



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.

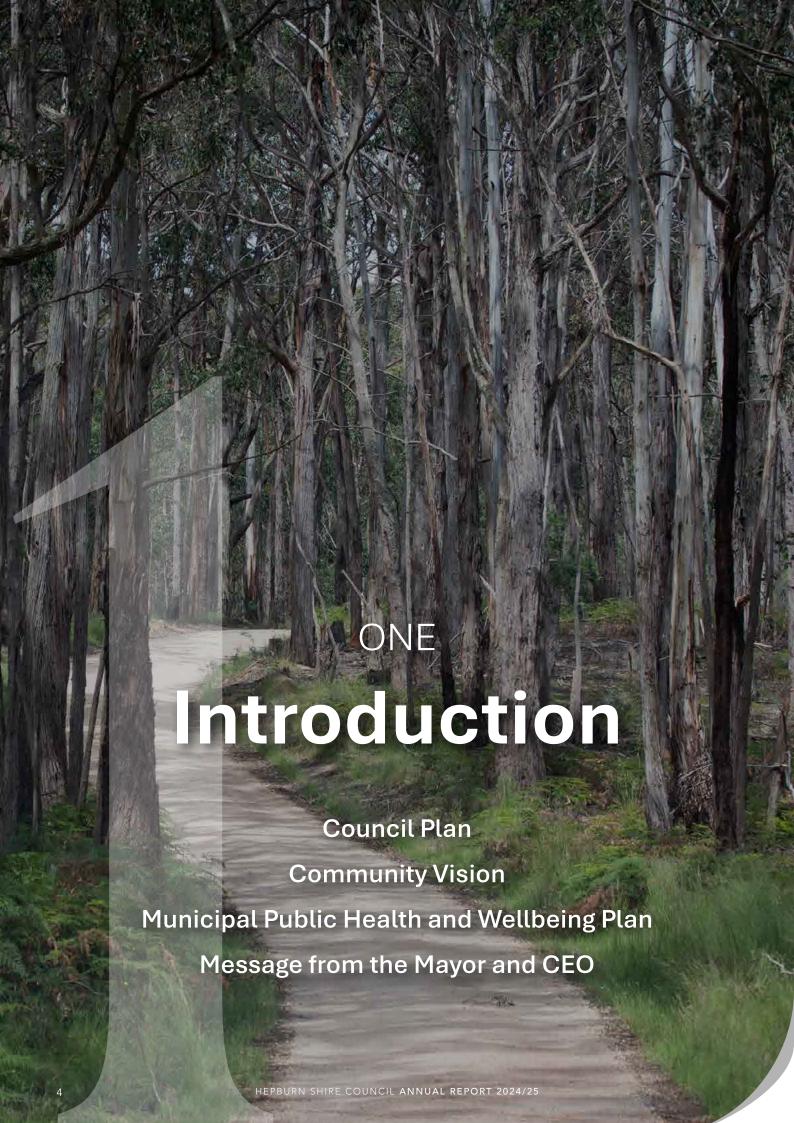
We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore.

We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.



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Introduction

The 2024/25 Annual Report (the Report) is based on and reports against Hepburn Shire Council's (Council) Council Plan 2021–2025 (the Plan).

The new Council Plan 2025–2029 (which includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP)) was adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Council (OCM) in June 2025 along with four other key strategic documents; the 2025/26 Budget, Financial Plan 2025–2035, Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029, and the Asset Plan 2025–2035 and will be reported on in future financial years.

Community Vision

The Community Vision, developed in partnership with the community, is an aspirational statement and includes elements important to the community. Given its importance to our community, the Community Vision remains unchanged.

'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.'

Council Plan 2021–2025

The Plan is Council's key strategic document, which describes the community's long-term vision for the Hepburn Shire.

The Plan is shaped by the community and incorporates the:

- Community Vision: the long-term aspirations that the community has for our Shire.
- MPHWP: what 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 10 per cent of the community. Council held community drop-in sessions, hosted surveys, and carried out a deliberative engagement process made up of citizens reflective of our community.

The Plan identifies 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.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

For the first time Council's MPHWP was integrated into the Plan. Council and community identified health and wellbeing priority areas that supported the Community Vision.

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.



Council Plan 2025-2029

The Council Plan 2025–2029 sets the strategic direction of Council for the current Council term. It details the outcomes, strategies and measures Council will focus its efforts and resources on for the four-year term to achieve the Community Vision in a financially sustainable way. It was developed with community input through surveys and our deliberative engagement panel, along with Councillor and Officer workshops.

Domain 1: Hepburn Life

Hepburn Life is about building a vibrant, resilient, and inclusive community where every person feels connected, informed, and supported to thrive. Through strong partnerships, education, and advocacy, we will enhance community resilience to changing environmental conditions, emergencies, and evolving community needs. By ensuring access to essential resources before, during, and after crisis, we are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all residents.

Domain 2: Future Hepburn

Council is committed to shaping a future that honours the distinctive character of its towns and rural landscapes while fostering sustainable growth, infrastructure, and economic vitality. This strategic framework outlines three key outcomes designed to guide the region's development, while preserving the uniqueness of our communities and natural environment, ensuring responsible infrastructure and environmental management, and cultivating a resilient and vibrant local economy.

Domain 3: Hepburn Working Together

Council is committed to building an inclusive and sustainable community. Our strategic focus is guided by a commitment to delivering high-quality services, ensuring strong governance, and fostering a positive and skilled workforce. This domain outlines key outcomes and strategies desired to meet the evolving needs of our community while maintaining financial sustainability and enhancing community wellbeing.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Council's MPHWP for 2025–2029 was integrated into the Council Plan 2025–2029. Council and community identified health and wellbeing priority areas for working towards the Community Vision. They are:

- Increased active living.
- Increasing mental wellbeing.

Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer





It is with great pride that we present our Annual Report for 2024/25. This report outlines our key achievements, tracks our performance against the objectives set out in the Plan, and provides a detailed account of our progress within the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF).

The year brought with it both change and continuity, marked most notably by the Council elections in October 2024. Four sitting Councillors were re-elected, and three new Councillors joined our team under an undivided ward structure. We ensured a smooth transition by facilitating a comprehensive induction program for all Councillors, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to serve our community effectively.

Throughout the year, we continued to make steady progress toward the strategic goals set out in the Plan. This included the completion of major projects such as the official opening of Djuwang Baring, Creswick's mountain bike trails, the adoption of Future Hepburn (five township structure plans and our rural strategy), and

the endorsement of a long-term Financial Vision. These initiatives will have lasting positive impacts on our Shire's liveability and sustainability. Our Plan was ambitious, especially for a small rural council, but it is pleasing to note that Council has completed 105 actions, representing over 90 per cent of our commitments.

Our advocacy efforts were once again critical in securing essential funding from both state and federal governments. Their ongoing support remains vital to the successful delivery of infrastructure and community programs.

While celebrating our progress, we also acknowledge the persistent challenge of long-term financial sustainability. Inflationary pressures, cost shifting from other tiers of government, and the continuing financial burden of recovering from multiple storm and flood events have created a complex financial environment. Council successfully secured a 7 per cent rate cap variation from the Essential Services Commission (in excess of the 3 per cent set by the Victorian Government), allowing us to better manage service delivery and invest in infrastructure. This also supported the development of a council plan focused on outcomes rather than individual projects, along with a budget shaped by difficult

decisions that position us for long-term financial sustainability.

Despite these challenges, we have remained committed to delivering core services that our community relies on every day, including maintaining roads and footpaths, collecting waste and recycling, caring for our parks and open spaces, planning and development and supporting our residents through library services, youth programs, and positive ageing initiatives. We know our community expects us to do better on core services and customer service, something this Councillor group and organisation is committed to achieving.

We extend our sincere thanks to our dedicated staff, Councillors, community members, and external partners for their commitment and support over the past year. Together, we have achieved a great deal, and we look forward to continuing this momentum into 2025/26 and beyond.

We encourage you to explore the pages of this report for a comprehensive overview of our performance, projects, and services.

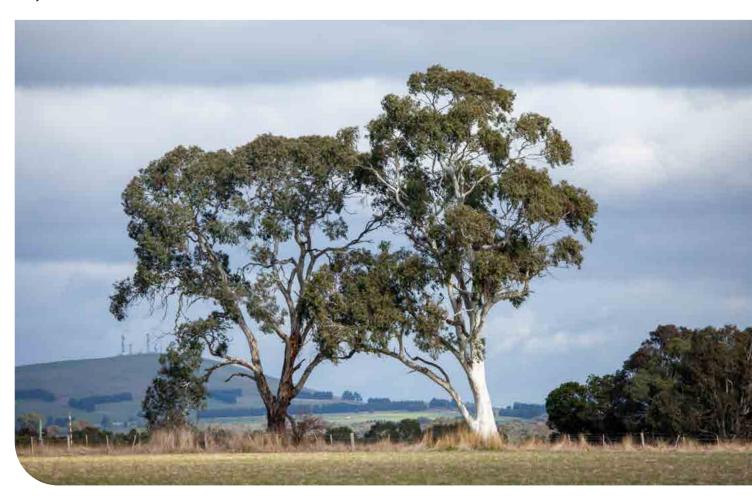
Cr Don Henderson

Opplem

Mayor

Bradley Thomas

Chief Executive Officer





Highlights

Council elections

In October 2024, eligible Victorians participated in the local council elections.

This Council's election was conducted under an unsubdivided structure for the first time, meaning that eligible enrolled voters voted for elected representatives from across the municipality, not from five wards as done previously.

On 14 November 2024, after a competitive election cycle and 12 nominations, Don Henderson, Brian Hood, Lesley Hewitt, Tony Clark, Tim Drylie, Pat Hockey and Shirley Cornish were sworn in as Councillors. Councillors then commenced a comprehensive induction program as required by the *Local Government Act 2020*. On 26 November 2024, Cr Don Henderson was elected Mayor and Cr Lesley Hewitt as Deputy Mayor for the first year of the new four-year Council term.

Council Plan 2025-2029

A significant task for the new Council was the Integrated Strategic Planning project, in particular the development of a council plan, to guide its strategic direction. The Council Plan 2025–2029 was adopted in June 2025 and outlines the strategic agenda for Council during its term, including the steps it will take to implement the Community Vision. It does this by providing a strategic direction for the organisation, including objectives, strategies, indicators and key initiatives or priorities.

The Council Plan 2025–2029 is centred around three key domains: Hepburn Life, Future Hepburn, and Hepburn Working Together, each addressing vital aspects of community wellbeing, sustainability, and local collaboration.

Council received nearly 200 community submissions during this final consultation period, with most community members focused on shaping the Council Plan and Budget. A range of engagement factors were considered in the drafting of the strategic documents, including:

- previous engagement activities, especially associated with Future Hepburn, the previous council plan input and the Financial Vision.
- Councillor and Officer insights.
- a community-based deliberative engagement panel.
- a Shire-wide community survey.
- seeking community feedback on the draft document.

At its June 2025 meeting, Council also adopted its 2025/26 Budget, Asset Plan 2025–2035, Financial Plan 2025–2035, and Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029, which set out the key objectives Council wishes to achieve during its term and into the future.

Djuwang Baring's official opening

Council was incredibly proud to open the full 60-kilometre Djuwang Baring, mountain bike trail network on Saturday 30 November at the Hammon Park trailhead in Creswick.

Despite some bad weather, the official opening attracted an impressive turn out, many of whom were mountain bike enthusiasts having made the journey from Melbourne and beyond. The event was a festive culmination of years of hard work from many stakeholders, and years of advocacy by the community and Council.

The 60-kilometre trail network, weaving its way through some of Creswick's most iconic landscapes, is designed for a wide range of abilities and skill levels and works to build a healthy, connected community.

Djuwang Baring celebrates a partnership with DJAARA (the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and acknowledges that the trails are located on Dja Dja Wurrung Country. This project has been instrumental in strengthening the relationship between Council and DJAARA. The branding and signage suite has been designed by Dja Dja Wurrung enterprise DJANDAK and features art by Nukara Nicholls-Moore, a Dja Dja Wurrung artist.

Djuwang Baring is a unique asset for our local community and visitors. It is generating positive tourism outcomes, including increased visitation, providing a strong return to local and regional businesses and tourism destinations.

The trails are extremely popular, and well-used by local and visiting mountain bikers and biking groups. Council is committing resources to the ongoing auditing and maintenance of the trails.

Djuwang Baring won at the LGPro Awards in two categories – Outstanding Small Rural Council and Community Assets and Infrastructure (Projects \$5 million – \$20 million) for populations under 50,000.

The \$9.4 million project included funding from the Victorian Government's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund (\$2.56 million), with additional funding coming from Victorian Government (\$2.1 million) and the Creswick Community Bank (\$250,000) to supplement Council's contribution to the Hammon Park redevelopments.

Financial Vision

Council continues to face significant financial challenges driven by rising service delivery and construction costs, a small and widely dispersed population, limited revenue opportunities, ongoing recovery from multiple costly natural disasters, and a historically low-rate base since amalgamation.



To address these issues and ensure long-term financial sustainability, Council developed a Financial Vision (adopted September 2024). This document sets clear parameters to guide the next group of Councillors in shaping the Council Plan 2025–2029 and its accompanying Financial Plan.

Councillors and Officers participated in a number of workshops over a 12-month period to review available options to improve the financial sustainability of Council.

In the 2024/25 Budget, Council implemented operational savings of \$1.5 million, while seeking to minimise the impact on service delivery.

The 2024/25 Budget also identified an annual cash shortfall of approximately \$4 million from 2025/26 onwards.

Council hosted an online survey inviting ratepayers, residents and visitors to provide feedback and share their priorities regarding service delivery, community infrastructure renewal or upgrades, and the potential for a rate increase, providing vital input into the Financial Vision.

Community engagement for the Financial Vision identified that 61.6 per cent of the community were open to a rate variation above the rate cap (at various percentages), and 38.44 per cent of community were not open to a rate variation.

In May 2025, Council received confirmation from the ESC that its application for a seven per cent rate cap variation was approved. The increase is a one-off, uplift adjustment in rates, resulting in a total rate rise of 10 per cent for the 2025/26 period (including the three per cent set by the Victorian Government).

Future Hepburn adoption

Council is required to follow Victorian Government planning policy mandates that all municipalities have sufficient land available to cater for projected population growth, and this was a significant driver for the Future Hepburn project. Strategic land use planning is a major focus for Council, embodied in both the Council Plan 2021–2025 and Council Plan 2025–2029.

The delivery of the Future Hepburn project was a critical body of work for the Shire's future, and a key goal in the Council Plan 2021–2025.

At a special meeting in September, Council unanimously adopted the township structure plans (TSPs) (for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon, and Trentham) and the Rural Hepburn Strategy (RHS). The adoption of the TSPs and RHS was the culmination of over two years of work by Council and community and is a once in a generation project.

The TSPs and RHS were developed after extensive consultation with community panels, community and stakeholder groups throughout 2023, along with specialist technical advice from consultants and Council Officers with expertise in planning, ecology, infrastructure, transport, recreation, and economic development.

The delivery of the Future Hepburn project could not have been achieved without the feedback, knowledge and expertise of the community. Council listened and acted on submissions, making community-informed changes to the draft documents.

Future Hepburn generated significant interest from the community. The final engagement period that occurred between Wednesday 1 May and Wednesday 26 June 2024 included 32,441 page views of the Future Hepburn project page on Participate Hepburn, 12,971 letters and 8,016 text messages, seven community information sessions with 623 participants attending, a Future Hepburn webinar with 80 participants and 366 views, and a total of 577 submissions from community members and other stakeholders.

The implementation of Future Hepburn will involve future planning scheme amendments, along with more formal community and stakeholder consultation. There will also need to be future Council decisions at key stages, independent expert scrutiny of Council's strategic work, and a decision from the Minister for Planning on whether to adopt or reject Council's proposed planning scheme amendments.

The Block

In July 2024, the producers of *The Block* announced their decision to choose Daylesford for the filming of the 2025 season, at the corner of Raglan Street and the Midland Highway in Daylesford. Filming of the much-loved renovation competition reality TV series commenced in March 2025, coinciding with the ChillOut Festival on the Labour Day long-weekend.

Hosting *The Block* has proven to be an excellent opportunity for the Shire, delivering noticeable economic benefits and showcasing our beautiful landscapes, rich history, and vibrant community to millions of viewers across the country.

Daylesford, known for its charming streets, restaurants and cafes, mineral springs and spa resorts, has and will continue to benefit from an influx of visitors.

The Shire stands to gain far more than architecturally beautiful homes, the exposure will continue to boost tourism beyond the show's broadcast, reinforcing the Hepburn Shire as a must-visit destination for local and international travellers.

Council Officers worked closely with the production crews to limit disruption and ensure a successful filming schedule.

The Block began airing on television in July 2025.

"The highlight this year has been the completion and in particular the activation of projects such as The Mechanics Trentham (June 2024) and Creswick Trails network. These projects have taken years to plan and complete, and have spanned many terms of Council. They are projects that will serve generations of people. The fact that several terms served by many and varied councillors is a testament to the important projects that have an enduring benefit to community and the region."

- Cr Don Henderson

The year in review

July 2024

- Launched community engagement for the Financial Vision on Participate Hepburn.
- Promoted Plastic Free July.
- Installed a Choose Tap water fountain at Chatfield Reserve (Lake Daylesford) in partnership with Central Highlands Water.
- Launched Young Mayors program.
- Received funding through the Victorian Government's 2024 Seniors Festival Active Living Fund for Council's Seniors Festival 2024.
- Celebrated NAIDOC Week 2024 with a flag raising ceremony at The Mechanics Trentham.
- Launched a Container Deposit Scheme Unit at the Clunes IGA.
- Announced successful outcomes for several applications for funding from the Regional Development Victoria's Tiny Towns Fund.

- Queens Park (Clunes) shade structure - \$45,000
- Newlyn Recreation Reserve playspace upgrade planning - \$18,750
- Victoria Park, Daylesford Masterplan Development - \$50,000
- Accessible Equestrian Mounting Ramp Glenlyon Recreation Reserve - \$37,500
- Trentham Outdoor Fitness Equipment Installation - \$44,970
- Hosted an Australian Citizenship ceremony where ten new citizens were welcomed to the country and Shire at the Daylesford Town Hall.
- Acknowledged that the 2025 season of The Block will be filmed in Daylesford.
- Completed a condition audit of the stormwater network.
- A rejuvenated Central Springs Reserve is reopened to the public with new mineral spring pumps, brass artwork by Timani Nicholls-Moore and BBQ area.





Central Highlands Water

NAIDOC Week

- Inaugural Rainbow Action Plan adopted at July Council meeting.
- Electric vehicle charger installed at The Mechanics Trentham.
- Launched Arts and Culture Strategy.
- Daylesford named TAC Victorian Top Small Tourism Town winner.
- Central Springs Reserve is officially opened by former mayor Cr Brian Hood, the Hon Catherine King MP and DJAARA CEO Rodney Carter.
- Partnered with Central Highlands Rural Health (CHRH) to deliver primary school puberty education.



Central Springs Reserve



Daylesford Riding for the Disabled Association

"A few highlights - Future
Hepburn and endorsing
the town structure plans;
welcoming new citizens
to the Shire, and having
some wonderful women
inducted into the Shire's
Heather Mutimer Honour
Roll - not just women who
are contributing today but
acknowledging Jessie Leggatt,
one of the women who
have made a contribution
years ago but have often
been forgotten with time."

- Cr Lesley Hewitt



Trentham EV

August 2024

- Opened 32 km of Djuwang Baring five months ahead of schedule.
- Supported 'Winter in the Gardens' at the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, a collaboration between the Friends of Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens Daylesford (FWHBG), Daylesford and District Horticultural, Agricultural and Historical Societies and U3A.
- Finalised the Creswick Creek project, a partnership program between Council and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).
- Renovation work begins at the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens Day Basin; a water storage facility that sits at the base of the historic Pioneer Memorial Tower.
- Daylesford named one of the top ten most beautiful places in Australia by Time Out.
- Released a statement welcoming the Victorian Liquor Commission's decision to refuse Dan Murphy's a licence to operate a store in Daylesford.

- Visit Hepburn Shire website launched.
- Sustainable Hepburn, Biodiversity and Environment Group grants recipients celebrated at The Mechanics Trentham.
- Djuwang Baring website launched.
- Launched Business and Community local directories, enabling businesses and community groups to promote themselves and for residents to search and support local businesses, community groups, associations and sporting clubs.



Gillie Gough and Patrice O'Shea from the Friends of Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens at the Day Basin prior to works commencing



Creswick local Xanthia Chatham is the first to ride the partially opened Diuwang Baring



Group shot of grant recipients

- Inaugural Rainbow Action Plan launched with the Hon Harriet Shing MP and the Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP in Daylesford.
- Reconciliation Action Plan adopted at August Council Meeting.
- Joined Victorian Government anti-vaping campaign to empower young people to say no to vaping.
- Acknowledged Wear it Purple Day.
- Funding announced for Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve Masterplan to develop a masterplan to establish a guide for the future development and management of the reserve.

September 2024

- In-vessel composting units installed and operational at Creswick Transfer Station.
- Local Government Inspectorate announces that it will not be releasing a report on the Hepburn Hub at The Rex project.
- Council unanimously adopted the TSPs (for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon, and Trentham) and the RHS at a Special Council Meeting.
- Community invited to help name 70 segments in Djuwang Baring.
- Hartowing Rainbow Rain

Rainbow Action Plan launch

- Council endorsed the Financial Vision at a Special Council Meeting.
- Daylesford received silver in the Australian Top Tourism Town awards Small Tourism Town category.
- 2023/24 Annual Report adopted.
- Confirmed future for Daylesford Town Hall.
 The project team was given the green light to develop designs to locate the library and community spaces at the Town Hall, with the assistance of a community-based Project Advisory Group (PAG).
- Hosted 55 planning students from RMIT University at Council Chamber in Daylesford.



Loading food and garden organics into composting unit



Council Officers hosting RMIT students

October 2024

- Celebrated Positive Ageing Month with the Positive Ageing Expo at the RACV Goldfields Resort in Creswick.
- The Big Rainbow at Victoria Park, Daylesford undergoes maintenance to get it sparkling again.
- Hosted the Emergency Services Expo with representation from a number of emergency response agencies at Victoria Park, Daylesford.
- 2024 local council elections.



November 2024

- On Tuesday 5 November 2024, Council and community came together commemorate the lives lost and those forever changed by the collision in Daylesford in 2023.
- Hosted a free skate park competition at the Daylesford Skate Park for all ages and abilities.
- On Friday 8 November, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) declared the results for Council and the successful candidates were:
 - Don Henderson
 - Brian Hood
 - Lesley Hewitt
 - Tony Clark
 - Tim Drylie
 - Pat Hockey
 - Shirley Cornish
- Acknowledged Remembrance Day.
- Acknowledged National Recycling Week.
- Formally started the bituminous reseal season by stabilising patching on selected roads.

- Celebrated Trans Awareness Week with a panel discussion. Panel members were Cerise Howard (Program Director of the Melbourne Queer Film Festival), Georgie George (performer and mental health advocate), and Grace Lee (psychotherapist and counsellor).
- Annual free green waste drop off.
- Roadside slashing program begins. The program included the slashing of over 550 kilometres of roadsides.
- On Thursday 14 November, our seven Councillors were worn in, in front of the CEO, Bradley Thomas, friends and family, and Council Officers.
- Awarded funding for the 'Optimising compost quality for beneficial application' project through Sustainability Victoria's Circular Economy Organics Council Fund.
- Celebrated the opening of the new Dja Dja
 Wurrung Corporate and Community Centre named Larnangurrak meaning 'Our Place'.
- Participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign against gender-based violence from 25 November to 10 December.

- Cr Don Henderson was elected Mayor and Cr Lesley Hewitt as Deputy Mayor at a Statutory Council Meeting for the first year of the new four-year Council term. Town Crier makes formal declaration in front of the Daylesford Town Hall.
- Unveiled plaque recognising the AIDS Memorial Tree at Chatfield Reserve by Lake Daylesford.
- Restoration works at Daylesford Town Hall commence.
- Celebrated Trentham Twilight Night.
- Celebrated the official and full opening of Djuwang Baring at the Hammon Park Trailhead.



Cr Don Henderson, Cr Tony Clark, Cr Lesley Hewitt, Cr Tim Drylie, David Tannard (VOGA), Cr Shirley Cornish, Cr Pat Hockey, the Hon Martha Haylett MP



Cr Don Henderson and Cr Lesley Hewitt



AIDS Memorial Tree plaque

December 2024

- Acknowledged International Day of People with Disability.
- The Reconciliation Advisory Committee meet for the first time in the new Council term.
- Launched grant writing sessions for the community.
- The 2024 pool season began on Saturday
 7 December.
- The Daylesford Highland Gathering took place in Daylesford.
- Road reseal program began in Clunes, a maintenance activity to prolong the life of the existing sealed road network.
- The annual Community Grants
 Program opened.
- 13 kilometres of gravel resheeting completed.
- Council released a statement condemning recent incidents of antisocial behaviour in the Shire. Council confirmed that it would not tolerate homophobia, racism or any behaviour that seeks to diminish and devalue another's life experience.

- Celebrated International Mountain Day with DJAARA at Lalgambuk (Mount Franklin).
- New signage installed on bin collection trucks promoting food and garden organics recycling.
- Hosted the annual Visitor Information Centre (VIC) volunteer lunch where our dedicated volunteers were recognised for their dedication to our Shire.
- Added fresh sand to the beach at Lake
 Daylesford and Jubilee Lake in preparation
 for summer.
- Launched the Bright-eyed Brown
 Butterfly Restoration project in
 partnership with Healthy Coliban and
 local environment groups.
- Held the first Council Meeting of the new Council term.
- Launched the Circular Organics project ('Optimising compost quality for beneficial application').





Pools

Resheeting

January 2025

- Received Victorian Government funding to support OCTAVE youth events in the community.
- Our dedicated Parks and Gardens team spruced up township planter boxes.
- Hosted the annual Community Awards and an Australian citizenship ceremony on Friday 24 January at The Mechanics Trentham.
 Aunty Marilyne Nicholls and minsters
 Catherine King and Martha Haylett were in attendance.
 - Citizen of the Year Steve Ellis, for his fantastic community service and volunteer efforts in various local initiatives.
 - Event of the Year 160th Anniversary
 Clunes Show, for bringing us all together
 to celebrate and promote our region's
 rich heritage and community spirit
 (Jenny Redpath).
 - Hepburn Together Daylesford and Hepburn United Soccer Club, for creating a welcoming environment, fostering team spirit, and supporting youth development through soccer (Kirsty Plews and Chris Gingell).

- Hepburn Together project launched which focused on developing and delivering the Council Plan 2025–2029 in partnership with the community.
- World Heritage tentative listing for Victorian Goldfields approved by Australian Government.



Community Awards winners



Still from food and garden organics video



Scott Wade, Cr Tim Drylie, Bradley Thomas, Chantelle Hatzinikitas and Bruce Lucas

February 2025

- Sustainable Hepburn and Biodiversity grants programs opened.
- Annual Lyonville Woodchop held at Lyonville Hall.
- Launched annual reusable products voucher program
- Announced the partnership between Council and Mount Alexander Shire Council to deliver building services across both areas.
- Begonias at Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens in full bloom.
- Hosted 'Sunset in the Springs', a youth music event, over two weekends in February.
- Hosted the first Councillor Listening Post of the year at the Creswick IGA on Saturday 15 February.

- Djuwang Baring hosted its first public event, the Ballarat Cycle Classic.
- Mayor and Deputy Mayor visited Middleton Field in Daylesford. The event marked the start of "The Village" project, a sustainable home initiative which includes affordable homes for low-income women and womenled families.
- Hosted an industry open day at the Creswick Transfer Station, so neighbouring councils could have the opportunity to view and learn about our onsite in-vessel composting units.
- Prepared the Grove of Gratitude at Wombat Flat for a ChillOut Festival planting event with volunteers from Switchboard Victoria.
- Tender awarded for reconstruction of Dean-Newlyn Road.



Mel, Head Gardener at Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens



Middleton Field

March 2025

- Acknowledged Clean Up Australia Day 2025.
- Celebrated the Daylesford & District Historical Society's 60th anniversary.
- Celebrated International Women's Day with an event that saw five new members inducted into the International Women's Day Heather Mutimer Honour Roll; Mary Harvey, Jessie Leggatt (Posthumous), Donna Kelly, Mary-Faeth Chenery, and Lynda Poke.
- Celebrated ChillOut Festival 2025 in Daylesford and across the Shire.
- The filming on *The Block* 2025 begins with the ChillOut Festival parade.
- Commenced decking and drainage works at the Hepburn Bathhouse.
- Submitted a proposal to the ESC for a higher rate cap in 2025/26 to secure long-term financial sustainability.
- Funding secured for battery storage and solar at The Mechanics Trentham.
- Vaughan Springs Road bridge remediation works completed.
- Released a statement regarding the unofficial release of the confidential draft Local Government Inspectorate Report into The Rex.

"As a new Councillor elected in November 2024, it has been a challenging eight months of learning and understanding both the breadth of services and responsibilities of the Council and the diversity of our community across such a large area. It has been a challenging and difficult period addressing the long-term sustainability facing the Shire and all local government bodies which has required courage and fortitude from everyone.

It has been an honour and a privilege to work alongside my fellow Councillors, Officers and community to make difficult decisions, and I am looking forward to a positive future developing a supportive community."

- Cr Tony Clark



IWD 2025

- Acknowledged Cultural Diversity Week.
- Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors and Council Officers toured The Block site.
- Celebrated Clunes Booktown Festival.
- Installed interpretive signage on the Goldfields Track in partnership with the Victorian Government, DJAARA and local community groups, businesses and peak bodies.
- Hosted a Councillor Listening Post in Daylesford.
- Council released a statement expressing dissatisfaction and disappointment with the unfair Emergency Services Volunteers Fund, a Victorian Government levy.
- Celebrated 160 years of the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve, and 10 years since the pedestrian bridge was opened.

- Council advocated for support for regional local government at the Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils' quarterly meeting and at a meeting with Minister for Local Government, Nick Staikos, and Mary-Anne Thomas MP.
- Celebrated and welcomed new Creswick residents.
- Tree planted in honour of Private Thomas Alfred Chaplain on the historic Daylesford Avenue of Honour.
- Acknowledged Trans Day of Visibility.

Council visits The Block site



April 2025

- Commenced works on Dean-Newlyn Road.
- Council released a statement condemning hostile behaviour towards Council Officers.
- Installed 40 km/hr signs in and around the Daylesford township.
- Repaired the footpath in Hepburn between Tenth Street and Golf Links Road.
- Celebrated CresFest.
- Opened the Hepburn Together survey regarding the development of the Council Plan 2025–2029.
- Minister for Police, Anthony Carbines and Member for Ripon, Martha Haylett visited Creswick with Mayor, Cr Don Henderson, addressing policing in the area and the problems being faced.
- Turned off comments on Facebook in response to increasing negative community behaviours.
- Completed the Daylesford Football & Netball Sports Lighting Upgrade project.
- Celebrated Anzac Day with community commemorations around the Shire.
- Completed footpath works on Main Road, Hepburn.

May 2025

- The Great Aussie Hike walks through Hepburn and Daylesford.
- Celebrated The Great Trentham Spudfest.
- Celebrated one year of the food and garden organics collection.
- Acknowledged International Compost Awareness Week.
- Mayor, Cr Don Henderson, Deputy Mayor, Lesley Hewitt, Councillors and Council Officers attended the Live4Life launch at Daylesford College.
- Hosted a Native Screening Plants Workshop in Daylesford.
- Acknowledged Are You Safe at Home? Day.
- ESC approved Council's application for a rate cap variation in 2025/26.
- Council endorsed the draft Hepburn
 Together documents to go out to public exhibition at a Special Council Meeting.
- Installed new bike racks in Creswick due to the increasing popularity of Diuwang Baring.





Victoria Park, Daylesford

- Raised the rainbow flag to acknowledge the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT).
- Launched the DV (domestic violence)
 Safe Phone program, where community
 members and businesses could donate old
 or unwanted phones to be repurposed for
 victims/survivors of domestic violence.
- Hosted a Councillor Listening Post in Trentham.
- Celebrated National Volunteers Week with two 'Thank You' dinners for those volunteering and serving in our community.
- Offered free youth mental health first aid training.

- Hosted several Hepburn Together community drop-in sessions around the Shire. Giving residents and businesses the opportunity to speak directly with Councillors and senior Council Officers.
- Acknowledged National Sorry Day.
- Council adopted the Future
 Hepburn Settlement Strategy and
 Implementation Plan.
- Councillors unanimously moved a motion confirming Council's strong opposition to the Emergency Service Volunteers Fund, a Victorian Government levy.
- Celebrated and acknowledged Reconciliation Week with a flag raising ceremony at the Creswick Hub.



Volunteers dinner at Victoria Park Pavilion



Creswick bike rack



IDAHOBIT rainbow flag raising

June 2025

- Ted, a young labrador, was rescued from an eight-metre mineshaft near Trentham with help from Council.
- Djuwang Baring won at the LGPro Awards in two categories – Outstanding Small Rural Council and Community Assets and Infrastructure (Projects \$5 million - \$20 million) for populations under 50,000.
- Trentham named a finalist at the 2025 TAC
 Victorian Top Tourism Town Awards.
- Gave away compost generated from the Circular Organics project to community members.
- Hosted a Healthy Landscapes event for farmers at the Trentham Sportsground.
- Announced Council's partnership with TEDx to take part in the inaugural TEDx Daylesford Youth Talks.
- Opened the draft Integrated Transport Strategy for community feedback.

- Works commenced at the Glenlyon Recreation Reserve for the accessible horse mounting ramp.
- Hosted a Youth Songwriter Showcase at Radius Art in Hepburn Springs.
- Opened round one of the Victoria Park, Daylesford Masterplan for community feedback.
- Local restaurateur, Annie Smithers, du Fermier, recognised with 'Ordre du Mérite Agricole' at Parliament House.
- Hosted a Councillor Listening Post in Glenlyon.
- Completed the decking and drainage works at the Hepburn Bathhouse.
- Wrapped up 12 months of The Vet Project which desexed, microchipped and registered 120 cats over six days.
- Adopted the new Council Plan 2025–2029, 2025/26 Budget, Financial Plan 2025–2035, Revenue and Rating Plan 2025–2029 and Asset Plan 2025–2035.



Labrador Ted rescued from mineshaft in Trentham

- Hosted an Emergency Services Panel event at the Creswick Town Hall with representation from emergency services agencies like the CFA, Victoria Police, SES, Australian Red Cross and more.
- Mayor, Cr Don Henderson, met with the Minister for Local Government, Nick Staikos, to discuss a range of pressing issues facing the community.
- The Western Renewables Link
 Environmental Effects Statement is made available to the public.

"The proposed Glenlyon
"Pavilion" included input
from the Project Advisory
Group and community
consultation with the aim of
deciding whether to build a
new pavilion or renovate the
existing historic site. There
is a continued focus on
making the pavilion a vibrant,
inclusive and sustainable
community space."

- Cr Shirley Cornish



Compost giveaway



Mary-Anne Thomas MP, Annie Smithers and Cr Don Henderson



Hepburn Bathhouse finished works June 2025



Emergency Services Panel event Creswick Town Hall

Awards and recognition

Daylesford Top Tourism Town

On 25 July 2024, Daylesford was named the best Small Tourism Town for 2024 in the TAC Victorian Top Tourism Town awards. Daylesford won in the category 'Top Small Tourism Town' (population between 1,500 and 5,000) against Heathcote, Koroit, Maldon and Sorrento.

The Top Tourism Town awards recognise and reward towns that demonstrate a strong commitment to tourism and to increasing visitation to the destination, that offer an excellent visitor experience, and exhibit collaboration with tourism operators, local businesses and the community, to make their town the best destination it can be.

Daylesford's nomination was put forward by Destination Central Victoria (formerly Daylesford Macedon Tourism) in partnership with Council. The award is judged on a demonstration of commitment to tourism and increasing visitation, excellent visitor experience, and exhibiting collaboration with tourism operators, local businesses and the community.



Daylesford recognised in Australia's Top Small Tourism Town Awards

On 10 September 2024, Council received a silver award in the Small Tourism Town Award category for Daylesford at the Australian Top Tourism Town Awards at Parliament House in Canberra.

The recognition was a credit to staff at Destination Central Victoria for their work producing a comprehensive submission which was developed in collaboration with Council.

The achievement recognises Daylesford businesses and communities who continue to offer excellent visitor experiences.



Daylesford Top Tourism Town July 2025

Djuwang Baring named winner of two LGPro Awards

On 6 June 2025, Council was named a winner in the LGPro awards in two categories for its work on Djuwang Baring. The categories were Outstanding Small Rural Council Initiative, and Community Assets and Infrastructure (Projects \$5 million - \$20 million) and Population less than 50,000.

The Djuwang Baring project has set a new benchmark for how infrastructure projects can simultaneously support economic growth, community wellbeing, and a deep commitment to environmental sustainability and cultural respect.

The two awards are a testament to the collaboration between Council, community members, Traditional Owners, and land managers.

Council was recognised among some of Victoria's leading local government initiatives in other shires.

Advocacy

Council plays a vital role in advocating for the needs and interests of the community by representing local voices in decision-making processes at regional, state, and national levels. Through ongoing engagement with residents, Council identifies key issues, such as infrastructure, housing, and environmental sustainability, and works to influence policies and funding decisions that address these concerns. By building partnerships with other levels of government, community groups, and industry stakeholders, Council ensures that local priorities are heard and acted upon. This advocacy helps to create a more inclusive, responsive, and resilient community.



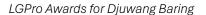




Photo from left: Cr Paul Tatchell, Cr Tanya Kehoe, Hon Nick Staikos MP, Cr Tracey Hargreaves, Cr Grace La Vella, Cr Owen Sharkey and Cr Don Henderson.

Reconciliation

Council collaborates with DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) to strengthen relationships with Traditional Owners and support cultural heritage preservation across the Shire. This partnership focuses on recognising and respecting the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Custodians of the land, integrating their knowledge and values into Council planning, land management, and community engagement initiatives. Through joint projects, cultural awareness programs, and ongoing dialogue, Council and DJAARA work together to promote reconciliation, protect significant cultural sites, and ensure that Dja Dja Wurrung voices are central to shaping the future of the region.

Western Renewables Link

AusNet Transmission Group is planning a 190-kilometre overhead high voltage electricity transmission line from Bulgana in western Victoria to Sydenham near Melbourne. The transmission line is proposed to cross the Hepburn Shire from east to west through the Mount Prospect, Newlyn, Kingston and Smeaton communities.

Council is strongly opposed to the project in its current location and form and continues to advocate for better solutions on behalf of affected communities. Council has advocated for the transmission line infrastructure to be placed underground or re-routed to avoid impacting high quality agricultural land, attractive heritage landscapes, and the wellbeing of our affected community.

In 2024, Council focused on reviewing the draft technical reports included in the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) that AusNet is required to submit and receive Ministerial approval for. The EES was released in late June 2025, and Council has allocated significant funding within its budget to support a comprehensive submission, reflecting ongoing strong community concern and a clear opposition to the project.

To support the community during the EES submission process, Council hosted a number of independent community information sessions in mid-July 2025 to enable discussion, provide guidance and answer questions. The EES was also displayed in Council libraries and hubs to give community members easy access to the information.

Endeavour Group/Dan Murphy's

In early 2023, Council, alongside a large number of community members, objected at the Liquor Licensing Commission (LLC) to the granting of a liquor licence to Dan Murphy's to operate at 63 Central Springs Road in Daylesford.

A four-week hearing was held during which the Council was represented by a barrister, while the majority of community members represented themselves. Council strongly advocated for the refusal during the submission process and at hearings, along with a number of committed community members who contributed their time and presented evidence.

In August 2024, the LLC refused Dan Murphy's a licence to operate in Daylesford. This was the first time the new definition of "harm" under the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* was used to refuse a licence, making it a landmark decision.



The decision was made namely on the basis that granting the licence could pose a public risk, encourage harm (particularly on minors) and have adverse social impacts.

The Endeavour Group (Dan Murphy's) made a decision to appeal the LLC ruling to refuse the licence in September 2024.

At the March 2025 meeting, Council resolved to make a written submission to VCAT in relation to the ongoing appeal by Endeavour Group for a packaged liquor licence. Council continues to believe that there is a public risk, and any decision to grant a licence would have adverse social impacts.

Emergency Services Volunteer Fund

Property owners contribute, through Council rates, to support emergency and disaster response services. At the May 2025 meeting, Councillors unanimously moved a motion confirming a strong opposition to the Emergency Services Volunteers Fund (ESVF), announced by the Victorian Government, which replaces the fire services property levy.

Council has written to the Treasurer and Minister for Local Government expressing that the levy has a disproportionate financial burden on rural and regional communities, like ours, especially primary producers.

Council will continue to advocate for the Shire and join the many other councils opposing the levy.

Financial sustainability

Council has actively participated in both state and federal enquiries into the financial sustainability of local government, making detailed submissions that highlight the growing challenges faced in maintaining service delivery standards amid constrained resources.

These enquiries aim to assess the capacity of local governments to sustainably manage infrastructure, deliver essential services, and respond to shifting responsibilities from higher levels of government. Through its submissions, Council has provided evidence of current financial pressures, including cost-shifting, rate-capping, limited revenue-raising capacity, and increasing community expectations. Council has also outlined potential reforms and funding models to support long-term sustainability and ensure equitable service delivery across all communities. Bradley Thomas, CEO, addressed the Victorian Government's Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee.

Housing

A growing number of people in the Hepburn Shire are finding it difficult to secure a home at a price they can afford. The challenges faced by our community can be grouped into three key issues, and a person or household may be experiencing one or a combination of these.

Affordability – people are spending so much on housing that they cannot pay for other basic needs like food, utilities, or medical expenses.

Availability – Even when people can afford the rent, there are not enough long-term rental properties available. This means people are competing and vulnerable people are more likely to miss out.

Appropriateness – Some people have a roof over their head, but the house is not appropriate for their needs.

Council plays an important role in helping our community to overcome these challenges, now and into the future. We do this in three main ways:

 By working in partnership with the community, organisations, and Victorian Government departments, we can help

- to address housing affordability in the municipality and encourage development of affordable and appropriate housing.
- By identifying how and where land use planning and other regulatory measures can be used to unlock areas for future housing, Council can facilitate the delivery of affordable housing in the Shire.
- Finally, Council recognises the importance of advocacy to state and federal governments. Council will continue to call for improved outcomes for our Shire through capital investment.

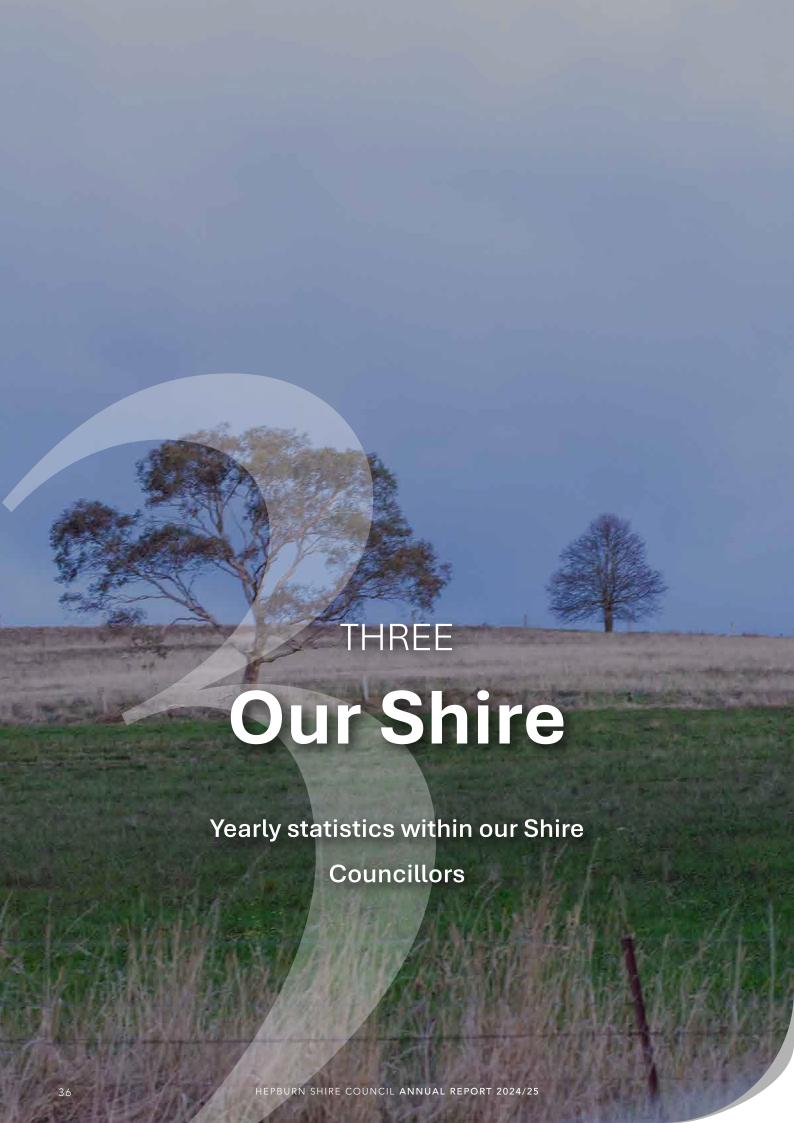
The Council Plan 2025–2029 is Council's key strategic document. It sets out how Council will work towards achieving the Community Vision 2031 over the next four years. It contains three domains (Hepburn Life, Future Hepburn, and Hepburn Working Together) which all contribute to our community's housing needs now and into the future, and provide a solid foundation for our advocacy to state and federal governments.

"It was a huge responsibility to contribute to the formulation of the budget and plan for 2025/26. Being part of a team that is working to restore the Council's finances for the long-term is hard work at a difficult time and I acknowledge the optimism and tenacity at the core of the organisation."

- Cr Pat Hockey



Clunes main street



Our community

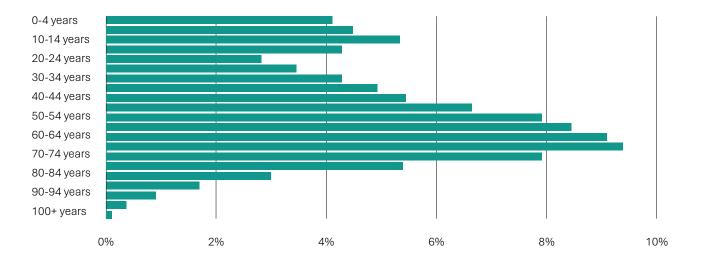
Population

16,824

Estimated to grow 12.3 per cent 2023-2026



Age profile





42.97%

Daylesford area



31.42%

Creswick area



13.29%

Clunes area



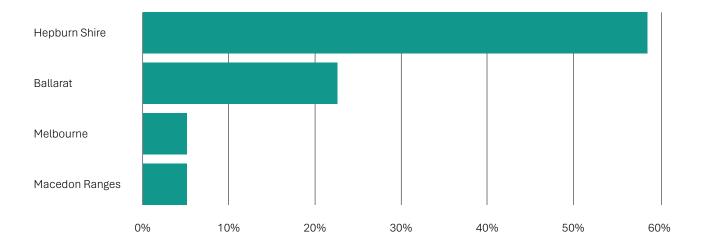
12.23%

Trentham area

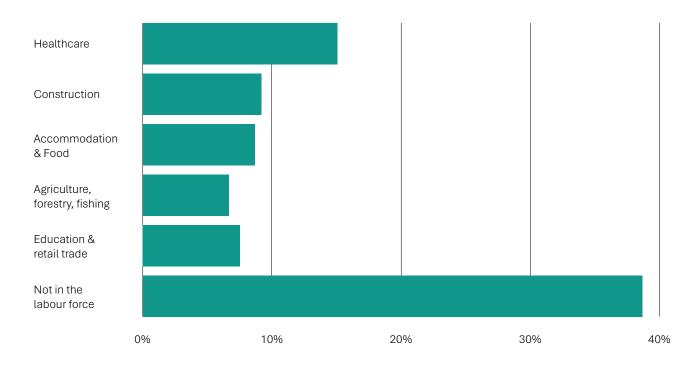
Business



Shire workforce usual place of work



Shire workforce industries



Employment



14.46%

Healthcare and social assistance



9.21%

Construction



9.03%

Accommodation & food services



8%

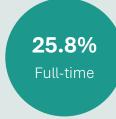
Retail trade



8.03%

Education & training

Shire workforce (FTE)



21.1% Part-time 2.1% Unemployed

21%Volunteer

Diversity



1.1%

Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander



13.8%

Born overseas



6.8%

Households where a language other than English is used

Education



37.4%

Bachelor's degree or above

Youth



11.72%

Disengaged youth aged 15-24

Tourism



\$233.5m

Output

Community



5.9% Ran out of food and



7.1%Organised sport participation rate



19.8%
Increased risk of alcohol-related harm



could not afford more

4.1%Currently vape



16.9%
Low income households under financial stress



6.8%Same sex couple households



64.5%Sufficiently active



52.2%Overweight or obese



14.3% Currently smoke tobacco



11.2%
Diagnosed with a mental health condition



6.7%Profound or severe disability



4.6%
Adults who met guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption



Councillors

The following Councillors were elected to represent the Shire in the 2024 local council elections.



Cr Don Henderson (Mayor)

Councillors voted to elect Cr Henderson as Mayor on 26 November 2024.

Phone: 0427 559 684

Email: dhenderson@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Henderson represents Council on the following committees and external bodies:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Committee
- Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils
- Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils
- Dean Recreation Reserve and Tennis Courts Community Asset Committee



Cr Lesley Hewitt (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors voted to elect Cr Hewitt as Deputy Mayor on 26 November 2024.

Phone: 0408 793 941

Email: lhewitt@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Hewitt represents Council on the following committees and external bodies:

- Daylesford Community Facilities Project Advisory Group
- Gender Equity Advisory Committee
- Drummond Hall Community Asset Committee
- Glenlyon Recreation Reserve Community Asset Committee
- Clydesdale Public Hall Reserve Committee Incorporated
- Cornish Hill Committee of Management Incorporated
- Daylesford Museum Reserve Committee of Management Incorporated
- Daylesford Trotting Track Reserve Committee Incorporated
- Franklinford Community Purposes Reserve
- Hepburn Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Incorporated
- Leonards Hill Mechanics Institute and Free Library Committee of Management Incorporated
- Municipal Association of Victoria (alternative representative)



Cr Brian Hood

Phone: 0427 797 151

Email: bhood@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Hood represents Council on the following committees and external bodies:

- Lyonville Hall Community Asset Committee
- Bullarto Public Hall Committee Incorporated
- Newbury Public Hall and Recreation Reserve Committee Incorporated
- Trentham and District Historical Society Incorporated
- Trentham Public Purpose Reserves Committee of Management Incorporated
- Trentham Quarry Street Reserve Committee Incorporated
- Trentham Sports Ground Reserve Committee of Management Incorporated



Cr Tony Clark

Phone: 0484 906 747

Email: tclark@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Clark represents Council on the following committees and external bodies:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Disability Advisory Committee
- Creswick Theatre Company Incorporated
- Lingbogol Camp Area Creswick



Cr Tim Drylie

Phone: 0427 503 258

Email: tdrylie@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Drylie represents Council on the following committees and external bodies:

- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Sustainable Hepburn Community Advisory Committee
- Yandoit Mechanics Institute and Free Library Committee Incorporated
- Yandoit Public Park and Recreation Reserve Committee Incorporated



Cr Pat Hockey

Phone: 0484 637 016

Email: phockey@hepburn.vic.gov.au

Cr Hockey represents Council on the following committees and external bodies:

- World Heritage Listing of the Victorian Goldfields Region
- Mineral Springs Reserves Advisory Committee
- Creswick Museum Community Asset Committee
- Lee Medlyn Home of Bottles Community Asset Committee
- Campbelltown Recreation and Public Hall Reserve Committee of Management Incorporated
- Clunes Former Free Lending Library Committee Incorporated
- Clunes Neighbourhood House Incorporated
- Ullina Reserve and Recreation Park Management Committee Incorporated
- Upper Loddon and Avoca Landcare Network Incorporated



Cr Shirley Cornish

Phone: 0458 961 949

Email: scornish@hepburn.vic.gov.au

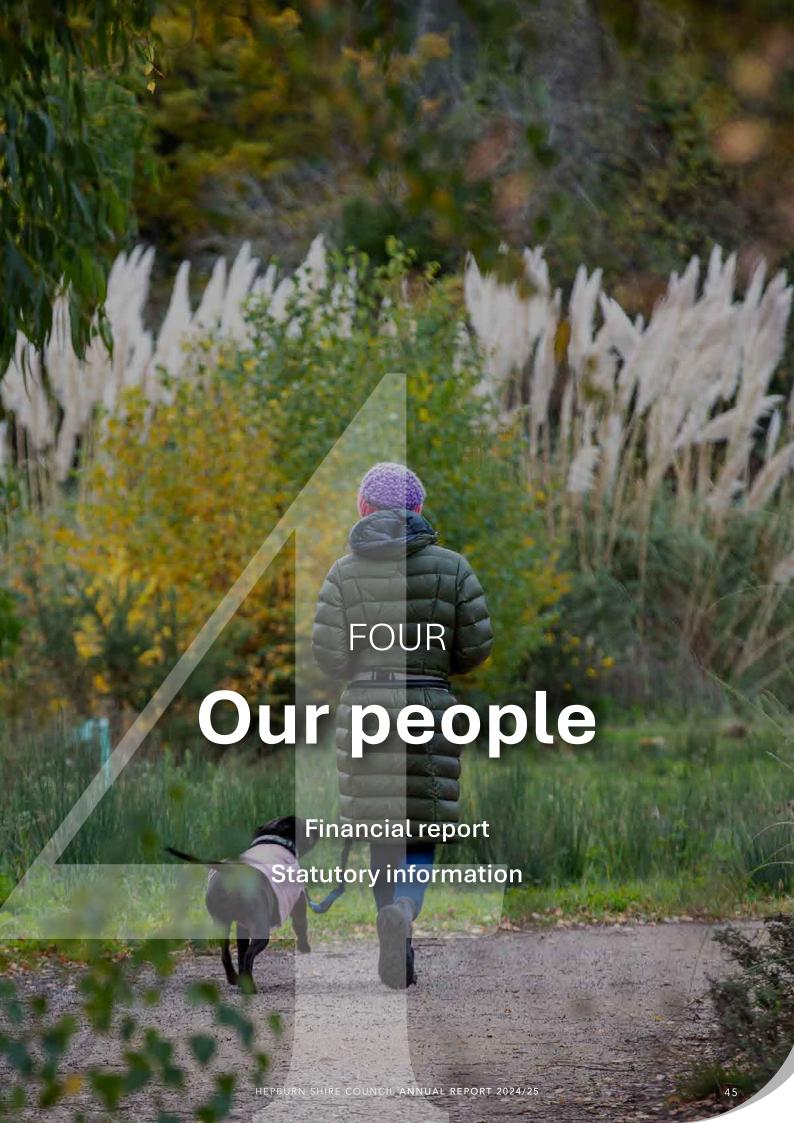
Cr Cornish represents Council on the following committees and external bodies:

- Glenlyon Recreation Reserve Community Pavilion Project Advisory Group
- Heather Mutimer International Women's Day Honour Roll Advisory Committee
- LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee
- Glenlyon Progress Association and Shire Hall

Previous Councillors

Cr Tessa Halliday (Term ended 26 October 2024)
Cr Jen Bray (Term ended 26 October 2024)

Cr Juliet Simpson (Resigned 22 July 2024)



Organisational structure

Council transitioned to an interim organisational structure in August 2024 which involved a reduction of directorates from four to three. The structure was considered interim due to the significant operational savings required for implementation in 2025/26 and ongoing to deliver Council's adopted Financial Vision. Across May and June 2025, extensive consultation and consideration of the organisational structure was undertaken

with the new structure effective from 4 August 2025. Presented below is the structure that was in place for 2024/25 and the structure to be implemented ongoing aligned to the newly adopted Council Plan 2025–2029 and service delivery. The organisational structure as presented below received extensive consultation and consideration in May and June 2024 and was effective from 4 August 2025.

2024/25 Structure **Chief Executive Officer Bradley Thomas Director Infrastructure Director Development Director Performance** & Delivery & Community & Transformation **Bruce Lucas** Ron Torres **Brooke Holmes Manager Operations & Project Delivery** Manager Governance & Risk Manager Planning & Building Asset Delivery & Construction Corporate Governance & Assurance Planning Permits and Compliance Asset Maintenance Councillor Governance Affordable Housing Open Space, Parks & Corporate Reporting **Building Safety** Reserves Management Information & Records Management Manager Facilities & Circular Economy Manager Finance Property, Leasing & Maintenance Financial Strategy, Accounting & Revenue Manager Strategic Planning Sustainability, Climate Resilience & Management Rural and Township Planning Circular Economy Procurement Waste Collection & Recycling Rates & Property Billing Manager Community & Economy Manager Community Safety & Health Business Support, Tourism & Events Manager Technology & Transformation **Emergency Management** ICT strategy, infrastructure and security Community Wellbeing, Support Public Health & Inclusion System Application Management Public Safety Aboriginal Culture, Reconciliation & Arts Youth & Early Years Recreation, Leisure & Aquatics Manager Communication & Customer Manager People & Culture Customer Experience & Libraries People, Culture and Performance Community Engagement Work Health & Safety **External Communications**

Effective as at 4 August 2025

Chief Executive Officer Bradley Thomas

Communications & Engagement

Community Engagement
Communications

Director Infrastructure & Delivery

Bruce Lucas

Manager Operations

Asset Delivery & Construction Asset Maintenance

Open Space, Parks & Reserves Management Recreation & Leisure

Manager Facilities & Circular Economy

Property, Leasing & Maintenance Sustainability, Climate Resilience & Circular Economy Waste Collection & Recycling

Manager Project Delivery

Asset Delivery & Construction Aquatics

Director Development & Community

Ron Torres

Manager Planning

Rural and Township Planning Planning Permits and Compliance Affordable Housing Building Safety

Manager Community Safety & Health

Emergency Management
Public Health
Public Safety

Manager Customer, Community & Economy

Customer Experience & Libraries Business Support, Tourism & Events Community Wellbeing, Support & Inclusion

Aboriginal Culture, Reconciliation & Arts
Youth & Early Years

Director Performance & Transformation

Brooke Holmes

Manager Governance & Risk

Corporate Governance & Assurance
Councillor Governance
Corporate Reporting
Information & Records Management

Manager Finance

Financial Strategy, Accounting & Revenue

Management

Procurement

Rates & Property Billing

Manager Technology & Transformation

ICT strategy, infrastructure and security System Application Management

Manager People & Culture

People, Culture and Performance Work Health & Safety



Workforce

As at 30 June 2025, Council employed 190 people in a diverse range of roles: customer service, reconciliation, engineering, parks and open space, planning, governance, sport and recreation, road maintenance, and school crossing supervisors to name just a small number.

Our workforce consisted of 123 full-time, 54 part-time, and 13 casual employees totalling 190 people. This equates to 155.5 full-time equivalent employees (FTE). The workforce is very close to being an even split of females and males, noting no staff have advised they identify as non-binary, with 48.75 per cent of the workforce female (51.25 per cent of the workforce male).

The FTE budgeted for 2024/25 was 174.3 FTE, therefore vacant FTE at 30 June 2025 were 18.8 FTE. To an extent the vacant FTE reflects Council's management of the imminent changes required to the workforce in 2025/26 to meet the financial sustainability challenges.

Where reasonable to do so, Council held a position vacant and adjusted service accordingly to enable the most considered approach to downsizing the workforce in a respectful and cost-effective manner.

Unplanned employee turnover rate (reflected as resignations where the employees transitioned to a new workplace) was 15.98 per cent. When the overall turnover is adjusted to include planned turnover (redundancies, terminations and retirements) the total annual turnover was 22.4 per cent, a reduction of 1 per cent on 2023/24.

The overall employee turnover rate is higher than would be preferred. Council's turnover rate remains consistent with the industry average for a small rural shire and reflects the challenges of small rural councils in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified individuals.

Note – turnover does not include seasonal workforce or short-term casuals.

Council employees

The following tables summarise the number of FTE Council employs by organisation structure, employment type and gender. This is accurate as at 30 June 2025.

Division	Full Time Female FTE	Full Time Male FTE	Part Time Female FTE	Part Time Male FTE	Casual Female FTE	Casual Male FTE	Total
CEO	0	1.00	0.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.89
Development & Community	16.00	11.00	9.77	2.37	0.10	0.20	39.44
Infrastructure & Delivery	25.00	52.00	5.75	5.20	0.70	0.20	88.85
Performance & Transformation	12.00	6.00	6.52	0.80	0.00	0.00	25.32
TOTAL	53.00	70.00	22.93	8.37	0.80	0.40	155.50

Note - Employment type by gender is represented as female and male, with no staff identified as non-binary.

Actual FTE	Female	Male	Total FTE
Band 1	1.42	0.50	1.92
Band 2	2.25	5.90	8.15
Band 3	1.00	23.00	24.00
Band 4	14.55	10.44	24.99
Band 5	15.33	10.55	25.88
Band 6	17.19	10.88	28.07
Band 7	12.60	8.00	20.60
Band 8	4.00	3.00	7.00
Not applicable	7.89	7.00	14.89
TOTAL	76.23	79.27	155.50

Annual Turnover	%
Unplanned Turnover	15.98%
Planned Turnover	6.43%
Total Turnover	22.1%

Recruitment and retention

Council carried out 56 external recruitment campaigns during the year, onboarding 51 new team members.

- Council has experienced positive trends and outcomes in staff attraction overall. 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 including in our asset maintenance, Geographical Information Services, and planning teams.

Council has continued to offer a 50 per cent 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 most of the staff opting to use the additional flexibility as suited to their role or 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 and employee relations

There were no matters requiring Council's appearance before the Fair Work Commission. People and Culture maintained strong, professional relationships with unions, resolving issues collaboratively

People and culture workforce outcomes

Council's Workforce Strategy, adopted in November 2021 under the *Local Government Act 2020*, continued to guide recruitment, training, and workforce planning. A highlight of achievements in 2024/25 included:

- Transition to a shared services delivery model for Building Services and involvement in a Central Highlands Council Shared Services Project to investigate shared service model for cyber security, procurement and legal.
- Participation in external leadership development including LGPro Emerging Leaders and LGPro Ignite.
- Implementation of IT systems to support and enable better people management including recruitment, onboarding, learning and development, and workplace health and safety.
- Updated Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, and Action Plan.
- Expansion of the Staff Consultative
 Committee from six to 14 representatives.
- 68 per cent participation in the June Employee Pulse Survey and development of a framework to develop action plans from the data.

- Delivery of superannuation seminars and celebration of diversity days including NAIDOC Week, IDAHOBIT, and 16 Days of Activism.
- Offered a range of flexible work arrangements to strengthen gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Learning and employee development

Council is working on the development of our learning and development offering to foster a workplace where our people are provided with valued opportunities to develop their skill and capability and support service delivery outcomes. Development of the learning management system, ELMO, has been undertaken which will be implemented in 2025/26. Key highlights for the year included:

- 105 supported external requests for training covering 440 opportunities.
- Completion of compliance training in outdoor roles including such areas as truck licences, Chemcert, tree felling, playground inspections, backhoe and excavator and health and safety representation.
- Supporting the wellbeing of our staff through challenging circumstances and change, we delivered multiple sessions on managing difficult interactions, maintaining resilience and self-care.
- Participation in LGPro programs including Ignite, Emerging Leaders, and Women's Leadership forum.
- Cultural awareness training and diversity and inclusion training to strengthen cultural awareness, challenge unconscious bias, and promote respectful relationships.

The induction program was enhanced with face-to-face sessions and supported by Council's online learning hub. Council's new learning management system, ELMO, has been developed and launched in September 2024, offering over 400 modules and custom content.

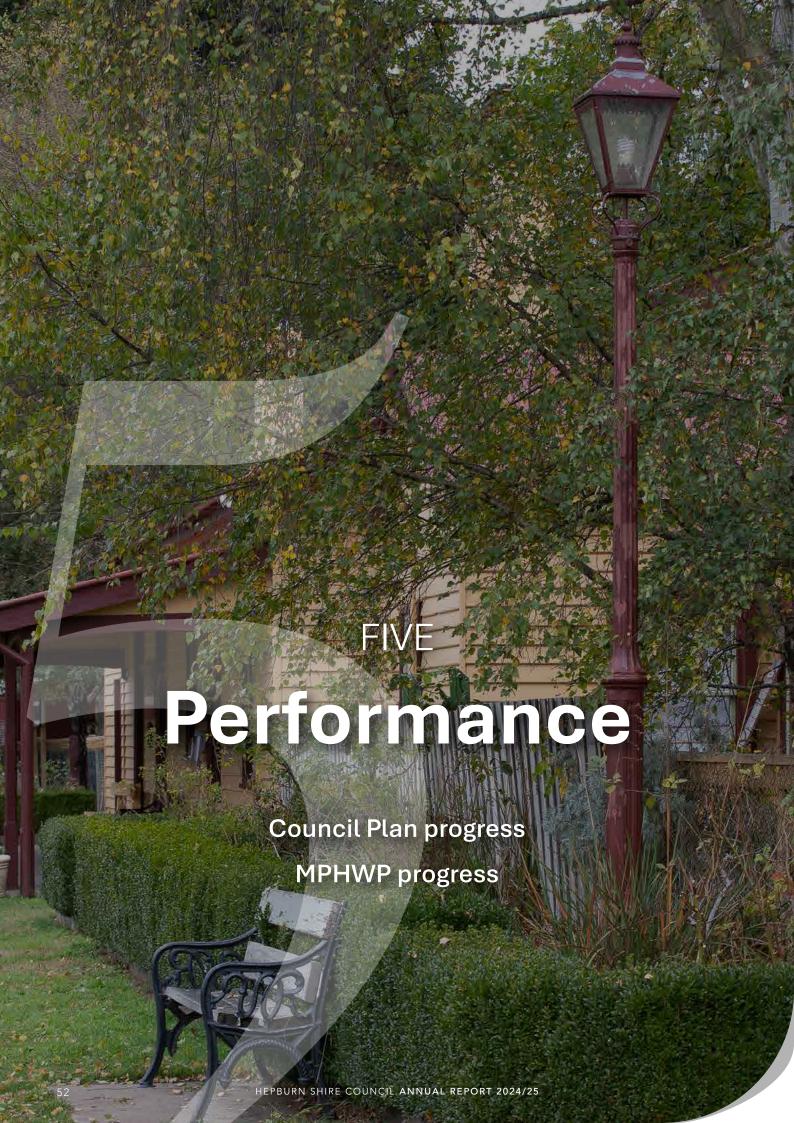
Formal study assistance for staff obtaining relevant qualifications continued, and the biannual Employee Performance Development Program remained a key input into learning needs and planning.

Work health safety and staff wellbeing

Council continued to focus on building and embedding our approach to safety and wellbeing. We maintain a strong commitment to safety and wellbeing, continually improving the training, support, direction, resources and tools our people need to perform their roles safely, effectively and to manage risks they may encounter.

Council Officers continue to work toward actions outlined in the Safety and Wellbeing Roadmap. Key highlights of the year include:

- Partnering and engaging with operational teams to improve safety awareness and support.
- Transition to Evotix to better support safety practice and data with a fit for purpose system.
- Development of multiple policies, procedures and SWMS.
- Regular Work Health and Safety Committee meetings.
- Flu and COVID-19 vaccination programs.
- Participation in wellbeing initiatives such as R U OK? Day and National Safe Work Month.



This Report relates to the 2024/25 financial year and marks the final year of the Plan, throughout this reporting period, Council has continued to deliver on the priorities set out in the four-year plan, working in partnership with our community to build a more connected, sustainable, and resilient Shire.

Council is committed to keeping our community informed about the progress of the Plan. This report shares the outcomes and achievements delivered across the five focus areas, highlighting both the progress made in 2024/25, and more broadly, over the life of the Plan.

We acknowledge the contributions of Councillors, staff, community members, and partners whose efforts have shaped the outcomes of this Plan and positioned us strongly for the next stage of strategic planning.

Council Plan 2021–2025

As we conclude the Plan, we are pleased to present the outcomes of the initiatives delivered for our community. This Plan incorporated a considerable amount (116) of complex actions for a municipality of our size, reflecting a highly aspirational and ambitious plan aimed at delivering broad and lasting benefits.

- 105 actions completed: representing
 90.6 per cent of our commitments.
- 0 actions on track
- 6 actions cancelled:
 Representing 5.1 per cent
- 2 actions not started:
 Representing 1.7 per cent
- 3 actions with progress delayed:
 Representing 2.7 per cent

This strong completion rate reflects the commitment and collaboration of Councillors, Council staff, community partners, and volunteers in delivering significant outcomes across the Shire.

Council Plan 2021–2025 completion of plan action status

Status



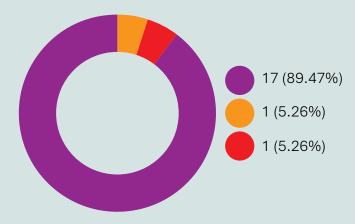




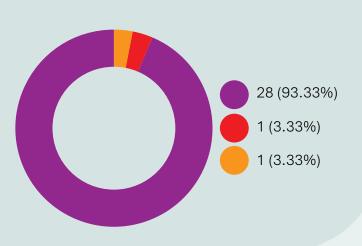




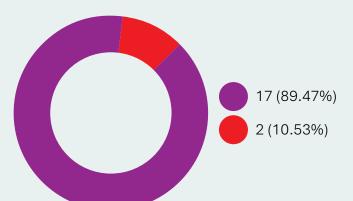
1. A resilient, sustainable and protected environment



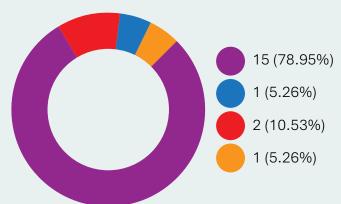
2. A healthy, supported and empowered community

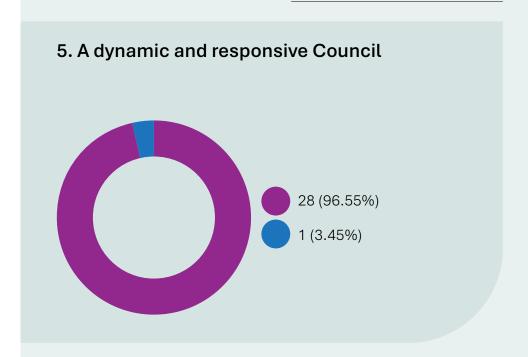


3. Embracing our past and planning for the future

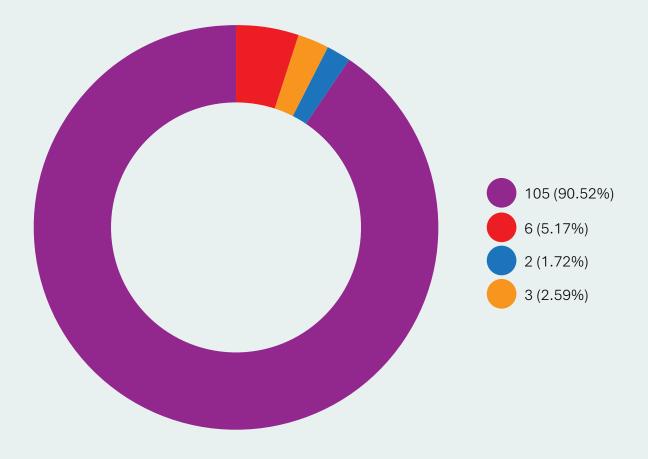


4. Diverse economy and opportunities





Status of all actions at the completion of the Plan





A resilient, sustainable and protected environment



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 1 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target Met	COMMENTS
Council's corporate emissions An annual reduction in Council's Corporate emissions measured via tonnes CO2e.	>1% Reduction	14% Reduction	6.8% Increase	17% Reduction	17.2% Reduction		Council continues to achieve significant annual reductions in our corporate emissions with a 17.2% reduction achieved in 2024/25. This has been achieved through procurement of 100% renewable energy for Council assets and a 47% reduction in gas consumption in part achieved through the closure of the Daylesford Town Hall. A recent review of overall data identified an error in the reported position for 2022/23 year which did result in a rise in emissions due to increased use of heavy plant over extended working week for a considerable period as part of emergency response and recovery programs. Notwithstanding this adjustment of Council's corporate emissions trajectory over the past four years under the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy shows an overall

MEASURES OF SUCCES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS									
FOCUS AREA 1 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Target Met	COMMENTS			
Community emissions 10% reduction in community emissions measured by tonnes CO2 against the baseline of 70,715 tonnes.	10% reduction from baseline of 70,715t in 2021	49.6%	24%	9.6%	14.6%		Hepburn Z-NET achieved a 14.6% reduction in emissions from electricity Shire-wide in 2024/25. Council contributed strongly by eliminating all electricity emissions through its 100% renewable energy power purchase agreement, providing grant funding for emissions reduction activities to local nonprofit groups, adding two new solar and battery power back-up systems to community buildings, and a range of other measures. Working with Hepburn Energy and the Hepburn Z-NET community partnership, the promotion of solar, battery, energy efficiency and electric vehicle bulk buys resulted in high uptake across the residential and commercial sectors and an overall excellent result again for reduction of community emissions across the municipality. Hepburn Shire's net emissions from electricity last year were 41,433 tonnes carbon (tC02e). From the 2018 baseline of 70,715 tC02e, this represents a 41.4% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use.			
Tonnes of waste to landfill per capita 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.	Reduction from 3,454	40.22%	34.3%	37.72%	52.95%		Diversion increased with the introduction of an organics service in 2023/24, as well as a change in general rubbish collection frequency from weekly to fortnightly.			
Roadside weed control across the Shire Maintain existing 11 kilometres of Roadside Weed Control across Shire measured by number of actual roadsides maintained.	11 km	15 km	16 km	80 km	130 km	•	Together with funding from Agriculture Victoria through the Roadside Weeds and Pest Program additional roadside weed control was achieved and targeted. 45 roadsides maintained and treated for weed control throughout 2024/25.			

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.

All three charging stations installed as of July 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 Council's operations and decision-making processes.

The Hepburn Shire Climate Risk Management Policy was adopted by Council in September 2024. Further work is being undertaken to provide capacity building across Council teams to assist with embedding climate risk management decision-making and practices.

Item

Strategy

Actions and Outcomes

1.1.1

COMPLETED

Undertake actions to support Council's declaration of a climate emergency including biannual 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 two climate action strategies - Sustainable Hepburn, and the Hepburn Z-NET strategy continue to deliver strong results in the climate mitigation space, and a quickly emerging area of focus, climate adaptation. The Hepburn Z-NET Steering Committee meets at least six times per year and the Sustainable Hepburn Advisory Committee also regularly brings local community members into collaboration with Council and enables us to provide progress updates and seek partnerships to maximise impact. These meetings are minuted and provided to the community in the following OCM.

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 adheres to best practice guidelines with a focus on sustainable practices, local content and Traditional Owner support.

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.

Collaboration between Council and local community-owned renewable energy group Hepburn Energy (formerly Hepburn Wind) though our MoU continues to provide results in the emissions reduction space. The last 12-month audit of emissions reduction in the electricity sector showed a 14 per cent reduction on the previous year, and Hepburn Z-NET remains one of the best-practice examples in Australia for collaboration between Council and community on climate action with projects such as the rollout of an electric vehicle charging network, and a low-income household energy upgrade program.

1.1.4



Promote the use of environmentally sustainable practices through planning processes and the Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) Policy.

Council's Statutory Planning team will continue to apply existing provisions in the planning scheme regarding environmentally sustainable design and water sensitive urban design. However, the recently adopted implementation plan does not have the creation of a policy as a short-term action. Council continues to be a member of the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) an association of Victorian councils committed to ensuring future generations can enjoy a sustainable built environment.

1.1.5



Pursue the environment and sustainabilityobjectives outlined in Council's Municipal Planning Scheme. Council's Statutory Planning team will continue to apply existing provisions in the planning scheme regarding environmentally sustainable design and water sensitive urban design. There is a role for the Victorian Government to implement more effective, statewide environmentally sustainable planning provisions.

1.1.6



Support community transition to zero emissions through the Sustainable Hepburn Grants Program and or any other applicable grant funding program.

The Sustainable Hepburn Community Grants Program replaced 'Towards Zero' grants in 2023/24 and both grant streams were successfully delivered annually, while attracting strong interest from community non-profit organisations and community members. A range of projects have been funded such as solar pv systems and energy-efficient heating and cooling systems for public venues, neighbourhood houses and other community facilities. We have supported feasibility studies

for energy resilience in townships vulnerable to power outages, as well as a variety of small-scale, local solutions to climate change.



Contribute to the implementation of the Grampians Region Climate Adaption Strategy.

Council delivered two projects with the DEECA Grampians in 2022/23. A climate adaptation toolkit was developed in partnership with Hepburn Energy, Central Highlands Water, DJAARA and other local stakeholders to help respond to climate impacts.

Council developed and ran a series of workshops to assist Grampians Region local government areas (LGAs) to respond to climate change by understanding adaptation options. Workshops were held in Ararat and Creswick.



Publish Council's emission profile annually.

A corporate emissions profile has been published each year, soon after the end of the financial year. A second emissions profile which looks at the whole of the Shire's greenhouse gas emissions is also consistently published each year.

1.2 Prioritise environmental management, protection, and regeneration

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
1.2.1 PROGRESS DELAYED	Review Environmental Significance Overlays.	A full-scale review of Environmental Significance Overlays was not conducted due to competing priorities with the completion of the Future Hepburn project. However, initial discussions have taken place with the water catchment authority on progressing this review. Any actions that fall out of these discussions will be included as part of outcome delivery under the new Council Plan 2025–2029.
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. 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 Leadership 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	Actions and Outcomes
1.3.1 COMPLETED	Develop and implement a sustainable and accountable Visitor Economy Strategy that balances sustainability goals whilst supporting the economy.	Worked with our visitor economy partners (Destination Central Victoria & Tourism Midwest Victoria) and adopted Destination Management plans.

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

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
1.4.1	Strengthen and protect existing agriculture to support the availability, sustainability, and accessibility of local food sources.	The Artisan Agriculture pilot was completed and resulted in strengthened relationships and contacts amongst the agricultural sector. A Shire-wide Agricultural Forum was also hosted by Council.
1.4.2	Promote community adaptation to the public health risks of climate change to public health.	Council has provided community adaptation through health and wellbeing messages, emergency response, staff community adaptation awareness training, emergency preparation training and awareness messages.
1.4.3	Increase community understanding of the risks of climate change to public health through communication and education.	Ongoing meetings with the external and internal health and wellbeing working groups completed. Ongoing communication plan to raise awareness continues. Staff awareness training provided. Sustainable youth and middle years activities embedded in school holiday programs and Sustainable Hepburn Day. Community awareness initiatives, events and training offered throughout the year.
1.4.4	Develop a meaningful and strategic partnership with Dja Dja Wurrung to identify and collaborate on our shared environmental priorities.	2024/25 saw further close collaboration between Council and DJAARA on climate, sustainability and biodiversity through Sustainable Hepburn and Healthy Landscapes initiatives and DJAARA-led activities.

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

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.

Council has appointed a Biodiversity Officer and the assessment and development of a multi-year roadside weed management program has been completed.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
1.5.1	Develop and implement the 'Sustainable Hepburn Strategy' to align waste, sustainability, and biodiversity strategies.	Sustainable Hepburn strategy endorsed at the August 2022 OCM. All five action plans of the strategy have been implemented by the responsible teams.
1.5.2	Continue environmental services with an increased focus on weed management and roadside vegetation management including development and implementation of a Roadside Conservation Strategy.	Council has appointed a Biodiversity Officer and the assessment and development of a multi-year roadside weed management program has been completed.
1.5.3	Support the implementation of priorities of the Integrated Water Management Plans.	Council continues to advocate for and pursues funding opportunities to support implementation of projects identified within the Integrated Water Management Plans.

1.6 The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2024/25 budget for the year.

Initiatives Progress Additional human resources within **Completed and Ongoing** the Emergency Management team, to Additional resources have been provided within the Emergency Management Team, and work with community and agencies to Council has undertaken many planning and preparedness activities across the year, improve our preparation, response and especially in relation to community workshops. recovery to emergencies. Continued implementation and **Completed and Ongoing** reporting of progress associated with the Significant progress continued on the implementation of the strategy, with a number of Sustainable Hepburn Strategy. highlights during the year including: successful in securing grant funding of \$400,000 for a battery storage and solar PV installation at The Mechanics Trentham; successful 12-month rollout of FOGO; funding of Sustainable Hepburn community grants; and the Circular Organics Project (project focused on a scientifically rigorous study of soil and tree health after applying compost, made from the organics collected via the food and garden organics bins, to a range of Council-managed parks and open spaces). Undertake a review of the level of Completed service delivery undertaken in Waste Review of organics (FOGO) waste service completed. Following the program's Management and ensure compliance successful first twelve months, Council Officers reviewed the service, consulted the with new Ministerial Guidelines for community and determined that the service had significantly reduced landfill disposal waste charges in 2025/2026.

1.7 The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2024/25 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

and increased the Shire's landfill diversion rate to 57.3 per cent.

Service Area	Description of Service Provided		2024/25 Budget \$'000	2024/25 Actual \$'000	2024/25 Variance \$'000
Emergency	We work with the community and response agencies to develop	Exp	386	569	(183)
Management	robust and innovative plans to prepare, respond and recover from emergencies.	Rev	145	704	559
		Net	241	(135)	376
Sustainability	To guide and support Council and the community in the development of innovative sustainable practices that ensure the	Exp	406	393	13
	preservation of limited resources.the development of innovative sustainable practices that ensure the preservation of limited	Rev	-	77	77
	resources.	Net	406	316	90
Biodiversity	In partnership with the community, natural resources are managed to ensure their conservation, enhancement and	Exp	167	163	4
	control.		-	2	2
		Net	167	161	6
Waste Management and	This service is to deliver high quality kerbside waste and recycling	Exp	6,323	6,254	69
Cleaning services	collection services, and general waste management which includes transfer stations, transporting materials, public place		6,471	6,568	97
	bins, disposing of waste, street cleaning, rehabilitating closed landfills and other waste management services.	Net	(148)	(314)	166
Net Cost to Counci	666	28	638		

Major variances relate to:

Emergency Management - Additional government funding received to complete storm recovery works, and various community
preparedness sessions.

2 A healthy, supported and empowered community



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FOCUS AREA 2 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
Proportion of adults eating sufficient fruit and vegetables 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.	51%	No updated data available	No updated data available	47%	No updated data available	&	Data is no longer collected by the Australian Health Survey. Council's Health and Wellbeing survey in 2024 found that 10% of 144 residents surveyed ate three or more serves of fruit and 42% ate three or more serves of vegetables.
Partnerships and networks to support access to mental health services 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%.	75%	0%	0%	86%	82%		82% of service providers attended Council-run Community Support & Services Networks (CSSNs) over the past year.
Percentage of population that are active library borrowers 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%.	1.25%	-3.2%	-1.6%	-1.88%	-0.12%	8	While borrowing in the Shire is strong, the percentage of active borrowers has still not recovered to pre-COVID-19 figures.
Partnerships and networks related to the prevention of all violence 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.	75%	100%	100%	92%	43%		Due to a drop in attendance, Hepburn Shire's Family Violence Network ceased in early 2025. All members have now joined the CSSNs and have reported an increase in benefits from cross collaboration across a wider spectrum of local providers and support services and shown much higher attendance at network meetings.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS							
FOCUS AREA 2 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
Children enrolled in Maternal Child Health (MCH) who participated in services	5%	18%	26.2%	4.97%	-5.5%	8	Attendance has reduced slightly during 2024/25.
Over the life of the Plan, a 5% increase of children against a baseline of 382 enrolled in who participated in MCH services.							

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.

An initial analysis and review has been completed. Data on the potential effects on Hepburn Shire of the levy (introduced in January 2025) continues to be collected. This data will inform future actions which seek to strike a balance with the Shire's local community and tourism accommodation needs.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
2.1.1	Develop an Integrated Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy.	Informed by township character assessments, growth targets, demographic needs and 'A Home in Hepburn' our TSPs 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 variety of housing. Future Hepburn also incorporates small parcels of additional land into our towns to provide more options for the housing market.
2.1.2	Deliver the strategic planning program from the adopted Municipal Planning Scheme.	The adopted Municipal Planning Strategy Vision has been delivered through the updated planning scheme and reinforced by the current Future Hepburn strategic program.
2.1.3	Advocate for involvement in the Victorian State Government's Big Housing Build program.	Advocacy to the Victorian Government is an ongoing commitment. Four new homes under the Big Housing Build were commenced, with a total investment of \$2 million.

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

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
2.2.1 PROGRESS DELAYED	Conduct a gap and needs analysis of local health and community services to support advocacy for funding parity.	Officers continue to partner with health and community services to support improved service outcomes in the local area however, further achievement in this space will not be delivered in the specific way set out in this action under the Council Plan 2025–2029.
2.2.2	Promote partnerships with health service providers to improve shared community health outcomes.	External health and wellbeing working group completed stakeholder mapping, local data analysis and priority mapping for the Hepburn Shire that informed the MPHWP. Officers attend ongoing stakeholder meetings to ensure a collaborative approach across the Central Highlands region.
2.2.3	Support advocacy for a new facility for Central Highlands Rural Health.	Council offers ongoing support and advocacy for the upgrade to Daylesford Hospital.
2.2.4 COMPLETED	Develop service networks to increase community awareness and access to local services.	The CSSN has regular attendance of 20–30 members and has increased to include many community groups working with venerable people. Collaborative local solutions are the focus and have achieved many outcomes for community e.g. emergency preparedness support, increased food security supply, Daylesford showering facility, and hoarding support services.
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.

2.2.6	Develop, adopt, and implement a Positive Ageing Strategy.	Council adopted the 'No Barrier' Positive Ageing Strategy 2022–2030 in August 202. Council continues to work with partners to deliver on objectives outlined in the strategy.				
COMPLETED		Annual action plans and reviews track the implementation of the eight focus areas of the strategy. Key achievements have been advocacy, Senior's Festival events, Positive Ageing Expo, stakeholder support and improvements in access to community information.				
2.2.7	Work with our partners to support the provision of Early Years Services, e.g., MCH, kindergartens, childcare and playgroup.	Supported the new Clunes Early Years hub which will include a playgroup room and MCH consultation room. Council is currently upgrading Hepburn Kindergarten and has received a scoping grant to consult and design a future plan for Daylesford Community Childcare.				
2.2.8 COMPLETED	Continue services to build strong, safe, and resilient communities (emergency management, local laws, animal control, environmental health).	Environmental Health, Local Laws, and Emergency Management have ongoing programs of work to help achieve a healthy, supported and empowered community. In the last 12 months, activities included the adoption of Council's Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, desexing program, and CERA.				
2.2.9	Deliver actions identified in the Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2018-2022.	Initiatives from the plan were completed and formed part of the development of the new Disability Action Plan 2022-2026.				
2.2.10 COMPLETED	Develop, adopt, and implement a new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan post-2022.	The Disability Action Plan 2023-2026, was adopted by Council in February 2023. Initiatives from the plan were delivered including convening the Disability Advisory Committee, which is used to improve inclusion outcomes across a range of Council activities, embedding universal design principles in Council projects, including significant inclusion outcomes in the Djuwang Baring mountain bike project and changing places at Creswick.				

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



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, installation of a shelter and landscaping have been completed.



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.

Finalisation of Clunes Masterplan planned in Q2 2025/26, with PAG meetings set, Council will consider final recommendations subsequently.

Glenlyon Recreation Reserve Pavilion scoping project nearing completion, with PAG meetings completed and final building data and recommendations to be considered by Council in September. Future actions on this item will be part of outcome delivery under the new Council Plan 2025–2029.



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.

Officers have finalised collecting and collating all required technical data and Council will consider a range of long-term options in Q2 of 2025/26. Future actions on this item will be part of outcome delivery under the new Council Plan 2025–2029.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes

COMPLETED

2.3.1

Increase female health and wellbeing by implementing the Hepburn Shire Active Women and Girls Strategy.

A collaboration with the Northern Grampians Health Service and the Daylesford and Hepburn United Soccer Club to integrate the Act@Play program to explore gender equality and cultural change initiatives within the club environment commenced in March 2025 and is due for completion by September 2025.

The Hepburn Shire Fair Access Policy was adopted by Council in June 2024; and implementation of year one actions including establishing a process to collect annual club participation data will be completed by September 2025.



Implement appropriate actions from the 'Play is for everyone' Hepburn Shire Playspace Strategy.

Implementation of the Hepburn Shire Playspace Strategy has been supported by the annual consideration and endorsement of budget allocations to undertake various playspace renewal projects. In July 2025, playspace projects including the Trentham outdoor fitness space installation, Clunes Queens Park shade structure and Newlyn Recreation Reserve playspace planning received Victorian Government co-funding through the Tiny Town Fund. Delivery of the Tiny Town funded projects commenced in August 2024 and will be completed by February 2026.

2.3.3



Support access and participation through strong asset management practices aligned with developing a long-term Asset Plan.

Council's current Asset Plan was developed in consultation with the community and is currently being reviewed. The 10-year plan seeks to provide effective and efficient management of public assets in the most cost-effective manner. Council Officers continue to undertake the development of masterplans in conjunction with key stakeholder groups and taking into account community input, and advocate for projects and programs which encourage and support community participation and improved access.

2.3.4

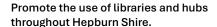


Facilitate walking and cycling infrastructure by implementing works outlined in the Walking and Cycling Strategy.

The action has now been incorporated into the development of a Shire-wide Integrated Transport Strategy, which is due to be completed in 2025.

2.3.5

COMPLETED



A communications strategy and a Participate Hepburn project page has been developed for the Open Access Libraries project. Libraries continue to use their Facebook page (1,300 followers) and Instagram account (148 followers) to promote library services and engage with community. Library membership is high in Hepburn Shire, with 27.9% of the population registered members.

2.3.6



Maintain our open spaces for the enjoyment of our community and visitors.

Maintenance of Council's open spaces including parks and reserves, sports fields and township areas throughout the Shire is ongoing.

2.3.7



Design, develop and advocate for funding to enhance or build sport and active recreation facilities identified through masterplanning.

Ensure design and construct projects comply with universal design principles, including compliance with the Design for Everyone Guide.

Federal funding commitment of \$1.25 million will co-fund priority projects from the Doug Lindsay and Glenlyon recreation reserves masterplans. Council was successful in gaining a Victorian Government grant of \$185,500 to co-fund new sports lighting at the Newlyn Recreation Reserve. Universal design elements were incorporated into the delivery of both the Trentham Sportsground Pavilion and Calembeen Park Amenities projects that will support the development of diverse participation in a range of sport and active recreation participation opportunities.

2.3.8



Deliver key projects including Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens enhanced visitation experience, Bullarto Station Precinct development and Creswick Town Hall restoration. Works associated with all three projects have been completed.

2.3.9



Finalise and implement the Hepburn Shire Aquatic Strategy.

The Aquatics Strategy is completed and adopted. A range of important initiatives have been completed (including the successful 2024/25 aquatics season) or are underway, including planning and delivering a range of required improvements for the 2025/26 season, and longer-term planning around the future of aquatics services and assets in Hepburn Shire.

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	Actions and Outcomes			
2.4.1	Lead by example, by supplying and promoting healthier local food and drink options across Council-run meetings, events, activities, facilities and programs.	Continued to provide healthy food choices at Hepburn Shire outdoor community pools kiosks during 2024/25 season.			
2.4.2	Support initiatives that encourage healthier lifestyles and habits across the lifespan, particularly in children's early years.	Council 'Starting Blocks' Early and Middle Years Strategy focuses on encouraging healthier lifestyles and improving outcomes for young families. Free family events, awareness campaigns and healthy lifestyle programs are offered throughout the year including healthy choices in the pools, skate competitions and partnerships with Daylesford College on the youth mental health program Live4Life.			
2.4.3	Partner with local organisation/s to increase access to healthy and affordable food (including for vulnerable groups) and to support positive food system change.	Council works with local food security groups to build better food access for vulnerable groups, as well as work to increase awareness of available programs.			
2.4.4 COMPLETED	Partner with key health agencies to support initiatives and services to improve health and wellbeing.	External Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Working Group continues to work together to improve health and wellbeing outcomes within Hepburn Shire, including providing expert evidence-based directions for the development of the Council Plan. MoU continued with CHRH to support links with health promotion and allied health professionals Live4Life and Daylesford College to support youth mental health.			

2.5 Improved mental wellbeing within the community **Actions and Outcomes** Item Strategy 2.5.1 Raise awareness and understanding of mental health Senior's Festival supported events to combat social isolation services and resources, and work with for older people. Council has signed a partnership with other levels of government to localise and improve Daylesford College around the Live4Life program addressing mental health services available to residents with youth mental health through a collaborative community-COMPLETED a specific focus on youth mental health. based approach. 2.5.2 Strengthen partnerships and support education, Gender Equity, Reconciliation, Disability and Rainbow Advisory programs, events, and prevention activities that committees met regularly providing advice to Council on focus on community participation, diversity projects, programs and policy to ensure all services promote community participation, diversity and inclusion. Council and inclusion. COMPLETED Officers facilitate and attend a wide range of committees and networks to support a collaborative approach across Council to raise community awareness. 2.5.3 Adopt a co-benefit approach to improving mental Active lifestyle programs supported through positive ageing wellbeing, supporting active living and healthy eating groups, volunteer program (VICs, museums and L2P driver initiatives. program), youth programs, active in pools sessions and ongoing sporting facility upgrades. Healthy eating initiatives COMPLETED 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 Ensure Council services, activities and facilities All new and major upgraded Council buildings and are accessible and inclusive to remove barriers infrastructure projects include accessibility compliance, in to participation. line with National Standards for Disability Services.. COMPLETED

2.6 The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2024/25 budget for the year.

Progress				
Complete				
Djuwang Baring was officially opened for community use in November 2024. It has now transitioned to a maintenance program to ensure that this high-quality community asset is well-maintained for future years. Visitation and experience have been well received by community, business and visitors – and officers will continue to work to ensure any impacts are managed.				
Complete				
The major upgrade project for Mechanics at Trentham has been successfully completed and the facility is now open for use by community members.				
Ongoing				
Oligonig				

2.7 The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2024/25 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of Service Provided		2024/25 Budget \$'000	2024/25 Actual \$'000	2024/25 Variance \$'000
Assets, Roads and Maintenance	With forward planning, the timely intervention and replacement of infrastructure assets is programmed to maximise the serviceability of assets and minimise escalating maintenance costs. This proactive management of assets also allows long term financial demands for asset renewal works to be anticipated and planned for. Also includes storm recovery works undertaken.	Exp	5,771	5,808	(37)
		Rev	93	185	92
		Net	5,678	5,623	55
Early Years Services	This service provides leadership in the planning and development of early years services and programs and in partnership with community and service providers facilitate integrated and coordinated service provision including maternal and child health.	Exp	539	529	10
		Rev	229	311	82
		Net	310	218	92
Library Services	This service provides, through our public libraries, a welcoming space that develops strong and connected communities, supports a culture of reading and improves quality of life.	Exp	447	623	(176)
		Rev	183	328	145
		Net	264	295	(31)
Recreation	This service provides proactive and planned approach to the maintenance, renewal and upgrade of recreation assets, and provide strategic direction for future recreation and aquatic facilities.	Exp	869	747	122
		Rev	31	15	(16)
		Net	838	732	106

05 PERFORMANCE

2.7 Continued

Service Area	Description of Service Provided		2024/25 Budget \$'000	2024/25 Actual \$'000	2024/25 Variance \$'000
Community Services	This service seeks to identify and create opportunities with residents to participate in enhancing community health and	Exp	1,158	1,011	147
	wellbeing.	Rev	-	-	-
		Net	1,158	1,011	147
Environmental Health	To provide a range of public health programs including food safety throughout the community which focus on a preventative	Exp	631	388	243
durity throughout the definitionity which to due on a pro-	approach to health and aim to minimise future problems.	Rev	198	220	22
		Net	433	168	265
Parks and Open Space	This service provides well-presented parks and gardens, public open space and sporting fields for the enjoyment, amenity and	Exp	2,304	2,699	(395)
Ориос	wellbeing of our community and visitors to the Shire.	Rev	-	155	155
		Net	2,304	2,544	(240)
Compliance	Through education and Local Law enforcement, including animal management, the Compliance department provides a safe	Exp	604	768	(164)
	community for all to enjoy.	Rev	209	308	99
		Net	395	460	(65)
Net Cost to Counc	il for Focus Area 2		11,380	11,051	329

Major variances relate to:

- Recreation The review of service delivery has led to reduced staffing costs, aligning with the operational efficiencies allocated for the \$1.5 million 2024/25 savings targets.
- Community Services The review of service delivery has led to reduced staffing costs, aligning with the operational efficiencies allocated for the \$1.5 million 2024/25 savings targets.
- Environmental health The favourable budget variance is due to staff vacancies in the early part of the financial year and the implementation of a team restructure, which has resulted in improve response rates to compliance activities. .
- Parks and Open Spaces The unfavourable budget variance is due to the allocation of one-off costs for open space projects, such as Djuwang Baring activation, willow removal, weeds roadside removal, which are partly funded by grant income. Additionally, further costs were incurred for additional maintenance requirements throughout the year.

3 Embracing our past and planning for the future



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FOCUS AREA 3 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
Council staff completed cultural awareness training 90% of current staff have completed cultural awareness training within the last four years measured by the current number of completions against the number of current headcounts.	22.5% p.a	0%	8%	26%	26%	8	In 2024/25 26% of the workforce completed cultural awareness training. This is well below the targeted completion rate, yet consistent with the participation in 2023/24. Council has a significant body of work around learning and development scheduled for 2025/26. The delivery model and engagement in cultural awareness training will be incorporated as an action to address the gap in training completion.
Deliver Council's documented and agreed annual strategic planning program 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.	50%	60%	68%	72%	0%	8	This action has been superseded by the recently adopted Implementation Plan (March 2025) for Future Hepburn.
Length of walking and cycling trails available across the Shire A 3% per annum (1.5 km) footpath expansion i.e., new footpath (generally concrete or asphalt, not granitic sand) to increase connectivity of walking paths across the Shire.	3%	2.5%	9%	10.93%	33.5%	⊘	Increase due to inclusion of additional recreational paths and developer gifted assets.
Percentage of planning applications approved within required time frames 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%.	67.7%	44.77%	43%	19%	26.47%	8	A turnover of staff in key roles over the last 18 months, coupled with a number of ongoing, complex planning enforcement and VCAT matters, has resulted in a challenging backlog of planning applications. However, the percentage of applications decided within 60 statutory days is steadily improving, in response to vacancies being filled and the continuing implementation of targeted process improvements.

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-19 Stimulus Infrastructure Projects: Continue to deliver key stimulus funded projects including, Bullarto Station Tourist Precinct, Creswick Town Hall and Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens.

Works associated with all three projects have been completed.



ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24 INITIATIVE

Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP): Develop and adopt a new RAP to ensure an inclusive community, reduce racial discrimination, identify and acknowledge issues requiring actions of reconciliation.

The Innovate RAP was formally approved by Reconciliation Australia and is now an active commitment Council is working to deliver.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
3.1.1	Continue to implement and review the RAP and build strong partnerships through the RAP Advisory Committee.	Our new Innovate RAP was launched in July 2025, and will continue our efforts to achieve reconciliation outcomes, including high level project involvement of DJAARA was achieved with Djuwang Baring, and Council's partnership with DJAARA Timbers.
3.1.2	Hold annual strategic meetings with Dja Dja Wurrung to share and align projects and priorities.	Council's relationship and collaboration with Dja Dja Wurrung peoples is strong and continues to build.
COMPLETED		We have met often to share and align projects and priorities including completing and launching the Innovate RAP, Djuwang Baring and The Mechanics Trentham including the fish traps indigenous artwork, Cultural Values Assessment, and our DJARRA Timbers partnership.
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.

05 PERFORMANCE

3.1.4



Develop and implement an Indigenous Heritage Strategy to support the recognition and preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Council-endorsed Future Hepburn Implementation Plan, contains a suite of planning scheme amendments that will seek to implement controls that protect and enhance heritage and cultural heritage. One action currently underway is an application to the Minister for Planning seeking interim protection of Lalgambuk and surrounds. Work is currently underway to explore future planning controls that protect cultural heritage across the Shire.

3.1.5



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

The Council-endorsed Future Hepburn Implementation Plan contains a suite of planning scheme amendments that will seek to implement controls that protect and enhance heritage and neighbourhood character.

3.1.6



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

The Victorian Goldfields UNESCO World Heritage bid was given a boost thanks to \$3.8 million announced in the Victorian Budget for championing Victoria's outstanding heritage. Officers provided input into the draft World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Masterplan 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 for 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.

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



ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Future Hepburn: Continuation of Hepburn Shire's key strategic planning program through the development of TSPs, agricultural land and rural settlement strategy, Integrated Transport Strategy and other supporting technical studies.

After two years of community and stakeholder engagement, and the preparation of technical reports, the Strategic Planning work program was adopted in September 2024. This included a rural strategy and five TSPs. In May 2025, Council adopted a detailed implementation plan which will ensure the ongoing delivery of Future Hepburn.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
3.2.1	Develop and complete TSPs as per Council's strategic planning program.	Council adopted TSPs for Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, Glenlyon and Trentham, along with the Rural Hepburn: Agricultural Land & Rural Settlement Strategy in September 2024.
3.2.2 CANCELLED	Support community planning to enable local communities to determine their priorities for the future.	Community planning actions are no longer directly actioned by Council through community plans, priorities are incorporated into key strategic documents.
3.2.3	Conduct a study of land development supply.	The Land Capacity and Demand Assessment study was prepared by Nation Partners in 2022 with an addendum provided in 2023.
3.2.4 COMPLETED	Develop an Agricultural Land Use and Settlement Strategy.	Future Hepburn was adopted in September 2024. This included the RHS and five TSPs. In May 2025, Council adopted a detailed implementation plan which will ensure the ongoing delivery of Future Hepburn.
3.2.5	Undertake strategic land use planning to identify access to commercial and industrial land.	The Land Capacity and Demand Assessment analysis prepared to inform our TSPs and RHS 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 and commercial land have been included in the draft Future Hepburn work.
3.2.6 COMPLETED	Develop and implement a local Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) Planning Policy.	A draft ESD policy was included in the C80Hep Planning Scheme amendment and review. Further, ESD outcomes have been incorporated through our Future Hepburn suite of work.

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.

Structural tender awarded September 2024. Construction currently underway. Electrical works to be tendered separately.



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.

Delayed due to the need to focus on the completion and adoption of the Future Hepburn structure plans and rural strategy. The draft Integrated Transport Strategy recently went out for community consultation (June 2025) and is scheduled for consultation and finalisation in 2025/26. Future actions on this item will be part of outcome delivery under the new Council Plan 2025–2029.



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 design has been completed and a two-part procurement process developed. Phase 1 of the procurement, an expression of interest closed on 26 August. Select tenders will be invited for the works. An extension to the grant funding agreement has been obtained acknowledging the further work required. Future actions on this item will be part of outcome delivery under the new Council Plan 2025–2029.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
3.3.1	Continue to provide strong management and maintenance of our infrastructure.	Council has an Asset Management Framework which, along with associated plans, guide the management and maintenance of community infrastructure and future asset planning. The updated Asset Plan 2025–2029 was recently adopted in line with Council's other integrated strategies and outlines the approach to improving Council's asset management maturity.
3.3.2	Support the amenity of our towns through the maintenance, replacement and development of streetscapes.	Multiple streetscape projects across the Shire have been delivered over recent years and ongoing maintenance of open spaces and civil infrastructure in township areas continues to occur. Further projects improving road safety and pedestrian connectivity are currently being planned, with supplementary grant funding sought where possible.
3.3.3	Advocate, plan and deliver pedestrian, cycling and recreation paths and trails that reduce reliance on vehicles.	Various works have been completed across the Shire across the four years of the plan, significant capital investment has occurred including \$12.2 million in capital works alone for roads and footpaths.

3.3.4



Advocate to the state and federal governments to improve cycling connections, public transport infrastructure and rollout of a public electric vehicle (EV) charging network across city boundaries and the broader region.

Council and Hepburn Energy have successfully partnered to establish an EV charging station network across the Shire with four public chargers installed and one more in progress in Clunes, and Council has installed charging infrastructure for its own electric fleet vehicles. A new charging infrastructure study was completed in late 2024 to map future EV charging needs across the Shire, and in June 2025 preparation was completed for an expression of interest to industry around potential new charging station development to be funded externally to Council.

3.3.5



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

Significant capital planning and expenditure across the shire including Trentham Sportsground, Djuwang Baring and many smaller valued projects.

3.3.6



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

Maintenance of Council's open spaces including parks and reserves, sports fields and township areas throughout the Shire is ongoing.

3.3.7



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

Significant advocacy was undertaken across the term of the Council Plan 2021–2025 in support of Council's identified priority projects to support community outcomes.

3.4 The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2024/25 budget for the year.

Initiatives	Progress
Continuation of our key strategic	Completed and Ongoing
planning program (Future Hepburn) and the implementation of Town Structure Plans, Rural Strategy and adoption of Integrated Transport Strategy.	In September 2024, the Strategic Planning work program was adopted after two years of community and stakeholder engagement, along with the preparation of technical reports. This included a rural strategy and five township structure plans. In May 2025, Council adopted a detailed implementation plan to ensure the ongoing delivery of Future Hepburn.
Maintenance works (new roof and	On-track and Ongoing
electrical works) at Daylesford Town Hall.	Roof renewal works have been completed, while stage 2 electrical upgrades are on track and expected to be finished by March 2026.
Planning of the possible Daylesford	Ongoing
Community Facilities at the Daylesford Town Hall, including activation of the community-based project advisory group (PAG).	Community consultation through a Project Advisory Group has been undertaken, schematic design finalised and scheduled for review early 2025/2026.

3.5 The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2024/25 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of Service Provided		2024/25 Budget \$'000	2024/25 Actual \$'000	2024/25 Variance \$'000
Statutory and Strategic	The Planning team provides advice and guidance for responsible current and future land use planning which includes the	Exp	2,117	2,003	114
Planning	•	Rev	516	504	(12)
	compliance with planning permits and controls. Through regular review of the Hepburn Shire Planning Scheme and development of new policy documents, the Planning department ensures that statutory planning, investment and decision making for the Shire is relevant to the needs of the community and provides a sustainable base for future generations.	Net	1,601	1,499	102
Property & Facilities	To make decisions on property management arrangements that are underpinned by service plans, the long-term financial plan	Exp	1,864	2,054	(190)
	and a minimisation of risks.	Rev	1,217	1,043	(174)
		Net	647	1,011	(364)
Building	To provide quality regulatory advice on all building matters associated with properties in the Shire.	Exp	612	714	(102)
	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	Rev	-	109	109
		Net	612	605	7
Net Cost to Coun	cil for Focus Area 3		2,860	3,115	(255)

Major variances relate to:

- Statutory and Strategic Planning The favourable budget variance is due to underutilisation of the consultant budget for strategic planning, which is to be carried-forward to 2025/26 to continue implementation of Future Hepburn township structure plans and rural strategy.
- Property and Facilities The reduction in lease income compared to budget is due to facility closures throughout the year for remediation works, along with additional reactive maintenance on buildings.

Diverse economy and opportunity



MEASURES OF SUCCESS	MEA	SUR	ES OF	SUCC	ESS
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FOCUS AREA 4 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	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%	-5.47%		Domestic day visitors to Hepburn Shire are estimated to spend an average of \$143 per trip. For those domestic visitors who stay overnight, the average spend per night is estimated at \$259. Average spend per night has decreased, this would be due to the cost-of- living pressures.
Per capita Gross Regional Product (GRP) 4% annual increase in per capita GRP against a baseline of \$46,730 per capita GRP.	4%	9.6%	3.7%	12.87%	6.54%	•	Annual increase of 6.54% from previous year.
Subscribers to Hepburn Shire Business eNewsletter 5% annual increase of subscribers to the Hepburn Shire business eNewsletter against a baseline of 595 subscribers.	5%	0.3%	-5.38	-3.4%	-7.56%	&	The business landscape is continuing to change over the past year, with business closures and new businesses. The open rate for the eNewsletter is steady with our average campaign performance at 46.2%.
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 \$1,163.565 million.	4%	6.2%	21%	10.4%	5.67%	•	Growth of 5.67% demonstrates broad growth of business sector (outside of tourism).

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

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
4.1.1	Develop and implement a Youth Strategy 2021–2025 to support the delivery of services and opportunities to young people in Hepburn Shire.	"ACE" Youth Development Strategy 2022–2030 created implementation of key actions including youth mental health training, apprenticeship program, FReeZa events, ongoing youth programs, school holiday programming, youth advocacy and creating a Youth Advisory Group.
4.1.2	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 2023/24. Council has made the decision to pause this program for 2024/25 to consider our ongoing ability to support trainees.
4.1.3 PROGRESS DELAYED	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, but specific advocacy of the Institute has not progressed. Further achievement of this action will not be delivered in the specific way set out in this action under the Council Plan 2025–2029.
4.1.4 COMPLETED	Investigate the formation of a Youth Council or Youth Advisory Committee.	Investigations completed and Council has partnered with The Foundation for Young Australians 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 **Actions and Outcomes** 4.2.1 Support implementation of Central Highlands Many opportunities to advocate for improved internet Digital Plan. infrastructure to support business, residents who work from home, students, and other citizens of the Hepburn Shire area. Public wi-fi is available in all customer experience and COMPLETED library locations; high speed fixed wireless nbn (national broadband network) tower is planned for Sailors Falls, representing an investment of over \$400,000 by the nbn; other smaller infrastructure upgrades including a number of 5G upgrades and power resilience programs; a greenfield tower in Drummond, and upgrades to the nbn fixed wireless in Clunes. Advocacy work will continue as an ongoing activity. 4.2.2 Review the impact of the co-working space Project cancelled and external funding returned to at the Hepburn Hub at the Rex and explore funding body. the feasibility of a local co-working spaces in other parts of the Shire. 4.2.3 Install public wi-fi in appropriate areas. Public wi-fi available in all customer experience and library locations. Installation in any future localities would be considered if funding became available. COMPLETED 4.2.4 Advocate to ensure that our community has access Many opportunities to advocate for improved internet to, and benefits from, reliable digital services. infrastructure to support business, residents who work from home, students, and other citizens of the Hepburn Shire area. Public wi-fi is available in all customer experience and

library locations; high speed fixed wireless nbn (national broadband network) tower is planned for Sailors Falls, representing an investment of over \$400,000 by the nbn; other smaller infrastructure upgrades including a number of 5G upgrades and power resilience programs; a greenfield tower in Drummond, and upgrades to the nbn fixed wireless in Clunes.

Advocacy work will continue as an ongoing activity.

COMPLETED

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.

The Victorian Government grant helped implement several digital enhancements that will benefit applicants and our community.



ANNUAL PLAN INITIATIVE 2023/24

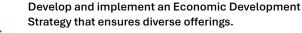
Mineral Springs Awareness Campaign: Through funding from the Victorian Government, develop marketing tools to raise the awareness and understanding of mineral springs in the region for locals and visitors.

The marketing tools to support the Mineral Springs Awareness Campaign include the development of the Mineral Springs Victoria website, a brochure and a display in the Daylesford VIC. The website is complete and is live.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
4.3.1	Implement a Business Concierge model (Customer Service, Planning and Economic Development) to enhance the permit approvals process.	There is no formal Business Concierge Model in place. Instead, the same outcomes are sought through the Planning and Economic Development teams working closely to facilitate business permits and applications. Council's Economic Development Officer continues to provide support to businesses. Councils Economic Development and Planning teams are now located within the same directorate of responsibility.
4.3.2	Invest in streetscapes and infrastructure in commercial and retail areas across the Shire.	Streetscapes works were completed across the Shire over the four years, including:
COMPLETED		 Pearman Street, Creswick kerb and channel, road upgrade, pedestrian connections.
		Albert Street, Trentham drainage upgrade.
4.3.3	Finalise the pilot project of the Artisan Agriculture Project to support producers more broadly.	The Artisan Agriculture pilot was completed and has resulted in strengthened relationships and contacts among the agricultural sector.

4.3.4

NOT STARTED



The development of an Economic Development Strategy did not receive a budget allocation. Other initiatives that have been implemented to support businesses includes the development of a Business Survey Implementation Plan, Development of Central Highlands Growers and Producers Hub website, established partnerships with Industry Bodies and local Business and Tourism associations, a comprehensive business workshop program and regular communication via a Business eNewsletter. Future actions to contribute to Economic Development will be included as part of outcome delivery under the new Council Plan 2025–2029.

4.3.5

Develop and implement a Commercial Land Use Policy.

While a commercial land use policy has not been implemented, the Council-adopted workplan for Future Hepburn contains several elements that will support commercial activity and the local economy. For example, Principle 3 of the Implementation Plan states: Housing and employment will be accommodated in established towns within clearly defined settlement boundaries and substantial non-urban green breaks between settlements.

4.3.6

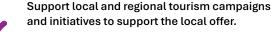
COMPLETED

Develop and implement Shire-wide Agricultural and Rural Settlement Strategy.

After two years of community and stakeholder engagement, and the preparation of technical reports, the Strategic Planning work program was adopted in September 2024. This included a rural strategy and five TSPs. In May 2025 Council adopted a detailed implementation plan which will ensure the ongoing delivery of Future Hepburn.

4.3.7

COMPLETED



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 and will transition to Destination Central Victoria and now include additional councils to support the long-term viability of the organisation.

4.3.8



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

Council supported more than 50 events in each of the four years with significant social, community and economic benefits coming to the region from small community focused events to large signature events.

4.3.9



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

The current policy has a focus on and provides incentives to support DJAARA and other Traditional Owner organisations.

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

Item Strategy

4.4.1



Review waste services to ensure alignment with the new Victorian Government's Circular Economy program.

Actions and Outcomes

Services have been rolled out in alignment with the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021, with the successful early implementation of food and garden organics as outlined in the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy. Planning and scoping are currently underway for the full rollout of the fourbin service, scheduled for 2027, in accordance with the draft service standards which are still pending finalisation. Recent audits indicate strong progress, showing a 24% reduction in landfill disposal and a 57.3% landfill diversion rate.

4.4.2



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

The promotion of circular economy has been implemented through the following initiatives:

- Circular economy business case studies developed to showcase local business implementing circular economy practices.
- Circular economy business workshop in partnership with Sustainability Victoria and two neighbouring councils exploring how to best support business and Council operations on circular economy practices.
- Circular organics videos and social media campaign promoting the circularity of our food and garden organics to compost journey.

05 PERFORMANCE

4.5 The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2024/25 budget for the year.

Initiatives	Progress
Implementation of the Young Mayors	Ongoing
Program (grant funded)	Council has partnered with The Foundation for Young Australians to implement the Young Mayors program. Given some difficulty in attracting youth candidates, a Youth Advisory Group has been established to assist in building momentum and awareness of the program with nominations and the program long term viability to be accessed in late 2025.
Collaboration with regional tourism	Completed and Ongoing
partners – Daylesford Macedon Tourism and Tourism Midwest Victoria	Extremely positive relationships with both Visitor Economy Partnerships, including partnering on key marketing of Djuwang Baring and working together for Daylesford to be recognised and Victorian Top Small Tourism Town, and 2nd in Australia.

4.6 The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2024/25 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of Service Provided		2024/25 Budget \$'000	2024/25 Actual \$'000	2024/25 Variance \$'000
Economic Development and Tourism	To facilitate Hepburn Shire becoming a recognised tourist destination and to foster economic development that is appropriate within the Shire which increases employment and	Exp Rev	1,012 55	906 18	106 (37)
	business opportunities.	Net	957	888	69
Youth	This service seeks to engage our young people. Invest in them now and create our community leaders for the future.	Exp	253	255	(2)
	new and dreate out community todate for the fatale.	Rev	36	38	2
		Net	217	217	-
Net Cost to Coun	cil for Focus Area 4		1,174	1,105	69

5 A dynamic and responsive council



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changes.

Engagement Policy is due for review in 2025/26 and will consider feedback from community in the development of any

52% in 2024. Noting

MEAC	IDEC	OE SI	ICCESS

FOCUS AREA 5 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
Subscribers to Council's eNewsletter Hepburn Life 5% annual increase in subscribers to Hepburn Life against baseline of 2,941 subscribers.	5%	14.9%	22.4%	16.92%	7.44%	⊘	For 2024/25, 3,840 subscribed to Hepburn Life.
Financial sustainability of the organisation Achieve a low or medium risk rating for VAGO (Victorian Auditor General's Office) financial sustainability indicators.	All indicators low or medium	4 Low, 1 Medium, 1 High	3 Low 2 Medium 1 High	2 High 2 Medium 2 Low			The underlying deficit remains in the high category; however, it is significantly reduced from the previous year. This reflects the ongoing efforts to address medium to long-term financial sustainability. The asset renewal gap has fallen below 100 per cent and into the high-risk rating due to the capital program delivering a high percentage of new assets. Moving forward, Council is committed to prioritising the renewal of assets.
Customer Service Requests responded to according to Charter 2% annual increase percentage of service requests responded to in accordance with customer service charter.	2%	No updated data available	No updated data available	No updated data available	No updated data available	&	This data relates to Closing the Loop enquiries that are not solved immediately by our Customer Experience Officers.
Community satisfaction with community consultation and engagement Increase result of community satisfaction with community	47	44	46	52	47	⊘	The 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey reports a satisfaction score of 47 for consultation and engagement. This

consultation and engagement

from 44 to 50 points, over the life

of the plan, a 14% improvement.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS							
FOCUS AREA 5 - STRATEGIC INDICATOR	TARGET	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
Workforce Plan Actions delivered 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.	36 Actions	8	26	31	0		At 30 June 2024, 31 of the 36 (86%) actions outlined in the Workforce Plan had been achieved. This number has not changed in 2024/25 despite significant progress made toward these actions. The competing challenges of preparing a workforce for the changes that would result of the organisational structure to ensure financial sustainability, coupled with the shifting focus of the organisation meant we have not yet fully completed this program of work. As the new Workforce Plan is developed, these outstanding actions will be reviewed and rolled over to the new workforce plan if they are still applicable under the new Council Plan 2025–2029.

5.1	Harness community expertise	
Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
5.1.1	Conduct a Community Skills Session to capture community skills and interest for future engagements.	Due to competing demands and operational challenges, this work has not been done. Future actions on this item will be considered as part of outcome delivery under the new Council Plan 2025–2029.
5.1.2	Strengthen processes to create strong alignment with community-led engagement.	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. The current policy has a focus on and provides incentives to support DJAARA and other Traditional Owner organisations.
5.1.3	Continue to value, support, and implement Community Reference Groups, where appropriate.	Successful PAGs were set up for key projects including The Mechanics Trentham, Glenlyon Pavilion, Daylesford Community Facilities and Clunes sporting facilities. A deliberative panel was established as part of the Council Plan 2025–2029 process to ensure representation from community.
5.1.4	Actively participate in community and government networks and regional alliances.	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 MoUs with Daylesford College, Young Mayors, Live4Life and CHRH.

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

Item	Strategy	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.	The Communications team engages with residents, ratepayers, businesses, and stakeholders through a variety of channels. Council has a strong digital presence, with over 7,400 followers on our corporate Facebook, almost 4,000 on LinkedIn, and around 4,000 subscribers to the Hepburn Life eNewsletter. In addition to these digital platforms, Council shares updates through a dedicated Council news page featured in community newsletters across the Shire. Our corporate website attracts approximately 90,000 views each quarter, while Participate Hepburn serves as our primary platform for community engagement.
5.2.3	Implement the recommendations of Hepburn Shire Council Service Review-Customer Experience.	All decisions made by Council are reported to community through live streaming of Council meetings, social media and communication through newsletters and media releases. Councillors have had the opportunity to engage with the community through a series of listening posts and drop-in sessions during the Council Plan 2025–2029 process.
5.2.4	Create an online database of community groups and contacts from across the Shire accessible to relevant Council departments.	The online Business and Community directories were launched in August 2024. Both businesses and community groups can add and update their listing and contact details as required and this information is publicly available on Council's website.
5.2.5	Increase public participation in Council meetings by continuing to live stream meetings.	Council meetings held in 2024/25 were live streamed via Council's Facebook and YouTube pages.

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



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.

Council's Financial Plan 2025–2035 was adopted by Council on 24 June 2025. This plan will be reviewed on a rolling basis in line with the budget adoption cycles ensuring attention to financial sustainability across the medium and long-term for Council.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
5.3.1	Strengthen the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework, including a programmed service review of all Council services.	Review and implementation of Council's updated approach to the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework resulted in Council's adoption of the Council Plan 2025–2029 and associated strategic documents in June, with a preliminary review of Council's service catalogue during development of Council's Financial Vision. This provides Officers with directions on how to further implement an integrated and complimentary approach to corporate planning and reporting to achieve the outcomes of the Council Plan.
5.3.2	Develop and implement an Annual Plan to set the operational direction of Council year on year.	Annual Plan documents were either developed by each unit (or formed part of the budget development) with regular updates on progress provided to the community.
5.3.3	Enhance long-term financial planning and forecasting through the development and implementation of a Long-Term Financial Plan.	The Financial Vision was adopted in October 2024, and a Financial Plan 2025–2035 adopted in June 2025 that details the strategies improving Council's financial position and performance.
5.3.4 COMPLETED	Effectively advocate, scope projects, prepare applications and ensure delivery of major initiatives and projects.	Improved project development, using the Project Management Framework has led to the progression of highly complex projects (Djuwang Baring, The Mechanics Trentham) and the delivery of a record amount of capital works expenditure.

05 PERFORMANCE

5.3.5	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.	Council developed and has focused on implementing a fit for purpose ICT Strategy. Ongoing focus on quality equipment and software that enables the delivery of high-quality services to the community and provides staff with the tools and processes to deliver quality service continue to be a focused commitment, with a review and update of the ICT Strategy actions to ensure their ongoing relevance and priority.
5.3.6 COMPLETED	Ensure Council practices, processes and decision making is compliant with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> provisions and other related legislation and regulations.	Throughout the length of the Plan, Council meetings and decisions have been conducted in compliance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . Council's instruments of delegation and authorisation are reviewed twice a year to account for changes to legislation, as well as changing roles and responsibilities.
5.3.7	Strengthen internal governance through ongoing Councillor and staff capacity building and skill development.	Councillors have undertaken an extensive induction program with the commencement of their term. Officers continue to be inducted on commencement, with a rolling development program to launch shortly.
5.3.8	Embed Council's risk management framework and risk appetite into project management and decision making.	Risk management procedures and templates have been developed for staff and form part of the ongoing training and development program for staff.
5.3.9	Ensure the procurement practices of staff are in line with set policies, procedures and guidelines that have a focus on transparency, accountability and probity.	All staff are required to adhere to the current procurement policy that was adopted in September 2023 with associated procedures and guidelines provided to facilitate this.
5.3.10	Respond and adapt to requirements set out by the VEC in relation to representation reviews and general elections.	Council fulfilled its obligations in relation to the recent local council elections and strengthened its partnership with the VEC.

Improve staff resourcing, support, and capacity building



ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23 INITIATIVE

Employer Value Proposition (EVP): Develop EVP and tools to market Council more effectively as an employer.

The timing for Council to develop a comprehensive EVP needs to be part of a broader approach to review and refresh Council's culture, engagement and values. Council has in the interim operated with a less formal but consistent approach to help inform our recruitment brand and how we present ourselves as an employer. With the adoption of the Council Plan 2025–2029, and the organisational restructure aligned to our financial vision, work will be undertaken to review the current EVP and further develop this as part of Council's integrated planning framework.

Item

Strategy

Actions and Outcomes





Develop Workforce Plan to promote gender equity, diversity, inclusion, with an appropriate organisational structure to deliver the Council Plan.

The Workforce Plan was built for a four-year period, aligned to the Council Plan 2021–2025. This guided the workforce needs and capabilities required to deliver the Council Plan. Following the adoption of key strategic documents, including the Financial Vision and the Council Plan 2025–2029, a new Workforce Plan aligned to Council's changing needs, service delivery, and financial sustainability will be developed in 2025/26 to guide the organsiation for the next four-year period.

5.4.2



Ensure appropriate training and development of staff to ensure continuous improvement and access to the required skills.

Many opportunities for training were afforded to and taken up by staff during the four years including a number of staff that undertook the key leadership programs within the sectoring being the Emerging Leaders and Executive Leaders Program facilitated by LGPro. Work to develop and build Council's approach to a supportive learning and development culture has been developed, and while a full launch was delayed, this program and the connection to the revised Personal Development Plan (PDP) will be embedded in 2025/26.

5.4.3



Strengthen the organisational approach to project management and delivery.

The Project Management Framework (PMF) continues to be implemented and improved, with an enterprise project management office approach now focusing on broadening the success of the PMF.

5.4.4



Ensure that 100% of staff are offered the opportunity to undertake cultural awareness training.

As part of the learning and development framework, mandatory compliance training and method has been developed. This will be implemented in 2025/26 to ensure the ongoing training of staff and maintain Council's emphasis and commitment to cultural awareness.

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 works are complete with 24 Vincent Street occupied, following the relocation from Daylesford Town Hall. Server room and office/meeting room alterations at the Daylesford Depot site are also complete. Schematic design for the Daylesford Community Facility has been completed for presentation to Council.

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Strategy

Actions and Outcomes

0.0.1

COMPLETED

Continue to invest in asset maintenance, renewal, and upgrade programs.

Council commits ongoing investment into the maintenance, renewal and upgrade of its community assets. In line with Council's asset management practices, periodic data collection and validation, condition assessments and valuations, feed into and improve decision making around investment requirement.





Review and modernise Council's Asset Management practices in alignment with the development of Council's Asset Plan.

The continued development of Council's asset management maturity is ongoing, facilitated by proactive condition audits, valuations, validation and update of asset data (including spatial information), and periodic data collection exercises. In 2024/25 the collection of open space asset data was completed, and discussions have progressed in relation to the implementation of a centralised electronic asset management and maintenance management system in 2025/26.

5.5.3

Deliver the annual Capital Works program.

Successful delivery of most of the Capital Works program was achieved, including significant projects like Djuwang Baring, the largest and most complex project ever delivered by Council.



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.

Building Council's approach to gender equality is ongoing, with the intent of ensuring that this can be embedded into daily practice the aim being to ensure that it becomes front of mind in how we deliver services and outcomes. A detailed Gender Impact Assessment was undertaken to inform the development of the Council Plan 2025–2029.

Item	Strategy	Actions and Outcomes
5.6.1	Implement provisions of the Gender Equality Act 2020, including a Gender Equity Action Plan.	Work is ongoing to uplift and grow Council's embedding of actions that support gender equality. Council does have a Gender Equity Advisory Committee in place.
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.	Council is often complimented on either its stance or work undertaken to build safe, respectful and equitable relationships, including such actions as Council's statement on the prevention of violence, development of Council's first Rainbow Action Plan and deep, meaningful engagement with our Traditional Owners. Ongoing work and commitment to embed equity and inclusion will continue to be a focus in the next Council Plan.
5.6.3	Review and update the Act@Work Plan and continue to strengthen gender equity at Council.	Council remains committed to the principles of Act@Work and has embedded our commitment into our Gender Equality Action Plan.

5.7 The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2024/25 budget for the year.

Initiatives	Progress
Council is committed to the improvement of its ICT infrastructure and in addition to maintaining a higher level of recurrent budget to enhance its day-to-day capability. It is also investing in a number of capital works projects to improve infrastructure, which will benefit both residents and staff, and ensure adequate cyber security in place.	Completed and Ongoing Various enhancements undertaken throughout the year, with Council's planned investment in ICT infrastructure continue into 2025/2026, focusing on key areas such as cyber security and system upgrades to future-proof Council's workplaces.
Working with the Victorian Electoral Commission for the 2024 Council Elections.	Complete Successful Council elections were held with final stages relating to non-voters expected to be completed in 2025/2026.
Community engagement, and	Complete
development of key documents including the Council Plan.	Council formally adopted a suite of key strategic documents on 24 June that will help guide the future of the Shire. These include the Council Plan 2025-2029 (incorporating the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan), 2025/26 Budget, Financial Plan, Revenue and Rating Plan, and Asset Plan.
Updated Financial Plan	Complete
(Long Term Financial Plan)	The Financial Plan for 2025-2034 was adopted by Council on 24 June 2025 and will undergo continuous review throughout the year. Any necessary amendments will be based on Council's direction.

5.8 The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2024/25 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of Service Provided		2024/25 Budget \$'000	2024/25 Actual \$'000	2024/25 Variance \$'000
Financial Services	To deliver efficient and effective allocation of resources through sound financial planning and management, that is guided by the	Exp	1,436	1,462	(26)
00111000	long-term financial plan and secures the financial viability of the municipality.	Rev	216	420	204
				1,042	178
ICT	To provide the highest quality technology-based services, in the	Exp	2,051	2,407	(356)
	most cost-effective manner, to facilitate the delivery of services to Council and the community.		-	46	46
		Net	2,051	2,361	(310)
Culture and Performance	In partnership with Management, Culture and Performance provide a high level of service and support to the organisation	Exp	1,079	1,107	(28)
Tenomanee	for recruiting and retaining qualified and diverse staff, facilitating positive employee relations, developing and	Rev	-	-	-
	delivering training to enhance employees skills and capabilities, measuring employee performance and job satisfaction and providing industrial relations advice to contribute to Council's organisational effectiveness.	Net	1,079	1,107	(28)
Customer	To provide consistent, high quality customer service, by	Exp	944	921	23
Experience	managing, resolving, and preventing problems; empowering and educating our customers with self-service tools and solutions; communicating effectively; and exceeding customer expectations which will enable Council and our community to reach their goals.	Rev	5	7	2
		Net	939	914	25
Governance & Risk	Good governance is provided through the development and implementation of policies and procedures that support good	Exp	1,726	1,824	(98)
	decision making.	Rev	6	23	17
		Net	1,720	1,801	(81)
Communications	Council delivers effective communication through varied channels to ensure all who wish to be informed are.	Exp	401	282	119
	Sharmote to should all who won to be informed allo.	Rev	-	-	-
		Net	401	282	119
Net Cost to Counci	l for Focus Area 5		7,410	7,507	(97)

Major variances relate to:

- Financial Services Increased returns from investment income over the past year.
- ICT The system improvements program for 2024/25 was funded using carry forward budget from the previous year, which was not allocated to the adopted budget position.
- Communications and Community Engagement Favourable variance in the service is attributed to reduced allocation of resources as part of allocation of the \$1.5 million of operational savings for the 2024/25 financial year.



MPHWP progress

2024/25 marks the final year of Council's MPHWP 2021–2025. The past 12 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

- Reusable products voucher program implemented for cloth nappies to reduce waste to landfill and raise sustainable practice awareness.
- Collaborated with CHRH to deliver the Reusable Period Products Program in all Hepburn Shire primary schools for the second year.
- Emergency management procedures in place to reduce public health impacts of climate related emergencies.
- Youth development ran school holiday nature-based programs with young people on climate awareness and recycling.
- Grants supported projects that increased awareness of the public health risks of climate change such as energy efficient kits, solar installs and wildlife walkways.
- Continued to increase community knowledge and awareness of public health risks of climate to public health through

- multiple communications channels.
- Emergency management ran a range of community events to assist with community climate emergency preparation and response.

Priority 2 – Increasing healthy eating

- Council continued Healthy Choices options at outdoor swimming pool kiosks, trained all pool staff, updated menus and upgraded kitchen equipment.
- Supported healthy eating awareness campaigns in partnership with CHRH.
- Promoted community-led initiatives that provide access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food.
- Promoted Healthy Choices messaging across community programs and events.
- Drafted Council's Healthy Food and Drinks Policy.
- Delivered the reverse advent calendar food security box project.



- Local food relief resources webpage updated and promoted, including the Wellbeing Pocket Guide.
- Promoted Choose Tap initiatives and messaging across community programs and events.
- Facilitated the Daylesford working group food security access for vulnerable populations.

Priority 3 – Improving mental wellbeing

- Supported ongoing meetings of the Disability, Reconciliation, Gender Equity and LGBTIQA+ advisory committees. MoU with neighbourhood houses implemented.
- Live4Life partnership with Daylesford College that focuses on improving youth mental health throughout the Shire.
- Supported events and campaigns that encourage and promote physical activity and healthy eating.
- Facilitated a positive ageing working group to focus on understanding the impact and drivers of social isolation in over 55s living in Hepburn Shire.
- Ran two free community mental health first aid sessions.
- Ran LGBTQIA+ awareness training for staff.
- Implemented the disability awareness training package for new staff members.
- Implemented and improved visual accessibility of Council documents, meeting minutes and agendas.
- Facilitated inclusion training at all staff inductions.

- Implemented employee assistance program and staff wellbeing awareness campaigns.
- Facilitated celebrations and events for NAIDOC, Reconciliation Week, Trans Awareness Week, World AIDS Day, R U OK? Day, women's and men's health weeks, IDAHOBIT, Youth Week, Children's Day, 16 Days of Activism, Australia Day, International Day of People with Disability and more.

Priority 4 – Prevention of violence in all forms

- Act@Play offered for one sporting club.
- DV Safe Phone project implemented in all waste facilities, libraries and customer service centres.
- Gender Equity Action Plan implemented.
- Gender Impact Assessment implemented on some major projects.
- Fair Access Policy implemented in sporting facilities.
- Active membership and promotion of the CoRE Alliance.
- Encouraged all local health service organisations to register at 1800 My Options.
- Promoted 1800 My Options and the 'Ask Issy' online service platform.
- Updated Wellbeing Pocket Guide and rolled out across the Shire.
- Ran awareness campaign and events throughout 16 Days of Activism in partnership with CHRH.

LGPRF 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

		Res	sults		
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
Service standard					
Health inspections of aquatic facilities	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	Satisfactory inspections of all aquatic facilities
[Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]					were undertaken during the 2024/25 pool season in line with the <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> . The Calembeen Park toddlers pool was closed throughout the 2024/25 season, reducing the number of facilities within the municipality to four.
Utilisation					
Utilisation of aquatic facilities	1.64	1.47	1.10	0.94	Minimal recorded participation data collected
[Number of visits to aquatic facilities / population]					throughout the season, has resulted in lower than anticipated visitation figures for the 2024 aquatics season.
Service cost					
Cost of aquatic facilities	\$12.95	\$18.91	\$36.71	\$25.19	Cost efficiency measures to pool operations have
[Direct cost of aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to aquatic facilities]					resulted in a decrease in services costs.

Animal Management

		Res	ults		Comments
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Timeliness					
Time taken to action animal management requests	4.48	4.54	4.14	4.00	Time taken to action animal management requests has remained consistent with the
[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]					previous year, with a slight reduction and improvement in time taken.
Service standard					
Animals reclaimed	13.75%	45.10%	26.00%	44.25%	Increased number of animals reclaimed due to
[Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100					increased follow-ups with pet owners to register their pets and update microchip details.
Animals rehomed	27.50%	7.50% 21.57%	28.38%	58.73%	The number of unclaimed collected animals has reduced from 2023/24 and from these there has been a higher number of unclaimed animals being rehomed in 2024/25.
[Number of unclaimed collected animals rehomed / Number of unclaimed collected animals] x100					
Service cost					
Cost of animal management service per population	\$9.72	\$9.72 \$12.25	\$14.77	\$13.67	Overall reduction in cost of animal management service per population due to savings as a result of
[Direct cost of the animal management service / Population]					reduction of permanent and contractor staff.
Health and safety					
Animal management prosecutions	0.00%	0% 100.00% 0.00% 100.0	0.00%	100.00%	Council prosecutes as needed and on legal
[Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100				advice. There was one successful animal management prosecution in 2024/25.	

Food Safety

Results						
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments	
Timeliness						
Time taken to action food complaints	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	All food complaints were responded to and	
[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]	t				actioned within one business day.	
Service standard						
Food safety assessments	48.44%	75.53%	100.00%	84.78%	Higher risk premises were prioritised. A slightly	
[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					lower percentage compared to the previous year, but performance remains high. Changes to programs of work due to (1) staff transitioning (2) increased wastewater priorities due to property development and (3) increased enforcement such as food act prosecutions.	
Food safety samples	New	New New	100.00%	100.00%	Achieved all required food sampling and testing obligations.	
[Number of food samples obtained / Required number of food samples] × 100						
Service cost						
Cost of food safety service	\$841.56 \$835.57	\$850.18	\$928.33	Marginal increase in direct cost of the food		
[Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]					safety service due to increased resourcing with responsibilities shared across multiple officers.	
Health and safety						
Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	90.91%	10 of the 11 major and critical non-compliances were followed up. Improved process, procedure and managerial oversight will ensure 100% follow up is achieved in the future.	
[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						

Governance

		Res	sults		
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
Transparency					
Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public	9.29%	13.99%	9.42%	12.10%	An increase on our previous year's results, Council continues to prioritise
[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					decisions being made in an open forum where possible. Resolutions made at confidential meetings are included in the public minutes where possible.
Consultation and engagement					
Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement	44.00	46.00	52.00	47.00	There has been a reduction in satisfaction with community
[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]					consultation from 2024. Throughout 2024/25 there has been a vast program of Councillor and Executive Officer engagement with community particularly during the Council Plan 2025–2029 development project. It is anticipated that this will impact positively on the next survey results.
Attendance					
Councillor attendance at council meetings	97.32%	98.10%	99.05%	92.86%	Council continues to maintain a high attendance rate for Council meetings.
[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					
Service cost					
Cost of elected representation	\$37,944.57	\$38,540.57	\$41,954.43	\$40,034.43	New Councillor term commenced
[Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]					November 2024 with average costs slightly reduced due to reduction in travel and other expenses to support the Councillor group.
Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with council decisions	41.00	42.00	46.00	42.00	Community satisfaction with Council
[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]					decisions has decreased in 2024/25. Engagement campaigns and improve communications with the community are being undertaken to improve the satisfaction levels.

Libraries

		Res	sults		Comments
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Resource currency					
Recently purchased library collection	66.17%	75.36%	46.89%	62.66%	Result indicates regular updates of the collection
[Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100					and includes ebooks and audiobooks for the first time in 2024/25.
Service cost					
Cost of library service per population	\$37.21	\$42.86	\$36.97	\$32.71	Cost of the service has further decreased this
[Direct cost of the library service / Population]	through gre libraries. P	financial year with a focus on cost reduction through greater efficiencies across the four libraries. Programs have continued and been well attended throughout the year.			
Utilisation					
Loans per head of population	New	New New	2.73	5.76	Borrowings show an increase from last financial
[Number of library collection item loans / Population]					year and loans of ebooks and audiobooks are included for the first time in 2024/25.
Participation					
Library membership	New	New	28.42%	27.91%	Library membership remains high in Hepburn
[Number of registered library members / Population] x100					Shire. We are leading a campaign in 2025/26 to further boost membership along with the introduction of Open Access Libraries.
Library visits per head of population	New	v New	3.65	3.81	Our libraries are popular destinations, with
[Number of library visits / Population]					Daylesford Library being the busiest of our sites, with 36,327 visits during the financial year. This good result will further improve as the Open Access Libraries project is implemented.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

		Res	ults		
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
Service standard					
Infant enrolments in the MCH service	104.63%	102.36%	102.65%	100.00%	The percentage of infants enrolled in the
[Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100					MCH service is per the number of birth notifications received.
Service cost					
Cost of the MCH service	\$98.54	\$138.10	\$140.84	\$137.94	Cost of service delivery result is similar to other
[Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]					rural councils.
Participation					
Participation in the MCH service	86.01%	85.37%	81.60%	75.44%	The percentage of infants enrolled in the MCH
[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100					service who attend MCH has remained fairly consistent. There is a drop off in three-year-old Key Age and Stage attendance as families will often attend general practitioners instead of MCH services.
Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children	75.76%	80.95%	88.89%	73.33%	Remains consistent with previous year and showing slight decrease in Aboriginal children attending over the four years as families choose to attend Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative services in Ballarat for its dedicated cultural support service. Council has provided free cultural competency training to service providers and has seen a high uptake from CHRH staff who are dedicated to maintaining a culturally safe service.
[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					
Satisfaction					
Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit	99.07%	95.28%	98.23%	100.00%	The percentage of infants enrolled in the MCH service who participated in four-week Key Age and
[Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100					Stage visit has remained constant over the four- year period with 100% attendance in 2024/25.

Roads

		Res	sults		
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
Satisfaction of use					
Sealed local road requests	50.26	43.08	32.06	26.10	A slight reduction of overall requests received due
[Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100					to targeted capital programs focused on sealed road defects.
Condition					
Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards	97.73%	98.19%	98.36%	98.36%	Council continues to maintain road assets to a targeted condition.
[Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100					
Service cost					
Cost of sealed local	\$49.88	\$49.40	\$66.46	\$70.77	Council had a limited amount of reconstruction
road reconstruction					projects in the year 2024/25, but has equally experienced rising costs, particularly in relation to
[Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]					construction.
Cost of sealed local road resealing	\$8.67	\$10.77	\$11.42	\$7.15	Council's program in 2024/25 was reflective of
[Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]					spray seal works covering larger areas at lower unit rates than the previous year.
Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with sealed local roads	39.00	33.00	29.00	33.00	Slight increase in the performance rating this
[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]					year for sealed local roads and is reflective of the poor state of roads in the region, not necessarily local roads.

Statutory Planning

	Results				
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
Timeliness					
Time taken to decide planning applications	107.00	145.00	180.00	102.00	On average a reduction in permit decision times resulting from a review of process and targeted
[The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]	reen and a				resources applied to the service.
Service standard					
Planning applications decided within required time frames	19.70% 33.79%		17.86%	26.47%	A turnover of staff in key roles over the last 18 months, coupled with a number of ongoing,
[(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	1				complex planning enforcement and VCAT matters, has resulted in a challenging backlog of planning applications. However, the percentage of applications decided within 60 statutory days is steadily improving, in response to vacancies being filled and the continuing implementation of targeted process improvements.

Statutory Planning (cont.)

		Res	ults		
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
Service cost					
Cost of statutory planning service	\$2,458.49	\$3,473.95	\$3,507.77	\$2,975.12	The cost per application reduced
[Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]					substantially and is within the target range. This reflects efficiencies gained through productivity improvements but also a reduction in the provision of specialist expert advice being required.
Decision making					
Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT	50.00%	40.00%	80.00%	100.00%	Council have had a reduction in the number of matters going to VCAT over the last 12
[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					months and are pleased with all decisions being upheld at the tribunal.

Waste Management

		Pos	sults			
Service/indicator/measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments	
Service standard						
Kerbside collection bins missed [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x10,000	5.89	12.76	15.04	11.61	Significant changes to bin collection schedules in 2023/24 saw an increase in requests for missed bin collections. After the adjustment to changes, requests have returned to a lower level for the 2024/25 period.	
Service cost						
Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service [Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]	\$149.49	\$163.63	\$149.04	\$129.24	Decrease in cost due to collection frequency change from weekly to fortnightly and the introduction of food and garden organics kerbside collections from April 2024.	
Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service	\$77.88	\$82.38	\$90.89	\$87.45	Slight decrease to the cost of recycling processing.	
[Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]						
Waste diversion						
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100	40.22%	34.23%	37.72%	51.99%	Diversion increased with introduction of organics service in 2023/24, as well as a change in general rubbish collection frequency from weekly to fortnightly.	



The role of local government

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 Victorians.

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 OCMs.

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 fourth Tuesday of each month, and unscheduled meetings as required. These meetings are open to the public.

Council meetings are live streamed to Council's YouTube channel, 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 14 meetings in 2024/25, including four special meetings and one statutory meeting.

Meetings

16 July 2024

Ordinary Meeting of Council

20 August 2024

Ordinary Meeting of Council

3 September 2024

Special Meeting of Council – Township Structure Plans and Rural Hepburn Strategy

10 September 2024

Special Meeting of Council – Financial Vision

16 September 2024

Ordinary Meeting of Council

26 November 2024

Statutory Meeting of Council to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor

17 December 2024

Ordinary Meeting of Council

25 February 2025

Ordinary Meeting of Council

25 March 2025

Ordinary Meeting of Council

29 April 2025

Ordinary Meeting of Council

3 April 2025

Special Meeting of Council – Hepburn Bathhouse Repairs Contract

13 May 2025

Special Meeting of Council – Council Plan, Budget and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

27 May 2025

Ordinary Meeting of Council

24 June 2025

Ordinary 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 Council staff are required to comply with the conflict of interest provisions as set out in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

During 2024/25, Councillors declared a total of eight conflicts of interest. These declarations were made at both Councillor Briefings and OCMs. Councillors declaring a conflict left the room while matters they had a conflict in were discussed and/or voted on.

Councillor	Conflicts of interest declared July 2024– October 2024
Cr Jen Bray	0
Cr Tim Drylie	0
Cr Tessa Halliday	2
Cr Don Henderson	1
Cr Lesley Hewitt	0
Cr Brian Hood	0
Cr Juliet Simpson	0

Councillor	Conflicts of interest declared November 2024–June 2025
Cr Tony Clark	0
Cr Shirley Cornish	0
Cr Tim Drylie	1
Cr Pat Hockey	0
Cr Don Henderson	0
Cr Lesley Hewitt	4
Cr Brian Hood	0



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.

Delegated committees

Council does not have any delegated committees.

Councillor allowances and expenses

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 classified as a category 1 council.

From 1 July 2024 until 17 December 2024, the allowances paid to Councillors were:

- Mayors \$84,498 per year
- Deputy Mayors \$42,248 per year
- Councillors \$27,291 per year

From 18 December 2024 to 30 June 2025, the allowances paid to Mayors and Deputy Mayors were:

- Mayors \$86,722 per year
- Deputy Mayors \$43,360 per year

The allowance for Councillors did not change.

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

Councillors	Allowance Paid
Cr Don Henderson (Mayor from 26 November 2024)	\$60,232
Cr Lesley Hewitt	\$35,323
Cr Brian Hood (Mayor until 26 October 2024)	\$45,682
Cr Tessa Halliday (Term ended 26 October 2024)	\$9,296
Cr Jen Bray (Term ended 26 October 2024)	\$9,296
Cr Tim Drylie	\$26,015
Cr Juliet Simpson (Resigned 22 July 2024)	\$3,321
Cr Tony Clark (Term commenced 19 November 2024)	\$16,719
Cr Shirley Cornish (Term commenced 19 November 2024)	\$16,719
Cr Pat Hockey (Term commenced 19 November 2024)	\$16,719
TOTAL	\$239,322



Councillor expenses

In accordance with sections 39-43 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council adopted the Council Expenses and Resources Policy on 16 July 2024. The policy provides guidance on the payment of reimbursement 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 2024/25 are set out in the following table:

Councillor	Training and development (including induction)	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*	\$1,747	\$7,170	\$840	\$9,757
Cr Lesley Hewitt	\$1,747	\$-	\$840	\$2,587
Cr Brian Hood*	\$897	\$6,575	\$840	\$8,312
Cr Tim Drylie	\$897	\$514	\$3,490	\$4,900
Cr Tony Clark	\$897	\$926	\$3,579	\$5,402
Cr Shirley Cornish	\$897	\$-	\$560	\$1,457
Cr Pat Hockey	\$897	\$2,407	\$560	\$3,864
Cr Jen Bray**	\$-	\$-	\$280	\$280
Cr Tessa Halliday**	\$-	\$2,277	\$2,014	\$4,291
Cr Juliet Simpson***	\$-	\$-	\$70	\$70
Total expenditure by cost category	\$7,978	\$19,869	\$13,073	\$40,919

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

Note: **Term ended 26 October 2024

Note: ***Resigned from Office 22 July 2024

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is required to include a number of elements in the induction and ongoing development of the Councillor group including:

- Working together in a Council
- Decision making, integrity and accountability
- Community representation

- Strategic planning and financial management
- Conduct
- Land use planning

In 2024/25, \$19,618 and significant Officer time was allocated to the Councillor induction program which all Councillors were required to attend.

06 GOVERNANCE

Go	vernance and Management Checklist	For the year ended 30 June 2025
Go	vernance and Management Items	Assessment
1	Community engagement policy	Adopted in accordance with section 55 of the Act.
	(policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters	Date of adoption: 23/02/2021
	of public interest)	Council has an adopted Community Engagement Policy which was current for the 2024/25 financial year, and is due for review within the 2025/26 financial year.
2	Community engagement guidelines	Current guidelines in operation.
	(guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)	Date of commencement: 23/02/2021
	and the engage man are community)	Comprehensive community engagement guidelines and templates exist for use by Council staff. These guidelines and templates will be reviewed and updated as required.
3	Financial Plan (plan under section 91 of the	Adopted in accordance with section 91 of the Act.
	Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 10	Date of adoption: 24/06/2025
	financial years)	Financial Plan 2025-2035 was adopted by Council on 24 June 2025.
	Asset Plan (plan that sets out the asset	Adopted in accordance with section 92 of the Act.
	maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the	Date of adoption: 24/06/2025
	next 10 years)	Asset Plan 2025-2035 was adopted by Council on 24 June 2025.
5	Revenue and Rating Plan (plan setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges)	Adopted in accordance with section 93 of the Act.
		Date of adoption: 24/06/2025
		Revenue and Rating Plan for 2025-2029 adopted by Council on 24 June 2025
6	Annual budget (plan setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken over the next 12 months and the funding and other resources required)	Budget adopted in accordance with section 94 of the Act.
		Date of adoption: 24/06/2025
		2025/26 Budget adopted by Council on 24 June 2025.
7	Risk policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations)	Current policy in operation
		Date of commencement: 21/11/2023
		The Risk Management Policy was adopted in 2023 and remains current.
8	Fraud policy (policy outlining Council's	Current policy in operation
	commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud)	Date of commencement: 21/09/2021
	the risk of riaday	The Fraud Policy was adopted in 2021 and will be reviewed in 2025/26.
9	Municipal emergency management planning (Participation in meetings of the Municipal Emergency Management	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) meetings attended by one or more representatives of Council (other than the chairperson of the MEMPC) during the financial year.
	Planning Committee.)	Dates of MEMPC meetings attended:
		Council's Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) have met every quarter in 2024/25.
10	Procurement policy (policy outlining the	Adopted in accordance with section 108 of the Act.
	principles, processes and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods and	Date of commencement: 19/09/2023
	services by the Council)	Procurement policy adopted September 2023 and will be reviewed at least once in the new four-year Councillor term.
11	Business continuity plan (plan setting out	No plan.
	the actions that will be taken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event	Reason for no plan:
	key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster)	A full review of the Business Continuity Plan is being undertaken in the 2025 calendar year.

06 GOVERNANCE

Gov	vernance and Management Checklist	For the year ended 30 June 2025
Gov	vernance and Management Items	Assessment
12	Disaster recovery plan (plan setting out the	No plan.
	actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event	Reason for no plan:
	of a disaster)	A full review of the Business Continuity Plan is being undertaken in the 2025 calendar year.
13	Complaint policy (Policy under section 107	Policy developed in accordance with section 107 of the Act.
	of the Act outlining Council's commitment and approach to managing complaints.)	Date of commencement: 29/07/2025
		The Complaint Policy was adopted in 2021 and remains current.
14	Workforce plan (Plan outlining Council's	Plan developed in accordance with section 46 of the Act.
	commitment and approach to planning the current and future workforce requirements	Date of commencement: 13/07/1905
	of the organisation.)	Council has a workforce plan that was adopted in 2021. The workforce plan is due for review, following the adoption of the Council Plan 2025-2029, Council's Financial Vision which outlined significant changes to Council's service portfolio and workforce to ensure financial sustainability. The workforce plan will be developed in the 2025/26 financial year and will reflect a four-year period in alignment with the Council Plan.
15	Payment of rates and charges hardship	Current policy in operation
	policy (Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to assisting ratepayers experiencing financial hardship or difficulty paying their rates.)	Date of commencement: 18/05/2021
		Revenue Collection and Financial Hardship Policy is in the process of being updated with the aim of presenting the reviewed policy to Council in quarter two of the 2025/26 financial year.
16	Risk management framework (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)	Current framework in operation
		Date of commencement:
	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	Council's Risk Management Framework was adopted in 2021 and remains current.
17		Established in accordance with section 53 of the Act.
	(advisory committee of Council under section 53 and 54 of the Act)	Date of commencement:
	section so and set of the Act)	Council's Audit and Risk Committee is established and meets at least four times a year. The Committee's Charter was reviewed in 2024 and remains current.
18	Internal audit (independent accounting	Internal auditor engaged
	professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations	Date of engagement:
	aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls)	Council has an established audit program with three to four audits undertaken each year. Recommendations arising out of audits are monitored and reported on regularly to the Audit and Risk Committee.
19	Performance reporting framework (a set	Current framework in operation
	of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the	Date of adoption:
	performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	The current performance reporting framework commenced on 1 July 2024.
20	Council Plan report (report reviewing the	Current report
	performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation	Date of report:
		Reporting has been provided to Council and the Community biannually.

06 GOVERNANCE

Go	vernance and Management Checklist	For the year ended 30 June 2025
Go	vernance and Management Items	Assessment
21	Quarterly budget reports (quarterly reports	Quarterly reports presented to Council in accordance with section 97(1) of the Act.
	to Council under section 97 of the Act, comparing actual and budgeted results and	Date of report:
	an explanation of any material variations)	Quarterly finance reports provided to Council for the periods September, December and March. Final quarterly report will be encompassed within the financial statements thus providing the final out-turn for Council.
22	1 0 1	Risk reports prepared and presented
	strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring	Dates of reports:
	and risk minimisation strategies)	Council risk registers are reviewed biannually. Reports are provided to the Executive, Councillors and the Audit and Risk Committee after each review.
23	Performance reporting (six-monthly reports	Performance reports prepared
	of indicators measuring the results against financial and non-financial performance,	Dates of reports:
	including performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	Financial performance indicators captured in the quarterly finance reports that are provided to Council.
24	Annual report (annual report under sections 98 and 99 of the Act containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements)	Annual report presented at a meeting of Council in accordance with section 100 of the Act.
		Date of presentation: 16/09/2024
	,	The Annual Report 2023/2024 was adopted at the Council Meeting held on 16 September 2024.
25	Councillor Code of Conduct (Code setting out the standards of conduct to be followed by Councillors and other matters.)	Code of conduct reviewed and adopted in accordance with section 139 of the Act.
		Date reviewed and adopted:
		The former Councillor Code of Conduct was adopted in 2021 and remained in effect until the Model Councillor Code of Conduct was implemented for all Council's in October 2024.
26	Delegations (documents setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and	Delegations reviewed in accordance with section 11(7) of the Act. and a register kept in accordance with sections 11(8) and 47(7) of the Act.
	the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff)	Date of review:
	,	Council has up to date Instruments of Delegation which are reviewed biannually and made available on Council's website.
27	Meeting procedures (Governance Rules	Governance Rules adopted in accordance with section 60 of the Act.
	governing the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees)	Date rules adopted:
	3	Council's Governance Rules and Election Period Policy was adopted in 2022 and remains current.

Council's Public Transparency Policy

The Local Government Act 2020 and the Freedom of Information Act 1982 require councils to make some information available to the public via their website or on request. This includes:

- Summaries of Personal Interest Returns from Councillors and senior staff, detailing their personal interests that may impact on their professional decision-making.
- Council's Instruments of Delegation and Authorisation, that detail powers that have been conferred on Officers under various pieces of legislation.
- Details of gifts, benefits and hospitality that have been declared by Councillors.

Information containing personal affairs information, such as property information or residents, cannot be made readily available, and usually requires a freedom of information request to be made to consider the release of this information if appropriate.

Public interest disclosure procedures

In accordance with section 69 of the *Public Interest Disclosures 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 of public interest disclosures complaints investigated during the financial year.

The Act 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 on Council's website.

During 2024/25, one public interest disclosure was received. The matter was referred to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC), which assessed that the complaint did not meet the threshold of a public interest disclosure and referred the matter back to Council. It was resolved though Council's internal processes.

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 2024/25 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 2024/25 financial year. Domestic Animal Management Plan

Domestic Animal Management Plan

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, Council must prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years and evaluate its implementation in the Annual Report. Implementing DAMP 2021–2025 has been a priority for Council. The DAMP provides a strategic framework that delivers an action plan over a four-year period. It outlines our approach to managing domestic animals in relation to:

- the registration of cats and dogs
- the promotion of responsible pet ownership
- addressing nuisance
- the identification of cats and dogs
- minimising the risk associated with dog attacks
- encouraging effective management of declared dogs.

The DAMP 2021–2025 will be superseded by the DAMP 2026–2029, which is currently in draft and will be open for community feedback in October 2025. The DAMP 2021–2025 had 10 objectives with 102 actions. Council has completed 70 per cent of its actions, equating to 71 actions to date, with 21 actions on track to be completed (these have become part of Council's business as usual). Nine actions are delayed, and these are likely be rolled over into the DAMP 2026–2029 following community consultation.

Key statistic for 2024/25

Dogs	Number
Total dogs registered	2,805
Number of dangerous/menacing/restricted dogs registered	3
Dogs impounded	52
Dogs surrendered (included in above value)	23
Impounded dogs returned to owner	29
Number of dogs rehomed	6
Number of dogs in foster/awaiting adoption	12
Number of dogs euthanised	8

Cats	Number
Total cats registered	956
Cats impounded	131
Cats surrendered (included in above value)	5
Impounded cats returned to owner	6
Number of cats rehomed	6
Number of cats in foster/awaiting adoption	27
Number of cats euthanised	83

Disability Action Plan 2023–2026

The Disability Act 2006 ensures a person with a disability cannot be discriminated against or treated unfairly because of their disability. Through our Disability Action Plan 2023-2026, Council seeks to provide equitable and dignified access to all Council services, facilities, programs, communications, planning and employment processes by removing the barriers that prevent people with disability from participating fully in society.

The Disability Action Plan 2023-2026 was developed with the members of the Disability Advisory Committee and has been registered on the Australian Human Rights Commission's Register of Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans.

Council has implemented a mandatory training module on disability awareness and inclusion for all staff and volunteers. In 2025, 22 sessions were held with more planned. Ongoing advocacy has ensured disability issues and perspectives were considered in the development of Council strategies, including the Integrated Transport Strategy, and the Recreation and Open Space Strategy.

Carers Recognition Act 2012

Council have implemented a series of measures to ensure compliance with our obligations under the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*. This legislation applies to councils that are responsible for the development, implementation, provision, or evaluation of policies, programs, or services affecting carers and those they support.

During this Council term, we have adopted several strategies, including our Positive Ageing Strategy, Youth Strategy, and Early and Middle Years Strategies. Implementation of those strategies had a strong input to the creation of the following actions, 'to work with communities and partners to deliver and advocate for equitable, inclusive access to programs and resources that support wellbeing across all life stages' as adopted in the Council Plan 2025–2029.

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 2024/25 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, while not a delegated committee, acts as an advisory body to Council (in that it doesn't have any decision-making powers of Council) and assists Council with oversight in the areas of risk, governance, financial management and compliance.

Independent members for 2024/25 were:

- Dr Jason Young (appointed July 2021)
- Mr Shane Marr (Chair, appointed November 2023)
- Ms Philippa Murphy (Appointed November 2023)
- Mr Kelvin Tori (Appointed November 2023)

Councillor Members were:

- Cr Brian Hood (June 2024 October 2024)
- Cr Juliet Simpson (June 2024 July 2024)
- Cr Don Henderson (November 2024 – ongoing)
- Cr Tony Clark (November 2024 ongoing)

At these meetings the committee considers the following:

- Council's financial statements
- Risk management practices and governance
- The performance and outcomes of Council's audit programs
- Ensuring overall compliance with legislative obligations

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 2024/25 were:

- Human resources management (Including workforce culture and retention activities)
- Volunteer management
- Information and Communication Technology, Cybersecurity Strategy and Governance

Council adopted its Risk Management Framework in December 2021. In November 2023, Council adopted its Risk Management Policy. Council's risk registers are reported on every six months.

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 2024 to 30 June 2025, 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 2024.

During the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 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)
Wombat Hill Day Basin and Forecourt Refurbishment	\$565,310
Victoria Park (Daylesford) Sports Lighting Redevelopment	\$306,790
Daylesford Town Hall Condition Upgrade	\$1,021,322
Sealed Road Patching 2024-2025	Schedule of Rates
Supply & Delivery of One Motor Grader	\$364,500
Supply of Bulk Emulsion	Schedule of Rates
Hepburn Bathhouse Decking and Drainage	\$381,958
Reconstruction of Dean-Newlyn Road, Newlyn	\$900,000
Council Borrowings 2024/2025	\$5,528,000
Pool Hall Ceiling Remedial Works	\$678,500

^{*}all shown as exclusive of gst





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