

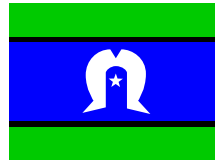
Yarra Ranges **Council**

# Annual Report 2023–24

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

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

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.



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## Disclaimer

This report is published to give general information and does not purport to be complete. In addition, the publication is a snapshot in time based on historic information, which is liable to change. The Yarra Ranges Council accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability for error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on information contained in this report.

**All of the data published on the Yarra Ranges Council services at a glance (p 6) and Our Council (p 24) pages, has been sourced from the following sites and articles:**

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. *QuickStats, Yarra Ranges local government area, 2021*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA27450>
- ID Consulting. *Yarra Ranges Council Community Profile, 2021 Census data and 2022 estimated resident population data*. <https://profile.id.com.au/yarra-ranges>
- Crime Statistics Agency. *Latest crime data by area, 2019 and 2023*. <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data-by-area>
- Crime Statistics Agency. *Family incidents, Victoria, 2019 and 2023*. <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-victorian-crime-data/family-incidents-2>
- Department of Health and Human Services. *Victorian Population Health Survey, 2020*. <https://vahi.vic.gov.au/report/population-health/victorian-population-health-survey-2020-dashboards>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Region summary, Yarra Ranges, 2022*. <https://db.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=sa3&rgn=21105>
- Jobs and Skills Australia. *Small Area Labour Markets – March 2023*. <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/work/small-area-labour-markets>
- Jobs and Skills Australia. *ABS Labour Force Results – March 2023*. <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-04/ABS%20Labour%20Force%20Results%20-%20March%202023.pdf>
- Yarra Ranges Economic Development Strategy 2022–2032



# Introduction

## About this report

The Yarra Ranges 2023-24 Annual Report provides a comprehensive account of Council's operational and financial performance, in addition to its performance against the commitments outlined in our 2021-25 Council Plan.

The contents of this report are guided by the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020, the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020, and the Local Government's Performance Reporting Framework.

**This Annual report is comprised of two parts:**

- Part 1. Annual report 2023-24
- Part 2. Annual Financial report 2024



## Vision 2036

“Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we value our natural beauty, how connected our communities are, and how balanced growth makes this the best place in the world.”

The Yarra Ranges community vision, and vision statement, was developed in consultation with over 1,000 local community members in 2016 and revisited again in 2021 with the Council's community panel. It captures the community's vision for our municipality in 2036.

## Community Vision Statement

Read the Yarra Ranges Community Vision Statement here:

[www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Community-Vision-2036](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Community-Vision-2036)

# The year in review

## Yarra Ranges Council services at a glance

In the past year there were:



**44,095 tonnes** of waste diverted from landfill



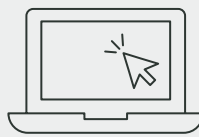
**25,442 m<sup>2</sup>** of sealed local roads reconstructed



**5,715** service requests for tree management



**117,653** trees and shrubs planted in council parks and reserves



**61,489** unique visitors to our Shaping Yarra Ranges page



**7,418** children enrolled in Maternal and Child Health Services



**515** potholes in sealed roads were filled



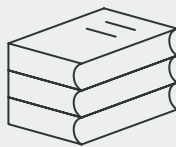
**1,139** drainage service requests completed



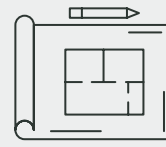
**124,277** calls answered by customer experience



**6,424** subscribers to our business e-newsletter



**1,177,168** library collection item loans



**1,121** planning applications received



**157** animals rehomed



**11,756** immunisations attended



**\$1.5 billion** worth of assets managed

## CEO Message

As we look back over the past 12 months, our community and our organisation have much to be proud of, as we continue to plan for the future and jointly manage an increase in severe weather events.



**Our communities are increasingly resilient and connected, with more people engaging with Council on local projects that impact their lives. We've distributed more community grants than ever before to support local projects, created safe spaces for all ages, and enhanced business support to boost trade and employment. Visitors are increasingly attracted to our nature-based, arts and cultural experiences, contributing to ongoing economic growth.**

This Yarra Ranges Council Annual Report for 2023-24 highlights our key achievements and progress on the 2021-2025 Council Plan, as we prepare for the next plan leading to 2030 and beyond. We've addressed financial pressures and extreme weather impacts, including localised flooding, with significant investments in drainage and community resilience programs. We are also addressing future urban heat risks by planting street trees and enhancing urban vegetation for shade and safety.

We have completed over 90% of planned asset investments this year, including upgrades to play spaces, pavilions, drains, roads, and more than half of our 78 public toilets. Planning for future spaces in various locations has progressed with active community engagement. The Housing Strategy, finalised this year, addresses housing availability and affordability for future generations.

We've listened to community feedback and the desire for greater transparency in our role, finances, and services. While changes in waste services have had mixed reactions, we

continue to work towards a circular economy and effective waste management for a sustainable future for all.

We are committed to financial sustainability, ensuring services and assets are affordable, and exploring alternative revenue sources to minimise future rate increases. We have advocated for changes to funding models to ease pressure on ratepayers and received valuable feedback during budget planning.

I am proud of our achievements this year and acknowledge areas for improvement. We will align our strategies with community expectations and remain dedicated to transparency, accountability, and excellence. I thank our elected leaders, staff, volunteers, and partners for their contributions and look forward to shaping the future of Yarra Ranges together, ensuring it remains a place of opportunity and community for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tammi Rose'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

**Tammi Rose,  
Yarra Ranges Council  
Chief Executive Officer**

# Performance summary

## Financial overview

### Financial Performance

Council's financial position continues to remain sound. A summary of Council's operating results, cash holdings, financial position and debt position is included below. Detailed information relating to Council's financial performance is included in the Annual Report (Part 2 – Financial Report).

### Operating Result

The operating result is presented under the accruals basis of accounting and therefore includes a mix of cash and non-cash items within both the income and expense categories.

Total revenue is up \$7.4million (m) and expenses are up \$19.6m on the budget. The comprehensive result of \$7.9m against the adopted budget of \$20.1m is 60% lower than budget largely due to:

- Rates and charges increase to budget of \$3.9m was due to the Roads to Community initiative recognised in FY24.
- Grant – capital revenue increase on budget by 10.3m was due to the additional grant funding recognised for the Trails project funded in line with project delivery timelines.
- Other income included Storms insurance claims received for the 4 major storm events in FY24.
- The underspend in employee costs by \$3.3m is primarily the result of vacancies across the organisation. Salary and wages were \$8.2m below budget, all directorates finished the year below budget with the Communities Directorate accounting for \$3.4m of this underspend. Planning was underspent due to a shortfall in the availability of planners in the sector. Due to staff vacancies, overtime and temporary staffing costs increased to budget (\$2.5m).

Summary of financial performance for year ended 30 June 2024	Actual \$'000	Budget \$'000
Total income	253,091	245,646
Total expenses	(245,138)	(225,523)
<b>Comprehensive surplus for the reporting period</b>	<b>7,953</b>	<b>20,123</b>
<b>Underlying surplus for the reporting period</b>	<b>(23,670)</b>	<b>(1,660)</b>



This was partially offset by:

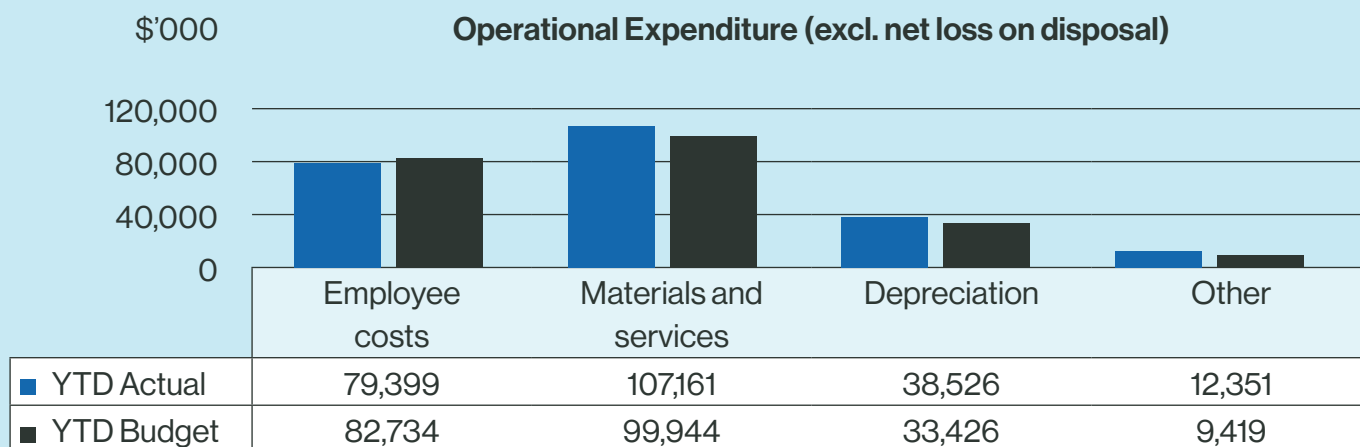
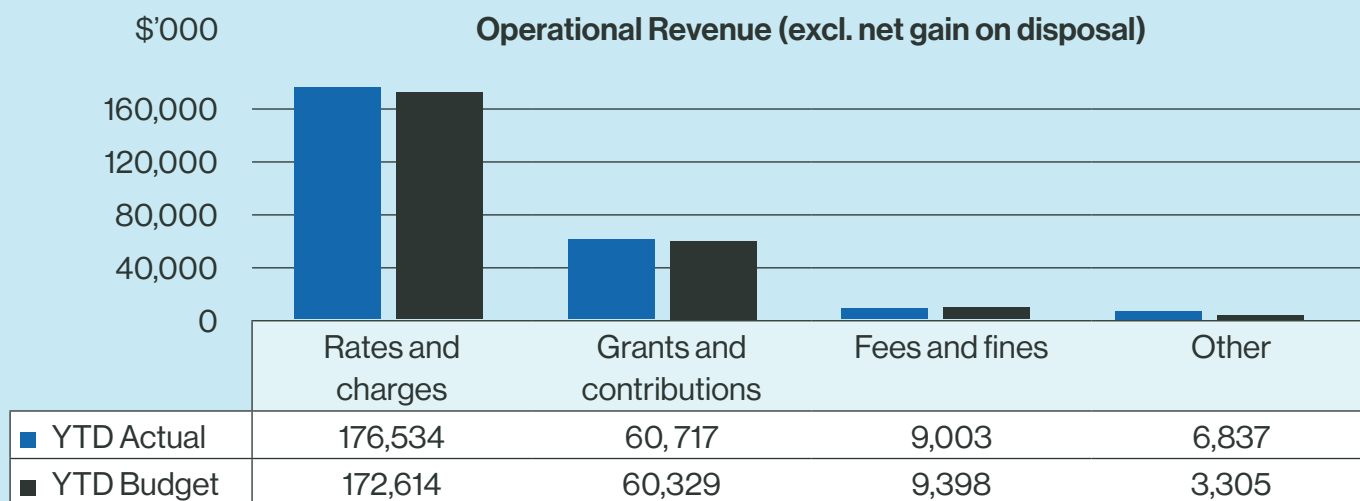
- The unfavourable variance in Operating grants of \$9.8m is due to the timing of grants that were budgeted for June, however received in July 2024 of \$15m.
- Materials and services was over budget by \$6.8m, with most directorates experiencing overspends. The main drivers were: natural disaster recovery costs of \$1.8m, information services \$2.7m network maintenance and online support services, waste management \$1.6m (with the introduction of the FOGO bin system), climate, nature and bushlands \$1.1m (due to streetlighting and corridors of green grant), infrastructure service costs of \$0.9m and parks, trees and trails \$1.1m due to increase in sports field usage.
- The net loss on disposal of \$7.7m due to the work in progress (WIP) adjustment of \$1.1m relating to items that could not be capitalised. The asset reconciliation process uncovered some assets in the buildings, other infrastructure and roads classes that needed to be decommissioned totalling \$6.8m. This includes the building write off of \$2.7m required for the redevelopment of Pink Reserve.

- Council's underlying result, which excludes income relating to the capital program, is unfavourable compared to the Budget due to the removal of capital grants from the comprehensive result. The negative underlying surplus is due to lower operating grant revenue received during the year with the timing of payment of the Victorian Grants Commission Financial Assistance Grant.

Please refer to Note 2.1.1 of Financial Statements in the Annual Report (Part 2- Financial Report 2024) for further details on variances.

The main categories of operating revenue and expenditure are shown in the following graphs:

Rates and charges continue to be Council's major source of income, accounting for 69.8% (2022-23: 62.6%) of income. The major operating expense items are employee costs, materials and services and depreciation.



## Cash Position

Council had cash and investment holdings of \$24.7m on 30 June 2024 (30 June 2023: \$96.7m). These cash holdings include \$8.4m of restricted (tied) cash for trust funds and deposits and \$10.9m for the public open space reserve.

The budget was prepared on the assumption that capital works projects, including those carried over from the previous financial year, would be completed in 2023-24. On 30 June 2024, there were several capital works projects not completed. The funding (\$25m+) for incomplete capital works projects has been carried forward to 2023-24. This, along with lower than anticipated grant funding and contributions and no need for drawdown on borrowings in FY24 has resulted in lower cash balances than budgeted.

## Financial Position

Council ended the financial year with net assets of \$1.623 billion, an increase of \$343.2m when compared to the budget.

Current assets of \$90,784m is less than budget by \$16m mainly due to the receipt of grant funding in July 2024 however budgeted in June 2024. Non-current assets increased by \$337m due to an asset revaluation increase and asset additions added to the fixed asset register.

Total current liabilities were lower by \$7m when compared to the budget. This is due to higher trade payables and unearned income being recorded at year end partially offset by lower contract and other liabilities, trust funds and deposits and provisions.

Summary of cash flows for year ended 30 June 2024	Actual \$'000	Budget \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities	4,545	59,267
Net payments for property, infrastructure, plant, and equipment	(72,855)	(58,756)
Cash flow provided by / (used in) financing activities	(5,598)	14,848
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(73,908)</b>	<b>15,359</b>
Cash at beginning of the financial year	91,150	60,527
<b>Cash at end of the financial year</b>	<b>17,242</b>	<b>75,886</b>

Summary of financial position as at 30th June 2024	Actual \$'000	Budget \$'000
Total assets	1,734,342	1,413,930
Total liabilities	(111,759)	(134,591)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>1,622,583</b>	<b>1,279,339</b>

## Debt Position

Council has not required any borrowings during the financial year 2023-24 due to the receipt of grant funding and ongoings delay in the delivery of some of the capital works projects.

## Where Council spends your rates

The chart below provides an indication of how Council allocates its budgeted expenditure across the main services that it delivers. It shows how much is allocated to each service area, on average, for every \$100 that Council receives in rates income in 2024.



### Further information

More information about our financial performance in 2023-24 can be found in the Yarra Ranges Council Budget and the Annual Report (Part 2 – Financial Report).







## Description of operations

### Major changes

Council implemented a small structural organisational change during 2023-24.

These changes took place to ensure that our organisation is appropriately set up to meet the changing needs of the Yarra Ranges municipality now and into the future.

The following structural changes have taken place:

- Two senior Communities roles were combined into a newly created role of Manager Economy, Tourism and Culture. This will deliver an efficient, future focussed portfolio that aligns Tourism, Economic Development and Creative Communities program that leverages existing Arts and Culture programs and seeks to balance needs of residents and future tourism projections.
- A senior role was made permanent to drive accountability for Council Governance, Performance and Integrity aligned with state government standards and community expectations.
- The Office of the CEO has been streamlined to focus on organisational efficiency, government relationship management and inter-governmental advocacy.

Council welcomed **a new member to the Executive** Leadership team; Leanne Hurst joined Yarra Ranges Council as the Director of the Communities Directorate following the departure of her predecessor, Jane Price, who left the organisation in November 2023 after 4 years of service. Leanne is an experienced senior executive with 27 years in local government and has led diverse teams across urban and rural settings including Community Development, Community Services, Tourism and Events, Economic Development and Planning.

Council **transitioned the final funded aged care services** to new Federally selected providers in line with the Federal Government's Aged Care Reform. All previous recipients of Council's support services who wanted to, were carefully transitioned to the new service providers and Council remains focussed on positive aging through direct activities, partnerships, advocacy, education and supporting the sector.

Accelerated delivery of capital works program has resulted in over 90% of Capital Works being completed as planned, which is a strong performance in a challenging delivery environment.

## Economic factors

Throughout 2023-24, Council was not immune to inflation pressures being felt across the whole economy. Council made a range of **Advocacy Submissions** to the Federal and State Government regarding our financial position including;

- Joint submission in partnership with Cardinia Council to the federal government to address the Roads for Community funding shortfall that was rescinded in 2022-2023
- Federal Government pre-budget submission to highlight key projects for funding in 2023-2024 and beyond
- State Government pre-budget submission to highlight key projects for funding in 2023-2024 and beyond
- Submission to the Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services  
Submission to The Parliament of Victoria  
Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee

These submissions addressed systemic issues of cost-shifting, underfunding and unreliable grant funding for key infrastructure and services, and provided clear consequences for community of service impacts, and rates pressure from the current funding situation. All submissions made clear options for resolution and amplified the needs of our Yarra Ranges Community.

Council has undertaken a range of financial modelling activities to prepare the Long-Term Financial Plan 2025-2035, and ensure it addresses these key issues.

## Major achievements

### Township Master Planning

The **Lilydale Lake Masterplan** was adopted, with improvements recommended, including an upgrade to the water access and viewing facilities, youth activity and exercise area, accessible seating and picnic spaces, informative Indigenous and historical signage, plus improved path connectivity with the Box Hill Institute and new Kinley Development.

The **Wandin North Town Centre Masterplan** was adopted in July 2023. There are known community risks in Wandin North due to unmanaged pedestrian movements across Warburton Highway at both the main activity centre as well as the Warburton Rail Trail. There has also been community advocacy, which has aligned with Council's efforts, to see town centres impacted by COVID become thriving hubs, providing further support for local businesses.

The **Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Masterplan** was adopted in September 2023 following extensive consultation with the local Kilsyth residents, Kilsyth Community Action Group, sports clubs and the broader Yarra Ranges community. The Masterplan provides a 10+ year strategic approach to improve sport and recreation facilities at the reserve. Improvements include the removal of the redundant tennis courts to provide a multi-generational play space, multi-purpose court and junior pump track. An upgrade to the oval irrigation and lights, and inclusion of a community plaza and oval viewing space.

The **Warburton Urban Design Framework** was adopted, which provides practical design solutions to realise the intent of the design, development, and public realm actions contained in the Warburton Place Plan. The comprehensive engagement undertaken has resulted in

extensive Community feedback with 335 written submissions composed of over 1,800 comments which are included in the Framework.

The **Monbulk Urban Design Framework** was adopted after comprehensive engagement which resulted in extensive Community feedback, with 448 submissions composed of 2,303 comments, which were included in the Framework.

### Strategy

The **Active Recreation Plan** was approved, which targets an increase in physical activity levels in Yarra Ranges by 15% over ten years. Currently, over 42% of women and over 36% of men in Yarra Ranges are sedentary or insufficiently active.

The **Nature Plan** was adopted, which sets bold targets to reflect Council's strategic priorities of environmental stewardship and nature protection. It is an ambitious Plan that will seek funding through future advocacy efforts, key partnerships, stakeholder collaboration, and internal budget bids.

The **Tree Canopy Strategy** was endorsed to key challenges and opportunities shaping the future of our tree canopy. Council adopted a more proactive stance to tree management. The strategy establishes a clear vision, defines objectives, and sets measurable targets.

The **Yarra Ranges Aquatic and Leisure Strategy** was adopted, with an overarching goal to ensure aquatic facilities are environmentally and financially sustainable, support participation and inclusion, and provide economic benefits for the entire community.

The **Housing Strategy** was adopted, which makes clear a 10-year roadmap for the municipality to provide increased volume and diversity of affordable housing options, incorporating new planning scheme amendment opportunities.

## Investment

Council supported 17 Arts and Heritage **project grants** (\$160,133), 35 community development grants (\$241,920) and 14 Festivals and Events grants (\$97,805) under the Grants for Community program for delivery in 2024 calendar year.

In May 2024, Council **reviewed the forward Annual Grants program to give more money to community projects than ever before.** A Council decision was made to increase the Community Development stream by \$25,000 to a total pool of \$275,000 and increase Festival and Events and Arts and Heritage streams by \$50,000 to a total pool of \$300,000 and raise the limit for large festivals from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

There was also an increase to the maximum for Monthly Grants to \$1,500 and increase to the budget for these grants to the Business and Trader Group Development stream from \$10,000 to \$18,000 per year and for grants up to \$1,500 each, with a specific allocation of \$12,000 was made for capacity building support for not-for-profit Business and Trader Groups. There was an approved increase in the Connected and Vibrant Communities Monthly Grants stream of \$20,000 to support small projects that focus on social connection.

Council also provided in-principal support for the creation of a separate emergency relief stream in the 2027 multi-year Partnership round and increase the funding limit to \$45,000 per year for larger agencies that demonstrate this is required.

Council also planned for an estimated increase of \$80,000 in the next Multi-year Grants, with the amount reviewed in 2027-28 budget process. This recognises and responds to cost pressures on community organisations.

Council is proud to support community organisations and commits to monitoring changes and the benefits to the community and make recommendations for further improvements as needed.

Council approved the **2024-25 Budget** at a public Council meeting in June 2024, with record investment in drainage infrastructure and strong community interest with a record number of submissions and community engagement interactions.

A **pilot of real-time parking information technology** was approved for Warburton, alongside a paid parking program for a period of up to 12 months to enhance enforcement efforts to achieve balanced safety, availability and accessibility. These actions are consistent with Council's Integrated Transport Strategy 2020-2040 Implementation Plan. Future options to manage parking behaviours are under development.

## Other

A **Supreme Court** challenge was launched against Council to test the veracity of Council engagement and governance processes. Council welcomed the decision by Her Honour Justice Richards at the Supreme Court of Victoria to dismiss the case against Yarra Ranges Council and award costs in August 2023.

# Challenges and outlook

Our climate and country are experiencing challenge and disruption, and the impact on our community has been clear this year. As your Council, we adapt and respond by listening to community and working together to find innovative ways to support our community and our valuable natural environment.

Challenge	Action	Outlook
<p><b>Cost of Living and inflationary pressures are creating an affordability challenge for our community.</b></p>	<p>Council continued distribution of grant funding to local business and trader groups and township collectives. Funds to emergency relief agencies also continued. Our hardship policy is actively assisting residents and council services remain low cost.</p>	<p>Council continues to campaign for cost recovery from state and federal government to decrease rates pressures in forward years. A strong focus on organisational financial sustainability for the next 10 years including Council efficiency, grants and revenue generation from non-residents is a focus for the Long-Term Financial Plan under development.</p>
<p><b>Community are telling us they have low trust in all levels of government, and reduced community satisfaction is clear.</b></p>	<p>Community disappointment and dissatisfaction is clear and the opportunity for Council to improve its communication pathways and rebuild trust. Council is providing more and varied opportunities for engagement to listen, and support community to provide guidance on issues and projects.</p>	<p>Council commenced deliberative engagement early to ensure adequate time to plan the next Council Plan to meet community expectations. We look forward to continuing levels of high engagement, seeing more community at events, meetings, townships, customer connection points and online. We are upgrading our customer portal, making it easier to self-service. The upcoming Council election enables Councillors and community to reconnect, and for community to elect their chosen representatives.</p>



Challenge	Action	Outlook
<p><b>Housing affordability and availability is becoming an increasing issue across Victoria, and this includes the Yarra Ranges.</b></p>	<p>Council has adopted a housing strategy in 2024, and the Kinley housing development is progressing. Council continues to advocate for changes to shortstay accommodation via the Municipal Association of Victoria to free up rental housing.</p>	<p>Council has a strong forward plan to deliver housing in Yarra Ranges which will leverages available locations, diverse building design, affordability and planning.</p>
<p><b>Ongoing flooding events continue to cause widespread flooding and damage to homes, roads and businesses. Floods also impacted community assets that Council manages, including drains, roads, bridges and buildings.</b></p>	<p>Council sought additional flood mapping and adjusted forward capital programs to improve resilience and support community prevention activities.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, flooding events are likely to become commonplace. Council now has committed budget and has dedicated and established teams to manage drainage and assets and respond to urgent repairs. Inter-governmental advocacy to Melbourne Water has also commenced to ensure accountability for drainage outside Councils remit.</p>
<p><b>Our changing climate and increasing extreme weather events are impacting the biodiversity of our environment.</b></p>	<p>Council has used innovative approaches to understand impacts of climate change and plan forward initiatives that build community and climate resilience, such as Tanks for Platypus programs.</p>	<p>Council has adopted the Nature Plan 2023-2032 to protect our biodiversity assets and has fully funded and commenced delivery of the first year of the program.</p>

## Capital Works Projects

The 2023-24 financial year saw Council undertake 337 Capital Works projects, with a worth of more than \$71.9m. These projects aim to address the changing and diverse needs of communities within the municipality.

The following is a summary of the program expenditure, highlighting some of the major projects undertaken this financial year.

### Program Expenditure 2023-24

#### **Bridges**

**\$1.7m**

Three projects with \$1.7m spent. Major projects:

- Bridge rehabilitation works for Cement Creek Road, East Warburton bridge
- Bridge Rehabilitation Program throughout the municipality (ongoing)
- McMahons Creek Pedestrian Bridge

#### **Buildings**

**\$16.9m**

Thirty-nine projects with \$16.9m spent. Major projects:

- Community Sports Pavilions for Millgrove, Mt Evelyn, Monbulk, Kimberley Reserve in Chirside Park, Pinks Reserve in Kilsyth and Powelltown
- \$1.5m to support the Climate Resilient Buildings for Community project

#### **Carparks**

**\$0.5m**

Two projects with \$0.5m spent. Major projects:

- Carpark sealing and minor works projects throughout the municipality (ongoing)
- Carpark extension, MacIntyre Lane, Yering

#### **Community and Recreation - Playspace, Sports Reserves**

**\$7.9m**

Thirty-one projects with \$7.9m spent. Major projects:

- Chirside Urban Park Playspace
- Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Stage 1
- Belgrave South Community Youth Space
- Seville Recreation Reserve Oval 1 Ground Reconstruction
- Carmen Reserve, Lilydale and Glenvalley Reserve, Seville East Playspace renewal
- Yarra Glen Netball Court upgrade
- Lilydale BMX Track Lighting Renewal

#### **Computers and Communication**

**\$1.6m**

Three projects with \$1.6m spent. Major projects:

- Upgrade and replacement of computer hardware (ongoing)
- Upgrade and replacement of software (ongoing)
- Enterprise Systems Project (ongoing)

## **Drainage** **\$1.6m**

Fifteen projects with \$1.6m spent. Major projects:

- Drainage Rehabilitation Program throughout the municipality (ongoing)
- Commercial Road, Mount Evelyn Stage 1 and 2
- Station Street, Coldstream
- George Road, Laylor Road, Maroondah Parade and Marna Street, Healesville
- Britton Road, Seville
- Schoolhouse Road, Woori Yallock
- Carmen Reserve, Lilydale

## **Footpaths and Cycleways** **\$1.0m**

Twenty-four projects with \$1.0m spent. Major projects:

- Minor footpaths rehabilitation projects throughout the municipality (ongoing)
- Olinda Creek Bridge Path – Maroondah Hwy (Main St) Lilydale
- Bridle Path, Sheppards, Grandvalley, Brambleberry and Edward, Maroondah Hwy, Chirnside
- Hawkins Road, Montrose
- Pedestrian steps, Pauline Avenue and Hakea Street, Tecoma

## **Land** **\$1.2m**

Three projects with \$1.2m spent. Major projects:

- Purchase of 13 Green Street, Healesville
- Purchase of 37-41 Olinda Monbulk Road, Olinda

## **Parks, Opens Spaces and Trails** **\$8.8m**

Fifty projects with \$8.8m spent. Major projects:

- ngurrak barring, Ridge Walk
- Yarra Valley Trail
- Brushy Creek Trail, Mooroolbark
- Wesburn Pump Track
- Mountain Bike Destination, Warburton

## **Plant and Equipment** **\$3.9m**

Five projects with \$3.9m spent. Major projects:

- Replacement of Council fleet, machinery and small equipment (ongoing)
- Biochar facility
- Lysterfield Transfer Station Fire Service

## **Roads** **\$11.6m**

Ninety-seven projects with \$11.6m spent. Major projects:

- Kallista-Emerald Road, Kallista
- Spring Lane & Gruyere Road (Harvey Cl to Darling Rd), Gruyere
- Edward Road & Switchback Rd, Chirnside Park
- Victoria Road, Coldstream
- Morton Road & Hood Street, Belgrave Heights
- Nation Road, Selby
- Road resurfacing throughout the municipality, with over \$5 million spent, major projects:
  - Vista Drive, Chirnside Park
  - Glen Dhu Rd, Kilysth
  - Tschampions Rd, Macclesfield
  - Bellara Drive, Mooroolbark
  - Glenview Rd, Yarra Glen
  - Glenfern Ct, Upper Ferntree Gully
  - Nelson Rd, Lilydale

### **Roads for Community Initiative**

**\$10.3m**

Sixty-five projects with \$10.3m spent, including:

- Mt Morton Road, Belgrave Heights
- Nation Road, Selby
- Grandview Crescent & Lawrence Court, Healesville
- Benton Road Group, Healesville
- Bell Street Road Group, Seville
- Station Road Group, Seville
- Victoria Road Group, Seville
- Tainton Street and Railway Parade, Wandin North

### **Asset management**

**\$5.1m**

A total of \$5.1m spent on:

- Advance design program
- Project Management







# Our Council

## About Yarra Ranges

Yarra Ranges Shire is situated in metropolitan Melbourne's outer east, 30 to 110 kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District. It covers 2,468 square kilometres in area, making it Melbourne's largest local government area.

Yarra Ranges is well known for its tourism and wineries, agricultural industry, and the natural beauty of the Dandenong Ranges. The diversity of places, people, industries and attractions – dispersed over a wide variety of urban and rural communities - makes Yarra Ranges one of the most unique municipalities in Victoria.



### Yarra Ranges Shire

Land area: 2,468.2 square kilometers

2% Council land, 30% is in private ownership, and 68% is Crown land

9 wards, 62 suburbs and localities, plus parts of 6 other suburbs



### Industries

\$7.30Bn GRP (est)

Construction is the largest industry by employment. The sector employs over 15% of all residents.

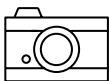


### Housing

64.30 persons per square km population density

14% of households with mortgage experience mortgage stress

33.9% of households renting experience rental stress (2021 census)



### Tourism

2023 estimates:

Day trips: 4.5m

\$984.3m visitor spend

7,300 people in YR employed in the tourism industry



### Population

158,694 residents (2023 est.)

1,713 Indigenous residents

Yarra Ranges has the highest number of indigenous persons in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.

26,287 born overseas



### Economic

3.1% unemployment rate (Dec 2023)

14,010 local businesses

53,750 local jobs

## Our Councillors

Mayor  
Cr Sophie Todorov  
**Melba Ward**

Cr Len Cox OAM  
**Walling Ward**

Cr Richard Higgins  
**Chirside Ward**

Deputy Mayor  
Cr David Eastham  
**Chandler Ward**

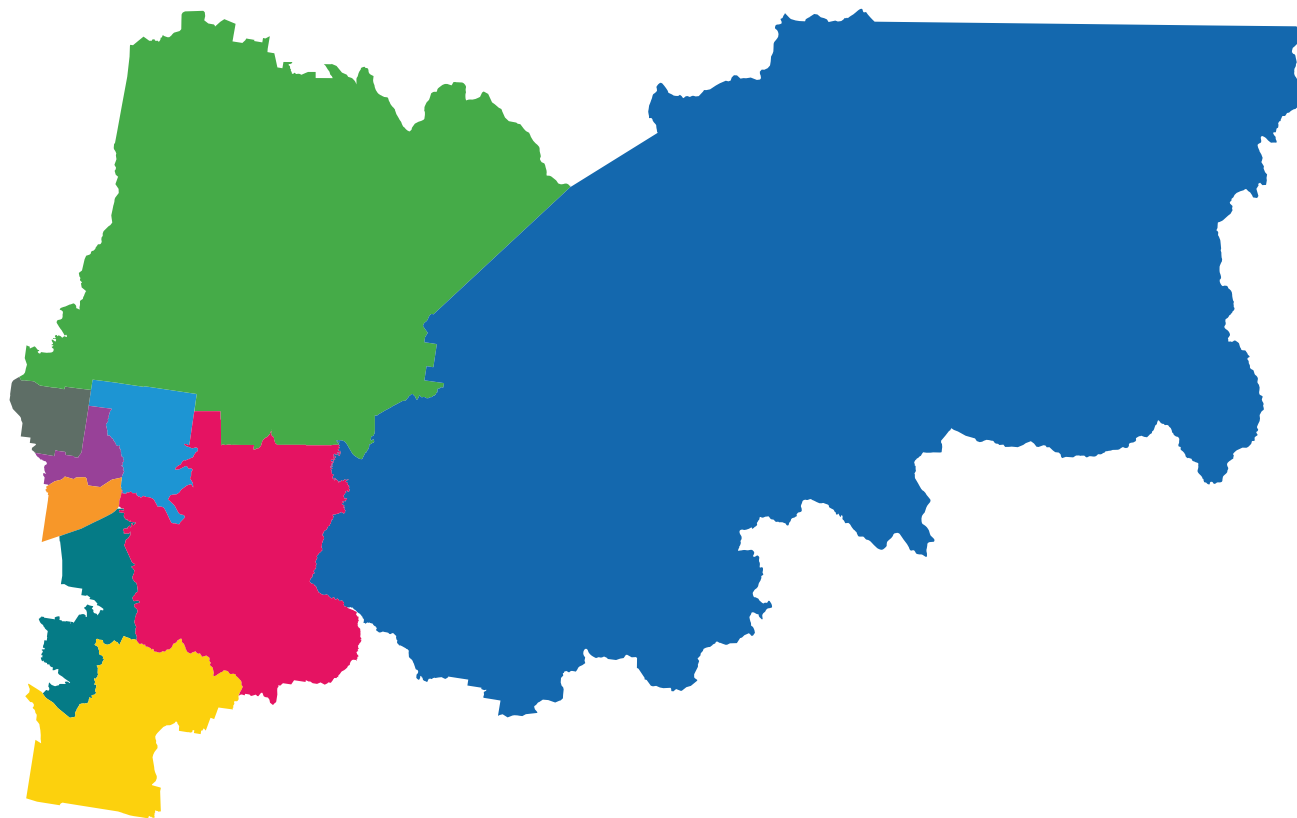
Cr Andrew Fullagar  
**Streeton Ward**

Cr Fiona McAllister  
**Ryrie Ward**

Cr Jim Child  
**O'Shannassy Ward**

Cr Tim Heenan  
**Billanook Ward**

Cr Johanna Skelton  
**Lyster Ward**



### How to contact us

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Lilydale, VIC 3140

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Lilydale VIC 3140

**Phone** 1300 368 333

**Email** [mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

**Web** [yarraranges.vic.gov.au](http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

# Governance

## Meetings of Council

Council conducts open public meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Members of the community are welcome to register to attend these meetings and observe from the gallery. Council meetings also provide the opportunity for community members to submit a question to the Council, make a submission, present a petition or speak to an item. Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024 Council held the following:

- 22 Council meetings
- 1 Delegated committee meeting.

The following table provides a summary of Councillor attendance at Council meetings for the 2023-24 financial year.

Councillor	1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024		
	Council Meeting	Delegated Committee	Total
Cr Jim Child	22	1	23
Cr Len Cox	19	1	20
Cr David Eastham	20	1	21
Cr Tim Heenan	18	1	19
Cr Richard Higgins	16	1	17
Cr Fiona McAllister	19	0	19
Cr Johanna Skelton	20	1	21
Cr Sophie Todorov	19	1	20
Cr Andrew Fullagar	21	1	22

## Representation

In addition to participation in Council meetings and engagement in direct community and individual consultation, Councillors are affiliated with a variety of bodies to represent the various interests of Yarra Ranges Council and its people. These are listed below for the 2023-24 period.

Committee	2023/24 Councillors	
Agribusiness Yarra Valley	Cr Eastham	Cr McAllister (Substitute)
Audit and Risk Management Committee	Cr McAllister	Cr Child
Burrinja Cultural Centre	Cr Fullagar	
Disability Advisory Committee	Cr Cox (Chair)	Cr Higgins
Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance	Cr Heenan	Cr Todorov (Substitute)
Eastern Alliance of Greenhouse Action	Cr Skelton	
Eastern Transport Coalition	Cr Fullagar	Cr Higgins (Substitute)
Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee	Cr Fullagar (Chair)	Cr Todorov (Substitute)
Indigenous Advisory Committee	Cr McAllister	Cr Skelton
Interface Councils	Cr Todorov	Cr Eastham (Substitute)
Jack Hort Memorial Indoor Pool Management Committee	Cr McAllister	
Metropolitan Education Traffic Centre (METEC) Board	Cr Higgins	
Municipal Association of Victoria	Cr Todorov	Cr Child (Substitute)
Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee	Cr Child	Cr Todorov (Substitute)
Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee	Cr Child	Cr Skelton
Positive Ageing Reference Group	Cr Higgins	Cr Skelton (Substitute)
Rural Advisory Committee	Cr Eastham (Chair)	Cr McAllister (Substitute)
Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee	Cr Skelton (Chair)	Cr Fullagar (Substitute)
Yarra Ranges Regional Museum Trust	Cr Higgins	Cr Heenan
Yarra Valley ECOSS	Cr Child	
Your Library Est June 2022 – formally known as Eastern Regional Libraries Corporation	Cr Fullagar	Cr Child

## Councillor Expenses

Councillors receive an annual allowance for their time and dedication to the role of being a Councillor. Their allowance and their expenses for the 2023-24 financial year are stated below.

Councillor	Allowance	Conferences / Training	Travel*	Other costs	Total
Cr Andrew Fullagar	\$39,001.20	\$925.39	\$7,026.99		\$46,953.58
Cr David Eastham	\$55,280.62	\$20.00	\$3,618.66		\$58,919.28
Cr Fiona McAllister	\$39,001.20			\$72.73	\$39,073.93
Cr Jim Child	\$60,603.72	\$2,920.99	\$7,632.79	\$510.14	\$71,667.64
Cr Johanna Skelton	\$39,001.20	\$1,197.15			\$40,198.35
Cr Len Cox	\$39,001.20		\$2,280.42		\$41,281.62
Cr Richard Higgins	\$39,001.20				\$39,001.20
Cr Sophie Todorov	\$116,069.17	\$4,253.67	\$2,461.13	\$219.09	\$123,003.06
Cr Tim Heenan	\$39,001.20			\$768.08	\$39,769.28
<b>Total (\$)</b>	<b>\$465,960.71</b>	<b>\$9,317.20</b>	<b>\$23,019.99</b>	<b>\$1,570.04</b>	<b>\$499,867.94</b>

\*represents mileage for council-related activities



## Code of Conduct for Councillors

The Councillor Code of Conduct assists Councillors to maintain the highest levels of integrity and ethical behaviour. Councillors recognise, accept and have committed to the following standards of conduct:

- To treat other Councillors, members of Council staff, the municipal community and members of the public with dignity, fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect.
- To do everything reasonably necessary to ensure that the Councillor performs the role of a Councillor effectively and responsibly.
- To ensure the good governance of the Council.
- To ensure that their behaviour does not bring discredit upon the Council.
- To not deliberately mislead the Council or the public about any matter related to the performance of their public duties.

All Councillors took an oath or affirmation of office to abide by the Councillor Code of Conduct and uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Councillor Code of Conduct. A full copy of the Councillor Code of Conduct is available at [yarraranges.vic.gov.au](http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au) or printed on request.

## Conflict of Interest

Council is committed to maintaining legislative compliance in respect of conflict of interest provisions contained within the Local Government Act 2020.

Our Councillors recognise the importance of maintaining the highest levels of integrity and ethical behaviour, with this demonstrated by Council adopting a new Conflict of Interest Policy. The commencement of Sections 126 to 131 of the Local Government Act 2020 on 24 October 2020 saw the repeal of the conflict of interest provisions described in Sections 76AA to 81 of the Local Government Act 1989. This change introduced general and material conflicts of interest. Disclosure forms are provided to Councillors and a register of conflict of interest disclosures is maintained.

The table below provides a summary of the conflict of interest disclosures made by Councillors during the 2023-24 financial year.

Conflict of interest	Number of declarations
General interest	4
Material interest	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>

# Our organisation

## Our Executive Team

Yarra Ranges Council is led by the Chief Executive Officer, who operates under the delegation of the elected Council and is responsible for the overall management and performance of all council operations, services and infrastructure delivery. The Chief Executive Officer, along with a group of directors, forms Council's Executive Team.



**Tammi Rose**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Tammi joined Yarra Ranges Council as CEO in 2019. Tammi is appointed by the Council and is responsible for leading the organisation in delivering on Council's objectives.



**Andrew Hilson**  
**Director Corporate Services**

Andrew joined Yarra Ranges Council in 2019 and has a passion for community impact and believes in the power of local government to bring communities together. Andrew has experience with both corporate and non-profit organisations.



**Leanne Hurst**  
**Director Communities**

Leanne joined Yarra Ranges Council in 2024. Leanne has 27 years of experience in local government. Leanne's approach to leadership is guided by a clear set of personal values and guiding principles that put people and community at the centre.



**Kath McClusky**  
**Director Planning and Sustainable Futures**

Kath joined the organisation in 2019 and has more than 21 years' experience in local government and is a qualified planner with experience in strategic, land use, social and sustainability planning. She is committed to improving outcomes for the community in the planning and economic development functions of Council.



**Hjalmar Philipp**  
**Director Built Environment and Infrastructure**

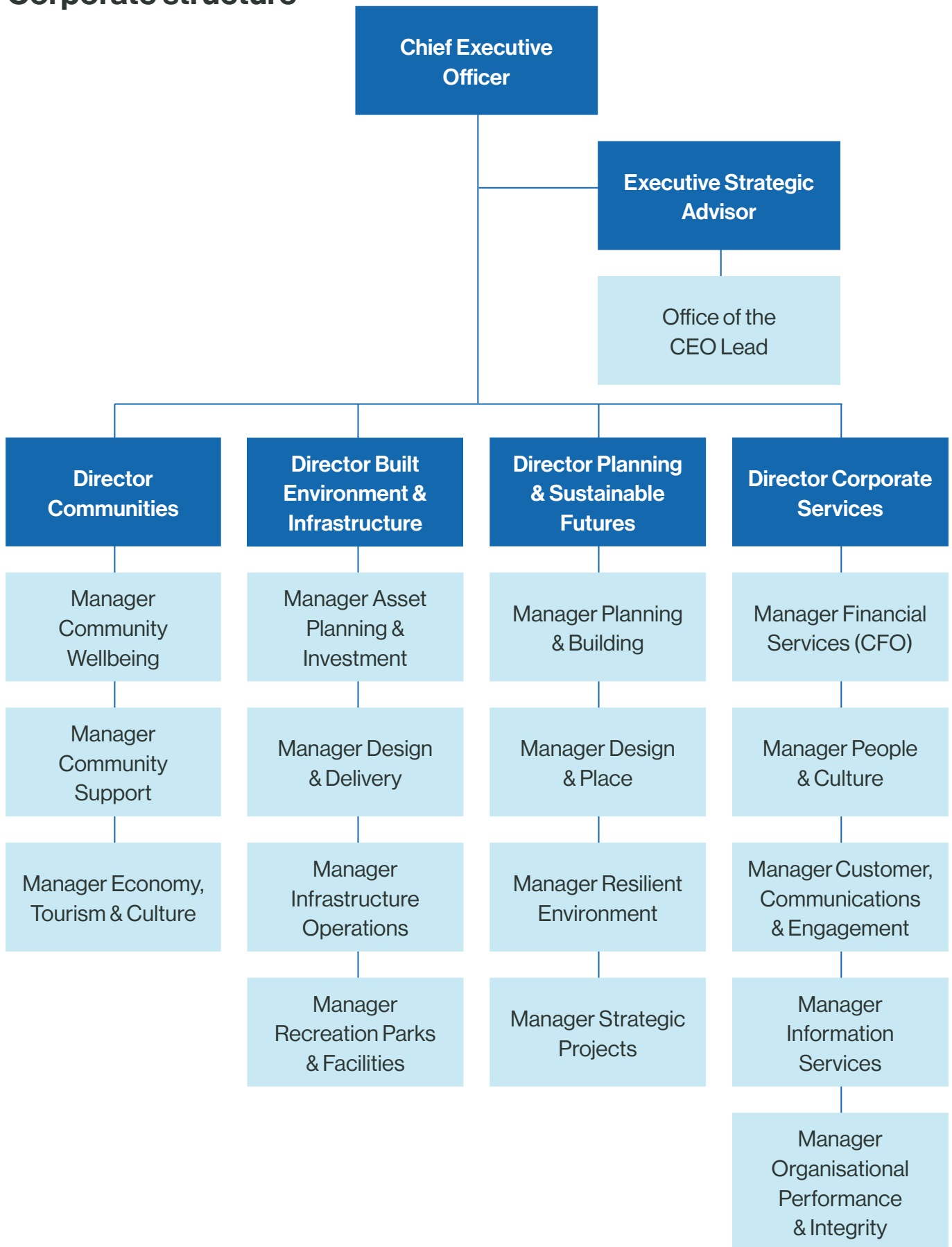
Hjalmar joined the organisation in 2023 as Director of Built Environment and Infrastructure. He brings a wealth of international and local government expertise to Yarra Ranges.



**Ameer Cooper**  
**Executive Strategic Advisor**

Ameer joined Yarra Ranges Council in 2020 and is a specialist in enhancing government services to meet community needs. Ameer leverages government relationships, innovation and future-focus to build outcomes that community and Council can both be proud of.

# Corporate structure



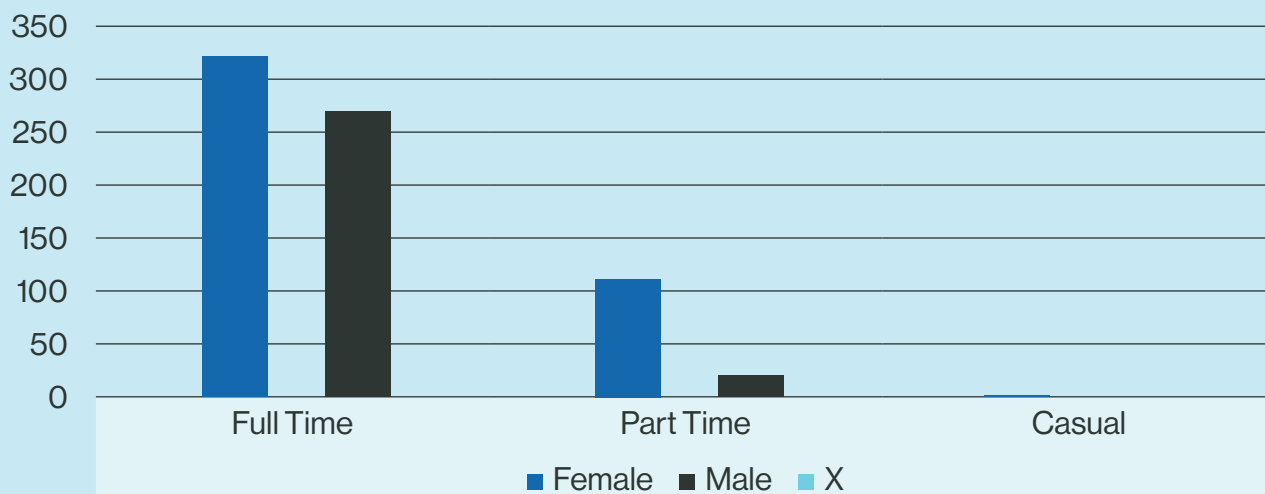
## Our workforce

### Our people at a glance

A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) Council staff by organisational structure, employment type and gender is set out below. In this table, F = Female, M = Male, and X = Non-binary employees.

	Full Time			Part Time			Casual			Total
	F	M	X	F	M	X	F	M	X	
Built Environment & Infrastructure	58.80	143.00	0.00	6.41	2.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>211.04</b>
Communities	97.44	27.00	0.00	59.59	10.50	0.00	1.15	0.11	0.00	<b>195.79</b>
Corporate Services	89.53	44.40	0.00	27.25	1.98	0.00	0.37	0.32	0.00	<b>163.85</b>
Planning and Sustainable Futures	64.60	50.00	0.00	18.14	5.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>137.77</b>
Office of the CEO	9.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>12.00</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>319.37</b>	<b>267.40</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>111.39</b>	<b>20.34</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>720.45</b>

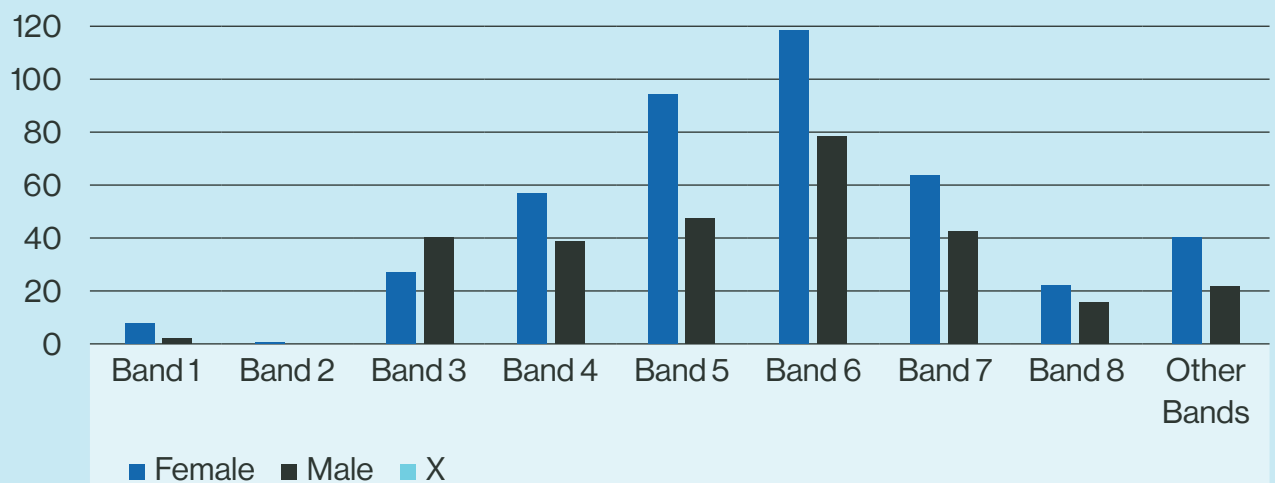
Headcount by employment status and gender



## Employment classification (FTE)

Employment	Female	Male	Total
Band 1	7.80	2.24	10.03
Band 2	0.63	0.00	0.63
Band 3	27.09	40.34	67.43
Band 4	57.11	38.94	96.05
Band 5	94.57	47.63	142.20
Band 6	118.77	78.83	197.60
Band 7	63.80	42.59	106.39
Band 8	22.20	15.60	37.80
Other Bands	40.31	22.00	62.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>432.28</b>	<b>288.17</b>	<b>720.45</b>

Headcount by employment status and gender



## Workforce Initiatives

### Free from Violence Local Government Grant Program 2022-2025

Council delivered the second year of a grant through the Free from Violence Local Government Grant Program 2022-25, a joint initiative by the People and Culture and Community Wellbeing Departments. The project aimed to foster a respectful, safe, and equal workplace and community.

Year 1 largely focused on increasing our collaboration and partnership with community organisations, while Year 2 focussed on building sustainable partnerships. The grant funded a 0.6 FTE Gender Equity Officer in the Health and Wellbeing Team to support achieving the outcomes of the first two years. This position enabled Council to advance community initiatives and scale up prevention activities across the Yarra Ranges. Key achievements included:

- Establishment of the Yarra Ranges Gender Equity Network with key regional organisations, such as Eastern Health, FVREE, Eastern Community Legal Centre, and Inspiro.
- Coordination and delivery of community initiatives for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, including workshops in local primary schools, a screening of 'Happy Sad Man' in partnership with the Mountain Men township group, and story times with curated booklists at Eastern Regional Libraries.

Council will continue to support the sustainability of this work through the Health and Wellbeing Team, which will connect organisations, foster collaboration, and empower local groups to take the lead in promoting community initiatives.

Year 2 also saw for Council:

- The establishment and training of Family Violence Contact Officers.
- Leadership training on Responding to Disclosures of Family Violence.
- Gender Equity and Bystander Intervention workshops for all staff.

These initiatives aimed to enhance staff's understanding of preventing violence against women, both professionally and personally. Building this foundational knowledge among employees is crucial for achieving long-term goals in violence prevention.

Year 3 provides the opportunity to continue to deliver training, promote, scale up and strengthen the culture of Gender Equity and Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children across all aspects of Council business. Another focus will be on embedding actions in Councils next Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029.



## Health and Safety

Council is committed to protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of its people by supporting managers, supervisors and staff in meeting their Health and Safety responsibilities.

We are committed to a proactive and positive safety culture, effectively balancing the need to reduce workplace hazards while focusing on creating a safety culture that promotes and encourages initiatives that lead to safer working environments.

Throughout 2023-24, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team have achieved:

- Continued efforts to support staff Mental Health and Wellbeing conducting wellbeing activities and having guest speakers on subjects with acknowledged impacts upon mental health.
- An enhanced Occupational Violence and Aggression (OVA) program rolling out three-tiered training, body worn cameras, lone worker protocols and begun a process to evaluate a portable duress alarm that will be effective throughout the Council area of operations. OVA continues to be the most frequently reported incident type and an increasingly significant risk to staff and Council operations.
- A revised suite of key performance indicators related to Task Risk Registers, Health and Safety incidents and Workers Compensation premium.







# Performance report

## Planning and reporting framework

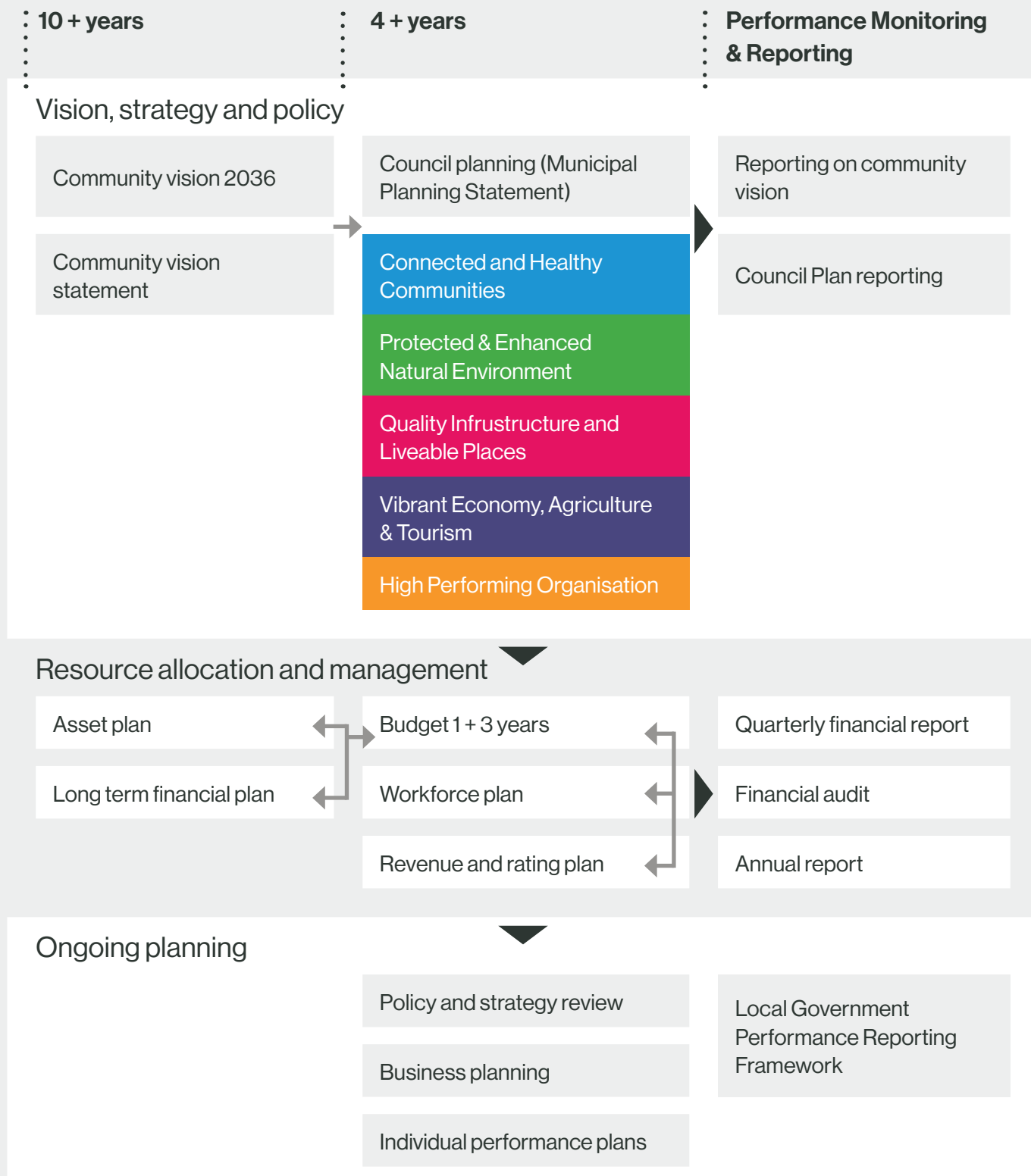
The Local Government Act 2020 requires Councils to prepare the following:

- A Community Vision (for at least the next 10 financial years);
- A Council Plan (for at least the next 4 financial years);
- A Financial Plan (for at least the next 10 financial years);
- An Asset Plan (for at least the next 10 financial years);
- A Revenue and Rating Plan (for at least the next 4 financial years);
- An Annual Budget (for the next 4 financial years);
- A Quarterly Budget Report;
- An Annual Report (for each financial year); and
- Financial Policies.



# Strategic framework

These documents guide the work for Council and drive accountability for the planning and delivery of our commitments to the community. The Council's strategic framework visualises the connections between these documents and how they feed into our planning.



## Council plan

The 2021-25 Council Plan articulates the key strategic objectives which guides Council's work in addition to 8 major initiatives. These goals and objectives were informed by the community in 2020 and responds to the priorities and big issues facing the Yarra Ranges community.

Within the Council Plan, an action plan details how we will aim to achieve the key strategic objectives. The following sections details these actions and our progress towards achieving them.

The Yarra Ranges Council's key strategic objectives, as outlined in the 2021-25 Council Plan, are:

### Connected and Healthy Communities



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

### Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places



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

### Protected & Enhanced Natural Environment



A healthier environment for future generations.

### Vibrant Economy, Agriculture and Tourism



Our tourism, agriculture, health, manufacturing and other industries are leading and dynamic. Strong investment and attraction underpins sustainable economic growth and job creation.

### High Performing Organisation



An innovative, responsive organisation that listens and delivers quality, value for money services to our community.

## Major initiatives for 2021–2025

### Major Initiative 1:

Improve Aboriginal health and wellbeing by providing a range of supports to Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation to establish the Healesville Belonging Place, an integrated Aboriginal health facility.

#### On track

#### Comments:

Connection to culture, community, family and Country is recognised as a key social determinant of Indigenous health and wellbeing that must be addressed to Close the Gap. Currently, an interim Belonging Place, operating under the Aboriginal community control Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation offers the Aboriginal community a self-determinative response as it seeks to meet local health needs.

A purpose-built integrated Aboriginal Health facility will make significant inroads in improving Aboriginal health and wellbeing in Healesville and across the broader Eastern Metro Region. Council has been working in partnership with Oonah for years to establish an Aboriginal community-controlled health and wellbeing service in Healesville. Following the initial business planning stage, a feasibility study was commissioned and completed in 2018. Reports and studies were then undertaken to move the Belonging Place project towards schematic design in 2020.

While Covid slowed progress, the Schematic design phase for the Healesville Belonging Place was finalised in mid-2023 and a planning application for the construction of the facility submitted to Council's Planning Department. The Planning Process is expected to be lengthy as it has a number of referral points including complex Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP)/ Bushfire & Vic Roads considerations.

In the spirit of self-determination, Council and Oonah have agreed that now a planning application for the construction of the facility has been finally submitted, Council's primary role in the establishment of the Belonging Place has concluded. Council acknowledges it has an ongoing role in supporting Aboriginal health and wellbeing and will continue to work Oonah and other agencies towards closing the gap on Aboriginal health and wellbeing.



## Major Initiative 2:

Become a world class trails and eco-tourism destination through project development, delivery, advocacy and partnerships, including the delivery of the four Rivers and Ridges projects; Warburton Community Recreation Precinct; ngurrak barring (RidgeWalk); the Yarra Valley Trail and the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination.

### On track

#### Comments:

Building from the success of the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, the most highly visited rail trail in Australia, the Ridges & Rivers projects are the next phase in achieving Council's ambition, to be a prominent eco-tourism destination in Australia.

Ridges and Rivers encompass three main projects funded by all Government tiers, these are the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination, ngurrak barring-RidgeWalk and the Yarra Valley Trail. Together, when combined with the existing Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, the trails provide crucial walking, running and cycling links for local communities.

It is anticipated that these projects will deliver 910,000 visitors per annum, create 597 jobs and inject \$103 million in economic spend to the region. Yarra Ranges has achieved funding for the projects to a value of \$38.050 million, with \$28.050 million coming from external funding sources.

#### Warburton Mountain Bike Destination

Construction is expected to commence by mid-July as soon as final approvals are received. Preparation for opening in mid-2025 is on track. The contractor, World Trail, has been engaged. Native Vegetation offsets using land purchased in Wesburn has been approved. The Federal

Government have confirmed \$3M Building Better Regions funding to State Government, a significant milestone for the project.

#### ngurrak barring-RidgeWalk

Further trail upgrades have been completed for ngurrak barring-RidgeWalk along Toroa and Bleakley Tracks. To date over 11km of trail has been upgraded. The Kalorama Land Art and landscape works tender, the most significant artwork on the trail, was awarded at the Council Meeting on April 23. Manufacturing of wayfinding and interpretive signage is underway. Upgrades to the Burkes Lookout car park have commenced. Website and digital app development continues with beta testing.

#### Yarra Valley Trail

Stage 1B.1 Yering to the Melba Highway bend, of the Yarra Valley Trail has commenced construction. Most of the trail has been completed with works on the heritage bridges now commencing. Planning for stage 1B.2 continues. The CHMP for the Northern Loop is anticipated to be endorsed in June 2024, with construction of the new Gulf Road trail expected to commence in June also. The funding agreement for Stage 2A has now been signed. The initial environmental assessment and fieldwork the complex CHMP have been completed. Project construction on stage 2A is expected to commence mid-2025.







## Major Initiative 3:

Ensure the plants, animals and ecologies of Yarra Ranges that our community value so much are supported and retained alongside us in healthy landscapes, by preparing and implementing a Biodiversity Plan that provides renewed focus for Council, the community, and partners.

On track

### Comments:

The **Yarra Ranges Nature Plan: Protecting our Biodiversity Assets (Nature Plan)** sets out the investment pathway and comprehensive framework to attain our biodiversity preservation objectives, setting ambitious and robust targets and aligning with Council's strategic focus on environmental stewardship. The Nature Plan provides a strategic approach to mitigating threats to biodiversity, with activities streamlined into four key themes:

- Land Use and a Changing Climate
- Landscapes and Ecosystems
- Pest Plants and Animals
- People and Nature

After undergoing community consultation in August 2022, progress on the Nature Plan in 2023 worked to incorporate the community's feedback, including additional actions, reprioritisation of actions and an increased financial investment pathway. The Nature Plan was endorsed by Council on Tuesday 12th December 2023.

With the plan's adoption, Council has committed to supporting evidence-based decision making for nature resource management, climate mitigation activities and supporting a positive, measurable change for biodiversity in Yarra Ranges over the next 10 years. The outcome of the plan's activities will progress Yarra Ranges towards the vision of a healthy, resilient and connected natural living landscape.

Since its endorsement in December, funding for Year 1 activities was pursued through the 2024/2025 budget process. Success through this has secured additional resourcing to implement all year 1 activities, ensuring that the Plan is set-up for success and that baseline data can be captured to enable measurable progress towards the Nature Plan targets.

## Major Initiative 4:

Reduce our ecological footprint through our commitment to source renewable energy generated by Council and extend benefits to community through advocating and securing funding to deliver on initiatives including Council's Solar Farm project.

On track

### Comments:

The community has high reliance and expectations of Council to take action and manage both climate issues and impacts. A swift transition from fossil fuel energy sources to renewables is a clear means of mitigating climate impacts, with obvious benefits for Council and community. Council's transition to 100% renewable electricity was realised in 2022 through the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO), a 10-year contract involving more than 50 Victorian Councils.

As of July 2023, Yarra Ranges **Council has reduced its emissions by 48%** compared with the baseline year of 2004/2005, demonstrating leadership in reducing our ecological footprint. The draft Energy Transition Plan is being progressed, providing the framework for investments into electrification and options to maintain its 100% renewable electricity supply after VECO finishes.

Yarra Ranges continues to participate in regional programs including the Solar Savers Program, Energy Savers Program, the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action and the Eastern Alliance for Sustainable Learning. The outcomes of these activities are supporting our communities to thrive in the face of a changing climate and shaping the supply of locally generated renewable energy.

Council is also pursuing a Local Government first - connecting two of its facilities to form a microgrid. The Monbulk Microgrid project is aiming to deliver a Localised Energy System (LES) in Monbulk, using findings from the Resilient Energy Precinct (REP) Feasibility Study – completed May 2024. At the conclusion of the project the Monbulk Link and Monbulk Sporting Pavilion will be able to share solar generated electricity and stored energy in times when the grid/mains power may have failed. The LES will ensure continuous energy backup at the two council buildings, that could be activated by essential and emergency management services to provide community with facilities and support during these times.



## Major Initiative 5:

Improve mental health outcomes for the community, strengthen social connections, and advocate for equitable and accessible mental health services across the municipality.

On track

### Comments:

Over the past six months, Council has continued to take significant steps towards improving community mental wellbeing in the Yarra Ranges. Spotlighted below are just some examples of Council's work in achieving this major initiative.

#### Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training:

In June, Council hosted two Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Community Lunch and Workshop events in Lilydale and Montrose, to celebrate the end of this four-year initiative. With over 50 attendees, these events connected past participants and community partners, further building their capacity and fostering new social connections. This initiative is part of the Yarra Ranges Council's Social Recovery Plan, which began with funding MHFA training for community members in 2020. Since then, Council has partnered with 17 community organisations to provide 28 free MHFA courses to over 450 residents and volunteers. Attendees valued the opportunity for open conversations and learning skills to support those experiencing mental health challenges, as an important way to build a stronger, more resilient community.

#### Poetic Portraits Volume 2:

In June, Council partnered with RMIT University and Your Libraries to launch Poetic Portraits Volume 2 - Book Launch at Lilydale Library. Poetic Portraits is an initiative that honours the varied life experiences of Yarra Ranges residents aged over 50. This project challenges stereotypes around ageing by showcasing participant poems and artwork by local artist Amandine Thomas.

#### Cultural Burn at Spadonis Reserve

In June, Yarra Ranges Council achieved a milestone by participating in its first cultural burn on Council-managed land at Spadonis Reserve. Led by Wurundjeri Custodian and Council's Firestick Officer Darren Wandin and supported by the Bushlands team, the burn aimed to reduce weedy grasses and stimulate the growth of native species in an area frequently flooded over the past two years. The event was praised for its calm execution, highlighted by the discovery of an unharmed frog inside a burned Lomandra. Caring for Country through cultural burns supports ecological health and strengthens community mental wellbeing by fostering a deeper connection to the land and promoting environmental stewardship.

## Major Initiative 6:

Undertake and deliver integrated place planning for priority activity centres and town centres to achieve coordinated community outcomes across Yarra Ranges, in accordance with the Living Places Framework.

### On track

#### Comments:

Over the past 6 months, Council has delivered the following place-based projects:

- Adoption of the Warburton Urban Design Framework, following targeted community engagement.
  - Community consultation for the Upwey Town Centre Masterplan
  - Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan ready for community consultation
  - The first of two Cycle Centre Nodes in Lilydale opened, located near the new Beresford Road pedestrian crossing.
  - Implementation of early actions from the Kilsyth Recreation Masterplan.
  - The Lillydale Lake Masterplan was adopted, which proposes to make improvements to facilities including to accessibility, signage, pedestrian access and to the toilet block.
  - The Morrison Reserve, Masterplan adopted, which explores opportunities to upgrade the reserve including the bike park and play space. Commencement of works on the Stage 1 Play space.
- Community consultation for the recently purchased former school site at 150 Cambridge Road in Kilsyth completed, and subsequent preparation for early minor landscape works.
  - Early investigations for priority projects coming out of the Monbulk Urban Design Framework completed.
  - Preparation of Planning Scheme Amendments for:
    - creation of a Monbulk Specific Design and Development Overlay- C212
    - implementation of the Lilydale Structure Plan- C218
    - Anomalies and Corrections to the Minister for Planning seeking approval - C223
    - Adoption of the Yarra Ranges Housing Strategy 2024
    - Installation of new wayfinding signage throughout Lilydale

## Major Initiative 7:

Build community resilience by working together to achieve greater emergency planning and preparedness with a focus on traditional cultural burning practices. This will include the development a firestick program across public, private land and local training hubs.

On track

### Comments:

Yarra Ranges Council is dedicated to fostering a resilient community that is actively involved in disaster preparedness and resilience. Our approach over the past year has been twofold: prioritizing learning and listening in the initial six months, followed by substantial action and implementation in the latter half. By collaborating closely with 14 communities, representing 25% of 55 townships in Yarra Ranges, we have supported local preparedness and resilience through initiatives, including:

Networking meetings to share activities, challenges, and communication strategies;

- Development of community hubs;
- Community asset mapping;
- Local training and awareness-raising initiatives;
- Partnerships to enhance power, telecommunications, and social and economic resilience;
- Emergency preparedness tailored for vulnerable populations.

The crucial role of these groups and community-based organisations was further recognized with the endorsement of the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) Municipal Emergency Relief Sub

Plan. Spearheaded by Yarra Ranges Council, this multi-agency sub plan across the seven municipalities in the EMR acknowledges and welcomes community participation in emergency relief.

On June 1st, a significant cultural burn was conducted on Yarra Ranges Council-managed land by Darren Wandin, a Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Traditional Owner, with support from the bushlands team. Guided by Darren and his father, Uncle Dave Wandin, a senior Wurundjeri Fire Elder, this burn marked a pivotal moment after facing delays due to plagues, floods, and storms. The event took place at Spadonis Reserve in Yering, an ecologically valuable area with a unique floodplain and rare species such as the Buxton gum. This cultural burn reflects Council's commitment to integrating Indigenous knowledge and practices into land stewardship.

Additionally, through larger-scale Resilient Yarra Ranges projects funded by National Emergency Management Australia and the Firestick Alliance partnership, the Council is advancing its disaster preparedness initiatives. These efforts now include place-based resilience planning, the development of resilient buildings and energy systems, and the reintroduction of traditional firestick practices across the municipality.

## Major Initiative 8:

Implement a Build Back Better approach to economic recovery and adaptation activities that improves the well-being of the community and business.

On track

### Comments:

In 2023-24, the following actions and strategies have been implemented to contribute to this major initiative:

- Young adult participants completed the 6-month Yarra Ranges Entrepreneur and Innovation Project developing the skills needed to make their business grow or turn their business idea into a reality.
- Business owners completed the 6-month Elevate program at Yarra Ranges Business Incubator Lab providing new and existing businesses opportunities to grow and develop with a diversity of concepts.
- Wellbeing and Resilience workshops featuring the 'Unbreakable Farmer' covering Resilience and Determination – Authentic Leadership; Mental Health and Wellbeing – Building Strong Communities; and Developing Capacity and Connection – Community Recovery for our business operators impacted by recent emergency events.
- Region of Choice – more than 80 businesses have committed to continuously improve upon the values that work towards their business and their employees' growth.
- Grant funding awarded to 8 business and trader groups to continue assistance with economic and social recovery.
- Ongoing support and advocacy for small businesses in our Villages through the Business and Trader Groups including assistance in resilience building, encouragement of engagement with communities and activation requests
- Refinement of the Small Business Office to facilitate 150 discussions for small business owners looking to start or expand their businesses, including facilitation of seven Priority investment Opportunities and two ongoing long-term projects.
- Delivered monthly e-newsletters to 6,424 subscribed businesses with information, updates, links, grant and networking opportunities
- Progressed the Upper Yarra Valley Local Development Strategy Project, resulting in five innovations to be explored and tested in the next 9 months
- Reinvigorated the Business and Jobs page on the website to a more comprehensive centralised portal, growing the reach substantially to enable job seekers to easier connect to potential Yarra Ranges Employers looking for staff
- Strategically focussed on the agricultural sector through closer engagement and support to Agribusiness Yarra Valley and through facilitation of the RAC

Each of these projects, programs and initiatives builds the economic resource base for Yarra Ranges businesses, residents, community and workers. The Economic Development Strategy is well progressed with a number of actions completed, and many underway. The actions from our ten year strategy will continue in earnest to continue the recovery and adaptation for our already strong and resilient business community.





## Connected and Healthy Communities

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

### Highlights under strategic objective 2023-24

The **2023 Yarra Ranges Youth Awards** celebrated Yarra Ranges young people, who are making significant contributions to their communities. A total of 51 nominations were made and 15 young people received awards and honourable mentions for outstanding contributions.

Council delivered a program of **community disaster resilience workshops** and events across Yarra Ranges, with guest speakers Elizabeth McNaughton and Dan Neely. These events brought everyone (community as experts, along with service partners and Council) around the table to strengthen knowledge, meet neighbours, and to openly discuss ideas.

Council received 28 nominations for the 2024 Community awards. Community members were recognised for the following achievements: Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award; Citizen of the Year; Ian De La Rue Award for Community Leadership; Young Environmental Achiever of the Year (dual winners); Community Group of the Year and 3 x Certificates of Recognition.

One of Victoria's nine **Mental Health and Wellbeing Local site officially opened in Lilydale**, December 2023. Council and the Health & Wellbeing Advisory Committee supported this important collaborative effort and congratulate Wellways Australia, Eastern Health, Inspiro, and Oonah Belonging Place on their successful tender. This service will provide professional walk-in services for community members experiencing mental health, alcohol and other drug concerns.

In partnership with six Yarra Ranges residents, Eastern Health and Inspiro Community Health, the **Living Stories Project** was launched in October. The project showcased lived and living experiences of mental health challenges. These powerful and personal stories from residents were shared across the community, aiming to destigmatise mental health conversations and encourage help seeking. These stories are now available on the Council website.

## 100% of Council Plan Actions are on track

### Key strategies and plans to achieve our objective include:

- Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Child and Youth Strategy
- Creative Communities Strategy
- Domestic Animal Management Plan
- Reconciliation Framework for Action
- Community Safety Strategy
- Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy
- Health and Active Ageing Plan
- Municipal Recovery Plan
- Wastewater Management Plan

### Our performance:

Actions	Status Year 3
Implement priority actions arising from the Health and Wellbeing Plan.	<b>On track</b>
Implement Council's Healthy and Active Ageing Plan to increase the age and dementia friendliness of the municipality and improve social connection.	<b>On track</b>
Implement the Pandemic Recovery and Resilience Framework and other key recovery actions to support the rebuilding of community resilience.	<b>On track</b>
Update the Aquatics Strategy to strategically plan for the provision of aquatic facilities across the municipality that are inclusive, sustainable, well designed and positioned to improve community health and wellness.	<b>On track</b>
Revise and implement key actions of the Recreation and Open Space Strategy to increase community access, support community connections and activate Council's community facilities and open space network.	<b>On track</b>
Implementing key actions in the Integrated Transport Strategy 2040 with a focus on people's localised movements and advocating for a cohesive public transport network that connects people with services, employment and to each other.	<b>On track</b>

## Measuring our success:

The following measures show Council's progress against our key strategy measures for 'Connected and Healthy Communities'.



### Health and Wellbeing Plan

Sets strategic direction for how Council works to support optimal health and wellbeing for its community. Council's vision for health and wellbeing is: *Yarra Ranges has connected and healthy communities that are resilient, fair and inclusive. Our places are liveable and sustainable.*

The priorities of the Plan are: respond to public health impacts of emergencies, tackle climate change and its impact on health, increase healthy eating, increase active living, improve mental wellbeing and social connection, prevent violence against women and children and reduce harmful alcohol and drug use.

Measures of success	Baseline data	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
Healthy Eating - the annual rate of growth in the prevalence of diabetes in Yarra Ranges is reduced.	4.6% 2020, desired rate of increase is maximum 10% per year, target is less than 5.1% for 2022	Maximum 10% increase per year	4.85%	✓
Physical Activity – there is an increase in the level of adults undertaking sufficient physical activity prevalence of adults by 2023.	58.4% 2017, target is to maintain 58.4% for 2020 and increase to 61.3% by 2023 data release	5% increase from 2017 data.  2014 baseline data: 41.3% and 45.40% in 2020	36.9%	–
Prevention of Violence Against Women – the rate of police callouts for family violence does not continue to increase.	1,084 per 100,000 in March 2021, target is rate of no more than 1,084 per 100,000 in subsequent years	No increase	1,224 incidents per 100,000 residents in year to September 2023	–
Drug and Alcohol Harm - ambulance call outs for drug and alcohol.	382 in 2019/20 financial year, target is less than 565 call outs for 2022	20% or less	Alcohol-related ambulance callouts were 302.4 per 1,000 in 2022/23, down from 452.3 in 2019/20*	✓

Mental Health – the rate of overnight admitted mental health-related population rates of separations does not grow by more than 5% per year.	114 per 10,000 in 2019-20	5% or less growth rate	103 per 10,000 residents in 2022/23	✓
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\*Total Drug and Alcohol callouts no longer available as a combined figure, so the indicator has changed to alcohol only.

## Services delivered in 2022–23:

Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
<b>2.1 Strategic Objective 1: Connected and Healthy Communities</b>		
1. Social planning and policy development	This service contributes to building strong and resilient communities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning, researching, and developing relevant social policies and actions</li> <li>• Providing advice, referral, and advocacy</li> <li>• Delivering selected community development projects.</li> </ul>	664
2. Primary health planning and coordination	Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy guides this legislated requirement to promote good health and wellbeing. Using data about the health of our community, Council collaborates with its partners and the community to improve health. An Advisory Group overseeing the work is resourced by this service. The service has a primary prevention approach – keeping people well through Council's many roles in creating healthy communities and environments.	338
3. Food, health, and environment inspections and protection	This service works with owners, operators, and applicants to ensure that appropriate health standards are achieved for the health and wellbeing of all.	1,508
4. Library services in partnership with Eastern Regional Library Corporation	Council works in partnership with Eastern Regional Libraries to enhance learning and cultural development in the municipality through the provision of library services.	4,366



Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
5. Maternal and child health and immunisation services	Council provides a universal and enhanced Maternal and Child Health Service to provide universal and targeted services for children and their families. Families can attend centres across the Yarra Ranges and receive services in their homes, or at other community locations.	1,251
6. Youth mental health and counselling, participation, and engagement	Council provides a range of universal and targeted services for young people and their families, enabling them to receive individual support and/or participate in a range of activities.	396
7. Early years development and early childhood education and care	Council provides a range of services that enable children to develop and for those with additional needs to be included in a range of Early Childhood Education settings. Council also provides Child Care and Preschool Services.	799
8. School crossing supervision	This service provides supervision for school crossings in both the morning and afternoon to improve community safety and encourage healthy habits of walking to school.	1,293
9. Animal Management	This service seeks to manage animals, both domestic and farm, to improve community safety.	(254)
10. Fire prevention and emergency management	This service works to build an empowered resilient community that can mitigate, prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies	6,746,
11. Positive ageing services	This service provides a range of services as part of the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP). The CHSP program provides a range of coordinated and integrated service approaches which assist CHSP eligible people to maximise their independence to remain living at home, stay connected to their community and adapt to changing life circumstances. Much of this program is externally funded by Federal Government.	1,587
12. Supporting people with disabilities	The Disability Inclusion Officer works across the Council to improve access, equity, and inclusion of people with disability. This role works to increase participation of people with disability in the life of their community.	109



		<b>2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000</b>
<b>Services</b>	<b>Description of services provided</b>	
13. Community engagement and development programs	<p>This service supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement and place-based Community Planning</li> <li>• Lifelong learning and building resilient organisations through the community grants program, community planning and community capacity building</li> <li>• Community skill development and collaborating with local community and local groups, networks, leaders, and service organisations</li> </ul>	400
14. Services and programs to increase participation in arts, culture, and heritage	<p>Creative Communities provides a framework to use arts and heritage to engage our local communities.</p> <p>This is achieved through the provision and funding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high quality Cultural Facilities with paid staff and technical expertise</li> <li>• the management and delivery of arts and heritage programs in the community</li> <li>• partnerships with community through grants programs</li> <li>• facilitation of community festivals and events</li> </ul>	3,491
15. Development of cultural facilities	<p>Creative Communities is responsible for the development of the Cultural Plan which includes planning for the development of cultural facilities across the municipality. This includes engagement and consultation with community and funding bodies, involvement in the project planning and involvement in delivery of the project working with the Capital Works and Planning area.</p>	3,897
16. General Local Laws Compliance	<p>This service provides Local Laws compliance for the safety and wellbeing of our communities.</p>	135
17. Community support to reduce impact and prepare for climate change	<p>This service provides support from Yarra Ranges Environment Stewardship team for residents to take steps towards sustainable living and preparing for climate change, including education in schools.</p>	72
<b>Total</b>		<b>20,586</b>



## Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places

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

### Highlights under strategic objective 2023-24

After extensive community consultation generating 2300+ pieces of community feedback; **Monbulk Urban Design Framework** was adopted. The framework shapes Monbulk's future, providing plans for transport, car parks, housing, and recreational facilities.

**Kilsyth Recreation Masterplan** proposing upgraded facilities and maximisation of future use by community.

Adoption of the **Housing Strategy** and **Warburton Urban Design Framework**

The opening of new **Gary Tait Pavilion** at Pinks Reserve and the **Mt Evelyn Community & Sporting Pavilion**

Opening of the **Wesburn Pump Track** which joins Coldstream Station Pump Track and will soon be complimented by Warburton Mountain Bike Destination and the Morrisons Reserve Bike Park which will commence construction in 2024.

Fencing and lighting upgrades at **Upwey** and **Lilydale Tennis** clubs completed.

**MONBOLLOC**

## 80% of Council Plan Actions are on track

### Key strategies and plans to achieve our objective include:

- Recreation and Open Space Strategy
- Aquatics & Leisure Strategy
- Active Recreation Plan
- Asset Management Strategy
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Municipal Planning Statement
- Housing Strategy
- Road Management Plan

### Our performance:

Actions	Status Year 3
Improve our social infrastructure planning by working across Council to integrate place, service and infrastructure planning to meet the needs of our diverse communities and improve the unique places they live.	<b>On track</b>
Develop and implement a strategic approach for activating and providing functional and affordable community assets and spaces that are welcoming to all and support the wellbeing and connectedness of the community.	<b>Off track</b>
Continue to evolve the maturity and sophistication of Council's Asset Management planning to ensure existing community infrastructure is renewed and maintained for the benefit of future generations.	<b>On track</b>
Activate, develop and construct significant community facility projects across the municipality to respond to current and future community and social needs.	<b>On track</b>
Seal gravel roads in townships across the municipality enabled through funding provided by the Federal Government combined with landowner contributions to improve local amenity and liveability for the community.	<b>On track</b>
Integrate and strengthen the planning, maintenance and management of community assets to ensure the needs and priorities of current and future communities are balanced against investment requirements and Council's ability to pay for them.	<b>On track</b>
Complete the Lilydale Structure Plan and incorporate key actions into the Planning Scheme through an amendment to provide clear direction of the future land use, urban design, transport and access and landscaping forms for Lilydale.	<b>On track</b>



Actions	Status Year 3
Amend the planning scheme by using the outcomes of the reviewed Housing Strategy to ensure housing needs of the community are met, new housing is well designed, provides for housing choice and improve neighbourhood character outcomes in residential areas.	On track
Plan, facilitate and develop urban renewal projects, including Lilydale Revitalisation project, Kinley development and Level Crossing Removal to facilitate the revitalisation of Lilydale. Ensuring alignment with Council's place making objectives of encouraging a vibrant, attractive, sustainable, healthy and connected community.	On track
Establish a municipal wide Development Contributions Plan to provide funds for new infrastructure to support future growth and development.	Deferred

## Measuring our success:

The following measures show Council's progress against our key strategy measures for 'Quality Community Infrastructure and Liveable Places'.

✓ On track	+ Monitor	- Off track	→ Deferred
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## Integrated Transport Strategy

Guides transport planning and decision-making over the next two decades to address the most pressing challenges and the big moves required to make getting around in Yarra Ranges convenient, safer and more sustainable.

This will include improved public transport, with better connections between modes (such as cycling, walking and public transport), better footpaths, more walkable neighbourhoods and cycling networks separated from roads to achieve a safer, healthier, more connected, sustainable and more inclusive Yarra Ranges.

Measures of success	Baseline data	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
% of Car usage to travel to work	Baseline 89%	≥ 4% reduction	88.43%	+
Source: ABS Census data, baseline 2016 census.			Source: ABS 2021 census	

Measures of success	Baseline data	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
% of Train/ Bus use to travel to work	Baseline 7%	≥ 1.8% increase	1.65%	—
% of walk to work	Baseline 2%	≥ 0.8% increase	2.07%	
% of using a bicycle to travel to work	Baseline 0.1%	≥ 1.7% increase	0.25%	
Source: ABS Census data, baseline 2016 census.			Source: ABS 2021 census	
% of Car usage for non-work trips under 3km	Baseline 75%	≥ 6% reduction	Data unavailable*	→
Source: ABS Census data, baseline 2016 census.				
% of Train/ Bus use for non-work trips under 3km	Baseline 0.5%	≥ 0.6% increase	Data unavailable*	→
% of walk for non-work trips under 3km	Baseline 24%	≥ 1.6% increase		
% of using a bicycle for non-work trips under 3km	Baseline 0.5%	≥ 3.7% increase		
Source: ABS Census data, baseline 2016 census.				
Number of trips by Car	Baseline 87%	Reduce biennially in all measures	84.6% of trips by car	+
Number of trips by Public Transport	Baseline 3%		4.8% of trips by public transport	
Number of trips by Walking	Baseline 9%		0.7% of trips by bicycle	
Number of trips by Bike	Baseline 0.6%		9.9% of trips by Walking	
Source: Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity Baseline data Journeys recorded in YRC 2018			Source: Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity Baseline data Journeys recorded in Yarra Ranges for 2020	

\*Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity data has not been made available for this measure since 2020. A new round of data collection began in February 2022 but no results have been published.



## Asset Management Strategy

Guides improvement in Council's asset management practices to ensure long-term management of its infrastructure assets is sustainable for current and future generations of the community.

Measures of success	Baseline data	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
Asset Management maturity rating score.	2021 maturity score 90	1,000 maturity level score	925	+
Source: National Asset Management Assessment Framework measures asset management performance across 11 core areas of asset management competencies.				

## Services delivered in 2022–23

Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
<b>2.2 Strategic Objective 2: Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places</b>		
1. Maintenance and renewal of buildings	This service is responsible for maintenance of Council's buildings, facilities, public amenities and building security.	8,954
2. Management of facilities	This service manages lease and licence arrangements with sporting clubs, user groups and individuals for a range of Council facilities and properties, ensuring that the needs of occupants are provided for in a viable and sustainable way.	433
3. Road, footpath and bike path construction and maintenance	This service maintains and manages Council's civil infrastructure (roads, drainage, footpaths, etc.). The area also manages the implementation of the annual local road resurfacing program and provides after hours emergency response service.	5,917
4. Major Council building projects	This service is responsible for coordinating the design and development of major building assets for the Council.	1,263
5. Urban design including township and streetscape improvements	The service is responsible for developing and implementing proposals for township improvements across the municipality and supporting the development of high-quality infrastructure in the private environment through strategic and statutory planning processes.	1,523

<b>Services</b>	<b>Description of services provided</b>	<b>2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000</b>
6. Aquatics facilities	This service provides for the maintenance of Council's aquatic facilities.	2,033
7. Strategic land use policy development	This service continues to review and maintain Council's planning scheme and sets the direction for land use planning within Yarra Ranges. This also includes planning for the Kinley Estate.	1,400
8. Statutory Building Services	Our building team ensures all buildings, both existing and proposed, comply with the Building Act and regulations. They can also assist with information about pool fencing, maintenance of fire safety equipment, general and technical advice, property information, copies of plans, landslip certificates, building complaints and Council Consent applications.	1,628
9. Capital works and strategic asset management	This service contributes to the management of Council's capital works program and management of Council's infrastructure assets across all infrastructure categories.	16,312
10. Maintenance and renewal of plant and equipment to support services of the organisation.	The service provides support to procuring, servicing and disposal of vehicles and both large, small plant that the organisation's services require to undertake their businesses effectively.	6,709
11. Planning permits, approvals, and advice	Assesses and provides advice and enforcement in relation to planning application approvals under the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme and the related legislation.	4,052
12. Drainage works	This service manages the maintenance and improvement of the Council's drainage infrastructure to ensure effective stormwater management and reduce the risk of flooding across the municipality.	3,712
<b>Total</b>		<b>53,936</b>





## Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment

A healthier environment for future generations

### Highlights under strategic objective 2023-24

The **2024 –2034 Nature Plan** was endorsed at the Council meeting in December 2023. The Plan defines the highest priority projects for the next 10 years, sets targets for Council and allows prioritisation of conservation action on Council-managed land. The Plan will improve our support for private landowners to increase environmental stewardship, identify areas to seek external funding, highlight key advocacy priorities for our municipality and ensure rigorous monitoring and adaptive management are embedded into our programs.

**3,000 new street trees** planted across Kilsyth and Mooroolbark to beautify our streetscapes, improve community health & wellbeing, and reduce urban heat.

**11,420 trees and shrubs** planted in Council parks and reserves.

## 100% of Council Plan Actions are on track

### Key strategies and plans to achieve our objective include:

- Environment Strategy
- Liveable Climate Plan
- Zero Emissions Fleet Transition Plan
- Nature Plan
- Community Waste Management Plan
- Integrated Water Management Plan

### Our performance

Actions	Status Year 3
Implement actions of the Liveable Climate Plan and shift to low carbon and renewable energy sources across all facilities, buildings, plant and fleet to reduce Council's climate impact.	<b>On track</b>
Deliver actions of the Urban Tree Canopy Strategy and deliver the parks and reserves improvement program to enhance amenity, access and participation in public spaces and places.	<b>On track</b>
Develop a Municipal Waste Plan, education programs and pursue innovative waste processing technologies to maximise waste resource recovery for a more sustainable future.	<b>On track</b>
Continue to develop and support the capability of Environmental Volunteer Groups including seeking funding support to invest in our shared environment.	<b>On track</b>
Improve our green corridors to enable native wildlife movement across the landscape by investing in restoration and revegetation works on private and council land.	<b>On track</b>



## Measuring our success:

The following measures show Council's progress against our key strategy measures for a 'protected and enhanced natural environment'.

✓ On track
+ Monitor
– Off track
→ Deferred

### Environmental Strategy

improves the health and biodiversity of our natural environment through environmental best practice, supporting the future of agriculture and horticulture and reducing of resource and energy consumption to represent the best interests of our environment.

Measures of success	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
Potable water use for irrigation, roads maintenance and aquatics by 2025.  Baseline data: 2018-19 – 190, 635 and 2019-20 - 138, 249	25% reduction	231,242 kL	–
Customer satisfaction rating for environmental education targeted programs  Satisfaction is a strong understanding of the subject matter.	80% satisfaction score annually	Data not gathered	→
Plants planted per annum to contribute to native fauna habitat, increased property floristic diversity and agricultural productivity such as shade, shelter, windbreaks on private property	200,000 or greater	117,653	–
Kilometres of roadside with bushfire fuel levels reduced	40km or greater	7.46km	+
Increase habitat restoration through change in the proportion of reserves from medium to high conservation status.	2% increase by 2025	2% increase in proportion of reserves	✓

## Liveable Climate Plan

Aims for Council to be more efficient in using renewable energy, building resilient buildings, having a zero emission fleet, taking sustainable lifecycle approach to asset management and incorporate climate thinking in strategies, policies, programs and services as we help the organisation and the community adapt to a changing climate.

The plan aims to empower the community to be liveable and connected and focus on deliberate climate responsible services and programs including living landscapes, food security, sustainable transport, thriving economy and adapting together as one community in the shift to a low carbon future.

Measures of success	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
Reduction of 60% of corporate greenhouse gas emissions on 2005 levels by December 2025, with a view to net zero by 2040.	6,400 tCO <sub>2</sub> e or lower	8551tCO <sub>2</sub> e July 2022 – June 2023 data	+
2020 corporate emissions are estimated at 12,000 tCO <sub>2</sub> e			
State Government has introduced a new Climate Active Reporting methodology for all Local Government to reach net zero emissions. These new standards of reporting have more inclusions which has resulted in a revised higher result than the set target.			

## Services delivered in 2022–23

Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
<b>2.3 Strategic Objective 3: Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment</b>		
1. Environmental education programs including a focus on schools	This service provides environmental education programs to our community, as well the Council's extensive school network.	39
2. Weed reduction and replanting programs	Council has an active weed reduction and replanting service, in addition to running an ongoing weed removal program called Weed Wipeout, to help residents remove and dispose of weeds on their property.	366

Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
3. Biodiversity conservation	The Biodiversity Conservation Unit has responsibility for the protection and enhancement of the region's biodiversity values in line with Federal, State and regional requirements. Conducts environmental assessments for planning permit applications (Council and community). Manages a system for biodiversity offsets and provides advice to landholders to enhance biodiversity.	1,161
4. Support for friends and land care groups	This service provides grants and support for Friends of groups and Landcare groups across Council's parks, reserves, and natural habitats.	1,564
5. Waste management services	This service provides waste services to 59,708 general properties consisting of a weekly garbage collection, fortnightly recycling, and green and hard waste collections for general properties only. We also provide services to more than 2,751 commercial properties across the municipality which consist of twice weekly garbage collection, and fortnightly recycling collections. A core priority includes minimising the volume of material going to landfills through the coordination of education and management programs.	(96)
6. Maintenance of bushland and natural open space	This service provides for the maintenance of Council's bushland and natural open spaces.	8,937
7. Maintenance and redevelopment of sports fields, play spaces, parks, and reserves	This service provides for the maintenance and redevelopment of Council's sports fields, play spaces, and parks and reserves.	10,194
8. Environmental sustainability management	This service provides the management and administrative support for the environment and sustainability teams.	1,163

Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
9. Landfill Rehabilitation	This work typically involves reshaping, contouring, and capping of the landfill, in association with ongoing management and regular monitoring of leachate, landfill gas and stormwater. This also includes the establishment of infrastructure to minimise and mitigate any potential onsite and offsite impacts to soil, ground and surface water and the atmosphere. The length of the process is indeterminable and may take many years, dependant on the nature of the site and material that was placed in the landfill and when the EPA determines no further rehabilitation is required.	(136)
<b>Total</b>		<b>23,192</b>





## Vibrant Economy, Agriculture and Tourism

Our tourism, agriculture, health, manufacturing and other industries are leading and dynamic. Strong investment and attraction underpins sustainable economic growth and job creation.

### Highlights under strategic objective 2023-24

More than **176 business applications supporting 532 local jobs** were facilitated through the Small Business Office providing a single point of contact with Council for regulatory processes.

Through Business and Trader Group (B&TG) Led Recovery Program, 8 groups received a total **\$119,000 to promote** and foster local initiatives and events, encouraging economic stimulus.

Renewal of a 3-year **partnership with Yarra Ranges Tourism** supporting the Yarra Ranges as a key tourism destination creating local jobs.

Completion of two 6-month Innovation programs: **Elevate a Business Incubator Lab** that will mentor new and existing local businesses through a growth and innovative mindset; and **Entrepreneurship & Innovation program** empowering young entrepreneurs aged 17 and 30 who have a business idea that they want to see developed from concept to sales.

## 100% of Council Plan Actions are on track

### Key strategies and plans to achieve our objective include:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Destination Management Plan
- Yarra Ranges Tourism Partnership

### Our performance:

Actions	Status Year 3
Implement a plan that improves employment opportunities and mental health outcomes for everyone.	<b>On track</b>
Develop and deliver improvements to Council's network of recreational trails across the municipality to support improved recreational, health, social, and economic needs of the community and become a world class trails, agritourism and eco-tourism destination.	<b>On track</b>
Finalise and implement a new Economic Development Strategy and Investment Attraction Plan, to create local jobs, business, and investment to deliver positive and sustainable economic community outcomes.	<b>On track</b>
Deliver key initiatives outlined in the Bayswater Business Precinct Transformation Strategy that create jobs, attracts future investment and progresses the revitalisation of the Precinct, in association with Knox and Maroondah Councils.	<b>On track</b>
Raise the cultural profile of Yarra Ranges to drive creative industry development and cultural tourism spend via attracting and retaining new creative professionals and businesses and supporting existing creative professionals and businesses. [Commenced mid 2022]	<b>On track</b>
Develop a destination management Plan with Yarra Ranges Tourism Board to support the right eco-tourism, infrastructure growth that also protects our natural environment.	<b>On track</b>

## Measuring our success:

The following measures show Council's progress against our key strategy measures for 'Vibrant economy, agriculture and tourism'.

✓ On track
+ Monitor
– Off track
→ Deferred

### Economic Development Strategy

Aims to improve the economic health and vitality of our communities through sustainable business practices and local job creation, increase accessibility to economic opportunities through improved transport, encourage investment, training and skill generation to attract new businesses to the region. The strategy will guide to Yarra Ranges to be ready and supports a low carbon economy and improves place based and investment outcomes in Yarra Ranges.

Measures of success	Baseline data	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
Growth in resident spend locally	\$1,188 million (May 2021)	Increase annually	\$1,611 million	✓
Growth in overall visitors spend locally	\$671m (May 2021)	Increase annually	\$984.3 million	–
Plants planted per annum to contribute to native fauna habitat, increased property floristic diversity and agricultural productivity such as shade, shelter, windbreaks on private property.		200,000 or greater	117,653	–
Growth of international visitors in the Yarra Ranges and Dandenong Region	14,000 – (December 2020)	Increase annually	34,000 international visitors from September 2023 to March 2024.	+
			International visitor data is not available below state level from year ending June 2020 to year ending September 2023, so comparisons with previous years are not possible.	

Measures of success	Baseline data	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
Gross Regional Product - Increase the net wealth generated by the local economy influenced through employment, productivity, and industry types in the area	\$6.7billion in 2021	3% or greater	\$7.3 billion	—

## Services delivered in 2022–23:

Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
<b>2.4 Strategic Objective 4: Vibrant Economy, Agriculture, and Tourism</b>		
1. Facilitate tourism development and regional marketing	This service offers work across the tourism sector – a key segment of the Yarra Ranges economy to promote and develop the benefits that flow from tourism. Advocacy on developing latent tourism potential through eco and heritage tourism seeks to develop our tourism offer and deliver benefits to local communities. Yarra Ranges Tourism is a major partner, and the service manages Council's Partnership Agreement with the Board.	489
2. Agribusiness support and development	This service offers advice on planning applications, networking opportunities for agribusinesses and works with industry to advocate, for example for a recycled water pipeline to support local food production.	1
3. Business networks and sustainable business practices	Forums, industry networks, training programs and investment attraction are promoted by this service. Strong employment opportunities are vital to our communities and the service works to facilitate vibrant local economies through relationship brokerage and networking.	1,001
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,491</b>





## High Performing Organisation

An innovative, responsive organisation that listens and delivers quality, value for money services to our community.

### Highlights under strategic objective 2023-24

Council continued to consolidate diverse array of technology platforms into one, through a project called YRConnect. This consolidation streamlines our processes and systems, achieving greater efficiencies and **improving customer experience**. In the first half of 2023-24, two of Council's internal platforms were transitioned, with further deployments imminent.

**Advocacy activities** have included a federal government budget bid to fund a range of infrastructure and service streams, and a commissioned review of changing grant eligibility and impacts on Yarra Ranges Council sustainable revenue position.

**Shaping Yarra Ranges community engagement page** attracted 61,489 people, resulting in 4,884 online contributions to decision making. Council also connected with just under 3,000 people face to face at our 35 community engagement roadshows.

## 100% of Council Plan Actions are on track

### Key strategies and plans to achieve our objective include:

- YR Ignite - High Performing Organisation Strategy
- Workforce Management Plan
- Asset Plan
- Strategic Asset Management Plan
- Long Term Financial Management Plan
- Annual Budget & 3 Year Plan
- Information and Communication Technology Strategy
- Health & Safety Strategy
- Gender Equity Action Plan

### Our performance:

Actions	Status Year 3
Ensure Council's workforce reflects the community it serves by embedding the principles of diversity and inclusion in our day-to-day leadership and share our experience and knowledge with the community.	<b>On track</b>
Improve the community's trust and connection with Council through more meaningful and inclusive community engagement and innovative approaches to communication.	<b>On track</b>
Develop and grow an organisational culture committed to delivering exceptional customer experience.	<b>On track</b>
Streamline internal Council processes and improve systems to deliver more efficient services and improved interactions with our community.	<b>On track</b>
Increase the community's visibility, understanding of and access to Council's information and performance to improve accountability to the community.	<b>On track</b>
Consolidate and strengthen advocacy through evidence and stronger relationships to ensure other levels of government are effectively and efficiently engaged to support local services and programs.	<b>On track</b>
Adapt and improve our service delivery to ensure the measurable provision of services that are supporting our municipality to rebuild resilience.	<b>On track</b>
Strengthen relationships and networks to support local community groups and build their capacity to be active in achieving community outcomes.	<b>On track</b>

## Measuring our success:

The following measures show Council's progress against our key strategy measures for a 'High Performing Organisation'.

✓ On track
+ Monitor
– Off track
→ Deferred

### 'YR Ignite' High Performing Organisation Strategy

Aims to build a dynamic and flexible organisation that supports thriving communities. It supports the organisation to do things differently, with a focus on the way we operate, how to improve listening to our community and our people and recognising the value of working collectively and collaboratively.

This strategy will help build our strategic capability and our operational systems to improve our decision making, our services and, ultimately, the health, diversity and strength of our community. This will be achieved through establishing structures, systems, technologies, processes and the right resources needed to deliver our objectives in the Council Plan.

Measures of success	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
% increase in Council's Maturity Model Assessment in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a great culture;</li> <li>• Leadership that achieves outcomes;</li> <li>• Focus on community and customer;</li> <li>• Individual's performance and accountability via their performance development plans</li> <li>• Information Technology systems and data management maturity.</li> </ul> Source: Yarra Ranges Maturity Model Assessment.	Increase annually	Assessment not completed during 2023-24	→
Number of lost time injuries incidents Baseline data: 4 in 2021.	Aiming for zero, with a realistic range to be no greater than 2021 results.	19	–
Customer satisfaction with Yarra Ranges Council Source: Yarra Ranges Customer Satisfaction Score.	Increase annually	46 Not Achieved	–

Measures of success	2025 Target	2023-24 Result	Status
<p>Increase in gender equity and diversity inclusion among Yarra Ranges Council staff.</p> <p>Source: Yarra Ranges Employee Alignment and Engagement Survey.</p> <p>Please note this measure has been replaced by the Gender Equity Audit carried out every two years.</p> <p>Baseline data is available on the Yarra Ranges Website at Gender equity Yarra Ranges Council.</p>	<p>Increase annually on baseline data captured in July 2021.</p>	Replaced*	→

\*This measure has been replaced by the Gender Equity Audit carried out every two years. Council's Gender Equity Action Plan, along with baseline data and progress reports can be [found on our website](#)

## Services delivered in 2022–23

Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
<b>2.5 Strategic Objective 5: High Performing Organisation</b>		
1. Community engagement and development programs	<p>This service supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community engagement and place-based Community Planning</li> <li>Lifelong learning and building resilient organisations through the community grants program, community planning and community capacity building</li> <li>Community skill development and working collaboratively with local community and local groups, networks, leaders, and service organisations</li> </ul>	1,644
2. Customer Experience	<p>This service leads the provision of front-line service delivery of five geographically dispersed sites across the municipality, a contact centre and customer liason team. Their focus is to lead and partner with the organisation by designing and delivering quality processes and services, enhancing all customer experiences through feedback, analysis, and improvement measures to improve overall performance.</p>	3,782



Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
3. Financial management and reporting	This service provides financial management and reporting functions for Council, including the preparation of the Budget and the Annual Financial Statements.	1,568
4. Procurement, contracts, and tendering	This service provides best practice procurement support to the organisation including tendering and collaborative procurement initiatives.	1,368
5. Corporate planning and performance	This service provides business support to Councillors for the development and reporting of the Council Plan, in addition to business plans across the organisation. It also leads our Business Excellence Program, a program of coordinated process improvement and innovation aligned to the nationally recognised business excellence framework.	3,040
6. Information services	This service provides a range of different services and solutions related to the Information Management requirements of the Council including information technology, geographic information systems, records management, archives management, courier services, FOI, information privacy and an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS).	10,511
7. Rating and valuation services	This service provides the generation of rate notices, management of the rates database, including the fire services levy, and liaison and support of Council's Valuers.	845
8. Council governance and meeting procedures	This service provides leadership of Council's governance framework, including administration and operational support for Council and executive meetings, advice and guidance on legislative changes and requirements focusing on good governance initiatives. It also provides executive support to the CEO and Councillors ensuring a seamless approach to interactions within the organisation and the community.	1,724
9. Occupational health and safety	This service provides support to the organisation in meeting requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Protecting the health and safety of employees, Councillors, volunteers, contractors, and visitors.	171

Services	Description of services provided	2023-24 Net Cost (income) \$'000
10. Human resources, employee relations and organisational development	This service provides leadership and coordination of Council's human resources, workplace relations, payroll, and organisational development functions.	4,002
11. Digital	This service supports Council to harness the opportunities that digital technology presents and to improve the way services are delivered to our community. This service also plays a vital role in improving and enhancing the way in which the organisation manages, shares, and uses data to ensure Council's decisions are evidence-based.	381
12. Risk management	This service provides risk management and insurance services to the organisation.	2,960
<b>Total</b>		<b>31,996</b>







## Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF)

The LGPRF reports on Council's performance against selected service areas. These measures are included under each Strategic Objective and allow the organisation to monitor and identify areas for improvement.

Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
<b>Animal Management</b>					
Time taken to action animal requests  [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]	3.68 days	4.33 days	1.31 days	0.91 days	The time taken to respond to Animal Management requests has continued to improve through ongoing process improvements, successful recruitment efforts, and effective staff retention strategies resulting in improved safety outcomes for our community.
Animals reclaimed  [Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100	61.46%	55.92%	52.31%	54.23%	Due to a nationwide cat vaccine shortage, Yarra Ranges Council temporarily paused its cat trapping service, resulting in a decrease in the overall number of animals collected. Cats are more likely to fall into the semi-owned or unowned category, reclaim rates typically tend to be lower. However, the reduction in cat collections led to a proportional increase in the number of animals reclaimed compared to previous years.



Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Animals rehomed  [Number of animals rehomed / Number of animals collected]x100	20.49%	26.76%	21.74%	59.25%	Due to a nationwide shortage of cat vaccines, Yarra Ranges Council temporarily paused its cat trapping service. This pause led to a decrease in the overall number of cats collected compared to the previous year. However, with fewer animals collected during this period and a similar number being rehomed in the previous year, the rehoming rate showed a significant percentage increase.
Cost of animal management service per population  [Direct cost of the animal management service / Municipal population]	\$9.07	\$7.00	\$8.36	\$8.85	Costs of the Animal Management service rose slightly but remained consistent with previous year.
Animal management prosecutions  [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions]x100	100.00%	95.65%	100%	100%	Council achieved 100% success rate of animal prosecution cases during 2023-24. 20 prosecutions took place this year which was similar to the previous year. Two of the prosecutions were consolidated into one as they occurred on the same date and had two separate informants and separate investigations with the same accused.
<b>Aquatic Facilities</b>					
Health inspection of aquatic facilities  [Number of authorised officer inspection of Council aquatic facilities / Number of aquatic facilities]	0.43	0.00	0.00	1.00	All aquatic facilities were inspected by an authorised officer during the 2023-24 year to ensure safety and wellbeing of all patrons.

Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Utilisation of aquatic facilities  [Number of visits to aquatic facilities/ Municipal population]	1.29	1.39	2.81	2.69	Overall visitor numbers to pools were lower than the previous year, primarily due to the closure of the Kilsyth Centennial Pool. Due to their outdoor nature and difficulty ascertaining accurate visitor numbers, visitors to outdoor splash parks are not included in this figure.
Cost of aquatic facilities  [Direct cost of the aquatic facilities less income received/Number of visits to aquatic facilities]	\$7.50	\$7.31	\$5.32	\$2.34	Costs of aquatic facilities were significantly lower this year, primarily caused by the closure of the Kilsyth Centennial Pool.
<b>Food Safety</b>					
Time taken to action food complaints  [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints /Number of food complaints]	3.41 days	2.32 days	3.36 days	1.32 days	Council observed a significant improvement in the time taken to action food complaints this year.
Food safety assessments  [number of registered class 1 and class 2 food premises that received an annual food safety assessments/ Number of registered food premises that required an assessment]x100	84.84%	67.51%	38.26%	89.68%	Council reported a significant improvement in this indicator this year, though this is off a very low score in the previous year where we were dealing with significant staff shortages.
Cost of food safety service  [Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]	\$215.75	\$218.25	\$218.48	\$264.11	The annual fees for registered food premises were adjusted in accordance with council's annual fees and service review.

Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Health and safety  Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications  [Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance notifications and major non-compliance notifications about food premises] x100	97.67%	72.97%	93.33%	90.66%	Variance to previous year is within tolerance and expectations.
Food safety samples  [Number of food samples obtained / Required number of food samples] x 100	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.14%	This is a new indicator introduced in 2023-24 so comparisons with previous years are not possible. Council collected more food samples during the year than required to support community safety and wellbeing
<b>Governance</b>					
Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public  [Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council, or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors] x100	0.50%	0.84%	0.89%	3.85%	Council continues to pride itself on open and transparent decision making. Only 5 out of 130 council decisions were made at meetings closed to the public.

Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
<p>Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement</p> <p>Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement</p>	53	51	46	45	Council scored 45 in the 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey for this indicator, a decrease from previous years. Results were varied amongst different sub-groups of the community. Residents from the Urban region reported higher satisfaction (48) while residents from the Healesville - Yarra Glen region reported the lowest satisfaction (40)
<p>Councillor attendance at Council meetings</p> <p>[The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each ordinary and special Council meeting / (Number of ordinary and special Council meetings) × (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x100</p>	95.65%	91.79%	85.99%	87.92%	Councillor attendance improved slightly during 2023-24. Overall, this is consistent with previous years
<p>Cost of governance</p> <p>[Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]</p>	\$49,953.26	\$47,917.89	\$54,406.89	\$55,540.88	There was a small increase in cost of elected representation, though the figure remains consistent with pre-pandemic levels
<p>Satisfaction with Council decisions</p> <p>[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]</p>	56	54	48	41	The 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey found Council 41 for this indicator, a significant decline from the year before (48). Results were varied amongst different sub-groups of the community, the Urban region and women reporting the highest satisfaction score (45) and residents from the Healesville - Yarra Glen region reporting the lowest satisfaction (35)



Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
<b>Libraries</b>					
Standard of library collection  [Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100	79.76%	78.04%	75.34%	76.51%	Council observed an increase in library collection item costs resulting in fewer new items being purchased. Council continues to spend less on physical collections and more on digital, which increases the number of items available for borrowing. Our target is to have less than 80% of items less than 5 years old. Some older books that are highly valued by borrowers are being retained for much longer than 5 years.
Cost of library service per population  [Direct cost of the library service / Municipal population]	\$18.81	\$20.31	\$20.69	\$22.76	This figure is higher than previous years but remains low. Being a semi-regional library service, costs are typically lower than most urban library services.
Loans per head of population  [Number of library collection item loans / Population]	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.42	This is a new indicator introduced in 2023-24 so comparisons with previous years are not possible. Overall borrowing trends remain consistent though, with loans for digital items continuing to be popular
Library membership  [Number of registered library members / Population] x100	n/a	n/a	n/a	22.50%	This is a new indicator introduced in 2023-24 so comparisons with previous years are not possible. Being a semi-regional library service, membership numbers may not be as high as urban Councils
Library visits per head of population  [Number of library visits / Population]	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.51	This is a new indicator introduced in 2023-24 so comparisons with previous years are not possible.

Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
<b>Maternal Child Health</b>					
Infant enrolment in the MCH service  [Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100	100.99%	101.12%	102.35%	100.06%	The rate of enrolment in the Maternal and Child Health service by families with newborns continues to be very high, however fewer birth notifications were received during 2023-24 meaning fewer total enrolments. Every birth notice received by Council is offered the opportunity to engage in the MCH Service. Yarra Ranges Council continues to provide services to residents from neighbouring Councils which has caused our participation rate to be slightly higher than 100%.
Cost of the MCH service  [Cost of the MCH service/ Hours worked by MCH nurses]	\$68.48	\$84.66	\$80.44	\$80.94	The number of working hours and cost of the MCH service were consistent with previous years
Participation in 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	74.54%	74.93%	74.65%	72.36%	Participation in Council's MCH service has remained consistent with levels seen in previous years, though a small decrease was observed during 2023-24
Participation in MCH service by Aboriginal children  [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	74.81%	79.00%	78.47%	76.41%	Participation in Council's MCH services by Aboriginal and Torres Straight children has remained consistent with levels and continues to work with external partners to improve participation in MCH services by Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island children

Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage home visit  [Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100	94.08%	97.76%	96.13%	96.62%	The number of 4-week Key Age and Stage visits was lower than birth notices received due to readmission to hospital for either mother or baby and temporarily staying in other local government areas. This was particularly relevant during extreme fire rating days and during power outages from storm damage.
<b>Roads</b>					
Sealed local road requests  [Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100	72.12	85.48	141.15	101.32	Council received significantly fewer sealed local road requests during 2023-24, which has improved this result.
Sealed local roads below the intervention level  [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100	98.16%	97.61%	97.45%	95.98%	Council's method for assessing whether sealed roads meet the renewal intervention level has changed this year, due to a new contractor. As a result, the score is lower than in previous years, but Council now has a more accurate understanding of road resealing and reconstruction priorities moving forward.
Cost of sealed local road reconstruction  [Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]	\$87.79	\$107.69	\$166.71	\$102.47	This year we have fully completed three road reconstruction projects. Edward Road, Victoria Road & Gruyere Road. These were a mix of rural asphalt and rural spray seal roads.
Cost of sealed local road resealing  [Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]	\$21.02	\$15.31	\$25.43	\$23.38	Road resealing costs during 2023-24 remained consistent with previous years.

Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Satisfaction with sealed roads  [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	49	48	43	37.00	The Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey reported that satisfaction with sealed local roads fell from 43 to 37 this year. Higher scores were reported by residents from the Urban region, whereas the Hills, Yarra Valley and Healesville-Yarra Glen regions reported significantly lower scores.
<b>Statutory Planning</b>					
Time taken to decide planning applications  [The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]	86	99	113	121	Council's gross time taken to processing applications has increased over the last year. Council's Planning Department continues to be impacted by an industry-wide shortage of planners which is impacting our ability to respond to applications on time. There has been a focus on resolving older applications which have been 'on hold' for extended periods, with many of these being represented in this reporting period. This focus will continue into the 2024/25 financial year.
Planning applications decided within 60 days  [Number of planning application decisions made within 60 days / Number of planning application decisions made] x100	80.79%	53.25%	51.42%	61.78%	A higher proportion of planning decisions were made within required timeframes this year. We have seen a slight decrease in the number of applications lodged in 2023 -2024, however more amendments have been received than in the previous year.
Cost of statutory planning service  [Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]	\$2,484.26	\$2,039.79	\$2,749.11	\$3,055.65	The slight increase in cost, relative to the previous year, is due to the lower number of new planning application being received this financial year while staffing cost have remained the same.



Service / Indicator/ Measure	Results				Variation
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
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] x 100	88.00%	56.25%	62.50%	51.52%	Council continues to see an increase in the number of matters being appealed to VCAT. Of the 33 applications to VCAT 51% of Council decisions have been upheld. Council has also worked with a number of applicants to reach a negotiated consent order with 33% of all decision being consented out prior to the VCAT hearing.
<b>Waste Management</b>					
Kerbside collection missed bins  [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x 10,000	5.61	5.74	6.34	14.20	This indicator has risen significantly following a change from weekly to fortnightly garbage service collections. This has significantly reduced the number of scheduled lifts.
Cost of kerbside garbage collection services  [Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]	\$141.89	\$163.01	\$178.68	\$149.77	The costs of the kerbside garbage bin collection service has fallen following a change from weekly to fortnight collections
Cost of kerbside recyclables bin collection service  [Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]	\$55.16	\$69.62	\$71.35	\$78.63	Council commenced a new contract for recyclables collections during the 2023-24 financial year, which has led to an increase in costs from previous years
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	50.56%	50.15%	52.14%	67.26%	Council has seen a significant increase in the volume waste diverted from landfill from previous years following the introduction weekly Food Organics, Garden Organics (FOGO) bin collections from all properties

# Statutory Reporting

## Statutory information

### Contracts

In 2023-24, there have been no reported breaches of Section 108 of the Local Government Act (2020).

Yarra Ranges Council's Procurement Policy ensures consistency and control over procurement activities, to demonstrate accountability to rate payers and to provide guidance on ethical behaviour in local government procurement. A public Tender Process or Expression of Interest process must be used for all procurement spends valued at \$250,000 (excl GST) and above for goods, services and/or works. The following contracts are valued at greater than \$250,000 and were awarded during 2023-24:

Reference	Details	Contractor
CT7456	Morrison's Reserve Youth Activation and Bike Park Design	Blue Tang (Wa) Pty Ltd
CT7458	Employment Assistance Program and Associated Services (EAP) 21065	Caraniche Pty Ltd T/A Caraniche
CT7331	Office Products and Workplace Consumables (PA# 2606/0845)	Complete Office Supplies Pty Limited
EOI5902 7316	Upwey South Multi Use Community Space, including, resurfacing, fencing and Lighting Project	Contek Constructions Pty Ltd
CT7360	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 1B.1	Cope Ag Pty Ltd
EOI7333 7405	Charles St. Pre-school Accessibility & Renewal Works	Cornerstone Constructions
CT7369	Microsoft 365 Licensing Agreement State Purchase Contract DPC-ICT-04-2020	Data#3 Limited
EOI6246 7322	Yarra Centre Pool - Battery Expansion & Installation	Energy Wired Pty Ltd
EOI6105 7126	Mt Morton Road Stages 2 and 3 (Ryan Road to no. 141) Belgrave Heights "Road Improvement Works SCS	Etheredge Minterm Pty Ltd
EOI6105 7286	Railway Parade, Wandin North Road Improvement Works SCS	Etheredge Minterm Pty Ltd
CT7427	Provision of Groundwater, Soil, Gas and Leachate Monitoring at Coldstream, Healesville, Wesburn & Lysterfield Landfill Sites	Eurofins/Mgt
EOI6105 7285	Alfred Street and John Street Wandin North Road Improvements Special Charge Scheme	Foley Services Pty Ltd
CT7325	YRConnect Property and Rating Consulting Services	Galaxy 42 Pty Ltd

Reference	Details	Contractor
CT7466	Contact Centre Software (ES8111-2021)	Generation-E Productivity Solutions Pty Ltd
CT7521	Record Storage & Imaging Services	Grace Records Management (Australia) Pty Ltd
CT7095	Kerbside Bin Collection Services including Mobile Bin and Lid Purchasing and Distribution	JJ Richards & Sons Pty Ltd
CT6906	Ridgewalk - Kalorama Park Land Art	Jonathon Tarry
EOI6105 7125	Alpine Street, Cecil Street and Glenbrook Road Warburton "Road Improvement Works SCS	Jotomex Civil Contracting
EOI6105 7179	Tainton Street, Wandin North Road Improvement Works SCS	Jotomex Civil Contracting
CT7326	Provision of Data Migration Services - TechnologyOne ERP System	Leander Business Consulting Pty Ltd
EOI6105 7349	Commercial Rd Mt Evelyn S2 Road & Drainage Works	Parkinson Group (Aust) Pty Ltd
CT6835 1	Traffic Management and Registered Spotter Services	Platinum Traffic Management P/L
CT6835 2	Traffic Management and Registered Spotter Services	Prestige Paving Pty Ltd
EOI6105 7359	Maddens Lane Road Rehabilitation	Prestige Paving Pty Ltd
CT7372	Road Sprayed Sealing Program 2023-24	Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd
EOI7330 7453	Land Art Trail Construction	R & J Kent & Co Pty Ltd
CT7246 1	Pavement & Linemarking Services	Roadside Services And Solutions
CT7366	Landfill Gas System Extension Stage 2 Coldstream Closed Landfill	Run Energy Pty Ltd
CT7393	ngurrak barring   Wayfinding & Interpretations - Fabrication & Installation	Signed On
CT7373	Provision of First Aid Training Services	St John Ambulance Australia (Victoria) Inc.
CT6835 3	Traffic Management and Registered Spotter Services	Supersealing Pty Ltd
CT7246 2	Pavement & Linemarking Services	Supersealing Pty Ltd

Reference	Details	Contractor
EOI6105 7181	Cedar Court Group Monbulk " Road Improvement Special Charge Scheme	Tdm Earthworks Pty Ltd
EOI6105 7334	Gruyere Road Gruyere Road Construction	Tdm Earthworks Pty Ltd
EOI6105 7385	Victoria Road, Yering - Road Rehabilitation	Tdm Earthworks Pty Ltd
EOI6105 7386	Edward Road, Chirnside Park - Road Rehabilitation	Tdm Earthworks Pty Ltd
EOI7333 7404	Yarra Junction Bowls Club Accessibility & Renewal Works	The Trustee For The A & C Patterson Family Trust
EOI7333 7406	Belgrave South Netball Pavilion " Pavilion Upgrade	The Trustee For The A & C Patterson Family Trust
EOI7330	Landscape Construction Contractors Panel	Various Suppliers
CT7576	Street Lighting Hardware & Installation SL3911 '22	Various Suppliers
EOI7333	Building Contractors Panel	Various Suppliers
EOI7333 7413	Lilydale Tennis Accessibility & Renewal Works	Versatile Property Maintenance - Eastwood Property Pty Ltd
EOI7330 7401	Morrison Reserve Playspace Renewal	Warrandale Industries Pty Ltd
CT7092	Street & Park Litter bin Collection & Maintenance Service	Wm Waste Management Services
EOI7330 7431	Belgrave South Pump Track	World Trail Pty Ltd Atf World Trail Unit Trust
CT7292	Service Agreement Yarra Glen Memorial Hall & Reading Room	Yarra Glen Living & Learning Centre



## Governance and Management checklist

This checklist measures whether a Council has strong governance and management frameworks in place covering community engagement, planning, monitoring, reporting and decision-making. It was established as part of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework to ensure transparent reporting.

### Community Engagement

Indicator of the broad objective that community engagement is important for good decision-making. Having appropriate engagement policies and procedures suggests an improvement in decision making

	Definition	Assessment	
1	<p><b>Community Engagement Policy</b></p> <p>Policy under section 55 of the Act outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest</p>	<p>Adopted in accordance with section 55 of the Act</p> <p>Date of adoption: 9 July 2024</p>	✓
2	<p><b>Community engagement guidelines</b></p> <p>Guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community.</p>	<p>YRC Staff Community Engagement Toolkit</p> <p>Regularly updated and easily accessible for all Council staff, including guidelines, templates and supporting resources.</p> <p>Date of commencement: 3 June 2024</p>	✓

### Planning

Indicator of the broad objective that planning is important for good decision-making. Having appropriate plans in place suggests an improvement in decision-making






	Definition	Assessment	
3	<p><b>Financial Plan</b></p> <p>Plan under section 91 of the Act outlining the financial and non financial resources required for at least the next 10 financial years</p>	<p>Adopted in accordance with section 91 of the Act</p> <p>Date of adoption: 26 October 2021</p>	✓
4	<p><b>Asset Plan</b></p> <p>Plan under section 92 of the Act setting out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years.</p>	<p>Adopted in accordance with section 92 of the Act</p> <p>Date of adoption: 28 June 2022</p>	✓

Definition		Assessment	
<b>5</b>	<b>Revenue and Rating Plan</b>  Plan under section 93 of the Act setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges.	Adopted in accordance with section 93 of the Act  Date of adoption: 27 June 2023	✓
<b>6</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>  Plan under section 94 of the Act setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken during the budget year and the funding and other resources required.	Yarra Ranges Council Budget  Adopted in accordance with section 94 of the Act  Date of adoption: 25 June 2024	✓
<b>7</b>	<b>Risk policy</b>  Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations.	Yarra Ranges Risk Policy  Date of commencement of current policy: 29 June 2021	✓
<b>8</b>	<b>Fraud policy</b>  Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations.	Yarra Ranges Fraud Control Policy  Date of commencement of current policy: 30 June 2021	✓
<b>9</b>	<b>Municipal emergency management planning</b>  Council's participation in meetings of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC).	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) meetings attended by one or more representatives of Council (other than the chairperson of the MEMPC) during the financial year  Date meetings attended: 16 August 2023, 15 November 2023, 21 February 2024, 15 May 2024	✓
<b>10</b>	<b>Procurement policy</b>  Policy under section 108 of the Act outlining the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to the purchase of goods and services by the Council.	Adopted in accordance with section 108 of the Act  Date of adoption: 25 June 2024	✓
<b>11</b>	<b>Business continuity plan</b>  Plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster.	Date of commencement of current policy: The Business Continuity Plan has been reviewed and adopted on 17 March 2024	✓

Definition	Assessment
<p><b>12 Disaster recovery plan</b></p> <p>Plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster.</p>	<p>Informal Technology Continuity Plan ✓</p> <p>Operational: September 2020</p> <p>Local storage facility has been contracted to provide data back-up, computer access and operational hot desks at their disaster recovery plan site. Full remote access by staff also available. This plan is tested annually and incorporates the reestablishment of customer service functions within 24 hours.</p>
<p><b>13 Complaint policy</b></p> <p>Policy under section 107 of the Act outlining Council's commitment and approach to managing complaints.</p>	<p>Complaint Policy ✓</p> <p>Policy developed in accordance with section 107 of the Act</p> <p>Date of adoption: January 2024</p>
<p><b>14 Workforce plan</b></p> <p>Plan outlining Council's commitment and approach to planning the current and future workforce requirements of the organisation.</p>	<p>2022 – 2026 Workforce Plan developed in accordance with section 46 of the Act ✓</p> <p>Date of adoption: 24 December 2023</p>
<p><b>15 Payment of rates and charges hardship policy</b></p> <p>Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to assisting ratepayers experiencing financial hardship or difficulty paying their rates.</p>	<p>Date of adoption: 23 May 2023 ✓</p>

## Monitoring

Indicator of the broad objective that monitoring is important for good decision-making. Having appropriate monitoring in place suggests an improvement in decision-making

Definition	Assessment
<p><b>16 Risk management framework</b></p> <p>Framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations.</p>	<p>Date of commencement of current policy: </p> <p>Risk Management Framework</p> <p>Adopted: 14 July 2024</p>
<p><b>17 Audit and Risk Committee</b></p> <p>Advisory committee of Council under section 53 and section 54 of the Local Government Act whose role is to monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures, monitor Council's financial reporting, monitor and provide advice on risk management, and provide oversight on internal and external audit functions.</p>	<p>Established in accordance with section 53 of the Act </p> <p>Date of establishment: 11 August 2021</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Management Committee met on: 2 October 2023, 27 November 2023, 19 February 2024, 20 May 2024</p>
<p><b>18 Internal audit</b></p> <p>Independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls.</p>	<p>Engaged HLB Mann Judd </p> <p>Date of engagement of current provider: 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2026.</p>
<p><b>19 Performance and Reporting Framework</b></p> <p>A set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Local Government Act 2020.</p>	<p>Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) </p> <p>Date of operation of current framework: 1 July 2014</p>
<p><b>20 Council Plan Reporting</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Progress report on the Council Plan </p> <p>Date report presented: 16 April 2024 &amp; 22/10/2024</p>



## Reporting

Indicator of the broad objective that reporting is important for good decision-making. Having appropriate reporting in place suggests an improvement in decision-making

Definition	Assessment
<p><b>21 Quarterly budget reports</b></p> <p>Quarterly reports presented to Council under section 97 of the Local Government Act 2020 comparing actual and budgeted results and an explanation of any material variations.</p>	<p>Reports presented to the Council in accordance with section 97(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 ✓</p> <p>Date reports presented:</p> <p>Quarterly Finance Report - September 2023: 28/11/2023</p> <p>Quarterly Finance Report - December 2023: 13/02/24</p> <p>Quarterly Finance Report - March 2024: 28/05/2024</p> <p>2023-24 Annual Financial Statements: 22/10/2024</p>
<p><b>22 Risk reports</b></p> <p>Six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies.</p>	<p>Dates of Strategic Risk reporting to ELT: 25 November 2023; 20 May (Audit and Risk Management Committee) ✓</p>
<p><b>23 Performance reports</b></p> <p>Six-monthly reports of indicators measuring results against financial and non-financial performance including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act 2020.</p>	<p>LGPRF report dates: Full year report on indicators is scheduled to be presented to Council on 22/10/2024 —</p>
<p><b>24 Annual Report</b></p> <p>Annual report under sections 98, 99 and 100 of the Act 2020 to the community containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements.</p>	<p>Presented at a meeting of the Council in accordance with section 100 of the Act ✓</p> <p>Date of Annual Report presented: 24 October 2023</p>

Definition		Assessment
<b>25</b>	<b>Councillor Code of Conduct</b>  Code under section 139 of the Act setting out the standards of conduct to be followed by Councillors and other matters.	Reviewed and adopted in accordance with section 139 of the Act  Date reviewed and adopted: 9 February 2021

## Decision Making

Indicator of the broad objective that good decision-making is important. Having appropriate decisionmaking policies and procedures in place suggests an improvement in decision-making

Definition		Assessment
<b>26</b>	<b>Delegations</b>  Documents setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff, in accordance with sections 11 and 47 of the Act.	Delegations made by Council have been reviewed in accordance with section 11(7) of the Act, with the exception of the Instrument of Delegation from Council to the CEO which was last reviewed on 21 September 2021.  A register of Delegations is kept in accordance with sections 11(8) and 47(7) of the Act.
<b>27</b>	<b>Meeting Procedures</b>  Governance Rules under section 60 of the Act governing the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees.	Governance Rules adopted in accordance with section 60 of the Act  Date Governance Rules adopted: 2 September 2022

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



**Tammi Rose**  
Chief Executive Officer

Dated: 22 October 2024



**Cr Sophie Todorov**  
Mayor

Dated: 22 October 2024







## Freedom of Information (FOI)

The *Freedom of Information Act (1982) (Vic)* gives any individual the right to access documentation held by Yarra Ranges Council about their personal affairs and the activities of Council, unless that information is deemed exempt under the Act.

Individuals have the right to apply for access to documents which are covered by the FOI Act and held by an agency.

This includes:

- Documents created by the agency.
- Documents supplied to the agency by an external organisation or individual.

Individuals can apply for access to:

- Documents about their personal affairs, regardless of the age of the documents.
- Documents held by a Council, no older than 1 January 1989.

Yarra Ranges Council maintains both paper-based and electronic documents in respect to its operational and general administrative functions.

The disposal of these documents is governed by the Public Records Act (1973) and no documents are destroyed or otherwise disposed of except in accordance with the relevant standards.

### Freedom of Information activity during 2023-2024

During 2023-2024, Yarra Ranges Council's FOI Team responded to a total 70 written Freedom of Information enquiries and processed 40 valid requests, under Freedom of Information legislation provisions. Outcomes from the processed requests and outstanding applications are listed below.

FOI Officers were able to assist an additional 7 applicants outside of the FOI process, prior to the formalisation of a valid FOI request. Further, despite officers providing assistance to applicants, 23 applications ultimately did not comply with section 17 of the Act and therefore could not be processed.

Enquiries that did not eventuate in valid FOI request applications were referred to other Council information access processes, such as planning-information or direct release, and applications that were yet to be formalised as valid requests as of the 1 July.

Year	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022
Access granted in full	5	10	6
Access granted in part	23	6	9
Access denied	0	0	2
Documents do not exist	2	0	1
Withdrawn / not proceeded	3	3	2
Satisfied outside the Act	3	7	0
Decision pending	10	8	11
<b>Total requests received (inc. carried forward)</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>31</b>



## Access arrangements

Access to FOI discovered documents is mostly through the provision of hard copy documents via the post or electronic files via email or USB.

Requests for access to documents should be directed to the FOI Officer. The request must be in writing, preferably on the application form available on 2, email or by telephone.

## Information privacy

Standards set out by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act (2014) (Vic)* and the *Yarra Ranges Privacy and Health Information Policy* control how we manage personal information. Privacy compliance is included in our staff induction training program.

We have trained Privacy Officers within our Information Management Service to assist staff and members of the public with privacy-related queries or issues.

All privacy inquiries should be directed to the Privacy Team, by post, email or by telephone.

## Public Interest Disclosure Act (2012)

Yarra Ranges Council is committed to the aims and objectives of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (the Act). Council does not tolerate improper or corrupt conduct by its employees, officers or Councillors, nor the taking of detrimental action against those who come forward to disclose such conduct.

Council recognises the value of transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt or improper conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment.

We will take all reasonable steps to protect people who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for making the disclosure. We also afford natural justice to the person who is the subject of the disclosure. Section 58 of the Act requires Council to establish procedures to facilitate the making of disclosures, assessing disclosures and the welfare management of those people involved in disclosures.

Council has adopted procedures to establish a system for employees and members of the public to report disclosures of improper conduct, corrupt conduct or detrimental action by Council employees, officers or Councillors. The system enables such disclosures to be made directly to the Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator, Public Interest Disclosure Officers or the CEO. Disclosures may be made by employees or by members of the public. All disclosures regarding local government Councillors must be made directly to the Independent Broadbased Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

These procedures are designed to complement normal communication channels between supervisors and employees and the organisation's complaints procedure. A full copy of the Yarra Ranges Council Public Interest Disclosure Procedure is available on our website.

## Disclosures during 2023-24

In accordance with Section 70 (1b) of the Act, Council is required to detail in the Annual Report the number of disclosures notified to IBAC for the financial year. No disclosures relating to the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* (formerly the *Protected Disclosure Act* and *Whistleblowers Act*) were received or required notification by Council during the 2023-24 financial year.

## Information available for inspection

Council is committed to open and transparent governance and the following information is available for public inspection:

- Council agendas and minutes of meetings held in the previous 12 months\*
- Agenda and minutes of meetings of delegated committees held in the previous 12 months\*
- Register of delegations\*
- Details of all leases involving land which were entered into by the Council as lessor, including the lessee and the terms and the value of the lease\*
- Register of authorised officers\*
- A list of donations and grants made by the Council during the financial year\*
- A summary of Personal Interests Returns made by Councillors, the CEO and officers nominated by the CEO as required by section 135 of the *Local Government Act 2020*\*
- Register of conflicts of interest disclosed in accordance with sections 130 and 131 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Inspection of these documents can also be arranged by contacting the Governance team by phone on 1300 368 333. The documents can be inspected at the Council Offices, Lilydale.

Additional information available for public inspection includes:

- Annual Report (includes Auditor's Report)\*
- Code of Conduct for Councillors\*
- Council Plan 2021-2025\*

- Council Budget (including the Strategic Resource Plan)\*
- Councillor Allowances and Expenses\*
- Councillor Expenditure Policy\*
- Election Period Policy\*
- Procurement Policy\*
- Summary of election campaign donation returns\*
- Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2020\*
- Meeting Procedures and Use of Common Seal Local Law 2015\*
- Governance Rules\*
- Electoral Representation Review Preliminary Report, Final Report and Minister's Ruling\*
- Yarra Ranges Protected Disclosure Act Procedures.\*

\* Also available online at [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

## Food Act Ministerial directions

In accordance with section 7E of the *Food Act 1984*, Council is required to publish a summary of any Ministerial Directions received during the financial year in its annual report. No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the 2023-24 financial year.

## Road Management Act Ministerial direction

In accordance with section 22 of the *Road Management Act 2004*, a Council must publish a copy or summary of any Ministerial direction in its annual report. No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the 2023-24 financial year.

## Disability Act 2006

Yarra Ranges Access, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023 outlined Council's vision and goals regarding disability access, equity and inclusion within our community.

A final report into our Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy, was endorsed by Council, reflecting on the goals set a decade ago, and achievements made to improve accessibility throughout the region.

The next Disability Action Plan is under development and captures the first of two phases in which the community is engaged regarding their vision and preferences for access, equity, and inclusion for people with disability and unpaid carers in the Yarra Ranges. Information gathered through community voice will inform the development of the Yarra Ranges Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2024 – 2028.

The Yarra Ranges Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) helped to inform and develop the current strategy.

Council extends a special acknowledgement to the members of the Disability Advisory Committee. Their pivotal role significantly contributed to the success of the Strategy. They shared their lived experiences and advice generously. This ensured Council's work is informed and responsive to the community's needs. Council sincerely thanks them for their invaluable contributions.

In the last year, DAC members have assisted with community engagement, reviewing our plans and strategies, provided input on building projects and masterplans for community reserves, and worked with Council staff to highlight their lived experiences to the wider community.

Members have provided feedback and shared their insights on the review of the Yarra Ranges Council Draft Housing Strategy, the Community Heart in Lilydale (CHIL), Yarra Junction, Upwey and Mooroolbark Place Plan and Active Recreation for People Plan.

Council has completed many projects that contribute to access, equity, and inclusion across the Yarra Ranges, including the ninth Annual Yarra Ranges International Day of People with Disability event. The 2023 event keynote speakers were Dr. Melinda Smith OAM and Sarah Hopkins from Your Library. They discussed how using assistive technology can transform lives for people with disability.

The event celebrated the DAC contributions and achievements during the first year of a 4-year term. An acknowledgement was given for Cliff Wise, DAC member who passed away in 2022. Cliff served two Terms on the DAC since its establishment in 2012 and his wife Wendy Wise joined the event so we could thank her for his contributions to the Yarra Ranges community.

DAC members participated in the Women's Health East launch event of the Margins to *Mainstream Guide to best practice co-design and consultation with women with disabilities*.

A DAC member participated in Council's Poetic Portraits exhibition and publication as part of the Over 50s Festival celebrating the rich and diverse life stories of Yarra Ranges residents over 50.

Preparing for an emergency workshop held in partnership with Mt Evelyn Community House, Red Cross and CFA and Victoria Police. This workshop targeted those community members needing extra support to prepare for an emergency.

The Community Changemakers Program aims to empower Yarra Ranges residents (aged 18+) to develop skills, confidence, and connections to create positive change in their local villages, townships, and suburbs. Twenty-one community members graduated from the program including people with disabilities and participants increased their understanding of diversity and inclusion through the sharing of lived experience.

Disability Advisory Committee Annual Report received and acknowledgment by Council of the contributions throughout the year provided by the Committee to ensure that people with disability are included in all aspects of the Yarra Ranges community.

Council continues to build organisational capacity, offering all staff an online disability awareness course by Scope Australia. Scope is one of the largest not-for-profit disability service providers in Australia, supporting thousands of people with complex intellectual, physical, and multiple disabilities. Scope's online training program promotes a more inclusive organisational environment for all our customers and staff.

Yarra Ranges Council participated on the working group of the Margins to the Mainstream (M2M) project led by Women's Health East. This project supports local women with disability by elevating their voice and contributing to the evidence base of 'what works' in community-led prevention of violence against women with disability.

## Carers Recognition Act 2012

We have taken all practicable measures to comply with our responsibilities under Victoria's Carers Recognition Act 2012.

- Provided information and support to carers including: Seniors Festival; International Day of People with Disability; Carers events; monthly Pathways for Carers walks held in Mt Evelyn and Healesville.
- Liaised closely with service providers, community houses and leisure services on behalf of carers.
- Provided information to people, community organisations and networks within Yarra Ranges through the Yarra Ranges Disability Inclusion newsletter. Information has included accessible school holiday activities, local events and supports and activities for carers including Carer Gateway and Villa Maria Catholic Homes Carer Supports.



## Domestic Animals Act 1994

The Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2022-2026 provides Council and community with a four year framework for identifying and addressing matters associated with the management and wellbeing of cats and dogs. It identifies animal management compliance and education initiatives carried out by Council, and new initiatives identified to address emerging issues. It also identifies opportunities for community and Council partnerships to tackle challenges associated with pets (predominately dogs and cats per legislative requirements) in the community, including the impacts of domestic animals on the environment and our native wildlife.

The 2022-2026 DAMP was adopted in November 2022, and seven main objectives to be focussed on include:

### Objective 1

Ensuring Council staff have access to professional development opportunities relating to animal management.

### Objective 2

Proactively promote and manage Council's pet registration program.

### Objective 3

Promote delivery of community education regarding responsible pet ownership.

### Objective 4

Ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community, infrastructure, tourism, wildlife, and the natural environment.

### Objective 5

Work with our community, businesses, and networks to help our local Domestic Animal Businesses to manage and grow responsibly.

### Objective 6

Advocate for the safety, health and wellbeing of domestic animal registered within the municipality.

### Objective 7

Using data to inform our service delivery and decision making.

Responsible pet ownership programs and activities continue to ensure that the community is aware of all aspects of responsible pet ownership. To support our objectives, some of our key actions Included:

<b>Officer Training:</b>	Officers received training on situational awareness and conflict management to better handle community interactions. In addition to this they received specialised training in aggressive dog behaviour and dog bite prevention.
<b>Enhanced Pet Registration:</b>	An improved registration program was introduced to ensure timely and compliant pet registrations.
<b>Increased Park Patrols:</b>	We boosted patrols in Council Parks and Reserves to enhance safety and monitor pet-related activities.
<b>Pet Ownership Education:</b>	We conducted responsible pet ownership presentations to local primary school students.
<b>Annual Inspections:</b>	Completion of the yearly inspections for declared and dangerous dogs, as well as for Domestic Animal Businesses.
<b>Animal Management Review:</b>	We completed a review and enhancement of our Animal Management processes.
<b>Community Engagement:</b>	Attendances to pop-up events focusing on Responsible Pet Ownership, providing valuable information on pet registration and cat containment.
<b>Cat Trespass:</b>	A review and update of the cat trespass process was conducted to improve the management of stray cats.
<b>Cat Trap Program:</b>	We increased the capacity of our cat trap program, deploying additional traps across the Yarra Ranges.
<b>Low-Cost De-Sexing:</b>	In partnership with Animal Aid, we promoted access to grant-funded opportunities offering reduced cost de-sexing services.
<b>Improved Cat Reunification:</b>	We advanced our equipment and processes to better identify and reunite cats with their owners.
<b>Improved enforcement outcomes:</b>	We have thoroughly reviewed and refined our enforcement and prosecution procedures to strengthen the investigation of dog attack incidents
<b>Data Analysis:</b>	Review of trends and statistics for registration, reunification of lost animals to ensure best practice principles and seek opportunities for improvement.

As a result of the annual review, the Safer Communities team has demonstrated it continues to provide a high quality, innovative and responsive animal management service, and maintain the commitment to a community approach to responsible pet ownership.







## **Copies and further information**

Copies of the Annual Report are available as hard copies or online.

All strategic documents to support the delivery of the strategic objectives are available in hard copy and in electronic format on Council's website at: [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au) or by contacting **1300 368 333**.



## Contact information

### Community Links

#### Lilydale

15 Anderson Street

#### Healesville

110 River Street

#### Monbulk

21 Main Road

#### Yarra Junction

2442-2444 Warburton Highway

#### Upwey

40 Main Street

### National Relay Service

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

**1300 555 727** - for callers using Speech to Speech relay

**9658 9461** - Teletypewriter (TTY)

### Translation and Interpreting Service

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

#### Chinese Simplified (Mandarin)

如需要，可撥打全國翻譯服務處 (TIS) 的電話 131 450 提供口譯服務。

#### Chinese Traditional (Cantonese)

如需要，可撥打全國翻譯服務處 (TIS) 的電話 131 450 提供傳譯服務

#### Chin Hakha

Holhlet na herh ah cun Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) kha 131450 ah chawnh in hlohleh rian tuawn nak kha hman khawh a si

#### Dutch

Indien nodig kunt u onze tolken- en vertaaldienst Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) bellen op 131 450 om met een tolk te spreken

#### Italian

Un servizio di interpretariato è disponibile, se richiesto, contattando i Servizi di traduzione e interpretariato nazionali (TIS) al numero 131 450

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