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TO BE HELD AT  
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ON WEDNESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2022**

## **OFFICERS' REPORTS – PART A - FOR DETERMINATION**

### **ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

#### **1. RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL TOWNPLANNING STAFF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**Report by Director Environment and Planning – Colin Kane**

##### **REASON FOR REPORT**

It is advised that 2021 has seen Council's Environmental Planning Department receive and process a record number of applications for development. To continue to provide an acceptable level of service for residents and to facilitate rezoning of land to permit ongoing growth of the Council it is necessary to seek Council's endorsement for the recruitment of additional town planning staff to assist in processing of development applications and undertaking strategic planning tasks.

##### **REFERENCE TO DELIVERY PLAN**

##### **DISCUSSION**

During 2020 and 2021 there has been unprecedented development pressures experienced in Greater Hume Council. This development pressure has correlations to the Covid 19 pandemic which has seen a migration of people from capital cities to regional centres. In addition it is evident that people have been directing additional discretionary spending to undertaking development and purchasing of property. The impact of these factors has seen record applications for development assessment and extremely high levels of land purchasing for residential & industrial development.

The impact of the increased purchasing of land for residential development has resulted in a lack of availability of both rural residential and residential land. To address this situation it is necessary for Council to undertake strategic planning in order to rezone land from rural land to residential land. 2021 has seen Council rezone land for residential purposes in Culcairn and it has finalised the Jindera Residential Land Use Strategy which provides the strategic framework and vision to guide the future growth of Jindera.

In relation to strategic planning Council now needs to undertake a process to prepare a Residential Land Use Strategy for Holbrook and Morven. In Jindera rezoning should be pursued to align with the findings of the Jindera Residential Land Use Strategy which will require Council to prepare planning proposals for additional residential land. The Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment have made recent changes to the way that rezoning is undertaken and Councils referred to as Local Plan Making Authorities must prepare contribution plans so that they can be exhibited concurrently with planning proposals. For Council this requirement will be very difficult to resource however the author is in favour of the proposal because it is considered that having knowledge of the contributions that will be payable removes uncertainty for potential developers and therefore should result in orderly development.

Local Planning Authorities can receive site specific applications for rezoning and currently in Jindera Council has two of these applications to determine and it is aware of a third application that is being prepared for submission.

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**RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL TOWNPLANNING STAFF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT [CONT'D]**

There are advantages to Council in having a reasonable supply of rural residential and residential land. These benefits include an increase in the rates incomes when land transitions to resident land and developer contributions can be used to provide and improve public infrastructure such as roads, parks and other public infrastructure. Developer contributions can also be used to repay the cost of preparing contribution plans and also for operational costs coordinating the plan.

An impediment to Councils strategic planning capacity is that only the author undertakes strategic planning with some support from consultant town planners. Often the author can be called upon to undertake work such as statutory planning, building surveying and other functions that take precedence to strategic planning.

As mentioned above 2021 was a record year for development related applications which include development applications, construction certificates, complying development certificates and local government approvals. The following table shows the number of applications processed each year since 2016.

<b>Number Lodged</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
DA (does not include Modifications)	151	183	203	170	202	267
CC	114	152	165	154	158	186
CDC	72	88	60	51	66	80
LGA	209	248	183	133	166	193
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>726</b>

The table indicates that there are fluctuations in the number of applications for development which is to be expected as there are many factors influencing people's decision. It is shown that there was a significant increase in applications for 2021. It is considered that higher numbers of applications will continue in the medium term as development is undertaken on recently purchased land.

The assessment of applications for development is undertaken primarily by the author, a building surveyor, a health and building surveyor and support administration staff. The building surveyor and health and building surveyor assess applications for residential development and the building surveyor will also assess applications for commercial development. The author assesses application for subdivision and other land uses which can include commercial development, quarries, intensive agriculture and solar farm developments. Currently the author, the building surveyor and the health & building surveyor also undertake compliance work

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The table outlining the number of applications does not provide detail as to the complexity of the applications assessed and there can be significant variations between applications. Over time the complexity of applications has been steadily increasing as additional matters require assessment. For example relatively new matters requiring consideration include accessibility, energy and water conservation measures and biodiversity.

Council assessment staff has not increased over time and the current staffing level has remained the same for the last 15 years. The workload to complete application for development and the need to undertake strategic planning to rezone land now requires that this situation is addressed through the recruitment of the additional staff.

It will be recommended that Council recruit a town planner. A person with these qualifications will be able to assess development applications which will assist the author, health and building and building surveyor. Further capacity is also needed when administration staff are on leave and an additional person will need to be trained to work one day per fortnight and in blocks when other staff are taking leave.

Costs associated with the recruitment of additional staff will partially be offset through increased revenue arising from higher volumes of application for development and the Department of Planning Infrastructure and Environment has increased by 17% the base fee for development applications and these fees will now increase with CPI.

There will be the need for additional expenditure for rezoning of land which will be discussed in preparation for the 2022/2023 operational plan.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The costs of the additional appointments is estimated at \$150,000 inclusive of on costs which will be partially offset by additional income (\$20,000). The balance of the additional cost will need to be factored into future budgets.

**CONCLUSION**

Due to unprecedented development pressure there is now a need for Council to increase its efforts to undertake strategic planning to both rezone land and complete contribution plans to provide for the delivery of well-planned future development. In the short term there is also a need to be able to provide a development assessment service that can adequately respond to the volume of applications that have been received and are predicted to continue to be received. For both of these reasons it is necessary to provide additional town planning staff.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Council resolve

1. To amend the organisation structure and recruit a person with town planning qualifications
2. Provide additional administration support staff for one day per fortnight and in blocks when other staff are taking leave.

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## **GOVERNANCE**

### **1. LOCAL ROADS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM – ROUND 3 Report prepared by General Manager – Steven Pinnuck**

#### **REASON FOR REPORT**

To advise Councillors of further funding under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program announced in 2021 Federal Budget.

#### **REFERENCE TO DELIVERY PLAN ACTIONS**

Objective: Our development and maintenance is sustainable, environmentally responsible, accessible and enjoyed by our community

Outcome 4.1: Infrastructure and facilities meet the needs of our communities

#### **DISCUSSION**

As Councillors would be aware last year as part of the 2021-2022 Budget the Australian Government announced a further \$1B for the continuation of the Local Road and Community Infrastructure Program. A copy of the Guidelines are attached as **ANNEXURE 1** for Councillors information.

Similar to the previous rounds this is non-competitive funding with Council's allocation \$2,588,380.

The projects outlined in the Table 1 below were approved at the July 2020 meeting for the initial funding round and have been completed.

**Table 1**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>Est. cost</b>
<b>Funding available</b>		<b>\$ 1,294,190.00</b>
Hot mix paths and concrete foot paving at Village Green	Jindera	\$ 80,000.00
Morgans Lookout Toilets	Walla Walla	\$ 137,195.00
Changing Places Facility at Ten Mile Creek Gardens	Holbrook	\$ 250,000.00
Walbundrie Comfort Stop	Walbundrie	\$ 150,000.00
Sam McPaul Memorial	Jingellic/Talmalmo	\$ 125,000.00
Walla Walla Skate Park	Walla Walla	\$ 150,000.00
Jingellic Road (part of from top of Gap to Coppabella Road)		\$ 401,995.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,294,190.00</b>

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A further tranche of projects were approved with funding for Round 2 and are included in the table 2 including their completion status.

**Table 2**

Projects	Locality	Est. cost	Status
<b>Funding available</b>		<b>\$ 1,145,745.00</b>	
Installation of drainage in Balfour Street (now Henty Sportsground)	Culcairn-Henty	\$ 350,000.00	Not completed Tender let January 2022 Council meeting
Installation of drainage	Gerogery	\$ 345,745.00	
Resheeting of roads	Walbundrie/Rand	\$ 250,000.00	Completed
Reconstruction of Ferndale Road	Woomargama	\$ 250,000.00	Not completed refer Table 3 below.
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,145,745.00</b>	

As stated above Round 3 funding totals \$2,588,380 with \$600,000 being allocated across two projects; the Burrumbuttock Multi Purpose Centre project (\$300,000) and the Henty Sportsground Extensions and Refurbishment project (\$300,000).

At the January meeting however Council was advised that following the closure of tenders for the Round 2 project - Balfour Street drainage would be unable to be completed by 30 June 2022 and therefore it was recommended that this project be substituted with the Henty Sportsground Upgrade.

It should be noted that this will increase funding for the Henty Sportsground project by \$50,000 however following the completion of the design for the Fire Safety Services it is anticipated that the additional funding will be required.

In relation to the Balfour Street drainage it is Management's intention to submit a Building Better Regions Application for \$350,000 to, if successful, assist with the completion of that project.

Council's application under the Building Better Regions Fund is limited to \$385,000 as the total amount of Australian Government (AG) Funding cannot exceed 50% of the project cost. Council currently has \$735,000 from other sources and \$350,000 from LRCIP Round 3. If further funds are allocated to this project from LRCIP Round 3 this would need to be reviewed if the Building Better Regions Application is successful to ensure that total funding AG funding did not exceed 50%.

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LOCAL ROADS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM – ROUND 3 [CONT'D]

Therefore Table 3 outlines the funding available, approved projects and other potential projects for consideration that are currently programmed in the current Delivery Plan but with insufficient funds to complete. It should be noted that the Jindera Swimming Pool shell replacement was not included with the current delivery Plan as the extent of the issue was not known at the time of its preparation.

**Table 3**

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>Est. cost</b>
<b>Funding available</b>		<b>\$ 2,588,380</b>
Installation of drainage in Balfour Street	Culcairn	\$ 350,000
Multi Purpose Centre Construction	Burrumbuttock	\$ 300,000
<b>Remaining funding</b>		<b>\$ 1,938,380</b>
<b>Recommended projects for consideration</b>		
Replacement of swimming pool shell	Jindera	\$ 1,250,000
Further allocation to Balfour Street Drainage	Culcairn	\$ 765,000
.Further allocation to Ferndale Road (Based on external estimate)	Woomargama	\$ 230,000
Brownrigg Street (Stages 2 & 3 Purtell Street to Culcairn-Holbrook Road)	Morven	\$ 310,000
King Parrot Bridge (available funding \$130k tender \$265k)	Lankeys Creek	\$ 135,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 2,690,000</b>

The shortfall between potential projects and available funding \$751,620. This is without any other projects being nominated by Councillors.

It is Management's view that the structural issues at Jindera could render the pool inoperable in short space of time which may result in a worse-case scenario of the pool being unavailable for up to two seasons. This would require Council to fully fund the replacement if grant funding is unavailable at that time.

Accordingly it is recommended that Council nominate the Replacement of the Jindera Swimming Pool shell and the remainder of funding to Balfour Street drainage (\$688,380).

The rationale is that the remaining smaller projects are likely to be more easily accommodated within future recurrent budgets.

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LOCAL ROADS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM – ROUND 3 [CONT'D]

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

It is anticipated that the projects will be budget neutral to Council.

**CONCLUSION**

The Australian Government has announced an additional \$1B for a further round of Local Road and Community Infrastructure Program as COVID-19 Stimulus measure and it is a matter for Council to determine the priorities.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Accordingly it is recommended that Council nominate the Replacement of the Jindera Swimming Pool shell and the remainder of funding to Balfour Street drainage (\$688,380).