
9 GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

9.1 ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024

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File No: FN/09/27

Attachments: 1. Attachment 1 - Budget Submissions 2020-2021

SUMMARY

This report presents the 2020-2021 Budget and Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 (SRP) for adoption.

The 2020-2021 Proposed Budget and Draft Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 were endorsed to be placed on public exhibition by Council on 16 March 2020. Public notice was advertised in the local papers and submissions invited.

Due to COVID-19 community information sessions were unable to be held across the Shire, however online avenues were utilised to ensure the community was informed. The submission period ended on 22 April 2020 and a total of 17 submissions were received. Five submitters elected to be heard by Council at a Special Hearings Committee held on Monday 4 May 2020.

A Community Check In process was also undertaken during late 2019 that included a project proposal opportunity and an online budget simulator. This yielded 227 responses that were considered by Council as part of the budget process.

This report recommends that Council, having considered public submissions and other information (including COVID-19 impacts) contained in this report in relation to the 2020-2021 Proposed Budget and Draft Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024, resolve to:

- Adopt the 2020-2021 Budget and the Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 following public notice and inspection in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* (the Regulations); and
- Declare the amount which the Council intends to raise by general rates and charges.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Adopt the Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 as the final Adopted Strategic Resource Plan of Council for the 2021-2024 financial years, (circulated separately and annexed to the Minutes), prepared by Council for the purposes of Sections 126(3) and 127(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

2. Adopt the Budget 2020-2021 as the final Adopted Budget of Council for the 2020-2021 financial year, (circulated separately and annexed to the Minutes), prepared by Council for the purposes of Sections 126(3) and 127(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
3. Makes copies of the 2020-2021 Adopted Budget and Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 available at Council offices, Libraries and on Council's website.
4. Authorise the Acting Chief Executive Officer to give public notice of the decision to adopt the 2020-2021 Annual Budget and Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 and submit copies as required to the Minister for Local Government, in accordance with Section 130 of the Act.
5. Notify in writing the persons who have made a submission regarding the 2020-2021 Budget and/or Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 of Council's decision, in accordance with Section 223 of the Act, which will include a detailed response to the issues raised in the submission.
6. Declare an amount of \$49.489M (or such greater amount as is lawfully levied as a consequence of this resolution) as the amount which Council intends to raise by rates and charges in line with the 2.00% rate increase and 8.6% Garbage charge increase outlined in the 2020-2021 Budget, which is made up of the following:
 - i. General Rates* \$35.437M
 - ii. Garbage Charges* \$7.957M
 - iii. Municipal Charges \$6.095M
 - iv. Total Rates and Charges \$49.489M* including supplementary rates
7. Advises in respect of general rates:
 - a) A general rate be declared in respect of and for the entire duration of the 2020-2021 financial year;
 - b) It further be declared that the general rate be raised by application of differential rates;
 - c) Council declare the differential rates (shown as cents/\$CIV) for the 2020-2021 year as follows:
 - i. General Land: 0.2908
 - ii. Vacant Land: 0.5816
 - iii. Vacant Commercial or Industrial Land: 0.7270
 - iv. Agricultural Land (40ha-100ha): 0.2617
 - v. Agricultural Land (greater than 100ha): 0.2326
 - vi. Subdivisional Land: 0.5816
8. Declares a Municipal Charge of \$283.50 in respect of the 2020-2021 financial year.
9. Declares:
 - a) Garbage charge (full service) of \$440.00
 - b) Garbage charge (extra service) of \$248.00
 - c) Recycling Charge (extra service) of \$192.00
 - d) Pandemic Garbage Charge (Optional service) of \$248.00
10. Authorises the Acting Chief Executive Officer to effect minor administrative and wording changes to the 2020-2021 Annual Budget and Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 documents, which may be required.

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

BACKGROUND

Along with prudent financial management and pursuant to Sections 125 and 126 of the Act, Council is required to annually review the SRP which has been undertaken as part of the budget process.

In addition, and under Section 127 of the Act, Council is required to prepare an annual budget that describes how Council intends to allocate resources to deliver services and invest in key infrastructure.

A draft budget and SRP were endorsed for Public Display at the March Ordinary Council meeting. Following this process revised documents have been prepared for endorsement by Council.

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

Council has an ongoing obligation to appropriately manage its finances in line with the Act by implementing the principles of sound financial management.

The SRP and the 2020-2021 Budget documents were formulated using principles of sound financial management to deliver a responsible financial plan and present a sustainable way forward for the municipality, which is undergoing significant growth and change, including the challenges associated with COVID-19.

Even whilst working through the challenges associated with COVID-19 these documents demonstrate that Council remains focused on maintaining its long-term sustainability and that the Council continues to meet the increasing demand for services and infrastructure whilst operating within constrained revenue parameters.

These documents are the result of collaborative work which commenced last July to ensure all assumptions and historical information could be revised and reviewed in detail ready for assembling in early 2020. Part of this early work included budget sessions held with Councillors and community consultation.

The 2020-2021 Budget sets out Council's Capital Works Program for the 2020-2021 year. The program will deliver \$23.638M of new and \$16.406M of carry forward capital works across various asset categories and will include expenditure on new, renewal, upgrade and expansion projects. Key areas of capital expenditure include buildings, plant and equipment, computers and telecommunications, roads, footpaths and cycleways, bridges, recreation, leisure and community facilities, waste management, parks, open space and streetscapes.

Our Capital Works Program continues to rely heavily on grant funding opportunities and continues to focus on increasing roads and footpath funding where possible as these areas always receive strong support from the community. The overall new program for Roads, Footpaths and Cycleways is set at \$5.59M or 24% of the new program.

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

In formulating the Annual budget and SRP, a combination of confirmed factors and assumptions have been applied. The key assumptions reviewed are related to:

- COVID-19 impacts to services and community support
- Overall increase in rates and charges income including the level of growth and supplementary rates
- The level of borrowings and linkage to projects
- Expected capital revenue linked to capital projects
- Expected movements in income and expenses
- Services provided
- Council's cash holdings
- Overall financial sustainability indicators

The key challenges addressed in the SRP include:

- **COVID-19** – Service restrictions and interruptions have altered future budgets with income reductions expected within User Fees and Charges. Council has also endorsed key areas of support for businesses and community which will see a combination of reduced income and increased costs to support key projects. Council has ensured that the immediate impacts of the challenges represented are covered without reducing Council's cash or adjusted underlying result.
- **Rate Capping** – The 2020-2021 rates are increased to the cap of 2% and the SRP assumption reflects 2.25% for the remaining term of the SRP. This assumption is updated annually.
- **Population growth** – Mitchell Shire comprises both rural and urban areas with continued strong growth, particularly in the South. Council is planning to ensure that infrastructure is provided or renewed for our new and existing communities, as well as the provision of additional and appropriate services to these communities.

Council is addressing the challenges of having enough capacity to plan for and provide the infrastructure and services to these communities within the timeframes and levels expected.

- **Adjusted Underlying Result** – It is important to Council to achieve an adjusted underlying surplus now and into the future. Council has achieved this and plans to continue to operate with an adjusted underlying surplus. This enhances our ability to respond to unexpected events such as COVID-19 and to further divert expenditure to increasing our expenditure on our assets.

Council remains committed to a continual review of assets and services and will continue to work with the Community in setting priorities within a financially sustainable framework. Council continues to strongly advocate to other levels of government for increased funding to support its operational and investment requirements.

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

- **Cash reserves** – Council’s current cash holdings are enough to cover all reserves in addition to day to day business commitments. Council has a number of discretionary reserves which must continue to be held as cash and has determined that it should hold approx. \$12M in cash and investments at a minimum in addition to the value held for trust monies and reserves to ensure funding of all works during periods of high expenditure and low income. The SRP remains focused on maintaining appropriate cash balances. This is extremely important in current times when faced with COVID-19 impacts and the need to be agile in providing for our communities.
- **Investment in Infrastructure** – The capital works budget whilst a substantial program for the size of our shire, is limited and insufficient to meet all capital demands and continues to remain a key focus. The revised SRP forecasts \$99.931M in capital works over the coming four years inclusive of carry forward projects.

External funding continues to play an important role in our ability to increase infrastructure spend. Council remains focused on advocacy and external funding opportunities to increase the expenditure to meet our needs.

- **Borrowing for long term benefit** – Future borrowings are linked to capital projects that provide inter-generational benefits. Borrowings have been identified in the SRP for Waste Expansion and Resource Recovery Centre Construction, Strategic Land Acquisition, Patterson Street Road Construction, and 300 Northern Highway Development.

Key areas included in the SRP and 2020-2021 Budget are as follows:Services (Operational Budget)

Council continues to scrutinise its operational budgets and achieve efficiencies each year to work within the State Government imposed 2.0% rate cap.

Recurrent operating budgets for Council services have been adjusted to reflect population and asset growth, and changes in costs, including COVID-19, inflation and contracted prices. Overall operating costs have increased by 3.5% when compared with the 2019-2020 end of year forecast.

Rates and Charges

Council’s long-term sustainability relies on its ability to raise sufficient income to deliver services, maintain and renew existing assets and build new assets and infrastructure to cater for growth.

The Budget proposes an overall increase in total rates and charges revenue to be collected in line with the annual rate cap and an allowance through supplementary rates due to the expected continued growth. The proposed increase in the overall rate revenue is 2.0% in year 1 and 2.25% per annum thereafter. These assumptions will be subject to the annual notification.

There has been no change to the Rating Strategy.

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

Capital

Council's 2020-2021 Budget supports a new capital works program of \$23.638M and a total program of \$40.044M which includes 2019-2020 carry forward projects. The program will be funded from a combination of government grants, proceeds from sale of assets, Council operations and borrowings. Council has included \$0.86M in borrowings to support Strategic Land Acquisition.

Meeting the asset renewal challenge

The challenge to fund the appropriate renewal of existing assets (roads, drains, buildings, etc.) is one that Mitchell Shire shares with many other municipalities. The renewal spend on roads and footpaths is similar to the \$5.19M budget in 2019-2020. In 2020-2021 will see a further \$5.1M invested in the renewal of roads and footpaths.

For our Shire, the challenge is complicated and continual. Our growing community requires new infrastructure and services, whilst much of our existing infrastructure is beginning to reach the end of its useful life.

The 2020-2021 Budget allocates \$13.2M to the renewal of Council assets, an increase from the previous year (\$8.1M). Of the \$5.1M increase, the three main increases include, \$1M relating to Recreation, Leisure and Community Facilities, \$1.6M relating to plant and fleet renewal, and a further \$2.2 M relating to waste management renewal projects. Renewal allocations vary year to year based on asset condition and the ability to adequately deliver the current services. Our renewal needs are greater than our funding allocations and therefore projects must be prioritised.

Council remain committed to increasing this amount each year where possible with renewal funding continuing to be one of Council's capital works priorities. Renewing our assets is important to ensure the level of service provided to the community is maintained.

External grant funding for new infrastructure is important in that it enables Council resources to focus on renewal requirements.

2020-2021 Changes post draft adoption

A full listing of changes made subsequent to the initial draft budget can be seen in Appendix C of the revised 2020-2021 Budget, key changes include:

- Revised Carry Forward estimates based on updated forecasts both operating and capital
- Reduced revenue and expenditure as a direct consequence of COVID-19
- Endorsed COVID-19 Community Support Package
- Increased rates revenue through supplementary growth during 2019-2020
- Borrowing estimates updated including interest costs
- Various grant updates following timing of delivery, additional successful grants and prepayments
- Employee costs with updated negotiation assumptions

Administrative amendments have been made to the wording and presentation of the budget document and SRP as required, including:

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

- Administrative update of graphs, tables and commentary to reflect the above changes
- Other minor administrative amendments to wording and tables

CONSULTATION

The Executive Leadership Team and Senior staff have worked together in the development of this Budget over many months and Councillors have been briefed and discussions held during July 2019 through to June 2020.

A Community Check In process was undertaken during late 2019 that included a project proposal opportunity and an online budget simulator. As part of this process we visited various locations and events to engage with the community and promote our online engagement tool and provide paper-based alternatives.

The budget simulator was completed online 212 times along with 15 hardcopies and 5 budget submissions were also completed. This information gathered was valuable and informed the draft budget process for 2020-2021.

In accordance with Section 129 of the Act, the revised SRP and Draft 2020-2021 Budget was exhibited for public consultation through a public notice and was available for inspection online through Council's website throughout the 28 days and at the following locations before closure due to COVID-19:

- Council's Libraries and Customer Service Centres:
 - Beveridge – Greater Beveridge Community Centre, Lithgow Street
 - Broadford – 113 High Street
 - Kilmore – 12 Sydney Street
 - Seymour – 125 Anzac Avenue
 - Wallan – 9/81-99 High Street

A period of 28 days was provided for the public to lodge submissions which were required to be lodged with Council by 5.00pm on Wednesday 22 April 2020.

Council considered all submissions and provided those requesting it the opportunity to present to a Hearings Committee meeting in support of their submission. The Hearings Committee was held at 7.00pm on Monday 4 May 2020 in the Council Chamber, 113 High Street, Broadford and supported through Microsoft Teams.

The public exhibition and consultation undertaken during March and April was the second opportunity for the community to be involved with the 2020-2021 budget development process.

Public notice was advertised through Engaging Mitchell and Councils website in addition to printing in the:

- North Central Review 24th March 2020
- Seymour Telegraph 25th March 2020
- Mclvor Times 25th March 2020

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

During the public notice and submission period no face to face sessions were held due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Full copies of submissions were provided to Council and verbal submissions heard by Council at its Special Hearings Committee meeting on Monday 4 May 2020. A summary of all submissions received, and Officer responses and recommendations can be reviewed in Attachment 1.

Revisions to the 2020-2021 Proposed Budget – Submissions

The statutory submission period ended on 22 April 2020 and a total of seventeen submissions were received. Of these, 5 written submitters were heard by Council at a Special Hearings Committee held on Monday, 4 May 2020.

Attachment 1 is a summary of all submissions received as well as staff responses and recommendations. Three submission suggestions will be included within the 2020-2021 Budget and relate to signage and design allocations to ensure projects are ready for future capital works consideration.

Strong themes within the submissions included support for key projects, a need for increased street trees and footpaths and improved drainage.

Following adoption of the budget all submitters will be notified in writing regarding Council's decision, which will include a detailed response to the issues raised in the submission

FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Financial, resource and asset management implications associated with the 2020-2021 Budget and SRP have been detailed in the body of this report and the attached documents.

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The 2020-2021 Budget has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* Section 125.

The Strategic Resource Plan 2021-2024 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Section 126.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

Risk Ranking is determined using [ROHS201-G1- Corporate Risk Matrix](#). Risk is identified as Low, Medium, High or Very High.

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that the community does not support the budget.	Low	Adequately advertise and promote the adopted Budget and SRP and progress throughout the year to ensure community	Yes

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Within Existing Resources?
		members are informed and provided opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions for future budgets.	
There is a risk that Council cannot deliver on the projects within the 2020-2021 financial year as described.	Medium	Council staff are commencing project preparation work as early as possible to deliver on projects. A review of project management resources required is being undertaken to ensure adequate resources are able to support the capital program. The quarterly budget reviews will also ensure open and transparent monitoring of progress throughout the year.	Yes
There is a risk that the full COVID-19 implications are yet to be known.	Medium	Council staff review forecasts monthly as a minimum and negative impacts will be addressed through quarterly budget reviews.	Yes

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)

The Shire's sustainability relies on its ability to raise enough income to deliver and grow required services, maintain and renew existing assets and build new assets and infrastructure to cater for a growing community.

The budget continues to provide funding and support new services and continues initiatives to improve our social and environmental sustainability.

CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The rights protected in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered in preparing this report and it's determined that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024 (CONT.)

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The draft budget and strategic resource plan includes resource allocations for areas that provide services to children and young people. No service changes are identified in these areas however service growth is occurring to provide for our growing community.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

CONCLUSION

The 2020-2021 Budget and SRP describes how Council will allocate resources to services and projects and continues to be prepared within tight financial constraints including the known impacts of COVID-19. The 2020-2021 Budget and SRP have been prepared supporting agreed strategic policy directions and objectives.

The Budget and SRP documents have been revised following changes due to COVID-19 and other influences to ensure that we continue to strike a reasonable and responsible balance between ensuring the continuing provision of the operational services and infrastructure investment that support the community. We continue to work within the rate cap and adapt to a changing financial environment.

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL

Council Meeting Attachment

GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

22 JUNE 2020

9.1

**ADOPTION OF THE 2020-2021 BUDGET AND
STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2021-2024**

Attachment No: 1

Attachment 1 - Budget Submissions 2020-2021

BUDGET SUBMISSIONS 2020-2021			
Submission	Number	Submitter Comment	Staff Comments
1.	1	Disappointed that the tree planting programme for 2020-2021 is not itemised.	Whilst the tree planting program is not itemised within the budget document, page 16 and 17 include the total budget for the Parks and Garden area and new initiatives. The tree planting programme allocation has been increased from 2019/2020 to 2020/2021. Kilmore received 1/4 of the total 2019-2020 planting program and has been proportionate in recent years. We are currently gathering a shire wide data set to inform future programs including missing locations. This will assist officers in creating long term programs for plantings.
	2	Developers should be required to plant street trees on both sides of the road	Agreed. Developers are typically always required to make contributions towards street trees. This is a standard requirement for all new planning permits. Where older permits do not have this specific requirement, officers do try to negotiate an outcome that sees some contributions made towards street tree plantings.
	3	The budget of \$895K is inadequate for Footpaths capital works. Developers should be required to lay footpaths on both sides of the street and this should be included in the approved planning application.	Agreed. Contemporary standards require developers of greenfield land to construct footpaths on both sides of the road. Where development is occurring in an established (brownfield) areas, developers are typically required to make contributions, either monetary or in-kind, towards footpath infrastructure. The extent to which a developer is asked to provide footpath infrastructure will depend on the scale and type of the development. In asking for infrastructure contributions, Council must demonstrate that a need and nexus exists between the development and the provision of new or upgraded infrastructure before requiring this as part of a planning or development permit.
	4	The budget of \$100K is inadequate for Drainage capital works	The \$100,000 allocation is intended for specific drainage upgrades to be performed at Harley Hammond Reserve in Broadford. This allocation is adequate for these purposes.
	5	The decision to knock back the use of recycled water for sports grounds is a short signed decision	Council has been working with Goulburn Valley Water on the quality of their water through the development of other projects and has discussed this issue with them. Their grade of B Recycled water is currently at the lowest level of Class B and not suitable for sports grounds where children's sports are played. Both Yarra Valley Water and Melbourne Water provide Class A for irrigation of sporting ovals. Council will assess any water that can be provided when the plant is upgraded, to see if it is suitable. However, it is also an issue of how it interacts with the clay base at JJ Clancy Reserve. Council has had the water tested and sought professional advise.
	6	The budget of \$4,880K for Roads is good, but Council should be pushing developers to provide roads in their planning application	Developers of greenfield subdivisions are required to build all infrastructure. Developers working in established areas are typically always asked to make contributions towards local infrastructure. These contributions may be monetary or in-kind works for the construction of new drainage, new footpaths, the construction of new roads or the upgrade of existing roads. The extent to which a developer is asked to provide infrastructure will depend on the scale and type of the development. In asking for infrastructure contributions, Council must demonstrate that a need and nexus exists between the development and the provision of new or upgraded infrastructure before requiring this as part of a planning or development permit.
	7	The budget does not include an allocation or push for the Bypass	The Kilmore Bypass project is being led by Regional Roads Victoria on behalf of the State Government. It is not a Council project. Advancing the planning for the bypass and its alignment is an important step towards progressing the project. The bypass project will reinvigorate Kilmore as it will provide the opportunity to improve the streetscape of the town centre and enhance the environment. Council continues to work, support and advocate to the government to progress the bypass to construction stage. The Kilmore bypass was a key ask in the Mitchell Shire Council 2020 Budget submission to the Government.
	8	Parking provisions and request for Kilmore Central Owners Corporation to repair carpark is inadequate. Council could take measures such as fining under a local law	Council officers have attempted numerous discussions with these parties to see an improvement to this space. Ultimately this is private land and the landowners are responsible for the safety of the public using this land. The carpark as noted is privately owned and managed and does not fall within the current enforcement provisions of Mitchell Shire Council Local Law.

BUDGET SUBMISSIONS 2020-2021			
Submission	Number	Submitter Comment	Staff Comments
	9	Parking in the Kilmore Structure Plan - there is an action (A42) identifying carparking but there is no provision in the budget for this	We acknowledge this is an action in the structure plan, however; there will be a need to undertake an initial car parking review and assessment to determine any other mechanisms Council may use in the future to determine if a special rate car parking scheme is required.
	10	The budget does not detail maintenance and operational tasks to be undertaken for the coming year by project	Section 2 of the Draft Budget sets out the services and initiatives for the 2020-2021 financial year. This section sets out the maintenance and operational business as usual and projects/initiatives for service delivery. Projects or initiatives are highlighted for each service area, if applicable. Detailed budgets are not provided however if you have a query on a specific area please contact officers at Council for further information. No 2019/2020 services have been decreased.
	11	Concerned with increasing borrowings, could Council not utilise funds from the substantial reserves?	All borrowings within the Draft Budget are linked to capital works projects which have been identified in line with Council's borrowings policy. These projects are considered to be intergenerational projects and could not be otherwise delivered without borrowings. Council always assess each opportunity for utilisation of reserve funds against projects, however there are strict criteria which apply to these funds. For the Draft Budget projects linked to borrowings, reserve funds cannot be used.
	12	Council not setting aside a sum (\$2K) to record Council meetings for residents lacks transparency. It should not be expected for residents to travel to Council meetings when they are working or looking after children, or no transport available to them, yet want to be informed.	Council is currently looking at options to livestream its Council meetings and undertook its first test via Facebook on 20 April 2020. It will continue to explore low cost options to allow for better transparency and other options for residents who cannot attend in person.
	13	Increase of 8.6% on the waste charge is disgraceful, given Mitchell do not have a green water collection.	Council is currently investigating the option of introducing a Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) kerbside service. The a date for the implementation of a FOGO service has not been confirmed. The increase of 8.6% relates directly to the cost of the Waste service inclusive of the increase in disposal costs and future remediation works.
	14	Why is the Council even doing a budget given COVID-19? Federal and State have delayed their budgets. This budget will be meaningless in three months	When the Draft Budget was being developed and then subsequently released for public consultation, Victoria was not yet in a state of emergency and Council were still legally needing to meet a 30 June Budget adoption deadline. Council is aiming to review the Draft Budget in line with potential COVID-19 impacts on the 2020-2021 financial year, however we still plan to adopted a Budget by 30 June 2020. Having a budget in place from 1 July 2020 enables projects and services to go ahead with certainty of funding. We will monitor our budget performance each quarter throughout the 2020/21 Financial Year.
2.	15	Footpaths added to Powlett Street, Kilmore (between Rutledge Street and Broadhurst Street)	Not currently identified as a priority Missing Link Footpath. It will be considered as part of the next review of this program. White Street is generally considered to be the priority route for pedestrian movement in this area.
	16	Extra pedestrian lights / traffic lights in the vicinity of Green and Powlett Streets	Project may have some merit; however, would require further investigation. Due to the extensive planning required and consultation with Regional Roads Victoria, we suggest this project be given further consideration in the development of the 2021-2022 Capital Budget. If there is a strong appetite from Council for this project, Council may elect to fund the investigation and planning components of this project through the Operational Budget in 2020-2021.
	17	Plant of suitable trees at along Powlett Street, Kilmore (between Rutledge Street and Broadhurst Street and between Union Street and Clarke Street. Along with general beautification	The area between Union Street and Clarke Street is not currently suitable for tree plantings and requires significant asset construction works to create a viable area for tree growth. This would require a grant opportunity or significant capital bid. The area between Rutledge Street and Broadhurst Street has been included in the 2019-2020 planting program and will be gaining approximately 20 mature trees in May/June. Further plantings will be considered in future years in line with other priorities. The street tree planting budget is proposed to increase from \$107K (19/20) to \$250K (20/21) in operational expenditure.
3.	18	In support of Harley Hammond Reserve, Broadford - Drainage upgrade project for \$100K	Officers are liaising with the Reserve's Committee of Management on resolving major rain/storm events issues.
	19	In support of Harley Hammond Reserve, Broadford - Pavilion, netball court and lighting project for \$400K	This amount was included in Council's draft 2020-2021 Capital Works budget. The project scope and costings are currently being reviewed.

BUDGET SUBMISSIONS 2020-2021			
Submission	Number	Submitter Comment	Staff Comments
4.	20	Seeking \$200K capital allocation for the scope, design and detailed plans development for the redevelopment of the Seymour Sports and Aquatic Centre to enable changerooms / clubrooms to support activities on the two indoor courts	<p>The project has merit and can be added to future Capital Program development discussions. Council will need to make an assessment based on conflicting priorities.</p> <p>In the interim scope and design money will be allocated to the 2020-2021 Budget to support potential funding opportunities.</p>
5.	21	Manufacture and installation of upgraded signage for three of the five access point along the Great Victorian Rail Trail (GVRT)	<p>Council has an annual budget allocation for the installation and upgrade of brown signs (tourism information directional signs). Suggestions such as these are welcome at any time and are regularly received from across the Shire. These suggestions will be added to the list of needed tourism signs (new installations / upgrades) that the Economic Development team maintain and work through. There are many brown signs needed across the Shire and priority is determined based on a range of factors including whether or not any signage already exists, the likely benefits to the tourism industry in terms of supporting attractions that can support job creation, traffic volumes, traffic safety considerations, and Regional Roads Victoria rules and regulations.</p> <p>Also the submission states emphatically that tourism roadside signage to help visitors find tourism attractions has not been installed. This is not completely accurate as evidenced by photos in the submission of existing brown signs on the Hume Freeway (both directions) and also on Upper Goulburn Road. That said, the benefits of clear identification, reference to the full name of the 'Great Victorian Rail Trail', and consistency, are noted. So too ensuring there is good signage on high-traffic, high visibility routes.</p> <p>Finally, the Economic Development team is working with the other two Shires to implement priority actions from the recently completed Strategic Plan for the GVRT (presented at Council Strategy Briefing by Amber Gardner, 2 September 2019). This includes work to create a funding package for new interpretative and way-finding signage along the trail - which was identified as a key missing element and much needed to better serve visitors and better capitalise on this \$17 million asset. Economic Development presented to Council on this as part of our suggestions for responding to COVID-19 to boost recovery efforts and sought \$20,000.</p>
6.	22	In support of Greenhill Reserve, Wallan - Cricket practice nets project for \$313K	This amount was included in Council's draft 2020-2021 Capital Works budget.
	23	In support of Greenhill Reserve, Wallan - Upper ovals lighting upgrade project for \$313K	This amount was included in Council's draft 2020-2021 Capital Works budget.
7.	24	In support of Sydney Street, Kilmore Rejuvenation - Bourke Street to Union Street project for \$2.584M	This is a largely grant funded project and is included in Council's draft 2020-2021 Capital Works budget.
	25	Why is there no planning or allocation for Sydney Street Kilmore, Rejuvenation - Union Street to Clarke Street? There are narrow footpaths, no street trees and no coordinated landscaping	<p>The improvements proposed between Bourke Street and Union Street have been funded from the State Governments Growing Suburbs Fund. We are currently seeking other grants for the section of Sydney Street between Union Street and Clarke Street which are currently pending.</p> <p>Also, the area between Union Street and Clarke Street is not currently suitable for tree plantings and requires significant asset construction works to create a viable area for tree growth. This would require a grant opportunity or significant capital bid. The area between Rutledge Street and Broadhurst Street has been included in the 2019-2020 planting program and will be gaining approximately 20 mature trees in May/June. Further plantings will be considered in future years in line with other priorities. The street tree planting budget is proposed to increase from \$107K (19/20) to \$250K (20/21) in operational expenditure.</p>
	26	In support of the tree canopy mapping project	Appreciate the support for this budget item
	27	Budget does not mentioned purchase and planting of street trees. In previous years the budget for street trees has been inadequate	The street tree planting budget is proposed to increase from \$107K (19/20) to \$250K in (20/21) in operational expenditure.
	28	In support of Melbourne Street, Kilmore - missing footpath links carried forward project of \$53K)	This amount was included in Council's draft 2020-2021 Capital Works budget.

BUDGET SUBMISSIONS 2020-2021			
Submission	Number	Submitter Comment	Staff Comments
	29	Is it expected that some of the footpath renewal program (new and carry forward) could be used to fund a footpath on the north side of Union Street (east and west of Sydney Street)?	No. The footpath renewal program is specifically targeted at looking after the existing footpath assets that we have. Not about creating new assets. We have a separate program called the 'Missing links Program' which is aimed at providing new footpaths.
8.	30	Concerned with the proposed rate increase (14.3%) for Agricultural Land in the 40-100Ha category.	The 14.3% is not the impact that each individual rate payer will experience. The increase in the revenue from the rate category is a combination of a reduced municipal charge and an increase to the valuations. The increase is variable for each property.
	31	What is the logic behind reducing the municipal charge by more than 10%?	The municipal charge has been decreased to 15% of total rates and charges to be raised from all property owners. The reduction will mean that we are gradually reducing the % in preparation for a 10% mandatory cap expected to be introduced.
	32	What is Council intentions for farming operations in the municipality? Is the intent of the 14.3% increase to ultimately force farmers out of the Mitchell Shire?	Councils increase to the revenue in each category is linked to the valuations provided to Council by the Valuer General. There is no intent to force farmers out of Mitchell Shire. Council's rating strategy allows for a lower rate of either 10% or 20% depending on the size of the farm and is supportive of farmers through this initiative.
9.	33	Upgrade existing poorly maintained sand footpath on William Street, or construct a new footpath to deal with current usage of the footpath	We have prioritise footpath upgrades in Windham Street as part of the 2019-2020 budget which are currently being designed. Footpaths in William Street can be considered as part of the next review of the Missing link Footpath Program.
10.	34	Funding allocation to set up the Wallan to Heathcote Rail Trail Working Group	The submission references FBKRT's previous ask for \$10K; says that it doesn't see it there and then makes a revised ask for \$5,000. Economic Development have already made an allocation of \$10,000 within its budget for 2020-2021 to advance work on the next stages of the Wallan to Heathcote Rail Trail. This is a modest allocation considering the work that is required to set up a community working group and investigations required as part of that, as per the Council resolution passed when the feasibility study was adopted. However, it is a start. While very much supportive of rail trails, Economic Development has prioritised work on other projects - in particular being successful in \$2.5M funding for the Kilmore Town Centre Rejuvenation project - because of the much greater immediate need and much higher cost benefit ratio which these have demonstrated when assessed for their potential economic impacts (ca. 8 to 1; compared with 1.3 to 1 for the rail trail). Rail Trails are great - but Mitchell Shire critically needs attractive town centres along the route of the rail trail - so that visitors to our Shire using a future rail trail find our towns attractive, enticing and appealing places in which to stop and spend money. It should also be noted that the rail trail route has already been taken account of and planned for as part of the Kilmore Creek Master planning work and Kilmore southern flank growth plans. This work refers to the Feasibility Study that was started.
11.	35	Parking in Ferguson Street, opposite Nexus. Request for angle parking with parking for three vehicles initially	This location has been a concern for locals for a number of years. This is a worthy project but not among the highest priorities for road upgrades across the Shire. It is a potential candidate project for a resident funded special charge (road construction) scheme. Design and scope funding will be allocated within the 2020-2021 Budget to support future capital consideration.
12.	36	Financial support for the 25th Celtic Festival in 2021	Mitchell Shire Council assist community groups with grants application training and governance on an annual basis. This training enables upskilling of individuals on external grant opportunities. The Community Development Team may also assist group with letters of support for philanthropic grant opportunities. Unfortunately Mitchell Shire Council no longer provides a Community Grants program to fund these specific events.
13.	37	To have the avenue of cypress trees that run from the Kilmore Miniature Railway shed to Foote Street, pruned with dead branches removed	Trees will be inspected within operational parameters. Tree pruning is performed on a risk management and tree health basis.
	38	Complete removal of two cypress pine trees immediately north of the Kilmore Miniature Railway shed	Trees will be inspected within operational parameters. Tree pruning is performed on a risk management and tree health basis. Trees will not be removed unless posing a significant risk.
14.	39	Damage to the courthouse cells caused by a combination of invading tree roots and water damage due to poor drainage	This has been investigated previously during 2018/2019 and no action has been required regarding the tree roots.

BUDGET SUBMISSIONS 2020-2021			
Submission	Number	Submitter Comment	Staff Comments
15.	40	In support of Kings Park, Seymour - Oval irrigation project of \$164K	This amount was included in Council's draft 2020-2021 Capital Works budget.
16.	41	Continuation of funding towards the restoration of the Old Goulburn River Bridge at Seymour	An allocation of \$100,000 is proposed in the 2020-2021 Capital Works budget to be used to prepare designs and a restoration plan for the bridge. Future restoration works will be subject to funding in future budgets.
17.	42	Seeking financial support due to expected insufficient business income from July 2020 due to COVID-19	Funding cannot be provided from Council due to the Local Government Act. However, Council Officers can provide advice on where other Government funding might be sought during the COVID-19 crisis. Officers will work with the Committee of Management to identify opportunities with relevant associations and Government departments.

