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## WORK FOR VICTORIA INITIATIVE HELPS HEPBURN COMMUNITY

The State Government's Work For Victoria initiative has helped Hepburn Shire Council deliver a range of projects and services for the community while keeping people employed through the pandemic.

Hepburn Shire Council Acting CEO Bradley Thomas said the initiative has seen 35 people take contracts with Council across a whole range of occupations.

"We have been able to bring some excellent people into the organisation to support us to keep helping the community," said Mr Thomas.

"Whether it was with the Works team on road and footpath jobs or in a corporate services role contributing to a project or service, the community has certainly been the big winner," said Mr Thomas.

"And we have been able to help these people with employment and experience at a time when jobs were extremely difficult to come by."

Mr Thomas said *Working for Victoria* resourcing allowed, for example, the Economic Development team to target specific initiatives to support our business community directly during COVID-19.

"The 'Go Local First' campaign utilised the experience of our *Working for Victoria* Communications Officer and Investment Specialist to bring this successful campaign to life for the Shire.

"Without their input Council would not have had capacity to deliver this important COVID recovery project for our business community."

Mr Thomas said the WFV scheme also allowed internal corporate service department to progress key projects that would not have been made possible otherwise.

"The has allowed us to undertake a stocktake of Council's procurement policies, guidelines, framework, contracts, gaps and areas for improvement and forge forward in this space at a greater speed than what we would have ordinarily been able to achieve.

"Having a procurement specialist come on board while COVID-19 was at its peak in 2020 gave Council more resources to continue the work in this space when many other COVID-19 projects and priorities were requiring resources."

Mr Thomas said the Community Care team also had the opportunity to add to their resources, with Disability Community Development Officer role and an Administration Support Officer.

"These roles allowed us to run events as part of the International Day of People with Disability and the 16 Days of Activism which are important, as well as create training packages, work with the community on projects, undertake essential administrative tasks to do with audit requirements and a lot more.

"The \$1.6 million received from the State Government to fund these positions have made a real impact on the organisation, and the community."

Mr Thomas said six people who came into the organisation via the scheme have become ongoing employees, while the scheme has provided an opportunity for people to gain an insight into the workings of Local Government and Hepburn Shire Council and make a positive impact on our communities.

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