

Benalla Rural City Council

Council Meeting

Agenda

Date: Wednesday 4 March 2026

Time: 6pm

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

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Agenda

Chair	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)
Councillors	Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor) Councillor David Blore Councillor Vince Branigan Councillor Peter Davis Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne Councillor Jillian Merkel
In attendance	Peter Keane Chief Executive Officer Robert Barber General Manager Corporate Jane Archbold Manager Community Cathy Fitzpatrick Manager Finance Adrian Gasperoni Manager Assets and Infrastructure Janine McMaster Manager People and Performance Greg Robertson Manager Facilities and Information Technology Nilesh Singh Manager Development Jess Pendergast Governance Coordinator

Opening and Acknowledgement of Country

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

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

Apologies

It is noted that Councillor Bernie Hearn is requesting a leave of absence from Thursday 2 April 2026 to Monday 27 April 2026.

It is noted that Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne is requesting a leave of absence from Thursday 5 March 2026 to Thursday 19 March 2026.

Recommendation:

- 1. That a leave of absence be granted to Councillor Bernie Hearn from Thursday 2 April 2026 to Monday 27 April 2026.**
- 2. That a leave of absence be granted to Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne from Thursday 5 March 2026 to Thursday 19 March 2026.**
- 3. 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 17 December 2025 and Wednesday 4 February 2026 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

No petitions were submitted to the meeting.

Record of Committees

3.1 Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee

The recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 18 February 2026 are attached as **Appendix 1**.

Recommendation:

That the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 18 February 2026 be adopted.

Recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee - Wednesday 18 February 2026

1. Planning Permit Application To Use And Develop Land For A Warehouse, Creation Of Access To A Transport Zone 2, Removal Of Native Vegetation And Installation Of Business Identification Signage At 331 Sydney Road, Benalla

The report assesses a planning application received to use and develop land for a warehouse, creation of access to a Transport Zone 2, removal of native vegetation and installation of business identification signage at 331 Sydney Road, Benalla.

It is recorded that the following people made submissions on the item:

- David Joseph from David Joseph & Co Lawyers spoke against the planning application.
- Robert Rowland from Freedom of Design spoke in support of the planning application.
- Jennie Baldry from Oxley & Co spoke in support of the planning application.
- Emma Cavalot from Midland Freight spoke in support of the planning application.

Cr King / Cr Gunaratne:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to David Joseph.

Carried

It is noted that Councillor Peter Davis joined the meeting at 6.28pm.

Cr King / Cr Hearn:

That the Finance and Planning Committee, acting under is delegated authority of the Council, having caused notice of Planning Application No. P055/25 to be given under Section 52 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and having considered all the matters required under Section 60 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* decides to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit under the provisions of the Benalla Planning Scheme in respect of the land known and described as 331 Sydney Road, Benalla, Lot 1, TP813128, Parish of Benalla to use and develop land for a warehouse, creation of access to a Transport Zone 2, removal of native vegetation and installation of business identification in accordance with the plans as lodged with the application dated 8 August 2025 and subject to the following conditions:

Compliance with documents approved under this permit

- 1. At all times what the permit allows must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of any document approved under this permit to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

Amended plans

- 2. Before the use and development starts, plans must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The plans must:**
 - a. be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**
 - b. be drawn to scale with dimensions.**
 - c. submitted in electronic form.**
 - d. be generally in accordance with the plans as prepared by Robert Rowland, Freedom of Design, Revision 16, dated 08/08/25 forming part of the application, but amended to show the following details:**

- i. An amended landscape plan in accordance with Condition 14.
- ii. Submission of a Structural Root Plan to accord with Condition 34.
- iii. Annotation that no gate will be fixed to the Sydney Road, Benalla entrance/exit.
- iv. Numbering of all car parking bays.
- v. Swept path movements for trucks entering and existing the Truck Parking Bays.
- vi. Annotation that no more than 4 rigid trucks will be at the loading dock at any one time.
- vii. Updated acoustic report in accordance with Condition 8.
- viii. An amended site plan showing access and egress provision for vehicles from Sydney Road in accordance with Condition No. 46 of the permit

Layout not altered

3. The layout of the proposed development must not be altered from the layout on the approved endorsed plans without the written consent of the responsible authority.

General Amenity

4. The use and development must be managed so that the amenity of the area is not detrimentally affected, through the:
 - a. transport of materials, goods or commodities to or from the land
 - b. appearance of any building, works or materials
 - c. emission of noise, artificial light, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, vapour, steam, soot, ash, dust, waste water, waste products, grit or oil
 - d. presence of verminto the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Hours of operation

5. Training activities associated with the use must only operate between the following times:
 - a. 7am to 6pm Monday to Saturday.
6. All loading activity use must only operate between the following times:
 - a. 5.30am to 6pm Monday to Saturday.
7. All truck arrival times must only occur between the following times:
 - a. 2am – 6pm Monday to Sunday with the exception of one truck arrival at 9.30pm.
 - b. Only two truck movements can occur between the hours of 9.30pm and 5.00am. The one truck arriving at 2.00am must access the site via Gate 2, park in the loading bay located between the shed and the workshop and shut down. No loading or unloading is to occur from this truck until 5.30am.

No vehicle movement is to occur on the site between 10pm and 2am on any day.

The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary these requirements.

Acoustic Report

8. Before the development starts, an Acoustic Report must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The Acoustic Report must be the same as that prepared by Waveform Acoustics dated 02.07.2025 but modified to include all dwellings within the immediate area, including those located opposite the subject site on Sydney Road, Benalla.

Noise control

9. At all times noise emanating from the land must comply with the requirements of the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021* (as amended from time to time) as measured in accordance with the Noise Protocol to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Noise Protocol means the *Noise limit and assessment protocol for the control of noise from commercial, industrial and trade premises and entertainment venues*, published by the Environment Protection Authority on its website, as in force from time to time.

10. The permit holder must arrange and pay for noise testing within three months after the use begins, and then a further test must be undertaken within twelve months of the use commencing. The testing must measure actual operating noise levels to check compliance with the relevant noise protocols.

If the testing shows that the noise protocols are not being met, the permit holder must promptly implement additional noise reduction measures to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Security alarms

11. All security alarms or similar devices installed on the land must be of a silent type in accordance with any current standard published by Standards Australia International Limited and be connected to a security service to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Loudspeakers

12. No external sound amplification equipment, loudspeakers or public address system are to be used for the purpose of announcement, broadcast, playing of music or similar purpose.

Soundproofing of plant and equipment

13. All external plant and equipment must be acoustically treated or placed in soundproof housing to reduce noise to a level to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Landscaping

14. Before the development starts, a landscape plan must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The landscape plan must:
 - a. be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
 - b. be prepared by a suitably qualified person.
 - c. have plans drawn to scale with dimensions.
 - d. be submitted to the responsible authority in electronic form.
 - e. include the following:

- i. layout of landscaping and planting within all open areas of the subject land.
- ii. a survey (including botanical names) of all existing vegetation to be retained and/or removed.
- iii. details of surface finishes of pathways and driveways.
- iv. a planting schedule of all proposed trees, shrubs and ground covers, including botanical names, common names, pot sizes, sizes at maturity, and quantities of each plant.
- v. vegetation to screen the development from abutting properties on Sydney Road, Benalla.
- vi. canopy trees which grow to a minimum height of 2m in the following areas:
 - Top of the acoustic earth mound.
 - Along the length of the rear chain fence dividing the warehouse area from the paddocks. Trees must be provided in a continuous form to provide a visual barrier to the warehouse site.
- vii. details of how the project responds to water sensitive urban design principles, including how storm water will be mitigated, captured, cleaned and stored for onsite use and the location and type of irrigation systems to be used including the location of any rainwater tanks to be used for irrigation.

The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary any of these requirements.

Completion of landscaping

15. Before the use starts, the landscaping shown on the approved landscape plan must be carried out and completed to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary this requirement.

Landscaping maintenance

16. At all times the landscaping shown on the approved landscape plan must be maintained (including the replacement of any dead, diseased or damaged plants) to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Acoustic mounding

17. Before the use and development starts, acoustic earth mounding must be put in place along the boundary abutting 321 Sydney Road, Benalla as shown on the endorsed plans, to a height of 1.5 metres and 2.5 metres above natural ground level and a width of 2 metres, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
18. The mound must be designed by a suitably qualified acoustic engineer to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Concealed service pipes and equipment

19. All pipes, fixtures, fittings vents, plant and equipment servicing any building on the site (excluding storm water down pipes, guttering and rainheads) must be concealed in service ducts or otherwise hidden from view to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Plant/equipment or features on roof

- 20. No plant, equipment, services or architectural features other than those shown on the approved plans are permitted above the roof level of the building(s).**

Waste storage

- 21. All waste and recyclables must be stored in and collected from an area set aside for this purpose. This area must be graded, drained and screened from public view to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

Regular waste removal

- 22. All waste material not required for further on- site processing must be regularly removed from the site to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. All vehicles removing waste must have fully secured and contained loads so that no wastes are spilled or dust or odour is created, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

Control of light spill

- 23. External lighting must be designed, baffled and located so as to prevent any adverse effect on adjoining land to the satisfaction of the responsible authority**

No sales to the public

- 24. Direct sales of goods or other materials must not be made to the public on the land.**

Waste management plan

- 25. Before the use starts, a waste management plan must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The waste management plan must:**
- a. be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**
 - b. be submitted in electronic form.**
 - c. include the following:**
 - i. anticipated volumes of waste and recycling that will be generated and how they are determined.**
 - ii. the type and number of waste bins.**
 - iii. the type and size of trucks required for waste collection.**
 - iv. a plan detailing adequate areas for waste bin storage and collection for the required type and number of bins.**
 - v. frequency of waste collection.**
 - vi. hours for waste collection.**

The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary these requirements.

Waste management and collection

- 26. Waste management and collection must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the approved and endorsed waste management plan to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**
- 27. The storage of goods or materials in conjunction with the use or development hereby permitted shall:**
- a. be carried out in a manner so as to prevent the exposure to view from any adjacent premises or from any public place of any unsightly matter.**
 - b. be stored to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority so as to not become visually obtrusive on the site.**

Parking signs

- 28. Before the use starts, signs must be provided directing drivers to the areas set aside for car parking to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. The area of each sign must not exceed 0.3 square metres.**

At all times, the sign/signs must be located and maintained to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

Signs not to be altered

- 29. The location and details of the sign(s), and any supporting structure, as shown on the endorsed plans, must not be altered without the written consent of the responsible authority.**

No illumination

- 30. The sign(s) must not be animated or contain any flashing or intermittent light.**

- 31. The sign(s) must not be illuminated by external or internal light.**

The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary this requirement.

Sign maintenance

- 32. The sign(s), including the structure and content, must be constructed and maintained to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

Stormwater management system – implementation and management

- 33. The stormwater management system approved by the responsible authority and included in the endorsed stormwater management plan must be constructed, managed and maintained to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

The details of the stormwater management system must not be altered from the details in the endorsed stormwater management plan without the written consent of the responsible authority.

Native vegetation – notification of permit conditions

- 34. Before works start, the permit holder must advise all persons undertaking the vegetation removal or works on site of all relevant permit conditions and associated statutory requirements or approvals.**

Native vegetation - Construction management

- 35. Before any works and native vegetation removal starts, plans must be submitted to and approved by the responsible authority. The plans must:**

a. be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

b. be submitted in electronic form.

c. include the following:

- i. a detailed description of the measures to be implemented to protect the native vegetation to be retained during construction works, and the person/s responsible for implementation and compliance. These measures must include the erection of a native vegetation protection fence around all native vegetation to be retained on site, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, including the tree protection zones of all native trees to be retained. All tree protection zones must comply with AS 4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

- ii. an amended site plan, drawn to scale with dimensions and georeferenced (such as VicGrid94 co-ordinates), that clearly shows:
 - the location and identification of the land affected by this permit, including standard parcel identifiers for freehold land.
 - the location and area of all native vegetation present, including scattered trees, that are permitted to be removed under this permit.

Protection of vegetation to be retained

36. Before works start, a plan identifying all native vegetation to be retained and describing the measures to be used to protect the identified vegetation during construction, must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority.

Native vegetation offsets

37. To offset the removal of 0.08 hectares of native vegetation, as identified in Native Vegetation Removal Report *NVRR ID: 381_20250422_4J5*, the permit holder must secure a native vegetation offset, in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (DELWP 2017)* as specified below:
- A general offset of 0.023 general habitat units:
 - a. located within the Goulburn Broken *Catchment Management Authority* boundary or Benalla Rural City LGA.
 - b. with a minimum strategic biodiversity score of at least 0.752.
 - The offset secured must provide protection of at least 1 large tree.

Engineering

38. Appropriate measures must be implemented throughout the construction stage of the development to rectify and/or minimise mud, crushed rock or other debris being carried onto public roads from the subject land, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
39. Before the construction works start the provision of vehicle parking and access, construction plans must be provided showing a detailed layout, demonstrating compliance with Austroads Publication 'Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice: Part 11 Parking' to the satisfaction of the responsible authority must be submitted to and approved by the responsible authority. The plans must be drawn to scale with dimensions. Before the use starts, the area(s) set aside for parking of vehicles and access lanes as shown on the endorsed plans must be:
- a. all weather sealed surface,
 - b. constructed and completed to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority,
 - c. drained in accordance with an approved drainage plan,
 - d. line-marked to indicate each car space and all access,

The areas must be constructed and drained to prevent diversion of flood or drainage waters and maintained in a continuously useable condition to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. Car spaces, access lanes and driveways must be kept available for these purposes at all times.

40. No additional vehicle crossing may be constructed apart from that endorsed on the approved plan.
41. Before the use begins all stormwater and surface water discharging from the relevant portion of the site, proposed buildings and works must be conveyed to the legal point of discharge to the satisfaction of the responsible Authority. No effluent or polluted water of any type may be allowed to enter the Council's stormwater drainage system.
42. Before any of the development starts a properly prepared drainage discharge plan with computations to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. When approved, the plans will be endorsed and will then form part of the permit. The plans must be drawn to scale with dimensions and a minimum of three copies must be provided. The information submitted must show the details listed in the Council's Infrastructure Design Manual and be designed in accordance with the requirements of that manual.

The information and plan must include:

- a. details of how the works on the land are to be drained and retarded,
- b. measures to enhance stormwater discharge quality from the site and protect downstream waterways including the expected discharge quality emanating from the development (output from MUSIC or similar) and design calculation summaries of the treatment elements,
- c. a maximum discharge rate from the site is to be determined by computation to the satisfaction of Council,
- d. the details of the incorporation of water sensitive urban design designed in accordance either "Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines" 1999,
- e. discharge from the site to be retarded on site to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, to ensure a maximum discharge rate off-site as specified in the Infrastructure Design Manual unless otherwise approved by the Responsible Authority.

Before the use begins all works must be constructed in accordance with those plans to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority

Environmental Health

43. All sewage and sullage wastewater from the proposed development must be discharged into a new onsite wastewater management system which is approved under the Australian Standards, retains all wastes within the boundaries of the land, in accordance with the Land Capability Assessment prepared by *Porta Environmental Pty Ltd for 331 Sydney Road Benalla for Emma Cavalot (Midland Freight) with Report number EC05082024-1A dated February 2025* and is located to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Head, Transport for Victoria

44. There must be only one vehicle access point from Sydney Road, Benalla to the subject land as shown on the plans appended to the application.
45. Prior to commencement of the buildings and/or works, a functional layout plan must be submitted to and approved by the Head, Transport for Victoria. When approved by the Head, Transport for Victoria, the plans must be endorsed by the Responsible Authority and will then form part of the permit.

46. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the functional layout plan must include:
 - a. The access constructed generally in accordance with DTP Guideline Drawing GD4010A for 26 metre B-Double truck.
 - b. A Rural Basic Right Turn (BAR) to current Austroads standards on Sydney Road, Benalla.
 - c. A Rural Basic Left Turn (BAL) to current Austroads standards on Sydney Road, Benalla.
 - d. All existing, removed and relocated vegetation, services - bus stops, road signage etc.
 - e. Removal of all disused and redundant accesses.
47. Prior to commencement of the buildings and/or works, a functional layout plan stage road safety audit must be submitted to and approved by the Head, Transport for Victoria. The road safety audit must be undertaken by a suitably qualified road safety auditor.
48. Prior to the occupation of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Head, Transport for Victoria, the following works must be completed to the satisfaction of and at no cost to the Head, Transport for Victoria and the Responsible Authority:
 - a. All road works identified in the approved Functional Layout Plan.
 - b. Any works identified in the Road Safety Audit.
 - c. Any other works required.
49. Driveway must be maintained in a fit and proper state so as not to compromise the ability of vehicles to enter and exit the site in a safe manner or compromise operational efficiency of the road or public safety (e.g. by spilling gravel onto the roadway).

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority

50. The finished floor level of the proposed warehouse and workshop building must be set at least 300 millimetres above the 1 in 100 AEP flood level of 170.78 metre AHD i.e., 171.18 metres AHD.
51. Twin 300mm x 1800mm box culverts be installed in the acoustic barrier with the culvert inverts set at the general ground elevation as shown on the submitted plan (Authority Ref: P055-25, Rev P2, Nov 2025).

Commencement of Permit

52. This permit will operate from the issued date of this permit.

Expiry - Signage

53. This permit as it relates to a sign will expire 15 years from the issued date of this permit.

On expiry of the permit, the sign and structures built specifically to support and illuminate it must be removed.

In accordance with Section 69 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, an application may be submitted to the responsible authority for an extension of the period referred to in this condition.

Native vegetation permit expiry

- 54. This permit will expire if one of the following circumstances applies:**
- a. The removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation does not start within two years of the date of this permit.**
 - b. The removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation is not completed within ten years of the date of this permit.**

Development and use permit expiry

- 55. This permit will expire if one of the following circumstances applies:**
- a. The development is not started within 2 years of the issued date of this permit.**
 - b. The development is not completed within 4 years of the issued date of this permit.**
 - c. The use does not start within 2 years of completion of the development.**

In accordance with Section 69 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, an application may be submitted to the responsible authority for an extension of the periods referred to in this condition.

General notes:

The granting of this permit does not obviate the necessity for compliance with the requirements of any other authority under any act, regulation or local law.

An asset protection permit is required prior to the commencement of any works on site.

A consent to work within a road reserve must be obtained from the Responsible Authority prior to the carrying out of any vehicle crossing works.

This permit does not authorise the commencement of any building construction works. Before any such development may commence, the applicant must apply for and obtain appropriate building approval.

Head, TfV notes:

Separate consent for works within the road reserve and the specifications of these works is required under the *Road Management Act 2004*. For the purposes of this application the works will include provision of:

- a. Access constructed to GD4010A for a 26 metre B-Double truck.**
- b. Rural Basic Right Turn (BAR)**
- c. Rural Basic Left Turn (BAL)**
- d. Any other works required.**

Carried

2. Planning Permit Application For Use And Development Of Accommodation (Host Farm), Rural Industry, Primary Produce Sales, Food And Drink Premises (Restaurant), Place Of Assembly (Petting Zoo), Reduction Of Car Parking And Business Signage At 58 Centre Road, Molyullah

This report assesses a planning application received to use and develop the subject site for a tourism operation including a host farm, rural industry, primary produce sales, 60 seat restaurant, place of assembly, signage and reduction of car parking.

It is recorded that the following people made submissions on the item:

- Rodney Berkahn spoke against the planning application.
- Troy Spencer from Planography spoke in support of the planning application.
- Anthony Hill spoke in support of the planning application.
- Leon Meyer spoke in support of the planning application.

Cr Davis / Cr King:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to Anthony Hill.

Carried

Cr King / Cr Merkel:

That Council having caused notice of Planning Application No. P064-25 to be given under Section 52 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and having considered all the matters required under Section 60 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* decides to issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit under the provisions of the Benalla Planning Scheme in respect of the land known and described as 58 Centre Road, Molyullah for the use and development of land for use and development of Accommodation (Host Farm), Rural Industry, Primary Produce Sales, Food and Drink Premises (restaurant), Place of Assembly (Petting Zoo), reduction of car parking and business signage and subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Before the use and development starts, plans must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The plans must:**
 - a. Be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**
 - b. Be drawn to scale with dimensions.**
 - c. Submitted in electronic form.**
 - d. Be generally in accordance with the plans submitted with the application, but amended to show the following details:**
 - i. Car parking spaces are to be a minimum of 4.9m x 2.6m and in accordance with the requirements of Clause 52.06 of the Benalla Planning Scheme.**
 - ii. Car parking spaces must be properly formed and drained and constructed of a spray seal.**
 - iii. Amend cabin elevations to show the correct property address.**

- iv. Amend the floor plan of Shed 1 to show the restaurant seating.
 - v. Show the location of bus parking on the site plan.
 - vi. Show colours of external cladding.
 - vii. Provide details of proposed signage including location, dimensions, elevations, colouring and wording.
 - viii. Shrubs and trees planted to screen the activity on the land.
 - ix. Location of drainage channels and swales.
2. The layout of the proposed development must not be altered from the layout on the approved endorsed plans without the written consent of the responsible authority.
3. At any time no more than 60 seats may be made available to patrons on the land. The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary this requirement.
4. Shrubs and trees must be planted and maintained to screen activity on the land.
5. The use and development must comply with the Integrated Land Management Plan dated January 2025 and prepared by Planography.
6. The use and development must be managed so that the amenity of the area is not detrimentally affected through the:
 - a. Transport of materials, goods or commodities to or from the land.
 - b. Appearance of any building, works or materials.
 - c. Emission of noise, artificial light, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, vapour, team, soot, ash, dust, wastewater, waste products, grit or oil.to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
7. At all times noise emanating from the land must comply with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Regulations 2021 (as amended from time to time) as measured to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
8. Noise Protocol means the Noise limit and assessment protocol for the control of noise from commercial, industrial and trade premises and entertainment venues, published by the Environment Protection Authority on its website, as in force from time to time.
9. Noise generated from the premises must not be audible within the habitable rooms with windows closed of any nearby dwellings to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
10. Before the use starts, a noise and amenity plan/patron management plan must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The noise and amenity plan/patron management plan must:
 - a. Be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
 - b. Be submitted to the responsible authority in electronic form.
 - c. Include the following details:

- i. Staffing and other measures which are designed to ensure the orderly arrival and departure of patrons.
 - ii. Signage to be used to encourage responsible off-site patron behaviour.
 - iii. The training of staff in the management of patron behaviour.
 - iv. Staff communication arrangements.
 - v. Measures to control noise emissions from the premises.
 - vi. Complaint handling process to effectively manage any complaints received. This must include a Complaints Register to be kept at the premises which records details of the complaint received any action taken and the response provided to the complainant.
11. All security alarms or similar devices installed on the land must be of a silent type in accordance with any current standard published by Standards Australia International Limited and be connected to a security service to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
12. No external sound amplification equipment, loudspeakers or public address system are to be used for the purpose of announcement, broadcast, playing of music or similar purpose.
13. All external plant and equipment must be acoustically treated or placed in soundproof housing to reduce noise to a level to the satisfaction of the responsible authority
14. Waste collection must be conducted in EPA Publication 1254 'Noise Control Guidelines and shall not occur after 10pm and before 7am weekdays or 9am on all other days.
15. Deliveries must be conducted in accordance with EPA Publication 1254 'Noise Control Guidelines' and shall not occur after 10pm and before 7am weekdays or 9am all other days.
16. Acoustic testing must be conducted over a 48hr period, during a representative time of the operation, within three months of occupancy to determine compliance or otherwise to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
 - a. The testing should include, but be limited to, testing of plant and equipment and music noise emissions, measured at the Noise Sensitive areas of the NSR.
 - b. If non-compliance is detected, additional measures may be required to ensure compliance with the TRPA 1826.4 limits.
17. The use must only operate between the following times:
 - a. 7am and 6pm Monday to Sunday
 - b. Closed Christmas Day.The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary these requirements.
18. All waste and recyclables must be stored in and collected from an area set aside for this purpose. This area must be graded, drained and screened from public view to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

19. All waste material not required for further on-site processing must be regularly removed from the site to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. All vehicles removing waste must have fully secured and contained loads so that no wastes are spilled or dust or odour is created, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
20. External lighting must be designed, baffled and located so as to prevent any adverse effect on adjoining land to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
21. No fewer than thirty-six (36) car parking spaces must be provided on the land.
22. Before the use starts, the areas set aside for the parking of vehicles and bicycles, and access lanes as shown on the endorsed plans must be:
 - a. Constructed.
 - b. Properly formed to such levels that they can be used in accordance with the plans.
 - c. Surfaced with a spray seal.
 - d. Drained.
 - e. Line marked to indicate each space and all access lanes.
 - f. Clearly marked to show direction of traffic along access lanes and driveways.

To the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

At all times car spaces, access lanes and driveways must be kept available for these purposes.

Once constructed these areas must be maintained to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

23. No native vegetation may be removed from the land unless with the further written consent of the responsible authority.
24. Before the development starts, a landscape plan must be approved and endorsed by the responsible authority. The landscape plan must:
 - a. Be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
 - b. Be prepared by a suitably qualified person.
 - c. Have plans drawn to scale with dimensions.
 - d. Be submitted to the responsible authority in electronic form.
 - e. Include the following:
 - i. Layout of landscaping and planting with all open spaces of the subject land and include the buffer planting along the boundaries.
 - ii. A survey (including botanical names) of all existing vegetation to be retained.
 - iii. Details of surface finishes of pathways and driveways.
 - iv. A planting schedule of all proposed trees, shrubs and ground covers, including botanical names, common names, pot sizes, sizes at maturity, and quantities of each plant.

The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary any of these requirements.

- 25. Before the use starts the landscaping shown on the approved landscape plan must be carried and completed to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary this requirement.**
- 26. At all times the landscaping shown on the approved landscape plan must be maintained (including the replacement of any dead, diseased or damaged plants) to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

Engineering Conditions

- 27. Prior to buildings and works commencing on the land, an updated Traffic Impact Assessment Report (TIAR) must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. The TIAR must consider the impact of the use and development to the Molyullah Road and Centre Road intersection. Any recommendations from the updated report regarding intersection works must be implemented prior to the use commencing on the land.**
- 28. The proposed works must not cut off natural drainage from adjacent properties.**
- 29. Any damage to Council assets (i.e. roads, table drains etc) shall be repaired at the cost of the applicant to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.**
- 30. No additional vehicle accesses may be constructed apart from those endorsed on the approved plan.**
- 31. The applicant shall provide drawings prepared by a Registered Engineer to demonstrate the dimensions of the vehicle parking and manoeuvring areas and including the method of how the bays will be marked on the gravel surface. Details of the vehicle parking shall be submitted to Council for endorsement prior to the commencement of works.**
- 32. The internal access road shall be designed to ensure that vehicles exiting the road fronting cabins, circulate behind the proposed sheds in the same direction of traffic flow detailed on the submitted drawings. The drawing prepared by the Registered Engineer will need to dimension the road widths that will accommodate the largest vehicle that will use the road and including any signage to assist drivers with the traffic flow direction. Details of the road infrastructure shall be submitted to Council for endorsement prior to the commencement of works.**
- 33. Drainage infrastructure required for the proposed development shall be designed by a Registered Engineer. The drainage infrastructure shall conform to the requirements of the Infrastructure Design Manual. Details of the drainage infrastructure shall be submitted to Council for endorsement prior to the commencement of works.**
- 34. Prior to the commencement of use, the proposed vehicle access from Molyullah Road must be constructed in accordance with the Infrastructure Design Manual standard drawing SD255 for a rural entrance and include setback to the gate as detailed on the IDM standard drawing.**
- 35. Prior to the commencement of buildings and works a Construction Management Plan must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority, and effective measures consistent with the Plan must be taken to:**
 - a. Implement effective traffic management and environmental controls;**
 - b. Establish and maintain safe construction vehicle access to the site;**

- c. **Maintain vehicle and machinery hygiene;**
- d. **Avoid the spread of soil-borne pathogens and weeds;**
- e. **Minimise erosion, sedimentation and contamination;**
- f. **Reduce the impact of noise, dust and other emissions during construction;**
- g. **Prevent mud, dirt, sand, soil, clay or stones from entering the drainage system;**
- h. **Avoid having such materials deposited on public land by construction vehicles;**
- i. **Establish and maintain all recommended Tree Protection Zones.**

Environmental Health Conditions

- 36. **All sewage and sullage wastewater from the proposed development site must be discharged into a new on site wastewater management system which is approved under the Australian Standards, retains all wastes within the boundaries of the land, in accordance with the Land Capability Assessment prepared by *Land Capability Assessments Victoria Pty Ltd for 58 Centre Road Molyullah VIC 3673 with Report Number LCA15032025 dated April 2025* and is located to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.**

Goulburn Murray Catchment Management Authority Conditions

- 37. **The finished floor level of all proposed buildings must be constructed at least 450 millimetres above the highest existing ground level underneath the building footprint. This requirement excludes areas associated with a garage, carport, pergola, verandah, decking and the like.**

Goulburn Murray Water Conditions

- 38. **All construction and ongoing activities must be in accordance with the EPA Publication 1834.1 Civil Construction Building and Demolition Guide (September 2023).**
- 39. **All wastewater from the site must be treated and disposed of using an approved system. The system must have a certificate of conformity issued by the relevant body (or equivalent approval) and be installed, operated and maintained in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard(s) and EPA Guideline for Onsite Wastewater Management, May 2024, as updated or replaced, to the satisfaction of Council's Environmental Health Department.**
- 40. **The wastewater management system(s) must be appropriately designed to manage the potential volume of wastewater generated from the site, including an appropriately sized disposal area based on a full water balance specific to the proposal and subject land in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Australian Standard(s) and EPA Guideline for Onsite Wastewater Management, May 2024, as updated or replaced, to the satisfaction of Council's Environmental Health Department.**
- 41. **The wastewater disposal area(s) must be kept free of stock, buildings, driveways and service trenching and must be planted with appropriate vegetation to maximise its performance. Stormwater must be diverted away. A reserve wastewater disposal field(s) of equivalent size to the primary disposal field must be provided for use in the event that the primary field requires resting or has failed.**

42. Prior to the commencement of any works, the five parcels described as Crown Allotments 30, 31, 32, 33 and 35 Parish of Tatong must be consolidated to create one parcel of land.

Expiry

42. This permit will expire if one of the following circumstances applies:
- The development is not started within two (2) years of the date of this permit.
 - The development is not completed within four (4) years of the date of this permit.
 - The use is not commenced within four (4) years of the date of this permit.

The Responsible Authority may extend the commencement date if a request is made in writing by the owner or the occupier of the land to which the permit applies before the permit expires or within 6 months afterwards.

General Notes

- The granting of this permit does not obviate the necessity for compliance with the requirements of any other authority under any act, regulation or local law.
- This permit does not authorise the commencement of any building construction works. Before any such development may commence, the applicant must apply for and obtain appropriate building approval.
- A consent to work within a road reserve must be obtained from the Responsible Authority prior to the carrying out of any vehicle crossing works.
- A subdivision approved under a planning permit does not constitute the certification of a Plan of Subdivision. A separate application should be made by a licensed land surveyor.
- Prior to any works being carried out in relation to any part of the onsite wastewater system a permit for the works must be obtained from the Benalla Rural City Council.
- Business identification signage for the subject site cannot exceed 3m² in area.
- Please note the 1 in 100 AEP flood is not the maximum possible flood. There is always a possibility that a flood larger in height and extent, than the 1 in 100 AEP flood, may occur in the future.
- The *Environment Protection Act 2017* imposes duties on individuals and-or businesses undertaking the activity permitted by this permit. If your business engages in activities that may give rise to a risk to human health or the environment from pollution or waste, you must understand those risks and take action to minimise them as far as reasonably practicable. *For further information on what the laws mean for Victorian businesses and community go to <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/general-environmental-duty>.*

Carried

3. Planning Permit Application For Use And Development Of A Place Of Assembly (Wedding And Events Venue) And Accommodation At 140 Darktown Road, Lurg

The report assesses a planning application received to use and develop the subject site for a place of assembly (wedding and events venue) and accommodation.

It is recorded that the following people made submissions on the item:

- Michelle McGath spoke in support of the planning application.
- Lianna Ramage spoke against the planning application.
- Michele Ramage spoke against the planning application.
- Lee Barr spoke against the planning application.

Cr Davis / Cr Gunaratne:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to Michelle McGath.

Carried

Cr Davis / Cr Hearn:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to Lianna Ramage.

Carried

Cr Davis / Cr Gunaratne:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to Michele Ramage.

Carried

Cr Hearn / Cr King:

That item 3. *Planning Permit Application For Use And Development Of A Place Of Assembly (Wedding And Events Venue) And Accommodation At 140 Darktown Road, Lurg* be deferred until the Finance and Planning Committee meeting on 25 March 2026 to allow for further consideration on the planning permit application.

Carried

4. Building and Planning Approvals – November and December 2025

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

Cr Hearn / Cr Davis:

That the report be noted.

Carried

5. 2025/26 Quick Response Grants Program

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

Cr Hearn / Cr Gunaratne:

- 1. That a \$600 grant from the 2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program be awarded to U3A Benalla.**
- 2. That a \$750 grant from the 2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program be awarded to Swanpool and District Community Development Association.**

Carried

6. Petition: Reopen The Reserve Located To The South of Willis Little Drive, Benalla

The report discusses a petition received by Council requesting the reopening of the reserve located to the south of Willis Little Drive, Benalla.

It is recorded that the following person made a submission on the item:

- Desma Versteegen spoke in support of the petition.

Cr Davis / Cr Gunaratne:

That an extension of three minutes be granted to Desma Versteegen.

Carried

Cr Hearn / Cr Gunaratne:

That item 6. *Petition: Reopen The Reserve Located To The South of Willis Little Drive, Benalla* be deferred until the Finance and Planning Committee meeting 25 March 2026 to allow for further information to be provided on the request to reopen the reserve located to the south of Willis Little Drive, Benalla.

Carried

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.

December 2025

2 December	Australia Day Advisory Committee Meeting
3 December	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review
9 December	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
12 December	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
15 December	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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Record of Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committees

December 2025

Australia Day Advisory Committee

3.30pm Tuesday 2 December 2025, Customer Service Centre (Geoff Oliver Meeting Room) 1 Bridge Street East, Benalla.

Chair	Cr Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	Councillor Representative
Committee	Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Representative
	Amanda Challis	Community Representative
	Robyn Goudie	Community Representative
	Jade Kirk	Community Representative
	Rex Nankervis	Community Representative
	June Howard	Community Representative
	Christine Werner	Community Representative
	Diane Young	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. Australia Day Awards 2026
2. General Business

Assembly of Councillors – Business Review

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

Chair	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	
Councillors	Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	
	Councillor David Blore	
	Councillor Peter Davis	
	Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
	Councillor Jillian Merkel	
In attendance	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Stephen Dowe	Senior Projects and Technical Services Engineer
	Melissa Reid	Project Manager Community Development Fund

Apologies: Cr Bernie Hearn and Cr David Blore.**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil**Items discussed:**

1. Victorian Forestry Transition Program Update
2. Draft *Active Transport Plan 2025-2030* and Draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030*
3. Benalla Landfill and Resource Recovery Centre Business Operations
4. Solar Project, Victorian Transition Plan and Renewable Energy Zones Discussion
5. Priority Projects for 2026 Election

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting

5pm Tuesday 9 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
Janine McMaster Manager People and Performance
Greg Robertson Manager Facilities and Information Technology
Kate Parker Corporate Risk Coordinator

Internal Auditors: Brad Ead AFS Auditors

External Auditors Jason Gilbert Crowe Auditors

Apologies: Nil

Conflicts of Interest disclosed: Nil

Items discussed:

1. Meeting with Auditors
2. Internal Audit Program
3. Risk Management Update
4. ICT Disaster Recovery Plan
5. Procurement Process Exemptions
6. Reports From Regulatory and Integrity Agencies
7. Audit and Risk Committee Annual Review
8. Audit and Risk Committee Compliance Management Items
9. 2025/26 Year End
10. General Business

Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre (BIRC) Redevelopment Project Steering Committee

10am Friday 12 December 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

Chair:	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
Committee:	Cr Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	Councillor Representative
	Cr Peter Davis	Councillor Representative
	Wally Armstrong	Benalla Basketball Association
	Noel Baumgarten	Community Member
	David Booth	Community Infrastructure and Place, Sport and Recreation Victoria
	David Huxtable	Basketball Victoria
	Tom O'Connor	Basketball Victoria
	Terry Nowland	BIRC Committee of Management
	Simone Sammon	Community Member
	Jenny Sloan	Community Infrastructure and Place, Sport and Recreation Victoria
In attendance:	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Tom Arnold	Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
	Dean Steegstra	Open Space Coordinator
	Laura Benson	Browns Project Solutions
	Bree Glass	Administration Officer

Apologies: Cr Peter Davis, Tom O'Connor, Simone Sammon and Laura Benson.

Conflicts of Interest disclosed: Nil

Items discussed:

1. Project Opportunities
2. Project Design and Community Consultation
3. Key decisions and milestones
4. Information Sharing
5. Actions

Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee

5.30pm Monday 15 December 2025, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

Chair	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
Committee	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Puna Gunaratne	Councillor Representative
	Joyce Clarke	Community Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
In attendance	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Alison Angus	Visitor Economy Coordinator
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer

Apologies: Cr Puna Gunaratne and Alex Ross

Conflicts of Interest disclosed: Nil

Items discussed:

1. Curator Presentation
2. Sponsorship Update
3. Event Production Update
4. General Business

Officer Reports

4.1 Financial Report For The Half Year Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 198090245-2787
Cathy Fitzpatrick – Manager Finance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the financial results compared to budget for the quarter ended 31 December 2025 and presents outcomes from the 2025/26 half-year budget review.

BACKGROUND

Section 97 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that at the end of each quarter of the financial year, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to the Council at a meeting that is open to the public.

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 of a financial year must include a statement by the Chief Executive Officer as to whether a revised budget is, or may be, required.

OPERATING RESULT

Year to date 31 December 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 31 December 2025 was a surplus of \$15.223 million which was \$1.322 million more than the budgeted surplus of \$13.901 million as shown in Table 1 below.

The Council at its meeting on Wednesday 19 November 2025 reviewed the 2025-26 Budget at the first quarter 2025/26 Budget review. The half-year budget review is presented as Current Budget in table details throughout this report.

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 half-year budget review.

The forecast operating result for the year ending 30 June 2026 is a surplus of \$0.443 million which is an unfavorable variance of \$3.536 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 31 December 2025 and Half-Year Review Forecast Compared To Budget As At 30 June 2026

Income Statement	Notes	2025/26 YTD Actuals \$'000	2025/26 YTD Current Budget \$'000	2025/26 YTD Variance \$'000	Half-Year Review Forecast \$'000	Full Year Budget \$'000	EOY Forecast to Budget Variance \$'000
Income / Revenue							
Rates and charges	1	23,947	23,939	7	24,191	24,013	178
Statutory fees and fines	2	251	233	18	450	457	-7
User fees	3	1,984	1,906	78	3,563	2,973	590
Operating grants	4	3,022	3,000	22	5,428	7,621	-2,194
Capital grants	5	75	0	75	5,940	5,940	0
Contributions	6	245	130	115	272	209	63
Other income	7	991	1,012	-21	1314	600	714
Internal plant hire		156	0	156	0	0	0
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		48	0	48	0	0	0
Total Revenue*		30,719	30,220	498	41,158	41,813	-655

*Rounding may impact total values.

Income Statement	Notes	2025/26 YTD Actuals \$'000	2025/26 YTD Current Budget \$'000	2025/26 YTD Variance \$'000	Half-Year Review Forecast \$'000	Full Year Budget \$'000	EOY Forecast to Budget Variance \$'000
Expenses							
Employee costs	8	6,762	7,574	812	14,942	14,914	-28
Materials and services	9	8,160	8,195	35	17,226	14,393	-2,833
Depreciation amortisation & impairment	10	229	321	92	7,789	7,789	0
Bad and doubtful debts - allowance for impairment losses		-	-	-	14	14	-
Borrowing costs		31	32	1	120	120	-
Finance costs leases		0	0	0	16	16	-
Other expenses	11	314	196	-118	608	608	-
Total expenses*		15,496	16,318	822	40,715	37,854	-2,861
Surplus/(deficit) for the year *		15,223	13,902	1,320	443	3,959	-3,516

*Rounding may impact total values.

Income Statement Notes:

1. Rates and charges: EOY Forecast favourable result \$178,000 due to supplementary rate revenue consideration of most objections to valuations are near finalisation.
2. Statutory fees and fines favorable variance \$18,000 as certificate charges higher in period to date overall EOY forecast unfavorable result \$7,000 mainly due to permit fees.
3. User fees: Forecast results to 30 June favourable due to landfill - commercial admission charges \$517,000 and cinema sales \$37,000 and various services small variances.
4. Operating grants favorable YTD \$22,000 operating grants impacted by several timing variances for grants payments. Additional grant funds of \$50,000 received for emergency services and volunteers' collection 25/26 \$50,000, offset by others yet to be assessed as earned.

Forecast results to 30 June unfavourable \$2.194 million due to the *Financial Assistance Grants* budgeted in 25/26 early payment \$1.937 million general purpose grant and local road funding \$1.007 million received in June 2025, the forecast reflects the \$2.944 million overall reduction for this item there are other additional grants to be received later in year.

5. Capital grants: Favourable year to date variance for dog park project \$75,000 first grant installment payment received and not budgeted for in 25/26.

Forecast results expected to 30 June impacted by timing of capital project delivery. The Art Gallery redevelopment staging was still to be determined at half-year review. This will be reviewed at quarter three.

6. Contributions: Favourable variance of \$115,000 as timing variations to contribution funding received:

Visit Victoria - Street Art (total in 25/26 150,000)	\$50,000
Additional Public Open Space contributions	\$11,446

Forecast results to 30 June favourable due to the above items and expected contributions non-monetary. Valuation of gifted assets from subdivision - developer contributions are still to be determined.

7. Other income: Unfavourable YTD variance of \$21,000 insurance reimbursement payments however EOY forecast is higher due to greater earnings on investments in 25/26. End of year forecast is expected to be favourable by \$694,000.
8. Employee costs: Overall were favourable by \$812,000 due to various staffing vacancies and several staff accessing long service leave. Also, the recording of recovery oncosts accounts and the allocation of salary payments to periods in the new finance system is different to the system used for budgeting creating a timing variance in YTD December 2025.

Forecast results to 30 June 2026 is expected to be unfavourable \$28,000 impacted by additional by savings due to vacant positions throughout the 2025/26 period and offset by additional costs associated with emergency events in the December 2025 period.

9. Materials and services: Unfavourable \$35,000 additional grants projects in 25/26 resulting in additional materials and services cost as at 31 December 2025.

Forecast results to 30 June many service items have been impacted by 2024/25 deliver delays accordingly additional carry forward expenditure is forecast in 2025/26 for \$1.829 million additional expenditure, generated from grant funded projects and contributions requiring acquittal of funds in 2024/25.

Carry forward items payments will be categories when spent	\$1,804,769
EPA Levy – offset by income	\$265,000

Results to 30 June expected to be unfavourable by \$2.8 million.

Appendix 1 details Materials and services expenditure to 31 December 2025.

10. Depreciation: Favourable variance of \$92,000 as 23/24 capital expenditure building and infrastructure assets delivery has been delayed in 24/25 and impacted YTD depreciation expense.

Forecast results to 30 June 2026 is not expected to be significantly altered.

11. Other expenses: Unbudgeted community contributions as the Council auspice for the Ian Potter Foundation sponsorship of Art Gallery Foundation \$70,000 offset by income.

CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRAM RESULT

The Capital Projects Program result for the six months ended 31 December 2025 was expenditure of \$3.029 million, which was \$4,000 less than the half-year budgeted expenditure of \$3.033 million as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Capital Program result for the period ending 31 December 2025 and Forecast to 30 June 2026

Asset By Type	2025/26 YTD Actuals \$'000	2025/26 YTD Current Budgets \$'000	2025/26 Full Year Budget \$'000	2025/26 Half-Year Review Forecast \$'000	EOY Forecast to Budget Variance \$'000
Buildings - specialised	521	503	2,229	2,772	-543
Land Improvements	0	0	46	46	
Computers and telecommunications	15	15	180	180	
Fixture fittings and furniture	248	234	195	492	-297
Library stock	92	92	96	96	
Plant and equipment	103	113	860	1,144	-284
Bridge	23	29	191	300	-109
Drainage	346	335	1,377	1,631	-254
Footpath	587	580	252	868	-616
Parks open space and streetscapes	138	138	160	467	-307
Recreational, leisure and community	1	1	1,000	780	220
Roads	949	965	4,278	4,322	-44
Waste management	6	25	2,226	951	1,275
Total Capital Works	3,029	3,033	13,395	14,356	-961

Material variances in the Capital Program budget are discussed in Agenda Item 4.3 Capital Works Program Status as at 31 December 2025.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Significant additional carry forward items from 2024/25 Budget for both operating statement items and capital works projects have been forecast to spend throughout year.

As a result, carry forward items from 2024/25 Budget \$1.829 million for materials and services expenditure is included in the 30 June 2026 forecast in employee costs and materials and services, this is partly funded from unspent grant revenue recognised in the prior year.

The forecast result is based on the Council's status as of 31 December 2025 and reviewed projection during January 2026.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Materials and Services Expenditure to 31 December 2025
Appendix 1

Materials and services expenditure	2025/26 YTD Actuals	2025/26 YTD Budgets	2025/26 YTD Variance
0400 - Advertising & Promotion	58,829	73,227	14,398
0401 - Audit / Monitoring costs Landfill		13,555	13,555
0402 - Bank Charges	14,548	17,208	2,660
0403 - Canteen Trading Purchases	15,143	19,000	3,857
0404 - Carry Forward Expenditure	7,588	103,362	95,774
0405 - Catering & Refreshments	35,974	24,802	(11,172)
0407 - Cleaning Expenses	142,568	153,888	11,320
0408 - Computer Support/Software	676,905	566,066	(110,839)
0409 - Consultants General	171,903	145,199	(26,704)
0410 - Contract Payments	2,526,719	2,140,747	(385,972)
0411 - Contract Staff	53,839	16,274	(37,565)
0412 - Contributions & Reimbursements		10,088	10,088
0414 - Councillors Training	2,832	7,778	4,946
0415 - Diesel Rebate (Negative Expense)	(33,545)	(27,036)	6,509
0417 - Domestic Animals Levy	12,399	7,366	(5,033)
0418 - EPA Levey	970,435	659,828	(310,607)
0419 - Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging	12		(12)
0420 - Electricity	187,433	282,840	95,407
0421 - Exhibitions	9,386	21,670	12,284
0422 - Functions & Receptions	14,040	14,746	706
0423 - Gas	17,232	17,886	654
0424 - Gas Monitoring - Landfill		7,406	7,406
0425 - Goods Delivered (Contractual)	8,398	26,078	17,680
0426 - Green Waste Mulching		38,624	38,624
0427 - Insurance	575,497	600,882	25,385
0428 - Internal Charge - Expense	34,453	17,961	(16,492)
0429 - Internal Plant Hire Expense	155,359	35,949	(119,410)
0430 - Landfill Daily Cover		5,000	5,000
0431 - Landfill Rock Supplied	5,694	10,000	4,306
0432 - Lease Payments		24,518	24,518

Materials and services expenditure	2025/26 YTD Actuals	2025/26 YTD Budgets	2025/26 YTD Variance
0433 - Legal Expenses	45,086	76,297	31,211
0434 - Machine Hire	55,144	41,802	(13,342)
0435 - Management Committees	34,312	76,480	42,169
0436 - Materials	425,879	412,986	(12,893)
0437 - Meeting Expenses	1,600	10,422	8,822
0438 - Membership & Subscriptions	245,502	175,633	(69,869)
0439 - Merchandise	29,142	32,665	3,523
0440 - Museum Fees	3,657	1,128	(2,529)
0441 - Distributor Costs - Movies	29,961	32,500	2,539
0442 - Performing Fees	865		(865)
0443 - Postage & Freight	45,303	36,791	(8,512)
0444 - Printing Copying & Stationery	13,088	48,819	35,731
0445 - Registrations	20,379	13,276	(7,103)
0446 - Rent	66,547	46,365	(20,182)
0447 - Repairs & Maintenance	265,501	423,476	157,975
0448 - Security Expenses	7,131	21,900	14,770
0450 - Services (Non Contract) To Council	628,803	1,020,670	391,867
0451 - Staff Training / Courses	67,405	74,614	7,209
0452 - Stores Issues	123,977	98,343	(25,634)
0453 - Telephone	52,235	78,467	26,232
0455 - Travel Expenses	3,836	860	(2,976)
0456 - Tyres Purchased for Plant	5,021	18,328	13,307
0457 - Vandalism	335	4,614	4,279
0458 - Vehicle Expenses	5,961	102	(5,859)
0459 - Vehicle Fuel	120,212	196,576	76,364
0460 - Vehicle Lease Payments	100,115	7,008	(93,107)
0461 - Vehicle Maintenance - Repairs	61,312	74,732	13,420
0462 - Vehicle Maintenance - Standard	9,028	41,942	32,914
0463 - Volunteer (Internal Charge) expenses		53,752	53,752
0464 - Water Consumption	28,719	40,382	11,663
Expenditure Total	8,159,694	8,195,842	36,148

4.2 Finance Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 198090245-1414
Cathy Fitzpatrick – Manager Finance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents an overview of the functions of the Finance Department for the quarter ended 31 December 2025.

Finance

- *Victorian Local Government Grants Commission 2024/25* return lodged.
- Quarter two review of year-to-date results considered impacts against budget phasing 2025/26 and CAPEX 2025/26 for half-year review to reforecast to 30 June 2026.
- Commencement of 2026/27 Budget program. The Minister for Local Government has set the rate cap for 2026/27 at 2.75 per cent.
- Victorian Auditor-General's Office audit process for *2024/25 Financial Statements and Roads to Recovery Annual Report Acquittal*.
- Implementation of new corporate finance system *Altitude* in November 2025. Transition of data and new systems operations currently being documented.
- *Essential Services Commission* annual rate rise compliance return submitted.
- Ongoing involvement with *Collaborative Digital Transformation (CODI)* Project and sharing learnings from system changes.

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
31/12/25	\$214,193	\$129,600	\$155,765	\$176,935	\$676,493
30/09/25	\$287,155	\$44,825	\$219,398	\$210,445	\$761,823
30/06/25	\$81,853	\$125,759	\$190,679	\$705,702	\$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

Investment Portfolio

In accordance with the *Investment Policy*, details of investments held at 31 December 2025 are provided in the following table.

Table 1. Investments held at 31 December 2025

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

Bank	Short-term credit rating	Investment type	Amount invested \$'000	Interest rate	Term (days)	Maturity date
Rabo	A1+	TD	\$4,098	4.35%	184	04-Feb-26
Westpac	A1+	TD	\$3,102	4.13%	92	30-Jan-26
NAB	A1+	TD	\$3,498	4.10%	90	05-Feb-26
NAB	A1+	TD	\$3,111	4.10%	90	17-Feb-26
ANZ	A1+	TD	\$4,245	4.13%	90	24-Feb-26
Westpac	A1+	TD	\$2,317	4.19%	122	30-Mar-26
Rabo	A1+	TD	\$2,045	4.53%	182	12-Jun-26
NAB	A1+	TD	\$1,063	4.15%	90	20-Mar-26
Rabo	A1+	TD	\$2,044	4.41%	122	29-Apr-26
Subtotal			\$25,523			
CBA	A1+	Operating	\$10,501	3.8%		
Total			\$36,024			

These funds are required to meet the Council's short-term commitments, including capital and operating supplier payments, employee payroll costs and loan repayments.

Loan Portfolio

Details of existing loans held at 31 December 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

Revenue, Property and Valuations

- Second instalment notices issued to all ratepayers.
- Fire Services Property Levy:
 - Second instalment remittance return submitted to the State Revenue Office (SRO).
 - Annual Return for 2024/25 approved by SRO.
 - Annual Reconciliation for 2024/25 approved by SRO. Funding invoice generated and paid.
- E-notice stats:
 - EzyBill – 675
 - BPAY View – Cancelled service due to Banks phasing service out.

Rates and Charges Revenue

Second instalment notices were issued on 19 October 2025 with payments due by 30 November 2025.

Valuation objections are still being processed by Valuer-General Victoria. In total, 21 objections were lodged this year – down slightly compared to last year.

To date, 272 supplementary valuations have been processed this year.

Procurement

Contracts and Works Awarded Under Delegation

The purpose of this sections is to inform the Council and community of publicly advertised tenders which have been awarded under delegation for the period 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025.

Eight contracts were awarded for the period 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025.

Details of contracts awarded are attached in confidential **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.

Invoice Date	Type	Amount
24/10/2025	State Revenue Office – Fire Services Property Levy Instalment	\$936,960
22/12/2025	Environmental Protection Authority Levy	\$500,474

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operating budget result for the period ending 31 December 2025.

	Notes	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	2025/26 Budget	Year End Forecast	Variance
Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties	1	(\$47,069)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Property & Valuations	2	(\$19,191,840)	(\$18,901,592)	(\$19,066,835)	(\$19,274,835)	\$208,000
Accounting Operations	3	(\$1,179,227)	(\$1,638,525)	(\$3,063,878)	(\$1,781,815)	-\$1,282,063
Geographical Information System		\$48,160	\$70,136	\$138,038	\$105,509	\$32,529
Total		-\$20,369,976	(\$20,469,981)	(\$21,992,675)	(\$20,951,141)	-\$1,041,534

Notes comparing Year End Forecast and original 2025/26 Budget:

1. Forecast at year end will be an expense as the disposal of assets costs from the renewal of infrastructure items will exceed any income received.
2. Forecast favourable result \$208,000 as consideration of most valuation objections are near finalisation.
3. Forecast at 30 June 2026 unfavourable \$1,250,000 due to higher interest revenue offset by *Victoria Grants Commission* payment for 2025/26 being received in 2024/25.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Loans held at 31 December 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	2031/32 Year	Total
18	\$1,372	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,372
19	\$4,458	\$1,589	-	-	-	-	-	\$6,047
20	\$7,721	\$3,692	\$1,576	-	-	-	-	\$12,989
21	\$6,070	\$4,343	\$2,565	\$716	-	-	-	\$13,693
22	\$50,766	\$39,319	\$30,859	\$22,224	\$13,677	\$5,130	\$0	\$161,975
Total Interest Payable	\$70,387	\$48,942	\$35,000	\$22,940	\$13,677	\$5,130	\$0	\$196,075

Principal to be paid:

Loan Number	2025/2026 Year	2026/2027 Year	2027/2028 Year	2028/2029 Year	2029/2030 Year	2030/2031 Year	2031/32 Year	Total
18	\$58,819	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$58,819
19	\$55,446	\$56,816	-	-	-	-	-	\$112,262
20	\$53,433	\$57,461	\$53,389	-	-	-	-	\$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	\$410,376	\$358,684	\$299,573	\$233,684	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$0	\$1,682,316

4.3 Capital Works Program Status as at 31 December 2025

Ref: 1573044422-1296

Adrian Gasperoni – Manager and Infrastructure

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents an update on the Capital Works Program as at 31 December 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:

- North Benalla Shared Pathway works were completed. Negotiations are ongoing with Metro Service Station regarding a short section adjacent to the fuel station.
- The works for The Culdesac, Benalla drainage upgrade were tendered. The tender closes February 2026.
- Design process ongoing for the *TAC Safe Local Roads \$2 Million Program*.
- Design process ongoing for the *Victorian Safe System Pedestrian Infrastructure Program Funding* (bridge and carrier street pedestrian crossings).
- Design stage completed for blackspot funding for Goorambat-Thoona Road/Bungeet Road, Goorambat. To be tendered in 2026.
- Reseal preparation work commenced and are ongoing.
- Road resealing program for 2025/26 commenced, works will continue into early 2026.
- Gravel road re-sheeting program for 2025/26 commenced, work will continue into early 2026.
- Shoulder re-sheeting and sealing program 2025/26 awarded, work will commence in early 2026.
- Kerb and channel replacement program 2025/26 commenced, work will continue into early 2026.
- Footpath construction program for 2025/26 commenced, and work will continue into early 2026.
- Asphalt pavement patching program for 2025/26 commenced, work will continue into early 2026.
- 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.
- Work commenced on the draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030*.
- Work commenced on the draft *Active Transport Plan 2025-2030*.

- Tender process commenced for the replacement of a Motor Grader. The tender was listed via the Municipal Association of Victoria procurement tender portal.
- Remaining Hino heavy truck fitted with tipper body. The truck is due for delivery in March 2026.

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Capital Projects Program result for the six months ended 31 December 2025 was an expenditure of \$3.029 million which was \$4,000 less than the Half-Year budgeted expenditure of \$3.033 million as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Capital Program result for the period ending 31 December 2025 and Forecast to 30 June 2026

Asset By Type	Notes	2025/26 YTD Actuals \$'000	2025/26 YTD Current Budgets \$'000	2025/26 Full Year Budget \$'000	2025/26 Half-Year Review Forecast \$'000	EOY Forecast to Budget Variance \$'000
Buildings - specialised	1	521	503	2,229	2,772	-543
Land Improvements		0	0	46	46	
Computers and telecommunications		15	15	180	180	
Fixture fittings and furniture	2	248	234	195	492	-297
Library stock		92	92	96	96	
Plant and equipment	3	103	113	860	1,144	-284
Bridge	4	23	29	191	300	-109
Drainage	5	346	335	1,377	1,631	-254
Footpath	6	587	580	252	868	-616
Parks open space and streetscapes	7	138	138	160	467	-307
Recreational, leisure and community	8	1	1	1,000	780	220
Roads		949	965	4,278	4,322	-44
Waste management	9	6	25	2,226	951	1,275
Total Capital Works		3,029	3,033	13,395	14,356	-961

Notes comparing Year End Forecast and original 2025/26 Budget:

1. Variance primarily due to more than forecast expenditure (\$530,000) on the Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment.
2. Variance primarily due to unbudgeted expenditure (\$80,000) on Benalla Art Gallery CCTV upgrade and Electronic Community Signage (\$75,000). Income to be received from by Local Roads and Community Infrastructure grant funding.
3. Variance due to new truck purchase (\$284,000) ordered 2024 expected delivery March 2026.
4. Variance primarily due to unbudgeted Gillies Street and Racecourse Road Major Culverts Project (\$183,000). To be reallocated from Drainage budget to Bridges and Major Culverts budget.
5. Variance primarily due to more than budgeted expenditure on the Culdesac Drainage project.
6. Variance primarily due to \$329,000 more than budgeted expenditure on the North Benalla Shared Path project and Lake Benalla Boardwalk Renewal Project \$300,000. Boardwalk project funded by State Government Council Flood Support program with income received in prior year.
7. Variance primarily due to the Saleyards Dog Park project forecast expenditure of \$250,000. not budgeted. \$150,000 of associated unbudgeted grant funding to be received across 2024/25 and 2025/26.
8. Variance due to less than forecast expenditure on Fawckner Drive Pump Track (\$220,000).
9. Variance due to the postponement of \$1.250 million of landfill cell rehabilitation works. Need for works dependent on the outcome of an application to the EPA for an amendment to the Council's Landfill License Agreement.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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Benalla Rural City Council Capital Works Project Status Report as at 27 February 2026

Capital Works Project Status Report	Original Project Budget	Forecast Project Budget	Stage	Project Risk	Notes
Tarnook Rd & Pagets Rd, Baddaginnie - Y-Intersection Removal/Reconfiguration		TBC	Planning and Design	Low	Planning and Design for four (4) projects almost complete. Procurement to commence in March 2026. Total TAC allocation is \$2 Million.
Clarke St & Waller St, Benalla, Raised Intersection & Raised Priority Crossing		TBC	Planning and Design	Low	Planning and Design for four (4) projects almost complete. Procurement to commence in March 2026. Total TAC allocation is \$2 Million.
Martin Pl, Benson St & Thomas St, Benalla - Roundabout & Raised Priority Crossings		TBC	Planning and Design	Low	Planning and Design for four (4) projects almost complete. Procurement to commence in March 2026. Total TAC allocation is \$2 Million.
Mitchell St, Ackerly Ave & Mackellar St, Benalla - Roundabouts, LATM & Raised Priority Crossing		TBC	Planning and Design	Low	Planning and Design for four (4) projects almost complete. Procurement to commence in March 2026. Total TAC allocation is \$2 Million.
Bridge Renewal Program	191,000.00	191,000.00	Planning and Design	Medium	Potential for minor works to be undertaken on several bridges.
Blackspot Funding - relocate splitter islands various Benalla locations	-	232,560.00	Planning and Design	Low	Design underway.
Kerb and Channel Renewal Program	190,000.00	190,000.00	Handover	Low	Works completed, awaiting invoicing.
Regulation Program - R2R	64,000.00	64,000.00	Handover	Low	Completed.
Crack Sealing - Council Funded Component	24,000.00	24,000.00	Handover	Low	Completed.
Sealed Roads Preparation for Resealing	200,000.00	200,000.00	Handover	Low	Completed.
Shoulder Resheet Program	1,098,000.00	1,098,000.00	Delivery	Low	Works continuing, with expected completion in March 2026.
Reseal Program - RTR	1,351,000.00	1,351,000.00	Delivery	Low	Works due to be completed in March 2026.
Sealing of Gravel Roads Program	50,000.00	50,000.00	Delivery	Low	Works expected to commence in March 2026.
Gravel Resheet Program	889,000.00	889,000.00	Delivery	Low	Works continuing, with expected completion in April 2026.
Footpath Renewal Strategy	100,000.00	100,000.00	Handover	Low	Completed.
Footpaths	102,000.00	102,000.00	Handover	Low	Completed.
New footpath Midland Hwy to Equestrian Precinct	103,000.00	382,500.00	Delivery	Medium	Works almost complete, bar a small section fronting the Metro Fuel Station, with negotiations underway to coordinate works.
Lake Benalla Boardwalk Refurbishment Project	205,000.00	205,000.00	Construction	Low	Materials purchased, awaiting for Works to commence.
Drainage Strategy	1,244,000.00	1,244,000.00	Delivery	Medium	Planning, Design and Procurement.
The Culdesac - Drainage	400,000.00	400,000.00	Delivery	Low	Report to Council Meeting 4 March 2026
Pits and pipes, CQ ID NA	74,000.00	74,000.00	Delivery	Low	Ongoing.
Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Roof Renewal	450,000.00	450,000.00	Handover	Low	Completed.
VIC Basement Concrete Sealing	50,000.00	50,000.00	Handover	Low	Completed.
Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment	3,000,000.00	6,515,000.00	Delivery	Medium	Works due to commence in early March 2026. Grant Variation required.
Major Plant	630,000.00	630,000.00	Procurement	Low	Contract award for new Grader to be considered by Council.
Small Plant Upgrade	30,000.00	30,000.00	Delivery	Low	Ongoing.
Vehicle Replacement Strategy	200,000.00	200,000.00	Delivery	Low	Ongoing.
HVAC Renewal	32,000.00	320,000.00	Delivery	Low	Works on Civic Centre and Customer Service Centre to occur in coming weeks.
Community Christmas Tree	50,000.00	50,000.00	Completed	Low	Complete.
IT Projects - identified in service plan	180,000.00	180,000.00	Delivery	Low	Ongoing.
Library Purchases - Hub	96,000.00	96,000.00	Completed	Low	Complete.
Waste Management - Cell 3B Construction	951,000.00	951,000.00	Delivery	Low	Site Works due to commence in late March 2026.
Waste Management - Cell 2A Rehabilitation	1,250,000.00	1,250,000.00	Not Started	High	Project on-hold awaiting EPA Decision/Approval on License Amendment
Pump Track (BMX) design / construction	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	Delivery	Low	Works continuing, expected completion in April 2026. Remainder of works currently in Planning and Design phase.
Playground Replacement Program	50,000.00	50,000.00	Procurement	Low	Priorities Developed.
Devenish Playground Fence Replacement	30,000.00	30,000.00	Completed	Low	Fence completed in 2024/2025.
McKellar St Playground Fence	80,000.00	80,000.00	Procurement	Low	Awaiting delivery dates.
Saleyards dog Park (2)	250,000.00	250,000.00	Planning and Design	Low	Completion Imminent.
Benalla Airfield Runway/Taxiway Lighting	250,000.00	250,000.00	Planning and Design	Medium	Tenders received. Budget allocation to be developed.
Churchill Reserve Indoor Recreation Centre	15,000,000.00	15,000,000.00	Planning and Design	Low	Planning and Design continuing.

4.4 Assets and Infrastructure Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 1573044422-1295

Adrian Gasperoni – Manager Assets and Infrastructure

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the activities of the Assets and Infrastructure Department for the quarter ended 31 December 2025.

Assets and Infrastructure

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

Highlights for the quarter are detailed below.

Operations

- Completed grading of 94 kilometers of gravel roads.
- Completed grading of 62 kilometers of sealed road shoulders.
- Replaced 44 square metres of concrete footpath in the following areas:
 - Benalla Street, Benalla
 - Clarke Street, Benalla
 - The Culdesac, Benalla
- Resealed 1100 square metres of sealed footpaths in the following areas:
 - Benson Street, Benalla
 - Wedge Street, Benalla
 - Church Street, Benalla
 - Maginness Street, Benalla
- Replaced 30 metres of kerb and channel in Kingfisher Court and Glenfern Court, Benalla.
- Carried out urban kerb and channel cleaning of 318 streets with the street sweeper and collected approximately 97 tonnes of waste.
- Cleaned out the gross pollutant traps in Benalla.
- Repaired six leaking fire hydrants throughout Benalla.
- Provided support to the Goomalibee fires in the form of supplying water trucks and graders and implementing road closures throughout the area.
- Changed the central business district banners and eastern gateway flags to the Christmas banners as well as assisting with the setup of the Christmas decorations.
- Carried out fire plug maintenance throughout Benalla.
- Carried out sealed road maintenance.
- Carried out routine rural drainage maintenance.
- Carried out rural carriageway tree pruning maintenance.
- Employed one new full-time staff member.

Depot

- 400 Tonne of 20-millimetre crushed rock for stock at depot (for gravel road and shoulder maintenance).
- 360 Tonne of 40-millimetre crushed rock for stock at depot (for gravel road and shoulder maintenance).
- 160 Tonne of 7-millimetre premix for stock at depot (for sealed road maintenance).
- 90 Tonne of 7-millimetre precoat for stock at depot (for sealed road maintenance).
- 10,000 litres of bitumen emulsion for stock at depot (for sealed road maintenance).

Parks and Gardens and Open Spaces

- Commenced Phase 1 of the collection of tree data in streets, parks and Councils managed land.
- Commenced the powerline audit and vegetation clearance work for 2026..
- Completed the level three playground audit.
- Completed the riverine parkland weed management program.
- Completed the removal of five trees throughout the township.
- Installed two tree root barriers on Council nature strip trees.
- Carried out the street tree watering program for new plantings.
- Carried out routine tree pruning maintenance.
- Carried out routine street furniture maintenance throughout the municipality.
- Carried out routine nature strip maintenance.
- Carried out lawn maintenance of the Splash Park, Churchill Recreation Reserve and Botanical Gardens.

Waste

- Prepared a draft *Waste Management Financial Model*.
- The tender for Cell 3B was awarded to Keystone Civil, with the construction audit tender in the final stages of scoring.
- Cell 1 anchor trench exposed in readiness for Cell 3B construction, i.e. weld lining systems together during the construction process.
- Work commenced on *Landfill License Amendment* to raise contours of landfill cells, incorporate master plan changes and have dedicated asbestos cells.
- Site slashing at the *Resource and Recovery Centre* was undertaken.
- Provided additional waste management assistance following the Goomalibee fires.
- Completed the green waste and processed timber mulching.
- Commenced the new lift in Cell 3A.
- Commenced the review of the business cases for the landfill compactor, transfer station hook lift truck and bin.
- Commenced the kerbside bin review process.
- Quarterly leachate ground water and landfill gas monitoring were completed.

Asset Management

- *Benalla Rural City Council Road Management Plan 2025-2029* was adopted by Council.
- *Benalla Rural City Council Road Register 2025-2029* was adopted by Council.
- *Benalla Rural City Council Asset Plan 2025-2029* was approved by Council.
- Revaluation of Council assets for financial reporting remains ongoing.

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

Task	March 2025	June 2025	September 2025	December 2025
Defects overdue on roads and drains - safety only:				
Link roads	10	7	8	4
Collector roads	14	11	11	3
Access roads	9	29	8	14
Defects overdue on footpaths - safety only	0	1	0	0
Defects rectified - routine maintenance and safety – road, footpath and parks	227	144	301	142
Defects and maintenance - items outstanding - road, footpath and parks	283	251	207	90
Unsealed roads graded (km)	90	147	138	94
Sealed road shoulders graded (km)	16	41	24	62

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operating Budget result for the period ending 31 December 2025.

	Notes	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	2025/26 Budget	Year End Forecast	Variance
Asset Management Services		\$192,303	\$178,031	\$350,278	\$350,278	\$0
Bridges		\$9,897	\$82,997	\$160,977	\$167,477	-\$6,500
Capital Projects Operations	1	\$315,588	\$306,491	(\$5,339,518)	(\$4,749,144)	-\$590,374
Drainage	2	\$122,392	\$131,051	\$533,146	\$400,146	\$133,000
Kerbside Waste		(\$3,848,968)	(\$3,787,185)	(\$2,912,502)	(\$2,932,502)	\$20,000
Landfill		\$149,609	(\$226,251)	(\$384,896)	(\$360,461)	-\$24,435
Mechanics Workshop		\$30,802	\$44,594	\$87,367	\$87,367	\$0
Operations Support	3	(\$35,640)	(\$181,826)	(\$1,303,042)	(\$348,310)	-\$954,732
Parks & Gardens		\$503,822	\$595,727	\$1,177,507	\$1,177,507	\$0
Plant Operations		(\$42,389)	\$177,617	\$7,329,121	\$7,339,947	-\$10,826
Recreation	4	\$60,788	\$141,295	\$555,431	\$303,331	\$252,100
Roadsides		\$290,781	\$249,633	\$450,333	\$469,367	-\$19,034
Sealed Roads		\$301,988	\$365,154	\$721,153	\$721,153	\$0
Street Cleaning		\$24,392	\$42,731	\$84,126	\$84,126	\$0
Unsealed Roads		\$392,605	\$503,479	\$991,972	\$991,972	\$0
Total		-\$1,532,029	-\$1,376,462	\$2,501,453	\$3,702,254	-\$1,200,801

Notes comparing Year End Forecast and original 2025/26 Budget:

1. Favourable variance due to different projects with minor underspend and overspends, however the main variances relate to a saving (\$1,250,000) for Stage 2A Rehabilitation at the Benalla Landfill not proceeding, A forecast underspend on the Pump Track (\$300,000), however this was counteracted with the forecast of overspend with the major plant (\$284,000) with the new truck order in 2024 not budgeted, Saleyard, Road Dog Park (\$150,000) not budgeted, over expenditure on the North Benalla Shared Path (\$411,000) not budgeted, and forecast overspend on the Culdesac, Benalla (\$373,000) not budgeted.
2. Favourable variance due to subdivision contributions (\$133,000) not budgeted (expected this financial year).
3. Unfavourable variance (\$954,732) mainly due to the *Financial Assistance Grants* for 2025/2026 being received In 2024/2025.
4. Unfavourable variance (\$252,100) mainly due to recreation masterplans 2026-2036 not budgeted.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

4.5 People and Performance Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 1751917845-874

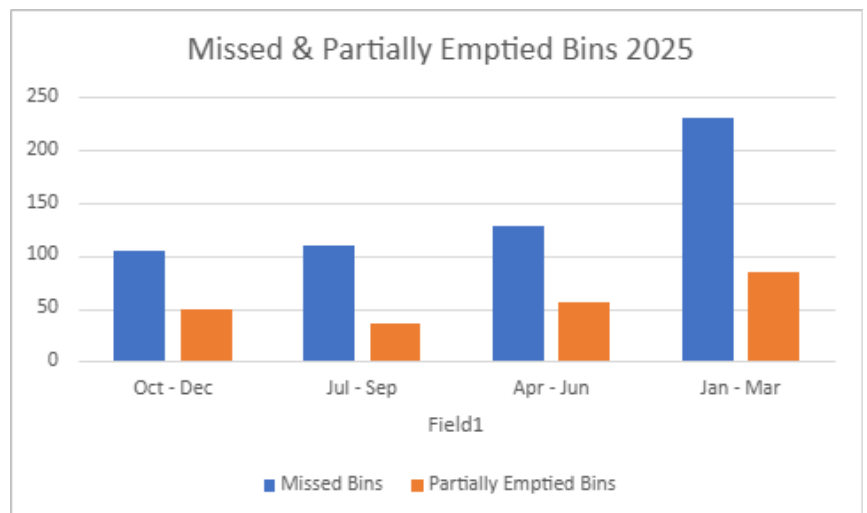
Janine McMaster Manager People and Performance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the activities of the People and Performance Department for the quarter ended 31 December 2025.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

- The Customer Relations Coordinator has been heavily involved in the configuration and integration of the Customer Request Management (CRM), receipting, E-Service (Customer Portal), and bin register modules within the new Authority Altitude platform. This work has included coordinating and delivering targeted training for key stakeholders, and ongoing engagement with internal and external partners to support consistent program delivery.
- The new Altitude program went live this quarter. The Customer Relations Team has assumed primary responsibility for CRM and receipting, while also managing change within the legacy system as an interim measure until additional modules (animals, infringements, and bins) are fully integrated. This transition has required the team to upskill internally and actively support customers and ratepayers in adapting to new processes.
- The Customer Relations Team continues to manage requests relating to missed or partially emptied bins. Data from the past nine months indicates that the volume of these requests has remained relatively stable.
- There was a 21 per cent decrease in after-hours phone calls received and a 27 per cent decrease in calls being escalated to duty officers compared to the same quarter in 2024/25.



HUMAN RESOURCES

- Continued maintenance and administration of core human resources functions, including recruitment, interviews, inductions, organisation-wide training, and monitoring of the training budget.

Service	June 2025	December 2025
Recruitment	5	3
Turnover	1	3
Training Applications	164	238
Workplace incidents	1	2
WorkCover claims	1	1

- Two workplace incidents were reported this quarter: A splinter in the thumb sustained while working with a palm tree and a lower-back injury caused when a staff member lost grip of an awkwardly shaped table. The staff member was unable to work for three days, returned on light duties, and has since resumed full duties with no ongoing issues.
- Finalised and submitted the annual WorkCover premium, resulting in a refund of \$131,151 due to actual remuneration being lower than the forecast figure.
- Continued implementation of the new Human Resources (HR) system (ELMO). The recruitment module is currently being configured for use with all new starters. Finalisation is expected during February, with go live planned for March 2026.

PAYROLL

- Introduced the new finance and payroll system in November 2025, with ongoing collaboration between Mansfield, Strathbogie and Murrindindi Shire Councils to support consistency and improved processes across the shared service model.
- Completed gender equality reporting for staff and Councillors in line with the requirements of the *Gender Equality Commission*.
- Participated in the *McArthur Local Government National Remuneration* benchmarking survey.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Training and Upskilling

The Corporate Risk Coordinator attended the following training and upskilling:

- Fire warden and emergency evacuation training conducted.
- Several MAV and JLT lead training workshops and webinars.

OHS continues to be monitored through the following regular activities

- Scheduled workplace OHS site inspections.
- Designated Workplace Group meetings.
- Ongoing incident and hazard reporting and monitoring.
- Tracking and reviewing incident and hazard action lists.
- Reporting to the Leadership Team and the OHS Committee.
- Regular Risk Management meetings.

Project Work

Work is continuing to improve the usability of Elumina, our incident and hazard management system, through the integration of the organisational structure and the Risk Register.

These enhancements will support a more efficient process for recording, actioning and monitoring incidents and hazards.

General Tasks

Incident Management and Investigations:

- Ongoing investigation and follow-up of incidents across the organisation.
- Continued work to improve and streamline investigation processes, including providing training and support to staff.

Scheduled OHS and Risk Activities:

- Regular OHS site inspections.
- Scheduled servicing of stationary first aid kits and defibrillators.

Business Continuity and OHS Framework Development:

- *Business Continuity Plan* was presented to the *Audit and Risk Committee* for their endorsement. The Plan will now be presented to the Leadership Team for approval.

Training and Events:

- Upcoming MAV and JLT training scheduled at the Town Hall on 26 February 2026.
- Events Risk Workshop scheduled in Bright on 19 February 2026, with invitations sent to staff involved in event management or permit issuing.

The Corporate Risk Coordinator inducted two new staff members and one Councillor for this period.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- Ongoing contribution to the Civica Authority Project, including preliminary research into the Authority/SharePoint folder structure mapping requirements. Clarification on several elements is still pending.
- Enhancements to the search portal and associated workflows were implemented and rolled out to all staff. Improvements include the addition of relocate record and link to document functions, along with clearer workflow guidance.
- Initiated the SharePoint Review Project, commencing with a formal kick-off meeting facilitated by Information Proficiency.

Statistics

- Support request volumes continue to decline as staff confidence with SharePoint increases. The majority of current requests relate primarily to access rather than system functionality.

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

Volunteer activity for the quarter:

Activity	Current 2025	
	Registered	Active
Arts & Tourism (<i>includes Cinema</i>)	54	33
Events and Festivals (<i>Includes Benalla Street Art 2025</i>)	38	23
Youth Programs (<i>Live4Life only</i>)	45	45
L2P (<i>Mentors only</i>)	40	30
Gardens maintenance and Litter Reduction	19	19
Specialist Committees & Steering Groups (<i>includes Age Friendly and ARG</i>)	39	39
RedB4 Bookshop	51	42
Benalla Library	16	7

Note: Some Volunteers are in several groups.

Activity

- Consistently receiving two to three new volunteer enquiries each month via multiple channels, including the Council’s website, walk-ins at the Customer Service Centre, and enquiries at other Council sites such as the Visitor Information Centre and Benalla Library.
- Updated the active volunteer register, including verification and correction of volunteer information.
- Ongoing support with interviewing, onboarding, and processing new volunteers.
- Delivered multiple face-to-face support sessions to assist volunteers with applications, Occupational Health and Safety training, Police Checks, and Working with Children Checks, particularly for those requiring additional help with digital processes.
- Coordinated, designed, and distributed Christmas gifts for all volunteers.

SIR EDWARD ‘WEARY’ DUNLOP LEARNING CENTRE (BENALLA LIBRARY)

During this quarter, the Benalla Library welcomed 15,200 patrons through our doors and loaned a total of 14,339 items.

2025	October	November	December	Total
Total Visits	6,141	4,996	4,063	15,200
Total Loans	5,374	4,624	4,341	14,339
Total Members	4,136	4,149	4,114	
New Members	46	52	39	137

October 2025

- In early October, the Benalla Library marked the end of the school holidays and the beginning of Seniors Month with a Musical Interlude featuring local musician and teacher, Edwin. Patrons enjoyed live calming music accompanied by relaxing nature visuals.
- Throughout October, the Library hosted two work experience students—one from the local home-school network and one from a local school. Both students demonstrated enthusiasm and a genuine interest in library services.
- Author Gabriel Bergmoser visited the library to deliver a book talk on his latest novel, High Rise, attracting strong community interest.
- The Australian Christian College also attended for a story-time session with a staff member, followed by craft activities and a familiarisation tour of the library.



November 2025

- November was a particularly busy month, with a high volume of internal training sessions, staff leave, and preparation of Christmas displays across the library.
- We welcomed CommBank back to deliver another session of their highly regarded Scam Awareness program, which continues to attract strong community interest.

December 2025

- As part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, the Benalla Library partnered with Upper Murray Family Care to deliver a special storytime session promoting respect and awareness.
- One of our creative staff members crafted another beautiful Christmas and New Year display for children and families to enjoy in the lead-up to the holiday closure.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operating Budget result for the period ending 31 December 2025.

	Notes	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	2025/26 Budget	Year End Forecast	Variance
Customer Relations		\$233,193	\$249,956	\$534,262	\$534,262	\$0
Library		\$146,562	\$129,473	\$521,575	\$521,575	\$0
People & Performance Operations		\$331,372	\$352,033	\$703,734	\$703,734	\$0
Records Management	1	\$155,866	(\$10,824)	(\$21,651)	\$330,449	-\$352,100
Risk Management		\$669,667	\$695,549	\$868,110	\$868,110	\$0
Volunteer Development		\$19,371	\$26,280	\$51,701	\$51,701	\$0
Payroll & Overheads		(\$244,339)	(\$22,886)	(\$45,776)	(\$45,776)	\$0
Total		\$1,311,692	\$1,419,581	\$2,611,955	\$2,964,055	-\$352,100

Notes comparing Year End Forecast and original 2025/26 Budget:

1. Unfavourable variance due to a mapping error when new financial system was implemented. Error has been rectified in the Year End Forecast with a zero organisational impact overall.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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4.6 Community Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 1536132109-1078

Jane Archbold – Manager Community

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the activities of the Community Department for the quarter ended 31 December 2025.

Community Development and Recreation

- Contraction of the Pump Track was awarded to World Trail. A community consultation session was held to share the concept designs and inform the final design. Construction will begin in January 2026.
- Work continued in support of Council's *Fair Access Policy* with a survey being shared with local clubs to gather feedback on progress.
- Work began on the *Recreation Reserve Masterplans*. Over 30 stakeholders were interviewed for the first round of consultation and site inspections completed. This information has provided Council staff with in-depth insights into local sports clubs' participation, growth and how our recreation reserves can be improved. Draft concepts are in development and the second stage of consultation due early 2026.
- Draft *Open Space Strategy* was received in December 2025. Council's internal working group are now reviewing.
- Staff supported Benalla Golf Club and Benalla Bowls Club to progress applications for Sports and Recreation Victoria funding.
- Work has begun on the draft *Active Transport Plan 2025-2030*. Community and Recreation staff are assisting in with consultation development and background information.
- Five *Quick Response Grants* were awarded this quarter.
- *Reconciliation Action Plan* annual impact survey submitted over the quarter.
- Staff continue to attend the *Benalla Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group* meetings. Meetings are now being held bimonthly with resourcing of the meetings being shared between several organisations. Aboriginal community Caucus meetings are being held before the Advisory Group meetings giving members of the local Aboriginal community the opportunity to discuss their ideas and concerns.
- *Health and Wellbeing Partnership* meeting was held on 6 October 2025 with a guest from Towong Shire attending to consider ways of maintaining connections across sectors and the community as this has been challenging in Towong. The Benalla Health and Wellbeing Partnership continues to maintain good representation from organisations working in or providing services to Benalla Rural City.
- Financial assistance was provided to help with storage for the *Benalla Homelessness Response Group* as the group was struggling to safely store bedding and equipment from the pilot night shelter project.

Free From Violence (FFV)

A number of activities were organised as part of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. These included:

- To start 16 Days of Activism Benalla Rural City Council and the Centre Against Violence worked together to bring Jelena to Benalla to speak about her experience with family violence, mental health and her inspiring journey to be where she is today. This event sold out at 325 tickets, Council subsidised these tickets, so they were accessible for all community members. The event was held on Tuesday 25 November 2025.
- A free showing of Jelena's documentary that further explored her experience as a victim/survivor of family violence at the hands of her father was screened at Benalla Cinema on Wednesday 26 November 2025. Over 20 people attended this session.
- Children and young people were invited to Waminda Community House for Colouring and Ice Creams with VicPol. The colouring competition was designed by Clinton Levy. The event was held on Thursday 27 November 2025.
- Free From Violence Coordinator hosted a *Croissants and Care: Respect Everywhere* morning tea held on 2 December for Council staff.
- Coffee with a Cop was held at Waminda Community House on Thursday 4 December. Representatives from Waminda's food relief, Victoria Police, Council's Compliance team and Waminda staff were able to have some open and honest conversations about family violence, personal impacts, and how individuals can support someone, while enjoying a coffee provided by the Benalla Flexible Learning students and staff.
- The Benalla Library was lit up in orange for the whole 16 Days of Activism campaign.
- Councillors and staff supported the Rotary Club of Benalla's event 'Say No Against Violence' walk and BBQ.



Communication and Community Engagement

- During the reporting period media coverage reached a potential 942,640 people with 1,120 direct mentions across online, print and broadcast media.
- Council's Facebook page recorded 490,161 views over the reporting period, reaching 70,566 unique viewers, 488 comments and 347 shares.
- The Communications team played a pivotal role in promoting key community events, including the Benalla Festival, Seniors Month, and Christmas celebrations. Efforts included event marketing, social media content creation, website updates, and collaboration with Benalla Ensign to produce an eight-page special feature for the Benalla Festival. Additionally, the team supported the promotion of nominations for the 2026 Australia Day Awards, ensuring strong community participation across all initiatives.
- The Communications team continued to support the delivery of communications and engagement plans for the draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030* and draft *Active Transport Plan 2025-2030*.
- The Communications team coordinated messaging for the Altitude rollout, ensuring staff were informed about platform changes and outages. Work continued refining internal

processes to improve the quality and timeliness of communications briefs, with a focus on accountability and collaboration.

- In November 2025, the Communications Coordinator attended the *25th Social Media for Government Summit* in Melbourne, gaining valuable insights into process improvement, accountability, and moderation. The team also continued to refine internal workflows, focusing on enhancing communication request processes and ensuring timely updates to senior leadership and Councillors.

Youth Development

- Amplify (previously FReeZA) and Engage! funding enabled the youth team to support a number of events and activities over the quarter.
- On Saturday 4 October 2025 a mix of bands and soloists battled it out at the Benalla heat to win a spot at the North East Battle of the Bands Grand Final being held in December. The gig was held on Benalla Lake Foreshore; seven performers gave it their all to wow local judges Adam Toms and Edwin Manono. Winners were Alexis Cox and The B500s.
- Over 130 tickets were registered for the free Benalla Festival Event B-Town Rave on Friday 7 November 2025. The event was held at The Shed, with young people enjoying free music pumping out of the Boom Box Party Van, a free photo booth and \$5 meals served from a local food truck.
- Teaming up with Tomorrow Today's Full Impact Squad, *Tag on Impact* was a free event for young people held in the Benalla Gardens. Young people were split up into teams with the team with the most flags at the end winning. A free ice cream truck on site provided a treat for the more than 50 young people in attendance.
- The Live4Life Benalla Crew delivered another Live4Life Celebration event on 21 October 2025 for Year 8 students from Benalla P-12 College, FCJ College Benalla and the Australian Christian College. Delivering the key messages from the Teen Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training delivered previously in the year, recruiting for the 2026 crew and again reminding young people of the importance of being kind to one another. Year 8's were then treated to fun activities outside and some delicious burgers.
- Teen MHFA training began for Year 10's at Benalla P-12 College and FCJ College Benalla. Training was well received by students and schools with over 100 young people newly trained in Term 3.
- Applications closed on Monday 15 December for the Live4Life Benalla 2026 Crew recruitment drive. At the time of closing there were a total of 74 applications received.
- During the Benalla Festival Adam Toms and Catherine Burton held a Small-Town Sing event with the money raised \$1,230 which was donated to Live4Life Benalla. This funding will help support the delivery of Youth MHFA training to community members.



- The L2P program continues to thrive with 12 young people obtaining their licence over the reporting period. Seventeen driving mentors provided over 830 hours of driving experience to learners. Sixty two professional driving lessons were provided to mentees. There remains 28 learners on the wait list, with a focus on high priority learners.
- In total 32 young people achieved their probationary licence through the program in 2025.
- The L2P presence at a Day in Gardens as part of the Benalla Festival in November 2025 attracted two new volunteer mentors.
- 20 volunteer mentors attended an end of year celebration and thank you event at the Benalla Visitor Information Centre in December 2025.
- Two older drivers obtained their licence through the Independence to Drive program over the quarter.



Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG)

- Jordyn Atkinson, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, funded one day a week through the SIAG program has been adding Aboriginal artefacts into the already established Resource Library, adding items such as possum skins, a coolamon, a boomerang, and clapsticks. SIAG plans to have some of these artefacts on display, while others can be utilised by local community for educational purposes.
- Aboriginal Liaison Officer has been working on the following projects: working with local elders and the Historical Society to update lake signage to reflect the First Nations history in Benalla, working with the Art Gallery to add a Reflection Garden, and preparing for National Reconciliation Week coming up in May 2026. These include engaging local schools to educate students on Aboriginal culture and hosting dedicated workshops throughout the year, such as weaving and Aboriginal dance.
- The SIAG Coordinators have been working closely with seven new committee members. In November 2025, two induction sessions were held to welcome the new members and support their understanding of SIAG's purpose and goals for 2026. The new members have integrated exceptionally well with existing members, and their combined lived experience and passion is helping SIAG expand its reach within the Benalla Rural City.
- In December 2025, a dedicated funding round was launched for Christmas and Summer grants for rural communities. This initiative was well received, with four applications submitted. Thoona, Goomalibee, Devenish, and Tatong each received \$1,000 to host Christmas or Summer events. The consensus was that the events were beneficial for connection and inclusion.
- Initial discussions have begun to prepare for two new SIAG initiatives: the Community Group "How To" Starter Kit and the Lake Mindfulness Booklet. Work on these projects is scheduled to begin in early March 2026, with the Community Group Starter Kit taking precedent.

- Following the success of last year's Creating Community Connections Expo, SIAG Coordinators have begun preliminary discussions about hosting the Expo again in Spring 2026. There is potential to align the event with the Benalla Festival, though further discussions are needed before confirming the date and beginning detailed planning.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

- 34 Birth Notices were received over the Quarter. fourteen were first time Mothers. 11 children transferred into the service from other areas and five children transferred out (moved to other areas within Victoria). Three children enrolled in the service were born interstate.
- 425 children are currently enrolled in the MCH service. Twenty-five are Aboriginal children with 211 children attending the service at least once.
- The Enhanced MCH service worked with 41 families over the quarter. Commencing with 37 active families, 13 new families joined the service, and nine families no longer required support. (In comparison to last quarter starting with 25 families and finishing with 35 active families).
- The new graduate MCH nurse has settled in well to her role and has been well received by families coming into the centre. However, with the addition of new staff, the MCH Team have a shortage of consulting rooms and arrangements have been made with Waminda Community House to pilot an outreach service one morning a fortnight during first term. This should allow families in Benalla West to have improved access to Maternal Child Health services.
- An MCH staff member was available over the Christmas week, ensuring any Birth Notifications received were picked up in an appropriate time frame.
- Further meetings were held over the quarter with Education Department representatives in relation to Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan (KISP). Following these discussions a meeting with early years providers to review the KISP took place. An Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between partners developed to help ensure at risk children do not miss out on kindergarten places was also reviewed. The final KISP was agreed to and published in late December 2025.

Integrated Family Services (IFS)

- Family Services and Family Liaison supported 41 families over the quarter. Referrals to the programs were predominantly received from: Child Protection, External Family Services agencies, self-referrals, Police – L17 (family violence referrals), and Maternal and Child Health. Common themes included: Behavioural issues (child 6-14 years), Family Violence , Household Management/Routine, Parenting Skills, understanding child's behaviour, managing behaviours, setting limits and boundaries, Service access to early childhood services, mental health, NDIS, Physical Health.
- Family Services funding target achieved 112 per cent for this quarter, bringing year to date funding target achieved to 105 per cent.
- Five flexible packages (support funding) were accessed through Ovens Murray Child and Family Services Alliance during the quarter, for a total of \$8,656. Items funded for clients included ASD/Cognitive assessments, security cameras, skip bins, and school uniforms.
- LaTrobe University Social Work student, Xalijah Scriberra, completed her initial field placement with Family Services. This placement consisted of 490 hours' field experience with our service.

- Supported Playgroup delivered funding targets of two groups per week for term 4. The Supported Playgroup Facilitator has been working with referring bodies and local families to enhance attendance in 2026.

Age Friendly Benalla

- The Ageing Well Officer has worked in partnership with the *Age Friendly Reference Group members* to address the *Age Friendly Benalla Action Plan 2025*. The plan focuses on four focus areas - social connection, communication and information, housing, health, and community services as well as accessible places and spaces, mobility, and transport. A Community Forum is being planned for May 2026 allowing the group to report back to the broader community and gain community feedback on priorities to consider for 2026.
- During the quarter the Age Friendly Information Hub transformed into the Age Friendly Resource stand located at the Customer Service Centre, aiming to increase access to all of the brochures and information to a broader cross section of the community.
- Five *Benalla Treasures* were selected by the Age Friendly Reference Group to be showcased in Benalla Ensign over the quarter for their outstanding contributions to our community.
- Worked collaboratively with Waminda Community House on the *Benalla Community Food Collective Food Share Strategy and Food Security Framework*.

Waminda Community House

An agreement was signed between Waminda Community House and the Council for \$10,000 awarded as a budget bid this financial year. As part of this agreement Leeane Bullard from Waminda Community House agreed to provide an update each quarter as part of the Community Department quarterly report to Council.

- The second half of 2025 continued to be a busy time for Waminda Community House. Over Terms 3 and 4 a total of 321 people accessed Food Relief on Thursdays, collecting 1,570 kilograms of food. Around half of these people stayed on for the free lunch which is cooked by volunteers. Food was collected every four weeks from Shepparton Food Share, complimented by the weekly Aldi pick-up, donations from Benalla Bowls Clubs as well as individual community member donations.
- Waminda Community House held two low-cost Community Lunches in Term 3 at the Country Women's Association (CWA) Hall. More than 75 people attended Waminda Community Houses Christmas Lunch held at the Benalla Town Hall in December 2025. More than 100 people at Waminda's end of year Christmas party and Indigenous Seasonal Mural unveiling.
- Waminda Community House hosted the Tomorrow Today Reading Buddie program every Monday and Free Kids Cooking on Wednesday afternoons after school. Children also attended the Indigenous Mural Sessions, Dancing and Singing, and the Anganya program. In total for Terms 3 and 4, 316 children attended the range of Waminda Kids programs.
- During the quarter Waminda Community House has led the Benalla Community Food Collective (BCFC) and has now released the BCFC Strategy and Framework. The strategy has practical and achievable actions that can be adopted by individuals and organisations to increase the reach and accessibility to those individuals and families most at risk in the community. The document is evidence based and can be used as a resource to support collaboration, partnerships and funding applications.

Highlights

In October 2025, the Benalla Seniors Festival delivered 41 events across four locations: Benalla, Swanpool, Lima East, and Devenish. Council delivered 22 events and promoted 19 community group activities. The festival attracted 1,146 attendees aged 60 and over. Events included World Flavors Morning Tea, Benalla Woodworkers Association and Men’s Shed open morning, Aviation Museum history exploration, Sharing the Stage at Lakeside Market, U3A BBQ Lunch and Digital Classes, and Waminda High Tea and Fashion Parade.



Community feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants describing the festival as ‘fabulous, fun, affordable, and thoroughly enjoyable’. Many valued the social connections and opportunities to try new activities. The Victorian Seniors Festival organisers praised the event’s scale, variety, branding, and detailed evaluation, calling it ‘an incredible month for your residents’.



Seniors Festival events at the Benalla Aviation Museum and Chair Yoga at the CWA Hall.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operating Budget result for the period ending 31 December 2025

	Notes	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	2025/26 Budget	Year End Forecast	Variance
Community Development	1	\$197,168	\$124,891	\$243,247	\$395,222	-\$151,975
Community Operations	2	\$230,958	\$244,291	\$539,942	\$974,166	-\$434,224
FCS Family & Children’s Services		(\$36,078)	\$61,931	\$110,068	\$115,946	-\$5,878
FCS Maternal Child Health	3	\$46,646	\$113,133	\$213,213	\$432,019	-\$218,806
Youth Programs	4	(\$20)	(\$13,490)	\$49,551	\$78,680	-\$29,129
Communication & Engagement		\$167,782	\$193,200	\$379,762	\$385,192	-\$5,430
Total		\$606,456	\$723,956	\$1,535,783	\$2,381,225	-\$845,442

Notes comparing Year End Forecast and original 2025/26 Budget:

1. Unfavourable variance due to carry forward of projects (Free from Violence and Open Space Strategy) from 24/25.
2. Unfavourable variance due to carry forward of Social Inclusion Action Group funding and incorrect mapping with the introduction of a new finance system.
3. Unfavourable variance due to the need to recognise Maternal and Child Health carry forward income from prior years.
4. Unfavourable variance due to timing of grant payments and some carry forward funding in L2P program and community contribution for the Live4Life program.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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4.7 Facilities and Information Technology Department Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 1573044422-1289

Greg Robertson – Manager Facilities and Information Technology

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the activities of the Facilities and Information Technology Department for the quarter ended 31 December 2025.

Facilities Management

- Completed works to facilitate the Benalla Art Gallery move to the Pop-up Benalla Art Gallery space at 75 Bridge Street, Benalla.
- Upgraded first floor security, CCTV and air conditioning at the Benalla Town Hall so the facility is suitable for temporary art collection storage and staff office space.
- The Facilities team took on the project of curation and coordination of town Christmas decorations for 2025. The new town Christmas tree was considered a success with a easy set up and pack up. The placement and reuse of many existing town decorations in new locations, including the refurbished nativity scene back on public land in front of the library, received good community feedback.
- Awarded the digital display signage tender for the Customer Service Centre building.
- The tender for the Customer Service Building CCTV was awarded.
- Conservation Works are ending at BARC Hut 65 with painting and electrical to complete midway through quarter three.
- Re-keyed the Senior Citizens Community Centre.
- Concreting completed under the Visitor Information Centre in the storage undercroft.
- Pleasing to report there was minimal vandalism across council facilities during the quarter.
- An increase in airport user noncompliance with Airport Rules is noted and Authorised Officer compliance actions will increase and continue at the airport over the next few months.
- All formal Safety Findings for the recent Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) Audit of the Benalla Airport have been completed to the satisfaction of CASA. Compliance with CASA regulations is a priority for the Facilities team to maintain Aerodrome Certification. If certification is lost it would not reasonably be able to be attained without significant capital investment. There is no indication we will lose our CASA certification, based on our current proactive management of the facility and Authorised Officer enforcement campaign.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

- Arranged provision of faster fibre optic internet connection to main server room at the Customer Service Centre through Telstra Business. The faster connection is required as most council software is now cloud based, accessed via the internet.
- The ICT team continue to support the CODI Project and various complex tasks associated with moving to a cloud first system.

- Successful configuration of new Virtual Private Network (VPN) software to enable staff working remote, or working from home, to use their council laptop securely and the same is if they were logged in from their office location. VPN rollout to all staff will take place later in quarter three.
- Preplanning works to replace the whole of council landline phone system with a software-based phone system. The ICT aims to switch over to the new phone system mid-2026.

Collaborative Digital Innovation (CODI) Project

- Weekly meetings were held with the Civica account manager to address incidents and support for outstanding tickets. As of end December we logged 211 tickets of which 184 were resolved.
- Civica On Demand training has been secured to provide additional support for Rates, Payroll and Finance as they learn the new Altitude software system.
- Combined Microsoft teams groups developed amongst the four CODI Member Councils (including Murrumbidgee, Mansfield and Strathbogie Shires) for each department to share knowledge, help resolve incidents and increase team collaboration.
- CODI Project works in progress:
 - Rural and residential bin data register deployment and configuration.
 - Animals and Infringements project commenced.
 - Background works completed for CODI Altitude Citizen Central project. Project to commence in February 2026 to allow customers to undertake more council tasks on-line via the website.

Benalla Aquatic Centre

- Swimming Lesson enrolments exceeded the target of 700, currently sitting at 718 enrolments. The YMCA are working through a waitlist of enrolments by programming additional classes. Classes are now offered on Sundays.
- General Memberships also exceeded their target of 400, currently sitting at 411 general memberships. This number is projected to increase slightly through quarter three and a membership drive will commence in the lead up to quarter four with a refresh of all gymnasium equipment.
- A good number of local school swimming carnivals and school swim lessons are now booked for quarter three.
- For the 2025 calendar year the centre recorded 43,135 visits, a substantial increase on the 35,267 visits recorded in the 2024 calendar year.
- The Splash Park is operating well with minimal breakdowns, compared to prior seasons. Incremental improvements to plant configuration are assisting to achieve reliable Splash Park operations.

Highlight

- Civica Altitude, which covers the Finance, Rates, Property and Customer Relationship Management software functions for the whole of council, moved to a business-as-usual operating mode as of November 2025, after a successful cut over from the old software which has been in use for more than 20 years at Benalla Rural City Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operating Budget result for the period ending 31 December 2025.

	Notes	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	2025/26 Budget	Year End Forecast	Variance
Aquatic Centre		\$478,002.32	\$461,958	\$923,918	\$923,918	\$0
Benalla Airport		\$6,370.19	\$15,152	\$30,307	\$30,307	\$0
Facilities	1	\$531,591.94	\$766,229	\$1,586,398	\$1,564,015	\$22,383
Information Technology		\$1,322,868.59	\$1,375,665	\$2,777,261	\$2,777,261	\$0
Saleyards		\$16,049.47	\$16,496	\$32,966	\$29,898	\$3,068
Total		\$2,354,882.51	\$2,635,500	\$5,350,850	\$5,325,399	\$25,451

Notes comparing Year End Forecast and original 2025/26 Budget:

1. Facilities forecast for repairs and maintenance costs impacted by insurance reimbursement of \$212,510 for flood damage to the Ceramic Mural offset by additional repairs costs expected to be incurred in 25/26 year.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the activities of the Development department for the quarter ended 31 December 2025.

Strategic Planning

- The Heritage Study is progressing with a meeting of the Heritage Working Group held on 20 October 2025. The meeting outlined the work undertaken on the Heritage Study to date including the completion of the draft heritage study with properties to be included into the study. It was advised at the meeting that any comments from the working group should be received within one month of the meeting. Comments from the working group have now been received and are with Council's Heritage Advisor to update the draft *Heritage Study* where required. It is then anticipated that the draft *Heritage Study* will be advertised to affected properties as per the *Heritage Study Engagement Plan* approved by the Council.
- The Benalla Planning Scheme Review amendment (C45) was approved at the Council Meeting held on 17 December 2025. The amendment has been submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval.
- The *Benalla Growth Strategy* is progressing with three more studies completing procurement initiation including updated drainage strategy, a retail/commercial study and a service strategy. Work is also progressing on the traffic study with the scope of this study being reviewed after comments received by the Department of Transport and Planning requiring additional work.

Statutory Planning

- 27 applications received during the quarter.
- 29 applications decided during the quarter.
- 79.31 per cent of applications were decided within statutory timeframes.

Building Surveying

- 158 building inspections.
- 153 building certificates.
- 9 building permits issued.
- 46 private building permits issued.

Public Health

- Benalla Community Food Collective (BCFC) has launched a new strategy and identified three additional related projects beyond supplying safe food to vulnerable groups. Ongoing funding and securing suitable locations are the main challenges.
- Meatballs containing substantial bone fragments, distributed from interstate, were identified in Benalla. Council's Public Health Coordinator is continuing to investigate.

Compliance

- The compliance team impounded 49 domestic animals.
- Responded to 54 domestic animal related requests.
- 22 dogs and cats were returned to their homes.

Emergency Management

- The *Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2025-28* was submitted in October 2025 and approved by the Regional Emergency Management Team review committee in November 2025. This is a state legislated all-agency plan no longer a Council Plan. Councils' role is now to display it on our Webpage.
- Council submitted applications for hub-based standalone communications centres (such as *Starlink*) under a Commonwealth Grant process called Strengthening Telecommunications against Natural Disasters (STAND) These are to be located at (public hall) locations across the Municipality. These included Baddaginnie, Benalla Town Hall, Devenish, Goorambat, Molyullah, Moorngag, Swanpool, Tatong, Thoona and Warrenbayne. Ten proposals were submitted, all 10 were successful.
- Council staff in conjunction with Regional CFA held a training and equipment familiarity session pre–Fire Danger Period to ensure Councils equipment (eg. Bulk Water tankers) had fittings compatible with CFA tankers, just in case they are needed.
- Council staff provided direct input into CFA deliberations for the start to the N/E Fire Declaration Period resulting in the imposition of an earlier than usual (by 2 weeks) start date. The underlying reason being a severe subsoil moisture deficit which might portend a higher intensity fire season.
- Council activated its response and recovery procedures for the Goomalibee fires in December 2025.

Manager Development

Septic Tanks

- 12 Permit to Install issued.
- 10 Certificate to Use' issued.
- 44 septic inspections conducted.

Wastewater Referrals for Planning Permit

- 15 applications were referred for planning comments to Manager Development for wastewater comments for planning proposals.

Fee Dispensation

The Council supports community groups and not-for-profit organisations through fee dispensation or reduction and responding to other circumstances as warranted.

For the quarter ended 31 December 2025, six applications to the value of \$405 in fee dispensations were approved:

Burning Off	0
General	5
Food and/or accommodation premises	0
Planning Matters	0
Building Matters	0

Applications Received:

Applicant	Permit Type	Value
Benalla Festival Launch	Community Event	\$67.50
Benalla By the Lake	Community Event	\$67.50
Tatong Market	Community Event	\$67.50
Anzac Appeal	Fundraising	\$67.50
BRCC Tag on Impact	Community Event	\$67.50
Domestic Violence Walk	Community Event	\$67.50
Carols by Candlelight	Community Event	\$67.50
Total		\$405.00

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Operating Budget result for the period ending 31 December 2025.

	Notes	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	2025/26 Budget	Year End Forecast	Variance
Building	1	\$149,708	\$156,784	\$306,155	\$363,155	-\$57,000
Compliance	2	\$316,159	\$446,762	\$878,299	\$695,615	\$182,684
Development Operations		\$113,141	\$120,307	\$303,783	\$303,783	\$0
Emergency Management		(\$7,687)	\$11,747	\$22,107	\$28,761	-\$6,654
Environmental Health		\$70,503	\$64,840	\$126,820	\$128,760	-\$1,940
Planning	3	\$76,471	\$116,953	\$241,526	\$497,190	-\$255,664
Total		\$718,295	\$917,393	\$1,878,690	\$2,017,264	-\$138,574

Notes comparing Year End Forecast and original 2025/26 Budget:

1. Unfavourable variance due to building income being lower than expected and payment to contract building surveyors which expired in November 2025.
2. Favourable variance due to error in mapping of transaction when financial were being moved from Syngeysoft to Authority. This has been fixed.
3. Unfavourable variance due to carry forward from last financial year for the Benalla Urban Growth Study and Heritage Study.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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4.9 Economic Development and Sustainability Activity Report For The Quarter Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 1545273666-206

Courtney Naughton – Manager Economic Development and Sustainability

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the activity of the Economic Development and Sustainability Department for the quarter ending 31 December 2025.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Future of Benalla and District Project – Community Development Fund

- Benalla Future Economy and Employment Precinct funding application approved for \$240,000 as part of the *Community Development Fund - Round 3 - Stream 2*.
- Benalla Migrant Camp feasibility study funding application was approved for \$66,580 as part of the *Community Development Fund - Round 3 - Stream 2*.
- Benalla Art Gallery undercroft feasibility study funding application was approved for \$21,141 as part of the *Community Development Fund - Round 3 - Stream 2*.
- Benalla Art Gallery undercroft feasibility study commenced with appointed consultant Dan Kroener. Inception meeting and site inspection were conducted on 8 and 9 December 2025.
- Benalla Future Economy and Employment Precinct Innovation Working Group commenced with the first introduction gathering on 11 December 2025.
- The Community Leadership Program, delivered by the Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE), first workshops “Connect and Explore”, were held on 4 December 2025 with 12 people attending the morning session and seven for the afternoon session.
- Winton Motor Raceway feasibility study expression of interest was submitted and approved as part of the *Community Development Fund - Round 3 - Stream 2*. The project is led by Winton Motor Raceway.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Business Development Coordinator conducted the following visits during the quarter.

Month	Number of Business	Notes
October 2025	15	
November 2025	110*	Included recruitment and Christmas campaign engagement of local businesses
December 2025	70*	Included Christmas market business liaison
Total	195	

Business Upskilling

Ten business workshops and live webinars were offered this quarter, promoted on Supporting Benalla Business’ Facebook events page and through the e-newsletter.

Topics included:

- Navigating disruption to your business
- Advanced strategies to taking your business online
- Digital Solutions 1:1 mentoring

- Tax Professionals conversations
- Turning emails into sales leads
- Lead a new future for Benalla – Connect and Explore
- Farm debt mediation
- Retail leasing.

Business Development Coordinator (BDC) attended the National Economic Development in Newcastle, NSW between 28 to 30 October 2025. The theme was ‘Shaping Tomorrow’s Economy’ with excellent speakers, thought provoking discussions and informative study tours over 2.5 days.

Business Networking

The monthly Coffee Connections organised by Council continued this quarter with a variety of topics and guest speakers.

Date	Venue	Guest speaker / Topic	Attendees
October	BBQ Den Smokehouse	Victoria Police – retail theft, vandalism and how to report it	18
November	The Earlybird	Compliance Dept - requirements for outdoor trading	15
December	The Merchant Benalla - courtyard	Annual wrap	25



Benalla Business Network (BBN)

A strategic planning session was held in November 2025 to consolidate the vision, governance and key priorities and actions for the next three years, led by consultant Magnus Nilsson, from Magnetise. The final report will be presented to the Council in 2026.

Jobs and Skills

Investment

The Supercheap Auto complex development at Witt Street, Benalla roundabout is making good progress. McMullin Property Developers is seeking suitable tenants to lease Tenancy A. It is anticipated that the build will be finished by April 2026. Tenants will fit out the building in May and June for a July 2026 opening. The contacted builder for the development is H. Troon which is a Ballarat company that employs regional trades.

Inland Rail

Progress this quarter has been focused on intensive construction for the new Benalla pedestrian underpass, including piling for the lift shaft and installation of concrete units. Major works included re-signaling, utility relocations, and track layout enhancements near the station. Works are continuing into early 2026 as part of the 2027 completion target. Construction firm John Holland completed the north section of the pedestrian underpass, installing 33 sheet piles, completing more than 600 metres of drainage and laying 1,300 metres of track.

Grants

Business Development Coordinator submitted two applications for the *Multicultural Business Precincts Program* of \$250,000 for the central business district (CBD) and visitor servicing precincts. If successful, the Council must contribute \$50,000.

The projects would allow activation of a range of options in the CBD precinct to celebrate the cultural diversity of Benalla's CBD precinct by transforming public spaces into vibrant, inclusive and story-rich environments that reflect the heritage and contributions of our multi-cultural business community by 'seeing the art in everything'. This would include visitor assets such as outdoor furniture, public lighting, wayfinding signage, public art installations and shopfront exteriors improvements.

Central Business District (CBD) Activations – Christmas Buy Local campaign

Council organised the following activities in December 2025 to support local businesses:

- Main Street Market held on Friday 12 December and Saturday 13 December. This inaugural event co-ordinated by the Business Development Coordinator saw 30 different stallholders from within the region trading on the footpath in the central CBD. Some businesses also had stalls out the front of their shops.
- Shop Local First competition. Thirty-nine businesses participated in the promotion and encouraged shoppers to scan QR codes in store and upload receipts to go in the draw to win a share of \$1,000 in Benalla dollars. A total of 361 entries were received throughout December 2025. Each week seven winners were announced on social media. They were emailed \$50 or \$25 gift cards, which must be spent locally at businesses who accept Benalla Business Network dollars.
- The annual business window competition was judged by the Mayor and BBN President. Winners were announced at the Family Christmas Party on 12 December 2025.

Category	Business	Prize
Best Daytime	Elmtree House Antiques	\$100 Benalla dollars
Best Night-time	Spot on Sparky	\$100 Benalla dollars
Most Amazing	Brick by Brick	\$100 Benalla dollars
Best Out of Town	The Devenish Store	\$100 Benalla dollars
Highly Commended	Milner Watson Pharmacy	\$50 Benalla dollars
Highly Commended	Room at the Table	\$50 Benalla dollars
Commended	Stolz	Cinema double pass
Commended	The BBQ Den	Cinema double pass
Commended	Terry White Chemmart	Cinema double pass

- Fifty students from four local schools painted Christmas corflutes for the first time this year. These were installed by Council staff on rubbish bins throughout the CBD. The schools involved were Benalla P-12 College, Benalla Flexible Learning, Benalla Special School and FCJ College Benalla.

The BBN assisted the Business Development Coordinator with the Main Street Market set up, the distribution of expressions of interest for the Christmas campaign to more than 200 businesses, and the marketing of promotions and prize winner announcements on socials.

Busking

Busking was free in December 2025. A variety of individuals and groups utilising the busking bases including families, young people, church and local theatre groups, and professional musicians.

Special thanks to Benalla P-12 College Music Coordinator Edwin Manono, who organised the Benalla P-12 College Band to perform several times. Thank you to all performers who added a wonderful atmosphere to the CBD.

Street Art Festival 2026

- Recruitment of additional sponsors for the Festival has been ongoing during the quarter. 75 potential sponsors have been approached, with the following sponsorship confirmed. \$10,000 from European Energy, \$5,000 from RACV, \$5,000 from Avenir Energy, \$2,500 from Engie, \$250 from the Officer of Helen Haines and \$250 from Morrison Sawers.
- In kind sponsors are also contributing significant support including Open2View, local bakeries, Winton Motor Raceway to date.
- Grant applications have also been submitted for the Inland Rail Community Grant for \$4,000 and the Tomorrow Today Stepping Stones for \$2,000. Grants will be awarded in March 2026.
- Business Development Coordinator has been encouraging businesses to host fringe events, such as workshops, tours, exhibitions or special events. Applications have now been extended to early February 2026.

VISITOR ECONOMY

Major Event Funding

In this quarter, four funding applications were approved by the Council for Major Event Funding.

Applicant	Event	Funding Amount
Benalla Migrants Association	Diwali	\$1,000
Benalla Lions Club	Carols by Candlelight	\$2,000
Benalla Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club inc.	100th annual Benalla Lawn Tennis Club Tournament	\$2,000
Molyullah Recreation and Public Hall Reserve Committee	Molyullah Easter Sports	\$2,000

Benalla Festival

The 2025 Benalla Festival was held from Friday 31 October to Sunday 9 November 2025.

Benalla by the lake program started one and a half hours earlier to include children's activities that were usually held at the splash park. Activities added to the program included face painting, lawn games, children's entertainment and a roaming artist.

2025 saw new event producer, Activate Community looking after the logistics of the lake entertainment. Community Engagement was made a priority strengthen and enhance community pride. This included performances by local dance schools and a battle of the bands featuring local high school students.

Estimated attendance was for Saturday by the Lake was more than 3,500, with strong early-day turnout from the children's entertainment, and despite the cold weather.

- The side alley and board games were a popular addition, particularly for teenagers.
- Food and beverage vendors reported high satisfaction.
- The event was on schedule despite a busy program.
- The jetpack show added something new that both kids and adults enjoyed.
- Feedback on Benalla by the Lake was positive. The public responded well to the inclusion of community groups and the addition of the jetpack show.

The Festival saw a total of 24 events.

Community Christmas Party

The Benalla Community Christmas Party was held on Friday 12 December 2025 at the Visitor Information Centre Precinct. The event featured catering provided by Rotary, entertainment by DJ Lopes, and a visit from Santa, with inflatables in the Splash Park proving particularly popular with families.

Santa photo sessions were also hosted in the Visitor Information Centre, adding to the festive atmosphere and strong community participation. Winners of the business Christmas windows competition were also announced.

Garage Sale Trail

Garage Sale Trail is a community-powered waste education and behaviour change program that encourages the buying and selling of second-hand items, while bringing communities together and reducing landfill waste. The initiative is delivered nationally over two weekends each November.

In 2025, Garage Sale Trail was held locally over two weekends on 8 and 9 November, as part of the festival program, and 15 and 16 November. This marked Benalla's first year participating in the Trail. Across the two weekends, a total of 35 stalls were registered, including the Pre-Loved Market, demonstrating strong community engagement and interest in sustainable practices.

The dates for Garage Sale Trail 2026 have been confirmed as 7 and 8 November and 14 and 15 November 2026.

BENALLA CINEMA

Benalla Cinema participated in the 2025 Seniors Festival in October 2025 by screening the popular *Reel History: Benalla's Story on Screen*. This special screening was an immersive exhibit that brings Benalla's past to life through short films, documentaries, and personal stories. Featuring historical footage, it offers a captivating glimpse into the people, events, and culture that shaped the town's rich and vibrant history. More than 45 people were in attendance.

November 2025 saw a very special screening of: *Unbreakable: The Jelena Dokic Story*. This special screening was part of the 16 days of Activism. More than 20 people were in attendance.

Benalla Cinema also participated in the 2025 Benalla Festival with the official launch of the festival opening with a free screening of the movie *Hocus Pocus*. More than 30 people were in attendance at the screening.

Cinema Comparison 2024/25 – 2025/2026

Month	Benalla Cinema	Patrons 2025	Benalla Cinema	Patrons 2024
October	138 sessions	866	129 sessions	667
November	100 sessions	741	97 sessions	807
December	100 sessions	1315	96 sessions	988

**Some session weeks have overlapped into the next month. Numbers are dependent on movies.*

Benalla Visitor Information Centre

Visitor numbers for the quarter:

Month	Visitor numbers
October	1247
November	1531
December	1243
Total	4021

**This is an increase of approx. 14 per cent on the same quarter last year.*

TOURISM

Victorian Tourism Awards



Finalist

2025 Victorian
Tourism Awards

The Benalla Street Art Festival was nominated in the Festivals and Events category of the Victorian Tourism Awards. Achieving finalist status is a significant accomplishment, as it requires submissions to meet a minimum assessment score of 70 per cent or higher.

While the Festival did not receive the award, the nomination provided valuable additional exposure for Benalla and offered an important opportunity to network with industry peers and engage with leading tourism and events professionals from across Victoria.

Visitor Information Centre Exhibitions and Book Launches

Benalla Camera Club

Benalla Camera Club held their latest exhibition in the Visitor Information Centre space as part of the Benalla Festival. The exhibition was to celebrate the clubs 70th year in Benalla and the photographic skills of the members.

Peter Fitzsimmons Author Talk

Australia's bestselling non-fiction author, Peter FitzSimons AM, brought one of Australia's most remarkable stories to life with his trademark passion and engaging storytelling. Renowned for acclaimed works such as *Kokoda*, *Gallipoli*, *Ned Kelly* and *Breaker Morant*, FitzSimons continues to captivate audiences by bringing Australia's history and iconic figures vividly to the page. Peter presented his latest book on Weary Dunlop at the Visitor Information Centre.

The author talk was held on Tuesday 28 October 2025 and attracted more than 100 attendees, reflecting strong community interest and engagement in high-quality literary and cultural events.

BENALLA ART GALLERY

- Benalla Art Gallery staff continued to work through the plan for Benalla Art Gallery closure, collection relocation, and temporary venue activation per the endorsed plan. Major milestones in this period included the complete relocation of the Benalla Art Gallery Collection to two appropriate venues, and the launch of the Pop-Up Benalla Art Gallery at 75 Bridge Street East, Benalla on the evening of 14 November 2025.
- During the quarter Benalla Art Gallery welcomed 2,500 exhibition visitors and staged 25 public and education programs for 423 participants to the Pop-Up Benalla Art Gallery.
- A further two exhibitions, *Desmonde Downing: Threads of Kelly*, and *Andrew Bond: A Few Good People I Know*, were presented in this period at the Visitor Information Centre.
- Benalla Art Gallery secured \$40,000 in funding over the calendar years 2026 and 2027 to support student engagement and learning through the Department of Education's Strategic Partnerships Program.
- Benalla Art Gallery undercroft feasibility study application was approved for \$21,140.90 (part of Community Development Fund - Round 3 - Stream 2).
- Benalla Art Gallery Video Façade activation expression of interest was approved by Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to progress to full application (part of Community Development Fund - Round 3 - Stream 2).
- Stage 1 of conservation works to the *Benalla Ceramic Mural* were completed from 10 to 13 November 2025. The project is managed by Penny Byrne, ceramics conservator from Grimwade Conservation Services, and involving heritage tiler Michael Hathaway, and local ceramicist and original *Mural* artist Regina Laity-Plex. Subsequent stages of restoration are intended to be delivered in Autumn of 2026.

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

- A request for tender (RFT) was put out to have the conservation value of the Council's roadsides reassessed. The RFQ is now closed and will be awarded shortly. Works will hopefully begin in late February or early March 2026.
- The Goulburn Valley Community Food Bowl Framework was launched in December 2025. The Framework was put together with support from the Goulburn Valley Food System Reference Group. The group is now moving to a governance model to oversee the deployment of the Framework.
- The Powering Resilience in the Regions Project (Library Battery Storage) which is being led by the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance with support from the Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance. The tender for the operation and maintenance of the batteries was awarded to Indigo Power. Indigo Power completed a site inspection in December 2025.
- Council's Sustainability team held its third annual clothes swap. The event was run as part of the 2025 Benalla Festival. The event was well received by both stall holders and patrons, and the team will look to grow the event further in 2026.
- On 1 July 2024 the Council switched over its electricity to renewable energy under the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO). This resulted in costs dropping by \$2,277 a month on average. Council then installed a new Solar system on the Customer Service Centre Building on 4 June 2025. This has resulted in a further cost saving of \$2,121 a month on average, resulting in a 75 per cent drop in costs since July 2023.

Economic Development and Sustainability

Operating Budget result for the period ending 31 December 2025.

	Notes	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	2025/26 Budget	Year End Forecast	Variance
Art Gallery	1	\$291,491	\$372,980	\$632,263	\$744,807	-\$112,544
Benalla Cinema		\$58,713	\$121,843	\$239,628	\$224,628	\$15,000
Business Development		\$72,070	\$89,998	\$176,834	\$176,834	\$0
Economic Development & Sustainability Operations	2	\$39,476	\$189,041	\$371,637	\$293,385	\$78,252
Environmental Sustainability	3	(\$9,294)	\$81,083	\$159,360	\$204,988	-\$45,628
Events		\$209,573	\$155,170	\$307,429	\$305,929	\$1,500
Tourism		\$130,888	\$175,675	\$353,668	\$360,749	-\$7,081
Total		\$792,918	\$1,185,790	\$2,240,819	\$2,311,320	(\$70,501)

Notes comparing Year End Forecast and original 2025/26 Budget:

1. Unfavourable variance due to un-forecasted additional external funding received and to be spent in this FY. An additional \$70,000 funding received from the Ian Potter Foundation on behalf of the Foundation. As well as additional funding received from the Community Development Fund of \$20,000 and Strategic Partnerships Program for \$20,000 and \$8,000 preservation works in the collection.
2. Favourable variance due to delay in the Forestry Transition Fund Project Stage 2 funding starting.
3. Unfavourable variance due the error made in the forecast of the additional \$58k income from AusNet lighting refund. This will be rectified in the quarter three review.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

4.10 Appointment of Councillor Representatives to Advisory Committees, Peak Industry Bodies and Regional and Community-Based Committees

Ref: 1138149297-13246
Peter Keane – Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents proposed nominations of Council representatives for appointments to various committees, peak industry bodies and regional and community organisations for 2025/26.

BACKGROUND

Nominations of appointment of Council representatives to various committees, peak industry bodies and regional and community organisations for 2025/26 were approved by Council at its meeting on 19 November 2025.

Following the resignation of Cr Nathan Tolliday in November 2025, a countback to fill the vacancy was conducted on Wednesday 3 December 2025. Councillors agreed to review the Council representatives to various committees, peak industry bodies and regional and community organisations for 2025/26 following the swearing in of a new Councillor Vince Branigan.

DISCUSSION

Council representatives nominations to various committees, peak industry bodies and regional and community organisations for 2025/26 are detailed below.

Advisory Committee	Current 2025/26 Representatives	Nominated 2025/26 Representatives	Number of representatives in accordance with Terms of Reference	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Festival Advisory Committee	Cr Justin King Cr Jillian Merkel	Cr Justin King Cr Jillian Merkel Cr Vince Branigan	Up to three Councillor representatives	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability	Monthly or as required 4pm Tuesday

Recommendation:

That Cr....., Cr..... and Cr..... be appointed as Councillor representatives on the Benalla Festival Advisory Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.

Advisory Committee	Current 2025/26 Representatives	Nominated 2025/26 Representatives	Number of representatives in accordance with Terms of Reference	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee	Cr Jillian Merkel Cr Puna Gunaratne	Cr Jillian Merkel Cr Vince Branigan	Up to two Councillor representatives	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability	Monthly 5.30pm Monday

Recommendation:

That Cr..... and Cr..... be appointed as Councillor representatives on the Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.

Advisory Committee	Current 2025/26 Representatives	Nominated 2025/26 Representatives	Number of representatives in accordance with Terms of Reference	Officer	Meetings
Communications Advisory Committee	Mayor Cr David Blore Cr Peter Davis	Mayor Cr David Blore Cr Peter Davis Cr Puna Gunaratne	The Mayor and Councillor representatives as determined by the Council.	Chief Executive Officer	Monthly 1.30pm Wednesday.

Recommendation:

That Cr....., Cr....., Cr..... and Cr..... be appointed as Councillor representatives on the Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.

External Incorporated	Current 2025/26 Representative	Nominated 2025/26 Representative	Number of representatives in accordance with Terms of Reference	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Family Research Group	Cr David Blore	Cr Vince Branigan	Not specified.	Chief Executive Officer	Monthly 11am Wednesday

Recommendation:

That Cr..... be appointed as the Councillor representative on the Benalla Family Research Group for the 2025/26 Council year.

External Working Groups	Current 2025/26 Representatives	Nominated 2025/26 Representatives	Number of representatives in accordance with Terms of Reference	Officer	Meetings
Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee	Cr David Blore Cr Bernie Hearn	Cr David Blore Cr Bernie Hearn Cr Puna Gunaratne	Not specified	Manager Assets and Infrastructure	Bi-monthly 2pm Monday

Recommendation:
That Cr....., Cr..... and Cr..... be appointed as Councillor representatives on the Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.

Audit and Risk Committee

The *Audit and Risk Committee Charter* allows for Councillor representatives to be appointed to the Committee.

While three councillors (refer to table below) have been nominated, only two can be appointed. The committee allows for six members. Four of the positions must be held by independent members.

Historically, one Councillor representative has been the Chair of the Finance and Planning Committee.

Statutory Committees	Current 2025/26 Representatives	Nominated 2025/26 Representative/s	Number of representatives in accordance with Audit and Risk Committee Charter	Officer	Meetings
Audit and Risk Committee	Cr David Blore (Chair of F&P Committee) Cr Puna Gunaratne	Cr David Blore Cr Puna Gunaratne Cr Peter Davis	Up to two Councillor representatives.	General Manager Corporate	4 times a year. 3 rd Tuesday of month.

Recommendation:
That Cr..... and Cr..... be appointed as Councillor representatives to the Audit and Risk Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.

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4.11 Chief Executive Officer Credit Card Report For The Quarter Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 669520245-347
Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

CEO Credit Card Transactions for the Quarter ended 31 December 2025

Date	Name	Details	Amount
7/11/2025	NRMA Electric	EV charging	\$11.59
20/11/2025	Seven Creeks Hotel	Meeting expenses	\$25.82
23/11/2025	Ready Express	Fuel	\$76.84
26/11/2025	SQ Pluss Coffee	Meeting expenses	\$25.45
26/11/2025	SQ Plus Coffee	Meeting expenses	\$7.73
26/11/2025	Benalla Car Wash	Car wash	\$4.73
26/11/2025	Mercure Melb	Accommodation	\$155.55
27/11/2025	Captain Melville	Travel expenses	\$40.60
27/11/2025	CBD Park Pty Ltd	Travel expenses	\$30.51
28/11/2025	The Merchant	Meeting expenses	\$15.16
11/12/2025	The Merchant	Meeting expenses	\$9.19
Total (ex. GST)			\$403.17

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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4.12 Councillors Expenses For The Quarter Ended 31 December 2025

Ref: 36168913-9990
Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

Councillors' Information and Communication Expenses

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

Councillor	2025/26 Q1	2025/26 Q2
Cr Branigan	\$0	\$31.81
Cr Davis	\$0	\$0
Cr Gunaratne	\$95.43	\$95.43
Cr Hearn	\$0	\$0
Cr King	\$0	\$0
Cr Blore	\$95.43	\$95.43
Cr Merkel	\$95.43	\$95.43
Cr Tolliday	\$95.43	\$63.62
Total (ex. GST):	\$381.72	\$381.72

Councillors' reimbursement of expenses

The Council at its meeting on 10 September 2025 adopted the *Councillor Resources and Reimbursement Policy*.

Councillors' reimbursements for quarter 2 are detailed in the table below:

Date	Councillor	Reimbursement Details	Amount (ex. GST)
15/10/2025	Mayor Cr Bernie Hearn	Accommodation Sofitel Melbourne – MAV State Council Meeting	\$449.46
04/12/2025	Cr Puna Gunaratne	Accommodation Mercure – MAV Masterclass Speaking with Impact	\$201.33
Total (ex. GST):			\$650.79

Councillors' attendance at training courses, conferences and seminars

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

Date	Councillor	Description	Professional Development (ex. GST)	Conferences and Seminars (ex. GST)
29/07/2025	Cr David Blore	Victorian Greenhouse Alliance Conference and mileage costs		\$470.99
04/08/2025	Mayor Cr Bernie Hearn	MAV Service Awards including Mr Danny Claridge and accommodation		\$810.09
15/10/2025	Mayor Cr Bernie Hearn	State Council Meeting - accommodation		\$449.46
20/11/2025	Deputy Mayor Cr Justin King	Mayor's Mandatory Training Program 2025	\$450.00	
20/11/2025	Mayor Cr Bernie Hearn	Mayor's Mandatory Training Program 2025	\$450.00	
10/11/2025	Cr Puna Gunaratne	Masterclass – Speaking with Impact and accommodation	\$1,001.33	
Total (ex. GST):			\$1,901.33	\$1,730.54

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *2025/26 Budget* allocated for Councillors' attendance at professional development courses, conferences and seminars is \$15,557.

Summary	Professional Development, Conferences and Seminars (ex. GST)
Quarter ended 30 September 2025	\$1,281.08
Quarter ended 31 December 2025	\$2,350.79
Total (ex. GST):	\$3,631.87

Recommendation:
That the report be noted.

4.13 Mayor and Councillors' Attendance At Conferences and Events

Ref: 36167913-9985

Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

The Mayor and Councillors attended meetings and events as detailed below during the period from 8 December 2025 to 22 February 2026.

Mayor Councillor Bernie Hearn	
2025	
8 December	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
10 December	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
12 December	Tour of the Benalla Flexible Learning Centre
	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
	Benalla Rural City Community Christmas Party
17 December	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
21 December	Benalla Lions Club Carols by Candlelight
2026	
3 January	Opening of 100th Annual Lawn Tennis Club Tournament
20 January	Interview with the The Age
22 January	Visit to Goomalibee
26 January	Baddaginnie Australia Day Community Breakfast
	Benalla Australia Day Community Breakfast and Presentations
	Benalla Rural City Australian Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony
2 February	Benalla Health and Wellbeing Partnership Meeting
4 February	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
5 February	Municipal Association of Victoria Regional Meeting – Goulburn Ovens Murray
7 February	Radio Interview with ABC Goulburn Murray
10 February	Australia Day Advisory Committee Meeting
11 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
13 February	Radio Interview with ABC Goulburn Murray
16 February	Radio Interview with ABC Goulburn Murray
	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
17 February	Benalla Airport Advisory Committee Meeting
18 February	Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) - Consultation Session
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

Deputy Mayor Councillor Justin King	
2025	
10 December	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
11 December	Benalla Showgrounds and Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Meeting
12 December	Benalla Rural City Community Christmas Party
	Devenish Christmas BBQ and Carols
17 December	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
21 December	Benalla Lions Club Carols by Candlelight
2026	
26 January	Goorambat Australia Day Community Breakfast and Presentations
	Devenish Australia Day Community Breakfast and Presentations
	Benalla Rural City Australian Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony
4 February	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
10 February	Australia Day Advisory Committee Meeting
	Churchill Reserve Committee of Management Meeting
11 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
12 February	Official Opening of the Winton Cafe
14 February	Goomalibee Thank You Celebration
17 February	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group
18 February	Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) - Consultation Session
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
19 February	Special Meeting Benalla Showgrounds and Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Meeting

Councillor David Blore	
2025	
8 December	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
9 December	Benalla Family Research Group Meeting
	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
10 December	Benalla Business Network Coffee Connections
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
12 December	Benalla Rural City Community Christmas Party
16 December	Family Research Group Committee Meeting
17 December	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
21 December	Benalla Lions Club Carols by Candlelight
2026	
20 January	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group Meeting
21 January	Launch of Benalla Community Food Collective Food Share Strategy and Framework
26 January	Thoon Australia Day Community Breakfast and Presentations
	Benalla Rural City Australian Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony
	Goomalibee Community BBQ
3 February	Goulburn Murray Catchment Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
4 February	Councillor Only Time
	Benalla Historical Society Meeting
	Additional Council Meeting
11 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
12 February	Circular Economy Seminar
15 February	Benalla Historical Society Annual General Meeting
16 February	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
17 February	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group
	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
18 February	Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) - Consultation Session
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

Councillor Vince Branigan	
2025	
10 December	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
12 December	Benalla Rural City Community Christmas Party
17 December	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
21 December	Benalla Lions Club Carols by Candlelight
2026	
21 January	Launch of Benalla Community Food Collective Food Share Strategy and Framework
26 January	Warrenbayne Australia Day Community Breakfast
	Benalla Rural City Australian Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony
	Annual Student Exhibition, SHOWCASE Launch – Pop Up Benalla Art Gallery
4 February	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
11 February	Benalla Business Coffee Connections
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
12 February	Official Opening of the Winton Cafe

Councillor Peter Davis	
2025	
10 December	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
11 December	Albert Heaney Oval Committee of Management Annual General Meeting
12 December	Benalla Rural City Community Christmas Party
	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
14 December	Tatong Christmas BBQ
17 December	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
2026	
26 January	Lima/Swanpool Australia Day Community Morning Tea and Presentations
	Benalla Rural City Australian Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony
	Goomalibee Australia Day Community BBQ and Presentations
4 February	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
11 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
14 February	Goomalibee Thank You Celebration
17 February	Benalla Airport Advisory Committee Meeting
18 February	Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) - Consultation Session
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
2025	
9 December	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
10 December	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
12 December	Benalla Rural City Community Christmas Party
15 December	Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
17 December	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
2026	
26 January	Tatong Australia Day Community Breakfast
	Benalla Rural City Australian Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony
2 February	Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
4 February	Additional Council Meeting
11 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
14 February	Goomalibee Thank You Celebration
17 February	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
18 February	Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) - Consultation Session
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
19 February	Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee Meeting
20 February	Benalla Street Art Festival Committee stakeholder consultation session

Councillor Jillian Merkel	
2025	
10 December	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
12 December	Tour of the Benalla Flexible Learning Centre
	Benalla Rural City Community Christmas Party
15 December	Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
17 December	Councillor Only Time
	Council Meeting
2026	
26 January	Molyullah Australia Day Community Breakfast and Presentations
	Benalla Rural City Australian Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony
2 February	Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
4 February	Councillor Only Time
	Additional Council Meeting
10 February	Churchill Reserve Committee of Management Meeting
11 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
18 February	Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) - Consultation Session
	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

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4.14 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.	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 25 February 2026.
2.	Council Meeting 19-Nov-25	2.1	Reopen the reserve located to the south of Willis Little Drive, Benalla 1. That the petition be received. 2. That a report be presented to the February 2026 Finance and Planning Committee.	MAI	1. Completed 2. Completed
3.	Council Meeting 19-Nov-25	4.3	Appointment of Council Representatives to Advisory Committees, Peak Industry Bodies and Regional and Community-Based Committees 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.	CEO	1. Completed 2. In progress
4.	Council Meeting 19-Nov-25	4.4	Benalla Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 1. That the <i>Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029</i> be adopted. 2. That the <i>Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029</i> 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 <i>Benalla Rural City Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029</i> .	MD	1. Completed 2. Completed 3. Completed
5.	F&P Committee 10-Dec-25	1	Planning Permit Application For Building 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 25 March 2026.	MD	1. Completed 2. In progress

6.	Council Meeting 17-Dec-25	4.3	<p>Planning Scheme Amendment C45bena – Benalla Planning Scheme Review</p> <p>That the Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with Section 29 of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>, adopt Planning Scheme Amendment C45bena with modifications to Clause 72.08 for the removal of the Benalla Business Area Car Parking Precinct Plan (2011) and Clause 43.02 Schedule 5 with the replacement of references to Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DECCA) . In accordance with Section 31 of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> submit Planning Scheme Amendment C45bena to the Minister for approval. 	MD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Completed In progress
7.	Council Meeting 17-Dec-25	4.4	<p>2025/2026 Quick Response Grant Program</p> <p>That a \$600 grant from the <i>2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program</i> be awarded to the Goorambat Public Hall Reserve Committee.</p>	MC	Completed
8.	Council Meeting 17-Dec-25	4.5	<p>Authorisation of Signing and Sealing of Documents – Instrument of Delegation from the Council to Council Staff</p> <p>In the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the <i>S6 – Instrument of Delegation</i> dated 17 December 2025, the Council resolves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That the power delegated to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the offices or positions referred to in the attached <i>Instrument of Delegation to members of Council staff</i>, the powers, duties and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument. That the instrument comes into force immediately when the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument. That on the coming into force of the instrument that all previous delegations to members of Council staff (other than the Chief Executive Officer) are revoked. That the duties and functions set out in the instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the instruments must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt. 	CEO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Completed Completed Completed
9.	F&P Committee 18-Feb-25	5	<p>2025/26 Quick Response Grants Program</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That a \$600 grant from the <i>2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program</i> be awarded to U3A Benalla. That a \$750 grant from the <i>2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program</i> be awarded to Swanpool and District Community Development Association. 	MC	Completed
10.	F&P Committee 18-Feb-25	6	<p>Petition: Reopen The Reserve Located To The South of Willis Little Drive, Benalla</p> <p>That item 6. <i>Petition: Reopen The Reserve Located To The South of Willis Little Drive, Benalla</i> be deferred until the Finance and Planning Committee meeting 25 March 2026 to allow for further information to be provided on the request to reopen the reserve located to the south of Willis Little Drive, Benalla.</p>	MAI	In progress

5. Reports by Councillors

Recommendation:

That the report(s) be noted.

6. Notices of Motion

6.1 Notice of Motion: Improved Parking Layout at Benalla Railway Station

Councillor David Blore submitted the following motion.

Recommendation:

1. **That Council notes the following:**
 - a. **Rail travellers have enjoyed direct and immediate access to the Benalla Railway Station building and platform for well over a century.**
 - b. **The current Inland Rail project will result in loss of this direct access. Disabled passengers will no longer enjoy the previous accessibility by way of the drop-off zone at the entrance and convenient parking spaces within 10 metres of the platform.**
 - c. **Disabled parking spaces are now to be a minimum of 35 metres away. Public transport parking (buses and taxis) is further removed.**
 - d. **The design for the station provides for substantial open space directly outside the station entrance. The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) (article in the Benalla Ensign dated 14 January 2026) is reported as asserting that the shift was driven by the community's desire for open space.**
 - e. **A recent response letter from former members of the Benalla Working Group (BWG) established by the ARTC in 2020 rejected this assertion, stating that in the deliberations of the BWG it was never an either open space or parking situation immediately outside the station building.**
 - f. **Substantial opportunities for open space development will be available for ARTC after the southern rail track and former Express Passenger Train (XPT) platform is removed, without impinging on opportunities for an improved parking layout.**
 - g. **Provision of disabled parking spaces together with improved provision for emergency vehicle and public transport access can be readily achieved by using the existing concrete and asphalt pavement immediately in front of the station entrance.**
 - h. **The proposed change will result in cost savings through not requiring current pavement to be excavated.**
2. **That the Council notes that the new northern platform to be developed as part of this project will experience significant passenger movements. A new northside car park for all patrons including public transport and disabled users will enhance the functionality and community acceptance of the changes.**
3. **That the Council has the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to write to the ARTC CEO (copies to Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Catherine King, State Minister for Transport Sonia Kilkeny, Annabelle Cleeland MLA, Member for Euroa and Helen Haines MP, Independent Member for Indi) in terms of the above points.**

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 CM26.042 Culdesac Drainage Improvement Works
- 9.2 Tender Report For Contract CM26.029 Supply and Delivery of a Motor Grader
- 9.3 Confidential Reports by Councillors
- 9.4 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 CM26.042 Culdesac Drainage Improvement Works**
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 Contract CM26.029 Supply and Delivery of a Motor Grader**
Item 9.2 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 Confidential Council Actions Pending**
Item 9.5 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.

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10. Reopening of the meeting to the public

Recommendation:

That the meeting be reopened to the public.

Closure of the meeting