

Council Meeting

Agenda

Tuesday, 25 February 2025

Council Chamber - Civic Centre and via
Videoconference

Information for Councillors and the community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

COUNCIL VISION

Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we care for country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how sustainable balanced growth makes this the best place in the world.

VALUE OF HISTORY

We acknowledge that history shapes our identities, engages us as citizens, creates inclusive communities, is part of our economic well-being, teaches us to think critically and creatively, inspires leaders and is the foundation of our future generations.

COUNCILLOR COMMITMENT

We'll be truthful, represent the community's needs, be positive and responsive and always strive to do better.

OUR COUNCILLORS

Billanook Ward: Tim Heenan
Chandler Ward: Gareth Ward
Chirnside Ward: Richard Higgins
Lyster Ward: Peter Mcilwain
Melba Ward: Mitch Mazzarella

O'Shannassy Ward: Jim Child
Ryrie Ward: Fiona McAllister
Streeton Ward: Jeff Marriott
Walling Ward: Len Cox

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & DIRECTORS

Chief Executive Officer, Tammi Rose
Director Built Environment & Infrastructure, Hjalmar Philipp
Director Communities, Leanne Hurst

Director Corporate Services, Vincenzo Lombardi
Director Planning and Sustainable Futures, Kath McClusky

GOVERNANCE RULES

All Council and Delegated Committee meetings are to be conducted in accordance with Council's Governance Rules, which can be viewed at: <https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Corporate-documents/Policies-strategies/Governance-rules>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS

Members of the community can participate in Council meetings in any of the following ways:

- making a verbal submission for up to 5 minutes on matters not listed on the agenda.
- submitting a question.
- speaking for up to 5 minutes to a specific item on the agenda. For planning applications and policy issues, the Chair will invite one person to speak on behalf of any objectors and one person to speak on behalf of the applicant. For other matters on the agenda, only one person will be invited to address Council, unless there are opposing views. At the discretion of the Chair, additional speakers may be invited for items of large interest.
- speaking for up to 5 minutes to a petition to be presented at a meeting.

For further information about how to participate in a Council meeting, please visit: <https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-meetings/Submissions-questions-petitions-to-Council>

LIVE STREAMING AND RECORDING OF MEETINGS

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Opinions or statements made during the course of a meeting are those of the particular individuals. Council does not necessarily endorse or support the views, opinions, standards or information contained in the live streaming or recording of meetings. While Council will use its best endeavours to ensure the live stream and Council's website are functioning, technical issues may arise which may result in Council temporarily adjourning the meeting or, if the issue cannot be resolved, adjourning the meeting to another date and time to be determined.

A person in attendance at the meeting must not operate film, photographic, tape-recording or other equipment to reproduce sound and/or images at any meeting without first obtaining the consent of the Chair.

The Minutes produced after each Council Meeting form the official record of the decisions made by Yarra Ranges Council.

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EVACUATION PROCEDURES

In the case of an emergency during a meeting held at the Civic Centre, 15 Anderson Street, Lilydale, you should follow the directions given by staff and evacuate the building using the nearest available exit. You should congregate at the assembly point at Hardy Street car park.

CONTACT US

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YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

**AGENDA FOR THE 619TH COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY
25 FEBRUARY 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.00PM IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC
CENTRE, ANDERSON STREET, LILYDALE / VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

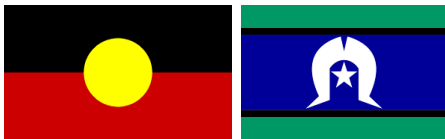
1. MEETING OPENED

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

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3. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS PRESENT

OUR COUNCILLORS

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4. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

There were no apologies received prior to the commencement of this meeting.

5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Chapter 7, Rule 4, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

The Local Government Act 2020 defines two categories of conflict of interest:

- *a general conflict of interest, which is defined as "...a relevant person has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty", and*
- *a material conflict of interest, which is defined as "...a relevant person has a material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. The benefit may arise or the loss incurred (a) directly or indirectly; or (b) in a pecuniary or non-pecuniary form."*

In accordance with section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020, a conflict of interest must be disclosed in the manner required by the Governance Rules and the relevant person must exclude themselves from the decision-making process.

No Conflicts of Interest have been received prior to the Agenda being printed.

6. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held Tuesday 11 February 2025, as circulated, be confirmed.

8. QUESTIONS AND SUBMISSIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

In accordance with Chapter 3, Rules 57 and 59, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

A person may make a submission to Council on matters that are not listed on the Agenda. A submission 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) is substantially the same as a submission made to a Council meeting in the preceding 12 months;
- (c) relates to confidential information as defined under the Act;
- (d) relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- (e) relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person.

SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL

Playground Facilities at Stuart Reserve in Lilydale

Hamish Smith wishes to raise concerns regarding the dated and inadequate playground facilities at Stuart Reserve in Lilydale.

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9. PETITIONS

In accordance with Chapter 3, Rules 60, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

A person may submit a petition to Council on matters that are not listed on the Agenda. Every petition or joint letter submitted to Council must:

- a) identify a 'Lead Petitioner' who Council can correspond with;
- b) be legible and in permanent writing;
- c) be clear and state on each page the matter and action sought from Council. Every page of a petition or joint letter must be a single page of paper and not be posted, stapled, pinned or otherwise affixed or attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the petition or joint letter;
- d) not be derogatory, defamatory or objectionable in language or nature;
- e) not relate to matters outside the powers of Council; and
- f) clearly state the names and addresses of at least seven (7) people who live, work, study or do business in the Municipal district.

There were no Petitions received prior to the Agenda being printed.

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION - AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT 2025-2026

Report Author: Senior Advocacy & Government Relations Advisor
 Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer
 Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

The Australian Government's delivery of its annual Budget is currently scheduled for 25 March 2025. Before or shortly after that date a federal election will be called by the Prime Minister, with the election required to be held before the end of May 2025.

A submission has been prepared to present to local candidates for election in the Federal seat of Casey and to send to relevant Australian Government Ministers and shadow Ministers seeking to influence decision-making. The suggested projects and programs are drawn from existing Council strategies and plans. The submission is provided in the attachment to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Pre-Budget Submission – Australian Government 2025-26 (Attachment 1).

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

None.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Through the Australian Government's budget cycle, there is an opportunity for organisations and individuals to influence funding allocations made in the federal budget. The forthcoming federal election expands that opportunity to providing a

submission to all candidates and parties outlining the priority projects and policy positions of Council with hope for commitments of funding or policy change as part of the election process.

Yarra Ranges Council regularly meet with local Members of Parliament and has provided such submissions previously.

The projects listed for potential funding commitments sit across a full range of Council's identified priority capital works and programs and are drawn from the adopted Advocacy Agenda, previous pre-budget submission and projects identified in a range of council strategies and plans. The priority list has been developed and reviewed by officers.

There is no guarantee or standing commitment from the Government or candidates to fund projects at Council.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

There is no financial outlay in providing a submission as part of our advocacy activities. The submission has been prepared by officers as part of business-as-usual activities.

If projects are funded by government, there may be both income and some costs associated with delivering the additional projects. Projects put forward have been identified from our priority pipeline or existing strategies and plans. Full funding of projects is sought and no commitment to co-fund has been made.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following action in the Council Plan:

- Consolidate and strengthen advocacy through evidence and stronger relationships to ensure other levels of government are effectively and efficiently engaged to support local services and programs.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

The Submission puts forward projects or seeks support from the Government that would positively impact the Yarra Ranges' local economy and the financial sustainability of Council.

Social Implications

The Submission puts forward projects or seeks support from the Government that would positively impact the Yarra Ranges Council's ability to foster social connection through a range of Council programs and activities.

Environmental Implications

Specific projects put forward for consideration would have positive impacts on the environmental sustainability of our region if funded.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Recent community engagement on Council's Draft Budget 2025-26 also sought responses from our community to identify strategic priorities for Council's advocacy program. The top priority from respondents was for Council to advocate for integrated transport including public transport, road sealing and maintenance, flood mapping and drainage. The second highest priority was for Council to advocate for funding and support for vibrant townships including sporting pavilions and aquatic facilities and streetscape improvements.

The Submission includes advocacy for support and funding to deliver projects and programs in these priority areas.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Projects, programs and policy changes put forward for consideration in this submission have either been proposed or reviewed by Managers and other staff across the organisation.

Some projects or policy changes are also reflective of advocacy work undertaken with local government sector partners.

RISK ASSESSMENT

By making submissions to the Australian Budget process, Council seeks to mitigate the following strategic risks:

- SR31: Insufficient planning and support for future generations and vulnerable communities, leads to poorly planned communities, inadequate distribution of services and infrastructure and inappropriate land uses, resulting in low levels of amenity for and trust from the community.
- SR35: Inability to successfully facilitate and advocate for community projects to fulfil community needs.
- SR30: Failure to appropriately plan, respond to or prepare for the impacts of climate change, exposes Council, its assets and services to a range of physical, economic and liability risks.

The financial risk of each initiative described in the submission has been assessed and full funding of projects is being sought without committing Council to contribute. Project deliverability has also been determined as a key reputational and financial risk, which will be addressed through proactive discussions with political stakeholders to ensure the level of committed funding is appropriate and stakeholder expectations are effectively managed.

Full risk assessments on the proposed projects will be undertaken if funding is committed, and as they progress through their planning and delivery stages.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Pre-Budget Submission Australian Government 2025-26



Yarra Ranges Council

Pre-Budget Submission

Australian Government
2025–2026





Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been who have been and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

Yarra Ranges Council has worked closely with the community to develop a strong vision for the future of Yarra Ranges as a thriving and resilient region – the best place in Australia to live, work and visit.

Council is pleased to make this pre-budget submission to the Australian Government, outlining a range of proposals and opportunities for investment in key programs and initiatives that drive positive outcomes for our communities locally and nationally.

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Snapshot of Yarra Ranges



Yarra Ranges Shire

- Land area: 2,468.2 square kilometres
- Largest LGA in Melbourne Metro
- 2% Council land, 30% is in private ownership and 68% is Crown land
- 9 wards, 62 suburbs and localities, plus parts of 6 other suburbs



Population

- Est. 158,694 residents
- 1,713 Indigenous residents
- Yarra Ranges has the highest number of indigenous persons in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.
- Speak a language other than English at home: 10.4%
- 20.6% born overseas



Housing

- 64.30 persons per square km population density
- 52% of the population live in the urban areas of Yarra Ranges
- \$840,000 median house price (Dec 2023)
- 10.9% households with a mortgage experiencing mortgage stress
- \$520/week median house rental (Dec 2023)
- 31.7% households in private rentals experiencing rental stress



Economic

- 3.1% unemployment rate (Dec 2023)
- 14,010 local businesses
- 53,750 local jobs
- Amongst 20% of LGA's with lowest levels of disadvantage on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage



Industries

- \$7.30Bn GRP (est)
- Construction is the largest industry by employment. The sector employs over 15% of all residents.



Tourism

2023 estimates:

- Day trips: 4.5 million
- \$984.3m visitor spend
- 7,300 people in YR employed in the tourism industry

Financial Assistance Grants – Financial Sustainability of Local Government

Yarra Ranges supports the call from the Australian Local Government Association to restore Financial Assistance Grants to at least 1% and ideally 2% of Commonwealth taxation revenue via a phased approach.

The value of Financial Assistance Grants provided to local government has declined over the past three decades from around 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue to around 0.55%.

If funded, this could contribute more than \$2.3 billion to annual GDP, create over 16,000 jobs and ensure Councils can better meet the infrastructure and services expectations of the community. For Yarra Ranges, with a large land area, dispersed population and high exposure to natural disasters, the increase in the Financial Assistance Grants would allow us to continue delivering swimming pools, playgrounds, sports facilities, roads and much more for our community.

Telecommunications

In Yarra Ranges, 98% of residents rely on telecommunications in an emergency. However, a 2020/2021 study on mobile blackspots in Yarra Ranges found that 25% of sites tested along the road network and at key service locations had unusable signal or no coverage, often despite telecommunications companies' maps showing supposedly full coverage.

Further, our community experiences lagging broadband speeds and poor network resilience, even in urban townships.

During the June 2021 storm events, telecommunications service was cut to thousands of residents across 34 communities. Mobile service was lost in some areas for up to 72 hours, with no line out of the impact zone and no access to emergency information, while more than 3,000 homes were without power and internet for over a month.

Council made a submission to the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review and has welcomed subsequent investment in new and upgraded infrastructure provided through the Commonwealth's Peri-Urban Mobile Program (PUMP), Regional Co-Investment Fund and Victorian Government's Connecting Victoria program.

We would also advocate that telecommunications be identified as an essential service. This would enable faster response to system failures, ensure accurate reporting of network issues and require the development of contingency plans. This could prove lifesaving through future disasters, not only in Yarra Ranges but across Australia.

While Council continues to work with community and providers to ensure these projects can be delivered on-the-ground, ongoing investment will be needed to effectively:

- Improve **mobile connectivity** in 5 key areas with low or no mobile service quality: Dandenong Ranges, Hoddles Creek, East Warburton, Steels Creek, Fernshaw.

- **Upgrade NBN** broadband services from fixed wireless, satellite and FTTN to FTTP in key areas with slow broadband service.
- Strengthen telecommunications **network resilience** during power outages and emergencies e.g. increased battery back-up at mobile towers, generator power for NBN nodes.
- Through the Mobile Network Hardening Program Noticeboard, in December 2024, Yarra Ranges Council has nominated the following crucial sites for consideration for funding and attention under this program:
 - *Stream 1* (Rural/Regional) - Warburton (4G), East Warburton (4G), McMahon's Creek, (4G)
 - *Stream 2* (Peri-Urban) - Kalorama (5G), The Patch (5G), Macclesfield, Silvan and Belgrave
- Recently, in February 2025 nominations were submitted for Round 8 of the Mobile Black Spot Program. As this Round only allowed nominations for rural and regional areas some of Council's nominations were not accepted for the Dandenongs in particular. Locations submitted included:
 - Hoddles Creek; Fernshaw; Olinda (on the eastern side of the Major Urban Boundary)

A key ongoing barrier is the eligibility of the Yarra Ranges LGA for relevant Australian Government funding programs, such as **PUMP**, the **Mobile Network Hardening Program** and the **Mobile Black Spot** program. While our outer areas such as Warburton are eligible under the rural/regional streams, the peri-urban stream is currently restricted to locations 2km inside of the Major Urban Boundary (MUB), which excludes high-risk areas such as the Dandenong Ranges, where key infrastructure is located and service blackspots and reliability issues remain.

Council strongly advocates for peri-urban eligibility to be expanded to 4km within the MUB.

Resilience and Sustainability

The Yarra Ranges boasts a rich natural environment deeply valued by the community, however climate change and increasing natural disasters pose significant challenges.

Yarra Ranges Council has welcomed the Australian Government's investments in recent years. With continued investment, the following initiatives will strengthen the resilience of Yarra Ranges' built and social infrastructure, support the communities' role as environmental stewards and accelerate the region's transition to renewable energy.

Projects:

- [Resilient Yarra Ranges](#)
- [Firestick Cultural Burning Program](#)
- [Greening the Suburbs](#)
- [Fire Risk Management](#)
- [Biolinks and Invasive Species Program](#)
- [Energy Transition](#)

Strategic links:

Yarra Ranges Council	Commonwealth Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and Wellbeing Plan• Liveable Climate Plan• Nature Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Strategy for Disaster Resilience• Net Zero 2050 plan• Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030

Resilient Yarra Ranges

The *Resilient Yarra Ranges* program, delivered with \$10 million provided through the Preparing Australian Communities program, spans a range of activities including: place-based resilience planning, emergency relief network building, a resilient buildings program, Changing Places facilities, resilient energy precinct feasibility studies and proactive tree management.

The funding agreement concludes in March 2025, with Council working with NEMA to seek a short extension to 30 June 2025 to complete all works. Successful outcomes from funded projects demonstrate that the following activities would benefit the community by extension and expansion.

Place Based Resilience Planning

Ask: \$1.4 million

Trialled through the Resilient Yarra Ranges pilot program, model to be expanded across communities in the region.

Focused on key at-risk localities:

- Mount Dandenong, Kalorama & Montrose.
- Belgrave, Belgrave South & Kallista
- Steels Creek, Dixons Creek & Yarra Glen
- Reefton, McMahons Creek

Regional Resilience Hub – Feasibility

Ask: \$500,000

Yarra Ranges is the second most disaster prone LGA in Australia. Council would like to undertake a feasibility study and commence building the partnerships for a central operations centre to coordinate emergency response, preparedness and resilience.

The Regional Resilience Hub would be used as Incident Control Centre by council and Emergency Management agencies.

Pilot project to use AI to undertake mapping of cultural assets

Ask: \$3.2 million

The proposed project would see an innovative, Victorian first, risk mapping initiative using AI to enhance risk mapping and environmental asset management. The outcomes of the pilot project would see results and learnings shared with other LGAs and Emergency Management agencies.

Inclusion of cultural mapping focused on songlines and has not been formally undertaken before. In partnership with local ATSI elders would pioneer an approach to manage risk respecting both environmental and cultural landscape.

Enhancing Cultural Burning Program

Ask: \$820,000

Funding of community development and resilience building initiatives to be delivered to help residents make critical improves to reduce risk.

Focus will be at supporting at risk groups such as elderly, people living with disability and include risks such as heatwaves outreach and response planning and working with community to support property preparedness for risks and disaster events.

Firestick Cultural Burning Program

Firestick Cultural Burning Program uses the ancient practice of Firesticks or cultural burning on private and public land to sympathetically manage fuel loads, increase biodiversity and provide a positive impact on wellbeing.

Benefits include healing of Country, advanced climate change adaptation, resilient landscapes, preservation of significant flora and fauna, space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to share Aboriginal culture and heritage and a platform for Reconciliation to thrive.

Yarra Ranges Council has delivered an award-winning Firestick program through a partnership with the Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation (FAIC).

Ongoing funding to support Firestick cultural burning knowledge and capabilities, led by Traditional Owners, could enhance local land management and caring for country practice.

Build Cultural Burning Capability for Land Management and Asset Protection

Ask: \$200,000

Project aims to build Cultural Burning capability and understanding of the efficacy of traditional Firestick practices for land management and asset protection on private, Council or public land.

Deliver Cultural burning activities, led by Traditional Owners around Monbulk, Healesville & Yarra Junction, which includes habitat of endangered species such as the Helmeted Honey Eater and Leadbeater possum. Facilitated by a funded Project Officer - Cultural Burning.

Research Project

Ask: \$100,000

Funding will help deliver a research project to understand and develop Culturally appropriate tools and measures for future Cultural Burning opportunities, that can be shared with fire management and land managers at local, regional and state level.

Greening the Suburbs

Trees are fundamental to the story of Yarra Ranges, shaping our cultures, values and communities. They are a prominent feature in our landscape, providing benefits to our health and wellbeing, community and culture, the environment, ecology and economy.

But as the climate changes and our urban areas evolve, severe weather events will become more frequent, and the tree canopy will continue to decline.

During the savage storms that swept through the region in June 2021, our region is estimated to have lost around 25,000 trees. This forever changed the landscape and created more vulnerability for trees that were once buffered from dramatic weather but are now exposed.

We need more trees, with the right tree in the right location, through a targeted tree-planting initiative that will 'Green the Suburbs'.

Greening the Suburbs

Ask: \$9.5 million

This funding would allow Council to **plant and establish over 130,000 trees over four years**, with a mix of street tree planting and bushland reserve planting across various townships in the urban, valley and hills areas.

Project funding will resource planning, community engagement, plant selection and procurement, project management, delivery and maintenance. Potential to integrate school-based programs and volunteer groups.

Fire Risk Management

Woody Weed Removal

Ask: \$1.5 million (5yrs)

\$300,000 per year for 5 years to carry out a program of woody weed removal undertaken along council managed roadsides. This program would enhance community safety and reduce fuel and weed seeding across the Yarra Ranges.

Biolinks and Invasive Species Program

Biolinks and Invasive Species Program

Ask: \$3.95 million (10yrs)

Council recently endorsed its Nature Plan, which sets the direction to deliver a Biolinks Plan to establish important habitat corridors for biodiversity protection and enhancement; implementation of a strategic cross-tenure program between community and government landowners to address invasive animal and plant species; community education and incentive programs.

\$450,000 investment would kick-start a Biolinks and Invasive Species program and an additional \$350,000 per annum for 10 years for implementation.

Energy Transition

Zero Emissions Facilities Transition

Ask: \$3.6 million

(\$900,000 per year for 4 years) to reach Yarra Ranges' community zero emissions target, by extending Council's portfolio of solar and energy storage systems and transitioning community facilities off gas and improve overall performance to support future net zero operations.

Zero Emissions Fleet and Plant

Ask: \$2 million

(\$500,000 per year for 4 years) for additional investment required in zero emissions vehicles and plant and charging infrastructure to support Council and the community's transition.

Community Climate Adaptation Program

Ask: \$1 million

(\$250,000 per year for 4 years) to support local communities to overcome cost and capability barriers to investing in climate-resilient measures; provide ongoing practical support and education programs for residents, community groups and businesses working to transition energy, reduce carbon emissions and adapt to a changed climate future.

Stormwater Offset Program – Implementation

Ask: \$120,000

Council is preparing to implement a Stormwater Offset Program to enhance our stormwater management efforts. Currently, developers make financial contributions to Melbourne Water, which allocates funds based on project priorities.

The Council Offset Program would allow us to receive contributions directly, enabling us to prioritise and fund local stormwater projects. These funds could support significant infrastructure improvements like wetlands, waterway restorations and enhanced flood control measures. This approach ensures that new developments effectively contribute to managing stormwater, even when site-specific constraints limit the full implementation of certain measures.

By pursuing this program, we aim to support sustainable urban development and strengthen our community's resilience against flooding and climate change.

Stormwater Flood Mapping & Mitigation Projects

Ask: \$3.72 million

Undertake comprehensive stormwater flood mapping for the municipality.

Develop and implement a stormwater management infrastructure program to mitigate flood risks to the community and waterways, which may include:

- large scale and/or distributed stormwater harvesting
- stormwater detention systems
- infiltration systems
- passive drainage design for roads, where feasible
- rainwater tank incentive programs on private land

Council has identified a priority list along with developing detailed plans for works. A package of works could be coordinated to an agreed budget allocation.

Sustainable Food Systems Program

Ask: \$400,000

(\$100,000 per year for 4 years) to deliver a Food Security Program that promotes community resilience, quality nutrition and social cohesion; in partnership with commercial growers, traditional owners, visitors, service providers and local gardeners. This program will highlight Yarra Ranges' critical position as the food bowl of Melbourne and aim for greater food resilience for our community in the event of natural disasters and other disruptions to supply chain.

Vibrant Townships: Tourism and Sustainable Economic Growth

By 2032, Council aims to grow its regional economy to \$9.1 billion, supporting more than 57,000 local jobs. Visitors to the region are expected to double, to over 9 million per annum in the next decade. Investment in flagship precincts and projects, as well as workforce skills and accommodation, will be key to attracting and retaining both local and overseas workers, driving sustainable economic growth and developing competitive tourism offerings.

Despite this need and the region’s potential, Yarra Ranges has been losing access to critical funding programs that support these economic objectives.

Council recognises the Australian Government’s intent to manage these programs with tighter definitions of the regions. However, it is evident that key opportunities and unique local conditions are being overlooked.

Council would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information for projects or localities to be considered on a municipal or locality level for exemptions and funding.

Projects:

- [Ridges and Rivers](#)
- [Regional Centre of Excellence, Workforce Skilling and Accommodation](#)
- [Wandin North Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements](#)

Strategic links

Yarra Ranges Council	Commonwealth Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development Strategy • Integrated Transport Strategy • Recreation and Open Space Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THRIVE 2030 • Thriving Suburbs Program • Local Govt Financial Assistance Grants

Ridges and Rivers

Ridges and Rivers is a world-class trail-based tourism destination consisting of three signature outdoor attractions: the Yarra Valley Trail, ngurrak barring (formerly RidgeWalk) and Warburton Mountain Bike Destination.

To date, \$30 million in investment has been funded between the Commonwealth Government, Victorian Government, Yarra Ranges Council and Bendigo Bank (Warburton & Yarra Junction). Early stages of the projects have commenced construction.

Through a network of improved trails and walking tracks, Ridges and Rivers will help to connect local townships and provide convenient, easy access to walking, cycling and mountain biking opportunities, delivering significant health and wellbeing benefits for Yarra Ranges communities.

Ridges and Rivers will also provide a much-needed economic boost to the region, particularly throughout the course of the Native Timber harvesting transition. Warburton Mountain Bike Destination alone is projected to inject \$48 million into the local economy by 2031 and create 229 new jobs.

Warburton Mountain Bike Destination – Stage 1 (Southern section)

Ask: \$3 million

The first 100km of trails are currently under construction. \$3million will deliver the final 25km of tracks that will complete Stage 1 of the project, the southern section.

Yarra Valley Trail

Ask: \$5.1 million

Funding is sought to continue delivery of stage 1B of the Yarra Valley Trail, between Yering and Yarra Glen, including a dedicated bridge over the Yarra River.

ngurrak barring

See below

Further investment required to deliver car parks and pedestrian crossings in Dandenong Ranges townships to facilitate visitors to ngurrak barring trails and ease broader parking pressures for locals. Projects can be staged.

Pedestrian crossing upgrades at Olinda and Sassafras	\$1.5M + \$1.5M
Terry Avenue, Belgrave-Ferny Creek – Carpark Upgrade	\$800,000
Mechanics Hall, Sassafras – Carpark Upgrade	\$50,000
Falls Road, Kalorama – Carpark Upgrade	\$30,000

Regional Centre of Excellence, Workforce Skilling and Accommodation

As Yarra Ranges braces for visitor numbers to double over the next decade, there is a need for investment in worker upskilling across key industries, alongside key infrastructure, to sustain meaningful employment opportunities and quality visitor experiences.

Feasibility Study

Funding to develop a feasibility study for a Centre of Excellence for food and beverages of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, akin to industry-leading examples in the Barossa Valley. (To be developed and run by industry bodies).

Workforce Accommodation

Investment in housing to address workforce accommodation needs, particularly across growing industries of health, aged care, hospitality and agriculture.

Hospitality Upskilling Program

Support for local hospitality businesses to train and upskill existing and new workers. (To be developed and delivered via industry bodies)

Wandin North Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements

The Wandin North masterplan was adopted by Council in July 2023. The plan seeks to reinvigorate the public areas for visitors and locals, with a focus on the shopping precinct, Greenglades Court Reserve and connections to the popular Warburton Trail.

Pedestrian Crossings and Streetscapes

Ask: \$1.7 million

\$1.7 million investment would deliver improvements to pedestrian crossings and streetscapes in Wandin North, including:

- Installation of 2 signalised pedestrian crossings across Warburton Highway at Warburton Rail Trail and George Street.
- Upgrading on-street car-parking, footpaths, street furniture, roadside (kerb and drainage) and street tree planting, along Warburton Highway between George St and Union Rd.
- Upgrading footpaths, roadside (kerb and drainage) and street tree planting, along Warburton Highway between Warburton Rail Trail and George Street.

Community and Recreation Infrastructure

Accessible and inclusive facilities are needed to support our communities to stay active and connected – every day, and even in times of emergency.

Council has taken an evidence-based approach to identifying facilities requiring renewal and upgrade. With targeted investment in the following projects, Council's facilities will support equitable participation in sport and active recreation, with some facilities – such as our pavilions – playing a critical role during disaster response and recovery.

Projects:

- [Community Pavilions](#)
- [Aquatics](#)
- [Other community assets](#)
- [Early Years Infrastructure](#)

Community Pavilions

Priority projects	Location	Total cost
Lilydale Recreation Reserve	Lilydale	\$8,450,000
Belgrave Recreation Reserve	Belgrave	\$8,400,000
Wesburn Community Recreation and Education Centre	Wesburn	\$8,800,000
Warburton Recreation Reserve	Warburton	\$8,400,000
Mooroolbark Heights Recreation Reserve	Mooroolbark	\$6,000,000
Yarra Junction Recreation Reserve	Yarra Junction	\$9,500,000

Aquatics

Adopted in 2024, Council's Aquatics Strategy has identified a number of priority projects in consultation with our community:

Priority projects	Location	Total cost
Indoor Aquatics Centre – funding to develop a business case for an integrated indoor aquatics facility in the urban area	Urban	\$300,000
Healesville Outdoor Pool – heating and minor improvement works	Healesville	\$1,000,000
Monbulk Aquatic Centre Electrification and Sustainable Building Upgrades	Monbulk	\$2,400,000

Other community assets

Priority projects	Location	Total cost
Upwey Oval #1	Upwey	\$1,500,000
Gateway Oval # 2	Lilydale	\$1,200,000
Belgrave Lighting (#1 Oval)	Belgrave	\$260,000
Don Road Lighting (#1 Oval)	Healesville	\$300,000
Morrison Reserve Netball Courts	Mt Evelyn	\$330,000
Don Road Netball Courts	Healesville	\$330,000
Queens Park Pavilion – change rooms & upgrades	Healesville	\$500,000
Montrose Tennis Court	Montrose	\$300,000
Belgrave Cricket Nets	Belgrave	\$265,000
Lilydale Recreation Reserve – temporary change facility	Lilydale	\$500,000
Lilydale Recreation Reserve – engineering design & detailed costings	Lilydale	\$300,000

Early Years Infrastructure

The Australian Government has renewed its focus on early years with the development of its draft Early Years Strategy 2024-2034. Its vision is one that Council strongly supports, for 'all children in Australia to thrive in their earlier years. They reach their full potential, nurtured by empowered and connected families, who in turn are supported by strong communities.'

The Australian Government's focus, alongside the Victorian Government's *Best Start, Best Life*, impacts on Council's capacity to provide critical built infrastructure and technology, and in turn, support effective and efficient service delivery for local families.

Yarra Ranges anticipates that at least 33 additional rooms and \$64 million in new and upgraded infrastructure will be required to facilitate the early years' service system over the next 10 years, with enrolments growing due to Early Years reform and population growth.

As Council continues to analyse projected enrolments and asset requirements, an early priority infrastructure project has been identified at the Rolling Hills facility in Mooroolbark.

Rolling Hills – Mooroolbark Facility Redevelopment

Ask: \$8.7 million

The Rolling Hills is an existing and well-used facility, with the potential to be redeveloped to meet growing service needs into the future.

A redevelopment would involve renewal and upgrade of the existing pre-school building (200m²); rebuilding of the old kinder and immunisation building, including an expansion in area and joining it to the pre-school building (830m²).

This funding would allow for 3 x playrooms (for 33 children each), amenities and storerooms, 2-3 Maternal and Child Health and allied health consultation rooms and refurbishment of the existing kinder into community room.

Roads & Integrated Transport Infrastructure

Our region covers the largest area of any metropolitan council in Victoria so reliance on roads is significant. Sealing our extensive network of dangerous unmade roads remains a priority. Yarra Ranges Council's Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS), **Connected**, sets the direction to deliver transport infrastructure that is safer, healthier, well-connected, sustainable and inclusive.

Council welcomes the Australian Government's increased investments into local roads, which will contribute to building safer roads that are more resilient to natural disasters. This includes recently announced increases to Roads to Recovery, Black Spot Program and Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program.

Council has also developed programs through the ITS to make our roads safer, promote physical activity and make our communities safer. The proposed scale of each program is designed to maximise efficiencies in cost and delivery however, programs can be tailored to any level of funding commitment.

Projects:

- Priority Road Sealing – Roads for Community & Emergency Preparedness
- Cycle & Pedestrian Safety – Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail

Strategic links

Yarra Ranges Council	Commonwealth Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated Transport Strategy• Liveable Climate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030• National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy

Priority Road Sealing – Roads for Community & Emergency Preparedness

Yarra Ranges has more than 700 kilometres of unsealed roads, accounting for 40% of the Council-managed network. A lack of public transport options increases our community's reliance on car travel. With a land primed for agriculture, local agribusinesses rely on our roads to transport prized produce to domestic markets and for exports. Additionally, every year millions of tourists use our roads to visit a range of attractions.

In 2019 Council received nearly \$50 million to commence delivery of the Roads for Community initiative, with a further \$100 million promised by the then Australian Government for an extended program. Extensive planning, design and community engagement activity was undertaken to implement the road sealing program with additional contributions from landowners, amplifying the program's reach. 31.75 km over 96 local roads will be completed with the initial funding. Following the Government's 2022 review, the funding for future year projects was withdrawn. With much of the design and engagement completed, Council seeks the funding to be re-instated to complete this significant road safety initiative.

Yarra Ranges' extensive network of unsealed roads impedes evacuation and access in emergencies and creates safety risks for local drivers and visitors. Council has identified and prioritised roads where sealing works will enhance community safety, particularly during emergency situations.

A commitment of \$23 Million would enable Council's top 12 identified roads to be sealed to support emergency access or egress.

Council seeks to work with the Australian Government to address these needs and can tailor a program of work to align with its priorities of emergency preparedness.

Cycle & Pedestrian Safety – Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail

Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail and Little Yarra River Trail: Crossing and Bridge Upgrade Program

- Warburton Highway, Wandin North – signalized crossing
- Warburton Highway, Yarra Junction 1 – signalized crossing
- Warburton Highway, Yarra Junction 2 – road crossing and bridge over Yarra River
- Warburton Highway, Warburton – signalized crossing at termination point of trail
- Woods Point Road, East Warburton – bridge upgrade to separate pedestrians/cyclists & vehicles

Lilydale Line – Rail Duplication Between Lilydale and Mooroolbark

Duplication of the Lilydale railway line between Mooroolbark and Lilydale to enable additional trains to operate on the line; construction of a new station at Cave Hill to reduce bottlenecks and provide for an increase in users with 3,000 new dwellings to be developed in the 800m catchment area.

The estimated value of construction in 2020 was \$46 million and this major project requires investment and delivery by the Victorian and Australian Governments into the future.

Health and Wellbeing

In 2023, Yarra Ranges Council conducted a **Human Services Needs Analysis (HSNA)** across our region. This analysis provides insight into the main issues and trends affecting services, including shifting community needs, access to services, working challenges, funding and infrastructure.

The HSNA found that nearly two-thirds of services have experienced demands they had been unable to meet. The top service gaps reported were:

- Housing and homelessness support
- Mental health – including shortage of GPs and Mental Health specialists
- Urgent Care – access to an urgent care centre in the Yarra Valley
- Transport – which impedes transport access to physical services

Council will continue collaborating with local service providers to leverage the findings from the HSNA and expand our strategic advocacy efforts, including opportunities to work with other levels of government and close these critical service gaps.

Projects:

- [Housing and Homelessness](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- [Urgent Care](#)

Strategic links

Yarra Ranges Council	Commonwealth Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Plan • Housing Strategy • Municipal Recovery Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision 2030: Blueprint for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention • National Housing and Homelessness Plan • Early Years Strategy

Housing and Homelessness

Council advocates on housing and homelessness issues alongside its partners in the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance and the Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Charter.

The combined rate of homelessness and other marginal housing in Yarra Ranges rose by 19% between 2016 and 2021 – a total of 756 people. Homelessness alone rose by 10% in Yarra Ranges, double the state average.

Yarra Ranges social housing stock stands at 2.5% of all dwellings compared with the state average of 3.2%. Coupled with the 25% increase of households on the Victorian social housing waiting list from 2018 to 2023, highlights the growing need for increased investment for social and affordable housing in the region.

As a foundational determinant to community health, increasing access to affordable housing will be key to addressing disadvantage in the LGA. Improved access to affordable housing will also address key worker shortages in the region, as currently the median house price is unaffordable for the 10 most represented occupations within Yarra Ranges.

In 2024, Council adopted its renewed Housing strategy, which provides direction for long-term planning and development of private residential housing, as well as Council's partnership work on social and affordable housing.

Ask: Housing & Homelessness

Yarra Ranges Council's key asks for the Australian Government include:

- Identify and release suitable Commonwealth land in Yarra Ranges for social and affordable housing.
- Provide delivery pathways and funding for social and affordable housing to be developed when Councils contribute suitable land.
- Undertake a comprehensive review and increase the Commonwealth Rental Assistance to support those struggling in private rentals.
- Provide targeted funding to State Government to urgently increase the number of social housing dwellings and crisis accommodation units in Yarra Ranges, which currently is facing a shortfall of 2500 units with an expected rise to 3600 by 2041.
- Collaborate with Local Government to design and fund a local homelessness service to provide a homelessness outreach case management service and a drop-in service in Yarra Ranges.

Mental Health

From the HSNA, all mental health services (25 total) reported increase in service demand over the past four years. This was particularly concentrated in the urban part of Yarra Ranges, which saw the closure of the Lilydale Youth Hub at the end of 2022.

Further, 89% of all services surveyed reported increased mental health concerns among their clients.

Over the past few years, Council has advocated with local service providers for investments to meet the needs of our community, which remain relevant given the findings from the HSNA.

Ask: Mental Health Services

Yarra Ranges Council's key ask of the Australian Government:

- **Expanded resourcing for mental health services, including headspace Lilydale and support to integrate mental health services with general health service provision.**

Urgent Care

Yarra Ranges residents experience significant challenges trying to access health services locally, particularly residents in the outer areas of the municipality. Issues include a lack of GPs, specialists and health workers; lack of local accessible services; residents having a very high tendency to go to emergency departments when unwell; lack of private health insurance and falling levels of preventative care and screening. Service usage and survey data show that most services have had rising demand over the past four years and have often been unable to meet community demand.

The Australian and Victorian Governments have funded and opened a number of Medicare Urgent Care Clinics in metro areas and 70 Urgent Care Centres in rural and regional areas.

Provision of an urgent care clinic, potentially to be co-located or supported by Healesville Hospital, is likely to save the federal government large amounts of money in spending on preventable health issues and emergency department use. Currently the nearest Urgent Care Clinic is located in Bayswater (40km from Healesville & 45km from Warburton) with similar distances to the nearest emergency departments at Angliss and Maroondah Hospitals.

Ask: Access to an urgent care centre in the Yarra Valley

Yarra Ranges Council asks that the Australian Government allocate funding for either a Medicare Urgent Care Clinic or a Rural Urgent Care Centre to be developed in Healesville.

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE & MEMBERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Report Author: Executive Officer - Climate
 Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Sustainable Futures
 Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is intended to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public. A confidential attachment has been included with the report which contains personal information that is not to be disclosed whilst the meeting is open to the public.

SUMMARY

Yarra Ranges Council Advisory Committees play a key role in demonstrating local leadership and working directly with community on important matters for Council.

The Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee (SEAC) is comprised of community representatives, Councillors, and staff with an interest and/or expertise in sustainability and environmental matters. The Committee provides local insight and advice to support Council decision making.

This report provides Council with an updated Terms of Reference to guide SEAC over the next four-year term, along with a recommendation to formally appoint twelve community representatives to SEAC following an extensive recruitment process.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That Council**
 - (a) Adopt the updated Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee Terms of Reference generally in accordance with Attachment 1.**
 - (b) Formally appoint the recommended individuals to the Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee for the 2025-2029 term.**
 - (c) The Confidential Attachment to this report remains confidential indefinitely as they relate to matters specified under section 3(1)(f) of the Local Government Act 2020.**

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council Meeting 30 January 2024 – Council formally endorsed the appointment of the recommended individuals to the Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee (SEAC) for the remainder of the 2021-2025 term and noted that the Terms of Reference were to be updated at the end of the current term.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

The purpose of the Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee (SEAC) is to provide Yarra Ranges Council with informed and constructive advice, input and support on environmental sustainability issues and initiatives relevant to the management and stewardship of the natural environment within the municipality.

This Report provides Council with an updated Terms of Reference and establishes the next term of the Committee by appointing the recommended community representatives (Attachment 2 Confidential) for the period 2025-2029.

Under the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee will consist of 13 community members. The specific membership will include:

- Up to 10 general community representatives
- One community representative with links to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community (if available)
- Two or more positions for young people with an interest in developing knowledge and networks within the environment sector (if available).

The Committee is supported by:

- Two Councillors nominated by Council;
- Three Council Officers including:
 - a) Manager Resilient Environment
 - b) Executive Officer for the Committee, nominated by the Manager Resilient Environment at the first meeting of each calendar year
 - c) Committee Administrator to be appointed by the Manager Resilient Environment.

Options considered

The recruitment to these positions involved an Expression of Interest process with advertising occurring between 16 August and 15 September 2024. There was good interest from community for both the general and youth positions, with many qualified and experienced individuals applying.

A total of 25 applications were received for general membership, and eight applications for youth membership. No applications from community representatives with links to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community were received,

however additional recruitment is underway to support the inclusion of a representative. This is in line with the Terms of Reference, and Council's Reconciliation Action Plan commitments.

Applications were shortlisted to 12 general applications and four youth applications by officers. Shortlisted candidates participated in an online interview led by the Executive Officer Nature.

Candidates were interviewed and assessed for their alignment with Yarra Ranges Council values, communication style and to ensure they could contribute to a diverse and inclusive committee environment. These interviews confirmed a final list of nominees for appointment to serve the four-year term. Three nominees are returning members, ensuring continuity of knowledge.

After the finalisation of recruitment, an induction session for all members will be scheduled at the first Committee meeting for the year. This session will inform members of Council's expectations and ensure they are equipped to make meaningful contributions to fostering a healthy, safe, and productive Committee environment.

The SEAC Terms of Reference has also been reviewed and updated to align with the Yarra Ranges Council Governance Framework for Advisory Committees. The review was completed by the Executive Officer Nature, with support from the Governance team. The draft Terms of Reference were also reviewed by the previous SEAC cohort.

Key changes to the Terms of Reference include:

- Removal of reference to agencies as potential SEAC members
- Length of term extended from three to four years
- Updating duration of service - members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms without a break.

This is to encourage new ideas and input and provide opportunities to a greater number of community representatives, particularly given the high level of interest and highly competitive Expression of Interest process.

Recommended option and justification

The recommended appointments to the Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee for the period of 2025-2029 are listed in the confidential attachment to this report.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

This decision has no financial implications. Committee members provide their time and expertise voluntarily and do not receive any financial allowance for their involvement.

Advisory Committees of Council are funded through operational budgets, including Officer time and a small catering budget of no more than \$500 per year.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

- Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment.

Key relevant Council strategies include:

- Nature Plan 2024-2034
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026
- Stormwater Management Plan 2024-2034
- Community Waste and Resource Recovery Plan 2023-2030
- Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032
- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Integrated Transport Strategy 2020-2040
- Liveable Climate Plan 2020-2030
- Environment Strategy 2015-2025
- Integrated Water Management Plan 2017.

RELEVANT LAW

The proposed representatives align with the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in ensuring diverse representation.

The Yarra Ranges Council Community Engagement Policy 2024-2028 includes advisory committees as part of its community engagement methodology, in line with addressing engagement requirements outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

By providing advice on Council's strategic work, SEAC contributes to maintaining a healthy environment, increasing the attraction of the region, and ensuring the long-

term protection of natural assets. This in turn fosters economic value for the community through initiatives such as sustainable nature-based tourism.

Social Implications

The social impacts of SEAC are numerous, firstly by providing community voices and representation on crucial local environmental matters.

By actively participating in the decision-making process, the committee becomes a vital means of influencing Council projects and strategies, ensuring they incorporate the needs and aspirations of the people of Yarra Ranges.

Additionally, the committee enables a collaborative approach to engagement regarding improving environmentally conscious social behaviours and stewardship.

Environmental Implications

The committee serves as a critical avenue for community engagement on environmental matters, bringing extensive environmental expertise, passionately advocating and providing invaluable counsel to Council regarding sustainability issues.

Committee members concentrate on the thoughtful and thorough management and stewardship of the environment, consistently delivering insights and advice aimed at ensuring a sustainable future for Yarra Ranges.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The expression of interest for SEAC membership was advertised on Council's website, on social media and through the environmental volunteer's newsletter and the Council newsletter.

The Terms of Reference were reviewed by outgoing Committee members.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

No collaboration with other Councils, Governments or statutory bodies was sought or required.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The SEAC enables a connection with the community interested in environmental issues and creates an opportunity for environmental decisions to be informed by community perspectives. A new cohort of members will strengthen Committee's capacity to provide advice and feedback on a broad range of environmental topics.

A key issue for SEAC is the retention of members, particularly in relation to young people. To mitigate this challenge, a thorough induction will be conducted with the new and returning members in early 2025.

The Terms of Reference has also been updated to further reflect Council's commitment to a safe, supportive and collaborative committee environment.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee Terms of Reference 2025-2029
2. Confidential - Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee Membership Appointments



Sustainable Environmental Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

Version:	1.6
Adopted by Council:	TBC
Next Update:	December 2029
Responsible Officer:	Nominated Executive Officer
Department:	Resilient Environment
Contact Officer:	Manager Resilient Environment

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Yarra Ranges Council recognises the benefit from networks and connections with community groups and advisory committees. Advisory committees and groups allow for the provision of technical advice, local knowledge, and support in specialised issues.
- 1.2 The Environment Strategy sets out the strategic direction for making Yarra Ranges a place of thriving communities, at home in healthy landscapes. It reflects Council's commitment to demonstrate leadership on environmental issues and working closely with the community and agencies to foster environmental stewardship across the municipality.
- 1.3 The Committee does not have authority to make decisions on behalf of Council and nor does it have delegated authority to act or to incur expenditure on behalf of Council.
- 1.4 The Committee must at all times recognise that the primary responsibility for management of Council's operations is controlled by the Chief Executive Officer and that the Committee, at all times, is an advisory committee to Council.
- 1.5 While comprising diverse interests and representatives, the Committee will not be seen as the only means for the Council to engage and consult within the municipality on environmental issues. The Council will continue to engage with the broader Yarra Ranges community on important matters warranting consultation.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee (the Committee) has been established by Council for the purpose of:
 - a) Providing advice to Council on implementing its environmental, climate action and biodiversity objectives as outlined in Council's Environment Strategy, Liveable Climate Plan, Nature Plan, Community Waste and Resource Recovery plan and related policies.
 - b) Contributing to the consultation process of broader Council driven projects, processes and policies that may impact on environmental, climate action and biodiversity objectives.
 - c) Contributing local knowledge and technical expertise to support Council's decision making on:
 - i. Climate change mitigation and adaptation
 - ii. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and natural ecosystems

- iii. Sustainable resource management including water and waste
 - iv. Environmental stewardship and community engagement.
- d) Providing feedback on Council's progress toward its established environmental targets.
 - e) Identifying emerging environmental challenges and opportunities that may impact Council's ability to achieve its sustainability objectives.
 - f) Supporting Council in engaging with and building capacity among community stakeholders to promote environmental stewardship.
 - g) Supporting Council to foster partnerships between community groups, businesses and other levels of government to deliver positive environmental outcomes.

3. Mission Statement

- 3.1 The Committee provides advice and stakeholder perspectives to support Council in:
 - a) Protecting and enhancing the municipality's natural environment and biodiversity
 - b) Building community resilience to climate change impacts
 - c) Transitioning to renewable energy and sustainable resource use
 - d) Engaging the community in environmental stewardship.

4. Committee Structure

- 4.1 The Committee will include up to thirteen community members, appointed in conjunction with the selection criteria included at paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5, together with up to two Councillors appointed by Council and three Council staff.
- 4.2 Members will be appointed as individuals based on their qualifications and experience to be part of the Committee to undertake the role.
- 4.3 The thirteen members of the Committee should comprise:
 - a) Two Councillors nominated by Council;
 - b) Up to ten general community members;
 - c) One community representative with links to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (if available);
 - d) Two or more positions for young people with an interest in developing knowledge and networks within the environment sector (if available); and
 - e) Three Council Officers including:
 - i) Manager Resilient Environment;

- ii) “Executive Officer” for the Committee, nominated by the Manager Resilient Environment at the first meeting of each calendar year.
- iii) “Committee Administrator” to be appointed by the Manager Resilient Environment.

4.4 Additional members may be invited to join the Committee for a defined period to address specialised needs as identified and agreed to by the Committee.

Establishing working groups

4.5 The Committee may establish special interest work groups to progress specific initiatives for a defined period of time. A working group may also invite individuals and groups to attend their meetings for the purpose of providing specialist advice, in accordance with paragraph 8.3.

4.6 Working groups can present opportunities and issues to the wider Committee, upon request to the Committee’s Executive Officer.

5. Nomination, selection & appointment of members

5.1 Expression of interest from individuals will be called through Council’s website, local media and by communications to local community organisations.

5.2 Applications for membership must be made in writing, address to the Executive Officer.

5.3 Applications will be considered against the selection criteria and short-listed applicants will be interviewed by a selection panel, to be appointed by the Executive Officer.

5.4 Members of the Committee will, as far as possible, be representative of the community, with reference to:

- a) Ability;
- b) Age;
- c) Gender and gender identification;
- d) Geographical location;
- e) Cultural background; and
- f) Socio-economic status.

5.5 All members must:

- a) Live or work in Yarra Ranges;
- b) Have a demonstrated interest, skills, experience or background relevant to environmental fields such as water management, biodiversity conservation, energy, climate change, sustainable development and transport, waste recovery or environment planning.
- c) Have knowledge of Yarra Ranges and issues impacting the local environment;
- d) Be able to commit to attending the regular meetings of the Committee; and
- e) Have a passion for working with Council to support environmental management.

Terms of Appointment

- 5.6 Community members will be appointed for a four-year term and may reapply to be appointed to the Committee on the expiry of their first four-year term, but no person should serve more than two consecutive terms, unless exceptional circumstances are identified by Council.
- 5.7 Unless determined otherwise, a community member who has served two consecutive terms as a member of the Committee may apply to be appointed again after a one-year break from the Committee.
- 5.8 Councillors are appointed to the Committee by Council for a four-year term. Notwithstanding the term of appointment, Council will consider and reaffirm this on an annual basis, while reserving the right to change its appointed representative at any time.
- 5.9 All appointments required to be made to the Committee will be submitted in a report by the Executive Officer to a Council meeting for determination.

6. Induction

- 6.1 A workshop will be held to enable Committee members to be inducted into their role. This will provide information on:
 - a) The role of the Committee;
 - b) The role of Council and Councillors;
 - c) Council processes e.g. timelines for programs, strategy development, advocacy positions;
 - d) Confidentiality and Code of Conduct;
 - e) The processes involved in achieving change;
 - f) Cultural awareness and accepted positions of Council; and
 - g) The importance of team building and developing trust within the group.
- 6.2 Within 24 months of a member's appointment to the Committee, the Executive Officer will conduct a review with individual members on their experiences as part of the Committee. This aims to identify any information, supports or steps that may assist the member in fulfilling their role on the Committee.

7. Vacancies

- 7.1 A position is deemed vacant if a member fails to attend four consecutive meetings without being granted a leave of absence by the Committee. Members with low attendance rates may be asked to retire their position to allow new members an opportunity to contribute.
- 7.2 Where a member decides to relinquish their membership before the end of their term of appointment, they must submit their resignation in writing, addressed to the Executive Officer.
- 7.3 Council reserves the right to fill a vacancy that may occur before the end of a four-year term of appointment, with the exception of a vacancy that occurs within two months of the end of the term of appointment.

- 7.4 All recommendations regarding the filling of vacancies mid-term or appointment of additional members will be submitted by the Executive Officer to the Chairperson for approval in consultation with the Manager Resilient Environment.

8. Co-opted members and specialist advice

- 8.1 The Committee may invite suitably skilled persons to join the Committee as a co-opted member for a specified purpose and period of time. A co-opted member would join the Committee in an advisory capacity only.
- 8.2 A member of the Committee who has already served two consecutive four-year terms may be invited to join the Committee as co-opted member to act as a mentor to newly appointed members for a set period of time.
- 8.3 Individuals and groups may be invited to attend meetings of the Committee for the purpose of providing specialist advice. Any such individual or Group must not be involved in decision making processes and must not vote on any matter. This may include representatives from agency partners such as Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Sustainability Victoria, and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

9. Chairperson

- 9.1 The Chairperson will be a Councillor, appointed by Council.
- 9.2 The Chairperson will be the public face of the Committee and will lead advice and reports to the Council and other bodies on behalf of the Committee.
- 9.3 The Committee may appoint a Deputy Chairperson, whose role would be to perform the duties of the Chairperson if the Chairperson is absent or unable to perform their duties at a meeting of the Committee. If a Deputy Chairperson is not appointed, the Manager Resilient Environment may perform the duties of the Chairperson.

10. Meetings

- 10.1 At least six meetings of the Committee will be held per year, with these to be held at an accessible venue in the Yarra Ranges and/or via video conference (to be determined by the Executive Officer after consultation with the Chairperson).
- 10.2 Meetings may be cancelled, or additional meetings may be convened, by the Executive Officer after consultation with the Chairperson.
- 10.3 If apologies are received from a significant number of the members of the Committee, meetings may be cancelled and rescheduled (if feasible) by the Executive Officer after consultation with the Chairperson.
- 10.4 Members are asked to check their email on the morning of the meeting to receive any notice of cancellation.
- 10.5 Meetings of the Committee are defined as “Informal Meetings of Councillors” under Chapter 8, Rule 1 of Council’s Governance Rules if at least one Councillor is present. The Executive Officer must forward a record of an Informal Meeting of Councillors to Council’s Governance Team within 7 days of a meeting to enable

this to be tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the Minutes of that Council meeting.

11. Code of Conduct for Committee members

- 11.1 All members of the Committee, as Council volunteers, are bound to act within the Yarra Ranges Council's Code of Conduct.
- 11.2 When acting in their capacity as a member of the Committee, all members will be respectful of others and refrain from discriminating, harassing or bullying other people and using offensive language.
- 11.3 In performing their role, a committee member must:
 - a) Act honestly,
 - b) Exercise reasonable care and diligence,
 - c) Not make improper use of their position, and
 - d) Not make improper use of the information acquired because of their position.
- 11.4 The failure of a member to comply with the above may result in the termination of their appointment to the Committee.
- 11.5 Committee members will also have regard to the principles of health and safety and must ensure that they contribute to the notion of a healthy and safe workplace.

12. Confidentiality and Privacy

- 12.1 Members must treat information they receive as confidential, unless otherwise advised, and are expected to comply with the provisions that cover confidential information contained in sections 3 and 125 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- 12.2 It is recognised that members of the Committee may receive confidential or sensitive information that should not be disclosed without the consent of Council Officers or the Yarra Ranges Council Chief Executive Officer. Members must not use confidential information other than for the purpose of performing their function as a member of the Committee.
- 12.3 Documents presented to the Committee will often be in draft format and not suitable for wider distribution. Members have an obligation not to disclose any materials or information that is not available to the public, unless approved by the Chair or a representative of Council.
- 12.4 All Committee discussions should comply with the requirements under the *Privacy Act 1988* and its principles.
- 12.5 The failure of a member to comply with paragraphs 12.1 to 12.4 will result in termination of their appointment to the Committee.

13. Conflict of Interest

- 13.1 A member of the Committee with a real or perceived conflict of interest in an item of business to be considered at a meeting must declare this before the item is considered.

- 13.2 A member declaring a conflict of interest must leave the meeting while the identified item is being discussed and must not vote on the matter being considered.
- 13.3 A declaration of a conflict of interest that has been made at a meeting of the Committee must be recorded in the minutes of that meeting and in the Informal Meeting of Councillors record to be submitted to Council.
- 13.4 A failure to comply with the provisions regarding the disclosure of conflicts of interest may result in the member's appointment to the Committee being terminated.
- 13.5 A Councillor appointed to the Committee must declare a conflict of interest in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 7, Rule 7, of Council's Governance Rules.

14. Attendance at Meetings

Submitting Apologies

- 14.1 Members should submit any apologies to the Executive Officer or the Committee Administrator if they are unable to attend, with these to be received at least 24 hours prior to a scheduled meeting time (where possible).

Requesting a Leave of Absence

- 14.2 If a member is likely to be absent from at least four consecutive meetings and wishes to remain as a member of the Committee, they should request a leave of absence.
- 14.3 Any such request should be submitted to the Chair and the Executive Officer.
- 14.4 The Chair and Executive Officer will not unreasonably withhold their approval of a leave of absence request.

15. Meeting Procedures

Agenda for Meetings

- 15.1 Council will be responsible for setting the agenda for each meeting.
- 15.2 Committee members may request an item to be included on an Agenda by sending to the Executive Officer at least ten days prior to the meeting.
- 15.3 The Executive Officer will consider any such requests and determine if they are to be listed or dealt with as per normal business given discussion on operational issues should be directed to the appropriate Council Officer.
- 15.4 The Agenda for each meeting will include:
 - a) An opportunity for members to disclose a conflict of interest;
 - b) Provision for any urgent items of business to be raised and, by agreement, considered by the Committee;
 - c) Brief reports back on:
 - i. the use of the Committee's advice by Council; and
 - ii. actions and/or matters arising from items discussed at the previous meeting;
 - d) Updates on current Council programs and initiatives;

- e) Substantive discussion about major current issues and directions; and
 - f) An opportunity to raise other business matters from the table.
- 15.5 An agenda will be sent to the Committee one week prior to each meeting, together with any background reading material.

Decision Making

- 15.6 A quorum of at least five members must be present if a formal committee meeting is to be held.
- 15.7 No formal business shall be conducted by the Committee unless a quorum exists. If a quorum is not present, the Chairperson may decide that the Committee meet for discussion only.
- 15.8 Any decisions in respect of formal advice and/or comment to be provided to Council by the Committee will be reached by consensus. As far as practicable the Committee will provide advice to Council based on the collective wisdom of its members, supported by the best available information provided by Council Officers.
- 15.9 A diversity of views may be expressed by the Committee and these will be reflected in any reports and statements issued by the Committee.

Minutes of Meetings

- 15.10 Minutes will be taken for each meeting by the nominated Committee Administrator and will record:
- a) The attendance of members;
 - b) Agenda items tabled;
 - c) Any declared conflicts of interest;
 - d) Key discussion points; and
 - e) Actions and agreed outcomes only.
- 15.11 Minutes and action items will be distributed to each member of the Committee and relevant Council staff within two working weeks of the meeting.
- 15.12 Minutes will be finalised only when formally adopted at the following scheduled meeting of the Committee.
- 15.13 Minutes will appear on Council's website for public viewing after their formal adoption.

16. Reporting

- 16.1 The Chairperson will make a Delegate's Report at the next Council meeting following a Committee meeting.
- 16.2 The Committee will contribute to an Annual Report to Council in combination with Council's other Advisory Committees. The Annual Report will provide information on the Committee's activities over the previous 12-month period and detail the Committee's key plans and goals over the upcoming 12 months.
- 16.3 The Annual Report will be made by the Executive Officer, with others deemed appropriate by the Executive Officer after consultation with the Chairperson and Council's Governance team.

17. Management and support to the Committee

- 17.1 The Committee Administrator will provide administrative support to the Committee, which will include:
- a) Maintaining contact details of members;
 - b) Preparing and distributing Agendas and prior reading material;
 - c) Preparing and distributing Minutes of meetings;
 - d) Reporting on actions and/or matters arising from previous meetings back to the committee;
 - e) Circulating other material to Committee members as necessary;
 - f) Completing and submitting an Informal Meeting of Councillors record for inclusion on a Council Agenda;
 - g) Maintaining a web page for the Committee on Council's website;
 - h) Assisting with the preparation of an Annual Report to Council; and
 - i) Managing all other administrative processes associated with the Committee.
- 17.2 The Committee will have access to Council staff with relevant expertise on matters being considered by the Committee.

18. Support Available to Community Representatives

- 18.1 Community members are eligible for assistance, e.g. cab vouchers, to support their attendance at meetings and involvement with the Committee.
- 18.2 Community representatives should raise any individual participation or access requirements with the Executive Officer.

19. Review

- 19.1 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every four years, or at such other time that Council determines.

Confidential Item

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT - DECEMBER 2024

Report Author: Executive Officer – Management Accounting
 Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
 Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

SUMMARY

The attached December 2024 Finance Report has been prepared as of 31 December 2024.

The report includes financial year-to-date data up to the end of December for the 2024-2025 financial year and is compared to adopted budget for the financial year 2024-2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Finance Report for the six months to 31 December 2024.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Section 101 of the *Local Government Act 2020* outlines the financial management principles that Council needs to adhere to monthly reporting to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and quarterly reporting to Council and the Audit and Risk Management Committee on the operational financial results fulfils this requirement.

Summary of year-to-date results

Comprehensive Result (Net Surplus)

YTD comprehensive result of \$8.4m is \$7.9m favourable over the adopted budget. This is due to:

- Overall revenue is \$12.9m above budget, this predominantly relates to Grants – Capital being above Budget by \$16.2m due to grant revenue budgeted to be received in 2023-2024 however was received in July and August 2024.

This is partially offset with Grants Capital being under budget by \$1.7m due to a delay in project milestones and unearned income not yet recognised.

- This favourable result is partially offset by increases in total expenses being over budget by \$7.1m, this predominantly relates to Materials and Services in expenditure of contracted spend due to storm clean up and tree services, Employee benefits \$1m due to contractor costs, and \$0.5m due to depreciation and amortisation with the capitalisation of assets YTD of \$34m.

Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement

Cash and investment holdings ended 31 December at \$8.8m representing a declining cash position. The Balance Sheet presents a positive working capital of \$31.3m (total current assets of \$108m less total current liabilities of \$76.7m). This reflects Council's ability to meet its obligations as and when they fall due.

Capital Program

Capital expenditure finished the month at \$5.1m against a budget of \$5.5m for December. Year to Date capital expenditure of \$26.7m is \$6.3m or 19% below the YTD Adopted Budget of \$33.0m.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The attached report outlines the financial performance and position of Council's activities as at the end of December 2024 with variance commentaries on performance by income/expenditure type.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Sound financial management and reporting of Council's activities forms part of Council's commitment to be a High Performing Organisation, one of the five Key Strategic Objectives outlined in the Council Plan.

RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment has been considered in relation to the financial report and deemed an acceptable level of risk.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within *the Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Financial Report – December 2024



Financial Report

December 2024

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Key Highlights

This report provides a summary of the financial Performance of the Yarra Ranges Council as at the 31st December 2024

Area	RAG	Key Message	Slide #
YTD Underlying Result	●	Favourable \$7.9m Underlying Result (\$8.4m Actual Surplus v \$0.5m Budget Surplus). Grant commission 23/24 paid in Jul-24 and budgeted in prior year \$8.4m favourable impact YTD. With grant removed the result would be -\$0.5m unfavourable to Budget, YTD. Storm impacts from 3 events YTD \$2.0m unfavourable, offset by additional grant income & carry forwards (\$2m), and other negative variances in Interest and employee & temp costs.	7
Annual Forecast	●	Unfavourable \$3.6m Underlying full year result forecasted. (Current Forecast \$7.1m deficit v \$3.5m Budget Deficit). Major movements: Storms \$2.3m unfavourable impact	7
Internal financing	●	Net Operating Cashflow/Net capital expenditure: Unfavourable due to timing of rate collections and capital expenditure. This will even out as the year progresses.	9
Liquidity	●	Current Assets / Current Liabilities: Favourable showing for every dollar of current liabilities there is 1.41 of assets to cover. As noted in the Cashflow the Cash On hand is declining based on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cashflow budget had the assumption that Capital Grant income was cash to be received however further analysis indicated that \$17m was carried forward/income received in advance. - Rates in arrears from prior years of \$26.5m puts pressure on the current year financing of operational expenditure requirements - Prior year Borrowings budgeted of \$18.9m was not drawn down further impacting the borrowing capacity in the current financial year with budgeted \$20.448m borrowings now fully drawn down 	9
Capital Expenditure	●	Forecasted expenditure is on track noting that YTD \$26.7m has been spent of the adopted budget of \$33m YTD. Underspend of \$6.3m due to delayed expenditure in Community & Recreation \$0.8m, Roads & Drainage \$1.1m, Footpaths & Cycleway \$0.6m, Open space \$3.1m, Roads \$1.3m and Buildings \$0.8m.	13-18
Rates in arrears	●	Currently \$26.5m from prior to 2024/2025.	19-24

Full Year Under / Over Impacts: Income (\$'000)

Income Statement Category	Explanation Summary	Full Year Variance	Explanation Detail
Statutory Fees & Fines	1. Planning Statutory Fees	-\$0.4m	- Reduction in Planning applications (down 24% currently) -\$0.4m
Grants Operating	1. Grant Commission Funding	+\$1.0m	- 24/25 Grant funding \$17.9m, Budget \$16.9m
Other Income	Interest on Investments	-\$1.1m	Investments expected to be utilised to reduce borrowing requirements. Interest Forecast \$0.8m, Budget \$1.9m
NEW INCOME	<i>New Revenue opportunities to be advised</i>	+\$1.0m	Parking program, new initiatives, \$1.0m (needs review)
TOTAL INCOME		+\$0.5m	

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Full Year Under / Over Impacts: Expenditure (\$'000)

Income Statement Category	Explanation Summary	Full Year Variance	Explanation Detail
Employee Benefits	1. YR Connect – Employees	+\$1.2m	1. YR Connect – project completion date extended to Jun-26. ELT approved operational carry forward to FY2025, but not reflected in the Budget
Materials & Services	1. Trees	+\$2.7m	1. Trees YTD +\$2.2m unfavourable to Budget, mainly in Reactive works.
	2. Temporary Staff	+\$1.0m	2. Currently overspent by \$1.0m, but offset by vacancies and savings in Salaries and Wages
	3. Operational Savings	-\$0.8m	3. Operational savings identified
Storms	Natural Disaster costs 24/25 Recoveries accrued	+\$2.3m	Three storm events to date YTD \$8.9m, full cost expected to be \$12.0m, with \$9.3m Operating Grant income recovery (77% income recovery)
Loss on Disposals (Asset Write Offs)	Write downs or write offs of assets (due to replacements etc)	+\$1.0	Additional write offs anticipated. No budget for asset write offs. No cash impact
SAVING INITIATIVES	1. Employee Benefits	-\$0.8m	Current full year forecast is showing savings as follows: Communities -\$0.5m, P&SF -\$0.9m, BE&I -\$0.3m but needs further review (\$1.7m total).
	2. Other	-\$2.5m	Other areas forecasting savings
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		+\$14.3m	
TOTAL UNDERS / (OVERS)		(\$3.6m)	

Executive Summary – Operating Result

This report provides a summary of the financial Performance of the Yarra Ranges Council as at the 31st December 2024.

	MTD December 2024				YTD December 2024				Annual Total			
	Actual \$'000	Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance	Actual \$'000	Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance	Forecast \$'000	Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance
Total Income	21,977	22,228	(252)	(1.1)%	140,159	127,290	12,869	10.1%	263,301	252,916	10,386	4.1%
Total Expenses	23,435	21,642	(1,793)	(8.3)%	123,260	116,167	(7,092)	(6.1)%	247,644	235,146	12,498	5.3%
Net Gain/(Loss) on Disposal	12	0	12	0.0%	237	0	237	0.0%	(954)	0	(954)	0.0%
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,446)	587	(2,032)	346.5%	17,137	11,123	6,014	54.1%	14,703	17,769	(3,066)	(17.3)%
Operating (Underlying) Surplus/(Deficit)	(4,182)	(1,182)	(3,000)	253.8%	8,364	512	7,852	1,533.7%	(7,065)	(3,453)	(3,613)	104.6%

MTD Variance (Over/Under)	Explanation	YTD Variance	Explanation
Income: \$0.3m under budget	Rates and user fees (\$0.8m) and Interest Income (\$0.2m) under budget offset with Contributions – gifted and found assets \$0.8m due to the reconciliation of drainage assets by the SAM team.	Income \$12.9m over budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Operating Grants \$16.2m over budgeted due to the Grant Commission Funding being budgeted to be received in FY24 however was received in July and August 2024 (+\$8.1m), Storms recoveries +\$6.4m income accrued for 24/25 events User fees are up on budget by \$0.1m YTD. Partially offset with under's in Grants – Capital (\$1.7m) due to timing of income recognised in the prior year Rates- Special Charges \$0.6m Interest income is under budget by (\$0.7m) due to the restrained cash position and maturation of Term Deposits \$5.5m YTD
Expenses: \$1.8m over budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Employee Benefits over budget by \$0.6m due to the backpay of the EBA being passed with the rate cap of 2.75% Materials and Services over budget by \$1.1m due to \$0.4m Trees due to weather events, \$0.4m infrastructure services due to timing, \$0.2m due to timing of spend on oval maintenance Turf services on sport fields full year is inline with budget. 	Expenses over budget by \$7.1m	<p>Due to unbudgeted overspends</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Employee benefits \$1m – due to the extension of YR Connect project & 24/25 Cost of Living payment accrued. Materials and Services: Storms \$7.6m due to 3 events, \$3.2m Parks, Trees & Trails, predominantly driven by Trees Reactive (1214), due to an increase in requests because of the recent storms. \$0.5m due to depreciation and amortisation with the capitalisation of assets \$34m YTD.
Operating/Underlying Surplus/(Deficit) \$3m unfavourable to budget	Excluding the Capital Grants add back of \$2.7m being added back to the net surplus the deficit of \$1.4m is under budget by \$2m due to over expenditure as noted above.	Operating/ Underlying Surplus/(Deficit) \$7.9m over budget	Over budget due to the receipt of the Capital Grant in July/August partially offset by over expenditure in Staffing and Materials and Services.

Executive Summary – Balance Sheet & Cashflow

This report provides a summary of the Financial Position of the Yarra Ranges Council as at the 31st December 2024.

Balance Sheet - as at Dec 2024				
\$'000	Actuals YTD (Dec 2024)	Actuals YTD (Dec 2023)	Adopted Budget (to Jun 2025)	Adopted Budget (to Jun 2024)
Total current assets	114,269	146,936	134,462	90,784
Total non-current assets	1,645,197	1,375,720	1,453,387	1,643,558
Total assets	1,759,466	1,522,656	1,587,849	1,734,342
Total current liabilities	80,349	116,845	110,922	87,294
Total non-current liabilities	38,041	10,913	40,112	24,466
Total liabilities	118,390	127,758	151,034	111,760
Net assets	1,641,076	1,394,898	1,436,815	1,622,582
Total equity	1,641,076	1,394,898	1,436,815	1,622,582
Working Capital	33,920	30,091	23,540	12,656

Statement of Cash Flows - as at Dec 2024			
\$'000	Actuals YTD (Dec 2024)	Annual Budget (to Jun 2025)	Prior year (to Jun 2024)
Net cash provided by operating activities	989	63,026	4,595
Net cash used in investing activities	(33,210)	(77,696)	(71,090)
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	18,234	15,086	(5,413)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(13,987)	416	(71,908)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the financial year	24,742	78,242	96,650
Cash and cash equivalents	10,755	78,658	24,742

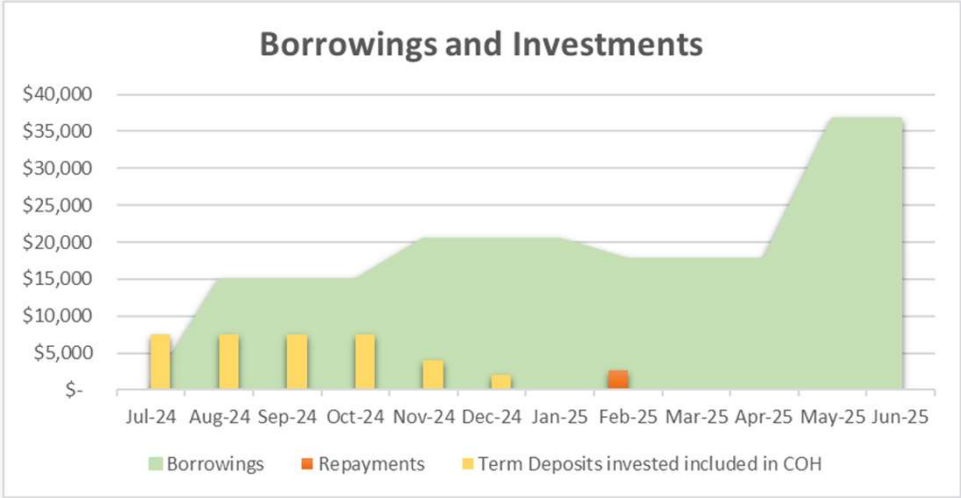
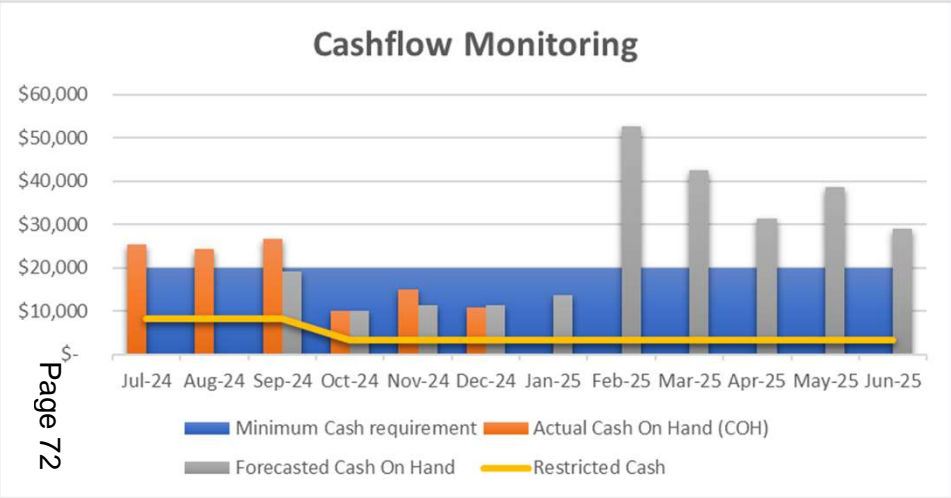
Executive Summary – Indicators

This report provides a summary of the Financial Position of the Yarra Ranges Council as at the 31st December 2024.

VAGO Performance Indicators as at Dec 2024								
Indicator	Measure					YTD Actual	Full year Budget	Ref
Net result	Net surplus (deficit) / Total revenue	Less than (1.0%)	(10%) to 0%	More than 0%	%	12.2%	7.0%	1
Adjusted underlying result	Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue	Less than 0%	0% to 5%	More than 5%	%	6.4%	(1.5%)	2
Liquidity	Current Assets / Current Liabilities	Less than 0.75	75% to 100%	More than 1.0	x	1.41	1.21	3
Unrestricted Liquidity	Current Assets (less restricted cash) / Current Liabilities	Less than 0.75	75% to 100%	More than 1.0	x	1.12	-	4
Internal financing	Net operating cashflow / Net capital expenditure	Less than 75%	75% to 100%	More than 100%	%	3.0%	81.1%	5
Indebtedness	Non current liabilities / Own sourced revenue	More than 60%	40% to 60%	40% or Less	%	42.2%	20.1%	6

1. **Net result** – is revenue/income from transactions minus expenses from transactions, as a percentage of total revenue. Full Year actual result remains positive due to a favourable result in operating grants.
2. **Adjusted underlying result** – is the net result exclusive of capital grants and contributions. It is an indicator of the sustainable operating result required to enable Council to continue to provide core services and meet its objectives. Full Year actual is favourable due to the increase in Operating Grants due to the timing of the grant funding received in FY25 budgeted for FY24. Budget is negative due to the adjusted result with the add back for Capital Grants budgeted and contributions of \$24m.
3. **Liquidity** - The ability to pay liabilities due within the next 12 months. For every dollar of liabilities this ratio represents the cash and liquid assets to repay the debts when they fall due.
4. **Unrestricted Liquidity** - The ability to pay liabilities due within the next 12 months. A ratio of one or more means that an entity has more cash and liquid assets than short-term liabilities. YRC is comfortable to meet short-term financial obligations after deducting restricted cash.
5. **Internal financing** – The ability to finance capital works from net operating cashflow. Actual result reflects low net cash inflows as capital expenditure is higher than the rate revenue collected, and grant funding received at this time of the year. The full year budget expects net capital expenditure to exceed net cash from operating activities due to timing of Operating grant funding received.
6. **Indebtedness** - The ability to repay debt due after the next 12 months from own-sourced revenue (Total revenue excluding grants and contributions). Full year actual and budget reflect Council's level of debt compared to own-sourced revenue generated. Due to timing of rate revenue and the operating grants received in July 2024 not budgeted this indicator is showing an unfavourable result however this will rectify as the year progresses and rate revenue exceeds grant revenue.

Financial Sustainability



Assumptions:

1. Minimum cash requirement is set at approximately \$20m being 2 months of operating expenditure.
2. Restricted Cash \$3.2m: Consists of \$0.8m of deposits held for Kinley Estate project and \$2.4m for deposits held in trust.
3. Borrowings determined by FY25 Budget set at \$20.448m. Currently drawn down \$15m in August 2024 and \$5.448m in November 2024. Further drawdown per revised Budget in May 2025 \$18.9m.
4. Term Deposits are included in cash on hand currently \$2m invested.
5. TCV Loan of \$20.448m biannual repayments set over 5 years with February 2025 and August 2025 repayment dates.

Loans and borrowings

Account Name \$'000	Original Loan Amount \$'000	Applicable interest rate	Current Liability \$'000	Non Current Liability \$'000	Total \$'000
Loan					
TCV 21/8/24	15,000	4.295%	1,361	13,639	15,000
TCV 6/11/24	5,448	4.755%	990	4,458	5,448
Loan Balance			2,351	18,097	20,448

Note: Due to the delay in drawdown of borrowings in FY24 and based on the assumption of maintaining 2 months of operational expenditure a minimum balance of \$20m cash on hand is required. It is proposed that an additional borrowings of \$18.9m is needed to maintain a financially sustainable cash on hand balance.



Income Statement

	MTD December 2024				YTD December 2024				Annual Total			
	Actual	Budget	\$ variance	% variance	Actual	Budget	\$ variance	% variance	Forecast	Budget	\$ variance	% variance
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
	25PJACT	25PJBUD			25PJACT	25PJBUD			25PJFOR	25PJBUD		
Income												
Rates - General	15,054	15,074	(21)	(0.1)%	90,500	90,446	54	0.1%	181,093	180,893	200	0.1%
Rates - Special Rates and Charges	0	105	(105)	(100.0)%	0	629	(629)	(100.0)%	1,516	1,258	258	20.5%
Statutory Fees and Fines	236	313	(78)	(24.8)%	1,577	1,881	(303)	(16.1)%	4,332	3,761	571	15.2%
User Fees	537	1,154	(618)	(53.5)%	3,550	3,428	122	3.6%	6,832	6,394	437	6.8%
Contributions - Cash	179	274	(95)	(34.8)%	1,296	1,524	(228)	(14.9)%	3,144	3,113	30	1.0%
Grants - Capital	2,731	1,761	970	55.1%	8,818	10,565	(1,747)	(16.5)%	21,515	21,129	386	1.8%
Grants - Operating	1,567	2,471	(904)	(36.6)%	31,538	15,364	16,174	105.3%	39,443	29,250	10,193	34.8%
Other Revenue	119	126	(7)	(5.4)%	862	754	109	14.4%	1,623	1,715	(92)	(5.4)%
Interest	14	200	(186)	(93.1)%	477	1,201	(724)	(60.3)%	813	2,402	(1,589)	(66.2)%
Contributions - Non Monetary Assets	1,541	750	791	105.4%	1,541	1,500	41	2.7%	2,991	3,000	(9)	(0.3)%
Total Income	21,977	22,228	(252)	(1.1)%	140,159	127,290	12,869	10.1%	263,301	252,916	10,386	4.1%
Expenses												
Employee Benefits	8,267	7,709	(558)	(7.2)%	41,803	40,804	(998)	(2.4)%	80,653	80,230	423	0.5%
Materials and Services	10,554	9,436	(1,118)	(11.8)%	55,647	49,942	(5,705)	(11.4)%	116,191	104,814	11,377	10.9%
Bad and Doubtful Debts	0	16	16	100.0%	2	32	30	94.0%	64	64	0	0.0%
Depreciation and Amortisation	3,345	3,299	(47)	(1.4)%	20,271	19,793	(478)	(2.4)%	39,882	39,586	295	0.7%
Other Expenses	1,121	1,054	(68)	(6.4)%	4,823	4,823	(0)	(0.0)%	9,318	8,906	412	4.6%
Finance Costs (Interest)	147	129	(19)	(14.5)%	714	773	59	7.6%	1,538	1,546	(8)	(0.5)%
Total Expenses	23,435	21,642	(1,793)	(8.3)%	123,260	116,167	(7,092)	(6.1)%	247,644	235,146	12,498	5.3%
Net Gain/(Loss) on Disposal	12	0	12	0.0%	237	0	237	0.0%	(954)	0	(954)	(100.0)%
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,446)	587	(2,032)	346.5%	17,137	11,123	6,014	54.1%	14,703	17,769	(3,066)	(17.3)%
Operating (Underlying) Surplus/(Deficit)	(4,182)	(1,182)	(3,000)	(253.8)%	8,364	512	7,852	1,533.7%	(7,065)	(3,453)	(3,613)	104.6%

Balance Sheet

Balance Sheet - as at Dec 2024				
\$'000	Actuals YTD (Dec 2024)	Actuals YTD (Dec 2023)	Adopted Budget (to Jun 2025)	Actual (to Jun 2024)
Current Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	8,754	42,767	78,659	17,242
Trade and other receivables	77,160	72,370	41,833	43,657
Other financial assets	2,000	7,500		7,500
Prepayment	2,109	1,548		2,018
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	3,363	3,205		3,263
Contract assets	14,623	3,533	13,970	17,104
Total current assets	108,009	130,923	134,462	90,784
Non-current assets				
Trade and other receivables	5,003	6,292	2,383	6,099
Investments in associates and joint venture	2,924	2,613	2,550	2,924
Property, infrastructure, plant & equipment	1,620,050	1,366,990	1,429,997	1,611,462
Intangible asset	6,069	6,151	2,840	5,625
Right-of-use assets	16,349	17,848	15,617	17,448
Total non-current assets	1,650,396	1,399,894	1,453,387	1,643,558
Total assets	1,758,405	1,530,817	1,587,849	1,734,342
Current liabilities				
Trade and other payables	34,034	24,049	31,061	27,500
Contract and other liabilities	19,027	56,785	46,000	31,779
Trust funds and deposits	3,212	8,660	14,802	8,589
Provisions	16,048	16,662	15,056	16,575
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	2,350	1,250	2,045	640
Lease liabilities	2,036	1,856	1,958	2,211
Total current liabilities	76,707	109,262	110,922	87,294
Non-current liabilities				
Provisions	8,833	9,486	8,647	8,832
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	18,098	639	17,807	0
Lease liabilities	14,680	16,213	13,658	15,634
Total non-current liabilities	41,611	26,338	40,112	24,466
Total liabilities	118,318	135,600	151,034	111,760
Net assets	1,640,087	1,395,217	1,436,815	1,622,582
Equity				
Accumulated surplus	645,629	638,542	690,558	645,628
Reserves	976,953	746,256	746,257	976,954
Current Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	17,505	10,419	0	0
Total equity	1,640,087	1,395,217	1,436,815	1,622,582
Working Capital	31,302	21,661	23,540	3,490

Commentary

- Cash and cash equivalents excludes Term Deposits invested of \$2m. The \$2m in Term Deposits are included in Other financial assets and due to mature in January 2025.
- Working Capital (Current assets - current liabilities) = \$31.3m which is a positive result ensuring that YRC can meet its current liabilities when and if they fall due.
- Interest bearing liabilities (current and non-current) is the TCV new borrowings in August 2024 of \$20.448m.
- Lease liabilities consists of the new waste contract
- Provisions covers employee provisions such as Long Service Leave and Annual Leave.
- Property, Plant and Equipment has increase substantially from budget due to the revaluation increment that was processed in June for the Land under roads valuation. Total asset revaluation increment for FY24 was \$229.8m.

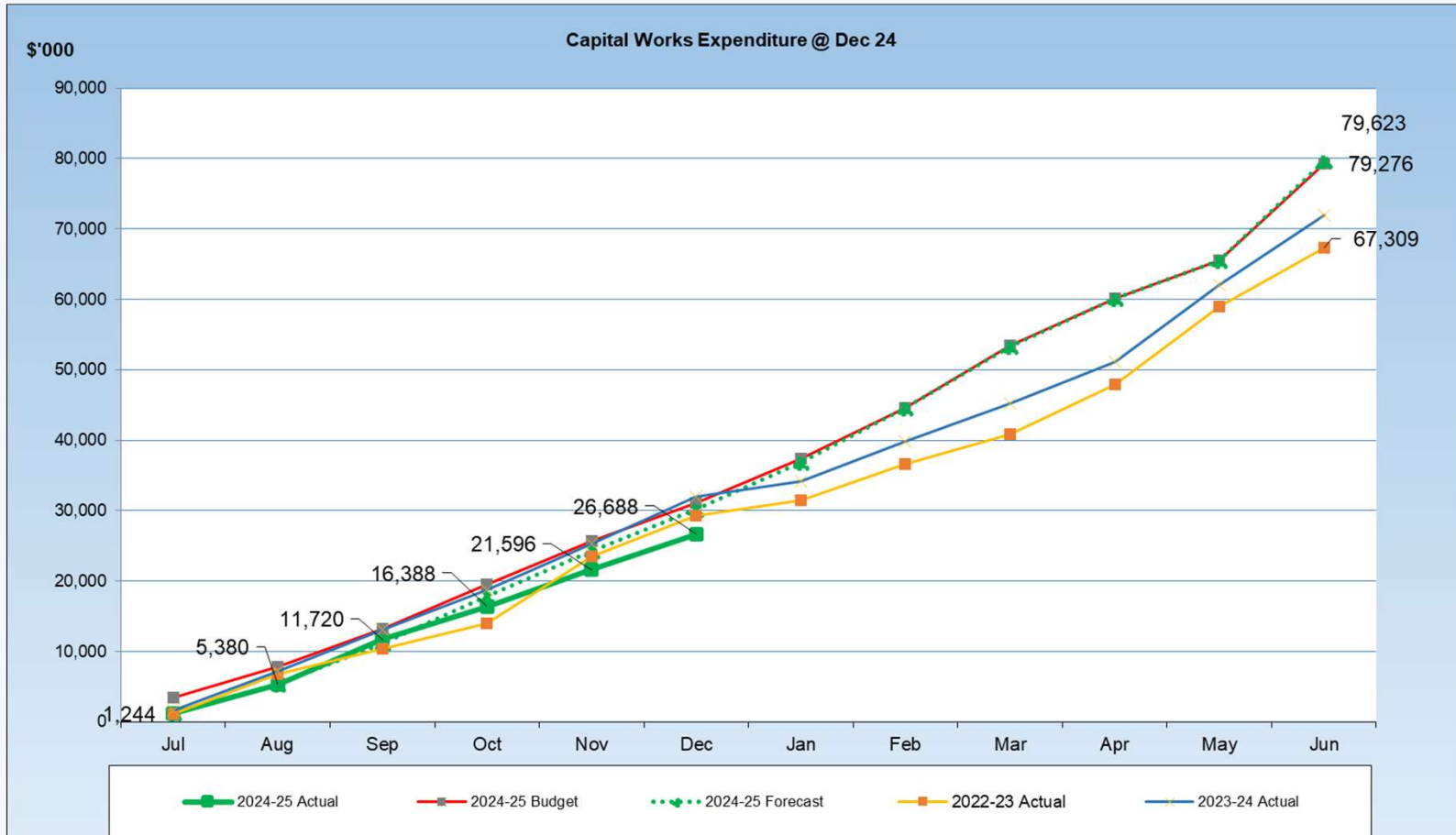
Cashflow Statement as at 31st December 2024

Statement of Cash Flows - as at Dec 2024

\$'000	Actuals YTD (Dec 2024)	Annual Budget (to Jun 2025)	Prior year (to Jun 2024)
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Rates and charges	83,842	182,616	157,558
Statutory fees and fines	2,477	4,141	8,738
User fees (inclusive of GST)	3,835	7,040	7,279
Grants - operating (inclusive of GST)	27,839	29,279	14,009
Grants - capital (inclusive of GST)	1,504	21,150	6,707
Contributions (inclusive of GST)	1,291	3,020	3,742
Interest received	553	2,401	3,314
Trust funds and deposits	(5,216)	0	3,617
Other receipts (inclusive of GST)	834	2,296	3,125
Net GST refund	7,922	15,502	17,232
Materials and Services (inclusive of GST)	(76,582)	(114,882)	(129,817)
Employee costs	(42,062)	(79,756)	(79,736)
Other payments	(5,248)	(9,781)	(11,173)
Net cash provided by operating activities	989	63,026	4,595
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(32,739)	(77,696)	(72,224)
Payments for intangibles	(770)		
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	299	0	1,134
Investments in associates			
Net cash used in investing activities	(33,210)	(77,696)	(71,090)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Finance costs	(16)	(672)	(176)
Proceeds from interest bearing loans and	20,448	20,448	(2,472)
Repayment of borrowings	(640)	(1,239)	0
Interest paid - lease liability	(428)	(874)	(667)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(1,130)	(2,577)	(2,098)
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	18,234	15,086	(5,413)
equivalents	(13,987)	416	(71,908)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the financial year	24,742	78,242	96,650
Cash and cash equivalents	10,755	78,658	24,742

	Dec-24
Cash and Cash Equivalent Balance \$'000	10,754.5
Restricted cash	17,019.8
Reserve - Public Open Space	11,665.5
Reserve - Waste	197.9
Reserve - Biodiversity Offset Program	603.5
Reserve - Pandemic Recovery Reserve	800.0
Reserve - Disaster Response	300.0
Reserve - Digital Transformation	300.0
Trust Funds - Deposits, Planning, Builder etc	3,153.0

Capital Works Expenditure Graph December 2024 YTD



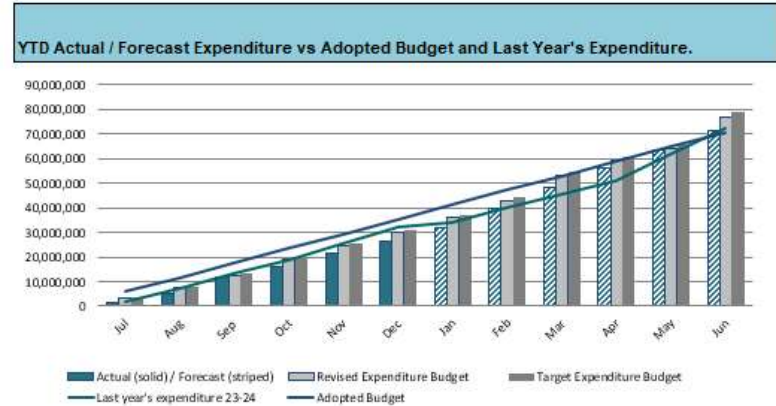
Capital Works Statement

	MTD December 2024				YTD December 2024				Annual Total			
	Actual \$'000	Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance	Actual \$'000	Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance	Forecast \$'000	Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance
Expenditure												
Infrastructure - Asset Management	(67)	67	134	200.6%	1,919	400	(1,519)	(379.7)%	5,453	5,509	(56)	(1.0)%
Infrastructure - Bridges	0	39	39	100.0%	70	233	163	69.8%	824	466	358	76.8%
Infrastructure - Community & Recreation	139	554	415	75.0%	2,614	3,326	711	21.4%	3,605	6,651	(3,046)	(45.8)%
Infrastructure - Drainage	242	288	45	15.8%	585	1,727	1,142	66.1%	2,824	3,453	(629)	(18.2)%
Infrastructure - Footpaths & Cycleways	4	159	155	97.5%	395	956	561	58.7%	2,113	1,912	201	10.5%
Infrastructure - Off-street Carparks	18	32	13	42.5%	121	190	69	36.4%	380	380	0	0.0%
Infrastructure - Open Space	1,035	1,258	223	17.7%	4,475	7,550	3,074	40.7%	14,868	15,099	(231)	(1.5)%
Infrastructure - Roads	1,419	1,518	99	6.5%	7,793	9,108	1,315	14.4%	21,329	18,216	3,113	17.1%
P&E - Computers & Comms	327	198	(130)	(65.5)%	1,167	1,187	20	1.7%	3,042	2,374	668	28.1%
P&E - Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	0	2	2	100.0%	0	9	9	100.0%	17	19	(2)	(10.5)%
P&E - Plant, Machinery & Equipment	30	204	174	85.3%	1,224	1,224	(0)	(0.0)%	2,306	2,447	(141)	(5.8)%
Property - Buildings	1,854	1,176	(679)	(57.7)%	6,225	7,053	829	11.8%	14,510	14,107	403	2.9%
Property - Land	90	0	(90)	0.0%	100	0	(100)	0.0%	10	0	10	100.0%
TOTAL	5,092	5,494	402	7.3%	26,688	32,962	6,274	19.0%	71,282	70,633	648	152.6%

Capital Expenditure Program Quarterly Report

For the period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024

Approved 2024-25 Capital Expenditure Program (CEP) Budget		\$'000
Published Capital Budget Allocation: Council contribution		48,153
Published Capital Budget Allocation: external income		22,480
Adopted Capital Expenditure Program Budget		70,633
Additional carried forward from 2023-24 to 2024-25		8,274
Capital Expenditure Program budget at 1 July 2024		78,907
Mid-year adjustments, including additional income <i>expected</i>		-748
Capital Expenditure Program Budget (Revised Budget)		78,158
Target Expenditure Budget (as at August 2024)		79,079
Expected to be spent by the end of the financial year		71,282
YTD Actual Spend to 31 December 2024		26,688
Percentage of the Revised Budget Expected to be Spent¹		91%



¹Status:
✔ **90% or more of the revised budget is expected to be spent**
⚠ **Between 80% and 90% of the revised budget is expected to be spent**
✘ **Less than 80% of the revised budget is expected to be spent**

Terminology:

- Adopted Budget:** The annual published Council Budget of capital projects for delivery each year. It complies with the State Government reporting guidelines and so, excludes the non-capital components of projects. The carry forward amounts captured are estimates only as they were formed at the time the budget was set, not at the end of the financial year.
- Target Expenditure Budget:** Set by Project Managers before the start of the financial year, this represents the agreed upon Capital Works expenditure for the year. It includes the Adopted Budget plus any carry forwards from the previous final year and budget adjustments/transfers known at the time and as such, is used to report on monthly expenditure.
- Revised Expenditure Budget:** The current total expenditure budget for works to be completed in the current financial year. It includes the Adopted Budget, final carry forward from previous financial year, external grants made within the year and any budget adjustments/transfers approved within the financial year and as such, is used to report against on the annual program.

Capital Expenditure Program

	December 2024			
	Actual	Target Budget	\$variance	%variance
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
PROPERTY				
Land	90	1,112	(1,021)	(91.9)%
Buildings	1,854	1,112	742	66.8%
PLANT, MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT				
Plant & Equipment	30	157	(127)	(80.9)%
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	-	2	(2)	(100.0)%
Computers & Telecommunications	327	253	75	29.6%
INFRASTRUCTURE				
Roads	1,419	1,794	(376)	(20.9)%
Bridges	-	-	-	0.0%
Footpaths & Cycleways	4	3	1	20.8%
Drainage	242	71	171	242.0%
Recreational, Leisure & Community Facilities	139	376	(238)	(63.1)%
Parks, Open Space & Streetscapes	1,035	1,240	(205)	(16.5)%
Off-street Carparks	18	50	(32)	(63.6)%
Other Infrastructure	(67)	434	(501)	(115.5)%
Total	5,092	6,603	(1,511)	(22.9)%

YTD December 2024				
Actual	Target Budget	\$variance	%variance	
\$'000	\$'000	\$'000		
100	-	100	100.0%	
6,225	7,475	(1,250)	(16.7)%	
1,224	964	260	26.9%	
-	9	(9)	(100.0)%	
1,167	1,516	(349)	(23.0)%	
7,793	7,809	(16)	(0.2)%	
70	289	(219)	(75.6)%	
395	724	(328)	(45.4)%	
585	244	341	139.8%	
2,614	1,771	843	47.6%	
4,475	7,080	(2,605)	(36.8)%	
121	200	(79)	(39.6)%	
1,919	2,635	(716)	(27.2)%	
26,688	30,715	(4,027)	(13.1)%	

Annual Total				
Forecast	Adopted Budget	Revised Budget	\$variance	%variance
\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	Forecast to Revised Budget
10	-	100	(90)	(90.0)%
14,510	14,107	14,119	391	2.8%
-	-	-	-	0.0%
2,306	2,447	2,027	279	13.8%
17	19	19	(2)	(11.1)%
3,042	2,374	3,031	11	0.3%
-	-	-	-	0.0%
21,329	18,216	21,896	(567)	(2.6)%
824	466	756	68	9.0%
2,113	1,912	2,131	(17)	(0.8)%
2,824	3,453	3,826	(1,002)	(26.2)%
3,605	6,651	3,931	(326)	(8.3)%
14,868	15,099	20,680	(5,812)	(28.1)%
380	380	380	0	0.0%
5,453	5,509	5,262	191	3.6%
71,282	70,633	78,158	(6,876)	(8.8)%



Capital Expenditure Program - Property

	Prior Year Actual 2023-24 \$'000	YTD December 2024			
		Actual \$'000	Target Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance
Land					
Land New / Improvements	1,158	100		100	100.0%
Buildings					
Buildings Rehab / Renewal	2,717	2,339	3,294	(955)	(29.0)%
Buildings New / Improvements	14,207	3,886	4,181	(295)	(7.1)%
	18,083	6,325	7,475	(1,150)	(15.4)%

FY 2024-25 Forecast vs Budget				
Forecast	Adopted Budget	Revised Budget	\$ variance	% variance
			Forecast to Revised Budget	
\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
10		100	(90)	(90.0)%
8,202	6,401	8,614	(412)	(4.8)%
6,308	7,706	5,505	804	14.6%
14,520	14,107	14,219	301	2.1%

YTD Variance to Target Budget Over / (Under)	Explanation
Buildings Rehab / Renewal under budget by \$0.95m	Main variance is a delay in Mt Evelyn Library and Community Room, Selby Tennis Club, Court House, Athenaeum Theatre, Jane Children's Centre, Healesville, Mooroolbark Library and Lilydale Tennis Club (1.2m) offset by accelerated expenditure at Lilydale Bowls Club, Yarra Junction Bowls Club and Charles Street Pre-school (0.6m).
Buildings New / Improvements under budget by \$0.3m	Main variance is accelerated spend at Pinks Reserve Stadium, Climate Resilient Buildings and Advanced Design for Early Years (1.5m) offset by delay in expenditure for PAC Funding (1.6m) and Electrification of Monbulk Aquatic (0.12)

Forecast YTD Variance to Revised Budget Over / (Under)	Explanation
Buildings Rehab / Renewal under budget by \$0.4m	Driven by forecasted underspend and carry forward to 2025-26 input for Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre (\$0.5) and overspend expected for Yarra Junction Bowls Club (\$0.2m).
Buildings New / Improvements over budget by \$0.4m	Driven by forecasted overspend on Pink Reserve stadium Improvements.

Capital Expenditure Program - Plant, Machinery & Equipment

	Prior Year Actual 2023-24 \$'000	YTD December 2024			
		Actual \$'000	Target Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance
Plant & Equipment					
Plant & Equipment Rehab / Renewal	2,701	1,066	897	169	18.9%
Plant & Equipment New / Improvements	1,180	157	67	90	134.5%
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	9	-	9	(9)	(100.0)%
Computers & Telecommunications	1,585	1,167	1,516	(349)	(23.0)%
	5,475	2,391	2,489	(99)	(4.0)%

FY 2024-25 Forecast vs Budget				
Forecast	Adopted Budget	Revised Budget	\$ variance	% variance
			Forecast to Revised Budget	
\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
1,940	2,447	1,794	147	8.2%
366	-	233	133	56.8%
17	19	19	(2)	(11.1)%
3,042	2,374	3,031	11	0.3%
5,365	4,840	5,078	288	54.2%

YTD Variance to Target Budget Over / (Under)	Explanation
Computers & Telecommunications under budget by \$0.4m	Budget phasing information not received with forecasted expenditure later in 2024-25.
Plant & Equipment Rehab / Renewal over budget by \$0.3m	Driven by forecasted overspend on Plant & Equip - Plant Replacement

Forecast YTD Variance to Revised Budget Over / (Under)	Explanation
Plant & Equipment New / Improvements over budget by \$0.1m	Forecasted over spend expected for Lysterfield Transfer Station Fire Service.

Capital Expenditure Program - Infrastructure

	Prior Year Actual 2023-24 \$'000	YTD December 2024				FY 2024-25 Forecast vs Budget					
		Actual \$'000	Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance	Forecast \$'000	Adopted Budget \$'000	Revised Budget \$'000	\$ variance \$'000	% variance	Forecast to Revised Budget
											\$'000
Roads											
Roads Rehab / Renewal	9,436	2,932	2,332	600	25.7%	9,891	10,338	10,633	(742)	(7.0)%	
Roads New / Improvements	1,811	15	248	(233)	(94.1)%	2,875	1,410	3,163	(288)	(9.1)%	
Road Traffic Management	312	190	171	19	11.1%	311	222	342	(31)	(9.2)%	
Roads for the Community Initiative	10,337	4,656	5,058	(402)	(7.9)%	8,252	6,246	7,759	494	6.4%	
Bridges											
Bridges Rehab / Renewal	1,188	-	10	(10)	(100.0)%	545	466	477	68	14.3%	
Bridges New / Improvements	469	70	279	(209)	(74.8)%	279	-	279	-	0.0%	
Footpaths & Cycleways											
Footpaths Rehab / Renewal	649	392	408	(16)	(3.9)%	889	905	905	(16)	(1.8)%	
Footpaths New / Improvements	385	3	316	(312)	(99.0)%	1,225	1,007	1,226	(1)	(0.1)%	
Drainage											
Drainage Rehab / Renewal	331	220	120	100	83.6%	238	263	263	(25)	(9.4)%	
Drainage New / Improvements	1,249	364	291	74	25.4%	2,586	3,190	3,563	(978)	(27.4)%	
Recreational, Leisure & Community Facilities											
Playspace Rehab / Renewal	616	764	552	212	38.3%	869	204	1,105	(235)	(21.3)%	
Playspace New / Improvements	4,266	1,171	682	489	71.6%	1,253	5,040	1,354	(101)	(7.4)%	
Sports Reserves Rehab / Renewal	2,162	450	412	38	9.2%	1,178	1,043	1,169	9	0.8%	
Sports Reserves New / Improvements	892	230	125	105	84.1%	304	364	303	1	0.4%	
Parks, Open Space & Streetscapes											
Open Space Rehab / Renewal	557	412	380	32	8.3%	926	906	958	(32)	(3.4)%	
Open Space New / Improvements	1,205	391	339	52	15.2%	1,386	95	2,375	(989)	(41.7)%	
Townships New / Improvements	1,092	205	831	(626)	(75.3)%	1,080	571	1,778	(698)	(39.3)%	
Trails Rehab / Renewal	912	414	507	(93)	(18.3)%	815	741	807	8	1.0%	
Trails New / Improvements	4,990	3,053	5,022	(1,969)	(39.2)%	10,661	12,786	14,762	(4,101)	(27.8)%	
Off-street Carparks											
Off-street Carparks Rehab / Renewal	359	121	200	(79)	(39.6)%	380	380	380	0	0.0%	
Off-street Carparks New / Improvements	113	-	-	-	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-	
Other Infrastructure											
Infrastructure - Project Management	5,042	1,888	2,355	(467)	(19.8)%	4,709	4,709	4,709	0	0.0%	
Infrastructure - Asset Renewal Reserve	-	-	-	-	0.0%	-	-	-	-	0.0%	
Infrastructure - Asset New / Improve Reserve	61	31	280	(249)	(89.0)%	744	800	553	191	34.6%	
	48,437	17,972	20,917	(2,945)	(14.1)%	51,397	51,686	58,862	(7,465)	(12.7)%	

YTD Variance to Target Over / (Under)	Explanation
Roads Rehab / Renewal over budget by \$0.6m	Forward spend by road resurfacing projects completed early (\$0.9m) and early expenditure of road rehab on Maddens Lane, Gruyere (\$0.6m), offset by underspend on Paid Park (\$0.2m) and Retaining wall Rehabilitation (\$0.1)
Roads for the Community Initiative under budget by \$0.4m	Underspend by RFCI projects Mt Morton, Belgrave Heights (\$0.1), Alpine street Warburton (\$0.1), Station Road Seville (\$0.2), Alfred St & John St Wandin North (\$0.1), and Cedar Court Monbulk (\$0.3), offset by overspend on Bell St Seville.
Bridges New / Improvements over budget by \$0.2m	Earlier than expected YTD expenditure on completion works at McMahons Creek Pedestrian Bridge.
Footpaths New / Improvements under budget by \$0.3m	Delayed commencement of footpath works in Chirnside Park Southern cross and Brentwood project and Healsville Stephens road project.
Playspace Rehab / Renewal over budget by \$0.2m	Budget phasing information not received. Variance due to expenditure on playspace completion in Badger Creek and near completion in Lilydale, Millgrove and Upwey.
Playspace New / Improvements over budget by \$0.6m	Budget phasing information not received. Playspace construction at Morrison Reserve well underway.
Sports Reserves New / Improvements over budget by \$0.1m	Expenditure on projects awaiting budget transfers and earlier than anticipated YTD spend for Capital Development Grant projects.
Townships New / Improvements under budget by \$0.6m	Budget phasing information not received. Expenditure now forecasted later in 2024-25 with some budget carry forward to 2025-26.
Trails New / Improvements under budget by \$1.97m	Driven by lower than expected YTD expenditure for Mountain Bike Destination, Yarra Valley Trail and Yarra Valley Trail Northern Loop. Forecasts have been adjusted and carry forward input for Mountain Bike Destination and Yarra Valley Trail Northern Loop, with Yarra Valley Trail is now forecasted to spend more towards the end of 2024 than budget allocation in 2024-25 and bring forward 2025-26 budget also.

Forecast YTD Variance Over / (Under)	Explanation
Roads Rehab / Renewal under budget by \$0.7m	Quotes for Victoria Rd, Coldstream - Stage 3 were lower than anticipated, reducing expected LRCI funding expenditure. Reduced expenditure redirected to Lomond Ave renewal. Delay in works for Domaine Road, Chirnside Park (.5m)
Roads New / Improvements under budget by \$0.3m	Forecast under budget mainly from Myers Creek Road, Healsville (\$0.3m)
Footpaths Rehab / Renewal under budget by \$0.1m	Budget carry forward expected for Kilsyth Greeves drive and Lena Court in 2025-26.
Playspace Rehab / Renewal under budget by \$0.2m	Budget carry forward input for Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Playspace, with design to be completed this financial year and construction in 2025-26.
Playspace New / Improvements under budget by \$0.1m	Expected underspend on Morrison Recreation Reserve Playspace.
Open Space New / Improvements under budget by \$1m	Budget realigned based on construction timelines and carry forward input for Morrison Recreation Reserve Youth Activation and Bike Park.
Townships New / Improvements under budget by \$0.7m	Budget carry forward input for Township Improvement projects based on scope and delivery timelines.
Trails New / Improvements under budget by \$4m	Budget realigned based on construction timelines and carry forward input for Mountain Bike Destination (\$3m), Yarra Valley - Stage 2A (\$0.5m) and Yarra Valley Trail Northern Loop (\$1.3m). Accelerated expenditure expected for Yarra Valley Trail with a commitment to build the trail to the Yarra River will see budget brought forward from 2025-26 for spend this year (\$0.8m).

Carry Forwards

Projects that have been delayed and are impacting on anticipated expenditure will request funds to be carried forward for use in the next financial year. Early identification of carry forward funds ensures the optimum utilisation of cash resources. Forward spends occur when capacity becomes available to make an early start on a future year's project.

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	Carry Forward of 2024-25 budget to 2025-26 \$'000	Forward spend of 2025-26 budget in 2024-25 \$'000	Total Carry Forward \$'000
PROPERTY			
Land	-	-	-
Buildings	1,006	-	1,006
PLANT, MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT			
Plant & Equipment	-	(62)	(62)
Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	-	-	-
Computers & Telecommunications	-	-	-
INFRASTRUCTURE			
Roads	510	-	510
Bridges	-	-	-
Footpaths & Cycleways	-	-	-
Drainage	1,087	-	1,087
Recreational, Leisure & Community Facilities	284	-	284
Parks, Open Space & Streetscapes	6,526	(821)	5,705
Off-street Carparks	-	-	-
Other Infrastructure	-	-	-
	9,414	(883)	8,531

Projects with Carry Forward in excess of \$100k	
	\$'000
Mountain Bike Destination, Warburton	2,986
Yarra Valley Trail Northern Loop	1,317
Morrison Recreation Reserve Youth Activation and Bike Park	888
Yarra Valley Trail - Stage 2A	535
WP CBMW - Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre	514
Townships Improvements	400
Township Improvements, Belgrave	300
Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Playspace - Stage 2	270
Cedar Court Road Group, Monbulk - RFCI	117
Morrison Recreation Reserve District Playspace, Mt	101
Alfred St and John St, Wandin North - RFCI	
Projects with Forward Spend in excess of \$100k	
\$'000	
Yarra Valley Trail	(821)

Rates in Arrears (Includes Special Rates & Charges)

Rates Debts Outstanding ('000)		
Current Rates 23/24	116,798.2	
Current Interest	-	
Legal Costs on Current	62.5	116,860.8
<hr/>		
Arrears (prior to 24/25)	23,587.6	
Interest on Arrears	2,529.8	
Legal costs on Arrears	358.3	26,475.7
<hr/>		
Total rates & charges Outstanding		143,336.4

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Rate Debts outstanding

The Balance Sheet shows an amount of \$143.3m total for Receivables – Property. Including \$26.5m from prior year.



Rates outstanding comparison year on year

The level of outstanding current rates measured in real terms (+2.75% Rates Cap Increase) compared to the same period last year has increased by 0.14%

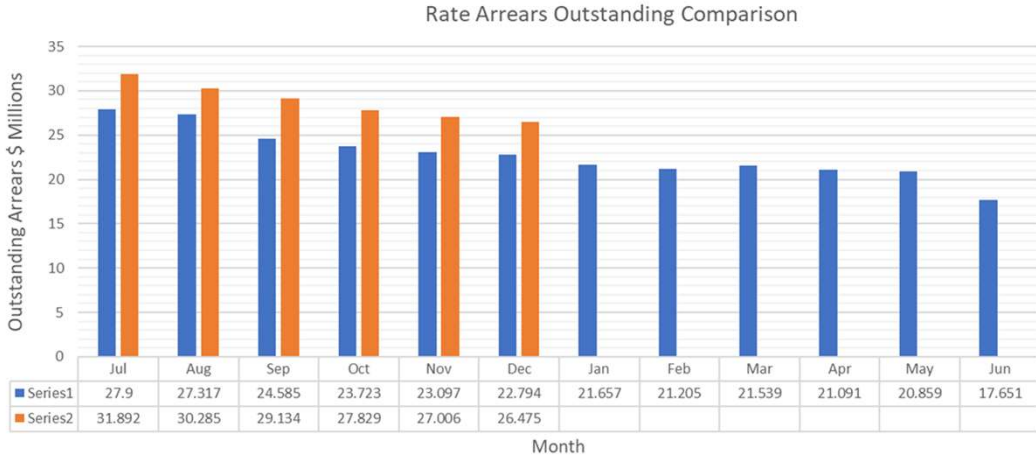
In 2024/2025 there are less customers that have opted to pay instalments. This will lead to the current rates payments improving in comparison to previous years closer to the February 15 in full payment due date.

**When calculating real terms, the increases in waste service charges has not been considered, only the rate cap (increase in general rates) the increase in waste service charges is significant enough to impact this data.*

www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Rates in Arrears

Rate Recovery Category	Activity	Arrears	Interest on Arrears	Legal Costs	Total O/S	Number of Assessments	Current Including Assessment
Financial Hardship	Deferment in place	4,024.5	261.2	50.7	4,336.4	562	1,330.2
	Recurring Deferment	100.8	1.3	-	102.1	17	27.7
	Deferment recently completed	641.9	36.7	2.9	681.5	79	212.9
	Defaulted conditions	392.4	73.8	5.7	472.0	42	95.7
Hardship Being Reviewed	Standard deferment being reviewed	1,517.4	47.4	5.5	1,570.2	174	412.1
	Recurring Deferment being reviewed	-	-	-	-	-	-
Payment Plans	Payment Plan in place	4,807.2	128.5	9.5	4,945.2	2,015	4,755.3
	Payment Plan in place with Credit Solutions	2,689.5	191.6	11.4	2,892.5	510	1,311.3
	Receivership	152.0	35.2	0.8	188.0	21	50.4
Auction (sales)	21.9	44.6	0.5	67.0	2	0.8	
Sale Pending	138.5	22.6	3.9	165.0	179	232.9	
Probate Pending	11.7	1.8	0.8	14.4	12	22.1	
Legal Action Avenues Exhausted	370.9	219.0	24.1	614.0	19	41.1	
Legal Action Continuing	2,894.7	666.1	209.5	3,770.3	257	649.3	
Legal Action Pending	6,599.6	1,027.5	214.9	7,841.9	1,508	3,931.1	
Totals		24,363	2,757	540	27,660	5,397	13,073



Courtesy reminders issued to all in full payers, including those in arrears are issued on 17th January 2025, and will have the option to pay via Payble for the first time. The amount of customers in arrears and the level of those arrears is expected to decrease, as they have the ability to self-serve to manage their debt.

The above table details the current status of the arrears and rate recovery methods.

Decreases in Hardship and Payment plans due to payment and review are expected to be offset by increases after issue of Courtesy reminders on January 17..



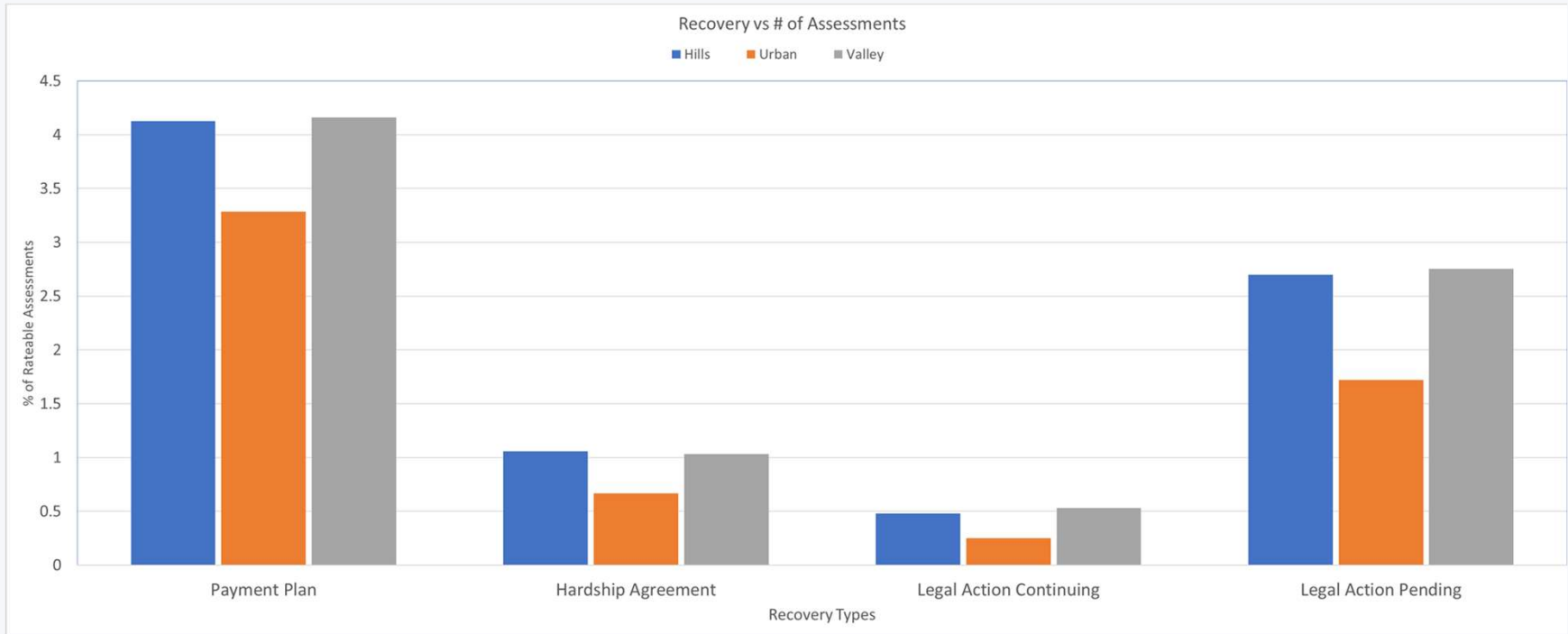
Rates in Arrears

Please refer to the graphs for information regarding Location categories (Hills, Urban,Valley) and the amount of assessments on the following recovery methods:

- Special Payment Arrangement
- Financial Hardship Agreement
- Legal Action Pending (For 2022/2023 outstanding rates)
- Legal Complaint Filed – With the Magistrates Court for Outstanding amounts.

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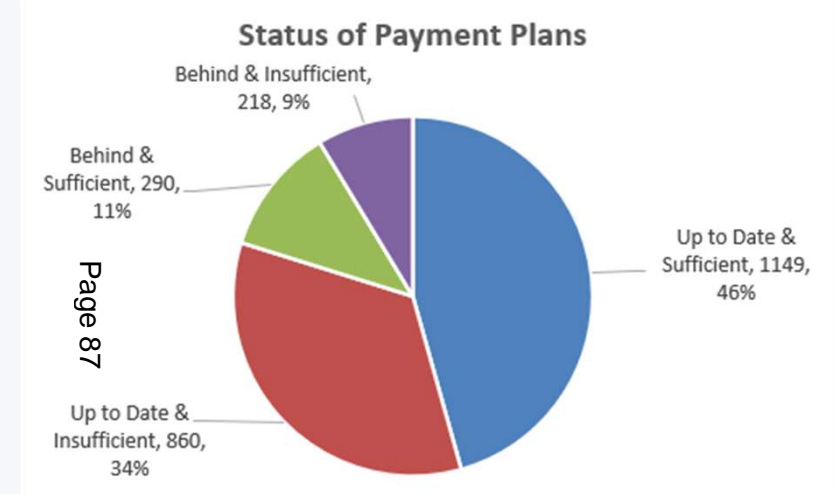




The above graph considers % of assessments on rate recovery methods vs the number of rateable assessments in the location category. **Urban** has a higher number of assessments in all methods of rate recovery, but when compared to the number of rateable assessments in the Urban area it is relatively lower than **Hills** and **Valley** areas.

Payment Plan recovery

Following legislation changes, Council can no longer charge penalty interest rates against Payment Plans. In order to encourage customers to meet the minimum payment criteria against Payment Plans, Payment Plans that are not up to date, or Plans that do not meet the minimum criteria, will be cancelled and must be reapplied for. To become sufficient, the (\$) amount that ratepayers on insufficient payment plans would need to increase their payments by is a combined annual total of \$732,753.



Total Payment Plans 31 Dec 2024		
Status	2,521	%
Up to Date & Sufficient	1149	45.58
Up to Date & Insufficient	860	34.11
Behind & Sufficient	290	11.50
Behind & Insufficient	218	8.65

Assessments with insufficient payment plans will be issued cancellation letters in February.

A submission will be made to ELT, Forum and Council in February 2025, to consider adjusting minimum payment plan amounts will substantially affect these figures.

Insufficient Payment plans – Payments no longer meet minimum criteria of annual rates and charges +0%

Payment plans behind – Assessments are not up to date with agreed upon payment amount and/or schedule.

Supplementary Valuations and Rates Predictions

Since Rates were generated on 1 July 2024 a total amount of \$117,229,996 has been added to valuations on assessments within Council. This change in valuations will equate to predicted increase of \$4,381,666.99 (3.00%) for the 2025/2026 Rates income.

Rate Type	Start of Year			31-Dec-24			Movement (Supps)		2024/2025 Prediction **
	Assessments	CIV (\$)	Rate Value (\$)	Assessments	Value (\$)	Rate Value (\$)	Assessments	Value (\$)	Rate Value
Residential	62449	50,883,276,000.00	126,918,155.00	62560	51,039,071,000	127,306,755	111	155,795,000	131,125,957.44
Vacant Sub Standard	328	14,915,000.00	37,202.00	328	14,915,000	37,202	0	-	38,318.56
Farmland	1568	3,138,405,000.00	5,479,655.00	1539	3,091,645,000	5,398,012	-29	46,760,000	5,559,952.54
Commercial	2344	2,397,555,004.00	8,970,452.00	2342	2,408,475,000	9,011,309	-2	10,919,996	9,281,648.49
Industrial	1085	1,265,710,000.00	4,735,654.00	1085	1,266,035,000	4,736,870	0	325,000	4,878,976.05
Rec & Culture	13	50,950,000.00	76,252.00	13	47,900,000	71,687	0	3,050,000	73,837.75
	67,787	57,750,811,004	146,217,370	67,867	57,868,041,000	146,561,836	80	117,229,996	150,958,690.83

*Rate Values for August 2024 are used to indicate base rates in 2024/2025 year, it is not an indication of rates charged during 2024/2025

**2025/2026 estimates a 3.00% rates cap

***Rates team are committed to having all supplementary valuations and charges updated by 31/1/2025, and will provide a more accurate prediction at this point.

Predicted Rate Increase (\$)	4,741,320.83
Predicted Rate Increase (%)	3.24

PAYREQ Registrations

The Property Rating Services team will be increasing visibility of option to register for PAYREQ – Allowing customers to receive notices via email, rather than post. In 2024/2025 a total increase of 2,352 registrations have been received. The total PAYREQ registrations is now 11,566 active registrations, 17.04% of assessments that represent a saving of \$46,264 in postage & printing costs per annum.

PAYREQ (Email) Registrations

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total to date
2023/2024 Registrations	337	218	518	213	218	74	130	335	131	103	138	151	1,578
2024/2025 Registrations	159	520	445	838	225	165							2,352
Comparison %	- 52.82	138.53	- 14.09	293.43	3.21	122.97							49.05

Total Active Registrations 11,566

Registrations vs Assessments (%) 17.04

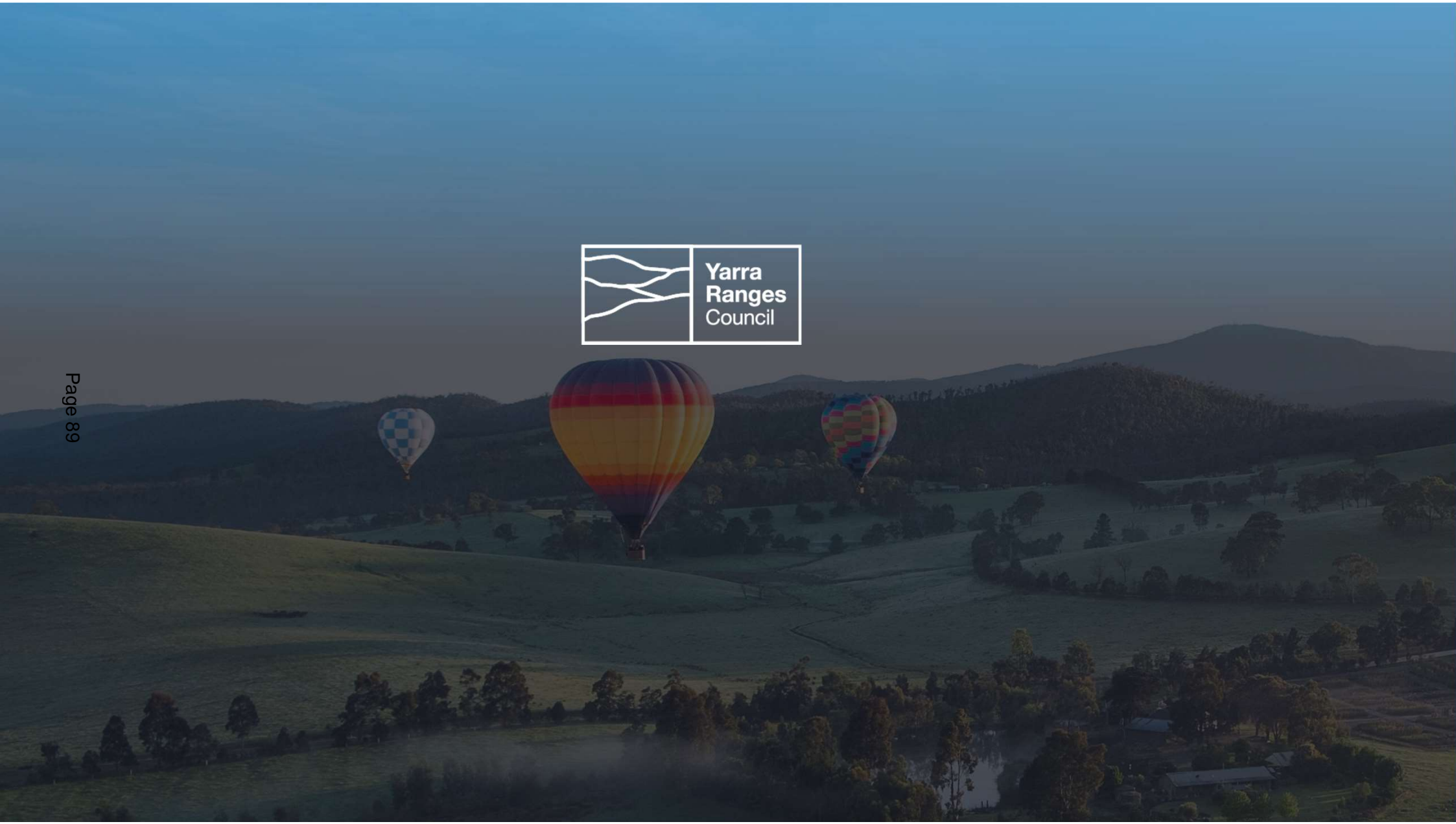
Total savings p.a on post (\$) 46,264

Total Registration to (date) 2,352

Comparable 1,511

Difference 841





DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2025-2029 DRAFT

Report Author: Executive Officer – Health and Wellbeing

Responsible Officer: Director Communities

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

Council's Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023 (The Strategy) meets Council's legislative obligations under the *Victorian Disability Act (2006)* and stipulates the requirements for a Disability Action Plan (DAP). The most recent DAP expired in 2023, with the next iteration for Council (Attachment One) building upon the learning and success of the previous Strategy.

The proposed DAP (2025-2029) outlines Council's approach to meeting legislative requirements, ensuring we work towards a common vision, advancing disability inclusion across all aspects of Council. The DAP works towards a long-term vision through the structure of four goals and is written to ensure Council has strategic foresight to additional legislative obligations pending the passing of the *Disability Inclusion Bill*.

A first phase (four weeks) of community engagement, in addition to Council's Disability Advisory Committee and Access and Equity Reference Group supported the development of the DAP to date, identifying both the key themes and desired outcomes of the Plan. This is attached to this report as Attachment Two: Disability Action Plan Community Engagement Report. A further four weeks of stakeholder and community engagement is required before finalising the DAP. This is planned to commence in March 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Draft Disability Action Plan 2025-2029 and support a further four weeks of consultation.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council endorsed Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013 – 2023 (Item 7.7, 13 May 2014)

Council endorsed appointment of Disability Advisory Committee Members 2022–2026, (Item 10.6, 20 September 2022)

Council endorsed Equity, Access & Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023, Final Report (Item 10.4, 11 June 2024).

DISCUSSION

Yarra Ranges Council has been successful with advancing disability inclusion for the past decade through the implementation of the Yarra Ranges Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023. This Strategy has expired and a new plan is required.

Yarra Ranges Council is obliged under *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and the *Victorian Disability Act 2006* (currently under review) to develop and maintain a Disability Action Plan (DAP).

As part of the review of the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*, a *Disability Inclusion Bill* was released for sector-wide consultation, closing in October 2022. A summary of key themes has been released and the DAP is positioning Council to meet both increasing legislative responsibility while moving to the social model of disability as core practice for Council.

Once passed, the *Disability Inclusion Bill* which will sit alongside the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*, will require an additional resource commitment to meet Council's new legislative requirements. The DAP positions Council strongly to meet any new requirements.

Options considered

Only one option has been considered.

Recommended option and justification

After a first phase of community engagement identifying key themes and outcomes for the proposed DAP, it is recommended that Council support a further four weeks of consultation on the proposed Disability Action Plan 2025-2029, in particular to obtain feedback on the accessibility of the document, inclusion of actions to address hidden disabilities and the suite of proposed actions that sit within the DAP.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The cost to develop the proposed Disability Action Plan 2025-2029 is broken down in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Cost to develop Disability Action Plan

Action	Cost	Comment
Community Engagement – Two Phases (8 weeks total)	\$4000	Renumeration for participants beyond Council Advisory Committees and Community Engagement Roadshow.
Graphic Design	\$1,500	Design of Community Engagement Reports and Accessible Content
Consultancy	\$4,500	Women’s Health East
FTE: <i>Health & Wellbeing Planner</i> <i>Disability Inclusion Officer</i> <i>EO Health & Wellbeing</i> <i>Internal Project Working Group</i>	In-kind	

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

Connected and Healthy Communities:

- The DAP will address the needs of people with disability in having communities which are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive, and socially well connected. It will also address the key objective to have quality services which are accessible to everyone through the identification and removal of systemic barriers.

Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places:

- Consultation with people with disability will be conducted when Council plans and develops quality facilities and infrastructure that meet current and future needs. Places will be well planned and are hubs of activity that foster wellbeing, creativity, and innovation. Where appropriate, Disability Advisory Committee members support site audits with officers, where project timelines and resources allow.

High Performing Organisation:

- An innovative, responsive organisation that listens to people with disability and those who provide unpaid care. It also recognised that Council is one of the largest employers in the Yarra Ranges and also has a high proportion of employees who may be living with a disability or providing unpaid care.

RELEVANT LAW

International

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

National

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992

State

Victorian Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

Disability Inclusion Bill Exposure Draft 2022

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

Gender Equality Act 2020

Gender Impact Assessment

An initial Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) was completed on the 17 May 2024. The key recommendation from the GIA was to conduct broad consultation, particularly where data was lacking.

Further to this, Women's Health East will consult on the DAP to further ensure an intersectional lens is applied and that the actions included in the plan are strengthened.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

The DAP seeks to support employment opportunities for people with disability and for those who provide care and unpaid care. Recognising the impacts on social and economic participation experienced by community members. The DAP looks to review and continuously work to advance disability inclusion across internal workforces and through advocacy and partnership with external agencies.

Social Implications

The health and wellbeing of all community members is underpinned by the social determinants of health including education, employment, housing, economic participation, transport, gender, environment, social inclusion, violence, health literacy and power over decision making. In the context of disability inclusion, it is important to consider these determinants and the disproportionate effects. This presented in the key themes stated in Attachment Two: Disability Action Plan

Community Engagement Report. As a result, actions outlined in the DAP will involve Council playing a role as a lead, partner or advocate to address these determinants

Environmental Implications

In the context of climate change, people with disability, particularly women are often among those most adversely affected in an emergency, sustaining disproportionately higher rates of morbidity and mortality, and at the same time being among those least able to have access to emergency support. Meaningful participation, inclusion, and leadership of people with disabilities and their carers in disaster response, planning and evacuations is required. This has been referenced in the DAP and will be reinforced through other critical planning documents for Council.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the final year of the outgoing Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023, consultation was completed with community and key stakeholders to evaluate, review and provide recommendations for the next iteration of the DAP. This, in addition to the review of local health data was vital to ensure Council planning is aligning with the changing needs of the community. This was presented to Council in the form of a Final Report, Summary Report and Video to close out the previous Strategy in June 2023.

In preparing for the next four-year DAP, a four-week community engagement period was held between February and March 2024. It captures the first of two phases in which the community is engaged regarding their vision, desired outcomes and preferences for access, equity, and inclusion for people with disability and unpaid carers in the Yarra Ranges.

During this time several of Council's advisory committees were also consulted including; Disability Advisory Committee, Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee and Youth Ambassadors.

Information gathered through this consultation phase is summarised in Attachment Two. A second round of stakeholder and community engagement will be undertaken in March 2025, this in adherence to Council's Community Engagement Policy.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This DAP meets all legislative responsibilities and requirements for Council. It ensures we work towards a common vision, advancing disability inclusion across all aspects of Council. In developing the DAP, consideration has been given to the following key documents:

- Council Plan 2025-2029 (*in development*)
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 (*in development*)
- Other key strategies, plans and policy for Yarra Ranges Council where existing commitments are referenced.

Council will continue to deliver three critical functions that will ensure good governance and monitor and evaluate progress against all actions referenced in the DAP. This will be captured in Councils Corporate Performance Management system and presented to Council via an annual report. They are:

Council's Access and Equity Reference Group

The Access and Equity Reference Group (A&E Reference Group) is a group of Council staff that meet quarterly. They are responsible for helping to implement and evaluate the Disability Action Plan. They will support the annual reporting to Council.

Disability Advisory Committee

Council is dedicated to advancing access, equity, and inclusion of people with disability and unpaid carers. This includes a dedicated Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), established in 2012. The DAC provides advice to Council, bringing their lived experience to inform policy, planning and programs delivered by Council. DAC members serve a four-year term and meet every six weeks with a nominated Councillor delegate.

Disability Inclusion Officer

Council has a full-time Disability Inclusion Officer. This role drives community development, engagement and advises on all work across Council. It acts as a conduit between community and Council. It convenes the Disability Advisory Committee and the Access and Equity Reference Group. It builds Council's capacity in all areas.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The following risks have been identified:

Resource Constraints

Risk: Yarra Ranges as one of the larger LGAs with a significantly high proportion of the population that requires a variety of service supports, in addition to ageing infrastructure.

Impact: Limited resources to meet growing community demand. Limited number of service providers in the region.

Mitigation: Capacity building and professional development opportunities for officers to build Disability Inclusion as part of business as usual. Continued advocacy on behalf of Council relating to matters outside of Councils jurisdiction. Enhancing partnerships between service providers.

Legislative Changes

Risk: Ongoing reviews and potential changes to legislation, such as the *Disability Act* requires Council to be agile and ensure resources are available.

Impact: Increased governance and reporting requirements, resulting in potential new obligations for Council.

Mitigation: Annual review and reporting on the DAP. Consider aligning Disability Impact Assessments with Gender Impact Assessment processes.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Disability Action Plan 2025-2029
2. Disability Action Plan Community Engagement Report



Yarra Ranges Council

DRAFT Disability Action Plan 2025–2029



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Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

Message from the Mayor and CEO

Yarra Ranges Council has prepared this Disability Action Plan in partnership with our Disability Advisory Committee and through broader community and key stakeholder consultations. Through the development of this action plan, Council has reflected upon our last action plan and the previous 10 years of work to advance disability inclusion across the municipality. We have re-affirmed our commitment and vision towards achieving an accessible, fair, and inclusive society where people with disability, and unpaid carers, can participate in community life as equal citizens.

Our Disability Action Plan 2025-2029 identifies opportunities to improve access to Council information, services, facilities and to eliminate barriers that may prevent access and inclusion across all aspects of our business. This Action Plan not only meets our legislative responsibilities, but ensures we work together through planning, broaden our understanding of disability across our workforce and work to the social model of disability. What's new in this Action Plan is a focus on access and inclusion for people with invisible disabilities and an intersectional approach ensuring we are working with all people regardless of background, identity or age.

We acknowledge the growing rates of self-reported disability within our community (26.7%) when compared to the rest of Victoria (19.5%) and are committed to continually striving for positive health and wellbeing outcomes for all people within our community. Our work is never done.

We extend our gratitude to everyone who helped to inform this Action Plan which will assist us to continually improve and provide information, services and facilities that are accessible to all people who live, work, play and visit Yarra Ranges.

Cr Jim Child
Mayor
Yarra Ranges Council

Tammi Rose
Chief Executive Officer
Yarra Ranges Council

Our Vision

Yarra Ranges is an accessible, fair, and inclusive society where people with disability and unpaid carers can participate in community life as equal citizens.

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Our Aim

Yarra Ranges Council leads the way, offering accessible information, infrastructure, services, and experiences to all people who live, work, visit and play in the region.

Legislation and Policy

The importance of access, fairness and inclusion is recognised throughout legislation and policy at all levels of Australian government.

For over a decade, Yarra Ranges Council has been successful in advancing disability inclusion through the implementation of the Yarra Ranges Access, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023. This refreshed Disability Action Plan meets all legislative responsibilities and requirements for local government. The Plan ensures we work towards a common goal, advancing disability inclusion across all aspects of Council. In developing this Disability Action Plan consideration has been given to the following key documents:

Table 1: Legislation and Policy across all levels of Australian government.

International	Federal Government	State Government	Local Government
Page 101 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i>	<i>Disability Act 2006 (Vic)</i>	Council Plan 2025-2029 (due for adoption Jun 2025)
	Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031	<i>Disability Inclusion Bill Exposure Draft 2022 (Vic)</i>	Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 (due for adoption Oct 2025)
	National Carer Strategy 2024-2034	<i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</i>	Other key strategies, plans and policy for Yarra Ranges Council are referenced in the action plan below.
	<i>National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Vic)</i>	<i>Carers Recognition Act 2010 (Vic)</i>	
	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i>	<i>Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)</i>	
	<i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i>		

Working together through planning

In addition to broad legislative and policy frameworks, the Disability Action Plan enables localised approach to address community needs. Council is also working to align planning to further strengthen our commitment and ability to embed inclusion in every aspect of business. This includes working together and leveraging off other Council plans such as the overarching Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and other key plans and policies for Council.

It is worth noting, Council's Healthy and Active Ageing Plan sets the strategic direction for 'age-friendly' communities that are designed to value the contribution of older people and ensure their access to all aspects of community life. It outlines priority areas and helps guide the programs and services that Council provides to the community. Both the Disability Action Plan, Healthy and Active Ageing Plan, as part of the Key Life Stages Plan (in development) reinforce the benefits of ageing well across all life stages and keeping active, healthy, and involved in the broader community.

Council has many endorsed plans, policy and strategies that include specific actions or criteria to advance disability inclusion across the municipality. Where there are existing commitments residing in other plans for Council, these have not been included in the scope of the Disability Action Plan.



Understanding disability

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides a comprehensive definition of disability. According to the UNCRPD, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments. These impairments when interacting with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on equal basis with others. Disability can be permanent or temporary, visible, or invisible, acquired, or congenital, fluctuating, or episodic.³

Throughout this document, the term ‘carer’ and ‘unpaid carer’ are used as defined in the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* as an umbrella term for those who provide unpaid care, support and assistance for someone with disability, a medical condition, a mental illness or is frail due to age⁴. Carers who receive financial support such as a Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance are included in this definition.

Formal carers and paid support workers are those who provide care, support and assistance as a paid service, as part of a volunteer arrangement or as part of training or education for paid care services. Such formal care arrangements are out of scope for this Disability Action Plan.

Carers and unpaid carers are often hidden, working in the background to navigate complex systems and to provide continuous care without being recognised or remunerated. They often make significant personal sacrifices regarding their careers, social lives, education and financial security to care for others, this often impacts the carer’s mental and physical wellbeing.

The importance of carers can not be overstated. They deserve recognition, respect, and support for their contributions to their families, friends, and broader community.

³ State Government of Victoria. Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2021). *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021 – 2025*

⁴ Parliament of Australia. (2010). *Chapter 2 – The Carer Recognition Act*.

Invisible disability

'Invisible disabilities' (also known as hidden disabilities) is a broad term which can include any disability that may not be immediately apparent to others. Some examples of invisible disabilities include physical conditions (e.g. chronic pain, diabetes), mental health conditions (e.g. PTSD, depression, anxiety), neurological conditions (e.g. epilepsy), and neurodiversity (e.g. autism, ADHD, dyslexia).⁵

Social model of disability

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by people with disability. The social model of disability says that people are disabled by barriers in society, such as buildings not having a ramp or accessible toilets, or people's attitudes, like assuming people with disability can't do certain things.

The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences and looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs. The medical model of disability creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice, and control in their lives.

The social model helps to recognise barriers that make life harder for people with disability. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers people with disability more independence, choice, and control.⁶

Intersectional experience

Individual characteristics such as Aboriginality, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, and cultural upbringing can shape the experiences, perspectives, needs, and challenges of individuals. The intersectional nature of a person's circumstance can result in compounding layers of barrier and discrimination, or power and privilege.⁷

This Plan demonstrates Council's commitment to doing everything we can to understand disability, to recognise and eliminate barriers and to promote genuine inclusion across the municipality.

⁵ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. (2022). *Public statement: Invisible disabilities*.

⁶ Australian Federation of Disability Organisations. (2024). *Social model of disability*.

⁷ State Government of Victoria. Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector. (2022). *Applying intersectionality*.

Our goals

Inclusion is fundamental to all aspects of Council

Yarra Ranges Council recognises that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference, and that unpaid carers are integral for both the person they care for and as part of the broader health system. We are committed to doing everything we can to eliminate these barriers and to promote genuine inclusion across the municipality.

The Disability Action Plan identifies the actions Council will take to advance disability inclusion over the next four years while setting four longer term goals. The Plan is broken down to specific action plans under each long-term goal that will ensure incremental change can be monitored and achieved while working towards aspirational goals. They are:

Yarra Ranges Shire is a local government area in outer eastern Melbourne,

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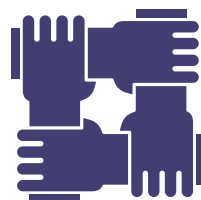
Goal 1:

Information and communication from Council is accessible to everyone in our community and supports fair participation and inclusion in community life.



Goal 2:

Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community.



Goal 3:

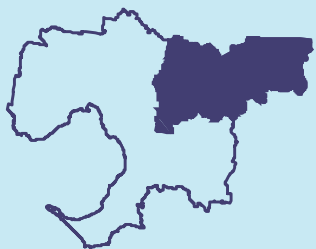
Yarra Ranges is an inclusive community where everyone can participate equally.



Goal 4:

Council's commitment to access, fairness, and inclusion is demonstrated in all aspects of the business.

Our community



Yarra Ranges Council is a local government area in outer eastern metropolitan Melbourne.



It is 2,468 square kilometres in area

Only **3%** of this area is urban



In 2021, Yarra Ranges had an estimated 156,840 residents⁶

50.3% female
49.7% male

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In 2021 **17.2%** of the Yarra Ranges population were aged **65 years and over**, compared with 16.4% for Victoria.⁷



This level is forecast to rise to 19.8% by 2034.

The prevalence of disability increases with age

50%

of Australians people aged 65 years and over experience some form of disability, meaning that the prevalence of disability in our community is going to increase across the life of this Disability Action Plan, as the population ages.



⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). *Regional population by age and sex, 2021*: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population-age-and-sex/latest-release#victoria>

⁹ idcommunity. (2024) *Population and age structure | Yarra Ranges Council | Population forecast*

¹⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *People with Disability in Australia 2019: in Brief*.

The 2021 Census found that:



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Just over

5% of residents

(5.6% of females and 5.2% of males) need daily support with core activities due to severe or profound disability, chronic illness, or age.

This is 1 in 20 people

15% of residents

(17.6% of females and 11.7% of males) provide unpaid care for someone due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

This is nearly 1 in 7 people

26.7% of adults

self-reported disability in the 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey, compared to 19.9% across Victoria. This includes people with invisible disability. *Gender disaggregated data is not yet available at local level.*

⁹ State Government of Victoria. Department of Health. (2023). *Victorian population health survey data.*

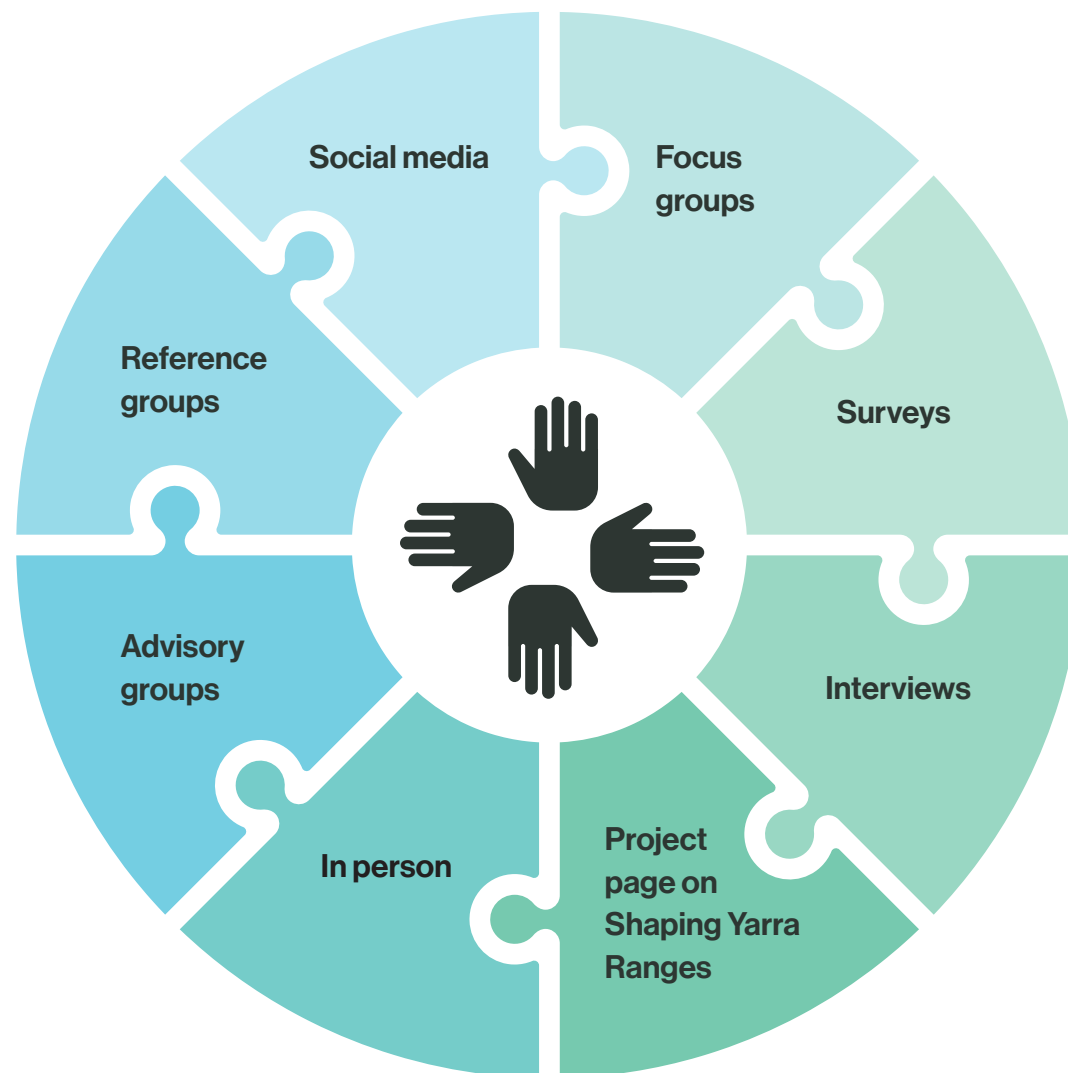
Who we consulted

Over two rounds of consultations we asked community to help us develop a Disability Action Plan that addresses the issues important to them. We heard from people with disability, carers and unpaid carers, people with chronic illness, service providers and interested community members willing to share their feedback and ideas.

Our approach focussed on the four long term goals identified in the Disability Action Plan.

Engagement opportunities were promoted, and feedback was collected via multiple platforms to ensure that all community members had an opportunity to contribute. The full Disability Action Plan Community Engagement Report can be accessed by visiting our website: <https://shaping.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/disability-action-plan>

Figure 1. Engagement and Feedback methods to develop the Disability Action Plan



The feedback received highlighted several key themes and desired outcomes for community that warrant consideration by Council. These themes listed alphabetically provide valuable insights and opportunities for Council to improve disability inclusion as a lead, partner or advocate to achieve these outcomes.

This section also outlines Council's role in these initiatives which may include:

- **Lead:** Where Council has a direct responsibility for full delivery of an initiative
- **Partner:** Where Council works with other groups, organisations or agencies to deliver an initiative
- **Advocate:** Where Council's role is to influence others to achieved desired outcome such as advocating for policy, legislation, funding.

Key Themes	Desired Outcome	Council's Role
Accessible tourism	Yarra Ranges is a welcoming destination for all visitors.	Partner
Customer Experience	Communication aids and training are available to provide an improved customer experience for community members.	Lead
Emergency Management	People with disabilities and unpaid carers are included at all stages of Emergency Management planning and delivery.	Lead / Partner
Festivals and Events / Local Businesses	Community events and local businesses have access to information and capacity building opportunities.	Lead
Housing	Advocate for accessible housing affordability, availability, and suitability for people with disability.	Advocate
Information	Information is in an accessible format and readily available.	Lead

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Key Themes	Desired Outcome	Council's Role
Infrastructure	<p>Increased accessibility in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing Places toilets • Footpaths • Trails • Seating • Shade • Safe pedestrian crossings • Accessible parking • Recreational facilities 	Lead
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible public transport • Adequate infrastructure leading to public transport. • Increased public transport options across Yarra Ranges. 	Advocate
Safety	Lighting near recreation equipment and around shopping precincts is improved.	Advocate / Lead
Social connection and wellbeing	People with disabilities and unpaid carers have access to local programs to enhance social connection and wellbeing.	Lead / Partner / Advocate
Youth Employment	Pathways for young people with disabilities to support workforce entry.	Partner

Action Plan

Council is committed to the following actions of the duration of this Disability Action Plan. The action plan is divided into four key goals/focus areas and identifies the following:

Action	What we are going to do.
Responsibility	Which business units within Council are responsible for leading the delivery of the action.
Timeframe	When the implementation of the action will commence: Short term = Year 1, Medium term = Year 2-3, Long term = Year 4+
Frequency	How often we will complete this action.
Performance Indicator	How will we know we have achieved this action.

Goal 1:



Information and communication from Council is accessible to everyone and supports equitable participation and inclusion in community life.



Image description: Image of a group of six people on a stage with a blue curtain behind them. Two women are standing to the left, two women are seated (with one in a wheelchair), followed by another woman standing and a male standing to the far right.

Goal 1: Information and communication from Council is accessible to everyone and supports fair participation and inclusion in community life.

Aim: Council aims to ensure that all information and communication provided by Council is accessible to everyone. This includes making sure that information is available in a variety of formats that accommodate the diverse needs of our community.

Outcome: Council's websites and online content are accessible. Council continually improves customer experience and community engagement opportunities for community. Council's imagery and social media campaigns are inclusive.

Budget:

Disability awareness campaigns	\$100,000
Workshops and training	\$200,000
Communication tools and accessible documents	\$200,000
Sub-Total	\$500,000

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Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.1 Disability Awareness training is provided to all Council staff as mandatory training.	Organisational Development	Short term	Ongoing	Percentage of staff and Councillors who have completed the training; target of 100% completion rate

Goal 1 continued

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.2 Council documents online are available in accessible word format.	Communications	Long term	Ongoing	<p>Provide critical staff with training on accessible documents.</p> <p>Website guidelines include a requirement that all Council documents be available in accessible format upon request.</p>
1.3 Deliver accessible communication training and tools for staff	Diversity and Inclusion Committee / Health and Wellbeing / Communications	Medium term	Ongoing	<p>Deliver at least one accessible communication training to staff</p> <p>Develop accessible communication tip sheet for staff</p> <p>Develop tools and templates for staff to ensure accessibility standards are met.</p>

Goal 1 continued

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
<p>1.4 Council's websites include information about the accessible features of all Council owned and managed public facilities with a priority focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playspaces, walking trails and other recreation facilities • Cultural venues and public facilities • Public toilets and accessible toilets 	<p>Creative Communities / Design and Place / Sport and Recreation / Facilities</p>	<p>Long term</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Information is listed on website and is reviewed and updated by relevant department areas as required.</p>
<p>1.5 Improve access to information for people with disabilities and their unpaid carers that enables them to make informed decisions about their lives.</p>	<p>Early and Middle Years / Youth / Healthy Ageing</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Information shared is in an accessible format; brochures, website, newsletters.</p> <p>Accessible communication training is delivered to staff.</p> <p>Deliver Quarterly Vitality Newsletter.</p>

Goal 1 continued

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.6 Explore feasibility of establishing a Yarra Ranges Accessibility Map for inclusion on Council's website.	Health and Wellbeing	Long term	Annual	Explore funding to undertake feasibility of establishing Yarra Ranges Accessibility Map.
1.7 Increase accessibility of Self-service Digital Planning Enquiry Portal	Building and Planning	Short term	Ongoing	<p>Delivery of Self-Service Digital enquiry Portals, guiding enquiries for development proposal online.</p> <p>Review and consider customer insights to improve accessibility and user access.</p>
1.8 Include intersectional imagery in all Council publications or campaigns including people with disabilities and/or unpaid carers.	Communications	Short term	Ongoing	<p>Council publications and campaigns include intersectional images</p> <p>Council has a Library of images featuring local people with disabilities and unpaid carers.</p>

Goal 1 continued

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.9 A variety of communication tools are available at Community Links to support an improved customer experience for people with disability and unpaid carers.	Customer Experience Information Technology	Long term	On-going	A variety of communication tools are available. Customer experience staff receive training in how to use tools effectively. Positive customer experience recorded.
1.10 People with disabilities and unpaid carers are included at all stages of Emergency Management planning and delivery.	Emergency Management	Medium term	Ongoing	Workshops are held to include people with disabilities and unpaid carers in emergency planning and preparedness Emergency Relief Centres are inclusive and accessible Information shared is in an accessible word format

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Goal 2:

Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community.



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Image description: Image of a man in a wheelchair and a young woman assisting him on a playground merry-go-round. Both individuals are smiling, showing companionship and shared enjoyment. The image focuses on the interaction between the two using a disability accessible merry-go-round.

Goal 2: Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community.

Aim: Council aims to ensure our buildings and infrastructure are designed, maintained, and operated in a way that ensures accessibility for everyone in our community.

Outcome: Councils buildings and infrastructure are accessible. Council considers accessibility and connectivity across all design phases of projects.

Budget:

Infrastructure Upgrades: Buildings, Major Projects, Pavillions	\$1,000,000
Carparks	\$100,000
Parks, Open Spaces and Trails	\$800,000
Footpaths and Cycleways	\$200,000
Asset Management and Maintenance	\$400,000
Sub-Total	\$2,500,000

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Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
2.1 Assess/audit building functionality to determine accessibility and prioritise accordingly.	Strategic Asset Management	Short term	Annual	Improvement actions are incorporated into Council's Buildings Asset Management Plan.

Goal 2 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
2.2 Use prioritisation to inform asset management projects to ensure DDA compliance.	Major Projects / Strategic Asset Management / Design and Delivery	Short term	On-going	<p>Prioritise design for dignity reviews</p> <p>Feasibility and scoping of building adjustments which are practicable</p> <p>Where no practicable adjustments available, review for alternative buildings/service access, appropriateness of building stock for use</p> <p>Scheduling of access improvement projects</p> <p>Issue of Occupancy Permits by a Building Surveyor confirming the facility has been built to comply</p>
<p>2.3 Council community links and facilities accessible through review and update of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer experience and service • Quiet and sensory spaces • Signage and messaging 	Customer Experience / Facilities / Creative Communities / Community Support	Medium term	On-going	<p>Cultural facilities and community links have quiet and/or sensory spaces available to public.</p> <p>Signage at community links and cultural facilities includes neurodivergent and inclusive friendly messaging.</p> <p>Customer service teams are trained in disability inclusion.</p>

Goal 2 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
2.4 Continue to make playspaces and parks more accessible and inclusive.	Design and Place / Recreation and Sport	Long term	On-going	Each region has play spaces and features that are accessible and inclusive.
2.5 Council continues to make paths, trails and footpaths more accessible through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lighting – Mobility Aid access (width of design is considered) 	Design and Place / Recreation and Sport	Medium term	On-going	<p>Paths and Trails Plan considers signage, safety and communication of accessibility features.</p> <p>Required maintenance is undertaken to remove barriers for people with disability to ensure safety and accessibility is a priority.</p> <p>Safety and accessibility of existing shared use paths is improved.</p>
2.6 Improve the accessibility of townships through enabling the community to walk or ride to local shops, public transport and/or other key services.	Design and Place / Infrastructure Services / Traffic and Transport	Long-term	Ongoing	Identify barriers to accessibility, and prioritise key pedestrian crossings and movement routes in township frameworks, township master plans, and streetscape master plans.
2.7 Continue the footpath building program through the delivery of the Integrated Transport Strategy	Infrastructure Services / Traffic and Transport	Long-term	Ongoing	Footpath connectivity is installed, supporting accessible spaces.

Goal 2 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
2.8 Proactively identify Council projects with greater opportunities for access and inclusion.	Major Projects / All Service Owners	Medium Term	Ongoing	Number of projects where consideration of access and inclusion are brought into scope. # of Project Plans reviewed by Councils Disability Advisory Committee or other consultation with community.
2.9 Identify opportunities for renovations and/or opportunities to construct new Changing Places facilities. Information on public and accessible toilets are on Council's website eg; National Toilet Map	Facilities / Major Projects	Long-term	On-going	New builds and/or renovations include an ambulant toilet, and a single occupant gender neutral toilet. # of Changing Places facilities that are accredited and registered.
2.10 Progressively review open space master plans, to consider and implement an accessibility lens.	Design and Place / Recreation and Sport	Long-term	Ongoing	New Master Plans will consider the needs of people with disability, including but not limited to cognitive, neurological, physical, and psycho-social disabilities.



Goal 3:

Yarra Ranges is an inclusive community where everyone can participate equally.

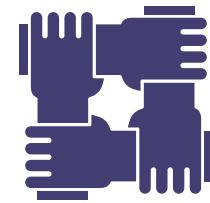


Image description: Image of a group of people posing in front of a vibrant mural. The mural is large and features abstract shapes and colours, including stylised images of trees and someone playing the saxophone. The group consist of at least 15 people of various ages and ethnicities, and are positioned in a relaxed manner.

Goal 3: Yarra Ranges is an inclusive community where everyone can participate equally.

Aim: Council will lead by example in implementing best practices for accessibility and inclusiveness across its services, programs, and events. Council will work to influence individuals and community organisations to increase access and promote inclusiveness, ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable opportunities to participate.

Outcome: Council services, programs and events have improved accessibility. Council owned facilities promote inclusion for all people. Council works with community to build capacity, skills and leadership to advance disability inclusion.

Budget:

Grants Programs	\$800,000
Enhanced Support Services	\$100,000
Projects and Programs	\$250,000
Sub-Total	\$1,150,000

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Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.1 Council grants programs create the platform for increased opportunities for access and inclusion.	Community Building and Partnerships / Health and Wellbeing	Short term	Annually	<p>Criteria for all grant programs require access and inclusion to be considered.</p> <p>Number of applications received that identify methods and actions to increase inclusion.</p> <p>Number of projects with a specific focus on inclusion that are funded by Council.</p>

Goal 3 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.2 Ensure Council's School Holiday Programming continues to be inclusive.	Family, Children and Youth	Short Term	Annually	<p>Accessible school holiday programs are offered across the region.</p> <p>Where possible, co-design sessions with families.</p>
3.3 Ensure Council's Maternal and Child Health Services continue to be inclusive.	Maternal and Child Health Services	Short Term	Annually	<p>Information and referral to services and supports for families.</p> <p>Advocate for improved health services and accessibility of health services.</p>
3.4 Partner with young people to create social stories for Council's website	Youth Development / Community Support	Long term	Annually	<p>Social stories are created and added to website.</p> <p>Stage 1: Community links</p> <p>Stage 2: Arts centres</p> <p>Stage 3: Libraries</p> <p>Stage 4: Play spaces</p> <p>Stage 5: Community houses</p>

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Goal 3 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.5 Deliver Community Change Makers program	Community Building and Partnerships / Health and Wellbeing	Medium term	Bi-yearly	<p>Deliver program in 2025 and review outcomes to inform decisions about future programs.</p> <p>Promotion, design and delivery of program is inclusive of people with disability and unpaid carers.</p>
3.6 Deliver local Over 50's Festival and Events in line with Victorian Seniors Festival	Healthy and Active Ageing Team	Short term	Annually	<p>Deliver annual program in conjunction with Victorian Seniors Festival</p> <p>Promotion, design and deliver of program inclusive of people with disability and unpaid carers.</p>
3.7 Support township groups, networks and grant seekers through capability building to ensure inclusion of people with disability and unpaid carers.	Community Building and Partnerships	Short term	Ongoing	<p>Promote training opportunities through newsletters.</p> <p>Invite township and other network leaders to Council's celebration events ie; International Day of People with Disabilities event.</p> <p>Highlight "how to do" inclusion at the annual grants celebration event.</p>

Goal 3 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.8 Distribute Disability Inclusion Newsletter promoting information and activities relating to disability inclusion.	Health and Wellbeing	Short term	Monthly	Monitor number of subscribers to the newsletter. Monitor correlation to attendance at events and programs.
3.9 Promote inclusive sporting opportunities with local clubs, such as All Abilities Expo or Come and Try days.	Recreation and Sport / Health and Wellbeing	Medium term	Ongoing	Delivery of an All Abilities Expo Attendance at expo Number of Come and Try days held by sporting clubs Attendance at events
3.10 Continue Pathways for Carers program in Healesville and Mount Evelyn.	Health and Wellbeing	Short term	Ongoing	Participants feel socially connected and have increased knowledge of service and supports available. # of walks held per year

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Goal 3 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.11 Deliver inclusive performances and experiences at Council owned venues.	Creative Communities	Short-term	Ongoing	<p>Open Captions sessions are delivered.</p> <p>Sensory Friendly sessions are delivered.</p> <p>Hearing Loops are available at The Memo Healesville.</p> <p>Performances that showcase people with lived experience of disability are delivered and promoted.</p> <p>Performances with Auslan interpretation are prioritised.</p> <p>Relaxed performances are delivered.</p>
3.12 Promote the benefits for businesses and owners of diverse recruitment practices through the Region of Choice program.	Economic development	Short term	Ongoing	<p>Disability Inclusion Toolkit is promoted to local businesses.</p> <p>Region of Choice program is delivered with inclusive recruitment practices a key focus.</p>

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Goal 3 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.13 Raise awareness of, support and promote Accessible Tourism opportunities.	Economic Development	Medium term	On-going	Spotlight and promote local businesses advancing inclusion and equity. Advocate to advance accessible tourism through awareness raising campaigns, grant criteria and collaborative partnerships.
3.14 Deliver capacity building sessions for staff and social media campaigns to promote invisible disability.	Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Medium term	Annually	Raise awareness of Invisible Disabilities Awareness Week (20th to 26th October) At least one capacity building session for staff delivered At least one social media campaign delivered Develop tools for staff Review reach and impact

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Goal 4:

Council's commitment to equity, access and inclusion is demonstrated in all aspects of business.

Image description: Outdoor photo of a group of women walking along a gravel trail in a bush area in Mount Evelyn. The women are various ages and are dressed in casual clothing suitable for walking. This walk is part of the program for Pathway for Carers.

Goal 4: Council's commitment to equity, access and inclusion is demonstrated in all aspects of business.

Aim: Council will embed a commitment to equity, access, and inclusion throughout all its operations. This means developing the capacity of all Council officers to systematically address barriers faced by people with disabilities, use statutory and regulatory roles to advocate for improved inclusion and accessibility, enhance local employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and ensuring sufficient funding is allocated to support access and inclusion initiatives across the municipality.

Outcome: Councils recruitment practices are inclusive and accessible. Council includes access and inclusion across all advocacy priorities. Councils considers people with disabilities and unpaid carers across all aspects of business.

Budget:

Disability Inclusion Operations	\$150,000
Employment Programs	\$100,000
Events	\$50,000
Sub-Total	\$300,000
Total:	\$4,450,000

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Goal 4 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
4.1 Promote flexible working arrangements and support to recruit and retain people with disability in the workforce and include inclusive recruiter messaging in all job advertisements.	People and Culture	Medium term	On-going	Recruitment advertisements include inclusive statement and are up to date, including Council's website. Recruitment training and materials are updated to ensure Hiring Managers promote flexibility and inclusivity during recruitment.
4.2 Deliver Disability Awareness Training as part of Councillor induction.				Training delivered to Councillors at the start of each 4-year term.
4.3 Build awareness of the Disability Advisory Committee.	Health and Wellbeing	Short term	Annually	Annual report to Council on progress of Disability Action Plan and achievements of the Disability Advisory Committee.

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Goal 4 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
4.4 Promote industry specific training opportunities to teams to ensure access and inclusion is considered across all aspects of business.	People and Culture	Medium term	Annually	<p>Emergency preparedness resources are promoted and delivered.</p> <p>Site visits are conducted as appropriate.</p> <p>Staff professional development opportunities are identified and delivered as part of the Performance Development Plan process; Embrace Diversity.</p> <p>Continue to offer access to and promote JobAccess training and webinar sessions to promote disability and inclusive recruitment.</p>
4.5 Better understand the needs of our staff with disability and/or provide unpaid care to inform improvements.	Organisational Development	Medium term	Bi-yearly	Review results from Staff People Matter Survey, including women with disabilities, women and men who are unpaid carers, and older women.
4.6 Diversity and Inclusion Committee is available to all staff and supports internal capacity building opportunities.	Organisational Development	Short term	Ongoing	<p># of meeting per year</p> <p># of activities delivered by the committee</p> <p>Breakdown of gender dis-aggregated data and participation across business units</p>

Goal 4 continued

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
4.7 Access & Equity Reference Group meets quarterly to consult on all major projects, master plans and identifies areas for continuous improvement across Council.	Health and Wellbeing Executive Leadership Team	Short term	Quarterly, Ongoing	Terms of Reference Updated # of meetings per year # of projects delivered
4.8 Continue the delivery of the Disability Advisory Committee to ensure that access and inclusion of people with disability is considered.	Health and Wellbeing Governance			Terms of Reference updated Annual Report to Council # of projects/activities consulted on
4.9 Delivery of annual event to celebrate International Day of People with Disability	Health and Wellbeing	Short term	Annually, Ongoing	Delivery of annual event
4.10 Council includes accessibility lens across all advocacy priorities.	Advocacy and Government Relations Health and Wellbeing	Short term	Ongoing	Councils Advocacy Agenda Number of successful advocacy submissions

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Throughout the life of the Disability Action Plan, Council will monitor and evaluate our progress and implementation of actions via an annual report to Council. Included in the annual update to Council will be the achievements of the Disability Advisory Committee, showcasing their input and influence on advancing disability inclusion across all aspects of Council business. They are also involved in the annual review of the Disability Action Plan.

In the final year of the Disability Action Plan, consultation with community and key stakeholders to review and update the Disability Action Plan will occur. This is vital to ensure Council planning is aligning with the changing needs of the community.

Council's Access and Equity Reference Group

The Access and Equity Reference Group (A&E Reference Group) is a group of Council staff that meet quarterly. They are responsible for helping to implement and evaluate the Disability Action Plan. They will support the annual reporting to Council.

Disability Advisory Committee

Council is dedicated to advancing access, equity, and inclusion of people with disability and unpaid carers. This includes a dedicated Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), established in 2012. The DAC provides advice to Council, bringing their lived experience to inform policy, planning and programs delivered by Council. DAC members serve a four year term and meet every six weeks with a nominated Councillor delegate.

Disability Inclusion Officer

Council has a full-time Disability Inclusion Officer. This role drives community development, engagement and advises on all work across Council. It acts as a conduit between community and Council. It convenes the Disability Advisory Committee and the Access and Equity Reference Group. It builds Council's capacity in all areas.

Healthy and Active Ageing Team

If you would like advice or assistance on Healthy and Active Ageing, or making your business or club more dementia friendly, please contact Council on 1300 368 33 and speak to an officer from our Healthy and Active Ageing Team.

Follow our progress

To find out more about the range of disability support services, programs and resources available, visit our website:

<https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Community/Disability-Support/Disability-support-services>

Please contact us if you would like further information or an accessible format.

Health and Wellbeing Team

1300 368 333

healthandwellbeingteam@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Yarra Ranges Council

PO Box 105, Lilydale VIC 3140

1300 368 333 | mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

yarraranges.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service

133 677 – for callers who have a hearing, speech or communication impairment and for Text Telephone or modem callers

1300 555 727 – for callers using Speech to Speech relay

9658 9461 – Teletypewriter (TTY)

Translating and Interpreting Service

131 450 – Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) National. An interpreting service is available if required.

Services and Supports

In addition to contacting Council, there are free services and supports available to help you.

Carer Gateway

Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm for support and services

Telephone **1800 422 737**

Website **www.carergateway.gov.au**

Beyond Blue Support

Service

24 hours, 7 days a week or chat online 3pm to 12am AEST.

Telephone **1300 224 636**

Website **www.beyondblue.org.au**

Lifeline Crisis Support

Provides support if you are feeling overwhelmed, having difficulty coping or thinking about suicide.

Available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Telephone **13 11 14**

Text **0477 13 11 14**

Website **www.lifeline.org.au**

1800RESPECT

For support if you are affected by sexual assault or domestic and family violence or abuse.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, chat online 24 hours a day,

Telephone **1800 737 732**

Website **www.1800respect.org.au**

13YARN

First Nations service providing culturally safe crisis support.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Telephone **13 92 76**

Website **www.13yarn.org.au**

QLife

QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTQIA+ peer support and referral for people in Australia.

3pm to midnight, every day or visit QLife - Support and Referrals.

Telephone **1800 184 527**

Website **<https://qlife.org.au>**

Open Arms Veterans and Family Counselling

As a carer of a veteran, or a veteran who is a carer, you can contact Open Arms to find out what support and services are available for you or your loved ones.

Telephone **1800 011 046**

Website **www.openarms.gov.au**

eheadspace

eheadspace is a national online and phone support service for young people between 12 and 25.

Available 9am – 1am AEST every day.

Telephone **1800 650 890**

Website **<https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support>**

Mental Health and Wellbeing Local

18 Clarke Street, Lilydale 3140

Telephone **1300 000 252**

Website: **www.wellways.org.au**

Glossary

Language is important. It shapes how we see the world around us. Council understands that language changes over time and that words can mean different things to different people. Disability isn't the same for everyone and can be understood in different ways depending on a person's culture. Similarly, there is no universal preference for terminology use. People with disability have different preferences regarding how they describe their disability.

In this plan, Council have chosen to align with the Victorian Disability Action Plan and use person-first language. Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, 'person with disability'. This language puts the person before their disability, showing respect for who they are beyond their disability.

Whilst this is the approach we have chosen; we acknowledge that some people prefer what's called "identity-first" language, like "disabled person." They see their disability as an important part of who they are and use this language to show pride in their identity and to point out that it's society that creates barriers for them, not their disability itself.

Different people have different preferences about how they want to talk about their disability because it reflects how they see themselves, their experiences, and what their community thinks. We commit to continuing to explore and understand the evolving community preferences for preferred language use. We acknowledge people's personal preferences and individual right to choose how their identity and experiences are described.³⁰

¹⁰ State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026*.

Term	What it means in the plan
Accessible communication	Accessible communication ensures everyone has the same access and opportunity to read publications, use websites, attend events, respond in emergency situations, and find out about Council's policies and programs. ¹¹
Accessibility	Accessibility is the ability to access and benefit from a process, system, service or product. If something is accessible, then anyone can directly access or use it, regardless of their ability, location, language, culture, time and resources, or any other differentiating factor that contributes to the diversity of our communities. ¹²
Advocacy	Advocacy means getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and to help you stand up for your rights. Someone who helps you in this way is called an advocate. An advocate can be a family member, friend, or a carer. You can also access a professional advocacy service through an organisation. When Council advocates, it typically does so to other tiers of government, to improve the lives of Yarra Ranges residents. Individuals can also advocate for their own rights. ¹³
Carer and Un-paid Carer	The terms 'carer' and 'unpaid carer' are used as defined in the <i>Carer Recognition Act 2010</i> as an umbrella term for those who provide unpaid care, support and assistance for someone with disability, a medical condition, a mental illness or is frail due to age ¹⁴ . Carers who receive financial support such as a Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance are included in this definition.
Changing Places	Public toilets with adult sized change tables and hoists in major public spaces that meet the needs of people with disability. ¹⁵

¹¹ State Government of Victoria. (2023). *Accessibility guidelines for government communications*.

¹² State Government of Victoria. (2021). *Key definitions for common terms used in the Public Engagement Framework 2021-2025*.

¹³ State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2024). *List of Advocacy Organisations in Victoria*.

¹⁴ Parliament of Australia. (2010). *Chapter 2 – The Carer Recognition Act*.

¹⁵ State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026*.

Term	What it means in the plan
Disability	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) defines people with disability as encompassing individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments. These impairments, when interacting with inaccessible communities and environments, may hinder their full and equal participation in society. Disability can be permanent or temporary, visible, or invisible. acquired or congenital, fluctuating, or episodic. ¹⁶
Disability discrimination	The Disability Discrimination Act states that discrimination based on disability occurs when a person with disability is either: 1. treated less favourably than a person without disability (direct discrimination), or 2. made to comply with a general requirement or condition that the person is unable to comply with because of their disability, and that leads to the person being disadvantaged (indirect discrimination). ¹⁷
Discrimination	When we talk about a person being discriminated against, it means they're being treated badly or unfairly because of a personal characteristic that is protected by the law. The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 describes it as being treated "unfavourably". ¹⁸
Diversity	Diversity is about what makes each of us unique and includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs. It is a combination of our differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective, and our approach. Diversity is also about recognising, respecting and valuing differences based on ethnicity, gender, age, race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. It also includes an infinite range of individual unique characteristics and experiences, such as communication style, career path, life experience, educational background, geographic location, income level, marital status, parental status, and other variables that influence personal perspectives. ¹⁹

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¹⁶ Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2021). *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–2025*.

¹⁷ Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2021). *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–2025*.

¹⁸ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. (2024). *Discrimination*.

¹⁹ State Government of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2019). *What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?*

Term	What it means in the plan
Equal opportunity	Equal opportunity means that every person can participate freely and equally in areas of public life such as in the workplace, in education, or in accessing goods and services without disadvantage or less favourable treatment due to their unique attributes. ²⁰
Equality / Equity	Equality means treating everyone the same regardless of their needs. Equity is about treating people differently based on their needs. It recognises each person has different circumstances and allocates opportunities and resources needed to reach equal outcomes. ²¹
Formal Carer	Formal carers and paid support workers are those who provide care, support and assistance as a paid service, as part of a volunteer arrangement or as part of training or education for paid care services. Such formal care arrangements are out of scope for this Disability Action Plan.
Gender-equity	Gender equity: is an approach that leads to gender equality. To ensure fairness, strategies must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent everyone from operating on a level playing field. ²²

²⁰ State Government of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2019). *What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?*

²¹ Australian Government, Department of Social Services (2024) *National Carer Strategy 2024-2034*. Online: [National Carer Strategy 2024-2034 | Department of Social Services](#)

²² Women's Health East. (2021). *Together For Equality & Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2021-2025*.

Term	What it means in the plan
Inclusion	<p>Inclusion occurs when people feel, and are, valued and respected, and where they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have the opportunity to fulfil their potential • have access to opportunities and resources • can contribute their personal best in every encounter • can contribute their perspectives and talents • have a sense of belonging.²³
Intersectionality / intersectional approaches	<p>Coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, the term 'intersectionality' refers to a way of seeing people's experiences as shaped by (but not limited to) their race, socio-economic background, sex, gender, ability, and sexuality all at the same time. This overlap or combination of differences makes up a person's unique identity. Identities within an individual may come, go, or converge, depending on time or place (for example life stages). The point of understanding intersectionality is to also understand the variety of privileges and/or forms of discrimination or exclusion that one may experience simultaneously at any given time (for example gender, race, and disability together).²⁴</p>
LGBTIQA+	<p>Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, questioning, and asexual.²⁵</p>
Person-first language	<p>Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, 'person with disability'. Person-first language is used to emphasise a person's right to an identity beyond their disability.²⁶</p>

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²³ State Government of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2019). *What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?*

²⁴ State Government of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2019). *What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?*

²⁵ State Government of Victoria, Department of Education. (2024). *Inclusive Workplaces*.

²⁶ State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026*.

Term	What it means in the plan
Social Model of Disability	The social model of disability sees ‘disability’ as the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. It therefore carries the implication that the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with impairments to participate in society on an equal basis with others. In the social model of disability, it is society that places limits on a person, not their disability. ²⁷
Wellbeing	Wellbeing includes physical, mental and social health. Wellbeing can be described as how you feel about yourself and your life. ²⁸

²⁷ People With Disability Australia. (2022). *Social Model of Disability*.

²⁸ State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026*.

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Appendix 1 – Additional local data

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability

Among the Aboriginal population

9.55%

**need daily support
with core activities**

Due to severe or profound
disability, chronic illness, or age.

(9.7% among females;
11% among males)

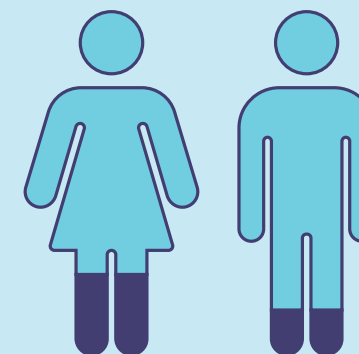
**This is nearly
double the
rate observed
in the general
population.**



Over 18%

provide unpaid care
for someone with disability,
chronic illness, or age.

(23.3% of females; 12.9%
of males)



23.3%

12.9%

²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). *Census of Population and Housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile. Yarra Ranges (LGA27450) 2468.2 sq Kms. Tab 109. Core Activity Need*

³⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). *Census of Population and Housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile. Yarra Ranges (LGA27450) 2468.2 sq Kms. Tab 110. Unpaid Assistance*

Culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability

Almost 17% of Yarra Ranges residents were born overseas.

39 languages other than English are spoken at home



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Assumptions for the Yarra Ranges Culturally and Linguistically Diverse residents based on general population data suggest:

Over 5,000

people have a disability

Over 1,400

need daily support with core activities due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

Almost 3,800

people provide unpaid care to a person due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

³.idcommunity Demographic Resources. (2021). *Yarra Ranges Council, Birthplace.*

⁴.idcommunity Demographic Resources. (2021). *Yarra Ranges Council, Languages used at home.*

LGBTIQ+ people with disability

Currently, National population-based data collections, such as the Census, and the State based Population Health Survey lack of inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status. Despite this, the Department of Health (2019) estimates that approximately 11% of the Australian population identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Intersex (LGBTI).³¹

Based on the Department of Health estimates, some assumptions for the Yarra Ranges community are:

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Over
17,000



**Yarra Ranges residents
identify as LGBTIQ+**

(11% of the population)

Of this 17,000 people:

**Almost 3,500
have a disability**



**Over 900
need daily support
with core activities**

due to disability,
chronic illness, or age.



**Over 2,500
provide unpaid care**

to a person due
to disability, chronic
illness, or age.



³¹ End of Life Directions for Aged Care (2022). *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Australia's ageing LGBTI population.*



Image description: Image of a person who is blind, standing outdoors near a sign in a park-like setting. The person is positioned to the left of the sign and they are holding a black shoulder bag. Their posture is relaxed and their expression is neutral. The sign is an interpretive audio-sign using Woiwurrung language. It features a green background with descriptive text and graphics about a “Stringybark Tree”.

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Yarra Ranges Council

Disability Action Plan Community Engagement Report

April, 2024

Prepared by the Health and Wellbeing Team

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Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.





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Introduction

This report summarises the community engagement period between February and March 2024. It captures the first of two phases in which the community is engaged regarding their vision and preferences for access, equity, and inclusion for people with disability and unpaid carers in the Yarra Ranges.

Information gathered through community voice will inform the development of the Yarra Ranges Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2024 – 2028.

The DAP outlines the ways Council will work to improve disability access and to advance equity and inclusion for people with a disability and unpaid carers, including Councils infrastructure, facilities, communications, and service.

Once a Draft DAP has been developed, a second round of community engagement will be undertaken.

Project Background

People with disability (and unpaid carers) have a human right to be included in all aspects of community life. This also brings many social, cultural, and economic benefits to the wider community.

The Victorian Public Sector Commission, in alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, defines disability as encompassing individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments. These impairments, when coupled with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal footing with others. Disability can be permanent or temporary, visible, or invisible. acquired or congenital, fluctuating, or episodic.¹

Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support a person who has a disability, this may be a family member and or a friend. Carers are an integral for both the person they are caring for and as part of Australia's health system.

Individual characteristics such as age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and cultural upbringing can shape the experiences, perspectives, needs, and challenges of individuals living with disability. The intersectional nature of a person's circumstance can result in compounding layers of barrier and discrimination. For example, an older woman with disability, may experience difficulties participating in social activities due to mobility issues and age-related discrimination, and may also be more likely to experience violence, which influences her overall health and wellbeing.

Council actively sought to capture the intersectional experience of individuals with disability and unpaid carers, when undertaking community engagement to inform the DAP.





Almost **20%** of Yarra Ranges residents identify as having a disability.²

Over 5% (5.6% among females; 5.2% among males) need daily support with core activities due to severe or profound disability, chronic illness, or age.³ Among the Aboriginal population, this figure increases to **9.55%** (9.7% among females; 11% among males), nearly double the rate observed in the general population.⁴

Additionally, almost **15%** of Yarra Ranges residents (17.6% among females; 11.7% among males) provide unpaid care for someone due to disability, chronic illness, or age.⁵ Among the Aboriginal population, over **18%** (23.3% of females; 12.9% of males) provide unpaid care for someone with disability, chronic illness, or age.⁶

Currently, National population-based data collections, such as the Census, and the State based Population Health Survey lack of inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status. Despite this, the Department of Health (2019) estimates that approximately **11%** of the Australian population identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Intersex (LGBTI).⁷

Based on the Department of Health estimates, some assumptions for the Yarra Ranges community are:

- Over **17,000** Yarra Ranges residents (11% of the population) identify as LGBTIQ+

Of this 17,000:

- Almost **3,500** people have a disability.
- Over **900** people need daily support with core activities due to disability, chronic illness, or age.
- Over **2,500** people provide unpaid care to a person due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

Almost **17%** of Yarra Ranges residents were born overseas. 39 languages other than English are spoken at home.^{8,9} Gender-disaggregated data is not available. Assumptions for the Yarra Ranges Culturally and Linguistically Diverse residents based on general population data suggest:

- Over **5,000** people have a disability
- Almost **3,800** people provide unpaid care to a person due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

1. Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–2025 (content.vic.gov.au)

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). "Region Summary, Yarra Ranges". <https://dbrabs.gov.au/region.html?lrr=iga&rqn=27450> Accessed 17 April 2024.

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4. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). Census of Population and Housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile. Yarra Ranges (LGA27450) 2468.2 sq Kms. Tab 109. Core Activity Need

5. idcommunity Demographic Resources. (2021). "Yarra Ranges Council, Unpaid Care". Unpaid care | Yarra Ranges Council | Community profile. Accessed on 10 April 2024.

6. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). Census of Population and Housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile. Yarra Ranges (LGA27450) 2468.2 sq Kms. Tab 110. Unpaid Assistance

7. End of Life Directions for Aged Care (2022). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Australia's ageing LGBTI population. <https://www.eldac.com.au/Resources/Diverse-Population-Groups/Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-and-Intersex#:~:text=Current%20estimates%20from%20the%20Department,based%20discrimination%20over%20their%20lifetime.> Accessed on 10 April 2024.

8. idcommunity Demographic Resources. (2021). "Yarra Ranges Council, Birthplace". <https://profile.id.com.au/yarra-ranges/birthplace>. Accessed on 10 April 2024.

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It is the vision of the DAP to:

“Yarra Ranges is an accessible, inclusive and equitable society that enables people with a disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.”

The four goals of the DAP are:



Goal 1

Information and communication from Council is accessible to everyone in our community and supports equitable participation and inclusion in civic life.



Goal 2

Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community.



Goal 3

Yarra Ranges is an inclusive community where all citizens can participate equally.



Goal 4

Council's commitment to equity, access and inclusion is demonstrated in all aspects of the business.

Council has a responsibility under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and the *Victorian Disability Act 2006* to develop and maintain a Disability Action Plan (DAP) that seeks to:

- Reduce barriers faced by people with disability in accessing goods, services, and facilities.
- Obtain and maintain employment.
- Promote inclusion and participation of people with disability.
- Achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against such people.





Methods of data collection

Council completed a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) obliged under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, which recommended Council:

- Respond to clear gaps in gender-disaggregated data and intersectional lived experience by undertaking targeted consultation with priority cohorts.
- Establish relationships with priority cohorts who have a disability, capture their voices to inform the DAP.
- Consider the needs of LBGTIQA+, CALD, and Indigenous people with disability, including women, girls, and gender diverse people, who are currently under-serviced communities.

These recommendations guided Council with planning the engagement that was delivered.

To gain an understanding of how Yarra Ranges Council was performing against the Vision and Goals, the community was able to get involved in the following ways:



The Yarra Ranges community exhibits a remarkable diversity of interests and requirements relating to accessibility, shaped by factors such as the type of disability, levels of support required. Residents genuinely appreciate living in the Yarra Ranges and, Council remains committed to actively listening and involving community in making improvements.

To promote and reach a variety of people Council used the following promotional methods:



Website Promotion



Social media



E-Newsletters



Radio



Presentations



Printed media



Email distribution





Limitations

Views on how accessible Councils' infrastructure, facilities, communications, and services was sought. However, due to respondents self-electing to participate, this resulted in data gathered reflecting a present-time individual needs base rather than indicating an aspirational view of future community needs.

Given the broad geographical spread of the Yarra Ranges municipality, this imposed limitations on levels of participation during the engagement process across all nine wards of the region. Therefore, note that the feedback included in this report reflects the individuals who participated in the engagement process and may not be reflective of all people with a disability and unpaid carers in the Yarra Ranges.

During the engagement, Council successfully connected with people residing, working, and spending time in the Yarra Ranges. Yarra Ranges offers a mixture of urban and rural communities. There are over 55 suburbs, townships, small communities, and rural areas, making it one of the most diverse of any municipalities in the State.

The voluntary sharing of location by some participants, in contrast to others who did not, highlights the breadth of outreach efforts across Yarra Ranges. The engagement extended to a diverse range of suburbs, including at least 34 distinct neighbourhoods. This coverage represents over 50% of the suburbs within Council, encompassing all nine wards.

Council cannot take immediate action in response to all feedback received. Any action taken due to the data collected must align with the Council's ongoing legislative responsibilities and align with the vision and intended goals of the DAP. Budgetary constraints are also a consideration.

How did people get involved

Recognising ways that systems, structures, and attitudes can lead to multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination and disadvantage, the community engagement plan applied an intersectional lens. The engagement methods, number of participants, key findings and who offered feedback from the community are shown below.



E-newsletter and Radio

- Over **13,190** recipients received Council E-newsletters

Social Media

- **14,977** people reached through Yarra Ranges Council Facebook and Instagram.

Shaping Yarra Ranges Page & Surveys

- **828** visitors
- **30** contributions
- **125** surveys completed

Interviews and Focus Group Sessions

- **489** people reached
- **5** face-face focus group sessions
- **2** public events
- Disability Inclusion Network
- **2** Pathways for Carers Walks
- **11** interviews
- Yarra Ranges Neighbourhood House Network

Advisory Committee's

- Disability Advisory Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee
- Positive Ageing Reference Group.

Summary of feedback

The Community has highlighted several key themes that warrant consideration for the upcoming DAP. These themes listed alphabetically provide valuable insights.

Table 11 – Key themes and desired outcomes

Number of Key Themes	Key Themes	Desired Outcome
1.	Accessible tourism	Yarra Ranges is a welcoming destination for all visitors.
2.	Customer Experience	The latest technology is available to provide an improved customer experience.
3.	Emergency Management	People with a disability and unpaid carers are included at all stages of Emergency Management planning and delivery.
4.	Festivals and Events / Local Businesses	Community events and local businesses have access to Information and capacity building opportunities.
5.	Housing	Temporary/permanent housing affordability, availability, and suitability for people with disability.
6.	Information	The information required is readily available and in accessible formats.
7.	Infrastructure	Increased accessibility in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing Places toilets • Trails • Shade • Accessible parking • Footpaths • Seating • Safe pedestrian crossings • Recreational facilities
8.	Public Transport	Accessible public transport Adequate infrastructure leading to public transport. Increased public transport options across Yarra Ranges.
9.	Safety	Lighting near recreation equipment and around shopping precincts is improved.
10.	Social connection and wellbeing	People with a disability and unpaid carers have access to local programs to enhance social connection and wellbeing.
11.	Youth Employment	Pathways for young people with disability to support workforce entry.

Conclusion

Council values and acknowledges the people who informed this report and the development of the next DAP. It's essential to create an inclusive environment for the community.

The next engagement and consultation phase of this project will ask the community for feedback on the draft version of the DAP.



To remain up to date with this project please visit the [Access, Equity and Inclusion Strategy | Shaping Yarra Ranges](#) page.





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Glossary of terms

Term or abbreviation	What it means in the plan
Accessibility	The extent to which people with disability can access something like an office, worksite, or public area.
Changing Places	Public toilets with full-sized change tables and hoists in major public spaces that meet the needs of people with disability.
Cohorts	A group of people with a shared characteristic
Community engagement and consultation	Community engagement at Yarra Ranges Council includes a wide range of activities aimed at involving the community in Council's decision-making processes.
Community voice	Involvement of members representing the community/lived experience
Culturally Linguistically diverse (CALD)	A community or group of people who come from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
Data	Facts or information about a topic or group of people.
Disability Advisory Committee	The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) provides advice on equity, access and inclusion to maximise opportunities for people with a disability to participate fully in the community of Yarra Ranges.
Disability Act	The Disability Act 2006 (Vic) provides a whole-of-government and community response to the rights and needs of people with disability including a requirement to have four-year state disability plans
Disability Action Plan (DAP)	An important way that state government departments and local governments ensure they are delivering inclusive and accessible services.
Emergency Management (EM)	The process of preparing for and responding to emergencies, including natural disasters such as storms and floods.
Gender	The socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.
Gender Disaggregated Data (GDD)	Data that has been broken down and analysed by gender.
Gender Diverse	Refers to a range of genders expressed in different ways. There are many terms used by gender diverse people to describe themselves, for example non-binary.
Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)	It's an assessment that outlines where gender analysis has been used to inform a policy to deliver better gender equality outcomes.

Term or abbreviation	What it means in the plan
Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee	The Health & Wellbeing Advisory Committee allows for community voice and a consultative process for a wider range of activities and initiatives, as well as advice to support Council's decision making and monitors the achievement of objectives of the Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.
Health and Wellbeing Team	A team within YRC that is responsible for providing advice on outcomes, namely the Disability Action Plan.
Intersectionality	A methodology of studying the overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, and queer.
NDIS	Jointly funded by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, the National Disability Insurance Scheme provides access to disability supports for eligible people with disability.
Pop up sessions	Directly engaging with the local community through face-to-face conversation
Underserviced groups	Groups of people who, because of systemic discrimination or disadvantage, often miss out on important services or having their voices heard
Unpaid Carer	Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged.
Vision	In this plan the vision represents what we hope will happen if the actions do what they are meant to do.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing includes physical, mental, and social health. Wellbeing can be described as how you feel about yourself and your life.
Focus groups	Conversing with key stakeholders to inform the DAP in a group setting whether it be face to face and or online.
Survey	Asking people questions through a questionnaire with a written set of questions. Both online and paper surveys were available.
Interviews	A formal conversation one on one and or in a group setting.
Shaping Yarra Ranges Page	An online engagement platform that gives you the opportunity to share your ideas and feedback on the projects and services that will shape your community.
Advisory Committee	A group of people with skills, expertise across multiple sectors who provide independent advice on issues occurring in the community.
Reference groups to Council	A collective group of people providing advice/opinions of topics.



Yarra Ranges Council

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MOOROOLBARK COMMUNITY HOUSE

Report Author: Executive Officer – Partnerships & Community Building
 Responsible Officer: Director Communities
 Ward(s) affected: Melba;

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public

SUMMARY

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) is the lead funder of Neighbourhood Houses (Community Houses) in Victoria. The Houses connect and support local communities.

Yarra Ranges Council also funds Neighbourhood / Community Houses through its Neighbourhood House Partnership program. The program is run on a four-year cycle and the current cycle was endorsed by Council in 2022. Council funding is for community development and has a focus on community participation, inclusion, connection and capacity building.

After the closure of the Kallista Community House in December 2022 an opportunity was identified to support a new Neighbourhood House in Mooroolbark.

Mooroolbark is one of the most populous areas of Yarra Ranges and growing. It has strong community volunteering and commitment to strengthening and connecting the local community.

In 2024, the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG) led an engagement process to develop an application for Neighbourhood House funding from the DFFH with support from the regional DFFH and Council. In June 2024, DFFH announced that the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group was successful in achieving Neighbourhood House funding to commence the work of establishing a new Community House in Mooroolbark.

This report proposes that, with core DFFH funding now secured, funds from Council's current Neighbourhood House Partnership program be allocated to the new Mooroolbark Community House. Council funding will assist with developing a sustainable operating model with strong community-led governance to further strengthen the Mooroolbark community.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the proposal:

- 1. To include the new DFFH funded Community House in Mooroolbark in Council's Neighbourhood House Partnership Program.**
- 2. That the new Neighbourhood House in Mooroolbark, commence with Council funding of \$20,000 until incorporated status is achieved and then increase to the same level as the other Neighbourhood Houses.**

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

No related Council decisions recorded.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Council's current four-year Neighbourhood House Partnership Program was endorsed in 2022. The Program strengthens the ongoing partnership between the Houses and Council to support effective planning, development and delivery of community development programs and activities in local communities. This supports the strategic objective of Council for connected and healthy communities.

Neighbourhood Houses (also called Community Houses) are responsive to local opportunities and needs, help build belonging and connection and offer a range of programs and activities as diverse as skill building, creative arts, social groups and more. They also foster local leadership and volunteering through participation in the governance of the Houses and the daily activities offered.

The DFFH funds Neighbourhood Houses based on a strict criterion and focus on particular community vulnerabilities. New proposed Neighbourhood House needed to be accepted by DFFH to be financially viable.

Options considered

Options considered for delivering community benefit with the funding available in the current four-year Neighbourhood House Partnership program included an assessment of demographics and gaps in the provision of Houses in Yarra Ranges. Advice from DFFH about their priorities for delivering value for their funding investment also informed the options. The options considered were:

1. Allocating funding to a new Mooroolbark Community House, (now funded by DFFH), to meet a gap in accessible, inclusive, social connection activities and participation in lifelong learning in the most populous area of Yarra Ranges.

2. Not using the Neighbourhood House program funds for the intended purpose of supporting community development activities in local communities through funding to a Neighbourhood House.
3. Re-allocating funding to the other Neighbourhood Houses.

Recommended option and justification

Option 1 is recommended. It will build on the significant community assets (active community groups and volunteers) and the growing community needs in the Mooroolbark area such as engaging refugee community members, those living on low incomes or people who are socially isolated. The new House can also offer social connection and community building for the new Kinley estate community.

The Community House in Mooroolbark will:

- Support social cohesion, through an Asset Based Community Development approach where the community activate their own solutions to local issues, harness opportunities, and identify and work to realise their aspirations for the future.
- Enhance the value of an existing Council facility, the Mooroolbark Community Centre, creating a physical space for more community led activities to occur, building social cohesion and increasing access to a range of supports.
- Use Council's Neighbourhood House Partnership funds for the intended and approved purpose to deliver community benefit.

Option 1 keeps the number of Houses serving Yarra Ranges communities and funded by Council, stable at 12.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

This report proposes to bring the new Mooroolbark Community House into Council's current four-year Neighbourhood House Partnership program, using now unallocated funds in the budget.

Council funds Community Houses/Neighbourhood Houses through its Neighbourhood House Partnership program. Historically there have been three re-allocations of funding to new Houses after closures, to retain the level of service across the municipality.

The report proposes that funds in Council's current Neighbourhood House Partnership program be allocated to the new Mooroolbark Community House. With the core DFFH funding now secured, this will assist in ensuring a sustainable operational model and delivering community development.

Funding for the Mooroolbark Community House will be needed at a lower level initially as it establishes, incorporates and builds its program and governance structure. An allocation of \$20,000 for the next two financial years (2024/25 and 2025/26) is proposed. This is in line with the approach to the establishment of other new Houses.

Procurement

Council's Procurement Policy responds to section 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and provides guidance relating to sourcing strategies for services that ensure all purchases promote open and fair competition and value for money. Section 9.2 of the policy allows for exemption from a competitive procurement process if there is a proven monopoly or specialised market, or where the work is highly specialised.

An exemption from the usual procurement processes may be granted (in accordance with financial delegations) when it can be demonstrated that Council is still obtaining value for money.

The success of the Mooroolbark community, through MUG, in receiving DFFH funding establishes them as the Community House governing group, with the imprimatur to develop and provide the unique community benefits that Houses offer. The new House has specialist market knowledge, a form of monopoly (given the State has funded its establishment), and is a specialised community service offering.

Council's funding of the Neighbourhood House Partnership program is on a cycle of 4-year agreements. There is budget available for this project over the remaining two financial years in the current program allocation. The initiation phase for the new House is expected to take 12-18 months to reach full incorporation.

From the 2026/27 financial year the Mooroolbark Community House is expected to be fully functional and therefore, subject to achieving Incorporation, should be funded in line with the other neighbourhood houses as part of the new Neighbourhood House Partnership program. Currently this allocation is \$39,004 per year per House.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

Connected and Healthy Communities

Communities are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive, and socially well connected. Quality services are accessible to everyone.

Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places

Quality facilities and infrastructure meets current and future needs. Places are well planned and are hubs of activity that foster wellbeing, creativity, and innovation.

Other Council strategies and policies that are addressed by Community House programming and activities include the:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy (particularly social connection and mental wellbeing).

- Creative Communities Strategy (cultural participation).
- Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy (disability focused social inclusion, support for carers).
- Child and Youth Strategy (builds on existing family focused activities at the Mooroolbark Community Centre).
- Healthy and Active Ageing Plan (inclusion of older adults on the committee, in programs, social connection and volunteering).
- Cultural Diversity Policy (a significant migrant and refugee community lives in the area).
- The Municipal Recovery Plan (access to power and food relief can be mobilised in emergencies as needed).

RELEVANT LAW

All Neighbourhood Houses comply with State legislation and regulations such as Occupational Health and Safety and Child Safe Standards.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

Neighbourhood Houses are recognised for their pre-employment role in building skills and confidence and some offer more formal skill building and training. Volunteer contribution is valued around \$44 per hour, and this is before the positive health impacts of volunteering are considered.

In 2019, pre Covid, the value of volunteering to Victoria was around \$58.1 billion, with an average of 224 hours donated per volunteer. The level of volunteering is still recovering post the pandemic and Neighbourhood Houses encourage and are helping re-build confidence in volunteering.

Social Implications

Facilitating social connection is one of the ways Council supports good mental wellbeing. Feeling connected to your neighbourhood and community and having a sense of belonging and purpose, promotes wellbeing.

The new Mooroolbark Community House taps into volunteers with a commitment to strengthening the local community and preventing social issues from developing. The House has positive social implications in this growing community, welcoming new residents from all walks of life.

Environmental Implications

Neighbourhood Houses are well placed to provide environmentally focused courses and skill development. In Mooroolbark this will include potential partnerships with the thriving community garden. The House will also be well placed to support communities after natural emergencies with support, information and access to power.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A thorough and inclusive engagement process was undertaken to identify community support for the establishment of the Mooroolbark Community House. This included workshops, meetings and informal engagements over many months.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Officers of Council worked closely with the DFFH Senior Advisor Community Partnerships in identifying where a new House would have most community benefit. The peak body for Neighbourhood Houses in the Outer East also guided and partnered in the process and is the auspice for the funding until incorporation is achieved. Support was expressed by a variety of services including the Migrant Information Centre, Foundation House and Services Australia.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks related to the proposed funding are outlined in the table below. A risk assessment for the project informed the initiation and subsequent stages of establishing a new House. A strong focus on good governance and developing comprehensive policies and procedures is central to the work of the new Steering Committee and the auspice organisation, in establishing the new House. The new House has a committed group of community members involved in the Steering Committee, a strength that mitigates risks.

Risk	Mitigation
Sustainability of Neighbourhood Houses - increased costs, set funding levels, reliance on volunteering at a time of decreasing participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With a focus on cultural inclusivity, the House may provide opportunities to attract alternative funding specific to this cohort. - The inclusion of complementary, not for profit service organisations, within the facility builds capacity. - Mooroolbark has a well-established group of volunteers and a governance model in place for volunteer participation and contribution. - Box Hill Institute students need local placements and could do important project work.
Relationship and partnering with other Houses located in the Urban Region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The other Houses are informed of the process. - Highlight the delivery of services specific to Mooroolbark with a focus on multicultural programs and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A focus on a culturally inclusive space offering targeted support to the communities of Burma who have high

Risk	Mitigation
	<p>population in Mooroolbark.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek opportunities for collaboration between urban area Houses. - Kinley estate will result in significant population growth on the Mooroolbark side, creating opportunities for new participants and board members.
Lack of strategic support for the increasing migrant and refugee communities in the urban area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing an all-cultures community centre in the heart of Mooroolbark will assist Council and service awareness of and responsiveness to, emerging needs within newly arrived communities while strengthening the broader community to include, welcome and celebrate all cultures through the new House.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. The Neighbourhood/Community Houses of Yarra Ranges

Attachment 1. The Neighbourhood Houses of Yarra Ranges

Hills Houses

Olinda Community House

Selby Community House

Urban Area Houses

Chirnside Park Neighbourhood House - part of the Chirnside Community Hub

Japara Neighbourhood House - part of the Kilsyth Community Hub

Mt Evelyn Community House - co-located with the Mt Evelyn Reading Room

Lilydale Community House - co-located with Lilydale senior Citizens

Mooroolbark Community House - co-located with community groups and arts programming.

Upper Yarra Houses

Seville Community House

Woori Community House

Yarra Junction Community House

Valley Neighbourhood Houses

Healesville Living & Learning Centre

Yarra Glen & District Living & Learning Centre

WARBURTON PAID PARKING PILOT FEES PROPOSAL

Report Author: Manager – Strategy & Transformation
 Responsible Officer: Director Built Environment & Infrastructure
 Ward(s) affected: (O'Shannasy Ward);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

With visitor numbers in the Yarra Ranges expected to double, effective parking management is essential to support accessibility and local businesses. The Warburton Paid Parking Pilot aims to ease congestion and improve parking availability in high-demand areas by introducing a targeted, location-specific fee system.

Yarra Ranges residents and eligible Warburton traders (including non-residents) will be exempt from paying parking fees.

Following extensive research, engagement with local businesses, and benchmarking against other Victorian municipalities, Council proposes a variable fee structure that balances affordability with effective parking management. Paid parking will apply only during peak times (weekends and public holidays, 9 am–5 pm) at key locations, including Thomas Avenue, Warburton Highway, Water World, and Station Street. Fees range from \$3.50 to \$6.00 per hour (excluding the providers' transaction costs) with the first hour free along Warburton Highway to encourage customer turnover and support local businesses. A digital permit system will allow Yarra Ranges residents and traders to park for free. Additionally, a \$99 penalty under Road Rule 207(2) will apply for failure to pay parking fees or comply with signage.

Noting that the primary objective of the pilot is to improve traffic and parking safety and amenity, the financial impact of the pilot remains uncertain, given fees apply only to non-residents, making revenue projections variable. However, initial estimates suggest that the cost of implementing paid parking infrastructure and technology should be recovered within two years. The performance of the pilot will be reviewed after 12 months to assess its viability as a long-term solution.

More information on the paid parking pilot, including Frequently Asked Questions, is available on the Council's website. Please refer to:

[Paid Parking in Warburton Yarra Ranges Council](#)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. ***Approves location-specific fees (excluding the provider's transaction costs) for parking during Warburton Paid Parking Trial:***
 - ***Thomas Ave \$3.50 an hour***
 - ***Water World \$6.00 an hour***
 - ***Station St \$3.50 an hour***
 - ***Warburton highway first hour for free, second hour \$6.00***
2. ***Notes the introduction of a new penalty under Road Rule 207 (2) set at \$99 for individuals who fail to comply with parking payment requirements.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Approval of Paid Parking Trial in Warburton. Council meeting 14/05/2024.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

The Yarra Ranges region is one of Victoria's most visited destinations, with annual visitor numbers expected to double from 4.5 million to over 9 million in the next decade. While this growth is vital for the local economy, it also creates significant challenges for our infrastructure, particularly in high-visitation areas like Warburton.

Parking congestion has become a persistent issue, with key areas such as Thomas Avenue, Warburton Highway, and Water World often operating at full capacity during weekends and holidays, making it difficult to find a space, increasing traffic congestion, and impacting local businesses.

To address these challenges, Council has explored a range of solutions, including updated parking restrictions and improved enforcement using new technology. While these measures have made progress, they alone cannot address traffic congestion and parking management. The introduction of paid parking trial is an essential next step to better manage parking demand and improve traffic flow in Warburton.

Paid parking has been carefully designed to achieve several objectives:

- Improved traffic and commuter's experience
- Support the local economy
- Reinvest in the local community

Designing the Fee Structure

To ensure the trialled paid parking system in Warburton is fair and effective, Council undertook extensive research of common paid parking practices, completed benchmarking as well as consultation with local businesses:

- **Community Engagement:** In August 2024, Council consulted with impacted local businesses regarding the parking fee structure along Warburton Highway and trader parking areas. Following this engagement, Council committed to reserving 20 unrestricted free parking spaces exclusively for trader permit holders. To further support business activity and encourage customer turnover, all parking spaces along Warburton Highway will provide the first hour of parking free. This initiative aims to improve parking availability near shopfronts while attracting more customers to the area.
- **Benchmarking:** Council reviewed paid parking systems in other Victorian municipalities, where fees range from \$1.50 to \$7.00 per hour. These systems often use variable pricing to balance demand and affordability, particularly in tourist areas. Lessons learned emphasised the need for fair, location-specific fees that encourage turnover without deterring visitors.
- **Traffic and Parking Data:** Occupancy rates in key Warburton parking areas, such as Thomas Avenue, consistently reach over 85% during weekends and public holidays highlighting the need for paid parking to improve turnover and availability. However, with such significant visitor numbers, it is crucial to carefully balance parking fees to manage demand effectively without deterring visitors or impacting the local economy.

To provide a fit-for-purpose solution, paid parking fees will be trialled only when they are needed – on weekends and public holidays from 9am to 5pm and only in the busiest locations.

- Thomas Avenue
- Warburton Highway
- Water World
- Station Street

Multiple payment options will be available during the Warburton parking trial to ensure convenient access for all users. Visitors can choose to pay through the PayStay mobile app, use MetroLite parking meters installed throughout the area, or scan TouchnGo QR codes that link directly to a payment website. Understanding that some community members may face digital barriers, a dedicated phone service will also be available where users can call to start and stop their parking sessions, ensuring the system remains accessible to everyone regardless of their technological comfort level.

This targeted approach ensures that fees address parking issues during peak visitation times without imposing unnecessary costs on users during quieter periods.

Yarra Ranges residents and eligible Warburton traders (including non-residents) will be exempt from paying parking fees through a free digital permit system.

Options considered

Getting the balance right between high and low parking fees is key to managing parking effectively. A well-thought-out parking fee structure serves several purposes:

- Encouraging Turnover: Reasonable fees motivate shorter stays, making parking spaces available more frequently and supporting local businesses by increasing customer turnover.
- Managing Demand: Variable pricing based on time and location helps manage demand, discouraging long-term parking in busy areas while attracting drivers to less crowded spaces.
- Supporting Community Infrastructure: Parking fees help distribute the costs of maintaining and improving local facilities more equitably between residents and visitors. This shared approach ensures both visitors and residents contribute to maintaining our community spaces, creating a fair distribution of costs.

In designing the fee structure for the Warburton Paid Parking and Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) trial, Council considered these objectives alongside benchmarking data. Fees in other Victorian municipalities range from \$1.50 to \$7.00 per hour, depending on the location and demand. Several options were evaluated:

1. Higher Parking Fees: Setting fees above the average range was considered but ruled out, as high fees could deter visitors, leading to empty parking spaces, increased congestion in nearby residential areas, and public dissatisfaction.
2. Lower Parking Fees: While more affordable, lower fees risk encouraging longer stays, reducing turnover, and impacting parking availability, particularly during peak times.
3. Location-Specific Fees (Recommended): A tailored fee structure was deemed the best option, with fees adjusted based on demand and community input. This approach balances affordability with effective parking management, ensuring spaces are available when and where they're most needed.

Drawing from lessons learned in other municipalities, Council suggests a variable fee structure for Warburton. By targeting high-demand times and locations, this approach supports local businesses, improves access, and ensures that parking remains a fair and effective resource for everyone.

Recommended option and justification

The proposed Location-Specific fee structure reflects a strategic compromise:

- Thomas Avenue and Station Street: \$3.50 per hour to encourage turnover while aligning with the average fee range in benchmarked municipalities.
- Water World Car Park: \$6.00 per hour to manage high demand in this popular location.
- Warburton Highway: Free for the first hour, followed by \$6.00 per hour. This approach supports local businesses by increasing customer turnover at the shopfronts.

It is important to note that depending on the channel of payment Council's technology provider will charge additional fee of 0.12 cents per transaction as well as small % based service fee. These fees will be paid in one transaction but displayed separately on the receipt making it clear what customers are paying for.

With the introduction of paid parking fees, it is essential to implement enforcement mechanisms, including fines, to ensure compliance and effective parking management. Failure to pay the required fee or adhere to signage and instructions—categorised under Road Rule 207(2) as “Fail to pay fee and obey instruction on sign, meter, ticket, or ticket vending machine”— will incur a penalty of \$99.

This fine reflects set 0.5 of a penalty unit for this violation, with penalty units being a standardised measure used to calculate fines for various offences. Under the *Monetary Units Act 2004*, penalty values are reviewed and updated annually on July 1 by the Department of Treasury and Finance. This approach ensures that fines remain consistent and proportional across a range of regulatory breaches.

By linking fines to penalty units, councils can ensure their enforcement measures are transparent, standardised, and in line with broader legislative frameworks.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Noting that the primary objective of the pilot is to improve traffic and parking safety and amenity, the financial impact of the paid parking pilot will be reviewed as part of its overall evaluation. Since only non-residents are required to pay fees, revenue projections are uncertain due to the unknown ratio between residents and visitors using the parking.

Implementing paid parking requires some investment in technology and infrastructure.

That infrastructure provides traffic flow benefit (for example dynamic signage) and can also be used for paid parking. It is anticipated upfront costs for the infrastructure would be recovered within approximately two years. The pilot will provide valuable data to assess the viability of a long-term paid parking system and inform future decisions on its implementation.

It would also be difficult to estimate number of fines Council will issue to those that will fail to pay for parking. After the trial commences the Project team can review the data and estimate financial impact.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

- Integrated Transport Strategy
 - Real time car parking information display.
- Health and Wellbeing Plan
 - Increase active living
- Vibrant economy, Agriculture and tourism
 - Identity, Leadership and Collaboration Taking a unified and collaborative approach that demonstrates leadership in economic development, industry engagement and business responsiveness. Establishing a strong identity that raises national and global brand awareness.
- Protected and enhanced natural environment
 - Our iconic places and their natural character are actively protected.
- High performing organisation
 - Community is at the heart of all we do. Our goal is for our diverse communities to be at the heart of every decision and service we deliver, to ensure we are meeting the needs and hopes of our communities.
 - We excel in thinking smart and good practice. Our goal is to excel in considered thinking, problem solving and decision-making, underpinned by operational practices that guide and support the processes and services we offer our communities now and into the future.
 - No regional, state or national plans and policies are applicable to the recommendation in this report.

RELEVANT LAW

Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Victoria), Council has the authority to implement paid parking and parking enforcement through several key provisions:

1. Primary Powers:

- Section 163(2)(d): Councils have explicit power to "manage and control roads and streets and construct works on roads and streets, including footpaths, bridges and traffic control measures"
- Section 163(2)(g): Councils can "manage, improve and develop public places vested in the Council"

2. Supporting Framework:

- Section 163(3): Allows councils to "do all things necessary or convenient to be done in connection with the performance of its responsibilities and the exercise of its powers"
- Section 9 provides overarching governance principles that support these initiatives through:
 - Promoting economic, social and environmental sustainability (Section 9c)
 - Ensuring ongoing financial viability of the Council (Section 9g)

While the Act doesn't explicitly mention paid parking, these provisions collectively give Council the legal authority to implement parking management systems, including paid parking and enforcement measures, as part of their responsibility for managing roads and public places within the municipality.

Additional legal framework can be found in several key pieces of legislation:

- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Infringements Act 2006*
- *Victorian Road Safety Act 1986*
- *Monetary Units Act 2004*

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

The introduction of paid parking may have following economic implications:

- **Parking Turnover:** Paid parking encourages higher turnover of parking spaces, as drivers are incentivised to park for shorter durations to avoid higher fees. This can benefit local businesses by increasing the availability of parking for customers.
- **Revenue Generation:** Paid parking generates revenue that can be directed toward local asset maintenance, projects, and community initiatives.

Social Implications

The introduction of paid parking may have following social implications:

- **Affordability:** Paid parking can impact low-income individuals who may have fewer transportation alternatives or less ability to pay for parking. This can raise concerns about equitable access to public spaces and services.
- **Alternative Transportation:** If implemented effectively, paid parking can encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit, cycling, or walking, which can have positive social impacts in terms of increased physical activity and community interaction.

Environmental Implications

Wayfinding signs can help reduce emissions in a few different ways:

- **Reducing congestion and idling time:** Clear wayfinding signage helps drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians navigate more efficiently to their destinations. This reduces the amount of time vehicles spend idling in traffic or circling.
- **Encouraging walking/biking:** Good wayfinding makes it easier for people to navigate areas on foot or by bicycle rather than driving.
- **Optimising traffic flow:** Effective wayfinding signage can optimize traffic patterns and reduce vehicle emissions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The project has successfully engaged with affected traders along Warburton Highway and Thomas Ave in August 2024 to identify optimal solutions for accommodating their permits and paid parking charging scheme.

Businesses were offered an opportunity to provide their input in designing the charging models as well as provide their feedback on trader parking areas and permit.

Further community engagement is not expected until the conclusion of the trial. The project team will continue to communicate progress regarding implementation and will assist the local community in Warburton with the permit application process once the systems are configured.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Significant benchmarking activities related to LPR, smart technology, and paid parking have been undertaken for this project. The Project team reviewed parking permit policies from over 20 councils and engaged with Mornington Peninsula Shire to identify opportunities and lessons learned during and after their trial. Research with technology providers and tender process has also revealed innovative solutions currently being implemented for selected car parks and enforcement. These include LPR technology, sensors, wayfinding signs and system integration allowing for more process automation and better customer experience.

The project involves representatives from six different Council departments who are actively collaborating to achieve the best outcomes for the community and visitors. We have also engaged with additional departments to seek their guidance and ensure our actions and messaging are aligned. Furthermore, the Project team engaged an external consultant to review the plan and ensure that the proposed solutions and costs are effective and aligned with our desired outcomes.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Paid parking is one measure, within a suite of measures, to mitigate risks associated with traffic safety and amenity at specific locations.

Introduction of parking fees for visitors is a pilot only and will be evaluated accordingly.

Notwithstanding the limited pilot period and opportunity to evaluate and adjust if considered appropriate, risks associated with a poorly designed fee structure have been mitigated through benchmarking, discussion with traders, and consideration of occupancy data.

The technology being adopted is compliant with privacy legislation.

A comprehensive communications campaign and reminder support for residents has been designed to mitigate risks associated with lack of awareness of the new system. Further information on this can be found here [Paid Parking in Warburton Yarra Ranges Council](#)

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

Nil

CT 7747 YARRA VALLEY TRAIL STAGE 1B.2

Report Author: Project Manager – Yarra Valley Trail
 Responsible Officer: Director Built Environment & Infrastructure
 Ward(s) affected: Ryrie;

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential information is contained in Attachment 1. This information relates to contractual matters and contains commercially sensitive information including, but not limited to, the name of tendering parties, the evaluation panel members, and the evaluation of the tenders received against the published evaluation criteria.

Any disclosure of the information included within the confidential attachment to this report could be prejudicial to the interests of the Council or other parties. If a discussion of any of this confidential information is required, the Council is recommended to resolve that item by deferring it to the confidential section of the agenda when the meeting is closed to members of the public in accordance with Section 3(1), g(i)g(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

SUMMARY

This report summarises the evaluation process taken and seeks Council approval for the construction of a new 1.5 km long shared path trail along the alignment of the former Healesville Railway Line, starting at the end of the existing path 1.2 kilometres north of MacIntyre Lane, Yering and finishing at the end of the existing earth railway viaduct 50 metres from the Yarra River, Yering. This construction constitutes stage 1B.2 of the Yarra Valley Trail project.

An advertisement calling for tenders was placed in The Age newspaper on Saturday 2 November 2024. Tenders closed on Wednesday 4 December 2024 and two (2) tenders were received.

This item has been included in the public agenda to facilitate the openness and transparency in Council's decision making. A confidential attachment has been included with the report which contain commercially sensitive information that is not to be disclosed while the meeting is open to the public

The recommendation in this report has been formally endorsed by the tender evaluation panel.

RECOMMENDATION

That

1. ***Council awards the tender from Cope Ag Pty Ltd for a total lump sum price of \$2,654,990.65 Inclusive of Provisional Items and Exclusive of GST (\$2,920,489.71 inclusive of GST and Provisional Items) for contract CT7747 Yarra Valley Trail Stage 1B.2.***
2. ***The Director Built Environment and Infrastructure be delegated authority to sign the contract documents.***
3. ***The confidential attachment to this report remain confidential indefinitely as it relates to matters specified under section 3(1)(g)(i)(g)(ii) of the Local Government Act 2020.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no related Council decisions relevant to this item.

DISCUSSION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to enter into a contract for the design and construction of Yarra Valley Trail Stage 1B.2 under contract CT7747.

This tender includes the design and construction of 1.53 kilometres of shared use path, including the re-purposing of one existing timber trestle bridge, construction of three new bridges, and associated works for the Yarra Valley Trail Section 1B.2 from the existing trail end to the Yarra River, Yering. All of the new trail will be centred along the former railway line including earth viaducts, cuttings and bridges. The contract will include the following:

- Project management and authority approvals.
- Demolition and removal of remaining railway sleepers, railway line and fixtures including stockpiling of steel for future heritage railway reuse.
- Detailed design certified by a structural engineer including demolition, testing, strengthening and re-construction methodology for the one (1) existing timber trestle bridge.
- Detailed design by a certified structural engineer for three (3) replacement bridges.
- Repair, strengthening and reconstruction of one historic timber trestle railway bridge.

- Replacement of three former railway bridges destroyed in the 2009 bushfires with new 3.2-metre-wide bridges.
- Construction of approximately 1.35 kilometres of 3.0 metres wide crushed rock path, with crushed rock shoulders.
- Installation of approximately 2.7 kilometres of partial barrier timber and wire fencing on either side of the crushed rock path along the earth viaduct.
- Fencing to include stock evacuation gates.

Background

This project was identified in various Council adopted strategies including the Hike and Bike Plan 2005 and the Eastern Regional Trails Strategy 2018. The Stage 1 was described in the Yarra Valley Trail Feasibility Study Report and the Yarra Valley Trail Impact Assessment.

The 7.5km long Stage 1A was completed in December 2019. Following a VCAT hearing, the Planning Permit for Stage 1B was issued in February 2023. A separate tender for the construction of the 1.2km long Stage 1B.1 (north of MacIntyre Lane) was endorsed by Yarra Ranges Council on 12th December 2023.

Options considered

The procurement method for this tender was a single-stage, competitive open tender. An advertisement calling for tenders was published on Council's online e-tendering portal and placed in The Age newspaper on Saturday 2 November 2024. Tenders closed on Wednesday 4 December 2024 and two (2) tenders were received.

The tender process has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Council's Procurement Policy and the endorsed evaluation plan. Tenders were assessed for conformity with the tender documents. A summary of these tender submissions is contained within the confidential attachment to this report. The evaluation panel scored the tenders against the pre-established evaluation criteria, as published in the tender document.

A summary of the evaluation criteria follows:

- Tendered Price - 45%
- Capability & Capacity to Undertake Work - 20%
- Commitment to Quality & Sustainability - 10%
- Timeframes - 20%
- Community Benefit – 5%

Recommended option and justification

Following an extensive evaluation process as detailed in the Confidential attachment, the tender evaluation panel are unanimous in their decision to recommend the tender from Cope Ag Pty Ltd.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

This tender is part of a larger Yarra Valley Trail Stage 1 project. Overall, Stage 1 has committed funding (exclusive of GST) as follows:

- \$2.5M Council;
- \$2.5M Growing Suburbs Fund (DELWP);
- \$1.26M Regional Growth Fund;
- \$1.0M Eastern Metropolitan Partnership (DELWP). The Eastern Metropolitan (for Stage 1A only).

The tender price is within the project budget and Quantity Surveyor estimate.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

- **Connected and Healthy Communities:** Communities are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive and socially well connected. Quality services are accessible to everyone.
- **Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places:** Quality facilities and infrastructure meet current and future needs. Places are well planned and are hubs of activity that foster wellbeing, creativity and innovation.
- **Vibrant Economy, Agriculture and Tourism:** Our tourism, agriculture, health, manufacturing and other industries are leading and dynamic. Strong investment and attraction underpins sustainable economic growth and job creation.

A Yarra Ranges Council Major Initiative for 2021-2025 is to become a world class trails and eco-tourism destination through project development, delivery, advocacy and partnerships, including the delivery of the Ridges and Rivers projects. The desired community outcome is a trail network that provides locals with improved connections and recreation options to improve health outcomes and active transport alternatives. Additionally, it will create a tourism destination to support economic growth. Council will achieve this by delivering projects including the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination, Yarra Valley Trail, and ngurrak barring-RidgeWalk.

RELEVANT LAW

This report seeks Council approval to award a contract that complies with Section 108 and 109 of the *Local Government Act 2020*

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Local and social sustainability was considered as part of the evaluation process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An overview of the Yarra Valley Trail project, background reports, project updates and frequently asked questions are publicly available on the Ride Yarra Ranges / Yarra Valley Trail web site.

The tender requires the successful contractor to prepare a Communications Plan, as per the Planning Permit Condition, between the Contractor, Council, VicTrack, and the Adjoining Landowner covering the conduct of construction, including:

- Sequencing of the works to allow underpass access for the Adjoining Landowner's stock between the eastern and western parcels of land comprising the Adjoining Land.
- Consultation with and ongoing notice of works as they progress, with the Adjoining Landowner to the satisfaction of Council.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Yarra Valley Trail project is guided by a Project Reference Group including all relevant State agencies. The contractor is also responsible to obtaining approvals of the detailed designs from VicTrack and Melbourne Water.

The contractor shall prepare and have approved a Construction and Environmental Management Plan that will cover site assessment, and management to avoid impacts on the environment and waterways. Site inductions will be undertaken for Cultural Heritage and Environment.

RISK ASSESSMENT

An overall Yarra Valley Trail Risk Register has been kept updated since the beginning of the project.

The CT7747 tender documents included:

- An OH&S Hazard Identification Report (Identified risks including demolition of railway infrastructure, underground services, traffic management, working at heights, restricted construction access, working over water, uneven ground conditions, hazardous substances, and stock management).

- Environmental Management Plan (VicTrack Guideline).
- Draft Flood Response Plan (Melbourne Water requirement to be finalised on completion of project).

The successful tenderer is required to complete a Construction & Environmental Management Plan, to be approved by Council, Melbourne Water and VicTrack prior to commencing any on-site works.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Tender Evaluation (Confidential)

Confidential Item

11. COUNCILLOR MOTIONS

In accordance with Chapter 3 Division 4 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

There were no Councillor motions received prior to the Agenda being printed.

12. ITEMS THROUGH THE CHAIR

13. REPORTS FROM DELEGATES

14. DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNING AND SEALING

In accordance with Clause 87 of the Meeting Procedures and Use of Common Seal Local Law 2015, as prescribed by Section 14(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 2020.

There were no Documents for Signing and Sealing listed for this meeting prior to the Agenda being printed.

15. INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

Report Author: Senior Governance Officer
 Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
 Ward(s) affected: All Wards

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public

SUMMARY

Chapter 8, Rule 1, of the Governance Rules requires that records of informal meetings of Councillors must be kept and that the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the Minutes of that Council meeting.

An 'informal meeting of Councillors' is defined in the Governance Rules as a meeting of Councillors that:

- is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- is not a Council meeting, Delegated Committee meeting or Community Asset Committee meeting.

The records for informal meetings of Councillors are attached to the report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the records of the Informal Meetings of Councillors, copies of which are attached to the report, be received and noted.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. 4 February 2025 – Council Briefing
2. 4 February 2025 – Council Forum
3. 5 February 2025 - Councillor Development Program (CDP)

Informal Meeting of Councillors

Public Record



Meeting Name:	Council Briefing		
Date:	04 February 2025	Start Time: 6.19pm	Finish Time: 6.31pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference		
Attendees:	<p>Councillors: Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair), Cr McAllister, Cr Cox, Cr Heenan, Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott</p> <p>CEO/Directors: Tammi Rose, Leanne Hurst, Hjalmar Philipp, Kath McClusky and Vince Lombardi</p> <p>Officers: Gina Walter, Beck Stevens, Ben Waterhouse, Joanne Hammond, Ameer Cooper, Mel Villani, Samantha Boyle, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart Wilson</p> <p>Externals: Yarra Ranges Tourism - Simon O'Callaghan (CEO)</p> <p>Via Zoom: Yarra Ranges Tourism - Leigh Harry (Chair)</p>		
Apologies:	Nil		
Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For transparency Councillor Jim Child noted a conflict of interest relating to the public submission and item 11.1 - Councillor Motions - Gippsland Kangaroo Harvest Zone. 		
Matter/s Discussed:	This briefing covered the following items of business to be considered at the 11 February 2025 Council Meeting.		
	9.1	a) Petition to Council - Fair and reasonable carparking signage b) Petition to Council - Introduction of a Special Charge Scheme for Sealing Stanton Grove, Lilydale	
	10.1	Audit & Risk Management Committee Biannual Report	
	10.2	Audit Risk Management Committee Charter	
	10.3	Warburton Paid Parking Pilot Fees Proposal	
	10.4	Stormwater Community Reference Panel	

Assembly of Councillors

Public Record



Completed By:	11.1	Councillor Motions - Gippsland Kangaroo Harvest Zone - Cr Cox
	14	Documents for Signing and Sealing – Ken White
	Gina Walter	

Informal Meeting of Councillors

Public Record



Meeting Name:	Council Forum	
Date:	04 February 2025	Start Time: 5.30pm Finish Time: 9.46pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference	
Attendees:	<p>Councillors: Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair), Cr McAllister, Cr Cox, Cr Heenan, Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott</p> <p>CEO/Directors: Tammi Rose, Leanne Hurst, Hjalmar Philipp, Kath McClusky and Vince Lombardi</p> <p>Officers: Gina Walter, Beck Stevens, Ben Waterhouse, Joanne Hammond, Ameer Cooper, Anne Blakeway, Maria Stevens, Mel Villani, Samantha Boyle, Jarrod Reid, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart Wilson, Bumeke Jayasinghe, Daniel Wressell, and Kim O'Connor</p> <p>Via Zoom: Alanna Ford</p> <p>Externals: Yarra Ranges Tourism - Simon O'Callaghan (CEO)</p> <p>Via Zoom: Yarra Ranges Tourism - Leigh Harry (Chair)</p>	
Apologies	Nil	
Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For transparency Councillor Jim Child noted a conflict of interest relating to the Item 8.1 – Gippsland Kangaroo Harvest Zone, held during General Business. 	
	2.0	Briefing Session One
	2.1	Yarra Ranges Tourism - Annual Report
	5.0	Briefing Session Two
	5.1	Warburton Paid Parking Pilot Fees Proposal
	5.2	Councillor Code of Conduct
	5.3	Audit & Risk Management Committee Charter
	5.4	Councillor Induction Session – People and Culture – Verbal Discussion

Assembly of Councillors

Public Record



	6.1	9 February Council Plan and Budget Workshop – Verbal Check-In
	8.1	Gippsland Kangaroo Harvest Zone – Verbal Discussion
	9	For Noting
	9.1	Audit & Risk Management Committee Biannual Report
	9.2	Indicative Forum & Council Meeting Schedule
Completed By:	Gina Walter	

Informal Meeting of Councillors

Public Record



Meeting Name:	Councillor Development Program (CDP)
Date:	5 February 2025 Start Time: 5:30pm Finish Time: 8:27pm
Venue:	Civic Centre
Attendees:	<p>Councillors: Cr Child, Cr Higgins, Cr Heenan, Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott</p> <p>CEO/Directors: Hjalmar Philipp, Vincenzo Lombardi and Kath McClusky</p> <p>Via Zoom: Nil</p> <p>Officers: Nathan Islip, Adam Berkley, Alison Fowler, Damian Closs, Corinne Bowen, Andrew Edge</p> <p>Apologies: Leanne Hurst, Tammi Rose</p>
Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil
	Item Title
	- Places, Spaces & Lives
	- Strategic Projects
	- Resilient Environment
Completed By:	Andrew Edge

16. URGENT BUSINESS

In accordance with Chapter 3 Rule 24 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

In accordance with Chapter 3 Rule 24 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

There were no Confidential Items listed for this meeting.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Council is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 11 March 2025 commencing at 7.00pm, at Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference.



In providing for the good governance of its community, Councillors are reminded of their obligation to abide by the provisions as set within the Local Government Act 2020 and the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

When attending a Council Meeting, Councillors should adhere to the procedures set out in the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

The following is a guide for all Councillors to ensure they act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of Yarra Ranges as a whole.

1. Councillors will respect the personal views of other Councillors and the decisions of Council.
2. Councillors may publicly express their own opinions on Council matters but not so as to undermine the standing of Council in the community.
3. The Mayor is the official spokesperson for Council.
4. Councillors will incur expenditure in a responsible manner and in accordance with the Councillor Expenditure and Policy.
5. Councillors will avoid conflicts of interest and will always openly disclose any direct and indirect interests where they exist.
6. Councillors will act with integrity and respect when interacting with Council staff and members of the public.
7. Councillors will demonstrate fairness in all dealings and conduct and be open with and accountable to the community at all times.
8. Councillors will conduct themselves in a manner that does not cause detriment to Council or the Yarra Ranges community.