



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL

The Heart of Gippsland

**COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA
SPECIAL MEETING TO CONSIDER
2024/25 DRAFT BUDGET SUBMISSIONS**

Meeting to be held at

Wellington Centre – Wellington Room

Foster Street, Sale and via MS Teams

Thursday 16 May 2024, commencing at 5:00 PM

**or join Wellington on the Web:
www.wellington.vic.gov.au**

**SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL
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COUNCIL MEETING INFORMATION

Members of the Public Gallery should note that the Council records and publishes Council meetings via YouTube to enhance the accessibility of Council meetings to the broader Wellington community. These recordings are also archived and may be published on Council's Website for viewing by the public or used for publicity or information purposes. At the appropriate times during the meeting, members of the gallery may address the Council at which time their image, comments or submissions will be recorded.

Members of the public who are not in attendance at the Council meeting but who wish to communicate with the Council via the online webform should lodge their questions or comments early in the meeting to ensure that their submissions can be dealt with at the end of the meeting.

Please could gallery visitors, Councillors and invited online attendees ensure that mobile phones and other electronic devices are turned off or in silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

MISSION STATEMENT

Working together to make a difference. We listen and lead to provide quality services that improve life for all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

“Wellington Shire Council acknowledges our offices are located on the traditional lands of the Gunaikurnai nation. We pay our deep respects to their Elders past, present and future and acknowledge their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to their land and waters.”

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT/S OF INTEREST

3. GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES

3.1. RECEIPT AND CONSIDERATION OF SUBMISSIONS RELATING TO THE 2024/25 DRAFT BUDGET

ACTION OFFICER: MANAGER CORPORATE FINANCE

PURPOSE

To receive and consider any verbal and written submissions (as attached) relating to the 2024/25 Draft Budget.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE GALLERY

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and consider any verbal and written submissions (as attached) relating to the 2024/25 Draft Budget.

BACKGROUND

Council resolved at its meeting held on 16 April 2024 to:

- advertise its proposed 2024/25 Draft Budget and proposed differential rates under section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*; and
- consider submissions on the 2024/25 Draft Budget at a Special Council Meeting on Thursday 16 May 2024 at 5.00pm.

In accordance with section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council invited interested persons to make written submissions in relation to the 2024/25 Draft Budget by 5:00pm on 6 May 2024 and to also make verbal submissions at the Council meeting on 16 May 2024.

Council received 5 written submissions (as attached) in response to the 2024/25 Draft Budget and will consider these submissions in conjunction with any verbal submissions prior to the Council meeting in June, where it will be recommended that the Budget, including any revisions, be adopted.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2024-25 Budget Submissions [3.1.1 - 15 pages]

OPTIONS

Council has the following options available:

1. To receive and consider any verbal and written submissions (as attached) relating to the 2024/25 Draft Budget; or
2. To seek further information and receive and consider any verbal and written submissions (as attached) relating to the 2024/25 Draft Budget at a later Council meeting.

PROPOSAL

That Council receive and consider any verbal and written submissions (as attached) relating to the 2024/25 Draft Budget.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No staff and/or contractors involved in the compilation of this report have declared a conflict of interest.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Consideration of submissions may result in changes to the proposed 2024/25 Draft Budget.

COMMUNICATION IMPACT

This impact has been assessed and there is no effect to consider at this time.

LEGISLATIVE IMPACT

Under s96(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Council must develop a budget in accordance with its Community Engagement policy.

COUNCIL POLICY IMPACT

This impact has been assessed and there is no effect to consider at this time.

COUNCIL PLAN IMPACT

The Council Plan 2021-25 Theme 4 “Services and Infrastructure” states the following strategic outcome:

Strategic Outcome 4.1: *“A financially sustainable, high performing organisation.”*

This report supports the above Council Plan strategic outcome.

RESOURCES AND STAFF IMPACT

The consideration of submissions relating to the 2024/25 Draft Budget may have an impact on the level of resources available in the 2024/25 financial year and the staffing levels of Council.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

This impact has been assessed and there is no effect to consider at this time.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This impact has been assessed and there is no effect to consider at this time.

ENGAGEMENT IMPACT

Section 96(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that Council develop the budget in line with its Community Engagement policy. To ensure that Council provided ample and varied opportunity for community engagement, Council placed the draft 2024/25 Budget on Council's website and advertised that it had done so. Advertisements were placed in local newspapers, on Facebook and Council's website (including the *Your Wellington Your Say* page) seeking community submissions on the draft 2024/25 Budget and inviting the public to speak to, and in support of, submissions at this special Council meeting.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPACT

This impact has been assessed and there is no effect to consider at this time.

DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGET SUBMISSIONS

	CORRESPONDENT	SUBMISSION
1.	Paul Mayer	Commentary re lack of services received by remote rural ratepayers.
2.	Samuel Lindsay	Commentary on Council borrowing money for community assets
3.	David Woodhouse	<p>Commentary on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amenity of footpaths and street furniture/facilities 2. Sweeping of tree leaves and debris Johnson and Foster Streets 3. Residential street sweeping 4. Johnson Street Maffra Clock 5. Street tree and vegetation management 6. Responsible pet ownership and animal management matters
4.	Meerlieu Hall Committee of Management	<p>Request for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administration support and capacity from council to continue seeking grants for the required \$380,000 for the project; and 2. \$850,000 for the hall refurbishment or a strategy to facilitate the removal of the asbestos and refurbishments of the community facility over the next 3 years.
5.	Jim King	Request for Council to conduct a survey of all non-sporting community groups within the Shire to ascertain their existing accommodation issues in order to address a fairer/more balanced allocation of funding into the future.

No.	1
Submission	Commentary re lack of services received by remote rural ratepayers
Correspondent	Paul Mayer

I note that satisfaction level with Council is barely above 50%. This percentage is no doubt dragged down by non-residential ratepayers, particularly those in remote communities which receive LITTLE OR NO services from Council. In those communities, satisfaction with Council is NEAR ZERO.

Remote communities get no waste management collection, or any other vital services which are available to residents of the major towns in Wellington...yet they are still charged significant rates expense every year. Essentially, rural remote residents are taxed for living in Wellington Shire.

Can I respectfully suggest that cutting the already minimal roads budget by more than 10% will simply create more dissatisfaction within the community, particularly the rurally remote who get NOTHING for their rates contribution.

Paul Mayer

No.	2
Submission	Commentary on Council borrowing money for community assets
Correspondent	Samuel Lindsay

Dear Council, I appreciate your clarity around our community's finances. Your work is important and you are to be commended for serving the community in this way. It seems to be a popular trend at the moment for various governments to borrow monies. Why? If I were to guess it is because it is an easy way to get more money and make it look like the council is doing more for the people of the Shire. Yet, as your own budget document states: "Borrowings are utilised by Council to spread the impact across generations of the community utilising assets." You have admitted that you are taking money from future generations in order to spend it now! Why do you plan to rob the future? Isn't it better to pay outright for our assets and give the community a beneficial asset that is unencumbered?

I understand that there are large costs involved in creating such community assets, but is it really an asset for future generations if they are saddled with the debt anyway? It is my sincere hope that you may revise your philosophy of borrowing such that it is kept as a last resort in emergencies, rather than as a quick fix for present shortfalls or good looking projects. If we need large sums for large infrastructure projects then we should put aside the funds over time, investing for a return, rather than saddle the people with unnecessary debt and ongoing interest payments so we can have it now. It may make sense for business to take on risk to borrow large sums in the hope of a greater return in the future, but the Shire is not strictly a business.

At the end of the day the Shire is made up of people, you serve those people, and it is not good for you to saddle us with unnecessary debts that we have to pay back in larger rates and more expensive fees. Every dollar you spend affects us all. The borrowing amounts and repayments may be considered "small potatoes" in comparison to the overall financial position of the Shire, but it is the principle of the whole affair that is of concern. It demonstrates: a lack of concern for today as well as future generations; unwillingness to truly plan ahead; and sets a precedent for borrowing that could soon turn into a reliance. Why don't we work towards a Shire where the rates go down instead of up? Why don't we work towards a Shire that has large reserves rather than borrowing for short term gain? Why don't we work towards a Shire that is free from all debts and better prepared to face an uncertain future?

Your work is truly appreciated, and I only write this way out of concern for the Shire and it's future. It would be better to make a small course correction now while it is easy, rather than to continue down a path of ever increasing borrowing and endless debt.

Kind Regards,
Samuel Lindsay

No.	3
Submission	<p>Commentary on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amenity of footpaths and street furniture/facilities 2. Sweeping of tree leaves and debris Johnson and Foster Streets 3. Residential street sweeping 4. Johnson Street Maffra Clock 5. Street tree and vegetation management 6. Responsible pet ownership and animal management matters
Correspondent	David Woodhouse

Wellington Shire Council – 2024 Draft Budget Submission

In respect of your 2024 Draft Budget, I make the following submission.

Please acknowledge receiving my submission. Please contact me should you wish to discuss any part of it.

1. Amenity of the footpaths and street furniture/facilities in the Maffra shopping precinct.

I ask that funds be available to ensure that there is regular cleaning (including washing as applicable) of the footpaths and street furniture/facilities along the shopping precinct of Johnson Street Maffra and its intersecting streets.

More particularly, but not limited to, in the precinct:

- (i) The **street and footpaths**, to remove the tree debris and bird droppings that prevail, including around the public telephone.
- (ii) The **bike-hoops**, to remove bird droppings.
- (iii) The **street furniture** (seats and tables, including at the Rotunda and the median-strips) to remove bird droppings and any other soiling.

The incidence is particularly noticeable (*but not limited to being*) at both sides of the corner of Johnson and Pearson Streets: tree debris and droppings on the footpaths, droppings on the bike-hoops and on the Pearson Street seat outside the Maffra Post Office.

The incidence of the tree debris – twigs/sticks (of various thickness and lengths), tree gum-nuts, conkers, leaves – on the street, footpaths and median-strips' grass are a danger to pedestrians, and possibly to those using mobility aids.

The bird droppings are unhygienic and unsightly:

- (iv) They are a danger underfoot to users, including around the public telephone, who can be prone to slip on fresh droppings, which can also be carried on footwear.
- (v) Cyclists should not be expected to contend with unhygienic bike-hoops.
- (vi) Those using the seats and tables should not be expected to use soiled items.

Any response that business operators are responsible for the cleaning is spurious: they do not own the pavement, trees or the street furniture/facilities. In any case, any furniture in the median strips is not abutting their businesses. No statute validly enforces any responsibility.

2. Sweeping of tree leaves and debris – Johnson and Foster Streets.

The incidence of leaves and debris from the Plane, Liquid-amber and other trees at the eastern end of Johnson Street needs to be managed.

Subject to the wind direction, leaves do accumulate around the Cenotaph and in Foster Street on the pavement outside the Memorial Hall/the Library's outer wall. Other debris remains where it falls.

3. Residential Street sweeping of tree leaves and debris.

I ask that funds continue to be available for Street sweeping [in all Streets across the Shire as necessary], and continue to schedule to do so.

This is especially when Street trees are shedding leaves and other debris (be it pre-, during-, or post- autumn), or when debris is instigated by flocks of birds at any time. It is also necessary when there is otherwise debris resulting from weather events.

We have always been grateful that/when Council has swept our adjoining street, either when requested by us or others, or when scheduled by the Council.

4. Johnson Street Maffra Clock.

The clock in the Johnson Street median-strip near the pedestrian crossing does not keep proper time (for now, it is about 35 minutes fast). It would be appropriate that funds be expended for it to be accurate, be it Standard- or Summer-time.

5. Street tree and vegetation management.

The Council needs to provide funds to do more to enforce:

- (i) the provisions of *Appendix D* its *Road Management Plan 2021*, and
- (ii) upon itself the sentiment of its *Community Local Law 2021* at its *Part 2 [Clause 2.1 1) Trees and Plants not to interfere or obstruct]*,

in respect of dealing with Council's own Street trees and vegetation adjacent to footpaths or nature strips in Maffra [and throughout the Shire] that interfere or obstruct with the passage of foot and other traffic, including those using mobility aids.

It is a hazard when [to paraphrase extracts from *Clause 2.1 1)*] any tree or part of a tree or any plant or other vegetation:

- (iii) overhangs onto or over any pavement abutting land or road at a height of less than (the Council prescribed measure) from the level of the adjacent footpath or nature strip, or
- (iv) otherwise impacts on the safe and convenient use of any pavement or road adjacent to or near the land.

6. Responsible pet ownership and animal management matters.

The Council needs to provide funds to do more to enforce its obligation as the responsible authority for the proper implementation of:

- (i) its *Community Local Law 2021* at its *Part 6: Animals, Clause 6.3 2)* in respect of laws to deal with animal excrement, and
- (ii) the WSC Cat Curfew imposed by the *Council Order* made at the 20 December 2022 Council Meeting.

Council seems loathe to comply with its *Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025* to "... educate members of the public on responsible pet ownership and animal management matters.”:

- (iii) The inaction by Maffra's irresponsible dog owners continues, with dog excrement remaining on nature strips being an ongoing issue. This can be from roaming dogs or those dogs supposedly under effective control.
- (iv) Cats still roam, despite the Cat Curfew.

The offending animal may not have been seen “in action”: however its presence is evidenced by their excrement, either on public or (our) private property.

This ends my submission in respect of the 2024 Draft Budget, thank you.

No.	4
Submission	<p>Request for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Administration support and capacity from council to continue seeking grants for the required \$380,000 for the project; and \$850,000 for the hall refurbishment or a strategy to facilitate the removal of the asbestos and refurbishments of the community facility over the next 3 years.
Correspondent	Meerlieu Hall Committee of Management

Wellington Shire Budget Submission 2024

Meerlieu and District



Introduction

The Meerlieu and Districts community would like to formally acknowledge the Wellington Shire's annual 2024 budget. In financially challenging times, we observe a tight but fair distribution of funds across the shire. The Meerlieu Hall committee and assorted users' groups would also like to acknowledge the support of the Wellington Shire for the Meerlieu and districts community, recent visits from 7 of the 9 councillors who have all made considerable efforts to understand our community's aspirations for the modernization of our one and only community facility.

The Meerlieu Hall serves as the one community facility which lies on the Eastern Edge of the Central Ward of the Wellington Shire. This facility is used weekly for field days, morning teas, community events, sport, community dinners, emergency management, and preparedness. The Shire-owned facility was constructed in 1911, and the hall has been a central hub for the local communities of Meerlieu, Hollands Landing and Perry Bridge and offering events and engagement opportunities to the communities of Munro, Bengworden, Goon Nure. The region offers young families affordable housing and farms and is experiencing growth, with a 20% increase between the 2016 and 2021 census.

Evidence of Community and Growth

- **Community Dinners:** These dinners, served by volunteers every Thursday night for 6 months of the year, offer a meaningful space for individuals to connect and belong. We regularly have more than 80 attendees.
- **ANZAC Day Service:** Run by the local ANZAC day committee, the event regularly sees attendees exceeding 150 for the dawn service to commemorate those who have and continue to serve our country's peace and freedom efforts.
- **Local Newsletter:** The Meerlieu and District Rural Community Group regularly produces and distributes a local newsletter to 220 households in the region.
- **6 Cricket Teams:** The Meerlieu Cricket Club (the "Tussocks") draw from a small catchment but have built a country cricket club with a culture of inclusivity and family values evident in our capacity to field 3 full junior and 3 full senior cricket teams annually. Total membership is 92

Overview and Stakeholders

This submission puts forward for noting the “Mark Blandford Pavilion Extension” and puts forward for funding “Meerlieu Hall Refurbishment.” These two projects have formed as the basis for our community development strategy, as recognized in partnership with Wellington Shire in our last two community plans. Both projects have been scoped, designed, and costed. Both projects are shovel-ready for delivery, overseen by a specialist growth team of management comprising members from each of the 6 local volunteer organizations. This consolidated approach ensures that all community members have input, and the volunteer efforts required to bring these projects to life are shared and sustainable.

Community Stakeholders:

1. Meerlieu and District Rural Community Group
2. Meerlieu Cricket Club
3. Meerlieu Country Fire Brigade
4. Meerlieu Hall Committee
5. Meerlieu ANZAC Day Committee
6. Bengworden and Toms Creek Landcare Groups

** Please see attached Letters of Support for this project

Project for Noting and Professional Administration Support – Mark Blandford Pavilion Extension

The Mark Blandford Pavilion Extension is a project proposed to extend a current sporting facility and the local community precinct. The extension aims to increase the facility’s capacity to support female sport by including separate changing facilities for males and females and umpires. The additions will simply bring our facility up to a required standard to encourage female sport participation and comply with child safety regulations. The Meerlieu Cricket Club has a small catchment in terms of residents but a large impact. The club’s inclusive family culture has grown in recent years, evidenced by the presentation of 3 full junior sides and 3 full senior sides. We are one of the few clubs in the region to achieve this. The committee believes this project is better suited to be supported by sport-related grants drawn from outside the council budget. The committee has a full expression of interest submitted to the “Play Our Way Program,” which is a federally funded program to create greater opportunities for women and girls to participate in sport and physical activity.

Formal Request: We would like to respectfully request administration support and capacity from a qualified and experienced council officer to continue seeking grants for the required \$380,000 for this project.

Project for Funding - Meerlieu Hall Refurbishments

The Meerlieu Hall Refurbishments encompass a very significant program of works to remove asbestos in the facility, upgrade the kitchen and toilet facilities to meet basic standards for health and safety, and make alterations to the hall to increase the amenity for community and social events. The refurbishments would position the hall to be in a similar position to the recently refurbished Bundalaguah Hall, which now attracts revenue-generating events that not only serve the community but also serve the future maintenance and refurbishment requirements. Unfortunately, due to the spread of asbestos in the hall, as reported in the “Hazardous Materials Report by Marin OHS&E Consulting Pty Ltd,” this project is limited in its ability to be staged. Asbestos is present in the flooring, bathrooms, kitchens, internal ceiling, external and internal walls, and sub-floor. It’s been advised that the removal and refurbishment occur as one activity.

Request: We would like to request \$850,000 for the hall refurbishments from the current budget. If this is not possible, we would like to request a formal strategy from Wellington Shire to facilitate the removal of the asbestos and refurbishments of the community facility over the next 3 years.

Shovel Ready

These projects are shovel ready. In partnership with the Shire in recent years, we have taken the following actions to bring us to having a fully scoped project ready for delivery.

1. **Formed a Growth Team:** The team draws from the region's 6 community groups who all use the facility proposed for refurbishment. We have conducted several community surveys and needs analysis to come to the current plans
2. **Restumped the Building:** With support from the Shire, the hall has recently been restumped and is confirmed to have sound foundations and bones for a full refurbishment that would see this facility service the community for another 110 years.
3. Conducted a full **Site and Soil Assessment** by Simon Anderson Consultants.
4. Conducted a **Land Capability Assessment** by Simon Anderson Consultants.
5. Conducted a **Hazardous Building Materials Inspection** by Marin OHS&E Consulting.
6. Conducted **Levels and Features Planning** for toilets and septic planning.
7. Conducted **Completed Preliminary Building Plans** by JJC Design & Associates Pty Ltd.
8. Completed **Cost Plans** MC Consulting Quantity Surveyors Pty Ltd

The above activities present projects that have been meticulously planned, designed, and costed, ensuring they are shovel-ready for implementation. The extensive groundwork laid, from community engagement to comprehensive assessments, demonstrates a readiness to proceed with confidence. In addition to being shovel ready should the council be able to facilitate funding for the hall refurbishment project the community will contribute \$42,500 (%5.00) in cash to the cost of the project.

Conclusion

The partnership between the Meerlieu and Districts community and the Wellington Shire stands as a testament to collaborative efforts in fostering growth and development in our region. The proposed projects, the Mark Blandford Pavilion Extension, and the Meerlieu Hall Refurbishments, underscore the community's dedication to enhancing facilities and services to meet evolving needs. From supporting female sports participation to ensuring health and safety standards in community spaces, these initiatives reflect a forward-thinking approach to community development.

As we look to the future, we respectfully urge support for funding requests to realize these vital projects. Whether through grants or budget allocations, investing in these endeavours not only benefits the immediate community but also contributes to the broader social and economic well-being of the region. In partnership with the Wellington Shire, we stand poised to embark on a journey of transformation, ensuring that the Meerlieu Hall remains a vibrant hub for generations to come. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient community that thrives in the face of challenges and embraces opportunities for growth

Meerlieu & District Rural Community Group Inc.

President: Merridy Ingrouille

Representing our Community

Secretary: Anita Hallett

Topic: Letter of Support for the upgrades at the Meerlieu Hall
 From: Meerlieu & District Rural Community Group Inc.
 To: Wellington Shire Council
 Date: 1st May 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

This is a letter of support for the proposed upgrades to the Meerlieu Hall.

The Meerlieu Hall is a major and essential hub for the districts of Meerlieu, Perry Bridge, Hollands Landing and surrounding areas. Numerous groups use the hall for a wide range of meetings and functions, with attendees at several events numbering over 180 people. Without the hall, the local community has nowhere to meet and socialise, maintaining social cohesion and support which is so critical in small rural areas. There is no other facility in this area .

Our Meerlieu & District Rural Community Group is a regular user of the hall, for meetings and other functions we hold, including dinners, morning teas and Community Fun Days. We also produce a local newsletter that is distributed free of charge to over 220 local households, keeping people informed about local groups and events.

The hall desperately needs major upgrades to the kitchen area, the toilets and storage rooms. The kitchen does not pass the Wellington Shire Council's own safety benchmarks, but at various functions we are preparing and serving food for 140 – 180 community members. During cricket season about 60 meals are prepared and served every week in that kitchen. For some years now the community has been working on plans for upgrades to the hall, with inputs from all hall users, and we urge you to fund these renovations.

The Wellington Shire held several Emergency Preparedness meetings at the Meerlieu Hall last year, with the suggestion that the Meerlieu Hall could be a critical place of refuge during local disasters such as bush fires or floods. If there was a huge fire in the district there could be large numbers of people seeking shelter at the hall. The existing amenities at the hall would be hopelessly inadequate.

We understand that council budgets are tight, but please remember that the Meerlieu area has NO town, NO school, NO other meeting place and for a long time VERY LITTLE council funds to maintain the building. The local community has had to raise funds for, and do much of the maintenance. We implore you to please fund these upgrades to the one local building we have, so we can continue to maintain a cohesive and supportive community, critical in times with so many mental health issues.

Yours Sincerely,
 Anita Hallett.
 Secretary of the Meerlieu & District Rural Community Group Inc.



Meerlieu Rural Fire Brigade

Mr James Blandford
President
Meerlieu Public Hall Committee of Management

2 May 2024
Ref: NB002

Dear James,

Re: Meerlieu Public Hall Refurbishment / Addition

The Meerlieu Rural Fire Brigade fully supports the development process to improve the amenities of the Meerlieu Public Hall reserve. With only limited facilities in the Meerlieu fire shed the Hall reserve currently provides amenities for the deployment of essential brigade functions. This includes acting as a training space, providing meeting facilities and a location for social gatherings and fundraising.

The hall is a focal point for both the Meerlieu and neighbouring communities of Bengworden and Perry Bridge. Acting as a facility where these communities can gather during challenging times, it also acts as an information centre and distribution hub for relief efforts. As such, it is essential that the hall has the appropriate facilities to support these functions and the community it serves.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Blandford
Secretary Meerlieu Fire Brigade



Meerlieu Cricket Club Inc.
ABN: 66925789508

Scott Ashley
President

1 May 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

The Meerlieu Cricket Club gives its 100% support to the Meerlieu Public Hall and Reserve Committee Inc proposal in seeking funding to upgrade the Meerlieu Hall and Pavilion to bring them up to a modern standard.

The Meerlieu Cricket Club would be considered the main user group of the Public Hall and Reserve, and this has been the case since the club was formed in 1937.

The Cricket Club has been, and continues to be, a very proactive club within the Meerlieu and district community. In the last season the club fielded three senior sides and three junior sides in the Bairnsdale Cricket Association, Winning the U16 premiership and finishing runners up in A Grade. The club also runs a successful Woollies Blaster program and provides community dinners every Thursday night throughout the cricket season.

Although the population of Meerlieu may not be large we are bolstered by players coming from Bairnsdale and Sale to play for our club as it has proven to be a welcoming and enjoyable environment even though we are 30 plus Ks out of town.

One area we would like to build on is our female participation in the game. The cricket club has a long history of advocating for females, our success story has been Lillian Strong. Starting her cricket as an U13, she captained our U16 side, won the U16 batting and bowling average, she was the first female to play A grade, before moving to Melbourne for university where she now plays for Dandenong, in Victorian Premier Cricket (women).

In saying the above, our Club would be the first to acknowledge that our pavilion is far from female friendly. Our committee has been working alongside the Hall committee towards making improvements to the pavilion which has cumulated in the preparation of concept plans to bring the pavilion into compliance with current standards.

We believe the Hall Committee's concept plans for upgrades to the hall and pavilion are a fantastic idea and supports our clubs extremely hard work in fostering community sport within our backyard.

With cricket being the only major outdoor sport played in our district, we see it as important for the wellbeing of the community that cricket continues to be played at our reserve, and to ensure our enduring legacy of having males & females playing at Meerlieu is continued. Having female friendly upgrades of the pavilion would be paramount in achieving this.

We look forward to hearing that the Hall Committee has been successful in obtaining this grant.

Regards

Scott Ashley
President



Bengworden Landcare Group Inc.



6/ 5/ 24

To Whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the Meerlieu and District Community Hall's Management Committee request for inclusion of refurbishments/ renovations to the Meerlieu Hall in Wellington Shire Council's forward budget projections.

The Meerlieu Hall is central to the social and community life of the district. It is an essential resource for the Bengworden Landcare Group which accesses the venue for meetings, workshops, seminars, educational programs, and Landcare celebrations.

The Meerlieu Hall however needs substantial renovations to continue to meet the needs of the district.

The Bengworden Landcare Group considers the Toilets and the Kitchen priority areas for refurbishment to meet the broad needs of the community and to fully meet current and future Occupational Health and Safety requirements.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Maher
President Bengworden Landcare Group.



Meerlieu Anzac Day Committee



3.5.2024

To Whom it May Concern,

As organisers of the Meerlieu Anzac Day commemorations, we strongly support the application by the Meerlieu Hall Committee for Shire support for Meerlieu Hall and Pavilion upgrades.

We have organised Anzac Day commemorations at the Meerlieu Hall and Reserve since 2015 (except in Covid years), on which occasion we launched, in conjunction with the Meerlieu & District Community group, a book co-written by two locals, Sue Deery and Andrea Bush, called "They Answered the Call", which tells the stories of men from the Meerlieu and Bengworden districts who served in the Great War 1914 - 1918.

A feature of our commemorations has been the abundance of young people attending the events and the consistent attendances, with average attendances of about 150 people.

We supply a gunfire breakfast at the conclusion of the commemoration, and it is regularly noted that the kitchen is deficient in several key areas, without proper washup facilities and with power limitations, and the toilets are insufficient in number and not fit for purpose.

Caterers for the gunfire breakfast report that they need to spread toasters, urns and other electrical appliances around the hall, so they avoid tripping circuit breakers by overloading the kitchen electrical circuit.

At this year's event one of our most elderly and frail attendees, who had an official role in proceedings, had difficulty making the long haul from the Pavilion, where there are no toilets, to the Hall, where the disabled toilet is less than satisfactory.

Currently these factors contribute to our inability to attract more attendees to our event.

We regularly draw attendees from local towns, particularly Stratford, Lindenow and Bairnsdale, and if you ask them, they will say that Meerlieu is **their** community.

The Meerlieu Community is alive and growing and deserves a Hall that is fit for purpose.

Regards,

Craig Bush
Meerlieu Anzac Day secretary

No.	5
Submission	Request for Council to conduct a survey of all non-sporting community groups within the Shire to ascertain their existing accommodation issues in order to address a fairer/more balanced allocation of funding into the future.
Correspondent	Jim King

I note that comments on the proposed WSC 2024/25 budget were due 06/05/24 however today I noted the article on the WSC budget in the Gippsland Times edition dated 07/05/24.

In that article I read that the Maffra Lawn Tennis Club were budgeted to receive \$365,000 for an upgrade to their existing lights via the installation of LED lighting and the Maffra Cameron Sporting Complex were budgeted to receive \$920,000 for changeroom upgrades.

Both groups have recently had extensive funding (millions) to renew their clubroom (MLTC) and actually build the facility (MCSC).

Great that both groups can get this level of support however spending up to \$1.3 million to upgrade/update existing facilities seems a luxury considering that a number of non-sporting community groups in Maffra and no doubt throughout the Shire are struggling to upgrade very basic facilities.

In Maffra I refer to the McMillan Rockhounds, the Maffra Angling Club and the Maffra Men's/Women's Shed who either have a very poor facility (Rockhounds), no facility (Angling Club) or are attempting to raise funding to refurbish a former Amenities Block which requires extensive work to bring it up to today's health and safety standards.

Council is aware of the accommodation issues of regarding each group mentioned via the failed attempt to create the Maffra Community Group Activity Hub a number of years ago.

It seems that any organisation within the sporting category is favoured by Council for funding opportunities to the detriment of smaller voluntary community groups within this Shire.

Could/would Council be able to conduct a survey of all non-sporting community groups within the Shire to ascertain their existing accommodation issues in order to address a fairer/more balanced allocation of funding into the future?

I realise that sporting groups provide a large co-hort of voters however all ratepayers deserve to be considered when Council allocates funding via it's annual budgetary process.

Regards

Jim King
Ratepayer

Meeting declared closed at:

The live streaming of this Council meeting will now come to a close.