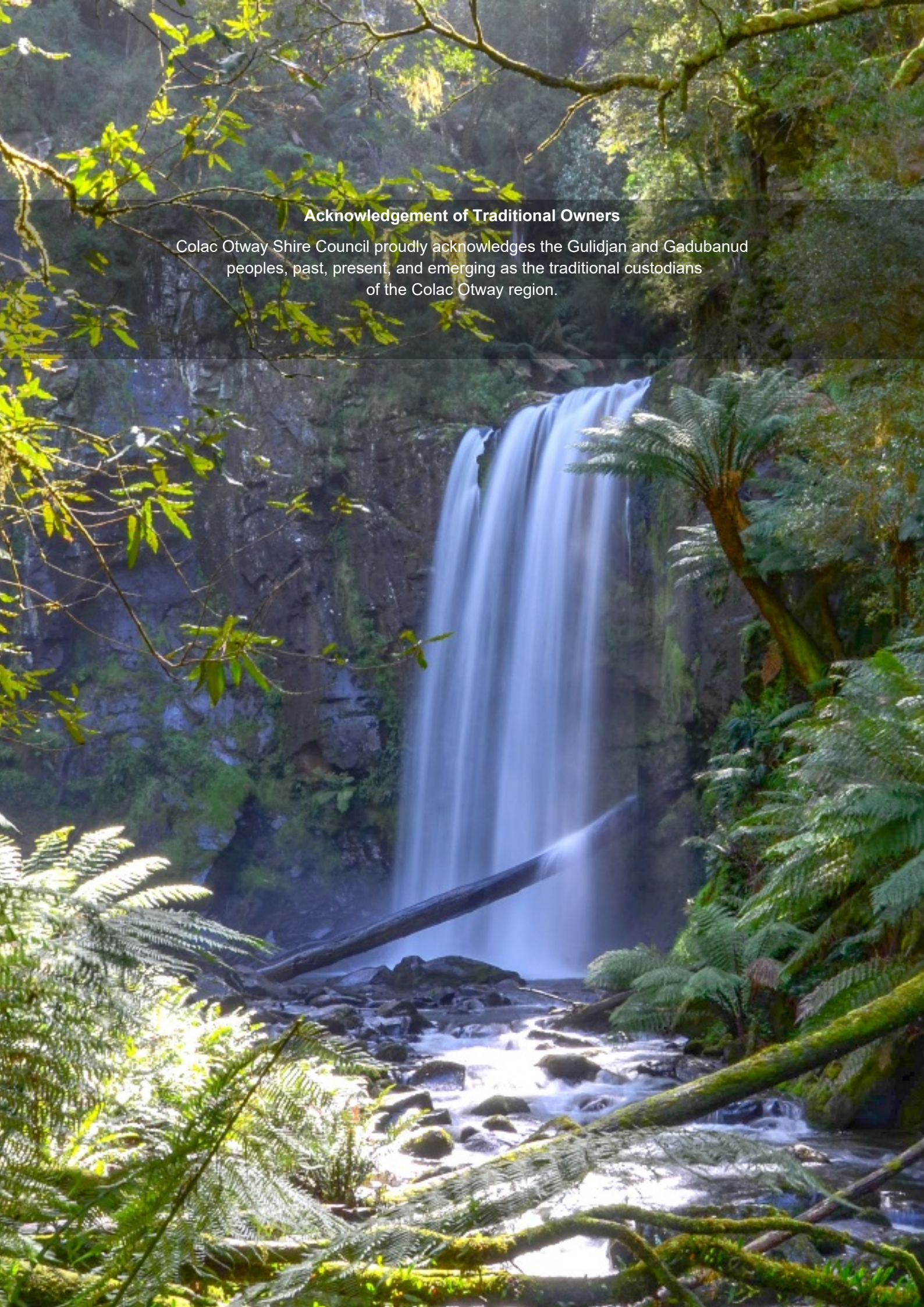


Candidate Information

Colac Otway Shire Council Elections 2024



Colac Otway Shire
Colac Memorial Square Fountain
The fountain was designed by the architect
John Blackmore and was built in 1919.
It is a fine example of the classical style
of the early 20th century.
The fountain is a landmark of the town
and is a popular spot for tourists.
It is a well-maintained and beautiful
feature of the town.

A lush forest scene featuring a waterfall cascading over rocks into a stream, surrounded by ferns and moss-covered branches. The waterfall is the central focus, with water flowing over a series of dark, wet rocks. The surrounding vegetation is dense and vibrant, with many large ferns in the foreground and midground. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a dappled light effect on the water and foliage. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Colac Otway Shire Council proudly acknowledges the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples, past, present, and emerging as the traditional custodians of the Colac Otway region.

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CEO MESSAGE

Congratulations on nominating to be a candidate in the upcoming general election for the Colac Otway Shire Council and thank you for your willingness to serve our wonderful community.

Whether you are contemplating running for the first time or have stood for Council previously it is important to have the latest information.

From election advertising and the role of local government, to expected time commitments and what happens if you are elected, there is a lot to absorb. We have aimed to cover many of the essentials in this booklet and hope you find it helpful.

Best wishes as you consider representing your community and please don't hesitate to reach out if you wish to discuss the exciting role of the Councillor.



Anne Howard
Chief Executive Officer

PROFILE OF COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL

The Colac Otway Shire is a richly diverse area located less than two hours west of Melbourne, linked by rail and a dual highway.

Colac Otway is one of the most picturesque municipalities in Victoria, from its volcanic lakes, craters, and plains in the north, to the lush forests of the Otway Ranges to the iconic Great Ocean Road coastline.

A large proportion of the southern half of the shire is National Park, boasting waterfalls, bushwalking and some of the most significant environmental assets found in Australia.

The northern area of Colac Otway features equally significant environmental features including Lake Colac, Lake Corangamite and the surrounding Ramsar wetlands, overlooked by Red Rock Reserve.

The original inhabitants of the area are the Gulidjan people (from the Colac region) and the Gadubanud people (from the southern area of the municipality).

About 21,000 people currently live in the Colac Otway Shire, with about 13,000 people living in the shire's major industrial, commercial, and service centre of Colac (Colac and Elliminyt).

The City of Colac population is forecast to reach 20,000 by 2050, and Colac Otway Shire has a strategic plan to guide sustainable residential growth and infrastructure development.

The second major urban centre is Apollo Bay, which has a permanent population of 1,800 (Apollo Bay and Marengo) that swells to more than 15,000 during the busy summer tourist season.

More than 15 small towns and rural communities are spread across Colac Otway and provide a lifestyle choice for those looking for a quieter life through either a sea change or tree change.

Diverse industries range from tourism and hospitality to key agriculture ventures such as dairy, beef and boutique farming and food enterprises, to sustainable timber production.

Colac is also home to international food processors Bulla Dairy Foods and the Australian Lamb Company, and Australia's second largest softwood processor AKD.

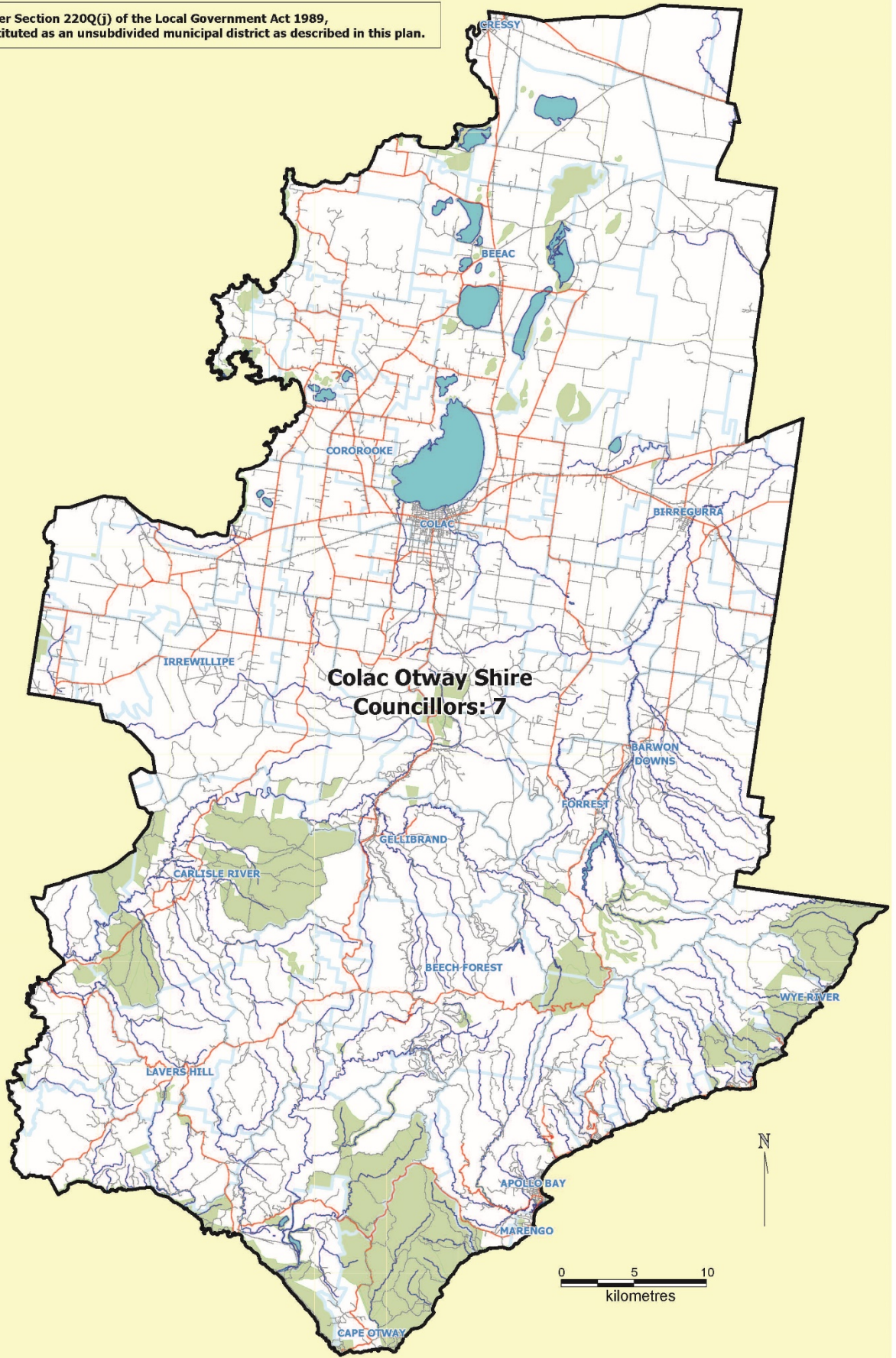
Among Colac Otway Shire's other significant employers include the region's quality health service providers, Colac Area Health, and Great Ocean Road Health.

Colac is the major retail centre, offering an exciting shopping experience across large stores and franchises and unique small businesses, while farmgate sales across the shire showcase locally grown produce.

Colac Otway Shire proudly offers lifestyle diversity like no other region.

**Local Government Act 1989
ELECTORAL STRUCTURE OF COLAC OTWAY SHIRE COUNCIL**

NOTE: By Order in Council made under Section 220Q(j) of the Local Government Act 1989, Colac-Otway Shire Council is re-constituted as an unsubdivided municipal district as described in this plan.



**Colac Otway Shire
Councillors: 7**

Legend

- Locality Boundary
- Map Symbols**
- Freeway
- Main Road
- Collector Road
- Road
- Unsealed Road
- River/Creek
- Railway Line
- Lake
- Parks & Reserves

I hereby certify that the electoral boundaries shown on this map have been aligned to the VicMap property grid to represent those boundaries as presented in the Electoral Representation Review Final Report for Colac Otway Shire Council, submitted to the Minister for Local Government on 20 August, 2007.

Steven Tully, Electoral Commissioner

Electoral Structure of
Colac Otway Shire Council

LEGL./07-314

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR

Local Government is recognised in the Victorian Constitution (1975) as a “distinct and essential tier of government consisting of democratically elected councils having the functions and powers that the parliament considers are necessary to ensure the peace, order and good government of each municipal district”.

Local Government is acknowledged as the tier of government working most closely with the community. There are 79 Councils across rural, regional and metropolitan Victoria. Not all Council services are prescribed or found in legislation, with many representing historic service decisions over previous decades or sometimes are those services that reflect current community expectations. Examples of services that Councils generally provide include:

- Local roads and civil infrastructure
- Parks and open space maintenance
- Waste and resource recovery management
- Domestic animal management
- Urban planning, building services and protection of heritage buildings or vegetation
- Local laws and ranger services
- Community facilities such as meeting halls and reserves
- Maternal and Child Health and Immunisation services

Council functions and services are generally funded through rates and charges, user fees, external grants, borrowing and contributions from developers.

The *Local Government Act 2020* sets out the roles and responsibilities of councils, its elected councillors and council administration. Local Government Victoria, as the responsible government agency, provides information, policy advice and support works to councils.

Councils are subject to oversight by the following agencies

- Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC)
- Local Government Inspectorate
- Victorian Auditor General’s Office (VAGO)
- Victorian Ombudsman

There are three peak bodies representing councils in Victoria

- The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) established under the Municipal Associations Act (1907)
- LG Pro, an association for people working in local government in Victoria
- The Victorian Local Governance Association, an independent member-based association supporting councils, councillors and community in good governance

Councils also have other member-based associations that can represent their particular needs or activities, such as Rural Councils Victoria that represent small and large rural shire councils.

THE ROLE OF A COUNCILLOR

Councillors are elected as individuals but fulfil their roles collectively with the other elected members of Council.

Councillors work together and make decisions collaboratively as members of Council to guide the development of strategic planning, local policies, set service standards and priorities and monitor the performance of the organisation. Other responsibilities of Councillors include determining the financial strategy and budget and allocating resources to enable Council to meet its commitments and strategic objectives.

The role of a Councillor is established by legislation. Section 28 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is as follows:

1. The role of every Councillor is:
 - a) to participate in the decision making of the Council; and
 - b) to represent the interests of the municipal community in that decision making; and
 - c) to contribute to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of key strategic documents of the Council, including the Council Plan.
2. In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must:
 - a) consider the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community; and
 - b) support the role of the Council; and
 - c) acknowledge and support the role of the Mayor; and
 - d) act lawfully and in accordance with the oath or affirmation of office; and
 - e) act in accordance with the standards of conduct; and
 - d) comply with Council procedures required for good governance.

Being a Councillor presents people with an opportunity to be exposed to, and involved in, an extraordinary variety of subjects and opportunities that go beyond the normal issues of roads, rates, and rubbish. The good news is that Councillors do not have to be experts in these matters because they will be provided with a lot of information and support to understand these matters, and most importantly how their decisions benefit the community.



COUNCIL MEETINGS

The collective decision-making of Councillors occurs at meetings through a resolution of Council.

Council meetings are open to the public. There are, however, certain circumstances which are described in Section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, when a council meeting may be closed to the public, enabling confidential information and debate to occur. This should be avoided when possible to preserve transparency and accountability which are key aspects of good governance.

Council conducts its meetings in accordance with its [Governance Rules](#). A well-run meeting should have a clear and informative agenda, be well chaired and facilitated, follow meeting procedures appropriately, and adhere to statutory requirements.

COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS AND WORKSHOPS

It is important that Councillors find out about the detail of relevant issues before making decisions at Council meetings and seek any information that is needed for them to make a fully informed decision before they find themselves in the chamber having to formally vote on a matter.

Every Council holds briefings or workshops to help brief Councillors on day-to-day issues affecting the Council. These are generally internal sessions with Council staff, but sometimes external advisors or delegates are present.

Briefing sessions enable Councillors to discuss issues among themselves and with senior staff or subject matter experts. These briefing sessions can help Councillors to understand a complex issue. They provide a way for Councillors to request additional information to assist them in making decisions.

Councillors cannot make legally binding decisions in briefings or workshops. At any meeting involving at least half the Councillors and at least one member of staff (referred to as 'assemblies of councillors'), where matters are likely to lead to a formal Council decision, a record must be kept of those items considered and Councillors are subject to the conflict of interest rules.

Councillor briefing sessions should not be confused with public briefings. Public briefings are held by Councils when they want to brief members of the community about Council activities or other significant matters that might be coming before the Council in the near future.

MEETING AND BRIEFING SCHEDULES

Each Council determines the days and times for its own Council Meetings and briefing sessions. Colac Otway Shire Council has met on Wednesdays for many years, with briefings occurring through the day-time and Council Meetings commencing at 4pm.

Following each election, Councillors and the CEO should discuss what an effective schedule will be for the term ahead. Councillors will need to collaborate and be open to adjustments if needed to ensure being a councillor is accessible and effective for the whole of the Council.

Council meeting dates for 2024 have been scheduled and are published on Council's website [Council and Committee Meeting Dates](#). Dates for 2025 will be determined after the election.

All Councils have introduced options for remote attendance at briefing sessions and Council Meetings, which is particularly important when weather conditions may present risks for Councillors and staff travelling across the municipality. Notwithstanding these provisions, in-person attendance is recognised as the most effective form of participation and is generally expected to be the normal way of operating.

EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORT FOR COUNCILLORS

Councillor Code Of Conduct

The *Local Government Act 2020*, as amended in 2024, requires Councillors to observe the Model Councillor Code of Conduct. The Model Councillor Code of Conduct is being developed by Local Government Victoria, and the draft of the new code can be found on the [Engage Victoria](#) website. If the final Model Councillor Code of Conduct reflects the draft, there will be a number of specific policies that Councils will be required to develop early in the term that are enforceable through the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

Indicative time commitment

When asked about time commitments, almost every former Councillor will comment on the amount of reading required by a Councillor. Council tries to minimise paper usage, issuing all agendas and reports electronically. This on-screen reading can take a bit of time to get used to.

Councillors also need to prioritise spending time meeting and working with other Councillors, the CEO and Council officers to:

- Provide local knowledge or local insight; and
- Ensure that they are fully informed before making decisions as Council.

The following table reflects the current arrangements and is a good representation of the time a Councillor needs to be able to commit to effectively fulfill their role.

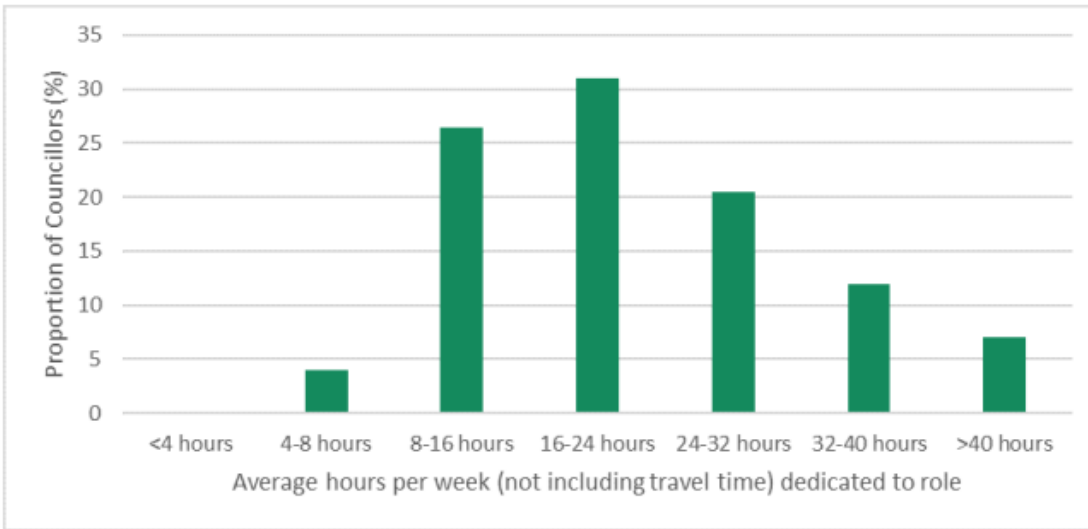
ACTIVITY	HOURS PER MONTH	CURRENT PRACTICE
Council Meeting Day	5 - 6	Fourth Wednesday of each month including Agenda review at 2pm and Council Meeting at 4pm
Council Briefings	16 - 20	First, second and third Wednesdays of each month
Planning Committee Meeting	2 - 4	Second Wednesday of each month
Submissions Committee Meetings	2 - 3	First Wednesday of each month
Civic engagements and events	1	As invited
Other Committees	1 - 2	Appointed by Council in Nov/Dec each year
Reading and research	4 - 6	Any time
Community engagement	2 - 4	As required
TOTAL	Approx. 33 – 46 hours per typical month	

The above table doesn't include travel time or discretionary activities.

The role of the Mayor includes additional responsibilities and therefore requires an even greater time commitment.

In 2020, the Local Government Inspectorate sent all Mayors and Councillors a survey including a question asking the average number of hours per week dedicated to fulfilling the role.

A total of 187 councillors responded and most respondents stated that they dedicated between 8 and 32 hours a week to fulfilling their role as a Councillor. This does not include travel time.



The first few weeks of January are generally free from Council commitments, however, the first January of the term may require some additional workshops due to Councillor induction or the development of the Integrated Strategic Plans, including the Council Plan.

Councillors will also be required to participate in additional meetings each year for strategic and annual planning workshops such as the development of the Council Budget, Council Plan and Community Vision.

Remuneration

The term of the Councillor commences on the day that the Councillor takes the oath or affirmation of office in front of the Chief Executive Officer. The oath or affirmation will also require that Councillors abide by the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Once the Councillor’s term commences, they are eligible to be paid an allowance and receive reimbursement for nominated activities and expenses.

The Council Expenses Policy sets out information relating to allowances paid to the Mayor and Councillors, reimbursement of eligible disbursements, facilities, resources and support available to provide support to enable Councillors to fulfil their responsibilities as elected members of the community.

As a minimum, Councillors are provided with a mobile phone, devices and email accounts. Follow this link for more information: [Council Expenses Policy](#). This policy will be reviewed within the first few months of the new Council Term.

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor allowance amounts be set in accordance with a determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal. The base allowances payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayor and Councillors from 1 July 2024 are set out below. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not entitled to receive an allowance as a Councillor while receiving an allowance as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor:

Mayors	\$109,114
Deputy Mayors	\$54,558
Councillors	\$34,028

THE GENERAL ELECTION 2024

The Colac Otway Shire Council General Election for the 2024 - 2028 term will take place on 26 October 2024 and will be conducted by postal ballot.

At the Council General Election 2024, seven Councillors will be elected. Colac Otway Shire Council is unsubdivided, so there are no wards and every Councillor represents the whole of the municipal community.

Visit our website at [Local Government Elections - Colac Otway Shire](#) for more information and direct links to the Victorian Electoral Commission and the Municipal Association of Victoria websites

Key Dates

DATE	ACTIVITY
7 August 2024 at 4pm	Close of roll
9 September 2024	Nominations open
17 September 2024 at 12 noon	Nominations, candidate statements, photographs, and questionnaires close
18 September 2024	Ballot draw
7 October 2024	Ballot pack mail out begins
25 October 2024	Voting closes at 6pm
1 November 2024 at 12 noon	All postal votes must be received by VEC
15 November 2024	Latest date election results will be declared

Mandatory candidate training

Candidates must complete candidate training prior to nominating to be a candidate. Under the *Local Government Act 2020* you will not be able to nominate as a candidate unless you have completed the training.

This training has been prepared and is being administered by Local Government Victoria. For this reason, the Colac Otway Shire Council is not able to assist you if you are having difficulties accessing the candidate training. You can access more information including the link to the training at [Candidate Training \(localgovernment.vic.gov.au\)](https://localgovernment.vic.gov.au)

Becoming a candidate

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) conducts the elections on behalf of all councils in Victoria.

All candidate nominations have been lodged in person with the VEC at the VEC's election office within the nomination period. The VEC has released a Candidate Handbook to assist candidates in the nomination and campaigning process. This manual outlines the nomination process, campaigning, and post-election activities.

The VEC has also published a Scrutineer's Handbook. Both handbooks are available at the VEC website [Local council candidate resources | Victorian Electoral Commission \(vec.vic.gov.au\)](#).

Election Advertising

The Electoral Signage Guidelines outline the requirements for the placement of electoral signs within Colac Otway Shire.

Basically, election advertising signs are permitted on private property without a permit if they meet the following:

- Property owner's permission is obtained;
- Must only include one sign on the land;
- Must not be animated or internally illuminated;
- Cannot exceed a display area of 5 square metres;
- The sign is limited to publishing the election, potentially including information about an election candidate;
- Cannot be displayed at any stage;
 - Three (3) months prior to the election;
 - More than 14 days after the election.

Electoral signs **are not** permitted on roads, on municipal buildings, reserves, or Council land, including any structures such as bus shelters, power/light poles. In general terms no electoral advertising is permitted on roads, parkland or council owned or managed land.

The guideline can be found at Council's [Information for Candidates](#) webpage.

Election Period Policy

Section 69(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires an Election Period Policy to be included in the Governance Rules. The Policy must prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election that:

- a) relates to the appointment or remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer but not to the appointment or remuneration of an Acting Chief Executive Officer; or
- b) commits the Council to expenditure exceeding one per cent of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year; or
- c) the Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or the Council considers should not be made during an election period.

The Policy must also prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election or a by-election that would enable the use of Council's resources in a way that is intended to influence, or is likely to influence, voting at the election.

The Election Period Policy has been prepared to ensure the election is conducted in a manner that is ethical, fair, and equitable and are publicly perceived as such.

The Policy is incorporated into Council's Governance Rules document which can be accessed on Council's website at [Governance Rules](#)

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET ELECTED?

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) will declare the election results for all Councils by 15 November 2024. It is expected that Colac Otway Shire Council's declaration will occur on Friday 8 November 2024. In the first few days, successful candidate/s will take the oath/affirmation and read the Code of Conduct.

Councillor Induction

Councillor Induction is a critical investment of time and effort by Councillors and Council's administration. It ensures the Council Term starts on a strong footing, establishing an effective way of working that will underpin the success for the next four years.

Once elected, a Councillor must complete Councillor induction training within four months after the day the Councillor takes the oath or affirmation of office. Mayors and Deputy Mayors must complete additional training specific to these roles within one month of election to these offices.

The induction program arranged by Council will be comprehensive and will include all prescribed matters as well as additional content. This program is designed to enable Councillors to develop a detailed understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including legal requirements and the strategic planning framework.

Through participation in the induction program, Councillors will be able to develop the skills, capabilities and knowledge needed to fulfil their important role, as well as build effective relationships with each other, the CEO and senior officers.

In-person attendance will be required and most of the induction will take place in Colac. The induction will be delivered by external parties with specific expertise, as well as by Council officers.

The following key dates are provided in this information booklet so that candidates can plan their calendar in advance of the election. These dates are based on the Declaration occurring on Friday 8 November 2024 and are therefore subject to change if the declaration is delayed.

11 November 2024

- Opportunity for Councillors-elect to attend Remembrance Day services.
- Swearing in ceremony for Councillors and afternoon tea with family and friends.

12 November to 14 November 2024

- Commencement of Induction incorporating mandatory elements.

19 November to 21 November 2024

- Continuation of Induction incorporating mandatory elements.
- Includes regional induction day for SouthWest Victoria Alliance (hosted in Warrnambool).

Induction and Council Meetings and briefings will continue to be scheduled Tuesday to Thursday until mid-December, with details to be provided to Councillors at the commencement of their induction program.

Other key Meeting Dates that have already been scheduled during this period include:

- 20 November 2024 at 4pm – Meeting to Elect the Mayor
- 27 November 2024 at 4pm – First Council Meeting of the term
- 4 December 2024 at 3pm – Submissions Committee Meeting (if required)
- 4 December 2024 at 4pm – Planning Committee Meeting (if required)
- 11 December 2024 at 4pm – Council Meeting

COUNCILLORS AND STAFF

Relationships are key to good governance in local government. Good relationships, which are based on understanding and agreements around roles, help the different elements of a local government to work together effectively.

The relationship between Councillors and staff is one of the most complex relationships in local government and is critical to achieving good governance and good outcomes. These relationships are stronger and more effective when there is goodwill, understanding and respect of each other’s roles, open and constructive communication, clear protocols and a good understanding of legislative requirements.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that council decisions are implemented promptly, overseeing the daily management of council operations, implementation of the Council Plan within the resources allocated by Council, overall performance and conduct of council staff and providing timely advice to the Council. The Chief Executive Officer is also the main person to which Council delegates powers.

The Chief Executive Officer sets the protocols for interactions between Councillors and staff, with the aim of ensuring that protocols and practices promote mutual respect, role clarity and professionalism.

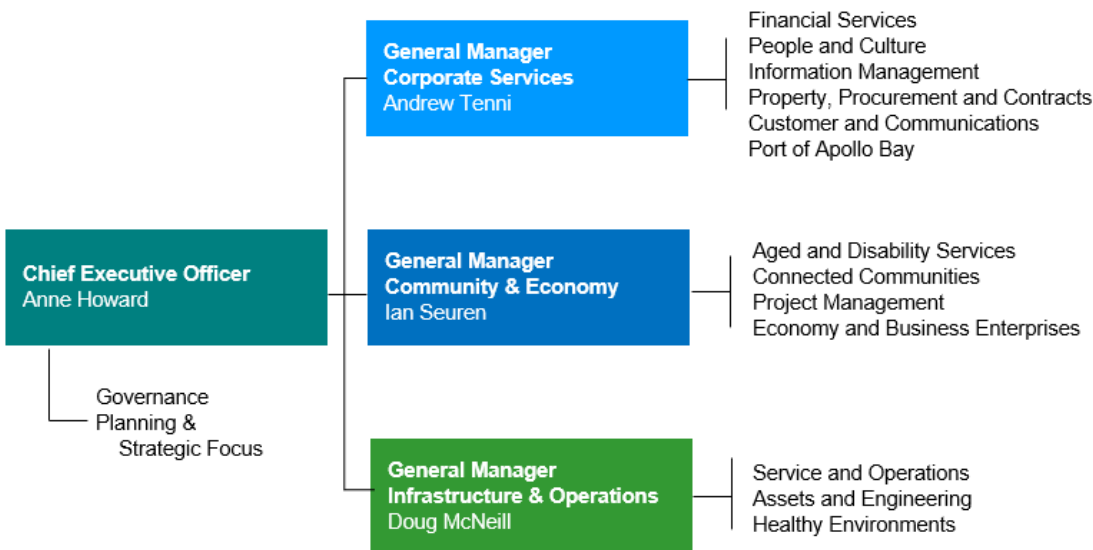
OUR PEOPLE

The organisation is comprised of 248 employees (fulltime equivalent) (full time, part time and casual) led by the Chief Executive Officer.

It is the function for the Chief Executive Officer to establish and maintain the organisational structure of Council. The organisation is comprised of three directorates and within these directorates there are several departments.

The *Local Government Act 2020* provides the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for all staffing matters including appointing, directing, managing, and dismissing members of Council staff.

(as at 30 June 2023)



FURTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

To access more information and resources, visit:

Colac Otway Shire Council

Council's website - [Home - Colac Otway Shire](#)

[Council Policies](#)

[Strategies and Plans](#)

[Budget and Finances](#)

[Regional Profile](#)

[Local Government Elections - Information for Voters and Candidates](#)

Other sources of Information

Municipal Association of Victoria - [MAV website](#)

Local Government Victoria - [Local Government Victoria](#)

Victorian Electoral Commission - [Victorian Electoral Commission - VEC](#)

Victorian Electoral Commission - [Candidate Handbook](#)

What Council's Do - [Know Your Council](#)

Local Government Inspectorate - [Local Government Inspectorate](#)

Good Governance Guide - [Good Governance Guide](#)

If you have any further questions, you can also contact Council's Governance Team, at inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au or call 5232 9400.

Speech or hearing impaired

National Relay Service TTY on 133 677

Speak and Listen on 1300 555 727

Translation and interpreting services

Please call the Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to telephone Colac Otway Shire Council on 03 5232 9400. This service is available 24 hours a day.