



P: (03) 5220 7111
F: (03) 5220 7100
Local call: 1300 363 036
E: enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

Golden Plains Shire Council
2 Pope Street, PO Box 111
Bannockburn, Victoria, 3331
W: www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au

19 September 2016

Environment, Natural Resources & Regional Development Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street, East Melbourne
Email: ENRRDC@parliament.vic.gov.au

GPS Ref: OUT16/66D39816
GPS File: 04-02-014; 36-02-023;
40-02-001
Your Ref: Kieran Crowe

Dear Ms Halfpenny

Letter of support for the Municipal Association of Victoria's submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the sustainability and operational challenges of Victoria's rural and regional councils

Golden Plains Shire Council is classed as a large rural LGA and has an estimated 20,544 residents (ERP 2014) across 56 communities and 16 townships. Golden Plains Shire is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria, with population growth of around 2% per annum.

As has been the case for many years, Golden Plains Shire Council faces many challenges:

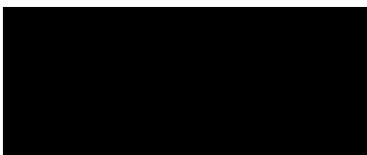
- High population growth;
- Substantial challenges associated with provision and renewal of roads, paths and community and recreation facilities;
- Although increasing, still a comparatively low rate base;
- A history of significant dependence on grants, contributions and recoupments;
- Managing the competing interests of rural and urban communities;
- Maintaining the extensive road network of over 1,800km;
- Supporting community based committees of management that currently manage the vast majority of community and recreation facilities on Council and Crown land; and
- Fair Go Rates system which limits Council's ability to raise funds.

Over the coming 12 months, Council will undertake a review of its services and strategies contained within its Council Plan to develop a long term plan on how it can maintain a sustainable financial position under the State Government's Fair Go Rates System, while also attentive of the above challenges. It is not expected to be an easy or pain free process; Council may need to cut services, review staffing numbers and reduce service levels. Appropriate planning may or may not also require future application/s for a variance to rates levied. Throughout however, Council will continue to focus on identifying sustainable cost savings that will enable it to deliver high quality, responsive and accessible services to the community and maintain a 'Community First' attitude.

In light of these significant challenges, Golden Plains Shire Council fully supports the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV) submission to the Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee and the submission's aim to highlight the myriad of structural and operational challenges facing Victoria's rural and regional councils. Council also shares the MAV's concern regarding the likelihood that councils will be unable to maintain and renew their infrastructure responsibilities due to the current range of policies in place.

Council welcomes the opportunity to provide this letter as support for the MAV's submission to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Rod Nicholls
Chief Executive Officer