

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Report Author: Business Analyst
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

Council's 2023-2024 Annual Report (Attachment 1) has been prepared to provide the community transparent reporting on our financial and non-financial achievements for the last financial year in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

The Annual Report shares the story of successes and challenges Yarra Ranges Council faced in delivering on the most recent year as part of the 2021-2025 Council Plan.

There are three components of the 2023-2024 Annual Report: the Report of Operations, the audited Performance Statement, and the Financial Report. This paper presents the Report of Operations (Part 1). The Performance Statement and Financial Report (Part 2) are presented to Council separately.

The Annual Report is presented to Council for consideration for formal approval. Once approved, the Annual Report will be made available for public release online and in the foyer of the Lilydale Civic Centre.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Yarra Ranges Council Annual Report 2023-2024 (Part 1) and notes its completion as per Section 98 of the Local Government Act 2020.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Part 2 of the Annual Report, which includes the audited Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement, is also being presented for consideration by Council on 22 October 2024.

DISCUSSION

Annual Report (Part 1)

The Annual Report contains the report of operations, with a detailed overview of the key activities and achievements by Council in 2023-24 towards the delivery of the Vision 2036 and the five strategic objectives and strategies contained in the Council Plan.

Highlights

Much has been achieved throughout the 2023-24 financial year and the Annual Report celebrates these achievements while also highlighting some of the challenges experienced.

Yarra Ranges Council delivers a vast and diverse range of vital community services. To help communicate this, the Annual Report:

- Summarises key achievements and challenges in the CEO message.
- Highlights some fast facts, including an overview of services provided over the year (see Image 1: 2023-2024 Fast Fact Overview).
- Identifies the top 5 achievements under each of the key strategic objectives.
- Reports on achievements against the 8 major initiatives and Council Plan actions.

Image 1: 2023-24 Fast Fact Overview

The year in review

Yarra Ranges Council services at a glance

In the past year there were:

 <p>7.07 tonnes textiles collected for recycling</p>	 <p>25,442 m² of sealed local roads reconstructed</p>	 <p>5,715 service requests for tree management</p>
 <p>11,420 trees and shrubs planted in council parks and reserves</p>	 <p>65,559 tonnes of household waste and recycling collected</p>	 <p>7,418 children enrolled in Maternal and Child Health Services</p>
 <p>515 potholes in sealed roads were filled</p>	 <p>1,139 drainage service requests completed</p>	 <p>124,277 calls answered by customer experience</p>
 <p>6,424 subscribers to our business e-newsletter</p>	 <p>1,177,168 library collection item loans</p>	 <p>1,121 planning applications received</p>
 <p>157 animals rehomed</p>	 <p>61,489 unique visitors to our Shaping Yarra Ranges page</p>	 <p>1.5 billion worth of assets managed</p>

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Key highlights of the financial statements and the performance statement are contained in the Council agenda item relating to the 2023-2024 Financial and Performance Statements.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The Council Plan outlines the activities Council will undertake during the 2021-25 period. The Annual Report outlines the Council's progress towards achieving these activities and outcomes. The audited Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement provide an auditable account of the performance of these strategic activities and priorities outlined in the Council Plan 2021-25 for the last financial year.

RELEVANT LAW

Council is required to produce an Annual Report that provides the community transparent reporting on its financial and non-financial achievements for the 2023-24 financial year in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there are no financial, social, or environmental implications from producing this report, there are broad ranging implications in association with achievements and services outlined in the 2023-24 Annual Report.

Economic Implications

Highlights for 2023-24:

- More than 176 business applications supporting 532 local jobs were facilitated through the Small Business Office providing a single point of contact with Council for regulatory processes.
- Through Business and Trader Group (B&TG) Led Recovery Program, 8 groups received a total \$119,000 to promote and foster local initiatives and events, encouraging economic stimulus.
- Renewal of a three-year partnership with Yarra Ranges Tourism supporting the Yarra Ranges as a key tourism destination creating local jobs.
- Completion of two six month Innovation Programs: Elevate a Business Incubator Lab that will mentor new and existing local businesses through a growth and innovative mindset; and Entrepreneurship & Innovation program empowering young entrepreneurs aged 17 and 30 who have a business idea that they want to see developed from concept to sales.

Social Implications

Highlights for 2023-2024:

- The 2023 Yarra Ranges Youth Awards celebrated Yarra Ranges young people, who are making significant contributions to their communities. A total of 51 nominations were made and 15 young people received awards and honourable mentions for outstanding contributions.
- One of Victoria's nine Mental Health and Wellbeing Local sites officially opened in Lilydale, December 2023. Council and the Health & Wellbeing Advisory Committee supported this important collaborative effort.
- In partnership with six Yarra Ranges residents, Eastern Health and Inspiro Community Health, the Living Stories Project was launched in October 2023. The project showcased lived and living experiences of mental health challenges.
- Council delivered a program of community disaster resilience workshops and events across Yarra Ranges. These events brought everyone (community as experts, along with service partners and Council) around the table to strengthen knowledge, meet neighbours, and to openly discuss ideas.

Environmental Implications

Highlights for 2023-2024:

- Kilsyth Recreation Masterplan was adopted by Council proposing upgraded facilities and maximisation of future use by community.
- The 2024-2034 Nature Plan was endorsed. The Plan defines the highest priority projects for the next 10 years, sets targets for Council and allows prioritisation of conservation action on Council-managed land.
- 3,000 new street trees planted across Kilsyth and Mooroolbark to beautify our streetscapes, improve community health & wellbeing, and reduce urban heat.
- 11,420 trees and shrubs planted in Council parks and reserves.
- After extensive community consultation generating 2,300+ pieces of community feedback, the Monbulk Urban Design Framework was adopted. The framework shapes Monbulk's future, providing plans for transport, car parks, housing, and recreational facilities.
- Adoption of the Housing Strategy and Warburton Urban Design Framework.
- The opening of new Gary Tait Pavilion at Pinks Reserve and the Mt Evelyn Community & Sporting Pavilion
- Opening of the Wesburn Pump Track which joins Coldstream Station Pump Track and will soon be complimented by Warburton Mountain Bike Destination.
- Fencing and lighting upgrades at Upwey and Lilydale Tennis clubs completed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The 2023-2024 Annual Report provides the community transparent reporting on Council's financial and non-financial achievements for the last financial year. It also summarises Council's community engagement reach for the year.

In 2023-2024 the Shaping Yarra Ranges community engagement web page attracted 61,489 people, resulting in 4,884 online contributions to inform decision making. Council also connected with just under 3,000 people face to face during 35 community engagement roadshows throughout 2023-2024.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The 2023-2024 Annual Report highlights achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement for Council. This report contributes to Council's commitment and community desire for greater transparency in its role, finances, and services. It is an important tool to inform collaboration and innovation among elected leaders, staff, volunteers, community members and partners, and Council's continuous improvement as a high performing organisation.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Completion of the Annual Report, the Financial Statements and Performance Statement is an important part of Council's compliance with and commitment to accurate and transparent reporting of its activities and financial position to the community

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. Yarra Ranges Council Annual Report 2023-2024 Part One