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Anne Gibbs  
Chief Executive Officer (Victoria)  
Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia  
PO Box 115  
OAKLEIGH SOUTH, VICTORIA 3167

Dear Anne

**RE: PYRENEES SHIRE COUNCIL NOMINATION OF WAUBRA HUB FACILITY FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER THE IPWEA (VIC) AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE**

Please accept the attached submission for consideration under the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (Victoria) awards for excellence on behalf of the Pyrenees Shire Council.

Should you or your staff require any further information on the project please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Robert Ladd Projects and Contracts Manager.

Regards

Stephen G. Cornish  
Chief Executive Officer

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## What has the project achieved ?

This project provides the residents of Waubra with a purpose built, functional multi-use facility. Council has consolidated the two existing old facilities within the township to a modern, user-friendly community space that allows the community to come together and connect in ways that were not previously possible.

The Waubra Hub was designed to (*see attached Waubra Hub Plan*):

- Provide harmony with the environment
- Engage the community to use the facility
- Maximise space efficiency and low cost of operation and maintenance
- Provide flexible areas to allow for future capacity
- Meet the community's needs whilst maintaining financial viability
- Ensure accessibility for all ages and groups and those with disabilities
- Provide a safe and welcoming environment

The Waubra Community Hub has increase community access by providing residents with facilities that they have requested. The previous facility was old and had been developed solely to cater for traditional sports without any consideration of multi use. The low rate base of the Pyrenees Shire combined with community demand for access to a building that can accomodate greater range of community activities necessitated the redevelopment of this building to maximize facility use.

The Waubra Community Hub provides the Waubra community with a warm, comfortable community space that facilitates a range of activities that allows the residents of Waubra and surrounding districts to come together and connect through learning, socialising and participation.

The Waubra Primary School and Kindergarten provide for children from the surrounding Townships and Districts of Evansford, Lexton, Learmonth, Glenbrae, Langi Kal Kal, Ercildoen and Addington. A number of these communities are also without public meeting spaces and also use the Waubra Hub because of their affiliation with the township through the school or kindergarten and because of it's central location to them on the Sunraysia Highway.

Seniors are able to use the facility without having to worry about how they will manage the cleaning of the facility. This was a major inhibitor for them in using the previous Mechanics Hall. The inclusion of disability access also supports a range of participants that could not access the previous buildings.

The Pyrenees Shire, in partnership with adjoining Shire's has recently been successful in securing three years of funding from Vichealth to deliver an Arts & Culture project to enhance the Mental Health and Well being of residents. The project aims to improve the mental health and well being of the communitiy through increased participation in the arts as both an artist and an audience of the arts. Projects are being delivered from Council owned buildings where possible and the Waubra Community hub provides the perfect venue from which to deliver a range of arts & culture workshops and events to the Waubra and district community to achieve the aims of the project of increasing mental health and

well being. There was previously no suitable building in Waubra from which to deliver this project.

**The outcomes therefore relate to provision of a purpose built centre for multiple user groups across arts, culture and social interaction.**

Community engagement and cohesiveness is underpinned by appropriate amenity and infrastructure. The shared office and storage facilities requested by the community during consultation is evidence of strong working relationships and engagement between community user groups.

Increased participation in community activities and events is another outcome that has flowed from increased amenity for participants. Many social theorists count participation in community, recreational pursuits and volunteer work as drivers in resilient communities.

The multi-purpose centre provides shared office space for the community's most proactive volunteer and community groups. This includes CFA, Scouts, Netball, Football and Historical Clubs, the Agricultural Society and Reserve Committee. An increased level of engagement between these groups is ensuring that volunteerism remains at a sustainable level.

#### **Why was this project needed?**

The Waubra Community Hub has been developed in response to community demand expressed through the Community Action Plans (CAP). This project has been identified in the Waubra CAP in some form for the past five years.

The CAP process is an annual one that is driven by the community. Each Community within the Pyrenees Shire has an annual cycle of review of their CAP, a process that is supported by Council staff but is a genuine community consultation process involving individual residents and community groups coming together to discuss and identify the priorities for their township. Through this process a list of realistic projects that will benefit the community are identified by the community.

The development of a Community Hub in Waubra was also supported within The Pyrenees Shire Council – Council Plan 2009 – 2013. *Under Goal 2: Community Infrastructure – our objective is: To provide safe, well maintained and functional assets to support communities.*

Council will implement the following strategies:

- Continue to encourage and support user groups to source external funding for development of community facilities.
- Use the Community Action Plans to determine the use of, and future needs for, community facilities.
- Support and promote the development of community hubs throughout the shire.

Previously the Shire owned and operated two community facilities in Waubra, the mechanics hall which has a kindergarten attached at the back and the current recreation reserve building.

The mechanics hall is an old building constructed in the early 1900's that was in need of some maintenance. In 2007 a major building assessment of the structure was undertaken by John Dixon & Associates, registered building inspectors, and a strategic plan was compiled with all maintenance and regulatory requirements listed. This progressive plan over a 10 year outlook showed that there is a need for \$715,000 worth of work to bring the structure to an appropriate operational standard.

The hall area of the Mechanics Hall was used twice a year by the Waubra Horticultural Society for their flower show, once a year by the Primary School for their end of year concert, hosts 2-3 other community events a year and a Taekwondo School from Ballarat hired it for weekly classes during the School term.

The Mechanics Hall had two meeting rooms at the front. These were used for quarterly CFA meetings and bi-monthly Horticultural Society meetings. The Pre School at the rear operated a 10 hour program over two days each week.

The Mechanics Hall user groups consistently told Council that it does not meet their needs for a community building. Their feedback indicated that it was difficult to heat in winter and it is hot in summer. The plumbing was inadequate, toilets very basic with no disabled toilet. The Hall was difficult to clean and the kitchen was old and inefficient. The Hall during its use had no disabled access.

Council, as the owner of the facility, sold the Mechanics Hall on the open market with the funds raised put towards the Waubra Hub.

Feedback from the users revealed that the previous existing building at the Waubra Recreation Reserve, built in 1988 was also no longer meeting their needs. There were no meeting rooms and the floor space could not cater for more than 80 people severely limiting the types of community events staged in the town. The building was designed to cater for the single use of the Football and Netball club.

Disabled access was an ongoing problem with the building. There were no ramps or hand rails to assist the frail elderly or disabled. The only way the front entrance could be accessed is via steps. The disabled toilet was not wide enough to allow access by a wheelchair.

As the recreation reserve building was the only venue in Waubra to cater for large gatherings it was often booked for celebrations such as birthday and engagement parties and used for school and community functions. These functions, as well as the scheduled sporting events are attended by all members of the community including those with a disability, seniors and frail aged.

Council experience has shown that when a small community is provided with a community space such as the Waubra Community Hub it draws the community together and acts as glue that helps bind them. Snake Valley is a prime example of where the Pyrenees Shire has been successful with this approach in the past. Prior to the Hall refurbishment project there were few community events and most of the residents travelled out of the town to participate in community activities. Since its refurbishment the Hall has become the centre piece of the town and it is utilized every day for the conduct of a variety of community run

activities. This experience has been repeated since the completion of the Waubra Community Hub.

A small committee of local women organise an annual Oaks Day event to raise funds for the local school and to provide the local women with a social event. Ladies dress as they would for the races and compete for Lady of the Day and Junior lady of the Day. They are served food prepared by local volunteers and enjoy a parade of fashions from local stores modelled by local women.

Attendance at this event was limited to 80 women (by the capacity of the previous building) and was always sold out well in advance. One of the highlights of the day is the reunion of some of the older women from the community. A bus is hired to collect them from their various retirement homes in Ballarat and take them home at the end of the day. This allows them to renew acquaintances with members of the local community on an annual basis and is an example of how the community can come together if provided with the right environment. This years Oaks day saw 120 women attend the event in the new building and all were glowing in their praise for the new facilities it provided.

The local community enthusiastically supports the local kindergarten, school, shop, football and netball clubs thus showing them to be loyal to local activities and services. All these activities (apart from the shop) are run by local community volunteers providing a wealth of experience that is utilised in the management of the Waubra Community Hub. Through their commitment of funds and active involvement in the planning process the Waubra Community has given a commitment that the Hub will be supported in the same way.

#### **How was the project delivered?**

Pyrenees Shire Council managed the project during the capital development. The Chief Executive Officer and the Assets & Development Directorate oversaw the preparation of specifications and manage contractors engaged to construct various elements of the project.

The Pyrenees Shire Assets and Development Directorate manages the construction and maintenance of Council infrastructure and roads across the Shire, including: community facilities, roads, parks and gardens, open spaces, recreation and leisure facilities and other property owned or occupied by Council.

Council's Assets and Development Directorate tenders and manages the relevant contracts for these works. All works that are tendered are done so in accordance with council policies and procedures to maintain fair, open and effective competition.

Morton Dunn Architects was contracted to provide Architectural services and Bruce Hollioake & Associates provided structural design for the building. Resicare were contracted to construct the building.

Councils Manager Project & Contracts, oversaw the building works on behalf of Council and the Manager Community Well Being managed the Community consultation and engagement aspect of the project.

The sustainability of the Waubra Hub has been considered through:

- Recurrent funding
- Budget and cash-flow estimates
- Sources of funding and support
- Capacity of the groups to cover the costs of upgrading and recurrent costs
- The need for long-term funding plans
- Market appeal
- Risk management

A Business Plan has been developed to reflect the development and sustainability of the project, noting the financial and human resource capacity of the Waubra and district community. The facility will be made available to community groups, with fees for hire charged, depending upon the capacity of the organisation/group and the nature of the event.

Collaboration has been developed with key user groups identified in the Waubra CAP.

An Implementation Plan has been developed as part of the Business Planning, and includes the consideration of management options for the facility within the context of the whole organisation. The Implementation Plan has included consideration of Community Capacity Building Strategies, which will contribute to the strengthening of the local communities to enable them to operate to their full capacity.

The old facility was managed by a Section 86 Committee of Management, as is the new facility. Pyrenees Shire launched a manual for the operation of its Section 86 Committee's of Management earlier 2011 and is part way through a series of training sessions to strengthen their capacity to conduct their business and to ensure consistent practices across the shire.

The commitment of the communities and the shire together with ongoing business planning and review will help to ensure that the Hub is highly utilised, relevant to needs, and thus remains viable and self sustaining.

The total capital cost for the development of the Waubra Hub was \$1,440,600. Funding was raised from a number of sources including the sale of the existing mechanics institute. The list below indicates funding sources.

	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>FEDERAL GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>\$ 169,000</b>
- RLCIP Funding Round 2	
<b>STATE GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>\$ 764,737</b>
- Small Town Development Fund	\$ 300,000
- Community Support Fund	\$ 250,000
- Sport & Recreation – Minor Facility	\$ 60,000
- Country Netball/Football grant	\$ 24,737
- Children's Capital Fund	\$ 100,000
<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>\$ 325,818</b>
- Council 2010/11 Budget	\$ 100,000

- Sale of Hall (\$160,000 GST inc.)	\$ 151,818	
- Budget- Recreation Strategy	\$ 50,000	
- Budget – Kindergarten Participation Project	\$ 24,000	
<b>BENDIGO BANK</b>		<b>\$ 5,000</b>
<b>COMMUNITY</b>		<b>\$ 176,000</b>
- Wind Farm Community Fund	\$ 107,000	
- Sale of Bricks (\$250 each)	\$ 14,000	
- Sale of Dwelling (built by community)	\$ 50,000	
- Waubra Netball Club	\$ 5,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b><u>\$ 1,440,555</u></b>

### Who was involved?

The Waubra Community Hub has evolved from planning undertaken by the local communities through the Community Action Planning process.

The Waubra community in general and the existing user groups of the recreation reserve were consulted throughout the planning process. The community has driven the CAP process and all of the Waubra Community have had opportunity for input into the Community Action Plan and have been consulted further on the proposed design of the Community Hub. Storage areas have been included for user groups and lockable shared office space that includes the capacity to store documents relevant to each organisation, plus a larger servery area under cover are changes that have been made to the plan at the direct request of the user groups as part of the consultation process. This has meant that we were required to develop 5 versions of the building plan, further demonstrating council's commitment to a consultative process and the involvement of the Waubra community in the planning process.

The Waubra Recreation Reserve COM (Section 86 CoM), Netball, Football, Cricket and Bowls Clubs, the Progress Association, Pre School, School Council and Parents & Friends Association, Waubra CFA, Horticultural Society and individual community members have all participated in the Community Action Planning and have all indicated ongoing support for the Hub Project.

Project development has included consultation and collaboration with the Victorian Government Department of Planning and Community Development and The Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD) Regional Development Victoria.

### Daily management

Daily management of the facility will be undertaken by Waubra Community Hub Committee of Management Inc. The Waubra Community Hub Committee of Management Inc will be responsible for all bookings and maintenance of the building in accordance with Council's Section 86 CoM Manual, and consistent with all Pyrenees Shire CoM.

The Waubra Community Hub Committee of Management also has responsibility for coordinating input and feedback from facility users, through the Waubra Hub Advisory

Group, and from the broader community, through an annual community forum which is held with the whole community and Victorian and Australian government representatives to inform ongoing planning, management and sharing of resources.

#### **Advisory Group responsibilities**

Under the governance model, the Waubra Hub Advisory Group would meet quarterly to advise on planning, support management, and formalise the 'Code of Access and Usage'.

It is intended that the Waubra Hub Advisory Group review the Business Plan half-yearly, continually defining:

- projected usage for all aspects of the Facility
- the appropriate mix of uses to ensure long term viability
- best estimate of cash flow projection for the capital and recurrent revenue and expenditures
- the standard and availability of programs which will maximise usage and create cost efficiencies
- the indexation assumptions
- affordable hire rates
- viable service profile and capacity to attract new user groups

The Group should:

- undertake a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats review
- review the marketing plan
- review the effectiveness of the management structure and administrative procedures which will ensure appropriate usage and quality opportunities for users
- identify community development opportunities

The review should also consider:

- safety for all
- access for all age groups
- low maintenance costs through effective preventative maintenance



**Governance model**

