



## SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

NOTICE OF MEETING

Monday 5 August 2024

Barcaldine Council Chambers, 71 Ash Street, Barcaldine

### Councillors

Rob Chandler (Mayor)

Milynda Rogers (Deputy Mayor)

Kim Williams

Vanessa Howard

Linda Penna

Bob O'Brien

Tom Gleeson

### Officers

Paula Coulton (District Manager – Aramac and Muttaborra)

Jenny Lawrence (District Manager – Barcaldine)

Daniel Bradford (Acting Chief Executive Officer)

Karyn Coomber (District Manager – Alpha and Jericho)

Lee Busby (Interim Director of Works)

### In Attendance

Debbie Young (Minute Secretary)

### Deputations

Nil

Please find attached the agenda for the Special Meeting to be held on Monday 5 August 2024 at the Barcaldine Council Chambers, 71 Ash Street, Barcaldine.

Daniel Bradford, Acting Chief Executive Officer

**BARCALDINE REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
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BARCALDINE REGIONAL COUNCIL

**Our Vision** – A positive, sustainable and innovative regional council.

**Our Mission** – To provide excellence for the community.

**Prayer**

Almighty God

We acknowledge that we have a responsibility to look after your creation, especially this region we call Barcaldine Regional Council.

We are conscious that our decisions are going to affect deeply the people we have come here to serve.

Assist us to exercise respect for Councillors, staff and for the people of our region.

Help us in this meeting to act wisely, justly and intelligently in all our deliberations.

Thank you Lord for the privilege of both leading and serving and assist us to do these well.

Amen

**Condolences**

**Apologies**

**Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners**

**Declarations of Prescribed Conflicts of Interest**

**Declarations of Declarable Conflicts of Interest**

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**2. Close of Meeting**

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Council Meeting Date: 5 August 2024  
**Item No:** 1.1.1  
**Subject Heading:** **Grant Application – Local Government Grants and Subsidies**  
Author and Title: Daniel Bradford, Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Classification: (if confidential)

*Summary: The Department of Local Government’s Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program 2024-2028 funding round is currently open for submissions. This report is to consider those projects which could be funded through this program and endorse the submission for the funding which closes on the 9th of August 2024.*

**Officer’s Recommendation: That Council:**

- 1. Approve the Barcaldine Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade project for submission for grant funding under the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program and**
- 2. If unsuccessful, requests the Chief Executive Officer to continue to apply for grant funding to fund the balance of the project.**

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**Background**

Barcaldine Regional Council, at its Annual Budget Meeting in June 2024 approved the Barcaldine Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Upgrade project as part of its three-year capital works program. The STP has been undergoing works for a number of years and officers have taken the step to reset and define the needs of Council going forward.

The project approved in the budget included a scoping and design stage and then a construction phase. The total project cost is expected to be approximately \$3.25million. This will become clearer once the scoping and design stage is complete. The overall project is aiming to see the STP be capable of producing tertiary treated effluent for reuse to suitable land application and commercial reuse, aiming to minimise environmental impact. As part of the project and review, the new design will need to be agile enough to respond to the future demands of the Barcaldine township.

As part of the budget, the design and scoping exercise is to be funded through the Works for Queensland Program 2024-2027. Additionally, Council committed \$1.05million to the construction phase of the project. While as part of the budget; Council has committed to the project, to aid in minimising the financial impacts of this project, sourcing funding for the balance will reduce risk to Council.

The Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program is a cyclic grant program offered through the Queensland Department of Local Government. The funding is offered in two streams, planning and infrastructure. The objective of the funding is to deliver priority infrastructure projects that meet the identified needs of their communities and which support safe, liveable and prosperous local communities and sustainable councils.

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Council is required to provide 40% of the funding, with projects eligible for up to \$10million, out of a pool of \$115million. The project proposal stage closes on 9 August with approved projects moving to the business case phase. With the limited information available, Council will apply for funding for the \$1.95million currently unfunded portion of the project.

It must be noted that depending on outcomes of the defined scoping exercise and final design, less or additional funds may be needed to complete the project. So even with this funding being successful, until this stage is complete and tenders assessed, a definitive understanding of the costs relating this project is still a little way off at this stage.

**Link to Corporate Plan**

Theme 2: Services

Our townships continue to be provided with compliant and sustainable water, sewerage and waste services. In the absence of other alternative providers, we continue to provide quality community support services on a cost neutral basis.

**Consultation (internal/external)**

Council Officers

**Policy Implications**

Nil

**Asset Management Implications**

The Barcaldine STP is a piece of essential infrastructure which needs to be managed appropriately. This upgrade will consider ongoing maintenance and operational needs to provide for efficient operation and management.

**Legal Implications**

The project is approved by Council to proceed, with or without the grant. This resolution is of no impact to the project itself from a legal perspective.

**Budget and Resource Implications**

The project is approved by Council to proceed with partial funding allocated to the project. The intent is to continue to explore options for the balance of the project to be funded. This is the first step of this process to reduce the financial burden of self-funding the project.

**Risk Management Implications**

The upgrade to the Barcaldine STP is essential to alleviate pressures from regulatory agencies and achieve ongoing compliance and statutory performance measures. By being able to fund this project through a grant, officers feel that the reduced impact on Council's finances is essential to the ongoing sustainability of Council.

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Council Meeting Date:	5 August 2024
<b>Item No:</b>	<b>1.1.2</b>
<b>Subject Heading:</b>	<b>Grant Application – Housing Support Program</b>
Author and Title:	Daniel Bradford, Acting Chief Executive Officer
Classification: (if confidential)	Click here to enter text.

*Summary: The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Housing Support Program Stream 2 funding round is currently open for submissions. This report is to consider those projects which could be funded through this program and endorse the submission for the funding which closes on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2024.*

**Officer's Recommendation: That Council:**

- 1. Approve the Council Housing Project as an approved project for the value of \$11,500,000 for 2024/2025 Capital Works Program, subject to funding being approved and**
- 2. Approve the Council Housing Project for submission for grant funding under the Housing Support Program.**

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**Background**

Barcaldine Regional Council, at its Annual Budget Meeting in June 2024 approved the undertaking of the Housing Strategy for the Barcaldine region. This document is essential for establishing and understanding the regional needs of housing, which then can be used as a critical document in supporting the community to address the perceived regional housing shortage. This strategy would detail the needs of Council housing, regional housing needs now and into the future and the role Council is to play in seeing this come to fruition.

Detail of these impacts are expected to be explored as part of the housing strategy. However, an opportunity to apply for grant funding is available now and officers are requesting approval from Council for a housing construction project aimed at addressing some of these critical needs now.

The Housing Support Program Stream 2 funding opened on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2024 and closes on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2024. This \$500million funding program is a competitive grant process open to Local and State Government projects which will support the delivery of increased housing supply through the construction of enabling infrastructure and community amenities.

The proposed project to be submitted for funding is aiming to address housing issues in both Barcaldine and Alpha. The housing needs for Council are essential to delivering services. In the current climate, Council in some parts of the region, simply cannot employ staff as we have nowhere to house them. Low local unemployment is impacting our ability

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to attract locally based staff and some prospective employees from outside the region are unwilling to come to the area without suitable accommodation being offered as part of the role. This has been an issue for over two years and has steadily escalated to the point of somewhat of a stalemate in towns like Alpha.

In Barcaldine, the need for housing has been able to somewhat be addressed by renting private accommodation. This then impacts the public market with now eight properties not available for public rent. Other businesses and families looking to move to the region are being impacted by increased demand, driving up rental prices and reduced housing stocks available. Council is renting these houses for a cost of approximately \$150,000 per year.

The project proposed to begin to address these two critical issues is to construct suitable housing on land that is already developed and ready for house construction in Alpha and Barcaldine. The project is proposing to:

- Construct six homes in Gordon and Hooper Streets, Alpha:
  - 4x2 bedroom houses
  - 2x3 bedroom houses
- Construct six homes in Boree Street and Mahogany Court, Barcaldine:
  - 4x3 bedroom houses
  - 2x2 bedroom houses.

Officers have undertaken a review of the estimated cost of constructing housing in Western Queensland and have engaged with a housing supplier who has recently undertaken work in the region. The final site designs and layout will need to be worked through once approved, the budget includes allowances for:

- Housing Construction
- Carport and Garages
- Driveways
- Landscaping and Fencing
- Internal Road (Boree Street lot, Barcaldine)
- Project Management and Contingencies.

The process following the grant application being successful will see project managers appointed, tender documents drawn up and Council go to market for the construction of the work with delivery likely to take 6-9months, depending on the contractor and method of delivery.

This is a significant project with an ongoing impact to Council's operations which must be considered as part of the project. The project is proposing to construct an internal road into the Boree Street property; this would need to be maintained, along with common land gardens and lawn. Additionally, housing maintenance and management costs would increase with the increase to Council's managed housing stocks.

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Offsetting the costs of the owning these additional assets, Council would be receiving rent from the tenants.

Given where Council are with the Housing Strategy about to commence, it is a little unusual to be proposing a project at this point. However, the cost of housing construction and the availability of the grant funding, officers feel it is appropriate to undertake some works to try and address the immediate needs of housing for Council while this funding is available.

As part of the resolution, if funding is successful, the project would proceed. If it is unsuccessful, the project would need to be reconsidered by Council for any future grant funding rounds.

**Link to Corporate Plan**

Theme 1 – Community

Our communities have the infrastructure and programs to support safe, healthy living; welcome and retain new people to the region, provide affordable access to technology and culture and build resilience.

**Consultation (internal/external)**

Council Officers

**Policy Implications**

Nil

**Asset Management Implications**

This project would have a significant impact on Council's housing stocks. These houses would be new assets. While housing is a large cost, it is largely offset by revenue unlike many other Council assets. Appropriate inclusion in asset management plans and inspection programs would need to follow.

**Legal Implications**

Nil

**Budget and Resource Implications**

This is brand new project by Council. Council housing is essential to the delivery of our budgets and supporting ongoing service delivery for the community. By increasing our housing, this allows additional staff to come to the region to deliver these services and also increase the vibrancy of communities they live in. The project is expected to cost \$11.5million, with the entire project funded through the Housing Support Program.

Ongoing costs will vary from year to year with estimated costs per house of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for operations and maintenance. Rent from the two and three bedroom houses is \$7,300 and \$9,100 per annum respectively. It would be expected that



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during the first few years, given the houses are new, maintenance and operating costs should be lower.

**Risk Management Implications**

In considering any project, Council should consider the do-nothing approach, do-something. In this situation, doing nothing would see Council not consider any projects until the housing strategy is complete, with the continued escalation of challenges resourcing Council's operating activities. In a normal space with Council's funds, officers would consider this the appropriate option.

Given there is significant funding available, officers consider doing something an appropriate option.

This project is worth \$11.5million, with 100% funding from the program to deliver this essential supporting infrastructure. This is not going to resolve the problem of housing across the region, but in the absence of the housing strategy, this would start to address the issue.

For the specific project, there are a number of standard risks, which should be managed appropriately. There are financial risks that should the project costs not be managed appropriately or Council continues to experience escalation of construction costs. Officers have built in a 20% contingency to try and manage this risk.

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Council Meeting Date: 5 August 2024  
**Item No:** 1.1.3  
**Subject Heading:** Country University Centre  
Author and Title: Daniel Bradford, Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Classification: (if confidential) Click here to enter text.

*Summary: Remote Area Planning and Development (RAPAD) has successfully applied for funding for a Regional University Study Hub and has proposed that a new entity be established to operate and administer the Country University Centre (CUC) to be co-located across sites of the seven RAPAD Councils.*

**Officer's Recommendation: That Council:**

- 1. Agrees to become a member of the proposed CUC RAPAD and**
- 2. Nominates the Mayor to act as a Director of the CUC RAPAD to represent the Barcardine region.**

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**Background**

Remote Area Planning and Development (RAPAD) have pursued an option for a regional university hub since 2021. Duncan Taylor has partnered with RAPAD to navigate some of the early works to get the project to this point. With funding now secured, formal establishment and commitment from Council is required.

RAPAD applied in the 2023 Regional University Study Hub grant round and was announced as successful in mid-March 2024, the name proposed was CUC RAPAD. In that application it was proposed:

- That a new entity be established to operate and administer CUC RAPAD – not part of or legally connected to RAPAD or a particular Council.
- CUC RAPAD be incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and registered as a charity.
- Each RAPAD Council will form the membership and nominate a person to be their representative, or advise if they do not wish to participate.
- Each Council nominate facilities to be the sites – in Barcardine's case The Globe has been selected.
- A Centre Manager be responsible and accountable to the Board of Directors for all operational, financial, risk management and reporting processes and activities.

CUC RAPAD is an innovative model developed in conjunction with the seven local governments of Central Western Qld, operating under the organisation of the RAPAD Board and the Country Universities Centre (CUC), to provide educational support to a significantly large region of very remote, inland Australia.

The initial directorship was proposed as the pre-election seven RAPAD Directors and D. Taylor as Chair, this may now change to relevant Mayors.

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CUC RAPAD will affiliate into the CUC network by an Affiliation Agreement with defined accountabilities, financial and operational reporting; with the CUC Central Organisation providing comprehensive operational, risk management and financial support.

**Link to Corporate Plan**

Theme 1: Community – our communities have the infrastructure and programs to support safe, healthy living; welcome and retain new people to the region, provide affordable access to technology and culture and build resilience.

**Consultation (internal/external)**

RAPAD Councils

**Policy Implications**

Nil identified

**Budget and Resource Implications**

\$205,915 over four years (in-kind contributions from the seven Councils of RAPAD), plus any operational costs for use of Council assets.

**Risk Management Implications**

- Incoming Directors are responsible for their understanding of and application to all governance responsibilities of the new entity.
- Given this is a standalone organisation, Council's exposure is limited by liability of CUC RAPAD and not impact Council.

**Asset Management Implications**

A section of The Globe would be dedicated for the use of hub. This may require a few changes to the building to allow all hours access with a small investment from Council to accommodate these needs.

**Legal Implications**

Nil identified