



**NORTHERN
MIDLANDS
COUNCIL**

AGENDA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2025

Maree Bricknell
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER



QUALIFIED PERSONS ADVICE

The *Local Government Act 1993* Section 65 provides as follows:

- (1) A general manager must ensure that any advice, information or recommendation given to the council or a council committee is given by a person who has the qualifications or experience necessary to give such advice, information or recommendation.
- (2) A council or council committee is not to decide on any matter which requires the advice of a qualified person without considering such advice unless –
 - (a) the general manager certifies, in writing –
 - (i) that such advice was obtained; and
 - (ii) that the general manager took the advice into account in providing general advice to the council or council committee;
 - and
 - (b) a copy of that advice or, if the advice was given orally, a written transcript or summary of that advice is provided to the council or council committee with the general manager's certificate.

I therefore certify that with respect to all advice, information or recommendation provided to the Council in or with this Agenda:

- i) the advice, information or recommendation is given by a person who has the qualifications or experience necessary to give such advice, information or recommendation; and
- ii) where any advice is directly given by a person who does not have the required qualifications or experience, that person has obtained and taken into account in that person's general advice, the advice from an appropriately qualified or experienced person.

LIVESTREAMING AND RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Ordinary and Special Council Meetings held in Council's Chambers at 13 Smith Street, Longford will be audio live streamed and recorded and made on the internet via Council's website www.nmc.tas.gov.au.

The recording will be uploaded to Council's website as soon as possible and no later than four business days after the Council meeting (not including the day of the meeting). A link to the streaming service and recording of meetings will be made available on Council's website for ease of access.

Closed Council Meetings will not be live streamed or recorded.

A copy of the recording of the meeting will be placed on Council's website as soon as practicable after the meeting, the Closed Council session of the meeting will be redacted.

Regulation 33(4) provides that "a Council may determine any other procedures relating to the audio recording of meetings it considers appropriate".

In addition to the Live Streaming Policy, Council is to audio record meetings to assist Council officers in the preparation of minutes of proceedings.

The provision for audio recording of Council meetings in this policy:

- only applies to formal Council meetings (ordinary meetings, special meetings and Annual General meetings);
- does not apply to closed sessions of Council;
- does not apply to Committees of Council;
- the recording will not replace written minutes and a transcript of the recording will not be prepared by Council;
- the recording may be used by Council staff to assist with the preparation of the minutes;
- the minutes of a meeting, once confirmed by Council, prevail over the audio recording of the meeting;

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Maree Bricknell
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER



GUIDELINES FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS

EXPECTATIONS OF COUNCILLOR CONDUCT

- The *Code of Conduct for Elected Members Policy* sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Councillors with respect to all aspects of their role, including the following:
 - Councillors acknowledge the importance of high standards of behaviour in maintaining good governance and therefore agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the standards of behaviour set out in the Policy;
 - Councillors are to be respectful in their conduct, communication and relationships with members of the community, fellow Councillors and Council employees in a way which builds trust and confidence in Council;
 - Councillors' actions must not bring the Council or the office of a Councillor into disrepute;
 - Councillors must treat all persons fairly, must not cause any reasonable person offence or embarrassment, and must not bully or harass any person;
 - Councillors must listen to, and respect, the views of other Councillors in Council meetings, and endeavor to ensure that issues, not personalities, are the focus of debate;
 - Councillors must show respect when expressing personal views publicly and the personal conduct of a Councillor must not reflect, or have the potential to reflect, adversely on the reputation of the Council;
- Pursuant to section 28(3)(a) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Councillors must not direct or attempt to direct an employee of the council in relation to the discharge of the employee's duties;
- Pursuant to section 40 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, the chairperson may suspend a councillor from part or all of the meeting if the councillor makes a personal reflection about another councillor or an employee of the council and refuses to apologise; or interjects repeatedly; or disrupts the meeting and disobeys a call to order by the chairperson.

MEETING CONDUCT

- People attending Council Meetings are expected to behave in an appropriate manner.
 - The following is not acceptable:
 - Offensive or inappropriate behaviour;
 - Personal insults; and
 - Verbal abuse.
 - Pursuant to section 41 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, it is an offence if a member of the public hinders or disrupts a council meeting.
 - In the case of any inappropriate outburst or derogatory behaviour, an apology from the offending party or parties will be requested. Anyone at the meeting, if they feel offended in any way by any such behaviour specified above, should immediately bring the behaviour to the notice of the Chairperson by the way of a Point of Order.
 - The Chairperson has the right to evict from a meeting any person who is not behaving to an appropriate standard.
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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NORTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY 15 DECEMBER AT 5.00PM AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 13 SMITH STREET, LONGFORD.

MAREE BRICKNELL
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER
10 DECEMBER 2025

1 ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

In Attendance:

APOLOGIES



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3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and original owners, and continuing custodians of this land on which we gather today and acknowledge Elders past and present.

4 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

A welcome and opening address by Mayor Knowles.

5 DECLARATIONS INTEREST

In accordance with

- part 5 of the *Local Government Act 1993*,
 - in particular, section 48(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993*;
- regulation 10(3)(f) of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025*;
- schedule 1, part 2 of the *Local Government (Code of Conduct) Order 2024*; and
- section 28U of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires compliance with the Code of Conduct

the Mayor requests Councillors and staff to indicate whether they have, or are likely to have, an interest in any item on the Agenda.



6 PROCEDURAL

6.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6.1.1 Confirmation Of Minutes: Annual General Meeting

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Northern Midlands Council held at the Council Chambers, Longford on Monday, 9 December 2024, be confirmed as a true record of proceedings.

6.2 PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS: ANNUAL REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

That the Submission be received.

The Annual Report for the 2024/2025 financial year was circulated by the Acting General Manager.

The notice of the Annual General Meeting together with the Annual Report was advertised in the Examiner Newspaper on Saturday, 29 November 2024 and Wednesday, 3 December 2024. The community were invited to submit comments on the Annual Report for discussion at the Annual General Meeting.

The following submission was received:

1. Mr Jason Horton, Devon Hills

ATTACHMENTS

1. AGM Submission - Jason Horton [6.2.1.1 - 37 pages]



6.3 QUESTIONS

6.3.1 Questions On Notice - Various Topics - Mr Jason Horton

The following questions on notice were received from Mr Jason Horton, Devon Hills:

The following responses to the questions have been provided by Maree Bricknell, Acting General Manager:

To foster an open dialogue, I pose the following questions to Council. I respectfully request that Council address these questions at the Annual General Meeting or in a subsequent public forum, providing page references or context from the Annual Report where applicable:

1. INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO GOVERNANCE

In 2024/25 the report by the Independent Advisor was released, with 30 Recommendations. The last report to Council in May 2025 advised that only 6 recommendations have been marked as completed. In the Mayor's media release, it stated that *it is expected that the implementation of the recommendations arising from the review will occur over an extended period of time.*

- a. *What is the timeline for the implementation of the remaining 24 recommendations?*
 - b. *Why was the Review not included in the Annual Report?*
- a) Any recommendations from the report that were not implemented were either already being practiced or deferred until new legislative requirements are released, as they primarily relate to training. Elected Members have resolved not to proceed with external training at this stage, pending legislative updates and further guidance from the State Government regarding program funding. Previous training sessions incurred significant costs to ratepayers and experienced low Councillor participation, resulting in limited overall effectiveness.
 - b) The review was not included in the Annual Report as there is no legislative requirement to do so and it was deemed an internal operational review. However, the report is available to the public and was released in the minutes of the 19 May 2025 ordinary council meeting.

2. SUPREME COURT FINDINGS REPAYMENT OF LEGAL AND OTHER COSTS

- a. *What was the total expenditure by council since the action commenced?*
 - b. *What was the amount of the monies repaid?*
 - c. *How much of Council's costs were not recovered from this legal action?*
- a) The Council costs relating to the Supreme Court Action amounted to \$110,641.20.
 - b) The legal costs repaid by the Mayor/General Manager for defamation legal costs amounted to \$135,422.78
 - c) All legal costs ordered to be repaid were received.
 - d) This item was not separately included in the annual report as the figures are already reflected in the financial statement under reimbursement revenue. However, the subject was not specifically addressed within the report as there is no legislative requirement to do so.

3. OPERATING DEFICIT RECOVERY

- a. *What specific actions will Council take in the next budget/s to eliminate the \$2.6 million underlying operating deficit reported for 2024/25?*
 - b. *Is Council considering revenue measures (rate increases above CPI or new fees) or cost-saving measures to close this gap and ensure Council's finances are sustainable long-term?*
- a) Council is committed to addressing this challenge in upcoming budgets. Some actions which Council will look to further explore will be diversification and growth through the continual growth of new industries through the TransLink Intermodal Facility, encouraging further residential developments, expansion to user pays systems and growth of Commercial opportunities such as leasing Council-owned land, facilities, and resources.
 - b) Council will consider the underlying deficit and ensure long-term financial sustainability; Council is considering modest rate increases above CPI and introducing new fees where appropriate. Council will also seek to identify any operational efficiencies and cost-saving measures that will not compromise the quality of services provided to the community. These actions will be carefully balanced to maintain financial responsibility while meeting community needs.



4. RATE STRATEGY AND AFFORDABILITY

- a. *Given that 61% of Council's income comes from rates paid by a relatively small base of ratepayers, how does Council plan to manage rate increases moving forward?*
 - b. *Specifically, will Council commit to keeping rate rises gradual and predictable, and/or can it broaden the rate base through encouraging growth in a way that doesn't compromise our rural character?*
 - c. *Essentially, how will you balance the need for more revenue with ratepayer affordability?*
- a) Council is working to reduce reliance on a small ratepayer base by attracting new businesses, promoting tourism, and exploring emerging industries. Council will also encourage responsible residential growth to expand the population and rate base. Additional strategies include commercial development, user-pays services, grants, partnerships, and leasing Council assets. These initiatives aim to create a balanced and sustainable revenue model.
 - b) Council will seek to keep rate rises at a marginable percentage above CPI in an attempt to be gradual and predictable for rate payers. As Council seeks to grow its rate base through the growth of the municipality, Council will continue to reflect on the environmental and social considerations in land use planning, infrastructure, and resource management.
 - c) Council will aim to grow revenue in a measured and predictable way, balancing the need for income with affordability for ratepayers. This will include exploring external revenue sources and ensuring that revenue aligns with the costs of delivering services and employee-related expenses.

5. CONTINGENCY FOR GRANT REDUCTIONS

Council benefited from unusually high grant funding (21% of operating revenue, and over \$14m in capital grants) this year.

- a. *If state or federal grant programs (like the Local Roads & Community Infrastructure fund) are scaled back in future years, what is Council's contingency plan to fund important capital works or services?*
 - b. *Would projects be postponed, or would Council consider borrowing or reallocating funds to compensate?*
 - c. *How is Council preparing for a scenario of reduced external funding?*
- a) Council continues to advocate for the continuation of these grants and is actively engaging with federal and state governments to secure additional support, including through current inquiries such as the Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability.
 - b) Council would seek to prioritise projects as either urgent or non-urgent if grant funding in a specific area ceases. Where urgent projects are deemed necessary, Council may consider borrowing funds. However, this decision will take into account whether the interest payable outweighs the benefits of proceeding with the project. All borrowed funds must be repaid within a defined timeframe.
 - c) Council is preparing for reduced external funding by continuing to advocate for grant retention and engaging with federal and state governments, including through the Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability. At the same time, we are exploring user-pays options where feasible, ensuring these do not place additional pressure on the rates base.

6. DEFERRED PROJECTS TIMELINE

Several capital works were listed as "Deferred" or "Ongoing" at 30 June 2025 (e.g., certain Perth road upgrades, Campbell Town streetscape stages).

- a. *Can Council explain the reasons for these deferrals (lack of contractors, design issues, etc.) and provide an updated timeline for when each of these deferred projects will be completed?*
 - b. *How will Council ensure that these projects, many of which communities have been eagerly awaiting, are delivered on the revised schedule?*
- a) The annual report sees a number of projects marked as deferred as in the 2024/2025 period some projects became delayed or paused due to third party involvement or delays with the operational timeframes of contractors. However, the majority of these projects have now recommenced and are on track for completion within the current financial year.
 - b) Council is working closely with contractors and third parties such as department of state growth to ensure that the current projects being undertaken are on track to be delivered to the community in the coming periods. The annual report sees a number of projects marked as deferred as in the 2024/2025 period some projects became delayed or paused due to third party involvement or delays with the operational timeframes of contractors. However, the majority of these projects have now recommenced are on track for completion within the current financial year.

7. STAFFING AND EFFICIENCY



Council's employee costs rose significantly (from ~\$8.46m to \$9.65m) in 2024/25.

- a. *What is Council's strategy to ensure staffing levels and costs are sustainable and delivering value?*
 - b. *For instance, have these additional staff resources led to measurable improvements in service delivery (such as faster permit approvals or extended service hours at facilities)?*
 - c. *If so, please provide examples. If not, what steps are being taken to improve operational efficiency?*
- a) Council is currently reviewing its workforce plan which will see Council address recruitment, retention, and efficiency.
 - b) Yes.
 - c) Increasing staff resources has resulted in measurable improvements, which include longer swimming pool operating hours, Council oversight of waste transfer stations and in turn more environmentally sustainable control and expanded childcare services in Perth and Cressy.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT COSTS

What was the total cost to Council of the Code of Conduct complaints handled in 2024/25 (including Panel fees, legal advice, etc).

- a. *Why was this figure not disclosed in the Annual Report?*
- b. *Moving forward, will Council commit to publishing this information in compliance with Section 72 requirements?*
- c. *What steps is Council taking to reduce the incidence of such complaints (e.g., mediation processes, training for Councillors on conduct)?*

The total figure associated with code of conduct complaints in 2024/2025 was \$23,940. This has now been included in the annual report and will continue to be included in the future.

- a) It appears these figures have never been included in the annual report and upon review was due to an administrative oversight.
- b) Council commits to ensuring its compliance with the legislation moving forward.
- c) Council is attempting to reduce the incidence of Code of Conduct complaints through councils' endorsement of the Dispute Resolution for Elected Members Policy, which encourages mediation and outlines a framework for code of conduct complaints against elected members. Council has also been active in their advocacy of proposed changes to the Local Government Act which may see stronger legislative sanctions for elected members who behave outside of the expected code of conduct and mandatory training for elected members to attend regarding these matters.

9. COUNCILLOR TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS

Councillor training modules were completed by only 4 Councillors. Professional development of Councillors is important in improving governance.

- a. *Will Council develop a Councillor training and development program?*
 - b. *What steps have been taken to increase Councillors' understanding of the Code of Conduct and understanding of meeting procedures?*
- a) The elected members have resolved not to proceed with external training at this stage, pending legislative updates and further guidance from the state government regarding program funding. Previous training sessions incurred significant costs to ratepayers and experienced low Councillor participation, resulting in limited effectiveness.
 - b) The implementation of the Dispute Resolution for Elected Members Policy was preceded by extensive discussion before its adoption by Council. While there is currently no formal framework requiring Councillors to undertake training, it is anticipated that proposed amendments to the Local Government Act may introduce mandatory training for elected members.



10. COUNCILLOR GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT

I request clarification because effective governance is crucial for focusing on community outcomes rather than internal disputes.

- a. *Following on the above, how does Council plan to rebuild public trust and internal cohesion after a year with nine Code of Conduct complaints?*
 - b. *Are there any governance initiatives (perhaps through the Local Government Association or Office of Local Government) that Council is undertaking to improve teamwork and decision-making processes among Councillors?*
- a) Council is focused on moving forward in a positive manner with the implementation of the Dispute Resolution for Elected Members Policy giving a framework and guidance on how to disputes can be managed with elected members. The Code of Conduct order in September 2024 and subsequent Council policy has seen an increased awareness in mediation and conflict resolution strategies. Public trust will be the result of viewing strong internal unity of the organisation.
 - b) Council is monitoring gradual changes in Tasmania's local government sector, which is undergoing governance reform through the Local Government Priority Reform Program led by the Office of Local Government. These reforms, based on the Future of Local Government Review, aim to strengthen integrity, accountability, and financial sustainability. Key measures include introducing good governance principles, mandatory internal audit frameworks, and enhanced misconduct provisions. Supporting these reforms are resources such as the Good Governance Guide and the Learning and Development Framework, delivered in partnership with the Local Government Association of Tasmania, to build councillor capability and entrench best-practice governance across councils.

11. SERVICE PERFORMANCE METRICS

Metrics like customer request resolution times, community satisfaction survey results, library/pool usage statistics, etc. could help the community gauge how well Council services are performing. Does Council have any current internal targets for such metrics

- a. *Will Council consider developing and reporting key performance indicators for service delivery in future Annual Reports or updates that can be shared publicly?*
 - b. *How does the community know it is receiving a high standard of service for the rates they pay?*
- a) Council officers are currently assessing the feasibility of implementing a ticketing system that can generate reports aligned with measurable metrics. This system, along with other potential solutions, is being evaluated to ensure user-friendliness, compliance with privacy requirements, and consideration of financial implications for the Council.
 - b) The community can feel confident about the value of their rates by simply looking around. Well-kept roads, beautiful parks, reliable infrastructure, and a clean, safe, and welcoming environment all reflect the high standard of service being delivered.

12. ASSET RENEWAL FUNDING

The Annual Report shows Council plans to fund 100%+ of required asset renewals in its Long-Term Financial Plan. I seek assurance that maintenance of what does the community have to be sacrificed for new capital works.

- a. *Can Council confirm that it is fully committed to maintaining existing assets in coming years, even as it pursues new projects?*
 - b. *For instance, if faced with budget pressures, will Council prioritise critical renewals (roads, stormwater, plant replacement) to avoid accumulating an infrastructure backlog?*
- a) Council is committed to maintaining any assets which continue to be of use or value to the municipality. Through internal strategic assets management, decisions are made on these matters as they arise.
 - b) Council remains committed to pursuing diverse funding opportunities and has successfully managed budget pressures in a proactive and sustainable manner. Moving forward, Council will continue this approach while prioritising core infrastructure such as stormwater systems, roads, and plant. At the same time, Council will strategically assess the need for new assets to ensure responsible investment to avoid the creation of an infrastructure backlog.



13. LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (LTFP) TRANSPARENCY

- a. *Will Council publish or share highlights of its updated Long Term Financial Plan so the community can understand the financial trajectory and assumptions (e.g., assumed rate increases, growth forecasts, major projects planned) that underpin statements like "Council believes it is sustainable in the long term"?*
- b. *Having more insight into the 5–10 year outlook would help the community provide input and brace for any required adjustments. In particular, how and when does the LTFP project a return to an underlying surplus, and what are the key variables (rate revenue growth, operating cost control, etc.) involved?*
- a) Council will be reviewing its long-term financial plan over the next 12 months. Council will share information with the community throughout this process at appropriate times.
- b) A surplus operating result could be reached with similar levels of service and by increasing rates above CPI by 3% over the next 4 year period.

14. UNDERLYING DEFICIT DRIVERS

The underlying deficit worsened from –\$0.76m to –\$2.60m in one year.

- a. *What were the top 3 drivers of this deterioration (e.g., specific cost increases revenue shortfalls), and which of those are expected to persist into 2025/26?*
- a) The main causes of the level of operating deficit include timing of the Financial Assistance Grant revenue, increased Employee costs, reduced bank interest revenue, and increases for material & services costs.

15. OPERATING COST CONTAINMENT PLAN

Employee costs rose materially (approx. +\$1.2m over 3 years) while Council is running an operating deficit.

- a. *What concrete cost- containment measures (if any) are being implemented in 2025/26, and what savings target is set?*
- a) Growth within the community service levels has resulted in an increase in employee numbers, accompanied by rising costs associated with employee entitlements and insurance. Council has experienced growth in pool supervision, childcare educators and waste transfer staff. To offset some of these additional costs, Council will implement an expanded user-pays system.

16. INTEREST AND ARREARS CHANGE

Interest on rates fell sharply year-on-year (from ~\$416k to ~\$88k).

- a. *What caused this drop (reduced arrears, policy change, waived penalties?), and what is Council's expected rates arrears level going forward?*
- a) The resolution of the Launceston Airport dispute resulted in a reduction of funds previously held for this matter. Looking ahead, Council anticipates that rate arrears will remain at approximately 3.5%.

17. CASH BUFFER ADEQUACY

Council holds ~\$17m in cash/investments with no debt.

- a. *What is Council's target minimum unrestricted cash reserve (in months of operating spend), and how close is council to that floor given ongoing deficits?*
- a) The current LTFP provides for a minimum cash reserve balance of approximately \$8m or between 3-4 months of average operating expenditure.

18. DEBT STRATEGY CLARITY

Council is debt-free.

- a. *Does Council have a formal debt policy or borrowing threshold for future intergenerational assets, and under what circumstances would borrowing be preferred over rate increases or deferring projects?*
- a) Council does not have a dedicated debt policy; however, it operates under a borrowing policy. While Council has the capacity to borrow funds as an alternative to increasing rates or deferring new projects, it seeks to avoid borrowing wherever possible. Borrowing incurs interest and requires repayment, which Council aims to minimize. To date, Council has demonstrated prudent financial management and successfully navigated previous financial challenges.



19. GRANT REVENUE RECOGNITION VS DELIVERY RISK

Capital grants received exceeded capital works delivered.

- a. *How much of the unspent grant funding is quarantined for specific projects, and what is the risk of clawback or deadline breach?*
 - a) All funding allocated to a specific project is quarantined for that purpose. Council maintains strong relationships with funding bodies and provides early communication regarding any need to defer a project. This proactive approach and high standard of engagement have enabled Council to manage delays without incurring penalties.

20. DEFERRED WORKS AND INFLATION EXPOSURE

Several projects were deferred or carried forward

- a. *What is the estimated cost escalation exposure from deferrals (construction inflation), and how is that being budgeted for?*
 - a) Council has mitigated the risk of cost escalation by entering into fixed-price contracts with contractors engaged on projects. This approach minimises the likelihood of increased costs when delays occur outside Council’s control.

21. RENEWAL GAP EARLY-WARNING

Renewal spend was slightly below depreciation this year (97%).

- a. *Which asset classes (roads/bridges, buildings, stormwater) have the highest renewal backlog risk over the next 3–5 years, and what is the quantified backlog value?*
 - a) Council’s Asset Management Policy guides decision-making in this area. The policy was last reviewed in November 2025 and remains current, providing direction on the management of asset classes. At present, the backlog is minimal, and the guidance provided by this policy is expected to maintain this position in future years.

22. BUILDING PORTFOLIO RISK

Building condition ratio fell to ~63% remaining life.

- a. *Which specific buildings are in the lowest condition bands, what are the renewal/upgrade plans and costs, and are any service risks emerging?*
 - a) Major buildings include: Cressy Batholomew Rotunda – demolish/replace; Evandale Medical Centre - extension plans available – cost est \$300,000; Longford works office building – draft plans available for replacement/extension etc; and Former Police Station – office renovations.

23. ROAD NETWORK SUSTAINABILITY BY SEGMENT

Council maintains ~970 km of roads.

- a. *What proportion of the road network is currently rated “poor” or “very poor,” and how has that changed over the last 3 years?*
 - a) Figure 5.1.3 shows 67.4 % of Council’s total transport infrastructure asset value is in ‘very good’ or ‘good’ condition (refer Table 5.1.3), 4.4 % in ‘fair’ condition, 0.3 % in a ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ condition and 27.9 % currently assigned as condition ‘0’ rating (this includes road formation replacement value which is not depreciated, hence condition is not required).

Table 5.1.3: Condition Grading System

Condition Grading	Description of Condition
1	Very Good: free of defects, only planned and/or routine maintenance required
2	Good: minor defects, increasing maintenance required plus planned maintenance
3	Fair: defects requiring regular and/or significant maintenance to reinstate service
4	Poor: significant defects, higher order cost intervention likely
5	Very Poor: physically unsound and/or beyond rehabilitation, immediate action required

The condition profile of our transport assets is shown in Figure 5.1.3.

Figure 5.1.3: Asset Condition Profile



All figure values are shown in current day dollars.

24. STORMWATER & FLOOD MITIGATION SEQUENCING

West Perth flood works are multi-stage with external funding.

a. *What are the remaining stages, their costs, and the funding certainty for each stage? What happens if the next stage funding isn't secured?*

a) The West Perth flood mitigation scheme is a \$3.7M project for which we have grant funding from the Commonwealth Government under the Disaster Ready Fund for 50% (\$1.85M). To successfully received all the external funding the project must be complete by 30 September 2026. Council has committed funding for the remaining 50%.

The works are broken down into four areas:

- i) Drummond Street – replacement of existing culverts with a bridge. The bridge is under construction by TasSpan and the road due for reopening by the end of the year, with completion of the remaining works in Jan/Feb 2026.
- ii) New Western rail line culverts and underpass – these works are programmed for January 2026 with Gradco undertaking the work. Once complete channel works linking the new rail culvert and underpass to Drummond Street bridge will be undertaken.
- iii) Edward Street culvert replacement– contract awarded to Walters Construction in November, with practical completion required by April 2026.
- iv) Phillip Street culvert replacement– part of the same contract awarded to Walters Construction in November, with practical completion required by April 2026.

25. CUSTOMER REQUEST RESOLUTION PERFORMANCE:

Council logged 1,224 customer requests and improved counting methods.

a. *What % of requests were resolved within target timeframes, and does Council have resolution-time KPIs by service area?*

a) Council does not have a measurable system for collating this information at this point in time however as outlined above Council officers are currently assessing the feasibility of implementing a ticketing system that can generate reports aligned with measurable metrics.

26. CHILDCARE SERVICE SUSTAINABILITY

Perth Early Learning Centre opened and expanded capacity.

a. *Is the childcare operation forecast to be break-even or subsidized over the next 3 years, and what utilisation rate is required to stay financially sustainable?*

a) Council's long-term forecast indicates that the Perth Childcare Service is expected to achieve a break-even position. This outlook is supported by an increase in enrolments and the availability of federal grant funding, which helps offset the costs associated with employing qualified educators.



27. RECREATION UTILISATION

Council invested in new recreation assets.

- a. *What are current utilisation trends for key facilities (pools, sports centre), and how are those trends guiding future investment?*
- a) Council regularly reviews the management of its recreation centres to ensure they meet community needs. Recently, operational changes have been introduced at the pools to enhance services and strengthen community involvement through active engagement with volunteers. Council has also reviewed its user-pays fee structure for facilities it operates, ensuring fairness and accessibility. In addition, Council has entered into commercial lease arrangements for recreation centres it does not directly manage, enabling the community to access high-quality services without placing a financial burden on Council.

28. WASTE / TRANSFER STATION COST RECOVERY

Council runs multiple waste facilities.

- a. *Are waste services fully cost-recovered through fees and levies? If not, what is the annual subsidy from general rates?*
- a) No, general revenue subsidy in 2024/25 was \$678,882.

29. INTEGRITY COMMISSION COMPLAINTS

Five Integrity Commission complaints were received; none investigated.

- a. *What were the themes of these complaints, and what governance improvements (if any) resulted from them?*
- a) The complaints primarily related to allegations of misconduct. However, the Commission determined that investigating these matters would be an unjustifiable use of resources, as they had either already been addressed or lacked supporting evidence. Consequently, Council has made no changes to its governance processes, as the Integrity Commission's determination reports did not identify any wrongdoing or confirm that misconduct had occurred.

30. CONTRACT CONCENTRATION

Multiple high-value tenders/contracts were awarded.

- a. *What % of Council's total procurement spend goes to the top 5 suppliers, and what safeguards are in place to prevent over-reliance on a small set?*
- a) Waste contractors – tender process for contracts.
Road material suppliers – Annual Tender process for pricing.
Road sealing suppliers – Annual Tender process for pricing.
Insurance – Broker obtaining quotes from several suppliers.
Construction contractors – tender process for projects over \$250,000 and procurement policy for quotes up to \$250,000.

31. COUNCILLOR TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS

Councillor training modules were completed while Code complaints remain high.

- a. *How is Council evaluating whether councillor training is improving conduct and governance outcomes, and what enhancements are planned?*
- a) Council currently does not have an established framework for evaluating Councillor training or formally monitoring improvements in conduct and governance among Elected Members. Should legislative updates or further guidance be issued by the State Government, Council will adopt and implement any prescribed framework, including relevant enforcement measures or sanctions. As previously noted, past training sessions incurred significant costs to ratepayers and experienced low participation from Councillors, resulting in limited overall effectiveness.

32. NARRATIVE/DATA CONSISTENCY CONTROLS

The report contains at least one narrative inconsistency with KPI data.

- a. *What internal review/QA process is used to verify that performance narratives accurately match the financial and KPI tables?*
- a) Upon review an administrative error has been identified and corrected.



33. GROWTH INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PLAN

Perth and Longford are projected to grow strongly.

- a. *What is the long-term infrastructure funding plan to support growth (roads, stormwater, parks), and how much is expected from developer contributions vs rates/grants?*
- a) Council will continue to advocate for federal funding while collaborating with developers to ensure contributions toward the costs of roads, stormwater infrastructure, and parks in new and upgraded development areas.

34. STRATEGIC PLAN MEASURABLE TARGETS

Strategic initiatives (Economic Development, Health & Wellbeing, Youth) are progressing.

- a) *What measurable outcome targets (not just actions) are set for each strategy, and how will success be reported year- on-year?*
- a) Targets and outcomes have historically been measured on the actions, this could be reviewed to provide other measurable outcome targets.

35. CLIMATE RISK INTEGRATION INTO ASSET PLANNING

Council is doing regional climate risk work.

- a. *Which high-risk climate hazards (flood, heat, bushfire) are expected to materially increase asset renewal or maintenance costs, and how are those costs built into the LTFP?*
- a) Flooding is considered councils highest climate risk due to the large water catchment systems of the midlands, Council continues to apply for mitigation grant funding to plan and undertake works to assist in reducing the flood risk to property and built infrastructure e.g. the West Perth bridge/culvert improvement works to be completed during 2026.

36. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROI

Council is supporting major economic initiatives like TransLink planning.

- a. *What is the expected economic return for the municipality (jobs, rate base growth, freight uplift), and how will Council measure whether projects like TransLink deliver that return?*
- a) In 2024 Council secured a \$5m grant through the federal government Priority Community Infrastructure Program to fund the preparation of a feasibility study and business case for the proposed TRANSLink Intermodal Facility. Council has commissioned Northern Tasmania Development Corporation to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to deliver the project outcomes by the end of 2026. A key component of the feasibility study and business case will be quantifying the expected economic return of the TRANSLink Intermodal Facility; both during planning and construction, and ongoing operation post-construction.

37. NMBA RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The Council spends over \$100,000 with NMBA for economic development.

- a. *Why are the NMBA activities in promoting Economic Development not listed in Council's achievements?*
- b. *Has council undertaken an evaluation of the return on investment for the expenditure with NMBA in improving economic development?*
- a) The NMBA activities promoting economic development funded by Council are listed in the Economic Development section of the Annual Report as follows: 'provided funding to NMBA to enable the Association to undertake activities to foster economic activity in the Northern Midlands including implementing the Business Enabling and Resilience Program, the TRANSLink Promotional Program, and the '2025 Illuminate Youth Leadership Program'.
- b) NMBA representatives will be invited to attend a forthcoming Council workshop to provide a report on the Association's progress with implementing the NMBA Strategic Plan 2023/2028 - with a particular emphasis on the achievements of the Business Enabling and Resilience Program, the TRANSLink Promotional Program, and the 2025 Illuminate Youth Leadership Program.

38. LIVE STREAMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council audio streams its meetings. Many councils in the state also video stream their meetings.

- a. *When will Council commence live video streaming its council meetings?*
- a) Council has deferred the implementation of live video streaming due to privacy considerations. This decision may be reviewed in the future should it be deemed appropriate.

39. PHOTOS



Photos within the report and particularly the cover are poor selections as they are not truly reflective of the council's core business or achievements as per page 76 of the Annual Report. There are numerous photos throughout and these should not be focused on a one-day visit by the Governor. The use of the photos appears to be nothing more than a self-indulgent attempt by the mayor to promote herself. On page 20 there is a photo that appeared in the 2023/24 report (page 22) and appears to be irrelevant to this financial year. The photos of other councillors is limited.

a. *What is the mayor doing to show leadership and inclusiveness of all councillors?*

a) The Mayor demonstrates leadership and inclusiveness by ensuring all councillors have opportunities to participate in community engagement activities and by sharing information openly and consistently. As the official spokesperson for Council, the Mayor represents the organisation in a professional and transparent manner. The absence of photographs of some elected members may reflect personal preferences or their availability to attend community and Council events.

40. COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITY

On page 32 of the report I quote Communicate the latest information on projects, services, activities and issues to the community through a diverse range of channels including Council's website and Facebook page, Council's page in the fortnightly Northern Courier section of the Tasmanian Country newspaper and other media outlets – online and hard copy – as required.

a. *What steps are being taken to better communicate with residents who do not have ready access to IT?*

a) Council is currently reviewing options for disseminating information to residents who may not have internet access. The cost implications of traditional printed media must be considered against its effectiveness, including whether it will be utilised or discarded. Community members can access the internet at the Longford Council Chambers reception area. Additionally, hard copies of certain documents are available upon request for the applicable prescribed fee.

41. BUDGET FOR PROJECTS

On page 38 of the report under the Integrated Priority Projects and Strategic Projects there are several projects on hold, yet it is understood that they are in the budgets for the 2025/26 years in which our rates have been calculated.

a. *Will they be completed in this budget cycle? If not, why not?*

a) Council intends to complete these projects within the allocated budget year. However, many projects are dependent on external grant funding and/or third-party contractors to undertake the works. Council will provide further updates on these projects as information becomes available.

42. SALE OF CAMPBELL TOWN "TOWN HALL"

On page 38 you report that the Campbell Town "Town Hall" sale or lease is on track. How can this be true as it has dragged on for years now and the building needs urgent repairs. In November 2024 Council moved a motion that should the building not be sold within 6 months council would reassess the sale again. The six months has now expired.

a. *As the Town Hall has not been sold within 6 months, has the sale been reassessed as per the Council passed motion?*

a) Due to the nature of commercial sales contracts and the time between Council meetings, negotiations for the contract of sale took longer than anticipated. The sale of the Campbell Town Town Hall has now progressed to an unconditional contract, with settlement scheduled for the first quarter of 2026. The agreed timeframe will accommodate the needs of current Town Hall users.

43. INTEGRATED PRIORITY PROJECTS AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS

On Page 56 of the report, there are no values or schedule in the table.

a. *Will there be no funds allocated to these strategic projects?*

a) There were no projects identified for this section, which is why the table is empty. The table could be removed for clarity.



44. MAIN STREET PROJECTS

On page 77 in the report under Key Achievements for 2025/2025 it is stated that Perth Main Street Upgrade \$1,221,000 and Campbell Town Main Street Upgrade \$386,000

a. *How can this be an achievement with work to continue well into 2026? When will these be completed?*

a) As stated in the Annual Report: "In 2024/2025 Council progressed projects of various scales across the municipal area. The list below includes some of Council's primary infrastructure achievements over the past financial year." The reference is therefore to projects that were progressed during the year, including the Perth Main Street Upgrade and the Campbell Town Main Street Upgrade. It is important to note that the works on Perth Main Street are nearly complete, while the works on Campbell Town Main Street were intended to start by the end of the last financial year (mid-2025). However, due to additional community consultation requested by Elected Members, the start of this project was slightly delayed.

45. CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM STATUS

On page 79 of the report, you cite top priorities for the 2025/26 year. On pages 80 through to 83 you cite many projects with a completed status.

a. *Is this not misleading to include completed projects as priorities for the coming financial year when they are no longer requiring effort?*

a) Upon review of the relevant pages, Council advises that for the park at Napoleon Street, Perth, the previous financial year marked completion of the design phase. The priority for the current financial year is the construction phase of the project. In relation to the Perth Main Street project, a residual amount remains to complete minor works in the area. These tasks are a priority for the coming financial year; however, the overall project is considered complete. Finally, regarding the Cressy Recreation Ground, the carpark redesign was completed in the 2024/25 financial year, and the priority for 2025/26 is to seal the carpark at the recreation ground.

46. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Council currently has a Strategic Plan that expires in 2027.

a. *What action is council taking to engage with the community for effective consultation to develop a new 10-year plan?*

a) Council will soon commence the development of a new 10-year Strategic Plan. This process will include extensive community engagement through various methods, such as surveys (both online and paper-based) and community drop-in sessions. As in previous years, the Strategic Plan will be developed during the first half of 2026 and is expected to be formally endorsed by the incoming Council following the October Local Government elections.

47. WORKERS COMPENSATION COSTS

On page 42 of the report Workers Compensation costs have risen from \$124,762 in 2022/23 to \$206,554 in 2024/25.

a. *Has there been any incident that has caused the Councils Workers Compensation Costs to rise?*

a) No specific incident has caused the increase in the workers compensation costs to Council. The increase is attributed to the rising cost of insurances and the increase in employee numbers.

48. STRATEGIC PLANNING - AGED AND DISABILITY PLANNING

Northern Midlands has a high proportion of retirees and pensioners. On page 34 of the report, it states that the Disability Action Plan and Plan have been completed. This is not correct. At the October 2025 council meeting, council was advised: The development of further strategies including a Domestic and Family Violence Strategy, Disability Inclusion Strategy, Positive Ageing Strategy and Reconciliation Strategy was flagged. To date these have not progressed past preliminary drafts due to staff resource limitations.

a. *When will these strategies be finalised so that they can be fully implemented.*

a) Council is currently progressing work on the relevant strategies, with several documents still in draft form. Council officers aim to finalise all draft documents by mid-year, after which they will be presented to Elected Members for review.



49. TASCAT COSTS

The report makes no reference to the costs of taking legal action with TASCAT or the Planning Commission.

- a. *How many cases have been initiated by Council and others and how many have been won by council?*
 - b. *What is the total cost of this legal action to council?*
- a) Council has not initiated any matters before TASCAT. Council has been the defendant in 5 new matters in this period and 3 residual matters from a previous period. Council has won 2 and had 4 withdrawn as consent was reached by the parties.
 - b) The total cost of these actions is \$103,901.95.

50. AVAILABILITY OF ANNUAL REPORT

In the OLG Annual Report Good Practice Guidelines, the guide suggests that copies of the report should be available by 1 November to provide the community with sufficient time to read the report before the council's annual general meeting. Given that the council released the document in the afternoon of 26 November and provided until 10am on 8 December 2025 to provide for questions and motions on notice, giving ratepayers only 11 days to review and make a submission. Further, on requesting a copy of the annual report at the council office I was told that only on USB and on clarification only on the payment of \$9.50 can I get a hard copy?

- a. *How do ratepayers without computers access the report?*
 - b. *Why is the Annual Report not made available to ratepayers earlier?*
- a) Ratepayers and members of the public may request a hard copy of the Annual Report for the prescribed fee. For those who do not wish to pay this fee, an electronic version is available for viewing at the Council Chambers via the kiosk computer located in the reception area. Additionally, local libraries provide IT services that enable community members to access the Annual Report on the Council's website.
 - b) The Annual Report was delayed due to the Auditor's Report not being finalized until 5 November 2025, followed by the necessary final review and printing timeframes.
-



6.3.2 Questions On Notice - Evandale General Practice - Evandale Business Network

The following questions on notice were received from Mr Tom Glynn, Ms Sue Glynn and Ms Jo Archer, Evandale Business Network.

The following responses to the questions have been provided by Maree Bricknell, Acting General Manager:

On behalf of the Evandale Business Network (EBN) I submit a question on notice to be raised at the 2025 AGM on Monday 8th October.

BACKGROUND

Members of the Evandale Business Network (EBN) and, indeed, the broader community, are very concerned about the future of the Evandale General Practice (EGP). As Council will appreciate, the provision of local medical services is vital to many residents in the Evandale region – but, more particularly, to older locals for whom it is more difficult to access services elsewhere.

The EBN is also mindful of the added demand that will result from the 150+ housing development currently approved and due to progress.

There is an expectation that Council should proactively support the expansion to the premises that would enable EGP to be financially and operationally sustainable and to grow as demand increases.

Many in the community fear that, if the EGP is unable house existing medical services and, in future, attract more medical and allied health professionals, they may be forced to move on to a more accommodating region.

The EBN understands that the EGP and Council are discussing the potential for expansion of the building – but that the Council's expectations in terms, conditions and costs may hamper timely progress.

While the EBN recognises the need for sound due diligence and oversight, it is mindful of the negative message to community, and to other potential tenants, if a positive outcome is not achieved. It is also worth noting that these premises were under-utilised, and vacant, for a considerable period.

... The Evandale Business Network encourages the Northern Midlands Council to be proactive in facilitating the provision of these essential community services.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. The EBN is keen to understand when an agreement will be reached to enable the required expansion to proceed – and, in turn, provide the region with the security that accompanies a fair and reasonable deal – and meets community service obligations.

Answer: The proposed expansion of the Evandale Medical Centre is currently under negotiation between the parties. A meeting is scheduled for early 2026 to progress discussions, with Council aiming to reach an amicable agreement to proceed.

2. Assuming a workable agreement is reached, when works will commence and how long are they anticipated to take?

Answer: Funding for the project has already been allocated and will remain reserved until negotiations are finalized. Once an agreement is reached, works are expected to commence within 12 months and are anticipated to take approximately 3 to 6 months to complete.



6.3.3 Questions On Notice - Evandale General Practice - Ms Jo Archer And Mr Stuart Walls

The following questions on notice were received from Ms Josephine Archer and Mr Stuart Walls, Evandale.

The following responses to the questions have been provided by Maree Bricknell, Acting General Manager:

As ratepayers of Evandale, and patients of the Evandale General Practice (EGP), we wish to submit questions on notice to be raised at the 2025 AGM on Monday 8th October.

BACKGROUND

We are concerned about the future of the Evandale General Practice (EGP). As Council will appreciate, the provision of local medical services is important to existing and future residents in the Evandale region.

We believe that NMC should proactively support the proposed expansion of the EGP premises, in a timely manner, to enable operators to achieve the level of financial and operational sustainability required to serve current and future demand.

We fear that, if the EGP is unable to house existing medical services and, in future, attract more medical and allied health professionals, they may be forced to set up elsewhere – either in alternative Evandale premises or, concerningly, another region.

While we are aware that the EGP and NMC are in discussions there is a view that NMC's proposed expectations in terms, conditions and costs may hamper EGP's capacity to be sustainable.

... Thank you for taking time to consider our views and questions.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. When will an agreement be reached to enable the required expansion to proceed – and, in turn, provide the region with the security that accompanies a fair and reasonable deal – and meets community service obligations?

Answer: The proposed expansion of the Evandale Medical Centre is currently under negotiation between the parties. A meeting is scheduled for early 2026 to progress discussions, with Council aiming to reach an amicable agreement to proceed.

2. Assuming a workable agreement is reached, when works will commence and how long are they anticipated to take?

Answer: Funding for the project has already been allocated and will remain reserved until negotiations are finalized. Once an agreement is reached, works are expected to commence within 12 months and are anticipated to take approximately 3 to 6 months to complete.



6.3.4 Questions And Motions Without Notice

Questions not on notice welcomed by Mayor Knowles, to be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

- A person seeking to ask a question must firstly identify himself or herself by stating their name and the town they reside in.
 - If more than one person wishes to ask a question, the Mayor is to determine the order in which those questions are asked.
 - Questions must be directed to the Mayor who shall answer or direct the question to the appropriate Councillor or Council Officer. A question will be answered if the information is known otherwise taken on notice and responded to in writing within 10 working days. Questions should preferably be in writing and provided to the General Manager at the Council Meeting.
 - A person is entitled to ask no more than two questions on any specific subject. If a person has up to two questions on several subjects, the Mayor may defer those questions until other questions have been asked and refer back to that person only if time permits.
 - Each speaker is limited to a maximum of 3 minutes.
-



6.4 MOTIONS

6.4.1 Motions On Notice

A paper attendance register will be made available for completion by prior to the meeting at reception and at the commencement of the meeting upon the table at the entrance to the Council Chambers.

Note: Only attendees who are electors within the Northern Midlands municipal area are entitled to register and vote at the Annual General Meeting.

The following extract from *Local Government Act 1993, Section 72B - Annual General Meeting*, legislation is applicable:

...

(4) Only electors in the municipal area are entitled to vote at an Annual General Meeting.

(5) A motion at an Annual General Meeting is passed by a majority of votes taken by a show of hands or by any other means of ascertaining the vote the council determines.

(6) A motion passed at an Annual General Meeting is to be considered at the next meeting of the council.

...

No Motions On Notice were received.



7 CLOSURE

Mayor Knowles closed the meeting at _____pm.