

OFFICIAL



Mansfield Shire Council Meeting

Tuesday 24 June 2025 5:00 pm
Mansfield Council Office

Notice and Agenda of meeting livestreamed via the
[Mansfield Shire Council website](#)
Commencing at 5pm

Our aspiration for our Shire and its community

We live, work and play in an inclusive, dynamic and prosperous place where
community spirit is strong and people are empowered to engage in issues that
affect their lives.

Councillors

Cr Steve Rabie (Mayor)
Cr James Tehan (Deputy Mayor)
Cr Mandy Treasure
Cr Bonnie Clark
Cr Tim Berenyi

Officers

Kirsten Alexander, Chief Executive Officer
Melissa Crane, General Manager Investment & Planning
Nick Maple, Acting Executive Manager Capital Works & Operations
Janique Snyder, Acting Executive Manager Community Health & Wellbeing

Order of Business

1. Opening of the meeting

The Mayor, who chairs the meeting, will formally open the meeting and welcome all present.

2. Present

Where a meeting is held virtually, Councillors will confirm that they can see and hear each other.

3. Apologies

Where a Councillor is not present, their absence is noted in the Minutes of the meeting.

4. Statement of commitment

The Council affirms its commitment to ensuring its behaviour meets the standards set by the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

5. Acknowledgement of Country

The Council affirms its recognition of the Taungurung people being traditional custodians of this area, and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

6. Disclosure of conflicts of interest

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Councillor must declare any Conflicts of Interest pursuant to sections 126 and 127 Act in any items on this Agenda.

Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to any items listed on this Agenda must declare a Conflict of Interest regarding the specific item.

7. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting are placed before Council to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the record.

8. Representations

Council receives or presents acknowledgements to the general public. Deputations may also be heard by members of the general public who have made submission on any matter or requested to address the Council. Council may also receive petitions from residents and ratepayers on various issues. Any petitions received since the previous Council meeting are tabled at the meeting and the matter referred to the appropriate Council officer for consideration.

9. Notices of Motion

A Motion is a request (Notice of Motion) that may be made by a Councillor for an issue not listed on the Agenda to be discussed at a Council meeting and for a decision to be made.

10. Mayor's report

The Mayor provides a report on their activities.

11. Reports from council appointed representatives

Councillors appointed by Council to external committees will provide an update where relevant.

12. Public question time

Councillors will respond to questions from the community that have been received in writing, by midday on the Monday prior to the Council meeting. A form is provided on Council's website.

13. Officer reports

13.1 Council considers a report from the Chief Executive Officer on the current operations, activities and projects undertaken with each department over the past month

13.2-13.6 Officer reports are presented to the Council, where required.

14. Council resolutions report

Council reviews the outstanding actions arising from resolutions from previous Council meetings.

15. Advisory and Special Committee reports

Council considers reports from Advisory Committees that Councillors represent Council on.

16. Authorisation of sealing of documents

Any documents that are required to be endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer under delegated authority and sealed by the Council are presented to the Council.

17. Closure of meeting to members of the public

Whilst all Council meetings are open to members of the public, Council has the power under the Local Government Act 2020 to close its meeting to the general public in certain circumstances which are noted where appropriate on the Council Agenda. Where this occurs, members of the public are excluded from the meeting while the matter is being discussed.

18. Presentation of confidential reports

19. Reopen meeting to members of the public

The Mayor will reopen the meeting to members of the public.

20. Close of meeting

The Mayor will formally close the meeting and thank all present for attending.

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Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Present

The Chair will call on any Councillor/s attending the meeting virtually and ask them to confirm verbally that they can see all Councillors and hear the proceedings.

Councillor/s attending virtually will respond to their name with: *"I can hear the proceedings and see all Councillors and Council officers"*.

The Chair will ask the Councillor/s to confirm by raising their hand that they could all hear each statement of the Councillors.

Councillors will raise their hand to acknowledge they can hear each other.

3. Apologies

The Chair will call on the CEO for any apologies.

4. Statement of commitment

The Chair will read the statement and call on each Councillor to confirm their commitment:

"As Councillors of Mansfield Shire we are committed to ensuring our behaviour meets the standards set by the Model Councillor Code of Conduct. We will, at all times, faithfully represent and uphold the trust placed in us by the community."

5. Acknowledgement of Country

The Deputy Mayor will recite Council's Acknowledgement of Country:

"Our meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Taungurung people. We wish to acknowledge them as the traditional custodians and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all members of our community."

6. Disclosure of conflicts of interest

The Chair will call on each Councillor in turn and ask them to declare whether they have any conflicts of interest in relation to any agenda items:

- Councillor Tehan
- Councillor Treasure
- Councillor Clark
- Councillor Berenyi

7. Confirmation of minutes

Recommendation

THAT the Minutes of the Mansfield Shire Council meeting held on 21 May 2025 be confirmed as an accurate record.

8. Representations

9. Notices of motion

Nil

10. Mayor's report

Mayor Steve Rabie will present the monthly Mayor's report to the Council as follows:

Firstly, I'd like to thank the community for coming together to help shape the Council Plan in a deliberative panel session held in Chambers on the evening of Friday 30 May. By all accounts, it was a productive session where the panel sorted through the many bits of feedback that we have received as part of the engagement period. The Council Plan is a major piece of work for us – it determines the work Council does over the next four years. We'll now go over that feedback and draft a Plan, which we will put back out to the community for further feedback.

The Deputy Mayor and I travelled to Melbourne to protest the introduction of the new and unfair Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF) on the steps of parliament with at least 5,000 other frustrated taxpayers on Tuesday 20 May. It was a powerful experience with speakers from all walks of life and all sides of politics uniting to say that this tax hurts everyone in our communities. Our Councillors have been vocal in our opposition to this unfair tax since we unanimously voted to advocate against it in February. Following the rally, the state government announced a temporary backdown on unfairly taxing regional communities by capping the ESVF temporarily.

Unfortunately, a temporary suspension for primary producers to not have to pay this financial year is not enough. We still feel this tax is unfair to our community. We don't want our community to have to pay the enormous increase and we certainly don't want to be the ones who have to collect it. So we'll continue to advocate against the tax and I'm pleased we have advocated so strongly against the ESVF.

The state budget saw Mansfield Shire left out again. A host of initiatives were announced and all of them were extremely metro-centric, for example, free public transport for the state's kids. How will that benefit Mansfield Shire where barely any public transport exists? With no free transport for our children to travel to Mt Buller for the day!

It's great that they are injecting some money into their poor road network. However, there's nothing extra for roundabouts, which we've been saying we need – especially those on the intersections with state roads, like the Dead Horse Lane intersection with Midland Highway. We continue to push for safer intersections with priority roundabouts being advocated for on Dead Horse Lane, Greenvale & Mt Buller Roads, Chenery and Malcolm Streets and the Highton Lane Mt Buller Road intersection.

Early June brought a bit of rain, but our community needs much more. I was pleased to see that the little rain we did get helped the Mt Buller ski season get off to a good start. Visitors to the alpine areas are an important boost to our local economy every year, and a good snow season will make a lot of difference to many of our businesses.

On behalf of Mansfield Shire, I wrote to the Minister for Agriculture, Ros Spence, to request that Mansfield Shire is considered in the drought declaration. I also co-signed a letter from the Hume Regional Local Government Network to the Minister to advocate for a comprehensive drought support program that provides the same level of support to our Shire as other areas on the state, and in line with other natural disasters. At the time I'm writing this, I'm hopeful that our community may get some real relief in the way of funding for infrastructure and feed.

Cr Steve Rabie
Mayor

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL receive the Mayor's report for the period 21 May 2025 to 18 June 2025.

11. Reports from council appointed representatives

Councillors appointed by Council to internal and external committees will provide a verbal update where relevant.

Committee	Responsible Councillor(s)
Australia Day Awards Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Cr Steve Rabie Cr James Tehan Cr Mandy Treasure
Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cr Tim Berenyi
Hume Regional Local Government Network (HRLGN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Cr Steve Rabie
Mansfield Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Cr Steve Rabie Cr Mandy Treasure
Mansfield Shire CEO Employment Matters Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Cr Steve Rabie Cr James Tehan Cr Bonnie Clark
Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Cr Steve Rabie Substitute - Deputy Mayor Cr James Tehan
North East Local Government Waste and Recovery Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cr Tim Berenyi
Rural Councils Victoria (RCV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cr James Tehan
Station Precinct Museum Community Asset Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Cr Steve Rabie
Taungurung-Local Government Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor Cr Steve Rabie

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL note the verbal reports provided by Councillors in relation to their representation on internal and external Committees.

12. Public question time

Council welcomes questions from the community. A question must be submitted by midday on the Monday prior to the Council meeting. The [‘ask a question’ form](#) is available from Council's website.

The Mayor will read out the question and answer at the meeting.

13. Officer reports

13.1. Chief Executive Officer's report

File Number: E103

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer, Kirsten Alexander

Introduction

The Chief Executive Officer's report allows a short briefing to be provided to the Council on the current operations, tasks and projects undertaken within each department over the past month.

The Chief Executive Officer report will provide information relation to:

- ▶ Customer Service
- ▶ Capital Works
- ▶ Statutory & Strategic Planning
- ▶ Building Services
- ▶ Regulatory Services
- ▶ Waste Services
- ▶ Field Services
- ▶ Library
- ▶ Youth Services (including Events)
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Digital Transformation Project

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL receive and note the Chief Executive Officer's report for the period 1 May 2025 to 31 May 2025.

Support Attachments

1. CEO Monthly Report – May 2025 [13.1.1 - 32 pages]

13.2. Investment and Planning

13.2.1. Goughs Bay Plan

File Number	E11201	Responsible Officer	Senior Coordinator Planning, Nicole Embling
Purpose			

To provide Council with the final Goughs Bay Plan for adoption. The report provides information on the community engagement undertaken and the priority projects that have been included in the final plan. It also recommends that officers begin preparation of a planning scheme amendment to incorporate the recommendations of the Goughs Bay Plan into the Mansfield Planning Scheme, subject to the results of the Integrated Wastewater Management Plan and feasibility of a sewer system in the township.

Executive Summary

In late 2023, work began on the Goughs Bay Plan, with the aim of creating a comprehensive document directing the future of Goughs Bay over the next 20 years. It has been important to maintain the township’s unique character in line with the community vision and values developed during the community engagement process.

The plan addresses the key objectives of sustainable development, environmental conservation, community wellbeing, economic growth, wastewater, infrastructure enhancement, and cultural heritage, cumulating in a list of priority projects that direct the development of Goughs Bay.

The Goughs Bay Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the community, as well as Traditional Owners and relevant government authorities.

Key Issues

In developing the Goughs Bay Plan community engagement was undertaken over three rounds, beginning in early 2024. The resulting plan has been shaped by the community feedback and reveals a passionate community looking for improvements across the town, while maintaining a strong set of community values and sense of Goughs Bay’s unique character.

The project underwent extensive engagement with the community, key stakeholders and government departments ensuring that adequate information was collected to inform the plan. During the engagement process, Council received feedback from both permanent and non-permanent residents as well as broader interested parties who either supported or generally supported the plan. In areas where the plan lacked detail, these were addressed through redrafting and a further round of engagement. The engagement process included a walk-through of the township, drop-in session, and community meeting all held in Goughs Bay, as well as letters to residents and multiple online surveys to gather feedback.

Situated on the banks of Lake Eildon, Goughs Bay sees a highly fluctuating population which peaks over the summer months. The region poses a challenge when expanding or intensifying development in the area due to its proximity to the lake and lack of reticulated sewerage. Many

of the projects proposed by the community relate to the impacts of tourism in the region, and the management and access to Lake Eildon. While some recommendations have been outside of Council's control, nine projects covering infrastructure, community wellbeing, and wastewater have been identified as priorities and having the greatest benefit to the Goughs Bay community. These projects are of short (0-5years), medium (5-10 years) and long (10+ years) term timeframes dependent on the anticipated complexity of the project.

Although the Goughs Bay Plan has been prepared before the final outcomes from the Integrated Wastewater Management (IWM) feasibility study are available, it is proposed that any future sewer plans for the region can be integrated into the recommendations once available. The community engagement has shown strong support for a reticulated sewer in Goughs Bay and general frustration from those who have faced barriers to development and/or high costs to upgrade their onsite wastewater systems.

The Goughs Bay Plan has also identified investigation areas for development north and west of Goughs Bay, which will help Council achieve the housing targets set by the State Government. In addition, when looking at the IWM Feasibility for Goughs Bay, this additional developable land could be used to offset the costs of a serviced sewerage system, with development contributions used to supplement the costs that existing landowners would bear for any new system.

The inclusion of future development areas in the Goughs Bay Plan supports the Shire in achieving the housing target of 3,900 new dwellings by 2051 set by Plan Victoria. It is estimated that Goughs Bay could provide for up to 675 new dwellings however, in the absence of serviced sewerage, Goughs Bay is nearly at capacity without further greenfield development. These development areas would need to be rezoned through a planning scheme amendment.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Adopt the *Goughs Bay Plan, 2025* to inform the preparation of a planning scheme amendment to develop local policies in accordance with the recommendations of the plan.
2. Commence preparation of a planning scheme amendment to implement the recommendations of the plan.

Support Attachments

1. DRAFT Goughs Bay Plan [13.2.1.1 - 31 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Economic: The plan supports sustainable growth, infrastructure, and economic development in Goughs Bay

Environmental: The plan supports protecting the Goughs Bay environs, including Lake Eildon and the surrounding state forest.

Social: The plan supports enhancing and promoting community connectivity which aligns with social sustainability goals.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement has been undertaken in accordance with the Council Community Engagement Policy by conducting a drop-in session, a community meeting, a township walk, online surveys and forums, as well as letters to residents.

Collaboration

Collaboration with relevant government bodies, Traditional Owners and the community was sought during the development of the Goughs Bay Plan.

Financial Impact

All work to create the policy has been undertaken internally by Council Officers within existing staff resources. Implementation of the plan has additional resourcing and financial implications which have been detailed through the implementation section of the Goughs Bay Plan.

Legal and Risk Implications

Once adopted, the Goughs Bay plan will inform Council's direction for growth in the area and following a planning scheme amendment will go on to form part of the Mansfield Planning Scheme.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The Goughs Bay Plan aligns with the Planning Policy Framework, as well as local policies, plans, and reports, ensuring a consistent approach to planning and management.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Goughs Bay Plan promotes innovative approaches to community engagement, sustainability, and resilience in decision-making.

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 1: Connected and Healthy Community Strategic Objective 1: The health and wellbeing of families and communities is maximised

Strategy 1.3 Contribute to efforts that ensure essential community services exist locally.

Theme 1: Connected and Healthy Community Strategic Objective 2: Activities that promote connection and fitness of our people and visitors

Strategy 2.2 Create an environment where community and clubs can recreate, socialise and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community

Strategy 2.3 Enhance the social and economic value of tourism to Mansfield.

Theme 2: Vibrant Liveability Strategic Objective 3 Future focused: Intelligent land use and infrastructure

Strategy 3.1 Protect natural vistas and farmland

Strategy 3.3 Improve roads, drainage and footpaths

Strategy 3.4 Plan for and encourage appropriate housing

Theme 2: Vibrant Liveability Strategic Objective 5 Prosperous: Industries, businesses and workforces of the future

Strategy 5.2 Enable land use and base infrastructure that stimulates commercial activity

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 6: Council possesses in-house and outsourced capability to meet community expectations

Strategy 6.1 Use and gain knowledge of our community to make good decisions

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 8 A consultative Council that represents and empowers its community

Strategy 8.1 Increase community trust in Council to make informed decisions with "no surprises"

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.2.2. Mansfield Performing Arts Centre - Joint User Agreement

File Number	E6573	Responsible Officer	Asset Maintenance Officer, Chloe Schlemitz
Purpose			

To provide Council with information and seek approval in principle for the proposed community joint use agreement between the Victorian Government Department of Education (the Department), Mansfield Secondary College (the school) and Mansfield Shire Council regarding the Mansfield Performing Arts Centre. This report outlines the basis on which the parties propose to enter into an agreement with the Minister.

Executive Summary

The proposed Joint Use Agreement (JUA) is for the Mansfield Performing Arts Centre (MPAC) building at 15 View St, Mansfield. The term of the agreement is proposed to be an initial term of 10 years, with a further term of 10 years, and is subject to the Minister's approval.

The Mansfield Performing Arts Centre serves as a creative hub that strengthens the community by providing access to, participation in, and engagement with a diverse range of cultural events.

The current Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between the Department of Education, Mansfield Secondary College and Delatite Shire Council was established in 1999 and outlined the rights of the parties, governance, delegated powers, and responsibilities. A copy of the original agreement is provided in Attachment 2.

The construction of the MPAC building was a collaborative effort between Delatite Shire Council and Mansfield Secondary College. Government funding to the value of \$400,000 was obtained along with a \$200,000 cash contribution from both the Delatite Shire and the School for a total project value of \$800,000.

Following review of the current management arrangements by the School and Mansfield Shire Council, an amended JUA has been developed to reflect the facility's current operations and management. A copy of the proposed agreement can be found in Attachment 1.

The objectives of the proposed new JUA for the MPAC facility are to:

- ▶ Create opportunities for creative participation.
- ▶ Encourage high levels of community and civic usage.
- ▶ Support community connections.
- ▶ Ensure a sustainable future through the provision of appropriate governance and infrastructure.

The management of the MPAC facility bookings is proposed to be undertaken using Council's new booking system, OPTIMO. This system will cater to the needs of MPAC users and allow for the effective and efficient management of MPAC facility bookings. Event organizers will have the ability to organize their own ticketing using third party providers.

It is proposed that an officer from Council's Property Management team manage the MPAC bookings, a role previously handled by the Secondary College. This change aims to streamline the process and ensure efficient and consistent management of user bookings for the venue. It is also anticipated that Council's Youth Services team and YAG (Youth Advisory Group) will be actively involved in organising events for young local performers at the venue.

Key Issues

Analysis of MPAC usage was undertaken to identify the characteristics and patterns of events staged at MPAC and inform the proposed JUA.

The usage profile is dominated by Mansfield Musical and Dramatic Society (MMuDS) who use the auditorium for rehearsals as well as their production week and performance seasons. Usage of the theatre by Mansfield Secondary College during school hours consists of music classes, music/theatre practices and performances and as a testing space during VCE examinations.

The total days of usage and venue utilization are comparable to other regional performing arts centres which operate at between 50% and 60% venue utilization. Under the new JUA, the school utilization of the facility would equate to 36% (based on 133 full days of use, not school hours as it would not be realistic to hire during these periods) and it would be available for Council and community use 64% of the time.

Full responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the MPAC venue will be taken by Council under the proposed terms of the proposed JUA, with an annual contribution made by the school. This arrangement is consistent with the JUA executed for the Alex Pullin Stadium, where Council manages access to the facility outside of school hours and undertakes facility maintenance, with operating costs shared between the Secondary College and Council based on the usage profile for the stadium.

Under the new MPAC JUA Council will take responsibility for:

- ▶ Bookings for the facility (excluding ticketing).
- ▶ Maintenance – including the building fabric and the equipment and fittings, and the provision of an afterhours call-out facility.
- ▶ Cleaning – recognizing that the cleaning has both a base level requirement and an ad-hoc requirement based on when the venue is occupied (ad hoc cleaning costs are fully recovered through reimbursement invoicing of user groups).

An initial licence term of 10 years and a further term of 10 years is proposed under the JUA. A licence fee of \$1.00, payable by the Council as the Community Partner upon demand, is proposed.

The following terms of use and consultation provisions are included in the proposed JUA:

Terms of Use

The Facility's use is planned to start from the date of the Community Joint Use Agreement.

The parties will share the use of the Facility based on a calendar of use agreed between the parties on an annual basis. Council will be entitled to use the Facility outside the agreed school hours, within its operating hours.

The parties have agreed on overall Operating/Opening Hours for the Facility (comprising School Hours and Council Hours) as 6.00am to 12.00am. Standard school hours are 8.00 am to 4.30 pm on School Days.

The Joint Use Agreement will provide that the school is entitled to use the entire Facility, or a specified part of the Facility, outside School Hours, free of any charge, an agreed number of times during each term or year.

School to have use on:

- ▶ 84 days during school hours (2 days per week during school terms, 8:00am to 4:30 pm only, allowing time for others to hire outside of these hours) and;
- ▶ 49 days for the venue opening hours (4 weeks for a production, plus 3 weeks of music concerts, exams, etc.)

Council will be responsible for hiring the Facility to community users outside school hours.

Recommendation
<p>THAT COUNCIL:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse in principle the Joint User Agreement as presented, to enable its submission to the Minister for approval, and 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make any necessary editorial adjustments and execute the final Joint User Agreement upon the receipt of approval by the Minister.
Support Attachments
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mansfield Performing Arts Centre Joint Use Agreement - Mansfield Shire Council and Mansfield Secondary College [13.2.2.1 - 23 pages] 2. Mansfield Performing Arts Centre Joint Use Agreement - Delatite Shire Council and Mansfield Secondary College [13.2.2.2 - 84 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Community Engagement

Community Engagement has been undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy by holding a stakeholder meeting with users of the facility. At this meeting the new JUA was discussed and feedback on infrastructure improvements was obtained. As the facility already operates under an existing JUA between the parties, broader community engagement was not undertaken.

The formation of a Community Reference Group is proposed, to include MMuDs and other interested community stakeholders. Under the new JUA terms, the parties to the JUA (being Council and the School) will meet regularly during the Licence Term, with meetings to be held every 6 months unless the parties agree otherwise.

Financial Impact

Historically, both parties (being Council and the School) have made financial contributions to the maintenance and operation of the MPAC facility. The school has managed the MPAC bookings and operations and has fully funded the associated costs and outgoings and collected income

from MPAC users, with Council providing an annual maintenance contribution budgeted to a value of \$10,000 in addition to funding 50% of the insurance costs.

In terms of resources, it is anticipated that the facility management requirements can be adequately met by existing Council staff resources, now that managing property bookings can be completed through the newly implemented in-process system, OPTIMO. There will be some resource time required to set up the MPAC within the new system.

Under the new JUA, the revenue from hiring the venue to the community (that is, hire outside School Hours) is to be invoiced, collected and retained by Council. The balance from the existing MPAC operating account will be transferred to Council upon execution of the JUA.

Capital upgrades of the facility will be undertaken by Council (with approval from the school) and will be subject to future grant funding applications. Under the proposed JUA, Mansfield Secondary College proposes to pay \$10,500 annually to Mansfield Shire Council, with a review of their contribution after five years of operation, with the objective being to increase revenue and find efficiencies in expenditure so that the cost sharing arrangement can be re-evaluated.

Table 1: MPAC expenditure and income summary

Item	2021	2022	2023	2024	New JUA costs to Council	Notes
Expenditure						
Council Repair Costs	\$2,744.96	\$6,594.49	\$9,293.84	\$10,091.00	\$10,000.00	Maintenance contribution from Council
Council Cost of Insurance	\$2,775.00	\$2,875.00	\$3,508.00	\$3,350.00	\$6,382.50	Full cost of insurance as per existing cover held by School (this will be reviewed)
Water	Paid by School - utility cost to remain with School					
Gas					\$1,000.00	Meter readings once JUA is executed – Council's estimated portion
Electricity	\$6,475.49	\$7,352.02	\$9,762.06	\$9,312.46	\$9,600.00	School's contribution to power is included below
Cleaning	\$9,344.81	\$8,919.92	\$14,114.74	\$10,512.93	\$12,300.00	Cleaning costs are offset by third party income
School Repair Costs	\$1,955.33	\$2,300.08	\$2,457.52	\$1,127.36	-	
School Cost of insurance	\$2,775.00	\$3,159.62	\$3,159.62	\$3,159.62	-	
Total Expenditure	\$23,295.59	\$28,041.51	\$39,136.16	\$34,393.75	\$39,282.50	
Income						
Reimbursement		-\$1,740.00	-\$100.00		-\$10,500.00	School Contribution
Income	-\$10,749.20	-\$17,081.37	-\$23,483.00	-\$19,440.52	-\$21,500.00	Third Party Income
Total Income	-\$10,749.20	-18,821.37	-\$23,583.00	-\$19,440.52	-\$32,000.00	
Net	\$12,546.39	-\$9,220.14	\$15,553.16	\$14,953.23	\$7,282.50*	*Additional Cost to Council

Note: The figures in Table 1 are based on data available as of May 2025 and reflect the most recent financial report provided by the School.

Under the proposed JUA, Mansfield Secondary College and Council are each responsible for the cost of employing staff and engaging contractors and any other costs or expenses in relation to their use of the facility and the performance of their obligations in respect of the facility.

Council is responsible for any statutory charges payable in respect of Council's use or occupation of the facility. Mansfield Secondary College are not required to pay any statutory charges in respect of its use of the facility for the school's purposes.

Both parties are responsible for the cost of any service call outs in relation to the security or fire safety of the facility if the call out was required due to an act of their personnel.

Mansfield Secondary College will continue to pay for the full cost of water usage at the facility and Council will pay for gas usage.

Under the JUA, the parties agree to include structural building insurance for property damage to the facility and contents to cover all audio/visual equipment and fixtures and fittings alike. An updated quote will be sought from Council's insurers as the building is currently insured through the school.

A rolling 5-year Capital Works plan for the facility will be generated and updated annually to ensure effective planning and management, with opportunities for grant funding identified in collaboration with the school.

The new Joint User Agreement will impact on Council's operational budget by approximately \$7,000-\$8,000 per annum. The proposed Council budget allocation to the MPAC for 2025-26 includes \$10,000 for repairs and maintenance and \$3,350 for insurance. The new expenses that will be incurred by Council under the new JUA are forecast to increase total expenditure to \$39,732.50, offset by the additional income and the proposed contribution from the school.

Under the proposed JUA, Council will be taking on the responsibility for collecting revenue and managing access to the facility, which will involve additional Council officer time. Total revenue is estimated to be \$32,000 (ex GST) per year, including a contribution of \$10,500 from the school. A balance transfer will be received by Council in 2025-26 from the school's operating account once the JUA is executed; this account currently sits at \$6,596.71.

Opportunities will be sought to increase the revenue from the facility in future years; hence the new JUA includes a provision for review of the school contribution in 5 years.

Legal and Risk Implications

Under the proposed JUA, Council will take on the responsibility for collecting revenue and managing access to the facility, which does expose Council to some additional financial risk. This will be addressed by actively promoting the facility to increase its utilisation and the associated income. Council will work closely with MPAC stakeholders, and under the terms of the proposed JUA, will establish a Community Reference Group to increase community involvement and help mitigate financial risks.

Building insurance will be maintained to cover property damage to the facility and to insure the contents to cover all audio/visual equipment and fixtures and fittings.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The proposed Joint Use Agreement has been developed in line with the following:

- ▶ *Mansfield Shire Council Leasing and Licencing Policy 2024*
- ▶ *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- ▶ *Privacy Act 1988*

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Council Plan Theme 1, Strategic Objective 2 includes the following initiative for Council to partner with other organisations to: Establish appropriate governance structure to support the ongoing development of the Mansfield Performing Arts Centre (MPAC).

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.2.3. Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance MOU and Solar Savers Program

File Number	E8680, E8683	Responsible Officer	Coordinator Waste and Environment, Melissa Reid
Purpose			

To seek a Council endorsement for the CEO to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Mansfield Shire Council and Murrindindi Shire Council for the renewal of Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA) membership for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029.

Additionally, to seek Council's consideration of participation in the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers Program, with consideration as to the timing of entering the program.

Executive Summary

The Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA) is a formal unincorporated alliance of 16 councils and statutory authorities working together on joint programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and facilitate climate change adaptation across the Goulburn Murray region. The Alliance is chaired by Mansfield Shire Councillor Tim Berenyi.

Mansfield Shire Council's continued membership of the Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA), through execution of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), requires an annual financial commitment of \$4,745.70 (ex GST), which is adjusted annually over the four-year term.

Membership of the GMCA has supported access to significant grant funding opportunities over the four-year term of the existing agreement, in addition to sharing specialist knowledge and experience across the network of organisations involved in the Alliance. Under the current MOU, Mansfield Shire received substantial benefits through grant funding for the following projects:

- ▶ Charging the Regions: DELWP DCAV Programme 2021-22
- ▶ Naturally Cooler Towns 2021-22
- ▶ Environmental Markets & Climate Resilience
- ▶ Victorian Climate Resilient Councils 2022-current
- ▶ Neighbourhood Battery Initiative Business Case Development 2023-24
- ▶ Neighbourhood Battery Initiative Implementation 2025
- ▶ EDPN AusNet Subsidies 2021-2025
- ▶ DEECA Research grant Goulburn Murray Solar Savers
- ▶ DEECA Climate Change Forums 2023

To date, Mansfield Shire has secured \$218,258 (ex GST) in financial benefits through these initiatives, including savings on public lighting, EV charging infrastructure, and funding for community upgrades. Ongoing membership of the GMCA is considered beneficial, offering both financial and environmental advantages to Council.

The Goulburn Murray Solar Savers Program is a regional partnership initiative designed to reduce energy costs and improve energy efficiency for Mansfield Shire property owners. Each participating council contributes \$7,000 (ex GST) annually.

Originally funded by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) - now the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) - the program was established in response to strong community interest in renewable energy solutions. Delivered in partnership with Solar Savers and led by Maroondah City Council, the program provides access for property owners to a range of pre-vetted renewable energy products and services.

Council may consider participating in the Solar Savers program in 2025-26, or in a subsequent financial year.

Key Issues

Membership of the Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA)

Council endorsement of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will enable renewal of Mansfield Shire Council's membership in the Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA) for the period of 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029. The current MOU ends on 30 June 2025.

As a small rural shire, membership of the Alliance allows Mansfield Shire Council to access expert advice, support and knowledge sharing in collaboration with other Councils, suppliers, and industry partners. It supports delivery of the commitments in Council's Climate Action Plan, including Council's commitment to supporting the community in responding to climate change. Council does not have the in-house resources or expertise to support initiatives independently. Participation in the GMCA enables access to the necessary expertise and resources without exceeding Council's current operational capacity.

The Goulburn Murray Solar Savers Program

Officially launched in November 2024, the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers Program provides access to the following:

- ▶ The program ensures reliable and safe energy upgrades by vetting installers, products, and installation processes through a comprehensive public tender process, random audits, and a focus on quality and safety.
- ▶ Providers and products are selected through a rigorous public tender process overseen by a panel of experts.
- ▶ It currently provides solar PV systems, battery systems, hot water heat pumps, and efficient heating and cooling solutions.
- ▶ From July 2025, the program will expand to include induction cooktops, electric vehicle (EV) chargers, insulation, draft proofing, and home energy assessments.
- ▶ Currently, there are 10 providers on the Solar Savers Panel.

Should Council decide to join the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers Program, Mansfield Shire property owners can then participate through the following process:

- ▶ Community members register interest via the Solar Savers website.
- ▶ Solar Savers officers conduct eligibility checks and advise on suitable products.
- ▶ Customers are supported in applying for State Government rebates and loans.

As a small rural shire, Mansfield Shire Council is not in a position to offer such a service independently. If Council decides to participate in the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers Program, Mansfield Shire property owners would be able to access the necessary expertise to make informed decisions on purchasing products as outlined above.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Endorses the Memorandum of Understanding with the Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance for execution by the Chief Executive Officer.
And, either:
2. Agrees to allocate \$7,000 (ex GST) in the 2025/26 Budget for Mansfield Shire Council to participate in the Solar Savers Program;
or
3. Defers the decision on program participation, opting instead to review the Solar Savers Program proposal in 12 months, with consideration for inclusion in the 2026/27 Budget.

Support Attachments

1. Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance MOU [13.2.3.1 - 16 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Mansfield Shire Council's Climate Action Plan outlines Council's commitment to supporting the community in responding to climate change. This includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions, participating in projects that build resilience to local climate impacts, and assisting the community through the transition to a low-emissions future.

Community Engagement

Not Applicable

Collaboration

The Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA) involves 16 councils and statutory authorities working together collaboratively on joint programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and facilitate climate change adaptation across the Goulburn Murray region.

Member organisations include:

- ▶ Alpine Shire Council
- ▶ Alpine Resorts Victoria
- ▶ Benalla Rural City
- ▶ Campaspe Shire Council
- ▶ Indigo Shire Council
- ▶ Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- ▶ Greater Shepparton City Council
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council
- ▶ Mitchell Shire Council
- ▶ Moira Shire Council
- ▶ Murrindindi Shire Council
- ▶ North-East Catchment Management Authority
- ▶ Strathbogie Shire Council
- ▶ Towong Shire Council
- ▶ Rural City of Wangaratta
- ▶ Wodonga City Council

The Solar Savers Project Working Group, which includes interested Councils from the Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance (GMCA), listed above, recommended partnering with the Solar Savers program, led by Maroondah City Council. This partnership led to the creation of a regional version, Goulburn Murray Solar Savers.

Financial Impact

Renewal of Mansfield Shire Council's membership with the GMCA will involve an annual financial commitment of \$4,745.70 (ex GST), indexed annually, over the four-year term of the MOU. This commitment has been factored into the Proposed Budget 2025–26, with an allocation of \$4,800 (ex GST). Support for GMCA participation will be provided through existing resources within Council's Waste and Environment team.

In addition, if Council resolves to participate in the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers Program, this will require an annual contribution of \$7,000 (ex GST). This amount is currently not included in the Proposed Budget 2025–26.

Legal and Risk Implications

Financial Risk: Program finances for the Solar Saver Program are managed by Mitchell Shire Council, including invoicing and payments. Partner contributions of \$7,000 (ex GST) annually cover operational costs and monthly financial reports are submitted to the program's Steering Committee to provide oversight of the program expenditure. Responsibility for payment for the systems or products installed or purchased through the Program remains the responsibility of the individual property owner.

Reputational Risk: Reporting and monitoring of the Program includes monthly reports to Mansfield Shire Council on enquiries, installations, carbon emissions avoided, financial savings, customer demographics, and audit outcomes to enable Council officers to assess and monitor the benefits achieved for Mansfield Shire property owners.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Innovation and continuous improvement in environmental management is undertaken through collaboration and information sharing with other Councils, suppliers, and industry partners, including through forums such as the GMCA.

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 2: Vibrant Liveability

Strategic Objective 4 Clean and green: Waste and energy sustainability

Strategy 4.2 Adopt and promote energy options that are affordable, self-sustaining & carbon positive

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.2.4. Compliance Policy

File Number	E1533	Responsible Officer	Governance and Risk Officer, Chelsea Young
Purpose			

To seek Council endorsement of the Compliance Policy.

Executive Summary

Council is responsible for administering a wide range of legislation, regulations and Local Laws providing for the safety, health and amenity of the community. Council recognises the importance of compliance with these requirements and is committed to investigating and undertaking compliance actions when required to reduce amenity impacts, maintain trust and meet community expectations.

A Compliance Policy has been developed as a mitigating control for Council's identified Operational Risk Area 'Lack of mature policies and procedures within community safety'. The Policy outlines the approach that Council will take to meet its compliance and enforcement responsibilities under relevant Acts, Regulations and Local Laws.

Key Issues

Council has a duty to investigate compliance issues and statutory obligations to enforce the requirements of various legislation and will use a range of strategies to achieve legislative compliance in the community.

Council's primary aim is to achieve compliance with a facilitatory approach rather than punitive responses such as prosecution. Fines and prosecutions are typically a last resort for severe and/or repeat offending. The policy outlines principles that underpin Council actions relating to compliance and enforcement as follows:

- ▶ **Accountable and Transparent:** Council will be open and transparent about the manner in which it undertakes enforcement activities. In educating the community, Council will make a clear distinction between what is legally required; if legislation, regulations or Local Laws apply, and what is desirable but not compulsory.
- ▶ **Risk-based:** Acknowledging that resources for compliance and enforcement are limited, Council will focus efforts on preventing and resolving the most critical issues, prioritising public safety above all else.
- ▶ **Timely:** Responses to reports alleging unlawful activity, and decision making in relation to those, will be undertaken in a timely way.
- ▶ **Proportionate:** Ensuring the level of enforcement action is proportionate to the level of risk and seriousness of the breach.
- ▶ **Consistent:** Ensuring all compliance and enforcement action is implemented consistently – similar circumstances will lead to similar outcomes.

Following consideration by Council, the community will be notified of the new policy through the Mansfield Matters column in the Mansfield Courier and it will be published on Council's website.

Recommendation
THAT COUNCIL endorses the Compliance Policy 2025.
Support Attachments
1. DRAFT Compliance Policy 2025 [13.2.4.1 - 5 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Not Applicable

Community Engagement

The community will be notified of the new policy through Council's Mansfield Matters column in the Mansfield Courier and it will be published on Council's website.

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Impact

All work to create the policy has been undertaken internally by Council Officers within existing staff resources.

Legal and Risk Implications

This policy ensures that Council's compliance and enforcement functions are fair, consistent and without bias and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The Policy serves to provide certainty to community members on Council's approach to compliance activities and to inform or educate the community on legislation, regulations or Local Laws that may impact them. The policy supports compliance with legal obligations to prevent further or repeated instances of non-compliance.

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 6: Council possesses in-house and outsourced capability to meet community expectations
Strategy 6.2 Building organisational capacity through its people

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 8 A consultative Council that represents and empowers its community
Strategy 8.1 Increase community trust in Council to make informed decisions with "no surprises"

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.3. People, Communications and Governance

13.3.1. Internal Audit Charter

File Number	E12404	Responsible Officer	Governance and Risk Officer, Chelsea Young
Purpose			

To present the revised draft Internal Audit Charter for Council endorsement as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Executive Summary

The conduct of internal audits is a key component of Council's governance framework in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Charter provides the framework for the conduct of the internal audit function in Council and following review by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) at their meeting on 26 May 2025, the revised Internal Audit Charter is recommended to Council for endorsement.

Council's Internal Audit function is currently outsourced to independent professional contractors, AFS & Associates.

Key Issues

Minor updates have been made to legislative and staff position references within the Charter. The remainder of the Charter remains largely unchanged.

The draft revised Charter was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee (in line with Section 4.5(a) of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter) at their meeting on 26 May 2025, with presentation to Council for endorsement of the draft revised Charter recommended by ARC.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL endorses the Internal Audit Charter 2025.

Support Attachments

1. Internal Audit Charter 2025 [13.3.1.1 - 7 pages]
2. Tracked Changes - Internal Audit Charter 2025 [13.3.1.2 - 7 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Not Applicable

Community Engagement

Not Applicable

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Impact

Not Applicable

Legal and Risk Implications

Internal Audit is a key part of Council's risk management framework. The Charter is provided to prospective Internal Audit providers as part of the three yearly tender package and governs the conduct of the internal audit program.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 6: Council possesses in-house and outsourced capability to meet community expectations
Strategy 6.2 Building organisational capacity through its people

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.3.2. Instruments of Delegation and Appointment Authorisation - S6 & S11A

File Number	E2478	Responsible Officer	Governance and Risk Officer, Chelsea Young
Purpose			

To seek Council endorsement of the following Instruments:

- ▶ S6 Instrument of Delegation - Council to Members of Staff
- ▶ S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987)

Executive Summary

Delegations to undertake a specific duty or power in accordance with a specific section of an Act of Parliament are essential to enable Council staff to carry out professional duties, particularly in areas which involve enforcement such as Planning, Local Laws, Environmental Health, Animal Management, Parking Control and Road Management.

Council subscribes to a delegations and authorisations service produced by the legal firm Maddocks. The firm reviews all legislation that impacts local government in Victoria and distributes an updated schedule of delegations that reflects any legislative changes bi-annually. This template is used by many Victorian councils and reflects common practice within the industry. Drawing on these updates, the Instruments of Delegation are updated periodically as legislation is amended, or new legislation is introduced which impacts the operations of Council.

Key Issues

The following Instruments have been updated to include the 'Planning Officer' role and are attached for Council endorsement.

S6 Instrument of Delegation - Council to Members of Staff

This instrument delegates Council powers, duties and functions within various Acts and Regulations which contain a specific power of delegation. This delegates certain powers directly from Council to Council staff due to the legislation referred to containing specific powers of delegation.

S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*)

This instrument is used to authorise officers to enforce the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and institute proceedings on behalf of Council or represent Council.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Revoke the existing:
 - a. Schedule 6 - Instrument of Delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff previously endorsed by Council on 18 March 2025, and
 - b. Schedule 11A - Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987) previously endorsed by Council on 18 March 2025.
2. Endorse the following dated 24 June 2025:
 - a. Schedule 6 - Instrument of Delegation from Council to Members of Council Staff, and
 - b. Schedule 11A - Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987).
3. Approve Mayor Cr Steve Rabie to sign the endorsed instruments as listed in point 2 and Deputy Mayor Cr James Tehan to witness the signing.

Support Attachments

1. S 6. Instrument of Delegation — Council to Members of Staff (June 2025) [13.3.2.1 - 70 pages]
2. S 11 A. Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act 1987 (June 2025) [13.3.2.2 - 2 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Not Applicable

Community Engagement

Not Applicable

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Impact

Council's subscription to Maddocks delegations and authorisations service is invoiced bi-annually for \$2,200 (including GST), this is accounted for in the operational budget. All work to update Mansfield Shire Council's delegations and authorisations is undertaken internally by Council Officers within existing staff resources.

Legal and Risk Implications

Regular reviews of delegations and authorisations ensure compliance with the relevant Acts and Regulations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Is in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 6: Council possesses in-house and outsourced capability to meet community expectations

Strategy 6.2 Building organisational capacity through its people

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.4. Capital Works and Operations

13.4.1. Station Precinct Stakeholder Group

File Number	E12005	Responsible Officer	Coordinator Capital Works, Donald Kwan
Purpose			

To seek Council endorsement for the Terms of Reference for the Mansfield Station Precinct Stakeholder Group (SPSG), including the appointment of three new community members selected via an Expression of Interest process.

Executive Summary

Since 2020, the Mansfield Station Precinct Stakeholder Group (SPSG) has played a pivotal role in guiding and supporting the development and revitalisation of the Station Precinct. The group has provided valuable advice, financial support, and feedback on multiple projects, including the new Museum building, Gadhaba Gathering Place, Railway Station signage, Rail Trail refurbishment, and Loading Platform repairs.

To further broaden community representation and engagement, Council recently conducted an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to invite new members to join the SPSG, in addition to the existing group members. Three highly engaged community members applied and are recommended for appointment to the group, which will benefit from their demonstrated commitment and expertise. The proposed Terms of Reference for the SPSG are also attached for Council's consideration.

Key Issues

This report addresses the following key considerations, as the new projects funded through the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (rPPP) grant for activation of the Station Precinct progress through to delivery over the next two financial years:

Broadening Community Engagement and Representation

The Mansfield Station Precinct Redevelopment is a significant project for Mansfield Shire and will deliver on the adopted Station Precinct Masterplan for activation of the precinct, for the benefit of local residents, businesses, and visitors. As such, it is crucial that the Stakeholder Group reflects the diversity of interests and expertise within the community. Expanding the group ensures that a broader cross-section of voices is heard, leading to more robust review and decision making.

Project Oversight and Guidance

The Stakeholder Group has been involved in providing advice, securing funding, and supporting the delivery of key projects within the precinct. Their oversight is essential for maintaining momentum, ensuring projects align with community needs, and leveraging local knowledge and resources.

Strengthening the Group with New Perspectives

The inclusion of new members through the recent Expression of Interest (EOI) process brings fresh perspectives and specialised expertise to the group. Each new member offers a unique contribution, with the following members recommended to join the group:

- ▶ Emma Wiking (Bendigo Bank – Community Bank Mansfield District): Emma is a key supporter of the Station Precinct development and brings deep connections within the local business and communities. Her involvement will help foster partnerships and ensure the precinct's development aligns with broader community interests.
- ▶ Samantha Orb (Mansfield Parkrun, Northeast Triathlon Club, Open Water Swim Group): Samantha is passionate about community health, recreation, and bringing people together. Her experience as a regular volunteer and committee member demonstrates a strong commitment to community-building. Samantha's perspective will be invaluable in shaping a precinct that is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of active lifestyles for all ages and abilities.
- ▶ Matther Empey (Mansfield Mt Buller Cycling Club): Matther has hands-on experience in designing and building recreational facilities, particularly pump tracks, and is a passionate advocate for cycling. His technical expertise and enthusiasm for community recreation will help ensure that new facilities are well-designed, safe, and appealing to a wide range of users.

Ensuring Effective Collaboration

The proposed Terms of Reference (Attachment 1) provide a framework for collaboration, helping to manage expectations, clarify roles, ensure that all voices are heard and that clear communication and effective facilitation is maintained.

In summary, the new members bring complementary skills, local knowledge and a strong commitment to development of the Station Precinct for the benefit of the broader Mansfield Shire community. Their inclusion will strengthen the Stakeholder Group's capacity to guide the precinct's redevelopment, ensuring outcomes that are innovative, inclusive, and responsive to community needs.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Endorse the Terms of Reference for the Station Precinct Stakeholder Group.
2. Endorse the appointment of the following three members to be part of the Station Precinct Stakeholder Group:
 - Emma Wiking – Bendigo Bank (Community Bank Mansfield District)
 - Samantha Orb – Mansfield Parkrun, and member of North-East Triathlon Club and Open Water Swim Group
 - Matther Empey – Mansfield Mt Buller Cycling Club

Support Attachments

1. DRAFT Terms of Reference - Station Precinct Stakeholder [13.4.1.1 - 4 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Not Applicable

Community Engagement

Community Engagement has been undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. An Expression of Interest (EOI) was published on the Engage Mansfield webpage and in Mansfield Matters in the Mansfield Courier from 9 May to 2 June 2025, inviting community members to nominate for the Stakeholder Group, with three nominations received as outlined above.

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Impact

Not Applicable

Legal and Risk Implications

Expansion of the stakeholder group will help to ensure that project delivery and reputational risks are addressed through thorough engagement and early identification of potential concerns or areas of community sensitivity. The expanded stakeholder group will enable a diverse range of views to be considered during the final design development process and allow for consensus-building due to the inclusion of new and diverse perspectives.

To ensure that project delivery timeframes are maintained, and mitigate the risk of conflict within the group, clear Terms of Reference and effective facilitation of meetings are proposed to be adopted to ensure productive collaboration and timely project progress.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 1: Connected and Healthy Community Strategic Objective 2: Activities that promote connection and fitness of our people and visitors

Strategy 2.2 Create an environment where community and clubs can recreate, socialise and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community

Strategy 2.3 Enhance the social and economic value of tourism to Mansfield.

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 6: Council possesses in-house and outsourced capability to meet community expectations

Strategy 6.1 Use and gain knowledge of our community to make good decisions

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 8 A consultative Council that represents and empowers its community

Strategy 8.1 Increase community trust in Council to make informed decisions with "no surprises"

Strategy 8.2 Develop capacity and capability to advocate powerfully for the most important interests of the Mansfield community

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.4.2. Goughs Bay Playground

File Number	E12087	Responsible Officer	Project Coordinator, Fabian Rukshan
Purpose			

To inform Council of the outcomes of community engagement regarding the location of a new toddler playground in Goughs Bay and to seek endorsement for the selected site along Lake Valley Drive, Goughs Bay.

Executive Summary

Two alternative locations for the toddler playground—on Lake Valley Drive and Bayside Boulevard—were presented to the community, with survey responses obtained in May 2025 showing majority support for a location on Lake Valley Drive (63%), with less support for the alternative Bayside Boulevard location (37%).

A community meeting was held on 10 May 2025 at the Goughs Bay Boat Club, to review the responses received up to that date and explore the issues and concerns being raised by the community responses to see if a consensus could be reached over the location. Agreement was reached on 10 May, that most community members did support a new playground in Goughs Bay and that Council would undertake a site walk on 31 May 2025 to explore alternative locations along Lake Valley Drive.

A range of locations was explored along Lake Valley Drive, with the final outcome, for which majority (but not total) community support was achieved, being a location along Lake Valley Drive approximately 100 metres to the south of the original site. The selected site offers natural tree screening, shade, improved safety as further from the lake and roads, and equitable access to a playground for community members residing on the southern side of Goughs Bay.

Key Issues

Following strong community support for a new playground identified through the Goughs Bay Community Plan engagement in 2023, the Goughs Bay Area Progress Association applied for and secured \$20,000 in funding through Council’s Outlying Community Infrastructure Fund for a new toddler playground in Goughs Bay.

Initial engagement was conducted in July 2024 by Council over the proposed location for the playground, with a draft concept plan uploaded for community feedback on Council’s Engage platform. This was followed by broader consultation through the Goughs Bay Plan community engagement process in late 2024, which identified that there was some community concern over the proposed playground site on Lake Valley Drive.

Following feedback received from community members in early 2025, two alternative locations for the playground—Lake Valley Drive and Bayside Boulevard—were presented to the community through a direct mailout to all community members, with feedback sought on the preferred location. A total of 279 responses were received to this survey (which closed on 12 May 2025), with 175 respondents supporting a location on Lake Valley Drive and 104

respondents supporting a Bayside Boulevard location. The engagement results obtained through the Engage online survey and via email are included in Attachment 1.

A community meeting was held on 10 May 2025 at the Goughs Bay Boat Club, to review the responses received up to that date and explore the issues and concerns being raised by the community responses. The meeting was well-advertised and attended by around 25 community members.

After providing background on the playground project and the prior consultation undertaken by Council in mid-2024 and again during the development of the Goughs Bay Plan, Council officers presented consultation results received to date and undertook a 6 Thinking Hats exercise on the playground seeking feedback from all attendees on potential solutions to the issues and concerns raised. The Engagement Report in Attachment 1 includes details of the feedback received through this exercise.

The following outcomes were confirmed with meeting attendees on 10 May:

- ▶ There was near unanimous agreement that a playground is needed. This was also supported by the Engage feedback with only 4 responses out of the 137 received up to 10 May opposed to having a playground at all.
- ▶ Consensus was reached that Council should review the siting of the playground along Lake Valley Drive, as there may be better locations.
- ▶ It was agreed that a site walk should be arranged on 31 May to visit the originally proposed Lake Valley Drive site and look at options for moving the playground site along the road/path to a location which has better support from the community generally, given the feedback received.
- ▶ More information on the type and size of playground equipment should be provided to the community along with the final consultation results. Some community members were not aware that only a small toddler playground was proposed – it was agreed that community concerns about the size/height and proximity to vehicles accessing the lake needed to be addressed.
- ▶ There was also a strong desire for Council to look at fencing and carparking/access as part of the final design and siting review.
- ▶ The on-site meeting and proposal to adjust the siting would also provide Council with an opportunity to address the concerns of community members unable to attend the meeting at the Boat Club.
- ▶ Information would be provided to advertise the proposed date and time of the site walk to the community and communicate the opportunity to help review the Lake Valley Drive site.

A range of locations was explored along Lake Valley Drive, with the pros and cons of each discussed with around 30 community members who attended the site walk on 31 May.

The final outcome, for which majority (but not total) community support was achieved, was a location along Lake Valley Drive approximately 100 metres to the south of the original site. The selected site offers natural tree screening, shade, safety from the lake and roads, and equitable access to a playground for community members on the southern side of Goughs Bay (refer

Figure 1 below).



It is recommended that Council endorse the final site location selected on Lake Valley Drive, to enable construction of the toddler playground to proceed.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL notes the engagement undertaken with Goughs Bay community members, and endorses the final location selected on Lake Valley Drive for the construction of the new toddler playground.

Support Attachments

1. Goughs Bay Playground – Engagement Report [13.4.2.1 - 19 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL Goughs Bay Playground - Engagement Report - Appendix B [13.4.2.2 - 9 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Not Applicable

Community Engagement

Community Engagement has been undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy by conducting community meetings, a township walk, online surveys and forums through Council's Engage platform, as well as letters to residents and ratepayers and a final site selection walk.

The Engagement Report in Attachment 1 provides a detailed summary of the engagement undertaken over the proposed Goughs Bay playground.

Collaboration

Council has collaborated with the Goughs Bay Area Progress Association (GBAPA) on this project, with the construction of the playground proposed to be undertaken collaboratively through a combination of Council resources and GBAPA community volunteers.

Financial Impact

The Goughs Bay Area Progress Association applied for and secured \$20,000 in funding through Council's Outlying Community Infrastructure Fund. The project engagement process and support for the playground siting and installation are supported by existing Council resources from Council's Capital Works and Field Services teams.

Legal and Risk Implications

Legal and reputational risks have been managed through undertaking a thorough engagement process to address the identified community concerns in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 1: Connected and Healthy Community Strategic Objective 2: Activities that promote connection and fitness of our people and visitors
Strategy 2.3 Enhance the social and economic value of tourism to Mansfield.

Theme 2: Vibrant Liveability Strategic Objective 3 Future focused: Intelligent land use and infrastructure
Strategy 3.2 Enhance township character

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 8 A consultative Council that represents and empowers its community
Strategy 8.1 Increase community trust in Council to make informed decisions with "no surprises"

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.4. Community Health and Wellbeing

13.5.1. Friends of Mansfield Library - Memorandum of Understanding

File Number	AG1392	Responsible Officer	Coordinator Library Services, Justine Shelton
Purpose			

To seek Council endorsement of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Mansfield Shire Council and the Friends of the Mansfield Library for the 2025 – 2029 period.

Executive Summary

The Friends of the Mansfield Library (FOML) formed in 1991 to advocate for and support the Mansfield Library, particularly during the establishment of the High Country Library Network (HCLN). The FOML became incorporated in 2019 and until 2022 most of the funds used to support the library were raised through an annual pre-loved book sale held in January. In 2022 FOML started exploring the idea of operating a small pre-loved bookstore.

Council initially provided access for the FOML to use the 'Studio', a building in the gardens of the Youth Centre, where the 'Little Shop of Good Reads' was first opened. After three months, FOML moved from the Studio and operated the 'Little Shop of Good Reads' as a pop-up shop in the Library meeting room and at the Mansfield RSL Hall. On 31 August 2023 the Little Shop of Good Reads started operating four days a week at 31 Highett Street where they now remain with Council granting approval for a licence to FOML.

The Little Shop of Good Reads is staffed by the FOML on a volunteer basis. All books sold are donated to the Little Shop by community members. All profits made by the Little Shop are used to support the Mansfield Library and Library related programs. In the last 12 months, the FOML have contributed approximately \$12,000 worth of benefits to the library.

Key Issues

The purpose of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to specify the respective roles and responsibilities of the Friends of the Mansfield Library (FOML) and of Council, with the objective of continuing the successful relationship between the two parties. A copy of the proposed MOU is attached to this report.

The overarching aim of the MOU is to recognise the positive and productive impact the FOML has on the library and the broader community, and to provide support and a framework for this approach to be sustainable and collaborative.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL endorses the Memorandum of Understanding between Mansfield Shire Council and the Friends of the Mansfield Library 2025 – 2029 and authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the agreement.

Support Attachments

1. Mo U - Mansfield Shire Council & Friends Of Mansfield Library [13.5.1.1 - 5 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Not Applicable

Community Engagement

Stakeholder engagement with the Friends of the Mansfield Library (FOML) has resulted in the proposed MOU agreement to recognise the positive and productive impact the FOML has on the library and the broader community.

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Impact

The Friends of Mansfield Library are provided administrative support by Library staff at their meetings within the approved Library budget. In return, the Friends of Mansfield Library give support to the Library or Library programs to support agreed activities and events. In the last 12 months, FOML have contributed approximately \$12,000 worth of benefits to Mansfield Library and to the many Mansfield Shire community members who use the service.

Legal and Risk Implications

Not Applicable.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 1: Connected and Healthy Community Strategic Objective 1: The health and wellbeing of families and communities is maximised

Strategy 1.2 Connect, develop and support children and young people.

Strategy 1.3 Contribute to efforts that ensure essential community services exist locally.

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council

Strategic Objective 7 Financial sustainability and value for money

Strategy 7.1 Increase Council's financial resilience by utilising opportunities to derive own-source of funding income and optimising costs of delivering services

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.6. Executive Services Directorate

13.6.1. Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-29

File Number	E11873	Responsible Officer	Coordinator Financial Planning & Analysis, James Alcaniz Financial Controller, Michael McCormack
Purpose			

To present Council with the Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-29 for adoption.

Executive Summary

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires each Council to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan for a period of at least 4 years by 30 June after a general election.

The Revenue and Rating Plan establishes the revenue raising framework within which the Council proposes to operate.

The purpose of the Revenue and Rating Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for Council to generate income to deliver on the Council Plan, services, and the capital works program.

Community engagement over the proposed Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-29 has been undertaken in accordance with the Act, with no submissions received, and the Plan is now presented to Council for adoption.

Key Issues

Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-29

Council has made the decision that rating fairness is measured by a consistent sharing of rates charges between rating sectors from year to year. It is a method called the 'pie model'. It means that each year, each rating sector should contribute a very similar amount of the rating pie. This reflects the intent of section 101(1) (c) of the Local Government Act 2020 which requires that Councils seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community.

To maintain consistency in the percentage of rates being charged across the five rating sectors it is critical to understand that the differential rate is not a discount or a fixed element that underpins rating fairness, rather that it is an economic lever to be used to ensure that the current rates proportion is maintained between rating sectors.

This equilibrium in charges between rating sectors is often disturbed through changes in property valuations between rating sectors. If valuations in one sector increase or decrease disproportionately to the overall movement in valuations it will skew the proportion of rates paid by one sector and this needs to be adjusted through alteration of one or more differentials.

Council will continue to attempt to minimise the impact of rating increases on the community by seeking ongoing organisational efficiencies.

The Revenue and Rating Plan contains the necessary statutory information in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Revenue and Rating Plan explains how Council calculates the revenue needed to fund its activities, and how this will be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services. Council's revenue sources include:

- ▶ Rates and charges
- ▶ Waste and recycling charges
- ▶ Grants from other levels of Government
- ▶ Statutory fees and fines
- ▶ User fees and charges
- ▶ Cash and non-cash contributions from other parties (including developers and community groups)
- ▶ Investment income
- ▶ Sale of assets

Community feedback on the proposed Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-29 was sought through Council's Engage platform on the website and advertised as part of the 2025-26 Budget process in Mansfield Matters and on social media, with no submissions received on the draft Plan.

The only change made to the Plan following its exhibition for community feedback is the inclusion of further information on the Victorian Government's Emergency Services Volunteer Fund, which has now been legislated. The Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-29 is now recommended to Council for adoption.

Proposed Budget 2025-26 – Final Valuations

The Valuer General Victoria (VGV) is responsible for valuing all properties as of 1 January each year and the resulting Capital Improved Values are used to allocate Council rates.

Council received the final certified valuations (Stage 4) in May 2025 with some changes to the capital improved values used for development of the Proposed Budget 2025-26. This resulted in some minor adjustments required to the differential rates in the Proposed Budget. The 2025 valuations have returned valuation increases that are more consistent and lower than the previous year.

Council has reviewed the impact of these increases on general rates in relation to each type or class of land and is proposing to modify the differential rates applied to each property category to ensure a more equitable distribution of the general rates revenue. If unaddressed this would have the effect of shifting the rate burden toward those property categories with higher valuation increases.

The profile of the change in general rates revenue by type or class of land is presented in the table below, compared with the original Proposed 2025-26 Budget amounts:

<i>Type or class of land:</i>	<i>General Rate Revenue:</i>		
	<i>Draft 2025-26 \$'000</i>	<i>Final 2025-26 \$'000</i>	<i>Percentage Change</i>
Residential	4,438	4,449	0.24%
Commercial	1,008	1,009	0.10%
Vacant properties	587	576	-1.87%
Rural residential	3,838	3,843	0.13%
Farmland	1,805	1,808	0.16%
Total amount to be raised by rates	11,676	11,686	0.09%

The final Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-29 proposed for adoption by Council includes minor changes to the differential rates for 2025-26 as shown in the table below:

<i>Differential Category</i>	<i>Differential as a percentage (%) of the Residential Rate</i>		
	<i>Draft 2025-26</i>	<i>Final 2025-26</i>	<i>Percentage Change</i>
Residential	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Commercial	166.00%	165.90%	-0.10%
Vacant properties	195.00%	194.70%	-0.30%
Rural residential	86.00%	86.00%	0.00%
Farmland	61.00%	61.00%	0.00%

Emergency Services Volunteer Fund

The Emergency Services Volunteers Fund (ESVF) is a new levy in Victoria that will replace the existing Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) from 1 July 2025 and will be governed by the new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act which recently received Royal Assent. The ESVF will be collected through Council rates notices. This new tax will significantly increase the amount ratepayers will pay, as summarised across each land category and financial year below:

<i>Rating Category</i>	<i>FSPL and ESVF Comparison</i>			
	<i>2023-24</i>	<i>2024-25</i>	<i>2025-26</i>	<i>Percentage Change</i>
Residential	\$1.078m	\$1.342m	\$1.809m	35%
Commercial/Industrial	\$0.341m	\$0.377m	\$0.618m	64%
Primary Production	\$0.613m	\$0.887m	\$0.895m	1%*
Public Benefit	\$0.031m	\$0.032m	\$0.033m	3%

*The State Government announced during May 2025 a temporary freeze on the ESVF levy for Primary Producers for the 2025-26 financial year. This means the ESVF rate for primary production land will remain at the 2024-25 rate for one year.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL adopt the Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-29.

Support Attachments

1. DRAFT Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-29 [13.6.1.1 - 27 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Economic: The disparate impact of annual property valuation movements on each differential rating category has been mitigated through the revision of the differential percentages. This has the effect of ensuring the revaluation cycle does not unfairly redistribute rates between ratepayers categorised as Commercial, Farmland, Residential, Rural Residential and Vacant.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement has been undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. The proposed differential rates were provided for public review within the Proposed 2025-26 Budget. The budget was available for public comment via Council's Engage page from 9 May 2025 to 30 May 2025. No public submissions regarding the differential rates were received by the close of business on 30 May 2025.

The Revenue and Rating Plan was exhibited on Council's Engage page from 2 December 2024 to 31 January 2025. No public submissions via the Engage Page platform or email were received.

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Impact

The Revenue and Rating Plan does not set revenue targets for Council. The Plan outlines the strategic framework and decisions that inform how Council will determine and collect revenue to fund the services it provides to the Mansfield Shire community.

Legal and Risk Implications

Not Applicable

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The Revenue & Rating Plan 2025-29 has been developed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council

Strategic Objective 7 Financial sustainability and value for money

Strategy 7.1 Increase Council's financial resilience by utilising opportunities to derive own-source of funding income and optimising costs of delivering services

Strategic Objective 8: A consultative Council that represents and empowers its community

Strategy 8.1: Increase community trust in Council to make informed decisions with "no surprises"

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.6.2. Budget 2025-26

File Number	E11873	Responsible Officer	Coordinator Financial Planning & Analysis, James Alcaniz Financial Controller, Michael McCormack
Purpose			

To present Council with the final 2025-26 Budget, including the schedule of fees and charges for adoption.

Executive Summary

Development of the annual budget is an essential planning process to provide for the operational and financial sustainability of Mansfield Shire Council and the services it provides to the community. Sound financial management and well-planned infrastructure investment is necessary to support the long-term growth of the Shire, deliver Council Plan initiatives, and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

The budget document covers the financial year commencing from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 and includes financial projections for the following three years. It is prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020 (the Act)*, *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 (the Regulations)*, Better Practice Guides and the Australian Accounting Standards.

Key Issues

Council gave public notice and invited early budget submissions from the community for consideration in development of the 2025-26 Budget over a two month period between Monday 2 December 2024 and Friday 31 January 2025.

Council received 117 submissions in our early budget consultation. Every submission was considered, and many have been included in this year's budget, including:

- ▶ Extending the new shared footpath from Howqua Inlet to the Caravan Park in collaboration with community volunteers.
- ▶ Upgrade of Walshs Road, Goughs Bay with an additional 1km of road sealing, to be completed over the next 2 financial years in consultation with DEECA.
- ▶ Township Sealing Program continued with upgrades for Church Street and New Street, Mansfield.
- ▶ Extending shared paths along Piries-Goughs Bay Road to Mountain Bay Drive and along Mansfield-Woods Point Road in Jamieson to Gooley's Bridge in collaboration with community volunteers.

The Proposed Budget 2025-26 was released for further community consideration from 9 May 2025 to 30 May 2025, with a hybrid Community Information Session offered by the Mayor on 28 May 2025, for which no registrations for attendance were received. Three (3) submissions were received from the community in response to the Proposed Budget via the Engage Mansfield portal. These submissions are summarised along with responses to each submission in this report.

Budget Influences

Mansfield Shire has experienced extraordinary growth in recent years and is expected to continue at a rate of 2.02% per annum in the long term. This has put Mansfield only behind the City of Wodonga as experiencing the fastest population growth in Northeast Victoria.

The Victorian Government has set a housing target for 2051 of an additional 3900 houses for Mansfield Shire. In 2023, there were 6900 houses in the municipality, making this a 36% increase in the number of houses. Over the next 15 years Mansfield Shire's permanent population is forecast to grow by 4,000 residents. This, together with our non-resident population, which currently equates to 43% of our rate base, presents some emerging opportunities and challenges.

Development of the 2025-26 Budget has been influenced by how our community, businesses and visitors see, use and value the places and spaces we currently have. Our future prosperity is determined and shaped through sound financial management and well-planned infrastructure investment to support the long-term growth of the Shire.

The budget development process has considered and responded to external and internal factors as outlined below.

External Factors

The Victorian Government introduced a cap on rate increases from 2016-17. The cap for 2025-26 has been set at 3%. Over the last year CPI has been sitting around 3.3%. With inflationary and cost of living pressures, the economic climate provides a challenging operational landscape.

The budget includes a rate increase of 2.75%, down from the maximum 3% rate cap set by the Minister under the Fair Go Rating System, in recognition of the cost-of-living pressures and drought conditions being experienced by the Mansfield Shire community.

Internal Influences

As well as external influences, there are also several internal influences which have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the 2025-26 Proposed Budget.

These include:

- ▶ Continuing to invest in the maintenance and beautification of the Shire's public spaces, through increased investment in Field Services resources to maintain the new open space assets transferred to Council from subdivisions.
- ▶ Maintaining a positive position for the waste reserve with careful budget management and cost reduction, in addition to managing the cost impacts associated with new waste streams.

- ▶ Increased resourcing in our Youth Services team, partly funded with a reduction in resourcing at a coordinator level to have more staff on the ground directly working with our young people.
- ▶ Investing in systems, with funding to improve efficiencies through the continued rollout of the Collaborative Digital Transformation program this year to enhance productivity and customer service.
- ▶ Continuing to renew infrastructure assets, with an expanded capital works program focused on road, stormwater and bridge renewal.
- ▶ Training a Junior Local Laws officer (ranger) to better service the Shire's growing communities.
- ▶ Continuing to carefully plan for the future development of our Shire and respond to growth pressures through the Strategic Planning Program, preparation of Flood Studies and adoption of an Infrastructure Plan to guide development contributions.
- ▶ Strategic Property Program to critically look at Council's property portfolio and maximise the value of this for residents while balancing community uses and needs for all spaces.
- ▶ Delivery of major grant-funded capital works projects. These include a major package of works at the Station Precinct for delivery over two financial years including a new pump track and shared paths, a fenced dog park, Changing Places facility and all abilities playground, refurbishment of the Goods Shed and Fertiliser Shed and fit out of the Mansfield Heritage Museum. The capital works program also includes a new Pavilion at Lords Reserve, new roundabouts on Dead Horse Lane and on Monkey Gully Road, Mansfield and upgraded changerooms at the Mansfield Sporting Complex.

Budget Summary

The 2025-26 Budget provides for a total operating expenditure of \$24 million and a capital works program of \$22.28 million. This includes:

- ▶ \$11.458 million on the road network including renewal and upgrade works to sealed and unsealed roads, kerb and channel, bridges, culverts, footpaths, and car parks.
- ▶ \$9,203 million on community buildings and recreational facilities.
- ▶ \$1.068 million on plant and equipment.

Proposed carried forward works of \$2.657 million from 2024-25 include the completion of priority grant-funded projects such as the Impact Route, the Greenvale Lane Pedestrian Bridge, the Rifle Butts – Ogilvies Road Intersection, the Station Precinct, and the Lords Reserve Pavilion.

Key indicators within the 2025-26 Budget include:

- ▶ Operating Surplus: \$12.878 million.
- ▶ Underlying operating deficit: \$93,000.
- ▶ Asset renewal of \$6.963 million compared to depreciation of \$5.492 million, new assets \$10.760 million and asset upgrades \$4.556 million.

In addition to the planned delivery of services, the 2025-26 Budget incorporates funding of several new initiatives. The new initiatives are as follows:

- ▶ Working with our community to finalise the Delatite Valley Plan and progress plans for a riverside green space and public park in Merrijig.
- ▶ Continue the successful “Spring Clean Up” event for green waste in advance of the declared Fire Danger Period with the acceptance of green waste at the Resource Recovery Centre, free of charge and the provision of a Tip Voucher for green waste disposal, available for collection through the Customer Service Centre.
- ▶ Streamlining our health and wastewater permit systems to make it easier to apply for permits, make payments and track applications, as part of our digital transformation program. This puts systems in place that mean we can deal with regional growth in a more efficient way.
- ▶ Further increased funding for weed management, controlling weeds such as blackberry and Paterson’s curse, with a continued focus on European Wasp control following the successful community collaboration last year.
- ▶ Continue a program of Planning Scheme amendments over the next 2 years to implement new policy within the Mansfield Planning Scheme to complete and improve the protect the alpine approaches (Design and Development Overlay), properly identify flood affected areas in Mansfield township (following completion of the flood study), change the Environmental Significance Overlay to reduce red tape in referrals to Goulburn Murray Water and implement the Mansfield Planning Strategy with Amendment C60mans.
- ▶ Continued commitment to the Outlying Communities Infrastructure Fund - \$50,000.
- ▶ Support for the expansion of Council’s volunteer program and to attract, induct and onboard new volunteers. Includes additional volunteer training and software to support volunteer engagement and the continuation of the L2P program.
- ▶ Community Connections Officer role, now ongoing, to provide advocacy and support for seniors with advice and guidance on services, engagement with outlying communities, in addition to the popular Tech-help at the library program.
- ▶ Increased frontline resources with new Field Services team members to support increased in-house tree maintenance and road resheeting.
- ▶ Continue to progress Lakins Road Industrial Precinct, through the completion of an options and feasibility assessment for the balance of industrial land at 141 Lakins Road, to maximise value for residents and ratepayers, following settlement of contracted land sale of Lot 1.
- ▶ Finalisation of the purchase of the Bowling Club land (Year 2) – offset by the sale of Lakins Road land.

Capital Projects

Council’s Capital Works program provides for renewal of existing infrastructure and for the upgrade or provision of new assets to meet community expectations.

A record Capital Works program for 2025-26 of \$22.28 million will be funded with \$13.9 million from government grants, \$99,000 from development contributions and \$8.26 million from Council operations. Included within the Capital Works program is \$2.657 million in estimated carryover expenditure from 2024-25 for priority projects currently in progress.

Some of the key infrastructure projects included within the 2025-26 Capital Works Program are:

- ▶ Completing the IMPACT Route with Highton Lane and Rifle Butts Road works being finalised, including the construction of a new roundabout at the intersection with Monkey Gully Road.
- ▶ Progressing the Mansfield Heritage Museum, working with the Mansfield Historical Society and other project partners including Taungurung Land and Waters Council on the exhibit design and fit-out of the new building and other Station Precinct projects.
- ▶ Construction of a new roundabout at the black spot intersection of Dead Horse Lane and the Mansfield-Whitfield Road, which is a state government road that is managed by VicRoads, with a targeted full completion by the end of the year.
- ▶ Commencement of the construction of the Lords Reserve Pavilion and amenities upgrades at Lords Reserve and at the Mansfield Sporting Complex changerooms so that all users of these important sporting and recreational spaces can benefit.
- ▶ Design and construction of a new bridge on Greenvale Lane for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and more funding for bridges and culverts to address longstanding issues.
- ▶ Upgrade of the access road at the Mansfield Resource and Recovery Centre, improving the experience for all users who access this important service.
- ▶ Installation of solar panels and batteries at the Mansfield Sporting Complex and other key locations as part of our Climate Action Plan.

Funding has been put aside to demonstrate Council's commitment to progressing major community projects. These projects will require Council to commit a co-contribution to a funding application and we are working hard to advocate for the money we need for these projects:

- ▶ The construction of an Emergency Resilience Centre on the Maroondah Highway in Mansfield, co-located with the SES to provide an important hub for emergency management training and collaboration between first responders, building community resilience.
- ▶ An upgrade of facilities at the Mansfield swimming pool including a new roof over the learner's pool and improved accessibility so that it can be used for swimming lessons all year round.

Waste Service Charges

The cost to Council of waste disposal has decreased year on year, due to a collaborative renegotiation of waste collection costs.

However, State Government charges such as the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) waste levy have increased significantly in recent years from \$33.03 in 2019-20 up to \$66.30 in 2024-25, an increase of over 100%. In addition to this, the EPA levy is scheduled to rise to \$84.78 per tonne for the 2025-26 Financial Year, an additional increase of 20% on the previous year. Despite this, Council's cost of waste collection services reduced in 2024-25 due to the renegotiation of waste service contracts with our primary service provider.

Council's waste charges are now proposed to reduce even further in 2025-26 as a result of on-going efforts to reduce waste to landfill from all sources in order to reduce costs for the community. This has resulted in the following reductions to our waste charges proposed from 1 July 2025:

- ▶ Community Waste - down 11.1% to \$76.70
- ▶ Kerbside Garbage 80L – down 5.2% to \$163.70
- ▶ Kerbside Garbage 120L - down 5.2% to \$245.55

- ▶ Kerbside Garbage 240L - down 5.2% to \$491.10
- ▶ Kerbside Recycling 240L - down 4.5% to \$131.70
- ▶ Kerbside FOGO 240L (Green Bin) - up 3.4% to \$102.00

Hence, the **average household waste charge will reduce by 6.1%** for households not receiving a green bin. The average household waste charge will reduce by 4.5% to \$555.96 for those households who have a green bin.

In December 2024, the Victorian Government announced the introduction of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund to replace the existing Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL). Councils will be required to collect this tax on behalf of the Victorian Government, and it is mandatory for this tax to be included on Council's rate notice. The FSPL increased substantially in 2024-25, and the ESVF is forecast to increase again in 2025-26 for all properties except primary producers (deferred for one year).

Loan Funding

The 2025-26 Budget does not include any new borrowings. Council debt as of 30 June 2025 will be \$3.556 million and is expected to reduce to \$1.243 million across the next four years.

Cash Management

Overall, total cash and investments of \$10.994 million are forecast as of 30 June 2025.

Submissions

No financial amendments were required to the 2025-26 Budget as a result of the latest round of community submissions received (summarised below). The submissions are summarised below, together with Council's proposed response to them:

Submitter	Focus of Communication	Council Response
Submitter 1: Lousie & Laurie Jacob	Sealing of Buttercup Road	To be considered as part of the next review of Council's 10 Year Capital Works Plan, with grant opportunities to be sought for accelerated funding of the project.
Submitter 2: David Oppenheim	Sealing of Buttercup Road	As above; with information also to be provided to the submitter on the cost differential between the maintenance and upgrade of sealed and unsealed roads.
Submitter 2: David Oppenheim	Clarification of Rate Cap increase	Information will be provided to the submitter to explain how the rate increase (compared to the rate cap) is calculated, confirming that Council's rate increase will comply with the 2.75% proposed in the Budget.

The three submissions have been carefully considered by Council; although Council is not able to fund further works on Buttercup Road this financial year, it is noted that sealing and improvement works to priority sections of this road were completed in recent years and that further sealing works are already included in Council's 10 Year Capital Works Plan. Opportunities for accelerated funding of this road upgrade project will continue to be sought.

Fees and Charges

The Fees and Charges Schedule has been included as part of the 2025-26 Budget with no amendments required following community consultation.

Rates and Charges

Due to the final certified (Stage 4) property valuations provided to Council by the Valuer General during May 2025, the following amendments were made to the Budget 2025-26 with the key tables below updated to show the total valuations for each rating category and the proposed rate in the dollar due to the amendments from Stage 3 to Stage 4 valuations:

Table 4.1.1 (f) Stage 3 Revaluation - 8 April 2025

Type or class of land	2024/25 \$'000	2025/26 \$'000	Change \$'000	%
Residential	2,580,071	2,631,215	51,144	1.98%
Commercial	357,590	360,028	2,438	0.68%
Vacant land	203,254	178,578	-24,676	-12.14%
Rural residential	2,643,136	2,646,089	2,953	0.11%
Farmland	1,766,001	1,754,710	-11,291	-0.64%
Total value of land	7,550,052	7,570,620	20,568	0.27%

Table 4.1.1 (f) Stage 4 Revaluation – 26 May 2025

Type or class of land	2024/25 \$'000	2025/26 \$'000	Change \$'000	%
Residential	2,580,071	2,634,265	54,149	2.10%
Commercial	357,590	360,098	2,508	0.70%
Vacant land	203,254	175,253	-28,001	-13.78%
Rural residential	2,643,136	2,645,035	1,899	0.07%
Farmland	1,766,001	1,755,200	-11,291	-0.61%
Total value of land	7,550,052	7,569,851	19,799	0.26%

Table 4.1.1 (b) Stage 3 Revaluation - 8 April 2025

Type or class of land	2024/25 cents/\$CIV	2025/26 cents/\$CIV*	Change
General rate for rateable residential properties	0.1635	0.1687	3.15%
General rate for rateable commercial properties	0.2714	0.2800	3.16%
General rate for rateable vacant land	0.2942	0.3289	11.79%
General rate for rateable rural residential properties	0.1406	0.1450	3.16%
General rate for rateable farmland	0.1000	0.1029	2.88%

Table 4.1.1 9b) Stage 4 Revaluation – 26 May 2025

Type or class of land	2024/25 cents/\$CIV	2025/26 cents/\$CIV*	Change
General rate for rateable residential properties	0.1635	0.1689	3.30%
General rate for rateable commercial properties	0.2714	0.2802	3.24%
General rate for rateable vacant land	0.2942	0.3288	11.76%
General rate for rateable rural residential properties	0.1406	0.1453	3.34%
General rate for rateable farmland	0.1000	0.1030	3.00%

The table below represents the dollar change in the type/class of land based on the 2.75% proposed rate cap increase, showing the amendments required as a result of the Stage 4 valuations:

Table 4.1.1 (c) Stage 3 Revaluation - 8 April 2025

Type or class of land	2024/25 \$'000	2025/26 \$'000	Change \$'000	%
Residential	4,218	4,438	219	5.20%
Commercial	970	1,008	38	3.86%
Vacant land	598	587	-11	-1.79%
Rural residential	3,716	3,838	122	3.27%
Farmland	1,766	1,805	39	2.22%
Total amount to be raised by general rates	11,269	11,676	407	3.61%

Table 4.1.1 (c) Stage 4 Revaluation – 26 May 2025

Type or class of land	2024/25 \$'000	2025/26 \$'000	Change \$'000	%
Residential	4,218	4,449	231	5.47%
Commercial	970	1,008	38	3.97%
Vacant land	598	576	-22	-3.64%
Rural residential	3,716	3,843	127	3.42%
Farmland	1,766	1,808	42	2.37%
Total amount to be raised by general rates	11,269	11,686	416	3.70%

Based on the Stage 4 rating valuations confirmed during May 2024, the movement has been minimal across all categories of land. Total revenue from rates based on Stage 4 valuations has increased slightly by \$9,606 for the final budget.

Budget Savings

During the final budget review process Council identified further cost savings or amendments to operating initiatives that were not previously recognised within the Proposed Budget 2025-26. These have now been incorporated and include the following adjustments to the operating budget:

- ▶ Outlying Community Infrastructure Fund – reduction to \$50,000 (ongoing)
- ▶ Fleet maintenance – in house completion saving \$200/vehicle
- ▶ Closed Landfills provision review - \$100,000 saving
- ▶ Additional rental income - \$20,000 p.a. forecast
- ▶ Review of Field Services roles – Tree maintenance support by Roads Crew - \$80,000 saving
- ▶ Youth Services roles x 2 – funded for 2025-26, with review planned for future years
- ▶ Records Rationalisation – BAF grant application made for funding of this initiative

Capital Works Review

During the final review of the proposed Capital Works program Council also identified several cost savings or amendments to the timing of capital works that were not previously included in the Proposed Budget 2025-26. These have now been incorporated and include the following adjustments to the capital works budget:

- ▶ Timing adjustments for receipt of IMPACT Route funding and the associated expenditure
- ▶ \$100,000 reduction to Maintongoon Road Toilet Block project scope
- ▶ \$100,000 reduction to Jamieson footpath project, to be delivered in collaboration with community volunteers

- ▶ \$301,000 reduction to Walsh's Road sealing project, to be delivered in collaboration with DEECA
- ▶ \$100,000 reduction to Elvins Street drainage project, to reflect the proposed staging of works

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Having considered all submissions received on the Proposed Budget 2025-26, adopts the Budget 2025-26 including the Schedule of Fees and Charges for the financial year ending 30 June 2026.
2. Formally declares and sets the following rates and charges for the 2025-26 rating year:

General Rates

- a) Pursuant to the provisions of Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989* the following differential rates be declared for the 2025-26 financial year:
 - A general rate of 0.1689 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for all rateable residential properties.
 - A general rate of 0.2802 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for all rateable commercial properties.
 - A general rate of 0.3288 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for all rateable vacant land.
 - A general rate of 0.1453 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for all rateable rural residential properties.
 - A general rate of 0.1030 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value for all rateable farmland properties.
- b) It be recorded that Council believes each differential rate will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of Council functions. Details of the objectives of each differential rate, the types of classes of land which are subject to each differential rate and the uses of each differential rate are set out in the Revised Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-29 and shown at item 4.1.1 of the Budget 2025-26 as attached.
- c) In accordance with the *Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963* the cultural and recreational charge, in lieu of rates in respect of the 2025-26 financial year, be applied to all land to which the Act applies.

Municipal Charge

- d) Pursuant to the provisions of Section 159 of the *Local Government Act 1989* a municipal charge be declared in respect of the 2025-26 financial year.
- e) The municipal charge be declared for the purpose of covering some of the administrative costs to Council.
- f) The municipal charge in the sum of \$359 for each rateable land (or part) in respect of which a municipal charge may be levied is declared in respect of the 2025-26 financial year.
- g) It be confirmed that the municipal charge is declared in respect of all rateable land within the municipal district of which a municipal charge may be levied.

Annual Service Charge

- h) Pursuant to the provisions of Section 162 of the *Local Government Act 1989* an annual service charge relating to waste management be declared for the 2025-26 financial year for each rateable property as follows:
 - Kerbside rubbish collection 80 litre bin \$163.70
 - Kerbside rubbish collection 120 litre bin \$245.55
 - Kerbside rubbish collection 240 litre bin \$491.10
 - Kerbside recycling collection 240 litre bin \$131.70
 - Kerbside recycling collection 240 litre additional bin \$131.70
 - Kerbisde FOGO collection 240 litre bin \$102.00

- Community Waste \$76.70
- i) Pursuant to the provisions of Section 221 of the *Local Government Act 1989* an annual service charge relating to waste management be declared for the 2025-26 financial year for each non-rateable property the same as for a rateable property. The charges are:
 - Kerbside rubbish collection 80 litre bin \$163.70
 - Kerbside rubbish collection 120 litre bin \$245.55
 - Kerbside rubbish collection 240 litre bin \$491.10
 - Kerbside recycling collection 240 litre bin \$131.70
 - Kerbside recycling collection 240 litre additional bin \$131.70
 - Kerbside FOGO collection 240 litre bin \$102.00
- 3. Formally declares that rates are due and payable in four (4) instalments:
 - a) First Instalment: 30 September
 - b) Second instalment: 30 November
 - c) Third instalment: 28 February
 - d) Fourth instalment: 31 May
- 4. Writes to all submitters thanking them for their participation in the budget development process and advising them in writing of the reasons for Council's decision.

{recommendation-end-do-not-remove}

Support Attachments

1. DRAFT Budget 2025-26 [13.6.1.1 - 82 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Economic: The cost of living has increased significantly in the past 12-18 months. The Reserve Bank continues to closely monitor inflationary pressures with a recent cut to the cash rate creating relief to households. Council has responded to the current environment by undertaking a comprehensive review of its operational expenditure.

Despite economic conditions, Mansfield Shire continues to grow, currently at a rate of 2.02% per annum. Over the next 15 years, Mansfield Shire's permanent population is forecast to grow by 4,000 residents. This together with the non-resident population, which currently equates to approximately 43% of our rate base, continues to present both opportunities and challenges for community which have been considered during development of the 2025-26 Budget.

Community Engagement

Council sought community input into the 2025-26 budget process for the period 2 December 2024 to 31 January 2025, with 117 submissions being received. This early consultation occurred through Council's Engage Mansfield portal and allowed officers to consider and respond to the community feedback received in the Proposed Budget 2025-26.

Council released the Proposed Budget 2025-26 on 9 May 2025 for public exhibition until 30 May 2025, inviting further community feedback and submissions. The exhibition of the Proposed Budget was through the Engage Mansfield portal on Council's website. Council also offered to undertake a public information session in a hybrid format on 28 May 2025, however no registrations were received

Public submissions were received until close of business Friday, 30 May 2025.
3 final submissions were received by Council and have been addressed in this report.

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Impact

The Mansfield Shire Council Budget 2025-26 contains the financial resources required to deliver the Council Plan.

Legal and Risk Implications

Not Applicable

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

The Mansfield Shire Council Budget 2025-26 has been developed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council

Strategic Objective 7 Financial sustainability and value for money

Strategy 7.1 Increase Council's financial resilience by utilising opportunities to derive own-source of funding income and optimising costs of delivering services

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.6.3. Insurance Renewal 2025-26

File Number	E11021	Responsible Officer	Financial Controller, Michael McCormack
Purpose			

To seek approval for the payment of invoices relating to Mansfield Shire Council's insurance renewal for 2025-26, as the total sum exceeds financial delegations.

Executive Summary

Council has received advice relating to the 2025-26 insurance renewal that requires Council approval, as the invoices exceed the CEO's financial delegation.

Council's insurance program is coordinated through JLT Public Sector (JLT), a division of Jardine Lloyd Thompson Pty Ltd, which is part of the Marsh Group of Companies. JLT Public Sector has been delivering specialist services to local government authorities since 1972 and arrange several insurance policies on Council's behalf.

The JMAPP Policy covers Council's assets including buildings, vehicles, machinery and artworks. MAV Insurance provides Public and Products Liability and Professional Indemnity cover, and Crime Insurances. Final costings for these are yet to be received and are estimated as outlined in this report.

The total premiums for the insurance cover are \$485,331.94 (ex GST), an increase of 4.45% over the 2024-25 cost. The invoices for the policies will include stamp duty and policy administration fees that are yet to be advised, although expected to be similar to prior years.

Key Issues

The various policies included in the 2025-26 insurance renewal are detailed in the table below. The policies cover the period commencing 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 and acceptance of the renewal advice is due on Wednesday 25 June 2025.

The Insurance Renewal documents are expected to arrive in June, with acceptance and execution of the documents required after the Council meeting on 24 June 2025.

The table below provides a breakdown of the insurance costs compared with the previous financial year. The JMAPP policy costings are projected not to increase for the 2025-26 period.

The major variance from the prior year insurance costs relates to the LMI component. JLT have provided Council with an indicative rate increase based at 5-10%. Conservatively based on a 10% increase for the LMI component, this would result in an increase of \$20,545.27 in 2025-26.

Insurance Comparison				
Class	2024-25 Actual (Ex GST)	2025-26 Expected Premium (Ex GST)	2025-26 \$ Change	2025-26 % change
Councillors & Officers	\$17,880.35	\$16,092.32	-\$1,788.04	-10%
Cyber	\$19,376.05	\$19,376.05	\$0.00	0%
Motor Vehicle	\$43,633.35	\$47,560.35	\$3,927.00	9%
Personal Accident	\$1,310.10	\$1,375.61	\$65.51	5%
Personal Accident - Associated Organisations	\$501.58	\$526.66	\$25.08	5%
Community Liability Pack (Public & Liabilities)	\$5,348.50	\$5,348.50	\$0.00	0%
Corporate Travel	\$127.60	\$133.98	\$6.38	5%
JMAPP (JLT Discretionary Trust)	\$140,502.12	\$138,394.59	-\$2,107.53	-2%
Fee	\$26,750.00	\$26,750.00	\$0.00	0%
TOTAL	\$255,429.65	\$255,558.05	\$128.40	0%
Crime	\$3,630.65	\$3,775.88	\$145.23	4%
Local Govt Liability Insurance (LMI 000359)	\$205,452.74	\$ 225,998.01	\$20,545.27	10%
TOTAL	\$464,513.04	\$ 485,331.94	\$20,690.50	4.45%

**** All costs for 2025-26 are based on estimated costs only and will be confirmed by 30 June 2025.**

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL authorises the Chief Executive Officer to accept the offer and approve payment of invoices relating to Mansfield Shire Council's 2025-26 insurance renewal for a total estimated amount of \$485,331.94 (ex GST) plus applicable stamp duty, policy administration fees and GST.

Support Attachments

Nil

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

Not Applicable

Community Engagement

Not Applicable

Collaboration

Not Applicable

Financial Impact

The 2025-26 insurance renewal costs have been included in the 2025-26 Budget, with an allocation of \$495,000.

Legal and Risk Implications

The insurance policies are structured to manage key risks to Council's financial sustainability.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 8 A consultative Council that represents and empowers its community

Strategy 8.1 Increase community trust in Council to make informed decisions with "no surprises"

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

13.6.4. Opposition to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund

File Number	E370	Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer, Kirsten Alexander
Purpose			

To reiterate Mansfield Shire Council's advocacy position regarding the Victorian Government's new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) tax.

Executive Summary

On Friday 13 December 2024, the Victorian Government announced that the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) will be replaced with the new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) from 1 July 2025.

Mansfield Shire has been actively supporting the broad campaign against the new ESVF tax with Councillors' voting unanimously to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 12 February 2025:

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Calls on the Victorian Government to review the new Emergency Services Volunteer Fund by:
 - a. Reducing the tax burden proposed for primary producers, and all Mansfield Shire residents and ratepayers.
 - b. Not shift the administrative, reputational and resource costs of the tax to local government by asking councils to act as tax collectors for the state government.
2. Notes the Mayor's written correspondence to the following:
 - a. Municipal Association of Victoria,
 - b. Rural Councils Victoria, and
 - c. Victorian Local Government Association
3. Authorises the CEO and Mayor to advocate for and communicate this position statement.

The Mayor and CEO continued and strengthened this advocacy work at the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV's) State Council Meeting on 16 May 2025 by amending the ESVF motion alongside Benalla Rural City Council, with the amended motion achieving majority support.

Councils from across the state resolved to:

1. Oppose Councils being the collector on behalf of the State Government
2. State Revenue Office to collect the Principal Place of Residence (PPR) component of the ESVF, instead of councils
3. Fully reimburse costs incurred by the local government sector for the collection, reporting and debt recovery services that it will provide
4. Improve transparency and communication
5. Ensure that the levy is equitably structured and does not disproportionately burden rural communities or primary producers

Key Issues

The Mayor wrote to voting members of the Upper House on 31 March 2025 (attached) asking them to vote no to the Fire Services Property Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund) Bill 2025 (the Bill). After extended debate, the Upper House passed the Bill in the early hours of 16 May 2025, and it was given Royal Assent on 27 May 2025.

In a media release on 30 May 2025 the Victorian Government announced a 12 month freeze on the ESVF rate for all primary production properties keeping it at the 2024-25 level of 28.7 cents per \$1,000 CIV (Capital Improved Value) rather than increasing it to 71.8 cents as originally proposed. While this short-term relief is welcome it does not address the long-term financial burden this inequitable and unfair tax will impose on the Mansfield Shire community, neither does it provide any relief to other property categories.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Reiterates its position of 12 February to call on the Victorian Government to review the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF) tax by:
 - a. Reducing the tax burden proposed for primary producers, and all Mansfield Shire residents and ratepayers.
 - b. Not shift the administrative, reputational and resource costs of the tax to local government by asking councils to act as tax collectors for the state government.
2. Confirms its objection to the introduction of the abhorrent ESVF tax in its current form, due to the significant, unfair and inequitable impacts it will have on the Shire's farming, commercial and industrial sectors and on all residents and ratepayers.
3. Authorises the Mayor to write to the State Government calling on them to listen to our community and immediately repeal the implementation of the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund levy, raising Council's concerns over the proposed use of the revenue to fund activities currently paid from consolidated revenue.
4. Includes a message with the rates notices clearly indicating that the ESVF is a State government levy that Councils are forced to collect, that Council opposes the ESVF and is campaigning to end it.
5. Continues to collectively advocate against the ESVF tax with other Councils and interested groups.
6. Notes the Mayor's written correspondence to all voting members of the Upper House asking them to vote against the proposed bill.

Support Attachments

1. Letter to Member of the Legislative Council re ESVF bill [13.6.4.1 - 2 pages]

Considerations and Implications of Recommendation

Sustainability Implications

The introduction of the ESVF tax does have potential financial sustainability implications for Council, with the potential for increased community hardship and the associated reduction in

Council revenue at a time when cost of living pressures and the effects of drought are already being felt across the Mansfield Shire community.

Community Engagement

Councillors have been actively engaging directly with the community to listen to their concerns and views and to discuss the impacts of the proposed tax. These conversations are helping ensure that community concerns are heard and represented in Council's advocacy efforts.

Collaboration

Council is working collaboratively with other Victorian councils that oppose this tax. These efforts include direct engagement with individual councils, as well as through Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

Financial Impact

The impact of a new Emergency Services Volunteer Fund using Council as the tax collection mechanism is not accounted for in the annual budget or long-term budget. There will be a significant cost implication in terms of administrative and resource cost. In addition, there will be a financial burden of paying more than \$2m in additional tax, which Council then must recover from the community.

Legal and Risk Implications

The Fire Services Property Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund) Bill 2025 has been given Royal Assent and Council must comply with the new legislation and collect the tax on behalf of the Victorian Government.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not Applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not Applicable

Alignment to Council Plan

Theme 3: A Trusted, Effective and Efficient Council Strategic Objective 8 A consultative Council that represents and empowers its community
Strategy 8.2 Develop capacity and capability to advocate powerfully for the most important interests of the Mansfield community

Governance - Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The author of this report and officers providing advice in relation to this report do not have a conflict of interest to declare in this matter, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

14. Council Meeting Resolution Actions Status Register

This report presents to Council the Mansfield Shire Council Meeting Resolution Actions Status Register

Recommendation	
THAT COUNCIL receive and note the Mansfield Shire Council Meeting Resolution Actions Status Register as at 16 June 2025.	
Support Attachments	
1.	Mansfield Shire Council Action Register as at 16 June 2025 [14.1.1 - 5 pages]
2.	CONFIDENTIAL Mansfield Shire Council Action Register as at 16 June 2025 [14.1.2 - 3 pages]

15. Advisory and Special Committee reports

15.1. Audit & Risk Committee Meeting Agenda and Minutes

The Agenda and Minutes of the Mansfield Shire Audit and Risk Committee, held Monday 26 May 2025, are attached for Council's information.

Recommendation	
THAT COUNCIL receive the Agenda and Minutes of the Mansfield Shire Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on Monday 26 May 2025.	
Support Attachments	
1.	Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes - 26 May 2025 [15.1.1 - 6 pages]
2.	CONFIDENTIAL Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Agenda - 26 May 2025 [15.1.2 - 65 pages]

16. Authorisation of sealing of documents

Nil

17. Closure of meeting to members of the public

Council has the power to close its meeting to the public in certain circumstances pursuant to the provisions of Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020. The circumstances where a meeting can be closed to the public are:

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

The definition of confidential information is provided in Section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Recommendation

THAT COUNCIL close the meeting to members of the public under Section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider Confidential Reports in accordance with section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 for reasons set out in section 18 below.

18. Confidential Reports

18.1. Expression of Interest - Lease of Lot A, Part 141 Lakins Road, Mansfield

Confidential

This report contains confidential information pursuant to the provisions of Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 under Section 3(g) - private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:(i) relates to trade secrets; or (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage

18.2. Tender Award: Highton Lane Roundabout

Confidential

This report contains confidential information pursuant to the provisions of Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 under Section 3(g) - private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:(i) relates to trade secrets; or (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage

18.3. Tender Award: Lords Reserve Toilet Upgrade

Confidential

This report contains confidential information pursuant to the provisions of Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 under Section 3(g) - private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:(i) relates to trade secrets; or (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage

19. Reopen meeting to members of the public

Recommendation
THAT COUNCIL reopen the meeting to members of the public.

20. Close of meeting