



Minutes

**Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held at 9:30AM on Wednesday 10th September 2025,
ONLINE via Teams meeting.**

1 Present

In attendance

Mr Tony Roberts (Chair)

Mr Peter Knights

Cr Karen Hyslop

Cr Karen Probst

Also in attendance

Mr Mahesh Silva (Partner) & Mr Dylan Murray (Audit Manager) from RSD (External Audit Provider)

Mr Brent McAlister, Chief Executive Officer

Mr Vaughan Williams, Director Corporate Services

Mrs Jay Driscoll, Manager Financial Services

Ms Fern Hahn, Coordinator Financial Services

Ms Camille Buntsma, Manager People and Culture

Mr Trenton Fithall, Director Infrastructure and Amenity

Ms Stretch Smith, Acting Manager Business Transformation

Ms Brittany Burns, Governance Officer

2 Apologies

Nil

3 Disclosures of a Conflict of Interest at a Council Auspiced Meeting

None noted

4 Confirmation of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Confirmation of draft minutes from the Northern Grampians Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held Thursday 12th June 2025.

Attachment: 20250612 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes

Recommendation: That the minutes are received and recommended to Council for review

Moved: Karen Hyslop

Seconded: Karen Probst

CARRIED

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

5.1 Implement the approved internal audit plan including follow-up penetration testing and review of authorisation systems in the new finance system - COMPLETED

5.2 Continue to monitor rate debt trends, cash flow and the financial impact of the Emergency Services Levy (ESVF). Keep record of ratepayers only paying rates portion - ONGOING

5.3 Ensure corrective actions are embedded, including internet activity monitoring and ongoing fraud prevention training. - ONGOING

5.4 Maintain implementation of safety management plans and continue to address high-risk incidents promptly. - ONGOING

5.5 Continue to streamline risk management process and present 2 strategic (external) and 2 operational risks per meeting. - COMPLETED

5.6 Continue updating policies, systems, and implementing VPDSS measures. Schedule progress updates for Q1 and Q3 meetings - COMPLETED

5.7 Develop a framework for independent review of journals. Ensure follow-up on audit management letter points. - REFER ITEM 8.1 & 8.2

5.8 Action items from the penetration test report to be finalised and included in next follow-up audit. - COMPLETED

5.9 Finalise and confirm Audit and Risk Committee meeting dates for 2025–26 at the next meeting - COMPLETED

5.10 Distribute the revised 2025–26 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Work Program and ensure task balance across meetings - COMPLETED

5.11 Update records to reflect Tony Roberts' appointment as ARC Chair for 2025–26. - COMPLETED

5.12 Continue advertising to fill the independent member vacancy on the committee - ONGOING

6 Notification of Fraud Events

No fraud events to report

7 Risk Management

7.1 Review OHS considerations for Council

Ms Camille Buntsma provided an update on OHS incidents and significant safety risks for the quarter, including high-risk incidents and corrective actions taken. The committee discussed recent incidents, investigations, and ongoing improvements to safety protocols.

Report Tabled & Noted

7.2 Risk Committee Update

Mr Vaughan Williams provided an update from the last Risk Committee Meeting, including discussion of risk register processes, capital project risks, and policy updates. Action item: St Arnaud Hotel – update to be provided at next meeting.

Tabled & Noted

7.3 Review Risk Register

Ms Brittany Burns presented on the risk register and progress in risk management processes, including the implementation of key risk indicators and feedback from operational levels.

Tabled & Noted

7.4 Review the Victorian Protective Data Security Standard (VPDSS) Actions

Ms Stretch Smith presented on VPDSS actions, annual compliance, and cybersecurity updates. The committee discussed ongoing improvements, compliance KPIs, and the implementation of new systems and training.

Presentation Tabled & Noted

7.5 Review Environmental impact considerations for Council

Mr Trenton Fithall provided an update on EPA audit items and environmental risks. Recommendation: That the standing item for Review Environmental impact considerations for Council is removed and covered in the operational risk register.

Moved: Peter Knights

Seconded: Karen Hyslop

CARRIED

8 Audits

8.1 Consideration of External Auditors Comments on Management Letter & Closing Report

Mrs Jay Driscoll introduced RSD (external audit provider) to discuss the Management Letter & Closing report for the 2024-25 Audit. The auditors presented key findings, management letter points, and recommendations. The committee discussed outstanding items and management responses.

Recommendation: That the Committee accept and endorse the 2024/2025 Closing Report and receive the 2024-25 Management Letter and support the management responses within.

Moved: Karen Hyslop

Seconded: Peter Knights

CARRIED

8.2 Review Outstanding Audit Recommendations

Mrs Jay Driscoll presented and discussed the Outstanding Audit Recommendations. The committee noted progress and discussed ongoing actions to address outstanding items.

Presentation Tabled and Noted

8.3 Consideration of VAGO Audit – Financial Management of Local Government

Mr Vaughan Williams provided a summary of the findings of the VAGO audit, including recommendations for local government sustainability, service reviews, and asset management. The committee discussed the challenges for rural councils and the importance of shared services and advocacy for improved funding models.

Tabled & Noted

9 Financial Reporting

9.1 Review & Recommend Adoption of Annual Financial Report & Performance Report

Mrs Jay Driscoll tabled the Annual Financial Report and Performance Report for the year ending June 2025. The committee reviewed the reports, discussed key financial movements, and confirmed satisfaction with the process and outcomes.

Recommendation: That the Annual Financial Report & Performance Report be received and recommended to the Council for adoption.

Moved: Peter Knights

Seconded: Karen Probst

CARRIED

11 General Business

11.1 Survey – Annual assessment of committee's performance

Mrs Jay Driscoll to report a summary of the responses. Item held over to next meeting.

11.2 Independent ARC member

Mrs Jay Driscoll provided an update on efforts to fill the independent member vacancy. The committee discussed ongoing recruitment challenges and strategies to attract suitable candidates.

11.3 EFTsure new payment control

Mrs Jay Driscoll to provide an update on the status of this system. Item held over to next meeting.

12 Open floor

No additional issues raised by Audit Committee members.

13 Next Meeting

13.1 Confirmation of next meeting

Mrs Jay Driscoll to confirm the next meeting time, date and location. Proposed December 11th 2025 at 9am (Online)

14 Close

The meeting closed at 11:34am.