



**2021  
2022**  
.....  
**Annual  
Report**



## **Accessibility**

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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

*"The Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land: the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk 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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# Contents

Annual report for the year ended 30 June 2022

Community Vision	2	<b>Staff Profile</b>	<b>51</b>
Report of Operations	3	Equal Employment Opportunity	51
Council Snapshot	3	Occupational Health and Safety	51
Description of Operations	4	WorkCover Claims	51
Major Achievements	7	Incident Reports	52
Mayor's Message	10	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement	52
Chief Executive Officer's Message	11	Gender Equality Act 2020	52
Major Challenges	12	Child Safe Standards	53
Major Changes	12	Number of Staff (FTE)	54
Major capital works	13	Governance	56
Our Council	14	Audit and Risk Committee	57
<b>People</b>	<b>15</b>	Internal Audit	58
Organisational Structure	16	Risk Management	58
Organisational Vision, Values and Behaviours Statement	17	Organisational Plans, Policies, Procedures and Strategies	60
Community Development Grants and Donations	18	Community Satisfaction Survey	61
Council Plan	25	<b>Statutory Information</b>	<b>62</b>
Theme 1 – Community	26	Freedom of Information	62
Theme 2 – Liveability	28	Documents Available for Public Inspection	62
Theme 3 – Sustainability	30	Procurement Activity	63
Theme 4 – Accessibility	32	Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities	63
Theme 5 – Leadership	34	<b>Local Laws</b>	<b>64</b>
Advocacy	37	Domestic Animal Management Plan	64
<b>Performance and Major Initiatives</b>	<b>38</b>	2019-22 Community Inclusion Plan	64
Theme 1: Community	38	Food Act Ministerial Directions	65
Theme 2: Liveability	40	Road Management Act Ministerial Direction	65
Theme 3: Sustainability	42	Infrastructure and Development Contributions	65
Theme 4: Accessibility	44	Victoria's Compulsory Child Safe Standards	65
Theme 5: Leadership	46	Public Interest Disclosures	65
Customer Service Data and Complaints	47	<b>Government and Management Checklist</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Governance and Compliance</b>	<b>48</b>	Victorian Local Government Indicators	68
Council Meetings	48	Where our money comes from	
Council Briefing Meetings	48	Where our money goes	69
Conflict of Interest	49		
Councillor Allowances	49		
Councillor Expenses	50		

# Community Vision

*“In 2041, Horsham region is a vibrant, liveable hub that thrives on strong economic growth and social connectedness. Empowering people to live, work and access opportunities for recreation and culture, now and into the future.”*



## SUSTAINABILITY

A sustainable community is driven by strong economic growth in a healthy and safe, natural environment.



## ACCESSIBILITY

An accessible community is a connected hub supported by an extensive transport network. It is designed to meet the growing demand for services and supports education and wellbeing.



## LIVEABILITY

A liveable community is a place where green spaces are prioritised and specialised services are available to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing.



## COMMUNITY

A welcoming community connects the diverse population and enables all people to feel a strong sense of belonging. It is underpinned by a framework of community consultation and accountable and transparent decision making.

# Report of Operations

For the year ended 30 June 2022

## Introduction

This Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and guidelines of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* 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. It is an important document that provides a transparent record of Council's activities in meeting the needs of the community as set out in the Council Plan.

# Council Snapshot

## City Profile

Horsham Rural City is a regional city in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region of Western Victoria. The Wimmera Southern Mallee encompasses 20 percent of the area of Victoria and only 1 percent of the population. Horsham Rural City Council has an estimated residential population of 19,961<sup>1</sup> people (2021). Approximately three quarters of residents live within the urban area of Horsham.

At the 2021 Census<sup>2</sup>, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 2.2 percent of the population and 90.9 percent of the population were born in Australia. India, England, Philippines, New Zealand and Italy were the most common countries of birth.

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

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 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 2021-25 Council Plan and 2021-22 Budget, set the strategic direction for Council and management and include the indicators that Council uses to deliver key outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> ABS 2021 Census  
– [www.quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au](http://www.quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au)

<sup>2</sup> ABS 2021 Census  
– [www.quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au](http://www.quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au)



**Major Employment Sectors:**

- Health and social assistance
- Retail
- Construction
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Education and training
- Accommodation and food services
- Public administration and safety
- .....

# 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 for community use and enjoyment.

Council’s Strategic Objectives, Strategies, Initiatives and Priorities to further improve the health, prosperity and wellbeing of our community through the provision of services and facilities are described in the 2021-25 Council Plan and associated 2021-22 budget, and reported upon in the Performance section of this document (page 40).

The delivery of services, facilities, support and advocacy to achieve the strategic objectives is measured by a set of service performance indicators and measures (page 70). Council also has a wide range of responsibilities under the Victorian and Australian legislation.



**12,749**  
rateable properties housing  
**19,961 residents**



Connecting family, friends,  
work and play through  
**2,983 kilometres**  
of maintained roads



**7,904 tonnes** of waste  
and 1,510 tonnes of recycling  
diverted from landfill



**7,063 online** service requests  
responded to for the safety,  
sustainability and connection  
of our community



Connected community through  
grants and donations provided  
to not-for-profit groups to  
the value of **\$381,756**



**97.15 percent**  
participation in 4 week  
Key Age and Stage visit by  
Maternal Health Nurses



**1,700 trees** planted  
providing shade for pedestrians,  
habitat for birds and natural beauty



**2,989 footpath**  
and road issues resolved  
for the safety and supported  
connection of residents



**125 animals**  
were rehomed and  
424 collected



**59,690**  
library items loaned



Fitness and social  
enjoyment through  
**77,664 aquatic centre**  
visits



**241,862 square meters**  
of road resealed connecting  
community across our region



**281 birth** notices  
received and supported by our  
maternal health team



**162 Council decisions**  
made with only 14 decisions  
closed to the public



Greenhouse gas emissions  
**reduced by 50%**  
in one year of sustainability  
initiatives

# Services Council Delivers

General snapshot of services Council delivered for every \$100 spent in 2021-2022:



**\$16.82**  
Rural – Roads  
Paths & Bridges



**\$12.70**  
Urban – Roads  
Paths & Bridges



**\$14.93**  
Waste, Recycling  
& Environmental Services



**\$2.48**  
Building Regulation & Strategic  
Landuse Planning



**\$1.92**  
Economic Development  
& Tourism



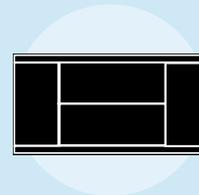
**\$7.05**  
Arts & Culture



**\$13.12**  
Council Governance  
& Operations



**\$12.48**  
Parks & Open Spaces



**\$7.24**  
Recreation & Community  
Facilities



**\$13.11**  
Families, Youth  
& Children Services



**\$3.72**  
Community Safety  
& Animal Management



**\$4.43**  
Enterprise & Business Units



## Major Achievements

### Yangga Dyata – Walking on Country

National Reconciliation Week saw the grand opening of the new Yangga Dyata - Walking on Country Silo artwork. A smoking ceremony opened the artwork with a walk on country following Yangga Tyerrang Street (Firebrace Street) through to Warta Tyerrang Muwil Park (Sawyer Park).

Chair of Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Clarke Family Representative Dylan Clarke noted the important achievement.

*"I believe this is a significant accomplishment for reconciliation week, and is a demonstration of quality partnerships across our region. The Silo depicts an iconic story of our region and connects both sides of our communities to a history that recognises the importance of traditional practices and methods."*

Projections featuring Wotjobaluk Nations' artwork, curated by ACT Natimuk led the way with the walk ending at Warta Tyerrang Muwil Park (Sawyer Park) for a presentation of a new artwork titled, 'Let's take those steps' by local Gunditjmara and Wotjobaluk artist Tanisha Lovett.

Tanisha notes the importance of Reconciliation Week, "In the theme of my artwork we acknowledge the land we are walking on. Where we take our steps, following in the steps of our ancestors. We need to come together to care for the land and take care of each other. It's time to take those steps together to achieve this."

Following the walk on country attendees were able to enjoy live music by Dallas Woods. Dallas has used his song writing as a powerful platform to speak

about his experiences in life as an Indigenous man, the justice system, racial stereotyping and his own personal struggles. With a no holding back approach to writing, the 26 year old uses wit and wordplay to get his messages out, weaving comments on big issues into rapid-fire rhymes. Supporting Baker Boy through his entire career and having huge moments himself through 2020–2021 with his recent releases.

The *Yangga Dyata – Walking on Country* Silo Art Project is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

# Major Achievements *continued...*

## **Asset Management Done Right – National Asset Management (NAMie) Award to Krishna Shrestha**

The National Asset Management Award goes to a presentation or paper at the International Public Works Conference that best demonstrates the most significant contribution towards advancing Asset Management within an organisation.

Developed with a focus on innovation and efficiency, Council has implemented a raft of programs covering both community facilities and open space assets, as well as the council's extensive road and bridge network. From innovative new road repair and maintenance processes, through to an 'Australian-first' implementation of the world-renowned *Dynamic Infrastructure* AI-enabled asset data and reporting system, Horsham Rural City Council has transformed its entire approach to asset management.

Importantly, these innovative new programs are already helping to deliver a range of practical benefits for ratepayers, residents, local industry and primary producers alike, with faster, better targeted and more efficient service delivery, together with significant improvements in asset capacity, safety and amenity.

After two full years of work on development of a base level asset management system, Horsham Rural City Council, is working towards becoming a regional city

with an exemplary implementation of asset system, thanks to the efforts of Krishna Shrestha and his team. Council has been using various sophisticated tools to enable efficient decision-making, based on extensive background work on data capture and predictive modelling. For this effort Krishna has been presented with the National Asset Management Award (NAMie) at the International Public Works Conference in May this year.

Rather than simply focussing on the operational aspects of asset monitoring and maintenance, Council has moved to a more 'holistic' asset management process that includes input from all stakeholders – initially from within the council, and then from the community and local industry.

Even though Horsham Rural City Council is relatively small in terms of population, its road network stretches some 3,000 kilometres and incorporates over 60 bridges. Approximately one-third of the road network is sealed, with the remaining two-thirds split evenly between gravel and unmade earthen roads.



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*According to Krishna  
"managing a road  
network of this type  
is definitely a matter  
of finding the right  
balance."*

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## Four Bin System a Boost in Sustainability and Regional Processing

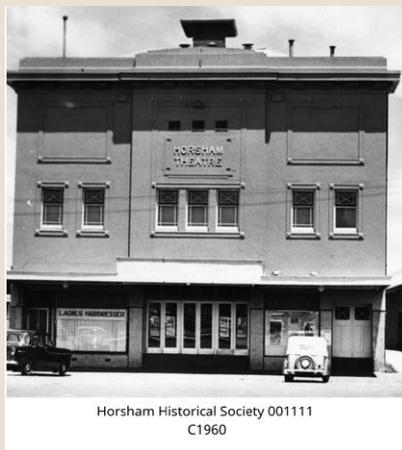
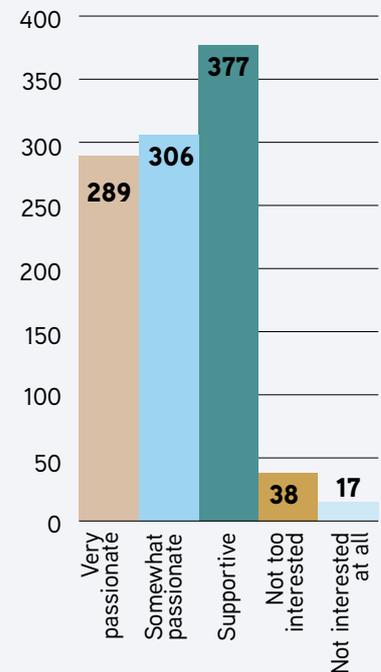
Horsham Rural City Council has started planning for the statewide switch to a four-stream kerbside waste service. Under state government legislation this is a compulsory shift for all councils.

The four bin system, while mandatory has led to significant innovation in terms of local environmental responsibility and sustainability. Discussions are underway for the processing of green waste within the region, reducing the transportation mileage of the green waste and allowing for useable product at the end of the process. Similarly the glass bins will be delivered to a local facility at where they will be processed to fine matter and returned to the Council to be used as road base.

Last year a survey was conducted to determine the frequency of the kerbside collection as well as bin sizes. More than 1000 questionnaires were completed informing the shift and as a result, Councillors adopted the new Kerbside Collection Policy on 2 May 2022. Urban residents will transition from a two-bin kerbside rubbish and recycling collection to a four-bin system in April 2023.

The system will be comprised of a red lid bin for rubbish (collected fortnightly), a yellow lid bin for recycling (collected fortnightly), a green lid bin for food organics and garden organics (FOGO)(collected fortnightly) and a purple lid bin for glass (collected monthly).

**Question 6:** How would you rate your understanding and enthusiasm for recycling and the environment?



## Understanding the value of Heritage

Kicking off with Horsham Theatre, over the next four years Council has plans to undertake a number of conservation management plans.

Understanding the public value of heritage buildings and spaces is important in that they hold social, tourism and economic value for the community. Using the example of Horsham Theatre the intangible attributes such as the use of the

cinema, memorable events and experiences underpin the social value of the places and spaces. Protecting those memories is just as important as protecting the heritage fabric and a critical part of the overall significance.

Conservation Management Plans are a guiding document for the conservation and management of a heritage place. They identify

and record important character defining elements and architectural qualities so as to understand its heritage value and provide guidance to protect these values into the future. They do not seek to 'freeze in time' but seek to safeguard what is important and identify ways of enhancing spaces and keeping them fit for purpose.

# Mayor's Message

On behalf of fellow Councillors and staff, I am pleased to present Horsham Rural City Council's 2021-22 Annual Report.

It can be said that no two people will experience the same event the same way. The ongoing pandemic and the reality for Victorians who spent more than a third of the 2021-2022 year in lockdown, has brought clarity to that statement.

For many of our Council leaders and officers, working for and alongside residents over this past year has also brought a deeper understanding of how our corporate values of being kinder, smarter and fairer can make a difference in the community.

I'm proud to say that the future of our municipality has also received the attention it deserves.

The adoption of the Greening Greater Horsham Municipal Tree Strategy and concept plans for the redevelopment of central Horsham and City Oval and Sawyer Park can be counted as major strategic planning work that has been done.

We've also made good progress on identifying the best routes for the planned alternative truck route that will provide the city with important relief from the ever-increasing number of heavy vehicles in the city. This has included working with the Department of Transport to undertake targeted engagement.

## A year of projects

The more things change, the more they stay the same and maintaining rural roads remains a monumental challenge facing regional councils across Australia.

It's particularly tough in the Wimmera where reactive subsoils mean roads deteriorate quicker. Adding to the strain is the growing prevalence of B double trucks and other heavy vehicle traffic as well

as the increasing dimensions of contemporary farm machinery.

It was tremendous to see the development of Horsham's silo art project which culminated in its launch during National Reconciliation Week. The success was based on comprehensive collaboration between HRCC, the silo owners, our local indigenous community and the wider community.

The artwork, on both the silo and flourmill, celebrates little known but locally significant story of Wotjobaluk man Yanggendinyanyuk's leadership, resilience and great legacy.

The completion of a new 244,000 m<sup>3</sup> waste cell at Dooen Landfill was a major accomplishment.

As a disposal site for residual waste originating from Horsham Rural City, as well as Hindmarsh, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack Shires, the Dooen Landfill is critical to continuity of waste services for the wider region and the new cell will be an asset for years to come.

Nearby at the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal, site works have been completed at the 75-hectare Wimmera Agriculture and Logistics Hub. The WAL Hub has been developed for bulk agriculture and associated small manufacturing and warehousing logistics. With the first stage completed, blocks are now being sold to new and expanding industrial business looking to capitalise on what the Wimmera has to offer.

## Arts and culture

Amid the stop-start nature of the pandemic, the past 12 months have seen Horsham embed itself as the region's performing arts hub with drawcard exhibitions at Horsham Regional Art Gallery such as The Dressmaker costume exhibition.

In between the lockdowns, Horsham Town Hall attracted big numbers through its doors with shows from Human Nature and The Rubens, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Bluey among the highlights.

## Advocacy wins

I'd like to mention some instances where our advocacy has achieved an outstanding result for the community.

We attracted state and federal funding of \$2.35 million to construct the Hamilton Street Pedestrian Bridge along with \$5 million of Commonwealth funding for reconstruction across five of our most important rural connector roads.

We also received a \$2 million commitment from the Victorian Government to create a major outdoor events precinct at the City Oval which will include a multipurpose stage.

Other major advocacy initiatives delivered \$125,000 from Regional Arts Victoria to support a creative partnership between the Horsham Town Hall and our indigenous community. Council also auspiced a community project to upgrade the oval at the Quantong Recreation Reserve attracting a State Government grant of \$175,887.

## Thank you

I'd like to finish by thanking our Chief Executive Officer Sunil Bhalla and all our staff for their ongoing support.

I'd also like to thank my Councillor colleagues for their hard work, stoicism and commitment in what has been a tumultuous and unforgettable year.



Cr Robyn Gulline  
Mayor

# Chief Executive Officer's Message

It is important to acknowledge that it has been another difficult year for the community. COVID has continued to alter the way we live, work and play. We had a small taste of normalcy before record rates of illness impacted families, businesses, homes and schools across the region. The high uptake of vaccination in our organisation was a testament to our staff's ability to band together in difficult times and look out for one and other. However, a winter of frequent illness and staff shortages has impacted everyone.

Services have continued for the community relatively unhindered even with staff shortages. The commitment of our staff to working together and getting the job done must be acknowledged. The organisation underwent a significant cultural audit this year. The cultural audit resoundingly demonstrated that Council staff are dedicated to this community and hold the needs of the community front of mind at all times. It is important for the community to understand and recognise the dedication of the staff to their needs and to ensuring a transparent and accountable organisation.

From an operational perspective, it has been a big year at Horsham Rural City Council with the completed implementation of the new Local Government Act 2020. This has seen the Council's adoption of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and Long Term Asset Plan. We have implemented a number of significant plans and strategies around roads and managed to secure significant funding for the improvement of a number of our rural roads. The time taken to engage in these planning processes sets us up to be ready in the bid to secure further government grants moving forward. In addition to this our reporting process allows our activities to be clear and transparent to the community.

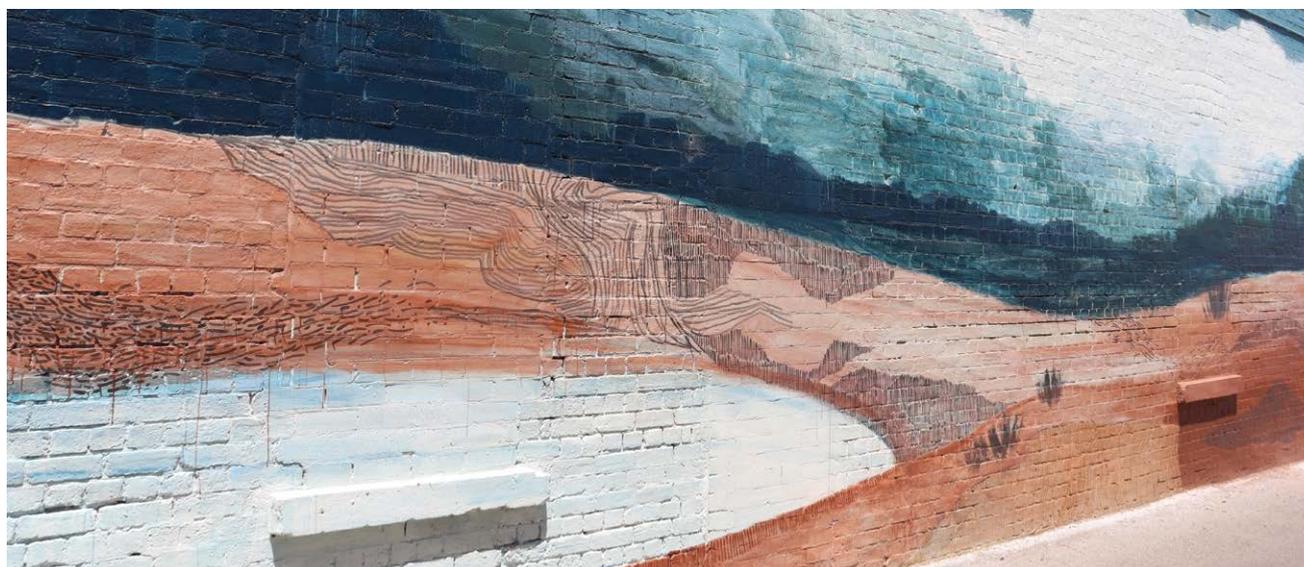
Although the year has been packed with numerous achievements, it goes without saying that the highlight of the year was the grand opening of the new *Yangga Dyata - Walking on Country* Silo artwork. The opening commenced with a smoking ceremony and walk on country following Yangga Tyerrang Street (the temporarily renamed Firebrace Street) through to Warta Tyerrang Mulwil Park (Sawyer Park).

The silo artwork is the culmination of extensive partnership works with Barenji Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Horsham Rural City Council. The Chair of Barenji Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Clarke Family Representative Dylan Clarke noted the important achievement. The silo opening saw a significant community turnout with many travellers now stopping in Horsham to view the silo. We are truly privileged to have this incredible legacy of reconciliation, resilience, acknowledgement and respect on display in our community.

I would like to thank the staff and councillors for their incredible efforts in another challenging year.



Sunil Bhalla  
Chief Executive Officer



# Major Challenges

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

Staff shortages in the Early Years Sector (a state wide issue) has continued to present challenges to families in the community. COVID continued to have a significant

impact on attendances at the Horsham Aquatic Centre and the Horsham Town Hall which has financial implications for Council.

Staff turnover in key areas such as the Project Office impacted on delivery of key capital works projects and planning. Supply shortages in the construction industry have also had an impact on the timely completion of works. The increase in demand for capital projects to be delivered from COVID stimulus also created

market shortages of contractors which posed a challenge to the completion of works.

COVID infection and higher than previous years waves of illness has impacted staff resourcing with the need to isolate as a result of illness and infections.

Council are taking a risk management approach to this by monitoring changes and implementing various instructions as needed.

# Major Changes

## Integration of Health and Wellbeing Plan

Horsham Rural City Council understands the health and wellbeing of our community underpins all that we do. Therefore, 2021 has seen Council integrate the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan into the Council Plan for the first time. This approach, in accordance with Section 26 of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, recognises both the important role and natural alignment of health and wellbeing in all aspects of Council work along with the increase in efficiency of planning processes. Delivery of health and wellbeing inherently promotes collaboration with local organisations to maximise the health and wellbeing outcomes for our community. The health and wellbeing priorities for

Horsham Rural City Council are (in no particular order):

- Increasing healthy eating and active living
- Reducing harmful alcohol and drug use
- Preventing family violence
- Improving mental health/social connection
- Improving sexual and reproductive health
- Improving early years and education outcomes
- Strengthening economic development
- Tackling climate change
- Improving Aboriginal health and wellbeing

## Hybrid Working Environment

COVID has seen a shift to a hybrid working environment. The success of productivity remaining high with staff working from home has seen a number of staff choosing more flexible work arrangement.

Flexible arrangements have a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of staff.



## Major capital works

This year, Horsham Rural City Council spent \$15,091,973 on capital works throughout the municipality as part of improving accessibility, connection and sustainability for the community. The table below provides details of some of the capital works projects that Council funded during 2021-22.

<b>Major Capital Works</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
Rural Roads – Roads to Recovery Program	1,163,996
Rural Bridges – Roads to Recovery Program	15,553
Rural Bridges	360,898
Rural Roads	1,711,149
Urban Roads – Roads to Recovery Program	171,043
Urban Roads	1,399,704
Industrial Estate Roads	1,177,176
Completion Putrescible Waste Cell 3	920,492
Land purchase	6,986
Horsham Cinema/Mechanic Institute works	36,701
The Station Refurbishment	67,176
Town Hall Sound Banners and Lighting	159,855
Replacement two new Public Convenience	556,907
Buildings Solar Roofing	19,461
Miscellaneous Building Works	149,211
Pergola structures – Wimmera River	239,992
Barbecue structures – Wimmera River	420,704
Miscellaneous Parks and Gardens	19,702
Off Street Car park	35,225
Caravan Park Improvements	44,000
Plant and Equipment replacements	2,334,027
Furniture and equipment	412,066
Works in Progress	3,320,480
Public Art Purchases	310,155
Art Purchases	39,314
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,091,973</b>



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



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



**Cr David Bowe**  
**First elected:** 24 October 2020  
 david.bowe@hrcc.vic.gov.au  
 437 894 605

## 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 seven Councillors are the elected representatives of all residents and ratepayers across the municipality. They have responsibility for setting the strategic direction for the municipality, policy development, identifying service standards and monitoring performance across the organisation. The Mayor is elected for a one-year period each November and is voted in by the Councillors.

Our Councillors are listed here.



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



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



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



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



**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

**Our People**  
**Organisational Structure**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) leads an Executive Management Team which includes three Directors. The team plans, coordinates and monitors the progress of Council's goals and strategic direction and manages day-to-day business activities. Directors are accountable to the CEO for effective and efficient management of their portfolios and the collective delivery of the Council Plan.

**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**

**John Martin**

BE (Agric)

**Engineering Services**

- Engineering Design
- Facilities management
- Project Office

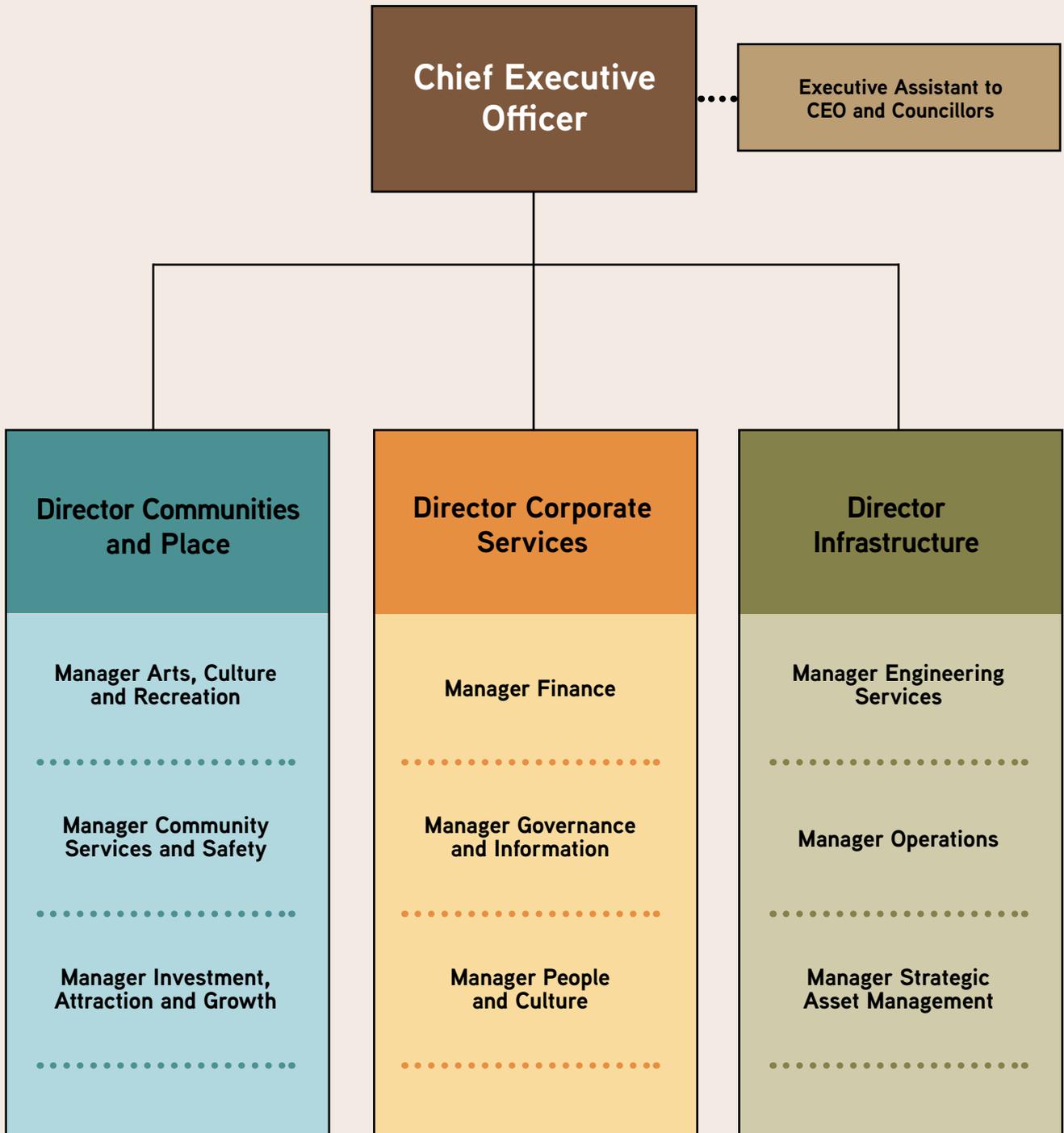
**Operations**

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

**Strategic Asset Management**

- Assets
- Fleet
- Waste and Sustainability

# 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

#### 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

### ACCOUNTABILITY

We are responsible for our behaviour and actions

#### MY BEHAVIOUR

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

### INTEGRITY

We are ethical, transparent and honest in our conduct

#### MY BEHAVIOUR

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

### RESPECT

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

#### 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

# Community Development Grants and Donations

Council's Community Development Grants and Donations program allocates funding to local not-for-profit organisations, groups and associations every year. The program helps groups in the Horsham and district community to improve community facilities and events, and work together for more engaged and healthy communities. Council provided a total of \$388,903 in Community Grants and Donations this year. Details are provided below.

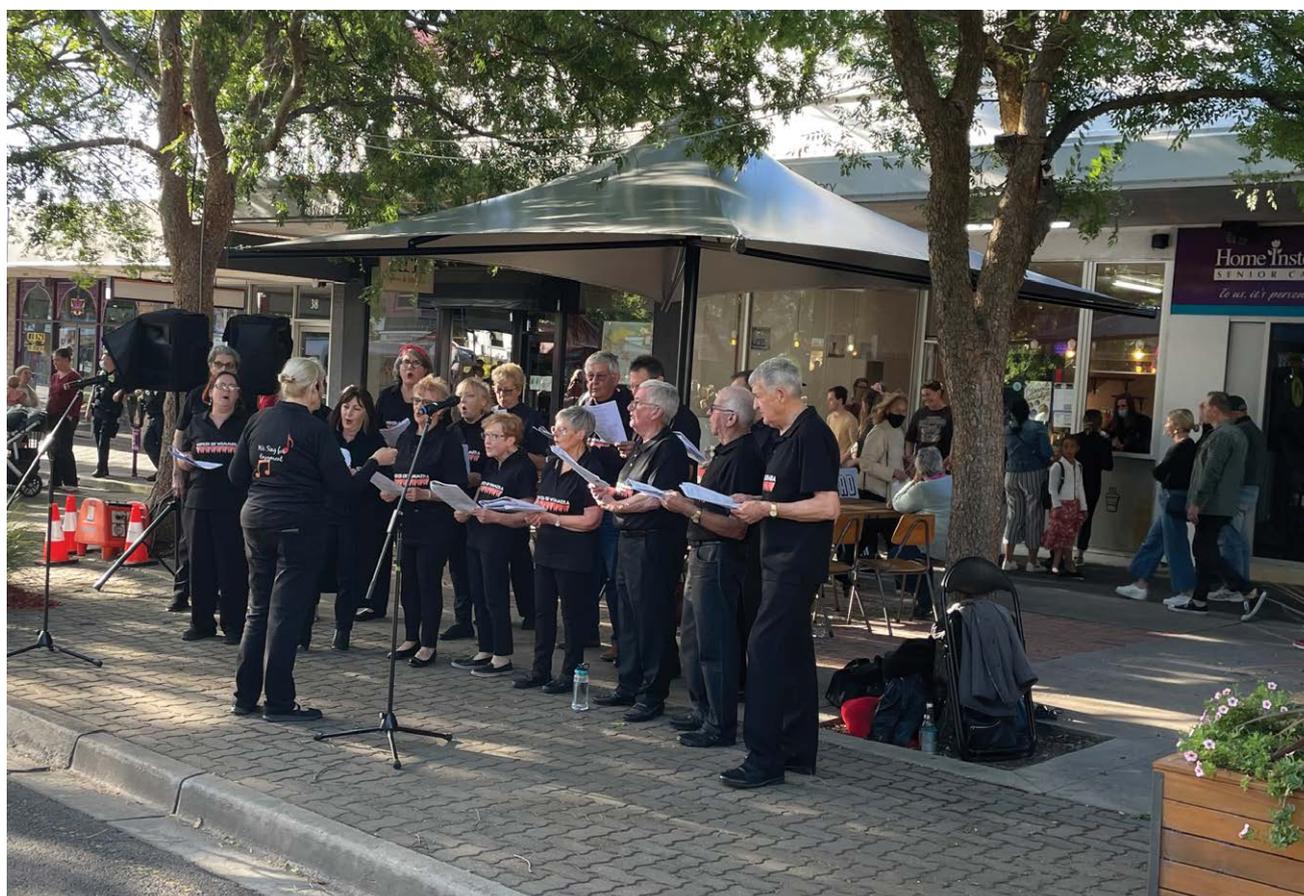
Sport and Recreation	Donations (\$)	Grants (\$)
Natimuk Climbing Club		4,118
Horsham Table Tennis Association Inc.		4,000
Noradjuha Recreation Reserve Committee		1,620
Coughlin Park Committee of Management		5,400
Wimmera Equestrian Club		5,000
Central Park Tennis Club		2,498
Horsham City Bowling Club Inc.		5,000
Natimuk Golf Club		880
Horsham Golf Club		1,500
Laharum Sports Inc.		3,810
Wimmera Kart Racing Club Inc.		4,800
Horsham Croquet Club Inc.		5,000
Sunnyside Horsham Bowling Club		1,333
Horsham City Rowing Club Inc.		1,751
Riding for the Disabled Association Horsham		1,364
Riverside Recreation Reserve		5,000
Horsham Swimming Club		3,710
Homers Sporting Club Inc.		8,500
Natimuk Bowling Club Inc.		2,000
Toolondo Golf Club		3,000
Taylor's Lake Football Netball Club		5,794
Noradjuha Quantong Football Netball Club		8,367
Specific Donation - Horsham Basketball Stadium (Lease)	15,500	

<b>Community maintained Recreation Reserve maintenance allocation</b>	<b>Donations (\$)</b>	<b>Grants (\$)</b>
Clear Lake	530	
Dock Lake	12,530	
Dooen Recreation Reserve	530	
Laharum	12,530	
Kalkee	6,265	
Pimpinio	6,265	
Quantong	12,530	
Riverside (Equestrian Outdoor Surface)	530	
Noradjuha	3,110	
Natimuk Showgrounds	6,265	
Toolondo	530	
Coughlin Park (HRCC allocation of outdoor staff resources)	11,987	
<b>Total Community Grants for Sport and Recreation</b>	<b>89,102</b>	<b>84,445</b>
<b>Halls Infrastructure</b>	<b>Donations (\$)</b>	<b>Grants (\$)</b>
Dooen Public Hall		7,493
Laharum Hall Committee		3,000
Natimuk & District Soldiers Memorial Hall		5,055
Wonwondah Hall		1,000
Insurance levy for Public Halls	11,004	
Insurance levy for other community groups	8,175	
<b>Total Community Grants for Halls</b>	<b>19,179</b>	<b>16,548</b>
<b>Kindergartens</b>	<b>Donations (\$)</b>	<b>Grants (\$)</b>
Bennett Rd Kindergarten	1,050	
Green Park Casuarina Kindergarten	3,725	
Natimuk Rd Pre-School	4,485	
Maintenance Grants of \$883 for Council's 6 Kindergartens	5,298	
<b>Total Community Grants for Kindergartens</b>	<b>14,558</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>General Welfare and Community Services</b>	<b>Donations (\$)</b>	<b>Grants (\$)</b>
Christian Emergency Food Centre Inc.	5,075	
Horsham College Chaplaincy Committee	5,800	
Wimmera River Imp Committee	8,485	
Wimmera River Imp Committee-Police paddock	2,490	
<b>Total Community Grants for General Welfare and Community Services</b>	<b>21,850</b>	<b>0</b>

## Community Development Grants and Donations *continued...*

Organisations	Donations (\$)	Grants (\$)
Arapiles Historical Society		2,500
Arapiles Community Theatre (ACT) Natimuk		5,000
Gariwerd Wimmera Reconciliation Network		3,925
Horsham Agricultural Society		6,000
Horsham Angling Club		10,000
Horsham Arts Council		4,000
Horsham Camera Club		1,755
Horsham Dog Obedience Club		588
Horsham Girl Guides		983
Horsham Historical Society Inc.		2,500
Lions Club of City of Horsham Inc.		1,000
Horsham Men's Shed		1,860
Horsham Rural City Brass Band		2,499
Makers Gallery and Studio Inc.		1,000
Natimuk Showgrounds Management Committee		6,000
Natimuk Urban Landcare (NUL) Group		5,000
North West Grampians Lions Club of Horsham		1,500
Oasis Wimmera		1,800
Phoenix Animal Rescue Horsham		985
Smart Artz Theatre Inc.		4,633
The Salvation Army		4,000
U3A Horsham & District Inc.		999
Wimmera Association for Genealogy	335	
Wimmera Hearing Society Inc.		2,260
Wimmera Model Aircraft Association		5,000
Horsham City Pipe Band	1,770	
Horsham Rural City Brass Band	1,770	
Natimuk Brass Band	1,770	
Dadswells Bridge Hall - newsletter	275	
Natimuk & District Progress Association	1,770	
North West Grampians Newsletter	1,770	
Wonwondah North Hall - Newsletter	275	
Charitable Organisations - refund of rates (Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, Axis Worx, Jacobs Well)	6,225	
Federation University Horsham Campus - Nursing award	300	
Longerenong Citizenship Prize	300	
Horsham Secondary College Senior Achievement Award	200	
Horsham College - Alternate Pathways Achievement Award	200	
St Brigid's College Senior Achievement Award	200	
Holy Trinity Lutheran College Senior Achievement Award	200	
<b>Total Community Grants to Organisations</b>	<b>17,360</b>	<b>75,787</b>

Events	Donations (\$)	Grants (\$)
Ace Radio		682
Arapiles Community Theatre Nati Frinj		4,336
Arapiles Cycling Event Committee		638
Art Is Festival		7,000
Horsham Calisthenics College		1,300
Horsham Christian Ministers Association	4,060	
Horsham Fishing Competition Inc.		5,000
Horsham Lawn Tennis Club		750
Kannamaroo Committee of Management		6,000
Karen New Year		6,000
Operation 19:14 Action Team		1,398
WestVic Academy of Sport		425
Wimmera Hospice Care Auxiliary		900
Wimmera Pride Project		2,385
Wimmera & Southern Mallee Careers Expo		2,200
Wimmera Music Eisteddfod		6,000
Mother's Day Classic		1,000
<b>Total Community Grants for Events</b>	<b>4,060</b>	<b>46,014</b>
<b>SUB - TOTALS</b>	<b>166,109</b>	<b>222,794</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL COMMUNITY GRANTS AND DONATIONS 2021/2022</b>		<b>388,903</b>



# Business and Community COVID Support Grants

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 pandemic.

Restrictions have had significant economic impact on local arts, events, and 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:

- Council Packages from Council Funds
- Council has distributed \$180,386 in packages from Council funds. This includes Community and Business Support Packages, rent relief and permits waived. This also includes Councillor Allowances provided for COVID Business Support.

## Grants Received

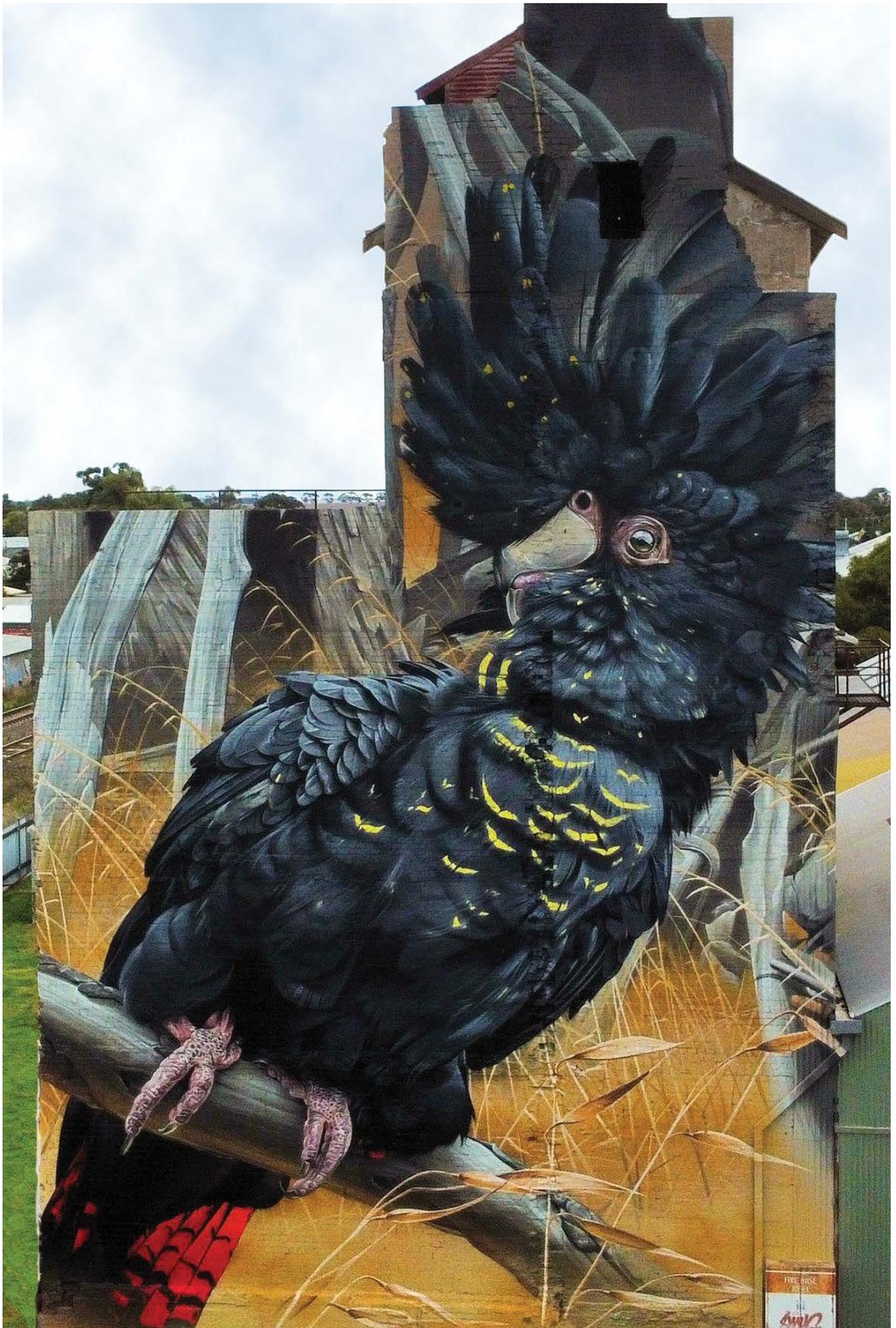
Council has received \$1,436,248 in COVID a combination of federal and state government relief grants which have been and continue to be used for various community initiatives.

The following programs have completed or are still underway:

- Australia Day COVID Safe Grant
- COVID Vaccination Program
- COVID Relief Program
- Outdoor Activation Recovery
- Arts and Events Activation.







# Council Plan

The Council Plan 2021-25 sets the strategic direction of Council over the next four years, linking the Community's Vision to Strategies, Initiatives and Priorities for Horsham Rural City Council.

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

	<b>Theme 1</b> - Community	Horsham Rural City Council will develop the municipality as a diverse, inclusive and vibrant community.
	<b>Theme 2</b> - Liveability	Horsham Rural City Council will actively work to create a healthy and connected community that is a great place to live, work, invest and explore for all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
	<b>Theme 3</b> - Sustainability	Horsham Rural City Council will actively lead in sustainable growth and development of the community and the economy.
	<b>Theme 4</b> - Accessibility	Horsham Rural City Council will meet community needs through connected transport networks and the provision of accessible and welcoming places and spaces.
	<b>Theme 5</b> - Leadership	Horsham Rural City Council, will build trust and connections with the community through good governance, community consultation, accountability, transparent decision making and financial stability.

You will see the following icons sitting next to many of our initiatives. These demonstrate that the strategy or action is an integrated Health and Wellbeing priority.

	Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing		Early years		Economic Development		Active Living		
	Climate Change		Drugs and Alcohol		Healthy Eating		Mental Wellbeing and Social Connection		Prevention of Family Violence



## Theme 1 – Community



Horsham Rural City Council will develop the municipality as a diverse, inclusive and vibrant community.

### Strategies and Actions

*“An inclusive, accessible, connected and safe community”*



#### Rainbow flag flown high in Horsham

Horsham Rural City Council recognised IDAHOBIT Day on May 17 by hoisting the rainbow flag in the municipality and through joining a Wimmera Pride Project breakfast. IDAHOBIT is the international day against homophobia, biphobia, interphobia and transphobia discrimination.

Mayor Robyn Gulline said it was a day to come together and support LGBTIQ+ friends, family and colleagues in their fight against discrimination. HRCC flew the pride flag at the top end of Firebrace Street to celebrate the week.

“The purpose is to raise awareness of the discrimination faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, trans, queer or questioning and asexual (LGBTIQ+) community members and celebrate the richness that diversity brings to our lives. This year’s international theme is “Our Bodies, Our Lives, Our Rights,” Mayor Robyn Gulline said.



#### Government Aquatic Centre change rooms grant

Horsham Rural City Council welcomed a \$331,000 Commonwealth Government contribution that will deliver new accessible change rooms at Horsham Aquatic Centre. The funding will deliver building extensions to the indoor pool hall on the Hamilton Street side of the Aquatic Centre.

Included in the renovation will be two family rooms and two accessible change rooms to allow a person with a disability to access both the indoor and outdoor pools. There will also be an undercover outdoor function space for events such as birthday parties.

In conjunction with the \$384,000 allocated in the HRCC Budget for 2021-2022, the \$331,000 Federal Government allocation allows the project to come to fruition.



#### Bumper Citizenship Ceremony

Twenty seven people from six different countries formally became Australians in May at one of the largest ever Citizenship Ceremonies at Horsham Rural City Council.

Countries of origin included The Philippines, Papua New Guinea, India, Myanmar, Zimbabwe and South Africa. It was an unusually high number of new citizens, with six family groups taking the oath at the Civic Centre.

Council officiates about six ceremonies per year on behalf of the Australian Government and all new citizens receive a native plant as a gift from Council to mark the special occasion.

“I always look forward to these events on our civic calendar and getting to meet our municipality’s newest Australian citizens,” Mayor Robyn Gulline said.



*“Every new citizen has something special to share and, as a result, our communities and workplaces become stronger because of the culture, knowledge, skills and stories they bring to our region.”*

***“A community that is empowered in shaping the future of our region”***



Horsham Rural City Council has provided community organisations with \$388,903 in funding as part of its annual Community Grants and Donations Program.

Each year HRCC allocates funding to support community and sporting groups as part of its budget process, empowering community groups to shape the region they want to see and create a more sustainable future for community connection.

An additional \$50,000 allocated from Council’s COVID support package from the previous year’s budget was a welcome boost to community groups. The funds support groups such as sports clubs, halls, kindergartens to assist with their maintenance and facility improvements as well as grants for specific projects and events. Additionally, Council has allocated donations which support the operations of recreation reserves, public halls, kindergartens and welfare services.

Mayor Robyn Gulline said the high percentage of community grants funded indicated the importance of the program within the community.

These grants are a way of supporting not-for-profit community groups and organisations to build a more connected and liveable community.

***“A region that acknowledges and engages with First Nations people on place, connection and truth”***



**Yangga Tyerrang (Walk Together)**

National Reconciliation Week 2022 saw Horsham Rural City Council undertaking an activity that aligns with the theme “Be Brave. Make Change”. For the duration of National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June) Firebrace Street and Sawyer Park were temporarily renamed.

The names put forward by Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation were – Firebrace Street renamed to Yangga Tyerrang Street (Young gun Ch-rang) meaning *Walk Together*, and Sawyer Park became Warta Tyerrang Muwil Park (War-da Ch-rang Moo-will) meaning *Come Together All*.

Chair of Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Clarke Family Representative Dylan Clarke noted:



***“The renaming of streets is a clear representation that our landscape and society is changing, Traditional Owner families are still here and remain strongly connected to our country. Reconciliation is an ongoing process however, this is one of many important steps towards healing and truth-telling in our region.”***

Mayor Robyn Gulline commented that renaming the street and park is a significant action for this years’ National Reconciliation Week.

“This is a significant event for National Reconciliation Week and is an opportunity for truth-telling, sharing history and moving forward together,” she said.

To celebrate Reconciliation Week outdoor activation projections featuring Wotjobaluk Nations’ artwork and curated by Natimuk ACT, lit the way down Yangga Tyerrang St for the week. This project was funded through the Victorian Government Outdoor Activation Funding.





## Theme 2 - Liveability

- 
- Horsham Rural City Council will actively work to create a healthy and connected community that is a great place to live, work, invest and explore for all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- 

### Strategies and Actions

*“A resilient, inclusive and socially connected community”*



#### Online marketing workshop for community groups

Horsham Rural City Council teamed up with O2 Media to present an interactive digital media workshop for local community groups. The free event at the Wimmera Business Centre was designed to help local groups from major event organisers to local service clubs to use modern marketing to meet their goals in staying connected and operating in the community.

Mayor Robyn Gulline urged all local groups who needed assistance with digital marketing to attend the workshop. “Digital marketing, including social media, is a part of everyday life now and if you are running a local organisation or event, you can’t afford to be without it,” Cr Gulline said.

The workshop was designed to give groups the basics on what they need to know about digital platforms, the resources required to get started, and how to put together a plan to maximise community engagement. Advertising Agency O2 Media’s director Karen Foster was the presenter.



#### Christmas message projections

Horsham Rural City Council’s Arts and Culture Team launched a Christmas Postcard Projection that saw the White Hart Hotel lit up with festive artwork and messages. The projections coincided with the easing of lockdown restrictions at a time when the community were starting to come together again.

Creative Services and Events Lead Shana Miatke said the Christmas Postcard Project invited Horsham people and visitors to stay up after bed time and participate in a family friendly event.

Natimuk artist Hannah French was commissioned to develop the Christmas Project postcard format and project mascot the Christmas Cocky.

The project was a celebration of our resilience and connection over the past two years. It shared messages of hope and good will and energised the streets of Horsham.



*“A destination to live, work, explore and invest”*



### Central Activity District Revitalisation

This year Council has been undertaking extensive consultation on the Central Activity District Revitalisation. The “CAD Revitalisation: Streetscape Plan Project” to improve Horsham’s town centre will focus on our public spaces by identifying ways to improve our streets, footpaths, parks, laneways, plazas, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and parking.

Through extensive community engagement, Council has looked to the community to help select and prioritise projects that will make Horsham a better place to live, work and play.

The project is quite involved starting with an Urban Design Analysis which identified the opportunities that were brought forward into the Draft Streetscape Plan. The Draft Streetscape Plan sets out a number of proposals to improve the city centre of Horsham including new public spaces, streetscape improvement, street tree planting, greening opportunities and public art.

Extensive responses have been received from the community which Council will closely consider when deciding on a series of streetscape and public space projects.



*“Quality opportunities and facilities that meet the health and wellbeing needs and interests of all ages, abilities and backgrounds”*



### City Oval events stage investment

Horsham Rural City Council has secured \$2 million from the Victoria Government to build a multifunctional stage that will better connect City Oval with Sawyer Park.

The structure, to be built near the site of the existing main scoreboard, will be designed to host major outdoor events at City Oval and will address a gap in Horsham’s ability to hold large outdoor events due to a lack of suitable infrastructure.

The Soundshell at Sawyer Park cannot host modern music festivals because it has a limited capacity for patrons and performers and is more than 40 years old. However the new stage will meet contemporary sound and lighting needs and will be able to host up to 8,000 people. With an incorporated broadcast box, demountable digital screen and a food and beverage outlet, it will also benefit local sports competitions on matchdays.

Council will initially target the scheduling of two large events in the first year of operation, increasing tourism numbers by up to 15,000 people which would create an estimated \$5 million boost to the Horsham economy.



### Theme 3 – Sustainability



Horsham Rural City Council will actively lead in sustainable growth and development of the community and the economy.

*“Achieve a sustainable and sound environmental future”*

*“A region where climate change impacts are addressed and remediated”*



#### Zero Net Emission Action Plan Annual Target Surpassed

As part of Council’s ongoing commitment to reduce its carbon footprint, Council’s Zero Net Emissions Action Plan (“ZNET Action Plan”) was implemented in February 2021 and has now been in action for over a year.

Under the ZNET Action Plan council committed to deliver a number of sustainability projects and lead by example with its energy initiatives. Council has committed to achieve its target of zero net emissions by the year 2050 with a focus on:

- solar projects
- energy audits
- building efficiency improvement projects
- fleet efficiency and;
- sustainability policy development.

Council has an ambitious goal to progressively reduce its emissions by 42% by the year 2030. Through the successful implementation of a number of projects, Council has achieved its Green House Gas emission target significantly earlier than 2030 and has already surpassed that target by approximately 8%.

Council plans to undertake the remaining projects and initiatives planned under the Zero Net Emission Action Plan to keep achieving carbon offsets and getting closer to its Zero Net Emissions Target.

Name	Category	Status
Horsham Aerodrome Solar	Project	On Schedule
May Park Terrace Solar	Project	On Schedule
Nexus Youth Centre Solar	Project	On Schedule
Horsham Town Hall Solar Expansion	Project	On Schedule
Type 1 Energy Audits	Project	On Schedule
Horsham Town Hall Building Efficiency Upgrades	Project	On Schedule
Fleet Efficiency Improvement	Project	Complete
Green Energy PPA	Initiative	Complete
Energy Efficiency Improvement for High Use sites	Project	On Schedule
Council ESD Policy	Initiative	On Schedule
Sustainable Fleet Policy	Initiative	On Schedule



***“A sustainable economy where local business, agriculture, tourism and other diverse industries thrive – a region that attracts new investment, technologies and opportunities”***



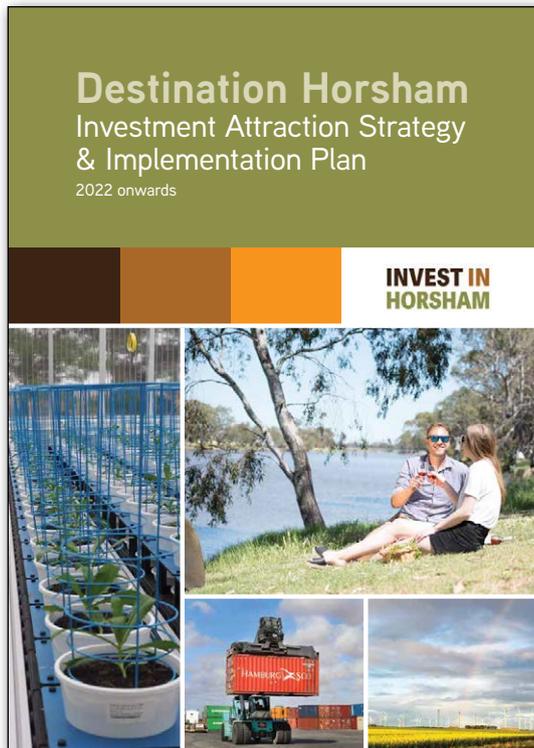
**Destination Horsham**

Horsham Rural City Council has launched a campaign to fulfil the Wimmera’s economic potential by using the region’s untapped advantages to attract investment and new industry. It sets bold targets for the region including the goal of becoming Australia’s most dynamic sustainable energy region with the campaign exploring the potential for the municipality to become a major nature-based tourist destination.

The dependence on agriculture is also addressed, with increased local processing and export marketing the keys to adding strength to

the region’s main industry. With investment in the right areas, the Horsham region has the potential to achieve the following goals:

- **Australia’s largest and most dynamic sustainable energy region and skills centre:** We will make efficient use of our large parcels of land and suitable weather conditions to become a key sustainable energy region for Australia
- **A leading regional food and grain hub:** We will thrive off our existing specialisation in agriculture and develop a closed regional food economy through food, wine and agritourism
- **Diverse and affordable housing options to attract new residents:** A growth management framework will deliver sensible, affordable and diverse housing options to bring students, professionals and families to the region
- **An expansive, lucrative, and efficient export industry:** We will continue to make use of the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal (WIFT) facility and be a hub for exports.





## Theme 4 – Accessibility

- 
- Horsham Rural City Council will meet community needs through connected transport networks and the provision of accessible and welcoming places and spaces.
- 

### *“Improved and connected transport services and networks in and around the region”*

#### **Study to consider alternative truck routes**

Work is currently being undertaken on a feasibility study to determine whether heavy vehicle traffic could be directed outside of central Horsham. The joint initiative between HRCC and the Department of Transport will not consider a Western Highway bypass, however

will identify what options are achievable for alternative truck routes around Horsham.

The study will look at possible routes for heavy vehicles that do not originate or terminate in Horsham to travel around the city instead of through the center. If an alternative route is found to be feasible, it would likely include the construction

of a second road bridge across the Wimmera River. The study will firstly determine whether any achievable options exist and if there is more than one potential route, the second step would be to establish a preferred option. Cultural heritage will be a major consideration in any routes with the feasibility study due to be completed by January 2023.

### *“Diverse services, programs and facilities that are accessible to all”*



#### **State funding for Horsham youth programs**

Horsham Rural City Council successfully applied for Victorian Government funding to deliver youth programs for the next two years with a total \$241,500 going towards the roll out of both the FReeZA and Engage! Initiatives in Horsham.

Youth Services Planning and Engagement Officer Louise Barnett said the FReeZA funding would help revive the passion in young people in our area for music, culture and recreation. Wimmera youth will be empowered to plan and stage fully supervised drug, alcohol, and smoke-free events that are open to young people between the ages of 12 and 25.



*“This is the first time FReeZA funding has sat with Horsham Rural City Council so we are excited to rollout the new look FReeZA Program in collaboration and partnership with other youth focused business, organisations and agencies.”*

Youth Councillor Kori Both said Horsham’s youth were proud of their involvement in the application for the funding.

*“An integrated, strategic and needs based approach to investing in our places and spaces”*

**\$8.8 million for rural roads to be widened**

Five priority rural roads across Horsham Rural City Council will receive a share of more than \$5 million in Australian Government funding. In a major win for the municipality, a total of 36.2km will be widened thanks to the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program’s \$5,096,156 contribution that will be boosted by Council funding of \$3,661,082.

Sections of the Dimboola-Minyip Road, Horsham-Lubeck Road, Noradjuha-Tooan East Road, North-East Wonwondah Road and Polkemmet Road will each have sections approximately five to ten km kilometers widened. The roads were identified as high priorities in HRCC’s Rural Road Network Plan which was developed through engagement with rural communities. The works will improve safe truck passing and alternate routes for moving around Horsham.





## Theme 5 – Leadership

- Horsham Rural City Council, will build trust and connections with the community through good governance, community consultation, accountability, transparent decision making and financial stability.

### Strategies and Actions

***“Good governance, through leadership and connection with community”***

#### **Council Plan and key documents adopted**

Following an extensive deliberative engagement process, HRCC adopted its Council Plan 2021-2025, Long Term Financial Plan 2021-2031 and Asset Plan 2021-2031, on 25 October 2021.

The product of Horsham Rural City Talks 2021, where the Council Plan 2021-2025 sets out Council’s strategic directions for the next four years and was informed by a range of key documents, including the Community Vision 2041. This is the first year HRCC has elected to integrate the Health and Wellbeing plan into the Council Plan.

The Long Term Financial Plan 2021-2031 covers all aspects of Council’s role including the delivery of programs and services, building new infrastructure, as well as the maintenance of roads, footpaths, bike paths, buildings, and parks over the next ten years while ensuring financial sustainability in the long term.

The Asset Plan 2021-2031 has been prepared to ensure that infrastructure assets support services that are not only sustainable and timely, but also appropriate, accessible and responsive to the community. Based on best practice, the Asset Plan will ensure the community receives the best value for money from Council’s asset management programs over the next 10 years.

Council developed the initial documents using the deliberative processes where 26 residents of the community were randomly selected as a representative sample of the community, a Community Panel that also developed the Community Vision for 2041.

***“Accountable and transparent decision making”***

#### **Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework**

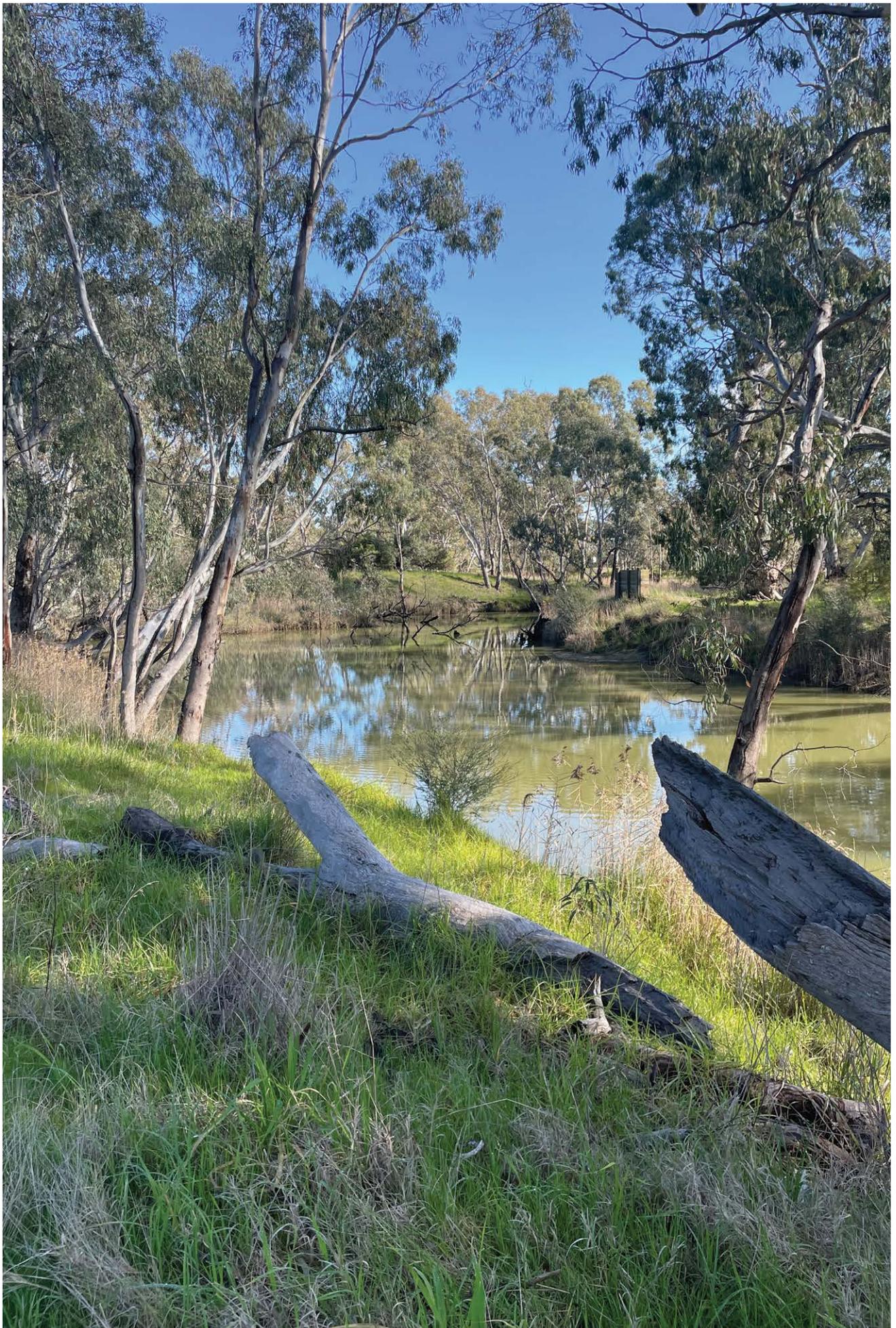
The complexities of Council planning and reporting are now easily contained and viewed in HRCC’s Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework adopted in November 2021. This framework documents the key element of Council’s planning processes and outlines the linkages between the various documents and the timeframes in which they are produced, managed and evaluated.

This framework is key to Council providing transparent and cohesive strategic direction. The Council Plan 2021-25 adopted in 2021 required the operational focus of an annual action plan to give effect to that strategic vision. After consultation with community, Councillors, the Executive, Managers, Co-ordinators and staff, the Annual Action Plan 2022-23 was developed and adopted allowing for frequent tracking and reporting.

The Annual Action Plan 2022-23 details the actions required to give effect to the priorities and initiatives in the Council Plan, including measures and expected timeframes. Progress on the Annual Action Plan will be reported to Council quarterly in the Quarterly Performance Report.

Community engagement will be undertaken at key junctures in the planning cycle with the Horsham Rural City Talks Expo 2022 taking place in September 2022.





# 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 and regional services.

Throughout 2021-22, Council attracted specific project funding in excess of approximately \$15 million from the State and Federal Governments to undertake a range of infrastructure and service related projects. Highlights of this included:

- State and Federal funding of \$2.35 million to construct the Hamilton Street Pedestrian Bridge
- \$5 million of Federal funding for specific road infrastructure improvements
- \$2 million from Regional Tourism Funding to create a major outdoor events precinct at the City Oval (part of City Oval/Sawyer Park redevelopment Stage 1)

Council have continued to advocate for City to River projects, with Concept Design completed for the City Oval/Sawyer Park precinct redevelopment outlining staged projects of around \$20 million. Funding has been sought through the State and Federal Governments to fund the first stage with a total project budget of \$12.8 million.

Important smaller community based projects also received government support including a grant of \$125,000 from Regional Arts Victoria to support a creative partnership between the Horsham Town Hall and our indigenous community. Council also auspiced a community project to upgrade the oval at the Quantong Recreation Reserve attracting a State Government grant of \$175,887

In addition to advocacy for funding of Council infrastructure and service related projects, Council also actively advocated for a range of priority projects to enhance regional liveability and economic and jobs growth. Details of advocacy priorities that have progressed during the past 12 months are provided below.

## Advocacy – Priority Projects for Government and Private-Sector Investment

- Alternative Truck Route – Council continues to work with project partners including the Department of Transport and Barengi Gadjin Land Council on a Feasibility Study investigating possible alternative truck routes
- Horsham Rail Corridor – continued discussion with Vic Track mainly focussed on the process and timelines for the remediation of contaminated land and transfer of land to Council to progress future development of the area.

- Greening Horsham Strategy – adoption of a new strategy that makes a commitment to addressing climate change, to improving the amenity and comfort of living in our municipality, recognises the economic value of trees and provides a framework for the proactive and sustainable management of trees
- CAD revitalisation project focusing on a Streetscape plan that seeks to improve the city centre of Horsham including the provision of new public spaces, streetscape improvements and urban greening opportunities
- Advocacy around the current operations of the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal, the infrastructure constraints at the terminal and future opportunities for the WAL Hub
- Continuing advocacy and support for our community as we continue to move through the COVID pandemic
- Investment Attraction and Growth Strategy and Implementation Plan provides clear direction for delivering economic growth for the municipality and wider region
- Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration Project - progressing through the selection of a preferred supplier of new IT systems for three RCCC member Councils
- Wimmera Health Care Group merger with Ballarat Health Services – joint meetings with the Minister for Health and Wimmera Councils to discuss concerns relating to the proposed merger
- Continued advocacy for the return of passenger rail services to Horsham

# Performance and Major Initiatives

Council’s performance for 2021-22 has been reported against each strategic objective to demonstrate how Council is performing in achieving the 2021-25 Council Plan. Performance has been measured as follows:

- Results achieved in relation to Monitoring Achievements 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

## Theme 1: Community

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

Monitoring Achievements	Result	Comments
1. Implementation of 100% actions identified in the 2019-2022 Community Inclusion Plan		Underway – Community Inclusion Officer appointed and delivering the development of Easy English documents, the inclusion of inclusive engagement practices in our engagement policy, Disability Awareness Training conducted for staff, volunteers and Councillors and improved access to Horsham Aquatic Centre with the completion of a compliant accessible ramp
2. In consultation with Barengi Gadjin Land Council, develop a partnership agreement		Underway – Discussions have commenced with Barengi Gadjin Land Council
3. Improved diversity in community and programmed events by 10% over the four year period of the Council Plan		Underway – Diversity of offering has been a key objective to attract new audiences to Council and Horsham Town Hall events. This year we are establishing a baseline of data.
4. Ensure gender equity on all Council Committees		Underway – Committee Terms of Reference requires Gender Equity to be considered when selecting membership with a number of other processes being incorporated in the recruitment phase to ensure balance.
5. Increased reach and diversity of allocation of Annual Community Grants program with a 10% increase of new successful applicants over the four year period of the Council Plan		Underway – Changes in promotion of the Annual Community Grants program to attract new clubs and groups and support a greater portion of the community.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to Major Initiatives identified in the 2021-22 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Lost in the Bush Silo Art Project	Complete – The project was completed ahead of time and on budget.
Precinct Planning and Design Services	Significant consultation has taken place this year with respect to the Central Activity District with a prioritisation of projects being completed. Engagement has been undertaken on the social heritage value of the Horsham Theatre which will inform heritage planning and improvements moving forward.

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2021-22 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description
<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>	
<b>Animal Management</b>	This service provides animal management through implementation of appropriate rules and regulations in relation to keeping of cats, dogs and other animals and livestock within the municipality to minimise disturbance to residents and the community and ensure public safety. It also includes the operation of Council's dog and cat rehoming program.
<b>Community Safety</b>	This service deals with matters concerning Local Laws including permits and licences, enforcement and fines and fire hazard enforcement.
<b>Emergency Management</b>	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 and includes the Wimmera Emergency Management Resource Sharing Partnership.
<b>Emergency Support</b>	This service supports community health and wellbeing during times of an emergency and to support the community to recover from emergency events.
<b>Environmental Health</b>	This service provides health administration, health vending machines and other preventative measures under the health plan including needle exchange, Tobacco Act reforms and mosquito monitoring. A variety of legislative based services and functions around environmental health issues are also provided.
<b>Social Infrastructure Support</b>	This service provides maintenance, insurance and other ongoing costs for the municipality's recreation groups and clubs including community halls, the Cenotaph and War Memorials, Brass and Pipe Bands and Sawyer Park Soundshell.

## Theme 2: Liveability

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

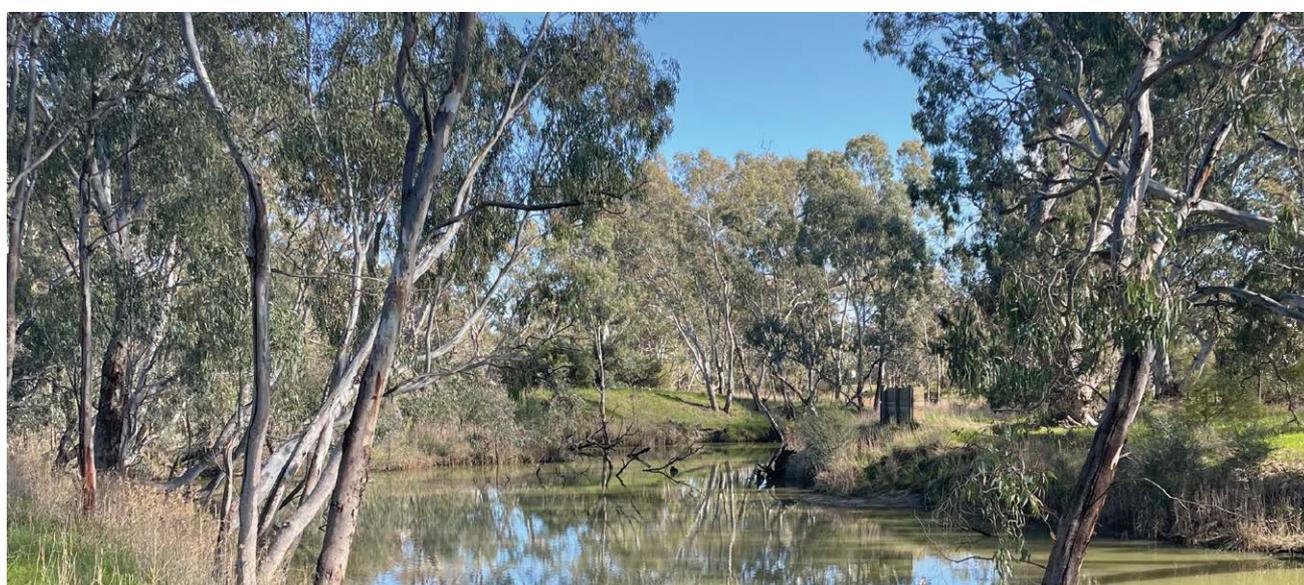
Monitoring Achievements	Result	Comments
1. Number of visits to aquatic facilities per head of municipal population to increase 5% over 4 year period of Council Plan		Underway – Number of visits to aquatic facilities in 2020-21 were 60,658 with a total of 74,664 for the year 2021-22. This is a 23% increase in one year however this is attributable to COVID closures in 2020-21
2. Participation in Horsham Town Hall programs to increase by 5% over 4 years of Council Plan		Underway – This goal is on track. Numbers have increased but the data is skewed as a result of 2020-21 COVID shutdowns. We are currently establishing baseline data.
3. Participation in Maternal and Child Health service at or over 95% annually		Underway – Currently participation is at 85.89% for participation at the service who attend at least once a year.
4. Active library borrowers in municipality to increase by 5% over 4 year period of Council Plan		Underway – Active library borrowers in the municipality have increased from 1,312 to 1,366 since 2020-21. 4% increase this year. This goal is on track.
5. Increased number of new planning permits approved for new housing by 2% annually		Underway – New planning permits have increased but Council's influence on this is limited. Council is reviewing this metric as it is not a clear indicator of liveability and growth.
6. Increase Horsham Rural City population by 5% over 4 year period of Council Plan		Underway – Current data for 2021 census is that there has been a population increase from 2016 to 19,961. The estimated population increase since 2020-21 is 0.87%.
7. Increased number of new building/planning permits approved for commercial development by 2% annually		Underway – Council has increased the number of new planning permits approved but is reviewing this metric as it is not clear indicator of liveability and growth.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to Major Initiatives identified in the 2021-22 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
City to River Stage 1	City to River Stage 1 is currently under completion. The entrance way activation is completed as are the pergola for the angling club rooms, new riverfront nodes and barbeque shelters. Construction of the Water Play Park has commenced.

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2021-22 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description
<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>	
<b>Aquatic Recreation</b>	Management of the strategic use of the Aquatic centre, including major refurbishment and upgrades.
<b>Library</b>	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.
<b>Management and Administration</b>	This service provides local and regional facilitation and leadership for planning, developing and delivering community services to meet the needs of the community.
<b>Parks and Gardens</b>	Provision of managed areas for sport, recreation and amenity – includes sports grounds, parks, gardens, the Botanic Gardens and playgrounds throughout the municipality.
<b>Performing Arts Centre &amp; Visitor Services</b>	This service encompasses the running of the Horsham Performing Arts Centre operations, including Performing Arts, the Regional Art Gallery and support to visitors accessing the Visitor Services.
<b>Sports and Recreation</b>	Provision and maintenance of outdoor and indoor sports and recreation facilities throughout the municipality and works with community Groups and user groups to increase participation.
<b>Streetscape and Public Conveniences</b>	The 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 provides operations and maintenance of the public conveniences in Horsham, Natimuk and several rural facilities.
<b>Youth and Early Years</b>	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.



### Theme 3: Sustainability

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

Monitoring Achievements	Result	Comments
1. Reduce Council's net carbon emissions by 24% by 2025		Underway – Council has exceed its target. The target was to reduce emissions by 42% by 2030 however council has exceeded that 42% goal by 8%
2. Reduce the municipality's net carbon emissions		Underway – a number of solar projects still stand to be completed with further initiatives around reducing councils emissions and the four bin recycling system underway
3. Maintain employment in government and health services at current level (as at 2021)		Underway – Current data would indicate that while there is a shortage of health staff in general, employment levels are being maintained.
4. Increase the diversion of recyclables from landfill by 40% by 2025		Underway – Council will be implementing the four bin waste system for the improved diversion of recyclables from landfill
5. Increase the utilisation of alternative water sources by 10% by 2025 (reduced use of potable water)		Underway – Initiatives proceeding as per the Zero Net Carbon Plan

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to Major Initiatives identified in the 2021-22 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Investment Attraction and Growth Strategy	Investment Attraction and Growth Strategy has been released. Monthly council reports are provided on the progress of the strategy.
Zero Net Carbon Plan	Plan was adopted by Council and one year into implementation has seen a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by Council in one financial year. Council has exceeded its 2025 and 2030 target and is on track to achieve the 2050 target.

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2021-22 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description
<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>	
<b>Business Development and Tourism</b>	This service includes tourism marketing and development as well as promotion for major events and festivals.
<b>Commercial Activities</b>	This service includes the contracted facilities such as the Caravan Park and the Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal.
<b>Commercial Operations</b>	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.
<b>Natural Resource Management</b>	This service provides a mix of environmental services covering fire hazards, fire disaster clean up, grass removal, fire plugs, their replacement and markers, footpath cleaning in the CBD and weir operations.
<b>Statutory Planning and Regulations</b>	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.
<b>Strategic Planning Services</b>	The function of strategic planning, aims to strategically plan the municipality's land use needs for the future.
<b>Sustainability</b>	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.
<b>Management and Admin</b>	This service provides local and regional facilitation and leadership for planning, developing and delivering community services to meet the needs of the community.



## Theme 4: Accessibility

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

Monitoring Achievements	Result	Comments
1. A reduction in the number of vehicle crashes and their impacts (e.g. number of injuries/fatalities) by 5% by 2025		Underway – Council is currently reviewing the way in which design features impact the safety of roads. This includes the inclusion of wombat crossings and other safety initiatives.
2. Increase the % of urban population within 400 m of a fully developed open space by 5% by 2025		Underway – Council is currently employing a number of strategies to improve access and development near open spaces.
3. Increase the percentage of Tree canopy in Horsham urban areas with a 1% increase by 2025		Underway – Greening Greater Horsham Municipal Tree Strategy was adopted by Council in May 2022.
4. Improve sealed road satisfaction – excluding arterial roads by 5% annually		Satisfaction with sealed local roads was rated 45 in this year's Community Satisfaction Survey down from 47 in the previous year. This is a 4% decrease. The Road Management Plan, Rural Road Network Plan and consultation on roads of concern in the Community Satisfaction Survey will allow a more targeted response to this goal.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to Major Initiatives identified in the 2021-22 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Wimmera River Pedestrian Footbridge – Extension of Hamilton Street	State Government funding has been received to match Council one for one for the footbridge. Construction of the foot bridge will commence in the financial year 2022-23 with the bridge aimed to be completed in the next financial year.
Water Play Park	Construction of the Water Play Park as part of City to River Stage 1 has commenced. This will be the leading accessible play space in Horsham with full wheel chair accessibility, play spaces and inclusive design.

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2021-22 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description
<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>	
<b>Engineering Services</b>	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.
<b>Infrastructure – Rural</b>	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).
<b>Infrastructure – Urban</b>	This service provides maintenance and construction of roads, 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.
<b>Management and Administration</b>	This service provides administration and support services for the Infrastructure Services department.
<b>Operations Management</b>	This service includes management and administration of the Operations department to facilitate the delivery of core functions and capital programs.
<b>Parking and Traffic Management</b>	This service provides management of parking infringements, maintenance on parking meters, car parking fees, fines and associated costs.
<b>Strategic Asset Management</b>	Responsible for the strategic management of Council's Infrastructure, including the long term planning of asset renewal and capital works.



## Theme 5: Leadership

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

Monitoring Achievements	Result	Comments
1. Improvement in community satisfaction with customer service by 5% annually (Community Satisfaction Survey)		Underway – Customer service staff did further customer service training this year.
2. Improvement in community satisfaction with overall Council direction by 5% annually (Community Satisfaction Survey)		Underway – Community satisfaction with overall Council direction improved from 47 points last year to 50 this year indicating general improvement overall. This is a 6% increase in satisfaction on the previous year. There is further work to be done in this area around process, consultation and transparency.
3. Improve community satisfaction with Council decisions by 5% annually (Community Satisfaction Survey)		Underway – Community satisfaction with Council decisions increased last year from 48 to 52. This is an 8% improvement on the previous year. This is a positive shift.
4. Community satisfaction with consultation and engagement by 5% annually		Underway – Community satisfaction with consultation and engagement increased last year from 48 to 53. This is a 10% improvement on the previous year. This is a positive shift.
5. Community satisfaction with Council lobbying on behalf of the community		Underway – Data not available as this is no longer measured through Council's Annual Community Satisfaction Survey.

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to Major Initiatives identified in the 2021-22 budget for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Rural Council Corporate Collaboration	The Rural Council Corporate Collaboration project has seen the procurement process proceed to contract stage.
Drug and Alcohol Testing Program	Random drug and alcohol testing from all departments has been implemented with staff from all departments taking part. This is a huge achievement in terms of supporting the safety and wellbeing of all staff.
Business Efficiencies Project	The project has been running successfully with significant learnings and insight. The Operations team have been dedicated to the project with the learnings set to be shared throughout the organisation and allow for overall organisational improvement.

## Customer Service Data and Complaints

For the year Horsham Rural City Council addressed 7,063 customer service requests. The highest categories of service requests related to animals, waste services, parking, trees and roads.

Council has a complaints process and 92 complaints were received for the year.

A breakdown of complaints data can be seen as follows:

Complaints	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr.4
Finalised	25	25	11	6
Open	3	5	6	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2021-22 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service	Description
<b>Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas:</b>	
<b>Accounting Services</b>	Provides financial services internally to all staff, department managers, project leaders, Council, 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 Board.
<b>Community Relations and Advocacy</b>	Responsible for three key areas: advocacy and grant seeking, media and communications and community engagement.
<b>General Revenue</b>	Provides treasury management including additional borrowings and interest repayments.
<b>Governance and Leadership</b>	This service manages and facilitates Council's governance services, the implementation of Council decisions and policies and compliance with legislative requirements. This also includes the Customer Service, the management of Council's property portfolio (including Leases/Licenses & land sales/purchases), Records Management, the office of the Mayor and Councillor's, and the office of the Chief Executive.
<b>Information and Technology</b>	Provides IT hardware, software systems and IT support service to staff at HRCC. The goal of this service is to provide efficient and effective access to the information needs of staff and the community while maintaining the security of Council's information and assets.
<b>Management and Administration</b>	This service provides management across the areas of finance, IT, rates and organisation development.
<b>People and Culture</b>	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.
<b>Rates and Property Services</b>	Rate collection services encompasses collection of Council rateable income which ensures consistency in debt management, general rate, municipal and garbage charges. Property services encompasses, collection of property valuations and maintaining a strategically focused property management system.

# Governance and Compliance

## Council Meetings

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. Council meetings also provide an opportunity for community members to raise questions during Public Question Time.

In 2021-22, Horsham Rural City Council held 15 Council meetings. This included seven face-to-face meetings in the Council Chamber and eight online Council meetings live streamed on the Council website [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au). Audio recordings were made available following all meetings.

The live streaming of Council Meetings has enhanced transparency and increased accessibility.

Live streaming of meetings makes them more accessible to a wider audience. Previous meetings are available on Council's website [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au). Meetings can be watched at any time and previous meetings are indexed to the meeting agenda allowing you to skip directly to the items of interest.

Live Streaming does not extend to any confidential meetings to the public in accordance with Section 66 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

During this period, 45 questions were submitted to Public Question Time up from 24 the previous year.

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council meetings for the 2021-22 financial year.

Councillor	Scheduled Council Meeting Attendance (15)
Cr Di Bell	14
Cr David Bowe	15
Cr Penny Flynn	14
Cr Robyn Gulline	15
Cr Claudia Haenel	12
Cr Les Power	14
Cr Ian Ross	14

\*Cr. Claudia Haenel was absent for the February, March and April 2022 scheduled Council Meetings due to authorised leave (where authorised leave can include sick leave or WorkCover leave)

## Council Briefing Meetings

Council Briefing meetings are generally held on the first and second Monday of each month. 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.

In 2021-22, Council held 33 Council Briefing Meetings (up from 22 the previous year).

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council Briefing Meetings for the 2021-22 financial year.

Councillor	Council Briefing Meeting Attendance (33)
Cr Di Bell	30
Cr David Bowe	33
Cr Penny Flynn	33
Cr Robyn Gulline	33
Cr Claudia Haenel	24
Cr Les Power	30
Cr Ian Ross	26

\*Cr. Claudia Haenel was absent for the March, April and May 2022 briefings due to authorised leave (where authorised leave can include sick leave or WorkCover leave)

## Conflict of Interest

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.

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.

During 2021-22, there were 8 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 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. Horsham Rural City Council is recognised as a Category 2 Council.

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

Councillor	Allowance \$
Cr Robyn Gulline (Mayor)	93,166.14
Cr Di Bell	29,490.19
Cr David Bowe	28,869.48
Cr Penny Flynn	29,490.19
Cr Claudia Haenel	29,490.19
Cr Les Power	29,490.19
Cr Ian Ross	29,490.19

## 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.

Details of Councillor expenses for the 2021-22 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 \$	Total \$
<b>Child Care</b>								
<b>Communications</b>	1,249	1,061	1,145	1,060	1,396	880	829	<b>7,620</b>
<b>Conferences and Seminars</b>	1,058			1,058	591	1,058		<b>3,765</b>
<b>Development and Training</b>		1,845	1,000	800	1,550			<b>5,195</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>								
<b>Memberships</b>	85	85		85	85			<b>340</b>
<b>IT Equipment</b>								
<b>Transportation</b>					4,265		6,594	<b>10,859</b>
<b>Travel and Accommodation</b>	1,812			1,023	257	1,651		<b>4,743</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>	44			50	265		636	<b>995</b>
<b>Total \$</b>	<b>4,248</b>	<b>2,991</b>	<b>2,145</b>	<b>4,076</b>	<b>8,409</b>	<b>3,589</b>	<b>8,059</b>	<b>33,517</b>

### Note:

- Figures in this table may include expenses that were processed but not incurred in the reporting period
- No reimbursements for expenses to members of Council committees were paid by Council during 2021-22

**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.

# Staff Profile

## Equal Employment Opportunity

In employment, but also more generally, Council aims to ensure 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. A further aim is to ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment.

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 accordance with the requirements and obligations of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.



## Occupational Health and Safety

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

In 2021-22, following the decision by WorkSafe not to re-licence the MAV WorkCare self-insurance scheme, Horsham Rural City Council returned to the standard WorkCover scheme. Council was allocated a new insurance agent selected by WorkSafe from its panel of accredited agents. Since 1 July 2021 the HRCC WorkCover insurance agent has been XChanging, more recently known as DXC Claims Management Services. Despite some early difficulties in the transfer from MAV WorkCare to the WorkCover system, an effective relationship has since been built with XChanging/DXC and Council will continue to work with that provider for the foreseeable future in respect of claims, claims management and return to work matters.

Throughout 2021-22 a key health and safety focus has been on ensuring compliance with government pandemic orders and community and staff expectations in respect of COVID management. As the year progressed this moved from the application of clear directives and mandates designed to contain the spread of the virus, to the less straightforward management of staff returning to on-site work, the spread of the virus throughout the community, and learning to live and work with the virus in a way that does not create unnecessary risk to employees and the public.

The challenges of the ever-changing COVID environment have made it difficult to have a specific focus on some of the broader OHS objectives that were outlined for the year. In particular, the desire to improve OHS management arrangements and systems has been hampered both by the pandemic and by unavoidable delays in procuring a better software system, although it is now expected that this will be rectified in 2022-23 and a new system will be procured in that period.

Nevertheless, despite the extensive focus on COVID management throughout 2021-22 and distraction from other objectives, the pandemic-related work undertaken has demonstrated a positive OHS culture across the organisation, active and visible OHS leadership and contributed to the provision of a safe workplace.

## WorkCover Claims

At the end of the period there are nine active WorkCover claims. Six of the nine claims were resolved by the end of the financial year, the breakdown is as follows:

- Two matters involving staff whom no longer work with Horsham Rural City Council. The claims are managed by the insurer;
- One complex active claim being managed directly by the insurer;
- Two matters being overseen by occupational rehabilitation providers in conjunction with Horsham Rural City Council; and
- One medical expense only basic claim.

## Incident Reports

Total incidents reported for the year were 134. Plant and Vehicle incidents totalled 55. Personal incidents totalled 42. Hazards, near miss, property damage and security incidents account for the remainder of the incidents reported.

WorkSafe notifiable incidents totalled four with one relating to COVID.

Proactive inspections across various areas of operation continued throughout the year in Parks & Gardens, the Civic Centre, Town Hall, Operations Depot and the Wimmera Business Centre.



## Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

Enterprise Agreement Number Nine (EA9) nominally expired on 30 June 2022. EA9 comprises three distinct parts (local provisions, the Victorian Local Authorities Award 2001 and the Nurses (ANF – Victorian Local Government) Award 2015). The local provisions include a commitment to the adoption of a consolidated (single part) Enterprise Agreement Number 10 (EA10). Consolidation of the three parts will facilitate reading and understanding of the enterprise agreement and help to avoid confusion and misunderstandings that can occur when referencing the existing complex agreement.

Throughout the year considerable work was undertaken internally and in conjunction with the staff consultative committee, towards the development of a draft 'consolidated' document. The intention was to develop a document that effectively (but unofficially) replicates the current enterprise agreement, the intention being to obtain unofficial early agreement from the negotiating parties that the document is a reasonable base upon which to start negotiation of Enterprise Agreement Number Ten in 2022-23.

At 30 June 2022 discussions with the relevant unions on the status of the draft consolidated document were continuing, ahead of formal negotiations commencing in the early part of the 2022-23 year. An environment of rising inflation and interest rates will no doubt have an impact on the development of EA10. EA9 provided for increases of 2.1% (or \$28 per week) across each year of the three year agreement.

## Gender Equality Act 2020

Gender equity is the tool used to achieve gender equality. Gender equality is the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, transgender and gender diverse people.

Equality does not mean that women, men, transgender and gender diverse people will become the same, it means their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender. Gender equity is about fairness to all people. It is about implementing strategies and actions to ensure everybody in the community can participate in the way they want to.

Horsham Rural City Council welcomed the *Gender Equality Act 2020* which requires organisations within the Victorian public sector, including local councils, to demonstrate positive progress towards achieving gender equality in the workplace and in the community.

Horsham Rural City Council's organisational vision for gender equality is "to create a safe, equal and fair workplace where all people, regardless of gender and diversity of background, can access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities."

In accordance with the Gender Equality Act, and supported by Women's Health Grampians, Council developed a Gender Equality Action Plan founded on results from a workplace gender audit. Strategies and measures to improve gender equality in the workplace have been included and are based on seven key indicators:

- Gender composition of all levels of the workforce
- Gender composition of governing bodies

- Equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value across all levels of the workforce, irrespective of gender
- Workplace sexual harassment
- Recruitment and promotion
- Availability and utilisation of terms, conditions and practices relating to family violence leave, flexible working arrangements and working arrangements supporting workers with family or caring responsibilities
- Gendered segregation within the workplace

Council is working towards ensuring that gender equality in policies, programs and services is achieved by the completion of Gender Impact Assessments, to assess how the relevant output impacts different genders in different ways. In accordance with the Act, assessments are to be completed on Council programs or services that have a direct and significant impact on the public, taking into account that gender inequality may be compounded by additional disadvantages or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation.

Council is also working towards the application of a Gender Equality Lens in all its work. This will ensure that any differences in the way processes, policies or services are likely to impact unfairly on women and men are anticipated, and that decisions are made that take account of, and are responsive to gender.

Gender inequality creates an environment in which violence against women is more likely to occur. Horsham Rural City is part of the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance, which is a partnership of organisations, businesses, clubs and groups that share a vision for safe, equal and respectful communities in the Grampians region. Council has maintained this membership since 2016.

The development of the CoRE Strategy was led by Women’s Health Grampians (WHG), as part of the Women’s Health Services Leading Regional Action to Prevent Violence against Women and Children Project. The Strategy helps guide and direct individual and collective work in building communities of respect and equality and prevent violence against women before it occurs.

Section 26 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act, requires the specification of measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community. The Gender Equity Action Plan is a key part of council’s response to the prevention of family violence and support of victims and seeks to monitor the impact.

## Child Safe Standards

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

While seven mandatory Child Safe Standards have been in effect in Victoria since 2016, the Victorian Government announced eleven new Standards to replace the seven, commencing 1 July 2022. The eleven new Standards have been made to support greater national consistency, reflecting the National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation developed following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Betrayal of Trust Enquiry).

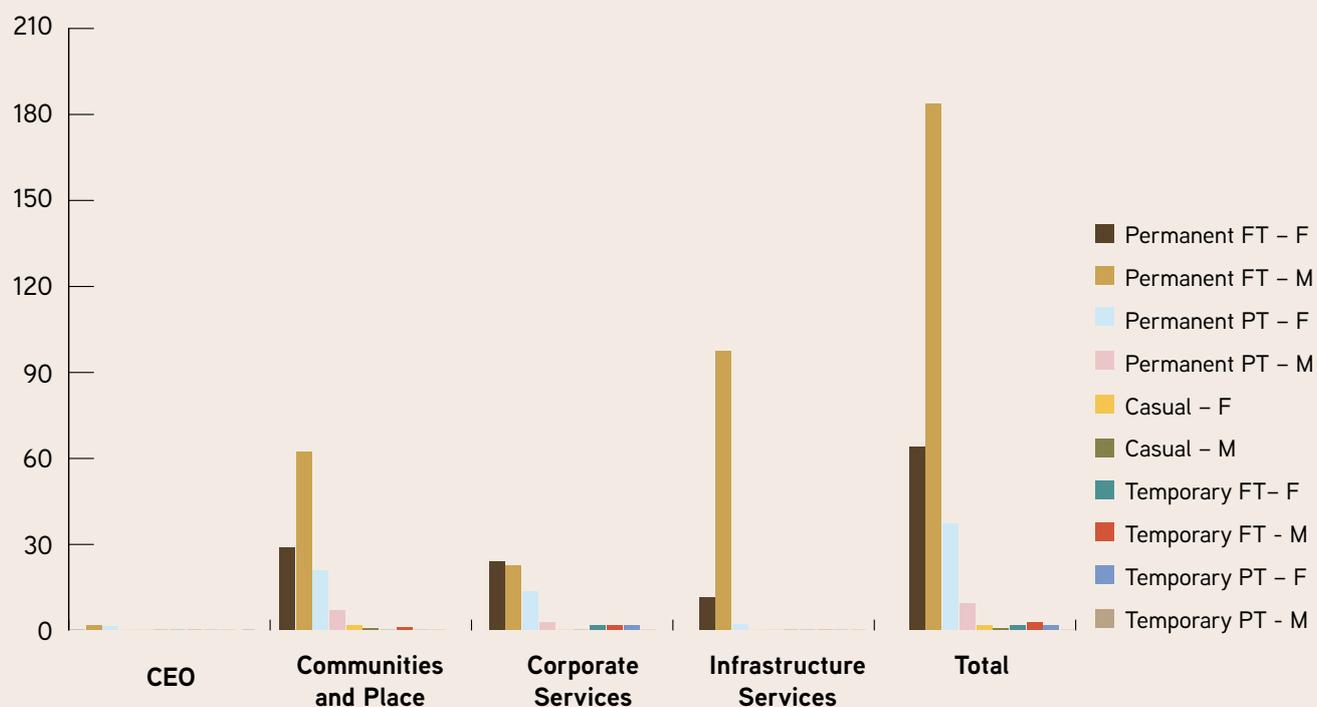
Council has two Child Safety Officers to assist in the management and reporting of any suspected child abuse. A revised Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy has been prepared along with a Child Safe Code of Conduct to guide staff, volunteers, families and children through the process to report any concerns about child safety.

## Number of Staff (FTE)

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	Communities and Place	Corporate Services	Infrastructure Services	Total
	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE
Permanent FT – F	0	18.00	15.00	7.00	40.00
Permanent FT – M	1.00	39.00	14.00	61.00	115.00
Permanent PT – F	.80	12.88	8.36	1.19	23.23
Permanent PT – M	0	4.15	1.6	0	5.75
Casual – F	0	.95	0	0	.95
Casual – M	0	.26	0	0	.26
Temporary FT – F	0	0	1.00	0	1.00
Temporary FT – M	0	.60	1.00	0	1.60
Temporary PT – F	0	0	.90	0	.90
Temporary PT – M	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.80</b>	<b>75.84</b>	<b>41.86</b>	<b>69.19</b>	<b>188.69</b>

FT-Full time PT-Part time F-Female M-Male \*currently no staff identify as non-binary



## NUMBER OF STAFF (FTE) by Employment Classification

Employment Classification	Female FTE	Male FTE	Total FTE
Band 1	1.89	0.21	2.10
Band 2			0
Band 3	1.49	49.00	50.49
Band 4	15.07	27.30	42.36
Band 5	11.77	11.90	23.67
Band 6	14.85	13.20	28.05
Band 7	12.25	12.00	24.25
Band 8	1.00	2.00	3.00
Band not applicable	7.76	7.00	14.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.08</b>	<b>122.61</b>	<b>188.69</b>

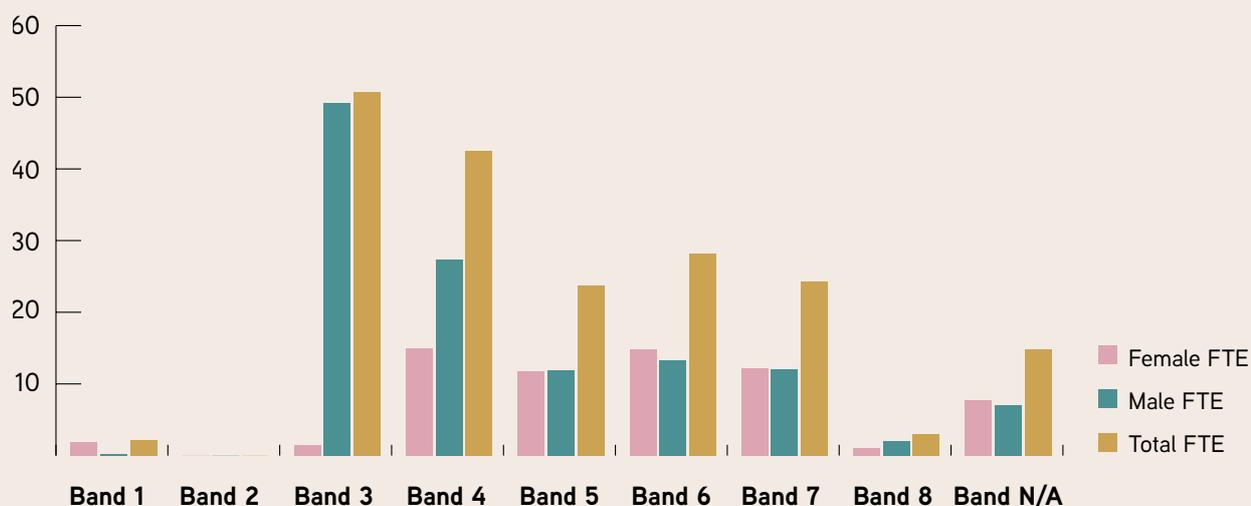
### Professional Development

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

During 2021 - 22 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 of Building Surveying
- Diploma of Project Management
- Diploma of Management (5 staff)

One staff member also completed the Leadership Wimmera Program.



# 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.

In the performance of its role, Council must 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.

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 operational 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 66-67.

# Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk committee is an advisory committee of Council whose role is determined by Sections 53 and 54 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. 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 bi-annually and formally approved by Council.

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

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 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 Robyn Gulline – Councillor representative/Mayor
- Cr Ian Ross – Councillor representative
- Cr Penny Flynn – Councillor representative

*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 Crowe (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 Risk Management, Human Resources and Service and Business Planning.

This year the Audit and Risk committee also receives regular status reports in relation to recommendations from previous audits to ensure that these are adequately addressed.

## External Audit

Council's external auditor is the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) who has appointed Crowe for an initial three-year period (until 30 June 2024) to conduct the annual statutory financial statement audit.

## 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 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.



# Organisational Plans, Policies, Procedures and Strategies

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

Asset Plan 2021-2031

Asset Recognition and Valuation Policy

Body Camera Worn Policy

Body Camera Worn Procedure

CEO Remuneration Policy

Civic Flag Policy

Committee Framework Policy

Community Development Grants Policy

Community Donations Policy

Complaint Resolution Policy

Complaint Resolution Procedure

Conflict of Interest – Staff Procedure

Corporate Uniform Procedure

Council Plan 2021-2025

Councillor Standing as a State or Federal Candidate Policy

Destination Horsham – Investment Attraction Strategy

Environmental Health Regulatory Activities Policy

Financial Plan 2021-2031

Greater Horsham Tree Strategy

Horsham Regional Art Gallery Collection Policy

Kerbside Collection Policy

Live Streaming of Council Meetings Policy

Loan Borrowing Policy

Mobile Food and Beverage Vehicle Trading Procedure

Mobile Food and Beverage Vehicle Trading Policy

Parking Management Plan

Policy Development, Implementation, Review & Approval Procedure

Policy Framework Policy

Procurement Procedure

Rent Relief for SME Commercial Tenancies Procedure

Road Management Plan

Rural Road Network Plan

Sexual Harassment Policy

Social Media Policy

Staff Training and Development Policy



# Community Satisfaction Survey

The Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey again this year surveyed residents to check their satisfaction with Council's performance and services. For the purposes of the survey, Horsham is classified as a Regional Centre, along with Bendigo, Geelong, Latrobe, Mildura, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga. 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.

A total of 400 interviews were completed in Horsham Rural City Council from June 2021 to March 2022. The survey sample matched

to the demographic profile of Horsham Rural City Council as determined by the most recent ABS population estimates.

Council's core measures compared to the previous year, other regional centres and state-wide averages are shown in the table below:

Core Performance Measure	Score				Highest Score	Lowest Score
	Horsham 2022	Horsham 2021	Regional Centres 2022	State-wide 2022		
Overall performance	56	54	59	59	Aged 65+ years	Rural Area residents
Value for money	49	50	53	53	Women	Rural Area residents
Overall Council direction	50	47	52	50	Aged 35-49 years, Women, Aged 65+ years	Aged 50-64 years
Customer service	64	68	69	68	Aged 35-49 years, women. Horsham area residents	Aged 50-64 years
Waste management	68	70	68	68	Aged 65+ years	Aged 18-34 years
Community decisions	52	48	54	54	Aged 35-49 years	Rural Area residents
Consultation and engagement	52	48	54	54	Women, Aged 35-49 years, Aged 65+ years, Horsham area residents	Rural Area residents
Sealed local roads	45	47	54	53	Aged 65+ years	Rural Area residents, Aged 18-34 years

Council's overall performance (index score of 56) is similar to those seen across 2018, 2019 and 2021 and establishes a trend of improvement from the series low index score of 45 in 2020.

Overall council direction improved three points from 47 last year. With Council performing significantly lower than the Regional Centres group and state-

wide average for councils on the sealed local roads index. Council is very aware of the need to improve its performance and 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](http://www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au).

# Statutory Information

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

## Freedom of Information

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

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

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

Before submitting a request, people should telephone the FOI Officer on (03) 5382 9777, or email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au), to clarify the information they are seeking, how they want to receive it, fees and charges, timelines, consultation with third parties and documents that may be exempt. The application fee during the 2021-22 financial year was \$30.10 plus any access charges that may be levied in accordance with the Freedom of Information Regulations.

In 2021-2022 a total of six requests were made, of which three were valid.

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

Personal Requests	0
Non-Personal Requests	6

- Two applications fees of \$30.10 were paid. One application fee was waived due to financial hardship.
- No access charges applied.
- 2021-22 total charges - \$60.20

## What happened?

Part access given	1
Full access given	1
Access denied in full	1
Unclear request, no further correspondence received	3
Withdrawn by applicant	0
Information provided outside FOI process	1
Lapsed after 28 days due to applicant fee not paid	0

No internal reviews were conducted.

One new appeal to the FOI Commissioner was received.

No new appeals to VCAT were received.

## Review Applications to OVIC and VCAT

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

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

## 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](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au) – alternatively, please contact Council on email [council@hrcc.vic.gov.au](mailto: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 Community Asset and Delegated Committees established under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Note: Horsham Rural City Council’s committee structure has been reviewed and the implementation of the review is currently underway.

**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.

**Procurement Activity**

In 2021-22, Council submitted 20 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 \$10,262,686. An additional 45 requests for quotation were issued under a public Request for Quotation process in compliance with Council’s Procurement Policy and obligations under Section 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, totalling \$2,008,431. Combined competitive procurement for 2021-22 is \$12,217,117.

Five new panel supply contracts were put to the market resulting in a total engagement of 83 annual supply tenders.

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

- Your right to recognition and equality before the law
- Your right to life
- Your right to protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment

- Your right to freedom from forced work
- Your right to freedom of movement
- Your right to privacy and reputation
- Your right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
- Your right to freedom of expression
- Your right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association
- Your right to protection of families and children
- Your right to taking part in public life
- Cultural rights
- Property right
- 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.

# Local Laws

The objectives our local law are to provide for the peace, order and good government of the municipal district; protection, fair use and enjoyment of waterways managed by Council and Council land; safe and fair use of roads and road related areas; protection and improvement of the amenity of the municipal district; keeping and control of animals; and uniform and fair administration of this local law.

Horsham Rural City Council has the following Local Laws:

- Community Local Law 2021 which commenced on 9 December 2021 this local law is made under Part 5 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and section 42 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.
- Community Local law Number 3 & 4 are now revoked.

## 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 new Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2026 in June 2022. The plan was prepared in consultation with the Domestic Animal Management Advisory Group, and extensive public engagement 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.

A continued improvement process along with collaboration with rehoming organisations has supported us to decrease the number of animals being euthanised, and increase rehoming of animals who are available for adoption.

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

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 including follow up of registrations and microchipping continues to reduce the numbers of animals being impounded.

## 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.

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.

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

- The development of Easy English documents
- The inclusion of inclusive engagement practices in our engagement policy
- Disability Awareness Training conducted for staff, volunteers and Councillors
- Improved access to Horsham Aquatic Centre with the completion of compliant accessible ramp

### **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 2021-22 year Council had no infrastructure or development contributions.

### **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.

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](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au)

These resources are currently under review in response to the Victorian Government's adoption of new Child Safe Standards introduced on 1 July 2022. Impacted organisations have 12 months to transition to the new Standards. Until then, the current Standards continue to apply.

### **Public Interest Disclosures**

Horsham Rural City Council is a public body subject to the *Public Disclosures Act 2012* (Vic) (the Act). The purpose of the Act is to encourage and facilitate disclosures of improper conduct by public officers, public bodies and other persons, and detrimental action taken in reprisal for a person making a disclosure under the Act. The Act provides protection to persons who make disclosures or who may suffer detrimental action in reprisal for those disclosures.

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 2022, 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.

# Governance and Management Checklist

Items as completed in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act)

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
<b>1. Community engagement policy</b> (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
<b>2. Community engagement guidelines</b> (guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)	Guidelines 15 February 2016
<b>3. Financial Plan</b> (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: 25 October 2021
<b>4. Asset Plan</b> (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: 25 October 2021
<b>5. Revenue and Rating Plan</b> (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
<b>6. Annual budget</b> (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: 27 June 2022
<b>7. Risk policy</b> (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
<b>8. Fraud policy</b> (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud)	Policy Date of commencement of current policy: 9 December 2013, this policy is currently under review
<b>9. Municipal emergency management plan</b> (plan under section 20 of the Emergency Management Act 1986 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
<b>10. Procurement policy</b> (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: 23 August 2021
<b>11. Business continuity plan</b> (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster)	Plan Date of operation of current plan: 26 March 2018
<b>12. Disaster recovery plan</b> (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster)	Plan Date of operation of current plan: 29 June 2015
<b>13. Risk management framework</b> (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)	Framework Date of commencement of current framework: 1 June 2021

<b>Governance and Management Items</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>14. Audit and Risk Committee</b> (see sections 53 and 54 of the Act)	Established in accordance with section 53 of the Act Date of re-establishment: 24 August 2020
<b>15. Internal audit</b> (independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls)	Engaged Date of engagement of current provider: 23 September 2019
<b>16. Performance reporting framework</b> (a set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	Framework Date of operation of current framework: 30 June 2022
<b>17. Council Plan report</b> (report reviewing the performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the financial year)	Report Date of Reports: 25 October 2021, 28 February 2022, 26 April 2022
<b>18. Quarterly budget reports</b> (quarterly reports to the Council under section 97 of the Act, comparing actual and budgeted results and an explanation of any material variations)	Reports presented to the Council in accordance with section 97(1) of the Act Date reports presented: 25 October 2021, 28 February 2022, 26 April 2022
<b>19. Risk reporting</b> (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)	Reports Date of reports: 25 October 2021, 28 February 2022, 26 April 2022
<b>20. Performance reporting</b> (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)	Reports Date of reports: 25 October 2021, 28 February 2022, 26 April 2022
<b>21. Annual report</b> (annual report under sections 98 and 99 of the Act containing a report of operations and audited financial statements and performance statements)	Presented at a meeting of the Council in accordance with section 100 of the Act Date statements presented: 27 September 2021
<b>22. Councillor Code of Conduct</b> (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
<b>23. Delegations</b> (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: 26 April 2022
<b>24. Meeting procedures</b> (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.



**Kevin O'Brien**  
Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Dated: 13 October 2022



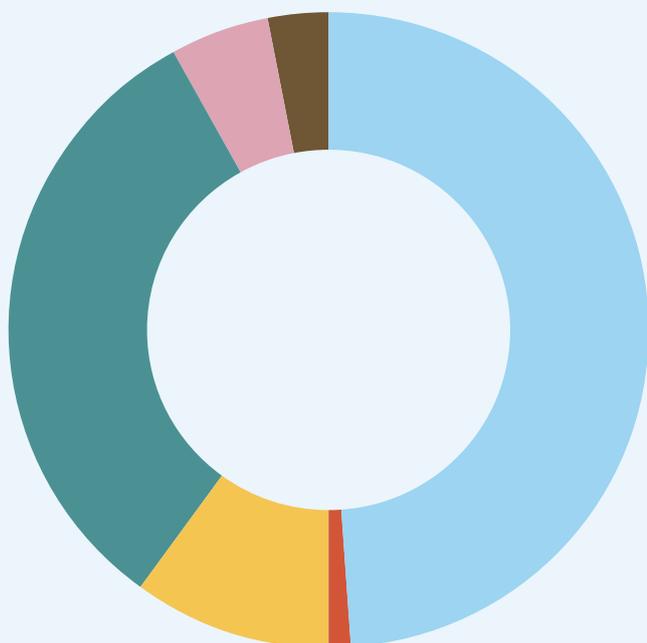
**Cr Robyn Gulline**  
Mayor  
Dated: 13 October 2022

# Victorian Local Government Indicators

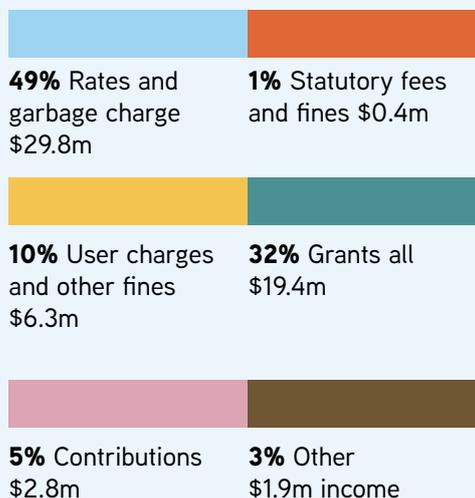
These indicators provide information regarding expenditure, cost of services and infrastructure provision, customer satisfaction and governance

Indicator	Calculation	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
1. Average rates and charges per assessment	Total rates and charges receivable at beginning of year/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$2,308.83	\$2,245.00	\$2,195.79	\$2,147.94
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	\$2,045.30	\$2,012.08	\$1,971.56	\$1,867.56
3. Average liabilities per assessment	Total liabilities/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$2,274.32	\$2,107.21	\$2,065.27	\$1,469.24
4. Operating result per assessment	Net surplus/Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$328.03	\$246.23	(33.00)	\$434.11
5. Average operating expenditure per assessment	Operating expenditure/ Number of assessments in adopted budget	\$4,452.62	\$4,505.78	\$4,305.02	\$4,357.62
6. Community satisfaction rating for overall performance generally of Council	Result from the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	56	54	45	55
7. Average capital expenditure per assessment	Capital expenditure/ Number of assessments in the adopted budget	\$1,370.91	\$1,224.79	\$1,344.12	\$872.59
8. Renewal gap	Capital renewal/Average annual asset consumption	58.4%	86.8%	71.9%	50.1%
9. Renewal and maintenance gap	Capital renewal and maintenance/Average annual asset consumption plus planned maintenance	69.8%	86.1%	77.1%	59.6%
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	No longer available	44	54
11. Community satisfaction rating for Council's engagement in decision making on key local issues	Result from the Annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	52	48	39	49

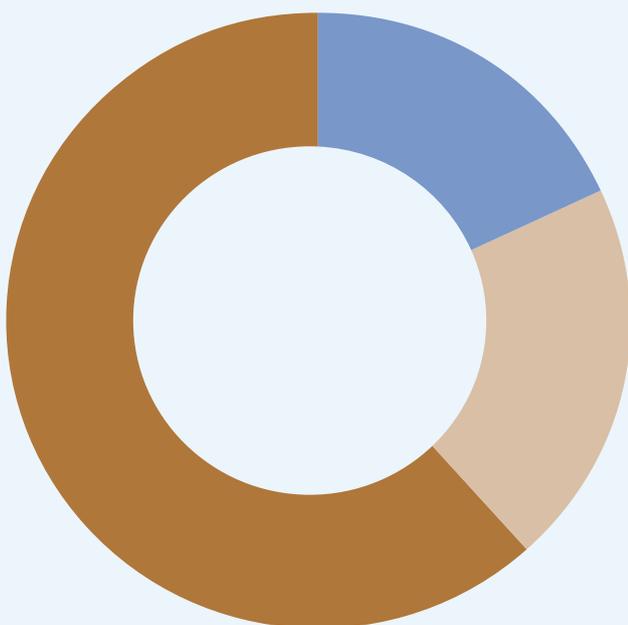
## Where our money comes from



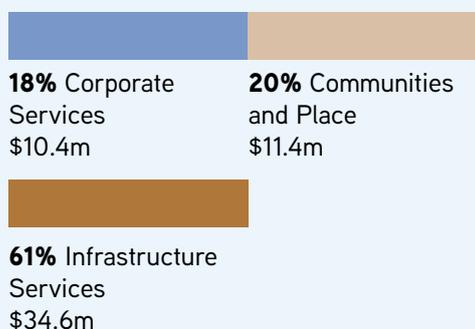
### Income



## 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](mailto:council@hrcc.vic.gov.au)

**W** [www.hrcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au)

Monday to Friday  
8.30am to 5.00pm

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### Depot:

Selkirk Drive, Horsham 3400

**P** (03) 5382 9600

Monday to Friday  
7.30am to 4.30pm

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