

## 9.2.10 SUBMISSIONS - LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/2025 - 2033/2034

**FILE NO:** 16.00198

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council consider the submissions individually.

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### **REPORT:**

The Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034 (LTFP) was approved by Council to go onto public display on 1 May 2024, with submissions to close at 4.45pm on 31 May 2024.

#### **Public Display**

Council commenced promotion of the Draft Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025 (DP/OP) and the Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034 (LTFP) with a media release on 26 April, flagging the draft documents being presented to an Extraordinary Meeting of Council on 1 May 2024. The media release provided an overview of both documents and the key dates for the exhibition period of both draft plans.

The YourSay projects for both the DP/OP and LTFP went live on 3 May and ran through until 31 May. A link to the YourSay projects was provided on the home page of Council's website.

A media release was issued on 3 May advising that this submission process was now open. Council advertised the submission processes in the Council notices published to the Council website on 4 and 11 May.

Social media posts for the LTFP submission period were published on 9, 15 and 24 May. Social media posts for the DP/OP submission period were published on 16, 23 and 28 May. Both included links to the YourSay projects.

Council included a radio advertisement on the submission period for the DP/OP and LTFP on 2BS/B-Rock from 20 May through to 31 May.

#### **Submissions**

Submissions were able to be made via Council's YourSay site and/or through written submissions. At close of submissions on 31 May 2024, **20 people had visited the 2025 LTFP YourSay website** (down from 25 for 2024 LTFP), with 4 submissions being received via this method (1 for 2024 LTFP). A further submission was included from the Draft Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025 (DP/OP) that is more appropriately answered here, **totalling 5 submissions for the 2025 LTFP** (1 total for 2024 LTFP).

Council has had the Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034 (LTFP) on exhibition for the minimum required period of 28 days. Submissions were made on various matters and are detailed below for Councillors consideration:

## **Submission 1 – Various matters raised by John Hollis**

Mr Hollis has raised several issues which will be dealt with individually. The submission (**attachment 1**) is a series of questions, with each question addressed separately below. The recommendation is presented at the end of the submission.

### **1.1 Steps to improve and monitor Governance**

Mr Hollis comments that “I feel for quite a number of years the overall governance has been lacking and the community now is being asked to pick up the financial slack. What steps are planned/being taken to improve and monitor the Governance?”

Council has already commenced its *Pathway to Sustainability*, an initiative to return Council to a sustainable position over the long term. The LTFP as presented confirms that a continued focus on this initiative is required to achieve a sustainable outcome.

### **1.2 Improvement in transparency**

Mr Hollis further states “Also there needs to be a vast improvement in transparency of decisions/actions/strategies etc”.

Council seeks input via community consultation on most matters of importance. Council advertises for suitably qualified consultants, who actively consult local community members and experts when relevant and appropriate. While there are some reports that remain confidential due to their specific subject matter, most reports are presented to Council and are available in Council Business Papers. All Council Strategies and Plans are advertised and open to public submissions for at least 28 days before being presented to Council for final adoption and display on Council’s website.

### **1.3 Professional Marketing Plan**

Mr Hollis notes “A Professional Marketing Program also needs to be tabled.”

It is not clear from this submission as to what it is that needs to be “marketed”, however the LTFP was advertised and promoted in excess of the minimum requirements as prescribed by the applicable legislation.

**Recommendation:** That the information be noted, and no amendment be made to the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

## **Submission 2 – Steve Wilson – cutbacks**

A submission has been received from Steve Wilson (**attachment 2**) who comments “Two examples of easily cuts (sic) to save money are car races and fireworks. There are many others. The amount of rate payer money devoted to the Mt Panorama and the proposed go cart track is extortionate. For example \$350,000 (it seems) for a tyre wall would be far better spent almost anywhere else.” Mr Wilson also comments that “Another waste of money is on fireworks”.

These comments relate more to the Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025. Council is continuing on its *Pathway to Sustainability* program to identify areas where cost savings or additional income opportunities can be identified, and savings/opportunities identified so far have been included in both the Operational Plan 2024/2025 and the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

In response to Mr Wilson's comments, the \$350,000 for the tyre wall at Mt Panorama is for replacement of the tyre wall at turn 2 and is a requirement from Motorsport Australia before any future race events can be held.

No funds for a Go Kart track have been included in the Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025 or the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

With regards to the fireworks, it is assumed Mr Wilson is referencing the New Years Eve Party in the Park, which includes a firework display, but also includes other family-based entertainment options. Discussions are continuing with the Bathurst Business Chamber to take over this event, but Council is yet to make a formal decision on this matter.

**Recommendation:** That the information be noted, and no amendment be made to the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

### **Submission 3 – Kate Allan**

A submission has been received from Kate Allan (**attachment 3**) supporting the "Optimistic option with 15% rate rises over years 3, 4 & 5". Ms Allan states "The community has been distracted with arguments over Go cart (sic) tracks and BARN developments" and "the infrastructure that needs to be maintained and extended".

**Recommendation:** That the information be noted, and no amendment be made to the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

### **Submission 4 – Dianne McNab**

A submission has been received from Dianne McNab (**attachment 4**) stating "Council also has to limit its spending and concentrate on the services and facilities most important to the people it serves".

Bathurst Regional Council has a wide cross-section of ratepayers with many different views on what is important, and that Council is trying to satisfy, as identified through its ongoing community consultation. Council has been reviewing all its services and facilities over recent years to improve its financial sustainability and this process continues with the *Pathway to Sustainability* program.

Mrs McNab then mentions several areas that will "encourage visitors to spend some extra money and so improve the "bottom line" for the Museums" and "Council should listen to the people and not take the attitude of "us" and "them"."

These comments relate more to the Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025. Council is continuing on its *Pathway to Sustainability* program to identify areas where cost savings or additional income opportunities can be identified. Some of Mrs McNab's suggestions have already been implemented and all will be considered in future iterations of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Council constantly reviews its community consultation to ensure it continues to service the community's requirements.

All savings/opportunities identified so far have been included in both the Operational Plan 2024/2025 and the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

**Recommendation:** That the information be noted, and no amendment be made to the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

## Submission 5 – Various matters raised by Rowan Bracken

Mr Bracken lodged a submission for the Draft Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025 that contained several matters that are better addressed under the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034. The submission (**attachment 5**) is a series of comments, with each comment addressed separately below. The recommendation is presented at the end of the submission.

### 5.1 SRV

Mr Bracken comments that “It needs to be made clearer that the SRV amount of 15% in FYs 27-29 in the Optimistic budget is inclusive of the rate peg of 2.5%. OR IS IT? Presumably the additional amount sought in those three FYs is 12.5% per year on top of the assumed 2.5% rate peg, total 15%.”

Council has not approved an SRV (Special Rates Variation) so no SRV has been included in the Draft Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025.

The Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 does contain three scenarios – the Draft Operational Plan 2024/2025 as the Planned Model, plus an Optimistic Model and a Conservative Model. The Optimistic Model includes an SRV of 15% per year for 3 years commencing from 1 July 2026, which includes an estimated rate peg of 2.5% as stated on page 24:

increase-for-comparison-purposes. The SRV increase in the table below is inclusive of the rate peg increase in that year.

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	Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29	Year 6 2029/30	Year 7 2030/31	Year 8 2031/32	Year 9 2032/33	Year 10 2033/34
Planned (Base) Case	4.80%	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Cumulative	4.80%	8.47%	11.72%	15.07%	18.53%	22.08%	25.74%	29.52%	33.40%	37.40%
Conservative Case	4.80%	3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Cumulative	4.80%	8.47%	11.72%	15.07%	18.53%	22.08%	25.74%	29.52%	33.40%	37.40%
Optimistic Case	4.80%	3.50%	15.00%	15.00%	15.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Cumulative	4.80%	8.47%	24.74%	43.45%	64.97%	69.92%	75.01%	80.26%	85.67%	91.24%

As per IPART guidelines, an SRV percentage is always inclusive of the rate peg.

### 5.2 Balance Sheet

Mr Bracken comments that “The Balance Sheet for the Optimistic budget doesn't reconcile to the PnL”.

For all 3 scenarios, for all 4 funds and the Consolidated Fund, the Statement of Financial Position (previously called a Balance Sheet prior to 2013) in the Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 does reconcile to the Income Statement (previously called a Statement of Financial Performance from 2004 to 2005, or a Profit & Loss Statement (P & L) before then).

### 5.3 Three scenarios do not appear in Budget documents

Mr Bracken comments “note that the three scenarios budgeted do not appear in any of the documents on exhibition. Again, difficult to provide robust feedback based on the documents exhibited.”

The Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 contains three scenarios – the Draft Operational Plan 2024/2025 as the Planned Model, plus an Optimistic Model and a Conservative Model. The Financial statements for each fund as well as Consolidated

basis, for each of the three scenarios, are presented in the Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 as exhibited.

The Draft Operational Plan 2024/2025 does not contain any scenarios as it is the proposed budget for the years 2024/2025 to 2027/2028.

Mr Bracken comments that “The presentation of the consolidated budget means the issue with the General Fund and the need for an SRV is disguised. Would prefer a budget for each Fund as well as Consolidated.”

The Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 as exhibited presents the Financial Statements for each fund as well as Consolidated basis, clearly showing “the issue with the General Fund and the need for an SRV”.

#### **5.4 BARN**

This comment is addressed under Mr Bracken’s submission to the Draft Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025 earlier in these business papers.

#### **5.5 Water and Sewer charges**

Mr Bracken comments that “The changes to charging in Water and Sewer Fund are appreciated, notwithstanding that it’s expected they will be offset with increased cost efficiencies so as to keep the price rises as small as possible and not let the income side do all the heavy lifting. To that point about cost efficiencies being deployed as well as price rises, I would question the blanket 5% per annum rise which is at odds with CPI assumptions elsewhere across the LTFP; it seems excessive and is double the assumption for the planned budget’s CPI.”

Council is continuing on its *Pathway to Sustainability* program to identify areas where cost efficiencies can be identified, and savings identified so far have been included in both the Operational Plan 2024/2025 and the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

For this LTFP, in line with Reserve Bank of Australia, NSW Treasury forecasts and the Rate Peg, a CPI of 4.8% in 2025, and then 2.5% as per Office of Local Government and NSW Treasury guidelines has been used.

As explained in the Key Financial Risks and Issues section of the Draft Long Term Financial Plan, at the commencement of preparation of this LTFP the CPI was 5.4%, declining from 6.0% for the year ended 30 June 2023. The Revenue Assumptions section of the LTFP further describes how the % used in the LTFP were determined.

CPI is one of the many factors that are considered when setting the future charges for Water and Sewer services. Employee costs increasing 5.25% in 2025, then 4.75% in 2026 and then 4.25% (assumed) are another of the main contributors to these charges. After considering all factors, plus cost efficiencies whilst being mindful of minimising % increases, the charges as stated in the LTFP were decided.

#### **5.6 Inclusion of capital items in budget**

This comment is addressed under Mr Bracken’s submission to the Draft Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025 earlier in these business papers.

#### **5.7 How will my rates be spent**

This comment is addressed under Mr Bracken’s submission to the Draft Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025 earlier in these business papers.

#### **5.8 Consolidated Budget**

Mr Bracken comments that “The presentation of the consolidated budget on pp 76-78 makes it impossible to view each budget by Fund, noting the issue with the General Fund and the proposed SRV - Current Assets are a credit balance in FY26/27 onwards but no alarm bells are ringing.”

The Statement of Financial Position on p77 of the Draft Bathurst Delivery Program 2024-2028 and Operational Plan 2024/2025 is on a consolidated basis (total for General, Water, Sewer and Waste funds), and does not show either an SRV or a credit balance for Current Assets (as that shows in General Fund only, not on a Consolidated basis).

Financial statements for each fund as well as Consolidated basis are presented in the Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034. This has highlighted the sustainability issues in the General Fund over the long term for a number of years.

**Recommendation:** That the information be noted, and no amendment be made to the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

If the recommendations are adopted, the changes will be incorporated into the Long Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 – 2033/2034.

### **BATHURST COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN – OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES:**

#### **Objective 6: Community leadership and collaboration.**

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Strategy 6.1 | Communicate and engage with the community, government and business groups on important matters affecting the Bathurst region. |
| Strategy 6.4 | Meet legislative and compliance requirements.   |
| Strategy 6.5 | Be open and fair in our decisions and our dealings with people.   |
| Strategy 6.6 | Manage our money and our assets to be sustainable now and into the future.  |
| Strategy 6.8 | Implement opportunities for organisational improvement.   |

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

01 **Inform** - to provide the public with balanced and objective information to help them understand the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

02 **Consult** - to obtain public feedback on alternatives and/or decisions

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 1 John Hollis [9.2.10.1 - 1 page]
2. 2 Steve Wilson [9.2.10.2 - 1 page]
3. 3 Kate Allan [9.2.10.3 - 1 page]
4. 4 Dianne Mc Nab [9.2.10.4 - 1 page]
5. 5 No More Museums completed Draft Delivery Program 2024-2028 and; Operational Plan 2024-2025 (16.001 [9.2.10.5 - 2 pages])

**From:** [Your Say Bathurst Region](#)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** johnhollis completed Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 (16.00198)  
**Date:** Wednesday, 29 May 2024 3:03:40 PM

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johnhollis just submitted the survey 'Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034' with the responses below.

**Name**

John Hollis

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**Do you have any comments in regards to the draft Long Term Financial Plan?**

I realise there is a need to review the rating levels in order to recoup the revenue losses due to many Government Grants having been withdrawn. Also I realise that as a community member the responsibility to contribute to the future development to a City I'm proud to be a member of. However, I feel for quite a number of years the overall governance has been lacking and the community now is being asked to pick up the financial slack. With this in mind I ask the question "What steps are planned/being taken to improve and monitor the Governance"??

Also there needs to be a vast improvement in transparency of decisions/actions/strategies etc. A Professional Marketing Program also needs to be tabled.

When these areas are seriously/openly addressed I will support an SRV. I congratulate the Council on the Draft Financial Plan and look forward to the future growth and development of Bathurst.

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**From:** [Your Say Bathurst Region](#)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Steve Wilson completed Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 (16.00198)  
**Date:** Friday, 31 May 2024 9:23:41 AM

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Steve Wilson just submitted the survey 'Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034' with the responses below.

### Name

Steve Wilson

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### Postal Address

2795

### Do you have any comments in regards to the draft Long Term Financial Plan?

Overall the projected Optimistic scenario budget seems reasonable and sensible given the difficult economic times we are experiencing but if there needs to be cut backs let them be on circuses rather than on bread and butter. Two examples of easily cuts to save money are car races and fireworks. There are many others. The amount of rate payer money devoted to the Mt Panorama and the proposed go cart track is extortionate. For example \$350 000 (it seems) for a tyre wall would be far better spent almost anywhere else. If neotenous boy racers want to smash into tyres let THEM pay for it, not us. Furthermore there is considerable evidence with more emerging that these sorts of testosterone fuelled events lead to measurable spikes in incidents of domestic violence. Ratepayer money should never be spent on events with violent outcomes. The clean up cost after these events must also be horrendous given the cavalier attitudes of many of the attendees towards our environment. The argument that businesses benefit from the races is outweighed by the fact that these same businesses have no qualms in price gouging local customers during race events. The ratepayers get hit twice in that they must pay rates to have themselves robbed. All of this is compounded by the opaque nature of our council's contractual dealings with those who profit most from these events. Another waste of money is on fireworks. Children and gob smacked parents are entitled to watch their money go up in smoke like Catherine wheels on the fence but the cost should not be extorted from the rest of the long suffering ratepayers. Council should spend ratepayers money for tangible results rather than on gunpowder. A noisy minority of agitators should have no part in dictating council spending. Councillors need to make difficult but informed decisions in the ratepayers interests and these may, probably do, include rate increases and savings. Ratepayers who demand good services have to be prepared to fund them. Careful and rational consideration should make this possible with minimal pain to most ratepayers though some interest groups will always squeal more loudly than justified.



**From:** [Your Say Bathurst Region](#)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Kate Allan completed Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 (16.00198)  
**Date:** Friday, 31 May 2024 10:01:35 AM

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Kate Allan just submitted the survey 'Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034' with the responses below.

**Name**

Kate Allan

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**Do you have any comments in regards to the draft Long Term Financial Plan?**

Submission to Bathurst Regional Council Long Term Regional Budget Plan Having recently returned to Bathurst after an absence of 30 years I feel it is my responsibility to be as fully informed as possible regarding the development of this community. I was made aware of a conflict that had arisen after a Special Rate Variation was put forward, thankfully I wasn't here at that time. One thing is clear to me is that BRC needs adequate funds if it is to provide the necessities for a sustainable community. I therefore support the rate rises that will put Bathurst in the best financial position possible. That is to follow the Optimistic option with 15% rate rises over years 3,4 & 5 followed by 3% increases up to year 10. The community has been distracted with arguments over Go cart tracks and BARN developments and as rewarding as these may be to sections of the community it is the infrastructure that needs to be maintained and extended. As the population grows BRC needs to be able to provide the essentials and have reserves for the disasters that will occur as a result of the changing climate and economic conditions. A council needs to listen to the experts in the field and not be influenced by loud dissenting voices that will always be there. Long term, well explained plans are essential if BRC is to provide the quality of life that our community deserves. Kate Allan

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**From:** [Your Say Bathurst Region](#)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Dianne M completed Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034 (16.00198)  
**Date:** Friday, 31 May 2024 12:38:16 PM

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Dianne M just submitted the survey 'Long Term Financial Plan 2024-2034' with the responses below.

**Name**

Dianne McNab

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**Do you have any comments in regards to the draft Long Term Financial Plan?**

After perusing the Long Term Financial Plan and other relevant information, I make the following comments: Families in the BRC area are finding difficulty in maintaining their economic position and are needing to limit their spending in order to pay their bills, keep a roof over their heads (either rented or mortgaged); and feed their families. Therefore, Council also has to limit its spending and concentrate on the services and facilities most important to the people it serves. These services include, but not limited to: upkeep of roads, bridges, culverts and other parts of the road network; rubbish removal and processing; parks and gardens, sporting facilities; Library, BMEC, Art Gallery and Museums. However, Council should limit expenditure on projects and other items which do not create a direct benefit to its Ratepayers and Residents of Bathurst - such as the BARN Project. This Project, although it MAY be built with Grant Money, will however create a facility which requires money spent on upkeep and maintenance paid from Council rate and other income. In respect of Council Museums, Council should be installing signage on the major roads through Bathurst and the "Janine Vaughan Sign" which advertise all the Museums to people passing through. Each Museum should also advertise the other Museums, to encourage visitors to attend more than one! The Museum shops should be stocked with items related to the Museum and Bathurst, to encourage visitors to spend some extra money and so improve the "bottom line" for the Museums. There are many other things which Council could do to improve the current situation. Many Ratepayers, Residents, Business Owners and others living and working in Bathurst have interesting ideas and suggestions. Council should listen to the people and not take the attitude of "us" and "them". Suggestions to improve should not be take as criticism, but as genuine suggestions by people who want Bathurst to be the best that it can be!

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**From:** [Your Say Bathurst Region](#)  
**Subject:** No More Museums completed Draft Delivery Program 2024-2028 and; Operational Plan 2024-2025 (16.00198)  
**Date:** Wednesday, 8 May 2024 3:58:57 PM

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No More Museums just submitted the survey 'Draft Delivery Program 2024-2028 and; Operational Plan 2024-2025' with the responses below.

**Name**

Rowan Bracken

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**Do you have any comments in regards to the draft Delivery Program & Operational Plan and the strategies and financial resources allocated to deliver facilities and services?**

1. It needs to be made clearer that the SRV amount of 15% in FYs 27-29 in the Optimistic budget is inclusive of the rate peg of 2.5%. OR IS IT? Presumably the additional amount sought in those three FYs is 12.5% per year on top of the assumed 2.5% rate peg, total 15%.
2. The Balance Sheet for the Optimistic budget doesn't reconcile to the PnL - note that the three scenarios budgeted do not appear in any of the documents on exhibition. Again, difficult to provide robust feedback based on the documents exhibited.
3. The presentation of the consolidated budget means the issue with the General Fund and the need for an SRV is disguised. Would prefer a budget for each Fund as well as Consolidated.
4. The BARN is not mentioned anywhere in the CSP; only the Cultural Vision 2036 contains details of BARN and it is the reference to the CV2036 in the CSP that is the only link between BARN and CSP. It is difficult to reconcile the intent to progress the BARN project with the stated community objectives in the CSP - and its resourcing - when it's not discussed at all in the keystone document. I will leave the financials of BARN itself for another submission after I receive the draft budget for the BARN.
5. The changes to charging in Water and Sewer Fund are appreciated, notwithstanding that it's expected they will be offset with increased cost efficiencies so as to keep the price rises as small as possible and not let the income side do all the heavy lifting. To that point about cost efficiencies being deployed as well as price rises, I would question the blanket 5% per annum rise which is at odds with CPI assumptions elsewhere across the LTFP; it seems excessive and is double the assumption for the planned budget's CPI.

### **Do you have any other comments in relation to the draft Delivery Program 2024-2028 Operational Plan 2024-2025?**

1. The draft detailed budget is made difficult to analyse due to the inclusion of capital items in totals for each cost centre.
  2. The table on page 15 is useful as a concept however it's misleading as it depicts spend of \$100 in revenue across all Funds when the main issue with the budget is with the budget is the Gen Fund. Would prefer to see \$100 spend disaggregated for each Fund (W, W, S and Gen), not combined.
  3. The presentation of the consolidated budget on pp 76-78 makes it impossible to view each budget by Fund, noting the issue with the General Fund and the proposed SRV - Current Assets are a credit balance in FY26/27 onwards but no alarm bells are ringing.
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### **Do you have any comments in regard to the Statement of Revenue Policy for 2024-2025?**

It is pleasing to see BRC has spent time investigating avenues for improvements in cost recovery and implementing change.

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