

Benalla Rural City Council

# Council Meeting

## Agenda

Date: Wednesday 22 April 2026

Time: 6pm

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

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# Agenda

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	
	Councillor David Blore	
	Councillor Vince Branigan	
	Councillor Peter Davis	
	Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
	Councillor Jillian Merkel	
<b>In attendance</b>	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Tom Arnold	Community Development and Recreation Coordinator
	Stephen Dowe	Senior Projects and Technical Services Engineer
	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 on an approved leave of absence from Thursday 2 April 2026 to Monday 27 April 2026.

Councillor Justin King is requesting a leave of absence from Monday 1 June 2026 to Tuesday 9 June 2026.

## Recommendation:

- 1. That the apology/ies be accepted.**
- 2. That a leave of absence be granted to Cr Justin King from Monday 1 June 2026 to Tuesday 9 June 2026.**

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

### **Recommendation:**

**That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 4 March 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.**

## 1. Public Question Time

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

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

A question may be on any matter except if it:

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

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

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

### **Recommendation:**

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

## 2. Petitions

No petitions were submitted to the meeting.

### Record of Committees

#### 3.1 Recommendations from Finance and Planning Committee

The recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2026 are attached as **Appendix 1**.

#### **Recommendation:**

**That the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2026 be adopted.**

## Recommendations From Finance and Planning Committee 25 March 2026

### 1. 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 assessed 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.
- Leanne Maxwell from Regional Planning Services spoke in support of the planning application.
- Lee Barr spoke against the planning application.

#### **Cr Hearn / Cr Merkel:**

**That Council having caused notice of Planning Application No. P091-25 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 140 Darktown Road Lurg for the use and development of land for Accommodation and a Place of Assembly (Wedding Events) 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 plans submitted with the application, but amended to show the following details:**
    - i. **Provide details of proposed signage including location, dimensions, elevations, colouring and wording.**
    - ii. **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 200 patrons may be permitted on the land. The responsible authority may consent in writing to vary this requirement.**
4. **The use and development must comply with the recommendations of the Acoustic Engineering Report, prepared by DDEG, dated 01/10/2025, to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

- 5. The use and development must comply with the Bushfire Emergency Management Plan to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**
- 6. Prior to the commencement of the use an updated Event Management Plan must be submitted to and endorsed by the responsible authority. The Event Management Plan must be amended as follows:**
  - a. The plan must be updated to comply with all conditions of this permit.**
  - b. Measures to ensure that all guests leave the site by 11pm.**
  - c. Measures to ensure that there will be no short term accommodation or camping on the site other than that approved within the existing dwelling.**
  - d. Measures to ensure that all guests are restricted to the event area during the course of an event. Only wedding photos may be taken outside of the event area.**
  - e. Measures to ensure that the Responsible Authority is contacted in writing prior to each wedding/event undertaken on the land.**
  - f. Measures to encourage patrons to use a bus service to attend a wedding/event.**
  - g. Detailing the preferred route for access to and from the facility by patrons. The preferred route must not include Bostock Road.**
  - h. Details of how the operator will advise patrons of the preferred access route and car parking arrangements.**
- 7. 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, wastewater, waste products, grit or oil.**

**to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**
- 8. 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.**
- 9. 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. Noise measurements of actual in operation noise levels must be undertaken at the permit holders expense every three weddings/events over a period of twelve months to determine if the use is achieving compliance with the noise protocol. If the monitoring finds compliance is not being achieved with noise protocol additional noise mitigation measures must be implemented without delay to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**

- 11. Noise measurements as required by Condition No. 10 of this permit must be submitted to the Responsible Authority within two weeks of noise measurements taking place.**
- 12. In the event of unreasonable noise being generated by activities conducted from the subject land and being established by Council planning officers as likely to be causing a disturbance to nearby property, then further noise testing by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant must be undertaken to assess whether activities on the site are breaching the EPA permissible noise levels and to advise what measures must be implemented to minimise the problem to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.**
- 13. 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.**
- 14. 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**
- 15. Waste collection must be conducted in EPA Publication 1254 'Noise Control Guidelines and shall not occur after 8pm and before 7am weekdays or before 9am on all other days.**
- 16. 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.**
- 17. The use must only operate between the following times:**
  - a. 9am to 11pm Thursday to Sunday**
  - b. Music must cease by 10pm**
  - c. Closed Christmas Day.**
- 18. No more than twelve (12) weddings/events may occur on the land in any calendar year.**
- 19. Prior to the commencement of the use, the operator under this permit must prepare a Complaints Handling Procedure, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, including (but not necessarily limited to) the following matters:**
  - a. A register of complaints that sets out:**
    - i. The date of a complaint;**
    - ii. Details of the complaint with name, contact number and address if relevant;**
    - iii. Action to investigate the complaint and , if appropriate, action to rectify the complaint and date of the action;**
    - iv. Details of any subsequent contact with the complainant regarding the complaint and any action taken to resolve the complaint as appropriate;**

- v. A process and timeframe for review of the Complaints Handling Procedure by management.
  - b. A process and timeframe for the operator to consult with and consider solutions proposed by the local community members to resolve complaints and any identified issues.
  - c. A process and timeframe for regular submission of copies of the Complaints Handling Procedure to the Responsible Authority.
20. The complaints register and the Complaints Handling Procedure shall be made available for examination by the Responsible Authority at all reasonable times on request by the Responsible Authority.
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.
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.
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.
24. No fewer than sixty (60) car parking spaces must be provided on the land.
25. 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 of compacted crushed rock.
  - b. Properly formed to such levels that they can be used in accordance with the plans.
  - c. Drained.
  - d. Line marked to indicate each space and all access lanes.
  - e. 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.

26. No native vegetation may be removed from the land unless with the further written consent of the responsible authority.

#### **Engineering Conditions**

27. The proposed works must not cut off natural drainage from adjacent properties.
28. 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.

29. No additional vehicle accesses may be constructed apart from those endorsed on the approved plan.
30. 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.
31. The vehicle parking drawings shall also demonstrate how the surface will be drained to minimise erosion and including proposed sediment control.
32. Prior to the commencement of use, the vehicle access must be upgraded to include a pipe and headwalls at the applicant's expense. The Access must be in accordance with the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) standard drawing SD255 for a rural entrance and include setback to the gate as detailed on the IDM standard drawing. The applicant shall provide a drawing prepared by a Registered Engineer that will demonstrate that the width of the crossing will accommodate the design vehicle (bus) and to provide two-way vehicle access to Darktown Road.
33. All stormwater generated from proposed impervious areas shall be retained on site and discharged such that it does not cause nuisance to adjoining properties.

#### **Environmental Health Conditions**

34. Prior to the commencement of use the developer/applicant must provide a plan that shows that the wastewater system of the existing dwelling is wholly contained within Crown Allotment 20, Section B, Parish of Tatong. In the event it is not located within Crown Allotment 20, Section B, Parish of Tatong, the boundary must be realigned to accommodate the wastewater or the wastewater system must be relocated within the confines of Crown Allotment 20, Section B, Parish of Tatong under a separate wastewater permit prior to the commencement of use.
35. 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, and is located to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

#### **Expiry**

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Business identification signage for the subject site cannot exceed 3m<sup>2</sup> in area.
6. 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>.

Motion Defeated

A division of the vote was called.

*Votes recorded in favour of the motion:*

Cr Bernie Hearn

Cr Jillian Merkel

Cr David Blore

*Votes recorded against the motion:*

Cr Justin King

Cr Vince Branigan

Cr Peter Davis

Cr Puna Gunaratne

The motion was **defeated**.

**Cr Hearn / Cr Merkel:**

**That standing orders be suspended to allow for discussion on item 1.**

**Carried**

Standing orders were suspended at 6.43pm.

**Cr King / Cr Davis:**

**That standing orders resume.**

**Carried**

Standing orders resumed at 6.46pm.

**2. Planning Permit Application For Buildings And Works To The Existing Building At 18 Bridge Street East, Benalla**

The report discussed the planning application received for buildings and works at 26 Bridge Street East, Benalla to replace the door and window and repaint a section of the front façade.

**Cr Hearn / Cr Davis:**

**1. That the report be noted.**

**2. That a report on the 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 22 July 2026.**

**Carried**

**3. Building and Planning Approvals – January and February 2026**

The report detailed planning permit applications and building approvals for January and February 2026.

**Cr Davis / Cr Branigan:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

**4. Proposed Tesla Carpark Licence at Barkly Street, Benalla**

The report presented a proposal from Tesla to lease a section of carparking on Barkly Street, Benalla for the purpose of installing and operating Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers.

**Cr King / Cr Hearn:**

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

- **That the proposed Tesla Carpark Lease at Barkly Street, Benalla proposal be endorsed and released for public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.**

**Carried**

## 5. Event Funding Program Guidelines

The report discussed proposed changes to the *Major Event Grant Funding Guidelines* for the delivery of events within Benalla Rural City Council.

**Cr Davis / Cr Merkel:**

1. That the budget for the *Event Funding Program* be increased to \$15,000 in the *2026/27 Budget*.
2. That the *Event Funding Program Guidelines* be adopted.

Carried

## 6. Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

The report presented the updated and reviewed *Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Terms of Reference*.

**Cr King / Cr Merkel:**

That the revised *Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Terms of Reference* be adopted.

Carried

## 7. Australia Day Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

The report presented the updated and reviewed *Australia Day Advisory Committee Terms of Reference*.

**Cr Hearn / Cr King:**

That the revised *Australia Day Advisory Committee Terms of Reference* be adopted.

Carried

## 8. **Petition: Reopen The Reserve Located To The South of Willis Little Drive, Benalla**

This report discussed 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 Hearn / Cr King:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That Council officers meet with petitioners to further discuss public access to the Willis Little Drive Reserve.
3. That a report on outcomes from the proposed meeting be presented to the Council by 31 May 2026.

Carried

## 9. **Draft *Benalla Airport Masterplan* – Consideration of Submissions**

The report considered submissions received on the draft *Benalla Airport Masterplan*.

**Cr Davis / Cr Hearn:**

That the report be noted.

Carried

## 10. **2025/26 Quick Response Grants Program**

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

**Cr Hearn / Cr Merkel:**

That \$750 grants from the 2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program be awarded to Tomorrow Today Education Foundation and the Benalla Branch of the Commonwealth Clydesdale Society.

Carried

**11. Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – Report Of Operations For Half-Year Ending 31 December 2025**

The report presented half-year service performance indicator results under the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.

**Cr King / Cr Merkel:**

**That the report be noted.**

**Carried**

**12. Urgent Business**

No urgent business was submitted.

Recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2026

### 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.

No Assemblies of Councillors, Advisory and External Committee meetings were held in January 2026.

#### February and March 2026

<b>2 February</b>	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
<b>10 February</b>	Australia Day Advisory Committee Meeting
<b>11 February</b>	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review
<b>16 February</b>	Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee Meeting
<b>17 February</b>	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group
<b>17 February</b>	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting
<b>19 February</b>	Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee Meeting
<b>23 February</b>	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
<b>25 February</b>	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
<b>25 February</b>	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review
<b>26 February</b>	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee Meeting
<b>16 March</b>	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
<b>17 March</b>	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group
<b>18 March</b>	Assembly of Councillors – Business Review

#### **Recommendation:**

**That the report be noted.**

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

February and March 2026

**Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee**

5.30pm Monday 2 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Puna Gunaratne	Councillor Representative
	Joyce Clarke	Community Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
<b>In attendance</b>	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Alison Angus	Visitor Economy Coordinator
	Simon Grant	Curator
	Eric Nash	Director Benalla Art Gallery

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

1. Curator Update
2. Exhibitions Update
3. Sponsorship Update
4. Social Media / Marketing Update
5. General Business

**Australia Day Advisory Committee**

3.30pm Tuesday 10 February 2026, Customer Service Centre (Geoff Oliver Meeting Room) 1 Bridge Street East, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Cr Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	Councillor Representative
<b>Committee</b>	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
<b>In attendance</b>	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Kate Nolan	Tourism and Events Officer
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer

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

1. Australia Day 2026
2. General Business

## Assembly of Councillors – Business Review

6pm Wednesday 11 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

**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

Cathy Fitzpatrick Manager Finance

Adrian Gasperoni Manager Assets and Infrastructure

Courtney Naughton Manager Economic Development and Sustainability

Nilesh Singh Manager Development

Alison Angus Visitor Economy Coordinator

Tom Arnold Community Development and Recreation Coordinator

Nathan Gasperoni Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

Joel Ingham Planning Coordinator

Kate Nolan Tourism and Events Officer

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

### Items discussed:

1. Presentation: nbn
2. Planning Application To Use And Development 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
3. Planning Application For Use And Development Of A Place Of Assembly (Wedding and Events Venue) And Accommodation At 140 Darktown Road, Lurg
4. Planning 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
5. Petition: Reopen the Reserve Located to the South of Willis Little Drive, Benalla
6. Proposed Tesla Carpark Lease Agreement
7. Annual Major Events Funding Program Review
8. Annual Quick Response and Community Grants Program Review
9. Appointment of Council Representatives to Advisory Committees, Peak Industry Bodies and Regional and Community-Based Committees
10. Proposed 2026/27 Budget

**Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee**

2pm Monday 16 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	Councillor Representative
	Councillor David Blore	Councillor Representative
	Mel Walker	Victoria Police
	Scott Bradley	Victoria Police
	Sam Strano	Victoria Police
	Kylie Cotter	Benalla P-12 College
	Joseph Mount	FCJ College Benalla
	David Morrow	Coinda Village
	John Stafford	Regional Roads Victoria
	Saad Mohammad	Regional Roads Victoria
	Stephen Dowe	Senior Projects and Technical Services Officer
<b>In attendance</b>	Brianna Beggs	Administration Officer
<b>Apologies:</b>	David Morrow	
<b>Not in attendance</b>	Kylie Cotter and Joseph Mount	

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

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

**Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group**

2pm Tuesday 17 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Representative
	Cr David Blore	Councillor Representative
	Barber Alexander OA	Chair Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee
	Jason Brown	Browns Project Solutions
	Laura Benson	Browns Project Solutions
	Eric Nash	Benalla Art Gallery Director
	Travis Vincent	Regional Development Victoria
<b>Invitees</b>	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Brian Beggs	Administration Officer
<b>Apologies:</b>	Peter Keane, Courtney Naughton and Jason Brown	

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

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

**Audit and Risk Committee Meeting**

5pm Tuesday 17 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

**Chair** Mr Cameron Gray

**Committee** Councillor David Blore  
Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne  
Mr Stephen Paterson  
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

**Internal Auditors:** Brad Ead AFS Auditors

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Meeting with Auditors
2. Internal Audit Program
3. 2024/25 Year End
4. Risk Management Update
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. General Business

## **Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee**

5.30pm Thursday 19 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Alexander OA	
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Puna Hewa Gunaratne	Councillor Representative
	Tim Abdallah	General Member
	Andrew Ashton	Friends of Benalla Art Gallery delegate
	Winsome McCaughey AO	General Member
	Elizabeth Costello	Tourism North East delegate
	Anna Parle	General Member
	Fiona Stephens	General Member
	Alice Tallis	General Member
<b>In attendance</b>	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Courtney Naughton	Manager of Economic Development and Sustainability
	Eric Nash	Director Benalla Art Gallery

**Apologies:** Andrew Ashton, Anna Parle, Fiona Stephens, Cr Jillian Merkel and Tim Abdallah.

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

### **Items discussed:**

1. *Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project* – Stage 1 Update
2. Community Development Fund – Feasibility Study and Concept Design of Immersive Street Art Activation at Benalla Art Gallery
3. Committee Meeting Dates Proposed – 2026

**Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee**

5.30pm Monday 23 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Puna Gunaratne	Councillor Representative
	Joyce Clarke	Community Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
<b>In attendance</b>	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Alison Angus	Visitor Economy Coordinator
	Simon Grant	Curator
	Andrew Eckersley	Tourism North East
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer

**Apologies:** Sara Bowie

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Curator Update
2. Marketing Presentation with Tourism North East
3. Program Update
4. Volunteers
5. General Business

**Communications Advisory Committee**

1pm Wednesday 25 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	Councillor Representative
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor David Blore	Councillor Representative
	Councillor Peter Davis	Councillor Representative
<b>In attendance</b>	Peter Kean	Chief Executive Officer
	Jane Archbold	Manager Community
	Grant Banks	Communications and Engagement Coordinator
	Tracey Beaton	Executive Coordinator
	Tess Petrides	Administration Officer Community

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Review of Actions From The Previous Meeting
2. Current Community and Community Engagement Projects
3. Challenges
4. Opportunities
5. General Business

## Assembly of Councillors – Business Review

6pm Wednesday 25 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

**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

Adrian Gasperoni Manager Assets and Infrastructure

Courtney Naughton Manager Economic Development and Sustainability

Greg Robertson Manager Facilities and Information Technology

Nathan Gasperoni Environmental Sustainability Coordinator

Stephen Dowe Senior Projects and Technical Services Engineer

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Presentation: European Energy
2. Draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030*
3. Draft *Active Transport Plan 2025-2030*
4. Cabomba Management in Lake Benalla
5. Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Update
6. Draft *Benalla Airport Masterplan – Consideration of Submissions*
7. Collaborative Digital Innovation Project (CODI) Update
8. *Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan To 30 June 2027*

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

Midday Thursday 26 February 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room), 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair:</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee:</b>	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
<b>In attendance:</b>	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:** Noel Baumgarten, Jenny Sloan and David Booth

**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 16 March 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Ian Gonzaga	Community Representative
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Jillian Merkel	Councillor Representative
	Cr Vince Branigan	Councillor Representative
	Joyce Clarke	Community Representative
	Alex Ross	Community Representative
	Raelene Stratton	Community Representative
<b>In attendance</b>	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Alison Angus	Visitor Economy Coordinator
	Sara Bowie	Administration Officer
	Simon Grant	Curator
	Saskia Van Bever	Producer
	Christina Harris	Head of Marketing Tourism North East
	Elizabeth Costello	Communications Manager Tourism North East

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

**Items discussed:**

1. Curator Update
2. Live Site Program Update
3. Tourism North East (TNE) Social Media / Marketing Update
4. Follow Up and Feedback
5. General Business

### **Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group**

2pm Tuesday 17 March 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Gasperoni	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
<b>Committee</b>	Cr Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor Representative
	Cr David Blore	Councillor Representative
	Barber Alexander OA	Chair Benalla Art Gallery Advisory Committee
	Jason Brown	Browns Project Solutions
	Laura Benson	Browns Project Solutions
	Eric Nash	Benalla Art Gallery Director
	Travis Vincent	Regional Development Victoria
<b>Invitees</b>	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Courtney Naughton	Manager Economic Development and Sustainability
	Brian Beggs	Administration Officer
<b>Apologies:</b>	Peter Keane, Cr Justin King and Jason Brown	

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

#### **Items discussed:**

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

### **Assembly of Councillors – Business Review**

6pm Wednesday 18 March 2026, Civic Centre (Council Meeting Room) 13 Mair Street, Benalla.

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Bernie Hearn (Mayor)	
<b>Councillors</b>	Councillor Justin King (Deputy Mayor)	
	Councillor David Blore	
	Councillor Peter Davis	
	Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne	
	Councillor Jillian Merkel	
<b>In attendance</b>	Peter Keane	Chief Executive Officer
	Robert Barber	General Manager Corporate
	Tom Arnold	Community Development and Recreation Coordinator

**Apologies:** Nil

**Conflicts of Interest disclosed:** Nil

#### **Items discussed:**

1. Presentation: Art of Flight Ballooning Event
2. Accessibility Reference Group Discussion
3. Planning Permit Application For Use And Development Of A Place Of Assembly (Wedding and Events Venue) And Accommodation At 140 Darktown Road, Lurg
4. Proposed 2026/27 Budget
5. Proposed 2026/27 Capital Works Program Budget

## Officer Reports

### 4.1 Draft Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030

Ref:837709661-8472

Stephen Dowe – Senior Projects and Technical Services Engineer  
Adrian Gasperoni – Manager Assets and Infrastructure

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#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents for consideration the draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030*.

#### BACKGROUND

The Council has secured funding through the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) Local Government Grant Program for the *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030*.

The funding program supports projects aligned with the *Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030* and safe system principles to reduce crashes, particularly those involving pedestrians and cyclists.

#### DISCUSSION

The draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030* (the draft Strategy) has been prepared by specialist road safety engineering consultancy, Road Solutions.

The draft Strategy provides a strategic framework to improve road safety across the Benalla municipality and aligns with broader transport and safety objectives.

The draft Strategy:

- identifies key crash trends, high-risk locations, and road user groups.
- establishes strategic focus areas.
- outlines priority actions to improve road safety outcomes.
- includes an implementation framework to guide project delivery.

Development of the draft Strategy has included technical analysis, community and stakeholder engagement.

It incorporates feedback received through community surveys, stakeholder consultation, and targeted engagement activities.

The draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030* is available for download on Council's website and in the Councillor MS Teams Group.

#### **COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Community**

- *A healthy, safe and resilient community.*

## **Liveability**

- *Connected and accessible roads, footpaths, transport and parking.*

## **Leadership**

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

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Implementation of actions detailed in the draft Strategy will require significant funding, which can be achieved through a combination of existing Council budget allocations, and external funding sources, including the TAC and other levels of government.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020**

In developing the draft Strategy, gender equality considerations have been addressed in accordance with Council's obligations under section 9 of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

The draft Strategy has a direct and significant impact on the community, influencing how people of different genders move through and experience safety in public spaces.

It was identified that men and women experience different road safety risks, travel patterns and injury outcomes. These findings have informed the draft Strategy's priorities and actions, including a focus on pedestrian safety, speed management, and measures that support local and multi-stop travel patterns.

The draft Strategy incorporates actions intended to promote gender equality. No adverse gender impacts are anticipated should the proposed actions be implemented. The draft Strategy has an overall neutral gender impact.

### **CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006**

Relevant human rights under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* have been considered in the preparation of the draft Strategy.

The draft Strategy engages the rights to life, security of the person, freedom of movement and equality before the law. It is intended to promote and protect these rights by reducing the risk of road trauma and improving safety in public environments.

To the extent that the draft Strategy may place limits on freedom of movement, such as through speed management or traffic controls, those limits are considered reasonable, proportionate, and demonstrably justified in pursuit of the legitimate objective of protecting public safety.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

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

Community consultation on the draft Strategy will open Thursday 23 April 2026 and close 5pm Wednesday 20 May 2026.

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

### OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

### CONCLUSION

Submissions relating to the draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030* will be heard at an additional meeting of the Finance and Planning Committee on Wednesday 3 June 2026.

Following the consultation period and consideration of submissions, the draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030* will be presented to the Council for adoption.

### Recommendation:

**That the draft *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2030* be endorsed and placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.**

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## 4.2 Draft Active Transport Plan 2025-2030

Ref:837709661-8471

Stephen Dowe – Senior Projects and Technical Services Engineer  
Adrian Gasperoni – Manager Assets and Infrastructure

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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents for consideration the draft *Active Transport Plan 2025–2030*.

### BACKGROUND

The Council has secured funding through the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) Local Government Grant Program for the *Active Transport Plan 2025–2030*.

The funding program supports projects aligned with the *Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030* and safe system principles to reduce crashes, particularly those involving pedestrians and cyclists.

### DISCUSSION

The draft *Active Transport Plan 2025–2030* (the draft Plan) has been prepared by specialist transport planning consultancy, Eukai.

The draft Plan provides a strategic framework to support a connected, accessible, and safer active transport network for Benalla, and aligns with broader transport and safety objectives.

The draft Plan:

- defines a strategic active transport network for Benalla.
- identifies priority projects and key transport connections.
- outlines an implementation framework to guide project delivery.

Development of the draft Plan has included technical analysis, community and stakeholder engagement. It incorporates feedback received through community surveys, stakeholder consultation, and targeted engagement activities.

The draft *Active Transport Plan 2025–2030* is available for download on Council's website and in the Councillor MS Teams Group.

### **COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Community**

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

#### **Environment**

- *Healthy and protected natural environment.*

## **Liveability**

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

## **Leadership**

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

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Implementation of priority projects detailed in the draft Plan will require significant funding, which can be achieved through a combination of existing Council budget allocations, and external funding sources, including the TAC and other levels of government.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **GENDER EQUALITY ACT 2020**

In developing the draft Plan, gender equality considerations have been addressed in accordance with Council's obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

The draft Plan has a direct and significant impact on the community, influencing access to walking and cycling networks across both urban and rural areas.

It was identified that participation in active transport varies by gender due to differences in travel patterns, safety and perceived safety, and caring responsibilities. This has informed the draft Plan's focus on improving safety, connectivity and accessibility, particularly along key local routes and high-use areas.

The draft Plan incorporates actions intended to promote gender equality. No adverse gender impacts are anticipated should the proposed actions be implemented. The draft Plan has an overall neutral gender impact.

### **CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006**

Relevant human rights under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* have been considered in the preparation of the draft Plan.

The draft Plan engages the rights to freedom of movement, equality before the law, and security of the person, and is intended to promote these rights by improving access to safe and inclusive active transport options.

To the extent that the draft Plan proposes changes to road use or the allocation of road space, any resulting limits on vehicle movement are considered reasonable, proportionate, and demonstrably justified in pursuit of public safety, accessibility and equitable use of public space.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

Level of Public Participation	Promise to the community	Techniques to be used
Consult	We will provide information and consider feedback prior to making a decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Draft Plan presented in a public report to the Council.</li><li>▪ Public Notice of community consultation in the <i>Benalla Ensign</i> and on the Council's website.</li><li>▪ Draft Plan to be published on the Council's website.</li><li>▪ Community feedback invited via the Council's website and social media channels.</li><li>▪ Key stakeholders invited to provide feedback on the draft Plan.</li></ul>

Community consultation on the draft Plan will open Thursday 23 April 2026 and close 5pm Wednesday 20 May 2026.

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

### OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

### CONCLUSION

Submissions relating to the draft *Active Transport Plan 2025–2030* will be heard at an additional meeting of the Finance and Planning Committee on Wednesday 3 June 2026.

Following the consultation period and consideration of submissions, the draft *Active Transport Plan 2025–2030* will be presented to the Council for adoption.

### Recommendation:

**That the draft *Active Transport Plan 2025–2030* be endorsed and placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.**

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### 4.3 2025/26 Quick Response Grants Program

Ref:1536132109-1109

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

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

#### BACKGROUND

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

The program distributes grants up to \$750 allowing local clubs, groups and organisations the opportunity to seek funds when the need arises.

#### DISCUSSION

Applications for consideration under the 2025/26 Quick Response Grant program are detailed in the table below.

Applicant	Details	Amount Requested	Proposed Assistance
Room at The Table (RATT)	<p>RATT's Mischievous Makers are applying for \$750 to deliver the <i>Benalla Creative Cafes &amp; Spaces Art Trail</i> pilot during the 2026 Benalla Street Art Festival.</p> <p>The project will place Art Boxes filled with free creative materials in ten local cafes and community spaces, encouraging people of all ages to make art while visiting local businesses. A Gifting and Art Exchange Station at the Hub in Mair Street, Benalla will allow participants to gift or swap their creations, building a sense of connection and celebrating everyday creativity.</p> <p>The pilot aims to strengthen community engagement, support local traders and test whether an ongoing, accessible, town-wide creative trail could become part of Benalla's cultural life. The grant will fund Art Boxes, supplies, signage and promotional materials, supported by significant volunteer hours.</p>	\$750	\$750
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$750</b>	<b>\$750</b>

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

##### **Community**

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

## Leadership

- *Engaged and informed community.*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

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

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *2025/26 Budget* allocates \$15,000 to the Quick Response Grant program. To date \$12,050 in Quick Response Grant funds have been awarded, leaving \$2,950 in the funding pool.

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

## OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

### Recommendation:

**That a \$750 grant from the *2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program* be awarded to Room at The Table.**

## 4.4 2025/26 Event Funding Program

Ref:1766899222-1072

Kate Nolan – Tourism and Events Officer

Courtney Naughton – Manager Economic Development and Sustainability

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents a funding application for the 2025/26 Event Funding Program.

### BACKGROUND

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

### DISCUSSION

#### Event Funding

Applications for consideration under the 2025/26 Event Funding program are detailed in the table below.

Applicant	Details	Amount Requested	Proposed Assistance
Balloon Association of Victoria	<p><b>The Art of the Flight Festival – 6 to 12 April 2026</b></p> <p>Set against the landscapes of north-east Victoria, the Festival will feature more than 25 elite hot air balloon teams from Australia and overseas competing in round one of the Australian Hot Air Balloon Grand Prix, incorporating the Australian National Championships. The event will have a strong international presence, with pilots from China, the UK, and the USA.</p> <p>The Festival is expected to deliver significant economic benefits to Benalla through accommodation, dining, fuel, retail, and visitor spending. Held during the Victorian school holidays, it will attract visitors while engaging local volunteers and boosting community participation.</p> <p>The week-long event brings colour, activity, and positive publicity to a region with a rich air sports history, including two World Gliding Championships and three Australian National Balloon Championships. Benalla Airport remains home to Victoria's largest gliding club and Australia's largest balloon club.</p> <p>Local businesses and community members will be invited to participate through sponsorships, prize contributions, and support activities. Volunteers will assist with briefings, competitions, and ground operations.</p> <p>The Festival is expected to attract 5,360 participants and spectators. Council funding will support the free Community Key Grab event and assist local volunteers involved in the Festival.</p>	\$2,000	\$2,000

Applicant	Details	Amount Requested	Proposed Assistance
<b>Benalla Heritage Network</b>	<p><b>2026 National Heritage Festival – 29 April to 3 May 2026</b></p> <p>The Benalla Heritage Festival is a five day, townwide celebration of local history, culture, and community. Now in its seventh year, it will feature more than 30 events and over 120 hours of programming across multiple venues, delivered by local historians, artists, community groups and businesses. The program includes exhibitions, walks, talks, workshops, locally made films and hands-on activities, with a strong focus on storytelling and truth telling—highlighting First Nations perspectives and both well-known and lesser told local histories.</p> <p>The festival opens with a welcoming community event and concludes with a farewell gathering, creating an inclusive experience for residents and visitors. It encourages participation across all ages, strengthens community pride and connection, and activates public spaces while supporting local tourism and the cultural vitality of the municipality.</p> <p>Socially, the festival builds community cohesion by bringing together residents, volunteers, organisations and visitors through shared stories. Economically, it attracts visitors to Benalla, increasing demand for local accommodation, hospitality, retail and tourism services. The multi-day program supports extended stays and provides income opportunities for local businesses, artists and event organisers.</p> <p>The open program model encourages broad community involvement, with most events free or by gold coin donation and only one low cost ticketed activity, reducing barriers to access and fostering community ownership. Expected attendance is 2,140 people. Funding will support marketing, printing, shared equipment and modest catering for the delivery of the Festival.</p>	\$1,958	\$1,958
<b>Austin 7 Club</b>	<p><b>49th Historic Winton – Friday 29 to Sunday 31 May 2026</b></p> <p>Historic Winton is Australia's longest running all historic car and motor bike race meeting. Whilst there will be in the order of 40 motor racing events, it will also feature transport and heritage displays. Some of the vehicles which will be celebrating anniversaries of 50 to 100 years will be invited to take part in display laps of the circuit for the spectators young and old to enjoy. On Friday 29 May, there is a touring event around the Benalla district which is jointly conducted by the Benalla Rural City Council and the Austin 7 club.</p> <p>Having conducted this event for 40 plus years the economic benefits to the area are well known, all available accommodation in Benalla and the surrounding area is fully booked and the retail outlets enjoy brisk trade with food and petrol being in demand. Local service clubs receive good booking for groups for Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening meals.</p> <p>Expected attendance is 3,891 people.</p> <p>The intended use of the funding is for assistance with marketing and advertising the event.</p>	\$2,000	\$2,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$5,958</b>	<b>\$5,958</b>

## **COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 IMPLICATIONS**

### **Community**

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

### **Leadership**

- *Engaged and informed community.*

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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

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

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

To date, the 2025/26 Event Funding program has allocated \$9,000 to five events from a \$12,000 budget allocation.

The funding of the three event applications presented to the Council will result in the \$12,000 budget being exceeded by \$2,958.

If the three applications are approved, it is proposed that \$2,958 be allocated from the Event Attraction budget to meet the shortfall.

This financial year, the Event Attraction has had \$20,472 allocated from it against a budget of \$33,388 – leaving \$11,416 of unallocated funds.

### **OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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

#### **Recommendation:**

- 1. That a grant of \$2,000 from the 2025/26 Event Funding program be allocated to the Balloon Association of Victoria.**
- 2. That a grant of \$1,958 from the 2025/26 Event Funding program be allocated to the Benalla Heritage Network.**
- 3. That a grant of \$2,000 from the 2025/26 Event Funding program be allocated to the Austin 7 Club.**
- 4. That \$2,958 be allocated from the Event Attraction budget to part fund these grants.**

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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents actions to be included in the *Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan To 30 June 2027*.

### BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 29 October 2025, the Council adopted the *Council Plan 2025-2029*.

The Council Plan, commits the Council to report on progress against the plan, including the development of an action plan based on the plan's five themes: Community, Economy, Environment, Liveability and Leadership and associated strategies.

### DISCUSSION

Proposed *Council Plan 2025-2029* actions to 30 June 2027 are attached as **Appendix 1**. The actions were developed at a series of councillor and staff workshops conducted since the adoption of the *Council Plan 2025-2029*.

Once adopted, the actions will be incorporated into the *Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan To 30 June 2027*.

Progress in delivering actions detailed in the plan will be reported quarterly to the Council in departmental activity reports and the Benalla Rural City Council annual report.

### **COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Community**

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

#### **Economy**

- *Flourishing visitor economy and sustainable growth.*

#### **Environment**

- *Healthy and protected natural environment.*
- *Circular economy, renewable energy and sustainable waste management.*

#### **Livability**

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

#### **Leadership**

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

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

Level of Public Participation	Promise to the community	Techniques to be used
Inform	We will provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Report to the Council</li><li>▪ Action plan published and promoted to the community.</li><li>▪ Quarterly status updates reported to the Council with updates regularly promoted to the community.</li><li>▪ Annual Report.</li></ul>

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs associated with the development of the *Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan To 30 June 2027* have been met from existing budget allocations.

Funding allocations will be required to deliver many of the actions. Funding requests will be considered by the Council during development of the *2026/27 Budget*.

## LEGISLATIVE STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

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

## OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

### Recommendation:

1. That the actions detailed in Appendix 1 be incorporated into the *Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan To 30 June 2027*.
2. That quarterly updates on the status of the actions detailed in the *Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan To 30 June 2027* be reported to the Council.

# Benalla Rural City Council Council Plan Action Plan

1 July 2025 to 30 June 2027

# 1 Theme 1: Community

## 1.1 Objective 1: A healthy, safe and resilient community

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Work with key partners to implement and support initiatives that promote gender equality, reduce and prevent gendered violence, homelessness, food insecurity and harms caused by drugs, alcohol and gambling.</b>	Partner	Develop, implement and report on the Benalla Rural City Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.	Partners working collaboratively to identify and address public health and wellbeing priorities.
	Advocate	Advocate to the Victorian and Australian governments for improved funding and service models to address local health and wellbeing issues, including homelessness; mental health; drugs and other alcohol; and gambling.	Increased government funding and services.
<b>Support our community to feel safe, build resilience and prepare for emergencies and natural disasters.</b>	Provider/Partner	Deliver and monitor the Municipal Emergency Management Plan.	MEMP implemented.
	Provider/Advocate	Investigate the feasibility of installing closed circuit television in the Benalla central business district.	Investigation completed and reported.
<b>Deliver inclusive, accessible events and programs that reduce social isolation and promote participation for all community members.</b>	Provider/Partner	Coordinate and support the Social Inclusion Action Group to identify local needs related to social inclusion and connection.	Social inclusion and connection initiatives delivered.
<b>Help people stay healthy and active.</b>	Provider	Deliver actions from the <i>Youth Strategy 2022–2026</i> , which includes advocacy actions.	Youth Strategy actions delivered.

## 1.2 Objective 2: A connected, involved and inclusive community

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Provide opportunities for our children and young people to thrive.</b>	Provider/Partner	Deliver youth programs including L2P, Live4Life, FReeZA and Engage!	Programs delivered.
	Provider/Partner	Deliver Universal and Enhanced MCH programs including INFANT, First Time Parents and Dads Groups, Sleep and Settling support to young families.	Programs Delivered.
<b>Improve access, inclusion and opportunities for an ageing population.</b>	Provider	Develop and implement Benalla Seniors and Community Centre masterplan.	Masterplan adopted.
		Review, update, adopt and deliver <i>Age Friendly Benalla Rural City</i> strategy	Strategy adopted.
<b>Support volunteering opportunities that enable all community members to contribute to community life.</b>	Provider	Review, update, adopt and deliver <i>Volunteer</i> strategy.	Strategy adopted.
		Host annual volunteer recognition events supporting and celebrating our volunteers.	Events conducted.
<b>Respectfully engage, include and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and communities.</b>	Provider	Implement the Benalla Rural City Council Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).	RAP initiatives implemented.
	Provider/Partner	Investigate formal partnership agreements with Registered Aboriginal parties – Taungurung and Yorta Yorta peoples.	Agreements investigated.
<b>Ensure rural residents can access Council services fairly, and join in community life, and share their ideas and priorities.</b>	Provider	Support local events and initiatives in rural communities.	Minimum of 10 events or activities conducted in rural communities.
<b>Support initiatives that enhance the inclusion of culturally diverse groups.</b>	Provider/Partner	Create opportunities for culturally diverse communities to use Council services and to be actively involved in Council programs and activities.	Minimum of five events or activities involving culturally diverse communities.

## 2 Theme 2: Economy

### 2.1 Objective 1: Flourishing visitor economy and sustainable growth

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Improve local accommodation and nighttime economy offerings in Benalla Rural City.</b>	Provider/Partner	Deliver the <i>Benalla Rural City Destination Management Plan 2025-2029</i> .	Actions delivered. Community satisfaction with Council's tourism promotion and support increases.
		Advocate to Victorian Government and regional tourism bodies for increased funding and support for local tourism initiatives.	Funding and support received.
<b>Attract investment and support local businesses.</b>	Provider	Develop and implement a <i>Benalla Rural City Economic Development Strategy</i> .	Strategy adopted.
	Provider/Partner	Deliver the Benalla Rural City component of the <i>Victorian Forestry Transition</i> program.	Program delivered.
	Provider	Deliver <i>Benalla Future Economy and Employment Precinct</i> project.	Project delivered.
	Advocate	Advocate to NBN and Telstra to improve telecommunications services across Benalla Rural City.	Telecommunications improvements identified.
	Provider	Revitalise the Benalla central business district by making it a vibrant, accessible and inclusive space.	Benalla CBD masterplan adopted and implemented.

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Work with key stakeholders to improve local learning and employment pathways that address skills gaps, align with future needs, and local employment opportunities.</b>	Partner/Advocate	Partner with NE Tracks LLEN, GOTAFE, universities, local schools and other training providers to advocate for expanded training and education options that align with local industry needs.	Initiatives delivered in partnership with key stakeholders.
<b>Promote Benalla Rural City's liveability and proactively plan for sustainable residential development.</b>	Advocate/Partner	Progress implementation of the Benalla West masterplan and engage key stakeholders such as North East Water.	Masterplan implemented.
	Advocate	Explore options to fund the development of a <i>Benalla Rural City Growth</i> strategy.	Funding received.
	Advocate	Advocate for affordable Housing in Benalla Rural City.	Affordable housing increases.
	Provider/Partner	Implement the findings of the Benalla Planning Scheme Review (2023).	Findings implemented.

# 3 Theme 3: Environment

## 3.1 Objective 1: Healthy and protected natural environment

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Enhance climate change resilience.</b>	Provider/Partner	Finalise, adopt and deliver the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2025-2030</i> .	Strategy adopted and implemented.
<b>Partner to manage and enhance our environmental assets.</b>	Partner	Partner with the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority to deliver projects aligned with the Regional Catchment Strategy and river health priorities, including investigations into the potential de-silting of Lake Benalla.	Initiatives delivered in partnership with key stakeholders.
	Facilitator	Facilitate local environmental groups to deliver conservation and biodiversity projects.	Projects delivered.

### 3.2 Objective 2: Circular economy, renewable energy and sustainable waste management

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Provide efficient waste services and promote recycling and reuse through community and business involvement.</b>	Provider	Review, update and implement the Waste Management Strategy.	Strategy updated.
	Provider	Investigate glass recycling options.	Options investigated.
<b>Improve the environmental sustainability and climate resilience of Council assets.</b>	Provider	Investigate and install renewable energy systems in Council-owned facilities.	Systems installed.
	Provider/Partner	Partner with Goulburn Broken Climate Alliance to improve environmental sustainability and climate resilience.	Initiatives delivered.
<b>Support and inspire our community to embrace clean and renewable energy.</b>	Provider	Educate the community on the benefits of clean and renewable energy.	Education programs delivered.
	Advocate/Partner	Work with electric vehicle (EV) charging providers to deliver more EV chargers in Benalla Rural City.	Number of EV charging stations increase.

# 4 Theme 4: Liveability

## 4.1 Objective 1: Vibrant public spaces and places

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Provide and maintain services, spaces and facilities that support community wellbeing and creative activities.</b>	Provider	Deliver the Indoor Recreation Centre Development project.	Project delivered.
	Provider	Deliver the Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment project.	Project delivered.
	Provider/Partner/ Advocate	Develop, adopt and deliver the <i>Benalla Rural City Recreation Reserves</i> masterplan.	Masterplan adopted.
	Provider	Deliver the <i>Fawckner Drive Precinct Development</i> strategy.	Pump track project delivered. Initiatives from strategy delivered.
	Provider	Develop, adopt and deliver the <i>Benalla Rural City Open Space</i> strategy.	Strategy adopted.
	Provider/Partner	Develop and implement rural township plans.	Plans developed and delivered.
<b>Make Council services and facilities easy for everyone to access.</b>	Asset Owner	Review the management structure of Council-owned and managed recreation reserves	New committees of management structure implemented.
	Provider	Finalise, adopt and implement the <i>Benalla Airport</i> masterplan.	Masterplan adopted.
<b>Beautify and maintain streetscapes, landscaping, signage and town entrances.</b>	Provider	Develop, adopt and deliver a <i>Benalla Central Business District</i> masterplan.	Masterplan adopted.
<b>Protect and promote heritage to preserve local character and culture.</b>	Provider	Finalise, adopt and deliver the Benalla Heritage Study.	Heritage study adopted.

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Maintain and develop recreation reserves, parks and gardens, playgrounds, and paths.</b>	Asset Owner	Deliver the <i>Playground Renewal</i> program.	Program delivered. Community satisfaction with recreation facilities increases.
	Provider	Deliver the Saleyards Road, Benalla Dog Park project	Project delivered/

#### 4.2 Objective 2: Connected and accessible roads, footpaths, transport and parking

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Plan for accessible, sustainable, well-serviced and connected neighbourhoods.</b>	Facilitator	Establish community access and inclusion panel to provide meaningful feedback on accessibility and inclusion matters.	Panel established.
	Provider	Adopt and deliver the <i>Active Transport Plan 2025-2030</i> .	Plan adopted.
<b>Maintain and improve roads, footpaths, drainage and other infrastructure.</b>	Asset Owner	Develop asset plans for individual asset categories.	Asset plans developed.
	Asset Owner	Implement a program to upgrade accessible parking spaces to meet Australian standards.	Parking spaces upgraded.
	Deliver/Partner	Develop, adopt and deliver <i>Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030</i> .	Strategy and action plan adopted.

# 5 Theme 5: Leadership

## 5.1 Objective 1: Good governance

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
Ensure Council meets legislative obligations.	Provider	Meet Gender Equality obligations.	Obligations met.
Ensure procurement provides good value and benefits the local community.	Provider	Review, update and adopt the <i>Benalla Rural City Council Procurement</i> policy.	Updated Procurement Policy adopted.
	Facilitator	Investigate collaborative procurement and service sharing options.	Options investigated.
Advocate to all levels of government for improved services, infrastructure and social outcomes.	Partner/Advocate	Develop an Advocacy Strategy.	Strategy adopted.

## 5.2 Objective 2: High performance culture

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
Deliver accessible and responsive services.	Provider	Review and update the <i>Customer Experience</i> strategy and charter.	Strategy and charter updated.
Maintain an educated, healthy, safe, inclusive and diverse workforce.	Provider	Investigate and implement work experience, traineeship and apprenticeship options.	Traineeships and apprentices employed.
		Investigate and implement a new human resources system.	New system identified and implemented.
		Review and implement the Benalla Rural City Council Workforce Plan.	Workforce plan finalised.

### 5.3 Objective 3: Engaged and informed community

Strategy	Council's Role	Action (To 30 June 2027)	Measure of Success
<b>Engage clearly and openly with our community and stakeholders to better understand their needs and priorities.</b>	Provider	Review and update the Benalla Rural City Council <i>Community Engagement</i> policy and toolkit.	Policy and toolkit updated.
	Provider	Host regular community listening sessions and pop-up sessions at key local events, markets, festivals, rural townships and other gatherings.	At least five sessions hosted.
	Provider	Investigate holding regular Council meetings in rural townships.	Meetings conducted.
<b>Provide clear, timely, and accessible communication.</b>	Provider	Maintain an up to date and easy to navigate Council website.	Website continually improved.
	Provider	Install and maintain information screens at key locations.	Screens installed.

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## 4.6 Chief Executive Officer Credit Card Report For The Quarter Ended 31 March 2026

Ref: 669520245-389  
Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report details expenditure associated with the corporate credit card issued to the Chief Executive Officer for the quarter ended 31 March 2026.

### BACKGROUND

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

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

### CEO Credit Card Transactions for the Quarter ended 31 March 2026

Date	Merchant Name	Details	Amount
09/01/2026	Benalla Car Wash	Car wash	\$4.73
15/01/2026	The Merchant Benalla	Meeting expenses	\$15.16
26/01/2026	Little B Café	Meeting expenses	\$4.60
26/01/2026	Little B Cafe	Meeting expenses	\$9.20
28/01/2026	Little B Cafe	Meeting expenses	\$10.12
10/02/2026	The Merchant Benalla	Meeting expenses	\$44.12
20/02/2026	The Merchant Benalla	Meeting expenses	\$24.77
26/02/2026	Chase Cafe	Meeting expenses	\$14.30
09/03/2026	Benalla Car Wash	Car wash	\$4.73
19/03/2026	Paystay	Car parking	\$1.59
<b>Total (ex. GST)</b>			<b>\$133.32</b>

### Recommendation:

**That the report be noted.**

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## 4.7 Councillors Expenses For The Quarter Ended 31 March 2026

Ref: 36168913-10067  
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	2025/26 Q3
Cr Branigan	\$0	\$31.81	\$95.43
Cr Davis	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cr Gunaratne	\$95.43	\$95.43	\$95.43
Cr Hearn	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cr King	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cr Blore	\$95.43	\$95.43	\$95.43
Cr Merkel	\$95.43	\$95.43	\$95.43
Cr Tolliday	\$95.43	\$63.62	\$0
<b>Total (ex. GST):</b>	<b>\$381.72</b>	<b>\$381.72</b>	<b>\$381.72</b>

### Councillors' reimbursement of expenses

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

There were no Councillor reimbursements during quarter 3.

## 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	
17/03/2026	Mayor Cr Bernie Hearn	Institute of Community Directors Australia Board Boot Camp	522.99	
<b>Total (ex. GST):</b>			<b>\$2,424.32</b>	<b>\$1,730.54</b>

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The *2025/26 Budget* allocates \$15,577 for Councillors' attendance at professional development courses, conferences and seminars, as at 31 March 2026 \$4,154.86 had been spent.

Summary	Professional Development, Conferences and Seminars (ex. GST)
Quarter ended 30 September 2025	\$1,281.08
Quarter ended 31 December 2025	\$2,350.79
Quarter ended 31 March 2026	\$522.99
<b>Total (ex. GST):</b>	<b>\$4,154.86</b>

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

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

Ref: 36167913-10068

Tracey Beaton – Executive Coordinator

The Mayor and Councillors attended meetings and events as detailed below during the period from 23 February 2026 to 5 April 2026.

<b>Mayor Councillor Bernie Hearn</b>	
23 February	Annual General Meeting of the Benalla Business Network (BBN)
25 February	Interview with Win News
	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
1 March	Memorial Service to commemorate the USS Houston and the HMAS Perth
3 March	Benalla P-12 College Whole School Assembly
4 March	Council Meeting
6 March	Benalla FCJ College International Women's Day Breakfast
11 March	Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan Workshop
12 March	Morning Tea at Devenish
13 March	Official Opening of the Saleyards Road Dog Park
	Swanpool and District Community Development Association Community Spirit BBQ
18 March	U3A Benalla Inc Annual General Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
23 March	Media Training
24 March	Media Training
25 March	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
30 March	Benalla Health and Wellbeing Partnership Meeting
1 April	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review

<b>Deputy Mayor Councillor Justin King</b>	
25 February	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
3 March	Benalla P-12 College Whole School Assembly
4 March	Council Meeting
11 March	Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan Workshop
13 March	Official Opening of the Saleyards Road Dog Park
18 March	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
23 March	Media Training
24 March	Media Training
25 March	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
1 April	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review

<b>Councillor David Blore</b>	
23 February	Annual General Meeting of the Benalla Business Network (BBN)
25 February	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
26 February	Local Government Forum and Workshop: Partnering in nature-based investment for resilient communities
3 March	Benalla Historical Society Committee Meeting
4 March	Council Meeting
5 March	North East Local Government Waste and Recycling Forum
	Goulburn Murray Catchment Authority Quarterly Board Meeting
13 March	Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan Phone Session
17 March	Benalla Family Research Group Meeting
	Benalla Art Gallery Redevelopment Project Control Group Meeting
18 March	U3A Benalla Inc Annual General Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
25 March	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
1 April	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review

<b>Councillor Vince Branigan</b>	
23 February	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
25 February	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
4 March	Council Meeting
11 March	Benalla Business Coffee Connections
11 March	Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan Workshop
13 March	Swanpool and District Community Development Association Community Spirit BBQ
16 March	Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
25 March	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
1 April	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review

<b>Councillor Peter Davis</b>	
25 February	Councillor Only Time
	Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
26 February	Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Steering Committee
4 March	Council Meeting
11 March	Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan Workshop
13 March	Official Opening of the Saleyards Road Dog Park
	Swanpool and District Community Development Association Community Spirit BBQ
16 March	Goorambat Public Hall Triennial General Meeting
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
21 March	Wangaratta and District Cricket Association's A Grade Grand Final
25 March	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
1 April	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review

<b>Councillor Puna Hewa Gunaratne</b>	
25 February	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
2 March	Feasibility Study and Concept Design of an Immersive Street Art Activation at Benalla Art Gallery
3 March	Benalla P-12 College Whole School Assembly
4 March	Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan Phone Session
	Council Meeting
25 March	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
21 March	Wangaratta and District Cricket Association's A Grade Grand Final
1 April	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review

<b>Councillor Jillian Merkel</b>	
23 February	Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee Meeting
25 February	Councillor Only Time
	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
2 March	Feasibility Study and Concept Design of an Immersive Street Art Activation at Benalla Art Gallery
4 March	Council Meeting
11 March	Council Plan 2025-2029 Action Plan Workshop
13 March	Official Opening of the Saleyards Road Dog Park
16 March	Benalla Street Art Festival Advisory Committee Meeting
18 March	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review
25 March	Finance and Planning Committee Meeting
1 April	Assembly of Councillors - Business Review

**Recommendation:**

**That the report be noted.**

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## 4.9 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	<p><b>Benalla Sports and Equestrian Reserve Committee</b></p> <p>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.</p>	CEO	Report to be presented to Assembly of Councillors briefing on 29 April 2026.
2.	Council Meeting 19-Nov-25	4.3	<p><b>Appointment of Council Representatives to Advisory Committees, Peak Industry Bodies and Regional and Community-Based Committees</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	CEO	<p>1. Completed</p> <p>2. Completed</p>
3.	F&P Committee 10-Dec-25	1	<p><b>Planning Permit Application For Building And Works To The Existing Office Building At 18 Bridge Street East, Benalla</b></p> <p>1. That the report be noted.</p> <p>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.</p>	MD	<p>1. Completed</p> <p>2. Completed</p>

4.	Council Meeting 17-Dec-25	4.3	<p><b>Planning Scheme Amendment C45bena – Benalla Planning Scheme Review</b></p> <p>That the Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 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) .</li> <li>2. In accordance with Section 31 of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> submit Planning Scheme Amendment C45bena to the Minister for approval.</li> </ol>	MD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed</li> <li>2. Completed</li> </ol>
5.	Council Meeting 4-Mar-25	4.10	<p><b>Appointment of Councillor Representative to Advisory Committees, Peak Industry Bodies and Regional and Community-Based Committees</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Cr Justin King, Cr Jillian Merkel and Cr Vince Branigan be appointed as Councillor representatives on the Benalla Festival Advisory Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.</li> <li>2. That Cr Jillian Merkel and Cr Vince Branigan be appointed as Councillor representatives on the Benalla Street Art Advisory Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.</li> <li>3. That Mayor Cr Bernie Hearn, Cr David Blore, Cr Peter Davis and Cr Puna Gunaratne be appointed as Councillor representatives on the Communications Advisory Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.</li> <li>4. That Cr Vince Branigan be appointed as the Councillor representative on the Benalla Family Research Group for the 2025/26 Council year.</li> <li>5. That Cr David Blore and Cr Bernie Hearn be appointed as Councillor representatives on the Benalla Local Safety and Traffic Liaison Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.</li> <li>6. That Cr David Blore and Cr Peter Davis be appointed as Councillor representatives to the Audit and Risk Committee for the 2025/26 Council year.</li> </ol>	CEO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed</li> <li>2. Completed</li> <li>3. Completed</li> <li>4. Completed</li> <li>5. Completed</li> <li>6. Completed</li> </ol>



7.	F&P Committee 25-Mar-2026	2	<p><b>Planning Permit Application For Building And Works To The Existing Building At 18 Bridge Street East, Benalla</b></p> <p>1. That the report be noted.</p> <p>2. That a report on the 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 22 July 2026.</p>	MD	<p>1. Completed</p> <p>2. Completed</p>
8.	F&P Committee 25-Mar-2026	4	<p><b>Proposed Tesla Carpark Lease at Barkly Street, Benalla</b></p> <p>That the proposed Tesla Carpark Lease at Barkly Street, Benalla proposal be endorsed and released for public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.</p>	MEDAS	Completed
9.	F&P Committee 25-Mar-2026	5	<p><b>Event Funding Program Guidelines</b></p> <p>1. That the budget for the <i>Event Funding Program</i> be increased to \$15,000 in the <i>2026/27 Budget</i>.</p> <p>2. That the <i>Event Funding Program Guidelines</i> be adopted.</p>	MEDAS	<p>1. In progress</p> <p>2. Completed</p>
10.	F&P Committee 25-Mar-2026	6	<p><b>Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>That the revised Benalla Festival Advisory Committee Terms of Reference be adopted.</p>	MEDAS	Completed
11.	F&P Committee 25-Mar-2026	7	<p><b>Australia Day Advisory Committee Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>That the revised Australia Day Advisory Committee Terms of Reference be adopted.</p>	MEDAS	Completed
12.	F&P Committee 25-Mar-2026	8	<p><b>Petition: Reopen The Reserve Located To The South of Willis Little Drive, Benalla</b></p> <p>1. That the report be noted.</p> <p>2. That Council officers meet with petitioners to further discuss public access to the Willis Little Drive Reserve.</p> <p>3. That a report on outcomes from the proposed meeting be presented to the Council by 31 May 2026.</p>	MAI	<p>1. Completed</p> <p>2. In progress</p> <p>3. In progress</p>
13.	F&P Committee 25-Mar-2026	10	<p><b>2025/26 Quick Response Grants Program</b></p> <p>That \$750 grants from the 2025/2026 Quick Response Grant program be awarded to Tomorrow Today Education Foundation and the Benalla Branch of the Commonwealth Clydesdale Society.</p>	MC	Completed

## 5. Reports by Councillors

### **Recommendation:**

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

## 6. Notices of Motion

## 7. Notices of Rescission Motion

## 8. Urgent Business

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

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

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

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

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## 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 CM26.062 Stormwater Drainage Update Works
- 9.2 Tender Report For Contract CM26.069 Roundabout Construction, Intersection of Mitchell Street and Mackellar Street, Benalla
- 9.3 Tender Report For Contract CM26.068 Intersection Upgrade Works Tarnook Road and Pagets Road, Baddaginnie
- 9.4 Confidential Reports by Councillors
- 9.5 Confidential Council Actions Pending

### Recommendation:

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

- 9.1 Tender Report For Contract CM26.062 Stormwater Drainage Update 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 CM26.069 Roundabout Construction, Intersection of Mitchell Street and Mackellar Street, Benalla**  
Item 9.2 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.
- 9.3 Tender Report For Contract CM26.068 Intersection Upgrade Works Tarnook Road and Pagets Road, Baddaginnie**  
Item 9.3 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.
- 9.4 Confidential Reports by Councillors**  
Item 9.4 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to council business information, being information that council prejudice Council's position.
- 9.5 Confidential Council Actions Pending**  
Item 9.5 is confidential under the *Local Government Act 2020* as it contains information relating to private commercial information.

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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