

Final comments from community exhibition period (6 – 20 June 2023)

Comment provided	Response
<p>Major shame that there aren't more roads being sealed rather than you wasting money year after year on surfacing</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p> <p>The up-front capital cost of sealing roads is an expensive exercise and Council does not have the financial capacity to undertake this alone.</p> <p>Many roads were scheduled to be sealed under the Roads for the Community Initiative, however, in January 2023 Council was advised that the Federal Government had cut a significant amount of funding to the program. These funding cuts have had a major impact on Council's ability to deliver all projects planned for the Roads for the Community Initiative, as this Federal funding was subsidising about 75% of the total works in the program.</p> <p>Council appreciates that residents will be disappointed to learn that this important investment in Yarra Ranges' roads is no longer available. We are continuing to advocate strongly to the Federal Government to have this funding reinstated.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concerned over high number of employees and an expected further increase in budget of another 65 staff. 2. Given household pressures, it is unfair to apply the maximum allowable rates increase given how many councilors stand for office on reducing rates or freezing rate increases. 3. Highlights of capital works programs do not include RYRIE Ward (Healesville / Yarra Glen / Coldstream) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An increase in full-time equivalents (FTE) of 65 from 2022-23 to 2023-24 reflects vacant roles in the 2022-23 year which are expected to be filled in 2023-24. In addition, there are new temporary roles budgeted to support the implementation of the Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) program. Provision has been made for a reasonable level of vacant roles across Council. Council expects to keep its overall FTE stable while maintaining and improving service and program delivery. 2. Council is very aware of the cost pressures that the community are currently experiencing and understand the fine balance that is required to continue the delivery of valuable services and projects to our community. It should be noted that the 3.5% rate increase is below current CPI and was also less than what was recommended by the Essential Services Commission.

Comment provided	Response
	<p>3. A list of all our key capital works projects, broken down by Hills, Valley and Urban was included in the information when the budget documents were made available for community exhibition. We have used this commentary to update the highlights in the budget .</p>
<p>Hi, The budget appears to be lacking investment in EV charging infrastructure. As the largest council (by m2) and also a very large footprint for tourism I cannot understand the lack of investment. I have an EV , yes I have used the charging station in Yarra Glen ; and spent money locally. I have also used a Supercharger in box hill ; spent money their! Just like the focus on cycle and trails .. bring people to the area ! How can there be no high speed EV charging in Yarra junction, Warburton , lilydale ??</p>	<p>Thanks for your feedback. There are a number of projects that Yarra Ranges Council has worked on with YarraGlenergy, a local community energy resilience group, to deliver the first 50kw fast charger to Yarra Glen. This public charger is now operational.</p> <p>Council is also working with the State Government and Evie Networks under the Destination Charging Across Victoria Grant Scheme, to deliver another three fast chargers across the municipality. These public chargers are expected to be installed in Healesville, Yarra Junction and Belgrave by the end of this financial year. An additional charger is to be installed in front of the Lilydale Civic Centre in the same timeframe.</p> <p>Council will continue to work with the State Government and other service providers to support the roll out of EV charging infrastructure across Yarra Ranges.</p>
<p>Dear Council members. Thanks for putting together the budget for the community to read. I have read the document and would like to make some comments for consideration on the final release of the budget.</p> <p>1) It is stated repeatedly throughout the document that the average rate will increase by 3.5% in line with rate cap imposed at a State level. However, it is unclear to me how it was ensured that the budget complied with this requirement --</p>	<p>1. The general rates increase of 4.6% reflects the 3.5% rate increase applied to Council’s total general rate revenue (\$134.9 million) plus supplementary rates charged during 2022-23 (\$741k) which have then been annualised and included in the 2023-24 budgeted general rate base. Further detail on this is outlined in section 4.1.1 in the budget document.</p> <p>2. Thanks for your comments in relation to your waste services. Council recently adopted a Community Waste and Resource Recovery Plan. This Plan outlines the future service direction and priorities for waste management services for the Yarra Ranges’ Community. The Plan is a key part of the process facilitating Council meeting the requirements of the State Government’s Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy, and the service changes in the Plan are required under this policy. The Plan details the required changes to the waste collection services to be implemented over the next seven years. The changes to waste collection will assist Council in reducing waste, maximising resource</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>none of the tables that related to rates (e.g. 4.1.1(a) or especially 4.1.1(b) which lists all the general rates for the budget) allow me visualise how this was ensured or calculated. It appears as if rates for almost everyone will increase 5.4%, completely contravening the cap imposed. Can details on how the budget complies with the ordinance (and the calculations shown) be added to the final document?</p> <p>2) In the opinion of this reader the waste management changes listed in the document are not clear enough for me to conclude whether there will be changes to the FREQUENCY of collection of waste, especially general waste as it has been observed with other Councils in recent times. While I commend the YV Council for wanting to transition to a more sustainable future and the proposed changes using FOGO bins will help diverting organics from landfill, this transition should not come at the cost of appropriate waste management that could transform quickly into a public health issue if, for example, general waste is collected fortnightly and allowed to fester for a fortnight in the bins before collection, especially during summer. There is significantly hazardous waste that needs to be dealt with promptly (e.g.</p>	<p>recovery and meeting the State Government’s 2030 targets under the Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy. To meet the State Government’s targets, the following collection services will change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the optional fortnightly green waste bin service to a Shire wide weekly Food Organics and Garden Organics Service (FOGO) – to commence 2 October 2023; • Change the weekly waste bin lid to red and collect fortnightly – to commence 2 October 2023; • Introduce a monthly Glass bin collection service – to commence in 2025/2026;and • The fortnightly Recycling bin service will remain unchanged. <p>The new FOGO service will enable residents to place garden clippings and food scraps including meat and bones into the FOGO bin instead of the rubbish bin, saving around 13,500 tonnes of food waste going to landfill every year. As a result of food waste being disposed of through the FOGO bin, household rubbish bins are expected to become less full supporting a move to fortnightly rubbish bin collection.</p> <p>We have added more explanation on this in the budget document. In addition over the next few months Council will be promoting the key changes to the waste service delivery as well as providing detailed community education campaigns in preparation for the service changes. The campaign will include direct mailouts, social media engagement, development of a micro website that explains key changes and text messages sent to residents.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>nappies, meat waste, etc) before it becomes a public health hazard. Furthermore, fortnightly collection of general waste does not prevent this waste going to landfill, as this waste will only wait a week longer to go to landfill, occupying the same effective volume if it were collected weekly. Section 2.3. shows a table whose numeral 5 describes the waste management services as they currently operate (weekly general bin, fortnightly recycle/green bins), but there is no statement that this frequency will not change as part of the scope of this budget (until at least 2027). Can a statement or assurance (e.g. via public communications) be added to this process to give peace of mind to the residents of the YV regarding this topic? This has been an ongoing source of angst amongst fellow residents.</p>	
<p>I am pleased to see the surfacing of Old Coach Road, Montrose in the capital expenditure for 2023/2024 (SCS) and look forward to the commencement of this project</p>	<p>Thank you for your feedback.</p>
<p>I think it's important to look into the unsealed roads, many are unsafe, pot holes and I would like my children to be able to ride to school one day rather than navigate dangerous roads (Im in belgrave).</p>	<p>The maintenance of Council's unsealed road network is a priority within the operating budget and service levels have recently been increased to improve the response to pothole repairs over and above the road maintenance performance standards required in accordance with the Road Management Plan (RMP). The 2023/24 budget also included funding provisions to develop a program to re-sheet / resurface a number of unsealed roads annually.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>I also would like the belgrave main st shop area consideration around having too many welfare services there and with new train carpark whether crime will be attracted to this once safe felt area. I know I am reading lots of car theft in upwey as it is at the moment and I would hate for my safe abode to become not so safe and fear my life and childrens life late at night with all these reports of break ins and car theft in the area. Its frightening, something needs to be looked into re safety, cameras, not having so many welfare type services in the one small shopping stretch (spreading these out a bit), substance abuse, graffiti, new train station and be cautious of the crime that could bring to this beautiful suburb (I have spoken to various members of the community who report the same)</p>	<p>We understand that unsealed roads may deteriorate, and surface defects will reoccur between maintenance visits. If this is the case, please feel free to lodge a request for maintenance by calling our Customer Experience team on 1300 368 333 or via email to mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au whenever necessary.</p> <p>As part of any planning for an activity centre Council has developed a protocol to investigate any key missing links for pedestrians and cyclists, which would include Belgrave. In the coming financial year Council plans to commence a significant engagement with the Belgrave community to start planning for the future of the centre and explore ideas to improve access and make it more welcoming and vibrant. We would encourage participation in this process to ensure Council fully understands the opportunities for the community. We would anticipate there being strong advocacy outcomes for an upgraded train station and improved presentation and safety around this precinct. The new multi-deck carpark is being developed by VicTrack and Victorian Government and has included several safety measures that have been effective in other locations. Recent community-led street art projects along Blacksmiths Way have sought to improve the presentation of this space and lift the sense of safety.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we are unable to control what type of business operates from individual shop tenancies, and there are few opportunities for centrally located commercial floor space throughout the Hills so it is understandable that Belgrave has become a focal point for some key community services. However we anticipate continued improvements to the centre will help attract a more appealing range of uses that bring life and vibrancy.</p>
<p>What impact does the budget have on the Kilsyth pool? I'm not someone that can translate this budget well, however it doesn't appear that appropriate funding for the upgrade or renewal of the pool has been made.</p>	<p>Investigations are still being carried out to determine the current condition of the Kilsyth Pool and the costs to repair this facility. There is budget allocated for pool asset renewal and upgrades that will be used to invest across our Aquatic assets.</p>
<p>Thank you for allocating funds to footpath improvements. Please consider a footpath to replace the skinny, slippery and dangerous dirt track that runs parallel with McNicol Road in Belgrave between</p>	<p>Thank you for your response. Your suggestion will be investigated by Council's Traffic Engineering team and considered as part of the forward capital works program and budget for missing footpath links across the municipality.</p> <p>Given competing priorities across the municipality, funding for the projects cannot be confirmed at this stage. Funding consideration for projects depends on the following factors:</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>Oakwood Lane (near the railway bridge) and the Mcnicol Road access road that connects to Chandler Lane. This track is so thin, muddy, rocky and dangerous for pedestrians and yet it is frequented by primary school children each day as they make their way up and down the hill to Tecoma Primary School and back. There is only a hair's breadth between any pedestrian and the traffic coming down the hill. There is a proper footpath on the other side of the road, but it is unsafe for children to cross Mcnicol Road there because of the traffic volume and speeds. Please don't wait until somebody is injured before this is addressed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project ranking - Higher ranked projects generally prioritised to be delivered earlier. Footpath prioritisation is based on a range of criteria including proximity to public transport, schools, shops and other key facilities. • Delivery efficiencies - If two high priority projects are near each other they will be delivered together. This will bring delivery efficiencies and enhance connectivity in the local area. • Adjacent projects – Where other capital works projects or development projects are likely to induce pedestrian demand. The projects will be brought forward to be delivered in conjunction with those projects. • Funding availability – The availability of funding in any year may determine the projects that are recommended for delivery in any given financial year. • External funding opportunities – Projects that meet the relevant criteria for external grant fund funding may be elevated in priority for delivery.
<p>1. Being a Pensioner on a government pension it is hard to come up with the high cost of the ever increasing Shire rats. Yes, I can pay it monthly but if you are on a Pension it doesn't make it any easier to find that money every month. My shire rats for this year are \$ 2.253 I think as a pensioner you should get 50% of. It is hard enough as it is with cost of living, power, electricity.</p> <p>2. What I also noticed, this is not an isolated incident I saw this many times when I passed road works, so many people are just standing around and entertain them selfs with there phones.</p>	<p>1. Yarra Ranges Council provides a rebate on Council rates to eligible customers, including pensioners. This amount is funded by the State Government's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). DFFH provide a rebate on rates of 50% up to a maximum of \$253.20 per person per property, and a further \$50.00 toward the Fire Services Property Levy for a total of \$303.20. In the past Yarra Ranges Council has petitioned to the State Government to increase the rebate amounts available for pensioners, and we encourage all ratepayers to do the same. If you are struggling to pay, we're here to help. Council has multiple payment options which may suit your situation, we can help with a payment plan or even defer your rates through Hardship Agreement if necessary. Please contact our office on 1300 368 333 to discuss your options further.</p> <p>2. Traffic controllers are required to maintain a vigilant watch of the traffic and be alert while acting in an official capacity. In addition to looking after their own safety and that of the road workers in a hazardous environment, traffic controllers have the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the travelling public, including pedestrians through and around the worksite.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>Here would be an opportunity to save some money.</p>	<p>Traffic controllers being distracted by the use of mobile phone technology is unacceptable. Council's Procedures and Code of Conduct clearly stipulates that employees must not inappropriately use mobile phone devices / equipment in a manner that impact productivity and/or safety.</p> <p>All Council staff members and contractors are inherently aware of this fact and our strict no tolerance policy on the issue.</p>
<p>If I read the draft documents correctly your aquatic strategy is an absolute joke . Why bother to even survey the community in regards to what is needed and then leave everyone hanging on an outcome till end of the year when you have already made up your mind that all the council can afford is \$2million and then making the community wait till 2026/2027 financial year . \$2m does not get a 50 metre pool rebuilt . Hundreds of kids are not learning to swim in the Yarra ranges as you have walked away from your obligations to look after the youth</p>	<p>The Aquatics Strategy will determine Council's future investment in pools and water play. Council has a significant number of pools, all of varying age and condition, so the decision on what Council invests in to deliver the services needed by the community is an important one. The draft Aquatics Strategy will be available for community comment later this year. Following its adoption, Council will work with all levels of Government to fund the significant investment that will be required to action the recommendations within the strategy. Between Council facilities and those offered by private operators, we are confident that children in the Yarra Ranges will have the opportunity to learn to swim.</p>
<p>Please explain publicly the actual rates increase that residential ratepayers will be subjected to, because it seems that the 3.6% increase publicised to date is not what you expect to actually receive per :</p> <p>Estimated total amount of Residential rates to be received = 2022/3 118,494K vs 2023/4 122,803k = increase 4,309k = 3.6%, yet this is based on :</p> <p>General rate for rateable residential properties c/\$civ = 2022/3 0.23790</p>	<p>The general rates increase of 4.6% reflects the 3.5% rate increase applied to Council's total general rate revenue (\$134.9 million) plus supplementary rates charged during 2022-23 (\$741k) which have then been annualised and included in the 2023-24 budgeted general rate base. Further detail on this is outlined in section 4.1.1 in the budget document.</p> <p>The Waste Charge is a separate charge on all rates notice. This charge is cost recovery on what it cost for Council to deliver the waste service to all households. There has been an increase to this charge due to Council commencing the roll out of changes services to meet the requirements of the State Government's Recycling Victoria Policy – A new Economy.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>increase 2023/4 to 0.25069 = 5.4%, and when this c/\$civ is multiplied by the increased capital improved value it will probably be more like a 10% increase in rates cost to residential ratepayers. Then, in the budget documents you declare these increases: General Rates 2022/3 134,938k 2023/4 141,145k 6,207 = 4.6% (this (should??) include all rateable properties including commercial etc, which are increasing much more than this..? Waste Service Charges 2022/3 24,925k 2023/4 28,968k 4,043 = 16.2% Total Rates and charges 2022/3 159,863k 2023/4 170,113k 10,250 = 6.4% Clearly the nos. utilised for "budget" purposes have multiple meanings, depending on who and how they are interpreted, but to publish that residential ratepayers will be hit by "only" a 3.6% rise in cost is just not true (at least thats how it seems to me)</p>	
<p>One of the main drivers within the budget and gets hidden is Rates. Cost drivers are down with a significant decrease in property valuations in 2023. Grant money is lowered along with the financial impact on households with the ability to meet daily and annual costs. Rates rose significantly in 2022 - 2023 fiscal and proved to be inflated. We all have taken</p>	<p>Council is very aware of the cost pressures that the community are currently experiencing and understand the fine balance that is required to continue the delivery of valuable services and projects to our community. It should be noted that the 3.5% rate increase is below current CPI and was also less than what was recommended by the Essential Services Commission.</p>

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<p>hits and no doubt the rates for 2023 - 2024 need to be reduced significantly. Council expenditure must also decrease inline with RBA cost drivers. This is the only responsible conclusion to a very tough road ahead. A Rate rise will significantly hurt the constituents of all within the Yarra Ranges and across Victoria.</p>	
<p>Hello! I want to comment to say the Upwey and Belgrave public toilet blocks need to be desperately renovated or rebuilt! They are horrible and there are no baby change tables. Please remedy this! The Belgrave toilets have a sign that says there is a baby change, but there actually isn't one. I've been caught out there with my son and have had to change him on the grass across the road near the roundabout. It's awful, especially being so close to a train station.</p> <p>Additionally, the playground in Upwey Main St needs DESPERATELY to be upgraded. Every family I meet there says the same. Please renovate this space, make it more child-friendly - and please put a fence around it so our kids don't run off to the carpark. This is really needed as there are so many families in Upwey who</p>	<p>Both these toilets are flagged for minor works upgrades shortly.</p> <p>The Belgrave toilets are leased from VicTrack. They were recently painted but the minor works will update lighting, leaking fittings, some painting, new graphics and refurbishment of the illuminated external sign, as well as a replacement baby change table.</p> <p>The community recently completed their own Community Plan for Upwey and Council will now commence a town centre Masterplan that will consider design options to improve the amenity and attractiveness of the centre. This will take into account the toilet block, town square with the playground, and streetscape upgrades.</p> <p>The playspace in Upwey main street is a local level playspace that was commissioned in 2018. The shade sail over the playspace has been a recent addition in response to community requests. Yarra Ranges Council has over 110 playspaces within the municipality which are renewed in line with the Yarra Ranges Playspace Plan. A number of factors including age of the playspace, asset condition and population changes are considered when determining the priority for renewal. Upwey Main Street Playspace was one of the first to be constructed under this plan. Given that this playspace is a recent build when compared to others, and in good condition, the playspace will not be renewed within the next ten years however the Masterplan will investigate improvements around this area to make it more usable and welcoming. In the meantime we will request for our Infrastructure team to do a thorough clean of this playspace to address your concerns about cleanliness.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>use this space, but it's just awful, run down and filthy.</p> <p>I would also suggest please adding a playground somewhere close to the Belgrave strip of shops. There is no where to go to meet up with other families and kids. It will bring so many more parents to the area and we can frequent the shops and cafes for a coffee etc. This is seriously lacking! We need a meeting space, a place to sit and chat and for our kids to play. There are no decent playgrounds in Upwey or Belgrave.</p>	<p>All Playspaces within Yarra Ranges and their renewal timeframes can be found in the playspace plan available on our website https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Corporate-documents/Policies-strategies/Playspace-Plan-2019-2029</p> <p>There are currently six local playspaces in Belgrave and surrounds. A small local level playspace is located near the main street behind the community hub providing a place to play in Belgrave close to cafes. The playspace at Belgrave Lake Park was upgraded to a district level playspace as part of its renewal in 2021. This playspace includes a range of play elements for younger and older children, a separate nature play area, half court basketball as well as exercise equipment, tables, shelters and BBQ's.</p> <p>Council will be commencing an Urban Design Framework for Belgrave in the coming financial year which will consult with community on opportunities to improve the centre, including the quality and functionality of the areas of open space within the centre, including the town park at the roundabout, the open space behind the bakery, and the town square in front of the Belgrave Hub.</p>
<p>Could you please provide breakdowns for budgets on Ngarruk Barring Ridgwalk and also for the sporting facilities. It is impossible to comment on the expenditure because they are not explained. For instance, what is the 'art' (professional artist) versus 'design' (eg: landscape designer) spends on Ngarruk Barring.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p> <p>The Ngarruk Barring / RidgeWalk project broad budget breakdown is as follows:</p> <p>Infrastructure (paths, car parks, ped crossings)- \$4.9M Art & Nodes- \$3.1M Signage, Wayfinding, Web/App- \$800K Planning & Design- \$1.2M</p> <p>Sporting facilities budgets are listed by individual project line items in the Capital program. Expenditure on projects spanning across multiple financial years may have occurred in previous financial years.</p>
<p>Good Morning,</p> <p>I note that at the 6th of June Council meeting, the Budget was passed and put</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and concern regarding the 23/24 budget. The data and issues you have raised are very important.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>out for public exhibition. I'm not sure if public comment is invited. However, I thought if it's OK by you, I might send my comments to the council which are hopefully received in light of respectful yet robust debate. I must say that I was disappointed with the recent Council budget. As you are aware, I usually fully support Council's actions; however, on the issue of homelessness, I feel I am at odds with its budget priorities.</p> <p>Council's expert report, now four years old (attached), had alarming statistics on homelessness, which I fear have only worsened. Yarra Ranges Council previously stated that it "recognises the importance of Affordable Housing in its Vision 2020 Community Plan, Council Plan 2017-2021, Action Plan 2018-19 and Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2021, with the later expressing a goal of "affordable, safe and secure housing for all". The Yarra Ranges Housing Strategy 2009 highlights the need for more Affordable Housing across the municipality and recognises the importance of housing supply and diversity on housing affordability more broadly". However, in the current budget document, Social & Affordable Housing hardly rates a mention. It is only on page 14 that it states "Council has advocated</p>	<p>Council is continuing its work and advocacy around homelessness and social and affordable housing within Yarra Ranges. While a specific budget allocation may appear modest, this work is also progressed under the general banner of Health and Wellbeing and through a range of areas of Council's work. Over the past two years Council has increased its focus in this area and maintains this commitment in the 23/24 budget.</p> <p>Council is well progressed on drafting a Housing Strategy that will be put out for community feedback in the coming months. This aims to increase opportunities for housing supply, increase diversity of housing to offer more affordable options, and will have commentary and actions that Council will explore to seek to address the issues of homelessness and lack of social and affordable housing. More information and opportunities to contribute can be found here: https://shaping.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/housing-strategy-review</p> <p>Current and recently completed planning projects have also sought to create opportunities for housing across the range of community needs. These projects include the Lilydale Structure Plan, Warburton Urban Design Framework and Monbulk Urban Design Framework. Each of these offer strategies to increase the range housing available to community to enable residents to grow up connected to social networks and eventually to age in place. .</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>for funding and practical reforms to State Government policy on social and affordable housing, community health services, environmental and biosecurity issues, and mental health support”.</p> <p>When reading the budget document, I was and am still very concerned with the comment on page 10 under budget influences. (extract attached). I felt that highlighting that the Yarra Ranges has a low level of disadvantage and a high level of advantage, especially with the earlier than originally planned closure of the timber industry and the other homelessness issues that the Redwood Centre in Warburton is seeing on an unprecedented level of just now is not appropriate. I understand the high-level components within the ABS data that formulates this index coming from a financial planning background. Still, the data is derived from completed census data, and as you may guess, the most disadvantaged do not always complete their census. If you look at the IRSD Map from 2021, which this comment is based on, it could be put to Council that this data suggests that a person living in Brighton has a similar level of Advantage to someone residing in Milgrove, Warburton</p>	

Comment provided	Response
<p>or Reefton. I'd argue the complete opposite.</p> <p>I feel that we, as a society, are failing so many families when, at all levels of Government (Local, State and Federal), we keep prioritising new transport options, parks, gardens, sporting fields etc., over the most basic of human rights, i.e. shelter.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for letting me provide some feedback commentary.</p>	
<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>I was disappointed by the small number of people who took the opportunity to participate in the Budget process given the breadth of your community engagement program. The numbers were quite small for a shire of around 150,000. I am not surprised that the top priorities were roads and drains (typically those aspects that are irritants for residents) and sporting facilities.</p> <p>I was also disappointed that the Shire President's Introduction put so much emphasis on these aspects, typical of councils in the past, rather than highlighting other priorities that, while lower in the list of priorities are more</p>	<p>Thanks for taking the time to comment on our draft budget.</p> <p>We embarked on a new community engagement process with our budget this year to help us better understand the views and priorities of our community before developing the 2023-24 draft budget.</p> <p>We have been pleased to see an increase in the level of engagement with our budget this year, with 687 contributions made via our Shaping Yarra Ranges page and 209 formally engaging with the budget at one of 6 pop up sessions around the municipality.</p> <p>Feedback from these engagement activities, as well as information from prior engagements throughout the last year, has provided valuable input to the 2023-24 budget development process, helping ensure resources are being allocated to priority areas identified by the community, while also ensuring Council can continue to meet its legislative obligations.</p> <p>Council has been working on improved approaches to delivering town centre planning and projects, including rigorous community engagement, solid research and meaningful outcomes.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>important for a modern municipality today.</p> <p>As an example the Mornington Peninsula Shire highlights three overarching themes in its introduction to their budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a healthy natural environment and well-planned townships • a robust, innovative and diverse economy • a flourishing, healthy and connected community. <p>The Victorian Government overview of the role of councils states that "the role of each council is to provide good governance for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community" which includes amongst other members of the community "traditional landowners".</p> <p>I would hope Yarra Ranges would put a similar emphasis on these aspects of the budget rather than the outdated focus on roads and drains.</p> <p>I am not saying that roads and drains are not important, nor am I querying the expenditure on these items, what I am saying is that the emphasis should be on items #4 to #9 in the budget, that is on those items that reflect the wellbeing of our whole community, and that the introduction to the budget should reflect this.</p>	<p>Council has a strong commitment to supporting Indigenous cultural heritage, art and practice and is informed and advised through the Yarra Ranges Indigenous Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Council is also supportive of cultural burning practices as a traditional means to care for country, reduce bushfire risk and support the health and wellbeing of all community as a platform for reconciliation. Council has a strong partnership with the FireSticks Alliance that enables this work.</p> <p>While the budget papers may not specifically reflect this work, it is strongly supported through the 23/24 budget.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>One aspect that I feel is absent from the budget, other than "cultural burning practices", is an emphasis on the inclusion of special attention to the needs of Indigenous members of our community, for example Council has done work with the Indigenous Advisory Committee which could be highlighted in the Budget (my apologies if I have overlooked items in the budget, due to lack of time I scrolled through some parts of it)</p>	
<p>Thank you for this opportunity. My continuing concern is that we are not getting proportionately, adequately prepared for the global food and water crunch forecast, making supply lines to cities vulnerable, possibly this decade, because of accelerating and intensifying climate change events of droughts, heat waves, storms, fires and floods, and conflicts causing more crop losses, as forewarned by the IPCC report, 28/2/22.</p> <p>In the background to these climate change catastrophes is that Industrial Agriculture is degrading water and soil resources globally while the population is growing, climate accelerating this crunch point, accelerating also the need for real community response and empowerment.</p>	<p>Thanks for you feedback and carefully considered submission. Many of the matters you have raised in your submission speak to some of our existing strategic work in our Liveable Climate Plan and our draft Nature Plan.</p> <p>In 2019, Council reaffirmed its commitment to take action on climate change by recognising we face a global climate emergency, requiring urgent action by all levels of government.</p> <p>As a Council we have recognised the impact that Climate change has on our community and natural environment and in response we have set a target of zero net emissions by 2040 and a focus of 100 percent renewables by 2030. We also have set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% on 2005 levels by 2025.</p> <p>Through the Yarra Ranges Liveable Climate Plan 2022-2032, Yarra Ranges Council supports the transition you are referring to, however private enterprise is not in our direct field of control.</p> <p>Council also aims to advocate, educate and collaborate for a greater focus onto sustainable food systems. Council will continue to work with communities to improve food security and nutrition, through grass roots action, resilient agriculture and a flourishing local food economy. Council participates in networks such as Sustain Australia and Yarra Ranges Food Connections. Council also provides support to Agribusiness Yarra Valley and Yarra Ranges Landcare.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>Adding to this urgency is that the appropriate measures can significantly reduce emissions, maximize carbon sequestration, biodiversity, hydrological cycles and ecosystem strength.</p> <p>Council is working in the right direction supporting community food gardens and education events and newsletters, including with schools, but it is small-scale compared to what is needed and to what an informed community could be doing, informed of the urgency of what threatens us. Where is there visibility and signs of the emergency response deserved to strengthen and nourish community through the increasingly challenging times so emphatically and credibly forecast?</p> <p>Council has the responsibility and capacity to demonstrate best environmental health education practice on public land where it can have the most effective educational benefit. Planting diverse food trees along streetscapes and parklands, contributing also the needed shade micro-climate and biodiversity, will be the most valuable infrastructure investment to support community connection, co-operation and creativity, which will equally become necessities of survival. Supermarkets can run out of food in days; a retired army chief General has just warned we have 10</p>	<p>Council also runs the Gardens for Harvest Program, with 2000 subscribers educated / engaged and inspired to grow food in their own backyard. The program holds a number of workshops per annum on topics such as composting, fruit tree pruning and understanding soils. Recently Gardens for Harvest engaged David Holmgren to speak at the Cameo Cinema in Belgrave to 130 participants. Gardens for Harvest also releases a monthly newsletter on sustainable food growing aiming to encourage sustainable community behavioural change.</p> <p>Council has recently developed a Community Garden Network which brings all of the various township gardens together to discuss practice, policy and find synergies for open day events and recruitment drives.</p> <p>Council has also run a series of sustainable land management training sessions in collaboration with Landcare and Melbourne Water. This included farm dam protection, property management plan development and biodiversity on farms sessions. Recently, Charles Massy presented on regenerative agriculture techniques. More of these events are planned for 2023/24 financial year and it is intended that this will bring landholders a step closer to the type of localised and sustainable food production systems that you are referring to. Additionally, Council invest annually in our Gardens for Harvest program.</p> <p>Council will continue to plan sustainability measures into all town centre planning, focusing on improved tree canopy cover, improved water sensitive urban design (WSUD) solutions, encouraging active transport modes such as walking and cycling, and better local access to everyday needs and services. There are plans to explore permeable pavements as a trial to increase soil percolation from stormwater runoff, improve water quality and maximise tree health.</p> <p>A design framework is being developed for the Lilydale Bypass corridor to maximise the opportunities for innovative design response beneath an elevated deck structure. This may include a range of community outcomes or supporting infrastructure, and a larger scale community garden would form part of these considerations.</p> <p>Currently there is a Masterplan for Lillydale Lake out for community consultation, your feedback will be passed onto the team for consideration.</p>

Comment provided	Response
<p>days fuel supply if supply-lines from Singapore are cut during conflicts later this decade: how many meals for how many people can current food gardens extend at a pinch point like that, how many people for how many days can be fed by the existing food trees?, relatively few.</p> <p>Making such obvious shifts to local urban agriculture, and reinvented rural village living, building community co-operation, is necessary and urgent to transform mainstream agriculture also, which is a major source of Greenhouse emissions, loss of biodiversity, build-up of toxins in the food chain like Glyphosate, pollution and degradation of water sources and soil, and leaves us vulnerable to fuel cuts, transport and fertilizer disruption.</p> <p>\$9.5 million is given to Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes for trails and park furniture, excellent to appreciate Nature; but why, in comparison, is so little given to the infrastructure of Food Security for Survival.</p> <p>Small streetscape earthworks, forming run-off basins to help infiltrate water into soils is an important investment for Food Security, because that water can help trees grow faster and stronger in dry</p>	

Comment provided	Response
<p>times. It is important also to reduce flood events. Sink, Spread and Slow the flow of water is the new mantra for degraded, dysfunctional, landscapes. Council can demonstrate these low-cost, big-impact techniques close to the Civic Centre. The whole By-Pass Reserve could become a hugely valuable education precinct. This is education and community courage inspiration the whole world needs and is crying out for. The urgency and benefit of increasing tree-canopy, micro-climate and accessible food is not being taken seriously by the community which needs leadership from people in responsible positions. The survival of humanity is very seriously threatened, yet 98% of people are largely not engaged. People with big hearts and minds, stunted.</p> <p>Science warns us that 1.5 degrees C increase could be crossed repeatedly this decade, and that this can trigger tipping points of irretrievable accelerating catastrophes, even more likely at 2.0 degrees warming increase, yet we are on a much higher trajectory than that, and governments are not giving due response. Ketan Joshi in his article 23.3.23, 'New IPCC report shows Labor's approach is deadly and reckless', is heart wrenching about Labor's willingness to let Big</p>	

Comment provided	Response
<p>Industry get away with continuing disastrous emissions trajectories while using dubious offsets, which can't add up, not real cuts, not real ambition to meet what's necessary and possible, not real care for the next generation.</p> <p>It's no wonder people give up and stop engaging, because it hurts to think about. We need inspiring, enjoyable examples to be involved with. Council considers a native arboretum by Lillydale Lake to show the strongest adapters for the area; why not a food tree arboretum to show the diversity and strength of food trees that can help us adapt and survive best locally? Native Americans and Nature spread nut trees along waterways where they would be strongest. This makes sense everywhere.</p> <p>Here we are on the brink of terrible human demise, and governments everywhere including Council are still promoting Tourism as a livelihood when it is contributing to certain deathlihood, because there's no chance we can transform transport in this critical decade so it isn't driving us over the cliff of extinction. So it makes no sense to be promoting or celebrating resource-expensive, polluting Tourism; not like</p>	

Comment provided	Response
strengthening and appreciating our local habitat. Much gratitude, Much Love. Best wishes.	