



**Date:** Friday, 20 June 2025

**Time:** 3.35pm

**Location:** Loddon Shire Council Chambers, Wedderburn

# **MINUTES**

## **Council Meeting**

**MINUTES OF LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEDDERBURN  
ON FRIDAY, 20 JUNE 2025 AT 3.35PM**

**PRESENT:** Cr Dan Straub (Mayor), Cr Nick Angelo, Cr David Weaver and Cr Miki Wilson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Lincoln Fitzgerald (Chief Executive Officer), Wendy Gladman (Director Community Wellbeing), Michelle Stedman (Director Corporate), Steve Van Orsouw (Director Operations) and Lisa Clue (Manager Governance)

**1 OPENING AFFIRMATION**

The Mayor read the Opening Affirmation

**2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Chief Executive Officer read the Acknowledgement of Country

**3 APOLOGIES**

**RESOLUTION 2025/79**

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That the apology received from Cr Holt be accepted and leave of absence granted.

**CARRIED**

**4 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer declared a Material Conflict of Interest in relation to Agenda item 14.1. Mr Fitzgerald advised he would leave the meeting while that item is being considered.

**5 PREVIOUS MINUTES****5.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**File Number:** FOL/19/45615

**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance

**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

**Attachments:** Nil

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council confirm the Minutes of the following meetings as previously circulated to Councillors:

1. Council Briefing of 27 May 2025
2. Council Meeting of 27 May 2025
3. Council Forum of 10 June 2025

**REPORT**

This report seeks Council confirmation of Minutes from the May 2025 Council Briefing and Council Meeting, and the June 2025 Council Forum, as previously circulated to Councillors.

**RESOLUTION 2025/80**

Moved: Cr Nick Angelo

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council confirm the Minutes of the following meetings as previously circulated to Councillors:

1. Council Briefing of 27 May 2025
2. Council Meeting of 27 May 2025
3. Council Forum of 10 June 2025.

**CARRIED**

**6 COUNCIL AUSPICED MEETINGS****6.1 RECORD OF COUNCIL AUSPICED MEETINGS**

**File Number:** 02/01/001

**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance

**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

**Attachments:** Nil

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council confirm the records of the following auspiced meetings as detailed within this report:

1. Council Briefing held 27 May 2025
2. Council Forum held 10 June 2025.

Rule 35 of Council's Governance Rules requires a record of meetings conducted under the auspices of Council to be presented to the next available scheduled Council meeting for confirmation that must include:

- a) a record of which Councillors and officers attended the meeting;
- b) a summary of the matters considered in the meeting; and
- c) a record of any conflicts of interest disclosed by Councillors and officers and any Councillors or officers that left the meeting whilst a matter that their conflict of interest related to was being discussed.

Section 3 of the Governance Rules defines meetings conducted under the auspices of Council to mean a meeting of the kind described in section 131(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 and includes a meeting which:

- a) is schedule or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- b) is attended by a majority of Councillors;
- c) is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- d) is not a Council meeting or delegated committee meeting.

This report seeks confirmation of the Council Briefing held on 27 May 2025 and the Council Forum held 10 June 2025.

Meeting details	Briefing
Date	27 May 2025
Councillor Attendees	Cr Straub (Mayor) Cr Angelo Cr Holt Cr Weaver Cr Wilson
Staff/ Stakeholder representatives	Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing Steve Van Orsouw, Director Operations Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate Lisa Clue, Manager Governance  Marg Allan, Loddon Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee Independent Member/Chairperson – item 1 below  Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services and David Southcombe, Manager Assets and Infrastructure – item 3 below  Glenn Harvey, Manager Development and Compliance and Darcy Jackson, Statutory Planning Officer – item 4 below
Item(s) discussed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Audit and Risk Committee – Biannual Report</li> <li>2. Review of Council Meeting Agenda</li> <li>3. Finance Report for Quarter Ending 31 March 2025</li> <li>4. Planning Application 6042: Use of the land for a rural industry (olive processing facility), and use and development of the land for rural workers accommodation</li> <li>5. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drought support</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Conflict of Interest Disclosures – Councillor/officer making disclosure	Nil
Councillor/officer left room	N/A

Meeting details	Forum
Date	10 June 2025
Councillor Attendees	Cr Straub (Mayor) Cr Angelo Cr Holt Cr Weaver Cr Wilson
Staff/ Stakeholder representatives	Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer Wendy Gladman, Director Community Wellbeing Steve Van Orsouw, Director Operations Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate Lisa Clue, Manager Governance  David Stretch, Manager Tourism and Economic Development and Christine Coombes, Executive Services Officer – items 1 and 2 below Mark Juker, JWS Research – item 3 below Alistair Parker and Eliza Ginnivan, VicGrid – item 6 below David Southcombe, Manager Assets and Infrastructure and Peter Hamilton, Asset Management Coordinator – items 7 and 8 below Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services – items 8 and 9 below Glenn Harvey, Manager Development and Compliance – item 10 below
Item(s) discussed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 25 Main Street, Bridgewater</li> <li>2. Reef Street Subdivision Proposal</li> <li>3. 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey Results</li> <li>4. Strategic Risk Review</li> <li>5. Governance Rules Review</li> <li>6. Draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan</li> <li>7. Road Management Plan 2025</li> <li>8. Asset Valuations – AASB 13 Amendments – Council Compliance</li> <li>9. Feedback on Draft Budget (Including Draft Fees and Charges Schedule) and Draft Revenue and Rating Plan</li> <li>10. Building Services and Building Control</li> <li>11. General Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund</li> <li>• Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) Board Member Nomination</li> <li>• Murray River Group of Councils</li> <li>• ALGA National General Assembly Motions</li> <li>• Pyramid Hill Community Assets</li> <li>• Councillor Workshops</li> <li>• Reef Street Subdivision Proposal</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Conflict of Interest Disclosures – Councillor/ officer making disclosure	Nil
Councillor/officer left room	N/A

**RESOLUTION 2025/81**

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council confirm the records of the following auspiced meetings as detailed within this report:

1. Council Briefing held 27 May 2025
2. Council Forum held 10 June 2025.

**CARRIED**

**7 REVIEW OF ACTIONS****7.1 REVIEW OF ACTIONS****File Number:** 02/01/002**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** 1. Status of Council resolution actions**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the status of Council resolution actions, as attached to this report.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

**REPORT**

A document containing the status of actions associated with Council resolutions is attached to this Agenda report.

All eight actions arising from May Council meeting resolutions have been completed.

One action from the April Council meeting, reported on as 'progressed' at the May Council meeting (relating to proposed amendments to Council's Governance Rules) is also now complete.

**RESOLUTION 2025/82****Moved:** Cr Miki Wilson**Seconded:** Cr David Weaver

That Council receive and note the status of Council resolution actions, as attached to this report.

**CARRIED**



**8 MAYORAL REPORT****8.1 MAYORAL REPORT****File Number:** 02/01/001**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

**REPORT**

Mayor Straub presented a verbal report at the meeting.

<b>Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils</b>	
13/06/2025 – Meeting - Bendigo	
<b>Loddon Healthy Minds Network</b>	
19/06/2025 – Meeting (online)	
<b>Murray River Group of Councils</b>	
05/06/2025 – Mayor and CEO Meeting and Dinner – Wodonga	
<b>North Central Local Learning and Employment Network</b>	
28/05/2025 – Annual General Meeting	
11/06/2025 – Finance and Risk Committee Meeting – Online	
17/06/2025 – Board Meeting	
<b>Other Council activities</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
04/06/2025	Pyramid Hill Hostel Meeting
04/06/2025	Met with Gaelle Broad MP and Tim McCurdy MP – Pyramid Hill
10/06/2025	June Council Forum – Wedderburn
16/06/2025	NCCMA – Pyramid Hill
	Audit and Risk Committee – recruitment

17/06/2025	Bio Gro Facility Tour
18/06/2025	Dingee Hall Annual General Meeting
19/06/2025	East Loddon Men's Shed Annual General Meeting

**RESOLUTION 2025/83**

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Miki Wilson

That Council receive and note the Mayoral Report.

**CARRIED**

**9 COUNCILLORS' REPORT****9.1 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS****File Number:** 02/01/001**Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive and note the Councillors' reports.

**REPORT**

Each Councillor presented a verbal report at the meeting.

**Cr Angelo**

North Central Goldfields Regional Library	
Other Council activities	
Date	Activity
04/06/2025	Flood information session - Bridgewater
10/06/2025	June Council Forum
13/06/2025	Tarnagulla Community Planning Meeting
17/06/2025	Bio Gro Facility Site Tour

**Cr Wilson**

Council activities	
Date	Activity
10/06/2025	June Council Forum
	Campbells Forest Progress Association Inc Meeting
17/06/2025	Bridge Community Coffee Morning
19/06/2025	Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy – Online webinar

**Cr Weaver**

<b>Council activities</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
30/05/2025	Meeting with Steve Van Orsouw
10/06/2025	June Council Forum
03/06/2025	Boort Tourism and Development Meeting

**RESOLUTION 2025/84**

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council receive and note the Councillors' reports.

**CARRIED**

**10 DECISION REPORTS****10.1 DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL ASSETS POLICY V4, LAND DISPOSAL AND ACQUISITION POLICY AND SURRENDER OF LAND POLICY**

**File Number:** FOL/19/432511  
**Author:** Christine Coombes, Executive Services Officer  
**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer  
**Attachments:** 1. Disposal of Council Assets Policy V4  
2. Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy  
3. Surrender of Land Policy

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council

1. Adopts the Disposal of Council Assets Policy V4
2. Adopts the Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy V1, and
3. Rescinds the Surrender of Land Policy.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

This is the fourth version of the Disposal of Council Assets Policy, the last version was approved by Council on 26 September 2023. It is the initial review of the newly drafted Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy.

The draft documents were discussed at the Council Forum held on Tuesday 13 May.

**BACKGROUND**

The Disposal of Assets Policy and Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy outlines the detail of Council disposing of physical assets and the requirements for disposing and acquiring of land. The proposed adoption of the Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy by Council, would deem the Surrender of Land Policy as no longer required.

The draft policies were endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee at the May 2025 meeting.

**ISSUES/DISCUSSION**Disposal of Council Assets Policy

The purpose of the Disposal of Council Assets Policy is to provide direction to Council staff when disposing of assets. This policy applies to any person or persons responsible for the identification of assets that are no longer 'fit for purpose' or excess to the current needs of Council and require disposal or rationalisation.

Changes to this document include:

- the removal of the reference to the disposal of land
- notation of the Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy
- clarification on the authorisation of disposal through means of charity/gifting of surplus or redundant assets, and

- the disposal of minor non fixed assets purchased by through funds raised by Community Asset committees.

### Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy

This Policy has been developed to compliment applicable legislation and Government policy and guidelines relating to the disposal and acquisition of land as well as Council policy and strategies. It also provides guidance to Council staff in the method that land may be disposed and acquired.

The objective of the policy is to ensure that Council:

- has a consistent, equitable and transparent process in relation to the disposal and acquisition of land;
- behaves with impartiality, fairness, independence, openness and integrity in all discussions and negotiations;
- complies with best practice and legislative requirements when undertaking the sale or acquisition of land;
- provides criteria to be considered to determine surplus status;
- monitors and records all sale and disposal activities;
- appropriately manages risk;
- strategically manages its property portfolio for the long-term best interests of the community, including the rationalisation of commitments for financial sustainability; and
- achieves the best value (both financial and non-financial) in all of its land dealings.

Both policies have been reviewed with a reflection of the definition of Council referring to the governing body of a local area, responsible for providing services, implementing decisions, and representing the community.

### Surrender of Land Policy

The Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy incorporates the detail for the surrender of land, to simplify transactional detail relating to land. It is therefore recommended that the Surrender of Land Policy be rescinded in conjunction with the adoption of the Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy.

Effective application of these policies will ensure that any disposal of Council's assets is carried out in a transparent, fair, independent and open manner. All asset sale actions must adhere to the Levels of Authority Delegations.

## **COST/BENEFITS**

There are no direct costs associated with the adoption of these policies. The benefits provided include clarification and consistency around asset and land disposal to both internal and external stakeholders. There is also ability to create a small income stream back to Council for assets of value.

## **RISK ANALYSIS**

By providing clear direction as to what, how and when an asset or land can be disposed, most risks will be mitigated.

## **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

The Policies were reviewed by the Management Executive Group prior to submission to the Audit and Risk Committee for endorsement at the 5 May 2025 meeting and Council Forum for discussion on 13 May 2025.

These Policies have also had a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) undertaken. The outcome from this assessment was 'no recommendation to change the Policies from a gender lens'.

The Policies will have a review timeline of four years.

**RESOLUTION 2025/85**

Moved: Cr Nick Angelo

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council

1. Adopts the Disposal of Council Assets Policy V4
2. Adopts the Land Disposal and Acquisition Policy V1, and
3. Rescinds the Surrender of Land Policy.

**CARRIED**

**10.2 ADOPTION OF THE 2025/26 BUDGET AND FEES AND CHARGES SCHEDULE**

**File Number:** FOL/25/804

**Author:** Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services

**Authoriser:** Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate

**Attachments:** 1. Draft Budget 2025/26  
2. Draft Fees and Charges Schedule 2025/26

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Note the late changes in valuations data, and in order to remain within the rate cap, implement the revised differential rate to be struck between categories of Rural Production and General, as follows:
  - (a) General (Residential, Commercial and Other) - 0.185361 Cents in the Dollar of Capital Improved Value
  - (b) Rural Production - 0.163156 Cents in the Dollar of Capital Improved Value;
2. Adopt the 2025/26 Budget;
3. Adopt the 2025/26 Fees and Charges Schedule;
4. Acknowledge the submission to the Draft 2025/26 Budget from Bendigo Foodshare and authorises Director Corporate to provide a response on behalf of Council as recommended within this report; and
5. Authorise either the Director Corporate or Chief Executive Officer to approve changes to Council's 2025/26 Fees and Charges Schedule where statutory fees and charges are altered by external parties.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this paper, or involved in the subject matter of the paper.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Council was presented with the 2025/26 Draft Fees and Charges Schedule at the Council Briefing on 25 March 2025 and the 2025/26 Draft Budget at the Council Forum on 8 April 2025.

Council resolved to advertise the Draft Budget and Draft Fees and Charges Schedule at the Council Meeting on 22 April 2025.

Council was presented with any updates or community feedback at the Council Forum on 10 June 2025.

**BACKGROUND**

The draft documents were placed on public display, seeking feedback from Monday 28 April 2025 until Monday 26 May 2025, using the Community Engagement Policy as guidance.

During this period, copies of the documents were made available on Council's website and a printed copy posted to ratepayers where requested.

Advertisements were placed in the Bendigo Advertiser and the Loddon Herald. Facebook, emailing to all Council Section 65 Committees and other media options were also utilised.



**ISSUES/DISCUSSION**2025/26 Budget

The Draft Budget maintains Council's approach of being financially responsible, while ensuring its commitment of providing a large range of services to the community.

The draft budget includes a rate increase of 3.0% – in line with the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System. Council remains debt-free, with no loan repayments, and a continued strong cash positive position.

The draft budget allocates a capital expenditure program of \$8.61 million, which includes \$4.79 million towards roads, \$0.59 million for drainage and \$0.38 for footpaths.

Additionally, the budget includes a \$634,000 allocation for works associated with the Building Asset Management Plan and full funding of Council's ongoing commitment to community planning of \$750,000.

To offset the increased cost of kerbside waste and recycling services, waste services charges will have a 6.0% increase applied. These adjustments continue to ensure compliance with any necessary legislation or regulations. The cost of a 140-litre bin will remain at \$425 and a 240-litre bin to \$578. The cost for a 240-litre kerbside recycling bin will increase to \$160.

Due to the timing of preparing the Draft Budget, draft valuations for the 2025/26 year were used to calculate the rate in the dollar for both general and rural classifications. Confirmed valuation data was received in early May 2025 which included a slight increase in Capital Improved Value (CIV) within both general and rural categories.

Therefore, the rates in the dollar detailed in this proposed final budget have lowered slightly, with total income expected to be the same.

The rates published in the Draft Budget for community engagement were:

- General (Residential, Commercial and Other) - 0.187185 Cents in the Dollar of CIV
- Rural Production - 0.164762 Cents in the Dollar of CIV.

With the incorporation of the confirmed valuations, these rates are confirmed in the Final Budget as:

- General (Residential, Commercial and Other) - 0.185361 Cents in the Dollar of CIV
- Rural Production - 0.163156 Cents in the Dollar of CIV.

Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy:

It is noted that changes related to transition of the Fire Services Property Levy into the newly established Emergency Services Volunteer Fund levy do not have impact on the Budget's financial statements, as State Revenue Office collections and payments are transferred in and out of the balance sheet within the relevant quarter of the financial year. As such, no changes related to this new legislation were required within the final 2025/26 Budget document.

2025/26 Fees and Charges

The schedule of Fees and Charges has an increase to discretionary fees and charges by 3.0%, the same as the rate increase. Since the Draft Fees and Charges Schedule was placed on public display, it is noted that the State Government has issued a pricing update to fee units (from \$16.33 to \$16.81) for mandated statutory fees. All required changes to these fees have been amended in the final Schedule, encompassing statutory fees related to public health, planning, building and freedom of information.

Submissions to the 2025/26 Draft Budget and Fees and Charges Schedule

Council received one submission to the draft 2025/26 Budget during its period of community engagement:

Submitter	Details of Submission	Recommended response
Bendigo Foodshare	Seeking allocation within the Budget to strengthen Bendigo Foodshare's ability to continue operations and develop its business, noting local partnerships with other Loddon Shire groups and education providers.	Loddon Shire Council currently funds a generous community support program within the proposed 2025/26 budget. It is recommended that Council respond to the submitter with details of Council's Community Support Policy and its current community grants process.

Council received no submissions regarding the Draft 2025/26 Fees and Charges schedule.

**COST/BENEFITS**

The benefits to Council and the community are that a consultative budget process complies with Council policies in line with *Local Government Act 1989*, and *Local Government Act 2020*, and allows the community to provide feedback to Council on the Budget and Fees and Charges Schedule contents.

The Budget provides a measure for accurate planning, and ensures that Council can deliver the services and projects included in the document.

**RISK ANALYSIS**

The risk to Council of not discussing and advertising the annual budget is that it will not comply with requirements under the *Local Government Act 1989* and *Local Government Act 2020*.

**CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

In line with Council's Community Engagement Policy and Council's resolution at its 22 April 2025 meeting, a period of 28 days was provided for public feedback for both the Draft 2025/26 Budget and Draft 2025/26 Fees and Charges Schedule.

One submission was received on the draft documents during the public display period as advised earlier in this report.

An update on the process undertaken and community feedback was presented at the Council Forum on 10 June 2025.

**RESOLUTION 2025/86**

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council:

1. Note the late changes in valuations data, and in order to remain within the rate cap, implement the revised differential rate to be struck between categories of Rural Production and General, as follows:
  - (a) General (Residential, Commercial and Other) - 0.185361 Cents in the Dollar of Capital Improved Value
  - (b) Rural Production - 0.163156 Cents in the Dollar of Capital Improved Value;
2. Adopt the 2025/26 Budget;
3. Adopt the 2025/26 Fees and Charges Schedule;
4. Acknowledge the submission to the Draft 2025/26 Budget from Bendigo Foodshare and authorises Director Corporate to provide a response on behalf of Council as recommended within this report; and
5. Authorise either the Director Corporate or Chief Executive Officer to approve changes to Council's 2025/26 Fees and Charges Schedule where statutory fees and charges are altered by external parties.

**CARRIED**

**10.3 ADOPTION OF THE REVENUE AND RATING PLAN**

**File Number:** FOL/19/432508  
**Author:** Deanne Caserta, Manager Financial Services  
**Authoriser:** Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate  
**Attachments:** 1. Draft Revenue and Rating Plan

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopt the Loddon Shire Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this paper, or involved in the subject matter of the paper.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

The inaugural Loddon Shire Council Revenue and Rating Plan (the Plan) was adopted by Council in 2021 in accordance with the then newly legislated *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA 2020).

Consistent with the requirements under the LGA 2020, the Plan is now being reviewed under the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework.

Councillors undertook induction workshops post-election that covered the requirements of the Plan and subsequently participated in a mini-workshop and discussion at Councillor Forum in April 2025 ahead of the Plan's considered release for community feedback.

Council resolved to advertise the Plan at the Council Meeting on 22 April 2025. This was placed on advertisement with the Draft 2025/26 Budget and the Draft 2025/26 Fees and Charges Schedule.

The draft documents were placed on public display, seeking feedback from Monday 28 April 2025 until Monday 26 May 2025, in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

During this period, copies of the documents were made available on Council's website and a printed copy posted to ratepayers where requested.

Advertisements were placed in the Bendigo Advertiser and the Loddon Herald. Facebook, emailing to all Council Section 65 Committees and other media options were also utilised.

**BACKGROUND**

In 2017, Council established the first Rating Strategy (the Strategy).

When established, the LGA 2020 required each Council to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election. As a result, Council reviewed and built on the existing Strategy and adopted the first Plan in 2021 in accordance with the LGA 2020.

The Plan establishes the revenue raising framework within which the Council proposes to work. In line with the recent Local Government elections, this Plan is now due for review.

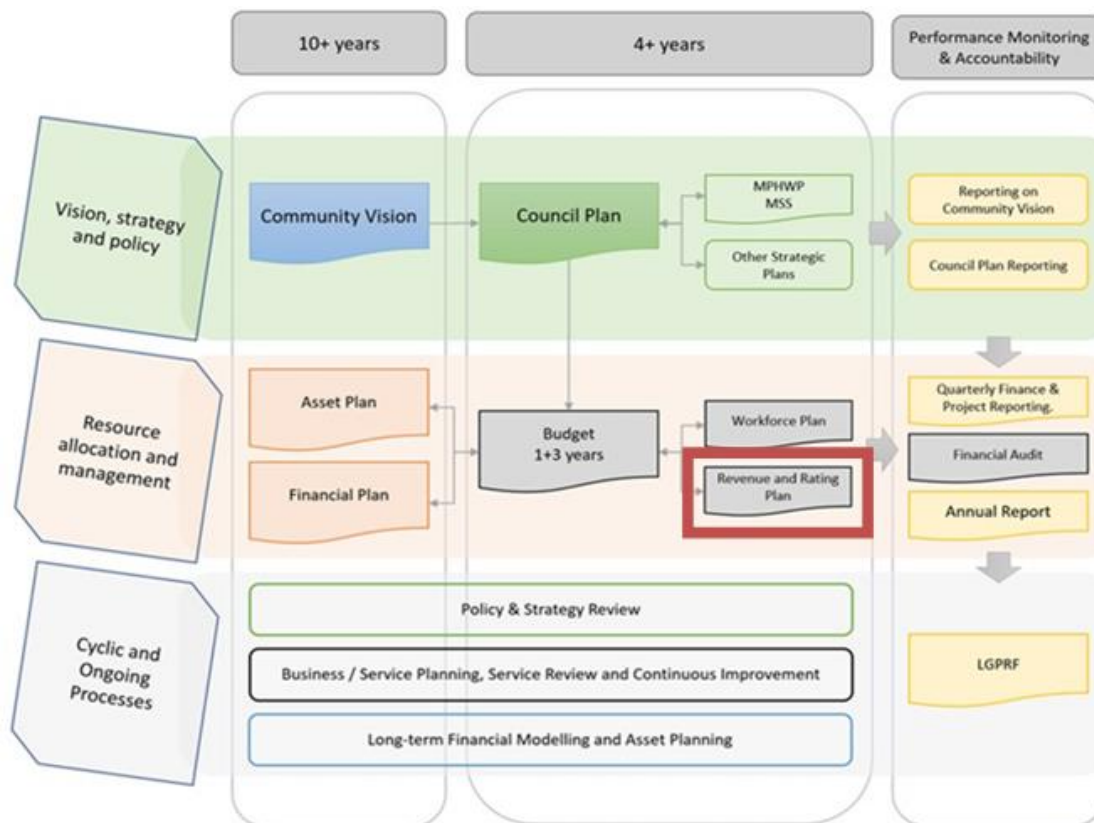
This document includes the basic principles for rate collection within Council and replaces information that was previously published within the Annual Budget, ensuring Council's position remains transparent and available to all ratepayers.

This will see Council build on the current Strategy and add to the required revenue components.

## ISSUES/DISCUSSION

This Plan is an important part of Council's integrated planning and reporting framework as outlined in Figure 1, and explains how Council calculates the revenue needed to fund its activities, and how the funding burden is proposed to be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services.

*Figure 1: Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework*



Source: Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions 2020

In particular, the Plan sets out Council decisions in relation to rating options available to it under the LGA 2020 to ensure fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners.

It also sets out principles for decision making regarding other revenue sources such as fees and charges, and what factors any deliberation to vary the rate cap in the future may consider.

The Plan does not set revenue targets for Council but rather outlines the strategic framework and decisions that inform how Council will go about calculating and collecting its revenue.

## COST/BENEFITS

The Plan will be used to guide Council in making decisions around the setting of rates, municipal charges and fees, and the equitable distribution of these fees and charges for future long term Financial Plans and Annual Budgets.

## RISK ANALYSIS

The principles of good governance require Council to provide ongoing or periodic monitoring and review of the impact of major decisions. It is essential that Council evaluates, on a regular basis, the legislative objectives to which it must have regard and those other objectives which Council determines are relevant.

Council is seeking to fully document its objectives and approach to the raising of revenue and rates in line with its goal of providing transparency in its decision-making.

**CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

The document has been subject to the standard approval process of Management Executive Group and Council Forum prior to presentation in the Council Meeting Agenda.

Council advertised the document for public comment for a period of 28 days, receiving no submissions. This process was guided by the Community Engagement Policy.

**RESOLUTION 2025/87**

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council adopt the Loddon Shire Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029.

**CARRIED**

## 10.4 GOVERNANCE RULES REVIEW

**File Number:****Author:** Lisa Clue, Manager Governance**Authoriser:** Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate**Attachments:** Nil

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Acknowledge findings of the Gender Impact Assessment undertaken on proposed changes to the Governance Rules;
2. Acknowledge community feedback received on proposed changes to its Governance Rules and subsequently maintain the current Rule 69 – *Recording of Council Meetings*, whereby continuing to live stream Council Meetings to a social media channel; and
3. Amend Loddon Shire Council's Governance Rules - Rule 65(4) – *Questions put by members of the public* as proposed in the Agenda report.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

At the September 2024 Council Meeting, in response to a Notice of Motion, Council resolved that a report be provided to Council at a meeting in December 2024 or January 2025, regarding an amendment to the Governance Rules relating to Question Time.

At the January 2025 Council meeting, Council resolved to defer consideration of the amendment to the Governance Rules relating to Question Time, contained within the Notice of Motion, until April 2025.

At the April 2025 Council meeting, Council resolved to endorse a number of proposed changes to the Governance Rules, relating to Public Question Time and Recording of Council Meetings, for the purpose of community engagement in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Councillors received and discussed feedback from the community, and options for continuing livestreaming Council meetings at the May and June Council Forums.

### BACKGROUND

At its meeting held 16 September 2024, Council resolved the following:

**RESOLUTION 2024/124**

Moved: Cr Linda Jungwirth

Seconded: Cr Wendy Murphy

That a report be provided to Council at a meeting in December 2024 or January 2025 on:

an amendment of Loddon Shire Council's Governance Rules to -

- a. removing 65, item (4)(b) - must relate to a matter of business on the meeting agenda
- b. amending Rule 65, item (4)(c) to add a time period. I.e. Must not relate to subject matter previously responded to by Council in the last six months

**CARRIED**

After resolving to defer the matter at the January 2025 Council meeting, at its meeting on 22 April 2025, Council resolved to endorse a number of proposed changes to the Governance Rules, relating to Public Question Time and Recording of Council Meetings, for the purpose of community engagement in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

This report seeks a Council decision on proposed amendments to the Governance Rules, considering feedback received from the community.

## ISSUES/DISCUSSION

In response to the September 2024 Council resolution and Councillor and officer discussions over subsequent months, Council endorsed the following changes to the Governance Rules for the purpose of community engagement:

Current Rule	Proposed amended Rule	Rationale
<i>Rule 65 Public question time</i>		
<i>65(4) Question put by members of the public</i>		
<i>(a) must be in writing</i>	must be in writing and include the name of the person putting the question. Questions asked on behalf of a business or organisation must include the name of the business or organisation representative.	Provides a point of contact in the event the question is rejected by the CEO in accordance with Rule 65(6) or is to be responded to in writing in accordance with Rule 65(8).
<i>(b) must relate to a matter of business on the meeting agenda.</i>	must relate to a matter within the duties, functions and powers of Council.	Removes the restriction that questions must relate to matters on the current Council meeting agenda and ensures questions relate to matters Council is responsible for.
<i>(c) must not relate to subject matter previously responded to by Council</i>	must not relate to subject matter previously responded to by Council in the last six months.	Reduces the time constraint on questions previously responded to.
<i>Rule 69 Recording of Council meetings</i>		
<i>(1) Council meeting proceedings will be livestreamed for real-time or on demand access via a Council social media channel.</i>	Council meeting proceedings that are open to the public will be recorded, and recordings will be made available on the next business day after the meeting, unless a meeting is required to be livestreamed in accordance with section 66(3) of the Act.	Retains timely remote access to Council meeting recordings, while reducing the resourcing burden associated with managing the livestream.



Current Rule	Proposed amended Rule	Rationale
(2) <i>If a meeting, or part of a meeting is closed to the public due to circumstances described in section 66(2)(b) or 66(2)(c) of the Act and the livestream is not able to be broadcast to a Council social media channel, the meeting may be adjourned, or a recording of the proceedings made available on social media as soon as practicable after the meeting.</i>	If a meeting, or part of a meeting is closed to the public due to circumstances described in section 66(2)(b) or 66(2)(c) of the Act and a livestream is not able to be broadcast to a Council social media channel, the meeting will need to be adjourned.	Amendment supports proposed amendment to Rule 69(1) above.
(3) <i>if a meeting, or part of a meeting is open to the public and the livestream is not able to be broadcast to a Council social media channel, the meeting will continue, and a recording of the proceedings may be made available on a social media page as soon as practicable after the meeting.</i>	Remove	Removal supports proposed amendments to Rule 69 above.

### Community Engagement

Community feedback on the proposed changes was invited via print and social media over a two-week period.

Themes of feedback received is summarised below:

- Livestreaming Council meetings provides real time access to residents of the Loddon Shire, regardless of where they live, where and when they work, and any health barriers to attending in person
- Livestreaming Council meetings reduces travel costs associated with in person attendance
- Delayed access to meeting recordings allows for the potential editing or omission of content and removes the immediacy and accountability that livestreaming affords
- If changes are being considered, more detailed rationale should be published, including a clear comparison of costs, staffing implications, and community impact
- Amend rule wording to require recordings made available to be unedited
- Suggestion of a 'point of truth' being visible during meetings (eg a clock) to show no edits have occurred, or if edits have occurred, an explanation of those edits be provided to the community
- Delayed access to recordings gives an unfair advantage to gallery attendees who witness debate and Council decisions ahead of the general broadcast.

**Note:** No feedback was received on proposed changes to rules relating to Public Question Time.

### Options for livestreaming

After noting the community feedback and the initial discussions of Council at the May Council Forum, Council officers reviewed current operations in relation to live-streaming of Council meetings.

A review was undertaken of broadcasting software and hardware to ascertain and troubleshoot against issues previously experienced by Councillors 'dialling in' to a live-streamed Council meeting. These issues were subsequently resolved without any further financial investment. This detailed exploration of process has also enabled subsequent formal standard operating procedure documentation, which enables reliable supplementation of trained and skilled staff that are able to undertake a live-stream broadcast. This resolves staffing backfill limitations previously identified.

Barriers to public access were also identified with Loddon's current choice of streaming platform whereby access to Facebook live streaming is behind a user registration wall (if the viewer is not a registered Facebook user, they are unable to stream or view). With an immaterial change in licensing structure away from Facebook, it is proposed that Council meetings be made accessible via Loddon's YouTube channel. This will also ensure meetings are available for long-term on-demand viewing, as opposed to Facebook which has recently placed a 30 day expiry on live stream videos. Any change to streaming locations will be communicated in advance to the community.

### Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)

Section 9 of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, (the Act) requires that as a defined entity, Council must undertake a gender impact assessment when developing or reviewing any policy, or program or service it provides, that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

Gender impact assessments must assess the effects that the policy, program or service may have on persons of different genders; state how the policy, program or service will be developed or varied in order to meet the needs of persons of different genders, address gender inequality and promote gender equality; and if practicable, take into account that gender inequality may be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of a number of attributes (listed under section 9 (2) (c) of the Act).

In accordance with the requirements of the Act, an assessment undertaken by Council officers determined a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) is required for the proposed amendments to the Governance Rules. Accordingly, a GIA was conducted.

The assessment found that the proposed changes to the Governance Rules do not have any negative impacts on gender equality or contribute to gender inequality. As such, the amendments are deemed compliant with Council's obligations under the Act.

### **COST/BENEFITS**

Costs associated with this matter are predominately officer time.

### **RISK ANALYSIS**

Governance Rules ensure effective meetings, provide clear direction for meeting protocol and mitigate reputational and unacceptable conduct risks.

### **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Community feedback on the proposed amendment to Council's Governance Rules was invited over a fourteen day period, communicated via local print and social media, and on Council's website.

**RESOLUTION 2025/88**

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council:

1. Acknowledge findings of the Gender Impact Assessment undertaken on proposed changes to the Governance Rules;
2. Acknowledge community feedback received on proposed changes to its Governance Rules and subsequently maintain the current Rule 69 – *Recording of Council Meetings*, whereby continuing to live stream Council Meetings to a social media channel; and
3. Amend Loddon Shire Council's Governance Rules - Rule 65(4) – *Questions put by members of the public* as proposed in the Agenda report.

**CARRIED**

**10.5 DRAFT VICTORIAN TRANSMISSION PLAN 2025****File Number:****Author:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. authorise the Mayor to make a submission to the Draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan on behalf of Loddon Shire Council; and
2. that the submission be generally in accordance with the issues identified within this Agenda report.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Council discussed the Draft Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP) Guidelines at the Council Briefing on 27 August 2024.

VicGrid presented the Draft 2025 VTP to Councillors at the Council Forum on 10 June 2025.

**BACKGROUND**

On 23 July 2024, VicGrid released the Draft VTP Guidelines which explained the methodology VicGrid proposed to use to develop the first VTP by mid-2025.

On 16 May 2025, VicGrid published the Draft 2025 VTP for public consultation with a closing date for submissions of 11:59pm **24 June 2025**.

A copy of the Draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan, other information and engagement details can be found at the Victorian Government's engagement website Engage Victoria - <https://engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan>

The purpose of the VTP is to plan new energy infrastructure while taking into account the impacts on local communities, landholders, First Peoples, agriculture, the environment and industry.

The plan aims to avoid over or under-investing in energy to maintain energy security and control costs to the consumers who ultimately pay for this infrastructure development and its ongoing operation.

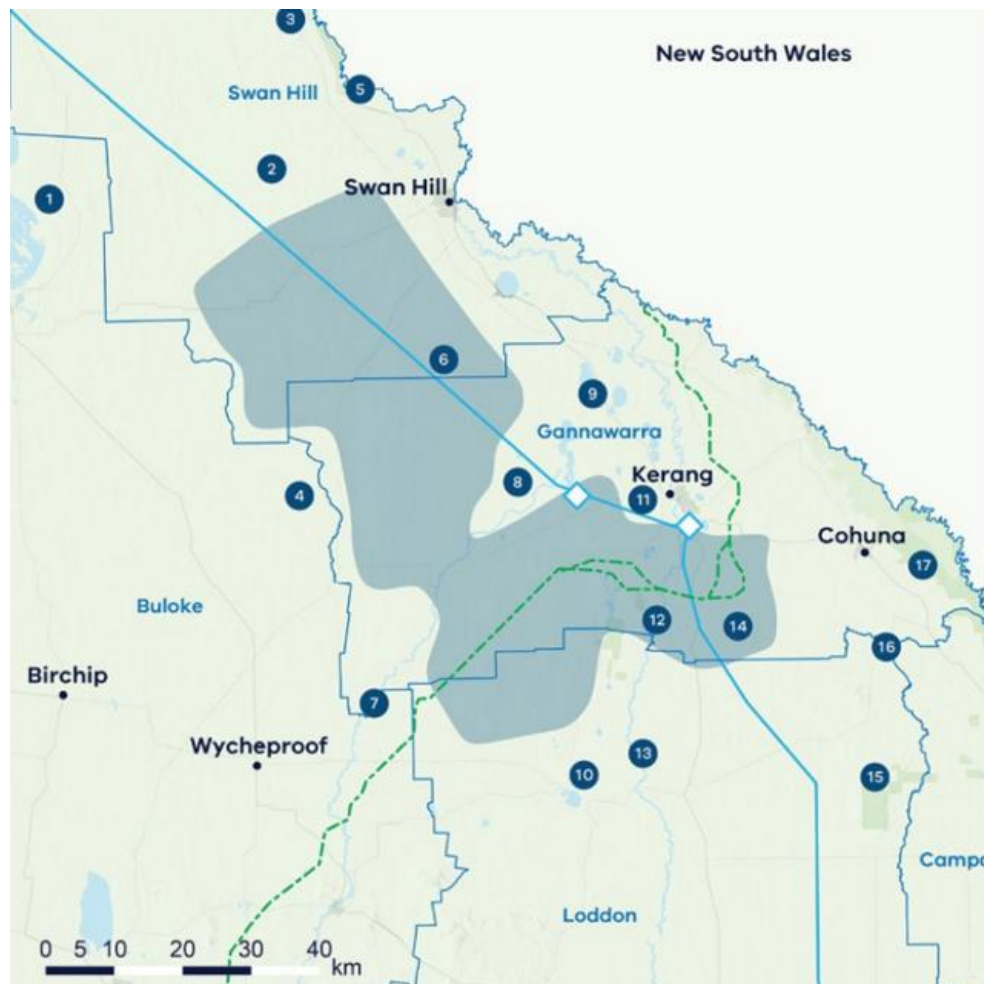
The Victorian Transmission Plan will be published later in 2025 once feedback has been considered and an update will be published in 2027 to ensure it remains up-to-date with any new technologies or power demands.

Key areas they are seeking feedback on include:

- The 7 draft proposed renewable energy zones.
- The 7 proposed programs of transmission investments needed to support renewable energy zone development and meet Victoria's energy needs over the next 15 years.
- The draft proposed Gippsland Shoreline Renewable Energy Zone.

Loddon Shire Council is directly impacted by elements of the first two areas for consultation. Those impacts are:

- The area of Loddon Shire included in the *North West Renewable Energy Zone*. This area is north and north/west of the township of Boort and extends into Gannawarra & Swan Hill Shire Council areas (refer Image 1)
- Replacement and upgrade of the transmission line between Kerang and Bendigo – the *North West strengthening program* by 2035 (refer Image 2).



**Image 1** (above) – North West Renewable Energy Zone with municipal boundaries indicated.

The image above indicates the Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) with the Loddon Shire municipal boundary overlaid. The dark shaded area outlines the REZ is approximately 10km north and north/west of the Boort township and extends north into Gannawarra and Swan Hill Shires. It also includes a small area of the municipality north/west of Pyramid Hill.

By 2040 the North West REZ in its entirety is proposed to host 320-480 MW of additional wind capacity and 930-1,390 MW of additional solar capacity.

While the area is shaded to indicate the zone, it is important to note that the physical land area required for generation projects is only a small percentage of this shaded area.

### VNI West

It is important to note that the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector (VNI) West is not included in the draft Victorian Transmission Plan. It is assumed by this plan that VNI West is constructed as proposed. This process does not offer the opportunity for comment on that project which is currently part of an Environmental Effects Statement process.



**Image 2** (above) – North West Strengthening Program, Kerang to Bendigo via Loddon Shire.

The North West Strengthening Program – Kerang to Bendigo will occur in Gannawarra Shire, Loddon Shire and Greater Bendigo. The scope of this 125km project is to rebuild the single circuit line from Kerang/New Kerang to Bendigo, as a high capacity double circuit line. Most of this route is within Loddon Shire.

The alignment is proposed to remain the same as the existing transmission lines, however it is expected that the replacement towers will be taller and additional lines are added to the new towers in order to create additional carrying capacity.

#### Landowners

Project proponents will need to negotiate with landowners for any rights to develop projects on their land, and a landowner has a right to say no to having new renewable generation on their property. Landowners who do agree to new renewable development will receive financial compensation that is negotiated with the developer.

#### Community

VicGrid is implementing new benefits for communities that host renewable energy zones. New REZ Community Energy Funds are proposed to support projects that improve energy supply, reliability, efficiency and affordability for business, communities and households. They will also support initiatives that create economic development opportunities from the energy transition, for example projects that build renewable energy supply chains, create jobs in the energy sector, promote renewable energy research and innovation, or help attract renewable energy investment.

#### Renewable Energy Developers

Once the REZ are declared, projects within the zones will benefit from special network access arrangements that will help protect against generators being constrained off – when generators need to limit the energy they supply due to constraints on the transmission network.

Projects outside the declared REZ will be subject to a Grid Impact Assessment, and will need to demonstrate that their project would not result in generators located within the REZ being constrained off.

The government are also currently considering changes to improve the procurement process for transmission projects in Victoria and will release further details later in 2025.

## ISSUES/DISCUSSION

Loddon Shire landowners will be impacted by both the North West REZ and the North West Strengthening Program which are included in the Draft 2025 VTP.

Loddon Shire Council is not a decision maker for this plan or the proposed infrastructure which is proposed to arise from its adoption. As an advocate for the community, it is proposed that Council make a submission to the Draft 2025 VTP.

Themes of the submission are proposed to include:

### 1. Agricultural Values of land within the draft REZ

The broad area of Loddon included within the draft REZ is high value and high productivity agricultural land. The area includes significant irrigated farmland with irrigation infrastructure. It is considered inappropriate for this highly productive food production area to be compromised by any renewable energy project which could be located on less productive and unirrigated land.

### 2. Cumulative impact on wellbeing and engagement of our community

- a. Floods
- b. VNI West
- c. Dry conditions and input cost growth
- d. Emergency Service and Volunteers Fund levy
- e. Mineral sands
- f. Renewable energy – project prospecting
- g. Murray Darling Basin water buy-backs

Areas impacted by both the draft REZ and transmission upgrade are also communities and individuals who have been impacted by challenging and stressful events over recent years. At a high level, these events have included the floods of 2022 and 2023/24, uncertainty about the alignment of VNI West, VNI West being confirmed to impact their property, low rainfall over the past 12 months impacting input costs, introduction of the Emergency Services & Volunteers Fund levy, mineral sands exploration, water buy-backs, and alleged unethical behaviour of commercial entities prospecting for renewable energy projects.

While some of these matters do not directly relate to the draft REZ, it is important to note that resilience of some landowners is a challenge and they may not be equipped to fully engage with this process or have trust that the engagement currently underway is authentic and meaningful.

VicGrid has undertaken a significantly better process than Australian Energy Market Operator - Victorian Planning to engage with the community in developing this plan, however due to the lived experience of our community, there could be low willingness to trust in the process.

### 3. Benefits to communities hosting

Council supports the proposal that communities hosting renewable energy projects see a direct benefit. These benefits should be enduring rather than once-off grants and should support economic growth of the community and support energy reliability, cost to business/households and create jobs to support long term prosperity of the community.

### 4. Authentic consultation with landowners directly impacted

- a) Renewable Energy Zone: It is unclear what the process has been to engage with landowners directly impacted by this draft plan. While acknowledging that it is impractical to directly engage with the vast area included in the REZ and also that landowners have property rights to agree or not agree to host projects regardless of inclusion, it would be beneficial to understand if any direct engagement has been undertaken (e.g. bulk letter).

- b) Landowners along the proposed upgrade of the transmission line between Kerang and Bendigo are known. Council should seek VicGrid's assurance that property owners along the transmission easement are directly informed of the proposal to upgrade the existing transmission line, are aware of any impact on their farm business and that fair financial compensation is proposed (during construction and over the asset life).

#### 5. Cost shifting to local government

- a. Environmental Effects Statement
- b. Planning permit
- c. Impact on council infrastructure

It is proposed that Council should articulate the resourcing challenges that transmission and renewable energy projects have upon councils. Council is not the decision maker for any permits as these are considered directly by the Victorian Government. As a result of this, Council is a referral agency for the permits and is asked to consider the vast body of work associated with the permit application and contribute feedback to the Environmental Effects Statement. There is no compensation paid to councils for this important work and as such it is subsidised by rate payers as a cost shift.

Through the development of renewable energy and transmission projects, it is anticipated that there will be a significant impact on local roads associated with construction and operating activities. This impact should be considered as part of the permit process, however there is a cost to Council to ensure that these impacts are adequately captured in the permit, enforcement of the conditions and monitoring. Council should seek a guaranteed commitment of this road infrastructure being returned to as *new* condition at the end of any project.

### COST/BENEFITS

There is the potential of significant financial impacts arising from the VTP. These include the infrastructure damage which would require astute management and the potential impact of lost agricultural productivity. These items have been previously mentioned within this report.

For transparency it is important to note that there is potential of a significant financial income to councils arising from the infrastructure investment of wind or solar factories. While it is not practical to apply Capital Improved Value rating to land hosting energy generation, the Victorian Government has an alternative system in place titled Payment in Lieu of Rates (PiLoR). A fact sheet about PiLoR can be found here:

[https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0031/594616/PiLoR-fact-sheet.pdf](https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/594616/PiLoR-fact-sheet.pdf)

There is a significant financial benefit to council arising from energy generation through the PiLoR system which could assist council's long term financial challenges, however the impact on Council assets and agricultural productivity must also be considered.

### RISK ANALYSIS

Council is a stakeholder and does not have any decision-making powers regarding the VTP.

Some community members will be highly supportive of the initiative based on their belief in the critical need to support the transition to renewable energy. Others will be highly critical of the VTP and the impact on the landscape and other competing land use.

There may be a reputational risk to Council if Council's role and position is not clearly articulated and communicated.

### CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Victorian Transmission Plan is being developed by the Victorian Government. Community engagement is being managed by the government and Loddon Shire is a stakeholder.

Information about the engagement activities, key documents and further information can be found on their website <https://engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan>



The Victorian Government is seeking feedback on the Draft 2025 VTP until Tuesday 24 June 2025. Once the 2025 VTP is finalised, VicGrid will begin detailed planning for the projects under each priority program. There will be further opportunities for consultation as these transmission projects are planned and developed.

**RESOLUTION 2025/89**

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council:

1. authorise the Mayor to make a submission to the Draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan on behalf of Loddon Shire Council; and
2. that the submission be generally in accordance with the issues identified within this Agenda report.

**CARRIED**

## 11 INFORMATION REPORTS

### 11.1 2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

File Number:

Author: Michelle Stedman, Director Corporate

Authoriser: Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: 1. 2025 Loddon Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey Results Report  
2. 2025 Loddon Shire Council Community Satisfaction Survey - Tailored Questions Results Report

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council note Loddon Shire Council's results from the 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councillors were briefed by JWS Research on the results of the 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey at the June 2025 Council Forum.

### BACKGROUND

The Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS) is conducted each year to gather data on how satisfied residents are with Council's resources, facilities and services. The results provide data for the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF), an annual process that requires councils to report on a number of mandatory performance indicators within various legislated reports and statements.

The CSS also presents an opportunity for Council to consider improvements that would be valued by residents and ratepayers.

Survey fieldwork for the CSS was conducted over two waves from 11 November 2024 to 16 March 2025 and represents the opinions of 500 residents (6.5% of residents). The sample of residents is matched as closely as possible to Loddon community demographics as per recent census data. As noted on page 82 of the attached CSS report, with 65 per cent of respondents aged over 50 years old. The breakdown of respondents by age demographic and ward groupings are as follows:

Age group	Percentage of respondents (%)
65 or over	43
50-54	23
35-49	18
25-34	15
18-24	2

Ward Grouping	Number of Respondents
Boort	105
Inglewood	129
Tarnagulla	79
Terrick	97
Wedderburn	90

## ISSUES/DISCUSSION

The overall performance index score for Loddon Shire Council is 58, up from a score of 53 in 2024. Council's overall performance has rated 5 points above the State-wide average and 4 points above the Small Rural group average (index scores of 53 and 54 respectively). This is a statistically significant result and positive for Loddon Shire Council and its community.

Council has either performed in line with or above the Small Rural group and State-wide averages on a majority of service areas evaluated, including Value for Money in Services and Infrastructure. Council's top three performing areas in the 2025 results are:

- Waste management (index score of 72)
- Recreational facilities (index score of 72 – up a significant 5 points from 2024)
- Appearance of public areas (index score of 71)

This is another positive result, with Council performing statistically higher than the Small Rural group and State-wide averages for Overall Performance, Value for Money, Community Decisions Waste Management and Recreational Facilities.

In contrast, Council's performance (62) has fallen behind benchmarks of both the Small Rural group and State-wide averages (66 and 65 respectively) for emergency and disaster management although this score has recovered from the previous year (59).

Loddon Shire's lowest performing areas from the 2025 survey remain consistent with previous years:

- Unsealed Roads (index score of 36)
- Sealed Local Roads (index score of 41)
- Planning and building permits (index score of 44).

All of these low-end scores however have increased from 2024, with unsealed roads and planning and building permits seeing a statistically significant jump in the 2025 results.

Loddon's lowest satisfaction scores as in previous years, continues to be unsealed roads and sealed local roads; scores for which likely continue to be impacted by ongoing flood recovery works and disaster recovery funding agreement claim processes

Another factor that Loddon contends with in its scoring for satisfaction with sealed roads are community perceptions of road management responsibilities. A number of surveyed community members identified arterial roads when asked which roads in particular they were not satisfied with Council's management of. Arterial roads are the responsibility of the Department of Transport & Planning, not Council.

Conversely, service performance reporting on Council's road management at its May council meeting indicate that despite ongoing impacts to our road network as outlined above, Loddon is operating well against its Road Management Plan (RMP) for the maintenance of its local road network with the most recent quarter seeing 98.6 per cent of defects resolved and 100 per cent of grading activities completed within timeframes outlined in the RMP.

Another contrast seen in the 2025 CSS results is that of the Planning and Building Permits service area, noting that this space is dictated by State Government process, which Council does not control. Despite its low index score of 44, service performance reports to Council at its May council meeting note that in quarter 3 of 24/25 financial year 100 per cent of planning applications were approved within statutory timeframes (well above rural shire average of 69.7 per cent), with the median processing days for Council to make a determination on applications being 27 days, well below the rural median of 58 days.

Despite internal resourcing challenges in the Building Permit space, Council has issued 133 new building permits over the last 12 month period. It is also noted that if delays are likely, then residents are advised that they can also seek private sector assistance for building survey work.

### Overall Council Direction

An index score of 46 for the overall direction of councils across the state remains within the lowest level of scores over the last ten years but is arresting the downward trajectory experienced over the previous three years. Loddon's index score is 45 in this area. This particular question asks residents to measure their views on the trajectory of Council's overall performance – having improved, stayed the same, deteriorated or can't say. This year's results on Council's direction of performance note that 74 per cent of residents feel Loddon's overall performance has either improved or stayed the same.

### Value for money in Services and Infrastructure

At an index score of 50, Loddon has improved its performance over State-wide and Small Rural groups in Value for Money. 66 per cent of those surveyed felt Loddon provided average to very good value for money in infrastructure and services provided to the community. Residents aged 35-49 and those located in Tarnagulla ward were more likely to be part of the 29 per cent that said value for money was poor or very poor.

The full results of Loddon Shire Council's Community Satisfaction Survey are attached to this report including responses to tailored questions that provided data specific to Loddon Shire.

### **COST/BENEFITS**

The Community Satisfaction Survey was administered externally by JWS Research and its cost is contained within Loddon's operational budget. The benefit of conducting the Community Satisfaction Survey is obtaining results for mandatory reporting along with valuable insight and benchmarking into how Council and its operations are perceived now and over time. It also highlights areas for improvement and is used to inform strategic and policy work.

### **RISK ANALYSIS**

There is a risk that results may reflect poorly on Council and have negative outcomes for Council's reputation, despite areas where Council has little or no control over results such as deterioration on particular roads which are not in Council's remit.

### **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

A sample of 500 residents was used to establish levels of satisfaction. A copy of the 2025 Survey results will be made available on Loddon Shire Council's website.

As in past years, data collection was undertaken at varied times over the year in order to normalise seasonal factors that may skew data outcomes.

### **RESOLUTION 2025/90**

Moved: Cr Nick Angelo

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Council note Loddon Shire Council's results from the 2025 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey.

**CARRIED**

**11.2 TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - QUARTERLY ACTIVITY****File Number:****Author:** David Stretch, Manager Tourism and Economic Development**Authoriser:** Lincoln Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer**Attachments:** 1. Jan-March 2025 Presentation**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Jan-March 2025 Tourism and Economic Development Quarterly Activity Report.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There is no conflict of interest for any Council staff member involved in the preparation of this report, or involved in the subject matter of the report.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Tourism and Economic Development Activity reports occur on the first Council Forum meeting after the conclusion of every quarter, and present and update key projects and activities that reflect and respond to the strategic objectives of the Loddon Shire Economic Development Strategy (2025-2029) and the Loddon Shire Visitor Economy Strategy (2025-2030).

This report is informed by May 2025 Council Forum report, presentation and discussion.

**BACKGROUND**

Economic development is the process of building economic capacity of an area to deliver improved social well-being and environmental outcomes for communities.

The Loddon Shire Economic Development Strategy 2025-2029 provides a framework and comprehensive plan to foster economic growth and resilience in the region. The Strategy prioritises several objectives, including optimising the agricultural sector, promoting housing development as a catalyst for growth, positioning the Council as a collaborative partner, enhancing community liability, and fostering innovative and diverse industries.

The Loddon Shire Visitor Economy Strategy 2025-2030 outlines a community-centric approach to building a sustainable and thriving visitor economy for the Loddon Shire. The Visitor Economy Strategy aims to enhance the well-being of residents and visitors by adopting a destination stewardship model that prioritises social, cultural, environmental, and economic outcomes.

Strategic Objectives - Economic Development**1. Optimised Agricultural Sector**

An optimised agricultural sector that promotes collaboration and innovation among producers, enhancing productivity, resilience, market responsiveness, and the region's capacity to attract investment, new businesses, and talent.

**2. Housing: A catalyst for growth**

A diverse and sustainable housing supply which supports economic growth by attracting and retaining residents and workers, while strengthening existing townships.

**3. Council: An advocating & collaborative partner**

Council actions that foster a growing and prosperous Loddon Shire by collaborating with businesses and industry partners, and government entities to attract investment, and promote sustainable economic growth and job creation.

**4. Liveable & Resilient Communities**

Loddon will be known for its lifestyle and opportunities, offering equitable access to services and employment, celebrated through a strong regional identity that attracts people and investment, comprised of townships that foster a sense of place and culture.

**5. Innovative & Diverse Industries**

A diverse and innovative industry base that has capabilities to respond to emerging industry, economic and policy trends, leveraging regional supply chain opportunities while value adding to the local economy.

Strategic Objectives – Visitor Economy**1. Enhancing the visitor experience**

Enhance and expand the quality and variety of visitor experiences in the Loddon Shire, strengthen connections between visitors, local people and place through authentic experiences and events, and develop infrastructure that supports placemaking, events and visitor services to improve the overall experience.

**2. Destination marketing and storytelling**

Share the unique stories of the people and place to attract visitors who value and protect the environment, culture and lifestyle. Target the right visitor markets through effective communication and partnerships, and extend visitor engagement by enhancing visitor servicing and bringing local stories to life.

**3. Stewardship - management and resourcing**

Foster strong leadership and collaboration to drive the vision for Loddon Shire visitor economy. Engage the community in tourism decision-making to build social license, and secure funding and resources to ensure stability and sustainable growth.

**ISSUES/DISCUSSION**

This report outlines Tourism and Economic Development Department activity, key operations and projects, for the period January to end March 2025:

1. REMPLAN Economic Insights
2. Spendmapp March Spending Summary Report
3. Tourism Marketing Report
4. Strategy Actions Update

## 1. REMPLAN Economic Insights (Updated April 2025)

**7,755 people**

Population (2024)

↑ 8 people from 2023

[View more...](#)**\$625.17 million**

GRP (2024)

↑ \$38.40 million from 2023

[View more...](#)**\$1.27 billion**

Output (2024)

↑ \$77.72 million from 2023

[View more...](#)**5.0%**

Unemployment Rate (Dec 2024)

↓ 0.4ppts from Dec 2023

[View more...](#)**\$174.06 million**

Wages and Salaries (2024)

↑ \$10.69 million from 2023

[View more...](#)**\$711.99 million**

Regional Exports (2024)

↑ \$43.73 million from 2023

[View more...](#)**\$302,500**

Median House Price (2024)

↓ \$2,500 from 2023

[View more...](#)**1,037**

Business Counts (Jun 2024)

↓ 1 from Jun 2023

[View more...](#)**\$10.39 million**

Residential Approvals (2023-24)

↓ \$2.37 million from 2022-23

[View more...](#)

## 2. Spendmapp Monthly Report (March 2025)



Spendmapp cleans and analyses bank transaction data by time, geography, Expenditure Category and Type allowing continuous monitoring and analysis of local economic activity.

For the month of March 2025:

1. Resident Local Spend was \$1.3M. This is a 0.63% increase from the same time last year.
2. Visitor Local Spend was \$2.2M. This is a -2.01% decrease from the same time last year.
3. Total Local Spend was \$3.5M. This is a -1.04% decrease from the same time last year.
4. Resident Escape Spend was \$4.6M. This is a -5.5% decrease from the same time last year.
5. Resident Online Spend was \$2.5M. This is a 14.44% increase from the same time last year.

The 14.44 % increase in Resident Online Spend reflects the growing national trend towards online sales. This emphasises the need for a strategy to support local traders in enhancing their online presence.

### Expenditure by Expenditure Type

These expenditure charts show the long-term pattern of expenditure activity by Expenditure Type across the Loddon Shire Council LGA. Typically, we see spending spikes at Easter and Christmas; dips in the post-Christmas period; and a steady climb through winter.

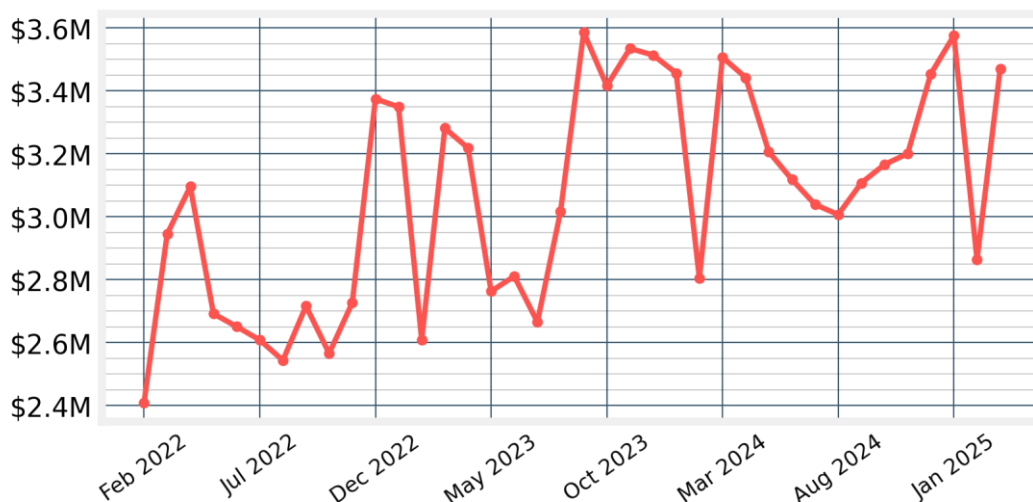
By way of a benchmark, the mean ratio of Resident Online Spend to all resident spending is 0.22. That is, for every dollar spent by resident cardholders anywhere, 22c goes online. Another 34c is in Escape Expenditure and the rest is spent locally.

Over the last few years across most of Australia, total expenditure has been relatively flat, even in fast growing municipalities. The exception to this has often been in Resident Online Spend, which continues to grow relative to Total Local Spend.



### Total Local Spend

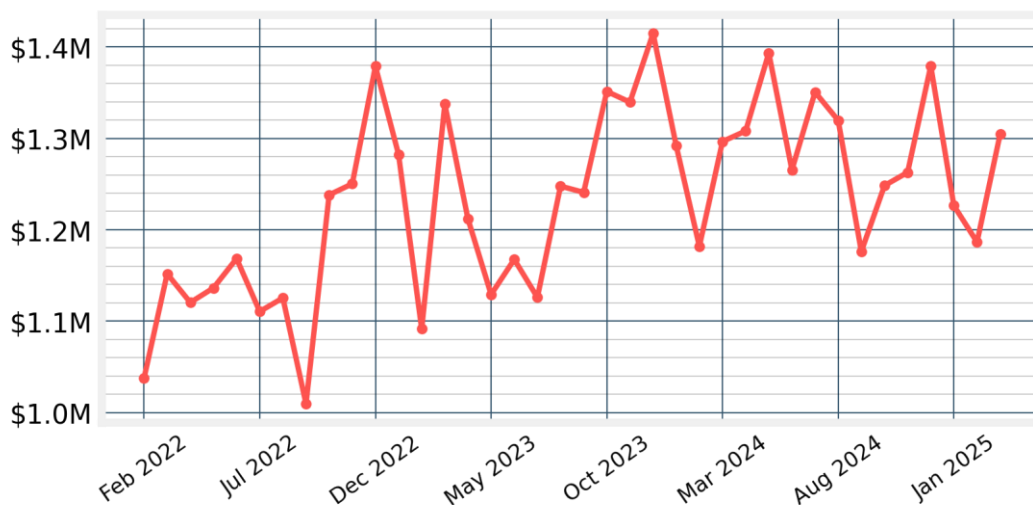
The total amount spent with merchants within the Loddon Shire Council LGA.



Over the last 38 months, the spending trend (as shown by the trendline in the Spendmapp app) for Total Local Spend has been upwards.

### Resident Local Spend

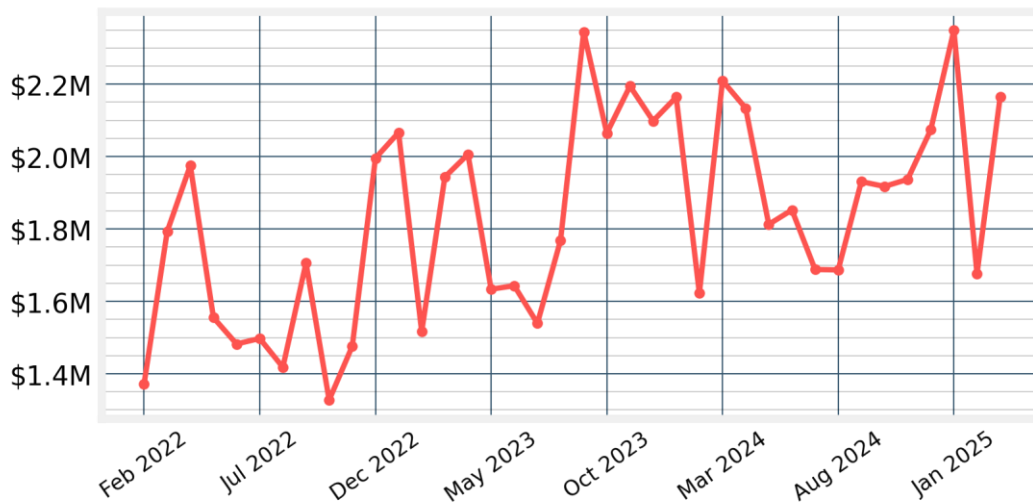
The amount spent by residents and local businesses with merchants inside the Loddon Shire Council LGA.



Over the last 38 months, the spending trend (as shown by the trendline in the Spendmapp app) for Resident Local Spend has been upwards.

### Visitor Local Spend

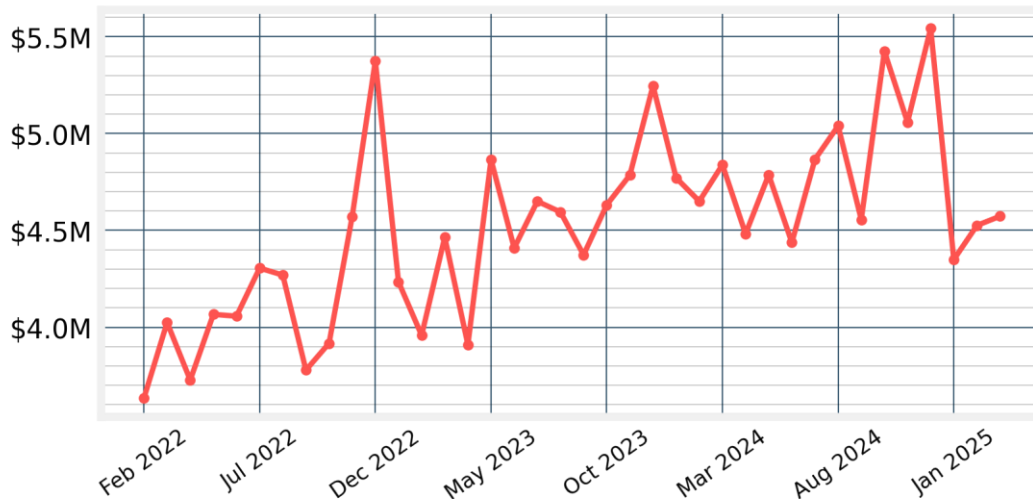
The amount spent by non-residents and non-local businesses with merchants inside the Loddon Shire Council LGA.



Over the last 38 months, the spending trend (as shown by the trendline in the Spendmapp app) for Visitor Local Spend has been upwards.

### Resident Escape Spend

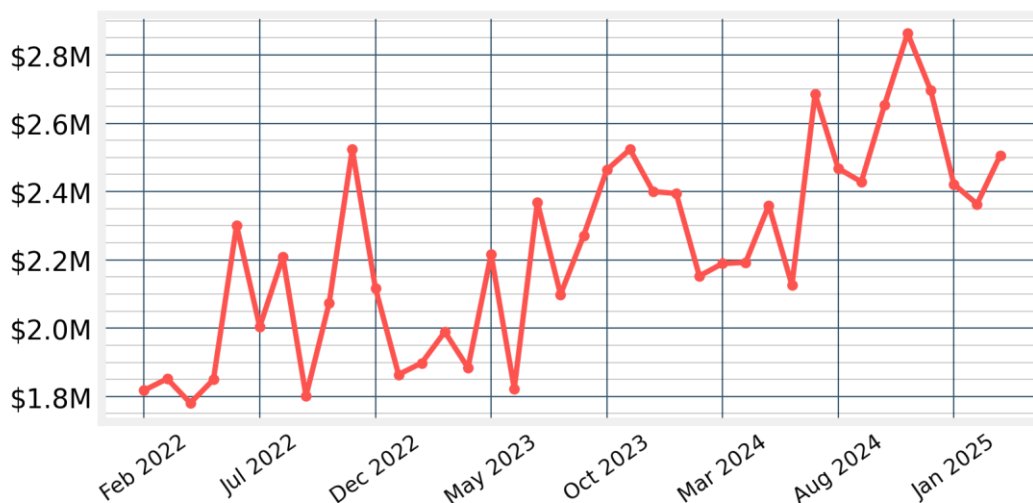
The amount spent by residents and local businesses outside the Loddon Shire Council LGA.



Over the last 38 months, the spending trend (as shown by the trendline in the Spendmapp app) for Resident Escape Spend has been upwards.

## Resident Online Spend

The amount spent by Loddon Shire Council LGA residents and local businesses with online merchants.

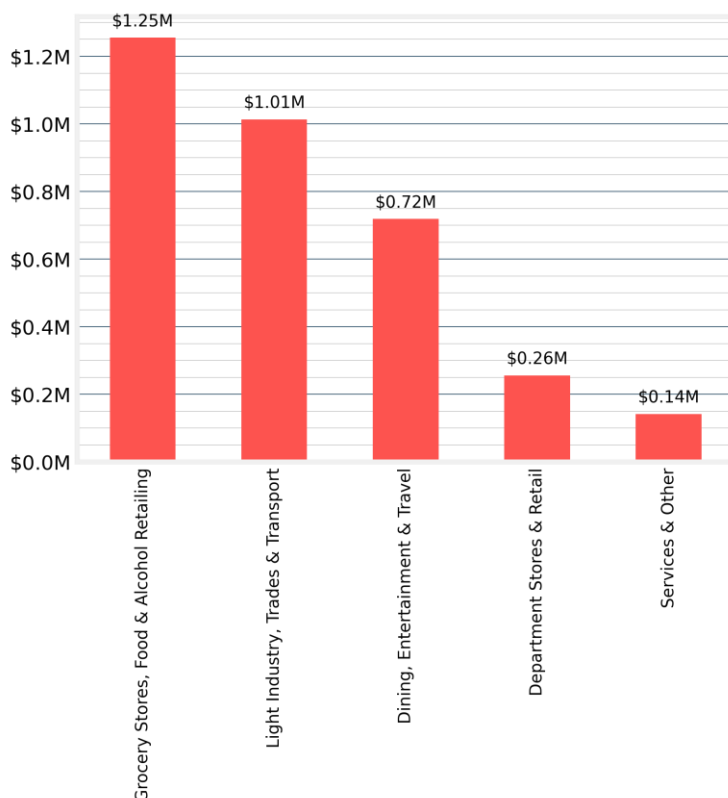


Over the last 38 months, the spending trend (as shown by the trendline in the Spendmapp app) for Resident Online Spend has been upwards.

## Expenditure by Expenditure Category

### The Top 5 Spending Categories for March 2025

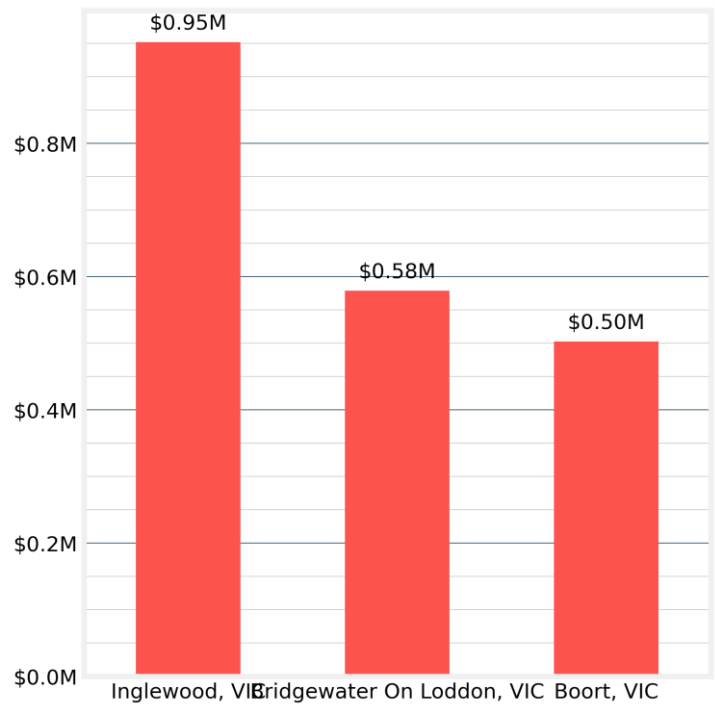
Total Local Spend split by the top 5 Expenditure Categories.



Spend by Origin and Destination

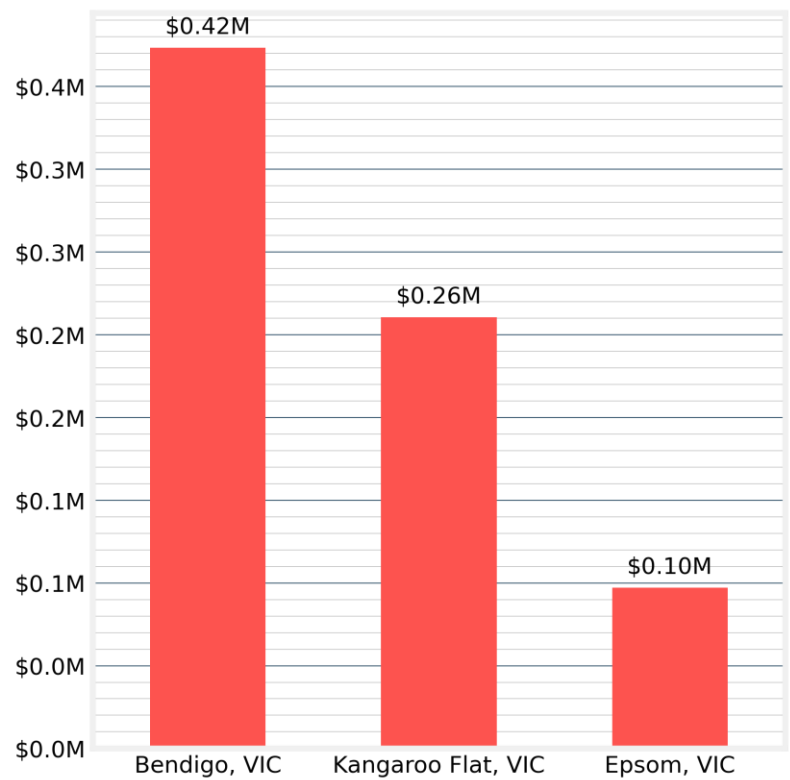
The Top 3 Suburbs by Total Local Spend for March 2025

Total Local Spend by Suburbs of destination (i.e. where the spending occurs)



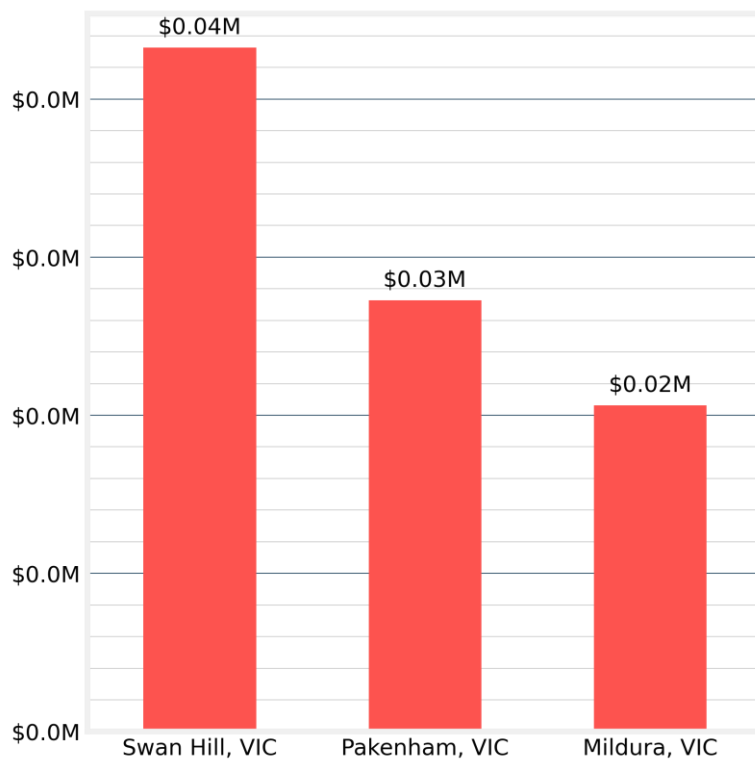
The Top 3 Suburbs by Resident Escape Spend for March 2025

Resident Escape Spend by destination Suburbs (i.e. where the spending goes to).

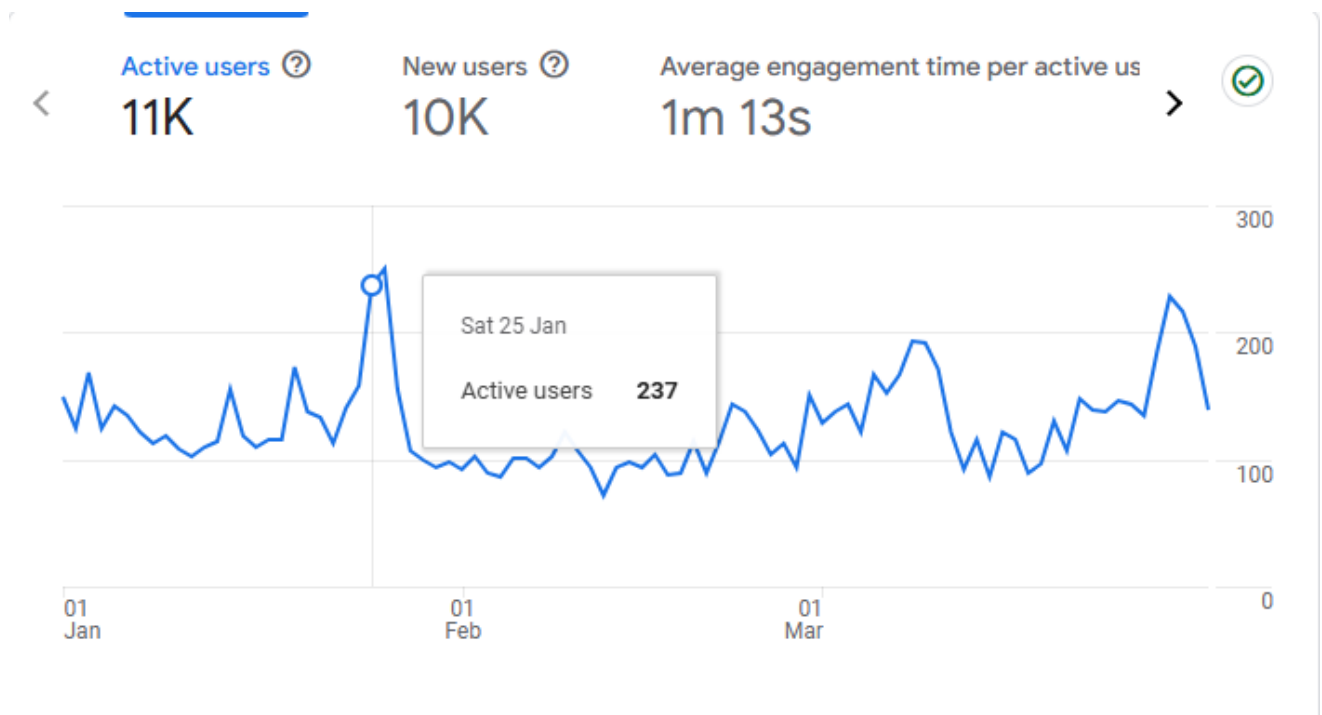


**The Top 3 Suburbs by Visitor Local Spend for March 2025**

Visitor Local Spend by Suburbs of origin (i.e. where the visitors originate).

**3. Tourism Marketing Report****Visit Loddon Valley Website (Jan-Mar 2025)**

- 11K – Users (Active on website)
- 10K – New users



## Traffic breakdown (visiting website)

- Organic search (82%)
- Direct (direct links and QR codes – 10%)
- Organic social (3.5%)
- Other (4.5%)

## Device overview (visiting website)

- Mobile – 66%
- Desktop – 30%
- Tablet 4%

## Most popular searches (visiting website)

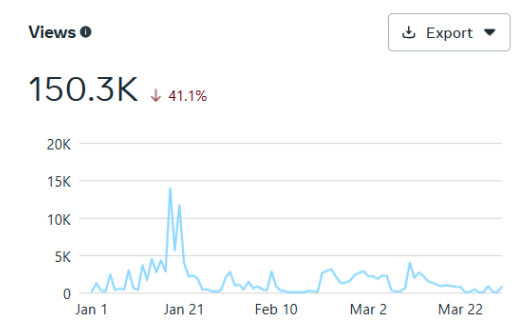
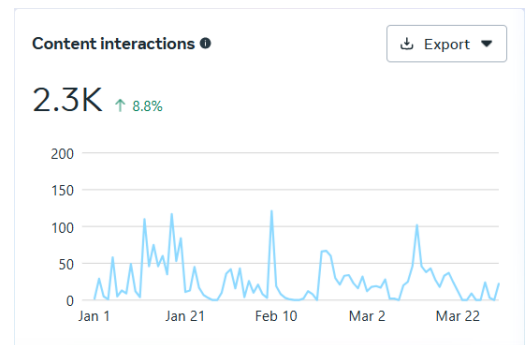
- Bridgewater on Loddon (landing page) – 1.1K views
- Spanner Man sculpture gardens – 1.1K views
- Home page – 964
- Eddington Sprints – 913
- What's On - Events - 778
- Gold prospecting – 670

**Social Media**

## Facebook (Jan-March 2025)

## Summary (3 month comparison – Oct-Dec 2024):

- 2.1K likes, 2.6K followers (3% growth)
- Content interactions (2.3K - 8.8% growth)
- Content views (150.3K – 41% decline)




## Highly engaged posts

**Visit Loddon Valley**  
Published by Jamie Roberts  
January 12

This summer, embrace the wonder of the Spanner Man Sculpture Garden, a must-visit destination in the Loddon Valley. Explore over 50 remarkable sculptures, from bulls to mermaids, all crafted from farm spanners by the late John Piccoli. Stroll through 2 hectares of lush lawns and vibrant gardens alive with birdlife—a perfect summer outing for art and nature lovers alike. Call 0408 932 181 to book your visit and experience this one-of-a-kind masterpiece.

Spanner Man - John Piccoli  
#VisitLoddonValley #SpannerMan #SummerAdventures #VisitVictoria #TravelAustralia




**Visit Loddon Valley**  
Published by Bradd Worrell  
February 20

Get ready, treasure hunters! The Wedderburn Detector Jamboree is almost here! Join us for a golden weekend filled with adventure, excitement, and the thrill of the hunt! Whether you're a seasoned prospector or a first-time fossicker, this is your chance to test your skills, uncover hidden treasures, and connect with fellow detector enthusiasts.

Expect epic detecting comps, expert tips, awesome prizes, and plenty of golden finds! Plus, soak in the charm of Wedderburn and enjoy a weekend of fun, food, and fossicking!

Date: Friday 7 – Sunday 9 March  
Location: Hardhill Tourist Reserve, Wedderburn  
#WedderburnDetectorJamboree #TreasureHunting #GoldRush #FossickingFun



See insights and ads


Boost again

Coffee to Di For and 223 others 29 comments 22 shares

**Visit Loddon Valley**  
Published by Bradd Worrell  
March 10

The Festival of Small Halls is coming to Inglewood! Join us on Saturday, 22 March 2025, at the historic Inglewood Town Hall for an unforgettable evening of live music and community spirit. Experience performances by international artists Lucy Farrell (U.K.), Hat Fitz and Cara, and local favorites The Ruminators. Enjoy a selection of country-style delicacies and a bar service provided by Black Wallaby Wines throughout the evening.

Location: Inglewood town Hall, Inglewood  
Tickets: Full admission \$25, concession \$20, children under 16 free (accompanied by an adult). Secure your spot now at <https://festivalofsmallhalls.com/inglewood-2025>  
Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to enjoy quality live music in a charming setting. See you there! #FestivalOfSmallHalls #LiveMusic #InglewoodVIC




**Visit Loddon Valley**  
Published by Bradd Worrell  
April 6 at 7:00 PM

Check it out - Restoration Australia took us inside the incredible transformation of Tivey House (aka Nimmitabel) in Inglewood!

This heritage-listed mansion, built during the gold rush for a family of 14 children, boasts 13 rooms—and after a decade of hard work it has been brought back to life in the Loddon Valley.

Stream the episode (number 1) now on ABC iview.  
<https://iview.abc.net.au/video/DQ2110H4001500>  
#RestorationAustralia #NimmitabelHouse #HistoricHomes #DreamMansion



RESTORATION AUSTRALIA

See insights and ads

Boost post

Inglewood Emporium - Vintage Collectables and 68 others 10 comments 13 shares

Visitor Information Centre

## Visitor Numbers

	January	February	March
2025	145	91*	160

\*Visitor data was under-reported in February due to technical challenges with Microsoft Power Bi Visitor Survey functionality.



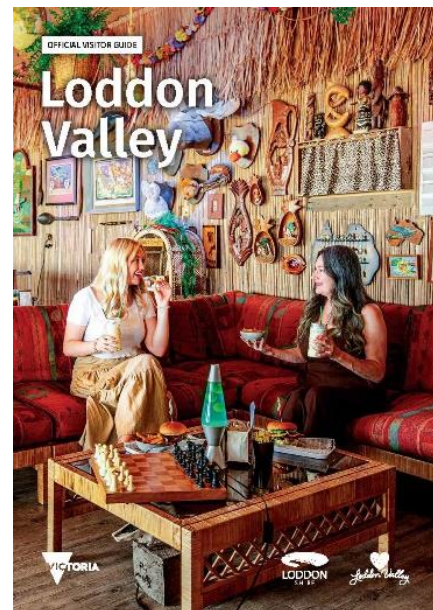
### New publications

Two new guides have been released:

#### **2025 Loddon Valley Official Visitor Guide**

The [2025 Loddon Valley Official Visitor Guide](#) is the ultimate travel companion!

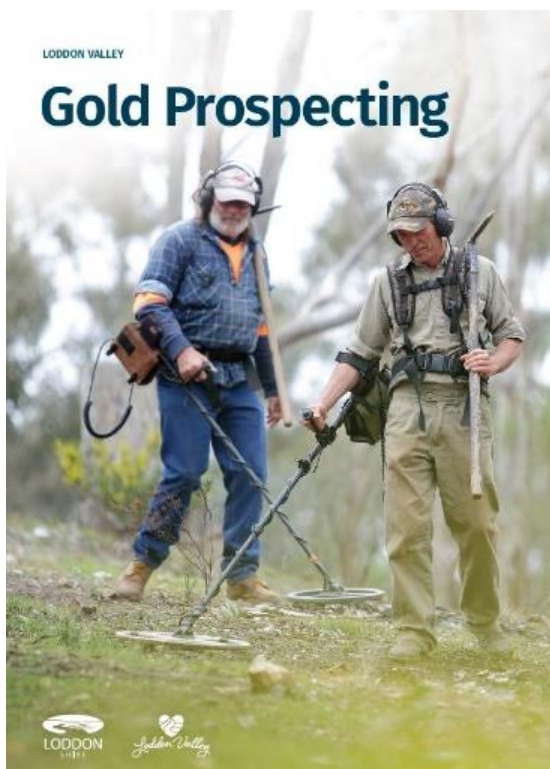
Packed with must-visit attractions, exciting events, and hidden gems, this guide will assist visitors make the most of their trip to our region.



#### **Strike gold with the new Gold Prospecting Guide!**

The brand-new [Loddon Valley Gold Prospecting Guide](#) is a must-have for treasure hunters. Covering top prospecting locations, local visitor services, and the rich history of Loddon's goldfields, this guide has everything prospectors will need to start their search.

Whether a seasoned prospector or a curious beginner, this resource will point people in the right direction. Grab a copy from the VIC today or via [this link](#).





## 4. Strategy Actions Update

Economic Development - ongoing responsibilities	Project / Activity
<b>Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met with RDV in February and March and have facilitated connection with local businesses and State Government</li> <li>• Attended City Nation Place Conference in February, met with Victorian-based businesses and local government colleagues to discuss ways to attract investment, workforce, visitors and new residents with place brand development</li> <li>• Attended meetings in February and March as an observer to the Workforce Australia Local Jobs – Bendigo Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Investment Attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting to discuss commercial liquid fertilizer production proposal for Loddon Shire. Positive conversation and have since connected with RDV and Invest Victoria, as well as meeting with Loddon Shire Stat planner to discuss plans for investment</li> <li>• Website content on LSC website being updated – Invest Loddon Mallee funded til EOFY</li> <li>• Have cleaned and re-segmented Loddon Shire business database (and client relationship management platform) Monitor CRMS to facilitate quarterly newsletters to Farming and Ag, Manufacturing and retail sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>Grant applications support to business and community organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In March, supported and encouraged an application to Victorian Distillery Door Fit-For-Purpose grant program by a local business</li> </ul>
<b>Business Liaison and Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have met with IDTC (February), Boort Tourism and Development (February), Wedderburn Tourism (January), Pyramid Hill Progress Association and Bridgewater On Loddon Development in March.</li> <li>• Have acquired enhanced functionality with the Monitor CRMS tool which will allow staff to record engagements with business and stakeholders, to provide accurate reporting on time spent serving strategic priorities</li> </ul>

<b>Skills Attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in the Bendigo Local Skills and Jobs Taskforce programs to support employment and industry, including the delivery of the Loddon Shire Employment Showcase and a Regional Mentoring Program Employment</li> </ul>
<b>2025 Eco Dev Project-Oriented Actions</b>	<b>Project / Activity</b>
<b>Optimised Agricultural Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor CRMS database clean and segment to facilitate local producer network.</li> <li>Have approached GWM Water - sits within the Grampians RDV team jurisdiction. Will be exploring project</li> </ul>
<b>Housing: A Catalyst For Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting planners re Newbridge structure planning</li> <li>Developing a project management plan for a potential residential subdivision</li> <li>Developing a Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program grant application for the Inglewood Streetscape project</li> <li>Reviewing the impacts and outcomes of the October 2024 Housing and Living Showcase</li> <li>Preparing (with LSC planners) for a Housing Round Table event for Boort in 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Council: An advocating and collaborative partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with Workforce Australia to advance planning for Loddon Workforce Expo, Pyramid Hill October 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>Liveable and Resilient Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business and Retail workshops planning for Bridgewater and Boort</li> <li>In March, facilitated the establishment of a retail traders group in Inglewood</li> <li>Preparing for the Australian Liveability Census Project, survey to take place in May/June 2025.</li> <li>Shop Loddon Campaign successfully launched in December 2024 and continues through to end December 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>Innovative and Diverse Industries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnering with CVGA, RDV and Loddon Mallee LGAs to commission a Zero Emissions Economic Opportunities Analysis for the Loddon Mallee region. Analysis will go beyond renewable energy to also investigate other opportunities for the region in the transition to a low-carbon economy.</li> </ul>

2025 Tourism BAU Actions	Project / Activity
<b>Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating Regional Events Fund, RTIF applications and promoting other funding programs</li> <li>Attendance at Bendigo Next Conference Jan 2025</li> <li>Attendance at Victorian Tourism Industry Council Seminar, Melbourne, Feb 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Industry relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating regional industry strengthening programs via Bendigo Regional Tourism including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jan 2025 Cultural Competency</li> <li>Feb 2025 ATDW Free listings</li> <li>Mar 2025 Click Region Program</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal Campaign promoting all destination experiences and seasonal highlights including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waterskiing events (national and international)</li> <li>Flavours of Loddon (Boort and Bridgewater)</li> <li>Food and Beverage</li> <li>Gold prospecting (Wedderburn Detector Jamboree)</li> <li>Camping, hiking, fishing</li> <li>Festival of Small Halls Inglewood</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Strategic partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with Dja Dja Wurrung in January to discuss Kooyoora Cultural Tours.</li> <li>Continue to work in partnership with CoGB on the development of a 'Bendigo Heathcote Loddon' Visitor Economy Partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Measuring Success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to hone Power Bi functionality to capture visitor data from Wedderburn Visitor Information Centre footfall.</li> <li>Utilise Spendmapp data to measure economic impacts from events, origin destinations of visitors, spend patterns.</li> <li>Preparing to launch Australian Liveability Census survey in May 2025</li> </ul>

2025 Tourism Project-oriented Actions	Project / Activity
<b>Enhancing the visitor experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commenced conversations with Central Goldfields Shire regarding a potential partnership to promote the Great Nuggets Landscape region (Dunolly, Moliagul, Tarnagulla) as a key component of the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid.</li> <li>Working with community tourism and progress committees on final plans for design and installation of new tourism signage in key townships</li> <li>Events support               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flavours of Loddon (Boort and Bridgewater)</li> <li>Wedderburn Detector Jamboree</li> <li>Festival Small Halls</li> <li>Water-skiing (national and international events)</li> <li>Pyramid Hill Art Show</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Destination Marketing and Storytelling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attended City Nation Place Conference Feb 2025 and have developed an RFQ brief for release in 2025.</li> <li>2025 Official Visitor Guide launched in February</li> <li>Autumn Campaign launched in March</li> <li>Welcome Shops program now established and moves to BAU</li> <li>New Gold Prospecting brochure launched in March</li> </ul>
<b>Stewardship – management and resourcing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Monitor CRMS platform has been upgraded to include an email plug-in to measure engagement with clients and assign to key objectives in new strategies – allowing the team the ability to identify areas where additional focus/support may be required</li> <li>Volunteer familiarisation tour planning in March, for trip to Bendigo for Frida Kahlo exhibition</li> <li>Contributing to VEP development and establishment, including membership of Cross Functional, Membership and Communications working groups. It is anticipated the VEP entity will be established before end 2025</li> </ul>

**COST/BENEFITS**

Per relevant operational budgets, to support relevant sections of the current Council Plan:

- 2.1 We will promote population growth to support a growing and diverse community.
- 2.1.1 Maximise opportunities to grow our population by taking advantage of all available development opportunities to expand the existing urban footprint
- 3.1 We will promote our unique tourism opportunities and support our local tourism industry
- to increase visitation to our area.
- 3.1.1 Increase the volume and value of tourism visitation
- 3.2 We will support established businesses and seek to attract new businesses to grow our
- local economy.
- 3.2.1 Provide support for economic development opportunities in the Shire
- 3.2.2 Increase the volume and value of the local economy

**RISK ANALYSIS**

Failure to invest in economic development programs can leave Loddon Shire Council businesses vulnerable to economic downturns and less capable of handling future challenges, thereby affecting the region's long-term sustainability and prosperity.

Negative impacts might include:

- Population decline
- Reduced visitation and losses to tourism businesses
- Limited business growth
- Reduction in local economic output
- Rise in unemployment
- Reduced liveability

**CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

The Tourism and Economic Development team regularly consults and engages with business and community stakeholders across the Shire, in Central Victoria and Melbourne, including but not limited to:

- Federal Government and agencies
- State Government departments and agencies
- Regional Development Victoria
- Regional Tourism Board
- Regional Local Governments
- First Nations Organisations
- Major business and employers
- Small business and retail
- Tourism, Progress and Community Groups
- Community House network
- Tourism and regional business NFPs and stakeholders

**RESOLUTION 2025/91**

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council receives and notes the Jan-March 2025 Tourism and Economic Development Quarterly Activity Report.

**CARRIED**

**12 COMPLIANCE REPORTS**

Nil

**13 URGENT BUSINESS****RESOLUTION 2025/92**

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council treat the following item as urgent business:

1. Emergency Services Volunteers Levy.

**CARRIED**

**RESOLUTION 2025/93**

Moved: Cr Miki Wilson

Seconded: Cr David Weaver

That Loddon Shire continues to condemn the Emergency Services Volunteers Levy and calls on the state government to immediately repeal the levy/tax for all Victorian rate payers, including residential, commercial and primary producers.

**CARRIED**

**14 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020:

**14.1 Chief Executive Officer Performance Review 2025**

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 3(1)(f) of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

This report contains personal information regarding the Chief Executive Officer Performance Review.

**RESOLUTION 2025/94**

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That the meeting be closed to the public in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2020 while Council considers the confidential report listed below:

14.1 Chief Executive Officer Performance Review 2025.

**CARRIED**

**RESOLUTION 2025/95**

Moved: Cr David Weaver

Seconded: Cr Nick Angelo

That Council

1. receive and note the Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Report 2025
2. review the salary component of the CEO Remuneration Package in accordance with clause 5.7.1 and 5.7.2 of the CEO Employment Contract
3. authorise the Mayor to apply an amendment to schedule two of the CEO employment contract, following the consideration of benchmarking results for CEO salaries at small rural Councils, with the amendment effective 1 November 2025.

**CARRIED**



**NEXT MEETING**

The next Meeting of Council will be held on 22 July 2025 at Wedderburn commencing at 3.00pm.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 5.02 pm.

Confirmed this.....day of..... 2025

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**CHAIRPERSON**