

Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL



2023/2024 Annual Report



Acknowledgement of Country

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

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

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Introduction 01

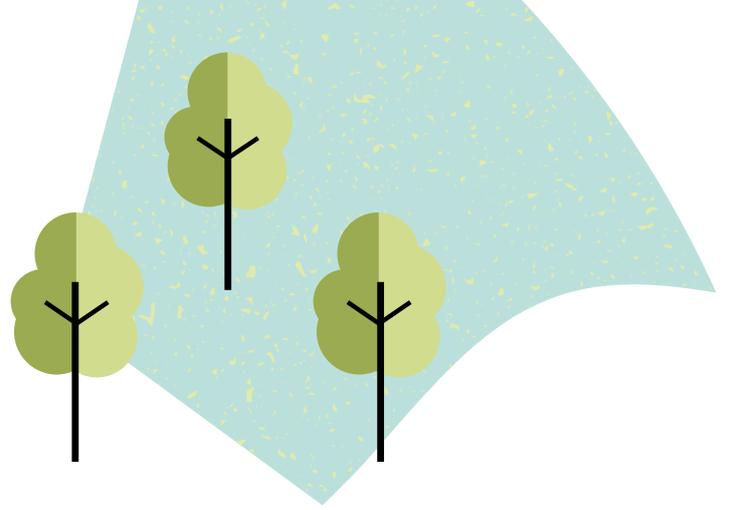


Council Plan

The Council Plan 2021–25 is Council’s key strategic document, which describes the community’s long-term vision for Hepburn Shire. The Council plan is shaped by the voice of the community and incorporates:

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

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



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

Focus area one: A resilient, sustainable and protected environment

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

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

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

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

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

Focus area four: Diverse economy and opportunities

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

Focus area five: A dynamic and responsive Council

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



Community Vision

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



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

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

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

Tackling climate change and its impact on health

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

Increasing healthy eating

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

Improving mental wellbeing

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

Preventing all forms of violence

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

Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer



At Hepburn Shire Council we continue to focus on delivering the commitments within our Council Plan and realising the Community Vision for a sustainable and thriving community.

Our Annual Report highlights key achievements for the year, reviews performance against Council Plan objectives, and details our progress relative to the Local Government Reporting Framework.

Council has continued to work towards the objectives set out in our Council Plan 2021-2025. A total of 47 actions have been fully delivered since the commencement of the Council Plan, including 22 throughout the 2023/2024 financial year. Significant progress has been made on a further 64 projects. Council is committed to completing all carry-over projects/initiatives subject to ongoing budgetary constraints.

We delivered almost \$16.8 million worth of projects as part of our annual capital works program. Over the life of the 2021-2025 Council Plan in excess of \$16 million has been invested into road/footpath/drainage assets, more than \$18 million into property, plant and equipment, and more than \$15 million into recreation/leisure/open space assets.

We cannot achieve our goals alone; the ongoing support of both the State and Federal Governments is vital to successfully deliver our projects. Once again Council played a crucial role in successfully advocating for funding from these levels of government.

In 2023/24, we built on the previous year's achievements through dedicated service delivery and continued partnering with the State and Federal Governments, creating opportunities for our community to grow and prosper.

Some significant achievements for 2023-24 include the completion of The Mechanics Trentham, advancing the considerable body of work in the Future Hepburn project, the completion of 32 kilometres of trails at Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails) well ahead of schedule and the roll-out of the food and garden organics service.

Future Hepburn is a significant, once-in-a-generation project designed to protect and enhance the character of our towns and rural settlements. Through strategic planning controls, it aims to sensitively and respectfully manage future growth and development across the Shire while protecting our valuable agricultural land. Council has devoted substantial resources to developing these critical plans and strategies. The draft Township Structure Plans cover Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon, and Trentham, and are complemented by the Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy.

In addition to these projects and emergency recovery works, our staff continued regular service delivery for the community. This included building and maintaining roads and footpaths, collecting waste and recycling, maintaining and beautifying our numerous parks and open spaces, and providing library services, youth programs, and positive ageing initiatives.

Long term financial sustainability remains an ongoing and imposing challenge for our Shire, as it does for most councils across Victoria. At Hepburn Shire, our financial environment has been severely impacted by rising inflation driving substantially higher costs for the delivery of services and construction of infrastructure; cost shifting from other levels of government; and extraordinary costs associated with recovery from multiple flood and storm events. Successive years of State Government-prescribed rate caps below the rate of inflation have also had a negative impact on our financial sustainability. It is important to note that councils have limited opportunities for alternate, unregulated income streams – particularly in regional and rural areas. The breadth and depth of strategic decisions that must be taken to ensure Hepburn Shire's longer term financial sustainability should not be underestimated. It will be necessary to realign our strategies and priorities in order to provide core services and infrastructure for the community within our means. To that end work to ensure our long-term financial viability continues, in conjunction with the community.

We are proud of what we have achieved over the past 12 months and look forward to continuing this progress in 2024/25 and beyond. We would like to acknowledge the hard work and contributions of our Councillors, community and staff and the ongoing support extended by many external partners.

Please read though the Annual Report for a summary of the services, initiatives and projects delivered over the last 12 months.



Cr Brian Hood
Mayor



Bradley Thomas
Chief Executive Officer

The Year in Review 02



(Left) Adaptive riding on Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails).



(Right) Central Springs Reserve at Lake Daylesford.

Highlights

Future Hepburn

Future Hepburn is a major once-in-a-generation project. It aims to protect and enhance the existing character of our towns and rural settlements through strategic planning controls to help manage future growth and development. The draft Township Structure Plans are for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon, and Trentham, along with the Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy. Council has dedicated significant resources to the development of these important plans and strategy.

The six draft documents have been informed by extensive community input throughout 2023, Council-commissioned specialist technical studies, and Council's specialist officers on planning, ecology, infrastructure, transport, recreation and economic development. The final drafts are being recommended for Council adoption in early 2024/25.

Future Hepburn has been a major undertaking for such a small rural Council. The project was made possible through the commitment of Councillors, community, our technical consultant partners and our incredible staff who have ensured the development of quality strategic planning documents for community consultation and possible endorsement.

The Mechanics Trentham

The Mechanics Trentham was officially opened by Mayor Cr Brian Hood, Mary-Anne Thomas MP and The Hon. Catherine King MP on 21 June 2024. This state-of-the-art facility includes playgroup space, library and study nooks, workspaces, visitor information, a commercial-style kitchen, and a function space for 245 people standing or 180 seated.

The new space incorporates elements of the original building, which dates to the late 1800s, and remains an integral part of the town's history. The respectfully restored former hall serves as the new library, a fitting nod to the function of Mechanics buildings through the formative years of many communities. The completed building achieves energy efficiency and draws its beautiful natural surrounds in through large picture windows. Ample on-site parking is available at the rear of the building along with an electric vehicle charging station. At the official opening, a magnificent piece of Indigenous artwork was unveiled. It is a series of purpose made glass and woven fish traps created by Aunty Marilyn Nicholls. The kitchen was named after long-time local Kit Manning. The meeting rooms are named after local rivers and feature nameplates in both English and Dja Dja Wurrung languages.



Future Hepburn.



The Mechanics Trentham.

The new building has a back-up generator to service the community in case of a power outage. It will ensure the building, which would be capable of being designated as an Emergency Relief Centre, can keep operating. Council prioritised the project and contributed \$2.35 million. This key project has been a major investment for Trentham and surrounds. It was borne out of a 2013 review of local facilities, and extensive consultation between Council and the people of Trentham.

Construction of Djuwang Baring

Djuwang Baring will be a 60-kilometre network of mountain bike trails that start at the Hammon Park Trailhead, a five-minute walk from the centre of Creswick. Djuwang Baring means 'long track' in Dja Dja Wurrung language.

Since receiving external funding in 2018, the project has made steady progress towards completion. Funding for Hammon Park and Djuwang Baring has been provided by the State Government's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund (\$4.66m) and Creswick Community Bank (\$250,000 for Hammon Park) with Council funding the remainder.

After completion of the planning and design stage, a Construction Planning Permit was issued in early 2022. The Hammon Park Trailhead was completed mid-2023 and the entire network of trails are expected to be open by December 2024.



Food and garden organics collection

Council started a weekly kerbside collection of food and garden organics for township residents.

The organics bins are collected from township households in Creswick, Trentham, Daylesford, Hepburn and Hepburn Springs. Food scraps and garden cuttings are taken to the Creswick Transfer Station and composted for local distribution.

With the introduction of weekly organics collection for townships, the red-lidded landfill (general rubbish) bins, and yellow-lidded recycling bins are now collected fortnightly.

Audits of bins in 2023 showed that the lime green-lidded food and garden organics bins will be able to take up to half the contents of the red-lidded landfill bins. This includes food scraps and leftovers, meat, bones, dairy products, garden clippings, leaves and non-noxious weeds. A further 12 percent of the contents of red-lidded bins can be recycled in the yellow-lidded recycling bins. By separating items carefully, it may be possible to reduce landfill waste by around 60 percent.

We continue to work with the community to educate and share information about the food and garden organics service and ways to reduce household rubbish.



Xanthia Chatham from Creswick was the first to officially ride on Djuwang Baring.

Working with our community

Advisory committees

We have several advisory committees that enable community members to have input into our projects and activities. They are our Disability Advisory Committee, Mineral Springs Reserves Advisory Committee, LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee, Reconciliation Advisory Committee, Sustainable Hepburn Advisory Committee, Gender Equity Advisory Committee, Heather Mutimer International Women’s Day Advisory Committee, The Mechanics Trentham Project Control Group and the Daylesford Community Facilities Project Advisory Group.

All advisory committees operate in accordance with the Governance Rules and each has a Terms of Reference, which sets out the role of the committees and how they operate, explains how members are selected, and any specific provisions that apply.

Advisory committees provide valuable local insight for Council decision making.

Volunteers

Council greatly values the significant contribution made by community members who volunteer their time. Everyone has something unique to offer.

Volunteers play an important role in supporting Council’s delivery of services to the community. They work in a variety of areas, some of which include Visitor Information Centres, Advisory Committees, Special Committees, Activity Groups, and Friends of Groups. Our volunteers help make the Hepburn Shire a great place to live, work and visit.

Community engagement

Community engagement is about empowering and hearing the community’s voice and expertise, allowing them to actively contribute to Council decisions. Council values and appreciates community input.

The ability for people to be involved and heard on important issues that affect them fosters greater ownership and transparency in decision-making. It creates greater community trust and confidence in the activities of Council.



Volunteers Jenny McKenzie and Kathy Burgum.

The Year in Review

July 2023

- Released results of Community Satisfaction Survey, which show our improvements.
- Council responded to Commonwealth Games cancellation. We were disappointed at the shock decision but pleased with the introduction of the regional support package to help balance the effects of the cancellation.
- Hosted event to recognise the renaming of Jim Crow Creek to Larni Barramal Yaluk.
- Council invested \$500,000 in a road patching contract, while also investigating a regional approach to bituminous resealing. There is \$2.73 million in the next budget for reconstruction and \$3 million for other repair work.
- Adopted the Annual Plan 2023/24.
- Announced that Borealis is returning to Lake Daylesford.
- Celebrated International Women's Day.
- An invitation was sent to residents to join the community panels to advise on the Township Structure Plans.



Council invested \$500,000 in a road patching contract.



Borealis returned to Lake Daylesford in 2023.



Township Structure Plans – Community advised on Township Structure Plans.



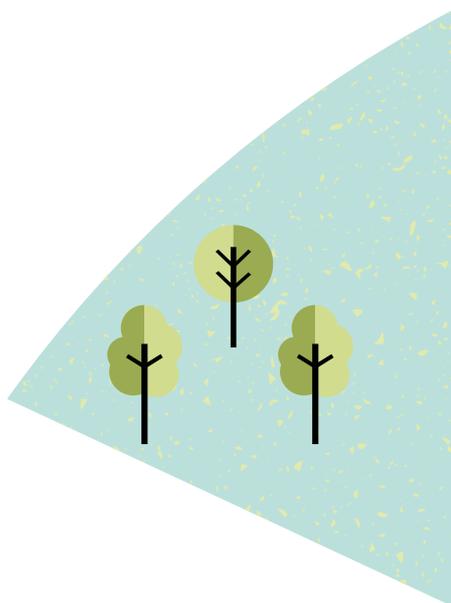
International Women's Day 2023.

August 2023

- Council welcomed disability advisory committee members and renewed the two-year term of seven serving members, (Andrew Brown, John Condon, Graham Downey, Kaylene Howell, Darren Manning, David Moten and Peter Waters). Council also appointed a new member, Jo Pegg. Council acknowledged the three departing members (Lainey Curr, Steve Kelly and Fiona Porter) for their contributions and involvement in the Committee.
- Formally stated unanimous support for the constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the Voice to Parliament.
- Summary of progress on the 2022/2023 Annual Plan deliverables were tabled at the Council meeting. It was pleasing to reflect on some of the achievements of the last year, especially considering the challenges faced in terms of ongoing recovery from multiple storm and flood events, the rising costs of construction, challenges with supply chains and increasing financial pressures.
- Citizenship Ceremony hosted with 9 new citizens.



Voice to parliament – unanimous support for the constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the Voice to Parliament.



Ongoing recovery from multiple storm and flood events.

September 2023

- Draft masterplans for Queens Park and Pioneer Park in Clunes were released for public feedback. The masterplans aim to improve accessibility and safety; but also to increase participation, visitation and connections for the community. The draft masterplan includes 18 potential actions at Pioneer Park and 17 at Queens Park.
- In collaboration with Agriculture Victoria, we held the inaugural Agriculture Forum to assist Hepburn Shire farmers engage in vital discussions surrounding biosecurity, planning, and emergency management.
- Free school holiday programs including do-it-yourself book bags and skate workshops, song writing, and an all-ages gig. A trip was also planned for 12–18-year-olds to visit the PopCon Convention in Ballarat.
- Implemented an early years survey to understand how parents and caregivers accessed early years services in our Shire in preparation for the implementation of the State Government 'Best Start, Best Life' reforms. This survey also helped Council to understand any unmet or future needs for Early Years services in our Shire.
- Announced introduction to begin food and garden organics collections in early 2024.
- Community award nominations opened for Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year, and Event of the Year.
- Transport survey released. The Transport Discussion Paper outlines the current transport needs and challenges facing our Shire, along with suggestions on how these may be addressed. Issues include public safety, footpaths and trails of varying condition, limited public transport network, signage, parking and more.

- Adoption of Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan. Council to establish a Housing Working Group to guide implementation. Options to investigate will be efforts to encourage property owners to provide long-term affordable rental accommodation rather than short-term holiday leasing, consideration of co-operatives to build and manage housing, and exploration of affordable retirement living options or public private partnerships.
- Supported residents on their low-waste journey through a free Cloth Nappy Workshop, which included a cloth nappy starter pack for all attendees.
- Council received and adopted its annual financial statements and performance statement for 2022/23 at its ordinary meeting. The financial statements set out the financial performance, financial position and cash flows for the financial year ending 30 June 2023, while the performance statement included the results of the prescribed indicators and measures developed by the Victorian Government under its performance reporting framework.
- Central Highlands Water (CHW) and Council joined forces to launch a new Choose Tap drinking fountain at the Hammon Park Trailhead in Creswick. New drinking fountains provide easy access to quality drinking water.



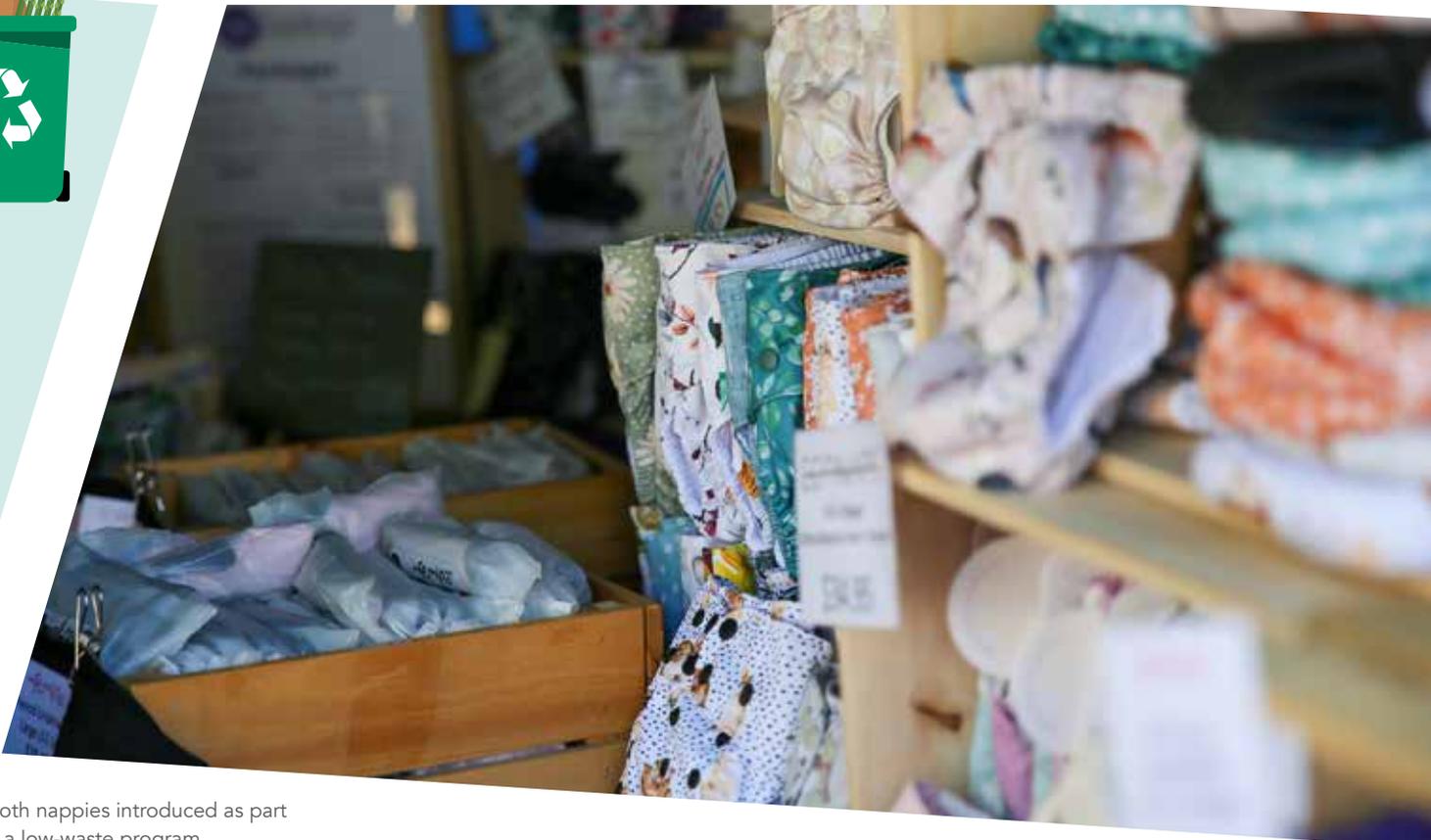
Transport Survey – Transport discussion paper covers public safety, including footpaths.



Food and Garden Organics are now separated to reduce landfill.



Affordable Housing.



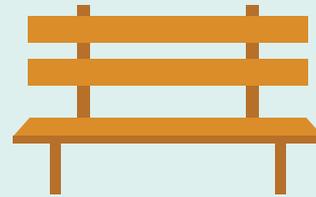
Cloth nappies introduced as part of a low-waste program.



Council issued biodiversity and Landcare grants to 19 community groups.

October 2023

- Review of Council-owned property policy. Council owns more than 80 properties and manages a further 50 reserves as Committee of Management. The two new policies will help to develop a practical and effective framework to guide decisions that are transparent, fair, and benefit the community.
- Council reaffirmed commitment to implement policies, strategies and programs founded in fairness, inclusion, respect, diversity, equity and prevention of violence.
- Announcement of Council's 2022/23 Biodiversity and Landcare grants in the amount of \$38,900 to 19 community groups.
- Creswick Ward Councillor Don Henderson received a 15-year service award for his outstanding contribution to Hepburn Shire at the Municipal Association of Victoria Annual Conference Gala Dinner on Thursday 12 October. Cr Don Henderson is the longest serving councillor since Hepburn Shire was formed in 1995.
- Businesses in Hepburn Shire were encouraged to join a business networking evening, hosted by Council, with the aim of bringing together local business owners and operators from across the shire to celebrate the achievements of the year and to build future connections.
- Citizenship Ceremony hosted with 3 new citizens.



Wombat Gardens.

November 2023

- Worked closely with Central Highlands Rural Health to offer mental health support to the many people impacted by the tragic accident outside the Royal Daylesford Hotel on 5 November.
- Council elected Cr Brian Hood as Mayor and Cr Juliet Simpson as Deputy Mayor.
- 1920s Bullarto Station building restoration completed.



A vigil and extensive counselling were offered to the community.



Bullarto Station seat.

December 2023

- Works commenced at Central Springs Reserve in Daylesford, which included drilling a new mineral spring bore to a depth of around 50 metres. This will provide more reliable and safe mineral drinking water.
- Launch of new event toolkit to help local event organisers to plan and carry out events.
- Funding was received for visitor service improvements, with Daylesford Macedon Tourism and Macedon Ranges Shire.
- Council adopted the Leases and Licences Policy and Disposal and Acquisition of Land Policy.
- Council joined more than 230 organisations in signing the Statement of Solidarity with the Trans Community.



Trans day of visibility – Council commits to solidarity with the Trans community.

January 2024

- Supported a range of Australia Day events organised by community groups throughout the Shire.
- Hosted workshop at Creswick to help farmers work on strategies to deal with extreme weather events.
- Citizenship Ceremony and Community Awards hosted with 2 new citizens and the following award winners
 - Joint Citizen of the Year, Neville Cartledge OAM
 - Joint Citizen of the Year Pat Tacey
 - Young Citizen of the Year Alice Newitt. The band Elysium, which formed in 2021, received a Special Commendation in the Young Citizen category
 - Event of the Year award, ChillOut Festival.

February 2024

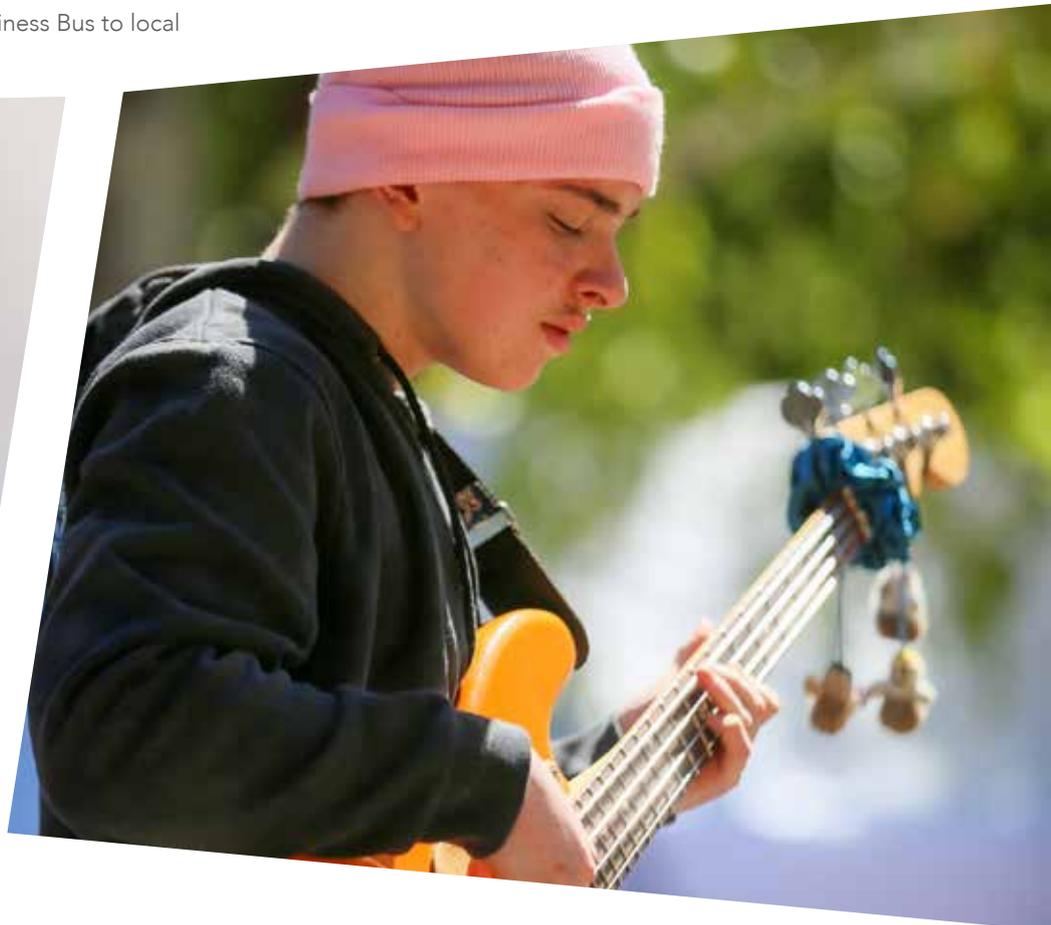
- Encouraged the community to provide a submission on the electoral structure review of Hepburn Shire, which was led by an independent electoral advisory panel.
- Hosted Sunset in the Springs family-friendly community concerts over two evenings.
- Promoted a visit from the Small Business Bus to local business operators.



Sustainable Hepburn day out.

March 2024

- Launched the Circular Hepburn Toolkit for Business and Beyond, a guide to help local businesses to reduce costs, reduce their impact on the environment and boost the circular economy.
- Opened Expressions of interest for the Daylesford Community Facilities Project Advisory Group.
- Five women added to the International Women's Day (IWD) Heather Mutimer Honour Roll: Anne Bremner, Nikki Marshall, Marj Green, Michelle Clifford and Yvonne Sillett.
- Hosted school holiday program activities.
- Council wins WorkSafe Award for significant progress in building positive health and safety culture.
- Released draft of our first Arts and Culture Strategy.
- Our second Sustainable Hepburn Day Out took place at Victoria Park in Daylesford, with a huge variety of stallholders and activities.
- ChillOut was held in Daylesford and surrounds. Council participated in the annual parade adopting a food and garden organics theme.



Local band Hobyas performing in our Shire.

April 2024

- Draft Township Structure Plans and Rural Hepburn released.
- Glenlyon Recreation Reserve Masterplan adopted.
- Round 3 of the Community Grants were distributed, with \$44,000 being allocated to community groups.
- Act@Play, promoting gender equality and cultural change, unveiled.
- Weekly Food and Organics collection program commenced for township households.
- Masterplans endorsed for future planning and development of Queens Park and Pioneer Park in Clunes.
- Opened Young Mayor’s program.
- Refurbished Bowling Green at Creswick officially opened. The next stage of the project is to tackle significant improvements to the drainage and irrigation of the main oval to increase use and enjoyment of the oval and reduce flood occurrence.

- Held Creswick Flood Information sessions.
- Four 30-metre high light tower poles and AFL competition standard lights turned on at Newlyn Recreation Reserve.
- Detox your home session held at Daylesford Transfer Station.
- Discount voucher scheme launched for reuseable nappies, training pants or period pants.
- Installed temporary crossing at Fraser Street Clunes for vehicle and foot traffic management.



Council distributed \$44,000 to various community groups in Round 3.



Township households began using the lime green-lidded bins for organics.



Clunes Crossing.



Cambridge St – Creswick streetscape.



AFL competition standard lights on at Newlyn.

May 2024

- Draft Budget was opened for feedback.
- Creswick Trails officially announced as Djuwang Baring.
- Daylesford Community Facilities Project Advisory Group (PAG) established.
- Sustainable Hepburn Strategy (2022-2026) progress report tabled at the May Council meeting, which also endorsed the next annual Solar Savers program.
- Councillors met with representatives from community groups that secured more than \$25,000 funding through the second round of Community Grants for 2024.
- Advertised lease for Hepburn Pavilion and Kiosk.
- Two-month organics drop-off initiative launched, where ratepayers and residents can drop off 120 litres of food scraps to our transfer stations.
- Clunes crossing project launched at the corner of Fraser and Service Streets. Temporary trial pin-down islands trialled as refuge points for pedestrians. Community feedback opened in July.
- Renew 21-year lease on Clunes Caravan Park.
- Trentham Tennis Courts resurfaced with tree roots removed, root barriers installed, drainage works and other improvements installed.
- Reconciliation Week flag raising.

- Little Wombats, a First Nations program, performed at Trentham and Creswick Libraries.
- Hosted IDAHOBIT Day flag raising and speak-up session at Daylesford. Guest speakers included Ange Barry (former CEO of Joy Media), Ro Allen (Human Rights Commissioner), Danni Karametos (Joy Media), Max Primmer (Senior Award Winner) and Grace Lee (Counsellor).
- Stitch and Yarn at Creswick Hub launched.
- Solar Savers program continued, with six eligible residents being allocated solar installations.
- Weed removal carried out at Lake Daylesford.
- Drop-in session held for Cambridge Street streetscape works in Creswick.



Flag raising ceremony - CEO Bradley Thomas, Mayor Cr Brian Hood, Councillors and members of the Creswick Primary School raise the Aboriginal flag at Creswick.



Clunes Caravan Park leased for another 21 years.



Creswick Trails officially announced as Djuwang Baring.



Flag raising for IDAHOBIT day at Daylesford.

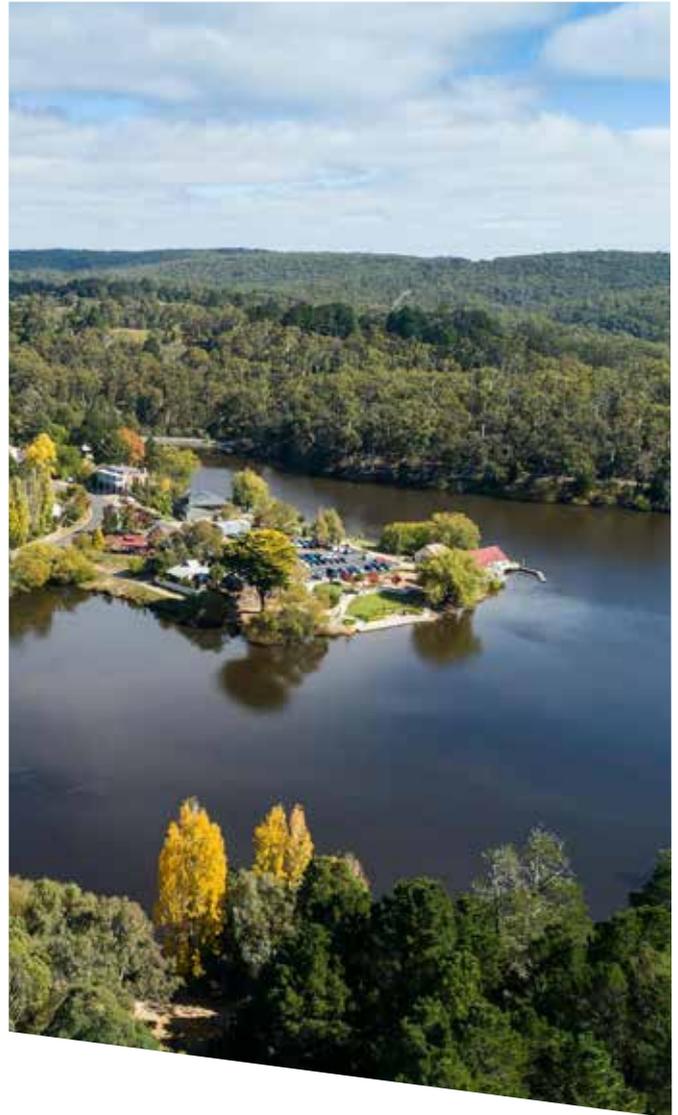


Trentham Tennis Courts.



June 2024

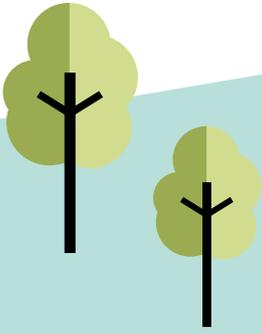
- The Mechanics Trentham officially opened 21 June by Mayor Cr Brian Hood, Mary-Anne Thomas MP, and The Hon Catherine King MP.
- Daylesford named finalist in 2024 Top Tourism Town Awards.
- The Budget was adopted at a Special Meeting of Council. This is the fourth and final year Budget under our current Council Plan. It funds important services such as roads, parks, waste and recycling, and more. The budget has a strong focus on the completion of current works, projects and infrastructure, and services and programs.
- Draft Township Structure Plans and Rural Hepburn engagement concluded. We received feedback from hundreds of community members. We created a comprehensive project page on Participate Hepburn, held community panels, community information sessions, webinars, hosted a survey and received hundreds of emails. The page received 7500 unique visitors, and we received more than 500 submissions. In-person community drop-in sessions were held at Creswick, Clunes, Glenlyon, Daylesford and Trentham.
- Community Satisfaction Survey showed a steady or improving satisfaction.
- Author talk with Leonie Kelsall at Daylesford and Creswick libraries.
- Adopted first Arts and Culture Strategy with the aim of providing a strategic framework for local artists, visitors and each other to grow the vibrancy of Hepburn Shire.



Lake Daylesford.



Little Wombats perform for school children in the libraries.

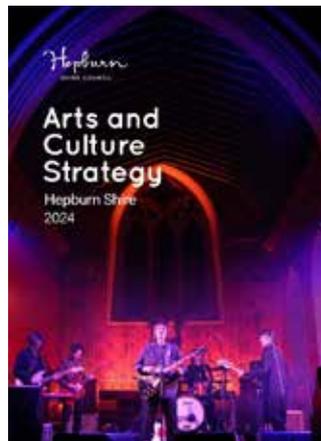


Central Springs Reserve Stage 1 complete.

- Winter School Holidays program with cooking, sand art, skate competitions and DJ workshops.
- Council's footpath network increased by approximately 2.7 linear kilometres in 2023/24.
- Creswick Creek clean-up completed with a reduction of obstructions and invasive plants. Works carried out along the 1.2 kilometre Wallaby Track section.
- Completion of Central Springs Reserve Stage 1 Masterplan. A new mineral spring bore and new mineral spring pump area featuring four stunning brass artworks by indigenous artist, Timani Nicholls, inlaid into the concrete splash pad; A BBQ and picnic shelter area with mobility scooter charge point; Rejuvenation of the historic hydropower pump infrastructure and Hard Hills spring pit; Creek works to stabilise existing stone walls, creek banks, eradicate weeds and introduce plantings to assist with erosion control; New connecting path network, all at accessible grade.
- Council successfully obtained a \$100,000 State Government Council support grant to assist with the activation of Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails), including signage, photos/video development, visitor collateral, marketing and a public event.



Township Structure Plans - Community panels advised on Township Structure Plans.



Arts and Culture.

Awards and Recognition

Council wins Worksafe award

Hepburn Shire Council was recognised for significant progress in building a positive health and safety culture. We won the OHS Leadership/Achievement award at the 2024 Victorian WorkSafe Awards.

Council was one of eight winners across a number of categories representing the healthcare, emergency services, agriculture, transport and local government sectors that were honoured for their commitment to preventing workplace harm, or improving outcomes for injured workers.

The award is recognition of the commitment to safety shown by the staff and the organisation over the last 12 months. Council has worked hard to increase the number of health and safety representatives to 20 across different departments. It has also developed health and safety policies and practices that address workplace hazards. Training has been a key to improving the safety culture and our staff have been amazing in driving the improvements.

Cr Don Henderson receives 15 year service award

Creswick Ward Councillor, Cr Don Henderson, received a 15-year service award for his outstanding contribution to Hepburn Shire at the Municipal Association of Victoria Annual Conference Gala Dinner on 12 October 2023.

Cr Don Henderson is the longest serving councillor since Hepburn Shire was formed in 1995. Being re-elected to a fourth term as the Creswick Ward Councillor is a testament to Cr Henderson's popularity and commitment to the community.



Cr Don Henderson, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Mayor Cr Brian Hood, Acting HSC CEO Bruce Lucas.



CEO Bradley Thomas, Catherine Nurse, John Keehner and David Stewart with HSC's OHS Leadership Achievement award.



The Mechanics Trentham. One of a series of purpose-made fish traps created by Indigenous artist Aunty Marilyn Nicholls.

Our Shire 03



Yearly statistics within our shire



16,670

Estimated resident population (no.) 2023



52.5

Median age 2022



208

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (no.) 2021



2.2

Average Household Size (no. of persons) 2021



3,093

Youth population 0-19 years 2022



1,050

Persons who have need for assistance with core activities (no.) 2021



\$43,129

Median income (excl. Government pensions and allowances) (\$) 2020



1,782

Worked from home (no.) 2021



1,738

Total number of businesses 2023



\$295

Median weekly household rental payment (\$) 2021



\$1,421

Median monthly household mortgage payment (\$) 2021



6,846

Total Households (no.) 2021



147,298.4

Land area (ha) 2021



3,578

Total protected land area (ha) 2022



51.40%

Completed year 12 or equivalent (%) 2021



2.8

Average Household Size Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (no. of persons) 2021

Councillors

Birch Ward



Cr Lesley Hewitt

Deputy Mayor to November 2023

Mobile: 0408 793 941

Email: lhewitt@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Hewitt represents Council on the Municipal Association of Victoria, Disability Advisory Committee and Gender Equity Advisory Committee.



Cr Jen Bray

Mobile: 0428 150 652

Email: jbray@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Bray represents Council on the Z-NET Community Roundtable, Heather Mutimer International Women's Day Honour Roll Advisory Committee and Mineral Springs Reserves Advisory Committee.

Coliban Ward



Cr Brian Hood

Mayor from November 2022

Mobile: 0427 797 151

Email: bhood@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Hood represents Council on the Audit and Risk Committee, Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee, Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils, Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils, and Sustainable Hepburn Community Advisory Committee.

Cameron Ward



Cr Tessa Halliday

Mobile: 0427 596 101

Email: thalliday@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Halliday represents Council on the LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee, and Heather Mutimer International Women's Day Honour Roll Advisory Committee.

Councillors

Creswick Ward



Cr Tim Drylie

Mobile: 0427 503 258

Email: tdrylie@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Drylie represents Council on the Municipal Association of Victoria, and Sustainable Hepburn Community Advisory Committee.



Cr Don Henderson

Mobile: 0427 559 684

Email: dhenderson@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Henderson represents Council on the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee, and World Heritage Listing of the Victorian Goldfields Region Steering Committee.

Holcombe Ward



Cr Juliet Simpson

Phone: 5321 6423

Mobile: 0427 855 603

Email: jsimpson@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Simpson represents Council on the Audit and Risk Committee.

She resigned her position on 22 July 2024.

Our People 04



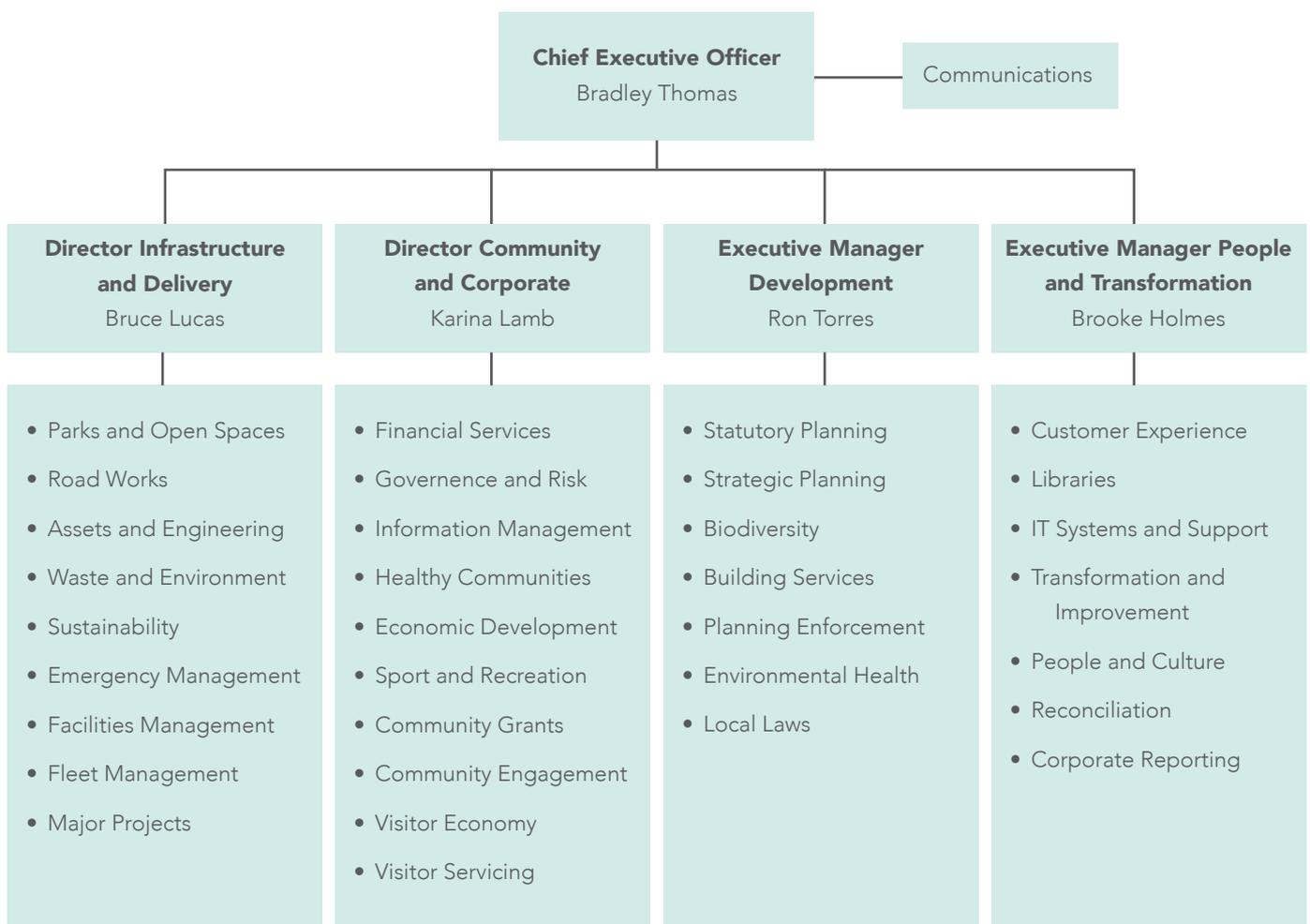
Organisational Structure

Hepburn Shire Council transitioned to a new structure in July 2023, which saw the introduction of four directorates reporting to the Chief Executive Officer. The four directorates are: Infrastructure and Delivery, Community and Corporate, Development, and People and Transformation.

Following the successful implementation of this structure, a further review was conducted, which focused on opportunities to further align functional capabilities to achieve greater efficiency, cross skill like roles and streamline priorities.

As a result of this review, a further structure realignment was proposed to ensure Council is best structured to meet the priorities of the 2024-2025 budget and ensure the organisation is positioned for long term financial sustainability. While no significant implications for individuals was proposed, organisational-wide employee consultations were held in June 2024 regarding department realignments and reporting line changes. The implementation of this structure realignment is expected to occur in August 2024.

Organisational structure



The average full time equivalent (FTE) across 2023/24 was 165.91. This fluctuates over time with seasonal workers along with changes to department structures, new roles, casual conversions, amendments to roles and vacancy rates.

New and amended positions

- Executive Manager People and Transformation
- Procurement Officer
- Systems Improvement Officer
- Creative Communities Officer
- Community Strengthening Grants
- Team Leader Community Safety
- Coordinator Environmental Health
- Project Officer
- Early and Middle Years Officer

Council employees

The following tables summarises the number of FTE Council employs by organisation structure, employment type and gender. This is accurate as at 30 June 2024.

FTE by Employee classification male and female

Banding	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Band 1	1.04	4	0.3	3
Band 2	2.47	5	7.80	13
Band 3	1.00	1	19.05	20
Band 4	15.81	32	9.57	13
Band 5	20.26	23	9.78	10
Band 6	17.15	21	12.72	14
Band 7	10.86	11	7	7
Band 8	5.27	7	3	3
SEO+	7.81	8	7	7

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

Office of the CEO as at June 2024

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Permanent Full Time (Perm FT)	1	1	0	0
Permanent Part Time (Perm PT)	.89	1	0	0
Fixed Term	0.8	1	1	1
Temp/casual	0	0	0	0

People and Transformation Directorate as at 30 June 2024

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Perm FT	9	9	4	4
Perm PT	8.90	16	1.63	2
Fixed Term	0	0	1	1
Temp/casual	0.2	4	0.1	2

Infrastructure and Delivery Directorate as at 30 June 2024

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Perm FT	13	13	50	50
Perm PT	4.17	6	3.47	5
Fixed Term	2.8	3	2.42	3
Temp/casual	.15	3	0.25	4

Community and Corporate Directorate as at 30 June 2024

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Perm FT	14	14	3	3
Perm PT	11.23	17	1.85	3
Fixed Term	1	1	2.4	3
Temp/casual	0.25	5	0	0

Development Directorate as at 30 June 2024

Tenure	Female FTE	No.	Male FTE	No.
Perm FT	10	10	4	4
Perm PT	4.23	7	1.04	2
Fixed Term	0	0	0	0
Temp/casual	0.05	1	0.1	2

Turnover

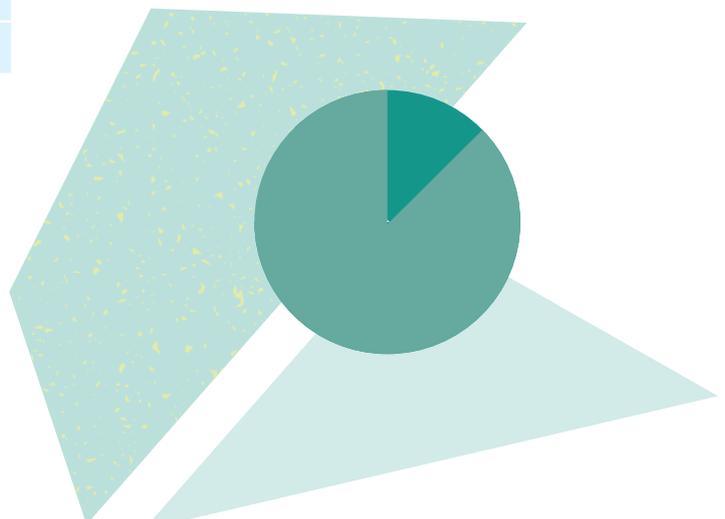
(Does not include seasonal workers or short-term casual).

Planned turnover	4.35%
Unplanned turnover	19.02%
Total turnover	23.4%

Planned turnover - employees who are ending a period of employment with the organisation, which predominately relates to fixed-term positions including funded roles, parental leave replacements or project-based roles.

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

Unplanned turnover has reduced marginally from 23.39% to 23.37% and is consistent with the industry average for a small shire Council.



Recruitment and retention

Council's People and Culture team carried out 97 recruitment activities during the year, attracting a total of 1,527 candidates. Of these:

- 10 positions related to new positions
- The remaining 87 recruitment activities related to vacant roles, restructured roles or readvertised roles (8) over the 12-month period and includes seasonal roles such as Aquatics.

Overall, Council has experienced positive trends and outcomes in staff attraction. The exception to this experience is for vacancies in Planning, Procurement, Environmental Health and some field-based roles, which is common across the local government sector. Where recruitment challenges have continued, these vacancies are managed by external consultants and temporary staff to enable review of positions and re-advertisement when the market is favourable.

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

Council is a regional employer and recognises the importance of supporting young people's careers. We continue to work with schools and universities in the region to provide opportunities for students to be involved in the work environment and gain valuable work experience. This year Council hosted three trainees across various functions which provided trainees with an insight into the important role of local government in the development and support of local communities.

Council has continued to offer a 50% work from home flexible work arrangement for suitable roles and a compressed nine-day fortnight option to increase flexibility, work life balance and wellbeing. This approach has been successful with a majority of the staff opting to utilise the additional flexibility as suited to their role or their personal situation. This has also had the added benefit of enhancing our employment offering and broadening our talent pool with an increase in candidates opting for flexibility and work life balance over higher remuneration.

Industrial Relations/Employee Relations

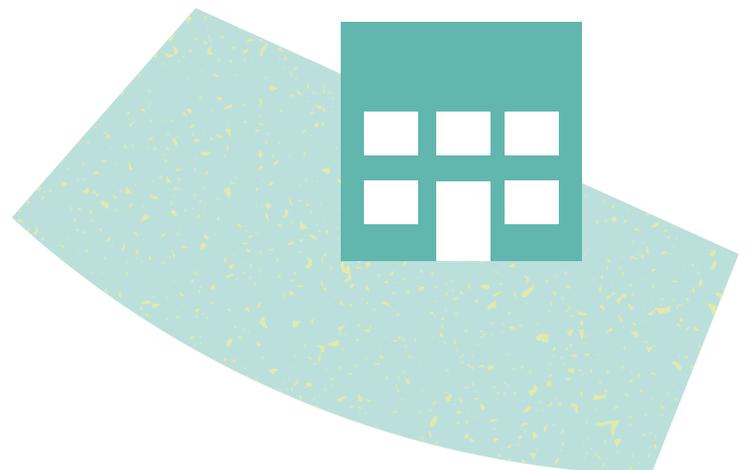
There were no industrial issues that required Council to present to the Fair Work Commission for conciliation. People and Culture continue to work positively with unions on matters as they arise and have developed strong professional working relationships.

People and culture workforce outcomes

Workforce Plan

In November 2021, Council adopted a Workforce Strategy in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020. The Workforce Plan outlines our approach to recruitment, training and planning for our workforce needs over the coming years. The Workforce plan addresses key risks for the organisation in attracting and retaining staff. This year several key activities have occurred to advance our Workforce Plan including:

- Review of Child Safe requirements with Action Plan, Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct update ready for endorsement.
- Refresh of Staff Consultative Committee with representation increasing from six representatives to 14 representatives.
- Update of Employee Pulse Survey with June survey reaching participation of 68%.
- Superannuation seminars.
- Diversity and significant day celebrations, including International Women's Day, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, IDAHOBIT day, Wear it Purple Day, Trans Day of Visibility, R U OK Day and 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.



Learning and employee development

During 2023/2024 financial year, Council invested significantly in evolving our existing learning and development programs.

Council has continued to evolve our face-to-face induction program to enhance the onboarding of new employees. This program provides new staff with a high-level overview of the organisation and key service areas, and covers key council policies, procedures, business processes and an introduction to corporate systems. This induction program is in addition to Council's online learning hub, which provides employees with an orientation to compliance and legislation obligations to support their commencement at Hepburn Shire.

This e-learning hub has undertaken a significant review with a new learning management system identified for implementation. The new learning management platform provided by ELMO will provide staff with an interactive learning experience, enabling employees to advance skills, personal knowledge and compliance knowledge. The platform includes over 400 learning modules and the opportunity to custom build learning content, which will enable Council to remain adaptable to employee learning needs, and to compliment face-face and virtual training provided from external providers. The integration of our new learning management system is due to be completed in September 2024.

In conjunction with internal programs, all staff are supported to undertake training specific to their role or industry. Compliance training continues to be at the forefront, with a refresh of compliance training implemented in July 2023 across Child Safety Standards, Privacy Training and Customer Experience.

Council continues to offer employee formal study assistance for individuals undertaking relevant undergraduate or postgraduate studies and provides ongoing work-related training programs. This year we had staff complete the LG Pro Executive Leadership Program and the Emerging Leaders program) and two of our emerging female leaders participated in a comprehensive Women in Leadership program focused on women in the Public Sector. Conferences, webinars and a variety of training sessions have also been attended by many of our staff as offered by a variety of industry organisations.

The annual Employee Performance Development Program, which is conducted twice per year across the organisation, has continued with success. This program concentrates on achievements, challenges, opportunities and behaviours and identifies development needs across departments and roles.

This program is an important input into the development of the annual learning and development program.

Diversity and Inclusion

Council is committed to equal opportunity and diversity and providing a workplace for employees that is free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

This year Council has continued to work closely with Women's Health Grampians and the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance. Gender Impact Assessment training has been conducted within the organisation to develop and embed a commitment to gender equity in program development and outcomes. Council has also encouraged and made available a range of modules for diversity, inclusion and intersectionality via the CoRE Alliance.

In November, Council hosted Dr Nikki Vincent, the Commissioner for Gender Equality, who spoke to staff on how we can further gender equality through our leadership in the community and the support of the Commission.

This year Council was required to report on our gender equality progress to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner, which occurs every two years. This progress report tracks the policies, programs and services that were subject to gender impact assessment, Council's progress in relation to strategies set out in the Gender Equality Action Plan and our progress in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators.

Council has made significant progress in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan as highlighted by the Progress Report. Key highlights included a notable increase in women working full-time from 30% to 45% and the number of women managers increasing from 43% to 50%. There was also a significant increase in women labourers from 27% to 48%. Council have also achieved a gender gap of positive 10, which means that for every \$100 paid to a man, \$110 was paid to a woman.

Reconciliation

This year saw Council complete the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which aimed to build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and more specifically with the Traditional Owners of the land on which Hepburn Shire is located, the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples.

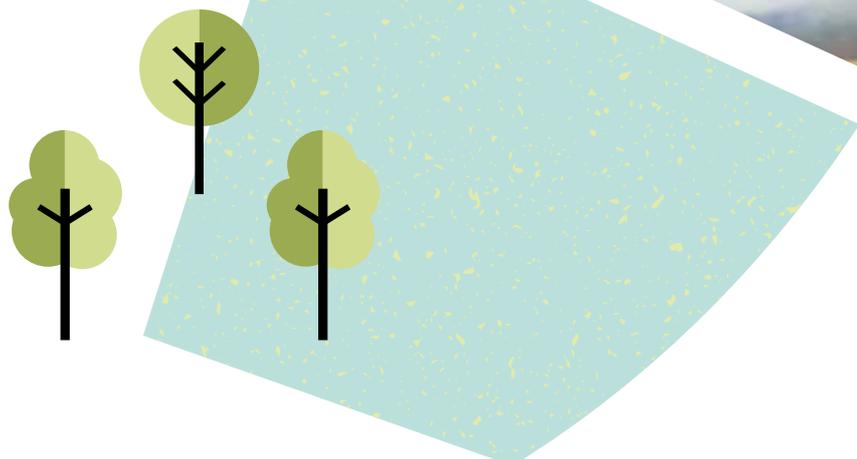
The success of the Reflect RAP has significantly raised the awareness and importance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues within our Council's sphere of influence and control. During this time Council has proudly delivered a number of meaningful reconciliation activities and projects within the Shire including:

- Commitment to Reconciliation including the adoption of the Uluru Statement of the Heart and the Voice to Parliament
- Cultural Value Assessment
- Diversity Plan
- Promotion of Reconciliation in our libraries and museums
- The renaming of Jim Crow Creek to Larni Barramal Yaluk and the co-naming of Lalgambuk
- The Manna Gums Frontier War Memorial
- The Coranderrk Portraits
- The naming of Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails)

Council continues to embed Cultural Diversity training with three sessions being delivered this year and over 50 participants undertaking the program. Cultural Diversity training is scheduled every six months and is strongly attended due to Council's ongoing commitment to our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Council is now at the second stage of implementing the Reconciliation Framework named the Innovate RAP, which aims to further embed and advance Councils' vision for reconciliation. This year we have worked with an internal working group, our external advisory committee; Djarra (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and Reconciliation Australia to develop the next iteration of our RAP which is aimed at further embedding and advancing Council's vision for reconciliation.

The Innovate RAP is planned to commence implementation later in 2024 following Council endorsement, and seeks to further develop relationships with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples through innovative approaches that align with the goals outlined in the Dja Dja Wurrung 'Dhelkunya Dja' Country Plan and the Recognition Settlement Agreement (RSA). This Innovate RAP will build on the learnings established through our Reflect RAP to deepen our understanding of histories, connections and stories to work together with the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples to heal country.



Work health safety and staff wellbeing

Council is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for all employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors and councillors, and recognises that safety is an integral part of our organisation.

This year Council delivered a program of work focused on improving the workplace health and safety culture through the training of several health and safety representatives, taking our number of representatives to 20 across various Council departments. Pleasingly, Council were recognised for this work by winning the 'OHS Leadership/Achievement' Award at the 2023 Victorian Worksafe Awards. Council was one of eight winners across a number of categories and industries, honored for their commitment to preventing workplace harm and improving outcomes for injured workers.

This year Council has also worked hard towards achieving status as a 'Heart Safe' Community. This is a joint initiative between Ambulance Victoria and the Heart Foundation which aims to improve survival rates for people who suffer a cardiac arrest. Council has been installing defibrillators in locations across the Shire that are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. To date Council has installed and registered ten defibrillators across the Shire. AED notification street signs have been installed at each location to ensure the public can easily locate them in the event of an emergency.

Council has also continued to focus on strengthening its safety management systems and practical safety applications within our workplaces. Our Work Health and Safety Committee continues to meet regularly to identify and discuss safety matters, compliance and training and awareness opportunities. This has seen the organisation contribute to key initiatives including over a third of staff opting to have a flu or Covid vaccination through Council delivery and initiatives aimed at improving wellbeing through days such as RU Ok Day and National Safe Work Month.



Performance 05



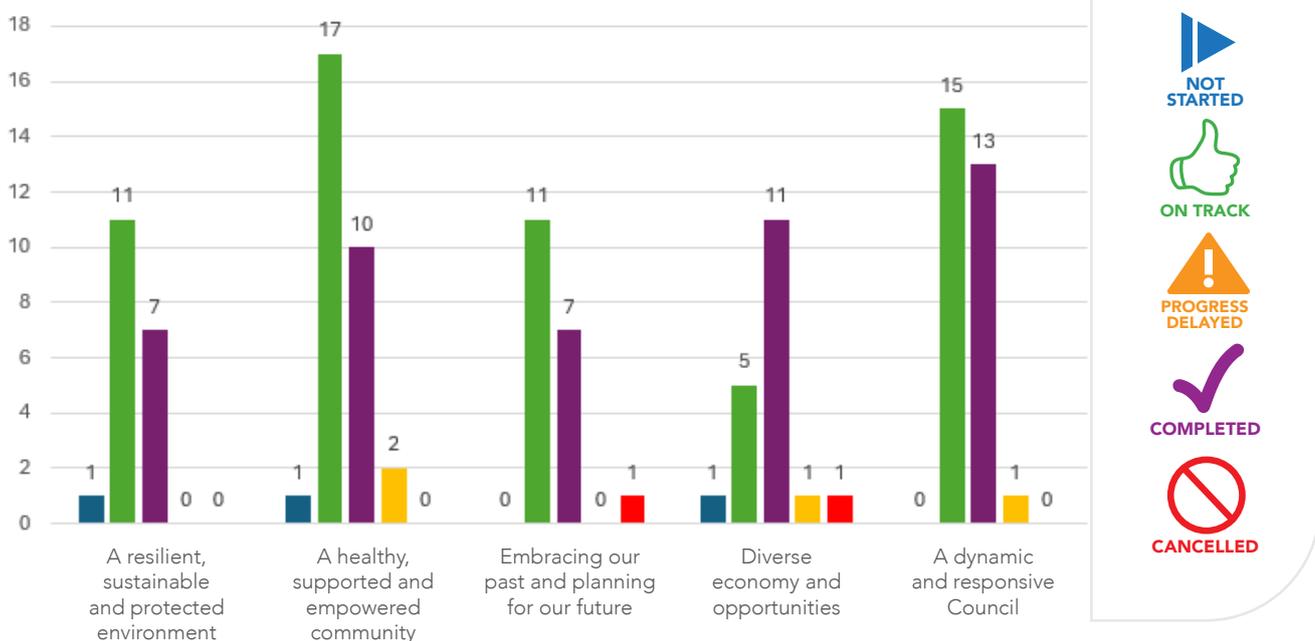
Council Plan Progress

The Council Plan 2021-2025, including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP), is complemented by the Annual Plan 2023/24.

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

Extensive progress has been made in delivering the actions in year three of the Council Plan 2021-2025. Of the 116 actions, a total of 47 have now been completed, 60 are on track with many of these having made significant progress and ongoing work will continue throughout the remaining period of the plan. Four actions have had their progress delayed, three are yet to commence and two have been cancelled.

Council Plan 2021-2025 action progress



Our five focus areas:



A resilient, sustainable and protected environment



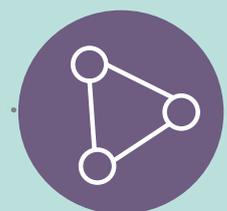
A healthy, supported and empowered community



Embracing our past and planning for our future



Diverse economy and opportunities



A dynamic and responsive Council

1 A resilient, sustainable and protected environment



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 1 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	Target Met	COMMENTS
<p>Council's corporate emissions</p> <p>An annual reduction in Council's Corporate emissions measured via tonnes CO₂e.</p>	>1% Reduction	14% Reduction	18% Reduction	18% Reduction	✓	<p>Another outstanding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction was recorded in financial year 2023/24 with emissions from Council operations down to 734 tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) from 895tCO₂e in 2022/23. This represents an elimination of a further 161 tonnes of carbon dioxide over the past 12 months, or a 18% reduction compared to the previous financial year.</p> <p>We have now shifted our entire electricity needs to 100% Victorian renewable energy while reducing power costs through a long-term power purchase agreement which will secure cheap, local and emissions-free electricity until 2029.</p> <p>Electrification of Council facilities and fleet continue to be a priority now that the only remaining sources of greenhouse gas pollution are diesel and petrol from our heavy and light-medium vehicle fleets, and remaining gas heating and hot water services in Council buildings.</p> <p>Compared to the baseline year of 2021, we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 42%.</p>
<p>Community emissions</p> <p>10% reduction in community emissions measured by tonnes CO₂ against the baseline of 70,715 tonnes.</p>	10% reduction from baseline of 70,715t in 2021	49.6%	24%	9.6%	✓	<p>Net emissions from electricity across the whole municipality for the previous period were 48,510 tonnes of carbon equivalent (tCO₂e). This represents a 9.6% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions across the Shire compared to last financial year, and a 31.4% reduction from the baseline year of 2018.</p> <p>We added a huge 4 megawatts (MW) of new solar (total 20.1MW) which is a doubling of rooftop solar since 2018 (93%). We have met the Z-NET targets for new solar PV on residential and business (8.5MW) - and it will only pick up pace in 2024/25.</p> <p>Electricity consumption continues to rise (due to electrification) but is offset by the rapid growth in solar. Due to this, reductions in electricity emissions will be a less significant measurement of success - we hope to be using much more electricity over the coming years as transport fuel, heating and other factors shift to electric.</p> <p>Generation from community solar and wind match 37.6% of our electricity consumption, while Green PPAs offset another 1.4%.</p> <p>Substantial advances continue in the local sustainable energy scene through solar and battery installations, energy-efficiency measures, electric vehicles and a range of other sustainability measures, with Council and our partnerships through Hepburn Z-NET continuing to provide important leadership.</p>
<p>Tonnes of waste to landfill per capita</p> <p>An annual reduction in tonnes of waste to landfill per capita measured by Weight of Garbage, Recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins against the baseline of 3,454 tonnes.</p>	Reduction from 3,454	40.22%	34.3%	37.72%	✓	<p>Towards the end of the financial year, following the implementation of a new weekly Food and Garden Organics service, we have seen a decrease in waste sent to landfill.</p>

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 1 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	Target Met	COMMENTS
Roadside weed control across the Shire Maintain existing 11 kilometres of Roadside Weed Control across Shire measured by number of actual roadsides maintained.	11km	15km	16km	80km		Through Community Recovery funding and additional resourcing, significant additional works were able to be achieved in partnership with community and other agencies. 42 Roadside roads maintained and treated for weed control throughout 2023/2024.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

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

The 3rd and final install of this project has been awaiting completion of the Mechanics Trentham development and was partly installed in June with final connection to Chargefox's national charging network to occur in late July/early August 2024.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Hepburn Shire Council Sustainability and Climate Change Policy: Adopt a Hepburn Sustainability and Climate Change Emergency policy and commence embedding this into Councils operations and decision-making processes.

A draft Climate Emergency & Risk Management Plan and accompanying draft Climate Risk Management Policy completed in June 2024. Draft policy to be presented to the Executive and Councillors in July/August with policy endorsement proposed for the September 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
1.1.1 	Undertake actions to support Council's declaration of a climate emergency including bi-annual reporting to community on local actions and projects which are delivering upon climate change mitigation, while ensuring that the levels of activity remain consistent with the importance of the climate emergency.	The Sustainable Hepburn strategy and its 5 action plans ensure that Council continues to deliver progress on climate mitigation measures such as emissions reduction projects, climate adaptation and resilience initiatives, and accompanying advocacy and policy work in line with the importance and urgency of a global climate emergency. These actions are updated and briefed to Councillors twice a year and presented at the May Ordinary Council Meeting 2024.
1.1.2 	Review procurement policies and procedures to ensure they provide a focus on sustainable practices.	The current procurement policy was adopted in September 2023 and a review will be undertaken in 2024/2025 to ensure that it continues to adhere to best practice guidelines with a focus on sustainable practices.
1.1.3 	Continue to support the objectives of Hepburn Z-NET and the Hepburn Wind MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) to achieve the target of net zero community emissions by 2030.	Council continues to support the Hepburn Z-NET Community Roundtable in 2023-24 with 10 community members joining one Councillor, a Hepburn Shire Officer, and a representative from Hepburn Energy who are also co-convenors of the Roundtable. Other areas of collaboration with Hepburn Energy as per the goals of the MoU are the roll-out of public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, working with local community groups to support renewable energy and energy efficiency bulk buys, an EV bulk buy, and a 'Hepburn Switch' event to assist the community to electrify their homes and businesses.

<p>1.1.4</p> 	<p>Promote the use of environmentally sustainable practices through planning processes and the Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) Policy.</p>	<p>An ESD planning policy was included in the Hepburn Planning Scheme through Amendment C80. Council has become a member of the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments is developing a framework to provide for local training and guidance on the application of ESD principles to development assessment.</p>
<p>1.1.5</p> 	<p>Pursue the environment and sustainability-objectives outlined in Council's Municipal Planning Scheme.</p>	<p>We continue to apply an environmentally sustainable lens to all of our work. This year we drafted our township structure plans which have included a number of environmental sustainability recommendations. This work will also help to strengthen future decision making on best practice decisions.</p>
<p>1.1.6</p> 	<p>Support community transition to zero emissions through the Sustainable Hepburn Grants Program and or any other applicable grant funding program.</p>	<p>Grant funding of \$39,740 was provided in 2023/2024 to six community organisations based in the Hepburn Shire to deliver projects ranging from increased renewable energy generation and storage, energy efficiency upgrades, a local microgrid, and a solar-powered electric chainsaw.</p>
<p>1.1.7</p> 	<p>Contribute to the implementation of the Grampians Region Climate Adaption Strategy.</p>	<p>Council delivered two projects with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Grampians in 2022/23. A climate adaptation toolkit was developed in partnership with Hepburn Energy, Central Highlands Water, Djarra and other local stakeholders to help respond to climate impacts.</p> <p>Council developed and ran a series of workshops to assist Grampians Region Local Government Areas (LGAs) to respond to climate change by understanding adaptations options. Workshops were held in Ararat and Creswick.</p>
<p>1.1.8</p> 	<p>Publish Council's emission profile annually.</p>	<p>Council published 2022/2023 year's emission profile in July 2023. Emissions for 2023/2024 will take place in September as the data required becomes available after the end of the previous financial year.</p>

1.2 Prioritise environmental management, protection, and regeneration

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
1.2.1 	Review Environmental Significance Overlays.	This will be the next stage following the adoption of our Rural Strategy and township structure plans.
1.2.2 	Undertake appropriate Municipal Emergency Management Planning to prepare for and respond to natural disasters.	Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) completed and Municipal Emergency Management Committee quarterly workplan in place to develop plans and sub plans to prepare for and respond to emergencies by 30/06/2025. Pre-season briefings undertaken and a number of community information sessions in partnership with various agencies.
1.2.3 	Adopt and implement a Tree Management Strategy to protect existing trees and increase planting of new trees.	Hepburn Shire's Tree Management Plan was endorsed by Council's Executive Team in July 2022. The plan was developed to provide guidance for the management of public trees to ensure consistent approach whilst providing a safe environment for the community and increase township tree canopy cover.

1.3 Transition to ecologically sustainable and accountable tourism

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
1.3.1 	Develop and implement a sustainable and accountable Visitor Economy Strategy that balances sustainability goals whilst supporting the economy.	Worked with our Visitor Economy Partners (Daylesford Macedon Tourism & Tourism Midwest Victoria) and adopted Destination Management Plans.

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

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
<p>1.4.1</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Strengthen and protect existing agriculture to support the availability, sustainability, and accessibility of local food sources.</p>	<p>The Artisan Agricultural pilot is completed and resulted in strengthened relationships and contacts amongst the agricultural section. A shire wide Agricultural Forum was also held.</p>
<p>1.4.2</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Promote community adaptation to the public health risks of climate change to public health.</p>	<p>Throughout 2023/24 Council has provided a wide range of community adaptation through health and wellbeing messages and training, storm recovery activity and resilience planning.</p>
<p>1.4.3</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Increase community understanding of the risks of climate change to public health through communication and education.</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings with the external and internal Health and Wellbeing working groups have been held during 2023/2024. Ongoing communication plan to raise awareness continues. Sustainable youth and middle years activities embedded in school holiday programs. Community awareness initiatives, events and training offered throughout 2023/2024.</p>
<p>1.4.4</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Develop a meaningful and strategic partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung to identify and collaborate on our shared environmental priorities.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Hepburn team continues to work with Djaara and collaborate on our shared environmental priorities through awareness raising events such as the Sustainable Hepburn Day Out which saw Djaara run an information stall, as well as the specific actions in Sustainable Hepburn strategy that are bringing the two organisations together to tackle intergenerational equity issues such as access to and preservation of water resources and landscape ecosystems. The Climate Adaptation Toolkit was completed mid-2023 and is being utilised to help track and facilitate climate impact resilience.</p>

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Food and garden organics kerbside service to the Shire's townships successfully rolled out on the 8th April 2024. This rollout also included a reduction of general waste collection from weekly to fortnightly.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Sustainable Hepburn Community Advisory Committee

Create a Sustainable Hepburn Community Advisory Committee to foster community support, involvement and partnership towards a sustainable Hepburn.

Sustainable Hepburn Community Advisory Committee adopted at the Ordinary October 2023 Council Meeting with the first meeting held on 30 November 2023.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Appointment of a Biodiversity Officer and development and assessment of roadside weed management programs that include multi-year follow-up. Roadside Conservation Management Plan in early stage development.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
<p>1.5.1</p>	Develop and implement the 'Sustainable Hepburn Strategy' to align waste, sustainability, and biodiversity strategies.	Sustainable Hepburn Strategy endorsed at the August 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. All five action plans of the strategy have been implemented by the responsible teams. Across the five action plans, 74 actions currently are active with 65 on track or completed by 30 June 2024.
<p>1.5.2</p>	Continue environmental services with an increased focus on weed management and roadside vegetation management including development and implementation of a Roadside Conservation Strategy.	Appointment of a Biodiversity Officer and development and assessment of roadside weed management programs that include multi-year follow-up. Roadside Conservation Management Plan in early stages of development.
<p>1.5.3</p>	Support the implementation of priorities of the Integrated Water Management Plans.	No update from Integrated Water Management Plans beyond drafts.

2 A healthy, supported and empowered community



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 2 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>Proportion of adults eating sufficient fruit and vegetables</p> <p>Over the life of the Plan 5% increase in proportion of adults eating sufficient fruit and vegetables measured against the baseline of 46% using Australian Health survey data.</p>	51%	No updated data available	No updated data available	47%	✘	Data collected in the 2024 Health and wellbeing survey. Expected slow increase in data given the long-term target.
<p>Partnerships and networks to support access to mental health services</p> <p>Increase in the network of mental health service providers servicing the Shire established. 75% of the network active in Shire to support access to mental health services measured by an increase in the number of providers servicing the Shire above 50%.</p>	75%	0%	0%	86%	✔	High attendance rate of providers actively engaged in the Community Services Support Network.
<p>Percentage of population that are active library borrowers</p> <p>Over the life of the Plan, a 5% increase in percentage of population that are active library borrowers measured by percentage of the community that are active borrowers against a baseline of 15.66%.</p>	1.25%	-3.2%	-1.6%	-1.88%	✘	Active library borrowers have continued to decrease following the pandemic, which is consistent with other Victorian public libraries. However, we know that many people who utilise the libraries are not active borrowers, but use the space to read newspapers or books; participate in programs; access internet, printers or public computers.
<p>Partnerships and networks related to the prevention of all violence</p> <p>Increase in the network of providers servicing the Shire focusing on prevention of all violence. An increase of 25% to 75% of network active in Shire to support prevention of all violence, measured by the number of providers servicing the Shire.</p>	75%	100%	100%	92%	✔	Majority of organisational members of Hepburn Prevention of Violence Network currently actively attending network.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 2 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
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<p>Children enrolled in Maternal Child Health (MCH) who participated in services</p> <p>Over the life of the Plan, a 5% increase of children against a baseline of 382 enrolled in Maternal Child Health (MCH) who participated in MCH services.</p>	5%	18%	26.2%	4.97%		While enrolments fell from the previous year, enrolments are currently on track with 401 children enrolled in 2023/2024.
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2.1 Support appropriate land use and accommodate more affordable long-term housing within townships that conforms with the character of the area



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Through its Housing Statement, the Victorian Government announced the introduction of a Short Stay Levy in 2024. It is proposed that any local Council regulations and levies on short stay accommodation are removed upon introduction. Whilst this proposal clashes with Hepburn Shire’s Strategy Action, Council remains committed to delivering other actions in its Strategy, and continues to advocate to Government, collaborate with stakeholders, and prepare strategic land use plans that support the Strategy.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
<p>2.1.1</p>	Develop an Integrated Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy.	Informed by township character assessments, growth targets, demographic needs and of course ‘A Home in Hepburn’ our township structure plans have been structured to encourage more diversity in housing delivery whilst protecting the precious characteristics of our towns. There are recommendations in the plans on how infill development can better accommodate a better variety of housing, we have also looked at the inclusion of small parcels of additional land into our towns to provide more options for the housing market.
<p>2.1.2</p>	Deliver the strategic planning program from the adopted Municipal Planning Scheme.	As part of the 7 key actions identified in C80 Hepburn Planning Scheme Review Future Strategic work - we have commenced all 7 targets tracking to complete at least 5 this financial year.
<p>2.1.3</p>	Advocate for involvement in the Victorian State Government’s Big Housing Build program.	Council has adopted an affordable housing strategy and has recently approved budget for a housing officer who will be tasked with encouraging a better variety of housing types in our towns through advocating to authorities such as the Big Housing Build and working with developers. There are currently 4 homes under construction as part of the Big Housing Building in the Hepburn Shire.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Advocating for Improved Health Services: Council will advocate for access to high quality health services across the Shire, including early years program and through the upgrade of Daylesford Hospital.

Engagement in Community Support and Services Network, Youth Network and Early Years network has been consistent with the last quarter. MOU with Central Highland Rural Health continues to assist with consistent messaging and common health promotion throughout Hepburn Shire Council.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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 the all Kindergarten facilities and early years workforce needs across the region into the future.

Council has submitted the final Early Years Workforce Development Plan to the Department of Education for Approval and Kindergarten Infrastructure Service Plan has been extended to 31st Dec 2024.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

All works claimable through state and commonwealth funding bodies have been completed and financial claims submitted for assessment. Other remaining works completed under annual work program.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Dusk to Dawn Cat Curfew was introduced in July 2023. Promotion continues via a number of channels including social media, media releases, posters in vet clinics, attendance at community events and information on formal notices. Enforcement continues but is reactive due to resource constraints. Furthermore, the last quarter has been particularly challenging due to vets, pounds and shelters not accepting additional cats, due to a nationwide shortage of the cat flu vaccine. (Vaccination is a prerequisite to admission to these facilities).



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

This project has been successfully achieved. Pleasingly, additional external funding for the Community Recovery Officer (CRO) was received, allowing the extension of community recovery hub initiatives and activities into Financial Year (FY) 24-25.

Community hub activities are being delivered in-line with the funding agreement delivery plan. This additional funding allows continuation of ongoing activities and new initiatives to be scoped and delivered in FY 24-25.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
2.2.1 	Conduct a gap and needs analysis of local health and community services to support advocacy for funding parity.	Council will continue to work with partners and prepare a gap and needs analysis in 2024/2025.
2.2.2 	Promote partnerships with health service providers to improve shared community health outcomes.	Internal and external Health and wellbeing working groups monitor the actions set in the Health and wellbeing plan to ensure that collaborative approaches are taken with stakeholders. This is an ongoing action for 2024/2025.
2.2.3 	Support advocacy for a new facility for Central Highlands Rural Health.	Hepburn Council offers ongoing support and advocacy for the upgrade to Daylesford Hospital.
2.2.4 	Develop service networks to increase community awareness and access to local services.	Council developed The Community Service Support network in late 2022. The network continues to grow members and now involves many community groups working with venerable people in the Hepburn Shire. The network is focused on finding local solutions for local people.
2.2.5 	Develop, adopt, and implement an Early Years Strategy.	The Early Years Strategy 'Starting Blocks' was adopted in 2022. Council continues to work with partners to deliver on objectives outlined in the strategy.

<p>2.2.6</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Develop, adopt, and implement a Positive Ageing Strategy.</p>	<p>Annual action plans and reviews track the implementation of the eight focus areas of the strategy: 1. Community and Information, 2. Community and Health services, 3. Housing, 4. Outdoor spaces and Buildings, 5. Transport, 6. Social Participation, 7. Civic Participation and Employment, 8. Respect and Respectful. Key achievements over the 12 months have been Advocacy, Senior's festival events, Positive Ageing expo, stakeholder support and improvements in access to community information.</p>
<p>2.2.7</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Work with our partners to support the provision of Early Years Services, e.g., Maternal Child Health, Kindergartens, Childcare and Playgroup.</p>	<p>Council is now facilitating quarterly Early Years Network meetings for service providers and support services. Council has created and recruited to a new Early Years Officer role. Free family friendly events have been implemented across the Hepburn Shire to build local connection for young families. Central Highland Rural Health continues to provide Maternal Child Health on behalf of Council proactively offering support services to young families.</p>
<p>2.2.8</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Continue services to build strong, safe, and resilient communities (emergency management, local laws, animal control, environmental health).</p>	<p>Council continues to deliver services to build strong, safe and resilient communities.</p>
<p>2.2.9</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Deliver actions identified in the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2018-2022.</p>	<p>Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2018-2022 was reviewed, and incomplete actions were carried forward in the New Disability Action Plan.</p>
<p>2.2.10</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Develop, adopt, and implement a new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan post-2022.</p>	<p>Disability Action and Inclusion plan reviewed and used to create new Disability Action Plan 2022-2026.</p>



Big Rainbow at Victoria Park in Daylesford.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

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

This action has now been incorporated into the AP24.19 Action - Shire Wide Integrated Transport Strategy.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Construction works, including drainage improvements, new mineral spring bores, shelter and landscaping practically complete with formal asset handover anticipated in July/August 2024.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

The Queens Park, Clunes and Pioneer Park, Clunes were adopted at the March 2024 Council Meeting. The Glenlyon Recreation Masterplan was adopted at the April 2024 Council Meeting. Eight meetings of the Clunes Community Project Advisory Group were convened up to June 2024 and Feasibility work required for this project has commenced, with further consideration needed into next financial year. Project is anticipated for completion by September 2024. An Architect has been engaged and has commenced the design phase of the new Glenlyon Recreation Reserve community pavilion.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Aquatics Business Case Development: Finalise a business case on aquatics provision within the Shire, as informed by the 2022 Hepburn Shire Aquatics Strategy.

A structural report on the structural integrity of existing pool shells that will further inform consideration by Council on the final options and feasibility report is anticipated by July 2024. Reporting to Council on the draft Indoor Aquatics Provision Final Options and Feasibility Discussion Report to be determined once further consideration has been made in the new financial year.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
<p>2.3.1</p>	<p>Increase female health and wellbeing by implementing the Hepburn Shire Active Women and Girls Strategy.</p>	<p>Fair Access Policy was adopted at the June 2024 Council Meeting. The Fair Access Policy has incorporated the Active Women and Girls Strategy actions to be delivered with 4 years Fair Access Policy period.</p>
<p>2.3.2</p>	<p>Implement appropriate actions from the 'Play is for everyone' Hepburn Shire Playspace Strategy.</p>	<p>Playspace Strategy implemented annually through the delivery of playground renewal projects as adopted in Council's annual Capital Works Program.</p>

<p>2.3.3</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Support access and participation through strong asset management practices aligned with developing a long-term Asset Plan.</p>	<p>Sport lighting assets improved and master planning projects commence to support access and participation.</p>
<p>2.3.4</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Facilitate walking and cycling infrastructure by implementing works outlined in the Walking and Cycling Strategy.</p>	<p>This action has now been incorporated into the development of a Shire Wide Integrated Transport Strategy, which is due to be completed in 2025.</p>
<p>2.3.5</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Promote the use of libraries and hubs throughout Hepburn Shire.</p>	<p>Council's Hub approach has continued as our model of operations successfully, with changes in 2023/24 including lunch time closures to support staff wellbeing and reduce labour costs in these spaces.</p> <p>The opening of the Mechanics at Trentham has introduced an improved experience for Trentham residents.</p> <p>In 2024-2025 we are committed to the review of the operations of each Hub, alongside the introduction of Open Libraries in Q4 that will be a significant change and benefit to the community accessing our locations.</p>
<p>2.3.6</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Maintain our open spaces for the enjoyment of our community and visitors.</p>	<p>Ongoing and periodic maintenance, both planned and reactive, of Council's vast open space portfolio continues.</p>
<p>2.3.7</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Design, develop and advocate for funding to enhance or build sport and active recreation facilities identified through Master Planning. Ensure design and construct projects comply with Universal Design principles, including compliance with the Design for Everyone Guide.</p>	<p>Federal Funding commitment of \$1.25m will co-fund priority projects from the Doug Lindsay and Glenlyon Recreation Reserves Master Plans. Council were successful in gaining a Victorian Government Grant of \$185,500 to co-fund new sportlighting at the Newlyn Recreation Reserve. Universal design elements were incorporated into the delivery of both the Trentham Sportsground Pavilion and Calembeen Park Amenities Projects that will support the development of diverse participation in a range of sport and active recreation participation opportunities.</p>
<p>2.3.8</p>  <p>PROGRESS DELAYED</p>	<p>Deliver key projects including Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens enhanced visitation experience, Bullarto Station Precinct development and Creswick Town Hall restoration.</p>	<p>Bullarto Station Upgrade Project and the Creswick Town Hall Project have been completed.</p> <p>The Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens works has been delayed, with Heritage Victoria approval and procurement for works which are now underway. Works planned to be undertaken in Q1 2024/25.</p>
<p>2.3.9</p>  <p>PROGRESS DELAYED</p>	<p>Finalise and implement the Hepburn Shire Aquatic Strategy.</p>	<p>The structural auditing of existing pool shells commenced in 23/24, this will inform further consideration by Council on the Indoor Aquatics Provision and Feasibility Business Case - Final Options and Feasibility Report.</p>

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

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
<p>2.4.1</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Lead by example, by supplying and promoting healthier local food and drink options across Council-run meetings, events, activities, facilities and programs.</p>	<p>Drafted Hepburn Councils Healthy Eating policy for consultation and adoption in 2024/2025.</p>
<p>2.4.2</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Support initiatives that encourage healthier lifestyles and habits across the lifespan, particularly in children’s early years.</p>	<p>Hepburn Council offers Children’s grants to local providers to support young families. Hepburn Council ‘Starting blocks’ Early years strategy focuses on encouraging healthier lifestyles and improving outcomes for young families.</p>
<p>2.4.3</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Partner with local organisation/s to increase access to healthy and affordable food (including for vulnerable groups) and to support positive food system change.</p>	<p>Council officers are working with local Neighbourhood houses, Good Grub Club, 5000 Club and other food security groups to build better food access for vulnerable groups.</p>
<p>2.4.4</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Partner with key health agencies to support initiatives and services to improve health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>External Municipal Public Health and wellbeing working group continues to work together to improve health and wellbeing outcomes within Hepburn Shire. MOU continued with Central Highland Rural Health to support links with Health promotion and allied health professionals. New MOU signed with Live4Life Daylesford College to support youth mental health.</p>

2.5 Improved mental wellbeing within the community

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
2.5.1  ON TRACK	Raise awareness and understanding of mental health services and resources, and work with other levels of government to localise and improve mental health services available to residents with a specific focus on youth mental health.	Mental health awareness campaign throughout Council's social media. Seniors Festival supported events to combat social isolation for older people. Hepburn Council has signed a partnership with Daylesford College around the Live4life program addressing youth mental health through a collaborative community-based approach.
2.5.2  ON TRACK	Strengthen partnerships and support education, programs, events, and prevention activities that focus on community participation, diversity and inclusion.	2023/24 Gender Equity, Reconciliation, Disability, Rainbow advisory committees met regularly providing advice to Council on projects, programs and policy to ensure all services promote community participation, diversity and inclusion. Council officers facilitate and attend a wide range of committees and networks to support a collaborative approach across Council to community awareness.
2.5.3  COMPLETED	Adopt a co-benefit approach to improving mental wellbeing, supporting active living and healthy eating initiatives.	Active lifestyle programs supported through positive ageing groups, volunteer program (VIC's, Museums and L2P driver program), youth programs, Active in pools sessions and ongoing sporting facility upgrades. Healthy eating initiatives through council run events and activities such as Healthy Choices in pools, Cooking classes, Healthy eating showbags (free family events, Sustainable Hepburn Day and Positive Ageing Expo) and Seed planting packs for school holidays. Council also continues to advocate through actions such as a submission to the "Inquiry into Securing the Victorian Food Supply".
2.5.4  ON TRACK	Ensure Council services, activities and facilities are accessible and inclusive to remove barriers to participation.	All new and upgraded building compliant in line with DDA standards.

3 Embracing our past and planning for the future



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 3 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>Council staff completed cultural awareness training</p> <p>90% of current staff have completed cultural awareness training within the last 4 years measured by the current number of completions against the number of current headcounts.</p>	22.5% p.a	0%	8%	26%	✘	Pleasant progress has been made towards increasing the cultural awareness and knowledge training completed by staff. This year we had 50 staff complete training with further training scheduled every six months.
<p>Deliver Council's documented and agreed annual strategic planning program</p> <p>Over the life of the plan, deliver 25 agreed actions from Council's documented and agreed annual strategic planning program measured by the number of actions completed.</p>	50%	60%	68%	72%	✔	We are on track to deliver the Township Structure Plans and rural strategy as per Council Plan.
<p>Length of walking and cycling trails available across the Shire</p> <p>A 3% per annum (1.5km) footpath expansion i.e., new footpath (generally concrete or asphalt, not granitic sand) to increase connectivity of walking paths across the Shire.</p>	3%	2.5%	9%	10.93%	✔	Continual implementation of footpath projects has increased the footpath network by approximately 2.7km throughout the 2023/2024 FY.
<p>Percentage of planning applications approved within required time frames</p> <p>Across the life of the Plan, a 10% increase in the percentage of Planning applications decided within required time frames against a baseline of 64.4%.</p>	67.7%	44.77%	43%	19%	✘	The reporting methodology has been incorrect in previous years, and has now been rectified. Whilst this result is a reflection of current application backlogs, importantly this figure is improving each quarter so we are seeing an upwards trend.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

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

Bullarto Station Upgrade Project and Creswick Town Hall Project complete. Wombat Hill Botanical Gardens works now has Heritage Victoria approval. Procurement for works now underway. Works planned to be undertaken in Q1 2024-25.



ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

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

This action has been transferred to an action in the 2023/24 Annual Plan (AP24.15 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan).



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

The Arts and Culture Strategy was adopted at the June 2024 Council Meeting.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

The Innovate RAP has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders including the Internal Council RAP Working Group, Council’s external Advisory Committee, DJAARA who are acting on behalf of the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples and Reconciliation Australia. The Innovate RAP will be discussed at Council briefing on 9 July with the intent of seeking endorsement to present at the Council Meeting on 20 August 2024.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
3.1.1 	Continue to implement and review the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and build strong partnerships through the RAP Advisory Committee.	<p>Our Reflect RAP has established our commitment toward embedding reconciliation without our organisation with a focus on truth-telling and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people who are a part of our community.</p> <p>The proposed Innovate RAP has been through consultation with our community through representation of our Reconciliation Advisory Committee and DJAARA. Our proposed Innovate RAP will presented to Council for endorsement in August, so we may progress on the final draft with Reconciliation Australia.</p>
3.1.2 	Hold annual strategic meetings with Dja Dja Wurrung to share and align projects and priorities.	Relationships and collaboration with Dja Dja Wurrung peoples is strong, thanks to our collaborative work with DJAARA. We have met often across the year to share and align projects and priorities including work on the Innovate RAP, the Djuwang Baring Trails, an MOU for trees removed from the Kingston Avenue of Honour (Creswick), support of the Referendum on the Voice to Parliament, Cultural Values Assessment, and returning language to Dja Dja Wurrung Country, known as Djandak.
3.1.3 	Develop and implement an Arts and Culture Strategy to support local artists to provide creative cultural experiences to enrich community wellbeing.	Arts and Culture Strategy was adopted in June 2024 and implementation will now commence.

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



ON TRACK

We have recently received the Djarra Cultural Values Assessments, this a shire wide document which speaks to the cultural and land values within Hepburn shire.

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



ON TRACK

We have undertaken a GAPS analysis with RBA consultants which will make part of future work & strengthening of heritage work undertaken to date.

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



COMPLETED

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

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



CANCELLED

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

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

This action is now included in 24.16.



PROGRESS DELAYED

ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

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.

The community consultation period for the draft Rural Strategy and five township structure plans has now concluded. Officers are considering all submissions, and this will inform changes to the documents. The Rural Strategy and five structure plans are scheduled to be presented to a special council meeting on September 3 for adoption.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
 ON TRACK	3.2.1 Develop and complete Town Structure Plans as per Council's strategic planning program.	Drafted township structure plans will be presented to council in September 2024.
 CANCELLED	3.2.2 Support community planning to enable local communities to determine their priorities for the future.	Community Planning actions are no longer directly actioned by Council.
 COMPLETED	3.2.3 Conduct a study of land development supply.	Completed. Land Demand & Supply study was prepared by Nation Partners in 2022 with an addendum provided in 2023. The reports are available through Participate Hepburn. These projections have been used to inform the development of our Township Structure plans and Rural Strategy.
 ON TRACK	3.2.4 Develop an Agricultural Land Use and Settlement Strategy.	The draft Rural Strategy has been prepared and will be presented to Council for formal adoption in September 2024. This strategy underpins a our land use strategies, focused on protecting our agricultural land and country first and foremost, encouraging housing to be channelled into our towns.
 ON TRACK	3.2.5 Undertake strategic land use planning to identify access to commercial and industrial land.	The Land Demand and Supply analysis prepared to inform our township structure plans and Rural Strategy provided specific information on needed industrial and commercial land to help support our communities economically into the future. A number of recommendations to help the community to have better access to industrial & commercial land have been included in the draft Future Hepburn work.
 COMPLETED	3.2.6 Develop and implement a local Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Planning Policy.	Draft ESD policy was included in the C80 Hep Planning Scheme review. Further Environmentally Sustainable Design outcomes have been recommended through our Future Hepburn suite of work.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Conservation design works completed with construction procurement underway. Tender to be awarded at the September Ordinary Council Meeting 2024.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Creswick Trails Construction: Achieve construction delivery milestones to enable the 60km of trails to be completed in December 2024.

Trail construction progressing well. Signage design and trails naming work underway. On track for planned completion date for the trail network date in December 2024.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Progress on the Integrated Transport Strategy has been delayed due to the need to focus on delivering the Rural Strategy and five structure plans. Work will continue on preparing a draft Integrated Transport Strategy and it is anticipated that community and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken in early 2025.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Completion of Trentham Hub Construction: Complete construction and open the new Trentham Community Hub for the community.

Construction now complete and facility operational.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Historic Wheelers Bridge in Lawrence:

With financial assistance from the Australian Government, begin construction on the historic Wheelers Bridge in Lawrence.

Detailed civil design and engineering checks in progress. Progress slowed by key consultant personnel turnover and the process of taking notes from both Council and independent checking engineering for incorporation. Detailed design approximately 60% complete.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
 3.3.1	Continue to provide strong management and maintenance of our infrastructure.	Ongoing activities including acquiring and maintaining asset data and asset planning to determine appropriate levels of maintenance and renewal. Activities completed in 2022-23 include updating building asset data, and a capital asset renewal of \$7.5M completed.
 3.3.2	Support the amenity of our towns through the maintenance, replacement and development of streetscapes.	Multiple streetscape projects have been delivered progressively since inception across all the townships. Projects have been a combination of capital improvements and operational works. Next steps planned for Creswick in FY 2024/25.
 3.3.3	Advocate, plan and deliver pedestrian, cycling and recreation paths and trails that reduce reliance on vehicles.	Over 55.5kms of works have been delivered on shared footpaths and trails throughout the Shire within the 2022-2023 Financial Year.

3.3.4

Advocate to the State and Federal Government to improve cycling connections, public transport infrastructure and roll out of a public electric vehicle (EV) charging network across city boundaries and the broader region.

Hepburn's public EV charging network continued to expand over the past 12 months with a fourth charger installed in June (to be online in late July) at the new Mechanics Trentham building, adding to the existing Daylesford, Creswick and Hepburn Springs fast chargers. Work commenced in May 2024 on a future EV charger roadmap for Hepburn and the Central and Northwest Victoria region in collaboration with councils and the Central Victoria Greenhouse Alliance. 'Charging the Regions 3' will be completed in the second half of 2024.

3.3.5

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

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

3.3.6

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

Ongoing project with continual investment in operational budgets.

3.3.7

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

Council officers continue to focus on advocacy and grant applications to support and enable the delivery of Council's priority projects. We have had success through the 2023-2024 year in attracting grant funding to support delivery of existing projects, and have been successful in grant funding for 2024-2025 for the activation of the Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails), Tiny Towns, and Living Libraries.

4 Diverse economy and opportunity



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 4 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
Yield of tourist spend Over the life of the plan a 2% increase in total spend per visitor measured against a baseline of \$60 of total spend per visitor.	2%	40%	75.4%	16.6%	✓	Growth of 16.6% from \$235 in the previous year to \$274.
Per capita Gross Regional Product 4% annual increase in per capita Gross Regional Product against a baseline of \$46,730 per capita GRP (Gross Regional Product).	4%	9.6%	3.7%	12.87%	✓	Target met with GRP per capita at \$55,738 representing a 12.87% increase on last year.
Subscribers to Hepburn Shire Business E-newsletter 5% annual increase of subscribers to the Hepburn Shire business e-newsletter against a baseline of 595 subscribers.	5%	0.3%	-5.38	-3.4%	✗	Increase on numbers of subscribers from last year, however this is a minor decrease over the period of the plan.
Gross revenue generated by business and organisations, outside the Tourism sector 4% annual increase percentage of gross revenue generated by businesses and organisations, outside the Tourism sector against baseline of \$1,163.565M.	4%	6.2%	21%	10.4%	✓	Exceeded target.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Council has partnered with Foundation for Young Australian to implement the Young Mayors program. We have implemented a Youth Advisory Group to assist in building momentum and awareness for the program with nominations to begin early 2025.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
 <p>4.1.1</p>	Develop and implement a Youth Strategy 2021-25 to support the delivery of services and opportunities to young people in Hepburn Shire.	"ACE' Youth Development Strategy 2022-2030 created in July 2022 and during 2023/24 implementation included a number of key actions: Youth mental health training, Apprenticeship program, FREE Freeza events, ongoing youth programs, School holiday programming, youth advocacy and creating a Youth Advisory group.
 <p>4.1.2</p>	Explore offering a graduate or traineeship program in alignment with Council's Workforce Plan development.	Council supported three trainees, engaged within various departments of the organisation in 2023-2024. Council has made the decision to pause this program for 2024-2025 to consider our ongoing ability to support trainees.
 <p>4.1.3</p>	Advocate to government to assist with funding of the business case for the establishment of Institute of Gastronomy within the shire.	Advocacy to government and support for the growth of the gastronomy industry within our shire continues.
 <p>4.1.4</p>	Investigate the formation of a Youth Council or Youth Advisory Committee.	Investigations completed and Council has partnered with Foundation for Young Australian to implement the Young Mayors program. The Young Mayors program has pivoted to ensure a higher level of engagement from young people living, working studying or playing in Hepburn Shire. We have implemented a Youth Advisory Group to assist in building momentum and awareness for the program with nominations to begin early 2025.

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

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
<p>4.2.1</p> 	<p>Support implementation of Central Highlands Digital Plan.</p>	<p>All opportunities to Advocate for improved internet infrastructure to support business, residents who work from home, students, and other citizens of the Hepburn Shire area. New high speed fixed wireless NBN tower being planned for Sailors Falls, at a cost of \$430,374 funded by NBN. A number of other upgrade projects taking place in the region, including a number of 5G upgrades, power resilience programs, greenfield tower in Drummond, and upgrades to NBN fixed wireless in Clunes. Advocacy work will continue as an ongoing BAU activity. Public Wi-Fi available in all customer experience and library locations. Rollout will continue to other areas when budget or grant funding allows this.</p>
<p>4.2.2</p> 	<p>Review the impact of the co-working space at the Hepburn Hub at the Rex and explore the feasibility of a local co-working spaces in other parts of the Shire.</p>	<p>Project cancelled and external funding returned to funding body.</p>
<p>4.2.3</p> 	<p>Install public wi-fi in appropriate areas.</p>	<p>Public Wi-Fi available in all customer experience and library locations. Rollout will continue to other areas when budget or grant funding allows.</p>
<p>4.2.4</p> 	<p>Advocate to ensure that our community has access to, and benefits from, reliable digital services.</p>	<p>All opportunities to Advocate for improved internet infrastructure to support business, residents who work from home, students, and other citizens of the Hepburn Shire area. New high speed fixed wireless NBN tower being planned for Sailors Falls, at a cost of \$430,374 funded by NBN. A number of other upgrade projects taking place in the region, including a number of 5G upgrades, power resilience programs, greenfield tower in Drummond, and upgrades to NBN fixed wireless in Clunes. Advocacy work will continue as an ongoing BAU activity.</p>

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



ANNUAL PLAN INITIATIVE 2023/24

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.

Final stages of implementation will occur in July, at which point it is expected that the project will be acquitted by the State Government.



ANNUAL PLAN INITIATIVE 2023/24

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.

The Daylesford Macedon Tourism Destination Management Plan is complete and implementation works have commenced. The Tourism Midwest Victoria Sustainable Destination Management Plan has also been completed.



ANNUAL PLAN INITIATIVE 2023/24

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.

The website is currently under development. Due to additional website design works required from several of the mineral springs land managers. The project is anticipated to be completed by 30 August 2024.



ANNUAL PLAN INITIATIVE 2023/24

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.

Event Toolkit is complete. Communications on the toolkit have been undertaken.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
4.3.1 	Implement a Business Concierge model (Customer Service, Planning and Economic Development) to enhance the permit approvals process.	The Planning and Economic Development Teams have established regular meetings to improve communications regarding business permits and applications.
4.3.2 	Invest in streetscapes and infrastructure in commercial and retail areas across the Shire.	The following streetscapes works/investments were completed in FY22/23: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vincent St, Daylesford roundabout garden redevelopment • Pearman Street, Creswick kerb and channel, road upgrade, pedestrian connections • Albert St, Trentham drainage upgrade • Albert St, Creswick Street furniture renewal • Various locations, street planter box installations
4.3.3 	Finalise the pilot project of the Artisan Agriculture Project to support producers more broadly.	The Artisan Agriculture pilot is completed and has resulted in strengthened relationships and contacts amongst the agricultural sector.

<p>4.3.4</p> 	<p>Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy that ensures diverse offerings.</p>	<p>Budget bid to develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy was unsuccessful. A business survey was conducted to seek feedback from businesses and a survey implementation plan developed to support our local economy.</p>
<p>4.3.5</p> 	<p>Develop and implement a Commercial Land Use Policy.</p>	<p>This will be recommended to make part of future strategic work in the coming years.</p>
<p>4.3.6</p> 	<p>Develop and implement an HSC Shire Wide Agricultural and Rural Settlement Strategy.</p>	<p>As per previous comments - this document has been drafted and will be presented to Council for consideration in September 2024.</p>
<p>4.3.7</p> 	<p>Support local and regional tourism campaigns and initiatives to support the local offer.</p>	<p>Council has formalised a partnership with Tourism Midwest, the inaugural Visitor Economy Partnership in Victoria to improve exposure, branding and product development in the West of the Shire. This augments Council's existing partnership with Daylesford Macedon Tourism which continues to showcase the region to travellers at a high level.</p>
<p>4.3.8</p> 	<p>Implement the Events Strategy 2020-2025 building on existing brand pillars including Indulge (Food & Drink), Refresh (Escape & Rejuvenate), Learn (History & Culture) and Make (Art & Artisans).</p>	<p>Council supported 60 events in FY23 with significant social, community and economic benefits coming to the region. Three signature events (Spudfest, Chillout and Booktown) and two regional events (Motorfest and Cresfest) combined brought an estimated 60,000 additional visitors to the region.</p>
<p>4.3.9</p> 	<p>Review procurement policy to ensure a focus on sustainable practices, a meaningful partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung and support local business.</p>	<p>The current policy has a focus on and provides incentives to support Djaara and other traditional owner organisations.</p>

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



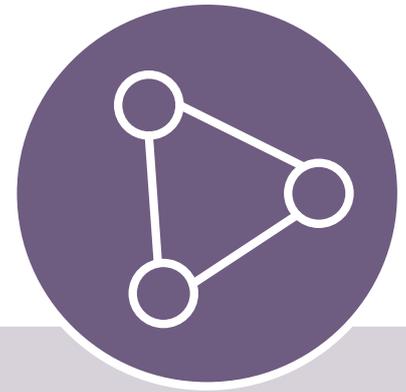
ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Launched the Circular Hepburn Toolkit for Business and Beyond at Sustainable Hepburn Day, kicked off a social media campaign associated with the Toolkit. Focus of Sustainable Hepburn Day was Circular Economy, with a fashion and textiles focus, highlighting good work and opportunities in the community. Aspire platform roll out continues. Circular Economy Roadmap soon to be released. Planning underway for increasing circularity of some waste streams at Council Transfer stations.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
4.4.1 	Review waste services to ensure alignment with the new State Government's Circular Economy program.	Food and garden organics service successfully rolled out to the Shires township April 2024 with commercial businesses to begin July 2024. Council officers to review a service for rural properties 25/26 financial year. Glass disposal and recycling services offered at the shires Transfer Stations and CDS machines with officers to review a glass service when Circular Economy draft standards are finalised.
4.4.2 	Develop and promote the circular economy to diversify our local economy and support our sustainability goals.	In 2023/24 the following circular economy actions have been delivered: design of a Circular Hepburn logo; publication of a circular economy toolkit and associated marketing campaign; circular economy fashion focused hub at the Sustainable Hepburn Day Out; co-producing FOGO roll out educational videos; creating a circular economy database of local businesses through the ASPIRE platform for materials exchange, and signups to the platform; draft Circular Economy Roadmap; Business Creswick Circular economy breakfast and circular economy updates through the Sustainable Hepburn e-newsletter.

5 A dynamic and responsive council



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 5 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>Subscribers to Council’s e-newsletter Hepburn Life</p> <p>5% annual increase in subscribers to Council’s e-newsletter, Hepburn Life against baseline of 2,941 subscribers.</p>	5%	14.9%	22.4%	16.92%	✓	<p>Subscribers to Hepburn Life fluctuates with news subscribers joining and people unsubscribing. This is in line with industry average. We have 4,392 contacts and 3,980 subscribers on the list which includes staff.</p>
<p>Financial sustainability of the organisation</p> <p>Achieve a low or medium risk rating for VAGO (Victorian Auditor General’s Office) financial sustainability indicators.</p>	All indicators low or medium	4 Low, 1 Medium, 1 High	3 Low, 2 Medium, 1 High	3 Low, 2 Medium, 1 High	✗	<p>The Underlying Surplus/Deficit is in the high category. This is predominately due to the financial assistance grants for 2024/2025 having been realigned for receipt in the year applicable, so no advanced payment was received in 2023/2024. Costs associated with prior year storm events have impacted that have not been reimbursed in 2023/2024. These short-term impacts will be closely monitored.</p>
<p>Customer Service Requests responded to according to Charter</p> <p>2% annual increase percentage of service requests responded to in accordance with customer service charter.</p>	2%	No updated data available	No updated data available	No updated data available	✗	<p>Development of the target is still in progress. A significant proportion of council enquiries are addressed by our first responders (Customer Service Officers) through phone and counter walk ups. For those enquiries that Customer Service Officers escalate to secondary responders (Specialist Council Officers), in 2023/2024 the average days to first response was 16.81, and the average days to close was 37.53.</p> <p>Not all enquiries are captured via our Customer Service Officers in our corporate system. Changes to capturing enquiries is required to develop the target. This will be worked on across 2024/2025.</p>

MEASURES OF SUCCESS						
FOCUS AREA 5 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
<p>Community satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</p> <p>Increase result of community satisfaction with community consultation and engagement from 44 to 50 points, over the life of the plan, a 14% improvement.</p>	47	44	46	52		Upward trend over the past 3 years in satisfaction ratings.
<p>Workforce Plan Actions delivered</p> <p>Over the life of the plan, 100% of actions (36) from the 2021 adopted Workforce Plan are implemented to ensure gender equity, diversity, and inclusiveness in the workforce.</p>	36 Actions	8	26	31		Strong progress resulting in two thirds of actions underway or completed.

5.1 Harness community expertise

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
<p>5.1.1</p> ON TRACK	<p>Conduct a Community Skills Session to capture community skills and interest for future engagements.</p>	<p>Harnessed community skills through various engagement activities. Continuing to build relationships with community and improve deliberative practices.</p>
<p>5.1.2</p> COMPLETED	<p>Strengthen processes to create strong alignment with community-led engagement.</p>	<p>Designed and implemented Community Engagement framework including various tools and processes.</p>
<p>5.1.3</p> ON TRACK	<p>Continue to value, support, and implement Community Reference Groups, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Strong use, and increase in the number of advisory committee's and community based Project Advisory Groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trentham PAG Sustainable Hepburn Strategy Daylesford Town Hall PAG
<p>5.1.4</p> ON TRACK	<p>Actively participate in community and government networks and regional alliances.</p>	<p>Hepburn Council officers participate in a wide range of community and government networks. Including Early Years Network, Hepburn Engaging Youth, Prevention of Violence Network, Community Service Support network. Council also participates in MOU's with Daylesford College, Young Mayors, Live4life and Central Highlands Rural Health.</p>

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Implementation of Council's Customer Experience training to support the Working Together - Delivering Better Service Strategy has been finalised. We are now moving toward sustaining the ongoing focus and capability of existing staff and engaging new staff. This will transfer to the Corporate Training program for implementation as part of the annual Learning & Development program.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Council Services Review: Prepare and undertake Service Summaries to provide insight to the cost, resources required, challenges and opportunities of each Council Service.

The development of Service Summaries is completed, however the implementation of reviewing these summaries continues. Our staff have completed a service summary template for each service, which offer a comprehensive overview of the service, including its costs, relevant legislative context, and key risks and opportunities. These summaries have been shared with Councillors during a workshop prior to Christmas 2023, and Councillors considered the data during the development of the 2024/25 Budget and updated 10-year Financial Plan. A service map, and simplified service profile was created and forms part of the Financial Vision project.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Risk Management Framework Implementation: Undertake a review of Council's risk management policies and practices and establishment of updated Risk Registers.

The Risk Management Policy was adopted by Council in November 2023. Council has also reviewed its risk appetite, reviewed its strategic and operational risks, and implemented software to manage its risk registers

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
5.2.1 	Implement the Community Engagement Policy and procedures to improve community engagement practices and relationship building.	Completed Engagement Framework and toolbox to support community engagement projects. Continuing to add new processes as they are identified in line with commitment to continuous improvement.
5.2.2 	Communicate in a timely, clear, responsive, and accessible way about decisions and circumstances that impact our community.	We use various channels to communicate with our residents, ratepayers, businesses and stakeholders. Council has over 6,300 followers on Facebook, 3,100+ on LinkedIn and just under 4,000 subscribers to Hepburn Life. In addition to digital means of communicating, we publish a Council News page in all the community newsletters around our shire. Our corporate website generates around 90,000 views per quarter and Participate Hepburn is used our engagement platform. Council received positive trends in relation to Consultation and Engagement as part of the annual Community Satisfaction Survey.
5.2.3 	Implement the recommendations of Hepburn Shire Council Service Review-Customer Experience.	Work continues on achievement of the actions from Council's CX Strategy. Following recent changes to the team leadership and future location; changing priorities due to budget reductions (CX and the organisation); and success with a grant to implement open libraries, a review of the action plan is required to align to our current state.
5.2.4 	Create an online database of Community Groups and contacts from across the Shire accessible to relevant Council Departments.	Development of the database expected to launched in August 2024.
5.2.5 	Increase public participation in Council meetings by continuing to live stream meetings.	All Council meetings held in 2023-2024 were live streamed via Council's Facebook page. The recording remains available for people to view.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

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

Annual Plan 22-23 Initiative has been rolled over into new annual plan action AP24.29.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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 the communities' values.

The 10-year financial plan continues to be progressed and a community engagement process will take place in July for a short period of time. Service priorities will be reviewed based on the engagement process. The intent is for the 10-year financial plan to be adopted by Council by 17 September 2024.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Cyber Security Enhancements for Council: Deliver a suite of ICT enhancements to provide greater security over Council's day-to-day operations.

All documents completed and pending review at Senior Leadership prior to implementation. Actions reviewed from penetration testing to be compiled and discussed with Governance and Risk.

Item	Strategy	2022/23 Actions and Outcomes
5.3.1 	Strengthen the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework, including a programmed service review of all Council services.	<p>Extensive work has been delivered in 2023-2024 in support of cataloguing and profiling Council's Services, with a current project for engaging the community to review and prioritise Council services underway. This work will inform a strategic approach to service review ongoing and maintenance of service profiles.</p> <p>Review of Council's reporting methods has been undertaken, with improvements to our quarterly reporting being implemented.</p> <p>The framework for Integrated Strategic Planning at Hepburn has been outlined with a target to develop and deliver prior to 30/06/2025.</p>
5.3.2 	Develop and implement an Annual Plan to set the operational direction of Council year on year.	<p>Annual Plan for 2023-2024 was developed and delivered.</p> <p>In 2024-2025, as this is the final year of the Council Plan, there won't be a separate Annual Plan as focus will be on delivery and finalisation of all outstanding actions.</p>
5.3.3 	Enhance long-term financial planning and forecasting through the development and implementation of a Long-Term Financial Plan.	<p>The Financial Plan was adopted in October 2021.</p> <p>Community engagement on service priorities and appetite for options to address the financial sustainability of Council is underway in July with Councillor workshops scheduled for August, to develop a financial vision for the next 10 years.</p>
5.3.4 	Effectively advocate, scope projects, prepare applications and ensure delivery of major initiatives and projects.	<p>Improved projects development, using the Project Management Framework, has led to the progression of highly complex projects (Creswick Trails, Trentham Hub) and the delivery of a record amount of capital works expenditure.</p>

<p>5.3.5</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Development and implementation of an Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Strategy to ensure staff have quality equipment and software to deliver high quality services to our community.</p>	<p>ICT Strategy has been completed, ratified and in place. Work now progressing on relevant transformation and project items.</p>
<p>5.3.6</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Ensure Council practices, processes and decision making is compliant with the Local Government Act 2020 provisions and other related legislation and regulations.</p>	<p>Throughout 2023-2024, Council meetings and decisions have been conducted in compliance with the Local Government Act 2020. Council's instruments of delegation and authorisation are reviewed twice a year to account for changes to legislation, as well as changing roles and responsibilities.</p>
<p>5.3.7</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Strengthen internal governance through ongoing Councillor and staff capacity building and skill development.</p>	<p>Councillors have been provided information and training regarding the Governance Rules, conflicts of interest, Councillor and staff interaction, rating and valuations, critical infrastructure and emergency management. All new staff receive induction in relations to privacy conflicts of interest, record keeping, decision making, and gifts. Refresher courses are offered throughout the year for existing staff.</p>
<p>5.3.8</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Embed Council's risk management framework and risk appetite into project management and decision making.</p>	<p>Risk Management procedures and templates have been developed for staff and training was held in May and June 2024 in embedding risk practice in their daily work.</p>
<p>5.3.9</p>  <p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Ensure the procurement practices of staff are in line with set policies, procedures and guidelines that have a focus on transparency, accountability and probity.</p>	<p>Procurement policy in place. Focus will continue to be on re-establishing the procurement training program in the long term.</p>
<p>5.3.10</p>  <p>COMPLETED</p>	<p>Respond and adapt to requirements set out by the Victoria Electoral Commission in relation to representation reviews and general elections.</p>	<p>Council participated in and provided feedback to the Electoral Structure Review. Council received the decision that from the 2024 Local Government elections, Hepburn Shire will move to an un-warded structure.</p>

5.4 Improve staff resourcing, support, and capacity building



ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Employer Value Proposition: Develop Employer Value Proposition and tools to market HSC more effectively as an employer.

The HSC Employer Value Proposition is progressing to plan. A key focus includes the launch of the Delivering Better Together project, which encompasses office accommodation, process transformation, people development, communication, culture and engagement, systems and tools, and flexible working. The Staff Engagement Survey has also been revised to include expanded custom questions to gather detailed information on what employee's value at Hepburn Shire Council. This data will be further explored in workshops planned for August, with a draft EVP to be socialized in September.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
5.4.1 	Develop Workforce Plan to promote gender equity, diversity, inclusion, with an appropriate organisational structure to deliver the Council Plan.	Council's Workforce Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan outlines actions that will support and promote gender equity and inclusion at Council and continue to be implemented.
5.4.2 	Ensure appropriate training and development of staff to ensure continuous improvement and access to the required skills.	Council has made significant progress in staff training and development with the introduction of a new e-learning system which will offer diverse courses for capability uplift. This platform will improve learning accessibility and personalised learning. Additionally, Council has invested heavily in classroom workshops, technical development and leadership capability.
5.4.3 	Strengthen the organisational approach to project management and delivery.	A Project Management Framework was developed and in use. Capital work programming was strengthened, and improvements made to a suite of templates and forms. This also included improvements in processes and an increased delivery of annual capital works
5.4.4 	Ensure that 100% of staff are offered the opportunity to undertake Cultural Awareness training.	Council has continued our delivery of cultural awareness training with staff, in collaboration with first nations organisations and Djaara peoples. Embedding this into the training curriculum with multiple methods of delivery will be finalised in 2025-2026.

5.5 Strong asset management and renewal



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Staff Accommodation and Community Facilities: Undertake scoping and planning of staff accommodation and Birch Ward facilities.

Medium Term staff accommodation plan and works now underway - Duke Street office works complete; have taken possession of 24 Vincent Street with the move from Town Hall scheduled for August.

Architects and PAG members appointed for Daylesford community Facilities project, with feasibility stage underway.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
5.5.1 	Continue to invest in asset maintenance, renewal, and upgrade programs.	Ongoing investments in key asset renewals and a continual cycle of asset data collection, assessment and valuations to improve decision making, including development of Asset Management Plans for the main asset classes.
5.5.2 	Review and modernise Council's Asset Management practices in alignment with the development of Council's Asset Plan.	Updating of GIS and asset class information ongoing, implementation of centralised software-based management still in progress for multi-year delivery.
5.5.3 	Deliver the annual Capital Works program.	A record amount of capital works expenditure has been delivered. Several large multi-year projects continue in delivery phase, including Creswick Trails Network and The Mechanics Trentham. This is a positive result given the very challenging constructions sector regarding pricing, availability COVID 19 impacts and inflation.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

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.

Council has made significant progress in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan, including completing Gender Impact Assessment Training and compulsory reporting for the Gender Equality Act in February 2024. There were several key achievements highlighted by the Gender Equity reporting include a notable increase in women in full-time work (34% to 47%), women managers (43% to 50%), and women laborers (27% to 48%). Council have also achieved a positive gender gap to from -2% to -10% - this means that for every \$100 paid to a man, \$110 was paid to a woman.

Item	Strategy	2023/24 Actions and Outcomes
5.6.1 	Implement provisions of the Gender Equality Act 2020, including a Gender Equity Action Plan.	The Gender Equity Action Plan commenced in March 2022. A number of key actions have been completed including a review of Council’s Recruitment, promotion and higher duties processes which have resulted in several changes to increase transparency and diversity. Council has adopted gender inclusive language when updating policies and procedures and has completed Gender Impact Assessment Training with key areas within the organisation.
5.6.2 	Provide strong Council leadership, both internally and in the community, to build understanding of safe, respectful, and equitable relationships through education and awareness raising.	Hepburn Shire Council has formed a strong relationship with Women’s Health Grampians and actively participate with CoRE. This has led to discussions with WHG regarding a review of our Gender Impact Assessment toolkit. With a renewed focus on gender equality when implementing strategies and projects this has seen a significant uplift in Gender Impact Assessments completed with seven undertaken in FY23-24.
5.6.3 	Review and update the Act@Work Plan and continue to strengthen Gender Equity on Council.	Act @ Work program was in place in Council from 2019 to 2021. The program was absorbed into the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) with an ongoing action to deliver GEAP on track.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) progress

2023-2024 marks the third year of Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (2021-2025). The past twelve months have seen collaboration across Council departments and with key external stakeholders to deliver meaningful health and wellbeing outcomes for residents across the municipality. Key highlights from each of the four MPHWP priority areas are listed below.

Priority 1 – Tackling climate change and its impact on health

- Data gathered from climate and health focused questions in the Wellbeing Survey.
- Collaborated with Central Highlands Rural Health to deliver the Reusable Period Products in Hepburn Shire Primary Schools Program.
- Continued to increase community knowledge and awareness of public health risks of climate to public health through multiple communications channels.
- Training by Climate and Health Alliance was delivered to Council staff to increase understanding of the link between Public Health and Climate Change.
- Supported Resource Smart Schools Program in Hepburn Shire Schools.
- Provided Health and Wellbeing focused feedback for the Integrated Transport Strategy. Gender and Disaster Training delivered to Council staff and local emergency organisation staff/volunteers.

Priority 2 – Increasing healthy eating

- Mapped current drinking fountain and water bottle refill stations across the Shire.
- Introduced Healthy Choices options at the Shire's Outdoor Swimming Pools Kiosks, including the training of all Pool staff.
- Data gathered from healthy eating focused questions in the Wellbeing Survey.
- Cooking classes delivered through the School Holiday Programs.
- Healthy lunchbox resources delivered to Hepburn Shire Primary Schools.
- Reverse advent calendar food security box project.
- Free fruit for council staff and volunteers in VIC's.

- Local food relief resources webpage updated and promoted.
- Developed, printed and delivered Wellbeing Pocket Guides.

Priority 3 – Improving mental wellbeing

- Audit of mental wellbeing initiatives across the municipality.
- Support ongoing meetings of the Disability Advisory Committee, Reconciliation Advisory Committee, Gender Equity Advisory Committee and LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee.
- MoU with Neighbourhood Houses.
- LIVE 4 LIFE partnership with Daylesford College that focuses on improving youth mental health throughout the Shire.
- Supported events and campaigns that encourage and promote physical activity including Wednesday Walks, Active 2 School and Active Footpaths project, Junior Lifeguard program.
- Supported the Walk to School and Active in schools programs.
- Mental health supports during emergency response situations.
- Free community mental health first aid sessions.
- Annual events for Men's and Women's Health Week.

Priority 4 – Prevention of violence in all forms

- One participant in 'Women in Leadership Course' sponsored by Council.
- Act@Play pilot with one sporting club.
- Fair Access Policy adopted.
- Council supported four local CoRE organisations and delivered training to their staff, volunteers and board members.
- Photographer engaged to increase the Council's portfolio of inclusive images.
- Training opportunities from Women's Health Grampians (WHG) were offered to all staff.
- Puberty education resources increased at all four library sites.
- Encouraged all local health service organisations to register at 1800 My Options.
- Promoted 1800 My Options and the 'Ask Issy' online service platform.

Local government performance reporting framework indicators

Service performance indicators

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

Aquatic Facilities

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Service standard					
Health inspections of aquatic facilities <i>[Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]</i>	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	Satisfactory inspections of all Aquatics Facilities were undertaken during the 2023/2024 pool season in line with the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.
Utilisation					
Utilisation of aquatic facilities <i>[Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]</i>	1.20	1.64	1.47	1.10	Minimal participation data collected throughout the season, has resulted in lower than anticipated visitation figures for the 2023/2024 Aquatics Season.
Service cost					
Cost of aquatic facilities <i>[Direct cost of aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to aquatic facilities]</i>	\$19.84	\$12.95	\$18.91	\$36.71	Due to minimal participation data collected throughout the season, this has resulted in a significant increase to service cost.

Animal Management

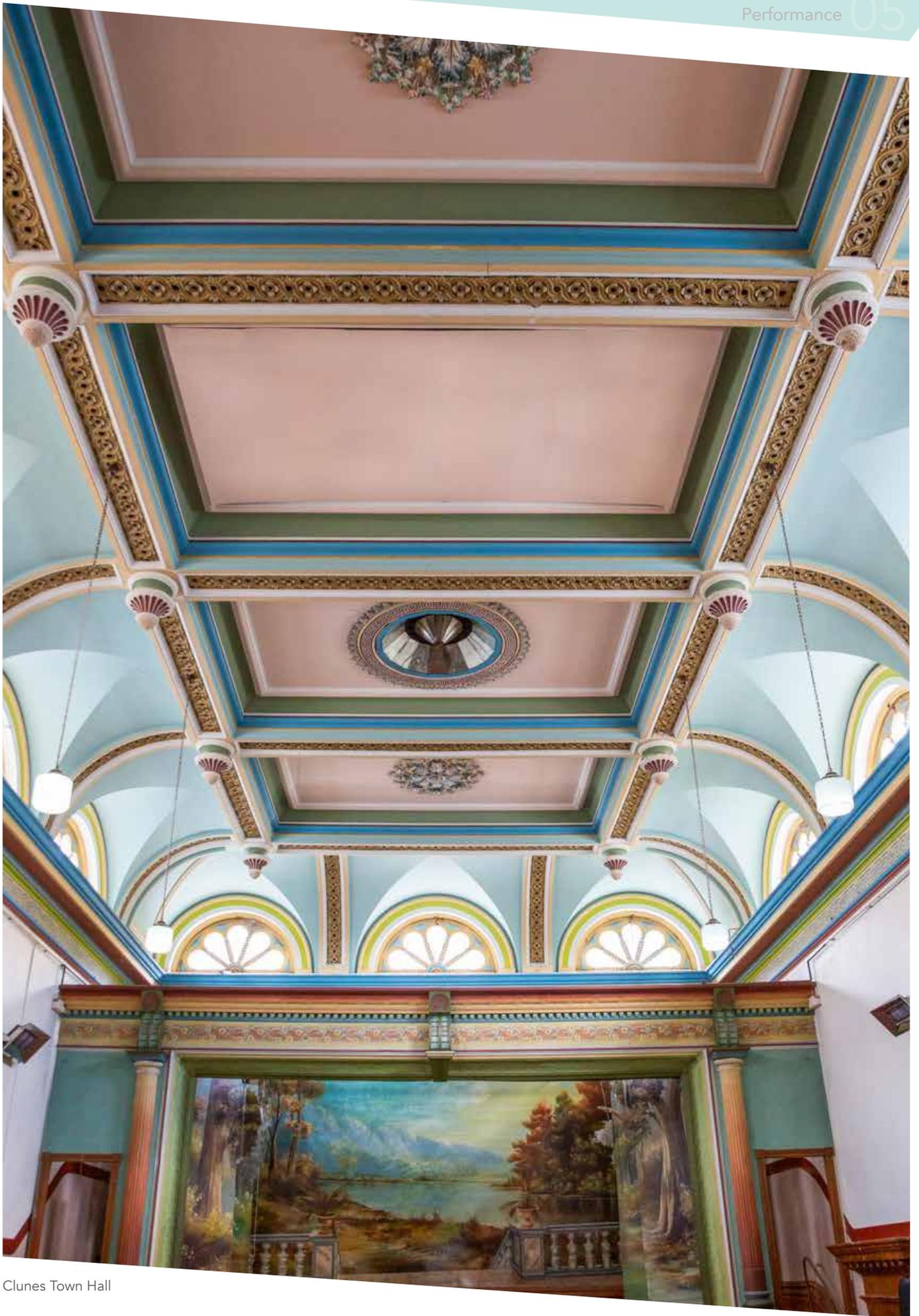
Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Timeliness					
Time taken to action animal management requests <i>[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]</i>	4.14	4.48	4.54	4.14	Improvement in response time due to increase in FTE, allowing Council to more effectively service community requests and complaints.
Service standard					
Animals reclaimed <i>[Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100</i>	11.63%	13.75%	45.10%	26.00%	There has been an increase in total number of dogs (45) and cats (55 - excluding those euthanized) that have been collected. The total number of animals reclaimed has decreased as more cats were impounded in FY 22-23 than dogs. Cats are less likely to be reclaimed and represent a higher number, on average, of animals collected.
Animals rehomed <i>[Number of animals rehomed / Number of animals collected] x100</i>	95.35%	27.50%	21.57%	28.38%	There has been a 38% increase in registered animals being rehomed over FY 22-23. Changes to how pounds, rescues and businesses house and manage animals supported this increase in rehoming.
Service cost					
Cost of animal management service per population <i>[Direct cost of the animal management service / Population]</i>	\$10.91	\$9.72	\$12.25	\$14.77	Cost increases due to additional FTE for increased service delivery and availability.
Health and safety					
Animal management prosecutions <i>[Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100</i>	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	Council initiates a prosecution based on legal advice and the particular merits of a case.

Food Safety

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Timeliness					
Time taken to action food complaints <i>[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]</i>	5.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	Food complaints are responded to within 24 hours.
Service standard					
Food safety assessments <i>[Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984 / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984] x100</i>	25.67%	48.44%	75.53%	100.00%	Achieved 100% completion in FY23-24 for food safety assessments. Additional resourcing and engagement with businesses supported increase in premises receiving an annual food safety assessment and requiring an annual food safety assessment.
Food safety samples <i>[Number of food samples obtained / Required number of food samples] x 100</i>	New	New	New	100.00%	Achieved all required food samples.
Service cost					
Cost of food safety service <i>[Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]</i>	\$585.21	\$841.56	\$835.57	\$850.18	Marginal increase in direct cost of the food safety service due to increased resourcing, with responsibilities shared across multiple officers.
Health and safety					
Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications <i>[Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100</i>	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	All critical and non-major compliant functions have been followed up.

Governance

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Transparency					
Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public <i>[Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council, or at meetings of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council or at meetings of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors] x100</i>	4.68%	9.29%	13.99%	9.42%	Council continues to prioritise decisions being conducted in an open Council Meeting wherever possible.
Consultation and engagement					
Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement <i>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]</i>	44.00	44.00	46.00	52.00	Community Satisfaction ratings showing an upward trend over the past three years.
Attendance					
Councillor attendance at council meetings <i>[The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each Council meeting / (Number of Council meetings) × (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x100</i>	99.25%	97.32%	98.10%	99.05%	Council had one apology for Council Meetings for the 2023/2024 year, which was due to illness.
Service cost					
Cost of elected representation <i>[Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]</i>	\$37,259.57	\$37,944.57	\$38,540.57	\$41,954.43	Results remain within range and reflect the increase in allowances paid to Councillors.
Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with council decisions <i>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]</i>	44.00	41.00	42.00	46.00	The Community Satisfaction Survey has identified a trend of improvement in results over the last 4 years.



Clunes Town Hall

Libraries

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Resource currency					
Recently purchased library collection	69.34%	66.17%	75.36%	46.89%	Collections numbers are within target.
<i>[Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100</i>					
Service cost					
Cost of library service per population	\$39.36	\$37.21	\$42.86	\$36.97	Cost of the service has decreased this financial year with a focus on cost reduction. Programs have continued and been well attended throughout the year.
<i>[Direct cost of the library service / Population]</i>					
Utilisation					
Loans per head of population	New	New	New	2.73	This is within target, with room to continue to grow the loans rate. The reintroduction of the intra-library loan service between Libraries Victoria's library network broadened the collection options available to patrons.
<i>[Number of library collection item loans / Population]</i>					
Participation					
Library membership	New	New	New	28.42%	The percentage of library membership is within target, with room to improve. We anticipate an increase in patrons with the opening of The Mechanics Trentham along with the introduction of Open Libraries next financial year.
<i>[Number of registered library members / Population] x100</i>					
Library visits per head of population	New	New	New	3.65	Just over three and a half visits to a library per year, which is our new baseline. This is the first year of reporting this measurement.
<i>[Number of library visits / Population]</i>					

Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Service standard					
Infant enrolments in the MCH service <i>[Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100</i>	101.50%	104.63%	102.36%	102.65%	The percentage of infants enrolled in the MCH service continues to exceed the number of birth notifications received. This may be due to families of infants moving into the Shire.
Service cost					
Cost of the MCH service <i>[Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]</i>	\$86.79	\$98.54	\$138.10	\$140.84	During this year Council received additional one-off funding of 99K, therefore additional services were able to be offered to families.
Participation					
Participation in the MCH service <i>[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100</i>	76.96%	86.01%	85.37%	81.60%	The percentage of infants enrolled in the MCH service who attend MCH service has remained fairly constant. Families who have moved during the year are now required to be reflected in the data therefore a slight drop in percentage can be seen from previous years due to families having sessions at other MCH services.
Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children <i>[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100</i>	75.76%	80.95%	88.89%	73.33%	The percentage of Aboriginal infants enrolled in the MCH service who also attend MCH service has remained fairly constant over the previous four years.
Satisfaction					
Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit <i>[Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100</i>	94.74%	99.07%	95.28%	98.23%	The percentage of infants enrolled in the MCH service who participated in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit has remained fairly constant over the three-year period.

Roads

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Satisfaction of use					
Sealed local road requests <i>[Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100</i>	46.96	50.26	43.08	32.06	A slight reduction of overall requests, which is pleasing. Due to targeted capital programs focused on sealed road defects.
Condition					
Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards <i>[Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100</i>	96.91%	97.73%	98.19%	98.36%	Updated data from a new road condition audit shows Council has continued to maintain road assets to a targeted condition.
Service cost					
Cost of sealed local road reconstruction <i>[Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]</i>	\$56.20	\$49.88	\$49.40	\$66.46	Council had a limited amount of reconstruction projects in the year 2023/2024, but has equally experienced raising construction costs, particularly in relation to construction.
Cost of sealed local road resealing <i>[Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]</i>	\$7.59	\$8.67	\$10.77	\$11.42	Council continues to include a level of asphalt surfacing in its reseal costs. In the FY23/24 the higher asphalt costs were slightly offset by large rural reseal projects at lower unit rates.
Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with sealed local roads <i>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]</i>	47.00	39.00	33.00	29.00	The performance rating this year for sealed local roads is at its lowest rating in 10 years. This is consistent with increase in water and flood damaged roads across the Shire. Reduction in satisfaction has occurred statewide.

Statutory Planning

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Timeliness					
Time taken to decide planning applications <i>[The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]</i>	69.00	107.00	145.00	180.00	Overall an increase in timeliness, however this is as a result of a large amount of older permits being resolved in the last 12 months and significant staff turnover. Our quarterly data is showing improved timeframes and this should be reflected next year.
Service standard					
Planning applications decided within required time frames <i>[(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100</i>	64.47%	19.70%	33.79%	17.86%	Process improvements in Quarter 4 mean we are now reporting accurately, however the first 3 quarters of the year are unreliable, therefore the figure is skewed. This data shows more permits are being issued in Q4 compared to Q4 last year so an upward trend.

Statutory Planning (cont.)

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Service cost					
Cost of statutory planning service <i>[Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]</i>	\$2,012.01	\$2,458.49	\$3,473.95	\$3,507.77	The 2024 financial year service cost remains consistent with the previous year. An overall reduction in the cost of service is expected as further efficiency initiatives are implemented.
Decision making					
Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT <i>[Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100</i>	80.00%	50.00%	40.00%	80.00%	This is a pleasing result, with the majority of Council decisions upheld at VCAT. Most applications contested at VCAT have been centred around technical matters such as bushfire risk considerations and rural planning.

Waste Management

Service / indicator / measure	Results				Comments
	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Service standard					
Kerbside collection bins missed <i>[Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x10,000</i>	3.59	5.89	12.76	15.04	Increase resulting from changes to kerbside collection frequency following the rollout of FOGO bins.
Service cost					
Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service <i>[Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]</i>	\$119.33	\$149.49	\$163.63	\$149.04	Costs have reduced since April 2024 following the introduction of FOGO kerbside collections and the resulting reduction of general waste collections from weekly to fortnightly.
Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service <i>[Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]</i>	\$85.15	\$77.88	\$82.38	\$90.89	Considerable increase to the cost of recycling processing.
Waste diversion					
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill <i>[Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100</i>	48.46%	40.22%	34.23%	37.72%	FOGO was introduced in April 2024, along with a change of garbage frequency from weekly to fortnightly. This has assisted with the diversion of waste from landfill. Inaccurate data was provided for 20/21 & 21/22 due to reporting in cubic metres not tonnages, showing an inflated result.

Governance 06



The role of local government

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

Council fulfils multiple roles, including:

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

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

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

Council meetings

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

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

All meetings are governed by Council's Governance Rules to allow for accountable and transparent conduct of Council meetings. The Governance Rules also provide the opportunity for community members to submit questions to the Council during scheduled Council meetings, or ask to address Council, and have the option to submit petitions to Council for consideration.

Council held 15 meetings in 2023/24, including three unscheduled meetings and one statutory meeting.

Meetings:

- 18 July 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 15 August 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 19 September 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 17 October 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 14 November 2023 – Statutory Meeting to elect the mayor and deputy mayor
- 21 November 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 19 December 2023 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 20 February 2024 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 19 March 2024 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 16 April 2024 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 30 April 2024 – Special Meeting of Council
- 21 May 2024 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 28 May 2024 – Special Meeting of Council
- 18 June 2024 – Ordinary Meeting of Council
- 25 June 2024 – Special Meeting of Council

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

Conflict of interest declarations

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

During 2023/24, Councillors declared a total of 21 conflicts of interest. These declarations were made at both Councillor briefings and Council Meetings.

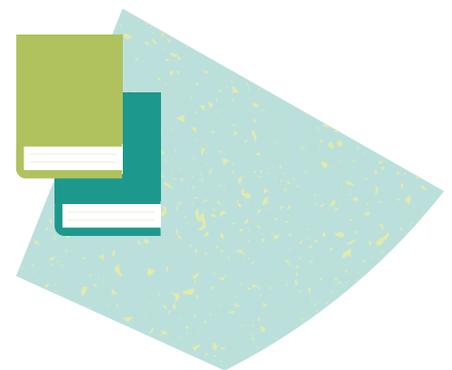
The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council Meetings in 2023/24:

Councillor	Conflicts of interest declared
Cr Jen Bray	4
Cr Tim Drylie	5
Cr Tessa Halliday	3
Cr Don Henderson	5
Cr Lesley Hewitt	1
Cr Brian Hood	0
Cr Juliet Simpson	3

Community asset committees

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

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



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

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

Councillor code of conduct

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

The Hepburn Shire Council Councillor Code of Conduct:

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

Councillor allowances

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

The superannuation guarantee increased to 11% as of 1 July 2023.

From 1 July 2023 until 17 December 2023, the allowances paid to Councillors were:

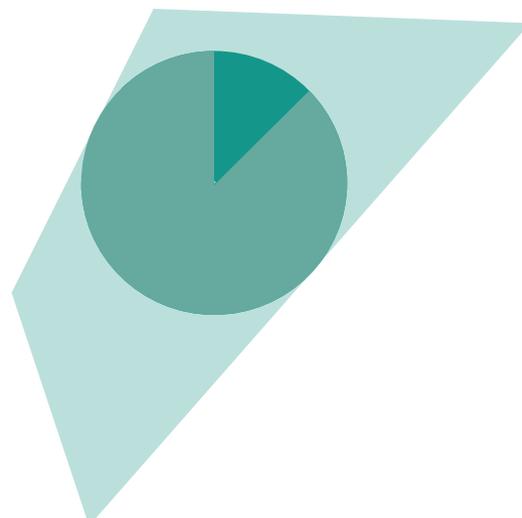
- Mayors - \$79,492
- Deputy Mayors - \$39,325
- Councillors - \$25,650.

From 18 December 2023 to 30 June 2024, the allowances paid to Councillors were:

- Mayors - \$81,641
- Deputy Mayors - \$40,819
- Councillors - \$26,368.

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

Councillors	Councillor Allowance
Cr Don Henderson	\$26,013
Cr Lesley Hewitt	\$31,809
Cr Brian Hood	\$80,578
Cr Tessa Halliday	\$26,024
Cr Jen Bray	\$26,024
Cr Tim Drylie	\$26,024
Cr Juliet Simpson	\$34,488
TOTAL	\$250,960



Councillor expenses

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

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

The details of the expenses for Councillors for 2023/24 are set out in the following table.

Councillor	Training and development	Travel	Expenses to support the performance of the role	Total expenditure by Councillor
Councillor Expenses & Resources Guidelines Reference	2.1	2.2 & 2.3	2.4, 2.5, 2.6 & 2.7	
Cr Don Henderson	\$290	\$218	\$900	\$1,408
Cr Lesley Hewitt	\$1,553	\$218	\$900	\$2,671
Cr Brian Hood	\$1,795	\$13,355*	\$900	\$16,050
Cr Tessa Halliday	\$-	\$10,490	\$5,676	\$16,166
Cr Jen Bray	\$-	\$-	\$900	\$900
Cr Tim Drylie	\$2,017	\$ 709	\$900	\$3,626
Cr Juliet Simpson	\$1,000	\$-	\$900	\$1,900
Total expenditure by cost category	\$6,655	\$24,990	\$11,076	\$42,721

Note: *Travel – cost is inclusive of Mayoral vehicle or vehicle allowance allocation

Governance and management

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

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
Council Plan report	Reports tracking progress against the Council Plan were presented to Council quarterly.
Quarterly budget reports	Budget reports are prepared quarterly.
Risk reporting	Council reviewed its risk registers during the year and established a refreshed reporting framework for risk commencing in 2024/2025.
Performance reporting	Reports were presented to Council quarterly.
Annual report	Council's Annual Report 2022/23 was endorsed on 17 October 2023.
Councillor Code of Conduct	Adopted and signed by all Councillors on 23 February 2021.
Delegations	Instruments of Delegation and Authorisation are updated at least every six months, and as needed to account for organisational requirements.
Meeting procedures	Meeting procedures were updated on 25 August 2022.

Protected disclosure procedures

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

The Protected Disclosure Act 2012 aims to ensure openness and accountability in government by encouraging people to disclose improper conduct within the public sector and provide protection for people who make disclosures. Procedures on how to make a disclosure are publicly available Council's website at www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/public-interest. During 2023/24 no disclosures were notified to council officers appointed to receive disclosures, or to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

Food act ministerial directions

In accordance with section 7E of the Food Act 1984, Council is required to publish a summary of any Ministerial Directions received during the financial year in its annual report. No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the 2023/24 financial year.

Road management act ministerial directions

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

Infrastructure and development contributions

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

Audit and risk management

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

In 2023, two long standing members of the Committee, Ms Carol Pagnon and Mr Robert Taylor, reached the end of their terms. Council thanks them for their commitment and service during their time on the Committee.

Council welcomed three new members to the committee in November 2023.

Independent members for 2023/24 were:

- Ms Carol Pagnon (Chair June – December 2023, departed December 2023)
- Mr Robert Taylor (Departed December 2023)
- Mr Jason Young
- Mr Shane Marr (Chair March – June 2024, appointed November 2023)
- Ms Philippa Murphy (Appointed November 2023)
- Mr Kelvin Tori (Appointed November 2023)

Councillor Members were:

- Cr Brian Hood (November 2020 – June 2024)
- Cr Juliet Simpson (November 2022 – June 2024)

At these meetings the committee considers the following agenda items:

- Review of key risks and controls
- Summary of quarterly finance reports
- Summary of quarterly management reports
- Mid-year budget review
- Annual budget review
- Review of councillor expenses
- Internal audit reports

- External audit reports and management letters
- Review of compliance obligations
- Progress on internal and external audit recommendations
- Policy and procedure review.

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

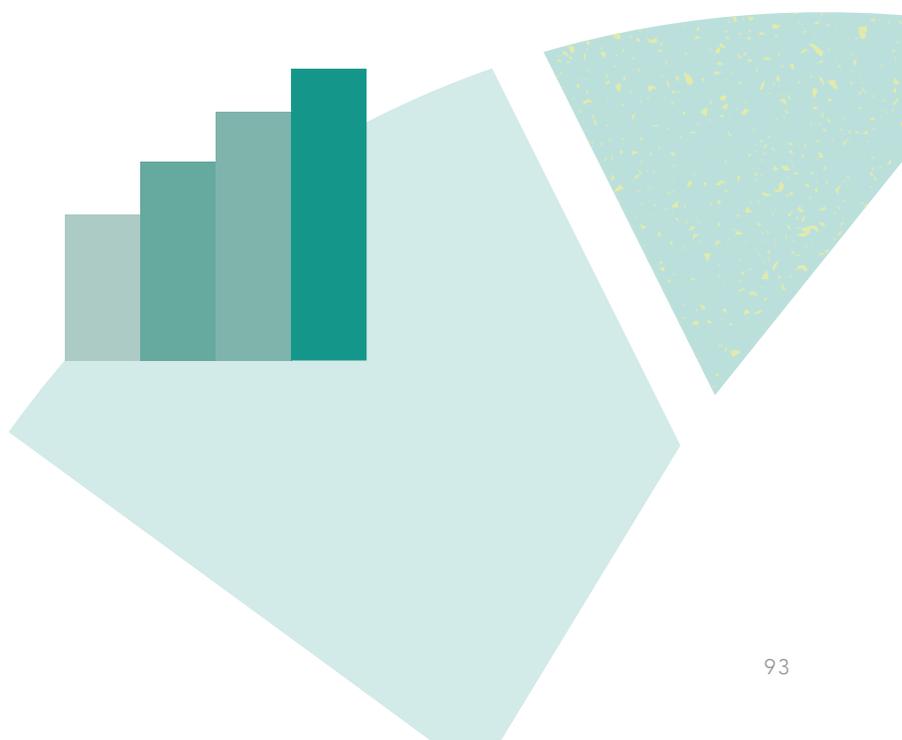
The audit plan considers Council's risk framework, the Council Plan, the impact of any change on operations, systems or the business environment, prior audit coverage and outcomes and management input. The plan is reviewed and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee annually.

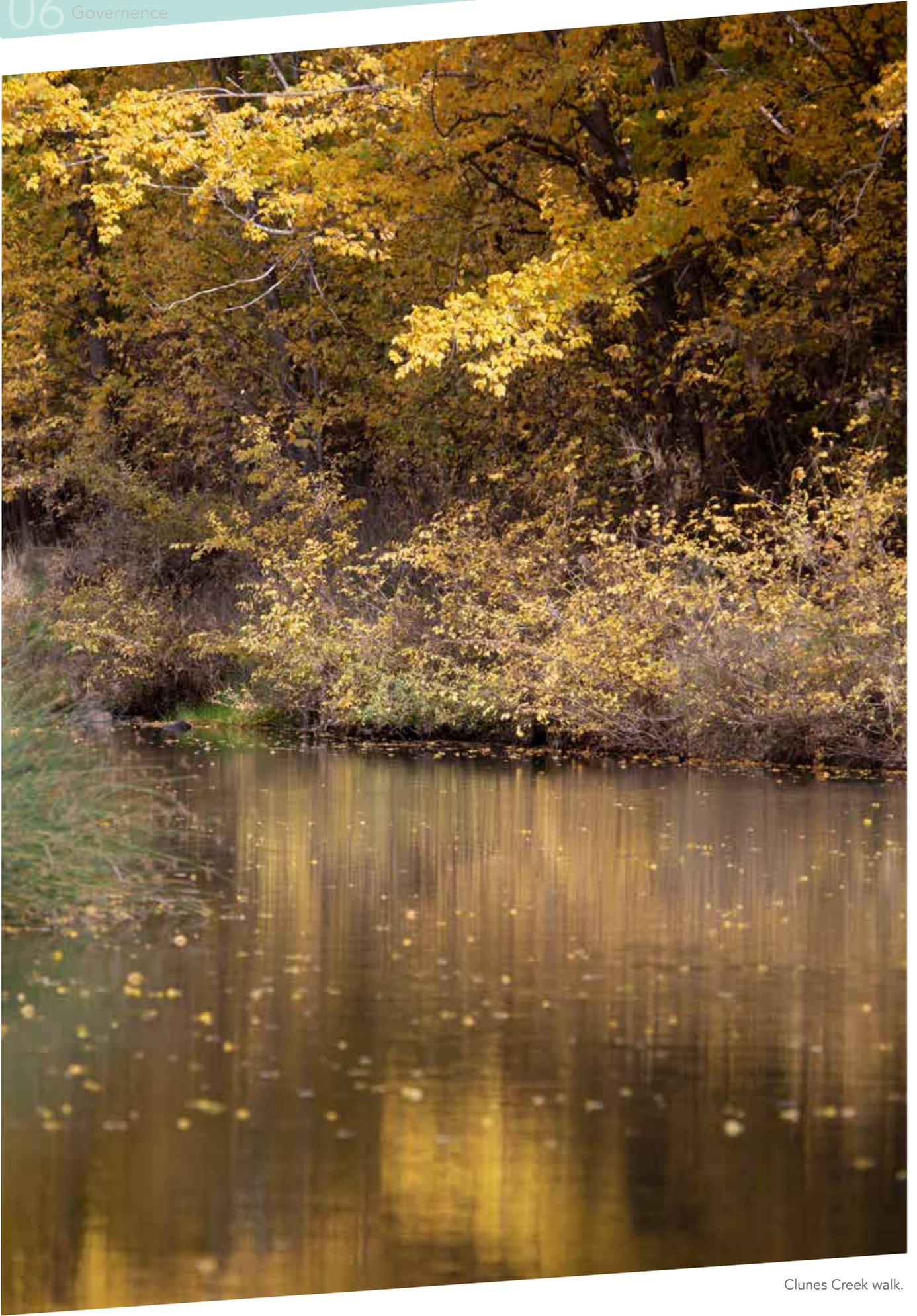
The Internal Auditor attends each Audit and Risk Committee meeting to report on the status of the Audit Plan, provide an update on the implementation of audit recommendations, and present findings of completed audits. All audit issues identified are risk rated and tracked in Council's performance management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

Internal Audits conducted in 2023/24 were:

- Payroll Key Controls
- Psychosocial Risks
- Review of the implementation of recommendations from past audits

Council adopted its Risk Management Framework in December 2021. In November 2023, Council adopted its Risk Management Policy and in 2024 completed a review of its risk registers.





Clunes Creek walk.

Procurement management reporting

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, Council adopted the Procurement Policy on 19 September 2023.

For the financial year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, Council entered into contracts for \$300,000 inclusive of GST or more for the purchase of goods or services or works.

The following table provides a list of these contracts where a public process was undertaken in compliance with the Procurement Policy for the financial year commencing on 1 July 2023:

During the period 01 July 2023 – 30 June 2024 Council entered into no contracts without first undertaking a competitive public process consisting of either a public tender or expression of interest.

Contract Title	Contract Value (Inclusive of GST)
Sealed Road Patching Autumn 2023	\$550,000.00
Transfer Station Bulk Bins	Schedule of Rates
Dry Hire Supplier Panel	Schedule of Rates
Quarry Materials, Gravel & Recycles Construction Materials	Schedule of Rates
Reconstruction Smeaton Road, Campbelltown	\$363,749.10
Central Springs Reserve - Stage 1	\$878,158.60
Building Services Supplier Panel	Schedule of Rates
Kerbside and Public Bin Collection, and Landfill Waste Disposal	\$498,163.46

Financial Report 07



Financial Report

Council, like most local governments, is experiencing a challenging fiscal environment with increasing costs for the delivery of capital projects and operating services, combined with extraordinary costs associated with unprecedented natural disasters and weather events, works on the two major storm events and the rising costs in the economy.

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

Overview

- A deficit of \$9.9 million (2022/2023 \$2.6 million deficit) against an original budget of \$5.1 million deficit. The increased deficit is predominately due to timing of State and Federal Government funding, including the Financial Assistance Grants of approximately \$6 million (received in July 2024).
- A net asset revaluation increment (non-cash) of \$114.9 million (2022/2023 \$23.9 million), as Council has undertaken a full, and detailed revaluation of its land, building and road assets.
- Revenue of \$39.2 million (2022/2023 \$54.0 million) with 66% coming from rates and waste charges (2022/2023 46%).
- Operating expenditure of \$49 million (2022/2023; \$56.6 million), with 37% attributable to employee costs (2022/2023; 33%) and 35% attributable to materials and services (2022/2023; 41%).
- \$484.7 million in capital assets (at written down value), providing community facilities, roads, bridges and other infrastructure (2022/2023; \$364.4 million).

- Cash and other financial assets of \$7.8 million (2022/2023; \$18.5 million), which after excluding external restrictions and internal allocations, provides revised cash and cash equivalents of \$(4.838)m (2022/2023; \$1.409m) and is being closely monitored.
- The total balance of loan borrowings at the end of the 2023/2024 financial year was \$9.4 million (2022/2023; \$3.9 million).

Cash

Council's cash, cash equivalents and other financial assets decreased \$10.7 million to \$7.8 million at 30 June 2024 (2022/2023; \$18.5 million). Council's cash and cash equivalents are subject to external restrictions and internal allocations that limit the amounts available for discretionary use.

At 30 June 2024 Council's working capital ratio, which represents Council's current assets as a percentage of current liabilities, was 141.04% (238% at 30 June 2023).

Income

Total income for the financial year was \$39.2 million (2022/2023; \$54.0 million).

This included \$3.7 million of capital grants (2022/2023; \$9.6 million).

Expenses

Council incurred total expenditure of \$49.0 million in the financial year (2022/2023; \$56.6 million). As a service-based entity, Council's main costs are employee costs. Employee costs for the financial year were \$18.0 million or 37% of total expenses (2022/2023; \$18.7 million or 33%). Materials and services for the financial year were \$17.4 million or 35% of total expenses (2022/2023; \$23.2 million or 41%).

Capital works

Of the \$16.8 million capital expenditure (\$14.6 million 2022/2023), 25% was spent on renewal of assets (2022/2023, 38%) and 53% was spent on new assets (2022/2023, 42%). Renewal of assets as opposed to building new assets or upgrading assets is an important focus of Council as it works towards reducing the infrastructure renewal gap.

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

Unrestricted cash position

Council has a very delicate cash position. The majority of cash reserves held at 30 June 2024 have been allocated to fund carry-forward projects, reserves and refundable deposits and are therefore considered to be restricted funds. Council's unrestricted cash balance as at 30 June 2024 was \$4.838m in deficit (\$2.64m in deficit in 2023). The deficit has been caused by a range of factors over this and past financial years including timing of grants and a high level of capital works. The unrestricted cash position is budgeted to return to a minor surplus in 2024/25 and is being carefully managed over coming years.

Liabilities

Council's liabilities comprise of loans, amounts owed to suppliers and amounts owed to employees for leave entitlements. The total balance of loan borrowings at the end of the 2023/2024 financial year was \$9.4 million (2022/23 was \$3.9 million).

Financial Vision

Council is committed to transparency and accountability when delivering on our financial strategy and the delivery of our services. In the 2024/25 budget, Council has committed to making \$1.5 million in operating savings and is now committing to working with community and Councillors to ensure our long-term financial viability.

In 2025/26, Council needs to find an additional \$4 million in long-term savings or additional revenue to develop a financially responsible plan that delivers on our shared Community Vision.

A responsible Financial Vision was adopted by Council on 10 September 2024, and should be read in conjunction with this Annual Report and the audited Financial and Performance Statements.

Audited Financial and Performance Statements

The detailed and audited financial and performance statements are an appendix to this Annual Report, and are also included on Council's website.

Storm Recovery

Council has been impacted by three significant storm events during the financial years 2020/21 to 2023/24. To date nearly \$15 million of repair works have been incurred by Council. The majority of these works are reimbursed by State and Federal Government. As at 30 June 2024 the total cost to Council is expected to be \$3.30 million - this relates to repair works undertaken to key community infrastructure including roads and parks that are not reimbursed. Council has taken the decision to include these works to respond to community needs to recovery post the events.



Djuwang Baring Smoking Ceremony fire pit.

Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

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