



WELLINGTON

SHIRE COUNCIL

The Heart of Gippsland

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES UNSCHEDULED MEETING

The purpose of the meeting is to
**Receive and consider submissions relating
to the 2021/22 Draft Budget**

To be read in conjunction with the Unscheduled Council Meeting Agenda 27 May 2021

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cr Garry Stephens (Mayor)
Cr Ian Bye
Cr Carolyn Crossley
Cr Marcus McKenzie
Cr Gayle Maher
Cr Carmel Ripper
Cr John Tatterson
Cr Jill Wood

OFFICERS PRESENT

Arthur Skipitaris, Acting Chief Executive Officer
Brent McAlister, General Manager Development
Chris Hastie, General Manager Built and Natural Environment
Sharon Houlihan, General Manager Community and Culture
Denise Teo, Governance Officer
Wendy Reeves, Coordinator Communications and Media

APOLOGIES

Councillor Scott Rossetti (Deputy Mayor)
David Morcom, Chief Executive Officer

**UNSCHEDULED 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 time during the meeting, members of the gallery may address the Council at which time their image, comments or submissions will be recorded.

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

"We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Gunaikurnai people, and pay respects to their Elders past and present"

PRAYER

"Almighty God, we ask your blessing upon the Wellington Shire Council, its Councillors, officers, staff and their families. We pray for your guidance in our decisions so that the true good of the Wellington Shire Council may result to the benefit of all residents and community groups."

Amen

1. APOLOGIES

COUNCILLOR SCOTT ROSSETTI
DAVID MORCOM, CEO

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT/S OF INTEREST

NIL

3. GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES

3.1. RECEIPT AND CONSIDERATION OF SUBMISSIONS RELATING TO THE 2021/22 DRAFT BUDGET

ACTION OFFICER: GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES

PURPOSE

To receive and consider any verbal and written submissions (as attached) relating to the 2021/22 Draft Budget.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE GALLERY

Kaylene Wheeler, Seaspray Ratepayers and Progress Association – seeking Council support for the construction of an off-road walking trail between Seaspray and The Honeysuckles

Yarram and District Adult Riding Club – seeking support towards the Yarram Equestrian Facility Project

Brian Lucas, Yarram Aero Club – seeking support for funding of the new terminal/training building and hangar development at the Yarram Aerodrome

John Buxton, Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) – seeking support from Council to adopt a dynamic rating strategy

Sandra Grant and Mark Hunt – seeking support from Council to review its rating strategy and spoke in support of the submission from the VFF

Trent Anderson – spoke in support of the submission from the VFF

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive and consider submissions relating to the 2021/22 Draft Budget.

COUNCILLOR TATTERSON / COUNCILLOR BYE

That Council receive and consider submissions relating to the 2021/22 Draft Budget.

CARRIED

BACKGROUND

Council resolved at its meeting held on 20 April 2021:

- To advertise its proposed 2021/22 Draft Budget and proposed differential rates under Section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*; and
- To hear verbal submissions on the 2021/22 Draft Budget on Thursday 27 May 2021 at 3pm.

In accordance with section 96 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council invited interested persons to make written submissions in relation to the 2021/22 Draft Budget by 5pm on 19 May 2021 and to also make verbal submissions at the Council meeting on 27 May 2021.

Council received 11 written submissions (as attached) in response to the 2021/22 Draft Budget and will consider these submissions in conjunction with any verbal submissions prior to the 15 June 2021 Council Meeting, where it will be recommended that the Budget, including any revisions, be adopted.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment for Budget Submissions [3.1.1 - 45 pages]

OPTIONS

Council has the following options available:

1. To receive and consider submissions relating to the 2021/22 Draft Budget; or
2. To seek further information and receive and consider submissions relating to the 2021/22 Draft Budget at a later Council meeting.

PROPOSAL

That Council receive and consider any verbal and written submissions (as attached) relating to the 2021/22 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 2021/22 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 2017-21 Theme 6 Organisational states the following strategic objective and related strategy:

Strategic Objective 6.3: *"Maintain a well governed, transparent, high performing, ethical and accountable organisation."*

Strategy 6.3.1: *"Maintain processes and systems to ensure sound financial management."*

Strategy 6.3.3: *"Ensure sound governance processes that result in responsive, ethical, transparent and accountable decision making."*

This report supports the above Council Plan strategic objectives and strategies.

RESOURCES AND STAFF IMPACT

The consideration of submissions relating to the 2021/22 Draft Budget may have an impact on the level of resources available in the 2021/22 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 2021/22 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 2021/22 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 2021/22 BUDGET SUBMISSIONS

	CORRESPONDENT	SUBMISSION
1.	Seaspray Reserves Committee of Management	Request for various works at Seaspray
2.	Seaspray Reserves Committee of Management	Request for Pump Track at Seaspray
3.	Brent Hanratty	Request to install footpath in Cedar Street, Sale and fix drainage system
4.	Yarram & District Adult Riding Club	Request for \$61,600 towards Yarram Equestrian Facility Project
5.	Women in Gippsland	Request to allocate funding to address the gender gap in place naming and commemoration of women
6.	Yarram Aero Club	Support for funding of new Terminal/training building and East End hangar development at Yarram Aerodrome
7.	Seaspray Ratepayers and Progress Association	Support for construction of Seaspray to Honeysuckles off-road walking trail
8.	John Buxton	That Council alter its rating strategy so that the farming sector does not shoulder an unfair share of the burden
9.	Victorian Farmers Federation	That Council adopt a dynamic rating strategy to maintain the burden across rating sectors
10.	Neil Barraclough	Consequences of the phase out of timber harvesting
11.	Stratford Recreation Reserve Committee	Request for \$30,000 funding for the design and cost planning of Stage 2 Facility Upgrade

No.	1
Submission	Request for various works at Seaspray
Correspondent	Seaspray Reserves Committee of Management

From: Pauline Hitchins
Sent: Monday, 15 March 2021 3:29 PM
To: Bodye Darvill
Subject: Seaspray Consultation followup

Dear Bodye

Apologies for a delayed follow-up: I seem to have lost a week with Sugar Beet Museum and Cemetery commitments!

To recap the input from the Seaspray Reserves Committee of Management -

The key needs for Seaspray are:

1. additional facilities for youngsters, including a pump track
2. any additional attractions which make a visit to Seaspray a more rounded experience
3. extension of the pathway to complete the 'loop' along Centre Road and eventually along Main Road
4. from a business perspective, a more useful General Store (not a council initiative, we know, but anything that encourages this would be worthwhile
5. a dump point for self-contained campers who do not wish to pay to utilise the caravan park.

1. Younger entertainment.

There are playgrounds within the caravan park and on the foreshore (Reserves Committee of Management) and on the Bearup-Buckley Street Memorial Park Reserve (council). The Reserves committee is planning a second playground for very young children within the Caravan Park, but older children/teens are not well catered for.

The Tennis court is available for public use and this could probably be better promoted. There also are basketball rings on one of the four courts. (At present the usage of the courts does not warrant four courts and perhaps one or two could be repurposed or incorporated into the pump track. However, this is dependent on future demand for the courts.)

A pump track has been recommended for the area to the north of the hall carpark and tennis courts bounding (and perhaps utilising) the levee bank. (An alternative site is the Bearup-Buckley Street Memorial Park Reserve.) The Reserves Committee would contribute to the pump track.

The tennis courts and hall usage could also be reviewed - the tennis club folded a couple of years ago but may reform. There have been basketball, table tennis etc in the hall in the

past. These groups no longer exist but there is the potential for informal usage along these lines for holiday makers.

2 - Additional attractions

New uses for the hall, improved amenities (toilet blocks, picnic shelters), additional beach crossovers and walking tracks are some suggestions. The Reserves Committee has installed pathways along the foreshore and a number of crossovers, although there is no support to keep these clear of the shifting sand and limited grant programs. The Ratepayers Association has sought a grant to add to historic signage along the foreshore path.

3 - Pathway extension

The popularity of the path installed along Shoreline Drive has emphasised the need to continue the 'loop' as a matter of urgency. Walkers turn into Centre Road, a busy road providing access to both Seaspray and the Honeysuckles, where the roadside area does not provide a good walking surface and there have already been accidents. The extension of this pathway to the Main Road (or at least as far as the quieter Hansen or Newton streets) is urgently required to enable walkers to complete a loop and link back across the park to the start of the new pathway.

4. - Traders

A major issue for both residents and probably even more so, for visitors, is the lack of a reliable store for general supplies and to cater for take-away meals. Mobile traders are generally present during peak holiday periods but other weekends are poorly catered for, even during summer, when the store is often closed. This is detrimental to the whole town. The Surf Club provides an excellent venue but is too expensive for many families, especially those visiting for more than a day.

5 - Dump point

Self-contained campers and fishermen have caused a number of issues, mainly at the shire managed toilet block near the creek. Fish heads and other waste is often found in the toilets and the toilets have used to empty the grey and black water tanks. There is a dump point for residents of the caravan park but this is not offered to those passing through.

Happy to provide any further information you may require, and thank you for your time to visit Seaspray.

regards
Pauline

No.	2
Submission	Request for Pump Track at Seaspray
Correspondent	Seaspray Reserves Committee of Management

SEASPRAY RESERVES COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

John Morgan
Chairman –

Pauline Hitchins
Secretary –

Email – Seasprayvic@outlook.com

**PO Box 557
MAFFRA Vic 3860**

ABN 36 354 838 026

March 2021

SEASPRAY PUMP TRACK PROPOSAL



SEASPRAY PUMP TRACK PROPOSAL

THE TOWN

Seaspray is a small coastal town in the Wellington Shire situated towards the southern end of the Ninety Mile Beach, 32 kilometres south of Sale.

Its normal population is around 350 but this swells by many hundreds during summer holidays with holiday home owners and caravan park residents and day visitors. The Honeysuckles nearby has another 80-100 permanent residents.

The Surf Life Saving Club bistro, a general store and a kiosk at the caravan park service the town (as well as a regular supermarket delivery).

The Memorial Park and the foreshore feature lawns, barbecues and picnic shelters, a playground (and war memorial in the Park) and there's a hall and tennis courts adjacent to the caravan park.

The Ninety Mile Beach is Seaspray's main attraction and is used for swimming, surfing, just walking along the sand, beachcombing and, of course, surf fishing.

Merriman Creek skirts around Seaspray's western edge, opening up to a wide waterway as it meets the Ninety Mile Beach. Near the mouth of the creek is a fishing platform and picnic shelter.

TOURISM

Tourism in its various forms is the only real 'business' of the town – from holiday home owners on regular visits, campers in the caravan park and day trippers with a variety of interests from a day out to swimming and fishing etc.

The modern 238-site caravan park attracts many visitors including a number of 'annuals' and many more who return on a regular basis throughout the year.

However the town compares poorly to other options nearby and further afield with little entertainment beyond a couple of playgrounds, the tennis court and the surf club bistro.

There is no golf club or choice of venues and no private attractions such as Lakes Entrance or other centres can boast.

While this provides a relaxing family-friendly atmosphere, deliberately chosen by the majority of visitors, the complete lack of facilities for older children is a major issue.

A PUMP TRACK

The growing popularity of Pump Tracks across the shire, illustrate how these facilities cater for a wide range of age groups and provide excellent value for money. A pump track would provide an alternative venue and discourage youngsters on bicycles speeding, both within the caravan park and along the town's streets.

The Seaspray Reserves Committee of Management has been promoting the idea of a Pump Track within the town and has received excellent support from the local community.

The Committee's suggested location is in Fatcher street in an area to the north of the Hall carpark and the tennis courts adjacent to, and perhaps utilizing part of the levee bank.

Uses of the tennis courts and the hall could also be incorporated in a revamp of the area. The tennis club disbanded a couple of years ago and the courts are mainly used by occasional casual players. There was a successful tournament this year but, unless this interest continues, it is hard to justify maintaining all four courts.

SEASPRAY PUMP TRACK PROPOSAL

There are basketball rings between two and this could be enhanced as a half court and part of the tennis courts incorporated in the pump track.

The Hall also contains facilities for basketball and previously hosted other sports such as table tennis. These groups are no longer active and provision for casual usage may be appropriate if insurance issues can be resolved.



Proposed location of Seaspray pump track.

FUNDING

The Seaspray Reserves Committee of Management would underwrite half the expected \$85,000 - \$100,000 cost of a pump track but would require Council and other grant funding to implement the track project.

The high profile location of the proposed track in Futcher street would attract considerable interest, although alternative locations in the Buckley – Bearup Streets reserve could be considered.



No.	3
Submission	Request to install footpath in Cedar Street, Sale and fix drainage system
Correspondent	Brent Hanratty

Put a footpath in Cedar st and fix the drainage system (street floods every time it rains)



No.	4
Submission	Request for \$61,600 towards Yarram Equestrian Facility Project
Correspondent	Yarram & District Adult Riding Club

3rd May 2021

Wellington Shire Community Budget Submission

REQUESTED BUDGET FUNDING \$61,600

Organisation: Yarram & District Adult Riding Club

Yarram Equestrian Facility Project

We have been in discussions with the Wellington Shire Council since July 2019 about our plans to develop safe and effective equestrian facilities at the Yarram Recreation Reserve. Our aim is to promote the equestrian sport for both adults and children in the local area and provide a destination for equestrian events and clinics for wider communities to visit our local area.

The Yarram & District Adult Riding club is affiliated with the Horse Riding Clubs of Victoria (HRCV) and the Yarram & District Pony Club is affiliated with the Pony Club Association of Victoria (PCAV). The Yarram and District Pony Club and Riding Club have a strong history in the Yarram area extending over 55 years. Over this time the clubs have had up to 50 riding members. Members compete widely in up to State level events, very successfully. The Yarram and District Pony Club offer a range of disciplines including riders without horses, show jumping, dressage, camps, certificates, and others.

Partly due to the lack of and quality of facilities, they have not been able to retain the members and the required space to run their activities. Parents have become concerned about the safety of their children and sought other clubs that offer safer and better facilities.

The improvements to safety and the longevity of our clubs have been the driving factors to develop such a facility. Since 2014-2016 when the Yarram Recreation Reserve was developed with the new RW May Pavilion and netball courts, our safety fences were removed (and not replaced) from our riding area and our limited space had these developments placed within them. This has caused both clubs to suffer extensive safety issues, with no enclosed riding space, no safe day yards and no fencing to contain a horse should it get loose. On top of this, we are also competing with the footballers, netballers and cricketers using the grounds at the same time as us, often encroaching on our current limited space.

We note that the fenced Equestrian Arena was noted as a high priority on the Wellington Shire 2017 Master Plan for Yarram Recreation Reserve.



Yarram Equestrian Facility Plan

Stage 1 – COMPLETE

Building of New Clubroom – Construction Completed March 2021 (Cost To Date \$47,924, Current Contribution by Yarram Riding Club and Pony Club \$23,894. Funding from LVA Grant \$24,030.



Building of our new clubrooms was achieved by the fundraising completed by the adult riding club holding the State Championships in 2015 and the Grant received from the Latrobe Valley Authority. This shed will enable us to have a space for our storage of equipment, pony club theory activities (for pony and non-pony owners), shared kitchen area with the Yarram Show Society and to have a safe toilet area for the children. This area will be used by the children and adults on a regular basis (at least twice a month)

This new arena will be developed in the 7 acre paddock away from the Football/cricket oval and netball courts (see diagram left).

Total Requested Budget Submission is for the Fenced Arena Build Cost of \$61,600 Inc GST. Arena per quote \$52,800 attached at Annexure 2 plus \$8,800 in materials for fences being completed by our club members.

Our Clubs cannot financially contribute additional funds to the fenced arena build. This is due to our clubs recently contributing majority of our funds of \$23,894 into the recent Yarram Ag Show Society Shed Extension. The shed construction is now complete with our clubs moving to the south end of the Recreation Reserve. This Shed Extension still requires us to contribute additional funds with fencing between the Yarram Recreation Reserve and the Reserve's back paddock to be updated and provide access points to our shed. We also need to allow funds to finalise the drainage from our shed and complete driveway access points within the paddock. Without the fenced arena we do not have the necessary facilities to grow our memberships and/or hold events to raise additional funds.

Stage 2 – CURRENT STAGE

Building of Safe Riding Facilities (Fenced Arena) & Day Yards

Detailed Plan at Annexure 1

Our second stage will involve the building of a fenced outdoor arena, 20 Day Yards and improve the fencing between our shed and the new area.

A meeting was held with the Yarram Campdrafters Association on the 3rd January 2021 to ensure alignment of all clubs future use of the facility. All clubs agreed on the location of the new outdoor arena and day yards per the diagram attached.

Funding Applications have been prepared for the following Grants:

Wellington Shire Community Facility Grant



Project Financial Budget

Costs:	Inc GST
Yarram Equestrian Facility Feasibility Study	\$5,500
New Shed Clubrooms	\$47,924
Professionally Built - 65m x 25m Arena BUDGET SUBMISSION FUNDING REQUEST	\$52,800
Fencing of Arena – Materials BUDGET SUBMISSION FUNDING REQUEST	\$8,800
Fencing of Arena – In-Kind Contributions	\$3,360
Wash Bay(s) – Materials	\$2,000
Wash Bay(s) – In-Kind Contributions	\$640
20 Horse Yards – Materials	\$5,000
20 Horse Yards – In-Kind Contributions	\$2,620
Fencing between New shed & Riding Facility (Either Chainmesh or Colorbond)	\$2,000 (Fence to paddock not Included as should be able to receive funding from fence allowance in Yarram Rec Reserve.
Driveways & Drainage - Materials	\$5,000
Driveways & Drainage – In-Kind Contributions	\$2,400
Total Costs	\$138,044

Contributions	
Yarram & District Adult Riding Club/Pony Club Contributions	\$43,514
Victorian Government Latrobe Valley Authority Grant	\$24,030
Wellington Shire Community Assistance Grant "Yarram Equestrian Future Planning" (October 2019)	\$4,000
<i>Wellington Shire Community Facility Grant*</i>	<i>\$4,900</i>
Total Contributions before Budget Submission	\$76,444
Budget Submission Funds Requested	\$61,600
Total Project Contributions	\$138,044

*Subject to approval.

Example of Fenced Riding Arena



Example of Day Yards



Example of Wash Bay



Stage 3– Building of an Indoor Competition & Training Complex

A feasibility study was conducted on the development of an indoor facility at the Yarram Recreation Reserve and provided to the Wellington Shire in October 2020. It has been suggested by the Wellington shire that the next step will require a strategic plan. We have engaged with a planner to develop the strategic plan and are awaiting the outcome of our grant application for this process. By having our outdoor arena professionally built, it will allow this arena to be developed into the indoor facility should this be a successful project to undertake in the future.

Annexure 1 – Detailed Plan



ANNEXURE 2

QUOTATION NO: 1078



DATE: 25/1/21

PH: 0417289898

EMAIL: admin@equibuildarenas.com.au
 ABN - 98624623109

Attention Caroline Epskamp

DESCRIPTION: Arena Construction	AMOUNT
<p style="text-align: center;">Yarram Equestrian Centre</p> <p><u>Arena Construction</u> Arena size to be constructed is a 65 x 25 arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - site set out of arena location - site scrape of vegetation to be stock piled only - site cut of arena with 1.% fall two ways for drainage reasons down to natural ground - supply and install 150mm of 40mm stabilising rock for arena sub base, laser graded, rolled and compacted - supply and install 70mm of crusher dust laser graded, rolled and compacted - supply and install 70 mm arena blend sand base laser graded - supply and install 100mm river pebbles for spood drainage trenches and wall batters - all excavated soil to be stock piled with in 10m of arena cut loaction can be taken away at an extra discussed quote - excavator hire - bob cat hire - tandem and truck and trailer hire - roller hire for compaction for all crushed rock layers - laser guided equipment hire - float of all equipment to and from site included <p>FOOTNOTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no allowance for importing fill or filling up of arena area cut only - no fencing included in this quote - \$ 15,000 deposit required prior or on start date. - upon approval of this quote a contract will be drawn up and signed by owner and Equibuild Arenas - no fencing included - any rock, under ground springs, existing drainage systems or unknown problems beneath the ground causing design changes may be extra costs - extra works can be done at hourly rates to be discussed - no tree, structure or fencing removal included 	
TOTAL EXCLUDING GST	\$48,000
	\$ 4,800.00
TOTAL INCLUDING GST	\$ 52,800.00

No.	5
Submission	Request to allocate funding to address the gender gap in place naming and commemoration of women
Correspondent	Women in Gippsland



May 11, 2021
 CEO
 Wellington Shire Council

Dear David

RE: 21/22 budget submission

I am writing on behalf of the Put Her Name On It (PHNOI) Campaign and Women in Gippsland to submit the following budget submission for consideration. With thanks we acknowledge the progress Wellington have already made and agreed to but request the other steps, resources or budgets are still considered for the following reasons.

During 2020 and 2021 the PHNOI campaign has gathered significant traction across Victoria. Among many wins was the Geographic Names Victoria review of the Naming of Places in Victoria guidelines with a strong focus on gender equality and cultural identity in place naming. The review will be finalised this year which is highly likely to create foundational change for place naming equality and create greater requirements on authorities like Councils to follow suit.

With the Gender Equality Act 2020 now in place and the need for gender impact assessments on new and reviewed services, programs and policies that have a direct and significant impact on communities, the opportunity to address place naming inequality is now more important than ever.

With low numbers of place naming and other public place commemoration of women globally and locally we are asking LGAs to follow the below actions and allocate the required budget as a starting point to addressing this identified gender gap:

- 👉 Audit place names for gender – internal 220 hrs or outsourced \$20,000
- 👉 Acknowledge the gender-gap – free
- 👉 Amend place name policies – free
- 👉 Accumulate a list of notable local women and their stories – previous committed made.
- 👉 Act to ensure gender balance in place names – place naming free. We encourage you to allocate your existing art acquisition budget or another arts/public place budget to creating public art projects that recognise a range of notable and diverse women or allocate at least \$75,000 each and every year as a demonstrated commitment to public place naming and commemoration of women.

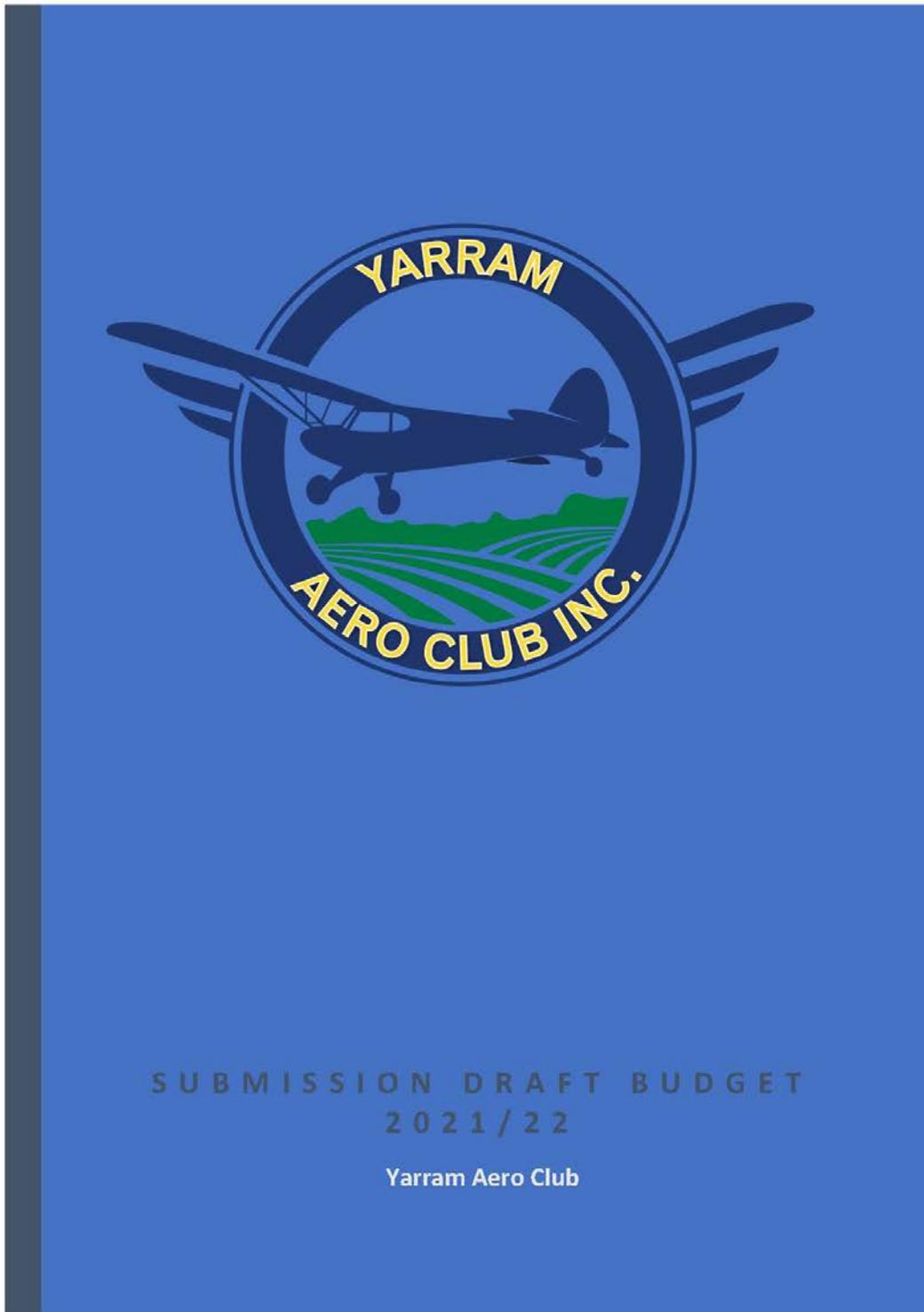
The above has been based on a work undertaken by Bass Coast Shire Council and may need to be adjusted to meet your specific needs.

We acknowledge that this submission may be read out in Council, published on the website and recorded in the minutes.

Kind Regards

Kerry Wilson on behalf of Women in Gippsland

No.	6
Submission	Support for funding of new Terminal/training building and East End hangar development at Yarram Aerodrome
Correspondent	Yarram Aero Club



Submission in support of Yarram aerodrome improvements draft budget 2021/22

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward a submission to Council Draft Budget 2021/22 in which Yarram Aerodrome has been allocated funding, for the following

\$180k - Landside development.
\$80K – Eastend hanger development
\$300K- Safety fencing.

It has become increasingly evident that we need to keep improving this aerodrome to cater for the ever-growing list of user groups who are seeking to use this facility.

Examples of users: -

- *Emergency services
- *Charter and freight company
- *Training organisations
- * GA and recreational flyers
- * YSC students
- * Local community groups

Yarram aerodrome is uniquely situated in that it is accessible to all aviators seven days a week below 4,000 ft which is a contributing factor to its popularity.

The Yarram Aero Club was reformed some 8 years ago, starting with just 11 members, that number has now increased to over 30 members (170%).

During this time the club has been focused on increasing the visibility of the aerodrome, through events and community engagement such as the air show in 2018, regular open days, a recent landing competition and the installation of Avgas fuel.

Our committees are dedicated to growing and improving this facility for the wider community.

The club has also been able to grow a relationship with council with the formation of the Aerodrome Representative Group.

This groups holds regular meetings with council representatives with the vision of achieving goals, making the aerodrome useful and functional while ensuring a return on investment for the ratepayers of Wellington Shire, as well as spin off for the local community.

In the 2021/22 draft budget council has highlighted \$180,000 for landside development. This is an area we would like to see underway as soon as possible.

The current building portrays a very poor image of the aerodrome and our corner of Wellington Shire.

It is run down and uninviting.

We feel that by working together we can build a multi use Terminal/ Training building that would meet the needs of all users and the general public.

One that is not just visually appealing, but contains a radio room, toilets, storeroom, pilot briefing room, kitchen and public waiting area which has tourist information facilities included. *Please see attached document.*

Yarram Aerodrome is one of a few aerodromes experiencing growth.

Our aerodrome has an opportunity for even further growth, given the number of renewable energy companies seeking to gain planning approval for projects in the area.

As well as untapped tourism potential.

We believe the time is right to invest in the aerodrome.

By building a facility that is spacious and functional and has the ability to fulfill needs for all users is an investment for now and the future.

The East End hanger development is another great opportunity for council, given there is currently no room for any new hangers at the present site.

The club receives many inquiries to build hangers at Yarram Aerodrome and by developing the east end of the aerodrome and leasing land for aviators to build their hangers it presents yet another opportunity for return on investment for council.

This development makes good commercial sense.

Yarram aerodrome draft budget submission 2021/22

New building - Landside

Current commercial uses of the aerodrome

Flinders Island Transport

AG Operations

City based flying schools

RAAF – approach training

ESSO – R NAV training

Helimed operations

Charter operations: celebrity, Politicians, Air survey (windfarm)

Private:

Yarram Aero Club

General Aviation (GA) and Recreational flyers

Building

Users:

Public taking charter flights

Visiting aircraft operators

Emergency services – Helimed and fixed wing air ambulance and is in an ideal location for fire ops

Yarram Secondary College

Yarram Aero Club

Community groups

Benefits

Replace existing, deteriorating infrastructure

Modernise the entrance to Yarram district

Provide safe and secure facilities in the one building

Enhance students learning environment.

Increase and foster the growth in aviation.

Why

The aerodrome is an essential community asset.

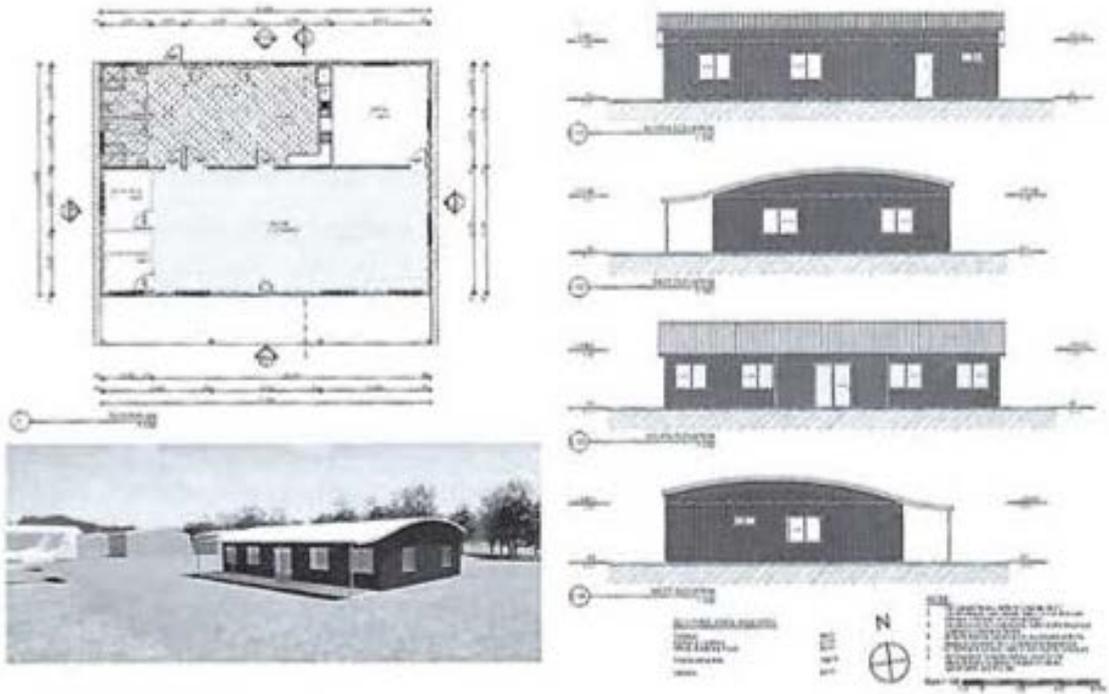
This aerodrome is perfectly placed, giving access to commercial, GA and recreational flyers seven days a week.

Potential for tourism and spin offs for the local economy.

Shortage of pilots – needs grass roots training

How

Local builder/project manager is happy to partner with the aero club to ensure project is built for maximum benefit for the dollars spent.



Terminal concept drawing added 2.12.20

Hanger space – East End development

Users:

Can be a mix of private and commercial aviation and related business.

Why:

No further sites available

Planned approach can be taken

Lot of inquiry

Needs a solid commitment to develop.

How:

Open the area for construction to begin

Develop the taxiway as demand increases

Market the site.

Benefits

Spin off for local economy

Commercial return to Wellington Shire

Utilise the large area available

Easy to design taxiways

Easy access to site

Increase activity

Low-cost development

Makes attractive alternative to maintenance organisations from larger centres due to urban

Creep and high costs.

No.	7
Submission	Support for construction of Seaspray to Honeysuckles off-road walking trail
Correspondent	Seaspray Ratepayers & Progress Association



18th May 2022

David Morcum,
Chief Executive Officer,
Wellington Shire Council,
18 Desailly Street,
Sale, Victoria 3850

Dear David,



As President of the Seaspray Ratepayers and Progress Association and also member of the Seaspray Reserves CoMI would like to thank you for sending me the “Proposed Seaspray to Honeysuckles Off-road Walking Trail” documentation.

Our submission for this trail has been presented to Council over a period of many years and we now feel that we are moving forward in the investigation, planning and costing of this project.

After consultation with community members, some of whose responses are attached to this letter, I am wholeheartedly convinced that there is overwhelming support for this development initiative. As a community we are working hard to grow and develop Seaspray and environs into a premier tourist destination. Major projects undertaken in recent years (e.g. the new Lifesaving Club, the new Caravan Park, community playground, tree planting projects and projects which are preserving our local history) as well as minor projects (e.g. the creation of gardens in our parks and countless community working bees) are all huge improvements which are making Seaspray a place to live, rent or to visit for a beach holiday.

The Seaspray Ratepayers and Progress Association vice-president, Zoe Curtis, has succinctly summarised all of those aspects needing your attention when considering our submission for this project. She has outlined all aspects relating to township connectiveness, pedestrian and cyclist safety, health and recreation, growth of tourism and home ownership and also providing a sense of place and community pride. We ask that you read her summary carefully and consider all aspects. We also request that Council consider prioritising ongoing funding for this project for the ongoing development of our town.

Kindest regards and thanks,

Kaylene Wheeler



Zoe Curtis

May 18, 2021

To whom it may concern, I write to you regarding the proposed off-road walking track between the twin townships of Seaspray and the Honeysuckles on the 90 Mile Beach. I have holidayed at Seaspray my entire life and for the past three and a half years have lived in the town permanently with my husband and two young children. I am currently a member of the Seaspray Surf Life Saving Club, the vice-president of the Seaspray Ratepayers' Association and the managing editor of Celebrate Seaspray, which is both a community Facebook page with more than 4400 followers and a quarterly print newsletter. Through all of these roles I believe I am very much in touch with the pulse of our community and across what facilities will best address their needs. I am in no doubt that an off-road walking track between Seaspray and the Honeysuckles is a vital development for the following reasons:

- **Council commitment:** in its 2012 strategic plan, Wellington Shire Council stated 'it will assist and support communities to promote walking and cycling in the Wellington Shire, and that planning will continue to incorporate opportunities for residents and visitors to walk and cycle to key destinations for leisure'. Since that time walking paths have been built in Longford, Wurruk and Alberton, and it is now time for council to make good on its plan commitment to Seaspray and the Honeysuckles.

- **Safety:** many residents and holidaymakers already use this route as an unofficial walking track, which presents a significant safety concern given the 100km/hr speed limit along much of the stretch and no existing road shoulder. I will always remember walking this stretch myself during the June long weekend in 2020 and being stunned by the number of others doing the same. It felt almost as busy as Melbourne's Tan walking track and was a clear demonstration of just how popular a formal off-road walking track for this area would be. There are many anecdotal accounts of near-misses between pedestrians, bike-riders and vehicles and our community lives in fear of one of these near-misses not actually missing at all.

- **Community connection:** while Seaspray and the Honeysuckles are less than 3km apart, the two towns see themselves as one united force, and a walking track would play an integral part in increased connectivity between the two towns. Both towns have experienced a significant increase in population in the past few years as well as new home construction. As the dual populations increase, so too will the existing usage of the road and use of the current unofficial pedestrian route.

- **Tourism:** domestic tourism has boomed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and Seaspray has not been immune from this flow-on effect. The Seaspray Caravan Park reported its most popular summer ever in January 2021 with many holidaymakers being first-time visitors to our town (and a high percentage promised they'd be back!). Airbnb recently reported a 1500 per cent increase in demand for regional Victorian getaways and the Victorian Government's regional travel voucher scheme saw more than \$112 million spent in regional trips in the past five months. A walking track

adjacent to the world-famous 90 Mile Beach will offer collateral that can be promoted by Council and Destination Gippsland to further enhance the appeal of the Gippsland region.

- **Community desire:** our community wants this track; we need this track. Our community has been lobbying Council for nine years to budget for the walking track and in January 2020 more than 1000 Seaspray locals and holidaymakers passionately signed a position supporting the proposal. This petition was presented to Council and in March 2020, more than 20 residents gathered on the road as a show of support for the proposal (as reported in the Gippsland Times on March 3, 2020). A desire for a walking track is also fiercely lobbied for at the monthly ratepayers' meetings and the time has come for Council to listen to its ratepayers.

- **Health and fitness:** the health and fitness benefits of this walking track are obvious as the track would be used by walkers, bike-riders and young families with prams and young children on scooters. While we do have access to a beautiful beach that is often a beautiful place for a stroll, weather and tide conditions mean it isn't always suitable for fitness.

Seaspray is a proud, independent town and our community doesn't ask the Wellington Shire Council for much. When things need doing our community members often simply roll up their sleeves and do it themselves. We are also mindful of the fact that much of Seaspray's charm lies in the fact that it isn't over-run with development and we have always carefully tried to strike the right balance between improving our facilities while maintaining the natural, under-developed charm of our town. So, when we do ask for help, it's not something we do lightly. But it's time for Council to make good on its commitment in its 2012 Strategic Plan and to build Seaspray and the Honeysuckles a walking track that will connect the two communities; that will keep its residents safe and that will attract tourists to our beautiful stretch of beach. As the EthosNRM document prepared for Wellington Shire Council clearly shows, the costs of such a track are significant. It also requires the full support of Council to bring together the many stakeholders who would be involved in the project. It is for this reason that I request your full consideration for this proposal and your full support for implementing it.

If you would like to discuss this with me in more detail, I can be contacted on _____ or at _____
Thank you for your consideration and for your support of Seaspray.

Kind regards,

Zoe Curtis

Seaspray  *On The Fabulous 90 Mile Beach*
Caravan Park

Kaylene Wheeler
Seaspray Ratepayers Association
Seaspray Hall
Futcher Street VIC 3851

Re –Connected Infrastructure Seaspray / Honeysuckles.

Please find this letter of support.

As a tourism operator in Seaspray both the local community and visiting guests are increasingly looking for the provision of walking and cycling to enhance the experience while living and visiting on the Ninety Mile Beach.

With several access paths to the Ninety Mile Beach off Shoreline Drive, further enhancement to both local communities' long term will create a safe healthy environment.

The need to provide a permanent connected Infrastructure between Seaspray and Honeysuckle's is long overdue.

Warm regards

St Courtney
Stewart Courtney
Manager

PO Box 19 Seaspray VIC 3851
Telephone: 03 5146 4364
Email: hello@seaspraycaravanpark.com
www.seaspraycaravanpark.com.au
A.B.N 36 354 838 026

To Wellington Shire Council,

Our names are Maggie & Gary Evison,

We bought our land in The Honeysuckles in 1991, at that time it was a very small community in this beautiful part of Gippsland. We had our house built in 2005 and moved down permanently in the May.

Over the years it has grown at a tremendous rate, especially these last few years.

We have been trying, (through The Seaspray Ratepayers Association) for a long time to get a walking path to Seaspray, while watching other towns get walking tracks and all sorts of improvements, well we believe it is now our turn as we certainly pay more than our fair share of rates.

As for myself I can't walk on the beach anymore as eventually I'll need a hip replacement, I still like to walk for exercise but it's not safe on the road to do so.

A footpath would make such a big difference to many people here in The Honeysuckles and Seaspray.

At Council you will know how many houses are here now and the large influx of people we get in the holiday times and on weekends so we certainly believe it would be worthwhile and safer for our communities. Kaylene, with the backing of the people, have done a tremendous job of pushing this forward.

It's Time.

Kind Regards,
Maggie & Gary Evison

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to support the submission for a walking track between Seaspray and The Honeysuckles. People in The Honeysuckles are members of The Seaspray Ratepayers Association too and they, along with residents and holiday makers in Seaspray have submitted a petition with over 900 signatures.

A walking and cycling track between the two towns would connect the two communities, who eat meals at Seaspray's Surf Club and shop and collect their mail at the general store.

The new track would remove the need for cyclists and pedestrians to use the roadway and would be ideal for exercise without having to worry about traffic. Youngsters would be able to cycle safely from The Honeysuckles to swim at the patrolled beach in Seaspray and attend the tennis courts and future pump track. The walking and cycling track would be a great asset for our holiday makers and tourists at the Caravan Park in Seaspray. Foreign tourists are always asking where they can go for long walks and bike rides.

It's time Seaspray and the Honeysuckles were recognized as a tourist destination; we want visitors to have a memorable experience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Birgit and Chris Sarsfield

It's well worth having a walking cycling path between Seaspray and the Honeysuckles for two reasons.

1. Safety. Many people use the road for walking and cycling exercise. The speed limit is 100kph along that stretch of the road. There have been many near misses between vehicles and people walking and cycling on the road. There is also a big increase of traffic both cars and pedestrians at holiday time especially younger families with small children.

2. Our two towns are both expanding in population, especially the Honeysuckles, which has had a boom in new houses in the past two years creating more use of the road.

Mick Fremlin. (Honeysuckles resident)

No.	8
Submission	That Council alter its rating strategy so that the farming sector does not shoulder an unfair share of the burden
Correspondent	John Buxton

Submission to Wellington Shire Budget for 2021/22.

From Buxton Ag

Buxton Ag is a farming business based at Stratford and Bundalaguah.

We produce wool, sheep meat and beef. Our product is sold on the export market.

All of our Livestock are processed in Victorian abattoirs.

We employ shearers, shed hands and casual station hands at busy times of the year such as lamb marking. In addition to that we employ contractors for jobs such as fencing and farm infrastructure up grades and development.

All of our business supplies and labour requirements are sourced locally. All of our economic activity benefits our local community.

I have attached the history of our rates bill since 2009/2010.

You will notice that the bill has risen from \$7958.43 to \$16201.61. In that time, it has doubled. An annual average increase of 8.66 % PA for the 12 years.

If you look at the attached chart you will see that if a 2% rate cap had been applied as it should have been, our rates bill for 2020/21 would have been \$9701.28.

This is not sustainable or justifiable. It makes us very angry and it also makes us feel very threatened. The question is how much will it be in 5- or 10-years' time if this trend continues. In excess of \$40,000 or \$50,000? It begs the question, are you trying to rate your farmers out of business?

It is impossible for us to budget ahead for this cost which is the biggest of our overhead costs.

Every year when this bill arrives, we have to adjust our budget to pay it. This means taking money away from productive inputs and much needed capital works up grades. Or we have to reduce the amount, of drawings we pay our selves so that we can pay the rates.

Now if I could cut a deal with the shire, I would happily pay you half that amount. I think a figure of \$8,000 pa would be a fair figure.

What could we do with the \$8,000 freed up by the rate reduction?

As farmers we have to invest in our business. If we do not the business productivity declines and the farm infrastructure starts to fall down around our ears. So, when we make some money, we do one of two things with it. We salt it away so that we have reserves that will get through the next drought and we invest it in the business.

The nature of our business is that we are impacted by wildly fluctuating seasonal conditions and international markets. In some years we have to sustain big losses and in other years we make some good profits. Our biggest enemy is ever increasing input costs.

What would we do with \$8,000 if it was freed up from the non-productive overhead cost? I have outlined 3 options below.

1/ At a cost of \$10,000 a klm for the fencing contractor to erect fencing that gets us another 800 meters of new or replaced fencing. I estimate we have over 10 klm of fencing that we can justify doing for both renewal of existing fencing and new subdivisional fencing that would increase productivity.

2/Or at a cost of \$140 a hectare for seed to sow (that is without the tractor, fuel, drill and tractor driver) we could sow 57 hectares with new hard seeded deep-rooted legumes that have roots which can penetrate to a depth of 2 meters. Now this is really significant. We are looking at plants that have recently become available to us that offer to make a significant improvement to productivity by fixing nitrogen, feeding sheep (seed pods) through dry times and contributing to a better environment because of their ability to tap deep moisture and add carbon to the soil at depth. This is a win for the whole community.

3/ Or we could go to the bank with \$8,000 to service a farm development loan. If we assume that the interest rate is 5% pa that would pay the interest for a loan of \$160,000. Now that funds a decent farm development program and all of the money and the additional income generated as a result of the farm development program would be spent in our local community. Agriculture and farmers are very good for your community.

If you were to extend the above examples across all of the farms in the shire it would provide a massive economic stimulus to the whole shire community.

In conclusion I would like to say that the rating system employed by the Wellington Shire where our business has been slugged with an annual increase of 8.66% pa is neither fair nor sustainable.

The rating burden placed on the farming community has been increased at a rate greater than the Fair Go Rating System and increased at a higher rate than the rest of the community has been asked to shoulder.

Council needs to re think the rating strategy with a view to ensuring that massive increases are not placed on the community and one sector is not asked to shoulder an unfair share of the burden.

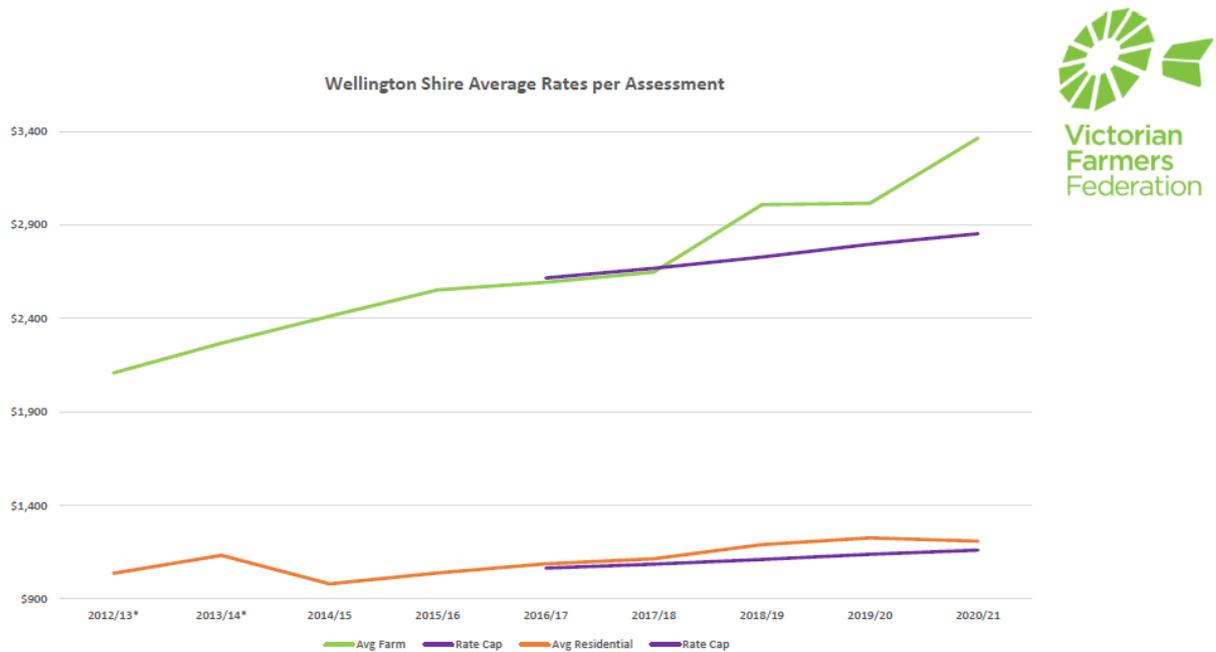
To that end I would point to the proposed set out in the Victorian Farmers Federation submission presented to the shire on the 14th May 2021 and the offer of assistance to re think the shire rating strategy.

John Buxton

Address	2009/2010	2014/2015	2015/2016	Total \$ 2018/2019	Total \$ 2019/2020	Total \$ 2020/2021	Increase	
		\$ 5,976.04	\$ 6,241.07	\$ 6,799.77	\$ 7,882.63	\$ 8,523.00	\$ 1,082.86	16%
		\$ 1,040.67	\$ 1,082.38	\$ 1,201.74				0%
		\$ 1,040.67	\$ 1,082.38	\$ 1,206.15	\$ 2,227.44	\$ 3,171.63	\$ 1,021.29	85%
		\$ 3,178.97	\$ 3,304.89	\$ 3,612.71	\$ 3,920.49	\$ 4,506.98	\$ 307.78	9%
Total	\$7,958.43	\$11,236.35	\$11,710.72	\$12,820.37	\$14,030.56	\$ 16,201.61		
Increase		\$ 3,277.92	\$ 474.37	\$ 1,109.65	\$ 1,210.19	\$ 2,171.05		
% Increase		41%	4%	9%	9%	15%		
Since Financial year 2009/2010 to 2020/2021 our rates bill has doubled.						\$ 16,201.61		
It has gone up from \$7958.43 in 2009/2010 to \$16,201.61 for 20/21 financial year.						7958.43		
That is an average increase of 8.66 % per year.						\$ 8,243.18		
						104%		
If the 2% cap had been applied.	2009/10	\$7,958.43	\$ 159.17					
	2010/11	\$8,117.60	\$ 162.35					
	2011/12	\$8,279.95	\$ 165.60					
	2012/13	\$8,445.55	\$ 168.91					
	2013/14	\$8,614.46	\$ 172.29					
	2014/15	\$8,786.75	\$ 175.73					
	2015/16	\$8,962.48	\$ 179.25					
	2016/17	\$9,141.73	\$ 182.83					
	2018/19	\$9,324.57	\$ 186.49					
	2019/20	\$9,511.06	\$ 190.22					
	2020/21	\$9,701.28	\$ 194.03	Difference of \$6500.33.				

Wellington Shire Council Draft Budget 2020/21

Average Rates Per Farm Assessment 2020/21	Change per farm assesment from 2019/20	Average Rates Per Residential Assessment 2020/21	Change per residential assesment from 2019/20	Farm Rate Burden 2019 (% contribution to total general rates from agriculture)	Farm Rate Burden 2020 (% contribution to total general rates from agriculture)
\$3,364	11.58	\$1,209	-1.44	18.43	20.25



*General rate including commercial assessments

No.	9
Submission	That Council adopt a dynamic rating strategy to maintain the burden across rating sectors
Correspondent	Victorian Farmers Federation

Cr Garry Stephens
Mayor
Wellington Shire Council
18 Desailly Street
SALE, VIC 3850



19 May 2021

Dear Mayor Stephens,

RE: Submission to Wellington Shire Draft Budget 2021/22

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) welcomes the opportunity to put forward this submission to Wellington Shire Council's Draft Budget 2021/22.

Over the last eight years, local farm businesses have seen a near exponential rise in their rate bills, yet residential rates have remained at or near the State Government's Fair Go Rate Cap. Whilst the VFF is welcomes Council's equitable increase to rates across rating sectors for 2021/22, we are concerned that this has only come about due to increased demand for residential properties and softening demand for farmland within the Shire, and not by the design of Council's rating strategy.

The VFF recommends that Council look at implementing a more adaptive and dynamic rating strategy that seeks to implement more equitable rate increases across property classes year on year. The principle of differential rating should be that where one property sector's value increases disproportionately to the others, the rate in the dollar should be actively adjusted to maintain the rating burden across all sectors.

The farming community cannot be expected to continue to endure the most from continued rate increases that results in less funds available to farmers to invest in their businesses, to create economic activity and to provide local jobs.

The VFF is committed to ensuring equity for all rural and regional ratepayers. We look forward to being able to continue working with the Wellington Shire Council to achieve positive outcomes for the farming community in Gippsland and welcome any opportunity to discuss Council's future rating strategy plans.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Germano
President

Understanding equity issues with the rating system

The VFF believes there are five major inequities associated with the local government rating system:

- Farmers in general pay more in rates than residents in urban areas.
- Rating structures rarely account for the ability to pay and farmers' ability to pay rates fluctuates to a far greater degree than wage and salary earners.
- Farmers in general use few of the services they pay for through rates and are provided in urban areas.
- Land is a farmers' working capital and is taxed disproportionately compared with the working capital owned by other people and businesses.
- Victoria's rating system produces vast inequalities between metropolitan and regional ratepayers which compounds pressures faced by farm ratepayers.

The current model of using land valuations for striking rates places undue financial stress on farming businesses as the value attributed to farm land does not reflect farm businesses' revenue generation nor capacity to pay. As a wealth tax, the rating system fails because it only taxes one form of wealth being real property, and no other forms of wealth such as shares. This has a disproportionate impact on farm businesses, as they require large amounts of land in order to produce an income.

What's more, farmers' incomes fluctuate because they are more exposed to factors beyond their control including seasonal variability such as rainfall, natural disasters and changes in international commodity markets. These factors have little impact on land values, but have a significant impact on farmers' incomes and ability to pay. Businesses in other industries are also far less exposed to the impact of these factors.

The burden of rates on individual businesses is difficult to quantify given that every farm business is different. However the VFF estimates that council rates represent anywhere between 2 to 15 per cent of a farm businesses cost of production, with these figures inflating with bad seasonal conditions. A smaller livestock property would typically be at the higher end of this scale, with a larger operation at the lower end because of its ability to absorb costs due to its scale. Inequitable farm rates therefore have an even more disproportionate impact on smaller farm businesses, which are lucky to provide their owners with an average income. On the other hand, whilst larger operations may be able to absorb some of the inordinate cost of rates, they do this at the detriment of investing in the business, thereby creating local jobs and economic activity.

Mechanisms designed to address the inequity of rates at the local level such as the use of differential rating helps to generate a substantial benefit to the whole local community as funds not used to pay rates are reinvested into farm businesses, helping to make those businesses more sustainable, creating more local economic activity, and helping to create more local jobs in the agricultural and agricultural services sectors. When farmers reinvest in their business, they rely on local trades and contractors, local machinery sales and local staff to employ on-farm. This helps the agricultural sector to directly employ a significant proportion of Wellington Shire's workforce.

It is important that Council acknowledges the inequities faced by farmers because of the rating system that has been imposed by state government policy. Whilst there is little Council can do to directly

change that policy, it nevertheless can use tools at its disposal to promote a more equitable local rating strategy through the differential rate.

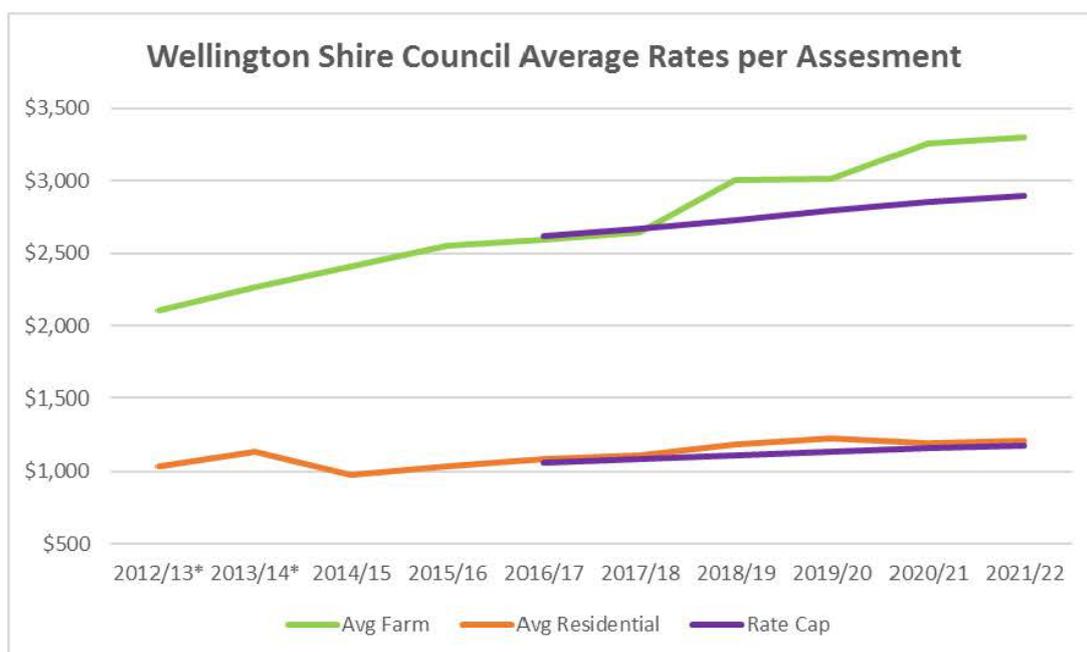
Rating in the Wellington Shire

In 2020/21 the average farm rate assessment in Wellington Shire increased by \$349 (11.58%), the average residential rate assessment decreased by \$18 (-1.44%), the average commercial rate assessment decreased by \$379 (-4.96%), although the total average rates combined did not change.

It is important to recognise that farmers usually pay multiple rates assessments as part of a single notice. VFF estimates the average farm rate bill in 2020/21 increased by \$1,338 – with the average farm business paying \$14,946 in rates. This change represented a “rate shock” across the farm rate sector demonstrating the degree to which the asymmetry in valuation increases has impacted on relativities of rating burden.

What’s more, the increase in farm rates also resulted in a shifting of the overall rating burden on the farm sector, which paid 18% of the total rates in 2019/20 to paying 20% of total rates in 2020/21. This represented one of the largest burden shifts seen across Victoria.

Rate capping has done nothing to address the rates shock farmers face, with the farm sector suffering from significant rate increases in 2018/19 and 2020/21. At the same time, residential rates have remained at or near the cap.



In its 2021/22 Draft Budget, Council proposes that the average farm assessment pays \$3,299 rates, representing a 1.24% increase, whereas the average residential assessment pays \$1,211, representing a 1.07% increase. Consequently, the total farm rating burden is to be reduced by 0.001% - effectively meaning no shift in the burden. Whilst the VFF is disappointed Council has not taken the step towards reversing the farm rate burden increase in 2020/21, we are nevertheless satisfied that the burden has not increased further.

Nevertheless, the VFF is concerned that rather than it being the conscious design of Council to equalise the rate increase between rating sectors this year, it would appear that the result can only be attributed to farmland and residential property valuations being at a similar level in 2021/22. The average farm value increase for the forthcoming year stands at 6%, whereas the average residential value stands at 6.53%.

The VFF is concerned that had the asymmetry in valuations between these sectors been larger, Council would not have responded proactively to equalise the rating burden. It is therefore incumbent upon Council to implement a policy that seeks to ensure that valuation asymmetries cannot lead to unequal rate rises into the future, and seeks to incrementally reverse the historical increase in the farm rate burden.

Differential rating and a dynamic rating strategy

The VFF strongly supports the use of differential rating to help equalise the rating burden between sectors. In saying this, it is important to recognise that differential rates are not discounted rates. Differential rates are made available under the *Local Government Act* (s161) and recognise the different rating dynamics that apply to different classes of rateable properties and different groups of ratepayers.

The objective of differential rating under the *Local Government Act* and the Ministerial Guidelines (2013) is 'to ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges' – whilst endeavoring to 'achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term cumulative effects of decisions'.

Differential rates are a useful tool to address equity issues that may arise from the setting of Council rates derived from property valuations. Circumstances whereby common types and classes of land use consistently demonstrate significant relative rate disparities, including access to services arising from the use of a uniform rate, may be addressed by use of the differential rate powers. What's more, a Council must give consideration to reducing the rate burden through use of a reduced differential rate to farm land and a Council should be able to provide evidence of having regard to modelling or consideration of the impact of its rating decision on those rated differentially and the consequential impact on the municipality.

In setting a differential rate for farmland, the VFF encourages Council to consider how differential rates can be used to maintain more equitable and fair rate rises for all rating sectors, not just for farmers. As differential rates were introduced as a tool for councils to address equity issues arising from the land valuation method of determining rates, the fundamental principle should be that as the value of farmland increases, the differential rate is adjusted to reduce the rate in the dollar so that the rate burden paid by all rating sectors remains stable.

The VFF encourages Council to look at strategies employed recently in Ararat Rural City Council's 2020/21 Budget and Mansfield Shire's 2021/22 Draft Budget which maintained the burden across rating sectors and to avoid 'rates shock' caused by the asymmetry in valuation increases.

The following table has been created by the VFF to demonstrate the impact of this strategy on Council's 2020/21 Budget, where there was an unequal shift in the rating burden. We see that had Council proposed a 2% rate increase for all sectors, Council would have exceeded its revenue objective by \$1 million, and would have remained within the requirements of the State Government Rate Cap.

	Rates per			Revenue 2020/21			c/\$ CIV	c/\$ CIV	
	Rates per Average Assesment 2020/21	Rates per Assesment Modelled @ 0%	Assesment Modelled @ 2%	Revenue 2020/21 \$	Modelled @ 0%	Modelled @ 2%	2020/21	Modelled @ 0%	Modelled @ 2%
Residential	\$1,209	\$1,227	\$1,251	\$33,402,000	\$33,888,500	\$34,566,270	0.004911	0.0049837	0.0050833
Commercial	\$7,256	\$7,635	\$7,788	\$11,632,000	\$12,277,175	\$12,522,719	0.004911	0.0051834	0.0052871
Farm	\$3,364	\$3,015	\$3,076	\$11,449,000	\$10,261,172	\$10,466,396	0.003929	0.003521	0.0035914
Total	\$1,731	\$1,731	\$1,761	\$56,552,000	\$56,426,847	\$57,555,384			

The VFF believes all councils must be required to use differential rates to establish a fair and equitable distribution of the rate burden for each category of land. Once established the rate burden for each category should be maintained for at least four years. Rather than setting the farm differential rate at a fixed 80% of the general rate, the rating strategy should set a lower and upper limit within which the farm differential may be set at – with a long term view towards incrementally reducing the rating burden on the farm sector to make farm business rates comparable to rates paid by other sectors.

No.	10
Submission	Consequences of the phase out of timber harvesting
Correspondent	Neil Barraclough

Dear Councilors,

I am resubmitting my 2018 submission with additions with the passing of of three years. In the 18 months following the submission we saw the significant drought that significantly impacted on the farming sector and its effect on their income and ability to pay rates. Since then we have had good growing seasons and very good prices for sheep and cattle which has been a savior for the grazing sector.

I forecast cooling I the Northern Hemisphere impacting on food production and in the last year this is starting to be a problem.

I wrote of impacts of state government mismanagement of the forests and timber industry, it is becoming obvious that this is becoming a real problem for the Wellington Shire and affecting on the local economy. There is a likelihood that mismanagement of the timber industry could impact on employment and the local economy in Heyfield to the point that will reduce land values and thus the ability of the Wellington Shire to raise the level of rates it had anticipated.

Questions that need to be answered, with the state government's stated intention to phase out timber harvesting on public land and the timber to come from plantations, does the Wellington shire know what changes this will mean to the rate ability of the land when it changes status from farmland to state or other owned plantations?

Commonwealth ineptitude. I am aware of areas being alienated from farming to grow trees in the belief that it will remove carbon from the atmosphere and prevent changes to the climate that there appears to be no basis for believing that increased atmospheric Carbon dioxide would cause anyway. Does the Wellington Shire know if this will have any effect on the Shires ability to raise rates to the extent that it had from the land when it was family owned farms as it would have predominately been?

The answers to these questions need to be understood to understand the consequences of the shires spending and the consequences having to raise the rates from a reduced rate base if the changes are substantial.

There is a far higher than random probability of a period of severe drought and associated increased risk of devastating fires in the period 2027-2029 which could place a financial burden on the Wellington Shire as well. The Wellington Shire needs to minimize their debt to be prepared for likely impacts on its spending and ability to raise rates.

I apologize for my submission being a few hours late and hope consideration will be given to the issues I briefly raise.

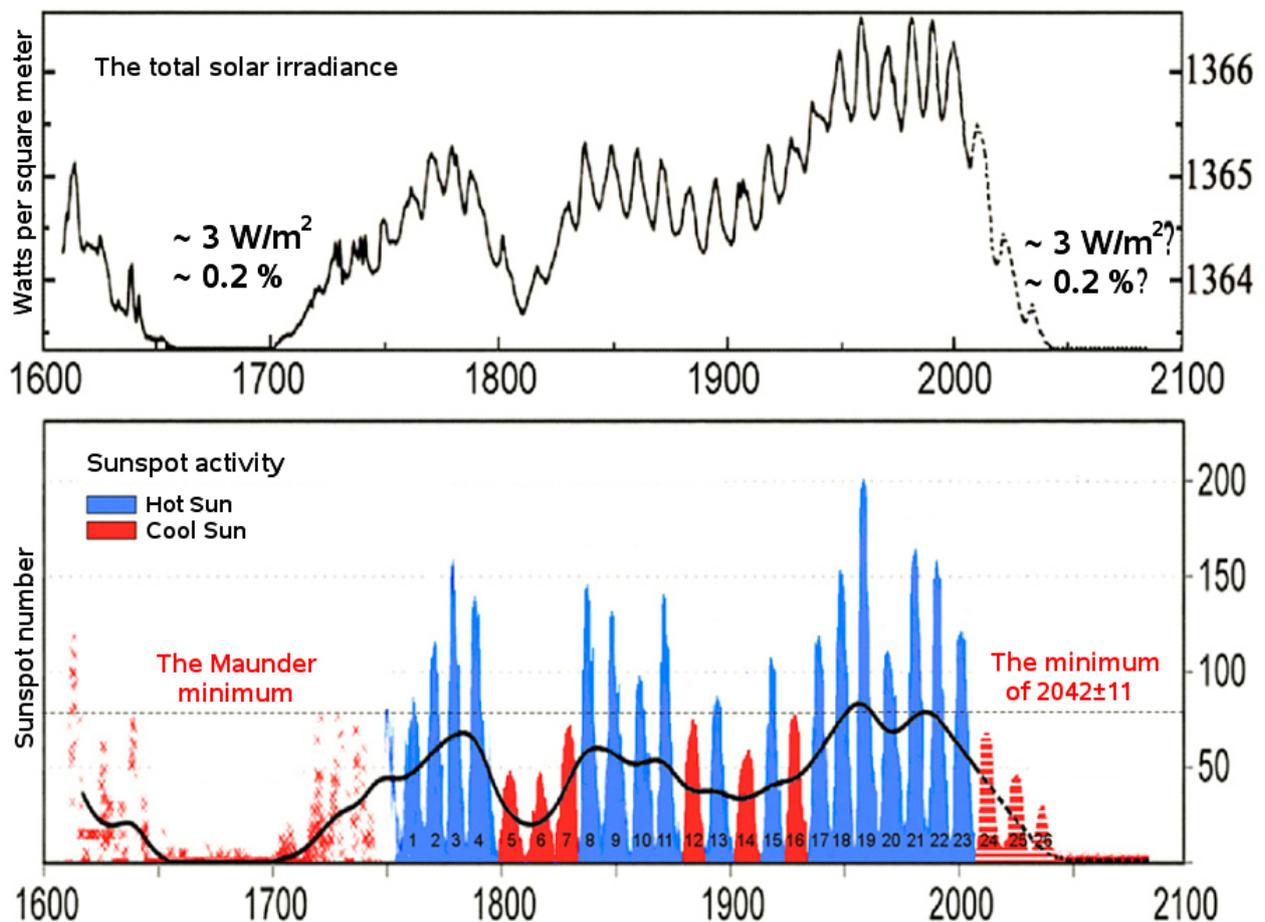
Neil Barraclough

The energy output of our sun is continually changing as is the strength of its magnetic field and other factors as well, the best known part of this is the variation in sunspots on a cycle averaging 11 years but ranging from 9 to 13 years. Usually the longer the cycle the less active the sun, the shorter the cycle the more active, also the greater the number of sunspots in the cycle the more active the solar cycle.

The graphs 1&2 below have been taken from-

<http://www.thelongview.com.au/documents/Sun-Defines-the-Climate-Abdussamatov-2009.pdf> and they show the relationship between sunspot numbers and solar energy output (total solar irradiance)

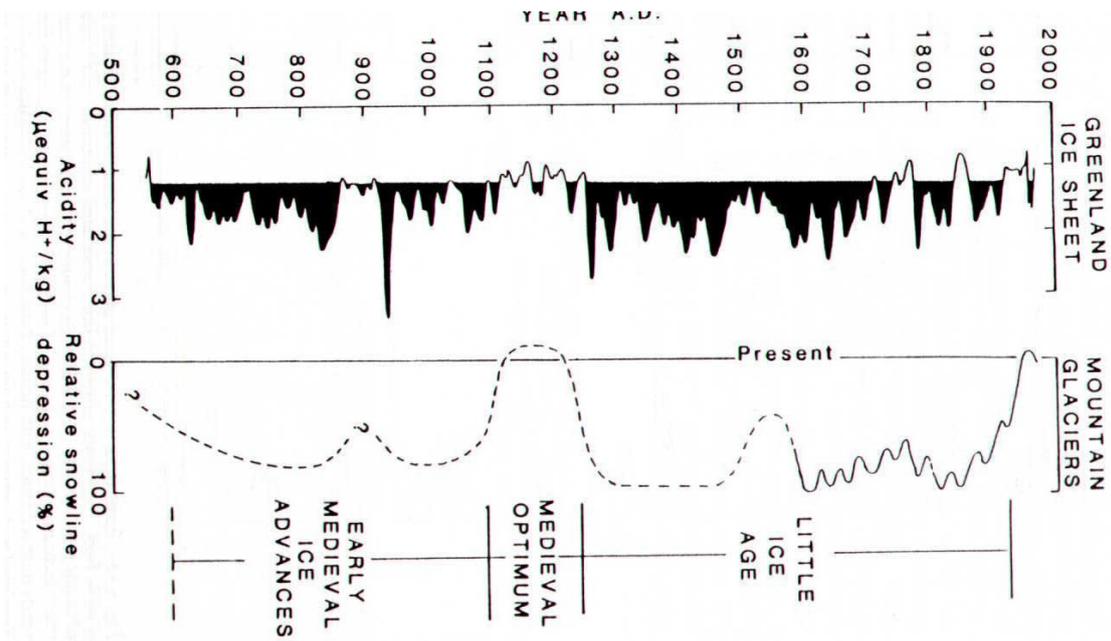
Graphs 1&2



It also gives the predicted solar activity to 2100 showing conditions similar to the Maunder Minimum, a period of very low solar activity that occurred during the coldest period of the Little Ice Age. The predictions are based on studies of how solar activity in the past has been influenced by the alignment of the planets and how the planets will align between now and 2100, it is very good science.

There is also a clear relationship between volcanic activity on earth and solar activity, the more active the sun the less volcanic activity. The graph of the pH of the Greenland Ice sheet below came from- <http://earth.usc.edu/classes/geol150/stott/evolution/lastmillenia.html> Volcano's put large amounts of sulphates and other chemicals into the atmosphere that make rain and snow falling back to earth acidic, the lower the pH the greater the volcanic activity.

Graph 3

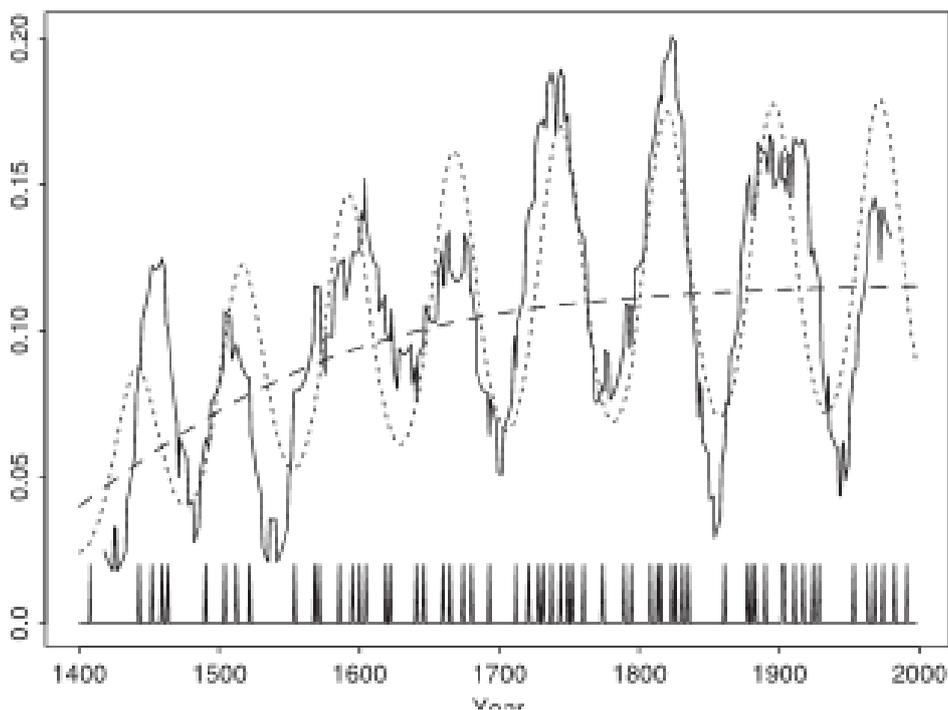


What we think of as normal for volcanic activity is one of the three periods of low volcanic activity since 600 A.D. and we are likely headed for the opposite end of the range in volcanic activity over the coming decades. Note the peaks in volcanic activity at the end of each period of low volcanic activity, that is likely what we can expect in the coming couple of decades.

For shorter term variations and greater detail we can look at the graph of volcanic activity derived from a study of sulphate deposits in the ice at the two poles-

<http://www.ep.sci.hokudai.ac.jp/~yokohata/work/review/pdf/20051214/AN03.GRL.pdf>

Graph 4



Let's look at five periods on the graph

Period 1 Early 19th century, peak in volcanic activity associated with the Dalton Minimum, a period of low solar activity. First fleeters suffered very badly from the ravages of drought.

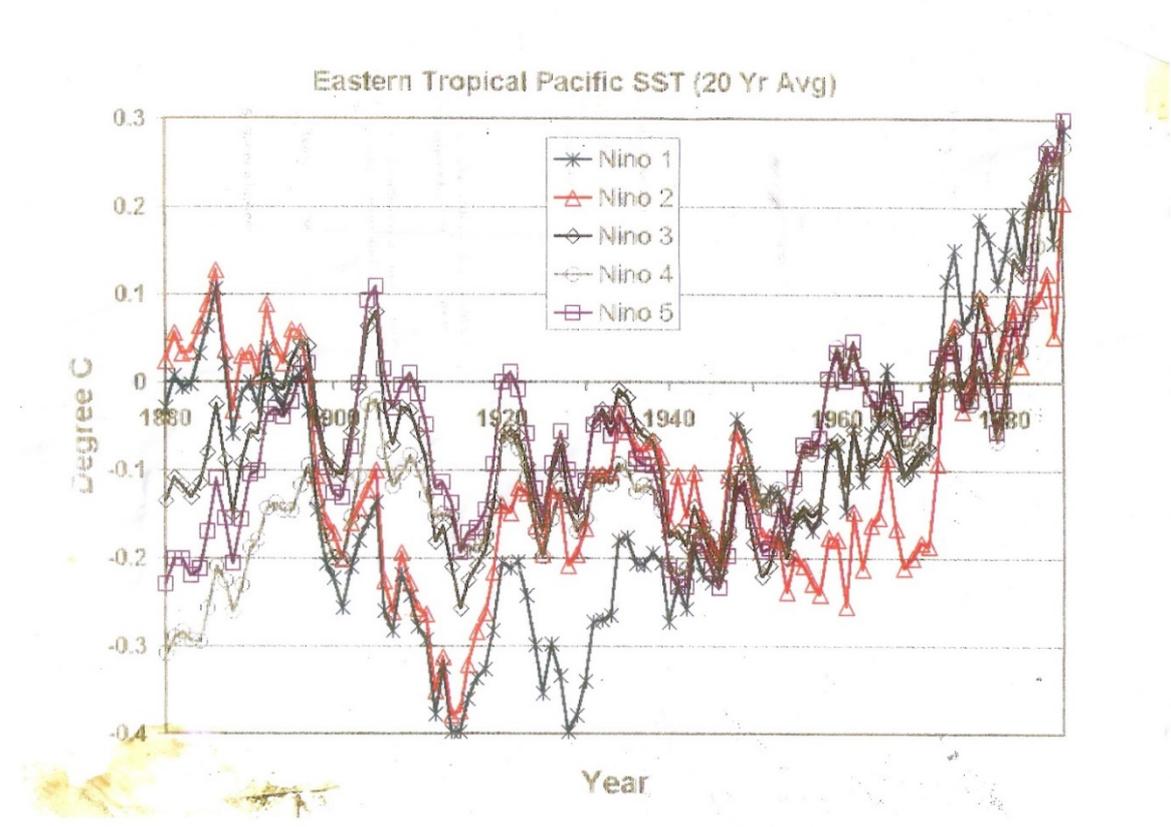
Period 2 mid 19th Century. Low in volcanic activity. In the 1850's and 1860's it was a low period of volcanic activity in the cycle and high point in solar activity. South Australia was growing half of Australia's wheat, much of it north of the Gwyder Line, a line drawn on the map to show the expected northern boundary of land suitable for cultivation. North of the Gwyder Line was previously considered, and later proved, too dry for cultivation and pursuits such as growing wheat. Written accounts suggest much of inland Australia recieved more rain during this period. Accounts I have been given say Bushy Park near Boisdale had a 32" annual average rainfall, now probably around or slightly below 26".

Period 3. Late 1880's-1920ish. Volcanic activity peaked and solar activity declined, drought gripped much of Australia. Sale's rainfall which averages around 620mm (calculated mid 80's) dropped to around 450mm on a 5 year average.

Period 4 Late 1940's to early 60's. low period of volcanic activity, resurgence of agriculture in inland S.A.. Sale's rainfall got up 780mm on a 5 year average (1952) (ref 13). This indicates a 330mm (13.2") difference in the annual average rainfall for Sale, varying with the 70-90 year volcanic and solar cycles.

Period 5. Late 80's onwards, heading towards another peak in volcanic activity, decades of below average rainfall.

The graph of Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) sea surface temperatures from 1880 until recent obtained from www.sepp.org/scirsrch/el_nino.html shows a relationship between sea surface temperatures in the region of the ETP where the warming of the sea surface is associated with el Nino's and the volcanic activity shown in graph 4.

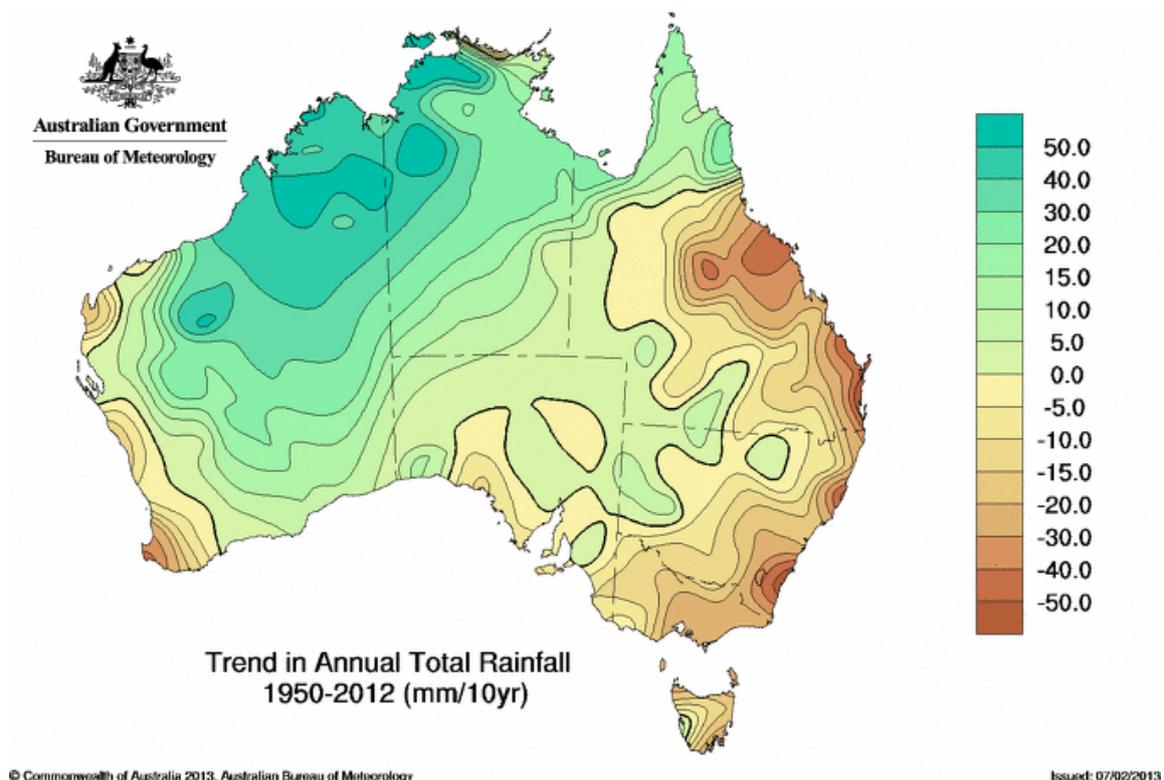


Two thirds of the earth's volcanos are undersea in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, likely varying in numbers and intensity, influenced by the same solar influences that are affecting the terrestrial volcano's. The most probable explanation for the apparent relationship between volcanos on land and the sea surface temperatures in the is that variations in the number of undersea volcanos in the ETP cause the variations in sea surface temperatures.

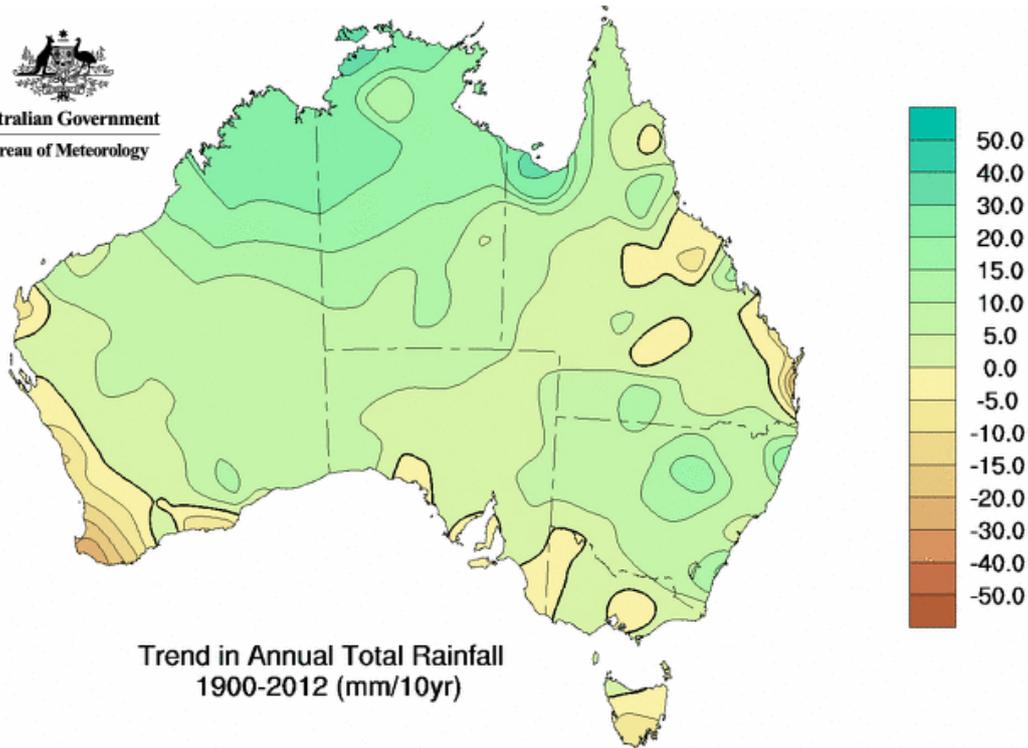
On a long term S.E. Australia's rainfall is closely related to the sea surface temperatures shown in graph 5 and we are very likely headed to from a 3 in 1,500 year low to a 3 in 1,500 year high.

Another perspective on rainfall variation over the last century and the start of this century and its relationship to volcanic and solar variation is the trend is changes from the decade up to 2012. As shown in the Bureau of Meteorology maps of rainfall trend changes from- <http://www.bom.gov.au/cgi-bin/climate/change/trendmaps.cgi?map=rain&area=aus&season=0112&period=1900>

The 1950's had the solar cycle with the highest sunspot numbers since 1600 and the highest rainfall for S.E. Australia during the period from 1900 to the present.



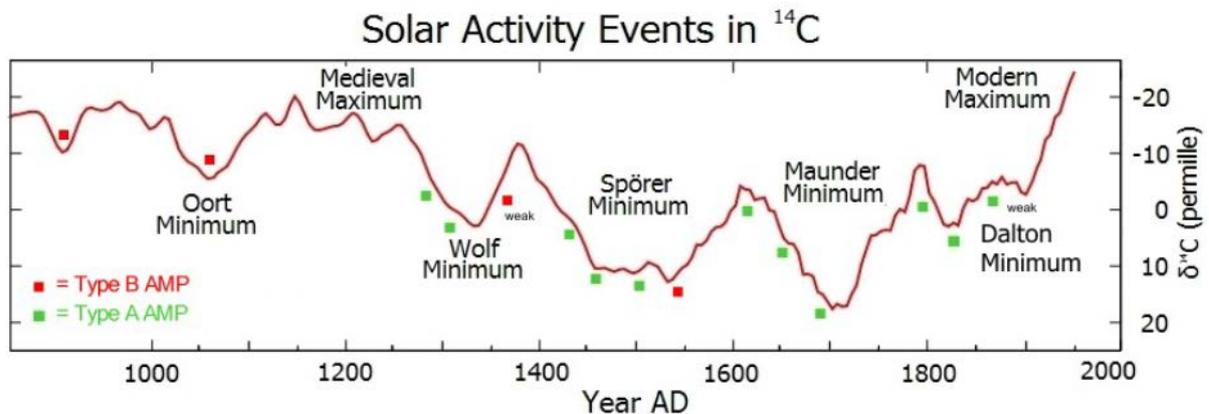
The first decade of last century was the lowest solar activity with the last decade being the most similar, these two decades of low solar activity were the lowest rainfall.



If we go to the following link we get an explanation of the planetary influences on solar activity-

<http://www.landscheidt.info/images/sharp2010.pdf>

The more active the sun the stronger its magnetic field and there are charged particles travelling through space called Galactic Cosmic Rays (GCR's) and the stronger the magnetic field of the sun the more GCR's drawn into it and less enter the earth's atmosphere. GCR's react with atmospheric Nitrogen to form the Carbon 14, an isotope of carbon which most commonly occurs in the form of Carbon 12. From the ratio of C14 to C12 preserved in tree rings it is possible to determine past solar activity, however the C14 to C12 ratio in modern growth rings has been altered by the burning of fossil fuels with the carbon being virtually all C12. The graph below, taken from the website above, is a very good indication of past solar activity with questions around perhaps the last 75 years only.



Rainfall could be thought of as following the pink line and the pink line being determined by the alignment of the planets. From now to 2050 the planets will be aligned similarly to how they were from 1645 to 1715, the lowest point on the graph.

What we think of as normal rainfall is likely perhaps a one in a thousand year high caused by a solar influence resulting from the alignment of the planets. We appear to be heading towards the opposite extreme.

From now to 2100, and in particular from now to 2050 we can expect much lower solar activity than what gave us the two decades of low rainfall at the start of last century and this century. We can expect the conditions that has caused local creeks and swamps that have only briefly been dry since the 1840's to be dry for several decades as they have been in the past as shown by perhaps 50+ year old dead trees normally under water.

There is ample evidence of such megadroughts around Australia and the world, one good example is quoted in "Recipe for Disaster" by Max Leitch describing dead trees in a lagoon on his property on the Murrumbidgee River-

"There is ample evidence to suggest that dry cycles can last half a century or more. On my property there is a large lagoon about one hundred acres in area and some 30-odd feet deep. It has been the main river channel at some bygone age, set in the middle of a flood plain that fills from the river when the river reaches 23 feet. It has been suggested that the mouth silted up but this is not possible because the water from the river runs in from both sides and both ends at once. This lagoon has been dry twice since white men took up the country in 1840- once in 1914 when it was dry for a few months, and in 1945 to 1950. It has a local catchment that puts some water in it every year and it normally takes ten years to go dry if it is not filled by the river. The amazing thing about this lagoon is that right in the bottom there were quite large dead trees that must have taken at least 50 years to grow, so it must have been bone dry for that length of time."

I would like to thank Kevin Long for his help in putting this together.

For more reading on the likely megadrought go to-

<http://www.thelongview.com.au/documents/MEGA-DROUGHT-DEVELOPING-Kevin-Long.pdf>

Submission to Wellington Shire Budget 2014

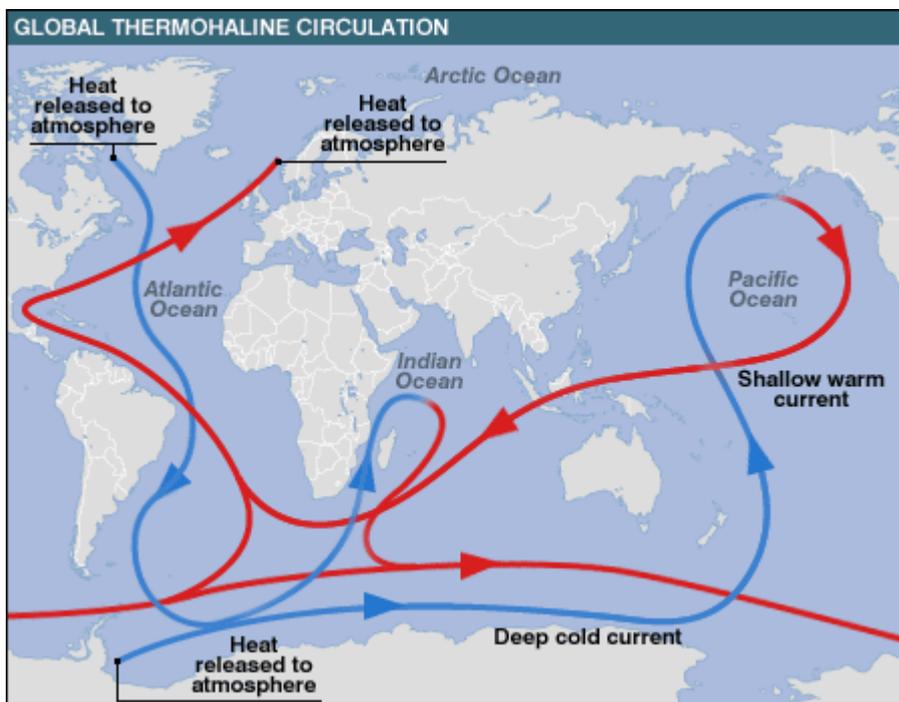
Last year I submitted some of my research into climate to the Wellington Shire for consideration in formulating their budget as an analysis of the available research on past climate suggests that southeastern Australia is headed for extremes in drought to the point that it will significantly impact on the shires ability to raise rates from the rural sector. In that submission I also suggested that cooling in the northern hemisphere could significantly impact the world economy and in the 12 months since I made that submission this has clearly happened. I am resubmitting that submission to this years budget consideration along with an update.

Research that has come out in the last 12 months supports what I said about low solar activity causing significant cooling in parts of the northern hemisphere-

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/03/140309150437.htm>

Unfortunately most climate research today appears to be influenced by the need to get funding by stating a belief that humans have caused the warming in recent decades that clearly appears to be associated with a period of very high solar activity from 1940 to 1996 and this usually prevents the proper analysis of the findings as well as further research.

Let's look further at the ocean current often referred to as the Gulf Stream-



It also appears to shift heat from the areas of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean where warming of the sea surface is related to atmospheric changes associated with el Nino's. A study of south eastern Australia's weather has indicated to me that hot dry weather was far more common prior to the period of high solar activity from 1940 to 1996 than during that period and our climate generally the least suitable to

agriculture during the lowest periods of solar activity. This is particularly evident with a study of the climate during the period of low solar activity at the end of the 19th century and start of the 20th century. Predictions of future solar activity for several decades to come are far more extreme than this period and the ostrich's approach of the past will most likely have drastic consequences for the future.

The next few years could see a halt to the cooling of the planet with a temporary el Nino warming first associated with changes in solar winds and has been predicted to start later this year-

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2014/05/17/sailing-on-the-solar-wind/> followed by a continuation of the el Nino associated with an 18.6 year lunar cycles which could start around 2016-17. This will mean drought for our region and also we will be entering the trough of the 11 year solar cycle in a few years, following the weakest solar cycle for likely over 150 years. During the trough of the previous lowest solar cycle (around 1912-15) that occurred during rainfall records Sale had extremely dry years.

So, the droughts of the past that have caused trees to grow for many decades in swamps and creeks that would normally be filled with water are very likely to start very soon and have to be allowed for in just about every decision we make in regards to the future economy.

No.	11
Submission	Request for \$30,000 funding for the design and cost planning of Stage 2 Facility Upgrade
Correspondent	Stratford Recreation Reserve Committee

Budget Submission - Stratford Recreation Reserve Stage 2 Facility Upgrade

Stratford Recreation Reserve seek \$30000 Council funding in the 2021/22 budget for the design and cost planning for Stage 2 Facility Upgrade. Stage 2 upgrade would be expected to include the upgrade of social rooms, family disabled change, toilets, bar, spectator cover, kitchen and kiosk upgrade.

Stage 1 upgrade of our facilities has seen the new female friendly change and upgrade of both football, netball and umpires change. We now seek commitment to Stage 2 works to be completed.

Following the recent official opening of Stage 1 works of Stratford Recreation Reserve discussions were held with the builder Andrew Stephenson, CEO David, Officers and Tim Bull regarding progressing immediately to Stage 2 facilities upgrade. We followed up with Tim Bulls office regarding state funding opportunities and been advised the likely state funding of Stage 2 works would be through the State Government Major Facilities Fund?.

Given this information to strategically plan the Stage 2 upgrade the Stratford Rec Reserve Committee seek \$30,000 Council funding for design and cost planning of Stage 2 in the 2021/22 budget.

Unlike several other recreation reserve facilities upgrades in major towns across the Shire in the Stage 1 upgrade of Stratford Recreation Reserve did not allow for upgrade of our key toilets and social facilities. We believe that Stratford Rec is one if not the busiest rec reserve across the shire. We have many user groups a very vibrant football, junior football, netball, junior netball and senior and junior cricket clubs. Our rec and social facilities are used most nights and over weekends for social events, meeting of local groups, club competition and trainings. We are proud of our facilities however they are poor in comparison to other reserves across the shire.

Stratford Rec provide the best playing surface of all facilities across the Shire. Our reserve relies on volunteers and we have been very active in maintaining and improving our facilities. With the support of the Shire which is greatly appreciated by our users for both annual maintenance and facility upgrades our volunteers continue to maintain our facilities to the best of their ability. Our committee has made a number of financial contributions to upgrade including Stage 1 works, Netball court upgrade, viewing area concreting, scoreboard replacement and oval lighting maintenance.

Funding the \$30,000 design and cost planning will allow Council to confirm state and Council funding to progress Stratford Rec Stage 2 works to be delivered over the summer season within the 2022/23.

Kind Regards

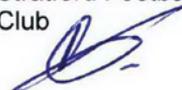
Andrew Bye
President Stratford Rec

Ben Channing
Stratford Cricket Club

Mathew Telling
Stratford Football Netball
Club

Stratford Junior football
club





Meeting declared closed at: 3:35pm

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