

INFORMATION PACK

INDEPENDENT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

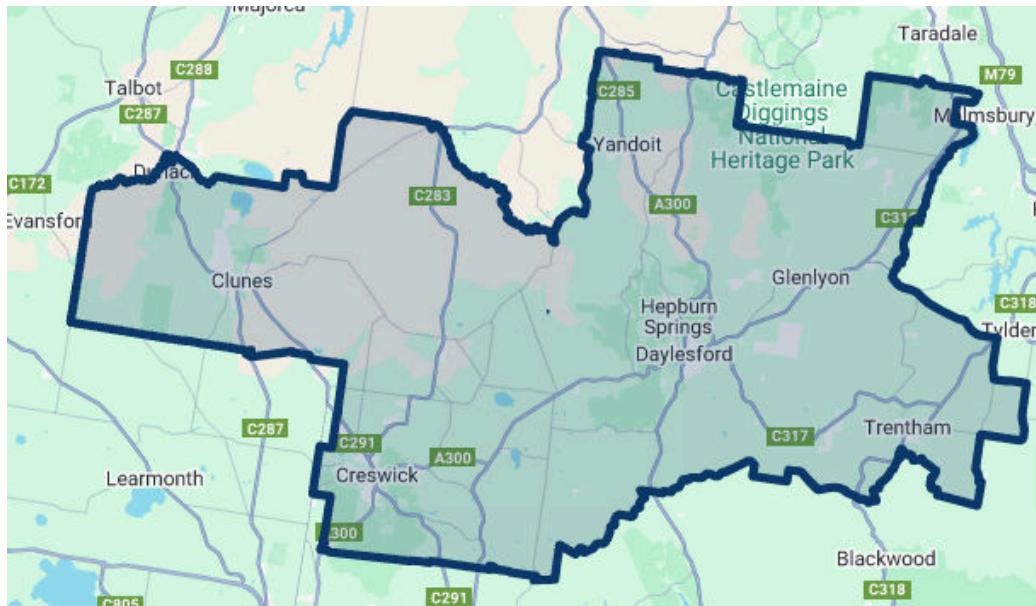
HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL

May 2025

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1. OVERVIEW OF MUNICIPALITY



Small Rural Council
Area 1,473km square

- Population by Major Town – 16,824
- Estimated growth 12.3% 2023-2026
- Median age 52
- Indigenous 1.1%

Business & Economy

Gross revenue - \$1.846 million

Total businesses 1,600

Top 5 industries by economic output:

1. Construction
2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
3. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
4. Manufacturing
5. Healthcare and Social Assistance

Top 5 industries by employment numbers:

1. Healthcare and social assistance 14.46%
2. Construction 9.21%
3. Accommodation and food services 9.03%
4. Retail Trade 8%
5. Education and training 8.03%

Source: ABS 2021 Census Place of Work Employment (Scaled); ABS 2021 / 2022 National Input Output Tables; ABS June 2024 Gross State Product

2. ORGANISATION PROFILE

About the Organisation

The organisation is comprised of approximately 165 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, which includes full-time and part-time staff, as well as approximately 18 casual staff across various teams.

Where councillors are the elected arm of local government, the organisation is the operational arm. The primary role of the organisation is to implement Council's goals, strategies and services and to advise and support Council in making decisions. The organisation, through the Chief Executive Officer, serves the elected Council and strives to provide open, honest and consultative local government, to continually improve service delivery, and ensure services are of high quality, cost effective and responsive to community needs.

The organisation provides support to individual councillors, including the provision of information and resources, in accordance with Council policies and directions.



Executive Team

Bradley Thomas – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Bradley became CEO of Hepburn Shire Council in May 2022. He first joined Council in January 2019 as Director Corporate Services.

He holds a Bachelor of Commerce, MBA and is a qualified chartered accountant.

He is experienced in all areas of the organisation, with excellent skills in local government finance, information technology, corporate reporting and advocacy. He is committed to driving positive changes, leading by example and working to embed continuous improvement into everyday operations.

Prior to joining Hepburn Shire Council, Bradley's history in Local Government dates back to 2008, with previous roles including Executive Manager Business Performance with Mount Alexander Council, and various finance roles City of Greater Bendigo.

The office of the CEO incorporates the following areas of responsibility:

- Councillor Support
- Executive Services

Bradley was President of the Victorian chapter of FinPro from 2018-2024, the peak body for finance professionals. He is also on the board of Tourism Midwest Victoria Board, and MAV WorkCare.



Brooke Holmes - Director Performance and Transformation

Brooke joined Hepburn Shire Council as Executive Manager People and Transformation in July 2023.

Brooke has a Bachelor of Behavioural Studies, a Graduate Diploma of Business Management, and is a Prosci® Certified Change Practitioner.

With over 10 years in regional Councils and statutory authorities, Brooke is known for driving organisational excellence through future focused leadership and strategic foresight. With a background spanning various facets of organisational development, transformation, and performance management, Brooke has consistently steered

organisations towards high-performance cultures and future-ready workforces.

Brooke is committed to the promotion and development of strong and inclusive workplace cultures. Throughout her career, she has championed a customer-centric approach to foster a culture where staff members are connected to the community's needs and feel valued and empowered to contribute their best.

The People and Transformation directorate plays a pivotal role in developing a high-performing organisation through a focus on culture, leadership, and transformation, enabling the delivery of our customer experience commitment by working together – delivering better. The directorate is responsible for:

- Generalist human resources, organisational development, safety and wellbeing and payroll.
- Information Communication Technology (ICT) systems and support and business analysis.
- Transformation and improvement of council systems and process, and change management.
- Corporate planning, performance and service review management.

The corporate directorate focuses on:

- Ensuring the highest standards of governance and probity in all elements of Council's operations
- Support for the Audit and Risk Committee

- Ensuring rates are raised and collected using accurate valuations
- Managing financial assets and resources, and managing the annual budget and financial reporting processes
- Support for Council's Asset Management Committees



Bruce Lucas – Director Infrastructure and Delivery

Bruce joined Hepburn Shire Council as Director Infrastructure in February 2012.

He has a Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering, and an Associate Diploma of Engineering (Civil).

Bruce is experienced in local government engineering, asset management, emergency management and effective management of operational and capital programs, waste management and development services.

With over 30 years of experience in regional Councils, Bruce enjoys the partnership with local communities in delivering high quality services and infrastructure. Having been involved in many significant natural disasters, including Black Saturday and major flood events across the region he also has responsibility for Emergency management arrangements within Council.

As a Board Director for the Central Victoria Greenhouse Alliance and a member of their Finance & Audit Committee he also has an active role in managing Councils Circular Economy and Sustainability portfolios.

The Infrastructure Directorate focuses on delivering clean and well-presented assets and services for residents and visitors alike in a high functioning team. It includes all aspects of council's built and natural environment, infrastructure and waste management. The Directorate is responsible for:

- Asset planning & engineering and urban & landscape design
- Construction and maintenance of roads, footpaths and drainage systems
- Development, protection and maintenance of parks and the natural environment areas under council's jurisdiction
- Management of waste and recycling services, landfill sites, transfer stations
- Planning, designing and delivering significant infrastructure projects
- Management of council's facilities, maintenance and property transactions including purchases/sales and leases/licences
- Planning for, responding too and recovery from emergencies

In partnership with the community, the directorate ensures:

- A connected community with healthy living, culture, heritage and creative industries
- Support for Council's advisory committees including LGBTIQ+, gender equity, disability, and the Heather Mutimer International Women's Day committee
- Support for our business and agricultural sectors
- Focus on tourism strategy and initiatives
- Community events support
- Delivery of community engagement and community grants programs
- Development and support for the Shire's sports and recreation organisations and facilities.



Ron Torres - Director Development and Community

Prior to joining Hepburn Shire Council in September 2023, Ron worked at an inner-city metropolitan council in a number of Directorial and Management roles including Statutory Planning, Strategic Transport and Sustainability.

Ron is a transformational leader with a proven track record of delivering complex, city-shaping projects and strategies. He skilfully builds and leads large, cross-functional teams, creating a cohesive culture of staff who are engaged, motivated and service-focused. He is strategic and calm in a fast-changing, high-pressure environment, cutting through issues to deliver tangible projects and program outcomes.

Ron's strong political and business acumen combine with consultative stakeholder engagement skills to manage competing views in a sensitive manner.

Holding a Bachelor Planning and Design, Ron has extensive experience in local government land use planning, strategic transport planning, regulatory services, sustainable development, animal management and economic development programs.

The Development Directorate incorporates these areas of responsibility:

- Strategic Planning – guiding strategic direction for future development, land uses and the protection of heritage and the environment.
- Building Services – advising on permits, asset protection and regulations.
- Statutory Planning – providing professional advice on planning matters, assessing applications for new developments and changes to land use.
- Biodiversity – helping to protect and enhance the Shire's unique and diverse environment.
- Environmental Health - discharging duties under legislation, including Food Act 1984 and Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2009.
- Local Laws – responding to issues and local community needs and local laws enforcement

- Community Safety – delivering regulatory services in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Customer Experience, libraries and community facility management.
- Communications

3. THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Role Description – Independent Member

Council is seeking to appoint two (2) Independent committee members to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) for a four (4) year term.

The Committee is seeking candidates who have broad senior business, audit and/or financial reporting/management knowledge and experience. Applicants must also be able to demonstrate a well-developed ability to apply appropriate analytical and strategic management skills, including experience within public sector management.

Formal qualifications and previous committee or board experience will be well regarded. Remuneration for the position is based per meeting determined by the Council, which will be indexed in alignment with the rate cap % each 1 July. This will be rounded up to the nearest \$5.

Payment will only be made if the member attends the meeting that is scheduled.

For 2025/26, the remuneration for independent committee members is \$800.00 and \$1065.00 for the Chair, including GST.

Background

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

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

The Audit and Risk Committee is governed by section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and operates in line with the [Audit and Risk Committee Charter](#) and develop a workplan to align with their obligations.

The Audit and Risk Committee meetings are closed to the public. Officers prepare a public set of meeting minutes to be presented to the next practicable meeting Ordinary Council Meeting that presents the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration.

There are four (4) independent committee members and two (2) Councillor delegates that make up the Committee. An independent committee member is appointed annually as the Chair.

Currently, the Mayor Cr Don Hendeson, and Cr Tony Clark serve as the Councillor delegates. The Council determines the Councillor delegates each November at the Statutory Council Meeting each year following the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The Committee meets at least four times a year, with authority to convene additional meetings, as required. The meetings are usually held in the Council Chamber, 24 Vincent Street Daylesford, with attendees preferred to be in person.

Meetings are usually held in March, June, September and December – subject to change.

Sections 123 and 125 and Division 2 of Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 2020* apply to a member of the Audit and Risk Committee who is not a Councillor as if the member were a member of a delegated committee.

Section 123 relates to the provisions of ‘misuse of position’.

Section 125 relates to the provisions of ‘confidential information’.

Independence

To be eligible as an independent committee member of the Hepburn Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee, the individual must be free from any conflict of interest and any business or any relationship that could reasonably be perceived to materially interfere with the members ability to act in the best interest of Council.

Members are required to adhere to the conflict of interest provisions in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Division 2 of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2020 applies to Independent Members, as if the member were a member of a delegated Committee. An independent member has a conflict of interest if they have:

- o a general conflict of interest within the meaning of section 127 of the Act
- o a material conflict of interest within the meaning of section 128 of the Act.

Appointed independent committee members should consider past employment, consultancy arrangements and related party issues in making required declarations and the Council, in consultation with the Chair, should be satisfied that there are sufficient processes in place to manage any real or perceived conflict.

Personal Interest Returns

Personal Interest Returns are a requirement for Councillors under Division 3 of Part 6 (sections 132-136) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Council's Audit and Risk Committee Charter extends this requirement to members of the Audit and Risk Committee.

The *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020* (2020 Regulations) set out the information that needs to be provided in these returns.

Members need to provide an **Initial Personal Interest Return** within 30 days of their appointment.

Between 1 March to 31 March and 1 September and 30 September each year, an Independent Committee member must lodge a **Biannual Personal Interest Return**.

The *Local Government Act 2020* (section 135 and 136) and the Regulations sets out what information that can be accessed or disclosed publicly from information submitted in the Public Interests Returns.

4. POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

The committee members will be required to:

- Actively and constructively contribute towards the Committees performance through the provision of professional, independent, and objective advice in respect to the delivery of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter;
- Provide independent advice on internal audit, governance and risk management plans, financial management and other reports as required;
- Provide objective advice on Council's processes, procedures or internal control mechanisms;
- Provide analysis and constructive comment on projects, reports, briefings, options or issues papers as required; and
- Adequately prepare for and attend all Hepburn Shire Council Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT

In addition to the freedom of any conflicts of interest, please respond to the following selection criteria with relevant examples of your experience or knowledge:

1. Operations of a large organisation.
2. Understanding of financial management, risk management and audit practices.
3. Reporting and Governance practices.
4. Ability to analyse information.
5. Knowledge of local government.
6. Capacity to commit to the workload required and attend committee meetings.

6. TIMETABLE FOR RECRUITMENT

Please note that this is subject to change

Position advertised	20 May 2025
Closing Date for applications	3 June 2025
Evaluation and shortlisting	17 June 2025
Intended interviews	4 July 2025
Recommendation for Appointment to Council	29 July 2025
Induction with new committee members	12 August 2025
First Audit and Risk Committee meeting	2 September 2025

7. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applicants are required to submit an expression of interest outlining their competency against the selection criteria specified with a covering letter a copy of your Curriculum Vitae via Seek.

Contact Us

We're happy to help. For more information please contact Council's Manager Governance and Risk via email: rsmith@hepburn.vic.gov.au or via telephone 03 5321 6434.

A copy of Council's latest Annual Report, Council Plan, Hepburn Together Project and Annual Budget are available on our [website](#).