



Minutes

Scheduled Council Meeting

Tuesday 15 September 2026

held at 2:00 PM

Council Chambers

Swan Hill Town Hall

53 – 57 McCallum Street, Swan Hill. VIC 3585

Public Access

Open to the public and live streaming from
Council's website: www.swanhill.vic.gov.au



Vision Statement

We have a great place to live, work, and grow, shared by our diverse culture and connected community.

Our Mission

We will lead, advocate, partner, and provide efficient services and opportunities for the growth and wellbeing of our community, environment, and economy.

Our Values

Community Engagement - We ensure that our communities are consulted, listened to, and informed.

Accountability - We are transparent and efficient in our activities, and we consistently value and welcome feedback.

Leadership - We play a central role in our community - actively engaging to shape a shared vision on strategic issues, while providing strong advocacy and decisive action.

Fairness - We value and embrace the diversity of our community and ensure that all people are treated equally.

Trust - We act with integrity and earn the community's trust by being a reliable partner providing services, projects and facilities.

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1 Procedural Matters

1.1 Welcome

Mayor, Cr King assumed the chair and declared the Scheduled Council Meeting - 15 September 2026 open at 2:00 pm

1.2 Acknowledgement Of Country

Mayor, Councillor Cr King read the Acknowledgement of Country.

"Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present."

1.3 Opening Declaration

Cr Broad read the prayer.

"We beseech you Lord, that we may be granted wisdom, understanding and sincerity of purpose, in the decisions we are called on to make for the welfare of the people of the Rural City of Swan Hill."

1.4 Apologies / Leaves of Absence

Nil.

1.5 Directors / Officers Present

Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
Bruce Myers, Director of Customer and Community Services
Leah Johnston, Director of Infrastructure
Stephen Fernando, Director of Corporate Services
Dennis Hovenden, Director Development and Planning
Sharon Lindsay, Executive Assistant
Tamara Matthews, Executive Support
Amanda Smith, Economic Development and Events Officer
Helen Morris, Organisational Development Manager

1.6 Confirmation of Minutes

1.6.1 Confirmation of Minutes

Recommendation/s

That the minutes of the Scheduled Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18 August 2026 be confirmed.

CM 2026/136 Motion

MOVED Cr Jennings

That the minutes of the Scheduled Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18 August 2026 be confirmed.

SECONDED Cr Thornton

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

1.7 Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

1.8 Joint Letters and Reading of Petitions

Nil.

1.9 Public Questions Time

CM 2026/138 MOTION

MOVED Cr Rogers

That standing orders be suspended at 2:01 pm.

SECONDED Cr Englefield

The Motion was put and **CARRIED 7 / 0**

Public Question 1 - Alison Black

Robinvale Hotel Planning Application PLN2024090. The permit included two conditions. If either was not met the permit would expire. The first condition was that demolition is to commence within 12 months of the date of the permit. Given the permit was considered at the meeting of 15th July 2025 and the permit was promptly signed, the permit should have expired. Can council confirm if this is the case? And if so, what action will council take with regard to the future of the hotel.

Response from Director of Development and Planning - Dennis Hovenden:

Thankyou Alison, for your question. Council Officers over the past twelve months have worked with the owner of the Robinvale Hotel site in an effort to find a solution to the current condition of both the building and the site.

Both the owner and the Council are following statutory processes including the owner applying for an extension of his Planning permit which allows the demolition of the building, the introduction of the exclusion zone around the hotel and ultimately a final decision on the future of the building.

At this stage, Council continues to work towards a resolution using all of its statutory powers.

Public Question 2 - Alison Black

Tati Tati massacre burial site sign Centenary Park Robinvale. Can council advise, if as a result of the sign being placed in the park, the construction of Stage 2 of the adventure playground and the off-leash dog park will be delayed or cancelled? What action has Council taken to resolve this issue?

Response from Director of Development and Planning - Dennis Hovenden:

Thank you, Alison, for your question, regarding the construction of Stage 2 of the adventure playground and the off-leash dog park.

Current Status, Council has paused the project at the request of the Victorian Government's First Peoples State Relations - while it investigates claims regarding the cultural significance of the site. Council understands these claims relate to matters that had not previously been raised during the Cultural Heritage Management Plan process undertaken to support the delivery of the project.

As of 27 August, Council has also asked that First Peoples State Relations request the removal of the massacre signage as a courtesy to the community during the phase of

pause. Council is communicating with First Peoples State Relations regularly on this matter and is awaiting their advice as to next steps for this sensitive matter. At this time, Council has not made any decision regarding Stage 2 of the adventure playground or the off-leash dog park project.

CM 2026/139 MOTION**MOVED Cr Broad****That standing orders be resumed at 2:05 pm.****SECONDED Cr Rogers****The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0****1.10 Open Forum**

Nil.

2 Officer Reports for Decision

2.1 Business Facade Improvement Program 26/27 - Successful Recipients

Directorate: Development and Planning

File Number: S17-01-08-01

Purpose: For Decision

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

1. Growth and Development – Building a resilient local economy, supporting businesses, and attracting investment for a thriving future. Objective 1.1: Support housing that meets community needs and enables future population growth

1.1.1 Support diverse housing to meet community needs.

1.1.2 Strengthen Council's planning and coordination capacity to enable housing growth.

1.1.3 Proactive strategic planning for future land use.

1. Growth and Development – Building a resilient local economy, supporting businesses, and attracting investment for a thriving future. Objective 1.2: Strengthen the visitor economy by showcasing the municipality's unique places, culture, and experiences.

1.2.1 Grow the visitor economy.

1.2.2 Support a range of accommodation options to attract and retain overnight visitors.

1. Growth and Development – Building a resilient local economy, supporting businesses, and attracting investment for a thriving future. Objective 1.3: Grow local businesses and attract new investment into the municipality.

1.3.1 Be a business-friendly destination.

1.3.5 Support businesses to build a strong local workforce that meets industry needs.

Current Strategic Documents

Economic Development Strategy 2024-2030

Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council an update on the 2026/2027 Façade Improvement Program and make recommendations to Council on which applications should receive funding.

Discussion

The Business Façade Improvement Program (FIP) provides funding of up to \$5,000 per application to support eligible businesses with visible street frontages to improve their façades and enhance the appeal of the municipality's commercial and shopping precincts.

The program aligns with the development of the Swan Hill and Robinvale CBD masterplans by supporting improvements that create attractive, active and inviting shopping precincts. Together with proposed streetscape works, the façade upgrades will add vibrancy to key commercial areas and encourage increased visitation and activity across the region.

The 2026/2027 budget for the Façade Improvement Program is \$50,000.

Eligible projects may include:

- Repainting of building facade and windows;
- Installation/upgrade of business signage;
- Renewal of exterior lighting or awning/structure;
- Digital displays;
- Repair or replacements of verandas;
- Improvements to frontages (e.g. server windows, bi-fold doors or large windows) - excluding security screens and doors;
- Cleaning of existing facade and removal of redundant signage/air conditioning units or hoardings;
- Minor repairs, maintenance, or reinstatement of missing elements of the facade; and
- Limited permanent interior improvements (if visible from the exterior)

An assessment panel comprising Mayor Cr Stuart King, Cr Philip Englefield, Chief Executive Officer, Director Development and Planning and the Development Manager evaluated all applications against the program criteria.

Applications were assessed against the following factors to determine funding priorities:

- Increased appeal of the business frontage;
- Use of local trades/suppliers to undertake proposed works; and
- Increased visual amenity of the towns streetscape

Applications

A total of 17 applications were received for the 2026/2027 round, of which 14 were eligible and 12 are recommended for funding.

This is the second round of the façade grants program, with community interest again extremely encouraging. The Economic Development Unit will continue to review the program, with input from the assessment panel, to refine and strengthen future rounds and achieve the best outcomes for Council and the broader community.

Successful Grants

The program is recommending support for 12 businesses located throughout the municipality including Lake Boga, Piangil, Robinvale and Swan Hill.

List of recommended applications

Business name	Project Location	Type of works	Total Funded
Commercial Hotel Lake Boga	9 Marraboor street Lake Boga	Renewing lighting	\$2,700
Duguid Industrial Supplies	10-12 Chapman Street, Swan Hill	Painting, Installing/upgrading signage	\$5,000
Voyage Fitness Swan Hill	121-123 Campbell Street, Swan Hill	Installing/upgrading signage	\$1,925
Riverina Paint Co Pty Ltd (Inspirations Paint)	14 Chapman Street Swan Hill	Painting	\$1,000
Nursub Pty Ltd ATF 369 Campbell Unit Trust	369 Campbell Street, Swan Hill	Repairing/replacing verandah, Removal of cladding, unwanted materials eg. signage, cladding, hoardings, Reinstatement of lost materials or elements to the facade	\$2,000
Mallee Roasters	68 Murray Street, Piangil	Installing/upgrading signage, Renewing lighting, Other:	\$5,000
Fruitiva/ Fresh Vibe Juices Pty Ltd	24 Perrin Street, Robinvale	Installing/upgrading signage, Renewing lighting, Removal of cladding, unwanted materials eg. signage, cladding, hoardings	\$2,355

G&S Mase ATF G&S Mase Superannuation Fund	174 Campbell Street, Swan Hill	Repairing/replacing verandah, Removal of cladding, unwanted materials eg. signage, cladding, hoardings, Reinstatement of lost materials or elements to the facade	\$4,500
Kennedys Showcase Jeweller	195 Campbell Street, Swan Hill	Installing/upgrading signage, Cleaning existing facade	\$5,000
O'Shea Services Pty Ltd	23 Shepherd Road, Swan Hill	Painting, Installing/upgrading signage	\$3,500
A1 Autoparts Swan Hill	1/6 Chapman Street, Swan Hill	Installing/upgrading signage*	\$5,000
Swan Hill Cinemas Pty Ltd	2 & 3/43 McCrae Street, Swan Hill	Painting, Installing/upgrading signage	\$3,000
			\$40,980

Council's \$40,980 investment in grant funding will leverage approximately \$145,000 in façade upgrades over the next six months, with businesses contributing the balance with works to be delivered predominantly by local trades and suppliers.

Of the \$50,000 allocated to the 2026/2027 Facade Improvement Program, approximately \$9,000 remains unallocated. It is recommended that the remaining funds be carried forward into the 2027/2028 financial year and added to the next program allocation, allowing Council to consider additional applications as the program grows and businesses see the benefits of façade improvements being delivered.

Consultation

The community was made aware of the funding opportunities through local newspapers, WIN News, Council's website, social media posts detailing guidelines, submission dates and link to grant application portal.

Financial Implications

Council set a budget of \$50,000 for the Facade Improvement Program for the 2026-2027 round.

Social Implications

Council's investment in business façade improvements enhances the visual appeal of our streetscapes, creating a more attractive and welcoming environment for both

visitors and locals and aligns with current CBD masterplans in both Swan Hill and Robinvale.

Economic Implications

Projects to the value of approximately \$145,000 will be completed by successful applicants. Proposed works must be completed within six months of receiving successful notification.

As part of the assessment criteria, applicants who nominated local tradespeople and suppliers to complete their façade improvement works were prioritised. This approach supports a larger economic benefit for our region by encouraging the use of local businesses.

Environmental Implications

Nil.

Risk Management Implications

Successful applicants will be required to enter a Funding Agreement with Council. This will be to ensure that the applicant organisation is aware of its responsibilities in terms of delivering the project safely, by qualified persons, to relevant standards and with appropriate insurances in place.

Attachments: Nil

Options

1. That Council approve the 2026-2027 Facade Improvement Program successful applications.
2. That Council does not approve the 2026-2027 Facade Improvement Program successful applications.

Recommendation/s

That Council approve the 2026-2027 Facade Improvement Program allocation and notify the successful applicants.

CM 2026/140 Motion

MOVED Cr Jennings

That Council approve the 2026-2027 Facade Improvement Program allocation and notify the successful applicants, and that unsuccessful applicants be advised of the reasons for the decision.

SECONDED Cr Englefield

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

2.2 In-principle adoption of Financial and Performance Statements 2025-26

Directorate: Corporate Services

File Number: S15-28-22

Purpose: For Decision

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

4. Leadership - We will ensure accountable leadership, advocacy and transparent decision making.

4.1 Excellent management and administration

4.1.1 Well managed resources for a sustainable future

4.1.2 Provide robust governance and effective leadership

4.1.3 Sound, sustainable:

- Financial management • Excellence in service delivery • Strategic planning

Current Strategic documents

Annual Report

Declarations of Interest:

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the matter of this report.

Summary

The Local Government Act requires that Council adopt its Annual Statements incorporating the Performance Statement and General Purpose Financial Statements 'in-principle' prior to the Auditor-General issuing an Audit Opinion on the Statements. The draft Statements have been prepared for 'in-principle' adoption.

Discussion

The primary purpose of a local government's Performance Statement is to make the council accountable to the community by reporting on its performance against strategic objectives and budget commitments for the financial year.

Local Government General Purpose Financial Statements provide information for decision-making and demonstrate accountability for public funds by reporting on the council's financial position, performance, and cash flows. They serve to inform residents, regulators, and other stakeholders about how public money is spent, ensuring transparency and accountability in the delivery of local services. These statements help users understand the council's financial health, how well it is managing its assets and liabilities, and whether it is effectively and efficiently serving

the community. The financial statements for the 2025-26 financial year report the following (in \$'000):

Statement	Item	Amount
Income Statement	Surplus	15,711
	Underlying Result *	1,646
Balance Sheet	Property, Plant & Equipment	721,183
	Cash, Equivalents & Term Deposits	56,390
	Loans & Leases	1,117
	Net Assets	773,245
Cash Flow	Cash Provided by Operations	29,571
	Cash Used in Asset Investments	(31,134)
	Cash Used in Finance Activities	(1,229)
	Net Cash Decrease	(2,792)
Capital Works	Total Capital Expenditure	24,463

* Note: This figure is not separately shown in the Income Statement but is calculated using the figures in the Income Statement. The figure is used in calculating the Adjusted Underlying Result Ratio.

The favourable result as reported in the Comprehensive Income Statement of \$15.7 million (m) has been impacted by the following:

- Part pre-payment of the Federal Assistances Grants (FAGs) 2026-27 funding. An advance payment of \$7.8m was received in late June (refer Note 3.3)
- A portion of the FAGs for 2025/26 being received in advance in 2024/25.
- \$4.2m of contributed assets received from new developments (refer Note 3.4).

The FAGs funding received in advance will be used to provide Council services for the 2026-27 year. The contributed assets now form part of Council's infrastructure and will be monitored and maintained as per the requirements of each asset class.

The Performance Statement and the General Purpose Financial Statements for 2025-26 have been prepared and presented for audit by the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO).

Council's Audit Committee met to review the Draft Statements on 02 September 2026. The Audit Committee recommended that Council adopt the statements "in-principle". As required under the Local Government Act these draft statements are attached and are presented to Council for 'in-principle' adoption.

The VAGO and Local Government Victoria both accept that adoption is 'in-principle' and is therefore not seen as a certification by Council as to the accuracy of the information being adopted.

It is anticipated that the final audit process will be completed shortly after Council adopts the Statements 'in-principle', at which time the Statements will be available for signing by the two appointed Councillors; Cr. King and Cr. Jennings, as per Council resolution number CM 2026/87 of 21 July 2026. The audited statements,

together with the audit opinion, will be included in the Annual Report. The draft Annual Report will be presented for adoption by Council by end October.

Consultation

The draft Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement were presented to the Audit and Risk Committee for review and endorsement on 02 September 2026. Both statements have been reviewed by the VAGO. Both the Financial Statement and Performance Statement form part of the Annual Report.

Financial Implications

Nil.

Social Implications

Nil.

Economic Implications

Nil.

Environmental Implications

Nil.

Risk Management Implications

Duly audited financial statements is a cornerstone of good financial governance. Failure to adopt the Statements 'In-Principle' will contravene the Local Government Act.

- Attachments:**
1. Annual Financial Statements- GPF S-2026 (1) [2.2.1 - 57 pages]
 2. Performance Statement - SHRCC Annual Report 2025-26 (3) [2.2.2 - 21 pages]

Options

1. Adopt 'in-principle' the draft Performance Statement and the General Purpose Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year as presented.
2. Not adopt the draft Performance Statement and the General Purpose Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year as presented.

Recommendation/s

That Council adopt 'in-principle' the draft Performance Statement and General Purpose Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year as presented.

CM 2026/141 Motion**MOVED Cr Thornton**

That Council adopt 'in-principle' the draft Performance Statement and General Purpose Financial Statements for the 2025-26 financial year as presented.

SECONDED Cr Jennings**The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0**

Swan Hill Rural City Council

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT
for the year ended 30 June 2026



Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report

for the year ended 30 June 2026

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Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

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Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Stephen Fernando CPA
Principal Accounting Officer
Date:
Swan Hill Rural City Council

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of the Swan Hill Rural City Council for the year ended 30 June 2026 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances which would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

Mr Stuart King
Councillor (Mayor)
Date:
Swan Hill Rural City Council

Mr Terry Jennings
Councillor
Date:
Swan Hill Rural City Council

Mr Scott Barber
Chief Executive Officer
Date:
Swan Hill Rural City Council

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Report

Insert VAGO Report here

UNCONFIRMED

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Report (continued)

Insert VAGO Report here

UNCONFIRMED

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Understanding Council's Financial Statements

Introduction

Each year, individual Local Governments across Victoria are required to present a set of audited financial statements to their council and community.

What you will find in the Report

The financial report set out the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of Council for the financial year ended 30 June 2026.

The format of the financial report is standard across all Victorian Councils and complies with both the accounting and reporting requirements of Australian Accounting Standards and requirements as set down by Local Government Victoria.

About the Certification of the Financial Statements

The financial statements must be certified by senior staff and Councillors as "presenting fairly" the Council's financial results for the year as well as Council's financial position, and are required to be adopted by Council - ensuring both responsibility for and ownership of the financial statements.

About the Primary Financial Statements

The financial statements incorporate 5 "primary" financial statements:

1. Comprehensive Income Statement

Summarises Council's financial performance for the year, listing all income & expenses.

Includes other comprehensive income which primarily records changes in the fair values of Council's property, infrastructure, plant and equipment.

2. Balance Sheet

A 30 June snapshot of Council's financial position indicating its assets, liabilities and "net wealth".

3. Statement of Changes in Equity

The overall change for the year (in dollars) of Council's "net wealth".

4. Statement of Cash Flows

Indicates where Council's cash came from and where it was spent.

5. Statement of Capital Works

This statement details all amounts expended by Council on capital works.

About the Notes to the Financial Report

The Notes to the financial statements provide greater detail and additional information on the 5 primary financial statements.

About the Auditor's Reports

Council's financial statements are required to be audited by the Victorian Auditor General's office.

The auditor provides an audit report which gives an opinion on whether the financial statements present fairly the Council's financial performance and position.

Who uses the Financial Report?

The financial report is a publicly available document and is used by (but not limited to) Councillors, residents and ratepayers, employees, suppliers, contractors, customers, Local Government Victoria, state and federal governments, and financiers including banks and other financial institutions.

The financial statements must be presented at a Council meeting no later than 1 month after submitting the annual report to the Minister.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Comprehensive Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Income / Revenue			
Rates and charges	3.1	35,013	33,508
Statutory fees and fines		944	983
User fees	3.2	4,906	4,574
Grants - operating	3.3	15,258	15,921
Grants - capital	3.3	11,648	7,027
Contributions - monetary		355	337
Contributions - non monetary	3.4	4,160	777
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		438	231
Other income	3.5	5,934	5,475
Total income / revenue		78,656	68,833
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	21,052	20,522
Materials and services	4.2	22,939	21,301
Depreciation	4.3	16,116	14,467
Depreciation - Right of use assets		128	141
Allowance for impairment losses		18	41
Borrowing costs		54	57
Finance Costs - Leases		23	25
Other expenses	4.4	2,615	4,751
Total expenses		62,945	61,305
Surplus		15,711	7,528
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1	17,518	43,499
Total other comprehensive income		17,518	43,499
Total comprehensive result		33,229	51,027

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Balance Sheet

as at 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	5,079	7,871
Other financial assets	5.1	51,311	43,999
Trade and other receivables	5.1	9,276	8,788
Inventories		260	242
Contract assets		889	1,001
Other assets		769	552
Total current assets		67,584	62,453
Non-current assets			
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	721,183	693,342
Right-of-use assets		348	450
Intangible assets	5.2	3,981	3,584
Other assets		50	50
Total non-current assets		725,562	697,426
Total assets		793,146	759,879
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.3	5,095	6,611
Trust funds and deposits		386	489
Contract and other liabilities	5.3	4,851	2,562
Provisions	5.5	5,198	5,028
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	244	785
Lease liabilities		120	123
Total current liabilities		15,894	15,598
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	5.5	3,254	2,930
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	508	995
Lease liabilities		245	340
Total non-current liabilities		4,007	4,265
Total liabilities		19,901	19,863
Net assets		773,245	740,016
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		364,488	348,777
Reserves	9.1	408,757	391,239
Total Equity		773,245	740,016

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Statement of Changes in Equity
for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	Total \$ '000	Accumulated Surplus \$ '000	Revaluation Reserves \$ '000
2026				
Balance at beginning of the financial year		740,016	348,777	391,239
Surplus		15,711	15,711	–
Other comprehensive income				
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1	17,518	–	17,518
Other comprehensive income		17,518	–	17,518
Total comprehensive income		33,229	15,711	17,518
Balance at end of the financial year		773,245	364,488	408,757
2025				
Balance at beginning of the financial year		688,989	341,249	347,740
Surplus		7,528	7,528	–
Other comprehensive income				
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1	43,499	–	43,499
Other comprehensive income		43,499	–	43,499
Total comprehensive income		51,027	7,528	43,499
Balance at end of the financial year		740,016	348,777	391,239

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$ '000	2025 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$ '000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges		34,120	32,437
Statutory fees and fines		882	891
User fees		4,908	4,577
Grants - operating		15,352	15,973
Grants - capital		13,841	6,787
Contributions - monetary		355	337
Interest received		2,700	3,062
Trust funds and deposits taken/(repaid)		(103)	75
Other receipts		5,293	9,814
Net GST refund		3,146	3,489
Employee costs		(20,916)	(20,497)
Materials and services		(22,593)	(20,836)
Other payments		(7,414)	(5,762)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	9.2	29,571	30,347
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(24,366)	(27,684)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		544	2,255
Payments for investments		(7,312)	(606)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(31,134)	(26,035)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Finance costs		(54)	(57)
Repayment of borrowings		(1,028)	(290)
Interest paid - lease liability		(23)	(25)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(124)	(136)
Net cash flow provided by/(used in) financing activities		(1,229)	(508)
Net Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(2,792)	3,804
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		7,871	4,067
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		5,079	7,871
Financing arrangements	5.6	952	1,980

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Statement of Capital Works
for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Property			
Land		—	1,226
Total land		—	1,226
Buildings		8,667	11,378
Total buildings		8,667	11,378
Total property		8,667	12,604
Plant and equipment			
Plant, machinery and equipment		2,417	1,953
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		73	—
Computers and telecommunications		111	195
Library books		105	166
Total plant and equipment		2,706	2,314
Infrastructure			
Sealed roads		8,500	7,787
Unsealed roads		637	131
Footpaths and cycleways		706	791
Drainage		274	217
Recreational, leisure and community facilities		164	267
Waste management		—	17
Parks, open space and streetscapes		583	1,757
Other infrastructure		2,226	1,865
Total infrastructure		13,090	12,832
Total capital works expenditure		24,463	27,750
Represented by:			
New asset expenditure		1,521	7,068
Asset renewal expenditure		20,637	15,545
Asset upgrade expenditure		2,305	5,137
Total capital works expenditure		24,463	27,750

The above statement of capital works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1. Overview

Introduction

The Swan Hill Rural City Council was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on 20 January 1995 and is a body corporate.

The Council's main office is located at 45 Splatt St Swan Hill.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 2020*, and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

The Council is a not-for-profit entity and therefore applies the additional AUS paragraphs applicable to a not-for-profit entity under the Australian Accounting Standards.

Accounting policy information

1.1 Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Specific accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, except for the cash flow information, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the fair value of land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1.)
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1.).
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.5.).
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.5.)
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* (refer to Note 3.3)
- whether or not AASB 1059 *Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors* is applicable
- other areas requiring judgements

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1. Overview (continued)

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

1.2 Impacts of other external events

Council has considered ongoing external events that have contributed to volatility in international markets, disrupted global supply chains and increased inflationary pressure, including the risk that they may cause significant changes in the carrying values of assets and liabilities in the next financial year, and has concluded that there is no material impact on the 2025-26 financial report that requires additional disclosure.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2. Analysis of our results

Note 2.1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of the lower of 10 percent or \$1,000,000 where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

2.1.1 Income / Revenue and expenditure

	Budget 2026 \$ '000	Actual 2026 \$ '000	Variance \$ '000	Variance %	Ref
Income / Revenue					
Rates and charges	34,740	35,013	273	0.79%	
Statutory fees and fines	1,140	944	(196)	(17.19)%	1
User fees	4,668	4,906	238	5.10%	
Grants - operating	11,099	15,258	4,159	37.47%	2
Grants - capital	15,740	11,648	(4,092)	(26.00)%	3
Contributions - monetary	263	355	92	34.98%	4
Contributions - non monetary	—	4,160	4,160	∞	5
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	99	438	339	342.42%	6
Other income	9,248	5,934	(3,314)	(35.83)%	7
Total income / revenue	76,997	78,656	1,659	2.15%	
Expenses					
Employee costs	22,660	21,052	1,608	7.10%	
Materials and services	19,085	22,939	(3,854)	(20.19)%	8
Depreciation	15,995	16,116	(121)	(0.76)%	
Depreciation - right of use assets	126	128	(2)	(1.59)%	
Allowance for impairment losses	1	18	(17)	(1,700.00)%	9
Borrowing costs	57	54	3	5.26%	
Finance costs - leases	23	23	—	0.00%	
Other expenses	3,724	2,615	1,109	29.78%	10
Total expenses	61,671	62,945	(1,274)	(2.07)%	
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	15,326	15,711	385	2.51%	

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Explanation
1.	Building Department income was below budget due to the inability to recruit suitably qualified building surveyor staff.
2.	Timing of Grants Commission funding. June 2025 Council received 50% (\$4.8m) of its 2025-26 allocation and therefore reported as income in the 2024-25 year. June 2026 Council received 80% (\$7.8m) of its 2026-27 allocation and reported within the 2025-26 result.
3.	Funding forecast for the Swan Hill Showgrounds - Regional Hub \$4m is awaiting funding outcome.
4.	Resort and Recreation contributions from developments was greater than budget.
5.	Following the completion of external land developments various sealed roads, drainage, footpaths and parks and open space assets were contributed to Council. The value of these assets has now been recognised as contributions, which were previously not budgeted for.
6.	Plant and equipment turnover was higher than forecast due to delivery delays experienced in the previous financial year. As a result, the assets were received and associated trade-ins processed during the 2025/26 financial year.
7.	Tower Hill land sales were \$4.0m below forecast due to the delay of Stage 16 development. Interest income was \$651,000 better than budget.
8.	Most of the materials and services variance is the result of works budgeted as capital expenditure but deemed not to meet capitalisation thresholds and requirements and was therefore expensed (\$2.04m). The variance also includes expenditure items that exceed budget for sealed road maintenance (\$340k), debt collection expenses (\$108k), contractors engaged to fill staff vacancies (\$428k) and costs for IT software and security (\$352k). Under AASB 1058 <i>Income of Not-for-Profit Entities</i> , local governments must recognise the fair value of volunteer services received as both an income and expense (\$291k). This amount was not forecast.
9.	The provision allowance increased due to higher provisions for parking infringements (\$32k) and other debtors (\$17k). This was partially offset by a reduction in rates debtors (\$31k). No budget had been allocated for this movement.
10.	Major operational projects at the Swan Hill Landfill have been delayed and awaiting further site reviews.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

2.1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2026 \$ '000	Actual 2026 \$ '000	Variance \$ '000	Variance %	Ref
Property					
Land	2,790	—	(2,790)	(100.00)%	1
Total land	2,790	—	(2,790)	(100.00)%	
Buildings	15,155	8,667	(6,488)	(42.81)%	2
Total buildings	15,155	8,667	(6,488)	(42.81)%	
Total property	17,945	8,667	(9,278)	(51.70)%	
Plant and equipment & culture and heritage					
Heritage plant and equipment	300	—	(300)	(100.00)%	3
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,724	2,417	693	40.20%	4
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	429	73	(356)	(82.98)%	5
Computers and telecommunications	640	111	(529)	(82.66)%	6
Library books	160	105	(55)	(34.38)%	7
Total plant and equipment & culture and heritage	3,253	2,706	(547)	(16.82)%	
Infrastructure					
Sealed roads	11,781	8,500	(3,281)	(27.85)%	8
Unsealed roads	1,310	637	(673)	(51.37)%	9
Footpaths and cycleways	269	706	437	162.45%	10
Drainage	1,801	274	(1,527)	(84.79)%	11
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	1,033	164	(869)	(84.12)%	12
Parks, open space and streetscapes	1,105	583	(522)	(47.24)%	13
Other infrastructure	3,572	2,226	(1,346)	(37.68)%	14
Total infrastructure	20,871	13,090	(7,781)	(37.28)%	
Total capital works expenditure	42,069	24,463	(17,606)	(41.85)%	
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	14,892	1,521	(13,371)	(89.79)%	
Asset renewal expenditure	21,004	20,637	(367)	(1.75)%	
Asset upgrade expenditure	6,173	2,305	(3,868)	(62.66)%	
Total capital works expenditure	42,069	24,463	(17,606)	(41.85)%	

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref Explanation

1. The budget allowed \$2.8m for the Tower Hill stage 16 development, works are yet to commence.
2. Budgeted projects include the Swan Hill Showgrounds Regional Hub (\$5.1m), Robinvale workers accommodation (\$5m), Art Gallery redevelopment (\$2m) and construction of the Tourism & Cultural Hub (\$1.9m). The Art Gallery redevelopment and Tourism & Cultural Hub works are complete, Robinvale workers accommodation is scheduled for completion in August 2026, and design works for the Swan Hill Showgrounds Regional Hub are in progress.
3. The budget included Gem caulking and protective works (\$150k), D3 Locomotive restoration (\$100k) and Pental Island Native Seedbank Nursery (\$50k). Gem caulking and protective coating works are in progress, while the D3 Locomotive restoration and Seedbank Nursery works are yet to commence.
4. Plant and equipment renewal expenditure exceeded budget due to the delivery of plant items ordered in the prior financial year.
5. The budgeted Neighbourhood Battery Program (\$396k) funding application was unsuccessful and did not proceed. Actual expenditure related to Council Chambers upgrades.
6. The budgeted Pioneer Settlement transitional experience (\$500k) funding application was unsuccessful and did not proceed. Actual expenditure includes IT equipment replacement.
7. Budget and actual expenditure includes Library collection purchases.
8. The budget allowed \$6.7m for Karinie street reconstruction, \$1.4m for resealing works and \$1.1m for sealed road reconstructions. Actual expenditure includes work currently underway at Karinie Street, together with resealing and reconstruction works.
9. The budget included gravel roads resheeting (\$810k) and Roads to Recovery gravel resheeting program (\$500k). Actual expenditure includes gravel resheeting works.
10. Footpaths and cycleways budget included Manangatang (CBD to school \$68k) works, footpath replacement programs (\$70k) and disabled kerb crossing works (\$37k). These works are complete, along with additional footpath works in Robinvale and Woorinen South due to additional funding received.
11. The budget allowed for Robinvale drainage stage 2 (\$1.3m) and Swan Hill stormwater upgrades (\$501k). The majority of actual expenditure relates to drainage works undertaken in connection with road works.
12. Recreation facilities budget included Robinvale Recreation Reserve change room redevelopment (\$505k), Swan Hill Sporting Precinct implementation (\$438k) and Alan Garden Reserve irrigation works (\$70k). Alan Garden irrigation works are complete, Swan Hill Sporting Precinct works are underway and Robinvale Recreation Reserve change rooms are awaiting funding outcomes.
13. Parks, open space and streetscapes budget included the Nyah Riverfront masterplan implementation (\$60k), Robinvale Off Leash Dog Park (\$250k), renewal irrigation systems (\$392k), playground equipment renewal (\$116k) and Swan Hill CBD street beautification works (\$200k). Actual expenditure includes the Nyah Riverfront masterplan implementation, playground equipment renewal and Tower Hill works originally budgeted for under land.
14. The Other Infrastructure budget included Pental Island pedestrian bridge upgrade (\$1m), Ten Steps renewal (\$575k), Riverside Park mooring platform (\$575k), Recreation Reserve lighting (\$400k) and Pental Island cultural tourism development (\$291k). The Ten Steps renewal was completed during the year, works are underway on the Riverside Park mooring platform and Pental Island pedestrian bridge, and the Recreation Reserve lighting is yet to commence.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

2.2.1 Analysis of Council results by program

Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

Economic growth

Economic growth will encourage new business development, provide support for business expansion and will continuously seek to help our existing businesses to prosper. This function provides, building and planning statutory services, management of caravan parks, economic development programs, regulatory services and parking control, management of the Pioneer Settlement and regional visitor information centre.

Community enrichment

Community enrichment function will provide a range of services to individuals and to the broader community that assist all in our community to live healthy, fulfilling lives. We will embrace our role as a regional centre by providing a range of cultural opportunities. The community enrichment function includes aged care services, maternal and child health, after school and vacation programs, libraries, art gallery and performing arts.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure will provide and maintain publicly accessible infrastructure that is appropriate for the community's needs in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The infrastructure function is responsible for constructing new infrastructure and maintaining existing infrastructure across the municipality.

Governance and leadership

Governance and leadership provides efficient, effective and proactive support services across Council to enable the delivery of policy commitments, Council vision and mission. The function will plan for our municipality's long term growth and development by committing to a robust program of strategic planning while representing our community's interests and conducting our affairs openly and with integrity, reflecting the high levels of governance our community expects.

2.2.2 Summary of income / revenue, expenses, assets and expenses by program

Functions/activities	Income / Revenue \$ '000	Expenses \$ '000	Surplus / (Deficit) \$ '000	Grants included in income / revenue \$ '000	Total assets \$ '000
2026					
Economic growth	9,855	17,634	(7,779)	5,672	11,498
Community enrichment	2,726	7,206	(4,480)	1,761	2,806
Infrastructure	17,917	20,920	(3,003)	9,863	710,405
Governance and leadership	48,158	17,185	30,973	9,610	68,437
Total functions and activities	78,656	62,945	15,711	26,906	793,146
2025					
Economic growth	6,907	21,954	(15,047)	2,478	11,668
Community enrichment	2,579	9,224	(6,645)	1,512	2,959
Infrastructure	16,240	17,555	(1,315)	8,510	681,665
Governance and leadership	43,107	12,572	30,535	10,448	63,587
Total functions and activities	68,833	61,305	7,528	22,948	759,879

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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3.1 Rates and charges

Council uses Capital Improved Value as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The Capital Improved Value of a property is the value of its land, buildings and improvements.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2025/26 was \$7,220 million (2024/25 \$6,822 million).

Residential & Recreational	13,171	12,487
Commercial	2,205	1,890
Farm/rural	13,315	13,068
Industrial	769	920
Recreational	–	17
Garbage charge	4,449	4,267
Special marketing rates	401	393
Rate agreements - Electricity Industry Act	331	322
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	283	163
Other	107	–
Abandonments	(18)	(19)
Total rates and charges	35,013	33,508

The date of the general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2025 and the valuation was first applied in the rating year commencing 1 July 2025.

Annual rates and charges are recognised as income when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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3.2 User fees

Administration fees	152	140
Child care/children's programs	202	179
Waste management services	597	442
Parking	187	208
Sales - admissions	1,297	1,414
Sales - merchandising, catering, other sales	677	689
Hire & leasing fees	810	819
Livestock exchange	772	479
Other fees and charges	212	204
Total user fees	4,906	4,574

User fees by timing of revenue recognition

User fees recognised over time	810	819
User fees recognised at a point in time	4,096	3,755
Total user fees	4,906	4,574

User fees are recognised as revenue at a point in time, or over time, when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied. Recognition is based on the underlying contractual terms.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
3.3 Funding from other levels of government		
Grants were received in respect of the following:		
Summary of grants		
Commonwealth funded grants	18,016	18,598
State funded grants	8,890	4,350
Total grants received	26,906	22,948
(a) Operating Grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Financial Assistance Grants - general purpose *	8,606	9,483
Financial Assistance Grants - local roads *	3,975	4,386
Out of school hours care	327	317
Recurrent - State Government		
Art Gallery and performing arts	150	150
Community Projects	240	—
Libraries	217	217
Maternal and child health	695	660
Public health	42	53
School crossing supervisors	65	63
Other	213	93
Total recurrent operating grants	14,530	15,422
Non-recurrent - State Government		
Community projects	123	113
Economic development	270	—
Environmental protection	85	170
Family and children	140	99
Libraries	26	28
Waste management	5	60
Other	79	29
Total non-recurrent operating grants	728	499
Total operating grants	15,258	15,921

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
(b) Capital Grants		
<i>Recurrent - Commonwealth Government</i>		
Roads to recovery	1,944	1,864
Total recurrent capital grants	1,944	1,864
<i>Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government</i>		
Aerodrome	274	252
Local roads and community infrastructure program	2,890	2,296
<i>Non-recurrent - State Government</i>		
Buildings	3,639	389
Art and heritage	41	12
Drainage	172	—
Footpaths	147	—
Livestock exchange	—	24
Parks playgrounds and street beautification	113	945
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	417	108
Roads	2,006	—
Waste management	5	1,137
Total non-recurrent capital grants	9,704	5,163
Total capital grants	11,648	7,027

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
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(c) Recognition of grant income

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue the Council assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. When both these conditions are satisfied, the Council:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the point in time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, the Council applies AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities.

Grant revenue with sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised over time as the performance obligations specified in the underlying agreement are met. Where performance obligations are not sufficiently specific, grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or when an unconditional right to receipt has been established. Grants relating to capital projects are generally recognised progressively as the capital project is completed. The following table provides a summary of unspent grants.

Income recognised under AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities

General purpose	8,606	9,483
Other specific purpose grants	6,270	6,149
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	11,647	7,027
Revenue recognised under AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers		
Specific purpose grants	383	289
	26,906	22,948

(d) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner**Operating**

Balance at start of year	289	237
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	120	132
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(26)	(80)
Balance at year end	383	289

Capital

Balance at start of year	2,257	2,497
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	1,158	1,305
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	1,035	(1,545)
Balance at year end	4,450	2,257

Unspent grants are determined and disclosed on a cash basis.

(*) 2026, 50% of the 2025/26 allocation was received prior to 30 June 2025, 80% of the 2026/27 allocation was received in June 2026.

(*) 2025, 100% of the 2024/25 allocation was received prior to 30 June 2025, 50% of the 2025/26 allocation was received in June 2025.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
3.4 Contributions		
Non-monetary contributions		
Non-monetary	4,160	777
Total non-monetary contributions	4,160	777
Artworks	13	89
Drainage	1,349	–
Footpaths	834	–
Library books	1	1
Other infrastructure	23	112
Sealed roads	1,854	–
Parks, open spaces and streetscapes	39	307
Plant and equipment	47	–
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	–	268
Total non-monetary contributions	4,160	777

Monetary and non monetary contributions are recognised as income at their fair value when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
3.5 Other income		
Interest	2,700	3,062
Reimbursements	1,519	1,314
Tower Hill land sales	1,319	746
Less - Tower Hill costs of goods sold	(25)	(12)
Revenue from volunteer services	291	299
Other	130	66
Total other income	5,934	5,475

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. The cost of delivering services

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
4.1 Employee costs		
(a) Employee costs		
Wages and salaries	16,317	16,028
WorkCover	585	319
Superannuation	2,526	2,388
Fringe benefits tax	68	80
Agency staff	623	780
Long service leave	521	487
Staff training	209	291
Other	203	149
Total employee costs	21,052	20,522

(b) Superannuation

Council made contributions to the following funds:

Defined benefit fund

Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	125	74
	125	74

Accumulation funds

Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	2,510	2,293
	2,510	2,293

Total superannuation costs

	2,635	2,367
--	--------------	--------------

Contributions made exclude amounts accrued at balance date.

Most employees in the group are members of various accumulation funds including Vision Super, and other industry and retail funds. As of 30 June 2026, there were 6 employees in the defined benefit funds.

For 30 June 2026 the Vested Benefits Index (VBI) for the defined benefits fund is 116.9% and in a good financial position, and therefore it is expected that there will be no change to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

In the unlikely event that the Fund Actuary determines there is a shortfall, the Fund's participating employers would be required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall. It is anticipated any shortfall in subsequent years would be immaterial to the Council.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. The cost of delivering services (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
4.2 Materials and services		
Contract payments	10,425	9,200
Building maintenance	1,176	958
General maintenance	3,228	2,840
Utilities	1,772	1,666
Office administration	679	724
Information technology	1,816	1,543
Insurance	959	1,203
Consultants	1,037	1,131
Community grants sponsorship and contributions	777	790
Volunteer services - cost of service	291	299
Other	779	947
Total materials and services	22,939	21,301

Expenses are recognised as they are incurred and reported in the financial year to which they relate.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. The cost of delivering services (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
4.3 Depreciation		
Property		
Buildings - specialised	2,381	2,349
Buildings - non specialised	364	83
Total depreciation - property	2,745	2,432
Plant and equipment		
Plant machinery and equipment	1,292	1,210
Fixtures fittings and furniture	237	343
Computers and telecomms	206	226
Artworks	18	17
Library collection	129	130
Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	66	66
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	29	29
Pioneer Settlement buildings	200	1
Total depreciation - plant and equipment	2,177	2,022
Infrastructure		
Footpaths and cycleways	715	469
Drainage	858	674
Recreational, leisure and community	452	455
Waste management	25	25
Parks open spaces and streetscapes	606	548
Sealed roads	5,930	5,380
Unsealed roads	2,240	2,116
Other infrastructure	368	346
Total depreciation - infrastructure	11,194	10,013
Total depreciation	16,116	14,467

Refer to note 6.1 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation charges and accounting policy.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
4.4 Other expenses		
Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	57	73
Auditors' remuneration - Internal Audit	59	105
Councillors' allowances	354	298
Assets written-off / impaired	1,584	3,848
Operating lease rentals	93	27
Vehicle registrations	94	95
Bank charges	70	59
Legal costs	93	50
Emergency services and volunteers fund levy	108	88
Others	103	108
Total other expenses	2,615	4,751

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
5.1 Financial assets		
(a) Cash and cash equivalents		
Current		
Cash on hand	12	13
Cash at bank	5,067	7,858
Total current cash and cash equivalents	5,079	7,871
(b) Other financial assets		
Current		
Term deposits	51,311	43,999
Total current other financial assets	51,311	43,999
Total current financial assets	56,390	51,870
Total cash and cash equivalents and other financial assets	56,390	51,870

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Other financial assets include term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
(c) Trade & Other Receivables		
Current		
<i>Statutory receivables</i>		
Rates debtors	6,963	6,070
Infringement debtors	533	478
Private scheme debtors	4	4
Net GST receivable	820	520
<i>Non-statutory receivables</i>		
Other debtors	1,397	2,163
Provision for doubtful debts - rates debtors	(32)	(57)
Allowance for expected credit loss - infringements	(397)	(372)
Allowance for expected credit loss - other debtors	(12)	(18)
Total current trade and other receivables	9,276	8,788
Total trade and other receivables	9,276	8,788

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. An allowance for expected credit losses is recognised based on past experience and other objective evidence of expected losses. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
(d) Ageing of receivables		
The ageing of the Council's trade & other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:		
Current (not yet due)	506	364
Past due between 31 and 180 days	576	1,333
Past due between 181 and 365 days	69	177
Past due by more than 1 year	234	271
Total trade and other receivables	1,385	2,145

(e) Ageing of individually impaired receivables

At balance date, other debtors representing financial assets with a nominal value of \$12,130 (2025: \$17,960) were impaired. The amount of the provision raised against these debtors was \$12,130 (2025: \$17,960). They individually have been impaired as a result of their doubtful collection. Many of the long outstanding past due amounts have been lodged with Council's debt collectors or are on payment arrangements.

The ageing of receivables that have been individually determined as impaired at reporting date was:

Past due by more than 1 year	12	18
Total trade and other receivables	12	18

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
5.2 Non-financial assets		
(a) Intangible assets		
Water rights	3,981	3,584
Total intangible assets	3,981	3,584

	Water Rights \$ '000
Gross Carrying Amount	
Balance at 1 July 2025	3,584
Asset revaluations	397
Balance at 30 June 2026	3,981
Accumulated amortisation and impairment	
Net book value at 30 June 2025	3,584
Net book value at 30 June 2026	3,981

Water rights are valued at current market rates. The valuation is based on market transactions being the trading of water shares within the relevant water trading region. Prices are sourced from the Victorian Water Register for water traded within trading zone 7 VIC Murray - Barmah to SA.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
5.3 Payables, contract and other liabilities		
(a) Trade and other payables		
Current		
Non-statutory payables		
Trade payables	2,387	1,806
Salaries and wages	498	411
Accrued expenses	1,211	3,460
Overpaid rate debtors	999	934
Total current trade and other payables	5,095	6,611
(b) Contract and other liabilities		
Contract liabilities		
Current		
Grants received in advance - operating	383	289
Grants received in advance - capital	4,450	2,257
Other	18	16
Total current contract and other liabilities	4,851	2,562

Contract liabilities

Contract liabilities reflect consideration received in advance from customers in respect of grants received of which council has an outstanding obligation. Contract liabilities are derecognised and recorded as revenue when promised goods and services are transferred to the customer or council obligation completed. Refer to Note 3.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities		
Current		
Other borrowings - secured	244	785
Total current interest-bearing liabilities	244	785
Non-current		
Other borrowings - secured	508	995
Total non-current interest-bearing liabilities	508	995
Total interest-bearing liabilities	752	1,780

Borrowings are secured by Swan Hill Rural City Council General Rates.

a) The maturity profile for Council's borrowings is:

Not later than one year	244	785
Later than one year and not later than five years	508	995
Total	752	1,780

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the Council has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The Council determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities at initial recognition.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	Employee provisions \$ '000	Landfill restoration \$ '000	Total \$ '000
5.5 Provisions			
2026			
Balance at the beginning of the financial year	4,878	3,080	7,958
Additional provisions	2,154	50	2,204
Amounts used	(1,695)	—	(1,695)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(323)	308	(15)
Balance at the end of the financial year	5,014	3,438	8,452
Provisions			
Provisions - current	4,805	393	5,198
Provisions - non-current	209	3,045	3,254
Total Provisions	5,014	3,438	8,452
2025			
Balance at the beginning of the financial year	4,853	3,118	7,971
Additional provisions	1,894	84	1,978
Amounts used	(1,596)	—	(1,596)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(273)	(122)	(395)
Balance at the end of the financial year	4,878	3,080	7,958
Provisions			
Provisions - current	4,706	322	5,028
Provisions - non-current	172	2,758	2,930
Total Provisions	4,878	3,080	7,958

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
(a) Employee provisions		
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	1,333	1,372
Long service leave	250	259
	<u>1,583</u>	<u>1,631</u>
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	379	330
Long service leave	2,843	2,745
	<u>3,222</u>	<u>3,075</u>
Total current employee provisions	<u>4,805</u>	<u>4,706</u>
Non-Current		
Long service leave	209	172
Total Non-Current Employee Provisions	<u>209</u>	<u>172</u>
Aggregate Carrying Amount of Employee Provisions:		
Current	4,805	4,706
Non-current	209	172
Total Aggregate Carrying Amount of Employee Provisions	<u>5,014</u>	<u>4,878</u>

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Annual leave

A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:

- nominal value if the Council expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Council does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability as the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement. Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability and measured at present value.

Key assumptions:

- discount rate	4.48%	3.73%
- index rate	4.15%	4.25%

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
(b) Landfill restoration		
Current		
Current	393	322
Total current	393	322
Non-current		
Non-current	3,045	2,758
Total non-current	3,045	2,758
Total	3,438	3,080

Council is obligated to restore Swan Hill and Robinvale landfill sites to a particular standard. The forecast life of the site is based on current estimates of remaining capacity and the forecast rate of infill. The provision for landfill restoration has been calculated based on the present value of the expected cost of works to be undertaken. The expected cost of works has been estimated based on current understanding of work required to reinstate the site to a suitable standard. Accordingly, the estimation of the provision required is dependent on the accuracy of the forecast timing of the work, work required and related costs. Council reviews the landfill restoration provision on an annual basis, including the key assumptions listed below.

Key assumptions:

- discount rate	4.41%	3.47%
- index rate	4.10%	2.40%

Total provisions

Current		
Employee provisions	4,805	4,706
Landfill restoration	393	322
Total current provisions	5,198	5,028
Non-current		
Employee provisions	209	172
Landfill restoration	3,045	2,758
Total non-current provisions	3,254	2,930
Total	8,452	7,958

5.6 Financing arrangements

The Council has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2026.

Credit card facilities	200	200
Loans and borrowings	752	1,780
Total Facilities	952	1,980
Used facilities	795	1,823
Used facilities	795	1,823
Unused facilities	157	157

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

5.7 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

(a) Commitments for expenditure

	Not later than 1 year \$ '000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years \$ '000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years \$ '000	Later than 5 years \$ '000	Total \$ '000
2026					
Operating					
Building and property maintenance	288	—	—	—	288
Cleaning - council buildings, public toilets, barbeques	1,093	881	470	—	2,444
Cultural and heritage	25	—	—	—	25
Licenses	132	50	80	—	262
Management & operations of the PS Pyap	352	182	—	—	534
Materials and supplies	99	—	—	—	99
Office equipment and supplies	54	—	—	—	54
Other Infrastructure	38	—	—	—	38
Professional services	1,416	236	145	—	1,797
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	737	714	731	—	2,182
Uniforms	2	—	—	—	2
Waste management operation and kerbside collection	1,800	2,574	4,129	—	8,503
Total	6,036	4,637	5,555	—	16,228
Capital					
Buildings	656	—	—	—	656
Cultural and heritage	—	—	—	—	—
Drainage	49	—	—	—	49
Footpaths	117	—	—	—	117
Land	646	—	—	—	646
Other infrastructure	2,640	—	—	—	2,640
Parks and open spaces	—	—	—	—	—
Plant & equipment	501	—	—	—	501
Professional services	23	—	—	—	23
Recreation and leisure assets	778	—	—	—	778
Sealed Roads	5,600	—	—	—	5,600
Total	11,010	—	—	—	11,010

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	Not later than 1 year \$ '000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years \$ '000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years \$ '000	Later than 5 years \$ '000	Total \$ '000
2025					
Operating					
Building and property maintenance	239	—	—	—	239
Cleaning - council buildings, public toilets, barbecues	989	122	—	—	1,111
Cultural and heritage	19	—	—	—	19
Licenses	140	81	37	—	258
Management & operations of the PS Pyap	227	165	—	—	392
Materials and supplies	125	—	—	—	125
Office equipment and supplies	73	—	—	—	73
Other Infrastructure	127	—	—	—	127
Professional services	975	192	—	—	1,167
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	694	1,274	40	—	2,008
Uniforms	1	—	—	—	1
Waste management operation and kerbside collection	2,095	2,744	686	—	5,525
Total	5,704	4,578	763	—	11,045
Capital					
Buildings	3,158	—	—	—	3,158
Cultural and heritage	13	—	—	—	13
Drainage	153	—	—	—	153
Footpaths	24	—	—	—	24
Land	4,456	—	—	—	4,456
Other infrastructure	2,373	—	—	—	2,373
Parks and open spaces	60	—	—	—	60
Plant & equipment	1,062	—	—	—	1,062
Professional services	34	—	—	—	34
Recreation and leisure assets	306	—	—	—	306
Sealed Roads	3,126	—	—	—	3,126
Unsealed Roads	71	—	—	—	71
Total	14,836	—	—	—	14,836

Swan Hill Rural City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	Carrying amount 30 June 2025 \$ '000	Additions \$ '000	Contributions \$ '000	Revaluation \$ '000	Disposal \$ '000	Depreciation \$ '000	Write-off \$ '000	Transfers \$ '000	Carrying amount 30 June 2026 \$ '000
Property	154,759	4,763	–	2,088	–	(2,745)	(1,178)	10,162	167,849
Plant and equipment/Culture and heritage assets	21,798	2,567	61	73	(186)	(2,177)	(3)	–	22,133
Infrastructure	503,105	6,972	4,099	14,960	–	(11,194)	(20)	1,487	519,409
Work in progress	13,680	10,161	–	–	–	–	(400)	(11,649)	11,792
Total	693,342	24,463	4,160	17,121	(186)	(16,116)	(1,601)	–	721,183

Summary of Work in Progress	Opening WIP \$ '000	Additions \$ '000	Write-off \$ '000	Transfers \$ '000	Closing WIP \$ '000
Property	10,113	3,904	(172)	(10,162)	3,683
Plant and equipment	85	139	–	–	224
Infrastructure	3,482	6,118	(228)	(1,487)	7,885
Total	13,680	10,161	(400)	(11,649)	11,792

Swan Hill Rural City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Land specialised \$ '000	Land non specialised \$ '000	Total land and land improvements \$ '000	Buildings specialised \$ '000	Buildings non specialised \$ '000	Total buildings \$ '000	Work in progress \$ '000	Total property \$ '000
(a) Property								
At fair value 1 July 2025	76,820	17,495	94,315	138,955	8,781	147,736	10,113	252,164
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	—	—	—	(81,670)	(5,622)	(87,292)	—	(87,292)
	76,820	17,495	94,315	57,285	3,159	60,444	10,113	164,872
Movements in fair value								
Additions	—	—	—	4,595	168	4,763	3,904	8,667
Contributions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Revaluation	—	—	—	4,758	351	5,109	—	5,109
Disposal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Write-off	—	—	—	(3,007)	—	(3,007)	(172)	(3,179)
Transfers	723	(723)	—	10,162	—	10,162	(10,162)	—
	723	(723)	—	16,508	519	17,027	(6,430)	10,597
Movements in accumulated depreciation								
Depreciation and amortisation	—	—	—	(2,561)	(184)	(2,745)	—	(2,745)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Revaluation movement	—	—	—	(2,796)	(225)	(3,021)	—	(3,021)
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	—	—	—	1,829	—	1,829	—	1,829
Transfers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	—	—	—	(3,528)	(409)	(3,937)	—	(3,937)
At fair value 30 June 2026	77,543	16,772	94,315	155,463	9,300	164,763	3,683	262,761
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	—	—	—	(85,198)	(6,031)	(91,229)	—	(91,229)
Carrying amount	77,543	16,772	94,315	70,265	3,269	73,534	3,683	171,532

Swan Hill Rural City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Plant machinery and equipment \$ '000	Fixtures fittings and furniture \$ '000	Computers and telecomms \$ '000	Artworks \$ '000	Library Collection \$ '000	Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels \$ '000	Pioneer Settlement site exhibits \$ '000	Pioneer Settlement buildings \$ '000	Total \$ '000	Work in progress \$ '000	Total plant and equipment/c ulture and heritage assets \$ '000
(b) Plant and Equipment & Culture and heritage assets											
At cost 1 July 2025	14,711	5,019	2,043	1,818	2,559	6,566	2,866	11,663	47,245	85	47,330
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	(8,544)	(4,016)	(1,345)	(17)	(1,868)	(66)	(29)	(9,562)	(25,447)	–	(25,447)
	6,167	1,003	698	1,801	691	6,500	2,837	2,101	21,798	85	21,883
Movements in carrying value											
Additions	2,278	73	111	–	105	–	–	–	2,567	139	2,706
Contributions	47	–	–	13	1	–	–	–	61	–	61
Revaluation	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	408	408	–	408
Disposal	(1,233)	–	–	–	(30)	–	–	–	(1,263)	–	(1,263)
Write-off	–	–	(36)	–	–	–	–	–	(36)	–	(36)
Transfers	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	1,092	73	75	13	76	–	–	408	1,737	139	1,876
Movements in accumulated depreciation											
Depreciation and amortisation	(1,292)	(237)	(206)	(18)	(129)	(66)	(29)	(200)	(2,177)	–	(2,177)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	1,047	–	–	–	30	–	–	–	1,077	–	1,077
Accumulated depreciation on revaluation	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(335)	(335)	–	(335)
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	–	–	33	–	–	–	–	–	33	–	33
	(245)	(237)	(173)	(18)	(99)	(66)	(29)	(535)	(1,402)	–	(1,402)
At cost 30 June 2026	15,803	5,092	2,118	1,831	2,635	6,566	2,866	12,071	48,982	224	49,206
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	(8,789)	(4,253)	(1,518)	(35)	(1,967)	(132)	(58)	(10,097)	(26,849)	–	(26,849)
Carrying amount	7,014	839	600	1,796	668	6,434	2,808	1,974	22,133	224	22,357

Plant and equipment are carried at historical cost.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Sealed roads \$ '000	Unsealed roads \$ '000	Footpaths and cycleways \$ '000	Drainage \$ '000	Recreational, leisure and community \$ '000	Waste management \$ '000	Parks open spaces and streetscapes \$ '000	Other infrastructure \$ '000	Total \$ '000	Work in progress \$ '000	Total infrastructure \$ '000
(c) Infrastructure											
At fair value 1 July 2025	382,801	109,558	45,257	92,738	26,412	7,841	19,000	23,688	707,295	3,482	710,777
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	(102,381)	(14,439)	(19,429)	(32,459)	(12,072)	(7,765)	(8,271)	(7,374)	(204,190)	–	(204,190)
	280,420	95,119	25,828	60,279	14,340	76	10,729	16,314	503,105	3,482	506,587
Movements in fair value											
Additions	3,862	284	682	267	92	–	570	1,215	6,972	6,118	13,090
Contributions	1,854	–	834	1,349	–	–	39	23	4,099	–	4,099
Revaluation	15,312	2,301	1,810	649	185	–	132	160	20,549	–	20,549
Disposal	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(896)	(896)	–	(896)
Write-off	–	–	–	–	–	–	(87)	–	(87)	(228)	(315)
Transfers	425	84	13	–	22	–	9	934	1,487	(1,487)	–
	21,453	2,669	3,339	2,265	299	–	663	1,436	32,124	4,403	36,527
Movements in accumulated depreciation											
Depreciation and amortisation	(5,930)	(2,240)	(715)	(858)	(452)	(25)	(606)	(368)	(11,194)	–	(11,194)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	896	896	–	896
Revaluation movement	(4,095)	(303)	(777)	(227)	(85)	–	(57)	(45)	(5,589)	–	(5,589)
Accumulated depreciation of contributions	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	–	–	–	–	–	–	67	–	67	–	67
Transfers	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	(10,025)	(2,543)	(1,492)	(1,085)	(537)	(25)	(596)	483	(15,820)	–	(15,820)
At fair value 30 June 2026	404,254	112,227	48,596	95,003	26,710	7,842	19,663	25,124	739,419	7,885	747,304
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	(112,406)	(16,982)	(20,921)	(33,544)	(12,608)	(7,791)	(8,867)	(6,891)	(220,010)	–	(220,010)
Carrying amount	291,848	95,245	27,675	61,459	14,102	51	10,796	18,233	519,409	7,885	527,294

Swan Hill Rural City Council

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Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

Acquisition

Initial measurement

Council initially measures its property, infrastructure, plant and equipment assets at cost. The cost of an acquired asset is the fair value of the consideration that Council has provided at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition.

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Refer to Note 8.4 for more information on how Council measures fair value.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

	Depreciation Period years	Threshold Limit \$ '000
Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods		
Land and land improvements		
Buildings		
buildings	30 to 100 years	10
Building improvements	30 to 100 years	10
Leasehold improvements	5 to 15 years	10
Plant and Equipment		
Plant machinery and equipment		
Large plant	10 years	3
Small plant	2 years	3
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	5 years	3
Computers and telecommunications	3 to 5 years	2
Cultural and heritage		
Artworks	100 years	–
Library Collection	5 to 100 years	–
Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	100 years	5
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	100 years	5
Pioneer Settlement buildings	100 years	10
Infrastructure		
Sealed road formation	-	10
Sealed road pavements	60 to 100 years	10
Sealed road seals	15 to 80 years	10
Road ancillary assets	20 to 25 years	10
Unsealed road natural surface	-	10
Unsealed road gravel surface	30 years	10
Kerb and channel	25 to 50 years	10
Footpaths and cycleways	20 to 100 years	10
Drainage	20 to 100 years	10
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	10 to 90 years	10
Waste management	10 years	10
Parks, open space and streetscapes	10 to 60 years	10
Other infrastructure	10 to 150 years	10

Land under roads

Council recognises land under roads it controls at fair value.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

Depreciation and amortisation

Buildings, land improvements, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Road earthworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Repairs and maintenance

Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

Leasehold improvements

Leasehold improvements are recognised at cost and are amortised over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement, whichever is the shorter. At balance date, leasehold improvements are amortised over a 5 to 15 year period.

Valuation of land and buildings

Valuation of land and buildings were undertaken by a qualified independent valuer Ben Sawyer AAPI Reg. 63163 as at 30 June 2025. The valuation of land and buildings is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement. Where land use is not restricted, highest and best use is assumed to be current use, except where the land is held for sale, or highly likely to be used for an alternative purpose within 12 months of the reporting date.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Any significant movements in the unobservable inputs for land and land under roads will have a significant impact on the fair value of these assets.

The fair value assessed may change significantly and unexpectedly over a relatively short period of time (including as a result of factors that the valuer could not reasonably have been aware of as at the date of valuation). Refer to Significant accounting policies under Overview section and Note 8.4 for further information on fair value measurement.

The date of the current valuation is detailed in the following table. An indexed based revaluation was conducted in the current year, this valuation was based on the June 2026 Valuer-General Victoria vacant land and building indexation factors, a full revaluation of these assets will be conducted in 2026/27. The most recent previous full revaluation of these classes of land and building assets were undertaken by a qualified independent valuer Ben Sawyer AAPI Reg. 63163 as at 30 June 2025.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of valuation	Type of Valuation
Land	–	16,772	–	30/06/2026	Index based
Specialised land	–	–	77,543	30/06/2026	Index based
Buildings	–	3,269	–	30/06/2026	Index based
Building - specialised	–	–	70,265	30/06/2026	Index based
Total	–	20,041	147,808		

Valuation of infrastructure

Infrastructure valuations were performed by Council's Enterprise Assets Manager who holds a Bachelor of Geomatics (BGeom) and brings two decades of local government experience in asset management. Valuation of infrastructure assets has been determined in accordance by applying the most recent unit rates as calculated from a sample of internal and external projects.

The date of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

The valuation is at fair value based on current replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation. Details of the Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of valuation	Type of Valuation
Sealed roads	–	–	291,848	30/06/2026	Index based
Unsealed roads	–	–	95,245	30/06/2026	Index based
Footpaths and cycleways	–	–	27,675	30/06/2026	Index based
Drainage	–	–	61,459	30/06/2026	Index based
Recreational, leisure & community facilities	–	–	14,102	30/06/2026	Index based
Waste management	–	–	51	30/06/2024	Index based
Parks, open space & streetscapes	–	–	10,796	30/06/2026	Index based
Other Infrastructure	–	–	18,233	30/06/2026	Index based

Cultural and heritage assets

Details of the Council's cultural and heritage assets and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

Artworks	–	–	1,796	30/06/2024	Full revaluation
Pioneer Settlement vehicles and vessels	–	–	6,434	30/06/2024	Full revaluation
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	–	–	2,808	30/06/2024	Full revaluation
Pioneer Settlement buildings	–	–	1,974	30/06/2026	Index based
Total	–	–	532,421		

Valuation of cultural and heritage assets**Artworks**

Valuation of artwork assets has been conducted by qualified independent valuer Mr David Freeman, member of Auctioneers and Valuers Association of Australia, and Chief Executive Officer of Amanda Adams Auctions, Bulleen, Victoria. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2024. Valuation of the assets was determined by analysing comparable sales of an artist's work, knowledge of the collections history and condition of the collection.

Pioneer Settlement

Valuation of Pioneer Settlement vehicles and vessels and site exhibit assets was conducted by qualified independent valuer Mr David Freeman, member of Auctioneers and Valuers Association of Australia, and Chief Executive Officer of Amanda Adams Auctions, Bulleen, Victoria. The valuation is based on average market realisation prices that should be obtained if the items were sold via private treaty or auction sales. The effective date of the valuation is 30 June 2024.

Valuation of Pioneer Settlement buildings were undertaken by qualified independent valuer, Ben Sawyer AAPI Reg. 63163 as at 30 June 2025.

The valuation is at fair value based on replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land and land under roads is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values between 25% and 75% for specialised land and between 85% and 95% for land under roads. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently land values range between \$1.15 and \$268.73 per square metre.

Specialised buildings are valued using a current replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement costs are calculated on a square metre basis. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 1 year to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of buildings.

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the current replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 0 years to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

Artwork assets are valued based on the market based direct comparison approach. Significant unobservable inputs include the rarity of the item, historical significance and the history of the artist. If there are events that determine certain pieces of the collection to be of historical significance, if the artist has works that have increased in popularity or the item is considered to be rare and in demand, this would result in a higher fair value.

Pioneer Settlement vehicles and vessels and site exhibit assets are valued based on the market based direct comparison approach. Significant unobservable inputs include the rarity of the item and historical significance. If there are events that determine certain pieces of the collection to be of historical significance or the item is considered to be rare and in demand, this would result in a higher fair value.

Pioneer Settlement buildings are valued using a current replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement cost is calculated on a square metre basis. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 5 years to 84 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend their useful lives.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Reconciliation of specialised land		
Land under roads	61,253	61,253
Parks and reserves	11,214	11,214
Crown Land	5,076	5,076
Total specialised land	77,543	77,543

(c) Community Asset Committee

All entities controlled by Council that have material income, expenses, assets or liabilities, such as community asset committees, have been included in this financial report. Any transactions between these entities and Council have been eliminated in full.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. People and relationships

7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related Parties

Parent entity

Swan Hill Rural City Council is a single entity.

Subsidiaries and Associates

Council has no interests in subsidiaries and associates.

(b) Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel (KMP) are those people with the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of Swan Hill Rural City Council. The Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Directors are deemed KMP.

Details of KMP at any time during the year are:

Councillors

Mayor Stuart King	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
Cr Les McPhee	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
Cr Hugh Broad	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
Cr Lindsay Rogers	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
Cr Peta Thornton	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
Cr Phillip Englefield	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
Cr Terry Jennings	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026

Chief Executive Officer

Mr Scott Barber	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
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Directors

Mr Bruce Myers (Community and Cultural Services)	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
Ms Michelle Grainger (Planning and Development)	01/07/2025 to 26/06/2026
Ms Leah Johnston (Infrastructure)	01/07/2025 to 30/06/2026
Mr Stephen Fernando (Corporate Services)	10/11/2025 to 30/06/2026
Mr Peter Brown (Acting Corporate Services)	01/07/2025 to 14/11/2025

	2026 No.	2025 No.
Total Number of Councillors	7	12
Total of Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel	6	6
Total Number of Key Management Personnel	13	18

Swan Hill Rural City Council

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Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. People and relationships (continued)

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Remuneration comprises employee benefits including all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by Council, or on behalf of the Council, in exchange for services rendered. Remuneration of Key Management Personnel and Other senior staff is disclosed in the following categories.

Short-term employee benefits include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

Other long-term employee benefits include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

Post-employment benefits include pensions, and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

Termination benefits include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	1,648	1,410
Other long-term employee benefits	39	22
Post-employment benefits	136	135
Total	1,823	1,567

	2026 No.	2025 No.
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The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities, fall within the following bands:

\$1 - \$9,999	—	1
\$10,000 - \$19,999	—	5
\$20,000 - \$29,999	—	5
\$30,000 - \$39,999	5	1
\$40,000 - \$49,999	1	—
\$70,000 - \$79,999	1	—
\$100,000 - \$109,999	—	1
\$110,000 - \$119,999	1	—
\$130,000 - \$139,999	1	—
\$190,000 - \$199,999	—	1
\$230,000 - \$239,999	—	1
\$240,000 - \$249,999	—	1
\$250,000 - \$259,999	—	1
\$260,000 - \$269,999	1	—
\$270,000 - \$279,999	1	—
\$330,000 - \$339,999	—	1
\$340,000 - \$349,999	1	—
\$360,000 - \$369,999	1	—
Total	13	18

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. People and relationships (continued)

(d) Remuneration of other senior staff

Other senior staff are officers of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remuneration exceeds \$170,000 and who report directly to a member of the KMP.

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Total remuneration of other senior staff was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	1,803	935
Other long-term employee benefits	40	107
Post-employment benefits	236	281
Total	2,079	1,323

	2026 No.	2025 No.
The number of other senior staff are shown below in their relevant income bands:		
Income Range:		
\$170,000 - \$179,999	5	3
\$180,000 - \$189,999	2	2
\$190,000 - \$199,999	1	1
\$200,000 - \$209,999	1	1
\$210,000 - \$219,999	2	—
Total	11	7

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
Total remuneration for the reporting year for other senior staff included above, amounted to:	2,079	1,323

7.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

During the period Council entered into the following transactions with related parties:

Cr Stuart King	Swan Hill Hire - \$52,740 Plant and equipment hire. Cr King has a controlling interest in Swan Hill Hire.
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At the end of the reporting period, \$669 was outstanding in relation to transactions with related parties (2025: \$445). There were no loans to/from or commitments to/from related parties (2025: Nil).

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

(a) Contingent assets

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. At balance date the Council are not aware of any contingent assets.

(b) Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:

- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council; or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
- it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation; or
- the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Superannuation

Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Future superannuation contributions

In addition to the disclosed contributions, Council has paid unfunded liability payments to Vision Super totalling \$0 (2024/25 \$0). There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2025. The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2026 are \$79,758

Landfill

Council operates a landfill. Council will have to carry out site rehabilitation works in the future. At balance date Council has a provision in place for these remediation works.

Liability Mutual Insurance

Council is a participant of the MAV Liability Mutual Insurance (LMI) Scheme. The LMI scheme provides public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover. The LMI scheme states that each participant will remain liable to make further contributions to the scheme in respect of any insurance year in which it was a participant to the extent of its participant's share of any shortfall in the provision set aside in respect of that insurance year, and such liability will continue whether or not the participant remains a participant in future insurance years.

MAV Workcare

Council was a participant of the MAV WorkCare Scheme. The MAV WorkCare Scheme provided workers compensation insurance. MAV WorkCare commenced business on 1 November 2017 and the last day the Scheme operated as a self-insurer was 30 June 2021. In accordance with the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013, there is a six-year liability period following the cessation of the Scheme (to 30 June 2027). During the liability period, adjustment payments may be required (or received). The determination of any adjustment payment is dependent upon revised actuarial assessments of the Scheme's tail claims liabilities as undertaken by Work Safe Victoria. Any adjustments, which are expected to occur at the 3-year and 6-year periods during the liability period will affect participating members. The assessment from WorkSafe Victoria at the 3-year period was a deficiency of \$5.776 million payable to WorkSafe Victoria. This was due to evidence of higher-than-expected payments and higher claim lodgements during the first three years of the runoff period.

(c) Guarantees for loans to other entities

Council is not the guarantor for any loans.

Financial guarantee contracts are not recognised as a liability in the balance sheet unless the lender has exercised their right to call on the guarantee or Council has other reasons to believe that it is probable that the right will be exercised.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

8.2 Australian Accounting Standards issued but not yet effective

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2026 reporting period. Council assesses the impact of these new standards.

The Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) has issued *AASB 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements*. When applicable AASB 18 supersedes AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements*. AASB 18 aims to improve how entities communicate in their financial statements, with a focus on information about financial performance in the statement of profit or loss. It is expected to result in presentation and disclosure changes, primarily to Council's Comprehensive Income Statement. AASB 18 is expected to first apply to Council for the 2028-29 financial year.

8.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank borrowings. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of Council financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Council's interest rate liability risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes Council to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Council has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the Local Government Act 2020. Council manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

There has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate increases have significantly affected the return expected on invested funds during the year. This impacted the surplus by \$651k.

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause Council to make a financial loss. Council has exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. Particularly significant areas of credit risk exist in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations. To help manage this risk:

- Council has a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities Council deals with;
- Council may require collateral where appropriate; and

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

- Council only invests surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in Council's investment policy.

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the Council's financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is secured by a charge over the rateable property.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the balance sheet, such as when Council provides a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any allowance for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of Council's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks Council:

- have a liquidity policy which targets a minimum and average level of cash and cash equivalents to be maintained;
- have readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- have a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- monitor budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- set limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the balance sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees disclosed in Note 8.1(c), and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at Note 5.4.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of + 0.50% and - 0.50% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 4.35%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair Value Hierarchy

Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards. For assets where Council adopts a current replacement cost approach to determine fair value, Council considers the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets in the underlying valuation.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

- Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
- Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.

In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Revaluation

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. (For plant and equipment carrying amount is considered to approximate fair value given short useful lives). At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 2 to 5 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts. The following table sets out the frequency of revaluations by asset class.

Asset Class	Revaluation frequency
Land	2 years
Buildings	2 years
Roads	3 years
Unsealed roads	5 years
Bridges	3 years
Footpaths and cycleways	3 years
Drainage	5 years
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	5 years
Waste management	5 years
Parks, open space and streetscapes	5 years
Other infrastructure	5 years

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increases are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increase reverses a prior year decrease for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increase is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decreases are recognised as an expense except where prior increases are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrease is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increases. Within the same class of assets, revaluation increases and decreases within the year are offset.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, the Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset. The impairment policy above does not apply to Council's property, infrastructure, specialised buildings and other non-current physical assets subsequently measured at fair value. These are primarily non-cash generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity. Their recoverable amount is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets* does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. Other matters

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$ '000	Increase (decrease) \$ '000	Balance at end of reporting period \$ '000
9.1 Reserves			
(a) Asset revaluation reserves			
2026			
Property			
Land and land improvements	47,680	—	47,680
Buildings	38,949	1,962	40,911
Buildings - non specialised	498	126	624
	87,127	2,088	89,215
Culture and heritage assets			
Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	2,682	—	2,682
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	1,727	—	1,727
Artworks	1,576	—	1,576
Pioneer Settlement buildings	5,483	73	5,556
	11,468	73	11,541
Infrastructure			
Footpaths and cycleways	19,921	1,033	20,954
Drainage	41,372	422	41,794
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	9,482	100	9,582
Waste management	131	—	131
Parks, open space and streetscapes	3,593	75	3,668
Sealed roads	185,996	11,217	197,213
Unsealed roads	21,284	1,998	23,282
Other infrastructure	7,925	115	8,040
	289,704	14,960	304,664
Intangible assets			
Water rights	2,940	397	3,337
Total Other	2,940	397	3,337
Total asset revaluation reserves	391,239	17,518	408,757

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$ '000	Increase (decrease) \$ '000	Balance at end of reporting period \$ '000
2025			
Property			
Land and land improvements	46,041	1,639	47,680
Buildings	34,347	4,602	38,949
Buildings - non specialised	161	337	498
	80,549	6,578	87,127
Culture and heritage assets			
Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	2,682	—	2,682
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	1,727	—	1,727
Artworks	1,576	—	1,576
Pioneer Settlement buildings	3,441	2,042	5,483
	9,426	2,042	11,468
Infrastructure			
Footpaths and cycleways	13,124	6,797	19,921
Drainage	25,213	16,159	41,372
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	9,750	(268)	9,482
Waste management	131	—	131
Parks, open space and streetscapes	4,277	(684)	3,593
Sealed roads	164,263	21,733	185,996
Unsealed roads	33,095	(11,811)	21,284
Other infrastructure	5,126	2,799	7,925
	254,979	34,725	289,704
Intangible assets			
Water rights	2,786	154	2,940
Total Other	2,786	154	2,940
Total asset revaluation reserves	347,740	43,499	391,239

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of Council's assets over time.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

	2026 \$ '000	2025 \$ '000
9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit)		
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	15,711	7,528
Non-cash adjustments:		
Depreciation/amortisation	16,244	14,608
Impairment losses	1,584	3,848
Profit/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(438)	(231)
Contributions - non monetary assets	(4,160)	(777)
Amounts disclosed in financing activities	77	82
Change in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(488)	(585)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	(18)	(86)
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	(217)	125
Increase/(decrease) in contract assets	112	5,791
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(1,516)	167
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	494	(13)
(Decrease)/increase in other liabilities	(103)	75
Increase/(decrease) in unearned income/revenue	2,289	(185)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	29,571	30,347

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2025/2026 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 10. Change in accounting policy

There have been no changes to accounting policies in the 2025-26 year.

UNCONFIRMED



Part Seven

Performance Statement

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Certification of the Performance Statement

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statement has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

(Principal Accounting Officer Name and Qualifications (if any))

Principal Accounting Officer

Dated: 15 September 2026

In our opinion, the accompanying performance statement of the Swan Hill Rural City Council for the year ended 30 June 2026 presents fairly the results of council's performance in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

The performance statement contains the relevant performance indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the council and by the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 to certify this performance statement in its final form.

Stuart King (Mayor)

Councillor

Dated: 15 September 2026

Terry Jennings (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor

Dated: 15 September 2026

Scott Barber

Chief Executive Officer

Dated: 15 September 2026

VAGO

VAGO



Description of municipality

Swan Hill Rural City Council covers 6,116 square kilometres and is home to 20,962* people.

It includes the townships of Swan Hill, Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Beverford, Woorinen, Ultima, Manangatang and Boundary Bend.

The Swan Hill municipality has experienced sustainable growth over the past decade, led by the expansion of horticultural/agricultural practices and supported by an innovative manufacturing sector.

This success is depicted by the fact that irrigated areas have been increasing with a higher proportion of mature, high value crops such as almonds and table grapes. The region is one of Australia's largest producers of almond and table grape plantings, vegetables including potatoes and carrots, stone fruit, olives, avocados and field crops.

The region also boasts an impressive 69% of its municipality dedicated to cropping and associated dryland infrastructure, including wheat, barley, lentils, cereal/hay, pulses (including chickpeas and lupins), grazing, oats, and canola.

2. Service Performance Indicators

Service/indicator/ measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	
Aquatic Facilities Utilisation <i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population.]	6.17	8.68	9.63	N/A	8.85	Favourable: Community use of aquatic facilities has steadily increased over the past 5 years.
Animal management Health and safety <i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions/ Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	N/A	0.00%	No animal management prosecutions in 2025-2026.
Food and safety Health and safety <i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i> [Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x 100.	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	N/A	100%	Favourable A follow-up inspection was conducted on all food premises that were assessed as either critical or major non-compliant.
Governance Satisfaction <i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement.]	50	48	53	51	55	Favourable: Community satisfaction with 'the opportunity to give feedback on key local issues' continues to be rated in the low to mid 50s. The result is above the target set by Council for 2025-26 and is within the expected range.

Service/indicator/measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	
Libraries Participation <i>Library membership</i> [Number of registered library members/ Population] x100.	-	27.24%	28.61%	N/A	22.84%	Library membership remains consistent with previous years. 2024-25 result should have been 22.46% indicating a difference in 2025-26 of only 0.02%.
Maternal and Child Health Participation <i>Participation in the MCH service</i> [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	89.19%	86.79%	85.96%	N/A	86.56%	Favourable: Council continues to promote healthy outcomes for children and families, and the result shows that families continue to regularly engage with our Maternal and Child Health services.
<i>Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children</i> [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	83.57%	91.49%	85.90%	N/A	84.72%	Favourable: Council continues to promote healthy outcomes for children and families. Participation during 2025-26 remained strong despite some movement of families between providers within the municipality.
Roads Condition <i>Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards</i> [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council /Kilometres of sealed local roads] x 100.	99.27%	98.95%	98.79%	99.00%	98.68%	Favourable: The number of kilometres (km) of sealed local roads that require intervention by Council to meet the required standard, remains consistent at around 1.5% of the total km of sealed local roads.

Service/indicator/measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	
Statutory Planning Service standard <i>Planning applications decided within the relevant required time</i> [(Number of regular planning application decisions decided within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x 100.	59.85%	75.73%	86.07%	77%	89.58%	Favourable: Almost 90 per cent of planning applications are decided within the required time frames. This is slightly better than the result achieved in 2024-25 and above the target set by Council.
Waste Management Waste diversion <i>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i> [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x 100	29.28%	28.38%	28.40%	30%	28.57%	The percentage of kerbside waste diverted from landfill is consistent with previous years but remains low compared to other Councils, who have introduced a mandatory organics waste collection to help reduce kerbside garbage waste. There has also been a steady decline in the amount of kerbside recyclable waste collected over the last few years, which may be a consequence of the state governments Container Deposit Scheme to encourage a circular economy.

3. Financial Performance Indicators

Dimension/indicator/measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual		Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Efficiency Expenditure level Expenses per property assessment [Total expenses / Number of property assessments]	\$4,486.0	\$4,964.10	\$4,957.54	\$5,005.00	\$5,051.77		\$5,180.66	\$5,467.90	\$5,588.68	\$5,766.14	
Revenue level Average rate per property assessment [General rates and Municipal charges / Number of property assessments]	\$2,173.9	\$2,310.33	\$2,332.85	N/A	\$2,420.79		\$2,463.88	\$2,560.37	\$2,627.39	\$2,688.03	

Dimension/indicator/measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Liquidity											
Working capital											
<i>Current assets compared to current liabilities</i>											
[Current assets / Current liabilities] x100	391.16%	428.23%	400.39%	425.22%	256.00%	425.22%	306.44%	395.57%	365.47%	359.64%	
Unrestricted cash											
<i>Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities</i>											
[Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100	344.09%	80.74%	306.39%	313.92%	N/A	313.92%	212.85%	311.03%	284.69%	281.38%	

Dimension/Indicator/measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Obligations Loans and borrowings <i>Loans and borrowings compared to rates</i> <i>[[Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100</i>	7.71%	6.42%	5.38%	N/A	2.17%	1.98%	1.06%	0.36%	0.10%		Council has two loans maturing during 2025-26 that were paid in full. One loan was an interest only loan maturity, and the second was due to renegotiation however the loan was paid out at this time. An interest only loan of \$500k became due and was paid in full. A further loan became due for renegotiation and was paid in full also (\$254k).
Loans and borrowings repayments <i>compared to rates</i> <i>[Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100</i>	1.12%	1.06%	1.05%	NA	3.13%	0.92%	0.86%	0.69%	0.25%		

Dimension/indicator/measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Indebtedness Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue [Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100	8.47%	11.14%	9.53%	N/A	8.48%	7.23%	6.00%	5.57%	5.38%		An increase in the own source revenue primarily due to \$1.5M increase in rates and charges has reduced this ratio for 2025-26.
Asset renewal and upgrade Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation [Asset renewal and upgrade expense / Asset depreciation] x100	81.44%	84.31%	142.96%	170.00%	142.36%	173.62%	93.68%	81.99%	68.04%		The result demonstrates Council's strong investment in renewing and upgrading its infrastructure assets. The result is influenced by several major road projects, including Karinie Street and Quambatook Roads, which increased renewal expenditure well above the annual depreciation charge for sealed roads of approximately \$5.93 million.

Dimension/indicator/measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Operating position Adjusted underlying result Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) [Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	8.05%	-16.14%	2.25%		N/A	2.55%	-2.34%	-1.04%	-1.50%	-2.66%	0.30% change in surplus result is minor, and can be attributed to the additional rates and charges raised.
Stability Rates concentration Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue [Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	51.12%	61.88%	52.80%		55.00%	53.59%	56.02%	55.29%	55.77%	55.94%	

Dimension/indicator/measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2026	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
Rates effort Rates compared to property values [Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100	0.55%	0.51%	0.48%	N/A	0.48%	0.45%	0.48%	0.49%	0.50%		

4. Sustainable Capacity Indicators

Indicator/measure [Formula]	2023	2024	2025	2026	Comments
Population <i>Expenses per head of municipal population</i> [Total expenses/Municipal population]	\$2,580.75	\$2,855.08	\$2,906.28	\$3,002.81	
<i>Infrastructure per head of municipal population</i> [Value of infrastructure/Municipal population]	\$22,278.30	\$25,927.16	\$28,397.98	\$29,904.97	
<i>Population density per length of road</i> [Municipal population/Kilometres of local roads]	6.16	5.94	6.9	6.86	Favourable: Council continues to have a relatively low level of traffic congestion on its local roads.
<i>Own-source revenue</i> <i>Own-source revenue per head of municipal population</i> [Own-source revenue/Municipal population]	\$1,909.61	\$2,087.73	\$2,122.45	\$2,253.36	

Service/indicator/ measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	Comments
Recurrent grants <i>Recurrent grants per head of municipal population</i> [Recurrent grants/Municipal population]	\$722.03	\$273.81	\$819.47	\$785.90	
Disadvantage <i>Relative socio- economic disadvantage</i> [Index of Relative Socio-economic disadvantage by decile]	1	1	1	1	Less Favourable: The municipality remains one of the most disadvantaged in Victoria. This means the provision of Council services to the community is acutely necessary and relies on significant funding and support. Increased costs imposed by other tiers of government on our rural community will have an adverse impact on the overall health and wellbeing of our community.
Workforce turnover <i>Percentage of staff turnover</i> [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x 100	22.10%	25.32%	11.00%	14.05%	Favourable: Council continues to invest in more resources, including staff, to deliver services to the community.

Notes to the Accounts

5.1. Basis of preparation

Council is required to prepare and include a performance statement within its annual report. The performance statement includes the results of the prescribed, service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district, an explanation of material variations in the results and notes to the accounts. This statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Where applicable the results in the performance statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the Financial Statements. The other results are based on information drawn from council information systems or from third parties (e.g., Australian Bureau of Statistics or the Council's satisfaction survey provider).

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year and the previous three years, along with the current year's target, if mandated by the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020. Additionally, for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the performance statement includes the target budget for the current year and the results forecast for the period 2025-26 to 2028-29 by the council's financial plan.

The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 requires explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

5.2 Definitions

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Part 7 | Performance Statement

Aboriginal children	means a child who is an Aboriginal person
Aboriginal person	has the same meaning as in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
adjusted underlying revenue	means total income other than: non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and non-monetary asset contributions; and contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above
adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)	means adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure
annual report	means an annual report prepared by a council under section 98 of the Act
asset renewal expenditure	means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability
asset upgrade expenditure	means expenditure that— (a) enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service; or (b) extends the life of the asset beyond its original life
critical non-compliance outcome notification	means a notification received by council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984 , or advice given to council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health
current assets	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
current liabilities	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
food premises	has the same meaning as in the Food Act 1984
intervention level	means the level set for the condition of a road beyond which a council will not allow the road to deteriorate and will need to intervene
local road	means a sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004
major non-compliance outcome notification	means a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984, or advice given to council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken
MCH	means the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age
non-current liabilities	means all liabilities other than current liabilities
own-source revenue	means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants)
population	means the resident population estimated by council
rate revenue	means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges
relative socio-economic disadvantage	in relation to a municipal district, means the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipal district is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage of SEIFA
restricted cash	means cash, cash equivalents and financial assets, within the meaning of the Australian Accounting Standards, not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year
SEIFA	means the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas published from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its Internet site
unrestricted cash	means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash

5.3 Other Matters

Operational Summary 2025-26

The Comprehensive Income Statement reports a Surplus of \$15.7 million (m) and an Underlying Result Surplus of \$1.6 m.

The Surplus includes Capital Grants and other non-monetary contributions (revenue), as well as depreciation (expenses) but excludes capital payments of \$24.5m and loan repayments of \$1.0m. This year's performance results have been affected by the prepayment of the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission Financial Assistance Grant. In June 2026, Council received 80% of its 2026/27 allocation. The reported Recurrent Grants result is therefore \$7.8m greater than forecast. This funding is intended, and will be used, for 2026/27 operations.

Revenue

Council's Rates Concentration (revenue within Council's direct control) was at 54%. While this is below the benchmark of 75%, it is not unusual for regional councils. Council continues to see notable constraints on revenue, primarily the rate cap set by the Victorian state government being consistently below general inflation (3.0% rate cap for the year compared to a consumer price index increase of 3.8%) and the lack of any movement in restoring the Federal Assistance Grants (FAGs) to 1% of tax revenue, which has been a consistent ask of the local government sector (ALGA) over several years. These revenue constraints, coupled together with cost side factors such as cost shifting and additional regulatory compliance burdens, continue to erode the long-term financial sustainability of rural and regional councils in general and specifically of Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Operating Expenses

Overall operating expenses saw a year-on-year increase of 2.7% with Materials & Services and Depreciation being the largest contributors to the increase. Material & Services increased by 7.7% (see Disruptions section below) and Depreciation rose by 11.4% due to new assets coming on board (see section of Capital Works) and revaluations increasing the value of the sealed and unsealed road networks.

Disruptions

The global fuel crisis and the resulting supply chain disruptions impacted our operations, influencing both direct operating costs (fuel and fuel related inputs) and the cost of delivering essential infrastructure and community projects. Council has monitored market conditions, reviewed procurement strategies, and assessed contingency allowances into project planning and budget forecasting. While fuel prices have shown periods of stabilisation, the broader effects on construction, transport, and supply chain costs continue to influence the cost of delivering infrastructure and services across Council operations.

Capital Works

Council continued to complete a significant capital works programme, delivering \$24.5m in capital works. The establishment of a dedicated Project Management Office (PMO) has resulted in improved project performance and expedited project completion. Completion of the Swan Hill Art Gallery and the Tourism & Cultural Hub at the Pioneer Settlement were major milestones for the project management team. Over \$9.8m of road and footpath works were undertaken, with Stage 2 of the Quambatook Road widening and reconstruction of Karinie Street Swan Hill being significant projects undertaken during the year. The reconstruction of the 'Ten Steps' Canoe Launching Platform at the Swan Hill Riverside Park was completed and has reinvigorated this area for the users of our riverfront.

As a result of these extensive capital works, Council recorded an Asset renewal Ratio of 1.42, well above the benchmark of 1.

Debtors

Rates debtors remain relatively high, with over \$6m overdue at the end of the year and two incorporated entities collectively owing over \$1m. Council has initiated follow-up and recovery action which will continue throughout the next year. Due to legislative constraints, recover action has a long lead time.

Borrowings

Council's level of borrowings continues to decrease, with the indebtedness indicators in the very low range. Council had a loan fall due for renegotiation during the year, and at that time made the decision to repay the balance of \$0.25m in full. Subject to any future Council decisions on additional borrowings, forecasts for borrowings is an ongoing decline with Council expected to be debt free by 2031.

Housing Development Support

Council remains active in supporting residential land development, with continued sales of existing lots at the Tower Hill estate. The development continues to be cash-flow positive and provided a return on investment to reserves of \$350k for 2025/26. Council also completed the construction of 10 units in McCartney Court Robinvale that will provide much needed accommodation to essential workers within the township.

2.3 Swan Hill Outdoor Pool - Update

Directorate: Development and Planning
File Number: S09-04-01
Purpose: For Decision

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

1. Liveability - We will be a healthy, connected and growing community supported by a range of infrastructure and services.

1.3 Building Healthy Communities

1.3.1 Encourage active healthy lifestyles for people of all ages, abilities and interests

1.3.2 Spaces where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can flourish

Current Strategic Documents

Aquatics Strategic Plan 2019-2029
Strategic Asset Management Plan
Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan 2013

Declarations of Interest

Council officers confirm that they have no general or material conflicts of interest to declare in relation to this report.

Summary

This report provides Council with background information and an update on the future of the Swan Hill Outdoor Pool.

Discussion

The Swan Hill Outdoor Swimming Pool, located on Monash Drive, has been the subject of several studies and reports over the past decade. These investigations have generally supported relocation, primarily due to the age and condition of the existing assets and the potential to consolidate aquatic services.

While this body of work provides a strong basis for considering relocation, no equivalent study has comprehensively assessed the requirements for retaining the pool at Monash Drive, including the scope, cost, constraints and long-term viability of renewing or replacing the existing infrastructure.

To date, consideration of the existing site has largely occurred in the context of the anticipated bridge alignment and the assumption that it may constrain or preclude the pool's long-term retention. Consequently, the scope, cost and constraints associated with renewing or replacing the existing infrastructure have not been

comprehensively assessed. This represents a gap in the information available to Council. A more balanced assessment is warranted before Council determines whether relocation is the preferred long-term solution.

Investigation and Background

The Aquatics Needs Analysis Report (2019), identified the benefits of consolidating aquatic infrastructure in Swan Hill. It recommended decommissioning the outdoor pool at its current location and constructing a new 25-metre outdoor pool near the Swan Hill Leisure Centre at 21 Pritchard Street.

Although the report acknowledged the existing Monash Drive site as a potential option, uncertainty about the location and impacts of the proposed replacement bridge reduced the prospect of retaining the pool at that site. Consequently, the feasibility of renewing or replacing the pool at Monash Drive was likely not explored in the same detail as the relocation option.

The Analysis Report outlines the advantages and disadvantages of the pool's existing location and considers the key factors relevant to retaining the facility on site or relocating it.

The Swan Hill Swimming Pool Master Plan, prepared by @Leisure (2023), also supports relocating the outdoor pool to the Swan Hill Leisure Centre. It provides four layout options for a 50m outdoor pool on the Showgrounds site, in contrast to the 25m pool recommended in the Aquatics Needs Analysis.

The reports identify the following considerations:

- The condition of the Swan Hill Outdoor Pool 50m shell is poor and requires replacement.
- Replacement of the shell would involve significant cost.
- Attendance at the Swan Hill Outdoor Pool has declined, reflecting the age and limitations of the existing facilities.
- There is a priority need for an additional warm water program pool focused on health, therapy and rehabilitation.
- Operating costs for the Swan Hill Leisure Centre and Swan Hill Outdoor Pool are likely to continue increasing while the facilities remain on separate sites.
- Community demand and expectations indicate that any new outdoor pool should be 50 metres with 8 lanes, rather than 25 metres.
- Co-locating the outdoor pool at the Swan Hill Leisure Centre may improve operational and financial efficiency.
- Current recreation infrastructure and funding trends support the development of multi-purpose facilities.

The 2023 Masterplan also identifies the elements that could be included if aquatic facilities were relocated to the Showgrounds site, noting that relocation would involve significant works to the Leisure Centre as part of an integrated indoor and outdoor aquatic offering.

- A 20-metre by 15-metre indoor warm-water pool at the Swan Hill Leisure Centre for lessons, programs, therapy and rehabilitation
- Tower slide (from and into the indoor pool hall)
- A small indoor or outdoor splash and water-play space
- A 50-metre, eight-lane outdoor pool, with a depth of 1.3–1.8 metres to accommodate tumble turns and block dives
- Potential provision of an outdoor toddler pool and splash pad

Potential advantages of retaining the Monash Drive site

- Established and well-known community location with a long history of aquatic use.
- Attractive riverfront and parkland setting within an existing recreation and visitor precinct.
- Potential to retain established site services and infrastructure, subject to detailed condition and capacity assessments.
- Retention would preserve geographic separation from the indoor aquatic facility and maintain access to outdoor swimming at the riverfront.
- If the surrounding area becomes more parkland-focused, investment in the pool could complement broader riverfront recreation and public-realm improvements.
- The preferred bridge alignment is not expected to directly affect the swimming pool.

Barriers and infrastructure considerations

A range of uncertainties affects potential refurbishment or life-extension works at the existing outdoor pool site.

- The Swan Hill Bridge – The preferred alignment is understood to involve a replacement bridge on the existing alignment (source: Swan Hill Bridge Replacement Preferred Options Report, December 2025). However, the Monash Drive connection remains unresolved and may affect the future of the pool in its current position. Future road arrangements could either constrain redevelopment of the site or strengthen its value as part of an enhanced riverfront recreation and parkland precinct.
- The potential acquisition of the Lower Murray Water (LMW) site presents an opportunity if expansion of the existing outdoor pool site is pursued. The LMW site abuts the pool and may enable expansion or reconfiguration of the broader precinct, potentially allowing the existing pool to be retained while accommodating future facility improvements.
- Cost of retaining the existing pool – Council does not currently have a comprehensive assessment of the cost to renew or replace the existing pool assets, or the service life that different levels of investment would provide.

- Funding – The scale of investment required for either relocation or substantial renewal will need to be considered against Council's funding capacity and the availability of external funding. A staged renewal program may allow Council to plan and accumulate funding over a longer period, whereas relocation would require a substantially larger upfront commitment. Reliance on external grants also presents a risk, as ageing aquatic facilities across Victoria compete for limited government funding.
- Long-term strategic value – The existing site is identified in the Riverfront Masterplan as a potential commercial development zone, while the Showgrounds Masterplan provides for future aquatic development. However, both retaining the pool at Monash Drive and relocating it would require substantial capital investment.

Key questions include whether:

- Relocation would deliver sufficiently greater community, operational and strategic benefits to justify the cost and disruption; or
- Renewing and maintaining the existing pool infrastructure for a further 30 years would represent better value for Council and the community.

Next Steps

To ensure all options are considered while key constraints remain unresolved, officers recommend preparing a comprehensive assessment of renewal and maintenance options for the existing 50m swimming pool at the current site. This assessment should also consider the potential decommissioning or replacement of other pools and elements on the site over the next 30 years. These costs should be benchmarked against high-level estimates for a relocated facility.

The relocated site would consist of:

- 50m pool
- Splash pad (regional destination size)
- Water slide (mid-size, high-yield amenity)

This work would assess current industry trends, the region's aquatic needs over the next 30 years, and the needs of the community and visitors. It would also identify options that may attract private investment and support Council's broader vision for the region towards 2050.

Consultation

Stakeholders and the community have been consulted over many years through the development of reports and documents relating to the outdoor pool. These include the Aquatics Needs Analysis 2019-2029, the Swan Hill Showgrounds and Alan Garden Site Development Plan 2020, the Swan Hill Swimming Pool Master Plan 2023 and the Swan Hill Showgrounds Sport & Recreation Precinct Masterplan.

Further consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the future direction of the swimming pool project.

Financial Implications

The financial implications will be further developed through the proposed assessment. At this stage, the following overarching considerations apply:

- Both substantial renewal of the existing pool and development of a relocated facility would require significant capital investment.
- Current cost information is preliminary and will require validation through detailed scope development, including construction, ongoing operation and maintenance, future upgrades or replacement, and disposal costs for each option.
- Potential operational efficiencies from consolidating aquatic services should be assessed alongside service outcomes, site constraints and the costs of delivering and maintaining the preferred facility.
- The timing and scope of any project will need to align with Council's long-term financial capacity, competing capital priorities and asset management obligations.
- Future project delivery will rely on external funding support from the Victorian and Australian governments.

The 2024/25 Annual Report records 203,109 visits to aquatic facilities across the municipality, at an average cost to Council of \$7.54 per visit.

Social Implications

Swimming has been identified as the fourth most popular physical activity in the municipality.

Municipal swimming pools play an important role in supporting water safety and ensuring community access to swimming and water-safety programs. In a regional community, the pool provides an affordable place for children and families to spend time outdoors, learn to swim, build confidence around water and remain active.

While this assessment is being undertaken, the existing outdoor swimming pool will continue to operate. Any redevelopment of the existing site, or relocation of the facility, would be a long-term project requiring detailed planning, approvals and funding before works could commence.

Economic Implications

The Swan Hill Outdoor Swimming Pool attracts regional carnivals and school events, contributing to the local economy. The facility also supports local swimming clubs and programs, helping to retain swimming and aquatic-related expenditure within the municipality.

Environmental Implications

Ongoing leakage of water from existing pool infrastructure wastes water resources and is occurring near a natural waterway.

New swimming pool infrastructure can be constructed to modern standards, incorporating sustainable supporting infrastructure and effective water-resource management practices.

Risk Management Implications

- Associated bridge and road connections may affect access to, and the long-term suitability of, the existing pool site.
- Construction activities and temporary access arrangements may disrupt pool operations.
- The availability and potential acquisition of the LMW site remain uncertain. If the land is not secured, opportunities to expand or reconfigure the existing pool precinct may be lost.
- The investment required to refurbish, redevelop or relocate the aquatic facilities may exceed Council's available funding capacity.
- Future government funding opportunities are uncertain and will influence the timing and scope of the swimming pool, bridge and associated projects.

Attachments: Nil

Options

1. Undertake a 30-year assessment of the renewal and maintenance costs of the existing pool, benchmarked against a high-level estimate for a relocated facility comprising a 50-metre pool, regional/destination splash pad and water slide.
 - a) The assessment would consider future aquatic needs, industry trends, community and visitor requirements, and opportunities for private investment.
 - b) The investigation would include a comprehensive assessment of the cost of renewing the existing 50-metre pool and identify opportunities for new or replacement elements that would extend the life of the precinct.
2. Do not undertake any further work.

Recommendation/s

That Council:

1. **Undertake a 30-year assessment of the renewal and maintenance costs of the existing pool, benchmarked against a high-level estimate for a relocated facility comprising a 50-metre pool, regional/destination splash pad and water slide.**
 - a. **The assessment would consider future aquatic needs, industry trends, community and visitor requirements, and opportunities for private investment.**

- b. The investigation would include a comprehensive cost assessment of renewing the existing 50m pool and identify opportunities for new or replacement elements that would extend the life of the precinct.**

CM 2026/142 Motion**MOVED Cr McPhee****That Council:**

- 1. Undertake a 30-year assessment of the renewal and maintenance costs of the existing pool, benchmarked against a high-level estimate for a relocated facility comprising a 50-metre pool, regional/destination splash pad and water slide.**
 - a. The assessment would consider future aquatic needs, industry trends, community and visitor requirements, and opportunities for private investment.**
 - b. The investigation would include a comprehensive cost assessment of renewing the existing 50m pool and identify opportunities for new or replacement elements that would extend the life of the precinct.**

SECONDED Cr Rogers

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

2.4 Outcome of Community Engagement Process - Request to Lease Council Land Swan Hill Aerodrome

Directorate: Infrastructure

File Number: AST-BU-36230-03

Purpose: For Decision

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

6. Transparency and Effectiveness – Ensuring Council is open, accountable and responsive, with services and decision-making that reflect community expectations.

Objective 6.2: Strengthen Council's internal capability, resources, systems and financial sustainability.

6.2.4 Maintain long-term financial sustainability.

Current Strategic Documents

Council Plan

Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the statutory community engagement process undertaken in relation to the proposed lease of Council-owned land at the Swan Hill Aerodrome and to seek Council's final consideration of the lease proposal.

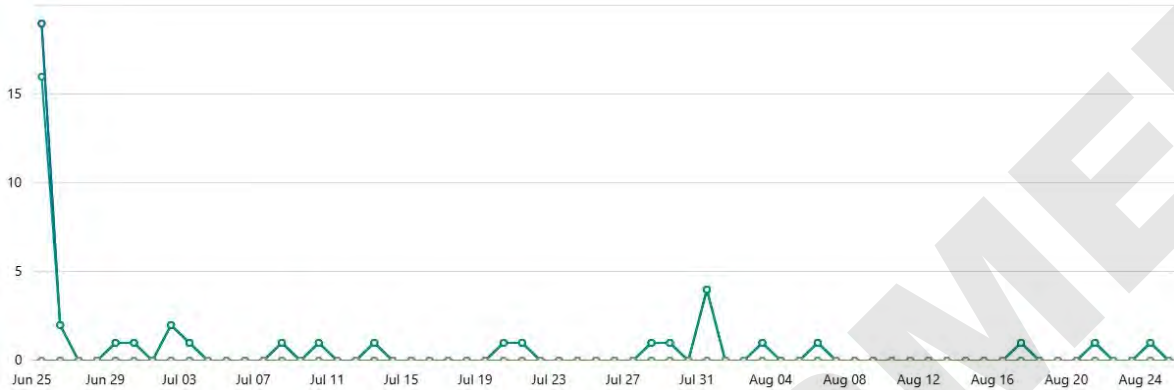
Discussion

In March 2026 Council received a request to lease Council-owned land at the Swan Hill Aerodrome by a tenant who has occupied the land since 2008.

The proposal involved leasing a 196 square metre (m²) area for aviation-related purposes, including aircraft hangar use, flight training operations and associated aviation activities. The requested lease arrangement comprised an initial ten-year term with two additional ten-year options, providing a potential total tenure of thirty years. Annual rental was proposed at \$3.80 per m² (\$745 per annum), indexed annually in line with CPI.

At a scheduled meeting of Council on 16 June 2026, Council resolved (CM 2026/70) to endorse the proposal to Lease Council land in principle and commence the statutory public notice of its intention to lease the land and undertake a community engagement process required under the Local Government Act 2020, with the final leasing decision to be considered following review of community submissions.

The notice of intention to lease the land was published in the *Swan Hill Guardian* newspaper on the 25 June 2026 and the community engagement process was undertaken from the 25 June 2026 to 24 July 2026 via Council's Let's Talk platform. During this period, the Notice of Intention to Lease Council Land Let's Talk page was viewed 42 times as shown in the table below. Council received zero submissions for or against the lease.



In relation to the proposed use, the operation of the existing flight school is consistent with the purpose and function of the Swan Hill Aerodrome and reflects the existing arrangement currently in place on the site. Given the specialised aviation nature of the precinct, it is not considered unreasonable or unexpected for flight training activities to occur at the aerodrome. Council does not anticipate that the lease renewal will result in a significant increase in aircraft movements or a surge in demand beyond that currently experienced at the facility.

The proposed rental is consistent with lease arrangements currently in place for comparable occupiers at the Swan Hill Aerodrome. It is also important to note that this is a ground lease arrangement, with the rental applying to the land only. Any buildings, structures, or other improvements on the site are owned by the tenant, who is also responsible for the ongoing maintenance, repair, replacement, and associated costs of those improvements.

Given the specialised nature of the aerodrome precinct and the limited demand for aviation-related lease sites, Council's priority is to maintain occupancy of the land while securing an income stream. In this context, seeking a higher rental rate is not considered appropriate, as it may reduce leasing opportunities and potentially diminish the economic activity and operational viability of the aerodrome. The proposed lease arrangement appropriately reflects both the market conditions within the aerodrome precinct and the significant responsibilities assumed by the tenant in relation to site improvements.

Consultation

The notice of intention to lease Council land was published in the *Swan Hill Guardian* newspaper on the 25 June 2026.

The community engagement process was undertaken from the 25 June 2026 to 31 July 2026 via Council's Let's Talk platform.

Financial Implications

The proposed lease will provide a commencing rental income of \$745 per annum, exclusive of GST.

Social Implications

Nil.

Economic Implications

The proposed 30-year lease term provides the proponent more surety to realise the value of any improvements made to the site and to develop the flight training academy.

Environmental Implications

Nil.

Risk Management Implications

The proposed term of the lease is not in keeping with standard terms for lease of Council land/facilities. The long-term nature of the lease limits Council options for this portion of the land (and potentially adjoining areas) for a considerable period.

Attachments: Nil

Options

1. Council grants the lease of Council land at the Swan Hill Aerodrome for a term of 10 years with two further terms of 10 years, at the option of the lessee.
2. Council does not proceed with any new lease arrangement and retains the current lease arrangements until expiry on 31 March 2028.

Recommendation/s

That Council grants a new lease of 196 square metres of Council-owned land at the Swan Hill Aerodrome to the incumbent tenant for an initial term of 10 years, with two further terms of 10 years each, exercisable at the option of the Lessee.

CM 2026/143 Motion

MOVED Cr Jennings

That Council grants a new lease of 196 square metres of Council-owned land at the Swan Hill Aerodrome to the incumbent tenant for an initial term of 10 years, with two further terms of 10 years each, exercisable at the option of the Lessee.

SECONDED Cr Rogers

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

2.5 Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2024

Directorate: Infrastructure

File Number: S17-02-153

Purpose: For Decision

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

5. Infrastructure – Investing in roads, facilities and public spaces that meet community needs and support growth into the future. Objective 5.1: Maintain and upgrade road infrastructure to support safe, efficient and accessible transport.

5.1.1 Ensure road upgrades and maintenance are based on condition, usage, and community access needs.

5.1.2 Advocate for improved transport services.

5. Infrastructure – Investing in roads, facilities and public spaces that meet community needs and support growth into the future. Objective 5.3: Improve connectivity between key precincts and cross-border infrastructure for regional growth.

5.3.1 Advocate for a new Swan Hill Bridge as Council's number one priority.

Current Strategic Documents

Council Plan

Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy

Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

Summary

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum (CMRTF) represents six councils across the north-west region of the state: Swan Hill Rural City Council, Murray River Council, Gannawarra Shire Council, Mildura Rural City Council, Buloke Shire Council, and Balranald Shire Council.

Swan Hill Rural City Council is the lead Council and is currently the chair of the forum. The structure of the forum includes a steering committee and a technical committee. The technical committee is made up primarily of Council Chief Executive Officers, directors and other agencies attend as required. The steering committee consists of one Councillor representative from each participating Council and the members of the technical committee.

The forum engaged and worked closely with a consultant to develop the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2024. The strategy was endorsed by the steering committee in early 2025. It is now recommended to seek formal endorsement from all the participating Councils.

Discussion

The CMRTF engaged the services of a consultant to work with all the individual participating Councils to develop a comprehensive strategic document around transport priorities for our region.

The Central Murray Region employs 46,000 people and has a population of approximately 110,000 people (2024). Agriculture is the key industry and contributes \$5 billion into our region. Approximately 7.2 million tonnes of road freight is transported in and out of our region annually, with an estimated value of \$19.2 million. This strategy supports the liveability for local residents while also focussing on upgrading the capability and capacity of infrastructure to support industry growth.

A copy of the endorsed strategy is shown in Attachment 1.

The four goals for transport in the region are to:

1. Increase supply chain efficiency and support economic development by improving freight transport access
2. Improve community access to services through efficient and affordable mobility solutions
3. Increase community safety and well-being and decrease supply chain disruptions and productivity impacts by improving transport network safety and resilience
4. Improve community health and environmental outcomes and decarbonise supply chains through sustainable transport modes and infrastructure

These goals will be achieved through the following ten priorities:

1. Swan Hill bridge upgrade and other priority regional bridge crossings
2. Grow freight on rail
3. High Productivity Freight Vehicle network for the Central Murray region
4. Key highway upgrades
5. Mildura freight links
6. New and improved regional public transport
7. Improved local bus services and active transport
8. Road improvements for enhanced transport safety and access
9. Climate change resilience and adaptation
10. Supporting new industries

These priorities also include a list of key actions that can be continuously worked on throughout the life of the strategy. Our partner agencies have supported the development of this document and have also advised that other levels of government are much better positioned to consider strategies on behalf of a region and emphasised the importance of having alignment amongst all 6 Councils, which this document achieves.

The strategy is extremely comprehensive and enables the region to work together and have a united voice around priorities for our region which can then be used to attract funding.

Consultation

The development of the strategy has included all Councils, various state departments and key stakeholders. The document has also been endorsed by the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum technical and steering committee.

Financial Implications

The cost of the consultant for the development of the strategy was \$88,220 (incl GST). This has been funded by the participating Councils who pay an annual amount to support the forum.

Social Implications

The final strategy supports growth in the region and the social benefits which align with population growth, economic growth and industry growth.

Economic Implications

There are no economic implications associated with receiving the strategy, however the document does inform readers about our region and the economic inputs and outputs of the agricultural sector.

Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications for receiving this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications for receiving this report.

Attachments: 1. Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy [2.5.1 - 44 pages]

Options

1. That Council adopt the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2024.
2. That Council does not adopt the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2024.

Recommendation/s

That Council adopt the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2024.

CM 2026/144 Motion**MOVED Cr McPhee**

That Council adopt the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2024.

SECONDED Cr Jennings

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy 2024

Central Murray Regional Transport Forum





Acknowledging the Traditional Owners

The Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout the region and recognises the continuing connection to land, waters, and communities.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

This strategy acknowledges the Registered Aboriginal Parties that reside throughout the study area including:

1. Millewa-Mallee
2. Barengi Dadjin
3. Wamba Wamba
4. Yorta Yorta
5. Dja Dja Wurrung

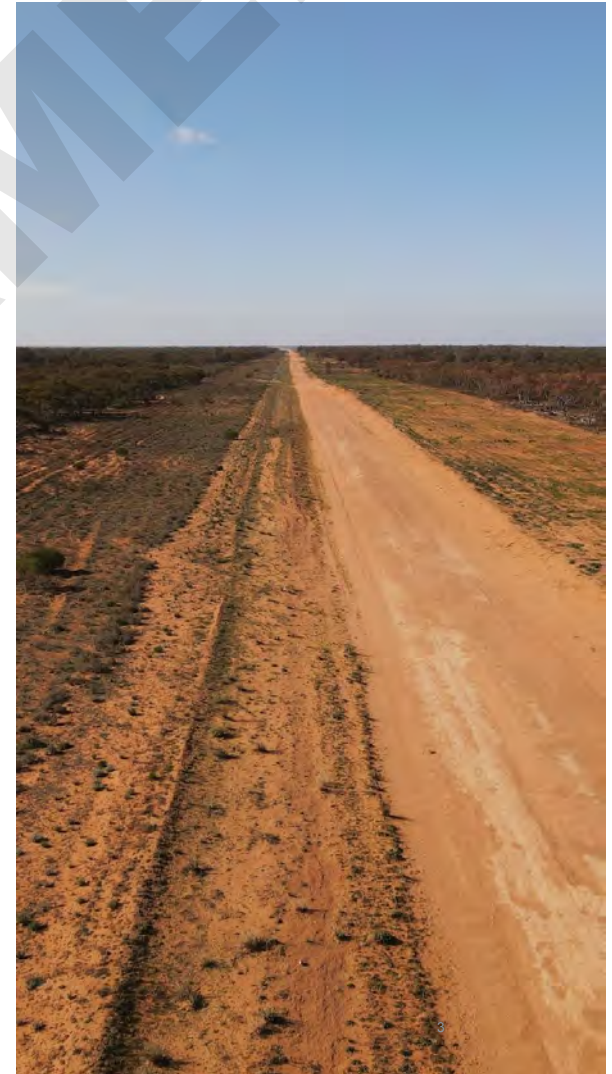


Executive summary

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum has developed a Transport Strategy for the region that expands on the previous iteration from 2019. These updates reflect the progress that has been made on the previous priority actions as well as considering recent and emerging changes affecting the region, including population changes, the growth of industry, and challenges associated with climate change, and road safety.

Four goals have been identified for transport to support the needs of communities and industries in the region. Ten priority actions have been identified to deliver these goals, based on their urgency, the significance of their impact, and relevance to the Central Murray region. These encompass a wide range of initiatives including road upgrades, public transport improvements, and investment in the freight network.

The overarching strategy underpinning the goals and priorities is to improve the liveability for local residents while also focussing on upgrading the capability and capacity of infrastructure to support industry growth.



Central Murray region – at a glance

The Central Murray region supports a large and growing transport task, with key commodities produced in the region comprising a large proportion of state production and making a significant contribution to the Australian economy.

- The Central Murray Region spans a large area, with a relatively small population. Transport access is a key issue within the region, with people moving goods and services within the reach, and to reach other major population centres.

 73,488 km²

 110,734 (2024)

- Approximately 91.7% of the Central Murray region is used for agricultural production, making agriculture the largest employment sector within the region, accounting for 7,300 jobs.

 3,094,934 tonnes
of broadacre crops produced

 499,257 tonnes
of hay and silage produced

 263 hectares
of nurseries, cut flowers
and cultivated turf

 645,852 tonnes
of fruits and nuts

 98,920 tonnes
of vegetables

 2,120,334
Livestock and livestock used for
livestock products (Note: figure
egg production)

- The gross production value of agricultural commodities within the Central Murray Region is approximately \$3.16 billion, representing approximately 17.5% of the total gross agricultural production value in NSW and 18% the total gross agricultural production value in Victoria.



18% of total gross
agricultural production in
Victoria.

- Substantial growth in horticulture production is driving growth in freight movements. Approximately 7.2 million tonnes of road freight is transported in and out of the Central Murray Region, with an estimated value of \$19.2 billion.

- Improving transport across the region requires solutions to various challenges, including:



Harmonising freight access for High Productivity Freight Vehicles and grow the use of rail freight to reduce transport costs for freight producers and the impacts of freight on the community.



Air services are essential to the region, but are limited to airports in Mildura and Bendigo. Train and bus services are also limited.



The Central Murray Region is comprised of councils that are considered either regional or remote areas, creating significant challenges for maintaining and improving local road networks under current funding arrangements.



Around 10 people are killed and 75 people are seriously injured on roads in the Central Murray region each year, costing the region \$146.1 million.



Climate change is already impacting on the region and will exacerbate existing challenges with maintaining under-funded local roads.

A transport strategy for the Central Murray region

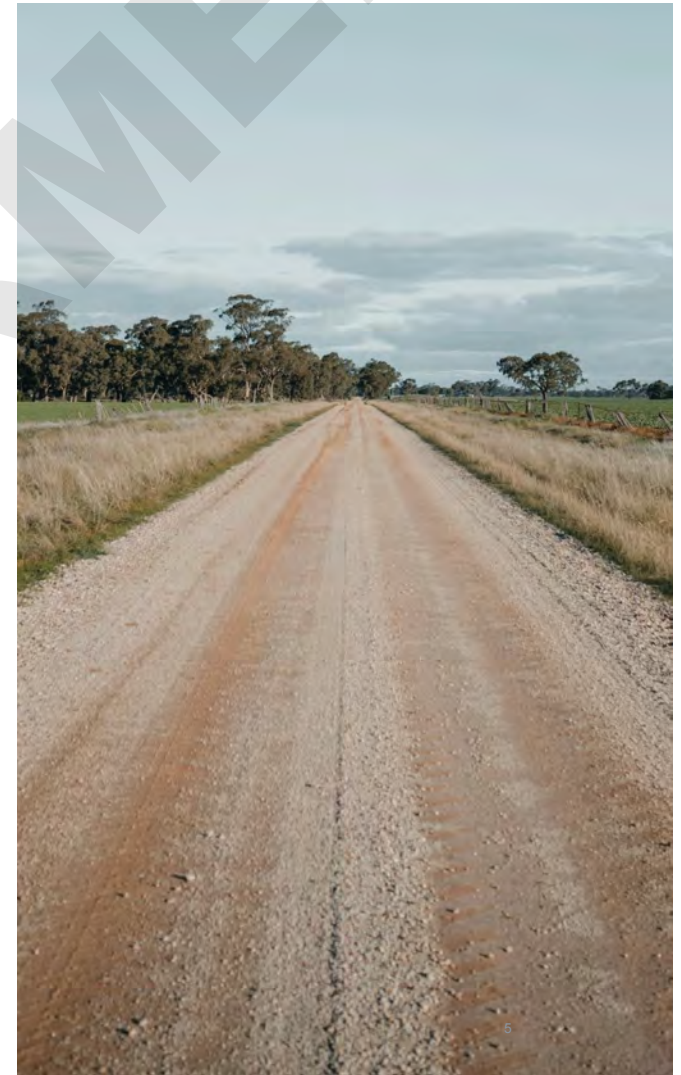
This strategy sets out transport issues opportunities and priorities for the six councils making up the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum - Swan Hill Rural City Council, Murray River Council, Gannawarra Shire Council, Mildura Rural City Council, Buloke Shire Council, and Balranald Shire Council. This 2024 document updates priorities identified in the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy, published 2019.

The four goals for transport in the region are to:

1. Increase supply chain efficiency and support economic development by improving freight transport access
2. Improve community access to services through efficient and affordable mobility solutions
3. Increase community safety and well-being and decrease supply chain disruptions and productivity impacts by improving transport network safety and resilience
4. Improve community health and environmental outcomes and decarbonise supply chains through sustainable transport modes and infrastructure

These goals will be achieved through the following ten Priorities:

1. Swan Hill bridge upgrade and other priority regional bridge crossings
2. Grow freight on rail
3. High Productivity Freight Vehicle network for the Central Murray region
4. Key highway upgrades
5. Mildura freight links
6. New and improved regional public transport
7. Improved local bus services and active transport
8. Road improvements for enhanced transport safety and access
9. Climate change resilience and adaptation
10. Supporting new industries



1

Goals of the Strategy

6

The Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy identifies strategic transport needs and priorities for councils within this economically important region.

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum (CMRTF, the Forum) comprises of six member Councils located along the Murray River in northwestern Victoria and New South Wales – Swan Hill Rural City Council, Murray River Council, Gannawarra Shire Council, Mildura Rural City Council, Buloke Shire Council, and Balranald Shire Council. Participating Councils are strongly focused on meeting broader regional transport needs as well as the needs of communities within their own council areas. This includes consideration of freight productivity, connectivity and rail freight services and network reliability.

In 2011, the Forum engaged consultants to develop a Regional Transport Strategy (the Strategy). The development of this strategy has led to success in the region's ability to attract funding for transport initiation studies and projects. The Strategy was updated in 2014 and again in 2019 and is recognised as an important strategic document at all levels of government.

The Forum has been updated to reflect changes in the operating environment for councils and new challenges and opportunities. These include the growth of agricultural production and freight movements in the region, emerging industries and the increasing challenges that climate change poses on the transport network.

The Strategy has been prepared by Forum councils with the assistance of key stakeholders including the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, the Department of Transport and Planning and Transport for NSW. The Strategy has been prepared with the assistance of consulting firm NineSquared.

The goals of the strategy are shown on the following page. Section 2 of the Strategy discusses why the Central Murray region is important and the current transport network and services. Section 3 presents the top ten regional transport priorities and Section 4 outlines the implementation approach.



The vision of the Central Murray Regional Forum is to provide a collective voice for transport needs of the Central Murray region and deliver priorities that improve the social and economic well-being of its communities.

The Strategy has four overarching goals, with underpinning initiatives and performance measures.

	Goal 1 - Access	Goal 2 - Mobility	Goal 3 - Safety & Resilience	Goal 4 - Sustainability
Regional Transport Goals	Increase supply chain efficiency and support economic development by improving freight transport access	Improve community access to services through efficient and affordable mobility solutions	Increase community safety and well-being and decrease supply chain disruptions and productivity impacts by improving transport network safety and resilience	Improve community health and environmental outcomes and decarbonise supply chains through sustainable transport modes and infrastructure
Supporting Initiatives	- Road freight access improvements - Increased use of rail freight	- New and improved passenger transport services - Technology based mobility solutions	- Road improvements - Initiatives to reduce risks for vulnerable road users - Road works to improve flood resistance	- Active transport networks - Intermodal terminals and rail network improvements - Infrastructure to support zero and low emission vehicles
Performance Measures	- Roads/networks allowing heavy vehicle access - Number of permit applications for restricted access vehicles	- Number and frequency of passenger transport services - Service patronage	- Number of deaths and serious injuries from crashes - Number of unplanned road and rail network closures	- Surveys of active transport - Rail freight mode share - Number of EV charging points - Number of zero and low emission trucks

The Central Murray Region and its transport network

9

The Central Murray region has a growing population – the size and location of the region make transport access a key issue.

Key characteristics

 73,488 km²

 110,734 (2024)

 0.40% (2024-2036)

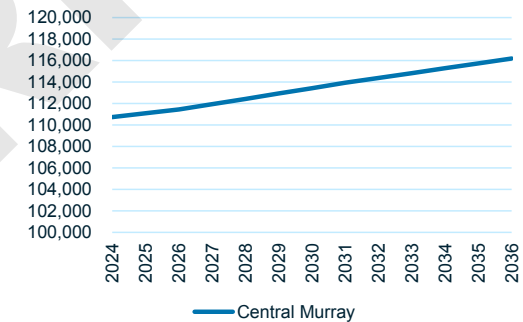
The Central Murray Region comprises six local councils, four of which are in Victoria (Swan Hill, Mildura, Buloke and Gannawarra) and two in New South Wales (Murray River and Balranald). The Central Murray Region includes over 70 thousand square kilometres of land and has a total population of 111,000 people. The area covered by the region is roughly equivalent to the size of Tasmania. Transport access is a key issue, with people and goods moving significant distances within the region and to reach other major population centres. State government projections indicate that the region's population is expected to reach 116,000 by 2036 (as seen right).¹

Mildura Council has the highest projected population, which is expected to reach 63,000 by 2036 (see right). While current projections indicate there will be population growth in the Murray River and Mildura Council areas, the population of other council areas is expected to remain stable, with some declining slightly between 2024 and 2036.

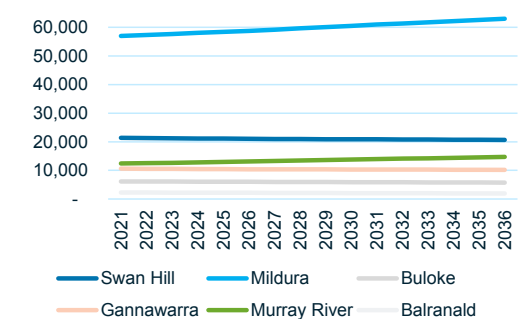
The Central Murray region has a very high seasonal workforce, with workers moving into and through the area for jobs in horticulture and other agricultural sectors. The emerging critical minerals and renewable energy sectors are also expected to generate employment opportunities. The region's seasonal workforce includes workers who come to the region through the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) program. There is a trial of longer-term visas (four years) planned/underway which will allow family to accompany PALM workers. The number of four-year visas in Victoria is currently 2,366 of the 7000 workers, with these numbers expected to increase.²

Work by the region's councils and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has found that the region's seasonal workforce is significantly under-reported in official population figures, impacting the ability of councils to fund essential services. A recent research study found Census non-response rates for Robinvale-Euston and Swan Hill ranged from 7% to 18%. Various initiatives are now underway to better understand the region's seasonal workforce, including improvements to data collection for the 2026 Census.³

Projected Population to 2036



Projected Population to 2036 by LGA

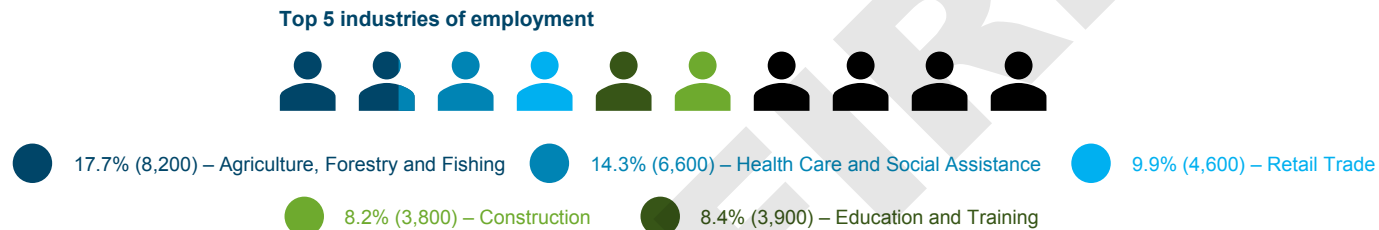


1. Methodology for population projections and growth rates are outlined in Appendix A
2. Swan Hill Council (2024), 'A new Rugby Club in Swan Hill, Media Release, June 2024
3. Information provided by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

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The Central Murray region employs 46,000 people – agriculture is a key industry and contributes \$5 billion to the Central Murray region.

Based on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, approximately 46,000 people are employed in the Central Murray region. Key employment categories are shown below.



Agriculture is the largest individual employment sector within the region, accounting for 7,300 jobs. The other main areas of employment within the Central Murray Region include; Preschool and School Education (3,300 jobs), Food and Beverage Services (3,300 jobs), Construction Services (2,500 jobs) and Hospitals (2,200 jobs). These employment figures were used as a proxy for determining the economic contribution of the Agricultural industry in the Central Murray Region using Input-Output (IO) modelling techniques.¹ The economic contribution analysis calculates the effects of the expenditure on agricultural commodities within the Central Murray region (calculated as the Total Gross Production Value of Agricultural Commodities as seen on p8).

Central Murray Region



Expenditure associated with the agricultural industry in the Central Murray region
\$3.16 billion

Economic contribution of the agricultural industry in the Central Murray Region

Additional **Gross Regional Product** associated with the local spend in the Central Murray Region

\$2.26 billion

Average number of annual jobs (direct and indirect) created through the Central Murray regions agricultural industry

18,144 FTEs

Total economic output generated by the agricultural industry in the Central Murray Region

\$5.08 billion

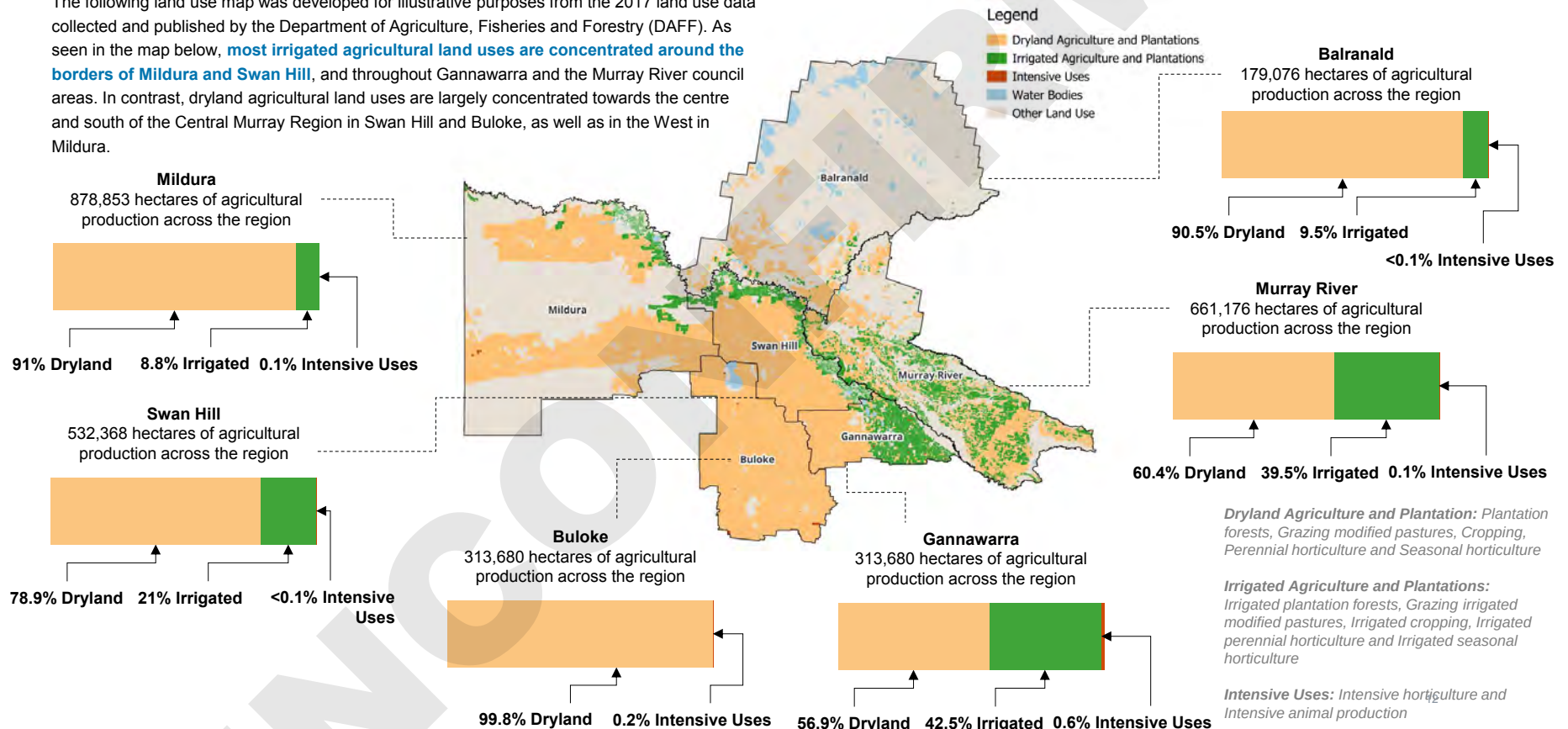
Total income generated by the agricultural industry in the Central Murray Region

\$0.65 billion

1. Methodology outlined in Appendix B

Dryland cropping and irrigated agriculture are key industries in the region.

The following land use map was developed for illustrative purposes from the 2017 land use data collected and published by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). As seen in the map below, **most irrigated agricultural land uses are concentrated around the borders of Mildura and Swan Hill**, and throughout Gannawarra and the Murray River council areas. In contrast, dryland agricultural land uses are largely concentrated towards the centre and south of the Central Murray Region in Swan Hill and Buloke, as well as in the West in Mildura.



Substantial growth in horticultural production in the central part of the region is driving growth in freight movements.

Approximately 91.7% of the Central Murray region is used for agricultural production - with 58% of this agricultural land used for grazing, 41.7% used for crops, 0.2% used forestry and 0.1% used for other agricultural purposes.

Advice from industry indicates that there has been substantial growth in horticultural production in the central part of the region in recent years, particularly in Swan Hill. In response to this growth, Australian Farming Solutions has recently constructed a major Almond Processing Plant at Murray Downs on the Border of Swan Hill Rural City Council and Murray River Council. The plant, which has commenced operations, has been designed to process 35,000 tonnes of almond kernel and is expected to create over 61 full time jobs.¹ Stakeholders indicate that this shift in production is increasing road freight movements in this part of the region, a trend that will continue to increase.

The 2020-21 ABS Agricultural Census, provides production volumes and land use estimates for agricultural commodities that have been grouped into the following categories; broadacre crops, hay and silage, nurseries, cut flowers and cultivated turf, fruit and nuts, vegetables and livestock and livestock products.

Agricultural Production in the Central Murray Region²



3,094,934 tonnes
of broadacre crops produced



499,257 tonnes
of hay and silage produced



263 hectares
of nurseries, cut flowers
and cultivated turf



645,852 tonnes
of fruits and nuts

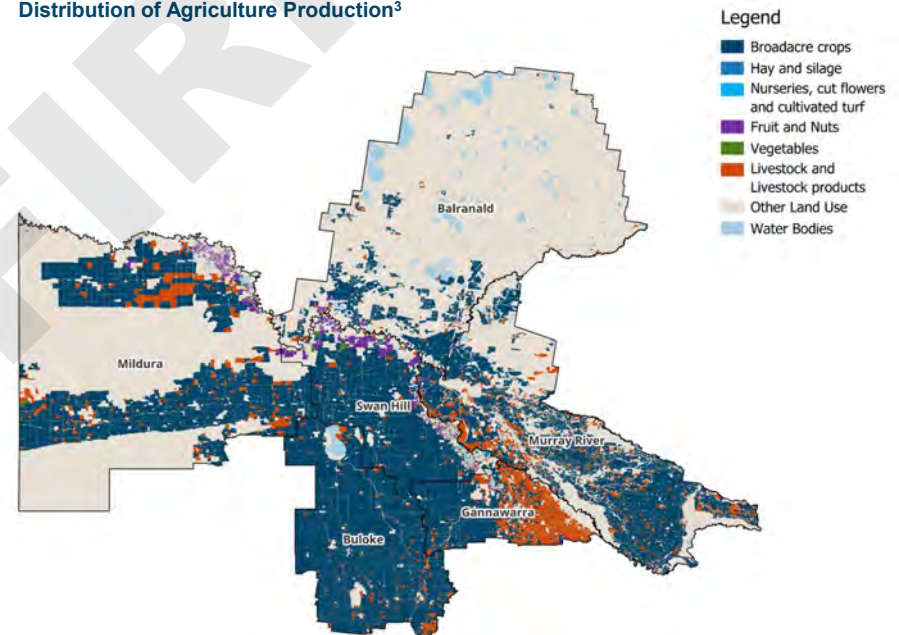


98,920 tonnes
of vegetables



2,120,334
Livestock and livestock used for
livestock products (Note: figure
egg production)

Distribution of Agriculture Production³

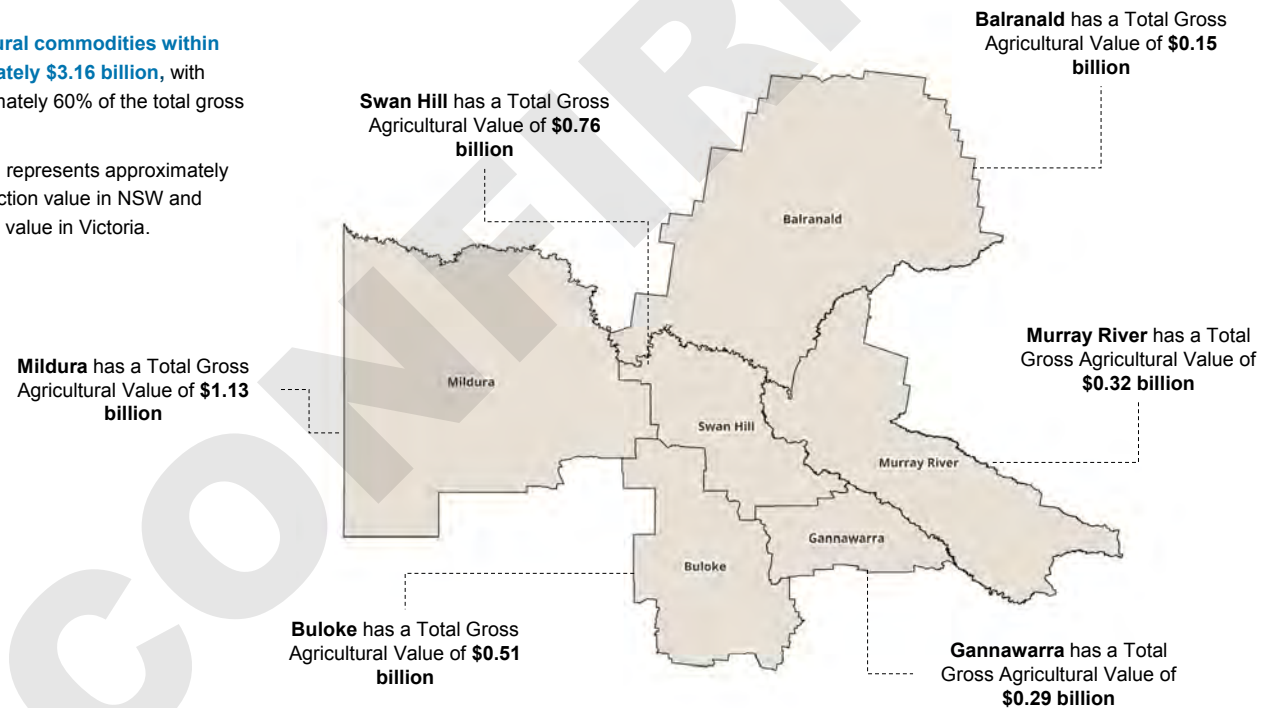


1. Murray River Council (2023), 'New almond hulling and shelling facility at Murray Downs, Media Release, April 2023
2. Production volumes are based on the 2020-21 ABS Agricultural Census
3. Map is based on the DAFF 2017 land use data and provides an indication of where commodities are produced within the Central Murray Region. The data is not up to date and is therefore only used for illustrative purposes. 13

The gross production value of agricultural commodities within the Central Murray region is approximately \$3.16 billion.

The gross production value of agricultural commodities within the Central Murray Region is approximately \$3.16 billion, with Mildura and Swan Hill making up approximately 60% of the total gross production value within the region.

Comparatively, the Central Murray Region represents approximately 17.5% of the total gross agricultural production value in NSW and 18% the total gross agricultural production value in Victoria.



Source: Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia 2020-2021 (ABS)

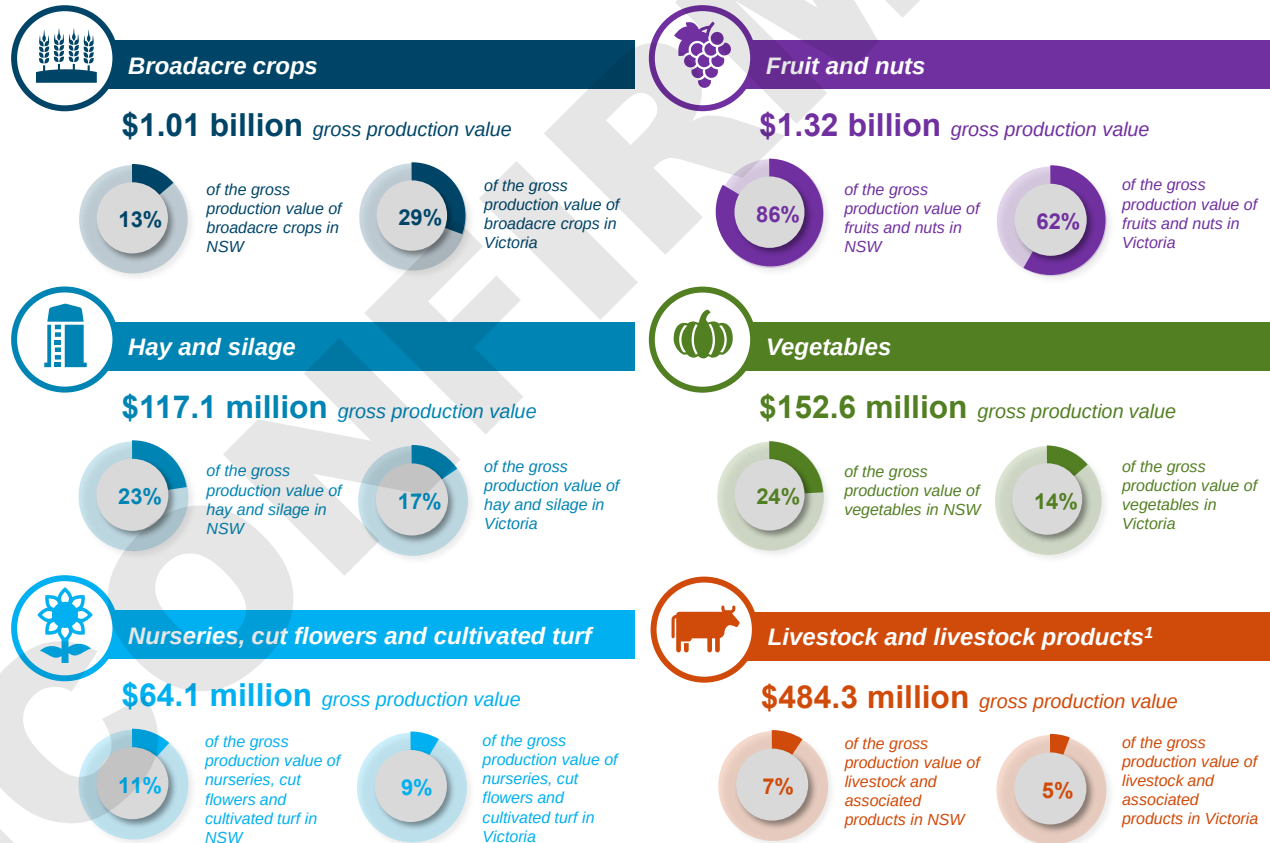
14

Key commodities produced in the region comprise a large proportion of state production.

Fruit and nuts have the highest total gross agricultural production value in the Central Murray Region out of all commodity groups.

Production from fruit and nuts and broadacre crops make up approximately 74% of the total gross agricultural production value within the Central Murray region, with livestock and livestock products contributing a further 15%. The remaining three commodity groups combined constitute around 11% of the total gross agricultural production value within the Central Murray Region.

Comparing the total gross production value of a commodity in the Central Murray Region to the total gross production value of the commodity in either NSW or Victoria provides context to the significance of the agricultural production in the Region. The total value of fruit and nuts in the Central Murray Region comparatively represents approximately 86% of the total production value of fruit and nuts within NSW, or 62% of the total production in Victoria.



1. Livestock products and livestock slaughtered and other disposables have been grouped into Livestock and livestock products (see Appendix C for calculation methodology)

Approximately 7.2 million tonnes of road freight is transported in and out of the Central Murray region, with an estimated value of \$19.2 billion.

Most agricultural commodities produced in the Central Murray region are transported outside the region, including overseas markets. Most produce is transported by road.

Freight task volume and value data was collected from the CSIRO Transport Network Strategic Investment Tool (TraNSIT) Supply Chain Dashboard on road freight movements for the relevant LGAs within the Central Murray region¹. This data was then filtered for inbound and outbound freight i.e. moving in and out of the Central Murray Region, removing any road freight movements within or between LGA's within the Central Murray Region.

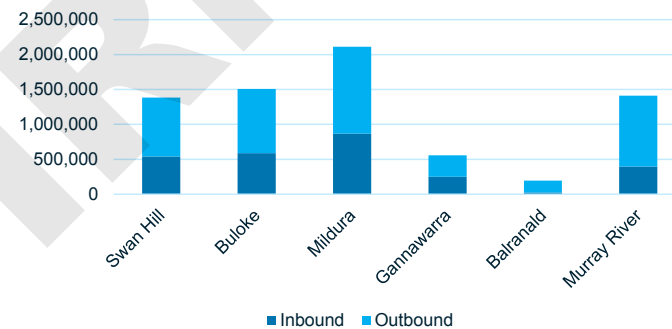
Based on CSIRO TraNSIT data (2024), approximately 7.2 million tonnes of road freight is transported in and out of the Central Murray Region. This annual road freight task is valued at around \$19.2 billion.

Based on the analysis, 62.8% of annual road freight tonnage originating from the LGAs within the Central Murray region is transported out of the region, with freight movements occurring both to intrastate and interstate destinations. Outbound freight is dominated by commodities related to cropping, horticulture, livestock and fuel. Comparatively, 37.2% of the annual road freight tonnage is transported into the Central Murray region. Key commodities include beverages, chemicals, horticulture, fuel, cropping, livestock, health, vehicles and general products.

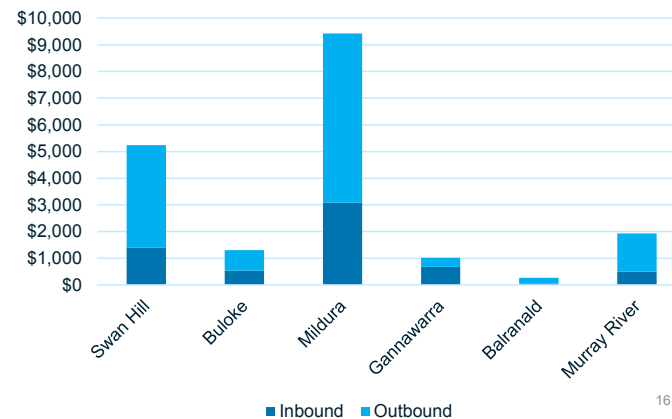
Within the Central Murray region, approximately 29% of annual road freight tonnage is transported in and out of Mildura LGA (see right) followed closely by the Buloke and Murray River LGAs. Mildura LGA accounts for inbound and outbound freight valued at around \$9.4 billion, which comprises almost 50% of the regions annual freight task value (see right). Cropping and horticulture related commodities make up the majority of Mildura's outbound freight, while the main inbound freight consists mostly of cropping and fuel.

In addition to freight moving in and out of the region, significant freight volumes also circulate within the region. For example, grain and horticultural products grown in the region will typically be transported from farms to nearby bulk storage or packing facilities where they are consolidated before being transported to end customers.

Annual freight volume (t) by LGA



Annual freight task value (\$m) by LGA



16

There are opportunities to harmonise access for High Productivity Freight Vehicles across the region

Improving road access for High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs or HPVs) was identified as a key priority in the 2019 Strategy. HPFV's are trucks that are designed to increase payload efficiencies over conventional trucks. Unlike 'general access vehicles' that can effectively use all parts of the road network, HPFVs operate on restricted networks.

HPVs are already used extensively to move freight in the Central Murray Region. There are a variety of types of HPFVs, including performance-based standards (PBS) vehicles. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) and state government road managers have policies to increase the use of performance-based standard (PBS) vehicles. PBS vehicles allow operators to move more freight using vehicles that occupy the same amount of road space as more conventional vehicles

Providing access on local roads for these vehicles is an increasing challenge because of the quality of many local roads and the larger and heavier nature of the vehicles.

Advances in access on state road networks will generate more heavy vehicle access requests and increase pressure for council road managers to provide access.

Currently access for PBS vehicles in the region is inconsistent and includes various gaps. As an example, the maps right show roads with gazetted (pre-approved) access for the most common type of HPV, 26m B-Doubles, compared to an equivalent PBS Tier 1 vehicle. Despite being assessed as having the same relative impact on road infrastructure, access for the PBS vehicle is more restricted compared to B-Doubles.

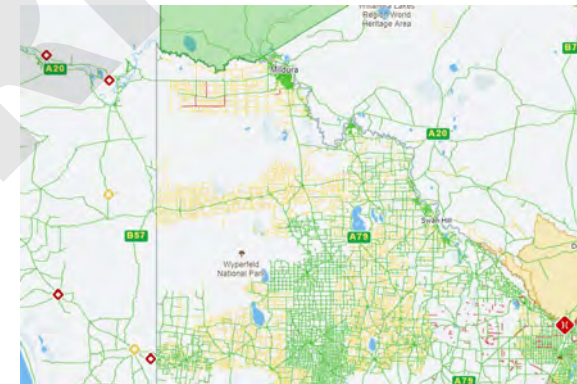
The PBS vehicle can allow operators to move the same load with less trips, but under current arrangements operators would need to apply for permits to use these vehicles. This can disincentive investment in safer and more productive combinations of heavy vehicles, or contribute to additional cost and environmental impact by necessitating lengthy detours.

1. Based on desktop analysis using the NHVR National Network Map [[National Network Map](#) | NHVR]

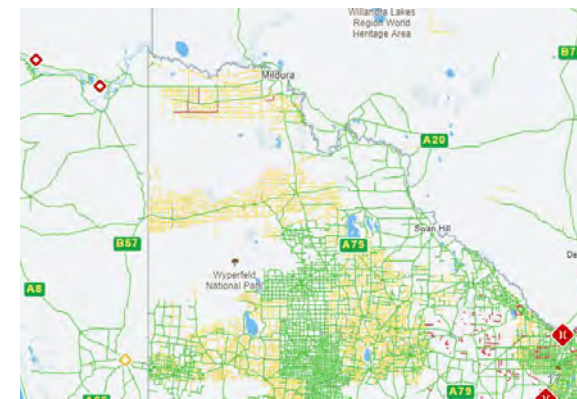
Comparison of heavy vehicle access for a B-Double and equivalent PBS vehicle¹



B-Double, up to 26m



PBS Tier 1, Level 2A, up to 26m, Truck and Dog



Rail plays an essential role supporting the movement of bulk commodities and containerised freight from the Central Murray region for exporters.

Benefits of Rail Freight¹

16 times less

carbon pollution per tonne kilometre travelled compared to road

20 times lower

accident costs per tonne kilometre compared to road

Rail is well suited to moving bulk commodities and containerised freight, particularly over longer distances (300 km or more). A combination of standard, broad, and dual-gauge rail lines make up the rail network that services the Central Murray region (see map right).

Rail services transport a large amount freight out of the Central Murray Region, including:

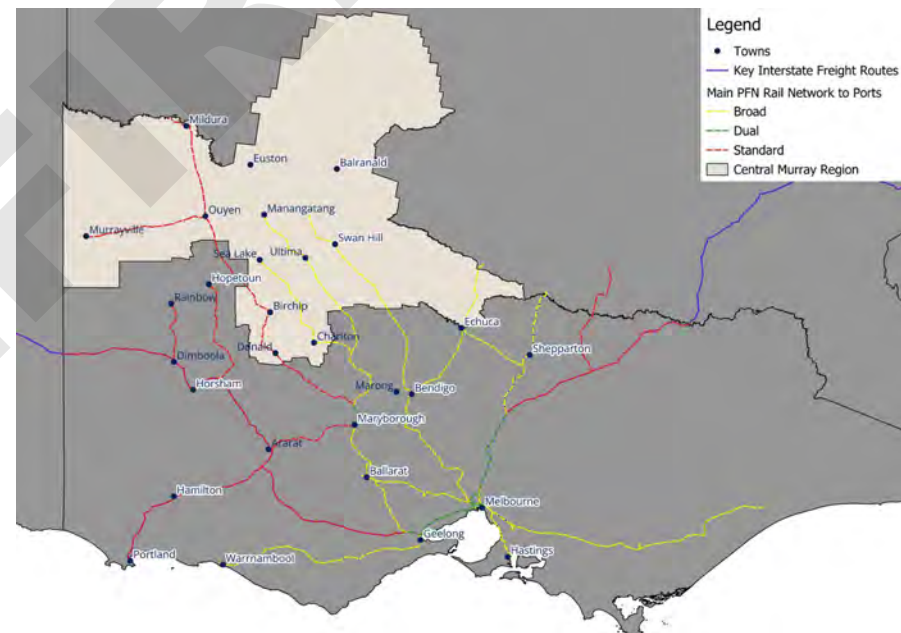
- **Containerised freight**, including horticultural products and grain from various packing facilities and intermodal terminals to the Port of Melbourne for export
- **Bulk grain**, transported from various grain storage facilities in the region to the Ports of Geelong, Melbourne and Portland for export and to domestic grain customers (e.g. mills)

At current estimates, the rail network facilitates an estimated 20-25% of the regions containerised freight task (approximately 40,000 - 50,000 TEUs), and around 45% of the region's bulk freight task (comprised exclusively of bulk grain, approximately 650,000 tonnes) moving to the 3 ports serving the Central Murray region.²

In the past, rail services have also transported Mineral sands from the Iluka Resources Limited's WRP mine near Ouyen to the Port of Portland. Various new mineral sands mines are proposed in the region, including approximately 35 km south of Swan Hill Goschen Mineral Sands and Rare Earths project. Planning for this project is well progressed, and it is proposed that processed materials will be transported using sealed sea containers via road to Ultima and then rail to Port of Melbourne.

Further information on freight terminals and proposed mineral sands development are shown in Appendix D.

The regional rail network



1. Value of Rail 2020, Australian Railway Association REPORT-ValueofRail2020-1.pdf (ara.net.au)
2. NineSquared (2024) Mallee Future Freight Investigation and Action Plan, Report prepared for the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

Growing the use of rail for moving freight will provide significant economic benefits for the Central Murray region.

Infrastructure limitations on the regional rail network and the impending mineral sands freight task (see right) present challenges for rail services.

These factors and innovation in road freight operations create on-going challenges for rail to maintain a competitive advantage over road freight for long distance freight movements.

Given that rail services can move much larger volumes of freight in a single trip compared to heavy vehicles, increases in the relative share of freight that rail transports can result in significant cost savings, environmental and safety benefits.

The recent Mallee Future Freight Investigation and Action Plan¹ analysed the implications of changes in rail mode share. This found that even modest reductions in rail mode share could significantly increase the amount of freight moved by road, increasing costs and negative impacts on safety, the environment and infrastructure. Conversely, increases in rail mode share will provide economic benefits to the region. Key findings from the analysis are summarised below.²

10% reduction rail's share of bulk freight

7600 additional truck trips per week

↑ \$3.2 million p.a.
Additional costs for freight customers

↑ 1.8 million litres p.a.
Fuel consumption

↑ 4.7 million kg p.a.
CO₂ emissions

5% reduction rail's share of containerised freight

1,700 additional truck trips year

↑ \$1.1 million p.a.
Additional costs for freight customers

↑ 1.3 million litres p.a.
Fuel consumption

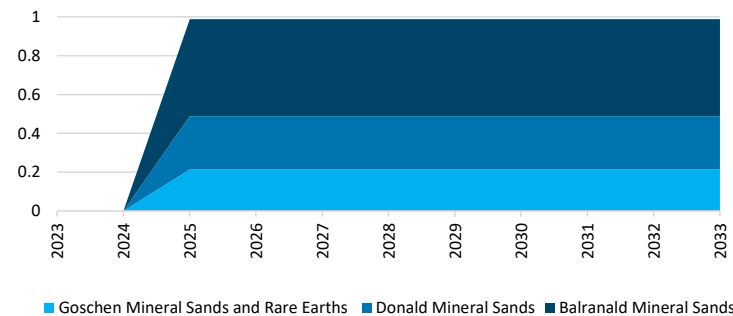
↑ 3.6 million kg p.a.
CO₂ emissions

Based on analysis conducted as part of the Mallee Future Freight Investigation² and Action Plan, if all the mineral sands mines that are currently proposed or under investigation in the Central Murray region were to be operational, this would add as much as 1 million tonnes of processed bulk materials on transport networks per annum. This assumes that materials are processed at or near mines, with the 'yield' transported on regional networks.

If processed bulk material in this scenario were to be transported exclusively on the road network, the estimated cost of pavement wear to transport the material could amount to \$11 million annually.

Minimising road freight movements and maximising rail freight will help to minimise damage to road networks, the environment and road safety, and maximise supply chain efficiency.

Estimated yield from proposed mineral sands projects in the Central Murray region



1. NineSquared (2024) Mallee Future Freight Investigation and Action Plan, Report prepared for the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
2. Impacts calculated using study assumptions detailed in the Mallee Future Freight Investigation and Action Plan report.
3. Based on analysis in the Mallee Future Freight Investigation and Action Plan, excluding projects outside the Central Murray region

Air services are essential to the region but are limited to airports in Mildura and Bendigo.

There are two airports within the vicinity of the Central Murray Region that offer passenger airline services.

There is limited access via passenger airline services within the Central Murray Region. Qantas/Qantaslink and Rex operate services from between Mildura Airport and Sydney and Melbourne, with approximately 48 arrival and 54 departure flights per week. The next closest airport to the Central Murray Region that offers passenger airline services is Bendigo Airport with Qantas operating services to/from Sydney. Bendigo Airport is outside the Central Murray region but is a closer option for towns in the eastern part of the region.

There are 19 other regional airports within or near the Central Murray Region, however, they primarily offer unscheduled general and commercial aviation services such as private charters, flying school, airshows, Royal Flying Doctors Services or agricultural and haulage services. Air ambulance services are also available to Mildura Airport, Swan Hill Airport and Balranald Airport¹.



¹Medial Air Service Worldwide (Airports | Air ambulance | Rescue flight - Australia (medical-air-service.com))

Case study – Aging in place and active transport

Alongside broader regional priorities, at a local level actions are needed to enable an aging population to age in place as much as practical, through improvements to land use, public transport and active transport. Local transport improvements are currently being considered through Integrated Transport and Land Use Studies and complement priorities identified in this Strategy.

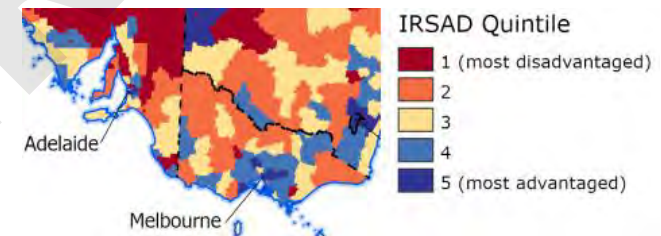
Communities in the Central Murray region experience a higher level of transport disadvantage compared to other regions because of lower median household incomes, and the requirement to travel longer distances than other parts of NSW and Victoria to reach essential services.

The region's population is aging, and it is desirable that people can live at home as long as possible to maintain quality of life. The challenges facing the Central Murray region are similar to the broader trend for Victoria's population. In 2021 there were almost 1.5 million Victorians aged 60 years or older. This represents 22% of the total population. By 2046 that number is expected to increase by around 60% to more than 2.3 million people. This aging population is particularly challenging in the Central Murray region due to many small towns in remote areas, which may have declining populations. Increasing economic participation for women is also of high priority for the region.

As the population ages transport disadvantage is likely to increase. Opportunities to enhance public transport access and accessibility in coordination with future land use changes planning in the main regional centres are critical for the development of the Central Murray region.

To enable aging in place, improvements are needed to active transport networks in local towns and major regional centres, to enable wheelchairs, mobility buggies and other mobility aids to operate safely as well as promote healthy lifestyles options. This will provide opportunities develop local community networks that are inclusive of all ages, genders and abilities. Creating streets that provide a people focus¹ can act as a catalyst for the development of well-located and low maintenance dwellings that enables older residents to maintain independence and age in place in their home communities.

It will be important to prioritise key active transport corridors and street enhancements through the movement and place framework and improve them through targeted upgrades including street calming and filtering, speed optimisation, the extension of the footpath network and separated cycling facilities and key intersection enhancements. Implementation of such projects has already begun, such as the Mildura CBD 30km/h speed limits, and Integrated Transport and Land Use Studies in Mildura and Swan Hill and the Swan Hill Riverfront activation project as well as an increased awareness of the need for viable transport links, to support all users in the community.



1. ABS SIEFA Index map (2024) [online]

1. The 'Safe Active Streets Pilot Program' is an example of a initiative to encourage more people to walk, wheel and ride in their communities, see [Safe Active Streets Pilot Program \(transport.wa.gov.au\)](https://transport.wa.gov.au)

The Central Murray region has substantial local road networks that are challenging to maintain under current funding arrangements.

The Central Murray Region is comprised of councils that are considered either regional or remote areas, creating significant challenges for maintaining and improving local road networks. Despite these funding challenges, there is continued pressure on councils to continually expand local road access for heavy vehicles.

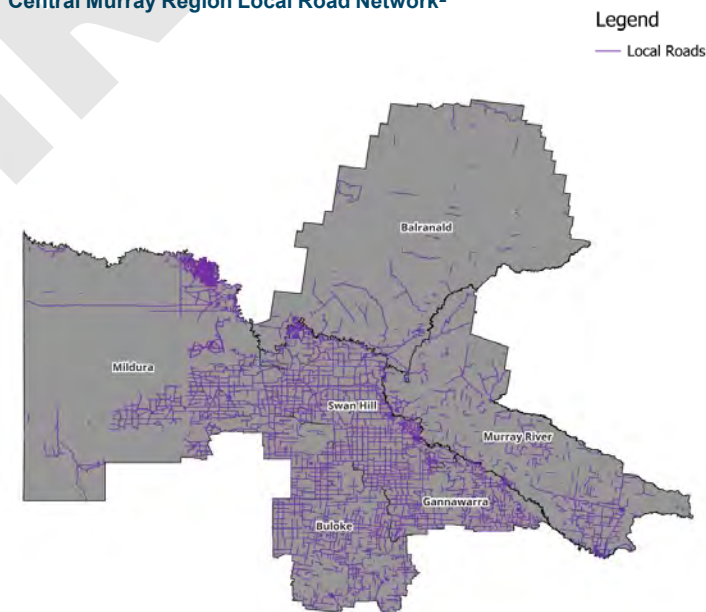
A recent report on funding for the maintenance of local roads by the Grattan Institute¹ argues that maintaining local roads to a safe and acceptable standard is an essential government service. The report found that local roads are primarily funded through a complex combination of councils' own-source of revenue, and tied and untied grants from the federal, state and territory governments. The report found that there is a serious overall underspend on local roads within regional and remote councils that have large land areas with vast road networks that require maintenance. Due to smaller populations, it is difficult for local councils in those areas to raise sufficient revenue to adequately fund the maintenance of these local road networks – resulting in significant underspending on local roads of 42% in regional areas and more than 75% in remote areas.

According to the Grattan Institute report, the median population density of regional and remote areas is 3.9 persons per km² and 0.1 persons per km², respectively. As seen in the table below, the local councils in the Central Murray region all have population densities within this range. Median road lengths within the Central Murray Region range from 0.1 km to 0.4 km, and maximum road lengths range from 6.4 km to 8.6 km – with the local road network spread throughout the entire region (see figure right), highlighting the challenges of maintaining and improving roads in the absence of increases in external funding.

Characteristics of LGAs in the Central Murray Region

LGA	Population	Median road length (km)	Maximum road length (km)	Total road length (km)	Land area (km ²)	Population Density (per km ²)
Mildura	58,027	0.1	8.7	5,299	22,082	2.6
Swan Hill	21,162	0.2	7.1	3,034	6,116	3.5
Buloke	6,059	0.4	7.1	2,913	7,998	0.76
Murray River	12,796	0.1	9.0	3,093	11,863	1.1
Gannawarra	10,484	0.2	7.1	2,260	3,738	2.8
Balranald	2,206	0.2	8.6	1,582	21,691	0.1

Central Murray Region Local Road Network²



1. Grattan Institute (2023), Potholes and Pitfalls: How to fix local roads [Potholes and pitfalls: How to fix local roads \(grattan.edu.au\)](https://grattan.edu.au/)
2. Road length values and map were generated through spatial analysis using the Digital Atlas of Australia National Roads (2024) dataset, and therefore the accuracy is subject to its collection methodology. Total road length provided by Councils. ([National Roads | Digital Atlas of Australia](#))

Around 10 people are killed and 75 people are seriously injured on roads in the Central Murray region each year, costing the region \$146.1 million¹

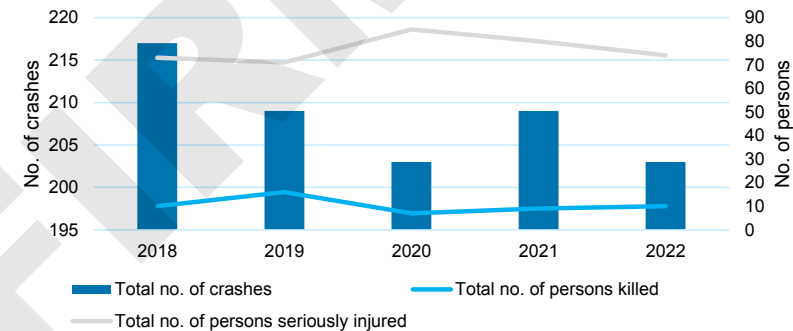
From 2018-2022, the Central Murray Region experienced a total crash rate lower than the average total crash rate of all LGAs in NSW and all LGAs in VIC

There were 1,041 crashes in the Central Murray Region from 2018-2022, with an average of 208 crashes occurring per year. Over the 5-year period, 788 crashes were attributed to cars, 64 crashes were attributed Light Commercial Vehicles and 54 crashes were attributed to Heavy Commercial Vehicles. The total number of crashes have declined since 2018 (see Figure 6), despite a spike in crashes in 2021. Over the 5-year period a total of 52 persons were killed during these crashes, and 383 persons were seriously injured (see right). Over the 5-year period, between 7 and 10 people had been killed on roads in the region each year, with spike of 16 people killed in 2019. Similarly, the total number of persons seriously injured has also remained relatively stable year on year, ranging 71 to 80 persons excluding an increase to 85 persons in 2020. The total number of persons killed, and the total number of persons seriously injured displays a slightly inverse relationship over the 5-year period.

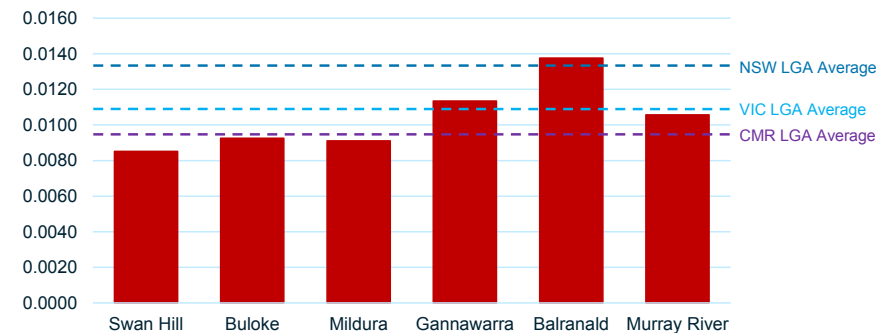
The average total crash rate for LGAs in the Central Murray Region was 0.0095 per person, with 0.0040 crashes per person resulting in either fatal or serious injury within the 5-year period. As shown right, the Central Murray Region total crash rate is lower than the average of the total crash rates of all LGAs in both NSW (0.0134) and VIC (0.0108) per person. Within the Central Murray Region, Balranald (0.0138) has the highest total crash rate exceeding both the NSW LGA and VIC LGA average followed by Gannawarra (0.0113) which only exceeds the VIC LGA average. All other LGAs within the Central Murray Region have total crash rates lower than both state's LGA average total crashes per person.

For LGAs within both states the distribution of fatal and serious injury crash rates per person show a relative spread when scaled by the LGAs population (see Appendix E). All LGA's within the Central Murray Region have a relatively small population, with Gannawarra and Buloke having higher 5-year fatal and serious injury crashes per person than both the NSW LGA (0.0042) and VIC LGA (0.0057) averages. All other LGAs within the Central Murray Region experienced lower fatal and serious injury crash rates than both the NSW and VIC LGA averages.

Road Safety within the Central Murray Region)



Total crashes per person (2018-2022)



1. Calculated using TfNSW Economic Parameter Values (August 2024) Table 5.2 'Inclusive WTP costs per casualty, for Fatalities and Serious Injuries in Rural areas'

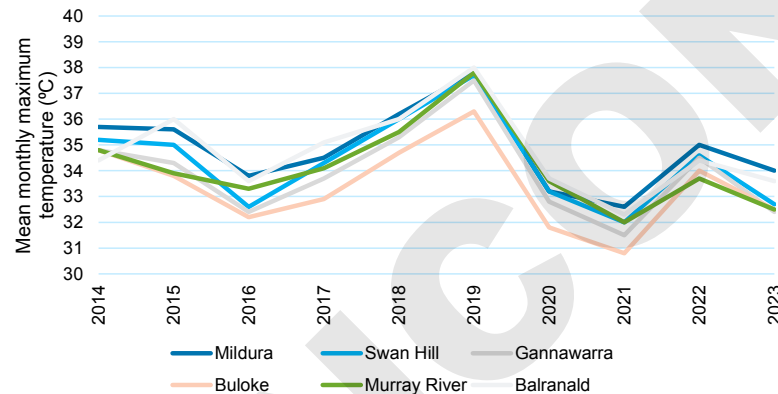
Climate change is already impacting on the region and will exacerbate existing challenges with maintaining under-funded road networks.

Climate change poses significant challenges for the Central Murray region. Work by the Grattan Institute¹ highlights the detrimental impact that climate change is having on roads. During summer months, the Central Murray Region experiences extreme heat with temperatures exceeding 30°C (see chart on left below). In 2019, the highest mean monthly maximum temperature of each local council within the region exceeded 36°C. Extreme heat bakes the surface of asphalt and bitumen, resulting in cracks or fails that leaves local roads susceptible to water getting into the pavement and causing further damage. Increased droughts also decrease water available to agriculture. Extreme heat days in the Mallee region are predicted to increase from the current average of 7.8 days per year to 15-23 days per year by the 2030s.²

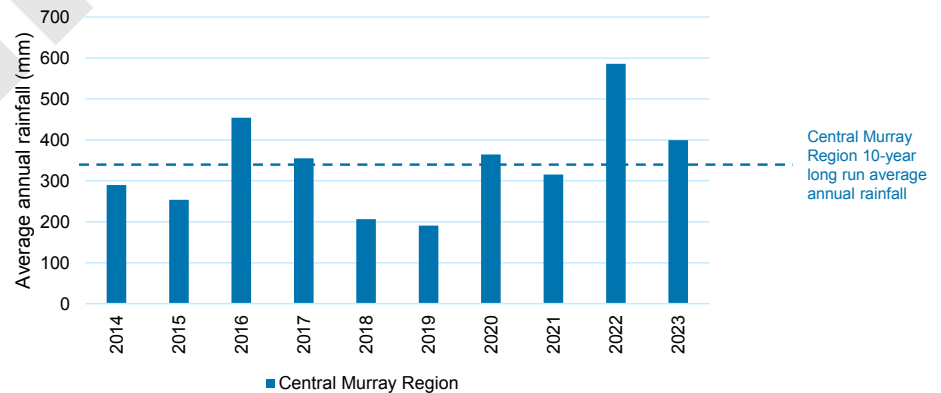
The average annual rainfall across all local councils within the Central Murray Region has exceeded the 10-year long run average of 341mm for 5 out of the past 10 years (see chart below right), with average annual rainfall in the region reaching 585 mm in 2022. Heavy rainfall also affects the slopes and batters of the road formation, water seeping into the sub layers of a road can cause potholes and major damage to the road's topmost layers. The 2022-2023 Murray River flood event is estimated to have caused over \$30 million of damage to Mildura, with an estimated \$15 million of damage occurring to roads and footpaths across the municipality.³

These climate change issues exacerbate existing challenges with maintaining under-funded local roads and are likely to become worse in the future, further highlighting the need for increasing local road funding.

Central Murray Region highest yearly mean monthly maximum temperature (2014-2023)²



Central Murray Region average annual rainfall (2014-2023)³



1. Grattan Institute (2023), Potholes and Pitfalls: How to fix local roads
2. Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology
3. ibid
4. Mildura City Council (2024) Draft Mildura Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy, p.50
5. ibid, p.51

Regional Transport Priorities

25

Priority 1: Swan Hill bridge upgrade and other priority regional bridge crossings

Develop a new two-lane crossing of the river at Swan Hill, capable of handling oversize and over mass vehicles and High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs). The bridge will also improve safety for road users and pedestrians.

Councils in the Central Murray Region have been advocating for a new Swan Hill Bridge since 1998. This has been a key priority in previous Regional Transport Strategies, and stakeholder engagement indicates that it remains a key concern for industry and community. The 2018 Murray River crossings investment priority assessment found that Swan Hill bridge was the number one short-term priority crossing for investment. The work highlighted a 400km section of road between Tocumwal and Euston-Robinvale where there were no B-Double Higher Mass Limit (HML) crossings between NSW and Victoria.

The Swan Hill bridge is a one-way crossing with a limited 65 tonne General Mass Limit (GML), which cannot accommodate more modern heavy vehicle combinations capable of carrying over 85 tonnes.

This means that many heavy vehicles are currently forced to use a longer route, or to drop a trailer and make multiple crossings or switch to a less efficient older-style truck to transfer product across the bridge. This is a particular problem given the nature of heavy freight commodities transported in the region, such as bulk grain and horticultural products for export. With the addition of the almond processing facility in Murray River and growth in horticultural production in the Central Murray region, this constraint will become more of a problem. The bridge is also a constraint on the use of rail from the Ultima Intermodal Freight Terminal as it limits the number of export containers that can be transported to the terminal in a single trip, increasing costs for exporters and limiting the cost competitiveness of rail compared to road.

An upgraded crossing will contribute to all four of the Strategy goals through significant improvements to access and mobility across the river, significant safety improvement to the bridge and sustainability improvements through allowing heavy vehicles to take shorter travel routes.

While upgrading the Swan Hill bridge is a key regional priority because of its limitations and central location, there are a range of other bridges and structures that limit the use of HPVs. Bridges at Tooleybuc, Nyah, Moama, and Sea Lake all have mass restrictions which limit the productivity of freight movements. There are also bridge restrictions on the Murray Valley Highway, Charlton Rd, Pyrenees Highway and Northern Highway.

Swan Hill Bridge



Alignment with goals

Access	Significant improvement
Mobility	Significant improvement
Safety and resilience	Significant improvement
Sustainability	Improvement

Actions:

Continue to advocate for an upgrade of Swan Hill bridge with Transport for NSW and Victorian Department of Transport and Planning, with a goal of commencing construction in the next 3-5 years.

Continue to advocate for other critical upgrades of other major Murray River Bridge crossings.

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Priority 2: Grow freight on rail

Improve access to freight terminals and advocate for a strategy to improve performance of the Murray Basin rail network to grow freight moved on rail.

The rail networks in the Central Murray Region have only been partially standardised due to cost overruns of the original Murray Basin project. As a result, there is a mixture of broad and standard gauge lines in the region and passing loops that are below the modern standard – which is to accommodate a 1500m long train. This reduces the productivity, feasibility and use of freight rail in the region.

While the project has delivered benefits, submissions by major freight operators into the Victorian Freight Plan¹ have highlighted various continuing challenges for current operations including network interoperability issues, access limitations on lines shared with passenger services (particularly for trains 800m in length), poor planning of network possessions for maintenance and upgrade projects. These issues impact on limit train utilisation and increase the costs of using rail relative to road. In some cases, freight has been permanently lost to road because of advances with HPFVs and rail network possessions that have resulted in some lines being closed for 2-3 months at a time. The limitations of the Victorian Government's Mode Shift Incentive Scheme (MSIS) have also resulted in Ultima Intermodal Terminal losing freight to road, and the process of renewing the MSIS annually has also provided no certainty to users of rail services.

The Rail Operators Group (ROG) includes Australia's largest main line rail freight operators and has proposed various reforms² to the Victorian government to help improve the competitiveness of rail and achieve government policy goals of increasing the use of rail freight. These include developing a rail freight strategy for Victoria, developing binding obligations for rail network managers to provide access for rail freight, improving planning passenger rail projects to minimise impacts on rail freight services and reviewing the MSIS and ensure incentive payments for rail freight are adequate and include additional terminals.

Access limitations on roads around intermodal freight terminals also impact on rail competitiveness by increasing the cost of moving freight between terminals and customers. Access limitations, including mass restrictions on Swan Hill bridge, are currently impacting on operations at Ultima intermodal terminal (see further discussion on page 28). Level crossings also pose risks for road safety and can limit train speeds. This is an issue for trains operating to the Merbein Intermodal Terminal which are required to travel through Mildura, traversing 22 level crossings (see Mildura Freight Links on page 30 for further discussion).

Alignment with goals

Access	Improvement
Mobility	Neutral
Safety and resilience	Improvement
Sustainability	Improvement

Actions:

Identify opportunities to improve road freight access to intermodal terminals in collaboration with terminal operators.

Advocate for the development of a rail freight plan for Victoria by the Department of Transport.

Engage with rail freight users and operators on potential improvements to rail efficiency.

Continue to advocate for improvements to the Murray Basin rail network to improve the productivity and reliability of rail freight services.

1. See Qube (2024) Submission in the Victorian Freight Plan Update, 5 July 2024

2. Rail Freight Operators' Group (2024), Submission to the Victorian Freight Plan review, 30 June 2024

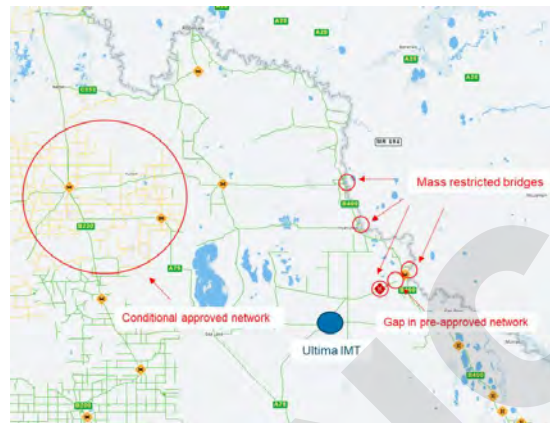
Priority 3: HPFV network for the Central Murray region

A regionwide priority network for High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs) that links across council boundaries and with Victorian and NSW arterial networks.

The Central Murray region contributes significantly to the economy of both NSW and Victoria and encompasses an important area of the freight network and of agricultural production, generating over \$5 billion dollars of economic output from agriculture alone. The majority of freight moved in and out of the region is transported on trucks. Major freight routes linking state capital cities also pass through the area.

Current access for PBS vehicles in the region is inconsistent and includes gaps. While accommodating larger and heavier vehicles on local roads may require significant investment, there are opportunities to harmonise access for PBS vehicles that are equivalent to more conventional HPVs that are already allowed on networks in the region. In some cases, freight access may need to be restricted to discourage inappropriate vehicles from travelling in residential areas and other roads not suitable for them.

Improvements to road access to intermodal rail terminals should be progressed as a priority. The map below shows road access limitations impacting on Ultima IMT. These increase the cost of moving freight to and from the terminal which reduces the cost competitiveness of rail services.



Heavy vehicle access limitations impacting on Ultima IMT

Alignment with goals

Access	Significant improvement
Mobility	Neutral
Safety and resilience	Improvement
Sustainability	Improvement

Actions:

Establish a road engineers working group to share knowledge and consider opportunities for improving the consistency of PBS networks.

Gather information on local road freight movements and engage with road freight operators in the region to identify and prioritise constraints for PBS vehicles.

Develop a PBS/HPFV network plan which includes restricting HPFV access on unsuitable residential roads in councils which currently allow full access.

Upgrade roads which have been identified as key freight routes to support their use as preferred freight corridors, including projects identified in the Swan Hill and Gannawarra Freight Road Network Mapping and Infrastructure Investment Study.

Advocate for the standardization of permits for crossing railway lines.

1. Based on stakeholder advice and desktop analysis using the NHVR National Network Map [National Network Map | NHVR]

Priority 4: Key highway upgrades

Continued improvements to key highway corridors in the region including the Calder, Sturt, Sunraysia, Mallee, Murray Valley, and Kerang Leitchville Highways can improve road safety and travel time. Upgrades that reduce heavy vehicle traffic through some townships can also improve amenity.

Regional and remote communities have a greater risk of experiencing road trauma compared to those in metropolitan areas. This is due to various factors including vehicles travelling at higher speed and longer distances and greater use of single carriageway roads compared to car travel in urban areas. Regional and remote communities also face greater risks of being involved in a crash with a heavy vehicle, which are disproportionately represented in crashes that result in serious injuries and fatalities compared to light vehicles. An average of 10 people are killed, and 75 people experience serious injuries from road crashes each year in the Central Murray region, costing the regional economy \$146 million.

Road managers take a 'Safe System' approach to improving road safety. This involves targeting various pillars to reduce crashes and road trauma, including safe people, safe vehicles and safe infrastructure. Improvements to regional highways and other roads used by large numbers of vehicles can significantly reduce the risk of crashes. This includes increasing lane width, separating lanes, providing passing lanes, new and improved driver rest areas, targeted speed reductions, intersection treatments and improvements to signage.

The following improvements to regional highways have previously been proposed by the Forum:

- **Calder Highway Corridor** - Corridor requires duplication of lanes, extra passing lanes, rest stops, intersection treatments, e.g. at Marong, and upgrade of the Keilor and the Bridgewater bridges (also identified in Mildura ITLUS)
- **Sturt, Sunraysia, Mallee, Murray Valley and Loddon Valley Highways** - More passing lanes, rest stops, additional bitumen shoulders, and some intersection treatments are needed to reduce conflicts between freight/buses/caravans and cars and to improve safety and travel time on these corridors. The lack of passing lanes on the Sturt Highway through Balranald Shire Council is of particular concern.
- **Kerang Leitchville Highway** – Upgrade to achieve a shorter transport route and possibly reduce transport through townships such as Cohuna/Kerang which has frequent heavy rigid transport through Sampson St Cohuna, which is a transport route through the town centre.

The Forum will work with state road managers to identify and prioritise highway upgrades, including through the development of corridor strategies. Councils will also work with state government road safety groups to better understand crash risks and outcomes in their areas to improve planning of road safety initiatives including infrastructure improvements.

Alignment with goals

Access	Significant improvement
Mobility	Improvement
Safety and resilience	Significant improvement
Sustainability	Neutral

Actions:

Analyse crash data to develop a baseline of road safety for the region, identify crash hot-spots and prioritise potential treatments to reduce or mitigate risks.

Engage with DTP/TfNSW on corridor strategies and regional road safety plans and advocate for the delivery of priority upgrades.

Advocate for new and improved rest areas for vehicles and freight.

Priority 5: Mildura freight links

Introduce freight link to reduce heavy vehicle traffic through central Mildura.

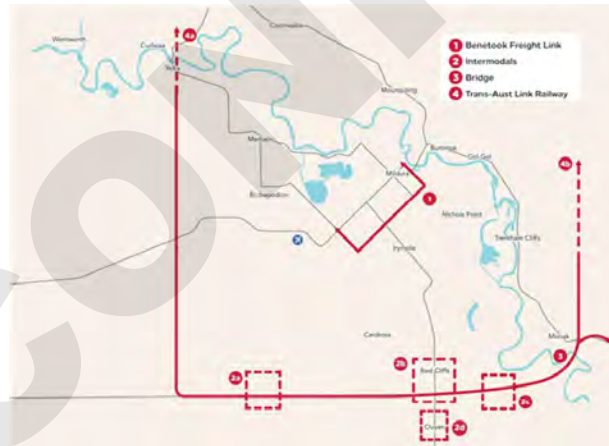
The Mildura Rural City Council accounts for a large proportion of agricultural production in the Central Murray Region and comprises half of the region's population. Freight movements are vital to the economy but trucks and trains moving through the Mildura urban area have negative impacts on amenity, increase safety risks and increase costs for freight operators because of increased journey times. Freight trains operating to the Merbein Intermodal Terminal which are required to travel through Mildura, travel through 22 level crossings in Mildura urban area, increasing travel times for freight customers and residents. This also impacts on the ability to grow the share of freight transported on rail because additional travel time increases train cycle times.

Mildura Rural City Council has identified four key enabler projects which aim to increase rail freight uptake and enhance amenity impacts on local streets. These are:

1. The Benetook Freight Link
2. Intermodal Terminal and Industrial Parks
3. A Bridge Crossing at Monak
4. Connection to the Trans-Australian Railway

The enabler projects include a proposal to relocate the Merbein IMT and GrainCorp operations at Yelta to Thurla, an area located to the south of Mildura. A new IMT and freight precinct at Thurla is expected to have the capacity of taking even longer trains (up to 2000m) to allow for the eventual connection to the national standard gauge network through a link with the Trans-Australian Railway. Similarly, storage and handling of LCL (less than container load) cargo is currently less efficient than through purposely designed facilities.

Mildura Freight Link Projects¹



Alignment with goals

Access	Significant improvement
Mobility	Improvement
Safety and resilience	Improvement
Sustainability	Improvement

Actions:

Advocate for funding to investigate and deliver projects to improve freight access at Mildura and enhance amenity impacts on local streets.

³⁰
1. Mildura City Council (2024) Draft Mildura Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy, p.14

Priority 6: New and improved regional public transport

Improve passenger rail services between Swan Hill and Bendigo, and advocate for a passenger rail service to Mildura.

The recent North West Victoria Regional Transport Study¹ found that North West Victoria's passenger transport system suffers from a number of notable deficiencies including not having a rail passenger service, limited inter and intra-regional bus services and expensive air services.

The Victorian Regional Development Plan indicates that Swan Hill will receive 3 to 5 services per day, which Ararat already receives on weekdays. With this uplift to the Swan Hill line, a redesign of the coach network could be undertaken to meet the principles above, and enable better connectivity for the region, both for residents and tourism, and enable connections to the two largest inland cities in Victoria (Ballarat and Bendigo). The increase in the number of services on the Swan Hill services and enhanced coach services with better linkages to the Ararat line, with appropriately timed services will also improve tourism within the region, without a private vehicle. Tourism is a major potential growth industry, given the mild climate, and highly productive and premium agricultural produce. Similar agriculture tourism examples would be Orange; Wagga Wagga; and the North-East valley regions.

Mildura is currently the only regional city in Victoria without a passenger rail service. Two direct rail services between Swan Hill and Melbourne operate each day but the timing of these cause challenges for passengers, particularly the evening train from Melbourne which does not arrive in Swan Hill until almost 11.00 pm.

More frequent shuttle services to and from Bendigo (see map at right) would provide residents with greater choice and minimise the need for connecting coach travel. The North West Victoria Regional Transport Study recommended that a series of 'quick-wins' including further investigation of a passenger rail service to Mildura. Subsidisation of flights between Mildura and Melbourne could also be considered, as part of the public transport network. Similar programs already exist in NSW, Queensland and Western Australia, to enable maximum connectivity.

Passenger rail connection to Swan Hill²



Alignment with goals

Access	Neutral
Mobility	Significant improvement
Safety and resilience	Improvement
Sustainability	Improvement

Actions:

Advocate with Loddon-Campaspe to DTP for improvements to services to provide a shuttle-style passenger service to operate between Swan Hill and Bendigo.

Advocate for funding from DTP to assess demand and benefits of a passenger rail service to Mildura and other options to improve regional accessibility.

Advocate for subsidised flights from Mildura to Melbourne, like access programs within WA, NSW and Queensland.

1. Tonkin (2022) North West Regional Victoria Passenger Study, report prepared for Mildura City Council
2. Public Transport Victoria (2024) Network Map [online]

Priority 7: Improved local bus services and active transport

Improve the bus services and active transport networks in regional centres, including Mildura, Swan Hill and Moama-Echuca.

Regional towns and cities experience various accessibility challenges. Dwelling density in small population centres is typically low, creating long distances between where people live and where they work and access services. This makes residents overly reliant on car travel. Residents that cannot afford a car or are limited on how much they can use a car may have fewer options, and it may not be practical or cost effective for councils to fund public transport services to meet these needs.

Integrated Land Use Strategies currently being developed by Mildura and Swan Hill are considering connectivity between townships as well as improvements to increase accessibility within them. Targeted improvements to existing bus services and new mobility services, such as community and on-demand transport are being considered and will become increasingly important to service the needs of aging populations.

Active modes of transport such as walking and cycling, are important for improving the health and wellbeing of regional communities and allow aging in place (see page 12). In many regional centres, pedestrians and bicycle riders are not provided with sufficient road space, priority, or segregation through the design of the network.¹ This makes active transport less attractive and can place pedestrian and cyclists at risk. Between 2014 and 2019, the MRCC community saw 45 crashes involving pedestrians. Of these crashes, 15 resulted in serious injuries to pedestrians.²

Bicycles are an efficient and low-cost transport option, ideal for use in Mildura's towns due to their small geographic size. However a lack of bicycle lanes in and around townships discourages residents to ride bicycles for daily travel.² Broader strategies for improving urban amenity and the health and wellbeing of communities such as initiatives to make more inclusive public spaces, establishing better walking and bicycle networks within centres throughout the Central Murray region, and reduce the need for more expensive mobility solutions such bus services.

Alignment with goals

Access	Neutral
Mobility	Significant improvement
Safety and resilience	Improvement
Sustainability	Improvement

Actions:

Engage with DTP/TfNSW on strategies to reduce transport disadvantage.

Establish a council working group to identify opportunities for improving the public transport services within and between centres.

Undertake a comprehensive review of existing bus routes and services.

Identify and deliver improvements to active transport networks in line with Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategies.

Advocate for greater funding for active transport projects throughout the region.

1. Mildura City Council (2024) Draft Mildura Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy, p.28

2. Ibid

3. Ibid

Priority 8: Road improvements for enhanced transport safety and access

Identify key intersections in the network, improvements to culvert structures along with other road improvements to enhance transport safety in the region.

Various Intersections and roundabouts across the region have limitations. While these do not always restrict heavy vehicle access, many intersections require improvements to make them more suitable for longer vehicles and to minimise the risk of damage to road infrastructure (e.g. insufficient space for the swept path of PBS vehicles). In other cases, design limitations of some intersections limit the efficient movement of people and vehicles resulting in localised congestion during some times of the day.

Priority intersections that have been identified by Central Murray Councils include:

- Intersections of Gray St and the Murray Valley Highway and Murlong and McCallum St
- The intersection of Murray Valley Highway & Wellington St to improve traffic flow and safety by reconfiguring the layout to accommodate larger vehicles and enhancing pedestrian pathways. It includes drainage upgrades to manage stormwater, reducing flooding risks, and traffic calming measures to lower vehicle speeds, creating a safer environment for all users. The project is investment ready with construction designs and costings.
- Five Way intersection Birchip (Sunraysia, Cumming Avenue, Corack Road and Birchip-Wycheproof Road)
- All Y intersections throughout Buloke shire including Birchip Wycheproof Road and Donald-Swan Hill Road.
- The intersection of the Murray Valley and Stuart Highways in Euston is dangerous, with fatalities as recent as 2016. It needs to be redeveloped, probably as a roundabout.

Existing local government road funding programs are overly restrictive and limit the number of intersections that can be improved. For example, the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program is limited to intersections of local council roads and does not allow local councils to nominate intersections that interface with state roads. In many cases it is the intersections with state roads that experience the most challenges and have the greater impact on road users given they have larger numbers of vehicles using them compared to many local councils. Amendments to funding criteria could allow issues with regionally significant intersections to be addressed more quickly.

Many roads in the region are unsealed, or sealed to widths that do not meet modern standards and require targeted improvements to ensure that they meet new and changed travel demands. The new almond processing plant is a case in point – where transport routes have changed to accommodate a new use.

The variability of the road width and whether it is sealed or unsealed can change intersection to intersection, which also increases safety risks, risk taking and fatigue. Targeted improvements including signage, speed changes and other low cost solutions can improve safety.

Alignment with goals

Access	Significant improvement
Mobility	Improvement
Safety and resilience	Significant improvement
Sustainability	Neutral

Examples of areas in the Central Murray region with variable road widths, showing sealed and unsealed roads



1. Murray Valley Highway at Lake Charm showing variable road widths with sealed and unsealed roads (nearmap)
2. Balranald outskirts showing differences in road widths, construction and sealing within intersections (nearmap)

Actions:

Improve critical intersections in towns to improve road safety and travel times.

Implement movement and place on all roads to ensure the right road, right treatment in the right place.

Advocate for changes to the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program to enable improvements to intersections of state and local roads.

Identify and advocate for tactical sealing of unsealed roads to improve safety based on changed travel patterns and tourism destinations.

Identify improvements required to irrigation structures and work with irrigation authorities to advocate for improvements.

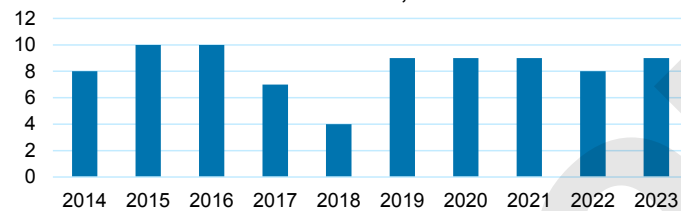
Priority 9: Climate change resilience and adaptation

Improve flood resilience to the Murray Valley Highway between Kerang and Swan Hill by raising the bridge over the Loddon River at Kerang township.

Climate change is already impacting the Central Murray region, along with most other parts of Australia. Bushfires and floods in particular pose a significant risk to accessibility and safety in the region. Over the past 10 years in Victoria there have consistently been 8-10 declared natural disasters annually, highlighting the need to better understand and improve infrastructure resilience. In surrounding areas such as the Goulburn Valley and Eastern Murray Basin, there have been multiple major flooding events which significantly affected residents, producers and employers. This is a portent of what may occur with increased heatwaves and flooding rains in the Central Murray Basin.

When floods occur Kerang township is completely isolated for up to several days, posing a safety and accessibility risk as well as impacting on the local economy and hindering freight productivity. This is only expected to increase in the future with climate change. The Patchell Bridge at Loddon River could be raised to improve flood resilience of Kerang, as shown in the map at right.

Declared natural disasters in Victoria, 2014-2023



Source: [Australian disasters \(disasterassist.gov.au\)](https://disasterassist.gov.au/)

Patchell Bridge



Alignment with goals

Access	Improvement
Mobility	Improvement
Safety and resilience	Significant improvement
Sustainability	Improvement

Actions:

Assess the economic and social costs of communities such as Kerang being inaccessible because of natural disasters and develop proposal for improvements.

Assess the flood resilience of roads and rail lines in the region and identify how to proactively upgrade and repair for the 'new normal'.

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Priority 10: Supporting new industries

Advocate for co-ordinated planning of mineral sands projects to enable efficient, safe and sustainable freight transport solutions, enabling new industries, and minimising their impact on infrastructure and safety.

Support other growth industries (e.g. Almond processing) through ongoing engagement with industry.

Identify and support other potential growth industries in the region, such as sustainable energy generation and storage.

Assess the implications of zero and low emission trucks for local roads and identify opportunities to support increased use of electric vehicles.

New and emerging industries will impact on the transport sector of the Central Murray region, creating both challenges and opportunities.

The almond processing plant in Murray River is already operational and upon planned expansion will take on processing of the almond crop for a significant portion of southern NSW. This will create significant freight growth in the area.

Upcoming mineral sands projects in the Central Murray region will also create large additional freight volumes. Indicative analysis shows that if all the mineral sands mines that are currently under investigation were to be operational, this would add as much as 1 million tonnes of processed bulk materials on transport networks per annum. If the 1 million tonnes of processed bulk material in this scenario were to be transported exclusively on the road network by 9-Axle B-doubles operating at HML, the estimated cost of pavement wear to transport the material could amount to \$11 million annually.

Minimising road freight movements and maximising rail freight will help to minimise damage to road networks and road safety risks, and maximise supply chain efficiency.

The rising electric vehicle uptake in Australia is another emerging industry for the region. In the year to March 2024, electric vehicle sales in Australia rose by 120%, with a total of more than 180,000 EVs on Australian roads¹. The availability of charging infrastructure will have an increasing impact on tourism for the region.

Alignment with goals

Access	Improvement
Mobility	Neutral
Safety and resilience	Improvement
Sustainability	Improvement

Actions:

Advocate for the development of a mineral sands transport strategy with Resources Victoria and DTP.

Engage with state road managers and the Commonwealth on freight decarbonisation initiatives.

Explore opportunities for funding work to assess the implications of zero and low emission trucks on local roads.

Engage with state road agencies and motoring groups to identify opportunities to improve EV charging infrastructure to support regional tourism.

Trials to improve infrastructure sustainability (e.g. increased recycled materials in road resurfacing).

1. The Guardian (2024) "No longer a novelty": massive rise in Australian EV sales, industry report finds"

4

Implementing the Strategy

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A key focus will be on enhancing the evidence base on regional transport to assist in advocating for priorities and demonstrating the benefits of transport improvements.

Many of the priorities identified in this strategy relate to assets that are owned and managed by other government entities. For priorities that involve upgrades to local roads will require funding support from state and federal government given local government resource constraints.

The Central Murray Regional Transport Forum will continue to advocate jointly for major transport infrastructure projects and service delivery improvements, seek funding for infrastructure projects and additional studies and will collaborate to further refine priorities.

A key focus of the Forum will be on enhancing the evidence base on regional transport to assist in advocating for priorities and demonstrating the benefits of transport improvements. This includes developing performance indicators (as shown on page 8) that can help councils better understand the effectiveness of transport and progress in achieving the goals in this plan.

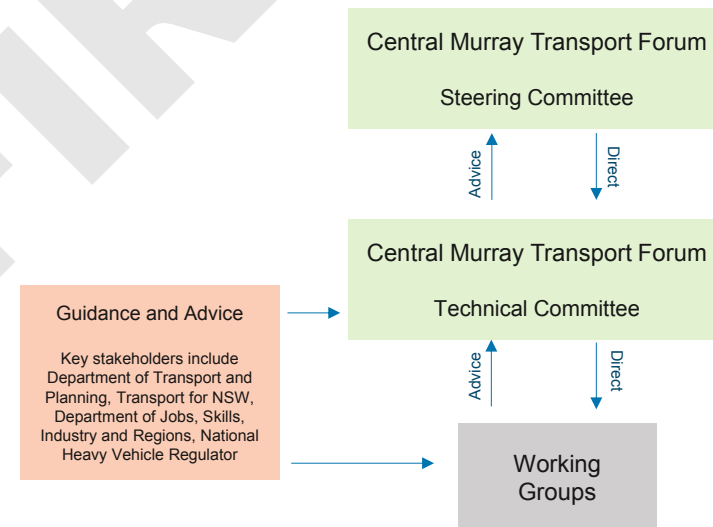
The existing governance structure for the Forum will be retained for the delivery of the Strategy. Opportunities exist, however, for improved collaboration and possibly joint projects with neighbouring regional transport bodies, particularly where common issues have been identified.

The Technical Committee will be responsible for delivery of the strategy under the oversight of the Steering Committee. The Technical Committee will convene working groups to examine specific issues (e.g., heavy vehicle access) where this can assist with implementation. Industry representatives and other government agencies will be included in working groups as appropriate.

An implementation action plan will be developed by the Technical Committee which includes key tasks, lead responsibility, stakeholders and timelines. This will be reviewed regularly as work progresses.

The governance structure will also be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Governance of the Central Murray Regional Transport Forum



Actions:

Develop an implementation plan and convene working groups to improve collaboration between councils and with stakeholders.

Improve the evidence base on regional transport and develop performance indicators.

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Population Projections Methodology

The population projections for each local council have been taken from the Victorian State Governments Victoria in the Future 2023 Report and the NSW Planning Departments 2022 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections for year ending 30 June data. The population projections for local councils in Victoria were available in 5-year intervals with 2021 as the base year, linear interpolation was to determine the population numbers for the years within each 5-year interval. The population projections for NSW were taken straight from the data source. The population projections for each local council were summed to calculate the projected population for the Central Murray Region.

Appendix B: IO Modelling assumptions and limitations

IO analysis assumptions:

Input-output modelling has some basic assumptions:

- There is a fixed input structure in each industry, described by fixed technological coefficients;
- All products of an industry are identical or are made in fixed proportion to each other;
- Each industry exhibits constant returns to scale in production;
- The method assumes unlimited labour, and capital is available at fixed prices;
- There are no other constraints, such as the balance of payments or the actions of government, on the response of each industry to a stimulus.

IO analysis limitations:

Input-output modelling is useful analysis in ascertaining the potential economic impact of spending in a certain industry at a point in time and provides a useful preliminary evidence case for carrying out further detailed studies. This being said, IO modelling has some inherent limitations, some of which are listed below:

- IO analysis underlying multiplier results describe average effects, not marginal effects, and therefore do not account for economies of scale, unused capacity or technological change.
- IO analysis' underlying multiplier results only account for one form of interdependence – the sales and purchase links between industries. All other interdependencies in an economy are not considered.
- IO analysis tends to overstate the potential impact of final demand stimulus.
- IO analysis' underlying multiplier results do not account for pre-existing conditions. For example, the implicit assumption for new employment is that those taken into employment were previously unemployed and therefore were consuming nothing. This is obviously not the case. Employment, output, and income responses therefore tend to be further overstated.

As such, IO results should not be the sole evidence for investment and policy decisions and should be accompanied by other economic investigations.

Appendix C: Total Gross Agricultural Production Value

The Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced (VACP) 2020-2021 ABS data set was used to calculate the total gross value of principal agricultural commodities for each LGA in the Central Murray Region, and then summed to determine the total gross production value of agricultural commodities for each LGA. VACP is derived using gross prices to calculate a weighted average commodity price per tonne and then multiplying this by the quantity of the commodity produced (except for livestock which is calculated using adjustments from the Livestock Products quarterly survey and ABS export data values). Despite the availability of a VACP 2021-2022 data set, the 2020-2021 data set was chosen for its completeness due to its base year aligning with the most recent ABS Agricultural Census.

Using the VACP 2020-2021 data set, the total gross production value of each principal commodity group was calculated for each LGA within the Central Murray Region, New South Wales and Victoria. For each respective commodity the gross production value for each LGA within the Central Murray Region was calculated and summed to determine the gross production value for the entire region. For each commodity, the total gross production value for the Central Murray region was then compared to the total gross production value for that commodity for all of NSW and all of VIC separately. For example, the total gross production value of broadacre crops within the Central Murray Region was divided by the total gross production value of broadacre crops within the whole of NSW to derive a representative percentage of the proportion of the value of broadacre crops within the state that is attributed to the Central Murray Region (the same process was done for VIC).

Appendix D Mineral sands projects and intermodal terminals

Proposed Mineral Sands Mines in the Central Murray region¹

Company	Project	Estimated commencement date	Estimated mine life	Deposits (approximation)	Estimated annual yield
VHM Limited	Goschen Mineral Sands and Rare Earths	2025	20 years+	199 Mt of ore	5 Mt of ore
Astron corporation limited	Donald Mineral Sands and Rare Earth	2025 (ore production) With 2 phases	40 years+	Over 2,634 million tonnes of Mineral Resource, consisting of 2 deposits	7.5Mt of ore (250-300 ktpa-HMC production)
ACDC Metals	Goschen Central Mineral Sands			Under investigation	
Iluka Resources Limited	Balranald Mineral Sands	2023 Production-2025	9.5 years (initial estimate)	West Balranald: total 36.8 Mt	1 Mt of ore, producing 0.5 Mt of HMC.
Iluka Resources Limited	Euston Critical Minerals Project			Under investigation	

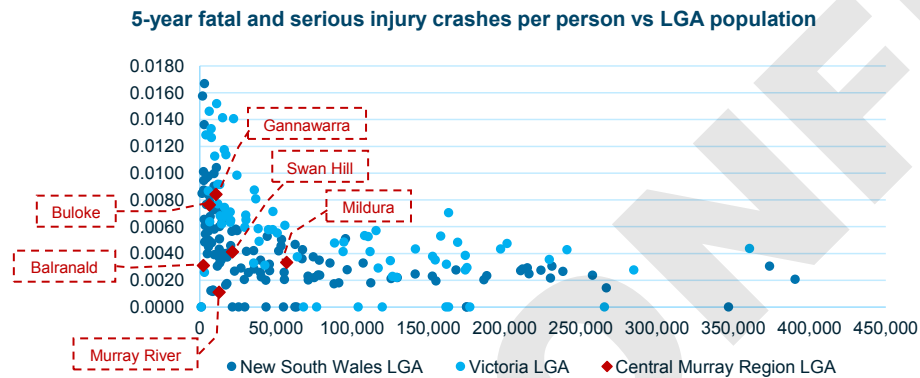
1. Note: These freight task estimates assume that the extracted product is refined and processed on site, avoiding the need to transport the unrefined extracted materials. If extracted materials need to be transported to another facility domestically or internationally for refinement, this will increase the freight task significantly, since refined product only translates to between 2% to 4% of extracted ore.

Intermodal Freight Terminals in the Central Murray region

Terminal	Location and LGA	Commodities	Services
Merbein Intermodal Terminal (Seaway/Pacific National)	Merbein, Mildura	- Cold chain services for fresh produce including almonds, citrus, stone fruit and other export commodities from the region to the Ports. - Export of grain from the region, including consolidation and packing services - Containerised bulk liquid movements from the region, for commodities such wine. - General containerised freight imported into the Mallee region.	3 return standard gauge services per week to Port of Melbourne
Ultima Intermodal Terminal (Pickering Transport/Qube)	Ultima, Swan Hill	- Containerised grain - Compressed and containerised hay (currently not in production) from local farms for export to Asian markets	2 return board gauge services per week to Port of Melbourne
Peaco Ltd	Donald, Buloke	Containerised lentils and pulses	3 return standard gauge services per week to Port of Melbourne (added to Merbein train)
Other consolidation and container loading sites	Various	Various grain receipt, processing and storage sites in the Central Murray region that facilitate the consolidation and transport of bulk grain and oilseed products grown in the Mallee region to the Ports of Geelong and Melbourne for exports. These are sites primarily operated by agricultural commodity firms such as GrainCorp, Louis Dreyfus Company (LDC), and Cargill.	Various – services vary by time of year and are subject to grain volumes and export prices

Appendix E: Road Safety within the Central Murray Region

NSW Crash Data (2022) and Victoria Road Crash Data (2023) was used to calculate the total number of crashes and total number of fatal and serious injury crashes for each LGA within the Central Murray region. The analysis considered annual crashes from 2018-2022. These figures were then divided by the average population from the same 5-year period for each LGA, taken from the *ABS Population estimates by LGA 2001 to 2023*³ to determine the total crashes per person and the fatal and serious injury per person crash rates for the LGA's in the Central Murray Region, and the rest of NSW and VIC.



3 Officer Report for Noting

Nil.

4 Decisions Which Need Action / Ratification

4.1 Sign and Seal

Directorate: Chief Executive Officer
File Number: S16-05-01
Purpose: For Noting

Declarations of Interest:

Council officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

Summary

The following documents and agreements have been signed and sealed by the Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer on the respective dates. Those actions require the ratification of the Council.

Discussion

During any month Council is required to sign and seal a range of documents arising from decisions made on a previous occasion(s). Examples include sale of land, entering into funding arrangements for Council programs etc.

As the decision to enter into these agreements has already been made, these documents are signed and sealed when received, with Council ratifying the signing and sealing at the next Council meeting.

The following documents were signed and sealed since the last Council meeting:

No.	Document Type	Document Description	Date signed/ sealed
1220	Section 173 Agreement for building a shed over drainage easement – 23 Nalder Drive, Swan Hill	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and B.W.Gurnett and J.L.Gurnett.	18/08/26

Note: A Section 173 Agreement is typically a contract between the Council and a landowner that places use or development restrictions on the land.

They are intended to ensure compliance with conditions contained in permits granted by the Council and are often used in subdivision matters. These agreements refer to Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Consultation

Council authorise the signing and sealing of the above documents.

Recommendation/s

That Council notes the actions of signing and sealing the documents under delegation as scheduled.

CM 2026/145 Motion**MOVED Cr Englefield**

That Council notes the actions of signing and sealing the documents under delegation as scheduled.

SECONDED Cr Broad

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

4.2 Councillor Briefings - Record of Attendance and Agenda Items

Directorate: Chief Executive Officer
File Number: S15-05-06
Purpose: For Noting

Declarations of Interest:

Council officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the matter of this report.

Summary

The following report provides attendance details of Councillor Briefings on a monthly basis.

Discussion

Whilst Minutes have not been recorded, Agenda items and those in attendance are reported and presented to Council.

A briefing of Councillors is defined as a meeting that is planned or scheduled and where the matters being considered that are intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision.

No formal decisions can be made at a briefing but rather direction can be given that is likely to lead to a formal decision of Council.

Details of the most recent briefings of Council are attached.

Council Plan Strategy Addressed

6. Transparency and Effectiveness – Ensuring Council is open, accountable and responsive, with services and decision-making that reflect community expectations.
Objective 6.1: Deliver accessible, responsive and inclusive customer and community engagement.

6.1.3 Improve community engagement and participation in Council decisions.

Current Strategic documents

No strategic documents applicable.

Key Legislation

There is no key legislation applicable

Attachments: 1. COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA
September [4.2.1 - 3 pages]

Options

Council Briefings are reported to ensure good governance and transparency.

Recommendation

That Council note the contents of the report.

CM 2026/146 Motion

MOVED Cr Broad

That Council note the contents of the report.

SECONDED Cr Thornton

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA

25 August 2026 at 10.00am, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS

- Assessing Financial Statements and Sustainability
- Long-term financial plan
- Long-term Financial Plan 2026-20-36 – Alternate Scenario – Additional Borrowing
- Councillor only

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Census Robinvale
- Rural Councils Victoria
- Robinvale Dog Park
- Mooring Platform Application Murray River Council
- Robinvale Hotel up-date

ATTENDANCE

Councillors

- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Hugh Board
- Cr Peta Thornton
- Cr Terry Jennings
- Cr Philip Englefield (on-line)

Apologies / Leave of Absence

- Cr Lindsay Rogers

OFFICERS

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Stephen Fernando, Director Corporate Services
- Bruce Myers, Director Community and Cultural Services
- Dennis Hovenden, Director Development and Planning
- Ash Free, Finance Manager

Other

- Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Nil

COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA

1 September 2026 at 10.00am, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS

- Swan Hill Housing Trust Project
- Swan Hill outdoor pool up-date
- DAMA up-date
- Swan Hill Economic Developments Strategy and Housing Plan up-date
- GWM Water – annual Council briefing
- VHM up-date
- Status of speed zone and signage change requests
- Outcome of Community Engagement Process – Request to Lease Council Land
Swan Hill Aerodrome
- MAV Quarterly report – Cr Les McPhee

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Dragstrip, Rural Councils Victoria Forum - Agenda, Liquor License, Caravan
Park South side, Murray Valley Highway, Caravan Park leases

ATTENDANCE

Councillors

- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Hugh Board
- Cr Peta Thornton
- Cr Terry Jennings
- Cr Philip Englefield
- Cr Lindsay Rogers

Apologies / Leave of Absence

- Nil

OFFICERS

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Stephen Fernando, Director Corporate Services
- Bruce Myers, Director Community and Cultural Services
- Dennis Hovenden, Director Development and Planning
- Nathan Keighran, Economic Development Coordinator
- Dione Heppell, Community Development Coordinator
- Bill Scott, Engineering and Technical Services Manager
- Maxine Templeton, Design and Survey Engineer
- Jess Chislett, Procurement and Properties Coordinator

Other

- Mark Williams – Managing Director GWM Water
- Caroline Welsh – Chair GWM Water
- Brian Hansen - Manager, Community and Stakeholder Engagement VHM

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Nil

COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA

8 September 2026 at 10.00am, Swan Hill Town Hall, Council Chambers

AGENDA ITEMS

- Potential Election Candidates (Brett Hosking - The Nationals and Zoe Cook - Greens)
- Road Widening (Acquisition) Back Boga Road
- Swan Hill Bridge Replacement Councillor update

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED

- RCV Forum success, MyLot, Skid City, Almond Husking update.

ATTENDANCE

Councillors

- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Hugh Board
- Cr Terry Jennings
- Cr Philip Englefield (on-line)
- Cr Lindsay Rogers

Apologies / Leave of Absence

- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Peta Thornton

OFFICERS

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Stephen Fernando, Director Corporate Services
- Bruce Myers, Director Community and Cultural Services
- Dennis Hovenden, Director Development and Planning
- Bill Scott, Engineering and Technical Services Manager
- Gaye Champman, Technical Officer

Other

- Murray River Council – Councillor/CEO/Directors
- Transport for NSW - Tim Webster / Tim Keys
- Transport for VIC - Dechlan Birt / Anthony Judd

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Nil

5 Notices of Motion

Nil.

6 Foreshadowed Items

Nil.

7 Urgent Items Not Included In Agenda

Nil.

8 To Consider and Order on Councillor Reports

8.1 Cr Lindsay Rogers

List events / meetings attended

Date	Organisation / Group	Details (if relevant)
15/09/26	Swan Hill Saleyards	Meeting
03/09/26	RCV	Conference
04/09/26	RCV	Conference

8.2 Cr Terry Jennings

List events / meetings attended

Date	Organisation / Group	Details (if relevant)
26/08/26	Victorian Skills Authority	Facilitated Regional Roadshow with large Industry
03/08/26	RCV	Presentation on Mining Pathways and MMC project
03/09/26	RCV Dinner	Dinner and Lightshow networking
04/09/26	RCV	Breakfast and Conference

8.3 Cr Peta Thornton

List events / meetings attended

Date	Organisation / Group	Details (if relevant)
19/08/26	Woorinen District Progress	General Meeting
28/08/26	Victorian Greenhouse Alliance	Annual Conference
03-04/09/26	Rural Councils Victoria	Annual Conference

8.4 Cr Philip Englefield

List events / meetings attended

Date	Organisation / Group	Details (if relevant)
	REBA	Annual General Meeting
	Murray Valley Winegrowers	Meeting

8.5 Cr Les McPhee

List events / meetings attended

Date	Organisation / Group	Details (if relevant)
25/08/26	Ultima Progress Association	
02/09/26	Audit & Risk Committee	
03/09/26	MAV Board Briefing	
03/09/26	RCV Welcome Dinner	
04/09/26	RCV Forum	
09/09/26	CMRTS Briefing	
11/09/26	MAV Board Meeting	

8.6 Cr Hugh Broad

List events / meetings attended

Date	Organisation / Group	Details (if relevant)
19/08/26	Piangil Community Group	Community Meeting
03/09/26	RCV	Art Gallery/Dinner/Heartbeat of the Murray
06/09/26	Swan Hill Market	Market Day
29/08/26	Central Murray Football Netball League	Finals in Swan Hill

8.7 Cr Stuart King

List events / meetings attended

Date	Organisation / Group	Details (if relevant)
21/08/26	Regional Australia Institute	Regional Alliance Working Group
24/08/26	Australian Christian College	ELC Discussions
24/08/26	SHRCC	Facade Improvement Program Panel
26/08/26	Victorian Skills Authority - SuniTAFE	Emerging Skills Showcase
27/08/26	Rural Councils Victoria	Committee Meeting
28/08/26	Nyah District PS	Book Week
31/08/26	Rural Councils Victoria	Forum Planning
03/09/26	Regional Development Australia	Swan Hill Future Planning Presentation
03/09/26	Murray River Group of Councils	Qtrly Meeting
03/09/26	ABC Statewide Drive	RCV Forum / Election Advocacy
03/09/26	RCV	Forum in Swan Hill
04/09/26	RCV	Forum in Swan Hill
05/09/26	SH Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club	Croquet Season Opening
09/09/26	Central Murray Regional Transport Forum	Strategy Overview
10/09/26	North West 9 Councils	Resource Ready Strategy Briefing on Funding
11/09/26	Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils	Meeting in Bendigo

9 In-Camera Items

RECOMMENDATION

That, in accordance with sections 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the meeting be closed to members of the public for the consideration of the following confidential items:

CM 2026/147 MOTION

MOVED Cr Rogers

That Council, resolve to close the meeting at 2:48 pm to members of the public to consider the following items.

SECONDED Cr Broad

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

9.1 Road Widening (Acquisition) Back Boga Road

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM This item is to be considered at an In Camera meeting in accordance with Section 3(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2020, this item is to be considered in an incamera meeting on the grounds that the item concerns Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

CM 2026/148 Motion

MOVED Cr McPhee

That Council:

1. Commence the statutory procedures under Clause 8 of Schedule 10 of the *Local Government Act 1989* to widen Back Boga Road, as shown on the plan included in this report.
2. Authorise officers to negotiate with the affected landowner to acquire the required portion of land by mutual agreement, including obtaining written consent and execution of the required Form 1 Notice of Intention to Acquire.
3. Authorise officers to enter into a Section 173 Agreement under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* with the landowner to protect Council's interest in the required land area should the property be sold prior to completion of the acquisition process.
4. Publish a public notice of the proposed road widening in accordance with sections 207A and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

5. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer, to undertake all administrative procedures necessary to enable Council to carry out its functions under section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and the relevant provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
6. Hear and consider any submissions received pursuant to section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* at a Council meeting.
7. If no submissions are received, proceed to acquisition.

SECONDED Cr Jennings

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

CM 2026/149 MOTION

MOVED Cr Broad

That the meeting move out of closed session at 2:53 pm.

SECONDED Cr Englefield

The Motion was put and CARRIED 7 / 0

10 Close of Meeting

There being no further business the Mayor, Cr King closed the meeting at 2:54 pm.