



# **Annual General Meeting Agenda**

**9<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**Bothwell Council Chambers**

## **Notice of Annual General Meeting of Council Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

To Councillors,

In accordance with the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025, Notice is hereby given, that an Annual General Meeting of Central Highlands Council is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber, **Bothwell** on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025**, commencing at 9.00am with the business of the meeting to be in accordance with the following agenda paper.

In accordance with the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 Part 2, Division 1, a notice of the meeting was published in the Mercury on 25<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

### **General Manager's Certification**

PURSUANT to Section 65 (1) of the Local Government Act 1993, I hereby certify, with respect to the advice, information and/or recommendation provided for the guidance of Council in this Agenda, that:

- A. such advice, information and/or recommendation has been given by a person who has the qualifications or experience necessary to give such advice; and
- B. where any advice is given by a person who does not have the required qualifications or experience, that person has obtained and taken into account the advice from an appropriately qualified or experienced person.

Section 65(2) forbids Council from deciding any matter which requires the advice of a qualified person without considering that advice.

Dated at Bothwell this **4<sup>th</sup>** day of **December 2025**.



Stephen Mackey  
**Acting General Manager**

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The meeting commenced at \_\_\_\_ a.m.

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## **AUDIO RECORDING DISCLAIMER**

As per *Regulation 43 of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025*, audio recordings of meetings will be made available to Councillors, staff and members of the wider community including Government Agencies at no charge and will be made available on Council's website as soon as practicable after each Council Meeting. Unlike Parliament, Council meetings are not subject to parliamentary privilege, and both Council and the individual may be liable for comments that may be regarded as offensive, derogatory and/or defamatory.

The Mayor advises the meeting and members of the public that Council Meetings, not including Closed Sessions, are audio recorded and published on Council's Website in accordance with Council's Policy 2017-50.

The Mayor also advises, that members of the public are not permitted to make audio recordings of Council Meetings without prior approval being granted.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

I acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and original owners and continuing custodians of this land on which we gather today and acknowledge and pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging.

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## **CONDUCT OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Central Highlands Council takes safety seriously. We have a duty to ensure that we provide a safe workplace for our Employees, Councillors, Contractors and members of the public while present at Council's workplaces.

These premises form part of the Council's workplace, and it is expected that everyone who attends Council meetings will behave in a polite and respectful manner. People should refrain from using offensive or derogatory language or comments and not be aggressive, threatening or speak in a hostile manner.

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**1. PRESENT**

**1.1 IN ATTENDANCE**

**1.2 PUBLIC ATTENDEES**

**1.3 APOLOGIES**

## **2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND STAFF**

### **2.1 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

#### **PURPOSE**

In accordance with the requirements of Part 2 Regulation 10 of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025, the chairperson of a meeting is to request Councillors to indicate whether they have, or are likely to have, a pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any item on the Agenda.

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## **3. MINUTES**

### **3.1 CONFIRMATION OF DRAFT MINUTES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2024**

#### **RECOMMENDATION 01/12.2025/AGM**

**Moved:** Cr

**Seconded:** Cr

**THAT** the Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 10 December 2024 be confirmed.

#### **Attachment – Draft Annual General Meeting Minutes**

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the report is to confirm the Council Minutes of the previous month. Copies of the minutes have been previously circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

#### 4. ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

##### RECOMMENDATION 02/12.2025/AGM

**Moved:** Cr

**Seconded:**

Cr

*THAT the Central Highlands Council Annual Report 2024-2025 be received.*

##### Attachment – Annual Report 2024-2025

#### BACKGROUND

The Central Highlands Council Annual Report for 2024-2025 was advertised in the Mercury Newspaper on 25 November 2025 and is now presented to Council and Electors. It has been prepared in accordance with Section 72 of the *Local Government Act 1993* which includes Financial Statements and Audit Opinion.

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#### 5. SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED ON THE ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

A submission was received from Kate Walker on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025

##### Attachment – Review of Central Highlands Council 2024-2025 and Moloney Asset Management Systems

#### Acting General Manager

Central Highlands Council  
6 Tarleton Street  
Hamilton TAS 7140

Dear Acting General Manager,

I am writing to formally submit my review of the Central Highlands Council's **2024–25 Annual Report**. I do so both in my personal capacity as a local resident and as a concerned representative of the community. I have a strong interest in our municipality's governance and performance, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the Annual Report in line with the Council's public accountability processes.

Please find enclosed a **written submission** which raises key findings, provides financial insights, and poses questions under the *Local Government Act 1993 (Tas)*. The submission highlights several important observations about Council's performance over the past financial year, including analysis of financial management and compliance matters. It also raises a number of questions for clarification, prepared in the spirit of constructive engagement. I note that under Section 72 of the Local Government Act 1993, councils are required to invite the community to make submissions on the Annual Report. In keeping with this provision, my submission is offered as a contribution to transparent governance and informed public discussion.

I respectfully **request that my submission be formally received** by the Council and **tabled as part of the public feedback** to Council's annual reporting process. In particular, I ask that it be included for discussion and record

at the appropriate forum (such as the Council's Annual General Meeting) where community feedback on the Annual Report is considered. By doing so, the Council will demonstrate its commitment to community engagement and fulfill its obligations to incorporate public input into the annual reporting cycle. I trust that the points raised in my submission will be given due consideration by both Council members and management in reviewing the year's outcomes and planning improvements for the future.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to any follow-up or clarification the Council may provide in response to my submission. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the address above should you require any further information.

Thank you for your assistance.

Regards

*Kate*

Kate Walker FRIM MAICD AMIM

## **Response to Kate Walker – Central Highlands Council 2024–25 Annual Report & Annual Plan from Zeehsan Tauqeer (Accountant)**

### **Executive Summary**

This report provides a formal response to the matters raised by Kate Walker regarding the Central Highlands Council 2024–25 Annual Report and Annual Plan. Several comments appear to be based on incorrect assumptions about Council's financial position, the difference between budget forecasts and actual results, and the structure of Council's capital program.

While the Executive Summary in the Annual Report references a **\$2.29 million surplus**, this was a **budget estimate**, not actual spending. Actual financial performance for 2024–25 resulted in a **deficit of \$821,757**.

Overall, Council remains financially sustainable. Operations continue to deliver **operating surpluses**, Council carries **zero debt**, and capital projects are funded through a combination of operating surpluses and external grants such as **Road to Recovery (RTR)**, **Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI)**, and **Black Spot funding**. Cash reserves have reduced in recent years due to investment in capital works that directly benefit the community.

### **1. Clarification – Surplus vs Deficit**

- The \$2.29 million referenced in the Executive Summary was a **budget forecast**, not an actual result.
- The **actual outcome** for 2024–25 was a **deficit of \$821,757**, which is consistent with several major capital projects being delivered.
- Council has consistently operated with an **operating surplus** meaning **operating revenue exceeds operating expenditure**.
- This operating surplus is used to support capital investment alongside state and federal grants.



## 2. Understanding Council's Financial Sustainability

- Council has **no borrowings**, and therefore no interest costs or debt repayments.
- Operating expenditure remains **below operating revenue**, which is the core indicator of long-term financial sustainability.
- Cash reserves have been drawn down in recent years to deliver community beneficial projects (roads, buildings, parks, public amenities).
- These investments directly support ratepayers and are aligned with Council's strategic goals.

## 3. Road Asset Revaluation – Moloney Asset Management

- Council's road network was recently revalued by independent road evaluator **Moloney Asset Management**.
- The annual renewal requirement for the entire road network is **\$1,063,000 per annum** (as per Moloney's asset modelling).
- Due to improved road conditions and sustained maintenance programs, Moloney's latest assessment extended the **useful life of several road categories**, reducing long-term renewal pressure.
- A snapshot of the Moloney's comparative benchmark (against 72 other councils) is attached for reference.

## 4. Capital Projects – How They Are Initiated

- Capital projects are brought forward primarily by **Councillors and the Mayor**, not by administration.
- Members of the public who wish to raise a project or concern must approach their **elected representatives** prior to the development of the annual budget.
- Administration assesses feasibility, costing, useful life, and compliance but project selection is largely **Council-driven**, not officer-driven.

## 5. Capital Budget Structure

Council operates two parallel capital streams:

### A. Maintenance & Renewal (Work & Services Budget)

- Focuses on maintaining existing infrastructure: roads, drainage, footpaths, kerbs, buildings, parks, and essential assets.

### B. New Capital Projects & Carry-Forward Projects

- Includes significant upgrades, new infrastructure, and projects continuing from previous years.

## Important Clarifications

- Capital budget estimates around **\$5 million** do **not** indicate full utilisation some projects naturally:
  - carry forward to the next financial year
  - complete under budget
- Plant replacement accounts for **15–20% of the capital budget annually**.
- Old plant is replaced with new plant; the total fleet size remains similar, keeping maintenance costs stable or reduced over time.

## 6. Community Spending Distribution

- Funding highlighted under “community spending” is **not funded by ratepayers**, but through external grants (RTR, LRCI, Black Spot).
- A review of the last three years of capital budgets confirms there is **no focus on one town or region**.
- With limited resources, Council continues to spread investment across **all parts of the municipality**.

### Examples from Annual Reports:

- **2024–25 Annual Report** – Page 6: Significant upgrades, expansions, and refurbishments.
- **2023–24 Annual Report** – Page 7: Major upgrade works conducted in house.
- **2022–23 Annual Report** – Page 7: Projects in Queens Park, Bethune Park, Ellendale, and other areas.

This demonstrates a consistent and equitable distribution of works.

## 7. Asset Renewal vs Depreciation

- Asset consumption ratio benchmark: **100%**
- Council’s 2024–25 ratio: **76%**, influenced by major upgrade projects (e.g., converting gravel roads to sealed roads).
- This variance is normal when renewals are deferred to accommodate significant upgrades that improve service levels.

## 8. Population Growth Context

- According to the Local Government Area Snapshot, Central Highlands Council population increased by **213 residents** from 2009 to 2024.

- This modest growth supports Council's focus on sustainable, long-term asset management rather than rapid expansion.

## Responses to Questions & Requests

### A. Underlying Surplus Strategy

Council's strategy for the coming years includes:

- Rebuilding **investment reserves**
- Increasing applications for **capital grants** to reduce reliance on Council reserves
- Managing inflation-driven costs by closely monitoring:
  - Employee benefits
  - Materials and services expenditure
- Maintaining operating surpluses to support capital sustainability.

### B. Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP)

- The LTFP is publicly available on Council's website and includes rate increase projections.
- Due to inflation and cost changes, annual variations in revenue and expenditure are expected.
- Council can provide an **LTFP Summary** in the next annual report to show how the annual budget aligns with long-term projections.

### C. Capital Investment Plan by Community

- Capital works are suggested primarily by **Councillors and the Mayor**.
- Community members may raise issues or proposals through elected members before the budget process.
- Council can consider a **multi-year schedule** for smaller Council-funded projects.
- Large-scale projects depend on external grant funding and may extend over multiple years.

### D. Asset Renewal and Backlog

- The recent Moloney road assessment covers:
  - Sealed roads
  - Unsealed roads
  - Pavement and formation
  - Kerbs and footpaths

- Council's performance is benchmarked against **72 other councils**, confirming reasonable asset condition and renewal performance.

### **Response to Kate Walker – Central Highlands Council 2024–25 Annual Report & Annual Plan from Jason Branch (Manager Works And Services)**

- Reserves have been drawn upon in recent years with majority of residents wanting expenditure as well as elected members in relation to concerns of growing merges with other Councils
- Capital Works Deliver - some projects simply don't finish by year end, with numerous reasons such as design and technical problems, environmental findings and availability of contractors
- Community Spending Distribution - Even though some towns seen more spending than others this year in past budgets this may have been different, has to also take into account priorities, rate base numbers, traffic volumes etc, achievability with grants. I believe that the larger populated areas need to receive more spending to maintain assets
- Road Upgrades - Thousand Acre Lane has been a 10 year plan of Councils to not only improve safety and turn from unseal to seal but also open up that lowet Broad Marsh/Elderslie area to the Upper Derwent Valley and with the latest traffic data from a 3 week time this year states it has been a good move The total vehicle movements were 4466 (averaging 213/day). Resealing of our sealed roads will continue as normal
- Bridge and Drainage - No major bridge problems at this stage, will be a couple level 3 inspections coming up on two bridges as they approaching 80 years in asset life this will determine if we will have any future renewals, are no wooden bridges left to replace

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**6. OTHER BUSINESS**

Any other business considered appropriate for the Annual General Meeting.

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**7. CLOSURE**

Mayor Triffitt thanked everyone for their contribution and declared the meeting closed at \_\_\_\_\_ **am**.