



Minutes

Council Meeting held at 12.30 PM on Monday 8 April 2024 in the Council Chamber, Pleasant Creek Historic Precinct, Stawell.

Present

Cr Rob Haswell (Mayor)
Cr Lauren Dempsey
Cr Murray Emerson
Cr Kevin Erwin
Cr Trevor Gready
Cr Karen Hyslop
Cr Eddy Ostarcevic PhD

Mr Brent McAllister, Chief Executive Officer
Mr Vaughan Williams, Director Corporate Services
Mr Trenton Fithall, Director Infrastructure and Amenity
Ms Justine Kingan, Director Strategy, Prosperity and Engagement

Affirmation

We recognise the traditional owners of the land.
We are inspired by the early pioneers and by those who gave their lives for our country.
We now ask God's blessing on our deliberations
and on our commitment to build a better lifestyle and environment.

To be confirmed at the meeting of Council on Monday 6 May 2024.

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1. Apologies

Nil

2. Confirmation of Minutes

Council Meeting held on Monday, 4 March 2024.

RESOLUTION

That the minutes as listed, copies of which have been circulated, be confirmed and adopted.

Moved: Cr Murray Emerson

Seconded: Cr Karen Hyslop

Carried

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Nil

4. Presentations/Awards

Nil

5. Presentation of Petitions and Joint Letters

Nil

6. Disclosure of a Conflict of Interest at a Council Meeting

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a Council meeting at which he or she-

- (i) is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the Council meeting immediately before the matter is considered; or**
- (ii) intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the Chief Executive Officer before the Council meeting commences a written notice-**
 - advising of the conflict of interest;**
 - explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and**
 - detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the-**
 - name of the other person**
 - nature of the relationship with that other person or the date on receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and**
 - nature of that other person's interest in the matter;**

and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the Chief Executive Officer.

The Councillor must, in either event, exclude themselves from the decision-making process, including any discussion or vote on the matter and any action in relation to the matter and leave the Council meeting immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

Members of Staff

A member of Council staff must disclose any conflict of interest in a matter in respect of which they are preparing or contributing to the preparation of a report for a Council meeting. They must immediately upon becoming aware of the conflict of interest, provide a written notice to the Chief Executive Officer disclosing the conflict of interest and explaining its nature.

Cr Erwin declared a general conflict of interest in Item 14.4 as he a Board Member of the group that is the subject of a fee waiver request.

7. Informal Meetings of Councillors

[Brent McAlister, Chief Executive Officer]

Council's Governance Rules require that if there is a meeting of Councillors that-

- is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- is not a Council meeting, delegated committee meeting or community asset committee meeting

the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are:

- tabled at the next convenient Council meeting; and
- recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The records for the period since the last Council Meeting are listed below.

18/03/2024	Councillor Briefing	8.1 10am Workshop - Passive Place	Councillor/Officer	Item Number	Left Meeting?
		8.2 Director Report - Corporate and Community Services			
		8.3 Councillor Expenses			
		8.4 Visitor Information Servicing Policy			
		8.5 Wayfinding (Signage) Strategy			
		8.6 Fair Access Policy			
		8.7 Procurement Policy			
9.1 C5 2023/24 - Navarre Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade	Nil	Nil	Nil		
04/03/2024	Councillor Briefing	7.1 Sports and Active Recreation Strategy - 10 minutes	Councillor/Officer	Item Number	Left Meeting?
		7.2 Open Space and Active Transport Strategy - 10 minutes			
		7.3 11am Presentation: St Arnaud Police - 20 minutes			
		8. Council Agenda Review			
Nil	Nil	Nil			
26/02/2024	Councillor Briefing	9.1 10.30am Presentation: RWE Renewables	Councillor/Officer	Item Number	Left Meeting?
		9.2 Shopfront Improvement Program and Easter Decorations Update			
		9.3 Air Show Discussion			
		9.4 Council Plan Action Plan			
		9.5 Quarterly Finance Report			
		9.6 Customer Support Update			
		9.7 Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan 2024-25			
Cr Hyslop	9.1	Yes			
Cr Erwin	9.3	Yes			
26/02/2024	Councillor Briefing Councillor and CEO Meeting	1. Staff support impacted by fires	Councillor/Officer	Item Number	Left Meeting?
		2. Lifting customer service priority			
		3. Regional workers accommodation fund			
		4. Major business visits update - the CEO and Mayor briefed Councillors on visits to Action Sheds, Krause Bricks and the Gold mine.			
		5. Stawell Gift accommodation			
Nil	Nil	Nil			
26/02/2024	Councillor Briefing SWRRA and NGSC Meeting	1. RWE Proposed Windfarm Development at Campbells Bridge	Councillor/Officer	Item Number	Left Meeting?
		2. Council's Letter of Support the State Government on the Victorian Transmission Plan.			
		3. EES In Respect of RWE Proposed Development.			
Cr Hyslop	The full meeting	Did not attend meeting due to conflict			

RESOLUTION

That the report on Informal Meetings of Councillors be approved with the amendment that on the 26 February 2024 Councillor Briefing SWRRA and NGSC Meeting Cr Karen Hyslop was not in attendance due to a conflict.

Moved: Cr Karen Hyslop

Seconded: Cr Kevin Erwin

Carried

8. Items Brought Forward

Nil

9. Consideration of Reports of Officers

9.1. Enhance Lifestyles and Community

Nil

9.2. Boost Economic Growth

9.2.1. Visitor Information Servicing Policy

Author/Position: Jennifer Thomas, Coordinator Economic Development

Purpose

To present the proposed *Visitor Information Servicing Policy* for Council endorsement.

Council officers have undertaken a review of strategies, action plans, and related documents endorsed by Council for the visitor economy and an internal audit of the processes relating to Visitor Information Service management and development of the *Visitor Information Servicing Policy*.

Visitor Information Servicing applies to post-arrival and in destination visitor information service. This provides exceptional arrival, in destination and departure information.

Summary

This policy provides guidance to how Northern Grampians Shire Council delivers its Visitor Information Servicing and implements all Council strategies and action plans for the visitor economy.

It establishes a set of principles defining the standards for the Council's visitor servicing, facilitating effective delivery of Visitor Information Servicing in line with Council's Vision, Stawell and St Arnaud Tourism Action Plans, and regional tourism objectives.

The policy outlines the role Council has and the responsibilities of all staff, volunteers and key stakeholders that Council collaborates with to provide exceptional arrival, in destination and departure visitor information.

Recommendation

That Council endorses the *Visitor Information Servicing Policy* to support its long term commitment to the delivery of visitor information service.

Background/Rationale

In June 2021, following a thorough review of the Visitor Information Centre and Halls Gap Hub Management, Council resolved to deliver:

- Shire wide initiatives aimed at increasing engagement with visitors (on Northern Grampians Shire wide attractions and tourism offerings) to increase cost versus benefits to the community of the services.
- A Victorian Tourism Industry Council Accredited Visitor Information Centre in Halls Gap HUB (staffed over 7 days/56 hours per week).
- An unaccredited, volunteer run Visitor Information Centre in St Arnaud (volunteer support over 6 days/42 hours per week).

Further to this decision, in 2022 Council resolved to deliver a volunteer run unaccredited Visitor Information Centre in Stawell at the Pleasant Creek Historic Precinct on the Western Highway. In the same year, Council adopted the Tourism Strategies and Action Plans for Stawell and St Arnaud which set out the vision and aspiration for the visitor economy for the respective towns.

Since that time, Council collaborated with Grampians Tourism to develop a regional Destination Management Plan, which was adopted by the Grampians Tourism Board in 2023. The Destination Management Plan provides a shared vision and direction for the sustainable development of our visitor economy.

This policy has been developed following a review of the strategic directions for Northern Grampians Shire Council visitor economy and an internal audit of the processes relating to Visitor Information Centre management. Implementation of this policy will be reinforced through the role of Council. Additionally, operation procedures for each Visitor Information Centre will be developed to support the implementation of this policy. It will also be integrated into the key performance indicators of the staff responsible for Visitor Information Centre.

This policy underpins the Council's long term commitment to the delivery of the service.

Legislation, Council Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

Local Government Act 2020

Council Plan 2021-25 – Boost Economic Growth

Options

Option 1

That Council endorses the *Visitor Information Servicing Policy* to support its long-term commitment to the delivery of visitor information service **[recommended]**.

Option 2

That Council do not endorse the *Visitor Information Servicing Policy* **[not recommended]**.

Implications

In the development of this policy, any identified sustainability issues (economic, social, environmental or climate change) or heritage/cultural, amenity, human rights/gender equality, privacy, risk management, budgetary and asset management implications have been considered.

Procurement

No procurement requirements apply for the subject of this report.

Community Engagement

No community engagement was required for the subject of this report.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The subject matter of this report has considered implications regarding innovation or improvements.

Collaboration

No collaboration with other councils, governments or statutory bodies was required for the subject of this report.

Officer's Declaration of Interest

All officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

Jennifer Thomas, Coordinator Economic Development.

In providing this advice as the author, I have no disclosable interests in this report.

Attachments

1. Visitor Information Servicing Policy [9.2.1.1 - 6 pages]

Visitor Information Servicing (VIS) Policy



March 2024







Northern Grampians Shire Council
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CONTACT US

-  ngshire@ngshire.vic.gov.au
-  www.ngshire.vic.gov.au
-  (03) 5358 8700
-  PO Box 580 Stawell VIC 3380

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Visitor Information Servicing Policy



Council Policy

Responsible director	Director Strategy Prosperity and Engagement
Responsible officer	Coordinator Economic Development and Tourism
Functional area	Strategy, Prosperity, and Engagement
Date adopted by Council/ELT	8 April 2024
Review date	April 2025

Purpose

This policy provides guidance to how Northern Grampians Shire Council (NGSC) delivers its Visitor Information Servicing (VIS). VIS applies to post-arrival, in destination visitor information service which provides exceptional arrival, in destination and departure visitor information. It's important to note that VIS differs from destination marketing, which promotes a destination to potential visitors and this service is managed by our regional tourism partner Grampians Tourism (GT) in conjunction with its eight Local Government partners.

Regular review and updates to this policy will help adapt to changing visitor needs and expectations while fostering collaboration and partnerships with local stakeholders.

Background

In 2021, the council reviewed VIS across the shire. The scope of the review applied to the provision of post-arrival, in destination visitor information service including channels such as face-to-face visitor information centres (VIC) and information on local attractions and tourism offerings across the municipality. The review identified that local government is one of the visitor's economy's most influential stakeholder operating VICs supporting events, promotions marketing and development in tourism.

Council's vision for post-arrival, in destination visitor information services is to inspire visitors to engage in multiple experiences, to extend the length of stay and increase the amount of money spent in the municipality.

In June 2021 Council resolved to deliver:

- Shire wide initiatives aimed at increasing engagement with visitors (on Northern Grampians Shire wide attractions/tourism offerings) to increase cost versus benefits to the community of the services.
- A Victorian Tourism Industry Council Accredited Visitor Information Centre in Halls Gap HUB (staffed over seven days/56 hours per week),
- An unaccredited, volunteer run Visitor Information Centre in St Arnaud (volunteer support over six days/42 hours per week).

Further to this decision, in 2022 Council resolved to deliver a volunteer run unaccredited VIC in Stawell at the Pleasant Creek Historic Precinct on the Western way. In the same year, Council adopted the Tourism Strategies and Action Plans for Stawell and St Arnaud which set out the vision and aspiration for the visitor economy for the respective towns.

Since that time, Council collaborated with Grampians Tourism to develop a regional Destination Management Plan (DMP), adopted by the GT Board in 2023. The DMP provides a shared vision and direction for the sustainable development of our visitor economy.

This policy has been developed following a review of the strategic directions for NGSC visitor economy and an internal audit of the processes relating to VIS management. Implementation of this policy will be reinforced through the role of Council. Additionally, Operations Procedures for each VIC will be developed to support the implementation of this policy. It will also be integrated into the key performance indicators of the staff responsible for VIS.

This Policy underscores the council's long-term commitment to the delivery of the service.

Scope

This policy provides a set of principles that define the standards for council's visitor servicing, the role of the council and how it applies to all staff, volunteers, and key stakeholders that the council collaborates with to provide exceptional arrival, in destination and departure visitor information.

Policy Principles

The following Principles will support the council in effectively delivering Visitor Information Servicing (VIS), aligning with the council's vision, Tourism Action Plans, and regional tourism objectives.

Principle A: Provide Quality and Accurate Information

1. Halls Gap VIC is recognised as Northern Grampians Shire 'HUB VIC' as defined by the 2018 VTIC Visitor Information Servicing Guidelines.
2. Stawell and St Arnaud recognised as being Northern Grampians Shire 'Ancillary VIC' as defined by the 2018 VTIC Visitor Information Servicing Guidelines.
3. Ensure that the visitor information centre (VIC) serves as a 'Centre of Inspiration' by being well-organised, with clear signage, maps, and use of interactive displays or multimedia presentations to engage visitors and provide in-depth information.
4. Ensure that VIC staff and volunteers are well-trained, knowledgeable about the local area, and up to date with current events, attractions, and services.
5. Ensure that the VIC staff and volunteers are approachable, welcoming, and willing to assist visitors.
6. Maintain an extensive database of approved collateral, physical and digital to include brochures, maps, and guides on local attractions, and activities. Refer to the Collateral and Brochure section in the VIC Operations Procedure.
7. Provide tailored advice and recommendations to visitors' interests, needs, and demographics. Suggest relevant activities, based on their preferences.
8. Maintain/update our destination website *Visit Grampians* and our Discover Northern Grampians (DNG) social media platforms with real-time information updates, marketing content, interactive maps, and links to local resources, making it easier for visitors to find information about our towns before they arrive.
9. Support the safety and well-being of visitors by acting as a communications channel for Parks Victoria and key government partners for accurate and up-to-date safety information on emergency incidents, potential hazards, and local regulations.
10. Encourage visitors to provide feedback about their experience and the accuracy of the information received.

Principle B: Encourage Visitor Dispersal Across the Wider Northern Grampians Region.

1. Ensure our VICs are conveniently located at strategic locations with accessibility options and have opening hours that suit the visitor. The 'Hub VIC' in Halls Gap is strategically located to capture high footfall visitor traffic. With over 60,000 yearly visitors, the hub serves as a pivotal point for dispersing tourists across the shire.
2. Promote Northern Grampians Shire as an iconic destination through the Discover Northern Grampians brand campaign, workforce and investment attraction campaign and other regional campaigns.

3. Develop and promote themed itineraries that guide visitors to different parts of the region, such as historical tours, outdoor adventures, cultural experiences, and culinary tours.
4. Collaborate with Parks Victoria, GT, local businesses and neighbouring LGAs to create joint marketing campaigns that showcase the diversity of experiences in the larger area.
5. Support, host, and promote local events attracting visitors and showcasing the unique character of our towns.
6. Participate in and promote workshops, tours, and educational programs that provide insights into the region's history, culture, and natural assets.
7. Support the local tourism businesses and communities to promoting their unique offerings and experiences, making them active stakeholders in the dispersal effort. Refer to the Collateral and Brochure section in the VIC Operations Procedure.
8. Collaborate with local businesses and community to cross-promote marketing content and ensure that the information is accurate and up to date.
9. Provide digital offering, roving ambassador programs and temporary information booths at events.
10. Diversify Northern Grampians Shire visitor offering to reduce impact of National Park closures following natural disasters.

Principle C: Boost Economic Growth and Community Development.

1. Inspire visitors to engage in multiple experiences and to stay longer which supports local businesses and job creation through tourism.
2. Involve local communities through local programs such as the business ambassador program in the development and operation of VIS to ensure they align with community interests. Refer to the Collateral and Brochure section in the VIC Operations Procedure.
3. Support our communities through training and opportunities through the Business Growth Program to develop high quality visitor experiences.
4. Develop buy in and community ownership through strong advocacy and involvement.
5. Deliver high quality services and amenities for visitors and community.

The Role of the Council

1. **Visitor Economy Development:** Providing strategic planning, governance frameworks, business models, and resources to support Visitor Information Services (VIS) delivery.
2. **Visitor Economy Management:** Providing infrastructure for visitor servicing, amenity, maintenance, waste management, parking, and wayfinding.
3. **Visitor Economy Marketing:** Managing destination branding, positioning, and cooperative promotion, and distribution locally and regionally in partnership with GT (Grampians Tourism).
4. **Visitor Economy Leadership and Advocacy:** Offering strong leadership and advocating for the visitor economy, influencing state and federal policies, aligning local priorities, and fostering regional collaboration.
5. **Visitor Economy Engagement and Collaboration:** Encouraging engagement and collaboration with local businesses, industry partners, and community groups to ensure the success of VIS initiatives.

Legislation and Standards

Council Plan 2021-25: Goal 2 Boost Economic Growth - Through Boosting Tourism – Ensure Quality Tourism Experience

VTIC Visitor Information Servicing Guidelines, 2018

Compliance

Local Government Act 2020

Responsibilities

1. The Director Strategy, Prosperity and Engagement is responsible for overseeing the policy.
2. The Coordinator Economic Development is responsible for the operational management, review, and communication of the policy.
3. VIS staff and volunteers and the Tourism and Marketing Officer are responsible for the implementation of the principles of the policy under the supervision of the Coordinator Economic Development.

4. All NGSC staff are ambassadors for the region and play a role in supporting effective visitor servicing.

Communication and implementation

This policy will be communicated to all staff via Employee Matters and to the Councillors via the Councillor Bulletin and Councillor Portal. It will be referred to in induction and/or training.

Implementation of this policy is documented in the Operational Guidelines for the Visitor Information Centres - [Halls Gap Visitor Information Centre Operations Procedure.docx](#)

Review

Review of the policy will be undertaken within the first twelve month to capture recommendations from the Local Area Action Plan (LAAP) once endorsed by Council and the regional Visitor Servicing Strategy which is expected to be delivered in June 2024. Subsequent review will occur every four years to coincide with the Council term, ensuring alignment with Council goals, processes, aims, and requirements, and mitigating risks. Triggers for earlier assessments include legislative changes and the implementation of new systems or procedures.

References

Northern Grampians Shire Council Community Vision 2041
Northern Grampians Shire Council [Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31](#)
Victorian Accredited Visitor Information Servicing Guidelines 2018
Northern Grampians Shire Council Events Strategy 2023-33
Northern Grampians Shire Council Art and Culture Strategy 2020-24
Stawell Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022-32
[St. Arnaud Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022-32](#)
[Grampians Destination Management Plan 2023](#)
[Invest in the Grampians](#) – A regional Tourism Investment Prospectus developed by Grampian Tourism
[Grampians Region Visitor Servicing Review Report – 2018](#)
[VIC_HG HUB Review Background Paper.pptx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
[20210628 Council Meeting Minutes 1 \(1\).pdf](#)

Privacy and Data Protection compliance

This policy has considered the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Victorian Protective Data Security (VPDSS) Standards* which adopt a risk-based approach to protective data security.

Gender Equality compliance

Council has considered if gender equality principles, workplace gender equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes and the promotion of gender equality in the development of this policy. These have been determined to be not relevant to this policy.

Charter of Human Rights compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact on any [human rights](#) identified in the *Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Definitions

Visitor Information Service: Visitor Information Servicing is the provision of information and assistance to travellers or visitors who are already in a destination. It aims to enhance their

Visitor Information Servicing Policy

experience and improve their satisfaction by offering guidance, recommendations and address any questions or concerns they may have during their visit.

Destination Marketing: Destination Marketing is the promotion of a destination to potential visitors, encouraging them to choose that destination for their travels. It aims to increase awareness of the destination, drive visitor arrivals, boost tourism revenues, attract businesses and events and stimulate economic growth within the destination.

Visitor Information Centre: A central location (in a fixed building. Structure) for visitors to gain access to timely, accurate and impartial information and advice.

VTIC Victoria Tourism Industry Council is Victoria's peak tourism industry body and is the leading advocate for Victoria's tourism and events industry.

Review history

Date	Review details	Action
March 2024	Policy developed	

9.3. Providing Sustainable Infrastructure

9.3.1. Great Western Pavilion Upgrade Budget Review

Author/Position: Jeevan Pinto, Manager Infrastructure

Purpose

To seek a Council decision on the budget for the redevelopment of the Great Western Pavilion and to allocate additional funds to the project.

Summary

This report presents further advancements following the briefing to councillors on 15 November 2023, where a potential \$175,000 shortfall in the contingency for the Great Western Pavilion Upgrade was reported.

Site constraints such as the presence of a sewer pump station, trees, and title issues have necessitated significant alterations to the building's layout, contributing to escalated costs. Moreover, the decision to increase the floor area further compounded construction expenses. These factors collectively have exerted pressure on the project budget, resulting in a reduced contingency available for construction, thereby necessitating careful reconsideration of financial allocations to ensure the successful completion of the Great Western Pavilion Upgrade.

Recommendation

That Council approves:

- a. the allocation of an additional budget increase of \$175,000, to set the overall budget for Great Western Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade to \$2,637,000.
- b. the additional budget to be allocated to the Great Western Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade to be funded from savings from a reduced rates subsidy for projects in the 2024/25 financial year.

RESOLUTION

That Council:

- a. supports the allocation of an additional budget increase of \$175,000, to set the overall budget for Great Western Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade to \$2,637,000
- b. the additional budget to be allocated to the Great Western Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade to be funded from savings from a reduced rates subsidy for projects in the 2024/25 financial year.

Moved: Cr Trevor Gready

Seconded: Cr Eddy Ostarcevic

Carried

Background/Rationale

The Council Action Plan and 10-year Capital Works Program makes a commitment to the delivery of the Great Western Football and Netball Clubrooms Upgrades.

The Victorian State Government announced several grants for sporting infrastructure in the shire and Council has committed to contribute to support this major redevelopment.

As the design has progressed through various phases, comprehensive service design assessments were conducted. These assessments included evaluating the electrical load requirements for both the new facility and the existing assets. It has been determined that the available 80 ampere/phase of power are insufficient to meet the project's needs. Consequently, it has triggered the need for a power upgrade onsite, which will affect the project budget. The Great Western Reserve has an 80 ampere/phase electricity feed and the upgrade to 160 ampere/phase must be considered as part of the new project redevelopment.

Additionally, site constraints such as the presence of a sewer pump station, trees, and title issues have necessitated significant alterations to the building's layout, contributing to escalated costs. Moreover, the decision to increase the floor area further compounded construction expenses. These factors collectively have exerted pressure on the project budget, resulting in a reduced contingency available for construction, thereby necessitating careful reconsideration of financial allocations to ensure the successful completion of the Great Western Pavilion Upgrade.

To make up for the short fall an analysis of the Long-Term Financial Plan was undertaken. On analysis, it is believed that the increase in budget and rates subsidy allocated to the project can be found from 2024/25 financial year, due to an increase in grant allocation to other future projects and reduced demand on Council's rates subsidy.

Legislation, Council Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

Local Government Act 2020

Council Plan 2021-25 – Provide Sustainable Infrastructure

Options

Option 1

That Council:

- a. supports the allocation of an additional budget increase of \$175k, to set the overall budget for Great Western Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade to \$2,637k
- b. Additional budget to be allocated from savings found in rates subsidy in the 2024/25 financial year
[recommended]

Option 2

That Council:

- a. does not support the allocation of funds towards the recommended contingency.
[not recommended]

Implications

Any identified sustainability issues (economic, social, environmental or climate change) or heritage/cultural, amenity, human rights/gender equality, privacy, risk management, budgetary and asset management implications have been addressed in this report.

Procurement

No procurement requirements apply for the subject of this report.

Community Engagement

No community engagement was required for the subject of this report.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The subject matter of this report has considered implications regarding innovation or improvements.

Collaboration

No collaboration with other councils, governments or statutory bodies was required for the subject of this report.

Officer's Declaration of Interest

All officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

Jeevan Pinto, Manager Infrastructure

In providing this advice as the author, I have no disclosable interests in this report.

Attachments

Nil

9.4. Improve Organisational Effectiveness

9.4.1. Procurement Policy

Author/Position: **Graham Haylock, Manager Financial Services**

Purpose

For Council to adopt the revised *Procurement Policy*.

Summary

Council adopted the *Procurement Policy* at the 15 August 2022 Council Meeting. The policy has been reviewed following an external audit and minor amendments are proposed.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the revised *Procurement Policy* as attached to this report.

RESOLUTION

That Council adopts the revised *Procurement Policy* as attached to this report.

Moved: Cr Karen Hyslop

Seconded: Cr Kevin Erwin

Carried

Background/Rationale

In 2023, an external audit of the *Procurement Policy* was completed. The audit found no major issues with the policy but included a number of recommendations for improvement. These were mainly in the areas of the operating procedures, systems and reporting.

The key area recommended for improvement in the policy was to clarify emergency procurement. The policy now includes a definition of 'emergency' and clearly articulates that the Chief Executive Officer is authorised to enter into contracts over tender thresholds in the defined circumstances and a report is to be provided to Council at the earliest opportunity.

Another proposed change to the policy is to increase the local supplier evaluation allowance from at least 5% to 10%.

Legislation, Council Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

Local Government Act 2020

Council Plan 2021-25 – Improve Organisational Effectiveness

Options

Option 1

Council adopts the revised *Procurement Policy* as attached to this report. **[recommended]**

Option 2

Council does not adopt the revised *Procurement Policy*. **[not recommended]**

Implications

The subject matter has not raised any sustainability issues (economic, social, environmental or climate change) or heritage/cultural, amenity, human rights/gender equality, privacy, risk management, budgetary and asset management implications.

Procurement

No procurement requirements apply for the subject of this report. However, it sets the parameters for all future procurement activities.

Community Engagement

No community engagement was required for the subject of this report.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The subject matter of this report does not raise any implications regarding innovation or improvements.

Collaboration

No collaboration with other councils, governments or statutory bodies was required for the subject of this report.

Officer's Declaration of Interest

All officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

Graham Haylock, Manager Financial Services.

In providing this advice as the author, I have no disclosable interests in this report.

Attachments

1. Procurement Policy - March 2024 [9.4.1.1 - 13 pages]

Procurement Policy

Council Policy

March 2024



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- ✉ ngshire@ngshire.vic.gov.au
- 🌐 www.ngshire.vic.gov.au
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Procurement Policy



Council Policy

Responsible director:	Director Corporate and Community Services
Responsible officer:	Manager Financial Services
Functional area:	Financial Services
Date adopted by Council:	15 August 2022
Review date:	August 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the key policies and principles forming the framework for procurement at the Northern Grampians Shire Council, to ensure that all purchases:

- demonstrate and achieve value for money
- are undertaken in a consistent and robust manner
- are consistent with Council objectives
- comply with all relevant legislation; and
- meet expected standards of probity and transparency.

This policy document is supported by a more detailed set of Procurement Guidelines which are designed to assist with the implementation of this policy. These documents, along with the relevant sections of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), provide direction for how all Council procurement should be performed.

Background

Section 108 of the Act requires Council to prepare and approve a procurement policy which must:

- specify the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods, services and works by the Council
- seek to promote open and fair competition and provide value for money.
- establish the thresholds and processes for public procurements
- provide for collaboration in procurement
- included the conditions where goods or services may be purchased without inviting a public tender or expression of interest
- describe the process of how a public tenders or expression of interest will be undertaken
- be reviewed at least once during each 4-year term of the Council

The Northern Grampians Shire Council spends a significant amount of its annual budget on purchasing goods and services and assets. These purchases have an enormous impact on the delivery of programs, services and projects therefore it is crucial that the process is well conducted.

Policy

Expectation to comply

Compliance with this policy, including associated guidelines, is mandatory.

Officers must bring any instances of non-compliance to the attention of their direct Manager or Director. The Manager or Director must then notify the Manager Financial Services of the non-compliance and any remedial action taken.

Non-compliance with this policy is taken seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with Council's [Disciplinary Procedure](#).

All Council staff, including their agents are expected to implement this policy:

- Officers engaged in the selection of external suppliers should seek timely input from the Contracts Officer
- Officers engaged in any procurement activity must be able to demonstrate that they have complied with this policy
- The source of funds must be identified, and the procurement authorised in accordance with Council delegations of authority, before any commitment to purchase is made
- More than one person will be involved in, and responsible for, each transaction with appropriate authorisations obtained and documented.

Conduct of Councillors and Council staff/conflict of interest

Councillors and Council officers must exercise the highest standards of integrity in a manner able to withstand the closest possible scrutiny. In accordance with sections 126-131 of the Act, Councillors and Council officers have an overriding responsibility to act impartially and with integrity, avoiding conflicts of interest.

Councillors and Council officers, must:

- Maintain confidentiality of Commercial in Confidence matters and information such as contract prices and other sensitive information
- Treat potential and existing suppliers with equality and fairness
- Council officers with delegated Council powers or duties are prohibited from exercising those powers, duties or functions if they have conflicts of interest
- Councillors (and members of the Audit and Risk committee) must disclose a conflict of interest
- A Councillor must comply with the Primary Principle of Councillor Conduct and avoid conflicts between their public duties as a Councillor and their personal interests and obligations.
- At all times avoid situations in which private interests' conflict, or might reasonably be thought to conflict, or have the potential to conflict, with their Council duties
- Disclose a direct or indirect interest (and the type of interest) before providing advice or reports (or any other matter)
- Not participate in any action or matter associated with the arrangement of a procurement where that person has a direct or indirect conflict as defined by the Act; and
- When becoming aware of a conflict, promptly declare the direct or indirect Conflict of Interest to the Governance Unit.

Basic principles

There are some basic principles that should be applied to all purchases, irrespective of the value or complexity of the purchase:

- value for money
- open and fair competition
- accountability
- risk management
- probity and transparency
- ethical behaviour
- responsible financial management
- collaborative procurement
- other considerations

Value for money

Value for money does not necessarily mean accepting the lowest price but obtaining the best quality and value for the price, for quality goods/services that meet Northern Grampians Shire Council's criteria and cost constraints.

Factors considered in the evaluation of value for money may include:

- contribution to the advancement of Council's priorities and objectives
- fitness for purpose, quality, social and environmental impacts, service and support

- cost-related factors including whole-of-life costs and transaction costs associated with acquiring, using, holding, maintaining and disposing of the goods, services or works

Value for money will be facilitated by:

- developing, implementing and managing procurement strategies that support the co-ordination and streamlining of activities throughout the procurement lifecycle
- aggregating purchasing whenever possible; and
- undertaking competitive procurement processes.

Open and fair competition

All prospective suppliers/vendors must be treated fairly in an open and transparent manner without bias (or perception of bias), with the same access to information regarding the proposed purchase, in order to enable submission of quotes/tenders to be made on the same basis.

Accountability

Clear and robust processes consistent across the entire organisation must be followed, in order that the lines of responsibility and accountability are clear, and to ensure that appropriate audit controls are in place.

Risk management

All purchases carry some level of risk. It is important that this risk is identified, assessed and dealt with appropriately.

Probity and transparency

Probity in purchasing relates to fairness, impartiality and integrity, and is often used in a general sense to mean good process. All Council dealings must be conducted in a fair and open manner, observing the highest standards of honesty, and demonstrating the highest levels of integrity consistent with the public interest.

Council's purchasing processes must be undertaken in a manner which meets all expected standards of probity and transparency, including consistent application of procedures, appropriate record keeping, compliance with policies and legislation, consideration for suppliers, and clear and transparent decision making.

Ethical behaviour

Ethical behaviour encompasses the concepts of honesty, integrity, probity, diligence, fairness, trust, respect and consistency. Council's purchasing processes must be undertaken in a manner which meets all expected standards of ethical behaviour and includes avoiding conflicts of interest and avoiding improper use of an individual's position. At all times, Councillors and Council staff must act in accordance with relevant policies, codes of conduct and guidelines regarding gifts and hospitality and conflicts of interest.

Specific processes regarding application of these basic principles are included within the Procurement Guidelines. If any officer is unclear of their responsibilities regarding procurement, they should seek advice from the Manager Financial Services.

Responsible financial management

The principle of responsible financial management will be applied to all procurement activities.

The availability of existing funds within an approved budget or source of funds will be established prior to the commencement of any procurement action for the supply of goods, services or works.

Council funds must be used efficiently and effectively to procure goods, services and works and every attempt must be made to contain the costs of the procurement process without compromising any of the procurement principles set out in this policy.

Collaborative procurement

When procurement is being planned, due diligence should be undertaken to evaluate if best value for money can be achieved by using an Agent or a collaborative tender.

Where practical, Council will collaborate with other Councils in order to take advantage of economies of scale, reduce risk and deliver community benefits for all participating councils.

In accordance with section 109 (2) of the Act, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that any report to Council recommending entering into a procurement agreement includes information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available.

As such, any report to Council on the outcomes of a tender process must set out information relating to opportunities explored for collaborative procurement and why or why not those identified opportunities are recommended.

Collaborative procurement will be achieved through:

- aligning procurement categories and timing (joint procurement)
- using Panels, including Panels in the region (that include the capacity to provide services outside of the contracting council area under the same terms and conditions)
- using State Government contracts and aggregators

Other considerations

There are also a number of organisational and legislative directives that help set the framework for purchasing decisions made by Council including the Council Plan and the *Local Government Act 2020* (see – Legislation/Standards).

In addition to the requirements of the Act, purchasing decisions must also consider other principles, Council policies, guidelines and philosophies. These include:

- sustainable procurement
- social procurement
- environmental purchasing
- local purchasing philosophy
- innovation
- IT hardware and software procurement
- category management
- purchase orders
- officer's financial delegations
- panel of contactors
- contractor register (approved suppliers)
- procurement vehicle
- thresholds
- threshold exemptions
- variations to Council resolution; and
- public tender requirements

Sustainable procurement

Council will consider benefits and value for money based on whole of life costs, as well as social and environmental impacts of its procurement processes, in order to achieve the best outcomes for the community having regard to the long-term and cumulative effects of its decisions.

Social procurement

Council supports procurement that not only delivers appropriate value for money goods and services and works, but also generates positive social outcomes.

Where strategic opportunities arise, Council's Economic Development Team will work with locals to encourage economic development.

The Economic Development Team and Contract Officer will work with local suppliers to explain Council's requirements with regards to providing goods and services and works to Council and the tendering processes in line with this policy and encourage them to tender for business.

Environmental purchasing

Council prefers to purchase recycled and environmentally sound products whenever they perform satisfactorily and represent value for money.

Local purchasing philosophy

Council is committed to supporting the local business community and encouraging its involvement in purchasing processes. Buying locally is preferred where local suppliers are competitive and achieve value for money.

Wherever practicable, Council will fully examine the benefits available through purchasing goods, services or works from suppliers/contractors within the Northern Grampians Region. Council will also seek from prospective suppliers/contractors where applicable what economic contribution they will make to the Northern Grampians region.

All tenders/quotes should allow at least ten percent (10%) evaluation allowance for local suppliers.

Council will endeavour to obtain quotes from local suppliers wherever possible, if two or more quotes are required then a minimum of one should be from a local supplier. If no local suppliers can be identified, this must be noted on the standard quote form.

Innovation

Council will use innovative procurement solutions to promote sustainability and achieve best value.

IT hardware and software procurement

To ensure consistency in our IT system architecture in-line with Council's Business Transformation Strategy, all IT hardware and software procurement is subject to additional requirements and must have the preapproval of the Manager Business Transformation before proceeding to the procurement stage.

Category management

Council will use a category management approach to identify the most appropriate and effective sourcing and supply arrangements in order to achieve the best outcomes for the community.

Purchase orders

Notwithstanding the processes used to select suppliers, purchase orders are to be raised and forwarded to suppliers to commit Council expenditure in advance of the goods or services being received, or works being commenced, in accordance with the Council's Purchasing Guidelines.

Officer's financial delegations

Section 11 of the Act enables Council to delegate its powers, duties and functions. Northern Grampians Shire Council has by an Instrument of Delegation delegated powers and responsibilities to the Chief Executive Officer. In turn, the Chief Executive Officer has delegated powers, responsibilities and financial purchasing limits to officers as appropriate to perform their duties.

Officers must be aware of their role and financial responsibilities and must ensure that all purchases they make are within their delegated authority. In the case of a purchase exceeding their authority the intended purchase should be referred to an appropriate officer with suitable delegated levels. Under no circumstances is a single purchase to be dissected into smaller dollar values in order to circumvent the prescribed financial delegations.

It should be noted that no employee can raise a purchase order or authorise reimbursement for their own training/conferences and associated costs (such as accommodation and meals) and this should at all times be referred to their line manager for approval and authorisation.

Panel of contractors

A panel of contractors is a contractor/company that has been appointed following an open tender process (this includes third party agents (e.g. MAV Procurement, Procurement Australia, State Government, etc.)). A panel of contractors cannot be appointed in any other manner. Unless specified during a tender process, no minimum quantity of work or turnover is guaranteed to any contractor on the panel.

Benefits of appointing a panel of contractors include:

- Savings in time and money
- Provide higher level of quality
- Faster turnaround times; and
- Increased confidentiality.

A panel of contractors should be appointed for one (1) year with a further option to extend for two (2) x one (1) years to a maximum of three (3) years, subject to contract requirements.

Council's panel of contractors should always be utilised whenever possible. A full list is available from the OnBudget section within InSites. When utilising any contractor within the panel "best value for money" should always be the first consideration.

Where a panel or standing offer agreement has been established through a competitive and open process, the following purchasing thresholds may be used to support purchases through these existing agreements.

Value (exclusive of GST)	Procurement threshold (minimum requirement)
\$15,001 - \$50,000	Issue a request in writing to at least two panel suppliers. Responses to be managed through the procurement e-tender platform. Rationale for selecting successful respondent must be documented.
<i>Purchase of goods and services:</i> \$50,001 - \$150,000 <i>Carrying out of works:</i> \$50,001 - \$200,000	Issue a request in writing to at least three panel suppliers. Responses to be managed through the procurement e-tender platform. Rationale for selecting successful respondent must be documented.

Any project, single purchase or a combination of approved contractors are not to be utilised to bypass the requirements to tender where the total project cost may exceed the threshold limits for tendering. If a schedule of rates was not provided, then a preferred supplier is to be selected by standard competitive quotation or tender process, subject to the value of the service or works (refer Thresholds section below).

Approval to complete the works or services, by panel contractors, is subject to normal limits for Council's financial delegates.

Provided the preferred contractor is pre-approved by Council, the CEO may approve the supplier appointment notwithstanding that the services / works may exceed normal delegation limits. CEO approval of amounts above delegation limits only applies where:

- The preferred contractor is pre-approved by Council as a member of the contractor panel; and
- The services/works to be performed were identified in the tender specifications that gave rise to the panel of contractors; and
- The services/works are to be performed within the contract term pre-approved by Council.

Where the preferred contractor is pre-approved by Council to carry out services/works within the contract term, then it is deemed that the CEO is not exercising a financial delegation, by approving the preferred supplier, but rather exercising the resolution of Council.

Where the above conditions are not met, and the value of the works or service exceeds the CEO delegation, then the project is to either be the subject of a public tender and/or required to be approved by Council.

Contractor register (approved suppliers)

Council has established a pre-qualified contractors register for those contractors who have submitted their insurances, qualifications, and OH&S documentation. These contractors/suppliers have not been through a public tender so have not submitted a schedule of rates. As a schedule of rates was not provided, then a preferred contractor/supplier is to be selected by standard competitive quotation or tender process, subject to the value of the service or works (refer Thresholds section below).

New contractors/suppliers can be added to the Contractors Register at any stage throughout the year via the process on Promapp: *Register a new contractor*.

Procurement vehicle

The acquisition of goods and services for which the estimated expenditure exceeds \$150,000 and carrying out of works for which the estimated expenditure exceeds \$200,000 must be undertaken by public tender.

Thresholds

There are a number of methods by which goods and services can be purchased, however not all methods are appropriate to all circumstances. The critical factors in determining the most appropriate method to purchase goods or services are the value of the purchase, the extent of risk associated with the purchase and any other complexities involved in the purchase decision.

Other factors such as market size/potential suppliers and time constraints may affect the decisions made in regards to the procurement process.

It should be noted that the thresholds as detailed below for a formal public tender will come into effect when one of the following occurs: 1) the cumulative supplier spend per financial year exceeds or is expected to exceed the threshold or 2) the expected spend per project exceeds the threshold.

The following table sets out Council's policy regarding procurement processes to be followed based on the value of the purchase.

Value of purchase (ex. GST)	Method of purchasing / selection of supplier
Under \$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers are able to determine the most appropriate process as identified in Council's Procurement Guidelines. • Minimum 1 verbal quote from a potential supplier. • Use of agency contracts (e.g. Procurement Australia) may be considered.
\$5,001 - \$15,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 1 written quotation • Use of agency contracts (e.g. Procurement Australia) may be considered.
\$15,001 – \$50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 written quotations* • Use of agency contracts (e.g. Procurement Australia) may be considered.
\$50,001 - \$100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 3 written quotations * • May be publicly advertised. • Formal contract agreement should be implemented if the purchase involves high risk for Council – confirm with Contracts Officer. • Use of agency contracts (e.g. Procurement Australia) may be considered.
Purchase of goods and services: \$100,001 - \$150,000 Carrying out of works: \$100,001 - \$200,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 3 written quotations * • Formal quotes required including (but not limited to) OHS questionnaire – confirm with Contracts Officer • Formal contract agreement should be implemented if the purchase involves high risk for Council – confirm with Contracts Officer. • May be publicly advertised. • Use of agency contracts (e.g. Procurement Australia) may be considered. • Public Tender may be used depending on risk, complexity or where project estimates are close to \$200,000 for contracts for the carrying out of works.
Purchase of goods and services: \$150,001 and over Carrying out of works: \$200,001 and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Tender is required. • Option to tender, or conduct Expression of Interest (EOI) followed by a Tender • Use of agency tenders, (e.g. MAV Procurement) subject to Ministerial approval, may be considered.

* A minimum of one of the quotes must be obtained from a local supplier/provider wherever possible.

Specific details regarding application of these procurement processes are included within Council's Procurement Guidelines. If any officer is unclear regarding their responsibilities in regards to procurement they should seek advice from the Manager Financial Services.

Threshold exemptions

Exemption Description	Explanation, including any limitations and responsibilities
1. A contract made because of genuine emergency or hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the Council has resolved that the contract must be entered into because of an emergency (e.g. to provide immediate response to a natural disaster, declared emergency. Refer to definition). • The CEO may enter into a contract under the aforementioned conditions. If the contract value is over the tender threshold and/or CEO's financial delegation, a report is to be provided to Council at the earliest opportunity.
2. A contract made with, or a purchase from a contract made by another government entity, government-owned entity, or other approved third party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This general exemption allows engagements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With another government entity or government owned entity. For example, Federal, State or Local Government or an entity owned by the Federal, State or Local Government; and/or ○ In reliance on contracts and arrangements established by another government entity, local authority or local government group purchasing scheme, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) or National Procurement network members (e.g. Local Buy), Procurement Australia (PA).
4. Extension of contracts while Council is at market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows Council to extend an existing contract where the procurement process to replace the contract has commenced, and where the tender process or negotiations will take or are taking longer than expected. • This exemption may be used when the establishment of an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is considered not to be in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of critical public services to the municipality.
5. Professional services unsuitable for tendering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal services • Insurance
5. Novated contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the initial contract was entered into in compliance with this policy and due diligence has been undertaken in respect to the new party.
6. Information technology resellers and software developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows Council to renew software licenses, maintenance and support, or upgrade existing systems. This includes situations where the barrier to change software providers is prohibitive.
7. Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situations where a Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Group constituted under the <i>Environment Protection Act 1970</i> had already conducted a public tender for and on behalf of its member councils.
8. Proven monopoly or specialised market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory compulsory monopoly insurance schemes, i.e. Workcover, motor vehicle compulsory third party. • Other statutory bodies such as water supply, electricity connections. • Landfill providers. • Legislatively required services, such as Aboriginal Land Council. • When supply of goods, services or works can only be sought from a monopoly supplier, for example the marketplace is restricted by a statement of licence, technology or third-party ownership of an asset. • If there are few suppliers for the goods, services or works being sought or where the work is highly specialised.
9. Operating leases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a lessor leases an asset (generally a vehicle or plant and equipment) to the Council and assumes the residual value risk of the vehicle.

10. Borrowings (loans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Borrowings are not within the scope of this policy as these are considered contracts of borrowings and not contracts of goods, services or the carrying out of works.
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In addition to the listed exemptions, the CEO or Director may grant an exemption from seeking responses via a competitive procurement process, such as tenders or multiple quotations, when it can be demonstrated that:

- it is in the public interest;
- Council is still obtaining value for money in the process adopted; and
- the process is defensible and able to withstand internal and external scrutiny – one which achieves both accountability and transparency.

Variations to Council resolution

Where Council has resolved to award a contract, a variation up to 10% of the resolution amount may be approved without requiring a Council resolution provided the variation:

- does not exceed \$150,000 for goods or services, and \$200,000 for works
- is within the allocated budget
- does not change the intended outcome(s) of the contracted works or services
- is approved by the CEO.

Public tender requirements

All public tenders will be published via Council's eTendering Portal and will be publicly advertised. Advertising will be appropriate to the offering, at a minimum this will include local papers. Information regarding current tenders will be placed on Council's website.

Council Plan Objective/Strategy

Council Plan 2021-25; Objective - to improve organisational effectiveness.

Strategies for effectiveness - streamline processes by reviewing internal processes to reduce red tape and increase efficiency.

Legislation and standards

Local Government Act 2020 – s.108 Procurement Policy

Section 108 of the Act requires Councils to prepare and approve a procurement policy which must include the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods, services and works by the Council. Also, the policy must seek to promote open and fair competition and provide value for money

In addition, the policy must include:

- the contract value which Council must invite a tender or seek an expression of interest
- a description of the criteria to be used by the Council to evaluate whether a proposed contract provides value for money
- a description of how the Council will seek collaboration with other Councils and public bodies in the procurement of goods or services
- the conditions under which the Council may purchase goods or services without inviting a public tender or expression of interest
- a description of the process to be undertaken in inviting a public tender or expression of interest

Local Government Act 2020 – s.109 Procurement

Section 109 of the Act requires Councils to comply with its Procurement Policy before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works.

Also, this section requires the CEO to ensure that any report to the Council that recommends entering into a procurement agreement includes information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available.

Responsibilities

The Director Corporate and Community Services is responsible for the good governance of Council's procurement practices. The Manager Financial Services is responsible for the development and management

of this policy. The Contracts Officer is responsible for assisting delegated purchasing officers and facilitating compliant tender and contract processes and procedures.

Monitoring of the Policy will be through:

- day to day enforcement of the processes as defined in the Procurement Guidelines by the officer/s responsible for processing the final payments for purchases made on behalf of Council
- periodic scrutiny of the processes as defined in the Procurement Guidelines by the officer/s responsible for authorising the final payments for purchases made on behalf of Council; and
- Internal Audits.

Stakeholders

Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, Director Corporate and Community Services, Manager Financial Services, Contracts Officer, all delegated purchasing officers and all other Council staff, temporary employees, contractors and consultants while engaged by Council.

Review

Assessment of the Policy will be undertaken every four years to align with the Council term to ensure it remains current with the Council's goals, processes, aims and requirements and as a means by which to reduce Council's exposure to risk. Triggers for an earlier assessment include legislative changes and introduction of new systems or procedures.

Communication and implementation

Northern Grampians Shire Council's EDRMS Procurement Guidelines
Council induction and in-house training presentations

References

Local Government Victoria Beyond Value for Money - Social Procurement for Victorian Councils – 3rd edition
Victorian Local Government Best Practice Procurement Guidelines 2013
MAV Model Procurement Policy (August 2011)
Local Government Victoria Conflict of Interest Guidelines
Procurement Guidelines
Staff Code of Conduct
Councillor Code of Conduct
Public Interest Disclosures
Fraud Policy and Fraud Awareness Training
Council Purchasing Delegations
Standard Tender and Contract documents
Disciplinary Procedure

Privacy and Data Protection compliance

All Council policies must consider the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Victorian Protective Data Security (VPDSS) Framework* which adopts a risk-based approach to protective data security. This policy includes relevant, identified security risks and governance arrangements in place to protect security across the domains of information, personnel, ICT and physical.

Gender Equality compliance

N/A

Charter of Human Rights compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact on any human rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Definitions

In this Policy, the following words and phrases have the meanings set out below:

Procurement/purchasing – to buy or acquire products, goods or services using Council's operational or capital works budgeted funds in order to deliver outcomes consistent with Council's objectives.

Category – an area of spending determined by market boundaries separating different products, services or industries.

Category management – recognising suppliers within certain markets that are likely to have similarities which enable a tailored approach to procurement.

Conflict of interest - an interest, pecuniary or otherwise, that could conflict with the proper performance of duties, or conflict or incompatibility between personal interests and the impartial fulfilment of public or professional duties.

Emergency - Sudden or unexpected occurrence requiring immediate action e.g.

- The occurrence of a natural disaster such as flooding, bushfire or epidemic which may require the immediate procurement of goods, services or works to provide relief;
- The occurrence of an event such as flooding or fire at a council property which may require the immediate procurement of goods, services or works to ensure business continuity;
- The unforeseen cessation of trading of a core service provider due to bankruptcy and a need to appoint a replacement service provider on the grounds of public safety;
- Any other situation which is liable to constitute a risk to life, property or reputation

Expression of interest – Public request for organisations to register their interest in the supply of goods or services but without providing details of pricing

Sustainable Procurement – a process whereby Council meets its needs for goods and services and works in a way that achieves value for money on a whole of life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to Council, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.

Tender/Request for Tender – Public request for organisations to submit a bid for the supply of goods or services, including pricing and other relevant information which demonstrates their ability to meet the specification and address the relevant selection criteria.

Procurement Australia/MAV Procurement – External contracting organisations that act on behalf of all Victorian Local Governments and establish various supply and service contracts at tendered rates.

Review history

Date	Review details	Action
7 November, 2013	Aligned to new format and updated to include information based on the Victorian Local Government Best Practice Guidelines 2013 and MAV Model Procurement Policy (Updated).	Presented to Audit Committee 12 November, 2013 Presented to Council Briefing 18 November, 2013 Presented to Council Meeting 2 December, 2013
18 November 2014	Increase the threshold levels that have remained constant for many years to recognise inflationary increases in costs.	Presented to Audit Committee 25 November, 2014 Presented to Council Briefing 23 November, 2014 Presented to Council Meeting 1 December, 2014
4 November 2015	Altered the review process of the policy to incorporate this statement, "If the policy is deemed to require only minor changes then the review process is to inform Councillors through the Councillor Bulletin. Significant alterations to the policy will require the Council to adopt the changes."	Submitted to the Councillor Bulletin on 4 November, 2015

29 June 2017	Aligned to new format and forwarded to civic support to include in next Councillor Bulletin	Submitted to the Councillor Bulletin on 29 June, 2017
22 August 2018	<p><i>New threshold limits:</i></p> <p>Threshold limit for going to public tender separated into 2 different dollar values being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. \$125,001 and above relating to contracts for the purchase of goods and services 2. \$170,001 and above relating to contracts for the carrying out of works <p>Amended all NGSC thresholds from GST inclusive to GST exclusive.</p> <p>Included an additional section under thresholds in relation to information on compliance with the policy.</p> <p>New wording around purchase order splitting added.</p>	<p>Presented to Audit Committee 5 September 2018</p> <p>Presented to Council Meeting 1 October 2018</p>
29 July 2019	<p><i>Thresholds:</i></p> <p>Paragraph 3 added for formal public tender to include cumulative spend per supplier and spend per project.</p> <p><i>Officers Financial Delegations:</i></p> <p>Paragraph 3 added whereby no employee should be purchasing/reimbursing their own training/conferences and associated costs.</p>	Presented to Audit Committee 9 September 2019
7 October 2019	Presented to Council Meeting 7 October 2019	
31 August 2020	Panel of Contractors & Contractors Register now included	
7 September 2020	Presented to Council Meeting 7 September 2020	
6 December 2021	Presented to Council Meeting 6 December 2021	Adopted by Council
18 July 2022	Presented to a Councillor Briefing 18 July 2022. Update the thresholds value requirements for panel of contractors from \$0 - \$50,000 to \$15,001 - \$50,000.	
15 August 2022	Presented to Council on 15 August 2022	Adopted by Council
18 March 2024	Presented to Council on 18 March 2024. Added 'emergency' definition and expanded exemption explanation. Local supplier evaluation allowance increased to 10%	

10. Notices of Motion or Rescission

Nil

11. Reports from Councillors/Committees

Stawell Recreation Advisory Group Minutes, Monday 12 February 2024.

St Arnaud Recreation Advisory Group Minutes, Tuesday 20 February 2024.

Councillors provided brief reports on their activities on behalf of Council since the last Council meeting.

Cr Dempsey reported on International Women's Day where she attended in Stawell. She said the theme for this year was to inspire inclusion with speeches from Lisa Whyte, Sue Campigli, Christine Huf and Kim Mintern-Lane fitting the theme, and thanked Stawell Neighbourhood House and Council staff for organising the event. She attended a Central Grampians LLEN (CGLLEN) Governance and Finance Meeting and Board Meeting, and reported they are tracking well with a number of key programs continuing to run in schools and beyond. She attended the Victorian Local Governance Association Conference, and the Harmony Day event at the Stawell Library welcoming new residents. She praised the success of Harmony Day events across the shire, noting the positive feedback from the community and thanked all groups who were involved. She attended a Citizenship Ceremony in Stawell and the annual Diversity Dash in St Arnaud run by St Arnaud Primary School and St Arnaud Secondary College. She reported her assistance in coordinating and aligning Council's Branding and Tourism Strategy with the Stawell Gift and Walk Your Blocks Podcast to further promote the event and region. She attended the Stawell Gift and thanked Kevin Rickard and the Parks and Gardens Team for their efforts on the track. She said it was a good achievement to see the women's finalist names on the scoreboard which she had a part of initiating. She said Council had a branding tent setup at the Stawell Gift showcasing Stawell and surrounding regions, and thanked Council staff for their work.

Cr Ostarcevic congratulated everyone on the success of the Stawell Gift. He reported his attendance at a SCAN Meeting and St Arnaud Debutante Ball noting maintenance issues with the St Arnaud Town Hall. He said the event went well, and commended the organisers of the event. He attended the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens Advisory Group Meeting which held a Gala event over Easter that saw several hundred people attend. He attended the Sunraysia Highway Advisory Committee Meeting who have scheduled a meeting with the government on 1 May to discuss their concerns. Cr Ostarcevic reported on a conversation with the Teddington group, and said State Government need to walk the walk by offering assistance and providing communication. He reported St Arnaud Football Club, St Arnaud Lions Club and St Arnaud RSL have raised similar issues around Council's Events Policy. He attended a meeting with East Wimmera Health Service Chief Executive Officer in which a wide range of health services were discussed.

Cr Erwin reported a meeting with Minister Pearson in relation to the Western Highway. He reported his attendance at the Harmony Day event at the Stawell Library, Stawell Citizenship Ceremony, Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Group and Harmony Day Multicultural Festival. Cr Erwin praised staff on their work on the multicultural event, and congratulated Kevin Rickard on his efforts with the oval and surrounds at the Stawell Gift, as well as all groups who contributed.

Cr Hyslop reported her attendance at the International Women's Day in St Arnaud, and volunteer work at Stawell VIC praising the efforts of the VIC staff. She attended the twilight session at the Halls Gap Zoo, which included local businesses from the region and thanked the owners of the Halls Gap Zoo for their organising. She reported visiting new buildings at the St Arnaud Secondary College, and attending numerous events over the Easter period giving praise to the large crowds at each event. She said the visit to the new building at Thomas Foods was impressive, and that Council was lucky to have a business and organisation like theirs in our shire.

Cr Emerson reported attending the Stawell Probus Club AGM in which he received feedback that will be passed onto Council. He said majority of the month was occupied by his role as part of the Stawell Gift Event Management Board overseeing the Stawell Gift. He said the event had a record crowd despite the rain on Monday, and thanked Council, PowerCor and State and Labour Government on behalf of the board for their continued financial support.

Cr Gready reported his attendance to the Great Western Ratepayers Association AGM and Great Western Futures Community Meeting with matters being communicated back to Council. He attended the Transmission Forum and the Transmission Company Victoria Meeting in St Arnaud. He attended the Victorian Local Governance Association Leadership seminar in Melbourne along side Cr Dempsey. Cr Gready said what an amazing event the Stawell Gift was, and all organisers should be congratulated on how they kept the event going after the rain. He reported his attendance to inspect Thomas Foods new building.

Cr Haswell reported his attendance at the Stawell Debutante Ball and Stawell Citizenship Ceremony, expressing how special the ceremonies are. He attended the Harmony Day Festival and inspected the new plate freezer building at Thomas Foods. He said the plate freezer is an enormous undertaking, and Thomas Foods remains committed to Stawell and the shire. He attended the opening of the Central Park Female Friendly Changerooms and congratulated all who were involved. He attended the DASH Program which involves interaction between students from St Patrick's Primary School and residents at Eventide Homes Stawell. Cr Haswell reported his attendance at the Stawell and Ararat Cross Country Event, Stawell Easter Horse Races, and the Stawell Gift on Easter Monday where he met with Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Sport. He said Mr Dimopoulos along side Marc Sleeman, Grampians Tourism visited the areas damaged by the recent fires in Pomonal and surrounds, speaking with community and CFA members. Cr Haswell thanked the Stawell Gift Event Management Board, Stawell Athletic Club, Council and all volunteers on a successful Stawell Gift.

RESOLUTION

That the reports be received.

Moved: Cr Murray Emerson

Seconded: Cr Kevin Erwin

Carried

Northern Grampians Shire Council

St Arnaud Recreation Advisory Group Meeting - Minutes

The meeting to be held at **6.00pm** on 20 February 2024 at **Lord Nelson Park Clubrooms**

Chair: Cr Eddy Ostarcevic (open 6:06pm)

Attendees: Cr Ostarcevic, Sharlene Bertalli, Kim Birthisel, Tara Lowe, Kaye Boyd, Nic Baird (NGSC), Jana Turkalj (NGSC, online for the first part of the meeting)

Apologies: Cr Karen Hyslop, Jason Smith, Peter Knights, Mark McTaggart, Annette Driscoll, Nicole Amos, Zander McDougall (NGSC) Tony Dark (NGSC)

Traditional owners of the land of which the meeting was held on were acknowledged and respects were paid to elders past present and emerging.

1. Introduction of Jana Turkalj : Cr Ostarcevic extended an invite to Northern Grampians Shire new events officer Jana Turkalj. Jana will be the first stop for clubs, groups and associations if they are interested in holding an event in the shire, this is not the "usual" match day type of event but larger events either clubs or individuals may hold. Jana's details are jana.turkalj@ngshire.vic.gov.au or can be reached on direct line via 5358 0593 and is able to help with requirements for event, potential funding that maybe required and any other questions.

2. Business arising from the previous meeting:

NIL

3. General Business

Item	TOPIC	Discussion	Action/ Outcome
1.1	St Arnaud Recreation Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The two year term of this current board is coming to an end.Nic will send out invites to the current members and to the community for any group not represented to nominate for the advisory group.Once nominations are received Councilors will make a decision as to who is represented on the group.	Action: Nic to organise the expression of interest for the St Arnaud Recreation Advisory group.

1.2	Lord Nelson Park Community Sports Centre	<p>Old Club Room Site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New grassed area to be built into the area where the old rooms are. • It was asked about the possibility of shade to be included at some point in that area. • Nic showed draft plans of how the area will look with the grassed area, paths to the area from the Sporting Club and carpark. Questions on whether the pedestrian crossing to the middle of the carpark was in fact required. • Nic to follow up Marcy (NGSC) about the outdoor gym equipment that had been potentially spoken about. <p>Netball Lighting/Old Football Lights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An email dated 19 February 2024 was sent to the advisory group from Nicole Amos (St Arnaud Netball representative). The email explained that the Netball Club were interested in using the old football lights (just the lights and not the poles) to re-do the current lights that service the netball court for trainings and a night match that was scheduled for later this season (match in early May). A quote was also attached which the club has said with recent works they have done around the court and the Lord Nelson precinct they would find tough to pay and asked whether the NGSC would be able to help. • The recommendation to the St Arnaud Netball Club is to apply for a community grant once they are open. Nic has said they will be open late February/early March as the officer in charge of grants had recently been affected by fires there was not a firm date as yet. • A discussion was also had about the fundraising committee potentially helping out the Netball Club but as discussed this was a discussion for the Fundraising Committee to have at their next meeting. <p>Naming of Rooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion was held about the naming of the social rooms. Nic explained that any name would need to go through the correct process with Governance and the naming process. • No decision was made by the group but the group was to come back with a decision from their relevant groups on whether they believe the rooms should be named. <p>Formal Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original formal introduction the group felt was rushed and there are still some slight unknowns. (Kaye mentioned a power issue and she called an electrician but this was an incorrect procedure) • A standard operating procedure document was questioned and whether there was one. Nic was unsure about the building, but was mentioned that some clubs/groups have their own for certain parts of the building. <p>General LNP Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning was discussed particularly around the off season/non use times. Each club/group has their own way of cleaning but it was discussed that something was needed in regards to a clean before use (e.g. for a party or non traditional use of the facility and also prior to traditional use starting) for both inside and outside the building. The question was asked whether this was something the shire would need to cover? Facilities team may need to inspect location before bookings (only once if for Football/Netball/Hockey) but just to ensure it is tidy. Cr Ostarcevic asked whether a tender was required for this process. • Memorabilia/Sponsors/General club signage to be displayed in the foyer area as per a suggestion from Cr Ostarcevic. 	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nic to send community grant to St Arnaud Netball Club once open and follow up with grant officer whether it could be assessed early to meet timeline of St Arnaud night match. • Nic to provide feedback about draft plan for old clubroom site including pedestrian crossing and drainage. • Nic to follow up Marcy re outdoor gym equipment. • Cr Ostarcevic to raise about LNP Clubroom cleaning to fellow councilors.
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1.3	Agreements and User Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question was raised that agreements and fees hadn't been sent. Nic to follow up Zander with this. 	Action: Nic to follow up Zander re user fees and agreements.
1.4	Sport and Active Recreation/Open Space and Active Transport Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councilors currently have the pre draft form of the two strategies. • Once comfortable the councilors will release the strategies for draft public comment. • Nic will send the drafts around (via a website link) with a survey as well. It is asked that a club/association only fills in One (1) sport and active recreation survey as it is the whole clubs thoughts on the strategy. The Open Space and Active Transport is open to everyone to have their say. 	Action: Nic to send link to strategies and surveys once councilors tick off.

Other business:

Kim/Kaye asked about the air conditioner upstairs and whether it was working, if not working what are the contractor warranties. **Action Nic to follow up with Jamie at NGSC Customer Service to see if a Merit was lodged for this, if not lodge the Merit.**

Kim asked about the fryer in the kitchen. **Action Nic to follow up with Jamie at NGSC Customer Service to see if a Merit was lodged for this, if not lodge the Merit.**

Sharlene asked about user fees that were paid prior to the waiving of the fees (St Arnaud Football Netball Club and Harness Club) last year and whether these would be credited. **Action Nic to follow up with Zander re user fee credit.**

Sharlene asked about bins at Lord Nelson Park. Currently there are four fixed bins for LNP and any other bins will need to be provided by the club/group using LNP. FOGO Green lid bins were discussed as something that maybe able to be used by clubs for any FOGO waste. Clubs would need to be careful as to what was placed in these bins though. Kim mentioned that extra Recycling (Yellow) bins would come at an added cost to clubs. Clubs also encouraged to register for the 10 cent CDS refund and to encourage members to select the club when recycling their cans/bottles.

NBN was raised. Nic had spoken to Tony Dark about this but was unsure of the outcome will need to confirm with Tony again and get back to group.

The floor in the main club area (bar and kitchen area) was raised as it is very difficult to clean with its rough surface. Mops don't do well and vacuums also don't work across it meaning it is a laborious task for volunteers to clean. This is something that will need to be looked at and whether a solution (e.g. carpet tiles can be laid over the top which would also reduce the trip hazard out of the doors). The windows were also mentioned and whether a tinting could happen to reduce sun glare through. Blinds were discussed but wouldn't necessarily be

practical with doors opening and shutting regularly. *Action Nic to work with appropriate NGSC staff to see if a solution can be found.*

4. Close time: 7:36 pm

5. Next meeting: TBC (New St Arnaud Recreation Advisory Committee will need to be confirmed first)

Northern Grampians Shire Council

Stawell Recreation Advisory Group Meeting - Minutes

The meeting was at 6.09pm on 12 February 2024 at the North Park Clubrooms (Function Area)

Chair: Nic Baird (NGSC).

To be Present: Nathan Baker, Ian O'Donnell, Amber Mitchell, Rob Lembo, Stephen Walker, Nic Baird (NGSC),

Apologies: Cr Lauren Dempsey, Reg Smith, Travis Nicholson, Tony Dark (NGSC), Zander McDougall (NGSC), Cr Murray Emmerson, John Griffiths, Blair Hart, Scotney Hayter.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting: Ian, Seconded Nathan.

2. Business arising from the previous meeting:

3. General Business

Item	TOPIC	Discussion	Action/ Outcome
1.1	Projects Update	<p>Recreation Advisory Members Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current two year tenure for this group is coming to an end.• Positions on the recreation advisory board will be advertised again (date TBC)• Recreation Advisory Board Terms of Reference may have a slight tweak to them with the board becoming more of an activation lead. <p>Fair Access Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft policy written.• Internal NGSC working group going through the document• Clubs/Associations will see the policy and some education on the policy will also occur. <p>North Park Playground and Pedestrian Zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feed back from last Stawell Recreation Meeting was considered and there is works being done on a new plan for the play ground.• Playground will be scaled back to a smaller size in a similar area. <p>Central Park Female Friendly Changerooms (Main Clubroom Pavilion) and Netball courts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project on track. Final minor works were being completed before inspections completed. <p>Sport and Active Recreation/Open Space Strategy</p>	<p>Action: Nic to send out draft strategies and link to survey's once able to</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently awaiting approval from Councilors for the draft strategies to be able to be shown in draft form. • Clubs (for sport and active recreation strategy) and individuals (for open space and active transport strategy) encouraged to provide feedback once draft versions are made public. Nic will send out a link to the drafts and surveys for feedback 	
1.2	Agreements and User Fees	<p>Zander McDougall, Manager Active Communities to update clubs/associations in regard to this. From last meeting Steve Walker asked about why the change to the user agreement was happening and what the rationale was, whether there was a draft proposal and draft user agreement. Nic was to follow up Zander with this.</p>	Action: Nic to speak to Zander (26 Feb update Nic has spoken to Zander and he has said that talks have started with Shane and Colene prior to the Stawell Rec Advisory Meeting)
1.3	Participation Plans	<p>Zander McDougall, Manager Active Communities to provide an update on current participation plans. No update for this meeting</p>	Action:

Other business:

Amber raised the Kaye Dalton plaque wording has been approved by family members. Amber will send email with wording, Nic and Amber will work together towards a quote and installation.

ALL: The group again voiced displeasure and how hard of the current Online booking system

Steve asked for minutes prior to Stawell Warriors meeting 27 February 2024.

Nathan asked about how to move a club's AGM, as he was worried about number of people attending the meeting might not be able to fill vacant positions and whether there could be a better hand over process. The group discussed this and it would be apart of the Stawell Amateur Athletic Club constitution. Nic passed on Dave Berry at WRSA details who would be able to assist with these types of questions.

Ian raised the new scoreboard at North Park required a soil test again. Swifts FNC will submit plans for planning permit and also sent an email to council to waive fee of permit. They were hoping to get scoreboard in before Good Friday but unlikely. The light that was damaged at the end of the Skate Park project was to go back up also in next week or so.

Rob asked about an indication of when soccer pitch can be used for training. Nic to follow up Zander/Heath in reagrds to this.

4. Close time: 6:50pm

5. Next meeting: TBC

12. Urgent Business

Nil

13. Public Question Time

Elizabeth Harrington, 5 Relph Street Stawell

Q.1 I watched your last meeting and was outraged that a woman would have to stand up for her rights because she felt discrimination and disrespected. Why did Lauren have to question her feelings?

Q.2 What is Council going to do about this?

Q.3 How is Council going to show they are accountable for this issue? Can we have this in documentation to ensure Women's rights?

The Mayor read the following response provided by Mr Vaughan Williams, Director Corporate Services:

Council has a Councillor Code of Conduct that details procedures regarding Councillor behaviour.

Dispute resolution is not a public process. The process of dispute resolution is detailed within the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Jennifer Greenberger, 3 Magdala Court Stawell

Q.1 I recently watched the live stream recording of the Northern Grampians Shire Council meeting held in St Arnaud on 4th March 2024. During the reports of activities by Councillors, Councillor Lauren Dempsey chose to make a public statement pertaining to disrespectful behaviour she alleges was directed toward her by other members of Council behind closed doors. I have two questions to council with respect to this matter, what processes are in place at Northern Grampians Shire Council to support and address the situation when a councillor perceives that he/she has been treated in a disrespectful manner by a fellow councillor?

Q.2 Has there been any investigation or action taken by council to address the particular matter to which Councillor Dempsey refers in her public statement to council at the above-mentioned meeting?

Q.3 As a ratepayer considering standing for election at the upcoming Northern Grampians Shire Council elections what assurances can council give me, that if I were to be elected, I would be treated in a respectful manner, and if I felt that this was not the case, what avenues would be open to me to have that situation addressed?

The Mayor read the following response provided by Mr Vaughan Williams, Director Corporate Services:

The expectation of Councillor behaviour and the procedures to attend to any breaches of expected behaviour are detailed within the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Council is working through the processes detailed within the Councillor Code of Conduct.

The Councillor Code of Conduct details both the behaviour expectations and the procedures for resolving disputes as they arise.

Dean Hurlston, PO Box 98, Chadstone Centre

Q.1 What amount of waste enforcement costs in the current financial year 2023/24 has the council included in its waste levies charged to residents? (if any)

Q.2 What amount of revenue has council included in the current financial year 2023/24 from waste enforcement actions?

Q.3 Has that revenue been offset in the waste levy OR applied to Councils General Revenue streams?

The Mayor read the following response provided by Mr Trenton Fithall, Director Infrastructure and Amenity:

\$0 is included in the Waste levy for waste enforcement. Waste enforcement is considered a Local law compliance matter which is budgeted and paid for out of Council's Community Safety budget and not the Waste Service and therefore not included in Waste Levy.

Council does not budget revenue for waste enforcement action, as we have a history of minimal number of enforceable actions that have generated revenue.

Any revenue received is treated as a matter of Local Law compliance and therefore considered in the General Revenue Streams.

Peter Rose, 62 Archdale Road Carapooee

Q.1 In relation to the eventual rehabilitation of the Mine Lane Pit, how much is the required bond that had to be provided when the work authority was originally applied for?

Q.2 Is this now adequate to cover the cost of rehabilitation?

Q.3 What is the estimated cost of rehabilitating the Mine Lane Site?

The Mayor read the following response provided by Mr Trenton Fithall, Director Infrastructure and Amenity:

Work Authority (WA33) that allows Council to extract material out of the Mine Lane Pit required Council to hold a \$50,000 bank guarantee.

The bank guarantee was originally established in 2003. Due to cost escalation and inflation over the past 21 years, I don't expect the bank guarantee would suffice if Resource Victoria enacted using it to enforce the conditions of the Work Authority.

Council has undertaken rehabilitation works on site as excavated areas of the quarry have been exhausted and closed in accordance with Council's obligation under the Work Authority. Rehabilitation work is still required for areas in the Quarry which remain open. Currently open areas within the Quarry cover approximately 13 ha and is estimated to cost in the order of \$100,000 to rehabilitate.

Eric Mattsson, 62 Napier Street St Arnaud

Q.1 Heavy transport and trucks not destined for St Arnaud township are banned from using Napier Street and Kings Avenue, St Arnaud. Street signs at the entrance and exits of our township currently serve to instruct these drivers to use an alternative bypass route of Dundas Street, St Arnaud and away from Napier Street and Kings Avenue, St Arnaud. I have observed that many trucks (at least 1-2 per day, including B-double trucks) not destined for the St Arnaud township currently ignore these signs and are routinely using the banned Napier Street and Kings Avenue, St. Arnaud route (instead of Dundas Street) as it is more convenient for them.

I have noticed that the camber on King Street, in particular at the southern end roundabout entrance of the town for north bound traffic, makes heavily loaded trucks struggle to safely turn right into King Street from the Bendigo Road heightening the risk of a roll-over accident at this roundabout. There is also significant risk of injury and accidents to pedestrians and other traffic using this St Arnaud main street precinct as a result of these trucks using the Napier Street and Kings Avenue, St Arnaud route.

Furthermore, these heavy vehicles will also accelerate the degradation of the condition of these roads with time thereby adding to the chances of more potholes in these streets in the future and hence costing NGS ratepayers more in road maintenance costs going forward. What is the Northern Grampians Council going to do to monitor and stop these trucks inappropriately and dangerously using the main street of St Arnaud?

Q.2 Whilst I applaud NGSC for introducing a public EV charging station at the SE corner of Market Square and also in Stawell, I have some concerns relating to this. Recent media reports indicate that queue management for EV vehicles waiting to use these charging stations are becoming longer as more EV vehicles are now on the road, particularly on public holidays and weekends. Recent pictures released show 12 EV waiting in a long queue which represents a wait time of 4 hours (12 x 20 minutes) minimum for a Tesla vehicle. What is NGSC doing to manage EV queues at charging stations to minimise blocking access to public parking?

Mr Trenton Fithall, Director Infrastructure and Amenity provided the following response:

Trucks that are classed General Purpose Vehicles have a right of access to the entire road network unless otherwise restricted by load limits. This means that Napier Street is open to small-medium rigid and semi-trucks. This is important to allow businesses to operate, freight and deliveries to get to where they need to get.

B-Double or larger trucks are restricted to use routes that are pre-approved or permitted to do so. Napier Street is not a permitted route for these trucks. This is a function of the Heavy Vehicle National Law which is regulated by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) which can be policed by the Victorian Police.

Traffic counts have been obtained on Napier Street, to determine the extent of the truck traffic using Napier Street. We know that approximately 2.5 large trucks are using Napier St per day. Using traffic counts obtained from the Department of Transport and Planning on Dundas Street, we can assume that approximately 14% of all B-Doubles trucks or larger traveling a North-South direction in St Arnaud are using Napier Street. This is not our preference in terms of how Council envisage the Main St to operate and there are many factors that could explain why we are seeing this inappropriate driver behaviour.

Council has no authority to police this activity, therefore we encourage individuals to come forward and report these instances to the local police or directly to NHVR.

In terms of physical deterrents, the roundabouts at the top end of Napier St and bottom end of Kings Avenue are the responsibility of the Department of Transport and Planning. The department has developed concepts plans that seek to improve the roundabout alignments and restrict heavy traffic down Napier Street and Kings Avenue. These projects are proposed only by the department, we therefore have no comment on their likely implementation. As members of the Sunraysia Highway Action Committee, Council is advocating to the government for the delivery of these works.

Council's Electric Charging Program has been more of an enabling function, rather than a direct strategy of council. We've had organisations come to council seeking space and effectively we have done our best to enable that.

The backlog of charging EVs in this area has not been a consideration at this time, other than we aim to put the charges in locations that allow for free movement and access. Placing the charging stations in car park sites will hopefully assist in any future issues with charging backlog, however we understand this will have an impact. At this point in time council does not have any strategy for this matter.

14. Closure of Meeting Pursuant to Section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020

A Council or delegated committee may resolve that the meeting be closed to members of the public if it considers it necessary because a circumstance specified below apply:

The circumstances are-

- (a) the meeting is to consider confidential information; or
- (b) security reasons; or
- (c) it is necessary to do so to enable the meeting to proceed in an orderly manner.

If the circumstances specified in subsection (b) or (c) apply, the meeting can only be closed to the public if the Council has made arrangements to enable the proceedings of the meeting to be viewed by members of the public as the meeting is being held.

14.1. C10 2022/23 – Provision of Quarry Products and Concrete Supplies

14.2. C5 2023/24 - Navarre Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade

14.3. Fee Waiver Request - Planning Permit Application

14.4. Fee Waiver Request - Building Services Fee

14.5. Fee Waiver Request - Planning and Building Services Fee

14.6. Property Matter - Stawell

RESOLUTION

That items 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5 and 14.6 be considered in Closed Council as it deals with confidential information as detailed in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Moved: Cr Murray Emerson
Seconded: Cr Kevin Erwin Carried

RESOLUTION

That the meeting be closed to consider the items listed pursuant to section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Moved: Cr Murray Emerson
Seconded: Cr Kevin Erwin Carried

OPEN COUNCIL

The Chief Executive Officer reported on the items discussed in Closed Council.

14.1 Council agreed to take up the first one year option to extend contract C10 - Provision of Quarry Products and Concrete Supplies commencing 20 April 2024.

14.2 Council agreed to award contract C5 2023/24 - Navarre Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade to Onleys Holdings Pty Ltd for their submitted lump sum.

14.3 Council has decided to refuse the planning permit application fee refund.

14.4 Council agreed to waive the building permit application fee.

14.5 Council agreed to waive the building permit application fee and refund the planning permit application fee.

14.6 Council agreed that this item is to remain confidential.

15. Close

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 1.55pm.

CR ROB HASWELL
MAYOR