

13 February 2024 Council Meeting Attachments

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Chief Executive Officer

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

December 2023 and
January 2024



**Hobsons
2.0**

Issue 79

Published February 2024

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The CEO Report on Operations is a regular report that is published by the Hobsons Bay City Council.

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and the community of recent issues, initiatives and projects undertaken across Council. The report is provided on a monthly basis.

CEO update

During December 2023 and January 2024, the Chief Executive Officer participated in a number of events, meetings and discussions about a range of matters relevant to Hobsons Bay and the local government sector.

Many of the events and meetings attended by the CEO during this period were related to regional initiatives and collaboration such as:

- attendance at a meeting with Matt Hilakari, Member for Point Cook together with Mayor Cr Matt Tyler to discuss Councils advocacy priorities;
- attendance at a meeting with Executives from the Association of Bayside Municipalities;
- attendance at a meeting with the Victorian Electoral Commission ahead of the Local Government 2024 elections;
- attendance at the M9 meeting of CEOs and Mayors; and
- attendance at a meeting with an officer from Tim Watts' office to discuss Councils advocacy priorities.



Aaron van Egmond
Chief Executive Officer

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Delivering for our community

Library services



Libraries

January 2023

Physical loans (books etc.): 28,279

eLibrary loans (eBooks etc.): 6,903

Renewals: 8,543

Total: 43,725

Library visits: 56,029

Loans have increased 7.2 per cent compared to December 2023.

Year to date loans have increased 23.1 per cent compared to January 2023.

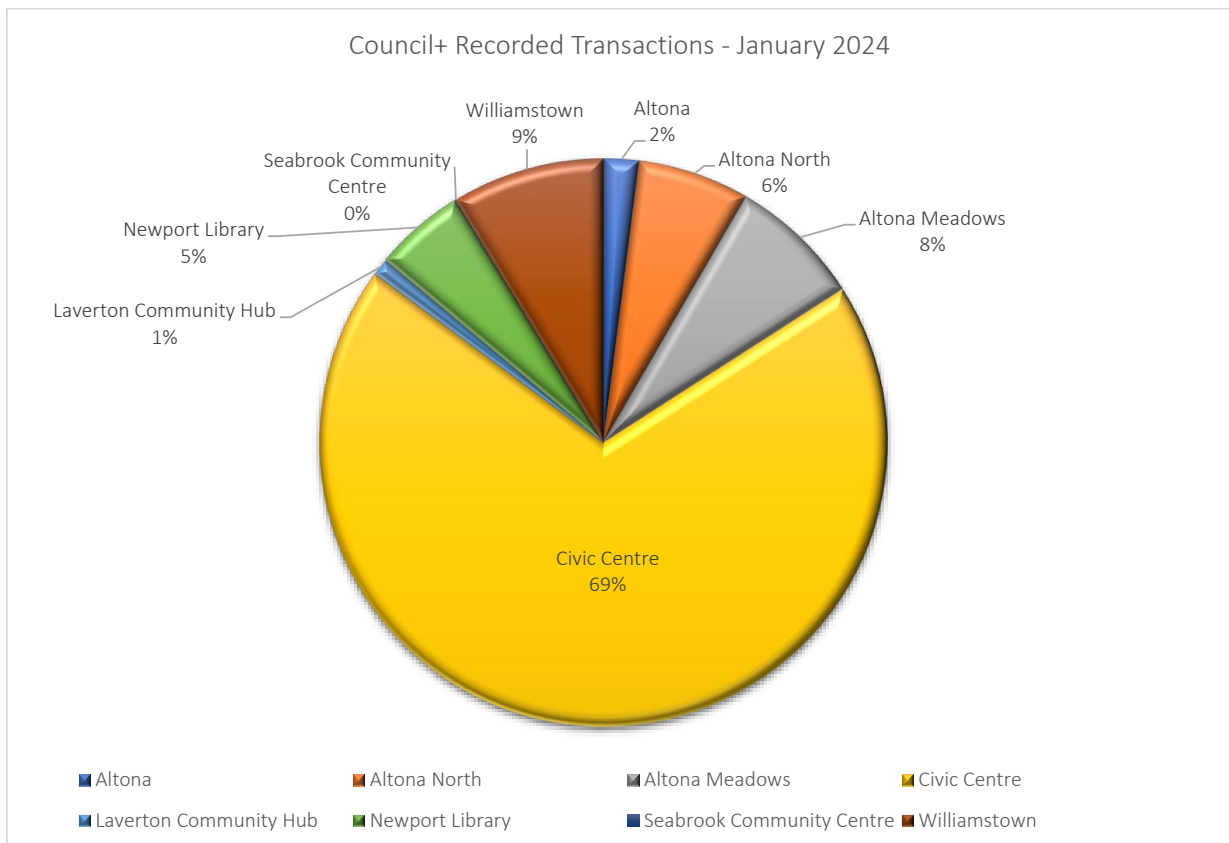
eLibrary loans have increased 3.28 per cent compared to December 2023.

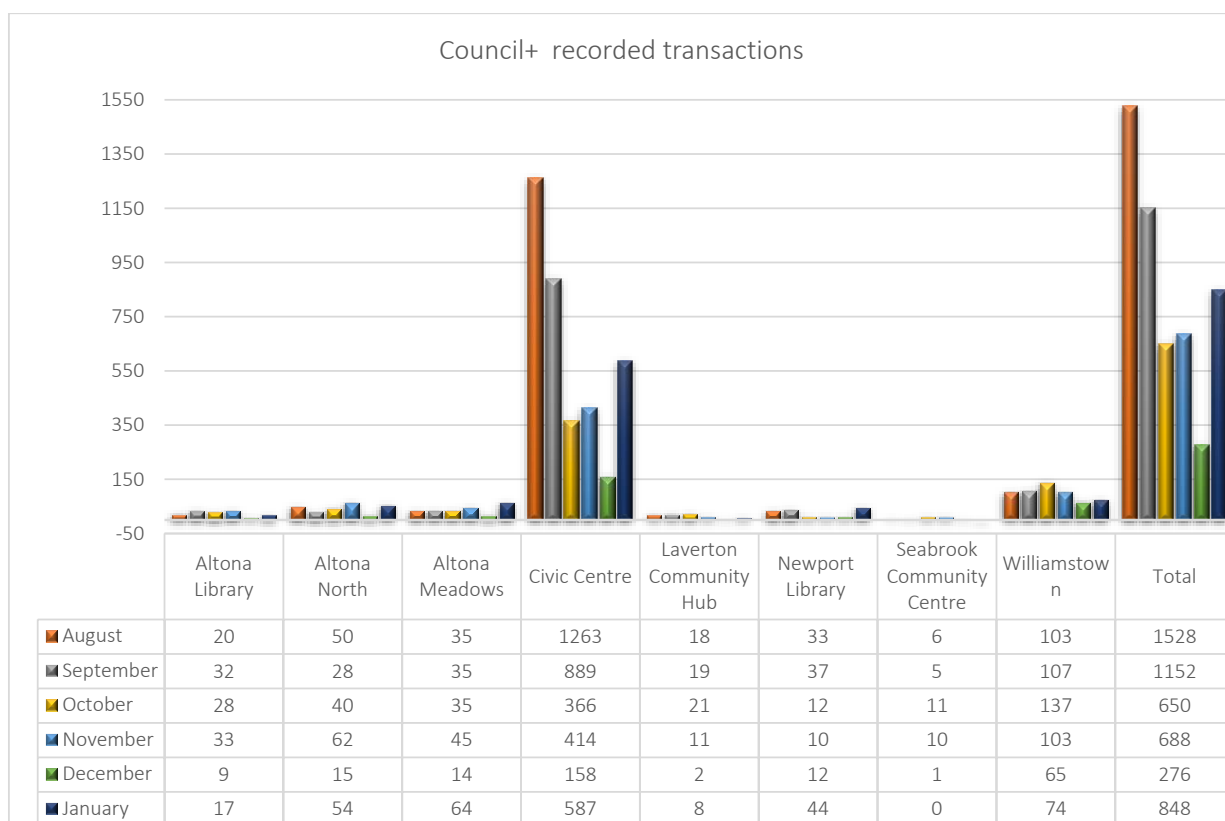
Year to date eLibrary loans have decreased -11.6 per cent compared to January 2023.

Council +

In conjunction with the Conservation team, two wildlife encounters were held at our STEAM Centre of Excellence at Altona Meadows Library. Over 1,100 people attended.

As part of the summer outreach program for children, story time and activities were held at the Williamstown Surf Lifesaving Club, the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and Central Square Shopping Centre at Altona Meadows.





Community Hubs and Centres



Laverton Community Hub

Big Story Day was held at Laverton Community Hub on 24 January 2024.

There were 293 bookings during December and 513 people attended the active program.

During January there were 175 bookings with 689 people attending the active program.

Newport Community Hub

There were 87 bookings during December and 40 bookings in January.

Seabrook Community Centre

There were 75 bookings during December. Seabrook was closed in January and reopened at the beginning of Term 1, 2024.

Youth services



Youth counselling

During December, Council's generalist youth counselling service delivered 40 face-to-face and online counselling sessions to 28 young people. At the end of December, there was an eight-week waiting period for a young person to access youth counselling services. Due to a problem with the counselling database during the transition to SharePoint, we are unable to provide stats for January, at this time.

Youth programs and activities

Council ran eight youth programs and activity sessions in December 2023 and six in January 2024, resulting in 153 contacts with young people. Over December and January activities and programs included FReeZA Committee, Creative Space Art Program and Newport Drop in Program, School Holiday activities and promotions of Summer in the Bay 2024 activities for young people.

Youth-focussed, capacity building programs

In December one final session of Tuning in to Teens was held for eight parents and stakeholder contacts, to support and empower young people. No sessions were held in January.

Immunisations



Immunisations

During December 2023 and January 2024, Council's immunisation team held 22 immunisation sessions, seven home visit sessions and administered 1,370 immunisations to 560 clients.

Sessions were held at Williamstown Town Hall and Laverton Community Hub.

Early years and family services



Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

A total of 149 infants were born to Hobsons Bay families during December 2023 and January 2024. The highest numbers of infants born were in Altona and Newport.

The Universal MCH Service completed 1,829 consultations/appointments. The Enhanced MCH Service received 21 new referrals and provided 135 ongoing consultations for vulnerable families. Ten vulnerable families received support packages from either St Kilda Mums or the Victorian Government Nursery Equipment Program for vulnerable families.

Parenting programs

During December 2023 and January 2024, the following parenting support programs were delivered.

- 17 First Time Parenting groups
- 4 Sleep Support groups
- 38 Sleep Support Outreach appointments
- 34 Breast Feeding Support sessions
- 1 Baby Makes Three sessions

Family/social work support (MCH)

During December 2023 and January 2024, Council's MCH social worker responded to three new Family Violence referrals. Thirteen further consults were conducted in relation to family violence.

Preschool Field Officer

The Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program supports kindergarten educators in developing capacity and skills to deliver inclusive programs for all children, including those with additional needs. The PSFO program received seven referrals in December and three in January, in addition to providing 40 consultations to Educators.

Kindergarten registration

Between 1 December 2023 and 31 January 2024, 68 three-year-old and 23 four-year-old kindergarten registrations were processed.

Occasional Care

Twenty-two children (between 0-5 years) attended Council's Occasional Care program on Thursdays and Fridays in December 2023. No Occasional Care Sessions were held in January 2024.

Supported playgroups

During December 2023, 31 small talk groups, 12 supported playgroups and four one-to-one sessions were provided to vulnerable families. No small talk group, supported playgroups, or one-to-one sessions were delivered in January 2024.

Services for older residents and residents with disabilities



Planned Activity Groups

Twenty-two Planned Activity Group sessions were provided to 78 clients in December 2023. During January 2024, 35 sessions were provided to 76 clients.

Community transport

Seniors Transport provided 14 trips to 33 clients in December 2023 and January 2024. A total of four Social Transport trips were provided to 18 clients over the same period.

Aged assessment

Council undertook 158 assessments and 210 support plan reviews for services required by older residents in December 2023 and January 2024.

Delivered meals

Between December 2023 and January 2024, 178 residents received a meal delivered to their homes. In total 4,253 meals were provided to eligible residents.

Home maintenance

Between December 2023 and January 2024, 38 residents received a service through Council's Home Maintenance Program.

Events, Arts and Culture



Event applications and permits

Five Expressions of Interest for event applications were received in December 2023 and nine Expressions of Interest for event applications were received in January 2024.

Six event permits were issued during December 2023 and four event permits were issued during January 2024.

Filming

Eight filming applications were received between December 2023 and January 2024, including a photographic shoot for a First Nations arts exhibition, and the commencement of a new television production. Eight filming permits were issued during this period.

Markets

In December 2023 and January 2024, monthly markets were held including the Regional Farmers Market in Altona Meadows and Williamstown, the Spotswood Slow Food Market, the Altona Lions Club Cherry Lake Market and the Williamstown Craft Market.

The weekly AVTA Altona Beach Market took place over the period, with some weather impacts. Extreme weather conditions also saw the rescheduling of the Williamstown Christmas Twilight Market.

Street banners

The December installation comprised of Christmas street banners.

Events and festivals

Events held over the period supported by Council's Make it Happen funding, include:

- Jamaican Food and Music Festival at Seaworks
- Carols by candlelight events at Altona Meadows and Williamstown

Inclement weather affected several events, leading to the cancellation of the scheduled Newport Carols on the Green and alterations to certain components of the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce Christmas Program.

Always Live

The Always Live music event at Commonwealth Reserve, supported by the state government and Metro Trains, was impacted by persistent bad weather resulting in cancellation on the day.

Movies by the Bay

Council presented Movies by the Bay at Homestead Run Reserve, Seabrook on 12 January 2024 and at Logan Reserve, Altona on 19 January 2024.

Summer Sounds

Council hosted Summer Sounds featuring music, street theatre and circus activities at Curlew Community Park in Laverton on 20 January 2024 and Logan Reserve on 27 January 2024.

Live at the Rotunda

A live and local music program is curated by members of the Newport Fiddle & Folk Club, providing music at the Rotunda at Commonwealth Reserve every Saturday during January, and at the Gazebo at Logan Reserve on dates in January and February. Genres include jazz, acoustic, gypsy and folk.

Celebrate Summer Altona Beach Program

To celebrate the new pier, and promote the area, Council supported sand sculpture displays and workshops across three days at Altona Beach on 12 January, 16 January and 20 January 2024. The program was popular, with lots of people of all ages assisting in building the sculptures.

Hobsons Bay Visitor Information Centre

The Visitor Information Centre (VIC) was open daily between 10am and 4pm. The centre was closed on Christmas day.

During December, 1,355 visitor contacts were made with 2,482 in January, 49 per cent were visiting from Victoria, 21 per cent were internationals, 10 per cent from interstate, and 20 per cent were locals.

During December 2023 and January 2024 VIC staff and volunteers assisted in the trial of the Hobsons Bay Bus Tour, briefed accommodation providers and collaborated with VIC staff in Melbourne and Werribee.

Williamstown Town Hall

December bookings included A Celtic Christmas by A Taste of Ireland, the Williamstown High School end of year graduation, Council's annual Christmas party for Meals on Wheels volunteers, a church gala and a nine-day booking for the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Service.

Regular immunisation sessions were held as well as meetings by The Williamstown Toastmasters, Williamstown Historical Society and Williamstown Film Society.



Image: 'A Celtic Christmas'

Altona Theatre

Dance season was in full swing at Altona Theatre, with eight dance studios using the venue for multiple days and concerts throughout December 2023. The performances saw the venue at capacity most days.

The Vivekanand Society of Australia Inc held a presentation evening in January 2024, while resident theatre company Altona City Theatre held auditions for their upcoming March pantomime.

The Substation

Approximately 800 people attended the Inner West Art Fair in December 2023.

Luke George, Amrita Hepi and Harrison Ritchie-Jones premiered new contemporary dance works in Lucy Guerin's *Pieces* with positive media reviews and high audience attendance.

Western Edge invited creatives from the west to *Open Stage: Sunset Session*, an evening of open-mic performance curated by young producers.

The Substation will host two Queer Photo 24 exhibitions, along with a launch for Midsumma.



Image: 'Open Stage: Sunset Session' curated by Western Edge

Woods Street Arts Space, Laverton

Expressions of Interest closed in December 2023 for Woods Street Arts Space programming February to July 2024. Council received 16 submissions, with a considerable number of new, local applicants. The weekly program launches in February.

In December 2023, two new programs were delivered: a co-design creative space with guest artist Jen Tran for young children aged under 12 as well as a weekly 'drop-in session with a Creative Producer'.

In partnership with Hobsons Bay Youth Services a Design a Tote Bage workshop was produced, as part of summer activities for young people aged 12-17. The workshop was booked out to capacity with 12 attendees.

Jubilee Fountain Conservation

Works have been completed to repair the plumbing and stonework of the Jubilee Fountain at the Williamstown Botanic Gardens, after vandalism in 2023.

The Jubilee Fountain was commissioned to commemorate the jubilee of the Williamstown municipality, being installed in April 1907. The fountain was designed by Town Surveyor Mr. H.V. Champion and built by Mr. Edward Bliss.



Image: Jubilee Fountain, Williamstown Botanic Gardens

Laneway Gallery at Woods Street Arts Space, Laverton

Expressions of Interest closed in December 2023 for the Laneway Gallery February to July 2024 program. Three Western region artists were selected to present exhibitions responding to themes of diversity, local place and sustainability.

The current exhibition, *Finally The Sun* by Olivia Mroz, is presented as part of Midsumma and on until 29 February 2024.

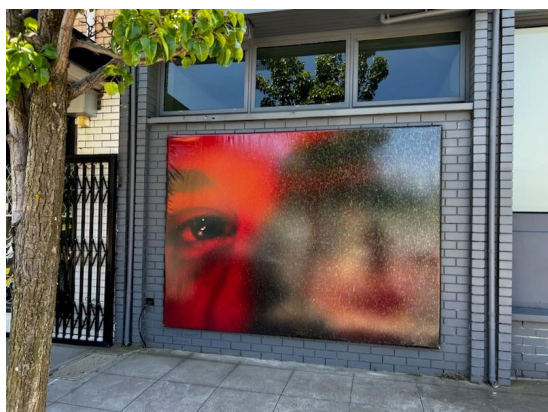


Image: 'Finally The Sun' by Olivia Mroz

Airtime at the Altona Meadows Skate Park

Earth, Body and Soul by Parminder Kaur Bhandal are exhibited on the Airtime flags in Altona Meadows until 2 February 2024.

In this series of works, nature acts as both content and context with Bhandal's family and friends wearing works created in collaboration with the artist.



Image: 'Earth, Body and Soul' by Parminder Kaur Bhandal

The Outside Gallery at Paine Reserve in Newport

Presented as part of Queer Photo (between 27 January 2024 and 24 March 2024), *So'otaga* (Connection) by Leilani Fuimaono is a visual love letter exchange with Fuimaono's LGBTQIA+ Pasifika family, friends and community.

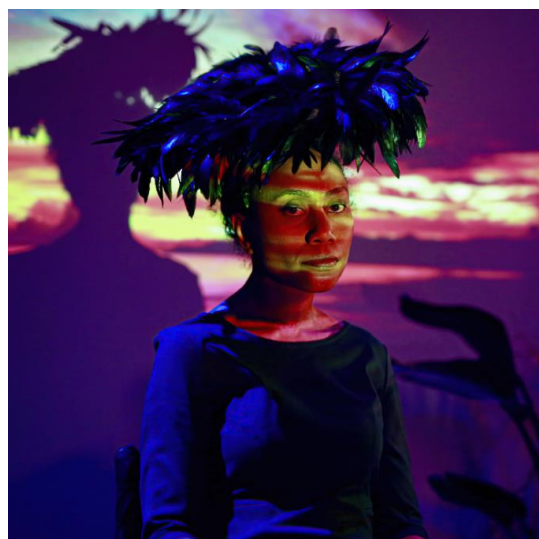


Image: Pauline Vetuna by Leilani Fuimaono

Street Art

Council received 25 applications from creative practitioners from the western regions of Melbourne to contribute to the 2024 Street Art Program.

Eight artists were selected to create works for various sites across the municipality this year.



Image: 'Colours of Seabrook' by Amanda Newman (2022)

Midsumma

Midsumma (which ran between 21 January and 11 February 2024) returned to Hobsons Bay as part of Midsumma Westside, a partnership between Hobsons Bay, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley and Wyndham councils.

The program featured over 20 events including exhibitions, workshops and tours. Venues in Hobsons Bay included Louis Joel Arts and Community Centre in Altona, Woods Street Arts Space in Laverton and The Substation in Newport.

The Substation hosted the launch event for Queer Photo, a festival presented by Midsumma and Photo 2024, in partnership with Creative Victoria's Go West program. Queer Photo features local and international artists across, Footscray, Newport and Werribee between 27 January and 24 March 2024.

Council took part in the annual Pride March in St Kilda on 4 February 2024.

Community Partnerships



Make it Happen grants program – 2024

Information for Council's Make it Happen grants program has been distributed. Grant applications open on 1 February 2024 and close on 2 May 2024, or earlier, if funds are exhausted. Applications are assessed monthly.

- applications can be made for equipment and resources (up to \$1,500), community projects (up to \$15,000) or events (up to \$25,000)
- grants support activities, programs and events that take place until December 2025
- \$495,000 is available, including a \$30,000 contribution from Toyota Australia for equipment grants.

Monthly grant information and writing sessions are scheduled.

Small group operational grants 2024

Small group operational grants of \$500 provide support the ongoing operations of small groups that meet regularly and promote social connection. Forty small groups received funds in December for 2024.



Image: Make it Happen recipients celebrating the grants program in 2023

Christmas Hamper Appeal 2023

Donations for the Christmas Hamper Appeal were collected across all Council+ sites, Bayfit Leisure Centre, Jim’s Self Storage and a local kindergarten until 8 December 2023. In partnership with Laverton Community Integrated Services and Laverton Colledge, Council delivered 36 hampers to local people in need.



Image: Mayor Cr Matt Tyler with donations for the 2023 Christmas Hamper Appeal



Image: Hampers created from the 2023 Christmas Hamper Appeal

Brooklyn Community Hall

The Vibrant Brooklyn Leadership Program kicked off in December 2023 with 15 local participants signing up. Participants of the program will work alongside the Brooklyn Community Hall Committee to attract and manage local-led projects, activities and events at the hall and its surrounds.

Brooklyn Community Hall E-News

The first edition of the Brooklyn Community Hall E-News was published and circulated in late January to 57 subscribers.

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY HALL	WHAT'S ON JAN/FEB 2024
	VIBRANT BROOKLYN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM RECOMMENCES WED 31ST JAN 7PM - 9PM NEW SIGN UPS WELCOME
	KYOKUSHIN KARATE MON & THUR FROM 15TH JAN 6.30 - 7.15PM CALL NEIL 0435 538 758
	IMMUNISATION PROGRAM 1ST & 3RD TUES OF THE MONTH FROM 6TH FEB 1PM - 2.30PM CALL 9932 1533
MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH 1ST & 3RD TUES OF THE MONTH FROM 6TH FEB 9AM - 1PM CALL 9932 1300	NEWPORT CALESTHENICS SAT 8.30AM - 12.30PM TUES 7PM - 12PM FROM 3RD FEB CALL SIAN 0401977799
PLAYGROUP TUESDAYS FROM 6TH FEB 9AM - 1PM PLAYGROUPS@HOBSONS BAY.VIC.GOV.AU	

TO JOIN THE BCH E-NEWS EMAIL COMMDEV@HOBSONSBAY.VIC.GOV.AU

Image: First edition of Brooklyn Community Hall E-News

Volunteering

The final two volunteer audit actions were completed in December 2023. A total of 13 outcomes were actioned during 2023, following an independent audit undertaken in March. Changes will significantly improve volunteer service delivery and alignment with the Hobsons Bay Volunteer Strategy.

Strategy, Economy and Sustainability

Economic development



Economic Development Strategy

Council adopted a new [Economic Development Strategy 2023-28](#) (EDS) at the 12 December 2023 Council Meeting. The new EDS is a forward-looking strategy that prioritises creating a positive economic environment for businesses and people who visit, live and work in Hobsons Bay. It is built around a vision statement and three strategic pillars “Grow” “Elevate” and “Transform”.

Experience Hobsons Bay Bus Tour

Through Pitch Your Project funding, Council, alongside Explore Australia, launched the Experience Hobsons Bay Bus Tour. The tour runs Tuesdays and Saturdays until April 2024.

The tour is off to a great start with 135 passengers in January. The tour takes guests across Hobsons Bay to stops including:

- Gem Pier and Commonwealth Reserve, Williamstown
- Williamstown Botanic Gardens and Williamstown Beach
- Altona Beach Market
- Truganina Coastal Park
- Newport Lakes
- Grazeland



Image: Passengers on the Experience Hobsons Bay Bus Tour

Outdoors – Pier Street Feature Site

In early December Council reconfigured the Pier Street feature site between Blyth and Queen Streets. The temporary street closure had modifications made to outdoor trading areas in line with the proposed extended footpath, an increase in community spaces and opportunities for informal activities. Upon trialling the activations during the summer months, further adjustments may occur during 2024.



Image: Pier Street feature site in Altona

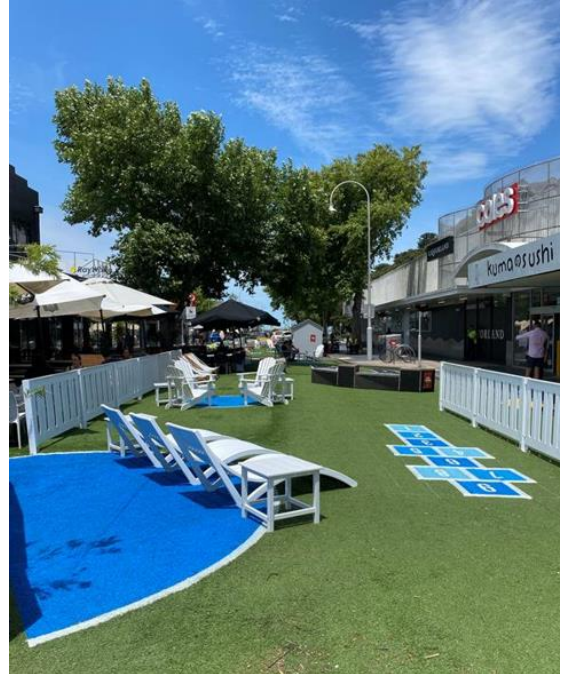


Image: New furniture in the Pier Street feature site



Image: Feature wall of Altona Pier, photo taken by local photographer Russell Cassar

Environmental Sustainability



Williamstown Container Deposit Scheme opening event

Deputy Mayor Cr Sutton-Legaud joined TOMRA Cleanaway in celebrating the official opening of the Williamstown Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) VIC Depot on 8 December 2023.

Residents can drive into the Williamstown CDS Depot, which is operated by environmental charity CitizenBlue, where staff will process their eligible cans, cartons and bottles for a 10c per container cash rebate.



Image: New Container Deposit Scheme Depot opening in Williamstown operated by Citizen Blue. Photo provided by TOMRA Cleanaway

Saving cups from landfill on Big Story Day

At Council's Big Story Day event on 15 January 2024, 95 cups were saved from landfill where free coffee was served in reusable mugs instead of single-use coffee cups.

Waste and recycling calendar distributed to households

Council distributed printed copies of the 2024 waste and recycling calendar to households in January. The calendar was coupled with a flyer including information about the kerbside waste service and promoting some of Council's environmental initiatives.

Christmas tree drop off event

One hundred and eighty-five Christmas trees were collected at Council's Christmas tree drop off event on 13 January 2024. The event supports residents with responsibly disposing of their Christmas trees.



Image: Cars dropping off Christmas trees at the drop off day

Supporting families to switch to reusable nappies

Parents of young children had the chance to learn about reusable swim nappies and take home a free pair when they attended Council's Early Years Clothes Swap event on 19 January 2024. Reusable nappies are an affordable and sustainable alternative to single-use swim nappies.

Reusables Rebate

Throughout December 2023 and January 2024, 91 residents applied for Council's *Reusables Rebate*. The rebate offers residents up to \$65 cash back when they purchase reusable nappy, sanitary and/or incontinence products.

This initiative is the result of a successful 2023/24 community Pitch Your Project.

Social & Strategic Planning



International Day of People with a Disability

International Day of People with a Disability (3 December 2023) aims to promote community awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with a disability. To celebrate, Council hosted an author talk with Carly Findlay OAM - an award-winning writer, speaker, and disability activist - at Altona Meadows Library and Learning Centre. Council also delivered and supported other free activities, including the launch of the Accessible Beaches Program, and an all-abilities soccer program for children hosted by Barnstoneworth United Junior Football Club.



Image: Author talk with Carly Findlay OAM

A Fair Hobsons Bay for All 2024-28

On 12 December 2023 Council adopted [A Fair Hobsons Bay for All 2024-28](#), an integrated social policy framework. The policy aims to ensure that fairness and equity continue to be embedded in all of Council's decisions and activities. It replaces the previous iteration, A Fair Hobsons Bay for All 2019-23. The updated policy will be implemented through annual action plans, with reporting to occur via Council's Annual Report.



Image: A Fair Hobsons Bay For All

Draft Alcohol Harm Prevention Policy

In December, Council commenced preliminary engagement to develop a [Draft Alcohol Harm Prevention Policy](#) to update its 2016 policy statement. Two surveys were undertaken, which provided an opportunity for residents and local community organisations (such as sporting clubs) to share their experiences, views, and suggestions for preventing harm from alcohol. Further consultation has been undertaken with other key stakeholders and Council staff, it is anticipated that the draft policy will be available for public feedback in mid-2024.

Accessible Beaches Program

Council's Accessible Beaches Program commenced in December 2023 and continues until March 2024. Beach matting will be available seven days a week at Williamstown and Altona Beaches. Beach wheelchairs and walkers are also available at both locations during surf lifesaving patrol hours (between 12pm and 5pm weekends and public holidays). The program is delivered with generous support from Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club, Altona Life Saving Club and local traders.



Emissions reduction

Household electrification action planner

Council has made available a practical action planner to support residents switch to electric appliances at home. Electric appliances are healthier, cheaper to run and better for the environment than their gas counterparts.

Residents can now download the [action planner](#), designed to help them choose which appliances they'll replace, when, and provides links to available rebates and discounts.

Solar webinar

Council delivered a free online webinar in partnership with the Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action for Hobsons Bay residents on 9 December 2023. Attendees received expert advice on solar panels and home batteries and a recording of the webinar will be made [available on our website](#).

Planning, Building and Health Update

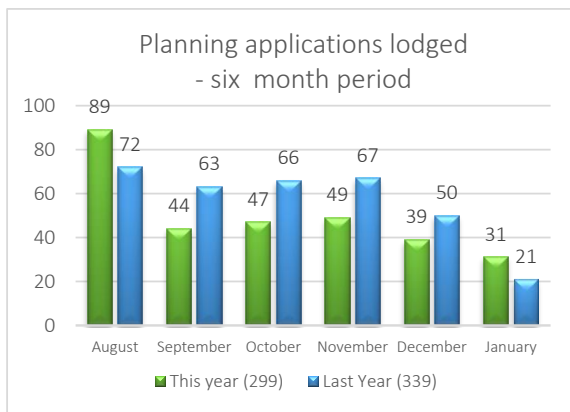
Planning



Planning applications received

Council received 70 planning permit applications for the months of December 2023 and January 2024.

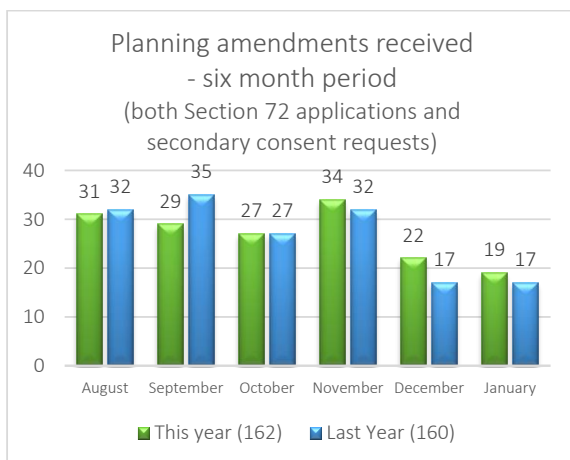
For the six-month period from August 2023 to January 2024, 299 planning permit applications were received, a 12 per cent decrease from the same period last year.



Amended permit applications lodged

Council received 41 planning permit amendment applications for the months of December 2023 and January 2024.

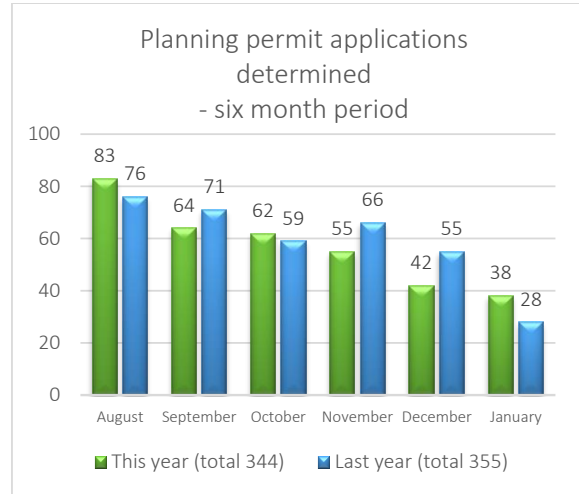
For the six-month period from August 2023 to January 2024, 162 planning permit amendment applications were received, a one per cent increase from the same period last year.



Planning applications determined

Council completed 80 planning permit applications for the months of December 2023 and January 2024.

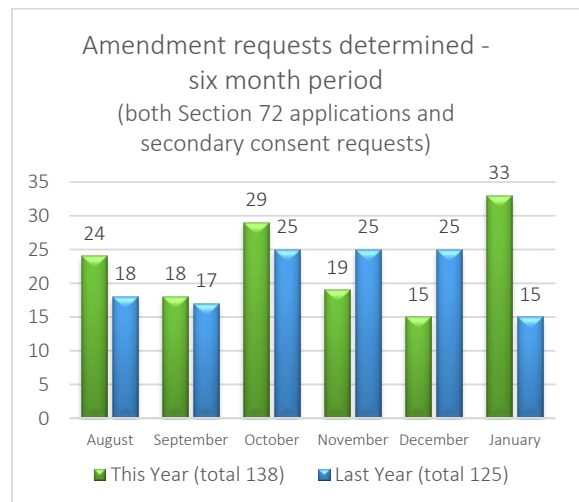
For the six-month period from August 2023 to January 2024, 344 planning permit applications were completed, a three per cent decrease from the same period last year.



Planning amendment requests determined

Council completed 80 planning amendment applications for the month of December 2023.

For the six-month period from August 2023 to January 2024, 344 planning amendment applications were determined, a three per cent decrease from the same period last year.



VCAT

The Town Planning Department received the following appeal decisions:

Application Number: PA220555

Address: 14 Twyford St Williamstown

Proposal: The extension of one dwelling on a lot under Clause 32.09-5 (Neighbourhood Residential Zone); The partial demolition and the construction of a building and carrying out of works under Clause 43.01-1 (Heritage Overlay); The construction of a building and carrying out of works under Clause 43.02-2 (Design and Development Overlay) in accordance with the endorsed plans.

Delegate Decision: Refusal

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: Set Aside/Permit Issued

Made by consent order? No

Application Number: VS230264

Address: 14 Vernon St South Kingsville

Proposal: The construction of a fence higher than 1.2 metres on a lot less than 300 square metres in the General Residential Zone Schedule 3, in accordance with the endorsed plans.

Delegate Decision: Refusal

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: Set Aside/Permit Issued

Made by consent order? No

Application Number: PA1737498-1

Address: 14 Vernon St South Kingsville

Proposal: Construction of four double storey dwellings in accordance with the endorsed plans.

Delegate Decision: Permit Issued

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: Approval (varied)

Made by consent order? No

Application Number: P98.975-1

Address: 144E Point Cook Rd Point Cook

Proposal: Development and use of the land for the purpose of a petrol station, convenience shop, take-away food premises and car wash in accordance with the endorsed plans.

Delegate Decision: Refusal

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: Set Asided/Permit Amended

Made by consent order? No

Application Number: PA220431

Address: Lot A Akuna Dr Williamstown North

Proposal: Use of the land for a Warehouse (including a Store) within 30m of a Residential Zone; Use of the land for a Food and Drink Premises; Use of the land for an Office; To construct buildings and carry out of works; To reduce the required number of car parking spaces; To remove native vegetation. In accordance with the endorsed plans.

Delegate Decision: Refusal

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: Set Aside/Permit Issued

Made by consent order? No

Application Number: PA220365

Address: 36 Kanowna St Williamstown

Proposal: Construction of a dwelling on a lot less than 300 square metres in area under clause 32.09-5; Demolition or removal of a building and construction of a building or construction of or carrying out works under clause 43.01-1; Construction of a building or construction of or carrying out works under clause 43.02-2 In accordance with the endorsed plans.

Delegate Decision: Refusal

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: Set Aside/Permit Issued

Made by consent order? No

The Town Planning Department received the following appeal decisions in January 2024:

Application Number: PA220256

Address: 18 Merritt Ct Altona VIC

Proposal: The construction of two or more dwellings on a lot under clause 32.09-6 (three double storey dwellings); and Removal of drainage and sewerage easement E-1 on Lot 66 on Lot Plan 057853 and contained in Certificate of Title Volume 08435 Folio 101 under Clause 52.02

Delegate Decision: Refusal

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: Decision Affirmed

Made by consent order? No

Application Number: PA220499

Address: 93 Stephenson St South Kingsville

Proposal: The construction of two or more dwellings on a lot under clause 32.08-6 (two double storey dwellings) in accordance with the endorsed plans.

Delegate Decision: Permit issued (Appeal withdrawn)

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: N/A

Made by consent order? No

Application Number: PA220480

Address: 219 Kororoit Creek Rd Williamstown

Proposal: The use of the land and buildings and works for the purposes of a material recycling facility pursuant to Clauses 33.01-1 and 33.01-4 (IN1Z); Building and works pursuant to Clause 43.02-2 (DDO4) in accordance with the endorsed plans.

Delegate Decision: Refusal

DPC Decision: N/A

VCAT Decision: Set Aside/Permit Issued

Made by consent order? No

Planning applications of interest

There was one application of interest to report this month.

Planning application PA231116 – 2-4 Fitzroy Street, Laverton

An application has been lodged for 10 three storey dwellings across two lots in Laverton. The land is within the Residential Growth Zone. Further information has been requested and the application will be advertised upon receipt of this information.

Major Hazard Facilities

There are nine Major Hazard Facilities (MHF) in Hobsons Bay. WorkSafe Victoria (WSV) are the authority that provides advice to Council on planning applications for use and development in proximity to an MHF.

Council developed and adopted the Interim Management of Land Use Planning Around Major Hazard Facilities Guidelines (the Guidelines) to guide planning decisions. The Guidelines outline the Inner and Outer Advisory Areas around MHFs to determine whether an application should be referred to WSV.

Since 1 July 2022, Council's Statutory Planning team have referred 85 planning permit applications to WSV. WSV have provided the following responses:

- Opposed 34 applications
- Support 13 applications (subject to conditions)



An analysis of these responses has confirmed that WSV has requested either the removal of any use that proposes a significant attraction of people or have requested placing significant limits on the number of people that can work at or visit these sites.

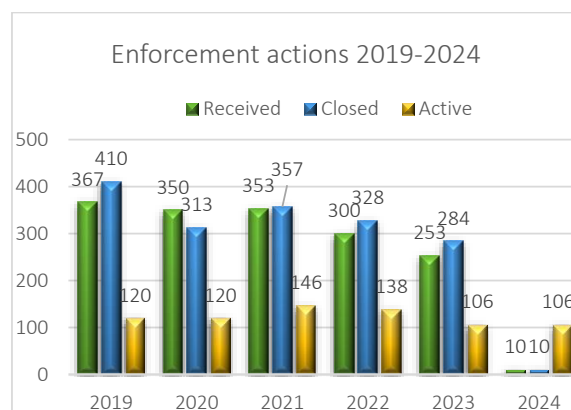
Of the 85 Applications referred to WSV, 32 involve warehouses or other low-intensity industrial uses. There is a very small population expectation at these properties.

Whilst it appears that WSV in raw statistics supports development, the analysis of the response has confirmed that WSV generally oppose any use which seeks to significantly increase population growth and population attracting uses around MHF's.

The expansion of the Inner and Outer Advisory Areas would favour MHF operations.

Active and significant enforcement matters

Council received 40 planning enforcement issues for the months of December 2023 and January 2024.



Building



Permits and consents

- Council’s Municipal Building Surveyor issued one building permits
- 124 building permits were issued by private building surveyors
- 30 report and consent dispensation requests were determined

Inspections and enforcement

- 22 building notices/orders were issued
- 12 notices/orders were resolved/completed/cancelled
- 298 inspections occurred

Building information requests

Council processed 279 requests for information and 95 general enquiry applications during December 2023 and January 2024.

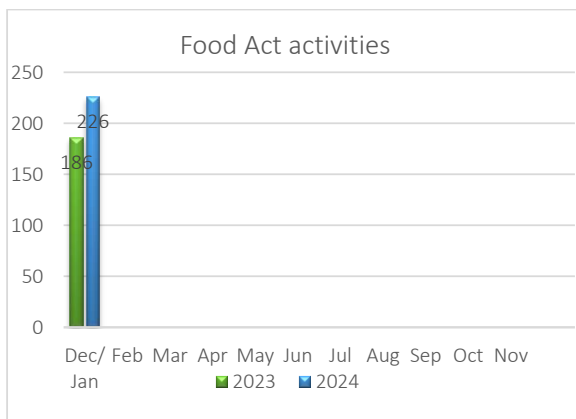
Health



Food Act activities

The following activities were recorded in December 2023 and January 2024, with the main activities being:

- 147 mandatory food assessments and inspections (Class one = 8, Class two =103, Class three = 36)
- 7 new food premises registration inspections
- 4 plans assessments
- 12 progress inspections



Client managed premises

Council has 21 client managed premises.

Food sampling

No samples were taken from Class two premises during December 2023 and January 2024

Food recalls

Five food recall was received in December 2023 and January 2024.

Outbreaks

One single incident salmonella case investigation was conducted in January 2024.

FoodTrader

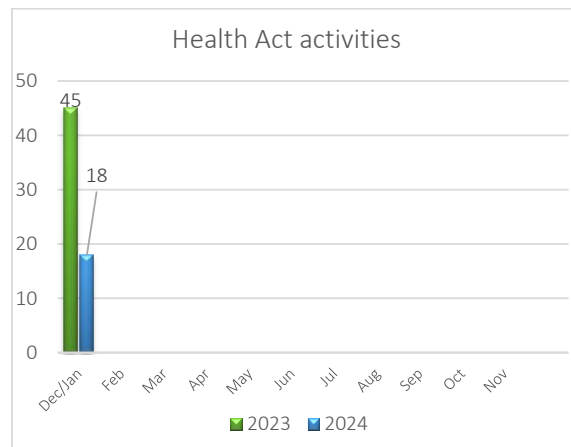
The following mobile and temporary food activities were recorded in December 2023 and January 2024.

- 138 Statements of Trade lodged with Council
- 20 new registrations issued

Public Health and Wellbeing Act activities

The following activities were recorded during December 2023 and January 2024.

- 8 mandatory public health inspections
- 2 new premises registration inspections
- 1 progress inspection
- 3 assessment of plans



Outbreaks

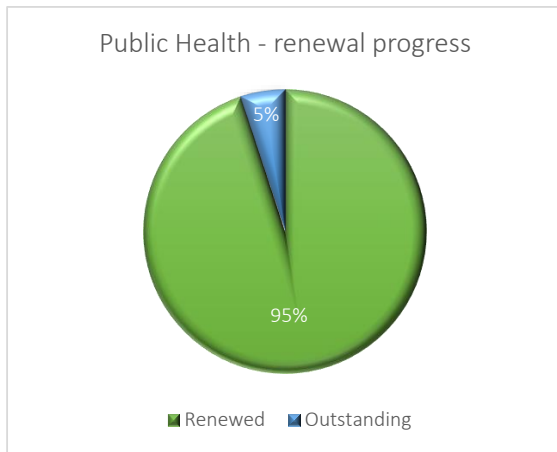
One gastroenteritis outbreak investigations was conducted in December 2023.

Tobacco Act activities

During December 2023 and January 2024, ten tobacco education visits were conducted.

Public Health Act renewals

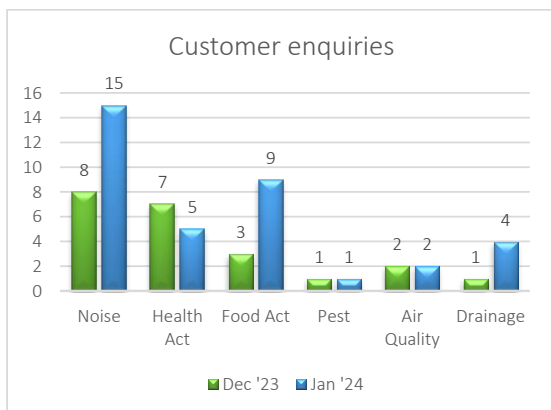
Public Health premises operate from 1 January to 31 December each year. All premises were notified to renew and pay their Food Act registration on 21 November 2023. All fees were due 31 December 2023. As of 31 January 2024, 95 per cent of premises have renewed their registration.



Customer enquiries

During December 2023 and January 2024, 58 customer requests were received, relating to:

- Noise 23
- Health Act 12
- Food Act 12
- Pest control 2
- Air quality 4
- Drainage 5



Governance

Governance



Council Meeting Timetable

Council Meeting was held on 12 December 2023.

Councillor Delegates to Council and Community Committees

- Cr Jonathon Marsden attended the meeting of the Metropolitan Transport Forum held on 6 December 2023
- Cr Peter Hemphill attended the meeting of the Substation Board held on 7 December 2023
- Cr Jonathon Marsden attended the meeting of the Association of the Bayside Municipalities on 11 December 2023
- Cr Peter Hemphill attended the meeting of the Hobsons Bay Community Fund held on 13 December 2023
- Cr Matt Tyler attended the meeting of M9 held on 15 December 2023

Citizenship Ceremony

A Citizenship Ceremony for 120 conferees was held at the Williamstown Town Hall on 26 January 2023.

The Ceremony was attended by Mayor Cr Matt Tyler, Cr Antoinette Briffa, Cr Peter Hemphill. Our distinguished guests included the Hon. Melissa Horne MP, the Hon. Trung Luu MP and Carolyn Foley, Acting Senior Sargeant, Victoria Police.

Record of Meetings attended by Councillors

Councillors attended the following meetings held between 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024:

- 5 December 2023 Councillor Briefing Session attended by Cr Antoinette Briffa, Cr Diana Grima, Cr Peter Hemphill, Cr Jonathon Marsden, Cr Pamela Sutton-Legaud and Cr Matt Tyler.
- 12 December 2023 Pre-Council Meeting agenda briefing attended by Cr Antoinette Briffa, Cr Daria Kellander, Cr Peter Hemphill, Cr Jonathon Marsden, Cr Pamela Sutton-Legaud and Cr Matt Tyler.

- 30 January 2024 Councillor Briefing Session attended by Cr Antoinette Briffa, Cr Diana Grima, Cr Peter Hemphill, Cr Jonathon Marsden, Cr Pamela Sutton-Legaud and Cr Matt Tyler.

Documents for Sealing

There were no documents that required sealing during the period.



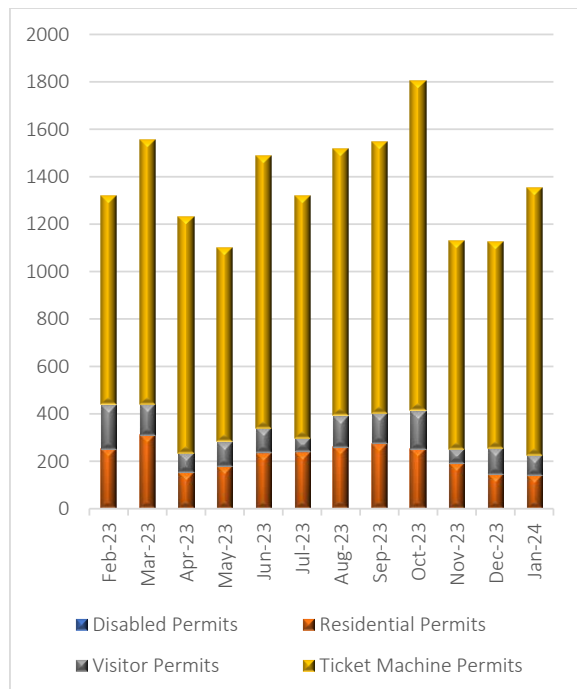
Local Laws

Permits

- issued 0 disabled parking permits
- issued 142 residential permits
- issued 85 visitor permits
- issued 1,127 ticket machine permits
- logged 289 CHARM assignments
- impounded 2 derelict/abandoned vehicles
- issued 24 local law infringement

Parking

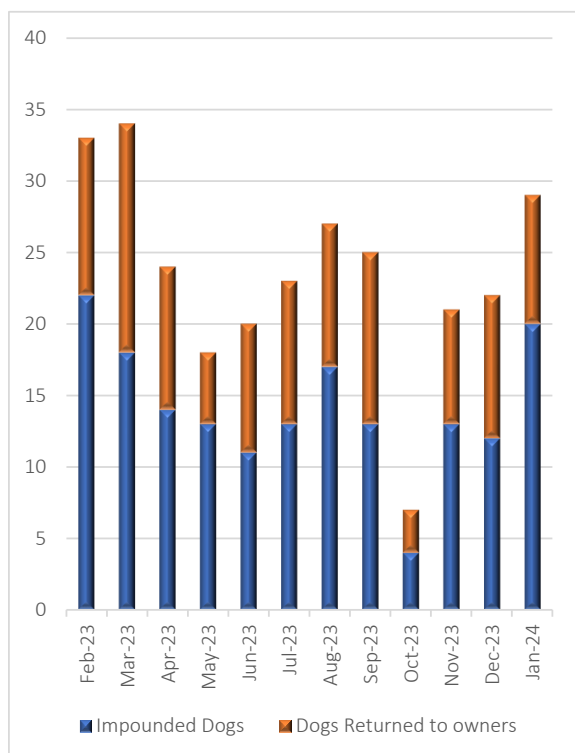
- 214 logged CHARM assignments
- issued 1,757 parking infringements
- issued 129 warnings
- percentage of warnings issued were 7 per cent



Above: The graph above illustrates the number of permits issued for January 2024

Animal management

- logged 147 CHARM assignments
- 14,181 animals registered
- 12 impounded animals at Lost Dogs Home (as at 31 December 2023)
 - dogs – 11 dogs impounded, 6 released
 - cats – 1 impounded, 0 released
- 9 animals returned to their owners by Council officers
- issued 13 animal infringement notices



Above: The graph above reflects the number of dogs impounded and the number of dogs returned home by Council Rangers

Communications and Engagement




Communications

Corporate social media

January 2024

Council manages corporate social media accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Social media is measured as below:

- Reactions – like, love, angry, haha, wow, sad

- Impressions – number of times our content is displayed in someone’s newsfeed
- Reach – total number of people who saw that content
- Engagement – number of times someone engaged with our content through clicks, reactions, shares comments

Total performance summary across all corporate social media accounts

Performance Summary		
View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.		
Impressions	Engagements	Post Link Clicks
527,360 ↗ 33.9%	34,479 ↗ 86.5%	5,495 ↗ 84%
Engagement Rate (per Impression)		
6.5% ↗ 39.3%		

Performance across the platforms decreased for this period due to significantly decreased posting over Christmas and the Council close-down period.

Follower growth across all corporate social media accounts

Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Total Audience	37,573	↗ 0.8%
Total Net Audience Growth	296	↗ 4.2%
Facebook Net Follower Growth	140	↗ 21.7%
Instagram Net Follower Growth	76	↘ 3.8%
LinkedIn Net Follower Growth	80	↘ 11.1%

Total followers per social media accounts

Facebook

Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers ↕	21,553	↗ 0.7%
Net Follower Growth	140	↗ 21.7%
Fans	19,038	↗ 0.8%
Net Page Likes	148	↗ 17.5%
Organic Page Likes	172	↗ 16.2%
Paid Page Likes	0	→ 0%
Page Unlikes	24	↗ 9.1%

Instagram

Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers	7,944	↗ 0.9%
Net Follower Growth	76	↘ 3.8%
Followers Gained	115	↘ 12.2%
Followers Lost	39	↘ 25%

LinkedIn

Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers	8,076	↗ 0.9%
Net Follower Growth	80	↘ 11.1%
Organic Followers Gained	80	↘ 11.1%
Paid Followers Gained	0	→ 0%
Followers Lost	0	→ 0%

Performance per social media account

Facebook

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

Organic and Paid ▼

Impressions 464,377 ↗ 39.2%	Engagements 32,639 ↗ 96.7%	Post Link Clicks 5,303 ↗ 126.3%
Engagement Rate (per Impression) 7% ↗ 41.3%		

Instagram

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

Organic and Paid ▾

Impressions

61,129 ↗ 9%

Organic Engagements

1,627 ↗ 41.1%

Profile Actions

217 ↗ 9.6%

Engagement Rate (per Impression)

2.7% ↗ 29.5%

Instagram stories

Story Metrics	Totals	% Change
Published Stories	8	↗ 60%
Story Replies	3	→ 0%
Story Taps Back	156	↗ 183.6%
Story Taps Forward	4,704	↗ 305.5%
Story Exits	1,001	↗ 344.9%
Story Impressions	7,231	↗ 299.7%
Average Reach per Story	898.38	↗ 100.9%

LinkedIn

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

Impressions

1,854 ↘ 55.5%

Engagements

213 ↘ 71.3%

Post Clicks (All)

192 ↘ 70.1%

Engagement Rate (per Impression)

11.5% ↘ 35.5%

Highest engagement posts for 1 to 31 January 2024

Facebook

 **Hobsons Bay City Cou...**
 Mon 1/22/2024 7:13 pm PST

♻️ What do you get when you combine speed dating with a clean-up event? Rubbish dating! A community...



Total Engagements	6,543
Reactions	778
Comments	634
Shares	60
Post Link Clicks	368
Other Post Clicks	4,703

 **Hobsons Bay City Cou...**
 Tue 1/16/2024 3:32 pm PST

⚠️ There will be fireworks over the next three nights (18, 19 & 20 January) at Melbourne Ballpark, Merton Street...



Total Engagements	2,507
Reactions	259
Comments	175
Shares	41
Post Link Clicks	—
Other Post Clicks	2,032

 **Hobsons Bay City Cou...**
 Sun 1/21/2024 6:51 pm PST

🏗️ The new Altona Pier is officially open! Mayor Cr Matt Tyler and Cr Diana Grima joined the Minister for...



Total Engagements	1,385
Reactions	103
Comments	19
Shares	4
Post Link Clicks	—
Other Post Clicks	1,259

Instagram

 **hobsonsbaycc**
 Sun 1/21/2024 6:51 pm PST

🏗️ The new Altona Pier is officially open! Mayor Cr Matt Tyler and Cr Diana Grima joined the Minister for...



Total Engagements	247
Likes	221
Comments	23
Shares	—
Saves	3

 **hobsonsbaycc**
 Wed 1/10/2024 10:29 pm PST

🏖️ Celebrate the opening of the new Altona Pier with some sand sculpting fun on the beach tomorrow. 📅 Frida...



Total Engagements	243
Likes	174
Comments	2
Shares	60
Saves	7

 **hobsonsbaycc**
 Mon 1/22/2024 7:31 pm PST

♻️ What do you get when you combine speed dating with a clean-up event? Rubbish dating! A community...



Total Engagements	134
Likes	56
Comments	1
Shares	70
Saves	7

Website top pages viewed

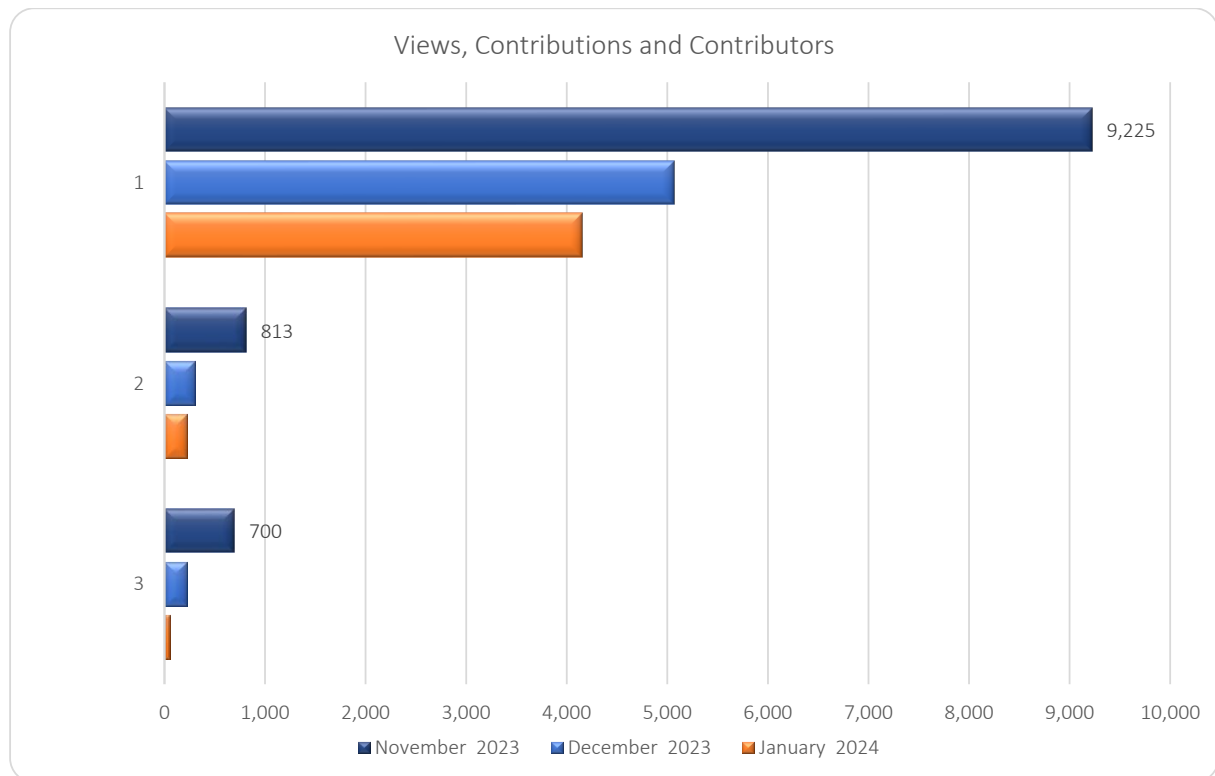
Page title and screen class	Views	Users	Views per user	Average engagement time
	162,724 100% of total	54,228 100% of total	3.00 Avg 0%	49s Avg 0%
1 Home - Hobsons Bay	22,245	14,169	1.57	16s
2 Libraries - Hobsons Bay	12,138	5,222	2.32	22s
3 Search Results - Hobsons Bay	7,869	3,730	2.11	33s
4 What's On - Hobsons Bay	4,733	1,740	2.72	1m 04s
5 When will my bins be collected? - Hobsons Bay	4,687	3,135	1.50	19s
6 Hard waste - Hobsons Bay	4,071	2,329	1.75	52s
7 Kite Flying Festival 2024 Melbourne - Hobsons Bay	3,873	2,716	1.43	21s
8 Waste & Recycling - Hobsons Bay	3,743	2,507	1.49	22s
9 Parking permits - register, renew and cancel - Hobsons Bay	3,433	2,043	1.68	44s
10 Work Opportunities - Hobsons Bay	2,764	1,817	1.52	6s

Engagement

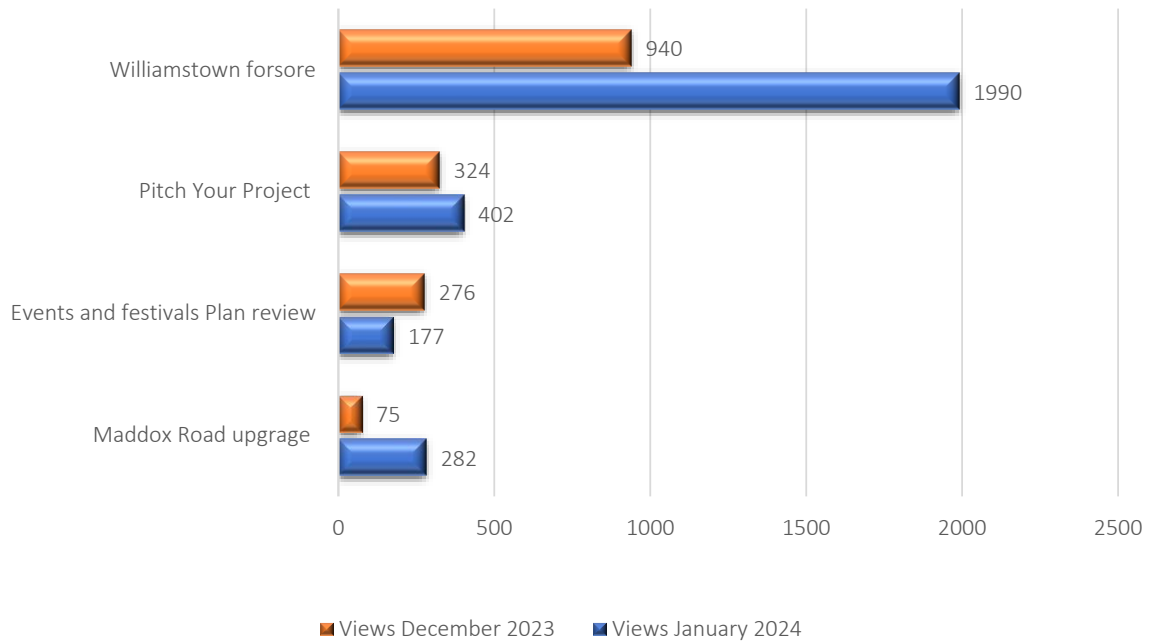


Participate Hobsons Bay statistics

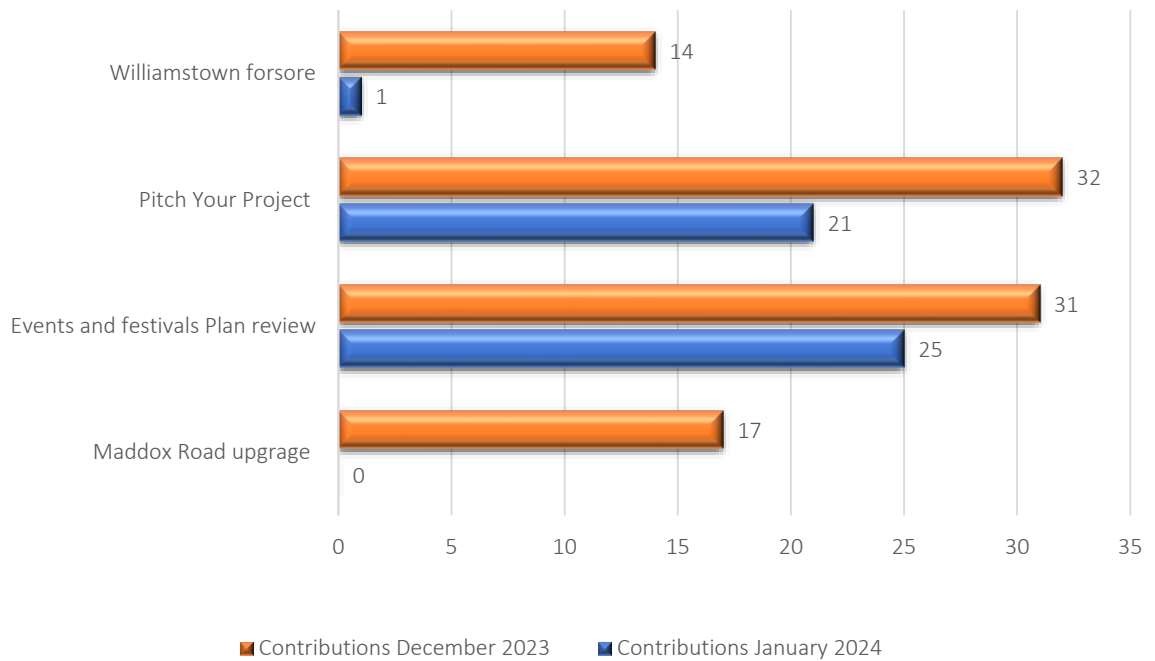
Participate Hobsons Bay, the online community engagement website participate.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au received the below highlights across January 2024.






Participate page views



Participate page contributions



Current consultations – January 2024

<p>Events and Festivals Plan Review</p> 	<p>Council is currently reviewing its Events and Festivals Plan. From neighbourhood initiatives to major events, Hobsons Bay City Council supports a vibrant annual program of events and festivals across our community spaces.</p> <p>The Hobsons Bay Events and Festivals Strategy provides a framework for the planning and delivery of events and festivals in the city, helping to ensure that the impacts, resources, and benefits are balanced across themes and areas of special interest, across locations and throughout the calendar year. Community consultation is from Dec 2023 to March 2024</p> <p>Share your thoughts here</p>
<p>Draft Alcohol Harm Prevention Policy</p> 	<p>Council’s Minimising the Harm of Alcohol Policy Statement 2016 aimed to mitigate the negative impacts of alcohol by adopting a harm minimisation approach, focused on influencing demand, supply and harm reduction. While Council cannot introduce major legislative or regulatory reform, the policy statement has guided Council’s actions and decision-making through a series of commitments and actions.</p> <p>This Preliminary engagement will help shape the draft policy, which will be made available for further public consultation in 2024. Click here to view the page.</p> <p>Consultation dates: November 2023 to January 2024</p>
<p>Pitch your Project</p> 	<p>Do you have a great idea for Council to deliver? We’re looking for projects that will make Hobsons Bay an even more vibrant, welcoming and exciting place to live, work, study and visit. Projects that deliver something special to support people in our community. Capital work projects will not be considered.</p> <p>Each idea must fall within the \$50,000 idea cap. The selected projects will be delivered by the team at Hobsons Bay City Council in the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>Pitch your project here</p>

Advocacy



Newport Rail Yard – UNESCO Nomination

Council is calling on VicTrack to work with council and rail heritage groups to carry out the necessary tasks required to support an application to list Newport Rail Yard on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Council reached out to the CEO of VicTrack, Chris Olds in early January to meet to discuss the possibility of supporting an application and undertake the necessary requirements.

Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre

Council is currently preparing an application for the Federal Government Urban Rivers and Catchment funding program for funds to support the wetlands development of the Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre. Applications close in mid February, 2024.

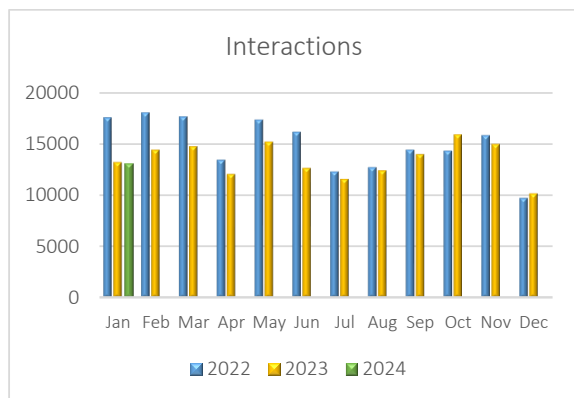
Our Performance

Customer Service



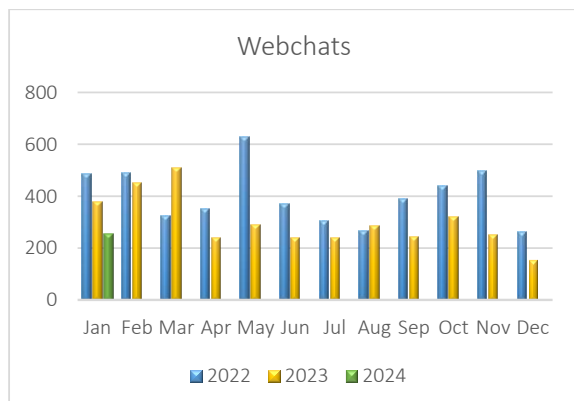
Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to improving our performance and better responding to our community needs.

One way in which we do this is to capture how our community approaches us to ensure we can make that process the best it can be to assist our customers with access to the information needed.



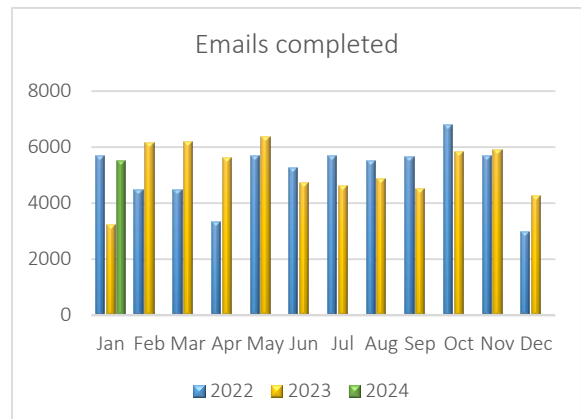
Top enquiries coming from incoming calls are for the following service areas:

- Waste (758)
- Local Laws (736)
- Assets (457)
- Town Planning (341)
- Animals (324)
- City Works & Amenities (232)
- Community care (215)
- Rates (213)



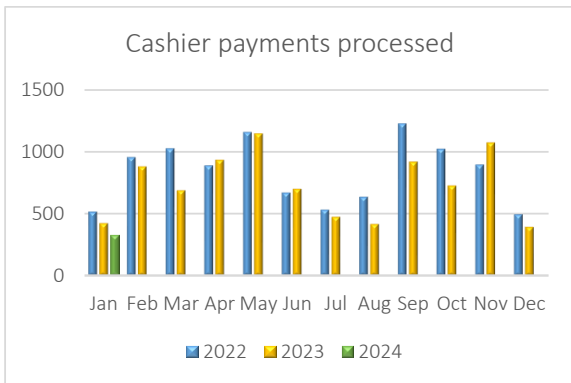
Top reasons our customers contacted Council via Web Chat related to the following service areas:

- Waste (55)
- City Works & Amenities (38)
- Local Laws (29)
- Rates (22)
- Parking Permits (13)
- Assets (11)
- Building (7)
- Town Planning (3)

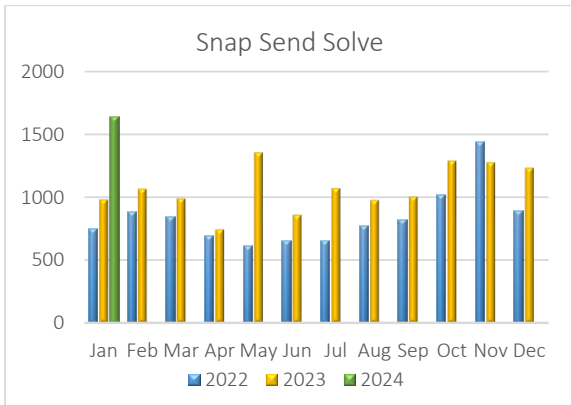


Top enquiries coming from emails are for the following service areas:

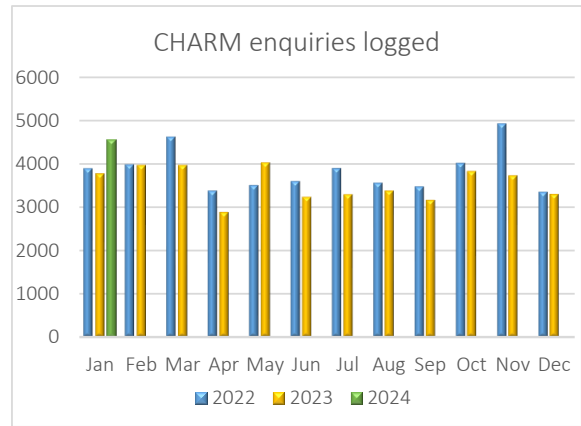
- City Works & Amenities (998)
- Waste (509)
- Local Laws (429)
- Cashier inbox (192)
- Rates (139)
- Animals (88)
- Facilities (67)
- Town Planning (26)



Snap Send Solve is a free app for iPhone or Android devices that allows visitors and residents of Hobsons Bay to easily report issues to Council by capturing a photo of an issue and having this information sent directly to Council for review.

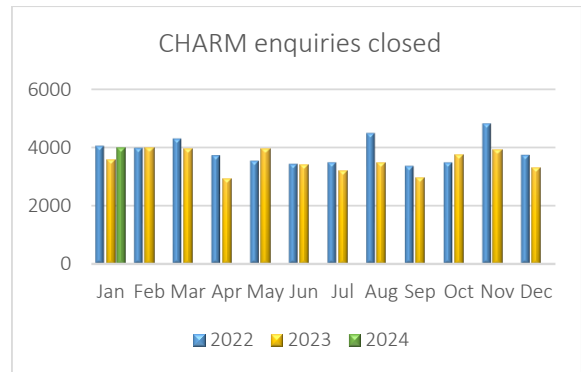


Council's Customer Help and Resolution Management (CHARM) system is used to record customer requests, which are primarily received via phone, Snap Send Solve and email.



Top CHARM requests logged related to the following service areas:

- Garbage (348)
- Council building maintenance (348)
- General waste (347)
- Street trees (332)
- Dumped rubbish (302)
- Local Laws (277)
- Parking (231)



Top CHARM requests closed related to the following service areas:

- Garbage (446)
- Street trees (318)
- General waste (318)
- Council building maintenance (314)
- Parking (227)
- Local Laws (227)

Financial Management

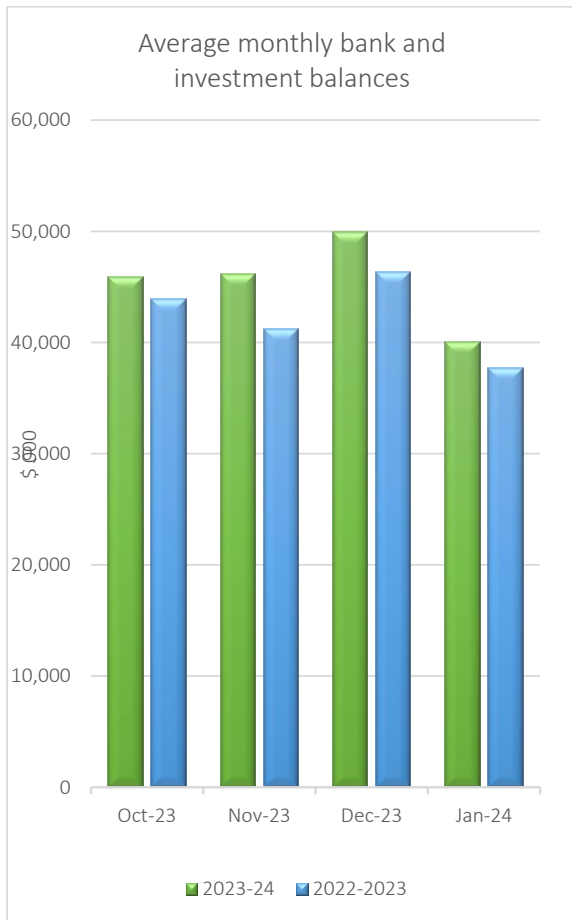


Financial statistics

The average balance of cash and investments during January 2024 was \$40.076 million. This compares to the average balance of \$49.935 million in December 2023 and an average balance of \$46.174 million in November 2023.

The closing balance of cash and investments at the end of January 2024 was \$34.019 million. Compared to \$45.087 million at the end of December 2023 and \$51.986 million at the end of November 2023.

Council investments at the end of January 2024 included cash and at call investments of \$4.019 million and term deposits of \$30.000 million, with an average date to maturity of 145 days and an average interest rate of 5.06 per cent.



The balance of outstanding debtors for January 2024 was \$3.318 million compared to an average balance of \$2.461 million over the last twelve months.

The value of receivables invoices issued in January 2024 was \$1.459 million compared to \$1.027 million in December 2023.

Amounts outstanding over 90 days at the end of January 2024 total \$768,000 representing 23.1 per cent of total debts.

The most significant debtor groups over 90 days are Property and the Westgate Tunnel Project.

The provision for doubtful debts at the end of January 2024 is \$850,000 or 25.5 per cent of total debts.



Hardship Policy

Any person who currently requires financial assistance can apply on-line and may be invited to enter into an interest free repayment plan and /or assessed for a waiver of rates if they provide evidence for consideration and meet the criteria as set out in Council's hardship policy.

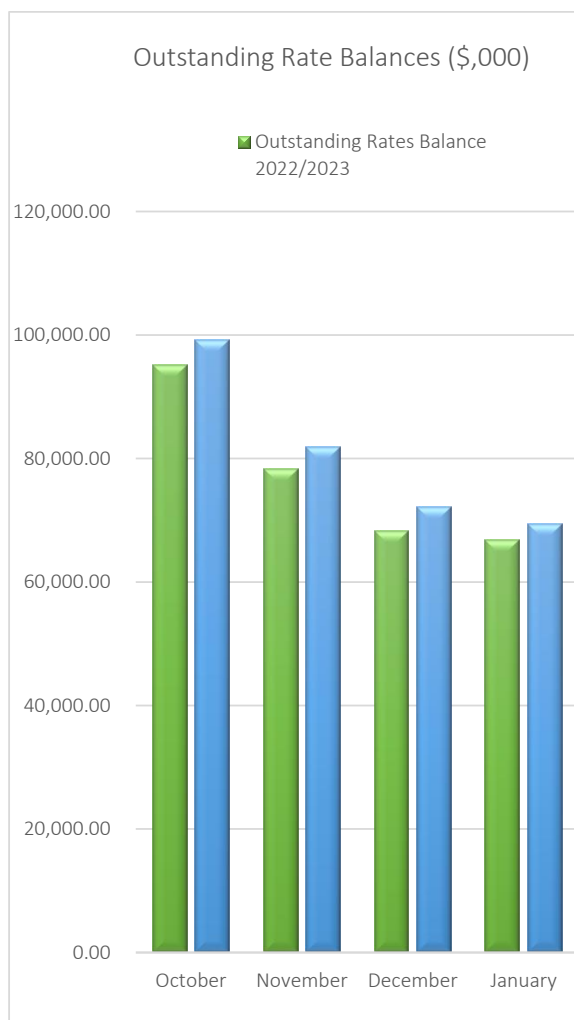
As of 31 January 2024, there is a total of 392 ratepayers, with arrears totaling \$2.08 million, listed on the Council's interest free repayment register. Council has waived over \$50,166 in interest charges since the start of the 2023/24 financial year. Council continued to receive regular payments in the month of December and January and the total amount of arrears outstanding as of 31 January 2024 is just over \$69 million.

Revenue statistics



Rates income as at 31 January 2024 was \$77.07 million compared to the year to date budget of \$76.54 million. This is made up of general rates (\$68.54 million), waste collection charges (\$7.634 million), supplementary income (\$337,000), including objections, payments in lieu of rates (\$445,000) and interest on rates (\$556,000). These are offset against the Financial Hardship rate adjustment and rate waivers (\$9,847) and Council rebates (\$432,900).

The Outstanding Rates Balance as at 31 January 2024 was \$69.36 million. This is made up of general rates (\$68.236 million), pension rebates to be collected (\$721,000) and hardship group (\$403,400).



Procurement



Tenders have been called for the following:

- 2023.42a – McCormack Park Footbridge
- 2023.51 – Altona Hockey Club Pavilion Redevelopment

The following tenders have been closed and are being evaluated:

- 2023.18 – Civil Works Panel - Category 1 Minor Works
- 2023.18 – Civil Works Panel - Category 2 Major Works
- 2023.23 – Pipeline Reserve Seabrook
- 2023.28 – Statutory Planning Consultant Services
- 2023.49 – Technical Consultant Panel
- 2023.48 – Arboriculture Panel

The following contracts awarded under Council resolution:

- 2023.13 – Telecommunications

The following contracts have been awarded under financial delegation:

- 2023.27 – Provision of Planning Notices
- 2023.34 – Newport Community Hub Counselling Suites Upgrade
- 2023.41 – McCormack Park Stage 1 Upgrades

Enhancing our community

The Infrastructure and City Services Directorate has delivered and continues to deliver a range of projects and services across the municipality.

West Gate Tunnel Project



Works have commenced on final road surfacing, road barriers, installation of overhead gantries and signage on the West Gate Freeway section of the West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP). Works also are continuing at the tunnel portals including ventilation structures, the Hyde Street ramps and the various paths and landscaping.



Image: Hyde Street Ramp beside Donald Mclean Reserve, Spotswood

Works are also progressing to join all the elements of the project including the main bridge over the Maribyrnong River and connecting the West Gate Tunnel to CityLink and the Central Business District.

The two tunnel boring machines (TBMs) have been dismantled. About seven kilometres of road deck in both tunnels has been constructed and work continue on the installation of electrical and safety systems, the ground ventilation system at the outbound tunnel exit as well as architectural timber features at its entrances.

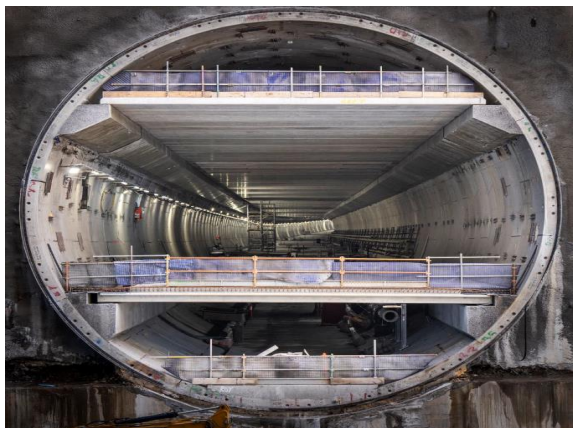


Image: Cross section view of new tunnel



Image: Southern Outbound Portal Vent Structure under construction

The shared walking and cycling path connecting Stony Creek Reserve to Spotswood station and the Kororoit Creek Shared User Path is nearing completion. Feature lighting has been installed at the M80 interchange.

The graffiti removal program along sections of the West Gate Freeway, including Millers and Williamstown Road interchanges and ramps along the freeway is continuing.



Image: Hall Street Shared User Path between Stony Creek Reserve and Hudsons Road, Spotswood

From mid-January to early March, WGTP will carry out major works on the West Gate Freeway, Wurundjeri Way and Footscray Road. From 10 January 2024 to early March, the West Gate Freeway will be reduced to three lanes between the M80 interchange and Millers Road along with long term ramp closures.

West Gate Neighbourhood Fund (WGNF)

The West Gate Neighbourhood Fund is a \$10 million community grants program established by WGTP MTIA to support communities in Melbourne's inner west, prioritising those who are most affected by the construction of the West Gate Tunnel Project.

In November 2023, 49 community groups within the Cities of Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong were awarded funding through the West Gate Neighbourhood Fund Partnerships and Active Community Grants funding round.

- Nine partnerships were awarded \$900,000.
- 20 minor facility upgrades worth \$600,000.
- Nine participation projects up to \$10,000 and 19 equipment projects up to \$2,500.

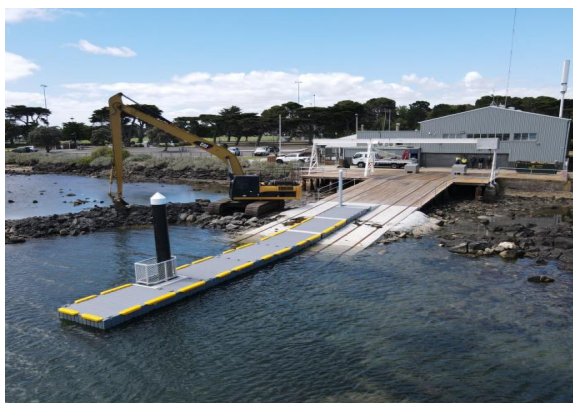


Image: WGNF Round 1 Project – Williamstown Jetty refurbishment

Level Crossing Removal Projects



Level Crossing Removal Project Update – Champion Road

In 2023, the State Government announced four new level crossing removal projects in Hobsons Bay including the closure of Champion Road in Williamstown North. In November 2023, the Level Crossing Removal Authority provided a high-level briefing to Councillors on the Champion Road and Maddox Road projects which included their own options assessments that informed the decision to close Champion Road. Their proposed design includes the removal of the level crossing at Maddox Road by building a rail bridge over the road and closing the level crossing at Champion Road by 2026. A new link road is proposed to connect Champion Road to Maddox Road.



Image: LXR plan for Champion Road and Maddox Road

Two Level Crossing Removal Community Interest Groups (CIG's) have now been established by Council to advocate for better outcomes as part of these projects:

- Champion Road and Maddox Road, Newport
- Hudson Road, Spotswood

The start-up meetings of these CIG's occurred in late 2023 with the second meetings of each group occurring in early February. At a recent CIG meeting for the Champion Road and Maddox Road project, the outcomes of a Traffic Assessment Report procured by Council was shared with the group. This assessment was completed to understand the impacts of the closure of the Champion Road crossing. Some of the key findings from the assessment include:

- The closure of Champion Road will result in a considerable redistribution of traffic movements, with drivers diverting their trips via Maddox Road to cross the railway line.
- When accounting for a future population growth of 25%, the Maddox Road / Kororoit Creek Road and Kororoit Creek Road / Champion Road intersections are expected to operate over capacity (maximum queue lengths increase for Kororoit Creek Road up to a maximum 590m and Maddox Road up to 280m).
- Based on the future intersection operations when accounting for the future population growth of 25%, it is recommended that a vehicle connection on Champion Road across the railway is retained.

- There are opportunities for small capacity improvements at Kororoit Creek Road/ Maddox Road with introduction of a left-turn arrow from the northern approach.
- Daily traffic volumes on Maddox Road will exceed the preferred capacity, and we would recommend use of LATM measures to reduce the attractiveness of this route in preference to alternative north-south arterials.
- The proposed Akuna Drive connection is not expected to have any significant beneficial impact, noting the indirectness of the likely proposed connection between Champion Road and Maddox Road.



Image: The Champion Road level crossing in Newport

Council continues to advocate for the retention of Champion Road due to the impacts of the road closure and has written and met with Ministers and Government officials to raise community concerns. In addition, meetings have also occurred with some of the major fuel companies to understand the options available for the relocation of their services in this precinct. Council welcomes the State’s investment in infrastructure throughout the municipality and will continue to work with them to achieve the best possible outcomes for the community as part of these projects.

Pavilion and Reserves



HC Kim Reserve Upgrade

Works are continuing at Kim Reserve Pavilion with the project on track for completion in mid-2024. Prior to the Christmas break the external brickwork was completed, roof works and internal framing works are currently underway.



Image: Kim Reserve, Pitch 1



Image: Kim Reserve Pavilion works

Dennis Reserve Stage 3

The new pavilion at Dennis Reserve in Williamstown is tracking well and is nearing lock up stage. Works are continuing on installation of the windows, external blockwork walls and landscaping.



Image: Dennis Reserve building, northeast side

The Avenue, Spotswood

Reconstruction of The Avenue is completed at Donald McLean Reserve in Spotswood. The project involved the construction of a new footpath on the northern side of the street, new pedestrian crossings, kerb protection for preexisting large trees, traffic calming, and formalised car parking areas.



Image: The Avenue, Spotswood

Road, Drainage and Footpaths



Champion Road, Williamstown

The replacement of rubber speed humps near the intersection of Kororoit Creek Road with asphalt speed humps has been completed.

The construction of the shared user path (SUP) along Shea Street in North Williamstown is well underway and scheduled for completion by mid-February 2024.



Image: Champion Road Williamstown



Image: The Avenue, Spotswood

The Strand, Newport

Road rehabilitation works on The Strand Newport were completed in December 2023. This project included upgrades to the existing drainage system, construction of new footpath, formalising the existing carparks, installation of new traffic signs and installation of new post and rail fencing.



Image: The Strand Newport

Sporting projects



Fearon Reserve Box Lacrosse Upgrade

Design works for the proposed upgrade of the Box Lacrosse court and its perimeter fencing has commenced. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2024.



Image: The current state of Fearon Reserve Box Lacrosse

Williamstown Tennis Club, Lighting Upgrade

Works on the footing for the ten new light poles has commenced at the Williamstown Beach Tennis Club. Reinstatement of synthetic and repairs to fencing will follow to complete the project that is scheduled for end of February 2024.

Other projects



HD Graham Reserves Water Meter Upgrade

Upgrade works to improve the water services around HD Graham Pavilion has commenced. The scope of work includes upgrading the existing meters, supply and installing new meters, adding a drinking fountain, and installing new underground pipes with isolation valves. The project is scheduled for completion by mid-February 2024.

Newport Community Hall Counselling Suites

Upgrade works are scheduled to soundproof selected Youths Counselling suites at the Newport Community Hub Youths Centre. The upcoming upgrade, set to commence in mid-February 2024 will involve implementing the designed soundproofing solutions.

Seaholme Kindergarten

Seaholme Kindergarten is nearing completion. This project has been delivered in partnership with the VSBA and incorporates a new 66 room kindergarten.

Council is currently facilitating the move of the Seaholme Kindergarten from the temporary location at the Altona Early Years Hub for service to commence Term 1 in the new building.

Parks



Recap on 2023 key achievements

Significant achievement and progress were made throughout 2023 in the implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy. Some of the key highlights include:

- Holding two major consultations, the Skeleton Creek Bay Trail, and Rifle Range Tree Planting Plan.
- Replacing the chipper machine and leasing a lift for the tree maintenance team. Both machines are necessary equipment for effective service delivery.
- Collaborating with DEECA for the More Trees for a Cooler Greener West initiative.

The successful delivery of the 'Green' suite of programs for streets, industries and schools, along with standard annual programs and services.



Image: New chipper (mulcher)

Other key achievements include:

- 2,493 street trees were planted.
- 2,370 trees were planted in parks and reserves.
- 19,350 street trees were inspected.
- 2,563 chipper jobs were carried out.



Image: New lift, allowing access to taller sections of trees for pruning works

Cooler, Greener West Initiative

Around 25,000 trees were planted in 2023 across nine sites as part of the More Trees for a Cooler, Greener West Program.



Image: Truganina Park, thousands of trees planted under the Cooler, Greener West initiative

Hardstand Tree Planting

The streets listed below had very little or no canopy cover. They all received new trees planted into cut-outs in the footpath or road.

- Stevedore Street Williamstown
- Hotham Street Williamstown
- Langford Street Williamstown
- Forster Street Williamstown
- Stanley Street Williamstown



Image: Stevedore Street, Melia azedarach 'Elite' trees thriving

Green Streets Program

Fidler Court, Altona Meadows, Maclean Street Williamstown and Richards Court in Brooklyn were transformed in Green Streets.



Image: Maclean Street, trees growing well with cages for protection

Tree Giveaways

Forty-four tree giveaways were held during 2023, providing 3,587 trees to residents to plant on private land.



Image: Tree giveaway stall at the Monster Mayhem event

Green Schools

Nine local schools took part in the Green Schools program, receiving 500 trees and 1,000 plants.



Image: Altona College held a working bee to plant 190 trees and plants at their school

Green Industries Program

In 2023 there were two successful applications with one application postponed to 2024.



Image: New trees planted at Aida Victoria Mosque in Altona North

Conservation news



Truganina Park

Fencing has been installed at the back of Truganina Park to exclude people, dogs and bikes further protecting sensitive saltmarsh vegetation found here. These fencing works are critical with enhancement efforts and protection of saltmarsh vegetation.



Image: Fencing at Truganina Park (behind the 100 steps)

The Conservation team are also working on weed control at Truganina Park. Various weeds are growing exponentially due to the unseasonal weather. However, the team have made some great progress on the habitat altering weed Buffalo Grass which is in some of the natural areas around Truganina Park.



Image: Weed control works with the Buffalo grass dying off at Truganina Park

Truganina Explosives Reserve

The Conservation team have installed an “audio/visual experience” for the Truganina Explosives Reserve Open Days along the boardwalk to the testing labs.

There have been four speakers located in “fake” stumps which are motion activated. They are powered by solar panels and there have been several manufactured animals also staged around the speakers, each relating to the sounds coming from these individual speakers. The four speakers represent four different animal groups including bats, birds, amphibians, and ground dwelling mammal.



Image: Microbat next to speaker which emits bat calls

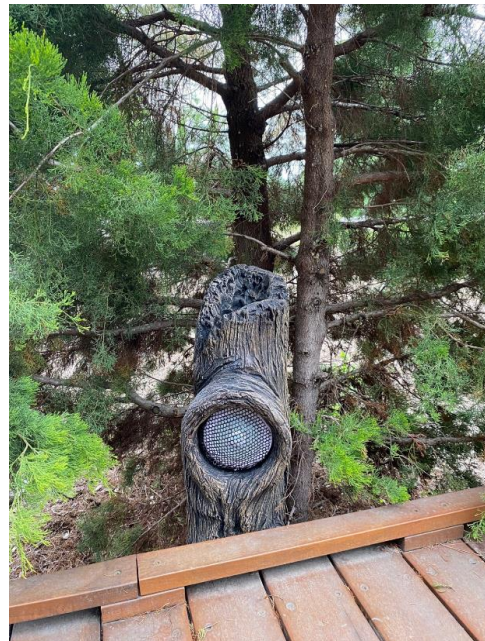


Image: Stump with motion activated speaker

Community events



Biodiversity by the Bay

The Conservation rangers were running activities throughout January 2024 as part of their Biodiversity by the Bay program. Community members had the chance to get up close to various species, gaining valuable insights into their behaviours, habitats, and the importance of biodiversity conservation.

On 15 January a local marine biologist (Diver Matt) conducted a walk along the Seaholme foreshore where participants learnt all about the weird and wonderful life on our Sandy Shores. Two other child friendly activities were held on 25 January where Sam from Labcoat Learning conducted hands-on activities about looking after our wildlife and waterways. The Biodiversity by the Bay program will continue into February with a Nocturnal Wildlife night and then into March and April with Guided Kayaking and bike riding events.

Native Plant Giveaway

A native plant giveaway was held on 13 December 2023 at Newport Lakes Native Nursery. The event provided 378 tube stock to over 40 habitat Garden alumni members to enhance local native gardens and continue growing the habitat garden community.

Dogs in the Park

Dogs in the Park is a series of dog training sessions held in Melbourne providing accessible, free group training to owners who need support with general training and safely managing their dogs in public. The Biodiversity and Conservation teams attended the event on 13 January to promote caring for our wildlife, providing educational resources, a Catio and wildlife displays highlighting wildlife in Hobsons Bay and the importance of protecting wildlife from domestic animals.



Image: Caring for our wildlife poster

Better Places Project

The Better Places model is focused on a design-led and place-based approach to projects. It helps provide a clear vision and understanding of the elements required to make better places and therefore provides better outcomes for the community.

It is about an approach where the whole “place” is considered and driven by a community vision for the suburb.

The Better Places Project is a unique program which provides an opportunity for the community to actively participate in helping shape the future direction of their suburb.

To date, three Place Guides have been shaped by community and endorsed by Council which are progressively being implemented:

- Laverton
- Spotswood & South Kingsville
- Brooklyn & Altona North

Laverton

Laverton was the first suburb to experience the Better Places model.

The Laverton Place Guide was endorsed by Council in September 2020. A copy can be found at: participate.hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au/better-places-laverton

Bruce Street Reserve and Cropley Reserve

Bruce Street and Cropley Crescent are two separate projects being delivered concurrently as a package of works at part of the Better Places Program. Work on Bruce Street Reserve commenced in early November 2023 and has been completed. The reserve includes new play equipment, an access path to the main play space area with two distinct park entry points, tree canopy for future shade cover and seating.



Image: Bruce Street Reserve

Cropley Reserve is one of eight parks in Laverton being upgraded. The aim of this upgrade is to create a local park that is useful for children and adults to enjoy. The park will feature picnic tables, open lawn area, new play equipment and planting. This project is scheduled for completion by March 2024.

Wayfinding signage Laverton

Way finding signage has been installed throughout Laverton.



Image: Way finding signage

Spotswood and South Kingsville Place Projects

The [Better Places Spotswood + South Kingsville Place Guide](#) was endorsed by Council on 12 October 2021.

Recent Place Guide project highlights include:

STREETS FOR PEOPLE, The Avenue, Spotswood

The focus of the Streets for People project is to make streets more pedestrian and bike friendly, while also improving the amenity and character of village centres and neighbourhoods throughout Spotswood and South Kingsville. The upgrade includes resurfacing of The Avenue and the gravel car parking areas adjoining Donald McLean Reserve with an asphalt finish. These improvements will complete the upgrades at Donald McLean Reserve and complement the recent implementation of the 40km zones in this precinct. Works are anticipated for completion in December 2023.

Mary Street Reserve masterplan implementation

Detailed design for the full park upgrade has been completed and procurement processes are underway to award these works.



Better Places Brooklyn & Altona North

The Better Places [Brooklyn + Altona North](#) final Place Guide was endorsed by Council in December 2022. A copy can be found at participate.hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au/betterplaces-brooklyn-and-altona-north. Three key themes were uncovered from thousands of pieces of community feedback:



The abovementioned themes drive [Place Guide](#) projects for the community... by the community. A mix of both shorter-term projects that can be implemented quickly, as well as longer term projects that are larger and more complex and will require more extensive design and consultation. The programme spans from 2023 to 2028.

Patch in the Park Community Garden

Council has been working with the local Brooklyn community to develop a detailed design for a community garden within Brooklyn Reserve. The group have obtained a local parks grant through the support of Local MP Melissa Horne. Works on the garden are expected to commence in April 2024 and be ready for planting at the end of June 2024.



Image: Design of community garden

Better Places Seabrook and Altona Meadows

[The final Seabrook & Altona Meadows Place Guide was endorsed by Council at the 12 September 2023 meeting.](#)

The Place Guide provides a mix of both shorter-term projects that will be able to be implemented quickly, as well as longer term projects that are larger and more complex requiring more extensive design and consultation.

The Place Guide provides six overarching projects in response to community feedback received through multiple stages of community engagement to be implemented throughout 2023-2028.

Better Places Seabrook – Altona Meadows – Love Our Parks

Pipeline Reserve Seabrook – Community Play space and Park Upgrade underway

Following several years of consecutive community submissions via the Pitch Your Idea Program and an extensive community consultation process, this project is well and truly underway.

Council is currently assessing tenders for the construction of a bespoke community play space that has been specifically designed for children on the autism spectrum as well as families and children of all ages.

A significant number of families living in the Seabrook and Altona Meadows area have children on the autism spectrum. Demographic data in addition to a number of customer requests to Council from families over the past 7 years, has indicated the need to provide a safe and inclusive family space for these children. The playground will be fully fenced and include family and social recreation spaces within this zone as well as a range of play options for children.

Construction of the playground and park is expected to commence in February 2024 and will be completed by the end of May 2024, for the community to use and enjoy.

The plans are available on Council's Participate Website for viewing.

<https://participate.hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au/pipeline-reserve>



INTERNAL ARBITRATION PROCESS – Hobsons Bay City Council

In the matter of an Application by Councillor Daria Kellander concerning
Councillor Antoinette Briffa
(IAP 2023-7)

**HEARING PURSUANT TO DIVISION 5 OF PART 6 OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (2020)**

Applicant: Councillor Daria Kellander

Respondent: Councillor Antoinette Briffa

Arbiter: Jo-Anne Mazzeo

DETERMINATION

Pursuant to s147(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) the Arbiter makes a finding of misconduct against Cr Antoinette Briffa.

STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DECISION

The Application

1. The Application dated 29 May 2023 by the applicant sought a finding of misconduct against the respondent relating to two allegations concerning conduct on 19 March 2023 and 9 May 2023 which are summarised below.
2. The Application alleged that respondent had breached Standards 1 (Treatment of Others) and 4 (Councillor must not discredit or mislead Council or public) of the prescribed standards of conduct set out in Schedule 1 to the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020* (the Regulations) by:
 - (a) issuing a press release purportedly of behalf of the Council, or alternatively in her role as Mayor and Councillor of Hobson's Bay, and the contents of that statement:
 - (i) falsely targeted Mrs Deeming for being a signatory to a petition by labelling Mrs Deeming "anti trans", and
 - (ii) intentionally misgendered Mrs Deeming by referring to her with the pronouns "they/their" rather than "she/her, and
 - (b) issuing a tweet on 19 March 2023 in an official capacity as Mayor "targeting Mrs Deeming, labelling Mrs Deeming a leader of a "violent rally" and jointly as a "trans/queer hater, neo-nazi".
3. The Application contends that the actions as outlined above infer that Mrs Deeming "is a nazi and a bigot who advocates for discrimination against transgendered persons".
4. Furthermore, the Application contends that by misgendering Mrs Deeming, the respondent has "hurtfully and invalidly violated Mrs Deeming's civil and political rights by refusing to acknowledge her by her gender identity."
5. Both in the Application and at the Arbitration hearing, the applicant submitted that the above behaviour goes "beyond what is acceptable as robust debate in a democracy at local government level" and that the respondent should be held to the highest standard by way of the Arbiter making a finding of misconduct in respect of her behaviour towards Mrs Deeming.

Evidence provided

6. Written evidence was submitted by both the applicant and the respondent to assist the Arbiter to make a decision in relation to this matter.

7. Both parties supplemented their written evidence with oral evidence given at the Arbitration hearing conducted on 15 September 2023, and with the consent of the respondent, the applicant handed up a document which summarised the applicant's oral evidence given on the day.
8. Neither party called any witnesses in support of their case.
9. This Statement of Reasons does not summarise all of the information submitted to the Arbiter but refers to the information relied on by the Arbiter to make her decision and explain why.

The jurisdiction of the Arbiter in relation to this Application

10. Section 143 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides that an Arbiter may hear an Application that alleges misconduct by a Councillor.
11. Pursuant to section 147 of the Act an Arbiter may determine whether or not a Councillor has engaged in misconduct.
12. "Misconduct" is defined in section 3 of the Act and is defined as follows:

"... any breach by a Councillor of the prescribed standards of conduct included in the Councillor Code of Conduct."
13. The standards of conduct are set out in Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020. The standards relevant to this matter provide as follows:

1. Treatment of others

A Councillor must, in performing the role of a Councillor, treat other Councillors, members of Council staff, the municipal community and members of the public with dignity, fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect, including by ensuring that the Councillor –

- (a) takes positive action to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in accordance with the **Equal Opportunity Act 2010**; and
- (b) supports the Council in fulfilling its obligation to achieve and promote gender equality; and
- (c) does not engage in abusive, obscene or threatening behaviour in their dealings with members of the public, Council staff and Councillors; and
- (d) in considering the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community, treats all persons with respect and has due regard for their opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities.

4. Councillor must not discredit or mislead Council or public

- (1) In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must ensure that their behaviour does not bring discredit upon the Council.
- (2) In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must not deliberately mislead the Council or the public about any matters related to the performance of their public duties.

5. Standards do not limit robust political debate

Nothing in these standards is intended to limit, restrict or detract from robust public debate in a democracy.

Evidence of the Applicant

14. By way of background, the applicant informed the Arbiter of a current matter before Council where strong views are held by proponents of both sides of the debate regarding the issue of whether public toilets should be reserved for males and females as has traditionally been the case, or whether public toilets should be genderless.
15. On 9 May 2023 Council received a petition from community members in support of "an inclusive Policy that allows people of all genders to access toilet facilities, while preserving separate public toilets of men and women". The applicant submitted that one of the signatories to this petition was a community member, Mrs Moira Deeming, who is also a local Member of Parliament.
16. The applicant submitted that Mrs Deeming is "a local woman, a well-known feminist activist, and a local member of Parliament, she is entitled to be recognised in public statements by her preferred pronouns".
17. The applicant outlined that there is no factual dispute regarding the respondent as the author of both the tweet and the media release, but that the conduct of the respondent has fallen short of that expected of a councillor and required by the prescribed standards of conduct.
18. The applicant submitted that there had been a complaint made in writing by a resident regarding the conduct of the respondent and the applicant lodged an application for internal arbitration as a result.
19. Furthermore, the applicant submitted that Mrs Deeming made a formal complaint regarding the conduct of the respondent to Council on 6 June 2023.
20. The applicant does not accept the respondents' explanation for the conduct in question.

Evidence of the Respondent

21. The respondent confirmed the authenticity of both the media release and the tweet and agreed that there was no factual dispute regarding whether it was the respondent who authored both documents and the accuracy of them as provided to the Arbiter.
22. The respondent submitted that when read, both as it was intended to be read and on literal reading of the tweet, the tweet "does not accuse Mrs Deeming of anything other than being one of the leaders of the well-reported violent rally held outside Parliament on 18 March 2023."
23. Furthermore, the respondent submitted that numerous media articles and tweets also reported on Mrs Deeming's role in the rally (and submitted these as evidence to the Arbiter).
24. Regarding the allegation of misgendering Mrs Deeming, the respondent submitted that the use of the word "they" in the media statement did not mean to suggest Mrs Deeming identifies as non-binary and was simply typical use of the word "they" in the context of its practical application and sentence structure.
25. In relation to the Media Statement, the respondent highlighted the sentence the applicant was relying on as a breach of the standards as follows:

"I note suspended Liberal MP, Moira Deeming, also signed this petition. They are well known for their anti-trans women stance."
26. The respondent submitted to the Arbiter what she contended were written examples of "anti-trans" commentary by Mrs Deeming in her role as a Melton City Councillor and also other documents obtained pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.
27. The respondent submitted that no harm was meant towards Mrs Deeming by the way in which she was referenced. In support of this contention the respondent outlined her excellent standing in the local community, highlighting:
 - (a) four terms as a Councillor, with this being a second term as Mayor;
 - (b) appointment as a Justice of the Peace for 17 years and a Bail Justice for over 10 years;
 - (c) being well known for both national and international work in the space of human rights of LGBTIQ+ people; and
 - (d) membership on the Victorian Government LGBTIQ+ Workforce
28. The respondent acknowledged there was a difference of opinion regarding the toilets and is "happy to respectfully agree to disagree".

29. The respondent further submitted that it was this Application which highlighted to the respondent Mrs Deeming's dissatisfaction/offence with both the Media Release and the Tweet and that had she contacted the respondent directly, the respondent would have been very happy to discuss the matter with her. In support of this contention the respondent provided evidence confirming not only that this Application for Internal Arbitration was lodged on 29 May 2023, but that it wasn't until the applicant submitted their evidence for this hearing on 31 July 2023 that the respondent was even aware that the complaint had been made by Mrs Deeming.
30. The respondent also submitted to the Arbiter that she had reached out to the applicant on several occasions to try and establish a positive working relationship, but the applicant had not yet accepted such offers.

Findings of the Arbiter

31. The Arbiter makes a finding of misconduct against the respondent.

Reasons for the Arbiter's Decision

32. The tweet of the respondent dated 19 March 2023 reads as follows:
"@Moirra Deeming was one of the leaders of the violent rally outside Parliament yesterday. I support free speech, but trans/queer haters, neo-nazis & "Liberal" politicians jointly spreading hatred and fear is appalling. We are & deserve better than that."
33. In relation to the tweet in paragraph 32 above, the Arbiter accepted the submission of the applicant that the tweet fell below the standard of conduct expected of a Councillor. The tweet clearly demonstrates a failure to treat a particular member of the local community with dignity, fairness, objectivity and respect and the Arbiter was unable to conclude that the tweet could be read or interpreted as anything other than disrespectful towards Mrs Deeming.
34. The Media Release authored by the respondent dated 9 May 2023 includes the following sentence:
"I note suspended Liberal MP, Moira Deeming, also signed this petition. They are well known for their anti-trans women stance."
35. The Arbiter finds that the singling out of one particular individual by name in the way the Media Release does demonstrates a failure to provide the individual (in this instance, Moira Deeming) with the same level of respect afforded to the rest of the local community, and also demonstrates a failure to comply with Standard 1 (Treatment of others).
36. In relation to the allegation that the respondent intentionally misgendered Mrs Deeming, the Arbiter accepts the respondent was using inclusive language, and did not intend to be disrespectful in any way.

37. In relation to whether a sanction should be imposed for the misconduct outlined above, the Arbiter has decided not to issue a sanction to the respondent. This decision was made taking into account the respondents conduct and demeanour throughout the course of the Arbitration process and their commitment to ensuring inclusivity and equality both within their role on Council and in the broader community.
38. The Arbiter notes that whilst the application relates to conduct towards Mrs Deeming, there is a clear tension between the applicant and the respondent which, in the view of the Arbiter, appears to have contributed to the Application being made in relation to this matter.
39. At all times the respondent was measured and respectful towards both the Arbiter and the applicant. The Arbiter accepts the respondent's submission that had Mrs Deeming approached her directly regarding her comments, she would have discussed the matter with her in a respectful manner.

Jo-Anne Mazzeo
Arbiter

Date: 8 December 2023

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION FOR AN INTERNAL ARBITRATION PROCESS

HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

IAP 2023-14

HEARING PURSUANT TO DIVISION 5 OF PART 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

Applicant: Councillor Antoinette Briffa

Respondent: Councillor Daria Kellander

Date of hearing: Thursday, 30 November 2023

Place of hearing: Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona

Arbiter: Simon Heath

DETERMINATION:

Councillor Antoinette Briffa seeks a finding of misconduct against that Councillor Daria Kellander relating to allegations, the details of which are summarized below.

The Arbiter acknowledges Councillor Briffa's withdrawal of allegations of alleged misconduct against Councillor Kellander occurring after submitting the Application, and those relating to alleged misconduct occurring more than three months beforehand.

The Arbiter also acknowledges Councillor Briffa's withdrawal of an allegation that Councillor Kellander had misused her position as a Councillor.

The Arbiter determines that Councillor Kellander has failed to comply with the standards of conduct in her Facebook post on 15 June 2023 headed "Should Council meeting recordings be edited?" and, as such, makes a finding of misconduct against her.

The Arbiter directs that Councillor Kellander make a written apology to the Chief Executive Officer of the Hobsons Bay City Council in relation to that post, a copy of which is to be posted on her Council Facebook page.

In relation to the remaining allegations, the Arbiter determines that Councillor Kellander has not breached the Standards.

STATEMENT OF REASONS

The Application

1. The 'Application for an Internal Arbitration Process' is dated 4 July 2023 (**Application**).
2. The Applicant seeks a finding of misconduct against the Respondent in relation to alleged breaches of the standards of conduct

Arbiter's jurisdiction

3. The Arbiter was appointed pursuant to sections 144 and 149 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Act)*.
4. Section 143 of the Act provides that an Arbiter may hear an application that alleges misconduct by a Councillor.
5. Section 143(3) of the Act provides that an Application "must be made within 3 months of the alleged misconduct occurring".
6. The Arbiter does not have jurisdiction to hear allegations of misconduct occurring after the Application had been submitted to the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar (**Registrar**).
7. This is by reason of section 144(1) of the Act which requires that the Registrar *must* examine an application made under section 143 of the Act to determine whether an Arbiter should be appointed to hear the matters.
8. The vetting of applications by the Registrar is a critical part of the internal arbitration process, as it prevents an applicant from introducing new or further allegations to circumvent the process.
9. This Application, therefore, is confined to allegations of alleged misconduct occurring between 4 April 2023 and 4 July 2023.
10. Pursuant to section 147 of the Act, an Arbiter may determine whether or not a Councillor has engaged in misconduct.
11. Importantly, "misconduct" is defined in Section 3 of the Act as follows:
"any breach by a Councillor of the standards of conduct".
12. That section specifies that "standards of conduct" (**Standards**) as those referred to in section 139(3)(a) of the Act which, in turn, specifies that they are set out in Schedule 1 to the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 (Regulations)*. A copy of the Standards is attached as Annexure A.
13. Pursuant to section 139 of the Act, the Standards are to be included in a Councillor Code of Conduct (**Code**). The Standards have been adopted by the Hobsons Bay City Council and are contained in its Code.

14. Pursuant to section 141 of the Act, the internal arbitration process applies only to breaches of the Standards.
15. An Arbiter also does not have jurisdiction to consider allegations of “serious misconduct”, which is defined in section 3 of the Act to include a breach of section 123 of the Act.
16. It is a matter for the Applicant whether to bring another application in relation to allegations of misconduct occurring after 4 July 2023.

Hearings

17. The internal arbitration process comprised directions hearings on 17 August 2023 and 9 November 2023, and a hearing on 30 November 2023.

Applicant’s evidence

18. The Applicant’s evidence comprised the Application and detailed ‘Further and Better Particulars’ dated 8 September 2023 (**Particulars**), as well as the Applicant’s oral evidence at the hearing.
19. In summary, the Applicant’s evidence was that the Respondent had breached the Standards in a range of social media posts and newspaper articles, a copy of which were annexed to the Particulars.

Respondent’s evidence

20. The Respondent’s evidence comprised detailed written submissions dated 23 November 2023 (**Submissions**), and the Respondent’s oral evidence at the hearing.
21. The Respondent denied the Applicant’s allegations.
22. In addition to objecting to having to deal with fresh allegations, the Respondent primarily relied on clause 5 of the Standards, namely that nothing in the Standards is intended to:

“...limit, restrict or detract from robust public debate in a democracy”.

Preliminary matters

23. The Submissions raised the following six “preliminary” matters:
 - (a) The Respondent sought to be legally represented.

Pursuant to section 141(2)(c) of the Act, the Arbiter did not consider that representation was necessary to ensure that the process was conducted fairly.
 - (b) The Respondent requested a hearing “on the papers”.

Pursuant to section 141(2)(b) of the Act, and regulation 11(3)(a) of the Regulations, the Arbiter determined that the parties should be given the opportunity to be heard in person.

- (c) The Respondent sought dismissal of the Application on the basis that the Arbiter originally appointed had to withdraw before hearing the matter.

The Arbiter considered that this submission was misguided because an Arbiter can be replaced. Replacing an Arbiter who has health issues or who discovers a conflict of interest are examples.

In the Arbiter's view, the decision of *Lew v Harvey & Anor [2023] VSC 477*, cited by the Respondent, supports the contrary view that the Application survives an Arbiter's withdrawal and must continue to be heard until the matter has been determined.

- (d) The Respondent submitted that she was not acting in the role of a Councillor when making social media posts and media statements.

The Arbiter rejected this submission relying on the decision in *Lew v Blacher [2023] VSC 604* where Justice Gray held that:

"in performing the role of a Councillor" is capable of applying to behaviour of a Councillor in communicating with members of the public about matters for decision before the Council."

- (e) The Respondent submitted that the alleged breaches of Council policies and clauses of the Code other than the Standards must be disregarded.

The Arbiter accepts this submission.

- (f) The Respondent submitted that the Application should be dismissed because it lacked substance.

The Arbiter did not consider that the Application was *"vexatious, misconceived, frivolous, or lacking in substance"* and was therefore not prepared to discontinue the hearing pursuant Regulation 11(3)(c)(i) of the Regulations.

Arbiter's findings

24. The Arbiter determines that the Respondent breached the Clauses 1 and 4 of the Standards by reason of her Facebook post on 15 June 2023 and makes a finding of misconduct against her.
25. The Arbiter does not find that the Respondent otherwise breached the Standards.

Arbiter's Reasons

26. The Application lacks detail. Instead, the Applicant chose to provide “numerous” social media posts and newspaper articles subsequently. As mentioned, a copy of the posts and articles were provided with the Particulars, but several related to matters occurring after the Application.
27. It is unclear from the Application what misconduct is alleged to have occurred on some of the dates listed by the Applicant. Paragraph 2 contains seven dates and paragraph 4 contains three more. When asked at the hearing, the Applicant was unable to clarify the relevance of two of the dates.
28. The Applicant appropriately withdrew allegations of misconduct occurring before 4 April 2023 and the fresh allegations in the Particulars for conduct after 4 July 2023.
29. The Applicant also withdrew the allegations that the Respondent had breached section 123 of the Act and the Code.

Recording of Council Meeting

30. The Applicant alleges that the Respondent breached the Standards by reason of her “abusive and disrespectful behaviour” towards the CEO in a Facebook post on 15 June 2023 (**recording post**). The Applicant asserts that the Respondent had “publicly and falsely targeted the CEO as a ‘liar’.”
31. The recording post, prominently titled “Should Council meeting recordings be edited?” and accompanied by images of a muted speaker and lips sealed with red tape, was as follows:

“The livestream recording from the last Council meeting dated 9 May 2023 contains various moments where the auditory is muted entirely. I asked the CEO why the recording sound was edited by muting it. He responded that the ‘Livestream has not been edited in any way’. It seems muted to me. Why the need? You be the judge.”
32. The Council’s Livestream provider, Interstream, has confirmed in writing that the recording had not been edited or muted. Interstream also provided the Council with photographs as evidence.
33. The Respondent was not prepared to accept the CEO’s assurance that the recording had not been edited or muted.
34. In her Submissions, the Respondent indicates that:

“I’m not sure what enquiries if any he made which form the basis of his opinion, The opinion received from the CEO did not allay my concerns”.
35. Instead of asking the CEO what enquiries he had made to “form the basis of his opinion”, the Respondent chose to question the CEO’s veracity in a public post.

36. While the Respondent did not call the CEO a “liar”, the question ‘*Why the need?*’ indicates to readers of the recording post that the stream had been edited, and that therefore the CEO’s response was false.
37. The recording post relates to a Council meeting. The Arbiter determines that the Respondent was “performing the role of a Councillor” when making it.
38. In making the recording post, the Arbiter finds that the Respondent breached Clause 1 of the Standards by failing to treat the CEO with “fairness”, “objectivity” and “respect”.
39. Further, the Arbiter finds that the Respondent also breached Clause 4(1) of the Standards as the recording post brought “discredit upon the council”. This is evidenced in the 97 comments on the recording post, which are highly critical of the Council. Such criticism was unwarranted because it was based on an incorrect assertion that the recording had been muted.
40. If the recording post has not been removed, it should be.
41. Pursuant to section 147(2)(a) of the Act, the Arbiter directs that the Respondent is to provide a written apology to the CEO for the recording post and that the apology is to be posted to the Respondent’s Council Facebook page.

Council Security Measures

42. The Applicant alleges that the Respondent breached Clause 1 of the Standards in posts on 21 June 2023 and on 7 July 2023 relating to the Council’s introduction of increased security measures for meetings (**security posts**). The security posts included articles from the Herald Sun.
43. There is nothing improper in the Respondent expressing her view in the security posts that all residents should be able to attend Council meetings. The Respondent acknowledges that Councillors, members of Council staff and members of the public should feel safe when attending meetings and is only critical of the extent of the measures taken.
44. In the security posts, the Respondent has not treated others in an undignified, unfair, discourteous, or disrespectful manner. Nor do the security posts contain anything “abusive, obscene or threatening”.
45. The Arbiter accepts the Respondent’s evidence that protestors at a Council meeting, the date of which was not provided, were not “associated” with her as alleged by the Applicant.

46. The Arbiter notes that an inappropriate “misgendering” of the Applicant was contained in a comment by a member of the public. Fortunately, it appears that the comment may not still be available but, in any event, the Respondent did not support the comment. The Arbiter accepts the Respondent’s indication that she has and will continue to abide by the Applicant’s chosen pronouns.
47. The Applicant refers to an unacceptable GIF posted by the Respondent containing a moving baseball bat as a guillotine blade. While the date of that posting has not been provided, the Arbiter notes that the Respondent removed it after a complaint.
48. The Arbiter therefore makes no finding of misconduct in relation to the security posts.

Performing the role of Councillor

49. The Applicant alleges that the Respondent has breached Clause 2 of the Standards by failing to perform the role of a Councillor “effectively and responsibly” (**role allegations**). The role allegations are that the Respondent:
 - (a) failed to respond to repeated written and verbal requests to meet with the Applicant and other Councillors to discuss issues; and,
 - (b) failed to attend briefings and meetings.
50. While the Applicant is to be applauded for her attempts to meet with the Respondent to discuss issues with the Respondent, and the Respondent’s failure to accept the Applicant’s requests is not ideal, the Respondent’s absence from a number of Council meetings, and briefings, do not themselves establish a breach of Clause 2 of the Standards.
51. The Respondent provided reasons why she was not prepared to meet with the Applicant as well as indicating that attendance at briefings was not mandated.
52. The Arbiter therefore makes no finding of misconduct in relation to the role allegations.

Compliance with good governance

53. The Applicant alleges that the Respondent breached Clause 3 of the Standards by failing to comply to comply with good governance measures.
54. It is important to note that those ‘measures’ are restricted to complying with policies for managing interactions between Council staff and Councillors, the Council’s expenses policy, Governance Rules, and any Ministerial directions.
55. The Applicant withdrew her allegation that the Respondent breached section 123 of the Act by misusing her position as a Councillor to cause detriment to the Council, the Mayor, the CEO, or other Councillors.

56. The Applicant provided no evidence that the Respondent had discriminated against or victimized staff.
57. “Robust public debate in a democracy” does not restrict the Respondent being critical of the Council where it is done in an appropriate manner.
58. The Applicant alleges that the Respondent’s failure take responsibility for the Council budget in a post on 23 June 2023, constituted a breach of Clause 3 of the Standards (**budget post**). The budget post was as follows:
- “Cheers to 3 consecutive years of voting against ongoing increases in rates, fees and charges.”*
59. The Arbiter does not find anything improper with the budget posting which simply records how the Respondent, as an elected representative, had voted in relation to the Council’s budget confirming the Respondent’s views expressed at a Council meeting on 20 June 2023.

Councillor must not discredit or mislead Council or public

60. In addition to the recording post, the security posts and the budget post, the Applicant further alleged that the Respondent had breached Clause 4 of the Standards in other posts (**other posts**). The Applicant alleged that these posts:
- “portrayed the council negatively, brought discredit upon the council and misled the community”.*
61. The other posts were in relation to the following issues:
- (a) ‘Public toilets’ dated 3 February 2023;
 - (b) ‘Rubbish bin’s dated 24 February 2023;
 - (c) ‘Harriet Shing comments’ dated 29 March 2023;
 - (d) ‘Mayor’s trip to Japan’ dated 13 April 2023;
 - (e) ‘Playground see-saw’ dated 17 May 2023;
 - (f) ‘Community Engagement Policy’ on 17 June 2023;
 - (g) ‘Techno Park Drive’ dated 17 July 2023;
 - (h) ‘Outdoor trading/dining’ dated 8 September 2023;
 - (i) ‘Tree removal’ dated 8 September 2023;
 - (j) ‘Paid parking’, no date or details were provided.
62. The Applicant withdrew her allegations with respect to the posts in (a), (b) and (c) above, as they relate to conduct more than three months before the Application, as well as the other posts in (f), (g) and (h), which relate to conduct after the Application had been submitted to the Registrar.
63. The other post in (j) was mentioned in the Application, however no details were provided by the Applicant and therefore the Arbiter was unable to consider the allegation.

64. With respect to the post in (d), the Applicant's issue is with the Respondent's use of "junket" in reference to her trip to Anjo, Japan. The Arbiter notes that the Respondent's post adopted the media's usage of that term and, in any event, the Applicant had previously used that term in relation to a similar Japanese trip by a previous Mayor and Councillors.
65. The Arbiter does not find anything improper with the Respondent indicating that:
"Rates are for community, not for junkets".
66. With respect to the post in (e), the Arbiter does not find anything improper with the Respondent posting a photograph of a broken and fenced off see-saw, with a comment that the Council was unable to provide a "timeframe" for repairs.
67. In relation to the post in (f), the Applicant alleges in the Application that the Respondent "heavily criticised" the Council's "Community Engagement Policy" (**policy**) in a public meeting. The Applicant however has not provided the date or any details of that meeting.
68. The Arbiter notes from a transcript of a Council meeting on 20 June 2023 that the Respondent said that she was:
"a little concerned about this policy to be quite honest";
and that that the policy:
"allows for less genuine consultation and less community input into decision making".
69. The Arbiter does not find that the Respondent's criticism of the policy constitutes a breach of the Standards and, therefore, makes no finding of misconduct in relation to the other posts.

Simon Heath

Arbiter

Dated: 11 December 2023

Appendix A

Schedule 1—Standards of conduct

1 Treatment of others

A Councillor must, in performing the role of a Councillor, treat other Councillors, members of Council staff, the municipal community and members of the public with dignity, fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect, including by ensuring that the Councillor—

- (a) takes positive action to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in accordance with the **Equal Opportunity Act 2010**; and
- (b) supports the Council in fulfilling its obligation to achieve and promote gender equality; and
- (c) does not engage in abusive, obscene or threatening behaviour in their dealings with members of the public, Council staff and Councillors; and
- (d) in considering the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community, treats all persons with respect and has due regard for their opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities.

2 Performing the role of Councillor

A Councillor must, in performing the role of a Councillor, do everything reasonably necessary to ensure that the Councillor performs the role of a Councillor effectively and responsibly, including by ensuring that the Councillor—

- (a) undertakes any training or professional development activities the Council decides it is necessary for all Councillors to undertake in order to effectively perform the role of a Councillor; and
- (b) diligently uses Council processes to become informed about matters which are subject to Council decisions; and
- (c) is fit to conscientiously perform the role of a Councillor when acting in that capacity or purporting to act in that capacity; and
- (d) represents the interests of the municipal community in performing the role of a Councillor by considering and being responsive to the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community.

3 Compliance with good governance measures

A Councillor, in performing the role of a Councillor, to ensure the good governance of the Council, must diligently and properly comply with the following—

- (a) any policy, practice or protocol developed and implemented by the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with section 46 of the Act for managing interactions between members of Council staff and Councillors;
- (b) the Council expenses policy adopted and maintained by the Council under section 41 of the Act;
- (c) the Governance Rules developed, adopted and kept in force by the Council under section 60 of the Act;
- (d) any directions of the Minister issued under section 175 of the Act.

4 Councillor must not discredit or mislead Council or public

- (1) In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must ensure that their behaviour does not bring discredit upon the Council.
- (2) In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must not deliberately mislead the Council or the public about any matter related to the performance of their public duties.

5 Standards do not limit robust political debate

Nothing in these standards is intended to limit, restrict or detract from robust public debate in a democracy.

HOBSONS **BAY CITY** COUNCIL



Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

Contents

Financial Statements

1. Income Statement
2. Summary Capital Works Program
3. Available Funding Result
4. Summary Cash Flow Statement
5. Reconciliation of Operating Result and Net Cash flows from operating Activities
6. Summary Balance Sheet
7. Financial Plan Projections

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

1. Income Statement

	Actual @ 31/12/23 \$'000	YTD Budget @ 31/12/23 \$'000	YTD Budget Variance \$'000	Budget 2023-24 \$'000	Forecast 2023-24 \$'000	Ref	Forecast Variance \$'000
Income							
Rates and charges	65,647	64,924	723	130,584	131,642	1.1	1,058
Statutory fees and fines	2,305	2,454	(149)	5,537	5,492	1.2	(45)
User fees	2,942	2,920	22	5,157	5,217	1.3	60
Grants - operating	5,908	4,734	1,174	9,995	10,298	1.4	303
Grants - capital	802	1,008	(206)	2,016	4,974	1.5	2,958
Contributions - monetary	1,494	2,742	(1,248)	5,484	4,529	1.6	(955)
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	7	26	(19)	52	52		-
Other income	2,801	2,217	584	4,631	4,781	1.7	150
Total Income	81,906	81,025	881	163,456	166,985		3,529
Expenses							
Employee costs	30,380	30,597	217	61,715	61,823	1.8	(108)
Materials and services	28,323	27,853	(470)	52,961	55,098	1.9	(2,137)
Bad and doubtful debts	435	346	(89)	693	693		-
Depreciation	15,923	14,489	(1,434)	28,989	31,854	1.10	(2,865)
Amortisation	147	235	88	471	371	1.11	100
Borrowing costs	381	379	(2)	1,061	822	1.12	239
Finance cost - leases	18	20	2	36	36		-
Other expenses	561	557	(4)	1,061	1,199	1.13	(138)
Total Expenses	76,168	74,476	(1,692)	146,987	151,896		(4,909)
Surplus / (deficit)	5,738	6,549	(811)	16,469	15,089		(1,380)

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

1. Income Statement (cont.)

Explanation of Variances

The operational surplus for the period ended 31 December 2023 was \$5.738 million, compared to the year to date (YTD) budget surplus of \$6.549 million. The year-end budget surplus of \$16.469 million has decreased to a forecast year-end surplus of \$15.089 million.

The decreased forecast surplus of \$1.380 million compared to budget is explained as:

- 1.1 Rates and charges are expected to be \$1.058 million over budget mainly due to an increase in the amount originally raised as rates due to property development (\$673,000), payments in lieu of rates (\$223,000), interest on rates (\$100,000), waste charges (\$43,000) and a reduction in rebates (\$18,000).

Actual income is \$723,000 over the YTD budget mainly due to the amount originally raised for rates (\$346,000), payments in lieu of rates (\$112,000), interest on rates (\$106,000), supplementary rates (\$78,000) and a delay in hardship applications (\$43,000).

- 1.2 Statutory fees and fines are expected to be \$45,000 under budget.

The most significant forecast decrease relates to planning applications (\$140,000).

The most significant forecast increases relate to parking infringements (\$52,000), building and construction compliance infringements (\$34,000) and animal registrations (\$10,000).

Actual income is currently \$149,000 under the YTD budget mainly due to planning applications (\$137,000) and town planning enforcement (\$27,000).

The most significant income over the YTD budget relates to building and construction compliance infringements (\$18,000).

- 1.3 User fees are expected to be \$60,000 over budget.

The most significant forecast increases relate to the casual hire of Council facilities – some of which has been reallocated from other income (\$92,000), food act registrations (\$46,000), developer fee for the promotion of the Hudsons Road, Spotswood retail precinct (\$30,000), and Always Live box office income (\$22,000).

The most significant forecast decreases relate to legal point of discharge fees (\$37,000), private subdivision supervision fees (\$35,000), building fees (\$25,000) and the second hard-waste collection services (\$18,000).

Actual income is \$22,000 over the YTD budget mainly due to the casual hire of Council facilities (\$55,000), food act registrations (\$40,000), health act registrations (\$39,000), venues administration (\$37,000), town planning general fees (\$31,000), developer fee for the promotion of the Hudsons Road (\$30,000), community development sponsorship income (\$30,000), and Always Live box office income (\$22,000).

The most significant income under the YTD budget relates to building insurance premiums on charged to tenants (\$96,000), private subdivision supervision (\$52,000), building information and private practice lodgements (\$37,000), road opening reinstatements (\$25,000) and legal point of discharge (\$30,000).

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1.4 Operating grants are expected to be \$303,000 over budget.

The most significant forecast increase relates to Commonwealth Home Support (\$882,000) and State HACC funding (\$403,000) retained from previous financial years.

Other forecast increases relate to funding for child community health (\$116,000), home maintenance for over 65 (\$100,000), school crossings (\$78,000), beach cleaning (\$70,000), COVID-19 Rapid Antigen (\$60,000), community transport (\$48,000) and meal supply for over 65 (\$27,000).

The most significant forecast decrease relates to the Victorian Grants Commission (VGC) payment which was received fully in advance during 2022-23 instead of the budgeted 50 per cent. This will be offset against an adjustment to the reserve transfer (\$1.414 million).

Other forecast decreases relate to Care and Assessment Management (\$160,000), and the Weed Management Program (\$16,000).

Actual income is \$1.174 million over the YTD budget mostly due to the retainment of Commonwealth Home Support and State HACC funding (\$1.28 million), earlier than anticipated payment of Commonwealth Home Support funding (\$1.12 million), school crossings (\$78,000), arboriculture management (\$23,000), and early years culturally and linguistically diverse funding (\$22,000).

Operating grants under the YTD budget mainly relates to the VGC income that was received last financial year (\$688,000), delays in public library funding (\$666,000), timing for beach cleaning (\$110,000) and the Level Crossing Removal project (\$60,000).

1.5 Capital grants are expected to be over budget by \$2.958 million due to income that was budgeted to be received in 2022-23 that is now expected to be received in 2023-24 (\$2.020 million), an increase in income received to fund the program (\$886,000), and capital income received earlier than anticipated and bought forward from the 2024-25 financial year.

For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the summary capital works program section of this report and the detailed capital works attachment.

1.6 Monetary contributions are expected to be under budget by \$955,000 due to developer contributions that are now expected to be received in future financial years for Altona North Precinct 15 (\$947,000), open space developer contributions (\$43,000) and caravan parks developer contributions (\$36,000).

The most significant increases relate to Port Phillip Woollen Mill developer contributions (\$39,000), street tree planting contributions (\$21,000) and contributions received for capital projects (\$11,000).

Actual income is \$1.248 million under the YTD budget mainly due to delays in receiving open space developer contributions (\$563,000), Precinct 15 (\$508,000) and Port Phillip Woollen Mill (\$177,000).

1.7 Other income is expected to be over budget by \$150,000 due to interest on investments – resulting from higher interest rates and additional funds available for investments (\$100,000) and rental income of Council facilities (\$50,000).

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1.8 Employee costs are expected to be over budget by \$108,000.

The most significant forecast increases relate to restructure redundancies (\$257,000), Community Learning and Service Centres (Council+ program), which makes it easier for the community to access services and interact with Council through various service centres across the municipality (\$164,000), parental leave (\$102,000), and community life project management costs (\$78,000).

Significant forecast increases offset against increased income or reductions in materials and services relates to building site compliance (\$68,000), and a temporary part time position for the Woods Street arts space place activation (\$34,000).

Actual expenditure is \$216,000 under the YTD budget mainly due to short term vacancies over and above the vacancies allowance included in the budget.

The most significant expenditure over YTD budget includes the Council+ program (\$292,000), redundancies (\$257,000) and parental leave (\$134,000).

1.9 Materials and services are expected to be over budget by \$2.137 million.

The most significant forecast increase relates to the waste service – with contract increases offset against reductions to the landfill levy and FOGO tonnage with corresponding adjustments made to the reserve (\$1.021 million).

An additional forecast increase has also been made in relation to the new Winter Activation project in Williamstown (\$500,000).

Other significant forecast increases relating to expenditure associated with operational grant income from 2022-23 associated with the statutory digital planning and customer experience uplift project (\$300,000), Recycling 2.0 (\$127,000), the kindergarten infrastructure service plan (\$82,000), the early years culturally and linguistically diverse program (\$43,000), and the culturally and linguistically diverse local partnership program (\$30,000).

There have also been forecast increases required for annual software maintenance (\$140,000), recruitment program (\$128,000) and Community Learning and Service Centres equipment (\$125,000).

The most significant forecast decreases relate to maintenance assets (\$300,000), projects associated with the IT Strategy – to be carried over into 2024-25 (\$190,000), corporate wellbeing (\$163,000), planning scheme amendments (\$130,000), external asset audit program (\$120,000), roadside landscaping maintenance (\$52,000), corporate services directorate professional services (\$50,000), building and construction regulation professional services – reallocated to employee costs (\$50,000), corporate training (\$49,000), Woods Street Arts Space activation – to be carried over into 2024-25 (\$30,000) and town planning bank fees (\$30,000).

Actual expenditure is \$470,000 over the YTD Budget mainly due to waste services (\$423,000), public lighting (\$293,000), IT annual software maintenance (\$214,000), tree planting (\$213,000), and facilities administration (\$115,000).

Actual expenditure also over YTD budget includes the funded statutory planning digital planning and customer experience uplift project (\$134,000) and the kindergarten infrastructure service plan (\$41,000).

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The most significant expenditure under the YTD Budget relates to centre based respite (\$300,000), timing differences for community grants (\$191,000), arboriculture management (\$127,000), asset audits (\$125,000), corporate wellbeing professional services (\$118,000), corporate training (\$104,000), traffic and transport contracts (\$95,000), strategic planning projects (\$98,000), costs associated with the redrawing of electoral boundaries (\$71,000), cottage respite (\$54,000), and vehicle insurance (\$52,000).

- 1.10 Depreciation is expected to be over budget by \$2.865 million. The forecast has been increased due to purchases and revaluations that occurred late in the last financial year. In particular, Buildings, Parks and open space, Roads, and Drainage asset classes.

Depreciation is a non-cash item and has minimal impact on funding Council's budget in 2023-24 and ongoing financial implications.

- 1.11 Amortisation costs are expected to be under budget by \$100,000. The forecast has been reduced to reflect information technology and copier equipment leases which have reached the end of their term.
- 1.12 Borrowing costs are forecast to be under budget by \$239,000 due to a reduction and delay in receipt of new borrowings.
- 1.13 Other expenses are expected to be \$134,000 over budget due to an increase in IT telecommunication rentals (\$134,000).

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

2. Summary Capital Works Program

	Actual @ 31/12/23 \$'000	YTD Budget @ 31/12/23 \$'000	Budget 2023-24 \$'000	Forecast 2023-24 \$'000	Forecast / Budget \$'000
Items to be Capitalised	22,844	25,631	64,685	69,344	(4,659)
less items capitalised from operational budget	-	-	-	-	-
Operational Projects	1,146	779	1,979	2,013	(34)
Total Capital Works Expenditure	23,990	26,410	66,664	71,357	(4,693)
Capital Works Income	813	1,008	2,016	4,985	2,969
Transfers from Capital Carryover Reserve	10,806	6,419	6,419	10,806	4,387
Transfers to Capital Carryover Reserve – Expenditure	-	-	-	2,601	(2,601)
Transfers to Capital Carryover Reserve – Income	-	-	-	63	(63)
Net Capital Works Program	12,371	18,983	58,229	58,230	(1)

The Council's 2023-24 Capital Works Program, including variations to individual capital projects are highlighted in the capital works attachment. The forecast result of the Capital Works Program shows a balanced financial result when compared to the original budget after forecast adjustments and carryovers are considered.

Capital Works Expenditure for the period ended 31 December 2023 was \$23.990 million compared to the year-to-date budget of \$26.410 million. The initial budgeted capital expenditure for the 2023-24 financial year of \$66.664 million has increased to a forecast of \$71.537 million. The increased forecast expenditure of \$4.693 million compared to the budget is attributable to:

- expenditure carryover adjustments from the prior year's program (\$6.407 million)
- the increase in funded capital expenditure (\$887,000)
- expenditure expected to be carried over to next year's program (\$2.601 million)

Capital Income for the period ended 31 December 2023 was \$813,000. The initial budgeted capital income for the 2023-24 financial year of \$2.016 million has increased to a year-end forecast of \$4.985 million. The increased forecast income of \$2.969 million compared to budget is attributable to:

- income that was budgeted to be received in 2022-23 that is now expected to be received in 2023-24 (\$2.020 million)
- an increase in income received to fund the program (\$887,000)
- income bought forward from 2024-25 (\$63,000)

Transfers from the capital carryover over reserve fund additional capital works required in 2023-24 to complete the 2022-23 program and income budgeted to be received in 2022-23 now expected to be received 2023-24. The initial budgeted transfer from the reserve of \$6.419 million was adjusted to \$10.806 million after post budget adjustments.

Transfers to the capital carryover over reserve fund the capital works budgeted in 2023-24, now expected to be completed in 2024-25. It is forecast that \$2.601 million capital expenditure will be delayed and carried over into the next financial year, while income of \$63,000 has been received early than anticipated and bought forward into the current financial year.

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

3. Available Funding Result

	Actual @ 31/12/23 \$'000	YTD Budget @ 31/12/23 \$'000	Budget 2023-24 \$'000	Forecast 2023-24 \$'000	Forecast / Budget \$'000
Operating Surplus	5,738	6,549	16,469	15,089	(1,380)
Less Items to be Capitalised	(22,844)	(25,631)	(64,685)	(69,344)	(4,659)
Less Principal repayments	(719)	(718)	(1,878)	(1,665)	213
Plus Proceeds from borrowings	-	-	14,000	7,000	(7,000)
Plus Transfers to/from Reserves	14,003	7,972	6,535	16,594	10,059
Plus Depreciation and Amortisation	16,070	14,724	29,460	32,225	2,765
Plus Book Value Assets Sold	82	75	150	150	-
Rate Determination Result	12,330	2,971	50	49	(1)

4. Summary Cash Flow Statement

	Actual @ 31/12/23 \$'000	Budget 2023-24 \$'000	Forecast 2023-24 \$'000
Cash flows from Operating Activities	22,578	48,545	50,568
Cash Flows from Investing Activities	(22,755)	(64,483)	(69,142)
Cash Flows from Financing Activities	(1,100)	11,060	4,515
Net Increase/(Decrease) in cash held	(1,277)	(4,878)	(14,059)
Add Cash at beginning of the year	45,598	40,112	45,598
Cash at end of Financial Period	44,321	35,234	31,539

The Summary Cash Flow Statement indicates that Council's cash and investment balance was \$44.321 million on 31 December 2023. The original budget of \$35.234 million for 30 June 2024 has been decreased to a year-end forecast of \$31.539 million. The decrease in year-end cash when compared to budget is mainly a result of:

- new borrowings in 2023-24 being reduced by \$7 million
- capital works expenditure that will be completed next financial year (\$2.601 million)

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

5. Reconciliation of Operating Result and Net Cash flows from operating Activities

	Actual @ 31/12/23 \$'000	Budget 2023-24 \$'000	Forecast 2023-24 \$'000
Result from Ordinary Activities	5,738	16,469	15,089
Depreciation & Amortisation	16,070	29,460	32,225
(Gain) / Loss on Disposal of Property, Infrastructure, Plant & Equipment	(7)	(52)	(52)
Initial Asset recognition	-	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment / (decrement)	-	-	-
Net movement in Operating Assets & Liabilities	777	2,668	3,306
Net Cash Inflow/(Outflow) fom operating activities	22,578	48,545	50,568

6. Summary Balance Sheet

	Actual @ 31/12/23 \$'000	Budget 2023-24 \$'000	Forecast 2023-24 \$'000
Total Current Assets	62,971	56,019	52,201
Total Non-Current Assets	1,542,551	1,579,224	1,593,808
Total Assets	1,605,522	1,635,243	1,646,009
Total Current Liabilities	41,117	37,987	44,531
Total Non-Current Liabilities	18,570	29,326	23,446
Total Liabilities	59,687	67,313	67,976
Net Assets	1,545,835	1,567,929	1,578,032
Represented By			
Accumulated Surplus	622,902	653,211	657,689
Reserves	922,933	914,718	920,344
Total Equity	1,545,835	1,567,929	1,578,032

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

7. Financial Plan Projections

Council adopted its Financial Plan 2021-22 to 2030-31 on 12 October 2021.

The Financial Plan includes Financial Policy Statements and associated measures that demonstrate Council's financial sustainability to fund the aspirations of the Community Vision and the Council Plan.

The seven financial indicators used by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) to assess councils' financial sustainability risks are all included. Other measures determined by Council have also been included and all are linked to the various policy statements. The measures can be used to assess Council's financial performance, capital works or financial position. The indicators should be considered collectively and are more useful when assessed over time as part of a trend analysis.

The Financial Plan provides guidance, rather than commits Council to a future financial direction. Council will continue to review the way it operates and re-evaluate its financial performance, position, and direction on an ongoing basis.

This section provides an update on the financial projections contained in the Financial Policy Statements after completion of the December (mid-year) 2023 forecast review.

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

7.1 Financial Plan Projections - Financial Performance

Council's policy statements (and strategic actions) in relation to financial performance are that Council will:

- achieve strong operational surpluses to ensure that there is adequate funding available for current and future capital works as well as other ongoing and future commitments
- consider all funding source to reduce the high dependence on rates and become more financially self-reliant by prioritised pursuit of own source revenue opportunities
- manage employee labor costs at an appropriate percentage of operating revenue

The financial performance policy statements are measured by five indicators.

The **Net Result Margin (VAGO)** measures the net result of Council as a percent of revenue.

It is calculated by: Net result divided by Total income.

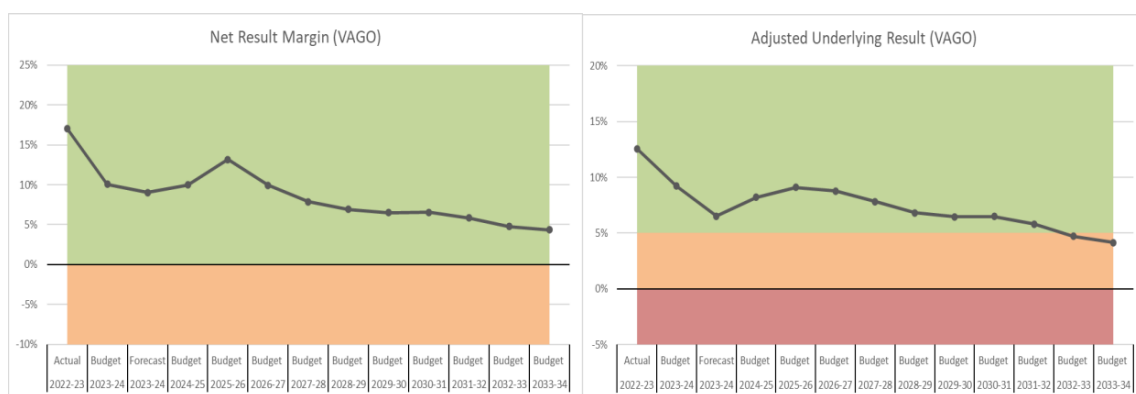
Target: > 0 per cent

The **Adjusted Underlying Result (VAGO)** measures an entity's ability to generate surpluses in the ordinary course of business - excluding non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions, and other contributions to fund capital expenditure from net result. A surplus or increasing surplus suggests an improvement in the operating position.

It is calculated by: Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) divided by Adjusted underlying revenue.

Target: > 5 per cent

The graphs below indicate that Council will generally achieve its targets to have low VAGO financial sustainability risk ratings in relation to its Net Result Margin and Adjusted Underlying Result. Current forecasts indicate that Council will achieve strong operational surpluses to ensure that there is adequate funding available for ongoing and future commitments. Council will need to closely monitor the trend of the Adjusted Underlying Result in later years of the plan as the results start to decline.



The **Own Source Revenue Ratio (excluding rates)** measures financial flexibility as it indicates the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating, and capital grants and contributions received. A council has improved financial flexibility with a higher level of own source revenue. This ratio is an adjustment to the standard Own Source Revenue Ratio by removing rates and charges.

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

It is calculated by: Total operating income less all grants, contributions, rates, and charges divided by Total operating income.

Target: > 10 per cent

The **Rates Revenue Ratio** indicates the ability of Council to generate rates and its dependence on rates, when compared to total revenue.

It is calculated by: Rates and charges divided by Total operating income.

Target: < 80 per cent

The graphs below indicated that Council will **not** achieve its targets in relation to its Own Source Revenue Ratio (excluding rates) and Rates Revenue Ratio. Current forecasts indicate that Council will **not** reduce its current high dependence on rates and will **not** become more financially self-reliant by prioritised pursuit of own source revenue opportunities outside of rates.

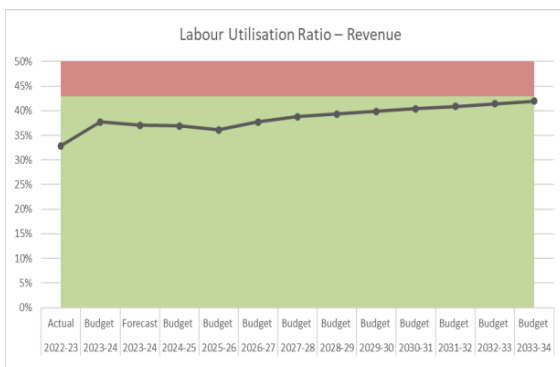


The **Labour Utilisation Ratio – Revenue** provides an overview of the organisation’s expenditure on internal labour as a proportion of total revenue. It is used to monitor and manage affordable internal employee costs and indicates the Council’s sensitivity to changes in income.

It is calculated by: Employee costs divided by Total income.

Target: < 43 per cent

The graph below indicates that Council will achieve its targets in relation to its Labour Utilisation Ratio - Revenue. Current forecasts indicate that Council will continue to achieve its aim of managing employee labour costs at an ‘appropriate’ percentage of operating revenue. Despite predictions that Council will achieve its targets, this ratio will need to be closely monitored as the trend indicates that the results will start to decline.



Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

7.2 Financial Plan Projections - Capital Works

Council's policy statements (and strategic actions) in relation to capital works are that Council will:

- ensure enough cash is being generated from operations to fund new assets
- ensure sufficient spending on asset renewal and Council's asset base
- increase the amount of funding currently available for Capital Works

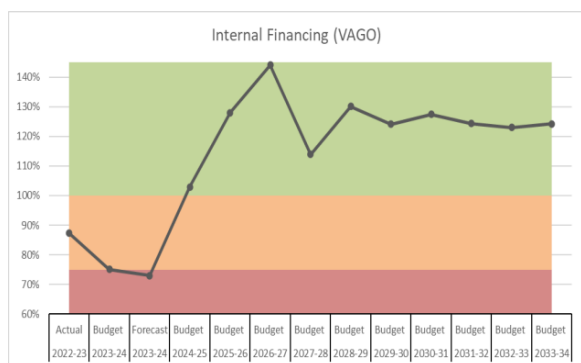
The capital works policy statements are measured by four indicators.

Internal Financing (VAGO) measures the ability of an entity to finance capital works from generated cashflow. The higher the percentage, the greater the ability for the entity to finance capital works from their own funds.

It is calculated by: Net operating cashflow divided by Net capital expenditure.

Target: > 100 per cent

The graph below indicates that Council will **not** achieve its targets to have low VAGO financial sustainability risk ratings in relation to Internal Financing until 2024-25. Increased capital expenditure between 2022-23 and 2024-25 must be funded by loan borrowings. The forecast in 2023-24 is that Council moves into the high-risk category, partially due to the additional capital works carryover from the previous year. The current forecasts indicate that Council will achieve its aim of ensuring enough cash is being generated from operations to fund new assets from 2024-25, when Council's capital works program reduces to more manageable levels.



Capital Replacement (VAGO) compares the rate of spending on new infrastructure, property, plant and equipment with its depreciation. Ratios higher than 100 per cent indicate that spending is faster than the depreciating rate. This is a long-term indicator, as capital expenditure can be deferred in the short term if there are insufficient funds available from operations and borrowing is not an option.

It is calculated by: Cash outflows for the addition of new infrastructure, property, plant and equipment divided by Depreciation.

Target: > 150 per cent

The **Renewal Gap (VAGO)** compares the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, and replacing existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 100 per cent indicate that spending on existing assets is faster than the depreciation rate.

It is calculated by: Renewal and upgrade expenditure divided by Depreciation.

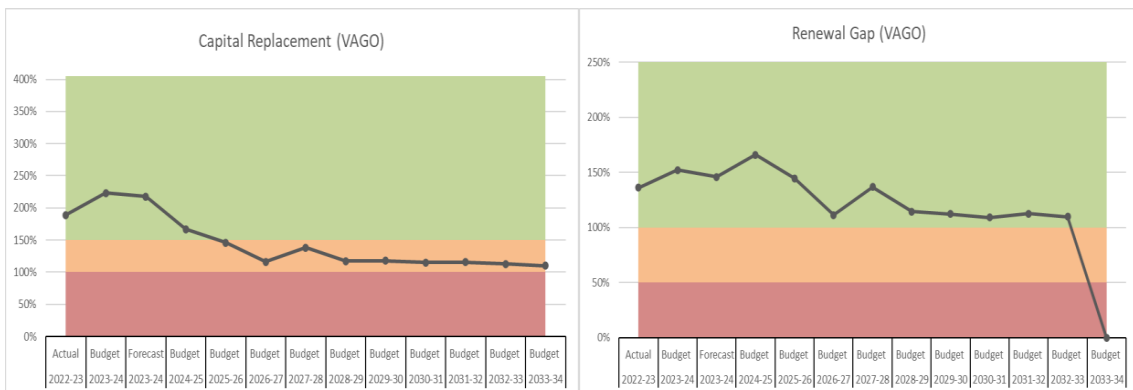
Target: > 100 per cent

Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

The Capital Replacement graph below indicates that Council will achieve its targets and have low VAGO financial sustainability risk ratings in relation to Capital Replacement until 2024-25 but will need to increase its capital spend from 2025-26 to continue to achieve its Capital Replacement targets to ensure sufficient spending on Council's asset base.

The Renewal Gap graph below indicate that Council will achieve its target to have low VAGO financial sustainability risk ratings in relation to the Renewal Gap to ensure sufficient spending on asset renewal. The indicator for 2033-24 should be ignored as Council officers are still collecting data for this particular year.

Both graphs have been negatively impacted by the increased forecast for depreciation in 2023-24 and beyond.

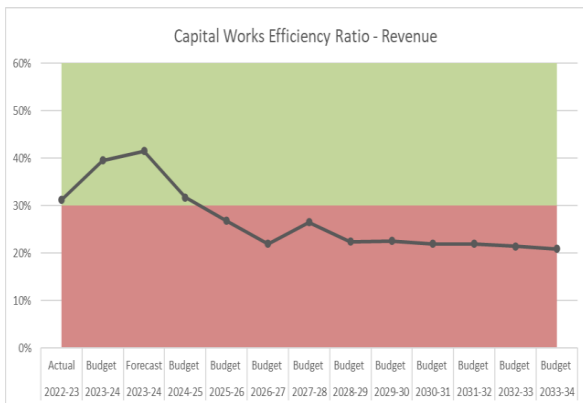


The **Capital Works Efficiency Ratio – Revenue** compares the rate of spending on new infrastructure, property, plant and equipment with total revenue.

It is calculated by: Capital expenditure divided by Total revenue.

Target: > 30 per cent (average)

The graph below indicates that Council will **not** achieve its target to average greater than 30 per cent (average result = 25.5 per cent) in relation to the Capital Works Efficiency Ratio – Revenue. Current forecasts indicate that Council will **not** achieve its aim of increasing the amount of funding currently available for Capital Works as ratios are forecast to decline in the later years of the plan.



Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

7.3 Financial Plan Projections - Financial Position

Council's policy statements (and strategic actions) in relation to financial position are that Council will:

- ensure there are no immediate issues with repaying short-term liabilities as they fall due. This will be achieved by maintaining Council's liquidity ratio at levels exceeding 100 per cent
- ensure loan commitments can be repaid from own source revenue, including interest and principle, as they fall due

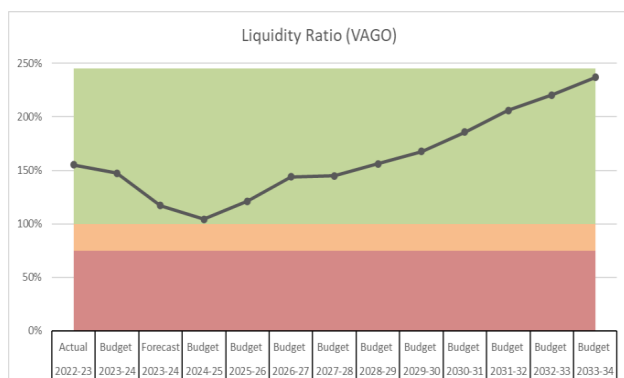
The financial position policy statements are measured by four indicators.

The **Liquidity ratio (VAGO)** measures the ability to pay existing liabilities in the next 12 months and is a key indicator of financial position. A ratio of 100 per cent or more means that there are more cash and liquid assets than short-term liabilities.

It is calculated by: Current assets divided by Current liabilities.

Target: > 100 per cent

The graph below indicates that Council will achieve its targets and have low VAGO financial sustainability risk ratings in relation to the Liquidity Ratio. Current forecasts indicate that Council will achieve its aim to ensure that there are no immediate issues with repaying short-term liabilities as they fall due. This ratio is inflated due to Council's loan borrowings as well as including funding in the Infrastructure and Advocacy Project reserves to fund future capital works. If/when additional projects are funded from these reserves, the liquidity ratio will reduce in-line with a reduction in cash and investments.



Indebtedness (VAGO) assesses an entity's ability to pay the principal and interest on outstanding loans, as and when they fall due, from the funds it generates. The lower the ratio, the less revenue the entity is required to use to repay its loans. Own-sourced revenue is used, rather than total revenue, because it does not include grants or contributions.

It is calculated by: Non-current liabilities divided by Own-sourced revenue.

Target: < 40 per cent

The **Debt servicing Ratio** assesses an entity's ability to pay interest on its outstanding loans each year from total revenue.

It is calculated by: Borrowing costs divided by Total income.

Target: < 5 per cent

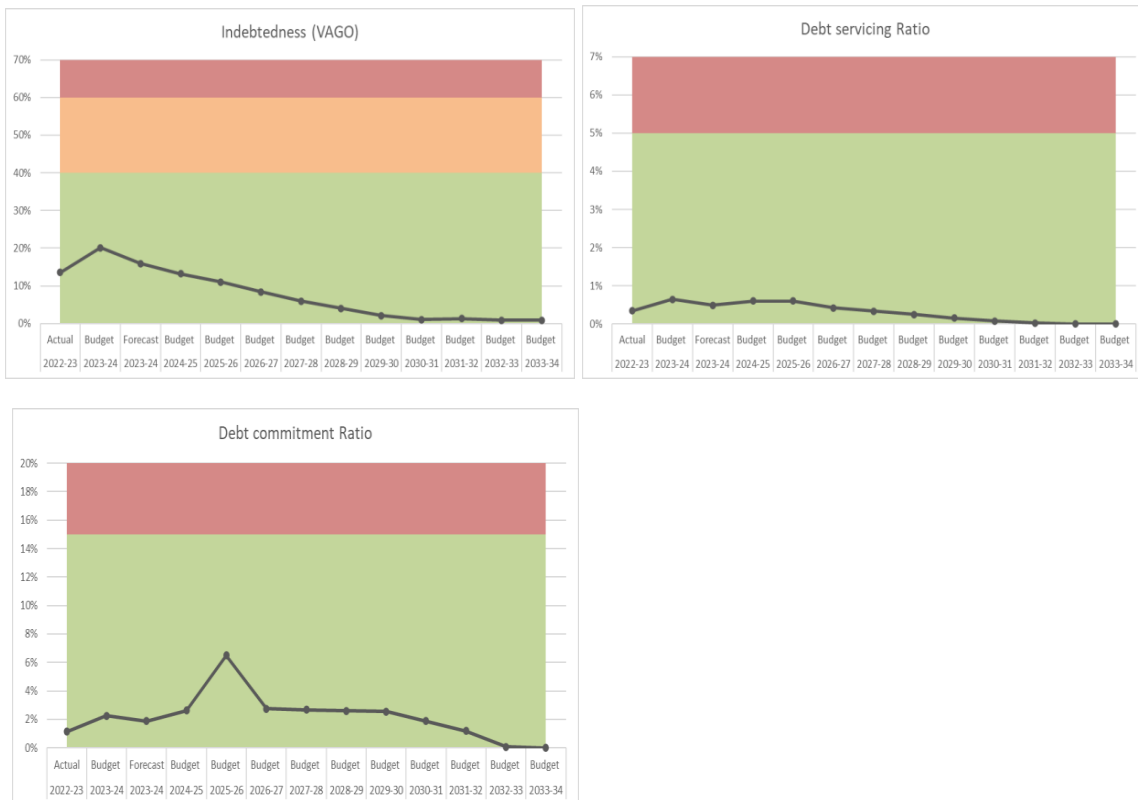
Hobsons Bay City Council – Financial Report for the period ended 31 December 2023

The **Debt commitment Ratio** assesses an entity’s ability to pay the principal and interest on outstanding loans, as and when they fall due, from rate revenue.

It is calculated by: Borrowing costs plus loan repayments divided by Rate revenue.

Target: < 15 per cent

Despite additional loan borrowings included in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 the graphs below indicate that Council will achieve its targets in relation to Indebtedness, the Debt Servicing Ratio and the Debt Commitment Ratio. Current forecasts indicate that Council will achieve its aim to ensure loan commitments can be repaid from own source revenue, including interest and principle, as they fall due.



Capital Works Program 2023-24	EXPENDITURE								INCOME							
	New Works	Budget Carried Over	Adopted Budget	Post Budget adjustments	Revised Budget	New Forecast	YTD Actuals	Proposed Carryover / (Brought Forward)	New Income	Budget Carried Over	Adopted Budget	Post Budget adjustments	Revised Budget	New Forecast	YTD Actuals	Proposed (Carryover) / Brought Forward
Arts & Culture																
Cultural Asset Maintenance	130,000	0	130,000	65,979	195,979	155,979	6,613	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Works																
West Gate Tunnel - Open Space enhancement	200,000	30,000	230,000	405,000	635,000	435,632	416,132	13,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foreshore Remedial	270,000	227,000	497,000	229,000	726,000	1,323,240	618,548	(500,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JT Gray Reserve Pavilion	0	0	0	0	0	896	896	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Towards Zero Program	1,720,000	(975,000)	745,000	165,000	910,000	292,948	234,248	480,000	0	0	0	(16,977)	(16,977)	(16,977)	0	0
Playground Upgrades	535,000	5,000	540,000	(5,000)	535,000	81,349	11,066	440,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blenheim Road Open Space	0	0	0	12,000	12,000	15,569	4,357	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Management Program	1,450,000	(40,000)	1,410,000	175,000	1,585,000	961,889	134,337	450,000	(127,000)	0	(127,000)	0	(127,000)	(127,000)	0	0
Irrigation Upgrades	640,000	25,000	665,000	255,000	920,000	811,053	344,053	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open Space Upgrades	4,935,000	1,639,000	6,574,000	(259,507)	6,314,493	7,075,087	3,425,274	160,000	0	(180,000)	(180,000)	(13,803)	(193,803)	(193,803)	0	0
Dennis Reserve	3,230,000	890,000	4,120,000	(115,000)	4,005,000	4,185,382	1,914,512	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HD Graham Reserve Future Development	0	0	0	270,000	270,000	279,181	158,062	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sporting Grd Infrastr/Floodlighting	0	210,000	210,000	110,000	320,000	340,837	224,027	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hard Courts - Various	0	0	0	70,000	70,000	65,449	32,116	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newport Park Track Masterplan	30,000	0	30,000	25,000	55,000	50,000	1,170	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sporting Ground Redevelopments	570,000	(140,000)	430,000	337,000	767,000	694,722	519,722	0	(300,000)	120,000	(180,000)	150,000	(30,000)	(30,000)	(30,000)	0
COVID-19	0	0	0	0	0	13,523	13,523	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten Program	970,000	0	970,000	120,000	1,090,000	1,011,189	342,686	0	0	0	0	(80,526)	(80,526)	(230,526)	(105,000)	0
Newport Gardens Kindergarten	0	0	0	0	0	9,477	9,477	0	0	0	0	(60,000)	(60,000)	(60,000)	0	0
Wayfinder Signage	0	0	0	115,000	115,000	116,777	24,492	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetlands Centre	600,000	0	600,000	0	600,000	162,894	53,054	410,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kororoit Creek Development	500,000	390,000	890,000	(240,000)	650,000	155,162	5,162	488,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Williamstown Mechanics Institute Upgrade	450,000	0	450,000	0	450,000	150,232	232	280,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laverton Swim Centre (Future Plan)	500,000	0	500,000	0	500,000	463,498	27,753	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pier Street Upgrade	0	0	0	0	0	30,624	22,210	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
City Works and Amenity																
Council Asset Maintenance	9,425,000	2,401,000	11,826,000	370,000	12,196,000	12,217,980	4,148,174	180,000	(160,000)	(400,000)	(560,000)	204,000	(356,000)	(291,291)	(28,741)	0
Pit Upgrade Program	120,000	0	120,000	0	120,000	115,000	82,958	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Learning & Service Centres																
Library Resources	1,210,000	(155,000)	1,055,000	71,000	1,126,000	1,101,000	387,252	0	(15,000)	0	(15,000)	0	(15,000)	(15,000)	0	0
Contracts & Procurement																
Plant Purchases	2,540,000	330,000	2,870,000	1,000,000	3,870,000	3,353,153	1,551,121	500,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Director Infrastructure & City Services																
Greenhouse Strategy	3,500,000	0	3,500,000	0	3,500,000	3,264,420	279,420	500,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering Services																
Bridge Renewal	760,000	365,000	1,125,000	20,000	1,145,000	1,149,145	14,145	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Footpath Renewals - Various	820,000	0	820,000	0	820,000	1,044,742	458,742	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drainage Renewal	1,110,000	0	1,110,000	229,500	1,339,500	1,274,619	163,447	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Road Rehabilitation	7,020,000	(410,000)	6,610,000	1,942,000	8,552,000	9,724,828	2,561,518	(1,780,000)	(954,000)	0	(954,000)	(677,167)	(1,631,167)	(1,631,167)	0	0
Traffic Management	860,000	300,000	1,160,000	228,800	1,388,800	1,293,691	232,832	220,000	0	0	0	(576,645)	(576,645)	(655,845)	0	0
Unsealed Laneway Upgrade Program	1,230,000	0	1,230,000	(13,000)	1,217,000	573,905	378,905	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Capital Works Program 2023-24	EXPENDITURE								INCOME							
	New Works	Budget Carried Over	Adopted Budget	Post Budget adjustments	Revised Budget	New Forecast	YTD Actuals	Proposed Carryover / (Brought Forward)	New Income	Budget Carried Over	Adopted Budget	Post Budget adjustments	Revised Budget	New Forecast	YTD Actuals	Proposed (Carryover) / Brought Forward
Drainage Upgrades - Various	1,250,000	0	1,250,000	155,000	1,405,000	883,635	196,544	700,000	0	0	0	0	0	(135,000)	0	0
Car Park - Various	940,000	850,000	1,790,000	25,000	1,815,000	2,518,199	360,641	0	0	0	0	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)	0	0
Stitch in Time Road Resurfacing	3,700,000	0	3,700,000	168,400	3,868,400	4,608,220	1,353,383	0	0	0	0	(88,768)	(88,768)	(88,768)	0	0
Trail Infrastructure - Maintenance	55,000	0	55,000	35,000	90,000	85,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Traffic Management	0	0	0	0	0	5,548	5,548	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Footpath New Program	400,000	(310,000)	90,000	152,000	242,000	294,255	109,255	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Signage - Interpretive	0	0	0	140,000	140,000	98,918	98,918	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ICT																
IT Strategy Implementation	670,000	0	670,000	0	670,000	655,000	305,089	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,510)	(1,510)	0
Open Space & City Design																
Community Gardens	1,610,000	355,000	1,965,000	53,000	2,018,000	940,294	467,032	895,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Demolition	0	0	0	0	0	5,500	5,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parks, Gardens & Conservation																
Open Space Asset Renewal	480,000	282,000	762,000	(277,000)	485,000	328,304	94,342	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bio-Diversity Strategy	340,000	130,000	470,000	(86,000)	384,000	344,693	77,782	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Williamstown Botanical Gardens	60,000	0	60,000	0	60,000	55,000	33,206	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elm Tree Management	60,000	0	60,000	0	60,000	55,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fencing of Council Reserves	170,000	0	170,000	16,000	186,000	181,000	35,056	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Planting	1,940,000	180,000	2,120,000	335,000	2,455,000	2,289,037	1,162,944	0	0	0	0	0	0	(585,500)	(585,500)	0
PMO																
Street Lighting	110,000	(20,000)	90,000	20,000	110,000	102,189	3,169	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buildings	1,100,000	(30,000)	1,070,000	0	1,070,000	2,019,869	691,957	(920,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Recreation, Planning & Projects																
Laverton Bowling Green	0	0	0	90,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Traffic & Transport																
Better Places	1,575,000	0	1,575,000	0	1,575,000	1,427,647	47,647	85,000	0	0	0	0	0	(62,500)	(62,500)	62,500
Road Rehab - Blackspot funded	0	350,000	350,000	(2,000)	348,000	374,294	49,794	0	0	0	0	(760,000)	(760,000)	(760,000)	0	0
	59,785,000	6,879,000	66,664,000	6,407,172	73,071,172	71,356,672	23,990,045	2,601,000	(1,556,000)	(460,000)	(2,016,000)	(2,019,885)	(4,035,885)	(4,984,886)	(813,251)	62,500



Half Year Progress Report 2023-24

**Second Quarter
Council Plan Initiatives Update**
October, November, December 2023

**Mid-Year Local Government Performance
Reporting Framework Indicators**
July – December 2023

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Acknowledgement of Country

Council acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of these municipal lands and waterways and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Summary

Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), Council is required to include its major initiatives and services in the Annual Budget document as committed projects for the financial year that support the implementation of the Council Plan. The annual reporting of the progress of these projects is a requirement in the Act. Council reports on a quarterly basis to ensure that progress is on track throughout the financial year.

The Act also requires Council to report the results from the prescribed Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) indicators. The LGPRF is a mandatory system of reporting requiring all councils to report on their service performance in a consistent format as a part of its Annual Report. Council undertakes half year reporting on LGPRF indicators to ensure that progress is on track throughout the financial year.

In 2023-24, Council nominated 19 major initiatives to support the delivery of Council Plan 2021-25, of which 16 are multi-year projects and have been carried over from the previous year. Three projects have been included in the budget as new major initiatives for 2023-24.

In addition to delivering the ongoing core services and major initiatives, Council also delivers other projects and actions to improve its services and create more value for the community. These projects are delivered in line with the Council Plan Objectives, Strategies and Priorities.

The overview of the status of Major Initiatives, other projects and actions as well as the LGPRF can be seen in the following infographics broken down by objective.

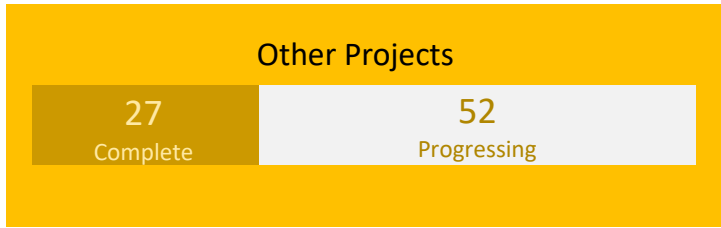
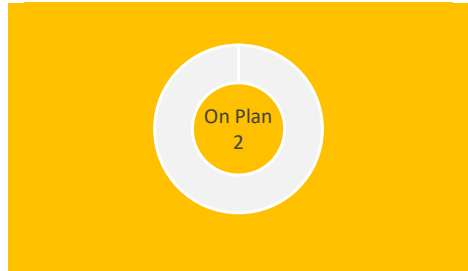
Objective 1 – Community

Healthy, Equitable and Thriving Communities

Be a city where all members of the community can participate equitably, feel safe, connected, and achieve good health and social wellbeing.

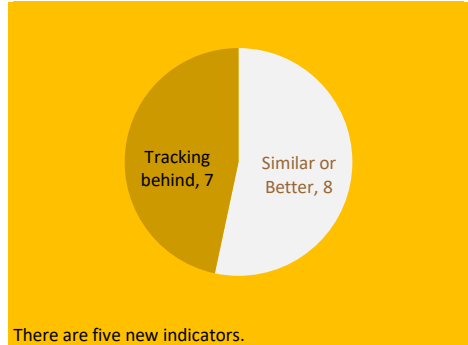
2

Major initiatives



20

LGPRF indicators



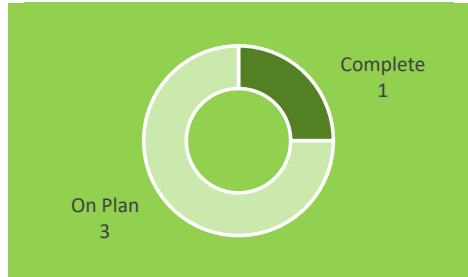
Objective 2 – Environment

Valuing our Environment

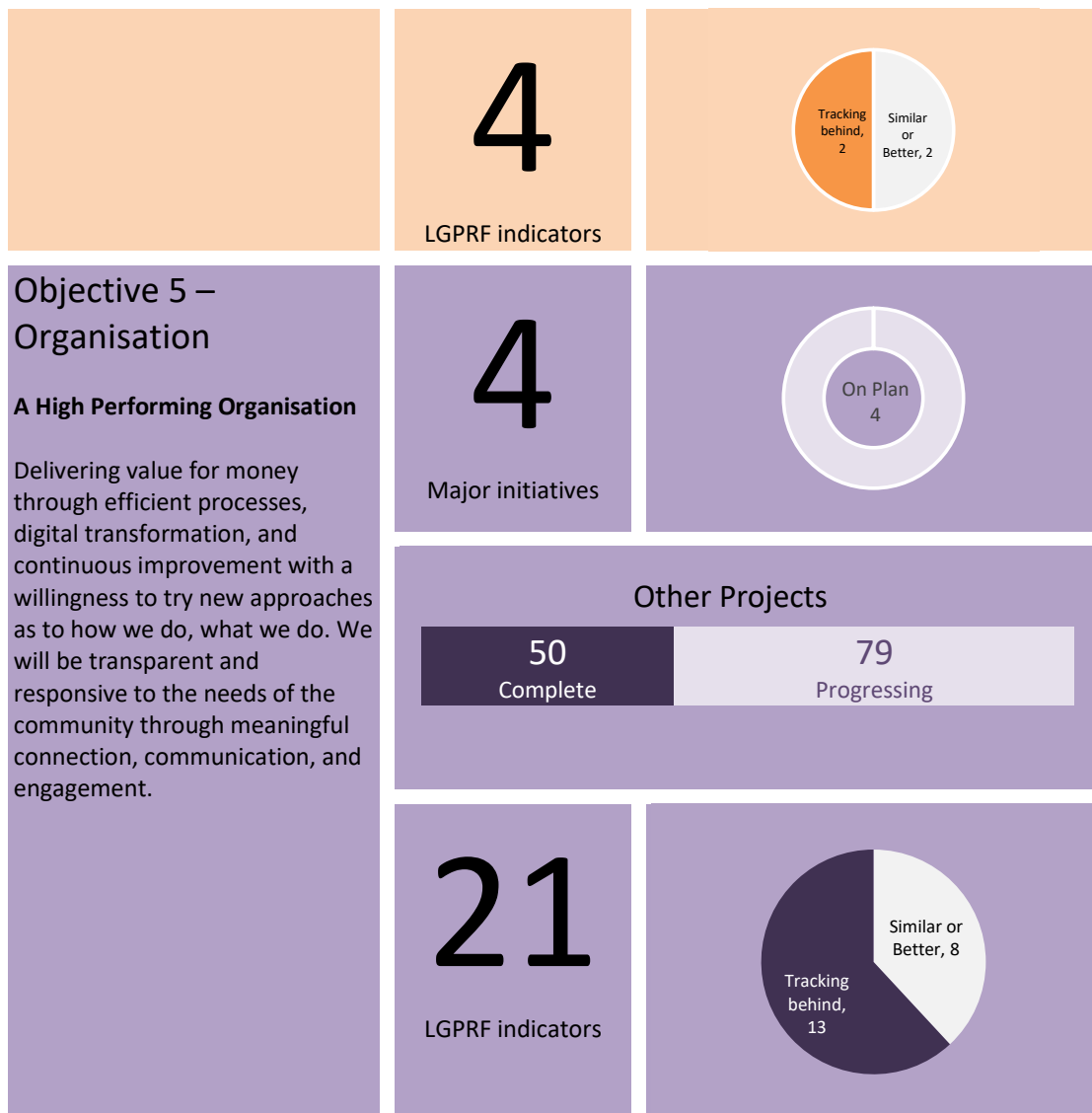
Foster a sustainable way of living in response to climate change through active involvement in alternative energy use, reduction of waste, enhancement, and conservation of our natural environment.

4

Major initiatives







Progress against the Council Plan objectives

Council Plan 2021-25

The Council Plan 2021-25 was adopted by Council on 12 October 2021. It guides the work of Council over a four-year period, setting objectives, strategies, and priorities for creating an even better Hobsons Bay through the delivery of Council’s services and major initiatives.

The Council Plan consists of five strategic objectives that are broken down by 19 strategies and 59 priorities which outline what Council will do to deliver the plan over 2021-25.

Objective 1: Community

Healthy, equitable and thriving communities. Be a city where all members of the community can participate equitably, feel safe, connected, and achieve good health and social wellbeing.

Major Initiatives

There are two major initiatives for this objective in 2023-24. The progress of each of the major initiatives is below:

Project	Status	Progress comment
<p>Hobsons Bay Affordable Housing Trust</p> <p>The Trust will provide housing to low-income households with a connection to Hobsons Bay.</p>	On Plan	<p>Council continues to work in partnership with Housing Choices Australia (HCA) as the Trustee of the Hobsons Bay Affordable Housing Trust to progress the Trust's aims.</p> <p>HCA are finalising the business plan year two, Council and the Trust are eagerly awaiting the outcome of the key focus for year one which was the submission for funding for the Epsom Street Affordable Housing Project.</p>
<p>Centres of Excellence Strategy 2022-2027</p> <p>A strategic plan for the future management of Council's community learning and service centres across the municipality.</p>	On Plan	<p>The launch of the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Centre of Excellence had an impressive attendance of 3,200 people. The event showcased the community's enthusiasm for science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) initiatives. Unprecedented foot traffic continued throughout the subsequent STEAM festival with over 2000 visitors attending each week.</p> <p>A Community Language Day introduced technology concepts in eight community languages, facilitating inclusivity and accessibility. This unique approach allowed diverse groups to explore STEAM subjects in their preferred languages.</p> <p>Additionally, the STEAM Goes Green event drew a remarkable turnout, with over 900 people participating. This event emphasized the intersection of technology and environmental sustainability, showcasing the community's interest in addressing critical global challenges through innovative and eco-friendly solutions. These successful initiatives underscore the STEAM Centre's pivotal role in bringing the community together, promoting</p>

Project	Status	Progress comment
		diversity and fostering a shared passion for knowledge and innovation.

Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Indicators (LGPRF)

There are 18 reportable LGPRF indicators related to this objective. The results are as follow:

Indicator						
Animal Management		Jun 2021- Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022- Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid- year)	Performance against same time last year
AM1	Time taken to action animal management requests <i>(The average number of days it has taken for Council to action animal management related requests)</i>	2.14	2.29	2.78	1.80	↑
AM2	Animals reclaimed <i>(The percentage of collected registrable animals under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 reclaimed)</i>	48.86%	61.24%	62.40%	52.41%	↓
AM5	Animals rehomed <i>(The percentage of unclaimed collected registrable animals under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 that are rehomed)</i>	New calculation in 2023-24	New calculation in 2023-24	New calculation in 2023-24	29.11%	○
AM6	Cost of animal management service per population <i>(The direct cost of the animal management service per municipal population)</i>	\$6.55	\$3.06	\$6.43	\$4.06	↓
AM7	Animal management prosecutions <i>(The percentage of successful animal management prosecutions)</i>	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	○
Food Safety		Jan-Dec 2021 (full year)	Jan-Jun 2022 (mid-year)	Jan-Dec 2022 (full year)	Jan-Jun 2023 (mid- year)	Performance against same time last year
FS1	Time taken to action food complaints <i>(The average number of days it has taken for Council to action food complaints received from members of the public about the safety or handling of food for sale)</i>	2.26	2.04	2.61	1.35	↑
FS2	Food safety assessments <i>(The percentage of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment)</i>	101.04%	71.05%	95.53%	70.23%	↓

FS3	Cost of food safety service <i>(The direct cost of the food safety service per food premises registered by Council, or for which Council has received notification, during the year)</i>	\$461.02	\$251.88	\$455.86	\$174.12	↑
FS4	Critical and major non-compliance outcome <i>(The percentage of critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications that are followed up by Council)</i>	87.36%	90.28%	99.12%	88.57%	↓
FS5	Food safety samples <i>(The percentage of food samples obtained per required number of food samples)</i>	New in 2023-24	New in 2023-24	New in 2023-24	44.44%	○
Libraries		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
LB2	Recently purchased library collection <i>(The percentage of the library collection that has been purchased in the last 5 years)</i>	75.25%	58.77%	59.31%	74.96%	↑
LB5	Cost of library service per population <i>(The direct cost of the library service per population)</i>	\$55.19	\$31.67	\$63.85	\$34.71	↓
LB6	Library loans per population <i>(The number of collection item loans per population)</i>	New in 2023-24	New in 2023-24	New in 2023-24	2.66	○
LB7	Library membership <i>(The percentage of resident municipal population who are registered library members)</i>	New in 2023-24	New in 2023-24	New in 2023-24	31.41%	○
LB8	Library visits per population <i>(The number of library visits per head of population)</i>	New in 2023-24	New in 2023-24	New in 2023-24	2.85	○
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
MC2	Infant enrolments in the MCH service <i>(The percentage of infants enrolled in the MCH service)</i>	100.70%	100.19%	101.18%	100.75%	↑
MC3	Cost of the MCH service <i>(The cost of the MCH service per hour of service delivered)</i>	\$ 81.32	\$ 78.32	\$ 88.00	\$ 84.68	↓
MC4	Participation in the MCH service <i>(The percentage of children enrolled who participate in the MCH service)</i>	67.41%	58.30%	68.42%	61.58%	↑

MC5	Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children) <i>(The percentage of Aboriginal children enrolled who participate in the MCH service)</i>	83.65%	69.39%	80.73%	74.29%	↑
MC6	Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit <i>(The percentage of infants enrolled in the MCH service who participated in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit)</i>	97.81%	93.89%	95.68%	93.47%	↓

Objective 2: Environment

Valuing our environment. Foster a sustainable way of living in response to climate change through active involvement in alternative energy use, reduction of waste, enhancement, and conservation of our natural environment.

Major Initiatives

There are four major initiatives for this objective in 2023-24. The progress of each of the major initiatives is below:

Project	Status	Progress comment
<p>Wetlands Centre Development</p> <p>Development of concept, detail design and contract documentation, including stakeholder engagement, for a state-of-the-art sustainability-focused Wetlands Centre in Hobsons Bay to increase community education and participation in preserving the local environment.</p>	On Plan	Design works for the early works are practically complete, this includes for all utility and service connections. The process to obtain statutory permits will commence in early 2024. With anticipated construction of the early works to commence in early 2024. Grant applications are being prepared to potentially expand scope of the project and allow for additional works.
<p>Tree Planting – Urban Forest Strategy</p> <p>Tree planting and establishment maintenance along streets, pathways and in public open space, to achieve 30% canopy cover by 2040</p>	On Plan	Advanced tree plantings for the 2023 season are complete. All plantings are also completed for the More Trees for a Cooler Greener West program. Recent advanced tree plantings are currently being provided supplementary irrigation. Weed control and supplementary irrigation is also being carried out on the tube stock plantings.
<p>Altona Meadows Library Building Renewal & Energy Efficiency Upgrades</p> <p>Building renewal works, including acoustic treatment, HVAC, and improved space utilisation, to enhance customer experience.</p>	Complete	<p>The project is now fully completed and open to the public for use.</p> <p>The official library launch took place on the 21 October 2023 with over 3000 visitors who attended.</p>
<p>Solar Program</p> <p>Large scale solar program across multiple sites to reduce emissions and result in operational savings.</p>	On Plan	This project is currently in the planning stage for the next phase of rooftop solar installation. Sites across Council's property portfolio are being assessed and Council is undertaking a feasibility analysis to ensure maximum generation and storage of renewable electricity.

Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Indicators (LGPRF)

There are five reportable LGPRF indicators related to this objective. The results are as follow:

Indicator						
Waste Management		Jun 2021- Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022- Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
WC2	Kerbside collection bins missed <i>(The number of kerbside collection bins missed per 10,000 scheduled kerbside collection bin lifts)</i>	16.78	13.80	13.54	11.28	↑
WC3	Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service <i>(The direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service per kerbside garbage collection bin)</i>	\$179.75	\$79.96	\$109.94	\$67.98	↑
WC4	Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service <i>(The direct cost of the kerbside recyclables collection service (including the contract cost of collection) per kerbside recyclables collection bin)</i>	\$40.87	\$14.48	\$27.00	\$18.50	↓
WC5	Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill <i>(The percentage of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins that is diverted from landfill)</i>	57.76%	54.59%	53.13%	53.41%	↓

Objective 3: Place, recreation, and economy

Vibrant place and economy. Support a resilient local economy that facilitates job growth and retention, promoting Hobsons Bay as a place to live, work, invest, recreate, and visit.

Major Initiatives

There are six major initiatives for this objective in 2023-24. The progress of each of the major initiatives is below:

Project	Status	Progress comment
Better Places Laverton A place guide for Better Places Laverton was adopted in 2020 which	On Plan	Of the 12 Better Places Laverton projects, four are complete with the remaining eight projects progressing or near completion. Key project highlights include:

Project	Status	Progress comment
<p>identified 12 initiatives for future implementation.</p>		<p>Project 3 Love Laverton Parks: Bruce Street Reserve - The upgrade at Bruce Street Reserve commenced in November following consultation with the local community. The project includes new playground equipment, an access path with two reserve entrance points, seating, and new trees to help establish additional canopy cover in future years.</p> <p>Project 3 Love Laverton Parks: Cropley Reserve - An upgrade to the playground within Cropley Reserve commenced in November. The new park will include picnic tables, an open lawn area, new playground equipment and planting. Works are scheduled for completion in March.</p> <p>Project 10 Wayfinding and Signage: A suite of new wayfinding signage was installed throughout Laverton in late 2023. This signage aims to link the community to key open space and activity centres throughout Laverton.</p>
<p>Better Places Spotswood + South Kingsville</p> <p>A place guide for Better Places Spotswood and South Kingsville was adopted in 2021 which identified 16 initiatives for future implementation.</p>	<p>On Plan</p>	<p>The Spotswood + South Kingsville place guide was endorsed by Council in October 2021. Since then, two projects have been completed with numerous others in progress with investigations and design. Key project highlights include:</p> <p>Project 5: Streets for People - The Avenue, Spotswood: Works were completed in December 2023 to upgrade The Avenue in Spotswood to make it more pedestrian and bike friendly, while also improving the amenity of the area. These works complement the recent implementation of the 40km zones in this precinct and complete the upgrades associated with the Donald McLean Reserve Improvement Plan (Project 10: Love our Parks).</p> <p>Project 10: Love our Parks – Mary Street Reserve: Following the completion of an extensive community consultation process, the Mary Street Reserve Master Plan was</p>

Project	Status	Progress comment
		adopted by Council in September 2023. Further investigation and detailed design have occurred prior to works being completed throughout 2024.
<p>Better Places - Brooklyn and Altona North</p> <p>A place guide for Better Places Brooklyn and Altona North was adopted in 2022 which identified 9 initiatives for future implementation.</p>	On Plan	<p>Following Council endorsement of the Brooklyn and Altona North place guide in December 2022, several projects have commenced investigation and design. A project that is well progressed is Project 7: Better Places and Spaces - landscape interface with Brooklyn Hall. The Brooklyn Hall was officially opened on 26 November 2023, including landscaping works that improve the facility's integration within the reserve.</p> <p>Officers have also been working with the local community to develop a detailed design for a community garden within Brooklyn Reserve. The construction of this facility will be completed by mid-2024 and is partly funded by a state government local parks grant.</p>
<p>Dennis Reserve Master Plan implementation</p> <p>Includes the construction of a new multipurpose community facility and car park.</p>	On Plan	The project is progressing well with over 50% of the construction works completed. Works on the internal space will commence in early 2024.
<p>HC Kim Reserve, Altona - New Pavilion, Female Friendly Change Rooms & Car Park Upgrades</p> <p>Construction of new pavilion and sports field and floodlighting upgrades, irrigation upgrade and carpark upgrades</p>	On Plan	Construction works are ongoing with the anticipated project completion due in mid 2024.
<p>Alma Avenue Reserve, Altona Meadows</p> <p>Local Park upgrade identified in the Better Places Seabrook and Altona Meadows Place Guide</p>	On Plan	Community consultation on the draft concept plans was completed in November. Feedback from the community has been reviewed and where possible addressed in the final design phase prior to construction. Improvement works to the reserve are expected to commence in April 2024.

Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Indicators (LGPRF)

There are four reportable LGPRF indicators related to this objective. The results are as follow:

Indicator						
Statutory Planning		Jun 2021- Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022- Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
SP1	Time taken to decide planning applications <i>(The median number of days taken between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application)</i>	129.00	120.00	119.00	81.00	↑
SP2	Planning applications decided within required time frames <i>(The percentage of regular and VicSmart planning application decisions made within legislated time frames)</i>	53.57%	52.83%	51.42%	69.94%	↑
SP3	Cost of statutory planning service <i>(The direct cost of the statutory planning service per planning application received)</i>	\$3,491.58	\$3,482.04	\$3,965.53	\$4,352.27	↓
SP4	Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT <i>(The percentage of planning application decisions subject to review by VCAT (Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal) that were not set aside)</i>	45.71%	50.00%	58.62%	7.69%	↓

Objective 4: Community infrastructure

Visionary community infrastructure. Develop and maintain infrastructure to promote liveability, planning for the future need and growth of the community, while preserving heritage, environment, and neighbourhood character.

Major Initiatives

There are three major initiatives for this objective in 2023-24. The progress of each of the major initiatives is below:

Project	Status	Progress comment
Bruce Comben Reserve Includes the open space development of the southern area oval and Henry Drive Carpark	On Plan	Development of the southern open space area at Bruce Comben Reserve includes a playground, tennis courts, dog off leash area, footpath networks, public toilet, furniture, fencing, signage, drinking water and all associated landscape works. The play equipment installations, pathways and tree planting are now complete. Construction works are due to be completed in February 2024.
Better Places Laverton 8. Places & Spaces - Road Reconstruction (On/Off-Road Rehabilitation) Program Railway Avenue, Laverton, from Merton St to Aviation Road.	On Plan	Design works for railway avenue are practically complete and it is anticipated construction work for the road safety elements and improvements will commence in 2024.
Hannan Street, Williamstown Esplanade to Collins Street	On Plan	Additional investigations were carried out due to the extent of contamination in the locality. Designs have been amended and updated to take this into account. This will be completed in early 2024.

Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Indicators (LGPRF)

There are four reportable LGPRF indicators related to this objective. The results are as follow:

Indicator						
Roads		Jun 2021- Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022- Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
R1	Sealed local road requests <i>(The number of sealed local road requests per 100 kilometres of sealed local road)</i>	196.07	142.76	249.43	106.19	↑
R2	Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards	97.46%	97.70%	92.64%	92.43%	↓

	<i>(The percentage of sealed local roads that are below the renewal intervention level set by Council and not requiring renewal)</i>					
R3	Cost of sealed local road reconstruction <i>(The direct reconstruction cost per square metre of sealed local roads reconstructed)</i>	\$158.91	\$221.20	\$157.30	\$172.46	↑
R4	Cost of sealed local road resealing <i>(The direct resealing cost per square metre of sealed local roads resealed)</i>	\$22.64	\$33.72	\$36.59	\$36.37	↓

Objective 5: Organisation

A high performing organisation. Delivering value for money through efficient processes, digital transformation, and continuous improvement with a willingness to try new approaches as to how we do, what we do. We will be transparent and responsive to the needs of the community through meaningful connection, communication, and engagement.

Major Initiatives

There are four major initiatives for this objective in 2023-24. The progress of each of the major initiatives is below:

Project	Status	Progress comment
Customer Experience Transformation (CX 2.0) To improve processes and interactions between Council and its Community ensuring processes are simple, transparent, and accessible.	On Plan	The Close the Loop project has continued to improve our response to the community, with 68% of customers now having received information regarding the outcome of the enquiry with Council. Cross-Council CX Advocates have completed training and will commence work within their teams to drive continuous improvement projects in February.
Implement Community Relationship Management (CRM) system including online payment processes To improve customer experience and management.	On Plan	The implementation of Council's new Community Relationship Management (CRM) solution is nearing completion and ready for launch (publicly available) in early 2024. This solution will improve customer experience both online and in person and increase the efficiency of back-office operations.
EDMS and Intranet Project Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)	On Plan	The EDMS and Intranet Project is in the final stage of completion. All SharePoint sites

Project	Status	Progress comment
To improve efficiency of Council operations.		and integration points have been built and document migration completed. Final testing and user acceptance testing is underway with a launched date planned for 29 January 2024.
Property Strategy To facilitate to management of Council's portfolio consisting of both Crown and Freehold Land and Building	On Plan	The implementation of the Property Strategy is progressing with Leasing and Licensing agreements supported through policy and the development of a pricing methodology and criteria which attempts to measure the community benefit. The Property Development Fund is still being developed and properties have been identified for future incorporation.

Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Indicators (LGPRF)

There are 21 reportable LGPRF indicators related to this objective. The results are as follow:

Indicator						
Governance		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
G1	Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public <i>(The percentage of Council resolutions made at a meeting of Council, or at a meeting of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public under section 66(1) of the Act)</i>	2.31%	2.13%	2.38%	2.27%	↓
G3	Councillor attendance at council meetings <i>(The percentage of attendance at Council meetings by Councillors)</i>	97.96%	95.92%	95.60%	97.96%	↑
G4	Cost of elected representation <i>(The direct cost of delivering council's governance service per councillor)</i>	\$45,738.86	\$24,019.71	\$52,659.86	\$25,916.39	↓
Efficiency		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
E2	Expenses per property assessment <i>(Total expenses per property assessment)</i>	\$3,009.07	\$1,551.07	\$3,302.48	\$1,725.29	↓

E4	Average rate per property assessment <i>(The average rate revenue per property assessment)</i>	\$2,461.45	\$1,267.50	\$2,534.54	\$1,324.16	↓
Liquidity		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
L1	Current assets compared to current liabilities <i>(Current assets as a percentage of current liabilities)</i>	135.46%	153.69%	155.10%	153.15%	↑
L2	Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities Definition <i>(Unrestricted cash as a percentage of current liabilities)</i>	-29.98%	-43.42%	-12.17%	-0.76%	↓
Obligations		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
O2	Loans and borrowings compared to rates <i>(Interest bearing loans and borrowings as a percentage of rate revenue)</i>	10.03%	25.10%	15.24%	28.92%	↓
O3	Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates <i>(Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings as a percentage of rate revenue)</i>	8.00%	0.47%	1.09%	1.68%	↑
O4	Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue <i>(Non-current liabilities as a percentage of own source revenue.)</i>	9.53%	23.20%	13.60%	25.20%	↓
O5	Asset renewal and upgrade expense compared to depreciation <i>(Asset renewal and upgrade expense compared to depreciation assesses whether council spending on assets is focused on purchasing new assets or renewing and upgrading existing ones)</i>	182.46%	398.10%	136.17%	96.09%	↑
Operating Positions		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
OP 1	Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) <i>(The underlying surplus (or deficit) as a percentage of adjusted underlying revenue)</i>	10.22%	10.97%	8.33%	6.07%	↓

Stability		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
S1	Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue <i>(Rate revenue as a percentage of adjusted underlying revenue)</i>	81.57%	81.56%	78.93%	80.95%	↓
S2	Rates compared to property values <i>(Rate revenue as a percentage of the capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality)</i>	0.32%	0.15%	0.30%	0.15%	↑
Population		Jun 2021-Jul 2022 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2022 (mid-year)	Jun 2022-Jul 2023 (full year)	Jul – Dec 2023 (mid-year)	Performance against same time last year
C1	Expenses per head of population <i>(Total expenses per head of population)</i>	\$1,429.03	\$736.61	\$1,592.63	\$830.30	↑
C2	Infrastructure per head of population <i>(The value of infrastructure per head of population)</i>	\$9,161.18	\$9,015.59	\$9,867.31	\$9,692.84	↓
C3	Population density per length of road <i>(Population per kilometre of local road)</i>	\$213.11	\$213.11	\$210.89	210.89	↓
C4	Own-source revenue per head of population <i>(Own source revenue per head of population)</i>	\$1,416.48	\$755.10	\$1,550.40	\$803.42	↑
C5	Recurrent grants per head of population <i>(Recurrent grants per head of population)</i>	\$113.07	\$50.58	\$119.26	\$48.56	↓
C6	Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage <i>(The relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage of the municipality)</i>	7	7	7	7	○
C7	Percentage of staff turnover <i>(The number of permanent staff resignations and terminations as a percentage of the average number of permanent staff)</i>	25.80%	8.30%	18.10%	0.00%	↓

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Annual Self-Assessment

November 2023

**HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Section 54(4) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, an Audit and Risk Committee must:

- (a) undertake an annual assessment of its performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter; and
- (b) provide a copy of the annual assessment to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at the next Council meeting.

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the Self-Assessment survey which was undertaken in September and October 2023.

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Introduction

This is the fourth year that the Hobsons Bay City Council Audit and Risk Committee has undertaken a formal Self-Assessment survey.

The Self-Assessment survey comprised 38 assessments, pertaining to 9 key result areas which were:

- Audit and Risk Committee Charter
- Audit and Risk Committee skills and experience
- Understanding of Council
- Audit and Risk Committee meeting administration and conduct
- Leadership by Chair
- Communication with Council
- Management input
- Internal Audit
- External Audit

The survey was extended to all voting members of the Audit and Risk Committee and regular attendees of Committee meetings. As requested by the Committee, the survey differentiates between voting members and regular attendees. A total of six responses to the survey were received; four responses from voting members and two responses from regular attendees.

'Strongly agreeing' with the statements which were all expressed in the positive, resulted in a score of four and was the highest possible score. 'Agree' was scored three, 'Disagree' scored two and 'Strongly disagree' scored one. 'Not applicable' was scored zero and was not included in the calculation of the average.

The overall rating of the Self-Assessment undertaken in September/October 2023 was positive, with respondents rating Committee performance at 87% across the breadth of the 9 headings and 38 multiple choice questions (compared to 83% in 2022, 88% in 2021, and 81% in 2020).

Three questions received a rating of 'Disagree':

- The Committee has sufficient understanding and appreciation of Council's Risk management framework and risk profile
- Committee meetings are run to maintain and foster an ethical environment

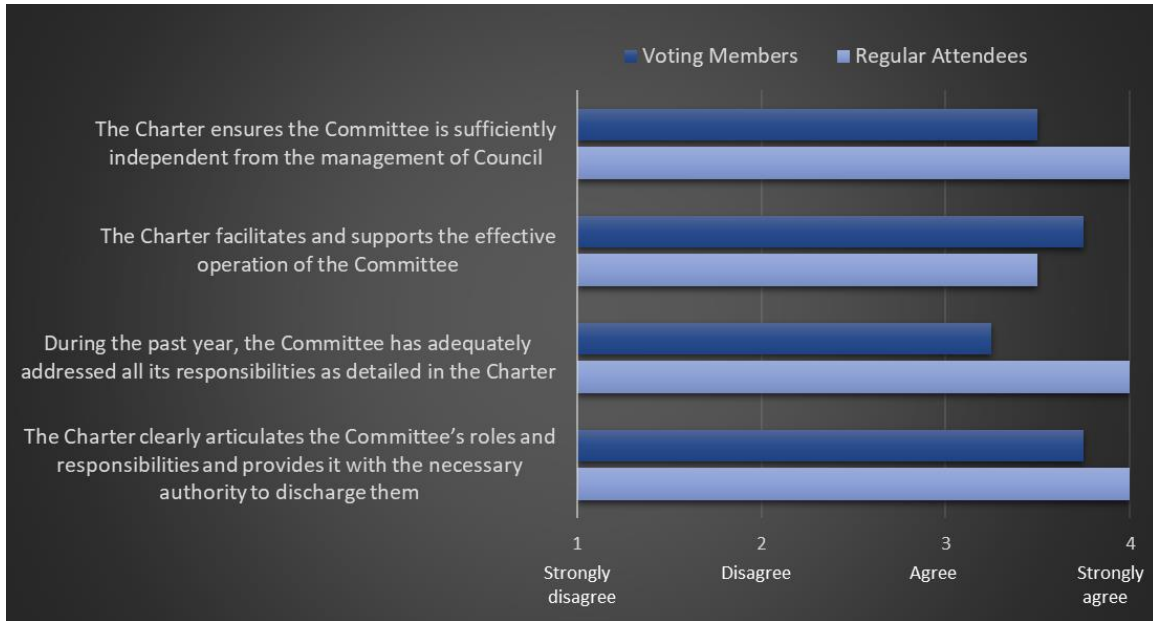
- The Committee has shown an openness to new ideas and different views in its deliberations

There were no instances of a response of 'Strongly disagree' being recorded.

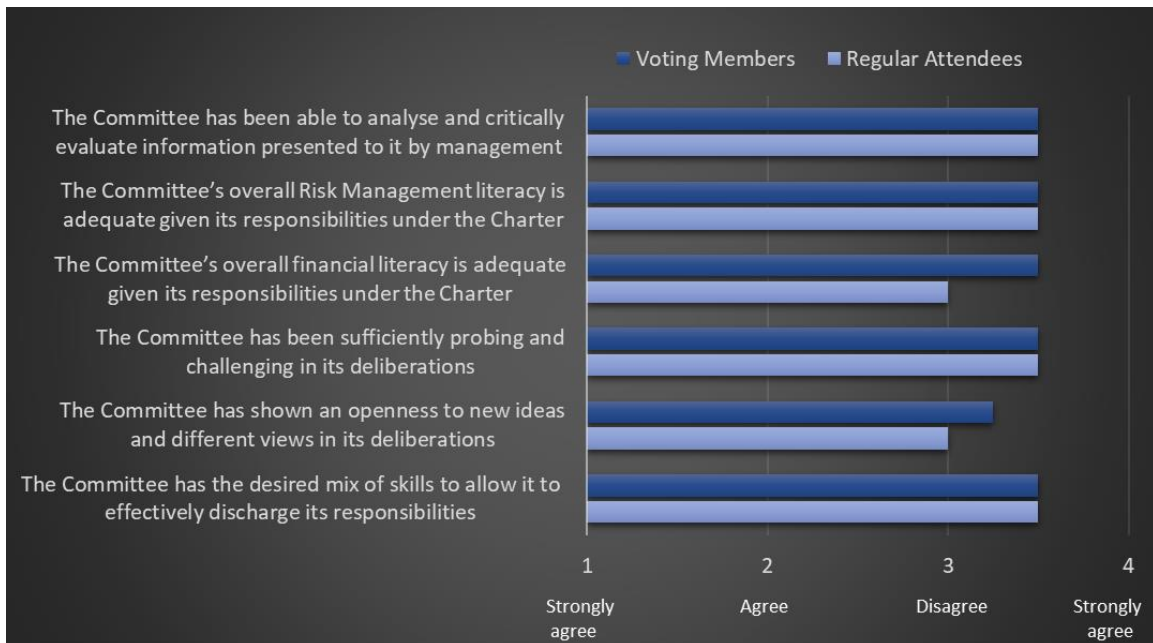
Respondents were also asked to provide feedback on continuous improvement opportunities.

Feedback has been included in the attached report and will be duly considered by the Committee.

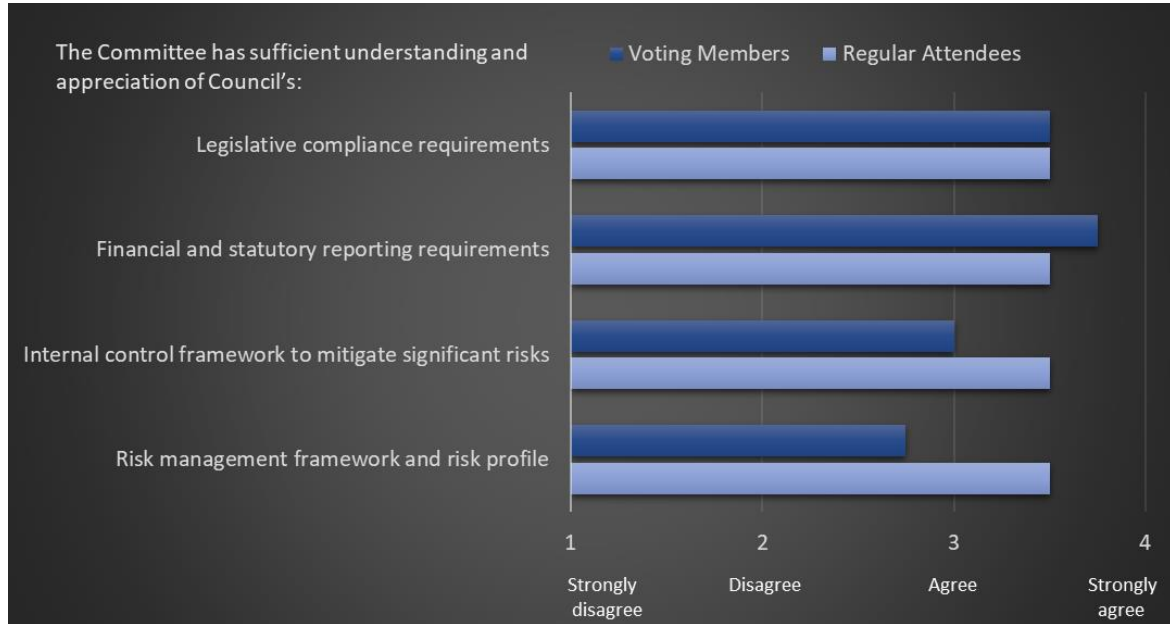
Audit and Risk Committee Charter



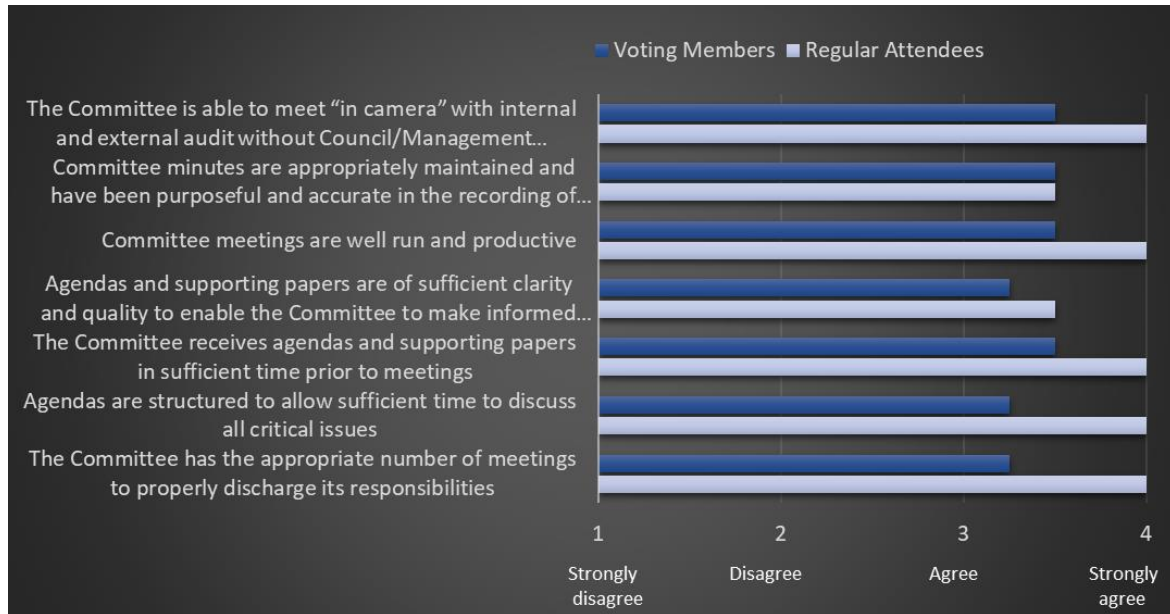
Audit and Risk Committee skills and experience



Understanding of Council



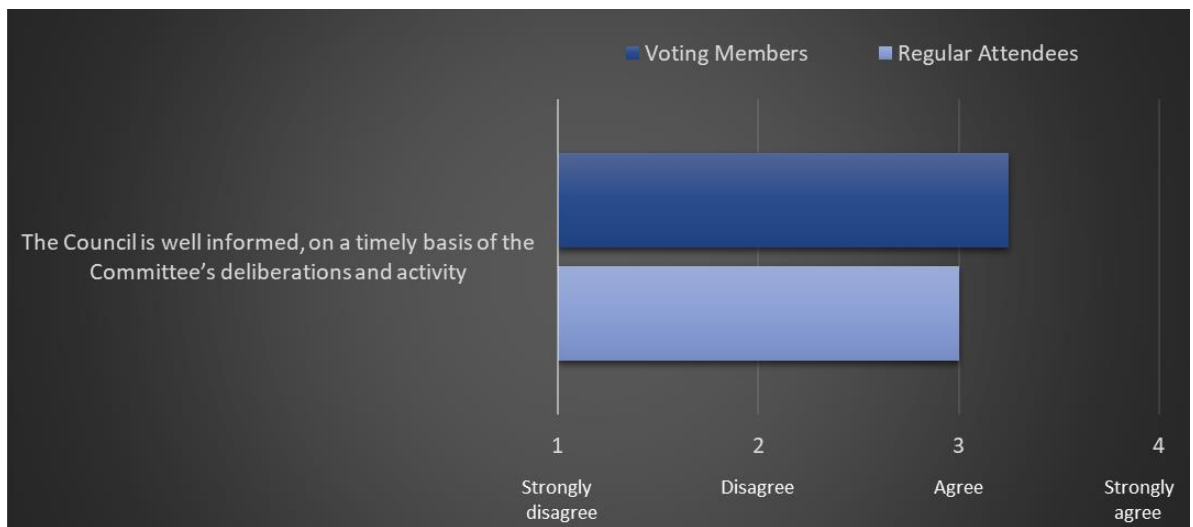
Audit and Risk Committee meeting administration and conduct



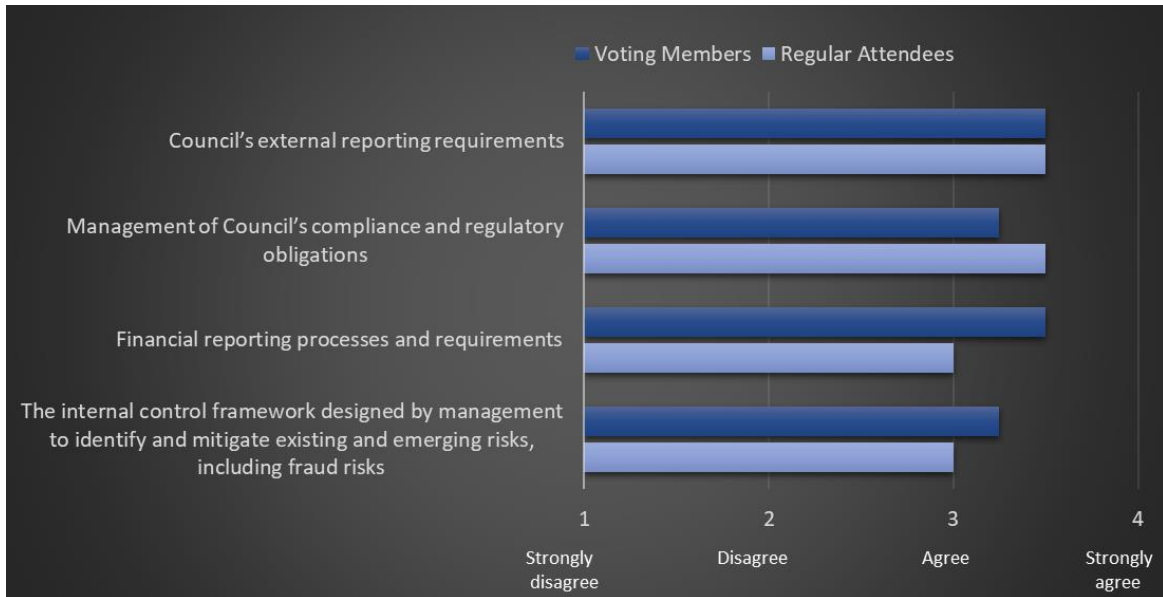
Leadership by Chair



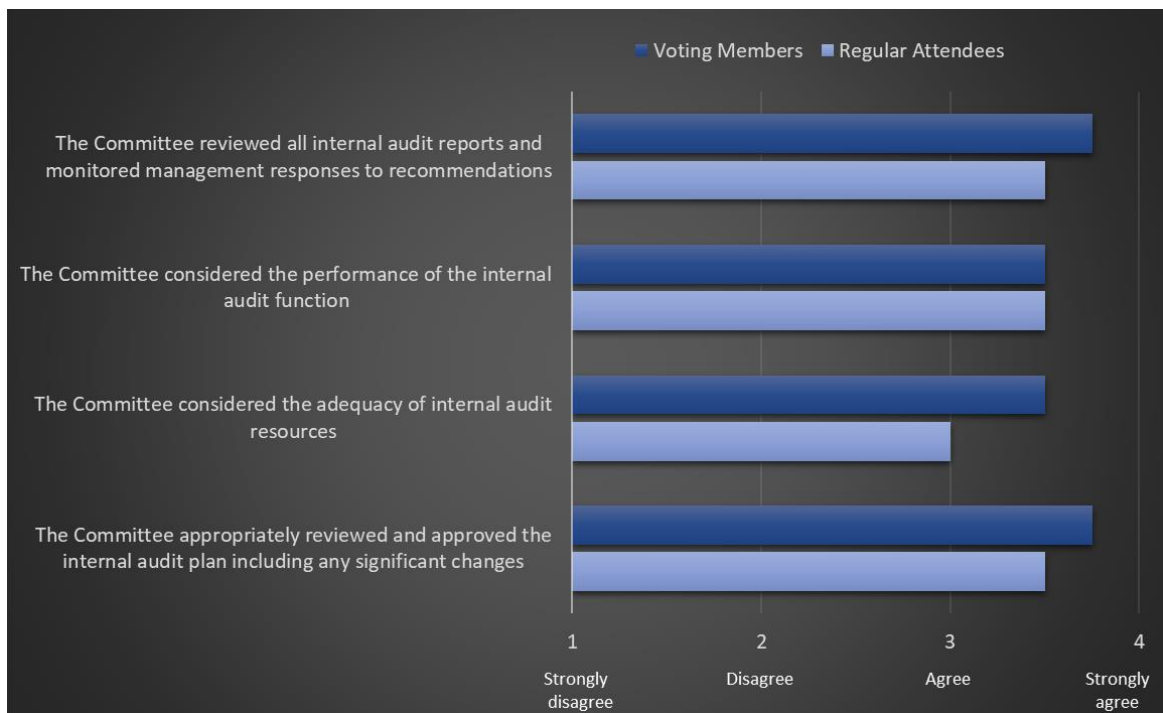
Communication with Council



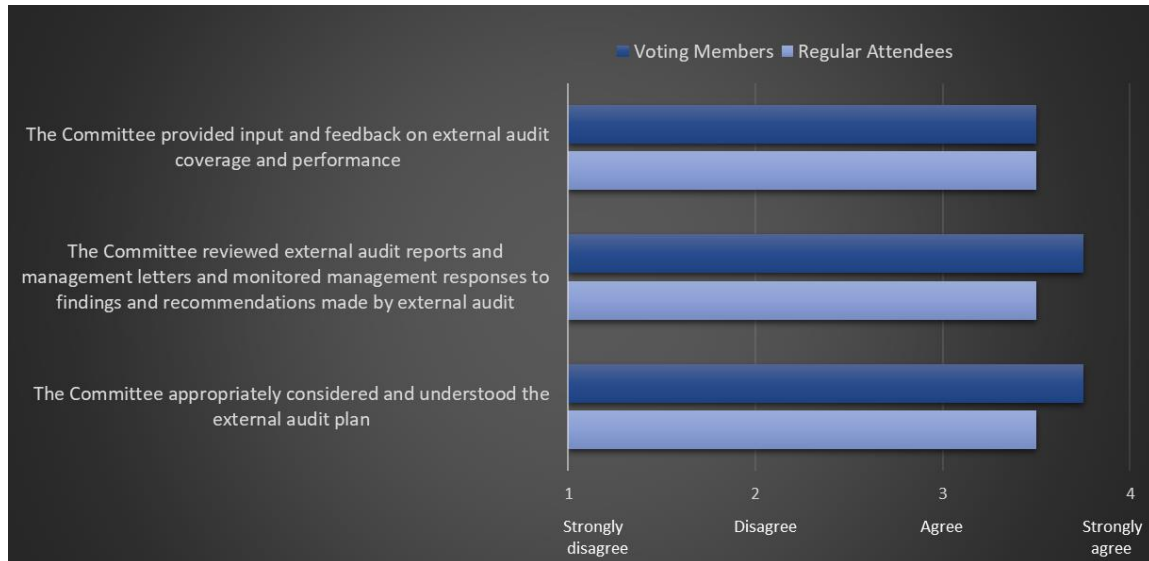
Management input



Internal Audit



External Audit



Continuous Improvement



What else can management do to assist the Committee in meeting its responsibilities?

Voting Members



Progress the elevation of strategic risk and associated risk appetite to the Council



It would be useful in the briefing paper accompanying Internal Audit Reports to provide a summary of the outcome of the review and list the high and medium rated findings to introduce the report.



Reach out to independent members in between formal meetings to ask questions or advice on risk, audit, compliance matters.

Regular attendees

N/A



What does the Committee do well?

Voting Members

1

Asks questions and provides comment in a constructive way

2

There is now a Statutory Compliance Report which is very insightful. Good frank discussions.

3

Runs a very keen eye over Council's operation. Attention to detail is very good.

4

Meetings are conducted in a professional manner and there are a number of voices who raise various issues and insights on matters.

Regular attendees

N/A



Are there any other responsibilities in the Charter that the Committee could address in a better way?

Voting Members

1

Six monthly reviews with briefing paper highlighting new risks, redundant risks, increasing risks, reducing risks, risk trends and emerging risks, new treatments required, rate of completion of treatments and impact on risk rating.

Regular attendees

N/A

Minutes – Audit and Risk Committee Meeting



Meeting held on Wednesday 22 November August 2023 at 10:45am at the Civic Centre, Altona

Pre-meeting in camera at 10.30am

Voting Members in attendance:

John Watson	Independent Member - Chair
Lisa Tripodi	Independent Member
Iqbal Halim	Independent Member
Cr Jonathon Marsden	Councillor
Cr Peter Hemphill	Councillor

Others in Attendance:

Aaron van Egmond	Chief Executive Officer
Andrew McLeod	Director Corporate Services
Diane Eyckens	Manager Corporate Integrity and Legal Counsel
Hamish Munro	Chief Financial Officer
Oliver McNulty	Manager Capital Works (item 9)
Roger Verwey	Manager Digital Services (item 9)
Graham Noriskin	Executive Director – Pitcher Partners (item 9)
Richard Wilson	Senior Manager – Pitcher Partners
Ross Evans	Risk and Emergency Management Advisor (item 10)
Irene Hills-Jones	Governance and Business Support Officer (minutes)

PRE MEETING IN CAMERA

The Audit and Risk Committee members held a separate in camera meeting prior to the main Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

1. WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Chair welcomed all those present and acknowledged the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of these municipal lands and waterways, and paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

2. APOLOGIES

Nil

3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 August 2023 were confirmed with no amendments.

5. ACTION ITEMS

The Committee noted the Action Items report.

6. AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

6.1 Review of Annual Work Plan

The proposed amendments to the wording of actions in the Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan were approved.

The Audit and Risk Committee endorsed the revised Annual Work Plan.

6.2 Review of Audit and Risk Committee Charter

The Chair presented a 'best practice' ARC Charter from another organisation that could be used to update the Committee's current Charter. Management welcomed discussion of proposed updates where material gaps are identified in the current Charter.

7. CONTROL FRAMEWORK

7.1 Chief Executive Officer's update

The CEO informed the Committee that Council had received written notice from lawyers advising that formal proceedings would be filed against Council, on behalf of and in relation to, the circumstances affecting Techno Park Drive occupants. In addition to Council's obligation to address the compliance matter, Council is working with service providers to find alternative housing solutions for the occupants.

Serious disruption to the Mayoral Election Council Meeting on 10 October 2023 resulted in an adjournment of the proceedings and the offending party being asked to leave the meeting. After refusing, the individual, who was known to Council, was assisted by security officers and Local Laws officers to leave. The CEO stated that security arrangements are reviewed after every event in an effort to keep the meetings in-person whilst balancing the Council's responsibility to ensure the safety of staff, Councillors and the community. Feedback from community members who attended the event was supportive of Council's approach to the disruption. The individual has been denied access to certain Council premises and staff under the 'Managing Unreasonable Conduct by Complainants' policy, for at least 12 months.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the CEO update.

7.2 Statutory Compliance update

The report was taken as read.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Statutory Compliance update.

7.3 Outstanding Audit Recommendations

The outstanding audit recommendations reports were taken as read.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the status of outstanding audit recommendations and approved the actions listed with a 'closed' status be removed from the outstanding audit recommendations list.

7.4 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Self-Assessment Report

The Committee noted the positive results from the self-assessment and discussed the comment requesting a brief summary of the Internal Audit reports presented to each meeting. For example, highlighting 'high' risk items in the covering report. The CEO stated that management are open to suggestions if the context of the request is understood. Andrew McLeod noted that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, he would meet with the ARC Chair to discuss the feedback from the annual self-assessment prior to the report being presented to the Committee, and it was agreed that this practice should be reinstated from next year.

Action Required	By
Going forward, a meeting is to be scheduled between the ARC Chair and Director Corporate Services to discuss the ARC annual self-assessment before presenting the report to the Committee.	Director Corporate Services

The Audit and Risk Committee received and noted the results of the annual self-assessment report, including noting continuous improvement opportunities. Subject to a review of the management response to the request for a brief summary of Internal Audit reports, the Committee endorsed the Annual Self-Assessment Report (November 2023) to be presented at the next available Council meeting.

7.5.1 Review of performance – Internal Auditor

The Committee congratulated Pitcher Partners on the positive feedback outlined in the report. In particular, Andrew McLeod highlighted the significant positive change in dynamic compared with the previous service provider. There is better communication and collaboration with staff and constructive recommendations that add value to the organisation.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the report on the performance of the Internal Auditor.

7.5.2 Review of performance – External Auditor

Hamish Munro presented the review of the performance of the External Auditor. This was the first year BDO carried out the audit for Hobsons Bay City Council. The late appointment of the auditor by VAGO had a significant impact on the audit, including BDO's understanding of Council's processes. Areas for improvement were discussed

and positive aspects acknowledged. Senior staff from BDO and Council's finance team will meet to discuss the Final Management Letter and to ensure better alignment for the 2023/24 external audit process.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the report on the performance of the External Auditor

Oliver McNulty, Manager Capital Works, Roger Verwey, Manager Digital Services, Erdem Uzuner, Director IT Pitcher Partners, and Graham Noriskin, Partner Pitcher Partners, joined the meeting.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT

8.1 Internal Audit Program Update

- **Recent Issues Brief**

The Recent Issues Brief was taken as read.

- **Internal Audit Status Report**

The Internal Audit Status Report was taken as read.

8.2.1 Cyber Security Technical Controls report

Erdem Uzuner, Director IT Pitcher Partners, presented the report. Following the Cyber Security Governance audit carried out in August 2022, this audit focused on the key technology controls and the ability of the organisation to defend its IT environment from cyber security attacks. A number of 'high' and 'medium' risk findings were identified, and actions have been agreed by management to strengthen the controls in these areas. During discussion of the timeframes for implementation of the actions, it was noted that the IT staff are also working on delivery of the Council's Digital Transformation. Erdem Uzuner stated that the audit did not include an assessment of resources, but this is worth consideration by Council. Andrew McLeod noted that Hobsons Bay City Council operates a very lean IT department compared to other Councils and the Executive will review IT resource requirements.

In relation to finding 3, which has been rated as 'high' risk, the Committee noted that two actions have target implementation dates of November 2025 and requested these actions be broken down into milestones to enable tracking of progress. Details should be reported back to the next ARC meeting.

The Committee thanked Pitcher Partners and Management for an excellent report.

Action Required	By
The actions relating to finding 2 of the Cyber Security Technical Controls report are to be broken down into milestones, with details reported back to the next ARC meeting.	Roger Verwey Pitcher Partners

The Audit and Risk Committee endorsed the Cyber Security Technical Controls report, subject to the actions relating to finding 2 being broken down into milestones, with details reported back to the next ARC meeting. The recommendations contained in the report are to be included in the outstanding audit recommendations listing.

8.2.2 Capital Works Planning report

Richard Wilson, Director Pitcher Partners, presented the Capital Works Planning report. The findings related mainly to improving the documentation of processes, including roles and responsibilities. The Committee acknowledged the benefits of good documentation, particularly in relation to business continuity. The Committee also recognised the strength of Council's project management delivery, resulting in this being one of the few councils in Victoria to achieve its capital works program to budget. The implementation of the Project Portfolio Management system to capture project submissions and track the progress and spend of capital projects will further enhance the management and delivery of the capital works program.

The Audit and Risk Committee endorsed the Capital Works Planning report and approved the recommendations contained in the report to be included in the outstanding audit recommendations listing.

Oliver McNulty, Manager Capital Works, Roger Verwey, Manager Digital Services, Erdem Uzuner, Director IT Pitcher Partners, and Graham Noriskin, Partner Pitcher Partners, left the meeting.

8.3.1 Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2024 - 2027

The Committee welcomed the Strategic Internal Audit Plan, noting there is a good balance of audits across the Directorates and the priorities are well thought through. Iqbal Halim commented that it is good to see a Risk Management audit on the plan, given the discussions at previous meetings, and queried whether there is scope to bring this forward to help identify gaps to be considered when revising the risk management process. The Committee agreed to bring this audit forward to 2025.

Action Required	By
The Strategic Internal Audit Plan is to be updated to bring forward the Risk Management audit to be completed in 2025.	Pitcher Partners

The Audit and Risk Committee endorsed the Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2023 – 2027.

Ross Evans, Risk and Emergency Management Advisor, joined the meeting.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 Risk and Insurance Report

Ross Evans provided a brief overview of the risk management update.

With regards to insurance, Andrew McLeod noted the increase in occupational violence incidents, which is characteristic across the sector. Training and awareness of staff has promoted a better understanding of how to avoid and de-escalate incidents, however the occurrence of such incidents remains relatively unchanged. Worker's compensation claims, especially those with a psychological component, can often extend for years. Council's insurance premium is due to increase by approximately 30-35% (\$0.5 million) without any significant change to the service received. Council is exploring options to mitigate some of the financial risk, including the possibility of self-insurance.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the risk management update.

Ross Evans, Risk and Emergency Management Advisor, left the meeting.

9.2 Occupational Health and Safety Report

The report was taken as read.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Occupational Health and Safety Quarterly Report for the period 1 June 2023 to 31 August 2023.

9.3 Fraud Control and Compliance

Hamish Munro provided an update on Council's fraud control and compliance. A fraud awareness training module is nearing completion after being developed in consultation with Organisational Development and will be rolled out to the organisation soon. The Committee noted the updated fraud risk register and acknowledged that the number of fraud risks reported may increase after staff complete the training module due to greater awareness. Hamish Munro confirmed there have been no incidents of fraud reported over the last year and welcomed a review of this area as part of the endorsed Strategic Internal Audit Plan.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the report in relation to Hobsons Bay's fraud control and compliance.

10. EXTERNAL AUDIT

10.1 VAGO Final Management Letter

The report was taken as read.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Final Management Letter in relation to the 2022-2023 Financial report and Performance Statement of Hobsons Bay City Council.

11. EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

11.1 Quarterly Financial Report

The report was taken as read.

The Audit and Risk Committee received and noted the financial report for the period ended 30 September 2023 and the revised 2023-24 annual budget projections.

11.2 Cash and Investment Balances

The report was taken as read.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the cash and investment balances as at 31 October 2023, which are reported to the Council as part of the Chief Executive Officer – Report on Operations.

11.3 Capital Works Quarterly Report

The report was taken as read.

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Capital Works Quarterly Report.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair thanked all Members and attendees for their contributions during the year and wished everyone a safe festive season ahead.

13. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 28 February 2024 at 10:45am at the Civic Centre.

The meeting closed at 12:33pm.