

Benalla Rural City Council

# Council Meeting

## Agenda

Date: Wednesday 23 April 2025

Time: 6pm

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

## Contents

<b>Opening and Acknowledgement of Country .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Apologies .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Statement of Commitment .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Disclosures of Conflict of Interest.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Public Question Time .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Petitions .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Record of Committees.....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 <i>Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee .....</i>	<i>7</i>
3.2 <i>Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>Officer Reports.....</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1 <i>2024/2025 Major Event Funding Program .....</i>	<i>11</i>
4.2 <i>Draft Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029 Update .....</i>	<i>15</i>
4.3 <i>Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Levy .....</i>	<i>19</i>
4.4 <i>Chief Executive Credit Card Report For The Quarter Ended 31 March 2025 .....</i>	<i>23</i>
4.5 <i>Councillors' Expenses Report For The Quarter Ended 31 March 2025 .....</i>	<i>25</i>
4.6 <i>Mayor and Councillors' Attendance At Conferences and Events .....</i>	<i>27</i>
4.7 <i>Council Actions Pending .....</i>	<i>33</i>
<b>5. Reports by Councillors .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6. Notices of Motion .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>7. Notices of Rescission Motion .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>8. Urgent Business .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Confidential Business .....</b>	<b>37</b>
9.1 <i>Audit and Risk Committee Appointment of Independent Members .....</i>	<i>39</i>
9.2 <i>Confidential Reports by Councillors .....</i>	<i>43</i>
9.3 <i>Confidential Council Actions Pending .....</i>	<i>43</i>
<b>10. Reopening of the meeting to the public .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Closure of the meeting .....</b>	<b>45</b>

## Governance Matters

This Council 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 Council Meeting will be livestreamed via the Council's website and 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](http://www.benalla.vic.gov.au)

## Question Time and Public Submissions

Any person wishing to participate in Question Time or Public Submissions in accordance with Rule 7.2 and 7.3 of the *Governance Rules 2020* should contact the Council by emailing [council@benalla.vic.gov.au](mailto: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

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	
	Councillor David Blore	
	Councillor Peter Davis	
	Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
	Councillor Jillian Merkel	
	Councillor Nathan Tolliday	
<b>In attendance</b>	Robert Barber	Acting Chief Executive Officer
	Nilesh Singh	Interim General Manager Corporate
	Tom Arnold	Acting Manager Community
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	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 the apology/ies be accepted.**

## Statement of Commitment

The Councillors will recite the following Statement of Commitment:

*I declare,*

*that as a Councillor of Benalla Rural City*

*I will undertake on every occasion*

*to carry out my duties in the best interests of the community*

*and that my conduct shall maintain the standards of our Model Councillor Code of Conduct so that I may faithfully represent*

*and uphold the trust placed in the Council*

*by the people of Benalla and District.*

## 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](http://www.benalla.vic.gov.au) pending confirmation at this meeting.

### **Recommendation:**

**That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 March 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.**

## 1. Public Question Time

The Council's *Governance Rules 2020* provide the opportunity for members of the public to lodge written questions of broad interest to the Council and the community.

Questions of the Council will not be allowed during any period when the Council has resolved to close the meeting in respect of a matter under section 66 (1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

A question may be on any matter except if it:

- is considered malicious, defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial, or objectionable in language or substance;
- relates to confidential information as defined under the Act;
- relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person.

No more than two questions will be accepted from any person at any one meeting. All questions and answers must be as brief as possible, and no discussion may be allowed other than by Councillors for the purposes of clarification.

Like questions may be grouped together and a single answer provided. The Chair may nominate a Councillor, the Chief Executive Officer or another member of Council staff to respond to a question.

### **Recommendation:**

**That the question(s) and answer(s) be noted.**

## 2. Petitions

No petitions were submitted to the meeting.

## **Record of Committees**

### **3.1 Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee**

The recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 9 April 2025 are attached as **Appendix 1**.

#### **Recommendation:**

**That the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 9 April 2025 be adopted.**

***This page intentionally left blank***



**Business****1. Building and Planning Approvals – February 2025**

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

**Cr Gunaratne / Cr Tolliday:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

**2. 2024/2025 Quick Response Grants**

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

**Cr Merkel / Cr Hearn:**

**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.**

**Carried**

**3. Annual Grants Program**

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

**Cr King / Cr Gunaratne:**

- 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.**
- 4. That a review of the Community Grants Program be conducted in 12 months.**

**Carried**

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

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

**Cr Hearn / Cr Blore:**

**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.**

**Carried**

#### **5. Urgent Business**

No urgent business was submitted to the meeting.

Recommendations of the Finance and  
Planning Committee meeting held on  
Wednesday 9 April 2025

### 3.2 Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees

Under Council's *Governance Rules 2020* the Chief Executive Officer is required to provide a written record of the Assemblies of Councillors at a scheduled Council Meeting.

The record of Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees are attached as **Appendix 1**.

Copies of the Minutes from the following meetings have been provided to councillors under separate cover.

<b>3 March 2025</b>	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee
<b>4 March 2025</b>	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group
<b>5 March 2025</b>	Communications Advisory Committee
<b>11 March 2025</b>	Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee
<b>12 March 2025</b>	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review
<b>17 March 2025</b>	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee
<b>18 March 2025</b>	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group
<b>18 March 2025</b>	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee
<b>27 March 2025</b>	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee
<b>31 March 2025</b>	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee

**Recommendation:**

**That the report be noted.**

***This page intentionally left blank***

## Record of Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees

March 2025

**Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee**

5.30pm Monday 3 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Nathan Tolliday	Councillor Representative
	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
<b>In attendance</b>	Alison Angus	Visitor Economy Coordinator
	Malcolm White	Fletcher Hill Products
	Bess Nolan-Cook	Chief Executive Officer Tourism North East
	Charlie Vincent	Tourism North East

**Apologies:** Cr Jillian Merkel and Ian Gonzalez**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil**Items discussed:**

1. Review of actions pending
2. Marketing Update
3. Event production Update
4. Curation Update
5. Budget Discussion
6. Program Update
7. Sponsorship and Business Engagement
8. General Business

**Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group**

10am Monday 4 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Representative
	Cr David Blore	Councillor Representative
	Barber Alexander OA	Chair Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee
	Jason Brown	Browns Project Solutions
	Laura Benson	Browns Project Solutions
	Eric Nash	Benalla Art Gallery Director
	Travis Vincent	Regional Development Victoria
<b>In attendance</b>	Nilesh Singh	Interim General Manager Corporate
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Brian Beggs	Administration Officer

**Apologies:** Jason Brown**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil**Items discussed:**

1. Public Information Campaign Review
2. Options for Consideration

**Communications Advisory Committee**

1pm Wednesday 5 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	Councillor Representative
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor David Blore	Councillor Representative
	Councillor Peter Davis	Councillor Representative
<b>In attendance</b>	Robert Barber	Acting Chief Executive Officer
	Jane Archbold	Manager Community
	Grant Banks	Communications and Engagement Coordinator
	Tracey Beaton	Executive Coordinator
	Lucy Hansen	Communications and Engagement Officer

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Review of Actions From The Previous Meeting
2. Current Community and Community Engagement Projects
3. Update on Council Facebook Page
4. Corporate Website Update
5. General Business

**Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee**

5.30pm Wednesday 11 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor David Blore
	Councillor Peter Davis
	Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne
	Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)
	Councillor Jillian Merkel
	Councillor Nathan Tolliday

**Independent Advisor** Chris Eddy

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Chief Executive Officer Appointment

**Assembly of Councillors – Business Review**

6pm Wednesday 12 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

**Chair** Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)

**Councillors** Councillor David Blore  
Councillor Peter Davis  
Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)  
Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne  
Councillor Jillian Merkel  
Councillor Nathan Tolliday

<b>In attendance</b>	Robert Barber	Acting Chief Executive Officer
	Cathy Fitzpatrick	Manager Finance
	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
	Joel Ingham	Interim General Manager Corporate
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Alison Angus	Visitor Economy Coordinator
	Tom Arnold	Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
	Marissa Batten	Community Development and Recreation Officer

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Cr Justin King declared a conflict of interest for Item 3.

**Items discussed:**

1. Presentation: Inland Rail
2. Proposed *2025/26 Budget*
3. Proposed *2025/26 Budget* – Capital Works Program
4. Draft *Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029*
5. Benalla Rural City Council Annual Grant Program Review
6. Draft *Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029*
7. 2025 Benalla Street Art Festival Update
8. Benalla Planning Scheme Review

**Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee**

5.30pm Monday 17 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Nathan Tolliday	Councillor Representative
	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
<b>In attendance</b>	Eric Nash	Director Benalla Art Gallery
	Alison Angus	Visitor Economy Coordinator
	Eddie Zammit	Curator
	Malcolm White	Fletcher Hill Products
	Bess Nolan-Cook	Chief Executive Officer Tourism North East
	Sara Bowie	Administrative Officer

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Review of actions pending
2. Council Update
3. Curator Update
4. Marketing Update
5. Event Production Update
6. General Business

**Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group**

2pm Tuesday 18 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Representative
	Cr David Blore	Councillor Representative
	Barbara Alexander OA	Chair Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee
	Jason Brown	Browns Project Solutions
	Laura Benson	Browns Project Solutions
	Eric Nash	Benalla Art Gallery Director
	Travis Vincent	Regional Development Victoria
<b>In attendance</b>	Brianna Beggs	Administration Officer
	Nilesh Singh	Interim General Manager Corporate

**Apologies:** Jason Brown

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Terms of Reference Review
2. Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Update
3. Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee Update
4. Funding Provider Update
5. Action Sheet Review
6. General Business



**Benalla Festival Advisory Committee**

4pm Tuesday 18 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Representative
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Nathan Tolliday	Councillor Representative
	Caroll Bolitho	Community Representative
	Stephanine Brack	Community Representative
	Vince Branigan	Community Representative
<b>In attendance</b>	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Kate Nolan	Tourism and Events Officer
	Will Smith	Youth Engagement Officer
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Election of Chair
2. Review of 2024 Benalla Festival Events
3. Survey Results
4. 2025 Proposed Festival Dates
5. Review and Update of Terms of Reference
6. Tender for Production Management of the Festival
7. General Business

**Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre (BIRC) Redevelopment Project Steering Committee**

Midday Monday 27 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair:</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee:</b>	Cr Bernie Hearn	Councillor Representative
	Cr Peter Davis	Councillor Representative
	Wally Armstrong	Benalla Basketball Association
	Noel Baumgarten	Community Member
	David Booth	Community Infrastructure and Place, Sport and Recreation Victoria
	David Huxtable	Basketball Victoria
	Tom O'Connor	Basketball Victoria
	Terry Nowland	BIRC Committee of Management
	Simone Sammon	Community Member
	Jenny Sloan	Community Infrastructure and Place, Sport and Recreation Victoria
<b>In attendance:</b>	Nilesh Singh	Interim General Manager Corporate
	Tom Arnold	Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
	Laura Benson	Browns Project Solutions
	Bree Glass	Administration Officer

**Apologies:** Noel Baumgarten

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Project Opportunities
2. Project Design and Community Consultation
3. Information Sharing
4. Actions

**Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee**

5.30pm Monday 31 March 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Nathan Tolliday	Councillor Representative
	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
<b>In attendance</b>	Eric Nash	Director Benalla Art Gallery
	Alison Angus	Visitor Economy Coordinator
	Eddie Zammit	Curator
	Malcolm White	Fletcher Hill Products
	Bess Nolan-Cook	Chief Executive Officer Tourism North East
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer

**Apologies:** Bess Nolan-Cook

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Review of actions pending
2. Marketing Update
3. Event Production Update
4. Curation Update
5. Council Update
6. General Business



## Officer Reports

### 4.1 2024/2025 Major Event Funding Program

Ref: 1766899222-1017

Kate Nolan – Tourism and Events Officer

Courtney Naughton – Manager Economic Development and Sustainability

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents funding applications for the 2024/25 Major Event Funding Program.

#### BACKGROUND

The Council's Major Event Funding Program enables local community groups, clubs, organisations and external event groups to seek up to \$2,000 in funding to assist in the staging of events that will provide measurable economic benefit and enhance the image and liveability of Benalla Rural City.

#### DISCUSSION

##### Major Event Funding

Applications for consideration under the 2024/25 Major Event Funding program are detailed in the table below.

Applicant	Details	Amount Requested	Proposed Assistance
<b>Benalla Heritage Network</b>	<p><b>National Heritage Festival</b> <b>Friday 2 May – Sunday 4 May 2025</b></p> <p>The 2025 Annual National Heritage Festival in Benalla Rural City will span three days and feature 11 local community groups.</p> <p>Each group will showcase unique activities and skills that help preserve and promote Benalla Rural City's rich and diverse heritage.</p> <p>The National Heritage Festival is Australia's largest community-run heritage event. Benalla Rural City's program is among the most extensive in rural and regional Victoria, and is the largest and most diverse in North East Victoria.</p> <p>Most events are free, making the festival accessible and encouraging broad community participation without financial barriers.</p> <p>Local groups, clubs, and historical societies host exhibitions, tours, talks, and demonstrations that showcase their passions and knowledge. Community members contribute through volunteering, guiding visitors, or supporting event logistics.</p> <p>Skills sharing, local business involvement, and cultural inclusion further expand opportunities to participate. The festival fosters local pride by celebrating what the community can create, share, and showcase to visitors.</p> <p>The festival celebrates Benalla Rural City's rich history, heritage sites, and unique stories, building pride and a strong sense of place. It connects historical societies, schools, artists, and volunteers, fostering community bonds and intergenerational learning.</p>	\$445	\$445

	<p>Tours, talks, and exhibitions explore Benalla Rural City's agricultural, rail, artistic, and architectural heritage. Inclusive of First Nations voices, immigrant experiences, and women's contributions, the festival presents a meaningful cultural narrative. Run by a network of organisations under existing insurance arrangements, the festival attracts heritage tourists who stay longer and spend more, boosting local cafes, shops, and accommodation.</p> <p>Markets, food stalls, and pop-up events support local producers and artisans.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the event will attract approximately 1339 participants and spectators. With 100 estimated participants and visitors staying overnight.</p> <p>The intended use of the funding is to provide refreshments for guests at the opening and closing events.</p>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$445</b>	<b>\$445</b>

### ***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.

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

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The *2024/25 Budget* allocated \$12,000 to the Major Event Funding program. This application brings the total applied for to seven for this financial year. The inclusion of this event will bring the total budget spend to \$11,445, leaving \$555 in the budget allocation for 2024/2025.

## **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 \$445 from the 2024/25 Major Event Funding program be allocated to the Benalla Heritage Network.**

***This page intentionally left blank***



### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents a progress report on the development of the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029*.

### BACKGROUND

Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that the Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next four financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

A Council Plan must include the following:

- the strategic direction of the Council
- strategic objectives for achieving the strategic direction
- strategies for achieving the objectives for a period of at least the next four financial years
- strategic indicators for monitoring the achievement of the objectives
- a description of the Council's initiatives and priorities for services, infrastructure amenity
- any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

The *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* is integrated within the Council Plan due to the inherent role council plays in fostering community wellbeing.

Ninety Mile Consulting have been appointed to assist the Council in the delivery of the *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025–2029*.

### DISCUSSION

The draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025–2029* is progressing in accordance with the planned timeline. A wide range of engagement activities have continued to be undertaken by Ninety Mile Consulting (NMC) and Council staff to gather community feedback and data to inform the plan.

### Progress and Achievements

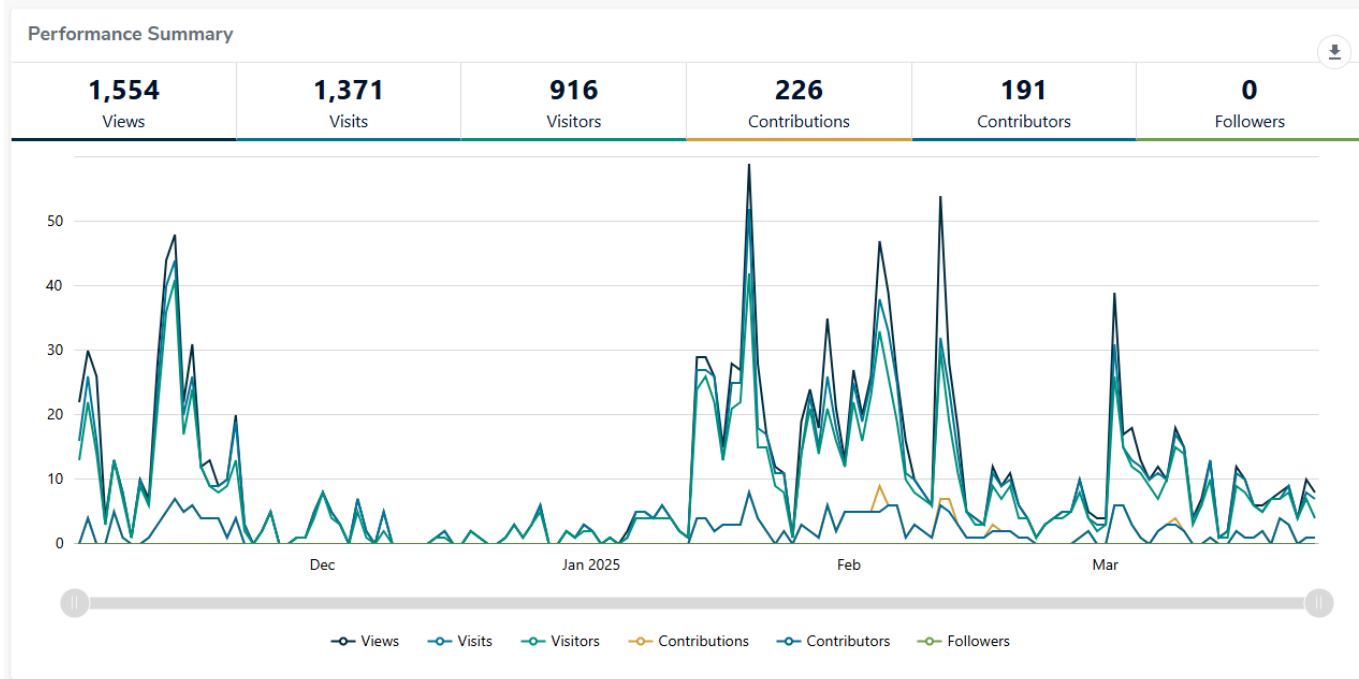
#### Community Panel

- 15 community members were appointed in December via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. A total of 34 community members submitted an EOI. Those appointed represent a range of key demographic groups within Benalla Rural City.
- Two Community Panel meetings have been held on 21 January and 18 March with the final meeting scheduled for 6 May.

## Community Surveys

- A total of 226 surveys have been received. The Community Survey closed on 6 April 2025.
- The survey was promoted through Council's website and social media, Have Your Say, brochures, postcards, the Benalla Ensign, Council's intranet, and to external working groups and advisory committees.

### Overview



*\*Statistics from Council's Have Your Say page December 2024 – March 2025.*

## Engagement Activities

- U3A Listening Session: 20 attendees
- Tomorrow Today's Full Impact Squad
- Local School visits. More than 180 young people were engaged via five school visits; Benalla P-12 (Waller Street campus), St. Joseph's, Australian Christian College, FCJ College, Benalla P-12 (Faithful Street campus). 139 feedback forms were submitted from students at these sessions.
- Creating Community Connections Expo
- Benalla Community Market
- Devenish Market
- Pop-ups in the main street and outside Coles Supermarket
- Rural community visits - Swanpool Community Spirit BBQ, Molyullah Fish and Chip Night and Lurg Community Gathering.

## Interviews

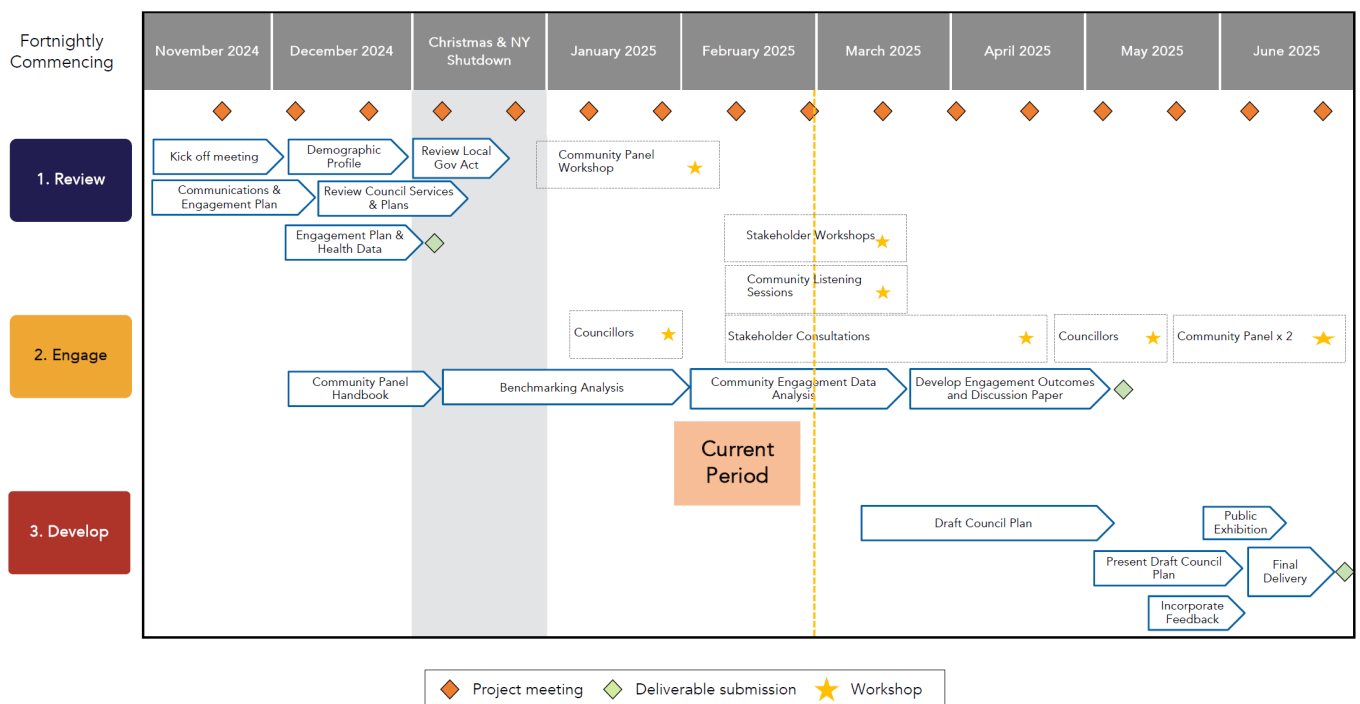
- NMC have conducted 71 interviews, including 21 staff members and 50 external key stakeholders from local businesses, community organisations and interested community members

## Workshops

- NMC has hosted six themed workshops over February and March.

Theme	Attendees
Environment	16
Community Workshop 1	17
Community Workshop 2	11
Arts, Culture, and Tourism	20
Business and Economy	14
Benalla Health and Wellbeing Partnership	18

## Timeline Summary



## COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS

### Community

- A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

### Leadership

- Good governance.*
- Engaged and informed community.*
- Effective and responsive advocacy.*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Council's *Community Engagement Policy*, it is proposed, due to the administrative nature of the report, that community engagement be undertaken at the 'Inform' 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
Inform	We will provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Promotion of achievements via media, websites and social media.</li><li>▪ Public report presented to the Council.</li></ul>

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has allocated \$50,000 to the development of the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029* in the *2024/25 Budget*. As at the end of March 2025 expenditure was \$36,854.

## 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*.

## 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

The development of the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029* remains on track.

The next phase will involve reviewing data and outcomes and working with the Community Panel, staff and Councillors to further develop the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029*.

The draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029* is scheduled to be presented to the Council in May 2025.

### Recommendation:

**That the report be noted.**

## 4.3 Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Levy

Ref: 1138149297-12799  
Robert Barber – Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Cr Bernie Hearn – Mayor

---

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report considers the Victorian Government's proposed Emergency Services Volunteers Fund levy.

### BACKGROUND

The Victorian Government introduced a *Fire Services Property Levy* (FSPL) into the rates collection system on 1 July 2013.

Prior to this point the State Government raised a levy through property insurance premiums; however, this system was inefficient for several reasons, including the fact that uninsured properties did not contribute to fire services.

In December 2024, the Victorian Government announced the *Fire Services Property Levy* (FSPL) would be replaced with the new *Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund* (ESVF) from 1 July 2025.

Key changes resulting from the ESVF include:

- Expansion of funding to include other emergency services in addition to the existing *Fire Rescue Victoria* and *Country Fire Authority* (CFA)
- CFA and *Victoria State Emergency Service* (VICSES) volunteers to be exempt from ESVF on their principal place of residence.
- Vacant land category will be abolished, with vacant land being allocated to its corresponding land use sector.

Like the FSPL, the ESVF will be calculated based on a fixed charge that varies by property type, and a variable charge based on property value. The ESVF will be collected by councils and appear on rates notices, replacing the FSPL.

The State Government has indicated that the variable component of the ESVF charge will increase between 64 percent to 189 percent from the current variable rates depending on the property classification.

The *Fire Services Property Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund) Bill 2025* was introduced into Parliament in March 2025.

The Bill amends the *Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012 (Principal Act)* to replace the Fire Services Property Levy with the Emergency Services and Volunteers Funding Levy to enable it to fund a broader range of emergency services.

The Bill also renames the Principal Act the *Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act 2012*.

The Bill was recently passed in the Legislative Assembly, however, the Bill was subsequently withdrawn from Parliament after the State Government failed to secure crossbench support for it.

## DISCUSSION

Several significant issues have been identified with the ESVF, primarily:

- Cost shock to property owners, particularly rural properties with agricultural/primary producer classification resulting in unpaid rates and ESVF levy.
- Ratepayer communication challenges with many ratepayers likely to perceive that the Council is significantly increasing their rates.
- A financial burden on council administration, including staffing costs, training and compliance costs, technology and systems, and communications and promotion.

Both the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) have started advocacy campaigns to have the State Government review the ESVF.

RCV has written to the Victorian Treasurer, Jaclyn Symes, as well as Opposition, Greens and crossbench MPs, proposing three amendments to the Bill:

- Recalculate the levy formula so country communities are not disproportionately footing the bill for emergency services across the state.
- Guarantee that funds taken from rural communities are returned to those same local areas through direct emergency services funding.
- Designate the State Revenue Office as the responsible authority to collect the levy (not councils).

It is proposed that the Council endorse RCV's suggested amendments to ESVF levy

## 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"><li>▪ Report presented to the Council.</li><li>▪ Advocacy strategy to be developed, implemented and promoted.</li></ul>

## COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 IMPLICATIONS

### Leadership

- *Good governance.*
- *Engaged and informed community.*

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If introduced, the ESVF levy will have a significant impact on Benalla Rural City ratepayers. Initial modelling indicates that in Benalla Rural City the new ESVP levy will collect \$4.285 million dollars an increase of \$1.912 million (81 percent) on the \$2.373 million collected under the FSPL.

A RCV Impact Analysis of the ESVP is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The FSPL is collected by the Council and remitted to the State Government (along with any penalty interest rate for late payment, etc). In this way there is no financial implications for the Council in the handling of this cash.

There is, however, a cost to administer the scheme. The Victorian Government currently reimburses the Council approximately \$41,000 per year. It is estimated that this is a reasonable reimbursement for the work that is currently undertaken under the FSPL system.

At this stage while it is unclear what additional workload the proposed changes will have, the current payment of \$41,000 will not be sufficient to pay for the increased administrative burden with the introduction of the ESVF.

## LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

At this stage ESVF legislation has not enacted. The Council will continue to comply with the *Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012*.

## 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 Council:

1. **Endorse Rural Councils Victoria's proposed amendments to the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Bill:**
  - a. **Recalculate the levy formula so rural communities are not disproportionately footing the bill for emergency services across Victoria.**
  - b. **Guarantee that funds taken from rural communities are returned to those same local areas through direct emergency services funding.**
  - c. **Designate the State Revenue Office as the responsible authority to collect the levy (not councils).**
2. **That a *Benalla Rural City Council Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy Advocacy Strategy* be developed and implemented.**

***This page intentionally left blank***





# Impact analysis

## RCV analysis of the Victorian Government's Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund levy.

### Headline results

- \$139,025,274 extra will be taken from rural communities each year.
- For each rural council area, the average additional tax take will be \$3.7 million.
- This represents an increase of 90%, compared to the Fire Services Levy.
- The hardest hit councils will be:
 

Colac-Otway (+151%)	Yarriambiack (+123%)
Hindmarsh (+117%)	Moyne (+117%)
- Primary Producers will bear the brunt of the change, with an average 154% rise in the amount owed.
- Rural residential landholders only will have an average increase 31%, with commercial operators paying 65% more.

### Council level data

LGA	FSL impact	New ESVF levy	Increase	% change
Hindmarsh	\$1,863,772	\$4,052,881	\$2,189,109	117%
Yarriambiack	\$2,722,192	\$6,071,619	\$3,349,428	123%
Swan Hill	\$3,683,193	\$5,979,401	\$2,296,208	62%
East Gippsland	\$8,535,717	\$12,992,439	\$4,456,721	52%
South Gippsland	\$6,454,983	\$11,603,176	\$5,148,193	80%
Wellington	\$8,929,971	\$14,460,968	\$5,530,997	62%
Macedon Ranges	\$7,394,869	\$11,951,388	\$4,556,518	62%
Golden Plains	\$3,673,929	\$6,663,994	\$2,990,065	81%
Moyne	\$5,014,421	\$10,900,028	\$5,885,608	117%
Corangamite	\$4,539,828	\$8,849,518	\$4,309,690	95%
Southern Gramps	\$3,783,000	\$7,881,000	\$4,098,000	108%
Glenelg	\$4,147,517	\$7,719,450	\$3,571,933	86%
Colac Otway	\$3,694,726	\$9,305,290	\$5,610,564	151%
Mansfield	\$2,638,168	\$4,559,622	\$1,921,454	73%

<b>Benalla</b>	\$2,373,289	\$4,285,320	\$1,912,031	81%
<b>Murrindindi</b>	\$3,348,051	\$6,203,081	\$2,855,030	85%
<b>Indigo</b>	\$2,685,436	\$5,341,372	\$2,655,936	99%
<b>Strathbogrie</b>	\$2,760,106	\$5,276,697	\$2,516,591	91%
<b>Total</b> (18 councils)			<b>\$65,854,077</b>	
<b>Average</b> (18 councils)			<b>\$3,658,560</b>	<b>90%</b>
		<b>All RCV Councils (33)</b>	<b>\$120,732,474</b>	
		<b>All rural councils (38)</b>	<b>\$139,025,274</b>	

### Inequities laid bare (Primary Producers vs Commercial vs Residential)

LGA	Residential increase (\$)	Residential change (%)	Commercial increase (\$)	Commercial change (%)	Primary Producer increase (\$)	Primary Producer change (%)
<b>Hindmarsh</b>	\$64,779	16%	\$33,368	35%	\$2,076,762	164%
<b>Yarriambiack</b>	\$69,924	14%	\$28,573	39%	\$3,222,034	162%
<b>Swan Hill</b>	\$292,101	23%	\$279,823	68%	\$1,777,547	126%
<b>East Gippsland</b>	\$1,340,790	28%	\$794,150	78%	\$2,031,661	117%
<b>South Gippsland</b>	\$937,735	33%	\$320,208	68%	\$3,692,131	140%
<b>Macedon Ranges</b>	\$1,878,005	41%	\$569,999	75%	\$1,967,618	143%
<b>Golden Plains</b>	\$995,635	53%	\$292,680	79%	\$1,907,669	170%
<b>Moyne</b>	\$470,176	34%	\$116,083	74%	\$5,180,370	170%
<b>Corangamite</b>	\$255,980	24%	\$160,507	57%	\$3,539,954	136%
<b>Southern Gramps</b>	\$244,000	21%	\$170,000	61%	\$3,593,000	168%
<b>Glenelg</b>	<i>Unavailable</i>	23%	<i>Unavailable</i>	56%	<i>Unavailable</i>	184%
<b>Mansfield</b>	\$486,904	37%	\$188,430	73%	\$1,211,779	137%
<b>Benalla</b>	\$652,015	58%	\$153,656	69%	\$1,021,166	137%
<b>Murrindindi</b>	\$515,197	34%	\$177,827	69%	\$2,023,198	171%
<b>Indigo</b>	\$357,408	29%	\$224,901	63%	\$2,079,345	197%
<b>Strathbogrie</b>	\$283,987	31%	\$150,856	76%	\$2,041,341	137%
<b>Total</b>	\$8,844,636	-	\$3,661,061	-	37,365,574	-
<b>Average</b>	\$589,642	31%	\$244,071	65%	2,491,038	154%

#### 4.4 Chief Executive Credit Card Report For The Quarter Ended 31 March 2025

Ref: 669520245-72

Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

##### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report details expenditure associated with the corporate credit card issued to the Chief Executive Officer for the quarter ended 31 March 2025.

##### BACKGROUND

As part of an audit of the Council's 2017/18 financial statements, the Victorian Auditor General's Office recommended that the Chief Executive Officer's credit card transactions be reviewed and authorised by a Council member.

In response to the recommendation, transactions on the CEOs credit card are reported quarterly to the Council.

##### CEO Credit Card Transactions for the Quarter ended 31 March 2025

Date	Details	Amount
10/01/2025	Tesla Motors Australia	\$276.53
14/01/2025	Global Electric	\$10.35
15/01/2025	Tesla Inc	\$9.08
22/02/2025	EG Group Benalla	4.55
<b>Total (ex. GST)</b>		<b>\$300.51</b>

##### Recommendation:

**That the report be noted.**

***This page intentionally left blank***

## 4.5 Councillors' Expenses Report For The Quarter Ended 31 March 2025

Ref: 36167913-9114  
Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report details expenditure associated with Councillors' mobile phone usage, attendance at professional development courses, conferences and seminars, and reimbursement of expenses incurred.

### Councillors' Information and Communication Expenses

Councillors' information and communication expenses for mobile phones and iPads are detailed in the table below:

Councillor	2024/25 Q1	2024/25 Q2	2024/25 Q3
Cr Claridge	\$147.24	\$147.24	\$0
Cr Davis	\$147.24	\$147.24	\$0*
Cr Firth	\$51.81	\$51.81	\$0
Cr Gunaratne	\$147.24	\$147.24	\$36.61
Cr Hearn	\$147.24	\$147.24	\$0*
Cr King	\$147.24	\$147.24	\$0*
Cr O'Brien	\$147.24	\$147.24	\$0
Cr Blore	\$0	\$36.61	\$36.61
Cr Merkel	\$0	\$36.61	\$36.61
Cr Tolliday	\$0	\$36.61	\$36.61
<b>Total (ex GST):</b>	<b>\$935.28</b>	<b>\$1,045.08</b>	<b>\$146.44</b>

\*Councillors now using personal devices.

### Councillors' reimbursement of expenses

The Council at its meeting on 15 December 2021 adopted the *Councillor Resources and Reimbursement Policy*.

There were no councillor reimbursements in this period.

## Councillors' attendance at training courses, conferences and seminars

The Council at its meeting on 12 October 2022 adopted the *Professional Development for Councillors Policy*. The policy states that a quarterly report be submitted to the Council detailing year to date expenditure on Councillors' attendance at professional development courses, conferences and seminars.

Date	Councillor	Description	Professional Development (ex. GST)	Conferences and Seminars (ex. GST)
22/08/2024	Cr Claridge and Cr Hearn	Accommodation - MAV Networking Event and State Council Meeting	\$0	\$752
27/08/2024	Cr Claridge, Cr Davis, Cr Hearn, Cr King and Cr O'Brien	IBAC Forum: Corruption risks in local government	\$0	\$0
12/09/2024	Cr Claridge and Cr Hearn	MAV Annual Conference and Dinner	\$0	\$1,390
12/09/2024	Cr Claridge and Cr Hearn	Accommodation - MAV Annual Conference and Dinner	\$0	\$770
23/12/2024	Mayor Cr Hearn and Deputy Mayor Cr King	Municipal Association of Victoria - Mayor and Deputy Mayor training and accommodation	\$2,520	
12/02/2025	All Councillors	Genderworks – Gender Equity Induction training for councillors	\$3,876.00	
28/02/2025	All Councillors	Russell Kennedy Solicitors – Planning Induction training for councillors	\$1,250.00	
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$5,126</b>	<b>\$2,912</b>

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *2024/25 Budget* allocated for Councillors' attendance at professional development courses, conferences and seminars is \$15,104.

Summary	Professional Development, Conferences and Seminars (ex.GST)
Quarter ended 30 September 2024	\$2,912
Quarter ended 31 December 2024	\$2,520
Quarter ended 31 March 2025	\$5,126
<b>Total spend as at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>\$10,558</b>

**Recommendation:**  
**That the report be noted.**

## 4.6 Mayor and Councillors' Attendance At Conferences and Events

Ref: 36167913-9115

Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

The Mayor and Councillors, listed in alphabetical order, attended meetings and events as detailed below during the period from 3 March 2025 to 13 April 2025.

<b>Mayor Councillor Bernie Hearn</b>	
3 March	Chief Executive Officer Second Round Interviews
4 March	Benalla P-12 College Whole-School Assembly
5 March	Presentation to Councillors – Regional Development Victoria Hume
	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
6 March	Hume Region Local Government Network Mayor's Meeting
	Hume Region Local Government Network - Mayor's and CEOs Meeting
11 March	Meeting with Benalla Bowls Club
	Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
12 March	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
14 March	Opening of the Women on Farms Gathering - Benalla 2025
	Molyullah Fish n' Chips Community Catchup
19 March	Council Meeting
24 March	Mokoan Solar Farm Opening
26 March	Official Opening of Benalla 7-Eleven
27 March	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
29 March	Opening of Smokehouse BBQ Den
31 March	CWA Information Evening
1 April	Tomorrow Today: Launch of Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (PLACE)
2 April	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
3 April	U3A Patchwork Class
4 April	Colour Run for Disability Services
	Lurg Community Gathering
7 April	Hume Region Mayor's Catch Up
9 April	Councillor Only Time
	Benalla Street Art Festival VIP Event
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
10 April	Benalla Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee Meeting
	Benalla Street Art Festival Official Opening
11 April	Interview with Edge FM Live From Benalla Street Art Festival
	Official Opening of the Benalla Police Station
	Benalla Street Art Tour with Annabelle Cleeland and Eddie Zammit
	Catherine Pianta Exhibition Opening
12 April	Meeting with Jaclyn Symes MP
	Benalla Street Art Festival

<b>Deputy Mayor Councillor Justin King</b>	
3 March	Chief Executive Officer Second Round Interviews
4 March	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group
	Benalla P-12 College Whole-School Assembly
	Benalla Showgrounds and Recreation Committee of Management Special Meeting
5 March	Presentation to Councillors – Regional Development Victoria Hume
	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
11 March	Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
12 March	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
14 March	Swanpool Community Spirit BBQ
	Molyullah Fish n' Chips Community Catchup
18 March	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
	Churchill Committee of Management Meeting
19 March	Council Meeting
20 March	<i>Council Plan 2025-2029 Workshop</i>
26 March	Official Opening of Benalla 7-Eleven
2 April	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
3 April	U3A Patchwork Class
9 April	Councillor Only Time
	Benalla Street Art Festival VIP Event
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
10 April	Benalla Street Art Festival Official Opening

<b>Councillor David Blore</b>	
3 March	Chief Executive Officer Second Round Interviews
4 March	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group Meeting
5 March	Presentation to Councillors – Regional Development Victoria Hume
	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
11 March	Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
12 March	Coffee Connections
	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
17 March	North East Local Government Waste and Recycling Forum
18 March	Benalla Family Research Group Meeting
	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group Meeting
19 March	U3A Annual General Meeting
	Council Meeting



<b>Councillor David Blore (Cont.)</b>	
20 March	<i>Council Plan 2025-2029 Workshop</i>
26 March	Official Opening of Benalla 7-Eleven
27 March	Benalla Sustainability Future Group Presentation: Advanced Resource Recovery in Rural and Regional Areas
	Municipal Association of Victoria - Preventing Fraud and Corruption in Local Government
2 April	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Benalla Historical Society Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
3 April	U3A Patchwork Class
4 April	Colour Run for Disability Services
6 April	Devenish Market
8 April	Accessibility Reference Group Meeting
9 April	Coffee Connections
	Councillor Only Time
	Benalla Street Art Festival VIP Event
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
10 April	Benalla Street Art Festival Official Opening

<b>Councillor Peter Davis</b>	
3 March	Chief Executive Officer Second Round Interviews
	Benalla Gardens Oval Committee of Management Meeting
5 March	Presentation to Councillors – Regional Development Victoria Hume
	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
11 March	Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
12 March	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
14 March	Swanpool Community Spirit BBQ
	Molyullah Fish n' Chips Community Catchup
15 March	Glenrowan Battery Energy Storage System Project - Drop-In Session
19 March	Council Meeting
20 March	<i>Council Plan 2025-2029 Workshop</i>
27 March	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
28 March	Interviews for Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee
2 April	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
9 April	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

<b>Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne</b>	
3 March	Chief Executive Officer Second Round Interviews
	Planning Induction - Statutory and Strategic Planning Roles and Responsibilities
5 March	Presentation to Councillors – Regional Development Victoria Hume
	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
11 March	Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
14 March	Holi Festival of Colours “Cultural Event”
18 March	Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee Meeting
19 March	Council Meeting
20 March	<i>Council Plan 2025-2029</i> Workshop
28 March	Interviews for Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee
	Preventing Fraud and Corruption in Local Government
2 April	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
9 April	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
12 April	Sinhala and Tamil New Year Celebration

<b>Councillor Jillian Merkel</b>	
3 March	Chief Executive Officer Second Round Interviews
	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
5 March	Presentation to Councillors – Regional Development Victoria Hume
	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
11 March	Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
12 March	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
14 March	Swanpool Community Spirit BBQ
	Molyullah Fish n' Chips Community Catchup
17 March	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
18 March	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
	Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee Meeting
19 March	Council Meeting
20 March	<i>Council Plan 2025-2029</i> Workshop
24 March	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
31 March	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
2 April	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
4 April	Colour Run for Disability Services
	Lurg Community Gathering
7 April	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
9 April	Benalla Street Art Festival VIP Event
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
10 April	Benalla Street Art Festival Official Opening
12 April	Benalla Street Art Festival

<b>Councillor Nathan Tolliday</b>	
3 March	Chief Executive Officer Second Round Interviews
	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
5 March	Presentation to Councillors – Regional Development Victoria Hume
	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
11 March	Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee Meeting
12 March	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
17 March	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
18 March	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
	Churchill Committee of Management Meeting
19 March	Council Meeting
20 March	<i>Council Plan 2025-2029 Workshop</i>
26 March	Official Opening of Benalla 7-Eleven
31 March	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
2 April	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review
6 April	Devenish Market
7 April	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
9 April	Benalla Street Art VIP Event
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
10 April	Benalla Street Art Festival Official Opening
11 April	Catherine Pianta Exhibition Opening

**Recommendation:**

**That the report be noted.**

***This page intentionally left blank***

#### **4.7 Council Actions Pending**

Council Actions Pending are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

**Recommendation:**

**That the report be noted.**

***This page intentionally left blank***

## Council Actions Pending

Action No.	Meeting Name	Item	Action	Officer	Status/notes
1.	F&P Committee 9-Apr-25	4	<b>Draft Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029</b> That the Finance and Planning Committee, acting under its delegated authority of the Council, resolve: That the draft <i>Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029</i> be placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.	MEDAS	Completed
2.	F&P Committee 9-Apr-25	3	<b>Annual Grants Program</b> 1. That allocations for Quick Response Grants and Community Grants be awarded as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quick Response Grants: up to \$750.</li> <li>Minor Community Grants: up to \$3,000.</li> <li>Major Community Grants: from \$3,001 to \$7,000.</li> </ul> 2. That the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Quick Response Grant Guidelines</i> be adopted. 3. That the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Community Grant Guidelines</i> be adopted. 4. That a review of the Community Grants Program be conducted in 12 months.	MC	1. Completed  2. Completed 3. Completed 4. Noted
3.	F&P Committee 9-Apr-25	2	<b>2024/2025 Quick Response Grants</b> That \$500 grants from the <i>2024/2025 Quick Response Grant program</i> be awarded to the Benalla Clydesdale and Heavy Horse Driving Day, Benalla Heritage Network, and Room at the Table Inc.	MC	Completed
4.	Council Meeting 19-Mar-25	4.2	<b>Benalla Planning Scheme</b> That Council prepare Amendment C45bena by undertaking the following actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request under Section 8A(4) of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> that the Minister for Planning authorise Benalla Rural City Council to prepare Amendment C45bena to the Benalla Planning Scheme.</li> <li>Request under Section 20(1) of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> that the Minister for Planning exempt Benalla Rural City Council from the requirements of Section 19 of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> and per the power under Section 20(2) of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>, limit notification of the amendment to only prescribed Ministers and referral authorities for a period of 14 days.</li> <li>When authorised by the Minister for Planning, exhibit Amendment C45bena to the Benalla Planning Scheme in accordance with the Minister's instructions and conditions.</li> </ol>	MD	1. Completed  2. Completed  3. Completed

Action No.	Meeting Name	Item	Action	Officer	Status/notes
5.	Council Meeting 13-Dec-23	4.4	<b>Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve Committee</b> That the debate on this matter be deferred until the Council Meeting on 14 February 2024 to allow the <i>Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve</i> user groups to endorse their representative on the <i>Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve Committee</i> and the <i>Instrument of Sub-Delegation from the Chief Executive Officer to Community Asset Committees</i> be updated.	CEO	Report to be presented to the Finance and Planning Committee 14 May 2025.
6.	Council Meeting 24-April-24	4.1	<b>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project</b> 1. That the Council give in principle support for the Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street Campus as the preferred site location for the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment project</i> . 2. That the Chief Executive Officer negotiate with the Department of Education for the Council to acquire crown land at 51-54 Barkly Street, Benalla. 3. That the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> be established. 4. That the amended <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference</i> be adopted. 5. That Cr Don Firth and Cr Bernie Hearn be appointed as the Councillor representatives on the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> for the remainder of the 2023/24 Council year. 6. That invitations to join the <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> be extended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hume Region Community Infrastructure, Place, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Basketball Victoria, President Benalla Basketball Association, Chair of the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Committee of Management.</li> </ul> 7. That an expression of interest process be undertaken to obtain two community member <i>Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee</i> representatives.	MAI	1. Completed  2. In progress  3. Completed  4. Completed  5. Completed  6. Completed  7. Completed



## **5. Reports by Councillors**

### **Recommendation:**

**That the report(s) be noted.**

## **6. Notices of Motion**

## **7. Notices of Rescission Motion**

## **8. Urgent Business**

Business can only be admitted as urgent business by resolution of the council, and only then if it:

- relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the agenda; and
- cannot be deferred until the next Council Meeting without having a negative impact on the Council, the municipality or the local community; and
- cannot be addressed through the Customer Request Management System.

A Councillor proposing that a matter be admitted as urgent business must lodge it in writing with the Chief Executive Officer by 4pm on the day of the meeting.

The Chief Executive Officer will advise the Mayor of any matter that the Chief Executive Officer determines appropriate for the Council to consider admitting as urgent business.

***This page intentionally left blank***

## Confidential Business

It is proposed that the following items be considered in confidential business pursuant to the *Local Government Act 2020* as they contain personal information or private commercial information that would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about a person, their personal affairs or expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking if released:

- 9.1 Audit and Risk Committee Appointment of Independent Members
- 9.2 Confidential Reports by Councillors
- 9.3 Confidential Council Actions Pending

### **Recommendation:**

**That the meeting be closed to the public for the consideration of the confidential business item noted above pursuant to Sections 3(1) and Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.**

***This page intentionally left blank***

## **10. Reopening of the meeting to the public**

### **Recommendation:**

**That the meeting be reopened to the public.**

## **Closure of the meeting**