



SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

AGENDA

Wednesday 8 July 2020

at 4:00 pm

COPACC

95 - 97 Gellibrand Street, Colac



COLAC OTWAY SHIRE SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 8 July 2020

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COLAC OTWAY SHIRE SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given that the next **SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL** will be held at COPACC on Wednesday 8 July 2020 at 4:00 pm.

AGENDA

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING

OPENING PRAYER

*Almighty God, we seek your
blessing and guidance in our
deliberations on behalf of the
people of the Colac Otway Shire.
Enable this Council's decisions to be
those that contribute to the true
welfare and betterment of our community.*

AMEN

2 PRESENT

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

4 WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND REASON FOR MEETING

Colac Otway Shire acknowledges the original custodians and law makers of this land, their elders past and present and welcomes any descendants here today.

Please note: All Council and Committee meetings will be audio recorded and live streamed, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the Agenda. This includes the public participation sections of the meetings.

By participating in open Council meetings, individuals consent to the use and disclosure of the information they share at the meeting (including any personal and/or sensitive information).

Audio recordings of meetings will be available to the public on Council's website as soon as practicable following the meeting and may be circulated by other means also. Audio recordings are also taken to facilitate the preparation of the minutes of open Council and Committee meetings and to ensure their accuracy. Original audio recordings will be retained by Council for a period of four years.

As stated in Local Law 4, other than an official Council recording, no video or audio recording of proceedings of Council Meetings will be permitted without specific approval by resolution of the relevant Council Meeting.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Stay Safe and Restricted Activities Directions issued by the Chief Health Officer of Victoria that are in place at the time of publication,

Council advises only Councillors, Council staff and people who have requested to speak to their submission will be permitted to attend this Special Committee meeting.

The sole purpose of the Special Committee Meeting is for Council's consideration of submissions to the Draft Budget 2020 - 2021.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken.

Councillors are also encouraged to declare circumstances where there may be a perceived conflict of interest.

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- **Special Committee Meeting held on 12 June 2019.**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Special Committee confirm the minutes of the Special Committee Meeting held on 12 June 2019.

7 VERBAL SUBMISSIONS

The Mayor is to read out the names of the people who have confirmed they wish to make a verbal submission. These verbal submissions will be made in relation to each respective agenda item and must be directly relevant to the respective agenda item. A limit of 5 minutes will apply.

Item: 8.1

Consideration of 2020/21 Draft Budget - Public Submissions

OFFICER	Jason Clissold
GENERAL MANAGER	Errol Lawrence
DIVISION	Corporate Services
ATTACHMENTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 - Victorian Farmers Federation - redacted [8.1.1 - 2 pages] 2. 2 - Judd (1) - redacted [8.1.2 - 1 page] 3. 3 - Kerr - redacted [8.1.3 - 2 pages] 4. 4 - Brown - redacted [8.1.4 - 1 page] 5. 5 - Judd (2) - redacted [8.1.5 - 1 page] 6. 6 - Judd (3) - redacted [8.1.6 - 1 page] 7. 7 - Judd (4) - redacted [8.1.7 - 1 page] 8. 8 - Hamilton - redacted [8.1.8 - 1 page] 9. 9 - Atkinson - redacted [8.1.9 - 1 page] 10. 10 - Wren - redacted [8.1.10 - 1 page] 11. 11 - Tunley - redacted [8.1.11 - 1 page] 12. 12 - Lions Club of Forrest - redacted [8.1.12 - 2 pages] 13. 13 - Buckingham - redacted [8.1.13 - 1 page] 14. 14 - Forrest Horse Riding Club - redacted [8.1.14 - 16 pages] 15. 15 - Russell - redacted [8.1.15 - 4 pages] 16. 16 - Donovan - redacted [8.1.16 - 2 pages] 17. 17 - Apollo Bay Pre- School - redacted [8.1.17 - 2 pages] 18. 18 - Shoebridge - redacted [8.1.18 - 1 page] 19. 19 - Arundell - redacted [8.1.19 - 1 page] 20. 20 - Barrett - redacted [8.1.20 - 1 page] 21. 21 - Mc Conville - redacted [8.1.21 - 1 page] 22. 22 - Billing - redacted [8.1.22 - 2 pages] 23. 23 - Rowntree - redacted [8.1.23 - 1 page] 24. 24 - Shoebridge (2) - redacted [8.1.24 - 2 pages]
PURPOSE	To hear from submitters who have requested to speak in support of their submissions and to receive written submissions to the 2020/21 Draft Budget received under s.223 of the Local Government Act 1989.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A total of 24 submissions were received in accordance with section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* in response to the exhibition of the Draft 2020/21 Council Budget.

In addition to lodging a written submission, submitters may request to speak to their submission prior to Council considering the Annual Budget. The following 8 submitters have requested to speak:

1. James Judd
2. Lyn Russell
3. Robert Shoebridge
4. Simon Arundell
5. Leigh Barrett
6. Yolandi McConville
7. Alan Billing
8. Arnold Rowntree

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. ***Acknowledges and notes the verbal comments made in support of written submissions;***
2. ***Receives and notes the written submissions; and***
3. ***Refers all submissions for further consideration to the Council meeting to be held on Wednesday 22 July 2020, as part of Council's deliberations in the adoption of the 2020/21 Budget.***

3. KEY INFORMATION

At the Special Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 May Council resolved:

That Council:

1. *Endorses the Draft Budget 2020/21 for the financial year (Attachment 1) for the purposes of Section 127 of the Local Government Act 1989;*
2. *Authorises the Chief Executive to give public notice, in accordance with section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989, that Council has prepared a Draft Budget for the 2020/21 year;*
3. *Appoints a Committee comprising of all Councillors and chaired by the Mayor in accordance with section 223(1)(b)(i) of the Local Government Act 1989, to meet on Wednesday 8 July 2020, and hear any persons who in their written submissions under section 223 of the Act have requested that they be heard in support of their submission;*
4. *Authorises the Chief Executive to undertake any and all administrative procedures necessary to enable Council to carry out its functions under section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989;*
5. *Notes that written submissions will be accepted for a period of no less than 28 days; and*

6. *Considers for adoption the Draft Budget 2020/21 at the Ordinary Council Meeting on Wednesday, 22 July 2020 at 4.00pm at Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre after consideration of written submissions, and consideration of any verbal submissions received by Council at its Special Committee Meeting on Wednesday, 8 July 2020.*

As part of the statutory process to adopt the 2020/21 Budget, Council is required to consider all submissions received in relation to the Budget. The closing date for submissions was Monday 29 June 2020.

During this process 24 submissions were received, covering 14 issues. These issues and officer responses are summarised below.

Submission 1 – Victorian Farmers Federation (attached)

Issue 1: To encourage a fair and balanced rating strategy

Response: The apportionment of rates and charges are established within Councils Rating Strategy and are done so on the basis that the distribution of rates is fair and equitable, taking into consideration the multitude of competing demands on Council. It is recognised that what is 'fair and equitable' is often subjective.

Council's current rating strategy was developed after conducting extensive community engagement and consultation and takes into consideration, amongst other issues:

- Rating structure
- Rating differentials
- Other charges
- Fairness & equity
- Capacity to pay

Council's rating strategy can be found at <https://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/Council-the-shire/Reports-strategies-plans/Strategies-plans>

Under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council must prepare and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan by 30 June 2021. The plan must be for a period of at least the next 4 financial years.

Issue 2: Extend an invitation for Council to partner with the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) in advocating for an overhaul to Victoria's rating system.

Response: The State Government is undertaking an inquiry into the local government rating system to identify changes that will improve its fairness and equity. Following an extensive engagement program in 2019 the panel, appointed by the Minister for Local Government, finalised their report in March 2020 for the Minister's consideration.

Please refer to the following links for the full terms of reference and the engagement process.

<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/council-governance/victorian-local-government-rating-system-review>

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/rating-review>

Submission 2 - James Judd (attached)

Issue: What amount out of total rates charges and other fees estimated as due to the Colac Otway Shire during the 2020/21 financial year will be required to pay third parties to collect these amounts?

Response: The net cost to Council of debt collection is zero. Council utilises the services of a third party debt collection agency to recover outstanding rates charges, however the cost of this service is added to the initial rates debt and placed as a charge against the property until paid. It is estimated that the annual cost of this third party service is \$15,000.

Submission 3 – Kelly Kerr (attached)

Issue: Request to consider the construction of a play and learning bike track for children.

Response: Strategically this idea would be supported but there is no Council funding to install such infrastructure.

Site investigations to determine the best location for such a park would need to be undertaken.

The Lake Colac Foreshore Master Plan proposes to develop Western Bay Reserve as a “local family recreation hub with well integrated and family features”. The inclusion of a bike learning area within this park could be achieved. The Lake Colac Foreshore Master Plan also proposes that this site could be considered as an alternative site for exercise or parkour equipment. A small junior playspace, to compliment the recently installed older children play equipment should also be considered at this location when developing a local park concept/landscape plan. The installation of seating and shade trees would enhance the amenity of the park and integrate the area with the foreshore. A site specific concept/landscape plan is needed for this site. There is currently no funding or Council budget allocation available to develop a concept plan for this park – business cases for a master plan for Western Bay Reserve have been submitted for the last few years but have not been supported by Council.

Submission 4 – Tony Brown (attached)

Issue: Commending Council’s response to COVID-19 and the financial responsibility shown in the 2020/21 draft budget, including support for a 1.5% average rate increase.

Response: Council is well aware of the financial challenges it will face in the future and has been undertaking significant work on both service planning and asset management planning over recent years.

This planning will be incorporated in to the Long Term Financial Plan (10 years) that must be finalised and adopted by 31 October 2021, per the Local Government Act 2020.

Council believes this is a financially responsible budget in the current environment, as well as delivering support to the community in managing and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Submission 5 – James Judd (attached)

Issue: Query as to whether the allocations from the Federal Government announced on Friday 22 May 2020 or allocations to support councils by the Victorian State Government will have any impact on the Colac Otway Shire Council's budget and proposed works during the 2020-21 financial year.

Response: Due to the level of uncertainty that exists regarding these funding programs it is not proposed that they be included in the 2020/21 budget. Whilst funding is likely, there is uncertainty regarding the operational and capital nature of the funded works.

Irrespective of the level and nature of any funding received from these programs, the bulk of funding has been structured to have zero net financial impact on Council's operations for 2020/21. Should any applications that require a Council contribution be successful, careful consideration of the project and funding options will be undertaken before accepting the funds.

Submission 6 – James Judd (attached)

Issue: Request for a regular hard waste collection service

Response: Council officers are currently investigating how a hard waste collection service may be delivered in Colac Otway Shire and assessing the associated costs.

Submission 7 – James Judd (attached)

Issue: Query as to whether Council will provide ratepayers with prompt advice once the State Government Budget is bought down.

Response: The State Government Budget is not expected to have any direct impact on ratepayers or Council's 2020/21 budget. If this was not to be the case, ratepayers would be promptly notified of any impact.

It is believed the submitter may be referring to the State's declaration of the Fire Service Property Levy (FSPL) for 2020/21. The 2020/21 charges have already been set by the State, despite the State Government deferring adoption of their budget. Further information can be found at <https://www.sro.vic.gov.au/fsplrates>.

The total amount levied on annual rates notices is the aggregate of:

- general rates and charges determined by Council's budget, and
- the State Government's FSPL.

Both Council's budget and the FSPL are set before annual rates notices are prepared. The State government's budget will include an amount of revenue raised by the FSPL based on the fixed charge and variable rates already advised to local government.

Submission 8 – Ian Hamilton (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to allocate funds in the 2020/21 budget to update the Apollo Bay tennis courts.

Response: Council has included an amount of \$40,000 in its funding application under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program. This is to fund an interim surface treatment prior to a planned full court reconstruction following the completion of a site master plan. This project is still subject to Federal department approval.

Submission 9 – Bruce Atkinson (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to allocate funds in the 2020/21 budget to update the Apollo Bay tennis courts.

Response: Council has included an amount of \$40,000 in its funding application under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program. This is to fund an interim surface treatment prior to a planned full court reconstruction following the completion of a site master plan. This project is still subject to Federal department approval.

Submission 10 – Caroline Wren (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to allocate funds in the 2020/21 budget to update the Apollo Bay tennis courts.

Response: Council has included an amount of \$40,000 in its funding application under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program. This is to fund an interim surface treatment prior to a planned full court reconstruction following the completion of a site master plan. This project is still subject to Federal department approval.

Submission 11 – Martin Tunley (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to allocate funds in the 2020/21 budget to update the Apollo Bay tennis courts.

Response: Council has included an amount of \$40,000 in its funding application under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program. This is to fund an interim surface treatment prior to a planned full court reconstruction following the completion of a site master plan. This project is still subject to Federal department approval.

Submission 12 – Lions Club of Forrest (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to reconsider the level of Class 3 Food Premises food register fees.

Response: The health registration fees for community service clubs like the Lions Club of Forrest & District were reviewed earlier this year following feedback from a local community service club. The Shire currently provides community groups a subsidised registration fee of 50%. The review has resulted in a proposed reduction to the fee for the 2020/21 year.

The annual registration fee for category 2 and 3 community service clubs is proposed to decrease from \$160 to \$50. Short term registration (less than 3 months) for community groups will continue to be at no fee. Colac Otway Shire, similar to other municipalities across the state, has no annual fee for Class 4 food business (i.e. sausage sizzle). It is considered this significant reduction proposed in the draft Fees and Charges document responds to the concerns being raised by the submitter.

Submission 13 – Jane Buckingham (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to allocate funds in the 2020/21 budget to update the Apollo Bay tennis courts.

Response: Council has included an amount of \$40,000 in its funding application under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program. This is to fund an interim surface treatment prior to a planned full court reconstruction following the completion of a site master plan. This project is still subject to Federal department approval.

Submission 14 – Forrest Horse Riding Club (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to allocate \$5,000 from the 2020/21 budget as a contribution to a joint land manager funded Stage 1 Trail Audit for the Sea To Tree Long Distance Horse Trail Project.

Response: Council has been working with the Surf Coast Shire Council and horse riding groups (including the Forrest Horse Riding Club) for some time, discussing the Sea to Tree long distance horse trail between Gherang and Forrest. Council confirms that it has committed \$5,000 through its operational budget to the project to enable a trail audit which will better define the project. The project will encourage horse riders to enjoy the natural beauty of the Otways, as well as support the myriad of small businesses and accommodation providers located close to the proposed trail.

Submission 15 – Lyn Russell (attached)

Issue 1: Request for Council to consider introducing an additional rating differential to capture those 'Rural Farms' owned by companies / investment groups, with the intention of charging them a higher rate in the dollar with the primary purpose of shifting some of the rate burden from the commercial / industrial sector.

Concern over the erosion of equal and responsible distribution of the rate burden across the Shire by not recognising that the rate in the dollar levied on Commercial/Industry for Colac and the Balance of Shire is unfair and requires the Commercial/Industries to supplement the Rural Farm sector

Response: The apportionment of rates and charges are established within Councils Rating Strategy and are done so on the basis that the distribution of rates is fair and equitable, taking into consideration the multitude of competing demands on Council. It is recognised that what is 'fair and equitable' is often subjective.

Council's current rating strategy was developed after conducting extensive community engagement and consultation and takes into consideration, amongst other issues:

- Rating structure
- Rating differentials
- Other charges
- Fairness & equity
- Capacity to pay

The rating strategy also took into account the 'Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating' which considers it inappropriate to create narrowly defined and specifically applied rating categories. The creation of a category for corporate owned farms as a separate category from the Rural Farm rating category is likely to be a contravention of those guidelines.

Council's rating strategy can be found at <https://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/Council-the-shire/Reports-strategies-plans/Strategies-plans>

Under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council must prepare and adopt a Revenue and Rating Plan by 30 June 2021. The plan must be for a period of at least the next 4 financial years.

Issue 2: Request that Council vote to impose the full 2% rate rise and use the extra funds to reduce the Infrastructure Gap which will impose an unacceptable burden on future generations to maintain assets such as halls, roads and footpaths.

"Reserve balance is forecast to decrease by \$8k to \$12.7m i.e. Cash will only exceed reserves by approximately \$753k". The reduction in reserves results in the decline in Council's financial sustainability over the four year period and will place an unacceptable impose on future generations and Councillors. Rate rises in line with the rate cap may ensure that Council costs do not continue to outstrip increased revenue.

Response: Council's financial performance indicators are depicting a decline in Council's financial sustainability over the coming four year period. It must be noted that these projected outcomes are based on Council maintaining existing services and service levels.

As a major component of its Long Term Financial Plan which must be finalised by 31 October 2021, Council is undertaking a service planning review. Utilising a Service Planning Framework Council will assess if it can, in the forthcoming 10 years, continue to provide the current range of services, at the current levels of service, to its community with rates capped per the State Government limit.

The initial results as contained in the draft budget indicate that Council's current financial direction is not sustainable based on a 'business as usual' financial model within a rate capping environment. It is expected that Council will need to reduce operating expenditure in coming years to remain sustainable.

Issue 3: That Councillors:

- support the staff and make known to the community, the reduction in staff numbers and staff savings;
- as per the Councillor Code of Conduct, DO NOT interrogate or treat staff in any other manner than how they would like to be treated; and
- make known to the community the actual cost of fully funded staff required to deliver and administer additional Home Care Packages.

Response: As quoted in Ms Russell's submission Council were forecasting a reduction in Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff of 5.73 for 2019/20 with a saving of \$450k.

\$1.15m of employee costs are fully funded by external funds in relation to the delivery of Home Care Packages. It should be noted that the delivery of Home Care Packages are just one Council service where employee costs are fully or partially funded by external

grants or user fees. E.g. The Commonwealth Home Support program also funds approximately \$700k of employee costs.

Issue 4: That Councillors

- should research and make informed decisions about services and service levels;
- indicate where services and service levels should be cut and inform the community in the interest of transparency and honesty; and
- not support new projects / assets unless FULLY funded.

Response: As a major component of its Long Term Financial Plan which must be finalised by 31 October 2021, Council is undertaking a service planning review. Utilising a Service Planning Framework Council will assess if it can, in the forthcoming 10 years, continue to provide the current range of services, at the current levels of service, to its community with rates capped per the State Government limit.

Issue 5: How can the community make informed and accurate submissions when the Colac Otway Shire Draft Budget 2020 as published is incomplete and how can the Councillors legally vote for the budget when in the section missing is "TO BE INSERTED FOLLOWING BUDGET ADOPTION"

Response: It is believed the submitter is referring to the Mayor's Summary which contained this statement. The purpose of this was to allow the Mayor to provide commentary on the final adopted budget.

Submission 16 – Cathy Donovan (attached)

Issue: Concern that there is no reference in the Draft Budget to the commitments made by Council and State Government to an Early Years Hub in Apollo Bay.

Response: The 2020/21 draft budget does include a \$500,000 commitment from Council to fund a Maternal and Child Health office and consulting room in conjunction with the new kindergarten which is to be fully funded by the Victorian Government. However, to provide a fully integrated early years hub inclusive of day care, Council would need to contribute a further \$1,000,000, which is currently outside of Council's ability to fund unless through new borrowings. Council will continue to seek external funding for this project, however it is unlikely that external funds will be sourced in the required timeframe.

Submission 17 – Apollo Bay Pre-School (attached)

Issue: Requesting support in the 2020-21 Budget for the building of an Early Years Hub in Apollo Bay as a part of the State Government funded Kindergarten build planned at the Apollo Bay School to be completed by the end of 2022.

Response: The 2020/21 draft budget does include a \$500,000 commitment from Council to fund a Maternal and Child Health office and consulting room. However, to provide a fully integrated early years hub Council would need to fund a further \$1,000,000, which would likely require new borrowings. Council will continue to seek external funding for this project, however it is unlikely that external funds will be sourced in the required timeframe.

Submission 18 – Robert Shoebridge (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to have a 0% rate increase.

Response: While Council's current risk rating in relation to financial sustainability is rated low, it's financial performance indicators are depicting a decline in financial sustainability over the coming four year period. It must be noted that these projected outcomes are based on Council maintaining existing services and service levels (i.e. business as usual).

One of the key financial management principle is section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that 'financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances'. The impact that a 0% rate increase would have on Council's revenue base could seriously jeopardise its long term financial sustainability.

The submission claims that 'almost all the rates go to paying wages, not services'. In response to this it must be noted that approximately 1/3 of Rates and Charges go toward paying Employee Costs, with the other 2/3 being funded by User Fees and Operating Grants. It should be noted that the payment of employee wages and service delivery are not mutually exclusive, as employees contribute to the delivery of services. Therefore, paying wages contributes to the delivery of services.

In addition, the submission also claims that Colac Otway rates are 'one of the highest in the state'. In response to this it must be noted that Councils 2018/19 average rates per assessment totalled \$1,942, which was 39th highest out of the 79 Victorian Councils. The State average was \$1,938.

The effect of COVID-19 was also referenced as a reason for not increasing rates. It should be noted that the draft budget includes initiatives to the value of \$950,000 to assist the community to manage and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic

Submission 19 – Simon Arundell (attached)

Issue Request for Council to have a 0% rate increase.

Response: While Council's current risk rating in relation to financial sustainability is rated low, it's financial performance indicators are depicting a decline in financial sustainability over the coming four year period. It must be noted that these projected outcomes are based on Council maintaining existing services and service levels (i.e. business as usual).

One of the key financial management principle is section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that 'financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances'. The impact that a 0% rate increase would have on Council's revenue base could seriously jeopardise its long term financial sustainability.

Submission 20 – Leigh Barrett (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to have a 0% rate increase.

Response: While Council's current risk rating in relation to financial sustainability is rated low, it's financial performance indicators are depicting a decline in financial sustainability over the coming four year period. It must be noted that these projected outcomes are based on Council maintaining existing services and service levels (i.e. business as usual).

One of the key financial management principle is section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that 'financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances'. The impact that a 0% rate increase would have on Council's revenue base could seriously jeopardise its long term financial sustainability.

The submission suggests that Councillors should be setting guidelines (KPI's), including a "salary cap – 50% of rates in salary and benefits – 50% of rates on maintenance and capital works". In response to this it must be noted that approximately 1/3 of Employee Costs are funded by Rates and Charges, with the other 2/3 being funded by User Fees and Operating Grants. It should also be noted that the payment of salaries and benefits, maintenance and capital works are not mutually exclusive, as employees contribute to the delivery of maintenance and capital works.

Submission 21 – Yolandi McConville (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to have a 0% rate increase.

Response: While Council's current risk rating in relation to financial sustainability is rated low, it's financial performance indicators are depicting a decline in financial sustainability over the coming four year period. It must be noted that these projected outcomes are based on Council maintaining existing services and service levels (i.e. business as usual).

One of the key financial management principle is section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that 'financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances'. The impact that a 0% rate increase would have on Council's revenue base could seriously jeopardise its long term financial sustainability.

Submission 22 – Alan Billing (attached)

Issue: Request Council to not increase rates.

Response: While Council's current risk rating in relation to financial sustainability is rated low, it's financial performance indicators are depicting a decline in financial sustainability over the coming four year period. It must be noted that these projected outcomes are based on Council maintaining existing services and service levels (i.e. business as usual).

One of the key financial management principle is section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that 'financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances'. The impact that a 0% rate increase would have on Council's revenue base could seriously jeopardise its long term financial sustainability.

The effect of COVID-19 was referenced within this submission, as well as the establishment of a business and community support fund. The draft budget includes initiatives to the value of \$950,000 to provide targeted assistance to the community to manage and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was suggested that Councillors should not take an increased allowance. This allowance is aligned with the approved adjustment factor approved by the Minister for Local Government. It was also suggested that wage levels of Officers should remain unchanged from the 2019-20 level. Council is required to increase wage levels per the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

You noted that the decision to not reduce the rural farm rate from 75% to 73% for the 2020-21 is a “massive breach of Council’s commitment to rural ratepayers”. This decision was made in response to the impact COVID-19 had on the Shire’s commercial/industrial and holiday rental properties. This reduction was proposed to be deferred until the 2021/22 financial year to alleviate the additional rate burden that would have otherwise been redistributed from Rural Farm properties.

The level of detail provided in this report was noted as insufficient. Council attempt to utilise their resources to provide enough detail for meaningful decision-making. In regards to your specific inquiries:

- Within the ‘Councillor and Chief Executive Service area, it was noted that expenditure is budgeted to increase in 2020-21 by \$334,000. This includes expenditure that is not incurred annually, such as \$200k relating to the election and Councillor Induction Program, as well as the Development of the Council Plan 2021-2025.
- It was noted that Council has budgeted \$1.8m for subscriptions and memberships in the 2020-21 year, which is a decrease from the 2019-20 forecasted expenditure. This includes Council’s contribution to the Corangamite Regional Library Corporation (\$740k) and Software licensing (\$700k).

Submission 23 – Arnold Rowntree (attached)

Issue: Request for Council to have a 0% rate increase.

Response: While Council’s current risk rating in relation to financial sustainability is rated low, it’s financial performance indicators are depicting a decline in financial sustainability over the coming four year period. It must be noted that these projected outcomes are based on Council maintaining existing services and service levels (i.e. business as usual).

One of the key financial management principle is section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that ‘financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances’. The impact that a 0% rate increase would have on Council’s revenue base could seriously jeopardise its long term financial sustainability.

Submission 24 – Robert Shoebridge, President Colac Otway Ratepayers and Residents Association (attached)

Issue 1: Request for Council to have a 0% rate increase.

Response: While Council’s current risk rating in relation to financial sustainability is rated low, it’s financial performance indicators are depicting a decline in financial sustainability over the coming four year period. It must be noted that these projected outcomes are based on Council maintaining existing services and service levels (i.e. business as usual).

One of the key financial management principle is section 101 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that ‘financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances’. The impact that a 0% rate increase would have on Council’s revenue base could seriously jeopardise its long term financial sustainability.

In addition, the submission also claims that Colac Otway rates are one of the highest in the state. In response to this it must be noted that Councils 2018/19 average rates per assessment totalled \$1,942, which was 39th highest out of the 79 Victorian Councils. The State average was \$1,938.

Issue 2: Request for the employment cost to remain unchanged at the 2019-20 level.

Response: The submission claims that the 'proposed rate rise by Council of \$430,000 will be used to cover a staff wage increase of \$610,000. In response to this it must be noted that approximately 1/3 of Employee Costs are funded by Rates and Charges, with the other 2/3 being funded by User Fees and Operating Grants.

Council would not be able to deliver the proposed services at the proposed standard whilst keeping costs unchanged. There is annual cost escalation in materials and increased service provision funded by external sources. Council offer services where employee costs are fully or partially funded by grants or user fees, therefore if the service requirements increase, this will result in an increase in funded employee costs. For example, the delivery of Home Care Packages is budgeted to increase, which is a service whereby \$1.15m of employee costs is fully funded by other levels of government. It should be noted that Home Care Packages are just one Council service where employee costs are fully or partially externally funded by grants or user fees. E.g. The Commonwealth Home Support program also funds approximately \$700k of employee costs.

Issue 3: Council look to find further savings in the budget.

Response: Council are continuously looking for operational efficiencies and subsequent savings, whilst delivering effective services to the community. The 2020-21 budget has been extensively reviewed in an attempt to maximise efficiencies and savings. In response to the impacts of COVID-19, proposed expenditure for 2020/21 was further reduced by \$1.94m, to account for estimated costs to the organisation due to COVID-19, and to ensure savings were available for a Business and Community Support Fund.

4. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

The draft 2020/21 budget has been subject to community consultation including an upfront consultative process surrounding potential community projects. A period of approximately 5 weeks was set aside to undertake a series of drop-in sessions and an online survey via Council's website to capture the community's expectations and priorities. This information was used to inform decision making around Council's capital, operating and priority projects.

This community consultation approach is reflective of Council's desire to put the community at the heart of all decision making.

In addition to the upfront consultation a 42 day public submission process was conducted, which ended on Monday 29 June where the draft budget was placed on public exhibition with the community invited to make written submissions on the draft budget document.

5. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLANS, POLICIES OR STRATEGIES

Alignment to Council Plan 2017-2021:

Theme 4 - Our Leadership & Management

1. Effectively manage financial resources.
2. Openness and accountability in decision making.
4. Provide value for money services for our community.
5. Communicate regularly with our community and involve them in decision-making.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL, & ECONOMIC

- No environmental implications were identified.
- All budget decisions take full consideration of any social or cultural implications
- The long-term financial sustainability of Council drives all financial decisions made during this budget process.

LEGAL & RISK

Any contractual obligations are met by the draft budget.

Local Government Act 1989: (Act)

- Section 127 - "Council must prepare a budget"
- Section 129 - "Public notice"
- Section 130 - "Adoption of budget or revised budget"
- Section 223 - "Right to make submission"

FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY

Refer to the draft budget document.

7. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

COMMUNICATION

The release of the draft budget and processes for providing feedback was publicised in the local media and on Council's website.

TIMELINE

The exhibition period ran from 18 May 2020 to 29 June 2020:

29 June 2020 – Exhibition ends

8 July 2020 – Council consider submissions

22 July 2020 – Council considers endorsement of the Budget 2020/21 at its Ordinary Meeting

8. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

No officer declared an interest under the *Local Government Act 1989* in the preparation of this report.

From: Charles Everist [Redacted]
Sent: Monday, 18 May 2020 11:24 AM
To: 'inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au'
Subject: 2020/21 Draft Budgets - Farm Rates

Cr Jason Schram
Mayor
Colac Otway Shire Council
2-6 Rae Street
COLAC, VIC 3250

By email: councillor.schram@colacotway.vic.gov.au

18 May 2020

Dear Cr Schram,

RE: 2020/21 Draft Budget - Farm Rates

Victorian agriculture cannot be expected to shoulder an even greater rating burden as we work to help rebuild the state's economy in the wake of COVID-19.

That's why I am writing to all Victorian local government councils to encourage a fair and balanced rating strategy, and to extend an invitation to partner with the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) in advocating for an overhaul to Victoria's rating system.

The VFF recognises the difficult position councils face when it comes to the resources available to them to develop a fair rating strategy. Victoria's rating system has created the situation whereby regional and rural ratepayers pay more in rates as a percentage of the value of their property than ratepayers in metropolitan Melbourne.

What's more, regional and rural ratepayers often receive and have access to fewer services from local government than ratepayers in the city.

The VFF is deeply concerned about the inequities that all regional and rural ratepayers face, not just farmers. Changes must be made to the state's rating strategy in the long term and we would welcome the opportunity to work with Colac Otway Shire Council to advocate for reform.

However, our expectation remains that all councils will put forward a fair and equitable rating strategy this year, particularly in light of recent drought conditions, the bushfires and the COVID pandemic.

The VFF constantly monitors and reports on the rates set by all local government councils to promote fair rating strategies and to actively campaign against unfair and inequitable rate hikes.

The VFF will be vocal in calling out councils that unfairly shift the rating burden onto farmers and the agricultural sector, whilst acknowledging and publicly commending councils that strike balance in their rating strategy.

The current model of using land valuations for striking rates, places undue financial stress on farming businesses as the value attributed to farm land does not reflect farm businesses' revenue generation nor capacity to pay. Differential rates were introduced as a tool for councils to address equity issues arising from the land valuation method of determining rates.

The fundamental principle should be that as the value of farmland increases, the differential rate is adjusted to reduce the rate in the dollar so that the rate burden paid by the farm sector remains stable. The VFF expects that Colac Otway Shire Council will use the mechanisms it has available to maintain a balanced rating strategy.

The VFF is very happy to meet with your council to discuss your rating plans for 2020/21 and how we may work together to advocate for long term reform. To discuss further, please contact Luke Hooke, Manager, Stakeholder Policy and Advocacy, on [Redacted] or at [Redacted].

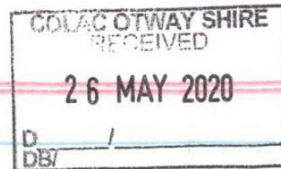
Yours sincerely,



David Jochinke
President
Victorian Farmers Federation

cc: Mr Peter Brown, Chief Executive Officer, Colac Otway Shire Council

Message protected by MailGuard: e-mail anti-virus, anti-spam and content filtering.
<http://www.mailguard.com.au>



MR J. R. JUDD

[Redacted]

COLAC VIC. 3250
24-5-2020

SUBMISSION TO COUNCILS 2020-2021 BUDGET.
MR PETER BROWN CEO
COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL
RAE STREET
COLAC VIC. 3250

DEAR SIR

WHAT AMOUNT OUT OF TOTAL RATES, CHARGES AND OTHER FEES ESTIMATED AS DUE TO THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE DURING THE 2020-2021 FINANCIAL YEAR, WILL BE REQUIRED TO PAY THIRD PARTIES TO COLLECT THESE AMOUNTS.

PAYMENTS THROUGH THIRD PARTIES SHOULD NOT BE ENCOURAGED IF A FEE MUST BE PAID OUT OF PAYMENTS MADE. THIS ONLY INFLATES EXPENSES AND REDUCES FUNDS TO BENEFIT THE SHIRE.

YOURS FAITHFULLY
James R Judd

COPY TO ALL COUNCILLORS PRIOR TO MEETING

Toni Uphill

From: Kelly Kerr [Redacted]
Sent: Monday, 25 May 2020 9:28 PM
To: inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au
Subject: submission for budget please

Dear Mayor Schram and Councilors,

I am writing with an idea for a kids play and learning area in town that I would hope you might consider.

We have a little girl aged 5 who is learning to ride a bike and many of the footpaths around our area are on an angle, unsafe due to overhanging branches or dangerous with driveways. As we live in Morrison Street our road is also unsurfaced at the edges and rises to a mound in the middle for part of the way. As I have another child aged 1 it is nearly impossible to keep up with a child on a bike and push a pram too in this situation.

I have seen in other areas, tracks/roads made for small children for riding bikes on. They involve learning road rules and are in safe, reasonably flat areas that are safe for small children. I believe something like this would be greatly appreciated by parents and children of the Colac Area and would encourage people to be active in teaching their children to learn to ride safely and more often. A couple of possible sites for a riding track like this might be along the foreshore near the Fire Brigade Running track or beside the skate park or even along the side of the Central Reserve under the trees off the back of Morrison Steet near to the Specialist School and Early Education Centre, where they can also make use of it. I am sure given the proper thought and layout other Primary Schools would find it useful and a safe option to teaching kids to ride.

I would be happy to discuss this idea further and am available for contact on [Redacted] or [Redacted].

Many thanks for your time

Kelly Kerr



From: Tony Brown [Redacted]
Sent: Thursday, 28 May 2020 4:08 PM
To: inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au
Subject: Budget Submission

Attention Peter Brown, CEO COS

We would like to commend Colac Otway Shire on the many ways in which it has responded to the COVID-19 crisis including ramping up its community services even though this has meant an additional cost.

The Shire has had to operate under such tight financial constraints with a rate increase of only 0.5 percent over the previous year despite the 2.5 percent rate increase allowed. Similar low rate increases in the coming and subsequent years would continue to erode the possibility of continuing the council services at an acceptable level in a large rural and sparsely populated shire.

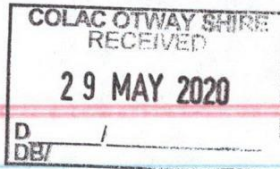
Having only had very modest increases in the last three budgets, a rate increase of 1.5 percent, much of which would be used to assist those adversely affected by COVID-19 by provision of community care packages and relief from fees and charges for homes and businesses, would be fair.

In light of these factors, we support the proposed draft budget rate increase with the understanding that some ratepayers may be subsidising others who are less fortunate in these times, while acknowledging the reduced rate increases leading up to this situation are not sustainable in the longer term, even with a return to normal circumstances.

Tony Brown and Joy Mitchell
Elliminyt



Virus-free. www.avg.com



MR J. R. JORD

[Redacted]

COLAC VIC. 3250

28-5-2020

SUBMISSION TO THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE DRAFT BUDGET
FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-2021.

MR PETER BROWN CEO
COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL
RAE STREET
COLAC VIC. 3250

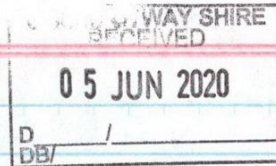
DEAR SIR,

WILL THE ALLOCATIONS FROM THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ON FRIDAY 22-5-2020
PLUS ALLOCATIONS TO SUPPORT COUNCILS BY THE
VICTORIAN STATE GOVERNMENT.

HAVE ANY IMPACT ON THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCILS
BUDGET AND PROPOSED WORKS DURING THE 2020-2021
FINANCIAL YEAR.

YOURS FAITHFULLY
James R. Jord

COPY TO ALL COUNCILLORS PRIOR TO MEETING



MR J. J. JUDD

[Redacted]

COLAC VIC. 3250

3-6-2020

SUBMISSION TO THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL'S
BUDGET FOR 2020-2021.

MR PETER BROWN CEO
COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL
RAE STREET
COLAC VIC. 3250

DEAR SIR,

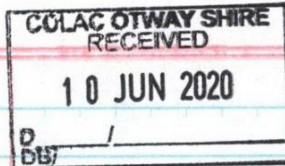
DUE TO THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE SHOWN UP AS
A RESULT OF COVID-19 WHEN TRYING TO DISPOSE
OF WASTE NOT ALLOWED TO BE INCLUDED IN GARBAGE
BINS. WITH SOME OUTLETS TO DISPOSE OF SPECIAL
WASTE CLOSED UNLESS SPECIAL AUTHORITY GAINED
TO DEPOSIT WASTE AT SET TIMES AND OTHERS ON
SHORTER HOURS TO LODGE RUBBISH AT.

WHEN WILL THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL INCLUDE
A REGULAR HARD WASTE COLLECTION. WITHOUT
FINDING OUT HOW OFTEN OR HOW MUCH PEOPLE WILL
PAY TO ACCESS THIS SERVICE.

PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW IF A SERVICE WILL BE
PROVIDED SINCE MANY HAVE BEEN CALLING FOR THIS
FOR MANY YEARS. NOT JUST BE TOLD IT WILL BE
CONSIDERED ONLY IF YOU PAY EXTRA FOR A SERVICE.
I WISH TO BE HEARD IN RELATION TO THIS SUBMISSION.

YOURS FAITHFULLY
James A Judd

COPY TO ALL COUNCILS PRIOR TO MEETING.



MR J. R. JUPP

[Redacted]

COLAC VIC. 3250
7-6-2020

SUBMISSION TO THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCILS 2020-2021 BUDGET.

MR PETER BROWN CEO
COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL
RAE STREET
COLAC VIC. 3250

DEAR SIR,

WILL THE COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL GIVE A PROMPT ADVICE TO ANY RATEPAYERS ONCE THE VICTORIAN STATE BUDGET IS BOUGHT DOWN AND CONFIRMED. SHOULD THE TOTAL OF RATE NOTICES BE ALTERED AS A RESULT OF VICTORIAN STATE GOVERNMENT DEBITS OR CREDITS BE CHANGED FROM ON RATE NOTICES CHARGED FOR THE 2020-2021 YEAR. PLUS STATE WHAT BALANCE IS DUE AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE PAID. THIS IS CRITICAL TO ALL WHO CHOSE TO PAY ON BASIS OF RATE NOTICES ALREADY ISSUED. PLUS HAVE MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO SETTLE ACCORDING TO RATE NOTICES. I WISH TO SPEAK IN RELATION TO THIS SUBMISSION.

YOURS FAITHFULLY
James A Jupp

COPY TO ALL COUNCILLORS PRIOR TO MEETING.

From: Ian Hamilton [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2020 9:39 AM
To: Ian Seuren [Redacted]
Subject: Tennis facilities at Apollo Bay

My wife and I have been playing tennis regularly at Apollo Bay since we retired to live there some 2 years ago. As older members of the community, we find tennis an extremely useful way to exercise regularly and maintain a level of fitness, as well as to facilitate our social interactions with the local community. We have made several friends through the Social Tennis organised by the Apollo Bay Tennis club, and we have found it difficult to find alternative means to continue to .exercise

Sadly this was completely ceased during the Covid 9 lockdown, and many regular payers, particularly amongst our age group, have not resumed playing since it was re-introduced.

We would value any support you may be able to provide to encourage Council to allocate some of the funding available through the Covid stimulus spending package, or the forthcoming financial year budget, to support upgrading the tennis courts available in Apollo Bay to help improve this facility and encourage more participation.

Thankyou for your consideration,
Ian Hamilton.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bruce Atkinson [Redacted]

Sent: Monday, 15 June 2020 2:28 PM

To: Ian Seuren [Redacted]

Subject: Apollo bay Tennis

Dear

Hi my name is Bruce Atkinson, I am actively involved with the Apollo bay tennis club and play socially Mondays and Wednesdays and have been for the past 6 years since retiring to Apollo bay. One of the courts (out of 3) has recently been resurfaced; a long time needed action both for safety and better play. Clearly the covid19 has had a negative effect upon the clubs activities but now that it is slowly coming back into use it would be fantastic if the Shire could allocate some of the covid stimulus spending and/or the 2020/21 budget to helping Apollo Bay netball and tennis get going again with a better court surface on the two remaining shared courts which desperately need it.

Many thanks

Bruce Atkinson

From: Caroline Wren [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2020 4:44 PM
To: Cr Chris Potter; Ian Seuren
Subject: Apollo Bay Tennis Courts

Categories: Save in CM

Dear Chris and Ian,

Just a quick email to ask Council to help complete the resurfacing of the tennis/netball courts at Apollo Bay.

I'm a keen tennis player - not a great player but enjoy the exercise and social interaction.

It's been great to see the kids teams and coaching restart in the Bay over the last couple of years and teams compete in the local league once again.

Just over the last few weeks we've restarted social tennis post covid and the one court which has been redone has made a real difference as it is much better to use particularly in the winter when it's often wet.

I would really like to see Council step up and help our tennis and netball clubs get a better surface to help female and senior sport into the future. It will be a real boost as we restart post COVID particularly for the netballers who have had their competitive season cancelled.

Please allocate some funding in the 20/21 budget - or alternatively in the covid stimulus package.

Many thanks,

Caroline Wren
Skenes Creek
VIC 3233
[Redacted]

Toni Uphill

From: Martin Tunley [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, 17 June 2020 9:36 AM
To: Cr Chris Potter; Ian Seuren
Subject: Apollo Bay Tennis Courts

Dear Chris and Ian,

My family have tennis lessons and my son plays pennant tennis at Apollo Bay Tennis Club.

The courts and fencing are in dire need of upgrading. No money has been spent by the council on these courts for many years. Other tennis players that come to our courts now consider the courts dangerous as they are far below the standard at other courts in the Colac area. They are the worst courts that we play on in pennants.

When can money be allocated to these courts before the courts cause injury to a player?

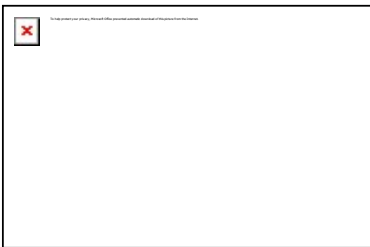
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Regards

Martin Tunley

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



[Redacted]

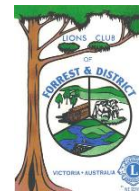


Lions Club of Forrest & District

Inc No A0009147C

[Redacted]

[Redacted], FORREST 3236



17 June 2020

Colac Otway Shire Budget Submission

**Ref: Draft Budget Class 3 Food Premises
Additional Temporary/Mobile Food Registration
Community Group Support**

The Lions Club of Forrest & District make a submission to the Colac Otway Shire to reconsider the excessive costs to Volunteer, Not-For-Profit Service groups for all fees in relation to the provision of a Service via a barbeque or the like.

Volunteer run not-for-profit service groups and Clubs all raise funds to return those funds to their communities. Many hours of volunteers time, efforts and other contributions are given freely for the benefit of their communities.

The costs of any fees charged to these community service volunteer groups are by necessity taken out of the sales. Therefore the benefit of funds to return to the community is reduced by the cost of the fees.

The fees have sneakingly crept up since the introduction of Streatrader. The commitment of administration done by the volunteers has also increased with this same process. We are increasingly finding the additional costs and administration is impacting significantly on the willingness of volunteers to contribute their own time, effort and personal financial input. Are you all volunteers; are your staff volunteers??

It is disappointing that the Colac Otway Shire does not acknowledge the commitment of volunteers to the liveability of the residents of Colac Otway Shire.

Research (see attached spreadsheet) proves that the Colac Otway Shire is charging fees over and above those of other local Government authorities. In fact there are LGAs who do not charge not-for-profit service groups at all. This is a snapshot of the 68 Lions Clubs in our Lions 201V2 District, bearing in mind that there are several clubs in these representative LGA's.

We respectfully seek your empathy and commitment to supporting the Colac Otway Shire volunteer not-for-profit community groups by ceasing or at the very least reducing this administration cost to these groups and their input to the well-being and livability of the communities of the Shire.

On behalf of all volunteers,
Yours faithfully
Delwyn Seebeck
Secretary
Lions Club of Forrest & District



**LIONS CLUB FORREST & DISTRICT
STREATRADER FEES EVALUATIONS - 2019/2020**

CLUB	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY	FEE CHARGED	COMMENTS
Lions Club of Casterton	Glenelg Shire	\$51 per annum for Class 3 mobile unit	Better change Councils!!!
Lions Club of Koroit	Moyne Shire Council	Nil	
Lions Club of Penshurst & District	Southern Grampians Shire Council	Nil - Category 3	Don't pay any fee at all as we are a not-for-profit organisation. I am aghast at the fees you have to pay!!
Lions Club of Edenhope	West Wimmera Shire	Nil for Lions Club. Various fees for General Community Groups.	Shire Environmental Health Office does not charge Community Groups an Annual fee. Although a schedule of fees is listed.
Lions Club of Horsham	Horsham Rural City Council	Class 3 = \$95/PA	With our registration we are only required to register a food event through Streatrader if we run that event outside the Horsham Rural City Council boundaries.
Lions Club of Geelong South Barwon	Greater Geelong City	Nil	Our Club comes under a Category 1 status according to CofGG. Therefore no fees are applicable.
Lions Club of Coleraine	Southern Grampians Shire Council	Nil	Have never been charged anything for Streatrader. We register every year and just have to inform them when we're having an event at least 10 days before an event. (Random drop-in inspections happen at events)
Lions Club of Portarlington Drysdale	Greater Geelong City	\$135 for 12 month renewal of BBQ trailer which has a class 2 licence.	No Streatrader fee provided they only operate in the COGG boundaries.
Lions Club of Footscray	Maribyrnong City Council & Moreland City Council	Nil	Checked both Councils and do not charge a Streatrader fee for Class 4 applications.
Lions Club of Altona	Hobsons Bay City Council	Nil for a sausage sizzle. \$60-\$70 for egg & bacon rolls (could not remember exact figure)	Not-for-profit group fees.
Rotary Club of North Balwyn	City of Boroondara	Nil	Registration is required. No fees charged for not-for-profit Community Service organisations.

From: Jane Buckingham [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, 17 June 2020 5:19 PM
To: Cr Chris Potter; Ian Seuren
Subject: RE: Netball/tennis club resurfacing Apollo Bay

Dear Councillors,

My 10 year old son plays tennis – training on Mondays and then participating in the Junior tennis competition that runs from September to February.

With the tennis club in Apollo Bay recently reforming, I have seen for myself the increase of interest in tennis for children.

It is a sport that provides opportunity for those that prefer more individual sport and not the demands that can be associated with team sport like netball and football.

The juniors took part in the first comp last September and so on most weekends, we played host to visiting teams from the Colac region at our facilities in Apollo Bay.

On several occasions, parents were sweeping puddles of water from the court to make it more possible to play on. Although tennis is a summer sport, I can tell you now that we played more tennis in cold/wet conditions than in sunshine and our courts in Apollo Bay were simply not fit for purpose.

The comp games require the use of 2 (sometimes 3) courts. It is great that 1 court has been resurfaced but it only highlights the awful state of the others.

We will be tossing coins to see who gets to play on the new court come the new comp season in September!

Please accept this email as a plea from myself and my son to consider the use of some Covid stimulus funding to resurface the remaining 2 courts in Apollo Bay. I firmly believe that with safe, inviting surfaces, tennis will continue to grow in popularity and would be a huge asset to adults and children in our community.

Thanks for taking the time to listen,
Jane Buckingham
[Redacted]
Apollo Bay
Vic 3233

Toni Uphill

From: Jeanette Dyson [Redacted]
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2020 1:23 PM
To: inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au
Subject: Budget Submission
Attachments: Extract Minutes Council Meeting 24 September 2019 - CPP49 Sea toTree Horse Trail.pdf; Surf Coast Times article Sea to Tree Horse Trail.pdf; Working document_DRAFT Trail Audit Brief.pdf; Budget Submission Sea to Tree.docx

Dear Chief Executive Officer

Please find a budget submission attached for the Sea to Tree Long Distance Horse Riding Route. Supporting documents are also attached.

Please note that due to the fires and COVID 19 some of the time frames in the draft trail audit attached have been pushed back with reconvening of a meeting with community, land owners and ParksVic scheduled for July 23rd.

Should Council deem it necessary I will endeavour to make myself available for a Special Committee Meeting Wednesday 8th July 2020. I would require notice however due to work commitments (unable to work from home).

Regards

Jeanette Dyson
President of the Forrest Horse Rdiing Club

2020/21 Draft Budget – Community Submission

Name: Jeanette Dyson

Group Name: Moriac Community Network/ Forrest Horse Riding Club (Australian Trail Horse Riders Association)

Contact Email:

Contact address (including town and postcode):

Contact phone:

PROJECT: THE SEA TO TREE LONG DISTANCE HORSE RIDING TRAIL

Introduction:

The Moriac Community Network and The Forrest Horse Riding Club (members of the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association) are requesting that Council allocates \$5,000 from the 2020/21 budget as a contribution to a joint land manager funded Stage 1 Trail Audit for the Sea To Tree Long Distance Horse Trail Project. This allocation (combined with \$5,000 committed by the Surf Coast Shire, in kind project management support by Parks Victoria and volunteer support by riders from the The Forrest Horse Riding Club), will enable the engagement of a contractor to audit the trail route to define/detail this horse trail opportunity. This audit will provide the necessary detail for a business case to be able to be developed for Stage 2 of this partnership project - trail establishment.

Project description

To establish a long distance recreational horse riding trail from Gherang to Forrest (via Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Bambra, Deans Marsh, Barwon Downs), showcasing the Anglesea Heathlands, Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park.

Project background

- Joint community groups, the Moriac Community Network and Forrest Horse Riding Club have initiated land managers coming together to discuss this proposal. Local and district horse trail riders are keen to promote what is currently an informal trail riding experience and to share it with others (horse riders and other potential trail users).
- Key usage demographic for long distance horse trails are women (source from Australian Trail Horse Riders Association 2018 membership figures which show 75% women, 47% over 51 years, 81% over 31 years).
- Riders have multiple insurances via riding clubs and horse / trail riding associations.
- Land owner / manager support has been provided from:
 - Parks Victoria - have accepted their key role as project lead and can offer project management of the audit and trail establishment stages.
 - Midway Plantations P/L (will permit horse riders upon application only through Midway Plantation land / horse riders without permission would be required to arrange transport around Midway via an alternative route along the Deans Marsh-Lorne Road / other trail users would take the alternative route)
 - DELWP (including free bush camping sites)
 - Surf Coast Shire (confirmed support at its 24 September 2019 Council meeting and allocation of \$5000 towards the Stage 1 trail audit)

- Colac Otway Shire (current application) – plus Madeleine Bisits will be able to provide further information having been involved in project proposal meetings to date.
- Also provided for your information
The Surf Coast Council strategic justification for this trail includes:
 - Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy (adopted May 2019) – supports Objectives 4.1 (Encourage the development of tourism products in the hinterland which provide low-impact outdoor recreation activities, such as fishing, cycling, kayaking, and dedicated off-road cycling e.g. mountain-bike riding and cycle cross and horse trails) and Objective 4.3. (Develop tourist trails with a product or experience focus to enhance the visitor journey and connect inland destinations with the Great Ocean Road and key access routes)
 - Council Plan (2017-2021) – supports objectives under Community Wellbeing, Balancing Growth and Vibrant Economy
 - Growing Adventure Tourism in Barwon South West Region (2016) - supports idea for creating unique and memorable visitor experiences
 - Strategic Master Plan Great Ocean Road Region Visitor Economy (2015-25) – supports Action 27
- Parks Victoria have identified that this proposal aligns to an outstanding action in the 2009 Management Plan for the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park (Caring for Country - The Otways and You).

Opinion of horse trail riders is that they are a ‘forgotten group’ potentially due to being predominantly self-supporting and have rarely sought funding support in the past.

Alignment with Colac Otway Shire Council Priorities

With reference to the Colac Otway Shire Council Plan, the proposed project would meet the objectives of the Council plan by addressing:

- Strategic Theme 1 : Our Prosperity – the following goals under this theme support the development of the Sea To Tree Trail:
 - Opportunity to further position Colac Otway as a place where visitors can be attracted
 - Identifying and improving tourism assets
 - Identify and promoting tourism pathways between attractions across the whole Shire
 - Develop and maintain regional partnerships and joint advocacy.
- Strategic Theme 2 : Our Places - the following goals under this theme support the development of the Sea To Tree Trail:
 - Develop and maintain constructive partnerships to access appropriate levels of funding, coordination, infrastructure and services
 - Support enjoyment of outdoor experiences through the provision of a network of quality open spaces, including paths and trails.
- Strategic Theme 3 : Our Community - the following goals under this theme support the development of the Sea To Tree Trail:
 - Provide grant programs to involve local people in activities that facilitate their health, wellbeing and enjoyment.

Alignment with Club/Group/Community Priorities

Forrest Horse Riding Club is affiliated with the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA). ATHRA was formed for people who enjoy horses, our heritage, the outdoors and camaraderie, all encompassed within a non-competitive leisure horse environment. ATHRA works with Government at all levels and the equine industry as Australia’s premier representative body for Trail Horse Riders. The Australian Directors

of ATHRA nationally support the development of the Sea to Tree Trail route as an exciting horse riding opportunity.

As part of a national body ATHRA members have the ability to ride anywhere that permits horse access and with any other clubs Australia wide. This opens up the potential for riders from other Clubs in Victoria and from around Australia to be welcomed by the Forrest Club and enjoy the hospitality of the club. ATHRA is a way of life for the whole family; it provides access to the most remote and beautiful places most people only dream of. Development of the trail route with signage and mapping enables horse riders to experience the Surf Coast Hinterland and the Otways and District in either day trips or multiple day rides.

Forrest is being promoted as the gateway to the Otways. The Sea to Tree Route is a fit with this concept.

Engagement

- This proposal has been submitted by the Moriac Community Network (129 member families) in partnership with the Forrest Horse Riding Club , the National Directors of ATHRA and the Gherang & Wensleydale Social Riders.
- Letters of support have been received from the above organisations as well as the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association and Whinbury Hill Equestrian Centre (Paraparap).
- Proposal liaison has occurred with multiple land managers (Parks Victoria, DELWP, Midway Plantations, Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire) at 2 project meetings hosted by Parks Victoria (Colac Office).
- Parks Victoria's 2009 Management Plan for the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park (Caring for Country - The Otways and You) was developed after extensive community consultation resulting in a recommendation for the investigation/provision/promotion of a long distance horse riding route across the Otways. Partnerships with local accommodation options located near the Park could also be explored
- At a Local Government level, there is potential shared interest and benefits for the Business and Tourism Unit and Recreation and Open Space Planning.
- Forest Horse Riding Club and the National Directors of ATHRA have been consulted re the standards for horse riding trails.

Potential to liaise further with horse riding clubs in the region and via Australian Trail Horse Riders Association who may be able to survey their member database.

Why is the project needed / who will it benefit

The project is needed to provide opportunity for a well marked and mapped route to facilitate horse riders (and other groups) access the Anglesea Heathlands and the Otways, with a continuous long distance route. A marked and mapped trail will guide and educate both locals and visitors about the trail route, suggested rest and overnight stop sites and also significant features of the area to enjoy and respect. Horse focused trail (re promotion / product) but also multi use (cycling, walking, running).

The route is divided into sections to provide day/weekend/ or mulitday options providing flexibility. Can be done in sections or as a 5 day /125km trail formalised on existing tracks via maps and signage and focused on 'self reliant' riders with support crew for horse/rider welfare.

The route provides a rural and remote experience, yet is connected to local hubs with service provision and overnight stays benefiting local businesses across the route. It connects horse hubs, promotes women in sport, provides rural women with social opportunities, and preserves the horse riding traditions of the area. It is envisaged to include other groups.

Other groups that would benefit from the project would include:

- cyclists

- walkers/runners

What is the total cost of this project and how much are you seeking from Council's 20/21 budget

- The main costs associated with formalising the trail will be way-finding signage, other supporting infrastructure (e.g. hitching posts, seats etc) as well as trail branding and promotion.
- The proposed project plan involves a 2 stage process:
 - Stage 1
 - estimated cost \$10,000 plus in-kind project management and expertise from parks Victoria and DELWP) and in kind support / assistance to the audit process (i.e. riding the route, collecting data and providing advice) by local club riders and ATHRA personnel (with total value of this in-kind support likely to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000)
 - With \$5,000 already committed by the Surf Coast Shire (in 2019/20 and carried over to 20/21), \$5,000 is sought from the Colac Otway Shire's 20/21 budget to enable the Stage 1 trail audit project to commence
 - this seed funding is required for a trail audit along the entire length of the proposed trail (doing the 'ground truthing') that determines what is needed that is not there now.
 - This is a planning phase involving the trail audit proposed to be jointly funded via land managers and then used to prepare an implementation plan and business case for the funding of a fully scoped product (Stage 2).
 - Stage 2
 - Estimated cost \$100,00 - \$150,000 (with a funding strategy to be prepared as part of Stage 1 and targeting State and Federal Government funding)
 - would cover sign design (look and feel of each type of sign trail branding and logo), promotion / marketing plan and costs, trail implementation (sign and other infrastructure production and installation)

The timing of Stage 1 trail audit project has been delayed due to Parks Victoria constraints with fire response across the State and also more recently due to COVID-19 restrictions. Planning for the audit however can commence as soon as the budget is confirmed. The audit could then take place in November / December 2020. Parks Victoria have already established a Draft Terms of Reference to guide the project.

Attachments and Links

- Please refer to a draft Alpaca Map product showing the Sea To Tree Horse Trail
<https://embed.alpacamaps.com/journey/9e337ddd-b4b8-11e9-96fe-067ec0c7e8f4/default>
- Draft brief (working document) for the Trail Audit (under review from Parks Victoria)
- Relevant Extract from Surf Coast Shire Council Meeting Minutes (September 2019) – provided as a reference document as it gives further background information
- Surf Coast Times article
- Copies of the following letters of support can be provided upon request:
 - Moriac Community Network
 - Forrest Horse Riding Club
 - Gherang & Wensleydale Social Riders
 - Whinbury Hill Equestrian Centre
 - Australian Trail Horse Riders Association

Long distance horse trail gets go-ahead

The Surf Coast Shire is supporting the creation of a long-distance horse trail.



BY KLAUS NANNESTAD

THE Surf Coast Shire has dedicated \$5,000 to the creation of a horse trail between Gherang and Forrest.

The Sea to Tree Long Distance Horse Trail is part of the council's Community Project Development plan that was unanimously carried at the council meeting on September 24.

Cr Margot Smith said she thought the planned horse trail - which will pass through Anglesea, Aireys Inlet and Deans Marsh - was an excellent idea.

"Those that ride horses around our area are probably pretty happy to see something like that."

"Getting people out into the bush, into the

environment is really good for our mental health and wellbeing, and probably good for the horses as well."

Cr Heather Wellington noted that while only a portion of the community frequently rode horses, it was a relatively large and diverse portion.

"There's a lot of people in our community who do enjoy horses, from children through to much older people."

The money for the project will come from the council's accumulated unallocated cash reserve.

The Community Project Development plan also supported the Anglesea and District RSL's War Memorial Proposal.

The Anglesea and District RSL will fully fund the \$87,100 project.

6.1 Quarterly Report - Community Project Development - September 2019

CPP49	Sea to Tree Long Distance Horse Trail Proposal – FEASIBLE
Proposal Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish a long distance recreational horse riding trail across the Surf Coast Hinterland from Gherang to Forrest (via Anglesea, Aireys Inlet and Deans Marsh).
Background Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very positive and proactive community groups who have initiated land managers coming together to discuss this proposal. Local and district horse trail riders are keen to promote what is currently an informal trail riding experience and to share it with others (horse riders and other potential trail users). Key usage demographic for long distance horse trails are women (source from Australian Trail Horse Riders Association 2018 membership figures which show 75% women, 47% over 51 years, 81% over 31 years). Riders have multiple insurances via riding clubs and horse / trail riding associations. Council strategic justification for this trail includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy (adopted May 2019) – supports Objectives 4.1 (Encourage the development of tourism products in the hinterland which provide low-impact outdoor recreation activities, such as fishing, cycling, kayaking, and dedicated off -road cycling e.g. mountain-bike riding and cycle cross and horse trails) and Objective 4.3. (Develop tourist trails with a product or experience focus to enhance the visitor journey and connect inland destinations with the Great Ocean Road and key access routes) Council Plan (2017-2021) – supports objectives under Community Wellbeing, Balancing Growth and Vibrant Economy Growing Adventure Tourism in Barwon South West Region (2016) - supports idea for creating unique and memorable visitor experiences Strategic Master Plan Great Ocean Road Region Visitor Economy (2015-25) – supports Action 27 Parks Victoria have identified proposal alignment to an outstanding action in 2009 Management Plan for the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park (Caring for Country - The Otways and You). Opinion of horse <u>trail</u> riders is that they are a 'forgotten group' potentially due to being predominantly self-supporting and have rarely sought funding support in the past.
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This proposal has been submitted by the Moriac Community Network (129 member families) and is supported by the Forrest Horse Riding Club and Gherang and Wensleydale Social Riders. Letters of support have been received from the above organisations as well as the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association and Whinbury Hill Equestrian Centre (Paraparap). Proposal liaison has occurred with other land managers (Parks Victoria, DELWP, Midway Plantations and Colac Otway) at 2 project meetings hosted by Parks Victoria (Colac Office). There is shared service manager interest from Business and Tourism Unit and Recreation and Open Space Planning. Potential to liaise further with horse riding clubs in the region and via Australian Trail Horse Riders Association who may be able to survey their member database.
What we know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed trail route has great potential as it follows existing safe trails (mainly on seasonally closed tracks which will limit all year round accessibility) and quiet country roads showcasing the Anglesea heathlands and the forest areas of the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park.

6.1 Quarterly Report - Community Project Development - September 2019

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main costs associated with formalising the trail will be way-finding signage, other supporting infrastructure (e.g. hitching posts, seats etc) as well as trail branding and promotion. • The trail links horse hubs, communities and also places of interest along the way. • The proposed 115 to 125 km trail passes through public land managed by Parks Victoria, DELWP, Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire as well as through land owned by Midway Plantations PL (an 8km section near Deans Marsh). • In principle land owner / manager support has been provided from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Midway Plantations P/L (will permit horse riders upon application only through Midway Plantation land / horse riders without permission would be required to arrange transport around Midway via an alternative route along the Deans Marsh-Lorne Road / other trail users would take the alternative route) ◦ Parks Victoria (currently seeking organisational approval to be project lead) ◦ DELWP (including free bush camping sites) ◦ Surf Coast Shire (to be confirmed at its 24 September 2019 Council meeting) ◦ Colac Otway Shire (to be confirmed) • A Terms of Reference for a Sea to Tree Trail Working Group will detail land owner / manager responsibilities. • Proposed as a horse focused trail (promotion and product) but also can be multi-use (for other non-motorised activities like cycling, walking, and running). • The trail celebrates and preserves the heritage of horse trail riding, can also encourage mutual respect / awareness of riders in a shared trail environment and lead to skill development of riders getting used to shared usage and road usage. South Australia's "we share the trail" concept could be carried over to this trail. • The trail can be ridden in single day sections or as a multi-day ride experience in either direction. It is a flexible trail product that can be supported by a range of accommodation options including free camping sites along the route. • Riders choosing to do the full 5 day experience are likely to cover 22-30km per day (with average speed on a horse 6km/hr) – dependent upon varying levels of experience and fitness of both rider and horse. • The trail proposal seeks the formalisation of the trail route using well recognisable route markers to guide self-reliant riders (that are also advised to have a support crew for horse/rider welfare). • A marked and mapped trail will guide and educate both locals and visitors about the trail route, suggested rest and overnight stop sites and also significant features of the area to enjoy and respect. • Proposed project plan involves a 2 stage process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Stage 1 - seek seed funding for a trail audit along the entire length of the proposed trail (doing the 'ground truthing') that determines what is needed that is not there now. This audit could then be used to prepare an implementation plan and business case for the funding of a fully scoped product (Stage 2). ◦ Stage 2 - would cover sign design (look and feel of each type of sign trail branding and logo), promotion / marketing plan and costs, trail implementation (sign and other infrastructure production and installation)
Potential funding partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local funding sources and regional / state grant programs are unlikely to contribute to the planning stages of the project but would be targeted for

6.1 Quarterly Report - Community Project Development - September 2019

	funding for infrastructure / establishment phase. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning phase potentially to be jointly funded via land managers.
Officer Summary / Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for a 2019/20 contribution (up to \$5,000) to a joint land manager funded Stage 1 project to engage a contractor to audit the trail route to define/detail the opportunity and enable development of a trail establishment business case. Opportunity for a contribution (as funding leverage) to a Stage 2 trail establishment and branding project to be referred to a future budget process.

Reviewing of the Community Project Proposal Master List (refer attached D19/92349)

The Community Project Proposal Master List currently includes 9 outstanding project proposals.

At the end of each quarter and following the Council Meeting resolution, each project proposal submitter is provided with a status update.

Proposals that are yet to progress into the investigation stage are reviewed at this time and submitters are invited to provide an update about their proposal. Officers provide advice to submitters as to how their proposal can be strengthened or alternatively a proposal may be withdrawn if it is no longer relevant or required.

New community project proposals received

59 new project proposals (average 6 per quarter) have been registered via Council's on-line registration process since February 2017. As each new project proposal is submitted on-line, it is assessed by the Community Project Development Officer together with relevant Council Service Managers. The Community Project Proposal Assessment Matrix determines where the proposal sits in priority order within the Master List.

Three new community project proposals were registered during the last quarter (between 14 May and 20 August 2019). One of these new proposals was accepted for inclusion in the Community Project Proposal Master List, one proposal was declined and one proposal was referred to Recreation and Open Space Planning as the relevant service manager.

Prioritised community project proposals to be recommended for further investigation (during the October to December 2019 quarter)

The Community Project Proposal Master List currently includes 9 outstanding project proposals presented in a prioritised order of highest to lowest when assessed against a priority assessment matrix.

Two of the highest ranked proposals from the Master List have been recommended to proceed to the detailed investigation stage (October to December 2019 quarter) including:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Anglesea Community Precinct Signage Upgrade | (score 54 / MEDIUM) |
| 2. BMX Track for Ocean Acres Reserve | (score 54 / MEDIUM) |

Each of these proposals has scored a MEDIUM rating (50-59 out of 100). There are currently no proposals in the Master List with a HIGH rating (60 or above).

Recommendations and progress relating to these projects will be presented to Council in December 2019 or earlier if investigations are complete.

Sea to Tree Long Distance Horse Riding Trail:

Brief for Audit and Trail-Ready Recommendations

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to audit the proposed Sea to Tree Horse Riding Trail route, identifying what is required to formalise the trail and to provide recommendations to improve the trail experience for all trail users.

Background

The proposed Sea to Tree Long Distance Horse Trail seeks to formalise and establish a long distance recreational horse riding trail across the Surf Coast and Otway Hinterland from Gherang to Forrest (via Anglesea, Aireys Inlet, Deans Marsh and Barwon Downs).

Please refer to a map of the proposed trail route provided in Appendix 1?

The proposed 115 to 125 km (Check) trail passes through public land managed by Parks Victoria, DELWP, Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire as well as through land owned by Midway Plantations PL (an 8km section near Deans Marsh).

The trail links horse hubs, communities and also places of interest along the way. The proposed trail route follows existing roads and tracks open to horse riding (mainly on seasonally closed tracks, open 1 Nov to Early June which will limit all year round accessibility) and quiet country roads showcasing the Anglesea heathlands and the forest areas of the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park.

Local and district horse trail riders are keen to promote the long-distance trail riding experience to other horse riders. The trail is proposed to be horse focused (promotion and product) but will be able to be shared with other trail users (walkers, runners and mountain bike riders).

The proposed trail celebrates and preserves the heritage of horse trail riding but it can also encourage mutual respect / awareness of riders in a shared trail environment and lead to skill development of riders getting used to shared usage and road usage. South Australia's "we share the trail" concept could be carried over to this trail.

The trail could be ridden in single day sections or as a multi-day ride experience in either direction. It is a flexible trail product that can be supported by a range of accommodation options including free camping sites along the route.

Horse riders choosing to do the full 5 day experience are likely to cover 22-30km per day (with average speed on a horse 6km/hr) – dependent upon varying levels of experience and fitness of both rider and horse.

The trail proposal seeks the formalisation of the trail route by using well recognisable route markers to guide (at decision points) self-reliant riders (that are also advised to have a support crew for horse/rider welfare). A marked and mapped trail will guide and educate both locals and visitors about the trail route, suggested rest and overnight stop sites and also significant features of the area to enjoy and respect. Other trail infrastructure may be recommended to support the trail use.

Key proposal stakeholders representing community and horse rider interests include:

- Moriac Community Network (129 member families)
- Forrest Horse Riding Club
- Gherang and Wensleydale Social Riders
- Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA)

Other horse rider stakeholder interest includes:

- **Commercial operators and accommodation** (eg. Whinbury Hill Equestrian Centre (Paraparap)
- Other horse riding clubs in the region

Naming places to stay along the route is possible? On and off trail accommodation options. Without naming down the commercial operators involved

Land owner / manager support for this proposal has been provided from:

- Parks Victoria
- DELWP **(to be confirmed)**
- Surf Coast Shire
- Colac Otway Shire **(to be confirmed)**
- **Midway Plantation**
- **Barwon Water**
- **VicRoads**

Key usage demographic for long distance horse trails are women (source from Australian Trail Horse Riders Association 2018 membership figures which show 75% women, 47% over 51 years, 81% over 31 years).

Strategic justification for this trail includes:

- Parks Victoria have identified proposal alignment to an outstanding action in 2009 Management Plan for the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park (Caring for Country - The Otways and You). *"...an opportunity exists to investigate the provision and promotion of a long distance horse riding route that links existing horse riding hubs and provides the opportunity for multi-day horse riding experiences. Partnerships with horse friendly off-park accommodation providers could also be explored"* (Page 39)
- Surf Coast Shire Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy (adopted May 2019) – supports Objectives 4.1 (*Encourage the development of tourism products in the hinterland which provide low-impact outdoor recreation activities, such as fishing, cycling, kayaking, and dedicated off-road cycling e.g. mountain-bike riding and cycle cross and horse trails*) and Objective 4.3. (*Develop tourist trails with a product or experience focus to enhance the visitor journey and connect inland destinations with the Great Ocean Road and key access routes*)
- Growing Adventure Tourism in Barwon South West Region (2016) - supports idea for creating unique and memorable visitor experiences
- Strategic Master Plan Great Ocean Road Region Visitor Economy (2015-25) – supports Action 27 *Using the framework established in the Growing Adventure tourism in the Barwon South West region extend product considerations to include a broader range of outdoor active experiences which add value to existing nature based experiences and encourage visitors to extend their length of stay and immerse themselves in the region.*

Reference <https://www.greatoceanroadtourism.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Masterplan-151022-ONLINE-version.pdf>

- **Data and detail on riders via ATHRA to be added**
- **Potential for additional tourism data via Simon Loone**

Why is this audit needed?

- A detailed trail audit along the entire length of the proposed trail (doing the 'ground truthing') will determine what is needed that is not there now.
- This audit will then be used to prepare an implementation plan and business case to seek funding for the establishment and promotion of a fully scoped product.

The Audit & Trail-Ready Recommendations

The project requires a suitably qualified and experienced contractor with a background in adventure trail assessment (experience with horse trails is ideal).

Voluntary (TBC) support will be provided by local riders who can provide on the ground advice being aware of requirements for horses and riders, local conditions, issues and opportunities. ATHRA committee and members have also offered **voluntary (TBC)** project support and will bring great experience to the project having been involved in the establishment of state and national riding trails.

The success of the project will require successful coordination of volunteers who have offered support to provide on-ground advice and experience in horse trail riding. This co-ordination will also require setting up of an information gathering template capturing trail detail as the audit progresses through the proposed trail route (with a schedule of trail route section assessments communicated with volunteers and land managers) and collating the information into a summary report.

The audit will be guided by relevant reference documents on best-practice horse and adventure trails including:

- International standard for horse trails
- Barwon South West Adventure Trails: Guidelines for trail planning, design and management
- South Australia Horse Trail Infrastructure Guidelines For peri-urban precincts in Australia
- Other relevant reference documents – **Parks Vic strategy?**
- **Other documents to be advised**

The key elements of the Audit and Trail Ready Recommendations include:

- Route assessment (both directions)
- Photo audit of key sites (i.e. **sign locations, stopping points, features, risks, etc**)
- **Risk Identification**
- **Major road crossings**
- Identify & recommendation of Signage Requirements
- Identify & recommendation of Infrastructure Requirements
- Consents & approvals
- Quantity survey to allow project team to develop a cost plan and implementation budget

Further details are provided below:

1. Route assessment (both directions)

- a. Access to each trail head and rest point
- b. Sections for half / full day ride
- c. The ride experience – what type of riding, what to see, key features/highlights
- d. Overall distance and distance to key points
- e. Alternative route around Midway Plantation for Walkers & MTB Riders
- f. Identify **and develop** a Log of Risks e.g. Fire, Fungus, Trucks, No Water, **where the trail traverses roads, major road crossings** etc
- g. Level of difficulty / terrain – as it relates to horse trail standards

2. Photo audit of key sites

- a. Include GPS capture for each photo (GPS camera is available for loan from SCS?)
- b. Key decision points along Trail for way-finding signage
- c. Camp grounds
- d. Viewpoints
- e. Route & features
- f. Intersection of nearest road to camp grounds/trail heads (road condition & signage)

Identify accommodation options and capacity

3. Identify & recommendation of Signage Requirements

- a. Sign hierarchy
- b. Trail head signage
- c. Directional / way finding
- d. Road signage (direction to trail heads)
- e. Interpretative sign points for areas of interest
- f. Safety/hazard
- (note - warning signage alerting motorists of trail users crossing or in the area is an opportunity to be promoting the trail name / brand)
- g. Directions to off-trail accommodation or rest points
- h. (note: excludes sign design & fabrication)

4. Identify & recommendation of provision/upgrade to Infrastructure Requirements

(Relevant to horse and adventure trail Standards)

But note that there would be a recommendation that riders doing multi day rides must have a support crew – needs to be a level of self sufficiency

Refer BNT bush etiquette – do not reinvent the wheel – Claire can provide some info here

a. Horse Specific Needs

- i. Access to water
- ii. Hose/wash down
- iii. Hitching Rails (next priority if don't have capacity to provide a holding yard)
- iv. Mounting blocks (at trailheads)
- v. Holding Yards (handy for overnight stays or at trail heads. If riders have a horse float can tie to the float. May not be needed if have hitching rails. Many groups use a temporary nightlines or electric fencing)
- vi. Support vehicle access (road condition + parking capacity est.)
- vii. Parking for floats
- viii. Gated area for floats to drop off horses

b. All user needs

- i. Drinking water
- ii. Toilets (existing along trail or nearby off-trail sites where toilets can be accessed)
- iii. Seats/tables
- iv. Shelter (with water tanks?)
- v. Foot/Tyre/hoof wash
- vi. Rubbish

5. Identify consents & approvals

- a. Through discussion with individual land managers considering but not limited to:
 - i. Cultural Heritage (re installing signage and other infrastructure) – the trail crosses borders and maybe Dave Roberts can communicate the concept)
 - ii. Native Vegetation
 - iii. Crown Land consent
 - iv. Fire?
 - v. Etc

6. Cost Plan / Quantity survey (need the right name for this

- a. Need detail on number and type of e.g. signage and infrastructure requirements
- b. Cost Plan / Quantity survey to allow project team to develop a cost plan and implementation budget

- c. Can include estimates based on consultant' level of experience/knowledge/expertise

The Audit & Trail-Ready Recommendations

The expected output for this project is a pdf report summarising recommendations with supporting documentation and photos relevant to each area of the audit to be provided to the project team.

The report will contain recommendations to bring each area of the audit to a suitable horse trail standard ready for public promotion and experience.

The audit will provide sufficient detail for the project team to properly cost the implementation of any recommendations.

Timing

For Working Group info (and not included in Brief)

Pre audit (to be completed by December 2019):

- *finalise brief*
- *confirm resourcing (in-kind and cash)*
- *discuss project with potential contractor*
- *appointment*

Audit (needs to be completed February to June 2020? (note track closure timeline when access will be an issue))

Budget

Total \$

For Working Group info (and not included in Brief)

- *Surf Coast \$5k*
- *Parks Victoria – in kind x hours equivalent to \$x*
- *Colac Otway Shire - TBC*
- *DELWP – commitment to fund supporting infrastructure and implementation*
- *Midway Plantation TBC*

Project Team

The project team includes:

- Multi- agency land managers:
 - Parks Victoria (lead agency)
 - Surf Coast Shire Council
 - Colac Otway Shire Council
 - DELWP
- Private land owner - Midway Plantation
- Community representatives *to be advised (from Moriac Community Network?)*

Consultation with Subject Matter Experts

There are a number of local horse riders and groups with considerable knowledge of the area and requirements for horse riding trails.

- Forrest Horse Riding Club
- Gherang and Wensleydale Social Riders
- Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA)

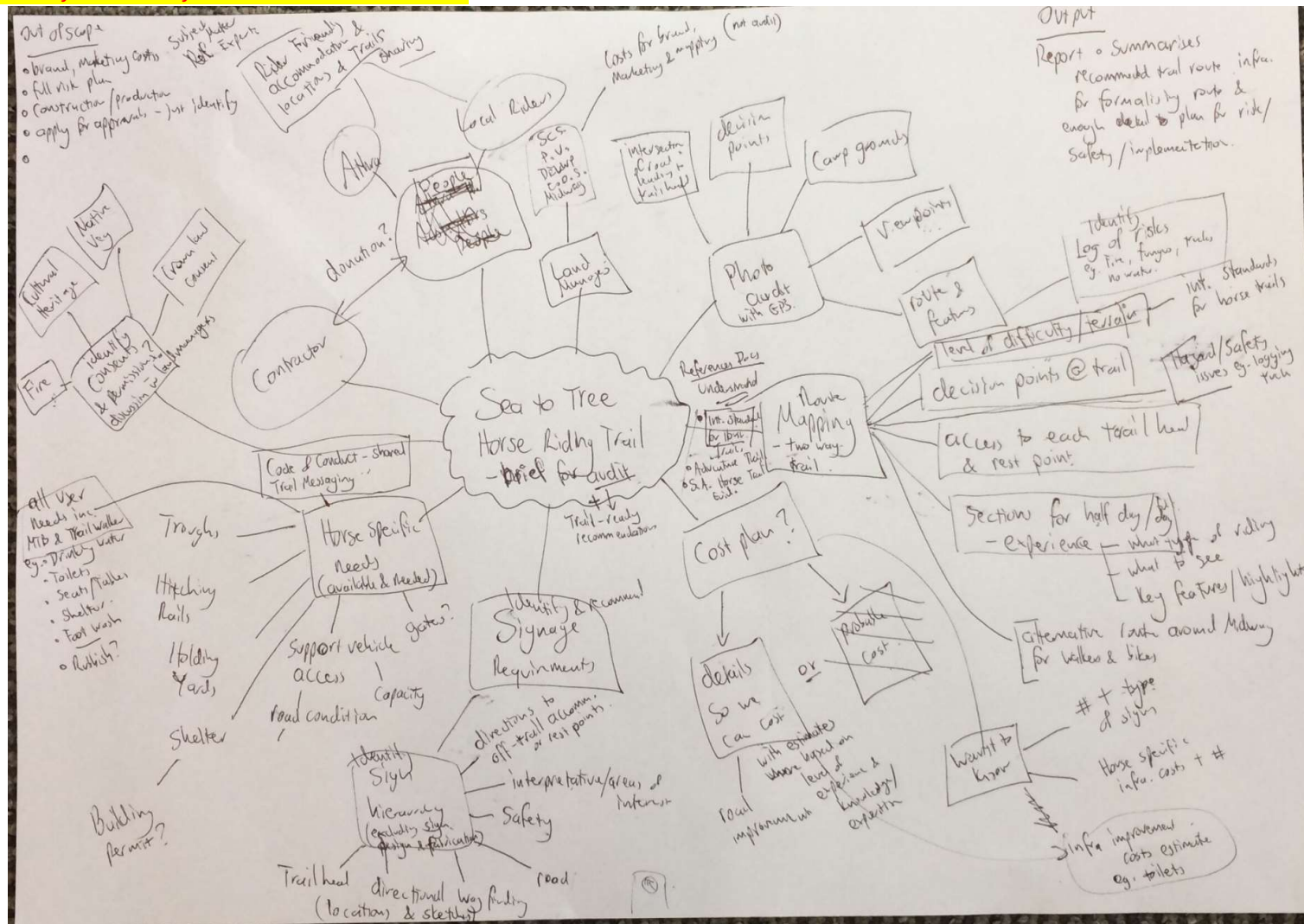
- Local land owners?

Introductions will be made with the successful consultant and the subject matter experts. The consultation could range from fact checking and review to assistance with the audit components under direction of the consultant (recommended budget for donation to clubs if they are engaged for assistance)

Out of Scope

- Development of a trail brand, marketing costs
- A full risk management plan – identification of risks only
- Construction / production
- Applying for approvals / consents
- Mapping a new trail route – the trail route exists and has largely been identified and agreed on
- Recommending a significant level of new infrastructure eg. toilets

The working document below is for initial land manager / stakeholder reference only and would not appear in the brief. It is a capture of Simon Loone and Nicky Angus discussion for what we felt the audit should consider.



Submission: Colac Otway Shire Draft Budget 2020/2021

Submission by Lyn Russell

I wish to express my responses to the Draft Colac Otway Shire Budget 2020/2021 and present the reasons for my responses as well as some recommendations for consideration.

The Colac Otway Shire has a Strategic Vision which states “Towards a prosperous future” The Councillors of Colac Otway Shire commit **to plan for growth in business and employment** for our towns and settlements; the delivery of **high quality services** that meet community needs and **demonstrate value for money**; and to be leaders and work together as a team with community and organisation to achieve our goals for the Shire. [Reference 1](#)

Submission Response

- 1) **The erosion of equal and responsible distribution of the rate burden across the Shire by not recognising that the rate in the dollar levied on Commercial/ Industry for Colac and the Balance of Shire is unfair and requires the Commercial / Industries to supplement the Rural Farm sector**

FACTS

- a) The rate in the dollar levied for Rural Farm is proposed **.002924** compared to Commercial / Industry – Colac **.006432** and Balance of Shire **.005457** i.e. Commercial / Industry rates are **over double** the rate for Colac and **almost double** for the Balance of the Shire [Reference 2](#)
- b) There are **2836** Rural Farms in Colac Otway Shire compared to **989** Commercial / Industries i.e. there are a **3rd less Commercial/Industries** in Colac Otway Shire than Rural Farms [Reference 2](#)
- c) Rural Farms have a value of **\$1,960,955,000** compared to Commercial / Industry who have a value of **\$524,620,000** i.e. per business **37.37% less** in value than per Rural Farms [Reference 2](#)
- d) In the last census, in the Colac Otway Shire, Agriculture together with Forestry and Fishing employed **3,407** but when you remove the technicians, trade workers, sales workers and others these 3 occupations have **only 678** employed labourers in those 3 industries compared to Commercial and Industry who employ **5,159** [Reference 4](#)
- e) Both Rural Farms and Commercial/ Industries **CAN** claim Shire rates as a tax deduction [Reference 5](#)
- f) Rural Farms will pay **\$5,732,852** in proposed rates compared to Commercial / Industries paying **\$3,192,293** but that equates to average Rural Farm rate bill (based on number of rate assessments) of **\$2,021:46** per farm, while Commercial/ industries will pay an average bill of **\$4,708:39 per business** [Reference 2](#)
- g) The value of Rural Farms mean that when a farm is sold the received monies are in the millions of dollars compared to Commercial / Industrial properties which would sell for hundreds of thousands and with “the downturn in retail the future is likely to see further reduction in Commercial / Industrial property values but agricultural land is likely to continue to increase in value.” [Reference 8](#)

- h) While there is a number of Rural Farms that are **owed by large companies/investment groups** and a number of Commercial and Industries owed by **large multinational companies** these are NOT distinguished from local owned /operated Rural Farms or Commercial /Industries which is another unequal abnormally in the rating burden
- i) Golden Plains Council has their Farming category divided into 5 different land use types to reflect the type of farming each division has a different variance **Reference: 3**

Recommendation:

That the Colac Otway Shire introduce another "Farm rate" similar to Holiday Rental being separate to Residential i.e. Rural Farm locally owned and Rural Farm owned by companies/ investment groups with the later paying a higher percentage of rates to supplement the Rural Farm rate rather than the Commercial/ Industry sector of our community or the residents thus making rates more equal and fair.

- 2 "Reserve balance is forecast to decrease by \$8k to \$12.7m i.e. Cash will only exceed reserves by approximately \$753k". The reduction in reserves results in the decline in Council's financial sustainability over the four year period and will place an unacceptable impose on future generations and Councillors. Rate rises in line with the rate cap may ensure that Council costs do not continue to outstrip increased revenue. **Reference 1**

FACTS

- a) The Victorian Auditor General Office has noted that 2 financial indicators are now rated a **moderate risk** for the 2018/2019 year. So what is the next report going to rate the Colac Otway Shire's financial management as? **Reference 1**
- b) By reducing the Reserves, Councillors put the Council in an unenviable position that if another financial shock such as pandemic or a Defined Benefits call happens again, then our children and grandchildren will have to pay for the short sightedness and making popular decisions rather than what they were elected to do and Council may be forced to borrow money, increasing debt and forcing higher future rate rises
- c) The current Colac Otway Shire Strategic Resource Plan indicates that Council's financial **sustainability will be in decline** with a continual reduction in cash reserves **Reference 6**
- d) Asset renewal as a percentage of depreciation continues **to exceed** depreciation expenditure. **Reference 6**

Recommendation:

That the Councillors vote to impose the full 2% rate rise and use the extra funds to reduce the Infrastructure Gap which will impose a unacceptable burden on future generations to maintain assets such as halls, roads, footpaths and Councillors elect NOT to fund new assets but to care of present assets, unless new assets are fully funded by other sources such as State or Federal Governments.

FACT - By recommending a rate increase of the full 2%, I am aware of the push by some for a zero rate rise but I would like to remind that a person publicly pushing for zero rate rise, was a Councillor himself with the Shire of Colac 1983- 1994 and after amalgamation with

the Colac Otway Shire 1996-1999 and NOT ONCE in those 14 years did he vote for or move to have zero rate rises. [Reference 9](#)

FACT - Also a present Councillor pushing for zero rate rise holds the unenviable title of voting for the highest rate rise in the history of Colac Otway Shire and left the incoming Councillors with a UNFUNDED \$1.3MILLION DEBT (Library) [Reference 9](#)

3 Staff costs and staffing levels is an issue identified by some Councillors and community as an issue

FACTS

a) Annual savings identified to 31 March 2020 **was \$450,000** and **staff levels reduced by 5.73 FTE** [Reference 1](#)

b) **Staff turnover is at an historical high** as this is an added cost to the organisation as there is a cost to orientate new/ replacement staff members and train them to their new position

c) Staff who work in an environment of mistrust, interrogation, and uncertainty leads to **low staff morale** which in turn leads to increased staff turnover, depression and increased sick level and resignation. [Reference 7](#)

Recommendation:

That Councillors support the staff and make known to the community, the reduction in staff numbers and staff savings.

That Councillors as per the Councillor Code of Conduct, DO NOT interrogate or treat staff in any other manner than how they would like to be treated

That Council make known to the community the actual cost of fully funded staff required to deliver and administer additional Home Care Packages

4 Future savings

FACTS

a) To maintain current services at current levels there will be increased cost because of workplace EBA, State and Federal regulation and legislation [Reference 1](#)

b) With Australia now in a recession there will be a reduction in State and Federal grants available to local government in the future

c) Depreciation expense will increase each year [Reference 1](#)

d) Without substantial financial input the Infrastructure Gap will widen so that Council assets cannot be maintained at safe and ideal levels making a unsustainable burden for future ratepayers

Recommendation:

That Councillors should research and make informed decisions about services and service levels

That Councillors indicate where services and service levels should be cut and inform the community in the interest of transparency and honesty

That Councillors not support new projects / assets unless FULLY funded

5. How can the community make informed and accurate submissions when the Colac Otway Shire Draft Budget 2020 as published is incomplete and how can the Councillors legally vote for the budget when in the section missing is “TO BE INSERTED FOLLOWING BUDGET ADOPTION”

Reference 1

References:

1. Colac Otway Shire Council Plan Quarterly Performance Report May 2020
2. Colac Otway Shire Draft Budget 2020
3. Golden Plains Council Draft Budget 2020
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics – 2016 Census
5. Australian Taxation Office
6. Current Colac Otway Shire Strategic Resource Plan
7. Mental Health – Worksafe Victoria
8. The Real Estate Institute of Victoria
9. Historical Colac Herald Reports,
1984,1985,1986,1987,1988,1989,1990,1991,1992,1993,1994,1995,1997,1998,1999

To Colac Otway Council

inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Chief Executive

Colac Otway Shire, PO Box 283, Colac VIC 3250

Budget Submission to the 20-21 Colac Otway Shire Draft Budget:

18/10/17

Dear Sir

I am concerned that there is no reference in the Draft Budget to the commitments made by Council and State Government to an Early Years Hub in Apollo Bay.

I would like to highlight the importance of an Early Years Hub in Apollo Bay and ask that Council include funding for it's development, including for a Kindergarten service, Long Day Care service, Maternal Child Health service and administration and playground facilities. The hub has been planned for location on the Apollo Bay P-12 school grounds following extensive community consultations, of which I was a part of as a member of the Preschool Committee of Management. Council staff were involved at every stage of this consultation with community and the Apollo Bay Secondary School as well as Great Ocean Road Health.

In December 2019, the Colac Otway Shire (COS) issued a press release stating that the State Government was funding a new kindergarten in Apollo Bay with 66 licensed places, along with administrative facilities and outdoor play spaces.

The press release included that:

"Council and the community have been working hard to advocate for this project and we are very pleased to receive this commitment from the State Government which will provide a great facility to families and children in the Apollo Bay region," he said.

"With this commitment from the State Government, Council will continue to investigate opportunities to broaden the scope of the facility as an Integrated Early Years Hub that could provide space for Maternal and Child Health services, Long Day Care and consulting rooms for visiting specialists alongside the kindergarten. We've had positive discussions with the Victorian School Building Authority about this concept.

"Council will also consider the opportunity to allocate the sale funds of the existing kinder to put toward the project.

"The establishment of an Early Years Hub will integrate with the Apollo Bay school and consolidate early years' services all in one location thereby providing the opportunity to maximise community participation and access to these services.

"The current playgroup facilities are in demand and we anticipate this need will continue to rise however, there is currently a lack of existing infrastructure and services for pre-school aged children, which this project aims to address.

"Council conducted extensive engagement to understand the needs of the community and what you believed was needed for pre-school aged children in Apollo Bay. We thank all groups

and community members involved for their work and contribution to the proposal,” Cr Schram said.

“Council is very proud to be involved in helping support the development, learning and well-being of children and families in our community.”

This press release followed a State Government press release on the 17th December 2019 by the Parliamentary Secretary for Schools, Tim Richardson. This press release included:

“Families living in Apollo Bay will be able to ditch the dreaded ‘double drop-off’ and access both kindergarten and school on the same site, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Parliamentary Secretary for Schools Tim Richardson today visited Apollo Bay P-12 College to announce a new kindergarten will be built on site at the school.

The Labor Government will be funding a two-room kindergarten, which will offer 66 licensed places, administrative facilities and outdoor play spaces.

The new kindergarten, which will be delivered in partnership with Colac-Otway Shire Council, is set to open in 2022.”

The State Government funding is for a Kindergarten, administration space and outdoor play area. The gap in this is linking the Long Day Care service, which currently has only a temporary lease with Great Ocean Road Health. It is also not clear whether the Maternal Child Health will be included.

The community consultations for the Early Years Hub, conducted in March 2019 by Wendy Hastrich for COS, found that the preferred model would be all inclusive. She provided a number of models that included architect drawings which incorporated Kindergarten, toilets, kitchen, Child-care (Long Day Care), consulting space, MCH and storage. The community consultations were in favour of the Preschool relocation; however, the preferred model was overwhelmingly for a ‘hub’.

As you know, the Apollo Bay Preschool runs every day of the week with both Kinder groups (which will also now include 3 year old Kindergarten), as well as a Rostered Playgroup. The Long Day Care also operates daily, and the Apollo Bay Preschool work in partnership, as many of the children attend both services. There are no other providers of preschool programs or childcare in the town and Apollo Bay is geographically isolated.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Donovan

Apollo Bay 3233



Apollo Bay Preschool Inc.

To Colac Otway Shire Councillors,

We would like to ask for your support in the 20-21 Budget with the building of an Early Years Hub in Apollo Bay as a part of the State Government funded Kindergarten build planned at the Apollo Bay School to be completed by the end of 2022.

The consultation process with your architect Wendy Hastrich in 2019 allowed us all to clarify ideas around how valuable combining resources for these vital early years services in Apollo Bay will be. We believe a purpose-built, sustainable building will be an cost-efficient effective use of community and council resources. We are grateful that the council has thrown their support behind us in procuring this new planned space and feel it is equally important that the build includes other early Childhood services whom we have existing strong partnerships with; Child Care Services, Maternal and Child Health and Playgroups who are currently operating in venues not fit for purpose.

We hope Council will consider investing in providing the permanent Infrastructure for an Early Years Hub which will support all families in our community particularly those vulnerable people who will be provided with opportunities in holistic support and wellbeing. Putting the energy and resources in now at this early stage could save time and money in the future. All our early years services are integral to local families and Apollo Bay residents will be put at a disadvantage if we are unable to sustain the strong linkages and partnerships that currently exist.

The convenience for all families in our community of having one central point of contact for Kindergarten, Maternal & Child Health, Long Day Care, School, Playgroups and After school care does not escape us. The Kindergarten in Apollo Bay currently employs 2 part time educators with Degree and Diploma Qualifications, an Administration Manager to assist the Community run committee consisting of 8 parents from both groups and a cleaner. We offer a Kindergarten Program 15 hours a week and an Activity Group for 3 year Olds 3 hours a week. This 3 year old program will be expanding in 2021 as we look to extend the hours and run a DET funded program with a qualified Early Childhood Educator. We believe working collaboratively in an early years hub will value add allowing greater flexibility in both hours and services available to families.

We hope you will consider favourably the need to have this hub established from the outset of the build with a design which is specific to the needs of our growing community and allows planning for good governance into the future

Kind regards,

Committee of Management and Staff of Apollo Bay Preschool



RICHARD RIORDAN MP
MEMBER FOR POLWARTH

2 March 2020

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Apollo Bay Early Years Hub

As the local Member for Polwarth, I am writing to express my full support for the creation of an Early Years Hub to be integrated into the new Kindergarten design at the Apollo Bay School.

Having a central point of service that gives the community access to multiple points of contact for support, education and activities allows those providing the programs to deliver the most cost and time efficient services. It also makes great economic sense to consider all these requirements during the planning stage to allow for the optimal design which will provide the community with the specific infrastructure that gives the best outcome for both the families accessing and the organisations providing, the services.

The people of Apollo Bay deserve to have a venue that is fit for purpose and allows for the efficient collaboration of all childhood and family services. This proposal for a cost efficient, sustainable building that will create a vital centralised hub of childhood and parental support, will be the best use of resources and provide a vital facility for the community.

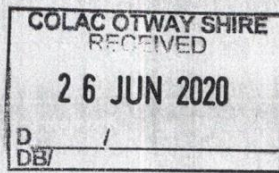
I look forward to hearing of the success of this proposal.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Riordan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Riordan MP
Member for Polwarth

115a Bromfield Street, Colac VIC 3250
Ph: (03) 5231 5046
Em: richard.riordan@parliament.vic.gov.au



R Shoebridge

[Redacted]
Gellibrand, 3239

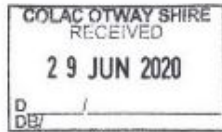
A SUBMISSION ON THE 2020-21 COLAC OTWAY DRAFT BUDGET

The Colac Otway Shire should not have any increase in Rates for its Residents & Businesses for the coming year. Since the amalgamation of the City of Colac and the Shires of Colac and Otway, Rate increases were well above the inflation rate almost every year. Increases were mainly due to more than doubling the number of Council Office Staff over this period and virtually no increase in the population of the Shire of Colac Otway. Now almost all the Rates go to paying wages, not services. At the time of amalgamation Colac Otway Shire Rates were one of the lowest in Rural Victoria reflecting the low socioeconomic position of its population. Consecutive Council Rate rises have made our Rates one of the highest in the State, in spite of the population remaining poor. The current Council, to its credit, kept rates down to 0.5% this year, finally reigning in costs. That was an excellent start to redress continual rise in wage costs. This beginning should be built on, through the Council choosing not to raise Rates this year, to make Colac Otway a more affordable place to live and work.

The other reason for not raising Rates this year, is due to the effect of Covid 19 Virus. The Timber Industry has its production more than halved with the corresponding layoff of staff, due to the Virus induced downturn in the Building Industry. Tourism is a major income earner for the Shire, particularly south of Colac. International Visitor numbers were well down due to bushfires throughout Eastern and Southern Australia which hampered income for many Tourist Operators during the summer. Shutdown caused by Covid 19 has further reduced or extinguished income, and many Businesses struggle to cover costs. Retrenched Staff has further reduced the amount of money spent in the Shire effecting local shops and service providers. This is not a time for the Shire of Colac Otway to increase rates to add to living and business costs. The best help the Shire could provide to Residents and Ratepayers, is not to raise Rates this coming year. I wish to be heard at a special Committee Meeting held by the Colac Otway Council.

Yours Faithfully R Shoebridge

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R Shoebridge".



S. Arundell

26/6/20

Dear Sir

I would like to make a public verbal submission to the Councilors regarding the rate increase.

Why cause pain to everyone. There would be more productive parking an elimination of contact points in society eg door handles not nots lever action taps etc

Please keep me informed

Yours Simon Arundell

From: "Leigh Barrett"
Sent: 29/06/20 3:52 PM
To: inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au
Subject: Submission for COS Draft Budget 20/21

Submission for COS Draft Budget 2020/21

CEO Peter Brown and his shire corporation's bid for a 1.5% rate rise to cover their salary increase for 226 employees with an average salary of \$90k indicates its lack of awareness of the world around it and their obsession with their own comfort, a lack of productivity and financial discipline. Australia is suffering its greatest financial and social crisis since the Second World War but it is business as usual for the CEO and his shire corporation.

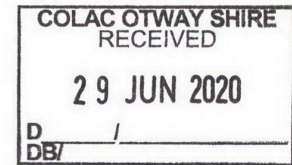
As Councillors you should be setting guidelines (KPI's) from which the CEO operates his corporation. No one in their right mind increases investment in a poor performing organisation so why should you force the community to do so without any plan for improvement. We know that there is no improvement plan because there is no acknowledgement of the mistakes of the past along with any apology. Your civic duty is to vote for a 0.00% increase or even a decrease and insist that a plan be produced and made public for a measurable improvement in productivity and improved relationship with the community who fund it.

The starting point would be a salary cap - 50% of rates on salaries and benefits - 50% of rates on maintenance and capital works. The community would understand this as it has a sense of public justice. There should be a separate department for state and federal grants along with a separate budget - all state and federal programs should stand or fall on their funding including salaries..

Councillors if you vote for this 1.5% rate increase you defy sound reason by supporting a shire corporation that represents a poor investment of community money. Ask yourself the question - are ratepayers getting value for money?

I wish to be heard at the Special Council Meeting for submissions on the Draft Budget 20/21

Leigh Barrett.



To Colac Otway Council,

I am writing in submission to the draft budget document of 20/21.

It's with great disappointment that I note that the council is again planning to increase rates for the year to come. I find it reprehensible that it's even possible to allow this to happen given the following:

1. Colac Otway residents are paying one of the highest residential rates in the state at \$0.0038c in the dollar.
2. Colac main street seems to be losing businesses on a daily basis;
3. Farmers are hit with reduced trade to China and low milk prices;
4. Residents, who are generally doing it tough being a low socio-economic area are especially struggling currently with Colac Otway Shire being one of the hardest hit areas during the Covid Crisis (as already being reported on radio channels).

Everyone is doing it tough – with the exception of Colac Otway Council and its workers.

How is it that the wage increase is proposed to go ahead for the approximate 230 employees at an average wage of \$90K per year? To add insult to injury a number of councils in the state have announced a freeze on both rates and wage increases.

This, when so many people in your council area have lost their jobs? It would certainly seem to me that we are NOT all 'In this together'.

Attached to this submission is a petition outlining the thoughts of community members. I found it telling, if not alarming that so many individuals declined to add a signature due to fear of council retribution in relation to building/council approvals.

I've spoken to a number of people in relation to the proposed rate increase over the last three weeks. What also made a big impression on me was that no one seemed to even know that there was another increase on the way and when they found out it was coupled with a wage increase; they were particularly incensed. I did not speak to a single person that felt the rates should increase. Based on the prior mentioned conversations, it is my strong belief that this petition would have been substantially larger had it not been for a limit on my time and fear of council.

Should councillors go ahead and again vote for this 1.5% rate increase, they show that they are not only out of touch with where the community is at but are supporting a mindset that is self-indulgent.

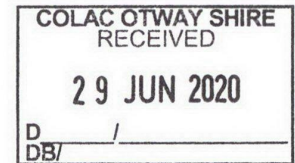
The community at large seems to fear speaking their mind to council - it feels ignored, taken for granted, it's time to be better

Given the above reasons, it's the council's responsibility is to vote for a 0.00% increase, but possibly even a decrease in rates and to freeze any wage increases effective immediately. This will create an opportunity for an improved relationship with the community who fund it.

I request the right to be heard in relation to this matter.

Yolandi McConville
Resident

26/06/2020.



To the Mayor, CEO, and Councillors of Colac Otway Shire.

Submission to Councils 2020/21 draft budget.

At a time when the Colac Otway community is facing very uncertain times, and has already suffered significant loss of employment and economic activity, Colac Otway Shire Council is planning to put its hands deeper into ratepayers pockets with a 1.5% rate increase.

In respect of the economic impact from the pandemic recent data shows that the Otway region is the fourth worst economically affected region in Victoria. Colac Otway ratepayers are not a bottomless pit. Times are tough and the future uncertain, but council proposes to increase the burden on the community. Businesses and households across the region have been forced to seriously rethink how they operate but apparently not the council.

The 20/21 draft budget includes an allowance and superannuation increase for councillors of 2%. For councillors to take an allowance increase at this time is insensitive at best and greed at worst.

Without being critical of individual staff, collectively council staff appear to be a protected species, in secure positions and receiving an automatic salary increase.

If councillors allowances and staff salaries stayed at current levels for 20/21 budget year the savings would be \$404 thousand dollars. The remaining \$26 thousand dollars of the \$430 thousand dollars from the proposed rate rise could be easily trimmed from a \$56 million budget. A 1.5% increase is not necessary in fact a 1.5% decrease is possible.

The draft budget justifies the rate increase on the establishment of a business and community support fund. This so called support fund which takes money from business and community to give it back to business and community is administratively cumbersome and inefficient. The draft budget document provides no detail as to the need for such a fund or how it would be used.

The \$1.7 million dollars provided to Colac Otway Shire by the Federal Government to support community works, as a community support, further removes the need for any increase in rates for 2020/21

Council's spin that the average increase per assessment is \$28 is deceptive, as council is aware the rating system creates an inequitable burden on businesses, particularly rural businesses, and the rate increase on most businesses is greater than \$28.

The proposal contained in the draft budget not to reduce the rural farm rate differential from 75% to 73% for the 20/21 year, which was determined by resolution of council, is a massive breach of council's commitment to rural ratepayers.

The amount of information provided in the draft budget is disappointing, and it limits the opportunity to provide a constructive critique. Whilst most areas of expenditure require more detail two categories are of particular concern.

Under Services.

Councillors and Chief Executive. At a time when constraint would seem appropriate an increase of \$334 000 for the 2020/21 year , does not appear to be constraint .

Under Materials and Services.

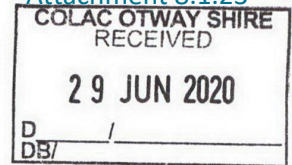
Subscriptions and Memberships . A budget amount of \$1.828 million for the 2020/21 year whilst 2% down on the previous year is a massive amount of community funds, with no indication as to what these organisation do or their accountability

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission to the budget process and I request my right to be heard in support of this submission.

If further information is required my contact is below.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alan R. Billing', written in a cursive style.

Alan Billing.



Submission to Colac Otway Shire Council

29th June 2020 by Arnold Rowntree

Re: Proposed 1.5% Rate Increase

Please don't raise rates at all. I object to a rate raise on two grounds; firstly for ethical and religious reasons, secondly for economic reasons.

1 A RATE RISE IS UNJUST

A quick observation about our culture and history is in order here;

This is a Christian country. Our fathers built churches on every other street corner of this town. They opened every council meeting with prayer, your oath of office is couched in biblical terms, not only the councilors but also the public servants. You swore your oath on a bible. Your council meetings are run according to parliamentary procedure which is itself a Christian invention in both its nature and its detailed format. Nearly all the other institutions in civil society are Christian, in short, the whole social order is Christian.

The main feature of a Christian social order is that the weakest and poorest members of society are protected from the predations of the powerful. Current levels of taxation have ballooned throughout the modern era. For example the graduated income tax began a hundred years ago at less than one percent.

The bible warns you not to oppress the poor, specifically the widow, the orphan and the stranger.

Some of you are thinking that these categories are obsolete, but they aren't. The term widow applies to all single mothers, orphans applies to all neglected children and strangers applies to immigrant workers. All three categories are well represented in Colac. Some of you are thinking these rate rises don't apply to these categories since they don't own property and therefore don't pay rates. That won't fly on judgment day, their landlords immediately pass on all costs to renters.

With the combined federal, state and local taxes, charges, stamp duties, permits, licenses and rates estimated by some to total 60% of the average income, another increase is unjust and immoral especially when considering the most vulnerable members of the community.

2 A RATE RISE IS AN ECONOMIC DISASTER

The productive sector of the economy is business and in particular small business and family businesses. The predominant industry which makes Colac a viable rural town is agriculture. Council rates are a disproportionate burden on small local family businesses and they are all under increased pressure in 2020 due to the Corona virus lockdowns. Many are failing and dying. A rate rise is a transfer of capital from the productive sector to the non-productive sector of the economy representing not only a brake on the growth of the local economy but a serious retardant and an existential threat.

The only way to release small family business from the current pressures is to reduce rates in real terms and not to raise them.

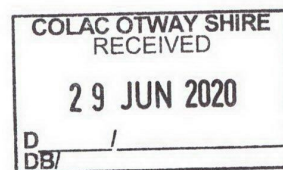
Conclusion:

Councillors, please don't raise the tax.

Councillors, please protect us from all who want to feather their own nests at our expense, especially if they are tenured bureaucrats.

I request to be heard by council at a public meeting.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Arnold Rowntree".



28/06/2020

To the Mayor, CEO, and Councillors of Colac Otway Shire.

Please find attached a submission to the Colac Otway Shire's 2020/21 draft budget.

This submission is endorsed by 175 signatories these are also attached.

If further information is required regarding this submission please contact

Mr Bob Shoebridge

Unfair Council Rate Increase

We, the undersigned wish to make a submission to the Colac Otway Shire draft budget for the period of 20/21.

- ❖ The proposed **rate rise** by council of **\$430,000** will be used to cover a staff wage increase of **\$610,000**.
- ❖ Colac rates were once one of the lowest in the state - today, it's one of the **highest**.
- ❖ The federal government is injecting millions into every Wannon council areas.

☑ **Corangamite shire is debt free and have numerous public projects planned, with no rate increase.**

We request that:

1. The rate for the period 20/21 is set at zero increase;
2. The employment cost to remain unchanged at the 2019/20 level;
3. Council look to find where there is room for further savings in the budget.

We request our right to be heard in support of this submission.

Bob Shoebridge

President Colac Otway Rate Payers & Residents Association

