

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

Notice of an Ordinary Meeting of the Loddon Shire Council to be held in the Tarnagulla Community Centre, Tarnagulla, on Monday 22 October 2012 at 3.30pm.

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1. APOLOGIES

Nil

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

SUMMARY

Approval of the Forum Minutes of 24 September 2012.
Approval of Ordinary Minutes of 24 September 2012.

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirm:

1. *the minutes of the Council Forum of 24 September 2012*
2. *the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting of 24 September 2012*

2.2 REVIEW OF ACTION SHEET

SUMMARY

Approval of Action Sheet.

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: 2.2 Action Sheet

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Action Sheet.

3. INWARDS CORRESPONDENCE

Nil.

4. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

4.1 MAYORAL REPORT

SUMMARY

Approval of the Mayoral Report.

Author: John McLinden – Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

4.2 COUNCILLORS' REPORT

SUMMARY

Approval of Councillors' Reports.

Author: John McLinden – Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Councillors' Report.

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5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

5.1 DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNING AND SEALING

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with a list of documents signed and sealed during the month.

Author: John McLinden - Chief Executive Officer

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. receive and note the 'Document for Signing and Sealing' report*
- 2. endorse the use of the seal on the documents listed*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nil

BACKGROUND

N/A

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation for John McLinden

Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 for Ian McLauchlan, Tyson Sutton, Anthony Gibbons

Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer

Instrument of Delegation to Members of Council Staff

Renewal of five year lease between Loddon Shire Council (Landlord) and Inglewood and Districts Community Enterprises Limited (Tenant) for premises on 64 Brooke Street, Inglewood, Certificate of Title Volume 10271 Folio 150

Instrument of Delegation to Campbell's Forest Hall Committee of Management

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6. DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES' REPORTS

6.1 FINANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with financial information for the period ending 30 September 2012.

Author: James Rendell - Manager Financial Services

File No: 8/06/001

Attachment: 6.1

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Receives and notes the "Finance Report for the period ending 30 September 2012"*
2. *Approves budget revisions included in the report for internal reporting purposes only.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council is provided with Finance Reports on a monthly basis.

BACKGROUND

The Finance Report for the period ended 30 September 2012 includes standard monthly information about budget variations, cash, investments, interest, debtors and creditors, and provides a comparison of year-to-date actual results to year-to-date budget (by dollars and percentage) and total revised budget (by percentage).

The information provided corresponds with the format provided in the 2012/2013 Budget, and includes operating results, capital expenditure and funding sources. It also provides a focus report.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

As this is an end of quarter report, detailed information about the capital works program has been provided. This includes progress to date on the full schedule of capital works as disclosed in the 2012/2013 Budget.

COSTS/BENEFITS

The benefit to Council and the community of monthly finance reporting is that accurate and regular financial information is being disclosed and the approved budget is being monitored on a constant basis.

Provision of financial reports on at least a quarterly basis is a requirement of the Local Government Act.

RISK ANALYSIS

Council's management of projects against budget at officer level, and the provision of regular and accurate finance reports to Council minimises the risk of Council not delivering projects within the approved budget.

Council's practice of revising budgets as changes become known provides current information about the expected results for the financial year, and assists in forward planning for future budgets.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

There has been considerable consultation internally with respective managers in understanding their budget responsibilities and keeping within budgetary constraints.

External engagement with the community was undertaken during the submission period of the budget, and regular reporting provides a mechanism of monitoring the financial outcomes of Council against that expectation.

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**6.2 SECTION 86 COMMITTEES OF MANAGEMENT AMENDED INSTRUMENTS OF DELEGATION:
BRIDGEWATER ON LODDON MEMORIAL HALL COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT
DONALDSON PARK COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT
PYRAMID HILL SWIMMING POOL COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT**

SUMMARY

This report seeks Council's approval of amended Instruments of Delegation for Bridgewater on Loddon Memorial Hall Committee of Management, Donaldson Park Committee of Management, and Pyramid Hill Swimming Pool Committee of Management.

Author: Jude Holt, Director Corporate Services

File No: 02/01/013, 02/01/018, 02/01/033

Attachment: 6.2a Bridgewater on Loddon Memorial Hall Committee of Management Instrument of Delegation
6.2b Donaldson Park Committee of Management Instrument of Delegation
6.2c Pyramid Hill Swimming Pool Committee of Management Instrument of Delegation

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approves the amended Instruments of Delegation for:

1. *Bridgewater on Loddon Memorial Hall Committee of Management*
2. *Donaldson Park Committee of Management*
3. *Pyramid Hill Swimming Pool Committee of Management.*

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council has been progressively approving amended Instruments of Delegation as they are returned by committees.

BACKGROUND

A review of Section 86 committees' Instruments of Delegation within 12 months of a general election is required under Section 86(6) of the Local Government Act 1989.

Council had not reviewed committee delegations for some time, and late in 2010 a review commenced. After the flood event of January 2011 the project was put on hold, and recommenced in January 2012. Since then 17 reviews have been started, with another 21 still to commence.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The Instruments of Delegation for the Bridgewater on Loddon Memorial Hall, Donaldson Park, and Pyramid Hill Swimming Pool Committees of Management are presented to Council for approval.

The delegations have been amended to the format that Council approved at the Ordinary Meeting held on 23 April 2012, and the further amendment of Clause 3.3 (representatives shall be nominated, not appointed) at the Ordinary Meeting held on 23 July 2012.

The Instruments of Delegation are provided as Attachments 6.2a, 6.2b, and 6.2c.

COSTS/BENEFITS

There are a number of benefits in adopting this recommendation including:

- Standardisation of committee Instruments of Delegation, which will be easier to administer during future reviews
- Inclusion of the committee's reporting requirements to ensure that all legislative requirements are met

- Increased compliance with the Local Government Act 1989
- An increased understanding of Section 86 of the Act for officers and Councillors.

RISK ANALYSIS

Section 86 Committees act for and on behalf of Council which creates a risk for Council should they ever act outside their delegated authority.

The project of updating every Section 86 committee delegation will be followed by a project to prepare a governance manual for use by committees which will guide them in their activities and provide information about their responsibilities.

This will not only better support committees, but ensure that they understand their legislative responsibilities and Council requirements.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Every committee was advised that their delegation would be updated as part of an overall Council review of Section 86 committee delegations.

Each committee is consulted and communicated with as part of the individual review process.

6.3 2011/2012 END OF FINANCIAL YEAR VARIANCE ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

This report highlights significant variances contained within the 2011/2012 Annual Statements as compared to the Revised Budget projection at the time of setting the 2012/2013 Budget.

Author: Deanne Wingfield – Management Accountant

File No: 06/01/001

Attachment: 6.3 Rate Determination Report

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the 2011/2012 End of Financial Year Variance Analysis Report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

As part of the 2012/2013 budget process, budget projections for the end of the 2011/2012 year position were presented to Council in the form of a Revised Budget.

BACKGROUND

The annual budget process requires that budget projections of the current year be undertaken. This is done to calculate the potential carried forward surplus that will form part of next year's budget.

As this process is generally finalised in late March or early April, there are a further three months of activity to the end of June which may give rise to variations to the budget projections.

This report outlines the major variations which have arisen between the budget projections made in April 2012 and the actual final results achieved by 30 June 2012. It should be noted that this report should be read with reference to Council's Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2012.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The budget projections called for a rate determination surplus of \$59,000 (K) to be achieved by Council. The actual rate determination deficit achieved by Council was in fact \$1.87 million (M) a variance of \$1.93M at the end of the year. This is a result of the recognition of Council's Unfunded Superannuation Liability of \$2.06M as at 30 June 2012. Without this adjustment, Council would have achieved a surplus of \$194k.

Even though the main obvious variance to the rate determination surplus/deficit was this recognition of the superannuation liability, there were a number of other individual variances to revenue, expenditure, capital expenditure, and transfers to and from reserves.

A Rate Determination Report is provided as an attachment and it includes the Revised Budget, Year to Date Actuals, Variance in dollars and Variance in percentage.

Whilst there are a number of variances, this report focuses on those which fall outside the +/- 10% or \$10,000 threshold.

INCOME

Income for the year was \$38.84M representing a variance of 16% or \$6.24M above the budget projection of \$32.6M. Within the income items the following variances occurred:

Revenue grants (26% or \$3.62M above budget projection)

This is primarily due to the following:

- Council received an advance payment of \$3.55 million from the Victoria Grants Commission for the 2012/2013 grant allocation. This was not included in the budget projections.

This was transferred into the Unspent Grants Reserve and offsets this income in the 2012/2013 financial year.

- Other areas of variance where Council received grants that were not included in the budget projection process include:
 - Innovation Fund BLine Project \$19K
 - Serpentine Memorial Hall Project \$20K
 - Flood Community Recovery Activities \$35K
 - Loddon Soccer Strategy \$21K
 - Serpentine Netball/Tennis Courts \$54K

Most of these are new grants that were approved after the 2012/2013 Budget process.

Circumstances where Council did not receive income that was included in the forecast are:

- Climate Change Coordinator \$35K

This funding was based on tasks that were not undertaken during 2011/2012, therefore no funding was received.

Capital grants (10% or \$1.03M above budget projection):

Council received \$1.02M more than anticipated to fund the cost of the flood restoration projects; this is offset by the additional expenditure that occurred above the budget projections.

There was also a grant of \$23K for the Boort Park power upgrade received during this period.

User fees (18% or \$558K above budget projection):

The majority of this variance relates to:

- Gravel pits where an additional \$512K was received from the operations of these pits. This extra income is offset by a transfer to the Gravel and Sand Pit (GSP) Reserve.
- Loddon Discovery Tours achieved an actual income of \$20K higher than projected. This was offset by additional expenditure in this area.
- Home and Community Care services were \$92K behind the projected budget position. This relates to lower service delivery in the 2011/2012 financial year.

Recurrent contributions (11% or \$12K below budget projection):

Areas where Council received additional contributions are:

- Drought Proofing Projects \$10K
- Wedderburn Housing Estate \$6K

The items where actuals were lower than projected include:

- Dingee Hospital Car Park Seal \$10K
- Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall Access \$10K

It is noted that both these projects were not finished at 30 June 2012 and invoices for these contributions are not raised until the projects are complete.

Interest received (14% or \$120K above budget projection):

Council received extra interest of \$115K for interest on investments. This is due to the extra cash that was on hand towards the end of the financial year than was previously expected.

Reimbursements & subsidies (50% or \$871K above budget projection):

Council received \$905K in reimbursement for the initial flood works undertaken which was not included in the budget projection process.

Private works finished \$49K under projected budget, due to a shift in focus of outdoor staff to complete the required flood works prior to the 30 June 2013 deadline.

EXPENSES

Expenses were \$25.05M representing a variance of 2% or \$625K above budget projection of \$24.43M.

Within the line items the following occurred:

Materials & services (13% or \$1.18M below budget projection):

This is primarily due to:

- Unfunded Vision Super Liability of \$2.06M which was required to be expensed during this financial year. There was no budget projection made due to the uncertainty around the timing and amount this final invoice.

Other significant variances include:

- Community Planning projects (this includes the strategic fund), which were \$341K lower than expected
- Councillor Initiatives of \$338K were lower than projected budget
- Flood Infrastructure Insurance Works were \$267K lower than projected budget
- Flood Recovery Committee expenditure was \$104K lower than projected budget.

All of these items are offset by relevant transfers to reserves.

Loss on sale of assets (154% or \$30K below budget projection):

Council projected to make a loss of \$50K on asset sales. This was based on estimated from prior experiences.

Council made a loss of \$20K on the sale of assets. The majority of this difference relates to the sale of heavy equipment and plant which achieved a higher trade in value than anticipated.

FUNDING DECISIONS

Funding decisions were \$1.11M representing a variance of 592% or \$6.58M below budget projection of \$7.69M.

Transfers to reserves (30% or \$5.93M above budget projection):

The variances include:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------|
| • Unspent Contributions | \$282K |
| • Unspent Grants | \$4.62M |
| • Capital Expenditure | \$373K |
| • Councillors Initiatives | \$100K |
| • Community Planning | \$460K |
| • Gravel and Sand Pits (GSP) | \$102K |

There is significant variation in the actual transfers to reserves compared to the projected budget and this is because Council expected to complete these projects during the financial year, but did not, so the balances were placed in reserve.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Capital expenditure was \$24.6M representing a variance of 3% or \$787K above budget projection of \$23.85M.

There was a downturn in most areas of Capital Expenditure, except for the flood works projects which have taken priority due to the 30 June 2013 deadline. Details are provided in the attachment, and a brief outline of each area is as follows:

Land & buildings (47% or \$428K below budget projection)

The main variances were:

- Bridgewater Caravan Flood Restoration project \$155K
- Bridgewater Sports Platform \$55K
- Pyramid Memorial Hall works \$100K

Drainage (19% or \$113K below budget projection)

There were a number of projects that were to be undertaken during the financial year but due to the focus on flood recovery projects these items have been carried over through the Urban Drainage Reserve to be undertaken during 2012/2013.

Flood works (14% or \$1.77M above budget projection)

The flood works program has taken precedence over other capital works projects due to the timeframe in which these projects need to be completed as stated in the funding guidelines. At present Council expects to meet this deadline.

Plant & equipment (4% or \$187K below budget projection)

This represents a relatively small variation which falls outside reporting threshold.

Furniture & office equipment (21% or \$31K above budget projection)

Council has a projected budget of \$65K for the purchase of computers, printers and photocopiers. The actual expenditure incurred for the year was \$94K or a \$29K variance. The extra requirements (some of which were related to flood recovery), were funded from the Information Technology Reserve.

Infrastructure (5% or \$290K below budget projection)

Relatively small variation which falls outside reporting threshold.

EXPENSES BY KEY DIRECTION AREA

Economic development & tourism (3% or \$48K below budget projection)

This represents a relatively small variation which falls outside reporting threshold.

Leadership (39% or \$1.14M above budget projection)

Major variances in the area include:

- Unfunded Super Liability which was \$2.07M higher than projected
- Councillor Initiatives \$338K below projected
- Flood Recovery Insurance Works below projects budget of \$253K
- Flood Recovery Committee \$105K behind projected budget

Works & infrastructure (4% or \$380K above budget projection)

This represents a relatively small variation which falls outside reporting threshold.

Good management (2% or \$85K below budget projection)

This represents a relatively small variation which falls outside reporting threshold.

Environment (2% or \$42K below budget projection)

This represents a relatively small variation which falls outside reporting threshold.

Community services & recreation (11% or \$690K below budget projection)

Areas where Council is below budget projection include:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| • Preschools | \$36K |
| • Home and Community Care | \$465K |
| • Community Planning | \$338K |
| • Donaldson Park Toilets | \$77K |
| • Depreciation | \$131K |

Items that were ahead of projected budget are:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Parks and Gardens | \$162K |
| • Newbridge Recreation Reserve Flood Restoration | \$207K |

NET CASH SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)

As stated above, Council's final cash deficit for the year was \$1.86 million; the revised cash surplus was \$59K, an unfavourable difference of \$1.92 million.

COSTS/BENEFITS

There was significant impact to Council's financial position as a result of the unfunded superannuation liability. Council carried forward into 2012/2013 an expected budget surplus of \$59K, but the result was a deficit of \$1.86 million.

The focus for 2012/2013 is to return Council's cash position to a surplus.

RISK ANALYSIS

Council recognised the financial risk associated with the unfunded superannuation liability during 2011/2012, but did not know the impact until the amount was confirmed late in the financial year.

Council had prepared for a call from the superannuation board by placing an annual amount in reserve, but the amount in reserve was substantially less than the sum of \$2.06M required.

Council will need to consider future allocations to reserve taking into consideration the market and any advice received from the superannuation board in relation to returns on the fund.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Council and staff were briefed about the end of financial year position and staff were asked to ensure that every effort was made to closely manage individual projects to ensure they were delivered within budget, and if possible, recognise savings that would contribute to returning Council to a surplus position.

Council resolved to accept a superannuation liability funding strategy at the September 2012 Ordinary Meeting of Council and, when implemented, that strategy will contribute to reducing the deficit. More work is required, and reporting of the situation will be provided to Council on a monthly basis.

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7. DIRECTOR OPERATIONS' REPORTS

7.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS CURRENTLY BEING PROCESSED

SUMMARY

Provides Council with an update on Planning applications currently under consideration and a register of planning permits issued between 15 August and 10 September 2012.

Author: Tyson Sutton – Manager Planning & Local Laws

File No: 02/01/001

Attachment: 7.1 Planning Applications

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes 'Planning Applications Currently Being Processed' report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council is provided with a monthly report identifying the status of planning applications currently under consideration or those permits which have been issued within the preceding month.

BACKGROUND

The Loddon Shire's Planning Scheme sets out Council's objectives for the Shire with regard to land use and development via the Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Policies, and specifies which uses and developments require planning approval via zones and overlays.

As the responsible Authority it is Loddon Shire Council's duty to administer and enforce its planning scheme.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Attachment 7.1 provides Council with a full list of planning applications currently under consideration and those planning permits issued between 15 August and 10 September 2012.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Nil

RISK ANALYSIS

Failure to process planning applications in a timely manner or undertake rigorous assessment of development or works proposals is considered to pose the following risks:

- Barrier to development and associated economic growth within the Shire
- Proliferation of incompatible land use development
- Council's reputation as a regulatory authority
- Infrastructure, service provision or regulatory and enforcement pressures
- Protection of zones to accommodate intended activities or reduction of surrounding property amenity

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation and engagement with planning permit applicants is routinely conducted at the required periods throughout the assessment and permit approval process.

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7.2 2011-2013 FLOOD RESTORATION PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

SUMMARY

Report provides Council with a status update regarding progress in the delivery of the 2011-2013 Flood Restoration Program to the period ending 30th September 2012.

Author: Steven Phillips, Manager Works

File No: 14/01/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the quarterly progress update on delivery of the 2011-2013 Flood Restoration Program.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council was presented with an initial delivery schedule for projects comprising the 2011-2013 Flood Restoration Program (The Program) at its ordinary meeting in August 2011.

Quarterly progress updates on the delivery of the Program have subsequently been provided.

BACKGROUND

In March 2011 a claim for \$22,422,329.00 towards repair costs for damage caused during the 2010/11 floods was submitted to the Department of Treasury & Finance (The Department) under the Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Council Guidelines. This claim was approved on 14th March 2011.

Following preparation of the initial claim further road network damage was identified and submitted to the Department for approval within claims 2 and 3 seeking additional restoration funding of \$8,281,664 and \$4,275,093 respectively.

A fourth claim under the Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Council Guidelines is being finalised for administration costs associated with the delivery of the Program. It is estimated that these costs will be in the order of \$2 Million. A fifth claim which includes further restoration works required is also being prepared with an estimated value of \$770,000.

Delivery of the Program commenced in March 2011 with the final delivery date currently estimated as 31st May 2013, this assumes a program life of 27 months. At the end of this time all works relating to the Program need to be completed to allow for acquittal of expenditure prior to the end of the 2012/2013 financial year. As per the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) completion and financial acquittal of all flood restoration works must be completed by 30th June 2013.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Table 1 outlines both the quantity of approved and completed works currently included within the Program (Claims 1, 2 &3) along with a summary of expenditure incurred as at 30th September 2012. Figures within the table vary slightly from previous reports due to the rectification of errors in the database and the inclusion of projects identified in the third flood restoration claim to the Department.

Table 1: Summary of Works Completed and Associated Expenditure to 30th September 2012

Activity	Programed Works	Completed Works		Original Estimate (Budget)	Actual Expenditure as at 30/09/2012	
Grading	249 Km	185 Km	(74%)	\$702,131	\$659,874	(94%)
Gravel Re-sheeting	491 Km	321 Km	(65%)	\$26,094,845	\$10,735,855	(41%)
Shoulder Re-sheeting	72 Km	55 Km	(76%)	\$2,928,108	\$1,183,890	(40%)
Sealed Road Repairs	19 Km	8 Km	(42%)	\$2,619,877	\$1,484,626	(57%)
Township Streets	13 No.	7 No.	(54%)	\$217,829	\$75,628	(35%)
Drainage Structures	2 No.	0 No.	(0%)	\$130,000	\$29,060	(22%)
Safety Infrastructure	8 No.	6 No.	(75%)	\$25,956	\$11,567	(45%)
Township Amenity	1 No.	1 No.	(100%)	\$0	\$500	(100%)
Bridges & Culverts	89 No.	41 No.	(46%)	\$1,380,026	\$897,638	(65%)
Floodway's	109 No.	75 No.	(69%)	\$485,603	\$275,571	(57%)
Sub Total				\$34,584,874	\$15,853,709	(44%)

As seen above 262km of grading, re-sheeting, shoulder re-sheeting and sealed road re-construction remains to be completed along with 92 separate jobs across remaining project categories. It is anticipated that all outstanding works shall be delivered over the next 5 months.

Expenditure to 30th September 2012 does not include administration expenses or estimated costs associated with works identified in claim 5. It is estimated that the combination of these additional program elements will be in the order of \$2.7 Million.

The requirement to deliver the works identified in claim 5 is not anticipated to present any barrier to the completion of the Program by the end of May 2013.

Council will receive further updates on progress of the 2011/2013 Flood Restoration Program delivery each quarter.

COSTS/BENEFITS

It is not anticipated that Council will incur any costs associated with the flood restoration program other than those required under the NDRRA funding guidelines, being an initial contribution of \$35,000.

RISK ANALYSIS

Primary risks associated with the delivery of the flood restoration program include:

- Completion and financial acquittal of all flood restoration projects prior to 30 June 2013.
- Ability of Council to source or maintain adequate contractors and resources to facilitate delivery of required works.
- Deteriorating weather conditions or delays.
- Financial and infrastructure management implications if works are not completed within the available timeframe.

Despite some significant risks being identified above it is believed that appropriate mitigating measures/systems have been put in place to address these. Such measures include:

- Sound programming of outstanding works
- Regular financial acquittal reports being presented to the Department
- Establishment of all supply & works contracts required
- Lodgement of a request for extension of time for those projects which may risk extending beyond the program deadline.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A full copy of the Flood Restoration program for those works which had been approved for delivery by the Department (excluding Claims 3 & 5) was presented within the recent Loddon Bulletin (September 2012) and distributed to all Residents within the Shire.

This program provided residents with indicative delivery timeframes for all projects identified as part of the flood restoration effort and also called for residents to report any additional flood damage which they believe had not been captured.

7.3 BUILDING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY STATISTICS JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2012

SUMMARY

Provides information to Council on the level of building activity within the municipality.

Author: David Turner – Municipal Building Surveyor

File No: 13/06/001

Attachment: Building Permit Approvals
Occupancy Permits Issued
Certificates of Final Inspection Issued
Summary of Building Inspections undertaken
Graph Sheets of Comparisons – 2005 to 2012

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the Building Department Activity Statistics Report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council is provided with a quarterly report regarding building activity statistics within the Shire.

BACKGROUND

Loddon Shire provides a range of Building advisory and control functions through its building department. The role of the Municipal Building Surveyor encompasses the provision of building advice, administration, issuing or review of relevant permits and approvals, advisory and consultancy services as well as performing regulatory administration and enforcement activities.

Capturing and reporting statistics relating to building activity within the Shire also forms part of the Municipal Building Surveyors role. Accordingly this information is provided to Council as an indicator of local development and investment.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

For the period July to September 2012, there has been a significant decrease of approximately 34% in the number of building permits issued and concurrent decrease of approximately 45% in the total value of building works compared with the previous three (3) months of 2012. This is generally in accord with figures across the state.

In comparison to the same period in 2011 there has been a small increase in the number of building permits issued, and there has been a fairly minor decrease in the total value of building works.

COSTS/BENEFITS

Nil

RISK ANALYSIS

Nil

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Nil

7.4 ROADSIDE WEEDS AND PEST ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

SUMMARY

The recent introduction of the State Government's Roadside Weeds and Pest Animal Management Program will see legislated responsibility for the coordination of roadside areas shift from adjacent landowners to Council. To support Council in meeting its new obligations the State Government has committed to provide Loddon Shire with \$150,000 funding over the next 3 years.

Author: Ian McLauchlan – Director Operations

File No: 15/03/001

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the introduction of the State Government's Roadside Weeds & Pest Animal Management Program.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council has considered the issue of management of roadside weeds on a number of occasions since 2008. This was primarily in response to funding offers from the Department of Primary Industries for the implementation of roadside weed management programs.

Council and the MAV have long held the position that the Catchment and Land Protection Act identifies that the responsibility for the management of roadside weeds vests with the adjacent landowners and not Council.

Accordingly Council has previously resisted taking on the role of co-ordinating and funding roadside weed and pest management activities.

BACKGROUND

Since 2005, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) have been examining the relevant legislation with a view to identifying who is best placed to deliver control operations for weeds and pest animals, and where responsibility resides for funding such activity.

The issue of managing invasive plants (weeds) and animals (pest animals) on roadsides is principally regulated by the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. However, responsibility for controlling these pests is affected also by other legislation, including the *Road Management Act 2004* and the *Local Government Act 1989*.

In June 2010, the former Minister for Agriculture established a working party to examine responsibilities for operational management of invasive plants and animals on roadsides and for funding such activities. A key recommendation of the working party was that the government should enact a legislative requirement for councils to prepare and implement approved Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plans.

The government has accepted this recommendation and considers councils to be best placed to coordinate the control of weeds and rabbits on local roadsides. Accordingly, it has committed funding over three years for the Roadside Weeds and Pests Management Program (RWPP) to support councils in addressing this issue.

The \$7.8 million Roadside Weeds and Pests Program will support councils to plan and implement control activities for the long-term management of regionally prohibited and regionally controlled plants and animals on rural roadsides. Participating councils will be required to use their annual funding allocation

to implement an approved Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plan, to be submitted to the Department of Primary Industries, before June 2013.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Despite Councils long held position that the responsibility for weeds management rests with the adjoining land owner, the introduction of legislation will require that Council now undertake a more proactive role in the co-ordination and management of roadside weeds and pest animals.

Loddon Shire Council currently maintains nearly 5000 km of roads and the introduction of new responsibilities for the management of roadside weeds and pest animals has the potential to result in a significant cost and/or resource burden.

To address this issue Council will be provided with annual funding for the next 3 years in the amount of \$50,000. This funding is however dependant on Council preparing a Roadside Weed and Pest Animal Management plan to the satisfaction of DPI. No commitment for funding beyond this in initial 3 year period has been made by the State Government.

A number of strategies or approaches for the management of weeds and pest animals may be considered during development of this plan which may see Council support local landowners and conservation groups to undertake the vast majority of required works as opposed to conducting spraying or eradication works itself.

It is noted that the funding agreement presented to Council places no restrictions on councils in providing funding to appropriately recognised community groups (for example, Landcare) or appropriately licensed/accredited contractors to undertake eligible control activities.

Further, support to local landowners to undertake co-ordinated or programmed spraying or control activities may include but is not limited to provision of training, access to chemicals and baits, mapping & planning studies or administrative co-ordination.

No council co-contribution to funding is required under the RWPP.

COSTS/BENEFITS

In the short term funding provided by the State Government should cover all costs associated with the development and implementation of Councils Roadside Weed and Pest Animal Management Plan. This assumes that demand for Council services or direct involvement in control activities will be limited.

Distribution of funding to landowners, Landcare Groups or Conservation Management Networks will however enable greater capacity within the local community to respond to roadside weeds and pest animals.

RISK ANALYSIS

A number of inherent risks relating to the introduction of the new legislation and associated funding have been identified, namely:

- Potential cost implications dependant on the level of community demand for service
- Limited funding commitment from the State Government
- Creation of community expectation for services
- Liability issues (impact upon adjacent land, failure to control, contractor and volunteer co-ordination)

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

It is envisaged that community consultation shall be required in the development of the Roadside Weed and Pest Animal Management Plan.

During implementation of the plan it is also envisaged that local conservation groups and landowners will play an important and active role in the conducting of works on roadsides and identification and monitoring of treatment areas.

8. DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY REPORTS

8.1 STATUS OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROGRAM 2012

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with a list and the status of projects and initiatives currently active in community planning.

Author: Tim Jenkyn, Manager Community Planning

File No:

Attachment: Status of the Loddon Shire Community Planning Program October 2012

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Status of the community planning program commencing October 2012 report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

- Council Report July 2012 – Community Planning Program 2012-13
- Council Report September 2011 – Community Planning Program Status

BACKGROUND

The community planning program has a number of large, medium and small scale projects underway across the Shire, as detailed in the attached report. This report identifies projects currently active that have been allocated funding from previous years as well as those approved in the 2012-13 financial year.

The attached spread sheet lists the location, type of project, funding sources, community planning allocation, percentage complete and project management information on items initiated in community planning.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Currently Loddon Shire Council's community planning program represents an allocation value close to \$1.5 million for Loddon's communities (October 2012). This figure is based on projects that council and the community have invested in over previous and the current financial year.

As detailed in the attached report many large and medium scale projects have attracted or seek external funding. Together with smaller projects numerous members of each community volunteer their time in planning, contributing funds and in kind work on the ground.

COSTS/BENEFITS

NA

RISK ANALYSIS

NA

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

NA

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9. DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING REPORTS

9.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

SUMMARY

This report is to provide Council with information regarding the introduction of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care

Author: Wendy Gladman – Acting Director Community Wellbeing

File No:

Attachment: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and note the report outlining the introduction of the National Quality Framework Assessment process for Early Childhood Education and Care services.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nil.

BACKGROUND

In December 2009, all Australian governments, through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), agreed to a partnership establishing a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (National Quality Framework).

The introduction of the National Quality Framework recognises the importance of increasing the focus on the early years to ensure the wellbeing of children, and is based on clear evidence that the early years of children's lives are very important for their present and future health, development and wellbeing.

The National Quality Framework aims to raise the quality and facilitate continuous improvement in education and care services through the introduction of:

- The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care
- A National quality assessment and rating process
- Streamlined regulatory arrangements
- Establishment of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), a jointly governed national body to oversee the new system.

ISSUES/DISCUSSION

As providers of funded early childhood programs, the five Preschools within the Loddon Cluster will be required to meet the National Quality Standard, comprising eighteen standards across seven quality areas. Each service will be required to participate in the assessment and rating program.

The purpose of the assessment and rating program is to determine whether services meet the National Quality Standard and the requirements of the National Regulations. Each service will receive a rating for each quality area and an overall rating. These ratings must be displayed by the service and will be published on the ACECQA and My Child websites.

Each Preschool is required to undertake a service self- assessment and the subsequent completion of a Quality Improvement Plan. The Quality Improvement Plan documents the outcomes of the self- assessment, evaluates current practice against the National Quality Standard, identifies the strengths of the service and areas that require improvement. Each service in the Loddon Cluster has developed a Quality Improvement Plan.

From 2012 Early Childhood services will begin to be assessed and rated. Services selected for assessment and rating receive advice that the process has commenced. They receive a request to submit their

Quality Improvement Plan and within twelve weeks will undergo an assessment and rating visit. Following a review of the draft assessment report, and the opportunity to provide comment, the report is finalised and the final rating determined a further eight weeks after the site visit.

On 28 August 2012, Pyramid Hill Preschool received notification of the commencement of the assessment and rating process. The current Quality Improvement Plan for the Preschool was submitted on 4 October, and the service is awaiting confirmation of the ensuing site visit.

COSTS/BENEFITS

No significant costs have been associated with the preparation of the Quality Improvement Plans or undertaking the improvements identified. The process will ultimately result in an improved quality of service.

RISK ANALYSIS

Although considered unlikely to occur, failure to meet the requirements of the National Quality Standards would result in:

- An unsatisfactory rating, indicating that significant improvement is required to enable the service to continue to operate
- The unsatisfactory rating being listed on the ACECQA and My Child websites
- Future assessment rating visits occurring more frequently until the standard improves.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Quality Improvement plans were prepared by teaching staff at the individual centres in consultation with parents and families accessing the service.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS

11. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Closing of Meeting to the Public

RECOMMENDATION

That the meeting be closed to the public.

NEXT MEETING

The next Ordinary Meeting of Council will be held on Monday 26 November 2012 at Serpentine commencing at 3.30pm.