

Recommendations	Council Actions	Who	Status
<p>Commission of Inquiry Recommendations</p> <p>2. The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council:</p> <p>a. Council appoint an external Interim CEO to the Council for a fixed period of 12 months to undertake an organisational restructure of responsibilities and reporting lines, with a capacity to extend the term.</p> <p>b. The interim CEO works with the Monitor to achieve contemporary good governance practices within the Council senior staff.</p> <p>Minister for Local Government's Recommendation:</p> <p>1 External Interim Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>a. Appoint an external interim CEO to the Council for a fixed period of 12 months to undertake an organisational restructure of responsibilities and reporting lines, with a capacity to extend the term.</p> <p>b. Ensure the Interim CEO works with any municipal Monitor to the Council to achieve contemporary good governance practices within the Council Senior staff.</p>	<p>The Interim External CEO commenced review of the organisation structure and responsibilities of reporting lines considered. Ongoing engagement with staff via realignment sessions and one on one meetings conducted during June 2018.</p>	<p>External Interim CEO</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>External Interim CEO appointed, commenced 2 October 2017 for a one year term.</p>	<p>External Interim CEO</p>	
	<p>CEO and Monitor met weekly to address issues raised by Commission of Inquiry.</p>	<p>CEO and Monitor</p>	
	<p>Council appointed CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee – April 2018.</p>	<p>Council</p>	
	<p>CEO appointed 7 August 2018 and commenced 1 October 2018.</p>	<p>Council</p>	
	<p>Following his appointment in October 2018, the CEO commenced an organisation structure review. The review was carried out with a focus on working with flexible teams, the fundamentals and building community confidence.</p>	<p>CEO</p>	
<p>Commission of Inquiry Recommendations:</p> <p>3. That the Council retain the 2016 rating strategy as the 2017 rating strategy.</p> <p>4. That the Council establish a Rating Strategy Advisory Group that:</p> <p>a. Has Terms of Reference to assist the Council develop its rating strategy by:</p> <p>i. Identifying and recommending principles for formulating a rating strategy.</p> <p>ii. Advising on the residential rate and consideration of differential rates</p> <p>iii. Advising on the equitable sharing of the rates revenue and changes to current charges and rebates</p> <p>iv. Proposing improvements to communication and engagement on the budget and rating strategy</p> <p>v. Producing a discussion paper with recommendations for Council before public comment</p> <p>b. Comprises an independent non-voting Chair with knowledge of local government rating and representatives of key groups of rate payers with voting rights.</p> <p>c. Is assisted by an external rating expert and Council staff in administration and management support</p> <p>d. In approaching its task has regard to the operation of the Wyndham City Council Rating Strategy Advisory Group; the findings of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) <i>Rating Practices in Local Government</i>; and the findings of the VAGO <i>Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i>.</p> <p>5. The Council that Council thereafter considers the recommendations of the Rating Strategy Advisory Group and public comment on the recommendations before developing a draft rating strategy.</p>	<p>Rating Strategy Advisory Group (RSAG) met over a 7-month period and have presented their recommendations to the Citizens Jury and Council.</p>	<p>RSAG/ Citizens Jury/ Council</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>The Citizens Jury meet on 21 and 22 April 2018 to discuss Rating Strategy Advisory Group's Discussion Paper.</p>	<p>Citizens Jury</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>Councillors had the opportunity to listen to the discussion on Saturday 21 April and the Presentation of Citizens Jury findings on 22 April 2018.</p>		
	<p>Council considered and adopted a Draft Rating Strategy for public exhibition at the Special Council Meeting held on 8 May 2018.</p> <p>Submissions heard at a Special Council Meeting held on 12 June 2018. June 2018 Council Meeting considered submissions and adopted Budget and Rating Strategy.</p>	<p>Council</p>	<p>Complete</p>



Ararat Rural City Council Response to Recommendations June 2019 (Final)



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<p>6. That Council prepare a rating strategy in accordance with the Local Government Better Practice Guide to determine the rating structure that will provide the most equitable imposition of rates and charges. The strategy should be developed after the results of the 1 January 2018 general revaluation of properties is known.</p> <p>7. That Council develop an implementation plan, which will transition the current rating structure to the proposed rating structure with the aim of providing a reasonable degree of stability in the level of the rates burden.</p> <p>Minister for Local Government’s Recommendation 2 Rating Strategy</p> <p>a. Retain the Council’s 2016 rating strategy as the 2017 rating strategy and reflect this in the Council’s 2017/2018 budget.</p> <p>b. Establish a rating strategy advisory group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Has terms of reference to assist the Council develop its rating strategy by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Identifying and recommending principles for formulating its ratings strategy. 2 Advising on the residential rate and consideration of differential rates 3 Advising on the equitable sharing of the rate revenue and changes to current charges and rebates 4 Proposing improvements to communication and engagement on the budget and rating strategy 5 Producing a discussion paper with recommendations for Council before public comment. ii. Comprises an independent non-voting Chair with knowledge of local government rating, and representatives of key groups of ratepayers with voting rights. iii. Is assisted by an external rating expert and Council staff in administration and management support. iv. In approaching its task has regard to the operation of the Wyndham City Council Rating Strategy Advisory Group; the findings of the <i>Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (VAGO) Rating Practices in Local Government</i>; and the findings of the VAGO Audit <i>VAGO Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i>. v. Gives significant regard to being informed by the outcomes of a Citizens’ Jury-type approach involving members of the local community. <p>c. Consider the recommendations of the Rating Strategy Advisory Group and public comment on the recommendations before developing a draft rating strategy.</p> <p>d. Prepare a rating strategy in accordance with the <i>Local Government Better Practice Guide</i> to determine the rating structure that will provide the most equitable imposition of rates and charges. The strategy should be developed after the results of the 1 January 2018 general revaluation of properties is known.</p> <p>e. Develop an implementation plan, which would transition the current rating structure to any proposed new rating structure, with the aim of providing a reasonable degree of stability in the lever of the rates burden.</p>			

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<p>Commission of Inquiry Recommendation: 9. That Council undertake a review of its current range and level of service provision to the community with a view to making structural changes that ensure it can fully fund its asset renewal requirements and remain financially viable over the long term.</p> <p>Minister for Local Government's Recommendation 3 Financial Stability a. Undertake a review of its current range and level of service provision to the community with a view to making structural changes that ensure it can fully fund its asset renewal requirements and remain financially viable over the long term.</p>	Review the existing Service Review documentation and develop an implementation plan.	Monitor and External Interim CEO	Complete
	Implementing the current Service Review program by September 2019.	External Interim CEO	Complete
	Business Analyst appointed to coordinate and support service review program. CEO met Business Analysts to assess the model used for carrying out Service Reviews. Ongoing meetings held with Analysts to keep CEO up to date with agreed review process and outcomes. All Service Reviews completed and final report presented to CEO on 21 June 2019.	CEO	
<p>Commission of Inquiry Recommendations 10. The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that: a. Council reviews its community engagement policy b. Council processes for documenting and evaluating community engagement be included in the policy c. Council consider the findings of the <i>VAGO Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i> in reviewing its community engagement policy.</p> <p>Minister for Local Government's Recommendation 4 Community Engagement a. Review its community engagement policy b. Include processes for documenting and evaluating community engagement in its community engagement policy c. Consider the findings of the <i>VAGO Audit of Public Participation and Community Engagement in Local Government</i> in reviewing its community engagement policy.</p>	Council adopted C.1.10 Community Engagement Policy on 20 March 2018.	Council	Complete

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<p>Commission of Inquiry Recommendation: 12 The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Mayor of the Council that it adopt best practice and restrict Councillor access only to the minutes of the Audit Committee meetings and Councillors no longer approve recommendations of the Internal Auditor</p> <p>Minister of Local Government's Recommendation: 5 Audit Committee a. Adopt best practice by: i. Restricting access by Councillors who are not Audit Committee members, to only the minutes of Audit Committee meetings, and ii. Ensure Councillors no longer approve recommendations of the Internal Auditor.</p>	<p>The Ministerial and Commission of Inquiry Recommendations were tabled for discussion at the Audit Committee Meeting held 18 September 2017.</p> <p>The proposed changes to Audit reporting were discussed at length and the consensus was that in moving forward the CEO will be deemed responsible for tracking and implementing all recommendations of the Internal Auditor and Council will have access to the Audit Committee minutes via an Information Report in the Council Meeting agenda.</p> <p>Revised Audit Committee Charter adopted by Council on 17 October 2017.</p>	External Interim CEO	Complete
<p>Minister for Local Government's Recommendation: 6. Code of Conduct a. Take steps under its Councillor Code of Conduct to address the Commission's findings in relation to potential breaches of the Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>Cr's McLean and Allgood gave a statement at the 21 November 2017 Council Meeting responding to alleged breaches of the Councillor Code of conduct.</p> <p>The Council resolved to accept both Councillors statements and proposed remedies. <i>(A copy is attached of the Council Meeting Minutes relating to this item)</i></p>	External Interim CEO and Municipal Monitor	Complete
<p>Commission of Inquiry Recommendation: 1 The Commission recommends to the Minister that at a minimum, she appoint a Monitor to the Council for the next two years with a specific brief.</p>	<p>Ms Janet Dore appointed Municipal Monitor on 23 August 2017.</p> <p>Monitor continues to attend all Council Meetings and Assembly of Councillors. The monitor met with the Mayor and CEO on a regular basis.</p> <p>Notification received from the Minister for Local Government on 21 May 2019 advising that the appointment of Ms Dore concludes effective from 2 May 2019.</p>	This role was a Ministerial appointment	Complete
<p>Commission of Inquiry Recommendation: 8. The Commission recommends to the Minister that accountability to the community be improved by amending the Act to require a Council to justify the use of a uniform rate as a method for the equitable imposition of rates as it currently requires for the use of differential rates</p>	N/A	Minister for Local Government	As part of LG Act Review
<p>Commission of Inquiry Recommendation: 11. The Commission recommends that the Minister recommends to the Electoral Commission that prior to its next statutory review it undertake a review of the unsubdivided electoral structure at the Council in light of the findings of this report.</p>	In November 2017 Council wrote to the VEC to advise of Commission's recommendations regarding the future electoral structure of municipality. The last electoral review was conducted prior to the 2008 general election. The next review is due prior to the 2020 general election.	External Interim CEO	Complete



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	The VEC have completed a Representation Review of the Ararat Rural City Council. The final report was presented to the Minister for Local Government in May 2019. The report recommends that Ararat Rural City Council to consist of seven Councillors elected from an unsubdivided electoral structure.	VEC	Complete
<p>Other Observations – Page 40 “The minutes of Council meetings are also replete with information statements and reports from unnamed officers.”</p> <p>“Where strategic or policy materials appear they are almost always to the back of the agenda. It appears some staff retain the hallmarks of the old-style information and decision-making approach and are unable or unwilling to make the break into corporate strategic and policy approach to decision making the Act prescribes”</p>	Council Meeting Agenda templates now includes the Author’s title on each report.	External Interim CEO	Complete
	Revised template of the Council Meeting agenda agreed for introduction in February 2018.		
	The reformatted Council Meeting Agenda now allows for ease of reading and improved decision making. This includes all strategic items now listed at the beginning of the agenda followed by information reports. Recommendations are clearly identified.		
	A further review of the Council Meeting agenda was carried out in March 2019 with an emphasis on presentation and content.	CEO	
	The CEO met with staff members responsible for report writing to communicate the requirements of the review.		



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The Hon Adem Somyurek MP

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File: LG/15/3023

Ref: MBR039075



ENTERED

Dear Cr Beales *Peter*

I have received the final report from the municipal monitor at Ararat Rural City Council, Ms Janet Dore.

I note Ms Dore's advice that the council has now completed its work to address the findings and recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into the council. Ms Dore is of the view that the council can provide good governance without her continued assistance.

Ms Dore was appointed for a period of two years from 23 August 2017 until 23 August 2019.

After considering the completion by the council of actions to address the findings from the Commission of Inquiry and the views of the monitor, I have decided to conclude Ms Dore's appointment at the council effective from 2 May 2019.

During the period of appointment of the monitor, the council has demonstrated continued progress to improve its governance practices. The council is to be commended for its commitment and achievements in this regard.

Could you please ensure all councillors are made aware of my decision. I have advised the monitor of her appointment's conclusion.

I am confident the council will continue to provide good governance and exhibit the high personal standards of conduct that are warranted as representatives elected to make decisions in the best interests of their local community.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Adem Somyurek MP
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Small Business

2 / 5 / 19

Cc: Chief Executive Officer, Dr Tim Harrison