



Merri-bek
City Council

Merri-bek City Council Annual Report 2022-23



Welcome

This report will tell you about our achievements during the 2022-23 financial year. We want to show the range of services we have delivered and how we have tackled the challenges our community has faced. The State Government requires that all local councils report on their performance every year. This document is our full statutory annual report.

We have also written a simple, summary annual report. You can find this on our website at merri-bek.vic.gov.au/annual-reports

Acknowledgement of Country

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities, who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

A new name for our city council

Following a community engagement process, Council resolved on 4 July 2022 to request that the State Government change Council's name to Merri-bek City Council. Council's new name was approved by the Governor in Council and gazetted to take effect on 26 September 2022. Embracing Merri-bek, a Woi-wurrung word, as our new name, is part of our commitment to walking together with the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

This document reports on the 2022-23 financial year, but for the first part of that period, Council was still named 'Moreland City Council'. As this change will take time, you might see some references to Moreland throughout this report. You can read more about the work Council has done to transition to our new name, 'Merri-bek City Council', on page 13 of this report.

Council plan

Our Council Plan 2021-25 is the guiding document for this annual report. This plan sets out our strategic objectives under 5 themes.

If you would like to view our council plan, you can:

- visit merri-bek.vic.gov.au
- call us on 9240 1111
- visit one of our customer service centres or libraries*.

We also welcome your feedback on this annual report. You can:

- call us on 9240 1111
- TTY on 133 677
- Voice Relay on 1300 555 727 and ask for (03) 9240 1111
- email us at info@merri-bek.vic.gov.au
- send us a direct message on Facebook @merribekcitycouncil

- write to us at Locked Bag 10, Brunswick Victoria 3056.

Our Customer Service Centres are open from 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

- Coburg Civic Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg
- Brunswick Customer Service Centre, 233 Sydney Road, Brunswick
- Glenroy Customer Service Centre, Glenroy Community Hub, 50 Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy

You can also follow us on Facebook (@merribekcitycouncil), Instagram (@merri_bekcitycouncil) or X (Twitter) (@merribekcouncil).

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Mayor's message

It has been a great year for Merri-bek, as our Councillors, staff and community members worked hard together to create wonderful outcomes for the community.

We changed our name, built amazing new facilities and came together as a community to find our new normal, following the most challenging years of the pandemic.

Delivering big projects

The Fawkner Leisure Centre temporarily closed its doors to make way for a significant \$36 million redevelopment. Stage 1 of the redevelopment will include a new outdoor 50-metre pool, a water play pool, new sauna, steam room and spa, extension of the gym, an updated reception and café lounge area and the entire site will be powered by renewable energy, aligning with Council's zero carbon objectives. The pool will reopen for the 2024-25 summer season.

We began construction on the cultural and community hub at 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick. This \$29 million project will see approximately 3500sqm of floorspace at the site to transform it into a state-of-the-art cultural, creative and accessible hub. It will also include a brand-new purpose-built building for Blak Dot to operate the new First Nations gallery. Council issued the planning permit and awarded the construction tender in December 2022 with demolition beginning in May 2023. We expect the project to be completed by the end of 2024.

We completed the redevelopment of Fleming Park, one of Brunswick East's favourite parks. As part of the \$9.8 million Master Plan Refresh of the site, we upgraded the community hall and bocce club building. We built a new multi-purpose female-friendly change rooms, family friendly public toilets and a new multi-court. We also reinstated the car park, improved safety between the bike path and children's play area and landscaped throughout the park.

Becoming Merri-bek City Council

On Monday 26 September 2022, following consultation with the Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and the community, we officially changed our name to Merri-bek City Council. I am so proud to be the second Mayor of Merri-bek, a land of rocky country, and a city that is committed to our walk towards reconciliation with the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders.

Since we changed our name, we changed our branding and digital assets and have been gradually updating signs and other infrastructure and items as they would normally be replaced due to wear and tear. This work will continue over the next decade.

A sustainable future

In 2022-23, we planted 5469 trees, which was an increase of 30% from 4188 trees the previous year. I am pleased to share that we have boosted our tree-planting budget by \$1.5 million over 4 years. This

will help us establish trees in tricky-to-plant areas and the increase to our canopy cover will contribute to a greener, cooler Merri-bek.

We installed a total of 44 subsidised rooftop solar systems on homes in Merri-bek, with an average system size of 5.4kW and household savings of around \$750 per year. As well as that, 77 households received subsidies for thermal efficiency upgrades (gap sealing and/or insulation).

We secured a \$500,000 Federal Government grant towards a project to install a community battery in Brunswick. Through this project, we aim to improve network conditions, help reduce energy bills and emissions, and encourage more residents to install solar panels. And any revenue generated from this battery will help reduce energy bills and emissions.

These are just a few of the initiatives that we completed as we continue our journey to reach net zero carbon in Merri-bek by 2035. I am proud to be part of an organisation that is committed to helping our community work towards environmental sustainability and making so many positive changes against the climate emergency.

Investing in early years

We have completed upgrade works at Park Street Early Learning Co-op this year and built a new 33-place kindergarten room, landscaping and car park works at Doris Blackburn Kindergarten. We have committed \$32.1 million towards starting upgrade works for several other early-years facilities over the next 5 years, including completing Oak Park Kindergarten and Derby Street Children's Centre in 2023-24. The State Government will contribute \$10.7m towards these projects through the Building Blocks Partnership with Council. These works will prepare our city to accommodate 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten for all children.

These are just a few highlights of what was an exciting year of providing quality services for our community. Thank you to my fellow Councillors for working together as a team to deliver great outcomes for our community, and thank you to our community members for your feedback and support. Merri-bek is one community, proudly diverse, and I am incredibly proud to have served as Mayor during this important year in our history.

Cr Angelica Panopoulos
Mayor

Chief Executive Officer's message

This year has seen many milestones, including the construction and completion of some significant community facilities, working towards implementing the State Government's new 4-bin waste system and changing the name of our council.

As we left the worst of the pandemic behind us, our council staff continued to work hard to deliver our community services and the goals of our Council Plan 2021-25 and our Community Vision.

Providing great services for our community

We continued to provide more than 150 services to our community. These ranged from helping people with housework, to our youth service Oxygen Youth Space to collecting rubbish and providing medical checks for babies.

In 2022-23, these services included:

- delivering 53,178 meals to Merri-bek residents
- planting 5469 trees
- loaning 1,125,691 books and e-resources through our libraries
- sweeping 31,253 kilometres of roads
- collecting nearly 28,582 tonnes of garbage, 13,661 tonnes of co-mingled recycling and 13,173 tonnes of food and garden waste
- and vaccinating 3673 children aged under 5 years, 2239 high school students and 830 adults.

Thank you to our staff for your commitment to providing for the community and for the whole of Merri-bek for working together.

Building for our community

We worked hard to build lasting infrastructure that will serve our community's needs now and into the future.

This includes huge projects such as the completion of the Fleming Park Masterplan, and commencement of construction at Fawkner Leisure Centre and the community and cultural hub at 33 Saxon Street. We built new female-friendly changerooms and umpire rooms at Sumner Park Pavilion in Brunswick East and Charles Mutton Reserve in Fawkner. We completed streetscape upgrades at the Melville/Moreland shopping strip in Brunswick West and fixed up bluestone pavements across our city. We completed a new wetland at Gavin Park in Pascoe Vale, upgraded playgrounds and installed new public toilets. We are constantly working to maintain and upgrade our facilities for the community, working with our residents to incorporate their feedback and needs into our designs.

Being financially responsible for our community

In June, we adopted our 4-year Council Budget for 2023-2027, a \$217 million budget funding core Council services and community facilities. This budget includes the delivery of important services such

as road resurfacing, maintaining footpaths, upgrading parks and playgrounds, as well as services for our older residents, parents and young children, kindergarten, immunisation and much more.

The budget allows us to continue providing key services to the community while operating within the rate cap set by the State Government, while also being mindful of cost-of-living pressures faced by our residents.

Looking forward for our community

In 2022-23, we also put in the groundwork for projects heading into the next financial year and the future.

We prepared our community and our organisation for the change to a 4-bin waste system. From 1 July 2023, we included a purple glass recycling bin in our kerbside collections, as well as the red general rubbish bin, green food and garden organics bin and yellow mixed recycling bin. This was a huge project and involved a large community education campaign as well as extensive logistical planning. Our community is passionate about sustainability, so we're proud to be an early adopter of the 4-bin service.

We worked with our community to prepare and advocate for the best possible outcomes from the Level Crossing Removal Project's planned removal of 8 level crossings in Brunswick. In consultation with the community, we developed the Reshaping Brunswick position paper and have submitted it to the State Government. Our advocacy role on this project is ongoing – we will continue to speak with our community during the project's delivery and will feed back any concerns to the State Government.

And we are always preparing our community to become more environmentally sustainable through our work towards making Merri-bek net zero carbon by 2035.

We have achieved so much over the past 12 months and there are plenty of exciting projects planned for the future. You can read more about our achievements throughout this report. Thank you to our Councillors, staff, residents, businesses and other community members for working together to make Merri-bek a great place to live.

Cathy Henderson
Chief Executive Officer

About our municipality

Here we talk about our municipality, how we are meeting the challenges we face and our focus for the future.

Merri-bek City Council is a diverse and vibrant municipality located between 4km and 14km north of central Melbourne.

The City of Merri-bek includes the following suburbs:

- Brunswick
- Brunswick East
- Brunswick West
- Coburg
- Coburg North
- Fawkner
- Fitzroy North (part)
- Glenroy
- Gowanbrae
- Hadfield
- Oak Park
- Parkville (part)
- Pascoe Vale
- Pascoe Vale South
- Tullamarine (part)

Merri-bek is bordered by Merri Creek to the east, Moonee Ponds Creek to the west, Park Street to the south and the Western Ring Road to the north.

Challenges and future outlook

A growing population

By 2036, our municipality is expected to have a population of 235,200. This is 10,000 fewer residents than we previously forecast we would have by 2036. The previous forecast was made before COVID-19.

We are continuing to plan for the services needed to support new residents, and greater pressure on infrastructure. We have strategies on our key challenges:

- transport and how we move around our city (under review)
- maintaining and increasing parks and open spaces (under review)
- reaching our zero carbon targets by 2040
- housing accessibility and affordability.

A diverse population

In 2021, 33% of our residents were born overseas. At home, residents are most likely to speak Italian, Arabic, Greek or Urdu if not speaking English. In total 34.5% of households in our community speak a language other than English at home.

Our Community Connector program appoints volunteers to help facilitate meaningful engagement and communication between Council and our culturally diverse communities. Our Connectors ask our community what information they need, share information from Council with their community and tell us how to improve our messages and translations.

Merri-bek households

People who live alone make up the largest proportion of households with 28% in our municipality, followed by families making up 26% of households.

We have also seen a steady increase in townhouse and apartment living in recent years (in 2021, 48% of all homes).

We are working for the best possible planning outcomes for our community. We are focusing on higher quality building design, increased canopy tree planting, redevelopment that maintains or increases local employment opportunities and protecting our valued heritage places.

Some people in our municipality cannot access or afford safe housing. We advocate to address homelessness in Merri-bek with strategies that aim to create pathways out of homelessness.

Modes of transport

Population growth poses challenges for our city when it comes to transport, with transportation already accounting for more than one quarter of carbon emissions in our municipality. However, about three-quarters of homes in our municipality are within 400m of public transport. This is approximately a 5-minute walk.

Getting people where they need to be for work, education or leisure as sustainably as possible is a key challenge for us.

Open space

There are parts of Merri-bek where residents do not have access to public open space that they can walk to. Forecasted population growth will continue to put pressure on access to open space. Our A

Park Close to Home initiative aims to ensure every Merri-bek resident lives within 500 metres walking distance to a park or open space, and within 300 metres for those living in our busiest areas. Through this initiative we purchase land to turn into parks, helping ensure all residents have access to quality open space close to where they work, live and play.

The climate emergency

Climate change is a dangerous threat to life. We are already experiencing hotter summer days, more frequent floods and droughts. Climate change is a risk to our health and wellbeing, and the economy, not just the environment.

Merri-bek is proud to be a leader in responding climate change. It is Council's adopted goal for Merri-bek to achieve 75% emissions reduction by 2030 (against 2011-12 baseline), net zero by 2035 and drawdown ('negative emissions') by 2040.

Burning fossil fuels for energy is the largest source of carbon emissions for our community. Our emissions come from electricity (59%), gas (21%), transport (17%) and waste (3%).

Council maintains the largest electric vehicle fleet of local governments in Victoria, which includes e-bikes. We are also expanding our public EV charging network, improving the energy efficiency of our facilities and installing solar power where feasible.

It is up to all of us to work together to be part of the solution to climate change. This includes demanding state and federal governments put in place policies to enable Australia to transition to a zero-carbon future.

Support for older people

We are committed to supporting our older residents to live and age well and to remain living independently at home for as long as possible. We are focused on supporting older residents to be connected to their community. This is part of the implementation of our Living and Ageing Well Framework. We have engaged our community and started implementing the Our Place program. This program aims to support all older people of Merri-bek.

The findings from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the Australian Government response continue to affect aged care services. The Australian Government has announced it will delay the beginning of the new Support at Home Program until mid-2024, instead of mid-2023, in line with the Royal Commission recommendations. We are keeping aged care support services in the home and are working to ensure we can continue these services throughout upcoming significant federal government changes to the way the aged care system operates in future years.

Achievements of the year

Here is a summary of our achievements for the past year. This is presented under our 5 themes that come from our Council Plan 2021-25.

Theme 1: An environmentally proactive Merri-bek

To strive for maximum protection of people's health, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment.

Achievements:

- A total of 44 subsidised rooftop solar systems were installed on eligible residents' homes, with an average system size of 5.4kW and household savings of around \$750 per year. In addition, 77 eligible households received subsidies for thermal efficiency upgrades (i.e., gap sealing and/or insulation).
- Six new Ride & Stride schools were fully inducted into the program. Two of our alumni Ride & Stride schools, Coburg North Primary & Merri-bek Primary, established monthly School-led Open Streets programs, and more than 30 families across our five alum schools received 50% subsidised e-cargo bike loans for two months.
- We prepared for the introduction on 1 July 2023, of our 4-bin waste service, for all households to have a glass recycling bin, a food and garden organics (FOGO) bin as well as general rubbish and mixed recycling bins. This included receiving 135,000 bins to the storage and distribution facility and delivering each bin to properties within Merri-bek.
- Our Hard Rubbish Trial finished and moved into the evaluation and recommendation phase with the new service to commence on 1 January, 2024.
- We completed stage 1 of consultation on our Open Space Strategy. This strategy will assist with identifying priorities for new and expanded open space and for decision-making.
- We completed construction of Moomba Park Wetland in Fawkner. The wetland will filter stormwater before it enters the Merri Creek. We have also created habitat for threatened species like the Growling Grass Frog.

Theme 2: Moving and living safely in Merri-bek

To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.

Achievements:

- We began our review and update of our Integrated Transport Strategy. This included completing social policy research field work, which helped inform the discussion paper for the strategy.
- We began planning for the review of our parking management policy. This will include community engagement and a precinct-by-precinct approach.
- We submitted applications to the State Government's Department of Transport and Planning to reduce the speed limit to 40km/h for all local roads with a speed limit of 50km/h. Lower speed limits will improve pedestrian safety.
- We considered a report in February 2023 regarding improvement opportunities for pedestrians, bike riders and people using public transport in Fawkner. Designs are nearing completion for pedestrian improvement near the Bonwick Street shopping precinct with implementation to occur in 2023-24.
- We continued to advocate for duplication of the Upfield line north of Gowrie Station; b) the creation of an East/West bus link and improved bus services in the North, including advocating for bus services to be scheduled to operate at night and on weekends. We reiterated our position through letters to the Minister for Public Transport and to all Northern Metropolitan MPs when sharing our Reshaping Brunswick paper (regarding the Brunswick Level Crossing Removals).

Theme 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek

To support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services, facilitating local partnerships and programs, mitigating the effects of climate change and supporting the community to adapt and build climate resilience.

Achievements:

- We delivered two early years infrastructure projects as planned in our 5-year Capital Works Program. We upgraded and expanded the Park Street Early Learning Co-op in April and built a new 33-place kindergarten room, landscaping and car park works at Doris Blackburn Kindergarten.
- We continued the Libraries After Dark program to reduce gambling harm or similar community impacts. Glenroy Library opened until 10pm on Thursday evenings, with programs offered including Conversation Cafe, Chess Night, Seed Masterclass and Job readiness workshop.
- We implemented actions of the Children, Young People and Families Plan. The new group of Youth Ambassadors and the Children's Reference Group met regularly to provide input into Council decision-making. Maternal and Child Health partnerships and programs supported women experiencing family violence, catch-ups for LGBTIQ+ families and Dads Groups. The Sleep and Settling Program had high participation levels with in-person (group) sessions, online and outreach to individual families where required.
- We developed and endorsed our LGBTIQ+ action plan, in collaboration with the reference group.
- We finalised and began implementation of our Climate Risk Strategy. This strategy outlines how we will plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change. We also endorsed our Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan.

- We officially began construction of our \$36 million upgrade of the Fawkner Leisure Centre, with a ground-breaking event in May. The new centre will include a 50-metre outdoor swimming pool.
- We completed our \$9.8 million upgrade of Fleming Park in Brunswick. We repurposed the grandstand to include seating and overall beautification, upgraded the community hall and bocce club building, built multi-purpose female-friendly change rooms, family friendly public toilets and a new multi-court.

Theme 4: Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek

To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity.

Achievements:

- We completed the design work and began construction of the \$29 million redevelopment of 33 Saxon Street in Brunswick. This hub will create approximately 3,500sqm of floorspace for artists, community members and creative industries and will celebrate Merri-bek's diversity, creativity and distinct culture.
- After extensive consultation on the design for the new dog parks, the Glenroy and Fawkner enclosed dog parks began construction and are expected to be completed and open to the public around September 2023.
- We reviewed the Merri-bek Planning Scheme and prepared a plan for implementing review recommendations.
- We added business development programs into our Shopping Strip Renewal Program. This included initiatives such as showcasing the wares of local micro-businesses in otherwise vacant shop fronts through our Merri-bek MoreSpace program and supporting eleven businesses to set up formerly vacant shops through our Vacant Shop Grant program.
- We continued to develop and support the Love Merri-bek Buy Local campaign, including content on the website showcasing businesses through blog posts such as Hidden Gems of Merri-bek.
- We partnered with the Melbourne International Film Festival to deliver a multicultural film festival in Glenroy. The Glenroy Public Hall was transformed into a cinema for a four-day, seven-film festival. The festival was well attended and welcomed by the local community.
- We developed a draft integrated arts and culture strategy. It will go out for community consultation in July 2023 before being recommended to Council for adoption at the September 2023 meeting.

Theme 5: An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek

Build community trust through encouraging participation, evidence-based decision-making, stewardship of resources and being accessible and responsive.

Achievements:

- Through feedback from our community, we have integrated Snap Send Solve with our Customer Relationship Management system and improved our website to improve the experience when our community contacts us.
- We delivered advocacy campaigns that support Council priorities, including seeking safe access over Bell Street Bridge, and seeking planning reform to elevate environmentally sustainable design targets along with the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment and 24 other Victorian councils.
- We continued to support the CALD Merri-bek Connectors community engagement program to improve access to information and services. The group of Connectors contributed to a number of significant Council engagement opportunities in the last quarter, including the Open Space Strategy, the Kerbside Waste Reforms, and the Glenroy Film Festival.
- We finalised and began implementing the change of our municipal name from Moreland City Council to Merri-bek City Council. This included updating our website and digital assets, key signs and uniforms.
- We continued our review of the Developer Contributions Rate in the planning scheme. This piece of work is meeting projected timelines and is on track to be delivered in 2024, with the amendment to commence in early 2025.

Renaming our city council

In the first few months of the 2022-23 financial year, we officially became Merri-bek City Council. Council's new name was approved by the Governor in Council and gazetted to take effect on 26 September 2022.

Professional research had highlighted that our previous name, "Moreland", was named by the State Government in 1994 and that this name was linked to local geographic features named directly after a Jamaican slave estate. Elders from the Traditional Owner community (and other community members) conveyed to Council in late 2021 their view that the name was racist and offensive.

Throughout the rest of 2021-22, we worked with the Traditional Owners (Elders), Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the community to choose a new name for our council. A six-week community engagement process resulted in the majority of respondents choosing Merri-bek, which means 'rocky country'. Council endorsed this recommended new name at a special council meeting on 3 July 2022.

As part of the transition to our new name, Council resolved to allocate \$250,000 per year across two financial years to enable implementation of the name change. For the 2022-23 year, we spent the allocated budget of \$250,000 on updates to Council's logo and visual identity, key signage, digital platforms, uniforms and other actions. Works to implement Council's new name, including graphic design works, were resourced internally, assisting in keeping associated costs low.

In December 2022, Council began a grants program for local organisations and businesses who wished to change their name and brand to Merri-bek. The budget for this was drawn from the name change implementation budget. During 2022-23, we supported six organisations to change their names from Moreland to Merri-bek. These were Merri-bek City Band, Moreland West Medical Centre, (to become Merri-bek Medical Centre), Community Information and Support Merri-bek, Merri-bek Darebin District Scouts, St Alban's and St Augustine's Merri-bek and Merri-bek Toy Library.

We have allocated \$250,000 to the 2023-24 year to further implement the name changes and will continue to upgrade our assets slowly over the coming years.

Financial overview

The 'Financial Report' section in this report includes the comprehensive financial statements. These were prepared in accordance with relevant accounting standards and legislative requirements.

These statements are detailed. As such, some stakeholders and community members may find them difficult to interpret. This overview aims to simplify the key information about our financial performance for the year.

Operating income

Our total income for the year was \$254.9 million.

This was an increase in income of \$6.5 million (or 2.6%) compared to 2021-22. This was largely due to the growth in rates income. Our major source of income is rates and charges, which generated 70.4% of our total income (\$179.4 million).

Other major sources of income included:

- government grants of \$27.3 million (or 10.7% of total income)
- user fees and statutory fees and fines of \$23.6 million (or 9.3% of total income).

Operating expenses

Our total operating expenses for the year were \$214.0 million.

The largest fraction of this was employee costs. This was \$102.9 million (48.1% of total expenses). The next biggest cost was material and services of \$66.9 million (31.3% of total expenses).

We are reporting an accounting surplus of \$40.9 million for the financial year. It is important to note that this accounting surplus is not spare money that builds up in the bank. These are surplus funds that are on our balance sheet. The accounting surplus funds other items including our rates-funded capital works program, transfers to reserves and loan repayments. Reserves are already committed to future capital works expenditure or other important items that are one-off.

Operating expenditure profile for 2022-23

Operating category	Percentage
Asset depreciation	15.5%
Administration	14.2%
Waste collection and recycling	9.5%
Parks and street trees	8.1%
Aged, disability and social services	7.4%
Planning and economic development	6.2%
Arts, culture and libraries	5.2%
Systems and communications	4.9%
Youth and children's services	4.5%
Local laws and regulations	4.3%
Roads and footpaths	2.6%

Street cleansing	2.5%
Customer service	2.1%
Recreation and leisure	2.0%
Sustainable communities and environment	2.0%
Asset maintenance	1.7%
Transport	1.7%
Property services	1.7%
Governance	1.4%
Capital works	1.2%
Health and immunisation	0.9%
Asset management	0.4%
Grand total	100%

Capital expenses

Our total completed capital expenditure for the year was \$71.4 million.

We continued to address our capital works program across a wide range of projects. Our total completed capital work spend was \$39.0 million above the depreciation for the year.

Capital works by category delivered in 2022-23

Asset class	Amount
Land	\$17.9m
Buildings	\$14.4m
Parks, open space and streetscapes	\$11.8m
Roads	\$10.6m
Waste	\$5.5m
Footpaths and cycleways	\$3.0m
Plant, machinery and equipment	\$1.7m
Drainage	\$1.6m
Building improvements	\$1.4m
Library collection	\$1.0m
Computers and telecommunications	\$1.0m
Other infrastructure	\$0.6m
Bridges	\$0.5m
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	\$0.4m

Delivering services to you

We provide more than 150 services to our community every year.

Here we give key figures about the services we provided to our community. These services include:

- waste management
- delivering meals
- libraries and leisure centres
- parks and open spaces
- supporting local businesses
- regulating traffic
- supporting older people in their homes
- overseeing the planning permit process
- animal registrations
- street cleaning
- children and family services.

These services, and our community infrastructure, support the wellbeing and prosperity of our community.

We also plan for development and ensure we are accountable for the money we spend.

For more on our achievements, read the 'Our performance' section of this report from page 115. There we talk about how we have delivered our services and the challenges we faced.

Snapshot of key services in 2022-23

- 1206 planning permit applications determined
- 53,178 meals delivered to Merri-bek residents
- 31,253 kilometres of streets swept
- 5469 trees planted
- 525,029 visitors to our libraries
- 1,125,691 library loans including 853,772 physical items and 271,919 e-resources
- 38,201 people attended 2,113 library program events
- 32,946 children and young people attended 1019 program sessions, including storytimes in Auslan, Urdu, Turkish, Spanish, French, Italian and Greek, as well as drag storytimes and special holiday events

- 1049 program sessions were offered for adults, seniors and all ages, with 5255 people enjoying programs including author talks, cultural events, job-seeking help, movie nights and local history events
- 983,672 total attendances at Active Merri-bek Aquatic and Leisure Centres
- 135,816 attendees at Active Merri-bek Aquatic and Leisure Centres water safety and learn-to-swim programs
- 215,476 total aquatic visits to seasonal outdoor pools (including swim carnivals and swim lessons)
- 102,358 casual swims at the seasonal outdoor pools
- 6701 Active Merri-bek Aquatic and Leisure Centres members at 30 June 2023
- 21,430 dogs and cats registered
- 13,661 tonnes of co-mingled recycling collected
- 13,173 tonnes of food and garden waste collected
- 1219 tonnes of hard waste collected
- 28,582 tonnes of garbage collected
- Total number of children, including aboriginal children who access MCH services at least once in a year: 6,291
- Total number of people immunised:
 - 3673 under 5s
 - 2239 high school students
 - 830 adults.

Community satisfaction

Every year we ask our community how they feel about our services. This is our Community Satisfaction Survey. A total of 401 members of the Merri-bek community were interviewed in 2023.

The survey asks questions about services including:

- waste management and environmental sustainability
- parking, roads and footpaths
- recreational facilities
- planning
- consultation and engagement, decision-making and lobbying
- support services and libraries
- customer service.

In 2023, our top 5 service areas ranked highest for performance by the community were:

- library services (75)
- supporting the diversity of the Merri-bek community (68)
- outdoor recreational facilities (67)
- customer service (65).

Library services and supporting diversity have consistently been our top-performing service areas over the past 3 years.

In 2023, the results showed a decline in service areas including waste management, parking facilities and sealed local roads. Overall satisfaction with Council was 51 as compared to 58 in 2022. This decline signals the need for attention and improvement in particular service areas of Council, which we are working to achieve.

We know Council has an important role to play in ensuring Merri-bek is a vibrant place to live. We are taking the results of this survey seriously and are continuing to work hard to improve our service delivery.

We are striving to improve our core service delivery while also balancing many important initiatives and projects.

When asked about the direction of our performance over the past year:

- 19% of survey respondents said our performance had improved
- 47% said our performance had stayed the same
- 28% said our performance had deteriorated

- 6% did not provide an answer.

We have noted the following services that had a decline in scores from the previous year as areas for attention:

- waste management (47 in 2023, down from 67 in 2022)
- parking facilities (46 in 2023, down from 52 in 2022)
- value for money (47 in 2023, down from 54 in 2022)
- sealed local roads (51 in 2023, down from 57 in 2022).

The long-term scores for some of these service areas have fluctuated considerably. The 2023 results may be attributable to local issues, including a waste truck driver shortage, prevalent around the time of the survey. These are all service areas for ongoing attention and work for Council.

Awards and citations

LGPro Awards for Excellence:

- **Winner**, Community Assets and Infrastructure Initiative – Over \$5 million – Glenroy Community Hub
- **High commendation**, Special Projects Initiative – Creative Coburg
- **Finalist**, First Nations Community Partnership Initiative – Merri-bek City Council, Renaming Project

The Glenroy Community Hub received the following awards:

- **Winner**, 2022 Excellence in Construction, Best Sustainable Project, Master Builders Victoria
- **Winner**, 2022 Excellence in Construction of Commercial Buildings \$20M to \$30M, Master Builders Victoria
- **Winner**, 2022, Public Buildings, Sustainability Awards
- **Commendation**, 2023 Sustainable Architecture, Australian Institute of Architects Victoria
- **International Living Future Institute** - Living Building Challenge 'Petal Ready and 'Net Zero Energy Ready'

Winner, 2022, Australian Flex Pavement Award, Innovation Award for Recycled Permeable Paving at City Oval

Winner, 2022 – PIA Awards for Planning Excellence, Climate Change & Planning in Victoria: Ensuring Victoria's planning system effectively tackles climate change - Hansen Partnership, (Merri-bek, CASBE and NAGA partnership)

Finalist, 2022-23, Mainstreet Australia Awards - Best main street place activation, event or initiative – Council working with Trader Association, traders, community group etc – activity cost under \$100k

High Commendation, 2022-23, Planning Institute of Australia - Female Achiever of the Year - Kate Murphy

Winner, 2022, Institute of Transport Engineer's-ANZ Sustainable Transport Award for Merri-bek Ride and Stride program

Our council

On 24 October 2020, our community elected 11 councillors to represent them. These councillors are elected from 3 wards across our municipality: North-West Ward, North-East Ward and South Ward.

Councillors

Every 4 years, Merri-bek residents and ratepayers elect our councillors. Together our councillors make decisions in the interests of the whole municipality. The next election is in 2024.

The councillors elect a mayor and a deputy mayor each year. In November 2022, Council elected Cr Angelica Panopoulos as Mayor and Cr Helen Davidson as Deputy Mayor. They will hold these offices until November 2023.

An essential representative role that councillors play is participating in a range of committees or groups. These include:

- committees established by Council (advisory committees)
- peak bodies or sector associations
- local and regional forums.

Some councillors are appointed by Council to take the lead in areas of interest, as the 'councillor responsible for' roles. They make sure key information is available to Council when decisions are made in these areas.

Our Councillors for the 2022-23 year were:

North-East Ward

Councillor Sue Bolton

Councillor Annalivia Carli Hannan

Councillor Helen Pavlidis-Mihalakos

Councillor Adam Pulford

North-West Ward

Councillor Helen Davidson

Councillor Angelica Panopoulos

Councillor Oscar Yildiz JP

Councillor Monica Harte

South Ward

Councillor James Conlan

Councillor Mark Riley

Councillor Lambros Tapinos

Councillors, committees and responsibilities

All councillors are members of the Chief Executive Officer Employment Matters Advisory Committee and the Communications and Engagement Councillor Group.

Mayor, Cr Angelica Panopoulos



Elected to Council in 2020 and elected Mayor in 2022

Advisory committees: Audit and Risk Committee, Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee, Saxon Street Oversight Committee, Merri-bek Community Recognition Committee, Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee, Glenroy Advisory Group

External committees: Northern Councils Alliance

Councillor responsible for: Climate and nature, economic development, urban planning, young people

M [0417 854 518](tel:0417854518)

E apanopoulos@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson



Elected to Council in 2012, 2016 and 2020, elected Mayor in 2016 and Deputy Mayor in 2022

Advisory committees: Glenroy Advisory Group

External committees: Merri Creek Management Committee (substitute)

Councillor responsible for: Sport and recreation, women

M 0403 709 948

E hdavidson@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Cr Sue Bolton



Elected to Council in 2012, 2016 and 2020

Advisory committees: Coburg Advisory Group, Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee, Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee, First Nations Advisory Committee, Disability Reference Group

External committees: Nil

Councillor responsible for: Human rights

M 0417 583 664

E sbolton@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan



Elected to Council in 2016 and 2020 and elected Mayor in 2020

Advisory committees: Coburg Advisory Group, Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee

External committees: Nil

Councillor responsible for: Early years, sport and recreation

M 0418 263 525

E acarlihannan@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Cr James Conlan



Elected to Council in 2020

Advisory committees: Brunswick Advisory Group, First Nations Advisory Committee, LGBTIQ+ Reference Group, Saxon Street Oversight Committee

External committees: Nil

Councillor responsible for: Sport and recreation

M [0409 279 335](tel:0409279335)

E jconlan@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Cr Monica Harte



Elected to Council in 2022.

Advisory committees: Affordable Housing Reference Group, Age-Friendly (Older People) Reference Group, Arts Advisory Committee, Glenroy Advisory Group

External committees: Northern Councils Alliance (substitute)

Councillor responsible for: Arts and Culture, Older Persons

M 0437 019 401

E mharte@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Cr Helen Pavlidis-Mihalakos



Elected to Council in 2020

Advisory committees: Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee, Coburg Advisory Group, Merri-bek Community Recognition Committee, Age-Friendly (Older People) Reference Group

External committees: Municipal Association of Victoria (substitute),

Councillor responsible for: Older persons, sport and recreation, transport and getting around, and women

M [0409 200 418](tel:0409200418)

E hpavlidism@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Cr Adam Pulford



Elected to Council in 2020

Advisory committees: Coburg Advisory Group, Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee, LGBTIQ+ Reference Group

External committees: Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) Executive (substitute), Metropolitan Transport Forum

Councillor responsible for: Transport and getting around

M [0417 835 793](tel:0417835793)

E apulford@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Cr Mark Riley



Elected to Council in 2016 and 2020, elected Deputy Mayor in 2018 and 2020, and elected Mayor in 2021

Advisory committees: Audit and Risk Committee, Saxon Street Oversight Committee, Brunswick Advisory Group, Gender Equality Reference Group,

External committees: Friends of Aileu Community Committee, Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) Executive

Councillor responsible for: Nil

M 0499 807 044

E mriley@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Cr Lambros Tapinos



Elected to Council in 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020, elected Mayor in 2008, 2013 and 2019, and Deputy Mayor in 2021

Advisory committees: Coburg Revitalisation Oversight Committee, Brunswick Advisory Group, Merri-bek Community Recognition Committee, Saxon Street Oversight Committee, Arts Advisory Committee

External committees: Merri Creek Management Committee, Municipal Association of Victoria

Councillor responsible for: Arts and culture, economic development, multiculturalism, older persons, sport and recreation, urban planning

M 0433 419 075

E ltapinos@merri-bek.vic.gov.au



Cr Oscar Yildiz JP

Elected to Council in 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020 and elected Mayor in 2010, 2012 and 2014, and Deputy Mayor in 2019.

Advisory committees: Glenroy Advisory Group

External committees: Nil

Councillor responsible for: Economic development, multiculturalism, sport and recreation

M 0413 850 357

E oyildiz@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Our people

Merri-bek City Council is led by a chief executive officer and managed by a highly skilled and experienced executive team.

Our executive team

Our staff translate Council's strategic direction and goals into organisational plans. Our executive team monitors and coordinates our progress against these plans.

Underpinning this work is our organisational vision: One team, brave and diverse, making a difference.

Chief Executive Officer - Cathy Henderson

Our senior officers who report to the chief executive officer are listed below, with their areas of responsibility.

Director Business Transformation - Sue Vujcevic

Responsible for the corporate functions of Council including:

- People and Safety
- Organisational Performance
- Information Technology
- Governance and Strategy
- Finance and Procurement

Director City Infrastructure - Anita Curnow

Responsible for the following branches:

- Amenity and Compliance
- Capital Works Planning and Delivery
- City Services
- Open Space and Environment
- Transport

Director Community - Eamonn Fennessy

Responsible for the following branches:

- Aged and Community Support
- Community Engagement

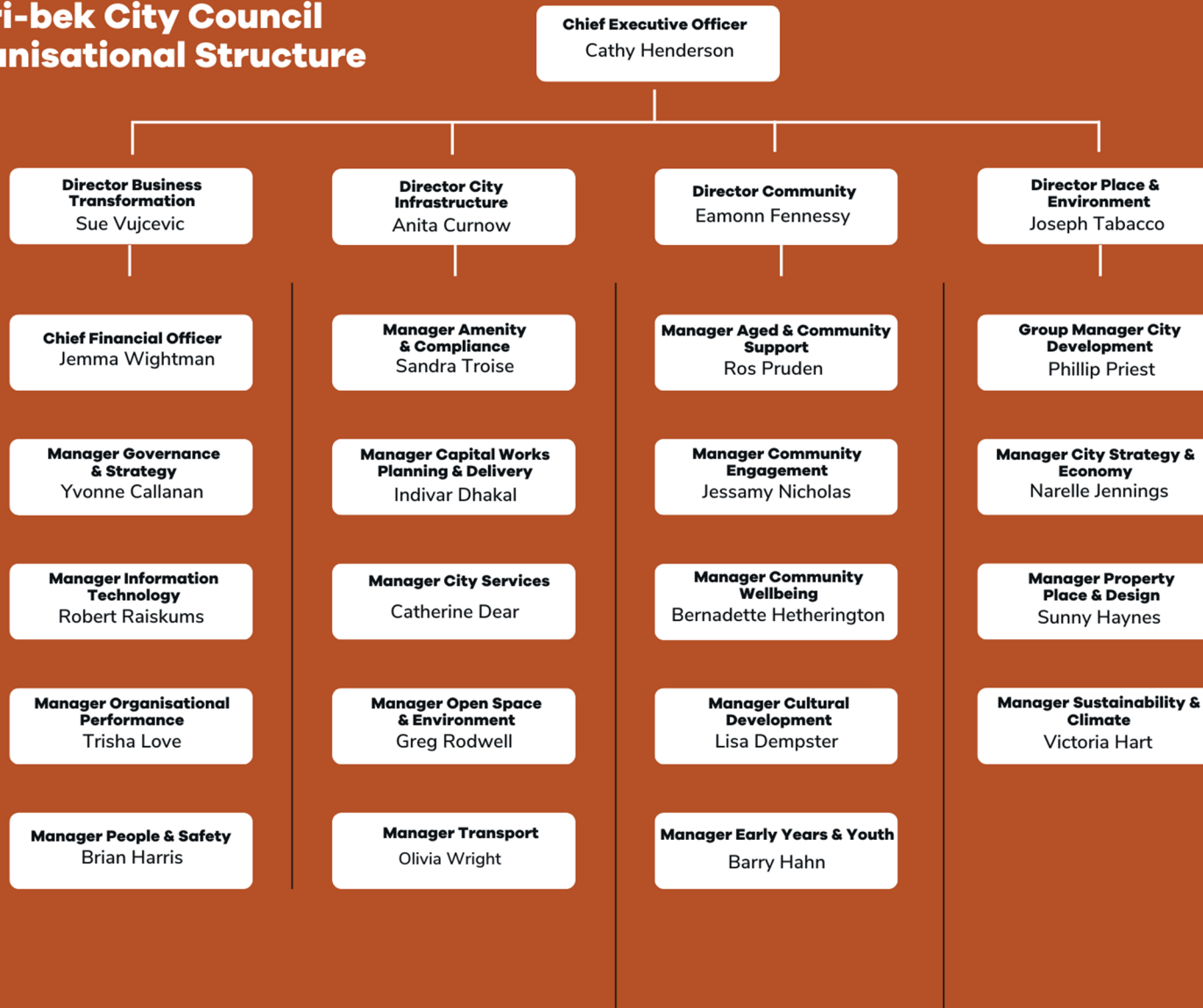
- Community Wellbeing
- Cultural Development
- Early Years and Youth

Director Place and Environment - Joseph Tabacco

Responsible for the following branches:

- City Development
- City Strategy and Economy
- Property, Place, and Design
- Sustainability and Climate

Merri-bek City Council Organisational Structure



Our staffing profile

A summary of the number of FTE (full-time equivalent) staff, categorised by employment classification and gender.

Structure	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8	SO/SEO/ other	Total
Classification	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE
Permanent full time – female	0.00	0.00	6	47.76	46.81	46	38	20	18	222.57
Permanent full time – male	0.00	0.00	44.11	74	83.09	37.09	45	16	22	321.29
Permanent part time – female	15.88	0.54	56.35	25.47	26.55	16.26	6.91	24.05	2.35	174.36
Permanent part time – male	6.43	0.26	14.07	3.73	2.49	2.79	2.9	0.00	0.00	32.67
Temporary female	0.00	0.00	12.09	10.61	11.97	17.49	4.84	5.06	5.19	67.25
Temporary male	0.00	0.00	4.34	8	5	7.8	7.04	2	4.84	39.02
Casual	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total FTE	22.31	0.8	136.96	169.57	175.91	127.43	104.69	67.11	52.38	857.16

A summary of the number of FTE staff categorised by directorate, employment status and gender.

Directorate	Business Transformation	Chief Executive Office	City Infrastructure	Community	Place and Environment	Total
Employment status	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE
Permanent full time – female	48.92	2	41	86.65	44	222.57
Permanent full time – male	38	0.00	212.18	34.11	37	321.29
Permanent part time – female	17.28	0.00	13.89	131.31	11.88	174.36
Permanent part time – male	1.26	0.00	9.87	19.98	1.56	32.67
Temporary female	5.25	0.00	7.74	40.16	14.1	67.25
Temporary male	3	0.00	13.68	14.44	7.9	39.02
Casual	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total FTE	113.71	2	298.36	326.65	116.44	857.16

Inclusive employment

We are proud to ensure our employees work in a supportive and understanding environment. Council has a range of agreed action plans in place to further support an inclusive working environment, that includes our Council Action Plan, Gender Equality Action Plan, Workforce Plan and First Peoples Employment Plan.

Some of the actions implemented this year from the above-mentioned plans that support diversity and inclusion include:

- Reviewing and strengthening our cultural awareness leadership development and programs that support a culture of inclusion for people with disabilities.
- Creation of an all-encompassing Flexible Work Arrangements Policy to strengthen gender equality and diversity and inclusion.
- Improving our data collection systems to enable safe and accurate recording of employee identity information.
- Gathering more data regarding the background of our existing staff to identify gaps and opportunities for strengthening our staff diversity in future.
- Reviewing and further developing our recruitment practices.
- Providing for the use of different pronouns in communications and providing appropriate training methods for staff to understand gender diversity specifically and the importance of why pronouns are important.
- Provision of all-gender bathrooms to create a more gender inclusive and safe workplace.
- Continue to support equal pay and equal recognition for all types of paid work within the organisation.
- Introduction of paid superannuation for staff on unpaid parental leave.
- Expanded leave entitlements for staff, including miscarriage and leave to support gender affirmation.

First Nations people

Merri-bek City Council is committed to reconciliation with First Nations people. As part of our commitment, we are working to increase our employment of First Peoples. This is part of our vision of being one team, brave and diverse, making a difference.

We recognise the strengths that First Peoples bring to an organisation through lived experience, knowledge and skills. We want to remove barriers in policy or practice that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and to increase opportunities to engage, employ, develop, and retain First Peoples staff.

In December 2022 our Executive team approved our *First Peoples Employment Plan*. The plan has been developed from an extensive review of workplace policies and procedures and in consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Land Council, Merri-bek City Council staff, and management. The policy and procedures review and consultation identified four specific priority areas for the plan, which are set out as follows:

- Develop Council's cultural capacities that impact First Peoples employment;

- Increase First Peoples recruitment and retention;
- Develop and implement employment pathways and skills development opportunities; and
- Provide culturally appropriate workplace supports.

The plan included recruitment of a First Peoples Employment Officer, with this role commencing in July 2023.

This work, along with other operational plans and an updated Enterprise Agreement, sees us continue to bring about systemic change and progress to focus on improving the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. This work will drive progress in inclusion through recruitment, development and retention and create a deeper connection and safer cultural environment both for staff and with the community.

Equal opportunity

Council is committed to equal employment opportunities through our policies and program. These are designed to end discrimination and promote equal opportunity in employment for women and people in designated groups.

We aim to ensure there is no discrimination relating to the characteristics listed under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. A further objective includes ensuring the workplace is free from bullying and harassment.

All new employees are required to undertake equal opportunity training within 3 months of commencing employment. This covers equal opportunity employment, and laws relating to workplace discrimination and harassment. It describes:

- the different personal characteristics protected under state and federal laws
- the effects of workplace discrimination and harassment
- what to do when faced with these behaviours in the workplace.

Other items actioned this year to support and promote equal opportunity in employment include:

- Review and update of our contact officers which includes promotion of staff to participate and undertaking refresher training.
- A review and update of our Inappropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy. This policy incorporates discrimination, equal opportunity, harassment, workplace bullying, stalking and cyber bullying, occupational violence, victimisation, and vilification.

Service recognition awards

Our service recognition awards acknowledged the significant dedication and contribution many employees make to our organisation and the community. In 2022-23, we presented service recognition awards to 190 employees. Their employment with us ranged from 5 to 40 years.

Building our organisational capability

This year we focused on developing and delivering actions from staff feedback received. We developed and launched our Leader Development Strategy, further raised the capability of our project managers and delivered a program of leadership events for our senior people leaders.

In 2022-23, we implemented a range of actions including:

- Developing and rolling out our 2023 Organisational Plan, linked to Council's internal organisational vision that comprised a series of initiatives to support a constructive culture including all staff sessions and the development of new initiatives across the pillars of safety and wellbeing, organisational culture, customer focus, systems and processes, diversity and inclusion and leadership
- Delivery of team actions in response to staff feedback
- Completion of a draft IT Roadmap and identified projects for key systems including a new rostering software and the first stages of an upgrade to our core systems
- Delivery of our talent program to support future high performing leaders
- Implementation of our refreshed competency framework to ensure it aligns closely with our strategic direction
- Customised team building and planning workshops used to improve team effectiveness across the organisation.

Leadership development

This year we had a particular focus on supporting the leaders of teams, along with targeted learning and on-the-job development. Key actions this year included:

- 360-degree feedback for leaders that provided insight and support for how they lead, as well as coaching for improvement
- Providing tailored assessment options (including strengths-based assessments) and targeted coaching and mentoring for leaders
- Continuing to support high-performing leaders by offering a range of learning opportunities includes coaching, formal programs and on the job opportunities such as secondments and project work.

To complement the above actions, we continued to move forward with several key leadership development initiatives and introduced a suite of new programs as part of the 2023-24 Leader Development Strategy. Key actions this year included:

- The rollout of new programs including Learning to Lead, Leadership Fundamentals and Coaching for Leaders, designed to develop the capacity of our emerging leaders, build peer relationships and establish a culture of cross-directorate coaching
- Participating in LGPro training for selected talent with one Merri-bek leader attending each of the XLP, Mastering Management, Mentoring, Ignite and Ignite for Outdoor Workers programs
- Supporting 15 of our top-level project managers into a Swinburne accredited course that will provide them with formal qualifications to complement their significant on-the-job experience.

Leadership capability

This year we developed and delivered a return to face-to-face learning and leadership development for our Senior Management Team, who participated in:

- Myers Briggs personality instrument assessment and workshop
- Customer-service-focused sessions to support our Community at the Heart program
- Discussion on financial strategy
- Work by our Executive to further embed our Organisational Vision, 'One team, brave and diverse, making a difference' through the development of an Organisational Plan and a set of key actions for 2023-24
- Analysis of recent Commissions of Inquiry and understanding of lessons learned
- The roll-out of a refreshed competency framework to enable leaders to develop competencies to assist us to achieve our vision
- A tour of the Victorian Pride Centre and discussion of how support of LGBTIQ+ staff is enabled through our policies and practices
- Regular face-to-face and online team 'huddles' to address issues and discuss any arising leadership topics.

Training and development programs

Council is committed to investing in our employees through development and training. By building our internal capacity, we contribute to improving the performance of the organisation. The following table outlines a summary of training courses delivery and employee attendance in the past year.

Category	Courses run	Attendees (instances)
Business effectiveness (online)	6	56
Business effectiveness (face-to-face)	11	121
Occupational health and safety (online)	6	57
Occupational health and safety (face-to-face)	26	207
Self-care and wellness programs (online)	3	42
Self-care and wellness programs (face-to face)	6	77
Diversity and inclusion programs (online)	5	65
Diversity and inclusion programs (face-to-face)	2	28
Total	65	653
Online compliance modules (Litmos is Council's Learning Management System)	17 compliance modules	9298 courses completed

Occupational health and safety

We are committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all:

- employees
- contractors
- visitors
- members of the public.

We recognise that our employees are our most important asset. Our highest priority is ensuring that employees are supported to work safely, and that safe work procedures are applicable and relevant so they can be followed.

We are committed to the continuous improvement of our health and safety systems and standards. We work so that, as far as is reasonably practicable, we prevent and minimise workplace injuries and illnesses. We recognise the importance of managing psychosocial hazards and supporting the psychological health of our employees.

Safety management system

We continue to support the organisation to adhere to the safety management system in place referred to as MoreSafe. This system supports us to meet our obligations outlined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and associated regulations.

We have a Safety and Wellbeing team, resourced and skilled to support and partner with business unit leaders. This team supports our leaders to understand their obligations to employees and Council in relation to occupational health and safety and can comply with the relevant regulations.

The focus on high-risk work areas, and those units that are at greater risk of workers compensation claims have been part of a strategic addendum to the OHS Roadmap in the past 12 months.

Consultation on safety incidents and changes to the workplace occur at all levels of the organisation.

We oversee training and undertake continuous improvement activities to create efficiencies and maintain compliance to a high standard. These activities include:

- incident management system enhancements
- development and/or updates of safety-related processes
- annual audits of the safety management system
- monitoring and review of data to support decisions on health and safety.

We have worked with the 3-year Occupational Health and Safety Roadmap covering the period 2020-23. This plan has guided many decisions relating to improvements to our health and safety process with a new safety plan under development. The new safety strategy for Council will incorporate key data points as well as day-to-day observations and feedback from the team.

Key safety initiatives undertaken during 2022-23 included:

- Continued adaptation and user knowledge of Elumina to manage workplace incidents and investigations.
- Continued review and consolidation of MoreSafe procedures.
- Black Dog Leadership Training for all leaders to support their teams with the conversations about psychological health including support.

- COVID-19 support for staff returning to onsite working, support to leaders and review of air ventilation systems and requirements.

Occupational health and safety training 2022-23

Course	Number of participants and sessions completed
Fire and emergency warden training	2 Sessions – 21 Participants
CPR training	1 Session – 7 Participants
Occupational violence prevention	1 Session – 12 Participants
First aid training	6 Sessions – 27 Participants
SunSmart UV safety session	3 Sessions – 35 Participants
First aid for mental health	1 Session – 12 Participants
Initial chief warden training	1 Session – 1 Participant
Asbestos awareness	1 Session – 25 Participants
Dangerous goods and hazardous substances	1 Session – 4 Participants
HSR refresher training	2 Sessions – 22 Participants
Plant safety	N/A
Initial HSR training (5-day program)	6 Sessions – 8 Participants
Safely working at heights	N/A
Traffic management and traffic control	2 Sessions – 27 Participants
Total sessions run	27 Sessions

Injury management data

Incidents reported (including injuries)	579
Injuries reported	153
Claims	17
Average claim cost	\$27,971
Employees returned to work*	15
Staff who remain unfit	2

*For return-to-work information, only time lost claims have been included

We acknowledge the importance of early treatment and support for staff when a workplace injury occurs.

It is critical for an injured worker's recovery that the medical treatment they receive is provided quickly and the return-to-work activities are proactively supported by their manager or supervisor. This aids in their recovery and a productive return to a normal work and home life.

We have an early intervention program which incorporates:

- onsite physiotherapy assessment
- offer of suitable alternative duties
- development of a return-to-work plan to match any restrictions the injured worker may have.

Our occupational rehabilitation and wellbeing adviser supports and facilitates the return-to-work plans and workers' compensation process. They also provide ongoing support to employees and guidance to leaders.

The time an employee is absent from work with a workplace injury significantly impacts their ability to return to their substantive role.

Employee health and wellbeing

We have a number of health and wellbeing initiatives with a focus on mental health support, as well as other health-related activities.

- Free classes are offered at the Coburg Leisure Centre
- Ongoing yoga sessions are being provided
- Black Dog Leadership training in psychological health has been provided and well received
- Headspace – a mental health app has been offered for 12 months for free to employees
- The EAP provider continues to offer stress stocktake sessions to teams as required
- Manager Assist has been more broadly highlighted as an available resource for leaders and uptake has increased.

Risk management

Risk management is embedded in our business practices and culture. We have implemented various improvements and changes that have bolstered our risk culture, ensuring that our risk management remains integrated, structured, and customised.

Our risk management planning encompasses all levels of the organisation, addressing strategic, operational, fraud, and environmental risks. We rely on our Enterprise Risk Management Framework and Risk Management Policy, which guide our approach by outlining our objectives, delineating responsibilities, and setting timeframes for risk review and reporting.

We have made significant advances in enhancing ownership and oversight of operational and strategic risks. The Climate Emergency Strategic Risk was reviewed by staff representatives from each Directorate and we facilitated a Business Continuity Exercise focused on Cyber Attack. We remain committed to ongoing training of staff in our risk management software and through our risk management online training.

Regular reviews of strategic and operational risks have allowed us to reinforce the effectiveness of existing controls and establish new ones. To ensure ongoing monitoring and discussion of risks, the Risk Management Committee convenes every six weeks. Meeting minutes are shared with the Executive, the Audit and Risk Committee, and made available on the staff intranet.

Council's Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for overseeing the governance of audits, accounting controls, and risk management. Throughout the year, the committee has held four meetings, providing valuable and independent risk management advice. Additionally, our internal audit program has conducted eight audits across the organisation, using the recommendations to inform risk controls and tasks within Council's operational risk register.

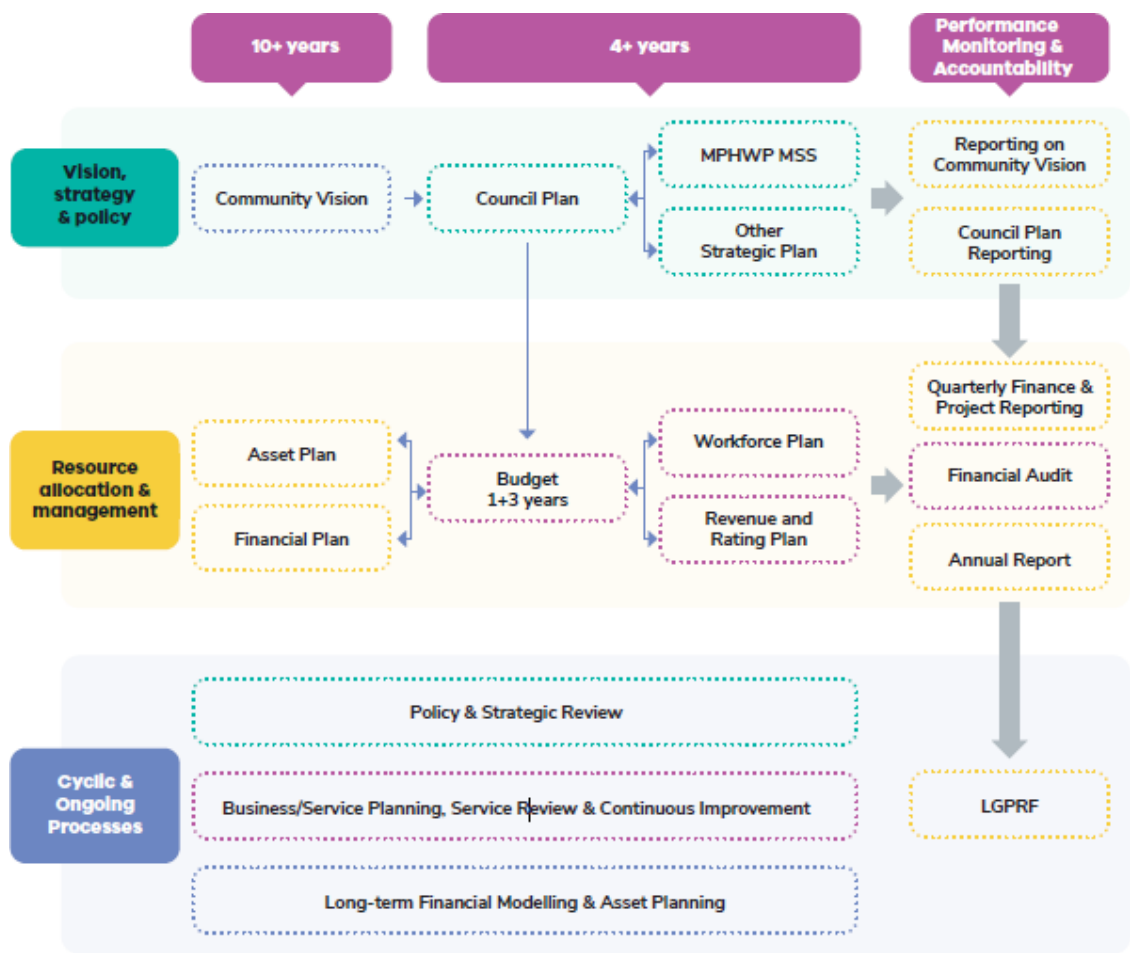
Our performance

Integrated planning and reporting framework

Our integrated planning framework shows the relationship between our vision, strategies, plans, budgets and programs that drive our service delivery, projects and how we allocate resources.

The integrated planning framework guides Council in identifying community needs and aspirations over the long term (Community Vision, Financial Plan and Asset Plan), medium term (Council Plan, Workforce Plan, and Revenue and Rating Plan) and short term (Budget and Council Action Plan). The framework will also provide for Council holding itself accountable (Annual Report and Quarterly Reporting).

The diagram below depicts the integrated planning and reporting framework that applies to local government in Victoria. At each stage of the integrated planning and reporting framework there are opportunities for community and stakeholder input. This is important to ensure transparency and accountability to both residents and ratepayers.



Source: Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Vision

The Imagine Merri-bek Community Panel (deliberative panel) identified the vision statement below and the key themes that would be used to achieve this vision and reflect the 'aspirations of our diverse and growing community in 2031.'

"Merri-bek is our home.

We respect and look after our land, air, waterways and animals.

We care for our people and celebrate our diverse stories, cultures, and identities.

Merri-bek is enhanced by all of us supporting our local businesses, arts communities and social organisations.

We work together proactively and transparently to continue to create a vibrant, safe, healthy, resilient, innovative, and regenerative community. Many faces, one Merri-bek."

Council plan

Our Council Plan 2021-25 sets a strategic direction for the related 4-year council term. This plan has been shaped by the voice of the community and is the result of deliberative engagement with a broad cross-section of the community, the Imagine Merri-bek 2021-31 Community Vision.

Our Council Plan 2021-25 is set out under the following 5 themes:

- An environmentally proactive Merri-bek
- Moving and living safely in Merri-bek
- A healthy and caring Merri-bek
- Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek
- An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek

These themes guide us on how we can make progress towards achieving the Community Vision, it also sets out ways to achieve these objectives through delivery of major initiatives and priorities. Our plan also includes indicators for measuring our progress over the next 4 years and outlines how Council will protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipality.

The plan outlines 5 strategic objectives, one under each theme, which together represent the strategic direction of Council over the next 4 years for the implementation of the Community Vision.

The 5 strategic objectives are:

1. To strive for maximum protection of people's health, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment.
2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.
3. To support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services, facilitating local

partnerships and programs, mitigating the effects of climate change and supporting the community to adapt and build climate resilience.

4. To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity.
5. To build community trust through encouraging participation, evidence-based decision-making, stewardship of resources and being accessible and responsive.

In achieving each strategic objective, the Council Plan 2021-2025 sets out:

- Strategies: 47 primary methods through which the objectives will be achieved over the next four years
- Major Initiatives and Priorities: 49 critical pieces of work underpinning delivery of the council plan
- Strategic Indicators: Measures to monitor progress against the objectives
- Related Strategies and Plans: Other strategic planning documents that will support delivery of the Council Plan.

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) is incorporated in the Council Plan. The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (PHWA) requires local government to develop a MPHWP every 4 years, based on an analysis of health and wellbeing in the municipality.

An annual council action plan is developed each year to identify priority actions for delivering the Strategic Objectives, Strategies and Major Initiatives contained in the Council Plan 2021-25.

Council plan on a page

The table below provides a high-level, plain-English summary of the strategic objectives and strategies outlined in our council plan.

Strategic Objective	Strategies
An environmentally proactive Merri-bek Strive to protect people's health, plants and animals. Respond now to the climate emergency. Regenerate nature.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cut carbon emissions from energy, transport and waste - protect existing trees and plant more trees - care for open space and ecosystems, including waterways - provide better access to parks, playgrounds and facilities - reduce the amount of waste going into landfill - develop a healthy and affordable local food system.
Moving and living safely in Merri-bek Improve the safety of everyone in our community. Make it safer and easier to get around.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - build more, better paths for people to get around without a car - advocate for better access to public transport for everyone - encourage more people to walk, cycle or take public transport

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consult the community before removing parking or road space - improve the safety of our roads and paths for everyone.
<p>A healthy and caring Merri-bek</p> <p>Support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide services that respond well to diverse, changing needs - build community resilience to the impacts of climate change - help residents to be healthier and more active, more often - support good mental health and help people connect - work closer with First Nations communities - reduce the harm caused by gambling and tobacco - work to prevent family violence and support victims - help more people volunteer in the community - work with others to support people in insecure housing - advocate for better use of digital technology for everyone.
<p>Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek</p> <p>Create welcoming, unique spaces across Merri-bek that are for everyone. Improve access to services and housing. Encourage artistic, social and economic activity.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide accessible facilities that meet community needs - design neighbourhoods to be safe and pleasant places for all - create a sense of place and protect valued heritage - promote clean, attractive and useful public spaces - create engaging spaces for children, young people and families - increase local affordable housing - work for better quality private developments - improve our shopping strips while keeping their local identities - increase local jobs by supporting local, micro and social business - make Merri-bek a creative and cultural destination.
<p>An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek</p> <p>Build community trust. Encourage everyone to get involved in council decision-making. Make good use of our resources. Be accessible and responsive to our community.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve access to council information for everyone - increase community participation in council decision-making - involve the community in matters that directly impact their lives - improve the way we respond to community requests and issues - advocate for our community - secure more developer funding to respond to population growth - manage our funds fairly and transparently and for the long term - manage assets that meet changing needs over the long term.

Report of operations

Performance against our objectives

Council's performance for the 2022-2023 year has been reported against each strategic objective to demonstrate how we are performing in achieving the 2021-2025 Council Plan. Performance has been measured as follows:

- results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators in the council plan
- progress in relation to the major initiatives identified in the budget and council plan for the year
- services funded in the budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided those services
- results against the prescribed service performance indicators and measures.

We monitor and report on our performance through monthly, quarterly and annual reports. This ensures we are accountable, transparent and comply with legislation.

Here we have reported our performance against our 5 strategic objectives. It is broken into:

- An environmentally proactive Merri-bek
- Moving and living safely in Merri-bek
- A healthy and caring Merri-bek
- Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek
- An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek.

Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

This is what is included in Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) reporting:

- aquatic facilities
- animal management
- food safety
- governance
- libraries
- Maternal and Child Health (MCH)
- roads
- statutory planning
- waste collection.

Some of the information below is repeated in the 'Performance Statement' section of this report on page 115. The below includes commentary and figures in addition to the LGPRF requirements met in the Performance Statement, which is auditable by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Strategic Indicator/measure	Target or desired trend	2022-23 Result	Comments
Council greenhouse gas emissions from baseline year	% Reduction (from baseline year) (21,253 tCO ₂ e)	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions were 7% higher in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21. (6,597 tCO₂-e)</p> <p>There is still a 70% reduction on baseline year and a downward trend which is on-track to meet our 2030 target.</p>	<p>The most recent available data is the financial year 2021-22 and was used for this reporting.</p> <p>Factors which influenced the change in emissions from 2020/21 to 2021/22 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, Council's Aquatic centres resumed normal operating hours resulting in increased gas (+157 tCO₂e) and water consumption. • The end of COVID-19 restrictions, resulted in increased roadbuilding and repair projects resulting in higher asphalt consumption (+138 tCO₂e). • Council's contractors reported a slight (+65 tCO₂e) increase in fuel consumption, counter-balanced by a decrease in fuel consumption by Council's fleet (-119 tCO₂e). • Council expanded our emissions boundary (for reporting) which now includes ICT equipment, arborist, and cleaning services. Increasing Council's reported emissions by 167 tCO₂e. <p>To meet its corporate carbon target, Council plans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrify sites in response to a recent gas audit. • Electrify Fawkner Leisure Centre (currently under construction in 2023) • Continue to electrify the light vehicle fleet • Continue to install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on its buildings

			Note** There is a lag in available data used to measure this indicator.
Community greenhouse gas emissions	% Reduction (from baseline year) 1,672kt (CO2-e).	20% reduction 1,336kt (CO2-e).	<p>The most recent emissions profile of Merri-bek is 1,336 kt CO2-e for the 2020-21 period, representing a 20% reduction against the 2013-14 baseline of 1,672kt (CO2-e).</p> <p>The data reported is indicative and coincides with significant community-wide restrictions associated with COVID-19, that were likely to influence this dataset.</p> <p>This data has been sourced from snapshotclimate.com.au and adheres to international standards for emissions reporting for cities and local governments.</p> <p>Note** There is a lag in available data used to measure this indicator.</p>
Juvenile tree retention on public land (1-3-year-old trees) in the municipality.	85% retention rate	87.71% retention rate	A three per cent decrease of retention on the previous year's results; however, this year is above the 85% rate set for this indicator.
Number of trees planted on public land in the municipality	10,000 over the 4-year period plus replacement of trees removed in this period	5,469 trees planted	The number of trees planted for the financial year 2022-23 was 5,469 which exceeded the annual target of 2,500, this is an increase of 30% on the previous year's results. The number of trees removed is estimated at 600 (based on canopy modelling inputs).
Tonnes of kerbside waste and recycling collected	% Reduction (Baseline measurement 57,551 tonnes	55,416.74	<p>This year's results saw a 3.7% decrease in total tonnes collected. This measure seeks to reduce the total tonnes of kerbside waste and recycling collected from the municipality. The total breakdowns are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tonnes of co-mingled recycling collected: 13,661.45 • Tonnes of food and garden waste collected: 13,173.41 •Tonnes of garbage collected: 28,581.

Municipal waste diverted from landfill (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator)	% Increase by previous year result: 48.34%	48.42%	Overall, the amount of material collected has decreased by 1953 tonnes; this is despite a marginal increase in properties serviced.
Capacity of water harvesting systems for re-use/irrigation	Increase (Baseline measurement 39 ML/year)	No increase	No additional stormwater harvesting systems for capture were constructed this year, which meant the capacity of water harvesting systems for re-use and irrigation for the Sports Grounds of the municipality did not increase and remained at 39 ML/year. A new Stormwater Harvesting System will be constructed at Dunstan Reserve in 2023-24.
Area of catchment treated by water sensitive urban design approaches	Increase (Baseline measure 256 hectares)	294 hectares	Our water-sensitive urban design approaches have seen the areas of catchment increase from the previous year's result of 284 hectares to 294 - an increase of 10 hectares. This is derived from the completion of the new Moomba Park Wetland and associated water treatment.

Major initiatives and implementation of the Council Plan 2021 -2025

The following statement reviews the progress of council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2022-23 budget and Council Action Plan for the year

Major Initiatives	Progress
Park Close to Home projects including Service Street, Coburg, Cardinal Road, Glenroy and Frith Street, Brunswick.	Council continues to address gaps in its open space network by implementing its Park Close to Home program. The program aims to ensure that all residents in Merri-bek have access to open space within 500m of their homes or 300m for people residing in Activity Centres. In 2022-23 key construction milestones were passed for the Frith Street, Brunswick and the Service Street Coburg projects, which are due for completion in 2023-24.

<p>Integrated Water Management Framework 2040 and action plan;</p>	<p>Associated work to the Integrated Water Management Framework 2040 and action plan are the now completed construction of Moomba Park Wetlands in Fawkner. The purpose of this project is to help clean stormwater through native planting and rocks which provides habitat for wildlife such as local native frogs, insects and birds, while also providing amenities for the community.</p> <p>The detailed design of Stormwater Harvesting at AG Gillon and Gilpin Park (Brunswick Central Parklands) was another key framework project. The community was consulted on the concept designs and feedback was incorporated into developing the detailed design of the stormwater harvesting, which the relevant stakeholders are now reviewing. Additional soil testing and surveys were required due to the complex nature of the site.</p> <p>The implementation of the Yarra and Maribyrnong Catchment Scale Integrated Water Management plans to achieve 2030 targets continues to progress with external parties.</p>
<p>Zero Carbon Moreland Climate Emergency Action Plan Implementation</p>	<p>Council continued to advocate for a Zero Carbon Merri-bek with: the submission to Infrastructure Victoria's 30-year Strategy, Inquiry into the Melbourne 2022 Flood Event, Fuel Efficiency Standards Joint Statement and Mayors Statement on Climate Action to the Australian Council of Local Government.</p> <p>The Go Electric Action Plan included events, videos, and outdoor and online advertising. Additionally, successful campaigns and events were held throughout the year, such as, Electrify Merri-bek for residents and the launch of the Adaptation Game. Council led a national, Local Government Go Electric campaign and community of practice with over 65 councils and 170 council officers.</p> <p>Funding for energy efficiency and electrification works at two neighbourhood houses was received from Sustainability Victoria through the Community Climate Change and Energy Action Fund. Council also installed electric vehicle chargers for the Council fleet at Coburg Civic Centre and Walter St Depot. Officers assessed gas-consuming equipment across Council sites enabling us to plan for future electrification of our sites.</p> <p>Further Community based work saw the launch of the 'Unlocking Sustainable Strata' guidance for sustainability and electrification to assist apartment owners and body corporates and funding applications submitted to the Federal Government's Community Batteries for Household Solar Program for eligible suburbs of Coburg and Brunswick.</p>

Kerbside Waste Reform (communications and education)	<p>Throughout the year, Council delivered education campaigns for the new 4-bin service to the community; this service aims to improve the quality of recyclables and reduce waste sent to landfill.</p> <p>Trials were also conducted for the 4-stream waste collection at Multi-Unit Dwellings before the rollout of the Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) uplift, Recycling upsize, and 120L Glass bins to every property within Merri-bek in late June 2023, ready for commencement on July 1, 2023.</p> <p>Changes to a booking system for Hard Rubbish waste were trialled throughout the year, which were well received. This trail has now moved into the evaluation and recommendation phase.</p>
Solar/Thermal low-income grant scheme	<p>A total of 44 subsidised rooftop solar systems have been installed on eligible residents' homes, with an average system size of 5.4kW and household savings of around \$750 per year. In addition, 77 eligible households received subsidies for thermal efficiency upgrades (i.e. gap sealing and/or insulation).</p>
Development of Climate Risk Strategy	<p>Broad community consultation and stakeholder engagement was undertaken to finalise the Climate Risk Strategy, and Council endorsed it in November 2022. A key output of the strategy was the subsequent development of the Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan endorsed at the June 2023 Council meeting. The next step will be implementing the Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan 2023-2025.</p>
Ride and Stride school sustainable travel program	<p>Council continued working with local schools in Merri-bek to increase walking, riding and scooting to school. Across Merri-bek Primary, Brunswick Northwest Primary and St Oliver Plunkett Primary, we delivered Open Streets, e-cargo bike trials, TagOn technology and more. A further six primary schools from the municipality were inducted into the program in early 2023.</p> <p>Council worked with Bicycle Network to open local streets at school drop off and pick up times ensuring children walking and riding to school were safe from vehicle traffic. School staff were trained to deliver bike education to students, and upskilling Year 6 students into travelling independently to high school.</p> <p>Other initiatives included providing families with free access to a Lug and Carrie e-cargo bike for a month to try swapping the car for a cheaper, healthier and more enjoyable school run.</p>
Continue implementing Zero Waste (and plastic wise) Community and Council (Festivals, events, facilities) initiatives.	<p>Key highlights for implementing Zero Waste (and plastic wise) Community and Council (Festivals, events, facilities) initiatives have been; Online community waste education workshops focused on food waste minimisation and promoting reusable items, including cloth nappies.</p>

	<p>Council promoted partnerships with 'Responsible Cafes' in the community via posters promoting BYO food-ware containers and coffee cups to reduce waste- trialled reusable crockery at the Brunswick and Coburg Town Halls. Council partnered with Brunswick Tool Library, which hosted a popular repair stall at the Glenroy Festival.</p> <p>At the Glenroy festival, April vendors complied with our Plastic Wise Policy, Council also implemented reducing single-use plastic in our Draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilion Policy.</p> <p>Additionally, Council has prepared for the launch of the new 4-bin waste stream at Council facilities, glass recycling and food organics and garden organics (FOGO) bins were placed in break rooms and kitchens, maternal and child health centres, libraries, function spaces, and other Council venues.</p>
Review and implement the Merri-bek Open Space Strategy	<p>Comprehensive community engagement was undertaken in April and May to inform the development of the Open Space strategy; the project has now moved into the draft strategy development stage and is scheduled to be presented to Council in December 2023 and again in April 2024 for final adoption.</p>
Urban forest strategy – tree planting regime	<p>The 2023 tree planting season commenced in May 2023 and is planned to conclude by October 2023; the total number of trees planted in 2022-23 was 5,469, this is 30% more than the annual target of 2,500.</p> <p>Efforts were focused on developing Council's Urban Forest Tree Policy, which will strengthen protection measures for public trees and mature trees on private land protected under Council's General Local Law. Further development of the 'Neighbourwoods' Program and collaboration with the Gardens for Wildlife program will continue in the new financial year.</p>
Establishment of a Northern Food Hub	<p>The ongoing work establishing a Northern food hub saw two food security groups present project outcomes at a Community Food Hub event organised by the Food Leadership Action Group. These projects increased the range and availability of low-cost, high-quality, culturally relevant foods to vulnerable households north of Merri-bek.</p> <p>Council also established a Service Agreement with Open Food Network to guide the Food Leadership Action Group in supporting community-led action through the Collective Impact Measurement Framework, which will continue into the next financial year.</p>

Services		
The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2022-23 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.		
Service	Description	Net Cost Actual <u>Budget</u> Variance \$000
Open Space Design & Development	Partnering with the community, this service protects and enhances our green public open space which includes parks, reserves, playgrounds, sports fields, creek corridors and streetscapes. The service responsibilities of this service unit are: open space strategic planning and policy; bushland conservation; and park capital works planning, design and delivery.	2,690 <u>1,906</u> (784)
Open Space Maintenance	This service maintains open space assets such as playgrounds, sporting infrastructure, and park furniture; streetscapes such as street trees, roadside garden beds and street/footpath/laneway weeds; and grounds in community centres, child care centres and kindergartens located in Merri-bek.	12,434 <u>12,567</u> 133
Sustainable Built Environment	This service is responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring reporting on strategies, policies, programs and partnerships relating to Merri-bek's environmental sustainability, in particular relating to integrated water management, sustainable management of Council's buildings and infrastructure, promoting a sustainable built environment in new development, and promotion and expansion of our electric vehicle fleet and charging network.	875 <u>985</u> 110
Sustainable Communities	This service is responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring and reporting on strategies, policies, programs and partnerships relating to Merri-bek's environmental sustainability, in particular fostering community climate action and advocacy for zero net emissions, zero waste and a circular economy in Merri-bek.	1,420 <u>2,471</u> 1,051

Community Development & Social Policy	This service contributes to social justice and community wellbeing by advocating for equitable and inclusive Council policies, services, facilities and programs. Further, by facilitating consultation and collaboration across Council and with community partners to address current and emerging community needs and supporting local actions to promote human rights, accessibility for all, volunteering, community service networks, food security, social cohesion, reconciliation, gender equality, family violence prevention, gambling harm prevention.	2,053 <u>2,325</u> 272
Waste Services	From 2023/24 the waste collection service provides weekly general rubbish and food and garden organics collections, fortnightly mixed recycling collections, 4-weekly glass recycling collections and booked kerbside hard waste collections.	17,907 <u>18,374</u> 467

Service performance indicators					
The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.					
LGPRF under this section	Results				
Service/ Indicator/ measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Comments
Waste Collection Satisfaction Kerbside bin collection requests [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households] x1000	274.25	266.35	235.70	247.32	There was a slight increase in garbage and recycling collection requests. This was mostly due to missed collections, which comprised 68% of the requests.
Service standard	12.06	12.92	12.51	14.65	Missed collection requests have increased this year. This was particularly problematic in early 2023 where

Kerbside collection bins missed <i>[Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x10,000</i>					driver shortages led to kerbside services falling behind schedule.
Service cost Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service <i>[Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]</i>	\$92.23	\$101.02	\$114.00	\$122.31	Increase mainly attributable to increased collection costs and increased waste levy.
Service cost Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service <i>[Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]</i>	\$59.82	\$68.05	\$70.95	\$74.17	Increase mainly attributable to increased collection costs and increased processing costs.
Waste diversion	48.48%	49.39%	48.34%	48.42%	Overall, the amount of material collected has decreased, with 1953 tonnes less garbage collected;

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Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100					this is despite a marginal increase in properties serviced.
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Strategic objective 2: Moving and living safely in Merri-bek

To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.

Strategic indicators

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the council plan including results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the council plan.

Strategic Indicator/measure	Target or desired trend	2022-23 Result	Comments
Expenditure per capita on bike and pedestrian infrastructure	Maintain baseline <i>(With an aim to increase, subject to budget process)</i>	\$7.70 per head	Council's baseline expenditure per capita on bike and pedestrian infrastructure is \$10 per head of population. An expenditure of \$7.70 per head has been achieved with another \$11.84 of projects carried forward into 2023-24 due to a number of delays.
Number of transport related injuries and fatalities	Decrease:	3 fatalities, 94 serious and 197 other injury crashes	Crash history from 2021-22 indicates 3 fatalities, 94 serious injuries and 197 other injury crashes which unfortunately indicates an increase in fatalities and serious injuries, which is consistent with crash history across Victoria. <i>Note** There is a lag in available data used to measure this indicator.</i>
Proportion of trips made by public transport, bicycle or on foot	Increase:	No result available	Council has been unable to ascertain this information as the annual household surveys have not been undertaken.
Number of kilometres of new, separated, dedicated cycling infrastructure / safe places to ride	Maintain baseline	840 metres of separated	At the August 2022 Council meeting Council resolved to make the trial separated bicycle lanes in Dawson Street,

	(With an aim to increase, subject to budget process)	bicycle path made permanent	Brunswick (530m) and Northumberland Road, Pascoe Vale (310m) permanent. The Kent Road trial was extended by a year.
Number of pedestrian crossings installed per year	Maintain baseline (With an aim to increase, subject to budget process) 2-3 per year	7 Installations	Through additional Federal funding and planned installations Council was able to install seven threshold treatments (coloured and/or textured road surface treatments that contrast with adjacent roadway).

Major initiatives and implementation of the Council Plan 2021 -2025	
The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2022-23 budget and Council Action Plan for the year.	
Major Initiatives	Progress
Refresh the transport strategy in consultation with the community	<p>Departmental resourcing initially delayed the early project phase in reviewing and implementing the transport strategy and revising the parking management policy, which forms part of the overarching strategy.</p> <p>Internal engagement and social policy research fieldwork was completed through the last half of the financial year; this will help inform the discussion paper for the strategy and community engagement activities due to occur from July 2023. Council will aim to draft a strategy for consideration in November 2023.</p>
Design and construction of new shared paths along the Craigieburn Rail Corridor.	<p>Council has been pursuing design approvals for Stage 2 and Stage 3 sections of the Craigieburn Rail Corridor project; however, this has encountered hurdles with ensuring Melbourne Water Design or Metro Trains (MTM) construction requirements are met. In light of the unsuitable designs, Council could not commit to constructing these project stages. It is necessary to undertake additional work on a design that will address Melbourne Water and Metro Trains requirements and then be suitable for submission to (MTM)/VicTrack for final approvals to be shovel-ready for any future grant opportunities.</p>

	<p>Work has proceeded on a concept alignment in the corridor between Oak Park and Glenroy (Stage 4). Council is seeking approval and cost estimates to have a shovel-ready design for future funding and able to be confidently proposed for grant opportunities and is working to submit a design to (MTM/VicTrack) for their assessment by early 2023-24. This will then position Council well for advocacy around funding for the construction of shared paths in this Strategic Cycling Corridor.</p>
<p>Advocate to improve public transport capacity and equitable access across Merri-bek</p>	<p>Council advocated for improvements to Merri-bek's public transport capacity and equitable access opportunities throughout the year, which have included, the duplication of the Upfield line North of Gowrie Station in letters to the Minister for Public Transport and to all Northern Metropolitan MPs when sharing Council's Reshaping Brunswick paper (regarding the Brunswick Level Crossing Removals).</p> <p>Duplication of the Upfield line and the creation of an East/West bus link and improved bus services in the North were also discussed with Federal MP for Wills Peter Khalil, via a Northern Councils Alliance meeting and followed up with a localised perspective by Merri-bek Mayor and CEO.</p> <p>The Merri-bek Mayor and CEO shared similar information with Sheena Watt, Northern Metropolitan MP. Council also submitted to Infrastructure Victoria, including advocating for the duplication of the Upfield line North of Gowrie and creating an East/West bus link and improved bus services in the North for inclusion in Infrastructure Victoria's next 30-year infrastructure strategy.</p> <p>Discussion and progress of a regional approach, including extension and electrification to Wallan, continued with Mitchell and Hume Councils, with the addition of Whittlesea indicating their desire to join a regional advocacy approach going forward.</p> <p>Council also investigated options for tram extensions for routes 19 and 58, and the information sourced will inform a future advocacy position of the Council.</p>

Services		
The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2022-23 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.		
Service	Description	Net Cost Actual <u>Budget</u> Variance \$000
Engineering Services	This service develops and coordinates the detailed planning, design, tendering and construction of Council's Road and drainage asset capital works programs, and manages the design and reconstruction of Council's drainage network.	938 <u>374</u> (564)
Transport Development	This service provides strategic transport planning and transport engineering to support a liveable city by ensuring that the community has access to a variety of modes to travel around and that consideration is given to what is best for the environment, community and the economy. Specific services include strategic transport planning, transport engineering, road safety and accessibility, transport permits, and transport advocacy.	2,508 <u>2,302</u> (206)
Road Construction and Maintenance	This service aims to create a more liveable city by providing a range of services to maintain and improve the safety and integrity of the City's Road Network. Specific services include: pothole patching, road resheeting and various civil infrastructure maintenance activities.	3,549 <u>3,520</u> (29)

Service performance indicators		
The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.		
LGPRF under this section	Results	

Service/ Indicator/ measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Comments
Roads Satisfaction of use Sealed local road requests <i>[Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100</i>	112.88	98.94	98.78	142.53	The increase is most likely attributed to an increase in wet conditions experienced over the last two years and the gradual ageing of road pavements.
Condition Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards <i>[Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100</i>	94.64%	95.04%	95.36%	93.34%	Necessary pavement patching works are being undertaken as programmed.
Service cost Cost of sealed local road reconstruction <i>[Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]</i>	\$258.13	\$237.53	\$299.69	\$347.04	This increase reflects the current inflation in the CPI and within the construction industry over the last two years.
Service Cost Cost of sealed local road resealing	\$19.21	\$19.58	\$22.10	\$28.13	The standard application thickness was increased from 25mm to 30mm this year. The increase in cost also reflects the current inflation in the CPI and within the construction industry over the last two years.

[Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]					
Satisfaction Satisfaction with sealed local roads [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	57.00	60.00	57.00	51.00	The 2023 score has declined from the previous year. The Metropolitan councils as a group, saw a similar average decline.

Strategic objective 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek

To support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services, facilitating local partnerships and programs, mitigating the effects of climate change and supporting the community to adapt and build climate resilience.

Strategic indicators

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the council plan including results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the council plan.

Strategic Indicator/measure	Target or desired trend	2022-23 Result	Comments
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Number of visits to aquatic facilities per head of municipal population (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator). <i>Noting construction periods and irregular opening hours may impact on number of visits.</i>	Increase:	5.64 visits	Council visitor attendance is back to pre-pandemic levels. This is a favourable result for Council as we continue to upgrade our facilities, such as Oak Park in 2018 and soon-to-be Fawkner.
Active library borrowers in municipality (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator)	Increase:	11.35%	With libraries back to normal operation, members have been increasing their use of collections. Libraries have also been campaigning to encourage the community to join and/or return to the library.
Participation in the MCH service (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator)	Increase:	74.60%	Council has seen another slight increase in participation in Maternal Child health services this year.
Participation in community playgroups kindergarten and childhood immunisation programs.	Increase:	Result: 88%	Kindergarten participation has increased by 4% on the previous year. We note that Kindergarten participation rates only includes Merri-bek residents who attend Merri-bek based Kindergarten and other municipalities. Data reported may underrepresent the total percentage of children in Merri-bek attending Kindergarten.
	Increase:	Childhood Immunisation programs: 3,673	The total number of children immunised in active programs for 2022-23 were 3,673 under 5's, this is a 1.7% decrease on the previous year's result.
Increase Merri-bek Council's active partnerships with First Nations Business and community organisations	Increase:	Result: 60%	<p>Council procurement aims to spend 1% of its total procurement activities year-on-year through partnerships with First Nations Businesses. Council achieved 60% of its target; however, this is an increase of 85% from the previous year, from \$204,530 to \$383,608 (1 July 2022- 30 June 2023).</p> <p>Community organisation activities included: The Arts and Culture Unit consult regularly with the First Nations Creative Consultation group who played a</p>

			<p>significant role in developing the 2023-2030 Arts and Culture Strategy.</p> <p>Continued advocacy for the Ballerdt Mooroop Community Hub Council and 30 facilitated stakeholder engagement activities which resulted in the receipt of formal letters of support from seven First Nations organisations for the Ballerdt Mooroop project.</p> <p>Council continued to support the Victorian Treaty process through active support for the work of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria in their 2023 Assembly elections and by organising a public forum with the Yoorrook Justice Commission.</p> <p>Council continued to hold monthly consultations with the Elders of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. In 2022-23 Council held 11 regular consultations and two special purpose consultations with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders.</p> <p>Council continued its partnership with Wurundjeri Narrap Rangers, who manage three sites in Merri-bek; Merri Murnong Coburg North, Bababi Djinanang Fawkner and Djirri Djirri, Glenroy.</p>
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Major initiatives and implementation of the Council Plan 2021 -2025

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2022-23 budget and Council Action Plan for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Commence the upgrade works for several kindergartens over the next five years totalling \$14.6 million, including completing Oak Park kindergarten & Doris Blackburn in 22/23	<p>Project updates in relation to priority projects include; the upgrade and expansion of the Park Street Early Learning Co-op was completed in April 2023. Doris Blackburn Kindergarten had a new 33-place kindergarten room installed, and associated landscaping and works to the car park were also completed.</p> <p>Stage one works to create a 33-place kindergarten at Pascoe Vale Community Centre commenced in June 2023. Turner Street Kindergarten improvement and expansion works for the kindergarten will begin in July 2023.</p> <p>Construction will commence at Oak Park Kindergarten with an additional 33-place kindergarten room once a planning permit are obtained. Additionally, detailed plans have been developed for Derby St Children's Centre. Construction will commence once a planning permit is obtained.</p> <p>Preliminary planning works began with the proposed development of a new Early Years Hub to be situated on Council-owned land at 346 Albert St, Brunswick. While all projects have progressed, there have been delays due to factors, including longer-than-anticipated timeframes for planning and tender processes with some projects.</p>
Implement Gender Equity Action Plan	The Gender Equity Action Plan continued to be implemented and embedded throughout Council. Key highlights have included, progressing

	<p>plans to create gender-neutral bathrooms for staff, updating the Family and Domestic Violence Policy and providing staff training.</p> <p>Council has also delivered cultural safety program training and improved data collection systems to enable the safe and accurate recording of employee identity information. Additionally, there were updates made to key policies, such as the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour policy to specifically refer to sexual harassment.</p>
Implement the First Peoples Employment Plan	<p>The First Peoples Employment Plan was endorsed. The plan included the recruitment of a First Peoples Employment Officer to support the delivery of the planned outcomes, including the development and delivery of staff training plans relating to cultural safety and awareness. Key partnerships with First Nations recruitment agencies were also established.</p>
Harold Stevens Athletics Track fences \$150,000	<p>The community proposed a fencing upgrade to the Harold Stevens Athletic Track as part of the Council's 2022-23 financial year community budget program and successfully gained Council funding. The fencing upgrade project involved; the removal of cyclone fencing and the installation new fencing. New pathways, pedestrian access gates and upgraded safety and wayfinding signage were installed and the project is now complete.</p>
Hadfield sporting club scoreboard \$160,000	<p>As part of the Council's 2022-23 financial year community budget program, the community proposed Council install a timekeeper's box and digital scoreboard at Martin Reserve, located on Box Forest Road, Hadfield.</p> <p>The new timekeeper's box and scoreboard will benefit all users of the Hadfield Sporting Club, which is home to sports such as football, cricket and netball. This project is in the final stage of completion and is scheduled to be completed in the first quarter of 2023-24.</p>
Youth Assertive Outreach Program \$60,000	<p>Council contributed \$60,000 in funding for Youth Assertive Outreach in recognition of long waiting lists for specialist support and a major service gap in the demand for intensive case-management support. The Youth Holistic Outreach Program (YHOP) is an early intervention assertive outreach service that engages and connects at-risk young people aged 12</p>

	<p>to 25 years to individualised housing, mental health education, training, employment, and crisis support.</p> <p>Sixty-seven young people were supported during the 12 months; the funding provided in 2022-23 was used to appoint a part-time YHOP coach (youth worker) to provide timely support to young people to overcome a range of barriers through tailored, flexible and holistic wrap-around support. The young people engaged in the program reported improvements in self-confidence, access to longer-term support, mental health, social engagement and re-engagement in education or training pathways.</p>
Outdoor help and transport	<p>The outdoor help and transport program for 2022-23 has seen the commencement of the 'Age Well Pilot Program', which commenced accepting referrals and working with individuals to provide support in accessing services and information from April 2023.</p> <p>The promotion of the program progressed with the development of flyers and postcards through Council's internal network. Four community outreach sessions were held, including a stall at the Sydney Road Street Festival and the 'Bring your Bills' event at the Glenroy Community Hub.</p> <p>The 'Outdoor Help Project' was promoted at Council's customer services centres and through distribution to Seniors Clubs and current client groups. 170 residents were assigned to the program and were able to access services such as garden clean up, tree removal, and development of raised garden beds.</p>
Pursue the development of a health and community services hub (health precinct within the Coburg activity centre)	<p>Following detailed negotiations on community benefit and delivery requirements, the contract of sale to transact land at Bell Street Coburg, to create a health and community services precinct was signed in December 2022.</p>
Advocate to support delivery of the Ballertr Mooroop Community Hub	<p>Landscaping works were completed at Ballertr Mooroop Community Hub throughout the year. Between March to June 2023, stakeholder engagement was undertaken to inform the development of the Hub; this</p>

	<p>included 25 different engagement activities, which resulted in receiving seven formal letters of support for the Ballerdt Mooroop Community Hub.</p> <p>Over 200 people attended the Ballerdt Mooroop Day in May 2023, which included many First Nations community leaders; the day also included a presentation to the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Board of Management, and a site visit from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung education team. Formal support for the project was also received from the CEO of Victorian Aboriginal Health Services.</p>
Implement the Children, Young People and Families Plan	<p>While COVID-19 has continued to impact service delivery at times, and some projects and programs were delayed or modified, there has been good progress in implementing key actions from the Plan, with almost 50 now completed.</p> <p>Some highlights have included; continued growth in participation by young people in programs in the North of Merri-bek through partnerships and space activation of the library at Glenroy Community Hub and several social and recreational programs in Fawkner, including "drop-in" and female only Basketball programs and study support groups. Community and school engagement and participation at festivals and events have supported promoting youth programs, including a drop-in at the Oxygen Youth Space at Coburg North.</p> <p>A new group of Youth Ambassadors and the Children's Reference Group both held their first meetings in March 2023. They are now meeting regularly, with both identifying opportunities to provide input into Council decision-making.</p> <p>Maternal and Child Health partnerships and programs have supported providing legal support to women experiencing family violence, catch-ups for LGBTIQ+ families and the expansion of Dads Groups and other events for new fathers. The Sleep and Settling Program has high participation</p>

	<p>levels. It includes in-person (group) sessions, online and outreach to individual families where required.</p> <p>The 'Intergenerational Pilot Program' was trialed in late 2022. This program focused on older residents visiting Early Years Services and participating in planned programs with children, focusing on art and music. Due to the success of the program Council will expand it, with many Centres expressing an interest in participating during 2023.</p>
Implement the Social Cohesion Plan	<p>The key highlights of implementing the social cohesion plan for 2022-23 have been; the 'Welcoming Cities Victorian Gathering' and community event during Cultural Diversity Week at Glenroy Community Hub, where the Social Cohesion Plan was presented. Social cohesion measures also continue to be embedded across Council departments.</p> <p>The 'Connecting Women in Merri-bek' funded partnership project was concluded with great outcomes and has moved into the evaluation phase, in addition to the 'Democracy Lab' and 'The Seeds of Change' projects. Preparations have also been finalised for the Victorian Interfaith Network Festival, which will be held on the 19th of November at the Coburg Town Hall.</p>

Services		
The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2022-23 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.		
Service	Description	Net Cost Actual <u>Budget</u> Variance \$000

Aquatic and Community Facilities	<p>This service provides for the management, operations and service delivery of Merri-bek's six Aquatic and Leisure Centres through an external contracted service provider; including direction and oversight of the Active Merri-bek program and service development; compliance auditing across a range of functions to deliver the objectives and outcomes required of the contract; capital maintenance and infrastructure improvement planning and project supervision; and, policy development and review.</p> <p>This service also provides accessible well utilised Council managed community venues for hire facilities that meet community needs, through the management of the 20 venues including small halls, senior citizen centres and external meeting rooms.</p>	1,591 <u>1,882</u> 291
Assessment Services	<p>This service provides Home Support Assessments for the older people, people with a disability or illness and their carers, they provide referrals to and information about other related services, and assistance with care coordination. Clients are then either linked to support services as part of the Commonwealth Home Support Program or the Home and Community Care Program for Younger People.</p>	190 <u>353</u> 164
Children's Services	<p>This service provides years early advocacy and planning, infrastructure management, professional training, network facilitation, resourcing and support to child care, kindergarten and playgroup providers. This unit also provides services and programs for families, including Supported Playgroups, Family Day Care, Primary School Holiday Programs, Kindergarten Central Enrolment and Child Care Central Registration to access Merri-bek programs, inclusion support to kindergartens through the Preschool Field Officer Program, and information on early years services.</p>	1,333 <u>1,655</u> 322
Environmental Health	<p>This service works to prevent food-borne illness by ensuring the supply of safe and suitable food through inspecting food premises, manage infectious disease outbreaks, ensure prescribed accommodation is provided at required standards, nuisance complaint investigation and resolution, proactively manage tobacco control activities, manage residential noise complaints, provide support to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and provide public health-related information to the community.</p>	(256) <u>(179)</u> 77
Home Care	<p>This service aims to assist eligible residents to remain living at home independently and in a safe and secure environment. Specific services include home</p>	1,972 <u>1,741</u> (231)

	maintenance and modifications, general home care and support, respite care, assistance with shopping and other activities and personal support.	
People and Safety	This service provides advice and support to the organisation regarding: the attraction, recruitment and selection for its employees; payroll; performance management; employee and industrial relations; development and implementation of HR policies, systems and processes including workforce planning; gender equity action planning; learning and development; and oversight of the health and safety processes including management of WorkCover claims and the return to work of sick and injured employees. In addition, there is a focus on the provision of health and well-being activities, induction and workplace training which supports a proactive approach to workplace safety.	3,988 <u>3,515</u> (472)
Maternal Child Health and Immunisation	The Maternal and Child Health (and Immunisations) service supports the optimal health and development of young children and families in their parenting role. Specific activities include: parenting support and education; breastfeeding support, sleep and settling, health promotion; immunisations for children, youth and adults; monitoring of growth and development in children; and, early identification and attention to child and family health issues. Our Immunisation service provides a schedule of vaccines offered free under the National Immunisation Program and Victorian immunisation programs for children, adolescents and adults at scheduled ages.	3,529 <u>4,031</u> 502
Recreation Services	This service aims to improve sport and physical activity participation for people of all ages gender, background and ability by promoting the use of recreation facilities and enhancing the capacity of local recreation, sporting clubs and community organisations to deliver services.	1,225 <u>1,040</u> (185)
Social Support Services	This service delivers a number of specific social support programs, including Community Transport, Food Services, Social Support Connection Options (which provides activities, outings for socially isolated eligible residents), and the provision of information and support to older community residents and senior citizens groups.	1,521 <u>1,415</u> (106)
Youth Services	This service aims to improve the lives of young people through the provision of safe, supportive and inclusive programs and spaces that promote youth participation and wellbeing. Specific service activities include: service planning and delivery; facility management and working in partnership with young people and the community to engage and empower young people in Merri-bek.	1,449 <u>1,413</u> (35)

Service performance indicators					
The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.					
	Results				
Service/ Indicator/ measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Comments
Aquatic Facilities Service standard Health inspections of aquatic facilities <i>[Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]</i>	0.83	0.00	1.00	1.00	Councils Environmental Health Officers conducted inspections of 100% of council owned aquatic facilities within the reporting period.
Utilisation Utilisation of aquatic facilities <i>[Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]</i>	4.49	2.31	3.55	5.64	Council visitor attendance is back to pre-pandemic levels. This is a favourable result for Council as we continue to upgrade our facilities, such as Oak Park in 2018 and soon-to-be Fawkner.
Service cost Cost of aquatic facilities <i>[Direct cost of aquatic facilities less income received]</i>	\$2.57	\$10.60	\$7.04	\$2.37	Pandemic-related costs significantly impacted the cost of aquatic facilities in the prior year. All centres are now back to full operation, which has brought down the associated costs of facilities for Council in the current year, with the exception of Fawkner Leisure Centre closure in April for upgrade works.

/ Number of visits to aquatic facilities]					
Food Safety Timeliness Time taken to action food complaints [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]	2.58	2.91	2.91	2.92	The average time taken to respond to food related complaints has remained stable at 2.92 days. This maintains Council's average response rate below three calendar days since 2018.
Service standard Food safety assessments [Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984 / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984] x100	90.03%	40.60%	55.63%	71.82%	72% of Class 1 and 2 food premises received a food safety assessment in 2022. Whilst this result is an improvement from 2021, a higher rate of non-compliance prompting more follow-up assessments, difficulties accessing businesses post the Covid-19 pandemic and significant staff changes impacted Council's ability to achieve 100% of first assessments.
Service cost Cost of food safety service	\$567.75	\$639.60	\$551.37	\$586.59	Costs have increased on this indicator due to filling two long-term staff vacancies. Having these positions filled increases the service cost from the previous year,

[Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]					as well as a minor reduction (2%) in the number of premises registered.
Health and safety Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications [Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100	100.00%	95.05%	100.00%	100.00%	All 277 non-compliances identified through assessments and inspections of food premises have been followed up to ensure compliance with relevant standards has been achieved.
Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service standard Infant enrolments in the MCH service [Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100	101.07%	100.83%	100.73%	100.98%	This indicator has remained consistent over the past few years.

Service cost Cost of the MCH service <i>[Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]</i>	\$73.87	\$74.35	\$86.34	\$69.28	Council has gone back to full delivery post-pandemic and allowing our nurses to see more clients, reducing the service's cost delivery.
Participation Participation in the MCH service <i>[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100</i>	72.27%	69.79%	71.95%	74.60%	Council has seen another slight increase in participation in Maternal Child health services this year.
Participation Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children <i>[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100</i>	71.43%	68.86%	71.52%	73.81%	Another small increase for the financial year with 84 families using the service. Engagement in Maternal Child health programs continues to show the value of the service to families
Satisfaction Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit <i>[Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of</i>	87.02%	88.39%	88.69%	87.73%	Council had a number of families transfer out from Merri-bek prior to their four-week appointment.

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birth notifications received] x100					
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Strategic objective 4: Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek

To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity.

Strategic indicators

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the council plan including results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the council plan.

Strategic Indicator/measure	Target or desired trend	2022-23 Result	Comments
Number of businesses in the municipality	Increase	18,333	Revisions made by the Australian Business Register to their previous estimates for the preceding year's figure (March 2022) resulted in a revised figure of 18,050. As a result, the latest figure available (for March 2023) shows a 1.6% increase in the number of GST registered businesses in Merri-bek.
Proportion of residents employed in the municipality	Increase	19.0%	The 2021 Census shows that 19% of Merri-bek's employed residents work in a job that is located in Merri-bek; equating to 17,658 people. This is a small increase when compared to the previous result from the 2016 Census.
Number of affordable housing projects delivered	Increase	1 project delivered	One development containing 5 affordable dwellings was completed in 2022-23, this is a decreased result on 2021-

		containing 5 affordable dwellings.	<p>22 where there was one development containing 32 affordable dwellings.</p> <p>Two planning permits containing 21 affordable dwellings were issued in 2022-23 for future delivery.</p>
Participation in arts /cultural events	Increase	115,175 participation rates in arts and cultural events	Attendance at the Counihan Gallery was 6,415, including onsite public programs. A further 3,210 people attended online. Our festivals and other arts events saw a participation rate of 105,550, which is a total of 115,175. This figure is elevated due to the State Government funded Resonate program and the return of the Sydney Road Street Party and is a 128% increase on the previous year's result.
Increase number of jobs within the municipality	Increase	49,152	<p>Revisions made by to the preceding year's figure (i.e. for the year ending June 2021) means that that figure was revised to 47,256.</p> <p>As a result, the latest figure available (for June 2022) shows a 4.0% increase in the number of jobs in Merri-bek.</p>

Major initiatives and implementation of the Council Plan 2021 -2025

The following statement reviews the progress of Council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2022-23 budget and council plan for the year.

Major Initiatives	Progress
Collaborative Graffiti Intervention Program \$61,357	<p>The collaborative graffiti intervention program saw six mural installations across the municipality. The program helps beautify Council's public spaces, engage the arts community in meaningful public artwork, and address graffiti hotspots in Merri-bek.</p> <p>A diverse range of local artists were commissioned to design and paint murals at the following locations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brunswick Baths, Phoenix Street gym entrance. • 201-207 Barkly St, Brunswick, Ewing St side wall. • 384 Victoria Street, Brunswick. Leslie St side wall. • Pascoe Vale South Primary School, Citylink noise wall, Parkstone Ave, Pascoe Vale South (with contribution from Transurban). • 369 Sydney Road, Brunswick, Albert St side wall. • 182 Sydney Road, Coburg, Rennie St side wall.
Commence the construction of the \$27.8 million Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment project;	<p>The progress of the Fawkner Leisure Centre upgrade for 2022-23 included awarding the design and construction contract at the December Council meeting, works began in April 2023. The site's redevelopment will mean a more accessible and environmentally friendly Leisure Centre that will enable all ages and abilities to participate in a healthy and active lifestyle in the local community.</p>
Completing the construction of the \$11.3 million Fleming Park redevelopment project (\$6.5 million);	<p>The construction phase of the Fleming Park master plan priorities is now complete; Council is awaiting the power connection of the site before it can be handed over to the relevant clubs. The demolition of the Clarrie Wohlers Centre is scheduled for August 2023.</p>

<p>Completing the design and commence the construction of the \$22.6 million Saxon Street facility and open space</p>	<p>The transformation at 33 Saxon Street, Brunswick, is now underway, with the design finalised through community consultation. Council endorsed the construction tender in December 2022, and construction began in May 2023 on the community and cultural hub. Once complete, the hub will offer artists and creatives affordable, sustainable, and practical spaces that will support the thriving creative industries in Merri-bek. It will also be home to maternal and child health services, multipurpose community rooms, commercial office spaces, and improved connections to the Brunswick Baths.</p>
<p>Complete two fenced dog-off-leash areas in northern Merri-bek ahead of finalising the Merri-bek Open Space Strategy.</p>	<p>Public consultation took place on the preferred location of two new dog parks in the municipality. Council reviewed community feedback and design options for two preferred locations progressed. The sites selected were Glenroy (Kingsford Smith-Ulm) and Fawkner (Moomba Par). The dog parks are currently under construction and are expected to be completed and open to the public in September 2023.</p>
<p>Revitalise the Coburg Activity Centre (start landing and communicating)</p>	<p>Progress has been made on many fronts, particularly around engagement planning, due diligence, and explorations of potential partnerships with a significant multi-year pipeline of projects. Whilst detailed planning is well underway, the need to carry out further due diligence on the context and constraints for central Coburg and the exploration of partnerships for delivery to inform the community engagement program means the delivery of the engagement program will now take place in the next financial year.</p>
<p>Review and implement the Affordable Housing Action Plan including the development of affordable housing on council land</p>	<p>The review and implementation of the Affordable Housing Action Plan this year has seen; Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd recognised the Council name change and became "Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd" in December 2022, with a draft new memorandum of understanding presented to Merri-bek Affordable Housing (MAH) for feedback. Council has also supported the (MAH) Board transition to a new Executive Officer.</p> <p>Further work on delivering the actions in the Affordable Housing Action Plan included, an in-principal agreement to sell 1/6 Sutherland St for use as social housing by Aboriginal Housing Victoria and increased advocacy and cooperation with M9 Councils, Homes Victoria and federal agencies.</p>

	<p>Following the endorsement of the Affordable Housing Action Plan in December 2022, which included developing the Merri-bek "Functional" Zero approach, Council has also allocated and endorsed a budget for assertive outreach for this program in the next financial year.</p>
Deliver Zero Carbon in the Planning Scheme (formally ESD version 2)	<p>Council lodged a Planning Scheme Amendment to introduce additional environmentally sustainable design (ESD) measures into the planning scheme on 28 July 2022. The amendment is yet to be authorised by the Minister for Planning. The Government's ESD Roadmap is also continuing alongside the Council process. It is expected to deliver the remaining environmentally sustainable design initiatives from Plan Melbourne in 2023.</p>
Review and prepare an implementation plan for the Merri-bek Planning Scheme	<p>Council reviewed the planning scheme, and a report was presented to Council at the October 2022 meeting. Council will also consider a project status report to review Neighbourhood Character provisions in the new financial year. This report will note what has been completed in the project and outline the further work required to encourage better-quality design of developments in Merri-bek.</p> <p>Council has also worked to formalise flood modelling within the Planning Scheme. This has included validating the stormwater modelling data for Council drainage assets prepared in 2018. Further community consultation is planned for later in 2023.</p>
Implement major activity centre capital works improvements in Coburg, Brunswick and Glenroy and neighbourhood activity centre capital works improvements as per the Shopping Strip Renewal Program	<p>The major activity centre capital works improvements and neighbourhood activity centre capital works improvements as per the Shopping Strip Renewal Programs have seen a number of actions completed over the financial year.</p> <p>Council carried out safety and accessibility audits for Louisa Street in Brunswick and designed tactical responses to improve the street for pedestrians. Artists and line-marking consultants have been engaged in installing Stage 1 tactical urbanism initiatives, which will be delivered in the new financial year.</p>

	<p>Council continued to integrate and implement business development programs into the Shopping Strip Renewal Program; activities undertaken include launching the Melville-Moreland Shopping Strip Renewal Project. Council also commenced engagement with businesses and local residents in West Street, Hadfield, to understand the concerns arising from the community.</p> <p>Related to this work program, Council continued to maintain the 'More Space' installations across Merri-bek, showcasing the work and wares of local micro-businesses. Council also implemented the Vacant Shop Grant program, launched in October 2022, which supported eleven businesses to set up formerly vacant shops across Merri-bek.</p> <p>The design commenced for the 260 Sydney Road (Park Close to Home) project; activities undertaken have included a draft concept design for the new park completion and community consultation. Council also sought feedback on the draft design and name suggestions for the new park.</p> <p>Construction works on the Wheatsheaf Road streetscape improvement in Glenroy were delayed due to site complexities. Stewart Street streetscape improvements in Brunswick were also delayed as per the capital works budget allocation.</p> <p>The commencement of a detailed design for the West Street streetscape renewal project in Glenroy was put on hold due to the complex and varied feedback received from the community. Further consultation with key stakeholders will be required to ensure Council has understood and met expectations.</p>
Activate major activity centres with intensive, holistic, rapid turnaround economic programs that increase social and economic activity and enhance local identity	<p>Collaboration with local traders, residents, agencies and creatives, developing and implementing of activation program for Brunswick, Glenroy and Coburg has seen the below activities.</p>

Brunswick: Activation of the future Park Close to Home site at 260 Sydney Road with night-time projection shows and a Christmas Carols event hosted by the adjacent Church community in December 2022. A closing party of Siteworks at 33 Saxon Street, including live music, a roller disco and an art market. The closing party was a significant milestone in the project which brought together old and new tenants and users to celebrate the project's achievements.

Further preparation on the Planning Scheme Amendment for an Activity Centre Zone for the Brunswick Activity Centre was also made with Council considering a report in May 2022 to endorse a third phase of consultation to seek feedback from the community. The third phase includes consultation on the draft Brunswick Activity Centre Zone, which responds to community feedback from the first two phases of engagement and an updated Brunswick Structure Plan.

Glenroy: The shopfront improvement program in Wheatsheaf Road was completed, and the Glenroy Cultural Diversity event took place in March 2023. The activation program concluded with a major event for Glenroy; Council partnered with the Melbourne International Film Festival to deliver a multicultural film festival. The Glenroy Public Hall was transformed into a Cinema for a four-day, seven-film festival. The festival was well attended and welcomed by the local community.

Coburg: Shade structures and picnic tables were installed at Coburg Courtyard to improve the usability of the space. A launch party was held in April 2022 which included 'Courtyard Jams'. Four plus activation events were also completed at the Coburg Activity Centre; including partnering with local creatives to develop and implement an activation program for Coburg Business Association to deliver Easter school holiday activities and a community lunch in Victoria Mall.

<p>In consultation with the community, develop and implement a new Public Realm Amenity Service Plan to keep our spaces and places clean, safe and inviting.</p>	<p>The Public Realm Amenity Service Plan preparation has seen three actions take place this year, which have included; a review of service levels for responding to public realm amenity customer requests, where Council has assembled a project team to collate and analyse data and further scope the development of the plan.</p> <p>Also, there has been collaboration with neighbouring Councils to advocate for removing graffiti on State-owned assets. Neighbouring Councils have expressed interest in approaching the state regarding a holistic review of how assets on state-owned land is maintained. Merri-bek will continue to work with them on advocacy opportunities.</p> <p>Council has also worked with the community to encourage greater participation in litter collection days, tree planting, weeding, and graffiti removal and clarify the community's role in nature strip management and keeping footpaths clear. Activities have included litter collection activities with the community around ATC Cook.</p> <p>Work on the Gardens for Wildlife Program continued to progress; the latest cohort of Nature Stewards graduated from the Nature Stewards course in June 2023. This program connects curious residents with their local environment and supports them to become actively engaged environmental champions. Collaboration with the Sydney traders' associations also took place to address graffiti on private properties along Sydney Road.</p>
<p>Implement Library strategy</p>	<p>The continued implementation of the library strategy has seen three actions occur throughout the year. The Libraries After Dark program was hosted at Glenroy Library until 10 pm on Thursday evenings. The program highlights include various events, including a fantastic and well-attended celebration for Cultural Diversity Week. There were also Conversation Cafe, Chess Night, Seed Masterclass and Job readiness workshops.</p>

	<p>Council undertook a trial for placements of 'Social Workers in a Library setting' through a partnership with Yarra, Melbourne Libraries, and RMIT University. Through the trial, a Master of Social Work student worked across Coburg, Glenroy and Brunswick libraries. The trial was a success, and a further one-year trial is underway with a Library Social Worker available for consultations with community members from June 2023.</p> <p>A framework was also developed to support Community programs for well-being and learning outcomes at Council's libraries. This will guide Merri-bek library's event planning and delivery of service.</p>
Develop and implement integrated arts and culture strategy	<p>Council worked to develop and prepare a new Arts and Culture Strategy that will inform arts, culture and creative practices in Merri-bek over the next five years. Community consultation was undertaken, and a draft strategy was presented to the council in June 2023; further community consultation is needed before the strategy is finalised in September 2023.</p>
Deliver a large-scale Glenroy Community Festival annually	<p>Council completed the 2022-23 festival program with the Glenroy Festival in April, with over 3000 people attending. Local Glenroy and Merri-bek artists performed, including Mary Petts Guitar School, David M Weston, Melbourne Contemporary Choir, Sanacori and Melbourne School of Tarantella, and an exciting Roving Carnival finale. Activities included repairing household items with Brunswick Tool Library volunteers. Council's youth program officers ran live podcasting and dance workshops.</p> <p>Other highlights included the return of the Brunswick music festival with nine days of live music across Brunswick in March 2023. The festival kicked off with the return of the Sydney Road Street Party, with over 47 events enjoyed by over 70,000 people. The Coburg Night Market and Carols by the Lake were both successfully run in December 2022 with high community participation and positive feedback.</p>
Enable and support the continued emergence of the Brunswick Design District as a State designated creative precinct	<p>Council continued participating in the Brunswick Design District (BDD) Steering Committee and practical and participatory support to the ongoing operation of RMIT's PlaceLab Brunswick. Throughout the year,</p>

	<p>many activities took place, including; The Brunswick Design District fed into Council's new Arts and Culture Strategy; Detailed suburb-level data was commissioned to understand better the creative and design-related economy in Merri-bek, including across Brunswick, to assist in forward planning of (BDD) actions and initiatives.</p> <p>Five case study videos of different designers and creatives were also completed. These will be published in the new financial year 2023-24 to raise awareness of the BDD to encourage the growth and further development of consumer-to-business and business-to-business relationships. In addition, the Steering Committee toured a Climate Action Centre in the heart of the Design District to learn more about the Centre, its activities, and potential collaborations.</p>
Develop and implement a Community Infrastructure Plan to support an integrated approach to the planning and investment of community facilities to meet community needs	<p>The Community Infrastructure Plan is complete and continues to inform the priorities for Council's capital works program. Highlights include the Fawcner Leisure Centre Redevelopment and the Saxon Street Community and Arts Hub in Brunswick.</p>
Create a Visitation and Experience Plan	<p>In line with the objectives and actions outlined in the Merri-bek Visitor Attraction Plan 2022-24, Council supported the identification of potential Renuwall sites (to install street art murals to deter and replace graffiti) and set up and launched the Merri-bek Vacant Shop Grants Program in October 2022.</p> <p>Council also finalised, printed and distributed two self-guided experience trail guides. The two guides showcase exciting and appealing visitor attractions within Merri-bek, namely;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • breweries and distilleries trail and, • a live music and record shops trail. <p>The trail guides, complete with maps, fulfil the aim of the Visitor Attraction Plan to promote visitor attractions in Merri-bek. Work also commenced on a third trail to showcase venues that provide fun, entertainment and exciting activities and is due for release in the new financial year.</p>

Services		
The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2022-23 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.		
Service	Description	Net Cost Actual Budget Variance \$000
Amenity and Compliance	This service aims to improve the safety, amenity and access within the municipality. Specific services include: parking and road safety enforcement, local laws, animal management, business support, prosecutions and school crossings service.	(5,038) <u>(5,687)</u> (649)
Arts and Culture	This unit is responsible for enhancing opportunities for artistic and cultural experiences for the Merri-bek community and growing the capacity of Merri-bek's creative sector and local artists. Merri-bek has developed a strong reputation for the arts and our creative community is well-established and plays a significant role in contributing to the identity, community well-being and economic success of Merri-bek.	3,958 <u>3,913</u> (45)
Asset Management	This service aims to provide sound stewardship of Council's \$1 billion asset base, undertaken through the development and implementation of Asset Management policies, strategies and plans and the provision of high-quality Asset Management data to support informed decision making.	885 <u>822</u> (63)
Building Maintenance	This service maintains Council buildings to appropriate Standards and Regulations.	3,808 <u>3,596</u> (212)

Building Projects	This service delivers Council's Capital Works Program for buildings and structures and provides construction advisory services across the organisation and to its stakeholders.	(897) <u>(2,345)</u> <u>(1,448)</u>
Building Services	This service aims to provide a safe and habitable for all stakeholders by meeting Council's statutory obligations under the Building Act 1993 and subordinate legislation.	485 <u>541</u> 55
City Strategy and Economy	This service is responsible for leading Council's response to population growth and land use and development trends to create sustainable neighbourhoods. The branch does this by keeping the Merri-bek Planning Scheme current and responsive to change; implementing actions aiming to increase the supply of social and affordable housing; leading an integrated approach to the planning of community infrastructure; and leading a research program, which includes population forecasting and supporting the organisation to use evidence in the delivery of services. This service facilitates industry innovation, investment and job creation, to enhance the reputation of Merri-bek as a progressive and prosperous municipality.	3,832 <u>4,010</u> 178
Property, Place and Design	This service delivers a wide array of projects, partnerships and internal services that define, strengthen, protect and celebrate Merri-bek's unique sense of place. The branch's primary functions are buying, selling and leasing Council's substantial portfolio of land and buildings, delivering place activation programs in our activity centres, conceptualising and delivering major urban revitalisation projects on Council's land, and designing and delivering upgrades to streetscapes, civic spaces and shopping strips.	1,666 <u>1,674</u> 7
Library Services and Resources	This service provides library lending services, literacy, digital and community programs and extension services, information services, internet access and facilities.	4,795 <u>4,902</u> 106
Street Cleansing	This service aims to maintain and enhance the quality of life for people who live and work in, and travel through Merri-bek, by improving the cleanliness and presentation of public spaces. This includes graffiti removal, pit and drain cleaning, street sweeping, street and park litter bin collection and removal of illegal dumped rubbish.	4,859 <u>4,728</u> <u>(131)</u>
Urban Planning and Planning Enforcement	These units manage administration and enforcement of the Merri-bek Planning Scheme and planning permits. The Urban Planning service assesses and determines planning permit applications and other related matters as well as representing Council at hearing before the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal including	3,289 <u>3,336</u> <u>47</u>

	<p>applications for use, development and subdivision of land and fast-track services for simple matters and commercial priority services to assist new and expanding businesses. investment decisions.</p> <p>The Planning Enforcement service oversees compliance with the Merri-bek Planning Scheme and planning permits through responses to complaints, proactively monitoring compliance with a select number of planning permits each year, and monitoring permits with legal agreements and land contamination considerations.</p>	
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Service performance indicators					
The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.					
	Results				
Service/ Indicator/ measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Comments
Animal Management Timeliness Time taken to action animal management requests <i>[Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]</i>	8.66	4.02	3.72	2.03	Council responded to 1868 animal related requests in 2022-23. Council is committed to delivering a high-quality, risk-based animal management service and this service remains highly responsive. The average time taken for first action on requests was 2.03 days, down from the previous years' 3.72 days and demonstrates Council's commitment to improving animal management service efficiency.
Service standard Animals reclaimed	12.75%	20.76%	23.09%	34.99%	Of the 503 animals collected in 2022/23, 35% were reclaimed which is up from the 23% for the previous year. This increase is reflective of the focus Council Officers have placed on the importance of animal

<i>[Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100</i>					registration. All avenues are explored to reunite animals with their owner however this relies on animals being registered.
Animals rehomed <i>[Number of animals rehomed / Number of animals collected] x100</i>	57.60%	68.59%	61.37%	51.69%	All avenues are explored to reunite animals with the owner prior to offering them up for adoption to new owners. Of the 503 animals collected in 2022/23, 51.7% were rehomed to a new owner, down from 61.3% for the previous year. This reduction in rehoming is balanced with a higher proportion of animals being collected by their current owner.
Service cost Cost of animal management service per population <i>[Direct cost of the animal management service / Population]</i>	\$5.10	\$5.65	\$6.46	\$7.25	The increase in this indicator is mainly due to the population decreasing from 184,707 to 174,502 which has impacted the cost per population.
Health and safety Animal management prosecutions <i>[Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100</i>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	There were no animal prosecutions for 2022/23, down from three reported in the previous year.
Libraries Utilisation Physical library collection usage	4.16	2.83	3.12	4.12	This financial year was not impacted by closures or restrictions and saw a significant increase in library users accessing physical collections.

[Number of physical library collection item loans / Number of physical library collection items]					
Resource standard Recently purchased library collection [Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100	73.61%	71.51%	68.29%	74.85%	Over the last five years we have rejuvenated library collections with newer materials. We also focused on increasing digital collections during the pandemic as they remained accessible despite library closures.
Participation Active library borrowers in municipality [Number of active library borrowers in the last three years / The sum of the population for the last three years] x100	13.65%	12.01%	10.89%	11.35%	With libraries back to normal operation, members have been increasing their use of collections. Libraries have also been campaigning to encourage the community to join and/or return to the library.
Service cost Cost of library service per population [Direct cost of the library service / Population]	\$26.92	\$24.89	\$29.31	\$32.18	Increase mainly due to the additional security required at libraries across the municipality.
Statutory Planning Timeliness Time taken to decide planning applications	100.00	94.00	112.50	106.00	Median days 106 compared to 113 last year during pandemic disruptions, a return to increased performance is now evident for simple applications.

[The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]					
Service standard Planning applications decided within required time frames [Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100	59.32%	65.29%	58.10%	59.87%	Council's performance has improved to be in alignment with metropolitan averages after the pandemic disruptions; the result is within the required timeframes.
Service cost Cost of statutory planning service [Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]	\$2,816.58	\$2,292.96	\$2,423.15	\$2,447.28	This indicator has remained stable for the financial year with a minimal service cost increase.
Decision making Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application /	67.57%	75.00%	56.67%	64.29%	Council results for this indicator are favourable from a now smaller sample with 9 of the 14 applications being held up at VCAT. Many VCAT decisions are now mediated and do not proceed to full hearings.

Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100					
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Strategic objective 5: An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek

Build community trust through encouraging participation, evidence-based decision making, stewardship of resources and being accessible and responsive.

Strategic indicators

The following statement reviews the performance of Council against the council plan including results achieved in relation to the strategic indicators included in the council plan.

Strategic Indicator/measure	Target or desired trend	2022-23 Result	Comments
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Community Satisfaction Survey - Overall satisfaction, aim to increase to meet or exceed metropolitan average <i>Victorian Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Results (published annually on Council's website)</i>	Increase metropolitan average:	Result: 51	According to the Merri-bek City Council Community Satisfaction Survey 2023 Council scored 51 for community satisfaction with our overall performance. This result is a decrease in comparison to the previous year and is lower than the Metropolitan council average of 62 out of 100 (a 3-point decrease on 2022).
Community Satisfaction Survey - Customer Service, aim to increase to meet or exceed metropolitan average <i>Victorian Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Results (published annually on Council's website)</i>	Increase metropolitan average:	Result: 65	According to the Merri-bek City Council Community Satisfaction Survey 2023, Council scored 65 for community satisfaction with our performance on customer service. This result is not significantly different to the previous year (68) but is lower than the Metropolitan council average of 71 out of 100. Our customer satisfaction performance has been relatively consistent over the past 10 years and this year's score is in line with Merri-bek's 10-year average score (67.5). Customer service is an area of ongoing work for Council.
Community Satisfaction Survey - Consultation and Engagement, aim to increase to meet or exceed metropolitan average <i>Victorian Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Results (published annually on Council's website)</i>	Increase metropolitan average:	Result: 51	The 2023 score has declined from the previous year, however over the long-term scores for this indicator have fluctuated.
Community Satisfaction Survey - Informing the Community, aim to increase to meet or exceed metropolitan average <i>Victorian Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey Results (published annually on Council's website)</i>	Increase metropolitan average:	Result: 56	According to the Merri-bek City Council Community Satisfaction Survey 2023 we scored 56 for community satisfaction with our performance on informing the community. This result is 5-point decrease on the previous year and is lower than the Metropolitan council average of 60 out of 100.
Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator) To decrease from Merri-bek 2021 baseline measure of 4.62%	Decrease:	Result: 3.67%	Council decisions made at meetings that are closed to the public are when confidentiality needs to be applied to contractual and personal information matters before Council. We aim to have reports made public, with confidential attachments where necessary.

Community satisfaction with Council decisions (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator) to increase to meet or exceed metropolitan average	Increase metropolitan average	Result: 48	The 2023 score has declined from the previous year. The Metropolitan councils as a group, saw a similar average decline.
Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) as a percentage of underlying revenue (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator) aiming for surplus	Surplus:	Result: 12.42%	<p>The 2022-23 accounting surplus decreased by \$7.0 million or 15%. This decrease, paired with an increase in adjusted items such as non-capital recurrent grants and non-monetary asset contributions has resulted in the reduction in the indicator shown.</p> <p>The main factors for the decrease in the accounting surplus were made up of a \$4.1 million (14.4%) increase in depreciation costs and a \$4.2 million (153%) increase in the loss of disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment. Council also saw an increase in employee benefits, which was as a result of the 0.5% superannuation guarantee and 2.1% enterprise agreement increases.</p>
Asset renewal and asset upgrade as a percentage of depreciation (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator) Increase from Merri-bek 2021 baseline measure of 95.57%	Increase:	Result: 118.36%	The asset renewal and upgrade expenditure increased by \$11.5 million in 2022-23. Resulting in the increase shown of 25% which is a great outcome to achieve a low-risk ratio as per the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO). Council forecasts to maintain a ratio of greater than 100 percent in the forward 4-years. This means that Council is forecasting to maintain the low-risk ratio which is an indicator that ensures that Council is spending enough to maintain its existing assets.
Governance and management: Compliant measures that are in place (Local Government Performance Framework Indicator) aim of 100% compliance	100% Compliance:	Result: 100%	Merri-bek was 100% compliant with the Governance and Management check list.

Major initiatives and implementation of the Council Plan 2021 -2025

The following statement reviews the progress of council in relation to major initiatives identified in the 2022-23 budget and council plan for the year

Major Initiatives	Progress
Finalise and begin change of the municipal name \$0.25 million	The July Council meeting presented a detailed report on the 2022-23 implementation of the name change. Signage has been updated across the municipality, including sites such as Maternal Child Health and childcare locations and some parks and gardens. Council vehicles used for community services, safety, well-being, planning and enforcement have been renamed. A once-off renaming Community Support Grant was established by Council in December 2022 and commenced in late February 2023.
Implement the Community Engagement Policy	<p>Delivery of the Community Engagement Policy Implementation Plan 2020-2024 continued across the organisation with a year-two progress report presented to the Council at its December 2022 meeting.</p> <p>Council endorsed an amended version of the Community Engagement Policy in June 2023. Additionally, forty project officers undertook the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) training and completed targeted training to deliver community pop-ups and to engage with children and young people.</p>
Develop a Child and Youth Engagement Framework to enable the active engagement of children and young people in civic participation and community life	The development and implementation of training and resources for Council officers to support a best practice approach to engagement with Children and Young People was developed. The first of several training sessions was successfully held with Council officers in November 2022.

<p>Streamline the customer experience including through service re-design, improved service targets and making easier council interactions across various digital channels</p>	<p>Training modules have been developed for communicating effectively with a range of people and understanding customer service essentials. Other capability-building activities have equipped leaders to embed the Community at the Heart program into their teams, which included learning from community feedback and driving local service improvements.</p> <p>Additionally, a series of staff training sessions were delivered to improve our website customer service channel, including maintaining current and relevant content to support self-service and improved Council information.</p> <p>Council's first point of contact channels were also reviewed based on community feedback. This has resulted in integrating Snap Send and Solve with our Customer Relationship Management system for an improved customer experience, conducting website user testing and implementing required improvements.</p>
<p>Prepare and implement a revised Open Space Levy</p>	<p>As part of the work to review the open space strategy, the review of the contribution rate in the planning scheme is underway. This piece of work is meeting projected timelines and is on track. A technical background report has been collated to analyse the supply, demand, gaps and land value for open space based on the infrastructure needed to cater for the growing population. This piece of work is meeting projected timelines and is on track to be delivered in 2024, with the amendment to commence in early 2025.</p>
<p>Develop and implement a new Development Contributions Plan</p>	<p>The preparation of a new Developer Contributions Plan (DCP) has commenced. A project brief has been prepared to engage a consultant to create a project list and undertake the methodology and calculations. This project relies upon finalising a project list for the Open Space Strategy.</p>
<p>Implement the Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy</p>	<p>Implementing the Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy has comprised two actions undertaken throughout the year: the soon-to-be-launched internal Accessible Communications Toolkit for Council staff. Also, progress was made on reviewing and refreshing the Community Language Aid Program, which involved recruiting officers who can speak our top 12 Merri-bek languages other than English and the ongoing delivery of Easy English advice for Council communications.</p>

	<p>Council also continued the support of the CALD Merri-bek Connectors community engagement program, which aims to improve access to information and services to our CALD community. The program participants were utilised in several key Council projects including the kerbside waste reforms, Brunswick Level Crossing Removals, and the new park at 260 Sydney Road. In addition to the Open Space Strategy, the Kerbside Waste Reforms, and the Glenroy Film Festival.</p>
Coordinate advocacy for improved community outcomes	<p>Coordinate advocacy for improved community outcomes saw Merri-bek actively participating with many partner advocacy organisations, including the Northern Councils Alliance, M9, the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action, the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) and the Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum. Motions were submitted to the Australian Local Government Association for the National General Assembly, advocating in the areas of soft plastics recycling, refugees and The Voice referendum.</p> <p>Advocacy campaigns continued, seeking safe access over Bell Street Bridge in collaboration with Darebin Council, Coburg High School and the SABBE group, and seeking planning reform to elevate environmentally sustainable design targets along with CASBE and 24 other Victorian councils. Merri-bek, Hume and Mitchell councils are refreshing the regional approach to the duplication and upgrade of the Upfield rail line and the extension and electrification to Wallan to increase activity around this priority.</p> <p>Council made submissions on key priorities, including the inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users, the inquiry into the 2022 flood event in Victoria and Infrastructure Victoria 'Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy; this submission outlined the Council's position on a range of topics including transport infrastructure, social and affordable housing, planning and climate change mitigation and adaption.</p>

	Council also progressed advocacy on securing the land title of the Ballert Mooroop site in Hilton Street, Glenroy, for the benefit of local First Nations communities via correspondence with the Victorian Education Minister and a resulting meeting with her Chief of Staff. Stakeholder engagement and an open day on-site took place in May 2023.
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Services		
The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2022-23 budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.		
Service	Description	Net Cost Actual <u>Budget</u> Variance \$000
Communications	This service supports a number of corporate functions, including issues and reputation management; marketing and branding services; website and social media; community engagement; corporate and internal communications; and delivers community information about council work impacting the community and promotions of services, events, Council decisions, projects and community development initiatives.	2,087 <u>1,948</u> (140)
Community Engagement	This service ensures that Council is providing the community with good information about the work it is doing and consulting the community about how it develops and delivers projects and services, including consulting the community about any changes to the way Council works. It allows Council to make decisions that best reflect the views of the community	974 <u>969</u> (5)
Corporate Finance	This service undertakes the management of corporate level finances including loan interest repayments, bank fees, parental leave costs, and utilities.	(1,752) <u>584</u> 2,336
Customer Service	This service is the primary public contact point for the organisation and is delivered through three citizen service centres, the telephone contact centre and other multi-media channels.	3,404 <u>3,439</u> 35
Facilities	This service co-ordinates the provision of Town Hall bookings, and meeting rooms with the Civic Buildings, including facility management, catering and security.	2,682 <u>2,660</u>

		(22)
Finance	This service provides a range of financial services, including management of Council's finances, internal and external reporting, payments to suppliers of goods and services along with procurement and contracting services. This services also manages the valuation and rating of properties within the municipality and the collection of debts owed to Council.	3,670 <u>3,584</u> (86)
Fleet Services	This service provides a fleet management and maintenance service for over 660 items of plant and equipment.	3,665 <u>3,729</u> 64
Governance and Civic Protocols	This service ensures good governance and transparent and responsible decision making, whilst providing support to the Mayor and Councillors through the development and implementation of systems which support democratic and corporate governance.	2,642 <u>2,404</u> (238)
Integrity, Risk and Resilience	This service coordinates Council's Audit and Risk Committee and audit function. It is responsible for ensuring that risk management is embedded into Council's activities, that Council is appropriately insured and that claims made by and against Council are proficiently processed. This service also ensures a Business Continuity Plan and Environmental Management System are in place.	3,571 <u>3,592</u> 21
Information Technology and Records	This service supports and maintains corporate computing, communication and record management systems for Councillors, staff and users of our public internet services.	8,593 <u>8,337</u> (255)
Organisational Performance	This service supports and leads Council's culture and leadership development, change and continuous improvement capability building and supports the organisation in service unit planning and process mapping. This service also supports project management systems, processes and reporting.	1,462 <u>1,599</u> 137
Civic Leadership / General Overheads	This service ensures that Council is providing the community with good information about the work it is doing and consulting the community about how it develops and delivers projects and services, including consulting the community about any changes to the way Council works. It allows Council to make decisions that best reflect the views of the community	2,714 <u>2,665</u> (49)

Service performance indicators					
The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.					
LGPRF under this section	Results				
Service/ Indicator/ measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Comments
Governance Transparency Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public <i>[Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council, or at meetings of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at meetings of Council or at meetings of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors] x100</i>	7.14%	4.62%	3.82%	3.67%	Council decisions made at meetings that are closed to the public are when confidentiality needs to be applied to contractual and personal information matters before Council. We aim to have reports made public, with confidential attachments where necessary.
Consultation and engagement Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement	53.00	59.00	54.00	51.00	The 2023 score has declined from the previous year, however over the long-term scores for this indicator have fluctuated.

[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement]					
Attendance Councillor attendance at council meetings [The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each Council meeting / (Number of Council meetings) × (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x100	93.18%	96.73%	91.79%	89.97%	Councillors remain committed to accountable and transparent decision-making, reflecting a consistent attendance record.
Service cost Cost of elected representation [Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]	\$54,978.09	\$49,265.02	\$50,959.55	\$54,385.73	The increase can be mainly attributed to the determination made by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal that increased Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor allowances.
Satisfaction Satisfaction with council decisions [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how	56.00	58.00	53.00	48.00	The 2023 score has declined from the previous year. The Metropolitan councils as a group, saw a similar average decline.

council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]					
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Performance statement

For the year ended 30 June 2023

Description of municipality

The City of Merri-bek lies between 4 and 14 kilometers north of central Melbourne. The City of Merri-bek is bounded by the Western Ring Road and Hume City in the north, the City of Darebin and Merri Creek in the east, the City of Yarra, the City of Melbourne and Park Street in the south, and the City of Moonee Valley and Moonee Ponds Creek in the west.

The City of Merri-bek covers the suburbs of Brunswick, Brunswick East, Brunswick West, Coburg, Coburg North, Fawkner, Glenroy, Gowanbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, Parkville, Pascoe Vale, and Pascoe Vale South. Small sections of the suburbs of Fitzroy North and Tullamarine are also part of the City of Merri-bek. As of June 2023, our estimated resident population is 174,502 based on the 2021 Census (ABS, August 2022).

COVID-19 has had, and will continue to have, an impact on our population and its growth. Our forecasts now suggest that our population will increase to a total population of 235,184 by 2036. This is 10,015 fewer residents than we previously forecast we would have by 2036 (Charter Keck Consultancy 2021). The previous forecast was made before COVID-19.

Merri-bek is a highly culturally and linguistically diverse municipality. In 2021, 33% of Merri-bek residents were born overseas. At home, residents are most likely to speak Italian, Arabic, Greek or Urdu if not speaking English. In total, 35% of households in our community speak a language other than English at home (ABS, 2021). In 2023, there were an estimated 18,333 total GST registered businesses in the City of Merri-bek. In the City of Merri-bek, Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest employer, generating 8,680 local jobs in 2021/22.

Sustainable Capacity Indicators

For the year end 30 June 2023

	Indicator / measure	Results				Comments
		2020	2021	2022	2023	
	Population					
C1	Expenses per head of municipal population [Total expenses / Municipal population]	\$1,023.60	\$1,107.12	\$1,084.83	\$1,228.54	The 13% increase in expenses per head is due to the ABS population figure decreasing from 184,707 in 2021-22 to 174,502 in 2022-23.
C2	Infrastructure per head of municipal population [Value of infrastructure / Municipal population]	\$5,006.38	\$5,046.30	\$5,858.10	\$6,992.26	Whilst the total value of Council's infrastructure increased in 2022-23, the increase displayed is due to the ABS population figure decreasing from 184,707 in 2021-22 to 174,502 in 2022-23.
C3	Population density per length of road [Municipal population / Kilometres of local roads]	295.34	299.62	293.19	276.99	While the results have remained in a consistent range, it has decreased this year due to the fall in municipal population.
	Own-source revenue					
C4	Own-source revenue per head of municipal population [Own-source revenue / Municipal population]	\$986.20	\$985.51	\$1,084.21	\$1,212.17	The 11.8% increase in own-source revenue per head is due to the ABS population figure decreasing from 184,707 in 2021-22 to 174,502 in 2022-23.
	Recurrent grants					
C5	Recurrent grants per head of municipal population [Recurrent grants / Municipal population]	\$99.33	\$100.64	\$112.40	\$115.91	The result achieved has increased slightly, due to the decrease in Municipal population more than offsetting the decrease in recurrent operating grants.
	Disadvantage					
C6	Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage [Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by decile]	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	There has been no change to relative socio-economic disadvantage over the past 4 years.
	Workforce turnover					
C7	Percentage of staff turnover [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x100	9.0%	14.7%	16.5%	15.9%	The reporting period has seen a slight decrease in staff turnover from the previous year. A favourable result for Council in comparison to the sector and an overall tight labour market.

Service Performance Indicators

For the year end 30 June 2023

	Service	Results				Comments
	Indicator / Measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	
	Aquatic Facilities					
	Utilisation					
AF6	Utilisation of aquatic facilities [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	4.49	2.31	3.55	5.64	Council visitor attendance is back to pre-pandemic levels. This is a favourable result for Council as we continue to upgrade our facilities, such as Oak Park in 2018 and soon-to-be Fawkner.
	Animal Management					
	Health and safety					
AM7	Animal management prosecutions [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	100%	100%	100%	0%	There were no animal prosecutions for 2022/23, down from three reported in the previous year.
	Food Safety					
	Health and safety					
FS4	Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications [Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100	100.00%	95.05%	100.00%	100.00%	All 277 non-compliances identified through assessments and inspections of food premises have been followed up to ensure compliance with relevant standards has been achieved.
	Governance					
	Satisfaction					
G5	Satisfaction with council decisions [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]	56	58	53	48	The 2023 score has declined from the previous year. The Metropolitan councils as a group, saw a similar average decline.
	Libraries					
	Participation					

LB4	Active library borrowers in municipality [Number of active library borrowers in the last three years / The sum of the population for the last three years] x100	13.65%	12.01%	10.89%	11.35%	With libraries back to normal operation, members have been increasing their use of collections. Libraries have also been campaigning to encourage the community to join and/or return to the library.
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	Service	Results				Comments
	Indicator / Measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	
	Maternal and Child Health (MCH)					
	Participation					
MC4	Participation in the MCH service [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	72.27%	69.79%	71.95%	74.60%	Council has seen another slight increase in participation in Maternal Child health services this year.
	Participation					
MC5	Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	71.43%	68.86%	71.52%	73.81%	Another small increase for the financial year with 84 families using the service. Engagement in Maternal Child health programs continues to show the value of the service to families.
	Roads					
	Satisfaction					
R5	Satisfaction with sealed local roads [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	57	60	57	51	The 2023 score has declined from the previous year. The Metropolitan councils as a group, saw a similar average decline.
	Statutory Planning					
	Decision making					
SP4	Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100	67.57%	75.00%	56.67%	64.29%	Council results for this indicator are favourable from a now smaller sample with 9 of the 14 applications being held up at VCAT. Many VCAT decisions are now mediated and do not proceed to full hearings.
	Waste Collection					
	Waste diversion					

WC5	Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100	48.48%	49.39%	48.34%	48.42%	Overall the amount of material collected has decreased, with 1953 tonnes less garbage collected; this is despite a marginal increase in properties serviced.
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Financial Performance Indicators

For the year end 30 June 2023

	Dimension	Results				Forecasts				Material Variations and Comments
	Indicator / Measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
Efficiency										
Expenditure level										
E2	Expenses per property assessment [Total expenses / Number of property assessments]	\$2,304.75	\$2,504.57	\$2,376.93	\$2,542.84	\$2,544.79	\$2,537.13	\$2,499.02	\$2,472.28	Expenditure between 2021-22 and 2022-23 has increased 7% or \$13.6 million. This increase is primarily made up of a \$4.1 million (14.4%) increase in depreciation costs and a \$4.2 million (153%) increase in the loss of disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment. Council also saw an increase in employee benefits, which was as a result of the 0.5% superannuation guarantee and 2.1% enterprise agreement increases. The increase of overall expenditure in proportion to the increase in rateable assessments has contributed to the 7% increase in expenses per property.
Revenue level										
E4	Average rate per property assessment [Total rate revenue (general rates and municipal charges) / Number of property assessments]	\$1,713.62	\$1,743.48	\$1,775.81	\$1,832.70	\$1,885.30	\$1,903.21	\$1,921.16	\$1,939.16	The result achieved has remained consistent. Council has increased the rate base by the rate cap that is set by the State Government.

	Dimension	Results				Forecasts				Material Variations and Comments
	Indicator / Measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
	Liquidity									
	Working capital									
L1	Current assets compared to current liabilities [Current assets / Current liabilities] x100	262.66%	241.44%	361.94%	357.24%	149.54%	136.65%	165.29%	220.44%	The result achieved has remained consistent from 2021-22 to 2022-23. This result reflects Council's strong position to meet current obligations if required. The reduced forecast in future years is due to the increased capital works program in 2023/24 and the repayment of Local Government Funding Vehicle in 2024/25.
	Unrestricted cash									

L2	Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities [Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100	119.59%	96.17%	39.22%	-60.93%	19.42%	3.37%	-5.51%	-21.74%	<p>This indicator has decreased in the current year as Council has invested a greater amount of term deposits over 90 days (which is considered restricted assets) and it shows the impact of capital works carried forward to be completed in 2023-24. The indicator looks at unrestricted cash (cash in the bank and in less than 90 day investments).</p> <p>Overall cash levels (both restricted and unrestricted) have remained the same. The split between unrestricted (less than 90 days) and restricted (greater than 90 days) has shifted to achieve best investment outcomes. It is anticipated that in future years the Council will continue to invest for greater than 90 days to achieve the best investment outcomes. Overall cash levels are forecasted to remain consistent with the 2022-23 actuals.</p> <p>However, the forecasted shift to increase unrestricted cash is causing the indicator to increase in the first 2-years and then reduce again in the outer years.</p>
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	Dimension	Results				Forecasts				Material Variations and Comments
	Indicator / Measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
	Obligations									
	Loans and borrowings									
O2	Loans and borrowings compared to rates [Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100	16.51%	21.04%	14.23%	12.94%	15.84%	14.37%	6.63%	5.35%	Interest bearing loans and borrowings decreased \$2 million, whilst rates revenue increased \$6.8 million, resulting in the decrease reflected between loan and borrowings compared to rates.

O3	Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates [Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100	6.43%	1.38%	6.19%	1.13%	1.61%	1.56%	7.83%	1.27%	In 2021-22 there was a repayment of a \$8 million loan. Loan and borrowing repayments decreased substantially in 2022-23, which reflects the decrease for this indicator shown. New borrowings of \$8.0 million have been included in the 2023-24 budget, as well as the repayment of an interest only loan in 2025-26 which sees the indicator increase in the outer four years.
Indebtedness										
O4	Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue [Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100	14.62%	14.14%	12.69%	11.44%	13.33%	6.84%	5.72%	4.63%	This figure is as a result of a minor decrease in non-current liabilities, and a 3.95% increase in rates and charges for 2022-23.
Asset renewal and upgrade										
O5	Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation [Asset renewal and asset upgrade expense / Asset depreciation] x100	70.02%	95.57%	94.99%	118.36%	282.14%	147.45%	141.76%	99.40%	The asset renewal and upgrade expenditure increased by \$11.5 million in 2022-23. Resulting in the increase shown of 25% which is a great outcome to achieve a low-risk ratio as per the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO). Council forecasts to maintain a ratio of greater than 100 percent in the forward 4-years. This means that Council is forecasting to maintain the low-risk ratio which is an indicator that ensures that Council is spending enough to maintain its existing assets.

	Dimension	Results				Forecasts				Material Variations and Comments
	Indicator / Measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
	Operating position									
	Adjusted underlying result									

OP1	Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) [Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	13.56%	10.28%	16.07%	12.42%	13.48%	12.91%	14.97%	16.67%	<p>The 2022-23 accounting surplus decreased by \$7.0 million or 15%. This decrease, paired with an increase in adjusted items such as non-capital recurrent grants and non-monetary asset contributions has resulted in the reduction in the indicator shown.</p> <p>The main factors for the decrease in the accounting surplus were made up of a \$4.1 million (14.4%) increase in depreciation costs and a \$4.2 million (153%) increase in the loss of disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment. Council also saw an increase in employee benefits, which was as a result of the 0.5% superannuation guarantee and 2.1% enterprise agreement increases.</p>
Stability										
Rates concentration										
S1	Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue [Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	72.15%	70.18%	72.09%	73.09%	73.22%	74.69%	74.88%	74.94%	The result of this indicator has remained consistent over the last few years. The small increase year on year is due to supplementary rates issued.
Rates effort										
S2	Rates compared to property values [Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100	0.28%	0.27%	0.28%	0.25%	0.26%	0.25%	0.25%	0.24%	Property values increased by a 16.7% in 2022-23, whilst rates and charges increased 2.67%. The property value increase in proportion to the rates increase resulted in the variance shown.

Definitions

“Aboriginal child” means a child who is an Aboriginal person

“Aboriginal person” has the same meaning as in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

“Active library member” means a member of a library who has borrowed a book from the library

“Annual report” means an annual report prepared by a council under sections 131, 132 and 133 of the Act

“CALD” means culturally and linguistically diverse and refers to persons born outside Australia in a country whose national language is not English

“Class 1 food premises” means food premises, within the meaning of the Food Act 1984, that have been declared as class 1 food premises under section 19C of that Act

“Class 2 food premises” means food premises, within the meaning of the Food Act 1984 , that have been declared as class 2 food premises under section 19C of that Act

“Critical non-compliance outcome notification” means a notification received by council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984 , or advice given to council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health

“Food premises” has the same meaning as in the Food Act 1984

“Infrastructure” means non-current property, plant and equipment excluding land

“Local road” means a sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004

“Major non-compliance outcome notification” means a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984, or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken

“MCH” means the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age

“Population” means the resident population estimated by council

“Relative socio-economic disadvantage”, in relation to a municipality, means the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipality is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (Catalogue

Number 2033.0.55.001) of SEIFA

“SEIFA” means the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas published from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its Internet website

“WorkSafe reportable aquatic facility safety incident” means an incident relating to a council aquatic facility that is required to be notified to the Victorian WorkCover Authority under Part 5 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

“Adjusted underlying revenue” means total income other than:
non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and non-monetary asset contributions; and
contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above

“Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)” means adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure

“Asset renewal expenditure” means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability

“Current assets” has the same meaning as in ASS

“Current liabilities” has the same meaning as in the ASS

“Non-current assets” means all assets other than current assets

“Non-current liabilities” means all liabilities other than current liabilities

“Non-recurrent grant” means a grant obtained on the condition that it be expended in a specified manner and is not expected to be received again during the period covered by a council's Strategic Resource Plan

“Own-source revenue” means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants

“Population” means the resident population estimated by council

“Rate revenue” means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges “Recurrent grant” means a grant other than a non-recurrent grant

“Residential rates” means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges levied on residential properties

“Restricted cash” means cash and cash equivalents, within the meaning of the AAS, that are not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year

“Unrestricted cash” means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash.

Other Information – Basis of preparation

Council is required to prepare and include a performance statement within its annual report. The performance statement includes the results of the prescribed sustainable capacity, service performance and financial performance indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district and an explanation of material variations in the results. This statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Where applicable the results in the performance statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the Financial Statements. The other results are based on information drawn from council information systems or from third parties (e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics).

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year and for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the results forecast by the council's strategic resource plan. The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 requires explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The forecast figures included in the performance statement are those adopted by Council in its 4-year budget adopted June 20, 2023, and which forms part of the council plan. The financial plan includes estimates based on key assumptions about the future that were relevant at the time of adoption and aimed at achieving sustainability over the long term. Detailed information on the actual financial results is contained in the General-Purpose Financial Statements. The financial plan can be obtained by contacting council.

Certification of the Performance Statement

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statement has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Allan Cochrane

Signature:



Acting Chief Financial Officer

Date:

13/9/2023

In our opinion the accompanying performance statement of the Merri-bek City Council for the year ended 30 June 2023 presents fairly the results of the council's performance in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

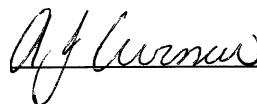
The performance statement contains the relevant performance indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the council and by the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 to certify this performance statement in its final form.

Anita Curnow

Signature:



Acting Chief Executive Officer

Date:

13/9/2023

Cr Angelica Panopoulos

Signature:



Mayor

Date:

13/9/2023

Cr Helen Davidson

Signature:



Deputy Mayor

Date:

13/9/2023

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Councillors of Merri-bek City Council

Opinion	<p>I have audited the accompanying performance statement of Merri-bek City Council (the council) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of municipality for the year ended 30 June 2023 • sustainable capacity indicators for the year ended 30 June 2023 • service performance indicators for the year ended 30 June 2023 • financial performance indicators for the year ended 30 June 2023 • other information and • certification of the performance statement. <p>In my opinion, the performance statement of Merri-bek City Council in respect of the year ended 30 June 2023 presents fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with the performance reporting requirements of Part 4 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020 and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020</i>.</p>
Basis for Opinion	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the performance statement</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's <i>APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the performance statement in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
Councillors' responsibilities for the performance statement	<p>The Councillors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the performance statement in accordance with the performance reporting requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and the <i>Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020</i> and for such internal control as the Councillors determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a performance statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p>

**Auditor's
responsibilities for the
audit of the
performance
statement**

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the performance statement based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the performance statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of this performance statement.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the performance statement, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the performance statement, including the disclosures, and whether performance statement represents the underlying events and results in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Councillors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE
26 September 2023



Travis Derricott
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Governance and management

Good governance, integrity and accountability are central to the Local Government Act 2020.

The Act is based on 5 principles:

- community engagement
- strategic planning
- financial management
- public transparency
- service performance.

We embed these 5 principles throughout our decision-making, corporate governance and democratic governance. We have established governance rules to help us do this.

We seek to apply good governance to:

- effectively engage our community in sound and responsible decision-making
- achieve the best outcomes for the Merri-bek community, considering future generations
- ensure the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information
- ensure our ongoing financial viability
- increase our performance
- identify and drive out inefficiencies
- reassure residents that we are spending public money responsibly, accountably and wisely.

Council meetings

Decisions on issues affecting the community are made at council meetings. Community members can observe the decision-making process at these meetings and ask questions.

We hold ordinary council meetings to conduct the business of Council. Where required, we may also hold special meetings.

We also hold council meetings to deal with planning applications. These are called planning and related matters meetings. Ordinary council and planning and related matters meetings are scheduled each month.

We live-stream our council meetings to enable people to watch the proceedings in real time. Meetings are also recorded and available to watch later. Live-streaming council meetings offers greater access to information, decision-making and debate. It also underpins the principles of accessibility, openness and transparency.

In April 2020, the Local Government Act 1989 was amended to allow council meetings to be held via video conferencing. This was in response to restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Minister for Local Government issued ministerial guidelines to govern how those meetings would be conducted. These guidelines ensure that the transparency of council decision-making is upheld.

We conducted council meetings from July 2022 to June 2023 in a hybrid format, with both in person and online attendance.

In 2022-23, the number of people watching council meetings online (live and the recordings) was 16,006, and the number watching planning meetings was 7846.

Councillor attendance at meetings

In 2022-23, we held:

- 12 ordinary council meetings
- 7 special council meetings
- 10 council meetings to consider planning and related matters.

Below we have outlined councillor attendance for the 2022-23 year, for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023:

Councillor	Ordinary council meetings (total 12)	Special council meetings (total 7)	Planning and related matters (total 10)
Cr Sue Bolton	12	6	9
Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	12	4	8
Cr James Conlan	11	7	7
Cr Helen Davidson	11	6	8
Cr Monica Harte	12	6	9
Cr Angelica Panopoulos	12	7	10
Cr Helen Pavlidis-Mihalakos	11	4	10
Cr Adam Pulford	9	7	10
Cr Mark Riley	12	6	10
Cr Lambros Tapinos	12	6	8
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	11	6	8

Major committees

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is established in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and its committee charter was officially adopted on July 14, 2021. As outlined in section 53(2) of the Act, this committee serves as an advisory body to Merri-bek City Council, aiming to strengthen governance, risk management, financial management, and drive continuous improvement.

The committee's role involves assisting us in fulfilling our responsibilities as outlined in the Act, including:

- monitoring the compliance of Council's policies and procedures with:
 - the overarching governance principles
 - the Act, regulations and any ministerial directions
 - other relevant laws and regulations
- monitoring internal controls
- monitoring Council's financial and performance reporting
- monitoring and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls
- overseeing internal audit functions
- overseeing external audit functions
- monitoring related-party transactions.

The current committee consists of seven members, including an independent chair, John Watson, three independent members (Lisa Tripodi, Marilyn Kearney, and Jeff Rigby), and three councillors (Cr Mark Riley, Cr Adam Pulford, and Cr Angelica Panopoulos - Mayor).

During the year 2022-23, the committee held four meetings with the following councillor attendance:

- Tuesday 6 September 2022: Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Cr Mark Riley, Cr Adam Pulford
- Tuesday 20 December 2022: Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Cr Mark Riley
- Tuesday 14 March 2023: Cr Angelica Panopoulos Cr Adam Pulford
- Tuesday 6 June 2023: Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Cr Mark Riley

Councillor expenses and allowances

We provide Councillors with resources and support to undertake their duties. This is so they can serve, engage and act in the community's best interests. We may make available or pay for resources or reimburse claims for out-of-pocket expenses.

Our Council Support Expenses and Resources Policy provides the level of expense and resources support provided.

We publish details of Councillor expenses (including those reimbursed) on our website quarterly.

Councillor expenses for the 2022-23 year are outlined below.

	Travel / Mileage	Child / Family Care	Conferences / Training	Accommodation / Refreshments	T, Mobile and Data	Events	Copying / Stationery	Subscriptions	Totals
Cr Sue Bolton	\$0.91	-	-	-	\$1773.94	-	\$83.86	-	\$1858.71
Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	\$551.47	-	\$417.27	-	\$791.24	-	\$83.86	-	\$1843.84
Cr James Conlan	-	-	\$820.45	-	\$2094.47	-	\$353.59	-	\$3268.51
Cr Helen Davidson	\$551.42	-	\$945.45	\$273.68	\$569.28	\$225	-	\$90	\$2654.83
Cr Angelica Panopoulos	\$913.93	-	\$985.45	\$780.26	\$567.24	\$175	-	\$90	\$3511.88
Cr Helen Pavlidis- Mihalakos	\$73.46	-	-	-	\$567.24	\$225	-	\$90	\$995.70
Cr Adam Pulford	-	-	-	-	\$567.24	-	-	-	\$567.24
Cr Mark Riley	\$260.10	-	\$1419.78	-	\$721.03	\$75	\$173.86	-	\$2649.77

Cr Lambros Tapinos	\$1143.10	-	\$945.45	\$581.32	\$567.24	-	\$83.86	-	\$3320.97
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	\$3399.29	-	\$1290.45	\$512.66	\$602.76	\$288.64	\$865.35	-	\$6959.15
Cr Monica Harte	-	-	-	-	\$883.56	-	\$184.58	-	\$1068.14

Allowances

Our mayor and councillors are entitled to receive an allowance while performing their duties as elected officials.

The Local Government Act 2020 creates a framework for allowances to be specified by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, rather than the Minister and councils.

In accordance with Section 39 of the Local Government Act 2020, on 8 December 2022 the Tribunal determined the following allowances for Category 3 councils (Merri-bek City Council being a Category 3) from 18 December 2022:

Mayoral allowance: \$124,469

Deputy mayor's allowance: \$62,235

Councillor allowance: \$37,565

The Tribunal determined that the value of the allowance payable to a councillor is inclusive of any Superannuation Guarantee Contribution amount, or equivalent, that may be payable under Commonwealth law to the councillor with respect to their service in that office.

Councillor Code of Conduct

Our Councillor Code of Conduct was reviewed and adopted on 20 June 2023. It is available on our website: merri-bek.vic.gov.au

The code sets out the standards of conduct expected of councillors.

The aim of the code is to empower councillors to model fair and respectful behaviours. This is so they can work together constructively in the best interests of the local community.

Conflict of interest

Councillors are elected by residents and ratepayers to act in the best interests of the community. This is a position of trust that requires councillors to act in the public interest.

Council officers must also act and prioritise public interests when undertaking their duties and functions.

There are 2 types of conflict of interest:

- A conflict between a councillor's or employee's public duty to act in the best interests of the community or organisation and their private interests. This is a general conflict of interest.
- Where a councillor or employee would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. This is a material conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest may be real, perceived or potential. They may also arise from direct or indirect interests.

A conflict of interest must be declared and appropriately managed. This is to ensure that public interests are not compromised or undermined in any way.

A conflict of interest can exist and must be declared even if no improper act results from it. It is also not important how the conflict of interest has arisen.

We are committed to delivering services to our community fairly and transparently, without favour or bias. Our integrity is critical to our reputation and effectiveness in the local community.

We have a procedure in place to accommodate the disclosure of a conflict of interest. The opportunity to declare a conflict of interest is a standard agenda item for all council meetings. This declaration also takes place before the start of procurement and recruitment processes.

In general, managing conflicts of interest involve:

- disclosing the conflict in a specific way
- considering the duties of the declarant
- determining the risk associated with the conflict arising
- applying an appropriate treatment.

This may require:

- the declarant to be removed from any decision-making on a particular matter
- restricting the declarant's involvement in the matter
- recruiting a disinterested or independent third party
- the declarant relinquishing the private interest.

We maintain a register of all declarations that raise a conflict of interest from councillors and staff.

During 2022-23, 17 conflict of interest disclosures were made at council meetings and councillor briefings. In declaring a conflict of interest, the relevant councillor would leave the meeting. This removed them from the decision-making process in relation to that matter. In one instance, a declaration was made prior to a briefing and the councillor did not attend.

There was 3 conflict of interest disclosure added to the register for council officers.

We reviewed our Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy for Councillors in December 2023. This policy sets out practices to avoid the potential for conflicts of interest through the offer/acceptance of:

- gifts
- benefits
- hospitality.

Our procedures vary depending on the role and circumstances of the offer. Our policy has robust thresholds and defined practices.

Governance and management checklist

Results of Merri-bek Council's assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist as of 30 June 2023

Governance and Management Item	Status	Outcome
Community engagement policy (policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest)	Adopted in accordance with section 55 of the Act	Reviewed and Adopted 20/6/2023 Merri-bek Community Engagement Policy was reviewed and adopted with minor amendments by Council on 20 June 2023 in accordance with section 55 of the Act.
Community engagement guidelines (guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community)	Current guidelines in operation	Operational: 9/12/2020
Financial Plan (plan under section 91 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 10 financial years)	Adopted in accordance with section 91 of the Act	Adopted 20/10/2021: The 10-year financial plan was adopted by Council in October 2021. The budget includes an update to the 10-year outlook and was approved in 20 June 2023 in accordance with section 91 of the Act 2020. Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2025 is in place, since 8/07/2020.
Asset Plan (plan that sets out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years)	Adopted in accordance with section 92 of the Act	Adopted 23/06/2022: 10-year Asset Plan adopted by Council on 23 June 2022 in accordance with section 92 of the Act 2020.
Revenue and Rating Plan (plan setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges)	Adopted in accordance with section 93 of the Act	Adopted: 24/06/2021 The Revenue and Rating Plan was adopted by Council on 24 June 2021 in accordance with section 93 of the Act.
Annual budget (plan setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken over the next 12 months and the funding and other resources required)	Budget adopted in accordance with section 94 of the Act	Adopted: 20/06/2023 The annual budget was adopted by Council on 20 June 2023 in accordance with section 94 of the Act.
Risk policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations)	Current policy in operation	Operational: 13/08/2020

Governance and Management Item	Status	Outcome
Fraud policy (policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud)	Current policy in operation	Operational: 20/12/22
Municipal emergency management plan (plan under section 20 of the Emergency Management Act 1986 for emergency prevention, response and recovery)	Prepared and maintained in accordance with section 20 of the Emergency Management Act 1986	Prepared and maintained: The Municipal Emergency Management Plan was approved by the Regional Emergency Management Committee on 19/08/2022 and endorsed by the Municipal Emergency Management Plan Committee on 14/03/2023.
Procurement policy (policy outlining the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods and services by the Council)	Adopted in accordance with section 108 of the Act	Reviewed and Adopted 10/05/2023: The procurement policy was reviewed and adopted by Council on 10 May 2023 in accordance with section 108 of the Act.
Business continuity plan (plan setting out the actions that will be taken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster)	Current plan in operation	Operational: 21/06/2022
Disaster recovery plan (plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster)	Current plan in operation	Operational: 29/11/2022
Risk management framework (framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations)	Current framework in operation	Operational: 30/06/2020
Audit and Risk Committee (advisory committee of Council under section 53 and 54 of the Act)	Established in accordance with section 53 of the Act	Established: 13/05/2020
Internal audit (independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls)	Internal auditor engaged	Engaged: 1/09/2021

Governance and Management Item	Status	Outcome
Performance reporting framework (a set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	Current framework in operation	Operational 20/06/2023: Framework described in the Annual Budget adopted 20/06/2023.
Council Plan report (report reviewing the performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the financial year)	Current reports	Reported 10/8/2022: Council Action Plan 2021-22 – Fourth Quarter Performance Report. Reported 9/11/2022: Council Action Plan 2022-23 – First Quarter Performance Report. Reported 8/02/2023: Council Action Plan 2022-23 – Second Quarter Performance Report. Reported 10/05/2023: Council Action Plan 2022-23 – Third Quarter Performance Report
Quarterly budget reports (quarterly reports to Council under section 97 of the Act, comparing actual and budget results and an explanation of any material variations)	Quarterly reports presented to Council in accordance with section 97 (1) of the Act	Reported 14/09/2022: 2021-22 Financial Statements and Performance Statements. Reported 7/12/2022: 2022/23 First Quarter Financial Report. Reported 8/03/2023: 2022/23 Mid-Year Financial Report. Reported 12/04/2023: 2022/23 Third Quarter Financial Report.
Risk reporting (six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies)	Risk reports prepared and presented	Strategic Risks were presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in 14 March 2023 via the Risk Management Report. The Annual Strategic Risk review was presented and noted by Council at their meeting of 12 April 2023 via the Governance Report.

Governance and Management Item	Status	Outcome
Performance reporting (six-monthly reports of indicators measuring the results against financial and non-financial performance, including performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act)	Performance reports prepared	<p>Reported 14/09/2022: 2021-22 Financial Statements and Performance Statements.</p> <p>Reported 9/11/2022 Council Action Plan 2022-23 – First Quarter Performance Report.</p> <p>Reported 7/12/2022: 2022/23 First Quarter Financial Report.</p> <p>Reported 8/02/2023: Council Action Plan 2022-23 - Second Quarter Performance Report.</p> <p>Reported 08/03/2023: 2022/23 Mid-Year Financial Report.</p> <p>Reported 12/04/2023: 2022/23 Third Quarter Financial Report.</p> <p>Reported 10/05/2023: Council Action Plan 2022-23 - Third Quarter Performance Report.</p>
Annual report (annual report under sections 98 and 99 of the Act containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements)	Annual report considered at a meeting of Council in accordance with section 100 of the Act	Considered: 12/10/2022
Councillor Code of Conduct (Code setting out the standards of conduct to be followed by Councillors and other matters)	Code of conduct reviewed and adopted in accordance with section 139 of the Act	Reviewed and Adopted: 20/6/2023.
Delegations (documents setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff)	Delegations reviewed in accordance with section 11(7) of the Act and a register kept in accordance with sections 11(8) and 47(7) of the Act	Registered Reviewed: 21/04/2023.
Meeting procedures (Governance Rules governing the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees)	Governance rules adopted in accordance with section 60 of the Act	Reviewed and Adopted: 10/08/2022.

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

Cathy Henderson
Chief Executive Officer

Signature:



Date: 22.08.2023

Cr Helen Davidson
Deputy Mayor

Signature:



Date: 23.08.2023

Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures

Council recognises the importance of disclosing the actual and potential impacts of climate-related risks and opportunities to the services we provide to the community. We are committed to providing information on how we are working to manage climate change risks through our various planning, strategic and operational processes. Building on the initial reporting in 2021-2022, we will continue to work to progressively improve our disclosures in alignment with the latest industry standards. The current approach to disclosures follows the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

Climate change governance

Councillors endorsed the Climate Risk Strategy in 2022 and the Foundational Action Plan in June 2023. The Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework and Zero Carbon Merri-bek Climate Emergency Action Plan were also endorsed by Council in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Councillors are briefed by Council staff to keep them up to date on progress of the implementation of actions.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides oversight of climate risks. In 2022-23, quarterly reports were submitted to the committee describing climate risk management processes and progress against the delivery of the Climate Risk Strategy.

The Climate Resilience Integration Board is composed of the CEO and four Directors, Chief Financial Officer, Governance Manager, Sustainability and Climate Manager, supported by key officers. It manages the development and implementation of the Climate Risk Strategy and Foundational Action Plan. The board meets quarterly and is informed about climate-related issues as well as progress against actions that mitigate climate risks. Progress on actions and emergent issues are reported to the board.

The Zero Carbon Merri-bek Project Control Board is comprised of the Place and Environment Director, Community Engagement Manager, and Sustainability and Climate Manager. It provides overall direction and management over the implementation of the Zero Carbon Merri-bek Action Plan.

Climate Risk Strategy

Council endorsed its Climate Risk Strategy in November 2022. The strategy describes how we will proactively plan for and respond to the inevitable impacts of climate change. It has five goals: Managing climate risk; Built and natural environments; Community services; Community and business; and Partnership approaches.

Consistent with the Community Emergency Risk Assessment, some of the identified climate-related risks that Merri-bek is facing relate to:

- Heatwaves and high temperatures that may impact on human health and wellbeing, particularly people that are at risk such as young children, older people, and those in precarious housing;
- High rainfall events that may result in stormwater flows/ flooding over streets and properties; and
- Potential damage to Council buildings and built and open space assets by increase in temperatures, drought, storms and intense rainfall, bushfire-induced air pollution, wind, and solar radiation.

There may also be some limited risk of riverine flooding. Drought and low rainfall are also risks that may be present depending on climate drivers. Risks are further assessed according to the sector or thematic area.

The objectives and actions in the Climate Risk Strategy also show how climate risks and effects are considered in changes in demand for Council services, workforce planning, as well as broader policies and strategic and financial management processes. To achieve the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes in the strategy, the Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan was developed and endorsed by Council in June 2023.

Other relevant work in assessing climate risk include stormwater mapping and thermal mapping. In 2018, Council updated stormwater flood modelling that considers climate change, following the guidance of the Australian Rainfall and Runoff guidance of having increased rainfall intensity. In the first half of 2023, this modelling and mapping has been reviewed to ensure the most up-to-date information is available. This guides our planning for drainage infrastructure and the special building overlay in the planning scheme. This allows for planning to consider increased rainfall due to climate change.

Thermal mapping conducted in January 2014 and February 2023 give an indication of heat hotspots in our municipality with values on surface temperatures. This gives a finer grained spatial assessment of heat risk, complementary to more general information from climate projections such as in the Victorian Climate Projections 2019 (VCP 19).

Climate risk management

Emerging climate risks are identified through horizon scanning, publications, internal audits, external audits, conference attendance, and a quarterly summary of publications by the Council's internal auditor, as well as active membership in organisations like the Risk Management Institute of Australia.

One of Council's nine strategic risks is that the impacts of climate change are not appropriately planned for or responded to. A workshop was conducted in February 2023 with a whole-of-Council approach, led by the Chair of the Climate Resilience Integration Board. During this workshop, the risk and mitigation strategies were systematically reviewed and updated. To proactively manage this risk and its consequences, Council identified various controls and tasks, including actions from the Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan. The risk, its rating, controls, and tasks are reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis in accordance with Council's Enterprise Risk Management Framework.

In addition to the above, Council has evaluated all 105 risks on Council's risk register, with 37 of them identified as having 'climate risks.' Climate was integrated into the description of the likely causes. These climate risks are continually reviewed and monitored in accordance with Council's Enterprise Risk Management Framework.

Metrics and targets

Council has completed its combined reporting to Carbon Disclosure Project and ICLEI Track Reporting for 2023. This reporting is aligned with the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

The monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and improvement plan for the Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan is currently being developed, with the aim of having key indicators for each goal that would enable tracking of progress and the impact that our actions are having. The monitoring and evaluation framework would also inform the priorities and development of the subsequent action plan for 2025 to 2030.

Council has also been certified by Climate Active from 2021-22 to 2020-21. Analysis for 2021-22 provides a total of 6,597 tCO₂-e for offsetting. Majority of the emissions are from transport, gas use, and contractor fuels. The data for 2022-23 is being collected.

The Merri-bek Zero Carbon 2040 Framework provides a pathway for Council to maintain its commitment of corporate carbon neutrality and for Council to aim for a zero-carbon municipality by 2040. In 2021, Council increased the ambition of its corporate carbon targets. For Council (corporate/operational) emissions we have a highly ambitious target range of between 80% and 100% reduction by 2030 (precluding offsets, against 2011-12 baseline). Council achieved a 70% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020-21, however achieving the remaining reductions will be very challenging. To meet its target, we are pursuing initiatives such as a gas audit, electrification of the Fawkner Leisure Centre, electrification of fleet, and continuing to install solar photovoltaic systems on Council buildings.

Statutory information

Victorian and Federal Government investigations

Merri-bek City Council was not the subject of any Victorian or Federal Government investigations.

Documents available for public inspection

We are committed to open and transparent governance under the *Local Government Act 2020*. We have a Public Transparency Policy in place. This outlines our commitment to being accountable to the community through:

- transparency of information
- service data
- performance
- decision-making.

We deliver a range of services to residents, business and visitors to Merri-bek. Our services and functions are documented. We will publish information about our services and administration activities on our website. We will also make this available on request.

The following documents are available on Council's website:

1. Council meeting agendas and minutes
2. Reporting from Advisory Committees in accordance with the governance rules
3. Audit and Risk Committee performance reporting
4. Details of Advisory Committees
5. Terms of reference for Advisory Committees and Audit and Risk Committee Charter
6. Registers of gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to Councillors or Council staff
7. Registers of Councillor attendance at Council Meetings and meetings arranged to brief Councillors
8. Registers of travel undertaken by Councillors or Council staff
9. Registers of conflict of interest disclosed by Councillors or Council staff
10. Submissions made by Council to state or federal processes
11. Details of any memorandum of understanding entered into by Council that are not subject to confidentiality clauses
12. Registers of donations and grants made by Council
13. Registers of leases entered into by Council, as lessor and lessee
14. Register of delegations
15. Register of Authorised Officers
16. Register of election campaign donations

17. Summary of personal interests.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (the 'Act') gives the community a legal right to access certain council documents.

The Act has 4 basic principles:

1. The public has a legal right of access to information.
2. Local governments are required to publish information on the documents they hold.
3. People may request inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date or misleading information in their personal records be amended.
4. People may appeal against a decision not to give access to the information or not to amend a personal record.

We respond to requests that are directly related to our operations. In 2022-2023, we received 35 FOI applications.

Of the 35 applications received in 2022-23:

- in 10 cases applicants were granted access to documents in full
- in 0 cases there were no documents to provide in response to the request
- 14 requests for documents were partially granted
- 6 requests were still pending at 30 June 2023 and will be reported as part of the 2023-24 annual report.

The most common reason parts of a document were redacted was to prevent the unreasonable disclosure of information relating to the personal affairs of a person.

Many other requests for information did not eventuate as FOI applications. This is because we were able to provide the information sought outside of the FOI process.

Under the Act, we have submitted our report on the operation of the Act for inclusion in the annual report of the Freedom of Information Commissioner to Parliament.

Accessing Freedom of Information

Requests to access Freedom of Information must be in writing and accompanied by an application fee.

We must decide about the release of documents within 30 days of receiving a valid application. This is unless an extension of time is agreed. Where a decision is made to refuse or defer access, we will notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for the refusal. We will outline the procedures available to appeal our decision.

More information about Freedom of Information can be found at ovic.vic.gov.au and on our website at merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Local laws

Merri-bek City Council has 2 local laws.

The purpose of General Local Law 2018 is to:

- promote a physical and social environment that is accessible and free from hazards to health, in which the residents of and visitors to the municipality can enjoy a quality of life that meets the general expectations of the community
- protect the use of public places and control activities in, on or near them
- provide for safety in public places
- control, protect and conserve the environment and maintain the amenity of the municipality
- provide for, control and manage the use of premises and vehicles in particular circumstances
- regulate the number and manner of keeping of animals
- control, prevent and abate nuisances
- provide for the peace, order and good government of the municipality.

The Meeting Procedure Local Law 2018 aimed to achieve several objectives, which included procedures governing the conduct of Council Meetings; the process for electing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor; setting behavioral rules for meeting participants and attendees; providing guidelines for appointing councillor office holders and assigning them to committees, both internal and external.

While the majority of the Council's existing Meeting Procedure Local Law 2018 has been replaced by the Council's Governance Rules, the remaining provisions of the Local Law persist for the specific purposes of governing the use of Council's Common Seal and establishing penalties for infringements.

Public Interest Disclosures

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (the 'Act') encourages and facilitates the making of disclosures of improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. It also established a system for matters to be investigated.

The Act provides protection from detrimental action to any person affected by a protected disclosure. This is whether the person makes a disclosure, is a witness or is a person who is the subject of an investigation.

The Act provides protection to whistleblowers who make disclosures under certain requirements. It also aims to ensure disclosures are investigated. Merri-bek Council adopted a Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower) Policy in December 2019.

Under the requirements of the Act, we have established a Public Interest Disclosure Procedure. This is supported by a series of guidelines.

During the reporting period, we received 1 disclosure. Internal or external whistleblowers can contact our Public Interest Disclosures Coordinator on 9240 1111.

Information Privacy and Health Records Policy

The responsible handling of personal information is a key aspect of good governance practices. It is also key to accountable democratic processes. We are committed to protecting every individual's right to privacy and their personal information.

We are committed to full compliance with our statutory obligations under:

- the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- the *Health Records Act 2001* (the Acts).

We comply with and handle personal information in line with the Information Privacy Principles and Health Privacy Principles in the Acts.

Our policy applies to all personal information we collect, handle and store. Our current policy was authorised and implemented on 7 January 2022.

Our Information Privacy and Health Records Policy applies to all our:

- employees
- Councillors
- agents (consultants, agency staff and volunteers)
- contractors.

It refers to all information collected by Merri-bek Council in the course of our duties.

We ensure personal information is protected through:

- training and awareness sessions
- local procedures
- guidance through our Information Privacy and Health Records policy (publicly available).

We have strong security frameworks in place around the use and disclosure of personal information.

Anyone who wants to access their personal information should first contact the area of Council that collected it. If you believe your personal information is inaccurate, incomplete or out of date, you may request we correct the information.

If you feel aggrieved by our handling of your personal information, you may make a complaint to our Privacy Officer. We take all complaints seriously. We will investigate your complaint and provide you with a timely response.

You can also make a complaint to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC). During the reporting period, there were 2 complaints referred to us by OVIC. Both complaints were resolved satisfactorily.

Community engagement

Council is committed to engaging effectively with our communities on decisions that affect them.

We continued to improve the process for engagement through the Community Engagement Policy and Implementation Plan, including the ongoing development of a digital engagement framework, and the development of a training program to help council staff better engage with children and young people.

During the past year, Council has carried out more than 170 planned engagement processes.

Council has engaged with the community on key projects such as:

- Our new 4-bin service
- Community Budget Ideas 2023-2024
- Brunswick elevated rail
- A Park Close to Home – 260 Sydney Road
- Fawkner Transport Study

Legislative environment

We operate and deliver services under, and in accordance with, more than 80 different pieces of Victorian primary legislation and the regulations made under those Acts.

Many sections of this report address specific legislation, including the:

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Road Management Act 2014*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.*

We have highlighted some key Acts.

Local Government Act

Community vision, council plan, asset plan

In October 2021, we adopted our Community Vision 2021-2031 and Council Plan 2021-2025, which were guided by our deliberative engagement practices.

The community vision and council plan were major outputs of the Imagine Moreland program. Imagine Moreland was a 4-stage engagement program to develop Council's Community Vision 2021-2031, and to inform the development of the following Council documents:

- 4-year Council Plan, including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- 10-year Financial Plan
- 10-year Asset Plan, including the Community Infrastructure Plan.

The Council Plan 2021-2025 was informed by current services delivered to the community, examining opportunities and challenges, evaluating existing Council strategies and projects and ensuring that identified legislative requirements (such as the *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, *Climate Change Act 2017* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*) were considered for incorporation.

Consequently, a Council Action Plan 2022-2023 was also adopted to support the implementation of the Council Plan 2021-2025 for the second financial year of the 4-year period. It identified the key actions for delivering the strategies and major initiatives contained in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

On 23 June 2022, Council adopted its Asset Plan 2022-2032. The 10year plan outlines maintenance, renewal, expansion, acquisition, disposal and decommissioning of assets for which Council is responsible and covers transport infrastructure (for example, roads, footpaths, bike paths and bridges), community and civic facilities (community centres, Council offices, sporting pavilions), stormwater infrastructure (drainage pits, pipes) and open space (parks, playgrounds, reserves and sporting fields).

Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy

In meeting our legislative obligations, Council adopted a Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy on 10 November 2021. This policy remained current during the 2022-23 period.

The policy covers such matters as:

- the recruitment and appointment of the chief executive officer
- provisions to be included in the contract of employment
- the appointment of an acting chief executive officer
- the provision of independent professional advice in relation to the matters dealt within the policy
- the monitoring of the chief executive officer's performance
- an annual review of the chief executive officer's performance
- any other matters prescribed by legislation
- determining the chief executive officer's remuneration.

Governance rules

Councillors took the opportunity to review the Governance Rules that were adopted on 13 October 2021, to provide for attendance and participation in Council meetings and delegated committees by electronic means of communication. Following a review of the rules, the majority of the content of the existing rules was recommended to be retained. Council invited written submissions from the community on the revised Governance Rules between the period 14 July 2022 to 24 July 2022 and at the 10 August 2022 meeting, Council endorsed revised rules that provided for:

- the conduct of its meetings by electronic means; and
- a process for the requesting and approving attendance at meetings by electronic means.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* provides the legal framework for what Merri-bek will look like. It governs the processes involved to determine what land can be used for – open space, industry, homes, for example. It also governs the processes for permits to develop certain land. During 2022-23, there were no significant changes to this legislation.

Freedom of Information Act 1982

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* provides the public with a right of access to government documents. This includes documents held by Council. During 2022-23, there were no significant changes to this legislation.

Domestic Animal Management Plan

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires all councils in Victoria to develop a domestic animal management plan. This plan must outline Council services, programs and policies established to address the administration of the Act and Council's management of cat and dog issues in the community.

This plan is the overarching strategic document relating to domestic animals and is prepared at 4-year intervals. It sets out:

- the method we use for evaluating whether the animal control services provided are effective and achieve the requirements under the Act and Regulations
- training programs for authorised officers
- programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with relevant legislation and associated codes of practice
- programs, services and strategies to address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; ensure that dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are compliant with the Act and Regulations
- to ensure that domestic animal businesses are complying with the Act, the Regulations and the related Code of Practice.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 was formally adopted on 10 November 2021.

Road Management Plan

The *Road Management Act 2004* requires each council to review its road management plan within 6 months after a general election or by the next 30 June.

The purpose of the plan is to demonstrate that Council, as the road authority, is responsibly managing all the road assets under its control and specifies the standards and inspection regimes required to manage civil liability, which are reasonable and achievable.

The Road Management Plan 2021 was adopted by Council on 13 October 2021.

Contracts

Compliance with contract management requirements as articulated in *Procurement Policy 2021-2025* made under Section 108 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)* remained strong in 2022-23. However, the following breaches were identified and reported in the Audit and Risk Committee Report on 14 March 2023:

1. Contract Expiry Exception Reporting: identified service contracts that have expired where business units were unable to provide the required information in time to exercise the options or extensions:

- a. DM-636-792T - Corporate Catering Services - Panel
- b. DM-567-536T - Provision of Sanitary and Hazardous Waste Services.

Resolution of the breach:

- These services will be tendered, and new contracts established by January 2024.
2. An internal audit identified that a summary report of key contract terms and conditions was not provided to the responsible director on a regular basis. To manage this risk, the procurement team has been working to standardise and centralise the reporting process, and the contract management system vendor (Open Windows) has been engaged to configure the reporting functionality.

A review of the amount spent with Australia Post for the past 12 months (July 2022 to June 2023) identified Council has spent \$425,234 (excluding GST) without a contract. A discussion held with Australia Post to put in place a contract was not successful. They advised they do not enter contracts for mail services.

Resolution of this breach:

- A procurement exemption was authorised by Council on 13 September 2023 to continue to use Australia Post for mail services without a contract.

A Child Safe Standards Audit, as reported to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting in March 2023 recommended that the Procurement Policy be updated to include information on Child Safety requirements for suppliers to align with Victoria's new Child Safe Standards. This was updated and endorsed by Council on 10 May 2023. Legal advice to include this requirement was obtained and contract templates were updated –on 8 September 2023.

In line with our contract management framework, contract managers regularly assess supplier performance for all contracts. Contract review, including assessing supplier performance against contract KPIs, is a mandatory process for contract extensions.

There were no matters requiring disclosure or significant compliance issues.

Disability access and inclusion plan

During 2022-23, Council improved disability access and inclusion and addressed the discrimination and inequality often experienced by people with disabilities.

These actions were progressed under the 5 objectives of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-26.

Equal access to all areas of community life:

- Undertook a major community engagement project to identify physical access barriers in the community – over 500 submissions received from community members
- Conducted multiple disability access audits of Activity Centres and open spaces
- Completed independent audit of Council's website against international standards for webpage accessibility (WCAG 2.0 & 2.1 AA)
- Improved accessibility of Coburg City Oval

- Built accessible footpath and kerb ramp to Ballertr Mooroop community hub site in Glenroy
- Responded to several requests for new accessible parking bays
- Delivered annual program to improve the accessibility of our pedestrian network
- Developed braille labels to help identify the 4 bins in Council's household waste service

Employment, education and economic security:

- Implemented work experience program for students with mild intellectual disabilities in partnership with Kangan TAFE
- Implemented a program to review Council's disability employment practices in partnership with Commonwealth agency – Job Access
- Worked with local Disability Employment Service to promote job vacancies
- Employed a full-time, ongoing staff member through Vision Australia's Graduate Program

Inclusion and participation in the community:

- Implemented a Support for Carers program
- Implemented Sensory Friendly Hour at Brunswick library
- Implemented a free art program at Coburg and Glenroy libraries for people with disabilities – The Art Connection
- Worked with the YMCA to specifically address disability access and inclusion to Merri-bek Aquatic and Leisure Centres.
- Convened the Merri-bek Disability Reference Group
- Convened the Merri-bek Disability Service Provider Network
- Chaired the Victorian Local Government Disability Planners' Network
- Chaired the Northern Metro Local Government Disability Planners' Network
- Compiled a submission to the Victorian Government about the (Draft) Disability Inclusion Bill.
- Celebrated International Day of People with Disability. We held events such as;
 - Film screening of "When We Were Younger" – a movie produced and acted by local people with disabilities
 - Library Auslan storytime session; library inclusive storytime sessions
 - Come 'n' Try Day at Aquatic and Leisure Centres and Coburg Tennis Club
 - Art exhibition – The Art Connection

Changing attitudes and practices that lead to discrimination

- Delivered disability related training for staff:
 - Deaf awareness training
 - Disability awareness training
 - Mental Health Awareness in the Workplace training
 - Mental Health First Aid
 - Universal Design training to staff involved in designing for the physical environment
- Delivered community workshop 'Planning for Access' – how to make arts events inclusive and welcoming for disabled audiences and collaborators.
- Provided advice and responded to more than 480 internal and external enquiries and complaints relating to disability.
- Advocated for accessible tram stops along Sydney Road – campaign and public rallies.
- Strongly advocated for the rights of disabled people to the Level Crossing Removal Authority in relation to the elevated rail that is planned for Brunswick.
- Developed a public campaign to raise awareness about 'invisible disabilities'.
- Reviewed and updated the Arts Merri-bek Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026.

- In collaboration with Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, launched 'Speak My language' program.

Supporting health, wellbeing and safety

- Provided regular in-home and community support services for over 130 residents under the age of 65 with disabilities.
- Submitted Universal Design grant application to the Victorian Government
- Encouraged and promoted Disability Royal Commission.

Domestic animal management

We prepare a domestic animal management plan every 4 years. This is a requirement of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the 'Act').

We endorsed our Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 on 10 November 2021. It was submitted to the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions on 15 November 2021. The plan was developed through a sector-leading partnership with two neighbouring councils, Darebin and Whittlesea.

Key objectives in the plan include:

- developing programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation
- educating the community on topics related to animal management
- increasing registration and identification of domestic cats and dogs
- ensuring animal management officers have appropriate training
- identifying dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs in the municipality to ensure they are kept in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations
- minimising the risk of dog attacks
- addressing overpopulation rates
- ensuring domestic animal businesses comply with legislation
- reducing the nuisance caused by cats and dogs.

Implementation of the plan is spread across 4 years with specific actions planned for each year.

Year 1 of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 actions delivered during the 2022-23 financial period included:

- auditing domestic animal businesses
- reviewing the animal registration database
- subsidising cat desexing programs
- promoting responsible pet ownership
- auditing of properties where dangerous or menacing dogs are kept

- comparison of our database against microchip registries
- reviewing and adjusting the frequency of park patrols as required
- social media posts about responsible pet management
- partnering with vets to reunite owners with their animals
- installing signage and decals promoting responsible pet ownership
- patrolling industrial areas for guard dogs.

Year 2 of the 2021-2025 plan actions delivered during the 2022-23 financial period included:

- reviewing the animal registration database
- subsidising cat desexing programs
- promoting responsible pet ownership
- training authorised officers
- increasing park patrols
- auditing properties where dangerous or menacing dogs are kept and ensuring the register is up-to-date
- reviewing information on our website
- social media posts about responsible pet management
- identifying suitable locations for dog poo bag dispensers and installing additional dispensers where appropriate
- amending working hours to reunite owners with their pets
- following up on unpaid animal registration
- investigating reports of unregistered domestic animal businesses.

Food Act ministerial directions

In accordance with section 7E of the Food Act 1984, there were no ministerial directions received by Merri-bek City Council during the financial year.

Road Management Act ministerial directions

In accordance with section 22 of the Road Management Act 2004, we must publish a copy or summary of any ministerial direction in our annual report. We did not receive any ministerial directions during 2022-23.

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities commitment

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria.

The charter requires governments, local councils and other public authorities consider human rights when they:

- make laws
- develop policies
- provide services.

Beyond compliance, Council takes a proactive approach to its commitment to the charter, promoting a culture of human rights across the organisation. We also facilitate shared attitudes, values and behaviours that influence the policymaking, decisions and practices of government to uphold the human rights of all people.

Potential breaches of human rights has been added to Council's risk register with the following controls in place to manage the risk:

- Merri-bek Human Rights Policy
- Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Human Rights Charter training for staff
- Gender Impact Assessments
- Social Cohesion plan.

New or revised policies, strategies, plans and programs considered human rights in line with charter responsibilities. Human rights charter training provided by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is now a regular offering in the Corporate Training Calendar and all staff are required to undertake an online module on the Charter. Other human rights-related training for staff included LGBTQIA+ awareness, cultural safety, gender equality and disability awareness.

The Human Rights Policy (2016-2026) was refreshed with the following key updates:

- Aligning with current Legal context (Local Government Act, Gender Equality Act, Privacy Act)
- Alignment with broader policy and contemporary context (Treaty, Climate change/climate justice, Disaster response)
- Lifestage considerations (children, young people and older people)
- COVID-19 and greater inequalities

Council has the following Advisory Committee and Reference Groups to guide the Human Rights Policy and associated plans and strategies, with more than 50 community members with diverse lived experience across these groups:

- First Nations Advisory Committee
- Human Rights and Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Environmental Sustainability Advisory Group
- LGBTQIA+ Reference Group
- Gender Equality Reference Group
- Disability Reference Group

- Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
- Age Friendly Reference Group

In February 2023 a joint forum was held to bring together members of Advisory Committee and Reference Groups as a way of learning together, to explore ways of working collaboratively to better understand and address key issues and actions. The forum was attended by over 35 people, including committee and reference group members, Councillors and convenors (staff).

Council have supported a joint forum with all Advisory Committees and Reference Groups to held regularly (annually or every 2 years).

A key goal of our human rights policy is to advance inclusion and social cohesion in the community. We held celebratory and awareness-raising events both online and in-person for significant dates including International Women's Day, Refugee Week, Cultural Diversity Week, IDAHOBIT, Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC and International Day for People with a Disability. We established an Interfaith Network, funded local projects such as the Merri-bek Democracy Lab's Seeds of Change, VICSEG's Connecting Women in Merri-bek and Merri Health's Great Idea Program in Glenroy to deliver social cohesion outcomes under our Social Cohesion Plan.

Social Cohesion

Under the Social Cohesion Plan 2020-2025, Council continued to fund the Merri-bek Democracy Lab, a partnership between Council and The Public Value Studio to build community leadership skills. This year a new pilot project 'Seeds of Change' was introduced to the program which was successful in supporting community members build on the skills and networks they developed during the 8-week Democracy Lab program.

Other events funded under the Plan include

- Palm Sunday
- World Interfaith Harmony Week event where Reverend Jenne Perlstein (Deputy Chairperson of Merri-bek Interfaith Network) shared her role and journey as Interfaith Minister with Council staff
- Cultural Diversity Week event at the Glenroy Community Hub held in partnership with local community organisations and groups attended by over 150 residents. It featured cultural performances and food from the diverse cultures in our local community
- Refugee week event theme 'Finding Freedom'. Mayor Angelica Panopoulos unveiled a new mural at Brunswick Baths, titled 'A Graffiti for Jina' by Feminista Melbourne, which highlighted the journey of refugees in finding freedom, whether through a new home or career, finding friendships, community, or ways to free others.

Reconciliation

Merri-bek City Council is dedicated to fostering and strengthening our partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and their respected Elders. As part of this ongoing commitment, we facilitated 11 cultural consultations with the Wurundjeri Elders, seeking their guidance on various projects and policies that impact cultural rights and practices. These discussions encompassed a range of topics, including:

- The Open Space Strategy, Arts and Culture Strategy, and First People's Employment Strategy
- The development of interpretive signage at Fawkner Parklands
- The Merri-bek Early Years Indigenous Perspectives Conference

- The acceptance of many Woi-wurrung names for renaming and naming parks and roads
- The organization of the 2023 Survival Day ceremony

Ballerrt Mooroop Site in Glenroy

Council made significant progress in the development of the Ballerrt Mooroop Community Hub in Glenroy. In cooperation with the First Nations Advisory Committee and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, Council initiated a variety of actions, including

- The launch of a website dedicated to the site's history
- Advocacy to the Victorian Government concerning land justice and the transfer of the title back to the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people
- Collaboration with First Nations leaders to re-engage over 30 stakeholders in the development of the site. such as the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Education Team, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, and Koorie Basketball Academy
- Holding a large public event during the 2023 Reconciliation Week, which marked the opening of the site for public use. The event provided an opportunity for the public to hear about proposed development plans for the site, such as an educational and health hub and sporting facilities.

Commitment to Socially Responsible Procurement

Council is dedicated to integrating sustainable procurement principles into our purchasing decisions, with a particular emphasis on achieving economic, environmental, and social benefits for the community. Our recently updated Procurement Policy (2021-2025) aspires to increase the involvement of priority group suppliers and other local businesses. The revised policy encourages Council to consider local and/or Indigenous suppliers where suitable and allows for the direct appointment of suitable Indigenous businesses when the risk is low. To further these goals, we have established partnerships with Supply Nation and the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, organizations that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners at both the national and Victorian levels. At present, we have 47 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses registered as active suppliers to Council.

Gender equality

Council also submitted our first Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 under the Act in March 2022 and are now setting up an internal working group for implementation. We are also required to undertake gender impact assessments for new or to be revised policies, programs and services with a direct and significant impact on the public and will submit our first progress report for the period from 1 July 2021-30 June 2023 to the Commission for Gender Equality by February 2024.

In March 2023 we celebrated International Women's Day with an in-person event promoting women's leadership in male-dominated education and business areas. Other priorities implemented under Council's Gender Equality Commitment included:

- Activities for staff and community during Week without Violence in October and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign in November.
- Supporting staff to understand the Act's requirements and undertake gender impact assessments

- Supporting community groups to develop and implement gender equity and family violence prevention projects.
- Convening the Merri-bek Family Violence Network and support frontline workers to work together for awareness raising, joint advocacy, improved service pathways and systemic reform to enhance response to and prevention of family violence in Merri-bek

LGBTIQA+ communities

Council's commitment to supporting LGBTIQA+ people continues to grow, as we responded to our diverse communities need's and increased rates of discrimination.

This year saw the endorsement of Merri-bek's first LGBTIQA+ action plan which provided a framework to develop activities that improve the wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ people across the city. The action plan was developed in collaboration with members of Council's LGBTIQA+ reference group, who provided guidance and direction throughout the process. The three-year plan features 26 new activities for the organisation, focusing on three priority areas: *Advance inclusion and social cohesion in the community, Deliver inclusive and accessible services and Council is an inclusive organisation.*

Council maintained an active role in the LGBTIQA+ space across the community through several events and advocacy days. This included a stall at Midsumma Carnival where staff from Community Development, Libraries and Brunswick baths engaged with people from the LGBTIQA+ communities about current issues in Merri-bek. While up to 35 Council staff proudly represented Merri-bek City Council at the Midsumma Pride March.

In partnership with Merri Health, Council held two successful events for IDAHOBIT in 2023. This included a community film screening of *The Dreamlife of Georgie Stone* and a staff event to celebrate LGBTIQA+ communities across the organisations.

Merri-bek Libraries continue to provide unique programs and events for LGBTIQA+ communities. Lead by the Lee Ellis Working Group, the library service has hosted a drag king storytime, Queer book club, Queer Youth clothes swap and have increased LGBTIQA+ library resources across the collection. Coburg library proudly hosted *Marking our Mark in Merri-bek* an exhibition by *The Shed* as part of Trans Awareness Week, featuring artwork produced by trans and gender diverse community members. This was the culmination a community project grant, awarded to *The Shed* to increase community capacity and resilience in the Merri-bek trans and gender diverse communities.

Merri-bek Council will continue to respond to our growing and diverse LGBTIQA+ communities across the city. Our action plan provides clear guidance, allowing the organisation to respond to emerging issues, while monitoring the sustainability and success of new programs.

Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum

The Local Government Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum has been advocating for the rights of people seeking asylum to the Federal and Victorian Government. 39 Councils are members. Council has taken a lead role in the taskforce. Mayor Angelica Panopoulos coordinated support for the of Iranian Women's Association (IWA) advocacy to the Minister The Hon. Clare O'Neil and Minister The Hon. Andrew Giles in alignment with the taskforce advocacy asks.

Cr Panopoulos also joined a delegation of taskforce representatives and Hazara refugees to a meeting in Canberra in June with Minister The Hon. Clare O'Neil, Greens and Independent MPs to call on the Federal Government for better support for all people seeking asylum in our communities. Council sent

questions on refugee rights, support and processing from our Asylum Seeker support service providers to Ms Spender’s office, for a response from the Departmental Committee of which she is a member.

We continue to convene a range of local service provider and community networks to support the capacity, reach and good governance of community organisations that target priority groups, including:

- Multicultural Settlement Services Network
- Fawkner and Glenroy Services Providers Networks
- Merri-bek Disability Service Provider Network
- Family Violence Network.
- Hume Merri-bek Volunteer Network

National Competition Policy annual statement of compliance

Merri-bek City Council has an ongoing commitment to comply with the National Competition Policy and we are obligated to adhere to competitive neutrality principles.

During the 2022-23 financial year, Council complied with the requirements of the National Competition Policy and did not receive any complaints in relation to competitive neutrality.

Infrastructure and development contributions

We introduced a development contributions plan in 2015. In accordance with section 46GM and 46QD of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, a council that is a collecting agency must prepare and give a report to the Minister for Planning on development contributions, including levies and works in kind.

For 2022-23 the following information about development contributions is disclosed.

Table 1 – Total Development Contributions Plan (DCP) levies received in 2022-23 financial year

DCP name and year approved	Levies received in 2022-23 financial year
Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$1,806,371
Total	\$1,806,371

Table 2 - DCP land, works, services or facilities accepted as works-in-kind in 2022-23 financial year

DCP name and year approved	Project ID	Project description	Item purpose	Project value (\$)
Merri-bek DCP (2015)				
Total				\$0

Table 3 – Total DCP contributions received and expended to date (for DCPs approved after 1 June 2016)

DCP name and year approved	Total levies received (\$)	Total levies expended (\$)	Total works-in-kind accepted (\$)	Total DCP contributions received (levies and works-in-kind) (\$)
Merri-bek DCP (gazetted 10 September 2015)	\$12,899,122	\$10,506,477	\$0	\$12,899,122
Total	\$12,899,122	\$10,506,477	\$0	\$12,899,122

On 24 March 2023, notice of Planning Scheme Amendment C221More's approval was published in the Victorian Government Gazette. This amendment materially changed the allowable value of DCP contributions to each project, as well as removing and adding projects to the project listing.

Some adjustments are required to previously completed projects to comply with the amendment. These are reported by category below under the section of the table titled 'Adjustments - C221More'

Adjustments – C221More

Charge Area	Project Type	DCP name (Year approved)	DCP fund adjusted
CA1 - Brunswick East/North Fitzroy	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$8,283
CA1 - Brunswick East/North Fitzroy	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$62,018
CA2 - Brunswick	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$240,459
CA2 - Brunswick	DI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$30,835
CA2 - Brunswick	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$79,321
CA3 - Brunswick West	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$48,303
CA3 - Brunswick West	DI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$9,110
CA3 - Brunswick West	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$13,632
CA4 - Coburg	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$75,825
CA4 - Coburg	DI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	(\$1,748)
CA4 - Coburg	DI - Drainage	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$5,588
CA4 - Coburg	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	(\$1,159,330)
CA5 - Pascoe Vale South	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$33,082

CA5 - Pascoe Vale South	DI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	(\$296)
CA5 - Pascoe Vale South	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$26,384
CA6 - Coburg North	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	(\$15,805)
CA6 - Coburg North	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	(\$98,946)
CA7 - Pascoe Vale	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$255,020
CA7 - Pascoe Vale	DI - Drainage	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$76,541
CA7 - Pascoe Vale	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$281,212
CA8 - Oak Park	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$103,542
CA8 - Oak Park	DI - Drainage	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$9,646
CA8 - Oak Park	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$40,177
CA9 - Fawkner	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$135,097
CA9 - Fawkner	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$119,386
CA10 - Hadfield	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$69,724
CA10 - Hadfield	DI - Drainage	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$7,466
CA10 - Hadfield	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$22,725
CA11 - Glenroy	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$333,589
CA11 - Glenroy	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	\$227,080
CA12 - Tullamarine/Gowanbrae	CI - Community Facilities	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	(\$4,873)
CA12 - Tullamarine/Gowanbrae	DI - Roads	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	(\$2,233)

Table 4 - Land, works, services or facilities delivered in 2022-23 financial year from DCP levies collected

Project description	Project ID	DCP name and year approved	DCP fund expended (\$)	Works-in-kind accepted (\$)	Council's contribution (\$)	Other contributions (\$)	Total project expenditure (\$)	Percentage of item delivered
Planning /Interest	PL01	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	343,644	-	-	-	343,644	-
Charles Mutton Reserve Pavilion 86 Lorne St Fawkner	CF010	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	46,105	0	652,226	96,481	794,812	116%
Fleming Park Community Hall Upgrade Fleming Park 47 to 51 Albert St, Brunswick	CF014	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	518,003	0	1,447,658	0	1,965,661	81%
Fleming Park Other Community Buildings, 47 To 51 Albert St, Brunswick East, Sporting Facility and Public Toilets Upgrade	CF027NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	237,038	0	2,212,585	0	2,449,623	81%
Charles Mutton Res-Athletics 86 Lorne St Fawkner	CF069	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	24,190	0	262,455	0	286,646	138%
Wallace Reserve-North 115 Justin Ave Glenroy	CF079	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	52,012	0	122,539	0	174,552	51%
John Pascoe Reserve Community Buildings,	CF094NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	31,930	0	17,935	246,418	296,283	19%

Fawkner, Community Facility Upgrade								
Wallace Reserve-South 115 Justin Ave Glenroy	CF096	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	33,845	0	251,095	0	284,940	83%
Wylie Reserve-South 1-2-Dog Club-Maintain North 1-2 Scout Hall No Action 256-264 Union St Brunswick West	CF097	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	4,113	0	-2,463	74,393	76,043	99%
Fawkner Leisure Centre, Fawkner, Swimming Pool Renewal	CF126N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	0	0	45,072	0	45,072	12%
Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment, Fawkner, Community Facility Upgrade	CF127N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	0	0	3,109,989	0	3,109,989	12%
Saxon St Community Hub, Brunswick, Community Facility Expansion	CF136N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	0	0	2,218,325	0	2,218,325	10%
Coburg Senior Citizens, 21 Harding St, Coburg, Community Facility Upgrade	CF143N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	19,908	0	91,634	0	111,542	59%
Derby St Kindergarten Children's Centre, 122 Derby Street, Pascoe Vale,	CF144N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	0	0	159,251	0	159,251	15%

Community Facility Upgrade								
Doris Blackburn Kindergarten, Shore Reserve Reynard Street, Pascoe Vale South, Community Facility Upgrade	CF145N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	37,942	0	11,984	0	49,926	10%
Hosken Reserve Football Pitch, Coburg North, Sportsfield Upgrade	CF146N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	12,757	0	56,723	0	69,481	3%
Hadfield Sporting Club Scoreboard, Hadfield, Sporting Facility Upgrade	CF147N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	9,523	0	94,382	0	103,905	129%
Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve Upgrade, Glenroy, Sporting Facility Upgrade	CF149N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	0	0	353,520	0	353,520	93%
Richards Reserve Natural Turf Renewal, Coburg North, Sportsfield Surface Renewal	CF151N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	0	0	11,738	0	11,738	4%
White Street (Engeny Hot Spot No 37), Brunswick East, Drainage Works	DR100N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	48,988	0	233,886	0	282,874	74%

Charles & Dods Street, Brunswick, Drainage Works	DR101N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	16,284	0	74,306	0	90,590	119%
Shamrock Street, Brunswick West, Drainage Works	DR111N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	0	0	134,449	0	134,449	118%
Blair Street, Coburg, Drainage Works	DR112N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	45,883	0	166,169	0	212,052	74%
O'Hea Street from Anderson to Davern Both Carriageways, Pascoe Vale, Drainage Works	DR127N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,487	0	5,151	0	6,639	105%
Shore Gve from McMahons to Carr, Coburg North, Drainage Works	DR129N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	4,324	0	160,819	0	165,143	79%
Williams Road from Mantell to Gaffney, Coburg North, Drainage Works	DR133N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,583	0	87,010	0	89,593	72%
Keane Street from Carr to McMahons, Coburg North, Drainage Works	DR134N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,654	0	111,162	0	113,816	88%
Suvla Grove from Sydney to Dead End, Coburg North, Drainage Works	DR135N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,888	0	123,074	0	126,961	67%

Hillview Avenue from Reynard to Purches, Pascoe Vale, Drainage Works	DR136N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	4,136	0	10,147	0	14,283	81%
O'Hea Street from Davern to Northgate Both Carriageways, Pascoe Vale, Drainage Works	DR139N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,675	0	8,863	0	12,538	80%
Peterson Avenue from Claremont to Mehegan, Coburg North, Drainage Works	DR140N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,218	0	60,113	0	62,330	58%
South Street from Sussex to East Part B, Pascoe Vale, Drainage Works	DR141N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	27,116	0	83,654	0	110,770	96%
Moascar Street from Gallipoli to Reynolds, Pascoe Vale South, Road Reconstruction	RD0022NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	7,824	0	330,856	0	338,680	65%
O'Hea Street Anderson-Davern-Both Carriageways Pascoe Vale South	RD0047	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	7,375	0	30,803	0	38,178	105%
Shore Gve from McMahons to Carr, Coburg North, Road Reconstruction	RD0177NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	110,415	0	274,920	0	385,334	79%

O'Hea Street Anderson-Davern-Both Carriageways Pascoe Vale South	RD0178	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	4,456	0	306,285	0	310,741	105%
Flinders Street from O'Hea To Murray, Coburg, Road Reconstruction	RD0184NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	45,920	0	9,226	304,395	359,542	76%
Jessie Street Station-West End-Dead End Coburg	RD0190	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	5,451	0	48,772	0	54,223	133%
Middle Street Lawrence-David Hadfield	RD0203	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	10,791	0	21,357	0	32,148	40%
Truscott Street from West to Farview, Hadfield, Road Reconstruction	RD0210NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	20,247	0	60,623	0	80,870	72%
Glen Street Delhi-Hilton Glenroy	RD0354	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,494	0	23,730	0	26,224	125%
Williams Road from Mantell to Gaffney, Coburg North, Road Reconstruction	RD0372NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	65,952	0	143,098	0	209,050	72%
Keane St Carr-McMahons Coburg North	RD0432	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,600	0	285,672	0	288,272	88%
Hillview Avenue from Reynard to Purches, Pascoe Vale South, Road Reconstruction	RD0438NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	4,674	0	273,049	0	277,723	81%

Suvla Grove from Sydney to Dead End, Coburg North, Road Reconstruction	RD0471NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	99,273	0	196,970	0	296,243	67%
McPherson Street Reynard-Berry Coburg	RD0472	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,610	0	15,606	0	18,216	93%
Hillview Avenue Reynard-Purches Pascoe Vale	RD0479	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	7,943	0	23,871	0	31,815	81%
Claremont Street from Whitton to Jackson, Coburg North, Road Reconstruction	RD0548NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	46,584	0	203,143	0	249,727	83%
Trevannion Street from Corrigan to Hilton, Glenroy, Road Reconstruction	RD0580NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	80,212	0	238,345	0	318,557	65%
Bruce Street Major-Lynch Fawkner	RD0614	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	4,030	0	59,330	0	63,360	131%
Lorne Street from Hume to Wembley, Fawkner, Road Reconstruction	RD0651NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	100,467	0	0	0	100,467	13%
O'Hea Street Davern-Northgate-Both Carriageways Pascoe Vale	RD0690	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	4,475	0	13,231	0	17,706	80%

O'Hea Street from Davern to Northgate Both Carriageways, Pascoe Vale South, Road Reconstruction	RD0690NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	5,483	0	286,758	0	292,242	80%
Lawrence Street Middle-Walter Hadfield	RD0710	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,962	0	33,622	0	37,584	129%
Peterson Avenue from Claremont to Mehegan, Coburg North, Road Reconstruction	RD0773NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	56,629	0	88,809	0	145,438	58%
Albion Street Hamilton-Pearson Brunswick	RD0783	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	4,618	0	16,406	0	21,024	59%
SEGGAN CIRCLE GOWANBRAE-DEAD END GOWANBRAE (Opp No 31)	RD0798	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	0	0	17,899	0	17,899	119%
Curtin Avenue from David to Sutherland - Both Carriageways, Hadfield, Road Reconstruction	RD0804NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	93,812	0	180,471	0	274,283	53%
Jukes Road Minona-Tyson Fawkner	RD0810	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	5,299	0	32,562	0	37,861	59%
Glen Street Hilton-Melbourne Glenroy	RD0828	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	5,714	0	40,497	0	46,211	96%

Colorado Street Watt-Quick Pascoe Vale & Oak Park	RD0833	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	947	0	28,742	0	29,689	585%
South Street from Sussex to East Part B, Pascoe Vale, Road Reconstruction	RD0840NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	68,298	0	190,165	0	258,463	96%
Dickinson Street Walter-Middle Hadfield	RD0917	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,872	0	34,007	0	37,879	133%
French Street Dawson-Williams Coburg North	RD0942	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,404	0	24,044	0	25,448	133%
South Street from Sussex to East, Hadfield, Road Reconstruction	RD1000NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	86,999	0	376,985	0	463,983	96%
Truscott Street from West to Farview Part B, Glenroy, Road Reconstruction	RD1001NR	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	73,580	0	249,900	0	323,480	72%
Brunswick Activity Centre Upgrade Works - Stewart St, Brunswick East, Streetscape Reconstruction	RD1280N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	76,343	0	0	0	76,343	5%
Kendall/Harding Footbridge Over Merri Creek BR070, Coburg, Footbridge	RD1291N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	17,414	0	0	0	17,414	4%

Hawthorn Street from Moreland to Benny Centre Line, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1298N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	8,408	0	43,140	0	51,548	82%
Barrys Lane From O'Hea To Dead End, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1299N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,295	0	6,967	0	8,262	85%
Grey Court from Meadow to Dead End, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1300N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,014	0	5,250	0	6,264	82%
Spring Street from Connolly to Connolly, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1301N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	5,352	0	28,635	0	33,986	85%
Urquhart Street from Armstead to Carpark, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1302N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,549	0	11,936	0	14,486	76%
Liverpool Street from Reynard to Munro, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1305N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	9,529	0	50,872	0	60,401	85%
Mavis Street from Willow to Dead End, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1306N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,268	0	6,830	0	8,098	85%
Connolly Avenue from Meadow Centre Line to Goff Centre Line, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1307N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	5,498	0	29,377	0	34,875	85%

Rogers Street from Sydney to Ross Centre Line, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1312N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,255	0	12,064	0	14,319	85%
Grafton Street from Shaftesbury to Dead End, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1314N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,748	0	8,908	0	10,656	81%
Meadow Street from Elizabeth to Connolly, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1316N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	7,193	0	38,423	0	45,617	85%
Connolly Avenue from Goff Centre Line to Meadow, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1319N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,657	0	19,539	0	23,195	85%
Strathearn Avenue from Craigrossie to Moreland, Coburg, Road Resurfacing	RD1320N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	10,890	0	58,140	0	69,030	85%
Baan Close from Imaroo Centre Line to Dead End, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1340N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	671	0	6,214	0	6,885	85%
Basil Street from Bonwick Kerb Line to McDougall Kerb Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1341N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,368	0	13,988	0	15,356	93%
Brian Street from Alec Kerb Line to Birchwood	RD1342N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,465	0	37,237	0	40,703	98%

Kerb Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing								
Hedley Street from Leighton Kerb Line to Eva Centre Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1351N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,385	0	23,967	0	26,352	92%
Leo Street from Dead End to Hume Kerb Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1359N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,557	0	35,424	0	38,981	91%
Leonard Street from McBryde Kerb Line to Dead End, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1360N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	676	0	5,696	0	6,372	78%
Maher Street from McDougall Kerb Line to Hume Kerb Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1364N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,779	0	37,981	0	41,760	92%
McBryde Street from Argyle Kerb Line to Lorne Kerb Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1366N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,166	0	31,547	0	34,713	91%
McBryde Street from Lorne Kerb Line to Tyrrell Centre Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1367N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,698	0	26,885	0	29,583	91%

McBryde Street from Tyrrell Centre Line to Vervale Centre Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1368N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,229	0	32,168	0	35,397	91%
Princess Street from Queens Kerb Line to Argyle Kerb Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1371N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,593	0	25,615	0	28,208	90%
Rohan Court from Anderson Kerb Line to Dead End, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1372N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	604	0	5,471	0	6,075	84%
Vervale Avenue from McBryde Kerb Line to Tyrrell Kerb Line, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1376N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,740	0	37,588	0	41,328	92%
Wroxham Court from Bungay Kerb Line to Dead End, Fawkner, Road Resurfacing	RD1379N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,277	0	13,055	0	14,333	93%
West Street Neighbourhood Streetscape Centre, Hadfield, Streetscape Reconstruction	RD1380N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	25,185	0	0	0	25,185	1%
Lex Grove from Grevillia Kerb Line to Nerissa Kerb	RD2012N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	9,170	0	35,038	0	44,208	90%

Line, Oak Park, Road Resurfacing								
Borang Street from Mathieson Kerb Line to Dead End, Coburg North, Road Resurfacing	RD2027N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,257	0	13,719	0	14,976	87%
Jackson Parade from Boyne Kerb Line to Boyd Centre Line, Coburg North, Road Resurfacing	RD2029N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,016	0	32,768	0	35,784	87%
Marama Street from Orvieto Kerb Line to Boundary Kerb Line, Coburg North, Road Resurfacing	RD2032N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,628	0	28,728	0	31,356	87%
Catherine Street from Bakers Road Kerb Line to Change of Width, Coburg North, Road Resurfacing	RD2037N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,071	0	23,377	0	25,448	90%
Boyne Street from Elizabeth Kerb Line to East End Ballard Centre Line, Coburg North, Road Resurfacing	RD2041N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	3,435	0	38,779	0	42,215	90%
Mehegan Avenue from Peterson Kerb Line to Claremont Kerb Line,	RD2051N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	1,907	0	22,784	0	24,692	95%

Coburg North, Road Resurfacing								
Orvieto Street from Mashoobra Kerb Line to Marama Centre Line, Coburg North, Road Resurfacing	RD2052N	Merri-bek DCP (2015)	2,415	0	25,957	0	28,373	86%

A plain English guide to the Financial Report

We are committed to accountability. We have developed this guide to help you understand and analyse the Annual Financial Report.

Our report complies with:

- Australian Accounting Standards
- other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board
- the *Local Government Act 2020*
- the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Some readers may not be familiar with the terms required by the standards as we are a part of the public sector. Some of the terms used in private-sector company reports are not appropriate for the public sector.

What is in the Annual Financial Report?

The report has 2 main sections: the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements. There are 5 statements and 10 notes. These are:

- prepared by our staff
- audited by the Victorian Auditor-General
- examined by our Audit Committee.

Council approves in principle the Annual Financial Report and authorises its certification.

The 5 statements are included in the first few pages of the report. They are the:

- comprehensive income statement
- balance sheet
- statement of changes in equity
- statement of cash flows
- statement of capital works.

The notes detail our accounting policies and the make-up of values contained in the statements.

Comprehensive income statement

The comprehensive income statement shows:

- the sources of revenue by income category
- the expenses incurred in running Council during the year.

The expenses relate only to Council operations. They do not include the cost associated with the purchase or building of assets. While asset-purchase costs are not included in the expenses, there is a line item for depreciation. Depreciation is a non-cash transaction. It represents the value of an asset decreasing over time due to wear and tear and becoming out-of-date.

The key figure to look at is the surplus or deficit for the year. The accounting surplus or deficit is the total revenue less the total expenses. While Council may be generating a healthy accounting surplus, this is used to fund other items in our operations. This includes loan principal repayments, transfers to reserves to fund future projects and rates-funded projects in the capital works program.

Balance sheet

The balance sheet is a snapshot of the financial position as at 30 June. It shows what we own as assets and what we owe as liabilities. Towards the bottom of the balance sheet is a line showing net assets. This is the net worth of Council, which has been built up over many years.

The assets and liabilities are separated into current and non-current. Current means those assets or liabilities that will fall due in the next 12 months.

Current and non-current assets

- Cash and other financial assets include cash and investments. That is, cash held in the bank, petty cash, and our investments.
- Receivables are amounts owed to us by ratepayers and others.
- Investment property represents the value of property owned by Council as investment.
- Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment is the largest component of our worth. It represents the value of all the assets held by Council. This includes land, buildings, roads, footpaths, shared paths, drains, vehicles, equipment, and parks. This has been built up over many years.
- Right of use assets shows Council's right to use assets over the course of a lease.

Current and non-current liabilities

- Payables are those who we owed money to as at 30 June.
- Provisions include accrued long service and annual leave owed to employees.
- Trust funds represent money held in trust by Council.
- Interest-bearing liabilities represent our outstanding borrowings.
- Unearned income represents money received for goods and services not yet provided.

Net assets

This term is used to describe the difference between the value of total assets and the value of total liabilities. It represents the net worth of Council as at 30 June.

Total equity

This always equals net assets. It is made up of the following components:

- asset revaluation reserve is the total of all post acquisition fair market value changes for non-current assets
- other reserves are allocations of funds that have been set aside and act as a future funding source for specific purposes:

- these reserve funds do not have bank accounts of their own but are a theoretical split up of cash that Council has on hand for a future identified need or obligation
- our reserves are broken up into 2 categories: restricted and non-restricted
- accumulated surplus is the value of all surpluses and deficits accumulated over time.

Statement of changes in equity

The statement of changes in equity summarises the transactions relating to the equity over the financial year. This statement shows the values of such changes and how these changes arose.

The main reasons for a change in equity stem from:

- a surplus or deficit from operations for the year
- the transfer of money to reserves and the use of money from our reserves
- revaluation of the assets, which are undertaken cyclically based on condition assessment and fair market value.

Statement of cash flows

The cash flow statement summarises our cash payments and cash received for the year.

The values may differ from those shown in the income statement as it is prepared on a cash accounting basis. The cash flow statement includes the total value (including GST). The income statement is prepared on an accrual basis and is excluding GST.

Our cash arises from, and is used in, 3 main areas:

- cash flows from operating activities:
 - receipts – all cash received into our bank account from ratepayers and others who owed money to us. Receipts can include grant payments, fees and fines or interest earnings from our cash investments
 - payments – all cash paid by us from our bank account to staff, creditors, and other persons
- cash flows from investing activities:
 - this section shows the cash invested in the creation or purchase of property, infrastructure, plant, and equipment assets. It also includes the cash received from the sale of these assets
- cash flows from financing activities:
 - this is where the receipt and repayment of borrowed funds are recorded.

The bottom line of the cash flow statement states the cash held at the end of the financial year. This shows our capacity to meet cash debts and other liabilities.

Statement of capital works

The statement of capital works details all amounts expended by Council on capital works. The statement classifies the expenditure in line with our asset classes.

It categorises capital works expenditure into:

- renewal of assets
- upgrading of assets
- expansion of assets
- creating new assets.

Each of these categories has a different impact on our future costs.

Notes to the accounts

The notes are a very important and informative section of the report. We have given details of our accounting policies to help you understand how the values shown in the statements are established. We have described these throughout the notes as relevant.

The notes also give details behind many of the summary figures in the statements. The note numbers are shown beside the relevant items in the comprehensive income statement, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and statement of capital works.

Where we wish to disclose other information, which cannot be incorporated into the statements, we have shown it in the notes.

Other notes include:

- the breakdown of expenses, revenues, reserves and other assets
- contingent liabilities
- transactions with persons related to Council.

The notes should be read at the same time as, and together with, the other parts of the Financial Statements to get a clear picture of the accounts.

Statements by Principal Accounting Officer and Councillors

The certification of the Principal Accounting Officer is made by the person responsible for the financial management of Council that, in her or his opinion, the financial statements have met all the statutory and professional reporting requirements.

The certification of Councillors is made by 2 Councillors on behalf of Council that, in their opinion, the financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of Council.

Auditor General's report

The independent audit report provides you with an external and independent opinion on the financial statements. It confirms that the financial report has been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation and professional standards, and that it represents a fair picture of Council's financial affairs.

Our main office

90 Bell Street, Coburg

External auditor

Auditor-General of Victoria

Internal auditor

Crowe Australasia

Solicitors

Various

Bankers

Westpac Banking Corporation

Website address

merri-bek.vic.gov.au



Merri-bek
City Council

Merri-bek City Council

Annual Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

Merri-bek City Council

Financial Report

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Merri-bek City Council

Financial Report

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Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.



Allan Cochrane - Certified Practicing Accountant (CPA)

Principal Accounting Officer

Dated : 13/09/2023

Coburg, Vic

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of the Merri-bek City Council for the year ended 30 June 2023 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

Angelica Panopoulos

Mayor

Dated :

Coburg, Vic


13/09/2023

Helen Davidson

Deputy Mayor

Dated :

Coburg, Vic


13/09/2023

Anita Cumow

Acting Chief Executive Officer

Dated :

Coburg, Vic



13/09/2023

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Councillors of Merri-bek City Council

Opinion	<p>I have audited the financial report of Merri-bek City Council (the council) which comprises the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• balance sheet as at 30 June 2023• comprehensive income statement for the year then ended• statement of changes in equity for the year then ended• statement of cash flows for the year then ended• statement of capital works for the year then ended• notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies• certification of the financial statements. <p>In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the council as at 30 June 2023 and their financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 4 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>, the <i>Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020</i> and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.</p>
Basis for Opinion	<p>I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report.</p> <p>My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.</p> <p>I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.</p>
Councillors' responsibilities for the financial report	<p>The Councillors of the council are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and the <i>Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020</i>, and for such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.</p> <p>In preparing the financial report, the Councillors are responsible for assessing the council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.</p>

**Auditor's
responsibilities
for the audit of
the financial
report**

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Councillors
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Councillors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the council's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the council to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Councillors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



Comprehensive Income Statement For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Income / Revenue			
Rates and charges	3.1	179,422	172,652
Statutory fees and fines	3.2	16,401	14,338
User fees	3.3	7,190	6,977
Grants - operating	3.4	22,234	24,766
Grants - capital	3.4	5,103	8,844
Contributions - monetary	3.5	10,617	13,123
Contributions - non monetary	3.5	6,061	1,387
Fair value adjustments for investment property	6.4	-	1,645
Other income	3.7	7,866	4,622
Total income / revenue		254,894	248,354
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	102,950	97,179
Materials and services	4.2	66,936	68,264
Depreciation	4.3	32,391	28,311
Amortisation - right of use assets	4.4	331	236
Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	6,917	2,734
Bad and doubtful debts - allowance for impairment losses	4.5	2,809	2,242
Borrowing costs	4.6	692	747
Finance costs - leases	4.7	4	-
Fair value adjustments for investment property	6.4	180	-
Other expenses	4.8	748	664
Total expenses		213,958	200,376
Surplus for the year		40,936	47,978
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)		119,579	356,647
Total other comprehensive income		119,579	356,647
Total comprehensive result		160,515	404,625

The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Balance Sheet As at 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	24,282	17,051
Trade and other receivables	5.1	38,638	38,461
Other financial assets	5.1	93,000	97,000
Inventories	5.2	248	294
Prepayments	5.2	2,263	2,157
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	6.1	2,625	2,119
Other assets	5.2	783	258
Total current assets		161,839	157,341
Non-current assets			
Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries	6.3	2	2
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.2	2,803,639	2,646,816
Right-of-use assets	5.8	947	945
Investment property	6.4	28,690	28,870
Total non-current assets		2,833,278	2,676,633
Total assets		2,995,117	2,833,975
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.3	14,828	12,337
Trust funds and deposits	5.3	6,057	5,465
Unearned income/revenue	5.3	1,823	3,272
Provisions	5.5	21,146	21,072
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	1,338	1,326
Lease liabilities	5.8	111	-
Total current liabilities		45,303	43,472
Non-current liabilities			
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	21,818	23,157
Provisions	5.5	2,262	2,253
Lease liabilities	5.8	128	-
Total non-current liabilities		24,208	25,410
Total liabilities		69,511	68,882
Net assets		2,925,606	2,765,092
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		750,053	710,485
Asset revaluation reserve	9.1	2,089,066	1,969,487
Reserves	9.1	86,487	85,119
Total Equity		2,925,606	2,765,092

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Changes in Equity For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	Note	Total \$'000	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Revaluation Reserve \$'000	Other Reserves \$'000
2023					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		2,765,091	710,485	1,969,487	85,119
Surplus for the year		40,936	40,936	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	9.1	119,579	-	119,579	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	-	(51,779)	-	51,779
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	-	50,411	-	(50,411)
		<u>2,925,606</u>	<u>750,053</u>	<u>2,089,066</u>	<u>86,487</u>
Balance at end of the financial year		2,925,606	750,053	2,089,066	86,487

		Total \$'000	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Revaluation Reserve \$'000	Other Reserves \$'000
2022					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		2,360,466	668,559	1,612,840	79,067
Surplus for the year		47,978	47,978	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment	9.1	356,647	-	356,647	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	-	(59,061)	-	59,061
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	-	53,009	-	(53,009)
		<u>2,765,091</u>	<u>710,485</u>	<u>1,969,487</u>	<u>85,119</u>
Balance at end of the financial year		2,765,091	710,485	1,969,487	85,119

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

		2023 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000	2022 Inflows/ (Outflows) \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges		179,125	168,362
Statutory fees and fines		14,994	13,767
User fees		10,162	7,280
Grants - operating		21,867	24,233
Grants - capital		3,925	6,056
Contributions - monetary		10,617	13,123
Interest received		3,627	421
Trust funds and deposits taken		44,870	38,145
Other receipts		2,926	4,975
Net GST refund/payment		(560)	2,911
Employee costs		(102,867)	(97,638)
Materials and services		(67,315)	(77,879)
Trust funds and deposits repaid		(44,278)	(39,146)
Other payments		(748)	(560)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		76,345	64,050
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.2	(71,422)	(48,691)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		424	421
Payments for investments		4,000	(45,500)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(66,998)	(93,770)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Finance costs		(692)	(747)
Repayment of borrowings		(1,326)	(9,907)
Interest paid - lease liability		(4)	-
Repayment of lease liabilities		(94)	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		(2,116)	(10,654)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		7,231	(40,374)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		17,051	57,425
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		24,282	17,051
Financing arrangements	5.6		

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Capital Works For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Property			
Land		17,926	2,047
Total land		17,926	2,047
Buildings		14,388	28,520
Building improvements		1,426	-
Total buildings		15,814	28,520
Total property		33,740	30,567
Plant and equipment			
Plant, machinery and equipment		1,727	6,460
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		370	873
Computers and telecommunications		978	1,116
Library books		1,040	1,023
Total plant and equipment		4,115	9,472
Infrastructure			
Roads		10,566	4,919
Bridges		486	344
Footpaths and cycleways		3,026	4,152
Drainage		1,582	2,464
Waste management		5,502	-
Parks, open space and streetscapes		11,767	-
Other infrastructure		638	4,743
Total infrastructure		33,568	16,622
Total capital works expenditure		71,422	56,660
Represented by:			
New asset expenditure		32,998	10,424
Asset renewal expenditure		30,253	25,755
Asset expansion expenditure		88	19,342
Asset upgrade expenditure		8,084	1,139
Total capital works expenditure		71,422	56,660

The above statement of capital works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 1 OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Merri-bek City Council was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on 21 June 1994 and is a body corporate. The Council's main office is located at 90 Bell Street, Coburg.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with the Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the Local Government Act 2020, and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

The Council is a not-for-profit entity and therefore applies the additional AUS paragraphs applicable to a not-for-profit entity under the Australian Accounting Standards.

Significant accounting policies

1.1 Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, except for the cash flow information, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the fair value of land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.2)
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.2)
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.5)
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.5)
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers or AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities (refer to Note 3)
- the determination, in accordance with AASB 16 Leases, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value (refer to Note 5.8)
- whether or not AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors is applicable
- other areas requiring judgements.

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 2 ANALYSIS OF OUR RESULTS

2.1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of the lower of 10 percent or \$3 million where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The budget figures detailed below are those adopted by Council on 23 June 2022. The budget was based on assumptions that were relevant at the time of adoption of the budget. Council sets guidelines and parameters for revenue and expense targets in this budget in order to meet Council's planning and financial performance targets for both the short and long term. The budget did not reflect any changes to equity resulting from asset revaluations, as their impacts were not considered predictable.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

2.1.1 Income / Revenue and expenditure

	Budget 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Variance 2023 \$'000	Variance 2023 %	Ref
Income / Revenue					
Rates and charges	177,529	179,422	1,893	1%	
Statutory fees and fines	16,772	16,401	(371)	(2%)	
User fees	6,873	7,190	317	5%	
Grants - operating	20,872	22,234	1,362	7%	
Grants - capital	6,821	5,103	(1,718)	(25%)	1
Contributions - monetary	11,700	10,617	(1,083)	(9%)	2
Contributions - non monetary	-	6,061	6,061	100%	3
Fair value adjustments for investment property	85	-	(85)	(100%)	4
Other income	4,117	7,866	3,749	91%	5
Total income / revenue	244,769	254,894	10,125	4%	
Expenses					
Employee costs	101,828	102,950	(1,122)	(1%)	
Materials and services	67,733	66,936	797	1%	
Depreciation	28,393	32,391	(3,998)	(14%)	6
Amortisation - right of use assets	236	331	(95)	(40%)	7
Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	2,119	6,917	4,798	226%	8
Bad and doubtful debts	2,931	2,809	122	4%	
Borrowing costs	670	692	(22)	(3%)	
Finance costs - leases	-	4	(4)	100%	
Fair value adjustments for investment property	-	180	180	100%	4
Other expenses	713	748	(35)	(5%)	
Total expenses	204,623	213,958	620	0%	
Surplus for the year	40,146	40,936	9,505	24%	

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(i) Explanation of material variations

1	Grants - capital	The variance primarily stems from the timing of grant funding for several projects, namely the Glenroy Activity Centre Upgrade, Oak Park Kindergarten, Saxon Street Community Hub, Derby Street Kindergarten, and Park Close to Home Frith Street. However, it is worth noting that this variance has been partially offset by the receipt of unbudgeted grants for other initiatives, such as Park Close to Home - Cardinal Road, CB Smith Reserve, Park Street Childcare Centre, and Robinson Reserve Playground.
2	Contributions - monetary	The shortfall in subdivider contributions can be attributed to a reduction in development activity, resulting in lower-than-anticipated revenue from this source. These funds are transferred to a restricted reserve.
3	Contributions - non-monetary	The noted variance is a result of the recognition of unbudgeted contributed assets including buildings, roads, drains, kerb and channel.
4	Fair value adjustments for investment property	The decrease in Council's investment properties can be attributed to the outcomes of market valuations conducted by qualified valuers.
5	Other income	The variance is primarily attributable to favourable interest income, which has been influenced by higher interest rates on Council's investments. At the time of budget adoption Council anticipated 0.3% interest rate compared to the actual rates of 1% to 4.1% achieved over 2022/23.
6	Depreciation	Increased depreciation due to assets revalued at 30 June 2022.
7	Amortisation - right of use assets	An additional lease entered into for multi-function devices used across Council.
8	Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	The disposal of infrastructure and other assets during the year is considered unbudgeted, primarily arising from the replacement of roads and other infrastructure assets, resulting in the write-off of undepreciated balances.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2.1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2023 \$'000	Actual 2023 \$'000	Variance 2023 \$'000	Variance 2023 %	Ref
Property					
Land	-	17,926	17,926	100%	1
Total land	-	17,926	17,926	100%	
Buildings	15,486	14,388	(1,098)	(7%)	
Building improvements	531	1,426	895	169%	2
Total buildings	16,017	15,814	(203)	(1%)	
Total property	16,017	33,740	17,723	111%	
Plant and equipment					
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,500	1,727	227	15%	3
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	156	370	214	137%	4
Computers and telecommunications	1,931	978	(953)	(49%)	5
Library books	1,040	1,040	(0)	(0%)	
Total plant and equipment	4,627	4,115	(512)	(11%)	
Infrastructure					
Roads	12,340	10,566	(1,774)	(14%)	6
Bridges	110	486	376	342%	7
Footpaths and cycleways	5,767	3,026	(2,741)	(48%)	8
Drainage	1,763	1,582	(181)	(10%)	
Waste management	2,659	5,502	2,843	107%	9
Parks, open space and streetscapes	12,490	11,767	(723)	(6%)	
Transport management/Off street car parks	1,185	-	(1,185)	(100%)	10
Other infrastructure	778	638	(140)	(18%)	11
Total infrastructure	37,092	33,568	(3,524)	(10%)	
Total capital works expenditure	57,736	71,422	13,686	24%	
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	13,169	32,998	19,829	151%	
Asset renewal expenditure	36,663	30,253	(6,410)	(17%)	
Asset expansion expenditure	-	88	88	0%	
Asset upgrade expenditure	7,904	8,084	180	2%	
Total capital works expenditure	57,736	71,422	13,686	24%	

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref		Explanation
1	Land	Expenditure related to land purchases takes place when opportunities arise to acquire properties in strategically identified areas. These acquisitions align with Council's adopted framework, known as "A Park Close to Home," which aims to address open space gaps. Funding for these purchases is derived from the Public Resort & Recreation Land fund.
2	Building improvements	Project expenditure that was budgeted as Buildings was reclassified to Building improvements.
3	Plant, machinery and equipment	Additional expenditure on Coburg Leisure Centre spa and sauna.
4	Fixtures, fittings and furniture	Additional unbudgeted CCTV works that were grant funded and unplanned Brunswick City Baths locker replacement.
5	Computers and telecommunications	Project expenditure that was budgeted as capital was reclassified to operational expenditure as software as a service systems cannot be capitalised.
6	Roads	De Carle Street bicycle lanes deferred as part of the mid-year financial review and a number of road projects delivered under budget.
7	Bridges	Additional renewal works undertaken on Newlands Road pedestrian bridge.
8	Footpaths and cycleways	Craigieburn shared paths projects were deferred.
9	Waste management	Expenditure related to rolling out the 4-bin kerbside waste reform, including bring forward funding from future years to be ready for the 1st July 2023 commencement.
10	Transport management/Off street car parks	Project expenditure that was budgeted as Transport management has been reclassified to Roads, Footpaths and Other infrastructure.
11	Other infrastructure	Project expenditure that was budgeted as Other infrastructure was reclassified to Parks, open space and streetscapes.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

2.2.1 Chief Executive Officer Management

Chief Executive Officer Management oversees the management executive group, manages overall operations and sets the tone, vision and culture of Council.

City Infrastructure

City Infrastructure delivers a large number of Council services, including waste, city presentation, parking, local laws and maintenance of our parks, roads and buildings. The directorate also plans and delivers most of Council's capital program and develops strategy for open space and transport.

Business Transformation

Business Transformation is responsible for corporate functions relating to people, culture and business enhancement. This includes finance and procurement, human resources, corporate governance, organisational performance and information technology.

Community

Community provides high quality community focused programs, service delivery and communication to residents. It is responsible for services relating to infants, children, youth, family and aged. Leading the achievement of our wellbeing outcomes including recreation, health, education, cultural vibrancy, safety, social cohesion and emergency management.

Place and Environment

Place and Environment is responsible for influencing development within Merri-bek. Place and Environment responds to population growth, environment change within Merri-bek and supporting economic development investment and attraction. The directorate advances city-shaping major partnership projects, delivers holistic place-based outcomes and manages Council-owned properties.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2.2.2 Summary of income / revenue, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program

	Income / Revenue	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income / revenue	Total assets
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
2023					
Chief Executive Officer Management	-	762	(762)	-	45
City Infrastructure	46,300	69,600	(23,300)	5,917	2,496,260
Business Transformation	174,344	74,738	99,606	6,892	192,423
Place and Environment	16,902	20,447	(3,545)	800	59,845
Community	17,348	48,411	(31,063)	13,728	246,542
	254,894	213,958	40,936	27,337	2,995,115

	Income / Revenue	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income / revenue	Total assets
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
2022					
Chief Executive Officer Management	-	618	(618)	-	299
City Infrastructure	44,672	64,810	(20,137)	8,129	2,354,899
Business Transformation	163,888	65,092	98,796	7,048	209,897
Place and Environment	20,118	20,283	(165)	2,040	25,218
Community	19,676	49,574	(29,898)	16,394	243,659
	248,354	200,376	47,977	33,610	2,833,972

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 3 FUNDING FOR THE DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICES

3.1 Rates and charges

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
General rates	152,082	148,122
Waste management charge	23,726	21,516
Special rates and charges	513	551
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	2,443	1,590
Interest on rates and charges	658	873
Total rates and charges	179,422	172,652

Council uses Capital Improved Value (CIV) as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The CIV of a property is its total market value of the land plus buildings and other improvements.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2022/23 was \$72.2 billion (2021/22 61.3 billion).

The date of the latest general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2022, and the valuation was first applied in the rating year commencing 1 July 2022.

Annual rates and charges are recognised as revenues when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

3.2 Statutory fees and fines

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Infringements and costs	10,149	7,888
Court recoveries	831	461
Town planning fees	1,758	2,127
Land information certificates	399	490
Other fines	610	905
Permits	2,217	2,143
Parking	438	322
Total statutory fees and fines	16,401	14,338

Statutory fees and fines (including parking fees and fines) are recognised as revenue when the service has been provided, the payment is received, or when the penalty has been applied, whichever first occurs.

3.3 User fees

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Aged and health services	1,866	1,907
Leisure centre and recreation	246	14
Registration and other permits	2,324	1,796
Building services	400	351
Valuation fees	48	55
Waste management services	248	207
Other fees and charges	2,032	2,629
Town planning fees	27	18
Total user fees	7,190	6,977

User fees by timing of revenue recognition

User fees recognised at a point in time	7,190	6,977
Total user fees	7,190	6,977

User fees are recognised as revenue at a point in time, or over time, when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied. Recognition is based on the underlying contractual terms.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

3.4 Funding from other levels of government	2023	2022
Grants were received in respect of the following :	\$'000	\$'000
Summary of grants		
Commonwealth funded grants	15,931	18,873
State funded grants	11,406	14,736
Total grants received	27,337	33,609
 (a) Operating Grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Financial Assistance Grants	6,610	6,968
Family day care	584	622
Aged care	6,334	6,775
Recurrent - State Government		
Home help	1,385	1,209
Families and Children	3,456	3,323
Food Services	42	41
Libraries	1,206	1,214
Total recurrent operating grants	19,617	20,152
 Non-recurrent - State Government		
Employment Assistance	674	749
Arts and culture	-	511
Libraries	203	270
Family and children	-	298
Community welfare	298	707
Other	1,442	2,079
Total non-recurrent operating grants	2,617	4,614
Total operating grants	22,234	24,766
 (b) Capital Grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Roads to recovery	609	609
Total recurrent capital grants	609	609
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Local Roads Community Infrastructure	662	3,899
Buildings	661	-
Recreation	100	-
Community Safety	371	-
Non-recurrent - State Government		
Buildings	628	1,458
Community Safety	285	283
Recreation	1,243	1,402
Other	544	1,193
Total non-recurrent capital grants	4,494	8,235
Total capital grants	5,103	8,844

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(c) Recognition of grant income

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue the Council assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*. When both these conditions are satisfied, the Council:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, the Council applies AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*.

Grant revenue with sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised over time as the performance obligations specified in the underlying agreement are met. Where performance obligations are not sufficiently specific, grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or when an unconditional right to receipt has been established. Grants relating to capital projects are generally recognised progressively as the capital project is completed. The following table provides a summary of the accounting framework under which grants are recognised.

Income recognised under AASB 1058 <i>Income of Not-for-Profit Entities</i>	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
General purpose	19,778	17,730
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	1,422	1,341
Other specific purpose grants	4,265	3,146
Revenue recognised under AASB 15 <i>Revenue from Contracts with Customers</i>		
Specific purpose grants	1,873	11,393
	27,338	33,609

(d) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner

Operating

Balance at start of year	2,362	985
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	1,416	2,331
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(2,251)	(954)
Balance at year end	1,527	2,362

Capital

Balance at start of year	2,731	154
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	-	2,616
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(1,938)	(39)
Balance at year end	793	2,731

Unspent grants are determined and disclosed on a cash basis.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

3.5 Contributions

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Monetary	10,617	13,123
Non-monetary	6,061	1,387
Total contributions	16,677	14,510

Contributions of non monetary assets were received in relation to the following asset classes.

Infrastructure	6,061	1,387
Total non-monetary contributions	6,061	1,387

Monetary and non monetary contributions are recognised as revenue at their fair value when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

3.6 Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Proceeds of sale	424	421
Written down value of assets disposed (plant & equipment)	(301)	(25)
Written down value of assets disposed (infrastructure)	(7,039)	(3,130)
Total net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(6,917)	(2,734)

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

3.7 Other income

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Interest	3,627	421
Investment property rental	1,304	1,234
Other rent	1,331	727
Recoveries	640	723
Sales	334	328
Other	307	815
Road occupancy/ Right of way closures	322	373
Total other income	7,866	4,622

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 4 THE COST OF DELIVERING SERVICES

4.1 (a) Employee costs

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Wages and salaries	86,681	81,857
Casual staff	4,322	4,482
WorkCover	2,715	2,252
Superannuation	8,842	8,217
Fringe benefits tax	115	122
Other	275	249
Total employee costs	102,950	97,179

(b) Superannuation

Council made contributions to the following funds:

Defined benefit fund

Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	392	406
	392	406
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	-	-

Accumulation funds

Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	3,687	3,675
Employer contributions - other funds	4,763	4,137
	8,450	7,811
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	978	565

Contributions made exclude amounts accrued at balance date. Refer to note 9.3 for further information relating to Council's superannuation obligations.

4.2 Materials and services

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
General maintenance	13,377	16,612
Utilities	4,200	3,554
Cleaning and waste removal	17,712	16,174
Leisure management fees	1,143	3,168
Legal costs	871	1,213
Minor equipment and supplies	1,021	1,067
Office administration	2,609	2,141
Information technology and telecommunications	4,548	5,028
Insurance	2,782	2,318
Consultants and Contractors	8,921	8,095
Other materials and supplies	7,853	7,229
Council grants and contributions	1,899	1,666
Total materials and services	66,936	68,264

Expenses are recognised as they are incurred and reported in the financial year to which they relate.

4.3 Depreciation

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Property	6,989	5,893
Plant and equipment	4,344	3,946
Infrastructure	21,059	18,472
Total depreciation	32,391	28,311

Refer to note 5.8 and 6.2 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation charges and accounting policy.

Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

4.4 Amortisation - Right of use assets

Right of use of Animal Shelter - Property
Right of Use - Equipment
Total Amortisation - Right of use assets

2023	2022
\$'000	\$'000
236	236
95	-
331	236

4.5 Bad and doubtful debts - allowance for impairment losses

Parking fine debtors
Other debtors
Total bad and doubtful debts - allowance for impairment losses

2023	2022
\$'000	\$'000
2,629	1,641
180	601
2,809	2,241

Movement in provisions for doubtful debts

Balance at the beginning of the year
New provisions recognised during the year
Amounts already provided for and written off as uncollectible
Amounts provided for but recovered during the year
Balance at end of year

18,270	17,214
2,899	2,229
(1,059)	(1,160)
-	(13)
20,110	18,270

An allowance for impairment losses in respect of debtors is recognised based on an expected credit loss model. This model considers both historic and forward looking information in determining the level of impairment.

4.6 Borrowing costs

Interest - Borrowings
Total borrowing costs

2023	2022
\$'000	\$'000
692	747
692	747

Borrowing costs are recognised as an expense in the period in which they are incurred, except where they are capitalised as part of a qualifying asset constructed by Council.

4.7 Finance Costs - Leases

Interest - Lease Liabilities
Total finance costs

2023	2022
\$'000	\$'000
4	-
4	-

4.8 Other expenses

Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals
Auditors' remuneration - Internal Audit
Councillors' allowances
Total other expenses

2023	2022
\$'000	\$'000
71	66
207	140
470	458
748	664

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 5 OUR FINANCIAL POSITION

5.1 Financial assets

(a) Cash and cash equivalents

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Cash on hand	5	6
Cash at bank	24,277	17,045
Total cash and cash equivalents	24,282	17,051

(b) Other financial assets

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Term deposits - current	93,000	97,000
Total other financial assets	93,000	97,000
Total financial assets	117,282	114,051

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Other financial assets include term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

(c) Trade and other receivables

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Current		
Statutory receivables		
Rates debtors	25,049	24,705
Parking Infringement debtors	21,966	17,930
Provision for doubtful debts - Parking infringements	(16,241)	(13,612)
Net GST receivable	2,367	1,807
Fire Services Property Levy Debtors	2,426	2,472
Non statutory receivables		
Other debtors	6,940	9,816
Provision for doubtful debts - other debtors	(3,869)	(4,657)
Total current trade and other receivables	38,638	38,461

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. A provision for doubtful debts is recognised when there is objective evidence that an impairment has occurred. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

(d) Ageing of Receivables

The ageing of the Council's trade and other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Current (not yet due)	1,819	3,055
Past due by up to 30 days	520	874
Past due between 31 and 180 days	134	225
Past due between 181 and 365 days	12	20
Past due by more than 1 year	586	985
Total trade and other receivables	3,071	5,159

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(e) Ageing of individually impaired Receivables

At balance date, other debtors representing financial assets with a nominal value of \$3,869,164 (2022: \$4,657,380) were impaired. The amount of the provision raised against these debtors was \$3,869,164 (2022: \$4,657,380). They individually have been impaired as a result of their doubtful collection. Many of the long outstanding past due amounts have been lodged with Council's debt collectors or are on payment arrangements.

The ageing of receivables that have been individually determined as impaired at reporting date was:

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Current (not yet due)	27	33
Past due by up to 30 days	95	114
Past due between 31 and 180 days	714	859
Past due between 181 and 365 days	834	1,004
Past due by more than 1 year	2,199	2,647
Total trade & other receivables	3,869	4,657

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

5.2 Non-financial assets	2023	2022
(a) Inventories	\$'000	\$'000

Inventories held for distribution	248	294
Total inventories	248	294

Inventories held for distribution are measured at cost, adjusted when applicable for any loss of service potential. All other inventories, including land held for sale, are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Where inventories are acquired for no cost or nominal consideration, they are measured at current replacement cost at the date of acquisition.

(b) Other assets

Prepayments	2,263	2,157
Accrued income	699	158
Other	84	101
Total other assets	3,046	2,416

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

5.3 Payables, trust funds and deposits and unearned income/revenue	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
(a) Trade and other payables		
Current		
Non-statutory payables		
Trade payables	2,773	4,643
Accrued expenses	12,054	7,694
Total current trade and other payables	14,828	12,337
 (b) Trust funds and deposits		
Current		
Refundable deposits	725	735
Trust funds	668	665
Fire services levy	4,065	3,584
Retention amounts	364	218
Other refundable deposits	235	262
Total current trust funds and deposits	6,057	5,465
 (c) Unearned income/revenue		
Current		
Grants received in advance - operating	50	417
Grants received in advance - capital	1,219	2,397
Other	554	458
Total current unearned income/revenue	1,823	3,272

Unearned income/revenue - Council has recognised contract liability amounts which are yet to be 'earned' through fulfillment of various contracts and operating funding agreements. This reflects the impact of AASB 15 and AASB1058.

Amounts received as deposits and retention amounts controlled by Council are recognised as trust funds until they are returned, transferred in accordance with the purpose of the receipt, or forfeited. Trust funds that are forfeited, resulting in council gaining control of the funds, are to be recognised as revenue at the time of forfeit.

Purpose and nature of items

Refundable deposits – deposits are taken by Council as a form of surety in a number of circumstances, including in relation to building works, contract deposits and the use of civic facilities.

Council currently maintains separate and distinct Trust Funds for the Gavin Environment Trust, the Blackburn Bequest Trust and the Inner Circle Linear Trust. These funds are held and administered in accordance with the Trust Deed arrangements.

Retention Amounts - Council has a contractual right to retain certain amounts until a contractor has met certain requirements or a related warrant or defect period has elapsed. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the contractual obligations, or the elapsing of time, these amounts will be paid to the relevant contractor in line with Council's contractual obligations.

Fire Service Levy - Council is the collection agent for fire services levy on behalf of the State Government. Council remits amounts received on a quarterly basis. Amounts disclosed here will be remitted to the state government in line with that process.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Current		
Treasury Corporation of Victoria borrowings - secured	918	906
Other borrowings - secured	420	420
Total current interest-bearing liabilities	1,338	1,326
Non-current		
Treasury Corporation of Victoria borrowings - secured	6,708	7,627
Other borrowings - secured	15,110	15,530
Total non-current interest-bearing liabilities	21,818	23,157
Total	23,157	24,483

Borrowings are secured by (insert security details)

(a) The maturity profile for Council's borrowings is:

Not later than one year	1,338	1,326
Later than one year and not later than five years	17,820	17,768
Later than five years	3,998	5,389
	23,157	24,483

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the Council has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method. The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The Council determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities at initial recognition.

5.5 Provisions

2023	Employee Provisions \$ '000
Balance at beginning of the financial year	23,325
Additional provisions	7,636
Amounts used	(9,749)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	2,196
Balance at the end of the financial year	23,408
Provisions - current	21,146
Provisions - non-current	2,262
2022	
Balance at beginning of the financial year	23,632
Additional provisions	7,276
Amounts used	(9,115)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	1,532
Balance at the end of the financial year	23,325
Provisions - current	21,072
Provisions - non-current	2,253

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
(a) Employee provisions		
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	6,833	6,991
Long service leave	2,069	1,966
	8,902	8,958
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	2,389	2,739
Long service leave	9,823	9,343
Other	33	33
	12,245	12,114
Total current employee provisions	21,146	21,072
Non-current		
Long service leave	2,262	2,253
Annual leave	-	-
Total non-current employee provisions	2,262	2,253
Aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions:		
Current	21,146	21,072
Non-current	2,262	2,253
Total aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions	23,408	23,325

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Annual leave

A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:

- nominal value if the Council expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Council does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave

Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability as the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement. Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability and measured at present value.

	2023	2022
Key assumptions:		
- discount rate	4.1%	3.7%
- index rate	3.9%	3.9%

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

5.6 Financing arrangements

The Council has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Credit card facilities	220	241
Treasury Corporation of Victoria facilities	7,627	8,533
Other facilities	15,530	15,950
Total facilities	23,377	24,724
Used facilities	23,233	24,541
Unused facilities	144	183

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

5.7 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

(a) Commitments for expenditure

	Not later than 1 year	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years	Later than 5 years	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
2023					
Operating					
Garbage collection	112	-	-	-	112
IT Systems Supports	2,538	38	43	-	2,620
Animal Welfare	473	473	946	-	1,893
Building Management	110	60	-	-	170
Parking	748	665	2,128	-	3,542
Total	3,981	1,237	3,118	-	8,336
Capital					
Consultancies	19	-	-	-	19
Works	49,124	7,545	-	-	56,668
Total	49,143	7,545	-	-	56,687
	Not later than 1 year	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years	Later than 5 years	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
2022					
Operating					
Garbage collection	2,055	1,809	-	-	3,864
IT Systems Supports	1,899	959	555	-	3,413
Building Management	1,137	268	268	-	1,673
Parking	606	-	-	-	606
Total	5,697	3,036	823	-	9,556
Capital					
Consultancies	421	-	-	-	421
Works	13,128	224	-	-	13,351
Drainage	1,654	-	-	-	1,654
Total	15,202	224	-	-	15,426

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

5.8 Leases

At inception of a contract, Council assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. To identify whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, it is necessary to assess whether:

- The contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- Council has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- Council has the right to direct the use of the asset.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

As a lessee, Council recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any, and adjusted for certain measurements of the lease liability.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, an appropriate incremental borrowing rate. Generally, Council uses an appropriate incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- Fixed payments
- Variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement
- Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- The exercise price under a purchase option that Council is reasonably certain to exercise, lease payments in an optional renewal period if Council is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, and penalties for early termination of a lease unless Council is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

When the lease liability is remeasured in this way, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset has been reduced to zero.

Under AASB 16 Leases, Council as a not-for-profit entity has elected not to measure right-of-use assets at initial recognition at fair value in respect of leases that have significantly below-market terms.

In 2016 Merri-bek City Council entered into a 10 year Animal Welfare Facility agreement with Darebin and Whittlesea City Councils for the use of facilities located in Epping, Victoria. Merri-bek City Council contributed to the construction and ongoing costs with respect to the Facility by way of an upfront payment in 2016.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Right-of-Use Assets

	Animal Shelter \$'000
Balance at 1 July 2022	945
Additions	333
Amortisation charge	(331)
Balance at 30 June 2023	947

Lease Liabilities

	2023 \$'000	2022 \$'000
Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows		
Less than one year	113	-
One to five years	130	-
Total undiscounted lease liabilities as at 30 June:	243	-

Lease liabilities included in the Balance Sheet at 30 June:

Current	111	-
Non-current	128	-
Total lease liabilities	239	-

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 6 ASSETS WE MANAGE	2023	2022
6.1 Non current assets classified as held for sale	\$'000	\$'000
Asset held for sale - fair value	2,625	2,119
Total non current assets classified as held for sale	2,625	2,119

Asset held for sale relates to 1/6 Sutherland Street, Coburg and 2-12 Wilkinson Street, Brunswick from the previous financial year, as part of the Affordable Housing Project.

Non-current assets classified as held for sale (including disposal groups) are measured at the lower of its carrying amount and fair value less costs of disposal, and are not subject to depreciation. Non-current assets, disposal groups and related liabilities and assets are treated as current and classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered through a sale transaction rather than through continuing use. This condition is regarded as met only when the sale is highly probable and the asset's sale (or disposal group sale) is expected to be completed within 12 months from the date of classification.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

6.2 PROPERTY, INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

	Carrying amount 30 June 2022	Additions	Contributions	Found Assets	Revaluation	Depreciation	Disposal	Write-off	Transfers	Carrying amount 30 June 2023
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Property	1,844,630	24,956	4,179	-	460	(6,990)	(597)	-	6,566	1,873,204
Plant and equipment	20,993	2,607	-	-	-	(4,343)	(55)	-	209	19,411
Infrastructure	759,546	20,957	1,882	6,155	113,114	(21,058)	(4,372)	-	6,496	882,719
Work in progress	21,647	22,902	-	-	-	-	-	(2,973)	(13,271)	28,305
	2,646,816	71,422	6,061	6,155	113,573	(32,391)	(5,024)	(2,973)	(0)	2,803,639

Summary of Work in Progress

	Opening WIP \$'000	Additions \$'000	Write-off \$'000	Transfers \$'000	Closing WIP \$'000
Property	8,612	9,750	(45)	(6,568)	11,749
Plant and equipment	426	486	(203)	(210)	500
Infrastructure	12,608	12,666	(2,725)	(6,493)	16,055
Total	21,646	22,902	(2,973)	(13,271)	28,304

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(a) Property

	Land - specialised	Land - non specialised	Land under Roads	Total Land	Buildings - specialised	Total Buildings	Work In Progress	Total Property
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
At fair value 1 July 2022	1,217,383	343,035	4,365	1,564,783	432,343	432,343	8,612	2,005,738
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2022	-	-	-	-	(152,496)	(152,496)	-	(152,496)
	1,217,383	343,035	4,365	1,564,783	279,847	279,847	8,612	1,853,242
Movements in fair value								
Additions	-	17,853	-	17,853	7,102	7,102	9,750	34,706
Contributions	-	-	-	-	4,179	4,179	-	4,179
Revaluation	-	-	460	460	-	-	-	460
Disposal	-	(301)	-	(301)	(366)	(366)	-	(666)
Write-off	-	-	-	-	-	-	(45)	(45)
Transfers	680	-	-	680	5,888	5,888	(6,568)	0
Found Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	680	17,552	460	18,692	16,803	16,803	3,137	38,634
Movements in accumulated depreciation								
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	-	-	(6,989)	(6,989)	-	(6,989)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	-	-	-	-	69	69	-	69
Accumulated depreciation Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accumulated depreciation on Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	(6,920)	(6,920)	-	(6,920)
At fair value 30 June 2023	1,218,063	360,587	4,825	1,583,475	449,146	449,146	11,749	2,044,371
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2023	-	-	-	-	(159,416)	(159,416)	-	(159,416)
Carrying amount	1,218,063	360,587	4,825	1,583,475	289,730	289,730	11,749	1,884,955

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(b) Plant and Equipment

	Motor vehicles	Plant and equipment	Furniture and fittings	Computer equipment	Library books	Artwork	Total plant and equipment	Work In Progress	Total plant and equipment
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
At fair value 1 July 2022	23,004	4,050	2,445	5,300	10,639	1,881	47,319	426	47,746
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2022	(13,255)	(2,459)	(928)	(4,039)	(5,645)	-	(26,327)	-	(26,327)
	9,749	1,591	1,517	1,261	4,994	1,881	20,992	426	21,418
Movements in fair value									
Additions	324	330	3	885	1,042	23	2,607	486	3,093
Contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposal	(521)	(8)	-	(916)	-	-	(1,444)	-	(1,444)
Write-off	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(203)	(203)
Transfers	-	44	31	132	2	-	209	(210)	(1)
Found Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	(197)	366	34	101	1,044	23	1,372	73	1,444
Movements in accumulated depreciation									
Depreciation and amortisation	(2,047)	(329)	(205)	(773)	(990)	-	(4,344)	-	(4,344)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	475	4	-	911	-	-	1,389	-	1,389
Accumulated depreciation Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accumulated depreciation on Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	(1,572)	(325)	(205)	138	(990)	-	(2,955)	-	(2,955)
At fair value 30 June 2023	22,808	4,416	2,479	5,401	11,683	1,904	48,691	499	49,191
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2023	(14,828)	(2,784)	(1,132)	(3,901)	(6,636)	-	(29,280)	-	(29,280)
Carrying amount	7,980	1,632	1,347	1,500	5,047	1,904	19,411	499	19,910

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(c) Infrastructure

	Road surface	Road pavement	Drainage	Footpaths	Kerb and channel	Bridges/ retaining walls	Other infrastructure	Total Infrastructure	Work In Progress	Total Infrastructure
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
At fair value 1 July 2022	89,195	387,376	269,331	187,634	110,107	32,532	120,889	1,197,063	12,610	1,209,673
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2022	(29,557)	(151,286)	(106,770)	(52,050)	(21,556)	(14,197)	(62,103)	(437,518)	-	(437,518)
	59,638	236,090	162,561	135,584	88,551	18,335	58,786	759,545	12,610	772,155
Movements in fair value										
Additions	3,924	2,164	3,242	2,927	622	845	7,233	20,957	12,666	33,623
Contributions	177	897	360	268	180	-	-	1,882	-	1,882
Revaluation	21,674	46,325	46,794	5,813	12,375	2,168	91,521	226,669	-	226,669
Disposal	(1,847)	(1,896)	(1,201)	(3,253)	(648)	(12)	(394)	(9,252)	-	(9,252)
Write-off	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,725)	(2,725)
Transfers	1,215	671	1,005	907	193	262	2,241	6,493	(6,493)	(1)
Found Assets	11	50	6,804	3	0	36	0	6,903	-	6,903
	25,154	48,211	57,004	6,665	12,722	3,299	100,600	253,652	3,448	257,100
Movements in accumulated depreciation										
Depreciation and amortisation	(2,876)	(3,886)	(3,076)	(4,098)	(1,556)	(435)	(5,131)	(21,059)	-	(21,059)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	1,449	1,192	357	1,399	168	8	307	4,880	-	4,880
Accumulated depreciation Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accumulated depreciation on Revaluation	(8,918)	(18,638)	(20,279)	(3,117)	(2,740)	(1,197)	(58,666)	(113,554)	-	(113,554)
Accumulated depreciation on Found Asset			(748)					(748)		(748)
	(10,345)	(21,332)	(23,746)	(5,816)	(4,128)	(1,624)	(63,490)	(130,481)	-	(129,732)
At fair value 30 June 2023	114,349	435,587	326,335	194,298	122,828	35,830	221,489	1,450,717	16,058	1,466,775
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2023	(39,902)	(172,618)	(130,516)	(57,866)	(25,684)	(15,821)	(125,592)	(567,999)	-	(567,999)
Carrying amount	74,447	262,969	195,819	136,432	97,144	20,009	95,896	882,719	16,058	898,776

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Acquisition

The purchase method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets, being the fair value of assets provided as consideration at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

	Depreciation Period	Threshold Limit
Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods		\$'000
Land & land improvements		
land	N/A	No limit
land improvements	N/A	No limit
Buildings		
buildings	20-260 years	1
building and leasehold improvements	N/A	1
plant, machinery and equipment	3-10 years	1
furniture and fittings	3-10 years	1
computer equipment	3-10 years	1
library books	3-10 years	1
motor vehicles	up to 10 years	3
artworks	not applicable	1
Infrastructure		
roads surface	Up to 40 years	1
roads pavement	Up to 100 years	1
drainage	Up to 100 years	1
footpaths and cycleways	Up to 100 years	1
kerb and channel	Up to 100 years	1
bridges	Up to 200 years	1
Other infrastructure		
street furniture	10 to 20 years	1
recreational, leisure and community facilities	10 to 50 years	1
parks, open space and streetscapes	10 to 100 years	1
playground equipment and other structures	10 to 100 years	1
Right of use assets		
right of use assets	1-10 years	1

Land under roads

Land under roads acquired after 30 June 2008 is brought to account using the fair value basis. Council does not recognise land under roads that it controlled prior to that period in its financial report.

Depreciation and amortisation

Buildings, land improvements, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Road earthworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Repairs and maintenance

Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset component is expensed.

Leasehold improvements

Leasehold improvements are recognised at cost and are amortised over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvement, whichever is the shorter.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Valuation of land and buildings

A revaluation is necessary when the fair value of each revalued class of asset differs materially from its carrying amount at balance date. Stephen Davey (Qualified CPV valuer) from Opteon Property Group, has completed a review of the carrying amount of land and building assets as at 30 June 2023. The valuation of buildings is at fair value based on current replacement cost less accumulated depreciation at the date of valuation. The valuation of land is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. All freehold land reserved for public open space is valued at a discount of 20 percent to market value based on legal precedents. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions, the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. The review methodology included analysis of recent land and building sales to determine the movement in values as displayed by the market. To ascertain a level of market value movement, Opteon Property Group reviewed the sales data throughout Merri-bek City Council from the 1st July 2022 to the 30th June 2023, to determine the material change in the underlying land value of each property sector. The property sectors referred to include residential, commercial and industrial property classifications. The change in the underlying land value of each sector over the analysed period has been residential -0.94%, commercial 2.97 % and industrial 21.64%. These movements can be summarised across all combined sectors to reflect an average change of 0.17% for that period. In addition, to determine the change in council owned buildings, reference was made to the building cost index "Rawlinsons Construction Guide 2023". The building cost index derived from this reference source has indicated an immaterial change in value over the period of 7.47%. From the valuer analysis, the movement in the value of the land and building assets since the last valuation undertaken as at 30 June 2022 was not material and therefore the change was not applied to Merri-bek City Council's land and building asset register.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Any significant movements in the unobservable inputs for land and land under roads will have a significant impact on the fair value of these assets.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2023 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of Valuation	Type of Valuation
Non-specialised Land	-	361,230	-	Jun-22	Index
Specialised land	-	-	1,222,245	Jun-23	Index
Buildings	-	-	289,729	Jun-22	Index
Total	-	361,230	1,511,974		

Valuation of infrastructure

Fair Value assessments were performed at 30 April 2023 where it was determined that there was a material movement in fair value for some classes of Roads and Drainage Infrastructure. The valuation of these classes was undertaken by Geoff Bolling (Bachelor of Engineering - Civil) from Council's Asset Management Unit, at fair value based on replacement cost less accumulated depreciation. The replacement cost revaluation was conducted in the current year, this valuation was based on Merri-bek City Council construction costs of assets within that category, Rawlinsons Australian Construction Handbook and construction cost indices from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. There was also a revaluation of significant Open Space Assets undertaken in 2022-23 by Asset Lab Consultants. The methodology included reassessment of each asset's replacement cost, condition and written down value.

The valuation is at fair value based on current replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Details of the Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2023 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of Valuation	Type of Valuation
Road surface	-	-	74,448	Jun-23	Index
Road pavement	-	-	262,969	Jun-23	Index
Kerbs	-	-	97,145	Jun-23	Index
Bridges	-	-	20,009	Jun-23	Index
Footpaths and cycleways	-	-	136,433	Jun-23	Index
Drainage	-	-	195,820	Jun-23	Index
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	-	-	20,472	Jun-23	Index
Parks, open space and streetscapes	-	-	47,759	Jun-23	Index
Other infrastructure	-	-	27,666	Jun-23	Index
Total	-	-	882,721		

Notes to the Financial Report For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land and land under roads is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values between 5% and 95%. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently land values range between \$2 and \$10,000 per square metre.

Specialised buildings are valued using a depreciated replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement costs are calculated on a square metre basis and ranges from \$100 to \$32,400 per square metre. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined based on the current condition of buildings and vary from 2 years to 260 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of buildings.

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the depreciated replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 2 years to 200 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Reconciliation of specialised land		
Land under roads	4,825	4,365
Parks and reserves	1,217,420	1,217,383
Total specialised land	1,222,245	1,221,748

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

6.3 Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries

(a) Investments in associates

Shares in Procurement Australasia Ltd

2023	2022
\$'000	\$'000
2	2

Associates are all entities over which Council has significant influence but not control or joint control. Investments in associates are accounted for using the equity method of accounting, after initially being recognised at cost.

6.4 Investment property

Balance at beginning of financial year

Fair value adjustments

Balance at end of financial year

2023	2022
\$'000	\$'000
28,870	27,225
(180)	1,645
28,690	28,870

Investment property is held to generate long-term rental yields. Investment property is measured initially at cost, including transaction costs. Costs incurred subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised when it is probable that future economic benefit in excess of the originally assessed performance of the asset will flow to the Council. Subsequent to initial recognition at cost, investment property is carried at fair value, determined annually by independent valuers. Changes to fair value are recorded in the comprehensive income statement in the period that they arise.

Valuation of investment property

Valuation of investment property has been determined in accordance with an independent valuation by Opteon Property Group who has recent experience in the location and category of the property being valued. The valuation is at fair value, based on the current market value for the property.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 7 PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related Parties

Parent entity

Merri-bek City Council is the parent entity.

Subsidiaries and Associates

Interests in subsidiaries and associates are detailed in Note 6.3.

(b) Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel (KMP) are those people with the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of Merri-bek City Council. The Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and Directors are deemed KMP.

Details of KMP at any time during the year are:

	2023	2022
	No.	No.
Councillors		
Mayor Angelica Panopolus		
Deputy Mayor Helen Davidson		
Councillor Mark Riley (Mayor from 1/7/22 to 29/11/22)		
Councillor Lambros Tapinos		
Councillor Annalivia Carli Hannan		
Councillor James Conlan		
Councillor Oscar Yildiz		
Councillor Adam Pulford		
Councillor Sue Bolton		
Councillor Helen Pavlidis		
Councillor Monica Harte		
Key Management Personnel		
Chief Executive Officer Cathy Henderson		
Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow		
Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic		
Director Place and Environment Joseph Tabacco		
Director Community Eamonn Fennessy		

Total Number of Councillors	11	12
Total of Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel	5	7
Total Number of Key Management Personnel	16	19

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Remuneration comprises employee benefits including all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by Council, or on behalf of the Council, in exchange for services rendered. Remuneration of Key Management Personnel and Other senior staff is disclosed in the following categories.

Short-term employee benefits include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

Other long-term employee benefits include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

Post-employment benefits include pensions, and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

Termination benefits include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:

Short-term employee benefits

Other long-term employee benefits

Post-employment benefits

Total

2023	2022
\$	\$
1,981	2,204
22	23
184	179
2,187	2,406

The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities, fall within the following bands:

\$0 - \$9,999

\$20,000 - \$29,999

\$30,000 - \$39,999

\$40,000 - \$69,999

\$70,000 - \$79,999

\$80,000 - \$89,999

\$90,000 - \$99,999

\$180,000 - \$189,999

\$200,000 - \$209,999

\$260,000 - \$269,999

\$300,000 - \$309,999

\$310,000 - \$319,999

\$320,000 - \$329,999

\$370,000 - \$379,999

\$390,000 - \$399,999

2023	2022
No.	No.
-	1
-	1
7	7
2	1
1	1
1	-
-	1
-	1
-	1
-	2
1	1
1	1
2	-
-	1
1	-
16	19

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(d) Remuneration of other senior staff

Other senior staff are officers of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remuneration exceeds \$160,000 and who report directly to a member of the KMP. *

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Total remuneration of other senior staff was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	4,176	4,958
Other long-term employee benefits	56	70
Post-employment benefits	401	448
Total	4,633	5,476

The number of other senior staff are shown below in their relevant income bands:

Income Range:	2023	2022
	No.	No.
\$160,000 - \$169,999	1	8
\$170,000 - \$179,999	1	5
\$180,000 - \$189,999	5	3
\$190,000 - \$199,999	6	6
\$200,000 - \$209,999	3	2
\$210,000 - \$219,999	4	2
\$220,000 - \$229,999	1	1
\$230,000 - \$239,999	-	1
\$240,000 - \$249,999	1	-
\$260,000 - \$269,999	1	-
\$270,000 - \$279,999	-	1
	23	29

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Total remuneration for the reporting year for other senior staff included above, amounted to:	4,633	5,476

* Due to a definitional change the comparative figures in this note may not align with the previous year's annual report, which included disclosure of senior officers as defined in the Local Government Act 1989.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

7.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

During the period Council did not enter into any transactions with related parties.

2023	2022
\$'000	\$'000

0 0

(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

The following balances are outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties

0 0

(c) Loans to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of loans in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party are as follows:

0 0

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of commitments in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party are as follows:

0 0

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 8 MANAGING UNCERTAINTIES

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

(a) Contingent assets

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively. As at 30 June 2023 there were no Contingent Assets identified by Council.

(b) Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:

- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council; or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
- it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation; or
- the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

As at 30 June 2023, the following Contingent Liabilities have been identified by Council.

Superannuation

Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Insurance claims

Council is presently involved in several confidential insurance matters, which are being conducted through Council's insurer. As these matters are yet to be finalised, and the financial outcomes are unable to be reliably estimated, no allowance for these contingencies has been made in the financial report.

Legal matters

Council is presently involved in several confidential legal matters, which are being conducted through Council's solicitors. As these matters are yet to be finalised, and the financial outcomes are unable to be reliably estimated, no allowance for these contingencies has been made in the financial report.

8.2 Change in accounting standards

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2023 reporting period. Council assesses the impact of these new standards. As at 30 June 2023 there were no new accounting standards or interpretations issued by the AASB which are applicable for the year ending 30 June 2024 that are expected to impact Council.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

8.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank or TCV borrowings. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of council financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Council's interest rate liability risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes Council to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Council has exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the *Local Government Act 2020* . Council manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

There has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on the Council's year end result.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause Council to make a financial loss. Council have exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. Particularly significant areas of credit risk exist in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations.

To help manage this risk:

- Council have a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities council deal with;
- Council may require collateral where appropriate; and
- Council only invest surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in Council's investment policy.

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the Council's financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is secured by a charge over the rateable property.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the balance sheet, such as when council provide a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any provisions for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of council's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks Council:

- have a liquidity policy which targets a minimum and average level of cash and cash equivalents to be maintained;
- have readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- have a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- monitor budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- set limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the balance sheet and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at Note 5.4.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of + 0.25% and + 0.50% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 4.45%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair value hierarchy

Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. AASB 13 *Fair value measurement*, aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities

Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and

Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.

In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Revaluation

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. (For plant and equipment carrying amount is considered to approximate fair value given short useful lives). At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 1 to 4 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts. The following table sets out the frequency of revaluations by asset class.

Asset class	Revaluation frequency
Land	1 to 2 years
Buildings	1 to 2 years
Roads	2 to 4 years
Bridges	2 to 4 years
Footpaths and cycleways	2 to 4 years
Drainage	2 to 4 years
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	2 to 4 years
Waste management	2 to 4 years
Parks, open space and streetscapes	2 to 4 years
Other infrastructure	2 to 4 years

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increments are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increment reverses a prior year decrement for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increment is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decrements are recognised as an expense except where prior increments are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrement is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increments. Within the same class of assets, revaluation increments and decrements within the year are offset.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, the Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 9 OTHER MATTERS

	Balance at beginning of reporting period	Increment (decrement)	Balance at end of reporting period
9.1 Reserves	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
(a) Asset revaluation reserves			
2023			
Property			
Land and land improvements	1,234,094	460	1,234,555
Buildings	118,323	-	118,323
	<u>1,352,417</u>	<u>460</u>	<u>1,352,877</u>
Infrastructure			
Road surface	61,805	12,758	74,564
Road pavement	185,379	27,696	213,075
Bridges	12,428	1,007	13,435
Footpaths	108,666	2,699	111,366
Drainage	111,958	32,468	144,426
Kerb and channel	77,156	9,635	86,790
Other structures	59,210	32,855	92,065
	<u>616,602</u>	<u>119,119</u>	<u>735,720</u>
Other			
Artworks	468	-	468
Total asset revaluation reserves	<u>1,969,487</u>	<u>119,579</u>	<u>2,089,066</u>
2022			
Property			
Land and land improvements	990,603	243,492	1,234,094
Buildings	93,140	25,182	118,323
	<u>1,083,743</u>	<u>268,674</u>	<u>1,352,417</u>
Infrastructure			
Road surface	61,805	-	61,805
Road pavement	160,890	24,488	185,379
Bridges	12,428	-	12,428
Footpaths	70,912	37,754	108,666
Drainage	95,080	16,878	111,958
Kerb and channel	68,304	8,852	77,156
Other structures	59,210	-	59,210
	<u>528,629</u>	<u>87,972</u>	<u>616,602</u>
Other			
Artworks	468	-	468
	<u>468</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>468</u>
Total asset revaluation reserves	<u>1,612,840</u>	<u>356,647</u>	<u>1,969,487</u>

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of Council's assets over time.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	Balance at beginning of reporting period \$'000	Transfer from accumulated surplus \$'000	Transfer to accumulated surplus \$'000	Balance at end of reporting period \$'000
(b) Other reserves				
2023				
Waste Charge Reserve (restricted)	1,880	1,624	-	3,504
Public resort and recreation land fund (restricted)	32,740	9,149	(22,294)	19,595
Social & affordable housing reserve	571	69	(244)	396
Leisure centre development reserve	1,370	-	(1,370)	-
Defined benefits superannuation reserve	13,500	-	-	13,500
Significant Projects reserve	10,010	18,256	(4,669)	23,597
Local Government Funding Vehicle reserve	2,405	1,805	-	4,210
Developer Contribution Plan reserve (restricted)	4,180	1,585	(3,373)	2,392
Carry Forward Reserve	18,462	19,292	(18,462)	19,292
Total Other reserves	85,119	51,779	(50,411)	86,487

2022				
Waste Charge Reserve (restricted)	-	1,880	-	1,880
Public resort and recreation land fund (restricted)	26,067	10,688	(4,015)	32,740
Social & affordable housing reserve	669	121	(220)	571
Leisure centre development reserve	1,739	-	(368)	1,370
Defined benefits superannuation reserve	13,000	500	-	13,500
Significant Projects reserve	15,249	4,000	(9,239)	10,010
Local Government Funding Vehicle reserve	1,405	6,581	(5,581)	2,405
Developer Contribution Plan reserve (restricted)	3,116	1,721	(656)	4,180
Carry Forward Reserve	17,822	33,570	(32,930)	18,462
Total Other reserves	79,068	59,061	(53,009)	85,119

The Waste Charge Reserve, factoring in under or over expenditure on the provision of kerbside waste services. The reserve is then used to offset the future waste charge calculation.

The Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund accumulates developers contributions paid to Council and is used to provide or improve recreation land and facilities.

The Social and Affordable Housing Reserve provides funds for the purchase of community housing projects along with other housing initiatives.

The Leisure Centre Development Reserve accumulates funds from the savings derived from the outsourcing of the leisure centre facilities. These funds are and will continue to be used to maintain and upgrade these facilities. This reserve was closed at the completion of the 2022/23 financial year with the balance transferred to the Significant Projects Reserve.

Merri-bek Defined Benefit Reserve provides funds for payments requested by Vision Super to meet our superannuation obligations under the defined benefit scheme.

The Significant Projects Reserve accumulates funds to be on significant projects, currently the two projects are the redevelopment of Fawcner Leisure Centre and the construction of the Saxon Street Community Hub.

The Local Government Funding Vehicle reserve accumulates funds to be used to reduce the LGFV bonds held by Council. LGFV is a group borrowing scheme with interest only repayments.

The Developers Contribution Plan Reserve (DCP) accumulates developers funds paid to Council in respect of developments within particular Plan areas and is used to contribute towards payment of a ten year Capital works program with each of the twelve DCP areas.

Carry Forward Reserve is used to set aside funding for projects that can not be delivered and need to be carried forward to future years.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
Surplus for the year	40,936	47,978
Depreciation	32,722	28,547
Profit/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6,917	2,734
Fair value adjustments for investment property	180	(1,645)
Contributions - Non-monetary assets	(6,061)	(1,387)
Finance costs	696	747
Change in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(174)	(6,036)
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	(633)	239
Increase/(decrease) in accrued income	(1,449)	(3,402)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	2,491	(2,521)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	46	103
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	83	(307)
Increase/(decrease) in trust funds	592	(1,001)
Net cash provided by operating activities	76,345	64,050

9.3 Superannuation

Council makes the majority of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund Vision Super (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in Comprehensive Operating Statement when they are made or due.

Accumulation

The Fund's accumulation category, Vision MySuper/Vision Super Saver, receives both employer and employee contributions on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2023, this was 10.5% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation (2022: 10.0%)).

Defined Benefit

Council does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan.

There is no proportional split of the defined benefit liabilities, assets or costs between the participating employers as the defined benefit obligation is a floating obligation between the participating employers and the only time that the aggregate obligation is allocated to specific employers is when a call is made. As a result, the level of participation of Merri-bek City Council in the Fund cannot be measured as a percentage compared with other participating employers. Therefore, the Fund Actuary is unable to allocate benefit liabilities, assets and costs between employers for the purposes of AASB 119.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Funding arrangements

Council makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary. A triennial actuarial investigation is currently underway for the Defined Benefit category which is expected to be completed by 31 December 2023. Council was notified of the 30 June 2023 VBI during August 2023 (2022: August 2022). The financial assumptions used to calculate the 30 June 2023 VBI were:

Net investment returns 5.7% pa

Salary information 3.5% pa

Price inflation (CPI) 2.8% pa

As at 30 June 2022, an interim actuarial investigation was held as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. The vested benefit index (VBI) of the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer was 102.2%. The financial assumptions used to calculate the VBI were:

Net investment returns 5.5% pa

Salary information 2.5% pa to 30 June 2023, and 3.5% pa thereafter

Price inflation (CPI) 3.0% pa

Council was notified of the 30 June 2022 VBI during August 2022 (2021: August 2021). Vision Super has advised that the estimated VBI at June 2023 was 104.1%.

The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2022 actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Employer contributions

(a) Regular contributions

On the basis of the results of the 2022 interim actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, Council makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2023, this rate was 10.5% of members' salaries (10.0% in 2021/22). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate and was reviewed as part of the 30 June 2022 interim valuation.

In addition, Council reimburses the Fund to cover the excess of the benefits paid as a consequence of retrenchment above the funded resignation or retirement benefit.

(b) Funding calls

If the Defined Benefit category is in an unsatisfactory financial position at an actuarial investigation or the Defined Benefit category's VBI is below its shortfall limit at any time other than the date of the actuarial investigation, the Defined Benefit category has a shortfall for the purposes of SPS 160 and the Fund is required to put a plan in place so that the shortfall is fully funded within three years of the shortfall occurring. The Fund monitors its VBI on a quarterly basis and the Fund has set its shortfall limit at 97%.

In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including Council) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.

Using the agreed methodology, the shortfall amount is apportioned between the participating employers based on the pre-1 July 1993 and post-30 June 1993 service liabilities of the Fund's Defined Benefit category, together with the employer's payroll at 30 June 1993 and at the date the shortfall has been calculated.

Due to the nature of the contractual obligations between the participating employers and the Fund, and that the Fund includes lifetime pensioners and their reversionary beneficiaries, it is unlikely that the Fund will be wound up.

If there is a surplus in the Fund, the surplus cannot be returned to the participating employers.

In the event that a participating employer is wound-up, the defined benefit obligations of that employer will be transferred to that employer's successor.

The 2022 interim actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation is conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. An interim investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2022 and the last full investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2020.

The Fund's actuarial investigation identified the following for the Defined Benefit category of which Council is a contributing employer:

	2022 (Interim) \$m	2021 (Interim) \$m
- A VBI Surplus	44.6	214.7
- A total service liability surplus	105.8	270.3
- A discounted accrued benefits surplus	111.9	285.2

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund's assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2022.

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses as at 30 June 2022.

The discounted accrued benefits surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to 30 June 2022.

The 2023 triennial actuarial investigation

A triennial actuarial investigation is being conducted for the Fund's position as at 30 June 2023. It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by 31 December 2023. The financial assumptions for the purposes of this investigation are:

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
	<u>Triennial</u>	<u>Triennial</u>
	<u>Investigation</u>	<u>Investigation</u>
Net investment return	5.7% pa	5.6% pa
Salary inflation	3.5% pa	2.5% pa
		for the first two years and 2.75% pa thereafter
Price inflation	2.8% pa	2.0% pa

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Superannuation contributions

Contributions by Council (excluding any unfunded liability payments) to the above superannuation plans for the financial year ended 30 June 2023 are detailed below:

Scheme	Type of Scheme	Rate	2023	2022
			\$'000	\$'000
Vision super	Defined benefits	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	392	406
Vision super	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	3,687	3,675
Australian Super	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	867	733
Hesta Super	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	506	439
Hostplus	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	454	341
First State	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	279	163
Aust Ethical Retail	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	237	201
CBus	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	218	170
UniSuper	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	230	191
Retail Employees Trust	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	176	89
Other Funds	Accumulation	10.5%		
		(2022:10.0%)	1,797	1,810

There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2023.

The expected contributions to be paid to the Defined Benefit category of Vision Super for the year ending 30 June 2024 is \$380,000.

Council has no unfunded liability payments to Vision Super during both 2022/23 and 2021/22 years.

Notes to the Financial Report

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Note 10 CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY

There have been no changes to accounting policies in the 2022-23 year.