



Rural Councils Victoria Annual Report 2023-24

Cover image: RCV Deputy Chair Cr Rob Amos honours RCV founding Chair Cr Rob Gersch OAM, Cr Rob Vance and RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM, who are retiring.

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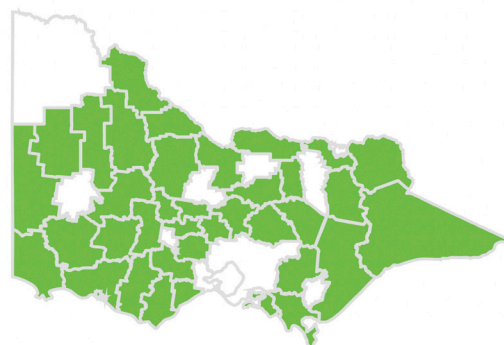
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Rural Councils Victoria

C/- Hepburn Shire Council

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About RCV

Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) represents Victoria's rural councils, supporting and promoting sustainable and prosperous rural communities.

We believe that liveable rural communities and strong rural Councils are fundamental to the ongoing success of Victoria.

Representing the one-in-nine Victorians who live in rural communities, RCV has 34 member councils right across the state.

Victoria's rural councils are responsible for 79 per cent of Victoria's land area and have a combined population of approximately 822,000 people (Census 2021). Our rural areas and communities are critical to the liveability of Victoria. They are also key to a thriving state economy.

RCV works to:

- Heighten awareness and understanding of issues that impact rural communities
- Use policy, strategy, advocacy and evidence-based research to secure better outcomes for rural councils, rural communities and in turn, for the whole of Victoria
- Promote a collective voice and act as an avenue of communication and liaison

between our member councils and state and federal governments

- Enable local solutions and facilitate networking, learning and external communication
- Contribute to the development of evidence-based policy and strategy
- Build the resilience and capacity of councils to support economic development and increase the sustainability of rural communities
- Develop strategies and initiatives to improve the attraction and retention of residents and businesses to rural areas
- Assist with building the capacity of rural councils to meet the challenges they face.

RCV's activities fall into two main categories:

- Supporting the growth and development of member councils and their communities, and
- Advocating for the needs of member councils.

Together, these activities help us work towards a sustainable, liveable future for rural Victorians.



Chair's message

The 2023-2024 financial year was one in which RCV again pushed home to government and media the message that “rural is not the same as regional”.

Rural Victoria does not include the regional cities and has very different needs and expectations.

This is a message that is getting through, with politicians and media now often referring to “rural and regional” Victoria. This is a message that needs to be constantly reinforced.

In the 2023-24 year, RCV continued to advocate for rural Victoria with no additional financial support from government to carry out the valuable research that would help inform and guide government policy in rural areas.

This lack of support has limited our ability to provide as much of the many important activities – such as additional training, government relations and advocacy – that rural Victorian communities need.

We know that RCV is valued highly by member councils. The clear evidence of that came when, at the 2023 AGM, members voted to increase fees to \$5,000 per council, which was over and above what the Committee had recommended.

I am very proud that the profile of Rural Councils Victoria continues to rise, with media coverage and audience reach up again on the previous year.

We are the trusted voice for not only rural communities and councils but for rural and regional Victoria more broadly. This is recognised by media, government and other groups.

RCV is also trusted and respected by state and federal governments. We have regular meetings with ministers and bureaucrats. Premier Jacinta Allan spoke at an RCV event at Parliament House in March 2024. Several ministers and many other MPs also attended to connect with RCV members (see page 12).

RCV was also very pleased to host a training session for members prior to the Parliament House event. That session was an opportunity to hear from former independent MP Susanna Sheed and The Agenda Group on how to connect to those in Spring Street. It was valued by the Mayors and CEOs present.

Housing was the central theme at the RCV Forum 2023, with members sharing their experiences and providing input. Following that event, we developed and launched the RCV Housing Action Plan.

This plan was well received by government and media. RCV met with state ministers and also advocated on housing at a federal level.

Financial sustainability of local government was also a major advocacy issue during the year. RCV made submissions to both a state and a federal inquiry into the issue.

As I step down from Council and from RCV, I would like to take the opportunity to thank every Committee member I have served with and every council we represent for their support over the years. It has been an honour and a privilege.

I will watch with interest as RCV continues to go from strength to strength while advocating for every rural Victorian.

Keep up the good work and continue to advocate for our communities who make such important social and economic contributions to both the state and the nation.



Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM
Chair, Rural Councils Victoria

RCV Committee

Rural North West Region



Cr Rob Gersch
Councillor, Hindmarsh
Shire Council



Ms Tammy Smith
CEO, Yarriambiack Shire
Council (**Treasurer**)

Rural North East



Cr Sophie Price Mayor,
Indigo Shire Council



Mr Dom Testoni
CEO, Benalla Rural City
(**Secretary**)

Rural North Central Region



Cr Rob Amos, Mayor,
Campaspe Shire Council



Mr Darren Fuzzard
CEO, Mount Alexander
Shire Council

Rural South Central



Cr Robert Vance
Councillor, Pyrenees
Shire Council



Mr Bradley Thomas
CEO, Hepburn Shire

Rural South West



Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM
Councillor, Southern
Grampians Shire (**Chair**)



Ms Anne Howard
CEO, Colac Otway Shire

About the Committee

The Committee consists of an elected official and a CEO from each of RCV's six regions.

Committee changes

In 2023-2024 the RCV Committee welcomed:

Cr Sophie Price, Mayor of Indigo Shire
Cr Rob Amos, Mayor of Campaspe Shire
Kerryn Ellis, CEO - South Gippsland Shire
Anne Howard, CEO - Colac Otway Shire
Bradley Thomas, CEO - Hepburn Shire

In 2023-2024 the RCV Committee farewelled:

Cr Jane Ogden, Ganawarra Shire Council
Cr Laura Binks, Strathbogie Shire Council
Brett Davis, former CEO - Moyne Shire
Eric Braslis, former CEO - Golden Plains Shire
David Morcom, CEO - Wellington Shire Council

Rural South East (Gippsland) Region



Cr Sonia Buckley
Councillor, East
Gippsland Shire Council



Ms Kerryn Ellis
CEO, South Gippsland
Shire Council

Rural Housing Action Plan

RCV's Rural Housing Action Plan was well received by government and outlined practical solutions for a growing problem across the state.

Rural Councils Victoria launched the RCV Rural Housing Action Plan in October.

The five-point Plan calls for the federal and state governments to help tackle the rural housing crisis by making the construction of new homes in rural Victoria easier and more efficient.

The document provided three examples from councils that tackled the rural housing crisis.

- Pyrenees Shire Council developed a residential estate with 100 new homes
- Moyne Shire Council built worker accommodation, and
- Mount Alexander Shire Council engaged a housing broker.

Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown told media: "Rural isn't the same as regional and the vast majority of the 152,000 homes recently announced for regional and rural Victoria will go to regional cities."

"What rural Victoria needs is a targeted approach with dedicated supports to enable development in rural communities."

RCV commissioned research – The Rural Victoria Housing Blueprint by SGS Economics & Planning – found that rural Victoria needs 87,400 new homes by 2036.

Failure to provide the extra homes could mean annual Gross Regional Product losses across rural Victoria of between \$200 million and \$1 billion, the report found.

RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown said: "Councils across rural Victoria are tackling the housing crisis themselves, providing practical solutions and new ways of getting homes built.

"But they can't do it all by themselves. Government support is needed.

"It's not all about governments providing money, though financial support is part of the solution."

"We need governments to help councils by making it easier for development to occur in rural communities.

"Through strategic financial support for the Rural Housing Action Plan, rural housing markets can be revitalised, economic stability promoted, and quality of rural life enhanced.

The Action Plan calls for:

- Rural Enabling Infrastructure Initiative, such as help providing connections to sewerage, water, energy (dozens of rural Victorian communities have no sewerage or water systems)
- Council Developer Support and Risk Mitigation strategy, including bridging funds to help councils develop homes
- Rural Housing Expertise and Capacity Building strategy, including adequate staffing to deliver project implementation and oversight
- Rural Housing Policy Reform to streamline housing approvals, and
- Targeted Rural Housing Funds, specific funding to deliver much needed homes in rural communities.

RCV also called for rural communities to get their fair share of the proposed Short Stay Levy on accommodation provided through online short-stay accommodation providers.

RCV sought a 12-month review of the levy to assess its operation and ensure it is working in a fair and equitable manner.

Council as developer: 100 homes provided

Maurice Trainor was the first resident to move into the Correa Park Residential Development in the Pyrenees Shire about 10 years ago.

Maurice says he has been active in several local groups in his 40 years in the area and the development has been widely welcomed as “fantastic”, bringing new families and energy to the town.

Maurice says he has built on one of the bigger lots: “I have the best of both worlds. Out the front door are the houses in the estate and out the back is bushland.”

“It (Correa Park) was a fantastic idea from whoever came up with it 15-20 years ago. I can see why families want to move here, smaller lots go for triple the price in Ballarat (which is about 30 minutes from Beaufort).

Council builds worker housing

David Knight is the CEO of Aberlea aged care in Mortlake and is a senior adviser (aged care and seniors living) at Leading Healthcare.

David says: “It doesn’t matter what industry you are in, it is imperative for staff to be able to find a place to live in rural and regional Victoria.

“It is hard to attract employees to rural and regional areas but when you tell them there is nowhere to live you might as well give up.

He said the 11 studio-style cabins built by Moyne Shire at the Mortlake and Koroit Caravan Parks for key workers has proved a godsend.

“If there were more of them we would use them more. It gives new employees or agency staff a new, clean and comfortable place to stay while they settle into new jobs and provides them with time to find a place to stay.

“I would like the government and shires across

rural and regional Victoria to know that one of the biggest blockers to filling jobs is the lack of accommodation. It is holding businesses back across all sectors.”

Council provides housing broker

Clare Richards is one of rural Victoria's first housing brokers. Based at Mount Alexander Shire, Clare works to implement short-, medium- and long-term best-practice solutions to the housing crisis in the shire.

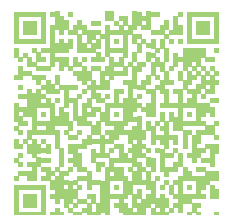
The role is an example of an effective solutions-based approach that, with the government support, RCV believes could be rolled out across rural Victoria.

In her role, Clare pursues Big Housing Build and other grant funding or financing opportunities; works closely with local social and health sector organisations and groups; develops and brokers relationships between key stakeholders including governments, the community housing sector, private and for-purpose developers, investors and financiers.

Her role also includes assessing options for use of Council and State land for affordable housing; and developing Council housing policy and governance vehicles (such as MOUs, partnerships, consortiums, and Trusts) to help deliver outcomes in the Shire.

To download the RCV Rural Housing Action plan

Scan the QR code:



RCV housing survey

RCV mayors, councillors, CEOs and staff provided invaluable insights that guided RCV policy on the rural housing crisis

RCV surveyed members to better understand the blockers in rural housing markets.

The statewide survey of mayors, CEOs, councillors, and council staff has identified the biggest blockers to solving the rural housing crisis and building new homes across rural Victoria.

The RCV Rural Housing Survey found that the biggest blockers to housing in rural Victoria are:

- Availability and preparation of land
- Ability to find qualified people (trades and planners), and
- State policy and regulation.

Land release and development

Nearly half (48.6%) of respondents nominated land release as one of the main blockers to more housing.

Making land ready for development was also a high-ranking blocker, with 39.2% of respondents nominating this issue.

This makes land-related blockers highly significant with 85.8% of respondents nominating at least one of these issues.

Skilled workers

The lack of skilled people also featured significantly as a block to getting more homes built and addressing housing issues.

Lack of planning staff and availability of skilled workers, builders, trades etc. was nominated by 47.3% of respondents as a key blocker.

Policy and regulation

State policy and regulation and the planning scheme/policy were also nominated highly among respondents with State policy and regulation at 43.2% and Planning scheme/policy at 35.1%

The survey also explored what the most significant issues in housing are:

- Housing supply and availability across all sections of the community was ranked number one, with 61.8% of respondents ranking it as the number one issue.
- Availability of key worker housing came in second with 42.5% of respondents selecting it as their most important issue.

Rural Councils Victoria Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown told media:

“The Rural Housing Survey paints a stark picture of what is happening in the rural housing crisis and points to possible solutions.”

“Several councils are already working on their own solutions, but they need help from government to deliver the homes rural communities need.”

Media

With a media-audience reach of more than 119 million in 2023-2024, Rural Councils Victoria is the go-to voice for media when seeking the perspective of rural Victorian communities. **No one else stands up for rural Victoria the way RCV does.**

Rural Councils Victoria's presence in media and social media is a key part of RCV's advocacy approach.

No other organisation stands up for rural Victoria the way RCV does. To ensure rural Victorian voices are heard, we engage regularly with traditional and social media.

RCV is available when media calls to ensure that our advocacy reaches government and wider community audiences.

Over the past several years, RCV's policies and practical approach to issues has ensured we are now the go-to organisation for media seeking comment on issues that are important to rural Victoria and rural Victorians.

In the 2023-24 financial year, RCV was quoted in more than 205 print and online news media reports. Those reports were published across rural, regional, metropolitan and national titles.

RCV proactively engages media, highlighting issues that are important to rural Victorians.

The media – radio, TV, print and online journalists from across rural, regional, metro and nationally – also contact us regularly for interviews and content.

The total audience reach of RCV media coverage was more than 119 million in the year to 30 June 2024, up from more than 111 million the previous financial year.

Excluding radio and television audiences, Meltwater media data shows that RCV had a **total audience reach of 119,543,979** across the 2023-24 financial year, up more than 8 million on the previous year.

This substantial audience reach means that RCV news and advocacy – which was published across Australia – reached many Australian and Victorian audience members on multiple occasions throughout the year.



Rural Housing Action Plan launch: RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM is interviewed by WIN TV.

This was an increase of more than 8 million audience reach over the previous year. RCV advocacy has again reached the population of Victoria many times over.

As well as raising awareness nationally and statewide, RCV advocacy finds its way into the media briefings that state and federal ministers and senior bureaucrats get each morning.

This helps shift perspectives, change conversations and open doors in Spring Street and Canberra so we can successfully advocate on behalf of rural communities and rural councils.

Council sustainability

In a submission to the **Inquiry into local government sustainability** the federal government, RCV warned of some negative consequences for rural communities.

Rural communities across Australia are facing hard decisions about whether to close swimming pools, shut libraries, curb the use of sports facilities, abandon playgrounds, and severely cut or close aged care and childcare, a Federal inquiry has been told.

Rural Councils Victoria, in a submission to the Inquiry into local government sustainability, has told the federal government that many small rural councils are on the financial brink and rural communities face losing essential community services and the only leisure facilities some communities have.

“We are at a point where we have to make some hard decisions,” Rural Councils Victoria Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown told media.

“Councils only have two reliable sources of income, rates – which are capped – and grants, which have been declining in real terms for years.

“Small rural communities are resilient and self-reliant but rural councils are being hit from many directions all at once.

“In recent years there have been successive natural disasters, a cost of living crisis, community expectations have changed and the system for financing councils and council services has not kept up.

“Put simply, councils need more resources, and we need federal and state governments to help us keep up with inflation.”

“The best and easiest thing that the Federal Government could do for the sustainability of local government and small rural communities across Australia would be to increase the amount of the Financial Assistance Grants,” Cr Brown said.



The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport

Submission to the Inquiry into local government sustainability

Submission by Rural Councils Victoria

About Rural Councils Victoria

Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) is an incorporated body representing 34 small rural councils across country Victoria.

Our membership does not include regional councils, so our focus is on issues relevant to smaller rural areas, many of which are isolated or sparsely populated.

Our members' experiences will also reflect those of many smaller rural and remote areas of Australia. One in nine Victorians live in rural communities and are served by a rural council.

In Victoria, 38 of the 79 councils are classified as 'rural', including a number on the urban fringe.

Victoria's rural councils are responsible for 79% of Victoria's land area and have a combined population of approximately 836,000 (ABS 2020) accounting for 12.5% of Victoria's population and 62% of Victoria's local roads network.

The impact of a dispersed and small population spread over a large geographic area presents several challenges for rural councils in meeting the needs of their communities. Not least being that rural councils have small rate bases and little access to substantial or helpful levels of 'own source' income.

Despite these challenges rural Victoria is a significant contributor to the national economy. Recent statistics shared by Agriculture Victoria highlight this:

- Victoria's gross value of agriculture production (GVAP) reached a new record high of \$20.2 billion in 2021–22.
- In 2021–22, Victoria accounted for 23 per cent of Australia's GVAP, making Victoria Australia's second largest agricultural producer after New South Wales (26%)

Overview


The financial sustainability of local government is a pressing issue for our membership.

Over many years, local governments across the country have been facing a situation where their capacity to raise revenue is not matching the expectations and needs of their communities.

Recently this has intensified with many rural councils facing multiple pressures.

“With communities and families across the country facing their own cost of living pressures, the option to raise revenue directly from communities is not a feasible one. Many in rural communities do not have the capacity to pay more,” Cr Brown said.

“Governments have all been guilty of 'cost shifting', forcing local government to take extra responsibilities without providing adequate



funding, as well as cutting support for local government in real terms.

“RCV has surveyed member councils, and the survey results show that councils are being squeezed on both expenditure and revenue sides.

“The soaring costs of providing and maintaining infrastructure, such as roads and road maintenance, is being exacerbated by limits on rural councils’ revenue sources, including the rate cap in Victoria.

“Without intervention, this problem will only get worse. If councils are not able to raise more money, they will not be able to meet the infrastructure and service delivery needs of their communities,” Cr Brown said.

“The largest source of operating grants for councils is from the Commonwealth Government through the Financial Assistance Grants program under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

“Disappointingly, as a percentage of total Commonwealth Government taxation revenue (excluding GST), the amount of Financial Assistance Grants made available to local government across Australia has decreased from 0.76% to 0.57% from 2011/12 to 2021/22.

“While the Commonwealth Government and the Victorian Government is able to earn uncapped taxation revenue that increases with economic and population growth, enabling increased living standards, the local government sector is reliant upon insufficient rate revenue to meet cost escalation and Financial Assistance Grants that have not increased in real terms on a per capita basis since 1995.”

The RCV submission to The House of Representatives Standing Committee on

Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport warned that unless further revenue can be raised by councils, they would be forced to review the services they offer and the infrastructure they build and maintain.

With finances stretched, councils are making the difficult decision to pull out of services they do not see as core to their role in the community, the submission said.

The RCV survey of member councils found that about one-third of councils have outsourced services in a bid to save money, with about a quarter saying they have also looked at raising fees and charges.

The survey showed that many councils have already cut jobs and extended plant replacement schedules.

Advocacy

Rural Councils Victoria is the only national voice for rural Victorians. Throughout the 2023-24 financial year, we advocated successfully to the state and federal governments on behalf of rural communities and rural councils.

An RCV event at Parliament House in March was an advocacy highlight of the year for RCV.

Victorian **Premier Jacinta Allan** outlined the importance of rural councils to communities.

Ministers who attended included: **Hon. Harriet Shing MP**, Housing; **Hon. Melissa Horne MP**, Local Government; **Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MP**, Health; **Hon. Gayle Tierney, MP** Regional Development; **Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP**, Energy & Resources; **Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP**, Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Environment; and **Hon. Sonya Kilkeny MP**, Planning.

Other MPs in attendance included: **Martha Haylett**; The Hon. **Maree Edwards, Michaela Settle, Jordan Crugnale, Gaele Broad, Lauren Kathage**, and MLCs **Jacinta Ermacora, Wendy Lovell, Rikkie-Lee Tyrrell**, and **Tom McIntosh**.

Following the RCVs submission to the Victorian Inquiry into rental and housing affordability, the RCV Chair was invited to address a hearing.

The inquiry was interested in examples of Councils acting as developers and what the state could do if funding or bridging finance was provided.

Cr Brown appeared at a hearing for the Federal inquiry into Australia's preparedness to host Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games. Cr Brown said while there had been disappointment at not hosting the Commonwealth Games, rural Victoria appears to have benefitted more through the \$2 billion Regional Package.

RCV made strong submissions to the state and federal inquiries into local government sustainability. Cr Brown addressed the state inquiry.

RCV met with The Hon Harriet Shing MP after the Commonwealth Games cancellation.

In the lead up to the RCV Rural Housing Action



RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM with Premier Jacinta Allan and RCV Deputy Chair Cr Rob Amos.



RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM addresses the Parliamentary inquiry into Local Government.

Plan launched in the Pyrenees Shire, RCV met with Martha Haylett MP and The Hon Colin Brooks MP. Helen Haines MP was also a strong supporter of RCV's housing work.

RCV held regular meetings with The Hon Melissa Horne MP and The Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP and a meeting with The Hon Gayle Tierney MP.

RCV provided input in the Tiny Towns Program and had meetings with Regional Development Victoria and Local Government Victoria.

RCV had representatives on the Local Government Mayoral Advisory Committee, the RAI's National Alliance for Regionalisation, Review of the Council Fees in the Building Regulations 2018 and the Councillor Conduct Framework Examination Working Group.

RCV Forum 2024

RCV's Forum 2024 was held on 2 August at Trawool Estate in Mitchell Shire. The theme was Federal Battlegrounds, with an emphasis on what the next federal election might hold for rural Victorian communities



Standing ovation: RCV founding Chair Cr Rob Gersch OAM, Committee member Cr Rob Vance and outgoing chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM are honoured for their service to rural communities at the RCV Forum 2024.



Honoured: Those who contributed to the RCV Committee between 2020 and 2024 are thanked for their service.

RCV Forum 2024



Taungurung Indigenous leader Uncle Larry welcomes Forum attendees to country.



RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM with Michaela Settle MP Parliamentary Secretary Agriculture, Parliamentary Secretary Regional Development.



The Hon Peter Walsh MP, RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM and Annabelle Cleeland MP.



Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM with Cr Nathan Clark, Deputy Mayor Mitchell Shire Council; Simon Coutts and Michael Wheelahan of Forum sponsor Grantus.



RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM with Tony Raunic of Forum sponsor Hunt & Hunt and MAV President Cr David Clark.



RCV Chair Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM with Emily Peel and Charlene Donovan from Forum sponsor NBN, and MAV President Cr David Clark.

RCV Forum 2024

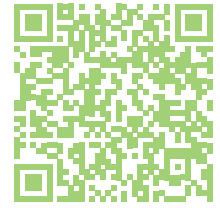


Federal battleground: ABC Radio's Steve Martin asks the questions of pollster Kos Samaras, Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal CEO Natalie Egleton and NFF President David Jochinke.



Full house: More than 120 attendees heard differing views of what various electorates will consider important for the next federal election.

More photos



RCV Forum 2024

Scan the QR code:



Cr Lauren Dempsey from Northern Grampians Shire.



Committee member Darren Fuzzard outlines the benefits of LGIU (Local Government Information Unit).



RCV Committee members Cr Sophie Price and Treasurer Tammy Smith.



RCV Committee members Cr Rob Amos (Deputy Chair) and Cr Sophie Price.



Attendees take part in social media training. In short, be on there but tread with caution.



Rural Councils Victoria Financial Report 2023-24



Income statement

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME STATEMENT

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024	2023
		\$	\$
Revenue from operations			
Grant income		-	150,000
Membership income		170,000	136,000
Leadership training reimbursements		-	160,445
Sponsorship		15,000	-
Event Fees		27,061	13,288
Total revenue from operations	3	212,061	459,733
Expenses from operations			
Materials and services		222,151	764,273
Total expenses from operations	3	222,151	764,273
Surplus/(deficit)		(10,090)	(304,540)
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period	3	(10,090)	(304,540)

The above income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Balance sheet

As at 30 June 2024

	Note	2024	2023
		\$	\$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		127,920	154,441
Trade and other receivables		-	4,423
Total current assets		127,920	158,864
Total assets		127,920	158,864
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables		17,441	45,682
Other payables	2	1,080	(6,307)
Total current liabilities		18,521	39,375
Total liabilities		18,521	39,375
Net assets		109,399	119,489
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		109,399	119,489
Total equity		109,399	119,489

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Changes in equity

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 Retained earnings \$
Balance at the beginning of the financial year		119,489
Deficit for the period		(10,090)
Balance at the end of the financial year		109,399

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

	Note	2023 Retained earnings \$
Balance at the beginning of the financial year		424,029
Deficit for the period		(304,540)
Balance at the end of the financial year		119,489

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.



Statement of cash flows

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 30 June 2024

		2024	2023
		Inflows/ (Outflows)	Inflows/ (Outflows)
	Notes	\$	\$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from operating activities (inclusive of GST)		216,483	455,310
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of GST)		(243,004)	(768,120)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	5	(26,521)	(312,810)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(26,521)	(312,810)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		154,441	467,251
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		127,920	154,441

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Notes

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Introduction

The Financial Statements cover Rural Councils Victoria Incorporated as an individual entity which was incorporated on 30 June 2016. Rural Councils Victoria Incorporated is an incorporated association under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Basis of preparation

a) Statement of compliance

These general purpose financial statements – Simplified Disclosures reporting requirements have been prepared in accordance to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

b) Basis of measurement

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and are based on historical costs, modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless stated otherwise.

Note 1: Accounting policies

a) Revenue and other income

Revenue is recognised at the time of the provision of the service to the customer.

Grant funding where there are no specific obligations is recognised at the time of receipt of funding or when the Association has the unconditional right to receive funding in accordance with AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*.

Council contributions are recognised at the time membership invoices are raised to member Councils.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax.

b) Income tax

The Association is a not-for-profit organisation and is exempt from income tax under section 50-45 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

c) Employee provisions

The Association has no employees.

d) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash on hand includes cash on hand, deposits held at-call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

e) Accounts receivable

Accounts receivable and other debtors include amounts due from members as well as amounts receivable from grants from government departments. Receivables expected to be collected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets. All other receivables are classified as non-current assets.

f) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

g) Accounts payable and other payables

Accounts payable and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the



NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Association during the reporting period which remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

h) Critical accounting estimates and judgements

There were no material estimates made during the preparation of this report.

i) Accounting standards

A number of Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been issued or amended since the last reporting date and are applicable to the entity but are not yet effective.

The Committee has assessed the impact of these amendments and they are immaterial to the Association. They have not been adopted in the preparation of the Financial Statements at balance date.

Notes

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2: Other payables	2024	2023
	\$	\$
GST liability/(refundable)	(3,720)	(11,107)
Other payables	4,800	4,800
Total other payables	1,080	(6,307)

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3: Comprehensive income statement - Member detail (2024)			
	Government funding \$	Member funding \$	Total \$
Income			
Sponsorship	-	15,000	15,000
Council membership fees	-	170,000	170,000
Event Fees	-	27,061	27,062
Total income	-	212,061	212,062
Expenses			
Workstream: RCV Membership			
- Governance costs	-	19,458	19,458
- Secretariat Services	-	185,053	185,053
- Consultancy	-	-	-
- Consultancy - Advocacy	-	-	-
- Other Expenses	-	17,639	17,639
Total expenses	-	222,151	222,151
Deficit for the year	-	(10,090)	(10,090)

Notes

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3: Comprehensive income statement - Member detail (2023)			
	Government funding	Member funding	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Income			
Grant funding - Thriving Rural Victoria Program	150,000	-	150,000
Leadership Training Reimbursements	160,445	-	160,445
Council membership fees	-	136,000	136,000
Event Fees	-	13,288	13,288
Total income	310,445	149,288	459,733
Expenses			
Workstream TRV: Thriving Rural Victoria			
- Governance costs	25,166	-	25,166
- Secretariat services	70,000	-	70,000
- Professional Development	282,597	-	282,597
- Consultancy	195,530	-	195,530
- Other Expenses	6,418	-	6,418
	579,711	-	579,711
Workstream: RCV Membership			
- Governance costs	-	5,307	5,307
- Secretariat Services	-	122,625	122,625
- Consultancy	-	5,500	5,500
- Consultancy - Advocacy	-	48,000	48,000
- Other Expenses	-	2,034	2,034
	-	183,466	183,466
Workstream 1: RCV governance, networking and communications			
- Governance costs	30	-	30
- Other Expenses	364	-	364
	394	-	394
UnAssigned			
- Governance Expense	625	-	625
- Other Expenses	77	-	77
	702	-	702
Total expenses	580,807	183,466	764,273
Deficit for the year	(270,362)	(34,178)	(304,540)
Income			

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 4: Related party transactions	2024 \$	2023 \$
a) Key management personnel		
Any person(s) having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the company, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise) is considered key management personnel.		
Key management personnel compensation:		
- Short term benefits	-	-
- Post-employment benefits	-	-
- Other long-term benefits	-	-
	-	-
b) Other related parties		
Other related parties include close family members of key management personnel and entities that are controlled or jointly controlled by those key management personnel, individually or collectively with their close family members.		
There were no transactions with related parties.		
	-	-
	-	-
Note 5: Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities with net current year surplus/(deficit)	2024 \$	2023 \$
Net current year surplus/(deficit)	(10,090)	(304,540)
Change in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in accounts receivable and other debtors	4,423	(4,423)
Increase/(decrease) in accounts payable and other payables	(20,854)	(3,847)
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operating activities	(26,521)	(312,810)

Notes

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 6: Financial risks management

The Association's financial instruments consist of deposits with banks, receivables and payables.

The carrying amounts for each category of financial instruments, measured in accordance with AASB 9: *Financial Instruments* as detailed in the accounting policies to these financial statements, are as follows:

Credit risk

The maximum exposure to credit risk by classes of recognised financial assets at the end of the reporting period is equivalent to the carrying value and classification of those financial assets (net of any provisions) as presented in the statement of financial position.

Accounts receivable and other debtors that are neither past due nor impaired are considered to be of high credit quality. The Association's financial assets and liabilities are all non-interest bearing.

Interest rate risk

As there are no investments or borrowings, there is no interest rate risk applicable to RCV.

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk arises from the possibility that the Association might encounter difficulty in settling its debts or otherwise meeting its obligations in relation to financial liabilities.

The Association manages this risk by monitoring the total inflows and outflows expected on a monthly basis. The Association ensures that sufficient liquid assets are available to meet all the short-term cash payments.

The Association's contractual maturity for financial assets and liabilities are all due within 3 months or less.

Entity details

The registered office of the entity is:

181 Manifold Street
Camperdown VIC 3260

Note 7: Events occurring after reporting date

There were no material matters or circumstances which have arisen between 30 June 2024 and the date of this report that have significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Association, the result of those operations or the state of affairs of the Association in subsequent financial periods.

Note 8: Contingent assets or liabilities

The Committee are not aware of any contingent assets or liabilities at balance date.

Note 9: Commitments

The Committee are not aware of any commitments at balance date.



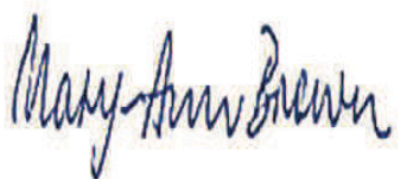
Committee declaration

COMMITTEE DECLARATION

In accordance with a resolution of the Committee of Rural Councils Victoria Incorporated, the Committee declare that:

The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 3 to 13, are in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – simplified disclosures and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the Association during and as at the financial year ending 30 June 2024.

In the opinion of the Committee there are reasonable grounds to believe that Rural Councils Victoria incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.



Cr Mary-Ann Brown OAM (Chair)

Dated this day Monday 19 August, 2024



Ms Tammy Smith (Treasurer)

Dated this day Monday 19 August, 2024

Auditors report



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Albury NSW 2640

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Independent auditor's report to the members of Rural Councils Victoria Inc.

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements, being general purpose financial statements – simplified disclosure of Rural Councils Victoria Inc, which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2024, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the period ended on that date, notes to the financial statements, including a summary of accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the committee declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements of Rural Councils Victoria Inc. are in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of Rural Councils Victoria Inc.'s financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its performance for the financial period ended on that date, and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – simplified disclosures and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the entity in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Committee of Management for the Financial Statements

The Committee of Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – simplified disclosures and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and for such internal control as the Committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Committee of Management is responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Independent auditor's report to the members (continued)

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Johnsons MME
Chartered Accountants



Stephen Clarke
Director

Albury
22 August 2024



Rural Councils Victoria

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