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Municipal Early Years Plan

Draft: 2023 - 2025





Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Campaspe is the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Yorta Yorta Peoples.

We respect and acknowledge their unique Aboriginal cultural heritage and pay our respect to their ancestors, descendants and emerging leaders as the Traditional Owners of this Country.

We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Campaspe Shire Council is committed to the safety and well-being of children and is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation, including places managed or owned by Council. All Council Officers, including employees, contractors, volunteers and Councillors have a legal and moral obligation to keep children safe and promote their best interests.

Campaspe Shire Council has a zero tolerance to child abuse. Council is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and friendly organisation where all children are valued and protected from abuse. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently, in line with our robust policies and procedures. We are committed to identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

Our commitment to the safety of children is based on our duty of care and responsibilities to children and always acting in the best interests of children. The wellbeing and safety of children and young people in our care will always be our priority and we are committed to providing welcoming, culturally safe and accessible environments where children feel valued, empowered, listened to and considered in decisions that affect their lives. All children have the right to feel and be safe, be protected from harm and to be treated with dignity, respect and integrity regardless of their, or their families', age, gender, race, ability, health, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or social background.

We will ensure that child safety and wellbeing and protecting children from abuse is embedded in our organisational culture, reflected in our policies and procedures, and understood and practiced at all levels of our work.



Children and their families are supported to grow, learn and thrive in our welcoming and inclusive community.

We will achieve this through:

- Creating the best possible start to life
- Providing high quality, safe and accessible services
- Providing family inclusive places and spaces



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Acknowledgement of partners

Campaspe Shire Council would like to acknowledge the partner organisations that contributed to the development of the Campaspe Shire Municipal Early Years Plan.



A Message From the Mayor

I am delighted to present the Campaspe Shire Municipal Early Years Plan 2023-2025 to the community. This plan outlines our strategic direction to promote and influence positive outcomes for children 0-8 years of age and their families.

Campaspe Shire believes that children are a vital part of our community. We also recognise the valuable role that families and carers play in the positive development of children, along with playgroups, early learning centres, kindergartens, schools, local services and a diverse array of other community organisations and individuals.

Council acknowledges the importance of continued investment in the early years. It is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

The plan has been developed through engagement with local service provider partners and the analysis of relevant policies, strategic plans, community engagement responses and demographic data. It aligns closely with the *Campaspe Shire Council Plan 2021-2025* vision and principles.

Our priorities for the Campaspe Early Years Plan over the next three years will focus on three themes;

1. **The best possible start to life**
2. **High quality, safe and accessible services**
3. **Family inclusive places and spaces**

On behalf of Councillors and Campaspe Shire Council, I invite you to be actively involved in the implementation of the plan and join us in achieving our Early Years vision:

Children and their families are supported to grow, learn and thrive in our welcoming and inclusive community.

**Cr Rob Amos
Mayor**

Introduction

The first eight years of a child's life, or what is known as the 'early years', provides the foundation for each child's growth and development throughout their life. It is a time where children's brains are developing rapidly and where they learn to communicate, think, problem solve and understand the world in which they live. It is also a time of physical growth and the development of both fine and gross motor skills. Further, it is a time where they learn to socialise and develop friendships.

How a child develops physically, emotionally and socially in their first eight years of life is dependent upon many factors including:

- Relationships with family, friends, early childhood educators and others
- Access to early learning education opportunities, e.g. playgroups, childcare, kindergarten and school
- Genetics
- Health – physical health and access to health care
- Nutrition
- Physical activity levels
- Family situation / experiences, e.g. access to housing, job security, financial security, safety and non-discrimination
- Broader environmental conditions, e.g. pollution and impact of natural disasters.

It is often said that "it takes a village to raise a child." Families, early years educators, schools, early years services, generic health and wellbeing services, sports clubs, arts / cultural groups, places of worship and others – the 'village' – all have an important role in helping our children to reach their full potential. The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model supports this notion that the child is at the centre and learning and development is shaped by the environment and networks which surround them.

Campaspe Shire recognises that it has a unique role in helping to influence the health, wellbeing, education and development of children at a local level through its policy development, program / service planning and delivery, as well as its role in provision of, or advocacy for, community infrastructure. Guiding its work in this space are the core principles of prevention, equity, health and long-term social and educational outcomes for children. Council recognises that when it has a focus on the needs of children, it ultimately benefits the entire community.

All children and families should have access to affordable and appropriate early years services that meet their needs consistent with best practice frameworks such as the Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (VEYLDF) and National Quality Framework and Standards. Council will advocate for access to services where gaps exist and work with suitable providers for direct service provision to its communities.

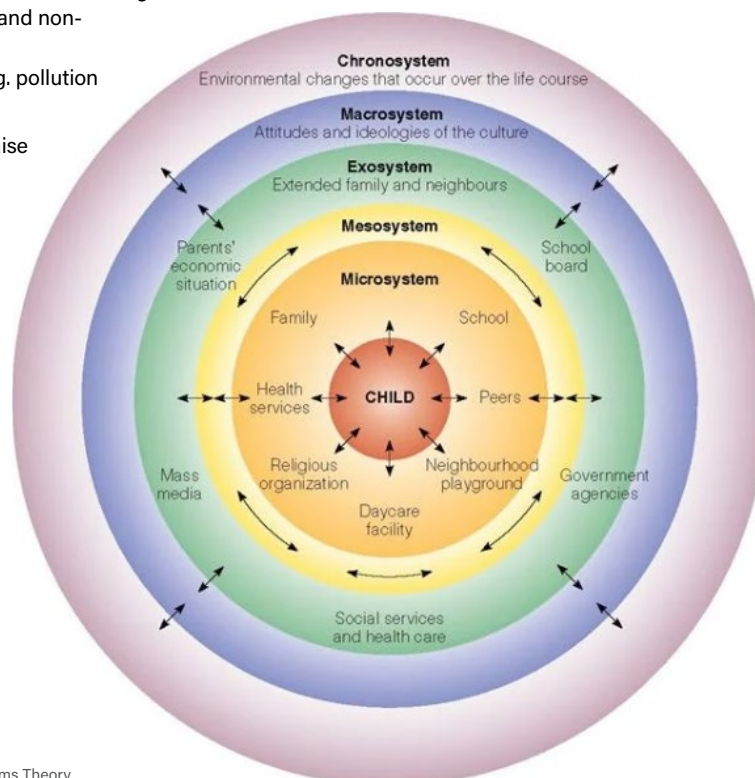


Image sourced from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
- Simply Psychology

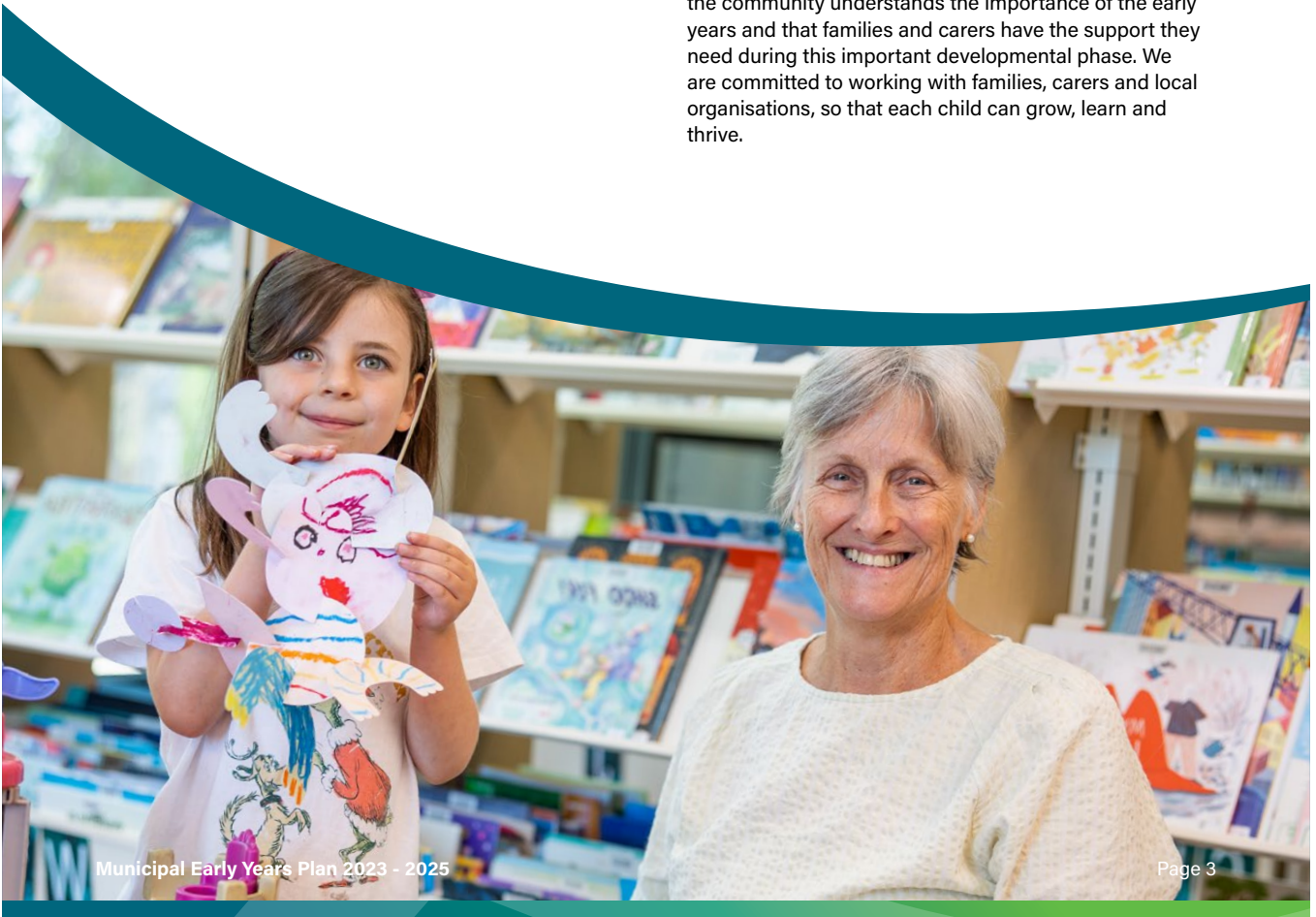
Introduction

Since the previous Municipal Early Years Plan was completed, the State Government has undertaken sector reform (titled Best Start Best Life). As part of these reforms, it has increased the hours for three-year old kinder from five to 15 hours per week from 2022, increasing this to 15 hours per week by 2029 across the state. Another initiative is the Pre-Prep program. This involves four-year old kindergarten gradually transitioning to pre-prep between 2025 and 2032. By the completion of the roll-out, four-year olds involved in pre prep will be eligible for 30 hours of pre prep per week, which is double the current number of 15 hours per week of kindergarten. As kindergarten is also now subsidised for both three-year old and four-year old kinder, it is more accessible from a financial perspective for families. The impact of these measures and the ability for increased hours of kindergarten and pre-prep programs to be delivered across the municipality is a key focus for planning by the Shire's Early Years team.

Some other priority areas of State Government in the early years sector include:

- Prioritising the development of new kindergartens on primary school grounds to enable better access for families
- Promotion of gender equity to help reduce family violence
- Reforming the early years to enable a higher quality more equitable and inclusive early childhood system
- Encouraging respectful relationships
- Strengthened Child Safe Standards which are designed to promote the safety of children; prevent child abuse; and ensure that organisations and businesses have effective processes in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse.

This Plan sets out the community's vision, objectives, themes and goals relating to children aged 0 to 8 and their families. The vision, objectives, themes and goals contained in the Plan were developed in consultation with local service providers. The focus is to ensure that the community understands the importance of the early years and that families and carers have the support they need during this important developmental phase. We are committed to working with families, carers and local organisations, so that each child can grow, learn and thrive.



Council's Role in the Early Years

Campaspe Shire plays an important role in facilitating the growth and development of children, and in supporting their families and carers. Working in partnership with local service provider partners, Campaspe Shire's key roles in the early years are:

Planning and Coordination

Council plans for and identifies early years needs as they relate to council service delivery or to the wider service system that supports Campaspe families. This includes the coordination of central enrolment for most kindergartens in the Shire. It also undertakes a collaborative approach with local service providers to share information and expertise and to further develop skills and knowledge to build early years sector capacity.

Service Provision

Council delivers the Maternal and Child Health Service throughout the municipality and also early years services at Campaspe Community Children's Centre in Echuca and Rochester Early Learning. Council also delivers the funded Supported Playgroup program, along with Library service programs and events that are inclusive of children and families.

Facility Planning

Council maintains a range of existing dedicated early years infrastructure such as Maternal & Child Health centres, as well as community infrastructure which is used by children and families including libraries, play spaces, parks and recreational facilities. Council's planning and advocacy role aims to encourage relevant stakeholders to plan for and deliver child and family friendly places throughout the municipality.

Advocacy

Council lobbies and advocates to state and federal government and other relevant organisations so that the needs of children and their families are heard and addressed.

Strengthening Community Capacity

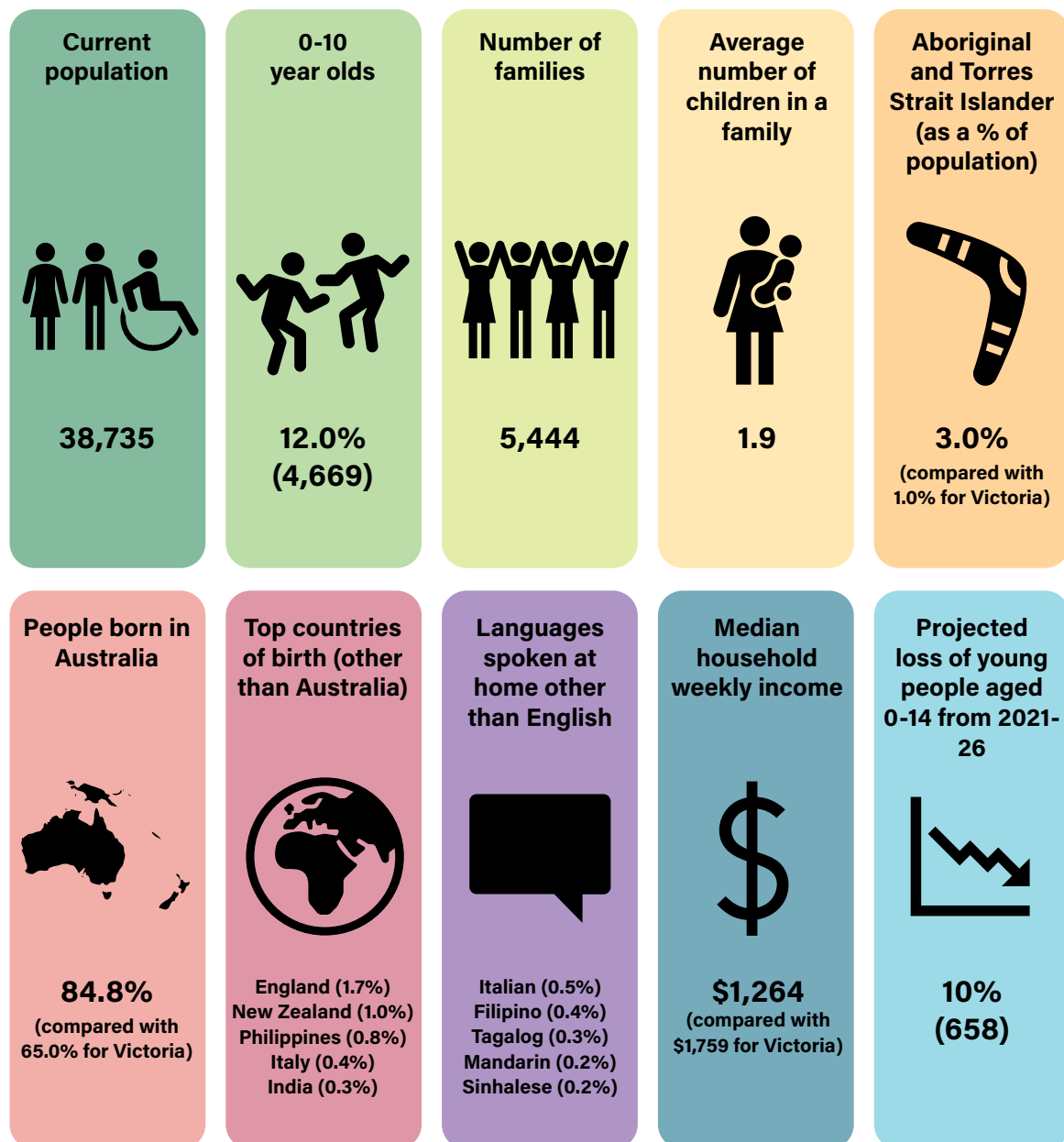
Council promotes participation by children and their families in decision making; provides information about services; and supports access to services where needed to build the capacity of families and carers and to enhance the development of children.



Children and Families in Campaspe Shire

Our Community

The Shire of Campaspe is situated in northern Victoria and covers an area of 4,519 square kilometres. Larger towns include Echuca, Kyabram, Rushworth, Rochester, Stanhope and Tongala. Our children live in a diverse range of settings, ranging from urban settlements through to rural properties.



The Health and Wellbeing of our Children

The Campaspe Primary Care Partnership (Public Health Unit)- Community Health and Wellbeing Profile (2020) and the Healthy Heart of Victoria (Healthy Loddon Campaspe) Active Living Census - Campaspe (2019) have been used to help inform the priorities of the Municipal Early Years Plan and will inform the development of annual implementation plans. These plans tell us that we are currently performing well in relation to birth weights, breast feeding rates, immunisation participation and kindergarten participation.

These plans also tell us that we need to address issues such as increasing awareness of how to prevent accidental injuries to children, preventing harm to children, reducing smoking during pregnancy, supporting families who experience financial stress, helping to prevent hospitalisations from conditions such as asthma, reducing school absenteeism, improving children's early development (physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills), encouraging healthy eating and improving children's sense of worth.



Early Years Snapshot

The following table provides a snapshot of how children and families are faring. Information has been sourced from Campaspe PCP Community Health & Wellbeing Profile (August 2020); Campaspe Shire kindergarten enrolment statistics; Campaspe Shire Maternal and Child Health service statistics; the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; the Australian Early Development Census; and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Maternal and child health (MCH) participation	Birth rate	Aboriginal maternal and child health (MCH) participation
Enrolment in the MCH service in 2022-2023 was 101.61%, however the participation rate in key developmental visits was 69.36% (although the four-week visit ranked much higher at 95.43% participation rate).	There were 378 birth notices in 2022-23 in Campaspe Shire. The average birth rate from 2019/20-2022/23 is 391.	Aboriginal children's MCH participation rates increased from a rate of 69.54% in 2018-19 to 80.90% in 2022-23.
Breastfeeding rates	Immunisation	Family stress
Higher proportion of infants fully breastfed on discharge and at 2 weeks, 3 months and 6 months of age, compared to the Victorian average.	A higher percentage of children fully vaccinated in Campaspe Shire compared with Victoria at 1 year of age (95.5% vs 94.3%) 2 years of age (92.8% vs 91.2%) and 3 years of age (97.0% vs 95.5%).	Higher proportion of low-income and welfare dependent families with children in Campaspe Shire compared with Victoria (10.4% vs 8.4%) and a much higher proportion of children whose parents report high levels of family stress (13.4% vs 9.9%) compared to the Victorian averages.
Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)	Childhood obesity	Family violence
31.4% of children in Campaspe are developmentally vulnerable on one or more of the AEDC domains (notably social competence, physical health and wellbeing and communication skills) compared with 19.9% of Victorian children. 19.7% of Campaspe children and 10.2% of Victorian children are vulnerable on two or more domains.	Almost one quarter of Victorian children and (24.9%) of Australian children aged 5-17 years were overweight or obese in 2017-18 (17% overweight and 8.1% obese). The rates were similar for boys and girls.	There were 1,967 reported incidents of family violence per 100,000 people in Campaspe in 2019 compared with 1,282 per 100,000 people in Victoria. Of the reported family incidents in Campaspe in 2019, 10% of children and young people were considered to be affected, compared with 8% of Victorian children and young people.
Smoking during pregnancy	Kindergarten participation	Child abuse
17.1% of mothers in Campaspe smoked during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy compared with 9.4% of Victorian mothers.	443 children enrolled in funded four-year old kindergarten in 2021 with a participation rate of 99.4%. 29 children enrolled in Early Start Kindergarten for 2023 through Council's central enrolment scheme.	Campaspe children aged 0-17 (per 1,000), have notably higher rates of child abuse investigations than Victorian children (31.7 vs 19.4) and similar levels of child protection substantiation (11.5 vs 11.4). Child first assessments were much higher in Campaspe than Victoria (15.0 vs 10.1), along with children who are the subject of care and protection orders (9.2 vs 5.4), and children in out of home care (8.5 vs 5.0) compared to state averages.

Strategic Context

Strategic directions related to the early years feature in numerous Council strategies and plans and will help guide us in the development of our annual Implementation Plans. A summary of each of these documents can be found below. More details of strategic documents can be found in the background document that accompanies this plan.

Access and inclusion plan (2020-26)

The focus of the Access and inclusion plan is to “demonstrate Council’s commitment to equal participation for all people across Campaspe and develop a road map to support the Shire to become more accessible and supportive.”

The nine communities of priority identified in this plan are: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disability, youth, LGBTIQ+, people with a mental illness, women, culturally diverse groups and people with social disadvantage.

Active transport strategy (2019)

The aim of this strategy is to “dramatically increase the amount of people walking and cycling in Campaspe.”

A key focus area of the strategy is to create an environment where kids feel safe and confident to walk and cycle to school and continue travelling actively for life.

Campaspe Shire Advocacy Priorities (2021-25)

The purpose of this document is to highlight the priority infrastructure and policy needs for Campaspe between 2021 and 2025.

One of the key priorities is to advocate for funding to support the co-location of kindergartens with already established primary schools across the municipality.

Campaspe Prevention / Health Promotion Work Plan (2021-2022)

This document sets out the four key priority areas that organisations working in the prevention space or health promotion in Campaspe are working towards, i.e.

- Increasing healthy eating
- Increasing active living
- Reducing tobacco related harm
- Prevention of family violence through gender equity.

Council Plan (2021-2025)

The Community Vision contained within the Council Plan is: “Our places are vibrant and sustainable; our people are strong and supportive.”

The three principles within the plan are: inclusion, respect and sustainability.

Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (2021-2025)

There are numerous actions contained within this plan that are of relevance to the broader community, of which children and families are a cohort. Those that specifically relate to children 0-8 years of age are as follows:

Focus area 1 - Active and Healthy Lifestyles:

- Work with schools to hear the ideas of young people and leverage in-school and extra-curricular activities to promote active living
- Early years health systems and health measurement protocols are monitored to identify communities of concern

Focus area 2 - Socially Connected and Inclusive Campaspe

- Work to ensure cultural safety by ensuring community spaces are safe for all community members
- Embed the principles of trauma informed practice in early years services

Focus area 5 - Food Secure Campaspe

- Improve school access to primary prevention programs
- Support schools to integrate food awareness within STEM programs

Department of Education and Training (2020) Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan (KISP)

This plan identifies a shortfall in three- and four-year old kindergarten places in the Shire of approximately 83 in 2023, increasing to 138 places by 2029.

By 2029, Echuca is anticipated to have a shortage of 138 kindergarten places; Kyabram 29 places; Lockington / Gunbower 9 places, Rochester 12 places and Rushworth 0 places.

The demand for kindergarten will increase as a direct result of the Victorian Government’s Better Start, Better Life reform. This demand will be reflected in the 2023 KISP (currently under development).

Community and Service Provider Engagement

Community Engagement

Feedback from community consultations undertaken for the development of the Council Plan of relevance to the early years has been used to help provide an evidence base for the development of this Plan. Key focus areas for consideration include:

- The need for enough childcare and kindergarten places available across the Shire – i.e. access to sufficient childcare and kindergarten places to meet demand
- The need for access to a range of early years services are accessible to all, e.g. allied health services
- The need for accessible and diverse early years services for all children and families
- The need for access to programs and services that are affordable
- The need to ensure that there are opportunities for parents to learn new skills and to build their capacity, e.g. provision of First time Parent groups and “Smalltalk” parenting program
- The need to ensure that there is a continued focus on gender equity / healthy relationships in the early years sector within the stakeholder groups e.g. Campaspe Early Years Network Group
- The need to ensure that there is safe access to programs, services and facilities via active transport options
- The need to promote physical activity opportunities and ensure that quality play opportunities are provided throughout the Shire.

Service Provider Engagement

A workshop was also held with local service providers to review the previous Municipal Early Years Plan and to identify priorities for the new plan.

Some of the broad strategic directions for the collective early years' service system in Campaspe include:

Our Practice

We acknowledge families' experiences and circumstances are diverse and understand:

- The need to adapt and target priorities where required to achieve positive health and wellbeing outcomes for children
- That early years' services and support services have a clear perception of the community's needs and challenges and that we are responsive and respectful

- The strength achieved through a greater focus on participatory service planning and genuine community engagement principles with children and families
- The options to explore different ways of delivering services, e.g. utilising telehealth
- How we provide clear referral pathways and additional supports where required to enable families to access specialist services
- The importance of and advocate that the voices of children and their families are heard and understood
- The need to build the knowledge and skills of families and people who work in the early years sector to enable children to thrive
- The importance of promoting gender equity
- The need to highlight and implement the Child Safe Standards
- The benefits of working collaboratively with other relevant services and organisations,
- The need to advocate for greater access to specialist early years services for local families.

Information / Communications

- We need to enhance our online capability to promote events, programs and services for children and families
- Campaspe Shire Council's commitment to the Child Safe Standards is promoted.

Places and Spaces

- Child Safe Standards signage is displayed as a visual message in public spaces.
- Consider specific cultural and physical features of family spaces and all access amenities that meet the needs of families
- The value of quality play experiences features predominantly in new and upgraded play spaces, providing opportunities for children to actively explore, create, imagine and participate within the infrastructure and the variety of elements which support children's development and abilities
- Provision and promotion for active play (e.g. pump parks, trails, etc) and participation in arts / culture, library programs, community events.

Council Plan

The Campaspe Shire Council's vision and planning principles have been used to guide the development of the vision and themes contained within the Municipal Early Years Plan. Council's vision and three planning principles are as follows:

Council Plan Vision:

Our places are vibrant and sustainable; our people are strong and supportive




Principle 1: Inclusion	Principle 2: Respect	Principle 3: Sustainability
Everybody is included and has something to contribute to the community. Nobody is left behind. Everybody should have an equal chance in life.	Respectful relationships are the norm between individuals and within communities. We respect the diversity in our community, and in particular, we respect the contribution of our older residents, our young people, and those with Aboriginal cultural heritage.	This is at the heart of everything we do. Sustainability is a key factor in planning for future land use, advocating for additional educational facilities, approving a development, or making decisions around how we use our infrastructure



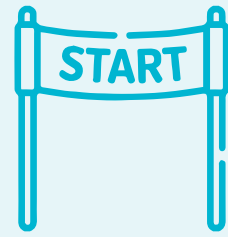
Early Years Framework

The Municipal Early Years Plan is built around a vision and seven guiding principles. From the vision and planning principles, three key themes, objectives and related goals have emerged. Together, the vision, guiding principles, objectives, themes and goals create the framework for the development of annual Implementation Plans.

Annual plans will outline the actions that Council intends to take with its partners towards the achievement of the vision and goals. It is important to note that many of these goals are dependent upon a collaborative approach between Council and its strategic early years partners.

Early Years Vision	Children and their families are supported to grow, learn and thrive in our welcoming and inclusive community		
7 Early Years Guiding Principles:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusion – we welcome and include children and families in all aspects of community life. 2. Respect – we respect the diverse needs of children and families and their right to be heard and understood. 3. Diversity – we acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of families that live in our community. 4. Equity – we recognise that not all of our children and families have access to the same resources and will ensure that we address barriers to participation and access, using a strength-based approach. 5. Quality – we advocate for and promote the importance of quality programs, services and facilities for children and families. 6. Safety – we promote and encourage early years services to be physically and culturally safe for children and their families. 7. Connection – we provide opportunities for children and families to develop strong community connections and a sense of belonging. 		
3 Themes:	 The best possible start to life	 High quality, safe and accessible services	 Family inclusive places and spaces
3 Objectives:	Our children have the opportunity to grow, thrive and learn in a rich, nurturing and inclusive environment.	Our collaborative early years services help to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and families living in our community.	Our public spaces and places are welcoming of children, accessible for people of all abilities and inclusive of diversity.

Theme 1 - The Best Possible Start to Life



Our children have the opportunity to grow, thrive and learn in a rich, nurturing and inclusive environment.

Goals for the next three years

1. Families and carers are supported to develop the skills and knowledge to enable children to be healthy, happy and to reach their potential.
2. Children's voices are valued, heard and acted upon for all matters of relevance to them.
3. Children are actively encouraged and supported to participate in a diverse range of experiences, activities and events to build upon their interests and strengths.
4. Children's connection to place, culture and community are respected and celebrated.
5. Gender equity and respectful relationships are promoted in the early years.



Theme 2 - High Quality, Safe and Accessible Services



Our collaborative early years services help to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and families living in our community.

Goals for the next three years

1. Families and children are consulted with and involved in co-design of services so that service providers better understand their diverse needs, circumstances and challenges.
2. Families are aware of the range of existing early years services available to them within Campaspe Shire and online.
3. Families can access early years services and specialist support services that are required for their development, health and wellbeing, or are provided additional supports to access these services.
4. Gaps in service delivery are identified by service providers and the community and either these gaps are addressed or service providers advocate for these gaps to be addressed.
5. Early years services maintain partnerships and networks in order to share information, enhance skill levels and advocate for improved services.
6. Work collaboratively to identify and support families in relation to child safety.



Theme 3 - Family Inclusive Places and Spaces



Our public spaces and places are welcoming of children, accessible for people of all abilities and inclusive of diversity.

Goals for the next three years

1. Community places and spaces are inclusive of children and diversity.
2. Community places and spaces are safe (both physically and culturally) and accessible for children and families.
3. Activities that occur within community places and spaces are affordable for children and families wherever possible.
4. New or upgraded community places and spaces are co-designed by children and families where relevant.
5. Early years facilities and schools are co-located where possible to improve access to these services.





2 Heygarth Street, Echuca



Hours: 8.30am to 5.00pm
Monday to Friday

Postal: PO Box 35, Echuca VIC 3564

Telephone: 03 5481 2200
1300 666 535

Email: shire@campaspe.vic.gov.au

Website: www.campaspe.vic.gov.au

Social:  @CampaspeShireCouncil
 #campaspeShire

Customer Service Centres

Kyabram, 19 Lake Road

Rochester, 43-45 Mackay Street

Rushworth, 33 High Street

Tongala, 37 Mangan Street

Procurement

Council Policy Number	126
Date adopted	
Scheduled for review	June 2027



Council Policy

Council Policy

Council Policy

Council Policy

1. Preamble

This Policy is made under Section 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Act requires each council to:

- Prepare and adopt a Procurement Policy which specifies the principles, processes and procedures applying in respect of the purchase of goods and services and carrying out of works by Council; and
- Review its Procurement Policy at least once during each 4-year term of Council.

2. Purpose

This Policy provides overarching guidelines in relation to the procurement of goods, services and works by Council in the delivery of services to the community and the operations of the organisation.

3. Definitions

Terms appearing in the singular may be read as plural and vice versa.

Act	Local Government Act 2020 (Vic).
Closed Tender	An approach to market which is directed to a select group of suppliers who are invited to submit a tender proposal.
Collaborative Procurement Arrangement	A contract established by the Council, government or a nominated agent, such as Procurement Australasia (PA), Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Loddon Mallee Procurement Network of Councils or a local government entity, for the benefit of numerous state, federal and/or local government entities that achieves best value by leveraging combined economies of scale.
Commercial in Confidence	Information that, if released, may prejudice the business dealings or commercial interests of Council or another party, e.g., prices, discounts, rebates, profits, methodologies and process information.
Conflict of Interest	A conflict of interest exists when private interests conflict with public duty. A situation where private interests may benefit from or be adversely affected by public duty.
Contract Management	The process that ensures all parties to a contract fully meet their respective obligations as efficiently and effectively as possible, in order to deliver the contract objectives and provide value for money.
Council	Campaspe Shire Council.

Councillors	Council's elected representatives (the Mayor and Councillors) or Administrator(s) appointed to act in this capacity.
Expression of Interest (EOI)	A procurement process used to identify suppliers interested in, and capable of, delivering the required goods or services. Potential suppliers are asked to provide information on their capability and capacity to perform the work. It is usually the first stage of a multi-stage tender process.
Genuine Emergency	<p>A sudden, unforeseen event, which has the potential to result in injury, loss of life or critical damage to property or infrastructure. Emergency in the procurement context is viewed at three levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 Immediate Response – Reactive procurement action taken immediately before, during and in the first period after an emergency to reduce the effects and consequences of the emergency on people, their livelihoods, wellbeing and property; on the environment; and to meet basic human needs. • Level 2 Disaster Relief – Emergency procurement for the provision of assistance to meet the essential needs of individuals, families and the wider community during and in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. • Level 3 Post-Disaster Recovery – Accelerated procurement to assist Council and the community to achieve a proper and effective level of functioning.
IBAC	Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission.
Indigenous Business	An Indigenous Business is one that is at least 50% owned by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islands person(s), consistent with the Supply Nation definition https://supplynation.org.au/benefits/indigenous-business/
Local Business	A commercial business with an operational premises that is physically located within the municipal borders, or in Moama.
Loddon Mallee Procurement Network (LMPN)	The 10 councils comprising the LMPN, being Buloke Shire Council, Campaspe Shire Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, City of Greater Bendigo, Gannawarra Shire Council, Loddon Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Mildura Rural City Council, Mount Alexander Shire Council and Swan Hill Rural City Council.
Principles	Procurement principles are the fundamental propositions or forces that serve as the foundation for Council's Procurement Policy, practices and decision making.
Probity	Within government, the term "probity" is often used in a general sense to mean "good process". A procurement process that conforms to the expected standards of probity is one in which clear procedures that are consistent with the Council's policies and legislation, are established, understood, and followed from the outset. These procedures need to consider the legitimate interests of suppliers and ensure that all potential suppliers are treated equitably.
Procurement	Procurement is the whole process of acquisition of external goods, services and works. This process spans the whole lifecycle from initial concept through to the end of the useful life of an asset (including disposal).

Procurement Manual	The administrative manual containing the specific operational methodologies and processes to be undertaken by staff engaged in purchasing activities.
Procurement Plan	A document prepared prior to an open or closed Tender or Expression of Interest, to detail the intended process to be followed throughout the approach to market; including but not limited to the criteria by which submissions will be evaluated.
Public Advertising	Public advertising is online/digital through Council's e-Tender Portal and any other forum which may be considered appropriate in the circumstances, including but not limited to social media platforms.
Purchasing Cards	Corporate credit cards issued to relevant Staff for use in accordance with Council's Corporate Purchase Card Policy.
Open Tender	Any approach to market which is publicly advertised and available to all potential respondents (rather than a targeted invitation to a select group of suppliers).
Responsible Officer	The member of staff responsible for the purchase or procurement activity.
Schedule of Rates Contract	A standing offer arrangement based on a Schedule of Rates Contract that sets out rates for goods and services which are available for the term of the agreement but without a commitment to purchase a specified value or quantity of goods or services.
Social Economic Benefit	The positive impacts on people, places or communities generated through procurement practices in the Loddon Mallee Region.
Staff	Includes all Council officers and employees, whether permanent, temporary, voluntary or under a contract of employment.
Supplier Panel	A panel is a group of suppliers with whom Council has a contract for services that have already been tendered and are based on categories such as trade services and plant hire.
Supplier	Any organisation which supplies goods or services to Council including but not limited to, contractors, subcontractors, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and consultants.
Sustainability	Activities that meet the needs of the organisation for goods, works and services in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis. This means that benefits are generated not only for the organisation, but for the community and local economy and that negative effects on the environment are minimised in doing so.
Tender Process	The process of inviting parties from either a select list or via public advertisement to submit an offer by tender, followed by evaluation of submissions and selection of a successful bidder or tenderer in accordance with pre-determined evaluation criteria.

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Total Contract Sum	<p>The potential total value of the contract including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • costs for the full term of the contract, including any options for either party to extend the contract; • applicable goods and services tax (GST); • anticipated contingency allowances or variations, and • all other known, anticipated and reasonably foreseeable costs.
Value for Money	<p>Value for money in procurement is about realising benefit in the purchase of goods, services and works, taking into account both cost and non-cost factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribution to the advancement of Council's priorities, fitness for purpose, quality, service and support, and • whole-of-life costs and transaction costs associated with acquiring, using, holding, maintaining and disposing of the goods, services or works.

4. Policy Statement

Council will adhere to all required provisions in the Local Government Act 2020 and the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 in all procurement matters and maintain consistency with any Victorian Local Government Best Practice Procurement Guidelines.

4.1. Scope and Application

This Policy applies to all procurement activities and is applicable to Council, Staff and all persons undertaking procurement on Council's behalf.

This Policy will assist Council to achieve objectives such as obtaining value for money, supporting local economies and sustainable and socially responsible procurement, leading to a better result in the provision of goods, services and works for the benefit of the community.

This Policy provides direction on the conduct of procurement activities throughout the sourcing, management and disposal phases. It does not extend to the related accounts payable processes.

1.1. Objectives

This Policy is consistent with the requirements of Section 108 (2) of the Act and will:

- Promote open and fair competition and provide value for money;
- Provide clear guidelines to the Council to promote consistency and control over procurement activities;
- Demonstrate accountability to ratepayers and residents;
- Provide guidance on ethical behaviour in public sector procurement;
- Demonstrate the application of best practice in procurement activities;
- Demonstrate the consideration of sustainability in procurement with respect to social, economic and environmental factors;
- Increase the probability of obtaining the best outcome for the municipal community when procuring goods and services and delivering works; and
- Promote collaborative procurement.

These objectives will be achieved by requiring that Council's contracting, purchasing and contract management activities:

- Support Council's corporate strategies, aims and objectives;

- Span the whole lifecycle of an acquisition and take sustainability and environmental benefit considerations into account;
- Achieve demonstrable value for money;
- Are conducted in, and demonstrate, an impartial, fair and ethical manner;
- Seek continual improvement through innovative and technological initiatives, and
- Generate and support local business when value for money is evidenced.

4.2. Application of GST

All monetary values stated in this Policy exclude GST, unless specifically stated otherwise.

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4.3. Effective Legislative and Policy Compliance and Control

i. Ethics and Probity

Council's procurement activities will be performed in an open, transparent and ethical manner that demonstrates integrity, fairness and accountability to meet relevant legal requirements.

All tender processes will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of this Procurement Policy and any associated procedures, relevant legislation, relevant Australian Standards, Commercial Law and the Act.

ii. Conduct of Councillors and Council Staff

Councillors and Staff will always conduct themselves in ways that accord with the Councillor Code of Conduct or the Employee Code of Conduct respectively, perform their duties ethically and with integrity and must:

- Treat potential and existing suppliers with equality and fairness;
- Not use their position to seek or receive personal gain in procurement matters;
- Maintain confidentiality of Commercial in Confidence information;
- Present the highest standards of professionalism and probity;
- Provide suppliers and tenderers with the same information and an equal opportunity to tender or quote for goods, services and works contracts;
- Be able to account for all decisions and demonstrate and provide evidence of the processes followed;
- Not perform any work under any Council contracts they are supervising, i.e. Staff cannot also work for the relevant supplier;
- Query incidents, decisions or directions that appear to contradict or deviate from Council's standards of ethics, probity or established policies and procedures; and
- Ensure that this Policy and Council's Procurement guidelines are adhered to in relation to the expenditure of Council funds.

iii. Conflict of Interest

Councillors and staff must, always, avoid situations which may give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest. A conflict of interest may be a 'general' or a 'material' conflict of interest.

A person has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

A person has a material conflict of interest in a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. The benefit or loss may be direct or indirect and pecuniary or non-pecuniary. Affected persons include, among others, the member of staff and their family members.

Staff involved in the procurement process; in particular, preparing tender documentation, writing tender specifications, opening tenders, participating in tender evaluation panels, preparing a recommendation report; and Councillors and council staff awarding tenders must:

- Avoid material or general conflicts of interest, whether actual, potential or perceived;
- Declare if they have a conflict of interest in respect of the procurement. Staff participating in tender evaluation panels must complete a conflict of interest declaration. Staff must declare any actual or perceived conflicts in line with Council's internal processes for reporting conflicts of interest; and
- Observe prevailing Council and Government guidelines on how to prevent or deal with conflict of interest situations; and not take advantage of any tender related information, whether or not for personal gain.

iv. Fair and Honest Dealing

All prospective contractors and suppliers must be treated impartially and afforded an equal opportunity to tender or submit a quotation.

Any suspected improper conduct, including fraud, corruption, substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health and safety, risk to the environment, or detrimental action should be managed in accordance with Council's Disciplinary Action Procedure for Staff or the Councillor Code of Conduct for Councillors.

v. Probity, Accountability and Transparency

Accountability in procurement means being able to justify and provide evidence of the process followed. An independent third party must be able to see clearly that a process has been followed and that the process was fair and reasonable.

Staff must be able to account for all procurement decisions and ensure all procurement activities leave an audit trail for monitoring and reporting purposes.

vi. Gifts and Benefits

Any gift or benefit offered to a Councillor or staff member will be managed in accordance with the Councillor Gifts Policy and Employee Code of Conduct (as applicable).

Councillors and staff, particularly contract supervisors, must not knowingly engage a council supplier for private benefit, unless that engagement is on proper commercial terms.

vii. Disclosure of Information

Commercial in Confidence information received by the Council must not be disclosed and must be stored in a secure location.

Councillors and staff must take all reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality of:

- Information disclosed by organisations in tenders, quotations or during tender negotiations; and
- Commercial in Confidence information.

Discussion with potential suppliers during tender evaluations should not go beyond the extent necessary to resolve doubt on what is being offered by that supplier.

At no stage should any discussion be entered into which could improperly influence the procurement process, or negotiation of a contract, prior to the contract approval process being finalised, other than pre-contract negotiations undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Plan.

viii. Complaints & reporting of suspicious activitiesComplaints Handling

Members of the public and suppliers are encouraged to report known or suspected incidences of improper conduct to the CEO. The management of complaints will be in accordance with Council's Complaint Handling Policy.

Reporting Suspicious Activities

Councillors, staff and suppliers are required, at all times, to act honestly and with integrity and to safeguard the public resources for which they are responsible. Council is committed to protecting all revenue, expenditure and assets from any attempt to gain illegal benefits (financial or otherwise).

Council will take all reasonable steps to protect those who assist Council by providing information about suspected fraud. This may include the provision of information on Council's Public Interest Disclosure Procedure, maintaining the confidentiality of identity and protection from harassment, to the extent possible.

Suspected improper conduct, offers of bribes, commissions and any other irregular approaches from suppliers, prospective suppliers or other individuals will be investigated and reported in accordance with Council's policies and processes.

The CEO must notify IBAC of any matter they suspect on reasonable grounds to involve corrupt conduct occurring (or having occurred) in accordance with mandatory reporting requirements under the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2011.

5. Governance

5.1. Structure

Council has delegated a range of powers, duties and functions to the CEO in relation to procurement. The delegations aim to ensure that the Council's procurement structure operates according to processes that:

- Are flexible enough to procure in a timely manner the diverse range of goods, works and services required by Council;
- Guarantee that prospective contractors and suppliers are afforded an equal opportunity to tender or submit a quotation; and
- Encourage competition and collaboration.

5.2. Methods

The Council's standard methods for procuring goods, services and works are:

- Through a purchase order that represents best Value for Money under the quotation process from suppliers for goods or services under the thresholds adopted by the Council. An approved purchase order must be created prior to committing expenditure on behalf of Council;
 - Under a contract following a quotation or Tender Process;
 - Under a Supplier Panel;
 - Engaging a supplier via a Collaborative Procurement arrangement;
 - Via a multi-stage tender commencing with a request for Expressions of Interest ("EOI") followed by a Tender Process;
 - Under an arrangement in line with the conditions contained in Appendix 3 - Exemptions from the Policy; and
 - Using Purchasing Cards;
 unless other arrangements are specifically authorised by Council.

5.3. Responsible Financial Management

The principles of responsible financial management will be applied to all procurement activities. To give effect to these principles, purchasing staff must provide detail of the availability of existing funds within an approved budget or alternative source of funds prior to the commencement of any procurement action for the purchase of goods, services or works.

Council funds must be used efficiently and effectively to procure goods, services and works and every attempt must be made to contain the costs of the procurement process without **compromising any of the procurement principles set out in this Policy.**

5.4. Procurement Thresholds and Competition

Council will invite offers from the supply market for goods, services, and works in accordance with the thresholds listed in Appendix 1.

i. Procurement Principles

Council will apply the following fundamental best practice principles to procurement, irrespective of the value and complexity of that procurement:

- Value for money;
- Sustainability (social, economic and environmental);
- Open and fair competition;
- Accountability;
- Risk management, and
- Probity and transparency.

ii. Procurement Methodology

Section 108 of the Act details that each Council will set the Open Tender threshold above which tenders or expressions of interest for contracts must be publicly invited.

An Open Tender process must be used for all procurement activities where the estimated value is \$300,000 and above (excluding GST) for goods, services or works.

For procurement activities where the estimated value is under \$300,000 (excluding GST), the procurement methodology and thresholds detailed in Appendix 1 will apply.

iii. Aggregate Spend

When considering the appropriate process for the procurement of services, regard must be had to the period of time considered optimal to drive value for money, as well as whether a contract arrangement would be appropriate in the circumstances.

The determination of the appropriate period of time in each case will take into account the type of service and number of suppliers in the market providing the service, as well as the mitigation of any risks which may be associated with a longer-term contract. Staff should consider any optimal timeframe for considering aggregate spend as may be stated in the Victorian Best Practice Procurement Guidelines.

iv. Contract Variations

All contract variations must be assessed to determine whether they are properly characterised as variations, or whether they are in effect a new contract. Whether a variation claim is to be considered a true variation depends on a number of factors relevant to the particular piece of work, including:

- The monetary value of the proposed variation, i.e. the value of the variation in the context of the thresholds fixed by the Procurement Policy; and
- The subject matter of the proposed variation, and whether it is consistent with the scope contemplated in the original contract.

Staff authority to approve financial variations is determined according to the Instrument of Financial Sub-Delegation as amended from time to time.

v. Payment for Goods, Services and Works

Request for payment of goods, services and works must be in the form of a Tax Invoice as defined by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Payment will be made within 7 days of confirmation of receipt by Council of a valid invoice.

5.5. Open Tender Requirements

All Open Tenders issued by the Council will be published via Council's e-Tendering portal and may be advertised in the local media and any social media as may be considered appropriate.

Information regarding current tenders and limited information regarding awarded contracts will be published on Council's web site.

i. Procurement Plan

Prior to commencing any Open Tender (or other process where it is considered prudent to do so), a detailed procurement plan must be developed by the Responsible Officer and followed strictly by the evaluation panel throughout the tender process.

The procurement plan should be completed and signed off by the relevant Director prior to any approach to market.

All procurement plans must contain the following information at a minimum:

- Summary of the scope of work;
- Budget;
- Collaborative procurement opportunities;
- Approach to market;
- Timeframe;
- Risk analysis;
- Tender evaluation panel (comprising at least 3 scoring members and a non-scoring chairperson);
- Proposed contract particulars; and
- Evaluation criteria.

All panel members must sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration before gaining access to tender submissions.

ii. Tender Evaluation

A tender evaluation panel will be established to evaluate each tender submission against the tender's selection criteria. Tender evaluation panels may include external personnel in order to ensure the best outcome for a procurement activity and must comprise at least 3 persons and a chairperson.

A tender evaluation plan should be incorporated within the Procurement Plan, completed and signed off prior to the tender or quotation being issued. The tender evaluation panel is expected to comply with the evaluation plan at all times.

iii. Evaluation Criteria

In order to determine whether a proposed contract provides Value for Money, all procurement plans for Open Tenders will include the following mandatory evaluation criteria: at a minimum:

- Occupational Health and Safety and Insurance Compliance criteria and any required pre-accreditation which may be required for the particular work (e.g. ABN registration, OH&S, Fair Work Act, risk and conflict of interest);
- Tendered price
- Tenderer capability and proposed methodology; and
- Capacity and experience of the tenderer in providing similar goods and/or services and/or works.

Additional evaluation criteria are optional and may be considered and weighted appropriately to address the key objectives and determining factors for success in each particular contract scenario.

The specific methodology to be applied to the evaluation process must be detailed in the Procurement Manual.

iv. Local Benefit

Council will demonstrate a commitment to supporting its local economy and/or the Campaspe Shire community by:

- Incorporating a weighted tender evaluation criteria category for benefits to the Campaspe Shire local economy, only where it would be appropriate to do so, having regard to the following factors:
 - supplier market conditions at the time of the tender;
 - the level of expertise required by the Contractor and/or subcontractors for the particular piece of work and capacity of Local Businesses to provide same;
 - The actual, measurable benefit to the local economy or community. That is, the likelihood that the service or works will generate tangible contributions to the local economy and/or community.

Where a weighted criteria item is included, the associated percentage weighting must not exceed 10 percent.

- Inviting at least one Local Business to submit a quotation for the piece of work, only where it is practicable to do so and where a public tender is not required under this Policy.

For the sake of clarity, where the purchasing staff member determines in their discretion that value for money, fairness, innovation and/or quality of work are likely to be adversely impacted by doing so, the staff member will not be required to approach the local supply market when seeking quotations.

v. Probity Advisor

A formal probity plan must be developed, and a probity advisor appointed in the following circumstances:

- If the proposed Total Contract Sum exceeds \$10 million (excluding GST) over the life of the contract, or any lesser value set by Council from time to time; or
- If a proposed contract is considered by Council or the CEO to be particularly complex, or of a high risk or controversial nature and requiring a high level of public confidence.

Outside of the above requirements, a probity advisor may be appointed by the CEO or Director, at any stage of the procurement process.

vi. Shortlisting and Negotiations

Council may carry out a second stage shortlisting process during any EOI, tender or quotation process. Shortlisting must be based on the advertised selection criteria.

Shortlisted tenderers may be invited by the Council to submit a best and final offer in relation to all or certain aspects of their respective tenders.

Once one or more preferred tenderers are selected, negotiations can be conducted in order to obtain the optimal solution and commercially agreed terms within the original scope and intent of the tender. Probity requirements apply to all negotiations.

A Best and Final Offer process (BAFO) may be used. The terms of the BAFO process should stipulate the time period for which the BAFO offer must be held by the tenderer.

5.6. Collaborative Procurement

In accordance with section 108(c) of the Act, Council will first give consideration to collaboration with other councils and public bodies or utilise Collaborative Procurement Arrangements when procuring goods, services and works, in order to take advantage of economies of scale.

Staff must consider any opportunities for Collaborative Procurement in relation to a procurement process undertaken by Council. Any report that recommends commencing a procurement process must set out information relating to opportunities for Collaborative Procurement.

Council is committed to seeking collaborative opportunities within the LMPN by sharing annual budget priorities and upcoming tender opportunities and gaining insight into the priorities of

the other councils in the group. Council will also consider shared panel of supplier arrangements where doing so is likely to generate Value for Money outcomes. All tender processes where the resulting contract is anticipated to be shared with other councils will include in the terms of tender and the conditions of contract a statement informing potential tenderers of these conditions.

Council may also collaborate with other agencies such as MAV Procurement or Procurement Australasia to procure goods, services or works, or utilise existing Collaborative Procurement Arrangements for the procurement of goods, services or works established through an Open Tender process where it provides an advantageous, value for money outcome for the Council.

Any report to Council recommending an award of contract must specify any opportunities for collaboration that were identified and where a collaborative approach was not used, the reasons why a collaborative tender could not be undertaken.

5.7. Delegation of Authority

Delegations define the limitations within which staff are permitted to commit Council to the procurement of goods, services or works and the associated costs. The Instrument of Sub-Delegation allows specified staff to undertake certain purchases, quotation, tender and contractual processes without prior referral to the Council. This enables the Council to conduct procurement activities in an efficient and timely manner whilst maintaining transparency and integrity.

Council has delegated responsibilities relating to the expenditure of funds for the purchase of goods, services and works, the acceptance of quotations and tenders and for contract management activities to the CEO. The CEO has further delegated some of those responsibilities to other members of council staff, subject to any specified conditions and limitations as set out in the Instruments of Delegation to Staff.

6. Internal Controls

The CEO must implement and maintain a framework of internal controls over procurement processes that will ensure:

- More than one person is involved in and responsible for the authorisation and management of a transaction from end to end;
- Transparency in the procurement process;
- A clearly documented audit trail exists for procurement activities;
- Appropriate authorisations are obtained and documented;
- Systems are in place for appropriate monitoring and performance measurement; and
- A process is in place for escalation, where appropriate, of procurement matters (including procedural non-compliance) to the Executive Management Team, the Audit and Risk Committee and Council.

6.1. Organisational Model for Procurement

Council operates a centre-led procurement structure. All strategy, policy, technology, best practice and networking in procurement matters will be led by Council's Contracts and Procurement Manager who is responsible for the centralised procurement team.

For day-to-day purchasing where formal contracts are not involved, Council operates a decentralised system where requests for quotations may be initiated by any department.

6.2. Procurement Manual

The CEO will ensure that a procurement manual is maintained, to provide direction to Council staff on the operational aspects of procurement.

6.3. Risk Management

Council is committed to the practice of effective risk management to provide improved stakeholder confidence and trust, and to support improved compliance and better corporate

governance. Risk management is to be appropriately applied at all stages of procurement activities including:

- Standardisation of contracts including current and relevant clauses
- Requiring security deposits wherever appropriate
- Referring specifications to relevant industry experts where appropriate
- Ensuring contractual agreements are in place before the commencement of works
- Use of and enforcement of delegated authorities
- Use of or reference to relevant Australian Standards (or equivalent)
- Effective management of the contract through ongoing monitoring to ensure key performance indicators are met.

To protect the interests of Council, terms and conditions must be settled in advance of any commitment being made with a supplier. Any exceptions to this requirement exposes Council to risk.

Contracts must be proactively managed by council staff responsible for the project or service. Each should be assessed equivalent to size, type, complexity, duration and value to determine the level of risk. This will then determine the level of management of the particular project/contract to best utilise resources and preserve value for money.

Risk assessments are a vital part of the procurement planning process, particularly for significant contracts. Risks will be identified for each part of the sourcing, transition, delivery and finalisation stages of procurement. Appropriate risk avoidance and mitigation strategies will be employed whenever practicable and appropriate.

6.4. Contract Management

Council will evaluate and seek to improve on all aspects of procurement and contract management, in accordance with its documented procurement processes and Contract Management Framework.

Effective contract management ensures goods, services and works are delivered to the required standards of quality and quantity as intended by the contract through:

- Establishing a system to monitor and achieve the responsibilities and obligations of all parties under the contract;
- Providing a means for the early recognition of issues and performance problems and the identification of solutions;
- Adhering to Council's Risk Management Framework and relevant Occupational Health and Safety and sustainability requirements.

Council contracts must include contract management requirements commensurate with the complexity of the procurement. Furthermore, contracts must be proactively managed by the member of Council Staff responsible for the delivery of the contracted goods, services or works to ensure Council, and therefore the community, receives value for money.

6.5. Dispute Resolution

All Council contracts will incorporate dispute management and alternative dispute resolution provisions to minimise the likelihood of disputes escalating to litigation.

6.6. Endorsement

Staff must not publicly endorse products or services without the prior approval of the CEO. For the sake of clarity, endorsement for the purposes of this provision does not include circumstances where Staff provide in-confidence references to other councils or businesses who seek to use a particular supplier from whom Council has previously procured goods, services or works.

6.7. Training

All staff with duties that involve the purchasing of goods and services undertake procurement training when they commence employment. In order to ensure existing staff are up-to-date with the latest requirements of this Policy, they should participate in refresher training every two years. Training may be delivered as an online course or in person. Staff who breach the Policy will be required to undertake refresher training immediately and may be subject to disciplinary action.

6.8. Achieving Value for Money

The Council's procurement activities are carried out on the basis of obtaining value for money. This means minimising the total cost of ownership over the lifetime of the requirement consistent with acceptable quality, reliability and delivery considerations. Lowest price is not the sole determinant of value for money.

Obtaining value for money will be facilitated by:

- Achieving continuous improvement in procurement activities;
- Developing, implementing and managing processes that support the coordination and streamlining of activities throughout the procurement lifecycle;
- Effective use of competition;
- Using existing Council contractual arrangement or collaborative procurement arrangements if appropriate;
- Identifying and rectifying inefficiencies in procurement processes;
- Developing cost-efficient tender processes;
- Staff responsible for providing procurement services or assistance providing competent advice in terms of available products and agreements; and
- Working with suppliers to create relationships that are professional, productive, and appropriate to the value and importance of the goods, services and works being acquired.

6.9. Sustainable Procurement

Sustainable procurement involves decision making that has the most positive environmental, social and economic impacts possible across the entire lifecycle of goods, services and works.

Staff will have a clear and shared understanding of what sustainable procurement means and how they can apply it to their daily tasks. Council commits to applying the principles of sustainability to its decision-making and activities.

Council demonstrates sustainable procurement by:

- Being accountable for its impacts on society, the economy and the environment including the impacts of the organisation's supply chain;
- Examining anticipated organisational, project and/or community needs;
- Continually improving specifications and practices as they relate to sustainable outcomes.

7. Building and Maintaining Supply Relationships

7.1. Managing Suppliers

Council recognises the importance of effective and open working relationships with its suppliers and is committed to managing existing suppliers via performance measurements to ensure the benefits negotiated through the procurement activity are obtained through the delivery stage.

7.2. Supply Market Development

A wide range of suppliers are encouraged to compete for Council work. The focus for new work need not always be with the larger more familiar businesses. Other types of organisations offering business diversity include:

- Local, small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and Social Enterprises;

- Green suppliers;
- Ethnic and minority businesses (e.g. Indigenous Business); and
- Volunteer and community organisations.

7.3. Panel of Suppliers

The establishment of a Supplier Panel allows staff to request quotations from suppliers on the panel on the following basis:

- Where the cost of a piece of work can be effectively calculated using the schedule of rates provided by each contractor, the staff member may select a supplier on the basis of those rates as well as any other factors stipulated to apply to selecting a supplier in the contract conditions. Value for money, probity and fairness must be demonstrated in selecting a supplier from the Panel in each case and the reasons for the staff member's selection of a supplier fully documented.
- Where the cost of a piece of work cannot be effectively calculated using the contractors' schedule of rates OR where the contract does not stipulate any other factors to be considered in selecting a contractor from the panel, the staff member must seek quotes in accordance with the purchasing thresholds in Appendix 1.
- Where the cost of a piece of work is likely to exceed the Open Tender threshold, a minimum of three quotations must be sought from suppliers on the panel. The ability to seek quotations from the panel is capped at a maximum purchase amount equal to the CEO financial delegation limit (as a public tender will have already been conducted to approve the panel).

8. Delegations and Authorisations

The CEO will ensure a documented register of procurement delegations is maintained, identifying Council staff authorised to make such procurement commitments in respect of materials, goods, services and works on behalf of Council, to include but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- Acceptance of tenders and of quotes.
- Contract term extensions (within authorised budget).
- Contract amendment (non-financial).
- Contract amendment (financial).

9. Exclusions

Nil

10. Human Rights

This Policy has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

11. Related Legislation

Competition & Consumer Act 2010
Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2011
Local Government Act 2020

12. Related Policies, Procedures and Strategies

Council Policy 039 - Risk Management
 Council Policy 075 - Fraud
 Council Policy 181 – Councillor Gifts
 Council Policy 174 – Complaint Handling
 Council Procedure PR141 - Public Interest Disclosure
 Council Procedure PR130 - Disciplinary Action
 Employee Code of Conduct

Councillor Code of Conduct

13. Attachments

Nil

14. Review Period

Four years

Responsible officer

Contracts and Procurement Manager

15. Administrative Updates

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter the Policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the appendices of this Policy, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

16. Approval History

Adopted	17 November 2009	Minute Book Reference No 14731 (Item 9.5)
Revised	21 September 2010	Minute Book Reference No 16407 (Item 12.6)
Revised	18 October 2011	Minute Book Reference No 18261 (Item 13.3)
Revised	21 August 2012	Minute Book Reference No 1057 (Item 4.16)
Revised	20 August 2013	Minute Book Reference No 1041 (Item 6.3)
Revised	19 August 2014	Minute Book Reference No 878 (Item 6.1)
Revised	18 August 2015	Minute Book Reference No 905 (Item 6.2)
Revised	16 August 2016	Minute Book Reference No 731 (Item 6.2)
Revised	20 March 2018	Minute Book Reference No 486 (Item 7.1)
Revised	23 June 2020	Minute Book Reference No 2221 (Item 9.6)

Chief Executive Officer:

Date:

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Appendix 1 Council – Procurement Methodology Thresholds

Council will invite tenders, proposals, quotes and expressions of interest from the supply market for goods, services and works in accordance with these thresholds:

Expenditure (Excluding GST)	Quotation Method
\$0 - \$2,000	No quote required
\$2,001 - \$15,000	One written quotation must be sought.
\$15,001 - \$50,000	Two written quotations must be sought.
\$50,001 - <\$300,000	Three or more written quotations must be sought via the process set out in the Procurement Manual, as updated from time to time. Advertising is not required unless undertaking an Open Tender.
\$300,000 and above	Open Tender to be undertaken.

*An Open Tender process may be used for values less than \$300,000 if this will service Council's interests and produce a better outcome in the context of this Policy. The Procurement Risk Matrix should be utilised in this regard.

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Appendix 2 Council – Reporting and Monitoring

Council will seek to improve its procurement performance by capturing and analysing data in areas including:

- New collaborative procurement contracts;
- New panel contracts;
- The number and details of any procurement over \$300,000 (excluding GST), for which an Open Tender process was not undertaken.
- Contract Management Framework compliance, including monitoring and reporting on management of variations, timelines, contractor management and feedback and overall quality of work or service.

A report detailing actual performance against these indicators will be presented annually to the Audit & Risk Committee.

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Appendix 3 Situations deemed outside the scope of this Policy (Exemptions from Policy)

A number of purchasing scenarios are deemed to fall outside the scope of this Policy. Council is not required to undertake any tender, quotation, or expression of interest process and may proceed with a direct sourcing method if any of the following circumstances apply:

Exemption Name	Explanation, limitations, responsibilities and approvals
1. A contract made with the approval of the CEO in response to a genuine emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the CEO has declared that the contract must be entered into because of an emergency which may be classed as either Level 1 or Level 2 in the definitions under this Policy, or Level 3 only where the procurement is essential to the continuation of business as usual.
2. A contract made with, or a purchase from a contract made by, another government entity, government-owned entity or other approved third party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This general exemption allows engagements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With another government entity or government owned entity. For example, Federal, State or Local Government or an entity owned by the Federal, State or Local Government; and/or In reliance on contracts and arrangements established by another government entity, local authority or local government group purchasing scheme, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) or National Procurement network members (e.g. Local Buy), Procurement Australia (PA). or LMPN.
3. Extension of contracts while Council is at market to replace that contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows Council to extend an existing contract if the procurement process to replace the contract has commenced, and when the tender process or negotiations will take or are taking longer than expected. This exemption may be used when the establishment of an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is considered not to be in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of critical public services to the municipality.
4. Novated Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the initial contract was entered into in compliance with the Act and due diligence has been undertaken in respect to the new party.
5. Information technology resellers and software developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows Council to renew software licenses, maintenance and support agreements, or upgrade existing systems, when there is only one supplier of the software who holds the intellectual property rights to the software.
6. Statutory Compulsory Monopoly Insurance Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motor vehicle compulsory third party WorkCover Joint/mutual insurance schemes specifically catering to Local Government
7. Plant and Equipment Servicing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If it is required to maintain a valid warranty, When works need to be carried out by recognised suppliers using genuine parts. To achieve this Council utilises servicing by the manufacturers from whom the plant and equipment was originally purchased. Spare parts from specific manufacturers can be purchased to complete works on plant and equipment in Council's workshop.

Exemption Name	Explanation, limitations, responsibilities and approvals
8. Artworks, Statues and Monuments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not practical to obtain quotes for artworks, statues and monuments as each piece of work is unique. Please note that if an artwork is commissioned then this exemption does not apply and quotations or tenders must be sought.
9. Shop Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Units of Council that operate a retail outlet that are required to purchase stock for resale to the public. This is due to the nature of the goods that are offered for resale, which may be unique.
10. Performers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Units of Council that engage performers as part of their performance program are exempt.
11. Sole Supplier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no market to test and obtain multiple quotations. Examples: Regional water corporations, PowerCor, professional membership payments (relating to positions held at Council), when the supplier is the sole source of intellectual property (e.g. Facebook, Google, Apple or Microsoft) Advertising (newspapers, magazines and the like), payments to third party agencies to meet statutory obligations (eg. Fire Services Levy payment).
12. Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of legal service providers.
13. Leases and Licences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save for finance leases where Council may ultimately acquire the goods under lease, lease agreements and licence agreements for goods, services and/or real property are outside the scope of this Procurement Policy. <p>Notwithstanding this exemption, wherever practicable, Council acknowledges that it will consider value for money, transparency, procedural fairness and accountability with regard to leases and licences and will act in accordance with all relevant Council policies and its statutory obligations in lease and licence arrangements.</p>

Staff raising a requisition where one of the above exemption categories applies must enter in the Purchasing System at requisition stage, the exemption type, as well as an explanation as to why the exemption type applies to their purchase for audit and reporting purposes.

A report detailing all exemption claims for each calendar month will be provided at the end of the relevant month to the Executive Leadership Team for review and any issues noted by the Contracts & Procurement Team. Where the relevant Director considers any exemption claims to have been misapplied, the Director will take any action required to prevent further misuse of the provision in future by the relevant Staff member.

Appendix 4 Waiver from Prescribed Procurement Process

It is recognised that there will be specific and limited circumstances when obtaining multiple quotations may not be possible, practical or represent the best value for money.

In this type of situation, a waiver of the requirement to follow the prescribed procurement process may be requested by completing a 'Request for Waiver from Procurement Process' Form. The form must detail:

- The details of the proposed supplier;
- An estimate of the cost; and
- the circumstances and reasons why the correct procurement process cannot be carried out.

All Request for Waiver forms must be reviewed by Procurement and approved by the relevant Director, who will first review the particular circumstances on their merit, to ensure value for money is able to be achieved and that the proposed purchase is fair, transparent and free from bias.

Where the purchase would ordinarily be subject to a public tender process (for purchases over the threshold of \$300,000 excluding GST) or where the value exceeds the relevant Director's financial delegation, the Request for Waiver form must be forwarded to Procurement and approved by the CEO.

Council Policy

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Cnr Hare & Heygarth Streets
Echuca VIC 3564

PO Box 35
Echuca VIC 3564

P: 1300 666 535
03 5481 2200

E: shire@campaspe.vic.gov.au
www.campaspe.vic.gov.au

ABN 23 604 881 620

Submission

To the Australian Government Productivity Commission's Inquiry - Murray-Darling Basin Plan: Implementation Review 2023

“What lessons should be learned from programs aimed at helping communities adjust to the Plan?”

“Are there any other issues with the Plan implementation that you wish to raise?”

31 July 2023

Campaspe Shire Council is pleased to lodge this submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan: Implementation Review 2023.

As a member of the Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC), we are fully supportive of its submission to this Inquiry. While our submission is complementary to the MRGC submission, we wish to highlight the significant economic contribution Campaspe Shire's agricultural industry makes to our economy, the strong food manufacturing sector that exists complimenting the agriculture sector, the ancillary businesses that support both sectors and most importantly the viability of our local towns. We also want to highlight that at the heart of its survival and growth into the future, is its continued access to irrigated water.

Campaspe Shire is one of the richest and most diverse agricultural areas in Victoria. The agricultural sector alone has the greatest number of business entities in Campaspe Shire, many of which are sole traders or small businesses. (Source: app.remplan.com.au/campaspe/economy/summary)

It is, therefore, not only vitally important that the effective and balanced implementation of the Basin Plan achieves environmental sustainability targets, but that it does so without undue negative impact on the long-term viability of our towns, prosperity of our shire's economy or wellbeing of our communities.

Campaspe Shire Council engaged economic consultants REMPLAN to conduct an economic analysis of Campaspe's agricultural sector. Prepared in July 2023, this report forms the basis of our submission to the Commission's inquiry, highlighting the significance of agricultural production, and importance of irrigated water, to the Campaspe economy and community.

Some of the key findings of the economic analysis include:

- Of the 852 agricultural businesses counted within the Campaspe Local Government Area (LGA), 614 are estimated to rely on irrigation water.
- 87% of irrigated water is used for pastures and crops for grazing or hay.
- 72% of local agricultural businesses are reliant on irrigation for production.
- Three quarters of irrigated water use is sourced from irrigation channels or pipelines.
- Campaspe accounts for three quarters (74%) of the total tomato crop value in Murray River Region.
- Campaspe directly supports almost half (45%) of all Murray River dairy sector jobs.
- Half (50%) of all Murray River fruit and vegetable processing jobs are in Campaspe.
- More than a half (52%) of all Murray River Region dairy farm workers are in Campaspe.
- Every one dairy manufacturing job supports another two workers within Campaspe LGA.

The REMPLAN analysis also highlights the likely impacts and flow-on effects of job losses within some of Campaspe's water-reliant agricultural sectors. Economic modelling for dairy product manufacturing as a case in point, shows that the loss of 100

jobs from dairy product manufacturing is associated with a direct reduction in annual gross revenue of \$80.5 million and direct fall in value added of \$14.8 million. From this direct contraction in economic activity, flow-on supply chain effects, in terms of reduced local purchase of goods and services, would be anticipated to include a fall of \$64.9 million in gross revenue, the loss of 172 supply chain jobs and a further fall in value added of \$24.1 million.

The report highlights the closure in recent years of Nestle in Tongala and Murray Goulburn in Rochester as case studies that illustrate the devastating impacts of job losses and the flow-on effects to the economy and other businesses in the supply chain. It must be understood that these impacts also create a ripple effect on the social fabric of communities, impacting attendance and participation in community programs and activities, such as childcare and sports clubs, for example. These “hidden impacts” go to the heart of the social cohesion and connectedness of our communities.

The Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning’s “2022 Update of the Socio-Economic Impacts of the Basin Plan in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District” (GMID) highlights a range of economic impacts, including:

- previous water recovery has resulted in less irrigation (50% less water use in the GMID), putting the viability of major irrigation districts and the industries and communities they support under pressure
- water prices have risen significantly (by an average of \$72 per ML) due to water recovery from the consumptive pool, particularly in dry years
- irrigation businesses are more reliant on the allocation market and have greater exposure to high water market prices – up to 50% of GMID irrigators rely on the allocation market to meet their water needs
- further water recovery from irrigators (buybacks and on-farm projects) will add to the impacts already being felt and undermine the ability of irrigation communities’ to plan for the future.

Agricultural production, particularly the dairy industry, is significantly lower in the GMID because of water recovery. The 2022 Update states that “if water recovery had not occurred, water use in the GMID could be expected to be about 50% higher in recent years (2018-19 to 2021-22). Subsequently, GMID milk production could be expected to have been about 50% higher than observed in recent years. This foregone production would have had significant flow-on benefits in towns and communities where farm inputs are sourced and dairy manufacturing occurs”. (Source: Socio-economic impacts of Basin Plan water recovery in Victoria – 2022 Update – available at www.delwp.vic.gov.au)

From a regional perspective, there are many economic studies that demonstrate the effects of future water recovery on water price and availability and the flow-on impact of these on the various industries. Essentially, they all predict that allocation prices would be consistently higher and there would be less water available.

It is also widely considered among stakeholders that water Buy-Backs divide and damage our communities. They increase the cost of water for irrigators, pushing up input costs that inevitably put upwards pressure on food price. Last time, they cost our

region 1600 jobs, helped close a milk factory (105 jobs) and increased farming risk across our region.

How can the Australian Government assist to re-purpose these abandoned factories, create jobs, and find new economies?

As the exponential negative impacts of The Basin Plan implementation continue to take hold on agricultural and manufacturing sectors, and supplementary industries, such as engineering, transport and hospitality to name a few, businesses, families and whole communities are starting to ask the highly logical and reasonable question of, 'How are we going to be compensated for our losses?'. Government compensation payouts are not new. In 2016 for example, the Victorian Government compensated workers and businesses impacted by the closures of the Hazelwood and Yallourn Power Station as part of the \$266 million Latrobe Valley Support Package.

If not compensation, as a minimum, we believe the government should help the communities impacted by their decisions to find new economic pathways to ensure the viability of small towns. A good example of how an economic negative and job losses for a town was turned into a positive is the story of Heinz's departure from Girgarre and how the company gifted local assets to the Girgarre Development Group.

When Heinz announced the Girgarre factory closure in 2012 resulting in the loss of 146 FTE jobs, the company decided to leave a legacy for the community. Heinz gifted the Girgarre Development Group four blocks of land (3 x residential and a larger parcel of farm-zoned land) and 67 megalitres of water. The result has been the creation of a benchmark regional botanical gardens, complete with an amphitheatre, café and nursery. "Gargarro" has created a new events and tourism focus for Girgarre which has resulted in new job creation and increased visitation. (Find out more at www.gargarrobotanicgarden.com.au)

Campaspe Shire Council has, for many years, strongly advocated for the careful, effective and balanced implementation of the Basin Plan, including a holistic approach to water management that achieves positive environmental, cultural, economic and social outcomes.

The environmental outcomes the government aims to achieve are supported by Campaspe Shire Council, but these should not be at the cost of the long-term viability of our towns, prosperity of our shire's economy or wellbeing of our communities.

With this in mind, we urge the Commission to carefully consider our submission from an economic perspective but to also apply a human lens in understanding the broader ramifications of the Basin Plan implementation on individuals, on families and on whole communities.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our submission in further detail.



CR ROB AMOS
MAYOR



PAULINE GORDON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER