

# Advocating For A Brighter Tomorrow



## Priorities For The Next Australian Government

Federal Election 2025



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## 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.

# From The Mayor

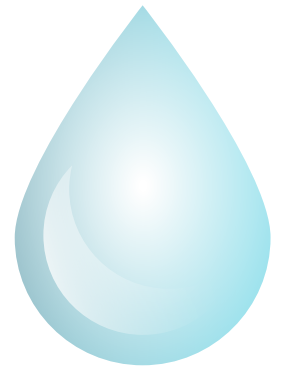
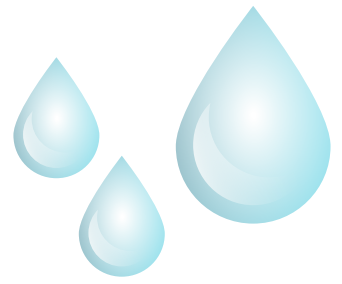
As Australians look to the future with the upcoming federal election, so too, Campaspe Shire Council is focusing on the bigger picture with the launch of our 'Advocating for a brighter tomorrow' campaign.

The campaign highlights six key advocacy priorities focusing on some of the most significant issues facing our shire, including challenges relating to resident health and wellbeing, social cohesion, community safety, economic prosperity and council financial sustainability.

While water is the lifeblood of our communities, supporting lifestyles, business and industry, tourism and the nation's food bowl, it can also have far-reaching negative impacts when external forces come into play. As such, water is a key theme in five of our six advocacy priorities, while the sixth focuses on the financial resilience of all councils.

We look forward to partnering with the next government to ensure we have the investments and policies needed to drive positive change and create a brighter tomorrow for our growing community.

**Cr Daniel Mackrell**  
**Mayor**  
**Campaspe Shire Council**



## Our Advocacy Priorities At A Glance

- ✓ **Aquatic facilities to replace the flood-demolished Rochester pool**  
to support recovery and enhance the health, wellbeing and social connectedness of Rochester.
- ✓ **Establishment of a national program for aquatic infrastructure**  
to support the health, fitness and wellbeing of our communities.
- ✓ **Reconstruction of flood-damaged, critical road infrastructure**  
to enable safe and efficient access to statewide waste facilities.
- ✓ **A commitment to fund flood study mitigation measures**  
to protect our communities from future floods caused by extreme weather.
- ✓ **Fair, direct and timely compensation to communities impacted by water purchasing**  
as part of Basin Plan community adjustment packages.
- ✓ **Restoration of Financial Assistance Grants to 1%**  
to support the financial sustainability of councils Australia-wide.

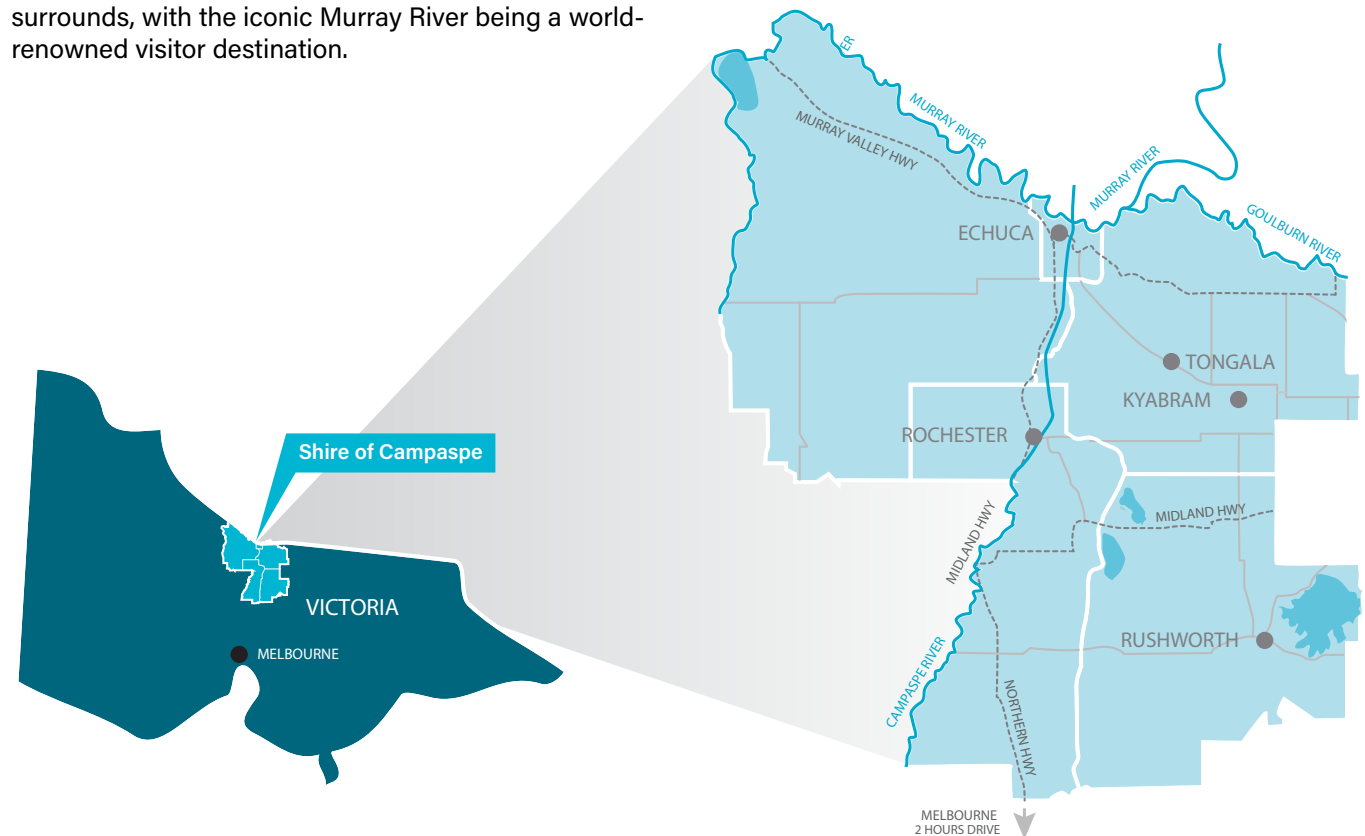
# About The Shire Of Campaspe

## Our Shire

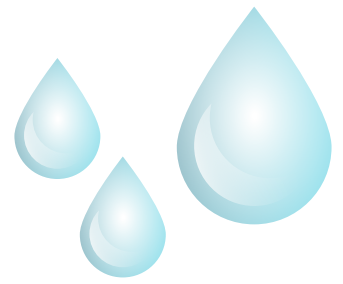
The Shire of Campaspe is located two and half hours drive north of Melbourne, in Victoria's Loddon Mallee region, with the Murray River forming its northern boundary.

About one-third of its 38,000+ resident population live in and around Echuca, one-third live in smaller towns (including Kyabram, Rochester, Tongala and Rushworth), and one-third live in rural areas. All areas are experiencing population growth, with Echuca set for a further 5000 homes to be completed by 2050.

The Campaspe economy is predominantly driven by its agriculture, manufacturing, health care and tourism sectors. Tourism plays a stronger role in Echuca and surrounds, with the iconic Murray River being a world-renowned visitor destination.







## Our People



### A growing community

- The shire's population of approximately 38,300 is expected to increase to 43,000 by 2036.



### More English speakers

- Most people in Campaspe speak English only (89.2%), compared to Victoria (67.2%).



### A strong and rich First Nations culture

- First Nations people represent 3% of our population.



### Lower income levels

- More people in Campaspe earn an income of less than \$500 per week (35.5%) compared to Victoria (32.5%).
- Fewer people in Campaspe earn an income of \$2000 per week or more (5.8%) compared to Victoria (12.3%).



### An older population

- The median age of our residents is 47 compared to 38 in Victoria.



### More people in employment

- Campaspe's unemployment rate is lower (3.5%) compared to Victoria (5%).

## Our Economy



In 2023, Campaspe's **total economic output** was valued at \$6 billion.



The **top industries** are manufacturing (25%), agriculture, forestry and fishing (14%), and construction (14%).



Campaspe's **visitor economy** contributed \$185 million in economic output in 2023. In 2024, more than 1 million people visited Echuca/Moama alone.



**Food production and processing**, such as beef and dairy production, dairy processing, fruit, vegetables and wine, are key contributors to economic output, exports and jobs.



**Retail and hospitality** (including accommodation and food services) contribute 6.1% of economic output.



The **health, social and education** sectors contribute 11% of economic output. They also provide essential services that support the liveability and community wellbeing of Campaspe.



There are **4,500 businesses**: 30% relate to agriculture, forestry and fishing, 17% in construction, and 7% in rental, hiring, and real estate services.



35% of businesses are **small to medium enterprises** (with less than 200 fulltime employees), and 98% of businesses are considered non-employing.

# KEY PRIORITY: Aquatic Facilities To Replace The Flood-Demolished Rochester Pool



## Background

The town of Rochester was significantly impacted in the October 2022 Victorian floods; the worst flood event in the area in more than 150 years. With the majority of the town inundated, thousands of people were evacuated and even today, many people are still living in temporary accommodation. Hundreds of homes, community facilities and public assets were significantly damaged; many beyond repair, including the Rochester District War Memorial Pool.

The pool was an important central focal point for residents of the town, but not anymore. Council has recently invested funds to remove the demolished pool infrastructure and prepare the site in readiness for a new aquatic facility. Removal of this eyesore was also important as it was a stark reminder to Rochester residents of the trauma they had experienced.

## What We Need

Council is seeking the support of the Australian Government and Victorian Government to build an aquatic facility that provides a focal point for community gatherings and fosters social cohesion. Council will make a financial contribution towards the proposed facility and is also seeking funding from the Australian Government and Victorian Government.

## What We're Asking For

*We call on the Australian Government to provide \$5 million towards the design and construction of a proposed \$12.5 million aquatic facility to replace the flood-demolished Rochester swimming pool.*

## Why It Matters

- A crucial social, health and recreation hub to support the mental health and wellbeing of Rochester and surrounding communities, and assist in recovery.
- Boosting community morale and fostering a sense of pride and resilience in the face of adversity.
- A fit-for-purpose accessible and inclusive aquatic facility built to modern standards, including flood-resistant infrastructure, updated amenities, and enhanced safety features.
- Stimulating economic activity through construction jobs and increased patronage of local businesses.
- Providing a safe and accessible recreational facility for residents of all ages and abilities.

## Key Contact

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# KEY PRIORITY: Establishment Of A National Program For Aquatic Infrastructure



## Background

It is widely recognised that public swimming pools play a critical role in promoting community health, fitness, water safety and social cohesion. However, a 2022 report by Royal Life Saving Australia (RLSA) underlined the urgent need for substantial investment in public swimming pool infrastructure across Australia.

The report found that:

- the average Australian public pool was built in 1968
- 500 (40%) public pools will reach the end of their functional lifespan by 2030
- \$8 billion is needed to replace those 500 ageing public pools
- a further \$3 billion will be needed to replace facilities ending their lifespan by 2035.

The RLSA report further highlights that ageing public pools are predominantly servicing regional areas; however, many of these councils struggle to afford to maintain or replace them so are increasingly considering closing their pools. The report also points to the community angst of such decisions.

The Australian Water Safety Council's *Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030* also highlights 'regional and remote communities' as a priority area of focus for the prevention of drowning. A key activity of the council for 2021–2025 is to 'advocate for policies and funding that support sustainability of aquatic infrastructure.'

In light of these findings and with several of its own outdoor swimming pools nearing the end of their functional lifespans, Campaspe Shire Council has resolved to support the establishment of a dedicated national program to assist local governments Australia-wide in the replacement and upgrading of public swimming pools.

## What We Need

The establishment of a national program will help ensure that public swimming pools across Australia can continue to play their critical and multifaceted role for communities. Without significant investment, many pools will become unsafe or unusable, depriving communities of these essential social, recreational and educational facilities.



## What We're Asking For

*We call on the Australian Government to establish a national program for the replacement and upgrading of public swimming pools.*

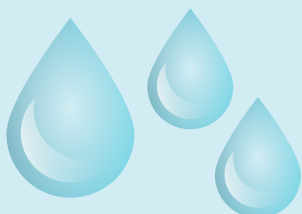
## Why It Matters

- It is essential that public swimming pools remain safe, accessible and functional, so they can continue to support community health, fitness and wellbeing outcomes and provide water safety education to all Australians.
- Public swimming pools are vital community hubs that foster social interaction, inclusivity and a sense of belonging.
- The adoption of sustainable and energy-efficient technologies in the construction and maintenance of new public swimming pools will reduce environmental impacts and operational costs.

## Key Contact

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# KEY PRIORITY: Reconstruction Of Flood-Damaged Critical Road Infrastructure



The flood event of October 2022 caused significant damage to roads and road infrastructure across Campaspe Shire. While Council has been successful in receiving some Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding to repair flood-damaged public assets, more funding is needed to reconstruct sections of two critical roads to enable safe and efficient access to a statewide waste facility used by multiple councils.

The two roads are:

1. **Davis Road, Patho**
2. **Two Tree Road, Carag Carag**

Our advocacy position aligns with the Municipal Association of Victoria's federal election campaign priority to 'Make safer roads happen' by 'connecting communities and supporting a safer and more productive Victoria.'

## 1. Davis Road, Patho

### Background

Davis Road connects the Patho Landfill facility to the Murray Valley Highway. The landfill facility has at least 30 years of life remaining with the potential for future expansion into resource recovery activities. The road experiences significant heavy vehicle traffic movements daily.

The Patho Landfill is the only major landfill facility in the region and receives waste from the wider north-western and northern parts of Victoria. The facility receives waste from multiple shires and was recognised as being of statewide significance in the 2018 *Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan*. When this site cannot be accessed, waste must be stockpiled for bulk haulage to other sites at considerable financial and environmental expense due to the distance involved.

The four-metre-wide road between the highway and the waste facility extends approximately 3.2 kilometres with gravel shoulders on both sides. During severe weather events, the road is subject to flooding, and access to the Patho Landfill facility is cut. The road also has a high maintenance requirement due to wear and tear to the gravel surface caused by the high traffic movements of waste collection/transportation heavy vehicles.

### What We Need

The proposed project includes the upgrade of a 3.2 kilometre segment of Davis Road from an unsealed gravel road to an all-weather, sealed road and the creation of three concrete flood ways. This is the most cost effective and best solution to achieve safe, reliable and resilient access to Patho landfill.

### What We're Asking For

*We call on the Australian Government to provide \$4.3 million to undertake critical flood repair works to Davis Road, Patho to enable safe and efficient access by municipal waste trucks to the regional Patho Landfill site, for the long-term future.*

## Why It Matters

### Road Safety

Davis Road sees approximately 50 heavy vehicles operating each day in each direction, on an unsealed road, with many of these vehicles being B-doubles. The current road design allows B-doubles; however, safety concerns have been raised, with near misses and trucks ending up in the swale drains, due to the unsealed nature of the road, and the overall narrowness of the carriageway.

### Road Resilience And Sustainability

Currently the resilience of Davis Road is poor in heavy rain events. In 2022 and 2023, the Patho Landfill was cut from the wider road network due to flooding, significantly impacting waste services for the wider region. Being a narrow-unsealed road with a proportionally high volumes of heavy vehicles, maintenance costs are significant.

### Productivity

The productivity of the Patho Landfill is impacted by the quality and condition of Davis Road. Our proposed improvements to Davis Road, would enable greater use of the Patho Landfill and create opportunities for further resource recovery at the site.

### Financially Prudent

This project will reduce the significant financial cost and risk to health and safety by reducing/eliminating the need to stockpile waste when the landfill site can't be accessed.







## 2. Two Tree Road, Carag Carag

### Background

Two Tree Road is currently an unsealed, narrow carriageway road, with significant topography and drainage issues and is the main access road to the Biomix Organics Composting Facility. Biomix plays a critical role for the Australian Government to achieve its objective under the kerbside reform program to provide mandatory FOGO services across the State by 2030. Biomix currently accepts 100,000 tonnes annually and is anticipated to exceed 250,000 tonnes by 2030.

### What We Need

The project proposes to upgrade approximately 5km of Two Tree Road from an unsealed gravel road to an all-weather sealed road.

Two Tree Road has been inundated multiple times due to overland flooding, and these events are increasing due to climate change. The road was closed for extended periods in 2022 and 2023 due to flooding. Even outside unprecedented rain and flooding events, there can be standing water on the road, reducing safety and the resilience of the road network.

### What We're Asking For

*We call on the Australian Government to provide \$5.5 million to undertake critical flood repair works to Two Tree Road, Carag Carag to enable safe and efficient access to a resource recovery facility of statewide significance.*

### Why It Matters

#### Road Safety

Two Tree Road has a high proportion of heavy vehicles travelling each day in both directions to the Biomix facility. Forecast volumes to the Biomix site are expected to increase from approximately 100,000 tonnes today, to 250,000 tonnes by 2030. The current road design allows B-doubles; however, there are high safety concerns following an accident and other near misses due to the unsealed nature of the road, and the overall narrowness of the carriageway.



### Road Resilience And Sustainability

Resilience of Two Tree Road is poor. Given local topography, standing water is a significant issue, leading to reduced road resilience, on a critical access road to a resource recovery facility of statewide significance. The proposed upgrade will increase road resilience and sustainability as the road will require fewer resources to maintain and provide a more appropriate B-double access point to the Biomix composting facility.

### Productivity

The productivity of the Biomix facility is impacted by the quality, flooding events and condition of Two Tree Road. All access to the Biomix site has been cut due to flooding events in 2022 and 2023, leading to significant resource recovery issues. Through these improvements, it would enable greater use of the Biomix composting facility for the circular economy, enabling a greater diversion of waste out of landfill into more productive uses. The Biomix facility is of state significance and critical to the delivery of the kerbside reform program.

### Key Contact

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# KEY PRIORITY: A Commitment To Fund Flood Study Mitigation Measures



## Background

The October 2022 flood event significantly impacted the Shire of Campaspe. Townships across the municipality were inundated, hundreds of homes, community buildings, roads and many other public assets were either demolished or damaged. Nearly two and half years later, many residents of Rochester are still not living in their own home.

For the past several years, Campaspe Shire Council has been partnering with other government and statutory authorities, agencies, water experts and community stakeholders to progress the **Echuca Moama Torrumbarry Flood Study (EMTFS)** and the **Rochester Flood Study (RFS)**, the results of which will inform future critical flood mitigation measures.

## Echuca Moama Torrumbarry Flood Study

The EMTFS was adopted by Council in March 2024. The second stage of the EMTFS, being the Risk Management Plan, will be released for community consultation in April. The Risk Management Plan recommends how flood risk is best managed, investigates mitigation works, development controls, flood warning systems and provides flood information ('intelligence') for responding agencies. There has been significant community input into the development of the plan through the reference committee and this will continue throughout the community consultation phase.

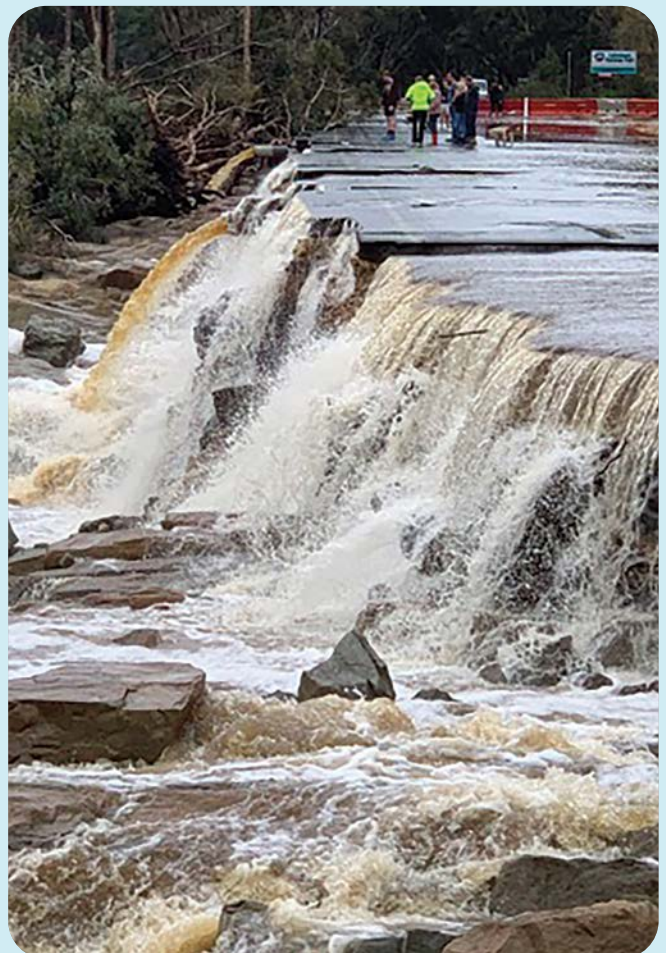
## Rochester Flood Study

The RFS is progressing well with extensive survey work and meticulous documentation carried out. Calibration of the computerised flood model is being finalised and will be presented to the community for review in April. The RFS Report will then be presented for review. Investigation and assessment of mitigation options is expected to be completed by December 2025.

## What We Need

Council and the community are looking for certainty from the Australian Government that it will continue to support flood-impacted communities with funding to help mitigate against potential future significant flood events.

Our advocacy position is in alignment with the Municipal Association of Victoria's federal election campaign priority to 'Make resilient communities happen' by 'future-proofing communities to withstand natural disaster'.







## What We're Asking For

*We call on the Australian Government to commit to funding vital mitigation measures as recommended in the Echuca Moama Torrumbarry Flood Study and the Rochester Flood Study to protect our communities from future significant flooding caused by extreme weather events.*

Council acknowledges and is most grateful to the Australian Government for funding support to date towards flood mitigation measures. So far, Council has received funding of \$1.08 million which will see flood barriers installed in Rochester and \$280,000 via DRF Round 2 for portable flood pumps.

Council has also applied for \$2 million in funding via the Regional Flood Risk Reduction Grant Program. If successful, the project will enhance flood resilience in Rochester and Echuca by implementing prioritised, staged mitigation works that address critical infrastructure gaps, with demountable barriers and flood gates.

## Why It Matters

- In a rate-capping and financially-constrained environment, Council has limited capacity to future-proof community infrastructure and relies heavily on government support.
- Not only will appropriate financial investment reduce longer-term costs to both the government and community in repairing damaged infrastructure from any future flood events, but it will help also avoid the devastating toll on our communities from the social, economic and environmental upheaval.
- The implementation of recommended flood mitigation measures will safeguard access to essential community services and assets during floods, protecting vulnerable areas and minimising loss and suffering for our community.

## Key Contact

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# KEY PRIORITY: Fair, Direct And Timely Compensation To Communities Impacted By Water Purchasing



## Background

With water purchasing now underway as part of the *Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Act 2023* implementation, Council is once again strongly advocating to protect our residents, businesses, communities and the environment against the projected negative socio-economic flow-on effects.

The Australian Government's '*Program Overview: Sustainable Communities Program*' document acknowledges that 'While the Basin Plan delivers substantial benefits and the Basin economy and agriculture sector has grown over the last decade of water reforms, there have been variable outcomes in different communities and lived experience of socioeconomic impacts.'

As the impacts of the government's water buybacks start to take hold on agricultural and food manufacturing sectors, and on supplementary industries, such as engineering, transport and hospitality, businesses, families, individuals and whole communities alike will be looking to the Australian Government to help them adjust, so they can continue to thrive and prosper.

## What We Need

- Council and the Campaspe community need certainty from the Australian Government that if any of our people, businesses or communities are negatively impacted by water buybacks, they will be compensated through adjustment assistance, in a fair, direct and timely fashion.
- Provide substantial and meaningful financial investment, in collaboration with local government, into our communities to support industry growth and job creation in those communities which are being directly negatively affected by the current round of water purchases. We need to ensure no loss of Gross Domestic Product.

## What We're Asking For

*We call on the Australian Government to provide assurance that anyone in Campaspe Shire negatively impacted by the government's water purchasing program, such as suffering job losses, business downturn and/or reduced social participation levels, will receive fair, direct and timely adjustment assistance.*







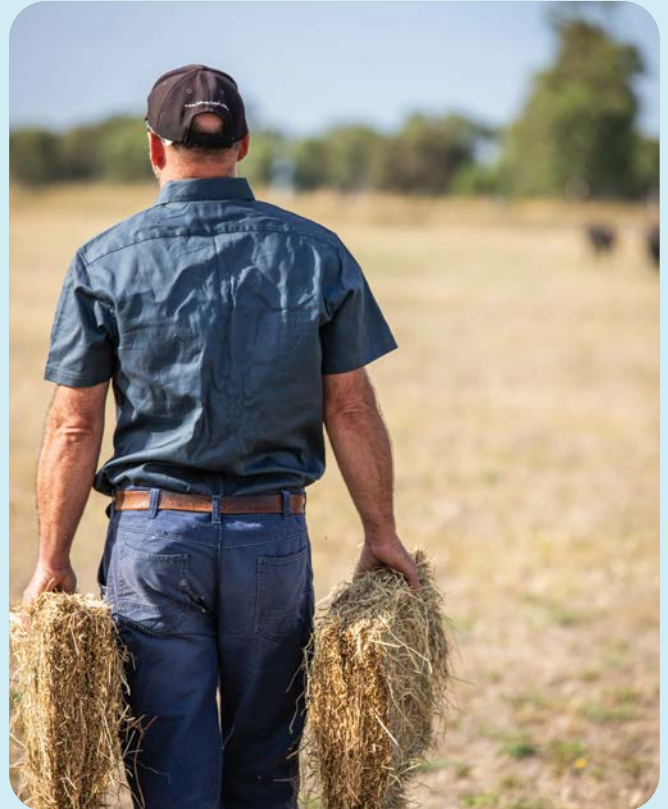
## Why It Matters

- Our regional and local economies, our irrigation communities as well as the agriculture and food production sectors and the multiple industries that support them, are at risk from the government's open market water purchase program. That's why it's critically important they are directly supported to adjust to the new environment.
- Business downturn and job losses create a ripple effect on the social fabric of communities, impacting attendance and participation levels in community programs and activities, such as at child care facilities and sporting clubs. These "hidden impacts" go to the heart of the social cohesion and connectedness of our communities.
- With fair, direct and timely community adjustment assistance, our communities negatively impacted by the Australian Government's water purchasing program, will be able to continue to thrive and prosper.

## Key Contact

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# KEY PRIORITY: Restoration Of Financial Assistance Grants To 1%



## Background

Campaspe Shire Council is joining with other rural and regional councils across the nation in calling on the Australian Government to provide a minimum allocation of 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

A recent submission by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) to the *Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability* highlighted the critical need for adequate and secure funding to ensure councils can effectively plan and deliver essential services.

The ALGA submission highlighted the limited revenue options available to local governments and their heavy reliance on Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs). Alarming, in the past three decades, FAGs have declined from around 1% to around 0.5%.

During the same period, Victorian councils have also had to contend with imposed rate capping and ongoing cost shifting from both state and federal governments. The compounded results are challenging councils' financial sustainability.

## What We Need

- An overhaul of the current FAGs model which is unsustainable and causing negative flow-on effects to councils and communities.
- A commitment by the Australian Government to restore local government funding to the 1996 level of 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

## What We're Asking For

*We call on the Australian Government to restore Financial Assistance Grants to 1% to support the sustainability of councils Australia-wide.*

## Why It Matters

- As untied funding, FAGs enable councils to spend money where it is most needed. Whether it's building new infrastructure, delivering services to meet community needs, maintaining assets or investing in operational improvements, FAGs are extremely valuable to councils.
- Amid the ongoing challenges faced by significantly flood-impacted municipalities such as the Shire of Campaspe, there has never been a more important time to support councils with the urgent funding they need.
- More resilient and sustainable councils are better able to support the diverse and ever-evolving needs of their communities.

## Key Contact

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