

2022 / 2023

Annual Report



Hepburn
SHIRE COUNCIL



Acknowledgement of Country

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We recognise their resilience through dispossession and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving.

We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.

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Introduction

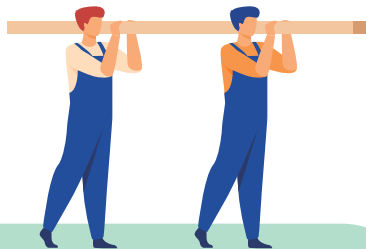


Council Plan

The Council Plan 2021–25 is Council’s key strategic document that describes the community’s long-term vision for Hepburn Shire and shows how we will strive towards that vision during our four-year term. The plan is shaped by the voice of the community and incorporates:

- **Community Vision:** the long-term aspirations that the community has for our Shire.
- **Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan:** what the Council will do to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing in the Shire.

The plan and vision were developed through the Hepburn Together Project, where we heard from ten per cent of the Shire’s community. Council held community drop-in sessions, hosted surveys, undertook a deliberative engagement process made up of citizens reflective of our community.



Our engagement with the community on the Council Plan identified five key focus areas:

Focus area one: A resilient, sustainable and protected environment

A responsive, adaptive and resilient community that addresses changes to our climate and biodiversity.

Focus area two: A healthy, supported and empowered community.

A community that values connection supports diversity, health and wellbeing, and is inclusive of all people and their needs.

Focus area three: Embracing our past and planning for the future.

We acknowledge and empower the Traditional Owners and other cultures of our area to protect our historical roots while planning for future generations.

Focus area four: Diverse economy and opportunities

Our community is enhanced by a diverse and resilient economy that supports local aspirations through opportunity.

Focus area five: A dynamic and responsive Council

Council and the community partner to achieve their aspirations through excellent communication and engagement, the delivery of effective services, strong financial management, and governance.

Community Vision

The Community Vision, developed in partnership with the community, is an aspirational statement and includes the elements that we heard were important to our community.

Hepburn Shire – an inclusive rural community located in Dja Dja Wurrung country where all people are valued, partnerships are fostered, environment is protected, diversity supported, and innovation embraced.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

For the first time Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) has been integrated into the Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025. Council and community identified health and wellbeing priority areas for working towards the Community Vision. They are:

Tackling climate change and its impact on health

Resilient and safe communities that are adapting to the public health impacts of climate change.

Increasing healthy eating

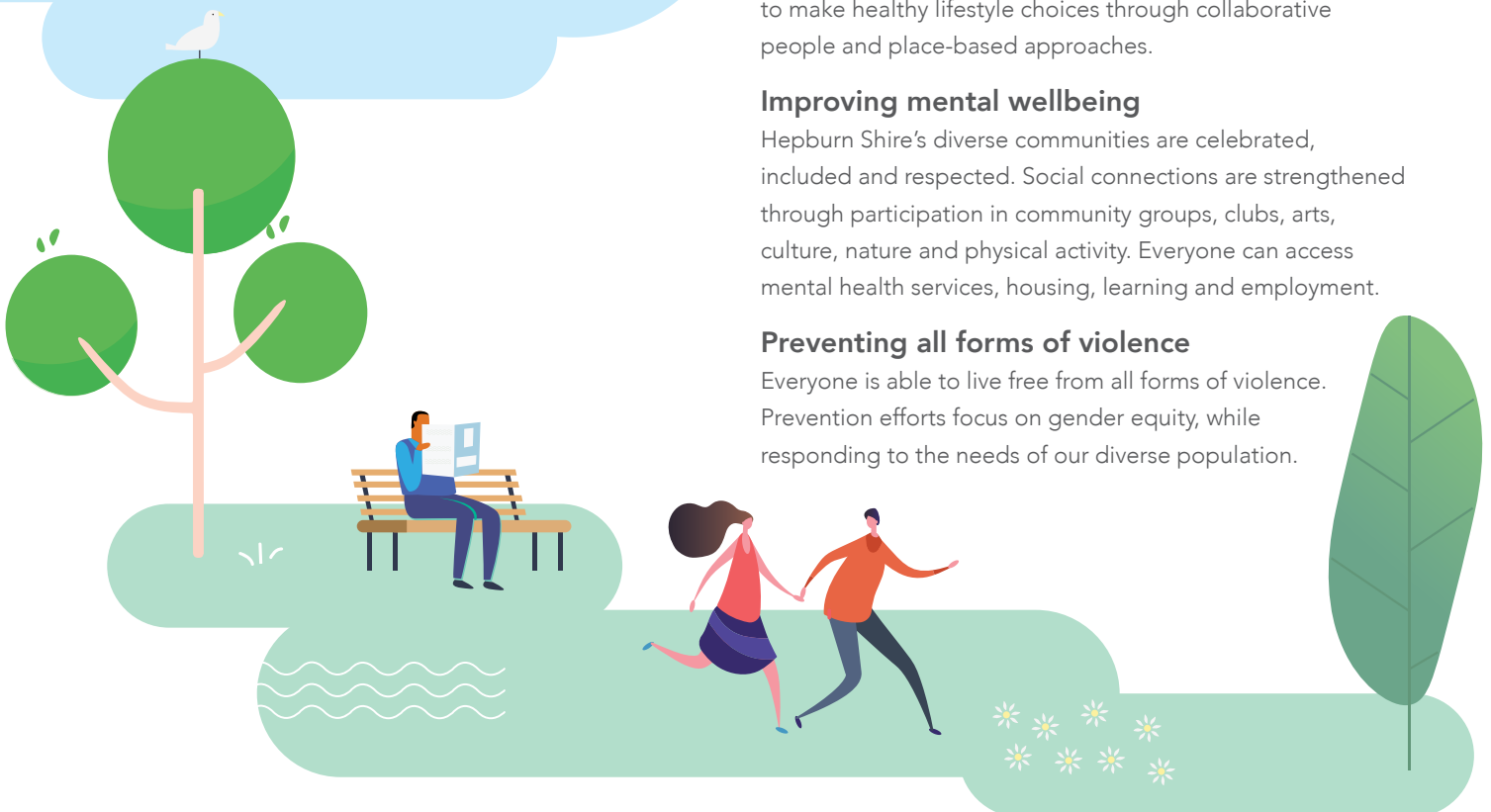
Access to nutritious food and water for everyone, especially the most vulnerable. People are supported to make healthy lifestyle choices through collaborative people and place-based approaches.

Improving mental wellbeing

Hepburn Shire's diverse communities are celebrated, included and respected. Social connections are strengthened through participation in community groups, clubs, arts, culture, nature and physical activity. Everyone can access mental health services, housing, learning and employment.

Preventing all forms of violence

Everyone is able to live free from all forms of violence. Prevention efforts focus on gender equity, while responding to the needs of our diverse population.



Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer



2022/23 has been an extremely busy time for Council. Our Annual Report provides an overview of some of the highlights from the year, reports on how we have performed against our Council Plan objectives and notes performance against the Local Government Reporting Framework.

Hepburn Shire continues to share in the global challenges faced by many other councils, including sharply rising costs, diminished levels of government funding, recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and rebuilding infrastructure after several severe weather events that have affected many parts of the Shire.



Despite these challenges, Council has made solid progress, including completing major capital projects such as the Trentham Sportsground Reserve Pavilion, the mountain bike trailhead at Hammon Park in Creswick and redevelopment of Chatfield Reserve at Lake Daylesford. These projects have brought considerable benefits to the community; they are well-used and highly valued spaces. We also began constructing the 60-kilometre mountain bike trails as part of the Creswick Trails Network, and the new library and community facilities as part of the Trentham Community Hub.

In addition to these capital projects we continued implementing a wide range of actions within the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy, including strengthening the circular economy. We adopted important plans such as the Disability Access Inclusion Plan, Youth Strategy, Positive Ageing Strategy 'No Barrier', and developed a Domestic Animal Management Plan which encompasses a dusk until dawn cat curfew.

We also continued work towards an Affordable Housing Strategy, formalised the creation of a Visitor Economy Partnership with neighbouring councils, installed the Big Rainbow in Daylesford, unveiled a public artwork in Glenlyon and worked through the lengthy process of renaming Jim Crow Creek to Larni Barramal Yaluk.

Alongside these projects, staff continued delivering business-as-usual activities to our community, including building and maintaining roads and footpaths, collecting waste and recycling, maintaining and beautifying our many parks and open spaces, and delivering library, youth and positive ageing programs.

The year has been dominated by the need to carry out works to repair our flood and storm damaged road network. We fully appreciate the extent of damage and the safety risk it presents. Council has undertaken works incurring expenditure of \$13.7m since June 2021, which exceeds the relief funding received from state and federal governments to date of \$9.2m. Council will continue to strongly advocate for greater funding and to work closely with Regional Roads Victoria.

While we are a relatively small shire council, our work has been recognised widely this year. We were named winner of the inaugural Maggolee Awards 2023 for the Manna Gums Aboriginal Peoples Memorial, recognising and honouring the loss of lives and the sacrifice and suffering inflicted on Aboriginal people during the frontier wars. In addition, we were announced as winners of the Local Government Professionals (LGPro) award for Aged Care and Disability Services Transition, in the category of Outstanding Small Rural Council Initiative. A small team of staff represented the Shire in the LGPro Australasian Management Challenge, with the team placing a very credible third in Victoria.

While the Annual Report reflects on Council's activities during 2022/23, we continue to have our sights firmly set on the future. Council has embarked on a once-in-a-generation strategic planning project, Future Hepburn. Future Hepburn includes the development of township structure plans for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford-Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon, and Trentham; Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land and Rural Settlement Strategy; and an Integrated Transport Strategy. We have heard clearly, that our community values and wants to protect our Shire's rural lifestyle, the look and feel of our townships, valuable built heritage, the natural environment and productive farming land. This critically important work will continue into 2023/24 and beyond.

Council continues to deal with the unwelcome prospect of massive overhead powerlines planned for our Shire as part of the Western Renewables Link. We are strongly opposed to the transmission lines being above ground along the proposed route, traversing prime agricultural land and uncomfortably close to our historic townships. We will continue to advocate alongside, and on behalf of, the community for a better long-term outcome.

Long-term financial sustainability remains an ongoing challenge for Hepburn Shire Council, as it does for many other small councils, requiring much diligence in our planning and budgeting. Council relies heavily on grant funding from state and federal governments, especially to fund capital projects, but maintains a strong relationship with our funding partners and we are grateful for their ongoing support.

Thank you to our dedicated staff for their adaptability, perseverance and commitment over the past year. As an organisation we have been able to achieve a lot over this time, often in difficult circumstances, and we appreciate your ongoing efforts.

We encourage you to read through our Annual Report to gain an understanding of the services, initiatives and projects delivered over the last 12 months.



Cr Brian Hood
Mayor



Bradley Thomas
Chief Executive Officer



The Year in Review



Highlights

Reconciliation and working with Djaara

The majority of Hepburn Shire is on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, formally recognised in a Recognition and Settlement Agreement signed in 2013.

Council's vision for reconciliation is to promote unity, respect and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our community. In 2019, Council adopted a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation. There are four types of RAPs in the Reconciliation Australia framework – Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate. Council's Reflect RAP was developed with staff, Councillors, Djaara, our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and representatives from relevant organisations.

Fundamental to the RAP is that reconciliation is placed at the core of our organisation and a foundation to our services.

Council works closely with Djaara, the Traditional Owner Group in Central Victoria, including ongoing engagement on Council's services, strategies and masterplans for Hepburn Shire.

There has been a significant amount of work by Council on delivering on actions in the RAP, many working in partnership with Djaara. These include:

- The renaming of Jim Crow Creek to Larni Barramal Yaluk
- Opening the Manna Gums Frontier Wars Memorial Avenue
- Formal support for the key principles of the Uluru Statement of the Heart
- Assistance with the installation of co-naming signage for Lalambuk (Mt Franklin), a project with Parks Victoria and Djaara
- Cultural awareness training for Council staff
- Recognition of National Sorry Day
- Celebration of Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week
- Commission of Dja Dja Wurrung public art by Aunty Marilyne Nicholls.

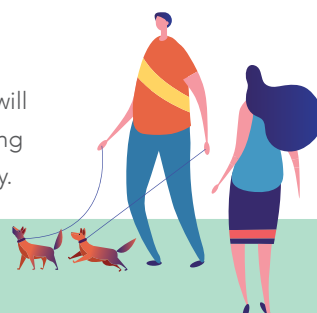
Council is nearing the end of the Reflect RAP and will develop the next plan, an Innovate RAP. This new plan will be developed in consultation with Djaara and referencing the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy.



During Reconciliation Week, Council partnered with Djaara Elder Uncle Rick Nelson and Daylesford and District Historical Society to showcase a set of portraits of Dja Dja Wurrung people photographed in 1866 at the Coranderk Aboriginal Station.



Cr Tessa Halliday and Octavia at the smoking ceremony that launched the Sustainability Expo at Trentham.



Sustainable Hepburn

Council adopted our Sustainable Hepburn Strategy in August 2022. The strategy covers four key areas - beyond zero emissions, natural environment and biodiversity, low waste and climate resilience. We have seen significant improvements in these area in recent years, particularly since the strategy was adopted.

In terms of tangible outcomes, 2022/23 saw a 24% reduction in community greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) resulting from electricity use in Hepburn Shire since 2018, with renewable energy generation accounting for 35.8% of electricity use during that time.

Our Solar Savers program, now in its fifth year will no doubt be a significant contributor to this achievement with the roll out of 100 solar systems for residents over that period and achieving emissions savings estimated to be in excess of 700t of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) per year.

Council’s corporate emissions reduced 29% on the baseline year of 2021, with a reduction of 18% on the previous financial year. Our decarbonisation efforts included the replacement of all streetlighting with highly efficient LED lighting, the purchase of clean renewable electricity, the addition of two electric vehicles into our pool fleet and other energy, emissions and cost saving measures. Along with the reduction in GHG emissions, we also had a reduction in energy and fuel costs across Council assets of 24% and energy consumption was down by 27% on 2021/22.

Throughout the year Council successfully delivered a range of projects related to Sustainable Hepburn. These include:

- Offered the Solar Savers program (fifth annual program), which supports pensioner households to install quality, affordable solar systems with no upfront costs. We reached the milestone of 100 Solar Savers households in Hepburn Shire.
- Delivered ‘Connecting the Circular Economy’ with Hepburn Energy, which identified circular economy case studies and opportunities to transition Hepburn Shire to a circular economy.



- Held Climate Adaptation Workshops.
- Offered workshops and training programs as part of the Healthy Landscapes (Regenerative Agriculture) program in partnership with Macedon Ranges Shire Council and City of Greater Bendigo.
- Launched a neighbourhood battery initiative Community Sparks with the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance and Hepburn Energy.
- Continued the collection of food organics and garden organics (FOGO) trial at Clunes and investigated a broader FOGO service roll-out.
- Established a Sustainable Hepburn e-newsletter to inform the community of our work in this space.
- Continued to work closely with Djaara on caring for country and climate action.
- Partnered with Hepburn Energy and Chargefox to install electric charging stations in Creswick, with more to come at Hepburn Springs, Clunes and Trentham.
- Continued to have representation on the Board of the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance.
- Progressed many of the actions endorsed in the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy.

This work will continue to strengthen in coming years as we continue to implement a range of actions to improve the sustainability and environmental outcomes in partnership with our community and stakeholders.



Creswick is now home to an electric vehicle charging station at the Visitor Information Centre. The charger is thanks to a collaboration between Chargefox, Hepburn Energy, Council and Central Highlands Water (CHW), with installation by Fells Electrical and partially funded by the State Government’s Destination Charging Across Victoria Program. More stations are planned for Trentham, Hepburn Springs and Clunes.

Roads

Council continued to invest heavily in roads through 2022/23, with \$12.10 million spent on our road network, which is made up of more than 1,400km of road and transport infrastructure.

Our expenditure included \$2.65 million on capital and construction works, \$3.06 million on scheduled and unscheduled maintenance works and \$6.39 million in flood and storm damage repairs.

The community will be well aware of the challenges facing road authorities with managing the road network given the flood and storm damage and the persistent wet conditions for much of the year.

The seasonal conditions created many challenges for Council in how we were able to manage and preserve our road network and make sure it is safe for our community.

We encouraged the community to notify us of issues with roads and customer requests were up on previous years. We received many reports and requests for maintenance works on roads managed by other authorities such as Regional Roads Victoria (formally Vic Roads). Council has been actively referring these requests to the responsible authority as part of supporting our community.

The Mayor, Councillors and senior officers have continued to advocate and lobby to all levels of government on the need for increased investment in road maintenance and upgrades. Advocating on behalf of the community is an important role of Council and this will continue into 2023/24 and beyond.



Before and after. Storm damage along Learmonth Road at Clunes in October and December 2022.



Storm recovery

We are still investing significant time and funds into our flood and storm recovery programs, which includes community infrastructure and road repairs as well as a number of programs to support the social and psychological recovery of our communities.

Over the year, Council invested \$6.393 million in these efforts and received reimbursements of \$5.046 million from state and federal government. The impact on Council to fund the \$1.347million shortfall for these events does have a significant impact on available funding for other community projects and initiatives.

We deeply appreciate many of our community also continue to work through their own recovery and repairs to family homes and we acknowledge the difficulties this can present. We are here to support the community and advocate for them wherever we can.

As part of this support, we carried out and continue to work on a number of community resilience projects in partnership with community. These include the Creswick Community Recovery Committee and Community-led Recovery Projects for Glenlyon, Bullarto, Lyonville and Trentham. We also secured funding to commence a further stage of the Creswick Flood Study. We will include a review of the previous Clunes Flood Mitigation Study as part of this work and both will be undertaken in partnership with community.

In November 2022 we launched the book, *The Big Storm*, which included incredible stories and experiences of people who were in Trentham and surrounds during the extreme weather event in June 2021. Copies were made available to libraries across the Shire, and we had two print runs due to the popularity of the publication.

We also ran a range of events including workshops and a storm recovery photography competition for the east and western parts of our Shire as part of the recovery efforts. Thank you to everyone who was involved and to those who continue to support the community throughout the recovery.



The Big Storm book told stories of the community of their experiences of the June 2021 extreme weather event.



Photography competitions invited residents to submit images from storm events. This image is by Alice Petherbridge.



The Year in Review

July 2022

- Launched the new series of Listening Posts to give the community the opportunity to speak with Councillors and staff about local projects, highlight ideas or raise concerns.
- Supported two major events in the Shire, BOREALIS and Winter Sounds.
- Opened submissions for community grants.
- Invited Creswick residents to join a Community Recovery Committee following the January 2022 storm and flood.
- Started community engagement on a review of Governance Rules.
- Creswick Community Bank announced \$250,000 of financial support towards the Hammon Park Trailhead project.
- Resolved to sell The Rex building in Vincent Street, Daylesford.
- Released a tender for construction of the 60-kilometre Creswick Trails Network.
- Completed a mini-facelift of the Daylesford Library to make the space more welcoming and practical.
- Adopted the Annual Plan.



Council announced six recipients of Biodiversity Grants, with \$24,000 share between Daylesford Primary School (pictured), Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre, Hepburn Gardens for Wildlife, Hepburn Wildlife Shelter, Blampied Kooroocheang Landcare Group and Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group.



Council unveiled a new drinking fountain at Doug Lindsay Recreation Reserve in partnership with Central Highlands Water as part of the Choose Tap campaign. Pictured: (L-R) Council CEO Bradley Thomas, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Tim Drylie and Council Director Bruce Lucas at the new drinking fountain in Creswick.



Council continued to protest the proposed Western Renewables Link and associated infrastructure.



August 2022

- Adopted Sustainable Hepburn, Council's updated environmental sustainability strategy.
- Invited community feedback on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan.
- Adopted the Positive Ageing Strategy 'No Barrier' to guide Council's work to promote positive ageing across the Shire.
- Secured funding from the Country Fire Authority (CFA) under the Victorian Government's Safer Together Program to continue removal of woody weeds from Lake Daylesford Reserve.
- Supported community efforts to keep waste and valuable resources out of landfill by offering subsidised compost bins to give a new life to food scraps and garden waste.
- Endorsed the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding 2022-2026 with Hepburn Energy. This will continue the work towards delivering the Z-NET Community Transition Plan and initiatives in our Council Plan 2021-25.
- Kicked off the Healthy Landscapes Program for 2022/23 with a sustainable horse grazing workshop. The program is run in partnership with Macedon Ranges Shire Council and the City of Greater Bendigo.



Council officially opened the new cricket nets at Newlyn, which we installed with support from the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

Pictured: (L-R) Cr Don Henderson, Shannon Slater Treasure and Secretary of Newlyn Cricket Club, Craig Slater Club President, Ben Diamon Club Captain, Catherine King MP, Kevin Clohesy President Newlyn Community and Sporting Complex Committee of Management, and Council CEO Bradley Thomas.



Council held free chainsaw classes as part of our storm recovery efforts. Around 80 people attended the three-day course, which was designed to build skills in theory, chainsaw maintenance and practical application.



Council donated a set of Birdie books to each of our local libraries and two copies to every school and preschool in the shire. The books were developed by Queensland Health to talk children through what happens in a disaster, how they might feel, and what the process is for recovery.

Pictured: Cr Henderson and Cr Drylie read the Birdie books with Savannah, Tori, Angus and Tommy.



Council hosted the Local Government Professionals (LGPro) CEO/Director Forum and the Regional Councils Victoria Forum, bringing together more than 130 leaders in local government to our Shire.



September 2022

- Awarded community grants totalling more than \$15,000 to local community groups.
- Supported the Victorian Seniors Festival with free events around the Shire, in line with our positive ageing work.
- Hosted award-winning Australian actor and documentary maker Damon Gameau as a guest speaker at a free Habitat Renewal event held in Trentham.
- Daylesford Macedon Tourism announced strong visitation figures for the region, including a 41% year-on-year increase on domestic overnight visitors (against a regional Victoria average of 26% growth) and total tourism spend of \$434 million for the 12 months ending March 2022.
- Held a Farmers and food forum in Creswick to give farmers, producers and food manufacturers the chance to hear from leading food regulators. The forum was part of Council's Artisan Agriculture project, which was established to assist the local artisan agriculture sector navigate operational challenges and thrive into the future.
- Supported residents on their low-waste journey through a free Cloth Nappy Workshop, which included a cloth nappy starter pack for all attendees.



Council held a Sustainable Hepburn Expo Day at Trentham Railway Station showcasing some of the businesses and community organisations who are improving the sustainability of our Shire.

October 2022

- Adopted the Domestic Animal Management Plan, which provides a strategic framework for Council to guide policy direction, service programs, initiatives and action plans related to animal management.
- Parts of the Shire were hit by another severe weather event impacting community, roads, Council buildings and services.
- Hosted a Community Preparedness Session in Creswick in partnership with emergency agencies. The purpose of the event was to help build resilience in the community and provide information on how to prepare for emergency events.
- Victorian Government announced the Creswick Trails to host the mountain biking competition in the 2026 Commonwealth Games.
- Participated in the 2022 Aussie Bird Count, which saw 145 bird species identified across the Shire.
- Began renewal works at the Creswick Town Hall.
- Started improvement works at Chatfield Reserve on Lake Daylesford.
- Invited applications for the Small-scale Artisan Agriculture Grants.
- Daylesford was named the winner of the Big Rainbow, following a national competition.
- Council representatives attended the regional affordable housing summit held in Creswick.
- Launched our ACE Youth Development Strategy at Daylesford Town Hall.



Launched photography competitions to capture images of the storms that had affected the community since 2021. This image was taken by Poppy Ludvac.

November 2022

- Responded to the potential adverse environmental and social impact of exploratory mining activities following the Victorian Government's decision to issue an exploratory license to Red Rock Mining.
- Hosted three events to celebrate International Day of People with Disability.
- Supported a community partnership led by Daylesford Men's Shed to celebrate the festive season by decorating Vincent Street in Daylesford with locally handcrafted Christmas trees.
- Hosted walks in Trentham, Daylesford, Creswick and Clunes to recognise 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence.
- Encouraged community readiness and emergency preparedness for summer.
- Announced a review into Council's grants program to ensure its effectiveness and value to the community.
- Adopted an amended 2022/23 project program in response to the market volatility being experienced in the construction sector, including significant price increases, material supply challenges and rising inflation.
- Council elected Cr Brian Hood as Mayor and Cr Lesley Hewitt as Deputy Mayor.
- Invited the community to help guide a strategy and action plan to address housing affordability in our Shire.
- Offered free green waste disposal at our transfer stations throughout November.



We completed the new change facilities at Calemburn Park in November. The project included three accessible unisex changerooms with toilet, shower and baby change facilities, an accessible footpath, accessible car parking space, drinking fountain, park furniture and landscaping. This project was funded in partnership by Council and the Victorian Government.

Pictured: Cr Tim Drylie and Cr Don Henderson.

December 2022

- Sold The Rex building to local entrepreneurs and businesspeople following a public expression of interest.
- Announced round two of our Community Grants program, totalling almost \$12,000 to local groups including Health Foods Australia, Daylesford Table Tennis Association, Eco Warriors Australia, Daylesford Dharma School and Trentham Playgroup.
- Opened the bike jumps at Hammon Park in Creswick in time for the summer holidays.
- Invited the community to review and provide feedback on the draft Disability Action Plan.
- Awarded a contract to construct the 60-kilometre Creswick Trails Network to Australian company Dirt Art, a world leader in mountain bike trail construction.
- Welcomed the announcement that the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and Transgrid would investigate alternative options for the transmission line route and terminal station siting planned for the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) project.
- Supported the announcement by Central Highlands Water of a \$15 million investment in Daylesford's long-term water supply security, with a 400mm raw water pipeline from Blampied to the Goldfields Superpipe.



Council opened outdoor pools and aquatic facilities across the Shire on the first weekend in December.



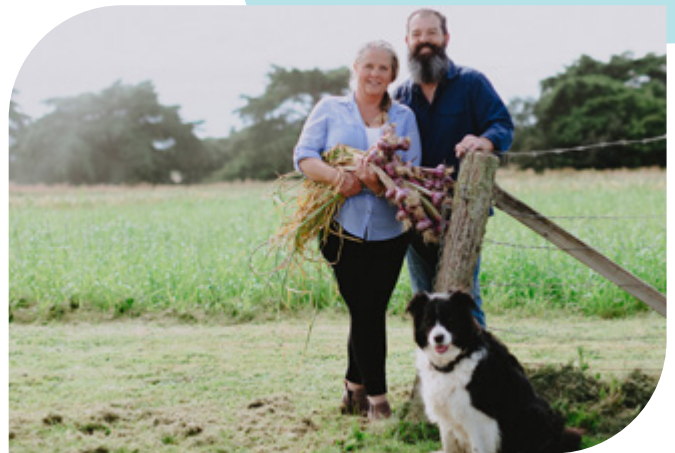
January 2023

- Supported a range of Australia Day events organised by community groups throughout the Shire.
- Began a trial of an off-lead dog park in Trentham near the Trentham Swimming Pool.
- Supported a series of seven sustainability and resilience events and workshops in partnership with Trentham Neighbourhood Centre. Topics included composting and worm farms, Hepburn Seed Savers, creating a wicking bed and food dehydrating and preserving.
- Invited a second round of community engagement on the Arts and Culture Strategy.
- Developed an online hub for artisan growers and producers to promote their business as part of our Artisan Agriculture Project.
- Supported businesses in the lead-up to the Victorian Government ban of single use plastics.
- Installed new outdoor furniture across townships in the Shire to support business recovery, activate outdoor spaces and enhance streetscapes.



Began the annual road reseal program in January, with works at Blampied, Creswick, Daylesford, Drummond North, Kingston, Lyonville, Newlyn, Smeaton and Ullina.

Pictured: Road works underway in Kingston. Investment in the annual reseal program this year was \$940,000 which achieved works to approximately 18km of the road network.



Awarded 18 Small-Scale Artisan Agriculture Grants worth more than \$34,000 to farmers and producers in the Central Highlands. Grant recipients came from a range of businesses including wineries, flower farms, organic growers and berry farms.

Pictured: Carmel and Brett from Springmount Fine Foods received an artisan agriculture grant. Photo by Chloe Smith.



Announced John Drife as Citizen of the Year (centre) Atticus Punt-Trethewey (right) as Young Citizen of the Year and The Great Dividing Trail Association Reconciliation Walks (represented by Tim Bach, left) as Event of the Year at our Hepburn Shire 2023 Community Awards in January.



February 2023

- Welcomed some aspects and expressed concern about other conclusions outlined in the report into the VNI West project, by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and Transgrid. Council was pleased to see the terminal station proposed for Mount Prospect was no longer the preferred option. However, concerns remained that the Western Renewables Link (WRL) transmission line continued to run through the Shire, that underground lines were not considered, and the recommendation to increase overhead transmission lines from 220kV (kilovolt) to 500kV along the section of the WRL from Mount Prospect through our Shire, requiring significantly larger towers.
- Victoria Park at Daylesford announced as the home of the Big Rainbow for a period of three years.
- Launched a trial project to sell low-cost and safe electrical items at the Daylesford Transfer Station.
- A series of small business workshops and webinars commenced, including topics such as how to boost your social media and online presence, cyber security and ways to generate cash flow.
- Promoted a visit from the Small Business Bus to local business operators.
- Encouraged the community to provide a submission on the electoral structure review of Hepburn Shire, which was led by an independent electoral advisory panel.
- Endorsed a special rates charge to fund the Solar Savers program for another 15 residences.
- Adopted a new Disability Action Plan to guide our actions in removing barriers and making adjustments to help people living with disability.
- Installed new play equipment at the Magic Pudding Playground in Creswick.



Began reconstruction works along a 1.6 kilometre section of the Ullina Kooroocheang Road at Ullina in February. The \$700,000 project was funded by Council and the Federal Government through the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program.



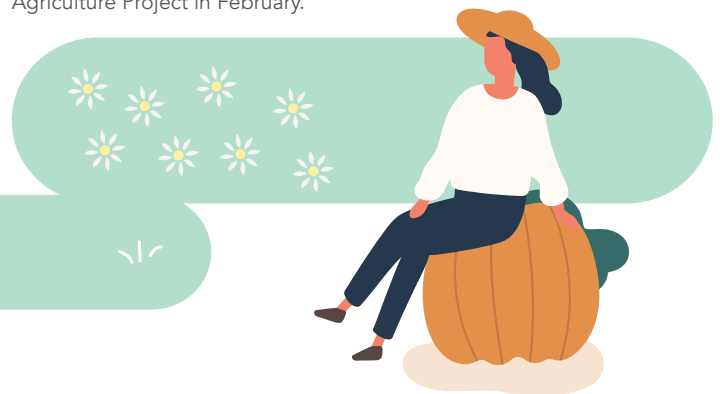
We held an affordable housing forum to hear from the community in February and to inform development of an Affordable Housing and Action Plan.



Council, staff, growers and project advisory group members celebrated the end of the three-year Artisan Agriculture Project in February.



We celebrated the Begonia season at the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, with the Alf Headland Conservatory awash with colour for everyone to enjoy.



March 2023

- Invited the community to complete a survey to help inform our indoor aquatics provision feasibility study and business case.
- Encouraged the community to have a say on outdoor dining and trading in the Shire.
- Officially opened Calemben Park change facilities, with Martha Haylett MP. The \$425,350 project was funded in partnership by the Victorian Government and Council.
- Proudly supported Clunes Booktown, ChillOut Festival and CresFest, three major events in the Shire throughout March, that collectively brought thousands of people to our region.
- Adopted a new approach to grants delivery through a more efficient, equitable and transparent process following a process review.
- Called for new members to the Gender Equity Advisory Committee.
- Promoted the visit by the BreastScreen Victoria van to Daylesford.
- Installed a defibrillator at Daylesford Visitor Information Centre.

We congratulated five local women who were inducted on to the Heather Mutimer Honour Roll on International Women's Day. These women were recognised for their contribution to the Shire and progressing women's causes.

Pictured: (L-R) Debbie Stoneman (granddaughter of posthumous inductee Marie Magdalen Lewis), Anneke Deutsch, Mayor Brian Hood, Heather Mutimer, Joee Aganetti-Fraser, Tess Brady, Joyce Orr, Cr Don Henderson and Cr Jen Bray.





Councillors and staff joined members of our LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee and committee representatives and volunteers from ChillOut, Daylesford Football Netball Club, Daylesford Show and Victoria Police to unveil the Big Rainbow at Victory Park in Daylesford in March.



Councillors, staff and family members participated in the street parade at ChillOut Festival in March.



Council was a proud supporter of a new shower and laundry facility for homeless and vulnerable people at Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre. The facility was launched in March with representatives from the neighbourhood centre and Council, Daylesford Foundation, Community Bank Daylesford and District, and Safe Place Homes Inc. Along with Council, supporters of the facility included Central Highlands Rural Health, Community Bank Daylesford District, the Department of Family, Fairness & Housing and Daylesford Community OpShop.



Council's Community Safety Officer rehomed a neglected sheep which was found roaming the streets of Smeaton. As no owner was able to be identified, Edgars Mission took special care of him, removing around 20kg of excess wool.

April 2023

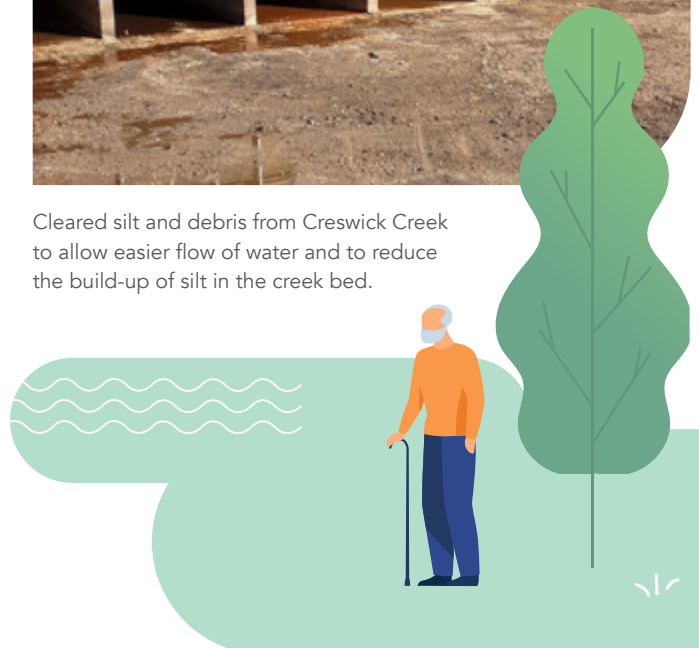
- Promoted and supported ANZAC Day events across the Shire.
- Launched the strategic planning project Future Hepburn, a once-in-a-generation project that will touch many aspects of life as a resident of Hepburn Shire. Its focus is to protect and enhance the existing character of our towns and rural settlements through strategic planning controls on growth and development.
- As part of Future Hepburn, we invited the community to provide input via a survey on Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land and Rural Settlement Strategy. The strategy will consider future agricultural needs and requirements and seek to adequately protect agricultural land and small rural settlements.
- Made a strong submission on the VNI West project.
- Lobbied the Victorian Government for a review to expand Creswick's ambulance operations to 24/7, noting that in this critically important part of the healthcare system ambulance response times in Hepburn Shire are significantly behind the state average – 19 minutes compared to 13.
- Marked Trans Day of Visibility by a flag raising event in Daylesford.
- Supported the Bullarto Trentham Vintage Tractor Pull and Vehicle Display.
- Launched a waste survey to understand how our community uses their bins, how full are the bins and the use of transfer stations to understand the information that the community is looking for to reduce waste to landfill.
- Endorsed joining a Visitor Economy Partnership (Tourism MidWest) with neighbouring councils at Ballarat, Moorabool, Pyrenees and Golden Plains, along with representatives from the tourism industry and the Victorian Government to continue to boost tourism to the region and to complement the work of Daylesford Macedon Tourism.
- Opened the Clunes Creek Walk outdoor fitness pod on Scenic Drive, which includes an aerobic walker, dexterity bar, hand cycle, and bars for push ups, step ups and chin ups. The project was funded by Council with a contribution from the Clunes Landcare and Waterways Group.



Signed a new service agreement with the Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre to manage the out-of-school-hours community use of the Daylesford Arts, Recreation and Cultural Centre (ARC). The ARC is part of the Daylesford Secondary College and features three indoor multi-lined indoor courts, squash courts, canteen/kitchen, office, storage spaces and change amenities. The service agreement ensures the centre provides access to a mix of recreation, social and sporting activities for the community.



Cleared silt and debris from Creswick Creek to allow easier flow of water and to reduce the build-up of silt in the creek bed.





Completed a major refurbishment of facilities at Quarry Street Reserve in Trentham in partnership with the reserve Committee of Management. The project included installation of all-abilities toilet facilities, two electric barbecues, baby change facilities, drinking fountain and carpark.

Pictured: (L-R) Cr Brian Hood, project manager Sam Hattam, committee member Fay Magee, builder Tim Ferrantino, committee members John Riches and Charles Sherlock with concept designer Steve Kelly.



We officially opened the Trentham Sportsground Reserve Pavilion with Mary-Anne Thomas MP, along with representatives from the Sportsground Reserve Committee of Management, Trentham District Football and Netball Club Inc, Trentham and District Cricket Club and community members. The wonderful new facility is a fantastic asset for the town and community, along with current and future netballers, footy players and cricketers. The redevelopment project, with over \$2.5 million of investment, was delivered in partnership between the Victorian Government and Council.



May 2023

- Released the draft budget 2023/24 for public comment.
- Adopted a cat curfew at the Council meeting, with an introduction date of 1 July 2023.
- Installed rope canopy bridges in Wombat State Forest near Spring Hill. These bridges help wildlife move through storm-damaged tree canopies where trees and branches have fallen or broken.
- Awarded more than \$25,000 of community grants.
- Invited submissions for our Biodiversity Grants program, with grants available up to \$5,000.
- Began works to improve the road pavement and drainage along West Berry Road in Creswick North, and then Daylesford-Clunes Road in Lawrence.
- Recognised the International Day Against LGBTIQ+ Discrimination, IDAHOBIT Day, with an event at the Big Rainbow in Daylesford.
- Launched an e-newsletter, Sustainable Hepburn enews, to update the community on actions relating to our Sustainable Hepburn strategy.
- Released the video 'We're getting our voice back' in partnership with Daylesford Museum and Djaara Elder Uncle Rick Nelson.



Council was a proud supporter of The Great Trentham Spudfest.

Pictured: (L-R) Mayor Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Deputy Mayor Lesley Hewitt, Mary-Anne Thomas MP, Telstra's Marcus Swinburne and the Hon Catherine King MP.



We said a big THANK YOU to our wonderful volunteers at Hepburn Shire Visitor Information Centres during National Volunteer Week in May. The day involved a morning tea, and a tour and talk from David and Karen at Overwrought in Blampied.



Installed public artwork The Drop at Glenlyon Dam and celebrated with the community as a special launch event. The Drop was created by international artist Yu Fang Chi. The piece is a polished stainless steel sculptural form that considers water in the landscape.





Mayor Brian Hood at the new signs at Larni Barramal Yaluk, which was renamed from Jim Crow Creek by Geographic Names Victoria. Council worked closely with the community and project partners Mount Alexander Shire Council, North Central Catchment Management Authority and DJAARA to campaign for the renaming of the creek over many years. The term Jim Crow is unacceptable due to its origins in racial segregation and anti-black racism.



Launched the next stage of Future Hepburn, and invited the community to help develop township structure plans for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon and Trentham. Community conversations were held in each township and a survey was launched to understand local perspectives on future growth and appropriate development, to understand what the community values.



We held an event in May to celebrate the opening of the Hammon Park trailhead at Creswick during The Dirty Pig and Whistle race event. Families enjoyed free face painting, coffee and explored the trailhead. It has challenging cycling jumps and a learn to ride track, which is a scaled-down model of the actual Creswick Trails. There are also terrific community facilities such as BBQ area and children's play area. The project was funded by Council and Regional Development Victoria, with a generous contribution from Creswick Community Bank, who provided financial backing for the children's playground and learn to ride track.



June 2023

- Adopted the \$59 million 2023/24 budget, with investment focused on the completion of major capital works and delivery of more than 100 services to the community, in line with the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Mayor, Cr Brian Hood and CEO Bradley Thomas attended the National Conference of Councils in Canberra. Representatives from 537 councils attended the conference, with key topics of financial sustainability, disaster relief funding, skills shortages, emergency management and resilience, cyber security and affordable housing. Council's motion to change the 2026 national census to add the topics of gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation, passed unanimously.
- Offered an exciting school holiday program with a range of events such as nature, cartoon and drawing workshops; NAIDOC Week activities; and sessions on art and craft, song writing, skateboard art and podcasting.
- Released the draft Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan for public feedback.
- Invited the community to sign up for free Youth Mental Health First Aid training in Creswick in partnership with Youth Gurus.

- Adopted our new Outdoor Dining and Trading Policy.
- Released the draft Glenlyon Recreation Reserve Masterplan for public comment.
- Hosted a Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) meeting, which included a report from the Creswick Community Recovery Committee on their activities.
- Opened the electric vehicle charging station at the Visitor Information Centre at Creswick.
- Staff attended the Ballarat Jobs and Training Expo to highlight employment opportunities at Council.
- Recognised the King's birthday honours of two Shire residents, Karen Heap AM and Anneke Deutsch OAM.
- Installed a new interpretive sign at Bullarto in partnership with the community to replace the storm-damaged sign.
- Co-hosted the Detox your Home event in partnership with Sustainability Victoria, which offered householders safe disposal of unwanted household chemicals such as weedkiller, cleaning chemicals, old cooking oil and cosmetics for free.



Work continued on the Trentham Community Hub, which will deliver a new library, Visitor Information Centre, Council customer service counter, meeting rooms and multi-functional community hall. The project is expected to be delivered in early 2024.

Pictured: Huon and Project Advisory member Kate Mooney, Mayor Brian Hood, Natalie Poole and Council's Lizzy Atkin.





The Hon Catherine King MP and Martha Haylett MP turned on the Creswick Town Hall clock to officially reopen the building following major restoration works. Building upgrades included roof plumbing, a new flagpole and access ladder, accessible entry, electrical work, painting, and masonry repairs. The project was funded by Council (\$251,017), State Government's Regional Tourism Investment Fund (\$500,000) and the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (\$432,000).

Pictured: (L-R) Cr Jen Bray, Cr Tim Drylie, Council's Sam Hattam, Catherine King MP, Cr Brian Hood, Martha Haylett MP, Cr Don Henderson and builder Jasper Davies.



Council held a Waste Assistance Day at the Daylesford Transfer Station for people who needed a helping hand to unload recycling or waste from cars or trailers.

Pictured: (Top) Cr Lesley Hewitt with members of Council's Waste Team Tally and (front) Simon with Ron.



Awards and recognition

Maggolee Awards 2023

Council was selected as one of the inaugural winners of the Maggolee Awards 2023 for facilitating the Frontier Wars Memorial along Malmsbury-Daylesford Road in Daylesford. The Manna Gums site for the Aboriginal Peoples Memorial recognises and honours the loss of lives, the sacrifice and suffering inflicted on Aboriginal people during the frontier wars.

The Maggolee Awards recognise Victorian councils that have shown excellence working in partnership with First Peoples to support self-determination, advance reconciliation, and strengthen inclusion of First Peoples' voices.

Local Government Professionals Award

Council won a Local Government Professionals award for its Aged Care and Disability Services Transition, in the category of Outstanding Small Rural Council Initiative. This was a three-year project where Council assessed the impacts of Commonwealth funding reforms on the delivery of its aged care services, ultimately transitioning from delivery into a focus on positive ageing.

Sparring Wombats

Council placed third in the Local Government sector Australasian Management Challenge, a professional development opportunity for local government staff in Australia and New Zealand.

The Management Challenge is a competition that requires quick-thinking teamwork around real-life local government themes.

Hepburn Shire's team placed third against 25 teams from across Victoria, including large metropolitan councils.



Our Shire



Yearly statistics within our Shire



16,555

Estimated
resident population
(no.) 2022



52

Median age
2021



180

Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Peoples
(no.) 2021



3,077

Youth population
0-19 years
2021



2,503

Age pension
(no.) 2022



\$42,504

Median income (excl.
Government pensions and
allowances) (\$) 2019



1,772

Total number
of businesses
2022



\$295

Median weekly household
rental payment (\$) 2021



\$1,421

Median monthly household
mortgage payment (\$) 2021



147,298.4

Land area (ha)
2021



3,537

Total protected
land area (ha)
2020



49.9%

Completed year 12
or equivalent (%)
2021

Source: ABS 2021 Census, release July 2022.

Councillors

Birch Ward



Cr Lesley Hewitt

Deputy Mayor from November 2022

Mobile: 0408 793 941

Email: lhewitt@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Represents Council on the Municipal Association of Victoria, Disability Advisory Committee and Gender Equity Advisory Committee.



Cr Jen Bray

Deputy Mayor to November 2022

Mobile: 0428 150 652

Email: jbray@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Represents Council on the Heather Mutimer International Women's Day Honour Roll Advisory Committee and Mineral Springs Reserves Advisory Committee.

Coliban Ward



Cr Brian Hood

Mayor from November 2022

Mobile: 0427 797 151

Email: bhood@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Represents Council on the Municipal Association of Victoria, Audit and Risk Committee, Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee, Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils and Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils.

Cameron Ward



Cr Tessa Halliday

Mobile: 0427 596 101

Email: thalliday@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Represents Council on the LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee.

Councillors

Creswick Ward



Cr Tim Drylie

Mayor to November 2022

Mobile: 0427 503 258

Email: tdrylie@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Represents Council on the Municipal Emergency Management and Z-NET Community Roundtable.



Cr Don Henderson

Mobile: 0427 559 684

Email: dhenderson@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Represents Council on the World Heritage Listing of the Victorian Goldfields Region Steering Committee and Heather Mutimer International Women's Day Honour Roll Advisory Committee.

Holcombe Ward



Cr Juliet Simpson

Phone: 5321 6423

Mobile: 0427 855 603

Email: jsimpson@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Represents Council on the Audit and Risk Committee.



4



Our People



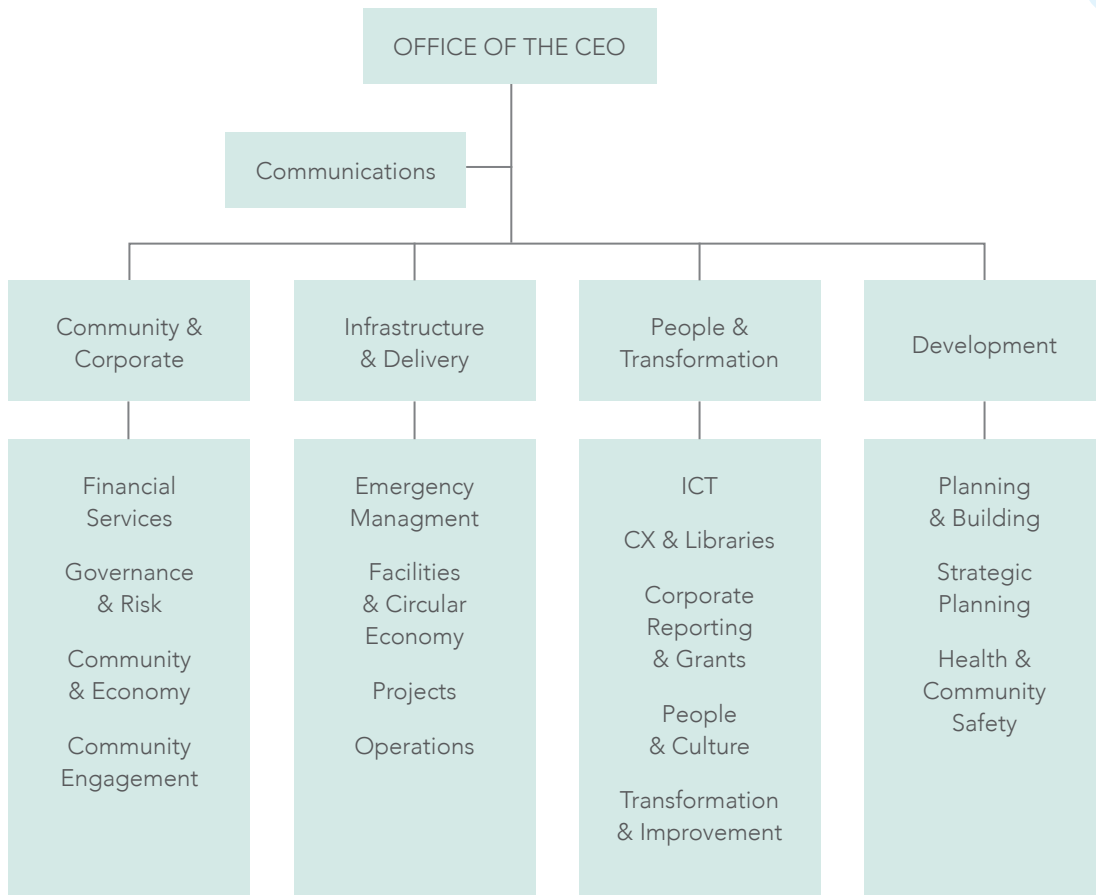
Organisational structure

The 2022/23 financial year commenced with a structure consisting of the three directorates and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Unit. Early in 2023, the departure of two executive team members presented an opportunity for the CEO to assess the structure in relation to the Council Vision, Council Plan and priorities, along with succession planning of the organisation, and market conditions of the local government sector.

An organisational-wide consultation process was carried out that aimed to deliver a dynamic and modern approach to the structure at Hepburn Shire and deliver on the future needs of the organisation. This structure will be implemented at the commencement of the 2023/24 financial year.



Organisational structure



The average full time equivalent (FTE) across 2022/23 was 193.30. This fluctuates over time with seasonal workers along with changes to department structures, new roles, casual conversions, amendments to roles and vacancy rates.

New positions

- Emergency Management Team x 2
- Circular Economy Officer
- Coordinator Major Projects and Policy
- Coordinator Transformation and Improvement
- Team Leader Trails.

Council employees

An Establishment Report has been introduced that assists with oversight of roles and FTE as staff movements occur over a 12-month period to ensure the workforce data can accurately be reviewed, monitored and managed.

The following tables summarise of the number of FTE Council employees by organisation structure, employment type and gender. This is accurate as at 30 June 2023.

FTE by Employee classification male and female

Banding	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Band 1	1.38	5	.15	3
Band 2	4.05	7	9.46	12
Band 3	2.00	2	17.00	17
Band 4	16.84	37	8.91	12
Band 5	19.54	22	16.28	17
Band 6	19.75	22	10.64	11
Band 7	12.32	13	8.00	8
Band 8	4.22	6	3.60	5
SEO+	5.73	6	6.80	7

FTE by organisational structure (excludes vacant roles/external consultants)

Office of the CEO

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Permanent Full Time (Perm FT)	2.00	2	0	0
Permanent Part Time (Perm PT)	.80	1	0	0
Fixed Term	0	0	1.00	1
Temp/casual	0	0	0	0



Organisational Services Directorate as at 30 June 2023

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Perm FT	13.00	13	5.00	5
Perm PT	17.07	27	0.86	1
Fixed Term FT	3.00	3	2.00	2
Fixed Term PT	.80	1	0	0
Temp/casual	.90	11	0.15	3

Infrastructure and Delivery Directorate as at 30 June 2023

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Perm FT	19.00	19	49.00	49
Perm PT	4.15	9	5.60	7
Fixed Term FT	5.00	5	5.00	5
Fixed Term PT	.63	1	0	0
Temp/casual	.10	2	0.25	5

Community and Development Directorate as at 30 June 2023

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Perm FT	14.00	14	7.00	7
Perm PT	5.29	9	3.28	4
Fixed Term FT	0	0	3.00	3
Fixed Term PT	.80	1	0	0
Temp/casual	0.60	2	0	0

Turnover

(Does not include seasonal workers or short-term casual).

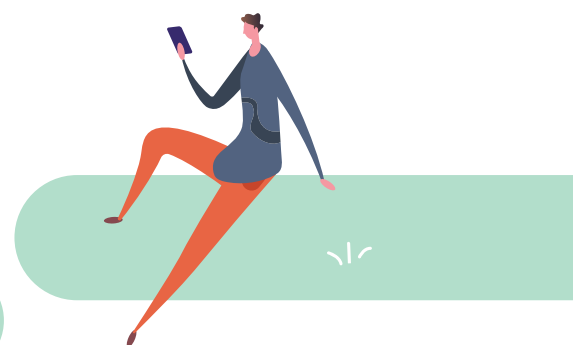
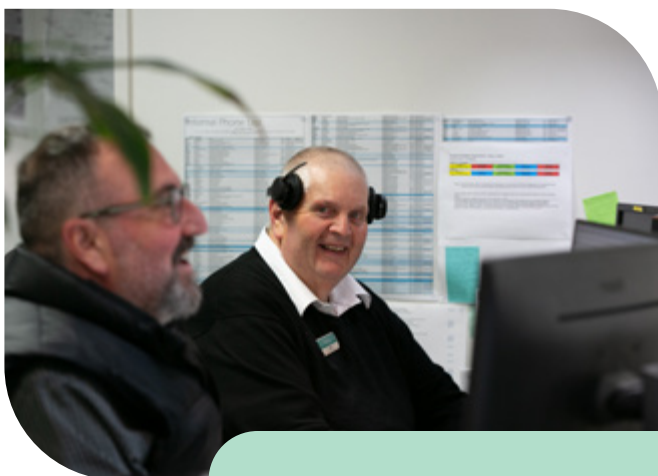
Planned turnover	5.97%
Unplanned turnover	17.93%
Total turnover	23.39%

Planned turnover - employees who are ending a period of employment with the organisation, which predominately relate to fixed-term positions including funded roles, parental leave replacements or project-based. There were no planned terminations outside of these categories.

Unplanned turnover - due to resignations by employees. Exit interview data shows a variety of reasons for departures including career opportunity, health, working closer to home and retirement.

Unplanned turnover has reduced from previous years. This is likely due to post-COVID adjustment and the return to a more normalised work environment.

Whilst some staff are of a casual tenure, conversion to permanent positions where possible occur and where the hours of work are routine and regular. Casual role conversions occurred across the work groups Customer Experience, Transfer Station and Planning roles.



Recruitment and retention

Council's People and Culture team carried out 97 recruitment activities during the year, attracting a total of 1,164 candidates. Of these:

- 12 positions related to new positions
- The remaining 85 related to re-positioned roles, vacant roles or re-advertised roles (19) over the 12-month period and includes seasonal roles such as Aquatics.

Overall, Council has experienced positive trends and outcomes in staff attraction. The exception to this experience is for vacancies in Statutory and Strategic Planning, Procurement and Asset Management, which is common across the local government sector. Where difficulty continues, the vacancies are managed by external consultants and temporary staff to enable review of positions and re-advertisement when the market is favourable.

Council continues to encourage applications from all suitable applicants including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people of different ages, abilities, gender identities, sexual orientations and cultural backgrounds.

Council staff continue to support career expos and contribute to other forums where appropriate to promote careers in local government. Council also supports the broader interests of the sector with inter-council mentoring programmes.

As a regional employer, Council recognises the importance of supporting young people's careers. During the year Council engaged three trainees in various roles across the organisation.

Council continues to work with schools and universities in the region to provide opportunities for students to be involved in the work environment and gain valuable work experience.

Encouragingly, Council has continued to support a blended approach to working from home (dependent on role suitability) and introduced a nine-day fortnight across the whole of organisation as an optional benefit increasing staff flexibility to enhance our employment offering.

Industrial Relations/Employee Relations

There were no industrial issues that required Council to present to the Fair Work Commission for conciliation. The Enterprise Agreement has been in place for over 12 months. People and Culture continue to work positively with unions on matters as they arise and have developed strong professional working relationships.

People and culture workforce outcomes

The HR Strategy and Workforce Plan 2021-2025 is the current strategy being implemented by People and Culture and has informed activities and outcomes for the year. In review of the past 12 months, the following has been noted and achieved:

Learning and employee development

The introduction of a full-day induction as part of the onboarding of new employees has been developed and implemented. This program provides new staff a high-level overview of the organisation to support their commencement at Hepburn Shire and ensures they receive corporate training that enables compliance with legislation and positive employee outcomes. These presentations are delivered by subject matter experts from various departments.

Mandatory training in bullying and harassment was undertaken with 100% of organisation participating.

The Employee Performance Development Program is conducted twice annually across the organisation which identifies development needs across departments and roles, and helps to inform the development of an annual learning and development program.

Council offers employee formal study assistance for individuals undertaking relevant undergraduate or postgraduate studies and provides ongoing work-related training programs.

In 2022-2023 Council had six staff participate in the Local Government Management Challenge, which saw the team placed third across the state. This programme is designed to engage emerging talent in a range of complex scenarios relevant to local government and develop their skills, preparing them for future opportunities.





Council staff spoke to job seekers at a stall at the Ballarat Jobs

Diversity and inclusion

Council has worked closely with CoRE and the Grampians CoRE Alliance. Gender Impact Assessment training has been conducted through this organisation to better develop and embed a commitment to gender equity in program development and outcomes. Council has also encouraged and made available a range of modules for diversity, inclusion and intersectionality via the CoRE Alliance. One round of Cultural Diversity training has been delivered with more scheduled.

The Recruitment Policy and Position Descriptions have been amended to include a broader statement on diversity and child safety commitments at Council. There was also the introduction of the Special Measures Policy, designed to sit alongside the Recruitment Policy and promote equity of opportunity through positive discrimination.



Other activities

- Mandatory Child Safe training / Child Safe Committee (new policy pending)
- Re-design of Annual Performance Review documents to simplify process
- Redevelopment of the Position Description Template
- Update of Code of Conduct
- Pulse Survey and staff cultural workshops
- Employee Assistance Program workshops / Superannuation Workshops
- Diversity and significant day celebrations, including Harmony Day, Men's Health Week, International Women's Day, IDAHOBIT day and Trans Day of Visibility.

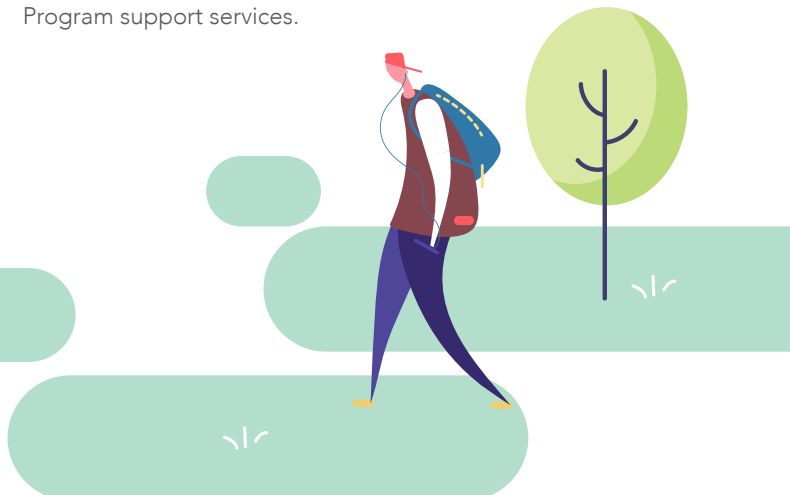
Work health safety and staff wellbeing

Council is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for all employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors and councillors, and recognises that safety is an integral part of our organisation. This commitment is supported by the Work Health Safety (WHS) Policy which is displayed on noticeboards in workplaces and on the website.

The organisation continues to focus on strengthening its safety management system and practical safety applications at the workplace. Health and safety are key components of all new employees' induction and orientation program, and Council's WHS Committee meets regularly to identify and discuss work health and safety matters, compliance and training/awareness opportunities.

Council also encourages staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccinations and seasonal flu vaccinations.

Council continues to offer all employees and volunteers access to 24/7 confidential Employee Assistance Program support services.





5

Performance



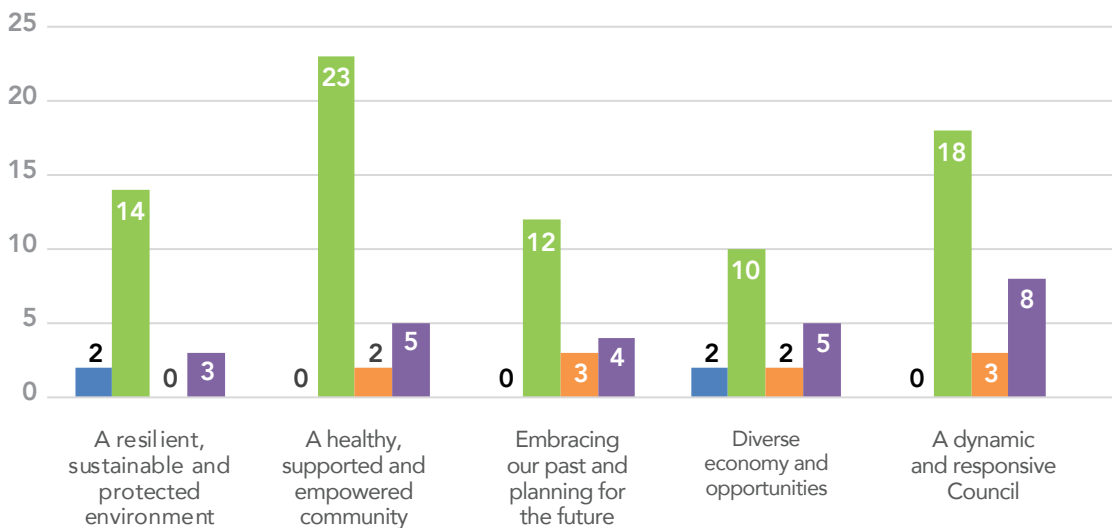
Council Plan Progress

The Council Plan 2021-2025 including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) is complemented by the Annual Plan 2022/23.

Council is committed to monitoring and reporting progress of the plan to the community. This reports on the progress of year two of the plan’s deliverables and initiatives under each of the five Focus Areas.

Significant progress is being made in delivering actions from the Council Plan this year. Of the 116 actions, 25 have been completed, 77 are on track and 10 have started with progress delayed. Four actions are not due to commence until future years. Many of the on-track actions have ongoing requirements across the four years of the plan.

Council Plan 2021-2023 action progress



Status

- NOT STARTED
- ON TRACK
- PROGRESS DELAYED
- COMPLETED

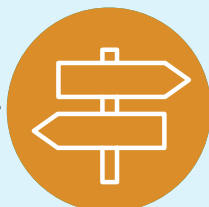
Our five focus areas:



A resilient, sustainable and protected environment



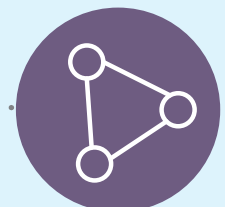
A healthy, supported and empowered community



Embracing our past and planning for the future



Diverse economy and opportunity



A dynamic and responsive Council

1 A resilient, sustainable and protected environment




MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 1 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	Target Met	COMMENTS
<p>Council's corporate emissions</p> <p>An annual reduction in Council's Corporate emissions measured via tonnes CO2e.</p>	>1% Reduction	14% Reduction	18% Reduction	✓	<p>Strong greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) reduction recorded in 2022/23 with emissions from Council operations down to 895 tCO2e (tonnes of CO2-equivalent) from 1,085 tCO2e in 2021/22. This represents an 18% reduction compared to the previous financial year, and a 29% reduction on baseline year of 2021. This is significant progress to our commitment to net-zero carbon emissions outlined in our Sustainable Hepburn Strategy.</p> <p>Our decarbonisation efforts included the replacement of all streetlighting with highly efficient LED lighting, the purchase of clean renewable electricity, the addition of two electric vehicles into our pool fleet and other energy, emissions and cost saving measures. Along with the reduction in GHG emissions, we also had a reduction in energy and fuel costs across Council assets of 24% and energy consumption was down by 27% on the previous year.</p>
<p>Community emissions</p> <p>10% reduction in community emissions measured by tonnes CO2 against the baseline of 70,715 tonnes.</p>	10% reduction from baseline of 70,715t in 2021	49.6%	24%	✓	<p>2022/23 marks the second year of Phase 2 of Z-NET Hepburn Community Transition Plan, focusing on zero-net energy. Despite an overall increase in electricity consumption across the Shire, Hepburn Shire's net emissions from electricity were 53,690 tCO2e, reflecting a 24% reduction in greenhouse emissions since 2018. Renewable energy generation accounted for 35.8% of electricity use, marking a decrease from the previous year. However, substantial advances continue in the local sustainable energy scene through solar power energy-efficient measures and electric vehicles. Again, this shows significant progress towards our goal of reaching net-zero emissions from energy use across the Shire by 2025 and net-zero emissions across all sectors in the community by 2030 as referenced in the Community Transition Plan.</p>
<p>Tonnes of waste to landfill per capita</p> <p>An annual reduction in tonnes of waste to landfill per capita measured by Weight of Garbage, Recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins against the baseline of 3,454 tonnes.</p>	Reduction from 3,454	40.22%	34.3%	✓	<p>The increase in waste to landfill can be attributed to changes in the community's habits and an increase in visitors to the Shire.</p>

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 1 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR

TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	Target Met	COMMENTS
11km	15km	16km		Council carried out over 16km of mechanical grooming to control previously untouched roadside weeds and more than a 100km of follow-up weed management works along sections of roadside that had previously been mechanically groomed to control regrowth.

Roadside weed control across the Shire




Maintain existing 11 kilometres of Roadside Weed Control across Shire measured by number of actual roadsides maintained.

1.1 Adapt to and mitigate climate change to reach net-zero community emissions by 2030.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Vehicle Charging Stations: Partner with Hepburn Energy and Chargefox to install three electric charging stations in Creswick, Hepburn Springs, and Trentham.

Two of the three planned electric vehicle charging stations have now been installed. Creswick’s charger started operation in June 2023 and Hepburn Springs’ is due to come online in July 2023. The Trentham charger is ready to be installed pending construction of Trentham Community Hub and carpark development.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
 ON TRACK	1.1.1 Undertake actions to support Council’s declaration of a climate emergency including bi-annual reporting to community on local actions and projects which are delivering upon climate change mitigation, while ensuring that the levels of activity remain consistent with the importance of the climate emergency.	Hepburn Z-NET Community Council Partnership convenes every two months to progress our joint response to the climate emergency in line with the Z-NET Community Transition Plan. More recently Council adopted its new Sustainability and Climate Strategy, Sustainable Hepburn.
 ON TRACK	1.1.2 Review procurement policies and procedures to ensure they provide a focus on sustainable practices.	A review of procurement policy, guidelines and procedures including discussions with sustainability staff has been undertaken, with formal adoption by Council expected in September 2023.
 ON TRACK	1.1.3 Continue to support the objectives of Hepburn Z-NET and the Hepburn Wind MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) to achieve the target of net zero community emissions by 2030.	Council continues to support Hepburn Z net through its role as secretariat with support from Hepburn Energy. Council Hepburn Wind memorandum of understanding (MOU) was renewed 2022.




<p>1.1.4</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Promote the use of environmentally sustainable practices through planning processes and the Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) Policy.</p>	<p>Development of a framework to embed ESD guidelines in planning decision making will continue in 2023/24. Council is now a member, and working with the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments to introduce and apply guidance material for development applicants.</p>
<p>1.1.5</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Pursue the environment and sustainability- objectives outlined in Council's Municipal Planning Scheme.</p>	<p>An ESD planning policy was included in the Hepburn Planning Scheme through Amendment C80. Council has become a member of the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments which is developing a framework to provide local training and guidance on the application of ESD principles to development assessment.</p>
<p>1.1.6</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Support community transition to zero emissions through the Towards Zero Community Grants Program and or any other applicable grant funding program.</p>	<p>The newly rebranded Sustainable Hepburn Community Grants is a continuation of Council's Towards Zero Community Grants, which are offered to not-for-profit community groups every year to assist them with reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and operating costs.</p>
<p>1.1.7</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Contribute to the implementation of the Grampians Region Climate Adaption Strategy.</p>	<p>Council delivered two projects with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Grampians in 2022/23. A climate adaptation toolkit was developed in partnership with Hepburn Energy, Central Highlands Water, Djarra and other local stakeholders to help respond to climate impacts.</p>
<p>1.1.8</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Publish Council's emission profile annually.</p>	<p>Council has successfully published our corporate emission profile in the 2021, 2022 and 2023 annual reports.</p>

1.2 Prioritise environmental management, protection, and regeneration

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Sustainable Hepburn: Develop and implement the 'Sustainable Hepburn Strategy' to align waste, sustainability, and biodiversity strategies. This includes \$150,000 for Waste initiatives and \$75,000 for Sustainability initiatives.

In 2022/23, Council successfully delivered projects including Solar Savers, Circular Economy Stage 2, Healthy Landscapes (Regenerative Agriculture) under the Sustainable Hepburn Initiative. Furthermore, we launched Community Sparks (Neighbourhood Battery Initiative), set up a governance model for Sustainable Hepburn, started an e-newsletter, and strengthened our climate action and relationship with Djaara on caring for country and climate action.


Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
 <p>1.2.1</p>	Review Environmental Significance Overlays.	Identified as future strategic planning work in Clause 74 of the Hepburn Planning Scheme. Budget for this work to be allocated once current strategic planning program priorities including structure plans for towns and agricultural land and settlement strategy are progressed.
 <p>1.2.2</p>	Undertake appropriate Municipal Emergency Management Planning to prepare for and respond to natural disasters.	Hepburn Shire has been preparing for the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) which will occur early in the first quarter of 2023/24 financial year. The CERA process is the core of undertaking appropriate Municipal Emergency Management Planning to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. The CERA process will determine which plans need to be updated or created based on the emergency risks assessed by the control agencies in Victoria's emergency management arrangements.
 <p>1.2.3</p>	Adopt and implement a Tree Management Strategy to protect existing trees and increase planting of new trees.	Hepburn Shire's Tree Management Plan was endorsed by Council's Executive Team in July 2022. The plan was developed to provide guidance for the management of public trees to ensure a consistent approach whilst providing a safe environment for the community and increase township tree canopy cover.

1.3 Transition to ecologically sustainable and accountable tourism

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Destination Management Plan: Partner with Daylesford Macedon Regional Tourism to develop a regional destination management plan which will include local tourism action plans to ensure community needs are understood and addressed.

The final Destination Management Plan for the Daylesford Macedon Tourism Region and Local Area Action Plan for Hepburn Shire will be completed in September 2024. This will provide a five-year plan for the region and support operators to attract sustainable visitation levels and identify areas that require private and public investment.





Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
 <p>1.3.1</p>	Develop and implement a sustainable and accountable Visitor Economy Strategy that balances sustainability goals whilst supporting the economy.	Council has been working with partner Daylesford Macedon Tourism on the development of a Tourism Destination Management Plan which is expected to be adopted late 2023.

1.4 Develop meaningful policies and strategic partnerships that link sustainability and public health

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Linking sustainability and public health: Develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Central Highlands Rural Health to ensure a collaborative approach to resource management and community messaging regarding the link between sustainability and public health.

A MOU was developed and signed by Central Highlands Rural Health and Council. The collaborative partnership continues in the implementation of our Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Central Highlands Rural Health Population Health Plan. An annual review of the MOU is in progress to improve formal communication and co-branding.




Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
 1.4.1 COMPLETED	<p>Strengthen and protect existing agriculture to support the availability, sustainability, and accessibility of local food sources.</p>	<p>The Artisan Agriculture pilot is completed and has resulted in strengthened relationships and contacts amongst the agricultural sector.</p>
 1.4.2 ON TRACK	<p>Promote community adaptation to the public health risks of climate change to public health.</p>	<p>This is an annual action for the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan - Focus area 1: Tackling climate change and its impacts on health. A Health and Wellbeing survey in development will inform the approach for 2023/24.</p>
 1.4.3 ON TRACK	<p>Increase community understanding of the risks of climate change to public health through communication and education.</p>	<p>This is an annual action for the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing plan - Focus area 1: Tackling climate change and its impacts on health. This strategy connects to the Central Highlands Rural Health – Health Promotions Plan which outlines key actions Council and Central Highlands Rural Health are delivering to improve community outcomes. A bi-annual Health and Wellbeing survey will inform actions taken by Council and health services to increase community awareness and understanding. Community awareness campaigns continue regarding potential risks to public health leading up to predicted extreme weather events.</p>
 1.4.4 ON TRACK	<p>Develop a meaningful and strategic partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung to identify and collaborate on our shared environmental priorities.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Hepburn team is currently working with Djarra on projects such as climate adaptation, Healthy Landscapes as well as attending several Djarra events and on-country workshops.</p>

1.5 Protect and regenerate the natural resources of the shire including soils, water and ecological systems, from both current and future threats

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Flora and Fauna Assessment: Conduct a biodiversity assessment as part of the Creswick Structure Plan.

A biodiversity assessment for Creswick township and surrounds has been prepared to inform work on the Creswick Structure Plan.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
<p>1.5.1</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Develop and implement the 'Sustainable Hepburn Strategy' to align waste, sustainability, and biodiversity strategies.</p>	<p>Sustainable Hepburn Strategy adopted and 59 out of 68 actions are on track or completed.</p>
<p>1.5.2</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Continue environmental services with an increased focus on weed management and roadside vegetation management including development and implementation of a Roadside Conservation Strategy.</p>	<p>Council is completing a biodiversity assessment of roadsides as part of our Future Hepburn Project and alongside this will be the development of a roadside Conservation Policy which is expected to be delivered in 2024. Council continues to implement an annual weed management program in accordance with budget allocations and in the past year has resulted in a further 16km of roadside weeds mechanically treated with over 100km of roadsides also treated/ followed up with selective weed management.</p>
<p>1.5.3</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Support the implementation of priorities of the Integrated Water Management Plans.</p>	<p>As a member of the regional Integrated Water Management forums, Council continues to advocate and source funding opportunities to support appropriate projects within the plans.</p>

2 A healthy, supported and empowered community






MEASURES OF SUCCESS					
FOCUS AREA 2 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>Proportion of adults eating sufficient fruit and vegetables</p> <p>Over the life of the Plan 5% increase in proportion of adults eating sufficient fruit and vegetables measured against the baseline of 46% using Australian Health survey data.</p>	51%	No updated data available	No updated data available	No data available	Health survey results from 2021. Next survey results will be available in 2024.
<p>Partnerships and networks to support access to mental health services</p> <p>Increase in the network of mental health service providers servicing the Shire established. 75% of the network active in Shire to support access to mental health services measured by an increase in the number of providers servicing the Shire above 50%.</p>	75%	0%	0%	✘	Council is working with Central Highlands Rural Health for establishment in 2024.
<p>Percentage of population that are active library borrowers</p> <p>Over the life of the Plan, a 5% increase in percentage of population that are active library borrowers measured by percentage of the community that are active borrowers against a baseline of 15.66%.</p>	1.25%	-3.2%	-1.6%	✘	Active borrowers are below target, down to 14% against a baseline of 15.6% in 2021, however active borrowers have increased from last year highlighting a continues focus area for the coming year.
<p>Partnerships and networks related to the prevention of all violence</p> <p>Increase in the network of providers servicing the Shire focusing on prevention of all violence. An increase of 25% to 75% of network active in Shire to support prevention of all violence, measured by the number of providers servicing the Shire.</p>	75%	100%	100%	✔	Target achieved. All participating organisations are actively engaged in the Hepburn Shire Prevention of Violence Network.
<p>Children enrolled in Maternal Child Health (MCH) who participated in services</p> <p>Over the life of the Plan, a 5% increase of children against a baseline of 382 enrolled in Maternal Child Health (MCH) who participated in MCH services.</p>	5%	18%	26.2%	✔	During the last year we have seen a spike in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) enrolments due to families moving into the region and engaging families who were previously enrolled in other MCH services outside of Hepburn Shire.

2.1 Support appropriate land use and accommodate more affordable long-term housing within townships that conforms with the character of the area

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Affordable long-term housing: Advocate for involvement in the Victorian State Government's Big Housing Build Program.

A draft Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan has been developed. It includes actions by Council and the community to advocate for state government investment to increase the supply of affordable housing. The draft action plan was made available for public comment. Submissions will be considered, and a final strategy presented for consideration by Council later in 2023. Regular contact and advocacy to Homes Victoria continues.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
2.1.1  ON TRACK	Develop an Integrated Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy.	A draft Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan made available for public comment in June 2023. Submissions to be considered and a final strategy presented for consideration by council in September 2023.
2.1.2  ON TRACK	Deliver the strategic planning program from the adopted Municipal Planning Scheme.	Council launched the Future Hepburn strategic planning program in May 2023. Future Hepburn consists of a suite of projects that will update and improve the urban and rural planning framework for the shire. Key projects currently underway include Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land and Rural Settlement Strategy, Structure Plans for five main townships (Creswick, Daylesford/Hepburn Springs, Clunes, Trentham and Glenlyon), Urban Design and Neighbourhood Character assessments, Integrated Transport Strategy and Biodiversity and Bushire assessments.
2.1.3  ON TRACK	Advocate for involvement in the Victorian State Government's Big Housing Build program.	A draft Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan has been developed. It includes actions by Council and the community to advocate for State government investment to increase the supply of affordable housing.

2.2 Increase the availability and accessibility of services in the Hepburn Shire area to support liveability, health, and wellbeing

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Trentham Community Hub: Continue constructing the new multi-purpose community facility, featuring the new library and Council Customer Services.





Construction commenced in May 2022, and ground works continued with site preparations and demolitions. Work completed this year included groundwork, footings, car park construction, with structural work to both the old building and the new section underway. Completion is expected in March 2024.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Disability Access Inclusion Plan: Develop and adopt a new plan.

Council created and implemented the Disability Action Plan 2023-2026 at the start of 2023. Annual action plans and reviews track the implementation of the four focus areas of the plan:

1. Inclusive communities
2. Health, housing and wellbeing
3. Fairness and safety
4. Opportunity and pride

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
2.2.1  ON TRACK	Conduct a gap and needs analysis of local health and community services to support advocacy for funding parity.	Council has implemented a new Community Services Support Network to increase local understanding of services available, referral pathways, arising issues and service gaps.
2.2.2  ON TRACK	Promote partnerships with health service providers to improve shared community health outcomes.	Council signed a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Central Highlands Rural Health and are working together to improve health and wellbeing outcomes throughout the region. Council also runs the external health and wellbeing working group, engaging a range of key local health and wellbeing partners that are committed to achieving the outcomes set in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing plan.
2.2.3  ON TRACK	Support advocacy for a new facility for Central Highlands Rural Health	Council continues to advocate and support Central Highlands Rural Health upgrade to Daylesford Hospital, including strong advocacy in the lead up to the 2022 state election.
2.2.4  COMPLETED	Develop services networks to increase community awareness and access to local services	Hepburn Shire Community Services Support Network was established in October 2022. We are seeing a high level of attendance and an increase in stakeholders wishing to engage in the network. The network has a strong focus on finding gaps in service delivery and looking for local solutions for local issues within Hepburn communities. One of the great successes of the network has been the implementation of the funding of the free shower and laundry facilities at Daylesford Neighbourhood House giving access of much needed services for vulnerable community members.

<p>2.2.5</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Develop, adopt, and implement an Early Years Strategy.</p>	<p>Council created and implemented the 'Starting Blocks' Early and Middle years strategy in 2022. Annual action plans and reviews documents the implementation of the three focus areas of the strategy: 1. Play and participate, 2. Grow and Develop, 3. Our Future Need. Key achievements over the past 12 months have been the implementation of Early Years network, free family friendly event supported across the region and ongoing advocacy for increased and improved early years services for young families.</p>
<p>2.2.6</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Develop, adopt, and implement a Positive Ageing Strategy.</p>	<p>Council created and implemented the 'No Barrier' Positive Ageing strategy in early 2022. Annual action plans and reviews track the implementation of the eight focus areas of the strategy: 1. Community and information, 2. Community and health services, 3. Housing, 4. Outdoor spaces and buildings, 5. Transport, 6. Social participation, 7. Civic participation and employment, 8. Respect and social inclusion. Key achievements over the 12 months have been implementation of the Positive Ageing Network, work in the lead up to signing the Aged Friendly declaration (planned for July 2023), free senior's week events and planning for an inaugural Positive Ageing expo for July 2023.</p>
<p>2.2.7</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Work with our partners to support the provision of Early Years Services, e.g., Maternal Child Health, Kindergartens, Childcare and Playgroup.</p>	<p>Council has built strong relationships with early years providers including playgroups, family day care, long day care and sessional kindergartens to improve service delivery, upgrade buildings and work with employers to increase workforce development within Hepburn Shire. Council has also been successful in receiving grants from Department of Education to create an Early Years Workforce Development plan and a Kindergarten Infrastructure and Service Plan that will be completed during 2023/24.</p>
<p>2.2.8</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Continue services to build strong, safe, and resilient communities (emergency management, local laws, animal control, environmental health).</p>	<p>Council continues routine inspections of registered businesses in relation to community safety and compliance activities. This included development of a suite of policies and procedures including an enforcement policy framework ensuring a greater consistency for enforcement actions. Developed a dusk until dawn cat curfew, to be implemented 1 July 2023. Continued development of emergency management plans. Provided tobacco education to local businesses. Participated in a Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) performance audit, which identified pleasing results although with a number of recommendations.</p>
<p>2.2.9</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Deliver actions identified in the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2018-2022.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 -2022 is complete. Key achievements over the 12 months have been included in the implementation of an Inclusion Officer role, celebrations for International Day of People with Disabilities, creation of a staff awareness pack and ongoing support of the Disability Advisory Committee.</p>
<p>2.2.10</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Develop, adopt, and implement a new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan post-2022.</p>	<p>Council adopted the Disability Action Plan 2023-2026 at the start of 2023. An annual action plan reviews and documents the implementation of the four focus areas of the plan: 1. Inclusive communities, 2. Health, housing and wellbeing, 3. Fairness and safety, 4. Opportunity and pride.</p>

2.3 Optimise the use of public spaces to increase participation and community connection

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Aquatics Strategy Implementation: Undertake further detailed investigation and development of a feasibility Study and Business Case for Indoor Aquatics Provision.

Council adopted the Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy at the April 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. In September 2022, officers commenced the Hepburn Shire Indoor Aquatics Provision Feasibility Study and Business Case (IAP) project. The IAP is anticipated to be completed in November 2023.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Walking and Cycling Strategy: Develop and adopt a Walking and Cycling Strategy.

The Integrated Transport Strategy, which includes Walking and Cycling goals, is advancing under the Strategic Planning Program - Future Hepburn. External experts have been engaged to lead this project, which is expected to progress in the second half of 2023.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
<p>2.3.1</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Increase female health and wellbeing by implementing the Hepburn Shire Active Women and Girls Strategy.</p>	<p>Council has implemented a new Community Services Support Network to increase local understanding of services available, referral pathways, arising issues and service gaps.</p> <p>Gender-neutral design elements were incorporated into both the Trentham Sportsground Pavilion redevelopment and Calemben Park Amenities projects to support the further growth of female participation in a range of sport and recreation opportunities. A Trentham Sportsground Participation Plan was developed and will be delivered throughout the 2023/24 period together with the Trentham Sportsground Committee of Management, Trentham Football Netball Club and Trentham and District Cricket Club that focuses primarily on opportunities to develop female participation.</p>
<p>2.3.2</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Implement appropriate actions from the 'Play is for everyone' Hepburn Shire Playspace Strategy.</p>	<p>The annual Hutchinson's safety audit of playspaces throughout the Shire was undertaken and has resulted in safety compliance works undertaken on 25 playspaces throughout 2022/23. Officers worked with Business and Tourism Creswick to upgrade the Magic Pudding Playspace with three new pieces of play equipment that align with the design principals of the Hepburn Shire Playspace Strategy. The Quarry Hill Reserve Committee of Management were funded within Council's 2022/23. Capital Works Program to provide a shade structure over the existing playground within the Reserve.</p>
<p>2.3.3</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Support access and participation through strong asset management practices aligned with developing a long-term Asset Plan.</p>	<p>Adopted a shire-wide Asset Plan in June 2022.</p> <p>Council officers continued to focus on developing projects and programs that encourage and support community participation within our public spaces. Council officers utilised delegated committees such as the Disability Advisory Committee to ensure projects have community oversight regarding access issues. Council's current asset management practices and future asset planning have access and participation at the core of decision making.</p>

2.3.4  PROGRESS DELAYED	2.3.4 Facilitate walking and cycling infrastructure by implementing works outlined in the Walking and Cycling Strategy.	The Integrated Transport Strategy is being delivered as part of the Future Hepburn project, which incorporates walking and cycling objectives. The strategy development has been delayed; however external expertise has now been secured for the project to progress in the second half of 2023.
2.3.5  ON TRACK	2.3.5 Promote the use of libraries and hubs throughout Hepburn Shire.	Activities are programmed across the Shire, developed independently and inclusive of programs developed by industry partners such as Public Libraries Victoria (PLV) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Programs include regular events, school holiday programs, and days of significance. These programs are promoted through Council's social media accounts and the Hepburn Libraries' social media accounts.
2.3.6  ON TRACK	2.3.6 Maintain our open spaces for the enjoyment of our community and visitors.	Council's Parks and Open Space department continue to manage and improve our public open spaces throughout the municipality.
2.3.7  COMPLETED	2.3.7 Design, develop and advocate for funding to enhance or build sport and active recreation facilities identified through Master Planning. Ensure design and construct projects comply with Universal Design principles, including compliance with the Design for Everyone Guide.	Federal funding commitment of \$1.25 million will co-fund priority projects from the Doug Lindsay and Glenlyon Recreation Reserves Master Plans. Council was successful in gaining a Victorian Government Grant of \$185,500 to co-fund new sports lighting at the Newlyn Recreation Reserve. Universal design elements were incorporated into the delivery of both the Trentham Sportsground Pavilion and Calembreen Park Amenities Projects that will support the development of diverse participation in a range of sport and active recreation participation opportunities.
2.3.8  PROGRESS DELAYED	2.3.8 Deliver key projects including Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens enhanced visitation experience, Bullarto Station Precinct development and Creswick Town Hall restoration.	Two of the three projects have experienced a delay due to construction industry challenges. Creswick Town Hall upgrades were completed on time. Bullarto Station construction works are behind schedule but well underway, with external cladding now installed. Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens scope required refinement, which now has full stakeholder support - heritage permits now underway. This has delayed the project, and procurement for construction is expected in November of 2023.
2.3.9  ON TRACK	2.3.9 Finalise and implement the Hepburn Shire Aquatic Strategy.	Council adopted the Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy at the April 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. In September 2022, Officers commenced the Hepburn Shire Indoor Aquatics Provision Feasibility Study and Business Case (IAP) project. The IAP is anticipated to be completed in November 2023. Following the adoption of the Aquatics Strategy, officers commenced planning and delivery of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Compliance works to the existing aquatics facilities as outlined in the strategy. It is anticipated that the OHS and Compliance works will be completed by September 2023.

2.4 Assist our community to increase access to healthy food to improve nutrition, reduce chronic disease, improve mental wellbeing, and strengthen the local food production system

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Creating a circular food economy in the Hepburn Shire: Partner with local organisations to increase access to healthy and affordable food.

Council is working closely with partners to build awareness and programs to support a circular food economy in the Shire. This includes working with emergency food relief agencies to understand the demand and access challenges for affordable food within the region for vulnerable populations.




Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
<p>2.4.1</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Lead by example, by supplying and promoting healthier local food and drink options across Council-run meetings, events, activities, facilities and programs.</p>	<p>Officers have drafted a Food and Drink Policy for Council-run meetings, events, activities, facilities, and programs. A Project Control Group will be formed over the coming months to review before seeking further feedback and adoption. The Health and Wellbeing Officer is collaborating with the Aquatics Team to implement a Healthy Choices project in the Council-run pools.</p>
<p>2.4.2</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Support initiatives that encourage healthier lifestyles and habits across the lifespan, particularly in children's early years.</p>	<p>Objective outlined in the 'Starting Block' Early and Middle Years Strategy 2022-2030. Council has supported free family friendly events across the Shire. Officers have developed partnerships with early years providers to improve healthy habits, raise awareness, and increase resources. The Positive Ageing Expo planned for July 2023 will focus on improving the visibility of local social support programs that have a healthy lifestyle focus.</p>
<p>2.4.3</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Partner with local organisation/s to increase access to healthy and affordable food (including for vulnerable groups) and to support positive food system change.</p>	<p>The Health and Wellbeing Officer is engaging with food security organisations to promote access across the region.</p>
<p>2.4.4</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Partner with key health agencies to support initiatives and services to improve health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Council runs the external Health and Wellbeing working group incorporating a range of key local health and wellbeing partners that are committed to achieving the outcomes set in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.</p>

2.5 Improved mental wellbeing within the community

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Improved mental wellbeing within the community: Establish a mental health support network for organisations that have a focus on mental health support and referral processes throughout the Hepburn region.

Council continues to work closely with Central Highlands Rural Health to ensure adequate Mental Health networks are run on a regular basis. Working with the new Mental Health team to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the network and referral processes throughout the shire.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
2.5.1 	Raise awareness and understanding of mental health services and resources, and work with other levels of government to localise and improve mental health services available to residents with a specific focus on youth mental health.	Officers are currently working with key stakeholders to improve attendance at regional mental health networks and increase awareness of funded services and referral pathways for community members.
2.5.2 	Strengthen partnerships and support education, programs, events, and prevention activities that focus on community participation, diversity and inclusion.	Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Daylesford College to support the implementation of Live4Life throughout Hepburn Shire. This project encourages a community response to mental health, increases awareness and activates young people in the community to champion mental health discussions. Inclusion activities have included support ChillOut Festival, Big Rainbow, recommitted to the refugee welcome zone, ongoing events and celebrations.
2.5.3 	Adopt a co-benefit approach to improving mental wellbeing, supporting active living and healthy eating initiatives.	A co-benefits approach has been embedded throughout the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. An annual action plan has been implemented that includes internal and external partnerships across Hepburn Shire. Key achievements over the year include implementation of Healthy Choices in pool project, Healthy lunch boxes project, free inclusion workshop for sporting clubs throughout the region.
2.5.4 	Ensure Council services, activities and facilities are accessible and inclusive to remove barriers to participation.	In July 2022 Council engaged an Inclusion Officer to ensure access and inclusion is embedded across the organisation. This role implements the Disability Plan, facilitates the Disability Advisory Committee and the LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee and ensures inclusion and equity is a priority throughout Council. Council continues to upgrade and redevelop Council facilities in line with access for all requirements. For example, the accessible pavilion at Trentham Sportsground Recreation Reserve, Calembreen Park change facilities and accessible pathways and a Changing Places facility at Hammond Park trailhead.

3 Embracing our past and planning for the future



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 3 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>Council staff completed cultural awareness training</p> <p>90% of current staff have completed cultural awareness training within the last 4 years measured by the current number of completions against the number of current headcounts.</p>	22.5% p.a	0%	8%	✗	Council is progressing towards our four-year target for cultural awareness training, and investigating how this program can be built into a staff on-boarding program to ensure an ongoing focus.
<p>Deliver Council's documented and agreed annual strategic planning program</p> <p>Over the life of the plan, deliver 25 agreed actions from Council's documented and agreed annual strategic planning program measured by the number of actions completed.</p>	50%	60%	68%	✓	We are on track in the middle phase of the strategic planning program Future Hepburn. Work commenced on the bushfire and biodiversity studies which will inform our township studies and settlements for future development. Work also began on Rural Hepburn - Agriculture Land and Rural Settlement Strategy, along with engagement on the five township structure plans for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford/Hepburn, Trentham and Glenlyon. Work also progressed on the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan.
<p>Length of walking and cycling trails available across the Shire</p> <p>A 3% per annum (1.5km) footpath expansion i.e., new footpath (generally concrete or asphalt, not granitic sand) to increase connectivity of walking paths across the Shire.</p>	3%	2.5%	9%	✓	Council has increased the total network length again this year through construction of new paths and acquisition of paths built by others resulting in the target being exceeded by 4.5km across the Shire.
<p>Percentage of planning applications approved within required time frames</p> <p>Across the life of the Plan, a 10% increase in the percentage of Planning applications decided within required time frames against a baseline of 64.4%.</p>	67.7%	44.77%	43%	✗	Statutory time limits are influenced by a range of factors. The complexity of an application and reliance on external agencies leads to delays in processing times. The unit has also been impacted by resourcing. Whilst steps are in place to manage and address these matters, it is expected this will be an area for ongoing improvement.

3.1 Partner with and empower our Traditional Owners and broader community to acknowledge, understand, celebrate, and preserve our area’s cultures, traditions, and environs

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE


COVID Stimulus Infrastructure Projects: Continue to deliver key stimulus funded projects including, Bullarto Station Tourist Precinct, Creswick Town Hall, and Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens

The Creswick Town Hall condition upgrade project is now complete with an official opening and restarting of the clock by Martha Haylett MP, the Hon Catherine King MP and Mayor Cr Brian Hood, on 23 June 2023. A brass plaque will be installed at the entrance to the museum to commemorate the occasion. The paint, flagpole, roofing elements, glazing replacement, joinery work, clock tower access ladder, cast iron cresting remediation and chimney works all look incredible and have secured the building for future generations. Despite construction industry challenges causing delays, Bullarto Station Project is progressing, now reaching the cladding installation stage. Meanwhile, the final designs for Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens have reached the heritage approval stage.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Reconciliation Action Plan: Develop and adopt a Reconciliation Action Plan.

A number of actions have continued through the year to support reconciliation and continue to strengthen our relationship with the Traditional Owners, such as renaming of Larni Barramal Yaluk, negotiations for Land Use Access Agreements and NAIDOC week. With our Reconciliation Officer role now on board we have prioritised the development of our new Reconciliation Action Plan which has been delayed due to temporary resourcing constraints.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
 <p>3.1.1</p>	<p>Continue to implement and review the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and build strong partnerships through the RAP Advisory Committee.</p>	<p>Council is reviewing the 2019 Reconciliation Action Plan - 'Reflect' in preparation for the next stage of an 'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan. This will run for two years to gain a deeper understanding of Council’s support to advance reconciliation.</p> <p>Initial discussion has begun with Dja Dja Wurrung representatives to enable a meaningful and effective community and stakeholder engagement process.</p>
 <p>3.1.2</p>	<p>Hold annual strategic meetings with Dja Dja Wurrung to share and align projects and priorities.</p>	<p>Council is currently working closely with Dja Dja Wurrung on several projects including Creswick Trails, Arts and Culture Strategy and the Larni Barramal Yaluk Creek renaming which will be formally acknowledge in July 2023. The ongoing development of strong relationships is a key focus and commitment for Council.</p>
 <p>3.1.3</p>	<p>Develop and implement an Arts and Culture Strategy to support local artists to provide creative cultural experiences to enrich community wellbeing.</p>	<p>Initial community consultation process has been completed and Council’s Arts and Culture Strategy has been drafted. It is anticipated to go on public exhibition period in early 2024 for community comment, subject to Council approval.</p>

5

PERFORMANCE

3.1.4



ON TRACK

Develop and implement an Indigenous Heritage Strategy to support the recognition and preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Council has prepared a brief for an Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management Strategy to inform shire-wide strategic planning.

3.1.5



ON TRACK

Manage and support our heritage buildings in accordance with the adopted Hepburn Heritage Strategy 2020-2030.

A brief for the heritage gap analysis for Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Clunes, Trentham, and Glenlyon has been advertised and a suitable response obtained. The project will commence in early July 2023 and is expected to be completed later in 2023.

3.1.6



COMPLETED

Partner with other Council's to advocate for UNESCO World Heritage Listing of the Central Victorian Goldfields.

The Victorian Goldfields UNESCO World Heritage bid was given a boost thanks to \$3.8 million announced in the stage government budget for championing Victoria's outstanding heritage. Officers provided input into the draft World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Master Plan and all feedback was accepted. The Steering Committee postponed the finalisation of the plan to allow for the shift to the 'Victorian Goldfields' approved by the Minister Planning, as this name is recognised better internationally. The Steering Committee will accept the report once this variation is completed.

3.2 Protect and enhance the existing character of our towns and rural settings through community-inclusive strategic planning to strengthen planning controls on growth and development

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Strategic Planning Work Program: Implement year 2 of council program of strategic planning work to be delivered in accordance with financial budget allocations, including continued work on Creswick Structure Plan and commencement of Trentham Structure Plan.

Council launched the Future Hepburn strategic planning program in May 2023. Future Hepburn consists of a suite of projects that will update and improve the urban and rural planning framework for the shire. Key projects currently underway include Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land and Rural Settlement Strategy, Structure Plans for the five main shire towns (Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Clunes, Trentham and Glenlyon), Urban Design and Neighbourhood Character assessments, Integrated Transport Strategy, and Biodiversity and Bushire assessments.




Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
3.2.1  ON TRACK	Develop and complete Town Structure Plans as per Council's strategic planning program.	Council launched the Future Hepburn strategic planning program in May 2023. Structure Plans for the five main shire towns (Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Clunes, Trentham and Glenlyon) have commenced with the first phase of community engagement through a survey, community pop-ups and a discussion paper for each town. Supporting technical work is also in progress, including Urban Design and Neighbourhood Character assessments, Integrated Transport Strategy, and Biodiversity and Bushire assessments.
3.2.2  PROGRESS DELAYED	Support community planning to enable local communities to determine their priorities for the future.	This has been delayed due to staffing. Recruitment is anticipated to commence in late 2023 with a future priority to review community planning processes to ensure a sustainable, effective, and efficient delivery framework is established to improve community outcomes.
3.2.3  ON TRACK	Conduct a study of land development supply.	SGS Economics & Planning completed revisions to the draft Land Supply and Demand Study.
3.2.4  ON TRACK	Develop an Agricultural Land Use and Settlement Strategy.	First stage of community engagement was undertaken in April and May 2023 through Participate Hepburn with release of a survey, background report, and consultation with key stakeholders. The next phase involves developing draft strategic directions and principles and further consultation with key stakeholders to inform preparation of a draft Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land and Rural Settlement Strategy in late 2023.
3.2.5  ON TRACK	Undertake strategic land use planning to identify access to commercial and industrial land.	Council launched the Future Hepburn strategic planning program in May 2023. Structure Plans for the five main shire towns (Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Clunes, Trentham, and Glenlyon) have commenced with the first phase of community engagement through a survey, community pop-ups and a discussion paper for each town. A Land Supply and Demand report prepared by SGS Economics & Planning and RMCG is a key input to planning for commercial and industrial land.
3.2.6  ON TRACK	Develop and implement a local Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Planning Policy.	The development of a framework to embed ESD guidelines in planning decision making will continue in 2023-24. Council is working with the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments to introduce and apply guidance material for development applicants.

3.3 Build and maintain quality infrastructure that supports and promotes liveability and active living in the community

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Trentham Sportsground Pavilion - Construct: Complete construction of the pavilion and change facilities.

The Trentham Sportsground Pavilion Redevelopment Project is now complete, with the facility officially opened on 20 April 2023 by the Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP. The new facilities are a fantastic asset for the area and the Trentham community, along with current and future netballers, footballers and cricketers.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
 3.3.1 COMPLETED	Continue to provide strong management and maintenance of our infrastructure.	Ongoing activities include acquiring and maintaining asset data and asset planning to determine appropriate levels of maintenance and renewal. Activities completed in 2022-23 include updating building asset data, and a capital asset renewal of \$7.5 million completed.
 3.3.2 ON TRACK	Support the amenity of our towns through the maintenance, replacement and development of streetscapes.	Council continued to maintain streetscapes to provide neat and tidy townships. The replacement and development of streetscapes are subject to Council priorities in line with appropriate organisational fiscal responsibilities. In addition to many seasonal plantings in urban environments, this year also saw the installation of planter boxes in main retail areas to support additional greening of the streetscape.
 3.3.3 COMPLETED	Advocate, plan and deliver pedestrian, cycling and recreation paths and trails that reduce reliance on vehicles.	The total length of our footpaths and trails network has increased again this year to a total length of 55.5kms which has been achieved through the construction of new paths and trails and acquisition of shared footpaths and trails built by others throughout the Shire.
 3.3.4 ON TRACK	Advocate to the State and Federal Government to improve cycling connections, public transport infrastructure and roll out of a public electric vehicle (EV) charging network across city boundaries and the broader region.	Council partnered with Hepburn Energy, Central Highlands Water, and EV charging network operator Chargefox, to install two of the three new 50kW public EV fast chargers as part of the Destination Charging Across Victoria program, partly funded by the Victorian Government. Creswick and Hepburn Springs EV chargers were installed, with Hepburn Springs EV set to open to the public in July 2023. A third EV charger is scheduled for installation in Trentham in late 2023/early 2024. The Sustainability and Planning teams are working together on an Integrated Transport Strategy with feed-in from the community and other stakeholders.

3.3.5

Ensure sustainable and accessible infrastructure that promotes healthy recreation, physical activity and social connection.



COMPLETED

Sustainable and accessible infrastructure has been achieved in delivered sport and active recreation projects and through the master plan development undertaken on community sport and active recreation places and spaces.

3.2.6

Maintain and improve the amenity and cleanliness of townships, roadsides and public spaces.



ON TRACK

Council continues to invest in maintenance and management of all public spaces throughout the municipality lead by Council's Operations Department.

3.3.7

Advocate for and partner in the delivery of Council's priority projects.



ON TRACK

Council continues to advocate on behalf of its community for improvements to improved services and to provide quality infrastructure that enhances the liveability of our Shire. This year has seen Council advocate on important issues such as the Western Renewables Link, increased financial support from state and federal governments, and the ongoing housing availability and affordability issues. Council also continued to work alongside neighbouring councils to progress the Goldfields UNESCO bid, Commonwealth Games 2026 and tourism growth opportunities.

4 Diverse economy and opportunity



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 4 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR

	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>Yield of tourist spend</p> <p>Over the life of the plan a 2% increase in total spend per visitor measured against a baseline of \$60 of total spend per visitor.</p>	2%	40%	75.4%	✓	Growth of 75.4% from \$134 in the previous year to \$235 indicates a significant bounce back from COVID-impacted years and reflects the strong branding and positioning of the region to domestic overnight visitors.
<p>Per capita Gross Regional Product</p> <p>4% annual increase in per capita Gross Regional Product against a baseline of \$46,730 per capita GRP (Gross Regional Product).</p>	4%	9.6%	3.7%	✗	Target not met with GRP per capita at \$49,380 representing a 3.7% increase on last year. This figure is reflective of the currently broader economic conditions.
<p>Subscribers to Hepburn Shire Business E-newsletter</p> <p>5% annual increase of subscribers to the Hepburn Shire business e-newsletter against a baseline of 595 subscribers.</p>	5%	0.3%	-5.38	✗	Although this target was not met, open rates are consistently exceeding 40%. This is double the industry average and indicates engagement with the e-newsletter is strong. It will be continually advertised for new businesses and subscribers throughout the coming year.
<p>Gross revenue generated by business and organisations, outside the Tourism sector</p> <p>4% annual increase percentage of gross revenue generated by businesses and organisations, outside the Tourism sector against baseline of \$1,163.565M.</p>	4%	6.2%	21%	✓	A 21% rise in revenue indicates broad growth of the business sector (outside of tourism) across Hepburn Shire.

4.1 Work in partnership to attract and retain young people in our area through the provision of improved digital connectivity, education opportunities, employment pathways, affordable housing, improved public and active transport options, and leadership opportunities

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Hepburn Shire Traineeships Program: Creation of new traineeship opportunities within Council.

Council has three trainees engaged within various departments of the organisation. In collaboration with industry association Local Government Professionals (LGPro), Council is working to expand traineeship opportunities for marginalised groups. The traineeship program has been successful for both Council and the trainees.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
<p>4.1.1</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Develop and implement a Youth Strategy 2021-25 to support the delivery of services and opportunities to young people in Hepburn Shire.</p>	<p>Council created and implemented the ACE (Advocate, Celebrate and Elevate) Youth Development Strategy in July 2022. Annual action plans track the implementation of the eight focus areas of the strategy: 1. Mental health, 2. Climate action, 3. Gender equality, inclusion and diversity, 4. Youth health and wellbeing, 5. Social and community connection, 6. Personal growth and development, 7. Youth agency and empowerment, 8. Safety and security. Key achievements over the last 12 months have been free family friendly events, school holiday programs, Queer Book Club, skate competitions, Freeza youth events and Hepburn Soundshell music events.</p>
<p>4.1.2</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Explore offering a graduate or traineeship program in alignment with Council's Workforce Plan development.</p>	<p>Council has three trainees engaged within various departments of the organisation. In collaboration with LGPro, Council is working to expand traineeship opportunities for marginalised groups. The traineeship program has been successful for both Council and the trainees with a framework that will enable ongoing success of the program to be developed.</p>
<p>4.1.3</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Advocate to government to assist with funding of the business case for the establishment of Institute of Gastronomy within the shire.</p>	<p>Advocacy to government and support for the growth of the gastronomy industry within our Shire continues.</p>
<p>4.1.4</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Investigate the formation of a Youth Council or Youth Advisory Committee.</p>	<p>Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) to implement a trial program 'Young Mayors'. This program is evidence based and is designed in partnership with the electoral commission. Young people under 18 will vote in representatives to sit on a committee of Council. The project is in design phase that will include young people, Councillors, officers, and key community stakeholders to design a model that is fit for Hepburn Shire. The trial will run for two years.</p>

4.2 Build and maintain quality infrastructure that supports and promotes liveability and active living in the community

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Trentham Sportsground Pavilion - Construct: Complete construction of the pavilion and change facilities.

The Trentham Sportsground Pavilion Redevelopment Project is now complete, with the facility officially opened on 20 April 2023 by the Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP. The new facilities are a fantastic asset for the area and the Trentham community, along with current and future netballers, footballers and cricketers.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
4.2.1  ON TRACK	Support implementation of Central Highlands Digital Plan.	Advocacy ongoing with both state government and telecommunication's carriers including Telstra and National Broadband Network (NBN). Grant funding was sought from NBN for Trentham fibre to the premise, but co-contribution was cost prohibitive. State government funding sought unsuccessfully under the Connecting Victoria program. Several meetings held with NBN, and proposal put forward for better internet coverage in the Sailors Falls area. Discussions with NBN and Councillors were also conducted. Public Wi-Fi mentioned in reports and moved into separate plan item.
4.2.2  CANCELLED	Review the impact of the co-working space at the Hepburn Hub at the Rex and explore the feasibility of a local co-working spaces in other parts of the Shire.	Project was cancelled and external funding returned to funding body. Council has a new project underway to investigate future community facilities in the Birch Ward.
4.2.3  ON TRACK	Install public wi-fi in appropriate areas.	Initial discussions with vendors have taken place with progress dependent on project funding. Public Wi-Fi is available at all Libraries and Customer Service Hubs.
4.2.4  ON TRACK	Advocate to ensure that our community has access to, and benefits from, reliable digital services.	Advocacy is ongoing with both state government and telecommunication carriers including Telstra and NBN. Grant funding has been sought from NBN for Trentham fibre to the premise, but co-contribution was cost prohibitive. State government funding has been unsuccessful under the Connecting Victoria program for areas of Trentham, Clunes, and Glenlyon. Several meetings have been held with NBN, and a proposal put forward for better internet coverage in the Sailors Falls area.

4.3 Support and facilitate a diverse and innovative local economy that encourages an increase of local businesses with diverse offerings to achieve positive social, economic, and environmental impacts

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE





Artisan Agriculture: Finalise the pilot project of the Artisan Agriculture Project to support producers more broadly.

The final elements of the Artisan Agriculture Project were completed including the final Project Advisory Group meeting in February 2023, an end of project event at Sault Estate, along with a final presentation to Councillors on achievements and project outcomes. The Artisan Agriculture Facilitation Specialist and Artisan Agriculture Project Support Officer completed their tenures with Hepburn Shire. With the loss of dedicated staff resources for this project, additional work created by this project will be absorbed into existing staff resources in the Economic Development Team.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Attraction of significant events: Advocacy and attraction of significant events that align with Council’s Event Strategy.

In total, 57 events throughout 2022/23 were supported by Council either financially or with in-kind support. Signature events including ChillOut, Spudfest and Booktown continued to grow in popularity and CresFest, in its second year also grew to become an important regional event. The signature event of BOREALIS on the Lake was successfully held for the first time in 2022 and has been reengaged to hold their event in July 2023.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
<p>4.3.1</p> 	<p>Implement a Business Concierge model (Customer Service, Planning and Economic Development) to enhance the permit approvals process.</p>	<p>This project will commence in 2024/25, following improvements being made to systems and processing within the Planning Team, following a \$260,000 grant from the state government to assist this work.</p> <p>The Planning and Economic Development Teams have established regular meetings to improve communications regarding business permits and applications.</p>
<p>4.3.2</p> 	<p>Invest in streetscapes and infrastructure in commercial and retail areas across the Shire.</p>	<p>The following streetscapes works/investments were completed in 2022/23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vincent Street, Daylesford roundabout garden redevelopment • Pearman Street, Creswick kerb and channel, road upgrade, pedestrian connections • Albert Street, Trentham drainage upgrade • Albert Street, Creswick Street furniture renewal • Various locations, street planter box installations.
<p>4.3.3</p> 	<p>Finalise the pilot project of the Artisan Agriculture Project to support producers more broadly.</p>	<p>The Artisan Agriculture pilot is completed and has resulted in strengthened relationships and contacts amongst the agricultural sector.</p>
<p>4.3.4</p> 	<p>Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy that ensures diverse offerings.</p>	<p>This project has not started as commencement of this project is subject to achieving funding as part of Council’s annual budget process.</p>

4.3.5

Develop and implement a Commercial Land Use Policy.



This project is delayed, and a scope is to be developed in consultation with Council's Economic Development department.

4.3.6

Develop and implement an HSC Shire Wide Agricultural and Rural Settlement Strategy.



The first stage of community engagement was undertaken in April and May 2023 with release of a survey, Background Report and consultation with key stakeholders. The next phase involves developing draft strategic directions and principles and further consultation with key stakeholders to inform preparation of a draft Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land and Rural Settlement Strategy in late 2023.

4.3.7

Support local and regional tourism campaigns and initiatives to support the local offer.



Council has formalised a partnership with Tourism Midwest, the inaugural Visitor Economy Partnership in Victoria to improve exposure, branding, and product development in the west of the Shire. This augments Council's existing partnership with Daylesford Macedon Tourism which continues to showcase the region to travellers at a high level.

4.3.8

Implement the Events Strategy 2020-2025 building on existing brand pillars including Indulge (Food & Drink), Refresh (Escape & Rejuvenate), Learn (History & Culture) and Make (Art & Artisans).



Council supported 60 events throughout the year, with significant social, community and economic benefits coming to the region. Three signature events (Spudfest, ChillOut and Booktown) and two regional events (Daylesford Motorfest and CresFest) combined brought an estimated 60,000 additional visitors to the region.

4.3.9

Review procurement policy to ensure a focus on sustainable practices, a meaningful partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung and support local business.





The Procurement Policy is being reviewed and will include a review of the evaluation criteria, with expected adoption in September 2023.

4.4 Develop and promote the circular economy to diversify our local economy and support our sustainability goals

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Circular Economy Officer: Employment of a Circular Economy officer to investigate and drive investment in circular economy initiatives relevant to the Shire.

The new Circular Economy Officer, who was appointed in January 2023, has been actively collaborating with teams on numerous Circular Economy initiatives. This includes developing a Circular Economy Toolkit and Roadmap, acquiring the Aspire software platform for resource recovery and a focus on improving Daylesford Transfer Station.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
<p>4.4.1</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Review waste services to ensure alignment with the new State Government’s Circular Economy program.</p>	<p>Community engagement plan completed with engagement beginning late September 2023 pending Council approval. Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) kerbside collection rollout proposed for February 2024. Council still awaiting confirmation from Recycling Victoria on clear direction regarding glass service delivery.</p>
<p>4.4.2</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Develop and promote the circular economy to diversify our local economy and support our sustainability goals.</p>	<p>Circular Economy Officer has been actively collaborating with teams on numerous circular economy initiatives. This includes developing a circular economy toolkit and roadmap.</p>

5 A dynamic and responsive council



MEASURES OF SUCCESS





FOCUS AREA 5 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>Subscribers to Council’s e-newsletter Hepburn Life</p> <p>5% annual increase in subscribers to Council’s e-newsletter, Hepburn Life against baseline of 2,941 subscribers.</p>	5%	14.9%	22.4%	✓	Target achieved and exceeded. There are now 3,968 subscribers.
<p>Financial sustainability of the organisation</p> <p>Achieve a low or medium risk rating for VAGO (Victorian Auditor General’s Office) financial sustainability indicators</p>	All indicators low or medium	4 Low, 1 Medium, 1 High	3 Low, 2 Medium, 1 High	✗	The Underlying Surplus / Deficit is in the high category. This is predominately impacted by costs associated with storm recovery that have not been reimbursed and the writing-off of costs incurred that will not be recognised as assets, however, needs to be closely monitored.
<p>Customer Service Requests responded to according to Charter</p> <p>2% annual increase percentage of service requests responded to in accordance with customer service charter.</p>	2%	No updated data available	No updated data available	No updated data available	Council adopted a Customer Service Strategy in 2022/23, with a key action to develop targets and appropriate reporting.
<p>Community satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</p> <p>Increase result of community satisfaction with community consultation and engagement from 44 to 50 points, over the life of the plan, a 14% improvement.</p>	47	44	46	✗	Hepburn Shire demonstrated an improvement of 2 points over the 2022 score of 44 (statewide results of other councils was a negative trend). Whilst it did not meet the target, there has been a demonstrated improvement. Over the life of the plan (2025) Councillors and Officers continue actions to reach the target of 50.
<p>Workforce Plan Actions delivered</p> <p>Over the life of the plan, 100% of actions (36) from the 2021 adopted Workforce Plan are implemented to ensure gender equity, diversity, and inclusiveness in the workforce.</p>	18 Actions	8	26	✓	Council is in the second year of year of five-year plan, with strong progress resulting in two thirds of actions underway or completed.

5.1 Harness community expertise

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Western Victoria Transmission Network Project: Continue to work in partnership with the community in support of their opposition to AusNet's 24ha terminal station location and the above ground transmission lines.

Council is working in partnership with the community to respond to the Western Renewables Link (WRL) and Victoria – New South Wales Interconnector (VNI) West transmission projects through a range of activities. These include regular community meetings and updates, engagement with the proponents AusNet and Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) on project details and seeking changes, participating in the Technical Reference Group for the WRL Environmental Effects Statement and via representations to political representatives and media.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
5.1.1  ON TRACK	Conduct a Community Skills Session to capture community skills and interest for future engagements.	Initial discussions have commenced investigating how we capture the skills and knowledge of community members that more effectively involves them in Advisory Committees and other advisory capacities within Council.
5.1.2  ON TRACK	Strengthen processes to create strong alignment with community-led engagement.	An increased focus on understanding stakeholder and community needs during the engagement planning process was identified during the internal audit. More work is being done with teams to understand the needs of those impacted or interested in their projects and strategies put in place to ensure their representation within the feedback collected.
5.1.3  ON TRACK	Continue to value, support, and implement Community Reference Groups, where appropriate.	Community Reference Groups have supported in the development of several Council engagement projects, for example Sustainable Hepburn, and have added a great deal of value to the finished strategies and plans in which they have been involved.
5.1.4  ON TRACK	Actively participate in community and government networks and regional alliances.	Council officers participate in a wide range of industry and government steering committees, alliances, strategic partnerships, and formal Memorandum of Understandings relating to community and social issues. Some of these are Early years workforce development, Community of Respect and Equity, Healthy and Active in Nature Alliance, Healthy Food Choices Alliance and Youth code of ethics steering committee.

5.2 Actively communicate, inform, and engage with our community about events and decision-making

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Customer Service Strategy Development: Develop and adopt a whole of Council Customer Service Strategy and Charter.

The Customer Service Strategy (Working Together Delivering Better) was approved by the Executive Team and provided to Councillor briefing in April 2023. Implementation of strategy and roll-out of staff training will be led by a new Customer Experience Coordinator in 2023/24.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE






Governance Rules Review: Undertake review of Governance and Risk rules to ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 2020.

Council reviewed its Governance Rules and undertook public consultation during July 2022. The rules were updated to embed arrangements for virtual and hybrid Council Meetings that had become common practice during the COVID-19 pandemic, along with some minor administrative amendments. The rules were adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 16 August 2022.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Community Engagement Staff Training Program: Deliver a Community Engagement training program for staff.

In September 2022, 30 Council Officers participated in Community Engagement Training, with engagement experts Mosaic Lab. These experts utilised our Community Engagement Policy, Matrix, and other tools so that the training delivered supported the professional development needs of our staff and organisation. An ongoing program is currently under development that will continue to build the capacity, confidence and skills of staff to deliver quality community engagement activities. The training was extended to Councillors and the Executive Team in March 2023.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
 ON TRACK	5.2.1 Implement the Community Engagement Policy and procedures to improve community engagement practices and relationship building.	Council continues to seek areas of improvement in the implementation of the Community Engagement Policy. A firm foundation has been established including tools and templates for Council officers and training across the organisation. An internal audit has been undertaken and we are working towards embedding continuous improvement practices across Council's community engagement processes and practices.
 COMPLETED	5.2.2 Communicate in a timely, clear, responsive, and accessible way about decisions and circumstances that impact our community.	Council continues to improve the way it communicates by providing accessible information to the community. Hepburn Life, the regular monthly newsletter has a reach of almost 4,000 subscribers, and a new look Council website was launched.
 ON TRACK	5.2.3 Implement the recommendations of Hepburn Shire Council Service Review-Customer Experience.	Actions as listed in the Customer Service strategy are on track for completion. Actions completed include development of all staff training modules in customer service (scheduled to be delivered in Q1 2023/2024) and communication to the community promoting customer experience services and availability.
 PROGRESS DELAYED	5.2.4 Create an online database of Community Groups and contacts from across the Shire accessible to relevant Council Departments.	This is anticipated for completion during 2024/25.
 COMPLETED	5.2.5 Increase public participation in Council meetings by continuing to live stream meetings.	All Council Meetings held in 2022/2023 were live streamed via Council's Facebook page. The recording remains available for people to view.

5.3 A sustainable and agile organisation with strong corporate governance that supports excellent operations

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

ICT Transformation Project: Implementation of the ICT Strategy.

Council's Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Strategy and Roadmap has been completed, with the implementation to be rolled out over the next five years.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Review of Council Services and Programs: Providing options to Councillors for undertaking service reviews of programs, and services offered by Council.

A contractor was appointed to undertake a high-level review of Council services in order to identify, rank and prioritise services for a detailed review. Ranking and prioritisation will be completed no later than December 2023, slightly later than expected, however implementation of reviews will be able to be carried out in 2023/24.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
5.3.1  ON TRACK	Strengthen the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework, including a programmed service review of all Council services.	A contractor was appointed to undertake a high-level review of Council services to identify, rank and prioritise services for a detailed review. Ranking and prioritisation was completed in 2022/23, with an internal review and service summary scheduled for 2023/24.
5.3.2  ON TRACK	Develop and implement an Annual Plan to set the operational direction of Council year on year.	Council adopted its Annual Plan 2022/23 in October 2023, with quarterly progress reports on the plan's actions presented to Council and published on Council's website. Council successfully delivered 31 of the 34 actions listed in the plan. The remaining actions will be incorporated into the Annual Plan 2023/24.
5.3.3  PROGRESS DELAYED	Enhance long-term financial planning and forecasting through the development and implementation of a Long-Term Financial Plan.	Work on the Long-Term Financial Plan will commence in September 2023 and the development of a forecasting process will be implemented.
5.3.4  COMPLETED	Effectively advocate, scope projects, prepare applications and ensure delivery of major initiatives and projects.	Improved projects development, using the Project Management Framework, has led to the progression of highly complex projects (Creswick Trails, Trentham Community Hub) and the delivery of a record amount of capital works expenditure of \$16.5 million. To assist with the cost of new and upgrades to our infrastructure, this year Council secured \$725,383 in grant funding toward our projects.
5.3.5  COMPLETED	Development and implementation of an Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Strategy to ensure staff have quality equipment and software to deliver high quality services to our community.	The ICT Strategy was finalised in 2022/23 and adopted. Activities are in progress and on-track with the schedule.
5.3.6  COMPLETED	Ensure Council practices, processes and decision making is compliant with the Local Government Act 2020 provisions and other related legislation and regulations.	Throughout 2022/23, Council meetings and decisions have been conducted in compliance with the Local Government Act 2020. Council's instruments of delegation and authorisation are reviewed twice a year to account for changes to legislation, as well as changing roles and responsibilities.





5.3.7  COMPLETED	5.3.7 Strengthen internal governance through ongoing Councillor and staff capacity building and skill development.	Throughout the 2022/23, Councillors have been provided information and training regarding the Governance Rules, conflicts of interest, Councillor and staff interaction, rating and valuations, critical infrastructure and emergency management. All new staff receive induction in relation to privacy, conflicts of interest, record keeping, decision making, and gifts. Refresher courses are offered throughout the year for existing staff.
 PROGRESS DELAYED	5.3.8 Embed Council's risk management framework and risk appetite into project management and decision making.	Council has commenced a project to implement the Risk Management Framework adopted in 2021. This project will include risk appetite assessment, the development of guides and templates for staff in managing risk, and training for staff in embedding risk practice in their daily work. the project is expected to be completed by March 2024.
 ON TRACK	5.3.9 Ensure the procurement practices of staff are in line with set policies, procedures and guidelines that have a focus on transparency, accountability and probity.	Procurement Policy, guidelines and procedures are being reviewed and scheduled for the September 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting.
 COMPLETED	5.3.10 Respond and adapt to requirements set out by the Victoria Electoral Commission in relation to representation reviews and general elections.	Council participated in and provided feedback to the Electoral Structure Review. Council is awaiting the decision of the Minister for Local Government regarding the electoral structure of Hepburn Shire for the 2024 local government elections.

5.4 Improve staff resourcing, support, and capacity building

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Employer Value Proposition: Develop Employer Value Proposition and tools to market Hepburn Shire Council more effectively as an employer.

Throughout the year, work has been done to ensure our workplace culture reflects an excellent proposition for potential employees. These actions will continue in 2023 aiming to produce an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) in 2024 that reflects the employee experience.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
5.4.1  ON TRACK	Develop Workforce Plan to promote gender equity, diversity, inclusion, with an appropriate organisational structure to deliver the Council Plan.	Council's Workforce Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan outline actions that will support and promote gender equity and inclusion at Council and continue to be implemented.
5.4.2  ON TRACK	Ensure appropriate training and development of staff to ensure continuous improvement and access to the required skills.	The Annual Review Professional Development Program (PDP) was redeveloped in 2022/23 with greater emphasis on staff development identification, with the data feeding into an organisational training program. Individual training opportunities continue to be identified through programs including LGPro Local Government Management Challenge, Local Government specific Leadership Diploma through Federation University, and inter-council mentoring program.
5.4.3  COMPLETED	Strengthen the organisational approach to project management and delivery.	A Project Management Framework was developed and is in use. Capital works programming was strengthened and improvements made to a suite of templates and forms. This also included improvements in processes and an increased delivery of annual capital works.
5.4.4  ON TRACK	Ensure that 100% of staff are offered the opportunity to undertake Cultural Awareness training.	Staff cultural awareness training was delivered across 2022/23. A focus on embedding cultural awareness training into the corporate on-boarding program will enable an effective and achievable process to building program success ongoing, as will ongoing training and awareness connected with dates of significance recognised throughout the year.

5.5 Strong asset management and renewal

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE




Daylesford Community Facilities and Staff Accommodation: Planning and scoping of Daylesford Community facilities and staff accommodation options.

A project manager has been assigned to undertake preliminary scoping and development of process in readiness for the Birch Ward Community Facilities project and the Staff Accommodation project. The Project Management department will be providing a proposed next steps approach and timeline for Councilors to consider and approve.

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Asset Condition Assessments: Undertake building condition assessment on Council owned facilities.

All building inspections and assessments have been completed and the condition audit report has been finalised. The future building renewal program is being revised by officers based on the audit data to spread the recommended works and resulting expenditure over a manageable period.




Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
5.5.1  ON TRACK	Continue to invest in asset maintenance, renewal, and upgrade programs.	Council officers continue to prepare annual budgets which provide recommended renewal and maintenance investment in line with the adopted Municipal Asset Plan and subsequent Asset Management Strategies and Asset Management Plans.
5.5.2  ON TRACK	Review and modernise Council's Asset Management practices in alignment with the development of Council's Asset Plan.	Council's Asset Plan details the framework in which Council manages assets through appropriate strategies, policies and individual management plans.
5.5.3  COMPLETED	Deliver the annual Capital Works program.	A record amount of capital works expenditure was delivered at \$16.5 million. several large multi-year projects continue in delivery phase, including Creswick Trails Network and Trentham Community Hub. This is a positive result given the very challenging construction sector regarding pricing, availability, COVID-19 impacts and inflation.

5.6 Be a leader in gender equality and equity and promote respect and safety in our community

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Gender Equity Action Plan: Implement 2022-23 actions detailed in the Gender Equality Action Plan.

Actions for the Action Plan (multi-year) are on track for completion including some achievements ahead of timelines. Actions implemented during 2022/23 include online anonymous reporting, Gender Impact Assessment training and awareness, gender and diversity included in new induction program, inclusion of a 'quiet room' in Duke Street office, customer service strategy with staff boundaries, increased incident reporting, revision of recruitment policy including recruitment panels, reboot of Personal Development Program (PDP) process, enablement of employee controlled personal data through Employee Self Service.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
5.6.1  ON TRACK	Implement provisions of the Gender Equality Act 2020, including a Gender Equity Action Plan.	The Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) and provisions of the Gender Equality Act continue to be met. Compliance with the act is an organisational responsibility with co-leadership by Community and Economy and People and Culture departments in the support of successful outcomes.
5.6.2  ON TRACK	Provide strong Council leadership, both internally and in the community, to build understanding of safe, respectful, and equitable relationships through education and awareness raising.	Council staff undertake Respectful Behaviours training as part of the onboarding program, with bystander training also included in Council's induction program for staff.
5.6.3  ON TRACK	Review and update the Act@Work Plan and continue to strengthen Gender Equity on Council.	Act @ Work program was in place in Council from 2019 to 2021. The program was absorbed into the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) with an ongoing action to deliver the GEAP on track.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) progress

Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (2021-2025) enters its third year. Over the past twelve months, Council has been actively engaged with numerous stakeholders as we work to develop positive change for residents. Building and maintaining these relationships is integral to fostering sustainable change for the region, both at the provider and consumer level.

Below are highlights from each of the strategic objectives for the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023.

Tackling climate change and its impact on health

- Council is working with neighbouring local government and appropriate authorities to develop consistent health and climate messaging, making additional considerations for communities who have experienced trauma from recent extreme weather events.
- 2023 saw the completion of the Sustainable Hepburn Climate Adaptation Toolkit, launched via Climate Adaptation Workshops for key stakeholders and community.
- Artisan Agriculture Grants Program projects implemented early 2023.
- Community-led Weed Control Grants Program launched in July 2023.
- Central Highlands Rural Health continues to implement the Mow to Grow program. Daylesford Secondary College continue to deliver their Getting Dirty program as well as a revegetation project supported by Council's Biodiversity Grants.
- Council supported the development of a Canopy Bridge in Wombat State Forest, through the Community Grants Program. The project has an online viewing component that allows community to observe local wildlife activity. Additionally, Daylesford Primary School was successful in receiving a Biodiversity Grant to establish a habitat garden.
- Council supported a research project by LaTrobe University and Women's Health Loddon Mallee which investigates the impacts of climate change on women's health and safety. Research findings will be directly provided to Council for reference.

Increase healthy eating

- Council officers have drafted the organisational Food and Drink Policy, which will be released for consultation later in 2023.
- Council continues to develop healthy retail environments by focusing on Healthy Choices in Pools project with close collaboration from Central Highlands Rural Health and joining the Vic Kids Eat Well program.
- Council has partnered with Central Highlands Rural Health to deliver a healthy lunchbox resource by way of fridge magnet, making it accessible to parents in the home via a scannable QR code.
- Added Food Relief services to Council's webpage for improved visibility.

Improving mental wellbeing

- Working with Central Highlands Rural Health to establish a Mental Health Network for service providers and practitioners in the region. This will assist in understanding services and gaps.
- Council signed a sponsorship agreement with WayOut Pride Camp, along with neighbouring councils to support the social connectedness of identified priority groups.
- A Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted with Daylesford Secondary College to deliver LIVE 4 LIFE program, a community-wide approach to youth mental health.

Preventing all forms of violence

- Project Rokit delivered at Daylesford Secondary College, programming focused on cyber-bullying prevention and respectful relationships.
- Outside the Locker Room delivered at various sporting clubs across the region, with a focus on respectful relationships and leadership.
- Council continues to promote service provision in the region through the ASK IZZY platform, ensuring improved understanding of and access to crucial services for vulnerable communities.

Local government performance reporting framework indicators

SERVICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.

Aquatic Facilities

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Service standard					
Health inspections of aquatic facilities <i>[Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]</i>	1.20	0.00	0.00	1.00	Satisfactory pool inspections in line with the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 were undertaken on Council's Aquatics facilities during the 2022/2023 Pool Season.
Utilisation					
Utilisation of aquatic facilities <i>[Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]</i>	1.59	1.20	1.64	1.47	Decrease of visits to aquatics facilities is due to shorter opening hours to manage aquatics sector wide qualified staff shortages and number of pool closures due to weather policy, staffing limitations and reactive maintenance requirements.
Service cost					
Cost of aquatic facilities <i>[Direct cost of aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to aquatic facilities]</i>	\$15.95	\$19.84	\$12.95	\$18.91	The increase cost of aquatics services per visit in 2022/2023 is attributed to service cost escalation of managing and maintaining aquatics facilities.

Animal Management

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Timeliness					
Time taken to action animal management requests <i>[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]</i>	1.58	4.14	4.48	4.54	There have been some complex service requests relating to animal management that have remained open until resolved. This has contributed to an increased average response time. In addition, the Ballarat Animal Shelter has been at capacity for a long period of time which has made it difficult to respond to some service requests in a timely manner that relate to the cat trapping program.
Service standard					
Animals reclaimed <i>[Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100</i>	83.33%	11.63%	13.75%	45.10%	These statistics relate to animals that have been collected and impounded either due to lack of registration or owners unable to be contacted. All other animals are provided a free ride home.
Animals rehomed <i>[Number of animals rehomed / Number of animals collected] x100</i>	55.56%	95.35%	27.50%	21.57%	The number of animals successfully returned to their owner is approximately 45% which has meant that fewer have required rehoming. Unfortunately, animal shelters across the region still have a number of animals available for adoption as adoption rates have declined post covid.
Service cost					
Cost of animal management service per population <i>[Direct cost of the animal management service / Population]</i>	\$8.29	\$10.91	\$9.72	\$12.25	There has been an increase in the cost of animal management services as the number of EFT has increased in the team.
Health and safety					
Animal management prosecutions <i>[Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100</i>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	One successful prosecution relating to a serious dog attack.

Food Safety

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Timeliness					
Time taken to action food complaints <i>[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]</i>	1.50	5.00	1.00	1.00	All food complaints have been actioned the same or the following day.
Service standard					
Food safety assessments <i>[Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984 / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984] x100</i>	74.30%	25.67%	48.44%	75.53%	Food Safety Assessments are carried out across a calendar year. Therefore, the remaining assessments will be completed outside of the reporting period.
Animals rehomed <i>[Number of animals rehomed / Number of animals collected] x100</i>	55.56%	95.35%	27.50%	21.57%	The number of animals successfully returned to their owner is approximately 45% which has meant that fewer have required rehoming. Unfortunately, animal shelters across the region still have a number of animals available for adoption as adoption rates have declined post covid.
Service cost					
Cost of food safety service <i>[Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]</i>	\$449.60	\$585.21	\$841.56	\$835.57	Direct cost of food safety service has increased this financial year due to workforce shortage of Environmental Health Officers and the need to employ contractors to cover vacant positions.
Health and safety					
Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications <i>[Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100</i>	100.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%	All critical and major non-compliant notifications have been followed up.

Governance

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Transparency					
Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public <i>[Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council, or at meetings of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council or at meetings of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors] x100</i>	3.03%	4.68%	9.29%	13.99%	Council ensures that as many decisions as possible are made in a public forum, and the majority of those decisions made at confidential meetings are disclosed to the public after the fact.
Consultation and engagement					
Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement <i>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]</i>	41.00	44.00	44.00	46.00	Community satisfaction on engagement and consultation has improved by 2 points over the past 12 months.
Attendance					
Councillor attendance at council meetings <i>[The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each Council meeting / (Number of Council meetings) × (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x100</i>	96.94%	99.25%	97.32%	98.10%	Councillor attendance at meetings has been excellent through the year, with all Councillors adhering to attendance and leave requirements with very few absences. This has been partly due to an amendment to the Governance Rules in August 2022 to allow virtual attendance by Councillors at all Council Meetings.
Service cost					
Cost of elected representation <i>[Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]</i>	\$37,815.57	\$37,259.57	\$37,944.57	\$38,540.57	This is within range and reflects the increase in allowances paid to Councillors.
Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with council decisions <i>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]</i>	38.00	44.00	41.00	42.00	This year's Community Satisfaction Survey has seen an improvement by increasing one point from last year's results, but down on the 10-year average of 45.

Libraries

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Utilisation					
Physical library collection usage <i>[Number of physical library collection item loans / Number of physical library collection items]</i>	3.61	2.50	3.16	4.66	Usage of the library collection is within target. Library teams continue to promote its services to maximise the benefits of the libraries' collections.
Resource standard					
Recently purchased library collection <i>[Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100</i>	73.18%	69.34%	66.17%	75.36%	75.36% of library collection has been purchased in the last five (5) years.
Participation					
Active library borrowers in municipality <i>[Number of active library borrowers in the last three years / The sum of the population for the last three years] x100</i>	18.08%	15.66%	13.67%	12.82%	The reduction is likely due to an increase in other available activities returning and becoming available post COVID that are an alternative to borrowing books from the library. We also see many people sit in our library services reading books whereas through COVID this was not an option.
Service cost					
Cost of library service per population <i>[Direct cost of the library service / Population]</i>	\$44.80	\$39.36	\$37.21	\$42.86	This figure is inclusive of all directly related costs: - Wages, depreciation, utilities, etc.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Service standard					
Infant enrolments in the MCH service <i>[Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100</i>	100.89%	101.50%	104.63%	102.36%	All children have been enrolled in MCH service.
Service cost					
Cost of the MCH service <i>[Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]</i>	\$86.46	\$86.79	\$98.54	\$138.10	Cost of the MCH service - Council is currently working with the auspice provider of MCH through a new contract to find a more cost-effective way to provide the service given recent state funding cuts for Maternal Child Health statewide.
Participation					
Participation in the MCH service <i>[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100</i>	78.99%	76.96%	86.01%	85.37%	Currently working with Central Highland Rural Health to increase the 3.5-year-old attendance rate. There has been a positive improvement compared to 2020 rates.
Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children <i>[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100</i>	76.74%	75.76%	80.95%	88.89%	Increase attendance from Aboriginal children in local MCH programs demonstrating a positive trend.
Satisfaction					
Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit <i>[Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100</i>	96.43%	94.74%	99.07%	95.28%	Some families choose to go outside Hepburn region to access MCH services that are closer to home.

Roads

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Satisfaction of use					
Sealed local road requests <i>[Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100</i>	41.94	46.96	50.26	43.08	High number of requests relating to flood or water damaged roads.
Condition					
Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards <i>[Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100</i>	99.47%	96.91%	97.73%	98.19%	Based on pavement condition.
Service cost					
Cost of sealed local road reconstruction <i>[Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]</i>	\$51.92	\$56.20	\$49.88	\$49.40	Based on a very small FY22/23 road reconstruction program
Cost of sealed local road resealing <i>[Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]</i>	\$6.80	\$7.59	\$8.67	\$10.77	Includes asphalt resealing works
Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with sealed local roads <i>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]</i>	44.00	47.00	39.00	33.00	The performance rating this year for sealed local roads is at its lowest rating in 10 years. This is consistent with increase in water and flood damaged roads across the Shire.

Statutory Planning

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Timeliness					
Time taken to decide planning applications <i>[The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]</i>	53.00	69.00	107.00	145.00	Whilst planning days are slightly higher than previous, significant work is being done to move through the back log of work so as these are completed they are attributing to the number of days. This in time should start to trend downwards as the back log clears. A process improvement project is also underway to improve efficiencies and processes which should also have a positive impact.
Service standard					
Planning applications decided within required time frames <i>[(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100</i>	60.99%	64.47%	19.70%	33.79%	Whilst planning days are slightly higher than previous, significant work is being done to move through the back log of work so as these are completed they are attributing to the number of days. This in time should start to trend downwards as the back log clears. A process improvement project is also underway to improve efficiencies and processes which should also have a positive impact.
Service cost					
Cost of statutory planning service <i>[Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]</i>	\$1,662.25	\$2,012.01	\$2,458.49	\$3,473.95	Costs to the service are higher than average due to a reliance on additional resources to assist with backlog of applications, however still within the targeted range. This service should prove more cost effective going forward with system and process improvements, a better interface for the public via the website and additional resources within the team.
Decision making					
Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT <i>[Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100</i>	0.00%	80.00%	50.00%	40.00%	The VCAT decisions overturned rested largely in policy within the planning scheme. Council is undertaking a large strategic planning program that will go directly to these matters.

Waste Collection

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Satisfaction					
Kerbside bin collection requests <i>[Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households] x1000</i>	94.46	96.44	104.19	162.83	Contractor staff and fleet shortages have contributed to an increase in kerbside requests.
Service standard					
Kerbside collection bins missed <i>[Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x10,000</i>	4.58	3.59	5.89	12.76	Contractor staff and fleet shortages have contributed to an increase in kerbside requests.
Service cost					
Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service <i>[Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]</i>	\$111.64	\$119.33	\$149.49	\$163.63	Slight increase to disposal rates.
Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service <i>[Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]</i>	\$71.43	\$85.15	\$77.88	\$82.38	Slight increase due to increase in disposal rates.
Waste diversion					
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill <i>[Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100</i>	37.81%	48.46%	40.22%	34.23%	A 6% decrease due to a reporting error for last year's recycling and organics tonnages. Have seen a decrease in overall waste delivered to land fill.



Governance



The role of local government

Hepburn Shire Council is constituted under the Local Government Act 2020, which guides governance processes to support the municipality and the local community. The key focus of the principles-based Act is to enhance local democracy, accountability, and service delivery for all inhabitants of Victoria.

Council fulfils multiple roles, including:

- Consideration of the varied needs of the community when making decisions.
- Providing leadership via the establishment of strategic objectives, along with monitoring and reporting on their progress.
- Ensuring responsible and accountable management of resources.
- Advocating for the community's interests at local, state and federal level.
- Promoting community unity and motivating active civic participation.

A commitment to efficient and sustainable democratic and corporate governance is core to Council operations, aiming to cater to the needs of the community effectively. There are ample avenues for the community to play a role in Council's decisions, including community consultation, public forums such as Listening Posts, or through public participation in each regular Council Meeting.

Council decisions are made through Council meetings and by officers acting under delegation. Council staff exercise these delegations in line with Council policies and legislative requirements.

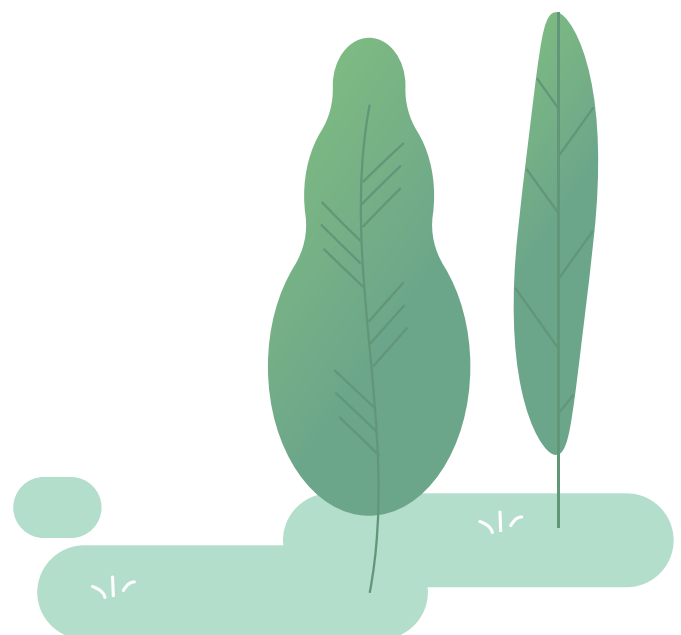
Council meetings

Council conducts scheduled meetings on the third Tuesday of each month, and unscheduled meetings as required. These meetings are open to the public.

Council meetings are livestreamed to Council's Facebook account, to maintain transparency and accessibility of these meetings to the public. The recordings and minutes are available on Council's website after the meeting.

All meetings are governed by Council's Governance Rules to allow for accountable and transparent conduct of Council meetings. The Governance Rules were reviewed during 2022/23 and adopted in August 2022 to continue provisions for hybrid and virtual meetings established during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Governance Rules also provide the opportunity for community members to submit questions to the Council during scheduled Council meetings, or ask to address Council, and have the option to submit petitions to Council for consideration.

In addition to Council meetings, Councillors are briefed on relevant issues during Confidential Councillor Briefing sessions throughout the month.



CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Councillors and members of Council staff are required under the Local Government Act 2020 to comply with the conflict of interest provisions as set out in the legislation.

During 2022/23, Councillors declared a total of 20 conflicts of interest. These declarations were made at both Councillor briefings and Council Meetings.

Council held 15 meetings in 2022/23, including three unscheduled meetings and one statutory meeting.

Meetings:

- 19 July 2022 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 16 August 2022 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 29 August 2023 – Special Meeting of Council
- 20 September 2022 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 18 October 2022 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 15 November 2022 – Statutory Meeting to elect the mayor and deputy mayor
- 22 November 2022 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 20 December 2022 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 21 February 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 21 March 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 18 April 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 16 May 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 23 May 2023 – Special Meeting of Council
- 20 June 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 27 June 2023 – Special Meeting of Council



The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council Meetings in 2022/23:

Councillors	Ordinary Meeting (11)	Special/Statutory Meeting (4)	Total
Cr Bray	11	4	15
Cr Drylie	11	4	15
Cr Halliday	11	4	15
Cr Henderson	11	4	15
Cr Hewitt	10*	4	14
Cr Hood	11	4	15
Cr Simpson	11	3*	14

*A leave of absence was granted

COMMUNITY ASSET COMMITTEES

Community Asset Committees are committees established by Council under section 65 of the Local Government Act 2020 to manage community assets within the Shire. They each have an instrument of Delegation, and members are appointed by the CEO.

On 25 August 2020 Council resolved to establish the following Community Asset Committees:



Special Committee	Purpose
Creswick Museum Community Asset Committee	To administer, manage and control the historic Creswick Museum building and collection of artworks and artefacts.
Dean Recreation Reserve and Tennis Courts Community Asset Committee	To manage, control, operate and maintain the Dean Recreation Reserve and Tennis Courts.
Drummond Hall Community Asset Committee	To manage, control, operate and maintain the Drummond Hall premises.
Glenlyon Recreation Reserve Community Asset Committee	To administer, maintain and control the Glenlyon Recreation Reserve.
Lee Medlyn Home of Bottles Community Asset Committee	To administer, manage and control the property of the Clunes Historic Medlyn Complex, the Lee Medlyn Bottle collection, the Eberhard Factory and other collectables and displays contained in the facility.
Lyonville Hall Community Asset Committee	To manage, control, operate and maintain the Lyonville Hall.

Under the Local Government Act 2020, the CEO is required to submit a report to Council each year on the activities and performance of Community Asset Committees.



COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

The Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to develop a Councillor Code of Conduct and details that Council must review and adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct within four (4) months after a general election. Council adopted a Councillor Code of Conduct in 2021.

The Hepburn Shire Council Councillor Code of Conduct:

- Sets standards of conduct expected of Councillors in order to ensure that good governance and increase public confidence in the administration of Council and integrity of local government is achieved and prohibits discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment) and vilification.
- Endeavours to foster good working relationships between Councillors to enable Councillors to work constructively together in the best interests of the local community.
- Details governing principles to guide the Councillors in their duties and functions and details the roles and responsibilities of Councillors. The Code additionally provides a dispute resolution process.
- Details breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct and includes obligations regarding child safety and gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness.

COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

The duties of a councillor demand time, energy and commitment with many reducing their time in paid employment to meet the demands of the role. The Victorian Government currently sets the upper and lower limits for all allowances paid to Councillors and Mayors. Councils are divided into three categories based on the income and population of the municipality. Hepburn Shire Council is currently recognised as a category 1 council.

Councils are required to review allowance levels by 30 June in the year following a general election and the allowance level determined remains in effect for the full term of the Council.

Whilst the Local Government Act 2020 was in force, Section 74 of the Local Government Act 1989 remained until the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal decided on the values of allowances, including allowance categories payable to mayors, deputy mayors and councillors in Victorian councils.

On 7 March 2022 the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal made the allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2022. The Determination applies to all Councillors (Council members) in all Victorian Councils and took effect from 18 December 2021.

The superannuation guarantee increased to 10.5% as of 1 July 2022.

Hepburn Shire Council is a category 1 Council for the purposes of Determination No. 01/2022.

From 18 December 2022 to 30 June 2023, the allowances paid to Councillors were:

- Mayors - \$76,781
- Deputy Mayors - \$38,391
- Councillors - \$24,775.

The following table contains a summary of the allowances paid to each Councillor during the year.

Councillors	Councillor Allowance
Cr Don Henderson	\$24,634
Cr Lesley Hewitt	\$32,983
Cr Brian Hood	\$56,520
Cr Tessa Halliday	\$24,634
Cr Jen Bray	\$29,841
Cr Tim Drylie	\$44,495
Cr Juliet Simpson	\$24,634
TOTAL	\$237,741

COUNCILLOR EXPENSES

In accordance with sections 39-43 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council adopted the Council Expenses and Resources Policy on 25 August 2021. The policy provides guidance for the payment of reimbursements of expenses and the provision of resources, facilities and other support to the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to discharge their duties.

It is a requirement of Council to adopt and maintain this policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors.

The details of the expenses for Councillors for 2022/23 are set out in the following table.

Councillor	Training and development	Travel	Communication	Carer expenses	Total expenditure by Councillor
Councillor Expenses & Resources Guidelines Reference	2.1	2.2 & 2.3	2.4, 2.5 & 2.6	2.7	
Cr Don Henderson	\$776		\$1,340		\$2,116
Cr Lesley Hewitt	\$3,483		\$1,228		\$4,711
Cr Brian Hood	\$3,531	\$7,878	\$1,570		\$12,979
Cr Tessa Halliday	\$686	\$ 5,225	\$1,228	\$1,049	\$8,188
Cr Jen Bray	\$2,763		\$1,228		\$3,991
Cr Tim Drylie	\$2,224	\$3,187	\$1,228		\$6,639
Cr Juliet Simpson	\$686		\$1,986		\$2,672
Total expenditure by cost category	\$14,149	\$16,290	\$9,808	\$1,049	\$41,296

Note: Travel – cost is inclusive of Mayoral vehicle allocation

PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT REPORTING

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, Council adopted the Procurement Policy on 21 December 2021.

For the financial year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, Council entered into contracts for \$300,000 inclusive of GST or more for the purchase of goods or services or works.

The following table provides a list of these contracts where a public process was undertaken in compliance with the Procurement Policy for the financial year commencing on 1 July 2022:

During the period 01 July 2022 – 30 June 2023 Council entered into the following contracts without undertaking a competitive public process consisting of either a public tender or expression of interest:

- Bulk Fuels ¹
- Provision of Municipal Building Surveyor

¹ Procurement Australia contract 2403/0109 Bulk Fuels

Contract Title	Contract Value (Exclusive of GST)
Realignment of Kingston Road Intersection, Kingston	\$351,382.53
Hammon Park Trailhead Amenities Block – Toilets and Changing Place	\$2,124,879.90
Public Amenity Upgrade – Quarry Street Reserve Trentham	\$382,934.20
Creswick Town Hall – Condition Upgrade	\$1,014,945.80
Arboriculture Maintenance and Removal Works	Schedule of Rates
Weed Control throughout Hepburn Shire	Schedule of Rates
Creswick Trails Mountain Bike Network – Trails Construction	\$4,925,786.80
Provision of Native Vegetation Offset Credits for Construction of the Creswick Trails	\$465,005
Creswick Bowling Club Suspended Slan and Green Redevelopment	\$1,063,551.50
Annual Bituminous Reseal Program	Schedule of Rates
Intersection Realignment of Kingston Road	\$319,438.66
Old Ballarat Road Clunes - Bridge Construction	\$507,039.10
Hammon Park Trailhead Public Amenities Block - Toilets and Changing Place	\$283,761

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
Community Engagement Policy	Council's Community Engagement Policy was adopted in February 2021 at a Special Meeting of Council (and is due for review in June 2025).
Community engagement guidelines	Current guidelines commenced on 23 February 2021
Financial Plan	Plan adopted on 26 October 2021
Asset Plan	Plan adopted on 29 June 2021
Revenue and Rating Plan	Plan adopted on 29 June 2021
Annual budget	Budget adopted on 27 June 2023
Risk Policy	Council commenced a project in May 2023 to review the Risk Management Policy, review risk registers, and establish regular reporting. The project will be completed in the 2023/2024 financial year.
Fraud Policy	Council adopted its Fraud Prevention Policy in 2021 and it is due for review in 2025.
Municipal Emergency Management Plan	Plan adopted on 16 September 2018. Council is on track in meetings its obligations under Section 20 of the Emergency Management Act with a planned formal review of the plan to occur in 2025.
Procurement Policy	Adopted 22 December 2020. An updated policy is being presented to Council in September 2023.
Business Continuity Plan	A full review of the Business Continuity Plan is required and is expected to begin in 2023/24.
Disaster Recovery Plan	Current plan adopted on 25 May 2017.
Risk management framework	Council adopted its Risk Management Framework on 21 December 2021. It will be reviewed in 2025.
Audit and Risk Committee	The Audit and Risk Committee met four times during 2022/23, and reports were prepared in line with the Audit and Risk Committee workplan to ensure appropriate oversight across Council's financial, risk management and audit activities.
Internal audit	Approximately half of the planned audits have been completed, and Council is well positioned to complete the current Audit Program by 2024.
Performance reporting framework	The current performance reporting framework commenced on 1 July 2022.
Council Plan report	Quarterly Council Plan reports and including Annual Report were reported on: Annual Report – 19 October 2022; Quarter 1 – 19 October 2022; Quarter 2 - 21 February 2023; Quarter 3 - 16 May 2023 Quarter 4- 17 August 2023.

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
Council Plan report	Quarterly Council Plan reports and including Annual Report were reported on: Annual Report – 19 October 2022; Quarter 1 – 19 October 2022; Quarter 2 - 21 February 2023; Quarter 3 - 16 May 2023 Quarter 4- 17 August 2023.
Quarterly budget reports	Budget reports are prepared quarterly.
Risk reporting	Council commenced a project in March 2023 to review the Risk Management Policy, review risk registers and establish regular reporting. This project will be completed in 2023/24.
Performance reporting	Reports prepared 22 November 2022 and 16 May 2023.
Annual report	Council’s Annual Report 2021/22 was endorsed on 19 October 2022.
Councillor Code of Conduct	Adopted and signed by all Councillors on 23 February 2021.
Delegations	Instruments of Delegation and Authorisation are updated at least every six months, and as needed to account for organisational requirements.
Meeting procedures	Meeting procedures were updated on 25 August 2022.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURE PROCEDURES

In accordance with section 69 of the Protected Disclosure Act 2012 a council must include in their annual report information about how to access the procedures established by the council under Part 9 of that Act. It is also required to provide certain information about the number and types of public interest disclosures complaints investigated during the financial year.

The Protected Disclosure Act 2012 aims to ensure openness and accountability in government by encouraging people to disclose improper conduct within the public sector and provide protection for people who make disclosures. Procedures on how to make a disclosure are publicly available Council’s website at www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/public-interest. During 2022/23 no disclosures were notified to council officers appointed to receive disclosures, or to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

FOOD ACT MINISTERIAL DIRECTIONS

In accordance with section 7E of the Food Act 1984, Council is required to publish a summary of any Ministerial Directions received during the financial year in its annual report. No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the 2022/23 financial year.

ROAD MANAGEMENT ACT MINISTERIAL DIRECTIONS

In accordance with section 22 of the Road Management Act 2004, a council must publish a copy or summary of any Ministerial direction in its annual report. No such Ministerial Directions were received by council during the financial year.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

In accordance with section 46GM and 46QD of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, a council that is a collecting or development agency must prepare and give a report to the Minister for Planning on infrastructure and development contributions including levies and works in kind. The report must be published in a council’s annual report. For the 2022/23 year there were no infrastructure and development contributions collected.

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Council established the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) pursuant to section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020 on 25 August 2020. The Audit and Risk Committee, whilst not a delegate committee of Council, acts as an advisory committee to Council (in that it doesn't have any decision-making powers of Council) and assists Council with oversight in the areas of risk, governance, financial management and compliance.

Independent members for 2022/23 were:

- Ms Carol Pagnon
- Mr Robert Taylor
- Ms Linda McNeill (Chair)
- Mr Jason Young.

Councillor Members were:

- Cr Brian Hood (November 2020 – June 2023)
- Cr Tim Drylie (November 2021 – November 2022)
- Cr Juliet Simpson (November 2022 – June 2023)

At these meetings the committee considers the following agenda items:

- Review of key risks and controls
- Summary of quarterly finance reports
- Summary of quarterly management reports
- Mid-year budget review
- Annual budget review
- Review of councillor expenses
- Internal audit reports
- External audit reports and management letters
- Review of compliance obligations
- Progress on internal and external audit recommendations
- Policy and procedure review.

Council's internal audit function provides independent and objective assurance that the appropriate processes and controls are in place. A risk based three-year Internal Audit Plan is revised annually to ensure the audit resources remain focused on the appropriate areas.

The audit plan considers Council's risk framework, the Council Plan, the impact of any change on operations, systems or the business environment, prior audit coverage and outcomes and management input. The plan is reviewed and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee annually.

The Internal Auditor attends each Audit and Risk Committee meeting to report on the status of the Audit Plan, provide an update on the implementation of audit recommendations, and present findings of completed audits. All audit issues identified are risk rated and tracked in Council's performance management system.

Internal Audits conducted in 2022/23 were:

- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- Governance
- Building Maintenance (Including Essential Safety Measures)

In July 2013, Council adopted its Risk Management Policy in line with current best practice in the management of business enterprise risks and current AS/NZS 31000 guidelines.

Council adopted its Risk Management Framework in December 2021.

In 2023, under a collaborative procurement process with Central Goldfields Shire, Council commenced a project to:

- Refresh the Risk Management Framework and Policy.
- Refresh risk management reporting.
- Refresh Strategic, Operational and Project Risk Registers.
- Provide Risk Management training for staff.

This project will be completed in 2023/24.



Financial Report

Council, like most local governments, is experiencing a challenging fiscal environment with the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, two major storm events and the rising costs in the economy.

Although rate capping has been implemented for several years, the impact on rate revenue for small rural councils is still significant. Council is in a delicate financial position which must continue to be managed over the coming years.

OVERVIEW

- A deficit of \$2.6 million (2021/2022; \$5.6 million deficit) against an original budget of \$5.7 million surplus.
- A net asset revaluation increment (non-cash) of \$23.9 million (2021/2022; \$20.1 million).
- Revenue of \$54.0 million (2021/2022; \$47.1 million) with 46% coming from rates and waste charges (2021/2022; 50%).
- Operating expenditure of \$56.6 million (2021/2022; \$52.7 million), with 33% attributable to employee costs (2021/2022; 39%) and 41% attributable to materials and services (2021/2022; 33%).
- \$364.4 million in capital assets (at written down value), providing community facilities, roads, bridges and other infrastructure (2021/2022; \$343.3 million).
- Cash and other financial assets of \$18.5 million (2021/2022; \$23.8 million), which after excluding external restrictions and internal allocations, provides revised cash and cash equivalents of \$1.409m (2021/2022; \$961k) and needs to be closely monitored.
- The total balance of loan borrowings at the end of the 2022/2023 financial year was \$3.9 million (2021/2022; \$4.5 million).

CASH

Council's cash, cash equivalents and other financial assets decreased \$5.3 million to \$18.5 million at 30 June 2023 (2021/2022; \$23.8 million). Council's cash and cash equivalents are subject to external restrictions and internal allocations that limit the amounts available for discretionary use.

At 30 June 2023 Council's working capital ratio, which represents Council's current assets as a percentage of current liabilities, was 238% improved from 195% at 30 June 2022.

INCOME

Total income for the financial year was \$54.0 million (2021/2022; \$47.1 million).

This included \$9.6 million of capital grants (2021/2022; \$4.9 million).

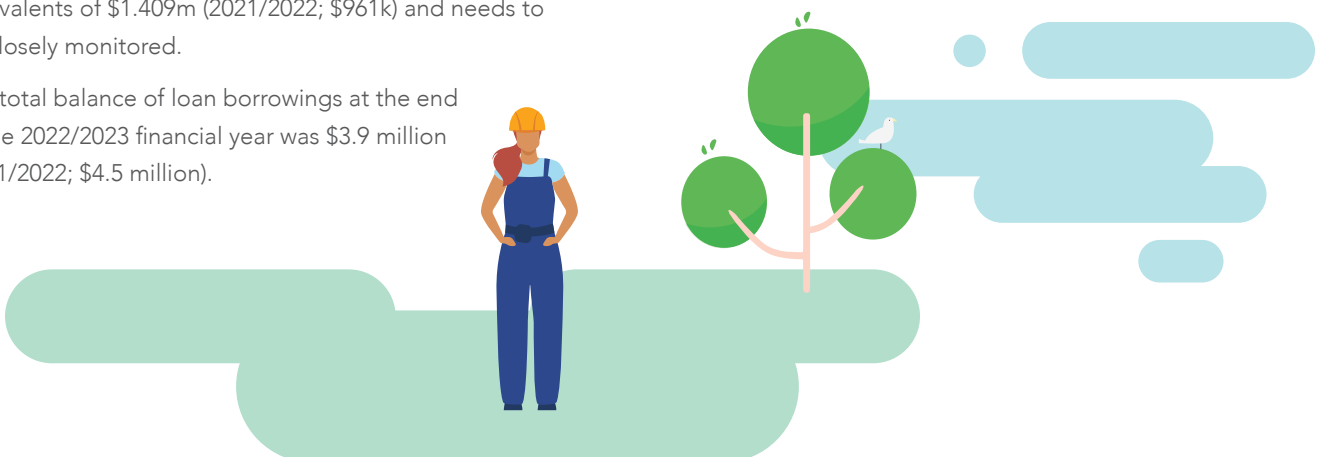
EXPENSES

Council incurred total expenditure of \$56.6 million in the financial year (2021/2022; \$52.7 million). As a service-based entity, Council's main costs are employee costs. Employee costs for the financial year were \$18.7 million or 33% of total expenses (2021/2022; \$15.6 million or 39%). Materials and services for the financial year were \$23.2 million or 41% of total expenses (2021/2022; \$12.4 million or 31%).

CAPITAL WORKS

Of the \$14.6 million capital expenditure (\$10.2 million 2021/2022), 38% was spent on renewal of assets (2021/2022, 64%) and 42% was spent on new assets (2021/2022, 14%). Renewal of assets as opposed to building new assets or upgrading assets is an important focus of Council as it works towards reducing the infrastructure renewal gap.

Council's capital assets provide community facilities, roads, bridges and other infrastructure that are important to the everyday functioning of our community. The written down value of these assets continues to increase over time.



UNRESTRICTED CASH POSITION

Council has a very delicate cash position. The majority of cash reserves held at 30 June 2023 have been allocated to fund carry-forward projects, reserves and refundable deposits and are therefore considered to be restricted funds. Council's unrestricted cash balance as at 30 June 2023 was \$2.64m in deficit (\$1.874m in deficit in 2022). The deficit is caused by \$4.049m (\$2.835m in 2022) in storm claim income not being received by 30 June. Timely receipt of storm claim income would have resulted in an unrestricted cash balance of \$1.409m (\$961,000 in 2022) which in itself is a small buffer against unforeseen emergencies. Council's cash position will need to be carefully managed over coming years.

LIABILITIES

Council's liabilities comprise of loans, amounts owed to suppliers and amounts owed to employees for leave entitlements. The total balance of loan borrowings at the end of the 2022/2023 financial year was \$3.9 million (2021/22 was \$4.5 million).

Detailed and audited Financial & Performance Statements are available on Council's website.

Statutory Information

Hepburn Shire Council is required by law to collect and make public information about some of the councillors and council administration activities, roles and responsibilities. We also publish information that is not required by law as we are committed to transparent and open governance.

- A register of authorised officers kept under section 224(1A) of the Local Government Act 1989.
- A register of delegations kept under sections 11 and 47 of the Local Government Act 2020.
- The Local Government Act 2020 requires our CEO, Councillors and any officers nominated by the CEO to complete personal interest returns.
- Section 135 of the Act requires Council to publish a summary of the most recent personal interest return which have been lodged with Council.
- Election campaign donation returns for a period of 4 years from the date that it is given under section 306 (s308).



Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

Hepburn Shire Council

PO Box 21 Daylesford Victoria 3460

T: (03) 5348 2306

shire@hepburn.vic.gov.au

www.hepburn.vic.gov.au

 www.facebook.com/hepburncouncil



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Council offices

Daylesford

Crn Duke & Albert Streets,
Daylesford

Creswick

68 Albert Street,
Creswick

Clunes

The Warehouse - Clunes
36 Fraser Street, Clunes

Trentham

13 Albert Street,
Trentham