



HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL  
ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
PUBLIC MINUTES

Tuesday 15 August 2023

Daylesford Town Hall  
76 Vincent Street Daylesford

5:30PM

A LIVE STREAM OF THE MEETING CAN BE VIEWED  
VIA [COUNCIL'S FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

Confirmed at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 19 September 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "B. Hood", is written over the text.

Chair, Cr Brian Hood, Mayor

# MINUTES

Tuesday 15 August 2023

Daylesford Town Hall

76 Vincent Street Daylesford

Commencing at 5:30PM

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**BRADLEY THOMAS**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Tuesday 15 August 2023

## CONDUCTING HYBRID COUNCIL MEETINGS

In the spirit of open, transparent and accountable governance, this meeting will be live-streamed on Council's Facebook page. The meeting will also be recorded and made available on Council's website as soon as practicable after the meeting.

- Council's meeting will be conducted tonight in accordance with:
- The Local Government Act 2020
- The Minister's Good Practice Guideline MGPG-1: Virtual Meetings
- Council's Governance Rules; and
- The Hepburn Shire Council Councillor Code of Conduct.

### 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

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.

### 2 SAFETY ORIENTATION

Emergency exits and convenience facilities at the venue to be highlighted to members of the public in attendance.

### 3 OPENING OF MEETING

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday, Cr Tim Drylie

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr Bradley Thomas - Chief Executive Officer, Mr Bruce Lucas - Director Infrastructure and Delivery, Dr Karina Lamb - Director Community and Corporate, Ms Brooke Holmes - Executive Manager People and Transformation, Ms Ania Guz - Business Analyst, Ms Rebecca Smith - Manager Governance and Risk

The meeting opened at 5:31pm.

#### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

"WE THE COUNCILLORS OF HEPBURN SHIRE

DECLARE THAT WE WILL UNDERTAKE ON EVERY OCCASION  
TO CARRY OUT OUR DUTIES IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY  
AND THAT OUR CONDUCT SHALL MAINTAIN THE STANDARDS OF THE CODE OF  
GOOD GOVERNANCE  
SO THAT WE MAY FAITHFULLY REPRESENT AND UPHOLD THE TRUST PLACED IN THIS  
COUNCIL BY THE PEOPLE OF HEPBURN SHIRE”

#### 4 APOLOGIES

Nil.

#### 5 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

#### 6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Go to 00:04:30 in the meeting recording to view this item.

#### RECOMMENDATION

*That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 18 July 2023 (as previously circulated to Councillors) be confirmed.*

#### MOTION

*That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 18 July 2023 (as previously circulated to Councillors) be confirmed.*

**Moved:** Cr Jen Bray

**Seconded:** Cr Juliet Simpson

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Cr Brian Hood

#### 7 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

Nil.

## 8 COUNCILLOR AND CEO REPORTS

### 8.1 MAYOR'S REPORT

Go to 00:05:30 in the meeting recording to view this item.

#### **Councillor Brian Hood, Coliban Ward**

Councillors & Community,

My report tonight is in four parts.

Firstly, the past month has been dominated by critically important matters including the emerging threat to Council's role in planning; the race to secure our fair share of funding for housing and sporting infrastructure post the Commonwealth Games cancellation; the disastrous powerlines destined for our Shire; the prospect of mining exploration and its effect on our precious aquifers; the delayed outcome of the electoral review; and the ongoing challenge of mending our roads.

I can assure the community that work is well underway in all of those areas to protect our Shire's interests.

On the subject of roads I can report that the total anticipated cost of works to repair storm and flood-damaged roads is around \$13m, approximately 90 % of which **may** be funded through relief grants. Council's already stretched cashflow has been seriously impeded by the untimely receipt of relief funding, slow assessments and the outright rejection of some claims. To be blunt – Council has undertaken multi-million dollar repair works ahead of receiving relief funding, thereby prioritising community safety over its own financial risk. While the community's frustration with the time taken to complete works is understandable and shared there remains poor understanding of which roads fall under Council's responsibility and that of RRV. It is very disturbing to note that the incidence of workplace violence, directed towards Council staff, is on the rise. On matters ranging from the condition of roads, planning decisions, community satisfaction and aged care, to name but a few, unacceptable attacks occur, some verbal, some online. Regrettably, irresponsible reporting in some local media emboldens some elements of the community and fans the flames of dissent.

Secondly, and on a more positive note, like so many others, I have closely followed the impressive successes of the Matildas in recent weeks. Winning games against formidable opponents while demonstrating admirable sportsmanship is a wonderful example for our younger generations to follow. The relevance for Council, and any other organisation for that matter, is the demonstrable value of teamwork. The old sporting analogy of champion teams out-performing a team of champions rings true yet again. When each team member plays their role, shares the workload and abides by team rules and processes then optimum performance is more likely. Of course the converse applies. A lack of teamwork, or failure to abide by team rules, inhibits optimal performance and compromises the achievement of common goals. That point is particularly relevant to Council's governance and planning processes.

Thirdly, in the past month I had the honour of welcoming Neil Para to our Shire as he started his long, 1000km walk from Ballarat to Sydney to advance the cause of refugees in this country. He is a remarkable young man and I wish him, his young family and other refugees all the best for a fair and equitable outcome. During the month I was pleased to sign the Age-Friendly Declaration on behalf of Council and I

congratulate Council officers for the staging of the very well-attended Positive Ageing Forum in Trentham.

Fourthly, I am very pleased to note that agenda item 12.1 tonight will address the topic of the Voice Referendum. The matter for consideration by councillors is whether Council adopts a formal position and, if so, what that position should be. It is worth noting that some of the key objectives for Council, as set out in the LG Act, include:

- To provide good governance .....for the **benefit and wellbeing** of the community....
- To give priority to achieving the **best outcomes** for the community, including **future generations**
- To represent the **interests** of the community in decision-making;
- and to consider the **diversity of interests and needs** of the community;

In that context I believe it is incumbent on Council to take a leadership role by adopting a formal position.

## 8.2 COUNCILLOR REPORTS

### **Councillor Don Henderson, Creswick Ward**

A visit to Trentham was an eye opener, and certainly the long overdue civic centre and community space is taking shape. I must say that I felt some disappointment that so much of the fabric of the old Mechanics Institute has been lost . The course taken was justified given the state of the old structure.

The all staff meeting held in the newly constructed Recreation Centre was also a chance to acknowledge that although Coliban was in a long line these new developments have certainly made a difference. On the issue of staff there were many new faces but also it was good to see those who had spent most of their long working lives at our Shire or its predecessors.

A pleasure to attend the AGM of the Dean Recreation Reserve Committee and to hear of their plans for an upcoming kite festival and sheepdog trials. The dog trials are an opportunity to come back to the reality of what is important to our farming communities. In a Shire driven by tourism and arts and cultural events it is important showcase agriculture in this way.

I must also report the growing concerns expressed to me about the state of our roads and drainage. One of the basic things that all ratepayers use and need is decent and safe roads and we need to be planning for more attention into the future on this vital amenity.

There is also a good news story in the fact that the Creswick Trails project with approximately a third constructed is on target to smash the offset allowance agreed with DEECA in respect of tree and vegetation removal. Careful construction and management has meant a vast reduction in removal which is a great benefit to our environment.

Plans are well underway for a fundraiser event to assist with the completion of the new rooms at the Creswick Hospital. The community has already reached over \$90k

out of a target of \$150k. There will be a dinner celebrating 160 years since the first Goldfields Hospital was built.

Lastly I urge our residents to turn their minds to nominating women to be honoured by their inclusion on the Heather Mutimer Womens Honour Roll. The date is set and guest speaker in place so all we need now is the nominations.

### **Councillor Tim Drylie, Creswick Ward**

There are so many good things happening in our community and in our Council. I'm proud to be part of Shire that puts a strong voice forward and acts on topics important to our community. I'm particularly pleased we are putting forward a motion tonight that recognises the significance of the Voice to Parliament referendum that aims to place the voice of First Nations people front and centre at a national level. I am also pleased we can stand together with our Dja Dja Wurrung traditional owners on our continued path to reconciliation. I also want to acknowledge the completion of the Djaarra designed project at Lalgambuk that was celebrated this month. Hepburn Shire Council outdoors team assisted with the installation of road signs as part of our Reconciliation Plan.

It was great to attend our all staff meeting last week and to witness the dedication many staff have given to our organisation through their ongoing service across decades and in one case considerable part of a lifetime with the Recognition of Service Awards that were given to worthy recipients. As a small rural council, it is a significant thing to be able to experience the buzz of bringing everyone together under the same roof, which was the newly completed Trentham Sportsground Pavilion, and feel the unifying sense of purpose and good energy that drives the bigger whole our organisational team. I frequently observe the genuine and compassionate care individual council staff members give to members of our community in a range of different situations and I think it is important to acknowledge their work and service that helps makes the Hepburn Shire a better place to live, work and play. I also want to welcome key executive staff member who have joined us this month.

As the Councillor representative on the Z-NET Roundtable committee I attended the quarterly meeting this month and was impressed with the progress our Council and community is making towards our Zero-Net emissions targets. Although it has not always been a straightforward line to success, with an increase in fossil fuel consumption and a bounce back in our numbers post covid, there has been a steady improvement in the longer term on many fronts through the concerted efforts of Council and community. It was pleasing to hear the successes our staff are having responding to the action points in our Sustainable Hepburn Strategy one year on and the many community projects that see stride ahead in our Community Transition Plan. One of these being the installation and official opening of the second of three Electric Vehicle charging stations at the Hepburn Springs Mineral Reserve which I attended this week.

On other transport news this month, it was great to see that 20kms of the Creswick Trails track has been completed and that only a few trees of over 500 earmarked for removal have been deemed necessary to remove. It is disappointing that we will no longer host the Mountain Biking as part of the 2026 Commonwealth Games, but we



are shaping up to receive a world class facility nonetheless. Residents will have another opportunity to participate in our Future Hepburn structure planning project by giving their input into the development of our integrated transport strategy. Watch out for the upcoming survey and other community engagement opportunities to have your say about the future of our bike and footpaths, public transport and other transport infrastructure needs that are important to you.

During the month, I have spoken directly to many local people about their concerns and responded to several requests for assistance on various matters. I welcome community members reaching out for advice and being able to help them where I can or putting them in contact with the right member of staff, or assist them to lodge a service request online. I am also pleased to be involved in various community committees and I note the progress that the Creswick Health Fundraising Committee is having towards reaching their \$150000 target. I urge our community to support the upcoming dinner on the 15 September. Tickets are available for community groups and individuals. There are so many ways to be engaged in our community and I congratulate all of our community volunteers and leaders who work so hard to the benefit the greater good.

#### **Councillor Juliet Simpson, Holcombe Ward**

I attended a staff meeting in Trentham for an afternoon where staff were given awards including one for forty years of employment with the Hepburn Shire Council. I attended three full day briefings.

I attended a councillor CEO session.

I attended a Glenlyon Recreation Reserve masterplan meeting at the Reserve on Saturday 22 July 2023 from 10am to 12:30pm.

I attended a dinner organised by The Committee For Ballarat where the Hon. Harriet Shing was the guest speaker.

#### **Councillor Jen Bray, Birch Ward**

##### **Activities since Tue 18 July 2023**

It's been great to get out into the community this month with many activities I attended along with other councillors. This included:

19 July - International Women's Day committee meeting. I urge community to nominate an exceptional woman for the Heather Mutimer Honor Roll.

27 July - Positive Ageing Expo – Trentham Recreation Pavilion

28 July - Municipal Association Victoria – Affordable Housing Summit (online) –

2 August - "No longer lost in Transmission" – an alternative plan for Transmission Lines (Online presentation) Professor Bruce Mountain, Victoria Energy Policy Centre, Victoria University.

2 August - I met up with Tamil Refugee Neil Para in Daylesford on the first leg of his journey, walking 1000km from Ballarat to Sydney to deliver a petition to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. The petition is asking for permanent visas for the thousands of refugees who are left in limbo without the right to work, study, or access Medicare.

3 August- I visited with other councillors the Replas facility in Ballarat which recycles plastic waste to make long lasting equipment such as bollards, speed humps, benches and decking.

3 August - Attended the Australian Citizenship Ceremony to welcome new citizens to Hepburn Shire.

7 August - Mineral Springs Advisory Committee

7 August - Western Renewables Link – Community Catch up. Advocating for our community against the proposed Transmission Lines project.

10 August - Tour of Trentham Hub facilities building site

10 August - All staff meeting for Hepburn Shire – Long Service Awards for staff

14 August - I was pleased to be at the Launch of another Electric Vehicle Charging station in Hepburn Shire. This one is at the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve near the bath house. Hepburn Shire partnering with Hepburn Energy who will supply green electricity for the charging station. This brings the number of public fast chargers in Hepburn Shire to three (adding to Vincent Street, Daylesford and Creswick), with the Trentham site on the way.

11 August - Last week was another landmark occasion for bringing Djaara culture and language back to country. It was the official Launch of the Djaara designed park facilities and new signage for Lalgambuk (Mt Franklin.) Djaara partnering with Parks Victoria, Djandak and Hepburn Shire celebrated the new look at the popular volcano camping and picnic site. Beautifully designed picnic shelter, timber seating, and indigenous landscape planting make a welcoming site acknowledging Djaara culture. It is a positive step towards healing country and reconciliation. But we have a long way to go. As we know, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not start out life on a level playing field with non-indigenous Australians.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face big challenges with:

- A life expectancy 8 years shorter than non-Indigenous Australians
- Worse rates of disease and infant mortality
- A suicide rate twice as high
- Significant issues with homelessness and incarceration.
- Fewer opportunities for education and training and employment.

The current approaches from governments have not succeeded in closing this gap. The Uluru Statement from the heart called for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament. This Voice would provide advice to government on key issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people such as: Health, Education, Jobs and Housing

We will be voting on that in the Referendum later this year.

Tonight, council will vote on a potential stance on the Voice to Parliament.

### **Community**

Responded to concerns and questions from community members regarding:

- Community facilities
- Swiss Italian Festa
- Planning matters
- Walking paths

- Dan Murphy's

### **Promoting**

Sustainable Hepburn Advisory Committee  
 Future Hepburn – community engagement group  
 Larni Barramal Yaluk Creek re-naming  
 Bushfire Ready Information Night Vic Park Daylesford  
 Neil Para Refugee Petition 1000km walk Ballarat to Sydney  
 Words in Winter Clever Town Crossword Challenge- Hepburn Libraries  
 Lalgambuk (Mt Franklin) Djaara designed facilities and new signage launch

### **Councillor Lesley Hewitt, Birch Ward**

One of the highlights this month was participating in the Council's citizenship ceremony. As the current deputy mayor, I had the honour and privilege of conferring Australian citizenship on nine new residents and to be reminded of what our own obligations are as Australians citizens in contributing to community and civic life. Aunty Marilyn Nicholls, a Dja Dja Wurrung elder welcomed everyone and it was significant to have Aunty Marilyn, an elder representing the oldest living continuous culture welcoming our newest citizens.

However, in the last four days I've been distressed to hear or read of events in regional Victoria of several events which reflect a lack of tolerance towards difference.

There was the reaction on social media about the joint Djaara /Parks Victoria project at Lalgambuk/Mt Franklin – some comments of course were very positive, but a significant number were very negative. There was the graffiti on the birthing tree at Buangor on the Western Highway near Ararat. And holes were drilled in the tree that may indicate that it was poisoned. A swastika was painted on the Maryborough/Dunolly Rd a distressing and offensive symbol to Jewish people and others targeted by Nazis. Following a media article that highlighted the private personal relationships of several of the Matildas there was a social media pile on relating to sexuality – like it's anyone's business and in marked contrast to most of the community response. These events contrast with the message that from the Hon Andrew Giles, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs that I had to read out at the citizenship ceremony. He said, and I quote;

*"For more than 60,000 years First Nations peoples have cared for country. Appreciating and understanding this truth, is a vital part of what it means to be Australian..... We believe in a society in which everyone is equal, regardless of their gender, faith, sexual orientation, age, ability, race, national or ethnic origin.....respect and compassion underpin our care for each other and our willingness to reach out to those around us in times of need.*

*By becoming an Australian citizen, you make a commitment to these values."*

A commitment expected by our newest citizens but surely one that is expected of those of us who are already citizens, including those who born here.

I also represented the Shire at the opening of Borealis on 20/7/23. This installation has returned to Lake Daylesford for the second year and according to feedback from

our local businesses has again been an important catalyst for increased patronage in what is traditionally a quiet month.

The CFA held a public meeting at Victoria Park focusing on bushfire preparedness prior to the upcoming fires season and this was well attended. Just a reminder that we will be moving into the new bushfire season and personally are starting to see spring growth that needs to be managed as part of that preparedness. The CFA are running free webinars and details can be found on Council's facebook page.

The Disability Advisory Committee, which I chair met yesterday (14 August 2023) with potential new members attending as observers. I want to publicly acknowledge the contribution of Lainey Curr, Steve Kelly and Fiona Porter. Just to note that there are currently no representatives from the Coliban ward/Trentham so if anyone is interested please get in touch.

Finally at the invitation of the Djaara I attended the opening of the Dja Dja Wurrung project at Lalgambuk (Mt Franklin). Djarra have been working for several years to embed Djarra knowledge and language into what is a sacred site for them, and it was fantastic to see the new signage, the picnic tables and chairs and the new shelters. Have visited for at least thirty years, taking my children when they were young and its very positive to see the changes that have been made. Please take the time to go and check it out. Dja Dja Wurrung and Parks Victoria have joint management of the Hepburn State Forrest.

As usual I have attended several events that the mayor and other Councillors also attended. A list of activities has been tabled with this report.

#### **Councillor Diary Activities**

Council Meeting – 18/7/23

Councillor Briefings – 1/8/23; 8/8/23;

CFA Community Session Victoria Park – 19/7/23

Borealis Official Opening – 20/7/23

Replast Facility Tour – 3/8/23

Citizenship Ceremony – 3/8/23

WRL- VNI West meeting – 7/8/23

Trentham Community Hub Tour – 10/8/23

HSC Staff Meeting – 10/8/23

Lalgambuk (Mt Franklin) Project Opening -11/8/23

Hepburn Springs EV Charging station opening – 14/8/23

Disability Advisory Committee Meeting – 14/8/23

#### **Councillor Tessa Halliday, Cameron Ward**

This month I attended a tour of the Replas facility in Ballarat which was a very informative insight into the recycling industry.

I attended the Words in Winter trivia night in Trentham which was a fantastic family friendly event and was so popular they'll need a bigger venue next year!

We had tour of the Trentham community centre / mechanics hall, which is coming along well with Lock up expected before the end of the year.

Finally, I was pleased to see today the Bureau of statistics issued a statement of regret today in regards to the 2021 census and have said 'The ABS is aware that for some respondents, the absence of questions on their gender identity, variations of

sex characteristics or sexual orientation meant that they felt invisible and excluded when completing the Census and in the Census results produced.’ Although our motion and submissions aren’t referenced I’d like to think that they, along with all the other efforts from the community, has helped put pressure on the ABS. This feels like a positive step and hopefully a sign that the 2026 census will be inclusive.

### **The Voice**

I have heard the arguments for and against the voice referendum and for me the most important things to consider are that:

- The voice will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say on laws, policy and strategies that impact them.
- The voice is part of the Uluru Statement of the Heart’s proposed outcomes which was developed by over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates.
- The majority (80%) of this minority group support the voice.
- The voice may not be perfect and still requires development, but this can all be worked on and improved over the next few years.

All things considered it is important that we take this step to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our constitution and keep working toward Treaty.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council receives and notes the Mayor’s and Councillors’ reports.*

### **MOTION**

*That Council receives and notes the Mayor’s and Councillors’ Reports.*

**Moved:** Cr Juliet Simpson

**Seconded:** Cr Tim Drylie

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Nil



### 8.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Go to 00:28:51 in the meeting recording to view this item.

The Chief Executive Officer Report informs Council and the community of current issues, initiatives and projects undertaken across Council.

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATE



On 18 July, around 50 people came together at a special event to celebrate the renaming of Jim Crow Creek to Larni Barramal Yaluk at the creekbank at Franklinford. Dja Dja Wurrung community members attended the event along with representatives from Hepburn Shire Council and project partners Mount Alexander Shire Council, North Central Catchment Management Authority and Djaara, who worked together to campaign for the renaming of the creek over many years. Elder Uncle Rick Nelson performed a smoking ceremony and Jason Kerr played the didgeridoo.



On 27 July we held our inaugural Positive Ageing Expo at Trentham.

The Expo provided an opportunity for people aged 55+ to build connections and learn about positive ageing through guest speakers, information displays and demonstrations.



Council also signed the Age-Friendly Victoria Declaration at the expo, showing our commitment to building the age-friendly capacity of our Shire in partnership with the Victorian Government and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). The declaration was signed by our Mayor, Cr Brian Hood, and Cr David Clark, MAV President and Pyrenees Shire Councillor.





This month the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) released the Operation Sandon report. Operation Sandon is an investigation by IBAC into allegations of corrupt conduct involving councillors and property developers in the City of Casey (Casey Council) in Melbourne's south-east. It examined whether any councillors accepted payments, gifts, or other benefits, including political donations, in exchange for supporting council decisions on planning matters that favoured the interests of a developer and property consultant, and his clients.

It also examined the effectiveness of Victoria's systems and controls for safeguarding the integrity of the state's planning processes.

Information is available [Operation Sandon special report | IBAC](#)

There is a lot of detail in the report that we will need to digest but there are significant recommendations that will impact the planning system and Council governance and will represent some of the biggest changes in local government history.

Steady progress is continuing on the construction of the Trentham Community Hub.



Project Manager Lizzy, PAG members Natalie Poole and Kate Mooney (and her son Huon) with Cr Brian Hood

We are working with the Project Advisory Group (PAG) to conduct a poll to consider the name for the new facility. This process allows all members of the community to provide a submission on what they think the facility should be named. The PAG has provided two options to get you thinking, or you can submit your own idea for the facility name. The poll closes 5pm on 31 August 2023. All submissions will remain confidential. Visit <https://ow.ly/9Wts50PquZW>



An option to vote in person is available at the Trentham Library, 13 Albert Street Trentham. Once the poll has closed, the PAG will review the results and provide a recommendation to Council officers for consideration at the October Council meeting.

Nine residents took the citizenship pledge or oath this month. This is a very important day to our new residents and we're very proud to warmly welcome them to our beautiful region.

Thank you to Djaara Traditional Owner and Elder Aunty Marilyn Nicholls who attended the ceremony on behalf of Dja Dja Wurrung and offered a traditional Welcome to Country.

Our new citizens have come from Britain, Taiwan, Germany, Italy, USA, Slovenia, Malaysia and Netherlands.



Round 4 Community Grants for 2022/2023 have been finalised, with funding totaling \$12,214.50 awarded to groups to support community-led initiatives valued at \$34,136.50. Officers are finalising guidelines, and timeframes for 2023/2024 before opening up the new rounds. The successful recipients for round 4 are detailed below.

Applicant	Project	Amount
Great Dividing Trail Association Inc.	Lerderderg Track Interpretive Signage and Visitor Enhancement Project	\$1,953.50
After Hours Community Jazz Band	Community Band Start Up	\$2,500
Transition Creswick	Repair & Share: Test & Tag Machine	\$2,220
Creswick-Smeaton RSL	Hot Water Service	\$1,456

Sub-branch		
Mollonghip Town Hall & Tennis Committee Inc.	Footpath Landscaping Project	\$2,500
Creswick Primary School	After School Activities	\$1,585

I had the opportunity to represent Hepburn Shire and present to the Victorian Parliament's Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee in relation to their Inquiry into the rental and housing affordability crisis in Victoria. The Committee will investigate the challenges facing Victorian renters and factors causing the rental and housing affordability crisis in Victoria including low availability and high costs of rental properties, insecurity, availability and affordability issues facing Victorian renters, the adequacy of regulation with regards to standards and conditions of rental housing, the adequacy of the rental system and its enforcement, the impact of short stay accommodation, barriers to first home ownership and the impact this has on rental stock and the experience and impacts all of this has on renters and property owners.

Some of the meetings I have attended in past weeks include:

- Local Government Professionals Mastering Management
- Executive Manager interviews
- Executive Team Inductions
- Meeting with Telstra regarding outages
- Meeting with Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing MP post the announcement about cancellation of the Commonwealth Games and discuss the opportunities for Ballarat and Hepburn
- Committee for Ballarat Round Table Dinner – Minister Harriet Shing guest speaker
- MAV lunchtime forum housing summit - opportunities and challenges
- VLGA CEO Network Forum co-hosted with Justitia Consultants & Lawyers and Hunt & Hunt Lawyers
- Financial Professionals/VAGO discussion - Financial management in local councils
- Citizenship Ceremony
- Department of Transport and Planning Ballarat Road Network discussion with Hon. Melissa Horne MP Central Highlands Regional Partnerships Working Group meeting
- Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee Inquiry into rental and housing affordability crisis in Victoria Central Highlands Regional Partnership quarterly meeting

- MAV Wimmera Southern Mallee Central Highlands (WSMCH) Regional Meeting
- Tour of the Trentham Hub with Councillors
- All Staff Meeting, Trentham
- VNI West briefing
- Western Renewables Link monthly meeting
- Executive Team meetings
- Organisational Management Team meeting
- Organisational Leadership Team meeting
- Meetings with direct reports
- Loddon Campaspe Councils CEOs monthly meeting

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council receives and notes the Chief Executive Officer's Report for August 2023.*

#### **MOTION**

*That Council receives and notes the Chief Executive Officer's Report for August 2023.*

**Moved:** Cr Don Henderson

**Seconded:** Cr Tim Drylie

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Nil

## 9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

Go to 00:31:20 in the meeting recording to view this item.

This part of the Ordinary Meeting of Council allows for the tabling of petitions by Councillors and Officers and 30 minutes for the purposes of:

- Tabling petitions
- Responding to questions from members of our community
- Members of the community to address Council

Community members are invited to be involved in public participation time in accordance with Council's Governance Rules.

Individuals may submit written questions or requests to address Council to the Chief Executive Officer by 10:00am the day before the Council Meeting.

Some questions of an operational nature may be responded to through usual administrative procedure. Separate forums and Council processes are provided for deputations or for making submissions to Council.

Questions received may be taken on notice but formal responses will be provided to the questioners directly. These responses will also be read out and included within the minutes of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council to make them publicly available to all.

### **BEHAVIOUR AT COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Council supports a welcoming, respectful and safe environment for members of the community to participate at Council Meetings regarding issues that are important to them. Council's Governance Rules sets out guidelines for the Mayor, Councillors, and community members on public participation in meetings. It reinforces the value of diversity in thinking, while being respectful of differing views, and the rights and reputation of others.

Under the Governance Rules, members of the public present at a Council Meeting must not be disruptive during the meeting.

Respectful behaviour includes:

- Being courteous when addressing Council during public participation time and directing all comments through the Chair
- Being quiet during proceedings
- Being respectful towards others present and respecting their right to their own views

Inappropriate behaviour includes:

- Interjecting or taking part in the debate
- Verbal abuse or harassment of a Councillor, member of staff, ratepayer or member of the public
- Threats of violence

### **9.1 PETITIONS**

No petitions were tabled.

### **9.2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions were received for this meeting.

### **9.3 REQUESTS TO ADDRESS COUNCIL**

Mr Steven Haynes and Mr Aaron Meakins addressed Council regarding the Daylesford Speedway lease.

## 10 A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

### 10.1 CRESWICK TRAILS UPDATE AND VARIATION APPROVAL

Go to 00:30:30 in the meeting recording to view this item.

#### DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

*In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Projects, I Ben Grounds have no interests to disclose in this report.*

#### ATTACHMENTS

- Nil

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

*That Council:*

- 1. Notes the update on the progress of the Creswick Trails Project;*
- 2. Approves Variation 01 to contract HEPBU.2022.101 Creswick Trails Mountain Bike Network Trails Construction for \$346,837 (excl. GST), accommodated within the existing approved project budget; and*
- 3. Delegates to the CEO all future contract variations for the Creswick Trails project, that can be accommodated within the approved project contingency for in the Creswick Trails project budget.*

#### MOTION

*That Council:*

- 1. Notes the update on the progress of the Creswick Trails Project;*
- 2. Approves Variation 01 to contract HEPBU.2022.101 Creswick Trails Mountain Bike Network Trails Construction for \$346,837 (excl. GST), accommodated within the existing approved project budget; and*
- 3. Delegates to the CEO all future contract variations for the Creswick Trails project, that can be accommodated within the approved project contingency for the Creswick Trails project budget and the CEO's delegated authority.*

**Moved:** Cr Don Henderson

**Seconded:** Cr Tim Drylie

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Cr Juliet Simpson

**Abstained:** Nil

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Construction is well underway on the Creswick Trails network with approximately 20 kilometres out of the total 60 kilometres of trails constructed. Construction is progressing according to the project program and is on track for a completion date of December 2024. Delivery of actions in the Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) with Djaara are well underway and tree removal has been significantly reduced through careful trail siting and construction.

Contract Variation 01 of the main construction contract requires Council approval due to the amount being above the CEO financial delegation.

## **BACKGROUND**

A \$4.477M contract to construct the Creswick Trails was awarded to Dirt Art in late 2022 with construction commencing in early 2023.

Once completed, the Creswick Trails will consist of a 60-kilometre network of mountain bike and shared trails in the State Forest, Regional Park and plantation lands near Creswick.

## **KEY ISSUES**

### **Construction Progress**

The main construction contractor has several crews active on site each workday. A crew consists of a small mechanical digger (excavator) and up to three trail groomers who shape and smooth the soil using hand tools such as secateurs and rakes. Approximately 20 kilometres of the total 60 kilometres of trail have been constructed to date.

Vegetation is removed from the surface of the ground and the trail bed levelled, angled and shaped to suit the difficulty rating and style of trail as per approved designs.

Due to best practice trail construction methodology and a 'light touch' approach, construction has had a much lighter impact on the project area than permitted and initially anticipated. For example, in the trails currently in construction, permissions have been granted to remove 566 native trees with an area of disturbance two meters wide. Actual trees removed have totalled three native trees (two dead, one live) with an average area of disturbance of 600mm wide. Given the reduced vegetation and tree removal requirements, it is possible that Council will have surplus Native Vegetation Removal Credits. A post-construction vegetation audit will be undertaken to understand the details of any resulting surplus.

Construction is tracking according to the program with an anticipated completion date of December 2024.

Progress has slowed with the cold wet weather, however this was anticipated and planned for in the construction program.

Depending on the weather, a loop of approximately 15-20 kilometres of trail may be able to open early to community use. Officers are currently working through requirements for this with the contractor.

### **Compliance**

To ensure compliance with requirements in the cultural, ecological and historical reports as well as State and local protections, the project has commissioned an archaeologist, a Djaara cultural historian and an ecologist. These specialists have conducted planned and unplanned inspections and checks on the compliance with construction requirements and have reported back to State authorities as appropriate. The outcome of the inspections has been positive with Djaara, Heritage Victoria and DEECA being pleased with the construction methodology and approach of Council officers and contractors.

### **Contract Variation**

A contract variation V01 has been requested from the main contractor, and is recommended for approval after thorough assessment. The variation is to supply and install required rock armouring on sections of the trail, where the assumed amount of rock has not been uncovered during the trail construction to date.

As part of determining the cost for variation, officers worked with the contractor to undertake the following process to minimise costs where possible:

1. Elimination – Is the change really required or is it possible to eliminate it from the deliverables? If not required, eliminate it.
2. Realignment – Can the trail be realigned to avoid an area where change is required? If so, realign it.
3. Substitution – Can the a less expensive trail treatment be substituted without taking away from the overall rider experience or sustainability of the trail? If so, make the change.

Using this methodology, the variation was reduced to the minimum that is necessary. Variation 01 – Imported Rock is \$346,837 (excl. GST) is within the approved project budget, however above the CEO's financial delegation. This variation has been assessed in detail, according to the above variation management process, and is justified, and is recommended to be approved by Council. The project budget contingency is able to accommodate this variation amount and the project remains in the adopted budget and this variation does not require additional funding. All elements comply with Council's Procurement Policy.

To prevent future project delays, it is recommended that the CEO be delegated the authority to approve all future variations of the Creswick Trails project within the adopted project budget (including contingency).



## LUAA Implementation

Positive progress has been made in implementing the Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) for the Creswick Trails. Key achievements include cultural awareness training, discussions regarding employment for Djaara, and engagement of Djandak to design a suite of signs for the Creswick Trails. Officers have a strong collaborative relationship and are providing a monthly update report to Djaara on the implementation of the LUAA actions.

## COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

### Council Plan 2021-2025

A resilient, sustainable and protected environment

1.3 Transition to ecologically sustainable and accountable tourism.

A healthy, supported, and empowered community

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

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The below table outlines the construction stage project budget. All variations to date, including Variation 01, are well within the project budget.

Construction Stage	Excl. GST
Construction Contract	\$4,477,988
Signage	\$530,000
Minor Works	\$200,000
PM and Consultants	\$958,000
Consultant Contingency	\$150,000
Construction Contingency	\$900,000
– Var 1	\$346,837
– Var 2	\$164,550
– Var 3	\$17,500
– Var 4	-\$81,975
Remaining	<b>\$453,088</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,215,988</b>

## **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

There are no community or stakeholder engagement implications associated with this report. Thorough engagement was undertaken to develop the project, and a range of communications are now being used to update the community on project progress.

## **RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

Approving this variation allows trail construction to comply with designed and approved trail standards, and reduces Council's maintenance and management risk.

The recommendations of this report ensure compliance with Council's Procurement Policy.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Environmental sustainability is a consideration in the use of imported rock to armour the trail in damp or wet areas as the best way to keep riders to the approved trail alignment while providing a safe, usable and fit for purpose trail surface.

Improperly constructed trails will gather standing water which will lead to riders creating unsanctioned detours to avoid the water and resulting degraded trail sections.

## **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Whilst the Gender Equality Act was not in place for the development stage of this project, the design took an inclusive approach that will result in improved equity outcomes. Key elements include provision of trails for handcycles (for those with a disability), accessible parking and toilets (including a Changing Places facility) at the Hammon Park Trailhead, and catering for a range of abilities, including all ages.

## 11 A HEALTHY, SUPPORTED, AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITY

### 11.1 DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Go to 00:48:57 in the meeting recording to view this item.

#### DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE

*In providing this advice to Council as the Inclusion Officer, I Brett Dunlop have no interests to disclose in this report.*

#### ATTACHMENTS

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - CONFIDENTIAL Proposed Membership Disability Advisory Committee 2023 [11.1.1 - 1 page]

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

*That Council:*

1. *Approve the renewal of membership of seven current members of the Disability Advisory Committee for a further two-year term; and*
2. *Endorse two community members for appointment as new members of the Disability Advisory Committee for an initial two-year term.*

#### MOTION

*That Council:*

1. *Approves the renewal of membership of seven current members of the Disability Advisory Committee for a further two-year term; and*
2. *Endorses community member Jo Pegg for appointment as a new member of the Disability Advisory Committee for an initial two-year term.*

**Moved:** Cr Lesley Hewitt

**Seconded:** Cr Jen Bray

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Nil

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Disability Advisory Committee may have up to ten community members appointed for a two-year term as per the terms of reference and the current term has now expired.

This report proposes to fill positions by the renewal of seven current members, note the successful Expression of Interest (EOI) process of two applicants, and appoint them as new members of the Disability Advisory Committee.

## **BACKGROUND**

The term of membership of the current Disability Advisory Committee has expired, with three members resigning (Lainey Curr, Steve Kelly and Fiona Porter) and seven members seeking reappointment (Andrew Brown, John Condon, Graham Downey, Kaylene Howell, Darren Manning, David Moten and Peter Waters).

Officers would like to acknowledge and thank the three departing members for their contributions and involvement in the Committee.

A public EOI process was held early in 2023, attracting two applications. The new applications were assessed by Council officers and a recommendation is made to appoint both Jo Pegg and Di Lehne as members of the Disability Advisory Committee.

## **KEY ISSUES**

The current membership term has expired and action is now required to ensure the committee is correctly constituted.

The Disability Advisory Committee has contributed greatly to the work of Council, with an increasing number of requests for advice coming from Council officers, when developing new strategies, plans and projects.

## **COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Plan 2021-2025**

A healthy, supported, and empowered community

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

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

A dynamic and responsive Council

5.1 Harness community expertise.

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

People with disability are identified as a priority population in Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Disability Advisory Committee operates with an existing budget allocation. No increase in costs is anticipated.

## **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The EOI was advertised through Council's social media and sent out to relevant service support organisations within the region.

## **RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The EOI process was fair. Applications were objectively assessed against the selection criteria outlined below:

### **Committee Member Criteria:**

The Committee will consist of key representatives' individuals, volunteering, caring, working, and/or are passionate about all access and inclusion advocacy for people with disability. The membership to the Committee will be reviewed annually.

Membership to the Committee is based on one or more of the following attributes:

- Personal lived experience as a person with disability;
- Knowledge, understanding and expertise in all access and inclusion advocacy for people with disability; and
- Willingness and ability to fulfil the key Committee responsibilities (outlined above).

Independent verification of claims were also sought from the applicants' referees.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

## **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The appointment of the two new advisory committee members will greatly improve the gender balance of the committee. Gender balance is considered in the overall assessment of applications.

A Gender Impact Assessment is due to be conducted on the work of the Advisory Committee. The assessment outcomes will be incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the next term.

## **12 EMBRACING OUR PAST AND PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE**

### **12.1 THE VOICE REFERENDUM**

Go to 00:56:10 in the meeting recording to view this item.

#### **EXECUTIVE MANAGER PEOPLE AND TRANSFORMATION**

*In providing this advice to Council as the Reconciliation Officer, I Carolyn Sanders have no interests to disclose in this report.*

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Nil

#### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council:*

- 1. In recognition of the position advocated by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and consistent with the Council motion of August 2022 supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, formally supports constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, through a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution;*
- 2. Commits to sharing clear, credible information on the Voice to Parliament and all aspects of the upcoming referendum to assist residents in making their own considered and informed choice on the day; and*
- 3. Acknowledges that any position resolved by Council is without prejudice to individual position each Councillor, or Council officer, may privately or publicly pursue.*

#### **MOTION**

*That Council:*

- 1. In recognition of the position advocated by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and consistent with the Council motion of August 2022 supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, formally supports constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, through a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution;*
- 2. Commits to sharing clear, credible information on the Voice to Parliament and all aspects of the upcoming referendum to assist residents in making their own considered and informed choice on the day; and*
- 3. Acknowledges that any position resolved by Council is without prejudice to individual position each Councillor, or Council officer, may privately or publicly pursue.*

**Moved:** Cr Lesley Hewitt  
**Seconded:** Cr Don Henderson  
**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Nil

*Councillors Note:*

*Mindful of their obligation under the Local Government Act to provide good governance for the benefit and wellbeing of the community and the need to consider the diversity of interests and needs of the community councillors unanimously resolved to adopt the officers' recommendation.*

*In so doing councillors acknowledged that a First Nations Voice to Parliament would be an independent, representative advisory body that will provide a permanent means to advise Parliament and Government on matters affecting the lives of First Nations communities – including advice on practical steps to improve health, education, employment and housing. Most importantly, a Voice to Parliament would be the means for recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution for the first time.*

*Councillors further noted that supporting constitutional recognition aligns with Hepburn Shire Council's Reconciliation Plan and its underlying commitments to self-determination, partnerships, community dialogue and truth-telling.*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On 27 May 2017, delegates of the National Constitutional Convention released the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart' which calls for legal and structural reforms to reshape the relationship between First Nations and the Australian population. The Uluru Statement calls for two substantive changes, including establishing a Makarrata Commission to lead treaty making and truth-telling, as well as a First Nations Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Constitution.

A First Nations Voice to Parliament would be an independent, representative advisory body that will provide a permanent means to advise Parliament and Government on matters affecting the lives of First Nations communities.

In 2022, the Federal Government committed to holding a referendum on a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament. The Prime Minister announced in March 2023 the proposed constitutional amendment and the referendum question that will be put to the Australian public at a referendum before the end of 2023.

Supporting constitutional recognition aligns with Hepburn Shire Council's Reflect Reconciliation Plan 2018/2019 and its underlying commitments to self-determination, partnerships, and community dialogue and truth-telling.

## **BACKGROUND**

The majority of Hepburn Shire is on the traditional lands (Djandak) of the Djaara people of the Dja Dja Wurrung. They are the traditional custodians of this land, formally recognised in a Recognition and Settlement Agreement signed by Council.

Council committed to develop a 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2016/2017, which has been implemented through the following years. Significant Reconciliation Action Plan projects, programs, and initiatives have been implemented, including:

- Council's formal recommendation to rename Jim Crow Creek to Larni Barramal Yaluk
- Opening the award-winning Manna Gums Frontier Wars Memorial Avenue
- Formal support for the key principles of the Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Cultural awareness training for Council staff and community
- Recognition of National Sorry Day
- An annual program of activities and events during Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week
- Commission of Dja Dja Wurrung public art by Aunty Marilyn Nicholls, and
- Increased engagement of Traditional Owner decision-making in Council's services, strategies, masterplans, and overall vision for Hepburn Shire.

Council is moving from its first 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan to a second stage 'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan in 2023/2024 as we progress our work in reconciliation. This plan will outline actions for achieving a shared Council and community vision for advancing reconciliation with Traditional Owners and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Previous Council decision dates:

- 2016: Recognition and Settlement agreement acknowledging that the majority of Hepburn Shire is on the traditional lands (Djandak) of the Djaara people of the Dja Dja Wurrung, who are the traditional custodians of this land.
- 2017: adoption of the Reflect Reconciliation Plan
- August 2022: unanimous resolution from Council for the Uluru Statement from the Heart.



## KEY ISSUES

On 27 May 2017, delegates of the National Constitutional Convention released the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart'. The Uluru Statement calls for legal and structural reforms to reshape the relationship between First Nations and the Australian population towards one based on fairness, truth, justice, and self-determination. This is an important step in Australia's reconciliation journey. In calling for 'Voice, Treaty, Truth', the Uluru Statement calls for two substantive changes which are:

- Constitutional enshrinement of a Makarrata Commission to undertake processes of treaty making and truth-telling; and
- A First Nations Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the constitution.

A First Nations Voice to Parliament would be an independent, representative advisory body of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members. It will provide a permanent means to advise Parliament and the Executive Government on the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to have the means to inform decisions on matters directly affecting the lives of First Nations communities.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart was developed out of a First Nations dialogue process, led by the Referendum Council, to discuss constitutional reform and how to ensure that Aboriginal decision-making was at the heart of the reform process.

### **Constitutional amendment and referendum question**

In 2022, the Federal Government committed to holding a referendum on a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament by the end of 2023. This is part of the Government's commitment to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full.

This referendum will give Australians a rare opportunity to write a new chapter into our Constitution.

On 23 March 2023, the Prime Minister announced the proposed constitutional amendment and question to be asked at the 2023 Referendum.

On 19 June 2023, Parliament passed the Constitution Alteration Bill. Australians will be asked to approve the inclusion of the following new chapter into the Constitution:

*In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia:*

- 1. There shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice;*
- 2. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;*

*3. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, including its composition, functions, powers and procedures.*

The question Australians will be asked will be:

***A Proposed Law: to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve this proposed alteration?***

The First Nations Referendum Working Group also outlined the principles underpinning the First Nations Voice to Parliament. This clarifies our understanding of the role and function of this new body.

To summarise, the Voice to Parliament will:

- Provide independent advice to the Parliament and Government.
- Be chosen by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples based on the wishes of local communities.
- Be representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Be gender balanced and include youth.
- Be empowering, community-led, inclusive, respectful and culturally informed.
- Be accountable and transparent.
- Work alongside existing organisations and traditional structures.

The Voice will not have a program delivery function, nor will it have veto powers.

### **State and local context**

Since mid-2022, several developments have occurred across all levels of government and community. At the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) June 2022 State Council, which comprises representatives from all 79 Victorian councils, it was resolved that:

*“...the MAV call upon all Victorian local government authorities to consider supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart which calls on the Australian people to walk with First Nations in a people’s movement for Voice, Treaty and Truth, and encourage all Councils to write to their respective Federal Member of Parliament calling on the Australian Government to support Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the key principles of the “Uluru Statement from the Heart”.*

This follows the Australian Local Government Association’s (ALGA) earlier support for constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as per its submission of endorsement to the 2018 Interim Report of the Federal Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Recognition.

It is important to note that there are many diverse opinions regarding The Voice to Parliament from Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals and organisations. This diversity is acknowledged, and respect given to individuals and organisations to freely deliberate for themselves.

Formal, public expressions of support for The Voice to Parliament include:

- In December 2022, 38 mayors from across Australia released a joint statement in support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the upcoming referendum, while also committing to civic education in their communities about the importance of the referendum.
- Six Victorian mayors signed the Mayors for the Voice to Parliament Public Statement, including the City of Ballarat, Nillumbik Shire Council and Bass Coast Shire Council and more recently Greater Bendigo City Council.
- At the National Cabinet meeting on 5 February 2023, all State and Territory Premiers signed a 'statement of intent', formally supporting a First Peoples Voice to Parliament.
- A series of national and state peak-based bodies have released position statements stating their support for the referendum and for constitutional recognition, including Reconciliation Victoria, Reconciliation Australia, Victorian Council of Social Service, the Australian Reconciliation Network and Diversity Council Australia.
- On 26 May 2023, more than 20 Australian sporting codes released a joint statement in support of constitutional recognition through the Voice to Parliament, including the AFL, NRL, Rugby Australia, Football Australia and Netball Australia.
- On 27 June 2023, Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation issued a statement advocating for a 'yes' vote on the Voice to Parliament referendum. Rodney Carter, Chief Executive Officer stated, "A Voice to Parliament would not detract from or interfere with the rights of Dja Dja Wurrung People under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) with the State of Victoria".
- *"In the past, we were left out of many conversations directly related to our wellbeing. We can be harsh and judge the people and structures created before us, but to make a difference for the next generations, what we can always do is improve. We can always do better for the people around us...  
My people have persisted. We negotiated for 15 years to be recognised as Traditional Owners of Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country), through the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) we signed with the state of Victoria in 2013...*

*The Voice to Parliament will bring attention to matters that are important to us and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – at a federal level.”*

There is a diversity of reasons offered by advocates opposed to The Voice to Parliament, and these come from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Some support the concept of constitutional recognition but not the proposed model for The Voice to Parliament. Despite online research, officers were unable to identify organisations other than political parties that have made formal, public statements of opposition to The Voice to Parliament. ‘Political’ opponents include several independent parliamentarians plus the Liberal Party, The Nationals, and Pauline Hanson’s One Nation.

Various ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ campaigns have been running since February 2023. Their official statements to the Australian Electoral Commission are attached.

The ‘No’ campaign, being led by *Australians for Unity*, seeks to offer an alternative solution to First Nations recognition and community needs. Made up of the former *Recognise a Better Way* and *Fair Australia* campaigns, the ‘No’ campaign reflects criticism around the lack of detail on the structure and role of the Voice to Parliament. For example, the previous *Recognise a Better Way* group sought symbolic recognition of First Nation peoples in the Constitution and reiterated that economic participation is the only way to close the gap of disadvantage. These campaigns reflect the diversity of views within First Nations communities and the broader public about the Voice to Parliament and referendum. Some groups, for example the Liberal Party, advocating for a no vote do support constitutional recognition but not the Voice to Parliament.

The ‘Yes’ campaign being driven by a collective of groups, including *The Uluru Dialogue*, *From the Heart*, *Uphold and Recognise*, and *Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition*. The campaign’s objective is supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart and constitutional recognition for First Nations peoples. A non-partisan forum, *Parliamentary Friends of the Uluru Statement*, has formed to support parliamentarians to meet and interact with various stakeholder groups around the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

### **Other**

The Voice to Parliament and upcoming referendum offers Council an opportunity to show its support for constitutional recognition of First Nations people, as part of our ongoing commitment to reconciliation and Aboriginal self-determination outlined in the Reflect Reconciliation Plan.

As the level of government closest to community, Council can play an important role in ensuring residents are able to participate in the democratic process in an informed way, providing access to unbiased information in the leadup to the referendum.

Council's role will involve informing and sharing clear, unbiased information on the Voice to Parliament and the upcoming referendum to ensure residents can make their own considered and informed choice on the day.

Offering support for constitutional recognition also aligns with important changes at the State level where the Victorian Government has been leading the nation in advancing treaty-making, truth-telling and providing a democratic voice for First Nations peoples. This has included the creation of the First People's Assembly of Victoria in December 2019, the establishment of an independent Treaty Authority and treaty negotiation framework in June 2022, and a formal truth-telling process through the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

### **COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

*Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

*Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026*

*Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan July 2018 - July 2019*

The Council website states that it is committed to:

1. Further recognising, strengthening, protecting and promoting Dja Dja Wurrung culture and connection to Country, for the benefit of our local communities
2. Increasing opportunities for reconciliation in Hepburn Shire
3. Improving Hepburn Shire Council business processes to create a culturally safe workplace
4. Ensuring Council officers have the knowledge and resources to meet Council's obligations for maintaining and managing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage locally.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Additional communications and information sharing activities in the lead up to the 2023 referendum can be implemented within the existing Reconciliation Action Plan implementation budget, and current staffing resources of the Communications team. This can include our website, social media, *Hepburn Life*, and distributing Yes and No campaign brochures at customer contact points.

### **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The Reconciliation Advisory Committee met on 7 August 2023 to discuss this proposal, and their views have been communicated to Councillors.

There are no other community or stakeholder engagement implications associated with this report.

## RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

Confirmation of a Council position regarding the First Nations Voice to Parliament is of high importance given the approaching referendum in late 2023 and the growing interest, both internally and externally, of Council's commitment on this matter.

### Options considered

Council may consider the following options in relation to the 2023 referendum:

#### Option 1 (recommended):

- That Council formally supports constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples through a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution.
- Council commits to informing and sharing of clear, unbiased information on the Voice to Parliament and all aspects of the upcoming referendum. This will ensure residents can make their own considered and informed choice on the day.

#### Option 2:

- No formal Council position is taken on the upcoming 2023 referendum or constitutional recognition through a Voice to Parliament.
- In the leadup to the referendum, Council commits to sharing clear and unbiased information on the Voice to Parliament and the upcoming referendum. This will ensure residents can make their own considered and informed choice in the referendum.

#### Option 3:

- Council passes a formal motion not supporting the upcoming referendum or constitutional recognition through a Voice to Parliament.

To support decision making, Council:

- Acknowledges that this Council position does not preclude the right of an individual Councillor to:
  - o Vote as they individually desire in the referendum.
  - o Actively campaign or not, for either side, as a private citizen – without prejudice to the position of Council.
- Acknowledges that Councillors must still comply with the Councillor Code of Conduct Policy 47(C), specifically but not limited to sections:
  - **5.4. Communication**
  - We recognise that as representatives of the local community, we have a primary responsibility to be responsive to community views and to accurately communicate the position and decisions of Council.

- We undertake to comply with the Council’s media rules and respect the functions of the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer to be the spokespersons for the Council, as follows.
- **5.4.1 The Mayor**
- The Mayor or delegate (ward Councillor) will provide official comment to the media on behalf of Council where the matter is of a strategic, political, controversial, or sensitive nature. This includes:
  - (b) Contentious local issues that impact the community that do not relate directly to the business of Council but to the representation of the community;
  - (c) Issues pertaining to policy and Council decisions;
  - (d) Issues relating to strategic direction of the Council.
- **5.4.3 Media Releases**
- All media releases issued by Council will be issued by the Communications Officer.
- Prior to their release, all media releases issued by Council will be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate. Prior approval must be obtained from the respective Councillor for a media release issued by Council where that Councillor is quoted by name.
- **5.4.4 Councillor Public Comment**
- We acknowledge that individual Councillors are entitled to express their personal opinions through the media. Where we choose to do so we will make it clear that such comment is a personal view and does not represent the position of Council. We undertake to ensure that any such comment is devoid of comments that could reasonably be construed as being derogatory, offensive, or insulting to any person.
- There may be times when a Councillor as an individual disagrees with a majority decision of the council and wants the community to know that. The appropriate time and place for communicating diverging views is when an item is being debated in the Council Chamber. This provides the best opportunity for informed decision-making and for both the community and the media to better understand the diversity of Councillor views and perspectives in context.

### **Timelines**

A referendum on the First Nations Voice to Parliament will be held in the second half of 2023 (most likely between October and December).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

### **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

There are no gender equity implications associated with this report.





## **13 A DYNAMIC AND RESPONSIVE COUNCIL**

### **13.1 ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2023/2024**

Go to 01:19:40 in the meeting recording to view this item.

#### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

*In providing this advice to Council as the Grants and Corporate Reporting Officer, I Kelly Lewis have no interests to disclose in this report.*

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Hepburn Shire Council Annual Plan-2023/2024 - Final [13.1.1 - 16 pages]

#### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council adopts the Annual Plan 2023/2024 and makes it available on Council's website.*

#### **MOTION**

*That Council adopts the Annual Plan 2023/2024 and makes it available on Council's website.*

**Moved:** Cr Tessa Halliday

**Seconded:** Cr Don Henderson

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Nil

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The draft Annual Plan highlights the delivery of 34 projects and initiatives which have been developed in consultation with Executive and organisational management teams and aligns with the Council Plan 2021-2025 Focus Areas and Strategies.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The draft Plan connects the Council priorities to our overall planning and reporting framework. It outlines our priorities and major actions for Council's financial year. The plan complements the Annual Budget 2023/2024 and provides further details on significant projects, services, and initiatives that will be funded during the financial year. The Plan does not include carry-forward projects and initiatives that have already been funded in previous financial years. However, if these projects and initiatives have yet to be completed, the funding is still available and will be carried forward and reported quarterly.

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council that took place in September 2021, Council adopted the ten-year Community Vision and four-year Council Plan 2021-2025, which includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. The Council Plan identifies 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 opportunities; and a dynamic and responsive Council.

## **KEY ISSUES**

To establish a direct connection to the Council Plan, the draft 2023/2024 Plan categorises projects under each individual focus area. These projects and initiatives listed in the draft Annual Plan align with the Priority Statements for each focus area in the Council Plan and correspond to the proposed funding in the recently adopted Annual Budget 2023/2024.

Projects from Annual Plan 2022/2023 that were not completed will continue to be reported on either as a carry-forward or as part of a revised action in the 2023/2024 plan, such as Trentham Community Hub, and the Walking and Cycling Strategy which now is part of the broader Shire-wide Integrated Transport Strategy in 2023/2024.

## **COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Plan 2021-2025**

5. A dynamic and responsive Council

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

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report as projects and initiatives listed are included in Council's Budget 2023/2024.

## **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The Annual Plan 2023/2024 identifies key projects and initiatives identified during the draft budget process and contained within Council Plan 2021-2025. Once adopted, the Annual Plan will be made available to Community on Council's website.

## **RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 support the operation of the strategic planning and reporting requirements under the Local Government Act 2020, by prescribing information to be contained in council budgets and revised budgets, Financial Plans, and annual reports, as well mandating for councils the system of performance reporting. This Annual Plan forms part of the Council Plan reporting requirements.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

There are no direct sustainability implications associated with this report, there are a number of projects within the draft Annual Plan to respond to sustainability challenges.

### **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

There are no direct gender equity implications associated with this report.

# 2023/24 Annual Plan



*Hepburn*

SHIRE COUNCIL

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## 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.

# INTRODUCTION

The 2023-2024 Annual Plan outlines how we will monitor our progress and report on actions for the year ahead.

The Annual Plan links the achievement of Council priorities with our overall planning and reporting framework. It sets out our priorities and major actions for the budget year for Council. The Plan complements the Annual Budget 2023-2024 which provides greater detail of all projects, services, and initiatives to be funded during the financial year.

Council undertook a significant community engagement process to develop the Community Vision 2021-2031 and the Council Plan 2021-2025 including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. The Plan was adopted by Council in October 2021 and contains five focus areas that reflect our community's goals and aspirations for the next ten years.



## Vision STATEMENT

*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.*

This Annual Plan has been developed under the five focus areas:



**1**  
**A resilient, sustainable and protected environment**

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



**2**  
**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.



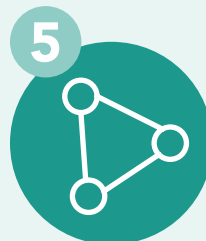
**3**  
**Embracing our past and planning for the future**

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



**4**  
**Diverse economy and opportunities**

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



**5**  
**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.

The Annual Plan does not include all Council projects and excludes the majority of carry-forward projects and initiatives that have been funded in previous budget years. If these projects and initiatives are yet to be delivered, the funding is still available and will be carried forward pending Council approval to be delivered in 2023-2024.

Council's Annual Budget has two primary components: the Operating Budget and the Capital Budget. The Capital Budget funds major improvements to community facilities and infrastructure and is based on the four-year Council Plan and ten-year long-term Financial Plan. The Operating Budget includes employee costs and annual facility operating costs, and services to the community like waste collection, local road and footpath maintenance. Both budgets are supported through multiple funding sources, including rates and charges, and government grant funding.

The actions in the Annual Plan will be monitored throughout the year and a quarterly progress report will be provided to Council and our community throughout the year.



1



## FOCUS AREA 1:

# A RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE AND PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT

## Vision:

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

## Priority Statements

- 1.1** Adapt to and mitigate climate change to reach net-zero community emissions by 2030.
- 1.2** Prioritise environmental management, protection, and regeneration.
- 1.3** Transition to ecologically sustainable and accountable tourism.
- 1.4** Development meaningful policies and strategic partnerships that link sustainability and public health.
- 1.5** Protect and regenerate the natural resources of the Shire including soil, water, and ecological systems, from both current and future threats.



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Project Name	Action	Budget	Target Completion Date	Business Unit
Hepburn Shire Council Sustainability and Climate Change Policy	Adopt a Hepburn Sustainability and Climate Change Emergency policy and commence embedding this into Council's operations and decision-making processes.	Operational	30 Jun 2024	Waste, Facilities & Environment
Let's Rethink Waste – FOGO Collection Service	Rollout of a new Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) bin collection service across the townships in the Shire with a goal to reduce landfill and create opportunities for resource recovery and re-use.	\$730,000 (Waste Reserve)	30 Apr 2024	Waste, Facilities & Environment
Sustainable Hepburn Community Advisory Committee	Create a Sustainable Hepburn Community Advisory Committee to foster community support, involvement and partnership towards a sustainable Hepburn.	Operational	28 Feb 2024	Waste, Facilities & Environment
Roadside Conservation	Continue environmental services with an increased focus on weed management and roadside vegetation management including development and implementation of a Roadside Conservation Strategy.	Operational	30 Jun 2024	Waste, Facilities & Environment

2



## FOCUS AREA 2:

# A HEALTHY, SUPPORTED AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITY

## Vision:

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

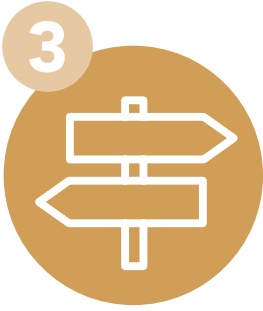
## Priority Statements

- 2.1 Support appropriate land use and accommodate more affordable long-term housing within townships that confirms with the character of the area.
- 2.2 Increase the availability and accessibility of services in the Hepburn Shire to support liveability, health and wellbeing.
- 2.3 Optimise the use of public spaces to increase participation and community connection.
- 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.
- 2.5 Improved mental wellbeing within the community.



Project Name	Action	Budget	Target Completion Date	Business Unit
Review of Short-Term Accommodation	Review possible regulation of short-term rental accommodation to assist with permanent rental housing supply, while still allowing for a diverse and sustainable base of tourist accommodation to support the local economy.	\$30,000	30 Jun 2024	Executive Office
Advocating for Improved Health Services	Council will advocate for access to high quality health services across the Shire, including early years programs and through the upgrade of Daylesford Hospital.	Operational	30 Jun 2024	Community & Economy
Best Start, Best Life - Kinder Infrastructure and Workforce Planning	Deliver the Best Start, Best Life program funded by the Victorian Government. This will involve an audit and analysis of all Kindergarten facilities and early years workforce needs across the region into the future.	\$82,000 (Grant Funded)	30 Jun 2024	Community & Economy
Storm Rectification and Road Repair Works	Continuation of Hepburn Shire's ongoing Storm Rectification Works program that includes the ongoing repair of sealed roads damaged by floods.	Operational	30 Jun 2024	Emergency Management
Dusk to Dawn Cat Curfew Rollout	Implement and enforce a cat curfew (effective from 1 July 2023) from dusk to dawn as part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025.	Operational	30 Sept 2023	Waste, Facilities & Environment
Community Recovery Hub	Deliver community recovery and resilience activities across Hepburn Shire building resilience of community members to respond to and recover from emergency risks in the shire.	\$130,000 (Grant Funded)	30 Jun 2024	Emergency Management
Central Springs Mineral Reserve, Daylesford - Stage One Development	Enhance the visitor experience of our Mineral Springs by delivering accessibility and water quality improvements at Central Springs Mineral Reserve at Lake Daylesford.	\$300,000 (Grant Funded)	30 Jun 2024	Operations
Recreation Masterplans for Clunes and Glenlyon	Prepare detailed designs for Clunes Recreation Reserve Masterplan and Glenlyon Recreation Reserve Masterplan, including detailed designs on the new Glenlyon Pavilion.	\$250,000	31 Mar 2024	Community & Economy
Aquatics Business Case Development	Finalise a business case on aquatics provision within the Shire, as informed by the 2022 Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy.	\$60,000	31 Dec 2023	Community & Economy

3



## FOCUS AREA 3:

# EMBRACING THE PAST AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

## Vision:

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

## Priority Statements

- 3.1** Partner with and empower our Traditional Owners and broader community to acknowledge, understand, celebrate and preserve our area's culture, traditions, and environs.
- 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.
- 3.3** Build and maintain quality infrastructure that supports and promotes liveability and active living in the community.





Project Name	Action	Budget	Target Completion Date	Business Unit
Arts and Culture Strategy	Finalise and adopt an Arts and Culture Strategy that provides support to local artists who enrich community wellbeing by providing cultural experiences.	Operational	31 Dec 2023	Community & Economy
Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan	Develop and adopt a new Reconciliation Action Plan to ensure an inclusive community, reduce racial discrimination, identify and acknowledge issues requiring actions of reconciliation.	\$27,000	30 Jun 2024	Community & Economy
Future Hepburn	Continuation of Hepburn's key strategic planning program through the development of town structure plans, agricultural land and rural settlement strategy, integrated transport strategy and other supporting technical studies.	Operational	30 Jun 2024	Strategic Planning
Daylesford Town Hall Restoration Stage 1	Award tender for the delivery of priority structural and electrical repair works to the Daylesford Town Hall to conserve our important heritage asset.	\$1.0M	30 Jun 2024	Waste, Facilities & Environment
Creswick Trails Construction	Achieve construction delivery milestones to enable the 60km of trails to be completed in December 2024.	\$4.9M	30 Jun 2024	Projects
Shire Wide Integrated Transport Strategy	Adopt a 10-year integrated transport strategy for improved connections for the community through the various modes of transport including active transport such as walking and cycling.	\$60,000	31 May 2024	Strategic Planning
Completion of Trentham Hub Construction	Complete construction and open the new Trentham Community Hub.	\$2.02M	31 Mar 2024	Projects
Historic Wheelers Bridge in Lawrence	With financial assistance from the Australian Government, begin construction on the renewal of the historic Wheelers Bridge in Lawrence.	\$3.0M (Grant Funded)	31 Mar 2024	Operations



## FOCUS AREA 4:

# DIVERSE ECONOMY AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Vision:

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

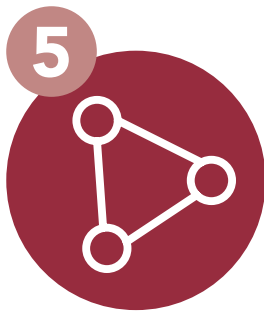
## Priority Statements

- 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.
- 4.2** Advocate for improved digital connectivity including enhanced internet infrastructure to support business, residents who work from home, students, and other citizens of the Hepburn Shire 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.
- 4.4** Develop and promote the circular economy to diversify our local economy and support our sustainable goals.



Project Name	Action	Budget	Target Completion Date	Business Unit
Hepburn Shire Young Mayors Program	Provide leadership and development opportunities for young people to increase youth advocacy and leadership by delivering the trial Young Mayors Program through peer led election of Youth Council Members.	Operational	30 Jun 2024	Community & Economy
Enhancing Hepburn's Digital Planning and Reporting Capability	With the financial assistance from the Victorian Government, deliver digital enhancements to modernise Council's planning services and improve the customer experience.	\$264,000	30 Jun 2024	Planning & Building
Destination Management Planning	Work with our tourism partners, Daylesford Macedon Tourism and Tourism Midwest Victoria to develop Destination Management Plans to support the Shire's visitor economy and provide foundations for sustainable growth which balances economic priorities with social, environmental and cultural factors in the region.	Operational	30 Apr 2024	Community & Economy
Mineral Springs Awareness Campaign	Through funding from the Victorian Government, develop marketing tools to raise the awareness and understanding of Mineral Springs in the region for locals and visitors.	\$28,600 (Grant Funded)	30 Jun 2024	Community & Economy
Build the Capacity of Event Organisers	Develop tools and templates to assist event organisers to build the capacity of the event industry to continue to deliver and enhance successful, sustainable and compliant events.	Operational	30 Jun 2024	Community & Economy
Circular Hepburn	Support and transition Hepburn to a circular economy by providing support to our businesses and community, and embedding sustainable practices into Council operations, based on the three pillars of the circular economy - rethinking waste, keeping materials in circulation and regenerating natural systems.	Operational	30 June 2024	Waste, Facilities & Environment





## FOCUS AREA 5:

# A DYNAMIC AND RESPONSIVE COUNCIL

## Vision:

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

## Priority Statements

- 5.1** Harness community expertise.
- 5.2** Actively communicate, inform and engage with our community about events and decision-making.
- 5.3** A sustainable and agile organisation with strong corporate governance.
- 5.4** Improve staff resourcing, support, and capacity building.
- 5.5** Strong Asset management and renewal.
- 5.6** Be a leader in gender equality and promote respect and safety in our community.



Project Name	Action	Budget	Target Completion Date	Business Unit
Working Together - Delivering Better	Commence implementing the new Working Together - Delivering Better Service Strategy through the delivery of all Council staff training to enable Council to continue to improve the way we work and deliver excellent customer service.	Operational	31 Mar 2024	Customer Experience
Council Services Review	Prepare and undertake Service Summaries to provide insight to the cost, resources required, challenges and opportunities of each Council Service.	Operational	31 Dec 2023	Executive Office
Review of 10-year Long Term Financial Plan	Conduct a review of Council's 2021-2031 Long Term Financial Plan to ensure that Council is investing in the assets and services that reflect communities' values.	Operational	31 Dec 2023	Financial Services
Cyber Security Enhancements for Council	Deliver a suite of ICT enhancements to provide greater security over Council's day-to-day operations.	\$100,000	30 Apr 2024	Information, Communications & Technology
Risk Management Framework Implementation	Undertake a review of Council's risk management policies and practices and establishment of updated Risk Registers.	\$30,000	30 Jun 2024	Governance & Risk
Staff Accommodation and Community Facilities	Undertake scoping and planning of staff accommodation and Birch Ward facilities.	\$200,000	31 Mar 2024	Projects
Gender Equity	Continue to implement Council's Gender Equity Plan with a focus on embedding an inclusive culture that respects diversity by providing a safe workplace for Council staff and ensuring that we have transparent, fair and gender diverse recruitment practices.	Operational	30 Jun 2024	People & Culture



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 [www.facebook.com/hepburncouncil](https://www.facebook.com/hepburncouncil)

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DAYLESFORD

Cnr. Duke & Albert Streets,  
Daylesford  
8:30am – 5pm

CRESWICK

Creswick Hub  
68 Albert Street  
Mon to Sat 8:30am – 5pm

TRENTHAM

13 Albert Street, Trentham  
Mon, Wed, Fri 10am – 5pm  
Sat 10am – 1pm

CLUNES

The Warehouse – Clunes  
36 Fraser Street, Clunes  
Mon & Thurs 10am – 6pm  
Wed & Fri 10am – 4pm

## 13.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2023

Go to 01:23:30 in the meeting recording to view this item.

### DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE

*In providing this advice to Council as the Manager Governance and Risk, I Rebecca Smith have no interests to disclose in this report.*

### ATTACHMENTS

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Chairs Cover Letter - Audit and Risk Committee - 26 June 2023 [13.2.1 - 2 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Confidential Minutes - Audit and Risk Committee - 26 June 2023 [13.2.2 - 32 pages]

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

*That Council:*

1. *Receives the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting that was held on 26 June 2023; and*
2. *Notes the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee that were moved at the meeting on 26 June 2023.*

### MOTION

*That Council:*

1. *Receives the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting that was held on 26 June 2023; and*
2. *Notes the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee that were moved at the meeting on 26 June 2023.*

**Moved:** Cr Juliet Simpson

**Seconded:** Cr Lesley Hewitt

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Nil

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider advice from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting that was held on 26 June 2023.

## **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the Audit and Risk Committee is to oversee and monitor the effectiveness of Council in carrying out its responsibilities for accountable financial management and risk, good corporate governance, provide experience in public sector management, and the maintenance of systems of internal control, and the fostering of an ethical environment.

The Audit and Risk Committee is not a delegated committee and cannot exercise statutory functions and powers of the Council under delegation, and essentially acts as an advisory body on behalf of Council.

The Audit and Risk Committee meetings are closed to the public.

## **KEY ISSUES**

The Confidential Minutes from the Committee's most recent meeting are attached for Councils consideration.

## **COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

*Council Plan 2021-2025*

A dynamic and responsive Council

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

*Local Government Act 2020*

The Audit and Risk Committee is governed by section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and operates in line with the Audit and Risk Committee Charter. A Workplan is developed to align with their obligations.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

There are no community or stakeholder engagement implications associated with this report. The Audit and Risk Committee, and representatives from Council's external and internal auditors respectively have been engaged and consulted on reports that relate to their function and duty to Council.

All members of the Audit and Risk Committee were presented with agenda papers and were all present at the Meeting.

## **RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The Audit and Risk Committee was established by Council resolution on 28 August 2020 in line with section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Committee is made up of four independent committee members – Ms Carol Pagnon (Chair), Mr Jason Young, Mr Robert Taylor. One position is currently vacant.

The Councillor delegates of the Committee are Cr Brian Hood (Mayor) and Cr Juliet Simpson.

The Audit and Risk Committee were duly briefed on all reports and a robust discussion was had. Should Council disagree with any recommendations that the Audit and Risk Committee present for its consideration, then Council will need to, via a resolution of Council and in line with Council's good governance framework, state which motions Council do not accept.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

#### **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

There are no gender equity implications associated with this report.

### **13.3 ANNUAL PLAN 2022/2023 - QUARTER 4 PROGRESS REPORT**

Go to 01:29:30 in the meeting recording to view this item.

#### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

*In providing this advice to Council as the Corporate Reporting and Grants Officer, I Kelly Lewis have no interests to disclose in this report.*

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Annual Plan 2022/2023 Quarter 4 Progress Report [**13.3.1** - 15 pages]

#### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council notes the Annual Plan 2022/2023 Quarter Four Progress Report and makes it available to the community on Council's website.*

#### **MOTION**

*That Council notes the Annual Plan 2022/2023 Quarter Four Progress Report and makes it available to the community on Council's website.*

**Moved:** Cr Don Henderson

**Seconded:** Cr Tim Drylie

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Nil

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The attached report provides an update on the progress against projects and initiatives included in the Annual Plan 2022/2023 for the quarter four period, April to June 2023.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Every financial year, Council compiles an Annual Plan featuring a selection of projects and key initiatives and the tasks required to progress or complete that year. This Plan outlines the actions for 2022/2023 to be implemented as priorities from the Council Plan 2021-2025 and Annual Budget 2022/2023. The Annual Plan 2022/2023 was adopted by Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 28 June 2022.

This plan serves as a progress tracker for the objectives outlined in the four-year Council Plan. However, it only presents a sample of the budgeted projects and isn't an all-inclusive list of what Council will deliver.

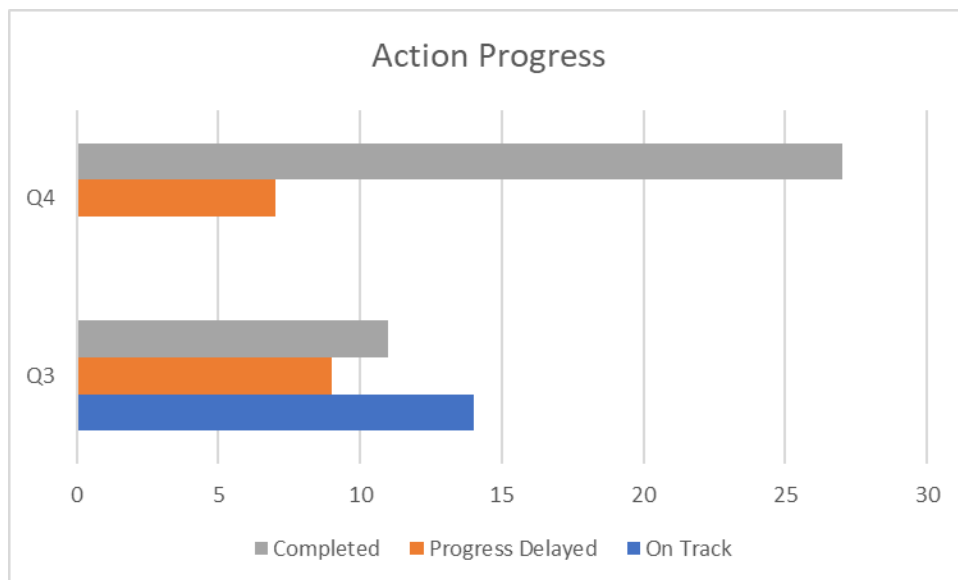
Given the nature of the annual plan, the objective is to finish actions related to the listed projects within a year. However, it is understood some larger or more complex projects, such as Trentham Community Hub may require more than a year to finalise. The term 'completed' in this report implies that the annual tasks have been finished, rather than the entire project. Council's Participate Hepburn website provides further updates on these larger projects.

The Annual Plan details the progress of actions in the Council Plan, and the quarterly report updates Councillors and the community on the progress of those actions.

### KEY ISSUES

The attached report provides a list of the projects included in the Annual Plan 2022/2023 and a progress comment has been provided for each project by the responsible officer, for the fourth quarter period.

The following graph provides a snapshot of the current status of projects as of 30 June 2023. Significant progress has been made on many of the projects this quarter, with the following changes from last quarter:



At the end of Quarter 4, a total of seven projects that have a status of 'progress delayed' will be continued to be reported as a 'carried forward' action as part of the ongoing quarterly progress reporting. It should also be noted that several projects have a status of 'completed' although the project is not finalised or is ongoing. The 'completed' relates to the expected activities to be undertaken in 2022/2023.

### COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

#### Council Plan 2021-2025

3. Embracing our past and planning for the future

3.3 Build and maintain infrastructure that supports liveability and activity in our community.



5. A dynamic and responsive Council

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

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

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All Annual Plan 2022/2023 projects and initiatives were budgeted for in the 2022/2023 financial year.

#### **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

There are no community or stakeholder engagement implications associated with this report. A copy of the report will be published on Council's website once endorsed by Council at the August 2023 Ordinary Meeting of Council.

#### **RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 support the operation of the strategic planning and reporting requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*, by prescribing information to be contained in council budgets and revised budgets, financial plans and annual reports, as well mandating for councils the system of performance reporting. Annual Plan progress reports form part of the Council Plan reporting requirements.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

#### **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

There are no gender equity implications associated with this report.

Annual Plan 2022/2023  
Progress Report – Q4

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.

Our five focus areas:



**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed



Not Started



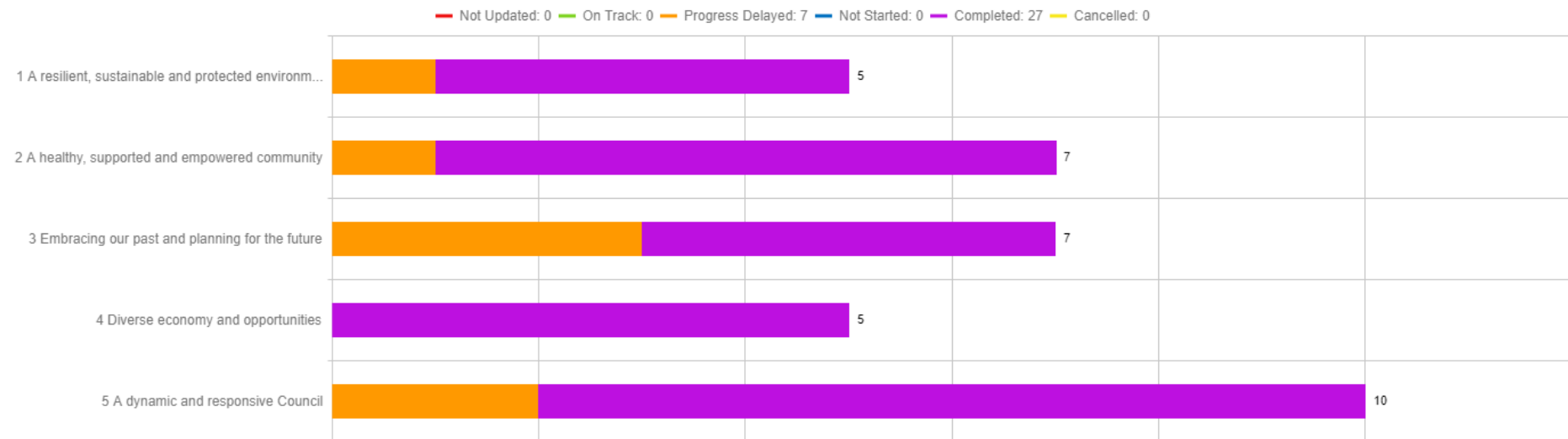
Cancelled

**About this Report**

Every financial year, Council compiles an Annual Plan featuring a selection of projects and key initiatives slated for completion for that year. This plan serves as a progress tracker for the objectives outlined in the 4-year Council Plan. However, it only presents a sample of the budgeted projects and isn't an all-inclusive list of what Council will deliver.

Given the nature of the annual plan, the objective is to finish actions related to the listed projects within a year. However, it is understood some larger or more complex projects may require more than a year to finalise. The term 'completed in this report implies that the annual tasks have been finished, rather than the entire project.

This report, produced every 3 months, provides an update on the progress against projects and initiatives included in the Annual Plan 2022/2023 for the quarter period.



**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed






Not Started



Cancelled

## A resilient, sustainable and protected environment

A responsive, adaptive, and resilient community that addresses climate change and biodiversity.

Action Code	Strategic Action	Business Unit	Due Date	Comments	Status
AP23.1	<b>Vehicle Charging Stations:</b> Partner with Hepburn Energy and Chargefox to install three electric charging stations in Creswick, Hepburn Springs and Trentham.	Waste, Facilities and Community Safety	01/01/2023	Two of the three planned electric vehicle charging stations have now been installed. Creswick’s charger started operation in June 2023 and Hepburn Springs’ due to come online in July 2023. The Trentham charger is ready to be installed pending progression of Trentham Hub site construction and carpark development.	
AP23.2	<b>Sustainable Hepburn:</b> 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.	Waste, Facilities and Community Safety	01/06/2023	In 2022/23, Council successfully delivered projects including Solar Savers, Circular Economy Stage 2, Climate Adaptation Toolkit & Workshops, 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 strengthened our relationship with Djaara on caring for country and climate action.	
AP23.3	<b>Destination Management Plan:</b> Partner with DMT to develop a regional destination management plan which will include local tourism action plans to ensure community needs are understood and addressed.	Economic Development and Recreation	01/06/2023	Daylesford Macedon Tourism and Urban Enterprise finished community and business consultations, delivering a draft Strategic Framework for the Destination Management Plan and Local Area Action Plans to Councillors. They used various engagement methods like Creswick and Daylesford workshops, stakeholder interviews and surveys.	

**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed





Completed



Not Started



Cancelled

<b>AP23.4</b>	<b>Linking sustainability and public health:</b> Develop a MOU with Central Highland Rural Health to ensure a collaborative approach to resource management and community messaging regarding the link between sustainability and public health.	Community Life	01/06/2023	Central Highlands Rural Health and Hepburn Shire Council have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and are jointly implementing the Hepburn Shire Council 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.	
<b>AP23.5</b>	<b>Flora and Fauna Assessment:</b> Conduct a biodiversity assessment as part of the Creswick Structure Plan.	Strategic Planning	01/09/2022	A biodiversity assessment for Creswick township and surrounds has been prepared to inform work on the Creswick Structure Plan.	

**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed








Not Started



Cancelled

## 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

Action Code	Strategic Action	Business Unit	Due Date	Comments	Status
AP23.6	<b>Affordable long-term housing:</b> Advocate for involvement in the Victorian State Government's Big Housing Build Program.	Strategic Planning	01/06/2023	The draft Affordable Housing Strategy and 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.	
AP23.7	<b>Trentham Community Hub:</b> Continue constructing the new multi-purpose community facility, featuring the new library and Council Customer Services.	Projects	01/06/2023	Impacts of previous delays continue to be managed to minimise the delay to completion. Completed work includes groundwork, footings and car park construction, with structural work to both the old building and the new section underway. Completion expected in March 2024.	
AP23.8	<b>Disability Access Inclusion Plan:</b> Develop and adopt a new plan.	Community Life	01/12/2022	The Hepburn Shire Council Disability Action Plan was finalised and adopted at the at the February 2023 Council meeting	
AP23.9	<b>Aquatics Strategy Implementation:</b> Undertake further detailed investigation and development of a feasibility Study and Business Case for Indoor Aquatics Provision.	Economic Development and Recreation	01/06/2023	Phase One Community and Stakeholder Engagement was undertaken throughout the last quarter period. Following the analysis of the consultation results, a draft Preliminary Options and Feasibility Discussion Paper and draft consultation report will be presented to Council for consideration later in 2023.	
AP23.10	<b>Walking and Cycling Strategy:</b> Develop and adopt a Walking and Cycling Strategy.	Economic Development and Recreation	01/06/2023	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.	

### STATUS



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed





Not Started



Cancelled



<b>AP23.11</b>	<b>Creating a circular food economy in the Hepburn Shire:</b> Partner with local organisations to increase access to healthy and affordable food.	Waste, Facilities and Community Safety	01/06/2023	Council is working closely with partners to build awareness and programs to support a circular food economy in the Hepburn 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. Adoption expected in early 2023/24.	
<b>AP23.12</b>	<b>Improved mental wellbeing within the community:</b> Establish a mental health support network for organisations that have a focus on mental health support and referral processes throughout the Hepburn region	Community Life	01/06/2023	Council continues to work closely with Central Highland Rural Health to ensure adequate Mental Health networks are run on a regular basis. Council is working with the new Mental Health team to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the network and referral processes throughout the shire.	

**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed






Not Started



Cancelled

## 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.

Action Code	Strategic Action	Business Unit	Due Date	Comments	Status
AP23.13	<b>COVID Stimulus Infrastructure Projects:</b> Continue to deliver key stimulus funded projects including, Bullarto Station Tourist Precinct, Creswick Town Hall and Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens	Projects	01/06/2023	Council has successfully completed and opened the Creswick Town Hall. Despite construction industry challenges causing delays, Bullarto Station Project is progressing, now reaching the cladding installation stage. Meanwhile, the final designs for Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens have reached the heritage approval stage.	
AP23.14	<b>Reconciliation Action Plan:</b> Develop and adopt a Reconciliation Action Plan.	Community Life	01/12/2022	Council Officers have now completed the recruitment for the Reconciliation Officer and continues to liaise with Reconciliation Australia to develop a new Reconciliation Action Plan. The next steps are to advance community consultation and stakeholder engagement during 2023/24	
AP23.15	<b>UNESCO Goldfields World Heritage:</b> Partner with other Council's to advocate for UNESCO World Heritage Listing of the Central Victorian Goldfields.	Economic Development and Recreation	01/06/2023	The Victorian Goldfields UNESCO World Heritage bid received a boost from the \$3.8 million announced in the Victorian Budget for championing Victoria's outstanding heritage. Officers contributed to the draft World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Master Plan. The steering committee is expected to adopt this document at their July 2023 meeting.	

**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed



Not Started



Cancelled

Action Code	Strategic Action	Business Unit	Due Date	Comments	Status
AP23.16	<b>Strategic Planning Work Program:</b> 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.	Strategic Planning	01/06/2023	Council's Future Hepburn strategic planning program is underway with the first phases of engagement for an agricultural land and rural settlement strategy and 5 township structure plans due to be completed by the end of June 2023. The second phase of engagement will involve co-design workshops with the community and stakeholders scheduled for October 2023.	
AP23.17	<b>Hammon Park Trailhead, Creswick - Construct:</b> Complete construction of the Trailhead at Hammon Park in Creswick	Projects	01/03/2023	The Hammon Park Trailhead project has been completed and is now open for use by the community and its visitors.	
AP23.18	<b>Trentham Sportsground Pavilion - Construct:</b> Complete construction of the pavilion and change facilities.	Projects	01/12/2022	The Trentham Sportsground Pavilion project has been completed and is now operational.	

**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed





Completed



Not Started



Cancelled

Action Code	Strategic Action	Business Unit	Due Date	Comments	Status
AP23.19	<b>Youth "ACE" Strategy 2022-2030 Implementation:</b> Implement Youth Strategy to support the delivery and opportunities to young people in the Shire.	Community Life	01/06/2023	The ACE Youth Development Strategy 2022 - 2030 has completed its first year. Key successes include the Junior lifeguard project becoming a permanent pool staff recruitment strategy, the continuation of Free Freeza events to tackle social isolation and mental health issues, a growth in membership of the Queer book club which is now considering a youth development model, and the inclusion of targeted programs for 8-12 and 12-18 age groups in ongoing school holiday activities. The Council has also signed an MOU to start a 2-year trial of the Young Mayor's project.	
AP23.20	<b>Key Projects Advocacy:</b> Continued advocacy for State and Federal Government funding of Councils key projects identified in the HSC Advocacy Statement.	Grants and Corporate Reporting	01/06/2023	Council and Officers continue to advocate for financial assistance from State and Federal Governments to help realise our Shire's community's vision Funding opportunities have actively been sought to support our: ongoing emergency management activities; environmental sustainability goals; and to develop our community recreation spaces. Advocacy for funding of key projects will be an ongoing process.	

**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed







Not Started



Cancelled

## Diverse economy and opportunities

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

Action Code	Strategic Action	Business Unit	Due Date	Comments	Status
AP23.21	<b>Hepburn Shire Traineeships Program:</b> Creation of new traineeship opportunities within Council.	Culture and Performance	01/06/2023	Council have three trainees engaged within various departments of the organization. . In collaboration with LGPro, Council is working to expand traineeship opportunities for marginalized groups. The traineeship program has been successful for both Council and the trainees.	
AP23.22	<b>Artisan Agriculture:</b> Finalise the pilot project of the Artisan Agriculture Project to support producers more broadly.	Economic Development and Recreation	01/02/2023	The final elements of the Artisan Agriculture Project are complete.	
AP23.23	<b>Attraction of significant events:</b> Advocacy and attraction of significant events that align with Council's Event Strategy.	Economic Development and Recreation	30/06/2023	Spudfest was successfully held in May 2023 with an estimated 5,000 people in attendance. Other supported events included Pig & Whistle cycling event at Hammon Park which marked the first of many events to be held at this location, attracting about 1000 cyclists. The Anderson Mill Heritage weekend, Bullarto Tractor Pull, and the Daylesford Collectibles all received support through the fourth quarter 2023. Additionally, significant advocacy led to the return of the Borealis event in July 2023.	
AP23.24	<b>Circular Economy Officer:</b> Employment of a Circular Economy officer to	Waste, Facilities and Community Safety	01/09/2022	The new Circular Economy Officer, who started in February 2023, has been actively collaborating with teams	

### STATUS



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed



Not Started



Cancelled

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investigate and drive investment in circular economy initiatives relevant to the Shire.

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.

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**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed






Not Started



Cancelled

## 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.

Action Code	Strategic Action	Business Unit	Due Date	Comments	Status
<b>AP23.25</b>	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.	Strategic Planning	01/06/2023	Council provided a submission to the VNI West Additional Consultation Report acknowledging that the proposed Mount Prospect Terminal Station has been removed from the project but that the community has ongoing concerns. Their concerns relate to the proposed route of VNI West and Western Renewables Link and the impact on shire communities of the project's upgrading to 500 kV along the entire length from Sydenham to Bulgana (and on to NSW).	
<b>AP23.26</b>	Customer Service Strategy Development: Develop and adopt a whole of Council Customer Service Strategy and Charter.	Culture and Performance	01/10/2022	The Customer Service Strategy (Working Together Delivering Better) was approved by Executive Team and provided to Councillor briefing in April 2023. Implementation of strategy and roll out of staff training will be led by new Customer Experience Coordinator in 2023/24.	
<b>AP23.27</b>	Governance Rules Review: Undertake review of Governance and Risk rules to ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 2020.	Governance and Risk	01/10/2022	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 COVID-19 along with some minor administrative amendments. The Rules were adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 16 August 2022.	

### STATUS



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed



Not Started



Cancelled



<b>AP23.28</b>	<b>Community Engagement Staff Training Program:</b> Deliver a Community Engagement training program for staff.	Engagement Specialist	01/06/2023	In September 2022, 30 Council Officers participated in Community Engagement Training, with engagement experts MosaicLab. MosaicLab 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.	
<b>AP23.29</b>	<b>ICT Transformation Project:</b> Implementation of the ICT Strategy.	ICT	01/06/2023	Council’s ICT Strategy and Roadmap has been completed, with the implementation to be rolled out over the next five years.	
<b>AP23.30</b>	<b>Review of Council Services and Programs:</b> Providing options to Councillors for undertaking service reviews of programs, and services offered by Council.	Grants and Corporate Reporting	01/04/2023	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 undertaken in 2023/24.	
<b>AP23.31</b>	<b>Employer Value Proposition:</b> Develop Employer Value Proposition and tools to market HSC more effectively as an employer.	Culture and Performance	01/03/2023	Throughout the year work has been undertaken to ensure that our workplace culture reflects an excellent proposition for potential employees. These actions will continue in 2023 with the aim to finalise remaining elements of the EVP in 2024 that is attractive and reflective of the employee experience. Two PULSE staff surveys were conducted during the year (November and May) with actions workshop with staff and implementation underway.	

**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed






Completed



Not Started



Cancelled

<b>AP23.32</b>	<b>Daylesford Community Facilities and Staff Accommodation:</b> Planning and scoping of Daylesford Community facilities and staff accommodation options.	Waste, Facilities and Community Safety	01/06/2023	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.	
<b>AP23.33</b>	<b>Asset Condition Assessments:</b> Undertake building condition assessment on Council owned facilities.	Operations	01/06/2023	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 of time.	
<b>AP23.34</b>	<b>Gender Equity Action Plan:</b> Implement 2022-23 actions detailed in the Gender Equity Action Plan.	Culture and Performance	01/06/2023	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, GIA training an awareness, gender and diversity included in new induction program, inclusion of a 'quiet room' in Duke St 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.	

**STATUS**



On Track



Progress Delayed



Completed



Not Started



Cancelled

### 13.4 COUNCIL PRIORITIES UPDATE - AUGUST 2023

Go to 01:32:45 in the meeting recording to view this item.

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

*In providing this advice to Council as the Chief Executive Officer, I Bradley Thomas have no interests to disclose in this report.*

#### ATTACHMENTS

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Councillor Priorities July 2023 [13.4.1 - 6 pages]

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

*That Council:*

1. *Notes the significant progress and action to the adopted Councillor priorities; and*
2. *Requests the Chief Executive Officer prepare a further update for the March 2024 Council Meeting.*

#### MOTION

*That Council:*

1. *Notes the significant progress and action to the adopted Councillor priorities; and*
2. *Requests the Chief Executive Officer prepare a further update for the March 2024 Council Meeting.*

**Moved:** Cr Lesley Hewitt

**Seconded:** Cr Tessa Halliday

**Carried**

**Voted for:** Cr Brian Hood, Cr Don Henderson, Cr Jen Bray, Cr Juliet Simpson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tessa Halliday and Cr Tim Drylie

**Voted against:** Nil

**Abstained:** Nil

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Council Meeting on 20 December 2022 Council requested the Chief Executive Officer prepare reports that outlines current progress and an action plan to respond to a number of emerging priority items as identified by Councillors and Executive.

Significant progress has been made against all identified priorities. A summary of progress is included, and a detailed update is provided as a confidential attachment.

## BACKGROUND

At the Council Meeting on 20 December 2022, the following motion was passed by Councillors.

*While noting its obligations and community commitments as articulated in the Council Plan 2021-2025, Council resolves to request the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a report, for tabling no later than the March 2023 Council Meeting, that outlines current progress and an action plan to respond to a number of emerging priority items as identified by Councillors and Executive.*

*The priorities include:*

- *Financial sustainability;*
- *Staff accommodation, community facilities and existing land and building assets;*
- *Governance, compliance and workplace health and safety;*
- *Customer service;*
- *ICT capability;*
- *Statutory and Strategic Planning;*
- *Emergency Management and Storm Recovery including road maintenance;*
- *Sustainable Hepburn Strategy implementation; and*
- *Commonwealth Games.*

At the March 2023 Council Meeting, the following motion was passed:

*That Council:*

- 1. Note the progress and action to the adopted Councillor priorities; and*
- 2. Request the Chief Executive prepare a further update for the August Council Meeting.*

## KEY ISSUES

A whole of actions have been undertaken in response to the identified priorities, these include but are not limited to:

- 2023/2024 budget workshops conducted, and budget adopted.
- Review of Financial Plan (10-year long term plan) and Service Review Project remains on track for workshops with Councillors prior to December 2023.
- Various briefings held with Councillors, Executive and project lead in regard to staff accommodation needs and Birch Ward community facilities – with update expected at the September/October Council meeting.
- A new, full day staff induction program is now in place and occurring each fortnight – inducting new and returning staff.
- Successful in obtaining a \$260,000 state government grant, aimed to digitalise and improve statutory planning functions.
- Various community engagement activities to date in relation to Future Hepburn (Strategic Planning), including Agricultural Land and Settlement

Strategy survey conducted between 13 April and 12 May 2023; Township Structure Plan surveys open from 17 May to 2 July 2023; and Community Conversations held between 29 May and 8 June 2023.

- The Health and Safety Committee is engaged and has a representative from each Designated work Group totaling 20 Health and Safety Representatives, this level of representation is significantly higher than other rural Victorian councils.
- Overall improvements in the results of the Community Satisfaction Survey, especially when compared to statewide trends.
- A Customer Service Strategy adopted, and currently rolling out customer service training to all staff, with Councillors planned in September.
- Created a dedicated Emergency Management team, with increased resources.
- ICT Strategy adopted, and funding included in the 2023/2024 budget to develop and action improvements to cyber security.
- Multiple actions of the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy implemented, and a Governance model established for implementation and review.
- Continue to work with and advocate to State Government about ensuring Council receives a fair share of allocated funding post-the Commonwealth Games cancellation.
- \$5.5 million spent up to June 2023 in relation to the late October 2022 storm events – mainly road repairs. A further \$1.54 million was spent on other natural disaster recovery (Trentham and Creswick) in the 2022/2023 financial year.

## **COUNCIL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Plan 2021-2025**

A dynamic and responsive Council

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

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no specific financial implications from this report – the individual programs and projects incur financial costs. Addressing the priorities will improve the financial capacity and position of Council to provide services.

### **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

There are no direct community or stakeholder engagement implications associated with this report. Individual programs and projects have their own engagement plans.

### **RISK AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

Addressing the priorities will enable Council to adequately remedy existing weaknesses in governance, mitigate risks and improve its financial capacity to provide community services.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

There are no direct sustainability implications associated with this report. However, note that the implementation of the Sustainable Hepburn strategy is a key priority as adopted by Council.

### **GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

There are no gender equity implications associated with this report – any gender implications will be considered as part of the implementation and response to each priority.

**14 CLOSE OF MEETING**

The Meeting closed at 7:05pm