

Borough of Queenscliffe

Ordinary Meeting of Council

Agenda

Wednesday 23 October 2024 at 7:00PM

On-line (zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84546815787>)



Borough of Queenscliffe
Queenscliff & Point Lonsdale, Victoria, Australia



Community Vision

The Borough is a special and restorative place, renowned for its distinctive coast, rich living heritage and vibrant culture. Our community is caring, and welcoming to visitors. We have a deep respect for the Wadawurrung People and are taking action to protect Country.

Our Values

1. **Integrity:** We take ownership and responsibility for our decisions and are accountable for all that we do.
2. **Respect:** We treat everyone with dignity, fairness and empathy, look out for the safety and wellbeing of others, and nurture positive and inclusive relationships.
3. **Community Focus:** We always work with our community's experience in mind and take pride in supporting our community.
4. **Sustainability:** We place climate change risks at the core of our decision-making, and take extensive action to protect our natural environment.
5. **Openness:** We actively engage with our community and are transparent in our decision-making.

Acknowledgement of Country

Bellawiyn is the Wadawurrung name for the lands where the Borough of Queenscliffe is located.

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these lands, waters and skies, the Wadawurrung People.

We acknowledge and respect their continuing connections to their lands, waters, skies, culture and the contribution they make to the life and spirit of our community.

We pay respect to their past and present Elders and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Distribution List

Councillors

Cr Isabelle Tolhurst

Cr Ross Ebbels, Mayor

Cr Donnie Grigau

Cr Michael Grout

Cr Robert Minty, Deputy Mayor

Officers

Martin Gill, Chief Executive Officer

Tim Crawford, Manager Community & Regulatory Services

Stuart Hansen, Manager Infrastructure & Environment

Gihan Kohobange, Manager Finance & ICT Services

Abbey Tatterson, Manager Customer Experience

Makenna Bryon, Communications Coordinator

Jenni Walker, HR & Governance Coordinator

Jackie Fletcher, EA to the CEO, Mayor & Councillors

Public Attendance

Under section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council Meetings are open to the public unless specified circumstances apply. Members of the public can also view proceedings remotely by watching the live stream available at [Council's YouTube channel](#).

Governance Rules

The Borough of Queenscliffe Governance Rules define the procedure for which Council Meetings are operated. The Rules can be read in full at [Council's website](#). In accordance with the Rules, the information contained within this Agenda is for the confidential and privileged use of Councillors until at least 48 hours prior to this meeting.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MATERIAL CONTAINED WITHIN THIS AGENDA DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF COUNCIL.



1. Opening of Meeting	6
2. Present & Apologies	6
3. Conflict of Interest Disclosures.....	6
4. Leave of Absence of Councillor	6
5. Public Question Time.....	6
5.1. Public Question Status Update.....	6
5.2. Public Questions.....	7
6. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meetings.....	7
6.1. Audit & Risk Committee Meeting on 2 September 2024	7
6.2. Ordinary Council Meeting on 11 September 2024.....	7
6.3. Special Council Meeting on 17 September 2024	8
6.4. Special Council Meeting on 25 September 2024	8
7. Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors.....	9
8. Notice of Motion.....	9
8.1. Notice of Motion Status Update.....	9
8.2. Motion on Notice.....	9
9. Petitions and Joint Letters	9
10. Functions Attended	11
11. Heritage, Planning & Infrastructure	13
11.1. Planning Permit Activity Report.....	13
12. Governance & Finance	19
12.1. Annual Report 2023-2024.....	19
12.2. Notice of Motion 2024/592: Investigation of a more frequent Council new publication	25



13. Signing & Sealing of Documents	34
14. Questions Without Notice	34
14.1. Questions Without Notice Status Update	34
14.2. Questions Without Notice	34
15. List of Council Meetings.....	34
16. Close of Meeting	34
17. Adjunct List.....	34
17.1. ADJUNCT TO 7 – RECORD OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS	35
17.2. ADJUNCT TO 5.1 – PUBLIC QUESTIONS STATUS UPDATE.....	37
17.3. ADJUNCT TO 8.1 – NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS UPDATE.....	38



1. Opening of Meeting

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these lands, waters and skies, the Wadawurrung People. We acknowledge and respect their continuing connections to their Lands, Waters, Skies, Culture and the contribution they make to the life and spirit of our community. We pay respect to their past and present Elders, and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2. Present & Apologies

3. Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Councillors must disclose a conflict of interest in accordance with section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Councillors:

Officers:

4. Leave of Absence of Councillor

Nil.

5. Public Question Time

5.1. Public Question Status Update

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 11 September 2024, one public question was taken on notice. Please refer to adjunct 5.1 for the details.

No public questions are outstanding.



5.2. Public Questions

The Chair will accept public questions which comply with Council's Public Question Time [Guidelines](#).

Public questions must be written and received by the Chief Executive Officer no later than 4 hours prior to the Ordinary Council Meeting. Questions received after this time will be treated as correspondence and a written response provided consistent with [Council's Customer Service Charter](#).

Questions can be lodged online via [Council's website](#), via email to info@queenscliffe.vic.gov.au, via post or in person by completing a Public Question Time Form.

6. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meetings

6.1. Audit & Risk Committee Meeting on 2 September 2024

A copy of the agenda and the unconfirmed minutes from the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting on 2 September 2024 was distributed to Councillors under separate cover.

A copy of the agenda and unconfirmed minutes is provided at appendix 6.1.1 and 6.1.2.

RECOMMENDATION

That the agenda and unconfirmed minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting on 2 September 2024, as distributed, be noted.

6.2. Ordinary Council Meeting on 11 September 2024

A copy of the minutes from the Ordinary Council Meeting on 11 September 2024 was distributed to Councillors under separate cover.

RECOMMENDATION



That the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting on 11 September 2024, as distributed, be confirmed as an accurate record.

6.4. Special Council Meeting on 25 September 2024

A copy of the minutes from the Special Council Meeting on 25 September 2024 was distributed to Councillors under separate cover.

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Special Council Meeting on 25 September 2024, as distributed, be confirmed as an accurate record.

6.5. Special Council Meeting on 10 October 2024

A copy of the minutes from the Special Council Meeting on 10 October 2024 was distributed to Councillors under separate cover.

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Special Council Meeting on 10 October 2024, as distributed, be confirmed as an accurate record.

6.6. Special Meeting of Council on 10 October 2024 Confidential Minutes

A copy of the minutes from the Special Meeting of Council on 10 October 2024 Confidential Minutes was distributed to Councillors under separate cover.

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Special Meeting of Council on 10 October 2024 Confidential Minutes, as distributed, be confirmed as an accurate record.



7. Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors

A Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors is included at adjunct to item 7.

- 11 September 2024 – Councillor Assembly Briefing
- 25 September 2024 – Councillor Assembly Briefing
- 16 October 2024 – Councillor Assembly Briefing

RECOMMENDATION

That the Record of Informal Meetings of Councillors, as presented in Adjunct to item 7, be noted.

8. Notice of Motion

8.1. Notice of Motion Status Update

A Council report on Notice of Motion number 2024/592: Investigation of a more Frequent Council news publication is included in this agenda.

No Notices of Motion are outstanding.

8.2. Motion on Notice

No Notices of Motion were received.

9. Petitions and Joint Letters

In accordance with the Borough of Queenscliffe Governance Rules, a petition or joint letter presented to the Council must lay on the table until the next ordinary meeting of the Council and no motion, other than to receive the petition or joint letter may be accepted by the Chairperson, unless the Council agrees to deal with it earlier.

None received.



10. Functions Attended

Council was represented at the following meetings and functions between 6 September and 16 October 2024.

Date	Meeting or Function
6 September 2024	Deakin Marine and The Nature Conservancy sea urchin tasting event (Cr Ebbels)
8 September 2024	Point Lonsdale Basketball Club Day (Cr Ebbels & Cr Tolhurst)
10 September 2024	Meeting with the Queenscliffe Historical Museum executives (CEO)
11 September 2024	Meeting with Queenscliffe Climate Action Now (QCAN) (Crs Ebbels, Tolhurst, Minty, Grigau & Grout)
11 September 2024	Meeting with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation via videoconference (CEO)
12 September 2024	Municipal Association of Victoria Annual Conference (CEO, Cr Ebbels & Cr Tolhurst)
12 September 2024	Municipal Association of Victoria Annual Conference Gala Dinner (Cr Ebbels)
13 September 2024	Meeting with the Queenscliff Music Festival executive (CEO)
16 September 2024	Tourism Greater Geelong & The Bellarine Board Meeting (Cr Tolhurst)
16 September 2024	ICLEI Oceania Board meeting via videoconference (CEO)
19 September 2024	Geelong Regional Library Corporation Board Meeting (CEO & Cr Ebbels)
20 September 2024	Coastal & Marine Management Plan Project Steering Committee (Cr Grout & Cr Tolhurst)
20 September 2024	G21 Planning & Transport Pillar Meeting
23 September 2024	Meeting with the Point Lonsdale Community Association executive (CEO)
25 September 2024	Respect 2040 Executive Governance Group Meeting via videoconference (CEO)
26 September 2024	Victoria's Path to Treaty meeting (CEO)



2 October 2024	Joint State/Local Government Monthly CEO Forum via videoconference (Acting CEO)
3 October 2024	G21 Regional Forum (Cr Ebbels)
4 October 2024	TOMRA Cleanaway and Coastal Management Authorities meeting (Acting CEO)
8 October 2024	Respect 2040 Community of Practice meeting via videoconference (CEO)
11 October 2024	Queenscliffe Historical Museum Swan Bay Exhibition launch (Crs Ebbels, Tolhurst & Grout)
11 October 2024	Queenscliffe Maritime Museum New Horizons event (Crs Ebbels & Tolhurst)
14 October 2024	Meeting with the Queenscliffe Lighthouse Theatre Group (CEO)
14 October 2024	ICLEI Oceania Board meeting via videoconference (CEO)
15 October 2024	G21 Special Meeting (CEO, Cr Ebbels)
16 October 2024	Planning Scheme Amendment C40quen landowner Information Session (CEO)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Functions Attended report be received.



11. Heritage, Planning & Infrastructure

11.1.	Planning Permit Activity Report
Author:	Senior Planner
Portfolio:	Heritage, Planning & Infrastructure Cr Ebbels

Purpose

The following table provides a summary of the planning permit activity during the last month.

Executive Summary

The following table provides a summary of the planning permit activity from the last report published at the close of business on 14 October 2024.

CATEGORY	TALLY
Current applications	5
Applications finalised since last report	12
New applications received since last report	13
Total number of active permit applications	15
VCAT matters yet to be determined	3
Development Plan & Planning Scheme Amendment Summary Report	3

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Permit Activity Report be received.



a. Current Applications

App. No	Date Received	Address	Proposal	No. of objections	Status
PA2023062	12/09/2023	105-107 Point Lonsdale Road & 1 Simpson Street Point Lonsdale	Buildings and works associated with the construction of two townhouses, a commercial building comprising two retail units and two apartments, a six (6) lot subdivision, partial waiving of the car parking required for the retail units, retail and residential development in the Bushfire Management Overlay and subdivision of land adjacent to a road in a Transport Zone 2	9	Under consideration
A2021-130-1	24/05/2024 (Amended 26/09/2024)	2 Nicholas Court Point Lonsdale	Amendment: Alterations and extensions to an existing three storey dwelling	2	Under consideration
PA2024028	30/07/2024	3 Yacht Club Road Swan Island	Works associated with the removal and reconstruction of a wharf	0	Under consideration
PA2024029	06/08/2024	4 Wharf Street Queenscliff	Part demolition of a building in a Heritage Overlay area	3	Under review
PA2024034	13/08/2024	30 Bellarine Highway Queenscliff	Construction of a two-storey dwelling and variation to the site coverage requirements of Design and Development Overlay Schedule 5	3	Under consideration



b. Applications Finalised Since Last Report

App. No	Date Received	Address	Proposal	Status
PA2024024	25/06/2024	Swan Bay waterway, adjacent to Swan Island, Queenscliff	Buildings and works associated with the installation of floating bird roosts	Permit issued
PA2024026	16/07/2024	44-48 Winterley Road Point Lonsdale	Subdivision of the land into two (2) lots	Permit issued
PA2024030	06/08/2024	4 Milne Court Point Lonsdale	Alterations and extensions (two storey) to an existing dwelling	Permit issued
PA2024031	09/08/2024	25-27 Albert Street Point Lonsdale	Alterations and extensions to an existing two storey dwelling	Notice of decision to grant a permit issued
PA2024033	12/08/2024	4 St Andrews Street Queenscliff	Buildings and works to an existing dwelling on a lot less than 300m ² and variation to the site coverage requirements of Design and Development Overlay Schedule 1	Permit issued
PA2024035	19/08/2024	32 Kirk Road Point Lonsdale	Construction of two double storey dwellings, subdivision of the land into two (2) lots, removal of native vegetation and variation to the front setback requirements of Design and Development Overlay Schedule 4	Permit issued
PA2024036	19/08/2024	7/81 Nelson Road Queenscliff	Construction of a two-storey dwelling and front fence and variation to the site coverage requirements of Design and Development Overlay Schedule 3	Permit issued
PA2024037	26/08/2024	18 Gellibrand Street Queenscliff	Removal and lopping of trees in a Heritage Overlay area where tree controls apply	Permit issued
PA2024038	28/08/2024	80A Mercer Street Queenscliff	Demolition of a shed, construction of a garage and removal of a tree in a Heritage Overlay area	Permit issued
PA2024043	16/09/2024	3 Old Geelong Road Point Lonsdale	Construction of a single storey dwelling	Permit issued
VS2400019	13/09/2024	10-12 Lawrence Road Point Lonsdale	Removal of native vegetation in the road reserve	Permit issued
VS2400020	23/09/2024	35 Beach Street Queenscliff	External painting of a dwelling in a Heritage Overlay	Permit issued



c. New Applications Received Since Last Report

App. No	Date Received	Address	Proposal	No. of objections	Status
PA2024039	06/09/2024	21 Werry Road Point Lonsdale	Construction of a dwelling and removal of native vegetation	0	Further information requested 9 September 2024
PA2024040	10/09/2024	5 Ethel Court Point Lonsdale	Subdivision of the land into two (2) lots	2	Under consideration
PA2024041	10/09/2024	103 Bellarine Highway Point Lonsdale	Extension to existing veterinary (animal health) practice and associated additional car parking and removal of native vegetation	1	Under consideration
PA2024042	10/09/2024	24 Point Lonsdale Road Point Lonsdale	Alterations to an existing building	0	Under consideration
VS2400019	13/09/2024	10-12 Lawrence Road Point Lonsdale	Removal of native vegetation in the road reserve	N/A	Permit issued
PA2024043	16/09/2024	3 Old Geelong Road Point Lonsdale	Construction of a single storey dwelling	0	Permit issued
VS2400020	23/09/2024	35 Beach Street Queenscliff	External painting of a dwelling in a Heritage Overlay	N/A	Permit issued
PA2024044	25/09/2024	42 Fellows Road Point Lonsdale	Construction of two double storey dwellings, subdivision of the land into two (2) lots, removal of native vegetation and variation to the side setback requirements of Design and Development Schedule 4	0	Further information requested 1 October 2024
PA2024045	08/10/2024	2 Johnstone Street Point Lonsdale	Removal of native vegetation	0	Under consideration
A PA2023081-1	08/10/2024	3 Grant Road Point Lonsdale	S72 Amendment: Alterations and extensions to an existing dwelling, construction of an outbuilding and variation to the site coverage requirements of Design and Development Overlay Schedule 4	0	Under consideration
PA2024046	11/10/2024	28 Alexander Crescent Point Lonsdale	Alteration and extensions to an existing dwelling	0	Under consideration



App. No	Date Received	Address	Proposal	No. of objections	Status
A 2022-088-2	14/10/2024	24 Flinders Street Queenscliff	S72 Amendment: Alterations to an existing dwelling, construction of a second dwelling (two storey) and front fences, subdivision of the land into two (2) lots and variation to the site coverage requirements of Design and Development Overlay - Schedule 1	0	Under consideration
PA2024047	14/10/2024	216 Point Lonsdale Road Point Lonsdale	Alterations and extensions to an existing dwelling and construction of an outbuilding	0	Initial review

d. VCAT Applications

App. No	Date Received	Address	Proposal	Status
PA2022-044	05/12/2023	6 McDonald Road Queenscliff	Use of the land for a helicopter landing site	VCAT application for review lodged by applicant VCAT preliminary hearing 15 July 2024 (waiting on decision) and full hearing 28 & 29 November 2024
PA2023-042	26/06/2023	13 Nicholas Court Point Lonsdale	Construction of a two-storey dwelling and front fence	VCAT application for review lodged by objector VCAT hearing 5 September 2024 (waiting on decision)
PA2024-009	13/02/2024	81 Hesse Street Queenscliff	Alterations and extensions to an existing building individually listed in a Heritage Overlay	VCAT application for review lodged by objector VCAT compulsory conference 8 January 2025 and hearing 12 & 13 March 2025



e. Development Plan & Planning Scheme Amendment Summary Report

Reference no.	Details	Status
C37quen	Proposed application of additional controls on three (3) Monterey Cypress trees on the Bellarine Highway	C37quen has no formal status. Council officers are awaiting incorporation of the Bellarine Distinctive Area and Landscape Statement of Planning Policy into the Queenscliffe Planning Scheme before progressing C37quen
DP2	Queenscliff Ferry Terminal (1 Wharf Street East, Queenscliff): Proposed amendment to incorporate an all abilities public access pathway to the beach	Referral to DEECA
C40quen	Proposed amendment to incorporate the recommendations of the "Heritage Review of Places in Fisherman's Flat Urban Conservation Precinct (HO1), Fisherman's Flat, Queenscliff, Victoria" (Ecology and Heritage Partners, August 2023)	Council adoption of Amendment C40quen will be sought at the November 2024 Ordinary meeting of Council

Legend

Italic text Amendment/extension of time request to application previously determined by Council

Bold text Officer delegation removed

PA Planning permit application

VS VicSmart application

A Application to amend a planning permit (under Section 72)



12. Governance & Finance

12.1.	Annual Report 2023-2024
Author:	Communications Coordinator
Portfolio:	Governance & Finance
Councillor:	Cr Grigau

Purpose

This report presents the Borough of Queenscliffe Annual Report for the financial year ended 30 June 2024 for Council’s endorsement.

Executive Summary

Portfolio 5: Governance and Finance

Strategic Objective: To provide a financially viable Council that is accountable, transparent and practices good governance.

Priority 3: Accountable and transparent governance

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to prepare an annual report and provide a description of its required contents. In accordance with the Act, Council officers have prepared an annual report for the 2023–24 financial year. The annual report must include the following:

- Report of operations: information about the operations of the council
- Performance statement: audited results achieved against the prescribed performance indicators and measures
- Financial statements: audited financial statements prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

The report provides an account of Council’s operations over the 2023–24 financial year as well as the achievements, challenges, and directions for the year ahead.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Borough of Queenscliffe Annual Report 2023–2024.



REPORT

Background

The *Local Government Act 2020* (Act) requires Council to prepare an annual report in respect of each financial year. Subsection 98(2) of the Act states that the report must contain the following:

- a) a report of operations of the Council
- b) an audited performance statement
- c) audited financial statements
- d) a copy of the auditor's report on the performance statement
- e) a copy of the auditor's report on the financial statements under Part 3 of the *Audit Act 1994*
- f) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

The 2023–2024 report is Council's third annual report prepared in line with the requirements of the new Act. In continuing with our standard of high-quality publications, these requirements are supplemented with an in-depth report of operations that addresses Council's performance against the strategic objectives listed in our Council Plan.

In preparing this report, the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the financial statements, performance statement and government and management checklist included in this report at its meeting held on 2 September 2024 prior to completion of the 2023–24 audit and Council adoption of the statements 'in principle' at a Special Meeting of Council held on 25 September 2024.

Council received unqualified audit opinions on the performance statement and financial statements from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office on 11 October 2024. These documents were subsequently incorporated into the Annual Report.

The *Local Government Act 2020* no longer requires Council to submit a copy of the Annual Report to the Minister for Local Government. However, subsection 99(1) of the Act still requires Council, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year, to prepare the performance statement and financial statements of the Council for the financial year. Section 100 of the Act requires that Council present the Annual Report at an open meeting of the Council within four months of the end of the financial



year. This requirement of the Act gives reason for Council considering the report at this October Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Discussion

The Annual Report complies with the legislative requirements of the Act, detailing the achievements of Council during the 2023–24 financial year. This year, given the 2024 Council elections, the Borough of Queenscliffe Annual Report is a scaled back version of the document. The structure of the annual report reflects the third year of the Borough’s Council Plan 2021–2025.

Officers contracted the services of Martlette Graphic Design who have produced an engaging document for Council. This year, the Borough of Queenscliffe’s Annual Report’s cover page and chapter heading photography focuses on showcasing the diverse and inspiring range of volunteers we have across our many community organisations in the Borough. Council officers engaged the services of photographer Alan Barber of Barefoot Media, who photographed an exceptional suite of high-quality shots to meet this brief. We are grateful to the community members who were obliging when asked to be photographed, in recognition of the many volunteer community members across the Borough, we only wish we could have included more in the report.

Options

1. Endorse the Annual Report as presented.
2. Choose not to endorse the Annual Report.

Communications and Engagement

Community Engagement

The purpose of this report is to inform the community regarding this proposal.

Collaboration

There are no collaboration requirements associated with this report.

Governance Context



Relevant Law

Local Government Act 2020

Charter of Human Rights

This report has had consideration to, and complies with, the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires a Gender Impact Assessment to be undertaken when the Council develops or reviews any Council policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public. Has a Gender Impact Assessment been undertaken in respect of the matters in this Council Report?

No; this is an update on Council programs and services but is not a program or service in its own right and therefore a Gender Impact Assessment is not required.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable.

Legal and Risk Implications

Not applicable.

Related Documents

Council Plan 2021–2025

Disclosure of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report has any conflicts of interest.

Considerations

Environmental Sustainability

The Annual Report provides information in relation to Council's commitment to Environmental Sustainability.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.



Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable.

Implementation

Operational Impacts

This project will be delivered with existing operational resources.

Implementation Process

This project will be delivered by existing staff and resources.

Attachments

1. Annual Report 2023-2024 [**12.1.1** - 152 pages]



12.2.	Notice of Motion 2024/592: Investigation of a more frequent Council new publication
Author:	Communications Coordinator
Portfolio:	Governance & Finance
Councillor:	Cr Grigau

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the initial investigations into the proposed viability of a Council news publication as described in the Council resolution from the Borough of Queenscliffe Ordinary Meeting of Council, 24 July 2024.

Executive Summary

Portfolio 5: Governance and Finance

Strategic Objective: To provide a financially viable Council that is accountable, transparent and practices good governance.

Priority 4: Engage all residents, including youth and diverse groups, in conversations about the future of our community and decision-making

Borough of Queenscliffe communication officers have reviewed the current methodology and frequency of existing BoQ external facing publications designed to update the community on Council/Councillor activity. A preliminary assessment was undertaken to determine if there is merit in changing the frequency, mode, and content included in our current publication offerings.

This report outlines key considerations on the proposal to increase the frequency of a Council news publication in print as set out in the Cr Tolhurst Notice of Motion adopted at the Ordinary Council meeting in July 2024. This report discusses the pros and cons of an option to expand the content mix included in Borough Bites or the development of an alternative style of newsletter, with the consideration given to increasing the number of editions distributed across the year. Numerous factors have been considered, including cost, officer capacity and the availability/accessibility of content. After briefing Councillors on this item, the discussion around considering



expanding Council's digital offerings was explored. This will form part of the ongoing inquiry and will require further follow-up and research.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes this report.



REPORT

Background

A commitment to deliver communications that are timely, informative and engaging is central to the work of the BoQ Communications team. We are dedicated to the process of sharing information and uphold the benefits that effective communication has for building trust in our community.

From a strategic perspective, we aim to deliver effective communications by utilising multiple digital and print mediums that enable us to be both targeted and wide-reaching in our messaging. Council's strong commitment to community engagement and transparent communications is exemplified by its efforts to support communications that are targeted to achieve the aim of enabling and supporting a more engaged, better-informed community.

Discussion

As it stands, our community is informed through a variety of mediums including our website, the Borough Bites newsletter (quarterly), social media and, on occasion, direct mail. Where appropriate, we prepare media releases to inform local media of events and projects in the Borough. Our engagement mix is based on the knowledge that different pockets within the community will have different preferences regarding how they would like to be kept informed.

The 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS) shows consistent and continued interest and preference for email newsletters. This has been the preferred form of communication for eight years running. Overtime, preference for newsletters via email has steadily increased (from 30% in 2014 to 54% in 2024), while preference for newsletters via hard copy mail has been on the decline and in 2024 is now at 13%. (See attachments)

This trend holds true for people both under and over 50 years of age, with the 2024 CSS showing that for people 50 years and over, newsletters via email are the preferred form of communication by 58%. Emailed newsletters continue to grow in preference among this cohort (up eight percentage points from 2023). Conversely, demand for a newsletter sent via mail continues to decline over time, dropping to 17% from 23% in 2023.



Our communications strategies are based on this data and directly inform the use of which channels we utilise when communicating with our community. The production of a hardcopy Borough Bites brochure provides us with the opportunity to deliver Council news and updates directly into the mailboxes (and inboxes) of our ratepayers. Extra copies are printed and made available from our Customer Service Officers at Town Hall for the public to collect, if interested. There is an opportunity to have copies available at key sites across the borough. A digital copy is also distributed to those who elect to receive correspondence from us electronically, and it is also available on the BoQ website. Borough Bites is circulated quarterly, in line with the rates notice distribution cycle.

The limitations of this model of distribution are as follows:

- Content is generally retrospective due to the quarterly cycle of distribution, meaning the information can appear to be outdated.
- Production and coordination timelines required to align the distribution with rates notices (cost saving measure) compromises the freshness of the content
- Production deadlines result in the nature of the content often being more general – an update on projects, a snapshot of the past 3 months in the Borough, a profile of Councillor activity etc.

With a quarterly distribution rotation for Borough Bites, approximate costs are outlined below. For the benefit of comparison, the costs associated with doubling the size of the publication are also cited, as are the costs for continuing with the existing 4-page format, but increasing the distribution to bi-monthly.

Borough Bites/new publication – indicative production and distribution costs			
<i>Brochure format</i>	Current format 4-page version Quarterly delivery	8-page version Quarterly delivery	4-page version Delivered bi-monthly (6 editions per year)
<i>Print cost per edition</i>	\$1260 + gst	\$2590 + gst	\$1260 + gst
<i>Design cost per edition</i>	\$645+ gst	\$995 + gst	\$645+ gst



<p>Delivery cost per edition (1888 by post 1297 electronically delivered)</p>	<p>Postage for Borough Bites is included with Rates Notice postage costs</p> <p>\$2813.12 – hardcopy \$328.50 – e notice delivery</p> <p>Total - \$3141.62 per edition</p>	<p>This option will need to be posted separately to the rates notice as it will require an A4 envelope</p> <p>(3234 dwellings @\$3.0 per envelope)</p> <p>\$9702 – per edition</p> <p>*We will offer an electronic version which will bring this cost down.</p>	<p>This model would see our publication being distributed 6 times per year.</p> <p>We could continue to piggyback on the rates notice distribution for 4 editions, the other 2 would be at an additional postage cost.</p>
<p>Total per edition Design, print and postage cost</p>	<p>\$1905.00 (postage costs not included as the publication is distributed with Rates notices) + officer time</p>	<p>\$13,284 + officer time</p>	<p>\$1905 (postage costs not included as the publication is distributed with Rates notices for 4 editions) Each additional edition would cost \$4818 for postage + officer time</p>
<p>Annual Total</p>	<p>\$7,612.00 + gst + officer time</p>	<p>\$53,136 + gst + officer time</p>	<p>\$21,055 + officer time</p>

Significant officer time is utilised to write, prepare and plan for the Borough Bites publication. Content is often re-purposed from our social media activity and website news stories. Where possible, the brochure is used to inform ratepayers of upcoming Councillor activities, community engagement projects, council services, grant and



funding opportunities, listening post schedules, works updates and other upcoming news. Given the existing commitments of the communications team, to consider expanding the content of the newsletter we would be wise to look at increasing the EFT in the team. An 0.4 EFT (2 days a week) at Band 6 would cost the business between \$41,700 and \$45,297 per annum.

With Borough Bites, if we were to consider expanding the content to include more broad subject matter outside Council led activities, such as community events and local business news not directly affiliated with Council, we potentially leave ourselves open to risks centered around accuracy and conflicts of interest. Extensive groundwork would be required to collate content and photography for stories outside core Council business, presently – we are limited by officer capacity to expand our content base.

On review, we have found that councils who prepare and distribute magazine style publications have far more resources available for the preparation and project management of their publications. For example, Glen Eira City Council produces a monthly 'local paper' that is delivered to all Glen Eira households. Glen Eira City Council has a Community Engagement team who share the responsibility for producing the document. Together with their communications team, they work with engagement and communications advisors to establish the content and messaging for the publication. Glen Eira City Council's model for the development of their magazine utilises officer resources across at least two teams of staff.

Similarly, the City of Greater Bendigo publication, GB magazine, is developed utilising the skills of a dedicated Publications Officer, and a team of Communication Officers (including an Online Communications Officer) who contribute content and coordination for the publication. Both the City of Greater Bendigo and Glen Eira benefit from having access to in-house graphic designers.

A key point to acknowledge is that both Glen Eira City Council and the City of Greater Bendigo utilise community engagement software that improves the process, experience, and outcomes of both community engagement operations and external communications for both the community and council alike. The BoQ communications team has previously put forward a request for a budget allocation to the CEO, to support a subscription for engagement software to better communicate projects



through more compelling and interactive formats, thereby improving engagement and reporting capabilities. Introducing community engagement software will assist us in offsetting some of the limitations we face as a small team with limited resources, assisting us to deliver an improved communications mix.

Engagement software will improve efficiencies and improve the quality of Council's community engagement campaigns. Community engagement and stakeholder management software can prove to be a critical success factor in managing stakeholder expectations and relationships, improving engagement processes, and having a single depository of engagement activity and consultation history across the organisation. Community engagement software significantly contributes to improved communications, transparency, and customer experience.

Our preliminary research illustrated that as we evaluate the viability of creating a news publication, we must consider what it is we are attempting to achieve with our publication. While the BoQ Communications team principally relies on Borough Bites, social media, the website, and media releases to communicate our community updates and engagement, other external communications are also distributed from Council to the community. This collateral includes the Borough Local Business e-news, an e-newsletter distributed to local traders promoting local events, business updates, training and upskilling opportunities, information about council support and other economic development /tourism stories. The Visitor Information Centre (VIC) produces a monthly 'What's on' flier that outlines all the activities on offer across the Borough each month. There is an opportunity to re-invigorate these items and coordinate an awareness raising campaign to ensure all in the community who might be interested in these updates are receiving them, thereby addressing the information gaps some residents report experiencing.

Overall, we have found that this review illustrates that increasing the breadth of our printed publication comes at a significant cost; an additional concern is the availability of relevant content. Our review showed that larger councils have significantly more programs and projects to report on, enabling them to avoid repetition and, even with a more frequent print rotation, they can keep their content fresh.



Next Steps

Provide a forum for further Councillor discussion with officers about establishing an ideal medium mix for external communication material, taking into account the availability of content, costs and officer capacity.

Communications and Engagement

Community Engagement

The purpose of this report is to inform the community regarding this proposal.

Collaboration

Officers have benchmarked with other Councils in the region.

Governance Context

Relevant Law

Not applicable.

Charter of Human Rights

This report has had consideration to, and complies with, the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires a Gender Impact Assessment to be undertaken when the Council develops or reviews any Council policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public. Has a Gender Impact Assessment been undertaken in respect of the matters in this Council Report?

No.

Audit and Risk Committee

Not applicable.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable.

Legal and Risk Implications

There are no legal or risk implications associated with report.



Related Documents

CP003 Community Engagement

Disclosure of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report has any conflicts of interest.

Considerations

Environmental Sustainability

There are no environmental sustainability implications associated with this report.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or recourse implications associated with this report.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable.

Implementation

Operational Impacts

There are no operational impacts associated with this report.

Implementation Process

This project will be delivered by existing staff and resources.

Attachments

1. CSS communications results chart [**12.2.1** - 1 page]
2. CSS communications results [**12.2.2** - 1 page]



13. Signing & Sealing of Documents

No reports to consider.

14. Questions Without Notice

14.1. Questions Without Notice Status Update

No Questions Without Notice are outstanding.

14.2. Questions Without Notice

The Chair will call for questions without notice.

15. List of Council Meetings

Planning Review Meeting

Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 7:00pm (if required)

Ordinary Meeting of Council

Wednesday 27 November 2024 at 7:00pm

Queenscliff Town Hall

16. Close of Meeting

The meeting will be declared closed.



17.1. ADJUNCT TO 7 – RECORD OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

The Borough of Queenscliffe Governance Rules (rule 11) require tabling of records of informal meetings of Councillors at the next convenient Council meeting and that their record be included in the minutes of that Council Meeting. If there is a meeting of Councillors that:

11.1 is scheduled or planned outside of an Ordinary Meeting of Council for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors; and

11.2 is attended by at least one senior member of Council staff; and

11.3 all Councillors have been invited by the Chief Executive Officer; and

11.4 a majority of Councillors are present; and

11.5 is not a Delegated Committee meeting or Community Asset Committee meeting.

Informal Meeting	Councillors	Officers	Agenda items	Conflict of interest disclosures
Councillor Assembly Briefing 11 September 2024 2:30pm – 3:53pm Wirrng Wirrng	Cr Tolhurst Cr Ebbels, Mayor Cr Grout Cr Grigau Cr Minty	Martin Gill, CEO Tim Crawford, MCRS Gihan Kohobange, MFS Stuart Hansen, MIE Abbey Tatterson, MCE	1. Planning Application 2024-029 at 4 Wharf St, Queenscliff 2. Golightly Park Development Plan cost benefit analysis 3. Public Questions	Nil.
Councillor Assembly Briefing 25 September 2024 11:35am – 12:26pm	Cr Tolhurst Cr Ebbels, Mayor Cr Grout Cr Grigau	Martin Gill, CEO Tim Crawford, MCRS Gihan Kohobange, MFS Stuart Hansen, MIE	1. Annual Financial Report 2023–2024 2. Fourth Quarter Financial Report to 30 June 2024	Nil.



Informal Meeting	Councillors	Officers	Agenda items	Conflict of interest disclosures
Town Hall	Cr Minty	Abbey Tatterson, MCE		
Councillor Assembly Briefing 16 October 2024 2:32pm – 3:49pm Wirrng Wirrng	Cr Tolhurst Cr Ebbels, Mayor Cr Grout Cr Grigau Cr Minty	Tim Crawford, MCRS Gihan Kohobange, MFS Stuart Hansen, MIE Abbey Tatterson, MCE Makenna Bryon, CC Sarah Hawkins, CO	1. NOM 2024/592: Investigation of a more frequent Council news publication 2. Annual Report 2023–2024	Nil.

CEO – Chief Executive Officer	CC – Communications Coordinator	CO – Communications Officer
CERP – Project Officer, Climate Emergency Response Plan	CSC – Community Services Coordinator	CDO – Community Development Officer
EA – Executive Assistant to the CEO, Mayor & Councillors	FSC – Financial Services Coordinator	HR&GC – HR & Governance Coordinator
HR&OD – HR & Organisational Development Advisor	MCE – Manager Customer Experience	MFS – Manager Finance & ICT Services
MIE – Manager Infrastructure & Environment	MPCS – Manager Community & Regulatory Services	RIE – Roads Infrastructure Engineer
SP – Senior Planner	STP – Strategic Planner	VFO – Vegetation & Foreshore Officer



17.2. ADJUNCT TO 5.1 – PUBLIC QUESTIONS STATUS UPDATE

Date	Question	Action	Status
11 September 2024	<p>Public question 1 from Ian Royce Regarding EV chargers in Learmonth St. Can the community get an update on how we will be effected by the supplier for the EV chargers, Tritium, going bankrupt? Who decided to go with Tritium? To my knowledge, the councillors never voted at a council meeting to approve the suitability of having Tritium as a suitable supplier and if they did can council please provide the date of that meeting.</p>	Additional questions taken on notice.	Response sent on 23 September 2024, see attachments

Attachments

1. Response to Ian Royce public question taken on notice [17.2.1 - 2 pages]



17.3. ADJUNCT TO 8.1 – NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS UPDATE

Date	Notice of Motion	Action	Status
24 July 2024	<p>Notice of motion number 2024/592: Investigating a more frequent Council news publication</p> <p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Creates a report investigating of the viability of creating and distributing a monthly, six weekly, or bi-monthly Council news publication in print for residents and ratepayers, including:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Detailing the costs and resources required, with comparative analysis to current print communications model.b. Suggesting key content areas, including, but not limited to Council advocacy updates, community grants/funding opportunities, Business news and What's On sections.c. Reviewing the publications distributed in municipalities who consistently receive high scores in the CSS for Communication.d. Considering a range of distribution options for such a publication, including via mail to ratepayers, email, and in local shops and venues.e. Making a recommendation on the merits of pursuing a trial for a more frequent Council news publication in print.2. Presents a draft report to Council by the October Ordinary Meeting of Council 2024.	A Council report is included at item 16.3 within this agenda.	Complete