



dorset
C O U N C I L

Ordinary Minutes

Council Meeting

Monday, 23 March 2026

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

it's in the making

Ordinary Meeting of Council

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Council Meeting - Minutes

Monday, 23 March 2026

Meeting Time: 5:01pm

Present: Councillors Rhys Beattie (Mayor), Edwina Powell (Deputy Mayor)¹, Wendy McLennan, Kahlia Simmons, Nick Bicanic, Jan Hughes, Mervyn Chilcott, Vincent Teichmann, Anthony Richards

General Manager: John Marik, Director – Corporate Services: Lauren Tolputt, Director – Infrastructure: Kerry Sacilotto, Director – Community & Development Services: Jayne Miller

Apologies: Nil

CLOSED SESSION

Item 42/2026 'Closed Session': Council

Purpose

The General Manager advised that in his opinion, the agenda items listed below are prescribed items in accordance with Regulation 17(2) of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025* (e.g. confidential matters), and therefore Council may by absolute majority determine to close the meeting to the general public.

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Hughes | **SECONDED:** Cr Simmons

That Council resolve, by absolute majority, that the meeting be closed to the public to enable Council to consider agenda items 43 to 48 which are confidential matters as prescribed in Regulation 17 of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025.

Time Meeting Closed: 5:02 pm

CARRIED²

¹ Councillor Powell arrived at 5:19pm for the Closed Session Meeting

² Councillor Powell absent for vote

Item	Purpose	Regulation Ref ³
43/2026 Declaration of Interests	Interests to be declared relating to items listed for discussion within Closed Session	-
44/2026 Confirmation of Closed Session Minutes – 16 February 2026	Confirm the minutes from the 16 February 2026 closed session Council Meeting	17(2)(h)
45/2026 Dorset Board of Inquiry: Submission on Costs	Consider a proposed submission to the Minister for Local Government on costs associated with the Dorset Board of Inquiry	17(2)(k)
46/2026 Contract 2025/26-08: Ferny Hill Road Realignment	Recommend the award of this contract to a preferred tendered based on the assessment of the Tender Assessment Committee	17(2)(e)
47/2026 Release of Public Information	Consider whether any discussion, decision, report or document relating to any Closed Session items should be released to the public	17((7) & (8)
48/2026 Completion of Closed Session	Move to Open Council and adjourn the Meeting	-

³ Regulation 17:

Reg.	Confidential Reason
17(2)(a)	personnel matters, including complaints against an employee of the council
17(2)(b)	industrial relations matters
17(2)(c)	information that, if disclosed, is likely to confer a commercial advantage or impose a commercial disadvantage on a person with whom the council is conducting, or proposes to conduct, business
17(2)(d)	commercial information of a confidential nature that, if disclosed, is likely to (i) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it; or (ii) confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the council; or (iii) reveal a trade secret
17(2)(e)	contracts, and tenders, for the supply of goods and services and their terms, conditions, approval and renewal
17(2)(f)	the security of (i) the council, councillors and council staff; or (ii) the property of the council
17(2)(g)	proposals for the council to acquire land or an interest in land or for the disposal of land
17(2)(h)	information that is (i) of a personal and confidential nature; or (ii) provided to the council on the condition that it be kept confidential
17(2)(i)	requests by councillors for leave of absence
17(2)(j)	notifications by councillors of leave of absence for parental leave
17(2)(k)	matters relating to actual or possible litigation taken, or to be taken, by or involving the council or an employee of the council
17(2)(l)	the personal hardship of any person who is resident in, or is a ratepayer in, the relevant municipal area

RESUMPTION | OPEN SESSION

Scheduled Meeting Time: 6:00 pm

Meeting Opened: 6:01pm

Council Meetings Procedures

In accordance with Policy No. 41: Council Meeting Procedures, this Meeting is being recorded. By attending the Meeting in person, you are consenting to personal information being recorded and published. No unauthorised filming or recording of the Meeting is permitted.

Visitors are reminded that Council Meetings are a place of work for Council Officers and Councillors.

The Council is committed to meeting its responsibilities as an employer and as host of this important public forum, by ensuring that all present meet expectations of mutually respectful and orderly conduct. It is a condition of entry to the Council Chambers that you cooperate with any directions or requests from the Chairperson or Council Officers.

The Chairperson is responsible for maintaining order at Council Meetings. The General Manager is responsible for health, wellbeing and safety of all present. The Chairperson or General Manager may require a person to leave the Council's premises following any behaviour that falls short of these expectations.

Language and conduct at a Meeting that could be perceived as offensive, defamatory or threatening to a person in attendance or listening to the recording, is not acceptable. It is an offence to hinder or disrupt a Council Meeting.

Present: Councillors Rhys Beattie (Mayor), Edwina Powell (Deputy Mayor), Wendy McLennan, Kahlia Simmons, Nick Bicanic, Jan Hughes, Mervyn Chilcott, Vincent Teichmann, Anthony Richards
General Manager: John Marik, Director – Corporate Services: Lauren Tolputt, Director – Infrastructure: Kerry Sacilotto, Director – Community & Development Services: Jayne Miller, Executive Assistant: Sarah Forsyth

Apologies: Nil

Acknowledgement of Country

Dorset Council acknowledges the deep history and culture of the First People who were the traditional owners of the lands and waterways where we live and work. We acknowledge the clans-people who lived here for over a thousand generations on the Country where Scottsdale is built and throughout the area we know as the north east region.

Dorset Council acknowledge the present-day Aboriginal custodians and the inclusive contribution they make to the social, cultural and economic essence of the municipality.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Item 49/2026 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with Section 48 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Regulation 10(8) of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025* and the Tasmanian Local Government Code of Conduct, Councillors are requested to indicate whether any have, or are likely to have, an interest in any item on the agenda.

INTEREST DECLARED

Cr Hughes ITEM 59 (immaterial conflict of interest)

Item 50/2026 Confirmation of Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes – Monday, 16 February 2026

Ref: DOC/26/2152

The Chair reported that he had viewed the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday, 16 February 2026 finds them to be a true record and recommends that they be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Hughes | SECONDED: Cr Powell

That the Minutes of Proceedings of the Dorset Council Ordinary Meeting held on Monday, 16 February 2026 having been circulated to Councillors, be confirmed as a true record.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Item 51/2026 Confirmation of Agenda

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Chilcott | SECONDED: Cr Richards

That Council confirm the Agenda and order of business for the Monday, 23 March 2026 Council Meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

⁴Members of the Public can ask a maximum of two question(s) without notice during Public Question Time. The Chairperson reserves the right to consider questions above this limit will be accepted or treated as correspondence.

Any person asking a question is asked to stand (if able), clearly state their name and suburb they live.

Question(s) must be clear and concise, not be a statement and have minimal pre-amble. Any answer given is not to be debated.

Members of the public must provide any question(s) without notice in writing to the Executive Assistant either before the commencement of the Meeting or within 24 hours.

The following questions were **taken on notice** at the 16 February 2026 Meeting:

Andrew Gall, Bridport and Launceston

Has, or will, Council consider the development of Specific Area Plans for Bridport's residential zones as part of Dorset's Local Provisions Schedule within the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, so that it is able to have increased local influence over Bridport's future development than what the current State-wide Planning Scheme allows, and to reduce the risk of deterioration or restriction to the comparatively unique coastal amenity that is able to be enjoyed by its residents?

It is noted that a range of Special Area Plans already exist that cover other areas of the town and municipality.

Response from Director – Community and Development Services:

A Specific Area Plan (SAP) is covered in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme (TPS) as part of the Local Provisions Schedules (LPS).

LPSs are prepared by Councils and assessed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission (the Commission).

The Dorset LPS became effective 18 January 2023, with only minor grammatical and formatting amendments undertaken on 9 July 2025.

Dorset Council has five (5) SAPs which are summarised below:

1. Port Hills SAP - To provide for [development](#) that is compatible with the residential area at Port Hills, Bridport
2. Barnbogle Dunes and Lost Farm SAP – To provide for tourist facilities and complementary uses that are appropriate for the location and to provide for [subdivision of land](#) that does not compromise the function of the surrounding area or primary industry operations.
3. Branxholm and Ledgerwood Industry SAP – To facilitate the establishment and continuation of manufacturing and processing that does not cause unreasonable loss of amenity to adjacent sensitive uses.
4. Town Centre Parking SAP – To maximise land use efficiency and reduce costs to business and developers by not requiring new or intensified use or development to provide on-site car parking spaces, bicycle spaces and motor car parking spaces on land within the town centres of Bridport, Scottsdale and Derby.
5. Bridport Main Street Centre SAP – To provide for development compatible with its existing build form, encouraging community services and commercial activities, residential and visitor accommodation use.

⁴ In accordance with Regulations 33, 36 & 37 and Council Policy No. 41: Council Meeting Procedures

When assessing a draft amendment to a LPS that proposes a new SAP, the Commission must be satisfied that the draft amendment meets the LPS criteria as required under section 34 of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (the Act). Of note within the criteria outlined in s34 of the Act, the amendment should be:

(e) as far as practicable, is consistent with the regional land use strategy, if any, for the regional area in which is situated the land to which the relevant planning instrument relates

(f) has regard to the strategic plan, prepared under [section 66 of the Local Government Act 1993](#), that applies in relation to the land to which the relevant planning instrument relates

Regarding the Regional Land Use Strategy, Dorset Council is currently undertaking a process in collaboration with other Northern Tasmanian Councils to deliver a Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (NTRLUS). This is a strategic planning tool that guides how land is used, developed, and protected across the region. It will implement the Tasmanian Planning Policies at a regional level and shape planning decisions in each Northern council area. This project is due to be delivered mid-late 2026.

Regarding the Strategic Plan, Dorset Council's Strategic Imperative 7 is to deliver the Future Ready suite. This is a holistic planning project whereby Council will consult and engage with the community on a vision for each township. For Bridport, a Structure Plan has been identified as a strategic priority. In 2025, Council made an application to the Federal Government for funding to support the development of the Bridport Structure Plan and are yet to receive notice of the outcome of that application.

SAPs is a planning control that is used to modify or add to the underlying zone standards of the State Planning Provisions (SPPs) for a specific spatial area or site. They are implemented to deliver a unique planning outcome that is specific to the specific spatial area or site. Section 32(4) specifies that for an SAP to be adopted in relation to an area of land, it must be demonstrated that:

- a. use or development to which the provision relates is of significant social, economic or environmental benefit to the State, a region or a municipal area; or*
- b. the area of land has particular environmental, economic, social or spatial qualities that require provisions, that are unique to the area of land, to apply to the land in substitution for, or in addition to, or modification of, the provisions of the SPPs.*

Given the context outlined, it is recommended that Council completes the identified strategic documents before any further amendments are made to the Dorset LPS.

Helen Cafe, North Scottsdale

Can I please rent some of the empty buildings in Derby because there's nothing there to house support services such as the cleaning services I manage in Derby and surrounds?

Response from Director – Corporate Services:

Council owns four buildings in Derby being:

1. 80-82 Main Street: Derby Town Hall which remains accessible for community use.
2. 53 Main Street: Currently leased and operated as the Derby Schoolhouse Museum.
3. 57 Main Street: The former Department of Main Roads building which is currently partially used as a public amenities block and bike wash area. This building and associated land are also currently subject to a live decision of Council supporting it to be leased to the Blue

Derby Foundation for the purpose of communal accommodation associated with Derby businesses or other initiatives related to the trails.

4. 31834 Tasman Highway: Currently leased by Council from Crown Land Services for the purposes of an operational works depot.

Ms Cafe is welcome to submit a proposal that would be considered on its merits, however on face value no Council owned buildings in Derby are currently vacant or fit for the proposed purpose. Council has no influence or authority over the use of any other buildings that Ms Cafe may be observing to be vacant in Derby, and she would need to progress any proposals to occupy those buildings with the relevant owners.

Tim Kemsley, Derby

The Blue Derby infrastructure has now existed for over 10 years since 2025. Can Council quantify the increase in Council's income due to the increase in rateable value of all properties in Derby and the immediate vicinity over the last 10 years and compare this increase in revenue with the expenditure directly related to the maintenance of the Blue Derby infrastructure?

Similarly, can Council quantify the increase in land tax that the State government has benefitted from over the same period and compare this with the expenditure directly related to the maintenance of the Blue Derby infrastructure.

Can Council please make these figures available to the public?

Response from Director – Corporate Services:

Council has not undertaken this type of analysis. While Council can identify historic and current rates revenue relating to Derby, isolating any increase attributable directly to the Blue Derby infrastructure would require detailed scoping and analysis and would involve a significant level of estimation.

In itself, this type of analysis would not provide a complete picture of the total cost of ownership of Derby. Any increase in rates revenue associated with growth in Derby must also be considered alongside the increased demand on Council's infrastructure and services, and the capital investment required to support Derby as a visitor destination. Council's expenditure in Derby extends beyond the Blue Derby mountain bike trail network and includes roads, stormwater infrastructure, waste services, public facilities and other town infrastructure.

Council has, however, recently commissioned an independent economic impact assessment, *The Value of Blue Derby to the Tasmanian Economy (August 2025)*, which provides a broader measure of the value generated by the Blue Derby trail network. The report found that Blue Derby generates approximately \$50.9 million in direct annual visitor expenditure, contributes \$26.6 million to Gross State Product, supports 274 full-time equivalent jobs, and attracts more than 45,000 mountain bike visitors each year. This work was undertaken to better understand and demonstrate the broader economic contribution of Blue Derby to the region and the State.

The concept of preparing a broader total cost of ownership analysis for Derby has been explored; however, developing a reliable model would require significant estimation and staff resources. This work has not been progressed at this time, noting the existing economic impact study, the complexity of a potential analysis and the need to consider whether a consistent approach would be applied across other townships.

Council is also not in a position to quantify land tax collected by the State Government from properties in the Derby area, as Council is not the custodian of this information.

The following questions have been **received on notice**:

Karl Willrath, Scottsdale | 7 March 2026

1. *As the overall health and attitude towards health of our Councillors can have a profound impact on their constituents with the decisions they make and/or do not make. Can the Mayor write to the minister for Health, the Hon Bridget Archer, and seek assistance in formulating a foodstuff policy that is to be followed when making decisions on councillor dietary choices at workshops, meetings etc that are funded by the ratepayer? As the Mayor may be aware, in Australia we have an eminent professor in the emerging field of nutritional psychiatry, Felice Jacka OAM, that I am sure the minister and her department would take into consideration before offering any much-needed assistance to Dorset Council. <https://foodandmoodcentre.com.au/team/felice-jacka/>*

Response from Mayor Beattie:

No.

2. *As Right to information requests have revealed, gaining access to how much Dorset Council spend on catering may be obtainable (which would include workshops, meetings etc) but an itemised list is not, apparently. As the Mayor is reluctant to alter his position on keeping itemised councillor foodstuff records, can the Mayor write to the minister of local govt, the Hon Kerry Vincent, so he can look into making it mandatory that all councils in Tasmania keep these records and make them freely available to the public. Then at least, the next time constituents hear a councillor spruiking “health health health” for a given project, it may have a different context?*

Response from Mayor Beattie:

No.

The following questions were received **without notice** from members of the public:

Karl Willrath, Scottsdale

In the Dorset 2024 / 2025 annual report, page 29, it states there were two applications for assessed disclosure of information under the RTI Act. It does not state if these were successful, blocked or even if the same information was applied for. As the Mayor is aware, I am in the process of an RTI in an attempt to find out how much Dorset council spends on catering which apparently includes the amount councillors spend on themselves. As the RTI process is some what of a rigmarole, will Dorset consider running a proper disclosure log, and actually publicly disclose the information which has been disclosed via the RTI process as many, if not all are in the public interest.

TAKEN ON NOTICE

Scott Timmins, Branxholm (representing Branxholm Events Committee)

Given the Branxholm Events Committee delivers community connection events like the Biggest Morning Tea, Christmas in July, The Barn Dance and The Devils Cardigan, all of which general a high volume of dishes, will the Council reconsider its decision and allow at no cost to Council, a commercial under-bench dishwasher similar to that installed in the Ringarooma Hub, to ensure proper hygiene standards and reduce the workload and safety risks for volunteers?

TAKEN ON NOTICE

⁵Members of the public can make a statement at a Council Meeting; it is not question or discussion time with Councillors. Prior to making a statement, the person is asked to stand (if able), clearly state their name and suburb they live.

Members of the public wishing to address Council at a Meeting shall indicate their intent and subject matter in writing by 10am on the Friday prior to the Meeting.

A person seeking to make a statement to may speak for a period up to 3 minutes but may be extended at the discretion of the Chairperson to a maximum of 5 minutes.

All proposed statements are to be provided in writing prior to the Meeting to allow for circulation and inclusion in the minutes of the Meeting.

North East Tasmania Chamber of Commerce Chair, Fiona Auton (DOC/26/4133)

- Relating to Councillor Motion with Notice – Rail Trail Project – Stage 3 (see attached)

⁶Councillors can ask a maximum of two question(s) without notice during Councillor question time. The Chairperson reserves the right to consider questions above this limit will be accepted or treated as correspondence.

Question(s) must be clear and concise, not be a statement, have minimal pre-amble, not offer an argument or opinion, draw conclusions, or make any accusations. Any answer given is not to be debated.

Councillors must provide question(s) without notice in writing to the Executive Assistant either before the commencement of the Meeting or within 24 hours.

The following Councillor questions were **taken on notice** at the 16 February 2026 Meeting:

Councillor Hughes:

There was a Dorset Digital Strategy Workshop on the 29 August 2024.

1. *What has been the outcome of this?*

Response from General Manager:

There were four projects that the key project partners, namely Council, NBN, Telstra and Northern Tasmanian Development Corporation devised from a working group with key stakeholders in late 2024. These were:

- a. Connectivity issues project
- b. Derby free Wi-Fi project
- c. Scottsdale Community Wi-Fi project
- d. Digital literacy project

There has been a huge amount of work conducted for all four projects by the project partners. The key partners are currently assimilating all of the work conducted to date and communications will be forthcoming in due course on what has occurred for all four projects.

2. *How has Council advocated for better connectivity for Dorset?*

Response from General Manager:

Council has advocated for better connectivity issues through project 1.a. as highlighted above.

⁵ In accordance with Regulations 46 and Council Policy No. 41: Council Meeting Procedures

⁶ In accordance with Regulations 33, 34 & 35 and Council's Policy No. 41: Council Meeting Procedures

Councillor Teichmann:

1. *Given the questions from the gallery this evening, could Derby as a MTB destination benefit from keeping some of its most popular trails, such as Air-Ya-Garn and Hazy Days, in better riding condition over the hot summers by installing a micro trail irrigation system, which would only need to be run a little bit at night, to keep the trails in optimum condition, thereby improving the ride quality and the visitor experience and safety, and hopefully reducing the risk of accidents and trail maintenance requirements and costs?*

Response from Director – Infrastructure:

While irrigation systems are used in major bike parks, the installation cost, lack of an accessible water source, maintenance and ongoing pumping or cartage requirements mean it is not considered viable for Blue Derby at this time.

2. *I'm just wondering in terms of the visitor experience in Derby more generally, and also the amenity for locals, what is Council planning to do with the Old Mine Office that's down at the trailhead, which is in a rather derelict condition with broken windows and so forth, and would it be possible for Council to use the Old Derby swimming pool as a temporary Dog Park until a more permanent solution can be found?*

Response from General Manager:

Council do not have plans for the Old Mine Office or the Old Derby swimming pool at this stage. Council will be commencing Derby Master Planning through the Derby - Future Ready project, on receipt of promised election funding from the State Government. This is the ideal mechanism for the community to provide feedback as to the future direction of Derby and surrounds.

The following questions were received **without notice** from Councillors:

Councillor Hughes:

1. *What role is Council playing in the current situation with the building of the Child and Family Learning Centre?*

Response from Director – Community and Development Services:

Council has sent a letter to the Minister for Education, The Hon. Jo Palmer advocating for the community benefit and need for an early years education and care facility in Scottsdale. It is understood that contact back to Council will be made from the Ministers office.

2. *Can we have an update on the cost of vandalism to rate-payers? Has there been a recent increase?*

Response from Director – Infrastructure:

Yes there has been an increase in incidents and intensity of vandalism particularly around public amenities in Scottsdale and Bridport. There is a considerable cost to rate payers, involved in additional cleaning and repairs due to vandalism, which is currently being reconciled.

Councillor Chilcott:

Does the Council have a policy on defibrillators and is there a list of where there are defibs in Dorset?

Response from Director – Infrastructure:

Council is currently developing an Automated External Defibrillators (AED) operational policy. Locations of AED's can be sourced on the open layer of the list map [here](#).

Councillor Teichmann:

1. *What is Council doing to control European wasps (Vespula Germanica), an invasive pest species, in Dorset generally and Derby, specifically, as they seem to be quite a problem at present?*

TAKEN ON NOTICE

2. *Does Council have responsibility for ensuring the old Briseis Mine Office is being maintained, under any contract Council has with Crown Lands?*

TAKEN ON NOTICE

Item 55/2026 Requests for Leave of Absence

Nil

Item 56/2026 Notifications of Leave of Absence for Parental Leave

Nil

Item 57/2026 Councillor Motions with Notice

Item 57.1/2026 Councillor Wendy McLennan | Rail Trail Stage 3 Project

Ref: DOC/26/3522 | NoM: DOC/26/3520

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to consider a notice of motion proposed by Councillor Wendy McLennan.

Background

The following notice of motion and background information was received from Councillor McLennan on 11 March 2026:

That Dorset Council remove the North East Rail Trail stage 3 from the Strategic Plan as a priority project and, as a consequence, remove it from the Annual Plan and Operational Plan.

Reasons:

1. The project was conceived in 2014 and has, for 12 years, been subject to ongoing revisions, reviews and unspent grants.
2. There remains ongoing uncertainty regarding the project's viability and net benefits to Dorset.

3. The project has been divisive within the community and does not have clear, broad community support.
4. Other priority projects have emerged, including the development of the Scottsdale Railway precinct, which was not included in the Stage 3 Project approvals.
5. Expenditure to date for Dorset ratepayers is over \$300,000 on legal fees, consultancies and other contingencies.
6. The current estimated project cost of \$6.54 million is difficult to justify in the context of the current national and state financial situation and ratepayer cost-of-living pressures.
7. The railway has not been maintained under the relevant agreement(s) of the *Strategic Infrastructure Corridors (Strategic and Recreational Use) Act 2016* and bringing it to a suitable standard would involve additional cost.
8. None of the milestones outlined in the June 2025 Ordinary Council Meeting have been achieved.

Given the risks, uncertainty, and competing priorities, the motion seeks to refocus Council effort and investment on projects with clearer deliverability and community benefit, and to act with fiscal responsibility in challenging financial conditions.

Recommendation

MOVED: Cr McLennan | SECONDED: Cr Bicanic

That Dorset Council remove the North East Rail Trail stage 3 from the Strategic Plan as a priority project and, as a consequence, remove it from the Annual Plan and Operational Plan.

DECISION - PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Cr Powell | SECONDED: Cr Richards

To defer to a Workshop for further discussion.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Powell	Councillor Beattie
Councillor Richards	Councillor Simmons
Councillor McLennan	Councillor Chilcott
Councillor Teichmann	Councillor Hughes
Councillor Bicanic	

CARRIED

ITEMS FOR DECISION

Item 58/2026

Blue Derby Foundation | Memorandum of Understanding Half-Yearly Update

Reporting Officer: General Manager, John Marik

Ref: DOC/26/1722

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a half-yearly governance update on the operation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Council and the Blue Derby Foundation (Foundation), in accordance with Activity 6 in Council's 2025/26 Annual Plan.

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Hughes | SECONDED: Cr Powell

That Council receives and notes the half-yearly governance update relating to the Memorandum of Understanding between Council and the Blue Derby Foundation.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Councillor Hughes declared an immaterial perceived conflict of interest in Item 59 and remained in the Meeting.

Item 59/2026

Retrospective Reimbursement Request

Reporting Officer: Director – Infrastructure, Kerry Sacilotto

Ref: DOC/26/3341

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to determine a request received from Dorset Renewable Industries Pty Ltd (DRI) in relation to retrospective reimbursement for works undertaken adjacent to the North East Rail Trail corridor at Ling Siding.

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Simmons | SECONDED: Cr Chilcott

That Council:

1. declines the request from Dorset Renewable Industries Pty Ltd for reimbursement of invoices totalling \$29,058.98; and
2. notes that:
 - a. the works were undertaken without Council authorisation or procurement approval;
 - b. Council did not enter into any agreement or commitment to fund the works;
 - c. one invoice submitted does not relate to rail trail works; and
 - d. under Section 69 of the *Strategic Infrastructure Corridors (Strategic and Recreational Use) Act 2016*, responsibility for preventing drainage entering a corridor rest with the adjoining landowner unless consent has been granted by the corridor manager.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to determine a request received by the General Manager to consider purchasing 75 Main Street, Derby, for use as a public and staff car park.



Image 1: Location of 75 Main Street, Derby

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Powell | SECONDED: Cr Hughes

That Council:

1. notes the correspondence received regarding request to purchase land at 75 Main Street, Derby for car parking purposes;
2. does not undertake further investigation, negotiation or assessment in relation to this request at this time, and that any future consideration of additional land acquisition in Derby be addressed through an adopted Master Planning process or where identified as a priority within Council’s Strategic Plan 2023–2032, Long-Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plans or other formally adopted Council strategy.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Powell Councillor Richards Councillor McLennan Councillor Teichmann Councillor Bicanic Councillor Simmons Councillor Chilcott Councillor Hughes	Councillor Teichmann (abstained)

CARRIED

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to determine a request received by the General Manager to consider purchasing Crown land at Emma Street, Bridport (PID 6845522) and for Council to decide whether to adopt a 12-month moratorium on land acquisitions.



Image 1: Aerial view of Emma Street parcel of Crown Land

Councillor Simmons left the Meeting during the presentation of the Item (7:40pm) and returned to the Meeting (7:41pm)

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Chilcott | SECONDED: Cr Powell

That Council:

1. does not pursue acquisition of the Crown Land parcel known as PID 6845522 Emma Street, Bridport; and
2. notes that this determination has been made following consideration of the financial, operational, strategic, risk and governance implications outlined within this report; and
3. adopts a 12-month moratorium on the investigation, negotiation or acquisition of land not identified within Council's adopted Strategic Plan, Asset Plans or endorsed master planning documents, unless otherwise resolved by Council.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to discuss the introduction of a new Council Policy relating to election caretaker periods prior to Local Government elections.

DECISION

MOVED: Cr McLennan | SECONDED: Cr Hughes

That Council adopt the attached new Policy No. 70 – Local Government Election Caretaker Period.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to present the recommendations of the Community Grants Selection Panel - Small Grants Fund 2025-2026 Round 2 for endorsement.

2025/26 <u>Small</u> Grants - Round 2 Summary of Applications					
*Rounded up to the nearest dollar					
Organisation	Total Cost of Project* (Incl. GST)	Amount Requested from Council* (Excl. GST)	Group/In-kind Contribution/ Other Grants*	Grant Details	Community Grants Selection Panel Recommendation (all Excl. GST)
Bridport Community Men's Shed	\$769	\$699	\$0	Hand Pallet Truck Purchase - The Bridport Community Men's Shed currently has 8 active members and the addition of this piece of updated equipment will ensure safety of the members when moving heavy items.	Full Recommendation - \$699
Total Requested		\$699	Total Recommended		\$699

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Chilcott | SECONDED: Cr Powell

That the distribution of \$699 to the following community group via the Small Grants Fund for 2025/26 Round 2 is endorsed:

- \$699 - Bridport Community Men's Shed

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Item 64/2026

Round 2 | 2025/26 Matching Grants Application Assessments

Reporting Officer: Director – Community & Development Services, Jayne Miller

Ref: DOC/26/3603

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to present the recommendations of the Community Grants Selection Panel - Matching Grants Fund 2025/26 Round 2 for endorsement.

2025/26 Matching Funds Grants - Round 2 Summary of Applications					
*Rounded up to the nearest dollar					
Organisation	Total Cost of Project* (Incl. GST)	Amount Requested from Council* (Excl. GST)	Group/In-kind Contribution/ Other Grants*	Grant Details	Community Grants Selection Panel Recommendation (all Excl. GST)
Ringarooma Golf Club	\$29,819	\$13,700	\$13,700	New Machinery Shed - The replacement of the old dilapidated unsafe shed with a new lockable shed is required to ensure the longevity of the mowers and equipment that the golf club own. They are a volunteer group who have worked hard to be able to match this grant with additional funds and volunteer labour.	Full Recommendation - \$13,700 - Conditional upon all Regulatory Approvals being obtained within a period of 6 months
Total Requested		\$13,700	Total Recommended		\$13,700

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Simmons | SECONDED: Cr Chilcott

That the distribution of \$13,700 to the following community group via the Matching Grants Fund for 2025/26 Round 2 is endorsed:

- \$13,700 - Ringarooma Golf Club

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Item 65/2026

Review of Policy No. 50 – Gifts and Benefits

Reporting Officer: Director – Corporate Services, Lauren Tolputt

Ref: DOC/26/3695 | Draft Policy: DOC/25/15272 | Guidelines: DOC/25/15273

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to present the revised Council Policy - No. 50 Gifts and Benefits.

Recommendation

That Council adopts the attached revised Policy No. 50 – Gifts and Benefits.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

MOVED: Cr Teichmann | SECONDED:

To defer the item to a Workshop.

LAPSED, NO SECONDER

AMENDMENT

MOVED: Cr Teichmann | SECONDED:

That travel, accommodation and meals proffered or accepted in attending an educational conference be exempted from section 4 of this Policy.

LAPSED, NO SECONDER

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Chilcott | SECONDED: Cr Simmons

That Council adopts the attached revised Policy No. 50 – Gifts and Benefits.

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Powell	Councillor Teichmann
Councillor Richards	
Councillor McLennan	
Councillor Teichmann	
Councillor Bicanic	
Councillor Simmons	
Councillor Chilcott	
Councillor Hughes	

CARRIED

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to appoint a Chairperson and Independent Member to Council’s Audit Panel in accordance with section 5(4) of the Local Government (Audit Panels) Order 2014.

Councillor Richards left the Meeting during the presentation / debate of the Item (8:12pm) and returned to the Meeting (8:14pm)

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Hughes | SECONDED: Cr McLennan

That Council:

- 1. appoints Ms Jan Lynch as Chairperson of the Audit Panel for a term of two years commencing 23 March 2026 and expiring on 22 March 2028; and**
- 2. appoints Mr Ian Wright as Independent Member of the Audit Panel for a term of two years commencing 23 March 2026 and expiring on 22 March 2028.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEMS FOR NOTING

3 March 2026 | Briefing Workshop

11 March 2026 | Councillor Community Meet and Greet Session @ Ringarooma

17 March 2026 | External Presentations Workshop

Mayor Calendar | 12 February to 18 March 2026

February 2026

- | | |
|----|--|
| 12 | Meeting with Tasmania Police new Northern Inspector with General Manager, Council Chambers |
| 12 | Online meeting with Department of Health Deputy Secretary with the General Manager, discussing the vacant James Scott Wing |
| 12 | Weekly meeting with the General Manager, Council Chambers |
| 13 | Councillor Planning Session February Council Meeting with Councillors Powell, Hughes, Bicanic, Teichmann, Richards and Chilcott, Council Chambers |
| 13 | Councillor Session Capital Budget Variation discussion, with Councillors Powell, Hughes, Bicanic, Teichmann, Richards and Chilcott, Council Chambers |

- 15 Bridport Innovations Annual General Meeting, Bridport
- 16 Interview with ABC news
- 16 February Council Meeting, Council Chambers
- 17 Better Health 4 Dorset Health Hub Open Day with General Manager, Scottsdale
- 17 Meeting with Minister for Health, Hon. Bridget Archer MP with General Manager, Council Chambers
- 19 Weekly meeting with General Manager, Council Chambers
- 19 Meeting with Legislative Member for McIntyre, Hon. Tania Rattray MLC with General Manager, Scottsdale
- 19 Meeting with Blue Derby Foundation representatives with General Manager, Council Chambers
- 24 Dorset Wellbeing Network Meeting, Dorset Community House
- 26 Weekly meeting with General Manager, Council Chambers
- 26 Online meeting with Minister for Local Government, Hon. Kerry Vincent MLC with General Manager
- 26 Online meeting with Senator Tammy Tyrrell with General Manager
- 27 Citizenship Ceremony with Councillors Powell and Richards, Council Chambers

March 2026

- 2 Online State Grants Commission Hearing with General Manager and Director – Corporate Services
- 3 March Briefing Workshop, Council Chambers
- 5 Weekly meeting with General Manager, Council Chambers
- 5 Onsite tour of James Scott Wing with General Manager, NESM Hospital Scottsdale
- 11 Councillor Community Meet & Greet Session with Councillors Powell, McLennan, Hughes and Chilcott, Ringarooma Memorial Hall
- 11 Future Links Gladstone meeting, Gladstone Hall
- 17 Councillor External Presentations Session, Nugget Sellars Pavilion, Scottsdale
- 18 Rotary Club of Scottsdale meeting, Scottsdale

Item 69/2026 Management Team Briefing Report

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide Councillors and the community with a briefing on matters of interest dealt with during the past month by Council’s Management Team.

DECISION

MOVED: Cr Simmons | SECONDED: Cr Chilcott

That Council

1. note the watching brief on the Iran conflict relating to fuel supply and cost implications; and
2. receive and note the remaining Management Team Briefing Report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Watching Brief: Iran Conflict – Fuel Supply and Cost Implications

Purpose

To inform Council of emerging global risks associated with the escalating Iran conflict, particularly in relation to fuel supply disruptions and potential cost impacts on Council operations, the local economy and community.

Background

The ongoing conflict involving Iran, the United States and Israel has significantly disrupted global energy markets. Of particular concern is instability in the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global shipping route through which approximately 20% of the world's oil supply typically flows.

Recent military activity has included strikes on oil and gas infrastructure and shipping routes, resulting in reduced production, disrupted exports and heightened uncertainty across energy markets.

Current Situation

- Global oil prices have risen sharply, with Brent crude exceeding USD \$100 per barrel and increasing by up to 50% since the conflict began.
- In some markets, physical oil supply shortages have driven prices significantly higher, with certain crude grades exceeding USD \$150 per barrel.
- Disruptions to shipping routes and infrastructure have curtailed supply and increased freight costs, compounding price pressures.
- Fuel prices in Australia have already responded, with notable increases in petrol and diesel prices, particularly in regional areas where supply lag can exacerbate price spikes.

Implications for Local Government

Operational Impacts

- Increased fuel costs for Council fleet, plant and contractor services
- Potential escalation in construction and maintenance costs (roads, waste, infrastructure)
- Supply chain delays or cost increases for materials linked to petroleum products

Financial Impacts

- Upward pressure on Council operating budgets and capital works programs
- Potential need for budget adjustments or reprioritisation if sustained

Community and Economic Impacts

- Increased cost of living for residents and employees (fuel, food, goods and services)
- Flow-on impacts to local businesses, particularly transport, agriculture and tourism sectors
- Heightened economic uncertainty across the region

Risk Considerations

- Duration of the conflict remains uncertain; prolonged disruption could entrench higher fuel costs
- Global energy shocks historically contribute to inflationary pressure and reduced economic activity

- Regional areas such as Dorset may experience delayed supply and higher relative price impacts

Council Position / Monitoring Approach

At this stage, there is no immediate risk to fuel availability locally, however price volatility is expected. Council will continue to monitor developments, including:

- Fuel price trends and supplier advice
- Impacts on Council contracts and procurement
- Broader economic indicators affecting the Dorset community
- Business Continuity Planning to prioritise core service including waste collection

Next Steps

- Maintain a watching brief and provide updates to Council as required
- Consider incorporating fuel cost contingencies into budget planning if volatility persists
- Engage with suppliers and regional stakeholders to understand emerging impact

WASTE MANAGEMENT REQUESTS | February 2026

	Requests Received February 2026	Comparison February 2025	FYTD Received 2025/26	Comparison FYTD Received 2024/25
Feedback and Queries	-	-	3	4
Repair Bin	-	6	30	12
Replace Bin	7	9	41	24
Request a New Service	3	9	21	8
Remove Additional Bin	-	9	14	21
Request an Additional Bin	1	2	12	9
Request an Upsize/Downsize	5	-	27	-
Request to Opt Out (of Service)	-	-	3	-
Total Requests	16	35	151	78

CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUESTS | February 2026

	Requests Received February 2026	Comparison Requests February 2025	Received 2026	Comparison 2025
Animal	7	3	12	4
Bike Trails	-	-	-	-
Bridges	-	-	-	-
Caravan Parks	-	-	2	1
Cemeteries	1	1	1	1
Community Awards	-	-	1	-
Community Development General	-	-	-	-
Corporate Services General	1	-	1	2
Council Elections	-	1	-	1
Customer Service	1	2	4	3
Emergency Services Enquiries	-	1	-	1
Environmental Management & Health	5	2	9	3
Footpath Enquiries	3	-	9	3
Government Relations	-	-	-	-
Licencing	-	-	-	-
Parks and Reserves	2	2	4	4
Planning & Building	1	-	1	-
Playground Maintenance	-	-	3	-
Public Health	-	-	-	1
Public Online Enquiries	-	-	-	-
Public Amenities	3	1	6	1
Public Halls Buildings	1	-	3	-
Recreation Grounds	3	1	10	1
Roads	18	16	47	41
Swimming Pools	-	-	-	5
Waste Management	2	1	2	1
Total Requests	48	31	115	70

See attachments for detailed request received in February 2026 and year to date.

APPROVED APPLICATIONS | February 2026

	Approved February	Approved 2026 YTD	Approved 2025 YTD
Planning	9	14	13
Building	7	11	7
Plumbing	2	3	4

See attachments for detailed information about applications approved in February 2026.

2025/26 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

Ref: DOC/25/9165

	Complete 2025/26
	Completed in February 2026
	Carried Forward Projects – 2026/27
	Projects Withdrawn

PROJECT	STATUS
BRIDGES	
Bridge 1508 Garibaldi Road, Pioneer – repairs to piers (addition allocation, storm recovery)	Commenced
Bridge 1604 Panama Forest Road, Golconda – timber deck renewal	Completed
Bridge 1589 Sledge Track, West Scottsdale – timber superstructure renewal (beams & deck)	Completed
Bridge 1556 New River Road, Ringarooma – timber deck renewal	Completed
Bridge 1594 Greeta Road, Nabowla – timber superstructure renewal (beams and deck)	Timber ordered
Bridge 1508 Garibaldi Road, Pioneer – slab repairs	
Bridge 1569 Jensens Road, North Scottsdale – upgrade superstructure (timber to concrete)	Tender issued
Bridge 1572 Haas Road, Legerwood – upgrade superstructure (timber to concrete, additional allocation)	Tender issued
STORMWATER	
61 King Street, Scottsdale – upgrade stormwater pits	
3 Murphy Place, Scottsdale – undertake network survey and hydrology assessment	Investigation
Main Road, Pioneer – pipe open drain	Completed
9 Willow Court, Winnaleah – design and install new network	Quotes received
21 Thomas Street, Scottsdale – design and install new network	Completed
52 Scott Street, Branxholm – design and install new network	Quotes received
3 Thomas Street, Scottsdale – design and install new network	Quotes received
ROADS – RESHEETING	
Old Waterhouse Road, Waterhouse	Completed
Cape Portland Road, Gladstone	Completed
Bridport Back Road, Nabowla	Completed
Nourses Road, Bridport	Completed
Unwins Road, Springfield	Completed
McDonalds Avenue, Ringarooma	Completed
Dead Horse Hill Road, Ringarooma	Completed
Pera Flats Road, Ringarooma	Completed
Swanee Road, Winnaleah	Completed
Ferny Hill Road, Bridport	Completed
Bridport – urban resheeting (various locations)	Completed

PROJECT	STATUS
ROADS – RESEALS	
George Street, Scottsdale – highway access	Prep work completed
Maurice Street, Legerwood	Prep work completed
Spotswood Drive, Scottsdale	Prep work completed
Beattie Street, Scottsdale	Prep work completed
Ringarooma Road, Scottsdale – highway access	Prep work completed
Christopher Street, Scottsdale	Prep work completed
Mary Street, Scottsdale	Prep work completed
Alice Street, Scottsdale	Prep work completed
East Maurice Road, Ringarooma	Completed
Oakdene Road, Jetsonville	Prep work completed
Barnbogle Road, Bridport	Prep work completed
Barnett Road, Ringarooma	Completed
Ruby Flats Road, Branxholm	Completed
Derby Back Road, Derby	Completed
Sykes Road, Springfield	Completed
Arnold Place, Scottsdale	Completed
Charles Street, Pioneer – additional reseal	Completed
ROADS – OTHER PROJECTS	
Willis Road, Lietinna – hotmix overlay intersection with Golconda Road	Completed
Koomeela Road, West Scottsdale – culvert repairs	Completed
Banca Road, Winnaleah – pavement repair and hotmix surface	Completed
Golconda Road, Nabowla – 3.4km safety upgrades and pavement renewal	Commenced
Ferny Hill Road, Bridport – landslip repair (storm damage)	Tenders received
Golconda Road, Golconda – pavement design	Design
Bentley Street, Bridport – footpath renewal	
Ellenor Street, Scottsdale – design pavement renewal	Design
Austins Road and Tasman Highway, Scottsdale – junction upgrade	Commenced
Northeast Lane, Scottsdale – design	Completed
Union Street, Scottsdale – kerb and stormwater upgrade (stage 1)	Completed
Pioneer township – footpath	Completed
Golconda Road, Golconda – freight and safety improvement strategy	Commenced
Buckney’s Road, Scottsdale – road survey	Commenced

PROJECT	STATUS
BUILDINGS	
Bridport Seaside Caravan Park – camp kitchen renewal (replace beams)	Completed
Bridport Seaside Caravan Park – electrical switchboard renewal and underground cables (stage 1)	Scheduled – April
Northeast Park, Scottsdale – electrical upgrades and shower payment machine upgrades	Completed
Winnaleah Old Scout Hall – replace old louvre windows	Completed
Derby, Branxholm, Ringarooma, Winnaleah & Legerwood – switchboard upgrades	Commenced
Pioneer Hall – toilet renewal	Planning
Northeast Park, Scottsdale – BBQ replacement	Completed
Scottsdale – switchboard upgrades (various sites)	Planning
Scottsdale Aquatic Centre – toilet and shower renewal	Completed
Branxholm Hall – kitchen renewal (Pines Committee donation)	Commenced
Bridport Seaside Caravan Park – amenities upgrade (shower cubicle storage / shelving)	
Bridport Seaside Caravan Park – cabin upgrades / outdoor area improvements	
Scottsdale Waste Transfer Station – Reuse Centre shop extension	Planning
Scottsdale Waste Transfer Station – heat pump	Completed
Derby Depot – alarm system and cameras	Planning
Scottsdale Depot – relocation of storage sheds (additional allocation)	Completed
Nugget Sellars Pavilion (Scottsdale Recreation Ground) – heat pump	Completed
Scottsdale Aquatic Centre – remote access through Council network	Scheduled - April
LAND IMPROVEMENTS	
Blue Derby – network signage	Commenced
Bridport Seaside Caravan Park and Bridport Foreshore – BBQ replacement	Completed
Scottsdale Aquatic Centre – flow meter and motor protection on leisure pool pumps	Planning
Scottsdale Aquatic Centre – chlorinator pump critical spare parts	Commenced
Scottsdale Aquatic Centre – balance tank temporary shut off valve	Ordered
Scottsdale Aquatic Centre – leisure pool filter sand replacement	Planning
Scottsdale Aquatic Centre – replace umbrella covers	Completed
Derby Park – Ringarooma Road erosion repairs	Completed
Pine Plantation, Ringarooma Road, Scottsdale – replanting (additional allocation)	Completed
Blue Derby – Black Stump car turning area redevelopment	Planning
Blue Derby – Top Creek drop off area completion	Planning
Netball court upgrades – Scottsdale, Bridport and Derby (Stage 1)	Planning
Scottsdale Railway Station precinct redevelopment	Commenced
Blue Derby – memorial lookout	Planning
Ellesmere Cemetery, Scottsdale – new memorial wall	Planning
Scottsdale sports precinct – master planning	
Scottsdale Aquatic Centre – covered pool feasibility study	

PROJECT	STATUS
CARRY FORWARD PROJECTS	
<u>Bridges</u>	
Bridge 1508 Garibaldi Road, Pioneer – scour protection piers (storm recovery)	Tender Awarded
Bridge 1572 Haas Road / Frenches Creek, Legerwood – upgrade to concrete	Funding received
<u>Roads</u>	
South Street, Bridport – replace kerb	
King Street, Scottsdale – pedestrian crossing	Withdrawn
George Street, Scottsdale – pedestrian crossing	Withdrawn
Coplestone Street, Scottsdale – new footpath	
<u>Buildings</u>	
Building Renovations (Blue Derby Foundation) - 57 Main Street, Derby	
Scottsdale Railway Station Building – restoration	
Derby Depot – new trail crew storage shed	Planning
Bridport Seaside Caravan Park – planning for new camp kitchen at Goftons Beach	Planning
Branxholm Waste Transfer Station – Oil Bunded Shed	Planning
Branxholm Waste Transfer Station – Recycling Shed	Planning
Gladstone Waste Transfer Station – Oil Bunded Shed	Planning
Gladstone Waste Transfer Station – Recycling Shed	Planning
Scottsdale Waste Transfer Station – Oil Bunded Shed	Planning
<u>Land Improvements</u>	
Croquet Lawn Beach, Bridport – access improvements	Investigations
Blue Derby Mountain Bike Trails – Tunnel stairs	
Bridport Lions Club Adventure Playground upgrade (election grant)	Planning
Scottsdale Childrens Reserve Playground upgrade (election grant)	Planning
Scottsdale community bike track	
Gladstone community park	
Waste Transfer Station signage	Commenced
CWA Carpark, Bridport – solar light	Completed

CLOSURE OF MEETING

Time Meeting Closed: 8:22pm

Minutes Confirmed: 20 April 2026

Minute No: 71/2026



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Mayor

I stand before you today as Chair of the North East Tasmania Chamber of Commerce, representing a diverse and resilient community of businesses, entrepreneurs and professionals across the Dorset Municipality.

Our purpose is simple: to grow our economy, strengthen our community, and create opportunity for the future.

And that is exactly what we are deciding here today. Whether the Dorset community will have the opportunity to grow our economy, strengthen our community and create opportunity for the future.

The Rail Trail Project is not just another idea. It is not speculative, and it is not untested. It is a fully researched, strategically aligned, and shovel-ready project that this Chamber has supported from the very beginning—and we continue to support it without hesitation.

Projects like this do not happen by chance. They are built over years—through collaboration, leadership, and persistence. This project reflects the work of councillors past and present, regional leaders, and expert organisations like the Northern Tasmanian Development Commission.

It has been shaped by data, informed by experts, and strengthened through partnership.

That partnership includes Launceston City Council—our closest regional ally—who formally provided in-principle their support for Stage 3 in December 2024. Councillors before you and those of you who have the deciding vote here today, have already supported progressing this project to the point where you voted for Launceston City Council to begin exploring their own costings towards this project.

That decision mattered.

It signalled intent. It built trust.

To now step back is not a neutral decision—it is a step backwards.

Because the business case for this project is not theoretical—it is proven.

Rail trail developments across Australia consistently deliver strong economic returns. Comparable projects demonstrate benefit-to-cost ratios between **2.5 and 4 dollars returned for every dollar invested**. The benefit-to-cost ratio for The Rail Trail project has been estimated at 5.6 over 10 years. So, for every dollar spent, the area will receive the benefit of \$5.60c. Interestingly, the recently approved Mac Point Stadium has a benefit-to-cost ratio of \$1 to 46-65c over 30 years. The economic case for this project is one of the highest you will find.

But, beyond the numbers, there is sentiment.

The business community supports this project—because they understand what it means: more people through the door, more nights stayed, more money spent locally.

But there is one more critical point—

This is the only major, shovel-ready economic development project currently available to Dorset.

And timing matters.

With State and Federal elections always on the horizon, funding follows readiness. If a project isn't ready, it doesn't get funded. This project is ready—and our region deserves its fair share.

Ratepayer funds have already brought the Rail Trail to this point. The groundwork is done, and Council is now positioned to secure state and federal funding. Walking away now would waste that investment.

Claims that funding should go elsewhere misunderstand how government funding works. It isn't one pool we can redirect to areas like childcare—budgets are allocated to specific sectors such as health, education, and tourism. This project will draw from Tourism and Regional Development funding, and we have every right to compete for it.

If we let this opportunity pass, we don't just lose a project—we lose our position. Financially and strategically, it no longer makes sense to stand in the way of the Rail Trail. That time has passed.

Over the past fifteen years, our region has taken repeated hits. The loss of major employers—Frenchpine, Auspine, Simplot, the Tonganah Clay Mine, and the UMT butter factory—has reshaped our economy, reduced our population, and eroded services.

And it hasn't stopped. We now face further setbacks—loss of key institutions, reduced funding to essential services, and rising cost-of-living pressures

At no point in recent history have we needed economic stimulus more.

At no point have we needed tourism more.