

ANNUAL REPORT 2020–2021



Horsham Rural City
Council urban rural balance.



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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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Cover image: *Nurrabiel* 2021 by local artist Stacey Rees is an acrylic paint on brick mural located in Jos Lane in Horsham's central activity district. The mural was commissioned through the Horsham Rural City Council Public Art Advisory Committee. For the full story see page 42.

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Report of Operations

For the year ended 30 June 2021

Introduction

This Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and guidelines of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the *Local Government Act 2020* 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 the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (page 6-11).

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 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 2020-21 is the primary means of advising the Horsham Rural City community about Council's operations and performance during the financial year.

Council Snapshot

City Profile

Horsham Rural City 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. Horsham Rural City has an estimated residential population of 20,018¹ people (2020), a number expected to reach 20,599 by 2036². Approximately three quarters of residents live within the urban area of Horsham.

At the 2016 Census³, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.5 percent of the population and 87.7

percent of the population were born in 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 on demand and accessibility of housing, infrastructure, services and amenities.

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

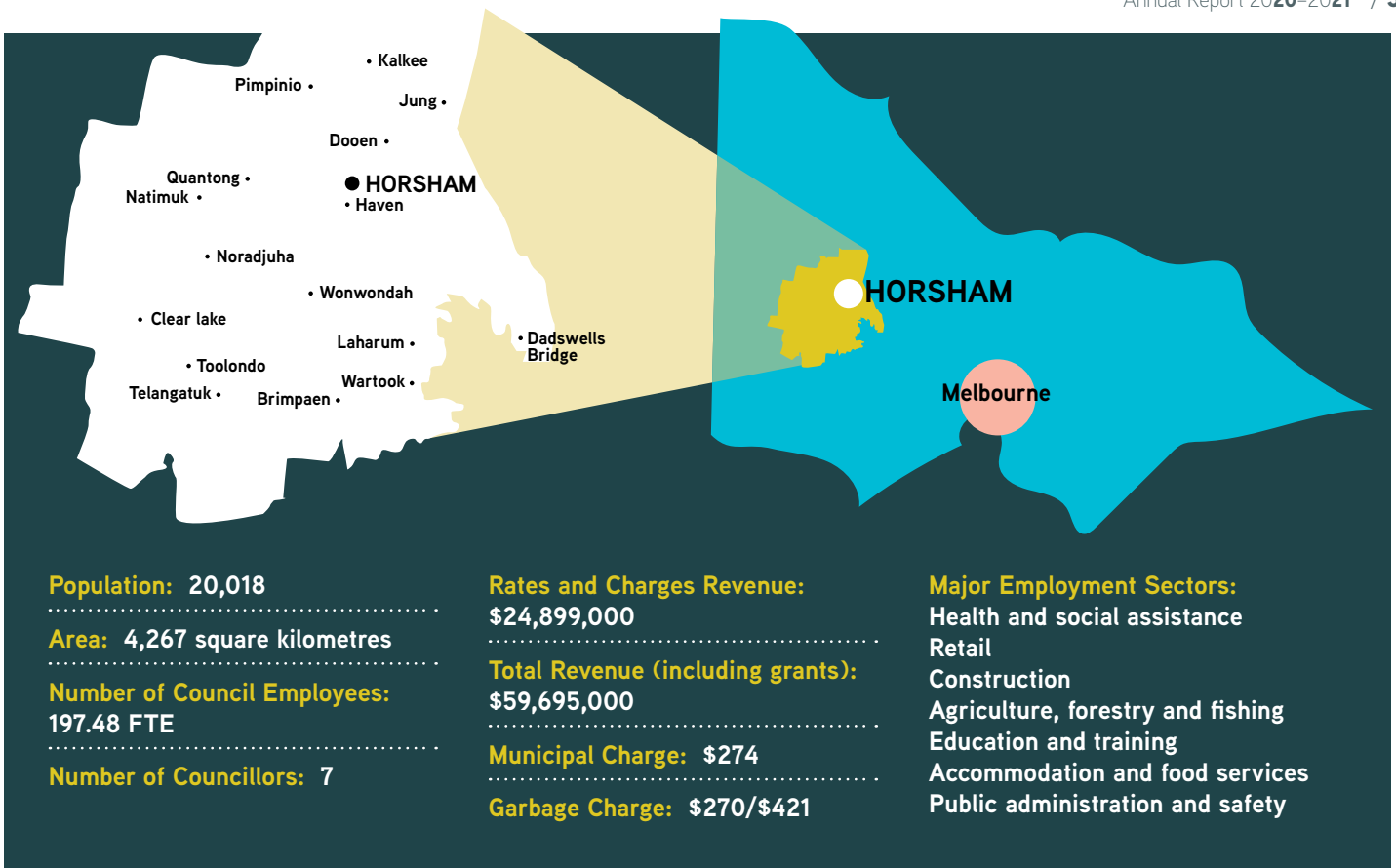
Horsham is a hub in the Wimmera for health care, niche retail, community services and arts and cultural opportunities. A dryland and broadacre agricultural municipality, Horsham is home to the Grains Innovation Park (a nationally acclaimed agricultural research centre) and quality educational facilities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

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 2020-24 Council Plan, associated Strategic Resource Plan and 2020-21 Budget, set the strategic direction for Council and management and include the indicators that Council uses to deliver key outcomes.

¹ Remplan – www.remplan.com.au

² Victoria in Future 2019 – Population Projections 2016 to 2056 – www.planning.vic.gov.au

³ ABS 2016 Census QuickStats – www.quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au



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



12,642
rateable properties



7,753 tonnes of waste and **1,544 tonnes** of recycling collected from kerbside bins



2,989
footpath and road issues resolved



98.25 percent
early childhood immunisation rates for 12 to 15 month age group (figure at 31 March 2021)



\$358,820
in grants and donations provided to not-for-profit groups



2,977 kilometres
of roads maintained



6,109 online service requests responded to



1,700
trees planted



157 animals
rehomed

Mayor's Message

On behalf of fellow Councillors and staff, I am pleased to present Horsham Rural City Council's 2020-21 Annual Report.

Of course, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been profound. Council's office and outdoor staff made unprecedented changes to the way we operate to ensure continuity of services while ensuring the safety of other staff and the community at large.

There has been plenty to learn in the first year of our new Councillor group.

Virtual Council Meetings were held online for the first time ever, a significant shift in meeting procedure but also opening up the meetings to a greater audience with the ability to view the meetings remotely but possibly at the same time disconnecting with some others.

It's been a year where we've had to take the good with the bad, and remain thankful for the lifestyle that's on offer in our region.

Pandemic response

Parts of our community have been affected by the restrictions more than others. Some businesses and individuals have thrived, while others have had it tough. It was terrific to see businesses hit hardest by lockdowns given financial and logistical support (pages 10, 34-35).

An example was the ongoing rollout of outdoor dining infrastructure for hospitality businesses. Council managed more than 30 projects with funding sourced from the Victorian Government and Council's own COVID-19 support program, with a combined total in excess of \$1 million.

Among the permanent installations were wind barriers, planter boxes, shade structures, street furniture and servery windows across Horsham, Natimuk, Wartook and Dadswells Bridge.

A staple of the Council Budget is our Community Development Grants Program. This year \$359,000 was delivered into the local community and economy. The local expenditure resulting from this Council support will provide a timely stimulus to our not-for-profit sector (pages 30-33).

Horsham Talks

A major strategic highlight for the year was the ongoing development of the 2041 Community Vision (pages 58-59). The Community Vision reflects the community's hopes, aspirations and priorities for the next 20 years, directly informing Council's other strategic documents including the Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Plan and Long-term Financial Plan.

The Vision was created not by Council, but an independent Community Panel. An invitation to join the Panel was sent to every household across the municipality and more than 90 expressions of interest were received.

From these, 36 participants were selected by independent consultancy firm i.e. Community, which ensured the demographics were evenly represented. The number of participants reduced to 26 when meetings were rescheduled due to pandemic restrictions.

The Panel nevertheless managed to hold its face-to-face sessions over three Sundays at Horsham Town Hall.

To inform the Panel's deliberations, wider public engagement was undertaken between February and May to gather feedback from the community under the banner of Horsham Talks. This involved online engagement, face to face pop-up sessions, surveys and community conversations, with 937 responses received.

All involved must be commended for taking a proactive role in shaping our future.

Strategic milestones

It was very much a year for long-term planning. We also adopted a new Community Engagement Policy and a new Parking Management Plan was developed to modernise and enhance the way we access Horsham's central activity district (page 44). Much work was also done in capturing the community's feedback on the proposed redevelopment of the City Oval and Sawyer Park precinct (page 50).

Thank you

I would like to thank all residents for their enthusiasm for our many engagement projects, patience, kindness and willingness to comply with state and federal directions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As restrictions ease, we will have to adjust to a new way of living, working and communicating.

Thank you and well done to our 273 staff for providing essential services to our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have enjoyed working with fellow Councillors and staff at Horsham Rural City Council, and it has been a real privilege to serve the community.



Cr Robyn Gulline

Mayor

Chief Executive Officer's Message

It has been another busy year with staff working hard to deliver services to ensure our communities are supported in all areas of their lives, especially in the face of COVID-19.

In 2020-21, we delivered an operating surplus of \$3.1 million, against a predicted deficit of \$1.25 million. There were no new borrowings and we secured \$22.1 million in grants and invested \$15.2 million in capital works.

COVID-19

For the second consecutive year, COVID-19 certainly threw challenges in our direction. The main task was keeping up with advice, which was changing daily as the risk of COVID-19 repeatedly eased and then escalated in Victoria. I am proud of the way our organisation adapted to change and was able to lead by example and support others in the community. Staff have risen to the challenge and embraced new ways of working, communicating and staying connected (pages 6-11).

An integral part of our year was the addition of 28 staff under the Working for Victoria program. This is a Victorian Government initiative in which organisations may apply for funding to hire staff to fulfil roles that directly or indirectly contribute to the State's ability to address the pandemic. We thank our Working for Victoria staff for their contributions to our community.

Council Election

A highlight of the year was the Horsham Rural City Council elections. We had six new Councillors and one returning elected member. The new Councillors hit the ground running with several complex decisions coming before them in the first few weeks of their election (page 14).

Operations

A significant challenge faced by the community was December's tornado which damaged about 100 houses in Horsham's North with winds reaching 177 kilometres an hour. Council was a part of the prompt and unified emergency response with clean-up of fallen trees and extra kerbside collections taking place. Council's building inspectors also played a part with assessments of the damage (page 60).

Another major challenge was a fire at the Dooen Landfill in December which forced the closing of public access to the site for the rest of the year (page 62).

During May, Horsham welcomed Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack who turned the first sod to start construction on the widening and sealing of shared pathways along the city's riverfront. This was the first of the much-anticipated City to River projects to get underway (pages 50, 56).

Another operational highlight was the beginning of construction on the Wimmera Agricultural and Logistics HUB. More businesses are looking to start up or expand in the Wimmera. To help meet the demand, we are developing an industrial park close to the Dooen freight terminal. With infrastructure such as heavy vehicle roads and site works taking shape, blocks of land are already attracting interest from the market (page 49).

Another operational achievement happened on rural roads at Lower Norton and Bungallally where Otta Seals – a revolutionary method of sealing gravel roads was successfully piloted. The ongoing success of these trials will allow for more low traffic volume roads to be upgraded.

While most of our office based staff have continued working from home for the majority of the past year, our operations team has been diligently getting on with essential construction, maintenance and waste management tasks to maintain the amenity and safety of our community (page 11).

I am also proud of the health and wellbeing services delivered under challenging circumstances. The Kalkee Road Children's and Community Hub went above and beyond to continue providing the quality early years and immunisation services our community requires (page 8).

Local Government Act

We welcome changes to the local government sector that strengthen transparency and accountability. As an organisation, a lot of work and training is done to communicate the importance of acting ethically, responsibly, and with integrity in the workplace.

The new *Local Government Act 2020* has co-existed with many of the provisions within the former Local Government Act across the past 12 months and will continue to do so into 2022. I thank all who have contributed to the ongoing transition to the new Act (pages 52-54).

Community relations

Council continues to provide information across a range of channels and platforms, both traditional and digital. Multimedia and video output increased during 2020-21, and an email newsletter was launched, providing news on Council's services, activities and events.

Results from the yearly Community Satisfaction Survey show Council improved in all core measures. This was a welcome change in trend and I look forward to seeing the improvement continue (page 84).

Thank you

I wish to thank our Councillors for their leadership, respect and professionalism. I'd especially like to acknowledge their work to implement changes to Council policies and plans to comply with the new Act.

I also thank all our staff for going above and beyond in 2020-21. It has been an honour to lead this organisation and see our workforce adapt in such a positive and proactive manner. I thank everyone for their valuable contribution.



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 2020-24 Council Plan and associated 2020-21 budget, and reported upon in the Performance section of this document (page 64).

The delivery of services, facilities, support and advocacy to achieve the Strategic Objectives is measured by a set of service performance indicators and measures (pages 64-79). Council also has a wide range of responsibilities under Victorian and Australian legislation.

Economic factors... the coronavirus pandemic

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

Throughout 2020-21, Council continued to close some services during periods of lockdown and staff who could work remotely continued to do so. Staff, Councillors, businesses and organisations had previously made significant changes to the way they operated which ensured continuity of services and the safety of our community remained.

Council continued to be mindful of the role it plays in looking after vulnerable members of the community and in sustaining economic activity by maintaining "business as usual" as much as was physically possible.

This section provides a summary of how Council continued to respond to COVID-19 during 2020-21.

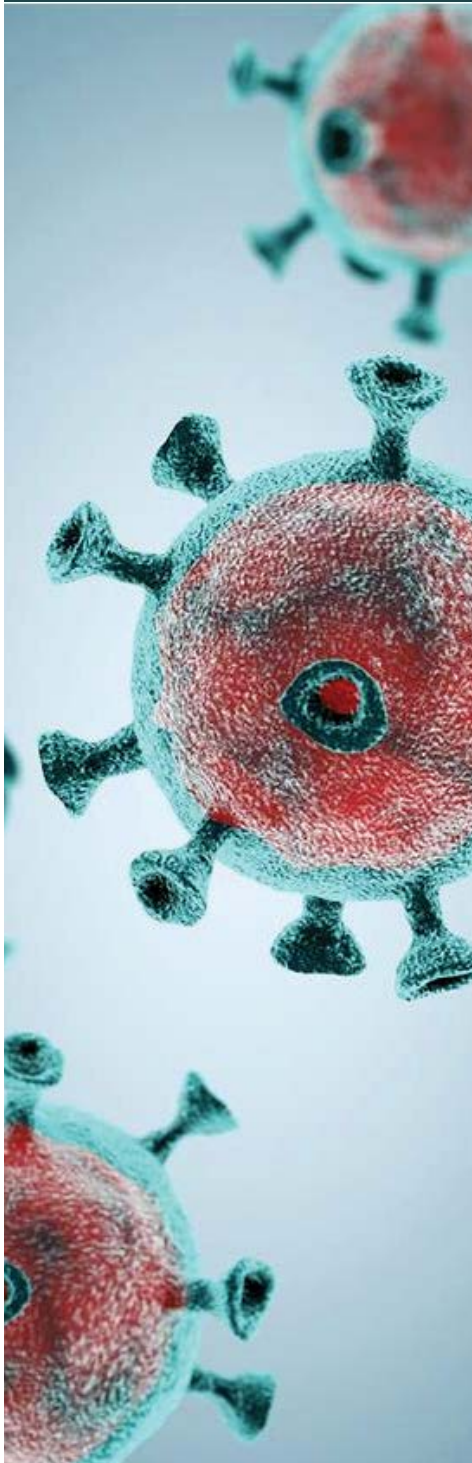
Business Continuity Plan

Council's Business Continuity Plan has continued to be activated by the Chief Executive Officer this year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Business Continuity 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.

As restrictions change, the Business Continuity Team continues to meet to ensure that Council not only maintains a COVIDSafe workplace, but also to ensure that community facilities such as parks, playgrounds, skate parks and barbecues are closed and opened in line with restrictions, and that Council's social media, website and newspaper communications are kept up to date with the latest information.

The Business Continuity Team will continue to monitor the ever-changing restrictions and react as necessary until we reach a "COVID-normal" state.



Employment Impacts

The COVID-19 environment and a series of associated restrictions and lockdowns, of varying length, continued to present Horsham Rural City Council with challenges throughout 2020–21. Management worked carefully to ensure that no paid staff were stood down, doing this in a cautious and economically responsible manner. Those staff whose work was most directly impacted by the pandemic were able to be redeployed into roles that were currently vacant or would otherwise have been undertaken by external contractors and consultants. Some also utilised outstanding leave balances.

Turnover and recruitment of staff continued without interruption throughout the various lockdowns, and grew exponentially with the implementation of the State Government Working for Victoria program, in which 28 fixed-term six-month positions were filled. Working for Victoria was created with a focus on creating additional employment opportunities for people who had lost their jobs, or been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

In most instances, interview and selection processes moved smoothly online. The greatest challenge associated with recruitment was ensuring that effective workplace induction occurred, given many new recruits were required to work at home from the time of commencement and to be supervised by colleagues also working from home. Despite some Working for Victoria employees working as little as two to three days from the office, the program has been a great success with many high quality staff employed, making significant contributions to the work of the organisation.

Council has been very conscious of the mental health and associated impacts on staff due to COVID-19. While outdoor staff continued to largely work as usual, they were placed under increased scrutiny by the public, careful to observe if relevant restrictions and requirements were being upheld.

Some staff were also anxious about continuing to work alongside others and being in the public domain and therefore potentially at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Most indoor staff had to adjust to working from home, new technology, physical isolation from colleagues, balancing/separating work and family life, and other issues.

Special efforts were made to engage/connect with staff in the early period of the pandemic and also as they transitioned to new (and unfamiliar) workplace arrangements. The services of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) were heavily promoted throughout the year, although they too were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions, and on-site and face-to-face counselling services were unable to take place for much of the year. The EAP provider, Converge International, provided a range of high-quality print resources, some of which were distributed with the monthly staff newsletter, along with some webinar opportunities focusing on various coping strategies. The counsellor engaged to provide the service remained on-call and accessible by telephone and also utilised time to make proactive introductory calls to new staff.

The impacts and interruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic remain ongoing and continue to challenge staff. Indoor staff have had the opportunity to consider how they might like to continue working in the future, with a high proportion of applications for continuing work from home arrangements (of varying degrees). The re-introduction of restrictions on workplace attendance numbers towards the end of the reporting period has, however, over-ridden those local arrangements for the time being.

It appears that 2021–22 will be another challenging year in the workplace, however, the successful pandemic-related learnings from the experience of 2020–21 places the organisation in a strong position to cope and to continue providing a high level of service delivery to the community.

COVID-19 Support Package

The table below provides a summary of the COVID-19 Support Package provided by Council.

COVID-19 Recovery/Summary Strategy	Actual Support Allocated 2020–21 \$
Discover Your Own Backyard	25,000
Digital Horsham	6,500
Love Your Community	74,500
Conferences Marketing Package	20,000
Grampians Resident Attraction Strategy	10,000
Business Sustainability	20,000
Community Health and Wellbeing	13,000
Stronger Business Grants*	83,098
Arts and Events Activation*	85,790
Recreation and Community Recovery*	75,800
Community Grant Additional Allocation	50,000
Health and Wellbeing Grant Stream*	20,877
Business Fronts Grants	86,418
Total	570,983

*Specific grant details are provided on pages 34–35.

Economic factors... the coronavirus pandemic



Occupational Health and Safety

Throughout 2020-21, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) staff have played an active and ongoing role in ensuring staff compliance with COVID-19 restrictions and associated requirements and workplace adjustments. This has been particularly critical in relation to those staff in the Operations Department, who continued their forward-facing and onsite duties throughout the pandemic. It was necessary to oversee many adjustments and provide ongoing advice and support to ensure staff compliance, and this has occupied a considerable amount of OHS staff time. Similarly, the many internal/indoor staff who were required to work from home throughout much of 2020-21 needed considerable support for the adjustment and other advice and assistance. The OHS implications of COVID-19 have been managed well and this is apparent through the smooth and uninterrupted provision of works and services throughout the challenging 2020-21 period, and the absence of any workplace-initiated pandemic-related personal health and wellbeing issues for staff or Council stakeholders.

Community Safety

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

An educative approach, along with following up on registration compliance, has resulted in a reduced number of complaints regarding dogs at large and dog attacks compared to last year at the beginning of the pandemic.

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

Partnership agreements are now in place with three animal rehoming groups which have been able to increase rehoming numbers and reduce domestic animal euthanasia rates.

Early Years Programs

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

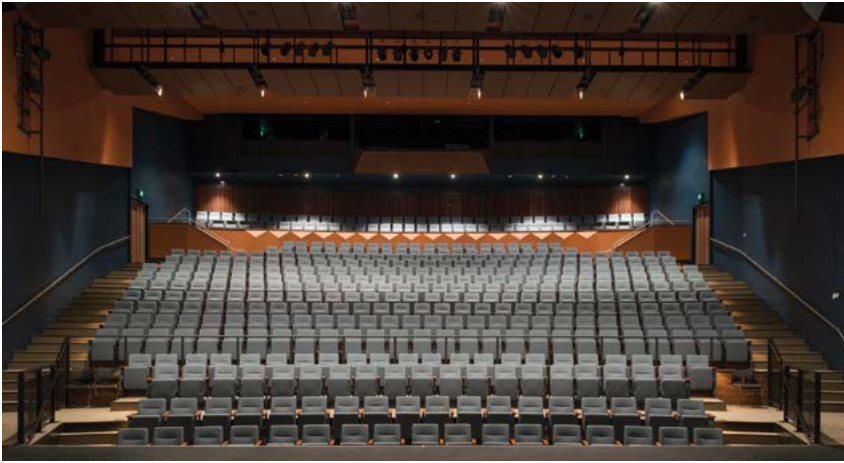
Immunisation is an essential service and our program has been adapted to provide a COVIDSafe environment. An online booking service has been implemented, where families can book an appointment time. In addition to maintaining our high level of scheduled vaccinations, influenza vaccinations have also 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.

The Maternal and Child Health new parents group has moved in and out of virtual platforms this year.

Initiatives such as online immunisation bookings have been well received and we plan to continue to offer this service in the future.

The supported playgroup has been delivered in a variety of methods over the past year including virtually. The playgroup page on the Council website has been updated to include clear information for families in relation to playgroup and activity options.

We look forward to welcoming families back to the Kalkee Road Children's and Community Hub when it is safe to do so.



Horsham Town Hall

Restrictions on gatherings, travel bans and closure of venues due to COVID-19 have had a major impact on the operations of the Horsham Town Hall over the past 12 months. The pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on the performing arts industry, however, planning is well underway for new and innovative programming as we contemplate recovery, and staff have worked hard behind the scenes to advocate for support across the sector.

The venue was closed to the public for approximately five months in 2020, requiring venue staff to be redeployed to other programs within Council. The Horsham Town Hall team returned to the venue in December 2020 and although the task to re-program, re-schedule and promote in an environment of uncertainty was challenging, the public confidently and enthusiastically embraced and attended the shows on offer.

Horsham Regional Art Gallery

The past 12 months have again seen a disrupted program delivered through the Horsham Regional Art Gallery due to the ongoing impacts and closures to the venue as a result of COVID-19. Despite this, staff have successfully managed to pivot some elements of the programming to online. This has worked particularly well for our education programs such as the Arts Club, After School and School Holiday Programs.

Some online delivery will continue to feature in the education program to extend access and reach into the future.

Further details in relation to education programs and exhibitions conducted in the past 12 months can be found on page 41.

Volunteers

Council relies on volunteers to support and enhance a range of services and programs. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions made it necessary to place many of our volunteer programs on hold, we are pleased to report that volunteers have returned in a limited capacity at the Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Horsham Town Hall and the Multiple Birth Families Support Program.

At the end of 2020, we said goodbye to our valued Meals on Wheels volunteers and this volunteering option can now be accessed through the Centre for Participation.

Council looks forward to welcoming back more of its valued volunteers once COVID-19 restrictions have been further eased, and we encourage those who might be interested to register through the Council online volunteering portal or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

Financial Hardship Support

Council has adopted a COVID-19 Rates and Charges Financial Hardship Policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance for the collection of rates and charges where an individual or business is experiencing genuine financial hardship due to COVID-19.

Customers experiencing hardship in paying their rates have the option of establishing an interest-free payment plan or deferment to assist in meeting their financial obligations.

In addition to this policy, Council appointed a Financial Hardship Officer in April 2020 for a period of nine months. The position ceased in December 2020.

The Financial Hardship Officer provided assistance to customers, community groups and businesses experiencing hardship during COVID-19. It was a single contact point for anyone needing more time to settle Council rates and other charges including animal and health registrations, infringements and commercial leases.

During the nine month period that the Financial Hardship Officer position was in place, 128 requests for hardship were received, with each case individually assessed and the outcome tailored according to need.

The COVID-19 Rates and Charges Financial Hardship Policy is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website - www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

Economic factors... the coronavirus pandemic



Business Development and Tourism Support

The Business and Community COVID-19 Support Package delivered projects that made up Council's direct financial contribution of \$484,000. Further projects were also developed to support businesses through the Local Council's Outdoor Eating and Entertaining program (\$600,000). Highlights from these two programs are provided below.

Stronger Business – Love Your City

The "Love Your City" banner project was developed in response to local photographer Rachel Deckert (Bella Madre) and her callout on social media to families, individuals and pets to be photographed during the first stage of the pandemic lockdown.

In partnership with Rachel, Council sought permission to display these images in the Central Activity District. With solid enthusiasm and excitement, 38 flags were commissioned. The participants' demographic included local Wotjobaluk and culturally diverse families aged from six months to 80+ years.

With the purpose to encourage the statement "Together We Are Stronger" these flags are a reminder of our community's resilience during 2020 and beyond.

Stronger Business Outdoor Dining – Proposals

Many businesses have benefited from permanent and non-permanent infrastructure such as tables, bench seats, wind barriers, umbrellas, planter boxes, heating and awnings installed within the Central Activity District and outlying hospitality businesses in the municipality.

Council's Building Services and Project Manager worked closely with businesses who required permits to ensure this process was fast-tracked.

Other initiatives facilitated by Council which provided direct support to businesses this year were:

- Stronger Business Fronts Submissions
- Business Fronts Upgrade Grant Stream
- Arts and Events Activation Grant Stream
- Recreation and Community Recovery Grant Stream
- Health and Wellbeing Grant Stream
- Business Newsletter.

The Stronger Business Fronts Upgrades grant stream was fully expended in support of improvement to the business visual appeal such as signage, landscaping and merchandising.

Funding was very much welcomed by the businesses involved and they appreciated Council support towards improving their business appearance.

Virtual Council Meetings

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, temporary provisions were inserted in the *Local Government Act 2020* to allow Councils to conduct their meetings virtually.

Council welcomed these changes and the first online Council meeting 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.

These provisions have been extended twice by Parliament and will expire on 27 April 2022. There has since been support for virtual meetings to be made permanent by Councils, after having experienced the flexibility these temporary provisions provide.

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.

Over the last financial year, there were 16 Council meetings held (including one statutory meeting and several additional Council meetings) with five successful online Council meetings conducted.



Due to COVID-19 restriction requirements, public attendance was not permitted at seven Council meetings, however, a public gallery was able to attend three meetings with numbers limited in line with COVIDSafe Guidelines.

This year, Council meetings have been livestreamed on the internet with a link provided on the Horsham Rural City Council website. This was enabled by Council's Information Technology team who have continued to support the many changing requirements of Victoria's lockdowns and restrictions, enabling professional recordings to be streamed live to the public. It is pleasing to report there has been a continued 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.

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

Outdoor Operations

Council's outdoor operations crews have generally operated consistent with normal practice, with relatively minor changes due to COVID-19 and its restrictions.

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, although the level of service was reduced during periods that sportsgrounds were unable to be used, for example, mowing frequency reduced
- Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange operations.

A key limitation with the Livestock Exchange has been a restriction on members of the public and store buyers to attend sales. Whilst restriction levels have varied in accordance with the prevailing rules, general public access was precluded for most of the year. This was especially challenging as many farmers wanted to take the opportunity to experience the sales under the new roof with its improved conditions. It is important to note that, whilst the public will be able to attend sales whenever possible, there is a heightened risk of COVID-19 impacts due to the importance of maintaining throughput of animals for the meat processing industry.

Other measures Council has continued to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic have included:

- Increased cleaning and sanitisation program introduced in 2020 has been continued at priority sites.
- 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.

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

Major Capital Works

This year, Horsham Rural City Council spent **\$15,225,020** on capital works throughout the municipality. The table below provides details of some of the capital works projects that Council funded during 2020-21.

Road Infrastructure Construction	Amount (\$)
Horsham	1,660,440
Rural	2,541,441
Roads to Recovery Program – Rural bridges	55,452
Roads to Recovery Program – Rural roads	1,023,176
Roads to Recovery Program – Urban roads	295,468
Other	
Aerodrome Runway Improvements	87,358
Aquatic Centre Indoor Pool Concourse Replacement	179,480
Aquatic Centre Entrance Ramp	98,904
Art Purchases	29,012
Basketball Building Kitchen Works	35,251
Botanical Gardens Pathways	80,753
Civic Centre Improvements	121,720
Community Halls Solar Roofing	51,198
Horsham College Rosebrook Sports Pavilion Painting External Infrastructure	26,200
Horsham Community Sports Pavilion Drainage Construction	28,731
Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange Completion Solar Roofing	583,623
Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange Effluent Disposal System	11,197
Horsham Town Hall Air Conditioning Works	58,724
Horsham Town Hall Fly Lines	112,818
Horsham Town Hall Gallery Receiving Room External Door	29,670
Horsham Town Hall Lighting	39,863
Horsham Town Hall Vic Digital Resources Fixed	54,443
Miscellaneous Buildings Works	38,289
Miscellaneous Recreation Works	13,636
Mitre Hall Kitchen Painting and Improvements	45,277
Natimuk Memorial Hall Cladding Replacement Infrastructure	26,116
Natimuk Preschool Foundation Slab and Plumbing	20,031
Nexus The Station Refurbishment	51,198
Off Street Car Parks	23,345
Plant and Equipment Replacements	2,133,275
Playgrounds Refurbishment	29,801
River Crossing Improvements	85,682
Rural Parks Improvements	14,521
Sporting Facilities Refurbishments	61,578
Taylors Lake Hall Ceiling, Painting and Improvements	18,740
Walking Paths Lighting	223,474
Works in Progress (projects under construction)	4,719,085
Other Works	516,050
Total	15,225,020



Major Changes

COVID-19

Throughout 2020-21, Council continued to close some services during periods of lockdown and staff who could work remotely continued to do so. Staff, Councillors, businesses and organisations had previously made significant changes to the way they operated which ensured continuity of services and the safety of our community remained (pages 6-11).

Home Support Services

In January 2020, Council made the in principle decision to exit Home Support Services, resolving to seek expressions of interests from agencies to deliver services that Council was delivering (HACC PYP and Commonwealth Home Support Programme), before making a final decision. The Expression of Interest process was completed in May 2020, and with Grampians Community Health recommended to be the new contractor, Council resolved to exit the service. The service with Grampians Community Health commenced as a provider on 1 January 2021 and all clients and staff who were interested in moving to the new service were able to do so.

Major Achievements

- Implementation of the *Local Government Act 2020* including adoption of Governance Rules, Public Transparency Policy, Community Engagement Policy, Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy and Revenue and Rating Plan (pages 52-54).
- Election of new Council including candidate training, adoption of Councillor Code of Conduct (page 16) and Councillor induction processes
- Comprehensive review of Community Local Law 2011 (No 3 and the amendment No 4) (page 87)
- Development and deployment of new intranet and Councillor portal (page 57)
- Progression of Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration Project in procurement processes (page 57)
- Refurbishment of Civic Centre Customer Service foyer (page 51)
- Development of plans (concept and schematic) for the City to River Stage 1 (Riverfront Activation) (page 50)
- Consolidation of Visitor Information Services with Horsham Town Hall (page 45)
- Decision in relation to Future model for Aged and Disability Services (see Home Support Services on this page)
- Delivery of \$484,000 COVID-19 Support Package and \$600,00 Outdoor Dining Program (pages 10, 34-35)
- Successful response to COVID-19 challenges to ensure continuity of Council business operations and the safety of staff and the community (pages 6-11)
- Completion of indoor and outdoor works at The Station (formerly Nexus) to activate this important youth facility (page 43)
- Preparation of draft Asset Plan as part of deliberative engagement with the Community Panel
- Preparation of a draft 10-year Capital Works Plan to inform Council's Long Term Financial Plan
- Completion of asset data capture and modelling of long term asset renewals requirement to inform the Asset Plan and Long Term Capital Plan
- Completion of roofing project at the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange providing many benefits, especially in relation to animal welfare and increased sale values (further details in 2019-20 Annual Report)
- Adoption of Zero Carbon Plan (Zero Net Emissions Plan) (pages 55, 61)
- Community consultation on the Rural Road Network Plan (page 48)
- Adoption of Social Infrastructure Framework (page 48)
- Implementation of Horsham Urban Transport Plan (page 48)



Mayor Cr Robyn Gulline
First elected: 24 October 2020
0437 941 806
robyn.gulline@hrcc.vic.gov.au



Cr Di Bell
First elected: 24 October 2020
0437 949 186
di.bell@hrcc.vic.gov.au



Cr David Bowe
First elected: 24 October 2020
0437 894 605
david.bowe@hrcc.vic.gov.au

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 24 October 2020.

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.



Cr Penny Flynn
First elected: 24 October 2020
0437 929 678
penny.flynn@hrcc.vic.gov.au



Cr Claudia Haenel
First elected: 24 October 2020
0437 972 592
claudia.haenel@hrcc.vic.gov.au



Cr Les Power
First elected: 22 October 2016
Re-elected: 24 October 2020
0419 922 687
les.power@hrcc.vic.gov.au



Cr Ian Ross
First elected: 24 October 2020
0409 330 603
ian.ross@hrcc.vic.gov.au

Meetings of Council

Council conducts open public meetings on the fourth Monday of each month (third Monday in December) at the Civic Centre at 5.30pm. 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 of 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.

Traditionally, Council meetings have been held in the Council Chamber, with members of the community welcome to attend and observe from the gallery. With the continuation of lockdowns in 2020-21 due to COVID-19, Council meetings were once more a combination of face-to-face and online meetings.

In 2020-21, Horsham Rural City Council held 16 Council meetings. This included 11 face-to-face meetings in the Council Chamber and five online Council meetings streamed live on the Council website www.hrcc.vic.gov.au. Audio recordings were made available following all meetings (pages 10-11).

During this period, 24 questions were submitted to Public Question Time.

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council meetings for the 2020-21 financial year.

Councillor	Scheduled Council Meeting Attendance	Additional Council Meetings Attendance	Total
Cr Pam Clarke (2020)	4	1	5
Cr David Grimble (2020)	4	1	5
Cr Alethea Gulvin (2020)	4	1	5
Cr Josh Koenig (2020)	4	0	4
Cr Mark Radford (2020)	4	1	5
Cr John Robinson (2020)	4	1	5
Cr Di Bell (2021)	7	3	10
Cr David Bowe (2021)	8	3	11
Cr Penny Flynn (2021)	8	3	11
Cr Robyn Gulline (2021)	8	3	11
Cr Claudia Haenel (2021)	8	2	10
Cr Les Power (2020 and 2021)	12	4	16
Cr Ian Ross (2021)	8	2	10

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.

In 2020-21, 32 Council Briefing meetings were held, including 15 face-to-face meetings and seven online meetings.

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council Briefing Meetings for the 2020-21 financial year.

Councillor	Council Briefing Meeting Attendance	Councillor	Council Briefing Meeting Attendance
Cr Pam Clarke (2020)	9	Cr Di Bell (2021)	23
Cr David Grimble (2020)	7	Cr David Bowe (2021)	23
Cr Alethea Gulvin (2020)	5	Cr Penny Flynn (2021)	23
Cr Josh Koenig (2020)	6	Cr Robyn Gulline (2021)	23
Cr Mark Radford (2020)	9	Cr Claudia Haenel (2021)	22
Cr John Robinson (2020)	5	Cr Les Power (2020 and 2021)	31
		Cr Ian Ross (2021)	18

Our Council

Councillor Code of Conduct

The *Local Government Act 2020*, section 139 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 22 February 2021.

A Councillor Code of Conduct, under the 2020 Act, must include the standards of conduct expected to be observed by Councillors. A Council may review or amend the Councillor Code of Conduct at any other time, but it must be by a formal resolution of Council.

The *Local Government Act 2020*, section 139(2) states:

The purpose of the Councillor Code of Conduct is to include the standards of conduct expected to be observed by Councillors in the course of performing their duties and functions as Councillors, including prohibiting discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment) and vilification.

Council is required to approve a Councillor Code of Conduct that incorporates the requirements under the new *Local Government Act 2020*, including the overarching governance principles and Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020. The regulations address the governance and integrity components of the new Act which commenced operation on 24 October 2020.

It is important for Councillors to be aware of how the standards of conduct fit within the overall Councillor Conduct framework, as a breach of the standards of conduct will constitute misconduct and be subject to sanctioning by an arbiter. It is therefore critical for all Councillors to be familiar with the standards of conduct and the distinction between the standards and the rest of the Councillor Code of Conduct.

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, statutory and general obligations and Standards of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct for Councillors is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email 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 interest of the public. A conflict of interest exists even if no improper act results from it.

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 also has a comprehensive Conflict of Interest Procedure and Declaration Form in place to ensure that staff fully and properly declare all general and material conflicts of interest 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 and published on the Horsham Rural City Council website – www.hrcc.vic.gov.au

During 2020-21, there were 37 conflicts of interest declared at Council meetings.

Councillor Allowances

In accordance with Section 39 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, 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	Applicable Timeframe	Allowance \$	Amount Surrendered for COVID-19 Support \$
Cr Mark Radford (Mayor)*	01/07/2020 until 23/10/2020	21,553.44	1,000.00
Cr Pam Clarke	01/07/2020 until 23/10/2020	7,214.31	
Cr David Grimble*	01/07/2020 until 23/10/2020	7,214.31	7,214.31
Cr Althea Gulvin	01/07/2020 until 23/10/2020	7,214.31	
Cr Josh Koenig	01/07/2020 until 23/10/2020	7,214.31	
Cr John Robinson*	01/07/2020 until 23/10/2020	7,214.31	7,214.31
Cr Les Power*	01/07/2020 until 30/06/2021	23,615.12	7,214.31
Cr Robyn Gulline (Mayor)	24/10/2020 until 30/06/2021	49,836.77	
Cr Di Bell	24/10/2020 until 30/06/2021	16,400.81	
Cr David Bowe	24/10/2020 until 30/06/2021	16,400.81	
Cr Penny Flynn	24/10/2020 until 30/06/2021	16,400.81	
Cr Claudia Haenel	24/10/2020 until 30/06/2021	16,400.81	
Cr Ian Ross	24/10/2020 until 30/06/2021	16,400.81	

*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 the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Council

Councillor Expenses

In accordance with Section 40 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is required to reimburse a Councillor for expenses incurred whilst performing their duties as a Councillor. Council is also required to 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 was reviewed this year in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and subsequently adopted by Council.

The Council Expenses Policy is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website - www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

Details of Councillor expenses for the 2020-21 year are set out in the following table.

Expense Category	Cr Robyn Gulline* (Mayor) \$	Cr Di Bell* \$	Cr David Bowe* \$	Cr Penny Flynn* \$	Cr Claudia Haenel* \$	Cr Les Power \$	Cr Ian Ross* \$
Child Care							
Communications	1,262.15	1,209.45	1,207.73	1,207.73	1,430.71	543.39	1,257.03
Conferences and Seminars	1,058.18	609.99		455.00	1,064.08	1,058.18	
Development and Training	3,117.59	3,117.57	3,117.57	3,517.57	3,517.57	3,117.57	3,117.58
Entertainment							
Memberships	85.00			85.00	85.00		
IT Equipment	2,069.00	2,069.00	2,069.00	2,069.00	2,294.00	2,069.00	2,294.00
Transportation	6,916.00				4,136.10		6,346.33
Travel and Accommodation	816.51			400.91	1,266.72	772.45	
Other Costs	155.83	155.83	155.83	155.83	155.83	100.00	683.38
Total \$	15,480.26	7,161.84	6,550.13	7,891.04	13,950.01	7,660.59	13,698.32

*24 October 2020 to 30 June 2021

**1 July 2020 to 23 October 2020

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 2020-21



Details of Councillor expenses for the 2020-21 year are set out in the following table... *continued*

Expense Category	Cr Mark Radford** \$	Cr Pam Clarke** \$	Cr David Grimble** \$	Cr Althea Gulvin** \$	Cr Josh Koenig** \$	Cr John Robinson** \$	Total \$
Child Care							
Communications	259.81	70.91	70.92	70.94	70.92	141.82	8,803.51
Conferences and Seminars							4,245.43
Development and Training							22,623.00
Entertainment							
Memberships							255.00
IT Equipment							14,933.00
Transportation	5,434.00						22,832.43
Travel and Accommodation							3,256.59
Other Costs							1,562.55
Total \$	5,693.81	70.91	70.92	70.94	70.92	141.82	78,511.51

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 provided to the right.



Chief Executive Officer

Sunil Bhalla

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

- Management and performance of all Council operations including \$60 million budget
- Ensure that day-to-day management of Council's operations are in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and align with the Council Plan
- Provide advice and support to Council
- Direct responsibility for Council's Directors

Senior Officers Reporting Directly to the Chief Executive Officer



Director Communities and Place

Kevin O'Brien

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

Arts, Culture and Recreation

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

Community Services and Safety

- Community Inclusion
- Community Safety
- Environmental Health
- Miscellaneous Projects
- Municipal Emergency Recovery
- Wimmera Emergency Management Project
- Youth and Early Years

Investment Attraction and Growth

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



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
- Property Management

People and Culture

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



Director Infrastructure Services

John Martin

BE (Agric)

Engineering Services

- Engineering Design
- Facilities management
- Project Office

Operations

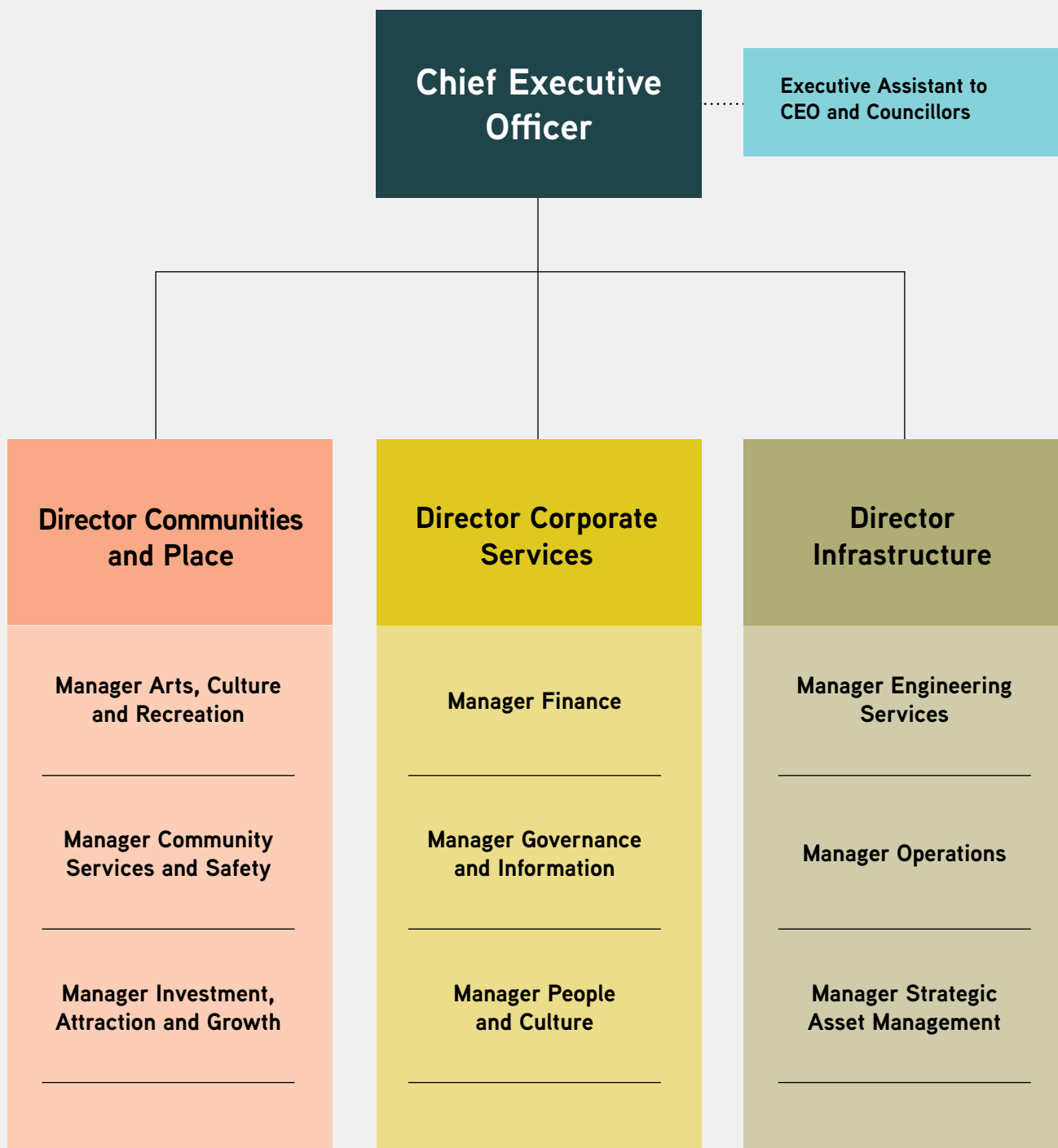
- Civil Works
- Horsham Rural Livestock Exchange
- Parks and Gardens
- Waste Operations

Strategic Asset Management

- Assets
- Fleet
- Waste and Sustainability

Our People

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



A



I



R

WE VALUE

FLEXIBILITY

We are adaptable
to changing
circumstances

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are responsible
for our behaviour
and actions

INTEGRITY

We are ethical,
transparent and
honest in
our conduct

RESPECT

We value diversity
and appreciate others
and will not tolerate
sexual or other forms
of harassment

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

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

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

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

Equal Employment Opportunity

Horsham Rural City Council commits itself in a variety of ways to the elimination of discrimination against, and the 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

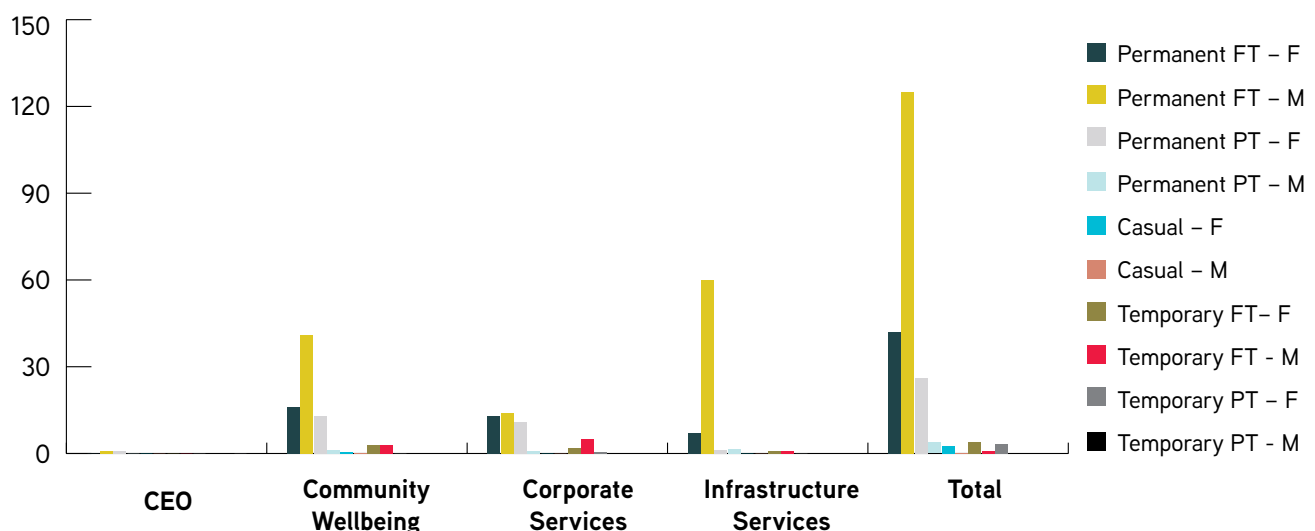
or political affiliation, gender identity and sexual orientation. Further objectives include ensuring the workplace is free from bullying and harassment.

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 in relation to equal opportunity.

Throughout the year, no formal Equal Opportunity complaints were received, and overall, it is considered that Horsham Rural City Council exercised its duties and responsibilities in suitable accordance with the requirements and obligations of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.

Number of Staff (FTE) 2020/2021

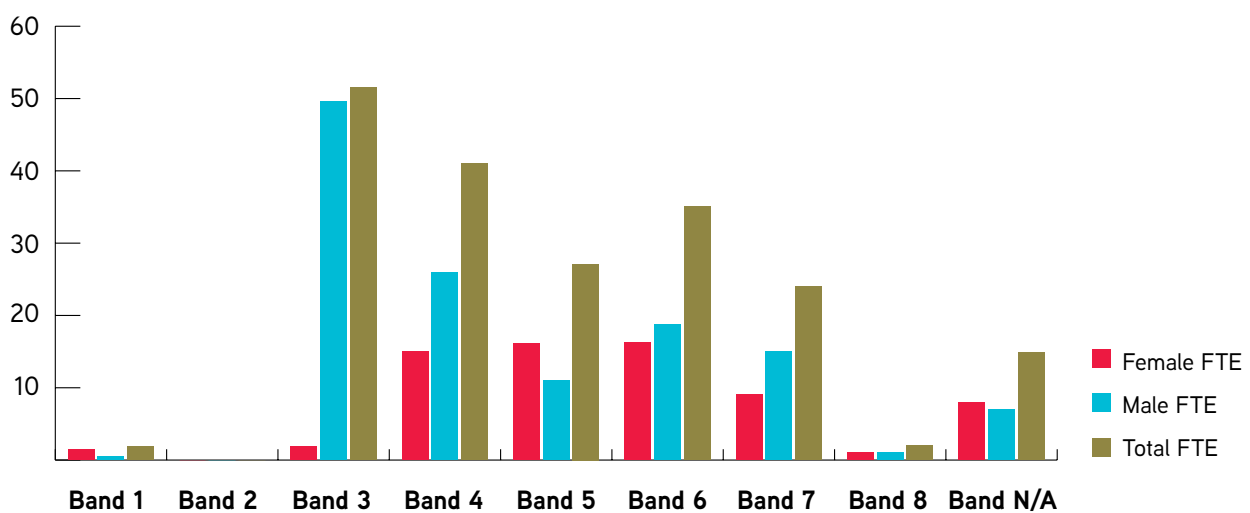
A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) Council staff by organisational structure, employment type and gender is set out below.



Employee type/gender	CEO FTE	Community Wellbeing FTE	Corporate Services FTE	Infrastructure Services FTE	Total FTE
Permanent FT - F	0.00	16.00	13.00	7.00	36.00
Permanent FT - M	1.00	41.00	14.00	60.00	116.00
Permanent PT - F	0.80	13.07	10.29	1.21	25.37
Permanent PT - M	0.00	1.34	0.80	1.66	3.80
Casual - F	0.00	0.64	0.00	0.00	0.64
Casual - M	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.05
Temporary FT - F	0.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	6.00
Temporary FT - M	0.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	9.00
Temporary PT - F	0.00	0.00	0.62	0.00	0.62
Temporary PT - M	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	1.80	78.10	45.71	71.87	197.48

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	1.41	0.47	1.88
Band 2	0.00	0.00	0.00
Band 3	1.93	49.61	51.54
Band 4	14.97	26.00	40.97
Band 5	16.12	11.00	27.12
Band 6	16.24	18.80	35.04
Band 7	9.04	15.00	24.04
Band 8	1.00	1.00	2.00
Band not applicable	7.92	6.97	14.89
Total	68.63	128.85	197.48

Staff Profile



Professional Development

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

During 2020-21, 23 Council staff were undertaking the following:

- Master of Infrastructure Engineering and Management
- Master of Natural Resources and Management
- Bachelor Civil Engineering
- Bachelor Management and Human Resource Management
- Bachelor Urban, Rural and Environmental Planning
- Advanced Diploma Public Safety (Emergency Management)
- Diploma of Risk Management and Business Continuity
- Diploma of Project Management
- Certificate IV Leadership and Management (11 staff)

Two staff also completed the Leadership Wimmera Program and a further four staff commenced the program during 2020-21.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been necessary to cancel or delay some of Council's training due to lockdowns and restrictions. Council has, however, continued to provide a comprehensive corporate learning program that supports a broad range of staff development needs, including an online training system that covers off on many levels of compliance training. This is developed in alignment with strategic priorities and 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 2020-21 was on developing a base level of skills for staff in Team Leader and Co-ordinator roles through the study of 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 the aim to have an injury-free workplace for all our employees. The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committee remains active, meets monthly, and plays a key role in a co-operative organisational approach to OHS awareness, improvement and compliance.

In 2020-21, Council continued to be a member of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) self-insurance workers' compensation scheme, MAV WorkCare, involving ongoing compliance and improvement efforts to ensure continued registration of the scheme by WorkSafe Victoria.

It was ultimately determined that MAV WorkCare would not be re-licensed from 1 July 2021, and that member Councils would be redirected back into the WorkCover scheme. Horsham Rural City Council was subsequently allocated a new insurance agent selected by WorkSafe from its panel of

accredited agents and we will become a client of Xchanging on 1 July 2021.

Despite this change, Council's OHS direction will continue to focus on:

- 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.

2020-21 OHS Snapshot

- A focus on encouragement and assistance for staff to report safety-related issues continued this year resulting in:
 - 124 incidents reported across all work areas
 - 35 plant/vehicle incidents reported
 - 60 personal incidents reported.
 The incident reporting system also provides the mechanism for staff to report on property damage incidents, hazards, near misses and security incidents.
- 15 WorkCover claims were accepted by the insurer this year, compared with eight in 2019-20 (10 of these claims were closed within the reporting period).
- Initial five-day OHS training completed by two staff in support of their roles as Designated Work Group Representatives.



- A formal report on the implementation of the OHS Management Plan was provided to the Executive Management Team in February 2021.
- Comprehensive audits, inspections and follow-up briefings in relation to four operations-focused business units were conducted by the OHS Officer in conjunction with managers, supervisors and staff responsible for road maintenance, road construction, waste management and community safety.
- Monthly reporting from the Chief Executive Officer via the weekly Tuesday Topics email on OHS Committee and related OHS activities.

Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

Enterprise Agreement Number Nine, which commenced on 5 February 2020, remained applicable throughout the reporting period. It has a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2022. The second of three 2.1% (or \$28 per week) increases under the agreement was applied in July 2020. Some preliminary internal work on preparations for Enterprise Agreement Number 10 commenced prior to 30 June 2021, in accordance with a commitment for the consolidation of the current document which comprises three parts that need to be read together:

- Part A** – Horsham Rural City Council local provisions
- Part B** – Victorian Local Authorities Award 2001
- Part C** – Nurses (ANF – Victorian Local Government) Award 2015.

Consolidation of these three parts will facilitate reading and understanding of the Enterprise Agreement and help to avoid confusion and misinterpretation that sometimes occurs when staff reference the existing complex agreement.

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 10,000 of population was 50% more than the Victorian LGA average and Horsham has consistently had the highest rate of family violence incidences in the Grampians Region (2014-2019). Since 2014, 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 2020-24 Council Plan lists four priorities, one advocacy action and two external factors that inform the plan in relation to violence, and the 2017-21 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan includes a section on preventing family violence. Council supports a range of initiatives to prevent violence.

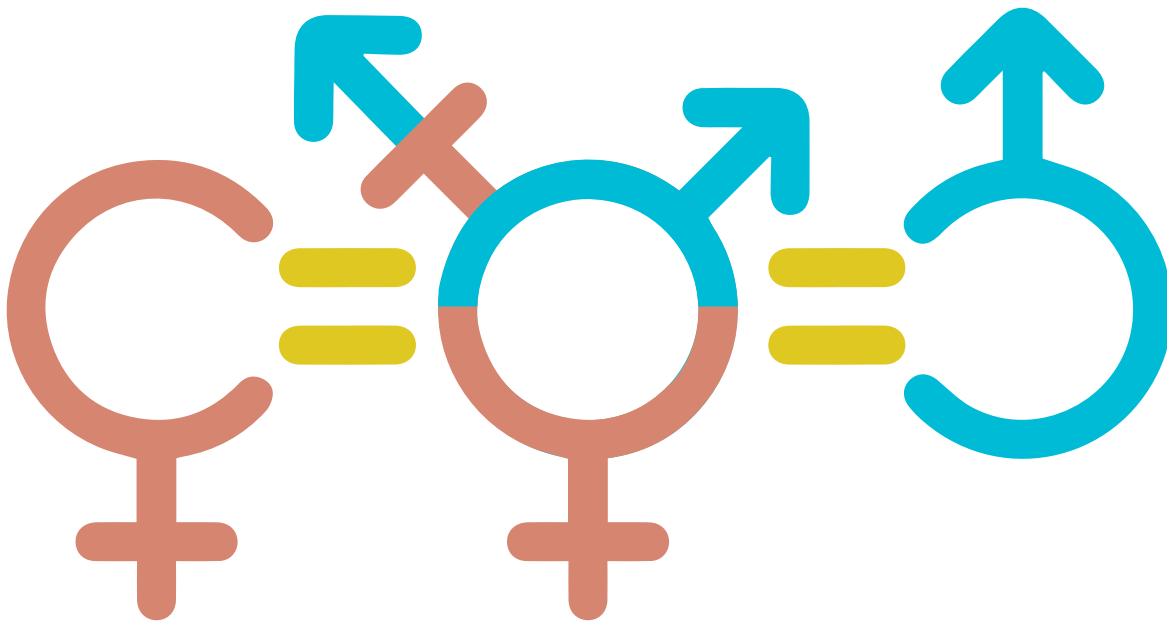
Council's Gender Equality Action Plan will include strategies and measures to address the gender equality indicators stated in the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, including levels of sexual harassment in the workplace and the availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and



practices relating to family violence leave. Council will also complete Gender Impact Assessments when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public, in order to meet the individual needs and safety requirements of people of different genders.

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 2021-25 Strategy has been developed to help guide and direct individual and collective work in building communities of respect and equality, and preventing violence against women before it occurs.

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.



Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act* commenced on 31 March 2021 and is the first of its kind in Australia. It requires Victorian public sector agencies such as local Councils to measure, report on, plan for and progress gender equality in their organisations. Importantly, the *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires Councils to consider gender equality, not only in their workforce, but in the policies, programs and services that they deliver.

Over the years, Horsham Rural City Council has shown its commitment to advancing gender equality and reducing levels of violence against women through its involvement in the Grampians based Communities of Respect and Equality Alliance (CoRE Alliance) (page 28). The *Gender Equality Act 2020* extends this commitment, with obligations that are ongoing and actioned through two separate pieces of work.

The Gender Equality Action Plan is currently being developed. It is internally focused and includes a workplace gender audit which establishes baseline organisational data against workplace gender equality indicators⁴.

Employee experience data gathered through the People Matters Survey, which Council staff participated in early 2021, supports the de-identified workforce data which was collected as part of the gender audit. Combined data will support evidence-based strategies and measures that underpin our Gender Equality Action Plan, which is due for submission on 1 December 2021.

The second area of work, the Gender Impact Assessment, is focused on outcomes for the public and considers how organisational policies, programs and services will meet the needs of women, men and gender diverse people. Gender Impact Assessments are more external in focus and aim to create better and fairer outcomes, and ensure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources. Gender Impact Assessments are everyone's responsibility, and all activity and actions will be recorded and collated for reporting over the next two years. Training opportunities and workshops will be provided to Council staff to help them understand and complete Gender Impact Assessments.

Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges that gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice, improves economic, social and health benefits for Victoria and is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against females. Through meeting and exceeding its expectations under the Act, Council aims to advance gender equality in the workplace and the community.

⁴The workplace gender equality indicators are:

- Gender pay equity
- Gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- Gender composition of governing bodies
- Workplace sexual harassment
- Recruitment and promotion
- Gendered work segregation
- Leave and flexibility.

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 municipality to improve community facilities and events, and work together for more engaged and healthy communities. Council provided a total of \$358,820 in Community Grants and Donations this year. Details are provided below.

Sport and Recreation	\$
AFL Wimmera Mallee - health and fitness equipment	750
Annual allocation to assist funding applications	15,000
Haven Tennis Club - temporary lighting - junior tournament	2,640
Horsham Flying Club - portable toilets for competitions	1,750
Horsham Golf Club - sprinklers	2,000
Horsham Little Athletics Centre - upgrade PA system (portable)	1,556
Horsham Pony Club - custom made covered trailer	4,500
Horsham Saints Football Netball Club - Coughlin Park playground equipment	5,000
Horsham Squash Club - lighting equipment for courts 3 and 4	2,500
Horsham Swimming Club - coaching stopwatches and speaker system	1,787
Jung Tigers Cricket Club - display cabinets for three user clubs	1,000
Laharum Sports Incorporated - digital netball scoreboard	2,750
Natimuk and District Field and Game - installation of solar power/battery	8,000
Natimuk and District Gymnastic Club - little Aussie ninja course and equipment purchase	2,500
Natimuk Bowling Club - replace toilets and plumbing	3,000
Natimuk Golf Club - ride on mower	2,500
Quantong Football Netball Club - new oven to support catering	2,000
Riverside Recreation Reserve - watering system main oval project	4,767
Specific Donation - Horsham Basketball Stadium (lease)	15,500
Toolondo Golf Club - replace boundary fencing	1,000
Community maintained Recreation Reserve maintenance allocation	\$
Clear Lake	520
Coughlin Park (Council allocation of outdoor staff resources)	12,340
Dock Lake	12,340
Dooen Recreation Reserve	520
Kalkee	6,170
Laharum	12,340
Natimuk Showgrounds	6,170
Noradjuha	3,060
Pimpinio	6,170
Quantong	12,340
Riverside - equestrian outdoor surface	520
Toolondo	520
Total – Sport and Recreation	153,510

Halls Infrastructure	\$
Brimpaen Reserve Committee of Management - Brimpaen Hall door replacement	1,044
Hamilton Lamb Hall Committee - gas heater replacement	1,627
Insurance levy for public halls	12,174
Insurance levy for other community facilities	9,107
Laharum Public Hall - paint interior	4,000
Taylors Lake Hall - installation security system	995
Wonwondah Hall Volunteer Group - new swing for playground area	4,000
Total – Halls	32,947
Kindergartens	\$
Green Park Kindergarten - foyer upgrade	2,000
Maintenance grants - \$870 each for Council's four kindergartens	3,480
Natimuk Road Kindergarten - outdoor space upgrade and improvements	3,460
Total – Kindergartens	8,940
General Welfare and Community Services	\$
Christian Emergency Food Centre - Christmas hampers	5,000
Horsham College Chaplaincy Committee	5,710
Wimmera River Improvement Committee	8,360
Wimmera River Improvement Committee Police Paddock	2,450
Wimmera Toy Library - educational toys	980
Total – General Welfare and Community Services	22,500

Community Development Grants and Donations

Organisations	\$
3 rd Horsham Brownies and Guides (Horsham Girl Guides) - Guide Hall improvements	964
Arapiles Historical Society - digitisation equipment	5,000
Charitable Organisations - refund of rates	6,783
Dadswells Bridge Newsletter	270
Federation University Horsham Campus Nursing Award	300
Gariwerd Wimmera Reconciliation Network - support for network establishment and education	3,660
Haven Bush Playgroup - toy upgrade	950
Holy Trinity Lutheran College Senior Achievement Award	200
Horsham Arts Council - defibrillator, microphones and speakers	2,800
Horsham City Pipe Band	1,740
Horsham City Pipe Band - defibrillator	1,000
Horsham College - Alternate Pathways Achievement Award	200
Horsham College Senior Achievement Award	200
Horsham and District Community FM Radio - outside broadcast upgrade, sound system	1,863
Horsham Historical Society - audio visual upgrade and improvements	3,000
Horsham Lions Club - air conditioner	3,000
Horsham Men's Shed - roof extraction fan	2,558
Horsham RSL Sub-Branch - support new WW2 memorial, DVA Grant	8,000
Horsham Rural City Brass Band	1,740
Horsham Urban Landcare - Horsham Repair Café (upcycling)	1,300
Lions Club of City of Horsham - electrical switchboard and kitchen upgrade	2,000
Longerenong Citizenship Award	300
Natimuk Brass Band	1,740
Natimuk and District Progress Association	1,580
Natimuk Urban Landcare - NC ² garden rejuvenation	3,670
North West Grampians Newsletter	1,580
Oasis Wimmera - support of group activities	2,500
Sing Australia Horsham - Singing with Seniors	430
St Brigid's College Senior Achievement Award	200
The Patch at the Salvation Army Horsham - cubby house at community garden	5,000
U3A Horsham and District - tai chi for seniors	1,000
Wimmera Association for Genealogy	330
Wimmera Mobility Group - group activities support	600

Organisations	\$
Wonwondah North Hall Newsletter	270
Wimmera Poultry Club (Horsham Agricultural Society) - safety upgrade of show shed including power and doorways	4,500
Wimmera Pride Project - support of pride night event	2,500
Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN - Let's Read Horsham	1,500
Wimmera Woodturners Guild - defibrillator	1,000
Total – Organisations	76,228

Events	\$
Art Is Festival	7,000
Beyond Community Inclusion - disability fashion parade roadshow	5,000
Business Horsham - managing mental health in the workplace*	900
Horsham and District Orchid Society - 2020 Spring show*	900
Horsham Agricultural Society - Farmer Bob Buchanan entertainment*	1,500
Horsham Christian Ministers Association - Horsham Carols by Candlelight 2020*	4,000
Horsham Fishing Competition - Horsham fishing competition event support	5,000
Horsham Karen Community Group - Karen new year celebrations (January 2021)*	6,000
Horsham Mother's Day Classic - raise funds and awareness breast cancer research	500
Horsham Motorcycle Club - portable crowd barriers to support future events	2,195
Horsham Rockers - Rockin' at the Races (Horsham Rockers annual dance)*	2,500
Horsham Spring Garden Festival - power supply upgrade	1,000
Kannamaroo Committee of Management - 2020 Kannamaroo festival*	5,800
Makers Gallery and Studio - Makers Christmas market, marketing support*	400
Natimuk A & P Society - family entertainment, 129 th Natimuk show	1,000
Horsham East Landcare Group - On the Brink music festival*	4,000
Rotary Club of Horsham East - Wimmera science and engineering challenge	6,000
Rotary District 978 - Defying the Drift event	1,500
Wimmera and Southern Mallee Careers Association - Western Victorian Careers Expo, guest speaker*	3,500
Wimmera Music Eisteddfod - Wimmera Music Eisteddfod 2020 – hire of Horsham Town Hall*	6,000
Total – Events	64,695
Total Community Grants and Donations Funded	358,820

*Funding allocated, however, event impacted by COVID-19

Business and Community COVID-19 Support Grants

This year, Council allocated grants for individuals, businesses and community organisations to help prepare, respond and build resilience to face the challenging situations that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions have had a significant economic impact on local arts, events, recreation, hospitality, tourism, retail and community groups.

This grants program provided support to affected people and groups located in the Horsham municipality through the following streams:

- Stronger Business
- Health and Wellbeing
- Recreation and Community Recovery
- Business Front Upgrades
- Arts and Events Activation.

	\$
Stronger Business	83,098
Aldo's Joinery	2,000
Best Westlander Motor Inn	2,750
Brown's Video Photography	2,800
Bunjil's Collective	600
Café Jas	4,000
Cat Nap Boarding	1,200
Cooks Manchester	1,000
Earle's Horsham	1,500
Farmgirl Produce	800
Fred and Hilda Kids	1,000
Gateway West Tours	2,000
Grampians Edge Caravan Park	1,000
Grampians Organics	800
Hoof Print Products	1,500
Horsham Autoglass	1,000
Horsham and District Racing	3,500
Horsham Martial Arts	2,500
Horsham School of Dance	2,000
I Do Events Planning and Management	1,500
Imelda Shoes and Accessories	1,091
Kellie McAlpine Remedial Massage	1,000
Lattanzio's	3,000
Mackay's Leading Edge Jewellers	2,000
May Park Executive Apartments	4,900
Menco Hair	1,800
Meringa Springs	2,000
MJM Heave Equipment Repair	3,000
Nourish'd Eatery	2,063
Olde Horsham Motor Inn	4,724
Patchwork Jungle	570
Planet Feelgood	2,600
Royal Hotel	4,200
Sassi Beauty Bar and Hair Design	3,000
Simply Skin and Body	1,510

	\$
Stronger Business <i>continued</i>	
Smart Fit Tailoring and Alterations	3,500
Thai Basil	500
Thea Jane Media	2,249
Wimmera Celebrant	1,091
Wimmera Trophies and Gifts	4,850
	\$
Arts and Events Activation	85,790
ACT Natimuk	5,000
Art is... festival	1,000
Boarding House Studios	3,000
Haven Market	5,000
Horsham Agricultural Society	5,000
Horsham Agricultural Society - 150km Feast	5,000
Horsham College Production	2,500
Horsham Combined Churches	5,000
Horsham Fishing Competition	5,000
Horsham Motorcycle Club	5,000
Horsham Volleyball Association	5,000
Kannamaroo Committee	5,000
Mary French	1,000
Natimuk Agricultural Society	5,000
Redrock Books and Gallery	2,992
Rotary Art Fair	1,000
St Brigid's College Production	5,000
Silo Art Project	10,000
Summer Brushes	5,000
Wimmera Music Eisteddfod	3,298
Wimmera Rockers	1,000
	\$
Health and Wellbeing Grant Stream	20,877
Lets Read	10,000
Natimuk Connections	2,877
Planet Feelgood	3,000
Rural Outreach Program	5,000

	\$
Business Fronts Grants	86,418
Cooks Manchester and Lingerie	3,000
Dooen Road Milk Bar	3,000
Earles Horsham	3,000
East Coast Interstate Removals	2,000
GK Autos and Hire	3,000
Grampians Olive Co	3,000
Gypsy Willow	2,450
Horsham Charcoal Chickens	3,000
Horsham Family Footwear	1,840
Horsham Undercover	1,595
I Do Events Planning	1,650
JNF Freight	1,250
Lattanzio's	3,000
Macchia Jewellery	1,980
Maria's Barber Shop	698
Mick Harrison signs	3,000
Miss Horsham	1,968
Moes Mexican Bar and Grill	2,662
Natimuk Arapiles Shop	1,210
Natimuk Café	5,000
Natimuk Post and Pharmacy	1,200
Norton Estate	2,000
Nourish'd Eatery	2,453
Olde Horsham Motor Inn	3,000
Onya Back Bedding and Furniture	3,000
Patchwork Jungle	1,322
Ploughmans Motor Inn	3,000
Redrock Books and Gallery	2,520
Rick Smith Motors	3,000
Royal Hotel	2,220
Sassi Beauty Bar and Hair Design	3,000
Seers Smokehouse	3,000
Tint - A – Rama	2,400
Wimmera Denture Clinic	3,000
Wimmera Meat Market	3,000

	\$
Recreation and Community Recovery	75,800
Central Park Tennis Club	1,500
Colts Cricket Club	2,000
Coughlin Park Bowls Club	2,000
Haven Tennis Club	1,500
Homers Sporting Club	2,000
Horsham Basketball Association	1,000
Horsham and District Community FM Radio	2,000
Horsham and District Soccer Club	2,000
Horsham Angling Club	2,000

	\$
Recreation and Community Recovery <i>continued</i>	
Horsham Agricultural Society	2,000
Horsham Calisthenics Club	1,500
Horsham City Bowling Club	1,500
Horsham City Netball	1,500
Horsham Croquet Club	1,000
Horsham Demons Football and Netball Club	2,000
Horsham Dog Obedience Club	1,500
Horsham Girl Guides	1,500
Horsham Historical Society	200
Horsham Hockey Club	1,200
Horsham Motorcycle Club	1,500
Horsham Motor Sports Club	1,500
Horsham People for Animal Welfare and Support	1,500
Horsham Pony Club	900
Horsham Saints Football and Netball Club	2,000
Horsham Spring Garden Festival	700
Horsham Squash Club	1,200
Horsham Swimming Club	1,500
Horsham Table Tennis Association	1,500
Horsham West Bowling Club	1,000
Horsham Volleyball Association	2,000
Jung Tigers Cricket Club	1,500
Kalimna Park Croquet Club	500
Kalkee Football and Netball Club	1,500
Kanagulk Memorial Reserve	1,000
Laharum Cricket Club	1,500
Laharum Hall Committee	1,000
Mitre Hall Committee of Management	900
Natimuk and District Gymnastics Club	2,000
Natimuk Bowling Club	1,500
Natimuk Farmers' Market Plus	1,500
Natimuk Soldiers Memorial Hall	500
Quantong Recreation Reserve	1,500
Rotary Club of Horsham	1,500
Sailors Home Hall Committee of Management	500
Sunnyside (Horsham) Sporting Club	1,500
Telangatuk East Hall Committee	600
Vic No-Till Farmers	2,000
Wimmera and District Umpires Group	1,000
Wimmera Equestrian Club	1,500
Wimmera Girls Cricket	1,500
Wimmera Hearing Society	2,000
Wimmera Mallee Historical Vehicle Society	1,500
Wimmera Model Aircraft	1,500
Wonwondah Hall	600



Council Plan

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires all Victorian Councils to prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next four financial years after a general election.

The Council Plan 2020–24 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 64–79).

The Council Plan is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website - www.hrcc.vic.gov.au, or by contacting Council on email 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.

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, the Australia Day ceremony was conducted at the Horsham Town Hall and livestreamed via the Horsham Rural City Council website and Facebook page to celebrate our national day on 26 January.

The ceremony started with a welcome speech by Master of Ceremonies, Simon Risson.

The event included a flag raising ceremony conducted by the Horsham Girl Guides and Scouts, welcome address by Cr Robyn Gulline, Mayor, and Ester Fry from the Horsham Arts Council singing the National Anthem. An Ambassador address via video by Tim Conolan, AM, Founder of TLC for Kids was presented at the ceremony.

This year's Horsham Rural City Council Australia Day Award recipients were:

• **Citizen of the Year – Colin Puls**

In addition to running a successful business in Horsham, Colin has been the driver behind the Sunnyside Lutheran Retirement Village aged care facility for 38 years. His skill to seek out and assist with successful funding applications has allowed the centre to prosper.



Emma Kealy (left) and Cr Robyn Gulline, Mayor (right) congratulate award recipients Bart Turgoose, Robbie Millar and Colin Puls at the Australia Day ceremony in Horsham.

• **Young Citizen of the Year – Bart Turgoose**

In 2018 at the age of 13, Bart commenced volunteering at the Horsham Agricultural Society to begin his Duke of Edinburgh Award for one hour a week, and quickly progressed into volunteering at major events. He is a member of the Natimuk Field and Game and volunteers his time on the committee at working bees and selling merchandise at competitions.

• **Community Event of the Year – 60 Years of Community Rock**

60 Years of Wimmera Rock was a three-day community event which saw Wimmera band members reunite. This reunion was enjoyed by thousands of former and current Horsham residents, along with band members returning to Horsham to perform. Current local bands were also included in three concerts over two nights across the city from Maydale Pavilion at the Showgrounds, to the Town Hall Theatre and Heritage Hall.

The event was challenged by inclement weather and scheduled concerts at the Soundshell were relocated to the Heritage Hall and the Exchange Hotel at short notice.

Australia Day celebrations were also held in Natimuk, Dadswells Bridge and Brimpaen as COVIDSafe outdoor gatherings.

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



Emma Kealy, Member for Lowan (left) and Cr Robyn Gulline, Mayor (right) provide a warm welcome to Vic Tan and Moyosore Kalopo at the Australian Citizenship Ceremony in Horsham.



WSM Early Years Project

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.

In 2020-21, Horsham Rural City Council conducted only one Australian Citizenship Ceremony due to COVID-19 restrictions. Four candidates were welcomed into Horsham Rural City from India, Spain and Romania.

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

Award Winning Paediatric Health Initiative

The Wimmera Southern Mallee's "By Five" Specialist Paediatric Support Partnership was awarded winner of the Creating Collaborative Community Partnerships category at the 2020 Victorian Early Years Awards in November.

The award recognises initiatives promoting collaborative practices to support and demonstrate positive outcomes for children and families.

"By Five" commenced as a response to the 2018 Australian Early Development Census that exposed a growing gap in the school-readiness of rural children compared with children living in urban areas.

Local Maternal Child Health providers and the Royal Children's Hospital created the research-based, shared care initiative to successfully connect specialist expertise with local primary health providers via digital health.

Previously, many rural children were being referred to specialist services in major cities for health and development issues that could be resolved locally. They can now receive that expertise through local primary care services that they trust and use every day.

"By Five" is a partnership between Horsham Rural City Council, Yarriambiack, West Wimmera and Buloke Shire Councils, Uniting Wimmera, Murdoch Children's Research Institute and the Royal Children's Hospital. It extends to over 50 health, education and family service providers working with children, together with the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Goal 1 – Community and Cultural Development



The Sea of Hands event at May Park during National Reconciliation Week provided an opportunity to raise awareness and take a moment to reflect.



Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan

National Reconciliation Week 2021 saw a collaborative approach by a number of Wimmera organisations. The week launched with a morning tea and a symbolic sea of hands event in May Park. On the day, people collected large cut-out hands in the colours of black, yellow and red and planted them in the ground to form a large display. It provided an opportunity to raise awareness and also allow moments of reflection during the planting as to how to support the 2021 National Reconciliation Week theme *“More than a word - reconciliation takes action.”* The sea of hands event ran alongside a display of smaller hands at the Horsham Regional Art Gallery that had been decorated by children.

This year, work continued on the implementation of Horsham Rural City Council Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan supported by the collaboration with Council’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the Reconciliation Action Plan Internal Working Group. A key achievement was the development of the Horsham Rural City LGA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Demographic Profile, co-owned with Barengi Gadjin Land Council and Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative, to assist in providing the data basis for future works.

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

The Horsham Town Hall

The first months of 2021 opened with a sold out performance of The Travelling Wilbury sessions in February, followed by Rachel Beck and Michael Cormick in You and I, 50 Shades and the sell-out performances of Archie Roach and the Melbourne Comedy Festival in May.

In a venue first, it was a great privilege to host local presentations of Longerenong College 2020 Graduates and Holy Trinity Lutheran College Debutantes for 2020 and 2021. Both organisations are to be commended for their drive and determination in ensuring that students who missed these significant milestones in 2020 had their chance in 2021.

The venue also experienced a welcome increase in bookings from organisations during the first months of 2021 in presenting and holding training events, meetings and forums.

Additionally, the Visitor Services Team relocated to the venue in early December 2020. Trialling Visitor Services in the venue took place over the summer with discussion, planning and modifications to staffing, service and space made to accommodate and integrate the service into the facility with an even stronger focus on customer service and responsiveness (page 45).

COVID-19 will continue to have an impact on scheduling, revenue and access to the facility. For an institution dedicated to bringing people together, Horsham Town Hall’s response to continue on and look to the future is a demonstration of our commitment to civic principles and engendering community spirit. The absence of live performance, however temporary, is a stark reminder of the significance of the arts to our culture, providing hope in a time of crisis and leadership in a time of recovery.

We thank the entire Horsham Town Hall team for their outstanding efforts in the past year and we look forward with optimism and confidence towards welcoming audiences, artists and visitors back safely.





Astrid Barry, Collection Officer, and Ben Plunkett, Digitisation Project Support Officer, show off the Horsham Regional Art Gallery collection.

Horsham Regional Art Gallery

The Horsham Regional Art Gallery continued to deliver a significant exhibition and education program this year amongst the disruption and ongoing impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public programs were heavily impacted during the year, however, despite the gallery being closed to the public from 1 July to 30 November 2020, a number of exhibitions were still able to be hung and shared publicly. The program featured the major solo exhibition *Unstable: Megan Evans* and a still life group exhibition *Still Now*, both curated by gallery staff. The Gallery also participated in *PHOTO2021 - International Festival of Photography*, with works by Michael Cook and presented two key touring exhibitions *FEM-aFFINITY* from Arts Project and *Body Language* from the National Gallery of Australia. The gallery's own Collection works featured in a number of exhibitions to create a greater awareness of the significance of the Collection.

Public program events in the gallery were most impacted this year, yet despite this, staff successfully pivoted their efforts toward providing numerous online events including exhibition artist talks, live Q&As, pre-recorded exhibition video bites and virtual tours on the gallery's website

and social media pages. Online live presenting worked particularly well for the Gallery Education programs - Arts Club and After School and School Holiday Programs with online delivery reaching out to kids in after school hours. Workshops were also delivered as face-to-face experiences including the ever popular Mini Markers monthly creative play sessions for children under five which began this year. The 2021 Education Calendar published in January successfully reached out to schools, with term two's program offering a combination of online and face-to-face workshops. The revamped Education Calendar and refreshed program increased interest overall.

From February to July 2021, the gallery engaged a Digitisation Project Support Officer whose role was funded through the Australian Museums and Galleries Association and part of the broader Working for Victoria program. Many of the scanned images from the gallery's collection have now been skilfully edited and have helped further progress moving the physical collection online to improve access.

Following the resignation of the Gallery Co-ordinator in February 2021, the team pulled together and worked hard to ensure the quality of programs, service and offerings were consistently delivered to a high standard.



A combination of online and face-to-face educational workshops were delivered by the Horsham Regional Art Gallery this year.



The Body Language exhibition from the National Gallery of Australia was one of two key touring exhibitions presented at the Horsham Regional Art Gallery this year.

Goal 1 – Community and Cultural Development



Lani and Freya Jones with Cr Robyn Gulline Mayor, in front of their artwork "Wimmera Garden".

New public art adds vibrancy to Horsham Streetscape

Council has installed two new public artworks on Firebrace Street this year. These works add vibrancy to Horsham's Central Activity District and celebrate the local landscape, its flora and fauna.

"Wimmera Garden" is situated on the corner of Firebrace and Pynsent Streets and was created by sisters Lani and Freya Jones. It depicts flora and native birds local to the region and was inspired by experiences walking and climbing in Gariwerd (Grampians) and Dyurrite (Mt Arapiles).

"Nurrabel" by local artist Stacey Rees (featured on the front cover and below), is an acrylic paint on brick mural located on Jos Lane, adjacent to Firebrace Street. It is an abstract impression of the natural and abundantly rich swamplands of Nurrabel, Telangatuk and Toolondo, located south of Horsham where Ms Rees grew up. "As a child, the beauty of the landscape often went unnoticed. Now, as an adult, I see it through a more mindful lens. It's a special place and a place which holds plenty of precious memories," she said.

The artists were chosen through a community expression of interest process run by Council's Public Art Advisory Committee in mid 2020.

Public art and street art have an increasingly important role to play in activating and enhancing the liveability and experience of our natural and urban environments. Council acknowledges Powercor and local businesses at the top end of Firebrace Street for their support of the installation of these new public artworks.



Cr Robyn Gulline, Mayor and artist Stacey Rees at the official opening of the Jos Lane mural "Nurrabel".



Horsham Youth Council

The inaugural Horsham Youth Council was formed in July 2019, following a recommendation from the 2018 Horsham Youth Strategy to establish a representative group of young people to respond to and advocate for issues relevant to young people and to support Council's engagement with them. They have had a challenging but successful term, ending in June 2021.

We are proud of the first Horsham Youth Council's achievements, especially as the majority of their term involved being creative during COVID-19 lockdowns and proactive between lockdowns.

The Youth Council has been instrumental in activating the reimaged building now known as The Station in Pynsent Street, Horsham, actioning the following four key areas:

Interior

In partnership with "90 Degrees Art", the Horsham Youth Council installed a mural inside the building. They chose a bright and friendly mural design, inclusive of all users within the space. It is a fantastic addition, making the space energetic and lively.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Youth Council monthly meetings were attended via the Zoom online platform. The Youth Council took to interior design and were a voice for the installation of technology in The Station to be used for events.





The Horsham Youth Council played a key role in activating The Station in Horsham's Pynsent Street this year.

Furniture was also part of the decision-making. They chose pieces that were versatile and could be re-arranged to suit the multi-purpose space. The different configurations have created a very dynamic space.

Exterior

In addition to the inside mural “90 Degrees Art”, the Youth Council co-ordinated the painting of the contest winning logo for The Station. The logo has attracted street-side appeal and attention for the utilisation of the space.

Stage 1 of the landscape redevelopment of The Station, funded by the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Funding Scheme, commenced in May 2021. The Youth Council are in the planning stage for an official opening and outdoor events once works have been completed. They are eager to hand over to the new Youth Council which will commence in July 2021 to carry on the implementation of the plans.

Events

Between COVID-19 lockdowns, the Youth Council successfully hosted three indoor events in the newly renovated space, attracting 132 young people within the community at The Station since May 2021. This was possible due to the Engage! funding and a successful Youth Week 2021 grant.

Young people were also able to socially connect for two huge gamer events. Gaming can be a very isolating hobby, but at The Station



they were able to come together and enjoy their hobby. Youth in the community also attended a Design Your Own Hoodie workshop, where they learnt various design and printing skills.

Projects

Horsham Rural City Council, in partnership with Uniting Wimmera, secured funding for a Social Enterprise project and the Youth Council brainstormed a pop up café at The Station for “Youth Drop in Nights”. The new Youth Council will inherit this project for delivery.

The Horsham Youth Council was also a voice for Horsham Rural City Talks and hosted a Youth Voice event to provide feedback to Horsham Rural City Council.

Applications were open in June 2021 for the recruitment of a new Youth Council to be formed in July 2021. Council looks forward



to another diverse and productive Youth Council that will continue to deliver on priority issues for young people in the community, and will participate in leadership opportunities and training.



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.

Parking Management Plan

Council adopted a new Parking Management Plan in June. The new plan is designed to help make it easier for people to shop, visit and do business in central Horsham.

Some of the changes include an extension of one-hour parking to two hours, while some four-hour zones on the fringe of the city will become two-hour bays. All short term parking will become a uniform half hour across the central activity district, and restrictions will now end at 5pm instead of 5.30pm. Twenty new Disability Discrimination Act compliant carparks were also added to assist people with disabilities to enjoy the central activity district experience.

It was identified that for many people, one hour is not long enough to complete their shopping, while two hours is sufficient. The changes will allow shoppers time to complete their visit to the central activity district without needing to continuously top up their meter or move to another location.

Considerable effort was made to ensure the public had extensive input into the new plan and a community-based Project Reference Group was established to provide local knowledge and guidance about parking issues in Horsham's commercial precinct. The draft was open to public feedback for five weeks and all parties impacted were consulted.

The new plan will be rolled out in 2022 following the purchase of new meters, re-signing and marking of additional disabled parking bay and long vehicle places and removal of on-street permit parking.

The Parking Management Plan is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

Open Space Strategy 2019–29

Our vision is that we will be:

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

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 our open spaces to ensure that they meet our current and future needs.

Important principles that underpin our delivery of open space throughout our municipality are that public open spaces will:

- Be equitably distributed
- Be accessible and safe
- Increase and enhance opportunities for participation
- Be sustainable, with future growth embedded in planning.

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

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- Establish a vision for Council for the provision of open space
- Establish an agreed hierarchy and definition of open space and play spaces to be applied to the municipality
- Establish benchmarks for Horsham Rural City Council.

The Strategy has been developed and endorsed by Council and work is currently occurring to develop an implementation plan so actions can be delivered.

Together, we are working to encourage 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 or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.



Cr Robyn Gulline, Mayor (left) and Sunil Bhalla, CEO (right) with Commissioner Judy O'Connell (centre) at the special Small Business Friendly Council Initiative breakfast event at Horsham Golf Club.



Andrea Hogan (left) and Fiona Gormann (right) at the Horsham Visitor Hub.



The pop-up park in Roberts Place (above and below) has received great community feedback.

Small Business Friendly Council Initiative

Council signed up to the Small Business Friendly Council Initiative in March 2021, at a special breakfast event at the Horsham Golf Club.

The initiative is co-ordinated by the Small Business Commission, in partnership with local Councils.

By signing up to the initiative, Council commits to:

- Paying small business supplier invoices promptly
- Supporting new local business networks to get started and existing ones to grow
- Helping manage disruption to small business trade caused by Council infrastructure works
- Promoting ways the Victorian Small Business Commission can help, including in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local small businesses are the backbone of our community and making the small business friendly pledge reinforces Council's commitment to supporting these businesses in any way we can.

Relocation of Visitor Information Services

Horsham's visitor information services relocated from O'Callaghan's Parade to a new hub at the Horsham Town Hall in late 2020.

Relocation of visitor information services is part of the vision to see the Horsham Town Hall become a local and visitor hub that provides a range of commercial and community uses, while providing a welcoming and engaging entry point to visitors to the municipality.

The co-designed space will work to further develop exciting contemporary tourism products that will entice our visitors to explore our municipality and everything it has to offer, while taking advantage of the beautiful space at the heart of the city.

Pop-up Park in Central Activity District

A new pop-up park was constructed in Roberts Place this year, providing an urban oasis for residents and visitors. The park features natural lawn, flower boxes and fixed seating made from recycled materials.

The pop-up park is an attractive space for people to socialise, relax and enjoy a picnic or takeaway food.





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.

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 and 1,007 kilometres are formed only (dirt) roads.

During 2020-21, Council was fortunate to receive significant funding from the Victorian Government through its Agrilinks Upgrade, and the Australian Government through its Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (HVSP) and Bridges Renewal Program to upgrade several roads and a bridge in the municipality. Funding was

also received from the Australian Government through its Roads to Recovery program, the Financial Assistance Grants and Council rates revenue, including additional funding committed to reducing Council's infrastructure renewal gap.

The Agrilinks Upgrade, HVSP and Bridges Renewal programs enabled the following upgrades to proceed:

- Wail Nursery Road (completed)
- Drung Jung Road, stages 2 and 3 (in progress)
- Horsham Lubeck Road Bridge over Mt William Creek (contract awarded, works about to commence).

These works have been/will be conducted by contractors and Council staff.

The following projects were funded by the State Government's Fixing Country Roads program in the previous year but were not able to be completed due to weather impacts late in the construction season:

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

These projects were completed early in the 2020-21 construction season.

A description of all roadworks completed by Council this year is provided on page 47.



Works description	Length (kilometres)	Area (square metres)
Road reconstruction (Urban)	5.72	38,864
Road reconstruction (Rural)	10.32	63,972
Upgraded unseal gravel road to seal road	2.84	10,508
New sealed road construction (subdivision)	0.124	1,017
Rural reseals	15.10	93,615
Rural final seals	9.05	56,120
Urban final seals	1.86	12,663
Sealed shoulder re-sheeting	22.64	81,513
Gravel road re-sheeting	26	103,148
Footpaths new (subdivision)	0.492	984
Footpaths renew	1.94	2,709
Kerbs and channels new (subdivision)	0.424	-
Kerbs and channels renew	3.519	-
Kerbs and channels new	0.661	-
Footpaths new	2.22	3114.04
Urban reseal	1.00	6823.20

Note: Urban area average width 6.8 metres; Rural roads average width 6.2 metres.



Goal 3 – Asset Management



Industrial land at the Wimmera Agriculture and Logistic HUB will be market ready in the near future.

Rural Road Network Plan

Following completion of the Horsham Urban Transport Plan in early 2020, Council commenced work 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 community engagement. This was unable to proceed until May 2021 when a series of workshops were held around the municipality. Attendance at these workshops was good in some locations, but as it coincided with cropping, they were not so well attended in some locations. As a result, a second round of engagement on this plan has been scheduled for August 2021.

The Rural Road Network Plan seeks to review the classification of roads in the existing hierarchy, of link, collector, access and minor roads. The plan also includes three new road classifications being:

- Farm machinery – all weather roads separate from the main routes where possible, where there is wide clearance to cater to larger farm vehicles
- Heavy vehicle – preferred routes for heavy trucks within the municipality and connecting to routes in neighbouring municipalities

- Tourism – sealed routes to access key tourism destinations, to cater for hire cars, which in many cases are not able to travel off sealed roads.

After the second round of engagement, the Project Control Group will review the route recommendations to identify changes in the road classifications. As funding for roads is finite, some compromises may need to be made in relation to which routes can be upgraded, and the timing of these upgrades may need to be planned over several years, subject to the availability of funds.

Social Infrastructure Framework

The Social Infrastructure Framework was adopted by Council in December 2020. This is Council's first strategic document for delivering social infrastructure (focused primarily on "built infrastructure") and resets the approach from looking purely at the structural elements of an asset to also looking at the purpose of an asset and how it assists the community.

The Social Infrastructure Framework aims to provide a framework and vision for social infrastructure and to implement a fair, transparent and consistent approach to asset management. It will help to inform key decision-making by Council, along with other strategic documents and tools such as the Horsham Rural City Council Asset Management Tool to inform long-term planning and asset prioritisation.

Work has now commenced to develop a prioritised Social Infrastructure Action Plan which will involve comprehensive, targeted community engagement.

Horsham Urban Transport Plan

Council adopted the Horsham Urban Transport Plan in January 2020. During 2020-21, the following priorities have been progressed from that Plan:

- Council committed \$100,000 in the 2020-21 budget to commence investigations into an alternative truck route in partnership with the Department of Transport, pending its support for that project. The Department was able to secure Federal Government funding, which was announced in May 2021 to progress this work, which will commence in the 2021-22 financial year.
- Road safety audits were conducted on two key intersections, McPherson Street (Western Highway) and Hamilton Street, and Natimuk Road (Wimmera Highway) and Bennett Road. The Plan identified these as two of four priority intersections for significant upgrades. The audits will be used as the basis for further advocacy to Regional Roads Victoria during 2021-22.
- Planning for the Hamilton Street Pedestrian Bridge has advanced to be construction ready. This project is identified in a range of strategies, not just the Horsham Urban Transport Plan.



- Input was provided to Regional Roads Victoria on the concept design for the Stawell Road/Hamilton Road (Western Highway Henty Highway South) intersection.
- The Firebrace Street/Hamilton Street roundabout was upgraded to enhance cyclist safety.
- Planning has occurred in conjunction with Regional Roads Victoria for safer roundabouts in the CBD area. Engagement on this will occur through the CBD revitalisation planning during 2021–22.
- Planning has occurred to improve safety of the roundabout at the east end of Baillie Street in particular, to make it safer for children to cross this intersection, given its proximity to two schools. A grant application has been made for funding of these works.
- A Parking Management Plan was adopted (page 44).
- Priorities for upgrades to the cycling network were identified in close consultation with the Bicycle Advisory Committee. Its priority for 2020–21 was for bicycle lane marking in Darlot and Hamilton Streets. A grant application for these works was unsuccessful, but Council funding enabled these works to commence late in the financial year.
- Continued advocacy for the introduction of passenger rail services to Horsham.

The Social Infrastructure Framework, Rural Road Network Plan and Horsham Urban Transport Plan are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website - www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

Wimmera Agriculture and Logistic HUB (WAL HUB) formerly named WIFT

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased demand for industrial land, Council has positioned itself to recover through making the following industrial land available:

- Wimmera Agriculture and Logistic HUB (WAL HUB) formerly named Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal (WIFT)
- Enterprise Industrial Estate
- Burnt Creek Industrial Estate.

Industry development will be the catalyst to keep people working, keep people in the region and attract people to the region, and as a result, will keep our economy and social well-being healthy.

It is important to note that the three industrial estates have different industry targets and each play a vital role in our region's economy and COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

WAL HUB, with substantial investment from Council and the State Government, will be Market

Ready with final valuations and price determination in the near future. This year has seen further development through a nine-lot subdivision, construction of roads and connection to power and water supplies.

The Enterprise Industrial Estate will require planning works to be undertaken prior to further land being opened up and ready for the market. This estate is ideal for smaller scale development such as trades, equipment storage, and start-up businesses.

The Burnt Creek Industrial Estate, through building on previous works, has commenced planning a four staged proposed subdivision. Council has also undertaken land valuations and a public notice of intent to sell industrial land within stage one of this four staged subdivision.

Goal 3 – Asset Management



The City to River project provides a suite of transformative projects that aim to improve, revitalise and link Horsham's Central Activity District, making Horsham a more attractive place to live, work, visit and invest.

City to River Works

The City to River Stage 1 Priority Works is a \$3.1 million portfolio of projects funded by Federal and State Government grants, together with a significant contribution from Council's 2020-21 budget:

- \$1,650,000 Community Development Grant (Federal)
- \$850,000 Horsham Rural City Council
- \$500,000 Regional Infrastructure Fund (State)
- \$104,510 Sustainable Infrastructure Fund (State).

All three funding programs have milestone requirements to be met, quite often varying significantly, for example, the Federal Community Development Grant requires 25% of the project complete by 30 November 2021, while the Regional Infrastructure Fund requires 50% of construction completed by 31 December 2021.

The individual construction projects to be delivered under this portfolio include:

- Riverfront pathways
- Dixon Drive civil works
- Public toilets and barbecue shelters
- Entrance pergola to the riverfront precinct and a pergola on the Horsham Angling Clubrooms
- Three riverfront nodes/decks
- Landscaping and lighting on the riverfront precinct.

During 2020-21, the following was achieved.

Riverfront Pathways

Council applied for a Sustainable Infrastructure grant to trial shared pathways utilising asphalt with a recycled rubber additive, as well as composite cellulose/plastic outdoor furniture and permeable paving. Although the grant required only 300 metres of pathway to utilise the recycled rubber additive, Council will treat the whole 1.1 kilometres of the riverfront pathways with this product. In addition, the shared pathways were widened to 3 metres along the entire length, to enable concurrent usage by pedestrians, cyclists and mobility scooters. The Pathways Project will also address access/gradient issues at both the Wimmera River Bridge and the Rowing Clubrooms.

Demolition Works

The new Sawyer Park public toilets will be located on the footprint of the existing toilets which will be demolished. The existing barbecue shelters and picnic settings will be removed and relocated to other parks. A contract was awarded for the works in June 2021 with demolition and removal of the structures scheduled to occur in August 2021.

The Langlands Track

Walkers, runners and cyclists can now enjoy more of the Wimmera River after a new track, known as the Langlands Track, was completed on the south side of the river in Horsham this year.

The new 2.1 kilometre sealed surface completes a loop between the Anzac Bridge and the Horsham Weir on both sides of the river.

The track is a completely sealed surface, meaning it is accessible for people in wheelchairs, mobility scooters and families with prams.

The south side of the track is on private land and we thank the Chempaka Group and the Langlands family for their generosity and community spirit in allowing the works to proceed, and for giving people the chance to enjoy more of the Wimmera River.

The project was supported by a number of Horsham organisations including the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Wimmera River Improvement Committee and Barengi Gadjin Land Council.



Council's frontline workers welcome residents with a friendly smile in the newly refurbished customer service area.



Additional lights were installed at the Roberts Avenue carpark this year.

Customer Service Facelift

An upgrade and extension to the Civic Centre customer service foyer was completed this year, providing greater accessibility for customers.

There are new private interview spaces to allow for confidential customer discussions, along with two large interactive screens, enabling customers to access important information on our website and the internet.

The upgrade has addressed major accessibility issues and brings the public areas of the building up to current standards for general accessibility and Disability Discrimination Act compliance.

These improvements enable Council to better respond to the needs of our residents by providing a more modern, accessible and convenient customer service area.

Horsham Aerodrome Upgrade

A minor upgrade to the Horsham Aerodrome has been completed this year to enhance safety at the aerodrome.

Works include pavement reconstruction of part of the north-south runway and the installation of a new backup power generator.

The pavement works have removed a high section in part of the runway which obscured the runway marker lights at its northern end.

A new generator has been installed which has sufficient capacity for both sets of runway lights and the Aeromedical Transfer Station, in the event of a power failure.

The upgrade will ensure that the aerodrome can continue to provide modern emergency services into the future.

The \$211,000 upgrade was jointly funded by Council and a Federal Government grant.

Roberts Avenue Carpark Lighting Upgrade

Council has upgraded lighting at the Roberts Avenue carpark, one of Horsham's busiest areas. With public toilets, Firebrace Street and the Horsham bus terminal nearby, the carpark experiences high traffic both during the day and at night. The new lights have increased safety and convenience for travellers, locals and pedestrians in the city.



An upgrade to the Horsham Aerodrome will ensure that modern emergency services can continue to be delivered in the future.



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.

Local Government Act 2020 Implementation

The new *Local Government Act 2020* received Royal Assent on 24 March 2020 and marks the first comprehensive overhaul of local government in Victoria in over 30 years.

The 2020 Act replaces the *Local Government Act 1989* and seeks to simplify outdated local government processes. With over 400 provisions, the aim of the 2020 Act is to improve local government democracy, accountability and Council operations, including Council's ability to respond to emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic (pages 6-11).

The 2020 Act is being implemented in four transitional stages. Stages 1 to 3 have now been completed, with the final stage commencing on 1 July 2021. As the 2020 Act comes into operation progressively, the various provisions in the 1989 Act are repealed progressively. This means that for some time into the future the two acts will co-exist, with some provisions of the 1989 Act continuing indefinitely at this stage.

The 2020 Act is a principles-based Act, removing unnecessary regulatory and legislative prescription contained in the 1989 Act. The 2020 Act is guided by the following five principles:

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

These principles aim to actively support stronger accountability to ensure that Council meets its legislative and regulatory obligations.

There are a number of new or revised requirements under the 2020 Act. The table on page 53 lists the 2020-21 legislative requirements and their current status.





Date	Requirement	Status/Comments
1 September 2020	Governance Rules	Completed – Governance Rules adopted by Council on 24 August 2020
	Public Transparency Policy	Completed – Public Transparency Policy adopted by Council on 24 August 2020
	Delegated Committees and Asset Committees	Completed – Community Asset Committee and Community Halls Asset Committee endorsed by Council on 24 August 2020
	Audit and Risk Charter and Committee	Completed – Audit and Risk Charter adopted by Council on 24 August 2020
17 September 2020	Mandatory Candidate Training	Completed – All candidates completed mandatory training provided by Local Government Victoria prior to 24 October 2020 general election
January 2020	Councillor Code of Conduct	Completed – Councillor Code of Conduct adopted by Council on 22 February 2021
1 March 2021	Community Engagement Policy	Completed – Community Engagement Policy adopted by Council on 22 February 2021
30 April 2021	Gift Policy	Completed – Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy adopted by Council on 22 March 2021
30 June 2021	Councillor Induction Training (to be completed within six months after Oath is taken)	Completed – Councillor Induction Training Declaration signed by all Councillors on 12 April 2021
	Annual budget	Completed – 2021-22 budget adopted by Council on 28 June 2021
	Revenue and Rating Plan	Completed – 2021-24 Revenue and Rating Plan adopted by Council on 28 June 2021

We are pleased to report that all the legislative requirements for 2020-21 were achieved within the required timeframe.

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence



Remediation of contaminated land in the Horsham Rail Corridor is due to be completed by 2022.

Council will now concentrate on the next stage of implementation. Details are provided in the table below.

Date	Requirement	Comments
31 October 2021	Community Vision	Almost complete – has involved significant deliberative engagement and recruitment of a Community Panel, will go to Council for adoption on 26 July 2021
	Council Plan	Well underway – will involve significant deliberative engagement and Council has commenced a process with the Community Panel to ensure that the Community Vision informs the Council Plan. The Health and Wellbeing Plan will be incorporated into the Council Plan
	10 Year Financial Plan	Well underway – will involve significant deliberative engagement and Council has commenced a process with the Community Panel
	Annual Report	Some changes made to meet the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> – will be completed by the due date
1 January 2022	CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy	New requirement – will be completed by the due date
	Workforce Plan	New requirement – will be completed by the due date
	Recruitment Policy	New requirement – Council has a Recruitment Policy and Procedure in place
	Staff Code of Conduct	Review of existing Staff Code of Conduct will be completed by the due date
	Complaints Policy	Review of existing Complaints Policy will be completed by the due date
	Procurement Policy	Review of existing Procurement Policy will be completed by the due date
30 June 2022	Asset Management Plans	Review of existing Asset Management Plan will be completed by the due date

Whilst the legislative requirements of the 2020 Act have placed considerable demand on Council resources this year, we are pleased with our progress to date and look forward to working towards full implementation during the year ahead.

Copies of policies, plans and a range of other documents adopted by Council are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.



Council is committed to supporting the planning of an alternative truck route for Horsham.



Dr Anne Webster, Member for Mallee (centre) officially opened the \$3.5 million roof over the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange in December 2020.

Advocacy

Advocating for and representing our residents, communities and businesses to 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. An important outcome of effective advocacy is funding support for new major projects and new municipal/regional services.

Throughout 2020-21, Council attracted specific project funding of \$4.6 million to undertake a range of infrastructure and service related projects. The highlight of this was the \$2.1 million funding allocation from Sport and Recreation Victoria for the Nature and Waterplay Park.

Details of advocacy priorities that have progressed during the past 12 months are provided below.

Advocacy – Priority projects for Government and Private-sector investment

To assist with Council's advocacy work, a new strategy was created providing details of priority projects requiring funding support from State and Federal Governments and/or the private sector. This document provides an overview of key priority

projects and the investment required under themes such as Future Horsham, Activating our Natural Assets and Making Connections.

The advocacy priorities can be found on the Horsham Rural City Council website - www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

Zero Carbon Plan

The 2020-24 Council Plan includes Council's ongoing commitment to reduce its carbon footprint and lead through example with energy efficiency initiatives. In February 2021, Council adopted a Zero Net Emissions Action Plan to achieve this goal. This plan commits to a "Science derived emissions target" as its target for greenhouse emissions, and to reduce carbon emissions by 3.5% (221 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) per year until 2050 representing a total reduction of 100% over that time (page 61).

Health care delivery in Horsham and the wider Wimmera region

In February 2021, Council made a written submission to Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Services outlining concerns in relation to the proposed merger being explored by the two health services. Council also met with representatives of Health Care Group to discuss concerns.

It is noted that in early July 2021, the Wimmera Health Care Group Board announced their intention to form a new health service with

Ballarat Health Services, Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital and Stawell Regional Health.

Regional Tourism

Following a State Government review, all Regional Tourism Boards will transition over three years into Visitor Economy Partnerships, under the responsibility of the Department of Jobs, Planning and Regions.

In June 2021, Council agreed to continue as a member of Grampians Tourism and over the next three years transition to the Western Victoria Visitor Economy Partnership, which aligns with other municipalities surrounding the Grampians National Park. At the same time, Council will seek a partnership with the North West Victoria (Outback) Visitor Economy Partnership to support the tourism needs of the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

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

In partnership with Grampians Tourism, Ararat Rural City, Northern Grampians Shire and Southern Grampians Shire Councils, Horsham Rural City Council completed a Grampians New Resident and Workforce Attraction Strategy and Action Plan, 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. The project was completed in May 2021 with the campaign website attracting over 24,000 visits during the project period.

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence



Dr Anne Webster, Member for Mallee, Minister Michael McCormack, Deputy Prime Minister, Danielle Green, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Yan Yean, and Cr Robyn Gulline, Mayor, at the sod turning for the Riverfront Activation Project.

Roofing of the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange

In December 2020, Dr Anne Webster, Member for Mallee, officially opened the \$3.5 million roof over the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange at Burnt Creek. This was the culmination of planning and advocacy to attract funding for this important regional project. A full report on this project was provided in the 2019-20 Annual Report.

Regional liveability

Council has actively participated in Regional Cities Victoria, a regional leadership group comprising Mayors and Chief Executive Officers of the 10 largest cities in regional Victoria. Regional Cities Victoria is dedicated to building sustainable regions by providing strategic advice, co-ordination and advocacy to State and Federal governments. A highlight of this advocacy was the announcement of \$15 million for social housing development in Horsham.

Changes to the local government rating system

The State Government response to the Review of the Local Government Rating System was considered by Council and there were 10 specific recommendations that Horsham Rural City Council agreed to question further with the Minister. The most significant for Council were the continued exemption from paying rates that has been given to mining industries, the need to update the Ministerial Guidelines for the use of Differential Rates, rating of electricity generators and the use of a public

benefits test for determining and reviewing rate exemptions, plus a range of more administrative matters.

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

Runoff into the region's reservoirs were well below average in the 2020 winter-spring, meaning that GWMWater was unable to supply recreational water to Green Lake.

Commencement of Stage 1 of the Riverfront Activation project

In February 2021, Council received a grant allocation of \$104,000 from Sustainability Victoria to increase sustainability elements in the Stage 1 Wimmera Riverfront project, which now has a total budget of \$3.1 million. Works will commence on this project in July 2021 (page 50).

The Horsham Nature and Waterplay Park, a key element of Stage 1, has also been fully funded through a Sport and Recreation Victoria grant of \$2.1 million and a Federal Government contribution of \$350,000. Work on this exciting project will commence in late 2021 (page 50).

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

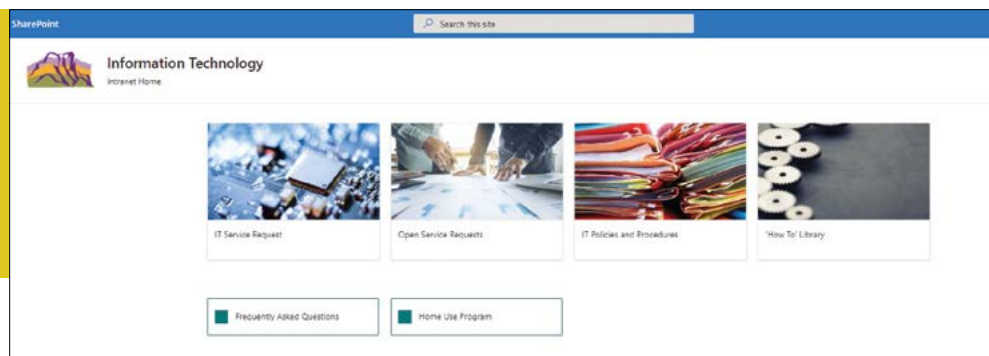
The Western Highway Action Committee, of which, Horsham and nine other Councils from Melton to the South Australian border are members, has continued to advocate

for resumption of the duplication of the Western Highway through to Stawell. Progress on this has been delayed due to a series of legal proceedings relating to the route alignment just east of Ararat. The Federal Government has made a continuing commitment to these works in its forward estimates, which should enable work to proceed once the legal aspects are resolved.

The continued advocacy of the Committee has contributed to the recent announcement by the Federal Government to fund the construction of a major roundabout to improve traffic flow at the key Western Highway/Henty Highway (south)/ Golf Course Road intersection. Regional Roads Victoria has developed a concept design for this, but a date for construction has not yet been confirmed.

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

Council committed \$100,000 in its 2020-21 budget to support the planning of an alternative truck route for Horsham. In May 2021, the Commonwealth Government announced further funding of \$105,000 to support Council and Regional Roads Victoria to plan for a second river crossing as part of an alternative truck route. This planning work will commence in late 2021.



Council launched a new Intranet this year.

Return of passenger rail to Horsham

During 2020–21, a working group of officers from several member Councils of the Western Rail Group and the Department of Transport developed a survey to gather data from users about their preferences/needs for transport services. This survey has been unable to be implemented due to the impact of COVID-19 on travel.

Horsham Rail Corridor

Council has been actively engaged with VicTrack to ensure remediation of contaminated land in the Horsham rail corridor is advanced. Although the remediation, which is due to be completed by 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, together with a range of other groups, has continued to advocate strongly for the continuation of the Overland passenger service. The Victorian State Government has committed funding to continue the Overland service for another three years until 30 June 2023. This limited, twice-weekly service, was historically also part funded by the South Australian Government.

Family violence support and safety hub in Horsham

Council has advocated strongly for a family violence support and safety hub in Horsham. Funding was secured and State Government agency Family Safety Victoria confirmed it would establish a new building at a Madden Street site in Horsham for a support and safety hub service. Construction of The Orange Door has commenced and will be completed by the end of 2021.

Wimmera service providers, Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative, Uniting Wimmera and Grampians Community Health will be partnering with The Orange Door to provide family-violence services from the hub.

Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration Project

Horsham Rural City Council has joined with three Councils in the Wimmera Southern Mallee local government region (Hindmarsh, Loddon 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 12 months including preparation of an expression of interest process followed by a selective tender and an evaluation process, in order to identify a successful vendor. System implementation is scheduled to commence in 2021–22.

Horsham Rural City Council is the lead Council in this project which is scheduled to be completed late in 2022.

Council launches new Intranet

Over the past several years, it was recognised that the Council Intranet was outdated, both in technology and the content hosted on the site. This year we were able to engage an employee through the Working for Victoria program to build a new site and load updated content, and construction of a new Intranet commenced in November 2020.

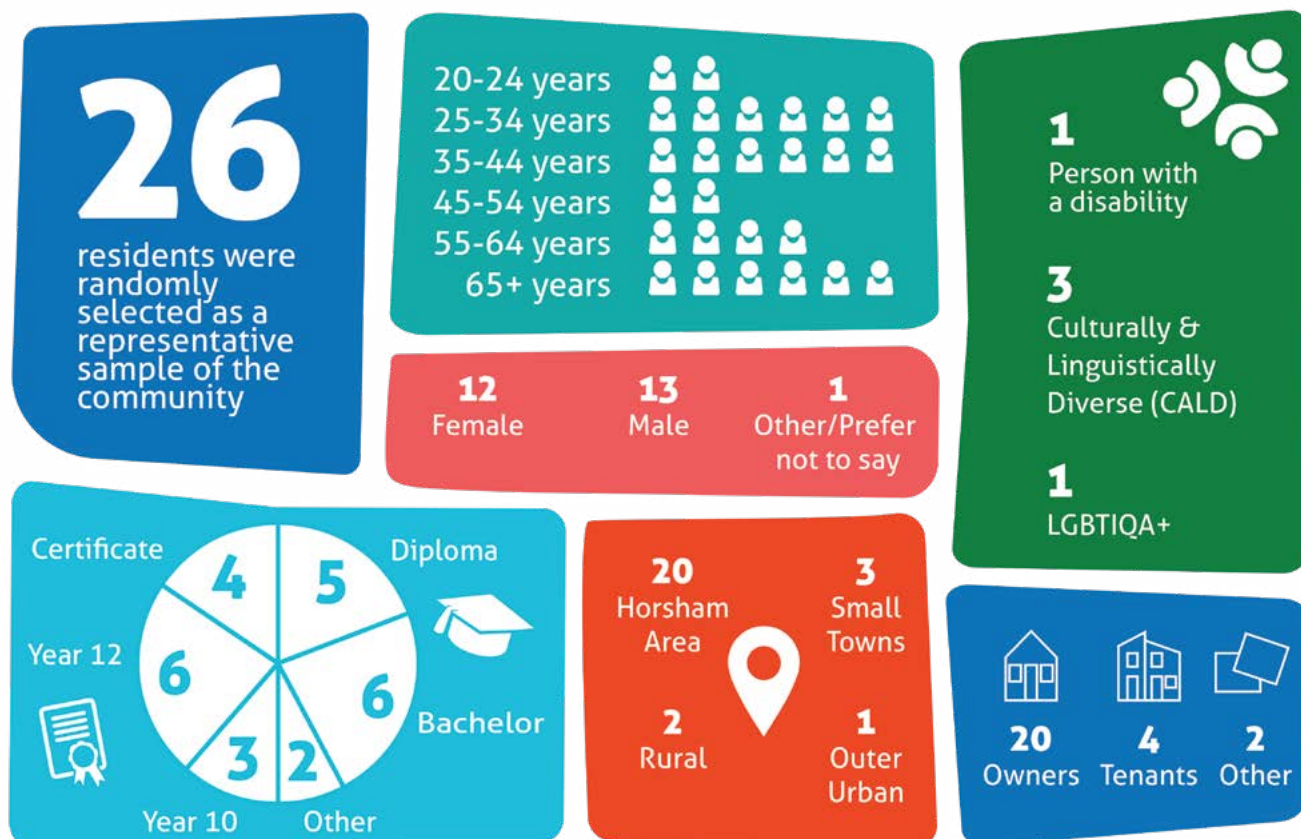
The new Intranet was launched in April 2021, and has been designed to share with fellow employees, information about the services and processes we offer as an organisation. Policies, procedures, meeting minutes, agendas, answers to frequently asked questions and common applications can all be accessed from the home page. This maximises staff efficiency and allows them to work smarter not harder, so that Council can in turn provide a high standard of customer service to our community.

Councillor Portal

To coincide with the commencement of the new Council, a new Councillor Portal was launched in October. The Councillor Portal provides a central point for Councillors to access and collaborate on important documents such as agendas, policies and procedures, forms and other resources.

Goal 4 – Governance and Business Excellence

HORSHAM RURAL CITY TALKS COMMUNITY PANEL



Horsham Rural City Talks Engagement Program

The Horsham Rural City Talks engagement process was primarily undertaken to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act). Central to the new Act was the desire to increase community input into Council decisions. To achieve this, Victorian Councils were required to develop a Community Engagement Policy and undertake deliberative engagement to develop a Community Vision and provide community input into the Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

The engagement process was co-designed with Councillors and Council Officers with many touch points from inception to conclusion. This included the broad engagement activities, recruitment of the Panel, developing the remits and design of the deliberative sessions.

Broad engagement with the Horsham Rural City community was conducted to gather data and information that would feed into the Community Panel process.

The Horsham Rural City Talks - Our Future 2041 community consultation ran from February to May 2021, providing opportunities for the community to have their say through a variety of channels, including:

- Online engagement on "Have Your Say" platform
- Random telephone surveys as part of the Community Satisfaction survey process
- Hosting a community conversation
- Providing feedback via a postcard distributed through Council and community facilities
- Listening posts held at Jung Market and the Horsham Plaza.

Across all activities, a total of 937 responses were received from 926 people and 11 groups. We heard from people of all ages and all areas of the municipality, including those who come for work or to visit. Questions were consistent across activities, allowing for collective analysis of results. The data was analysed using qualitative methods, to identify key themes as a starting point for deliberation by the Panel.

During the consultation period, two "What we've heard" reports were posted on Council's website, providing updates to the community on the responses heard to date. At the end of the consultation period, a final "What we heard" report was produced, as well as a comprehensive Engagement Findings report. These final reports were shared with the Community Panel so that they understood the aspirations of the broader community to inform their deliberations.

Horsham Rural City Talks

our future

Find out more online at hrcc.vic.gov.au/horshamtalks



What do you LOVE about Horsham?

What would make it even better?

Please register to join our community panel to help shape the future of our municipality. No experience/qualifications necessary, this invitation is open to all residents over the age of 15.

You will be paid for your time and travel.

Register now!



Recruitment of the Horsham Rural City Talks Community Panel was completed by consultants, working in partnership with Council. The Panel consisted of 26 members that were randomly selected to form a representative sample of the Horsham Rural City community. An invitation was sent out to every household across the Horsham Rural City municipality. These households were provided with the project background and the times and dates of workshops, and asked to register their interest online or via the phone. Respondents were asked to provide information on their age, gender, suburb, education, housing tenure and whether they were from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. They were also asked if they identified as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, or as having a disability.

Close to 100 registrations were received. From the pool of registrations, a stratified random sample was selected to broadly represent the Horsham Rural City community demographics. This included stratification by age, gender, education attainment, and location, with particular focus on ensuring a fair representation of urban and rural residents.

While the original target for the Panel was between 30 and 40 participants, due to the changing COVID-19 situation that brought Victoria into lockdown, it was necessary to change meeting dates, resulting in a number of applicants withdrawing from the process.

Through the Horsham Rural City Talks engagement program, Council has not only delivered on the requirements of the Act, it has empowered the community to work towards developing an informed vision for the future. It will also provide Council and the community with the opportunity to work together to implement recommendations from the Community Panel.





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.

Horsham Tornado

In the early hours of Monday, 7 December 2020, when most residents were sleeping, a mini tornado swept across the northern parts of Horsham.

The tornado damaged more than 100 houses, in some cases fully removing the roof, exposing sleeping residents to the night's sky. Damage also occurred to a range of public infrastructure including power lines and transformers and street trees.

A massive response from SES volunteers from Horsham and across large parts of the western half of Victoria provided assistance to residents to secure their houses in the short term. These SES volunteers were supported by CFA and other

emergency services, as well as Council staff, including many from the Operations Team. The considerable efforts of all of these volunteers is acknowledged by Council.

In the initial response, Council staff assisted with the removal of debris, such as roofing, fencing and vegetation. The Building Team also assisted with the assessment of houses for structural safety. Council's recovery team, in conjunction with other relief agencies, provided a range of support to affected residents in the days and weeks after the tornado and the Customer Service staff handled countless enquiries seeking a range of assistance.

Follow up activities included continuing recovery support and

some debris removal collections. For many residents, the temporary repairs had to last a long time while issues such as insurance and arranging builders were organised. In some cases this took many months.

The tornado struck a very narrow and straight path, affecting residents in a strip barely 100 metres wide, but stretching right across the northern parts of Horsham, from Florence Street in the north-west, through to Peppertree Lane in the north-east, along a near east-west path including Howard and Hennessy Streets.

Photos supplied by Council to the Bureau of Meteorology confirmed that the wind event was classed as a tornado.





Swirl marks in crops showing part of the impact of the Horsham tornado.



The Murra Warra Wind Farm is one of the renewable energy sources for the second stage of the renewable energy scheme.

Reducing our Carbon Footprint

Council adopted a Zero Net Emissions Action Plan in February 2021.

Council is committed to reducing its emissions by 100% over the next 30 years. The plan will see Council adopt a target to reduce emissions by 3.5% (221 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) per year until the year 2050.

Council's largest sources of emissions are fuel used in transport, electricity and street lighting. Pathways to achieving emission reductions include implementing energy efficiency measures for Council buildings and facilities, transitioning to a lower emission (hybrid) vehicle fleet, rolling out more solar for Council buildings and facilities, and switching the municipality's streetlights to LED.

Council is well ahead of this initial target, in part due to signing up to 100% renewable energy use (refer to next story). Additional measures have included the installation of solar panels at three existing buildings, including the Horsham Town Hall, Aquatic Centre and Mibus Centre. The largest installation this year was 99 kW installation on the new roof on the Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange roof.

Reducing emissions at the Dooen landfill site is also a priority and will be addressed in a separate Waste Strategy.

Council signs up for renewable energy scheme

Horsham Rural City Council has joined a group of Victorian Councils switching to a new renewable energy scheme.

From July 2021, Council will power all of its electricity use with 100 percent renewable energy, including street lighting, Council buildings and sporting and other facilities.

Energy will come from the Dundonnell wind farm near Mortlake and the Murra Warra Wind Farm, when its second stage begins supplying the energy grid from June 2022.

Forty-six Victorian Councils have signed on to the Victorian Energy Collaboration, the largest ever emissions reduction project by local government in Australia.

Based on current costs, it is expected that Council will save up to \$100,000 on its annual electricity bill. The deal is for 240 GWh of electricity over a period of nine and half years.

Goal 5 – Natural and Built Environments



Council operates two cells at the Dooen Landfill site.



Sally Ison and Cr Robn Gulline, Mayor, at the Quantong community centre.

Energy Savings for Quantong Community Centre

Thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Commonwealth Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program, solar panels and new LED lights have been installed at the Quantong Community Centre.

The grant provided funding for a 10 kW solar energy system to be installed on the centre's roof and all internal and external lighting upgraded to energy efficient LEDs.

The installation of solar power and LED lights will reduce costs to the local community who pay for services to the centre.

Dooen Landfill Fire

Council operates two cells at its Dooen Landfill site, the main cell being for municipal waste, including material collected from residents' bins. The second site is known as the hard waste cell, more formally, the solid inert waste cell. This second cell is located on the south side of Ladlows Road, Dooen, and generally receives demolition material and other inert waste such as grain tarpaulins and old power poles.

In the early hours of 18 December 2020, a significant fire was observed in the hard waste cell. This triggered a major response from local CFA brigades and subsequently Fire Rescue Victoria.

The initial response focused on containing the active fire. This involved pumping huge volumes of water onto the active fire area and removing the wetted down burning material using excavators.

The fire was under the control of the CFA until 22 December 2020, and while essentially contained, there continued to be hotspots detected in the underlying waste mass.

Control of the fire continued under Council's responsibility, involving a continuation of the measures developed during the CFA control, including:

- Wetting and excavation of material in hotspots
- Continual application of water to the area using sprinklers.

This became a major task as the hotspots proved difficult to contain, in part due to the nature of the material in the hard waste cell, with power poles providing channels which spread the fire, and grain tarpaulins providing barriers which prevented water being applied from above dousing the hotspots below them. Controlling hotspots and excavating material from the cell continued through to the end of the financial year, in accordance with a plan developed in conjunction with the Environment Protection Authority. Efforts were focusing primarily on extinguishing the fire, but also on preventing a large quantity of tyres at the bottom of the cell from catching alight. Practically all waste material other than the tyres needed to be removed from the cell.

Due to the fire, the cell was closed through to June 2021, and is closed at the time of compiling this Annual Report. This has caused significant disruption to local waste contractors, as there has been insufficient room at the municipal waste cell to accommodate the hard waste material.

During 2021-22, it is planned to reinstate the cell, so that consideration can be given to it again being operational.

Council extends its thanks to the CFA volunteers and staff, including Fire Rescue Victoria personnel who provided the initial response to the fire.



Performance

Council's performance for 2020-21 has been reported against each strategic objective to demonstrate how Council is performing in achieving the 2020-24 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	65%	Funding has been secured in the 2021-22 budget for landscape works in the rail corridor. Waiting on VicTrack to complete remediation works before consider advancing other rail corridor works. Other works occurring in Horsham North i.e. tree planting, urban construction works.
Review future use of all kindergartens and Maternal and Child Health, post the Horsham North Children's Hub	100%	All Maternal and Child Health staff based at the Kalkee Road Children's and Community Hub and former Bennett Road Maternal and Child Health site currently being used for supported playgroup activities. Two kindergartens no longer needed (Roberts Avenue and Robin Street).
Develop a master plan for Dudley Cornell Reserve following the construction of the Children's Hub	80%	Currently finalising a revised community engagement process prior to recommencing planning for the Dudley Cornell Reserve.
Implement recommendations from Innovate (Indigenous) Reconciliation Action Plan	95%	Majority of actions have been implemented.
Activate the Wimmera River Precinct for the community and visitors (including lights and greater presentation)	30%	Stage 1 City to River works are currently being implemented. Planning occurring for Stage 2 City Oval/ Sawyer Park Precinct.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2020-21 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Social Infrastructure Framework	Completed

Performance

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020-21 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Net Cost \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:			
Animal Management	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.	-85	31	116
Social Infrastructure Support	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	678	42
Community Safety	This service deals with matters concerning Local Laws including permits and licences, enforcement and fines and fire hazard enforcement.	187	156	-31
Emergency Management	To prepare for and mitigate if possible the impacts of an emergency on HRCC and the community through good planning and interoperability with all agencies, includes the Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership.	-216	13	229
Emergency Support	This service supports community health and wellbeing during times of an emergency and to support the community to recover from emergency events.	2	-	-2
Environmental Health	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.	94	187	93
Home Support	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.	-1,030	293	1,323
Library	Provides resources and programs aimed at meeting the information, creation, educational and cultural needs of the diverse community of Horsham in an equitable, effective, efficient, responsive and forward looking manner in accordance with the values and objectives of the Library Plan.	581	584	3
Management and Administration	This service provides local and regional facilitation and leadership for planning, developing and delivering community services to meet the needs of the community.	426	421	-5
Performing Arts	This service encompasses the running of the Horsham Town Hall and Horsham Performing Arts Centre operations.	469	343	-126
Visual Arts	This service provides an important visual art resource for the local community and visitors to Horsham through the Horsham Regional Art Gallery.	307	279	-28
Youth and Early Years	This service provides support to families with parenting, health and development, promotion of health, wellbeing and safety, social supports, referrals and linking with local communities.	-302	714	1,016

Performance Goal 1: Community and Cultural Development

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

Results					
Service/Indicator/measure	2018	2019	2020	2021	Material Variations
Libraries Utilisation <i>Library collection usage</i> [Number of physical library collection item loans / Number of physical library collection items]	2.40	2.14	1.86	1.20	This indicator has decreased for the 2020-21 financial year with COVID-19 lockdowns, reducing opening hours and therefore impacting on the number of physical library loans for the year.
Resource standard <i>Standard of library collection</i> [Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100	46.14%	43.11%	45.82%	39.87%	The Library Corporation now consists of two member Councils, where previously there were five member Councils, which has reduced the funding available for library collection purchases.
Service cost <i>Cost of library service per population</i> [Direct cost of the library service / Population]	\$20.87	\$20.98	\$22.13	\$24.53	Increase in financial contribution to the Wimmera Regional Library Corporation, due to limited increases being received from operational grant funding, and economies of scale of business after the withdrawal of two member Councils at end of 2019-20.
Participation <i>Active library members</i> [Number of active library borrowers in the last three years / The sum of the population for the last three years] x100	11.83%	11.06%	10.84%	9.08%	Reduction of 887 active library borrowers between 2018-19 and 2020-21, mainly due to COVID-19 stay at home lockdowns, where less borrowers have been able to physically access the library branch.
Maternal and Child Health Service Service standard <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	101.25%	100.41%	100.85%	101.44%	
Service cost <i>Cost of the MCH service</i> [Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]	\$70.48	\$60.62	\$64.72	\$62.31	
<i>Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children</i> [Number of aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	86.54%	95.51%	88.76%	97.30%	MCH staff have been working hard to improve outcomes for aboriginal families and this is reflected in our data.

Performance Goal 1: Community and Cultural Development

Service/Indicator/measure	Results				Material Variations
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Participation in the MCH service [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	89.63%	90.16%	87.94%	91.31%	
Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit [Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100	New in 2020	New in 2020	100.42%	96.65%	COVID-19 restrictions including lockdowns and stay at home orders have reduced the participation which has impacted this figure.
Food Safety Timeliness <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]	4.67 days	3 days	2 days	1.25 days	
Service standard <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 <i>Food Act 1984</i> / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the <i>Food Act 1984</i>] x100	112.50%	99.41%	90.80%	75.31%	As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, inspections are lower than normal due to restrictions and increased outbreak workload.
Service cost <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 <i>Food Act 1984</i>]	\$666.84	\$650.59	\$767.58	\$569.69	17% increase (44) in critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance outcome notifications in 2020. Reduction to the cost of Food Safety Services as an Environmental Health Officer had a six week secondment to a different function within Council.
Health and safety <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%	93.75%	75.86%	76.47%	

Performance Goal 1: Community and Cultural Development

Service/Indicator/measure	Results				Material Variations
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Aquatic Facilities Service standard <i>Health inspections of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities/Number of Council aquatic facilities]	0	0	0	1	Council conducted one health inspections during 2020-21. In previous years inspections were not annually required under the <i>Health Act 2008</i> .
Utilisation <i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities/Municipal population]	8.20	8.77	6.73	3.03	Utilisation of aquatic facilities has decreased due to the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions.
Service cost <i>Cost of indoor aquatic facilities</i> [Direct cost of indoor aquatic facilities less income received/ Number of visits to indoor aquatic facilities]	\$3.10	\$4.31	\$5.69	\$13.30	Cost per visit at the Aquatic Centre had a 133% increase, the drivers of the increased cost per visit is the fall in facility utilisation by 55% and additional COVID-19 subsidy payments made to the contractor during 2020-21.
Animal Management Timeliness <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]	1.01 days	1 day	1 day	1 day	
Service standard <i>Animals reclaimed</i> [Number of animals reclaimed/ Number of animals collected] x100	45.31%	62.91%	53.10%	52.83%	
Service standard <i>Animals rehomed</i> [Number of animals rehomed/ Number of animals collected] x100	New in 2020	New in 2020	20.73%	28.70%	Improvements to animal management practices and an increase to the number of rehoming agencies partnering with Council has seen an increase to the number of animals rehomed.
Service cost <i>Cost of animal management service</i> [Direct cost of the animal management service/Population] x100	\$19.79	\$32.14	\$16.58	\$18.65	Extra costs incurred by housing the animals for a longer period has increased the cost of animal management services but has resulted in improved animal rehoming results.
Health and safety <i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions/ Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	New in 2020	New in 2020	0.00%	100.00%	Council made one animal management prosecution during 2020-21, which was successful. In 2019-20 there were zero animal management prosecutions.

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
1. Progress implementation of the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal Precinct Plan	90%	1. First stage of works completed well under budget. Work has commenced on a new service road near the western end of the precinct, off Freight Terminal Road, to create “ready to occupy” lots. These works are due for completion by November 2021.
2. Encourage opportunities for the establishment of associated industries including the mining sector	95%	2. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased demand for industrial land, Council has positioned itself to recover through making industrial land available.
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	100%	Enhanced 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)	60%	Routes of bus services in Horsham have been reviewed and changes have been made. There has been 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 staff 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)	75%	Rural Roads Network Plan progressed well, with a series of workshops across the municipality in May 2021 to gather feedback from the rural community. A second stage of engagement is planned for August 2021 for those who were unable to participate in the earlier engagement. The report is planned to be completed by December 2021.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2020-21 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. Funds allocated in the 2021-22 Budget so the program will now be advanced.
Parking and Traffic Management - Parking Plan	Parking Management Plan completed June 2021.

Performance Goal 2: Sustaining the Economy

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020-21 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Net Cost \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:			
Business Development and Tourism	This service provides information and support to visitors accessing the Visitor Services. This area also covers tourism marketing and development as well as promotion for major events and festivals.	354	612	258
Economic Development	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.	174	750	576
Management and Administration	This service provides general administration for all areas of planning, building, tourism and economic services areas.	459	369	-90
Parking and Traffic Management	This service provides management of parking infringements, maintenance on parking meters, car parking fees, fines and associated costs.	95	110	15

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	100%	Long term financial modelling has been completed for all asset categories and used to develop the draft Asset Plan and Long Term Capex Plan.
Undertake master planning and major refurbishment of the Aquatic Centre	100%	Master plan was completed in 2017. Further projects are being included in annual capex programs, subject to availability of grant funding to facilitate works proceeding.
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	95%	Financial modelling and service level definition has been undertaken for all asset categories. The draft Asset Plan was subject to deliberative engagement through the Community Panel and will be presented for broader community feedback in the second half of 2021.
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 roofing project was completed in 2020-21.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2020-21 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Strategic Asset Management - Rural Road Network Plan	Work on the Rural Roads Network Plan has progressed well, with a series of workshops across the municipality in May 2021 to gather feedback from the rural community. A second stage of engagement is planned for August 2021 for those who were unable to participate in the earlier engagement. The report is planned to be completed by December 2021.
Strategic Asset Management - Asset Management System Rollout	Asset Management System is in place and all data has been reconciled with the financial system.
Strategic Asset Management - Disaster Asset Evidence Photography	Data collection process is complete. This has included capture of roughness data on all sealed roads which will improve the planning of Council's renewal works in coming years.

Performance Goal 3: Asset Management

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020-21 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Net Cost \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:			
Aquatic Recreation	Management of the use of the Aquatic Centre, including major refurbishment and upgrades.	863	886	23
Commercial Activities	This service includes the contracted facilities such as the Caravan Park and the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal.	45	86	41
Commercial Operations	This service includes the Horsham Regional 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. This service also includes the operations of the Horsham Aerodrome which provides a regional airport for commercial and private aircraft.	-482	-2	480
Engineering Services	Has overall responsibility for delivery of Council's capital works delivery and annual programming, traffic planning, waste planning, road, street and drain design and monitoring of standards adherence (quality assurance) for the infrastructure.	860	1,181	321
Infrastructure - Rural	This service is responsible for maintaining and constructing roads, bridges and related assets in all non-urban areas of Horsham and Natimuk. This includes the Rural Roads Victoria maintenance contract (which excludes major highways).	1,899	1,905	6
Infrastructure - Urban	This service provides maintenance and construction of roads, streets, bridges and related assets to the required standards within Horsham and Natimuk. This also includes maintenance of bicycle tracks, drainage, footpaths and off-street car parks.	-892	-641	251
Management and Administration	This service provides administration and support services for the Infrastructure Services department.	700	688	-12
Operations Management	This service includes management and administration of the Operations department to facilitate the delivery of core functions and capital programs.	131	152	21
Parks and Gardens	Provision of managed areas for sport, recreation and amenity – includes sports grounds, parks, gardens, the Botanic Gardens and playgrounds throughout the municipality.	2,573	2,378	-195
Sports and Recreation	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 user groups to increase participation.	724	732	8
Strategic Asset Management	Responsible for the strategic management of Council's Infrastructure, including the long term planning of asset renewal and capital works.	751	750	-1
Streetscapes and Public Conveniences	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 fall within this service. This service also provides operations and maintenance of the public conveniences in Horsham, Natimuk and several rural facilities.	1,094	1,218	124

Performance Goal 3: Asset Management

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
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Roads	12.22	10.72	9.80	10.76	
Satisfaction of use					
<i>Sealed local road requests</i>					
[Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100					
Condition	99.30%	99.23%	96.62%	99.30%	
<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					
Service cost	\$50.11	\$30.86	\$30.73	\$36.62	Several of the sealed road reconstructions were on Council's strategic freight route, Council improved these roads by providing thicker gravel depth and several additional culverts for improved drainage, which has resulted in a higher per unit cost.
<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>	\$4.67	\$5.71	\$5.47	\$5.20	
[Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]					
Satisfaction	44	45	39	47	Council was successful in various grant funding in 2020-21 that enabled Council to reconstruct more sealed roads than in previous years.
<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 Local Government Act including seeking community ideas for prosperity.	100%	The new <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> requires deliberative processes to be defined in Council's Community Engagement Policy, a revised policy was adopted in March 2021 and a deliberative community engagement process was undertaken during the first half of 2021. An independent community panel was appointed to develop a Vision for the Community for 2041 and to provide recommendations to Council on the Council Plan, Asset Plan and Financial Plan. The panel was a great success and the input from the community was greatly valued and appreciated by Council even though COVID-19 did impact to some extent on the process.
Respond to emerging risks through the strategic risk register and internal audit	100%	Council has taken an active approach in the management of risk within the organisation. Reports from a range of authorities such as VAGO, the Ombudsman, the Local Government Inspectorate and others are assessed to identify any relevant issues and emerging risks for Council. These are then treated like findings from an independent audit report and responses are enacted to ensure processes are improved.
Manage the implementation of the major revision to the Local Government Act	50%	The new <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> was enacted during March and will be phased in over the period to 31 December 2021. A detailed implementation plan is being followed to ensure that all legislated requirements are complied with by the required due date. To date all requirements have been met.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2020-21 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Governance - Community Engagement Tools	The "OurSay" on-line engagement tools were purchased and have been used to support community engagement activities throughout 2020-21.
Governance - Horsham Municipality Community Plan	Plans to undertake a community planning exercise have been rescheduled and replaced with the development of a Community Vision 2041 which was undertaken by an independent Community Panel and will be finalised in early July 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 three 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.

Performance Goal 4: Governance and Business Excellence

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020-21 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Net Cost \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:			
Accounting Services	Provides financial services internally to all staff, department managers, project leaders, Council, plus delivers external services in the form of information to government and the community and specific services to Wimmera Development Association and the Wimmera Regional Library Corporation.	932	931	-1
Community Relations and Advocacy	Responsible for three key areas: advocacy and grant seeking, media and communications and community engagement.	427	426	-1
General Revenue	Provides treasury management including additional borrowings and interest repayments.	-29,473	-28,688	785
Governance and Leadership	This service manages and facilitates Council's governance services, the implementation of Council decisions and policies, and compliance with legislative requirements. This also includes Customer Service, the management of Council's property portfolio (including Leases/Licenses and land sales/purchases), Records Management, the office of the Mayor and Councillors and the office of the Chief Executive.	1,580	1,674	94
Information and Technology	Provides IT hardware and 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.	1,012	1,005	-7
Management and Administration	This service provides management across the areas of finance, IT, rates and organisational development.	1,507	1,776	269
People and Culture	This service is responsible for human resources, payroll, OHS, risk management, industrial relations and organisational performance functions. Payroll also provides services to three separate Council related entities.	1,073	846	-227
Rates and Property Services	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 and maintaining a strategically focused property management system.	312	347	35

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
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Governance Transparency <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	10.95%	13.39%	18.44%	9.03%	During 2020-21 there was a decrease in resolutions made at meetings closed to the public.
Consultation and engagement <i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]	53	54	41	48	Satisfaction levels have improved post the Council Election.
Attendance <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	87.58%	96.19%	87.76%	96.43%	
Service cost <i>Cost of elected representation</i> [Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]	\$36,317.94	\$36,965.42	\$31,418.08	\$35,874.87	Additional training and development costs required in 2020-21 for first year of the Councillors new term.
Satisfaction <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]	49	49	39	48	Satisfaction levels have improved post the Council Election.

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	95%	During 2020–21, Council developed a Zero Carbon Plan, which aims for zero carbon in its operations by 2050. A series of measures have been implemented which currently place Council ahead of that target. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar panels on the new roof at Horsham Regional Livestock Exchange (100 kW) • Solar panels at 8 community halls across the municipality • Secured 100% green energy in its new electricity contract
Develop a Waste Management Strategy	85%	Detailed planning has occurred during 2020–21 to prepare for the implementation of a four-bin kerbside collection service, with separate bins for organics, glass, other recycled materials, and waste for landfill. This service will be complemented by an expansion of recycling and glass drop off facilities in regional areas. A community engagement process on this proposed service will be undertaken in the second half of 2021.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2020–21 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Waste Management Services - Dooen Landfill Master Plan	Two components of this have been completed. These are referred to as the Dooen Landfill Infrastructure Plan and the Operations Plan.
Sustainability - Waste Gasification Plant Investigation	The Waste Gasification Plant investigation has been deferred. Instead, Council is collaborating with the Regional Waste Group and GWMWater in consideration of options to provide some organics processing capacity, with the potential to provide some waste-to-energy capacity. These investigations are in an early stage.

Performance Goal 5: Natural and Built Environments

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020-21 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description	Net Cost \$'000		
		Actual	Budget	Variance
	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:			
Natural Resource Management	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.	31	86	55
Strategic Planning Services	The function of strategic planning, which aims to strategically plan the municipality's needs is also included.	500	584	84
Statutory Planning and Regulations	This service provides statutory planning services such as planning permits, notice of applications, information certificates, scheme appeals, subdivision costs, administration of building control services including building approval, inspection fees, easement approval and State Government levies.	161	291	130
Sustainability	This service manages a range of sustainability related projects from Council's Sustainability Strategy. A reserve has been established to facilitate future energy and water deficiency projects.	204	175	-29
Waste Management Services	This service manages the Dooen Landfill sites, Kenny Road Transfer Station and rural transfer stations along with waste collection and recyclables collection across the urban and rural areas of the municipality.	-547	-	547

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
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Statutory Planning	39.00	55.00	42.00	63.00	During 2020-21 there was a 37% increase in planning application decisions made, combined with some complex permits, leading to an increase in the median days taken to decide a planning application.
Timeliness <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]					
Service standard <i>Planning applications decided within required time frames</i> [(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100	86.96%	76.72%	85.57%	78.49%	

Performance Goal 5: Natural and Built Environments

Service/Indicator/measure	Results				Material Variations
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Service cost <i>Cost of statutory planning service</i> [Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]	\$3,221.30	\$2,770.27	\$2,898.33	\$2,328.04	21% increase in planning applications received during 2020-21 resulting in a lower average cost.
Decision making <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	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	There were no planning decisions taken to VCAT in 2020-21.
Waste Collection Satisfaction <i>Kerbside bin collection requests</i> [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households] x1,000	63.56	77.27	82.87	89.56	
Service standard <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	1.03	1.39	1.45	0.99	There were 39 less missed bin requests in 2020-21 as compared to 2019-20.
Service cost <i>Cost of kerbside garbage collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]	\$117.81	\$115.54	\$121.42	\$123.97	
<i>Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]	\$43.61	\$61.67	\$61.64	\$68.42	The costs associated with processing of collected commingled recycling are increasing – this increase is reflective of the current state of the recycling processing industry in Victoria.
Waste Diversion <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	22.75%	22.13%	20.49%	19.91%	

Governance and Compliance

Governance

Horsham Rural City Council is constituted under the *Local Government Act 2020* to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community.

Section 9 of the 2020 Act states that Council must, in the performance of its role, give effect to the following overarching governance principles:

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations
- (c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted
- (d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued
- (f) Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought
- (g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured
- (h) Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, Council must take into account the following supporting principles:

- (a) The community engagement principles
- (b) The public transparency principles
- (c) The strategic planning principles
- (d) The financial management principles
- (e) The service performance principles.

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 engagement, public forums and the ability to make submissions to 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, including project funding sources (where available), so people can contribute in a meaningful way including clearly defining negotiable and non-negotiable elements of any subject of engagement and an explanation of why elements are non-negotiable
- 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
- Inform 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. 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 2020* 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 90-91. The following items have been highlighted as important components of the management framework.

Committee Structure Review

Changes to the Victorian Local Government Act provide the opportunity to review committee structures within Victorian local government areas. Under the new *Local Government Act 2020*, there are now only two formal types of committees:

- **Community Asset Committees** for the purpose of managing a community asset
- **Delegated Committees** where specific powers of Council are delegated to the committee.

Other types of committees (often known as Advisory Committees) do not have decision-making authority and are not recognised by the Act.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to review its current committee structure to ensure we are operating in accordance with the legislation. This is timely because Council's committee structure has evolved over time without regular review leading to a broad and inconsistent suite of committees.

The aim of the review is to streamline Council's committee structure, whilst ensuring effective strategic advice is provided to Council to assist in their governance and decision-making. The proposed

methodology for completing the review will provide a transparent and open consultative process that will ensure all views are understood and fed into the Council's decision-making process.

Council commenced a review of its committee structure in January 2021 and activities to date include:

- Desktop review of the activities of the committees to identify the status and level of activity of each committee
- Benchmarking exercise with similar sized Councils
- Survey of all members of the various committees
- Development of a draft Committee Framework Policy.

Next steps:

In 2021-22 there will be further engagement with current committees and finalisation of the Committee Policy and structure.

Community Halls' Asset Committee

On 4 September 2017, a unique governance arrangement for 10 community halls was created that saw the establishment of a Community Halls' Committee of Management. This governance structure was possible under Section 86 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The structure provided an effective framework for each of the community halls to maintain their independence in providing an essential community service – a meeting place for individuals and community groups. The structure also provided support for the hall committees and volunteer members and ensured compliance with the requirements of the 1989 Act.

As a result of a new *Local Government Act 2020*, Section 86 arrangements were repealed (1 May 2020) with existing delegations remaining until 1 September 2020.

Following a review of the effectiveness of the governance arrangement for community halls and as part of a separate project within Council to review all committees managed by Council, a Community Asset Committee was established and a new Instrument of Delegation from the CEO was formalised by Council Resolution on 3 August 2020.

The 10 community halls within the Community Asset Committee are:

- Dadswell's Bridge Community Hall
- Hamilton Lamb Memorial Hall
- Jung Hall
- Laharum Hall
- Mitre Hall
- Natimuk Community Centre (NC²)
- Natimuk Solders' Memorial Hall
- Sailor's Home Memorial Hall
- Taylor's Lake Hall
- Telangatuk East Hall.

One representative from each of the community halls meet at least once each year to share information and provide formal advice in relation to the operation of the hall, usage and activities, promotion, challenges and opportunities.

Under the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, section 47(6), the CEO is required to provide an annual report to Council on the Activities and Performance of Community Asset Committees. Following the Annual Meeting of the Community Asset Committee scheduled for November 2021, the Annual Report to Council on the Activities and Performance of Community Asset Committees will be provided to Council and included in the 2021-22 Annual Report.

Council is appreciative of the partnership with, and ongoing support of, community volunteers and committees who manage a range of community facilities across our municipality.

Organisational Plans, Policies, Procedures and Strategies

This year the following plans, policies, procedures and strategies have been developed and/or reviewed:

Audit and Risk Committee Charter
Communications Policy
Communications Plan
Community Development Grants Policy
Community Donations Policy
Community Engagement Policy
Council Election Period Policy
Council Expenses Policy
Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy
Councillor Code of Conduct
Councillor Media Policy
Council Plan 2020-24
COVID-19 Rates and Charges
Financial Hardship Policy
Fit for Work Policy
Fit for Work Procedure
Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy
Governance Rules
Information Privacy Policy
Parking Management Plan
Policy Development, Implementation, Review and Approval Policy
Procedure Development, Implementation, Review, and Approval Procedure
Procurement Policy
Public Transparency Policy
Rates and Charges Debt Collection Policy
Rates and Charges Financial Hardship Policy
Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-24
Risk Appetite Strategy
Risk Management Framework
Risk Management Policy
Stage 1 Riverfront Activation Concept Plan
Strategic Resource Plan 2020-24
Temporary Measures for Conduct of Virtual Council Meetings Procedure
Working from Home Procedure
Zero Net Emissions Action Plan

Governance and Compliance

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*, Section 139, and more recently, the *Local Government Act 2020*, Sections 53 and 54.

Sections 53 and 54 of the 2020 Act have expanded the scope of the Audit Committee required by Section 139 of the 1989 Act, introducing the requirement for an Audit and Risk Committee with a Charter. These new arrangements cover both the structure and function of the committee and effectively mandate the requirement for an internal audit function.

Council established the first Audit and Risk Committee of the new *Local Government Act 2020*, in accordance with Division 8, Sections 53 and 54, on 24 August 2020. This was one of several key deliverables under the requirements of this part of the new legislation.

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter, which sets out the committee's objectives, authority, composition and tenure, roles and responsibilities and reporting, administrative and governance arrangements, was endorsed at the Special Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 30 July 2020, and formally adopted by Council on 24 August 2020.

The committee's objective is to provide appropriate independent advice and recommendations to Council on matters relevant to the committee's charter in order to facilitate decision-making by Council in relation to the discharge of Council's accountability requirements.

The Audit and Risk Committee does not have executive powers or authority to implement actions in areas over which management has responsibility and does not have any delegated financial responsibility. The committee does not have any management functions and is therefore independent of management.

Responsibilities

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 or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides oversight and guidance on the following matters:

- Council's financial performance reporting
- Compliance of Council's policies and procedures with the *Local Government Act 2020*, particularly the governance principles
- The effectiveness of the management and reporting of Council's risk management and fraud and corruption prevention
- The effectiveness of Council's system of internal controls
- The effectiveness of the internal and external audit functions
- The provision of an effective means of communication between the external auditor, internal audit, management and the Council.

The Audit and Risk Committee has an established Annual Work Program to enable it to discharge its responsibilities effectively, in accordance with the requirements of the Audit and Risk Committee Charter. The Annual Work Program is reviewed at least annually.

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 past 12 months were:

- Richard Trigg – Chair/Independent member
- Vito Giudice – Independent member
- Mark Knights – Independent member
- Cr Mark Radford – Councillor representative/Mayor (final meeting September 2020, end of Councillor term)
- Cr David Grimble – Councillor representative (final meeting September 2020, end of Councillor term)
- Cr Robyn Gulline – Councillor representative/Mayor (first meeting December 2020, start of Councillor term)
- Cr Ian Ross – Councillor representative (first Meeting December 2020, start of Councillor term)

Ex-officio members:

- Horsham Rural City Council – Sunil Bhalla (CEO), 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. RSD Audit have been Council's Internal auditors since November 2019.

RSD Audit conducted a review of Council's Strategic Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan, and completed an audit on Waste Management – Landfill and Transfer Station Operations.

An additional audit was completed by consultant CT Management – Review of the Road Management Plan.

The Audit and Risk Committee also receives regular status reports in relation to recommendations from previous audits to ensure that these are adequately addressed.

Additional to the RSD Audits, Council's Governance Unit undertakes its own internal assessments of relevant reports when they are released from entities such as Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO), Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC), Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC), the Ombudsman and the Local Government Inspectorate. Any applicable actions are identified and these are then tracked like any other internal audit undertaken, thus leading to significant continual improvement. Council considers this to be best practice and is leading the sector with this approach.

External Audit

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

Achievements 2020-21

- Five meetings conducted (30 July 2020⁵, 17 September 2020, 17 December 2020, 18 March 2021, 10 June 2021)
- Annual Self-Assessment of Performance against Audit and Risk Committee Charter
- Further development of the Organisational Quarterly Performance Report to the community

- Development of inaugural Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report in accordance with requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*
- Council's Governance Unit undertook its own internal assessment of the following reports from relevant external Integrity body reports:
 - Victorian Ombudsman's Investigation of Alleged Improper Conduct by Executive Officers at Ballarat City Council
 - IBAC Unauthorised Access and Disclosure of Information held by Local Government
 - VAGO Sexual Harassment in Local Government
 - Victorian Ombudsman's Investigation into How Councils Respond to Ratepayers in Financial Hardship
 - Victorian Ombudsman's Investigation into Corporate Credit Card Misuse at Warrnambool City Council
- Comprehensive review of Audit and Risk Committee Charter and Annual Work Plan in accordance with new *Local Government Act 2020*, Division 8 requirements
- Re-establishment of the Audit and Risk Committee in accordance with new *Local Government Act 2020*, Division 8 requirements
- Governance Compliance Framework – biannual updates presented to Council:
 - September 2020
 - March 2021
- Review of Audit and Risk Committee Member Allowances
- Development of Committee Membership Guide
- Introduction of closed session at beginning of each meeting (committee without Officers present).

Challenges

- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the capacity of staff to address some outstanding audit actions
- Implementation and requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Focus for 2021-22

- Inclusion of Audit and Risk Committee Independent Members on the Horsham Rural City Council website
- Preparation of a biannual Audit and Risk Report for Council
- Completion of all key deliverables as required under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

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.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has continued, risk management and business continuity have continued to be at the forefront of Council's operations.

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

Achievements 2020-21

- Two meetings conducted (7 December 2020, 28 May 2021)
- Risk Appetite Statement adopted
- Risk Framework adopted.

Focus for 2021-22

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

⁵Additional meeting held to address requirements of the new LGAct2020.

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. 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 2021. 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 performance 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 2021	Horsham 2020	Regional Centres 2021	State-wide 2021		
Overall performance	54	45	60	61	Aged 18-34 years	Rural Area residents
Value for money	50	New Measure	55	54	Aged 65+ years	Rural Area residents
Overall Council direction	47	35	54	53	Women	Rural Area residents
Customer service	68	61	71	70	Women	Men
Waste management	70	New Measure	69	69	Aged 65+ years, Horsham Area residents, Women	Aged 50-64 years
Community decisions	48	39	54	56	Aged 18-34 years	Rural Area residents
Consultation and engagement	48	41	54	56	Aged 35-49 years, Women	Rural Area residents
Sealed local roads	47	39	60	57	Aged 65+ years	Rural Area residents

Promisingly, performance ratings have improved this year across all individual service areas – significantly so on most.

Customer service received the highest score of 68 which was a 7 point improvement from last year. Council's overall performance index score of 54 was a 9 point increase from 2020 and this reflects a strong turnaround in perceptions of Council since the new Council term commenced in November 2020.

Council is very aware of the need to improve its performance, particularly around community engagement, and is actively working to achieve improvements in this space moving forward. 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

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
- Writing to Horsham Rural City Council, PO Box 511, Horsham 3402
- Sending an email to 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, 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 2020-21 financial year was \$29.60 plus any access charges that may be levied in accordance with the Freedom of Information Regulations.

In 2020-21, the number of valid requests increased due to topical issues in the municipality. In one case, Council was able to supply documents outside of the Freedom of Information process, and two were withdrawn as applicant did not go ahead with the request or re-submitted as a different request.

How many requests did Horsham Rural City Council receive?

Personal Requests	0
Non-Personal Requests	9

- Six application fees of \$29.60 were paid – total \$177.60
- 2020-21 total charges – \$551.04

What happened?

Part access given	1
Full access given	5
Unclear request, no further correspondence received	0
Withdrawn by applicant	2
Information provided outside FOI process	1
Lapsed after 28 days due to applicant fee not paid	0

No internal reviews were conducted.

Review Applications to OVIC and VCAT

Section 51 (1) review of a decision (OVIC)	3
Section 50 (2) applications to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)	1
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 or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

Procurement Activity

In 2020-21, Council submitted 39 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 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020* totalling \$9,499,684.

81 annual supply tenders were maintained, equating to an annual spend for these contracts of \$6,568,165.

An additional 81 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 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, totalling \$2,914,474.

Combined competitive procurement for 2020-21 is \$18,982,323.00.

Contracts

1. Minister for Local Government, Shaun Leane, approved the arrangements for the purposes of section 186(5)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, for Horsham Rural City Council to contract directly with Victorian YMCA Community Programming Pty Ltd (ACN 092 818 445) for the management and operation of the Horsham Aquatic Centre for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 (inclusive).
2. Horsham Rural City Council was one of 41 Councils across Victoria that received a Ministerial Exemption under section 186 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, in May 2021, for the provision of recycling services through to 30 June 2022, to facilitate transition arrangements relating to implementation of the Government's new policy "Recycling Victoria, A New Economy 2020". Council extended its recycling contract with Wheelie Waste at its June 2021 meeting on the basis of this exemption.

Statutory Information

Documents Available for Public Inspection

In line with public transparency principles, Council makes the following documents available for public inspection. Most of these documents are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – www.hrcc.vic.gov.au – alternatively, please contact Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777 to arrange an inspection.

Overseas and Interstate Travel

A document containing details of overseas or interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than 3 days) undertaken in an official capacity by any Councillor or member of Council staff in the previous 12 months including the:

- 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, Council meetings held in the previous 12 months which are kept in accordance with the Horsham Rural City Council Governance Rules, other than those agendas and minutes relating to a part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public under section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and contain confidential information within the meaning of sections 3(1) and 125 of the Act.

Community Asset and Delegated Committee Minutes

The minutes of meetings of Community Asset and Delegated Committees established under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Note: Horsham Rural City Council's committee structure is currently under review (pages 80-81).

Delegations

A register of delegations kept under sections 11 and 47 of the Act, including the date on which the last review took place.

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 of Authorised Officers, including the date on which the last review took place.

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.

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 Government departments, Local Government 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 2020* and federal legislation.

Promote and protect human rights is identified as a Guiding Principle in the 2020-24 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.

This report contains a section on Preventing Violence Against Women including information on the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance, Act@Work and the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (pages 28-29). 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.

Due to the sun-setting of Community Local Law 2011 (Number 3 and the amendment Number 4), a comprehensive review was undertaken in 2021. Information was gathered from similar Councils, in particular those that had recently updated their Local Law and key elements were noted in relation to consistency for the type of trading activities that may occur on Council controlled land, and changes for the management of areas of complaint such as motor bike noise and the new provisions of the *Environmental Protection Act*. The review identified changes that would better protect the community and enhance amenity. The draft replacement Local Law was presented to Council on 28 June 2021 for approval for public notice. Council commenced community engagement and invited submissions about the replacement local law.

Local Laws are available on the Horsham Rural City Council website – www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email 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.

Collaboration with external agencies and improved processes have led to a 50 percent decrease in euthanizing of animals, and a 70 percent increase from last financial year of adoptable animals being rehomed.

Council now has agreements with three rehome groups supporting the placement of unwanted animals in the municipality. These include Horsham PAWS, Phoenix Animal Rescue and Catnap Kitten Rescue.

We have continued our series of media releases encouraging the responsible ownership of domestic animals and key updates to Council's website to fill identified information gaps. Proactive work with pet owners has led to a large reduction in the numbers of animals being impounded. An electronic option to receive pet registration renewals in the form of an eNotice is now available, giving customers the choice to renew online.

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

2019–22 Community Inclusion Plan

Council adopted the 2019–22 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. 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. Council plays a key leadership role in building a more accessible community and reducing barriers to inclusion experienced by people with a disability.

Statutory Information

2019-22 Community Inclusion Plan *continued*

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 year include:

- The Employment of a Community Inclusion Officer
- Council publications available in alternative formats
- Collaborative planning for acknowledgement and celebration of Seniors Week 2021
- Inclusion of comprehensive information on disability services and accessible facilities in the Horsham Community Directory
- Disability Awareness Training for Councillors
- Improved access to Horsham Aquatic Centre with the completion of compliant/accessible ramp
- Incorporation of Universal Design Guidelines into Council processes such as master planning, scoping of capital works, engineering design and Capital Works Project Office processes.

The 2019-22 Community Inclusion Plan is available on the Horsham Rural City Council website www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

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 2020-21 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 remains committed to providing and promoting a child safe environment. Council has zero tolerance to child abuse and constantly endeavours to maintain a child safe and child friendly environment where children are 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 culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

The Child Safe Standards originally formed part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust inquiry. While Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required under the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005* to ensure that they have compulsory child safe

standards to protect children from harm, over-and-above this, Council considers child safety as an integral component of normal business and part of its fundamental moral obligation to provide services in a way that protects the health and wellbeing of the entire community.

Council's Child Safe Policy and Reporting a Child Safety Concern Procedure are key documents in respect of child safety and can be found on the Horsham Rural City Council website – www.hrcc.vic.gov.au or by contacting Council on email council@hrcc.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5382 9777.

These resources will be reviewed throughout 2021-22 in response to the Victorian Government's adoption of new Child Safe Standards, to be introduced on 1 July 2022. Impacted organisations have 12 months to transition to the new Standards, which come into effect on 1 July 2022. Until then, the current Standards continue to apply.

Legislative Objectives of Council

The purpose and objectives of the Horsham Rural City Council are defined in the *Local Government Act 2020*. The purpose of this Act is to give effect to section 74A(1) of the *Constitution Act 1975* which provides that local government is a distinct and essential tier of government consisting of democratically elected Councils having the functions and powers that the Parliament considers are necessary to ensure the peace, order and good government of each municipal district.

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.4).

- (a) Local government continues to be constituted as a democratically elected tier of Government in Victoria
- (b) Councils are constituted as representative bodies that are accountable, transparent, collaborative, efficient and engaged with their communities
- (c) Councils have the functions and powers necessary to enable Councils to perform their role.

Public Interest Disclosures

Horsham Rural City Council is a public body subject to the *Public Interest 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 2021, no disclosures were notified to Council officers appointed to receive disclosures, or to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

Council's Public Interest Disclosure Procedure (2020), provides details of Council's system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct, serious professional misconduct, detrimental action or misdirected disclosures by Councillors or employees.

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

Governance and Management Checklist

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
1. Community engagement policy (policy under section 55 of the Act outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest)	Adopted in accordance with section 55 of the Act Date of adoption: 22 February 2021
2. Community engagement guidelines (guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)	Guidelines 15 February 2016
3. Financial Plan (plan under section 91 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 10 financial years)	Adopted in accordance with section 91 of the Act Date of adoption: To be adopted prior to 31 October 2021 in accordance with the Act
4. Asset Plan (plan under section 92 of the Act setting out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years)	Adopted in accordance with section 92 of the Act Date of adoption: General: 21 December 2015 Roads: 21 December 2015
5. Revenue and Rating Plan (plan under section 93 of the Act setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges)	Adopted in accordance with section 93 of the Act Date of adoption: 28 June 2021
6. Annual budget (plan under section 94 of the Act setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken during the budget year and the funding and other resources required)	Adopted in accordance with section 94 of the Act Date of adoption: 28 June 2021
7. Risk policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations)	Policy Date of commencement of current policy: 1 June 2021
8. Fraud policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and management controls)	Policy Date of commencement of current policy: 9 December 2013
9. Municipal emergency management plan (plan under section 20 of the <i>Emergency Management Act 1986</i> for emergency mitigation, 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
10. Procurement policy (policy under section 108 of the Act outlining the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to the purchase of goods and services by the Council)	Adopted in accordance with section 108 of the Act Date of adoption: 26 April 2021
11. Business continuity plan (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 2018
12. Disaster recovery plan (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
13. Risk management framework (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)	Framework Date of commencement of current framework: 1 June 2021
14. Audit and Risk Committee (see sections 53 and 54 of the Act)	Established in accordance with section 53 of the Act Date of re-establishment: 24 August 2020

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
15. Internal audit (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
16. Performance reporting framework (a set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 131 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>)	Framework Date of operation of current framework: 24 June 2019
17. Council Plan report (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: 14 December 2020, 22 February 2021, 26 April 2021
18. Financial reporting (quarterly statements to the Council under section 138(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> , comparing actual and budgeted results and an explanation of any material variations)	Reports presented to the Council in accordance with section 138(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> Date reports presented: 14 December 2020, 22 February 2021, 28 June 2021
19. Risk reporting (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)	Reports Date of reports: 17 September 2020, 17 December 2020, 18 March 2021, 10 June 2021
20. Performance reporting (six-monthly reports of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 131 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>)	Reports Date of reports: 14 December 2020, 22 February 2021, 26 April 2021
21. Annual report (annual report under sections 131, 132 and 133 of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements) 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)	Presented at a meeting of the Council in accordance with section 134 of the Act Date statements presented: 30 November 2020
22. Councillor Code of Conduct (Code under section 139 of the Act setting out the standards of conduct to be followed by Councillors and other matters)	Reviewed and adopted in accordance with section 139 of the Act Date reviewed: 22 February 2021
23. Delegations (documents setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff, in accordance with sections 11 and 47 of the Act)	Reviewed in accordance with section 11(7) of the Act and a register kept in accordance with sections 11(8) and 47(7) of the Act Date of review: 24 August 2020
24. Meeting procedures (Governance Rules under section 60 of the Act governing the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees)	Governance Rules adopted in accordance with section 60 of the Act Date Governance Rules adopted: 24 August 2020

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



Sunil Bhalla

Chief Executive Officer

Dated: 28 September 2021



Cr Robyn Gulline

Mayor

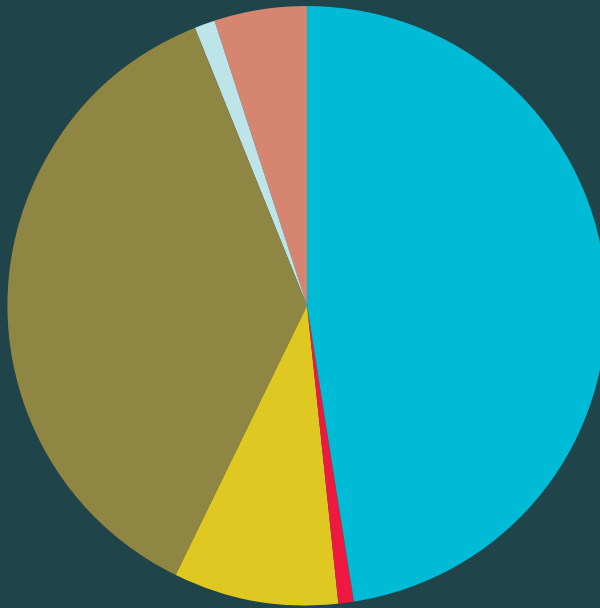
Dated: 28 September 2021

Victorian Local Government Indicators

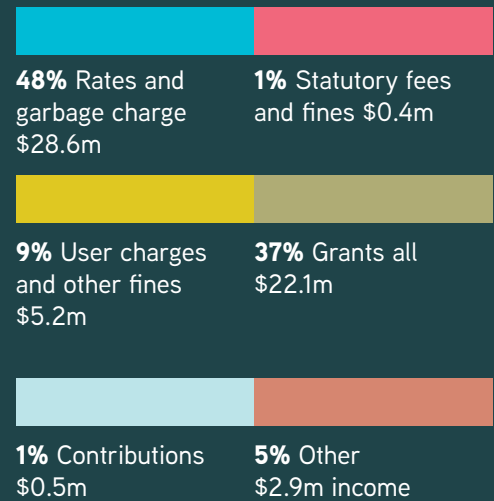
These indicators provide information regarding expenditure, cost of services and infrastructure provision, customer satisfaction and governance.

Indicator		Calculation	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
1.	Average rates and charges per assessment	Total rates and charges receivable at beginning of year/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$2,245.00	\$2,195.79	\$2,147.94	\$2,080.48
2.	Average residential rates and charges per assessment	Rates and charges declared for residential assessments receivable at beginning of year/Number of residential assessments in the adopted budget	\$2,012.08	\$1,971.56	\$1,867.56	\$1,855.91
3.	Average liabilities per assessment	Total liabilities/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$2,107.21	\$2,065.27	\$1,469.24	\$1,524.76
4.	Operating result per assessment	Net surplus/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$246.23	(33.00)	\$434.11	\$512.42
5.	Average operating expenditure per assessment	Operating expenditure/ Number of assessments in adopted budget	\$4,505.78	\$4,305.02	\$4,357.62	\$4,065.66
6.	Community satisfaction rating for overall performance generally of Council	Result from the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	54	45	55	54
7.	Average capital expenditure per assessment	Capital expenditure/ Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$1,224.79	\$1,344.12	\$872.59	\$1,387.02
8.	Renewal gap	Capital renewal/Average annual asset consumption	86.8%	71.9%	50.1%	78.8%
9.	Renewal and maintenance gap	Capital renewal and maintenance/Average annual asset consumption plus planned maintenance	86.1%	77.1%	59.6%	81.9%
10.	Community satisfaction rating for Council's advocacy and community representation on key local issues	Result from the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	No longer available	44	54	52
11.	Community satisfaction rating for Council's engagement in decision making on key local issues	Result from the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	48	39	49	49

Where Our Money Comes From



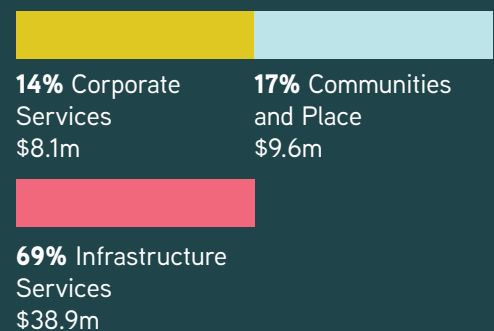
Income



Where Our Money Goes



Expenditure



Council Offices

Horsham:

Civic Centre, 18 Roberts Avenue,
Horsham 3400

P/ (03) 5382 9777

E/ council@hrcc.vic.gov.au

W/ www.hrcc.vic.gov.au

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