

Benalla Rural City Council

Council Meeting

Agenda

Date: Wednesday 19 November 2025

Time: 6pm

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

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Agenda

Councillors

Councillor David Blore
Councillor Peter Davis
Councillor Bernie Hearn
Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne
Councillor Justin King
Councillor Jillian Merkel

In attendance

Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
Cathy Fitzpatrick	Manager Finance
Nilesh Singh	Manager Development
Jess Pendergast	Governance Coordinator

The Chief Executive Officer will Chair the meeting until the Mayor is elected.

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.

Governance Matters

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

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 or telephoning the Governance Coordinator Jess Pendergast on (03) 5760 2600.

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

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.

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 Council Meetings held on Wednesday 15 October 2025, Wednesday 21 October 2025 and Wednesday 29 October 2025 be confirmed as true and accurate records of the meetings.

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

2.1 Reopen the reserve located to the south of Willis Little Drive, Benalla

A petition containing 18 signatories has been received requesting the Council reopen to the public the reserve situated to the southern side of Willis Little Drive, Benalla.

Refer **Appendix 1**.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the petition be received.**
- 2. That a report be presented to the February 2026 Finance and Planning Committee.**

Record of Committees

3.1 Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee

The recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meetings held on Wednesday 15 October 2025 and Wednesday 5 November 2025 are attached as **Appendix 1**.

Recommendation:

That the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meetings held on Wednesday 15 October 2025 and Wednesday 5 November 2025 be adopted.

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Email

Name <i>(please print name)</i>	Address <i>(please print full residential address)</i>	Signature <i>(petitioners must sign)</i>
Empty space for signatures		

PETITION TO REOPEN THE RESERVE LOCATED TO THE SOUTH OF WILLIS LITTLE DRIVE

We the undersigned residents of the Rural City of Benalla wish to petition the Benalla Rural City Council to reopen, to the public, the reserve situated to the Southern side of Willis Little Drive. The reserve in question, zoned as Conservation and Resource, has been closed for many years and it is our desire to see it reopened.

Name	Address	Signature
<div></div>		

Recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee Meeting - 15 October 2025**Business****1. Draft *Benalla Airport Masterplan* – Hearing Of Submissions**

The report presented submissions received on the draft Benalla Airport Masterplan.

It is noted that following persons addressed the committee in support of their submissions:

- Michael Hedderman
- Shaun Driscoll
- Andy Davdison – Gliding Club of Victoria
- Paul Gibbs – Gold Rush Ballooning
- Francois Steyn – Balloon Association of Victoria (BAV)
- Mark Carr
- Martin Jacobson

Cr Hearn / Cr King:

That submissions on the draft *Benalla Airport Master Plan* be received.

Carried

2. Draft *Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* – Hearing Of Submissions

The report presented submissions received on the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029*.

No submitters spoke in support of their submissions.

Cr Gunaratne / Cr Tolliday:

That submissions on the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* be received.

Carried

3. Benalla Airport – Intention To Lease Land

The report finalised the matter of intention to lease land to Balloon Across Australia Pty Ltd, trading as Goldrush Ballooning, for the development of aircraft hangarage at the Benalla Airport.

Cr Merkel / Cr Blore:

- 1. In accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a lease agreement will be entered into with Balloon Across Australia Pty Ltd, trading as Goldrush Ballooning, for 19 Hangar Lane, Benalla for a term of five years commencing 1 December 2025 with an option for five further terms of five years.**
- 2. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to execute lease documentation on behalf of the Council.**

Carried

4. Draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029* – Consideration of Submissions

The report presented submissions received on the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029*.

The *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029* will be considered for adoption at the Council meeting on 29 October 2025.

Cr King / Cr Merkel:

That the report be noted.

Carried

5. Draft *Benalla Rural City Council Road Management Plan 2025-2029* – Consideration of Submissions

The report presented submissions received on the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Road Management Plan 2025-2029*.

The *Benalla Rural City Council Road Management Plan 2025–2029* will be considered for adoption at the additional Council meeting on 29 October 2025.

Cr Blore / Cr Hearn:

That the report be noted.

Carried

6. Daft *Benalla Rural City Council Asset Plan 2025–2029* – Consideration of Submissions

The report presented submissions received on the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Asset Plan 2025–2029* and draft *Asset Management Policy*.

The *Benalla Rural City Council Asset Plan 2025-2029* will be considered for adoption at the Council meeting on 29 October 2025.

Cr Blore / Cr Gunaratne:
That the report be noted.

Carried

7. Urgent Business

No urgent business was submitted to the meeting.

Recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee Meeting - 5 November 2025

Business

1. Draft *Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029* – Consideration of Submissions

The report presented considerations of submissions received on the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029*.

The draft *Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* will be considered for adoption at the Council Meeting on Wednesday 19 November 2025.

Cr Blore / Cr Gunaratne:
That the report be noted.

Carried

2. Building and Planning Approvals – September 2025

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

Cr Hearn / Cr King:
That the report be noted.

Carried

3. Development Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

The report presented the activities of the Development department for the quarter ended 30 September 2025.

Cr Blore / Cr Merkel:
That the report be noted.

Carried

4. People and Performance Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

The report presented the activities of the People and Performance Department for the quarter ending 30 September 2025.

Cr Hearn / Cr Blore:
That the report be noted.

Carried

5. Economic Development and Sustainability Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

The report presented the activity of the Economic Development and Sustainability Department for the quarter ending 30 September 2025.

Cr King / Cr Gunaratne:
That the report be noted.

Carried

6. 2025/2026 Quick Response Grants

It is noted that Cr Peter Davis declared a general conflict of interest in item 6. A family member is an office bearer for the Moira Benalla Club and Cr David is a member of the Rotary Club of Benalla. Cr Davis left the meeting at 6.27pm.

Cr Jillian Merkel and Cr David Blore declared a general conflict of interest in item 6 as they are general members of the Moria Benalla Club. Cr Merkel and Cr Blore claimed an exemption as the conflict of interest is held in common with residents and ratepayers.

The report presented funding applications for 2025/26 Quick Response Grants.

Cr King / Cr Blore:
That \$750 grants from the *2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program* be awarded to the Rotary Club of Benalla, the Probus Club of Benalla, the Small Town Sing and the Moira Benalla Club.

Carried

Cr Davis returned to the meeting at 6.31pm.

7. Community Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

The report presented the activities of the Community Department for the quarter ended 30 September 2025.

Cr Blore / Cr Gunaratne:
That the report be noted.

Carried

8. Facilities and Information Technology Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

The report presented the activities of the Facilities and Information Technology Department for the quarter ended 30 September 2025.

Cr Hearn / Cr Merkel:
That the report be noted.

Carried

9. Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group – Terms of Reference

The report presents the reviewed *Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group Terms of Reference*.

Cr King / Cr Gunaratne:
That the *Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group Terms of Reference* be adopted.

Carried

10. Urgent Business

No urgent business was submitted to the meeting.

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.

October 2025

6 October	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
7 October	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
8 October	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review
13 October	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee
21 October	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
27 October	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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Record of Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees

September 2025

Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee

5.30pm Monday 6 October 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

Chair	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
Committee	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Nathan Tolliday	Councillor Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Joyce Clarke	Community Representative
	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
In attendance	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer

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

1. Chair Elections
2. Funding Update
3. Curator Announcement
4. Sponsorship and Grant Applications Update
5. Program Formation
6. General Business

Benalla Festival Advisory Committee

4.30pm Tuesday 7 October 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

Chair	Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Representative
Committee	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Nathan Tolliday	Councillor Representative
	Caroll Bolitho	Community Representative
	Stephanine Brack	Community Representative
	Vince Branigan	Community Representative
	Adam Toms	Community Representative
In attendance	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Kate Nolan	Tourism and Events Officer
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer

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

1. Program and Media Update
2. Launch Event Update
3. Benalla By The Lake Event Update
4. General Business

Assembly of Councillors – Business Review

6pm Wednesday 8 October 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

Chair Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)

Councillors Councillor David Blore
Councillor Peter Davis
Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne
Councillor Jillian Merkel
Councillor Nathan Tolliday

Online Attendance Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)

In attendance	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
	Jane Archbold	Manager Community
	Joel Ingham	Acting Manager Assets and Infrastructure
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Nathan Gasperoni	Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

Apologies: Cr Puna Hewa Gunaratne

Conflicts of Interest disclosed: Nil

Items discussed:

1. Presentation: Benalla Police Domestic Violence Response
2. Proposed Tesla Carpark Licence Agreement For Electric Vehicle Chargers
3. Draft *Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029* – Consideration of Submission
4. Draft *Benalla Rural City Council Road Management Plan 2025-2029* – Consideration of Submissions
5. Draft *Benalla Rural City Council Assets Plan 2025-2029* – Consideration of Submissions
6. Year End Audit Update

Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee

2pm Monday 12 October 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

Chair	Joel Ingham	Acting Manager Assets and Infrastructure
Committee	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	Councillor Representative
	Cr David Blore	Councillor Representative
	Jenni Lamond	Victoria Police
	Ted Graham	Victoria Police
	Lisa Aitkinson	Victoria Police
	Kylie Cotter	Benalla P-12 College
	Joseph Mount	FCJ College Benalla
	David Morrow	Cooinda Village
	John Stafford	Regional Roads Victoria
	Mo Rasooli	Regional Roads Victoria
	Stephen Dowe	Senior Projects and Technical Services Officer
In attendance	Brianna Beggs	Administration Officer
Apologies:	Kerrie Croxford	
Not in attendance	Kylie Cotter, David Morrow and Joseph Mount	

Conflicts of Interest disclosed: Nil

Items discussed:

1. Inland Rail Project Update
2. Review of Action Sheet
3. Project Updates
4. Opportunities to Work Together

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting

5pm Tuesday 21 October 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

Chair	Mr Cameron Gray	
Committee	Councillor Peter Davis	
	Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
	Mr Stephen Paterson	
	Ms Rita Ruyters	
	Mr Wilson Tang	
In attendance	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
	Cathy Fitzpatrick	Manager Finance
	Joel Ingham	Acting Manager Assets and Infrastructure
External Auditors	Jason Gilbert	Crowe

Apologies: Nil

Conflicts of Interest disclosed: Nil

Items discussed:

1. Position Paper: *Implementation And Impact Assessment of AASB13 Amendments*
2. Draft *Annual Financial Report* and Draft *Performance Statement For The Year Ended 30 June 2025*
3. General Business

Benalla Festival Advisory Committee

4.30pm Tuesday 27 October 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

Chair	Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Representative
Committee	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Nathan Tolliday	Councillor Representative
	Caroll Bolitho	Community Representative
	Stephanine Brack	Community Representative
	Vince Branigan	Community Representative
	Adam Toms	Community Representative
In attendance	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Kate Nolan	Tourism and Events Officer
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer

Apologies: Cr Jillian Merkel

Not in attendance: Adam Toms and Vince Branigan

Conflicts of Interest disclosed: Nil

Items discussed:

1. Benalla By The Lake Event Update
2. Media and Marking Update
3. General Business

Officer Reports

4.1 Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Ref: 1138149297-13112
Peter Keane – Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) a Mayor is to be elected at a Council meeting that is open to the public, the Councillors must elect a Councillor to be the Mayor of the Council. The Council may resolve to establish the position of Deputy Mayor.

Subject to section 167, any Councillor is eligible for election or re-election to the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

Election of Mayor

Section 25 of the Act states:

1. The election of the Mayor must—
 - a. be chaired by the Chief Executive Officer; and
 - b. subject to this section, be conducted in accordance with the Governance Rules.
2. Subject to subsections (5) and (6), the Mayor must be elected by an absolute majority of the Councillors.
3. If an absolute majority of the Councillors cannot be obtained at the meeting, the Council may resolve to conduct a new election at a later specified time and date.
4. If only one Councillor is a candidate for Mayor, the meeting must declare that Councillor to be duly elected as Mayor.
5. In this section, absolute majority means the number of Councillors which is greater than half the total number of the Councillors of a Council.

Procedures for Election of Mayor

The Returning Officer must invite nominations for the office of Mayor and the following procedures will apply to the conduct of the election:

- 2.2.1. there must first be a determination of the term of appointment of the Mayor
- 2.2.2. voting will be carried out by show of hands
- 2.2.3. any Councillor is eligible for election or re-election to the office of Mayor
- 2.2.4. the Chief Executive Officer must invite nominations for the office of Mayor and confirm acceptance of the nomination with the nominee.
- 2.2.5. nominations for the position of Mayor must be moved and seconded
- 2.2.6. any Councillor nominated may refuse nomination
- 2.2.7. where only one nomination is received, the Councillor must be declared elected

2.2.8. where two or more nominations are received, the Councillor with an absolute majority of votes must be declared elected.

2.2.9. where in an election for the Mayor:

1. only one candidate has been nominated, that candidate must be declared elected
2. two candidates have been nominated, a vote must be taken and the candidate who receives an absolute majority of votes must be declared elected.
3. two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives the number of votes equal to half the Councillors of the Council, a second vote will be conducted.
4. where, after a second vote, where two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives the number of votes equal to half the Councillors of the Council the Chief Executive Officer will seek the meeting to resolve to conduct a new election at a meeting to be held at 6 pm the following day.
5. more than two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives the number of votes equal to or greater than half the Councillors of the Council:
 - a. the candidate with the fewest number of votes cast must be eliminated.
 - b. the names of the remaining candidates must be put to the vote again.
 - c. the procedure in a and b above must be continued until there remain only two candidates, at which point the candidate to be declared elected is to be determined by the procedures outlined above in this sub-rule; and
 - d. in the event of two or more candidates having an equality of votes and one of them having to be declared a defeated candidate (where there are three or more candidates with equal votes) the Chief Executive Officer will conduct a vote for one candidate to be defeated.

Term of Appointment of the Mayor

Under Section 26 of the Act, before the election of the Mayor, the Council must determine by resolution whether the Mayor is to be elected for a one-year or a two-year term.

Recommendation:

That the term of appointment for the Mayor be for one/two year(s).

Election of Mayor

The Chief Executive Officer will call for nominations for the position of Mayor.

Recommendation:

That Councillor be elected as Mayor of Benalla Rural City Council for the 2025/26 Council Year.

The Chief Executive Officer declares Councillor elected as Mayor for the2025/26 Council Year.

Upon being elected, the Mayor may make a ceremonial speech. The purpose of the ceremonial Mayoral speech is to outline priorities for the year ahead based on the adopted Council Plan.

Once the Mayor has been elected, the Chief Executive Officer must vacate the Chair and the Mayor must take the Chair for the balance of the meeting, where the following matters may be dealt with:

- Appointment of a Deputy Mayor.
- Determining the Meeting Cycle for the next 12 months of Council and Committee meetings.
- Any other matter considered necessary by the CEO.

Establish the position of Deputy Mayor

The Council may resolve to establish the position of Deputy Mayor. The procedure for the election of Mayor will apply to the election of the Deputy Mayor with any necessary modifications.

Recommendation:

That the position of Deputy Mayor be established.

Term of Appointment of the Deputy Mayor

Under Section 26 of the act, before the election of the Deputy Mayor, the Council must determine by resolution whether the Deputy Mayor is to be elected for a one-year or a two-year term.

Recommendation:

That the term of appointment of the Deputy Mayor be for one/two year(s).

Election of Deputy Mayor

The Mayor will call for nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor.

Recommendation:

That Councillor.....be elected as Deputy Mayor of Benalla Rural City Council for the2025/26 Council Year.

The Mayor declares Councillor elected as Deputy Mayor for the2025/26 Council Year.

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4.2 2025/26 Meeting Cycle for Council and Delegated Committee Meetings

Ref: 1138149297-13111

Peter Keane – Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report proposes a schedule of Council and Delegated Committee Meetings for the 2025/26 Council Year.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides that the conduct of Council Meetings is at the Council's discretion. The *Governance Rules 2020* state that:

The date, time and place of all Meetings for the following Council Year is to be fixed by the Council at a Council Meeting after the election of the Mayor but not later than the last Council Meeting of the calendar year.

The Council may call for additional Council Meetings or Delegated Committee Meetings during the year. If an additional meeting is called, the Chief Executive Officer must arrange for a notice of the meeting on the Council's website as soon as practicable after the time and date has been determined.

Council meetings and Delegated Committee meetings are held on Wednesdays in the Civic Centre, 13 Mair Street, Benalla, unless otherwise advised. Meetings commence at 6pm.

Meetings are livestreamed.

DISCUSSION

In accordance with the *Governance Rules 2020*, the Council, by resolution, may determine certain meetings be held as face-to-face (in-person) meetings.

The proposed schedule of Council and Committee meetings for the 2025/26 Council Year is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Recommendation:

That the meeting schedule for Council Meetings and Finance and Planning Delegated Committee meetings for the 2025/26 Council Year be adopted.

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2025/26 Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting Name	Time	Reports Due
Wednesday, 3 December 2025	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	21-Nov-25
Wednesday, 10 December 2025	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	28-Nov-25
Wednesday, 17 December 2025	Council Meeting	6pm	5-Dec-25
December 2025 - January 2026	Christmas and New Year's Recess		
Monday, 26 January 2026	Australia Day		
Wednesday, 11 February 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	30-Jan-26
Wednesday, 18 February 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	6-Feb-26
Wednesday, 25 February 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	13-Feb-26
Wednesday, 4 March 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	20-Feb-26
Monday, 9 March 2026	Labour Day		
Wednesday, 11 March 2026	Meeting Free Week		
Wednesday, 18 March 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	20-Mar-26
Wednesday, 25 March 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	13-Mar-26
Wednesday, 1 April 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	27-Mar-26
Friday, 3 April 2026	Good Friday		
Monday, 6 April 2026	Easter Monday		
Wednesday, 8 April 2026	Meeting Free Week		
Wednesday, 15 April 2026	Meeting Free Week		
Wednesday, 22 April 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	17-Apr-26
Saturday, 25 April 2026	ANZAC Day		
Wednesday, 29 April 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	24-Apr-26
Wednesday, 6 May 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	1-May-26
Wednesday, 13 May 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	8-May-26
Wednesday, 20 May 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	8-May-26
Wednesday, 27 May 2026	Meeting Free Week		
Wednesday, 3 June 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	22-May-26
Monday, 8 June 2026	King's Birthday		
Wednesday, 10 June 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	29-May-26
Wednesday, 17 June 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	5-Jun-26
Wednesday, 24 June 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	12-Jun-26
Wednesday, 1 July 2026	Mid-Year Break		
Wednesday, 8 July 2026	Mid-Year Break		

Date	Meeting Name	Time	Reports Due
Wednesday, 15 July 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	3-Jul-26
Wednesday, 22 July 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	10-Jul-26
Wednesday, 29 July 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	17-Jul-26
Wednesday, 5 August 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	24-Jul-26
Wednesday, 12 August 2026 Meeting Free Week			
Wednesday, 19 August 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	7-Aug-26
Wednesday, 26 August 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	14-Aug-26
Wednesday, 2 September 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	21-Aug-26
Wednesday, 9 September 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	28-Aug-26
Wednesday, 16 September 2026 Meeting Free Week			
Wednesday, 23 September 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	11-Sep-26
<i>Friday, 25 September 2026</i>	<i>AFL Grand Final Public Holiday</i>		
Wednesday, 30 September 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	18-Sep-26
Wednesday, 7 October 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	25-Sep-26
Wednesday, 14 October 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	2-Oct-26
Wednesday, 21 October 2026 Meeting Free Week			
Wednesday, 28 October 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	16-Oct-26
<i>Tuesday, 3 November 2026</i>	<i>Melbourne Cup</i>		
Wednesday, 4 November 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	23-Oct-26
Wednesday, 11 November 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	30-Oct-26
Wednesday, 18 November 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	6-Nov-26
Wednesday, 25 November 2026 Meeting Free Week			
Wednesday, 2 December 2026	Assembly of Councillors	6pm	20-Nov-26
Wednesday, 9 December 2026	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting	6pm	27-Nov-26
Wednesday, 16 December 2026	Council Meeting	6pm	4-Dec-26

4.3 Appointment of Council Representatives to Advisory Committees, Peak Industry Bodies and Regional and Community-Based Committees

Ref: 1138149297-13113
Peter Keane – Chief Executive Officer

Nominations of appointment of Council representatives to various committees, peak industry bodies and regional and community organisations in 2025/26 are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: 2025/26 Council Representatives to Advisory Committees, Peak Industry Bodies, Regional and Community-Based Committees

Advisory Committees	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Australia Day Advisory Committee	Cr Bernie Hearn Cr Justin King	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability	Bi-monthly or as required 10am Friday
Benalla Airport Advisory Committee	Cr Bernie Hearn Cr Peter Davis	Manager Facilities and Information Technology	Quarterly 2pm Tuesday
Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee	Cr Puna Gunaratne Cr Jillian Merkel	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability	Bi-monthly 6pm Tuesday
Benalla Festival Advisory Committee	Cr Justin King Cr Jillian Merkel	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability	Monthly or as required 4pm Tuesday
Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee	Cr Jillian Merkel Cr Puna Gunaratne	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability	Monthly 5.30pm Monday
Communications Advisory Committee	Cr Bernie Hearn Cr David Blore Cr Peter Davis	Chief Executive Officer	Monthly

Boards of Management	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
North East Victoria Tourism Board Incorporated	Chief Executive Officer	Chief Executive Officer	Bi-monthly Thursday

Community Asset Committees	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve Committee	Cr Bernie Hearn	Open Spaces Coordinator	TBC

External Incorporated	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Family Research Group	Cr David Blore	Chief Executive Officer	Monthly 11am Wednesday
Benalla Showgrounds and Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Incorporated	Cr Justin King	Open Spaces Coordinator	After hours
State Gliding Centre Committee of Management Incorporated	Cr Bernie Hearn	Manager Facilities and Information Technology	Saturday AM
Churchill Reserve Committee of Management Incorporated	Cr Justin King Cr Jillian Merkel	Open Spaces Coordinator	Bi-monthly 6pm Tuesday

External Organisations	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Historical Society Incorporated	Cr David Blore	Chief Executive Officer	Monthly 4pm Wednesday
Benalla Health and Wellbeing Partnership Group	Cr Bernie Hearn	Manager Community	Bi-monthly 1.30pm first Monday

External Working Groups	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee	Cr David Blore Cr Bernie Hearn	Manager Assets and Infrastructure	Bi Monthly 2pm Monday
Live4Life Partnership Group	Vacant	Youth Development Coordinator	Bi-monthly Wednesday 2pm – 3pm

Industry Associations	2025/26 Representative	2025/26 Proxy	Officer	Meetings
Municipal Association of Victoria	Mayor	Cr Puna Gunaratne	Chief Executive Officer	Quarterly 10am Thursday

Internal Incorporated	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Gardens Oval Committee of Management Incorporated	Cr Peter Davis	Open Spaces Coordinator	After hours
Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Committee of Management Incorporated	Cr David Blore Cr Bernie Hearn	Open Spaces Coordinator	After hours
United Friendly Society Reserve Committee of Management Incorporated	Cr Peter Davis Cr Bernie Hearn	Open Spaces Coordinator	After hours

Reference & Working Groups	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Accessibility Reference Group	Cr David Blore Cr Puna Gunaratne	Community Development Coordinator	Bi-Monthly 10.30am Tuesday
Waste Reduction Working Group	Cr David Blore	Manager Assets and Infrastructure	TBC – committee established. First meeting never held.
Heritage Advisory Working Group	Mayor	Manager Development	Monthly

Regional Associations	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance	Cr David Blore	Environmental Sustainability Coordinator	Quarterly 1pm Thursday
Hume Region Local Government Network	Mayor	Chief Executive Officer	Quarterly 10am Thursday
Ovens Murray Regional Partnerships	Chief Executive Officer	Chief Executive Officer	Monthly Thursday or Friday
North East Local Government Waste and Recycling Forum	Cr David Blore	Manager Assets and Infrastructure	Quarterly

Statutory Committees	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Audit and Risk Committee	(Chair of F&P Committee) Cr Puna Gunaratne	General Manager Corporate	4 times a year 3 rd Tuesday of month.
Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Committee	All Councillors and Independent Advisor	General Manager Corporate	Quarterly
Municipal Emergency Management Committee	Mayor	Manager Development	Quarterly Thursday work hours

Steering Committees and Project Control Groups	2025/26 Representative/s	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment project Steering Committee	Cr Peter Davis Cr Bernie Hearn	Manager Assets and Infrastructure	Monthly Thursdays 11am
Benalla Art Gallery Project Control Group	Cr David Blore Cr Justin King	Manager Assets and Infrastructure	Monthly

Following the recent resignation of Cr. Nathan Tolliday, there is currently an extraordinary vacancy on the Council with a countback to fill the vacancy to be conducted on Wednesday 3 December 2025.

It is proposed that the appointment of Council representatives to various committees, peak industry bodies and regional and community organisations be reviewed in February 2026 to enable the countback's successful candidate to be allocated representative positions.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the appointment of Council representatives to various committees, peak industry bodies, regional and community organisations for the 2025/26 Council Year as detailed in Table 1 be approved.**
- 2. That the appointment of Council representatives to various committees, peak industry bodies, regional and community organisations for the 2025/26 Council Year be reviewed in February 2026.**

4.4 Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029

Ref: 6755727-107

Nilesh Singh – Manager Development

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents for consideration and adoption of the *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029*.

BACKGROUND

The current *Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* was developed as an operational document by Authorised Officers of the compliance team, over-viewed by the Manager Development, utilising current data and statistics available through Council and publicly accessible research and reporting.

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), Council is required to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (The Plan) every four years on 4 December. The Plan deals with strategies and services that Council must provide with regards to dogs and cats, which are the only domestic animals identified and dealt with by The Act.

The purpose of The Plan is to evaluate and monitor if Council animal management strategies and services are meeting community needs and adequately addressing the requirements of the Act and the *Domestic Animal Regulations 2015* (The Regulations).

A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must:

- a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
- b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
- c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
 - i. to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
 - ii. to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
 - iii. to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
 - iv. to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
 - v. to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
 - vi. to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
 - vii. to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and the regulations; and

- d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
- e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
- f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Every Council must

- a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
- b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
- c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

The Council at the Finance and Planning Committee on 27 August 2025, acting under its delegated authority of the Council, resolved:

That the Finance and Planning Committee, acting under its delegated authority of the Council, resolve that the draft Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 be endorsed and placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.

Public notice of the draft *Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* (the Plan) was given on the Council's website and the *Benalla Ensign* on 3 September 2025.

Feedback was also sought via the Council's website and social media.

Public listening posts were conducted by Compliance staff in Bridge Street East, Benalla in the central business district on 24 and 30 September 2025.

The submission period closed 5pm Wednesday 1 October 2025. At the close of the submission period six submissions were received.

In accordance with the Council's *Governance Rules 2020*, submitters were invited to address the Finance and Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday 15 October 2025 in support of their submissions. No submitters spoke in support of their submissions.

Submissions were considered by Council at the Finance and Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday 5 November 2025.

DISCUSSION

Following the consideration of submissions, Councillor and Council staff input, there are no major changes proposed to the *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2025*.

The *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2025* is attached as **Appendix 1**.

COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 IMPLICATIONS

Community

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

Economy

- *Flourishing visitor economy*
- *Sustainable growth.*

Environment

- *Healthy and protected natural environment.*

Liveability

- *Vibrant public spaces and places.*

Leadership

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no material financial implications with the development or implementation of the *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029*.

While there are currently no financial impacts associated with the Plan, some of the identified future initiatives may have cost implications that will need to be considered.

GENDER EQUALITY ACT

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* the Council is required to undertake a gender impact assessment when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

A gender equity assessment found the *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* has an overall neutral gender impact.

LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, Council is required to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years.

The adoption of the *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* will ensure the Council complies with its responsibilities under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

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 *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* has been developed following extensive consultation. The work of the community and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of the Plan is acknowledged.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* be adopted.**
- 2. That the *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029* be forwarded to the Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.**
- 3. That a letter of acknowledgement to be sent to public submitters outlining the result of their submission and thanking them for their contribution into the *Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029*.**

Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan

2026-2029

Version Control Table

Version number	Date of creation	Author(s)	Adopted by Council
1	1-Aug-2025	W. Rich	

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1. Introduction and Context

1.1 Purpose of Domestic Animal Management Plan

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), Council is required to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) every four years. The Plan deals with strategies and services that Council must provide with regards to dogs and cats, which are the only domestic animals identified and dealt with by the Act.

The purpose of The Plan is to evaluate and monitor if Council animal management strategies and services are meeting community needs and adequately addressing the requirements of the Act and the *Domestic Animal Regulations 2015* (The Regulations).

A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must -

- a. Set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations.
- b. Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district.
- c. Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district -
 - i. to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats.
 - ii. to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation.
 - iii. to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
 - iv. to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.
 - v. to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.
 - vi. to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.
 - vii. to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and the regulations.
- d. Provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable.
- e. Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.
- f. Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Every Council must -

- a. Review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.
- b. Provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan.
- c. Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

1.2 Process Applied in Developing the Plan

The Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan (The Plan) was developed as an operational document by Authorised Officers of the compliance team, over-viewed by the Manager Development, utilising current data and statistics available through Council and publicly accessible research and reporting.

The draft document will be subject to a community consultation process and Council review for further evaluation and adjustment before presentation to Council for approval and adoption before submission to the Minister.

1.3 Demographic and Profile of Council

Benalla Rural City is located approximately 214 kilometres north east of the city of Melbourne, Victoria's capital, making it easily accessible by road or rail in about two hours. Benalla Rural City Council comprises 235,264 hectares covering 41 localities, in whole or in part. It has a population of approximately 14,635 with an average median age of 51.5 years, and approximately 10890 people living in the Benalla urban area (2021-2024 census data).

Benalla Rural City includes the towns and rural districts of Archerton, Baddaginnie (part), Barjarg (part), Benalla, Boho South (part), Boweya (part), Boxwood (part), Bridge Creek (part), Broken Creek, Bungeet, Bungeet West, Chesney Vale, Creek Junction (part), Devenish, Glenrowan (part), Glenrowan West, Goomalibee, Goorambat, Lima, Lima East, Lima South, Lurg, Major Plains (part), Molyullah, Moorngag, Mount Bruno, Myrree (part), Samaria, Stewarton (part), Strathbogie (part), Swanpool, Taminick, Tarnook, Tatong, Thoona, Tolmie (part), Upper Lurg (part), Upper Ryans Creek, Warrenbayne, Winton and Winton North.

Benalla Rural City was formed in 2002, following the de-amalgamation of Delatite Shire into Benalla Rural City and Mansfield Shire. Benalla Rural City is predominantly a rural area but has substantial residential areas in and around the city of Benalla.

Most of the City's retail space is in shopping strips in central Benalla. There is some industrial land use to the north-east and east of the city. Most of the rural area is used for agricultural purposes, including wool and meat production, dairying and cropping.

1.4 Context and Current Situation

Program/Service:	Service Level:
Education programs by means of media releases, community notices, mailing of renewal notices and placement of A-frame signs in high-risk areas.	Number of dogs and cats per year.
Monitor registration renewals and follow up enquiries for previously registered animals	Desktop audit and follow up (phone or visit) commencing in June.
Enforcement activities for unregistered animals when located via complaint or impounded strays	All impounded animals must be registered prior to reclaim. Enforcement action taken upon receipt of reclaim reports
Dog attack complaints	Procedures manual requires response to dog attack complaint within 30 minutes.

Program/Service:	Service Level:
Routine street patrols	Dedicated “dog truck” vehicle for regular daily patrols during business hours and in response to after-hours callouts. Secondary compliance vehicle (Toyota Hiace van) containing 2 dog cages for animal management duties.
Pound	Contracted Municipal Pound facility (RSPCA Victoria) open for public at the Burwood facility, between 8:00am and 5:00pm Weekdays and weekends. RSPCA provide vehicles and drivers for collection and transport of impounded animals to and from RSPCA Burwood facility.
Advertise located animals on social media and hold locally for up to 24 hours before transport to pound facility	All animals found at large are posted on Council social media pages to try and identify owner and may be kept in holding pens locally for reclaim for up to 24 hours, when operationally viable, if not registered or owner unable to be identified through microchip.
Policy of one “free” return per year for any registered animal located at large without penalty	Currently registered pets returned to owner without release fee and warning once per year if located at large. Any further offences attract’s a release fee and possible enforcement action depending on the circumstances.
After hours emergency service	Officers on rotational roster for on call duties between 5:00pm and 8:00am Monday to Friday and 24 hours over weekends and public holidays.

1.5 Domestic Animal Statistics

Dogs	2022	2023	2024
Number Registered	3229*	2820*	3054*
Declared Dogs (dangerous, menacing, restricted)	Dangerous - 0 Menacing - 1 Restricted - 0	Dangerous - 3 Menacing - 1 Restricted - 0	Dangerous - 1 Menacing - 0 Restricted - 0
Seized for dog attack	2	1	0
Impounded wandering at large	38*	30*	62
Seized for animal welfare/abandoned	0	0	2
Surrendered by owners	23	31	46
Total	63	62	110
Adopted for the year	32 (50.7%)	33 (53.2%)	53 (48.18%)
Euthanized for the year	9 (14.28%)	9 (14.5%)	6 (5.45%)
Reclaimed for the year	22 (34.92%)	20 (32.2%)	51 (46.36%)

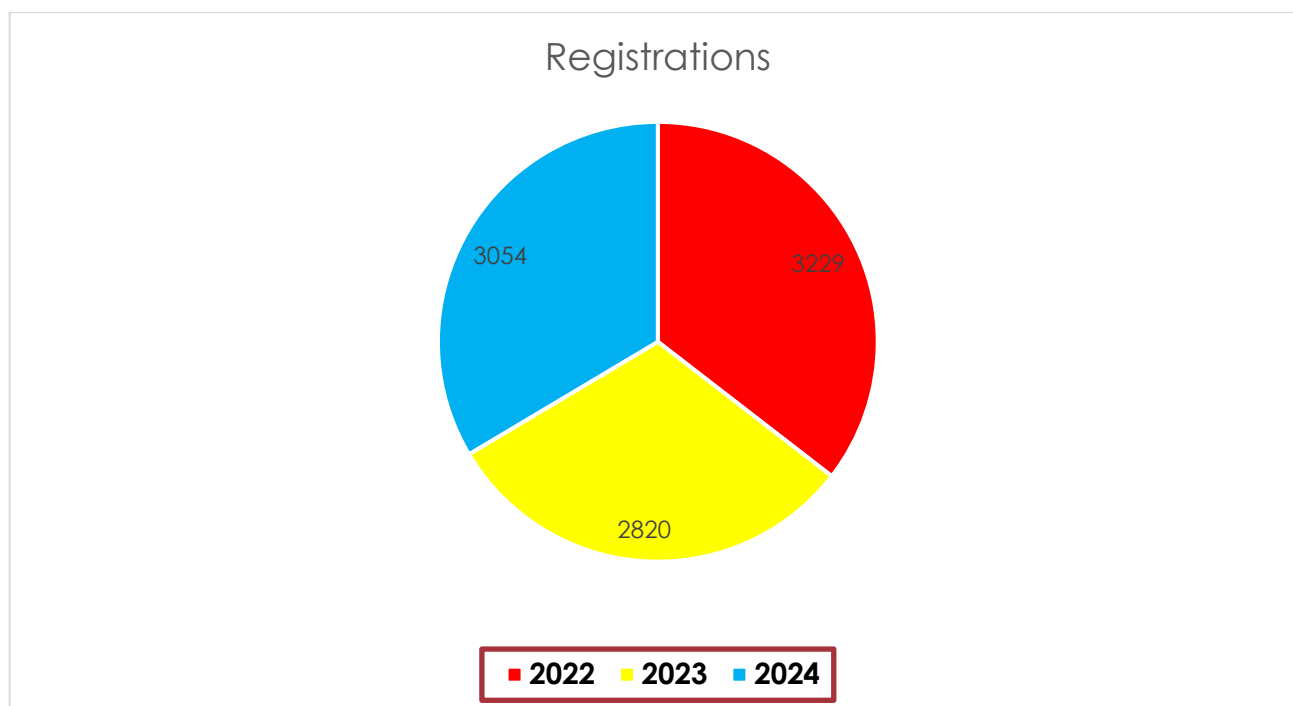
Cats	2022	2023	2024
Number Registered	<i>Included in dog numbers</i>	<i>Included in dog numbers</i>	<i>Included in dog numbers</i>
Impounded wandering at large	74*	202*	153
Seized for animal welfare/abandoned	0	0	0
Surrendered by owner	16	18	42
Total	90	220	195
Adopted	54 (60%)	90 (40.9%)	139 (71.28%)
Euthanized	23 (25.5%)	116 (52.7%)	46 (23.5%)
Reclaimed	13 (14.4%)	13 (5.9%)	10 (5.12%)
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* - Numbers estimated not accurate due to insufficient data available.

Registration

Registration figures for dogs and cats dipped slightly from 2022 to 2024, likely due to cost-of-living pressures and the aftermath of the global pandemic which limited Council's ability to publicise the registration renewal period or make follow up enquiries by doorknock to chase up renewals 2019 to 2023.

Registration numbers are expected to rise for the 2025 period as Compliance Officers continue to follow up renewals and educate the community through portable signs, vehicle decals, social media, phone calls and doorknocks.



Animal Fate Data

There has been a dramatic increase in the impound of stray dogs and cats over the 2023 to 2024 period, which is attributed to better record keeping via the RSPCA Victoria “Sheltermate” system and targeted feral cat trapping programs in the outer rural areas of the municipality in 2023 and 2024.

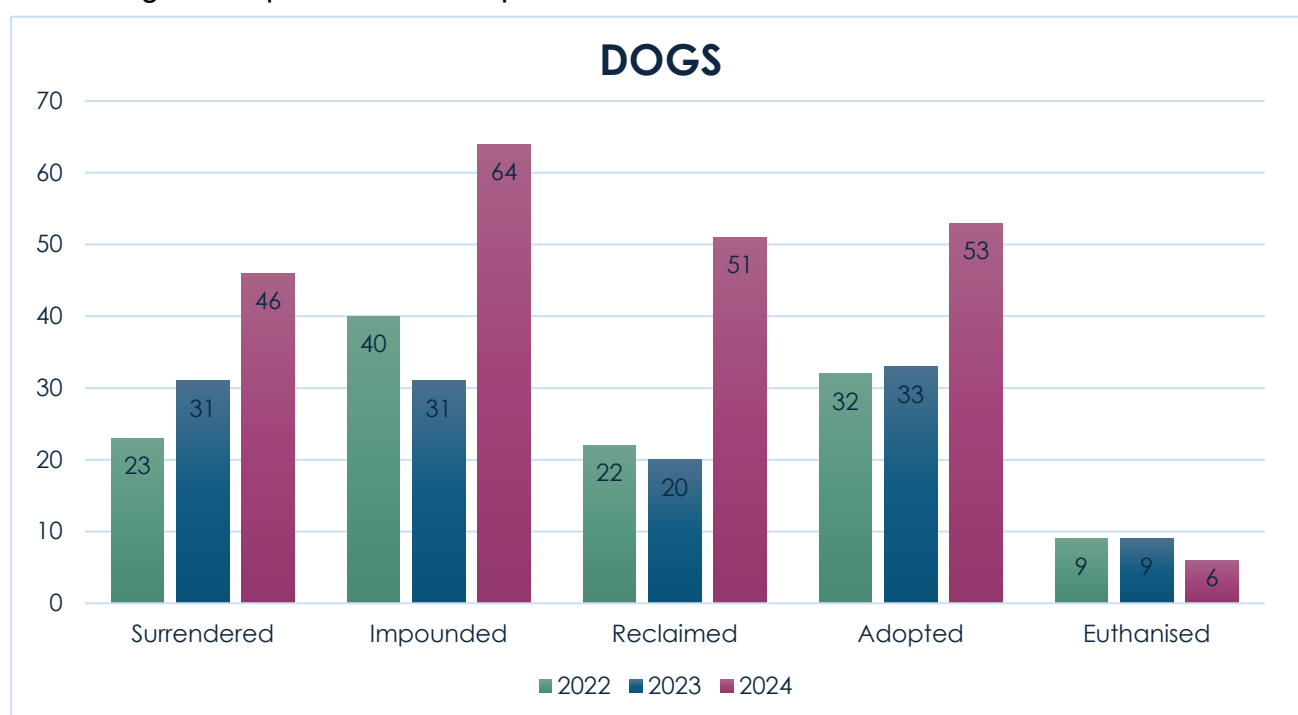
Reclaims and adoptions have remained fairly stable, with a slightly upward trend toward 2025, this can be attributed in part to public education and social media posts publicizing found and impounded animals.

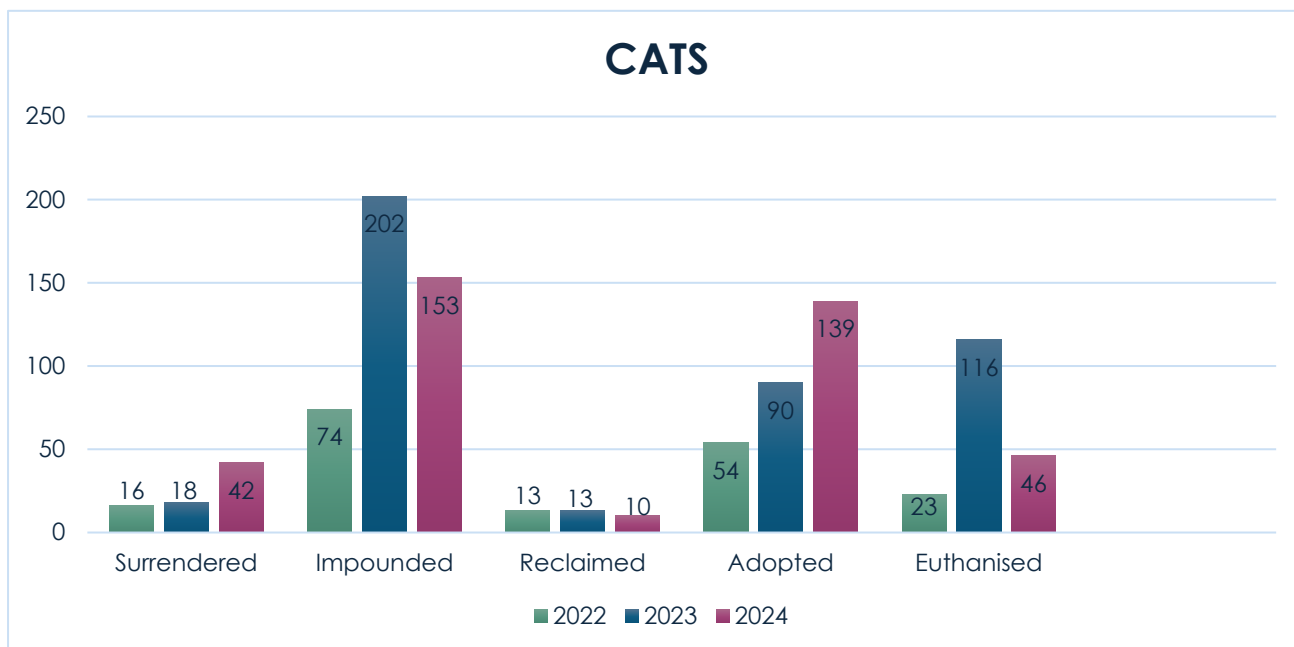
The practice of holding dogs in Benalla for up to 24 hours (when operationally viable) whilst trying to locate owners, has also resulted in many animals being repatriated without having to be transported to RSPCA.

The use of social media can delay or frustrate animals being repatriated with their owners as well-meaning community members hold on to lost animals for extended periods instead of handing them in to Council as required by The Act, for return to their owners. A remedy is available under Section 84D of The Act, which requires a found or seized dog to be delivered up to Council with a penalty of up to 5 penalty units for noncompliance. This has been somewhat relieved by changes in The Act, permitting dogs and cats to be handed to participating Veterinary Clinics for return to owners, without the need for an agreement under Section 84Y of the Act to be in place.

Euthanasia rates for dogs have fallen over the last three years from 14 per cent down to 5 per cent, whilst reclaims have climbed from 34 per cent to 46 per cent. The euthanasia statistics include dogs surrendered or seized for dog attacks that have been euthanised at the request of the owners.

The statistics for cats have remained constant with euthanasia rates slightly dropping from 25 per cent to 23 per cent, with a spike in 2023 due to targeted feral cat trapping program in rural areas, and reclaims dropping from 14 per cent to 5 per cent, although adoptions remain high at 71 per cent of all impounded cats in 2024.





- Surrendered – Owner has surrendered dog or cat for any reason under Section 33A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.
- Stray – Animal located wandering at large or not securely confined to the property and returned to owner upon registration or impounded at RSPCA Burwood.
- Reclaimed – Animal reclaimed by owner (includes dogs returned to owner without impound).
- Adopted – Animal adopted after eight days impound and not reclaimed.
- Euthanised – Animal assessed as feral, suffering untreatable illness or injury or at request of the owner (usually due to attack).

2. Training of Authorised Officers

2.1 Context and Current Situation

The Benalla Rural City Council's Compliance Department consists of a Compliance Coordinator and three full-time Compliance Officers. All Compliance Department staff take part in the after hours on-call five week rotating roster attending to incidents involving dogs at large, dog attacks and livestock on roads.

As well as Animal Management, the compliance team are responsible for investigation and enforcement in several areas covering various Acts including, Environment Protection Act complaints including illegal dumping and residential noise, Planning and Environment Act, Building Act and Regulations, Community Local Laws, Bushfire Prevention, Tobacco Act and Regulations, Impounding of Livestock Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (POCTA) and Regulations, Road Safety Act and Road Rules, Local Government Act and Council prosecutions.

The Compliance department is responsible for providing an animal management service, for Council, as required by The Act, which includes:

- Seizure and impounding of domestic animals
- Managing of complaints relating to domestic animals
- Promoting responsible pet ownership in the community
- Investigating dog attacks and nuisance complaints
- Enforcement and compliance with legislation and various codes of practice relevant to domestic animals.
- Domestic animal registration process
- Investigating animal welfare issues
- Management and inspection of domestic animal businesses
- Providing advice to owners and the general community in relation to domestic animals
- After hours animal emergencies.

2.2 Our Planned Training for Authorised Officers

A variety of training is available for all Authorised Officers. Training options are annually reviewed to ensure relevant and up to date material is provided.

Training options include:

- Animal handling and behaviour
- Dog and cat management
- Investigation and statement taking
- Enforcement and prosecution
- Conflict and time management
- Information technology

Officers are also eligible to attend industry related seminars, conferences and briefings from Animal Welfare Victoria (Department of Energy Environment & Climate Action (DEECA)), RSPCA Victoria, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM) and other relevant Associations.

2.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: Develop and maintain a training register for Compliance Officers to enhance skills and knowledge.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Record each officer's name, completed training along with proposed additional training opportunities.	Ongoing	Annually review, to ensure accuracy and to determine whether proposed training goals have been met for each Officer.
b) Staff attendance at industry related seminars such as RSPCA training, Animal Welfare Victoria training and animal specific training as opportunities present.	As available	Annually review to see if training objectives are being met.
c) Membership of professional bodies within the animal management industry, such as Australian Institute of Animal Management and attendance at conferences and discussion groups as they become available.	Ongoing	Annually review to see if training objectives are being met.

Objective 2: Develop existing authorised officers to multi-skill to ensure adequate backfilling or additional staffing when necessary.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Identify minimum level of experience and training required to build skill set.	Ongoing	Review and ensure all criteria are met prior to commencement of Officer out in the field.
b) Allocate a "buddy" to the Officer being developed and to ensure accurate information and training is being provided whilst on the job.	Ongoing	Review and ensure all criteria are met prior to commencement of Officer out in the field.
c) Allocate a variety of milestones for the Officer to reach during the development period.	Ongoing	Review each completion of task to ensure Officer is developing adequate skill sets required.
d) Officers to follow up complaints and provide feedback to improve skills and systems	Ongoing	Review each milestone as achieved to ensure Officer is developing adequate skill sets required

3. Programs to Promote and Encourage Responsible Pet Ownership and Compliance with Legislation

3.1 Context and Current Situation

Council use various methods to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation within the Benalla Rural City.

These methods include, but are not limited to:

- Provision of an internally resourced after hours emergency animal service.
- Display of A-frame signs and magnetic decals on Council vehicles.
- Stock and display information pamphlets in the foyer of the Customer Service Centre and regularly review information contained on Council website.
- Installation and stocking of poo bag dispensers at strategic locations within the Municipality.
- Regular media releases regarding benefits and requirements for dog and cat registration.
- Use of facebook and social media to advertise unidentified impounded animals to assist with speedy return to owners.
- Conduct investigations and enforcement options as offences are detected or complaints received.

3.2 Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Current Orders

Benalla Rural City currently has orders under Section 25 and 26 of the Domestic Animals Act, resolved by Council on 23 February 2022 and published in the Government Gazette.

Cat Curfew

Pursuant to Section 25 of the Act, cats within the municipality are to be securely confined to the owner's property, or the property where they are kept for the time being, always.

Control of Dogs

Pursuant to Section 26 of the Act, dogs and cats within the municipality must be kept under effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash, not exceeding three meters in length, held by the owner and attached to the animal whilst the animal is in a reserve or public place.

Owners Obligations

A dog may be exercised off leash in a designated area if the owner:

- Carries a chain, cord, or leash, not exceeding three meters in length, sufficient to bring the dog under effective control if the dog behaves in a manner which may worry, threaten or harass any person or animal.
- Remains in effective control of the dog by voice and/or hand command to promptly bring the dog under control by chain, cord, or leash if it becomes necessary.
- Does not allow the dog to worry, threaten or harass any person or animal.

Exceptions

If a dog is being exercised off leash in a designated area, it must be brought under effective control of the owner by means of chain, cord, or leash if:

- within 30 metres of the principal location of an organised sporting event
- within 30 metres of the principal location of an organised public meeting
- within 30 metres of a permanent barbecue or picnic area when in use
- within 10 metres of the perimeter of a playground
- within 5 metres of a shared pathway.

Prohibited Areas

Areas where dogs and cats are not permitted at any time:

- Dogs and cats, restrained or otherwise, are prohibited within the perimeter of any playground at any time.
- Dogs and cats, restrained or otherwise, are not permitted within any prohibited area declared by Council.

Current Local Laws

Local Law No. 52 (1) - Keeping of Animals in Residential Areas

An owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep, allow to be kept or remain on any land, any more animals or birds than is stated in the following table:

Type of Animal	Maximum allowed in residential areas
Dogs	2
Cats	2

**Actual list contains other animals and birds but has been edited for this document to improve clarity.*

- (2) Sub clause (1) does not apply where a planning permit has been obtained for land used for the purposes of animal boarding or breeding.
- (3) For the purpose of calculating the maximum number of dogs or cats kept on any land, any progeny may be lawfully kept, without a permit, for 12 weeks after birth.
- (4) An owner or occupier of land in a residential area may apply to Council for a permit to keep more than the maximum number of animals referred to in sub clause (1).

Local Law No. 53 – Accommodation for Animals

An owner or occupier of land must ensure that all animals on that land are housed:

- (1) In a clean, inoffensive and sanitary condition
- (2) So as not to cause nuisance
- (3) In an adequate and appropriate manner for the type of animal being housed.

Local Law No. 58 – Keeping of Dogs and Cats on Rural Land

An owner or occupier of rural land must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on that rural land more than:

- (1) five (5) dogs; or
- (2) three (3) cats.

Local Law No. 60 – Dog Excrement

A person in charge of a dog on a road or in a municipal place must:

- (1) Not allow the excrement of the dog to remain on that road or in that municipal place.
- (2) Carry a device suitable for the removal of any excrement that may be deposited by the dog.
- (3) Produce the device on demand by an Authorised Officer.

Current Policies and Procedures

Cats And Dogs At Large

The procedure for dealing with domestic animals found at large are designed to allow owners to retrieve their impounded animals with the minimal amount of stress to the animal and are detailed in the Compliance Procedures Manual.

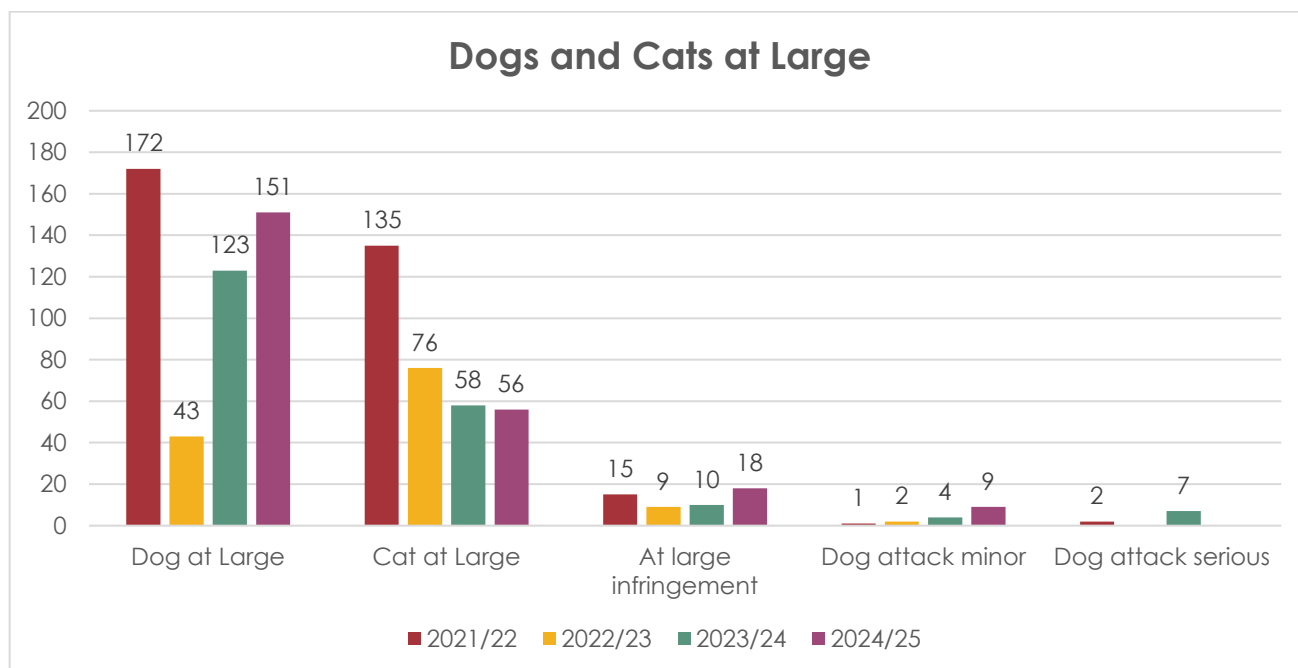
When a dog or cat is found at large and impounded, it is first checked for registration and microchip details. If the owner is able to be identified, and the animal is currently registered with Council, the officer will attempt to contact the owner and have them collect the animal directly. A registered animal is able to be returned to the owner without penalty once per registration year.

If the dog or cat is not registered or the owner is unable to be identified, the animal is taken to the Council holding pen, where it is lodged and may be held for up to 24 hours, when operationally viable, whilst attempts are made to locate an owner and have the animal registered and returned locally.

If an owner is unable to be located or contacted, the animal is collected by a driver from Councils contracted pound facility, RSPCA Victoria, and transported to their Burwood facility, where it is held for the Statutory designated period of eight days or until an owner is identified and the animal claimed. If no owner is identified or the animal remains unclaimed after this period, it may be adopted by Councils contracted pound facility as per the requirements of section 84O of The Act.

The owner of any reclaimed dog or cat may be dealt with by way of infringement or Magistrates Court for failing to securely contain the animal at the property where it is kept, fail to apply to register or any other applicable offence. As cats are subject to an order under Section 25 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, owners that reclaim may be dealt with by infringement for a breach of that order, or by Notice of Objection under Section 23 of The Act, if requested by the occupant of the affected property.

If repeat offenders for wandering dogs or trespassing cats are found and the issuing of infringements and relevant impound release fees have not encouraged the pet owner to adequately secure the cat or dog to its property, Council may withdraw any outstanding infringements and pursue the matter in the Magistrates' Court to seek an order from the Court under Section 84W of The Act, to require the owner to carry out works to ensure the animal is not able to escape from the owner's premises.



After Hours Service

Council provides an after-hours service to respond to urgent calls for service outside of normal business hours. The contracted after hours call service is monitored and controlled by the Customer Relations Coordinator and the after-hours roster by the Compliance Coordinator.

Compliance Officers are rostered for after-hours duties on a five week rotational basis. The on-call officer has custody of the compliance animal collection vehicle during their time rostered for after-hours call out and will ensure they remain physically and legally able to respond to calls for service during their roster period.

The officer on call must utilise the Council compliance vehicle, appropriate PPE and take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of themselves and others when attending to out of hours calls for service. The on-call officer must call for assistance from other officers and/or authorities where the incident involves dog attack, livestock on a road, or where, in the opinion of that officer, the situation warrants assistance.

The officer is to acknowledge all calls received through the after-hours service, contacting the customer to advise what action is to be taken and/or by turning out within 15 minutes of the phone call.

The officer on duty must respond to the following after-hours situations reported on the after-hours service, by attendance or advice where appropriate:

- Any Victoria Police call requesting assistance to control or contain domestic animals
- Dog attack
- Where a dog is at large or causing immediate danger to safety of people or animals
- Stray dog that has been securely confined for collection
- Injured or deceased stray animals (in coordination with the RSPCA inspectorate where available)
- Livestock at large and/or on the road
- Any other situation(s) that the Compliance Coordinator, Manager Development, General Manager Corporate or the Chief Executive Officer instructs the officer to attend to.

3.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: Reduce the number of compliance actions and complaints by educating the community about their legislative obligations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Develop engaging fact sheets and web content regarding legislative obligations.	Ongoing	Monitor complaints and enforcement actions quarterly.
b) Re-visit messaging on A-Frame signs that are displayed at various locations within the municipality.	2026 and annually	Assess if number of registrations and renewals increase and number of complaints received.
c) Explore opportunities for educational “pop up” stalls at community events and expos to deliver responsible pet ownership and educational material to pet owners.	As opportunities present	Community engagement and materials distributed.
d) Education campaign regarding the requirements of the Council order under Section 25 of the Act for containment of cats, via web pages and social media.	June 2026 and annually	Complaints and enforcement statistics regarding cats at large and trapped.

Objective 2: Encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets and maintain effective control when in public areas.

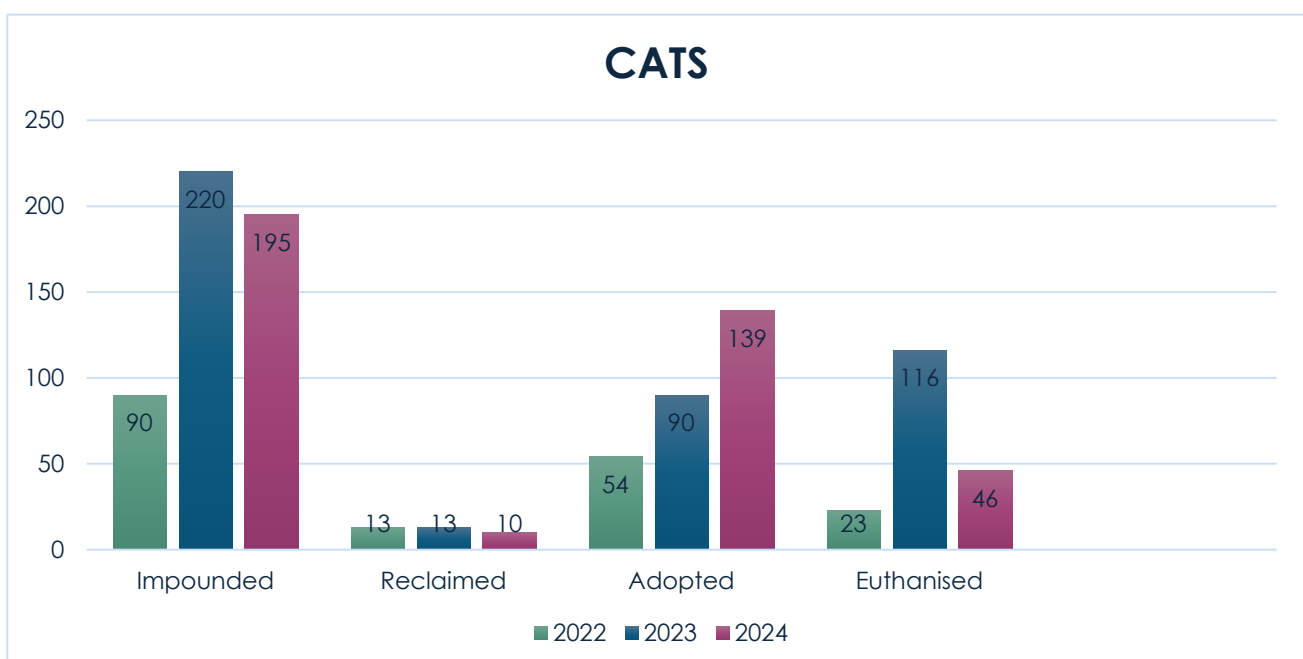
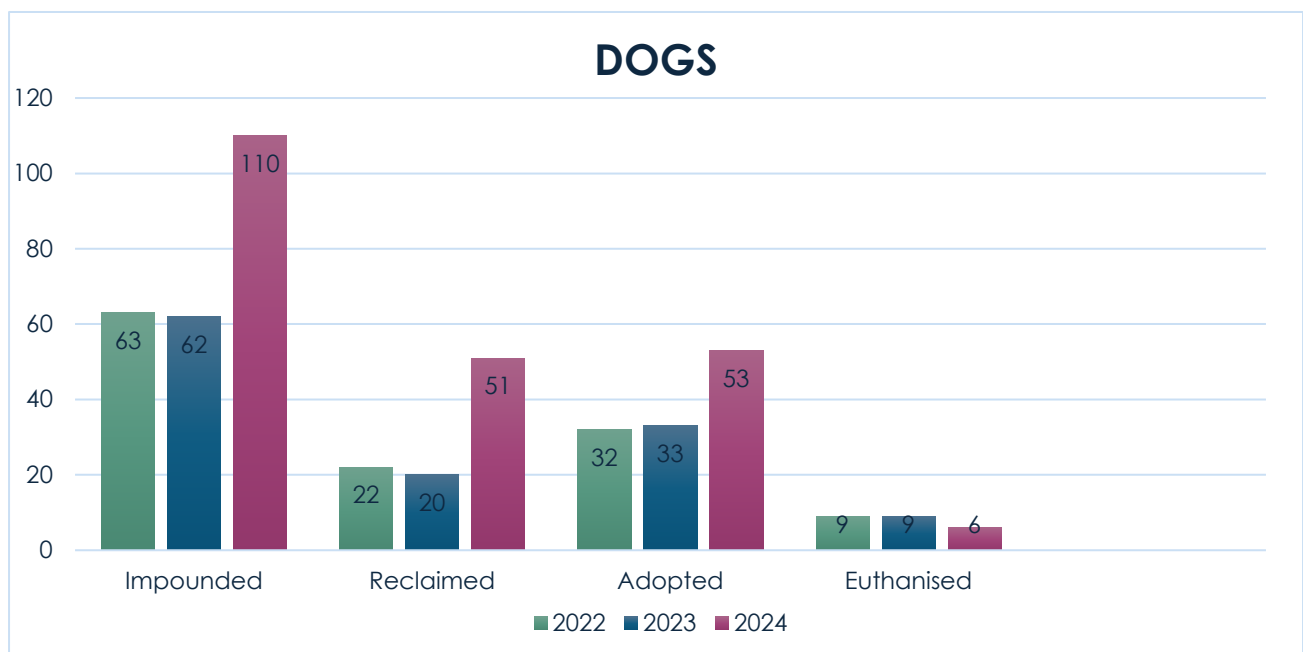
Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Continue to maintain poo bag dispensers in areas with high dog walker presence.	Ongoing	Amount of dispensers requiring change weekly.
b) Continue to identify changing demographics for areas where new dispensers and patrols may be required.	Quarterly	Monitor complaints regarding failing to pick up after animals and patrol observations.
c) Education campaign on Section 26 order for effective control in public areas via webpage and social media.	June 2026 and annually	Monitor complaints and enforcement action regarding dog behaviour in public places.

4. Programs to Address Over-Population Rates and any High Euthanasia Rates

4.1 Context and Current Situation

There has been a significant increase in the impounding of stray dogs and cats, including those surrendered by owners and abandoned animals, rising from 63 dogs up to 110, and 90 cats up to 195. This can be attributed to better record keeping through use of the RSPCA sheltermate software commencing in 2024, although the dramatic increase for the 2024 period is also likely to have been heavily influenced by the increase in cost of living expenses.

Euthanasia rates for dogs have fallen over the last 3 years from 14.28 per cent down to 5.45 per cent, whilst reclaims have climbed from 34.92 per cent to 46.36 per cent. The statistics for cats have remained fairly constant with euthanasia rates dropping slightly from 25.5 per cent to 23.5 per cent and reclaims dropping from 14.4 per cent to 5.12 per cent, although adoptions remain high climbing from 60 per cent to 71.28 per cent of all impounded cats.



4.2 Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Current Orders

There are currently no orders regarding domestic animal population rates.

Current Local Laws

Local Law No. 52 (1) - Keeping of Animals in Residential Areas

An owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep, allow to be kept or remain on any land, any more animals or birds than is stated in the following table:

Type of Animal	Maximum allowed in residential areas
Dogs	2
Cats	2

**Actual list contains other animals and birds but has been edited for this document to improve clarity.*

- (2) Sub clause (1) does not apply where a planning permit has been obtained for land used for the purposes of animal boarding or breeding.
- (3) For the purpose of calculating the maximum number of dogs or cats kept on any land, any progeny may be lawfully kept, without a permit, for 12 weeks after birth.
- (4) An owner or occupier of land in a residential area may apply to Council for a permit to keep more than the maximum number of animals referred to in sub clause (1).

Local Law No. 58 – Keeping of Dogs and Cats on Rural Land

An owner or occupier of rural land must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on that rural land more than:

- (1) five (5) dogs; or
- (2) three (3) cats

Current policies and procedures

Cats

The seizure of cats is regulated by the provisions of the DAA. Council passed an order under Section 25 of the DAA to declare cats must be confined to the property at which they are kept at all times on 23 February 2022.

Residents may use an approved cat trap, or hire a free cat trap from Council, in order to trap cats trespassing on their property. Authorised Officers may conduct trapping programs if circumstances dictate or a problem area is identified requiring targeted intervention. Use of cat traps and trapping programs are detailed in the Compliance Procedures Manual.

When a cat is trapped or seized by a person on private property, the officer must check for Council tag and scan for microchip details. If an owner is identified and the cat is registered, it should be returned to the owner, who is advised to keep the cat contained as per Council Order, and not allow it to trespass onto other person's property. If the cat is not registered or has no microchip details, it should be impounded and transported to the Council pound facility. If the cat is injured, unwell or obviously feral, Officers should contact Council's contracted pound facility for advice and assessment.

Any unidentified cat should be photographed and the Compliance Coordinator notified of the location time and date of seizure. The animal may then be posted on Councils social media pages to try and identify an owner.

Owned cats found at large or trespassing on private property are to be handled as a stray under Council Section 25 Order, or as per Section 23 of the Act if a Notice of Objection has been submitted and served.

Owners of cats that are impounded without microchip or registration and are later claimed may be infringed for failing to apply to register or renew.

Officers may also be required to collect cats surrendered by their owner. Under Section 33A of The Act, Council must accept any dog or cat in the municipal district that is surrendered by the owner. In this case, officers should ensure that the surrendering owner fills out a surrender form and acknowledges that upon surrender, the ownership of the animal passes on to Council, to be dealt with or disposed of in accordance with The Act, Regulations or any relevant Code of Practice.

Excess Animal Permits

Benalla Rural City Council Community Local Law 2017 restricts the number and type of animal/s that may be kept in a residential area. Generally speaking, residential areas are limited to two dogs and/or two cats whilst rural areas are allowed five dogs or three cats. Refer to Clause 52 (1) of the Community Local Law 2017 for the complete table.

A person who wants to keep more than the permitted number of or type of animals on a property must apply for an excess animal permit. The form can be obtained from customer service, posted to the applicant upon request or completed online when available.

When the completed application and fee are received, a survey will be conducted with neighbouring properties who might reasonably be affected by the keeping of excess animals. The officer must also undertake an inspection of the property to ensure the animals can be kept in accordance with the permit conditions, the requirements of POCTA and address any reasonable and verifiable issues raised by the neighbourhood survey. The officer will advise the applicant of the result of the inspection as soon as reasonably practicable.

If granted, a permit remains valid for twelve months subject to compliance with conditions. A permit may be reviewed, suspended or revoked if the permit conditions are not adhered to. Each individual permit granted is subject to a separate fee and registration. Following issue of a permit, if a verifiable complaint or information is received by Council, inspections may be required to ensure compliance with permit conditions. If a permit holder is found in breach of any permit conditions, an office may take any appropriate action to remedy the situation, including enforcement action.

4.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: Encourage desexing of animals and facilitate affordable desexing programs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a. Discount registration fees for cats and dogs that are de-sexed to encourage registration of animals over 3 months of age.	2028	Monitor number of registered dogs and cats within the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
b. Discount initial registration for cats and dogs that are both micro-chipped and de-sexed under 6 months of age.	2027	Monitor number of desexed registered dogs and cats within the municipality.
c. Report to Council in relation to conducting a cost/benefit analysis regarding; free initial registration fees for cats that participate in the AVA subsidised de-sexing voucher scheme.	July 2026	Monitor number of desexed registered dogs and cats within the municipality.
d. Explore grant opportunities to provide free or discounted microchipping and desexing for pets of disadvantaged or low income members of municipality.	July 2026	Monitor number of desexed registered dogs and cats within the municipality

Objective 2: Reduce number of impounded unregistered cats and reports of wild/unowned cats.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Education campaign regarding semi-owned and wild cats.	July 2026 and ongoing	Monitor number of cat trap requests and cat impound statistics.
b) Conduct targeted trapping operations in areas identified as cat nesting areas, particularly in areas of high biodiversity.	July 2026 and ongoing	Monitor number of cat trap requests and cat impound statistics.
c) Promote health and safety benefits for containing cats to property.	Ongoing as opportunities present	Monitor number of cat trap requests and cat impound statistics.
d) Explore options for education on building or installation of low-cost cat containment systems.	Ongoing and in conjunction with community groups	Monitor number of cat trap requests and cat impound statistics.
e) Circulate safe Cat, Safe Wildlife education material throughout municipality (Find out more: www.safecat.org.au)	July 2026 and ongoing	Monitor number of cat trap requests and cat impound statistics.

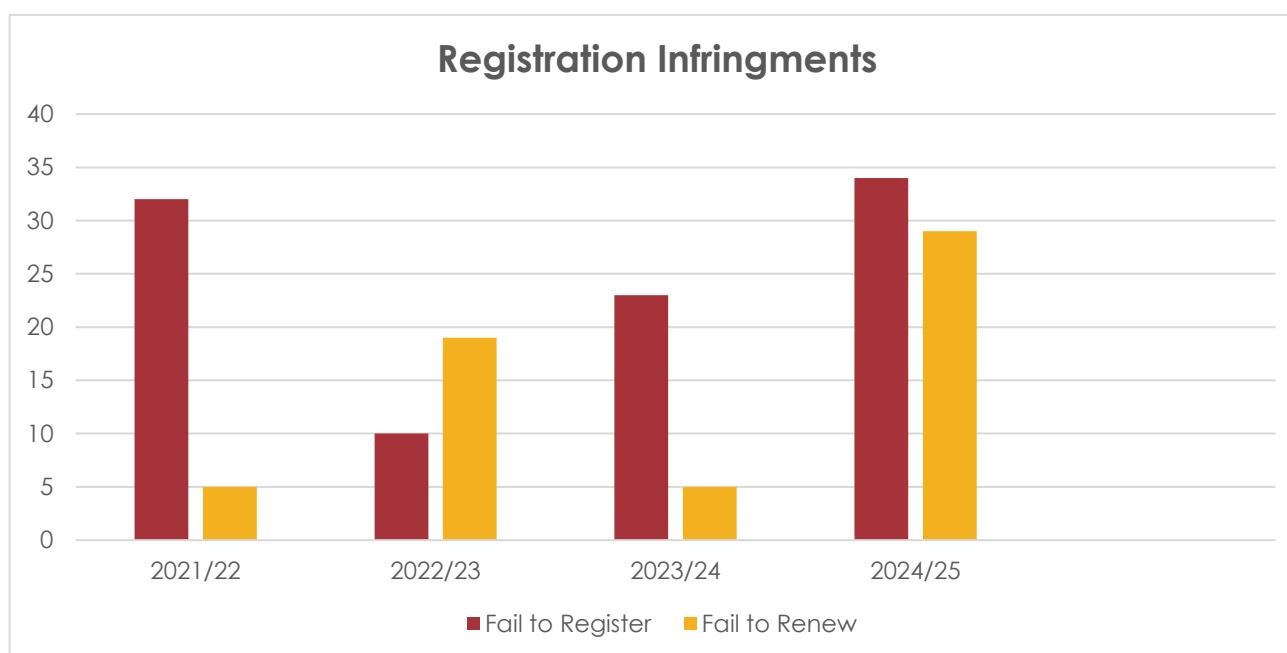
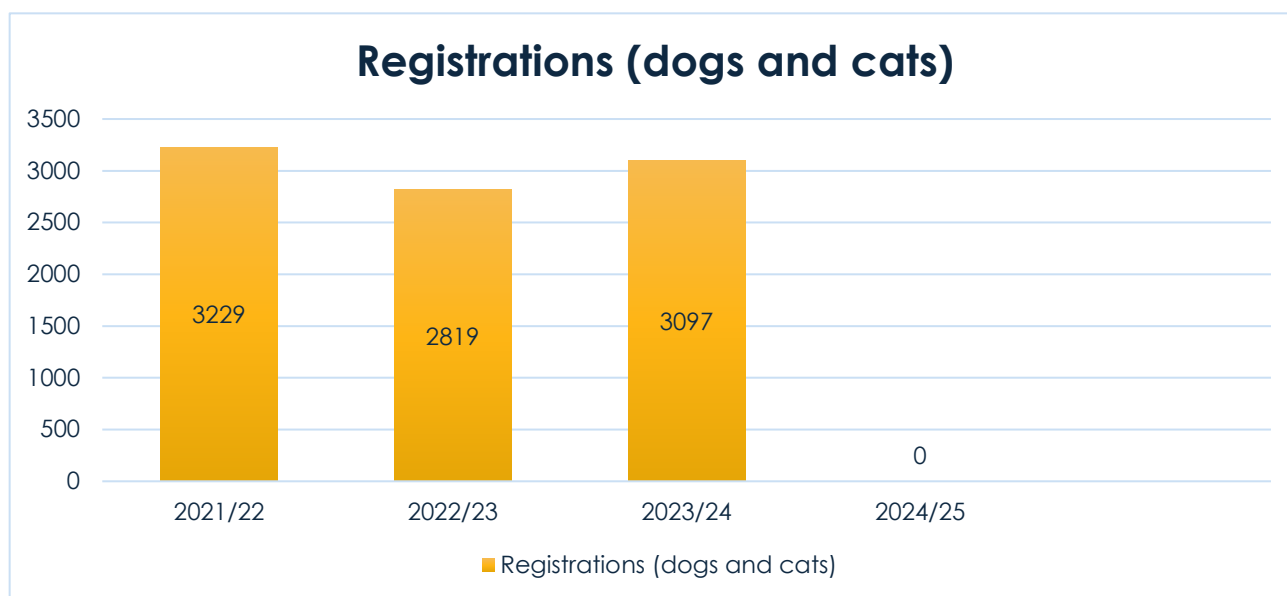
5. Registration and Identification

5.1 Context and Current Situation

All dogs and cats over the age of three months must be registered with the Benalla Rural City Council as per Section 10 (1) of the Act; newly registered animals must also be micro-chipped before registration can be accepted.

All dog and cat registrations commence on the 10 April each year and expire on the 9 April the following year. All statistics referred to in the following charts relating to dog and cat registration are between those dates.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Dogs and Cats registered	3229	2819	3097	No Data
Fail to register infringements	32	10	23	34
Fail to renew infringements	5	19	5	29



Summary

Registration figures for dogs and cats climbed slightly from 2023 to 2024, but Council software systems are unable to supply overall figures for current or historical registration levels. Figures for 2023 and 2024 were estimated using hard copies of renewal reminder invoices located within the compliance office.

Infringements for failing to register or renew have remained reasonably consistent over the past four years with a slight rise in the last registration year attributable to better record keeping through external agency programs (RSPCA Sheltermate).

The Australian Companion Animal Council, in their report (7th Edition), found that the overall pet population (including all pets such as birds and fish etc) in Australia was approximately 33 million.

The report showed that there are 3.41 million dogs, or 36 per cent of households owning a dog and 2.35 million cats, or 23 per cent of households. With an estimated population of 14000 people, according to 2021 Census data, Benalla has 3097 dogs and cats registered within the municipality in the 2023/2024 period, a percentage of 22 per cent registered pets per head of population.

2021 Census data shows 5118 private dwellings in Benalla, which gives a percentage of 60 per cent of dwellings having a registered dog or cat. This would indicate that registrations are slightly above the average number of dogs and cats currently kept in Australia.

5.2 Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Current Orders

There are no current local laws for registration in Benalla Rural City. We rely on Section 10(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act* for enforcement of registration.

Current Local Laws

Local Law No. 52 (1) - Keeping of Animals in Residential Areas

An owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep, allow to be kept or remain on any land, any more animals or birds than is stated in the following table:

Type of Animal	Maximum allowed in residential areas
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- (2) Sub clause (1) does not apply where a planning permit has been obtained for land used for the purposes of animal boarding or breeding.
- (3) For the purpose of calculating the maximum number of dogs or cats kept on any land, any progeny may be lawfully kept, without a permit, for 12 weeks after birth.
- (4) An owner or occupier of land in a residential area may apply to Council for a permit to keep more than the maximum number of animals referred to in sub clause (1).

Local Law No. 58 – Keeping of Dogs and Cats on Rural Land

An owner or occupier of rural land must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on that rural land more than:

- (3) five (5) dogs; or
- (4) three (3) cats

Current Policies And Procedures

Current education/promotion of registration and identification activities includes:

- (1) Publicising the requirement to register pets over the age of three months in the Benalla Ensign, Benalla Rural City Community Connect, Benalla Rural City website and the Council's on hold phone messages.
- (2) A-frame signs placed at high traffic intersections and areas reminding pet owners of requirement to register and renew.
- (3) Animal registration renewal notices are mailed out in late February or early March each year for currently registered animals.
- (4) Lifetime registration tags are issued to pet owners upon registration of dogs or cats.
- (5) Brochures included in newly registered animal notices to provide information regarding the importance and requirements of registration.

5.3 Our Current Compliance Activities

Current compliance activities for registration and identification include:

- (1) A door knock or telephone audit conducted each year for animal registrations that have lapsed.
- (2) Enforcement through infringement or prosecution where animals kept within the municipality are not registered or renewed.
- (3) Ensuring impounded and unregistered animals are micro-chipped and registered prior to release.
- (4) Investigating Domestic Animal Business (DAB) notifications of animals being sold or given away to residents in the municipality.
- (5) Monitoring advertisements relating to animals for sale to ensure microchip numbers or DAB numbers are provided.
- (6) Proactive and reactive park and street patrols to follow up registration and ensure identification tags are being worn.

Animals found unsecured or 'at large' from their property and are identifiable by means of an allocated Benalla Rural City Council identification tag have a higher chance of being reunited with their owners and therefore not impounded. When dogs and cats are outside of the owner's premises, Council identification tags must be worn as outlined in section 20 of the Act.

The registration of animals provides the Benalla Rural City Council with an understanding of the level of pet ownership in the community and in turn this helps Council plan for services, information and programs associated with pets in particular areas of the community.

Registration fees help fund the services provided by the Council in relation to animal management and Animal Welfare Victoria (AWV) responsible pet ownership campaigns and programs provided within the municipality.

5.4 Our Plan

Objective 1: To minimise the number of properties required for the desktop and door knock audit and increase numbers of registrations and renewals in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Educate residents of the animal registration renewal period by means of advertising/media releases, mailing of renewal notices and by placing A frame sign in areas where high levels of un-registered animals are kept.	March – May annually	Demonstrate increase or decrease in numbers of pets registered with council following annual registration and renewal period.
b) Ensure each property is audited and issued infringements where animals found to be unregistered.	July – August annually	Infringements issued.
c) Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Prior to each release	Registrations.
d) Proactive door knocking in areas believed to have high number of unregistered animals via impound stats, to check for unregistered and un-identified dogs and cats. Effective advertising prior audit commencing.	Annually	Enforcement actions
e) Utilise Council social media to promote benefits of registration, microchipping and desexing.	Ongoing	Registrations.

Objective 2: Facilitate registration for lower socio-economic areas and increase awareness among culturally and linguistically diverse communities of pet registration requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Brochures and articles explaining registration requirements and benefits in languages other than English for the CALD community.	February – April annually	Demonstrate increase or decrease in numbers of pets registered with council following annual registration and renewal period.
b) Offer responsible pet ownership rewards to pet owners found doing the right thing.	Ongoing	Public Feedback.
c) Explore options for grants and subsidies for discounted microchipping and desexing programs for pension card holders	Ongoing	Annual Registrations.
d) Educate local Vet clinics on their role as agents for stray animal collection and release on behalf of Council under section 84D, DA, DB, DC & DD of the Act.	As opportunities arise March 2026	Annual Registrations.

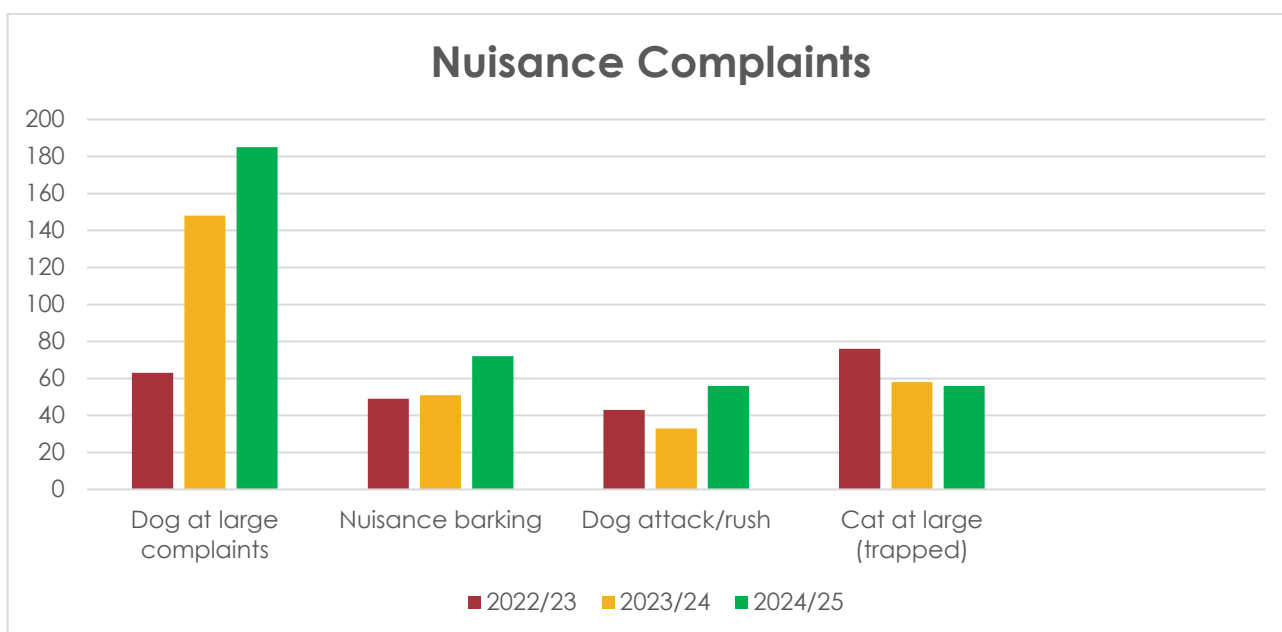
6. Nuisance

6.1 Context and Current Situation

Council's current policies and procedures regarding nuisance animals are positively weighted encouraging a community-based resolution before involving Council enforcement.

To this end, nuisance barking complaints are required to discuss the issue with neighbours or utilise a dispute settlement service, prior to reporting the matter to Council. Council offers a 24/7 call out service for collection of lost and wandering dogs and will return registered dogs and cats to their owners without penalty once a year, in order to encourage prompt registration and renewal.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Dog at large complaints	63	148	185
Nuisance barking complaints	49	51	72
dog attack/rush complaints	43	33	56
Cat at large (trapped)	76	58	56



6.2 Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Current Orders

Benalla Rural City currently has orders under Section 25 and 26 of the Domestic Animals Act, resolved by Council on 23 February 2022 and published in the Government Gazette to deal with nuisance animals within the Municipality.

Cat Curfew

Pursuant to Section 25 of the Act, cats within the municipality are to be securely confined to the owner's property, or the property where they are kept for the time being, at all times.

Control of Dogs

Pursuant to Section 26 of the Act, dogs and cats within the municipality must be kept under effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash, not exceeding 3 m in length, held by the owner and attached to the animal whilst the animal is in a reserve or public place.

Owners Obligations

A dog may be exercised off leash in a designated area if the owner:

- carries a chain, cord, or leash, not exceeding 3 m in length, sufficient to bring the dog under effective control if the dog behaves in a manner which may worry, threaten or harass any person or animal.
- remains in effective control of the dog by voice and/or hand command to promptly bring the dog under control by chain, cord, or leash if it becomes necessary.
- does not allow the dog to worry, threaten or harass any person or animal.

Exceptions

If a dog is being exercised off leash in a designated area, it must be brought under effective control of the owner by means of chain, cord, or leash if:

- within 30 metres of the principal location of an organised sporting event
- within 30 metres of the principal location of an organised public meeting
- within 30 metres of a permanent barbecue or picnic area when in use
- within 10 metres of the perimeter of a playground
- within 5 metres of a shared pathway.

Prohibited Areas

Areas where dogs and cats are not permitted at any time:

- Dogs and cats, restrained or otherwise, are prohibited within the perimeter of any playground at any time.
- Dogs and cats, restrained or otherwise, are not permitted within any prohibited area declared by Council.

Current Local Laws

Section 53. Accommodation for Animals

An owner or occupier of land must ensure that all animals on that land are housed:

- (1) in a clean, inoffensive and sanitary condition
- (2) so as not to cause nuisance; and
- (3) in an adequate and appropriate manner for the type of animal being housed.

Section 60. Dog Excrement

A person in charge of a dog on a road or in a municipal place must:

- (1) Not allow the excrement of the dog to remain on that road or in that municipal place.
- (2) Carry a device suitable for the removal of any excrement that may be deposited by the dog.
- (3) Produce the device on demand by an authorised officer.

Current policies and procedures

Nuisance Barking

The Council has a procedure for nuisance barking complaints, as detailed in the Compliance Procedures Manual, to ensure all complaints received are handled in a consistent manner by all authorised Officers. The procedure outlines processes involved to investigate a complaint and ensure all elements of a nuisance barking offence is able to be proven as required by the Act. This includes neighbourhood mediation, noise logs, statements and an approach to encourage compliance at the earliest stage possible.

Where a nuisance barking offence is found to exist pursuant to section 32 of the Act, Council will take enforcement action that may include negotiation, warnings, infringements, notice to comply and prosecution to obtain orders from the Magistrates Court as a last resort.

This procedure is regularly reviewed and updated as legislation and community expectations evolve over time.

Cats and Dogs at Large

The procedure for dealing with domestic animals found at large are designed to allow owners to retrieve their impounded animals with the minimal amount of stress to the animal.

When a dog or cat is found at large and impounded, it is first checked for registration and microchip details. If the owner is able to be identified, and the animal is currently registered with Council, the officer will attempt to contact the owner and have them collect the animal directly. A registered animal can be returned to the owner without penalty once per year.

If the dog or cat is not registered or the owner is unable to be identified, the animal is taken to the Council holding pen, where it is lodged and may be held for up to 24 hours, whilst attempts are made to locate an owner and have the animal registered and returned locally.

If an owner is unable to be located or contacted, the animal is transported to the Council contracted pound facility at RSPCA Victoria and held for eight days or until an owner is identified and the animal claimed. If no owner is identified or the animal remains unclaimed, it becomes property of Council and is assessed for adoption.

The owner of any reclaimed dog may be dealt with by way of infringement for failing to securely contain the dog where it is kept or any other applicable offence. Cats are currently subject to an order under Section 25 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, so owners that reclaim may be dealt with by way of infringement for failing to confine the animal or Notice of Objection if requested by the occupant of the affected property.

If repeat offenders for wandering dogs or cats are found and the issuing of infringements and relevant impound release fees have not encouraged the pet owner to adequately secure the cat or dog to its property, Council may withdraw any outstanding infringements and pursue the matter in the Magistrates' Court to seek an order from the Court to surrender the animal or require the owner to carry out works under Section 84W of The Act, to ensure the animal is not able to escape from the owner's premises.

6.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: Educate and enforce dog owners within the Municipality regarding Council Order pursuant to Section 26 of the Act relating to the control of dogs in public places.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Educate dog owners in public areas and include brochures in animal registration renewal notices.	Ongoing	Ensure appropriate time and level of education has been provided before enforcement of order.
b) Update signs in parks, reserves and municipal places identifying dogs off and on leash areas.	Ongoing	Regular audits to be conducted of parks, reserves and municipal places to monitor placement and effectiveness of signs.
c) Proactive patrols of public areas to identify high risk areas and conduct enforcement activities as appropriate.	Ongoing	Ensure appropriate time and education has been provided before enforcement of order.

Objective 2: Educate and enforcement of cat containment order pursuant to Section 26 of The Act.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Educate cat owners and include brochures in animal registration packs and renewal notices.	Ongoing	Ensure appropriate time and education has been provided before enforcement of order.
b) Explore grants and subsidies available to assist residents to have cats desexed to prevent wandering and spraying nuisance.	March 2026	Monitor emerging grants through DEECA (Animal Welfare Victoria) and other appropriate bodies as they are advertised.
c) Provide education material about cat enclosures and provide a DIY cat enclosure workshop.	July 2027	Monitor cat at large and trapping statistics to ascertain level of education required.
d) Circulate safe Cat, Safe Wildlife education material throughout municipality (Find out more: www.safecat.org.au)	Ongoing	Monitor cat at large and trapping programs statistics.

7. Dog Attacks

7.1 Context and Current Situation

Incidents of dog attacks and dog rush in Benalla Rural City are at the lower end statistically and have remained constant, over the last three years. Dog attacks are considered where a dog has physically contacted another person or animal, generally causing some kind of injury as a result and dog rush where there has been no contact or injury.

Dog attacks are categorised by determining if they caused minor injuries, serious injury or death as defined under The Act.

Serious injury means –

- (a) An injury requiring medical or veterinary attention in the nature of –
 - i. A broken bone; or
 - ii. A laceration; or
 - iii. A partial or total loss of sensation or function in a part of the body; or
- (b) An injury requiring cosmetic surgery.

Laceration means a wound caused by –

- (a) The tearing of body tissue
- (b) Multiple punctures caused by more than one bite from a dog.

Rush at, in relation to a dog, means to approach a person to a distance of less than three metres in a menacing manner, displaying aggressive tendencies that may include snarling, growling and raised hackles.

It is important to note that only attacks reported to Council are recorded, which tend toward attacks by dogs at large and not those that occur in the home by dogs known to or owned by the victim. This is explained in the report, “Dangerous dogs, a sensible solution” published by the Australian Veterinary Association in 2012, which states:

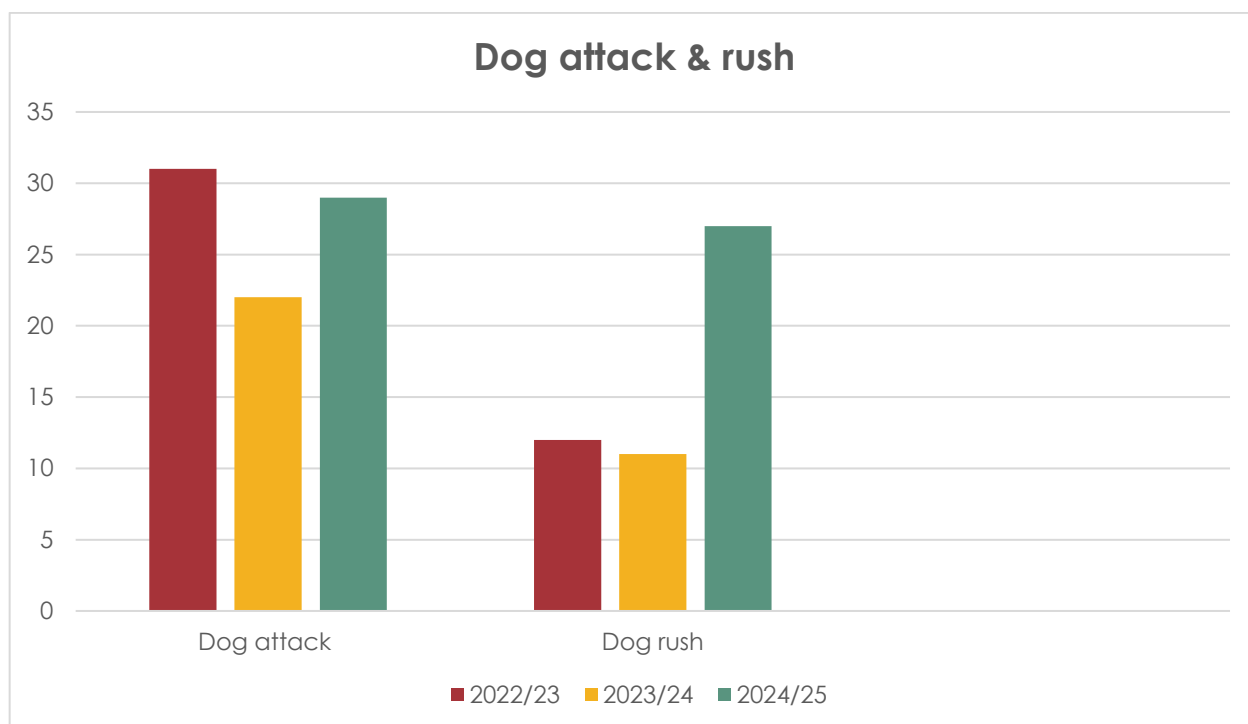
“Dog bite incidents generally occur either in domestic settings where the animal is known to the victim, or by dogs at large ... unknown to the victim. While dogs at large are responsible for a minority of dog bites, they attract disproportionate media and political interest. They are the public face of the dog bite problem, and most legislation is designed to control this part of the problem. However, most bites occurred in the dog’s own home and involve victims bitten by their own dog (Kizer 1979 cited in Overall and Love 2001). In Australia, 73 per cent to 81 per cent of attacks occur in the domestic environment (Ashby K 1996 quoted in Ozanne-Smith et al 2001)”

“Not surprisingly, Council data report that 62 per cent of dog attacks occurred in public places (Anon 2012) because few people will report bites by their own dog to council. Research has shown that owned dogs delivered more bites, were larger, bit more victims on the head and neck, delivered more bites needing medical treatment, and, in short, were more dangerous than strays (Harris et al 1974 cited in Overall and Love 2001).”

Dog attacks in Benalla are generally directed at other animals, dogs and cats, and particularly attacks on farming stock, such as sheep, cattle, poultry and alpaca.

Attacks on livestock can be particularly brutal, often resulting in the death or euthanising of valuable stock animals. Attacks on livestock are not just restricted to large or packs of animals, as even a smaller dog can cause terrified sheep or horses to run into fencing, causing injuries resulting in the animal being put down.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Dog attack	31	22	29
Dog rush	12	11	27



7.2 Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Current Orders

Benalla Rural City does not have any current orders in place under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. We rely on Part 3 Division 1 of the Act for containment of dogs and cats (including stray animals) & Part 3 Division 2 of the Act for control of dogs and cats (including dog attacks).

Current Local Laws

Local Law No. 52 (1) - Keeping of Animals in Residential Areas

An owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep, allow to be kept or remain on any land, any more animals or birds than is stated in the following table:

Type of Animal	Maximum allowed in residential areas
Dogs	2
Cats	2

**Actual list contains other animals and birds but has been edited for this document to improve clarity.*

- (2) Sub clause (1) does not apply where a planning permit has been obtained for land used for the purposes of animal boarding or breeding.
- (3) For the purpose of calculating the maximum number of dogs or cats kept on any land, any progeny may be lawfully kept, without a permit, for 12 weeks after birth.
- (4) An owner or occupier of land in a residential area may apply to Council for a permit to keep more than the maximum number of animals referred to in sub clause (1).

Local Law No. 58 – Keeping of Dogs and Cats on Rural Land

An owner or occupier of rural land must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on that rural land more than:

- (1) five (5) dogs; or
- (2) three (3) cats

Current Policies And Procedures

A report of a dog attack is regarded as a priority job and should receive an immediate response with an officer attending at the scene to assess, take details and seize the attacking dog if warranted. Dog attacks are entered onto the CRMS system by the officer taking the initial report.

The compliance procedures manual details steps to be taken upon report of a confirmed dog attack in line with the requirements of The Act:

- Upon arrival, officers should take details of all persons involved, including dog owners, victims and witnesses, including best contact numbers. If possible, a basic statement should be taken from the victim or witnesses at the time, or at least a brief description of the incident, where and when it took place. Photographs should be taken of the scene, any injuries and dogs involved.

When deciding if the offending dog should be seized, an officer should consider the following:

- The seriousness of the attack. Were there serious injuries (as defined in the Act) involved or an element of intentionally setting the dog to attack or reckless indifference.
- Is the dog still at the scene and acting aggressively or not under control
- Is the dog registered or does it have a history of attacks or aggressive behaviour.
- Is the dog able to be securely contained at the owners residence and is the owner responsible to keep the dog securely contained.
- Any other details relevant to public safety or community expectations.

If the dog is to be seized, the officer should follow the instructions for impounding, and a Notice of Seizure must be issued to the dog owner within four days after the dog is seized.

The officer should obtain signed statements from the victim, complainant, witnesses and a veterinary or medical report as soon as possible after the attack. It is often advisable to wait until after any necessary medical or veterinary attention is completed before taking a statement so that all relevant details can be included. The officer should note on the file if the owner of the offending dog has reimbursed or offered to reimburse the victim for expenses as a result of the attack.

When all the preliminary information is obtained and signed, the officer should offer the owner or person in charge of the offending dog, the opportunity to take part in an electronically recorded formal interview. This offer should be made in writing and recorded on the CRMS. If the owner accepts the offer, they should be interviewed as per the interview procedure. If the owner declines the offer, then the officer should proceed with the information at hand.

When the file is completed, the officer should make a decision to proceed with prosecution or take no further action in accordance with Benalla Rural City Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement policy. The investigating officer must be able to justify their decision with reference to the facts obtained in the investigation and the likelihood of a successful prosecution.

Non serious attack or rush offences may be dealt with by way of infringement or prosecution, depending on the circumstances as per Section 85 of The Act. An attack involving serious injury or death must be heard and determined by the Court and is not able to be dealt with by infringement.

Our Current Compliance Activities

- Investigating dog attacks promptly upon report
- Seizing and holding dogs responsible for serious injury attack
- Providing an afterhours service to respond to reports of aggressive or attacking dogs
- Prosecuting matters pursuant to the Act
- Issuing infringements for wandering dogs
- Issuing infringements for rush and attacks where non serious injury sustained
- Declarations for Menacing or Dangerous Dogs
- Seeking destruction Orders from Magistrates' Court where necessary
- Seeking confinement Orders from Magistrates' Court for dogs continually found wandering or not confined to property
- Proactive patrols of parks and streets for wandering dogs
- Proactive patrols for guard dogs on non-residential premises
- Recording data of reported dog attacks in the municipality

7.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: Provide targeted education and compliance campaigns in areas where data reporting shows incidents of dog attack against stock and other animals.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Collate and record data for dog attacks reported including, date/time, suburb, animal type, stock attacked, dog unsecured/off lead, dog unregistered, sex, entire/de-sexed.	Ongoing	Evaluate data annually to determine areas requiring specific education/compliance activities.
b) Initiate education and compliance activities in targeted areas to encourage reduction of roaming or uncontrolled dogs to prevent attacks occurring.	Annually	Evaluate this activity (and overall objective) by comparing number of dog attacks reported to council pre and post campaign.

Objective 2: To minimise the incidence of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Providing proactive Education/Compliance Activities in the targeted areas of higher dog attack incidents. Educating key dog attack prevention messages (e.g. confinement of dogs to property, leash laws) through media articles, mail outs, website information. Actively patrol areas for roaming, unsecure and/or unregistered dogs.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare number of reported dog attack incidents pre and post campaign. Consider a community survey pre and post campaign, to measure any changes in knowledge about dog attack prevention. Record type and number of education materials distributed. Numbers of campaign patrols conducted. Number of media articles published
b) Inform the community of outcomes of dog attacks prosecuted in Court.	Ongoing	As occurs.
c) Set key performance indicators for Officers to complete dog attack investigations within a six week timeframe.	2027	Review complaints annually to evaluate percentage completed within timeframe.

8. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

8.1 Context and Current Situation

Benalla Rural City Council has the following declared dogs currently registered within the municipality:

Registered restricted breed dogs	0
Registered declared dangerous dogs	1
Registered declared menacing dogs	0

The Act defines restricted breed dogs as any one of the following breeds:

- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)
- Perro de Prasa Canario (or Presa Canario)
- Japanese Tosa
- Fila Brasileiro.

Benalla Rural City Council has no restricted breed dogs registered. Owners of restricted breed dogs must abide conditions specified in the Act, including:

- Must not consent to, arrange or recklessly allow the dog to breed
- Must notify Council if dog is missing, custody or address changes
- Must notify Council if municipal district where it is kept changes
- Must be confined to a dwelling so that it cannot escape
- Minor cannot enter the dwelling where it is kept without an adult
- Must be kept in a prescribed enclosure when outside the dwelling
- Must display compliant warning signs at all entrances
- Must wear a prescribed collar
- Must always be muzzled and on leash outside the premises.

Benalla Rural City Council has one declared dangerous dog. A dangerous dog is one that has been declared dangerous by Council or the Courts, a guard dog kept for the purpose of guarding non-residential property or a dog that has been trained to attack or bite any person or thing worn or attached to a person.

Owners of declared dangerous dogs must abide conditions specified in the Act, including:

- Must notify Council if dog is missing, custody or address changes
- Must notify Council if municipal district where it is kept changes
- Must be confined to a dwelling so that it cannot escape
- Minor cannot enter the dwelling where it is kept without an adult
- Must be kept in a prescribed enclosure when outside the dwelling
- Must display compliant warning signs at all entrances
- Must wear a prescribed collar
- Must always be muzzled and on leash outside the premises.

Benalla Rural City Council currently has no declared menacing dogs within the municipality. A menacing dog is one that has been declared menacing by Council or the Courts. Owners of menacing dogs must abide by conditions specified by the Act, including:

- Must notify Council if dog rushes or chases a person
- Must notify Council if dog is missing, custody or address changes
- Must notify Council if municipal district where it is kept changes
- Must always be muzzled and on leash outside the premises

Council must register all dangerous/menacing/restricted breed dogs with the Victorian Dangerous Dog Register (VDDR). This is a database that records all declared dogs for all relevant parties to see. Any dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dog entered into the VDDR is declared for the life of the animal and cannot be revoked by the Council. Microchip registries are also updated.

8.2 Our Policies and Procedures

Current Policies And Procedures

Council may declare a dog to be dangerous under Section 34 or menacing under Section 41A of the DAA. If a dog meets the criteria specified in the Act and the officer is of the opinion that a declaration is in the public interest, they may apply for a declaration to be made through the Compliance Coordinator.

If a dangerous or menacing declaration is to be made, the process as listed in Sections 35 and 36 of the Act must be strictly followed using the documentation approved by Council for this purpose.

In order to avoid any apprehension of bias in the declaration process (*ref: Isbester v Knox City Council (2015) HCA 20*), Council utilises a panel system for all declaration applications, where at least three Council staff members, with no connection to the investigation or application, will consider the application based on the merits of the case alone.

Current Compliance Activities

- Ensuring all declared dogs are registered on the VDDR
- Regularly conducting inspections on premises housing declared dogs to ensure compliance
- Seizing dogs suspected of being Restricted Breed Dogs
- Dog declarations made where applicable
- Prosecution/Infringements issued for any determined breach
- Assessing suspected restricted breed dogs via the gazetted standard
- Flagging certain breeds from registration database for assessment.
- Conduct proactive patrols after hours for unregistered guard dogs (dangerous dogs)

8.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: Developing a policy to assist in decision to declare a dog dangerous, menacing provides assurance to local residents the decision making is fair and nonbiased.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) continue to review and update procedure for dangerous and menacing dog declarations in order to make equitable decisions.	Ongoing	Number of dangerous and menacing dog declarations made within the municipality as reported in annual reporting figures.
b) Review all dog attack investigations upon completion and complete a declaration application to the panel to assess if an order is required..	Ongoing	
c) Maintain dangerous and menacing dog register both locally and at a State level by maintaining the Victorian Declared Dog Registry	Ongoing	

Objective 2: Ensure declared dogs are compliant to relevant legislation and regulations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Random property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance.	Ongoing	Review actions as offences detected.
b) Prosecute repeat offenders or serious breaches detected.	As occurs	Monitor offences and prosecutions.
c) Patrols for unregistered guard dogs in industrial areas.	As occurs	Review actions as offences detected.
d) Educate the community about what is a declared dog.	Ongoing	Review complaints raised as result of heightened awareness.

9. Domestic Animal Businesses

9.1 Context and Current Situation

There are four registered domestic animal businesses (DAB) within the Benalla Rural City Council, these include one boarding business, one breeding business, one combination boarding/breeding business and one training based business.

Council has a short-term animal holding facility located at the rear of the works depot and RSPCA Victoria is contracted to provide pound services for Council from its Burwood premises. As part of the contract additions, RSPCA Victoria transport impounded animals from Benalla to Burwood and returned to Benalla upon reclaim. This contract expires in December 2026.

Registered domestic animal businesses are audited both randomly and on receipt of complaints. Council also proactively investigates the presence of animal businesses to ensure compliance with the relevant codes of practice and legislation.

9.2 Our Policies and Procedures

In accordance with the provisions under Part 4 of the Act, DAB must be registered with Council. Currently there are five types of DAB that must be registered, which are:

- Pet shops
- Boarding establishments
- Breeding and rearing establishments
- Dog training establishments
- Dog and cat shelters and pounds.

Council must refuse to register renew or revoke a DAB registration if any of the conditions under Part 4, Division 3 of the Act are met. DAB is subject to Council inspection prior to registration, and annually thereafter, to ensure they are complying with the Code of Practice applicable to that Business. Current Codes of Practice are available on the Agriculture Victoria website or via Animal Welfare Victoria, along with audit checklists and factsheets to assist DAB operators to remain compliant.

Codes of Practice for the operation various DAB are made under the provisions of Section 59 of Division 4 of the Act. The purpose of the Code is to specify the minimum standards of accommodation, management, breeding and care that are appropriate to the physical and behavioural needs of dogs and cats affected by businesses operating as DAB. The Council is responsible for inspection, audit and ensuring compliance with the relevant code of practice.

Where an inspection has revealed that the DAB is not operating in accordance with the Code of Practice, the officer must notify the proprietor of the breaches and issue a Notice to Comply directing the proprietor to undertake all work necessary to meet compliance with the Code within a given time.

In the event the proprietor does not comply with the Notice to Comply, the Compliance Officer shall prepare a report for consideration by the Compliance Coordinator who will determine if Council should take legal or further action.

Planning requirements may exist for an animal business. These are in addition to the requirements of the Act and Benalla Planning Scheme. The application should be forwarded to the Planning Department for comment prior to proceeding.

9.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: Ensure Domestic Animal Businesses are compliant with relevant legislation and codes of practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, including businesses selling pets, products or services. Follow up to determine if they should be registered with Council.	Ongoing	Compare number of registered DABs before and after activity.
b) Monitor the Council's registration database for owners with more than 3 fertile females	Annually	
c) Conduct searches for unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses via internet, social media and newspapers	Ongoing	

Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered DAB's.

Activity	When	Evaluation
a) Media campaigns to raise awareness of DAB definition, Council responsibilities and code of practices that must be adhered to.	Annually	Number of DAB registered each year.
b) Investigate advertisements of pets for sale.	Ongoing	Unlawful DAB prosecutions or enforcement actions.
c) Audit DAB's randomly to ensure compliance.	Annually	Number of successful audits showing compliance with the relevant code of practice.

10. Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting

Under section 68A(3) of the Act, Council must review its DAMP annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan. Council must provide the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Secretary with a copy of the plan, including any amendments, and publish an evaluation of the plan's implementation in its annual report.

Evaluation of Implementation of the Domestic Animals Management Plan

Complete for each activity		
Was each activity completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Describe any changes you will make if you do that activity again.		
Was an activity not done or is now not planned to be done? If so, why?		
If an activity was unsuccessful and you don't plan to do it again, outline insights you have into why it didn't work.		
Complete for each objective		
Did you meet your objective by carrying out the planned activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Describe your level of success/progress in meeting the objective.		

benalla.vic.gov.au

PO BOX 227
Benalla VIC 3671
(03) 5760 2600
council@benalla.vic.gov.au



4.5 Financial Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

Ref: 198090245-2747
Cathy Fitzpatrick – Manager Finance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the financial results compared to budget for first quarter ended 30 September 2025 and presents forecast outcomes to 30 June 2026.

BACKGROUND

Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that at least every three months the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a statement comparing the budgeted revenue and expenditure for the financial year with the actual revenue and expenditure to date is presented to the Council.

The budget report must include a comparison of the actual and budgeted results to date and an explanation of any material variations. In addition, the second quarterly report for a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or maybe, required.

OPERATING RESULT

Year to date 30 September 2025 operating result compared to budget

The report contains the Standard Income Statement and Statement of Capital Projects. The operating result for the quarter ended 30 September 2025 was a surplus of \$19.119 million which was \$784,736 more favourable than the budgeted surplus of \$18.335 million as shown in Table 1.

The Council at its meeting on Wednesday 25 June 2025 adopted the *Benalla Rural City Council 2025/26 Budget* with the items detailed in the table below to be considered at the first quarter budget review.

Item	Comment	Amount
Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment – Growing Regions Fund Program grant	Recognised - impacts over more than one year.	\$2.965 million
Benalla Local Development Strategy Implementation – Forestry Transition grant	Recognised - impacts over more than one year.	\$500,000
Additional Financial Assistance Grant Program additional funding	Recognised in current year forecast.	\$196,000
Saleyards Road Dog Park – Open Space For Everyone – New and Upgraded Dog Parks (Round 2) grant	Recognised in current year CAPEX Program forecast – requires additional \$50,000 Council contribution.	\$150,000
Benalla Rural City Council Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030 – Transport Accident Commission Local Government Grant Program funding TAC Grant \$45,00 and Council Contribution \$5,000 was included in budget and forecast.	No amendment required in 25/26 Budget.	\$50,000
Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop Centre Neighbourhood Batter – 100 Neighbourhood Batter Fund (Round 2)	Grant managed by lead organisation Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance – no amendment required to 2025/26 Budget.	\$100,000
Waminda Community House Project be allocated in 2025/26	Recognised in current year forecast.	\$10,000

Full Year 30 June 2026 Forecast Operating Result Compared to Budget

The forecast operating result for the year ending 30 June 2026 has been updated to reflect the first quarter budget review.

The forecast operating result for the year ended 30 June 2026 is a deficit of \$158,000, which is an unfavourable variance of \$4.138 million compared to the budgeted surplus of \$3.979 million as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Net Operating Result for the period ended 30 September 2025

	Notes	2025/26 YTD Actuals \$'000	2025/26 YTD Budgets \$'000	2025/26 YTD Variance \$'000	2025/26 Full Year Budget \$'000	2025/26 Full Year Forecast \$'000	2025/26 Forecast Variance \$'000
Income/Revenue							
Rates and charges	1	23,776	23,621	154	24,013	24,191	178
Statutory fees and fines	2	130	110	19	457	457	0
User fees	3	1,156	746	410	2,973	3,331	358
Operating grants	4	1,816	2,056	-239	7,621	5,366	-2,255
Capital grants		0	0	0	5,940	5,940	0
Contributions	5	172	50	122	209	267	58
Other income		416	215	201	620	622	2
Total Income/Revenue		27,466	26,798	667	41,833	40,174	-1,659

Expenses	Notes	2025/26 YTD Actuals \$'000	2025/26 YTD Budgets \$'000	2025/26 YTD Variance \$'000	Full Year Budgets \$'000	Full- Year Review Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000
Employee costs	6	3,677	3,814	137	14,914	15,092	-178
Materials and services	7	4,405	4,330	-75	14,393	16,694	-2,301
Depreciation		171	170	0	7,201	7,201	0
Amortisation - intangible assets		0	0	0	236	236	0
Depreciation - right of use assets		0	0	0	337	337	0
Allowance for impairment losses		0	0	0	14	14	0
Borrowing costs		14	16	2	120	119	0
Finance costs - leases		0	1	1	16	16	0
Other expenses		128	132	4	608	608	0
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	8	(48)	0	48	15	15	0
Total expenses		8,347	8,463	117	37,854	40,332	-2,479
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		19,119	18,335	(784)	3,979	(158)	-4,138

Financial Overview

Notes

1. **Rate revenue:** More than budgeted due to early supplementary rate revenue of \$124,721 and additional revenue from bins and interest charges.

Favourable forecast calculated for full year of \$178,000. This will be reviewed again in January as valuation objections are yet to be determined.

2. **Statutory fees and fines:** Overall favourable for quarter for Permit fees Planning and Building services \$7,898 and Certificate Charges \$9,267. No change to full-year forecast. To be reviewed in January.

3. **User fees:** \$410,000 favourable variance YTD due to budget phasing. Significant favourable variances:

Landfill commercial accounts	\$287,422
Landfill general admission charges	\$72,383
Private work (finalised billing expense in 24/25)	\$33,265
Cinema operating income	\$17,042

4. **Operating grants:** Unfavourably impacted by early receipt of Financial Assistance Grants received in June 2025. Full year forecast reflects \$2.944 million overall reduction.

Offset by additional grant funding received but budgeted for, significant favourable variances:

Forestry Transition Program – Community Development Fund – Benalla Economic Diversification Plan	\$173,636
Roadside weeds and Pest Program 2025/26	\$41,365
Living Heritage Grants Program, Former Benalla Migrant Camp Conservation	\$19,500
Art Gallery program additional grant allocations	\$8,192

5. **Contributions:** Additional funding received and not budgeted for in 2025/26 year: Developer Contributions \$122,150 received in 1st quarter, offset by timing variance for other programs such as Tobacco Education and Enforcement program funding and non-monetary contributions.

6. **Employee costs:** Overall favourable by \$136,597 due to position vacancies.

7. **Materials and services:** Unfavourable variance of \$74,572 against budget.

Many services impacted by 2024/25 delivery delays, accordingly additional carry forward material and services expenditure is forecast in 2025/26 (\$1.829 million)

Appendix 1 details materials and services for the first quarter. Forecast year end result is a \$2.3 million unfavourable variance to budget.

8. **Net gain (or loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment:** Favourable variance of \$48,273 due to plant items sold in Q1. Full year forecast will remain as a \$150,000 expense as adjustments for replacement of infrastructure assets will be incurred.

CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRAM

Year to date 30 September 2025 Capital Projects Program compared to budget

As of 30 September 2025, total capital works expenditure year to date was \$1.339 million against a \$202,000 year-to-date budget resulting in an unfavourable variance \$1.137 million as shown in Table 2 below.

The 2025/26 Capital Projects Program project items have been impacted by 2024/25 delivery delays, accordingly additional carry forward capital expenditure is forecast to be \$2.214 million. This is generated from grant-funded projects of \$1.266 million requiring acquittal of funds in 2025/26 and Council funded capital projects of \$947,574.

The quarter 1 forecast Capital Projects Program result for the year ended 30 June 2026 totals \$16.373 million a variance of \$2.9 million compared to the budgeted \$13.395 million. Carried forward capital expenditure for the 2026/27 Capital Projects Program is forecasted to be \$3.265 million.

Table 2 – Capital Projects Program Statement as of 30 September 2025

2025/26 CAPEX Projects by Asset Type	Full Year Budget \$000'	YTD Actuals \$000'	YTD Budgets \$000'	YTD Variance \$000'	Q1 Full Year Forecast \$000'
(A) Property					
Buildings	\$2,229	\$403	\$0	-\$403	\$4,688
Land Improvements	\$46	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46
(B) Plant and equipment					
Computers and telecommunications	\$180	\$15	\$20	\$5	\$180
Fixture fittings and furniture	\$195	\$88	\$39	-\$49	\$275
Library stock	\$96	\$2	\$0	-\$2	\$96
Plant and equipment	\$860	\$8	\$5	-\$3	\$860
(C) Infrastructure					
Bridge	\$305	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$305
Drainage	\$191	\$184	\$0	-\$184	\$300
Footpath	\$1,377	\$85	\$0	-\$85	\$1,771
Other Infrastructure	\$252	\$295	\$34	-\$261	\$582
Parks open space and streetscapes	\$160	\$178	\$0	-\$178	\$624
Recreational, leisure and community	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,392
Roads	\$4,278	\$77	\$104	\$27	\$4,278
Waste management	\$2,226	\$3	\$0	-\$3	\$976
Total Capital Works	\$13,395	\$1,339	\$202	-\$1,137	\$16,373

Variances in the Capital Works Budget are discussed in Agenda Item 4.8: Capital Works Program Status As At 30 September 2025.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The forecast result is based on information as at 30 September 2025.

Significant carry forward operating statement expenditure \$1.829 million will impact 2025/26 Financial results in Materials and Services additional expenditure for grant projects. Income recognised in 2024/25 with expenditure to occur in 2025/26.

The Saleyards Road Dog Park – Open Space for Everyone – New and Upgraded Dog Parks (Round 2) grant of \$150,000 was confirmed in 2025/26. The total project cost is \$225,000 comprising the grant \$150,000, a Council contribution of \$50,000 and an in-kind contribution of \$25,000.

It is proposed that a transfer from Resort and Recreation Reserve (balance at 30/06/2025 \$483,009) be authorised to fund the Council's contribution.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That the Council authorise a \$50,000 transfer from the Resort and Recreation Reserve as the Council's cash contribution toward the \$225,000 Saleyards Road Dog Park, Benalla project.**

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Materials and services expenditure to 30 September 2025

Materials and services expenditure	2025/26 YTD Actuals	2025/26 YTD Budgets	2025/26 YTD Variance
04: Vandalism	\$ 101	\$ 2,307	\$ 2,206
05: Contract Staff	\$ 39,172	\$ 8,137	-\$ 31,035
06: Catering & Refreshments	\$ 14,699	\$ 10,563	-\$ 4,136
07: Materials	\$ 272,745	\$ 218,620	-\$ 54,125
08: Contract Payments	\$ 1,340,093	\$ 986,148	-\$ 353,945
09: Merchandise	\$ 11,522	\$ 15,666	\$ 4,144
10: Functions & Receptions	\$ 1,503	\$ 7,373	\$ 5,870
11: Stores Issues	\$ 39,823	\$ 48,597	\$ 8,774
12: Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 80,191	\$ 112,629	\$ 32,438
18: Lease Payments	\$ -	\$ 12,259	\$ 12,259
20: Bank Charges	\$ 320	\$ 13,604	\$ 13,284
21: Advertising & Promotion	\$ 35,874	\$ 31,240	-\$ 4,634
23: Exhibitions	\$ 7,098	\$ 20,835	\$ 13,737
24: Insurance	\$ 549,666	\$ 586,770	\$ 37,104
25: Legal Expenses	\$ 16,878	\$ 42,401	\$ 25,523
26: Consultants General	\$ 68,543	\$ 72,013	\$ 3,470
27: Membership & Subscriptions	\$ 200,054	\$ 145,628	-\$ 54,426
28: Security Expenses	\$ 1,885	\$ 10,500	\$ 8,615
29: Postage & Freight	\$ 19,149	\$ 14,895	-\$ 4,254
30: Printing, Copying & Stationery	\$ 9,073	\$ 25,104	\$ 16,031
31: Rent	\$ 31,019	\$ 14,515	-\$ 16,504
32: Computer Support/Software	\$ 303,882	\$ 559,095	\$ 255,213
33: Internal Plant Hire Expense	\$ -	\$ 17,743	\$ 17,743
35: Travel Expenses	\$ 877	\$ 593	-\$ 284
36: Meeting Expenses	\$ 1,171	\$ 1,461	\$ 290
37: Staff Training / Courses	\$ 35,645	\$ 37,307	\$ 1,662
38: Vehicle Expenses	\$ 1,789	\$ 51	-\$ 1,738
39: Electricity	\$ 88,303	\$ 140,697	\$ 52,394
40: Water Consumption	\$ 15,658	\$ 20,191	\$ 4,533
41: Gas	\$ -	\$ 8,943	\$ 8,943
42: Telephone	\$ 26,933	\$ 39,789	\$ 12,856
43: Contributions & Reimbursements	\$ -	\$ 6,710	\$ 6,710
47: Green Waste Mulching	\$ -	\$ 19,312	\$ 19,312
49: Machine Hire	\$ 24,668	\$ 2,703	-\$ 21,965
51: E.P.A. Levy	\$ 499,961	\$ 234,110	-\$ 265,851
52: Domestic Animals Levy	\$ 12,399	\$ 3,683	-\$ 8,716
53: Management Committees	\$ 8,262	\$ 38,240	\$ 29,978
54: Cleaning Expenses	\$ 76,930	\$ 74,950	-\$ 1,980
103: Vehicle Fuel	\$ 87,431	\$ 98,288	\$ 10,857
104: Vehicle Maintenance - Standard	\$ 3,371	\$ 20,971	\$ 17,600
105: Vehicle Lease Payments	\$ 73,472	\$ 3,504	-\$ 69,968
109: Canteen Trading Purchases	\$ 7,861	\$ 4,250	-\$ 3,611
110: Distributor Costs - movies	\$ 19,600	\$ 16,250	-\$ 3,350
126: Landfill Daily Cover	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
127: Landfill Rock Supplied	\$ 2,069	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,931

Materials and services expenditure	2025/26 YTD Actuals	2025/26 YTD Budgets	2025/26 YTD Variance
128: Gas Monitoring - Landfill	\$ -	\$ 3,703	\$ 3,703
131: Diesel Rebate (Negative Expense)	-\$ 20,460	-\$ 13,518	\$ 6,942
138: Councillors Training	\$ 1,281	\$ 3,889	\$ 2,608
140: Carry Forward Expenditure	\$ 820	\$ 6,150	\$ 5,330
144: Vehicle Maintenance - Repairs	\$ 29,168	\$ 37,366	\$ 8,198
145: Tyres Purchased for Plant	\$ 4,540	\$ 9,164	\$ 4,624
146: Registrations	\$ 20,318	\$ 6,248	-\$ 14,070
16: Services (Non Contract) To Council	\$ 297,290	\$ 452,070	\$ 154,780
160: Audit / Monitoring costs Landfill	\$ -	\$ 13,555	\$ 13,555
170: Museum Fees	\$ 1,205	\$ 281	-\$ 924
171: Volunteer (Internal Charge) expenses	\$ -	\$ 26,876	\$ 26,876
199: Internal Charge - Expense	\$ 34,213	\$ 16,369	-\$ 17,844
34: Goods Delivered (Contractual)	\$ 6,843	\$ 12,039	\$ 5,196
Total	\$ 4,404,908	\$ 4,330,336	-\$ 74,572

4.6 Finance Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

Ref: 198090245-2736
Cathy Fitzpatrick – Manager Finance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents an overview of the functions of the Finance Department for the quarter ended 30 September 2025.

Finance

- Undertaking Victorian Auditor-General's Office audit process for 2024/25 Statements and Roads to Recovery Annual Report Acquittal. Audit is yet to be finalised.
- Assist other departments with Audit queries on assets revaluations undertaken utilising professional valuers and indexation percentage increases on asset types.
- Landfill Provision as at 30 June 2025 recalculation.
- Essential Services Commission – Waste Service Annual rate rise compliance return submitted.
- Preparation of financial systems with budget phasing 2025/25 and inclusion of carried forward items from Budget 2024/25.
- Issuing standing purchase orders for 2025/26 regular supplies.
- Production of draft Annual statement and Performance report 2024/25.
- Major focus of staff on the preparation for implementation of CODI new computer system and the current year data conversion requirement planned for November 2025.

Sundry Debtors

An analysis of the unpaid sundry accounts as at that date with comparative data for the previous year is as follows:

Debtors Balances

Date	90 days	60 days	30 days	Current	Total
30/09/25	\$287,155	\$44,825	\$219,398	\$210,445	\$761,823
30/06/25	\$81,853	\$125,758.78	\$190,679.48	\$705,701.56	\$1,103,993
31/03/25	\$5,733,543	\$7,601	\$250,034	\$484,545	\$6,471,176
31/12/24	\$100,090	\$170,671	\$232,105	\$307,885	\$810,752
30/09/24	\$0	\$40,510	\$97,293	\$145,170	\$282,973

Investment Portfolio

In accordance with the Investment Policy, details of investments held at 30 September 2025 are provided in the following table.

Table 1. Investments held at 30 September 2025

Bank	Short-term credit	Investment Type	Amount Invested \$'000	Interest Rate	Term (Days)	Maturity Date
NAB	A1+	TD	\$3,422	4.45%	184	07-Nov-25
Rabo	A1+	TD	\$2,000	4.47%	183	12-Dec-25
Rabo	A1+	TD	\$2,000	4.38%	185	29-Dec-25
Westpac	A1+	TD	\$3,061	4.09%	122	30-Oct-25
Westpac	A1+	TD	\$2,285	4.20%	121	28-Nov-25
Rabo	A1+	TD	\$4,098	4.35%	184	04-Feb-26
NAB	A1+	TD	\$3,079	4.10%	90	19-Nov-25
ANZ	A1+	TD	\$4,201	4.13%	90	24-Nov-25
NAB	A1+	TD	\$1,052	4.10%	90	20-Dec-25
Subtotal:			\$25,197			
CBA	A1+	Operating	\$11,323	3.8%		
Total:			\$35,064			

*TD refers to general term deposits where the use of interest earned is not restricted.

Loan Portfolio

Details of existing loans held at 30 September are attached in **Appendix 1**.

Loan terms are:

Loan Number	Type	Term
18	Fixed – principal and interest	10 years
19	Variable	10 years
20	Fixed	10 years
21	Fixed	10 years
22	Variable	10 Years

Procurement

Contracts and Works Awarded Under Delegation

The purpose of this section is to inform the Council and Community of publicly advertised tenders which have been awarded under delegation for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025.

Two contracts were awarded between 1 July 2025 and 30 September 2025.

Details of the contracts awarded are attached in confidential business **Appendix 2**.

Delegation of Procurement Authority to Chief Executive Officer

As per the *Procurement Policy*, instances where the Chief Executive Officer approved expenditure for statutory charges or other matters, generally consistent with the approved or revised budget, be reported quarterly.

The following table provides a summary of approvals (including GST).

Invoice Date	Type	Amount
11/07/2025	State Revenue Office	\$491,853.96
11/07/2025	JLT Risk Insurance	\$308,003.85
14/08/2025	Gallagher Bassett Services - Workcover Insurance 2025/2026	\$397,546.31
18/09/2025	EPA Victoria – 30/06/2025 quarter payment	\$359,064.36
18/09/2025	Midson Construction – CAPEX project	\$319,411.95

Revenue, Property and Valuations

- Issued annual valuation and rate notices to property owners.
- Annual Rate Cap compliance data submitted to the Essential Services Commission.
- Annual Reconciliation submitted (not yet approved) to State Revenue Office for 2024/25 for Fire Services Property Levy.
- Annual Return submitted (not yet approved) to the State Revenue Office for 2025/26 Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund.
- Completion of Municipal Rates Concession annual verification.
- E-notice stats:
 - EzyBill – 774 (+179)
 - BPAY View – 383 (-14)

EzyBill allows access to rate notices from any device, making payment both easy and convenient.

BPAY is an easy and secure way to pay and manage bills from your online banking.

Rates and Charges Revenue

The annual notices for 2025/26 were issued on 13 August 2025 with payment of the first instalment due by 30 September 2025. All properties have been revalued with the updated 2025 level valuations detailed on the notices.

Valuation objections must be lodged by 27 October 2025.

To date, 19 formal valuation objections have been lodged. It is expected the total number of objections will increase slightly as the due date for lodgment gets closer.

Appendix 3 details the overall rates and charges generated and collected and apportions the unpaid balance between arrears from previous years of roughly \$1,262,000 and unpaid charges levied in the current year amounting to approximately \$16,300,000.

Rate arrears collected in the current year amount to \$71,000. This figure is lower compared to last quarter, and quarter 1 2024/25 (- 70 per cent).

Collections, as a proportion of overall debt, are up compared to Q1 last year (+0.23 per cent).

Appendix 4 provides a graph summary comparing the 2025/26 rate instalments due with the total instalments paid as at 2 October 2025.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Loans held at 30 September 2025

Interest to be paid:

Loan Number	2025/2026 Year	2026/2027 Year	2027/2028 Year	2028/2029 Year	2029/2030 Year	2030/2031 Year	Totals
18	\$1,372	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,372
19	\$4,905	\$2,035	-	-	-	-	\$6,941
20	\$7,397	\$3,688	\$1,582	-	-	-	\$12,666
21	\$6,070	\$4,343	\$2,565	\$716	-	-	\$13,693
22	\$50,175	\$38,368	\$30,113	\$21,687	\$13,346	\$5,006	\$158,694
Total Interest Payable	\$69,919	\$48,433	\$34,259	\$22,402	\$13,346	\$5,006	\$193,366

Principal to be paid:

Loan Number	2025/2026 Year	2026/2027 Year	2027/2028 Year	2028/2029 Year	2029/2030 Year	2030/2031 Year	Totals
18	\$58,819	-	-	-	-	-	\$58,819
19	\$55,302	\$56,961	-	-	-	-	\$112,262
20	\$53,757	\$57,466	\$53,061	-	-	-	\$164,283
21	\$52,678	\$54,406	\$56,184	\$43,684	-	-	\$206,952
22	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$1,140,000
Total Principal Payable	\$410,555	\$358,832	\$299,245	\$233,684	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$1,682,316

Councillor Use Only – Confidential

Contracts awarded for the period 1 July 2025 – 30 September 2025

No	Contracts	Name of Business	Budget
1.	Building and Amenities Cleaning Service 2025-2027	H&A Traders Pty Ltd	\$569,000
2.	Art Gallery CCTV Replacement	Ross Wood Electrical	\$48,646

Rates and Charges Collections Report

As at 2 October 2025

	Rates	Interest	Legal	Total	Comments
Arrears as at 01/07/2025	\$1,249,453	\$73,949	\$9,733	\$1,333,135	Unpaid amounts up to and including the 2024/25 rating year.
Payments					
30/09/2025	-\$56,360	-\$14,648	-\$200	-\$71,208	
31/12/2025					
31/03/2026					
30/06/2026					
Total	-\$56,360	-\$14,648	-\$200	-\$71,208	
Arrears Rates Balance	\$1,193,093	\$59,301	\$9,533	\$1,261,927	Arrears unpaid as at 02/10/2025

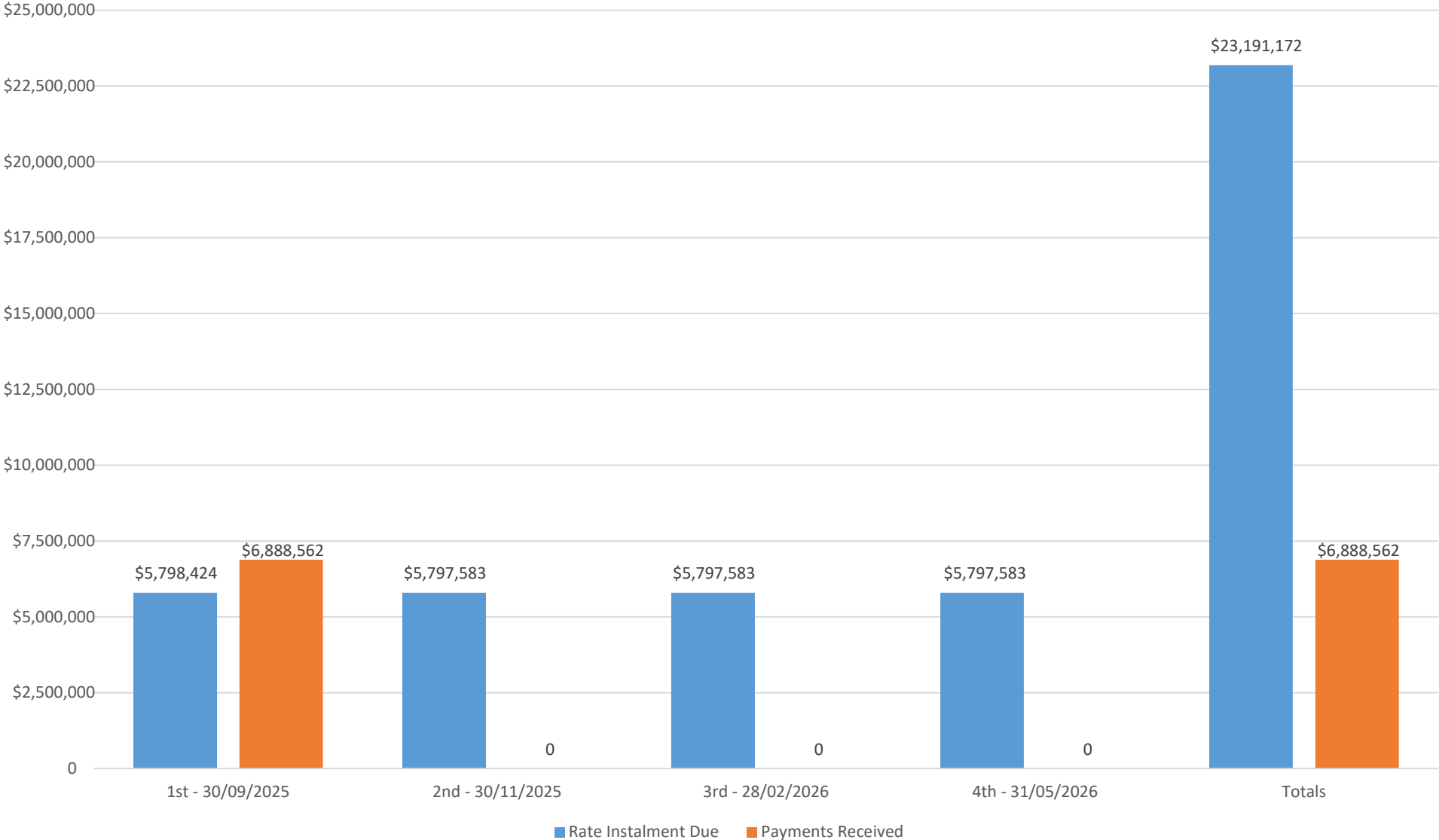
Current Rates/Charges	Rates	Interest	Legal	Total	Comments
Raised					2024/25 Rates including Municipal and Waste Management Charges (includes additional rates levied on new houses and subdivided lands)
30/09/2025	\$23,645,501	\$420	\$422	\$23,646,343	
31/12/2025					
31/03/2026					
30/06/2026					
Total	\$23,645,501	\$420	\$422	\$23,646,343	

Pension Concessions	Rates	Interest	Legal	Total	Comments
30/09/2025	-\$455,171	\$0	\$0	-\$455,171	State Govt - Reimbursed by DFFH
31/12/2025					
31/03/2026					
30/06/2026					
Total	-\$455,171			-\$455,171	

	Rates	Interest	Legal	Total	Comments
Net Rates for Collection	\$23,190,330	\$420	\$422	\$23,191,172	Payments recived to date for current year rates.
Payments					
30/09/2025	-\$6,888,491	-\$71	\$0	-\$6,888,562	
31/12/2025					
31/03/2026					
30/06/2026					
Total	-\$6,888,491	-\$71	\$0	-\$6,888,562	

	Rates	Interest	Legal	Total	Comments
Current Rates Balance	\$16,301,839	\$349	\$422	\$16,302,610	Current Unpaid as at 02/10/2025
Balance Remaining	\$17,494,932	\$59,651	\$9,955	\$17,564,538	Balance as at 02/10/2025

**2025/26 Rates and Charges
Due and Collected to 2 October 2025**



4.7 Assets and Infrastructure Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 30 September 2025

Ref: 1573044422-1047

Adrian Gasperoni – Manager Assets and Infrastructure

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the activities of the Assets and Infrastructure Department for the quarter ended 30 September 2025.

Assets and Infrastructure

Assets and Infrastructure department continued to provide maintenance throughout the municipality, there was a focus on gravel road grading and nature strip tree maintenance.

Highlights for the quarter are detailed below.

Operations

- Completed grading of 138 kilometers of gravel roads.
- Replaced 42 square metres of concrete footpath in the following areas:
 - Clarke Street, Benalla
 - Goodwin Street, Benalla
 - Esperanto Street, Benalla
 - Walker Street, Benalla
 - Rivergum Avenue, Benalla
 - Hiscock Court, Benalla
- Carried out sealed road maintenance.
- Carried out routine rural drainage maintenance.
- Carried out rural carriageway tree pruning maintenance.
- Carried out urban kerb and channel cleaning of approximately 200 streets with the street sweeper.
- Changed the central business district banners and eastern gateway flags to the Benalla Racing Club.
- Supplied 450 tonne of gravel to resheet Johnsons Lane, Warrenbayne.
- Carried out Fire Plug maintenance throughout Benalla.
- Four staff completed Chemcert training.
- Four staff completed Traffic Management training.
- Four staff completed OH&S White Card training.
- Three staff participated in the Winton Hands On Trade Careers Expo and had machinery on show, including a grader, backhoe, skid steer and jetpatcher.
- Invited a local High School student to undertake a week of work experience.
- Provided staff to assist at the Landfill for more than 456 hours.

Depot

- 793 Tonne of 20-millimetre crushed rock for stock at depot (for gravel road and shoulder maintenance).
- 1110 Tonne of 40-millimetre crushed rock for stock at depot (for gravel road and shoulder maintenance).
- 40 Tonne of 70-millimetre crushed rock for stock at depot (for gravel road and shoulder maintenance).
- 156 Tonne of 7-millimetre premix for stock at depot (for sealed road maintenance).
- 5,000 litres of bitumen emulsion for stock at depot (for sealed road maintenance).

Parks and Gardens and Open Spaces

- Works complete at the Aboriginal Gardens including earthworks, drainage works and pathway repair works.
- Completed repairs and painting of the Benalla Botanical Gardens seating.
- Undertook the removal of 11 trees throughout the township.
- Three tree root barrier installations undertaken.
- Carried out routine tree pruning maintenance.
- Carried out routine playground maintenance throughout the municipality.
- Carried out routine nature strip maintenance.
- Carried out lawn maintenance of the Splash Park, Churchill Reserve and Botanical Gardens.
- Four staff completed Traffic Management training.
- Four staff completed OH&S White Card training.
- Commenced the Roadside Slashing program.
- Commenced the Roadside Spraying program.
- Complete the Elm Leaf Beetle treatment program.

Waste

- Quarterly leachate ground water and landfill gas monitoring completed.
- Commenced the tender process for the construction of Cell 3B and the Construction Audit of Cell 3B.
- Local Government Performance reporting completed.
- Sustainability Victoria reporting completed.
- Recycling Victoria reporting completed.
- Sustainability Victoria grant completed.
- EPA VIC Permission Information and Performance Statement reporting completed.
- Nearing completion of tender documents for Cell 3b Construction and Cell 3b Construction audit, this will go out to market early October 2025. Tender expected to be awarded in November 2025.
- Finalised the tender extension for the emptying of the Transfer Station bins.

Asset Management

The following table outlines requests for works received through the *Asset Edge - Reflect* program of inspection and *Customer Request Management System*.

Task	December 2024	March 2025	June 2025	September 2025
Defects overdue on roads and drains - safety only:				
Link roads	12	10	7	8
Collector roads	16	14	11	11
Access roads	8	9	29	8
Defects overdue on footpaths - safety only	0	0	1	0
Defects rectified - routine maintenance and safety – road, footpath and parks	198	227	144	301
Defects and maintenance - items outstanding - road, footpath and parks	307	283	251	207
Unsealed roads graded (km)	191	90	147	138
Sealed road shoulders graded (km)	0	16	41	24

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operating Budget result for the period ending 30 September 2025.

	Notes	2025/26 YTD Actuals	2025/26 YTD Budgets	2025/26 YTD Variance	2025/26 Full Year Budget	2025/26 Full Year Forecast
Capital Projects Operations	1	\$260,265	\$155,393	-\$104,872	\$600,112	\$1,190,486
Operations Support	2	(\$66,014)	(\$314,571)	-\$248,557	(\$1,247,537)	(\$318,965)
Plant Operations	3	(\$264)	\$53,711	\$53,975	\$339,091	\$339,091
Operations & Capital Grant Income		\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$5,979,629)	(\$5,979,629)
Sealed Roads	4	\$80,294	\$182,691	\$102,397	\$3,578,928	\$3,578,928
Unsealed Roads		\$257,923	\$254,247	-\$3,676	\$1,466,337	\$1,466,337
Bridges	5	\$2,001	\$40,533	\$38,532	\$1,023,364	\$1,023,364
Drainage		\$145,234	\$139,764	-\$5,470	\$909,607	\$909,607
Mechanics Workshop		\$19,732	\$22,602	\$2,870	\$87,367	\$87,367
Street Cleaning	6	\$14,124	\$21,590	\$7,466	\$84,126	\$84,126
Roadsides	7	\$126,063	\$114,996	-\$11,067	\$626,608	\$626,608
Parks & Gardens	8	\$262,914	\$328,515	\$65,601	\$1,286,883	\$1,286,883
Asset Management Services	9	(\$19,507)	\$77,124	\$96,631	\$337,420	\$204,420
Landfill	10	\$32,882	(\$92,013)	-\$124,895	\$385,956	\$492,356
Kerbside Waste	11	(\$4,301,845)	(\$4,242,460)	\$59,385	(\$2,912,502)	(\$2,932,502)
Recreation	12	(\$19,426)	\$43,396	\$62,822	\$211,641	\$311,641
Total		(\$3,205,624)	(\$3,214,482)	-\$8,858	\$14,192,802	\$22,008,072

Notes:

1. Variance due to \$105,000 overspend on scoping for projects compared to YTD Budget.
2. Variance mainly due to DRFA funding income \$241,900 lower than expected compared to YTD Budget.
3. Variance mainly due to underspend of \$38,000 in operating costs compared to YTD Budget.
4. Variance mainly due to underspend on Sealed Road Shoulder Grading, Rehabilitation and Pavement Repairs of \$101,000 compared to YTD Budget.
5. Variance mainly due to underspend on Bridge Repairs of \$31,000 compared to YTD Budget, whilst awaiting Condition Assessment inspections to be undertaken.
6. Variance mainly due to underspend on Street Cleaning of \$7,000 compared to YTD Budget.
7. Variance due to \$18,800 overspend on Footpath Maintenance of \$18,000 compared to YTD Budget.
8. Variance mainly due to underspend on Powerline Clearance \$25,000, Street Tree Maintenance \$17,000 and Playground Maintenance \$25,000 compared to YTD Budget.
9. Variance mainly due to expected \$132,000 lower income from Drainage Headworks compared to YTD Budget.
10. Variance mainly due to timing of EPA Levy Returns of \$265,000.
11. Variance mainly due to underspend on Recycling Operations \$52,000, Organics Collection Service \$38,000 and an overspend of \$45,000 with our Garbage Collection Service compared to YTD Budget.
12. Variance mainly due to grant funding received for the Recreation Masterplan Strategy \$36,000 and savings from management committees of \$27,000 compared to YTD Budget.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

4.8 Capital Works Program Status As At 30 September 2025

Ref: 1573044422-1042

Adrian Gasperoni – Manager Assets and Infrastructure

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents an update on the Capital Works Program as at 30 September 2025.

BACKGROUND

Capital projects are funded from general revenue and grant funding. An update on the status of key capital projects is discussed below.

DISCUSSION

Capital Projects

Highlights for the year to date include:

- Culvert Upgrade and guard rail installation completed on Racecourse Road, Benalla.
- Works commenced on the North Benalla shared Pathway on Midland Highway, Benalla to Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve. Footpath works are expected to be completed in November 2025.
- The Pump station manufacture for The Culdesac drainage upgrade is set to be completed by January 2026. Tendering for civil works will commence in second quarter of 2025/26.
- TAC Safe Local Roads \$2 million Program – Design process ongoing.
- Blackspot Funding for Goorambat-Thoona Road/Bungeet Road upgrade. Detailed design tendered and have been awarded.
- Reseal preparation works commenced and are ongoing.
- Road Resealing Program for 2025/26 was tendered and awarded. Works to commence in October 2025.
- Gravel Road Re-sheeting Program for 2025/26 tendered. Tender to be awarded in October 2025.
- Shoulder Re-sheeting and Sealing Program 2025/26 tendered. Tender to be awarded in November 2025.
- Kerb and Channel Replacement Program 2025/26 tendered. Tender to be awarded in November 2025.
- Footpath Construction Program 2025/26 was tendered and awarded.
- Asphalt Pavement Patching Program 2025/26 was tendered. Tender to be awarded in November 2025.
- Planning and Design work continues with the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project*.
- Design process is ongoing for the Victorian Safe System Pedestrian Infrastructure Program for Bridge street and Carrier Street, Benalla Pedestrian Crossings. Works are expected to commence during the third quarter in 2025/2026.

- Road Safety Strategy was tendered. Tender to be awarded in October 2025.
- Active Transport Strategy was tendered. Tender to be awarded October 2025.
- Major Plant was sold at Auction in August and September 2025:
 - Isuzu Tipper Truck
 - Mitsubishi Canter Truck
 - Kubota Zero Turn Mower
 - Chipstar Wood Chipper

A Capital Works Program Status Report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 IMPLICATIONS

Community

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

Economy

- *Flourishing visitor economy*
- *Sustainable growth.*

Environment

- *Circular economy.*
- *Sustainable waste management.*

Liveability

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

Leadership

- *Good governance.*
- *High performance culture.*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Capital Projects Program result for the quarter ended 30 September 2025 was expenditure of \$1.339 million, which was \$1.137 million more than the year to date budgeted expenditure of \$202,000 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Capital Program result for the period ending 30 September 2025

2025/26 CAPEX Projects by Asset Type	Notes	Full Year Budget \$'000	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Q1 Full Year Forecast \$'000
Buildings	1	\$2,229	\$403	\$0	-\$403	\$4,688
Land Improvements		\$46	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46
Computers and telecommunications		\$180	\$15	\$20	\$5	\$180
Fixture fittings and furniture	2	\$195	\$88	\$39	-\$49	\$275
Library stock		\$96	\$2	\$0	-\$2	\$96
Plant and equipment		\$860	\$8	\$5	\$3	\$860
Bridge		\$305	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$305
Drainage	3	\$1,377	\$85	\$0	-\$85	\$300
Footpath	4	\$252	\$295	\$34	-\$261	\$1,771
Other Infrastructure		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Parks open space and streetscapes	5	\$160	\$178	\$0	-\$178	\$624
Recreational, leisure and community		\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,392
Roads	6	\$4,278	\$77	\$104	\$27	\$4,278
Waste management		\$2,226	\$3	\$0	-\$3	\$976
Total Capital Works		\$13,395	\$1,339	\$202	-\$1,137	\$16,373

Notes:

1. Variance primarily due Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Roof Renewal Project carried forward from 2024/25. Total project budget \$400,000. Other carried forward works include Benalla Aquatic Centre Chemical Storage (\$47,000) and Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Stage 1A (\$42,000).
2. Variance due carried forward expenditure associated with the Benalla Art Gallery CCTV Upgrade project.
3. Variance mainly due to budget phasing and carried forward expenditure associated with the Culdesac Drainage Upgrade project (\$47,000).
4. Variance due to carried forward expenditure of \$252,000 relating to the Midland Highway-Equestrian Centre Shared Path project.
5. Variance primarily due to carried forward expenditure associated with the Skate Park Activation (\$92,000) and Community Notice Boards (\$65,000) projects.
6. Variance due to \$27,000 less than year to date budgeted expenditure on reseal preparation.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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Benalla Rural City Council
Project Status Report as at 5 November 2025

Project Name	Original Project Budget	Forecast Project Budget	Stage	Status	Notes
BUI192: Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment	\$3,000,000	\$6,515,000	Procurement		Tender report due to be presented to Council November 2025. Funding options to be considered.
RSR140: Reseal Program - RTR	\$1,351,000	\$1,351,000	Delivery		Works commenced with balance to be completed in 2026 following reseal preparation work.
LFIL36: Waste Management - Rehabilitation Stage 2A: Design and Construct	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	Not Started		Works derferred until 2026/27 in line with Landfill Masterplan.
DRA044: Drainage Strategy	\$1,244,000	\$1,244,000	Delivery		Works started and planning for next priority projects commenced.
RSR047: Shoulder Resheet Program	\$1,098,000	\$1,098,000	Procurement		Procurement Report to be presented to Council in November 2025.
BMX001: Pump Track (BMX) design / construction	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	Delivery		Contract awarded.
LFIL37: Waste Management - Cell 3B Construction	\$951,000	\$951,000	Procurement		Tender closed. Report to be presented to Council December 2025.
RUR114: Gravel Resheet Program	\$889,000	\$889,000	Delivery		Works expected to start late 2025.
CPM192: Major Plant	\$630,000	\$630,000	Procurement		Grader, New Trailer and Excavator to be purchased in 2025/26.
DRA045: The Culdesac - Drainage	\$400,000	\$400,000	Delivery		Delay in project has mainly been due to a revision with the plans and stormwater treatment.
FPA132: New footpath Midland Hwy to Equestrian Precinct	\$103,000	\$382,500	Delivery		Works started and due to be completed prior to Christmas 2025.
BCP017: HVAC Renewal	\$320,000	\$320,000	Planning and Design		
BUI185: Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Roof Renewal	\$450,000	\$313,000	Completed		Remaining budget balance will be utilised to re-surface the Netball Courts at the Ackerly Street site.
AER008:Benalla Airfield Runway/Taxiway Lighting	\$250,000	\$250,000	Planning and Design		
OSP145:Saleyards dog Park	\$250,000	\$250,000	Planning and Design		
BLKS24: Blackspot Funding - relocate splitter islands various Benalla locations	\$0	\$232,560	Delivery		Works complete, Road Safety audit to be commissioned.
CPV001: Vehicle Replacement Strategy	\$200,000	\$200,000	Delivery		
RPR223: Sealed Roads Preparation for Resealing	\$200,000	\$200,000	Delivery		Works to start first quarter 2026.
BRD084: Bridge Renewal Program	\$191,000	\$191,000	Planning and Design		
KCR001: Kerb and Channel Renewal Program	\$190,000	\$190,000	Procurement		Contract to be awarded late November 2025. Works to start soon after.
CPE035: IT Projects - identified in service plan	\$180,000	\$180,000	Planning and Design		
FPA041: Footpaths	\$102,000	\$102,000	Delivery		Works started. Due for completion by Christmas 2025.
FPA032: Footpath Renewal Strategy	\$100,000	\$100,000	Delivery		Works expected to start November 2025.
LIB100: Library Purchases - Hub	\$96,000	\$96,000	Completed		
OSP144:McKellar St Playground Fence	\$80,000	\$80,000	Planning and Design		
PAP001: Pits and pipes, CQ ID NA	\$74,000	\$74,000	Delivery		Ongoing.
REG002: Regulation Program - R2R	\$64,000	\$64,000	Delivery		Works to commence late November 2025.
BCP019: Community Christmas Tree	\$50,000	\$50,000	Completed		Christams tree purchased and delivered.
BUI198: VIC Basement Concrete Sealing	\$50,000	\$50,000	Planning and Design		
OSP142:Playground Replacement Program	\$50,000	\$50,000	Planning and Design		
RSR141: Sealing of Gravel Roads Program	\$50,000	\$50,000	Delivery		Works expected to start late 2025.
CPS192: Small Plant Upgrade	\$30,000	\$30,000	Delivery		
LFIL38: Groundwater Monitoring Infrastructure	\$25,000	\$25,000	Not Started		Annual Monitoring to occur in 2027.
RPR108: Crack Sealing - Council Funded Component	\$14,000	\$14,000	Delivery		Works to start first quarter 2026.
OSP143:Devenish Playground Fence Replacement	\$30,000	\$30,000	Completed		Fence completed in 2024/2025. Current budget allocation is proposed to be utilised to upgrade the Playground at the Equestrian Centre.

4.9 Mayor and Councillors' Attendance At Conferences and Events

Ref: 36167913-9665

Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

The Mayor and Councillors attended meetings and events as detailed below during the period 6 October 2025 to 9 November 2025.

Mayor Councillor Bernie Hearn	
6 October	Benalla Health and Wellbeing Partnership Meeting
8 October	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review Meeting
9 October	Municipal Association of Victoria Councillor Service Awards Dinner
10 October	Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting
13 October	Collaborative Digital Innovation Project Update
	Benalla Art Gallery Foundation Strategy Meeting
	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
15 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Council Meeting
17 October	Interview with Edge FM Radio
20 October	Benalla Heritage Study Advisory Group Meeting
21 October	Live4Life Celebration
	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
	Additional Council Meeting
22 October	Emblem Benalla Lifestyle Precinct Visit
25 October	North East Multicultural Association (NEMA) Benalla Children's Week Event
28 October	Peter Fitzsimmons Book Launch at Benalla Visitor Information Centre
29 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review Meeting
30 October	Interview with Sports Entertainment Network (SEN) Radio
	Tomorrow Today's Community Celebration
	Spooktacular: Official Benalla Festival Launch Event
3 November	Diwali @ Mural 2025 Event
5 November	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
8 November	Devenish Remembrance Day Service
9 November	A Day in the Gardens Market

Deputy Mayor Councillor Justin King	
7 October	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
8 October	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review Meeting
13 October	Collaborative Digital Innovation Project Update
14 October	Churchill Reserve Committee of Management Meeting
15 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Council Meeting
21 October	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
	Additional Council Meeting
25 October	North East Multicultural Association (NEMA) Benalla Children’s Week Event
27 October	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
28 October	Peter Fitzsimmons Book Launch at Benalla Visitor Information Centre
29 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review Meeting
30 October	Spooktacular: Official Benalla Festival Launch Event
2 November	Tatong Market
	Devenish Market
5 November	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
7 November	Interview with Edge FM Radio
8 November	Cooinda Garage Sale
	Benalla by the Lake Event
9 November	A Day in the Gardens Market
	Benalla Short Film Festival

Councillor David Blore	
8 October	Business Coffee Connections
	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review Meeting
13 October	Collaborative Digital Innovation Project Update
	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
15 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Council Meeting
21 October	Benalla Family Research Group Meeting
	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
	Additional Council Meeting
25 October	North East Multicultural Association (NEMA) Benalla Children’s Week Event
27 October	Waminda 2025 Annual General Meeting

Councillor David Blore (continued)	
29 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review Meeting
30 October	Tomorrow Today's Community Celebration
2 November	Tatong Market
3 November	Diwali @ Mural 2025 Event
5 November	Councillor Only Time
	Benalla Historical Society Meeting
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
8 November	Benalla by the Lake Event
9 November	A Day in the Gardens Market

Councillor Peter Davis	
8 October	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review Meeting
15 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Council Meeting
21 October	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
	Additional Council Meeting
28 October	Peter Fitzsimmons Book Launch at Benalla Visitor Information Centre
29 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review Meeting
30 October	Tomorrow Today's Community Celebration
31 October	Spooktacular: Official Benalla Festival Launch Event
5 November	Councillor Only Time
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
8 November	Benalla by the Lake Event
9 November	A Day in the Gardens Market

Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
8 October	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review Meeting
15 October	Additional Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Council Meeting
21 October	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
	Additional Council Meeting
29 October	Additional Council Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review Meeting
3 November	Diwali @ Mural 2025 Event
5 November	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
8 November	Benalla by the Lake Event
9 November	A Day in the Gardens Market

Councillor Jillian Merkel	
6 October	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
7 October	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
8 October	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review Meeting
15 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Council Meeting
21 October	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
	Additional Council Meeting
27 October	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
29 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review Meeting
30 October	Spooktacular: Official Benalla Festival Launch Event
5 November	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

Councillor Nathan Tolliday	
6 October	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
7 October	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
8 October	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review Meeting
14 October	Churchill Reserve Committee of Management Meeting
15 October	Additional Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Council Meeting
21 October	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
	Additional Council Meeting
25 October	North East Multicultural Association (NEMA) Benalla Children's Week Event
27 October	Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
	Waminda 2025 Annual General Meeting
29 October	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review Meeting

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

4.10 Council Actions Pending

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

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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Council Actions Pending

Action No.	Meeting Name	Item	Action	Officer	Status/notes
1.	F&P Committee 5-Nov-2025	6.	2025/2026 Quick Response Grants That \$750 grants from the <i>2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program</i> be awarded to the Rotary Club of Benalla, the Probus Club of Benalla, the Small Town Sing and the Moira Benalla Club.	MC	Completed
2.	F&P Committee 5-Nov-2025	9.	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group – Terms of Reference That the <i>Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group Terms of Reference</i> be adopted.	MEDAS	Completed
3.	Additional Council Meeting 29-Oct-2025	5.	2025/26 Major Events Funding Program That a \$1,000 grant from the 2025/26 Major Event Funding program be allocated to the Benalla Migrants Association.	MEDAS	Completed
4.	Additional Council Meeting 29-Oct-2025	4.	Benalla Rural City Council Road Management Plan 2025-2029 1. That the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Road Management Plan 2025-2029</i> , including the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Road Register</i> , be adopted. 2. That all submitters be written to and advised of the outcome.	MAI	1. Completed 2. In progress
5.	Additional Council Meeting 29-Oct-2025	3.	Benalla Rural City Council Asset Plan 2025-2029 1. That the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Asset Plan 2025-2029</i> be adopted. 2. That all submitters be written to and advised of the outcome.	MAI	1. Completed 2. In progress
6.	Additional Council Meeting 29-Oct-2025	2.	Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029 1. That the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2025-2029</i> be adopted. 2. That all submitters be written to and advised of the outcome.	MC	Completed
7.	Additional Council Meeting 29-Oct-2025	1.	Benalla Rural City Council Annual Report 2024/25 1. That the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Annual Report 2024/25</i> be received. 2. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to make minor grammatical amendments to the operational section of the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Annual Report 2024/25</i> as required. 3. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to make minor amendments to the <i>Financial Statement for The Year Ended 30 June 2025</i> as approved by the Council's external auditors.	Mayor	Completed

Action No.	Meeting Name	Item	Action	Officer	Status/notes
8.	Additional Council Meeting 21-Oct-2025	1.	Draft Annual Financial Report, draft Performance Statement and Governance and Management Checklist For The Year Ended 30 June 2025 1. That Council approves in principle the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2025</i> and <i>Benalla Rural City Council Performance Statement for the Year Ended 30 June 2025</i> . 2. That Mayor Cr Bernie Hearn, Cr Peter Davis and Chief Executive Officer Peter Keane authorised to certify the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Annual Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2025</i> and <i>Benalla Rural City Council Performance Statement For the Year Ended 30 June 2025</i> in their final form after any changes recommended or agreed to by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office have been made. 3. That Council adopts the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Governance and Management Checklist</i> .	CEO	Completed
9.	Council Meeting 15-Oct-2025	4.2	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee – Consideration of Chair That Ian Gonzaga be appointed as the Chair of the <i>Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee</i> for the 2025/26 Council Year.	MEDAS	Completed
10.	Council Meeting 15-Oct-2025	4.1	2025/26 Major Event Funding Program 1. That \$2,000 grant from the 2025/26 Major Event Funding program be allocated to the Benalla Lions Club. 2. That the debate on the matter be deferred until the additional Council Meeting on Wednesday 29 October 2025 to allow for further information to be provided on the application from Benalla Migrants Association.	MEDAS	1. Completed 2. Completed
11.	F&P Committee 15-Oct-2025	3.	Benalla Airport – Intention To Lease Land 1. In accordance with Section 115 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , a lease agreement will be entered into with Balloon Across Australia Pty Ltd, trading as Goldrush Ballooning, for 19 Hangar Lane, Benalla for a term of five years commencing 1 December 2025 with an option for five further terms of five years. 2. That the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to execute lease documentation on behalf of the Council.	MFIT	Completed
12.	F&P Committee 15-Oct-2025	2.	Draft Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 – Hearing Of Submissions That submissions on the draft <i>Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029</i> be received.	MD	Completed
13.	F&P Committee 15-Oct-2025	1.	Draft Benalla Airport Masterplan – Hearing Of Submissions That submissions on the draft <i>Benalla Airport Master Plan</i> be received.	MFIT	Completed

Action No.	Meeting Name	Item	Action	Officer	Status/notes
14.	F&P Committee 27-Aug-25	3.	Planning Permit Application for Buildings and Works to the Existing Office Building at 18 Bridge Street East, Benalla 1. That the report be noted. 2. That a report on Planning Permit Application for Buildings and Works to the Existing Office Building at 18 Bridge Street East, Benalla be presented to the Finance and Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday 10 December 2025.	MD	1. Completed 2. In progress
15.	Council Meeting 13-Dec-23	4.4	Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve Committee 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 Assembly of Councillors briefing on 4 February 2026.

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.

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 and private commercial information that would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about a person, their personal affairs and expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking if released:

- 9.1 Tender Report For Contract CM26.036 Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment
- 9.2 Tender Report For Panel Contract CM26.011 Provision of Slashing Services – Council Roadsides and Reserves 2025-2027
- 9.3 Tender Report For Contract CM26.025 Shoulder Re-construction and Sealing Works on various Council Roads
- 9.4 Confidential Reports by Councillors
- 9.5 Confidential Council Actions Pending

Recommendation:

That the meeting be closed to the public in accordance with Sections 3(1) and Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* for the following items:

- 9.1 Tender Report For Contract CM26.036 Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment
Item 9.1 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.
- 9.2 Tender Report For Panel Contract CM26.011 Provision of Slashing Services – Council Roadsides and Reserves 2025-2027
Item 9.2 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.
- 9.3 Tender Report For Contract CM26.025 Shoulder Re-construction and Sealing Works on various Council Roads
Item 9.3 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.
- 9.4 Confidential Reports by Councillors
Item 9.4 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to council business information, being information that council prejudice Council's position.
- 9.5 Confidential Council Actions Pending
Item 9.5 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.

10. Reopening of the meeting to the public

Recommendation:

That the meeting be reopened to the public.

Closure of the meeting