

## 9.2 WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

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**Attachments:** Nil

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### SUMMARY

This report responds to Notice of Motion No. 933 relating to stand alone water supply infrastructure.

The report outlines the existing conditions of the Shire's rural water supply infrastructure, community engagement results regarding their current use, and current Council actions.

The report recommends noting the actions taken and communicate with those Shire residents that participated in the survey to ensure they are made aware of these actions taken by Council in response to their feedback.

### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** Council:

1. Note the actions taken in relation to upgrading and maintaining of existing rural water supply infrastructure including;
  - a) The renewal of the Seymour - Goulburn Park and Whitegate Road, High Gate water supply infrastructure; and
  - b) Write to The Honorable Lisa Neville, Minister for Police and Emergency Services seeking further support and assistance to maintain these important community assets.
2. Communicate to all who participated in the Rural Water Supply community survey thanking them for their participation and advising them of the current actions Council has taken.
3. Officers provide advice to the wider community through social media and print media of the actions taken by Council regarding the Shire's rural water supply infrastructure.

### BACKGROUND

At the Ordinary Council meeting of 19 March 2018, a Notice of Motion was moved and resolved as follows:

*"THAT Officers Prepare a report on the progressive upgrading of Councils standalone Rural Water Supply Infrastructure. This comprises standpipes, tanks and bores and in some cases static water points i.e. access points to water on creeks and rivers.*

*The report should further include:*

- a) plans for the long-term replacement and significant upgrading of this infrastructure and initiate ways in which to fund this program.*

## WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW (CONT.)

*With our changing climatic conditions, it is important for Council to be proactive in this space.*

- b) a breakdown of this program and the annual amount of water used.*
- c) the locations from which this water is drawn”.*

In response to the Notice of Motion, officers consulted widely to establish community sentiment around the importance of water supply infrastructure usage. Engagement methods included advertising via print media, physical signage, approaching users and social media messaging. This was accompanied by a survey hosted on the Engaging Mitchell platform that remained open for the entire 2018/2019 summer period. Over two hundred surveys were completed.

Following receipt of the survey information, a facilitated workshop with Councillors was also conducted in November 2019 to explore possible options to manage the Shire’s water infrastructure services.

## ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

### Existing Conditions

Mitchell Shire currently provides non-potable water from eleven (11) standpipes located throughout the municipality. This infrastructure is aging with many of the standpipes being near, or at the end of their serviceable lifespan. As a consequence of the current state of the infrastructure, management of the existing service is resulting in:

- A perceived poor level of service being provided, which is resulting in increasing negative feedback from the community;
- Staff spending additional time on the operational and maintenance issues relating to the existing infrastructure; and
- Councillors and Council staff escalating the matter and seeking a longer-term investment approach to improve this service.

Officers have been working towards a solution on the review of this water infrastructure services for over two (2) years.

### Community Feedback

Around 200 people responded to the survey on rural water supply infrastructure. This illustrated a keen local interest on their function and the service they provide to the community.

Some of the key points from the survey include:

- Approximately 36% of people who responded to the survey did not live within the Mitchell Shire;
- The largest community responses to the survey were from Pyalong (24 responses), Kilmore (16 responses), Broadford (13 responses) and Wallan (11 responses);
- 87% of respondents believe the infrastructure should be renewed and maintained.

## WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW (CONT.)

- The survey defined the top four (4) highest used standpipes within the Mitchell Shire as Kilmore (51 responses), Sugarloaf Creek (32 responses), High Camp (27 responses) and Seymour (24 responses);
- The water from the standpipes was predominantly used:
  - To support Livestock on lifestyle properties (40% of responses)
  - to support Primary Producers of Livestock (20% of responses);
- The biggest impact of removing the service as nominated by survey respondents would be:
  - Impact to Livestock (46% of responses); and
  - Impact to fire preparedness (24% of responses).

Councillor Workshop – 18 November 2019

The intent of the facilitator-led workshop was to:

- Reach a priority option for the future management of standpipes within Mitchell Shire;
- Provide a forum to share ideas and explore the future implementation of a preferred option; and
- To seek clarity for the future investment and management of the water infrastructure.

The workshop introduced critical information including:

- The presentation of four strategic options;
- Subject matter expert participating in the discussion to answer any technical questions;
- Additional information to support the guidance of a preferred option; and
- High level summary of the feedback gained from consultation processes

**Options**

Four options were presented at the Workshop.

- Option 1 – Do Nothing – *continue to manage the service on an as needs basis, maintaining infrastructure at the point of failure with no renewal or upgrades proposed.*
- Option 2 – Full System Upgrade – *significant capital investment upgrading all infrastructure.*
- Option 3 – Strategic Investment – *staged capital investment upgrading an agreed number of rural water supply infrastructure over a prescribed period.*

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW (CONT.)

- Option 4 – No investment, move out of providing service – *decommissioning of existing infrastructure available to the public.*

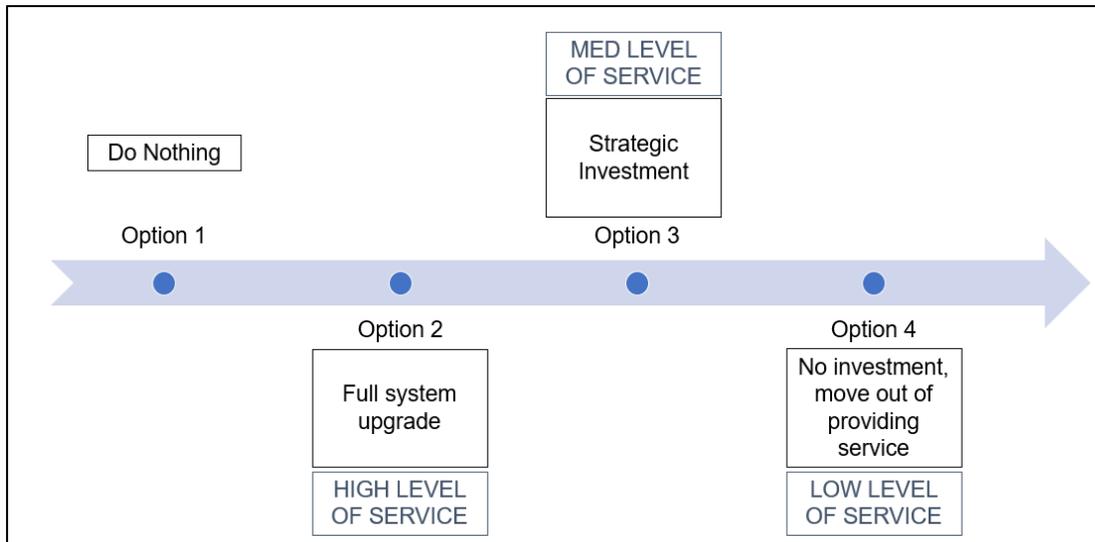


Table 1 – Water Infrastructure Review Strategic Options

Following the workshop, Councillors arrived at a general direction aligned with Option 3. This included the immediate upgrade of some high use rural water supply infrastructure. Further information was also sought to establish the current usage of this infrastructure.

Immediately after the workshop, at the Ordinary Council meeting on 18 November 2019, an urgent business item was considered and endorsed by Council to immediately fund the upgrade to two (2) standpipes, in Goulburn Park Seymour and at Whitegate Road, High Gate. These upgrades are currently being completed.

Costs to upgrade the two (2) standpipes are still to be finalised, however are estimated to be approximately \$70,000, with funding being provided from the 2019/2020 capital budget.

Councillors also resolved to install meters on all other existing standpipes to gauge the usage over a twelve-month period to inform future upgrades and investments.

Meter installation including all components cost \$12,721.50 and funded from the 2019/2020 operational budgets.

At the time of writing, officers are currently completing the renewal of the following two water point locations;

- Goulburn Park, Seymour
- Whitegate Road, Highgate

**CONSULTATION**

Whilst no further consultation was undertaken in the preparation of this report, it is acknowledged that several actions have been implemented since receiving feedback from the community and communications back to survey participants has been limited.

It is recommended that all community participants in the survey be contacted to both thank them for their important contribution and inform them of the actions taken and

## WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW (CONT.)

proposed by Council in relation to the rural water supply infrastructure. It is further proposed to provide advice to the wider community through social media and print media of the actions taken by Council regarding the Shire's rural water supply infrastructure.

**FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial, resource or asset management implications that result from the recommendations contained within this report.

**POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no known policy or legislative implications that result from the recommendations contained within this report.

**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 survey participants will not be aware of the actions taken and proposed by Council	High	Communicate to all survey participants the action taken and proposed by Council	Yes

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)**

Not applicable.

**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.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable.

**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**

Following the Notice of Motion, feedback from the community survey, a further workshop with Councillors and the consideration of an urgent business item of Council in November 2019, a clear direction now guides the complete renewal of water supply infrastructure at Goulburn Park, Seymour and Whitegate Road, High Gate. In addition,

## WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW (CONT.)

water meters have been installed on all other remaining standpipes to better understand the usage at each location and information infrastructure upgrades.

Officers recommend these actions be formally noted by Council and that all participants of the community survey be advised of the progress made and proposed to improve rural water supply infrastructure across the Shire.