



**Swan Hill Rural  
City Council**

## **SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING**

**Tuesday 15 October 2024  
to be held at 2:00 PM**

**Council Chambers  
Swan Hill Town Hall  
53 – 57 McCallum Street, Swan  
Hill. VIC 3585**

## **AGENDA**

### **PUBLIC ACCESS**

**Open to the public and  
Live streaming from Council's  
website: [www.swanhill.vic.gov.au](http://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au)**

## Governance Rules

A copy of Swan Hill Rural City Council's governance rules can be found at  
<https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/policies/governance-rules-2020/>

## Executive Leadership Team

Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer

Bruce Myers, Director of Community and Cultural Services

Michelle Grainger, Director of Development and Planning

Bhan Pratap, Director of Corporate Services

Leah Johnston, Director of Infrastructure



## Swan Hill Elected Members

### Mayor



**Cr Stuart King**

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[stuart.king@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:stuart.king@swanhill.vic.gov.au)

### Councillors



**Cr Chris Jeffery**

0429 447 802

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**Cr Nicole McKay**

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**Cr Jacquie Kelly**

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**Cr Bill Moar**

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**Cr Les McPhee**

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**Cr Ann Young**

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## Vision Statement

Built on strong foundations that embrace our rich History and natural environment, our region will be a place of progressions and possibility. We are a community that is happy, healthy and harmonious - we are empowered, we are respectful and we are proud.

## Our Mission

We will lead, advocate, partner and provide efficient services and opportunities for growth and the wellbeing of our community, environment and economy.

## Our Values

Council values our residents and community and will be responsive to their needs. In pursuing our objectives, we believe in, and are committed to, the following values:

**Community engagement** - We will ensure that our communities are consulted, listened to and informed.

**Leadership** - We will be at the centre of our community and by actively engaging our community we will form the collective view on strategic issues and will then express our views through strong advocacy and action.

**Fairness** - We will value and embrace the diversity of our community and ensure that all people are treated equally.

**Accountability** - We will be transparent and efficient in our activities and we will always value feedback.

**Trust** - We will act with integrity and earn the community's trust by being a reliable partner in delivering services, projects and providing facilities.



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## 1 Procedural Matters

### 1.1 Welcome

### 1.2 Acknowledgement Of Country

*“Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.”*

### 1.3 Opening Declaration

*“We beseech you Lord, that we may be granted wisdom, understanding and sincerity of purpose, in the decisions we are called on to make for the welfare of the people of the Rural City of Swan Hill.”*

Or

“We, the Councillors of Swan Hill Rural City Council, declare that we will undertake the duties of the office of Councillor, in the best interests of our community, and faithfully, and impartially, carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in us, to the best of our skill and judgement.”

### 1.4 Apologies / Leaves of Absence

Councillor Les McPhee.

### 1.5 Directors / Officers Present

### 1.6 Confirmation of Minutes

#### 1.6.1 Confirmation of Minutes

#### Recommendation/s

**That the minutes of the Scheduled Council Meeting held on the 10 September 2024 and the minutes of the Unscheduled Council Meeting held on the 16 September 2024 be confirmed.**

### 1.7 Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

### 1.8 Joint Letters and Reading of Petitions

Nil.

## 1.9 Public Questions Time

**You can access the form Public Question Time form from:**

<https://forms.swanhill.vic.gov.au/council-meeting-public-question-time/>

### **Please note**

- Only ONE question per form submission.
- Submission must be received no later than 10:00am on the day prior to the meeting.
- A time is set aside for public questions during a Council meeting at which time each question will be read after the Chairman has looked at its contents and determined that the question is appropriate.
- Statements and opinions are not permitted during question time and will not be read to the meeting.
- The Chairman may disallow any question. This may be because the question is repetitive of a question already asked, objectionable, irrelevant, raises an issue of a confidential nature or is asked to embarrass a Councillor or Council officer. The Chairman will provide reasons where a question is disallowed. Questions considered to be inappropriate will be made available to Councillors on request.
- The Chairman will nominate the appropriate Councillor or Council officer to answer the question or elect to answer it himself/herself.
- No debate or discussion of the questions or answers is permitted.
- The Chairman may elect to take a question on notice in which case a written response will generally be provided within 10 working days.
- A summary of the text of the question and the response will be recorded in the minutes of the Council meeting.

### **Who can use this form**

- Any community member

### **While completing this form, we will request**

- Your contact details (including your name, address, phone and email)
- Your question

It will take about 5 minutes to complete this form.

### **After you submit this form**

- We will send you an email receipt to confirm we have received your submission

### **What happens with your information?**

The information requested in this form is collected by Swan Hill Rural City Council to assist us in responding to your question.



Your name, suburb and question may be read out at the Council meeting and will be recorded in the Council meeting minutes but will not be used for any other purpose unless required by law.

We will handle any personal information you provide on this form in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. We record this information on our customer databases and make it available to relevant Council staff in line with our Privacy Statement.

You can access your personal information by contacting our Privacy Officer.

## 1.10 Open Forum

Please see below “Governance Rules 2023 – Section 7 referring to Open Forum” which outlines the rules and procedure of open forum.

### **7. Community questions and submissions**

#### **7.1. Open Forum and Questions Of Council Time To Be Held**

- (1) The Council will hold Open Forum and Questions of Council Time for up to 30 minutes duration at the beginning of each Scheduled Meeting to allow public submissions and questions of Council. Extension of time may be granted by resolution of Council.
- (2) Open Forum is an opportunity for the general public to present to Council on a matter listed on the Agenda or any other matter.
- (3) Questions of Council are an opportunity for the general public to submit a question prior to the Scheduled Meeting and receive a response from Council in the Questions of Council time.
- (4) Council meetings are recorded and broadcasted to the public; this includes community questions and submissions.

#### **Open forum and questions of council guidelines**

**7.2.** Questions of Council time and Open Forum will not apply during any period when the Council has resolved to close the meeting in respect of a matter under section 66 (1) of the Act.

**7.3.** Submissions as part of Open Forum and Questions of Council may be on any matter except if it:

- (a) is considered malicious, defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial, or objectionable in language or substance;
- (b) relates to confidential information as defined under the Act;
- (c) relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- (d) relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person;
- (e) If a person has submitted more than 2 questions to a meeting, the third and further questions may, at the discretion of the Chairperson be deferred until all other person who have asked a question have had their questions asked and answered and not be asked if the time allotted for public question time has expired.

**7.4.** Where the Mayor does not accept a question, the submitter is to be informed of the reason or reasons for which their question was not accepted.

**7.5.** The Mayor reserves the right to cease a submission as part of Open Forum if they deem the submission inappropriate.

**7.6.** Where possible Copies of all questions allowed by the Mayor will be provided in writing to all Councillors.



- 7.7. A submission or question submitted in writing by a member of the public, which has been disallowed by the Mayor will be provided to any Councillor on request.

**Open forum**

- 7.8. For any member of the public who wishes to be heard at Open Forum they must give prior notice:
- (a) in written form;
  - (b) contain the name, address and email or contact telephone number of the person to be heard;
  - (c) by online request <https://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/>;
  - (d) in a letter to the Chief Executive Office, 45 Splatt Street, Swan Hill, Vic 3585; or
  - (e) in an email [council@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@swanhill.vic.gov.au); or
  - (f) hand delivery to the Council's Office, 45 Splatt Street, Swan Hill or 72 Herbert Street, Robinvale.
- 7.9. It is preferable for any group or association that wishes to be heard at Open Forum to nominate a spokesperson for an issue upon which the group or association may wish to be heard.

**Open Forum Procedure**

- 7.10. Public addressing the Meeting
- (1) Any member of the public addressing Council must extend due courtesy and respect to Council and the processes under which it operates and must take direction from the Chairperson whenever called on to do so.
  - (2) Council may suspend standing orders to hear from a community member or representative of an organisation, on matters of significance to the Council, only if prior arrangements have been made by written request to the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.
- 7.11. The Chair will allocate a maximum of 3 minutes to each person who wishes to address Council.
- 7.12. The Chair will first invite any person who has given prior notice to present to Council.
- 7.13. The Chair will then invite members of the gallery who would like to present to Council.
- 7.14. The Chair has the discretion to alter the order of persons to be heard.
- 7.15. The person in addressing the Council:
- (a) must confine their address to the 3-minute allocation of time;
  - (b) shall extend due courtesy and respect to the Council and the processes under which it operates; and
  - (c) shall take direction from the Chair whenever called upon to do;
  - (d) There will be no discussion or debate with the attendees to Open Forum however Councillors may ask questions of clarification of the attendee;
  - (e) Standing Orders do not need to be suspended to allow discussion for the purposes of clarification.

## 2 Officer Reports for Decision

### 2.1 Swan Hill Incorporated 2024/25 Budget and Marketing Plan

**Directorate:** Development and Planning  
**File Number:** S 12-24-05  
**Purpose:** For Decision

#### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**1. Liveability** - We will be a healthy, connected and growing community supported by a range of infrastructure and services.

##### **1.1 A modern municipality: Vibrant, connected and resilient**

**2. Prosperity** - We will continue to build and strengthen a prosperous local economy, through sustainable growth and education. We will focus on creating jobs and wealth through adding value to existing strengths in all areas of our economy.

##### **2.2 A thriving diverse economy**

2.2.1 Encourage the growth and development of our economy

**4. Leadership** - We will ensure accountable leadership, advocacy and transparent decision making.

#### Current Strategic Documents

Council Plan  
Council 2024/25 Budget  
Economic Development Strategy 2017 - 2022  
Swan Hill Rural City Council Tourism Advocacy Document 2020

#### Election Period Statement

The recommended decision is neither a prohibited decision in accordance with section 69 (2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor a Significant Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Procedure.

#### Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

#### Summary

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the detail of the Swan Hill Inc. 2024/25 Budget and Marketing Plan, in concert with the Special Marketing Rate Agreement (2019-2026).

## Discussion

In accordance with the Local Government 2020 relating to the Special Marketing Rate Levy collected by Council on behalf of Swan Hill Inc. it is required to meet with Council to present the 2024/25 Budget and Marketing Plan.

Council is then able to discuss the budget and marketing plan with representatives of the Swan Hill Inc. Board prior to the adoption of the budget and marketing plan by Council.

Once Council has adopted the budget and marketing plan, it can then commence the process to pass on the payment of the levy to Swan Hill Inc. in accordance with the special rate struck on businesses.

In the attached documents, Swan Hill Inc. have highlighted the following:

- There continues to be a strong partnership between Swan Hill Inc., Council, key stakeholders, members and the general community involving the ongoing promotion of Swan Hill and the surrounding region.
- The special rate has been in place now for 18 years.
- The Board is continuing with its structure of the main board and three sub committees.
- Visitor levels are returning to pre-covid levels which is encouraging.
- Swan Hill Inc. will continue to utilise all forms of marketing to attract increased visitation.
- Events continue to be a key focus for the Board. The continued success of the Food and Wine Festival is an example of the work the Board has been undertaking.
- The new plan aims to target regional Victoria, Melbourne, regional New South Wales and South Australia.
- Shopping promotions will continue to support local businesses.

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024/25 Budget

The draft 2024/25 Budget indicates the following:

- Income - \$514,166, of which a Special Marketing Income of \$377,610 is within the Council budget and initiatives\* to support and work with Swan Hill Incorporated was approved by Council 18 June 2024.

\*122) Continue to support and work with Swan Hill Incorporated

\*126) Continue to work with Murray River Tourism and Swan Hill Incorporated to promote the municipality

- Expenditure \$543,120

Resulting in a deficit budget of \$28,954 with the funds to balance the budget drawn from reserves that Swan Hill Inc. has generated over time.

The financial reserve has accumulated due to the impact of COVID and several programs not proceeding, however the Board is mindful of the need to increase activities which includes increasing the expenditure.

The continuation of the partnership will provide benefits to the local business community and will see a steady increase in the number of visitors coming into our region.

### **Consultation**

The Swan Hill Inc. Board representatives regularly meet with Council and Council has representation on the various sub committees of Swan Hill Inc.

### **Financial Implications**

Council collects the Special Marketing Rate Levy from applicable businesses and then passes it onto Swan Hill Inc.

### **Social Implications**

The programs and events undertaken by Swan Hill Inc. continue to enhance our community and make our region an attractive destination.

### **Economic Implications**

The Special Marketing Rate Levy collected over the eighteen-year period has assisted and supported the local business community.

### **Environmental Implications**

Swan Hill Inc. is aware of the need to support programs that do not have a negative impact on the environment.

### **Risk Management Implications**

Swan Hill Inc. has in place procedures and processes to address risk issues.

- Attachments:**
1. Budget 2024 2025 [2.1.1 - 2 pages]
  2. Marketing Plan 2024 2025 [2.1.2 - 18 pages]

### **Options**

1. Council can resolve to adopt the Swan Hill Inc. 2024/25 Budget and Marketing Plan as presented.
2. Council having considered the Swan Hill Inc. 2024/25 Budget and Marketing Plan can seek amendments to the documents.
3. Council having considered the Swan Hill Inc. 2024/25 Budget and Marketing Plan can resolve not to adopt the document and request Swan Hill Inc. re-present the document.

### **Recommendation/s**

**That Council adopt the Swan Hill Incorporated 2024/25 Budget and Marketing Plan.**

	ACTUALS	BUDGET	BUDGET (V3)
	Jul 23 - Jun 24	Jul 23 - Jun 24	Jul 24 - Jun 25
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
Opportunistic Marketing Income	16,000.00		
Bank Interest	460.77	400.00	456.00
Market Day	1,697.90	1,500.00	1,500.00
Membership SHI (Voluntary)	50.00	4,600.00	4,600.00
Sundry income	4000.00		
Special Rate Income	383,982.83	377,610.00	377,610.00
Total Income	406,191.50 <sup>0.00</sup>	384,110.00 <sup>0.00</sup>	384,166.00
Swan Hill Region Food and Wine	124,980.90	120,000.00	130,000.00
Total Income	531,172.40 <sup>0.00</sup>	504,110.00 <sup>0.00</sup>	514,166.00
Expense			
ADMINISTRATION			
Member Communication Cost	0.00	1,000.00	0.00
Printer Lease	1,498.80	2,600.00	2,600.00
Audit	4,027.20	3,600.00	3,900.00
Bank Fees	203.09	70.00	180.00
Incorporation Fees		125.00	125.00
Insurances	6,370.66	3,200.00	6,340.00
Other Office Expenses	6,170.39	2,000.00	3,240.00
Payroll Expenses	64,000.77	70,000.00	90,833.33
Postage	158.18	100.00	156.00
Printing	308.05	500.00	400.00
Reckon Financial Software	2452.73	750.00	0.00
Staff Training	1,048.33	4,000.00	4,000.00
Stationery	550.08	200.00	300.00
Superannuation Payment	6,714.16	7,350.00	10,445.83
Telephon/Mobile	1653.70	1,700.00	1,700.00
VTIC Membership	770.00	800.00	800.00
Workers Compensation	1198.26	889.00	1000.00
Total ADMINISTRATION	97,124.40	98,884.00	126,020.17
BUSINESS SUPPORT & ADVOCACY			
Swan Hill Corporate Website		600.00	600.00
Media Communication	489.65	2,000.00	2,000.00
Business Forums	1608.65	5,000.00	5,000.00
Total BUSINESS SUPPORT & ADVOCACY	2,098.30	7,600.00	7,600.00



<b>MARKETING</b>			
Digital Marketing	43,600.63	35,000.00	35,000.00
Oportunistic Promotions	26,305.06	10,000.00	10,000.00
Digital Platform	8,370.91	8,000.00	15,000.00
Murray Regional Tourism Board	5,500.00	20,000.00	13,000.00
Targeted Mainstream Campaign	115,985.09	157,000.00	140,000.00
Visitor Guide Distribution	1,655.36	5,000.00	2,500.00
<b>Total MARKETING</b>	<b>201,417.05</b>	<b>235,000.00</b>	<b>215,500.00</b>
<b>FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL</b>			
SH Food & Wine Festival Expenses	137,725.08	120,000.00	120,000.00
<b>PROMOTIONS</b>			
Swan Hill Show	2,818.18	1,000.00	2,000.00
NSW Open Golf		0.00	10,000.00
<b>Total PROMOTIONS</b>	<b>2,818.18</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>
<b>TRADERS</b>			
Swan Hill Shopfront Initiative		2,000.00	2,000.00
Swan Hill Gift Card	9,482.65	10,000.00	10,000.00
Easter Market Day	7,646.99	10,000.00	10,000.00
Buy Swan Hill	2,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Retail Promotions	5,042.63	20,000.00	12,000.00
Christmas Promotion	28,369.81	13,000.00	13,000.00
October Market Day	5,233.44	10,000.00	10,000.00
<b>Total TRADERS</b>	<b>57,775.52</b>	<b>70,000.00</b>	<b>62,000.00</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>498,958.53</b>	<b>532,484.00</b>	<b>543,120.17</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>32,213.87</b>	<b>-28,374.00</b>	<b>-28,954.17</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>32,213.87</b>	<b>-28,374.00</b>	<b>-28,954.17</b>
<b>Opening Balance 1st July (Trading Account)</b>			
		201,266.00	265,448.39
<b>Budgeted Surplus / (Deficit)</b>		<b>-28,374.00</b>	<b>-28,954.17</b>
<b>Budgeted Closing Balance</b>		<b>172,892.00</b>	<b>236,494.22</b>

# Swan Hill Incorporated Marketing Plan 2024/25



# Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



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## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### INTRODUCTION

Swan Hill Incorporated has developed this annual marketing plan and budget to deliver a comprehensive set of priorities and actions for the organisation over the next 12 months. The function of the marketing plan is to deliver outcomes from the strategies documented in the strategic plan. It includes a tactical plan outlining the key initiatives, activities and timings.

### KEY PARTNERS

#### **Swan Hill Rural City Council**

Swan Hill Incorporated will work directly and collaboratively with the Swan Hill Rural City Council to ensure the success of the plan.

#### **Business Community**

Swan Hill Incorporated will represent the best interests of its members by providing leadership to, and engaging with, the business community through strong communication.

#### **Regional, State and Federal Tourism, Development and Government Organisations**

Swan Hill Incorporated will work collaboratively with State and Federal Government and relevant industry organisations including the Murray Regional Tourism Board, Visit Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, Destination New South Wales and Regional Development Australia. Each of these agencies will provide Swan Hill Incorporated with a range of opportunities not the least of which will be for additional funding for projects or events.

#### **The Community**

Swan Hill Incorporated will engage with the local community to promote the benefits of supporting local businesses and championing their own region.

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The promotion of our Region is focused on bringing visitors to Swan Hill and the surrounding region. Results from Murray Regional Tourism for the year ending 31 December 2022 showed that the Swan Hill Region experienced 395,000\* domestic overnight visitors in that time. This is an increase of 21.5% on year ending December 2021. We are close to pre covid levels where we experienced 415,000 domestic overnight visitors in 2019.

Fact sheets produced by Visit Victoria Research Unit in December 2022 show the average expenditure in the Murray region to be \$202 per night, \$167 per night for the Swan Hill region showing an increase of 62.7% on the previous year.

The visitor economy results in many businesses, not directly related to tourism, benefiting significantly from the proceeds of visitors to the region.

\* Domestic and international visitation and average expenditure are retrieved from Murray Regional Tourism Board December 2022 Quarterly reports.

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### ABOUT SWAN HILL INCORPORATED

Swan Hill Incorporated has operated under the Special Rate for the past 18 years and has been very successful in the promotion of Swan Hill and the region.

#### Our Purpose:

To market and promote the Swan Hill Region.

#### Our Vision:

We will be the relevant organisation supporting business in the marketing and promotion of our region.

#### Our Strategies:

##### **Visitation to the Region**

Increase visitation by specifically marketing the Swan Hill region as a place to visit and enjoy.

##### **Shopping in the Region**

Specifically market the Swan Hill region as a place to shop and encourage the provision of quality service. Promote and educate the importance of shopping locally.

##### **Advocacy**

Engage with and advocate on behalf of members.

##### **Business Support**

Provide support and direction to members.

### OUR STRUCTURE

Swan Hill Inc. has a Board of Directors and three sub-committees to cover:

- Marketing
- Traders
- Business Support and Advocacy

In total we currently have 22 volunteers that make up our main board and the sub committees. Each of these people give their time voluntarily and a number of them have done so since Swan Hill Inc.'s inception.



## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### Swan Hill Inc. Board Members

John Charleson – Chair – Bottle-O & Cellarbrations  
Greg Roberts – Deputy Chair – Murray Downs Golf and Country Club & Swan Hill Club  
Adam Laughlin – Pooles Accountants and Tax Specialists  
Colin Hayward – Stihl Shop Swan Hill  
Dale Whitfield – Whitfield Excavations  
Brendan McKenzie – Golconda Group  
Deb Martin – Aspire Jewellers  
Councillor Ann Young – Swan Hill Rural City Council Delegate

### Marketing Committee

Greg Roberts – Chair - Murray Downs Golf and Country Club & Swan Hill Club  
Janelle Earle - Pioneer Settlement  
Jessica Warburton – Pioneer Settlement  
Marcia Pollington - Swan Hill Rural City Council (Economic Development & Tourism Unit)  
Reece Sutton – Big4 Swan Hill  
Shaun O’Bree – Murray Downs Golf and Country Club & Swan Hill Club  
The Swan Hill Incorporated Marketing Committee is continually looking at new members to diversify the group and allow greater input and impact on all sectors.

### Traders Committee

Debbie Martin – Chair - Aspire Jewellery  
Stephen Colombo – Bowser Bean  
Colin Hayward – Stihl Shop Swan Hill  
Brendan McKenzie – Golconda Group  
Carrie-Anne Robins – Innocence and Attitude  
Rebecca Orlando – Swan Hill Fishing and Shooting  
Daniel Cleary – Premix King  
Georgia Lipp – Gorg Lifestyle  
Nadene Simpson – Home. Life Childrens Boutique  
Nina McNamarra – The Dandy Lion Studio

### Business Support Committee

Adam Laughlin – Pooles Accountants and Tax Specialists  
Colin Hayward – Stihl Shop Swan Hill

All Swan Hill Inc. members are encouraged to attend the Traders committee meetings which allows them the opportunity to have direct input. Any member is also welcome to submit any ideas with regard to expenditure or marketing to the Board in writing for consideration.

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### HOW HAVE WE PROMOTED THE REGION SINCE 2014 – 2024?

The Swan Hill Inc. Marketing Committee have annually developed and executed a marketing plan to promote the Swan Hill region through the following key activities:

- **Mainstream Marketing**  
Regional TVC advertising together with Radio and Print advertising in Metro & Regional outlets. Our current campaign is a Nature based TVC and a Local Shopping TVC promoting the Swan Hill region through camping and shopping.
- **Digital Marketing**
  - Targeted digital marketing on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube have formed the basis of our previous digital marketing campaigns.
  - Targeted use of social media influences to promote the region on their social media platforms.
  - Consumer website which forms part of the Murray River Tourism digital platform - Visit Swan Hill was launched in 2016.
  - TVC's playing through 7Plus App
- **Partnered with Murray Regional Tourism Board**  
We partnered with the Murray Regional Tourism Board which allows us to access state programs at a subsidised rate. We have previously participated in a number of promotions such as What's Up Down Under, Master Chef, consumer shows like Masters Golf, Melbourne Show and Caravan & Camping. We have also partnered with the tourism board to bring social media influencers to our region to promote visitation.
- **Swan Hill Region Food and Wine Festival**  
We have successfully presented an annual Food and Wine Festival weekend which attracts visitors from far and wide to our region. Visitor numbers through the gate has increased substantially from 224 in 2011 to 1947 in 2022 and a record of over 2,000 people in 2023 and 2024. 2023's event also saw a record number of stall holders in attendance. The 2024 Swan Hill Food & Wine Festival was once again a great success and is now becoming a profitable event that we anticipate will increase in the future. The estimated economic impact of the 2024 Festival was around \$352,880.
- **Official Visitor Guide and Touring Guides**  
We have also promoted our region with the production of an Official Visitor Guide which is distributed nationally to visitor information centres. This document is updated biannually. Due to COVID-19 the Marketing Committee made the decision to delay the production of the Official Visitor Guide until the 2022/23 Financial Year. This gave the committee the opportunity to review the product and research the tourism marketplace for other options. This has resulted in a transition for the old official visitor guide to a new Visitor Inspiration Guide that will always be relevant with QR codes linking to the Visit Swan Hill Website. This new guide has provided popular with its simpler format and design.
- **Partnered with Swan Hill Rural City Council**

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



We have and continue to partner with the SHRCC on various projects to promote our region since the inception of the special rate in 2002.

- Business Support Program, Discover More Drive, Shop Local Campaigns, Navigating Business Panel Events.

### HOW HAVE WE PROMOTED SHOPPING IN OUR REGION FOR 2023/24?

The Swan Hill Inc. Traders Committee have every year developed and executed a marketing plan that has promoted shopping locally through the following key activities.

- **EOFY Promotion**  
The EOFY promotion was a competition created this year to encouraging people to Shop Local and to shop in the Swan Hill region. With a purchase in local stores required to enter, the promotion gives the opportunity for the winner to win 1 of 25 \$200 local gift cards. This concept is a win for both businesses and shoppers in a time of year where business may be quieter. The prize being a \$200 local gift card means 25 shops will directly benefit from this.
- **Buy Local Campaign**  
In 2019 Swan Hill Traders Committee invested in a Gift Card program dedicated to local businesses through 'Why Leave Town'. With a minimum purchase of \$20.00 the Swan Hill Gift Card has kept over \$590,000 local dollars in town in local businesses in both Swan Hill and Lake Boga. This is an ongoing campaign that has now added on a digital option for more shops in Swan Hill to join in.
- **Buy Swan Hill / Local Loop Campaign**  
Swan Hill Inc. partnered with Ace Radio every year to run the local loop, which is now known as 'The Buy Swan Hill' campaign. Local businesses receive an allocated number of 30 second slots on the radio for the duration of the year. The message in every advert conveyed the importance of supporting shopping locally.
- **Easter Market Day and October Market Day**  
These two events held over the Easter weekend & the weekend of the Junior Basketball Tournament. A portion of Campbell Street is closed off and is filled with stalls and entertainment for young and old, whilst the Traders bring their wares out onto the foot paths. Both events have consistently proven to be very popular amongst locals as well as visitors in town.
- **Christmas Decorations & Christmas Shopping Campaign**  
Every year Swan Hill Inc runs their shopping competition from mid-November until Mid-December. The Christmas Shopping competition is held and supports local businesses.

### SUPPORTING LOCAL EVENTS

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



- **Funded Community Projects**

Swan Hill Inc. provides funding and marketing assistance to numerous community projects. Since 1 July 2015 we have provided support to the numerous festivals, events & projects. In the past these have included: Lake Boga Easter Regatta, Farmers Market, Heartbeat of the Murray Laser Light Show, Da Vinci Exhibition, Harmony Day, Country Week Tennis, Swan Hill Show and Swan Hill Show & Shine.

Swan Hill Inc was a proud sponsor of the 2024 Lake Boga New Year's event, Lake Boga Regatta. Swan Hill Inc has also already agreed to sponsor upcoming events, NSW Pro, Malle Cruisers Rush and The Swan Hill Show in 2024-2025.

Swan Hill Inc also contributed \$5,000 towards marketing of the Council run event Riverlights – Yana Waingi light activation held in June/July 2024.

### BUSINESS FORUMS

- **Advocacy - To engage with and advocate on behalf of our members.**

- Bi-annual advocacy forums have been held to provide our members & stakeholders with a platform to engage with Swan Hill Inc. and to raise issues that the Swan Hill Inc. Board can advocate for on their behalf.
- Swan Hill Inc. has conducted regular reviews annually with Councillors and the Council Executive team to provide updates on key achievements aligned with the annual Marketing Plan.
- Monthly meetings are held with the CEO and senior staff of Council to raise issues and share information.

- **Business Support – Provide business support and direction to members and encourage the provision of quality service.**

We have hosted 2 forums this year which included motivational/educational speakers and provided a platform for networking. Over a number of years our guest speakers have been: Max Walker, Chris Helder, Dave Straughton, Paul Lyons, Stan Grant and just recently Cameron Sutton, Sarah Blood and Shaun O'Bree. At the start of the financial year a forum was held around 'Employment' as the general feedback from local shop owners was that they were struggling getting staff and keeping staff. The panel consisted of Leanne Shannon-Kelson from Murray Ace, Bree Kent from Spoons Riverside, Nick Yan from Department of jobs, skills, industry and Regions and Chris Montgomery from BIRO network who spoke to the attendees around the options around getting more staff and finding the right staff for your business. In May held a Navigating Business night on 'Packaging and Promotions with the panel consisting of Cameron Sutton from MRT, Sarah Blood from the Bendigo Council and Shaun O'Bree from Murray Downs. The panel spoke to the attendees around the importance of working together to promote the same activity or event that is on in town.

There was plenty of great feedback from these nights and something the local shop owners/managers value.

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### OUR KEY BRAND MESSAGE

“Swan Hill Region – Heart of the Murray” will continue as the key theme, brand, as it provides the region with both a location identifier and a sense of “community and liveability”.

Other key messages will be:

- Escape the city to an authentic country location with a variety of activities.
- The Murray River in Swan Hill is the most natural part of the river, it allows for leisurely activities such as fishing and camping.
- The region is not commercialised – it has a good mix of boutique and regular shops. Something for the whole family.

Swan Hill’s point of difference is its authentic country centre experience, natural surrounds and because of the low key water sport activities allowed on the river, the region has a sense of serenity.

Unique selling points:

- Authenticity
- Murray River
- History - Pioneer Settlement, Heartbeat of the Murray, Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum
- Golf – quality of experience
- Fishing - Cod
- Lake Boga
- Skiing
- Motor Sports
- Nyah, Vinifera and Pental Island – Trails, Biking & Walking
- Bird Watching
- Events – Regional events – Swan Hill Region Food & Wine Festival, Tennis, Country Week, June Racing Carnival, Market Days
- Unique Shopping



## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### Situation Analysis – A Snapshot of Swan Hill

#### SWOT Analysis

##### Strengths

- Climate
- Murray river location
- Family focus/lifestyle
- Pioneer Settlement
- Heritage and history
- Café and dining
- Strong agriculture industry sector
- Positive outlooks and viewed growth potential
- Strong redevelopment (CBD, Chisholm Reserve & Pioneer Settlement)
- Championship golf course
- Harness and horse racing
- Food and wine festival
- The Heartbeat of the Murray
- Lake Boga flying boat museum
- Fishing
- Water sports
- Natural assets (Nyah Forest)
- Chasney Estate
- Regular Events

##### Weaknesses

- Distance from Melbourne & other regional centres
- Lack of developed tourism product
- Skills shortage
- Ageing infrastructure ( buildings, river precinct, bridge)
- Our ability to service the visitor 7 days a week
- Lack of secondary industries.
- A La Carte Dining
- No luxury accommodation or experience led accommodation on offer.
- No Aboriginal culture experiences on offer
- No Walking tour/cycling tours on offer
- No photography classes on offer
- No Agri- Tourism offerings
- No Local foodie experience: i.e. food and drink crawl through the region.
- Where are the Bird watching opportunities?
- Access to hospitality businesses on a Sunday and public holidays.

##### Opportunities

- Industry development/emerging products
- Event development
- Development of river precinct
- Harness innovative business people, enthusiasm & can-do attitudes
- Strong redevelopment (CBD, Chisholm reserve & Pioneer Settlement)
- Bird watching
- Motor sports
- Social media influences
- Asia market
- Capitalising on the regional travel
- Farm Gate Trail
- Ostra Gin
- New Heartbeat of the Murray Show
- Lake Tyrrell
- Silo Art Trail
- Country Pub Crawl Itinerary
- Light Shows

##### Threats

- Business disruption due to natural disaster
- Fragmentation – lack of industry support
- Uncontrollable external economic impacts
- Threat to retail from the development of global online presence
- Uncertainty due to potential floods & drought
- Blue green algae outbreak in recreational waterways
- Mosquito borne diseases
- COVID-19 outbreaks and associated restrictions such as border closures.
- Lack of investment (landlords and commercial property owners)

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### Our Target Markets

Coming out of a tough 12 months due to rise of living costs Swan Hill region has seen a decrease in visitation. From January to December of 2023 total domestic travel was down 11.4% with a total of 667,000 doing a day trip and down 2.8% with 912,000 staying overnight. Domestic overnight travellers spent \$163 million which was up 3.8%

Same as previous years we will be focusing on retaining and nurturing existing key markets, as well as focussing on new and developing markets.

- 45-50+ years – mid-life households & older self-funded retirees
- 35-45 years – Families (conventional and traditional, as well as attracting new and emerging culturally and socially diverse families.)
- All Ages – Visiting friends and relatives

Our Marketing efforts will be directed to the primary source markets of:

- Regional Victoria
- Melbourne
- Regional New South Wales
- South Australia

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### Strategy One - Visitation to the Region

Increase visitation by specifically marketing the Swan Hill region as a place to visit and enjoy. Swan Hill Incorporated encourages all food and beverage establishments to open 7 days a week during peak visitation periods.

#### Committee: Marketing

The Marketing Committee has outsourced the digital component of the marketing plan to the social media specialists SASI Marketing & Communications.

The full Marketing Strategy is provided in appendix A.

Initiative	Action	Timing/KPI	Annual Budget
<b>Develop targeted marketing designed to increase visitation &amp; spend</b>	Develop and implement a targeted Marketing Strategy that incorporates spend in each of the following areas: digital, print, TVC, radio, social media, events, projects, photography/videography, billboards and caravanning magazines.	Ongoing	\$140,000
	Develop, print and distribute the new Swan Hill Visitor Inspiration Guide.	Ongoing	\$2,500
	Work closely with Murray Regional Tourism on the Swan Hill section of the Murray Region Visitor Guide.	Ongoing	
<b>Develop strategic alliances with key Tourism industry organisations</b>	Develop and nurture relationships with Murray Regional Tourism, Visit Victoria, Destination New South Wales, Destination Riverina Murray and Murray River Council to leverage marketing & tourism opportunities for the region.	Ongoing	\$13,000
<b>Manage &amp; Improve our online presence</b>	Continually ensure the content on the Visit Swan Hill website is up to date and relevant. Providing the user with an interactive easy-to-use resource.	Ongoing	\$15,000
	Monitor and update operator Australian Tourism Data warehouse (ATDW) listings.	Ongoing	NIL
	Increase social media presence; with a dedicated budget to grow engagement and following.	Ongoing	\$35,000
<b>Manage the 'Visit Swan Hill' Brand</b>	Ensure the brand is represented consistently in all communications, i.e tone of voice and visual elements.	Ongoing	NIL

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



Reporting	Conduct local operator surveys to establish reliable data on visitation during peak periods, i.e the Food & Wine Festival, Easter, Christmas and June Racing Carnival.	Ongoing	NIL
	Develop and implement a quarterly reporting system for the board and committees that includes visitation to the region, website sessions, campaign performance and bi-monthly social media reporting.	Ongoing	NIL
Encourage and support pre & post travel around Festivals & Events.	Ensure visitors are informed and encouraged to extend their stay and further explore the region, i.e. itineraries.	Ongoing	NIL
Encourage and support the development and linking of regional festivals and events.	Organise and expand the Swan Hill Food & Wine Festival with a focus on encouraging dispersal of visitors throughout the region. <b>The expenditure on this event will be covered by the income generated from the event.</b>	Ongoing	\$130,000
	Support and develop new and existing events along with any other opportunistic ventures.	Ongoing	\$10,000
Support Aboriginal culture	Showcase Aboriginal culture through events, experiences and attractions where possible.	Ongoing	NIL
Develop a campaign focusing on our Evolving Market: 'Visiting Friends and Relatives'	Develop a targeted marketing campaign to attract more VFR into establishments, attractions and to spend more when visiting.	Ongoing	NIL
Continue to work closely with SHRCC on Product & Service gaps.	Work together to enhance the visitor experience through partnered projects, i.e Farm Gate Trail.	Ongoing	NIL

Total Strategy 1: Visitation to the region **\$215,500**

Swan Hill Food and Wine Projected income **\$130,000**

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### Strategy Two – Shopping in the region

Promote the Swan Hill region as a place to shop.

#### Committee: Traders

Initiative	Action	Timing	Annual Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Promote and educate the importance of shopping locally</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in the Ace Radio 'Buy Swan Hill' Promotion.</li> </ul>	Monthly	\$5,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued subscription and promotion of the 'Why Leave Town' Swan Hill Gift Card.</li> </ul>	Annually	\$10,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influence and educate the community about the importance of buying local versus spending their money outside the region.</li> </ul>	Annually	\$12,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Develop a targeted annual calendar of promotions to strengthen trade within the Swan Hill Region.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct specific shopping promotions including Market Day, Christmas Promotion, Swan Hill Shopfront initiative and other promotion(s) throughout the year.</li> </ul>	October to June	\$35,000

**Total Strategy 2: Shopping in the region**

**\$62,000**



## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### Strategy Three – Advocacy

Engage with and advocate on behalf of members

**Committee: Board & Business Support Committee**

Initiative	Action	Timing	Annual Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and maintain a leadership role by engaging with local businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to communicate regularly and effectively with members and stakeholders using preferred methods of communication such as radio, social media, e-mails, telephone calls, visits, corporate website etc.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	\$1,600
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with government agencies and relevant organisations to advocate on behalf of members and the region.</li> </ul>	As needed	NIL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule two networking forums for the year providing members with the opportunity to attend, raise issues and network with other members.</li> </ul>	October & May	\$1,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a strong and mutually supportive relationship with Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct two (2) reviews annually with Councillors to provide updates on key achievements aligned with the Annual Marketing Plan.</li> </ul>	October & May	NIL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to hold monthly briefings with the Council CEO and senior staff to raise issues and share information.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	NIL

**Total Strategy 3: Advocacy**

**\$2,600**

Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025  
Marketing Plan & Budget



**Strategy Four – Business Support**

Provide business support and direction to members and encourage the provision of quality service.

**Committee: Board & Business Support Committee**

Initiative	Action	Timing	Annual Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide members with opportunities to grow their business through educational and motivational events.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Host Business Support Forum which includes motivational speakers / educational and networking events designed to appeal to members.</li></ul>	August	\$5,000

**Total Strategy 4: Business Support** **\$5,000**

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



### Swan Hill Incorporated Annual Budget 2023/24

#### Income

Bank Interest	456
Market Day	1,500
Membership SHI (Voluntary)	4,600
Special Rate Income	377,610
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$384,166</b>
<hr/>	
Swan Hill Region Food and Wine	130,000
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Total INCOME</b>	<b>\$514,166</b>

#### Expenses

##### Administration

Audit	3900
Bank Fees	180
Incorporation Fees	125
Insurances	6,340
Other Office Expenses	3,240
Payroll Expenses	90,833
Printer Lease	2,600
Postage	156
Printing	400
Staff Training	4,000
Stationary	300
Superannuation Payment	10,446
Telephone/Mobile	1,700
VTIC Membership	800
Workers Compensation	1,000
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>\$126,020</b>

##### Business Support

Business Forums	5,000
Media Communication	2,000

## Swan Hill Incorporated 2024-2025 Marketing Plan & Budget



Swan Hill Corporate Website	600
<b>Total Business Support &amp; Advocacy</b>	<b>\$7,600</b>

### Marketing

Digital Marketing	35,000
Digital Platform	15,000
Targeted Mainstream Campaign	140,000
Murray Regional Tourism Board	13,000
Official Visitor Guide Distribution	2,500
Opportunistic Promotions	10,000
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>\$215,500</b>

### Swan Hill Region Food & Wine

Swan Hill Region Food & Wine	120,000
<b>Total Swan Hill Region Food &amp; Wine</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>

### Promotions

Swan Hill Show	2,000
NSW Open Golf	10,000
<b>Total Promotions</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>

### Traders

Buy Swan Hill	5,000
Retail Promotions	12,000
Christmas Promotion	13,000
Market Days	20,000
Swan Hill Shopfront Initiative	2,000
Swan Hill Gift Card	10,000
<b>Total Traders</b>	<b>\$62,000</b>

<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$543,120.17</b>
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<b>Net Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>(\$28,954)</b>
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## 2.2 Service Performance Report 2023/24

**Directorate:** Corporate Services  
**File Number:** S15-28--20  
**Purpose:** For Decision

### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**4. Leadership** - We will ensure accountable leadership, advocacy and transparent decision making.

#### 4.1 Excellent management and administration

4.1.1 Well managed resources for a sustainable future

4.1.2 Provide robust governance and effective leadership

### Current Strategic Documents

Annual Report

### Election Period Statement

The recommended decision is neither a prohibited decision in accordance with section 69 (2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor a Significant Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Procedure.

### Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

### Summary

The *Local Government Act 2020* is principles based, including the requirement for Councils to plan and deliver services to the municipal community in accordance with the service performance principles in Section 106.

The Service Performance Report includes 178 indicators across 10 service areas. Forty of the indicators are mandatory as part of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) requirements, the remaining 138 indicators were developed by Council under the previous Best Value Framework.

The council reports to the municipal community annually on the delivery of services.

## Discussion

The Service Performance Report shows achievement against the relevant standards/indicators, and includes commentary on any variances, per service group for 2023/24.

In 2023/24, the results show:

- 71 per cent of service performance indicators were either achieved or exceeded
- 90 per cent of LGPRF indicators were within the expected range.

The Swan Hill Rural City Council Service Performance Report 2023/24 is attached.

## Consultation

Responsible officers were contacted to provide results against the measures.

## Financial Implications

Nil.

## Social Implications

Nil.

## Economic Implications

Nil.

## Environmental Implications

Nil.

## Risk Management Implications

Nil

**Attachments:** 1. Service Performance Document 2023 24 2 [2.2.1 - 25 pages]

## Options:

1. Approve for release to the community the Swan Hill Rural City Council Service Performance Report 2023/24, as presented.
2. Approve the release of the Swan Hill Rural City Council Service Performance Report 2023/24 to the community, after minor changes requested by Council have been actioned, and its release approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

## Recommendation/s

**That Council approve for release to the community, the Swan Hill Rural City Council Service Performance Report 2023/24, as presented.**



# Swan Hill Rural City Council Service Performance Report 2023/24

## Quality and Cost Standards and Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Indicators

Service Group	Number of standards/indicators				
Quality/Cost Standard	Exceeded	Achieved	Not achieved	Not applicable	Total
Transport Services (page 2)	3	5	1	2	11
Family and Children's Services (page 5)	1	4	-	-	5
Economic Prosperity (page 7)	1	3	3	1	8
Community Care Services (page 8)	-	4	4	-	8
Community Wellbeing (page 9)	1	2	2	2	7
Waste Management (page 12)	-	1	2	-	3
Community Amenity (page 13)	1	5	1	2	9
Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services (page 15)	6	12	19	-	37
Organisational Support (page 20)	15	21	3	1	40
Governance and Leadership (page 24)	2	7	1	-	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Achieved in 2023/24</b>	22%	46%	26%	6%	100%
<b>Achieved in 2022/23</b>	31%	17%	50%	2%	100%
<b>Achieved in 2021/22</b>	31%	19.5%	48%	1.5%	100%

\*In 2023/24, a 25 per cent variance to target will result in either Exceeded or Not Achieved depending on the measure.

Service Group	Number of standards/indicators			
LGPRF	Within expected range	Outside expected range	Not applicable	Total
Transport Services (page 3)	4	1	-	5
Family and Children's Services (page 5)	5	-	-	5
Community Wellbeing (page 9)	11	2	-	13
Waste Management (page 12)	4	1	-	5
Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services (page 16)	7	-	-	7
Governance and Leadership (page 24)	5	-	-	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Achieved in 2023/24</b>	90.0%	10.0%	-	100%
<b>Achieved in 2022/23</b>	82.5%	17.5%	-	100%
<b>Achieved in 2021/22</b>	82.5%	17.5%	-	100%

## Transport Services

(Report adopted by Council December 2002)

Programs included within this service group:

- Footpaths
- Aerodromes
- Roads - sealed and unsealed

Footpaths				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Grinding metres/year	<100	45 <sup>1</sup>	147	66
Replacement square metres/year	<1,500	1,051	1,056	440
Average response time to address service requests Weeks	2	2	1	1
Number of service requests received that address issues on footpaths	<50 <sup>3</sup>	30 <sup>2</sup>	44	43
Average maintenance expenditure per square metre of footpath Total cost to maintain footpaths / Total square metres of footpaths	\$2.20	\$1.49	\$1.41	\$0.82

### Variance comments:

<sup>1</sup> Grinding meterage significantly reduced due to quantity of works completed the year prior.

<sup>2</sup> Footpath service requests down 30%, evidence of improved footpath condition as a result of works completed the year prior.

<sup>3</sup> The target has been amended to read 'less than 50' to better explain the intent of the target. Previously the target was 50.

Aerodromes				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Maintain Swan Hill and Robinvale aerodromes in accordance with Civil Aviation Regulation	100%	NRR <sup>1</sup>	100%	100%
Cost increase in maintenance of aerodromes Cost increase in Net Operating Result does not exceed 6% to previous year.	6%	NRR <sup>1</sup>	30.85%	-5.05%

### Variance comment:

<sup>1</sup> NRR = No Results Reported in 2023/24.

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Transport Services

Roads				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Completion of asset inspection as per the Road Management Plan	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average response time to address service requests Weeks	3	2	1.5	1
Number of Service Requests received that address issues on unsealed roads:	100 <sup>1</sup>	77	189	120
Average cost to re-sheet a square metre of unsealed road Total cost of re-sheeting / Square metre of re-sheeting	\$4.20 <sup>2</sup>	\$8.22	\$7.32	\$5.10
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Sealed local road requests Number of sealed local road requests per 100 kilometres of sealed local roads. Expected range: 10 to 120 requests.	10-120	10.55 <sub>3</sub>	14.64	5.96
Sealed local roads below the intervention level Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads. Expected range: 80 - 100%	80-100%	98.95%	99.27%	99.37%
Cost of sealed local road reconstruction Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed. Expected range: \$20 - \$200.	\$24 - \$240	\$76.08 <sup>4</sup>	\$30.97	\$59.36
Cost of sealed local road resealing Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed. Expected range: \$4 - \$30.	\$5 - \$40	\$6.18 <sup>5</sup>	\$6.79	\$4.80
Satisfaction with sealed local roads Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads. Expected range: 50 – 100.	50-100	35 <sup>6</sup>	44	51

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> The target of 100 should be a minimum figure, e.g. 'less than 100' or 'less than 75' to better explain the intent of the Target.

<sup>2</sup> The major contributor to the rising average cost of re-sheeting a road in our region over the past few years is due to a significant increase in the price of limestone. In January 2023, the budget price for limestone was \$5:50 per ton, yet the gate price to council was \$15:00 per ton. In 2024, the price increased by 53%, up to \$23:00 per ton. The extent of this material price rise, and other inflationary pressures, have significantly impacted Councils roads program.

The target figure of \$4.20 m2 needs to be revised in light of the actual cost of materials.

Council's Works Department is exploring options to gain access to a reliable and cost effective supply of limestone to improve the cost efficiency of the roads program.

<sup>3</sup> Requests for sealed local roads have reduced from previous years as flood repair has been completed throughout the network.

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Transport Services

<sup>4</sup>The 2023/24 Road Reconstruction program compromised of two Access Roads. Due to higher density and heavier traffic, the pavement design was for 300mm (as opposed to 100mm depth as used for last years program) and more raw materials have been required. The cost of the raw materials has increased significantly during 2023-24.

<sup>5</sup> Council's reseal program has focused on a blend of rural and urban roads which has seen a 9% saving in Sq. metre rate, comparative to last years reporting.

<sup>6</sup> Council continues to face challenges due to a severe shortage of skilled labour and design engineers within the road construction industry. This forces Council to outsource capability, which in the short term may affect community satisfaction results.

## Family and Children's Services

(Report adopted by Council September 2002)

*Programs within this service:*

- Out Of School Hours Child Care consisting of:
  - Before and After School Child Care
  - Vacation Child Care
  - Mobile Vacation Child Care
- Preschools
- Maternal and Child Health

Out of School Hours Child Care				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Meet the outcomes of the funding and service agreements Including licensing, children's regs and accreditation	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average cost to families per hour of care	\$4.61	\$3.18 <sup>1</sup>	\$3.64	\$3.37

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> The amount of Child Care Subsidy families get depends on their family income estimate. In general, the percentage of Child Care Subsidy has increased and therefore the cost of fees for families is reduced compared to previous years.

Maternal and Child Health				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Percentage of children enrolled from birth notifications received	98%	100.3%	100%	104%
Percentage of children attending for 3.5 - 4 year old developmental assessment	70%	53% <sup>1</sup>	87%	79%
Net cost to Council per consultation.	\$112.50	\$87.10 <sup>2</sup>	\$102.48	\$122.09
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Infant enrolments in MCH service Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received. Expected range: 90 - 110%	90-110%	100.33%	100.69%	102.01%
Cost of MCH service Cost to Council of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses. Expected range: \$50 - \$200	\$50 - \$200	\$110.38	\$110.69	\$121.52
Participation in the MCH service Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year)/Number of children enrolled in the MCH service. Expected range: 70 - 100%	70-100%	86.79%	89.19%	82.74%
Participation in MCH service by Aboriginal children Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service. Expected range: 60 - 100%	60-100%	91.49% <sup>3</sup>	83.57%	77.50%

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Participation in 4-week key age and stage visit The percentage of infants enrolled in the MCH service who participated in 4-week key age and stage visit	90-110%	94.00%	92.44%	95.99%
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Variance comments:

<sup>1</sup>Low attendance rates for 3.5-4.0 year assessment resulting from strain on families and results on non-attendance for booked appointments. Additionally families are moving interstate and are still recorded in database as active clients (does not occur if family moves within Victoria). The introduction of 3 year- old kinder will also have had an impact on attendances for 3.5 year assessment.

<sup>2</sup>Net cost to Council lowered due to significant increase in one-off unexpected state funding grants during this financial year.

<sup>3</sup> This effort keeps families engaged with the Service and receiving the care and support needed.

## Economic Prosperity Services

(Report adopted by Council February 2003)

*Programs within this service:*

- Economic Development Unit
- Swan Hill Livestock Exchange
- Tower Hill Estate development

Economic Development				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Achieve population growth for the municipality	0.1%	1.1%	1.0%	-0.3%
Achieve an unemployment rate lower than the average for Rural and Regional Victoria	4%	3.0%	3.3%	2.7%
Total number of visitors to the Swan Hill Region Information Centre	-	14,050	15,263	8,020

**Variance comment:** NA.

Swan Hill Livestock Exchange				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Maintain National Saleyards Quality Assurance (NSQA) and Meat Standards Australia (MSA) accreditation	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total turnover (Cattle plus Sheep and Goats) demonstrating contribution to the local economy	\$54.6m	\$24.3m	\$29.9m	\$38.7m
Ratio of cost to operate the livestock exchange verses income generated (income from sales of cattle, sheep, goats, truck wash and agistment divided by the operational costs including depreciation and reserves)	1.00	0.60	0.66	0.80

**Variance comment:** NA

Tower Hill Estate				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Subdivide and sell lots	18	6 <sup>1</sup>	6	16
Subdivision and sale costs of properties within Budget targets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> Tower Hill property sales have stabilised and returned to levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Community Care Services

(Report adopted by Council February 2003)

*Programs within this service:*

- Client assessments
- General Home, Personal and Respite Care
- Food services
- Aged Accommodation
- Senior Citizen centres

Community Care Services				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Client Needs Review of existing clients to assess appropriateness of service levels, whether service standards are being achieved and to reassess the needs of the client				
• High needs clients	100%	100%	100%	100%
• Medium needs clients	80%	80%	70%	80%
• Low needs clients	70%	50% <sup>1</sup>	45%	70%
Average cost per hour of service:				
• General Home Care	\$51.54	\$95.02 <sup>2</sup>	\$54.00	\$58.31
• Personal Care	\$53.72	\$115.17 <sup>3</sup>	\$61.00	\$75.00
• Respite Care	\$54.00	\$44.30 <sup>4</sup>	\$95.00	\$46.90
Average cost per meal <sup>5</sup> Total cost of Food Services Program / Number of meals delivered to clients	\$12.02	\$13.39	\$11.18	\$12.85
Senior Citizen Centre's <sup>6</sup> Total cost to operate Senior Citizen Centre's and related activities	\$11,500	\$58.967	\$19,772.33	\$19,772.34

### Variance comments:

<sup>1</sup> Priority was given to high and medium clients in lead-up to transition.

<sup>2</sup> General Home Care required extra visits by direct care staff due to transition, including review of safety plans and service plans.

<sup>3</sup> Personal Care clients required extra visits by direct care staff due to transition, including review of safety plans and service plans.

<sup>4</sup> Respite was slightly lower due to early transition to alternative providers.

<sup>5</sup> Price for meal provision was adjusted by supplier during this period.

<sup>6</sup> Swan Hill building had major works associated with relocation of Visitor Information Centre, and loss of income from regular users as a result.

## Community Wellbeing Services

(Report adopted by Council June 2003)

*Programs within this service:*

- Planning
- Building Department
- Regulatory Services – Animal Management
- Parking Control
- Food safety

Planning				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Average number of days required to issue planning permits	58 <sup>1</sup>	106.5	124	79 <sup>2</sup>
Cost per capita to maintain currency and appropriateness of the Planning Scheme Gross cost to Council / Population of the municipality	\$20	\$29.47	\$9.27	\$12.70
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Time taken to decide planning applications The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application. Expected range: 30 – 110 days	30-110	51 <sup>3</sup>	96	79
Planning applications decided within 60 days Number of planning application decisions made within 60 days/Number of planning application decisions made. Expected range: 40 – 100%	40 - 100%	75.73% <sup>4</sup>	59.85%	71.28%
Cost of statutory planning service Direct cost of the statutory planning service/Number of planning applications received. Expected range: \$500 - \$4,000	\$500 - \$4,000	\$5,484 <sup>5</sup>	\$3,967	\$3,218
Planning decisions upheld at VCAT Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application/Number of VCAT Council decisions in relation to planning applications. Expected range: 30 – 100%	0 - 100%	100% <sup>6</sup>	75%	0%

### Variance comments:

<sup>1</sup> In 2023-24, the Average for Small and Medium Victorian Councils was 112.6 Days – Target should be reviewed.

<sup>2</sup> In 2021-22 the Median figure was used in error. Result should have been 115.3 days.

<sup>3</sup> Council has engaged planning consultants to assist with the assessment of planning permit applications and this has improved the statutory timeframes for the assessment of the applications. Council is also in the process of recruiting permanent staff which will assist in maintaining the performance efficiency.

<sup>4</sup> Council has engaged planning consultants to assist with the assessment of planning permit applications and this has improved the statutory timeframes for the assessment of the applications.

<sup>5</sup> Council has had to engage consultants over the past 18 months to assess planning permit applications as it has been difficult to recruit planners to permanent positions. This directly leads to cost escalation but allowed Council to maintain a timely service to the community. Post-COVID\_19 Council application numbers have decreased, but the complexity of the applications has not, and this contributes to the higher cost per application assessment as shown by the data.

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Community Wellbeing Services

<sup>6</sup> For the small number of cases where Council's statutory planning decision making was reviewed by VCAT, the Authority found that Council's decision making was consistent with the local planning scheme.

Building Department				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Average number of days required to issue building permits	18	NR <sup>1</sup>	43	45
Net cost to Council per building permit (Profit)	\$305	NR <sup>1</sup>	\$374	\$112

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> NR = Where Indicator has been obsoleted, it is Not Reported (NR), and the row is shaded. Council ceased providing this service area in 2022-23.

Regulatory Services – Animal Management				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Average cost to Council to enforce Local Laws per registered animal	\$89.00	\$174.74 <sup>1</sup>	\$103.08	\$98.73
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Time taken to action animal management requests Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests. Expected range: 1 to 10 days	1 - 10	1.29	1.31	1.20
Animals reclaimed Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected. Expected range: 30 – 90%	30-90%	22.77% <sup>2</sup>	29.56%	26.90%
Animals rehomed Number of animals rehomed / Number of animals collected. Expected range: 30 – 90%	20-90%	86.94% <sup>3</sup>	60.95%	69.31%
Cost of animal management service per population The direct cost of the animal management service per municipal population. Expected range: \$3 to \$40	\$3-\$40	\$23.83 <sup>4</sup>	\$14.02	\$18.38
Animal management prosecutions Number of successful animal management prosecutions. Expected range: 50 to 200%	0-200%	0% <sup>5</sup>	0%	0%

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup> Increase in cost is due to \$25,000 reduced income for infringements as animal registration were delayed and \$12,000 reduced from last year on animal registrations.

<sup>2</sup> Animals reclaimed from the pound remains low due to cost of living crisis. (Registration, microchipping, de-sexing, vaccinations).

<sup>3</sup> The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact the number of animals uncollected by their registered owners, or abandoned or surrendered by their owners. However, it is a positive outcome that a significant percentage of these animals are being adopted by new owners.

## Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Community Wellbeing Services

<sup>4</sup> Replacement cost of staff on longer term paid leave. Cost is within expected range for this service.  
Note: 2022-23 result adjusted.

<sup>5</sup> No animal management prosecutions in the 2023-24 financial year.

Parking Control				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Hours ticket machines are not functional	1.0%	0.8%	1.37%	1.0%
Net operating cost to Council per restricted car park space per annum Restricted car parks consist of all parks excluding those privately owned.	\$90	\$18.47 <sup>1</sup>	\$33.47	\$105.74

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> Decrease in cost due to increase in parking infringement revenue and income with tap n go parking payment option.

Food Safety				
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
<b>Time taken to action food complaints</b> Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints. Expected range: 1 to 10 days	1 - 10	2.22 <sup>1</sup>	3.17	2.56
<b>Food safety assessments</b> Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984/Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984. Expected range: 50 – 100%	50-100%	83.87%	84.76%	76.63%
<b>Cost of food safety service</b> Direct cost of the food safety service/Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984. Expected range: \$300 - \$1,200	\$300-\$1,200	\$572.54 <sup>2</sup>	\$690.59	\$513.99
<b>Critical and major non-compliance notifications</b> Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about food premises. Expected range: 60 – 100%	60-100%	100%	100.00%	40.00%
<b>Food safety samples</b> Number of food safety samples obtained/Number of samples required. Expected range 50 – 100%.	50 -100%	121% <sup>3 4</sup>	NEW IN 2024	NEW IN 2024

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup> A full complement of Environmental Health Officer positions enabled Council to action food complaints in a timelier manner.

<sup>2</sup> Error in 2022-23 reporting adversely impacted 2022-23 and 2023-24 results. Actual result for 2023-24 shows a minimal 3.31% variance.

<sup>3</sup> Council was responsive to a complaint, and took sufficient food safety samples to provide required assurance.

<sup>4</sup> NEW = Where Indicator is NEW, any pre-dated box is shaded, and the year of operation noted.

## Waste Management Services

(Report adopted by Council June 2003)

Programs within this service:

- Kerbside collection service
- Landfills

Waste Collection				
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
<b>Kerbside bin collection requests</b> Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households x 1000. Expected range: 10 to 300 requests	10-300	NR <sup>1</sup>	115.82	118.16
<b>Kerbside collection bins missed</b> Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts x 10,000. Expected range: 1 – 20 bins	1-20	2.29 <sup>2</sup>	5.19	3.99
<b>Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service</b> Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service/Number of kerbside garbage collection bins Expected range: \$40 - \$150	\$44-\$164	\$109.58	\$106.77	\$93.39
<b>Cost of kerbside recyclables bin collection service</b> Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service/Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins Expected range: \$10 - \$80	\$11 - \$86	\$86.49	\$88.77	\$80.40
<b>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</b> Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins/Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins. Expected range: 20 – 60%	20-60%	28.38%	29.28%	30.92%

### Variance comments:

<sup>1</sup> NR = Where Indicator has been obsoleted, it is Not Reported (NR), and the row is shaded.

<sup>2</sup> There has been a significant reduction in reported missed bins for the 2023 -2024 reporting period. This has been mostly due to Councils kerbside collection contractor having had a more stable workforce during that period.

Landfill				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Net cost per capita of waste deposited at Swan Hill landfill sites	\$26.29	\$43.61 <sup>1</sup>	\$41.21	\$39.63
Net cost per capita of waste deposited at Robinvale landfill sites (exc GST)	\$64.36	\$56.50	\$53.39	\$49.73
Net cost per capita to maintain rural landfill sites (exc GST)	\$9.91	\$31.42	\$29.69	\$26.17

### Variance comment:

<sup>1</sup> Slight increase due to actual CPI increase applied to contracts being 3.8%, previous CPI estimate of 3% was used to create target number.

## Community Amenity

(Report adopted by Council June 2004)

Programs within this service:

- Environmental Standards
- Street Beautification
- Public Lighting

Environmental Standards				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Maintain potable water consumption below 2011/12 levels for parks and gardens annually <small>Source: 2012 - 2016 Sustainable Water Use Plan</small>	37,000kL	43,884 KL	42,187kL	43,005kL
Maintain current power usage in Council's 8 highest energy use buildings:	1.07M	463.4M <sup>3</sup>	0.867M	0.795M
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kilowatts (kWh)<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Greenhouse gas emissions (T)<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	1,262T	356.82T <sup>3</sup>	5.29T	0T
Total cost to Council for stationary energy of Council owned infrastructure <small>Including street lighting</small>	\$674,950	\$513,069	\$533,930	\$471,917

### Variance comments:

<sup>1</sup> A kilowatt hour (kWh) is a unit of measurement of energy. A kilowatt hour therefore refers to the consumption of your device. 1 kilowatt hour (kWh) is the energy consumed by a 1,000-watt or 1-kilowatt electrical appliance operating for 1 hour.

<sup>2</sup> Greenhouse gas emissions include carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide from all sources, including land-use change. They are measured in tonnes (T) of carbon dioxide-equivalents over a 100-year timescale.

<sup>3</sup> Councils 8 highest energy use buildings in 2023/24 were : Robinvale Recreation Centre; Community Centre Nyah; Performing Art Centre - Town Hall; Robinvale Community Centre; Swan Hill Outdoor Pool; Robinvale Community Centre; Swan Hill Leisure Centre and Swan Hill Library.

Street Beautification				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
The number of changeovers to water wise medians and gardens developed throughout the municipality	4	5	10	5
Number of community street tree theme consultations <small>Minimum of two annually</small>	2	2	2	2
Cost to Council to maintain garden beds and grass in public areas per hectare of grass maintained	\$59,500	\$57,599	\$55,165	\$64,731

Variance comment: NA

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Public Lighting				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Net increase in number of streetlights to existing network per year New light and pole assembly	3	NRR <sup>1</sup>	18	14
Cost to Council for public lighting per streetlight Electricity costs are increasing and it is expected they will continue to increase over coming years	\$100.00	NRR <sup>1</sup>	\$70.26	\$77.31

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup> NRR = No Results Reported in 2023/24.



## Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services

(Report adopted by Council June 2004)

*Programs within this service:*

- Art Gallery
- Community Centres and Swan Hill Town Hall PACC
- Performing Arts
- Pioneer Settlement
- Library
- Parks, Gardens, Recreation Reserves and Other Sporting Facilities
- Indoor Sports Facilities and Swimming Pools

Art Gallery				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of visitors to the Art Gallery per annum	11,000	10,382	7,926	7,653
Number of exhibitions	25	12 <sup>1</sup>	14	16
Number of events other than exhibitions Concerts, conferences, functions etc.	30	29	19	31
Net cost to Council to operate the Gallery per visitor	\$26.14	\$61.27	\$66.57	\$45.63

### Variance comments:

<sup>1</sup> Delivery of 12 exhibitions is in line with the strategic direction of extending exhibition display times while increasing the depth of visitor experience. This is also consistent with current trends in the public gallery sector.

Community Centres and Swan Hill Town Hall PACC				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of times the community centre/facility is used by the community each year:				
• Manangatang	150	16	24	7
• Nyah	100	125	91	92
• Lake Boga	100	11	18	10
• Robinvale	180	112	327	162
• Swan Hill Town Hall PACC	250	250 <sup>1</sup>	267	195
Number of people attending events, functions or performances at the Swan Hill Town Hall PACC	18,000	20,062	21,141	14,918
Net operating cost to Council per usage of the facility:				
• Manangatang	\$250	\$1,246	\$698	\$1,938
• Nyah	\$400	\$257	\$309	\$270
• Lake Boga	\$250	\$2,458	\$1,467	\$1,926
• Robinvale	\$600	\$1046	\$364	\$414
• Swan Hill Town Hall PACC	\$1,054	\$3,422 <sup>2</sup>	\$2,406	\$2,446
Net operating cost to Council per person using the Swan Hill Town Hall PACC Actual net cost / Number of people attending	\$14.65	\$41.52	\$30.39	\$42.44

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup> A slight drop in usage was due to one of the major dance schools using another venue.

<sup>2</sup> Increase in Net operating costs was due to Fairfax Youth Initiative additional costs being covered by Performing Arts Program.

Performing Arts				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of people attending performing arts events per annum	3,000	10,693	7,130	2,295
Net cost to Council to operate the performing arts program per patron <small>Final net cost for year / Number of attendees</small>	\$61.95	\$31.92 <sup>1</sup>	\$30.41	\$84.89

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> More performances were presented by Performing Arts; however, performances presented in February had very low attendance.

Pioneer Settlement				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of visitors to the Pioneer Settlement per annum	80,000	75,839	72,625	80,579
Net cost to Council to operate the Pioneer Settlement Museum per visitor	\$9.20	\$10.79	\$10.15	\$5.95

**Variance comments:** NA.

Libraries				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Visits to service points <small>Includes Swan Hill and Mobile Library. Does not include Wakool Council library branches</small>	80,500	55,206 <sup>1</sup>	52,842	37,142
Number of special events held in Library	15	65	96	52
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
<b>Library collection usage</b> <small>Number of library collection item loans / Number of library collection items. Expected range: 1 to 10 items</small>	1-10	NR <sup>2</sup>	0.92	0.97
<b>Currency of library collection</b> <small>Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items. Expected range: 40 – 90%</small>	40-90%	46.94% <sup>3</sup>	37.07%	41.20%
<b>Active library members</b> <small>Number of active library members/Municipal population Expected range: 10 – 40%</small>	10-40%	NR <sup>2</sup>	13.41%	13.35%

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<b>Cost of library service</b> Direct cost to Council of the library service per population <i>Expected range: \$10 - \$90</i>	\$10-\$90	\$66.53 <sup>4</sup>	\$51.98	\$50.14
<b>Library Loans</b> Number of collection item loans/municipal population. Expected range 4 – 8 items loaned.	4 to 8	4.48 <sup>5</sup>	NEW IN 2024	NEW IN 2024
<b>Library membership</b> Number of registered library users/municipal population. Expected range 20 – 40% of municipal population.	20 – 40%	27.24% <sup>5</sup>	NEW IN 2024	NEW IN 2024
<b>Library visits</b> Number of in-person visits to all libraries/municipal population. Expected range 2- 6 visits per person.	2 to 6	2.6 <sup>5</sup>	NEW IN 2024	NEW IN 2024

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup> In person visits to the library have not returned to the pre-COVID\_19 level.

<sup>2</sup> NR = Where Indicator has been obsoleted, it is Not Reported (NR), and the row is shaded.

<sup>3</sup> A comprehensive review of the collections at all the library service's branches was conducted during 2023-24, with a large number of unused and outdated items removed from the collection, therefore decreasing the average age of the items still in the collection.

<sup>4</sup> Previous results not comparable. Neutral Results. Government changes in reporting requirements for this indicator in 2023-24 resulted in an increase in the cost of library services per population.

<sup>5</sup> NEW = Where Indicator is NEW, any pre-dated box is shaded, and the year of operation noted.

Parks, Gardens, Recreation Reserves and Other Sporting Facilities				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Maintain grass height between 25 – 60 mm	100%	100%	100%	100%
Net operating cost per hectare:				
• Parks and gardens	\$13,000 <sup>1</sup>	\$14,776	\$13,415	\$11,923
• Recreation reserves	\$12,500	\$17,294 <sup>2</sup>	\$14,135	\$12,877

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup>Target to be reviewed.

<sup>2</sup>Cost to complete the McCallum St Shared Path Project reinstatement work.

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services

Indoor Sports Facilities and Swimming Pools				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of visitors/users of the indoor sports facilities/swimming pools:				
• Swan Hill Leisure Centre and Indoor Pool	80,000	106,010 <sup>1</sup>	65,329	51,035
• Swan Hill Indoor Sport and Recreation Centre	42,000	28,391	36,981	9,833
• Robinvale Leisure Centre and Pool	27,000	56,466 <sup>2</sup>	37,907	33,224
Number of visitors/users of outdoor swimming pools:				
• Swan Hill Outdoor Pool	20,000	15,235	17,722	17,484
• Nyah Pool <sup>5</sup>	9,000	4,328	6,813	8,119
• Manangatang Pool <sup>5</sup>	7,000	2,021	3,047	2,527
Net cost to Council per visitor to operate indoor facilities:				
• Swan Hill Leisure Centre and Indoor Pool	\$6	\$7.08 <sup>3</sup>	\$13.30	\$11.16
• Swan Hill Indoor Sport and Recreation Centre	\$1	\$4.28 <sup>4</sup>	\$4.26	\$19.19
• Robinvale Leisure Centre and Pool	\$10	\$7.93 <sup>3</sup>	\$9.15	\$13.54
Net Operating expenditure / Number of visitors/users				
Net cost to Council per visitor to operate outdoor pools: <sup>6</sup>				
• Swan Hill Outdoor Pool	\$11	\$17.65	\$13.74	\$26.73
• Nyah Pool	\$7	\$17.50	\$14.71	\$7.94
• Manangatang Pool	\$10	\$27.67	\$20.30	\$27.13
Net Operating expenditure / Number of visitors/users				
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Health inspections of aquatic facilities				
Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities. Expected range: 1 – 4	1-4	1.0 <sup>7</sup>	0.60	1.0
Utilisation of aquatic facilities				
Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population Expected range: 1 to 10 visits	1-10	8.68 <sup>8</sup>	6.17	5.58
Cost of aquatic facilities				
Direct cost less any income received of providing aquatic facilities per visit. Expected range: \$0-\$30	\$0-\$30	\$8.69	\$12.39	\$14.19

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup> Increase in use at SHARC is due to new gym with 24/7 entry and increased memberships – Greater offering for members now as member numbers over 1000.

<sup>2</sup> Increased use at Robinvale Centre (RRAC) is again due to a new larger gym with 24/7 entry and a second indoor basketball court. This has also increased members numbers due to greater offering.

<sup>3</sup> Increased use of SHARC & RRAC have resulted in reduction of Net cost per visitor.

<sup>4</sup> Night netball and Futsal no longer using the Stadium for their sport has increased Net cost per visitor.

<sup>5</sup> Nyah & Manangatang reduction in numbers reflects a cooler summer and not as many warm days to attract visitors.

<sup>6</sup> Reduction in the outdoor pool's usage has increased the Net cost per visitor.

<sup>7</sup> Increase inspections due to the ability to access pools during their opening hours and Environmental Health Officers taking on additional hours to undertake inspections.

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services

<sup>8</sup>*The increase in patronage corresponds with upgrades to both the Swan Hill Aquatic and Recreation Centre and Robinvale Aquatic and Recreation Centre and it is pleasing to see a 40% increase in membership and usage.*

<sup>9</sup>*Increased patronage has had a positive impact on the cost of service provision.*

## Organisational Support

(Report adopted by Council June 2004)

*Programs within this service:*

- Customer Service Revenue Control
- Robinvale Resource Centre
- Information Management
- Information Technology Services
- Finance Services
- Asset Management
- Human Resources
- Commercial Services and Risk Management
- Plant and Fleet Management

### Customer Service Revenue Control and Robinvale Resource Centre

Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Rate debtor collections as a percentage of Total Rate Income	94%	87.57% <sup>1</sup>	89.5%	92%
Cost of providing Customer Service and Revenue Control Services Net Customer Services and Revenue Control Program Costs / Total Council Operating Expenditure	1.20%	1.06%	1.18%	1.12%
Cost of providing customer services from the Robinvale Resource Centre per head of population Net Robinvale Resource Centre Program Costs / Population of Robinvale and surrounding district	\$63.50	\$110.30	\$83.71	\$72.80

#### Variance comment:

<sup>1</sup> Rates, Special Rates, Garbage and Fire Services Property Levy Debtors have increased by approx. 2% when compared to 2022/2023 collections. This is due primarily to debt collection practices having been stayed for the last three financial years (2020/2021, 2021/2022 & 2022/2023) & only recommencing in 2023/2024. The industry standard across the state is generally between 90-95%. Due to only commencing in 23/24 it is expected that collections will take a minimum two years to return to these levels. It is also noted that due to current cost of living this will likely take longer than 2 years.

### Information Management

Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Service meets agreed timeframes for incoming correspondence registration:				
• 3.40pm Monday	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• 2.20pm Tuesday – Friday	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cost of service as a percentage of total operating expenses (excluding major projects). Information Management Program / Total Operating Expenditure	<0.81%	0.53%	0.54%	0.49%

#### Variance comment: NA

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Organisational Support

Information Technology Services				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Authority System available	98%	99%	99%	98%
Network Services available	98%	98%	98%	98%
Internet Services available	98%	99%	99%	98%
Cost of providing IT services as a percentage of total operating expenses IT program (bottom line 3345) / Total operating expenditure	<3.0%	4.7% <sup>1</sup>	2.50%	2.54%
Cost of IT services per connected user IT program (bottom line 3345) / Number of personal devices supported	\$3,870	\$4,600 <sup>2</sup>	\$3,820	\$3,821

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup>This encompasses substantial investments in various projects that benefit the entire Council. Based on the forecast budgets for 2024/25, I expect this percentage to stabilise around 3.2%.

<sup>2</sup>The costs associated with projects that significantly enhance Council's overall functionality have led to a substantial increase in the per-device cost. As previously mentioned, a more accurate reflection of the true cost of service provision would involve allocating expenses through a cost recovery model like Activity-Based Costing (ABC). The current straightforward endpoint charge fails to capture the actual cost of a given service, merely creating the perception that IT is more expensive.

Finance Services				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Meet all statutory reporting obligations:				
• Annual Report	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Business Plan and Annual Budget	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Victoria Grants and Commission Return	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Local Government Sector Borrowings Surveys	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
• Taxation (PAYG, GST and FBT)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cost of providing financial services as a percentage of Total Council Operating Expenses Finance Program Costs (Bottom Line P3340) / Total Operating Expenditure (excluding depreciation)	2.10%	1.37%	1.54%	1.89%

**Variance comment:** NA.



Asset Management				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
National Asset Management Framework scorecard that allocates a score depending on the policies and processes in place:				
• Strategic Planning	85	79	75	75
• Annual Budget	100	94	94	94
• Annual Report	95	95	95	95
• Asset Management Policy	90	90	90	90
• Asset Management Strategy	100	100	100	100
• Asset Management Plans	75	68	64	57
• Governance and Management	60	75	71	61
• Levels of Service	60	69	69	69
• Data and Systems	80	72	72	72
• Skills and Processes	65	63	58	58
• Evaluation	60	50	50	50
Cost index: Full Cost of provision of the service / Total replacement value of assets managed. Total Operating Expenditure (Budget) / Total replacement cost all assets (Annual Report)	0.90	0.42 <sup>1</sup>	0.59	0.67

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> Cost index variation due to position vacancies (GIS) for most of the financial year. Slight improvements to NAMA scores as AMPs updated (fleet and Stormwater), creation of Asset Data Analyst role and formation of PAC.

Human Resources				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of staff issues referred to Fair Work Australia	Nil	4 <sup>1</sup>	1	Nil
Number of organisational training hours provided per EFT	7 hours	14.8 <sup>2</sup>	17.8	21.7
Cost of providing Human Resource Services as a per cent of total operating expenses	1.30% <sup>3</sup>	1.24%	1.34%	1.29%

**Variance comments:**

<sup>1</sup> Councils enterprise agreement allows issues to be raised with the Fair Work Commission, the matters raised have been resolved without the need to go to arbitration.

<sup>2</sup> Council continues to provide more hours per EFT than the targeted 7 hours, (2914.25/197.12 = 14.8 hours) of training per EFT in 2024, this is less than the previous year which may be attributed to the reduction in turnover and exiting of a large number of staff in the Aged Care area.

<sup>3</sup> Recommend increasing the Target from 1.20% to 1.50%, the original target has not changed since 2019 and the salary costs have increased, the 2023/24 result was close to the target due to Council not being able to replace a staff member from November 23 to July 2024 who had taken long service leave.

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Organisational Support

Commercial Services and Risk Management				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
All tendering and acquisitions undertaken by Procurement and Property is done in accordance with adopted Council policy.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Cost of providing Procurement and Property as a percentage of Total Council Operating Expenses. Total cost of Program (less Insurance Premiums) / Total operating cost of Council	<1.2%	0.66%	0.61%	0.58%
Risk Management (insurance)– WorkCover (EFT to premiums)	\$2,300	\$1,949	\$2,059	\$1,642
Risk Management (insurance)– Property (Value of property v Premium)	\$0.0020	\$0.003 <sup>1</sup>	\$0.0020	\$0.0020
Risk Management (insurance)– Registered Motor Vehicles Unit cost	\$425	\$541	\$555	\$555

**Variance Comment:**

<sup>1</sup> Insurer rate has increased by 13.7% from 2022-23 to 2023-24. Globally 2022 was the sixth year in a row of above average property catastrophic losses.

Plant and Fleet Management				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Percentage of occasions actual service times on all major plant and vehicle items meet manufacturers set standard time	90%	95%	90%	88%
Average cost of scheduled services for passenger and light commercial vehicles Total service costs (excluding oils and parts) divided by total number of services as recorded in Fleet Management Services	\$124	\$128	\$130	\$139
Average cost of scheduled services for major plant items Total service costs (excluding oils and parts) divided by total number of services as recorded in Fleet Management Services	\$218	\$132 <sup>1</sup>	\$253	\$295

**Variance Comment:**

<sup>1</sup> The cost to service major plant items has reduced due to a number of factors; including, a skills shortage in both grader operators and design engineers, affecting Council's ability to offer an 'in house' roads construction program. This means less mileage for a lot of corresponding plant. Additionally, with a large percentage of new fleet, the 1st service by manufacturer is built into the purchase contract, reducing additional service costs to Council in the initial years of acquisition.

## Governance and Leadership

(Report adopted by Council May 2005)

*Programs within this service:*

- Elected Members
- Community Development
- Corporate Governance
- Media and Events

Elected Members				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Community satisfaction with Council's community consultation and engagement per annual Local Government Survey	54	48	50	48
Community satisfactions with decisions made in the interest of the community per annual Local Government Survey	54	43	45	45
Community satisfaction rating for overall performance generally of Council as per Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey	55	46	50	53

**Variance comment:** NA.

Community Development				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Government and other funding attracted during the year to supplement community and Council activities	\$800,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,091,000	\$1,450,000
Number of actions implemented out of community plans At least one action per plan	30	3	3	28
Net program cost as a percentage of operating budget Net program cost: Total operating expenditure less revenue / Rates determination statement net operating result	<1%	0.64%	<1%	0.62%

**Variance comment:** NA.

Corporate Governance				
LGPRF Indicator	Range	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Council decisions made at Council Meetings closed to the Public				
Number of Council resolutions made at an ordinary or special meeting of Council, consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at an ordinary or special meeting of Council, consisting only of Councillors Expected range: 0 – 30%	0-30%	11.40% <sup>1</sup>	5.56%	4.93%

Service Performance Report 2023/24 – Governance and Leadership

<b>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</b>  Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement Expected range: 40 – 70	40-70	48	50	48
<b>Councillor attendance at Council Meetings</b>  Sum of number of Councillors who attended each ordinary and special council meeting / (Number of ordinary and special council meetings) x (Number of Councillors elected at last Council general election. Expected range: 80 – 100%	80-100%	84.82%	89.52%	90.00%
<b>Cost of Governance</b>  Direct cost of Governance service / Number of Councillors elected at last Council general election. Expected range: \$30,000 - \$80,000	\$30K-\$80K	\$52,767	\$53,993	\$52,315
<b>Satisfaction with Council decisions</b>  Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the performance of Council in making decisions in the interest of the community Expected range: 40 – 70	40-70	43	45	45

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> Increased number of capital projects necessitated increased level of sensitive decision making.

Media and Events				
Quality/Cost Standard	Target	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of media releases distributed annually	130	139	117	107
Number of social media post annually	1,700	2,222 <sup>1</sup>	1,833	1,445
Production and distribution of Council's Community Newsletter Twice per year	2	13	15	12
Cost of providing media and events unit services As a percentage of total Council operating expenses	<0.6%	0.46%	0.53%	0.53%

**Variance comment:**

<sup>1</sup> Increased resources and service capacity has enabled Council to significantly increase its community engagement activities, which are actively promoted through social media. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in shows at the Swan Hill Town Hall, which has resulted in a corresponding rise in social media promotions for these events.

## 2.3 Annual Report of Operations 2023/24

**Directorate:** Corporate Services  
**File Number:** S15-28--20  
**Purpose:** For Decision

### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**4. Leadership** - We will ensure accountable leadership, advocacy and transparent decision making.

#### 4.1 Excellent management and administration

4.1.2 Provide robust governance and effective leadership

4.1.3 Sound, sustainable:

- Financial management • Excellence in service delivery • Strategic planning

### Current Strategic Documents

Council Plan  
Annual Report  
Budget

### Election Period Statement

The recommended decision is neither a prohibited decision in accordance with section 69 (2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor a Significant Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Procedure.

### Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

### Summary

The presentation of the Annual Report during an election period is not prohibited.

- Council has a legislative obligation under Section 98 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) to prepare an Annual Report in respect of each financial year.
- Section 100 (2)(a) of the Act requires the Mayor to report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the annual report at a Council meeting open to the public. In the year of a general election, the council meeting must be held 'on a day not later than the day before election day'. The 2024 Local Council Election Day is 26 October 2024
- Part 4 of the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 specifies the required content of the Annual Report.

## Discussion

The Swan Hill Rural City Council Annual Report: 2023/24 is presented for consideration. The Swan Hill Rural City Council Annual Report 2023/24:

- received an unqualified audit opinion of its financial statements
- highlights community cost of living and inflation pressures, and council recruitment, as challenges in 2023/24
- highlights the transition of in-home aged and community-based care from council to external service providers, as a major change in 2023/24
- includes progress reporting on the implementation of the Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025, across the four strategic pillars – Liveability, Prosperity, Harmony and Leadership.

## Consultation

On 2 September 2024, Local Government Victoria reviewed the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework data. On 5 September 2024, the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed Part 7 (Performance Statement) of the Annual Report. On 10 September 2024, the Council accepted an in-principal adoption of Part 7 - Performance and Financial Statements at its general council meeting. On 18 September 2024, the Victorian Auditor-Generals Office completed its audit of the Performance and Financial Statements in the Annual Report.

Relevant officers were consulted and provided information in the development of the Annual Report.

## Financial Implications

Nil

## Social Implications

Nil

## Economic Implications

Nil

## Environmental Implications

Nil

## Risk Management Implications

Nil

**Attachments:** 1. Annual report 2023-24 [2.3.1 - 191 pages]

## Options:

1. Approve for release to the community, the Swan Hill Rural City Council Annual Report 2023/24, as presented.

2. Approve the release of the Swan Hill Rural City Council Annual Report 2023/24 to the community, after any minor changes requested by Council have been actioned, and its release approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

**Recommendation/s**

**That Council approve for release to the community, the Swan Hill Rural City Council Annual Report 2023/24, as presented.**





# Annual Report 2023/24







## Acknowledgement

Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.

## Thanks

Congratulations to our photography competition winner, Shawn Brennan, whose photo of a shearing shed at Goschen features on our front cover.

Swan Hill Rural City Council would like to also thank Russell Singh and Dianne Martin for their generous donation of Harmony Day photos that have been used throughout this report.

## About our Annual Report

Swan Hill Rural City Council is pleased to present its 2023/24 Annual Report, which provides a detailed account of our performance from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

Documenting Council's performance against the 2023/24 Budget and the Council Plan, the Annual Report highlights achievements and challenges faced within key service areas and programs.

Council seeks to achieve community engagement and an understanding of Council's operations by conducting its affairs openly and with integrity.

Transparency in our decision-making and accountability are core values of Council, reflecting high levels of good governance.

This report provides information to a variety of audiences including community groups, businesses, ratepayers, visitors, investors, government agencies and other interested stakeholders.

## Our Offices

### Swan Hill Office

45 Splatt Street  
Swan Hill VIC 3585  
03 5036 2333

### Robinvale Office

72 Herbert Street  
Swan Hill VIC 3549  
03 5051 8000

### Postal

PO Box 488  
Swan Hill VIC 3585

### Email

[council@swanhill.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@swanhill.vic.gov.au)

### Website

[www.swanhill.vic.gov.au](http://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au)

### Social Media

FB: @SwanHillCouncil  
IG: @swanhillruralcitycouncil





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## Welcome to the report of operations

We are committed to transparent reporting and accountability to our community. The Annual Report is our primary means of advising residents within the municipality about our operations and performance during the 2023/24 financial year.

### Introduction

Provides a snapshot of our region and highlights what we have accomplished.

### The year in review

Messages from our Mayor and CEO, a financial summary and major project highlights.

### Our Council

Our region's history and profile, and information on our Councillors.

### Our people

Information on Council's employees, including our organisational structure, occupational health and safety, equal opportunity, and appreciating our staff.

### Our performance

Results against our Council Plan key strategic initiatives, Local Government performance reporting indicators, and major initiatives and services identified in the 2023/24 Budget.

### Corporate governance

Governance and statutory information including decision-making, elected members, risk management, benchmarking and accountability.

### Performance statement

Local Government performance reporting indicators for sustainable capacity, service performance and financial performance.

### Financial performance

Council's general purpose financial statements.



# Part One

## *Introduction*



## Introduction

### Snapshot of Council

Swan Hill Rural City Council covers 6,116 square kilometres and is home to 21,403\* people. It includes the townships of Boundary Bend, Manangatang, Ultima, Woorinen South, Beverford, Piangil, Nyah West, Nyah, Lake Boga, Robinvale and Swan Hill.

The Swan Hill municipality has experienced significant growth over the past decade, led by the expansion of horticultural and agricultural practices and supported by an innovative manufacturing sector.

This success is depicted by the fact that irrigated areas have been increasing with a higher proportion of mature, high value crops such as almonds and table grapes. The region is one of Australia's largest producers of almond and table grape plantings, vegetables including potatoes and carrots, stone fruit, olives, avocados and field crops.

The region also boasts an impressive 69% of its municipality dedicated to cropping and associated dryland infrastructure, including wheat, barley, lentils, cereal/hay, pulses (including chickpeas and lupins), grazing, oats, and canola.

More than 20 per cent of all jobs in the city are directly related to agriculture.

The SunRISE report for Swan Hill on 2021 irrigated crops had a value of production of \$1.22 billion, and an additional \$268.4 million for dryland cropping.

Located along the Murray River, tourism plays an important role in our region's economy. Our climate and natural beauty attracted approximately 591,000 visitors this year as reported in the Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) 2023 report. Visitation was up by 1% and tourists stayed 1.2 million nights within our region—up by 35%. Overnight visitor spend is estimated to average \$454 per visitor, with the total visitor spend estimated at \$190 million within the region.

\*2021 ABS data estimates the Swan Hill Rural Council residential population to be 21,403, however, due to ongoing concern that the ABS consistently underestimates the population of Robinvale, Council commissioned Geografia to undertake a population determination study. The ABS census figure of 2021 show the Robinvale population as 3,740 people. The work of Geografia has reliably demonstrated that the true Robinvale population sits at approximately 7,900 people; making the total residential population 25,367.



## Vision Statement

Built on strong foundations that embrace our rich history and natural environment, our region will be a place of progression and possibility, we are a community that is happy, healthy and harmonious—we are empowered, we are respectful and we are proud.

## Our Mission

We will lead, advocate, partner and provide efficient services and opportunities for growth and the wellbeing of our community, environment and economy.

## Our Values

Council values our residents and community and will be responsive to their needs. In pursuing our objectives, we believe in, and are committed to, the following values:

## Community engagement

We will ensure that our communities are consulted, listened to and informed.

## Leadership

We will be at the centre of our community. By actively engaging our community we will form the collective view on strategic issues and express our views through strong advocacy and action.

## Fairness

We will value and embrace the diversity of our community and ensure that all people are treated equally.

## Accountability

We will be transparent and efficient in our activities and we will always value feedback.

## Trust

We will act with integrity and earn the community's trust by being a reliable partner in delivering services and providing facilities.

## Introduction

## Highlights of the year

### Liveability

- The Road Management Plan (RMP) was suspended in 2022 following the Victorian Flood Events, this financial year Council's RMP was fully reinstated.
- Investigations begin for Council's draft Drainage Strategy, with a focus on stormwater drainage asset management across the region and an acknowledgment of rainfall events putting pressure on the ageing infrastructure.
- The commencement of the draft Waste Management Strategy. The Waste Management sector is changing because of government efforts to tackle unsustainable practices and transition to a circular economy. To align with these changes, Council is drafting a Waste Management Strategy to guide waste and recovery services over the next ten years.
- The completion of the 2023/24 Tree Planting Program included hundreds of trees being planted across the municipality.



- In 2023, Council conducted a Housing Summit which highlighted the need to explore and develop new innovative approaches to support housing outcomes. This included bringing people together in a well-coordinated community approach, where we make best use of land, investment dollars, government funding and local know how.
- The unveiling of our River Viewing Platform and Boardwalk, this is a beautiful new resource for our region that is designed to celebrate our river - making the riverside walk even more enjoyable for visitors and locals.

### Prosperity

- This financial year has seen a significant increase in Community Engagement with over 16,000 views on the Let's Talk Community Engagement platform and over 2,000 contributions received.
- Official opening of CUC (Country Universities Centre) Mallee – this centre will help students in regional and remote areas to access higher education, without having to leave their community. It provides campus-style facilities for students who study online. At the time of their officially opening, they had over 110 student enrolments.



- Big things feature - Swan Hill's iconic Giant Murray Cod - Arnold - featured on a new release of collectable coins and post stamps. The Royal Australian Mint partnered with Australia Post to celebrate the Aussie Big Things theme - we were delighted to have been selected as 1 of 10 collectible "Big Things".
- Council has secured approximately \$20 million in grants, since July 2023, from a variety of State and Federal Government funding programs, to enable the delivery of new or improved infrastructure and facilities.
- The Community Development Fund supported 26 community groups/organisations that shared in \$78,000 worth of funding to support various projects throughout the municipality.
- Our 23/24 Event Support Fund allocated \$90,000 in funding, supporting 33 events.
- Domestic visitors spent \$190 million on travel to the Swan Hill region - down by 6%.



## Harmony

- Our municipality is proud to have more than 40 nationalities among our community and a population that is welcoming and resilient.
- We welcomed 70 new citizens to our municipality in this financial year, coming from 19 countries.



- 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the twinning relationship between Robinvale and Villers-Bretonneux, marking a proud milestone in the history of both towns.
- Commemorating the 40th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Swan Hill and Yamagata.

## Leadership

- Council continued to be a visible presence in the community. In May 2024, Council had the honour of hosting Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Gardner, Victorian Governor. Her Excellency visited a number of locations; including, the Robinvale Villiers—Bretonneux Memorial, toured the Robinswood Homestead, attended a Civic Reception at the Swan Hill Art Gallery, and viewed the Heartbeat of the Murray laser lightshow at the Pioneer Settlement.
- Coffee with a Councillor continued in 2023/24.
- We continued to be active advocates for the municipality, and as a member of the Murray River Group of Councils.

## Challenges for 2023/24

- Cost of living and inflation - In the 2023/24 financial year, Swan Hill Rural City Council faced substantial challenges due to the rising cost of living and inflation. Residents felt the strain as everyday expenses increased, affecting their overall financial stability. Concurrently, inflation led to escalating costs for Council projects, putting strain on budget management and the timely delivery of essential services and infrastructure. These economic pressures necessitated strategic adjustments and careful planning to ensure the continued support and well-being of our community.
- Recruitment has remained a challenge this financial year in our region, like many other areas. The labour and skills shortage continues to be impacted by housing and childcare shortages.

## Major changes for 2023/24

During 2023, Swan Hill Rural City Council made the decision to transition away from delivering in-home aged and community-based services, from 31 May 2024.

The decision was made in response to the planned introduction of the Commonwealth Government's new model of care - Support at Home program – which is part of its National Reform of Aged Care being introduced in the lead-up to 1 July 2027.

The Commonwealth Government approved Uniting AgeWell, Northern District Community Health and Swan Hill District Health to provide services that include domestic assistance, personal care, in-home flexible respite care, meals on wheels, home maintenance as well as social support programs from 3 June 2024.

Council supported approximately 450 clients to transition to the new providers.

Council acknowledges the Community Care Services team and thanks them for their wonderful and dedicated services and care for residents in our community.

## Introduction

<b>100%</b> Median House Price— increase (10 Years)	<b>139</b> Media releases	<b>7,400</b> tonnes of garbage, recycling and organics collected from kerbside bins
<b>184,060</b> Aquatic Facility Visits	<b>90</b> Planning permits issued	<b>41</b> Art Gallery Events and Exhibitions
<b>20,062</b> Attendance at Swan Hill Town Hall PACC	<b>10,382</b> Art Gallery Visitors	<b>75,839</b> Pioneer Settlement Visitors
<b>5,778</b> Active Library Members	<b>130</b> inspections of food businesses	<b>44</b> Livestock Exchange Sale Days
<b>350</b> Tress planted	<b>300</b> Maternal and Child Health Birth Notifications	<b>2,000+</b> Social media posts

## Year at a glance

### July



- Swan Hill municipality celebrates NAIDOC week with a range of activities in Swan Hill and Robinvale.
- Council welcomes \$1 billion fund to build 1300 new social and affordable housing homes in rural and regional Victoria, announced by the State Government.



- Victorian Government announces the implementation of a Container Deposit Scheme.



- Unclaimed goats are put to work controlling weeds at one of Council's retarding basins.

### August



- Pioneer Settlement's impressive brand-new Laser Light show, "Legends of the Mallee", is officially launched.
- Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission and presentation to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria.
- Council awards a Drainage and Road Reconstruction contract enabling the commencement of vital infrastructure upgrades of Butterworth Street, Swan Hill.



- Council delights in seeing the construction underway for a new modern and advanced Emergency Department (ED) in Swan Hill.
- Go North Arts Festival returns at the Swan Hill Town Hall Performing Arts Centre. A free event where the community could 'get their hands dirty'.



## Introduction

### September



- Our iconic giant Murray Cod, Arnold, features in the "Big Things" coin and stamp collection. The collection was officially launched on 4 September, marking a day of celebration for our region.



- The brand new dry fitness space opens at the Swan Hill Aquatic and Recreation Centre on 7 September. The new area boasts 75% more floor space.



- Following community consultations, the Robinvale Skate Park project commences.
- Council staff host a shared lunch to celebrate Women's Health Week.

### October



- Fairfax Youth Festival returns with a whirlwind evening of music, pride, and community spirit.
- Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery opens the Conflated Exhibition. An Inflatable Exploration of Bodies, Environments, and Cultures.



- The Swan Hill Regional Library organises a Roving Storytime to celebrate National Children's Week. Children, parents, carers, community members, and local businesses join together to enjoy reading.
- Council staff attend Swan Hill's Market Day to inform the community of our commitment to Sustainable Waste Management.
- Swan Hill Regional Library hosts Leading Australian crime writer, Chris Hammer. Chris is the author of international bestsellers Scrublands, Treasure & Dirt, The Tilt and The Seven.



## Year at a glance

### November



- Silo art installation at the Graincorp site in Lake Boga welcomes a mural that complements the region and promotes the area's history and of course, the Catalina Flying Boat Museum.
- Renowned author, Darry Fraser visits the library to share her love of the Murray River.
- Over 100 business professionals and engaged community members gather at a highly successful Housing Summit in Swan Hill.
- Cr Stuart King is elected as Mayor.
- Shade structures at Barry Steggall Playground in Tower Hill are completed just in time for summer.
- After the 90-day Independent Strategic Review of the Infrastructure Pipeline Program, the Federal Government announces that their funding commitment has been reaffirmed for the crucial Swan Hill Bridge infrastructure project.
- A one in fifty-year rainfall event takes place, Council staff work quickly to get the water out of flooded areas.

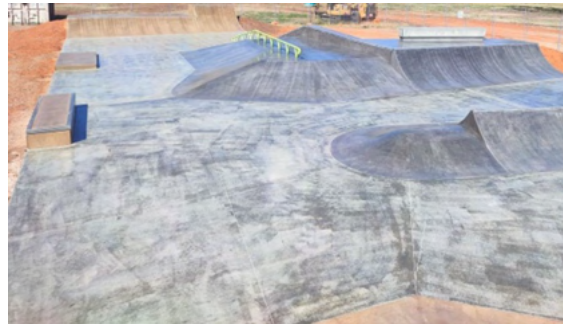


- Painting and landscaping at the new Robinvale Splash-pad take place.

### December



- After a successful lease transfer, Catalina Grill House opens alongside the historic Catalina Museum.



- Robinvale Skate Park opens to residents.
- At Council's scheduled December meeting, after having considered all available information, Council makes the difficult decision to close the Swan Hill Drag Strip.



- Tennis champion turned writer, Jelana Dokic speaks to a large crowd at the Swan Hill Regional Library.

## Introduction

### January



- Swan Hill Regional Library has partnered with St Mary MacKillop College, to run The Be Connected Young Mentors program.
- Council announces a line-up of events to celebrate Australia Day 2024. The festivities bring the community together to honour achievements, welcome new Australian citizens, and foster cultural connections.



- Tennis Victoria announces that Swan Hill will host Country Week Tennis in 2025.
- Council hosts Citizenship ceremonies as part of the Australia Day celebrations, in Swan Hill and Robinvale. 2024 marks the 75th Anniversary of Australian Citizenship.
- Council hears Robinvale community concerns regarding the Robinvale Hotel, and continues its commitment to pursue redevelopment of this significant commercial site.

### February

- Heritage Victoria grants approval for the much-anticipated Swan Hill Tourism and Cultural Hub at Pioneer Settlement.
- Comprehensive road upgrade and drainage improvements along Butterworth Street in Swan Hill commence.
- Another successful Big Summer Read program runs from 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024. 195 school aged children from 5-17 years participate and collectively they read 4,050 books.



- Following Council's decision to transition away from delivering in-home aged and community-based services from 31 May 2024, the Commonwealth Government announces the new providers.



- Council asks the community to share their thoughts on the Australia Day and Shared Connections celebrations for 2024.
- Residents have the chance to safely dispose of household chemicals without harming their health at the environmental Sustainability Victoria's Detox your Home event held at the



## Year at a glance

### March

- Swan Hill Harmony Day is held at the Swan Hill Riverside Park. A large crowd gathers to celebrate cultural diversity in our community.
- Residents of Robinvale have the opportunity to attend a Council meeting held at the Robinvale Community Arts Centre.
- In a bid to strengthen and support Council advocacy efforts, Council launches a survey on their Let's Talk platform calling for residents to submit their personal experiences with two of Swan Hill's most dangerous intersections.
- The Art Gallery opens its doors on the Sunday of the Swan Hill Regional Food and Wine Festival for people to come and participate in activities and workshops.



- Council hosts the Autumn Citizenship ceremony as part of the national Harmony Week celebrations. We welcome our newest citizens with a ceremony that showcases our nation's rich heritage and cultural diversity.



- A Seed Library is launched at the Robinvale Library, aiming to promote sustainable gardening practices and support the local Robinvale community to grow their own food.

### April



- A significant milestone for the Swan Hill community is marked with the official opening of the Swan Hill Riverfront Precinct, by Senator Jana Stewart.
- Our Mayor commemorates ANZAC Day by attending services at Villers-Bretonneux and Bullcourt, France. The trip also marks the 40 year anniversary twinning city relationship between Robinvale and Villers-Bretonneux.
- 40 years of the sister city relationship between Swan Hill and Yamagata is commemorated when the entire Swan Hill – Yamagata Club, including our Mayor Stuart King and his wife, Angela made the journey to Yamagata.
- Reticulate water turned on and celebrated with community, Grampians Mallee Water and Council.



- Council opens registrations of interest from current secondary school students within the municipality wishing to be considered for the 2025 Yamagata Student Exchange.
- Council participated in the Inquiry and Planning Panel for the Goschen Mineral Sands and Rare Earth Environment Effects Statement that held hearing over 6 weeks, now waiting on the Minister for Planning to make a decision on the proposal.

## Introduction

### May



- The Victorian Governor, her Excellency Professor Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, visits the municipality.



- Council turned RAINBOW to acknowledge IDAHOBIT Day - The International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia.
- The Swan Hill community welcomes a new sporting facility with the installation of rugby goal posts at Gurnett Oval.
- Lake Boga welcomes a 1.8 metre wide, 14 metre long gangway pontoon that is accessible to boaters who experience mobility challenges.
- The park at Nyah West has new play equipment structures installed.
- Council receives a substantial funding commitment from the Federal Government's Growing Regions Program, set to transform the Riverfront precincts in Swan Hill and Robinvale into iconic and visionary spaces for future generations to come.
- The first Housing Action: Greater Swan Hill forum takes place at the Swan Hill Town Hall and online at the Robinvale Resource Centre.

### June

- The 2024/25 Budget is adopted at the scheduled June Council Meeting.
- After active community consultation, the 24-Hour Cat Containment order is adopted at the scheduled June Council Meeting.



- Council launches an innovative organic waste project at Ultima. A new chapter will unfold as the newly acquired parcel of land is transformed into a cutting-edge organics processing facility.
- Council announces \$650,000 of Federal Government funding for the 'Transforming the Heart of Swan Hill Precinct' project has been secured.
- In an effort to promote sustainable living and responsible waste management, Council launches the "Small Acts Make a Big Impact" campaign.



- The community is asked to provide input into the future development of the Swan Hill Showgrounds Recreation Reserve Precinct, over 400 responses were received.
- At Council's scheduled June meeting, Council hears submissions from interested parties on possible uses for the Swan Hill Drag Strip.





# Part Two

*Year in review*

## Year in review

# Mayor and CEO message

As we reflect on the past financial year, we are proud to highlight the progress and achievements of Swan Hill Rural City Council. Our collective efforts have been instrumental in enhancing our community pillars of liveability, prosperity, leadership and harmony.

This year, we successfully reinstated our Road Management Plan (RMP), which had been suspended in 2022 due to the Victorian Flood Events. This reinstatement is crucial for maintaining the safety and functionality of our road network. Additionally, we commenced a Drainage Strategy to enable us to address the challenges posed by extreme rainfall events. This strategy focuses on improving stormwater drainage asset management to better cope with climate impacts and protect our infrastructure.

The unveiling of our River Viewing Platform and Boardwalk was a milestone that makes the riverside walk even more enjoyable for visitors and locals. This is a wonderful new resource for our region that celebrates our beautiful river.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability was further demonstrated through the completion of the 2023/24 Tree Planting Program, which saw hundreds of new trees planted across our municipality. Furthermore, we began drafting a Waste Management Strategy to align with government

efforts towards a circular economy and address unsustainable practices. This strategy will guide our waste and recovery services over the next decade alongside the commencement of our trial composting facility at Ultima.

In November 2023, we convened a Housing Summit that underscored the need for innovative solutions to housing challenges. This summit fostered a collaborative approach to maximise land use, attract investment, and leverage government funding to improve housing outcomes in our region. An ongoing Housing Action: Greater Swan Hill Committee has since been created tackling the housing challenge for the community. Council has continued to work with developers in Swan Hill and Robinvale and commenced the construction of the remaining four of eight houses in Ronald Street, Robinvale. Council has also supported numerous applications for Federal Government funding for housing projects.

Community engagement reached new heights this year, with over 16,000 views on our Let's Talk platform and more than 2,000 contributions from residents. This increased engagement reflects our dedication to transparency and active participation from our community.

The role of Council includes:

- Acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making.
- Providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring their achievement.
- Maintaining the viability of the Council by ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner.
- Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments.
- Acting as a responsible partner in government by taking into account the needs of other communities.
- Fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life.

We also celebrated the official opening of the Country Universities Centre Mallee. Council played a pivotal role in getting this new centre off the ground to ensure that higher education access is available to students in regional and remote areas. At its opening, over 110 students were already enrolled, highlighting the centre's importance to our educational landscape.

Our iconic Giant Murray Cod, Arnold, gained national recognition as it was featured in a new series of collectible coins and stamps by the Royal Australian Mint and Australia Post.

In terms of financial support, we secured over \$20 million in grants from State and Federal Government programs for infrastructure and facility improvements. Our Community Development Fund distributed \$78,000 to 26 community groups, and our Event Support Fund allocated \$90,000 to support 33 local events. Despite a 6% decrease in domestic visitor spending to \$190 million, our region continues to benefit from these investments.

This year, we took the opportunity to celebrate the 40th anniversary retrospectively, of our sister city relationship with Yamagata, which had been postponed due to COVID restrictions. We also honoured the 40th anniversary of our twinning relationship with Villers-Bretonneux. These celebrations reflect our community's rich diversity and unity and reaffirm our commitment to nurturing global connections and cultural exchange.

Council has actively advocated on several key issues, including inquiries into the 2022 Flood Event, migration and nation building, bank closures in regional Australia, and the proposed Goschen Mineral Sands Project. We have also engaged with federal and state committees on local government sustainability, funding, and infrastructure projects, including the Swan Hill Bridge.

We have successfully advocated for federal funding to remain for the Swan Hill Bridge through the 90-day review and a campaign visit to Canberra. In addition, an extension of time and funding for the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery upgrade and Tourism and

Cultural Hub projects was also granted. Our advocacy efforts also included strategic water recovery, greater solar energy generation, funding support for enabling infrastructure, and simplified migration to address worker shortages. We remain committed to advocating for the issues that matter to our residents.

Internally, Council has streamlined many of our processes with upgraded programs and software, leading to faster response times and a more efficient customer service experience. Our newly launched website, developed with extensive community input, has greatly enhanced our online presence. It now features efficient navigation and a modernised visually appealing design.

The year presented significant challenges. The rising cost of living and inflation impacted both our residents and Council's budget, necessitating careful planning and strategic adjustments to continue delivering essential services. Recruitment difficulties, influenced by housing and childcare shortages, also presented challenges like those faced across many regions.

A major transition occurred in aged care services. Effective from 31 May 2024, Council ceased delivering in-home aged and community-based services in response to the Commonwealth Government's new Support at Home program. We have supported approximately 450 clients in transitioning to new providers, including Uniting AgeWell, Northern District Community Health, and Swan Hill District Health. We extend our sincere gratitude to our Community Care Services team for their exceptional dedication and care.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to addressing challenges and seizing opportunities to build a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous community for all.

We extend our gratitude to residents, community groups, businesses, and Council officers for their ongoing collaboration and dedication to our municipality's achievements in 2023/24.

**Councillor Stuart King**

**Mayor**

**Scott Barber**

**Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining an appropriate organisational structure for Council.
- Ensuring that the decisions of the Council are implemented without undue delay.
- The day to day management of the Council's operations in accordance with the Council Plan.
- Developing, adopting and disseminating a code of conduct for Council staff.
- Providing timely advice to Council.

Year in review

Financial Summary

Operating position

On a full accrual basis the surplus for the year was \$3.4 million. It is important to note that this is an accounting profit after recognising non-cash items such as depreciation and amortisation of \$12.9 million and the receipt of infrastructure assets created by developers.

Major revenue and expenditure items included in the operating result can be identified from the following graphs.

For more information on the comprehensive income statement, balance sheet and cash flows for the year, please refer to the audited General Purpose Financial Report in Part Eight of this Annual Report.

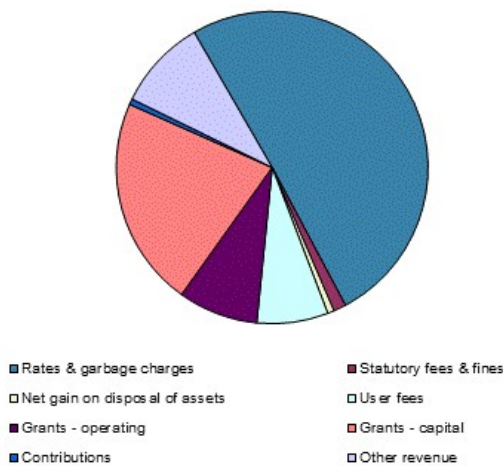
Revenue

Council’s total revenue for 2023/24 was \$63.9 million as per the Comprehensive Income Statement. A breakdown of Council’s revenue sources highlights that 81.7% of Council’s income comes from three income categories.

Other revenue is derived from interest received, Tower Hill land sales, flood and waste reimbursements.

- Rates and garbage charges 50.5%
- Grants—capital 21.8%
- Other revenue 9.4%

Total revenue (\$63.9 million)



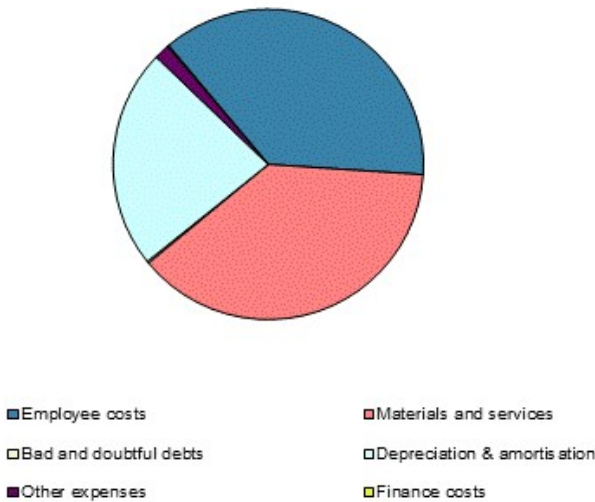
Expenditure

Council’s total expenses for the 2023/24 year were \$60.6 million as per the Comprehensive Income Statement.

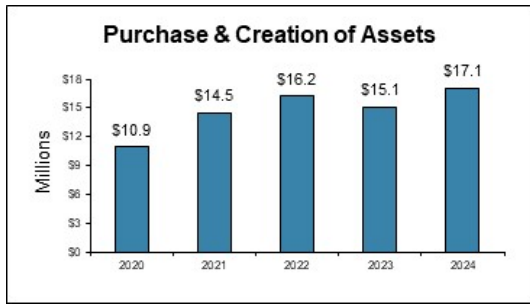
A breakdown of Council’s expenses highlights that 98.2% relates to three expenditure categories.

- Employee costs 37.2%
- Materials and services 38.0%
- Depreciation 23.0%

Total expenditure (\$60.6 million)





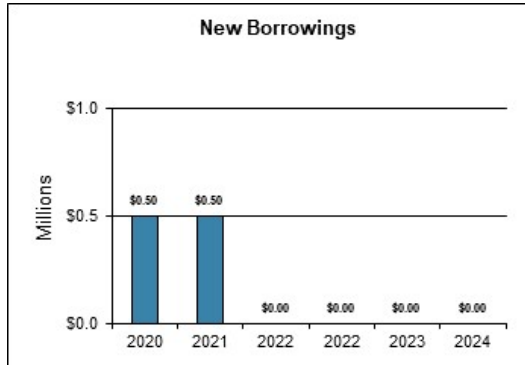


## Capital expenditure

During the financial year, Council spent \$17.1 million on capital works and asset purchases, bringing the five-year total of expenditure on fixed assets to almost \$73.8 million.

The graph on the left shows the level of expenditure spent on new and redeveloped assets over the past five years.

Major capital expenditure items were road networks, construction works at Tower Hill, sporting facilities, parks and open spaces.



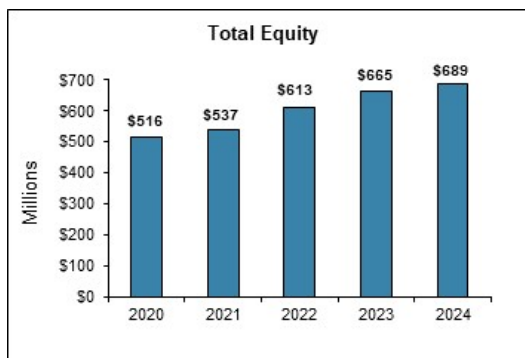
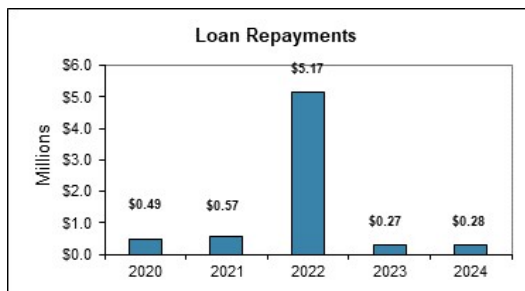
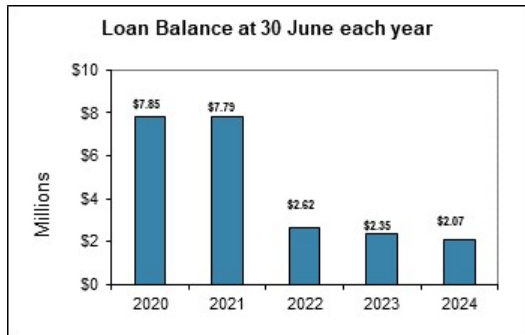
## Borrowings

Loans are used to fund major capital projects and asset purchases. Loan funding allows the community to pay for the asset (such as a leisure centre) over some of the time that it is being used.

At 30 June 2024, Council had a loan liability of \$2.07 million. This is a planned and responsible level of debt, achieved in accordance with Council's borrowing strategy.

During 2021/22 Council repaid an interest only loan of \$4.8 million. This loan was for a term of seven years, and each year Council had put aside funds in a reserve for the loan to be repaid in full at maturity.

Loan repayments for the upcoming year are forecast to be \$0.53 million.



## Equity

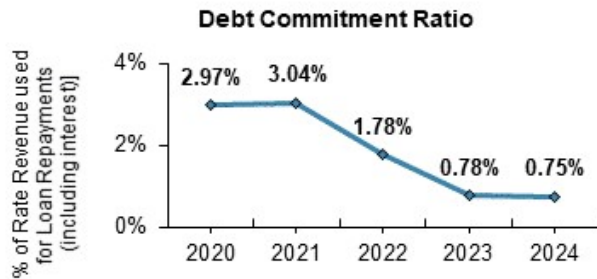
The Balance Sheet shows total community equity of \$689 million, represented by accumulated surplus and asset revaluation reserve.

The increase in equity is due to the revaluation of Council's buildings, road and infrastructure assets and a \$3.3 million surplus in 2024.

The graph on the left shows the movement in equity over the past five years.

## Financial ratios

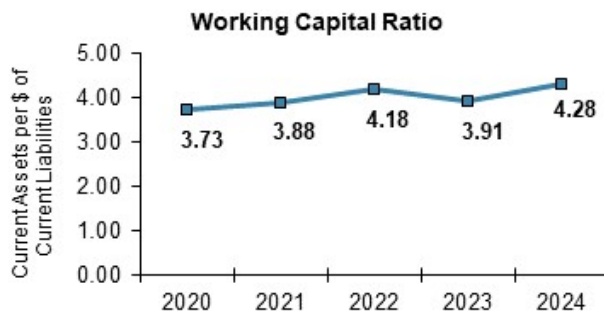
## Year in review



### Debt commitment ratio

The debt commitment ratio identifies the percentage of rate revenue required to pay interest and principal on Council's loans.

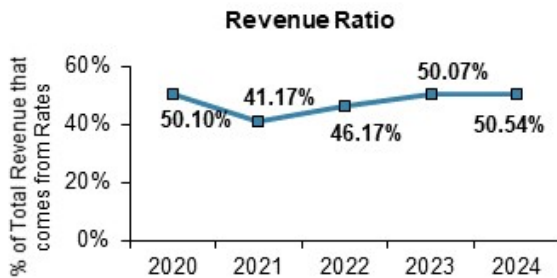
Closely tied to the Borrowing Strategy, the ratio shows that Council is in a healthy position and that it decreased in 2024. Of the \$2.07 million in loans, \$0.5 million are interest only repayment loans.



### Working capital ratio

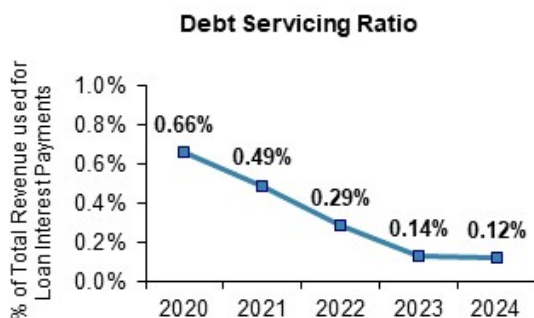
Working capital ratio shows the level of current assets Council has available to meet its current liabilities. The graph shows that the ratio is healthy and has remained constant over the past five years.

The ratio is expected to decrease marginally in future years.



### Revenue ratio

The revenue ratio shows rate revenue as a proportion of total revenue and seeks to measure Council's reliance on property rates. It is influenced by other revenue sources such as government grants, contributions, user fees and charges. This ratio increased in 2024 due to the reduced level of grants received.



### Debt servicing ratio

The debt servicing ratio shows the amount of rates required to pay the interest on Council's loan liability. This ratio documents that loan interest does not place a burden on finances.



## Description of operations

Swan Hill Rural City Council plays a vital role in shaping the future prosperity, health and wellbeing of our municipality. Council aims to be progressive, dynamic and committed as we work towards this.

Swan Hill Rural City Council delivers more than 100 services to our community.

These range from waste and road management, to managing and improving open space and community buildings.

We delivered services and facilities for children, young people, families and our elderly. We offer business development, town and strategic planning and community health initiatives.

Council's vision, strategic objectives and strategies to improve services and facilities are described in our Council Plan 2021-25 and the associated Budget.

The progress of these strategies and their delivery against the Budget is reported in this Annual Report. Refer to the section on Our Performance for more information about delivery of Council services.

The delivery of core services and facilities are measured by a set of Service Performance Indicators, as you will see in this report. We also track progress on the initiatives set out in our Council Plan.

Council has a wide range of responsibilities under both Victorian and Commonwealth legislation.

## Economic factors

Council delivered its eighth budget under the 'Fair Go' rates system. Council's rates increase was aligned with the rate cap set at 3.5%.

## Year in review

### Services provided

Council receives funding from a number of sources and had a budgeted income of almost \$59 million in 2023/24. Below is a breakdown of the services Council delivered and what these cost, for every \$100 of expenditure.

- \$11 Recreation and Community Facilities**  
Halls, parks, reserves, pools, playgrounds, sporting facilities and street beautification.
- \$17 Transport Services**  
Maintaining over 3,650km of roads, footpaths, signs, street cleaning, tree maintenance and the aerodrome.
- \$12 Governance and Administration**  
Municipal offices in Swan Hill and Robinvale, Councillor support, Council depots and plant equipment.
- \$3 Community Care**  
Domestic assistance and property maintenance for our seniors.
- \$12 Environmental and Waste Management**  
Recycling services, garbage collection, landfills, drainage and environmental management.
- \$4 Cultural Services**  
Performing Arts, Libraries, Art Gallery and Indigenous Affairs.
- \$3 Family, Youth and Children's Services**  
Services and support for families, children and youth.
- \$4 Pioneer Settlement**  
Managing, marketing, maintaining and developing this premium tourist attraction, including Heartbeat of the Murray Laser Light Show.
- \$4 Economic Development and Marketing Services**  
Business development and investment, marketing of the region and leases of caravan parks.
- \$9 Public Health, Safety and Regulatory Compliance**  
Animal control and registrations, parking, immunisations, emergency management, lighting and community health.
- \$21 Other**  
Livestock Exchange, property acquisitions and disposal, commercial works, planning and building services, Tower Hill residential development.





## Major capital works

During 2023/24 the major capital works included:

### Monash Drive – Viewing Platform and Boardwalk

Total project cost: \$681k

### Tower Hill – Stage 15 Development

Actual spend 2023/24: \$1.3m

Total project cost: \$1.75m

### Robinvale Recreation and Aquatic Centre

Actual spend 2023/24: \$750k

Total project cost: \$3.14m



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### Robinvale Skate Park

Actual spend 2023/24: \$502k

Total project cost: \$583k

### Robinvale Recreation and Aquatic Centre Splash Park

Actual spend 2023/24: \$480k

Total project cost: \$624k

### Floating Pontoon Lake Boga

Actual spend 2023/24: \$434k

Total project cost: \$434k



### Book collection purchases

Actual spend 2023/24: \$159k

Swan Hill Rural City Council - Annual Report 23/24

## Year in review

### Swan Hill Aquatic and Recreation Centre Group Fitness Room

Actual spend 2023/24: \$372k

Total project cost: \$781k



### Swan Hill Town Hall Exterior Refurbishment

Actual spend 2023/24: \$149k

Total project cost: \$304k



### Robinvale John James Oval Lighting

Actual spend 2023/24: \$345k

Total project cost: \$345k

### Swan Hill Saleyards Traffic Management

Actual spend 2023/24: \$110k

Total project cost: \$110k

### Circular Agricultural Plastics Economy

Actual spend 2023/24: \$278k

Total project cost: \$278k

### Apex Park Playground Renewal

Actual spend 2023/24: \$84k

Total project cost: \$84k

### Robinvale Recreation and Aquatic Centre Internal Fit out

Actual spend 2023/24: \$273k

Total project cost: \$454k

### Swan Hill Off-Leash Dog Park – Stage 2

Actual spend 2023/24: \$52k

Total project cost : \$52k



### Nyah West Revitalisation

Actual spend 2023/24: \$211k

Total project cost: \$211k

### Nyah West Toilet Block Renewal

Actual spend 2023/24: \$178k

Total project cost: \$191k

### Road reconstruction, sealing and maintenance

Actual spend 2023/24: \$15.95m

Multiple roads around the municipality were reconstructed and/or resealed during 2023/24.

### Pioneer Settlement - Lighting Activation

Actual spend 2023/24: \$136k

Total project cost: \$753k

Part Two | Year in review

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## Advocacy campaigns

Swan Hill Rural City Council regularly advocates to the Victorian and Federal governments for funding for important programs and projects that will benefit our community and the broader region.

### Improve housing availability

A lack of suitable, affordable housing is a significant barrier to economic growth across our municipality. Workers in all sectors have trouble finding housing when re-locating to our area, contributing to a local skills shortage. Housing is especially problematic for our seasonal workforce.

Council conducted a Housing Summit which highlighted the need to explore and develop new and innovative approaches to support housing outcomes. This included bringing people together in a well-coordinated community approach, where we make best use of land, investment dollars, government funding and local know-how.

Following the Housing Summit a Housing Forum was held and the development of a Housing Action Committee made up of individuals who are involved in sectors related to housing and community services was formed.

At present around 60-70 homes are built each year and this is not addressing the current shortfall, let alone building houses for people to move here to work, play and live.

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### A true population

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data for Swan Hill Rural City Council inaccurately represents the number of residents who actually call our region home.

Council-commissioned 2019 Robinvale Population Determination Study showed that Robinvale's population is between 7,900 and 8,800, much higher than the official Census data 3,740 (2021 Census.)

Council is seeking recognition for the true population data for Robinvale.

### Water and sewerage for small towns

Poor water and wastewater infrastructure is one element restricting housing development in our small towns, in areas where our agriculture, horticulture and manufacturing sectors need housing the most.

Council has continued to advocate for the Government to introduce a fund that water authorities can access to extend water and wastewater systems to small towns and ease our critical housing shortage.

Swan Hill Rural City Council - Annual Report 23/24

## Year in review

### Assist overseas workers

The demand for overseas professional, skilled and semi-skilled workers, is higher than ever. The pandemic exacerbated workforce gaps that existed in our region beforehand, placing pressure on local industry – including agriculture, horticulture, tourism, hospitality and healthcare.

Council is advocating for the following:

- streamlining the process for overseas workers to come to Australia and work in regional areas
- support for overseas workers living and working in regional areas, who want to progress to permanent residency
- practical planning for seasonal worker accommodation.

### Biosecurity

Council seeks assistance to support landholders and the community to manage established pests and diseases, for example Queensland Fruit Fly.

Our Council does not support a shift of these responsibilities to local government. The only practical way for area-wide pest and disease management, is through a state or national coordinated funding mechanism.

### Cost shifting from Government

Council is seeking greater transparency in relation to State and Federal Government initiatives that are imposed onto Local Government.

Greater reporting and budgeting requirements would enable better record keeping for initiatives that require a transfer of responsibilities.

### A new Swan Hill Hospital

The Swan Hill Needs a New Hospital Committee and Council have been advocating for a new hospital. We appreciate the Federal Government's \$30 million commitment and the State Government's \$35.7 million - which has acted as seed funding for Stage 1 of the new hospital.

Council continues advocating for all levels of government to further contribute to further stages of the build, so that a new Swan Hill Hospital is complete in its entirety.

### Swan Hill Rail Precinct Pedestrian Overpass

For over ten years Council has worked closely with the Department of Transport and Planning and the rail authority agencies to reach an agreement on pedestrian access. Various options have been explored and dismissed including 'at grade' possibilities.

Council's 10 Year Major Projects Plan 2022/23 to 2031/32 has allocated funding to support Connecting the Swan Hill CBD to Riverfront. This project is dependent on receiving funding from State and Federal bodies to support Council funds.





## Advocacy campaigns continued

### A new Swan Hill Bridge

The aging single-lane Swan Hill bridge creates a bottleneck for traffic moving through our region, is costing millions in ongoing repairs, and is simply unusable for the higher mass and over dimensional vehicles that local and interstate industry relies on.

The reaffirmed commitment from the Federal Government for \$60 million is welcome. We need all levels of government to continue working together to assist with the heritage removal on the current bridge, complete the designs, and commit to total project funding.

### Train Stabling Facility beyond the Swan Hill Central Business District to Murray Riverfront precinct

Council was concerned to discover that the Department of Transport and Planning has proposed to develop a stabling facility south of the Swan Hill Railway Station. Council's concern is that this land adjoins both the CBD precinct and the Riverfront tourism precinct, potentially impacting local tourism.

With significant progress already made in the Riverfront Precinct and millions of dollars more set to be invested in the construction of the Swan Hill Tourism and Cultural Hub (\$5m), an extension to the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery (\$6m), and purchase of the former GrainCorp site at 42 Monash Drive, which is in excess of \$10 million over the last ten years, it's clear that Council action needs to be taken.

Council is willing to work in partnership with the rail/transport authorities to find a solution including alternative stabling locations either south or north of the railway station.

### Active Community Connectivity

The Swan Hill Central Business District and the Riverfront precinct are currently separated by the railway, limiting commercial and tourism opportunities. Council has actively pursued a pedestrian access connection between Curlewis Street and Monash Drive since it was identified in the Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan 2013.

## Year in review

### Fix our roads

Large scale transport projects are out of reach for local government, therefore investment is needed.

Council is grateful that the Roads to Recovery program has injected essential funding into our ageing road network, and we encourage Federal Government to continue it.

Recent flooding events and an extraordinarily wet season, has had a significant impact on our local roads as well as our state road networks.

#### State arterial road priorities

##### *Hattah-Robinvale Road*

The growth of almond farms and other horticulture in the area has highlighted the need for this road to be widened, and for an upgrade of the intersection with Collins Road.

##### *Murray Valley Highway*

Key improvements identified as part of the Central Murray Regional Transport Strategy include pavement widening and shoulder sealing, more passing lanes north of Nyah, improved intersections and additional rest stops. This would reduce conflicts between freight, buses, caravans and other vehicles, improving safety and travel times.

##### *Murlong/McCallum Street and Gray/Campbell streets intersections*

We recently called for feedback from the community regarding two notorious Swan Hill intersections.

We received invaluable feedback from our community with a total of 452 surveys completed, reflecting strong engagement from residents that are invested in the safety and efficiency of our roadways.

It was alarming to see from these crucial results how many incidents have occurred at these intersections and data that has been lost as a result of these accidents and near misses not being reported to the Police. We appreciate the community participating in this consultation and supporting our advocacy efforts to enhance the functionality and safety of these intersections.

Council will use these findings to further highlight and advocate to the Government regarding the importance of prioritising improvements to address traffic flow and safety issues in these key areas.

#### Quick stats:

77% reported having had a near miss or accident at one of these intersections.

60% reported having had a near miss or accident at both intersections.

95% said they did not report their near miss or accident to the Police.

92% of incidents involved motor vehicle versus a motor vehicle.

97% of respondents identified the Murlong/McCallum Street intersection as requiring urgent attention.





## Australia Day Awards Local Government Citizen of the Year 2024 -



Ross Cleeland was awarded the Australia Day Citizen of the Year 2024 in recognition of a lifetime dedicated to community service and an unwavering commitment to the betterment of Swan Hill.

Ross Cleeland has become a pillar of community support through his multifaceted roles and tireless efforts in various organisations. Currently serving as the Secretary of the St Vincent de Paul Swan Hill conferee and welfare, Ross exemplifies compassion and empathy in aiding those in need.

As the Secretary for A Good Kitchen, Ross takes a hands-on approach to addressing homelessness supporting essential sustenance to the less fortunate. His dedication extends further as a Community Driver for Swan Hill Neighbourhood House, ensuring that residents have access to vital resources and assistance.

Ross's advocacy for social causes is further demonstrated through his role as a member of the Domestic Violence Housing Committee, where he actively contributes to initiatives addressing the urgent needs of individuals facing domestic violence.

His extensive involvement in community organisations is truly commendable. Ross serves as both President and Secretary of the Apex Club of Swan Hill, demonstrating leadership and dedication in promoting community welfare. His contributions extend to the sports arena, where he holds the positions of President, Secretary, and Life Member of both RSL Cricket Club and Swan Hill and District Cricket Association. Ross is also President and Life Member of Tyntynder Football Club and Tyntynder Junior Football Club, embodying the spirit of sportsmanship and community building.

Ross's commitment to beautifying Swan Hill is evident through his involvement in the McCallum Street beautification committee, showcasing his dedication to enhancing the aesthetics of our municipality.

His leadership extends to the rotary community, where he has served as both the President and Secretary and is currently the Community Service Director of Swan Hill Sunrise Rotary, exemplifying the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self."

Inducted into the Swan Hill and District Cricket Association Hall of Fame, Ross's contributions have left an indelible mark on the sporting community. Yet, beyond accolades, Ross Cleeland is characterised by his genuine enjoyment of helping and meeting people, making him a beloved figure in Swan Hill. Ross Cleeland is the embodiment of selfless service, community spirit, and leadership.

The Citizen of the Year award is a testament to his outstanding contributions, reflecting the gratitude and admiration of a community that has been positively impacted by his generosity and tireless efforts.

## Student Achievement award winners

Brock Baker	St Mary MacKillop College	Matilda Patterson	Woorinen District Primary School
Zoe Steicke	Swan Hill College	Tillie Shadbolt	Beverford Primary School
Lachlan Roberts	Swan Hill Specialist School	Ella Davis	Lake Boga Primary School
Connor Robertson	Swan Hill Primary School	Audrey Ibbs	Nyah District Primary School
Micah Dodgshun	Swan Hill Christian School	Aiden Plant	Manangatang P-12 College
Kye Pearce	Swan Hill North Primary School	Montana Zappia	Robinvale St Mary's Primary School
Emily Lawry	St Mary's Primary School	Wade Best	Robinvale P-12 College

## Year in review

### Young Citizen of the Year 2024



Shannon Polglase was awarded the Australia Day Young Citizen of the year for 2024, in recognition of exceptional resilience, extraordinary courage, remarkable leadership and an outstanding contribution to the local community.

Shannon's journey has been marked by overcoming trials and trauma with unwavering positivity. In the face of adversity, Shannon has demonstrated extraordinary courage, emerging as an inspirational figure within our community.

Shannon has become a profound influence on the youth of our community. Through empowerment and encouragement, Shannon leads by example, fostering the active involvement of young individuals. This positive impact is reflected in the improvement of self-esteem and a strengthened sense of identity among those touched by Shannon's guidance.

Shannon's commitment to building relationships between cultural groups has enriched the fabric of our community, fostering understanding and unity. Shannon has become a catalyst for positive change within our community.

Recognised by coaches and bestowed with the esteemed title of Captain of the Colts Football Team in 2022, Shannon's leadership qualities have shone brightly both on and off the field. This acknowledgment underscores Shannon's ability to inspire and lead others towards a shared vision of success.

Shannon Polglase represents the qualities and virtues befitting the Young Citizen of the Year. Through resilience, courage, and leadership, Shannon has not only overcome personal challenges but has also become a transformative force for positive change within our community.

### Community Event of the Year 2024



Mallee Cruisers' Show and Shine at Riverside Park Swan Hill was awarded the Australia Day Community Event of the Year for 2024. This extraordinary event brought together a diverse and vibrant community, attracting 120 entrants from various locations from right across the region and boosted the local economy.

Entrants created a spectacular display of cars, utes, vans, and motorbikes, captivating a large audience. The event held at Riverside Park welcomed approximately 500-600 enthusiastic attendees. Festivities included market stalls, a variety of food options, and entertainment for children, featuring a jumping castle, face painting, representation from the Novo Youth Council and Youth Inc, and the community ambulance.

The highlight of the event was the competition for 23 trophy categories and lucky entrant prizes, adding an element of friendly competition and excitement. Generous donations from local businesses contributed to a successful raffle, with proceeds exceeding \$8000. Notably, all profits from this outstanding event will be channelled back into the community to support mental health initiatives.

The Mallee Cruisers' dedication, commitment, and community spirit showcased in this event truly exemplify the essence of the Australia Day Award - Community Event of the Year. Their efforts have not only brought joy and unity but also made a lasting impact on the well-being of the community.





# Part Three

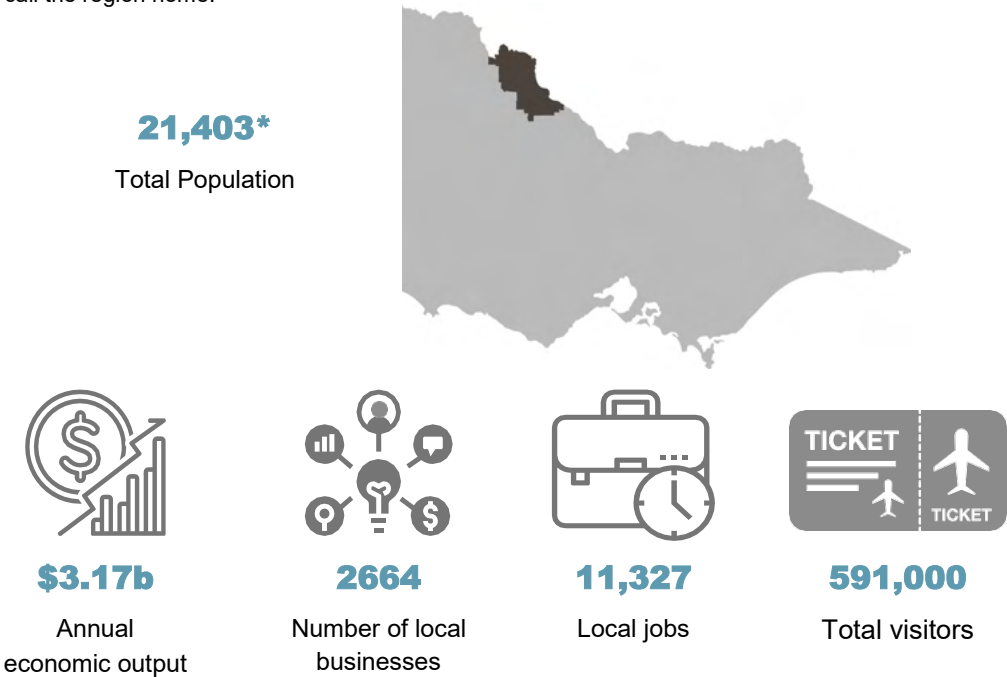
## *Our Council*

Our Council

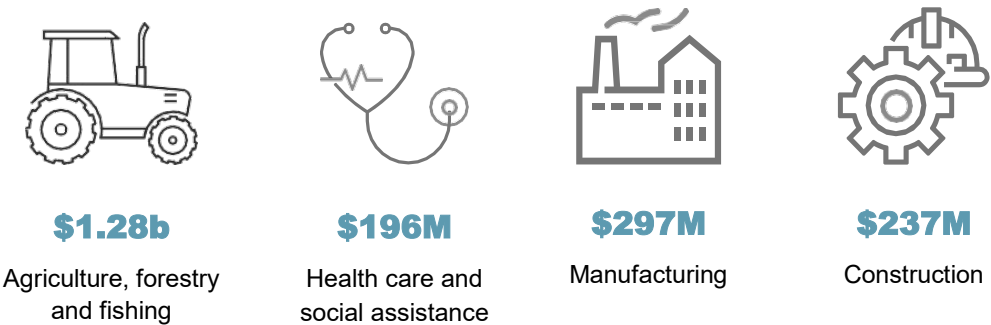
Our Region

The Swan Hill municipality covers 6,116 square kilometers that over 40 nationalities call home, creating a community that is diverse, welcoming and resilient. Our region has experienced significant economic growth over the past decade, led by the expansion of horticultural/agricultural practices and supported by an innovative manufacturing sector. With more than 40 commercially grown products including almonds, olives, stone fruit, grapes, vegetables, cereals, legumes, lucerne, sheep, beef and dairy – it is easy to see why our municipality is an important part of Victoria's food bowl.

The beautiful Murray River winds its way through much of the municipality, offering a major draw card for visitors and those who call the region home.



Top Four Gross Regional Product by Industry



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2024. ©2023. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions). Data are based on a 2020/21 price base for all years. NIEIR-ID data are inflation adjusted each year to allow direct comparison, and annual data releases adjust previous years' figures to a new base year.

\*2021 ABS data estimates the Swan Hill Rural Council residential population to be 21,403, however, due to ongoing concern that the ABS consistently underestimates the population of Robinvale, Council commissioned Geografia to undertake a population determination study. The ABS census figure of 2016 show the Robinvale population as 3,497 people. The work of Geografia has reliably demonstrated that the true Robinvale population sits at approximately 7,900 people; making the total residential population 25,806.



## Our history

For thousands of years, the traditional owners of the lands that now form the Swan Hill Rural City Council lived in the region, with the land providing abundant food sources and a permanent water supply.

In 1836, led by explorer Major Thomas Mitchell, the first Europeans arrived. Settlers started to arrive soon after, establishing large sheep stations next to the Murray River.

In 1871, the Shire of Swan Hill was proclaimed and was located in Kerang (which now forms part of the Gannawarra Shire).

In 1890, part of the Shire of Swan Hill was severed and formed the Mildura Shire, now called the Mildura Rural City Council.

In 1893, the Shire of Castle Donnington was created and centred around the town of Swan Hill. By 1904 it had assumed the name Shire of Swan Hill.

Returned servicemen settled in the Tol Tol and Robinvale areas circa 1923 and established farms, persevering through the Depression and providing a solid foundation for the prosperous farming community centred there today.

The Borough of Swan Hill was formed in 1939 and in March 1965 became the City of Swan Hill.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the City of Swan Hill was considered one of the largest wheat-producing municipalities in Victoria. Whilst broadacre farms are still found in abundance in our region, many farmers have since transitioned away from dryland farming to grow grapes, citrus, olives, carrots, asparagus, stonefruit and a wide range of other crops.

In January 1995, the Shire and the City were amalgamated to form Swan Hill Rural City Council.



## Our Council

### Councillors

The Council is elected to provide leadership and good governance for the municipal district and the local community.

Swan Hill Rural City Council is not divided into Wards, with seven Councillors elected as representatives for all residents and ratepayers across the municipality.

They have responsibility for setting the strategic direction for the municipality, policy development, identifying service standards and monitoring performance across the organisation.



**Cr Stuart King**  
**Mayor**  
Elected 2020



**Cr Les McPhee**  
Elected 2008



**Cr Ann Young**  
Elected 2016



**Cr Bill Moar**  
Elected 2016



**Cr Chris Jeffery**  
Elected 2016



**Cr Nicole McKay**  
Elected 2019



**Cr Jacquie Kelly**  
Elected 2022



## Community Satisfaction Survey

Each year, Local Government Victoria coordinates a state-wide local government community satisfaction survey. The survey measures the community's perceptions of their local council's performance in key areas.

Between 29 January - 18 March 2024, a total of 400 residents from across the municipality were randomly selected and contacted to provide their feedback via a telephone survey.

### Overall performance

The overall performance index score of 48 out of 100 for Council represents a decrease on the 2023 result. While disappointing, the decline in performance mirrors a general decline across the state, and can be partially attributed to the impact of recent flood events on local infrastructure.

### Top performing areas

Council's three highest performing services are:

- Waste Management
- Appearance of Public Areas
- Family Support Services

### Areas for improvement

Council's three lowest performing services are:

- Sealed and Unsealed Roads
- Planning & Building Permits
- Consultation and Engagement.

## Our Council



for overall performance

State average - 54

Large rural council - 50



for overall Council direction

State average - 45

Large rural council - 42



for community consultation

State average - 51

Large rural council - 48



for customer service

State average - 67

Large rural council - 65



for sealed local roads

State average - 45

Large rural council - 38



for making community  
decisions

State average - 50

Large rural council - 46

Full survey results are available on Council's website - [www.swanhill.vic.gov.au](http://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au)





# Part Four

## *Our People*

## Our People

### Our Executive Leadership Team

Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of operations, in accordance with the strategic directions of the Council Plan. Four Directors and the CEO form the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and lead the organisation.

#### Scott Barber - Chief Executive Officer



Scott is a results-driven Executive with more than two decades experience developing and leading high performing teams within local government, utilities and services sectors, as well as governance roles within the private and public sectors.

Scott has an in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing regional communities, with experience spanning local government, irrigated agriculture, bulk water management, infrastructure operations and financial leadership.

Scott has held Executive roles at Goulburn-Murray Water, Murray River Council and most recently Director of Projects & Strategy at Wagga Wagga City Council. He has completed a Master of Applied Science, Bachelor of Engineering, Graduate Certificate in Management and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

#### Bruce Myers - Director Community and Cultural Services



Bruce is a qualified librarian who started his career at the Swan Hill Regional Library, managing the mobile library, in 1994. From 1998 until 2007 Bruce was Manager of the Library. Bruce became the Director Community and Cultural Services in 2007. He now heads a team of about 70 people involved with a wide range of community services, including community-based aged care, children's and youth services and cultural experiences.

#### Michelle Grainger - Director Development and Planning



Michelle commenced as Director Development and Planning in January 2024.

A qualified town planner, Michelle has worked for a number of rural Councils in Victoria, managing statutory and strategic planning, economic development, regulatory services and environment teams.

Balancing sustainable land use outcomes with growing rural and regional economies has led to Michelle to having a variety of experience in agriculture, renewable energy, industry and business development proposals. She enjoys working in local government as it provides a range of opportunities to work with and for the community.



### Leah Johnston - Director Infrastructure

Leah commenced her role as Director Infrastructure with Council in April 2023. Leah is a qualified engineer, and recognised on the National Engineering Register. She also has an Advanced Diploma in Project Management, and Diploma in Emergency Management.

She has had a long career in local government, having worked within the engineering and works departments from a range of Councils in South West Victoria over the last 25 years, before relocating to Swan Hill.



### Bhan Pratap - Director Corporate Services

Bhan has 21 years of dedicated service to local government in Queensland, Northern Territory and Victoria, working within several regional and outback councils in a variety of positions. Bhan has worked in senior Executive positions, as CEO, Deputy CEO, Director of Corporate and Financial Services, and Chief Financial Officer. In addition to this, he is a Fellow of CPA Australia (FCPA) and has the following qualifications: Bachelor of Arts with majors in Accounting & Financial Management and Management & Public Administration, Graduate Diploma in Management and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) with majors in Local Government, Human Resources & Associations Management.



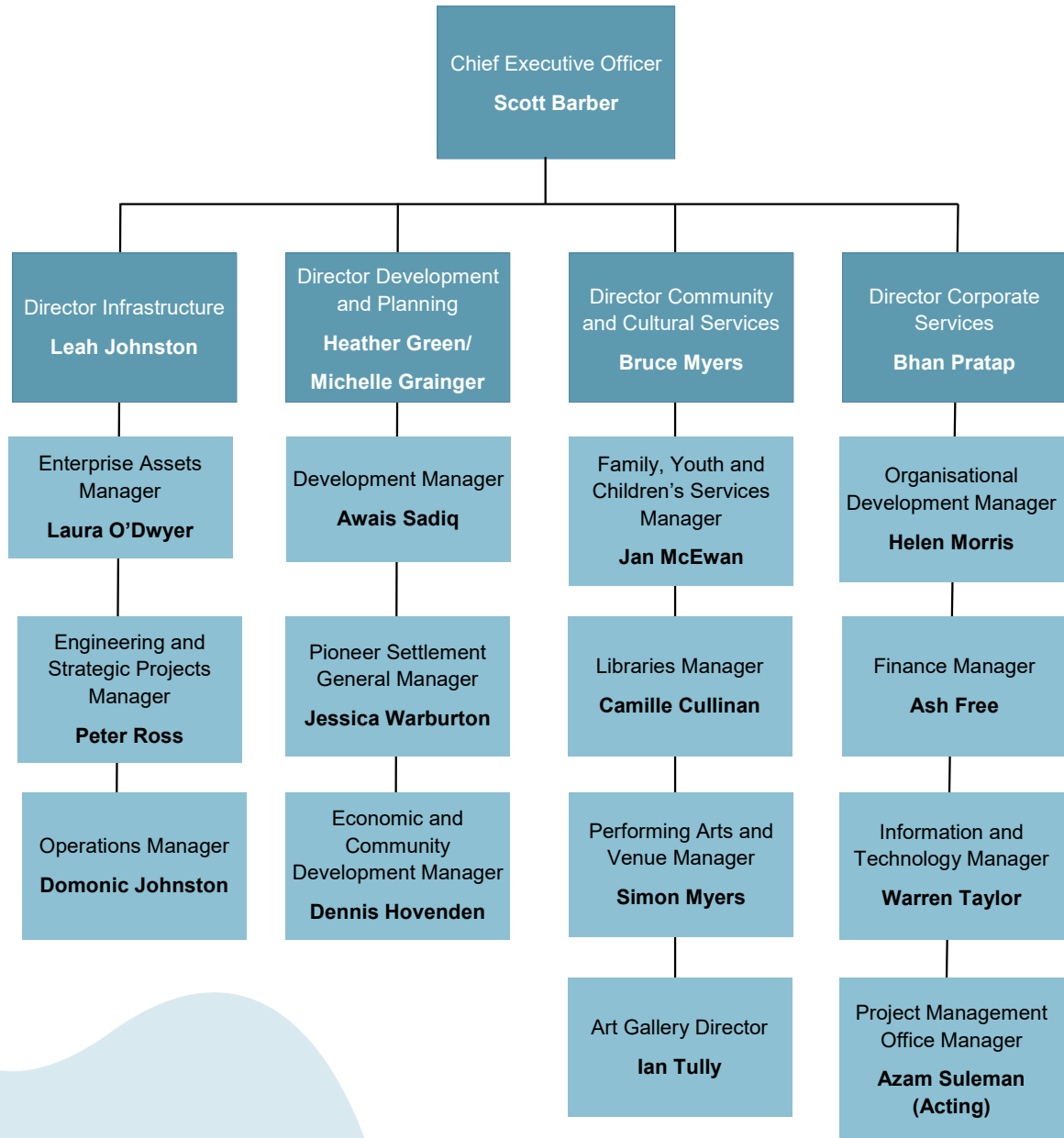
### Heather Green - Director Development and Planning

Heather worked as Council's Director Development and Planning from July 2017 through to January 2024, before stepping into the role of Executive Manager Strategic Projects at Council.

Heather has extensive local and state government experience across Australia. During her nine years as a manager and director at Victoria's Alpine Shire Council, she focused on sustainable development, planning, tourism and economic development. Heather was at Toowoomba for 15 years as the Manager of Strategic Planning. During her time working for the Northern Territory Government as the Katherine Land Manager, she oversaw planning, Crown leases and grazing licences. Heather has a Bachelor of Applied Science (Planning).

## Our organisational structure

## Our People



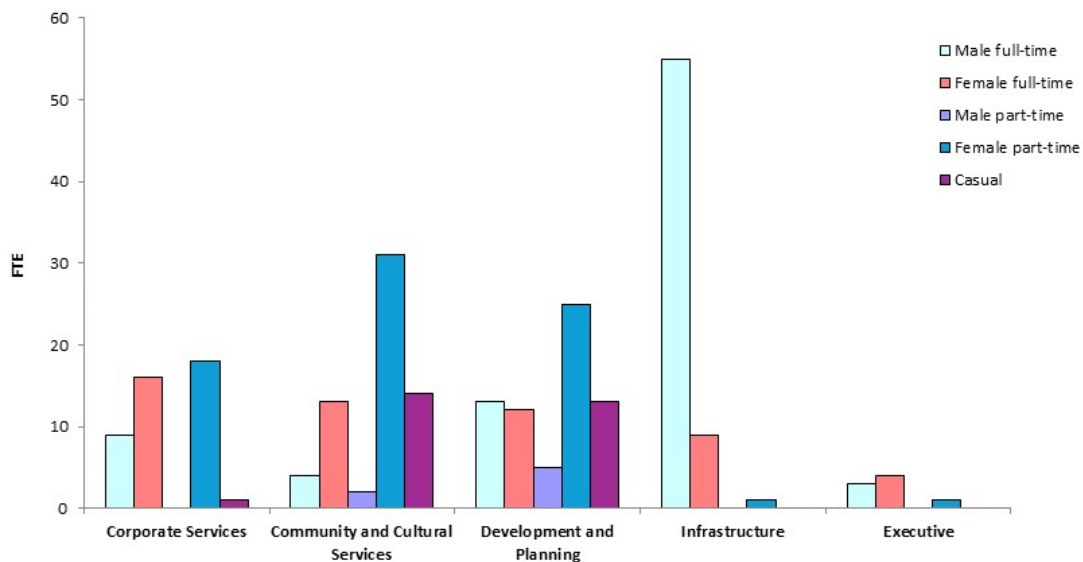


## Council employees

The table below shows the number of full time equivalent (FTE) Council staff by directorate, employment type and gender as at 30 June 2024.

Directorate	Male full-time	Female full-time	Male part-time	Female part-time	Casual	Total Staff	Male total FTE	Female total FTE	FTE total
Corporate Services	9.0	16.0	-	18.0	1.0	44.0	9.0	28.4	38.4
Community and Cultural Services	4.0	13.0	2.0	31.0	14.0	64.0	5.9	35.6	41.6
Development and Planning	13.0	12.0	5.0	25.0	13.0	68.0	16.7	26.4	43.1
Infrastructure	55	9.0	-	1.0	-	65.0	55.0	9.8	64.8
Executive	3.0	4.0	-	1.0	-	8.0	3.0	4.7	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>249.0</b>	<b>89.7</b>	<b>105.9</b>	<b>195.5</b>

### Staff (FTE) by directorate, employment type and gender—30 June 2024.





## Our People

The table below shows the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff categorised by employment band classification and gender as at 30 June 2024.

Employment Classification	Male FTE	Female FTE	Self-described gender FTE	Total FTE
Band 1	-	3.3	-	3.3
Band 2	1.4	5.7	-	7.2
Band 3	43.4	16.3	-	59.7
Band 4	5.8	25.6	-	31.4
Band 5	6.0	16.3	-	22.3
Band 6	9.0	12.2	-	21.2
Band 7	6.0	4.6	-	10.6
Band 8	1.0	3.2	-	4.2
Non-banded positions (includes salary packages)	17.0	18.6	-	35.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>89.7</b>	<b>105.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>195.5</b>

## Volunteers

Council is fortunate to have numerous local volunteers who give their time and expertise to assist Council and help others in the community. These dedicated volunteers play an essential role in delivering valuable services and support.

## Scholarship Program

Council's Scholarship Program supports up to seven local students who are completing undergraduate or TAFE studies during the school year. In addition to financial support, students receive valuable on-the-job experience by working at Council during semester breaks.

Students participating in the program are completing:

- Graduate Diploma in Child, Family and Community Nursing
- Bachelor of Design (Architecture) and Bachelor of Construction Management (Honours)
- Bachelor of Information Technology.

## Valuing our people

Swan Hill Rural City Council recognises the importance that each individual plays in achieving our goals. Our aim is to ensure that Council is a great place to work, where the capabilities of our people is nurtured and performance is focused on delivering exceptional service for our communities.

Council is committed to recruiting and retaining staff, but recognises ongoing challenges in today's climate including: skill shortages, pay conditions, an ageing workforce and staff turnover. To address the challenges, Council is implementing a number of strategies to keep valuable staff, expand Council's potential employee base, and promote Council as an employer of choice. Local governments require a diverse workforce that encompasses a wide range of occupations.

Council staff strategies include:

- A focus on enhancing the skills of staff to increase efficiency
- Implementation of the Workforce Plan including;
  - succession planning
  - recruitment and retention of staff
  - apprenticeships, traineeships and/or bursaries
- Offering phased retirement options to extend the careers of higher skilled staff
- Ongoing development of systems and processes to continually improve productivity
- Flexible work arrangements.

Swan Hill Rural City Council delivers substantial levels of government services, including community, social, health, physical, regulatory and environmental services, amongst others. Council also drives and develops considerable economic activity, supporting significant employment across the municipality.

## Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Committee

Council's OH&S Committee is made up of 11 committed and competent staff who have been elected by their designated work group, and are accompanied by a member of management. Together they work towards compliance with the OH&S Act and Regulations and assist with the delivery of Council's OH&S Management Plan.

The committee met six times during 2023/24.

In 2023/24 there were 24 reported injuries compared to 21 the previous year. There were 6 standard WorkCover Claims, compared to NIL the previous year, and seven minor WorkCover Claims compared to one the previous year.

## Health, safety and wellbeing

Council continued its commitment to staff health, safety and wellbeing by continuing several programs to encourage a healthy lifestyle and improved work/life balance. Programs include:

- Ergonomic assessments conducted upon request
- OH&S training including: Park and Playground Safety Inspection, Work Safety at Heights, HSR Initial five day OHS Training Course, Chemical Users Course, Confined Spaces, First Aid, CPR, White Card.
- Managing Construction Safety Training and Traffic Management Training.
- Provision of Personal Protective Equipment such as hi-vis safety vests, safety boots, broad brim hats, sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Internal HR Staff Matters newsletter distributed every six weeks. Regular features include updated Council policies and procedures, health and wellbeing, professional development, Gender Equality and Consultative Committee meeting minutes.
- Employee wellbeing initiatives including the flu vaccination program undertaken by Council's Public Health Unit and subsidised gym memberships.
- Ongoing provision of Council's Employee Assistance Program for employees requiring support and/or counselling for work and non-work related matters.
- Continued support of our internal Health and Wellbeing Committee with awareness day activities including RUOK day, Men's Health Week, LGBTQI+ initiatives, Women's Health Week, International Women's Day and National Safe Work Month.
- My Everyday Wellbeing program launched on 1 May 2024 providing staff and their families with online access to unlimited health and wellbeing resources, promoting health, wellness and efficiency in the workplace.

## Equal Employment Opportunity Program

Council is dedicated to providing a workplace where diversity is embraced and decisions are merit-based. This includes ensuring fair, equitable and non-discriminatory consideration being given to all job applicants, regardless of age, sex, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, race, religious beliefs or other irrelevant factors.

All staff undertake mandatory equal opportunity training every three years and our Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Procedure supports our organisation in fulfilling its obligations under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. In 2023/24, employees undertook Equal Opportunity training, Bullying and Harassment training and Culture at Work training.

Council offers bullying and harassment and sexual harassment courses with over 256 staff completing these programs.

The Sexual Harassment in the Workplace is now compulsory for staff to complete every two years, together with the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour courses which cover:

- Discrimination, harassment and bullying
- Impacts and actions
- Psychosocial hazards
- Respect@Work

These four Appropriate Workplace Behaviour modules address Respect@Work legislation, positive duty requirements, sexual harassment, discrimination, victimisation, vilification and bullying.

We have six Equal Opportunity contact officers available to provide guidance and assistance.

## Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* commenced on 31 March 2021. The Act aims to improve workplace gender equality in the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils. Our Council is committed to this work.

A Gender Equality Committee has been established which consists of volunteers within Council. The committee is focused on meeting Council's compliance obligations in line with the Act. The committee also provides gender-based advice and recommendations to the Executive Leadership Team.

## Our People



The In Victoria, employers have a positive duty to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment in their workplaces under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.

Council Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) has been an important document for improving and increasing gender equality within Council.

The Gender Impact Assessment requirement of the Act is being embedded into the policies, programs and services of Council to benefit all genders.

A new GEAP will be developed in March 2025.

## Preventing violence against women

Council is actively working towards Prevention of Violence Against Women primarily through promoting gender equity and building respectful and safe relationships and breaking down stereotypes of women. This prevention approach is consistent with Council's health and wellbeing planning approach, which is incorporated into the Council Plan and the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021-2025.

Council's partnership with Women's Health Loddon Mallee through the Collective Action for Respect and Equality (CARE), is leading to further access training for staff and various actions within the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) continue to be addressed.

There is also an active Gender Equality Network with agencies from across the LGA, who support events for the 16 Days of Activism events.

## Developing our people

Council is committed to providing learning and development opportunities to support the continuing professional development of our staff.

This year staff have accessed a range of learning and development opportunities including on-the-job training and coaching; attendance at courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, webinars, and meetings; and participation in professional networks. More than 2900 hours of organisational training was provided to staff during the year, or 14 hours per EFT. Council also offers study assistance for staff undertaking relevant undergraduate or postgraduate studies.

## Online training

Council continued to offer an expanded suite of compliance courses through an online learning program.

All internal courses are developed with industry experts and the courses are delivered in an engaging and easy to use format.

Courses are designed in line with relevant legislation, are fully customisable and are suitable for Council. The system also allows both administrators and end users to record attendance and completion of in-person training (accredited and non-accredited).

## People Matters Survey

This is an independent opinion survey conducted by the Victorian Public Sector Commission that enables employees from Councils across Victoria to have their say. The survey responses remain anonymous and confidential to create a safe space to express their opinions on their workplace culture and environment. The survey is designed to evaluate morale, engagement, achievement and overall employee satisfaction.

## Staff Recognition Awards

**Liveability Strategic Pillar Winner, and overall winner:** Town Hall Team (pictured below)

**Harmony Strategic Pillar Winner:** Economic Community Development Unit

**Prosperity Strategic Pillar Winner:** Jessica Chislett and Procurement and Properties Team

**Innovation/Customer Service Winners:** Adam Hunter, Conor McCreesh and Brooke O'Connor

**Leadership Strategic Pillar Winner:** Jessica Kei

**Special Commendation Certificate:** Harold Rovere and the Regulatory Services Team





## Year in review

### Staff service awards

Every year Council acknowledges service and presents awards to staff who have reached service milestones. Eleven staff were presented with Staff Service Awards at the annual all-staff function in December 2023.



**10 Years of Service**  
**Stacey Templeton**



**10 Years of Service**  
**Joyline Rovere**



**10 Years of Service**  
**Helen Morris**



**10 Years of Service**  
**Dean Overall**



**10 Years of Service**  
**Nicholas Brown**



**10 Years of Service**  
**Karen Taylor**



**10 Years of Service**  
**Amanda Smith**



**10 Years of Service**  
**Julie Wardle**



**20 Years of Service**  
**Anthony Duffin**



**20 Years of Service**  
**Samantha Uebergang**



**35 Years of Service**  
**Geoffrey Jochinke**



**25 Years of Service**  
**Roxanne Fox**



**25 Years of Service**  
**Tracie Warburton**



**25 Years of Service**  
**Christine Steicke**



**25 Years of Service**  
**Leanne Moroney**





# Part Five

## *Our Performance*

## Our Performance

### Our performance

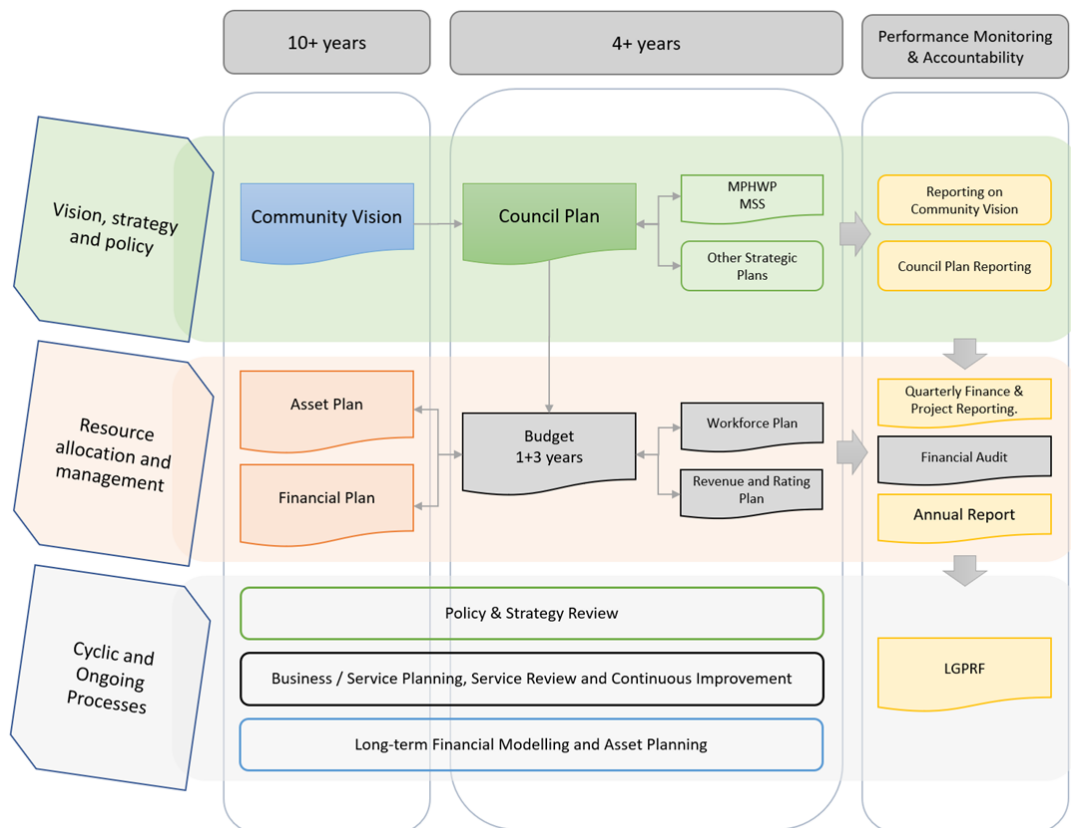
Part 4 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), sets out Councils' responsibilities for strategic planning, the budget process and reporting requirements.

Section 89 of the Act, requires Council to prepare its strategic plans in line with the strategic planning principles. These principles require Council to adopt an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting, that:

- addresses the Community Vision
- takes into account the resources needed for effective implementation
- identifies and addresses the risks to implementation
- provides for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.

The Act also requires Council to prepare and adopt specific long term (10-Year), medium term (4-Year) and short-term (12-Month) plans. Council's Integrated Strategic Planning Framework is shown below.

### Integrated Strategic Planning Framework



## Community Vision and Council Plan

Built on strong foundations that embrace our rich history and natural environment, our region will be a place of progression and possibility, we are a community that is happy, healthy & harmonious - we are empowered, we are respectful and we are proud.

### Performance

Council's performance for the year has been reported against each strategic initiative and respective actions to demonstrate how Council is progressing in achieving the strategic objectives in the 2021-25 Council Plan.

Performance has been measured as follows:

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

### Strategic Pillars

The Community Vision is supported by four themed pillars—liveability, prosperity, harmony and leadership.



**Liveability**

**We will be a healthy, connected and growing community supported by a range of infrastructure and services.**



**Prosperity**

**We will continue to build and strengthen a prosperous local economy, through sustainable growth and education. We will focus on creating jobs and wealth through adding value to existing strengths in all areas of our economy.**



**Harmony**

**We will be a welcoming community for all, recognised for our maturity and respect for each other.**



**Leadership**

**We will ensure accountable leadership, advocacy and transparent decision making.**

## Strategic Pillar 1: Liveability

## Our Performance

### Council Plan Initiatives

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

✓ Completed/ongoing    >> In progress    - Carried over 2024/25

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Attractive urban areas and regional townships	Complete stage 1 of Vibrant Villages project	✓
	Continue to implement relevant actions of the Swan Hill Riverfront Masterplan	>>
	Complete and implement the Robinvale Riverfront Masterplan	>>
	Develop Nyah Riverfront Masterplan	>>
	Develop Boundary Bend Riverfront Masterplan	-
	Develop a Small Town Strategy	>>
Ensure adequate provision of a variety of safe and secure housing	Develop and build houses on Council owned property	>>
	Continue to implement the Robinvale Housing Strategy	>>
	Continue development of Tower Hill stages	>>
	Assist South West Development Precinct developers	>>
Excellent transport links to allow ease of movement	Advocate for the completion of the Murray Basin Rail Project	>>
	Advocate for the continual improvement of the Murray Valley Highway and upgrade of the Robinvale-Sea Lake Road	>>
	Actively participate in the Central Murray Regional Transport (CMRT) Forum	✓
	Implement relevant actions from the CMRT strategy	✓
Accessible open spaces and healthy rivers and lakes	Implement effective diversion and reuse of waste resources	>>
Encourage active and healthy lifestyles for people of all ages, abilities and interests	Develop detailed plans for the Lake Boga-Swan Hill trail	>>
	Support initiatives leading to better outcomes for children and families	>>
	Partner with agencies to address preventable illnesses and active lifestyles	>>
Spaces where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can flourish	Reinvigorate performance spaces across the area, including Robinvale Community Art Centre	✓

## Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2023/24 Budget.

Major Initiative	Progress
Tower Hill residential estate development (Budget \$1,800,000 Actual \$0)	Incomplete
Robinvale Leisure Centre Splash Park (Budget \$500,000 Actual \$480,127)	Complete
Robinvale Centenary Park Nature Play Precinct (Budget \$1,389,005 Actual \$74,280)	In progress
Re-seal sealed roads (Budget \$1,405,800 Actual \$1,338,292)	Complete
Re-sheet unsealed gravel roads (Budget \$744,700 Actual \$748,366)	Complete
Complete road works funded by the Federal Roads to Recovery Program (Budget \$1,434,160 Actual \$2,636,944)	Complete
Ronald Street subdivision – increase housing supply (Budget \$1,443,000 Actual \$370,492)	In progress
Deliver the roadside weeds and pest management program (Budget \$75,000 Actual \$0)	Incomplete
Compost facility establishment (Budget \$1,556,625 Actual \$433,134)	In progress



## Our Performance

### Services funded in 2023/24 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2023/24 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of Service Area	Budget <u>Actual</u> Variance
		\$000
Building and planning statutory services	Provide statutory planning services including processing all planning applications, providing advice and making decisions about development proposals that require a planning permit. Represent Council at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal where necessary. Monitor Council's Planning Scheme and prepare major policy documents shaping the future of the municipality. Provide statutory building services to the community, including emergency management responsibilities, fire safety inspections, swimming pool barrier audits and complaints, and illegal building works investigations.	715 <u>584</u> (131)
Public health and regulatory services	Co-ordinate food safety, immunisations and management of public health concerns to ensure an acceptable state of wellbeing is maintained within the community. This service also provides staff for school crossings throughout the municipality, animal management services, parking control and enforcement and provides education, regulation and enforcement of the general Local Law and relevant state legislation.	802 <u>905</u> 103
Leisure centres	A wide range of programs and services giving the community a chance to participate in cultural, health, education, and leisure activities that contribute to the community's general wellbeing.	1,819 <u>2,212</u> 393
Amenity and safety	Provide the community with well-maintained public areas with a focus on community access and safety. Maintain urban streets and public areas, including footpaths, in a clean and litter-free state and provide access to public conveniences and lighting of public areas. Provide and maintain efficient and effective open and underground drainage systems.	3,540 <u>3,352</u> (188)
Community buildings	Maintain and renew community buildings and facilities, including community centres, public halls and pre-schools.	986 <u>538</u> (448)

Service Area	Description of Service Area	Budget
		<u>Actual</u>
		Variance
		\$000
Recreation	Maintain Council's parks, reserves, playgrounds and streetscapes in a functional and visually pleasing landscape.	3,783 <u>2,590</u> (1,193)
Swimming pools	Provide quality, accessible aquatic facilities that support a high quality of life for residents and visitors.	466 <u>397</u> (69)
Traffic and transportation services	Manage Council's roads and associated infrastructure assets. Ongoing maintenance and renewal work to municipal infrastructure assets including sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths and aerodromes.	6,509 <u>8,021</u> 1,512
Environmental management	Advocate for, and assist to deliver environmental projects as part of Council's aim to become more sustainable in both built and natural environments. This service also provides emergency management planning and support ensuring the municipality is prepared in the event of an emergency.	212 <u>(229)</u> (441)
Waste management	Provide waste collection services, including kerbside collection of garbage, hard waste and green waste from households and some commercial properties. This service area aims to operate at a surplus in order to make provision for future waste management service and compliance costs, including the construction of new cells and compliance with environmental protection guidelines.	2,163 <u>355</u> (1,808)
Residential development	Facilitating the efficient development of Council owned land and the maximisation of economic returns to rate payers from its realisation.	(74) <u>1,081</u> 1,155
Cultural services	Performing arts, art gallery and library services. A customer-focused service that caters for the cultural, educational and recreational needs of residents, while offering a place for the community to meet, relax and enjoy the facilities and services. Includes the operation and maintenance of the Swan Hill Town Hall and Performing Arts Centre.	2,296 <u>2,634</u> 338

## Our Performance

### Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures. Comments are provided if the result differs significantly from previous years, or requires further clarification.

\*Please note expected ranges are set by the State Government

Result 2024 column colour	Reason
	Within expected range
	Outside of expected range

Service/Indicator/ Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024*	Comments
<b>Aquatic Facilities</b> <b>Service standard</b> <i>Health inspections of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]	0.4	1.0	0.6	1.0	Favourable result - Increase inspections due to the ability to access pools during their opening hours and Environmental Health Officers taking on additional hours to undertake inspections.
<b>Utilisation</b> <i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	3.43	5.58	6.17	8.67	Favourable result -The increase in patronage corresponds with upgrades to both the Swan Hill Aquatic and Recreation Centre and Robinvale Aquatic and Recreation Centre.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of aquatic facilities</i> [Direct cost of aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to the aquatic facilities]	\$18.56	\$14.91	\$12.39	\$8.69	Favourable result - Increased patronage has had a positive impact on the cost of service provision.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024	Material Variation
<b>Animal Management</b>					No material variation.
<b>Timeliness</b>					
<i>Time taken to action animal requests</i> [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]	1.07	1.20	1.31	1.29	
<b>Service standard</b>					
<i>Animals reclaimed</i> [Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100	28.03%	26.90%	29.56%	22.77%	Less favourable - Animals reclaimed from the pound remains low due to cost of living crisis (registration, microchipping, de-sexing, and vaccinations).
<b>Service standard</b>					
<i>Animals rehomed</i> [Number of animals rehomed/ Number of animals collected] x100	67.42%	69.31%	60.95%	86.94%	Favourable result - The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact the number of animals uncollected by their registered owners, or abandoned or surrendered by their owners. However, it is a positive outcome that a significant percentage of these animals are being adopted by new owners.
<b>Service cost</b>					
<i>Cost of animal management service per population</i> [Direct cost of the animal management service / Population]	\$10.30	\$18.38	\$14.02	\$23.83	Less favourable: Replacement cost of staff on longer term paid leave. Cost is within expected range for this service. Note: 2022/23 result adjusted.
<b>Health and safety</b>					
<i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions/ Total number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	100%	NA	NA	NA	No animal management prosecutions in 2023/24.

## Our Performance

Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024	Material Variation
<b>Food safety</b> <b>Timeliness</b> <i>The time taken to action food complaints</i> [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]	1.90	2.56	3.17	2.22	Favourable result - A full complement of Environmental Health Officer positions enabled Council to action food complaints in a timelier manner.
<b>Service standard</b> <i>Food safety assessments</i> [Number of registered class 1 and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment / Number of registered class 1 and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment ] x 100	28.07%	79.63%	84.76%	83.87%	No material variation.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of food safety service</i> [Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises]	\$510.35	\$513.99	\$690.59	\$572.54	Neutral result: error in 2022/23 reporting adversely impacted 2022/23 and 2023/24 results. Actual result for 2023/24 shows a minimal 3.31% variance.
<b>Health and safety</b> <i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i> [Number of critical and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical major non-compliance notifications about food premises]	66.67%	40.00%	100%	100%	No material variation.
<b>Health and safety</b> <i>Food safety Samples</i> [Number of food safety samples/Number of food safety samples required] x100	NA	NA	NA	1.21	New measure in 2023/24. Favourable result: Council was responsive to a complaint, and took sufficient food safety samples to provide required assurance.



Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024	Comments
<b>Roads</b> <b>Satisfaction of use</b> <i>Sealed local road requests</i> [Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x 100	6.76	5.96	14.64	10.55	Favourable result - Requests for sealed local roads have reduced from previous years as flood repair has been completed throughout the network.
<b>Condition</b> <i>Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards</i> [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local road] x100	99.28%	99.37%	99.27%	98.95%	
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of sealed local road reconstruction</i> [Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]	\$33.26	\$59.36	\$30.97	\$76.08	Less favourable - The 2023/24 Road Reconstruction program compromised of two Access Roads. Due to higher density and heavier traffic, the pavement design was for 300mm (as opposed to 100mm depth as used for last years program) and more raw materials have been required. The cost of the raw materials has increased significantly during 2023/24.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of sealed local road resealing</i> [Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]	\$5.58	\$4.80	\$6.79	\$6.18	Favourable result - Council's reseal program has focused on a blend of rural and urban roads which has seen a 9% saving in Sq. metre rate, comparative to last years reporting.
<b>Satisfaction</b> <i>Satisfaction with sealed local roads</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	52	51	44	35	Less favourable result - Council continues to face challenges due to a severe shortage of skilled labour and design engineers within the road construction industry. This forces Council to outsource capability, which in the short term may affect community satisfaction results.

## Our Performance

Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024	Comments
<b>Waste Management</b> <b>Service standard</b> <i>Kerbside collection bins missed</i> [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x 10,000	5.78	3.99	5.19	2.29	Favourable result - There has been a significant reduction in reported missed bins for the 2023 -2024 reporting period. This has been mostly due to Councils kerbside collection contractor having had a more stable workforce during that period.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of kerbside garbage collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]	\$86.91	\$93.39	\$106.77	\$109.58	
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service</i> [Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]	\$78.51	\$80.40	\$88.77	\$86.49	
<b>Waste diversion</b> <i>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i> [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x 100	29.51%	30.92%	29.28%	28.38%	

## Strategic Pillar 2: Prosperity

### Council Plan Initiatives

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

✓ Completed/ongoing      >> In progress      - Carried over 2024/25

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Support our key industries	Establish the Terms of Reference and develop an Annual Plan with the Agribusiness Advisory Committee	>>
	Consider the establishment of an Industry Support Committee (Manufacturing and other)	>>
	Establish a Livestock Exchange Stakeholder Committee to improve stakeholder engagement and to better meet the needs of livestock exchange users	✓
Encourage the growth and development of our economy	Continue to support existing businesses to grow through the implementation of the Better Approvals process	✓
	Actively pursue the establishment of a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA)	>>
Assets for our current and future needs	Deliver and review Council's capital works program and Major Projects Plan each year	✓
	Review current assets and identify future needs - create a program to bridge the gap and identify funding requirements	>>
	Continue to plan and seek funding to implement the development of community infrastructure	>>

Our Performance

Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2023/2024 Budget.

Major Initiative	Progress
Pedestrian and Cycling Strategy (Budget \$80,000 Actual \$0)	Incomplete
Livestock Exchange cattle scanner, security cameras and new sheep yards draft (Budget \$183,000 Actual \$21,100)	In progress
Art Gallery redevelopment (Budget \$6,648,455 Actual \$301,503)	In progress
Cultural and Tourism Hub development (Budget \$5,000,000 Actual \$183,634)	In progress



## Services funded in 2023/24 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2023/24 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of Service Area	Budget <u>Actual</u> Variance
		\$000
Economic development	Assist the organisation with economic development to facilitate an environment that is conducive to a sustainable and growing local business sector, and provide opportunities for local residents to improve their skill levels and access employment.	12,850 <u>(2,486)</u> (15,336)
Livestock exchange	Provide a livestock selling facility and associated services to primary producers, purchasers and stock agents.	74 <u>304</u> 230
Pioneer Settlement	Care for and conserve the Pioneer Settlement and its collection. Market and promote the Settlement as a tourist destination, provide quality visitor programs and promote the sale of merchandise as an additional source of income.	753 <u>992</u> 239
Caravan parks	Provide and maintain caravan park facilities to a standard that promotes local tourism and supports a high quality of life.	(105) <u>(106)</u> (1)





## Our Performance

### Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures. Comments are provided if the result differs significantly from previous years, or requires further clarification.

\*Please refer to color-coded guide on page 57 for explanation.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024*	Comments
<b>Statutory Planning</b> <b>Timeliness</b> <i>Time taken to decide planning applications</i> [The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]	41	79	96	51	Favourable result - Council has engaged planning consultants to assist with the assessment of planning permit applications and this has improved the statutory timeframes for the assessment of the applications. Council is also in the process of recruiting permanent staff which will assist in maintaining the performance efficiency.
<b>Service standard</b> <i>Planning applications decided within required timeframes</i> [Number of planning application decisions made within 60 days for regular permits and 10 days for VicSmart permits / Number of planning application decisions made] x 100	96.39%	71.28%	59.85%	75.73%	Favourable result - Council has engaged planning consultants to assist with the assessment of planning permit applications and this has improved the statutory timeframes for the assessment of the applications.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of statutory planning service</i> [Direct cost of statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]	\$2,675.24	\$3,217.67	\$3,967.19	\$5,483.89	Less favourable: Council has engaged consultants over the past 18 months to assess planning permit applications as it has been difficult to recruit planners to permanent positions. This directly leads to cost escalation but allowed Council to maintain a timely service to the community.
<b>Decision making</b> <i>Council's planning decisions upheld at VCAT</i> [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside Council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100	0%	0%	75%	100%	Favourable result - For the small number of cases where Council's statutory planning decision making was reviewed by VCAT, the Authority found that Council's decision making was consistent with the local planning scheme.

## Community funding

Swan Hill Rural City Council recognises, respects and values the contribution that community, sporting and not-for-profit organisations make within our community. One of the ways Council does this is through the annual Community Grants program. Recipients of the 2023/24 Community Grants are detailed in the tables that follow.

### Community Development Fund

The Community Development Fund provides grants of up to \$5,000 to eligible community groups and organisations. Funding may be given for projects including minor repairs or upgrades to community facilities; purchase of new or upgraded equipment; new programs or activities; local sustainability initiatives or environmental innovations; increasing club capacity; OHS or risk management issues and more.

Organisation	Approved amount \$	Project description
Swan Hill Child Care Cooperative	5,000	Resource & Equipment Upgrade – purchase of children’s furniture
1 <sup>st</sup> Lake Boga Sea Scouts	3,500	Camp Readiness Upgrade – purchase of camping equipment (tents, camp stove, etc)
Nyah & District Community Pool Committee	5,000	Maintenance Shed – replacement of old shed with new Colorbond shed / concrete floor
Manangatang & District Bowling Club	5,000	Kitchen Makeover – installation of new kitchen cupboards
Lake Boga Bowling Club Inc.	4,500	Purchase of New Bowling Greens Roller – purchase bowling greens roller
Swan Hill Toy Library	1,985	Growing Our Toy Library by creating an Online Presence – website creation with online toy catalogue
Chinkapook Reserves Committee of Management Inc.	2,000	Kitchen Appliances – purchase of urn, pie warmer and fridge
Robinvale Lawn Tennis Club	4,000	New Lawn Mower – purchase of new lawn mower
Lakeside Golf Club, Lake Boga Inc.	3,100	Irrigation Pump Upgrade – purchase & installation of new irrigation pump
Swan Hill Soccer League Inc.	5,000	New Portable Goals – purchase a set of portable goal posts
Swan Hill Neighbourhood House Inc.	3,500	Kitchen Upgrade – installation of new stove/ cooktop and overhead cupboards in communal kitchen
Lake Boga Sports Club	3,000	Lake Boga Netball Court Upgrade – repairs to netball court surface
Woorinen Cricket Club Inc.	2,500	WCC Cricket Nets Redevelopment – replacement of old cricket nets

## Our Performance

Organisation	Approved amount \$	Project description
Swan Hill Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club Inc.	3,500	Kitchen Project – replace old stove with new unit
Lake Boga Equestrian Centre (Swan Hill Pony Club & Lake Boga Riding Club)	3,500	Canteen Windows – replacement of roller doors with servery windows on canteen section of building
Nyah District Cricket Club	2,500	New Training Net Matting – replace existing training net matting
Swan Hill Motor Racing Club	3,400	Broadcasting Upgrade – install new PA system in the SH Motor Racing Club area of the Motorplex
Swan Hill RSL Cricket Club	3,000	New Pitch Roller – purchase of new ride-on pitch roller
Speewa Heritage Collectors Club Inc.	2,000	New Fridge – purchase of new refrigerator for kitchen
Tyntynder Football Netball Club	2,000	Social Rooms Kitchen Upgrade - purchase/ installation of new electric fryers in kitchen
Swan Hill Cricket Club	1,015	Junior & Senior Equipment – purchase of match & training balls
Swan Hill Football Netball Club	2,000	Dishwasher Upgrade – purchase of new glass dishwasher
Robinvale Pistol Club	2,000	Re-Clad Shooting Range—replace old timber structure with steel posts and colourbond cladding. Variation approved—electrical works.
Lions Club of Lake Boga T/A Flying Boat Museum	2,500	WAAF Display—purchase of a mannequin and glass display cabinets for WAAF Exhibit. Variation approved—shelving display units.
Ultima Progress Association Inc.	1,000	Log Hut Renovation – removal of walls from old hut adjoining Cenotaph

## Event Support Fund

The Event Support Fund provides grants and logistical support to community groups and event organisers to develop new events, or existing events that provide significant economic and/or social benefit to the region.

For the 23/24 financial year, Council allocated \$76,165.00 worth of funding (cash and/or logistical support). This allowed Council to support 33 events, listed below.

Event Name	Sponsorship awarded (\$)	Logistical support awarded (\$)	Value Funded (\$)
2024 Robinvale Euston 80 Ski Race		4,500	4,500
Bigger Better Beverfod Community Colour Run	1,000		1,000
Beats at The Bend	3,000		3,000
Catalina Classic Two Triples	500		500
Celebrating Women With Wings	1,000		1,000
Fiji Day Celebration	1,000		1,000
Holiday Hoops Basketball Tournament	800		800
Lake Boga Bank 2 Bank	3,000		3,000
Lake Boga Fireworks	2,500	1,000	3,500
Lake Boga Yacht Club Easter Regatta 2024	1,000		1,000
Mallee Almond Blossom Festival		3,000	3,000
Nyah District Christmas Carnival	1,000	1,000	2,000
River Peoples Forum - Respect for Rivers, Integrity in Water Management		865	865
Swan Hill Bowls Club Inc. 58th Autumn/May Carnival	2,000		2,000

## Our Performance

Event Name	Sponsorship awarded (\$)	Logistical support awarded (\$)	Value Funded (\$)
Swan Hill Colour Run	500	500	1,000
Swan Hill District Cattle Show	2,000	500	2,500
Swan Hill District Show	2,500	1,000	3,500
Swan Hill Easter Market Day		1,500	1,500
Swan Hill Film Festival	1,000		1,000
Swan Hill Market Day		1,500	1,500
Swan Hill Region Food and Wine Festival	4,000	6,000	10,000
What's in my backyard?	1,000		1,000
Woorinen WinterFest	2,500		2,500
Brew and Chew Festival	7,000	3,000	10,000
Robinvale Early Years Family Expo	1,000		1,000
Robinvale Euston Christmas Carnival	1,000	2,000	3,000
Robinvale Euston Lantern Festival	2,000	2,000	4,000
Robinvale Lawn Tennis Club 2024 Easter Tournament	1,000		1,000
Spark		500	500
Speewa Collectors Club Rally	5,000		5,000
Speewa Swap Meet	500		500
Splash Down & Rev Up	2,500	500	3,000
Swan Hill Badminton Veterans Tournament	1,000		1,000



## Strategic Pillar 3: Harmony

### Council Plan Initiatives

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

✓ Completed/ongoing      >> In progress      - Carried over 2024/25

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Our elderly and vulnerable are cared for	Review Community Access and Inclusion Strategy (CAIS)	>>
All members of our Communities are supported	Work in partnership with local agencies to prevent all forms of Family Violence	>>
	Develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)	✓
	Ensure that we consider people of all abilities in the development of infrastructure and events	>>
Encourage and support community leadership	Continue to offer Aboriginal scholarships and leadership opportunities	✓
	Continue to assist to develop Our Place identifying an Aboriginal language name and business model	>>
Celebration and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait history and culture	Formal inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander input in Art Gallery programming and cultural activities	✓
	Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days of significance	✓

### Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2023/24 Budget.

Major Initiative	Progress
Deliver the Empower Youth Initiative (Budget \$210,195 Actual \$221,910)	Complete

## Our Performance

### Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2023/24 Budget.

Major Initiative	Progress
Coordinate the L2P Driver program in Swan Hill and Robinvale (Budget \$39,675 Actual \$2,936). Council has completed obligations for the program, further funding was not acquired.	Complete
Youth Support – Engage program (Budget \$96,705 Actual \$22,637)	In progress
Kindergarten Infrastructure Service Plan (KISP) (Budget \$75,405 Actual \$16,828)	In progress

### Services funded in 2023/24 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2023/24 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of Service Area	Budget <u>Actual</u> Variance  \$000
Aged and disability services	A range of home and community care services for the aged and people with a disability including home delivered meals, personal care, transport, dementia care, home maintenance, housing support and senior citizen clubs.	15 <u>745</u> 730
Family and children services	Family oriented support services including pre-schools, maternal and child health, youth services, out of school hours, and holiday programs.	1,364 <u>897</u> (467)
Community development	Effective and ongoing liaison with, and support to, community and recreation groups. Support for the development and implementation of Community Plans and liaison with our Indigenous community.	781 <u>838</u> 57

## Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures. Comments are provided if the result differs significantly from previous years, or requires further clarification.

\*Please refer to color-coded guide on page 57 for explanation.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024*	Comments
<b>Resource currency</b> <i>Recently purchased library collection</i> [Number of library collection items purchased in the last five years / Number of library collection items] x 100	43.45%	41.20%	37.07%	46.92%	Favourable result - A comprehensive review of the collections at all the library service's branches was conducted during 2023/24, with a large number of unused and outdated items removed from the collection, therefore decreasing the average age of the items still in the collection.
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of library service</i> [Direct cost of library service / population]	\$44.18	\$50.14	\$51.98	\$66.53	Previous results not comparable.  Neutral Results. Government changes in reporting requirements for this indicator in 2023/24 resulted in an increase in the cost of library services per population.
<b>Utilisation</b> <i>Library loans</i> [The sum of the number of collection item loans / municipal population]	NA	NA	NA	4.48	New measure in 2023/24
<b>Participation</b> <i>Library membership</i> [The number of registered library members / Municipal population] x 100	NA	NA	NA	27.24%	New measure in 2023/24.
<b>Participation</b> <i>Library visits</i> [Number of library visits / municipal population]	NA	NA	NA	2.6	New measure in 2023/24

## Our Performance

Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024	Comments
<b>Maternal Child Health (MCH)</b> <b>Service standard</b> <i>Infant enrolments in the MCH service</i> [Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service / Number of birth notifications received] x 100	102.21%	102.01%	100.69%	100.33%	
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of the MCH service</i> [Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]	\$109.86	\$121.52	\$110.69	\$110.38	
<b>Participation</b> <i>Participation in the MCH service</i> [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	80.05%	82.74%	89.19%	86.79%	
<b>Participation</b> <i>Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children</i> [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100	76.26%	77.50%	83.57%	91.49%	Favourable result - This effort keeps families engaged with the Service and receiving the care and support needed.
<b>Satisfaction</b> <i>Participation in 4-week key age and stage visit</i> [Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received]	94.01%	95.99%	92.44%	94.00%	

## Strategic Pillar 4: Leadership

### Council Plan Initiatives

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

✓ Completed/ongoing    >> In progress    - Carried over 2024/25

Council Plan Initiative	Action	Status
Well managed resources for a sustainable future	Invest in the development of employees to enable a highly skilled and engaged workforce	>>
	Develop and implement a Workforce Development Plan	✓
Provide robust governance and effective leadership	Implement a Project Management Framework and system	✓
	Develop and implement a Strategic Asset Management plan and supporting Asset Management plans	✓
	Provide Councillors with professional development and support to ensure effective governance	✓
	Work with Town Representative groups to better plan and deliver projects	>>
Sound, sustainable: • Financial management • Excellence in service delivery • Strategic planning	Deliver projects on time, on budget and within scope	✓
	Working to budget and ensure future planning to meet financial needs	✓
Effective and authentic engagement with our community	Review our use of social media platforms across Council with a view of increasing Council's exposure and ensuring consistent moderation	>>
Visible presence in our community	Continue quarterly Coffee with a Councillor around the municipality	>>
	Create a culture where staff are ambassadors for the Council	>>
Create meaningful partnerships across our communities	Continue involvement in community groups	>>
	Continue to support and work with Swan Hill Incorporated	>>
Strong relationship with State and Federal governments to influence advocacy and funding opportunities	Continue to advocate on the following issues: • Improved Healthcare for our people, including a new hospital for Swan Hill • A new Murray River Bridge at Swan Hill • Complete the Murray Basin Rail Project • Housing and enabling infrastructure Better use of environmental water and the development of a plan specific to the Murray River between Swan Hill and Robinvale	>>
	Review Council's advocacy strategy on an annual basis	✓
Working together in promotion of the municipality	Positively promote our region as a great place	>>
	Continue to work with Murray River Tourism and Swan Hill Incorporated to promote the municipality	>>



## Our Performance

### Major Initiatives

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2023/24 Budget.

Major Initiative	Progress
Further develop Council IT processes as identified in the Data and Technology Strategy (Budget \$1,051,000 Actual \$579,691)	In progress
Municipal office alterations (Budget \$450,000 Actual \$29,251)	In progress

### Services funded in 2023/24 Budget

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2023/24 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service Area	Description of Service Area	Budget Actual Variance \$000
Councillors and corporate management	Governance includes the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Leadership Team and associated support, which cannot easily be attributed to the direct service provision areas.	2,165 <u>2,293</u> 128
Community relationships	Proactively communicate Council decisions, programs and events to the community using a range of methods, and assist the organisation to respond to community issues as they arise.	265 <u>276</u> 11
Management of resources	Manage Council's offices along with human and financial resources to effectively and efficiently fulfil Council objectives. This includes rate raising and collection, customer service, human resource management, depot and office site management, Council finances, information technology and records management.	(27,962) <u>(25,855)</u> 2,107
Infrastructure planning and management	Provide for the planning, design and project management of Council's capital works program, and manage Council's plant and fleet assets and depot operations.	1,927 <u>2,625</u> 698

## Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures. Comments are provided if the result differs significantly from previous years, or requires further clarification.

\*Please refer to color-coded guide on page 57 for explanation.

Service/Indicator/Measure	Result 2021	Result 2022	Result 2023	Result 2024*	Comments
<b>Governance</b> <b>Transparency</b> <i>Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public</i> [Number of Council meetings closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council x 100]	4.04%	4.93%	5.56%	11.40%	Less favourable - Increased number of capital projects necessitated increased level of sensitive decision making.
<b>Consultation and engagement</b> <i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]	51	48	50	48	
<b>Attendance</b> <i>Councillor attendance at Council Meetings</i> [The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each Council Meeting / (Number of council meetings) x (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x 100	94.44%	90.00%	89.52%	84.82%	
<b>Service cost</b> <i>Cost of elected representation</i> [Direct cost of the Governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]	\$43,117	\$52,315	\$53,993	\$52,767	
<b>Satisfaction</b> <i>Satisfaction with Council decisions</i> [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the performance of Council in making decisions in the interest of the community]	48	45	45	43	



# Part Six

## *Corporate Governance*



## Council leadership

Swan Hill Rural City Council is constituted under the *Local Government Act 2020* to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community. Council has a number of roles including:

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

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

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

## Corporate Governance

### Meetings of Council

Council conducts open public meetings on the third Tuesday of each month. Members of the community are welcome to attend these meetings and observe from the gallery. Council meetings also provide the opportunity for community members to submit a question of Council, make a submission or speak to an item. For the 2023/24 year, Council held the following meetings:

- 11 Scheduled Council Meetings
- 4 Unscheduled Council Meetings

Below are the dates and locations of the Scheduled Council Meetings held in 2023/24:

Month	Location	Month	Location
18 July 2023	Swan Hill	20 February 2024	Swan Hill
15 August 2023	Swan Hill	19 March 2024	Robinvale
19 September 2023	Swan Hill	9 April 2024	Swan Hill
17 October 2023	Swan Hill	21 May 2024	Swan Hill
21 November 2023	Swan Hill	18 June 2024	Swan Hill
19 December 2023	Swan Hill		

### Councillor attendance at Council meetings

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council Meetings and Unscheduled Council Meetings for the 2023/24 financial year.

Councillor	Scheduled Council Meetings	Scheduled Council Meetings	Unscheduled Council Meetings	Unscheduled Council Meetings
	Eligible to attend	Attended	Eligible to attend	Attended
Cr Les McPhee	11	8	4	3
Cr Ann Young	11	10	4	2
Cr Bill Moar	11	11	4	2
Cr Stuart King	11	11	4	4
Cr Chris Jeffery	11	9	4	3
Cr Nicole McKay	11	9	4	3
Cr Jacquie Kelly	11	9	4	4

### Delegated committee and Community Asset Committees

The *Local Government Act* allows councils to establish one or more delegated and assets committees consisting of:

- Councillors
- Council staff
- Other persons
- Any combination of the above.

Council did not establish any delegated or Community Asset committees during 2023/24.



## Council representation on other committees

The following is the list of the annual appointments of Councillors to internal and external organisations and community groups.

### Cr Stuart King

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Chisholm Reserve Complex Inc
- Rail Freight Alliance
- Robinvale Euston Business Association
- Swan Hill Showgrounds Sport and Recreation Precinct Advisory Committee

### Cr Bill Moar

- Agribusiness Advisory Committee
- Event Support Fund
- Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Customer and Stakeholder
- Pental Island Leaves Management Project Steering Committee
- Swan Hill Regional Livestock Exchange
- Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance—Board and General Committee
- Joint Bridge Committee—Murray River Council and Swan Hill Rural City Council

### Cr Les McPhee

- Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Committee
- Joint Bridge Committee—Murray River Council and Swan Hill Rural City Council
- Lake Boga and District Association Inc
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Piangil Community Group & Memorial Park Committee of Management

### Cr Chris Jeffery

- Community Development Fund
- Woorinen and District Progress Association Inc.

### Cr Nicole McKay

- Boundary Bend Progress Association
- Rural Councils Victoria Inc.
- Nyah District Action Group

### Cr Jacquie Kelly

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Manangatang Improvement Group
- Swan Hill Leisure Centre Committee of Management
- Pental Island Leaves Management Project Steering Committee

### Cr Ann Young

- Central Murray Regional Transport Forum
- Swan Hill Incorporated Board
- Ultima Progress Association
- CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee
- Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery Advisory Committee

### Mayor

- Community Development Fund
- CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee
- Event Support Fund
- Murray River Group of Councils

### Voluntary

- Swan Hill Residents and Rate Payers Association

## Corporate Governance

## Conflict of interest

Councillors and staff are required by legislation to act in the best interests of the community. During the course of dealing with matters that come before Council for decision, individual Councillors and members of staff might find that they or their immediate family, have a financial or some other advantage that could be interpreted as having undue influence on the outcome. A conflict of interest occurs when personal or private interests might compromise the ability to act in the public interest.

To ensure transparency in the decision-making processes of Council, both Councillors and staff are required to declare and document their interest in a matter. Where Councillors have declared an interest, they take no part in the decision-making process.

During 2023/24, 11 conflicts of interest were declared at Council meetings.

A copy of the Department of Planning and Community Development guidance material 'Conflict of Interest: A Guide for Councillors,' October 2012, was provided to Councillors during their Councillor Induction Training.

## Councillor allowances

In accordance with Section 39 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance while performing their duty as a Councillor. The Deputy Mayor and Mayor are also entitled to receive a higher allowance.

The State Government sets the upper and lower limits for all allowances paid to Councillors, Deputy Mayors and Mayors. Councils are divided into three categories based on the income and population of each council. In this instance Swan Hill Rural City Council is recognised as a category two council.

For the period 1 July 2023 to 17 December 2023, the Councillor annual allowance for a category 2 council (as defined by the Act) was up to \$31,980 per annum, Deputy Mayor was up to \$51,325 per annum and Mayor was up to \$102,650 per annum. For the period 18 December 2023 to 30 June 2024, the Councillor annual allowance for a category 2 council increased to \$32,877 per annum, Deputy Mayor \$52,713 and the allowance for the Mayor increased to \$105,424 per annum. The value of the allowance payable to Council members is inclusive of any Superannuation Guarantee Contribution amount, that is payable under Commonwealth law to the Council member.

The following table contains details of allowances paid to Councillors during the year.

Councillor	Allowance
Cr Stuart King (Mayor)	\$84,039.07
Cr Les McPhee	\$50,349.66
Cr Bill Moar	\$32,462.26
Cr Ann Young	\$32,462.26
Cr Chris Jeffery	\$32,462.26
Cr Nicole McKay	\$32,462.26
Cr Jacquie Kelly	\$32,462.26

## 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 his or her duties as a Councillor.

Council is also required to adopt and maintain a policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors.

The policy provides guidance for the payment of reimbursements of expenses and the provision of resources, facilities and other support to the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to discharge their duties.

The details of the expenses, including reimbursement of expenses for each Councillor and member of a Council Committee, paid by Council for the 2023/24 year are set out in the following table:

Councillor	Travel & Accommodation	Car Mileage	Catering & meals	Information & Communication	Conference & Training	Total \$
Cr Stuart King (Mayor)	\$2,545.08	\$3,397.53	\$119.09	\$792.00	\$1,591.00	\$8,444.70
Cr Les McPhee	\$607.71	\$993.53	-	\$876.00	-	\$2,477.24
Cr Bill Moar	-	-	-	\$876.00	-	\$876.00
Cr Ann Young	-	-	-	\$639.82	\$327.27	\$967.09
Cr Chris Jeffery	-	-	\$17.10	\$876.00	-	\$893.10
Cr Nicole McKay	\$263.04	\$504.05	-	\$792	-	\$1,559.09
Cr Jacquie Kelly	\$1,250.60	\$201.45	\$170.39	\$582.00	\$1,182.13	\$3,386.57

Note: No expenses were paid by Council, including reimbursements, to members of Council Committees during the 2023/24 year.

## Code of Conduct

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils to review and adopt the Councillor Code of Conduct within 4 months after each general election. Swan Hill Rural City Council's Councillor Code of Conduct was reviewed and adopted on 23 February 2021.

After the review on 23 February 2021, Councillors signed the Code of Conduct declarations.

A copy of the code is available at [www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/policies](http://www.swanhill.vic.gov.au/about/overview/policies)

## Corporate Governance

## Risk Management

Council's Risk Management Committee consists of members from all levels of the organisations. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis to review operational and strategic risks and provide information to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Council's Risk Management Policy and Framework provides an integrated and consistent approach to risk management to ensure that risks are identified and addressed during planning, decision-making and everyday operations. Each department has a risk profile with strategies to minimise and manage identified risks.

This year Council has continued to implement our Risk Management Framework, processes and systems which has further strengthened our ability to respond to changes in existing risks as well as respond to new risks that have been introduced through the increasing complex external environment, with particular focus on the areas outlined below:

- **Cybersecurity** - Council continued to invest in our cyber security risk management program to ensure we are prepared to respond to the increasing sophistication and frequency of external cyberattacks
- **Integrity, ethics and culture** - Council continues to make improvements to Council's fraud and corruption control framework
- **Insurance** - Council continues to monitor its increasing insurance renewals which is a result of the industry being impacted by events both national and international.



## Audit and Risk committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is an independent Advisory Committee to Council and is formed under Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The primary objective of the Audit and Risk Committee is to assist Council in the effective conduct of its responsibilities for:

- Enhancing the credibility and objectivity of internal and external financial reporting
- Effective management of financial processes, to ensure integrity and transparency
- Effective management of risks and the protection of Council assets
- Compliance with laws and regulations as well as use of best practice guidelines
- The effectiveness of the internal audit function
- The provision of an effective means of communication between the external auditor, internal auditor, management and the Council
- Facilitating the organisation's ethical development
- Maintaining a reliable system of internal controls

## Audit and Risk Committee Members

The Audit and Risk Committee consists of five members, three of whom are independent experts in a range of areas including financial management, business, and project management.

The members of the committee during the 2023/24 financial year were:

**Rosanne Kava (chairperson)** – appointed for three years, first term expires 30 September 2025.

**Greg Kuchel** – appointed for three years, first term expires 18 November 2024.

**Bradley Hutchinson** – appointed for three years, first term expires 6 April 2025.

**Cr Bill Moar** – appointed for one year at the Council Meeting in December 2022, term expired 31 December 2023.

**Cr Stuart King** – appointed for a second term at Council meeting in December 2023, term expires 26 October 2024.

**Cr Jacquie Kelly** – appointed for one year at Council meeting in December 2023, term expires 26 October 2024.

The following table contains details of attendance at Audit and Risk Committee meetings during 2023/24:

Member	Eligible to attend	Attended
Rosanne Kava, Independent member and Chairperson	4	4
Greg Kuchel, Independent member	4	4
Bradley Hutchinson, Independent member	4	4
Bill Moar, Councillor	2	1
Stuart King, Councillor	4	2
Jacquie Kelly, Councillor	2	2



## Corporate Governance

### Internal Audit

Council's internal audit function is externally resourced to provide independent and objective assurance that appropriate processes and controls are in place across Council.

A three-year risk-based Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) is revised annually to ensure the audit resources remain focused on the nominated areas.

The review process considers Council's risk framework, the Council Plan, the impact of any change on our operations, systems or the business environment, prior audit coverage and outcomes, and relies heavily on management directional input. The SIAP is revised and approved by the Audit Committee annually.

The Internal Auditor attends Audit Committee meetings to report on the status of the SIAP and to present findings of completed reviews.

The responsible Director and Manager for each area reviewed is required to attend the Audit Committee meeting to respond to questions in relation to the review. All audit issues identified are risk rated.

Recommendations are assigned to responsible managers and tracked through the Audit Committee agenda until all recommendations have been completed.

Quality assurance is measured through completion of the review recommendations and completion of the nominated annual SIAP reviews.

The SIAP for 2023/24 was completed with the following reviews conducted:

- Accounts payable
- Budget Monitoring and Management Controls
- Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing
- Depot Operations

In order to attain a wider review of internal audit coverage, a mix of 'detailed' and 'insight' reviews are identified.

'Detailed' reviews typically include walk throughs, identification of key controls and sample testing of key controls to form a conclusion, resulting in a detailed report.

'Insight' reviews are high level discussions with those officers responsible for managing the area of focus, resulting in a brief report of observations and insights.

### External Audit

Council is externally audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO). For the 2023/24 financial year, the audit of Council's Financial Reports and Performance Statement was conducted on behalf of VAGO by Crowe Australasia (Albury).

The external auditors attend Audit and Risk Committee meetings to present the annual audit strategy and independent audit reports.

The external audit management letters and responses are also provided and discussed with the Audit and Risk Committee.

## Management

Council has implemented a number of statutory and better practice items to strengthen its management framework.

Having strong governance and management frameworks leads 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 in this section. The following items have been highlighted as important components of the management framework.



## Corporate Governance

## Governance and Management Checklist

The following are the results in the prescribed form of Council's assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist.

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
<b>1. Community Engagement Policy</b> <i>Policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest.</i>	Date of operation of current policy: 23 February 2021.
<b>2. Community Engagement Guidelines</b> <i>Guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community.</i>	Date of operation of current guidelines: 15 March 2022.
<b>3. Financial Plan</b> <i>Plan under section 91 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 10 financial years.</i>	Date of adoption of current Financial Plan: 20 July 2021.
<b>4. Asset Plan</b> <i>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.</i>	Council is currently developing a long-term ten year plan. Council currently has a medium-term plan.
<b>5. Revenue and Rating Plan</b> <i>Plan under section 93 of the Act setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges.</i>	Date of adoption of revenue and Rating Plan: 15 June 2021
<b>6. Annual Budget</b> <i>Plan under section 94 of the Act setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken over the next 12 months and the funding and other resources required.</i>	Date of adoption of the Annual Budget: 18 June 2024.
<b>7. Risk Policy</b> <i>Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations.</i>	Date of operation of the current policy: 20 June 2023.
<b>8. Fraud Policy</b> <i>Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud.</i>	Date of commencement of current policy: 16 March 2021.

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
<b>9. Municipal Emergency Management Planning</b> <i>Councils participation in meetings of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC).</i>	Dates of the MEMPC meetings attended by Council in 2023/24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17 August 2023</li> <li>26 October 2023</li> <li>7 March 2024</li> <li>16 May 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>10. Procurement Policy</b> <i>Policy under section 108 the Act outlining the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to the purchase of goods and services by the Council.</i>	Date of adoption: 21 December 2021.
<b>11. Business Continuity Plan</b> <i>Plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster.</i>	Date of operation of the current plan: 17 May 2023.
<b>12. Disaster Recovery Plan</b> <i>Plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster.</i>	Date of operation of current plan: 22 March 2021.
<b>13. Complaint Policy</b> <i>Policy under section 107 of the Act outlining Council's commitment and approach to managing complaints.</i>	Date of commencement of current policy: 5 January 2022.
<b>14. Workforce Plan</b> <i>Plan outlining Council's commitment and approach to planning the current and future workforce requirements of the organisation.</i>	Date of commencement of current plan: 24 December 2021.
<b>15. Payment of rates and charges hardship policy</b> <i>Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to assisting ratepayers experiencing financial hardship or difficulty paying rates.</i>	Date of operation of current policy: 26 April 2023. Hardship provisions included in multiple documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenue and Rating Plan 2021</li> <li>Debt Collection Policy 2024</li> <li>Financial Hardship Policy 2023.</li> </ul>
<b>16. Risk Management Framework</b> <i>Framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations.</i>	Date of operation of current framework: 18 January 2021.

## Corporate Governance

Governance and Management Items	Assessment
<b>17. Audit and Risk Committee</b> <i>Advisory committee of Council under section 53 and section 54 of the Act, whose role is to monitor the compliance of council policies and procedures, monitor Councils financial reporting, monitor and provide advice on risk management, and provide oversight on internal and external audit functions.</i>	<p>Audit and Risk Committee established under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>: 26 July 2023.</p> <p>Current Audit &amp; Risk Committee Charter reviewed 2024.</p> <p>Meeting minutes presented to Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 July 2023</li> <li>• 7 Sept 2023</li> <li>• 20 Feb 2024</li> <li>• 6 June 2024 .</li> </ul>
<b>18. Internal Audit</b> <i>Independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls.</i>	<p>Date of engagement of current provider: August 2023.</p>
<b>19. Performance Reporting Framework</b> <i>A set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act.</i>	<p>Date of operation of current framework: 20 June 2022.</p>
<b>20. Council Plan Reporting</b> <i>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 reporting year.</i>	<p>Council Plan Progress Reports are provided on a quarterly basis, The last report presented to Council during the 2023/24 financial year, was on 21 May 2024, for the quarter to 31 March 2024.</p>
<b>21. Quarterly budget reports</b> <i>Quarterly reports presented to Council under section 97 of the Act 2020, comparing actual and budgeted results and an explanation of any material variations.</i>	<p>Dates reports presented to Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 2023 – 19/09/2023</li> <li>• September 2023 – 21/11/2023</li> <li>• December 2023 – 20/02/2024</li> <li>• March 2023 – 21/05/2024.</li> </ul>
<b>22. Risk Reports</b> <i>Six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies.</i>	<p>Reports are presented quarterly to the Audit &amp; Risk Committee.</p> <p>Last two meeting dates were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 April 2024</li> <li>• 6 June 2024.</li> </ul>



Governance and Management Items	Assessment
<b>23. Performance Reports</b> <i>Six-monthly reports of indicators measuring the results against financial and non-financial performance, including performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act 2020.</i>	<p>Annual Reporting under <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>: 17/10/2023.</p> <p>Multiple performance reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>s 98 Annual Report</li> <li>s 106 Service Performance Indicators</li> </ul> <p>Quarterly Reporting under <i>Local Government Act 2020</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S 97 Financial Indicators</li> </ul> <p>Annual Reporting under Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020:</p> <p>Reporting on Council Plan Progress is done quarterly.</p>
<b>24. Annual Report</b> <i>Annual report under sections 98, 99 and 100 of the Act 2020 the community containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements.</i>	<p>Annual Report 2022/23 presented to Council: 17 October 2023.</p>
<b>25. Councillor Code of Conduct</b> <i>Code under section 139 of the Act setting out the standards of conduct to be followed by Councillors and other matters</i>	<p>Reviewed and adopted in accordance with section 139 of the Act. Reviewed: 23 February 2021.</p>
<b>26. Delegations</b> <i>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.</i>	<p>Delegations reviewed: 9 April 2024.</p>
<b>27. Meeting procedures</b> <i>Governance Rules under section 60 of the Act governing the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees.</i>	<p>Governance Rules adopted in accordance with section 60 of the Act: 18 August 2020. Reviewed: 21 April 2023.</p>

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Scott Barber**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Cr Stuart King**  
**Mayor**

**Dated:**

**Dated:**

## Statutory information

### Freedom of Information Act 1982

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* provides the opportunity for public access to Council documents.

The Act establishes a legally enforceable right for the community to request information, in document form, held by Council.

The Act has four principles:

1. the public has a right of access to documents subject to certain exceptions or exemptions.
2. Local Governments are required to publish information on the documents they hold.
3. individuals may request that inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date or misleading information about themselves be amended.
4. individuals may appeal against a decision not to give access to the document (s) or not to amend personal information.

Written requests must be made to Councils Freedom of Information Officer, be accompanied by an application fee, and specify the documents required, or provide sufficient detail to enable documents to be located.

In December 2019, the Victorian Information Commissioner issued Professional Standards relating to the conduct of an agency in performing its functions under the Act, and the administration and operation of the Act by an agency.

Council received five valid quests in 2023/24 and one request was carried over from 2022/23 three requests were released in full for 2023/24, two requests were released in-part and one request was not concluded due to non-payment of access charges. In addition, five requests lapsed due to lack of response to requests for clarification or requests for payment of the application fee. Four additional requests were answered informally outside of the Act.

Year	Number of valid requests	Fees and charges	Costs
2023/24	5	\$234	\$11,361
2022/23	8	\$208	\$4,525
2021/22	3	\$155	\$939
2020/21	8	\$287	\$5,125

## Corporate Governance

### Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

Council respects the privacy of its citizens, ratepayers and clients. Council is committed to the privacy principles prescribed by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001*.

Council has adopted a Privacy Policy that addresses the requirements of both Acts.

Council received no privacy complaints in the 2023/24 financial year.

### Documents available for public inspection

Council's Public Transparency Policy now provides details of how and what Council information is available to the public. This policy is available on Council's website.

Council's website contains a wide array of Council information including all policies, plans and reports required under the *Local Government Act 2020* and any other Act.

An extensive list of publicly available information is provided in Council's Part II Statement provided under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. This statement is also available on Council's website and is required to be updated annually.

### Local Laws

Council has the following Local Laws in place:

Local Law	Date adopted	Date operational
Community Local Law No. 2	16 May 2017	2 June 2017
Regional Livestock Exchange Local Law No. 3	16 November 2021	16 November 2021

## Domestic Animal Act 1994

Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, requires Council to prepare Domestic Animal Management Plan, and evaluate its implementation in the Annual Report. The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022–2025 was adopted by Council in November 2021. The plan was developed through consultation with the community and key stakeholders including veterinarians, animal businesses and other service providers.

The key achievements of 2024 were the completion of Stage Two of the Swan Hill Dog Park with the installation of shade sails, new dog waste bins and agility equipment and the implementation of the 24 hour Cat Containment Order which comes into effect on January 1 2025.

In May 2024, the 24 hour cat containment proposal was released to the community. The submission period was open for two-weeks. A total of 97 submissions were received, with 59% in support of the 24/7 cat containment proposal.

The Cat Containment Order requires all cats within the municipality to be confined to their owner's property, unless the cat is appropriately restrained in a cat carrier or leashed. The process of implementing the order involved extensive community consultation and education including surveys, community pop up sessions, multi-lingual factsheets, radio interviews, social media posts, as well as benchmarking with other councils.

At the June Council Meeting, the 24-hour Cat Containment Order was approved. The Order will help protect native wildlife, prevent nuisance behaviours like spraying, fighting and property damage, reduce the feral cat population and protect cats from injury and illness.

## Food Act 1984

Section 7E of the *Food Act 1984*, requires Council to publish a summary of any ministerial directions received in its Annual Report. No Ministerial Directions were received in 2023/24.

## Road Management Act 2004

Section 22 of the *Road Management Act 2004*, requires Council to publish a copy or summary of any ministerial direction received in its Annual Report. No Ministerial Directions were received in 2023/24.

## Contracts

During the 2023/24 period, the Council did not enter into any contracts for works valued at \$200,000 or more without first conducting a competitive process. For the same period, the Council awarded the following contracts, each valued above \$200,000, which required a tender invitation in accordance with its Procurement Policy:

Contract Type	Description
Construction Works	Nyah West Revitalisation - Footpath Construction
Construction Works	Tresco West Road Reconstruction
Construction Works	Fish Point Road Reconstruction
Construction Works	Butterworth Street Drainage & Road Upgrade Works
Supply of Services	Labour Hire Services
Design & Construct	Lake Boga Foreshore Beautification Project - Irrigation
Supply of Goods	Supply and Delivery of One Asphalt Road Maintenance Unit
Supply of Services	Supply of Hire & Plant Equipment (Wet & Dry) - Panel
Supply of Services	Internal Audit Services
Supply of Services	Provision of Tree Inspection & Maintenance
Construction Works	Robinvale Centenary Park Playground - Playground Equipment
Supply of Goods	Supply & Delivery of One Trommel Mobile Screen
Supply of Goods	Supply & Delivery of One Telehandler
Supply of Goods	Supply & Delivery of Concrete, Quarry & Bituminous Products - Panel
Construction Works	Woorinen Road Reconstruction
Construction Works	Boundary Bend - Kooloonong Road Reconstruction
Design & Construct	Design & Installation of Floating Boat Pontoon Lake Boga
Supply of Services	Provision of Temporary Staffing Services - Panel
Supply of Services	Management & Operation of the PS Pyap

## Service Performance Principles

Section 106 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, requires Council to plan and deliver services to the community in accordance with the service performance principles. The principles are:

1. services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community
2. services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended
3. quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community
4. a Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring
5. service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision.

## Carers Recognition Act 2012

Section 12 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*, requires Council to report on its compliance with the care relationship principles in its Annual Report.

Council promotes the principles to people in care relationships who receive Council services, and to the wider community by providing links to State Government resource materials on Council's website and providing information to organisations represented in Council networks.

Council staff, its agents and volunteers are informed about the principles by including information on the care relationship in Council induction and training programs for staff working in Community Care Services, and induction and training programs for volunteers working directly with the community.

Council has taken all practicable measures to review and modify policies, procedures and supports to include recognition of the carer relationship.

Council transitioned the delivery of community-based aged care services on 31 May 2024.

## Corporate Governance

### Community Access and Inclusion Strategy

Section 38 of the *Disability Act 2006*, requires Council to prepare a Disability Action Plan to:

1. reduce barriers to accessing services, programs and facilities
2. reduce barriers to people with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
3. promote inclusion and participation in the community for people with a disability; and
4. change community attitudes and practices that discriminate against persons with a disability.

Council is currently reviewing its Community Access and Inclusion Strategy.

### Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* commenced on 6 April 2020. Council has developed procedures that provide for the making of disclosures. The procedures encourage the disclosure of improper conduct undertaken by Council or its employees, provide protections for the person making a disclosure, and require the reporting of assessable disclosures to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

Council takes its role and responsibilities under the Act very seriously. Public Interest Disclosure procedures also form part of the staff induction process. Staff and members of the public are encouraged to report matters to the public interest disclosures co-ordinator, if they believe on reasonable grounds that improper conduct or detrimental action has occurred or is occurring.

No reportable matters were received in the 2023/24 financial year.

## Council documents — Policies and Plans

Council develops publicly available policies to explain to its community why Council is responsible for a particular subject area or service, and its obligations. Council develops procedures to explain how Council intends to discharge its responsibilities, and meet those obligations. Council also develops internal policies and procedures to guide Council operations.

Councils are usually required to develop policies and procedures in response to a legislative requirement, or to meet a particular Standard or Code. Plans and Strategies are typically longer term documents, that articulate and guide Council actions to achieve specific objectives and outcomes.

Most Council policies are reviewed every three years. New policies are reviewed after the first year of operation. Plans and strategies are either medium or long term, and reviewed in the final year of operation, or earlier if required.

The following publicly available policies, procedures, plans and strategies were reviewed and/or adopted by Council in 2023/24.

Policy/Strategy/Plan	Date reviewed/adopted
Asset Naming Guidelines	November 2023
Asset Naming Policy	December 2023
Asset Protection Policy and Procedure	April 2024
Chain of Responsibility Policy	May 2024
Economic Development Strategy 2024—2030	June 2024
Health Management Plan—Swan Hill and Robinvale Pounds	March 2024
Private Assets in Road Reserves Policy	May 2024
Infringement Notice Internal Review Process	July 2023
Part II Statement— <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	January 2024
Private Assets in Road Reserves Policy	May 2024





# Part Seven

## *Performance Statement*

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## Description of municipality

Swan Hill Rural City Council covers 6,116 square kilometres and is home to 21,212\* people.

It includes the townships of Swan Hill, Robinvale, Lake Boga, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Beverford, Woorinen, Ultima, Manangatang and Boundary Bend.

The Swan Hill municipality has experienced significant growth over the past decade, led by the expansion of horticultural/agricultural practices and supported by an innovative manufacturing sector.

This success is depicted by the fact that irrigated areas have been increasing with a higher proportion of mature, high value crops such as almonds and table grapes. The region is one of Australia's largest producers of almond and table grape plantings, vegetables including potatoes and carrots, stone fruit, olives, avocados and field crops.

The region also boasts an impressive 69% of its municipality dedicated to cropping and associated dryland infrastructure, including wheat, barley, lentils, cereal/hay, pulses (including chickpeas and lupins), grazing, oats, and canola.

More than 20 per cent of all jobs in the city are directly related to agriculture.

Located along the Murray River, tourism plays an important role in our region's economy. Our climate and natural beauty attracts approximately 768,000 visitors each year as reported in the Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) Snapshot report, March 2023.



\*This population estimate figure is provided by Local Government Victoria for the performance reporting of 2023/24.

\*Swan Hill Region includes the Swan Hill Rural City, Gannawarra Shire and Balranald Shire



## Operational summary

The Comprehensive Income Statement reports a surplus of \$3.3m. This includes depreciation and other non-monetary contributions but excludes capital payments of \$17.1m and loan repayments of \$0.3m.

A number of this year's performance results have been affected by the prepayment of the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission Financial Assistance Grant. In June 2023, Council received 100% of its 2023/24 allocation. Reported Recurrent Grant income was therefore significantly below budget due to the funds received in the prior financial year and therefore affected a number of our Performance Statement results.

At 31 May 2024 Council ceased its involvement in providing Home and Community Care services. This involved the transition of clients to new providers and the redundancy of staff involved in providing the services.

The impact of CPI increases and the resultant increase in goods and services continued to be an issue. Contract renewals and tender submissions have increased significantly and have impacted on our ability to complete capital projects and provide services within budget.

The attraction and retention of staff has continued to be an issue. Council experienced a number of positions which remained vacant for extended periods due to issues faced with recruiting suitably qualified staff. For a number of Council services there are considerable shortages within the industry, and Council has been competing with private industry to attract these staff. Areas such as building and planning, engineers, and project management staff have been difficult to recruit.

Council continued its lead role in administering a Commonwealth Regional Growth Fund on behalf of six partner councils. Final receipt of this grant funding was received in June 2024 with the distribution to the partner Council's completed at this time. Council share of this funding is to be used to complete the Swan Hill Art Gallery Redevelopment and construction of the Tourism and Cultural Hub.

Council remains active in the residential land development at Tower Hill Estate in Swan Hill; with continued sales within the prepared stages. The development continues to be cash-flow positive, and provide a return on investment of \$350k.



# Performance Statement

## Sustainable Capacity Indicators

Service/indicator/ measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations
<b>Population</b>					
<i>Expenses per head of municipal population</i> [Total expenses/ Municipal population]	\$2,525.03	\$2,604.00	\$2,580.75	\$2,855.08	Unfavourable result - total expenses in 2023/24 increased considerably due to the payout of funding held by Council to the partner Councils of the Building Better Regions / Our Region Our Rivers Federal Grant Program (\$1.67M) and the final payments involved in Council's withdrawal from the Community Aged Care programs (\$0.9M). These are once off expenses.
<i>Infrastructure per head of municipal population</i> [Value of infrastructure/ Municipal population]	\$20,751.24	\$24,532.17	\$24,772.76	\$25,927.16	Favourable result - The cost/value of assets is increasing much greater than the population of the municipality. Revaluation of infrastructure assets increased their value of \$17.6M.
<i>Population density per length of road</i> [Municipal population/ Kilometres of local roads]	5.62	6.45	6.16	5.94	No material variation.
<b>Own-source revenue</b>					
<i>Own-source revenue per head of municipal population</i> [Own-source revenue/Municipal population]	\$1,902.26	\$1,939.98	\$1,909.61	\$2,087.73	Interest income increased almost \$1.2M in 2023/24 due to higher cash holdings over the year and increased interest rates.



Service/indicator/ measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material variations
<b>Recurrent grants</b>					
<i>Recurrent grants per head of municipal population</i> [Recurrent grants/ Municipal population]	\$586.59	\$662.68	\$682.18	\$273.81	Unfavourable result - Had the 2023/24 Victoria Grants Commission payment been made in the 2023/24 year this result would have been \$679.38 or a reduction of 5.91%.
<b>Disadvantage</b>					
<i>Relative socio-economic disadvantage</i> [Index of Relative Socio-economic disadvantage by decile]	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	No material variation.
<b>Workforce turnover</b>					
<i>Percentage of staff turnover</i> [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x 100	14.40%	21.16%	22.09%	25.32%	Council's turnover rate of 15.61% increased to 25.32% with Council's decision to exit out of Aged Care Services in May 2024.

Performance Statement

Service Performance Indicators

Service/indicator/measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	
<b>Aquatic Facilities</b>						
<b>Utilisation</b>						
<i>Utilisation of aquatic facilities</i> [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	3.43	5.58	6.17	NA	8.68	Favourable result - The increase in patronage corresponds with upgrades to both the Swan Hill Aquatic and Recreation Centre and Robinvale Aquatic and Recreation Centre and it is pleasing to see a 40% increase in membership and usage.
<b>Animal management</b>						
<b>Health and safety</b>						
<i>Animal management prosecutions</i> [Number of successful animal management prosecutions/ Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	NA	0.00%	No animal management prosecutions in the 2023/24 financial year.
<b>Food and safety</b>						
<b>Health and safety</b>						
<i>Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications</i> [Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about food premises] x 100	66.67%	40.00%	100.00%	NA	100.00%	No material variation.
<b>Governance</b>						
<b>Satisfaction</b>						
<i>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement (community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the consultation and engagement efforts of Council)</i>	51.00	48.00	50.00	50.00	48.00	No material variation.

## Financial Performance Indicators

Service/indicator/measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	
<b>Libraries</b>						
<b>Participation</b>	-	-	-	NA	27.24%	New measure in 2023/24.
<i>Library membership</i>						
<i>[percentage of the population that are registered library members] x100</i>						
<b>Maternal and Child Health</b>						
<b>Participation</b>						
<i>Participation in the MCH service</i>	80.05%	82.74%	89.19%	NA	86.79%	No material variation.
<i>[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100</i>						
<i>Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children</i>	76.26%	77.50%	83.57%	NA	91.49%	Favourable result - This effort keeps families engaged with the service and receiving the care and support needed.
<i>[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x 100</i>						
<b>Roads</b>						
<b>Condition</b>						
<i>Sealed local roads below the intervention level</i>	99.43%	99.37%	99.27%	99.20%	98.95%	No material variation.
<i>(percentage of sealed local roads that are below the renewal intervention level set by Council and not requiring renewal)</i>						

Performance Statement

Service/indicator/ measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	
<b>Statutory Planning</b>						
<b>Service standard</b>						
<i>Planning applications decided within the relevant required time</i>	91.85%	70.49%	61.31%	70.00%	75.73%	Favourable result - Council has engaged planning consultants to assist with the assessment of planning permit applications and this has improved the statutory timeframes for the assessment of the applications.
<i>(percentage of planning application decisions made within the relevant required time)</i>						
<b>Waste collection</b>						
<b>Waste diversion</b>						
<i>Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill</i>	29.51%	30.92%	29.28%	30.50%	28.38%	No material variation.
<i>[Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x 100</i>						

## Financial Performance Indicators

[illegible]



Performance Statement

Dimension/ indicator/ measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
<b>Liquidity</b>										
<b>Working capital</b>										
<i>Current assets compared to current liabilities</i>	388.38%	417.74%	391.16%	204.00%	428.23%	261.64%	291.36%	283.83%	285.29%	The 2024 result is high due to the significant value of cash held for projects incomplete at the end of the year. These projects are forecast to be completed in 2025 and following this the ratio result remains stable.
<i>[Current assets / Current liabilities] x100</i>										
<b>Unrestricted cash</b>										
<i>Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities</i>	266.18%	269.46%	269.09%	N/A	80.74%	191.47%	219.27%	213.42%	218.01%	Unfavourable result - Prior year result was much higher due to the prepayment of Victoria Grants Commission payment for the 2023/24 year received in June. No prepayment was received in the 2023/24 year.
<i>[Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100</i>										

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
<b>Obligations</b>											
<b>Loans and borrowings</b>											
Loans and borrowings compared to rates	27.00%	8.81%	7.71%	N/A	6.42%	5.42%	2.84%	1.94%	1.07%		Favourable result - Ratio continues to reduce as Council pays off current loans and has no new loans forecast.
[[Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100											
<b>Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates</b>											
[Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100	3.08%	17.93%	1.12%	N/A	1.06%	1.04%	2.39%	0.88%	0.86%		No material variation.

## Performance Statement

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
<b>Indebtedness</b>											Actual 2023/24 year is high due to the prepayment of Victoria Grants Commission received at the end of the 2022-23 year. Council has continued its plan of no future borrowings from the 2021 year, therefore this ratio will continue to reduce until all loans are repaid in full in the 2030/31 year.
<i>Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue</i>	11.54%	14.70%	8.47%	N/A	11.14%		5.77%	4.39%	3.44%	2.64%	
<i>[Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100</i>											
<b>Asset renewal and upgrade</b>											No material variation.
<i>Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation</i>	101.54%	95.15%	81.44%	88.00%	84.31%		117.00%	133.45%	72.07%	92.16%	
<i>[Asset renewal and upgrade expense / Asset depreciation] x100</i>											

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
<b>Operating position</b>											
<b>Adjusted underlying result</b>	12.71%	5.76%	8.34%	N/A	-16.14%	1.49%	3.18%	2.34%	1.57%		Unfavourable result - The 2023/24 income doesn't include \$8.6M in Victoria Grants Commission Income which was received in June 2023. Had this been received in 2023/24 the result would be more favourable at 0.39%.
<i>Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)</i> [Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x100											
<b>Stability</b>											
<b>Rates concentration</b>	48.54%	53.38%	50.96%	55.90%	61.88%	54.27%	57.18%	57.29%	57.46%		Unfavourable result - Prepayment of the 2023/24 Victoria Grants Commission funding received in June 2023 of \$8.6M reduced the reported recurrent grant income, therefore significantly increasing this ratio. Had the funding been received in the relevant financial year this result would have been 53.07% and inline with prior results and forecasts.
<i>Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue</i> [Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100											

## Performance Statement

Dimension/ indicator/measure	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Material variations
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	
<b>Rates effort</b>											
<i>Rates compared to property values</i>	0.64%	0.62%	0.55%	N/A	0.51%	0.48%	0.51%	0.52%	0.52%	0.52%	No material variation.
<i>[Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality ] x100</i>											



## Definitions

<b>Aboriginal children</b>	means a child who is an Aboriginal person
<b>Aboriginal person</b>	has the same meaning as in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
<b>adjusted underlying revenue</b>	means total income other than: non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and non-monetary asset contributions; and contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above
<b>adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)</b>	means adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure
<b>annual report</b>	means an annual report prepared by a council under section 98 of the Act
<b>asset renewal expenditure</b>	means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability
<b>asset upgrade expenditure</b>	means expenditure that— (a) enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service; or (b) extends the life of the asset beyond its original life
<b>critical non-compliance outcome notification</b>	means a notification received by council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the <i>Food Act 1984</i> , or advice given to council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health
<b>current assets</b>	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
<b>current liabilities</b>	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
<b>food premises</b>	has the same meaning as in the <i>Food Act 1984</i>
<b>intervention level</b>	means the level set for the condition of a road beyond which a council will not allow the road to deteriorate and will need to intervene
<b>local road</b>	means a sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the <i>Road Management Act 2004</i>
<b>major non-compliance outcome notification</b>	means a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the <i>Food Act 1984</i> , or advice given to council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken
<b>MCH</b>	means the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age
<b>non-current liabilities</b>	means all liabilities other than current liabilities
<b>own-source revenue</b>	means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants)
<b>population</b>	means the resident population estimated by council
<b>rate revenue</b>	means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges
<b>relative socio-economic disadvantage</b>	in relation to a municipal district, means the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipal district is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage of SEIFA
<b>restricted cash</b>	means cash, cash equivalents and financial assets, within the meaning of the Australian Accounting Standards, not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year
<b>SEIFA</b>	means the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas published from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its Internet site
<b>unrestricted cash</b>	means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash

## Performance Statement

## Other information

## 1. Basis of preparation

Council is required to prepare and include a performance statement within its annual report. The performance statement includes the results of the prescribed, service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district, an explanation of material variations in the results and notes to the accounts. This statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Where applicable the results in the performance statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the Financial Statements. The other results are based on information drawn from council information systems or from third parties (e.g., Australian Bureau of Statistics or the Council's satisfaction survey provider).

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year and the previous three years, along with the current year's target, if mandated by the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020. Additionally, for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the performance statement includes the target budget for the current year and the results forecast for the period 2024-25 to 2027-28 by the council's financial plan.

The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 requires explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

Certification of the performance statement

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statement has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

.....

Bhan Pratap FCPA  
**Principal Accounting Officer**  
**Dated:**

In our opinion, the accompanying performance statement of the Swan Hill Rural City Council for the year ended 30 June 2024 presents fairly the results of Council's performance in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

The performance statement contains the relevant performance indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 to certify this performance statement in its final form.

.....

Stuart King  
**Councillor (Mayor)**  
**Dated:**

.....

Les McPhee  
**Councillor**  
**Dated:**

.....

Scott Barber  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Dated:**

Performance Statement



Independent Auditor's Report

To the Councillors of Swan Hill Rural City Council

<b>Opinion</b>	<p>I have audited the accompanying performance statement of Swan Hill Rural City Council (the council) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• description of municipality</li><li>• operational summary</li><li>• sustainable capacity indicators for the year ended 30 June 2024</li><li>• service performance indicators for the year ended 30 June 2024</li><li>• financial performance indicators for the year ended 30 June 2024</li><li>• definitions</li><li>• other information</li><li>• certification of the performance statement.</li></ul> <p>In my opinion, the performance statement of Swan Hill Rural City Council in respect of the year ended 30 June 2024 presents fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with the performance reporting requirements of Part 4 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.</p>
<b>Basis for Opinion</b>	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the performance statement</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the performance statement in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
<b>Councillors' responsibilities for the performance statement</b>	<p>The Councillors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the performance statement in accordance with the performance reporting requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 and for such internal control as the Councillors determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a performance statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p>



**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance statement**

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the performance statement based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the performance statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of this performance statement. As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the performance statement, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the performance statement, including the disclosures, and whether performance statement represents the underlying events and results in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Councillors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



MELBOURNE  
18 September 2024

Travis Derricott  
*as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria*



# Appendices

## Performance Statement

### Appendix 1: Donations and contributions

Organisation	Purpose	Amount
Australia Day Activities	Contributions	\$10,667.44
Agenda Entertainment	Contributions	\$7,000.00
Agenda Entertainment	Support	\$3,145.16
Bigger Better Beverford	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Boundary Bend Progress Association	Contributions	\$3,000.00
Chinkapook Reserves Committee of Management Inc	Contributions	\$2,000.00
Colman Education Foundation	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Fight Cancer Foundation Ltd	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Lake Boga Bowling Club Inc	Contributions	\$5,000.00
Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum	Contributions	\$2,500.00
Lake Boga Football Netball Club	Contributions	\$3,000.00
Lake Boga Inc	Contributions	\$2,500.00
Lake Boga Waterski Club	Contributions	\$3,000.00
Lake Boga Yacht Club Inc	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Lakeside Golf Club Inc	Contributions	\$3,100.00
Lead Loddon Murray Inc	Contributions	\$8,000.00
Lions Club of Lake Boga Inc	Contributions	\$4,500.00
Mallee Almond Blossom Festival Committee	Support	\$2,073.00
Manangatang & District Bowling Club	Contributions	\$5,000.00
Murray Downs Golf & Country Club	Contributions	\$22,727.28
Noahs Ark	Support	\$30.00
Nyah District Action Group	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Nyah District Action Group	Support	\$364.00
Nyah District Cricket Club Inc	Contributions	\$2,500.00
Nyah District Pool Committee Inc	Contributions	\$5,000.00
Pasifika Community of Australia Inc	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Reclink Australia	Contributions	\$727.27
Robinvale Lawn Tennis Club Inc	Contributions	\$5,000.00
Robinvale Network House	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Robinvale Network House	Support	\$1,061.80
Robinvale Pistol Club	Contributions	\$2,000.00
Rotary Club of Swan Hill	Support	\$414.50
Smoke on the Water	Support	\$372.73
Speewa Heritage Collectors Club Inc	Contributions	\$3,000.00

Organisation	Purpose	Amount
St Mary MacKillop College	Contributions	\$500.00
Swan Hill Badminton Association	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Swan Hill Bowls Club Inc	Contributions	\$2,000.00
Swan Hill Child Care Co-Op Ltd	Contributions	\$5,000.00
Swan Hill College	Contributions	\$2,000.00
Swan Hill Community Toy Library Inc	Contributions	\$1,985.00
Swan Hill Cricket Club Inc	Contributions	\$1,015.00
Swan Hill District Agricultural & Pastoral Society Inc	Contributions	\$4,500.00
Swan Hill District Agricultural & Pastoral Society Inc	Support	\$982.72
Swan Hill Football Club Inc	Contributions	\$2,000.00
Swan Hill Inc	Contributions	\$4,000.00
Swan Hill Inc	Support	\$5,058.40
Swan Hill Invitational Basketball Tournament ESF	Support	\$590.91
Swan Hill Kart Club Inc	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Swan Hill Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club Inc	Contributions	\$3,500.00
Swan Hill Motor Racing Club	Contributions	\$3,400.00
Swan Hill Neighbourhood House Inc	Contributions	\$3,500.00
Swan Hill Pony Club	Contributions	\$3,500.00
Swan Hill RSL Cricket Club Inc	Contributions	\$3,000.00
Swan Hill Soccer League	Contributions	\$5,000.00
The Rural Foundation Ltd	Contributions	\$500.00
The Rural Foundation Ltd	Support	\$629.20
The Rural Youth Network	Support	\$88.00
The Scout Association of Australia Victorian Branch	Contributions	\$3,500.00
Cinema Pop-Up Pty Ltd	Support	\$2,698.16
Tyntynder Football Netball Club Inc	Contributions	\$2,000.00
Ultima Progress Association	Contributions	\$1,000.00
Woorinen & District Progress Association Inc	Contributions	\$2,500.00
Woorinen Cricket Club	Contributions	\$2,500.00

## Performance Statement

## Appendix 2: Organisations of which Council is a financial member

Organisation	Amount
Australasian Fleet Managers Association	\$453.64
Australian Livestock Markets Association	\$675.08
Australian Livestock Saleyards Association Inc.	\$1,504.03
Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance	\$12,973.00
Community Childcare Assn	\$344.55
Rail Frieght Alliance - Glenelg Shire	\$6,925.00
Local Government Professionals	\$2,700.00
Local Government Infrastructure Design Association	\$500.00
Murray River Group of Councils	\$8,266.59
Municipal Works Operations Association	\$250.00
Municipal Association of Victoria General Account	\$31,120.00
Murray River Regional Tourism Ltd	\$31,380.00
National Saleyards Quality Assurance Inc	\$605.00
Public Galleries Association Of Victoria	\$899.09
Public Libraries Victoria Network Inc	\$2,038.00
Rural Councils Victoria Inc	\$5,000.00
School Crossings Victoria Inc	\$100.00
The Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres	\$1,633.64
Victorian Maternal Child & Health	\$75.00
Victorian Tourism Industry Limited	\$1,200.00



# General Purpose Financial Statements

## Financial Statement

# Understanding the Financial Statements

## Introduction

The financial report is a key report by the Swan Hill Rural City Council. It shows how Council performed financially during the 2023/24 financial year and the overall position at the end of the financial year (30 June 2024).

Council presents its financial report in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

Particular terms required by the standards might not be familiar to some readers. Council is committed to accountability and it is in this context that the following explanations have been developed to assist readers understand and analyse the financial report.

## What is contained in the Annual Financial Report?

Council's financial report has two main sections, namely the report and the notes. There are five statements and 10 notes. These are prepared by Council staff, examined by the Audit and Risk Committee and Council, and are audited by the Victorian Auditor-General.

The five statements included in the first few pages of the report are the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Capital Works.

The notes detail Council's accounting policies and the make-up of values contained in the statements.

## 1. Comprehensive Income Statement

The Comprehensive Income Statement measures Council's performance over the year and shows if a surplus or a deficit has been made in delivering services.

The statement includes all sources of income, less all operating expenses incurred in delivering Council services. This includes depreciation, or the writing down, of the value of buildings, roads, footpaths, drains and all other infrastructure assets that are used to deliver Council services.

These assets are depreciated over the life of the asset or as they are consumed. Capital costs or new assets purchased or created during the year are excluded from the statement but, as indicated above, are depreciated as they are used.

The statement is prepared on an accrual basis. This means that generally all income and costs for the year are recognised even though the income may not yet be received (such as interest on bank deposits) or expenses not yet paid (invoices not yet received for goods and services already used).

## 2. Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet is an important financial statement. This one-page summary is a snapshot of the financial position as at 30 June 2024. It shows what the Council owns as assets and what it owes as liabilities.

The bottom line of this statement is net assets. This is the net worth of Council that has been built up over many years.

The assets and liabilities are separated into current and non-current. Current means those assets or liabilities that will fall due or be consumed in the next 12 months. The components of the Balance Sheet are described on the following page.



## Current and non-current assets

- Cash includes cash and cash equivalents i.e. cash held in the bank, petty cash and term deposits.
- Receivables are monies owed to Council by ratepayers and other debtors.
- Other assets include income earned but not yet received and accounts which have been prepaid.
- Property, plant and equipment, infrastructure is the largest component of Council's worth and represents the value of all land, buildings, roads, vehicles, equipment, and other items which have been invested in by Council over many years.

## Current and non-current liabilities

- Payables are those to whom Council owes money as at 30 June 2024.
- Provisions include employee benefits, which is the accounting term for accrued long service and annual leave. Landfill restoration works are also grouped under provisions.
- Interest bearing loans and borrowings, which are repaid over a set period of time, finance leases that are leases of assets where ownership of the asset is transferred to the Council.

## Net assets

This term is used to describe the difference between the value of total assets and the value of total liabilities. It represents the net worth of Council as at 30 June 2024. The net value of the Council is also synonymous with total equity.

## Total equity

- Asset revaluation reserve is the difference between the previously recorded value of property and infrastructure assets and their current valuations.

Accumulated surplus is the value of all net assets accumulated over time, including other reserve allocations for specific projects.

## 3. Statement of Changes in Equity

During the course of the year, the value of total ratepayers equity as set out in the Balance Sheet changes. This statement shows the values of such changes and how these changes arose.

The main reason for a change in equity stem from:

- The surplus/(deficit) for the year from operations, described in the Comprehensive Income Statement as the surplus/(deficit) for the year.
- Revaluation of assets; takes on a regular schedule basis on average every three years. It also occurs when existing assets are taken up in the books for the first time.

## 4. Statement of Cash Flows

The Statement of Cash Flows summarises Council's cash payments and cash receipts for the year. This statement is presented according to a very specific accounting standard and needs some care in analysis.

The values may differ from those shown in the Comprehensive Income Statement because the Comprehensive Income Statement is prepared on an accrual accounting basis.

Cash in this statement refers to bank deposits and other forms of highly liquid investments that can readily be converted to cash.

Council's cash arises from, and is used in, three main areas:

## Cash flow operating activities

- Receipts – all cash received into Council's bank account from ratepayers and others that owed money to Council. Receipts also include the interest earned from Council's cash investments. It does not include the costs associated with the sale of assets.
- Payments – all cash paid by Council from its bank account to staff, creditors and other persons. It does not include the costs associated with the creation of assets.

## Financial Statement

### Cash flow from investing activities

The accounting term investing activities relates to payments for the acquisition and creation of assets, such as new plant, roads and other long-term revenue producing assets, and the proceeds from the sale of assets such as plant and land.

The notes also include a comparison to budget (note 2). This note reports on the actual performance of Council to its adopted budget, and provides commentary to all material variances.

The notes should be read at the same time as, and together with, the other parts of the financial statements to get a clear picture of the accounts.

### Cash flow from financing activities

This is where the receipt and repayment of borrowed funds are recorded. The bottom line of the Cash Flow Statement is the cash at end of financial year. This shows the capacity of Council to meet its debts and other liabilities.

### Statements by Principal Accounting Officer and Councillors

The Certification of the Principal Accounting Officer is made by the person responsible for the financial management of Council that, in his opinion, the financial statements have met all the statutory and professional reporting requirements.

The Certification of Councillors is made by two Councillors on behalf of Council that, in their opinion, the financial statements are fair and not misleading. The Chief Executive Officer also endorses and signs the certification.

## 5. Statement of Capital Works

Each year a significant portion of Council budget gets allocated to Capital Works projects. This Statement aims to give readers an understanding of what capital works assets have been built, upgraded or renewed throughout the financial year.

This Statement is broken down by asset category to provide further information as to what asset category these funds have been spent.

### Auditor General's Report

The Independent Audit Report is the external and independent opinion on the financial statements. It provides the reader with a totally independent opinion on the financial statements. The opinion covers both the statutory and professional requirements and also the fairness aspects of the financial statements.

### Notes to the Accounts

The notes are a very important and informative section of the report. The Australian Accounting Standards are not prescriptive in a lot of issues. Therefore, to enable the reader to understand the basis on which the values shown in the statements are established, it is necessary to provide details of Council's accounting policies within the notes.

The notes give details behind many of the summary figures contained in the statements. The note numbers are shown beside the relevant items in the Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Capital Works.

Where Council wishes to disclose other information that cannot be incorporated onto the face of the Statements, this is shown in the notes.

# Swan Hill Rural City Council

## ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT for the year ended 30 June 2024

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Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

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Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

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Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Annual Financial Report  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.



Bhan Pratap FCPA  
**Principal Accounting Officer**  
**Date:** 10 September 2024  
Swan Hill Rural City Council

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of Swan Hill Rural City Council for the year ended 30 June 2024 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances which would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify the financial statements in their final form.



Mr Stuart King  
**Councillor (Mayor)**  
**Date:** 10 September 2024  
Swan Hill Rural City Council



Mr Les McPhee  
**Councillor**  
**Date:** 10 September 2024  
Swan Hill Rural City Council



Mr Scott Barber  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Date:** 10 September 2024  
Swan Hill Rural City Council

# Independent Auditor's Report

## To the Councillors of Swan Hill Rural City Council

<b>Opinion</b>	<p>I have audited the financial report of Swan Hill Rural City Council (the council) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• balance sheet as at 30 June 2024</li><li>• comprehensive income statement for the year then ended</li><li>• statement of changes in equity for the year then ended</li><li>• statement of cash flows for the year then ended</li><li>• statement of capital works for the year then ended</li><li>• notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information</li><li>• certification of the financial statements.</li></ul> <p>In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the council as at 30 June 2024 and their financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 4 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>, the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.</p>
<b>Basis for Opinion</b>	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
<b>Councillors' responsibilities for the financial report</b>	<p>The Councillors of the council are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020, and for such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p> <p>In preparing the financial report, the Councillors are responsible for assessing the council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.</p>

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report**

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Councillors
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Councillors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the council's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the council to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Councillors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



MELBOURNE  
18 September 2024

Travis Derricott  
*as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria*

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

### Annual Financial Report

for the year ended 30 June 2024

### Understanding Council's Financial Statements

---

#### Introduction

Each year, individual Local Governments across Victoria are required to present a set of audited financial statements to their council and community.

#### What you will find in the Report

The financial report set out the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of Council for the financial year ended 30 June 2024.

The format of the financial report is standard across all Victorian Councils and complies with both the accounting and reporting requirements of Australian Accounting Standards and requirements as set down by Local Government Victoria.

#### About the Certification of the Financial Statements

The financial statements must be certified by senior staff and Councillors as "presenting fairly" the Council's financial results for the year as well as Council's financial position, and are required to be adopted by Council - ensuring both responsibility for and ownership of the financial statements.

#### About the Primary Financial Statements

The financial statements incorporate 5 "primary" financial statements:

##### 1. Comprehensive Income Statement

Summarises Council's financial performance for the year, listing all income & expenses.

Includes other comprehensive income which primarily records changes in the fair values of Council's property, infrastructure, plant and equipment.

##### 2. Balance Sheet

A 30 June snapshot of Council's financial position indicating its assets, liabilities and "net wealth".

##### 3. Statement of Changes in Equity

The overall change for the year (in dollars) of Council's "net wealth".

##### 4. Statement of Cash Flows

Indicates where Council's cash came from and where it was spent.

##### 5. Statement of Capital Works

This statement details all amounts expended by Council on capital works.

#### About the Notes to the Financial Report

The Notes to the financial statements provide greater detail and additional information on the 5 primary financial statements.

#### About the Auditor's Reports

Council's financial statements are required to be audited by the Victorian Auditor General's office.

The auditor provides an audit report which gives an opinion on whether the financial statements present fairly the Council's financial performance and position.

#### Who uses the Financial Report?

The financial report is a publicly available document and is used by (but not limited to) Councillors, residents and ratepayers, employees, suppliers, contractors, customers, Local Government Victoria, state and federal governments, and financiers including banks and other financial institutions.

The financial statements must be presented at a Council meeting no later than 1 month after submitting the annual report to the Minister.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Comprehensive Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>Income / Revenue</b>			
Rates and charges	3.1	32,267	30,809
Statutory fees and fines	3.2	834	955
User fees	3.3	4,723	4,497
Grants - operating	3.4	5,294	18,142
Grants - capital	3.4	13,896	2,520
Contributions - monetary	3.5	261	337
Contributions - non monetary	3.5	114	33
Net gain (or loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	434	60
Other income	3.7	6,027	4,176
<b>Total income / revenue</b>		<b>63,850</b>	<b>61,529</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Employee costs	4.1	22,512	20,570
Materials and services	4.2	22,997	19,821
Depreciation	4.3	13,723	12,400
Depreciation - Right of use assets	4.4	176	277
Allowance for impairment losses	4.5	116	45
Borrowing costs	4.6	64	70
Finance Costs - Leases	4.7	14	14
Other expenses	4.8	960	1,533
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>60,562</b>	<b>54,730</b>
<b>Surplus</b>		<b>3,288</b>	<b>6,799</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
<b>Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods</b>			
Net asset revaluation gain	9.1	20,939	45,359
<b>Total other comprehensive income</b>		<b>20,939</b>	<b>45,359</b>
<b>Total comprehensive result</b>		<b>24,227</b>	<b>52,158</b>

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.



## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Balance Sheet

as at 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	4,067	5,348
Trade and other receivables	5.1	8,203	4,805
Other financial assets	5.1	43,393	50,450
Inventories	5.2	156	184
Contract assets	5.1	6,792	1,780
Other assets	5.2	677	312
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>63,288</b>	<b>62,879</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	641,875	617,264
Right-of-use assets	5.8	60	236
Intangible assets	5.2	3,430	3,840
Other assets	5.2	50	50
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>645,415</b>	<b>621,390</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>708,703</b>	<b>684,269</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	5.3	6,444	2,880
Trust funds and deposits	5.3	414	485
Contract and other liabilities	5.3	2,747	5,442
Provisions	5.5	4,591	6,858
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	532	278
Lease liabilities	5.8	51	132
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>14,779</b>	<b>16,075</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Provisions	5.5	3,380	1,243
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	1,538	2,069
Lease liabilities	5.8	17	120
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>4,935</b>	<b>3,432</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>19,714</b>	<b>19,507</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>688,989</b>	<b>664,762</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Accumulated surplus		341,249	337,961
Reserves	9.1	347,740	326,801
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>688,989</b>	<b>664,762</b>

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

# Statement of Changes in Equity

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	Total \$ '000	Accumulated Surplus \$ '000	Revaluation Reserves \$ '000
<b>2024</b>				
Balance at beginning of the financial year		664,762	337,961	326,801
Surplus		3,288	3,288	—
Other comprehensive income				
Net asset revaluation gain	6.1	20,939	—	20,939
Other comprehensive income		20,939	—	20,939
Total comprehensive income		24,227	3,288	20,939
Balance at end of the financial year		688,989	341,249	347,740
<b>2023</b>				
Balance at beginning of the financial year		612,604	331,162	281,442
Surplus		6,799	6,799	—
Other comprehensive income				
Net asset revaluation gain	6.1	45,359	—	45,359
Other comprehensive income		45,359	—	45,359
Total comprehensive income		52,158	6,799	45,359
Balance at end of the financial year		664,762	337,961	326,801

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Note	2024 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$ '000	2023 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$ '000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Rates and charges		30,635	29,957
Statutory fees and fines		807	895
User fees		4,735	4,479
Grants - operating		3,508	18,398
Grants - capital		7,640	3,448
Contributions - monetary		261	337
Interest received		3,019	1,822
Trust funds and deposits taken/(repaid)		(71)	17
Other receipts		2,238	1,431
Net GST refund		2,872	2,596
Employee costs		(22,800)	(20,585)
Materials and services		(23,131)	(19,129)
Other payments		(977)	(5,331)
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>	9.2	<b>8,736</b>	<b>18,335</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	(17,064)	(14,961)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		528	1,914
Payments for investments		—	(9,896)
Proceeds from sale of investments		7,058	—
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities</b>		<b>(9,478)</b>	<b>(22,943)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Finance costs		(64)	(70)
Repayment of borrowings		(277)	(271)
Interest paid - lease liability		(14)	(14)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(184)	(279)
<b>Net cash flow provided by/(used in) financing activities</b>		<b>(539)</b>	<b>(634)</b>
<b>Net Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>(1,281)</b>	<b>(5,242)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		5,348	10,590
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year</b>		<b>4,067</b>	<b>5,348</b>
Financing arrangements	5.6	2,270	2,547

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

**Statement of Capital Works**  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>Property</b>		
Land	—	539
<b>Total land</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>539</b>
Buildings	2,997	5,434
<b>Total buildings</b>	<b>2,997</b>	<b>5,434</b>
<b>Total property</b>	<b>2,997</b>	<b>5,973</b>
<b>Plant and equipment</b>		
Plant, machinery and equipment	2,247	913
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	33	472
Computers and telecommunications	158	530
Artworks	4	1
Library books	175	125
<b>Total plant and equipment</b>	<b>2,617</b>	<b>2,041</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Sealed Roads	4,709	3,050
Unsealed Roads	1,494	1,119
Footpaths and cycleways	446	617
Drainage	697	234
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	1,236	197
Waste management	757	31
Parks, open space and streetscapes	852	845
Other infrastructure	1,259	996
<b>Total infrastructure</b>	<b>11,450</b>	<b>7,089</b>
<b>Total capital works expenditure</b>	<b>17,064</b>	<b>15,103</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
New asset expenditure	5,494	5,005
Asset renewal expenditure	10,095	6,780
Asset upgrade expenditure	1,475	3,318
<b>Total capital works expenditure</b>	<b>17,064</b>	<b>15,103</b>

The above statement of capital works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 1. Overview

## Introduction

The Swan Hill Rural City Council was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on 20 January 1995 and is a body corporate.

The Council's main office is located at 45 Splatt St Swan Hill.

## Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 2020*, and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

The Council is a not-for-profit entity and therefore applies the additional AUS paragraphs applicable to a not-for-profit entity under the Australian Accounting Standards.

## Accounting policy information

## 1.1 Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, except for the cash flow information, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the fair value of land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1.)
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1.).
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.5.).
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.5.)
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* (refer to Note 3)
- the determination, in accordance with *AASB 16 Leases*, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value (refer to Note 5.8)
- whether or not *AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors* is applicable
- other areas requiring judgements



Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 1. Overview (continued)

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Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

**Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2. Analysis of our results

Note 2.1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of the lower of 10 percent or \$1,000,000 where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

	Budget 2024 \$ '000	Actual 2024 \$ '000	Variance \$ '000	Variance %	Ref
<b>2.1.1 Income / Revenue and expenditure</b>					
<b>Income / Revenue</b>					
Rates and charges	32,182	32,267	85	0.26%	
Statutory fees and fines	1,101	834	(267)	(24.25)%	1
User fees	5,421	4,723	(698)	(12.88)%	2
Grants - operating	11,572	5,294	(6,278)	(54.25)%	3
Grants - capital	3,973	13,896	9,923	249.76%	4
Contributions - monetary	135	261	126	93.33%	5
Contributions - non monetary	–	114	114	∞	6
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	452	434	(18)	(3.98)%	
Other income	4,109	6,027	1,918	46.68%	7
<b>Total income / revenue</b>	<b>58,945</b>	<b>63,850</b>	<b>4,905</b>	<b>8.32%</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>					
Employee costs	22,215	22,512	(297)	(1.34)%	
Materials and services	20,526	22,997	(2,471)	(12.04)%	8
Depreciation	13,849	13,723	126	0.91%	
Depreciation - right of use assets	127	176	(49)	(38.58)%	9
Allowance for impairment losses	22	116	(94)	(427.27)%	10
Borrowing costs	64	64	–	0.00%	
Finance costs - leases	9	14	(5)	(55.56)%	11
Other expenses	1,016	960	56	5.51%	
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>57,828</b>	<b>60,562</b>	<b>(2,734)</b>	<b>(4.73)%</b>	
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>3,288</b>	<b>2,171</b>	<b>194.36%</b>	

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

## (i) Explanation of material variations

## Variance Explanation

## Ref

1. Building and planning fees were \$271,000 below forecast due to a downturn in the levels of building activity and also a reduction in the services provided by Council due to the issues associated with recruiting suitably qualified building and planning staff.
2. The Swan Hill Livestock Exchange income was \$331,000 below forecast due to a reduction in numbers and values of stock passing through the exchange throughout the year. The Performing Arts program was \$117,000 below forecast due to reduced attendances and the postponing of the Under the Stars event which is one of the biggest events of the year. Parking fees and fines were \$72,000 below forecast. Home and Community Care income was \$126,000 below forecast due to Council electing to withdraw from the service as of 31 May 2024.
3. The operating grants unfavourable variance relates to Grants Commission funding received in advance (\$7,567,000) in June 2023, this was slightly offset by funds received for the Our Region Our Rivers projects. Our Region Our Rivers funds were received by Council and passed on to partner Councils as their projects were completed (\$1,349,000).
4. Capital grants favourable variance relates to grants received in the current financial year, for carried over projects including; Our Regions Our Rivers (\$5,831,000), Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Rounds 1 and 2 (\$1,557,000), Monash Drive upgrade stage 2 (\$500,000), Ken Harrison Sporting Complex Soccer Pavilion (\$279,000), Swan Hill Leisure Centre Group Fitness Room (\$250,000), Robinvale Leisure Centre Expansion and Splash Park (\$687,000). Council received additional funding for the Lake Boga Floating Pontoon (\$434,000) and Disaster Ready Fund (\$426,000) which were not included in the budget.
5. Additional funding was sourced for the Riverlights event (\$47,000), purchasing of Christmas decorations for the Swan Hill CBD (\$15,000) and a contribution was received for the Robinvale Leisure Centre virtual fitness equipment (\$35,000).
6. The Swan Hill Art Gallery received donated artworks to the value of \$110,000 and the Swan Hill Library received donated books to the value of \$4,000.
7. Other income was favourable to budget, due to increases in interest rates and above forecast cash holdings, resulting in interest income being (\$1.9m) above forecast.
8. This variance is the result of works budgeted as capital expenditure, but deemed not to meet capitalisation thresholds and requirements and was therefore expensed (\$1,585,000) and the payment of the Regional Growth Fund allocations to the partner Councils of the Our Region Our Rivers grant (\$1,667,000). The repayment of the grant funds was forecast to occur in 2022/23, however the final funding was not received until 2023/24. The receipt of funding is referred to in note 3 & 4 above.
9. Council renegotiated an existing building lease agreement.
10. The increase in allowance for impairment losses is due to higher than forecast rates and other debtors, along with a community club debt being forgiven.
11. As per note 9 above, the renegotiation of the building lease was not forecast.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

	Budget 2024 \$ '000	Actual 2024 \$ '000	Variance \$ '000	Variance %	Ref
<b>2.1.2 Capital works</b>					
<b>Property</b>					
Land	3,242	–	(3,242)	(100.00)%	1
<b>Total land</b>	<b>3,242</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>(3,242)</b>	<b>(100.00)%</b>	
Buildings	12,841	2,997	(9,844)	(76.66)%	2
<b>Total buildings</b>	<b>12,841</b>	<b>2,997</b>	<b>(9,844)</b>	<b>(76.66)%</b>	
<b>Total property</b>	<b>16,083</b>	<b>2,997</b>	<b>(13,086)</b>	<b>(81.37)%</b>	
<b>Plant and equipment &amp; Culture and heritage</b>					
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,930	2,247	317	16.42%	3
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	50	33	(17)	(34.00)%	4
Computers and telecommunications	1,186	158	(1,028)	(86.68)%	5
Library books	168	175	7	4.17%	
Artworks	–	4	4	∞	6
<b>Total plant and equipment &amp; Culture and heritage</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>2,617</b>	<b>(717)</b>	<b>(21.51)%</b>	
<b>Infrastructure</b>					
Sealed Roads	4,983	4,709	(274)	(5.50)%	
Unsealed Roads	1,140	1,494	354	31.05%	7
Footpaths and cycleways	597	446	(151)	(25.29)%	8
Drainage	77	697	620	805.19%	9
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	718	1,236	518	72.14%	10
Waste management	1,650	757	(893)	(54.12)%	11
Parks, open space and streetscapes	2,734	852	(1,882)	(68.84)%	12
Other infrastructure	525	1,259	734	139.81%	13
<b>Total infrastructure</b>	<b>12,424</b>	<b>11,450</b>	<b>(974)</b>	<b>(7.84)%</b>	
<b>Total capital works expenditure</b>	<b>31,841</b>	<b>17,064</b>	<b>(14,777)</b>	<b>(46.41)%</b>	
<b>Represented by:</b>					
New asset expenditure	19,672	5,494	(14,178)	(72.07)%	
Asset renewal expenditure	11,261	10,095	(1,166)	(10.35)%	
Asset upgrade expenditure	908	1,475	567	62.44%	
<b>Total capital works expenditure</b>	<b>31,841</b>	<b>17,064</b>	<b>(14,777)</b>	<b>(46.41)%</b>	

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

## (i) Explanation of material variations

## Variance Explanation

## Ref

1. The budget allowed \$1,443,000 for the Ronald Street Housing Development, these works were capitalised as Buildings, and \$1,800,000 for the Tower Hill Development which was capitalised as roads and drainage.
2. The Art Gallery redevelopment (\$6,648,000) and construction of the Tourism & Cultural Hub (\$5,000,000) were yet to commence at 30 June 2024.
3. Council received grant funding for the purchase of equipment to recycle on-farm plastics (\$278,000). This grant and subsequent purchase of equipment had not been budgeted.
4. The budget included \$40,000 for the installation of Radio Frequency ID at the Library. This work was undertaken, but the recognition of the assets is reported in the computers and telecommunications assets category.
5. The Data & Technology Strategy had a budget of \$1,058,000, of which \$565,000 has been spent and not capitalised due to not meeting capitalisation rules or thresholds.
6. Council was able to purchase Artwork funded by donations to the Art Gallery acquisitions trust.
7. Additional funding received from the Victoria Grants Commission was expended on additional unsealed road renewal works.
8. Completion of the footpath replacement program was delayed and will be carried forward to be completed in 2024/25.
9. As per note 1, \$645,000 new drainage works from the Tower Hill Estate Development were originally budgeted in the land category.
10. Council was successful in obtaining a grant for the construction of a floating pontoon for Lake Boga (\$434,000).
11. The budget included \$1,387,000 for the Compost Facility Establishment. At year end this project is underway and to be completed in 2024/25.
12. Robinvale Centenary Park Nature Play Precinct project is yet to commence (\$1,389,000).
13. The Monash Drive Viewing Platform was completed in 2023/24. This project was carried over from the prior year.



Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

2.2.1 Analysis of Council results by program

Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

**Economic growth**

Economic growth will encourage new business development, provide support for business expansion and will continuously seek to help our existing businesses to prosper. This function provides, building and planning statutory services, management of caravan parks, economic development programs, regulatory services and parking control, management of the Pioneer Settlement and regional visitor information centre.

**Community enrichment**

Community enrichment function will provide a range of services to individuals and to the broader community that assist all in our community to live healthy, fulfilling lives. We will embrace our role as a regional centre by providing a range of cultural opportunities. The community enrichment function includes aged care services, maternal and child health, after school and vacation programs, libraries, art gallery and performing arts.

**Infrastructure**

Infrastructure will provide and maintain publicly accessible infrastructure that is appropriate for the community's needs in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The infrastructure function is responsible for constructing new infrastructure and maintaining existing infrastructure across the municipality.

**Governance and leadership**

Governance and leadership provides efficient, effective and proactive support services across Council to enable the delivery of policy commitments, Council vision and mission. The function will plan for our municipality's long term growth and development by committing to a robust program of strategic planning while representing our community's interests and conducting our affairs openly and with integrity, reflecting the high levels of governance our community expects.

2.2.2 Summary of income / revenue, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program

Functions/activities	Income / Revenue \$ '000	Expenses \$ '000	Surplus / (Deficit) \$ '000	Grants included in income / revenue \$ '000	Total assets \$ '000
<b>2024</b>					
Economic Growth	11,799	15,671	(3,872)	7,502	13,774
Community enrichment	4,857	9,882	(5,025)	3,227	2,474
Infrastructure	12,300	25,589	(13,289)	5,505	632,531
Governance and leadership	34,894	9,420	25,474	2,956	59,924
<b>Total functions and activities</b>	<b>63,850</b>	<b>60,562</b>	<b>3,288</b>	<b>19,190</b>	<b>708,703</b>
<b>2023</b>					
Economic Growth	6,766	17,964	(11,198)	2,680	8,448
Community enrichment	5,589	9,050	(3,461)	4,088	2,818
Infrastructure	13,964	19,862	(5,898)	7,945	608,311
Governance and leadership	35,210	7,854	27,356	5,949	64,692
<b>Total functions and activities</b>	<b>61,529</b>	<b>54,730</b>	<b>6,799</b>	<b>20,662</b>	<b>684,269</b>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

## 3.1 Rates and charges

Council uses Capital Improved Value as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The Capital Improved Value of a property is the value of its land, buildings and improvements.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2023/24 was \$6,364 million (2022/23 \$5,561 million).

Residential	11,665	11,212
Commercial	1,669	1,691
Industrial	919	795
Farm/rural	13,295	12,580
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	176	244
Garbage charge	4,081	3,822
Special Marketing Rates	374	379
Rate agreements - Electricity Industry Act	85	82
Abandonments	(13)	(13)
Other	16	17
<b>Total rates and charges</b>	<b>32,267</b>	<b>30,809</b>

The date of the latest general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2023, and the valuation will be first applied in the rating year commencing 1 July 2023.

Annual rates and charges are recognised as revenues when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

## 3.2 Statutory fees and fines

Infringements and costs	97	47
Building and planning fees	392	523
Animal registration and release fees	160	167
Health registration fees	141	134
Other fees and fines	44	84
<b>Total statutory fees and fines</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>955</b>

Statutory fees and fines (including parking fees and fines) are recognised as income when the service has been provided, the payment is received, or when the penalty has been applied, whichever first occurs.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>3.3 User fees</b>		
Aged and health services	612	687
Administration fees	125	134
Child care/children's programs	177	144
Parking	199	182
Sales - Admissions	1,319	1,345
Sales - merchandising, catering, other sales	628	596
Hire & Leasing fees	790	724
Livestock Exchange	323	414
Other fees and charges	550	271
<b>Total user fees</b>	<b>4,723</b>	<b>4,497</b>
<b>User fees by timing of revenue recognition</b>		
User fees recognised over time	790	724
User fees recognised at a point in time	3,933	3,773
<b>Total user fees</b>	<b>4,723</b>	<b>4,497</b>

User fees are recognised as revenue at a point in time, or over time, when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied. Recognition is based on the underlying contractual terms.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

3.4 Funding from other levels of government

Grants were received in respect of the following:

**Summary of grants**

Commonwealth funded grants	13,577	15,252
State funded grants	5,613	5,410
<b>Total grants received</b>	<b>19,190</b>	<b>20,662</b>

**(a) Operating Grants**

**Recurrent - Commonwealth Government**

Financial Assistance Grants - general purpose *	255	7,306
Financial Assistance Grants - local roads *	120	3,391
Home and community care	1,378	1,583
Out of school hours care	290	259

**Recurrent - State Government**

Art Gallery and performing arts	150	100
Libraries	217	217
Maternal and child health	734	545
Public health	53	98
School crossing supervisors	61	59
Other	109	116

<b>Total recurrent operating grants</b>	<b>3,367</b>	<b>13,674</b>
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**Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government**

Home & community care	111	112
Our Region Our Rivers	1,349	1,318

**Non-recurrent - State Government**

Community projects	80	870
Cultural heritage	86	50
Economic development	88	124
Emergency management/response	—	1,500
Environmental protection	—	85
Family and children	207	359
Libraries	5	31
Waste management	1	—
Other	—	19

<b>Total non-recurrent operating grants</b>	<b>1,927</b>	<b>4,468</b>
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<b>Total operating grants</b>	<b>5,294</b>	<b>18,142</b>
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## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>(b) Capital Grants</b>		
<b>Recurrent - Commonwealth Government</b>		
Roads to recovery	2,441	793
<b>Total recurrent capital grants</b>	<b>2,441</b>	<b>793</b>
<b>Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government</b>		
Aerodrome	245	—
Local roads and community infrastructure program	1,557	160
Our Region Our Rivers	5,831	330
<b>Non-recurrent - State Government</b>		
Buildings	967	94
Art and heritage	71	43
Livestock exchange	21	—
Parks playgrounds and street beautification	2,097	640
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	279	302
Waste management	387	25
Other	—	133
<b>Total non-recurrent capital grants</b>	<b>11,455</b>	<b>1,727</b>
<b>Total capital grants</b>	<b>13,896</b>	<b>2,520</b>



## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

**(c) Recognition of grant income**

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue the Council assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. When both these conditions are satisfied, the Council:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the point in time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, the Council applies *AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities*.

Grant revenue with sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised over time as the performance obligations specified in the underlying agreement are met. Where performance obligations are not sufficiently specific, grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or when an unconditional right to receipt has been established. Grants relating to capital projects are generally recognised progressively as the capital project is completed. The following table provides a summary of the accounting framework under which grants are recognised.

**Income recognised under AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities**

General purpose	255	7,306
Other specific purpose grants	4,802	8,813
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	13,896	2,519
<b>Revenue recognised under AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers</b>		
Specific purpose grants	237	2,023
	<b>19,190</b>	<b>20,661</b>

**(d) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner****Operating**

Balance at start of year	2,023	1,767
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	196	350
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(1,982)	(94)
<b>Balance at year end</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>2,023</b>

**Capital**

Balance at start of year	3,418	2,490
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	2,241	1,782
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(3,162)	(854)
<b>Balance at year end</b>	<b>2,497</b>	<b>3,418</b>

Unspent grants are determined and disclosed on a cash basis.

(\*) 2024 majority of allocation received in 2023.

(†) 2023, 100% of the 2023/24 allocation was received prior to June 30 2023

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>3.5 Contributions</b>		
<b>Monetary contributions</b>		
Monetary	261	337
<b>Total monetary contributions</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>Non-monetary contributions</b>		
Non-monetary	114	33
<b>Total non-monetary contributions</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Total contributions</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>370</b>

Contributions of non monetary assets were received in relation to the following asset classes.

Library Books	4	5
Artworks	110	28
<b>Total non-monetary contributions</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>33</b>

Monetary and non monetary contributions are recognised as income at their fair value when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>3.6 Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment</b>		
<b>Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment</b>		
Proceeds of sale	528	1,914
Written down value of assets disposed	(94)	(1,854)
<b>Total net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Total net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>60</b>

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>3.7 Other income</b>		
Interest	3,019	1,822
Reimbursements	1,632	960
Tower Hill land sales	959	936
Less - Tower Hill costs of goods sold	(17)	(51)
Revenue from volunteer services	319	329
Other	115	180
<b>Total other income</b>	<b>6,027</b>	<b>4,176</b>

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 4. The cost of delivering services

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>4.1 Employee costs</b>		
<b>(a) Employee costs</b>		
Wages and salaries	17,102	16,475
WorkCover	407	224
Superannuation	2,372	2,357
Fringe benefits tax	64	40
Agency staff	777	897
Long service leave	450	291
Staff training	189	168
Redundancy payments	945	—
Other	206	118
<b>Total employee costs</b>	<b>22,512</b>	<b>20,570</b>

As at 31 May 2024 council ceased its involvement in providing home and community care services. Redundancy of effected staff were processed at this date.

**(b) Superannuation**

Council made contributions to the following funds:

**Defined benefit fund**

Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	58	73
	<b>58</b>	<b>73</b>

**Accumulation funds**

Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	2,324	2,209
	<b>2,324</b>	<b>2,209</b>

**Total superannuation costs**

	<b>2,382</b>	<b>2,282</b>
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Refer to Note 9.3. for further information relating to Council's superannuation obligations.

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>4.2 Materials and services</b>		
Contract payments	9,674	7,756
Building maintenance	891	913
General maintenance	3,101	2,443
Utilities	1,627	1,294
Office administration	642	777
Information technology	940	708
Insurance	1,125	1,047
Consultants	994	769
Community grants sponsorship and contributions	2,547	2,244
Volunteer services - cost of service	319	329
Other	1,137	1,541
<b>Total materials and services</b>	<b>22,997</b>	<b>19,821</b>

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 4. The cost of delivering services (continued)

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Expenses are recognised as they are incurred and reported in the financial year to which they relate.



## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 4. The cost of delivering services (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>4.3 Depreciation</b>		
<b>Property</b>		
Buildings - specialised	2,246	1,295
Buildings - non specialised	81	80
<b>Total depreciation - property</b>	<b>2,327</b>	<b>1,375</b>
<b>Plant and equipment</b>		
Plant machinery and equipment	984	933
Fixtures fittings and furniture	273	286
Computers and telecomms	240	98
Artworks	19	18
Library Collection	126	130
Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	58	58
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	26	26
Pioneer Settlement buildings	1	11
<b>Total depreciation - plant and equipment</b>	<b>1,727</b>	<b>1,560</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Footpaths and cycleways	477	516
Drainage	655	650
Recreational, leisure and community	421	368
Waste management	25	97
Parks open spaces and streetscapes	519	417
Sealed roads	5,291	5,325
Unsealed roads	1,993	1,861
Other infrastructure	288	231
<b>Total depreciation - infrastructure</b>	<b>9,669</b>	<b>9,465</b>
<b>Total depreciation</b>	<b>13,723</b>	<b>12,400</b>

Refer to note 5.2( c ), 5.8 and 6.1 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation charges and accounting policy.

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>4.4 Depreciation - Right of use assets</b>		
Property	176	277
<b>Total Depreciation - Right of use assets</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>277</b>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 4. The cost of delivering services (continued)

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

## 4.5 Allowance for impairment losses

Parking fine debtors	49	43
Rates debtors	18	—
Other debtors	49	2
<b>Total allowance for impairment losses</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>45</b>

## Movement in allowance for impairment losses in respect of debtors

Balance at the beginning of the year	373	338
New allowances recognised during the year	116	35
Amounts already allowed for and written off as uncollectible	(63)	(10)
Amounts allowed for but recovered during the year	—	10
<b>Balance at end of year</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>373</b>

An allowance for impairment losses in respect of debtors is recognised based on an expected credit loss model. This model considers both historic and forward looking information in determining the level of impairment.

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

## 4.6 Borrowing costs

Interest - Borrowings	64	70
<b>Total borrowing costs</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>70</b>

Borrowing costs are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred, except where they are capitalised as part of a qualifying asset constructed by Council.

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

## 4.7 Finance Costs - Leases

Interest - Lease Liabilities	14	14
<b>Total finance costs</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 4. The cost of delivering services (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>4.8 Other expenses</b>		
Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	64	56
Auditors' remuneration - Internal Audit	51	62
Councillors' allowances	301	256
Assets written-off / impaired	98	574
Operating lease rentals	25	190
Vehicle registrations	95	109
Bank Charges	79	62
Legal Costs	107	77
Fire Services Levy	82	80
Others	58	67
<b>Total other expenses</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1,533</b>

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000
5.1 Financial assets		
(a) Cash and cash equivalents		
Current		
Cash on hand	13	13
Cash at bank	4,054	5,335
Total current cash and cash equivalents	4,067	5,348
(b) Other financial assets		
Current		
Term deposits	43,393	50,450
Total current other financial assets	43,393	50,450
Total current financial assets	47,460	55,798

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Other financial assets include term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>(c) Trade &amp; Other Receivables</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
<i>Statutory receivables</i>		
Rates debtors	4,999	3,367
Infringement debtors	402	389
Private scheme debtors	4	4
Net GST receivable	378	135
<i>Non-statutory receivables</i>		
Loans and advances to community organisations	—	48
Other debtors	2,846	1,235
Provision for doubtful debts - rates debtors	(90)	(77)
Allowance for expected credit loss - infringements	(325)	(290)
Allowance for expected credit loss - other debtors	(11)	(6)
<b>Total current trade and other receivables</b>	<b>8,203</b>	<b>4,805</b>
<b>Total trade and other receivables</b>	<b>8,203</b>	<b>4,805</b>

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. An allowance for expected credit losses is recognised based on past experience and other objective evidence of expected losses. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.



## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

**(d) Ageing of receivables**

The ageing of the Council's trade & other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:

Current (not yet due)	1,801	467
Past due between 31 and 180 days	786	215
Past due between 181 and 365 days	60	71
Past due by more than 1 year	188	524
<b>Total trade and other receivables</b>	<b>2,835</b>	<b>1,277</b>

**(e) Ageing of individually impaired receivables**

At balance date, other debtors representing financial assets with a nominal value of \$11,180 (2023: \$6,414) were impaired. The amount of the provision raised against these debtors was \$11,180 (2023: \$6,414). They individually have been impaired as a result of their doubtful collection. Many of the long outstanding past due amounts have been lodged with Council's debt collectors or are on payment arrangements.

The ageing of receivables that have been individually determined as impaired at reporting date was:

Past due by more than 1 year	11	6
<b>Total trade and other receivables</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>

**(f) Contract assets****Current**

Contract Assets	6,792	1,780
<b>Total Current</b>	<b>6,792</b>	<b>1,780</b>
<b>Total contract assets</b>	<b>6,792</b>	<b>1,780</b>

Contract assets are recognised when Council has transferred goods or services to the customer but where Council is yet to establish an unconditional right to consideration.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
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## 5.2 Non-financial assets

## (a) Inventories

## Current

Inventories held for distribution	19	39
Inventories held for sale	57	47
Tower Hill Estate	80	98
<b>Total current inventories</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>184</b>

Inventories held for distribution are measured at cost, adjusted when applicable for any loss of service potential. All other inventories, including land held for sale, are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Where inventories are acquired for no cost or nominal consideration, they are measured at current replacement cost at the date of acquisition.

## (b) Other assets

## Current

Prepayments	642	277
Other	35	35
<b>Total current other assets</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>312</b>

## Non-current

Other	50	50
<b>Total non-current other assets</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>

## (c) Intangible assets

Water rights	3,430	3,840
<b>Total intangible assets</b>	<b>3,430</b>	<b>3,840</b>

	Water Rights \$ '000
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## Gross Carrying Amount

Balance at 1 July 2023	3,840
Asset revaluations	(410)
<b>Balance at 30 June 2024</b>	<b>3,430</b>

## Net book value at 30 June 2023

3,840

## Net book value at 30 June 2024

3,430

Water rights are valued at current market rates. The valuation is based on market transactions being the trading of water shares within the relevant water trading region. Prices are sourced from the Victorian Water Register for water traded within trading zone 7 VIC Murray - Barmah to SA.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>5.3 Payables, trust funds and deposits and contract and other liabilities</b>		
<b>(a) Trade and other payables</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
<i>Non-statutory payables</i>		
Trade payables	1,380	1,177
Salaries and wages	376	391
Accrued expenses	3,918	1,312
Overpaid rate debtors	770	–
<b>Total current trade and other payables</b>	<b>6,444</b>	<b>2,880</b>
<b>(b) Trust funds and deposits</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Refundable deposits	286	213
Fire services property levy	14	12
Retention amounts	108	260
Other refundable deposits	6	–
<b>Total current trust funds and deposits</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>485</b>
<b>(c) Contract and other liabilities</b>		
<b>Contract liabilities</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
<b>Grants received in advance:</b>		
Grants received in advance - operating	237	2,023
Grants received in advance - capital	2,497	3,418
<b>Total grants received in advance</b>	<b>2,734</b>	<b>5,441</b>
<b>User fees received in advance:</b>		
Other	13	1
<b>Total user fees received in advance</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total current contract liabilities</b>	<b>2,747</b>	<b>5,442</b>
<b>Total current contract and other liabilities</b>	<b>2,747</b>	<b>5,442</b>

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

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*Trust funds and deposits*

Amounts received as deposits and retention amounts controlled by Council are recognised as trust funds until they are returned, transferred in accordance with the purpose of the receipt, or forfeited. Trust funds that are forfeited, resulting in council gaining control of the funds, are to be recognised as revenue at the time of forfeit.

*Contract liabilities*

Contract liabilities reflect consideration received in advance from customers in respect of grants received of which council has an outstanding obligation. Contract liabilities are derecognised and recorded as revenue when promised goods and services are transferred to the customer or council obligation completed. Refer to Note 3.

**Purpose and nature of items**

Refundable deposits - Deposits are taken by Council as a form of surety in a number of circumstances, including in relation to building works, tender deposits, contract deposits and the use of civic facilities.

Fire services property Levy - Council is the collection agent for fire services property levy on behalf of the State Government. Council remits amounts received on a quarterly basis. Amounts disclosed here will be remitted to the state government in line with that process.

Retention Amounts - Council has a contractual right to retain certain amounts until a contractor has met certain requirements or a related warrant or defect period has elapsed. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the contractual obligations, or the elapsing of time, these amounts will be paid to the relevant contractor in line with Council's contractual obligations.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Other borrowings - secured	532	278
<b>Total current interest-bearing liabilities</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>Non-current</b>		
Other borrowings - secured	1,538	2,069
<b>Total non-current interest-bearing liabilities</b>	<b>1,538</b>	<b>2,069</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,070</b>	<b>2,347</b>

Borrowings are secured by Swan Hill Rural City Council General Rates.

**a) The maturity profile for Council's borrowings is:**

Not later than one year	532	278
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,538	1,913
Later than five years	–	156
	<b>2,070</b>	<b>2,347</b>

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the Council has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The Council determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities at initial recognition.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	Employee provisions \$ '000	Landfill restoration \$ '000	Total \$ '000
<b>5.5 Provisions</b>			
<b>2024</b>			
Balance at the beginning of the financial year	5,141	2,960	8,101
Additional provisions	1,483	374	1,857
Amounts used	(1,572)	–	(1,572)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(199)	(216)	(415)
<b>Balance at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>4,853</b>	<b>3,118</b>	<b>7,971</b>
<b>Provisions</b>			
Provisions - current	4,591	–	4,591
Provisions - non-current	262	3,118	3,380
<b>Total Provisions</b>	<b>4,853</b>	<b>3,118</b>	<b>7,971</b>
<b>2023</b>			
Balance at the beginning of the financial year	5,156	3,094	8,250
Additional provisions	1,468	(53)	1,415
Amounts used	(1,672)	–	(1,672)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	189	(81)	108
<b>Balance at the end of the financial year</b>	<b>5,141</b>	<b>2,960</b>	<b>8,101</b>
<b>Provisions</b>			
Provisions - current	4,976	1,882	6,858
Provisions - non-current	165	1,078	1,243
<b>Total Provisions</b>	<b>5,141</b>	<b>2,960</b>	<b>8,101</b>



## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>(a) Employee provisions</b>		
<b>Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months</b>		
Annual leave	1,222	1,322
Long service leave	305	280
	<u>1,527</u>	<u>1,602</u>
<b>Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months</b>		
Annual leave	341	300
Long service leave	2,723	3,074
	<u>3,064</u>	<u>3,374</u>
<b>Total current employee provisions</b>	<u>4,591</u>	<u>4,976</u>
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Long service leave	262	165
<b>Total Non-Current Employee Provisions</b>	<u>262</u>	<u>165</u>
Aggregate Carrying Amount of Employee Provisions:		
Current	4,591	4,976
Non-current	262	165
<b>Total Aggregate Carrying Amount of Employee Provisions</b>	<u>4,853</u>	<u>5,141</u>

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

*Annual leave*

A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:

- nominal value if the Council expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Council does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

*Long service leave*

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability as the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement. Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability and measured at present value.

## Key assumptions:

- discount rate	4.44%	4.06%
- index rate	4.50%	4.35%

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>(b) Landfill restoration</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Current	—	1,882
<b>Total current</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>1,882</b>
<b>Non-current</b>		
Non-current	3,118	1,078
<b>Total non-current</b>	<b>3,118</b>	<b>1,078</b>

Council is obligated to restore Swan Hill and Robinvale landfill sites to a particular standard. The forecast life of the site is based on current estimates of remaining capacity and the forecast rate of infill. The provision for landfill restoration has been calculated based on the present value of the expected cost of works to be undertaken. The expected cost of works has been estimated based on current understanding of work required to reinstate the site to a suitable standard. Accordingly, the estimation of the provision required is dependent on the accuracy of the forecast timing of the work, work required and related costs. Council reviews the landfill restoration provision on an annual basis, including the key assumptions listed below.

Key assumptions:

- discount rate	4.09%	4.03%
- index rate	3.60%	6.00%

**Total provisions**

<b>Current</b>		
Employee provisions	4,591	4,976
Landfill restoration	—	1,882
<b>Total current provisions</b>	<b>4,591</b>	<b>6,858</b>
<b>Non-current</b>		
Employee provisions	262	165
Landfill restoration	3,118	1,078
<b>Total non-current provisions</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>1,243</b>

## 5.6 Financing arrangements

The Council has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2024.

Credit card facilities	200	200
Loans and borrowings	2,070	2,347
<b>Total Facilities</b>	<b>2,270</b>	<b>2,547</b>
Used facilities	2,094	2,378
<b>Used facilities</b>	<b>2,094</b>	<b>2,378</b>
<b>Unused facilities</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>169</b>

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

5.7 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

(a) Commitments for expenditure

	Not later than 1 year \$ '000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years \$ '000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years \$ '000	Later than 5 years \$ '000	Total \$ '000
<b>2024</b>					
<b>Operating</b>					
Building and property maintenance	169	18	—	—	187
Cleaning - council buildings, public toilets, barbeques	57	—	—	—	57
Cultural and heritage	—	—	—	—	—
Licenses	219	36	—	—	255
Management & operations of the PS Pyap	260	—	—	—	260
Materials and supplies	162	—	—	—	162
Office equipment and supplies	8	—	—	—	8
Other Infrastructure	66	—	—	—	66
Professional services	770	71	—	—	841
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	729	1,242	600	—	2,571
Uniforms	9	—	—	—	9
Waste management operation and kerbside collection	2,005	3,403	2,552	—	7,960
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,454</b>	<b>4,770</b>	<b>3,152</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>12,376</b>
<b>Capital</b>					
Buildings	172	—	—	—	172
Cultural and heritage	36	—	—	—	36
Drainage	123	—	—	—	123
Footpaths	53	—	—	—	53
Land	1,817	—	—	—	1,817
Other infrastructure	2,071	—	—	—	2,071
Materials and supplies	—	—	—	—	—
Parks and open spaces	150	—	—	—	150
Plant & equipment	1,540	—	—	—	1,540
Professional services	718	—	—	—	718
Recreation and leisure assets	280	—	—	—	280
Sealed Roads	5,064	—	—	—	5,064
Unsealed Roads	42	—	—	—	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,066</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>12,066</b>

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	Not later than 1 year \$ '000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years \$ '000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years \$ '000	Later than 5 years \$ '000	Total \$ '000
<b>2023</b>					
<b>Operating</b>					
Building and property maintenance	110	—	—	—	110
Cleaning - council buildings, public toilets, barbeques	337	—	—	—	337
Cultural and heritage	14	—	—	—	14
Licenses	76	—	—	—	76
Management & operations of the PS Pyap	307	—	—	—	307
Materials and supplies	721	—	—	—	721
Office equipment and supplies	85	—	—	—	85
Other Infrastructure	35	—	—	—	35
Professional services	685	20	16	—	721
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	1,462	2,230	2,230	—	5,922
Uniforms	15	—	—	—	15
Waste management operation and kerbside collection	181	508	508	704	1,901
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,028</b>	<b>2,758</b>	<b>2,754</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>10,244</b>
<b>Capital</b>					
Buildings	722	—	—	—	722
Cultural and heritage	91	—	—	—	91
Drainage	34	—	—	—	34
Footpaths	—	—	—	—	—
Land	19	—	—	—	19
Other infrastructure	802	—	—	—	802
Materials and supplies	—	—	—	—	—
Parks and open spaces	115	—	—	—	115
Plant & equipment	618	—	—	—	618
Professional services	—	—	—	—	—
Recreation and leisure assets	3,461	—	—	—	3,461
Sealed Roads	3,895	1,303	—	—	5,198
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,757</b>	<b>1,303</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>11,060</b>

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2024	2023
	\$ '000	\$ '000

(b) Operating lease receivables

*Operating lease receivables*

The Council has entered into commercial property leases on its investment property, consisting of surplus freehold office complexes. These properties held under operating leases have remaining non-cancellable lease terms of between 1 and 10 years. All leases include a CPI based revision of the rental charge annually.

Future undiscounted minimum rentals receivable under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

Not later than one year	291	375
Later than one year and not later than five years	640	920
Later than five years	12	73
	943	1,368

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

## 5.8 Leases

At inception of a contract, Council assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. To identify whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, it is necessary to assess whether:

- The contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- Council has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- Council has the right to direct the use of the asset.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

As a lessee, Council recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any, and adjusted for certain measurements of the lease liability.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, an appropriate incremental borrowing rate. Generally, Council uses an appropriate incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- Fixed payments
- Variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- The exercise price under a purchase option that Council is reasonably certain to exercise, lease payments in an optional renewal period if Council is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, and penalties for early termination of a lease unless Council is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

When the lease liability is remeasured in this way, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset has been reduced to zero.

Under *AASB 16 Leases*, Council as a not-for-profit entity has elected not to measure right-of-use assets at initial recognition at fair value in respect of leases that have significantly below-market terms.

Council has a number of Peppercorn Leases for parcels of crown land or land controlled by other entities. The leases of land are used to provide open space and recreation areas to residents along with a major tourist attraction in the area known as the Pioneer Settlement.

Details of Peppercorn Leases held by Council are as follows:

Land Details	Remaining Term of Lease	\$ Per Annum
Crown Land - Pioneer Settlement	24 years	\$0
Lake Boga Boat Ramps and Jetty	1 year	\$1
Various parcels of VicTrack Land (parks & reserves)	Various terms	\$1 each
Joint User Agreements - Department of Education	Various terms	\$0 - \$1 each



## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

## (a) Right-of-Use Assets

	Property \$ '000	Total \$ '000
<b>2024</b>		
Balance at 1 July 2023	236	236
Additions	—	—
Depreciation charge	(176)	(176)
<b>Balance at 30 June 2024</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>2023</b>		
Balance at 1 July 2022	408	408
Additions	104	104
Depreciation charge	(276)	(276)
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>236</b>
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$ '000</b>	<b>\$ '000</b>

## (b) Lease Liabilities

Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows		
Less than one year	41	132
One to five years	32	118
More than five years	—	6
<b>Total undiscounted lease liabilities as at 30 June:</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>256</b>
<b>Lease liabilities included in the Balance Sheet at 30 June:</b>		
Current	51	132
Non-current	17	120
<b>Total lease liabilities</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>252</b>

**Short-term and low value leases**

Council has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of machinery that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (individual assets worth less than existing capitalisation thresholds for a like asset up to a maximum of \$10,000), including IT equipment. Council recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Variable lease payments are those that depend on an index or a rate, for example payments linked to the consumer price index, a benchmark interest rate or changes in market rental rates.

**Non-cancellable lease commitments - Short-term and low-value leases**

Commitments for minimum lease payments for short-term and low-value leases are payable as follows:

Payable:		
Within one year	4	1
Later than one year but not later than five years	2	2
Later than five years	4	3
<b>Total lease commitments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 6. Assets we manage

## 6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	Carrying amount 30 June 2023 \$ '000	Additions \$ '000	Contributions \$ '000	Revaluation \$ '000	Disposal \$ '000	Depreciation \$ '000	Write-off \$ '000	Transfers \$ '000	Carrying amount 30 June 2024 \$ '000
Property	144,808	1,955	–	2,465	–	(2,327)	(13)	3,575	150,463
Plant and equipment/Culture and heritage assets	17,557	2,281	114	1,288	(94)	(1,727)	(76)	–	19,343
Infrastructure	448,395	9,641	–	17,599	–	(9,669)	–	1,441	467,407
Work in progress	6,504	3,187	–	–	–	–	(13)	(5,016)	4,662
<b>Total</b>	<b>617,264</b>	<b>17,064</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>21,352</b>	<b>(94)</b>	<b>(13,723)</b>	<b>(102)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>641,875</b>

Summary of Work in Progress	Opening WIP \$ '000	Additions \$ '000	Write-off \$ '000	Transfers \$ '000	Closing WIP \$ '000
Property	4,613	1,042	–	(3,575)	2,080
Plant and equipment	(41)	336	(4)	–	291
Infrastructure	1,932	1,809	(9)	(1,441)	2,291
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,504</b>	<b>3,187</b>	<b>(13)</b>	<b>(5,016)</b>	<b>4,662</b>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Land specialised \$ '000	Land non specialised \$ '000	Total land and land improve- ments \$ '000	Buildings specialised \$ '000	Buildings non specialised \$ '000	Total buildings \$ '000	Work in progress \$ '000	Total property \$ '000
<b>(a) Property</b>								
At fair value 1 July 2023	83,162	8,746	<b>91,908</b>	135,674	4,283	<b>139,957</b>	4,613	<b>236,478</b>
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2023	—	—	—	(83,861)	(3,196)	<b>(87,057)</b>	—	<b>(87,057)</b>
	<u>83,162</u>	<u>8,746</u>	<u><b>91,908</b></u>	<u>51,813</u>	<u>1,087</u>	<u><b>52,900</b></u>	<u>4,613</u>	<u><b>149,421</b></u>
<b>Movements in fair value</b>								
Additions	—	—	—	1,955	—	<b>1,955</b>	1,042	<b>2,997</b>
Revaluation	—	—	—	6,156	340	<b>6,496</b>	—	<b>6,496</b>
Write-off	—	—	—	(178)	—	<b>(178)</b>	—	<b>(178)</b>
Transfers	(980)	980	—	1,895	1,680	<b>3,575</b>	(3,575)	—
	<u>(980)</u>	<u>980</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>9,828</u>	<u>2,020</u>	<u><b>11,848</b></u>	<u>(2,533)</u>	<u><b>9,315</b></u>
<b>Movements in accumulated depreciation</b>								
Depreciation and amortisation	—	—	—	(2,246)	(81)	<b>(2,327)</b>	—	<b>(2,327)</b>
Accumulated depreciation on revaluation	—	—	—	(3,852)	(179)	<b>(4,031)</b>	—	<b>(4,031)</b>
Accumulated depreciation of write offs	—	—	—	165	—	<b>165</b>	—	<b>165</b>
Transfers	—	—	—	(58)	58	—	—	—
	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>(5,991)</u>	<u>(202)</u>	<u><b>(6,193)</b></u>	<u>—</u>	<u><b>(6,193)</b></u>
At fair value 30 June 2024	82,182	9,726	<b>91,908</b>	145,502	6,303	<b>151,805</b>	2,080	<b>245,793</b>
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2024	—	—	—	(89,852)	(3,398)	<b>(93,250)</b>	—	<b>(93,250)</b>
<b>Carrying amount</b>	<u>82,182</u>	<u>9,726</u>	<u><b>91,908</b></u>	<u>55,650</u>	<u>2,905</u>	<u><b>58,555</b></u>	<u>2,080</u>	<u><b>152,543</b></u>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

### Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Plant machinery and equipment \$ '000	Fixtures fittings and furniture \$ '000	Computers and telecomms \$ '000	Artworks \$ '000	Library Collection \$ '000	Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels \$ '000	Pioneer Settlement site exhibits \$ '000	Pioneer Settlement buildings \$ '000	Total \$ '000	Work in progress \$ '000	Total plant and equipment/c ulture and heritage assets \$ '000
<b>(b) Plant and Equipment &amp; Culture and heritage assets</b>											
At fair value 1 July 2023	12,837	4,986	1,880	1,857	2,285	5,729	2,607	5,599	37,780	(41)	37,739
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2023	(8,305)	(3,400)	(1,070)	(88)	(1,655)	(115)	(52)	(5,538)	(20,223)	–	(20,223)
	4,532	1,586	810	1,769	630	5,614	2,555	61	17,557	(41)	17,516
<b>Movements in fair value</b>											
Additions	1,911	33	158	4	175	–	–	–	2,281	336	2,617
Contributions	–	–	–	110	4	–	–	–	114	–	114
Revaluation	–	–	–	(166)	–	837	259	–	930	–	930
Disposal	(1,108)	–	(102)	–	(18)	–	–	–	(1,228)	–	(1,228)
Write-off	–	–	–	(76)	–	–	–	–	(76)	(4)	(80)
	803	33	56	(128)	161	837	259	–	2,021	332	2,353
<b>Movements in accumulated depreciation</b>											
Depreciation and amortisation	(984)	(273)	(240)	(19)	(126)	(58)	(26)	(1)	(1,727)	–	(1,727)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	1,013	–	103	–	18	–	–	–	1,134	–	1,134
Accumulated depreciation on revaluation	–	–	–	107	–	173	78	–	358	–	358
	29	(273)	(137)	88	(108)	115	52	(1)	(235)	–	(235)
At fair value 30 June 2024	13,640	5,019	1,936	1,729	2,446	6,566	2,866	5,599	39,801	291	40,092
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2024	(8,276)	(3,673)	(1,207)	–	(1,763)	–	–	(5,539)	(20,458)	–	(20,458)
<b>Carrying amount</b>	<b>5,364</b>	<b>1,346</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>1,729</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>6,566</b>	<b>2,866</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>19,343</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>19,634</b>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

### Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Sealed roads \$ '000	Unsealed roads \$ '000	Footpaths and cycleways \$ '000	Drainage \$ '000	Recreational, leisure and community \$ '000	Waste management \$ '000	Parks open spaces and streetscapes \$ '000	Other infrastructure \$ '000	Total \$ '000	Work in progress \$ '000	Total infrastructure \$ '000
<b>(c) Infrastructure</b>											
At fair value 1 July 2023	328,224	122,190	34,714	68,670	21,739	7,841	16,816	17,016	617,210	1,932	619,142
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2023	(81,965)	(17,216)	(16,481)	(25,292)	(7,826)	(7,715)	(7,422)	(4,898)	(168,815)	–	(168,815)
	<u>246,259</u>	<u>104,974</u>	<u>18,233</u>	<u>43,378</u>	<u>13,913</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>9,394</u>	<u>12,118</u>	<u>448,395</u>	<u>1,932</u>	<u>450,327</u>
<b>Movements in fair value</b>											
Additions	3,958	1,495	446	697	1,226	–	764	1,055	9,641	1,809	11,450
Revaluation	14,113	5,255	903	1,785	565	–	437	339	23,397	–	23,397
Write-off	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(9)	(9)
Transfers	496	8	32	30	206	–	235	434	1,441	(1,441)	–
	<u>18,567</u>	<u>6,758</u>	<u>1,381</u>	<u>2,512</u>	<u>1,997</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>1,436</u>	<u>1,828</u>	<u>34,479</u>	<u>359</u>	<u>34,838</u>
<b>Movements in accumulated depreciation</b>											
Depreciation and amortisation	(5,291)	(1,993)	(477)	(655)	(421)	(25)	(519)	(288)	(9,669)	–	(9,669)
Accumulated depreciation on revaluation	(3,525)	(740)	(429)	(658)	(203)	–	(193)	(50)	(5,798)	–	(5,798)
	<u>(8,816)</u>	<u>(2,733)</u>	<u>(906)</u>	<u>(1,313)</u>	<u>(624)</u>	<u>(25)</u>	<u>(712)</u>	<u>(338)</u>	<u>(15,467)</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>(15,467)</u>
At fair value 30 June 2024	346,791	128,948	36,095	71,182	23,736	7,841	18,252	18,844	651,689	2,291	653,980
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2024	(90,781)	(19,949)	(17,387)	(26,605)	(8,450)	(7,740)	(8,134)	(5,236)	(184,282)	–	(184,282)
<b>Carrying amount</b>	<u>256,010</u>	<u>108,999</u>	<u>18,708</u>	<u>44,577</u>	<u>15,286</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>10,118</u>	<u>13,608</u>	<u>467,407</u>	<u>2,291</u>	<u>469,698</u>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

*Acquisition*

The purchase method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets, being the fair value of assets provided as consideration at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Refer also to Note 8.4 for further disclosure regarding fair value measurement.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

**Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods**

	<b>Depreciation Period years</b>	<b>Threshold Limit \$ '000</b>
<b>Land and land improvements</b>		
<b>Buildings</b>		
Buildings	30 to 100 years	10
Building improvements	30 to 100 years	10
Leasehold improvements	5 to 15 years	10
<b>Plant and Equipment</b>		
Plant machinery and equipment		
Large plant	10 years	3
Small plant	2 years	3
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	5 years	3
Computers and telecommunications	3 to 5 years	2
<b>Cultural and heritage</b>		
Artworks	100 years	—
Library Collection	5 to 100 years	—
Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	100 years	5
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	100 years	5
Pioneer Settlement buildings	100 years	10
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Sealed road formation	-	10
Sealed road pavements	60 to 100 years	10
Sealed road seals	15 to 80 years	10
Road ancillary assets	20 to 25 years	10
Unsealed road natural surface	-	10
Unsealed road gravel surface	30 years	10
Kerb and channel	25 to 50 years	10
Footpaths and cycleways	20 to 100 years	10
Drainage	20 to 100 years	10
Recreation, leisure and community facilities	10 to 90 years	10
Waste management	10 years	10
Parks, open space and streetscapes	10 to 60 years	10
Other infrastructure	10 to 150 years	10

*Land under roads*

Council recognises land under roads it controls at fair value.



Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

*Depreciation and amortisation*

Buildings, land improvements, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Road earthworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

*Repairs and maintenance*

Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

*Leasehold improvements*

Leasehold improvements are recognised at cost and are amortised over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement, whichever is the shorter. At balance date, leasehold improvements are amortised over a 5 to 15 year period.

*Valuation of land and buildings*

Valuation of land and buildings were undertaken by a qualified independent valuer Campbell Kennon AAPI Reg. 103503 as at 30 June 2023. The valuation of land and buildings is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Any significant movements in the unobservable inputs for land and land under roads will have a significant impact on the fair value of these assets.

The fair value assessed may change significantly and unexpectedly over a relatively short period of time (including as a result of factors that the valuer could not reasonably have been aware of as at the date of valuation). Refer to Significant accounting policies under Overview section and Note 8.4 for further information on fair value measurement.

The date of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2024 are as follows:

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

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## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of valuation	Type of Valuation
Land	–	–	9,726	30/06/2024	Index based
Specialised land	–	–	82,182	30/06/2024	Index based
Buildings	–	–	2,905	30/06/2024	Index based
Building - specialised	–	–	55,650	30/06/2024	Index based
<b>Total</b>	–	–	<b>150,463</b>		

**Valuation of Infrastructure**

Valuation of infrastructure assets has been determined in accordance by applying the most recent unit rates as calculated from a sample of internal and external projects.

The date of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

The valuation is at fair value based on current replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Details of the Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2024 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of valuation	Type of Valuation
Sealed roads	–	–	256,010	30/06/2024	Index based
Unsealed roads	–	–	108,999	30/06/2024	Index based
Footpaths and cycleways	–	–	18,708	30/06/2024	Index based
Drainage	–	–	44,577	30/06/2024	Index based
Recreational, leisure & community facilities	–	–	15,286	30/06/2024	Index based
Waste management	–	–	101	30/06/2024	Index based
Parks, open space & streetscapes	–	–	10,118	30/06/2024	Index based
Other Infrastructure	–	–	13,608	30/06/2024	Index based

**Cultural and heritage assets**

Details of the Council's cultural and heritage assets and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2024 are as follows:

Artworks	–	–	1,729	30/06/2024	Full revaluation
Pioneer Settlement vehicles and vessels	–	–	6,566	30/06/2024	Full revaluation
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	–	–	2,866	30/06/2024	Full revaluation
Pioneer Settlement buildings	–	–	60	30/06/2024	Index based
<b>Total</b>	–	–	<b>478,628</b>		

**Valuation of cultural and heritage assets****Artworks**

Valuation of artwork assets has been conducted by qualified independent valuer Mr David Freeman, member of Auctioneers and Valuers Association of Australia, and Chief Executive Officer of Amanda Adams Auctions, Bulleen, Victoria. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2024. Valuation of the assets was determined by analysing comparable sales of an artist's work, knowledge of the collections history and condition of the collection.

**Pioneer Settlement**

Valuation of Pioneer Settlement vehicles and vessels and site exhibit assets was conducted by qualified independent valuer Mr David Freeman, member of Auctioneers and Valuers Association of Australia, and Chief Executive Officer of Amanda Adams Auctions, Bulleen, Victoria. The valuation is based on average market realisation prices that should be obtained if the items were sold via private treaty or auction sales. The effective date of the valuation is 30 June 2024.

Valuation of Pioneer Settlement buildings were undertaken by qualified independent valuer, Campbell Kennon AAPI Reg. 103503 as at 30 June 2023.

The valuation is at fair value based on replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

**Specialised land and land under roads** is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values between 25% and 75% for specialised land and between 85% and 95% for land under roads. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently land values range between \$0.12 and \$450.10 per square metre.

**Specialised buildings** are valued using a current replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement costs are calculated on a square metre basis. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 10 years to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of buildings.

**Infrastructure assets** are valued based on the current replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 0 years to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

**Artwork assets** are valued based on the market based direct comparison approach. Significant unobservable inputs include the rarity of the item, historical significance and the history of the artist. If there are events that determine certain pieces of the collection to be of historical significance, if the artist has works that have increased in popularity or the item is considered to be rare and in demand, this would result in a higher fair value.

**Pioneer Settlement vehicles** and vessels and site exhibit assets are valued based on the market based direct comparison approach. Significant unobservable inputs include the rarity of the item and historical significance. If there are events that determine certain pieces of the collection to be of historical significance or the item is considered to be rare and in demand, this would result in a higher fair value.

**Pioneer Settlement buildings** are valued using a current replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement cost is calculated on a square metre basis. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 1 year to 54 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend their useful lives.

Reconciliation of specialised land

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
Land under roads	52,195	52,195
Parks and reserves	18,985	19,894
Crown Land	11,002	11,073
<b>Total specialised land</b>	<b>82,182</b>	<b>83,162</b>

(c) Community Asset Committee

All entities controlled by Council that have material income, expenses, assets or liabilities, such as community asset committees, have been included in this financial report. Any transactions between these entities and Council have been eliminated in full.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 7. People and relationships

7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related Parties

*Parent entity*  
Swan Hill Rural City Council is a single entity.

*Subsidiaries and Associates*  
Council has no interests in subsidiaries and associates.

(b) Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel (KMP) are those people with the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of Swan Hill Rural City Council. The Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Directors are deemed KMP.

Details of KMP at any time during the year are:

Councillors

Mayor Stuart King	17/11/2020 to 30/06/2024
Cr Bill Moar	15/11/2016 to 30/06/2024
Cr Ann Young	15/11/2016 to 30/06/2024
Cr Les McPhee	08/12/2008 to 30/06/2024
Cr Chris Jeffery	15/11/2016 to 30/06/2024
Cr Nicole McKay	16/04/2019 to 30/06/2024
Cr Jacquie Kelly	24/01/2023 to 30/06/2024

Chief Executive Officer

Mr Scott Barber	06/06/2022 to 30/06/2024
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Directors

Mr Bruce Myers (Community and Cultural Services)	28/02/1994 to 30/06/2024
Ms Heather Green (Planning and Development)	03/07/2017 to 14/01/2024
Ms Michelle Grainger (Planning and Development)	15/01/2024 to 30/06/2024
Ms Leah Johnston (Infrastructure)	03/04/2023 to 30/06/2024
Mr Bhan Pratap (Corporate Services)	18/07/2022 to 30/06/2024

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Total Number of Councillors	7	8
Total of Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel	6	7
Total Number of Key Management Personnel	13	15

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 7. People and relationships (continued)

**(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel**

Remuneration comprises employee benefits including all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by Council, or on behalf of the Council, in exchange for services rendered. Remuneration of Key Management Personnel and Other senior staff is disclosed in the following categories.

**Short-term employee benefits** include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

**Other long-term employee benefits** include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

**Post-employment benefits** include pensions, and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

**Termination benefits** include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	1,312	1,186
Other long-term employee benefits	80	65
Post-employment benefits	130	115
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,522</b>	<b>1,366</b>

	2024 No.	2023 No.
The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities, fall within the following bands:		
\$1 - \$9,999	—	1
\$10,000 - \$19,999	—	2
\$20,000 - \$29,999	—	1
\$30,000 - \$39,999	5	3
\$40,000 - \$49,999	—	2
\$50,000 - \$59,999	1	1
\$80,000 - \$89,999	1	—
\$90,000 - \$99,999	1	1
\$130,000 - \$139,999	1	—
\$190,000 - \$199,999	—	1
\$210,000 - \$219,999	1	—
\$220,000 - \$229,999	1	2
\$230,000 - \$239,999	1	—
\$300,000 - \$309,999	—	1
\$310,000 - \$319,999	1	—
	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 7. People and relationships (continued)

**(d) Remuneration of other senior staff**

Other senior staff are officers of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remuneration exceeds \$160,000 and who report directly to a member of the KMP. \*

Total remuneration of other senior staff was as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$ '000</b>	<b>\$ '000</b>
Short-term employee benefits	985	872
Other long-term employee benefits	93	81
Post-employment benefits	129	109
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,207</b>	<b>1,062</b>

The number of other senior staff are shown below in their relevant income bands:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>No.</b>	<b>No.</b>
Income Range:		
\$90,000 - \$99,999	1	—
\$170,000 - \$179,999	2	3
\$180,000 - \$189,999	3	3
\$190,000 - \$199,999	1	—
	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>\$ '000</b>	<b>\$ '000</b>
Total remuneration for the reporting year for other senior staff included above, amounted to:	1,207	1,062



Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 7. People and relationships (continued)

7.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

During the period Council entered into the following transactions with related parties:

Cr Stuart King	Swan Hill Hire - \$38,072 Plant and equipment hire. Cr King has a controlling interest in Swan Hill Hire.
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(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

The following balances are outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties:

2024 = Nil

2023 = Nil

(c) Loans to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of loans in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party as follows:

2024 = Nil

2023 = Nil

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of commitments in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party are as follows:

2024 = Nil

2023 = Nil

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 8. Managing uncertainties

## 8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

**(a) Contingent assets**

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. At balance date the Council are not aware of any contingent assets.

**(b) Contingent liabilities**

Contingent liabilities are:

- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council; or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
- it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation; or
- the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

**Superannuation**

Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

*Future superannuation contributions*

In addition to the disclosed contributions, Council has paid unfunded liability payments to Vision Super totalling \$0 (2021/22 \$0). There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2024. The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2025 are \$75,057.

**Landfill**

Council operates a landfill. Council will have to carry out site rehabilitation works in the future. At balance date Council has a provision in place for these remediation works.

**Liability Mutual Insurance**

Council is a participant of the MAV Liability Mutual Insurance (LMI) Scheme. The LMI scheme provides public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover. The LMI scheme states that each participant will remain liable to make further contributions to the scheme in respect of any insurance year in which it was a participant to the extent of its participant's share of any shortfall in the provision set aside in respect of that insurance year, and such liability will continue whether or not the participant remains a participant in future insurance years.

**MAV Workcare**

Council was a participant of the MAV WorkCare Scheme. The MAV WorkCare Scheme provided workers compensation insurance. MAV WorkCare commenced business on 1 November 2017 and the last day the Scheme operated as a self-insurer was 30 June 2021. In accordance with the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013, there is a six year liability period following the cessation of the Scheme (to 30 June 2027). During the liability period, adjustment payments may be required (or received). The determination of any adjustment payments is dependent upon revised actuarial assessments of the Scheme's tail claims liabilities as undertaken by Work Safe Victoria. If required, adjustments will occur at the 3-year and 6-year points during the liability period, and will affect participating members.

**(c) Guarantees for loans to other entities**

Council is not the guarantor for any loans.

Financial guarantee contracts are not recognised as a liability in the balance sheet unless the lender has exercised their right to call on the guarantee or Council has other reasons to believe that it is probable that the right will be exercised.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 8. Managing uncertainties

## 8.2 Change in accounting standards

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2024 reporting period. Council assesses the impact of these new standards.

In December 2022 the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) issued AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities to modify AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement. AASB 2022-10 amends AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement for fair value measurements of non-financial assets of not-for-profit public sector entities not held primarily for their ability to generate net cash inflows. The AASB 13 modifications:

- are applicable only to not-for-profit public sector entities;
- are limited to fair value measurements of non-financial assets not held primarily for their ability to generate net cash inflows;
- are to be applied prospectively for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024;
- would not necessarily change practice for some not-for-profit public sector entities; and
- do not indicate that entities changing practice in how they measure relevant assets made an error in applying the existing requirements of AASB 13.

Council will assess any impact of the modifications to AASB 13 ahead of the 2024-25 reporting period.

In December 2022 the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) issued AASB 2022-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Non-current Liabilities with Covenants. AASB 2022-6 amends AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements to improve the information an entity provides in its financial statements about long term liabilities with covenants where the entity's right to defer settlement of those liabilities for at least twelve months after the reporting period is subject to the entity complying with conditions specified in the loan arrangement. The amendments in AASB 2022-6 are effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. Council will assess any impact of the modifications to AASB 101 ahead of the 2024-25 reporting period.

## 8.3 Financial instruments

## (a) Objectives and policies

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank borrowings. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

## (b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of Council financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

**Interest rate risk**

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Council's interest rate liability risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes Council to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Council has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the Local Government Act 2020. Council manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

#### Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

There has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate increases have significantly affected the return expected on invested funds during the year. This impacted the surplus by \$1.9m.

##### (c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause Council to make a financial loss. Council has exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. Particularly significant areas of credit risk exist in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations. To help manage this risk:

- Council has a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities Council deals with;
- Council may require collateral where appropriate; and
- Council only invests surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in Council's investment policy.

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the Council's financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is secured by a charge over the rateable property.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the balance sheet, such as when Council provides a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any allowance for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

##### (d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of Council's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks Council:

- have a liquidity policy which targets a minimum and average level of cash and cash equivalents to be maintained;
- have readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- have a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- monitor budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- set limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the balance sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees disclosed in Note 8.1(c), and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at Note 5.4.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

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**(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis**

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of + 0.50% and - 1.00% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 4.35%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

8.4 Fair value measurement

*Fair Value Hierarchy*

Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. AASB 13 Fair value measurement, aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

- Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
- Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
- Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above. In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

*Revaluation*

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. (For plant and equipment carrying amount is considered to approximate fair value given short useful lives). At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 2 to 5 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts. The following table sets out the frequency of revaluations by asset class.

Asset Class	Revaluation frequency
Land	2 years
Buildings	2 years
Sealed Roads	3 years
Unsealed Roads	5 years
Bridges	3 years
Footpaths and cycleways	3 years
Drainage	5 years
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	5 years
Waste management	5 years
Parks, open space and streetscapes	5 years
Other infrastructure	5 years

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increases are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increase reverses a prior year decrease for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increase is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decreases are recognised as an expense except where prior increases are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrease is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increases. Within the same class of assets, revaluation increases and decreases within the year are offset.



Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

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*Impairment of assets*

At each reporting date, the Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

## Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

## Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

## Note 9. Other matters

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$ '000	Increase (decrease) \$ '000	Balance at end of reporting period \$ '000
<b>9.1 Reserves</b>			
<b>(a) Asset revaluation reserves</b>			
<b>2024</b>			
<b>Property</b>			
Land and land improvements	46,041	–	46,041
Buildings	32,044	2,303	34,347
Buildings - non specialised	–	161	161
	<b>78,085</b>	<b>2,464</b>	<b>80,549</b>
<b>Culture and heritage assets</b>			
Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	1,674	1,008	2,682
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	1,390	337	1,727
Artworks	1,635	(59)	1,576
Pioneer Settlement buildings	3,441	–	3,441
Water rights	3,196	(410)	2,786
	<b>11,336</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>12,212</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
Footpaths and cycleways	12,650	474	13,124
Drainage	24,086	1,127	25,213
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	9,388	362	9,750
Waste management	131	–	131
Parks, open space and streetscapes	4,033	244	4,277
Sealed roads	153,675	10,588	164,263
Unsealed roads	28,581	4,514	33,095
Other infrastructure	4,836	290	5,126
	<b>237,380</b>	<b>17,599</b>	<b>254,979</b>
<b>Total asset revaluation reserves</b>	<b>326,801</b>	<b>20,939</b>	<b>347,740</b>

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$ '000	Increase (decrease) \$ '000	Balance at end of reporting period \$ '000
<b>2023</b>			
<b>Property</b>			
Land and land improvements	31,764	14,277	46,041
Buildings	29,320	2,724	32,044
	<b>61,084</b>	<b>17,001</b>	<b>78,085</b>
<b>Culture and heritage assets</b>			
Pioneer Settlement vehicles & vessels	1,674	–	1,674
Pioneer Settlement site exhibits	1,390	–	1,390
Artworks	1,635	–	1,635
Pioneer Settlement buildings	4,002	(561)	3,441
Water rights	3,196	–	3,196
	<b>11,897</b>	<b>(561)</b>	<b>11,336</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
Footpaths and cycleways	11,789	861	12,650
Drainage	17,723	6,363	24,086
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	7,374	2,014	9,388
Waste management	102	29	131
Parks, open space and streetscapes	2,831	1,202	4,033
Sealed roads	141,891	11,784	153,675
Unsealed roads	23,547	5,034	28,581
Other infrastructure	3,204	1,632	4,836
	<b>208,461</b>	<b>28,919</b>	<b>237,380</b>
<b>Total asset revaluation reserves</b>	<b>281,442</b>	<b>45,359</b>	<b>326,801</b>

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of Council's assets over time.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
<b>9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit)</b>		
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	3,288	6,799
<b>Non-cash adjustments:</b>		
Depreciation/amortisation	13,899	12,677
Impairment losses	98	574
Profit/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(434)	(60)
Contributions - non monetary assets	(114)	(33)
Amounts disclosed in financing activities	78	84
<b>Change in assets and liabilities:</b>		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(3,398)	(869)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	28	47
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	(365)	(152)
Increase/(decrease) in contract assets	(5,012)	(1,621)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	3,564	(145)
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	(130)	(149)
(Decrease)/increase in other liabilities	(71)	17
Increase/(decrease) in unearned income/revenue	(2,695)	1,166
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>8,736</b>	<b>18,335</b>

9.3 Superannuation

Council makes the majority of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in the Comprehensive Income Statement when they are made or due.

**Accumulation**

The Fund's accumulation category, Vision MySuper/Vision Super Saver, receives both employer and employee contributions on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2024, this was 11.0% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation (2023: 10.5%).

**Defined Benefit**

Council does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan.

There is no proportional split of the defined benefit liabilities, assets or costs between the participating employers as the defined benefit obligation is a floating obligation between the participating employers and the only time that the aggregate obligation is allocated to specific employers is when a call is made. As a result, the level of participation of Council in the Fund cannot be measured as a percentage compared with other participating employers. Therefore, the Fund Actuary is unable to allocate benefit liabilities, assets and costs between employers for the purposes of AASB 119.

**Funding Arrangements**

Council makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary. A triennial actuarial investigation is currently underway for the Defined Benefit category which is expected to be completed by 31 December 2023. Council was notified of the 30 June 2023 VBI during August 2023 (2022: August 2022). The financial assumptions used to calculate the 30 June 2023 VBI were:

Net investment returns 5.7% pa  
Salary information 3.5% pa

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

Price inflation (CPI) 2.8% pa.

The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2023 actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

Employer contributions

(a) Regular contributions

On the basis of the results of the 2023 interim actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, Council makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2024, this rate was 11.0% of members' salaries (10.5% in 2022/23). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate and was reviewed as part of the 30 June 2023 triennial valuation.

In addition, Council reimburses the Fund to cover the excess of the benefits paid as a consequence of retrenchment above the funded resignation or retirement benefit.

(b) Funding calls

If the Defined Benefit category is in an unsatisfactory financial position at an actuarial investigation or the Defined Benefit category's VBI is below its shortfall limit at any time other than the date of the actuarial investigation, the Defined Benefit category has a shortfall for the purposes of SPS 160 and the Fund is required to put a plan in place so that the shortfall is fully funded within three years of the shortfall occurring. The Fund monitors its VBI on a quarterly basis and the Fund has set its shortfall limit at 98% from 26 July 2024 (previously 97%).

In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including Council) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.

Using the agreed methodology, the shortfall amount is apportioned between the participating employers based on the pre-1 July 1993 and post-30 June 1993 service liabilities of the Fund's Defined Benefit category, together with the employer's payroll at 30 June 1993 and at the date the shortfall has been calculated.

Due to the nature of the contractual obligations between the participating employers and the Fund, and that the Fund includes lifetime pensioners and their reversionary beneficiaries, it is unlikely that the Fund will be wound up.

If there is a surplus in the Fund, the surplus cannot be returned to the participating employers.

In the event that a participating employer is wound-up, the defined benefit obligations of that employer will be transferred to that employer's successor.

The 2023 triennial actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation is conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. A full investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2023.

The Fund's actuarial investigations identified the following for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer:

	2023 (Triennial) \$m	2022 (Interim) \$m
- A VBI Surplus	84.7	44.6
- A total service liability surplus	123.6	105.8
- A discounted accrued benefits surplus	141.9	111.9

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund's assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2023.

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses as at 30 June 2023.

Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

The discounted accrued benefit surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to 30 June 2023.

The 2024 interim actuarial investigation

An interim actuarial investigation is being conducted for the Fund's position as at 30 June 2024 as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by October 2024.

The VBI of the Defined Benefit category was 105.4% as at 30 June 2024. The financial assumptions used to calculate the 30 June 2024 VBI were:

Net investment returns 5.6% pa  
Salary information 3.5% pa  
Price inflation (CPI) 2.7% pa

Council was notified of the 30 June 2024 VBI during August 2024.  
Because the VBI was above 100%, the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position at 30 June 2024 and it is expected that the actuarial investigation will recommend that no change will be necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

The 2020 triennial investigation

The last triennial actuarial investigation conducted prior to 30 June 2023 was at 30 June 2020. This actuarial investigation was completed by 31 December 2020. The financial assumptions for the purposes of that investigation was:

	2020	2023
	Triennial investigation	Triennial investigation
	\$m	\$m
Net investment return	5.6% pa	5.7% pa
Salary inflation	2.5% pa for two years and 2.75% pa thereafter	3.50% pa
Price inflation	2.0% pa	2.8% pa

Superannuation contributions

Contributions by Council (excluding any unfunded liability payments) to the above superannuation plans for the financial year ended 30 June 2023 are detailed below:

Scheme	Type of scheme	Rate	2024 \$ '000	2023 \$ '000
Vision Super	Defined benefit	11.0% (2023:10.5%)	58	73
Vision Super	Accumulation fund	11.0% (2023:10.5%)	2,324	2,209



Swan Hill Rural City Council

2023/2024 Financial Report

Notes to the Financial Statements  
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 10. Change in accounting policy

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There have been no changes to accounting policies in the 2023-24 year.

## 2.4 Proposed Date Change November Scheduled Council Meeting 2024

**Directorate:** Chief Executive Officer  
**File Number:** S16-05-03  
**Purpose:** For Decision

### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**4. Leadership** - We will ensure accountable leadership, advocacy and transparent decision making.

#### 4.1 Excellent management and administration

4.1.2 Provide robust governance and effective leadership

### Current Strategic Documents

Council Plan

### Election Period Statement

The recommended decision is not a prohibited decision in accordance with section 69 (2) and (3) of the Local Government Act 2020. The recommended decision is a Significant Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Procedure, but an exception should be made for the following reasons:

Council Election declarations will occur on Friday 15 November 2024, the first Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 19 November. This report seeks for the Scheduled Council meeting for the month of November 2024 to be deferred by one week to allow the newly elected Councillors the opportunity to be briefed on the reports due to be presented at the November Council meeting.

### Declarations of Interest

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

### Summary

Council Election declarations will occur on Friday 15 November 2024, the first Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 19 November. This report seeks for the

Scheduled Council meeting for the month of November 2024 to be deferred by one week to allow the newly elected Councillors the opportunity to be briefed on the reports due to be presented at the November Council meeting.

## Discussion

The Local Government Act requires councils to have an election period policy and further requires that Council's refrain from making major policy decisions or committing significant expenditure during the election period. The **election period** for the 2024 general elections commenced 12 noon on Tuesday, 17 September 2024 and will end at 6.00pm on Saturday, 26 October 2024.

It is desirable that the Scheduled Council meeting be delayed for one week from the 19 November 2024 to the 26 November 2024. This will allow Councillors' time to be briefed at a Council assembly on 19 November, of the Council reports listed for consideration at the November Council meeting. It is highly probable that the Council may be required to make some major decisions during the November meeting. This will be the first meeting since the election period which commenced on September 17 September 2024.

The newly elected Councillors' may take the oath or affirmation on Tuesday 19 November 2024, prior to the assembly. The LGA 2020 Section 30 states

(1) A person elected to be a Councillor is not capable of acting as a Councillor until the person has taken the oath or affirmation of office in the manner prescribed by the regulations.

(2) The oath or affirmation of office must be—

- (a) administered by the Chief Executive Officer; and
- (b) dated and signed before the Chief Executive Officer; and
- (c) recorded in the minutes of the Council, whether or not the oath or affirmation was taken at a Council meeting.

If the Oath or affirmation of office is taken prior to the assembly on the 19 November, it can then be recorded in the Minutes of the Council meeting to be held on November 26, 2024.

## Consultation

There has been a discussion with the Executive Leadership Team and a council assembly.

## Financial Implications

Nil.

## Social Implications

Nil.

## Economic Implications

Nil.

**Environmental Implications**

Nil.

**Risk Management Implications**

Nil.

**Attachments:** Nil

**Options**

1. That Council move the Council meeting originally scheduled for Tuesday, 19 November 2024, to the new date of Tuesday, 26 November 2024, commencing at 2pm at the Swan Hill Town Hall and to advertise this change of date in newspapers circulated throughout the municipality. The council considers taking the oath or affirmation prior to the Council Assembly on Tuesday 19 November 2024 and record it in the Minutes of the Council meeting to be held on November 26, 2024.
2. Council leaves the Scheduled Council meeting on Tuesday 19 November 2024, commencing at 2pm at the Swan Hill Town Hall

**Recommendation/s**

**That Council move the Council meeting originally scheduled for Tuesday, 19 November 2024, to the new date of Tuesday, 26 November 2024, commencing at 2pm at the Swan Hill Town Hall and to advertise this change of date in newspapers circulated throughout the municipality. The newly elected Councillors' take the oath or affirmation at the Council Assembly on Tuesday 19 November, 2024 and record it in the Minutes of the Council meeting to be held on November 26, 2024.**

## 3 Officer Report for Noting

### 3.1 Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes 5 September 2024

**Directorate:** Corporate Services  
**File Number:** S15-28-01  
**Purpose:** Information Only

#### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**4. Leadership** - We will ensure accountable leadership, advocacy and transparent decision making.

##### **4.1 Excellent management and administration**

4.1.2 Provide robust governance and effective leadership

#### Current Strategic documents

Council Plan

#### Election Period Statement

The recommended decision is neither a prohibited decision in accordance with section 69 (2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor a Significant Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Procedure.

#### Declarations of Interest:

Council Officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

#### Summary

Council's Audit Committee met on 5 September 2024 and this report summarises the items that were discussed at this meeting.

#### Discussion

The Audit Committee met on 5 September 2024 and as well as the usual procedural items the agenda included:

1. Internal Audit updates - OHS and Wellbeing Audit
2. Internal Audit updates - Payroll & HR Review
3. Internal Audit Reviews (AFS)
4. Review of Risk Register
5. Quarterly Risk Report

6. Review of Audit Committee Performance - Conducted at an unscheduled meeting 8 August 2024
7. Annual Financial Report and Annual Performance Statement FY2024
8. VAGO Final Management Letter
9. VAGO Closing Report to Audit Committee
10. Suspected and Actual Frauds, Thefts and Breaches of the Law by Management
11. Drag Strip Update
12. Swan Hill Art Gallery and Visitation Centre and Swan Hill Tourism and Cultural Hub Update
13. 2023-24 Asset Revaluations - Fair Value Report
14. Councillor Expenses April to June 2024

**General Business**

1. Audit + Risk Committee to determine future meeting dates, to avoid clashing with Murray River Group Council Meeting

**Consultation**

Not applicable.

**Financial Implications**

The sitting fees paid to independent members on the Audit Committee is adjusted annually by CPI. Sitting fees are included in Council's Budget.

**Social Implications**

Nil.

**Economic Implications**

Nil.

**Environmental Implications**

Nil.

**Risk Management Implications**

The Audit Committee helps to oversee Council's risk management practices. Internal and other audits are routinely done to reduce the risk to Council.

**Attachments:** 1. AC Placeholder Audit and Risk 5 September 2024 [3.1.1 - 1 page]

**Options**

Not applicable.

**Recommendation/s**

**That Council note the contents of this report.**



## **Confidential attachment**

- Audit Committee Confidential unconfirmed Minutes 5 September 2024 (attachment will be included into the in-camera agenda)

## 4 Decisions Which Need Action / Ratification

### 4.1 Sign and Seal

**Directorate:** Chief Executive Officer  
**File Number:** S16-05-01  
**Purpose:** For Noting

#### Declarations of Interest:

Council officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the subject of this report.

#### Election Period Statement

The recommended decision is neither a prohibited decision in accordance with section 69 (2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor a Significant Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Procedure.

#### Summary

The following documents and agreements have been signed and sealed by the Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer on the respective dates. Those actions require the ratification of the Council.

#### Discussion

During any month Council is required to sign and seal a range of documents arising from decisions made on a previous occasion(s). Examples include sale of land, entering into funding arrangements for Council programs etc.

As the decision to enter into these agreements has already been made, these documents are signed and sealed when received, with Council ratifying the signing and sealing at the next Council meeting.

The following documents were signed and sealed since the last Council meeting:

No.	Document Type	Document Description	Date signed/ sealed
1168	173 Agreement (amendment) - 13 River Oaks Drive, Swan Hill	Between Swan Hill Rural City Council and M and J Witney	24/09/24

Note: A Section 173 Agreement is typically a contract between the Council and a landowner that places use or development restrictions on the land.

They are intended to ensure compliance with conditions contained in permits granted by the Council and are often used in subdivision matters. These agreements refer to Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

### **Consultation**

Council authorise the signing and sealing of the above documents.

### **Recommendation/s**

**That Council notes the actions of signing and sealing the documents under delegation as scheduled.**

## 4.2 Councillor Assemblies - Record of Attendance and Agenda Items

**Directorate:** Chief Executive Officer  
**File Number:** S15-05-06  
**Purpose:** For Noting

### Declarations of Interest:

Council officers affirm that no general or material conflicts need to be declared in relation to the matter of this report.

### Election Period Statement

The recommended decision is neither a prohibited decision in accordance with section 69 (2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor a Significant Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Procedure.

### Summary

The following report provides attendance details of Councillor Assemblies on a monthly basis.

### Discussion

Whilst Minutes have not been recorded, Agenda items and those in attendance are reported and presented to Council.

An assembly of Councillors is defined as a meeting that is planned or scheduled and where the matters being considered that are intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision.

No formal decisions can be made at an assembly but rather direction can be given that is likely to lead to a formal decision of Council.

Details of the most recent assemblies of Council are attached.

### Council Plan Strategy Addressed

**4. Leadership** - We will ensure accountable leadership, advocacy and transparent decision making.

4.1 Excellent management and administration

4.1.1 Well managed resources for a sustainable future

4.1.2 Provide robust governance and effective leadership

4.1.3 Sound, sustainable:

- Financial management • Excellence in service delivery • Strategic planning

**Current Strategic documents**

No strategic documents applicable.

**Key Legislation**

There is no key legislation applicable

**Attachments:** 1. COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA  
October (1) [4.2.1 - 3 pages]

**Options**

Council Assemblies are reported to ensure good governance and transparency.

**Recommendation**

**That Council note the contents of the report.**

**COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA**

**17 September 2024 at 1.00pm, Swan Hill Town Hall – Council Chambers**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Extension of time refusal – 27 River Road
- Swan Hill Inc 2024/25 Budget and Marketing Plan
- Proposed Date Change for November Scheduled Council Meeting 2024
- Election Period Requirements
- Pental Island Bridge update

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Jacquie Kelly
- Cr Nicole McKay
- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Chris Jeffery

**Apologies / Leave of Absence**

- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Ann Young

**OFFICERS**

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Bhan Pratap, Director Corporate Services
- Michelle Grainger, Director Development and Planning
- Awais Sadiq, Development Manager
- Dennis Hovenden, Manager Economic and Community Development
- Dione Heppell, Liveability and Project Development Coordinator

**Other**

- Swan Hill Inc
- Vince Cutri

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil



**COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA**

**1 October 2024 at 1.00pm, Swan Hill Town Hall – Council Chambers**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- Annual Report
- Service Performance Report 2023/24
- Council Office Improvements
- Compost Facility Update
- Councillor/Directors question time

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Nil

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillors

- Cr Jacquie Kelly
- Cr Nicole McKay
- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Bill Moar

**Apologies / Leave of Absence**

- Cr Chris Jeffery
- Cr Ann Young
- Cr Les McPhee

**OFFICERS**

- Bruce Myers, Acting Chief Executive Officer
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Bhan Pratap, Director Corporate Services
- Michelle Grainger, Director Development and Planning
- Helen Morris, Organisational Development Manager
- Peter Ross, Engineering and Strategic Projects
- Ron Gibbs, Strategic Waste Coordinator

**Other**

- Nil

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

**COUNCILLOR ASSEMBLIES ATTENDANCE AND AGENDA**  
**8 October 2024 at 1.00pm, Swan Hill Town Hall – Council Chambers**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- DAMA and Migration Update
- Robinvale Hotel
- Councillor / Director question time

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS DISCUSSED**

- Harrison Crescent update
- End of Term Dinner
- Drag strip update

**ATTENDANCE**

**Councillors**

- Cr Nicole McKay
- Cr Stuart King
- Cr Bill Moar
- Cr Ann Young

**Apologies / Leave of Absence**

- Cr Chris Jeffery
- Cr Les McPhee
- Cr Jacquie Kelly

**OFFICERS**

- Scott Barber, Chief Executive Officer
- Bruce Myers, Director Community & Cultural Services
- Leah Johnston, Director Infrastructure
- Bhan Pratap, Director Corporate Services
- Michelle Grainger, Director Development and Planning

**Other**

- Nil

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Nil

## 5 Notices of Motion

## 6 Foreshadowed Items

## 7 Urgent Items Not Included In Agenda

## 8 To Consider and Order on Councillor Reports

### 8.1 Cr Stuart King

#### **Election Period Statement**

The recommended decision is neither a prohibited decision in accordance with section 69 (2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, nor a Significant Decision within the meaning of the Election Period Procedure.

## Conference Report: Australian Local Government Association – the 30<sup>th</sup> National General Assembly

**Date:** 2-5 July 2024

**Location:** Canberra, Australia

### Introduction:

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly is an annual conference that brings together local government representatives from across Australia. The conference provides a platform for knowledge sharing, networking, and discussing key issues and challenges faced by local governments.

The theme for this year was based on “Building Community Trust”.

This report aims to provide an overview of the conference program and highlight the notable speakers and sessions that took place during the event.

### Day 1: Tuesday, 2 July 2024

#### Regional Forum

ALGA President, **Linda Scott**, thanked speakers and sponsors

Welcome to Country (Warren Daley)

ALGA achievements - see website, regional roads and decreasing rate base

Minister Address **The Hon Kristy McBain MP**, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories

- Working with Councils is important
- Regional investment framework
- Swan Hill got a special mention for the regional Precincts and Partnership Program \$650k funding
- Roads to Recovery - doubling Federal contribution is coming
- Housing initiatives; target of 1.2 million homes over next 5 years...enabling infrastructure grants through the Housing Support Fund

#### OPENING CEREMONY

Shadow Minister Address **The Hon Darren Chester MP**, Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Development and Territories

- Supportive of Councils
- Localism will develop Australia to full potential
- Local Government is under-funded and disrespected by other tiers of Government
- Regional Australia is worse off under this Federal Government
- Coalition provided 0.6% of total tax revenue to Councils, reduced to 0.5% under current Government

#### OPENING CEREMONY

Forum Partner Address **Chris Cusack**, General Manager, nbn Local (sponsor)

- 300% growth in data use over the next decade
- Increased adoption and productivity associated with technology
- Fixed wireless upgrades and mapped to satellite service with faster wholesale speeds

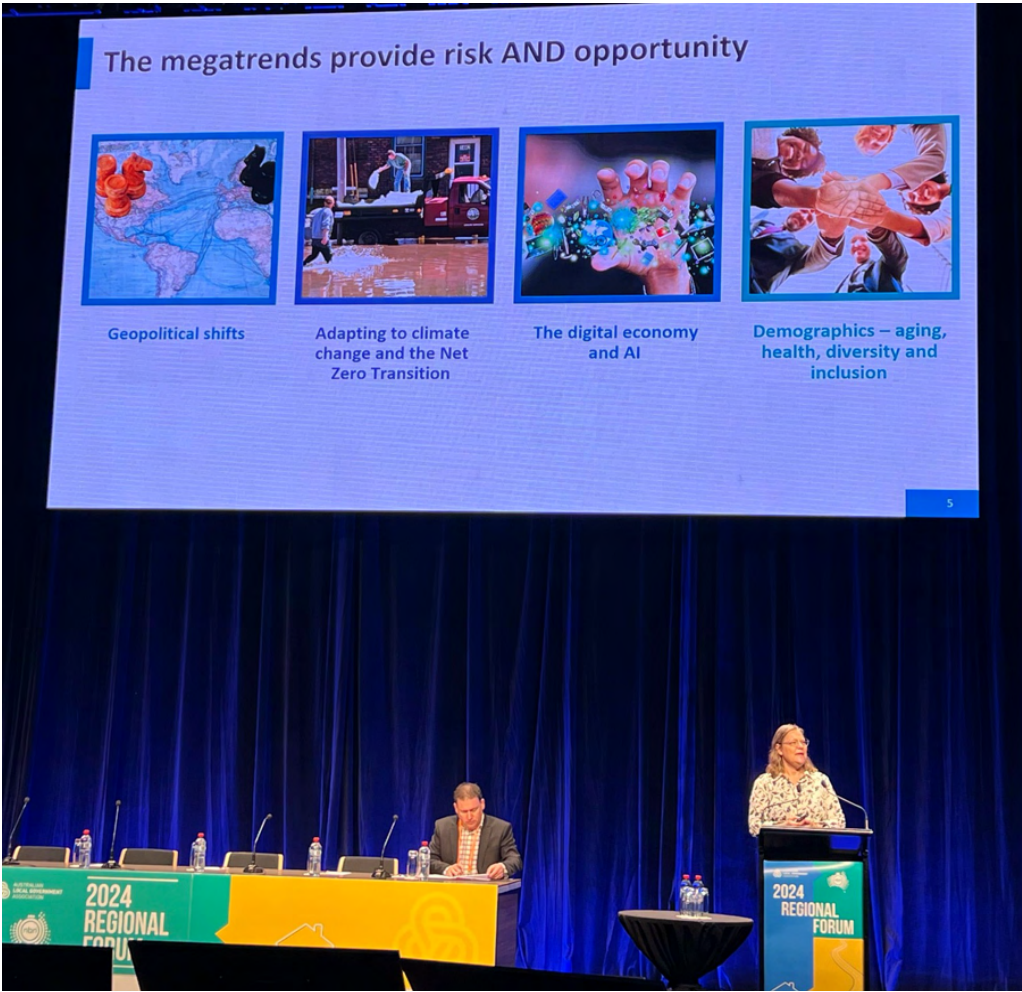
**Panel:** Regional Connectivity and Services

- Ingrid Bishop, Acting Director Infrastructure Services, Shire of Ashburton
- Michael Patterson, Regional General Manager for Tasmania and South Australia, Telstra

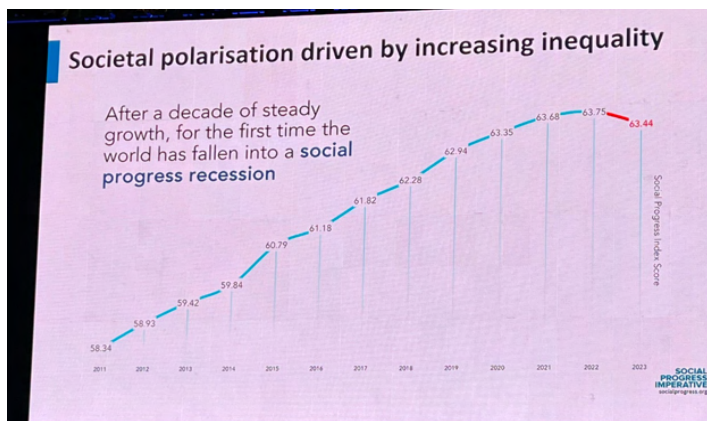
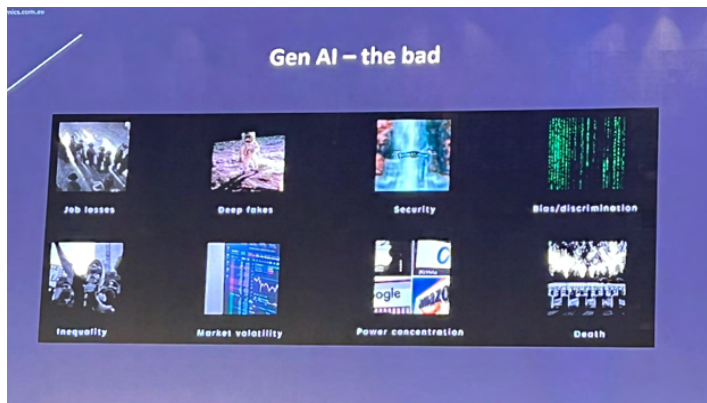
- Darryl Whicker, Chief Executive Officer, District Council of Grant
- A/Prof Lyndon Ormond-Parker, Deputy Chair, First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group
  - Megatrends, risks and opportunities
  - Observing our regions
  - Bringing it together











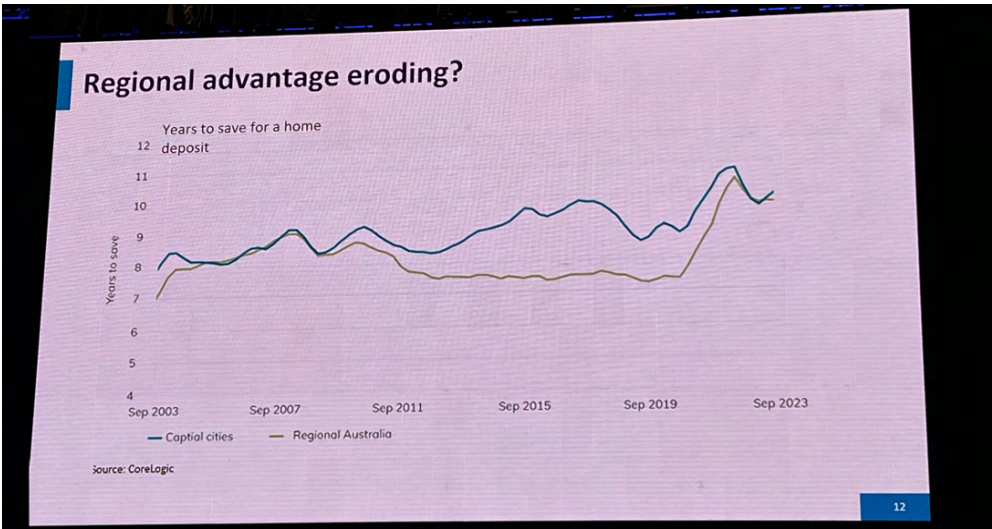
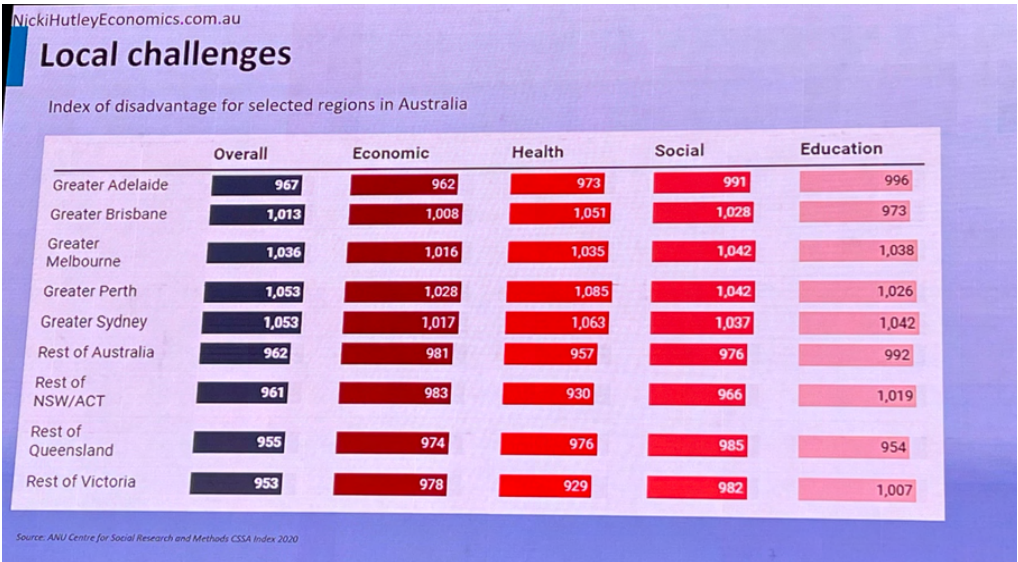
## Still the lucky country?

Australia is well-positioned on the **Global Social Progress Index**, ranking 8th in 2023. (cf ranked 17th on GDP per capita). **But** there are some critical areas of poor performance.

Basic Human Needs	Child Stunting (30) Diet low in fruits and vegetables (75)
Shelter	Dissatisfaction with housing affordability (131 – NB 106 in 2022)
Personal safety	Interpersonal violence (55)
Inclusiveness	Power distributed by sexual orientation (38) Discrimination and violence against minorities (28)
Access to Basic Education	Equal access to quality education (47)
Health and Wellness	Equal access to quality healthcare (39)
Personal Freedom and Choice	Vulnerable employment (36)

Source: Social Progress Imperative 2022 [socialprogress.org](http://socialprogress.org)


[nickhutelleyeconomics.com.au](http://nickhutelleyeconomics.com.au)








### Acknowledging comparative advantage



**Comparative advantage**

- Land – including natural resources
- Labour – education and skills
- Capital – public and private




**Enhancing advantage**


- Trickle down – attract targeted companies to the region, creating ‘anchor tenants’ and spillover benefits
- Trickle up – invest in infrastructure to enhance attractiveness to workers and business

14


### ‘Trickle up’ enablers




**Infrastructure – hard and soft**



**Services**



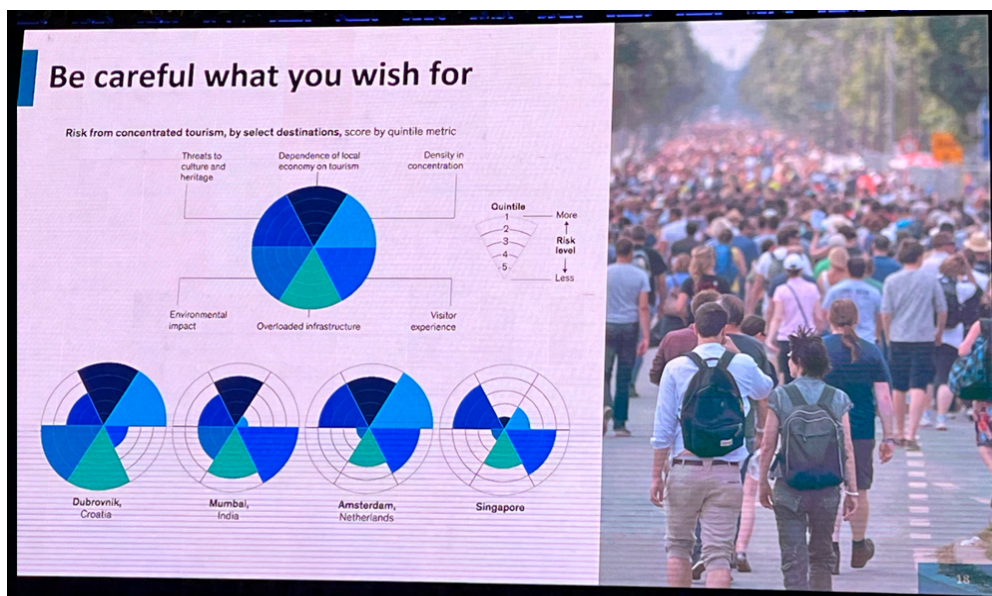
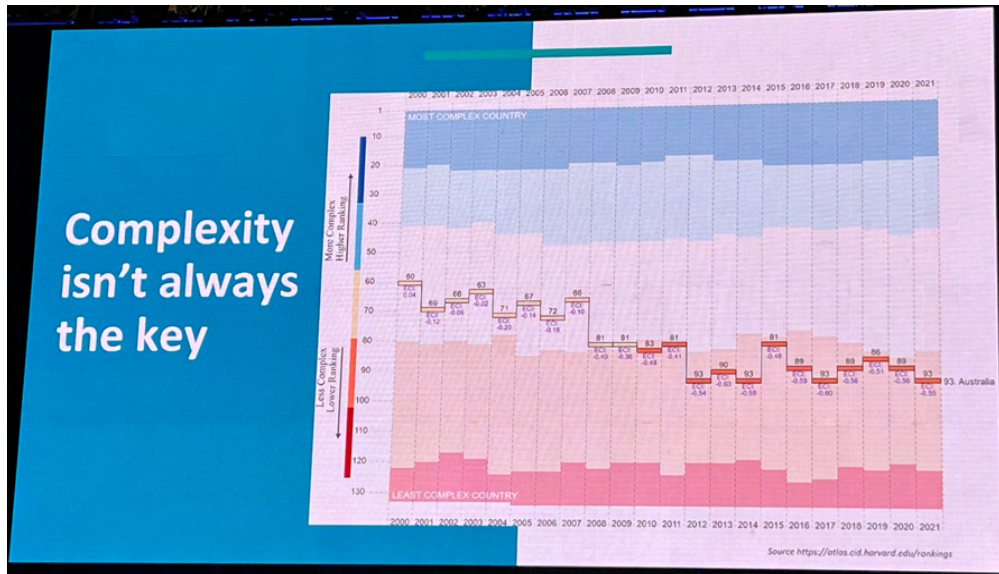
**People and skills**



**Housing & Amenity**

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15



**Panel: State of the Regions**

- Nicki Hutley, Economist
- Morven Cameron, Chief Executive Officer, Lake Macquarie City Council
- Cr Bob Turner, Melton City Council & National Growth Areas Alliance



- New research of State of the Regions, ALGA evidence



Cr King asking the panel about their thoughts on truth and misinformation and censorship, and whether this should be re-framed to be about having the opportunity to express different points of view and debate them.

**Panel: Regional Housing**

- Linda Nieuwenhuizen, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Greater Shepparton
  - Community connect working to make people feel welcome into the country
  - Diversity in housing stock needed (apartments, not houses)
  - Reduced commute time is important
- Jim Nolan, Chief Executive Officer, Pyrenees Shire Council
  - New version of Swan Hill Tower Hill
- Justin Hancock, Chief Executive Officer, Quilpie Shire
  - \$11m investment into council subdivision
  - Staff housing shortages
  - Queensland State assistance to remote areas
- Mark Hodges, Director Development Services, Orange City Council
  - 20 year housing strategy - infrastructure planning
  - Looked at skills shortage
  - Infill policy, affordable housing policy...(20% affordable housing in 24ha development)
  - Discussed location and economy
  - Opportunities- some small lots 6m wide
  - 45,000 people, 85% single house, 79% 3 or 4 bedroom. Need to diversify into terraces, etc.

- After economic return
- Key worker accommodation- probably start build on houses again to attract staff
- 240 houses/yr

Related links;

<https://www.orange.nsw.gov.au/news/council-adopts-new-housing-strategy-asks-for-new-directions/>

**NGA**

**Roads and Transport Session - Federal Department Officers**

- **Sal Petrocchio**, CEO, NHVR

**WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The NHVR aims to engage and work with local governments to understand their current needs and concerns with working with the heavy vehicle industry.

The NHVR's Access team visit local governments on request, and proactively visit when there is a noticeable decline in permit performance.

Together with local government, they manage the access of heavy vehicles to ensure a safe, efficient and sustainable road network for industry.

The NHVR also proactively works with local government for the publication of notices.

A key project that has been supporting local government is the Strategic Local Government Asset Assessment Project (SLGAAP) - an Australian Government funded initiative to optimise heavy vehicle access on the local road networks across Australia.

**PROACTIVELY ENGAGING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The NHVR understands the importance of providing education and proactive work to benefit local government road managers and to ensure safety on our roads.

Our Advanced Customer Support team has undertaken 4 road manager training sessions already this year, focused on portal assistance and portal functionality training for road managers.

The NHVR has five Stakeholder Engagement Officers, located across the country. The team provides local government with regular updates on upcoming notices, and other heavy vehicle related matters that help council officers do their roles.

For the year 2024, the Stakeholder Engagement Team have:

Attended 36 different discussions with 37 different councils and 180 council staff. Topics ranging from access and permits, gazettes and notices, mass, load restraints, and CoR.

Led 13 road manager webinars hosted to provide high level updates to local council - 276 road managers reached.

The NHVR is committed to ensuring we support local government by providing tools, information, systems and assistance to help local road managers do their job.

NHVR teams have undertaken several notable initiatives over the past two years, resulting in widespread benefits for local government across the country.

**WORK WITH STATE AGENCIES**

The NHVR works with state agencies across Australia to ensure consistency of information to local government.

We are making key updates to our National Network Map alongside our state government counterparts, which is improving and simplifying the way road managers access crucial information.

The NHVR has worked in close partnership with Transport for New South Wales (T/NSW) and Queensland Transport and Main Roads (TMR) to transition NSW and QLD networks to the map.

Completing this important piece of work is the first stage of enabling all local governments to propose any network changes directly into the system, using a self- service model.



This level of data integrity means that we can confidently assure both local government and industry that the networks are accurate.

- Most councils are struggling with accelerating costs for road maintenance. City has more support than county
- Federal Government trust Council to do right thing, not tie up Councils in case they do wrong thing with road funding. New program guidelines released.
- Talked about policymakers not understanding rural areas
- Talked about sharing data is useful

Related links;

<https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/about/local-initiatives/safer-local-roads-and-infrastructure-program>

Concurrently Cr King attended the Housing session. (refer to Listening Report – Melbourne Leadership Group.)

#### Key Points

- Housing shortages are an international problem caused by lack of investment over a long period of time.
- Government has not invested into public housing sufficiently since the 1960's.
- Currently very expensive to develop, with a typical house & land package doubling in cost since 2019.
- Cost blowouts due to labour shortages, industrial relations and increased costs of compliance.
- The cost of enabling infrastructure (roads, drainage, etc) is the biggest barrier to development in many areas, particularly regional Australia.
- Direct funding of Local government to create solutions would help alleviate issues in regional Australia.

Then attended MAV Lab launch.

**Day 2: Wednesday, 3 July 2024**

**Opening Ceremony**

The conference commenced with an opening ceremony featuring speeches by prominent government officials and ALGA representatives. The keynote address was delivered by Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. This was the first public address for the 28<sup>th</sup> Governor-General, the key themes of which were community connection, care, kindness, and respect.



Her Excellency spoke about the community and how they know it is local government and local decision making that makes a significant difference in the lives of so many and that's why the theme of building community trust is so important.

Edelman trust barometer 2024 edition reveals that only 52% of people today trust NGOs (not for profit organisations), Government and Media. And that government sadly is seen as less competent and ethical than business but, it is very important to point out that it is local government that is consistently the highest rank level of government when it comes to community trust.

The 2023 Australian cohesion index found that the sense of national pride and belonging in Australia has declined 20% since 2007-2022. Councils understand these trends and are trying to build community trust, pride and a sense of belonging by listening to and representing your communities.

Talked about the gap between young people and Government and work to close the gap. Young people are most often mischaracterized as uninterested in our institutions and they often get a very bad rap which is totally unjustifiable. These young people can teach us so much in order for our democracy to work well. She spoke about the creation of an organisations called YLab a social enterprise that builds capacity of both young people and government to design a better future together bridging the gap between young people and government so local challenges can be talked together. The Young Mayor Program an innovative program that backs young people to take on an active role in the community

through democratically elected youth councils of 11 to 17 year olds in partnership with the local Council and administered by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Her Excellency would like to visit Councils and she also acknowledged ALGA President Linda Scott 4 year term finishing in September.

Minister Address **The Hon Catherine King MP**, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

- Acknowledged councils, new Governor-General and Country
- 537 councils employing 200,000 people
- Reflected on houses, road infrastructure costs, and staffing shortages
- Increasing burden of state governments
- Increased infrastructure supports, doubling Roads to Recovery by 2027/28
- Cost of living pressures
- Growing Regions Program, round 2 shortly
- Thriving suburbs program - guidelines coming this month
- Affordable housing visit in Melbourne with Sally Capp
- Challenges to changing climate - \$100m active transport fund. Expects to be open to Councils. Guidelines coming. (Opportunity)
- Talked about federal inquiry into council financial sustainability. First in 20 years.

Shadow Minister Address **Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie**, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development

- Ministers of the Crown need to hear about community challenges
- Dutton said we should listen, trust, give autonomy back to Local Government and will do so in Government
- Talked about how the Labor government has failed councils and impacts on our communities
- \$23b of road work needed by councils. State of the Assets Report 2024
- Talked about zero emissions nuclear energy, infrastructure challenges

Related links;

<https://alga.com.au/app/uploads/ALGA-National-State-of-the-Assets-Report-2024-final.pdf>

President's Address **Cr Linda Scott**, Councillor, City of Sydney, NSW

- Advocacy to build communities of Australia
- Discussed milestones and advocacy
- Councils are now stepping up as the service providers of last resort when everyone else fails to do what is required by our communities.
- Speaker at tonight's dinner, Luke Gosling, will speak to the Federal government inquiry into Council financial sustainability.
- ALGA research that targeted investment in Councils can increase national output by \$7B!
- Implored attendees to attend the Local Govt report session to learn about this research (useful for advocacy)
- Grattan independent report into roads showed Federal Government not funding enough. Govt the doubled Roads to Recovery in November 2023, which will help.
- Evidence that Federal investment of untied funding into community infrastructure has actually improved condition of some assets. Proves councils used LRCI well.
- Affordable housing challenges.

Related links;

<https://alga.com.au/category/media-releases/>

<https://alga.com.au/presidents-update-1-july-2024/>

<https://alga.com.au/councils-to-boost-national-economy-by-7-billion-with-sustainable-funding/>

<https://alga.com.au/presidents-update-20-november-2023/>

POLITICS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

**Annabel Crabb**, ABC Writer and Presenter

- Discussed GG appointment - Sam Mostyn
- Discussed people's lost value of democratic process
- Changing trends in media, particularly in the age of digital platforms, commercial news outlets can be influenced by commercial interests
- Distinguishing between verbal minority shouting at Councillors and staff should not be the main source of feedback. Actively receiving feedback from a quieter majority is more important and better precedent to be set by Councils.

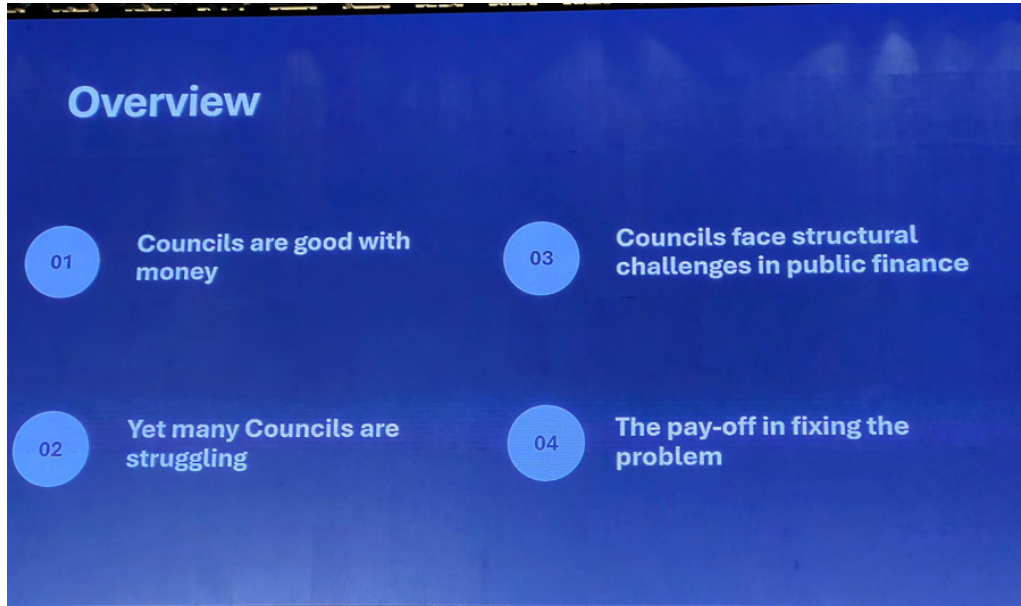


LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPORT

- **Marcus Spiller**, Founding Partner, SGS Economics and Planning

Financial sustainability in Australian local government: An overview  
National General Assembly of Local Government  
July 3 2024





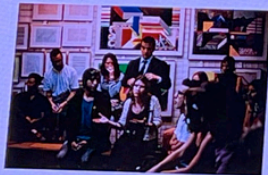
Council is best with money



## Many councils are struggling financially

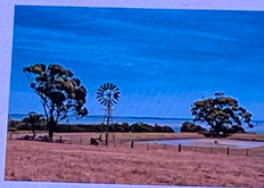
- More than 50% of councils are not raising enough revenue from their own sources to meet operating costs
- Almost half of all councils cannot renew assets
- Financial performance across the sector has deteriorated over the past 5 years
  - Only one in five councils report high financial sustainability on operating surplus, debt service and asset renewal ratios
- Access to basic local government services is at risk in many communities

## What does sound local government finance look like?



### Fiscal autonomy

Councils should have independent access to a tax base commensurate with their service responsibilities



### Fiscal equalization

Where Councils face tax base limits or costs beyond their control, they should be assisted to provide at least a basic level of service to their communities



### Subsidiarity

Beyond fiscal equalization, Commonwealth and States should only interfere with local resource allocation on matters of genuine national or state significance



## Council financial autonomy is ebbing away

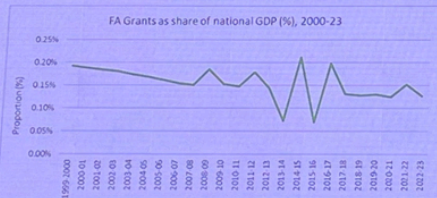
- Councils typically raise between 70% and 80% of their revenue from their own sources
  - A benchmark minimum is 60% (NSW Office of Local Government)
- More than half of NSW councils have own source revenue below this minimum
  - Ten years ago, fewer than 30% of councils fell below this minimum standard
- Growth in own source revenue in local government has flat lined compared to those for other tiers of government over the past 5 years
 

• Commonwealth	8%
• State	5.2%
• Local government	4%

## Fiscal equalization:

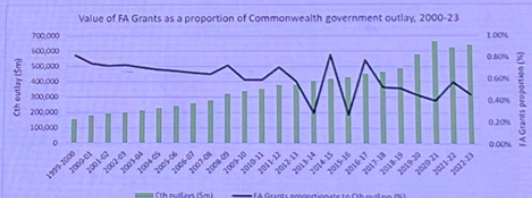
Commonwealth support for fair access to Council services is falling and volatile

FA GRANTS AS SHARE OF NATIONAL GDP, 2000-23



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2024), ABS (2000-23), DITRDOCA (2024).

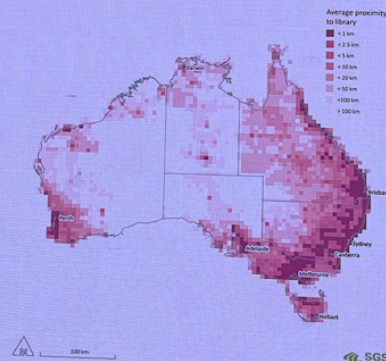
FA GRANTS AS SHARE OF COMMONWEALTH OUTLAY, 2000-23



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2024), DITRDOCA (2024).

## One example: neighbourhood libraries

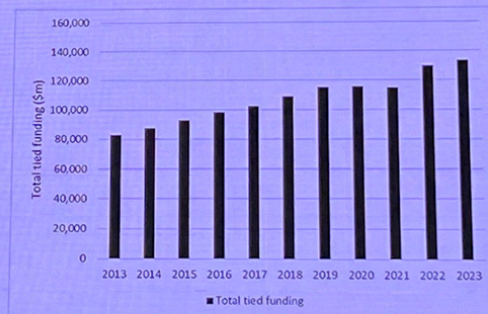
- These are a core and highly valued local government service
- Access is highly variable across Australia
- In Queensland, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of citizens have to travel further than 2.5 klm to access this service – in both the Brisbane metro area and in the regions



## Tied and competitive grants are on the rise

There is a growing tendency for the Commonwealth to influence the spending decisions of other tiers of government.

This is problematic for local government for two reasons. First, compared to block funding, councils are less able to align resources with community priorities. Second, councils may face an unwanted additional cost burden from compliance and reporting requirements.



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2024), ABS Government Finance Statistics (2024). Amounts are GST exclusive. Amounts are calculated from Commonwealth grant expenses to other tiers of government, less the FA Grant amount for each year.

Councils now have to spend more time and money to get money.  
Councils are infrastructure providers. Infrastructure leads to economic output.



## The pay off



- Once embedded in the economy, these savings and efficiencies would boost GDP by more than \$7 billion / year
- This would lift Commonwealth tax revenues by around \$1.7 billion per annum
- ***Putting local government on sustainable financial footing would largely pay for itself***

Commonwealth government would receive roughly a third back from that \$7B, paying for the required investment.

### Local Government Report

- **Steve Verity**, Principal Advisor, Asset Management, IPWEA

IPWEA

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING AUSTRALASIA

National State of the Assets

ALGA National General Assembly - July 2024

Steve Verity, Principal Advisor, IPWEA

## Infrastructure Asset Categories



Roads



Bridges



Buildings &  
Facilities



Parks &  
Recreation



Stormwater



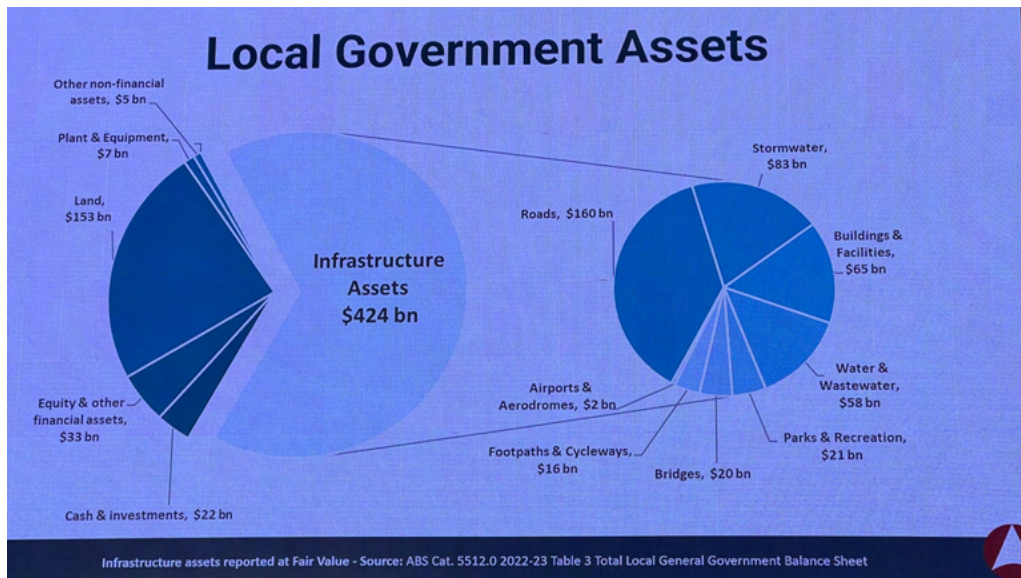
Water &  
Wastewater



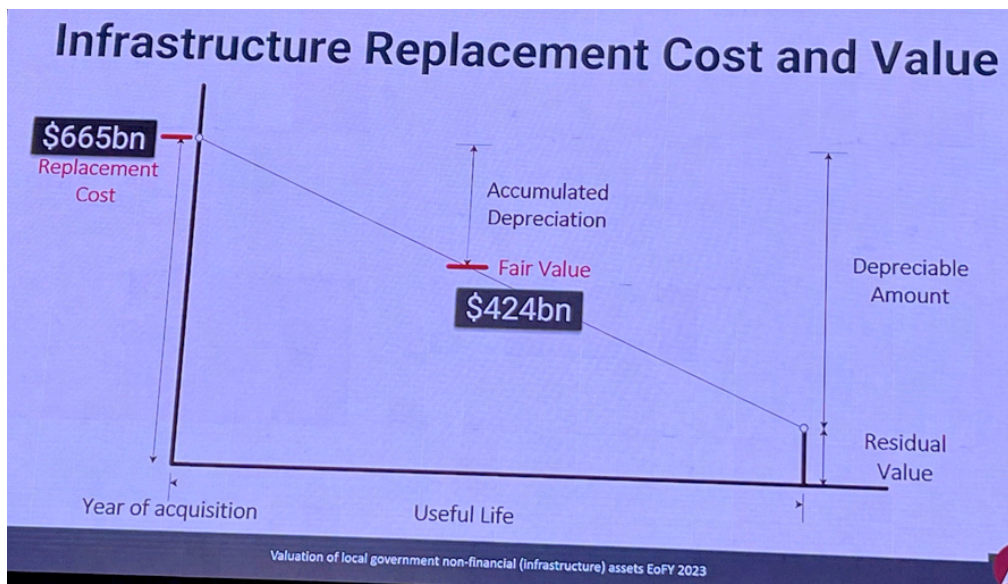
Airports &  
Aerodromes



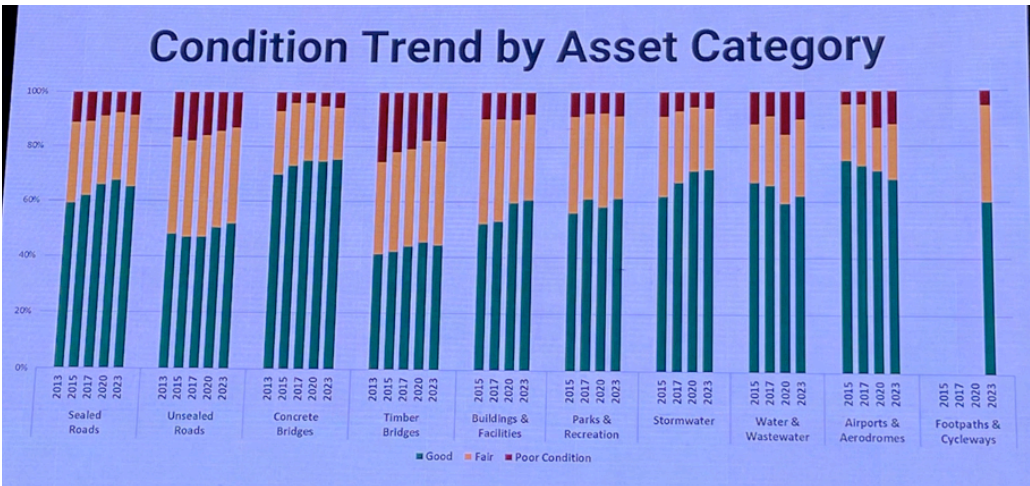
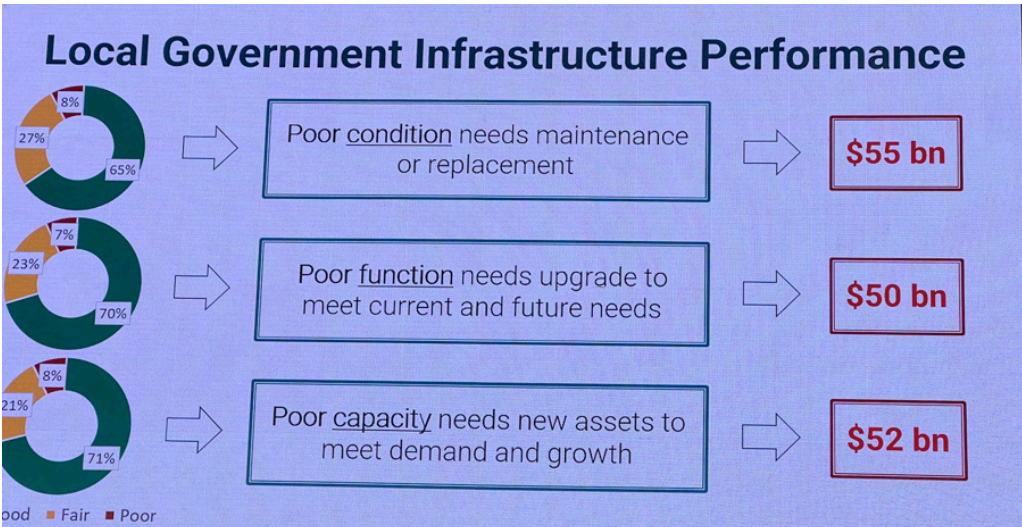
Footpaths &  
Cycleways

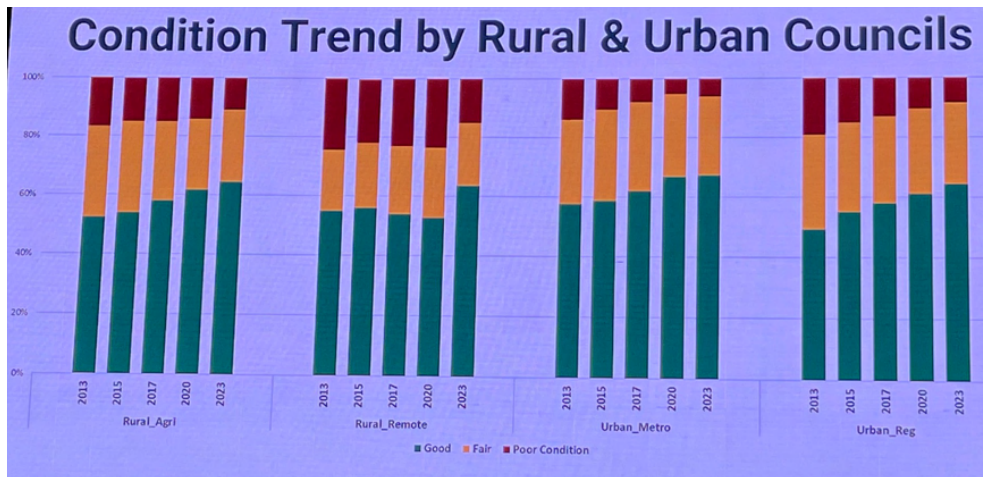


Councils are the most asset intensive level of Government, yet financially constrained.









#### Key finds

- The estimated cost to replace local government infrastructure is \$665bn
- Approximately two-thirds or 65% of local government infrastructure assets are in good condition, function reasonably well and are utilised within their original design capacity
- Around 20 to 30% are in fair condition, function, capacity
- Less than 10% are in a poor state of repair
- Between \$50bn to \$55bn of infrastructure assets are in poor condition, function or capacity
- On average, infrastructure assets appear to be improving over time
- Rural councils hold an 'older' stock of infrastructure assets
- On average infrastructure is lasting longer than originally anticipated

### Importance of strategic planning

- Councils have around 10 times as many assets as income
- Infrastructure assets exist to deliver a service
- They last a long period of time, but not forever
- We need to plan over the long-term to maintain preferred and affordable service levels in a sustainable way.

#### Panel Discussion

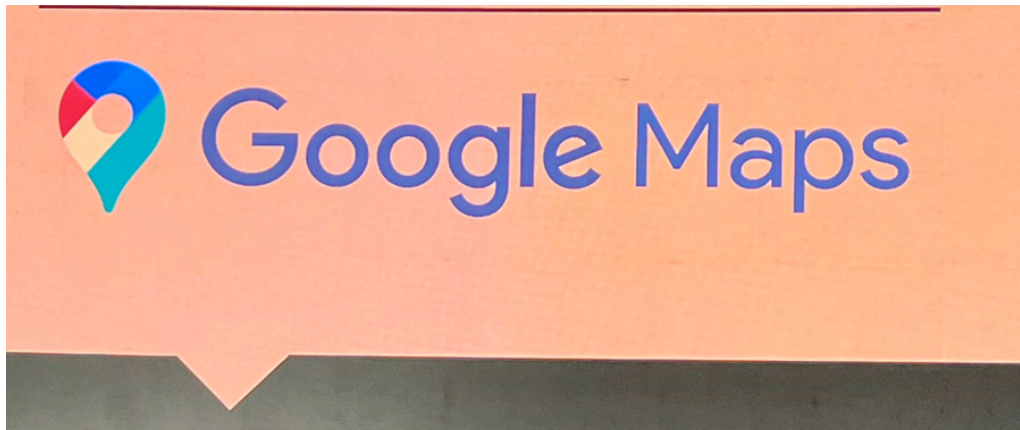
- Mayor Matt Burnett, Gladstone Regional Council



- Cr Darriea Turley AM, City of Broken Hill
- Cr David Clark, Pyrenees Shire Council
  - rural perspective; strategic plan, LTFP, budget and alignment
  - need data
  - LRCIP was a good program, want it back

Mayors attended

- MRGC media release regarding water buybacks
- Meeting with Minister Plibersek's water advisor Michael Wrathall
- Meeting with Dr Ann Webster Member for Mallee



Google maps presentation

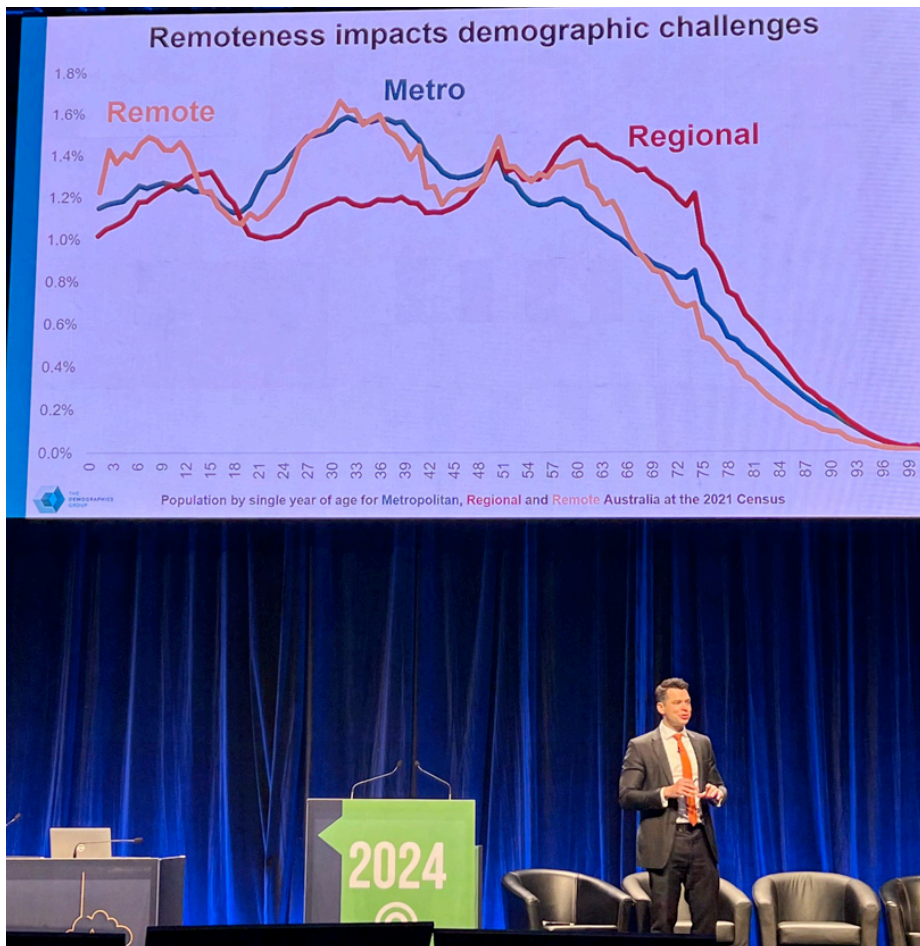
Conference Motions (Mayor) – report available on ALGA website.

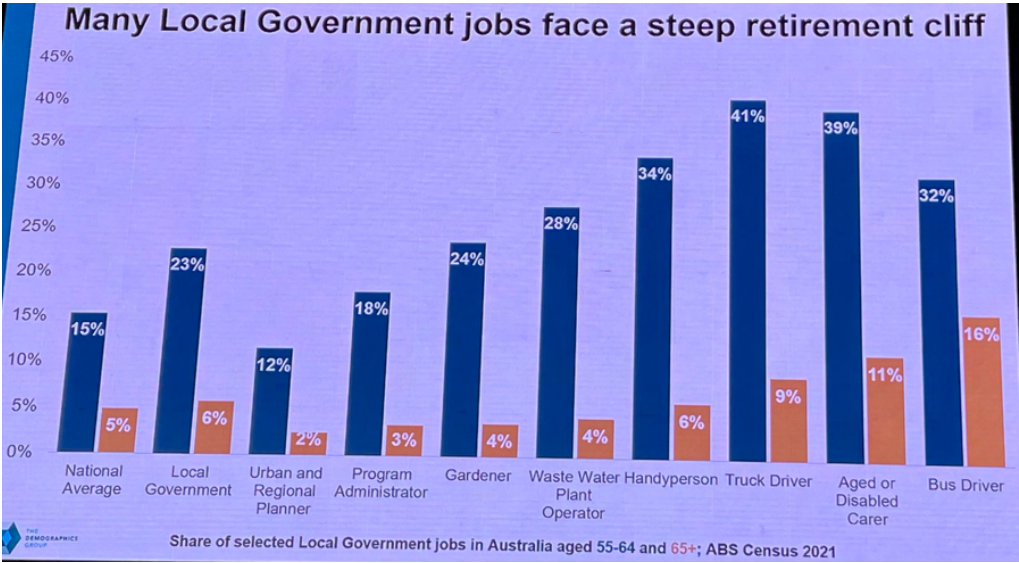
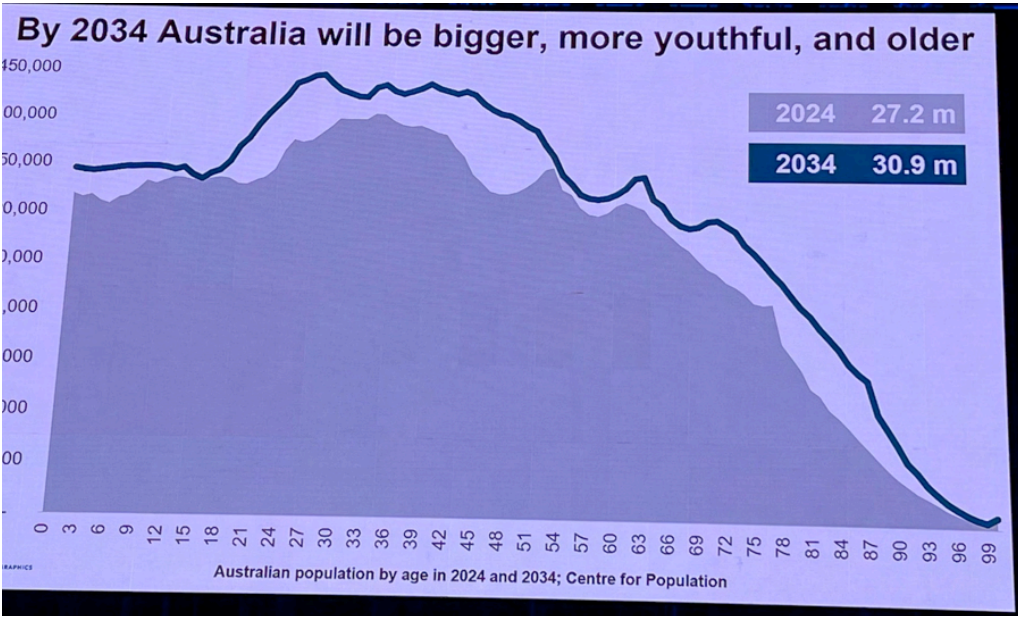
Meeting with Dr Webster

Day 3: Thursday, 4 July 2024

**Demographic Outlook Building Community Trust in Local Government**

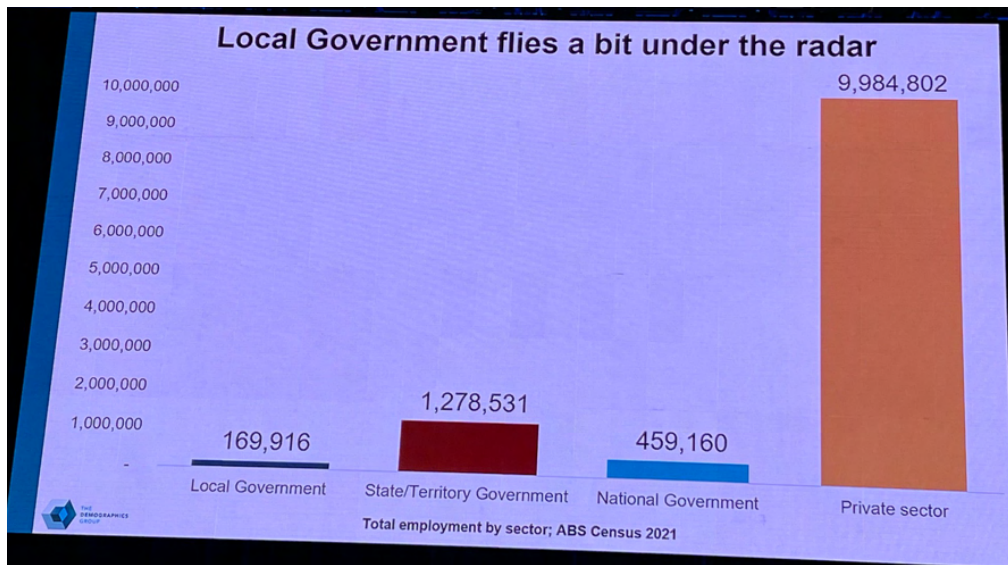
- **Simon Kuestenmacher**, Director and Co-Founder, Demographics Group



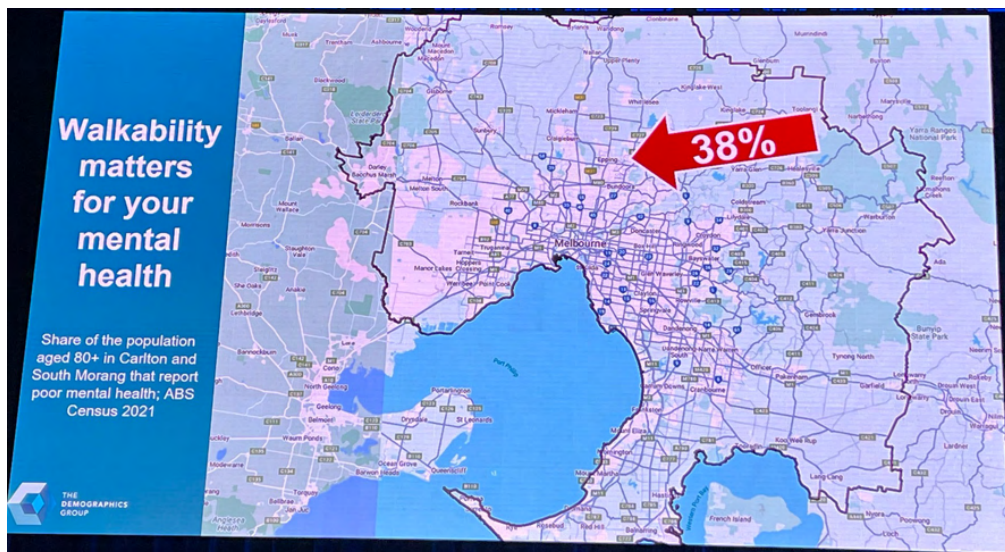


Skills shortages coming

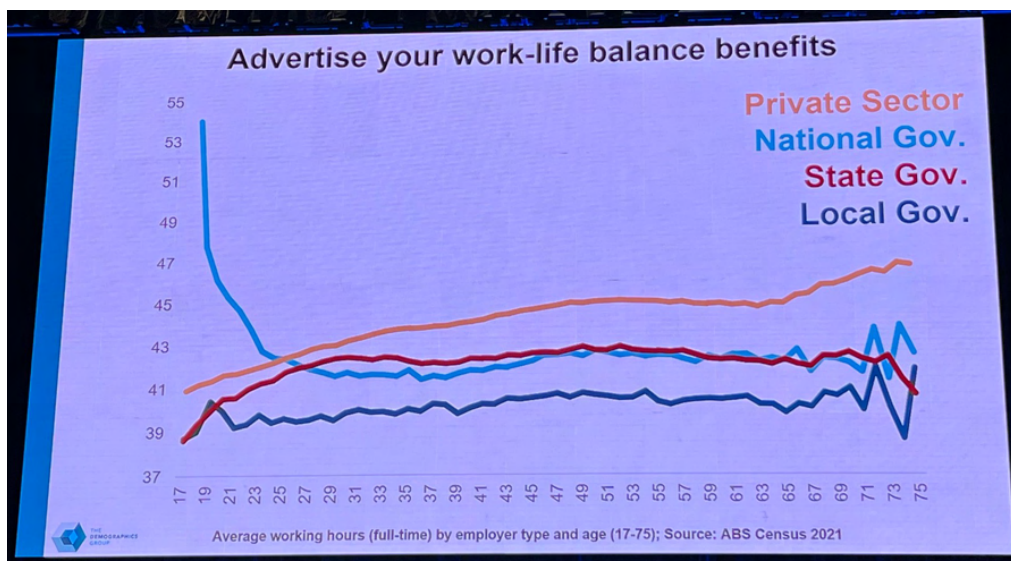




Councils are 1.4% of workforce



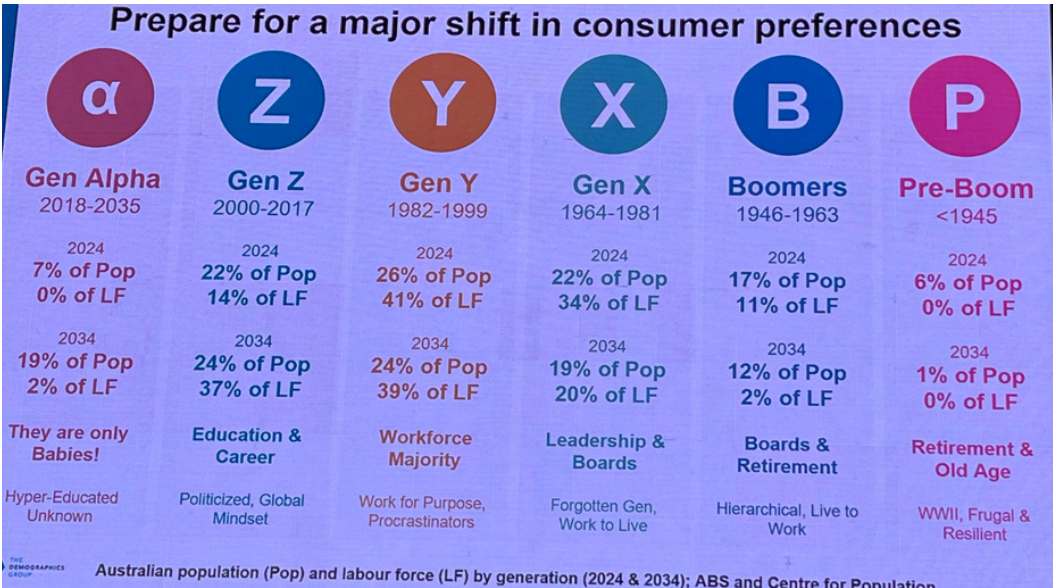
Good mental health and walk ability




Workable hours in LG. Selling point. Millennial women will be interested.

Urban sprawl means Australian city costs are 4 times the equivalent European city.







Recruitment considerations



The pie keeps growing. Australia grows at high rates. Big cities draw the most population. Most of regional Australia relies on jobs to drive population growth. Many remote areas will suffer from the sponge city effect.



The skills shortage is here to stay. To attract staff, be loud and proud about your offer: local employment, great work-life balance, and flexible work arrangements. Relatively affordable housing is crucial to attract low-income workers.



The wheel of time keeps turning. Your population ages rapidly. Loneliness will reach epidemic proportions in the 2030s. You can counteract this through walkable and inclusive planning practices. Make sure to encourage housing development for low-income earners in your region.





**Panel:** Addressing Intergenerational Trust

- **Kate Fielding**, Chief Executive Officer, A New Approach
- **Rebecca McKenzie**, Chief Executive Officer, Glen Eira City Council
- **Ingrid Stonhill**, Chief Executive Officer, Katherine Town Council
- **Professor Valerie Cooms**, Director, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
- **Tahlia Azaria**, Executive Director, Young Mayors at The Foundation for Young Australians
- **Simon Kuestenmacher**, Director and Co-Founder, Demographics Group

**Day 4: Friday, 5 July 2024**

Welcome remarks **The Hon Kristy McBain MP**, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories

- Labor re-established ACLG
- Successful dinner last night
- Importance of Councils
- Importance of these events to work together
- Net zero, needed skills and infrastructure
- Importance of untied funding to communities
- Doubled Roads to Recovery funds

Welcome address **The Hon Anthony Albanese MP**, Prime Minister of Australia



- Spoke about the importance of Councils to community
- Brought forward of Financial Assistance Grants funding
- Constructive engagement this week with Government
- Stream 1 Housing Support Fund
- Enabling Infrastructure Stream now open \$450m.

Related links;

<https://www.miragenews.com/boosting-australias-housing-supply-1269705/>



**Panel #1: Service Delivery, Housing, Communications, Skills and Capacity**

**The Hon Patrick Gorman MP**  
Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister; Assistant Minister for the Public Service

**Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm**  
Assistant Minister for Education; Assistant Minister for Regional Development

**Ms Lisa Rauter PSM**  
First Assistant Secretary, Partnerships and Project Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

**Mr Sam Grunhard**  
First Assistant Secretary, Communications Services and Consumer Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

**Ms Renae Houston**  
First Assistant Secretary, Industry Engagement and Quality Division of Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

**Panel:** Service Delivery, Housing, Communications, Skills and Capacity

- Importance of Councils
- Housing support fund; Stream 2 Enabling Infrastructure

**Panel:** Climate Change and Renewable Energy

## Panel: Climate Change and Renewable Energy

📅 05/07/2024

🕒 11:50am - 12:40pm

☆ Add to Favorites

### Session Overview

The Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy

Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister, Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Renewable Energy

Cr King asked a question of Minister Bowen regarding finding the right balance between chasing renewable goals in unrealistic timeframes vs modifying the targets and goals to ensure better community understanding and engagement and what the plan will actually deliver. As a follow up Cr King also asked about upgrading existing transmission lines where no new social licence is required as supported by a Victoria University report vs the push to construct new transmission lines through productive Victorian farmland.

**Out of session activities** as Government announced water buybacks to commence.

Related links;

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/restoring-our-rivers-trading-strategy.pdf>

**Panel:** Peri Urban Councils and Regional Cities

- The Hon Kristy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories
- The Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention; Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health
- Mr David Mackay, Deputy Secretary, Regional, Cities and Territories Group, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

(Not aligned to Rural Council but attended to understand what strategic growth looks like in high growth Councils.)

- Challenges with rapid and sprawling growth
- Health challenges for remote communities
- Mental health challenges
- No more Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program
- Financial Assistance Grants need to go to Councils that need it, large metros are sustainable- Govt grant process needs fair comparison, for example standard asset deterioration measures
- Discussed link between cost of living (mortgages), mental health, reserve bank and creating a public bank

Close of Event **Minister McBain**

Scott Barber  
CEO 2024



MELBOURNE  
LEADERSHIP GROUP

2024  
NGA

2 - 4 JULY

National Convention Centre  
Canberra



# LISTENING REPORT

2024 National General Assembly

- ✓ Roads & Transport
- ✓ Disaster Resilience & Recovery
- ✓ Energy Transition
- ✓ Housing & Community Infrastructure

## LISTENING SESSIONS OVERVIEW

Over 500 representatives from councils nationwide attended four concurrent listening sessions to share their stories and their community experiences in responding to the policy challenges in four critical areas:

- i) Roads & Transport
- ii) Disaster Resilience & Recovery
- iii) Energy Transition
- iv) Housing & Community Infrastructure.

Many of the representatives present were from councils in rural, regional and remote communities across Australia.

Panels of departmental and non-government policy experts attended as invited guests. Their role was to listen to the voice of local government, the concerns and feedback of participants, and to comment as required on federal government and other initiatives that might assist in challenges being faced in local communities.

The listening sessions were independently facilitated by Melbourne Leadership Group, who compiled this listening report. The comments in this report incorporate both verbal feedback provided by participants, and also written comments in the interactive audience engagement tool, Slido. This report captures the discussion in thematic categories rather than as a chronology.

As the sessions were not designed as problem-solving workshops, the report does not contain recommendations or the endorsed views of participating organisations; rather it is intended to convey to policy-makers the flavour of the conversations and the opinions and feelings of elected officials, their staff, and community members in local government areas.

It is important to note that:

- This report is a summary of the views of attending stakeholders at each listening session.
- The discussions and views raised in these sessions reflect the personal views of the attendees and do not reflect the position of the Australian Local Government Association.
- The discussion primarily reflects the lived experience of attendees and should be viewed as an insight into how each issue is viewed within councils and local communities.
- Any factual inaccuracies are a reflection of the discussion and have not been fact-checked as part of compiling this report.



If there was to be one unifying theme across all four sessions, it would be the importance of coordination and collaboration across all three tiers of government to achieving meaningful outcomes in these critical policy areas.

**Melbourne Leadership Group**

2 July 2024

## ROADS & TRANSPORT

### Survey results and responses

The pre-conference survey results from 36 participants highlighted road construction and maintenance as the major priority for council resources and budgets with regards to roads and transport.

The second priority was road safety, including the Black Spot and National Road Safety Action Programs, followed by active travel and transport, public transport and finally regional transport, heavy vehicles access and urban freight. In relation to road safety, respondents ranked infrastructure planning and investment as the highest priority, with medium priority for vulnerable road users, regional road safety and risky road use.

The invited guests on the listening panel, comprising both departmental and non-government policy experts, responded that the survey results reinforced what they were hearing, particularly around road construction and maintenance being the highest priority. They reported that construction costs and the challenges with road maintenance funding are of interest and the Government has been considering these issues. There had also been commentary from rural areas around resilience, roads and also operational supply chains.

With regard to road safety, invited guests highlighted the strong interest and investment in vulnerable road users and the need for both short and long-term solutions. Trends in road trauma are projecting higher injury rates compared to those of several decades ago, and local government is seeing this as a priority.

### KEY THEMES

#### Road construction and maintenance

Rural roads, particularly those with increasing heavy vehicle road use, are an increasing burden for councils. Repeated flood events create ongoing pressures on road maintenance and the standard of road construction needs to ensure longer lifecycles. Currently the standard of road construction and maintenance is compromised by the funding received. Innovations and new technologies are not readily available or understood by local authorities.

Participants observed that, with the increase in heavy vehicle masses, sizes and volume, the current infrastructure is increasingly inadequate. Regional areas face

specific issues with road suitability for heavy vehicles, bridge replacements, and heavy transport using local roads instead of state routes. Safety concerns were expressed in relation to heavier and longer trucks. Suggestions were made about the need to improve rail freight accessibility to relieve the pressure of heavy vehicles on roads.

Councils in peri-urban high growth areas are increasingly challenged by road construction demands, to relieve congestion and safely manage the mix of cars, freight and public transport. Better planning for freight routes and bypasses for cities and urban areas is required.

### **Impacts of the transition to renewable energy**

The group observed that new emerging industries and the rapid pace of change towards renewable energy is placing increasing heavy vehicle pressure on regional and rural networks, for the construction of renewable energy infrastructure and the movement of the mineral resources needed.

Concerns were also expressed about the implementation and cost implications of electric vehicle infrastructure in regional areas.

### **Funding and budget constraints**

Councils highlighted a significant lack of funding and the impact of budget constraints affecting infrastructure maintenance and upgrades. Competitive grant programs do not seem to address the issue and increased longer term funding is needed.

The unit cost of road construction used by departments for funding was not considered to have kept pace with increases in construction costs, nor the need to upgrade road construction techniques to withstand heavy vehicle access and extreme weather impacts. The speedier processing of funding allocations would ensure more timely distribution following disasters.

Local knowledge of road use is high in regional and rural areas and greater engagement and recognition of this knowledge would assist in better decision making. Councils can provide more information on which stretches of road are degraded or unsafe.

Participants expressed the need for better coordination between levels of government for planning and budgeting for road and transport programs and initiatives.

### **Sharing of knowledge, data and information**

Participants expressed appreciation for the sharing of knowledge, data and information. Ongoing investigations into innovations in road construction are welcomed, but not readily shared or accessible to councils.

Mass transition solutions are considered valuable. Examples of success in various cities were shared. Case studies highlighting heavy transport regulation and approaches between states are also helpful. High productivity vehicle operators can provide useful insights in the design of bypasses and truck facilities.

### **Ideas for the future**

Coordinated and integrated planning and budgeting between all levels of government, based on current data and evidence, would improve the effectiveness of road and transport policies, programs and decision making on priorities.

Improved engagement, end to end thinking and working together is seen to be very beneficial to align approaches. Collaborative approaches to collecting data, setting priorities and assessing the value of investments are needed.

New funding models and frameworks are needed to address overall financial demands, unit cost increases and the changing nature of and patterns of road use and to ensure funding is well targeted to local needs. This includes understanding and aligning planning and budgeting cycles to funding recipients' needs.

Participants observed that opportunities exist for implementing innovations in new technology for road construction and maintenance with longer lasting products. The research work of publicly funded entities could be more fully shared.

Utilising mining waste rock for road pavements could provide significant cost savings and would support the general shift to a circular economy.

New supply chains in regard to mining methods and renewable energy infrastructure and resources could be better understood and monitored, to build longer term approaches for transport infrastructure needs.

Participants learned that the Commonwealth Government is working with states and territories to come up with a strategic prioritised plan.

New modes of public transport such as trackless trams and trains are being trialled and offer more options for growing cities and regions.

Better and more frequent engagement and transparency between local government and federal departments would assist with improving understanding of specific and diverse community needs and demands. Options and local solutions can be explored with case studies and examples of what has been trialled and is delivering benefits.

It was suggested that regional and rural local government road maintenance crews could be deployed for pothole repairs on state and national roads. This would provide a more immediate response and also a revenue stream back to councils.

Finally, federal department staff were encouraged to visit regional and rural councils to understand local needs first hand.

## DISASTER RESILIENCE & RECOVERY

### Survey results and responses

Prior to the session, a survey collected data on the current issues councils were facing in disaster resilience and recovery. The responses of 34 people highlighted similar issues to those discussed during the session. These included the critical importance of betterment compared to like-for-like replacement of infrastructure, better access to funding and quicker timeframes, the level of administrative burden, and the need for improved mental health and wellbeing support and better communication.

The listening panel noted that the current response to natural disasters is based on historical methods that have been used for some time. Due to the increased frequency of disasters, the downtime for recovery is shrinking and the resilience of communities to deal with these events is weakening.

There is recognition that there needs to be a paradigm shift in our mitigation strategies before disaster events, and how communities can become more resilient to withstand adversity both during and after an event.

The panel emphasised the importance of resilience and innovation becoming mainstream in disaster planning and response. Funding arrangements that are a product of a decade ago urgently require updating to address the present challenges that communities are now facing.

### KEY THEMES

#### Infrastructure replacement and improvement

A dominant theme in participant discussions was building for betterment and its role in disaster mitigation. It was noted by the listening panel that mitigation and betterment needs to be incorporated as a preferred approach in future.

One council raised an example of rebuilding infrastructure back to a like-for-like state. The local community believed this infrastructure would not survive future disaster events and that front-line workers would face blame and criticism from their community about the insufficient strength and resilience of that infrastructure.



In 2022-23, one council had severe floods as a result of dams being at capacity. Participants commented that smaller councils do not have the capacity to respond to this scale and frequency of disaster events, and their ability to plan for and fund betterment is quite limited.

The limited resources that remote councils have access to was noted. Some remote councils relied on contract workers to do repair and recovery work. Many of the required tasks are put on hold when there is no workforce available. The workforce population in some areas is transient, which is also creates the linked challenge of mobilising grassroots efforts to respond to disaster events.

Another participant noted that a future mitigation strategy should be conceived at a national level. The current model is perceived to result in communities being pitted against one another, which undermines a collaborative approach to mitigation.

Communication infrastructure was highlighted as an area for improvement, particularly in some coastal, rural and remote areas, which can get cut off from the urgent information needed to respond to disasters.

## **Funding**

One of the biggest issues that was repeatedly raised by participants was the need for building for betterment. Mitigation works were seen as critical in helping communities build resilience due to the increased frequency of disasters they were responding to. There was a consistent message that building for betterment was heavily reliant on being able to access funding quickly, in order to meet immediate needs.

Some participants felt that consistency was not applied in the recognition of disasters. There were observations that having the 'right type of fire or flood' was needed in order to access appropriate funding. Receiving some types of disaster or emergency funding was only possible when disasters were recognised retrospectively after a second, well-publicised disaster hit months later.

The listening panel noted that the current funding model was an outdated product and that models needed to evolve. The panel mentioned that there was access to betterment funding and that there are ways of getting this to councils. There is a need to understand the weak points in the system and to better network.

Participants felt that financial relief for both businesses and individuals needed to be streamlined. An example raised was that farms and other businesses needed to spend government support funding first, then apply for reimbursement. This places

huge strains on the cashflow of some businesses. The conditions attached to funding needs to consider these consequences.

Several individuals raised issues around the access to Centrelink payments needed during disaster events. The administration required to set up a Centrelink profile with the agency was onerous for many, and it meant individuals did not apply or didn't receive funding in time when they needed it most.

### **Coastal adaptation**

Another need that was identified by multiple councils across multiple states was the need for a National Coastal Adaptation Plan.

Some councils expressed urgency, as many townships in some councils were islands and forecast to be permanently inundated by rising sea levels. It was also expressed that listening to residents with lived experiences was key to informing this plan, and truth-telling was important in this area.

### **Mental health and wellbeing**

It was recognised by the listening panel that this group had collective lived experience of trauma in times of disaster.

Due to the increased regularity of disasters, community members are being impacted more frequently by something that used to be a once in a lifetime event. The resilience of communities to bounce back from these events is heavily reliant on the mental health support both during and after these events. There was consistent sentiment that council staff and community members are exhausted and there is a need for increased mental health and wellbeing support.

The strain on councils and individual staff members was also recognised, as many of these people were also experiencing personal impacts of these events themselves.

The ongoing need for funding for mental health and wellbeing support was key to resilience and recovery efforts and needs to be a high priority when considering funding allocations.

### **First responders and volunteers**

A key issue that was raised multiple times by the group was the mental health and wellbeing for first responders and volunteers. This support needed to be ongoing and not just during a disaster and its immediate aftermath.

It was observed that over past few years, more than 60,000 volunteers and staff have left the emergency services system, resulting in a significant generational gap in the volunteer cohort. There is an urgent need to find a way to get people to respond to these disasters.

### **Administrative load**

Many of the participants mentioned that the administrative load on councils is onerous, especially for small councils. There are not the resources or capabilities available to meet the administrative requirements currently demanded.

One council shared the example of the process to repair and restore roads, which required the measurement of every pothole in order to get funding. Grant funding of \$6m was awarded, however, \$1m of this was spent on administrative costs alone. A more streamlined approach to reporting repairs and to reducing this administrative load is needed.

### **Insurance**

Insurance was widely recognised a challenge for most communities affected by disaster, especially those in rural and regional areas. Due to the increase in natural disasters globally, and supply chain issues, the price of insurance is increasing worldwide.

There was consistent sentiment that insurance prices needed to be equitable for families. Another issue affecting insurances prices for remote families was that some remote communities don't have their own postcodes, and consequently these residents use the postcode of the nearest township, which had higher risk profiles and therefore higher premiums.

Structural mitigation was raised as a potential strategy for lowering insurance costs. Working with local brokers, who know the local area well, would be preferable to dealing with global companies.

It was acknowledged by both the participants and the panel that the insurance issue is complex, and that the current approach needed to be 'flipped on its head.'

### **Communication and collaboration**

Whilst the pre-event survey did not highlight broad public awareness campaigns as a high priority, it was noted this was still an important factor to the resilience effort.

It was identified that more work needed to be done to work with indigenous communities to share local knowledge of the area, as well as helping those in remote areas to be more prepared for disasters. More isolated communities may have increased vulnerabilities during a disaster.

Some councils observed that communication channels within their communities were good, however, during a disaster these channels needed to be reliable and online to be effective. Some coastal councils said that due to infrastructure issues, communication efforts were difficult as these channels were sometimes down.

The panel shared information about new handbook guides to assist in the communication efforts during disasters.

### **Natural environment and wildlife**

It was observed that due to changes in climate, extreme weather events, and population growth, some bushland areas are no longer safe to live in. The vulnerability profiles of natural environments need to be considered when housing and other community infrastructure is situated.

The care and management of affected wildlife post bushfires and floods was raised as an issue that needed more awareness and support. Much wildlife suffers severe injuries that will eventually prove fatal, and efforts are needed to support injured wildlife humanely in these events.

### **Things working well**

Some councils acknowledged the positive outcomes that had come out of the disasters that they had been through, including the ability to adapt to the new challenges the world now faces.

Examples included having sub-committee groups in local townships as the go-to people on the ground in disaster-prone areas to provide information and communication during a disaster. Another example shared was a council appointing a Disaster Director who was solely focussed on the recovery effort and was not distracted by the day to day, business as usual work of council.

Many participants reinforced the need for a collective and collaborative effort between all levels of government and communities, and acknowledged that every council is unique and that therefore, there can be no one size fits all approach.

## ENERGY TRANSITION

### Survey results and responses

Responses were received from 24 people to the pre-conference survey.

Participants were asked to choose the priorities for their council area in the energy transition and net zero space. Pathways to transition to net zero for both council operations and the community was the highest priority identified.

Responses were spread for community engagement and retrofitting of existing buildings, ensuring the planning system is capable and effective of supporting the net zero transition, and supporting new technologies and innovation. The response to the fair transition of replacing fossil fuels industries, and building new renewable and transition lines, was slightly more polarised, with some respondents rating this as a high priority and others rating it the lowest.

The majority of respondents indicated an intention to make a submission for round 2 funding for the Community Energy Upgrades Fund Program.

### KEY THEMES

The broader group discussion revolved around the transition to renewable energy and its impact on local communities. Key themes included the need for equitable access to renewable infrastructure, especially in rural areas; the importance of tailored, place-based approaches rather than one-size-fits-all solutions; the urgency of developing clear transition pathways; balancing energy efficiency with renewable energy production; concerns about the economic impact on local communities, particularly job losses in fossil fuel industries; the need for better storage solutions and grid planning; the importance of community benefits and social license; challenges in funding and infrastructure development for local councils; and the potential for local manufacturing and economic opportunities in the renewable sector.

In imagining future policies and possibilities for Australia's energy transition, the discussion explored setting aside ideological differences to prioritise national interests, increasing renewable energy usage, and depoliticising the energy sector to build public trust and understanding.

Participants observed a disconnect between younger generations and cost-of-living concerns, particularly regarding regulating reducing emissions and impact. There

was support for better-funded energy programs, investment in energy storage solutions for worst-case scenarios, and the development of a comprehensive national grid masterplan.

There was a strong emphasis on collaboration between different levels of government, knowledge sharing, and the need for a comprehensive national energy transition plan that considers environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

To enable governments, communities and councils, the dialogue highlighted coordinated efforts across different levels of government and stakeholders, and emphasising collaboration, transparency, and community engagement will be important to successfully navigating the energy transition towards a sustainable future.

### **What's working well**

Notable insights that arose during the dialogue included several innovative energy initiatives with remarkable success and no direct financial investment.

The establishment of a virtual battery system was discussed; one that allows residents' batteries to be used by the community when homeowners are away.

Through a white-labelled bulk fuel program, residents can purchase solar panels and batteries at competitive prices with no upfront costs, repaying through energy savings. This program is evolving into a virtual power plant for energy sharing.

Participants report that these initiatives have been highly successful and positive, requiring only their time and effort to coordinate. The community also offers bulk-buy electric chargers for homes.

The group considered the potential impact of a focus on reducing their own power consumption first and transitioning to renewable sources internally.

### **The role of local government**

A recurring theme throughout the conversation was the crucial role local councils play in leading the transition to renewable energy, requiring a bespoke approach for different communities as challenges vary across regions. Critical aspects raised included comprehensive planning, lobbying for federal support, addressing cost shifts, the importance of building social license through community engagement and the challenges when social license is expended through factors outside of the council's control, such as energy transmission lines.



Several individuals highlighted the need to understand and target major emission sources, adopt end-to-end approaches, and prioritise local procurement.

Challenges involve coordinating infrastructure for diverse needs, embedding circular economy principles, and improving inter-governmental coordination.

It was noted that the focus has shifted towards planning in recent months, emphasising energy efficiency, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among local government areas.

The conversation touched upon the key to success being a collaborative approach to navigating change, leveraging Australia's resources, and ensuring genuine community engagement to address concerns and build social acceptance for renewable energy initiatives.

Participants also observed that regional councils sometimes struggle to recruit enough staff to complete important strategic transition documentation such as climate plans and risk assessments. This is an important area worthy of funding.

Finally, participants expressed frustration that some councils are not able to charge fair council rates to renewable electricity generators and that millions of dollars in rates were therefore being pushed to communities. Some felt that without councils being able to levy rates on crown land, there was no benefit to local government from the presence of wind turbines.

### **The role of federal government**

Participants questioned whether federal government departments were working together on the intersection of various policies that impact energy transition. They queried how the federal government might better support investment by local governments in the human capacity to participate in the transition.

More direct suggestions included a household battery program being funded by the federal government to take advantage of abundant rooftop solar power, and the development of a federal government policy on the end of life treatment of renewable components such as wind turbine blades and solar panels.

Participants were particularly keen to avoid the issue of cost shifting on to local government.

### **Community context and impacts**

Various perspectives were offered highlighting the complex challenges and opportunities surrounding Australia's energy transition. There was a strong emphasis on the need for targeted, place-based approaches that respond to local community needs, particularly in regional areas.

While renewable energy development faces obstacles, including land use conflicts and transmission infrastructure impacts on farmland, there was recognition of the potential for domestic manufacturing to fill employment gaps left by fossil fuel industries.

The conversation acknowledged the urgency of addressing climate change, with Australia potentially facing severe consequences if action is delayed. However, concerns were raised about job losses and the economic impacts in communities reliant on traditional power sources.

Participants called for energy market regulators to act more quickly reliably to approve or disallow generation and storage projects, and for a greater investment in Australian-made technologies and manufacturing capabilities, particularly in areas like battery production and software development, to capitalise on the economic opportunities presented by the energy transition.

Other participants observed 'consultation fatigue' that flowed from multiple renewable energy providers trying to 'woo' regional communities. Some felt that the developers of solar and wind farms were disinclined to exhibit goodwill to communities and were more focused on profits.

One participant felt that the community impact of renewable energy developments was one cost to balance in the face of broader cost of living challenges. Another participant thought that an appropriate offset to the community impact was the granting of free electricity to communities around large scale projects.

### **Energy itself**

During the discussion, the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in the energy transition were discussed. Highlighting the importance of energy storage and the need to focus on reducing consumption overall, participants felt that energy efficiency and storage is as crucial as the energy source itself.

The group observed that renewable energy, while promising, faces challenges with predictability and storage, leading some to question if net zero can be achieved

without nuclear power. Concerns were also raised about the sustainability of battery production, wind turbine blades and solar panel lifecycles. Some participants felt that wind and solar energy is as only as good as the weakest battery.

The discussion touched on the complexities of centralised versus distributed infrastructure, the oversupply of solar energy during midday, and the need for universal electric vehicle charging standards.

Attendees shared potential solutions for exploration such as bulk purchasing for communities, local energy generation and consumption, and finding ways to utilise excess midday energy.

A recurring theme throughout the conversation was that the energy transition is not just about achieving net zero, but also about ensuring the prosperity, safety, and security of Australians in a global context.

### **Community benefits**

Participants shared that the transition to renewable energy presents significant opportunities, but there's a pressing need to ensure its benefits reach everyday households, communities, and regions directly impacted by the change.

Attendees addressed the substantial potential for community benefit, however they flagged concerns about the current renewable rollout and the distribution of advantages. Issues discussed include the lack of financial returns to local government areas, despite increased infrastructure demands, particularly in areas targeted for large-scale projects like offshore wind farms.

There was a call for more transparent and effective benefit-sharing mechanisms, including free or discounted power for residents. The transition is seen as an environmental issue, and crucial for economic and social sustainability. However, others in the group shared that the current approach isn't sufficiently supporting widespread manufacturing growth or providing adequate structures for community benefit.

The impact on land use was acknowledged, where in some cases valuable agricultural land may be sought for renewable energy production which could be located elsewhere. The desire to protect land for its highest and best use was emphasised. Councils were keen for land use policies and community benefit funding models to be upheld, and for state government policy to assist in ensuring that development proponents abide by council guidelines.

Participants observed that improving access to benefits for constituents and securing social license through tangible community benefits are considered fundamental to the success of this transition.

One participant observed that the clear benefit to communities from the transition to cleaner energy is a planet that is habitable for humans.

### **Changing the narrative**

Another area of challenge explored during the discussion was the importance of having a clear vision for the future of energy and community development overall, as well as an underpinning narrative. The opportunity to change the narrative and language around the transition and renewable energy could be impactful.

A participant suggested that we should not be constrained by current limitations, but instead focus on defining the ideal future state we want to achieve. The conversation highlighted the need to shift the perspective from simply reaching net-zero emissions to considering the broader economic and social implications of energy transition.

The group stressed the importance of empowering communities to determine their own goals and the kind of life they want to build. The discussion also touched upon looking to other countries leading in this area, suggesting that there are valuable lessons to be learned from their experiences.

The conversation identified the need to broaden the dialogue beyond technical energy solutions to encompass a more holistic view of community development, quality of life and complexity.

## HOUSING & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

### Survey results and responses

The pre-event survey was completed by 45 people and showed that the provision of public and social housing was the highest concern among respondents, with nearly half of the respondents selected this as the most important issue.

This was followed by the capacity of the council workforce, the provision of financing through private, individual and institutional investment, and the capacity of the local construction industry.

Around 30% of councils would be making a submission on behalf of the council to the Housing Support Program. When asked about the Thriving Suburbs Initiative, 53% of participants responded that they will make an application when it opens.

Survey respondents also commented on the responsiveness of federal funding models to local needs, the coordination of multiple tiers of government, taxation arrangements, new housing models, market intervention, and the differing needs of rural and remote areas.

The listening panel noted that the survey results reflected a wide range of issues that are integral to the daily policy work of departments, highlighting the extensive reach of various departments to address housing policy.

The differing challenges across regional, rural and remote areas showcase the diverse range of challenges which face policy makers. Despite these differences, there are common threads, such as the importance of aged care and the goal of keeping people in their homes as long as they desire.

The panel also discussed sustainability concerns, considering climate and disaster resilience in housing planning, and the need for active transport connections to reduce car dependence.

A perennial issue noted by the panel is the need to increase exposure for Government programs within communities in order to incorporate community ideas and lived experiences.

The panel recognised the importance of increasing social housing, including income-based rents, key worker housing, and affordable housing, with the budget set to expand social and affordable housing over the next five years.

However, the panel also pointed out several roadblocks to delivering the expected number of homes. The actual number being delivered is lower than predicted, with a productivity decline in the industry due to labour shortages and retiring tradespeople. Regulatory issues and increased building costs adds further pressure.

Private investment in housing is declining due to these rising costs and rising interest rates. The panel mentioned that while there is a target of building 40,000 houses, only about 20% might be realised if these issues were not addressed.

Investment in social housing is starting to increase, but it is sometimes viewed as a something governments fund only in better economic times. The panel suggested that 1 in 10 houses should be socially affordable, emphasising the need for long-term commitment to building social and affordable housing and more partnerships.

The federal government was commended for prioritising housing, even at a challenging economic time. It was observed that meeting targets is difficult and noted that the housing crisis is an international issue, not solvable by pressuring local governments alone.

The private sector alone cannot deliver the predicted housing numbers; both private and government sectors must collaborate. Governments will need the right tools and planning capabilities to do this.

## KEY THEMES

### Cost of housing

The rising cost of housing was a consistent theme throughout the discussion. Participants observed the multifactorial reasons driving the cost increases.

Labour shortages have an impact on housing costs. Due to these shortages, project timelines are often inaccurate, leading to increased expenses. Subcontractors are charging higher rates and taking longer to complete projects, further driving up overall costs. Industrial relations issues and enterprise bargaining outcomes have added to expenses, with some agreements causing a 20% rise in costs and 100 days of paid non-working time.

Additionally, the cost of regulatory compliance has surged, requiring more administrative workers. Meanwhile, the rising material costs due to restricted resource extraction and freight challenges add to construction difficulties and cause overall input costs to rise.



## **Workforce**

The group discussed the significant impact of a tight workforce. Long-term solutions proposed included encouraging more people to enter trades, advocating for skilled migration, and prioritising trades through government funding to support work experience programs.

Participants highlighted a reluctance for builders to take on apprenticeships due to increasing and time-consuming administrative and legislative requirements. The group discussed ways to make these processes more appealing, such as the Apprentice Incentive Review, which simplifies the process. There was a suggestion that the government could consider covering the costs between trades and training companies.

The discussion also highlighted the gender imbalance in trades, emphasising the potential workforce that could be tapped by encouraging more women to enter the construction sector. To make this successful, the provision of childcare and addressing the stigma of hiring women would require action.

The shortage of tradespeople in regional areas potentially underscores the need for federal subsidies to attract apprentices and enhance TAFE programs. Increasing wages for tradespeople, especially carpenters, could be key to encouraging both new entrants and mature workers to join the industry.

## **Social housing provision**

Participants observed that integrating social housing into existing communities presents significant challenges, especially when there is local resistance. Overcoming negative perceptions is crucial to normalising the need for a diverse range of housing options to ensure everyone has access to shelter.

Some best practices for community engagement were shared. Early community involvement in the design process was raised as a way to address this issue. By fostering partnerships between local councils and communities, and involving them in the housing design phase, residents could better understand the planning and thought behind social housing projects. Building relationships and openly discussing social housing could help community members see that social housing residents are a diverse group, and that social housing does not necessarily lead to community challenges, unlike the problems caused by homelessness.

The panel acknowledged the audience's knowledge and expressed a desire to partner with them to showcase the benefits of such partnerships, and the benefits of social housing for local communities.

The importance of collaboration between public and private sectors to facilitate the delivery of social housing was also emphasised. There is an opportunity for the private sector to better understand the constraints faced by the public sector and vice versa. Inclusionary zoning requirements for the private sector to meet would be integrated into land purchase costs, as has occurred in London, if governments applied these policies consistently. Participants also cautioned against the privatisation of public housing over time.

### **Coordinating across tiers of government**

The involvement of local, state and federal government was discussed at length throughout the session. While it was noted that the federal government is involved in housing more than ever, ambitious housing targets will only be met if the effort between levels of government is coordinated and collaborative.

The group discussed how to align state governments to support federal funding for housing projects, without reducing state contributions as federal funding increases.

Participants also highlighted the challenges of the regulatory burden on developers and builders. The risk aversion of decision-makers at local, state, and federal levels sometimes delays crucial decisions, which hinders progress. All levels of government need to expedite decision-making to meet housing targets.

Concerns were raised about how states manage federal funds for social housing, sometimes taking out a portion for themselves, thereby reducing overall funds available for housing. The panel noted that new funding agreements have an outcomes framework to ensure states report spending and progress transparently.

Direct funding to local governments was discussed as an alternative to competitive grants, which often do support innovative approaches. There could be more trust placed in local councils to deliver what is needed for their communities and potentially become their own housing providers.

Engaging local builders and creating circular housing economies could yield significant results, as evidenced by local councils producing multiple houses with limited funding. Joint home-building vehicles and special purpose vehicles were discussed to access larger funding pools and bring in necessary skills.

## Taxation

Taxation policies significantly impact housing affordability and availability. Avenues for reform suggested by participants include changing negative gearing laws to discourage viewing homes purely as investments, which could help stabilise the housing market. Tax reforms could also enhance housing mobility, allowing individuals to move into suitable housing at different life stages.

Revising capital gains tax to exempt homeowners who rent out part of their homes to social housing candidates could incentivise more people to offer housing options. The panel observed that the Henry Tax Review recommended that government not consider changes to tax arrangements until the supply of housing was right, as premature change would reduce the number of houses being built and lead to a loss of investment in housing and a loss of jobs in the industry.

Participants mentioned that one issue not discussed enough is the involvement of banks setting the price of the housing. The influence of taxation change, grant funding and the RBA's interest rate decisions greatly affect the market.

## Funding

To enhance funding for social housing, suggestions included providing interest-free loans on a per capita basis to local governments, allocating part of the Housing Australia fund directly to local councils, and ensuring that federal funding is directed to local governments rather than state governments.

The effectiveness of competitive grant programs in addressing housing needs was questioned, with a call for leveraging data to understand local requirements better. There is also a need to incentivise institutional investment in affordable housing. Advocating for low fixed-rate long-term bank loans, similar to those in the USA, could provide financial stability for homeowners.

Local councils' readiness to undertake affordable housing projects was noted, but state government requirements for market value payment for unused land often hinder these projects. The potential for the federal government to remove the profit motive from state governments to facilitate such projects was discussed.

The efficiency of government spending on rental housing was questioned, and the need for value-for-money assessments was emphasised.

### **Housing types and quality**

The need to focus not just on the number of houses, but also on improving living standards, was discussed. Integrating health and wellbeing into housing policy and design, such as considering accessibility, adaptation, energy efficiency, and communal spaces, is crucial. NDIS money shouldn't need to be spent on upgrading housing.

It was noted by the panel that national housing and homelessness programs are considering approaches such as these, and a national construction code would take into account the minimum criteria for accessibility and adaptation.

The importance of placemaking was emphasised, highlighting that we cannot lose the connection between great placemaking and housing numbers. It was noted that public housing now includes communal spaces in the design process.

Cohousing projects with intergenerational and varied home sizes, where families and individuals can have private living spaces but share communal areas can facilitate integration, could be encouraged.

Concerns about poorly built single dwellings on small blocks were raised. The role of state governments in applying planning controls and ensuring builders adhere to standards was highlighted. The need for accountability in the building sector to maintain standards and reputation was emphasised. Participants encouraged builders who do not comply with building laws to be held accountable, as non-compliant businesses undercut their competitors and damage the construction sector's reputation.

Additionally, the impact of poorly located housing on the cost of living was noted, with the examples of tolls, lengthy commutes, childcare, and parking discussed. There was a call for the Commonwealth to guide state governments to prevent them from simply handing over land to developers without ensuring quality infrastructure. The panel noted that the Housing Support Program has a focus on well-located housing, and emphasised that planning controls are the responsibility of state governments.

Addressing the housing needs of single-person households in small communities was discussed. The industry could consider building homes that better suit the needs of single people, as most current houses are designed with multiple bedrooms, which may not be suitable for all demographics.

Participants observed that there is a distinction between a housing problem and a homes problem, emphasising the need to better use existing homes and infrastructure. The adaptive re-use of excess office space for housing could reduce carbon impact, and councils should play a role in housing supply due to their local knowledge in this space.

Leasing land for long terms, such as 99 years, could reduce the cost of home ownership. Reviewing and releasing boarded-up housing stock would also help. A consistent approach across all governments to resolve issues related to tiny homes and mobile homes is needed.

### **Policy and governance**

Some participants felt that local government should play a significant role in housing, supported by policies such as inclusionary zoning. State government bureaucracy was seen to hamper federal and local government partnerships, with local councils frequently bearing the brunt of cost-shifting.

Recognising that regional councils have different needs compared to larger urban councils was seen to be essential. The classification of rural and remote communities means some councils, although worthy of funding, are not receiving it.

Giving local councils control over short-term rental accommodations could help to manage housing availability. There seems to be little appetite from the Commonwealth to address this, leaving it a state issue. A direct link between negative gearing and Airbnb was noted as a challenge that needs addressing.

### **Capacity of local government**

Participants felt that local governments, familiar with their communities' needs, should receive direct funding to avoid duplication of efforts, however balancing business-as-usual responsibilities with building partnerships is challenging for local government staff.

Clear communication channels and readily accessible contact details for collaborative partners are essential. Awareness of funding programs that enable local and Commonwealth collaboration in social and community housing is necessary for effective action.

Some participants expressed concern that local government was being encouraged to take a role in housing provision, which is traditionally thought to be a policy responsibility of state and federal government.



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## 9 In-Camera Items

### RECOMMENDATION

That, in accordance with sections 66(1) and 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the meeting be closed to members of the public for the consideration of the following confidential item:

#### **Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minutes 5 September 2024 (confidential attachment)**

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM *This item is to be considered at an In Camera meeting in accordance with Section 3(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2020, this item is to be considered in an incamera meeting on the grounds that the item concerns Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.*

## 10 Close of Meeting