



# 2019–2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## ACCESSIBILITY

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TTY service (text only communication): telephone 133 677 and ask them to contact Horsham Rural City Council on 03 5382 9777

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*“The Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land: the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.*

*We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.”*

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## GRAPHIC DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION:

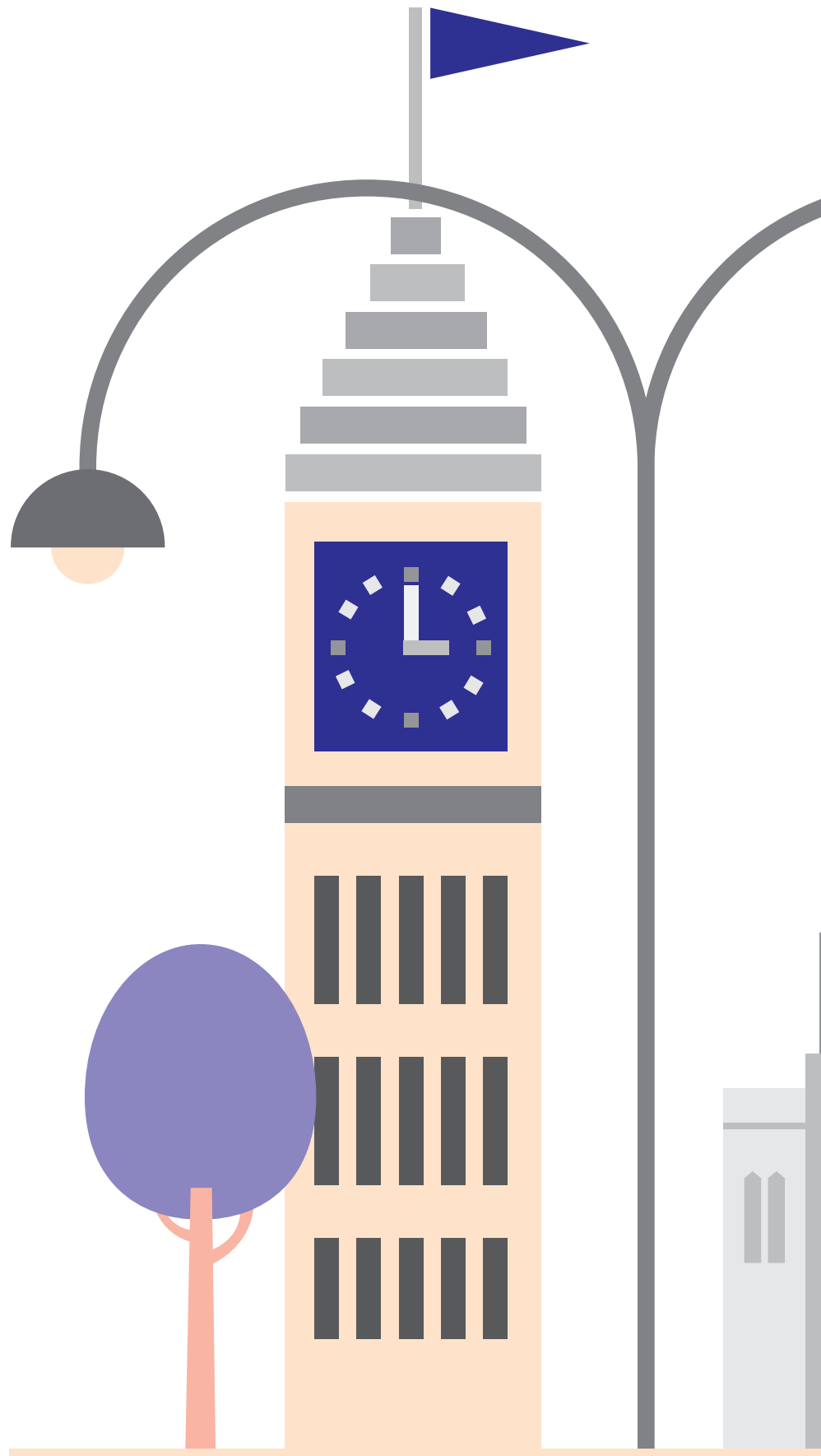
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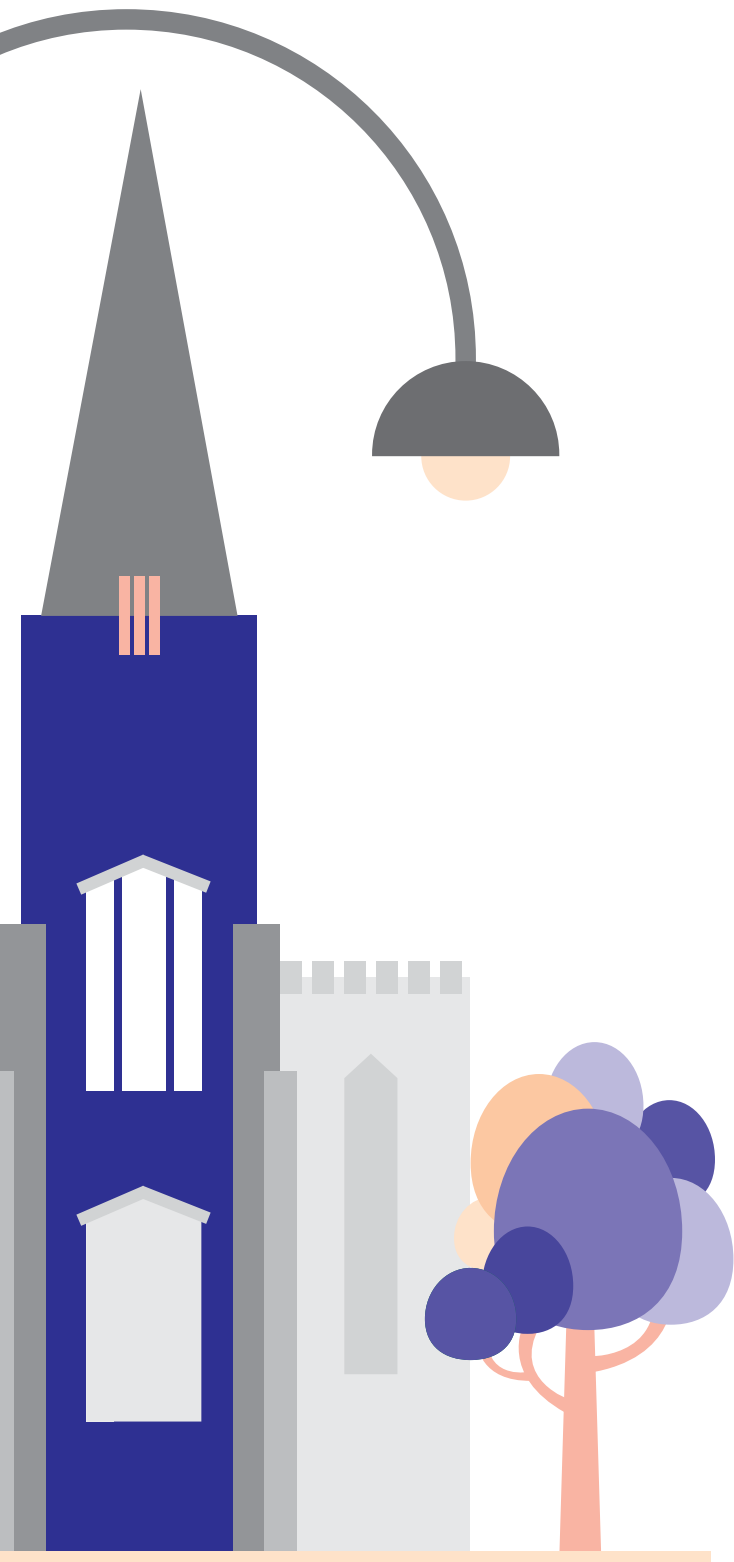
Illustrations on the cover and throughout the document are of local iconic buildings and infrastructure.



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# REPORT OF OPERATIONS

For the year ended 30 June 2020

## INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and guidelines of the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* and acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.

The report details the achievements and performance of Horsham Rural City Council over the past year, along with the challenges presented, particularly in relation to COVID-19 (page 5–12).

It is an important document that provides a transparent record of Council's activities in meeting its strategic goals and objectives as set out in the 2019–2023 Council

Plan to ensure that we deliver key outcomes for our community.

Council is committed to transparent reporting and accountability to the community and the Report of Operations 2019–2020 is the primary means of advising the Horsham Rural City Council community about Council's operations and performance during the financial year.

## COUNCIL SNAPSHOT

### CITY PROFILE

Horsham Rural City Council is a regional city in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region of Western Victoria. The Wimmera Southern Mallee is unique in that it encompasses 20 percent of the area of Victoria and only 1 percent of the population. Located along the Wimmera River, Horsham is approximately 300 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. The municipality covers an area of 4,267 square kilometres and includes the major centres of Horsham and Natimuk, and the localities of:

Arapiles	Jung	Pimpinio
Blackheath	Kalkee	Quantong
Brimpaen	Kanagulk	Riverside
Bungalally	Kewell	St Helen's Plains
Clear Lake	Laharum	Telangatuk East
Dadswells Bridge	Longerenong	Tooan
Dooen	Lower Norton	Toolondo
Douglas	McKenzie Creek	Vectis
Drung	Mitre	Wail
Duchembegarra	Mockinya	Wartook
Grass Flat	Murra Warra	Wonwondah
Haven	Noradjuha	
Jilpanger	Nurrabel	

Horsham is a hub in the Wimmera for health care, niche retail, community services and arts and culture opportunities. A dryland and broadacre agricultural municipality, Horsham is home to the Grains Innovation Park (a nationally acclaimed agricultural research centre) and quality educational facilities including

private and public secondary colleges, a university and an agricultural college. The municipality also has a rich indigenous history and an abundance of diverse natural assets including recreational lakes, wetlands, the Wimmera River, Mount Arapiles (widely regarded as Australia's best rock climbing area) and Wartook Valley and the Grampians National Park is nearby.

Horsham Rural City Council has an estimated residential population of 19,921<sup>1</sup> people (2019), a number expected to reach 20,600 by 2036<sup>2</sup>. Approximately three quarters of residents live within the urban area of Horsham.

At the 2016 Census<sup>3</sup>, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.5 percent of the population and 87.7 percent were born in Australia. Of those born outside Australia, England, India, Philippines, New Zealand and Italy were the most common countries of birth.

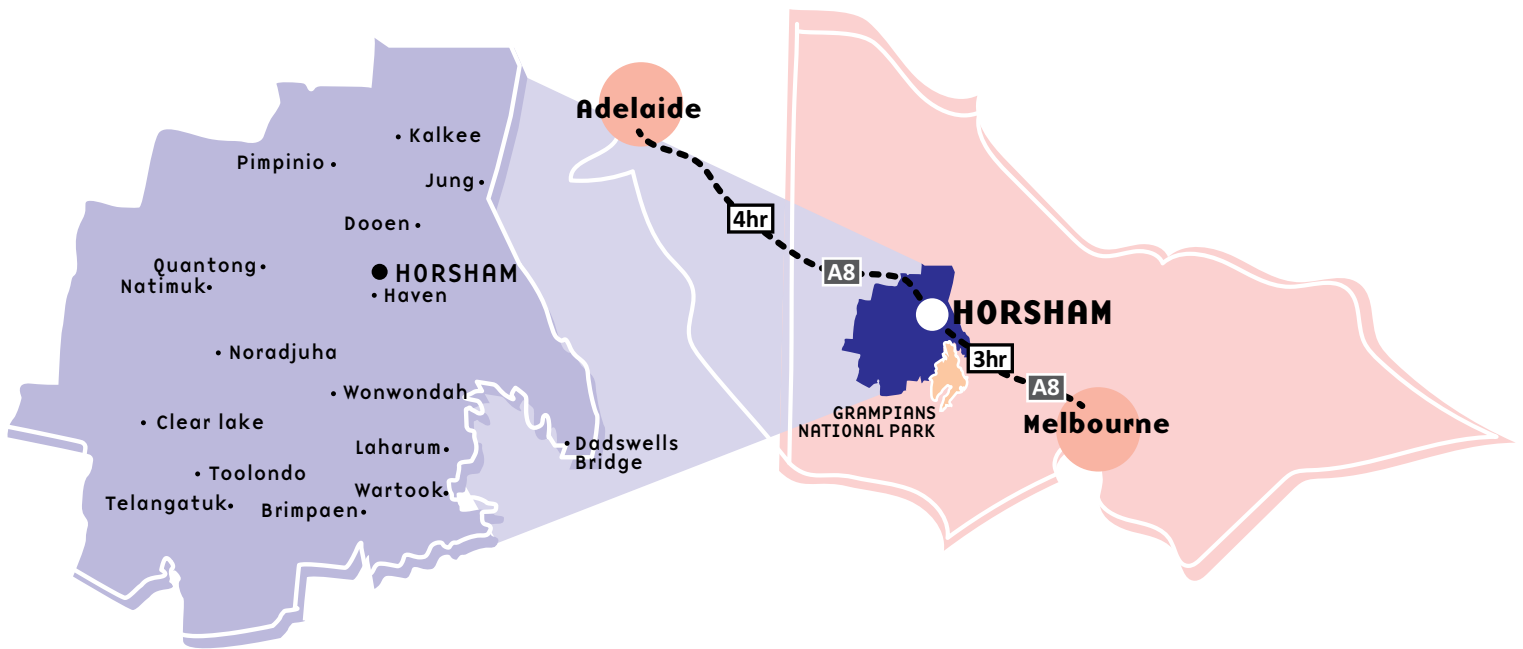
Also in 2016, 9,584 people in Horsham were working, with 55.1 percent employed full-time, 33.9 percent in part-time jobs and 4.9 percent unemployed. People aged 65 years and over made up 20.2 percent of population, a figure projected to increase by 2036. This will have implications for demand and accessibility of housing, infrastructure, services and amenities.

Horsham Rural City Council is committed to working with the community to develop the municipality through strong leadership, vision, good governance, responsive services and quality infrastructure, whilst enhancing our liveability and natural environment. The 2019–2023 Council Plan, associated Strategic Resource Plan and 2019–20 Budget, set the strategic direction for Council and management and include the indicators that Council uses to deliver key outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> Remplan – [www.remplan.com.au](http://www.remplan.com.au)

<sup>2</sup> Victoria in Future 2019 – Population Projections 2016 to 2056 – [www.planning.vic.gov.au](http://www.planning.vic.gov.au)

<sup>3</sup> ABS 2016 Census QuickStats - [www.quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au](http://www.quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au)



<b>POPULATION:</b>	<b>19,921</b>
<b>AREA:</b>	<b>4,267 square kilometres</b>
<b>NUMBER OF COUNCIL EMPLOYEES:</b>	<b>204.6 (FTE)</b>
<b>NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>RATES AND CHARGES REVENUE:</b>	<b>\$24,198,000</b>
<small>(EXCLUDES GARBAGE CHARGES AND REVENUE IN LIEU OF RATES)</small>	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE (INCLUDING GRANTS):</b>	<b>\$53,395,000</b>
<b>MUNICIPAL CHARGE:</b>	<b>\$280</b>

<b>GARBAGE CHARGE:</b>	<b>\$228/\$372</b>
<b>MAJOR EMPLOYMENT SECTORS:</b>	
	Health and Social Assistance
	Retail
	Construction
	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
	Education and Training
	Accommodation and Food Services
	Public Administration and Safety

## VISION

A vibrant, inclusive community to live, work, play and invest

## MISSION

Horsham Rural City Council, working with the community, will develop the municipality through strong leadership, vision, good governance, responsive services and quality infrastructure, whilst enhancing our economy, our liveability and natural environment

## VALUES

Caring	Honest	Passionate
Fair	Inclusive	Progressive
Flexible	Innovative	Reliable
Friendly	Open	

## FAST FACTS



**12,545**  
rateable properties



**6,093 tonnes**  
of waste and 1,570 tonnes  
of recycling collected from  
kerbside bins



**\$369,078**  
in grants and donations  
provided to not-for-profit  
groups



**2,977**  
**kilometres**  
of roads maintained



**6,391**  
online service requests  
responded to



**5,430**  
trees planted



**2,302**  
footpath and road  
issues resolved



**650 kilometres**  
of grading works  
completed



**100 percent**  
early childhood  
immunisation rates for  
12 to 15 month age group

# MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I am happy to present the Horsham Rural City Council 2019-2020 Annual Report for your consideration.

For our world, our nation, our state and our community ... we are at a significant point of time in history.

The coronavirus global pandemic (COVID-19) is affecting us all.

This Annual Report provides a snapshot of the activities, initiatives and finances of our growing regional municipality.

The challenges in the latter half of the financial year have impacted local businesses and local families in many ways.

Council has had to respond to COVID-19 restrictions in the "now" and with our planning for the future (pages 5–12).

A theme in the document is the wonderful work done by dedicated community groups and volunteers and I express my appreciation and encouragement to everyone who makes our municipality what it is today.

Under the leadership of Mr Bhalla, the Council staff are working well and serving the community, noting that some staff members have been redeployed into new roles due to COVID-19.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the long and faithful service of Director Ms Angela Murphy who resigned from Council this year.

I also thank my fellow Councillors for their support. Your commitment and dedication throughout your Council term is appreciated. I also acknowledge the extended years of Council service by retiring Councillors, Pamela Clarke and David Grimble, both whom have served Mayoral terms. Well done!

As a community during these testing times, we need to be patiently following the advice of those making decisions on our behalf. We will get through this challenging period. Compliance by our community of the regulations and restrictions has been commented on by our local Police – we are doing a great job.

Finally, through this report there is a theme of looking to the future. Whether it be the provision of services or building of infrastructure.

Council will continue to work with the community to ensure that Horsham Rural City is a vibrant, inclusive community to live, work, play and invest!

*"It's all happening in Horsham!"*



Cr Mark Radford  
**Mayor**



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Horsham Rural City Council 2019-2020 Annual Report.

This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by Council and demonstrates key highlights and achievements throughout the year.

There have been some significant challenges for Council and our community this year, most notably, the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Responding to COVID-19 is affecting communities, organisations and individuals across our region, state, nation and the world. In a very short time, Council has responded swiftly and efficiently to State Chief Health Officer directives to ensure essential services are maintained and our staff and community are safe.

COVID-19 will be with us for some time to come, and it is critical that Council continues to support our community every way we can. Our staff, Councillors, volunteers, businesses and community have shown incredible flexibility, resilience and adaptability, and I sincerely thank everyone for their support and co-operation as we work our way through the challenges that COVID-19 continues to present to us (pages 5–12).

I am pleased to report that we have once again finished the year in a sound financial position. Solid financial management, monitoring and due diligence processes have contributed to this result.

Council's operations are large and complex and we are committed to providing accurate, quality and timely information to the community in relation to our performance. Quarterly Performance Reports were introduced this year, bringing together a range of reports into one document, providing an overview on key strategic items in a clear and concise way that is readable and informative. These reports are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website.

The Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration Project is progressing well. This 24-month project is a joint partnership between Horsham Rural City Council and the Buloke, Hindmarsh, Loddon, Yarriambiack and West Wimmera Shire Councils. The project will undertake a major update to core business systems, with the ultimate aim of generating efficiencies through shared service delivery. It is funded by a \$5 million grant from the Victorian State Government (page 53).

Planning for Horsham's future is a key priority for Council, and work has commenced on the Riverfront Activation Project. This project is the first stage of the City to River Masterplan, also adopted this

year. The Wimmera River is a significant natural, social and cultural asset and the Riverfront Activation Project will build on and improve access and use of existing open space and recreational assets. It will also explore new active recreation spaces. A Community Reference Group has been formed to guide effective engagement for the project and we look forward to further progress during the coming year (pages 41–42).

Open space plays an important role in our society, and as our communities grow and change, planning open spaces to ensure they meet current and future needs is critical. Council adopted an Open Space Strategy this year, providing a framework for more people to be more active, more often (page 40).

The Horsham Urban Transport Plan is another important plan that was adopted this year. A key action of the plan is the identification and development of an alternative truck route to address a number of specific objectives such as creating a more active and vibrant CBD and river precinct, removal of trucks from the CBD and river precinct and linking highways to economic activities (page 46).

This year has seen the completion of some significant capital works projects including upgrades to the Horsham War Memorial Swimming Pool (page 46) and facilities at Dudley Cornell Park, construction of an E-waste facility at the Horsham Transfer Station (page 56) and solar energy installations on several Council properties (page 55). Works on the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange roof (page 43) and the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal precinct (page 44) are also almost complete. A full list of major capital works completed this year is provided on page 13.

As part of the budget process, Council allocates funding to support community and sporting groups each year. The Community Grants and Donations program gives not-for-profit groups the opportunity to apply for grants up to \$10,000 to improve community facilities. This year Council provided Community Grants and Donations totaling \$369,078 to more than 100 groups (pages 29–32).

The new *Local Government Act 2020* received Royal Assent in March and will come into operation progressively over the next two years. This is significant for the local government sector and a detailed implementation action plan has been developed to ensure that correct processes are followed, implemented and communicated throughout this process (page 48).

Advocating on behalf of the Horsham and wider Wimmera community to progress key projects and priorities is an important role for Council and I thank the state and federal governments for supporting many of our projects and initiatives this year. A report on advocacy priorities that have progressed this year is provided on pages 49–50.

After 19 years at Council and 35 years in Local Government, Angela Murphy announced her resignation in April. Angela was appointed as Director Community Services in 2001, Director Planning and Economic Services in 2016 and Director Development Services in 2018.

During her time at Council, Angela led numerous projects and strategic developments, including the Horsham Town Hall development and the City to River Vision and Masterplan. Angela was a valued member of the Executive Management Team and I sincerely thank her for the significant contribution she has made to local government and the Horsham community.

Volunteers play an important role in supporting and enhancing Council services and programs, and I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our volunteers for the important contribution they make. Unfortunately, many of our volunteer programs have been placed on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions, however, we look forward to welcoming back our volunteers as soon as it is safe to do so (page 7).

The current Council term is coming to an end in October. I express my appreciation to the Mayor and Councillors for their support this year and wish them well for the future.

Finally, I wish to thank our dedicated staff who have worked extremely hard during very challenging and unprecedented times to ensure that Council continues to be a progressive and innovative organisation that delivers high quality and sustainable services to our community.



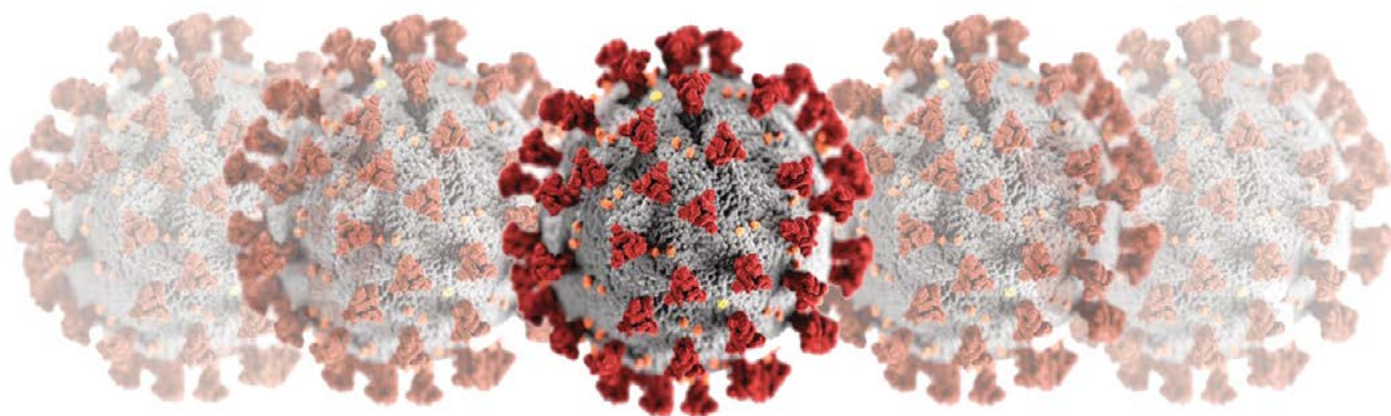
Sunil Bhalla  
**Chief Executive Officer**

# DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS

Horsham Rural City Council is responsible for more than 70 services to the community ranging from emergency, community, arts, culture and recreation to matters concerning economic development, governance and finance. We deliver a comprehensive range of building, planning and regulatory services, along with providing and maintaining important infrastructure such as buildings, roads, drains and parks.

Council's vision and four year outcomes and priorities to further improve services and facilities are described in the 2019-2023 Council Plan and associated 2019-2020 budget, and reported upon in the Performance section of this document (pages 57–70).

The delivery of services, facilities, support and advocacy to achieve the Strategic Objectives is measured by a set of service performance indicators and measures (page 83). Council also has a wide range of responsibilities under the Victorian and Australian legislations.



## ECONOMIC FACTORS... THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency has been, by far, the most significant economic factor faced by Horsham Rural City Council this year. COVID-19 has presented significant challenges for Council, businesses and organisations within our local community and across the world.

In a very short period, Council has closed some services, moved operations to be home based wherever possible, and supported the community and staff to stay safe. Staff, Councillors, businesses and organisations have made significant changes to the way they operate to ensure continuity of services and the safety of our community.

It has also been necessary to be mindful of the role that Council plays in looking after the vulnerable members of our community and sustaining economic activity during these challenging times. Maintaining “business as usual” as much as is physically possible has been critical in these difficult times.

This section provides a summary of how Council is responding to COVID-19 and supporting staff and our community.

### COVID-19 RELIEF AGENCIES GROUP

Council's Municipal Recovery Manager has been convening fortnightly meetings of relief agencies since late March 2020. This group meets to discuss the food, shelter and mental health needs of our community arising from the COVID-19 emergency. An early action was the establishment of a 1800 telephone number to triage community inquiries. The Relief Agencies Group also supports the work of the Community Activation and Social Isolation initiative, which is being rolled out for Council by Uniting Wimmera. This initiative supports individuals and families with a diversity of needs including those who are feeling lonely or have lost their regular networks during COVID-19.





Local COVID-19 Agencies Meetings commenced in March

**WORKING FOR VICTORIA**

Council successfully applied for a grant for 28 positions across a range of areas on a six-month full-time basis under the Working for Victoria scheme, a Victorian Government initiative that helps Victorian jobseekers find work and employers find workers due to the impacts of COVID-19 (page 23).

**COVID-19 AGENCIES MEETINGS**

Over 40 government agencies, organisations and local businesses have been meeting frequently since late March 2020 to co-ordinate our local response to COVID-19. The forum has been important in providing up-to-date information from agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services, Wimmera Health Care Group, VicPol, Department of Education and Training, Wimmera Development Association, local government and response and relief agencies. It has also been a forum to advocate on a range of emerging issues.

**FINANCIAL HARDSHIP CO-ORDINATOR**

In April 2020, a Financial Hardship Co-ordinator was appointed to help customers, community groups and businesses experiencing hardship during COVID-19. This position provides a single contact point for anyone who needs more time to settle Council rates and other charges.

Customers experiencing hardship with their rates have the option of establishing an interest-free payment plan or deferment to assist in meeting their financial obligations. Community groups have had their rent waived for a 12-month period and commercial tenants have access to reduced rental charges or deferrals. Businesses have access to hardship assistance with footpath trading permit fees waived and health registration charges either waived or reduced.

For the three-month period to 30 June 2020, 73 requests for hardship were received, with cases assessed individually and outcomes tailored according to need.

**BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

On 20 March 2020, Council’s Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was activated by the Chief Executive Officer in response to COVID-19.

Since then, the BCP Team has been meeting two to three times a week in response to the quickly changing government imposed restrictions affecting the community and Council as a business.

The BCP Team is the central point for decisions in relation to business functions, internal and external communications and health and safety, providing the ability to respond to the ever-changing COVID-19 environment.

A separate Pandemic Response Committee has been formed, reporting directly to the BCP Team. The focus of this committee is to address the direct health and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19 faced by the broader community. The committee works closely with key external agencies, providing a uniformed and guided approach to the pandemic.

Over the past four months, the BCP Team has developed a COVIDSafe Plan and COVIDSafe Policy. The team has also implemented working from home arrangements for all staff who can do so, as well as providing a COVIDSafe environment for those staff who need to remain working onsite or out in the community.

The BCP Team have made key decisions around the business functions of Council’s most impacted services including the Horsham Town Hall, Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Aquatic Centre and Visitor Information Centre.

Face masks and hand sanitiser have been provided for all staff whilst at work, and restrictions on the number of staff in vehicles introduced.

Externally, the BCP Team has ensured that all community facilities including parks, skate parks and barbecues were closed in line with government restrictions, and that Council’s social media, website and newspaper communications were kept up to date, providing as much information as possible to the public on the changes taking place due to COVID-19.

Looking forward, the BCP Team will play a key role in returning Council back to the “new normal” environment as soon as it is safe to do so.

# ECONOMIC FACTORS... THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



## STAFF REDEPLOYMENT

Permanent staff from areas hit hardest by the State Government closures and social isolation requirements due to COVID-19, have been successfully redeployed to other meaningful funded roles in the organisation, without the need for stand downs (page 23).

## PARKING METER FEES WAIVED

All parking fees have been waived for the period from mid March to December 2020 and parking meters have been covered. Council has still enforced signed time limits in order to keep the community moving and not restrict important access to businesses that have still been trading.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers support and enhance a range of Council services and programs including Meals on Wheels, the Horsham and Grampians Visitor Information Centre, Horsham Town Hall and Regional Art Gallery and the Multiple Birth Families Support Program. A number of advisory committees also rely on the support of volunteers.

COVID-19 restrictions have made it necessary to place many of Council's volunteer programs on hold for the last quarter of this financial year.

During National Volunteers Week in May 2020, volunteers were able to redeem a free thank you coffee or tea from local cafes across Horsham, which was appreciated by those who participated. Handwritten postcards were also sent to Meals on Wheels volunteers thanking them for their ongoing support of the program.

Council looks forward to welcoming back its valued volunteers once COVID-19 restrictions have been eased.



## COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Community Safety Unit has been proactive in their response to a range of issues arising within the community as a result of COVID-19.

Due to charity shops not accepting second hand goods, the Community Safety Unit has seen a sharp increase in illegal dumping and residences accumulating rubbish, resulting in complaints from the public. The majority of these dumpings have been successfully investigated by the team and they are currently working on a program to assist vulnerable households manage their rubbish.

There has been an increase in complaints regarding dogs at large and dog attacks due to stay at home restrictions and more people walking their animals. The team has taken a preventative educative approach, staggering patrol shifts out of business hours and asking people to place their dogs on leads.

The Community Safety Unit has been responsive to nuisance complaints such as barking dogs and neighbourhood complaints. As people are remaining home due to COVID-19 restrictions, they are becoming increasingly aware of nuisances and want them resolved.

Animal rehoming groups have been busy, and the team has been working closely with these groups to rehome as many animals as possible. As with Horsham Pound operations, animal rehoming groups have adapted to COVID-19 social distancing requirements by finding novel ways of introducing animals to their new owners.



## OUTDOOR OPERATIONS

Council's outdoor operations crews have been impacted by COVID-19 and its restrictions in a number of ways.

The following outdoor operations have continued to be provided at near-normal levels during this time:

- Garbage collection, landfill and transfer station operations
- Road construction and maintenance
- Parks and gardens preparation and maintenance
- Operation of the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange.

Council has introduced a range of measures to manage COVID-19 including:

- An increased cleaning and sanitisation program including "high-touch" facilities such as benches and tables in Horsham's central business district, along walking tracks and in Natimuk and Jung. This program also includes playgrounds, with the exception of when they have been closed.
- Installation and removal of signage restrictions at different facilities as restrictions varied.
- Safe working plans to manage physical distancing of work crews, including in vehicles.
- Introduction of attendance limits at the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange, including bans on all personnel not required to be present at the site on sale days. With the meat processing industry experiencing a number of COVID-19 hotspots across the state, safe practices at the livestock exchange have been vital in helping to ensure that food supply has been maintained.

A range of contractors provide assistance with Council's operations programs. These contractors are required to have COVID-19 measures in their OHS plans. This is especially important for works undertaken by contractors from Melbourne and other COVID-19 hotspots.



# ECONOMIC FACTORS... THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

## BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Business Development and Tourism team has focused on communications and assistance with business across retail, tourism, events, construction, agriculture and hospitality to give local businesses the best opportunity to respond to the challenges of COVID-19.

A strong focus has been on the #togetherwearestronger campaign using social media and a newsletter distributed directly to businesses with eight editions issued so far. Topics covered include:

- Financial Hardship Co-ordinator
- Rural Financial Counselling
- Commercial Leases
- Going Digital
- JobKeeper Grants
- Wellbeing and Support
- Business Recovery
- Business Impact Survey
- Business and Community Support Package
- Discover Your Own Backyard
- Business Horsham.

This newsletter is a key method of getting accurate and up to date information directly to businesses, and it is intended to continue on a monthly basis as we respond and recover from the impact of COVID-19.

Many COVID-19 affected businesses can access up to \$10,000 from the Victorian Government, along with the Commonwealth Government's JobKeeper payments. The Business Development and Tourism Team have been available to support business owners in understanding the government support packages available and applying for government grants.

When the restrictions eased in May 2020, the team's focus was on talking to hospitality and tourism businesses to help them understand COVIDSafe planning, including hygiene practices, occupancy calculations, signage and record keeping. Many businesses highlighted a difficulty in managing customers and social distancing requirements. In response, Council developed the "Give me 1.5" campaign, providing badges promoting the 1.5 metre social distancing message to businesses and the community.



## TOURISM AND EVENTS

The Business Development and Tourism team have worked closely with event organisers to work through cancellations and commence the recovery process with the support of Business Assistance Grants and JobKeeper.

## CLEANING BLITZ

During May and June 2020, Council's cleaning and disinfecting regimes were boosted, thanks to a state government program provided to Council as part of the Working for Victoria initiative.

The four-week blitz to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and support jobs, provided additional cleaning and disinfecting to high foot-traffic areas throughout the municipality including shopping precincts, parks and open public spaces. Crew members provided cleansing services to traffic light buttons and poles, signs, street and park benches and handrails on the exterior of public buildings and along paths.

Council has worked hard to ensure that public spaces are cleaned each day to keep our municipality clean and safe and this program was a great support.



### VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

In response to COVID-19, a new Bill was passed in the Victorian Parliament in April 2020 to allow Councils to conduct their meetings via virtual means. The *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020*, introduced into the *Local Government Act 2020*, enables the new measures to be in place from 1 May to 1 November 2020.

Horsham Rural City Council welcomed these changes and the first online meeting of Council was held on 11 May 2020.

At that meeting, Council adopted the Temporary Measures for Conduct of Virtual Council Meetings Procedure, allowing Council to continue to represent the community and make critical decisions by providing guidance to Councillors and Council staff in accordance with the new legislation.

Councillors and Council staff are required to continue to act in accordance with the Councillors Code of Conduct, *Local Government Act 1989*, *Local Government Act 2020*, Local Law No 1 Governance (2016) Meeting Procedure and other Acts and policies.

As at 30 June 2020, three successful online Council meetings have been held. These meetings were livestreamed on the internet with a link provided on the Horsham Rural City Council website. It is pleasing to report there has been an increased level of attendance at Council meetings via these means by community members and staff.

Public Question Time has continued throughout this period, with the Chairperson reading the questions submitted and responses provided by the Chief Executive Officer or another delegated person.

Councillors, staff and the community have adapted well to the move to online Council meetings.

Council meeting details are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

HRCC | LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT

## BUSINESS GRANT

Has your business been impacted by the Victoria's Non-Essential activity directions?

You employ staff?  
Have turnover of more than \$75,000?  
Have payroll of less than \$650,000?

Grants of \$10,000 are available through an online grant process. Closes June 1, 2020

for more information visit our website

53  
DAYS  
LEFT!

#togetherwearestronger

### COVID-19 BUSINESS SUPPORT PACKAGE

A COVID-19 support package will be included in the 2020-2021 Council Budget. The Business and Community Assistance Program will provide funding and Officer support to existing and new businesses in the municipality. The program will support business skills development, provision of professional services, support through the regulatory processes and other one-to-one in-kind support.

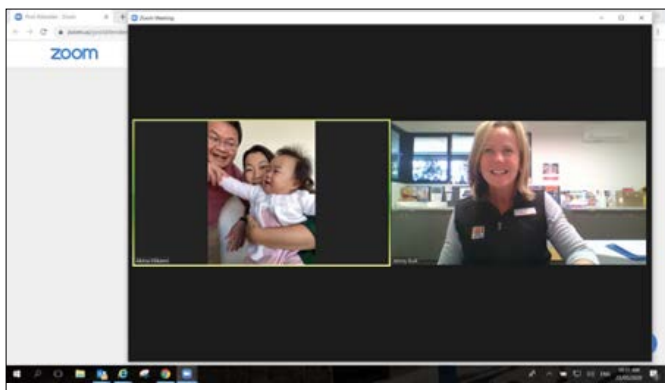
### THERMOMETERS

Council distributed a limited number of infrared thermometers free of charge to businesses and organisations with shared communal facilities such as toilets or kitchens, enabling them to take their customers' temperature on check-in. This allows them to operate with the knowledge that their customers are not presenting with a fever, a common symptom of COVID-19. The infrared thermometers were provided to Council by Regional Development Victoria.

Together  
we are  
stronger



# ECONOMIC FACTORS... THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



Chloe and her parents Josh and Akina participate in an online consultation with Maternal and Child Health Nurse, Jenny

## EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS

The unprecedented arrival and ongoing threat of COVID-19 has delivered many challenges and ongoing changes for our family centered services. Much of the work of the maternal and child health, immunisation and the supported playgroup teams rely on face-to-face contact with parents, carers and children on a daily basis.

Immunisation is an essential service and our program has been adapted to provide a COVIDSafe environment. An online booking service has been implemented, where families can book an appointment time. In addition to maintaining our high level of scheduled vaccinations, influenza vaccinations have also been administered to two-thirds of eligible children aged between six months and four years in the municipality. All families are screened on arrival, and parents are now offered the ability to weigh their children at the immunisation session.

Maternal and child health services have moved to a telehealth consultation followed by a short 15-minute physical check of the younger babies. Some parents have elected to Zoom with their nurse, and this platform has also been used for additional breastfeeding consultations where it is essential for the nurse to see the mother and baby.

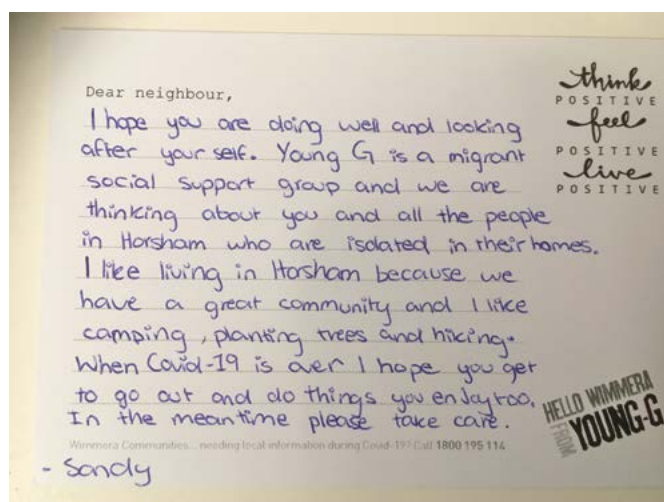
The new parents group has moved to a virtual platform and we offer four Zoom sessions for these families. We hope to arrange a Zoom CPR session for these families in the near future also.

The supported playgroup team have also commenced delivering playgroup virtually. Weekly playgroup sessions on YouTube and Facebook have been filmed for families to watch, and accompanying activity packs have been delivered to interested families.

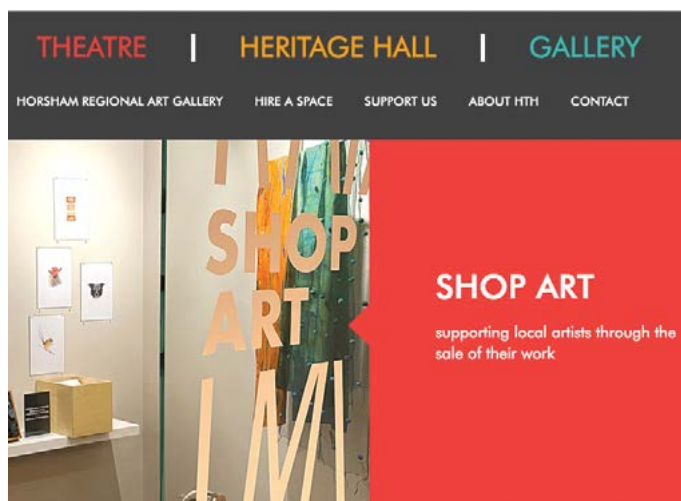
We look forward to welcoming families back to the Kalkee Road Children's and Community Hub when it is safe to do so. Initiatives such as online immunisation bookings have been well received and we plan to continue to offer this service in the future.



Young G Migrant Youth Group members created postcards for those in the neighbourhood who might need cheering up



Playgroup activity packs were delivered to interested families this year



The Gallery's retail outlet "Shop Art" moved online this year

### HORSHAM REGIONAL ART GALLERY

With the closure of Horsham Regional Art Gallery due to State Government restrictions, staff brought exhibitions to the public through virtual tours in the "Behind Closed Doors" initiative. The exhibitions "Minstrel Kuik: She who has no self" and "Rediscovered from the Collection" developed by the Gallery and "Peter Milne: Juvenilia" from M.33, were viewed by the public via the Gallery website and Facebook page. The Gallery's retail outlet "SHOP ART" was placed online to continue supporting local artists through the sale of their work.

Staff were also able to continue digitising the permanent collection with the support of Creative Victoria.

Further information is available on the Horsham Regional Art Gallery website – [www.horshamtownhall.com.au](http://www.horshamtownhall.com.au) or by contacting the gallery on email [hrag@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:hrag@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9575.

### HORSHAM TOWN HALL

Horsham Town Hall has always been focused on creativity, vibrancy and financial sustainability. The impacts of COVID-19 have devastated the performing arts sector and reduced opportunities for people to come together and connect socially through the arts.

Despite these challenges, the Horsham Town Hall has been supporting the business, economic and events teams at Council to deliver programs for our community. Staff have stayed connected with performing arts companies, musicians and artists with a plan for the return of programming in late 2020 and early 2021. The Horsham Town Hall team acknowledges their volunteers and casual staff who have been seriously impacted by the closure of the venue.

The team looks forward to providing a program that once again engages, entertains and excites our local and visiting audiences in potentially new ways as we recover from COVID-19.



Veronica, Marg and Payton-Rose were week 1 winners in the isolation Bin-Spiration competition

### ISOLATION BIN-SPIRATION

Council's Public Arts Advisory Group invited residents to take their art out with the trash throughout June 2020.

Incentives were awarded weekly with a grand prize awarded at the end of the competition.

There were two categories – best individual bins and best cluster of bins. Prizes included vouchers to local businesses and eateries, worm farms, compost kits and other delights. The judging team included waste truck drivers.

### "OVER THE FENCE" AWARDS

Many people have had extra time to maintain and improve their homes and gardens during COVID-19.

Throughout May 2020, Council and the Horsham Tidy Towns Committee joined forces to celebrate this work with the "Over the Fence" Front Yard Awards.

Neighbours were encouraged to identify friends in their street who had made improvements to their front yards, and nominate them for the award. Winners received a plaque for their letterbox, certificate and local media acknowledgement.



"Over the Fence" winning plaque

# MAJOR CAPITAL WORKS

This year, Horsham Rural City Council spent \$16,331,440 on capital works throughout the municipality. The table below provides details of some of the capital works projects that Council funded during 2019-2020.

<b>ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION</b>	<b>AMOUNT (\$)</b>
Horsham	2,129,297
Rural	3,019,880
Rural Bridges	262,995
Roads to Recovery Program – Rural bridges	105,758
Roads to Recovery Program – Rural roads	1,126,070
<b>OTHER</b>	
Kindergarten refurbishments	9,905
Horsham North Children’s and Community Hub	6,412
Dudley Cornell Park Clubroom refurbishment	257,614
Basketball Stadium Indoor refurbishment	47,456
Aquatic Centre Indoor refurbishment	31,435
Building solar projects	255,357
E-waste facility	338,207
Horsham Town Hall performing arts project	19,232
Other facility refurbishments	92,222
Hall refurbishments	12,582
May Park refurbishment	17,136
Outdoor pool refurbishment	1,309,987
Fishing pontoons and jetties	110,500
Off-street carparks	98,157
Works in progress (includes road reconstructions, WIFT roadworks and drainage and HRLE roof)	5,164,553
Plant and equipment replacements	1,561,723
Other works	354,962
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,331,440</b>





# MAJOR CHANGES

## COVID-19

Due to COVID-19, Council has closed some services, moved operations to be home based wherever possible, and supported the community and staff to stay safe throughout the last quarter of this financial year. The organisation has made significant changes to its operations to ensure continuity of services and the safety of staff and our community during a challenging time (pages 5–12).

## Home Support Services

In January 2020, Council made the in-principle decision to exit Home Support Services, resolving to seek expression of interests from agencies to deliver services that Council currently provides (Home and Community Care Program for Younger People and Commonwealth Home Support Programme), before making a final decision. The Expression of Interest process was completed in May 2020.



## Major Achievements

- Successfully responded to the challenges of COVID-19 to ensure continuity of Council business operations and the safety of staff and the community (pages 5–12)
- Established the Horsham Youth Council (pages 37–38)
- Commenced the Wimmera Riverfront Activation Project including establishment of a Community Reference Group (pages 41–42)
- Adopted an integrated Open Space Strategy (page 40)
- Completed a cycling path on the south side of the Wimmera River linking with existing tracks to provide a full loop of the river from the Anzac Centenary Bridge to the Horsham weir (page 40)
- Commenced construction of a new roof on the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange (page 43)
- Completed a \$1.5 million refurbishment of the Horsham Outdoor Swimming Pool (page 46)
- Commenced lighting works along Wimmera River walking/cycling tracks (page 45)
- Adopted the Horsham Urban Transport Plan (page 46)
- Commenced the Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration Project to undertake a major update of core business systems (page 53)
- Completed a number of solar saving initiatives across Council properties to reduce carbon emissions (page 55)
- Successfully processed all collected recycled materials (page 55)
- Introduced new Organisational Quarterly Performance Report to the community
- Commenced implementation of new *Local Government Act 2020* (page 48).



# OUR COUNCIL

Horsham Rural City Council has seven Councillors elected every four years by the residents of the municipality. Voting is conducted via postal vote, with the most recent election held on 22 October 2016.

The Mayor is elected for a one-year period each November and is voted in by the Councillors.

The seven Councillors are the elected representatives of all residents and ratepayers across the municipality. They have responsibility for setting the strategic direction for the municipality, policy development, identifying service standards and monitoring performance across the organisation. The Councillors are listed below.

## COUNCILLORS



**CR MARK RADFORD**

**Mayor**

**First elected:** 29 November 2008

**Re-elected:** 27 October 2012,  
22 October 2016



**CR PAM CLARKE**

**First elected:** March 2003,  
November 2008

**Re-elected:** 27 October 2012,  
22 October 2016



**CR DAVID GRIMBLE**

**First elected:** 29 November 2008

**Re-elected:** 27 October 2012,  
22 October 2016



**CR ALETHEA GULVIN**

**First elected:** 22 October 2016



**CR JOSH KOENIG**

**First elected:** 22 October 2016



**CR LES POWER**

**First elected:** 22 October 2016



**CR JOHN ROBINSON**

**BM OAM**

**First elected:** 22 October 2016

## MEETINGS OF COUNCIL

Council conducts open public meetings on the fourth Monday of each month (third Monday in December) at 5.30pm in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre in Horsham. Members of the community are welcome to attend these meetings and observe from the gallery.

The purpose of Council meetings is to enable elected members to make critical decisions about the future of our municipality on behalf the community. Council meetings also provide an opportunity for community members to raise questions during Public Question Time. Public questions must be submitted in writing by 5pm on Fridays prior to Council meetings.

While Council meetings have traditionally been held in the Council Chamber, with members of the community welcome to attend and observe from the gallery, the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic and introduction of social distancing rules has made it necessary to make some significant changes to Council meetings this year.

In May 2020, Council meetings moved to an online platform, with meetings streamed live on the Council website [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) and an audio recording made available following the meeting (page 10).

Council meetings have continued to operate effectively and efficiently during this period. Public question time has also continued. It is pleasing to note that there has been an increase in Council meeting attendance via electronic means by community members and staff.

In 2019-2020, Horsham Rural City Council held 14 Council meetings. This included 11 face-to-face meetings in the Council Chamber and three online Council meetings.

During this period, 42 questions were submitted to Public Question Time.

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council meetings for the 2019-2020 financial year.

COUNCILLOR	COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE	SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETINGS ATTENDANCE	TOTAL
Cr Pam Clarke	11	2	13
Cr David Grimble	10	2	12
Cr Alethea Gulvin	9	1	10
Cr Josh Koenig	10	2	12
Cr Les Power	12	2	14
Cr Mark Radford	12	2	14
Cr John Robinson	10	1	11

## COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETINGS

Council Briefing Meetings are generally held on the first and second Monday of each month, excluding January. These meetings provide an opportunity for Councillors to consider, discuss and provide feedback on reports prepared by Council Officers prior to them being finalised and presented to a formal Council meeting.

These meetings are closed to the public, however, time is allocated at each meeting for community groups to meet with Councillors and senior staff to discuss their issues and concerns.

During the last quarter of the financial year, Council Briefing Meetings were held online.

In 2019-2020, there were 33 Council Briefing Meetings held, including 24 face-to-face meetings and nine online meetings.

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council Briefing Meetings for the 2019-2020 financial year.

COUNCILLOR	COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETING ATTENDANCE
Cr Pam Clarke	28
Cr David Grimble	24
Cr Alethea Gulvin	26
Cr Josh Koenig	22
Cr Les Power	30
Cr Mark Radford	32
Cr John Robinson	19

## COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES

Councillors participate on a range of committees. A full list of Councillor committees is provided on page 73.

# OUR COUNCIL

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The *Local Government Act 1989*, section 76C requires each Council to review and adopt a Councillor Code of Conduct within four months after a general election. Horsham Rural City Council adopted a revised Councillor Code of Conduct on 6 February 2017. Councillors must observe principles of good governance including:

- Acting with integrity
- Impartially exercise responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- Not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Specific principles include the obligation to:

- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Act honestly
- Treat all persons with respect
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence
- Endeavour to ensure that public resources are used prudently and in the public interest
- Act lawfully
- Lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the office of Councillor.

The Code of Conduct sets out how Councillors will display these attributes. It also provides guidelines on ethical decision making, expectations and obligations of Councillors and Officers, prohibited conduct, media obligations and other statutory and general obligations.

The Code of Conduct for Councillors is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Councillors are elected by residents and ratepayers to act in the best interests of the community. This is a position of trust that requires them to act in the public interest. When Council delegates its powers to a Council Officer or committee, they also need to act in the public interest.

A conflict of interest exists when a personal or private interest may compromise the ability to act in the interests of the public. A conflict of interest exists even if no improper act results from it. *The Local Government Act 1989* defines the specific circumstances that give rise to a conflict of interest and describes the actions that must be taken when a conflict arises.

Declaration of a conflict of interest is a standard agenda item for all Council meetings and Councillors are encouraged to complete and submit the Conflict of Interest Declaration Form to the Chief Executive Officer upon receipt of their agenda documentation prior to the meeting. Alternatively, they may declare their Conflict of Interest at the meeting.

Council has a comprehensive procedure in place to ensure that Officers fully and properly declare all actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest also and this has been promoted widely across the organisation throughout the past year. While procedures vary depending on the particular role and circumstances, in general they involve disclosing the relevant interests in a specific way and then stepping aside from the relevant decision-making process or from exercising a public duty.

The minutes of Council meetings record all disclosed conflicts of interests, and a register is maintained.

During 2019-2020, there were 26 conflicts of interest declared at Council meetings.

## COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

In accordance with Section 74 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance whilst performing their duty as a Councillor. The Mayor is also entitled to receive a higher allowance.

The state government sets the upper and lower limits for all allowances paid to Councillors and Mayors. Councils are divided into three categories based on the income and population of each Council. In this instance, Horsham Rural City Council is recognised as a Category 2 Council.

The following table contains details of current allowances fixed for the Mayor and Councillors during the year.

COUNCILLOR	ALLOWANCE PAYABLE \$	AMOUNT SURRENDERED FOR COVID-19 SUPPORT \$
Cr Mark Radford (Mayor)*	68,295.25	3,000.00
Cr Pam Clarke	22,859.62	-
Cr David Grimble*	22,859.62	5,761.98
Cr Alethea Gulvin	22,859.62	-
Cr Josh Koenig	22,859.62	-
Cr Les Power*	22,859.62	3,841.32
Cr John Robinson*	22,859.62	2,236.78

\*These Councillors made a decision to surrender a portion of their Councillor Allowance to assist Council to provide specific hardship assistance for businesses impacted by COVID-19.

## COUNCILLOR EXPENSES

In accordance with Section 75 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council is required to reimburse a Councillor for expenses incurred whilst performing their duties as a Councillor. Council must also adopt and maintain a policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors. The policy provides guidance for the payment of reimbursements of expenses and the provision of resources, facilities and other support to the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to discharge their duties.

The Council Expenses policy is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council by email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

Details of Councillor expenses for the 2019-2020 year are set out in the following table.

EXPENSE CATEGORY	CR MARK RADFORD (MAYOR) \$	CR PAM CLARKE \$	CR DAVID GRIMBLE \$	CR ALETHEA GULVIN \$	CR JOSH KOENIG \$	CR LES POWER \$	CR JOHN ROBINSON \$	TOTAL \$
Child Care	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communications	1,176.76	216.35	216.35	216.35	216.35	216.35	216.35	2,474.86
Conferences and Seminars	318.18	-	-	-	-	-	-	318.18
Development and Training	285.74	285.71	285.71	285.71	285.71	285.71	285.71	2,000.00
Entertainment	77.80	77.79	77.79	77.79	77.79	77.79	77.79	544.54
Memberships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IT Equipment	1,737.00	-	1,737.00	1,737.00	1,737.00	1,737.00	-	8,685.00
Transportation	12,900.00	-	3,371.62	-	-	-	-	16,271.62
Travel and Accommodation	139.00	218.64	967.07	-	-	-	-	1,324.71
Other Costs	151.31	28.57	28.57	42.21	28.57	28.57	28.57	336.37
<b>Total \$</b>	<b>16,785.79</b>	<b>827.06</b>	<b>6,684.11</b>	<b>2,359.06</b>	<b>2,345.42</b>	<b>2,345.42</b>	<b>608.42</b>	<b>31,955.28</b>

### Note:

- Figures in this table may include expenses that were processed but not incurred in the reporting period
- No reimbursements for expenses to members of Council committees were paid by Council during 2019-2020

**Child Care** – Expenses incurred for dependent care or child care.

**Communications** – Monthly fees and usage costs associated with Councillor mobile phone and computer equipment. Any costs associated with personal use are to be reimbursed by the Councillor.

**Conferences and Seminars** – Registration fees and costs associated with Councillor attendance at local, interstate or overseas conferences and seminars.

**Development and Training** – Registration fees associated with Councillor attendance at one-off or short-term training or workshops within Victoria held by government agencies, professional bodies or institutions that support the local government sector.

**Entertainment** – Expenses incurred for snacks, meals and beverages while performing Councillor duties (excludes Council and Committee meetings which extend through normal meal times and where Council provides suitable meals and refreshments served on the premises).

**Memberships** – Professional memberships to recognised sector related bodies and other incidental expenditure incurred by Councillors in performing their Councillor role.

**Transportation** – Taxi fares, public transport costs, parking and toll fees and reimbursements for authorised use of private vehicles for kilometres travelled whilst conducting Council business within and outside the municipality. This category also includes actual annual vehicle repayments and reimbursements associated with registration, insurance, servicing, fuel and ETag for Mayoral vehicle.

**Travel and Accommodation** – All travel and accommodation costs associated with Councillor attendance at local, interstate or overseas conferences, seminars, training and workshops.

**Other Costs** – Other incidental expenditure incurred by Councillors in performing their Councillor role.

# OUR PEOPLE

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer has responsibility for the day-to-day management of operations in accordance with the strategic directions of the Council Plan. The Directors and the Chief Executive Officer form the Executive Management Team and lead the organisation. Details of the Chief Executive Officer and senior officers reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer are set out to the right.

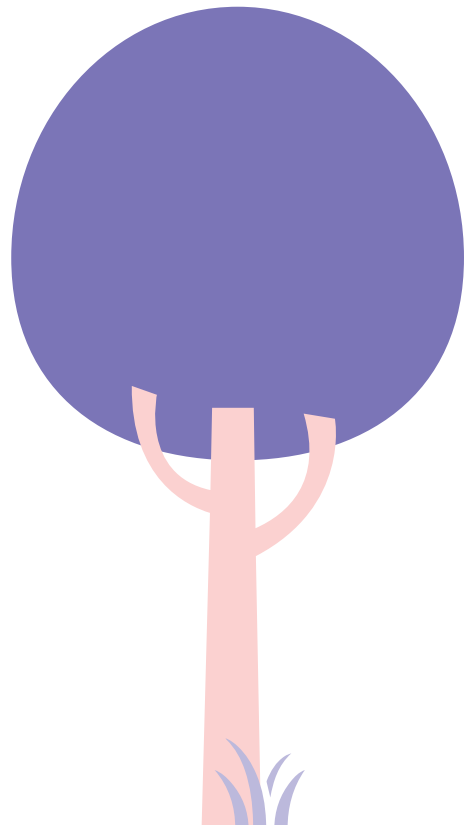


## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

### Sunil Bhalla

B Eng (Civil), M Tech (Const), MBA, GAICD

- Management and performance of all Council operations including \$54 million budget
- Ensure that day-to-day management of Council's operations are in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* and align with the 2019-2023 Council Plan
- Provide advice and support to Council
- Direct responsibility for Council's Directors



## SENIOR OFFICERS REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



### DIRECTOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

(to 27 April 2020)

### DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

(from 27 April 2020)

#### Kevin O'Brien

B Theol, Assoc Dip Arts,  
Dip Man, Grad Cert Man

#### Arts, Culture and Recreation

- Performance and Events
- Recreation and Open Space Planning
- Visual Art

#### Community Safety and Environmental Health\*

- Community Safety
- Environmental Health

#### Community Services and Emergency

- Home Support
- Wimmera Emergency Management Project
- Youth and Early Years

#### Investment Attraction and Growth\*

- Business Development and Tourism
- Statutory Planning and Building Services
- Strategic Planning

### DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

#### Graeme Harrison

B Econ, Dip GAICD, CPA

#### Finance

- General Accounting
- Revenue

#### Governance and Information

- Community Relations and Advocacy
- Customer Service
- Governance
- Information Technology

#### People and Culture

- Business Efficiency
- Human Resources Lead
- Risk/Occupational Health and Safety

### DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

(to 25 April 2020)

#### Angela Murphy

B Bus (Acc), B Bus  
(Local Gov), ASA

#### Economic Development

- Commercial Enterprises
- Business Development and Tourism
- Strategic Planning

#### Regulatory Services

- Community Safety
- Environmental Health
- Statutory Planning and Building Services

### DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

#### John Martin

BE (Agric)

#### Engineering Services

- Engineering Design
- Facilities Management
- Project Office

#### Operations

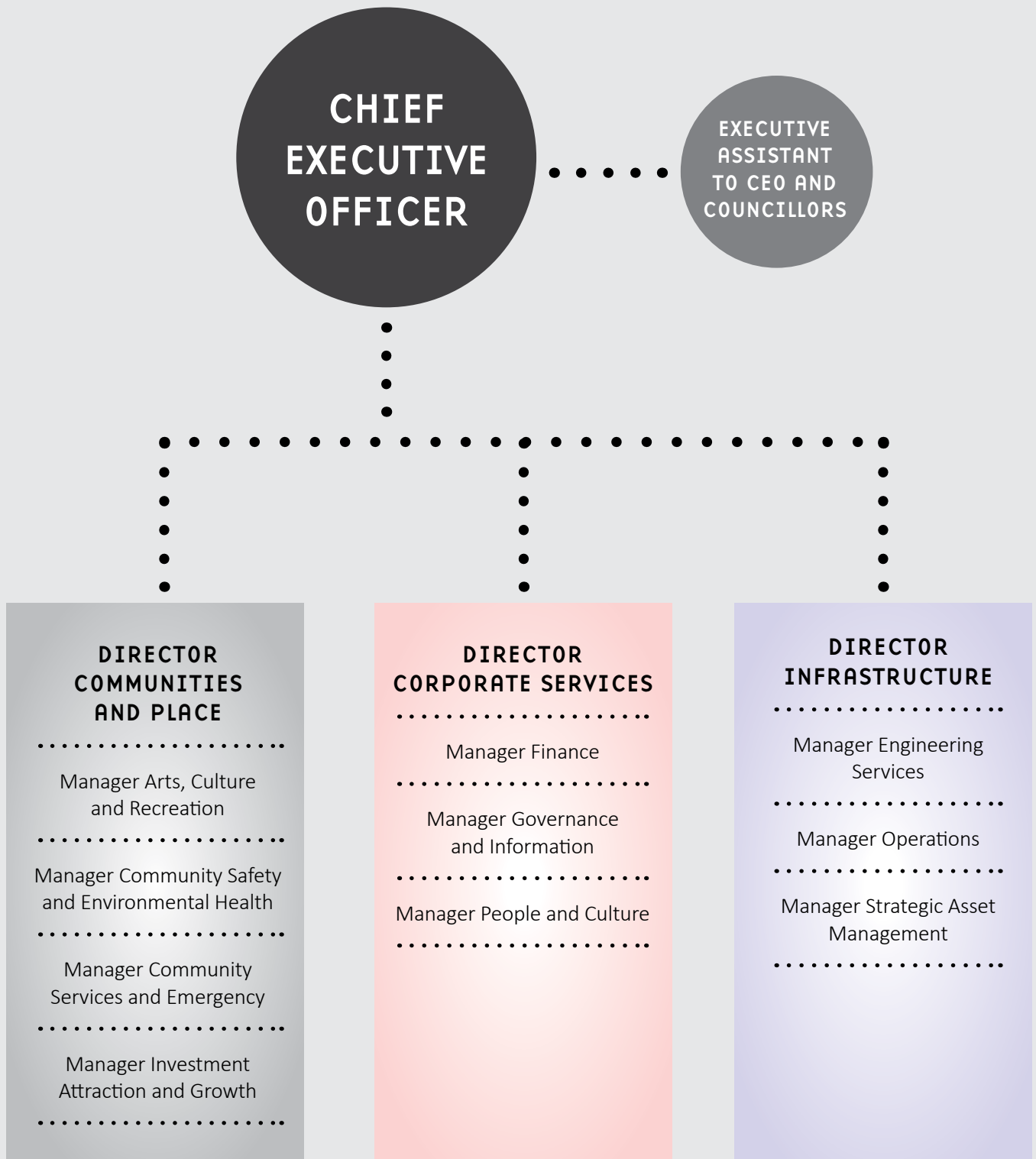
- Civic Works
- Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange Operations\*
- Parks and Gardens
- Waste Operations

#### Strategic Asset Management

- Assets
- Fleet
- Waste and Sustainability

\*From 27 April 2020

# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE





# ORGANISATIONAL VISION, VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS STATEMENT

## Our Organisational VISION

A progressive and innovative organisation,  
delivering high quality and sustainable services

## Our Organisational VALUES



# F

WE VALUE

### FLEXIBILITY

We are adaptable to changing circumstances

#### MY BEHAVIOUR

- I am willing to embrace new ideas and ways of doing things
- I am committed to finding a way to make it happen
- I seek opportunities for ongoing learning and continuous improvement
- I am willing to compromise for a better outcome



# A

### ACCOUNTABILITY

We are responsible for our behaviour and actions

#### MY BEHAVIOUR

- I lead by example
- I take ownership of my actions and decisions
- I perform my role with pride
- I deliver what I promise



# I

### INTEGRITY

We are ethical, transparent and honest in our conduct

#### MY BEHAVIOUR

- I do the right thing
- I always bring my best self to work
- I communicate openly and directly
- I act in the best interests of the community



# R

### RESPECT

We value diversity and appreciate others

#### MY BEHAVIOUR

- I treat others the way I expect to be treated
- I care for the people I work with
- I am inclusive and treat everyone equally
- I consider other views to gain a shared understanding



**Horsham Rural City**  
Council urban rural balance

# STAFF PROFILE

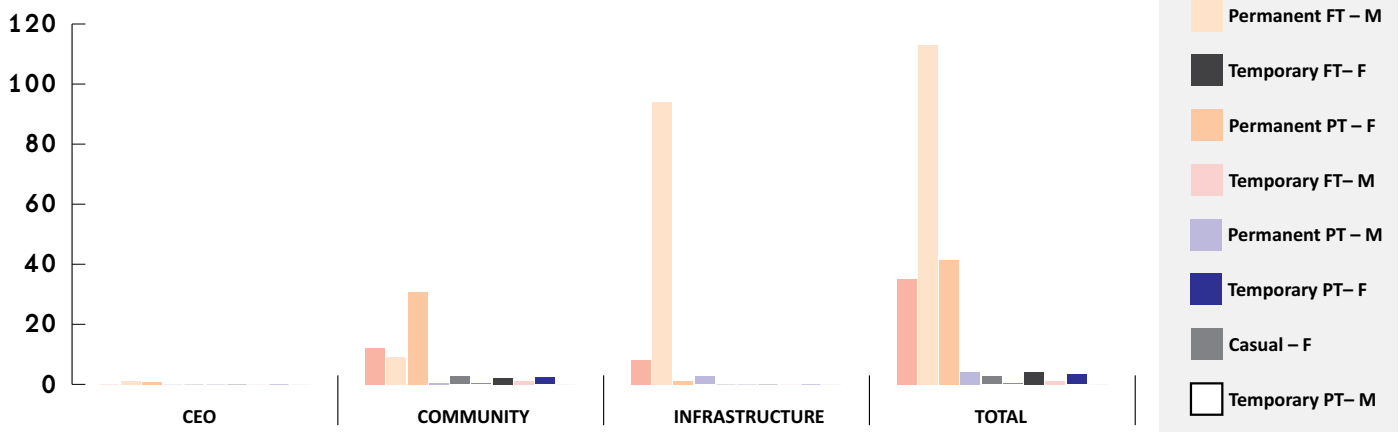
## COVID-19 EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS

The COVID-19 environment has presented challenges for Council, as it has for many employers. Local government staff are not eligible for JobKeeper payments from the state or commonwealth governments.

Council has proactively managed its vacancies, with staff impacted by the service closures mostly being redeployed to other roles and projects which would otherwise have been undertaken by external contractors and consultants. Some staff have also taken the opportunity to avail their leave entitlements.

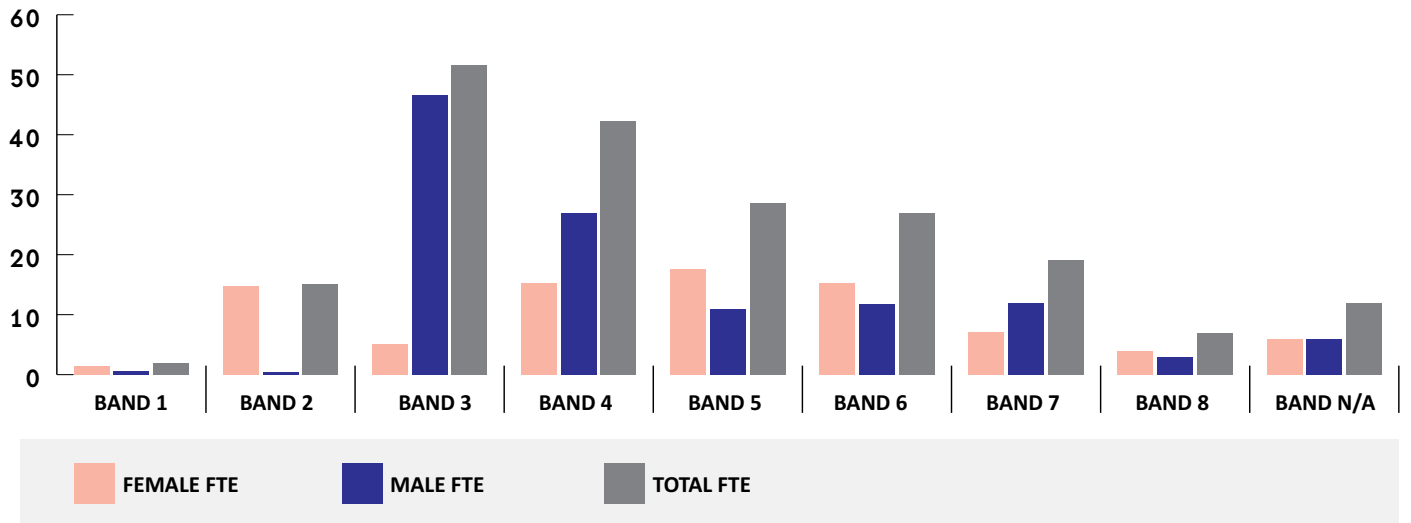
Whilst it has been challenging to make these adjustments, impacted staff have successfully been redeployed into meaningful roles, without the need for any stand downs.

See pages 5–12 for further details on Council’s response to COVID-19.



EMPLOYEE TYPE/ GENDER	CEO FTE	COMMUNITY WELLBEING FTE	CORPORATE SERVICES FTE	INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES FTE	TOTAL FTE
Permanent FT – F	0	12.0	15.0	8.0	35.0
Permanent FT – M	1.0	9.0	9.0	94.0	113.0
Permanent PT – F	0.8	30.66	8.8	1.07	41.33
Permanent PT – M	0	0.57	0.8	2.63	4.0
Casual – F	0	2.65	0	0	2.65
Casual – M	0	0.32	0	0	0.32
Temporary FT – F	0	2.0	2.0	0	4.0
Temporary FT – M	0	1.0	0	0	1.0
Temporary PT – F	0	2.29	1.01	0	3.3
Temporary PT – M	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>60.49</b>	<b>36.61</b>	<b>105.7</b>	<b>204.6</b>

FT-Full time PT-Part time F-Female M-Male



### NUMBER OF STAFF (FTE) BY EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION

EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION	FEMALE FTE	MALE FTE	TOTAL FTE
Band 1	1.45	0.55	2.0
Band 2	14.73	0.38	15.11
Band 3	5.06	46.59	51.65
Band 4	15.21	27.0	42.21
Band 5	17.6	11.0	28.6
Band 6	15.18	11.8	26.98
Band 7	7.12	12.0	19.12
Band 8	4.00	3.00	7.0
Band not applicable	5.93	6.0	11.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>86.28</b>	<b>118.32</b>	<b>204.60</b>

### EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Horsham Rural City Council commits itself in a variety of ways to the elimination of, discrimination against, and promotion of, equal opportunity for all people in relation to employment matters.

Council's equal opportunity program ensures there is no discrimination relating to the characteristics listed under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* such as race, colour, sex, marital status, parenthood, physical or mental impairment, age, religious or political affiliation, gender identity and sexual orientation. Further objectives include ensuring the workplace is free from bullying and harassment.

As part of Council's online learning suite, equal opportunity is a unit that must be completed by all staff. Offering training in this way allows easier tracking to ensure that all staff are aware of their obligations regarding equal opportunity.

Overall, throughout the last year, it is generally agreed that there were no breaches of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.

# STAFF PROFILE



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Council supports and promotes further education and development, including undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications.

During 2019-2020, 23 Council staff undertook the following:

- Master of Infrastructure Engineering and Management
- Master of Letters
- Master of Natural Resources and Management
- Bachelor of Civil Engineering
- Bachelor of Management and Human Resource Management
- Bachelor of Urban, Rural and Environmental Planning
- Advanced Diploma of Public Safety (Emergency Management)
- Diploma of Project Management
- Certified Practising Accountant
- Certificate IV in Leadership and Management (11 staff).

Two staff completed the Leadership Wimmera Program and a further three staff commenced the program during 2019-2020.

Council also provides a comprehensive corporate learning program that supports a broad range of staff development needs. This is developed in alignment with strategic priorities as well as in response to needs identified through performance and development plans. A variety of learning methodologies are used including e-learning, facilitated workshops, personal coaching and internal and external training providers. A focus for 2019-2020 was on developing a base level of skills for staff in Team Leader and Co-ordinator roles through study of a Certificate IV Leadership and Management.



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Compliance with the *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* is a continuing priority for Horsham Rural City Council, with an aim to have an injury-free workplace for all our employees.

### 2019-2020 Snapshot of Activities:

- 123 incidents reported across all work areas
- 50 plant/vehicle incidents
- 36 personal incidents
- Eight WorkCare claims accepted by the insurer (compared with 16 in 2018-2019)
- Development and adoption of an organisational OHS Management Plan. This framework for improvement demonstrates Council's commitment to provide a safe work environment. The plan is built around four cornerstones that work towards achieving zero harm:
  - Establishing a systematic approach to managing OHS
  - Building a positive OHS culture across the organisation
  - Demonstrating active and visible OHS leadership
  - Providing safe workplaces and equipment.
- Completion of the initial five-day OHS training by four staff in support of their roles as Designated Work Group Representatives
- Presentation by a staff group on behalf of the OHS Committee, to a regional shared learning seminar via Zoom, connecting with over 50 people from Councils across Victoria, as part of Council's involvement with the Municipal Association of Victoria OHS WorkCare self-insurance scheme.
- Extensive policy/procedure development and implementation in accordance with the Municipal Association of Victoria OHS WorkCare self-insurance scheme requirements.

## ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

Enterprise Agreement Number Nine was officially endorsed by the Fair Work Commission and came into effect on 5 February 2020. The agreement will run for three years and has a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2022. A 2.1% (or \$28 per week) increase for each year of the agreement was proposed by Council and adopted by staff at a secret ballot conducted in November 2019. The rate of increase was almost identical to that agreed in the previous agreement and was also influenced by rate capping and the current rates of inflation and wages growth. The agreement included the introduction of a superannuation "soft compulsion" provision at the instigation of the Australian Services Union, designed to promote increased personal contributions by staff towards retirement savings.



# GENDER EQUITY

## LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

*Horsham Rural City Council is committed to creating a safe, equal and respectful community that supports the prevention of (or is free from) violence against women and children.*

*Violence against women is preventable by ensuring respect and equality between women and men.*

*Horsham Rural City Council has a leadership role in the community and can influence cultural and social norms through our interaction with individuals, families, organisations and community to eliminate attitudes that support violence.*

*Council has an obligation to ensure a safe, equal and respectful workplace and to support employees.*

*Council is committed to addressing the drivers of gender inequality through the full range of our functions and responsibilities. Our work is underpinned by Council's membership of the CoRE Alliance; by our Act@Work Action Plan and by actions listed in the Council Plan; Health and Wellbeing Plan and other Council strategies.*

## PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is a major issue for Horsham Rural City Council. The family violence incident rate in Horsham Rural City per 100,000 of population (October 2015 to September 2016) was more than double the Victorian average and Horsham has consistently had the highest rate of family violence incidences in the Grampians Region (2011 to 2016). Since 2012, Horsham has been in the top 10 worst performing areas across the State in relation to family violence.

Council is committed to supporting family violence prevention initiatives and incorporating behaviours that reinforce respect and equality for all members of the community. The 2019-2023 Council Plan lists four priorities, one advocacy action and two external factors that inform the plan in relation to violence and the 2017-2021 Health and Wellbeing Plan includes a section on preventing family violence. Council supports a range of initiatives to prevent violence including White Ribbon Day and International Women's Day events.



*Council once again supported the Walk Against Violence in November as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence*

This year, Council partnered with Horsham cafes for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign. The 16-day campaign ran from 25 November 2019 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until 10 December 2019 (International Human Rights Day). During this time, Café Jas, Café Red Cherry, Cheeky Fox, Laneway Café and The Fig Tree Café used takeaway coffee cups featuring the "Call it Out" logo which aims to start conversations about the prevention of violence against women. The campaign encourages people to intervene when they witness sexual harassment and gender inequality – drivers that can lead to family violence and violence against women.

**CoRE:** Council is a member of the CoRE (Communities of Respect and Equality) Alliance and supports the framework developed to prevent violence against women and their children. CoRE is for those who believe that our communities can be better places to live if we take action together to promote change. The 2016-2020 CoRE Plan aims to prevent violence against women and their children in the Grampians Region.

**Act@Work:** Council is committed to ensuring our workplaces set high standards for equality and respect for all staff, and that we have welcoming environments that are supportive of women. In 2017, the Act@Work program was introduced across the organisation and an action plan developed as part of a region-wide strategy.

Act@Work is a comprehensive, organisation-wide cultural change program challenging sexism, discrimination and violence against women. It addresses workplace leadership, policies and procedures and promotes partnerships and links to the community to encourage workplaces to contribute to safer and more respectful communities.



Local cafés served takeaway coffee in cups featuring the “call it out” logo during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign

**Gender Equity in Community Engagement:** The Gender Equity in Community Engagement project was completed this year. This 12-month joint project between Horsham Rural City, Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack Shire Councils was funded by the Victorian State Government.

The project aims were to increase participation of women in community engagement by ensuring all policies, procedures and practices support gender equity.

Key outcomes include:

- Analysis of gender equality within Council’s community engagement processes and a number of recommendations made
- Gender lens applied to Council’s Community Engagement policy and procedure to be incorporated into future policy and procedure development
- Development and promotion of a Gender Equity Community Engagement Audit Toolkit
- Gender equity training provided to 21 staff and advisory committee members
- Gender lens applied to Advisory Committee Terms of Reference template and Expression of Interest form developed
- Pathway identifying support options for those experiencing domestic and family violence developed.

## GENDER AND DISASTER

There are significant differences in the way men and women experience and recover from disasters, and it is important to understand and address these differences.

Over two days in October 2019, a number of events linked together by the theme Gender and Disaster, were supported by Council with the help of a micro grant from the Office of Women.

The project supported the CoRE Leading Change Lunch, focusing on gender and disaster management with guest speakers from the Gender and Disaster Pod, Australasian Women in Emergencies (AWE) Network and Victoria Police.

There was also an AWE Networking Dinner with guest speaker Amanda Lamont (AWE Vice President), and a “Lessons in Disaster” training package delivered, exploring how girls and boys are raised to take on different roles in society, and how this creates different risks for men and women during and after disasters.

## GENDER IMAGE AUDIT

In partnership with Women’s Health Grampians, a gender image audit for Horsham Rural City Council was undertaken this year. The audit focused on publications, plans, community newsletters, social media channels and various Horsham-based websites.

The image audit recommended that Council:

- Include more images in publications – to help shift perceptions and instill the vision, mission and values of Horsham Rural City Council
- Challenge Gender Roles – as gender inequality is the key driver of violence against women
- Highlight Diversity – show LGBTIQ people, Indigenous people, multicultural people and people with a disability living, working and playing in the community, highlighting the Horsham Rural City Council values of being inclusive, open and friendly
- Let the Community Help – create a campaign asking the community to share a story about someone they know.

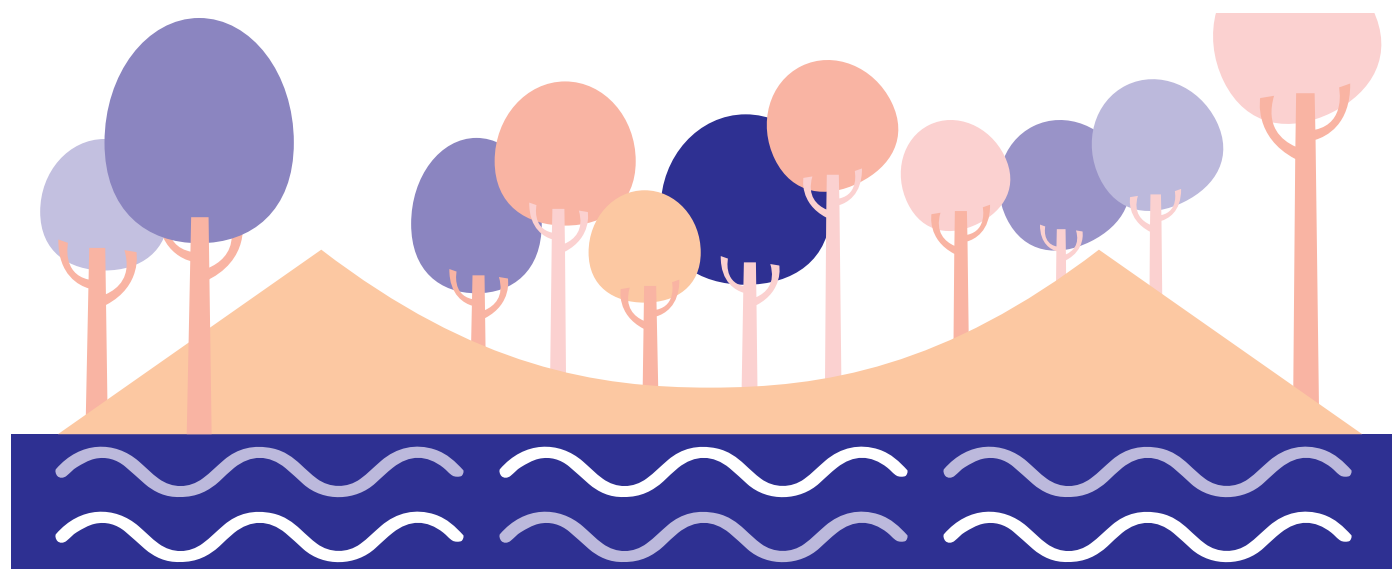
It is recognised that people have pre-conceived ideas about the type of place Horsham is, and Council is committed to changing these perceptions by showing images that challenge peoples perceptions. Every photo is an opportunity to make someone feel like they want to connect with Horsham Rural City Council.

Further information, including the 2017-2021 Health and Wellbeing Plan and 2016-2020 CoRE Plan are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Council's Community Development Grants and Donations program allocates funding to local not-for-profit organisations, groups and associations every year. The program helps groups in the Horsham and district community to improve community facilities and events, and work together for more engaged and healthy communities. Council provided a total of \$369,078 in Community Grants and Donations this financial year. Details of Community Development Grants and Donations funded by Council in 2019-2020 are provided below.

SPORT AND RECREATION	\$
AFL Wimmera Mallee – fitness equipment for umpires	425
Central Wimmera Clay Target Club – kitchen upgrade	3,000
Coughlin Park Bowls Club – synthetic bowling green	10,000
Drung Golf Club – upgrade 18 sandscrapes	700
Future application funding	5,000
Horsham and District Equestrian Sports Club – indoor equestrian surface	5,000
Horsham Basketball Stadium – lease	15,500
Horsham Flying Club – oxygen equipment	1,758
Horsham Golf Bowls Club – three additional toilets	7,000
Horsham Lawn Tennis Club – irrigation system	3,000
Horsham Little Athletics Centre – hurdles upgrade	4,980
Horsham Motorsports Club – transponder race timing equipment and software	4,830
Horsham Table Tennis Association – building repairs and kitchen appliances	3,000
Horsham West Bowling Club – replace kitchen carpet with vinyl	750
Kalimna Park Croquet Club – Learn to Play Croquet program	750
Laharum Sports Inc – resurface two netball/tennis courts	9,500
Moor Park Golf Club – installation solar panels	2,100
Natimuk and District Field and Game – two replacement traps	4,500
Natimuk Golf Club – upgrade and irrigation of trees	2,000
Noradjuha Recreation Reserve Committee – improve irrigation of oval for cricket	5,590
Pimpinio Recreation Reserve – safety fencing and bollards	3,008
Quantong Recreation Reserve Committee – oval upgrade to irrigation and topsoil	2,244
Riding for the Disabled – four mounting ramps	720
Riverside Recreation Reserve – pressure pump to water arena	2,000
Toolondo Golf Club – fuel trailer and tanks	2,500





<b>COMMUNITY MAINTAINED RECREATION RESERVE MAINTENANCE ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$</b>
Clear Lake	510
Dock Lake	12,100
Dooen Recreation Reserve	510
Laharum	12,100
Kalkee	6,050
Pimpinio	6,050
Quantong	12,100
Riverside – equestrian outdoor surface	510
Noradjuha	3,000
Natimuk Showgrounds	6,050
Toolondo	510
Coughlin Park (HRCC allocation of outdoor staff resources)	12,100
<b>Total – Sport and Recreation Community Grants</b>	<b>171,455</b>

<b>HALLS INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	<b>\$</b>
Dooen Public Hall – replace doors and new enclosed foyer space	5,500
Laharum Hall – internal blinds	500
Mitre Public Hall – ingredients for community meals	1,200
Taylors Lake Hall – speakers and security system	1,899
Telangatuk East Hall – lighting external toilets	1,078
Insurance levy for public halls – Brimpaen, Clear Lake School, Dadswells Bridge, Dooen, Hamilton Lamb, Haven, Jung, Kanagulk, Laharum, Mitre, Natimuk, Noradjuha, Riverside, Sailors Home, Taylors Lake, Telangatuk, Toolondo, Wonwondah	11,131
<b>Total – Halls</b>	<b>21,308</b>

<b>KINDERGARTENS</b>	<b>\$</b>
Bennett Road Kindergarten – five raised garden beds	2,249
Green Park Casuarina Kindergarten – veggie garden	2,150
Natimuk Pre School – veggie garden	3,140
Maintenance grants – \$850 each for Council’s six kindergartens	5,100
<b>Total – Kindergartens</b>	<b>12,639</b>

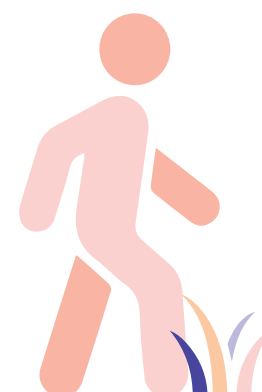
<b>GENERAL WELFARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>\$</b>
Christian Emergency Food Centre Inc – food hampers	2,290
Horsham College Chaplaincy Committee	5,600
Wimmera River Improvement Committee	8,200
Wimmera River Improvement Committee Police Paddock	2,400
Wimmera Toy Library – replacement toys	990
<b>Total – General Welfare and Community Services</b>	<b>19,480</b>

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AND DONATIONS

ORGANISATIONS	\$
Charitable Organisations – refund of rates	8,457
3 <sup>rd</sup> Horsham Brownie Guides – upgrade hall garden	848
Arapiles Historical Society – main entrance restoration/repainting	2,250
Centre for Participation – defibrillator	1,500
Centre for Participation – Sons and Daughters West Program	10,000
Dadswells Bridge Country Fire Authority – two folding tables	150
Dadswells Bridge Hall – newsletter	260
Federation University Horsham Campus – Nursing Award	300
Haven Bush Playgroup – play equipment	960
Haven Community Enterprise – road base to improve parking area	2,000
Holy Trinity Lutheran College – Senior Achievement Award	200
Horsham Arthritis Support Group – interactive seminar and workshop	900
Horsham Arts Council – air conditioner for foyer	2,521
Horsham City Pipe Band – support of Council events	1,710
Horsham College – Alternative Pathways Achievement Award	200
Horsham College – Senior Achievement Award	200
Horsham Dog Obedience Club – dog agility/dog sport workshop	800
Horsham East Landcare Agricultural Group – bird sign at Taylors Lake	2,000
Horsham Fire Brigade – shutters to Park Drive external windows	3,411
Horsham Lions Club – switchboard upgrade	2,500
Horsham Mens Shed – solar panels	1,950
Horsham Patchwork Quilters Inc – Accuquilt fabric cutter	500
Horsham PAWS microchip reader	900
Horsham Rural City Brass Band – support of Council events	1,710
Longerenong College – Citizenship Prize	300
Natimuk and District Progress Association – monthly newsletter	1,550
Natimuk Brass Band – support of Council events	1,710
Natimuk Community Energy – initial phase grid connection study	9,361
Natimuk Mens Shed – concrete flooring, lighting improvements	1,000
Natimuk Showgrounds Management Committee – air conditioning for pavilion	2,000
North West Grampians Lions Club of Horsham – Green Lake Driver Reviver Stop seating	2,500
North West Grampians Newsletter – monthly newsletter	1,550
OASIS Wimmera – support activities, Jubilee Hall	2,000
Rural toilet allocation	515
St Brigid’s College – Senior Achievement Award	200
Salvation Army – shade cover and paths for community garden	2,440
U3A Horsham and District Inc – support of tai chi program	1,000
Uniting Victoria and Tasmania – Tri-State Games uniform, Council logo	800
Voices of the Wimmera – uniforms and headset system	910

<b>ORGANISATIONS</b>	<b>\$</b>
Wimmera Association for Genealogy – annual support	320
Wimmera Filipino-Australian Club Inc – Zumba classes	1,000
Wimmera Mobility Group – group excursion support	750
Wimmera Parent Support Network – resilience and mental health guest speaker	2,663
Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN – Lets Read program	2,000
Wonwondah Fire Brigade – road base and gravel, McKenzie Creek	2,412
Wonwondah North Hall – newsletter	260
<b>Total – Organisations</b>	<b>83,468</b>

<b>EVENTS</b>	<b>\$</b>
Arapiles Community Theatre – biennial Nati Frinj	6,500
Art Is ... Festival – event support	6,900
Horsham Calisthenics College – annual calisthenics competition	1,100
Horsham Christian Ministers Association – Carols by Candlelight	3,600
Horsham Country Music Festival – event support	5,000
Horsham Fishing Competition Inc – support of fishing competition	5,000
Horsham Mother’s Day Classic – Mother’s Day Classic event support	1,000
Horsham Rockers – Rockers event, band hire	2,400
Horsham Urban Landcare – event and workshops at The Patch	2,000
Kannamaroo Committee of Management – Friday/Saturday evenings	5,500
Natimuk Agricultural and Pastoral Society – family entertainment Natimuk Show	1,000
North West Grampians Lions Club of Horsham – Christine Middleton performance	800
Operation 19:14 Action Team – children’s activities	3,465
Rotary Club of Horsham East – Wimmera Science and Engineering support	6,000
Volleyball Horsham – annual volleyball competition	900
Wimmera and Southern Mallee Careers Expo – marquee hire, health industry focus	2,500
Wimmera Croquet Association – Regionals 2020 event	800
Wimmera Machinery Field Days – President’s luncheon	2,273
Wimmera Music Eisteddfod – annual eisteddfod event	4,000
<b>Total – Events</b>	<b>60,738</b>
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY GRANTS AND DONATIONS FUNDED</b>	<b>369,078</b>





# COUNCIL PLAN

The *Local Government Act 1989* requires all Victorian Councils to produce a four year Council Plan which must be reviewed annually.

The Council Plan 2019-2023 sets the strategic direction of Council over the next four years, linking the community's vision to long-term community goals, four-year outcomes and four-year priorities for Horsham Rural City Council. The Council Plan provides direction to management and includes the indicators for monitoring strategic objectives and a Strategic Resource Plan. The Horsham Rural City Council Plan contains five long-term community goals (listed below).

The following pages provide details of some of the highlights achieved this year. Further information in relation to outcomes and priorities contained in the Council Plan are provided in the Performance section (pages 57–70).

The Council Plan is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au), or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.



## GOAL 1 | COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Develop Horsham and the municipality as a diverse, inclusive and vibrant community

.....



## GOAL 2 | SUSTAINING THE ECONOMY

Lead in sustainable growth and economic development

.....



## GOAL 3 | ASSET MANAGEMENT

Meet community and service needs through provision and maintenance of infrastructure

.....



## GOAL 4 | GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Excel in communication, consultation, governance, leadership and responsible use of resources

.....



## GOAL 5 | NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

Lead in environmental best practice, create a municipality for the future and plan for the impacts of climate change

.....



## GOAL 1 | COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Develop Horsham and the municipality as a diverse, inclusive and vibrant community

We support our diverse community by developing an environment that aims to cater to the shifting needs of our residents. We support innovation and encourage artistic and cultural expressions to develop our municipality as a great place to live.



Award recipients Lauren Matheson, Simon Risson, Andrea Cross, Zach Currie and new Australian citizen Thandi Eltze (second left) at Horsham's Australia Day celebrations

### AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

Australia Day is a day to reflect on what it means to be Australian, to celebrate contemporary Australia, and to acknowledge our history.

This year, approximately 250 community members came together at Horsham's Sawyer Park to celebrate our national day on 26 January.

The event started with a free barbecue breakfast provided by Council and supported by the Combined Service Clubs of Horsham.

Celebrations included a flag raising ceremony conducted by the Horsham Girl Guides and Scouts, Australia Day Reflection by Pastor Greg McKinnon from the Horsham Christian Ministers Association, children's story "Wombat Stew" read by Mary Dagleish and entertainment by the Horsham Pipe and Brass Bands and Emma Naylor and Tim O'Donnell from the Horsham Arts Council.

An address prepared by appointed ambassador Dr Bernard Jenner OAM, who was a late apology, was read at the ceremony also.

Australia Day Award presentations and an Australian Citizenship Ceremony were highlights of the day. This year's Horsham Rural City Council Australia Day Award recipients were:

- **Citizen of the Year – Simon Risson**

Simon has strong connections with the local community and is an unassuming achiever with time for those around him. Many Wimmera residents have been impacted and enriched by the faithful contribution Simon has made to the community.

- **Joint Young Citizens of the Year – Lauren Matheson and Zach Currie**

Lauren is passionate to help and assist others in the wider community. She volunteers on a number of organisations and is highly regarded by her peers. Zach has an interest in volunteering for the community in a range of ways. He demonstrates strong leadership skills and encourages others around him to do the same.

- **Community Event of the Year – 141st Horsham Show, Horsham Agricultural Society**

The Horsham Show has been a significant part of the Wimmera and its people. The 2019 Horsham Show has shown that there is a sustainable future, with a large number of volunteers, over 150 exhibitors and close to 100 sponsors, all contributing to the success of the event.

Australia Day celebrations were also held in Natimuk, Dadswells Bridge and Brimpaen.

Further details about Australia Day awards are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.



Horsham Rural City Council held six Australian Citizenship Ceremonies this year

### AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

The Mayor is responsible for conducting Australian Citizenship Ceremonies in the Horsham Rural City Council on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs. These special ceremonies provide an important opportunity for Council to officially welcome all our new Australian citizens to the local community.

Citizenship Ceremonies are held periodically throughout the year immediately prior to a Council meeting. The Australian national anthem, led by the Sing Australia Group is a highlight of these events.

This year, it was necessary to modify one citizenship ceremony to meet social distancing requirements due to COVID-19, however, the simplified ceremony ran smoothly and it was an enjoyable occasion for those involved.

In 2019-2020, Horsham Rural City Council conducted six Australian citizenship ceremonies welcoming 28 candidates from India, New Zealand, United States, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Japan, Nepal, Turkey, Botswana, United Kingdom and Scotland.

Details about Australian Citizenship Ceremonies are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.



The Combined Service Clubs of Horsham provided a free barbecue breakfast at the Australia Day ceremony in Horsham



### ACCESSIBLE WATER SPORTS PONTOON

An accessible water sports pontoon was installed on the Wimmera River in Horsham in June 2020. It is located on the eastern end of Baillie Street adjacent to the helipad area of the Wimmera River.

The accessible watercraft pontoon will provide safe and easy access to the water, support outdoor education programs and greater recreation and connectivity for local residents. It will encourage people of different ages, skills and abilities to enter the water and to participate in watercraft activity. The pontoon incorporates a wheelchair access platform, allowing a person easy and stable access to their watercraft.

The pontoon can accommodate up to 10 people, enabling carers, companions and multiple users to access it at the same time.

The \$80,000 project was jointly funded by Council (\$30,000), Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (\$30,000) and the Federal Government's Stronger Communities Grants Programme (\$20,000).



## GOAL 1 | COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



*Horsham Youth Councillors and the Young G Multicultural Youth Group learnt about the City to River project this year*

### **HORSHAM YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Horsham Youth Council formed in July 2019.

The Youth Councillors have established a plan of what they would like to achieve during their two-year term.

Key issues they have decided to focus on are:

- Environmental
- Alcohol and drug use
- Mental health and bullying
- Things to do in Horsham.

The Youth Councillors have formed small working groups to focus on four projects to raise awareness and try to address and combat some of the problems associated with these issues in our community.

The first project began in March 2020, in collaboration with the Art Is... Festival, focusing on environmental issues.

The Art Is... Future Surface project has incorporated story writing, art and animation workshops to develop a series of short animations about the impact of litter. These films are designed to educate people about what happens to different types of rubbish when it is thrown away, and what happens when different kinds of litter are placed in the wrong bins. These animations should be complete in September 2020 and will be accessible via a phone app, which augments drawings to become animations via scanning with your phone.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, some of the activities that had been planned for the year were postponed and replaced with a series of online competitions that ran during April and May 2020. These included activities young people could do at home during Stage 3 restrictions that would appeal to a wide audience including cooking, dancing, singing, art, sports and scavenger hunts.

Throughout December 2019 and January 2020, the Youth Council had an opportunity to participate in some training and workshops.

The Wimmera Primary Care Partnership facilitated Teen Mental Health First Aid training for the Youth Councillors, with one person also participating in a two-day Youth Mental Health First Aid course designed for people aged over 18 years.

The Horsham Youth Council also had an opportunity to attend a leadership workshop organised by Wimmera Development Association, delivered by Leading Teams. This provided a fantastic opportunity for Youth Councillors, with those in attendance thoroughly engaged and learning a lot from the experience.

Congratulations to Miranda Rose and Zack Currie, who were recognised for their contribution to the community by being jointly awarded the Horsham Rural City Council Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year award (page 35). Miranda, a student at Longerenong College, was also awarded a You thrive Victoria Rural Chances Vocational Scholarship, designed to improve equity of access to post-school education for rural young people, and ensure the availability of qualified young people to deliver services, drive economic growth and lead their rural communities.

The Horsham Youth Council is currently working on a time capsule project, engaging young people in the region to write letters about the impact of COVID-19 on their wellbeing in the form of a letter to their future self, or a journal of how they felt throughout 2020. The Youth Councillors are hoping to install a time capsule at The Station (formerly NEXUS Youth Centre) with all letters placed inside the capsule to be opened in 10 years, when the letters will be returned to their owners.





Horsham Youth Councillors held their first meeting in July 2019

The reimagined building in Horsham’s Pynsent Street, now known as The Station, has undergone interior renovations to the hall and the Youth Council is currently running a logo competition. The winning artist will receive acknowledgement for their design, and their artwork will be installed on the front of the building.

Horsham and Hindmarsh Shire Youth Councillors had a planning day at The Station to run a joint Youth Week event that was scheduled for April 2020, however, it was necessary to cancel this event due to COVID-19.

In collaboration with Headspace Horsham and the Young G Multicultural Youth Group, the Youth Council participated in some engagement surrounding the City to River project. Participants walked from Headspace headquarters in Hamilton Street to the Wimmera River, along part of the proposed plan, so they could visualise the proposal and discuss their views. This feedback was submitted to Council.

The Horsham Youth Council is looking forward to a productive year ahead. The Pynsent Street facility will be reopened and Youth Councillors will participate in training and leadership opportunities which will, in turn, have an impact on priority issues for young people in the community.



Horsham Youth Councillors participated in Teen Mental Health training this year



Children participated in a hand tracing activity as part of National Reconciliation Week

### INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

This year, Council’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Reconciliation Action Plan Internal Working Group continued working collaboratively with Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative, further strengthening these important relationships.

COVID-19 limited the customary public events to recognise National Reconciliation Week 2020, but presented opportunities for new innovative activities. National Reconciliation Week 2020 saw an outdoor projection of the Indigenous film “Marngrook”, onto the Horsham Town Hall and a double page reconciliation poster in The Weekly Advertiser, giving people the chance to trace their hand in the centre of the page to write or draw a message about what reconciliation means to them, before displaying it in a window.

There was also a virtual presentation of Megan Evans’ artwork “Proof” on the Horsham Regional Art Gallery website and on display in the gallery foyer for people to see as they passed by. “Proof” is a Victorian-era chaise lounge upholstered in white rabbit fur, with the legs replaced with shotguns and fencing posts that elevate it to eye level. On the back is an embroidered map of Victoria showing Indigenous massacre sites from the early 1880s. Shown in reverse, the map looks like it has seeped through from the front.

The Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

## GOAL 1 | COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



*A community art exhibition during NADIOC Week included over 130 artworks by 68 artists*

### HORSHAM REGIONAL ART GALLERY

The Horsham Regional Art Gallery once again responded to community needs this year, adding two new exhibitions to its already full schedule.

The Gallery assisted Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative with a new initiative, a community art exhibition held during NAIDOC Week. This project supported individual artist's growth, unearthed new talent and brought the community together in cultural activity, teachings and celebrations. Gallery staff provided essential skills and experience to develop and present the diverse display of our local Indigenous community's creative skills. Over 130 artworks by 68 artists featured large community-led paintings and sculptures, story-telling images and personal reflections of life. With the amazing response from the community, the exhibition extended to spaces throughout the building, was extended from one week to seven weeks, and was seen by over 4,300 visitors.

The Horsham Regional Art Gallery also worked with Horsham College to present "Cream of the Crop", an exhibition showcasing the best in art and design from regional VCE students studying Art, Studio Art, Visual Communications, Textiles, Woodwork, Metal Work and Food Technology. For the past 12 years, Horsham College has organised and staged the exhibition, but it outgrew their resources and "Cream of the Crop" transferred to the Gallery.

This year's exhibition featured 47 students from Horsham College, St Brigid's College, Holy Trinity Lutheran College, Donald High School, Nhill College and Ararat's Marian College and received over 2,500 visitors in its 19 days on display.

The Gallery plans to extend the length of time the exhibition is shown to make it more accessible to visitors and upcoming VCE students.



*Art Matters participants at the exhibition in Horsham this year*

### ART MATTERS

Art Matters is an arts support program that enables people living with a disability to build individual capacity through participation in a broad range of creative art projects. Art Matters entered the next chapter of its operation when the Centre for Participation took over from Council as the program's manager at the commencement of the 2020 program. There is a natural fit with the Centre for Participation, who have a history of strengthening the capacity of our community and changing lives. Council looks forward to the continued success of this important program.



*Zoey shows off her artwork at the Art Matters exhibition*



*The "Cream of the Crop" exhibition featured art and design works by 47 VCE students from across the region*



Upgrades to the cycling/walking path network continue to be a priority for Council

### CYCLING AND WALKING TRAILS

Council’s priorities for upgrades to the municipality’s cycling/walking path network continue to be guided by the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

A major achievement this year has been the completion of the cycling path on the south side of the Wimmera River, west of the Anzac Centenary Bridge. Through co-operation with the Southbank developer and the Langlands family, Council has obtained licences to the river frontage in these areas, enabling formed paths to be established. In co-operation with the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, additional works have included fencing of these areas. The Catchment Management Authority has also installed two new water regulating structures, which will manage water flow in the billabong section on the Langlands property. The seal over these structures was the last part of works to link this track with existing tracks, providing a full loop from the Anzac Centenary Bridge to the Horsham weir.

Council was also able to provide a riverfront linkage through a section of property at the east end of Baillie Street in Horsham. These works were enabled through the support of the Irwin family, who agreed to provide a licence to Council to access this frontage and the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, which carried out some river protection works along this section.

Further information about cycling/walking trails in the municipality is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

### OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Open space plays an important role in our society by providing places for exercise, quiet reflection, children’s play and organised sport. As our communities grow and change, greater attention needs to be placed on planning open spaces to ensure that they meet our current and future needs.

Horsham Rural City Council has developed an integrated Open Space Strategy to provide strategic directions and to determine priorities for the planning, provision and development of open space across the municipality.

The overarching vision for open space in Horsham is that we will become:

***“A leading regional community with an open space network that provides positive health and wellbeing outcomes for everybody.”***

The strategy is based on the following principles:

- Equity
- Accessibility
- Health and wellbeing
- Participation
- Sustainability
- Safety
- Adaptability
- Efficiency
- Environmental sustainability
- Biodiversity
- Design and placemaking.

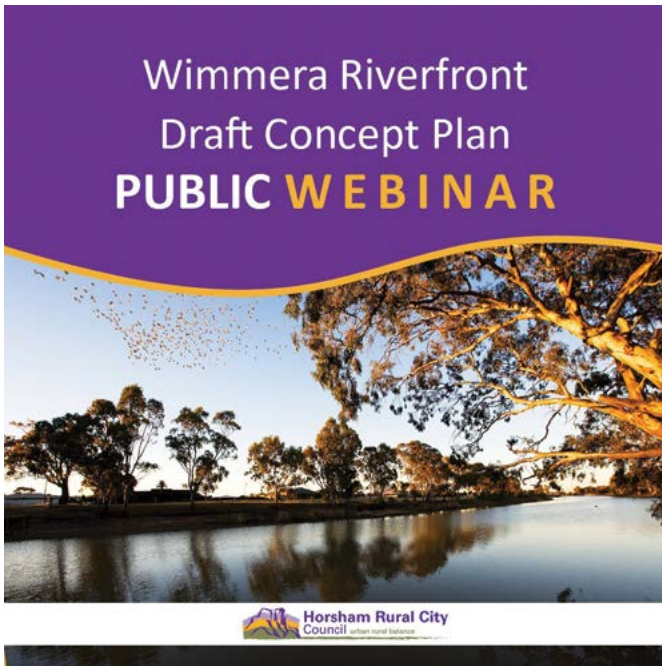
The Open Space Strategy adopted by Council in December 2019 provides a framework to:

- Increase connectivity
- Redefine the Wimmera River
- Improve open space
- Enhance collaboration
- Invest and plan for our future
- Colour and green our region
- Recognise and celebrate culture.

The Open Space Strategy provides a framework for more people to be more active, more often.

The Open Space Strategy is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

## GOAL 1 | COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



### WIMMERA RIVERFRONT ACTIVATION

The Wimmera Riverfront Activation Project is the first stage of the City to River Masterplan, a long-term 20 year plan which aims to enhance and activate the Wimmera River Precinct and improve its link to the Central Activity District of Horsham. The City to River project has been divided into sub-precincts to allow projects to proceed in a staged, prioritised manner.

The City to River Masterplan was developed in 2019, drawn from a large number of current Council strategies and plans, along with community input and engagement conducted throughout that year. The Masterplan was approved by Council in November 2019, with a number of amendments made. Council endorsed the development of detailed concept and schematic designs for the riverfront, including identifying the site for a café and waterplay area.

The riverfront precinct includes the area west of the Horsham Rowing Clubroom to east of the Wimmera Bridge. Assets located close to, or in the precinct include, Adventure Island and Apex Pump Track, botanical gardens playground, bike and walking tracks, rowing and angling clubrooms, miniature rail, the waterway, riverfront and caravan park.

The Wimmera River is one of Horsham's significant natural, social and cultural assets. The Wimmera Riverfront Activation Project has sought to build on this strength by exploring the creation of new active spaces for recreation, and build and improve access and use of existing open space and recreational assets.

Clear and direct community feedback provided through the 2019 City to River Master Planning process has informed how the Wimmera Riverfront Activation project evolved. A deliberate focus on improving engagement with the community to develop the Riverfront Concept Plan was established against the following objectives:

- Build relationships and trust with the community and key stakeholders
- Provide an opportunity for any member of the community to provide input
- Provide an open, transparent process so that the community understands and supports the process
- Gain diverse community input into a plan for making the riverfront more inviting
- Clearly communicate opportunities to be engaged.

A Community Reference Group (CRG) was formed in April 2020 to guide effective engagement for the project, taking on lessons learnt from the City to River Masterplan process, and to ensure the community's voice was heard and feedback acknowledged. The CRG worked closely with Council staff and the landscape architects "Tract", to develop the draft concept design for the riverfront. The CRG met 12 times via Zoom with one on-site meeting at the riverfront planned for July 2020.

The CRG included representatives of key stakeholders located in or adjacent to the riverfront precinct including the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Horsham Angling Club, Horsham Caravan Park, Horsham City Rowing Club, Horsham Rural Ratepayers and Residents Inc, Horsham Youth Council, Wimmera River Improvement Committee and three community representatives.

The CRG has developed a detailed engagement plan for the riverfront precinct. They have spoken to the broader public, canvassed groups and liaised with the landscape architects to develop the draft Concept Plan. The plan was then taken out to the community to gather feedback and reflect the interests and needs of current and future residents and visitors to our region.

Key themes that emerged during this engagement were:

- Retain the natural amenity
- Improve connectivity and places to socially connect
- Promote broader community access and use
- Provide opportunities to tell our local indigenous stories.

The final plan proposes the following improvements: a civic gathering space (including siting/services for future café/restaurant), carpark amendments, public toilet upgrade, outdoor covered area at angling clubrooms, upgrade and widening of shared path across the precinct, river edge connections, outdoor seating/ additional picnic facilities, planting works signage and lighting upgrades, artworks and cultural/heritage interpretation.

The CRG recognises that one plan will not satisfy all needs and interests of the whole community, however, if the majority are served well and generally satisfied, and the feedback provided improves the process, approach and plan, the CRG and Council view this as a way forward to advance plans to the next stage.

Further details about the City to River Masterplan and Wimmera Riverfront Activation Project are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.



*The Horsham Town Hall was packed to capacity for 60 Years of Wimmera Rock in February*

## THE HORSHAM TOWN HALL

Despite the impact of COVID-19 on the arts sector across Australia and the subsequent closure of the Horsham Town Hall to the public in June 2020, the venue has delivered an exciting program across the past financial year.

In July 2019, the year started with an awe-inspiring NAIDOC week exhibition that spanned the full length of the venue from the Gallery through the Foyer and into the Heritage Hall. A diverse array of locally created paintings, photography and 3D installations were on show by local Aboriginal artists. The popular display ran until mid August 2019 (page 39).

Over 22 performances including dance, drama, live music and physical theatre were presented in the venue from July through to December 2019. They were all very well received by the audiences.

In February 2020, venue staff partnered with local musicians and performers to present 60 Years of Wimmera Rock – a massive three days of live music and celebration across three venues. Audiences revisited bands they grew up with in the pubs and clubs of the Wimmera. The event attracted over 2,500 people, with performers and audiences coming from Germany, the USA and a significant contingent from interstate.

From March 2020 onwards, adjusting to bans on mass gatherings and closures of indoor entertainment venues, forced many planned performances to be rescheduled, with many now moving to 2021. Horsham Town Hall staff were also redeployed into other business units because of the impacts of COVID-19 (page 23). This has been challenging and difficult for our highly trained staff and for local audiences.

We hope to see a reactivation of the performing arts sector in 2021 and the opportunity for people to visit the venue and enjoy the social and cultural benefits of attending live shows at the Horsham Town Hall.



## GOAL 2 | SUSTAINING THE ECONOMY

Lead in sustainable growth and economic development

As our community grows, so our region grows. We welcome new development and we aim to support enterprise, small and large, whilst advocating for the community to shop locally. We will continue to promote and develop sustainable projects.



### NEW ROOF FOR HORSHAM REGIONAL LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE

The journey leading to construction of the roof on the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange (HRLE) commenced with preparation of a Master Plan for the site, which was adopted by Council in May 2018.

A business case was then prepared for the roofing project, which identified very large benefits in terms of animal welfare and increased value of sales as sheep would be presented in a better condition on sale days with the roof in place, reducing the stress associated with heat and cold or wet conditions. Additional benefits were identified including OHS for personnel on site and sustainability benefits through water harvesting and solar power generation.

The business case provided strong supporting evidence for a grant application through the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund, and Council was delighted with the announcement of a grant of \$1.49 million in March 2019. This grant, together with funding from Council, enabled the project to proceed to tender in mid 2019, leading to the contract for construction being awarded to MKM Constructions of Ballarat in September 2019, at a contract value of \$3.43 million. Significantly, the Council contribution to the

project will be repaid by dividends from HRLE operations over the coming years.

On-ground works started in late 2019, and it soon became evident that construction was running ahead of schedule, even with the extra measures put in place to ensure only minimal impact to sale days.

While initially planned to be completed by the end of September 2020, the main roof works will be completed by August 2020, and finishing touches by early November 2020.

A feature of the project has been the close co-operation between the builder, HRLE staff and all those involved in the conduct of sales, including the Horsham Stock Agents Association. Weekly updates were provided to stakeholders on progress with the works, and the sections of the saleyards that would be impacted each week. Staff attended monthly meetings of the Stock Agents Association to provide further updates and listen to any issues that were emerging during the works.

The formal opening of the new HLRE roof is planned for late 2020, subject to COVID-19 restrictions.



### WIMMERA INTERMODAL FREIGHT TERMINAL PRECINCT

A series of infrastructure works were completed at the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal Precinct this year to facilitate expansion of industry on this site including:

- A new power supply with capacity for significant processing in the precinct
- A water main, providing high pressure water from the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline along Freight Terminal Road
- A new roundabout at the intersection of Molyneux Road and Freight Terminal Road, designed for future longer vehicles including B-triple transport
- The first section of new road north along Molyneux Road
- Drainage works, including basins to provide retardation to manage stormwater runoff on the site.

These works have prepared the precinct for further development.

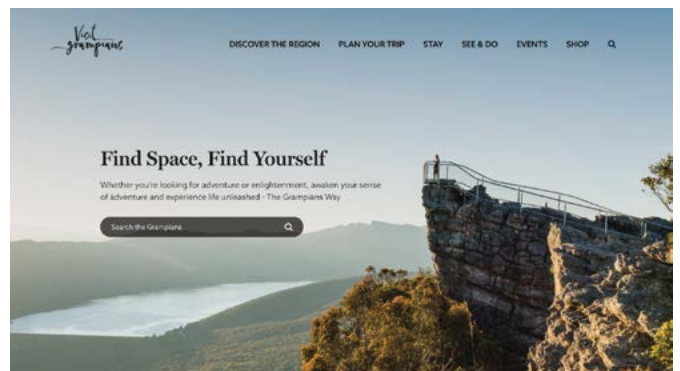
### DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Spirit Telecom have completed Horsham’s connection to the 5G network, with five towers developed across five districts in Horsham to transmit Spirit’s internet. Transmission will be via the air and will cover a 10 kilometre radius from each tower throughout Horsham, including the Horsham central business district, Horsham Enterprise Park, aerodrome and freight terminal precincts. Horsham now has the latest technology to ensure new and existing business have access to the fastest technology available.



### GRAMPIANS WAY

Grampians Tourism have successfully rolled out the Grampians Way marketing and branding to encourage visitation to and across the region. Profiling the southern, western, eastern and northern parts of the region, the campaign has been successful in increasing visitation in late 2019 and it is hoped the strong branding will help attract visitors back to the region once COVID-19 restrictions have eased.



### GRAMPIANS PEAKS TRAIL

The Grampians Peaks Trail project is a 160 kilometre, world-class natural and cultural walking experience, scheduled to be completed next summer. The Grampians Peaks Trail will include 12 campsites (11 hike-in camps and one group camp) and be accessible for people to experience the Grampians National Park through day walks, overnight sections, or as one 13-day journey. Partnerships with tour operators and potential investment opportunities for communities close to the trail around Mt Zero and Wartook, have been developed this year.

Further information about the Grampians Way and Grampians Peaks Trail is available on the Visit Grampians website – [www.visitgrampians.com.au](http://www.visitgrampians.com.au)



### GOAL 3 | ASSET MANAGEMENT

Meet community and service needs through provision and maintenance of infrastructure.

.....

We strive to ensure infrastructure is in place to support our growing community as well as upgrading and maintaining our infrastructure to attract more visitors to our municipality.

#### LIGHTING HORSHAM'S RIVER TRACKS

Works to install lighting along Wimmera River walking/cycling tracks has commenced this year. The Safe River Linkages Project sees overhead LED lights added along the river between Menadue Street and the Anzac Centenary Pedestrian Bridge, including along Wotonga Basin. Local contractors have been engaged to install this lighting.

Many people exercise along these paths during daylight hours and the new lighting will give the community reassurance to use the paths at night. The lighting will improve safety for users along key tracks that connect residential areas to the river.

The project will also include pruning of low to mid-height shrubs along some sections of the track to improve visibility and enhance people's perception of feeling safe. The Wimmera River Improvement Committee is involved in the landscaping works and the project has received support from other local groups such as Horsham Bicycle Advisory Committee, Horsham Parkrun Group, Horsham Running Group and Horsham Saints Football Netball Club.

The Safe River Linkages Project was funded through a \$173,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Public Safety Infrastructure Fund and \$90,464 provided by Council.



#### MANAGING OUR ASSETS

Council has maintained detailed records on most of its asset base over many years. An intensive program was undertaken this year to ensure that all assets associated with buildings and open spaces were captured and up to date, including their condition. This information is important to understand the remaining lives of assets, and the cost to renew them over time.

An innovative approach has also been applied to roads. Previously, Council has maintained records of the condition of roads based on typically one kilometre segments in rural areas, and "block by block" in urban areas, but condition of roads can vary considerably over these distances.

In early 2020, detailed roughness information was captured for each 20-metre length of the road network. This will give much better information on the sections of road that need replacing, enabling more targeted works to be conducted, leading to better value in our road maintenance expenditure. Council will be able to conduct works on only those sections of roads that are in poor condition, rather than longer stretches which may only have a few rough sections.

The data captured in 2020 will lead to improvements in the reconstruction program in the years ahead.

#### RURAL ROAD NETWORK PLAN

Following completion of the Horsham Urban Transport Plan in early 2020 (page 46), work has commenced on the complementary Rural Road Network Plan for the remainder of the municipality. The objective of this plan is to review the priority of all roads in the rural network, guide Council on any plans to upgrade certain roads and ensure long-term maintenance of the network can be appropriately funded. A community-based Project Control Group was established in March 2020, however, the onset of COVID-19 led to restrictions in the ability to conduct consultation. The Project Control Group have continued to meet to prepare material to inform a consultation process with the community, but this has been deferred until early 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions.



## HORSHAM URBAN TRANSPORT PLAN

Following an extensive preparation and community consultation process, Council adopted the Horsham Urban Transport Plan in January 2020. The plan aims to address the following six specific objectives identified by Council:

- Creating a more active and vibrant CBD and river precinct
- That trucks which don't originate or terminate in the CBD be removed from the CBD and river precinct
- More active transport
- More river crossings
- Linking highways to economic activities
- Preference for use of existing road reserves for future development of the local and arterial roads.

The plan developed a number of strategies under each of the following six themes:

- Streets for people
- Local access movement
- Public transport (inner Horsham)
- Parking
- Cycling
- Regional links.

Some key outputs from the Horsham Urban Transport Plan include:

- Support for investigation of an alternative truck route around Horsham to help remove this traffic from Horsham's CBD – to be conducted with Regional Roads Victoria.
- Identification of a series of problem intersections including Natimuk/Bennett Road, Wilson/Darlot Street, McPherson/Hamilton Street and Stawell Road/Henty Highway – all require advocacy to Regional Roads Victoria to review.
- Importance of improving passenger rail services to Horsham.
- Community support for a crossing of the Wimmera River at Hamilton Street.

The Horsham Urban Transport Plan has been used to support a range of grants Council has applied for and the recommendations are being incorporated into Council's 10-year capital works program.

The Horsham Urban Transport Plan is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.



*A \$1.5 million refurbishment to the Horsham Aquatic Centre's outdoor pool was completed this year*

## OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOL UPGRADE

Horsham's War Memorial Swimming Pool has undergone a \$1.5 million refurbishment this year. The 50-metre outdoor pool is part of the Horsham Aquatic Centre complex. It was built in 1956 and in need of an upgrade to address issues including water losses and ineffective solar heating.

Changes include removal of hobs around the pool to provide a flat wet deck, adding an accessibility ramp, modification of pool depths to a maximum of two metres and a minimum of 1.1 metres, and improved filtration for water quality benefits.

The wet deck provides a seamless edge to the pool and replaces an older style of guttering system. It is slip resistant, making it much easier to enter the water.

Shade structures with seating and landscaping have also been completed.

Sport and Recreation Victoria contributed \$200,000 towards the project for inclusion of the wet deck around the outside of the pool.

## GOAL 3 | ASSET MANAGEMENT

### ROAD WORKS

Providing suitable roads is one of Council's key services. Horsham Rural City Council services 2,977 kilometres of roads. Of these roads, 991 kilometres are sealed roads, 974 kilometres are unsealed roads, 1,007 kilometres are formed only (dirt) roads and 5 kilometres are bike tracks, crossings, etc.

During 2019-2020, Council was fortunate to receive significant funding from the Victorian Government through the Fixing Country Roads program to upgrade several roads in the municipality. Funding was also received from the Australian Government through the Roads to Recovery program, Financial Assistance Grants and Council rates revenue, including additional funding committed to reducing Council's infrastructure renewal gap.

The Fixing Country Roads program enabled the following upgrades to proceed:

- Wail Kalkee Road, two sections near Wail
- Sections of Green Lake Road, south of Green Lake
- Longerenong Road near Wimmera Machinery Field Days site.

These works were conducted by contractors and Council staff.

The following projects were not completed due to weather impacts late in the construction season:

- Widening part of Drung Jung Road, Longerenong
- Gravelling of Emmersons Road, Clear Lake.

These works will be completed early in the 2020-2021 construction season.



Below is a description of all road works completed by Council this year.

WORKS DESCRIPTION	LENGTH (KILOMETRES)	AREA (SQUARE METRES)
Road construction New Urban	-	-
Road construction New Rural	-	-
Carpark construction New Rural	0.088	2,089
Carpark construction New Urban	-	-
Road reconstruction Urban	1.755	18,661
Road reconstruction Rural	11.01	65,449
Upgraded formed only road to unseal gravel road	0.88	10,449
Upgraded unseal gravel road to seal road	3.37	8,720
New sealed road construction (subdivision)	0.313	2,596
Rural reseals	16.482	92,174
Rural finalseals	20.112	127,297
Urban finalseals	1.223	11,508
Sealed shoulder re-sheeting	20.128	80,512
Gravel road re-sheeting	38.532	169,415
Footpaths new (subdivision)	0.5271	738
Footpaths renew	1.807	2,547
Kerb and channels new (subdivision)	0.488	-
Kerbs and channels renew	4.221	-



## GOAL 4 | GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Excel in communication, consultation, governance, leadership and responsible use of resources.

Our goal is to excel in what we deliver and how we deliver it, both within Council and to our community. Our staff are our greatest asset so their wellbeing is key to learning and high performance.

### NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

The new *Local Government Act 2020* (Act) is a significant piece of legislation and is the most ambitious and comprehensive reform of local government in Victoria for 30 years. It is anticipated that the Act will improve local government democracy, accountability and service delivery for all Victorians.

The Act received Royal Assent on 24 March 2020, and is being proclaimed in four stages, with the first of these reforms proclaimed on 6 April 2020. With nearly 400 provisions, a number of these provisions are now in force.

The staged commencement dates are 6 April 2020, 1 May 2020, 24 October 2020 and 1 July 2021.

The Act comes into operation progressively, and at the same time various provisions in the *Local Government Act 1989* are repealed progressively, so the two Acts will co-exist for some time into the future.

The new Act replaces the *Local Government Act 1989* and will deliver on the Victorian Government’s commitment to modernise how local government operates. It is a principles-based Act, removing unnecessary regulatory and legislative prescription.

To achieve this, the following five primary principles have guided the development of the Act:

1. Community Engagement
2. Strategic Planning
3. Financial Management
4. Public Transparency
5. Service Performance.

Key dates for document deliverables to address the legislative requirements of the new Act are as follows:

#### 1 September 2020

Governance Rules, Public Transparency Policy, Expense Policy, Delegated Committees and Asset Committees

#### 17 September 2020

Mandatory Candidate Training

#### January 2020

Councillor Code of Conduct

#### 1 March 2021

Community Engagement Policy

#### 30 April 2021

Gift Policy

#### 30 June 2021

Councillor Induction Training, Annual Budget, Revenue and Rating Plan

#### 31 October 2021

Financial Plan, Council Plan, Community Vision, Annual Report

#### 1 January 2022

CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy, Workforce Plan, Recruitment Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Complaints Policy, Procurement Policy

#### 30 June 2022

Asset Management Plans

Council is liaising closely with Local Government Victoria (LGV), Maddocks Lawyers, Local Government Professionals (LGPro) and other local government Councils and organisations, to ensure correct processes are followed, implemented and communicated, and a detailed Implementation Action Plan for communication with Council’s Leadership Team and key stakeholders has been developed.

Final adoption of the relevant documents will be made by Council and available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

## GOAL 4 | GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

### ADVOCACY

Advocating for and representing our residents, communities and businesses in state and federal government is a key function of local government and one Horsham Rural City Council takes seriously.

During the past year, lobbying and advocacy was undertaken through local, state and federal politicians. This process also involves collaboration with other key stakeholders to progress key projects and priorities for the Wimmera-Southern Mallee and Grampians regions.

Details of advocacy priorities that have progressed this year are provided below.

#### **Develop incentives program to attract in-demand skills to the region**

Horsham Rural City Council, in partnership with Grampians Tourism, Ararat Rural City, Northern Grampians Shire and Southern Grampians Shire Councils is undertaking a collaborative project to address a key economic and social challenge facing the region – the poor retention and lack of growth in new residents and workforce. With funding provided through Regional Development Victoria, project partners have commenced work on a co-ordinated and consistent marketing campaign and development of a Grampians New Resident and Workforce Attraction Strategy and Action Plan.

The project, which is expected to be completed by November 2020, includes the commissioning of market research to understand the priorities of potential new residents, what liveability gains they may value, especially in rural centres, and how to best market these.

#### **Regional liveability**

Council continues to advocate on the important role of regional cities.

In March 2019, Council endorsed a Notice of Motion to the National General Assembly seeking support for the federal government to develop a long-term plan for investment in regional cities as a key to maintaining the liveability of the regions they support, attract business investment and to provide high quality health, education, recreation and cultural facilities.

In September 2019, a submission was made to the Senate Enquiry on Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas focused on new industries and employment opportunities that can be created in the regions, and the importance of appropriate community infrastructure to attract investment and job creation.

#### **Changes to the local government rating system**

Council's submission to the State Government Review of Local Government Rating System in November 2019 advocated on a range of rating issues faced by rural and regional Councils, including the high value of farm land and relative share of rates paid by farming enterprises, inequities between urban and rural Councils, significant impact of road construction and maintenance costs, and the role of a regional city.

#### **Retention of recreational lakes or other recreational water facilities with the purpose of securing water based recreational opportunities in the municipality**

Council's ongoing negotiations with GWMWater enabled the supply of approximately 1,300 ML into Green Lake to boost its level heading into the 2019-2020 summer period, given its role as the primary recreation lake in the municipality. Council is continuing to seek an ongoing water supply to Green Lake.

#### **Small Business Friendly Charter**

The Small Business Friendly Charter is an initiative to increase communication and positive interactions between local government and small business. Council has committed to implementing the following key elements of the charter over a 12-month period:

- Work with small businesses disrupted by infrastructure projects
- Support the creation of small business networks across Victoria
- Faster permit approvals processes for small businesses
- Prompt payment to small businesses
- Easy to read, easy to understand, information for Victorian small businesses
- Open channels of communication between the Victorian Small Business Commission and local Councils.

### **Improvements to the Horsham central business district and Wimmera River precinct**

Council has continued to work with our community on progressing the Wimmera Riverfront Activation Project and advocating to state and federal governments for funding. This has included securing a \$1.65 million 2019 election promise from the federal government and a \$500,000 funding commitment from the state government to commence Stage 1 works. The project is currently at detailed Concept Design Stage (page 41).

### **Duplication of the Western Highway to Stawell and improved safety through to the South Australia border**

The Western Highway Action Committee, of which Horsham and nine other Councils from Melton to the South Australian border are members, has continued to advocate for resumption of the duplication of the Western Highway through to Stawell. During the year, the committee made submissions to the Federal Environment Minister who was considering an application to protect an area including some potentially significant trees near Ararat. The committee's submission focused primarily on the need to improve safety on the Western Highway, the second busiest inter-capital freight route in Australia.

### **Alternative truck route to provide an effective bypass for the Western Highway, Wimmera Highway and Henty Highway**

During 2020, Council adopted the Horsham Urban Transport Plan (page 46). One of the actions in the plan was to work with Regional Roads Victoria on the identification of an alternative truck route around Horsham. Council has committed \$100,000 in its 2020-2021 budget to support this initiative, and is seeking Regional Roads Victoria to at least match this funding for the project.

Council also made submissions to Regional Roads Victoria in relation to other priority issues in the Horsham Urban Transport Plan including problematic intersections at Natimuk/Bennett Road, Wilson/Darlot Street and McPherson/Hamilton Street.

### **Return of passenger rail to Horsham**

Council has continued advocacy work with other regional Councils to improve regional public transport services. The main focus this financial year was agreement to work with Officers from the Department of Transport to develop a survey to gather data from users about their preferences/needs for transport services. This work has been delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 on public transport services.



### **Horsham rail corridor**

Council has been actively working with VicTrack for the remediation of contaminated land in the Horsham rail corridor. Although the remediation, which is due to be completed by June 2022, will open up the opportunity for the development of land for community use, the extent of land which will be available for development will be influenced by the decision in relation to return of passenger rail to Horsham.

### **Retention of the Overland passenger train between Melbourne and Adelaide**

Horsham Rural City Council has continued to advocate strongly for the continuation of the Overland passenger service. In April 2020, Melissa Horne, Minister for Public Transport, wrote to Council stating that the Victorian government will financially support the Overland until 30 June 2020, however, following continued advocacy from a range of groups, the Victorian government has committed funding to continue the Overland service for another three years.

### **Family violence support and safety hub in Horsham**

Advocacy has continued for a family support and safety hub (Orange Door) for Horsham this year. Discussions have been held with Family Safety Victoria in relation to the need for a hub in Horsham and potential site considerations.

### **Work with our regional partners to increase collaboration between communities, industry, businesses and government to address the most important challenges and opportunities in our region**

The state government's \$5 million Rural Council Transformation Program for the Wimmera Southern Mallee region has progressed during 2019-2020, with the submission of a successful business case addendum. A transformative suite of core business systems will now be rolled out across participating Councils over the next two years (page 53).

Horsham Rural City Council

# Customer Commitment Charter



### CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Council is committed to providing the highest possible level of service to our community and customers, and a revised Customer Commitment Charter and Customer Service Standards Procedure were adopted this year.

The Customer Commitment Charter aligns with Council's organisational values and behaviours (page 22). It provides simple, easy to follow instructions for service requests, feedback and complaints.

The Customer Service Standards Procedure includes service commitments across a range of identified services which will be monitored and reported back to Council and the community.

The Customer Commitment Charter and Customer Services Standards Procedure are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

### GOVERNOR'S VIRTUAL VISIT TO HORSHAM

On Friday 8 May 2020, Council was delighted to host a virtual visit to the municipality by the Hon Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria.

The tour began with a briefing on the impact COVID-19 has had on the region's residents and businesses and the ways in which the community is adapting to the circumstances. The virtual tour then followed with visits to Sunnyside Lutheran Retirement Village and Wimmera Health Care Group.

### COUNCIL ELECTIONS

In conjunction with the Victorian Local Governance Association, Council has co-ordinated a series of workshops to support potential candidates in the upcoming Council elections. A pre-candidate information session was held in May via the Zoom online platform, which was well attended. Council has also promoted "Local Government 101" a series of online workshops designed exclusively for women. The workshops answered questions that potential candidates may have, including how to become a candidate and run a successful campaign.

## GOVERNANCE

Council is committed to good governance and transparency. This includes policy development, legislative compliance, protection of personal information and facilitating public access to governance information.

Horsham Rural City Council's Governance Unit supports a workplace culture aligned to one of high performance and continuous improvement, focused on delivering exceptional governance, integrity and organisational outcomes.

### Achievements 2019-2020:

- Governance intranet site with resources for staff developed
- Mini governance training workshops conducted across a range of governance functions
- 21 policies/procedures reviewed
- 20 policies/procedures written
- Staff Conflict of Interest Declaration Form developed
- Governance and Transparency platform on Council website improved – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au)
- Implementation of requirements for new *Local Government Act 2020* commenced
- Governance Rules (including new Council Meeting Procedures) developed
- Four audit analysis and assessments conducted, following integrity body findings
- New Audit and Risk Charter and annual work program adopted
- Review of Section 86 Committees, to move to Asset Committees in line with new *Local Government Act 2020*
- Freedom of Information Part II Statement developed
- Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC) Protective Data Security Plan (PDSP) and development of Data Protection Continuous Improvement Action Plan completed.

### Focus for 2020-2021:

- Continued roll-out of the legislative requirements of the new *Local Government Act 2020*
- Council elections – October 2020
- Councillor induction training
- Develop a 10-Year Community Vision
- Review Council's Complaint Policy
- Develop an Organisational Performance Reporting Dashboard (strategic and operational)
- Implement Council Agenda preparation software and paperless Council Agenda.



*Cameron and Kerrie were available to provide information and answer questions at Council's display at the Wimmera Machinery Field Days*

## WIMMERA MACHINERY FIELD DAYS

Following positive engagement at the Wimmera Machinery Field Days in 2018 and 2019, the Executive Management Team made a decision to have a site at the 2020 Wimmera Machinery Field Days and continue to provide sponsorship for the official president's luncheon at the event.

Sixteen staff covered shifts at the site over three days from 3 to 5 March 2020. The Chief Executive Officer, Councillors and consultants working on the Horsham Rural Transport Network Plan also attended.

This year's focus was to engage with the public on a range of Council topics and key projects including:

- Business Assistance Program
- City to River Masterplan
- Community Map
- Corella Management Plan
- Horsham Rural Transport Network Plan
- Horsham South Structure Plan.

The display included a 43-inch monitor, allowing people to access Community Map, which included new layers showing bike racks and drinking fountains. There was also information available in relation to potential changes to Home Care services (page 14), photographs showing progress of the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange roof (page 43) and information on works at the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal (page 44).

Seventy-one community engagements were noted and there were several service requests and follow-up emails from these interactions. The most popular topics included roads, the Transforming Horsham project and Horsham Urban Transport Study.

## GOAL 4 | GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS EXCELLENCE



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the end of 2019, Council began using the “Our Say” online portal to promote and deliver engagement. This has centralised information on Council’s engagements and provides us with on-line tools to use. The tools available through the portal include a variety of survey and polling functions and forums. The portal will assist us to engage with our community during COVID-19.

Council is conducting ongoing engagement on the Wimmera Riverfront Activation Project (page 41). This involves the development of concept and schematic plans for the riverfront area west of the Horsham Rowing Clubrooms to east of the Wimmera Bridge. A key part of this engagement has been the formation of a Community Reference Group which includes representatives of key stakeholders located in or adjacent to the riverfront precinct, as well as three community representatives. This group was formed in April 2020 to guide effective engagement for the project, taking on lessons learnt from the City to River Masterplan process, to ensure the community’s voice has been heard and feedback is acknowledged. At the end of June, the Community Reference Group had met six times and will continue through to September 2020.

A dedicated “Have Your Say” page on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) provides details of all current engagement projects.

### RURAL COUNCILS CORPORATE COLLABORATION PROJECT

Horsham Rural City Council has joined with five Councils in the Wimmera Southern Mallee local government region (Buloke, Hindmarsh, Loddon, Yarriambiack and West Wimmera) to undertake a major update to the core business systems (finance, payroll, revenue management, procurement and regulatory) of these Councils. The project is funded by a grant of \$5 million from the Victorian state government.

Significant progress has been made during the past six months including preparations of business cases for submission to the state government in support of the grant. The state government in turn has accepted the business cases and the project is scheduled to proceed through two major stages – procurement of the best solution that will provide an integrated shared suite of systems, and the implementation of these systems across Council and the region.

Horsham Rural City Council is the lead Council in this 24-month project and will be recruiting and engaging a strong and experienced team to undertake and deliver these systems.









## GOAL 5 | NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

Lead in environmental best practice, create a municipality for the future and plan for the impacts of climate change

Encourage and increase awareness of environmental responsibilities within Council and the community, whilst planning for a growing municipality, and implement practices that minimise our environmental footprint and contribute to a sustainable future.

### SOLAR SAVING INITIATIVES

A number of Council buildings have benefited from solar installations or LED lighting upgrades this year.

A 70-kilowatt solar energy system was installed on the roof of Horsham Town Hall, a 28-kilowatt solar system and 12-kilowatt LED lighting system at the Mibus Centre Library complex, and a 100-kilowatt array on the roof of the Horsham Aquatic Centre.

Community halls at Dadswells Bridge, Mitre and Taylors Lake also benefited from the initiative, jointly funded by Horsham Rural City Council and Sustainability Victoria. These buildings were chosen following an audit of Council facilities with high energy use.

Local contractors were engaged to carry out installations at all six sites.

Council is committed to reducing its carbon emissions. These initiatives will not only assist in reducing costs, but also in managing energy use more efficiently.

### WASTE MANAGEMENT

The waste and recycling industry has been rapidly changing since the China Sword Policy led to significant restrictions on the ability to export recycled materials from 2018.

This resulted in increased costs for Horsham Rural City Council to process recyclable materials, however, these costs have remained lower than disposing to landfill, and all collected recycled materials have been processed and not sent to landfill during this time.

The higher costs of recycling processing has led to an increase in bin service charges for residents in urban areas in the municipality. To partly offset this, a single voucher was provided to these residents for a free trailer load of material to transfer stations. This voucher has been well received, and Council has continued to make it available to residents.

Council has been planning a green waste kerbside collection service in Horsham, aiming to introduce a garden organics only service by July 2020, and an expression of interest process was conducted to identify processors able to receive the collected material.

As part of the planning process, Council collaborated with other Councils in the Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Group area, in relation to procurement options for collection and processing services. In late 2019, the Victorian Government announced that it would soon release its new waste/recycling policy, and it was considered prudent to defer this collaborative program until the new policy was available.

In February 2020, the Government released its new policy "Recycling Victoria – A new Economy". A key part of this is plans to introduce a four-bin system for kerbside collections, with separate bins for glass, organics, other commingled recyclables and general waste. A benefit of this policy is that there would be a uniform approach to collection services, with public education and advertising campaigns to support this, and our neighbouring Councils providing the same service.

The launch of this policy has led to a review in Horsham Rural City Council's positioning on a green waste collection service, and work is currently underway on the detailed planning of how these new services will be introduced. Questions/issues being considered include:

- Will the new organics collection be garden organics only or will it also include food waste?
- Will there be local capacity to process waste streams rather than having to send it to Melbourne or other remote locations?
- When will the various services be introduced?

It is expected that consultation on this planning will occur in early 2021.

# PERFORMANCE

Council's performance for the 2019-2020 year has been reported against each strategic objective to demonstrate how Council is performing in achieving the 2019-2023 Council Plan. Performance has been measured as follows:

- Results achieved in relation to the goals in the Council Plan
- Progress in relation to the major initiatives identified in the budget
- Services funded in the budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided those services
- Results against the prescribed service performance indicators and measures.

## GOAL 1: COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan including results achieved in relation to the Measures included in the Council Plan.

MEASURE	RESULT	COMMENTS
Pursue funding for implementation of the Horsham North Urban Design Framework and Railway Corridor Master Plan	60%	GHD Consulting have been appointed to undertake assessments on parcels of land within the Rail Corridor to assess risk and remediation for future open space use.
Review future use of all kindergartens and Maternal & Child Health, post the Horsham North Children's Hub	90%	Work continues with DET and service providers to plan for 3 year old kindergarten introduction in 2022 in Horsham Rural City Council.
Develop a master plan for Dudley Cornell Reserve following the construction of the Children's Hub	95%	Initial planning commenced in 2018 but was placed on hold pending the development of various strategies: Open Space Strategy and completion of the Sporting Facilities Study. Currently finalising a revised community engagement process prior to recommending planning for the Dudley Cornell Reserve.
Implement recommendations from Innovate (Indigenous) Reconciliation Action Plan	75%	Actions are currently being implemented.
Activate the Wimmera River Precinct for the community and visitors (including lights and greater presentation)	90%	City to River strategic planning completed. The masterplan identified a range of projects including the Wimmera Riverfront Activation Project which has been successfully funded and will be implemented.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2019-2020 budget for the year.

MAJOR INITIATIVES	PROGRESS
Social Infrastructure Framework	CDM Smith has completed a framework for Council to use as the basis for its future actions in relation to Social Infrastructure Planning.



Council constructed an E-waste shed at the Horsham Transfer station this year, providing a safe collection point and compliance with new regulatory requirements

# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 1: COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2019-2020 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	NET COST \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>Service</b>	<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>			
<b>Animal Management</b>	This service provides animal management through implementation of appropriate rules and regulations in relation to keeping of cats, dogs and other animals and livestock within the municipality to minimise disturbance to residents and the community, and ensure public safety. It also includes the operation of Council's dog and cat rehoming program.	60	-10	-70
<b>Community Municipality's Development</b>	This service provides maintenance, insurance and other ongoing costs for the municipality's recreation groups and clubs including community halls, the cenotaph and war memorials, brass and pipe bands and Sawyer Park Soundshell.	636	640	4
<b>Community Safety</b>	This service deals with matters concerning Local Laws including permits and licences, enforcement and fines and fire hazard enforcement.	169	100	-69
<b>Emergency Management</b>	To prepare for and mitigate if possible the impacts of an emergency on HRCC and community.	-24	13	37
<b>Emergency Support</b>	To support the community pre, during and post any emergency events.	9	-	-9
<b>Environmental Health</b>	This service provides health administration, health vending machines and other preventative measures under the health plan including needle exchange, Tobacco Act reforms and mosquito monitoring. A variety of legislative based services and functions around environmental health issues are also provided.	108	141	33
<b>Home Support</b>	This service provides care to frail aged and disabled persons with home care, personal care, respite care along with property maintenance services and disabled parking permits.	202	286	84
<b>Library</b>	This service provides community development and education to enhance the capacity and strength of communities in the municipality by developing community plans that build on strengths and assets and acting as a resource to communities.	587	586	-1
<b>Management and Administration</b>	This service provides local and regional facilitation and leadership for planning, developing and delivering community services to meet the needs of the community.	452	407	-45
<b>Performing Arts</b>	This service surrounds the running of public halls, the Hamilton Lamb Hall and Horsham Town Hall and new Performing Arts Centre operations.	598	503	-95
<b>Visual Arts</b>	This service provides an important visual art resource for the local community and visitors to Horsham through the Horsham Regional Art Gallery.	478	451	-27
<b>Youth and Early Years</b>	This service provides support to families with parenting, health and development, immunisation, promotion of health, wellbeing and safety, social supports, referrals and linking with local communities.	444	605	161

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

<i>Service/Indicator/measure</i>	<b>RESULTS</b>				<b>Material Variations</b>
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	
<b>Libraries</b>	2.60	2.40	2.14	1.86	This indicator has decreased for the 2019-2020 financial year with COVID-19 impacting the number of physical library loans for the year.
<b>Utilisation</b>					
<i>Library collection usage</i> [Number of library collection item loans / Number of library collection items]					
<b>Resource standard</b>	48.70%	46.14%	43.11%	45.82	
<i>Standard of library collection</i> [Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100					
<b>Service cost</b>	\$20.31	\$20.87	\$20.98	\$22.13	
<i>Cost of library service per population</i> [Direct cost of the library service / Municipal population] x100					
<b>Participation</b>	12.38%	11.83%	11.06%	10.84%	
<i>Active library members</i> [Number of active library members / Municipal population] x100					
<b>Maternal and Child Health (MCH)</b>	100.43%	101.25%	100.41%	100.85%	
<b>Service standard</b>					
<i>Infant enrolments in the MCH service</i> [Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100					
<b>Service cost</b>	\$63.95	\$70.48	\$60.62	\$64.72	
<i>Cost of the MCH service</i> [Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]					
<b>Participation in the MCH service</b>	83.67%	89.63%	90.16%	87.94%	
[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100					
<b>Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children</b>	75.00%	86.54%	94.12%	88.76%	
[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					

# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 1: COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Service/Indicator/measure	RESULTS				Material Variations
	2017	2018	2019	2020	
<b>Food Safety</b> <b>Timeliness</b> <i>Time taken to action food complaints</i> [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]	3 days	4.67 days	3 days	2 days	Council gave food complaints a priority to ensure minimal time to action.
<b>Service standard</b> <i>Food safety assessments</i> [Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984 / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984] x100	77.71%	112.50%	99.41%	90.80%	Due to COVID-19 response, slightly fewer inspections have been conducted during March – June 2020.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of food safety service</i> [Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]	\$573.99	\$666.84	\$650.59	\$767.58	During the year there were quite a few premises closed, which has caused an increase in food safety costs per premises.
<b>Health and safety</b> <i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i> [Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about food premises] x100	0.00%	0.00%	93.75%	75.86%	Follow-up notifications down as one of the premises closed plus other delays including insurance issues.
<b>Aquatic Facilities</b> <b>Service standard</b> <i>Health inspections of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]	0	0	0	0	No health inspections were conducted as they are not required by the <i>Health Act 2008</i> .

<b>Service/Indicator/measure</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>				<b>Material Variations</b>
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	
<b>Utilisation</b> <i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	6.39	8.20	8.77	6.73	Utilisation of aquatic facilities has decreased due to the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions. The facility was closed from 23 March 2020.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of indoor aquatic facilities</i> [Direct cost of indoor aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to indoor aquatic facilities]	\$3.92	\$3.10	\$4.31	\$5.69	Utilisation of aquatic facilities has decreased due to the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions. The facility was closed from 23 March 2020.
<b>Animal Management Timeliness</b> <i>Time taken to action animal requests</i> [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests/Number of animal management requests]	1 day	1.01 days	1 day	1 day	
<b>Service standard</b> <i>Animals reclaimed</i> [Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected]	55.81%	45.31%	62.91%	53.10%	With the introduction of the “animals rehomed” measure below, animals adopted are no longer included in this measure.
<b>Service standard</b> <i>Animals rehomed</i>	-	-	-	20.73%	
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of animal management service</i> [Direct cost of the animal management service / Municipal population] x100	\$18.63	\$19.79	\$32.14	16.58	Cost of animal management services has returned to a more normal range. Cost for the services increased in 2018-2019 as a result of staff turnover and increased use of casual and contract labour.
<b>Health and safety</b> <i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions]	1	0	1	Retired in 2020	Zero prosecutions due to COVID-19 – all court matters delayed for several months.

# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 2: SUSTAINING THE ECONOMY

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan including results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the Council Plan.

MEASURES	RESULT	COMMENTS
Progress implementation of the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal Precinct Plan and encourage opportunities for the establishment of associated industries including the mining sector	80%	Completion of infrastructure works in progress. Prospectus and pricing policy in development to progress negotiations with developers.
Work with the economic and community sectors to maximise opportunities arising from the national broadband rollout, including training and awareness of on-line retail business opportunities	90%	Enhance broadband project established and operational. Renewed marketing and training required to promote digital connectivity as part of Business and Community Support Package for COVID-19 response.
Explore, with reference to current planning activities being undertaken, opportunities for improved timetabling and passenger rail and bus services to Horsham from outside and within the region (including Horsham to Halls Gap, Melbourne and Adelaide)	50%	Bus services in Horsham had a major overhaul recently. Ongoing advocacy for return of passenger rail through meetings with State Ministers and elected members. Working group established including senior Council Officers and Department of Transport bureaucrats to further investigate feasibility of return of passenger rail service to Horsham.
Conduct a review of the roads service to encompass levels of service, construction and maintenance methods (including cost efficiency)	25%	Rural Roads Network Plan advancing, but slowly due to COVID-19 limiting consultation. Preliminary draft framework for rural road service levels developed.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2019-2020 budget for the year.

MAJOR INITIATIVES	PROGRESS
Economic Development – Small Business Assistance Program	Endorsed by Council in January 2020 but put on hold due to COVID-19. The program has been temporarily replaced by Council’s Business and Community COVID-19 Grant program.
Parking and Traffic Management – Parking Plan	A Project Control Group has been formed, Councillors have been briefed on preliminary findings by the consultants and a Stakeholder Reference Group has been established as the first step in community consultation, which is currently underway. Consultation is impacted by COVID-19.

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2019-2020 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	NET COST \$‘000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>Business Development and Tourism</b>	This service provides information and support to visitors accessing the Visitor Information Centre. This area also covers tourism marketing and development as well as promotion for major events and festivals.	507	642	135
<b>Economic Development</b>	This service provides support to the Wimmera Development Association, maintenance and administration for the Wimmera Business Centre and general economic development and promotion for the municipality. Land sales and acquisitions, tree plantation and land management costs for the Burnt Creek and Enterprise Industrial estates and Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal, are also provided under this service.	121	272	151
<b>Management and Administration</b>	This service provides general administration for all areas of planning, building, tourism and economic services areas.	437	590	153
<b>Parking and Traffic Management</b>	This service provides management of parking infringements, maintenance on parking meters, car parking fees, fines and associated costs.	-121	-92	29



# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 3: ASSET MANAGEMENT

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan including results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the Council Plan.

MEASURES	RESULT	COMMENTS
Undertake a review of Council infrastructure asset holdings to ensure they meet future community needs and longer term implications of ownership	90%	The review and associated financial modelling has been substantively completed.
Undertake master planning and major refurbishment of the Aquatic Centre	90%	Wet deck works which include a new pool shell and concourse have been completed. Ramp works are soon to commence.
Develop and implement asset management plans for all nominated asset groups to assist with long term financial and asset management planning and legislative requirements – involve the community in the process	90%	Council has maintained detailed records on most of its asset base over many years. During 2019-2020, an intensive program was undertaken to ensure that all of the assets associated with buildings and open spaces were captured and up to date, including their condition. This information is important to understand the remaining lives of assets, and how much it will cost to renew them over time.
Master plan preparation for the Livestock Exchange including potential items such as: roofing to cover yards, electronic ramps to replace manual ramps, compost turner and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), solar panels and water capture	100%	The master plan for the Livestock Exchange has been adopted. The actions are now being implemented with roofing the highest priority.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2019-2020 budget for the year.

MAJOR INITIATIVES	PROGRESS
Strategic Asset Management – Rural Road Network Plan	Consultant now appointed and preparation work for a public consultation process is well advanced. COVID-19 has impacted this initiative with consultation now scheduled to occur in early 2021.
Strategic Asset Management – Asset Management System Rollout	Asset Management System is in place and is being used in preparation of information to support preparation of the Long Term Capex Plan and Long Term Financial Plan.
Strategic Asset Management – Disaster Asset Evidence Photography	Capture on sealed roads is complete. Overall, project is 60% complete.



Wimmera River Improvement Committee volunteers support Council's tree planting program – this year Council planted 5,430 trees



Street tree maintenance is an important priority for Council

# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 3: ASSET MANAGEMENT

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2019-2020 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	NET COST \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
	<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>			
<b>Aquatic Recreation</b>	Provision and maintenance of outdoor and indoor sport and recreation facilities throughout the municipality including the Horsham Aquatic Centre. Also works with community groups and usage groups to increase participation.	700	792	92
<b>Commercial Activities</b>	This service includes the Livestock Exchange, which provides weekly sheep sales at the Burnt Creek Drive facility servicing primary industry across the Wimmera. Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange is the fourth largest sheep selling centre in Victoria. It also includes the operations of the Aerodrome which provides a regional airport for commercial and private aircraft.	-278	-125	153
<b>Engineering Services</b>	Building Asset Management oversees the facilities management and maintenance of Council's buildings, including compliance and safety services (such as asbestos management and essential safety measures management).	847	760	-87
<b>Infrastructure – Rural</b>	This service is responsible for maintaining and constructing roads, streets, bridges and related assets in all non-urban areas of Horsham and Natimuk. This includes the Vic Roads maintenance contract (which excludes major highways) and Quarry operations.	1,498	1,842	344
<b>Infrastructure – Urban</b>	This service provides maintenance and construction of roads, streets, bridges and related assets to the required standards. Maintenance for bicycle tracks, drainage, footpaths and off street car parks.	-758	-675	83
<b>Management and Administration</b>	This service provides administration and support services for the Technical Services department.	749	681	-68
<b>Operations Management</b>	This service includes management and administration of the Operations department to facilitate the delivery of core functions and capital programs.	295	126	-169
<b>Parks and Gardens</b>	Provision of managed areas for sport, recreation and amenity – includes sportsgrounds, parks, gardens, botanical gardens and playgrounds throughout the municipality.	2,433	2,462	29
<b>Sports and Recreation</b>	Provision and maintenance of outdoor and indoor sport and recreation facilities throughout the municipality. Also works with community groups and usage groups to increase participation.	977	686	-291
<b>Strategic Asset Management</b>	This service ensures assets are managed in a responsible and cost efficient way to ensure best value for money.	635	881	246
<b>Streetscapes and Public Conveniences</b>	This service provides street tree maintenance, tree planting and removal, along with city centre maintenance on lighting, signage and street furniture, and street cleaning. Climate change initiatives such as environmental footprint reduction program also fall within this service. This service also provides operations and maintenance of the six public conveniences in Horsham, one in Natimuk and several rural facilities.	1,106	1,220	114

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

<b>Service/Indicator/ measure</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>				<b>Material Variations</b>
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	
<b>Roads</b>	6.33	12.22	10.72	9.80	
<b>Satisfaction of use</b>					
<i>Sealed local road requests</i> [Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100					
<b>Condition</b>	99.29%	99.30%	99.23%	96.62%	
<i>Sealed local roads below the intervention level</i> [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100					
<b>Service cost</b>	\$52.67	\$50.11	\$30.86	\$30.73	
<i>Cost of sealed local road reconstruction</i> [Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]					
<i>Cost of sealed local road resealing</i> [Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]	\$4.66	\$4.67	\$5.71	\$5.47	
<b>Satisfaction</b>	44	44	45	39	Council continues to increase expenditure on local sealed roads but there is much confusion in the community re what roads Council is responsible for and what is the responsibility of Regional Roads Victoria (formerly VicRoads). 78% of all roads identified in the 2019-2020 survey were Regional Roads Victoria roads. Council will continue to promote the difference between a local road and a Regional Roads Victoria road to all in the community.
<i>Satisfaction with sealed local roads</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]					

# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 4: GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan including results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the Council Plan.

MEASURES	RESULT	COMMENTS
Prepare for a more deliberative approach to community engagement following the adoption of the major revisions to the <i>Local Government Act</i> including seeking community ideas for prosperity.	50%	The "OurSay" package of products has been purchased which has provided a range of new engagement tools that are being utilised to facilitate more enhance on-line community engagement. COVID-19 is impacting on how community engagement can occur. The new <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requires deliberative processes to be defined in Council's Community Engagement Policy. A revised policy will need to be in place by 31 March 2021.
Respond to emerging risks through the strategic risk register and internal audit.	100%	Strategic Risk Register reviewed quarterly and presented to the Risk Committee for update and then to the Audit and Risk Committee. This regular process ensures an opportunity for changing/developing/emerging risks to be considered and revised/added/deleted, etc.
Manage the implementation of the major revision to the <i>Local Government Act</i> .	20%	The new <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> was enacted during March and will be phased in over the period to 31 June 2021. The Governance Team is working on the development of a detailed implementation project plan to ensure that all legislative requirement are met within the specified timeframes.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2019-2020 budget for the year.

MAJOR INITIATIVES	PROGRESS
Governance-Community Engagement Tools	The "OurSay" on-line engagement tools have been purchased and used for the 2020-2021 Budget Engagement and some other project activities during the year.
Governance-Horsham Municipality Community Plan	Plans to undertake a community planning exercise have been rescheduled and replaced with the development of a Community Vision which is a requirement of the new <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , with the work scheduled to take place early in 2021.
Governance-Replacement Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS)	Council was successful in receiving some funding to replace its core finance, payroll and rates systems through the Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration Project which is a joint project with six neighbouring Councils in a shared service approach. As a result it was decided to delay any replacement of the records system until such time as the new finance system is known and thus save cost and expense on integration of systems.

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2019-2020 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	NET COST \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
	<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>			
<b>Accounting Services</b>	Provides financial services internally to all staff, department managers, project leaders, Council etc plus deliver external services in the form of information to government and the community and specific services to Wimmera Development Association and the Wimmera Regional Library Board.	738	771	33
<b>Community Relations and Advocacy</b>	This service includes co-ordination of Council grant seeking and advocacy to State and Federal Governments for funding of major projects.	409	433	24
<b>General Revenue</b>	Provides treasury management including additional borrowings and interest repayments.	-28,788	-29,000	-212
<b>Governance and Leadership</b>	This service manages and facilitates Council's governance services, the implementation of Council decisions and policies, and compliance with legislative requirements. This service also includes the office of the Mayor and Councillors, the Chief Executive and media.	1,482	1,761	279
<b>Information and Technology</b>	Provides IT hardware and IT software systems, IT support services to staff, customer services at Horsham and Natimuk and the Council's Records Management service. The goal of this service is to provide efficient and effective access to the information needs of staff and the community, and the management of systems that support this, whilst at all times keeping secure Council's information assets from accidental or malicious access, modification or destruction.	673	819	146
<b>Management and Administration</b>	This service contains a variety of organisational services that are provided both internally within Council but also to ratepayers. It includes salaries for rates and property services, financial services, customer service and the general support for the Corporate Services group.	1,430	1,673	243
<b>People and Culture</b>	This service is responsible for human resources, payroll, OHS, risk management and organisational performance functions. The Payroll Co-ordinator is also responsible for processing the payroll for three separate Council related entities, including the Wimmera Regional Library Corporation, Horsham Public Cemetery and Wimmera Development Association.	632	736	104
<b>Rates and Property Services</b>	Rate collection services encompasses collection of Council rateable income which ensures consistency in debt management, general rate, municipal and garbage charges. Property services encompasses, collection of property valuations, maintaining a strategically focused property management system and management of Council leases and licences.	399	401	2

# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 4: GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

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

Service/Indicator/measure	RESULTS				Material Variations
	2017	2018	2019	2020	
<b>Governance</b> <b>Transparency</b> <i>Council resolutions at meetings closed to the public</i> [Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council, or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors] x100	8.21%	10.95%	13.39%	18.44%	There has been an increase in resolutions made at meetings closed to the public during the 2020 financial year. Closed decisions were for various contractual, personal, or hardship matters.
<b>Consultation and engagement</b> <i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]	57	53	54	41	Leading up to and during the survey period Council was listening and responding to a number of contentious issues, both within the Council Chamber and in the community.
<b>Attendance</b> <i>Council attendance at Council meetings</i> [The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each ordinary and special Council meeting / (Number of ordinary and special Council meetings) x (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x100	89.44%	87.58%	96.19%	87.76%	This indicator has decreased for the 2020 financial year with some Councillors missing the occasional meeting. In addition, the March meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19, which means each missed meeting has had a bigger impact on the overall indicator.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of governance</i> [Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]	\$37,546.00	\$36,317.94	\$36,965.42	\$31,418.08	Direct costs have decreased as there was less demand for training, travel and accommodation.
<b>Satisfaction</b> <i>Satisfaction with Council decisions</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]	58	49	49	39	Council has many commitments to deliver on and our community is demanding we do better in a number of areas.

# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 5: NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the Council Plan including results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the Council Plan.

MEASURES	RESULT	COMMENTS
Investigate opportunities for the use of renewable energy for Council facilities including implementing a biomass boiler system at the Aquatic Centre and solar panels where feasible on Council buildings and facilities	85%	The Zero Carbon Plan identifies additional measures for the use of renewable energy at Council facilities. These extend beyond the many solar panel installations this year.
Develop a Waste Management Strategy	75%	Planning has been delayed while waiting for release of the new Government Policy. Details of this are slowly being released and will lead to more work in months ahead.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2019-2020 budget for the year.

MAJOR INITIATIVES	PROGRESS
Waste Management Services – Dooen Landfill Master Plan	Operational plan completed. Design for next cells nearing completion based on new long-term Master Plan for best use of available land at site.
Sustainability – Waste Gasification Plant Investigation	Initiative on hold for now, but working with Wimmera Development Association and Regional Development Victoria on opportunities for Waste to Energy. No progress on this in 2019-2020. An option for advancing this is emerging in the early part of 2020-2021 financial year.
Sustainability – Street Lighting – Lighting Regions Stage 2	No suitable funding became available in 2019-2020. This project is on hold awaiting suitable funding.



Solar panels were installed on the roof of the Horsham Aquatic Centre and several other Council buildings this year (page 55)

# PERFORMANCE

## GOAL 5: NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2019-2020 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	NET COST \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
	<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>			
<b>Strategic Planning Services</b>	This service provides statutory planning services such as planning permits, notice of applications, information certificates, scheme appeals and subdivision costs. The function of strategic planning, which aims to strategically plan the municipality's needs is also included.	674	522	-152
<b>Natural Resource Management</b>	This service provides a mix of environmental services covering fire hazards, fire disaster clean up, grass removal, fire plugs, their replacement and markers, footpath cleaning in the CBD and weir operations.	58	84	26
<b>Statutory Planning and Regulations</b>	This service provides statutory planning services such as planning permits, notice of applications, information certificates, scheme appeals and subdivision costs. The function of strategic planning, which aims to strategically plan the municipality's needs is also included. This service provides matters relating to the administration of building control including building approval, inspection fees, easement approval and State Government levies.	73	184	111
<b>Sustainability</b>	This service manages a range of sustainability related projects from Council's Sustainability Strategy. A reserve is being established to facilitate future energy and water efficiency projects.	198	584	386
<b>Waste Management Services</b>	This service manages the Dooen Landfill sites, Kenny Road Transfer Station and rural transfer stations along with waste collection and recyclables collection across both the urban and rural areas of the municipality.	-1,276	-204	1,072

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

Service/Indicator/measure	RESULTS				Material Variations
	2017	2018	2019	2020	
<b>Statutory Planning Timeliness</b> <i>Time taken to decide planning applications</i> [The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]	50.00	39.00	55.00	42.00	Council has been successful in employing and retaining suitably qualified and experienced Statutory Planning staff. The result is the reduced time taken to decide planning applications.
<b>Service standard</b> <i>Planning applications decided within 60 days</i> [Number of planning application decisions made within 60 days / Number of planning application decisions made] x100	65.76%	86.96%	76.72%	85.57%	Council has been successful in employing and retaining suitably qualified and experienced Statutory Planning staff. The result is the reduced time taken to decide planning applications.



<i>Service/Indicator/measure</i>	RESULTS				Material Variations
	2017	2018	2019	2020	
<b>Service cost</b>	\$2,456.04	\$3,221.30	\$2,702.15	\$2,898.33	
<i>Cost of statutory planning service</i> [Direct cost of statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]					
<b>Decision making</b>	0.00%	0.00%	50%	0.00%	There were zero planning decisions taken to VCAT during the 2020 financial year.
<i>Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT</i> [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside Council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100					
<b>Waste Collection</b>	66.66	63.56	77.27	82.87	
<b>Satisfaction</b>					
<i>Kerbside bin collection requests</i> [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households] x1,000					
<b>Service standard</b>	1.07	1.03	1.39	1.45	
<i>Kerbside collection bins missed</i> [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x10,000					
<b>Service cost</b>	\$115.94	\$117.81	\$115.54	\$121.42	
<i>Cost of kerbside garbage collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]					
<i>Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]	\$36.71	\$43.61	\$61.67	\$61.64	
<b>Waste Diversion</b>	24.16%	22.75%	22.13%	20.49%	
<i>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i> [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100					

# GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

## GOVERNANCE

Horsham Rural City Council is constituted under the *Local Government Act 1989* to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community. Council has a number of roles including:

- Taking into account the diverse needs of the community in decision-making
- Providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring achievements
- Ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner
- Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments
- Fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life.

Council is committed to effective and sustainable forms of democratic and corporate governance as the key to ensuring that Council and its administration meet the community's priorities. The community has many opportunities to provide input into Council's decision-making processes including community consultation, public forums and the ability to make submissions to Special Committees of Council.

When engaging the community in a decision-making process, Council promises to:

- Provide a genuine opportunity for the community to have input and an influence on decisions that are the subject of the engagement
- Actively seek out and encourage contributions from people who may be affected by or interested in a decision
- Provide relevant, timely and balanced information so people can contribute in a meaningful way including clearly defining negotiable and non negotiable elements of any subject of engagement
- Provide a variety of appropriate and accessible ways for people to have their say and to speak honestly
- Actively listen so that people's ideas and input assist in making the final decision
- Consider the needs and interests of all people in the decision-making process
- Tell the community about the final decision and how their input was considered
- Effectively record engagement plans, methodologies, community responses, outcomes and evaluations.

Council's formal decision-making processes are conducted through Council meetings and Special Committees of Council. Council delegates the majority of its decision-making to Council staff. These delegations are exercised in accordance with adopted Council policies.

## MANAGEMENT

Council has implemented a number of statutory and better practice items to strengthen its management framework. Having strong governance and management frameworks lead to better decision making by Council. The *Local Government Act 1989* requires Council to undertake an assessment against the prescribed Governance and Management Checklist and include this in its Report of Operations. Council's Governance and Management Checklist results are set out on pages 81–82. The following items have been highlighted as important components of the management framework.

## AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

### Role of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory committee of Council whose role is determined by Council and the *Local Government Act 1989*, under Section 139. It monitors Council's audit, risk and governance processes, including Council's internal control activities. The key objective of the Audit and Risk Committee is to provide independent assurance and assistance to Council and the Chief Executive Officer on Council's risk, control and compliance framework, and its external accountability and legislative compliance responsibilities.

### Responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee

The responsibilities and Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Committee are clearly defined in Council's Audit and Risk Committee Charter, which is renewed annually and formally approved by Council.

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

Key responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee include a range of functional areas:

- External reporting review
- Financial statement audit review
- Internal audit
- Legislative compliance
- Internal control and risk management
- Fraud prevention and awareness
- Good governance.

## Membership

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises two appointed Councillors (one of whom is the Mayor) and three independent members with technical expertise and industry experience.

### Members over the 12 months were:

- Geoff Price – Chair/Independent member (final meeting – November 2019)
- Richard Trigg – Chair/Independent member (appointed as Chair – 16 December 2019)
- Vito Giudice – Independent member
- Mark Knights – Independent member (commenced – 16 December 2019)
- Cr Mark Radford – Councillor representative/Mayor
- Cr David Grimble – Councillor representative.

### Ex-officio members:

- Horsham Rural City Council – Sunil Bhalla (Chief Executive Officer), Graeme Harrison (Director Corporate Services), Heather Proctor (Finance Manager) and Diana McDonald (Co-ordinator Governance)
- Internal Auditor – RSD Audit (contractor)
- Auditor General's agent, McLaren Hunt Financial Group, attends meetings to report matters of significance in relation to the Financial Statements.

## Internal Audit

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the operations of Council. The contract with Crowe Horwarth, Council's previous internal auditor, expired and Council tendered for a new internal auditor contract. RSD Audit were successful and attended their first meeting in November 2019.

RSD Audit conducted an initial organisational Risk Review and Audit Plan leading to the development of the new Strategic Internal Audit Plan.

The new internal auditors also commenced a review of Council's Strategic Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan and completed an audit on the Governance processes of Council's City to River project.

The Audit and Risk Committee receives update reports in relation to any previous matters raised by the internal auditors to ensure that these are adequately addressed.

## External Audit

Council's external auditor is the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) who have appointed McLaren Hunt Financial group for an initial three-year period (until 30 June 2021) to conduct the annual statutory financial statement audit.

The Audit and Risk Committee also reviews recommendations from matters raised by other compliance entities including VAGO, Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) and Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC).

### Achievements 2019-2020:

- Four meetings conducted (11 September 2019, 21 November 2019, 19 March 2020, 11 June 2020)
- New Strategic Internal Audit Plan
- Annual Self-Assessment of Performance against Audit and Risk Committee Charter
- Inaugural 2018-2019 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report presented to Council
- Inclusion of Chief Executive Officer's report in the Audit and Risk Committee meeting agenda
- Introduction of new Organisational Quarterly Performance Report to Council and the community
- Council staff undertake regular internal analysis and develop recommendations for action in relation to relevant external integrity body reports and four such reviews were undertaken this financial year:
  - VAGO Fraud and Corruption Control Review – Horsham Rural City Council Analysis and Recommendations for Action (August 2019)
  - IBAC Report on Corruption Risks Associated with Procurement in Local Government (September 2019)
  - Local Government Inspectorate Protecting Integrity – Yarriambiack Shire Council (November 2019)
  - Ombudsman's Investigation of Alleged Improper Conduct by Executive Officers at City of Ballarat (May 2020).

### Focus for 2020-2021:

- Review of Audit and Risk Charter in line with the requirements of the new *Local Government Act 2020*
- Reappointment of Audit and Risk Committee following implementation of the new *Local Government Act 2020*
- Review of Audit and Risk Committee Annual Work Program addressing requirements of the new Charter and *Local Government Act 2020*
- Inclusion of Audit and Risk Committee Independent Members on Council's website
- Preparation of a biannual Audit and Risk Report for Council.

# GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

## Risk Management

Horsham Rural City Council recognises that Risk Management is an integral part of good management practice and through an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) approach is committed to establishing an organisational culture that ensures effective Risk Management.

Managing risk is an increasingly important aspect of Local Government, and one that requires commitment across the whole organisation. Council manages its risks to maximise opportunities and minimise losses. Council's risk management supports informed decision-making and encourages the identification of opportunities for continuous improvement through good governance and best practice.

More than ever, risk management has been at the forefront of Council's business operations with COVID-19 requiring Council to implement its Business Continuity

Plan (page 6), and address risks corresponding directly to the Council Plan.

Horsham Rural City Council has a Risk Management Framework in place. The framework includes Council's Risk Management Strategy which aligns directly with the International Standards AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018.

### Achievements 2019-2020:

- Meetings conducted – Three (3 September 2019, 19 November 2019, 3 March 2020 and 25 May 2020)
- Meetings focused on updating the Business Continuity Plan and working towards updating the strategic risks and Strategic Risk Register.

### Focus for 2020-2021:

- Review Business Continuity Plan
- Finalise and update strategic risks
- Review operational risks.

## Special Committees

The *Local Government Act 1989* allows Councils to establish one or more special committees consisting of Councillors, Council staff, other persons, or a combination of these.

The following table contains a list of special committees established by Council that are in operation and the purpose for which each committee was established.

COMMITTEE	PURPOSE	NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS	NUMBER OF COUNCIL STAFF	NUMBER OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS
Community Halls Committee of Management	To co-ordinate and manage the 10 Council-owned community halls identified within the Instrument of Delegation	1	1	10
Kannamaroo Festival Committee of Management	To arrange and stage the annual Kannamaroo Festival in Horsham	1	1	8

## COUNCILLOR COMMITTEES

Aboriginal Advisory Committee	Horsham Aquatic Centre Advisory Committee	Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee	Western Rail Lobby Group
Aerodrome Users Group	Horsham College/Community Oval	North Western Municipalities Association	Wimmera Business Centre Advisory Board
Audit and Risk Committee	Horsham Performing Arts Company	Public Art Advisory Committee	Wimmera Development Association
Australia Day Committee	Horsham Police and Community Consultative Committee	Rail Freight Alliance	Wimmera Drug and Alcohol Taskforce
Bicycle Advisory Committee	Horsham Racecourse Reserve Advisory Committee	Regional Cities Victoria	Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal Advisory Committee
Community Halls Committee of Management	Horsham Recreation Reserve (City Oval) Advisory Committee	Regional Mayors Roundtable	Wimmera Mallee Sustainability Alliance
Domestic Animal Management Advisory Group	Horsham Regional Art Gallery Advisory Committee	Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee	Wimmera Regional Library Corporation
Dudley Cornell Park Advisory Committee	Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange Advisory Board	Seasonal Conditions Committee	Wimmera River Improvement Committee
Grampians Central West Waste and Resource Recovery Group Forum	Local Advisory Fire Prevention	Sunnyside Park Advisory Committee	Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN
Green Lake Advisory Committee	Municipal Association of Victoria	Tidy Towns Advisory Committee	Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Group
GWMWater Regional Recreation Water Users Group	Municipal Emergency Management Committee	Victorian Local Governance Association	
Haven Recreation Reserve Advisory Committee		Waste Strategy	
		Western Highway Action Committee	

## ORGANISATIONAL PLANS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND STRATEGIES

The following plans, policies, procedures and strategies have been developed and/or reviewed this financial year:

Asset Location Tracking and GPS Policy	Equal Opportunity Policy	OHS Working in Extreme Heat and Cold Procedure
Business Assistance Program Policy	Equal Opportunity Procedure	OHS Working Alone or in Isolation Procedure
City to River Masterplan	Fit for Work Policy	Onboarding Policy
Community Development Grants Policy	Fit for Work Procedure	Onboarding Procedure
Community Inclusion Plan 2019-2022	Graffiti Policy	Open Space Strategy
Complaint Resolution Policy	Horsham Urban Transport Plan	Procurement Policy
Conflict of Interest Procedure (Staff)	Investment Attraction Policy	Procurement Procedure
Complaint Resolution Procedure	Location Based Asset Tracking – GPS Administrative Procedure	Property Strategy
Council Election Period Policy	Municipal Early Years Plan 2019-2023	Public Interest Disclosures Procedure
Council Plan	OHS Confined Space Entry Procedure	Rates and Charges Financial Hardship Policy
Council Property Strategy	OHS Health Monitoring Procedure	Recruitment Policy
Customer Service Standards Procedure	OHS Height Safety Procedure	Recruitment Procedure
Creditor Management Policy	OHS Infection Control Procedure	Records Disposal and Retention Policy
Disciplinary (including Managing Underperformance) Procedure	OHS Management Plan	Records Disposal and Retention Procedure
Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021	OHS Materials, Transport, Handling and Storage Procedure	Sun Protection Policy
Drone Policy	OHS Noise Management Procedure	Temporary Measures for Conduct of Virtual Council Meetings Procedure
Equal Opportunity (Discrimination and Harassment) Policy	OHS Safety in Design Procedure	
	OHS Safety Signage Procedure	
	OHS Traffic Management Procedure	



# GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

## COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

Horsham Rural City Council participated in the Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey again this year. Residents are surveyed annually to check their satisfaction with Council’s performance and services, and participation is optional.

The Community Satisfaction Survey is co-ordinated by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on behalf of Victorian Councils. For the purposes of the survey, Horsham is classified as a Regional Centre, which includes Bendigo, Geelong, Latrobe, Mildura, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

An independent research company conducted the survey during February and March 2020. Four hundred

residents aged 18 years and over, targeting the gender and age profile of the community were randomly selected over the telephone. The survey included compulsory questions, along with two additional free text questions and one tailored question in relation to sealed local roads.

The main objective of the Community Satisfaction Survey is to assess the performance of Council across a range of core measures, and to seek insight into ways to provide improved or more effective service delivery. It helps Council to identify the services and activities that need improvement.

Council’s core measures compared to the previous year, Regional Centres and state-wide averages are shown in the table below:

CORE PERFORMANCE MEASURE	SCORE				HIGHEST SCORE	LOWEST SCORE
	HORSHAM 2020	HORSHAM 2019	REGIONAL CENTRES	STATE-WIDE 2020		
Overall performance	45	55	56	58	Women	Men
Overall Council direction	35	47	50	51	Aged 18-34 years	Rural area residents
Customer service	61	61	70	70	Aged 65+ years, aged 35-49 years	Rural area residents, men, aged 50-64 years, aged 18-34 years
Lobbying	44	54	52	53	Women, aged 65+ years	Men
Consultation and engagement	41	54	51	55	Women, aged 18-34 years	Rural area residents
Community decisions	39	49	50	53	Women, aged 18-34 years	Aged 35-49 years
Sealed local roads	39	45	55	54	Aged 65+ years	Rural area residents

The survey shows a decline in six of the seven core performance measures, highlighting a number of areas for improvement across Council. Customer service received a score of 61, the same as last year. Council’s overall performance index score of 45 has declined 10 points from 2019, continuing a trend of deteriorating results each year since 2016 when the score was 63.

Council has many commitments to deliver on and the community is demanding improvement across a number of areas. Council is committed to making changes to meet the evolving expectations of the community.

Information about the Community Satisfaction Survey and performance of Councils across Victoria can be found on the Know Your Council website – [www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au](http://www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au)

# STATUTORY INFORMATION

The following information is provided in accordance with legislative and other requirements applying to Council.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act) gives individuals and organisations a general right of access to documents held by Council. The Act also provides rights of appeal if access to information through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request is not granted.

Requests for access to documents under the Act should be made by:

- Completing the Online FOI Request Form on Council's website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au)
- Writing to Horsham Rural City Council, PO Box 511, Horsham 3402
- Sending an email to [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au)

Before submitting a request, people should telephone the FOI Officer on 03 5382 9777, or email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) to clarify the information they are seeking, how they want to receive it, fees and charges, timelines, consultation with third parties and documents that may be exempt. The application fee during the 2019-2020 financial year was \$29.60 plus any access charges that may be levied in accordance with the Freedom of Information Regulations.

In 2019-2020, the number of valid requests increased due to topical issues in the municipality. In three cases, Council was able to supply documents outside of Freedom of Information process.

### How many requests did Horsham Rural City Council receive?

Personal Requests	0
Non-Personal Requests	8

Of the eight applications received:

- Seven application fees were not paid
- One application fee of \$29.60 was paid
- 2019-2020 total charges – \$167.65.

## What happened?

PART ACCESS GIVEN	1 (held over from previous year)
Full access given	1
Unclear request, no further correspondence received	1
Withdrawn by applicant	1
Information provided outside FOI process	3
Lapsed after 28 days due to applicant fee not paid	2

No internal reviews were conducted.

No appeals to VCAT or to the FOI Commissioner were received.

## Applications

Section 51 (1) review of a decision	0
Section 50 (2) applications to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal	0
Section 12 (1) notices served upon the Principal officer	0

Council's Principal Officer is Sunil Bhalla, Chief Executive Officer, however, under current Council delegations the Officers with authority to make a decision in relation to a request under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* are: Director Corporate Services and Team Leader Information and Knowledge. They can be contacted by email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

## CONTRACTS

During the year, Council did not enter into any contracts valued at \$150,000 or more for services or \$200,000 or more for works or more of a kind specified in Section 186(5)(a) and (c) of the Act\*. It also did not enter into any other contracts valued at \$150,000 or more for goods or services or \$200,000 or more for works without engaging in a competitive process .

\**Local Government Act 1989*, Section 186(5) This section does not apply if –  
 (a) the Council resolves that the contract must be entered into because of an emergency  
 (c) the contract is entered into in accordance with arrangements approved by the Minister for the purposes of this subsection.

# STATUTORY INFORMATION

## PROCUREMENT ACTIVITY

In 2019-2020, Council submitted 51 projects through a competitive tender process for the procurement of works, goods and services in compliance with Council's Procurement Policy and obligations under Section 186 of the *Local Government Act 1989* totaling \$11,997,180. One Expression of Interest was put to the market.

Sixty-seven annual supply tenders were maintained, equating to an annual spend for these contracts of \$4,440,578.

An additional 82 formal requests for quotation were sought and awarded for procurement of works, goods and services, in compliance with Council's Procurement Policy and obligations under Section 186 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, totaling \$2,271,548.

Combined competitive procurement for 2019-2020 is \$18,709,306.

## CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and responsibilities outlines the basic human rights of all people in Victoria. The Charter was introduced to Victoria through an Act of Parliament and came into full effect on 1 January 2008.

The Charter requires public authorities such as Victorian state and local government departments and agencies, and people delivering services on behalf of government, to act consistently with the human rights in the Charter when developing policies, making laws, delivering services and making decisions. It aims to build a fairer, more inclusive community by giving specific legal protection to the following 20 fundamental human rights:

- Your right to recognition and equality before the law
- Your right to life
- Your right to protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment
- Your right to freedom from forced work
- Your right to freedom of movement
- Your right to privacy and reputation
- Your right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Your right to freedom of expression
- Your right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association
- Your right to protection of families and children
- Your right to taking part in public life
- Cultural rights
- Property rights
- Your right to liberty and security of person

- Your right to humane treatment when deprived of liberty
- Rights of children in the criminal process
- Your right to a fair hearing
- Rights in criminal proceedings
- Right not to be tried or punished more than once
- Retrospective criminal laws.

Council has numerous moral and legal obligations in respect to human rights issues. These include specific human rights requirements under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, equal opportunity legislation, bullying and harassment requirements, the *Local Government Act 1989* and federal legislation.

Promote and protect human rights is identified as a Guiding Principle in the 2019-2023 Council Plan. Council's adoption of a Human Rights Policy in June 2015 embeds the Council's corporate responsibility to respect human rights in all operations.

Council adopted an Open Space Strategy this year (page 40) and an accessible Water Sports Pontoon was installed on the Wimmera River encouraging people of different ages, skills and abilities to enter the water and participate in watercraft activity (page 36).

This report contains a section on Preventing Violence Against Women including information on the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance, Act@Work, Gender Equity in Community Engagement project, Gender and Disaster and Gender Image Audit (pages 27–28). There is also a section on Equal Employment Opportunity (page 24).

Below are further examples of where Council has played a role in building understanding and respect for human rights.

### Local Laws

Local laws are developed to deal with important community safety and peace, and order issues. They often apply to noise, fire hazards, abandoned vehicles, parking permits, street stalls, disabled parking, furniture on footpaths, graffiti, burning off, animals in public spaces and nuisance pests.

Horsham Rural City Council has the following Local Laws:

- Local Law Number 1 Governance (2016) and Council Meeting procedure
- Community Local Law Number 3
- Community (Amendment) Local Law Number 4

Local Laws are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.



### **Domestic Animal Management Plan**

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), Council is required to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years. This plan sets out a program of actions, which aim to ensure compliance with statutory requirements, and to implement the vision and strategic objectives identified for effective animal management control in the Horsham Rural City Council municipality.

Council adopted the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021 in December 2019. The plan was prepared in consultation with the Domestic Animal Management Advisory Group, in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities under Section 68A of the Act and with reference to the Council Plan and Council Local Laws.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan:

- Documents Council's current animal management processes and practices
- Evaluates whether animal control services provided by Council meet strategic objectives, as set by the legislature and community standards
- Sets out a program of action Council intends to pursue to meet those strategic objectives
- Provides a benchmark against which progress in meeting the strategic objectives can be evaluated
- Provides for a review of existing orders made by Council under the Act and Local Laws regarding the management of dogs and cats in the municipality.

There have been some significant achievements this year. The Community Safety Unit now has a trained prosecutor, allowing for investigation and enforcement of the Act. This has been balanced by a series of media releases encouraging the responsible ownership of domestic animals and key updates to Council's website to fill identified information gaps. An electronic option to receive pet registration renewals in the form of an eNotice was also rolled out, giving customers the choice to renew online.

Council has once again worked closely with long-term partner Horsham PAWS (People for Animal Welfare and Support) to rehome animals in the municipality, along with developing a new partnership with Phoenix Animal Rescue. These relationships are key to reducing euthanasia rates in the municipality.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021 is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

### **2019-2022 Community Inclusion Plan**

Council adopted the 2019-2022 Community Inclusion Plan in January 2020, in accordance with Section 38 of the *Disability Act 2006*.

The Community Inclusion Plan identifies goals and actions to reduce barriers created by attitudes, practices and structures, to ensure that all people can participate equally in the life of our community.

Council has a critical role in increasing access and inclusion for Horsham in its role as a civic leader, community planner, infrastructure builder, policy leader and service provider and while Council has a key role in developing this plan, it is everybody's responsibility.

It is estimated that there are approximately 4,000 Horsham residents living with a disability, of whom, 1,333 are thought to have a severe or profound disability. As a primary provider of local services, Council plays a key role in building a more accessible community and reducing barriers to inclusion experienced by people with a disability.

As the population increases and the proportion of older people in the population increases, the level of disability in the community is likely to increase significantly, making it vitally important that the access and inclusion of people with a disability into the wider Horsham community is well considered and planned for.

Key outcomes and achievements of the Community Inclusion Plan this financial year include:

- Council's Community Development Grant Guidelines updated to include improving access as a key outcome
- Council's public meetings now held in accessible venues wherever possible
- Desktop hearing shuttles located at the Customer Service Centre, Horsham Town Hall and Visitor Information Centre, making it easier for those that are hard of hearing to communicate
- Council publications available in alternative formats
- Acknowledgement and celebration of Seniors Week, International Day for People with a Disability and Mental Health Week
- Inclusion of comprehensive information on disability services and accessible facilities in the Horsham Community Directory
- Disability Awareness Training conducted for staff, volunteers and Councillors
- Improved access to Jubilee Hall (automatic doors and ramp)
- Completion of design works for a compliant accessible ramp to the Horsham Aquatic Centre
- Incorporation of Universal Design Guidelines into processes such as master planning, scoping of capital works, engineering design and Capital Works Project Office processes.

The 2019-2022 Community Inclusion Plan is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

# STATUTORY INFORMATION

## DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION

Section 12 of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2015 states that a Council must make the following documents available for public inspection. All documents may be inspected at Horsham Rural City Council, 18 Roberts Avenue, Horsham. Some documents are also accessible on the Council website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au)

It is advisable to make an appointment to arrange an inspection of a document by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777. In some instances, requests may need to be made in writing or on a specific form.

### Overseas and Interstate Travel

A document containing details of overseas or interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than three days) undertaken in an official capacity by any Councillor or member of Council staff in the previous 12 months including:

- Name of the Councillor or member of Council staff
- Dates on which the travel began and ended
- Destination of the travel
- Purpose of the travel
- Total cost to the Council of the travel, including accommodation costs.

### Council Agendas and Minutes

The agendas for, and minutes of, ordinary and special meetings held in the previous 12 months which are kept under section 93 of the Act, other than those agendas and minutes relating to a part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public under section 89 of the Act and are confidential information within the meaning of section 77(2) of the Act.

### Special Committee Minutes

The minutes of meetings of special committees established under section 86 of the Act and held in the previous 12 months, other than those minutes relating to a part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public under section 89 of the Act and are confidential information within the meaning of section 77(2) of the Act.

### Delegations

A register of delegations kept under sections 87(1) and 98(4) of the Act, including the date on which the last review took place under section 86(6) and 98(6), respectively, of the Act.

### Leases

A document containing details of all leases involving land which were entered into by the Council as lessor, including the lessee and the terms and the value of the lease;

### Authorised Officers

A register maintained under section 224(1A) of the Act of authorised officers appointed under that section.

### Donations and Grants

A list of donations and grants made by the Council in the previous 12 months, including the names of persons who, or bodies which, have received a donation or grant and the amount of each donation or grant.

## 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.

No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the financial year.

## ROAD MANAGEMENT ACT MINISTERIAL DIRECTION

In accordance with section 22 of the *Road Management Act 2004*, Council is required to publish a copy or summary of any Ministerial Directions received.

No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the financial year.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

In accordance with section 46GM and 46QD of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, a Council that is a collecting or development agency must prepare and give a report to the Minister for Planning on infrastructure and development contributions including levies and works in kind.

For the 2019-2020 year, Council had no infrastructure or development contributions.

## CARER'S RECOGNITION ACT 2012

Council is not funded to provide home-based care services for children and young people in foster, kinship and permanent care, therefore there are no actions to report on.

## VICTORIA'S COMPULSORY CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Horsham Rural City Council is committed to providing and promoting child safe environments. Council has zero tolerance to child abuse and aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and secure and have fun. This includes the physical, emotional, cultural and social wellbeing of all children, including promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and children with a disability.

The Child Safe Standards form part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust inquiry. Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required under the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005* to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

To further consolidate Council's commitment to the Child Safe Standards, Council adopted a Child Safe Policy and Reporting a Child Safety Concern Procedure.

## LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES OF COUNCIL

The purpose and objectives of the Horsham Rural City Council are defined in the *Local Government Act 1989*. The Local Government Charter section of the Act (Part 1A) states that the purpose of Local Government is to provide a system under which Councils perform the functions and exercise the powers conferred by or under this Act and any other Act for the peace, order and good government of their municipal districts (S.3A).

A Council consists of its Councillors who are democratically elected in accordance with this Act. The Act sets out the objectives of the Council, of which, the primary objective is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community, having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions. In seeking to achieve its primary objective, a Council must have regard to the following facilitating objectives (S.3C):

- (a) To promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district
- (b) To ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively and services are provided in accordance with the Best Value Principles to best meet the needs of the local community
- (c) To improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community
- (d) To promote appropriate business and employment opportunities
- (e) To ensure that services and facilities provided by the Council are accessible and equitable
- (f) To ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges
- (g) To ensure transparency and accountability in Council decision making.

## PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES

Horsham Rural City Council is a public body subject to the *Public Disclosures Act 2012* (Vic) (the Act).

The purpose of the Act is to encourage and facilitate disclosures of improper conduct by public officers, public bodies and other persons, and detrimental action taken in reprisal for a person making a disclosure under the Act.

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* provides protection to persons who make disclosures or who may suffer detrimental action in reprisal for those disclosures. The Act ensures any disclosures are properly assessed and, where necessary, investigated, and provides confidentiality of the content of disclosures and the identity of people who make them. Under the Act, any person or group of individuals can make a disclosure, be a witness, or be the subject of an investigation.

Council is committed to the aims and objectives of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* and does not tolerate improper conduct by its employees, Officers or members, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct.

Council recognises the value of transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices, and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment, misconduct in public office or serious professional misconduct.

The role of the Public Interest Disclosures Co-ordinator is held by the Chief Executive Officer, the Public Interest Disclosures Officer by the Director Corporate Services, and Welfare Manager by the Manager People and Culture.

For the purposes of Section 69 (1) (b) of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*, in the period to 30 June 2020, no disclosures were notified to Council Officers appointed to receive disclosures, or to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

The Public Interest Disclosure Procedure provides details of Council's system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct, serious professional misconduct, detrimental action or misdirected disclosures by Councillors or employees. This procedure was reviewed and adopted on 4 February 2020 to include updates to the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*.

Further information about Public Interest Disclosures, including the Public Interest Disclosure Procedure can be found on Council's website – [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) or by contacting Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au) or telephone 03 5382 9777.

# GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ITEMS	ASSESSMENT
<b>1. Community Engagement Policy</b> (policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest)	Policy Date of operation of current policy: 15 June 2015
<b>2. Community Engagement Guidelines</b> (guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)	Guidelines 15 February 2016
<b>3. Strategic Resource Plan</b> (plan under section 126 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 4 financial years)	Adopted in accordance with section 126 of the Act Date of adoption: 27 July 2020
<b>4. Annual Budget</b> (plan under section 130 of the Act setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken over the next 12 months and the funding and other resources required)	Adopted in accordance with section 130 of the Act Date of adoption: 27 July 2020
<b>5. Asset Management Plans</b> (plans that set out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years)	Date of operation of current plans: Asset Management Plan – General: 21 December 2015 Asset Management Plan – Roads: 21 December 2015
<b>6. Rating Strategy</b> (strategy setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges)	Strategy Date of operation of current strategy: 23 April 2019
<b>7. Risk Policy</b> (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations)	Policy Date of operation of current policy: 14 March 2017
<b>8. Fraud Policy</b> (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud)	Policy Date of operation of current policy: 9 December 2013
<b>9. Municipal Emergency Management Plan</b> (plan under section 20 of the <i>Emergency Management Act 1986</i> for emergency prevention, response and recovery)	Prepared and maintained in accordance with section 20 of the <i>Emergency Management Act 1986</i> Date of preparation: 4 December 2017
<b>10. Procurement Policy</b> (policy under section 186A of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> outlining the matters, practices and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods, services and works)	Prepared and approved in accordance with section 186A of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> Date of approval: 11 May 2020
<b>11. Business Continuity Plan</b> (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster)	Plan Date of operation of current plan: 26 March 2019
<b>12. Disaster Recovery Plan</b> (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster)	Plan Date of operation of current plan: 29 June 2015
<b>13. Risk Management Framework</b> (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)	Framework Date of operation of current framework: 14 August 2017
<b>14. Audit Committee</b> (advisory committee of Council under section 139 of the Act whose role is to oversee the integrity of a Council's financial reporting, processes to manage risks to the Council's operations and for compliance with applicable legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements)	Established in accordance with section 139 of the Act Date of establishment: 1 March 2014

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ITEMS	ASSESSMENT
<b>15. Internal Audit</b> (independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls)	Engaged Date of engagement of current provider: 23 September 2019
<b>16. Performance Reporting Framework</b> (a set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 131 of the Act)	Framework Date of operation of current framework: 27 July 2020
<b>17. Council Plan Reporting</b> (report reviewing the performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the financial year)	Report Date of reports: 24 February 2020, 11 May 2020
<b>18. Financial Reporting</b> (quarterly statements to Council under section 138 of the Act comparing budgeted revenue and expenditure with actual revenue and expenditure)	Statements presented to Council in accordance with section 138(1) of the Act Date statements presented: 28 October 2019, 24 February 2020, 11 May 2020
<b>19. Risk Reporting</b> (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)	Reports Date of reports: 23 September 2019, 16 December 2019, 11 May 2020
<b>20. Performance Reporting</b> (six-monthly reports of indicators measuring the results against financial and non-financial performance, including performance indicators referred to in section 131 of the Act)	Reports Date of reports: 23 September 2019, 24 February 2020, 11 May 2020
<b>21. Annual Report</b> (annual report under sections 131, 132 and 133 of the Act to the community containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements)	Considered at a meeting of Council in accordance with section 134 of the Act Date statements presented: 28 October 2019
<b>22. Councillor Code of Conduct</b> (code under section 76C of the Act setting out the conduct principles and the dispute resolution processes to be followed by Councillors)	Reviewed in accordance with section 76C of the Act Date reviewed: 6 February 2017
<b>23. Delegations</b> (a document setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff)	Reviewed in accordance with section 98(6) of the Act Date of review: 11 May 2020, 1 June 2020
<b>24. Meeting Procedures</b> (a local law governing the conduct of meetings of Council and special committees)	Meeting procedures local law made in accordance with section 91(1) of the Act Date local law made: 24 August 2018

I certify that this information presents fairly the status of Council's governance and management arrangements.



Sunil Bhalla  
Chief Executive Officer  
Dated: 28 September 2020



Cr Mark Radford  
Mayor  
Dated: 28 September 2020

# VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INDICATORS

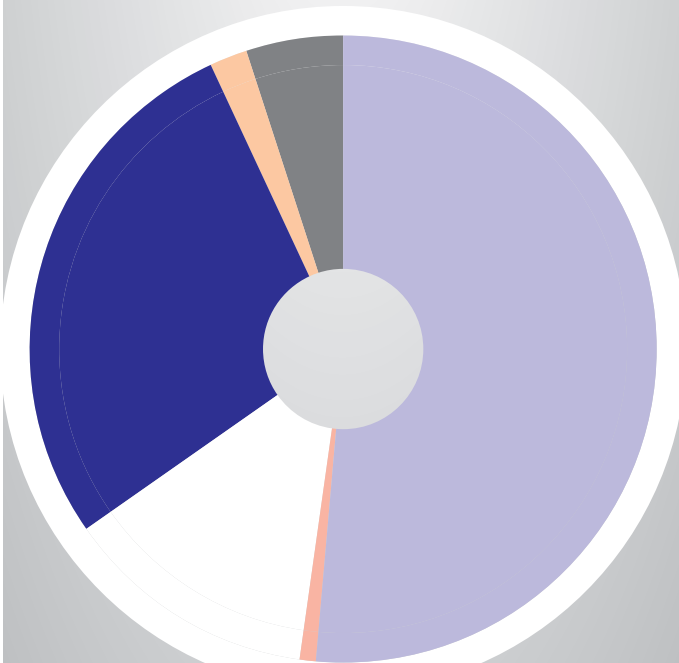
These indicators provide information regarding expenditure, cost of services and infrastructure provision, customer satisfaction and governance.

INDICATOR	CALCULATION	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
<b>1. Average rates and charges per assessment</b>	Total rates and charges receivable at beginning of year/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	2,195.79	\$2,147.94	\$2,080.48	\$2,033.53
<b>2. Average residential rates and charges per assessment</b>	Rates and charges declared for residential assessments receivable at beginning of year/Number of residential assessments in the adopted budget	1,971.56	\$1,867.56	\$1,855.91	\$1,812.14
<b>3. Average liabilities per assessment</b>	Total liabilities/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	2,065.27	\$1,469.24	\$1,524.76	\$1,631.24
<b>4. Operating result per assessment</b>	Net surplus/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	(33.00)	\$434.11	\$512.42	\$682.08
<b>5. Average operating expenditure per assessment</b>	Operating expenditure/Number of assessments in adopted budget	\$4,305.02	\$4,357.62	\$4,065.66	\$3,896.11
<b>6. Community satisfaction rating for overall performance generally of Council</b>	Result from the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	45	55	54	60
<b>7. Average capital expenditure per assessment</b>	Capital expenditure/ Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$1,344.12	\$872.59	\$1,387.02	\$1,137.70
<b>8. Renewal gap</b>	Capital renewal/Average annual asset consumption	71.9%	50.1%	78.8%	73.4%
<b>9. Renewal and maintenance gap</b>	Capital renewal and maintenance/Average annual asset consumption plus planned maintenance	77.1%	59.6%	81.9%	74.5%
<b>10. Community satisfaction rating for Council's advocacy and community representation on key local issues</b>	Result from the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	44	54	52	56
<b>11. Community satisfaction rating for Council's engagement in decision making on key local issues</b>	Result from the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	39	49	49	58

# WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM

## INCOME

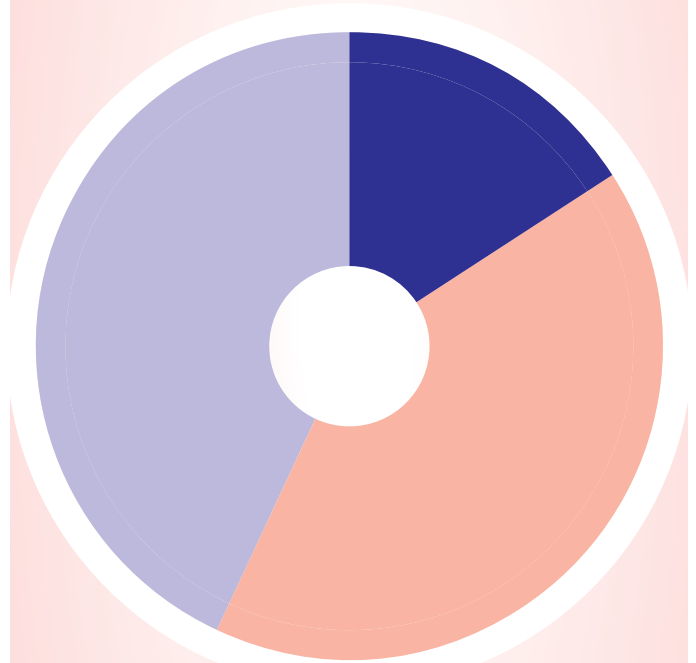
<b>52%</b>	Rates and garbage charge	\$27.6m
<b>1%</b>	Statutory fees and fines	\$.4m
<b>12%</b>	User charges and other fines	\$6.7m
<b>28%</b>	Grants all	\$15.1m
<b>2%</b>	Contributions	\$1.1m
<b>5%</b>	Other revenue	\$2.5m



# WHERE OUR MONEY GOES

## EXPENDITURE

<b>16%</b>	Corporate Services	\$8.5m
<b>41%</b>	Communities and Place	\$21.9m
<b>43%</b>	Infrastructure Services	\$23.4m





## COUNCIL OFFICES

### Horsham:

Civic Centre, 18 Roberts Avenue,  
Horsham 3400  
P · 03 5382 9777  
F · 03 5382 1111  
E · [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au)  
W · [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au)

Monday to Friday  
– 8.30am to 5.00pm

### Depot:

Selkirk Drive, Horsham 3400  
P · 03 5382 9600  
F · 03 5382 5358

Monday to Friday  
– 7.30am to 4.30pm

### Natimuk:

Natimuk Community Centre  
62 Main Street, Natimuk 3402  
P · 03 5387 1304

Thursdays only  
– 9am to 12pm

Postal Address:  
PO Box 511, Horsham 3402