



Item: 6.4 **Ref:** WO/2024/00681
Title: Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Phase 4 Priority List (LRCI)
Author: General Manager
Previous Items: Not Applicable
Attachment: No

Community Strategic Plan Reference:

Goal 1.1 – Walcha will be serviced by an integrated and efficient transport network.

Goal 5.3 – Walcha’s cultural identity will be enhanced.

Goal 5.6 – People of all ages and abilities will be encouraged to participate in cultural, recreational and sporting activities.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- 1) Obtain community feedback in regards to the allocation of Local Roads & Community Infrastructure (LRCI) funding Phase 4
 - 2) Consider feedback and endorse LRCI Phase 4 Works Schedule for submission to the Commonwealth Government, and;
 - 3) Update the 2024-2025 Operating Plan and Budget for adoption accordingly.
-

Introduction:

Local Roads & Community Infrastructure (LRCI) funding Phase 4 is the final round of non-competitive grant funding that was provided to Councils from the Commonwealth Government as a means to deliver ‘priority local road and community infrastructure projects’. Phase 4 is available now and must be expended by the end of the 2024-2025 financial year. The amount allocated to Walcha Council is **\$933,157** and is comprised of two parts:

Part A - **\$591,796** for approved local road and community infrastructure projects, and;

Part B - **\$341,361** for approved road projects in regional, rural and outer-urban areas.

Previous works undertaken via previous rounds of LRCI Funding include:

■ Middle, North & Pakington Street Kerb & Gutter -	\$526,830
■ Rose Garden Stage 2 (Stonework fencing) -	\$ 45,000
■ Aberbaldie Road Heavy Patching -	\$147,600
■ Gravel Resheeting works -	\$513,877
■ Truckwash Bay (contribution) -	\$252,000
■ Walcha Gym (contribution) -	\$225,200
■ Urban Roads Resealing -	\$174,000

Due to the flexible and non-competitive nature of the LRCI funding, Council have prioritised other sources of funding for our capital works schedule in the 2024-2025 financial year. The draft budget is now completed with the *exception* of allocation of LRCI Phase 4 for 2024-2025 – giving the community an opportunity for direct input to this funding while the budget is on public exhibition during May 2024.



Report:

Understandably, previous rounds of LRCI have prioritised road infrastructure funding. The most significant expenditure on community projects (truck wash bay, Walcha gym) was allocated during Phase 2 to fill funding gaps in committed projects already funded by other sources.

In the 2024-2025 budget Council has a large grant funding allocation to capital road infrastructure works, including:

■ Derby Street Upgrade -	\$6,000,000
■ Urban Roads Local -	\$1,000,000
■ Thunderbolts Way -	\$ 600,000
■ Sealed Local Rural Roads -	\$1,150,000
■ Unsealed Local Rural Roads -	\$ 740,000
■ LRCI (Roads – TBD) -	\$ 341,361

This is in addition to allocations for operation and maintenance expenditure (\$4,347,057), bridge replacement projects and expenditure on the Oxley Highway via Councils Roads Maintenance Contract with Transport for NSW (\$2,000,000).

Road Infrastructure

Council's renewal forecast for road infrastructure based on our adopted 2023-2024 Asset Management Plan is approximately \$2,700,000 per year. Excluding Derby Street, Council have budgeted \$3,831,361 for 2024-2025 – i.e. exceeding our target for that year. Additional road infrastructure works will help address any 'backlog' road renewal works and improve overall network condition, however will need to be done via contracted resources only as Council is already at its limit in terms of delivering works via internal resources.

Based on the LRCI Part A and Part B requirements, at least \$341,361 needs to be spent on road infrastructure. One possible project could be Churchill Street Rehab (est. \$368,000) which would meet our requirements for Part B.

Part A could be allocated to various contracted road infrastructure activity including gravel resheeting, additional kerb and gutter, or possibly contribute to bridge replacement works where there is a Fixing Country Bridges funding gap for Winterbourne Road and Mooraback Road Bridges (discussions currently underway with the funding body).

Community Infrastructure

There are two major Community Infrastructure projects with allocations in the 2024-2025 Budget, being the Walcha Skate Park Precinct and Walcha Swimming Pool Upgrade – both funded by the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery (BLER) fund. Both projects have tendered cost estimates that exceed remaining BLER budgets. The Skate Park Precinct requiring at least \$500,000 to complete the committed scope and the Pool requiring well over \$1,000,000 to complete identified improvement works.



Both projects have pending 'Growing Regions' funding applications that would enable Council to deliver both projects without accessing LRCI. Unfortunately, Council have not received the outcome of these applications at the time of budget preparation.

Should 'Growing Regions' be unsuccessful, LRCI Phase 4 (Part A) could be used to fund delivery of the Skate Park Precinct – Council have a preferred tenderer ready to deliver works as soon as funding is available. For the Pool, the nature of the works means that Council could 'de-scope' leak reduction and concrete replacement to fit the current \$1.1M BLER funding allocation – leaving further works for the future. Though it is still an option to allocate a portion of LRCI to this purpose as well.

Via the Arts Advisory Committee, Council resolved to consider two art projects in the 2024-2025 budget using LRCI funds – being the Hospital Wall Mural (\$15,000) and the undertaking of a new sculpture adjacent to the Shirley Davison Bridge (\$50,000).

Finally, there is a funding shortfall to deliver all three pathways projects – Town, Darjeeling Road, and Summervale. Council will liaise with the funding body in the first instance to either obtain more funding or 'de-scope' the pathways works in order to fit our grant funded budget, through LRCI could also be utilised for this purpose if desired.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Financial Implications:

Allocation of this funding will not impact Council's bottom line as the money is non-competitive and already committed to Walcha Council.

Environmental Implications:

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Social Implications:

Whether this money is allocated to road infrastructure or community projects will have implications for the community. Council is tasked with maintaining a sustainable Council and ensuring we are maintaining and renewing our assets, while also delivering on our community goals in regards to health and wellbeing, recreation and culture.

Policy Implications:

There are no policy implications arising from this report.