



LATROBE CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES FOR THE
COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD VIA AUDIO VISUAL LINK
AT 6.18PM ON
02 AUGUST 2021**

CM566

ADDENDUM

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following provides a response to questions that were taken on notice at the Council Meeting on 2 August 2021.

<p>Question</p>
<p><i>In regard to the money given to Council almost two years ago for bushfire relief and to be utilised by the Community Recover Committee (CRC):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where is the money now?</i> • <i>Who has control over the money?</i> • <i>How much has been expended?</i> <p><i>If it has been expended, why was the CRC's approval or opinion not sought?</i></p>
<p>Response</p>
<p><i>Response provided at meeting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grant was provided to Council through the bushfire recovery process. It was to be used for staffing and recovery activities • The grant proposal detailed the proposed expenditure • The CRC assists Council to finalise details of expenditure • There is money outstanding from the grant. An extension has been provided until the middle of next year. <p><i>Further information:</i></p> <p>The Budgerie, Jumbuk and Yinnar Community Recovery Committee (CRC) was established in mid 2019 to support the community in recovery activities after the bushfire event in 2019 affected the Budgerie, Jumbuk and Yinnar areas. The CRC membership includes community members and support agencies and is administratively supported by Latrobe City Council staff. The committee members are involved in decision making which is represented in the Minutes of each meeting.</p> <p>In December 2019, Latrobe City Council was allocated \$249,500 from the State Governments Community Relief Funding to support bushfire recovery activities in the Budgerie, Jumbuck and Yinnar South bushfire affected communities. The funding consisted of a staffing allocation of \$150,000 and \$99,500 to support community based projects through the Community Recovery Committee. The budget forecast table associated with the funding agreement is provided below.</p> <p>Due to COVID related delays, there is still \$94,982 remaining unspent and an extension has been granted. The funding spent to date has been appropriately</p>

acquitted as required by the funding agreement and evidence has been provided to support the acquittal. Council has also provided quarterly reporting to Emergency Management Victoria.

There has also been other funding received to support activities and items requested by the CRC. These include funding from the Bendigo Bank to install a fire fighting water tank and funding through Gippsland Lifeline for a Community Arts recovery project in partnership with Baw Baw and Cardinia Shire Councils.

The Minutes of the CRC document the consultations undertaken in relation to the projects and funding allocation.

Question

How was the level of funding determined?

Where is the money?

Are there guidelines on how the money should be spent?

Who is responsible for spending the money?

How do the suggestions made by officers (eg website, guest speaker) benefit people who have experienced a bushfire? Why has the money not been expended within the South Ward after two years of receiving the funding?

Response

Response provided at meeting:

A briefing paper was provided to Councillors regarding the process of establishing the CRC and what expenditure has occurred.

- *How was the level of funding determined?*

At the community meeting held in May 2019 potential areas of interest to community members were collated and this information was then used in the Community Recovery Fund submission to the state government.

The principal of community based funding activity areas, that look to support short and longer community wellbeing were applied. Potential projects were developed, based on issues that arose during and after the fires (such as protecting private water supplies, personal emergency management planning), activity classes (eg Zumba, art classes) and social connection projects.

Estimated costs for such community based activities were provided to the state government noting that program areas and potential costs could be varied through submission back through Emergency Management Victoria if needed.

There have been other items identified during the course of the CRC, some of which are within the eligibility of the funding provided and others for which Council officers

have sought additional funding. The table below is an extract from the Funding Agreement with the state government which identifies the budget and activity schedule.

- *Where is the money?*

Documentation regarding the funding is retained in the Latrobe City Council Finance System, and unspent funds are held in the bank to be released as required.

- *Are there guidelines on how the money should be spent?*

There are set eligibility criteria regarding the use of funds. The criteria includes: community led recovery and connections programs; community connection and network building events; preparedness and resilience; and resources and capabilities programs.

- *Who is responsible for spending the money?*

Expenditure is proposed by the CRC and accesses Council Officers to ensure any proposal aligns with the funding guidelines. Expenditure is subsequently approved by Council Officers in accordance with Council's purchasing policy and protocols.

- *How do the suggestions made by officers (eg website, guest speaker) benefit people who have experienced a bushfire? Why has the money not been expended within the South Ward after two years of receiving the funding?*

The funding is to support community recovery and resilience. There has been a consistent theme in the CRC about promoting the area for tourism and then assisting visitors to navigate the area. The review of the Yinnar & District website was considered to support this objective. The visitor economy is important to the area and supports social and economic recovery.

The funding criteria (set out above) does not include the funding of direct support services.

Applying the eligibility criteria has also meant that items identified by the CRC, such as a large water tank were unable to be funded through the Community Recovery Fund, however Council Officers have proactively and successfully sought other funding streams for the water tank.

To support the community however, Mental Health First Aid training was provided so that residents could identify individuals experiencing recovery challenges and refer to services in the area.

BUDGET FORECAST TABLE

Budget Forecast Table	Total	Yr 1 (2019-20)	Yr 2 (2020-21)
Activity Income - South East Victorian Fires - Recovery Support	Total \$ (excluding GST)	Total \$ (excluding GST)	Total \$ (excluding GST)
Funding from the Department	\$249,500	\$184,500	\$65,000
Activity Expenditure - South East Victorian Fires - Recovery Support	\$ (excluding GST)	\$ (excluding GST)	\$ (excluding GST)
COMMUNITY LED RECOVERY AND CONNECTION PROGRAM			
Communication, information and education activities to increase resilience - with local recovery initiatives in the area of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> private water supplies; rain water treatment; first flush diversion systems personal emergency management plans and community planning 	\$ 15,000	\$15,000	
COMMUNITY CONNECTION AND NETWORK BUILDING EVENTS			
Events that encourage men to access psycho-social support services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the purchase of tickets for two tables at the Lardner Park Big Men's BBQ event funding for an event at the golf club to encourage men to access psycho-social support services. 	\$ 2,500	\$2,500	
Community connection and network building events, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> small business lunch and information session lunch and speakers to talk about recovery after major events social connection activities targeted at youth, mothers, children, seniors and men thank you BBQ for Blazead and local residents zumba and yoga sessions for women 	\$ 45,000	\$30,000	\$15,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> school holiday event pop-up park 			
PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to signage to promote local parks and tourism in the area 	\$ 10,000	\$10,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultative activities with the CRC and wider community to inform EM planning for initiatives 	\$ 5,000	\$5,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold an information / training sessions for small businesses on how they can identify persons that may require personal recovery support following a disaster (in collaboration with Windemere) 	\$ 2,000	\$2,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field day aimed at disconnected communities to communicate pre-season advice to better prepare individuals and communities 	\$ 15,000	\$15,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration event to recognise the contributions of small businesses and community groups in local recovery efforts 	\$ 5,000	\$5,000	
RESOURCES AND CAPABILITY PROGRAM			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x Community Development Officer to work with communities and support their recovery from emergencies 	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$50,000
TOTAL	\$ (excluding GST)	\$ (excluding GST)	\$ (excluding GST)
Total Activity Expenditure	\$249,500	\$184,500	\$65,000