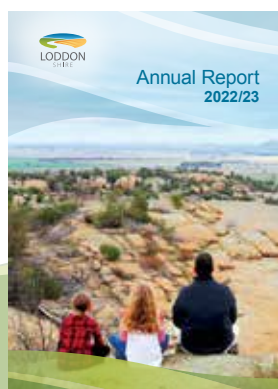




Annual Report 2022/23



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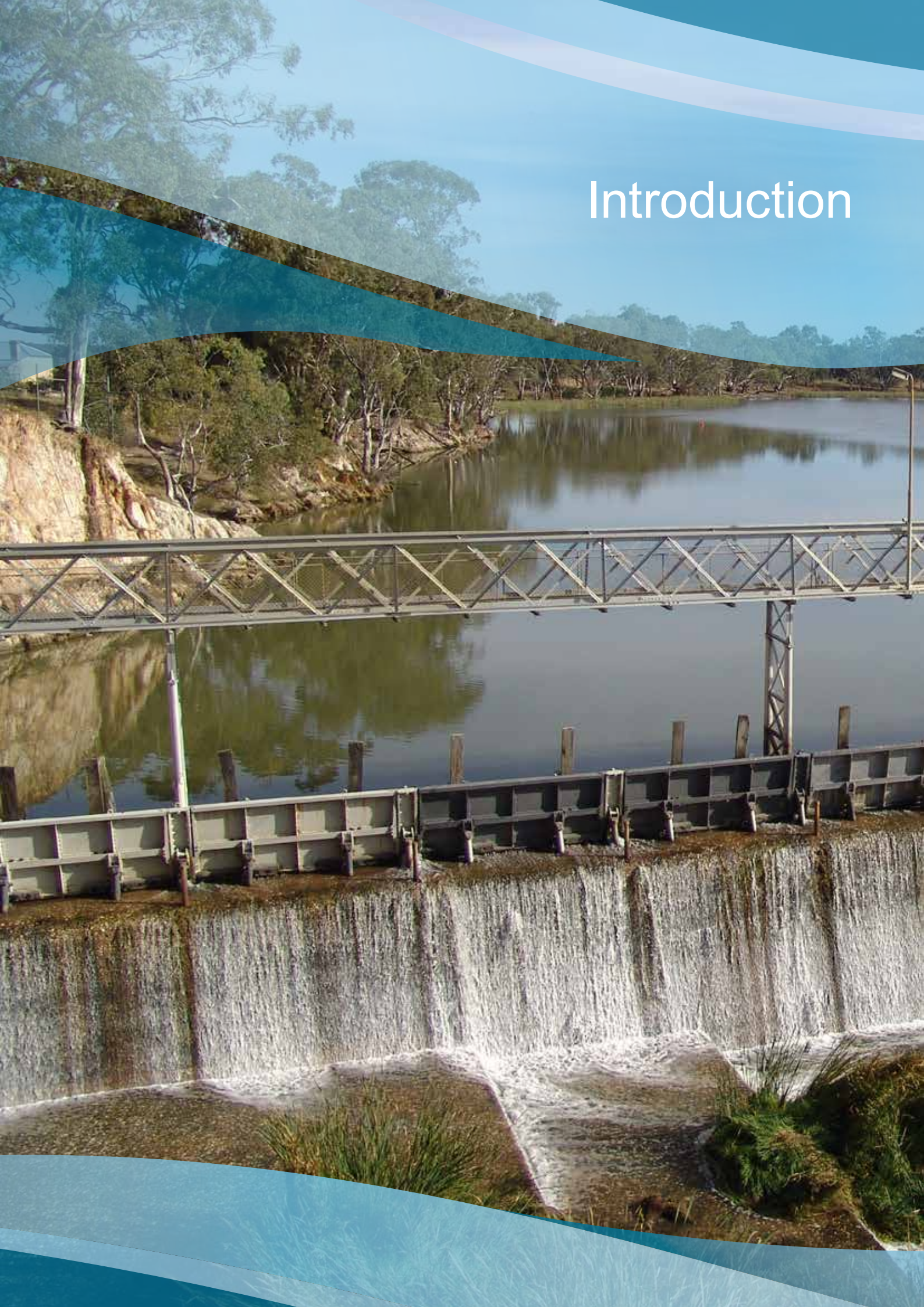


Acknowledgement of Country

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

*Front cover: Mount Hope Nature Conservation Area.
Back cover: Pyramid Hill station.*

Introduction



Welcome to report of operations

Welcome to Loddon Shire Council's report of operations for the year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

This is the final report in the planning and accountability framework for local government, and along with the Financial Statements and Performance Statement, forms Council's Annual Report for the year.

Council is committed to transparent reporting and accountability to the community. The report of operations is the primary means of advising the Loddon community about Council's operations and performance during the year.

The report also serves as an important document that will provide 'point in time' information about Council and the community for readers of the future.

This document also provides the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Council, Council staff and the community over the course of the year.

Snapshot of Council

Purpose

Council Plan 2021-2025

Council engaged a facilitator to work with Councillors, senior officers and members of the community to assist in preparing the Council Plan 2021-2025 (the Plan).

The ideas and philosophies contributed by those involved led to a restatement of Council's vision, mission and strategic objectives, all of which were included in the Plan.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, Council reviews the Council Plan annually to ensure it still reflects the Council's strategic intent.

The Council Plan 2021-2025 was adopted by Council at its meeting on 26 October 2021.

Community Vision and Council Plan

There is a strong link between the Community Vision and the Council Plan. This reflects Council's commitment to the community in focusing on the areas that are important to the Community vision.



Facts and figures



31,611
Incoming calls to
the office



46
Local law permits
issued



8,255
Meals on Wheels
delivered



8,628
Rates notices
issued



1,913
Dog registrations



54
Births



434
Land information
certificates



452
Cat registrations



98
Children enrolled
in kindergarten



2,164
Tonnes of garbage,
recycling and
organics from
kerbside bins



14,882
Visits to
swimming pools



58
Community
groups supported
with Council
grants



109
Planning
applications
received



25,774
Physical library
collection item
loans



17
New citizens
welcomed at
citizenship
ceremonies





Bridgewater Run for Resilience

Grants

Community Grants Program

The Loddon Shire Community Grants Program is a competitive funding program aimed at helping clubs and organisations to enhance the provision of facilities, services or activities that improve the quality of life for people in their community.

This funding is open to not-for-profit organisations wanting to deliver projects/programs that directly benefit Loddon Shire residents.

Grant recipients

Active Farmers Bridgewater

Arnold Cricket Club

Boort Lakeside Croquet Club

Boort Tourism and Development Committee

Boort Yando Cricket Club

Bridgewater Cricket Club

Bridgewater-on-Loddon Development

Bridgewater Recreation Reserve

Calivil United Football and Netball Club

Inglewood and Districts Health Service

Inglewood Bowling Club

Inglewood Community Sports Centre
Community Asset Committee

Inglewood Town Hall Hub Community Asset
Committee

Lifeline Central Victoria and Mallee

Newbridge Public Hall Committee

Northern Victorian Quarter Horse
Association

Pyramid Hill Golf Club

Serpentine Bowling Club

Wedderburn Band Cricket Club

Wedderburn Bowls Club

Wedderburn Historical Records Museum

Wedderburn Lions Club

Event Promotion Scheme

The Loddon Shire Council provides sponsorship for events that are held within the municipality and that provide important community development opportunities and/or attract a significant number of visiting competitors/participants, officials and families.

Sponsorships

1st Lake Boort Sea Scouts

Active Farmers Bridgewater

Boort and District Agricultural and Pastoral Society

Boort Amity Club

Boort Bowls Club

Boort District P-12 School Parents Club

Boort Football Club

Boort Golf Club

Boort Lakeside Croquet Club

Boort Memorial Hall Community Asset Committee

Boort Preschool Committee

Boort Trotting Club

Bridgewater-on-Loddon Development

Bridgewater Water Ski Club

Calivil Bowling Club

Dingee Bowling Club

Inglewood and Districts Health Service

Inglewood Bowling Club

Loddon Darts Association

Loddon Plains Landcare Network

Mitiamo Golf Club

Newbridge Arnold Llanely Community Planning Committee

Newbridge Recreation Reserve Committee of Management

Northern District Community Health

Pyramid Hill Bowling Club

Pyramid Hill Golf Club

Rheola Charity Carnival

Scots Day Out

Serpentine Bowling Club

St John's Bears Lagoon - Christmas Tree Committee

Wedderburn Community House Community Asset Committee

Wedderburn Country Women's Association

Wedderburn Historical Engine and Machinery Society

Wedderburn Patchwork Group

Wedderburn Tourism



Boort Bowls opening new synthetic turf - cutting of the ribbon.

Challenges and future outlook

Our challenges

- Internet and mobile phone connectivity and access.
- Ongoing recovery from October 2022 flood event, including Council infrastructure and community recovery.
- An ageing population.
- Retaining our youth.
- Technology and innovation.
- Budgetary constraints.
- Maintaining or upgrading Council's assets, including its extensive road network and building infrastructure.
- Changing weather patterns and unreliable rainfall.
- Water security.
- Attracting and retaining staff.
- Sparsely populated Shire.



Flood works at Skinners October 2022.



Bridgewater canola crop.

Future outlook

- Continuing to advocate to State and Federal politicians and their representatives on behalf of our community, including around priorities as outlined in Council's Priorities 2022 document.
- The expanding renewable energy sector.
- The growing agribusiness sector.
- Continuing to encourage tourism within the Loddon Valley.
- Delivering the Council Plan 2021-2025, Community Vision 2031, Financial Plan, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025, and asset management plans.
- Development of the Recreation Open Space and Aquatic Strategy (ROSA).
- Donaldson Park Community Hub redevelopment.
- Pyramid Hill Community Centre Development.
- Pyramid Hill Streetscape Revitalisation Project.
- Responding to service delivery expectations in a financially-sustainable way.
- Continued recovery from October 2022 flood event, including Council infrastructure and community recovery.

The year in review



Message from the Mayor and CEO

Welcome to the Loddon Shire Council Annual Report 2022/23.

This year saw the amazing community spirit at the forefront in our Shire, in what was a challenging end to 2022 following major flooding in October.

We saw how our Loddon Shire community stand with and support each other in times of need. We should all feel proud to be part of such a wonderful community – a community who is there for each other, that knew what needed to be done and made sure it happened.

We also acknowledge the strength of those in flood-affected areas across the region. As always, our emergency service personnel and volunteers – many dealing with impacts to their own property and livelihoods – worked tirelessly to support communities throughout the Loddon Shire.

Additionally, Council staff and contractors responded to the emergency in an effort to see Council services re-established as soon as possible, while working in dynamic, ever-changing environments.

We are still seeing recovery efforts taking place across our Shire, including on Council's 4,800-kilometre road network.

Following a tender process, Council appointed a panel of 16 contractors to carry out flood restoration works under the Federal and State funded Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. By December 2023, Council will have completed around \$6 million of restoration works. In total, \$20 million of restoration works are planned for the 2023/24 financial year, followed by another possible \$15 million in 2024/25.

Council welcomed two fulltime dedicated resources to help the community recover from the devastating floods – a Manager of Community Recovery and a Community Recovery Officer. Both positions work collaboratively with Council staff and partner agencies to advocate for the resources needed to support our community's recovery.



Mayor Dan Straub and CEO Lincoln Fitzgerald.

Despite disruption from the flood event, we saw major projects in our Shire forge ahead – including the Donaldson Park Community Hub and Pyramid Hill Streetscape Revitalisation Project, with both projects well underway.

Additionally, there was the installation of new fit-for-purpose light towers at the Serpentine Recreation Reserve, synthetic turf installation at the Boort Bowling Club, and continuation of Bridgewater Foreshore Beautification works.

There were also new canoe launchers installed at Laanecoorie and Durham Ox and the opening of a new outdoor fitness station in Inglewood through the Healthy Loddon Campaspe initiative. Consultation with stakeholders for the detailed design of the Pyramid Hill Community Centre Development also took place.

We thank respective State and Federal governments for their continued support of Council, including for the above-mentioned projects. We also acknowledge the many community groups and organisations, including local sporting clubs, that have helped support projects across our Shire.



Left to right: Celebrating Boort Bowls Club new synthetic turf - Mayor Straub, Cr Beattie and Peter Walsh MP. Mayor Straub with staff members Renae and Claire working on a mayoral column. New citizenship award.

Additionally, it was great to see a number of events throughout the Shire, which were well attended by community members and visitors alike.

These included the Boort show and harness racing, 150th Rheola Charity Carnival, Pyramid Hill's inaugural art competition, Wedderburn Minelab Detector Jamboree, Tarnagulla's Strictly Vintage Fair, Laanecoorie Gold Bash, Eddington Vintage Sports Car Club Sprints, Loddon Valley Arts Trail, Friends of Kooyoorra Spring Festival Show – and many more.

We also saw citizenship ceremonies, Australia Day events celebrated across the Loddon Shire, and the return of the Loddon Victorian Seniors Festival.

The 2022/23 budget saw Council continue its approach of being financially responsible – including a strong cash position – while maintaining its commitment to providing a large range of services to the community.

It included a capital expenditure program of \$7.34 million – with \$3.4 million towards roads, \$350,000 for urban and road drainage, \$426,000 for footpaths, and more. Council also continued its commitment to community planning via full funding of \$750,000.

The year saw Council adopt its Annual Infrastructure Program for 2022/23, putting funding towards a number of projects, including Donaldson Park and Pyramid Hill Streetscape, as well as the sealed and gravel road networks, a section of Newbridge Road and the Echuca-Serpentine Road.

Council continued to advocate on behalf of its communities and the broader region, including through its membership of the Murray River Group of Councils (MRGC).

This included a Canberra advocacy trip in May, where we represented Loddon Shire, alongside the MRGC. Our goal was to discuss a number of regional issues that affect our Shire with Members of Parliament – receiving a positive response from the Federal Members and advisors.

This included the Minister for Energy the Hon Chris Bowen regarding the AEMO VNI West project, and Minister for Environment and Water the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP around the Murray Darling Basin Plan, and impacts of further water buy backs.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank Councillors, Council staff and the community, in what was a challenging – yet progressive – year.

The community spirit, including among Councillors and staff, emergency services and the people of Loddon Shire, shone through during the difficult times, further highlighting the care and commitment within our Shire community.

Cr Dan Straub
Mayor

Lincoln Fitzgerald
Chief Executive Officer

Financial summary

Council's financial position continues to remain sound. A summary of our performance is outlined below. Detailed information relating to Council's financial performance is included within the financial statements and performance statement section of this report.

Operating position

Council finished the year with a surplus of \$6.95M. This surplus contrasts with the prior year surplus of \$2.0M. The Comprehensive Income Statement in the Financial Statements indicates that the variance is due mainly to the impairment of flood damaged assets as a result of the 2022 flood event. The adjusted underlying surplus of Council, after removing non-recurrent capital grants, cash capital contributions and nonmonetary capital contributions, is a deficit of \$15.12M or -37.44% when compared to adjusted underlying revenue.

Liquidity

Cash has remained steady with another early payment of the Financial Assistance Grant allocation which is equivalent to 100% of the expected 2023/24 funding. This will enable Council to complete some of the scheduled works for 2023/24 far earlier than expected. The working capital ratio which assesses Council's ability to meet current commitments is calculated by measuring Council's current assets as a percentage of current liabilities. Council's result of 597% is an indicator of a satisfactory cash position. Council operates a number of reserves to fund future expenditure. The balance of these reserves at the end of 2022/23 was \$33.72M. This amount was held by Council in cash and term deposits at the end of the financial year.

Obligations

Council aims to maintain its infrastructure assets in accordance with its Asset Management Plans, while at the same time continuing to deliver the services needed by the community. To bridge the infrastructure gap, Council invested \$5.1M in renewal and upgrade works during the year. This was funded from grants, rate income and cash reserves with no borrowings. At the end of the year, Council's debt ratio, which is measured by comparing interest bearing loans and borrowings to rate revenue, was zero per cent. Council's asset renewal ratio, which is measured by comparing asset renewal and upgrade expenditure to depreciation, was just under 48%.

Stability and efficiency

Council has a range of revenue sources including rates, user fees, fines, grants and contributions. Council's rates concentration, which compares rate revenue to adjusted underlying revenue, was 30.41% for the financial year. Council was restricted to increasing its revenue base for the year by a 1.75% rate cap. This resulted in an average rate per assessment of \$1,276.55 which compares favourably to similar councils in rural Victoria.



Description of operations

Council is responsible for a variety of services, from family and children's services, parks and gardens, youth programs, waste management and community building, to matters concerning business development, planning for appropriate development and ensuring accountability for Council's budget.

This broad range of services and infrastructure for residents helps Loddon Shire to be a resilient, sustainable and prosperous community of communities. Council's vision, strategic objectives and strategies to further improve services and facilities are described in our Council Plan 2021-2025 and budget.

The delivery of services, facilities, support and advocacy to achieve the strategic objectives is measured by a set of strategic indicators, service performance indicators and measures. Council also has a wide range of responsibilities under Victorian and Commonwealth legislation.

Major capital works

During 2022/23 major capital works included:

Buildings

- Refurbishment works completed at the Korong Vale Mechanics Institute Hall.
- Septic projects completed at Tarnagulla and Eddington.
- New barbecue and shelter installed in Progress Park, Newbridge.

Roads, bridges and culverts

Council completed:

- 12.5km of local road shoulder resheets
- 30.0km of local road resheets
- New pedestrian safety barrier installation on Lakeside Drive, Boort
- Kerb and channel, underground drainage, and sealing in Grant Street, Inglewood

- New footpaths in Newbridge and Wedderburn
- Godfrey Street culvert replacement in Wedderburn. The new culvert includes pedestrian access across the Nardoo Creek and much increased capacity for water flow under the culvert.

Flood Rectification Works

- 115 specific emergency works were undertaken to repair and restore road condition to an acceptable level of service to support the immediate flood recovery efforts.
- 3 packages of immediate restoration works undertaken to a value of \$1.2M dollars to restore the condition of a number of Council roads.
- Skinners Flat spillway emergency repairs undertaken to improve the safety of the reservoir.

Road inspections and maintenance

Inspection summary:

- 1,019 inspections were completed (3,266 defects raised).

Defect rectification:

- 7,420 defects were rectified, with 94.7% of all defects (7,027 in total) completed before their due date.

Regional Roads Victoria controlled roads

Council undertakes routine maintenance of pavement, shoulders, roadside areas, drainage systems, road furniture and structures on various arterial roads within Loddon Shire. Regional Roads Victoria-related requests or issues can be directed to Regional Roads Victoria by calling 133 778.

In 2022/23 1,956 defects were rectified, with 84.2% of all defects (1,646 in total) completed before their due date.

Maintenance program

860 maintenance grading work actions were completed resulting in 1,781km of grading and 3,736km of inspections.

Major changes

- Free kindergarten is among \$9 billion of reforms committed from the Victorian Government over the next decade for the early childhood sector. Free kindergarten in 2023 has increased the number of enrolments across Council's five services.
- Loddon has transitioned out of in-home care service provision with Boort District Health, Inglewood and Districts Health Service and Intereach awarded the 2023/24 Commonwealth and State contracts. The Regional Assessment Service is now contracted to Bendigo Health.
- Appointment of a flood relief and community recovery team.



Free kinder has increased enrolments across Loddon Shire.



Demolition works begin at Donaldson Park.

Major achievements

Assets and Infrastructure

- Skinners Flat emergency flood works saw all hands on deck.
- Donaldson Park redevelopment with the pavilion started after several years of planning.
- \$1.4M dollar grant secured from the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program for the reconstruction and widening of 5.28km of Echuca Serpentine Road.
- Works Department management of road closures and emergency call outs during the October 2022 floods, which saw staff go above and beyond.

Community events

- Loddon Shire Council provided monetary support to 35 organisations holding 44 events throughout the Shire during the 2022/23 financial year. In total \$23,064 was allocated under Council's event promotion scheme.
- 10 community groups were successful in obtaining sponsorship for a major event. These included the Boort Pacing and Trotters Cup, Water Ski Victoria – Victorian State Titles, Laanecoorie Gold Bash, Rheola

Charity Carnival and the 2023 Minelab Wedderburn Detector Jamboree.

Community groups successful in obtaining minor event sponsorship included Boort Preschool Twilight Colour Run, Dingee Bowls Club Australia Day Tournament, Women by Water – Living and Learning through Connection to Nature, Mitiamo Golf Club Tournament and Rock Along the Loddon at Newbridge.

Community Project management

- The Community Support Policy was updated and adopted by Council at the April Council meeting. This policy details community support programs provided by Loddon Shire Council to its community groups for economic and tourism development, recreational and community activities, facilities and services, education and developing sustainable communities.
- A review of Council's Community Grant Program was completed by Council officers. At the September Council meeting, Council adopted the proposed amendments to the program including the change to being open all year round, with assessments and approvals taking place every three months.

- Council's 2022/23 Community Grants Program saw almost \$148K in funding allocated to 23 community groups.
- The Calivil Football and Netball Club completed internal works at the Calivil Hall to ensure its long-term viability and continued use by the community, with Council providing financial support via the community grants program.
- Searle Bros was awarded the contract for the Donaldson Park Community Hub redevelopment project. The project commenced in November 2022 and is on track to be completed in the first half of 2024.
- The installation of synthetic turf at the Boort Bowling Club was completed as part of Stage 1 of the Little Lake Boort Foreshore Recreation Precinct.

Compliance and development

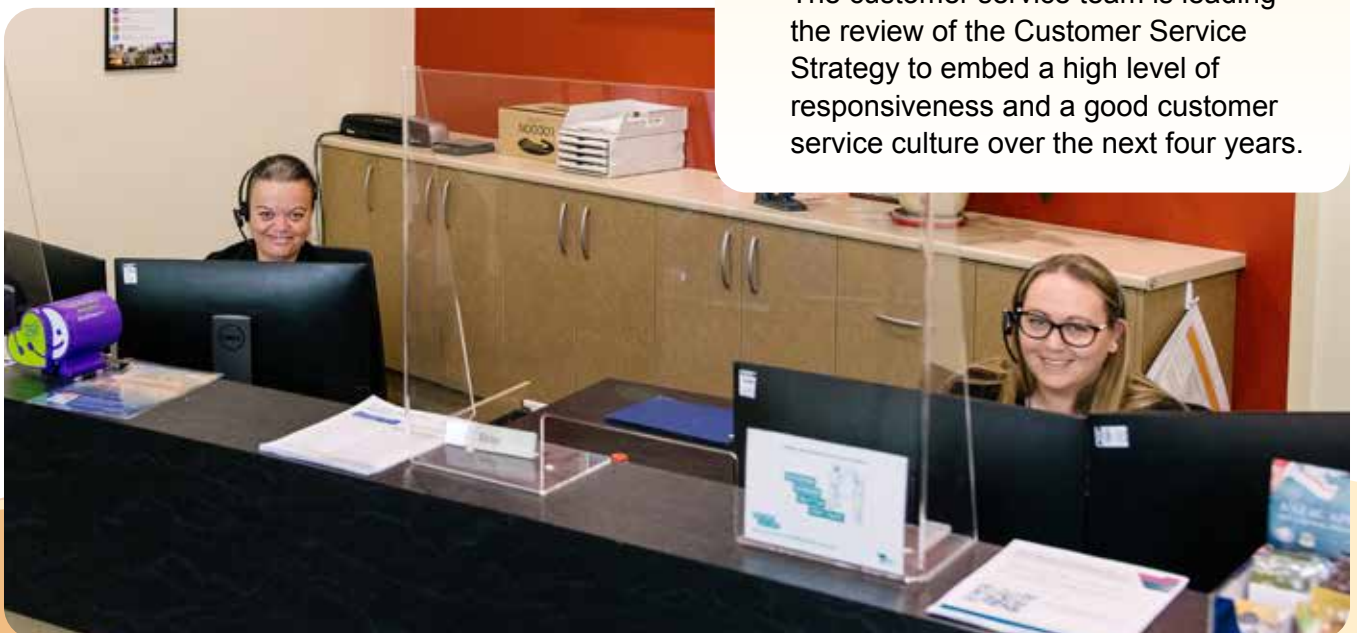
- Council has commenced the review of the previous Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) and development of a new DWMP. This will not only review the previous plan, but will look at developing a risk matrix of onsite wastewater.
- Council adopted the new Community Local Law in November 2022. The document covers a range of laws, including laws relating to Council land, streets and roads, private property, animals and pets, waste and recycling, permits, and enforcement.

Early childhood and early years

- Free kindergarten was introduced in 2023 by the Victorian Government under its Best Start Best Life reforms. Subsequently, enrolment numbers have increased from last year with 108 enrolments in the combined 3 and 4 year old program across Council's five services.
- Beginning to build towards the 2026 target of 30 hours of pre-prep (four year program) for Loddon. To support the increase in hours and therefore staffing requirements, the State Government has provided workforce and infrastructure planning funding.
- There were 54 birth notices in Loddon over the past 12 months with a Maternal Child Health service participation ratio of nearly 90% for children aged between 0 to 3.5 years. The number of births is lower compared to the previous year recording 71.

Customer service

- In July 2022, Council redirected all incoming Community Care department calls to form a single front line customer service team at the Wedderburn Office.
- The customer service team provided a high level of customer service to our community and to the internal flood relief team during the October 2022 flood event.
- The customer service team is leading the review of the Customer Service Strategy to embed a high level of responsiveness and a good customer service culture over the next four years.



Economic development

- Council became a member of Economic Development Australia to receive regular newsletters, access to training, seminars and workshops designed to build capability in supporting and enabling economic development across the Loddon Shire.
- The Tourism and Economic Development team collaborated with Regional Development Victoria to identify opportunities for sustainable economic growth through innovation.
- Nine eligible local businesses received funding through the State Government's Outdoor Activation Fund. This included the design and construction of the Inglewood Town Hall Outdoor Event space. Council assisted these businesses with the fund, including management and acquittal of the funding.
- The promotion of the Invest Loddon Mallee website aimed to encourage investment in Loddon Shire. Additionally, Council started preparations for a content update on this website, as well as the business pages of the Loddon Shire Council website.
- Council continued to work with economic and demographic specialists, REMPLAN to analyse the performance of the local and regional economy. The recently acquired economic insights dashboard provides live data and reporting on key economic indicators including population, employment, housing and business counts.
- Through collaboration with Loddon Shire planners, the team supported the Unlocking Loddon's Growth Potential project led by consultant Villawood Properties, to identify opportunities and priority sites for land/residential development.
- The collaboration with Loddon Shire planners also saw the Tourism and Economic Development team support the development of an Industrial Land Strategy, which is currently engaging with key businesses across the Loddon Shire involved in farming, food production, engineering, manufacturing and service industries.
- The Tourism and Economic Development team collaborated with Telstra on the development of the Loddon Shire Connectivity Plan, to identify key threats and opportunities in digital connectivity as an economic and community enabler.
- Council sponsored the Birchip Cropping Group to support the Young Farmer Network in the Loddon Shire.

Emergency management

- The Northern Victorian Emergency Management Cluster provided a comprehensive response to the October 2022 flood event inquiry.
- Emergency Management staff underwent training to support the provision of assistance to communities after disasters:
 - Introduction to personal support, eight people attended
 - Crisisworks training, 12 people attended
- Reviewed and updated the Municipal Pandemic Plan July 2022 and Municipal Emergency Animal Welfare Plan August 2022.



Finance

- Review and improvements implemented to debt collection process.
- Ensured Council remained compliant with any changes or new legislation that was implemented.
- Implementation underway for the Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration project where finance are a key stakeholder.

Flood recovery

- Appointment of Community Recovery Manager and Community Recovery Officer.
- Establishment of Municipal Flood Recovery Committee, chaired by the Mayor.
- Health and Wellbeing subcommittee convened, providing constant contact with health and wellbeing support agencies and impacted community members.
- Community events in support of flood recovery, including the Loddon Valley Football Netball League Flood Recovery Round, collaborating with Newbridge Football Netball Club to host the special round.
- Publication of flood recovery newsletters to inform community of flood recovery efforts, activities and events.

Hard waste

The annual kerbside hard waste collection for 2023 commenced on Monday 6 March to coincide with Clean Up Australia Day. The annual hard waste collection of metal, e-waste, furniture and white goods for residents (excluding businesses) within township boundaries was completed over a two-week period with approximately 701 collections, including:

- 411 items of e-waste
- 120 white good items
- 195m³ of furniture
- 240m³ of metal
- 108m³ of waste.

308,334 kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts were scheduled during the year with 62 (2.01%) kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed during normal operating conditions.



Waste management Pyramid Hill.

Governance

- Dedicated governance roles created.
- Tender process for Internal Audit Service Provision commenced.
- 2021/22 Annual report adopted.
- Councillors and officers commenced a comprehensive review of Council's Governance Rules.

Health and safety

Health and safety within our workforce is our number one priority, as it contributes to making Loddon a workplace of choice – a workplace where our people have a strong connection and involvement; and a place where our staff enjoy coming to work each day.

We strive to foster a safety culture that supports an incident and injury-free workplace for all employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

- Council's Occupational Health and Safety Committee meets quarterly and continues to work to make the organisation a safe and healthy place for all staff. Our committee, including staff health and safety representatives, receive regular refresher training and safety updates.

- Health and safety matters and data are routinely discussed at Management Executive Group and Loddon Leaders meetings, including reports from OHS Committee meetings from the committee's management representatives.
 - Council continued its proactive approach to encourage Council staff to protect themselves and others from influenza. Council provides free vaccination against influenza to its workforce on an annual basis, with 37% of staff taking the opportunity to be immunised against influenza in 2022/23.
- Healthy Loddon Campaspe (HLC)**
- Projects supported by HLC**
- HLC led the Healthy Sports Club project in Loddon Shire from January to June 2023. The project aimed to create healthy and sustainable food and drink environments, working directly with sporting clubs. Clubs that participated in the project included Pyramid Hill Football Netball Club, Calivil United Football Netball Club, Inglewood Football Netball Club and Bridgewater Football Netball Club. Tailored, one-on-one support was provided to each club, including menu development, canteen display modifications, signage to highlight healthy choices, promotional material and small-scale equipment purchases.
 - Commenced work on development of a region-wide food system framework to help guide the six councils in the Loddon Campaspe region to create a healthy, equitable and sustainable regional food system. A number of projects were delivered in 2022/23 based on the outcomes from in-depth workshops and stakeholder feedback. These included:
 - Local food system work - Inglewood and Districts Health Service and Boort District Health received funding to establish onsite community gardens. The aim is to increase the number of children and adults living in Inglewood and Boort engaged in growing and consuming fruits and vegetables. Work is underway at both sites.
 - Commenced partnership with Grow It Local to encourage and educate residents about healthy eating, cooking and growing local food. This included an opportunity for Loddon Shire residents to receive free heirloom seeds to grow ingredients for Costa Georgiadis's famous Spanakopita, and to access free online workshops on topics such as regenerative growing and growing your own food from kitchen scraps.

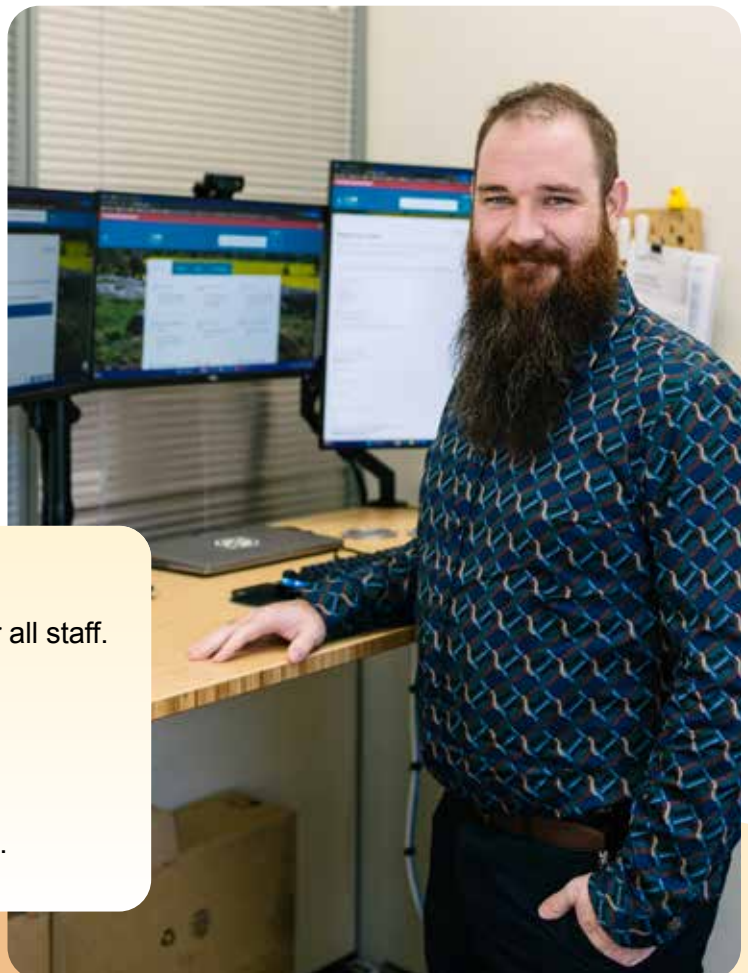
Cr Wendy Murphy (centre) tries out Inglewood's new outdoor fitness equipment, joined by (L-R) Loddon Shire Council Chief Executive Officer Lincoln Fitzgerald, Council's Director Community Wellbeing Wendy Gladman, and Inglewood and Districts Health Service's Shanaye Alexander.



- Launch of the “Support Our Own. Choose Locally Grown.” campaign promoting Loddon Campaspe-grown fruit and vegetables. This ongoing campaign aims to enhance awareness and consumption of Loddon Campaspe-grown fruit and vegetables available at local food retailers, growers and farmers markets.
- A second HLC Adventure Bingo trail at Little Lake Boort was launched in April 2023 with the help of Grade 1 and 2 students from Boort District P-12 School. Adventure Bingo encourages residents to be physically active by walking trails across the Loddon Campaspe region. Participants spot points of interest listed on a grid and once they’ve spotted three items in a vertical, horizontal or diagonal line, they’ve got Bingo!
- Outdoor fitness equipment was installed in Inglewood and officially launched with the help of approximately 40 attendees in December 2022. The equipment encourages the local community to be active at no cost, and in their own time. Installation of the equipment was supported by the creation of free downloadable fitness programs, as well as free fitness sessions hosted by Inglewood and Districts Health Service throughout April 2023.
- As part of HLC’s work in Boort to enable more people to be more active, financial support was provided to the Nolen’s Park Parkrun launch on 1 October 2022. This was off the back of HLC funding path connections in previous years to develop an appropriate route that met Parkrun’s criteria.

Municipal public health and wellbeing

- Council participated in the most recent roll out of the State Government’s free Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) distribution program, including liaising with local distribution points and promoting availability.
- Director Community Wellbeing is a member of the Loddon Public Health Unit Loddon Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Sub-Committee.
- Council continued to pursue advocacy for a sustainable rural childcare model, including involvement in a project, ‘Sustainable Childcare for Rural Kids’ covering the regions of Wimmera, Southern Mallee, Mallee and Loddon/Campaspe (Loddon-Shire specific).
This will further the initial work undertaken with Loddon’s feasibility business case by identifying childcare delivery options for integrated childcare services in rural and remote communities, including an economic analysis of each model and guidance on sustainable implementation.



Information technology

- Replacement of desktops with laptops for all staff.
- NBN connections for kinders.
- Updated staff phones and Telstra plans.
- Rolled out Microsoft 365.
- Transition of some services to Cloud tool.



Pyramid Hill Football Netball Club participated in the Healthy Sports Club initiative.

- Director Community Wellbeing returned as chair of the Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing Executives Network (BLG). Shared projects delivered or in progress in 2022/23 through the BLG include smoking prevention research, place-based antenatal service model, development of advocacy brief Increasing access to mental health supports in Buloke, Loddon and Gannawarra.
- Council is participating in the Loddon Local Safety Committee, facilitated by Victoria Police.
- Facilitated meetings of Loddon Healthy Minds Network every two months.

Organisation Development

- Capability Framework adopted in June 2023.

Parks and townships

- 3,364 programmed maintenance and defects that consisted of maintenance actions on footpaths, street and park trees, garden beds, grass mowing and playgrounds were rectified with 86.8% of all defects (2,921 in total) completed before their due date.
- Reached final stages of works to the Wedderburn Pioneer Caravan Park, in preparation for the replacement of three cabins in the 2023/24 financial year. The works are being funded by Council with matched funding from the Commonwealth Government Regional Growth Fund “Our Region Our Rivers” project.

Procurement

- Fleet management updates, such as disposal of excess vehicles, returning car pool to common fleet, implementation of a booking system and current review of fleet policy and procedure.
- Worked in conjunction with flood recovery teams regarding tender and selection of panel contractors for flood restoration works.
- Review procurement processes.
- Improved contract management systems and processes.

- Commenced work to replace the office at the Wedderburn Pioneer Caravan Park with construction offsite and ready for installation in the 2023/24 financial year.
- Completed an electrical audit at the Bort Lakes Holiday Park with rectification works to be undertaken in the 2023/24 financial year.

Records

- Council commenced a digitisation project in November 2022 including the digitisation of Property Files, Building Permits, Planning Permits and Public Health Permits to ensure records are easily accessible online going forward. This project is tracking on time and will be completed in November 2023. Based on the scoping of the project, three phases of digitisation were identified. Physical records scanned as part of phase 1 of the project were securely destroyed in May 2023. The physical records for phase 2 and 3 of the project will be securely destroyed by end of December 2023.
- A review of the Records Strategy and Records Policy is being undertaken, and will outline Council’s approach to records management over the next four years. A Data Management Team (DMT) has been formed and is guiding the review of this strategy and policy.



Records management.

Strategic planning

- Ridge Street Residential Development – a feasibility assessment has been completed and presented to Council briefing.
- Industrial Land Strategy – a discussion paper was completed and presented to Council Briefing. Further investigations into business needs and opportunities has commenced.
- Detailed feasibility assessment of key residential development sites identified in the Settlement Strategy – Villawood Properties were engaged by Council following a successful funding submission to the Victorian Planning Authority. The project has identified opportunities to unlock vacant residential land in Loddon Shire.
- Loddon Planning Scheme – a review of the planning scheme has been completed. This review identified opportunities to update the scheme and further strategic work that is required to address new issues and improve the scheme's performance.
- Updated flood controls planning scheme amendment (Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and Floodway Overlay) – Council is working with the North Central Catchment Management Authority to incorporate revised flood mapping into the Loddon Planning Scheme to ensure that flood risk is accurately identified when new development is proposed.

- Tourism accommodation brochure – a brochure has been prepared to assist residents interested in using their land for tourist accommodation.
- Rural road procedure – a procedure has been prepared to assist staff to coordinate approvals for land use and development on rural roads to ensure upgrade and maintenance obligations are managed.

Statutory planning

- 109 applications were received, 94 were standard applications and 15 Vic Smart applications.
- 96.91% of standard applications were decided within the 60-day statutory timeframe.
- 100% of Vic Smart applications were decided within the 10-day statutory timeframe.
- The median number of days to determine a standard application was 28.
- The median number of days to determine a Vic Smart application was seven.

Tourism

- Engaged visitor economy experts Urban Enterprise to conduct a Loddon Shire Visitor Servicing Review, to inform plans to provide an informative, efficient and contemporary visitor experience.
- Engaged Stanford Marketing to review Loddon tourism and township brands and destination messaging, to support local tourism committees across the Loddon Shire.
- Supported Visitor Information Centre volunteers with a familiarisation tour and morning tea events.
- Attended the Australian Gold Prospectors Expo in Bendigo in April, which led to the development of a new guided gold prospecting tour, delivered by an Inglewood business.
- Contributed to the planning and development of regional tourism projects including the City and Region of Gastronomy and Goldfields World Heritage Bid, to advocate for local business.
- Implemented local tourism business engagement plan, including in-person manager attendance at all tourism and development committees and/or meetings with local community representatives.



Looking out from Mount Korong.

Waste management

- Residents are provided with four waste vouchers with their rates notices. Each voucher can be used to dispose of up to four cubic metres of general domestic waste free of charge at Council's landfill and transfer stations. This includes green waste, mixed recyclables, general household waste and e-waste (white goods, TVs, computers, electronic items, etc.).
- Tyres, bricks and concrete, and mattresses are not included as these items have additional third party costs associated with their disposal, and are charged as per normal disposal charges.
- In 2022/23 a total of 2,714 vouchers were used.

Youth

- Loddon Shire Council has partnered with Buloke and Gannawarra shire councils, Northern District Community Health (NDCH) and North Central Local Learning and Employment Network (NCLLEN) to deliver youth events and programs across the three municipalities. Combined with FReeZA funding, NDCH and NCLLEN have delivered music festivals, coffee making training and other youth initiatives and awareness campaigns.

Volunteers

- Council hosted a lunch and presented certificates of appreciation to Community Asset Committee members, Visitor Information Centre and Meals on Wheels volunteers at the Serpentine Recreation Reserve during National Volunteers Week in May 2023.
- Council ran a community-focused 'Recognise a Volunteer' campaign during National Volunteer Week in May 2023.
- Council continues to identify opportunities in the volunteer area to promote and recruit, support and develop, recognise, celebrate and value, and partner and collaborate. These are the key strategic directions in the Volunteer Strategy.



Recovery continues following flood event

Loddon River at Bridgewater-on-Loddon, October floods 2022

In October 2022 Loddon Shire was hit by flooding, affecting many communities, with impacts similar to the January 2011 event.

A significant weather system in the lead up to 13 October resulted in flash flooding and riverine flooding in urban and rural areas throughout the Loddon Mallee region. Adjoining regions also experienced significant flood impacts.

Wedderburn had its wettest October on record with 228.2mm of rain (the previous record for October was 179.8mm in 1975), well above the October average monthly rainfall in Wedderburn of 44.2mm.

At the flood's peak, water volumes recorded at the Laanecoorie Reservoir spillway reached 145 gigalitres/day. This is more than 18 times the volume of Laanecoorie Reservoir.

The lead up to the flood event saw a Municipal Control Centre (MCC) established in Council's Wedderburn office. Sand bagging and other mitigating efforts, including construction of

levees and pumping were undertaken, with support from emergency service agencies, Council and community volunteers.

Emergency Relief Centres (ERC) were opened at Wedderburn, Bridgewater-on-Loddon, Calivil and Boort, and a centre placed on standby in Pyramid Hill. These centres were initially staffed by Loddon Shire Council with support from local community members and other local agencies. They were subsequently supported with staff from other councils via the MAV's Resource Sharing Protocol.

As a consequence of road closures, food, water, bedding, and other urgent supplies (supplied by the Salvation Army) and staff for some ERCs were brought in by helicopter. Some residents accessed ERCs in neighbouring municipalities, while others were able to relocate to family or friends.

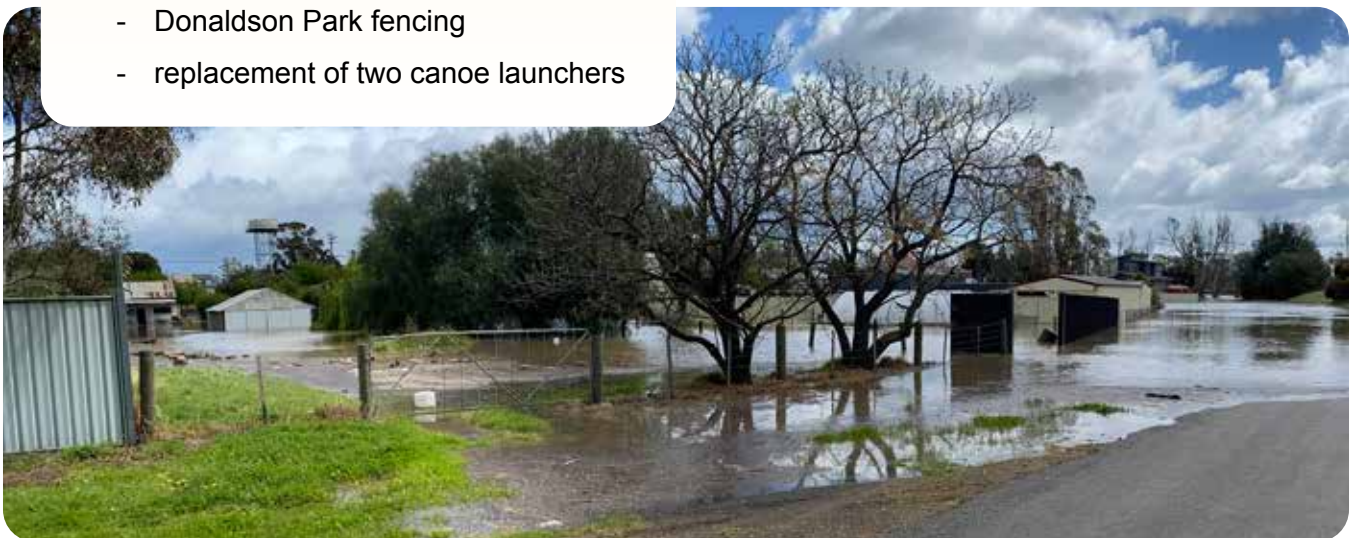
Over the duration of the flooding at least 65 roads were closed for various lengths of time, with many other roads impacted. Repairs identified included:

- 117 culvert repairs or replacements
- 56 floodway repairs
- one bridge replacement
- 273km of gravel road re-sheets
- 50km of unsealed road shoulders to replace
- 14.25km of sealed road to be rebuilt
- Repairs required to:
 - Bridgewater-on-Loddon Caravan Park and swimming hole
 - Newbridge Recreation Reserve
 - Durham Ox Hall
 - Fentons Creek Hall
 - Donaldson Park fencing
 - replacement of two canoe launchers

The flood travelled north along the Loddon River, quickly impacting communities in the south of the Shire through to Bridgewater-on-Loddon. The water breached into the surrounding land north of Bridgewater-on-Loddon and fed or joined other significant water sources including the Bullock Creek, Bendigo Creek, Serpentine Creek, Kinypanial Creek and Calivil Creek. It directly impacted many farms and towns.

While Loddon Shire makes up just 11% of the broader Loddon Mallee region, our farmers' share was an estimated 70% of the region's stock losses. Harvest activity indicated significant crop damage and further impacts to flood-damaged roads.

As a result of the flood event, Council temporarily suspended its Road Management Plan and redeployed staff elsewhere to meet the needs of the community.



Top: Bridgewater floods. Above: Railway track crossing the Loddon River at Bridgewater-on-Loddon.



Above: Newbridge Recreational Reserve. Top right: Relief centre supplies. Right: Bridgewater farmer Corie, rescued his sheep from floodwaters by boat.



The estimate of claimable expenditure under the Federal Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement (DRFA) is \$36M. In addition, Council is undertaking a further \$8M of repairs, not funded by other levels of government, such as to caravan parks and sports/recreation infrastructure.

Following a publicly-advertised tender process and evaluation by an assessment panel, Council awarded seven packages of flood restoration works, including road resheeting and culvert repairs. These packages are in addition to the extensive work undertaken by works crews. Following the formal transition from flood response to flood recovery on 7 December 2022, Council employed a Community Recovery Manager and a Community Recovery Officer. The positions work collaboratively with Council staff and partner agencies to advocate for the resources needed to support our community's recovery.

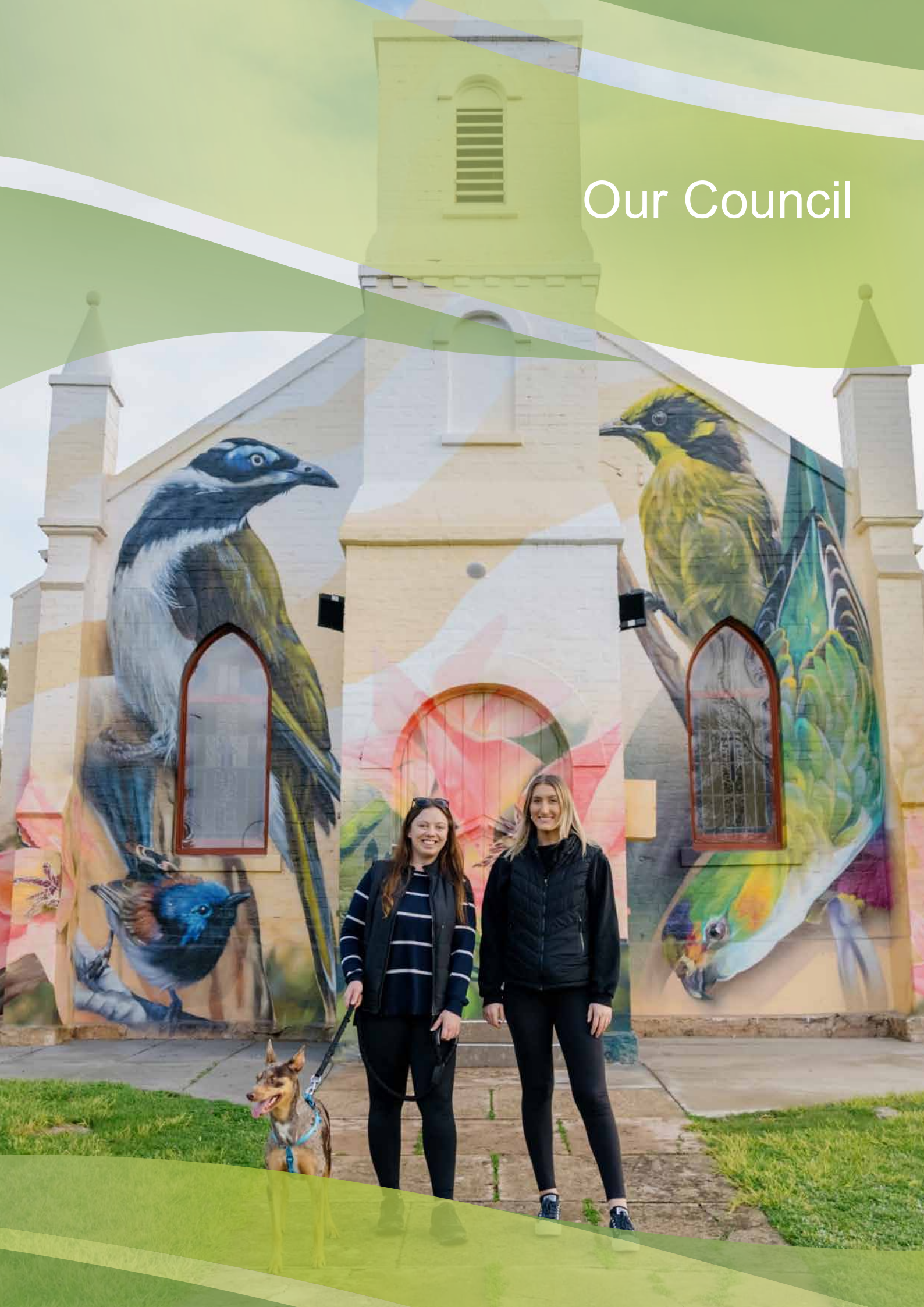
As per the Municipal Emergency Management Plan, a Municipal Flood Recovery Committee was established. Chaired by the Mayor, the committee provides guidance and support for recovery planning.

A Health and Wellbeing Sub-committee of the Municipal Flood Recovery Committee was convened to provide regular contact with the health and wellbeing support agencies along with impacted community members.

Council welcomed State Government announcements relating to support for impacted individuals and business, and continues to work with the Federal and State Governments on opportunities for funding for flood recovery efforts, including on roads and other infrastructure.

While as individuals we each faced our own challenges, we also saw amazingly resilient communities across the Shire work together, as soon as it was safe, to clean up after the flood and get back to business as usual.

Our Council



Shire profile

Geography

Loddon Shire is located in central Victoria, about 175 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. It is bounded by Gannawarra Shire in the north, the Shire of Campaspe and the City of Greater Bendigo in the east, Mount Alexander and Central Goldfields shires in the south and Northern Grampians and Buloke shires in the west.

Loddon Shire is a predominantly rural area, with many small towns and communities. The larger towns are Boort, Bridgewater-on-Loddon, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn.

The Shire encompasses a total land area of approximately 6,700 square kilometres. Land is used mainly for agriculture and horticulture, particularly grain, sheep, wool, beef cattle, dairy, pigs and poultry.

In recent years, there has been an increase in viticulture, olives and fodder crops.

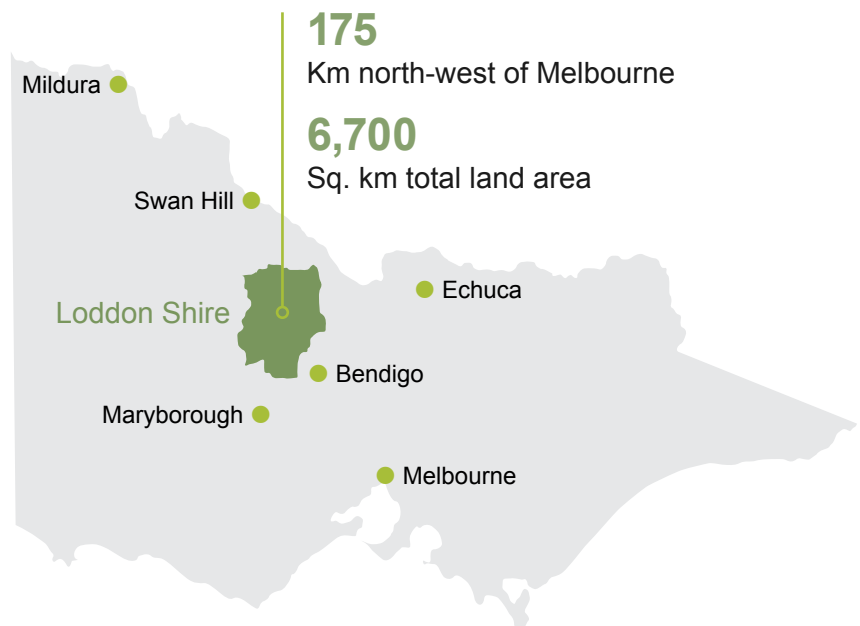
Major features of the Shire include the Loddon River, Terrick Terrick National Park, Leagur State Park, Kooyoora State Park, Lake Boort, Major Mitchell Trail, Mount Korong, Melville Caves and Laanecoorie Reservoir.

Major highways passing through the Shire are the Calder Highway, the Loddon Valley Highway and the Wimmera Highway.

Population

The estimated resident population in Loddon Shire for 2022 was 7,729 with an overall median age of 52 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)).

During the year, Council recorded 54 births in the Shire.



Family composition

Of the families in Loddon Shire, the ABS 2021 Census shows that 51.8% were a couple family without children and around 34% were a couple family with children, while 12.6% were one-parent families.

Origin

The 2021 Census shows a little over 20% of our residents were born overseas. The percentage of people born overseas has progressively increased from 7% in 2001. Other than Australia, the top five countries of birth were England, Philippines, New Zealand, Netherlands and Germany. The Philippines joined the top five most common countries of birth for the first time in 2016.



7,729

Estimated Residential
Population (ABS 2022)

52

Median age



51.8%

Family with no children

34%

Family with children

12.6%

One parent family



20%

Born overseas



4.9%

Attending preschool

24%

Primary education

20.5%

Secondary education

9.6%

University/technical
institution



\$554

Median weekly personal income

\$1,394

Median weekly family income

\$1,039

Median weekly household income



25.4%

Population volunteer
(14% Australia-wide
comparison)

14.8%

Provided unpaid care

Median weekly incomes

According to the 2021 Census, the median weekly personal income in Loddon Shire was \$554.

The median weekly family income was \$1,394, while the median weekly household income was \$1,039.

Volunteers

Loddon Shire has a strong sense of self-reliance and community spirit, and this is reflected in the rate of volunteerism.

The 2021 Census showed 25.4% of the population volunteer and many of those volunteers held roles in a number of community organisations in the previous 12 months.

This figure is compared with a total of 14% in Australia. In addition, 14.8% of our people provided unpaid care for others.

Education

Overall, 4.9% of our youth population were attending preschool, 24% were in primary education and 20.5% were attending secondary education. Furthermore, 9.6% were attending further education, including university or a technical institution.

Council contacts

Municipal office

41 High Street,
Wedderburn, 3518

Local call: 1300 365 200

Phone: (03) 5494 1200

Fax: (03) 5494 3003

Office hours: 8.15am - 4.45pm
Monday to Friday
(except public
holidays)

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service.

- TTY/voice users phone 133 677 then ask for (03) 5494 1200
- Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727, then ask for (03) 5494 1200

For more information, visit:
www.relayservice.gov.au

Website:

www.loddon.vic.gov.au

Email:

loddon@loddon.vic.gov.au

Library services

Council's library services are provided by:

Goldfields Library Corporation

259 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo, 3550
PO Box 887, Bendigo, 3552

Telephone: (03) 5449 2790

Email: helpdesk@ncgrl.vic.gov.au

Website: www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/libraryagencies

For enquiries about Loddon's library agencies, telephone (03) 5449 2790.

Library agency locations and opening hours

Boort

Boort Resource and Information Centre,
119 - 121 Godfrey Street, Boort

Hours: Monday to Friday 10.00am - 3.30pm
Closed from 12.30pm - 1.00pm

Dingee

Dingee Railway Station Progress Park,
Mack Street, Dingee

Hours: Tuesday 9.00am - 11.00am

Inglewood

Inglewood Community Neighbourhood House,
Inglewood Town Hall Hub, 20 Verdon Street, Inglewood

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
9.00am - 4.30pm

Pyramid Hill

Pyramid Hill Neighbourhood House,
Units 5-8 / 43-45 Kelly Street, Pyramid Hill

Hours: Tuesday to Friday 10.00am - 4.00pm

Tarnagulla

Tarnagulla Community Centre,
8 Sandy Creek Lane, Tarnagulla

Hours: First Monday of the month 2.00pm - 3.00pm

Wedderburn

Wedderburn Community Centre,
24 Wilson Street, Wedderburn

Hours: Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Maternal and child health centres

Council operates six maternal and child health centres.

Phone: (03) 5494 1201

Email: bookings@loddon.vic.gov.au

Online: www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Live/Services-for-our-younger-residents/Maternal-and-Child-Health-Service

Location / contact and opening hours

Boort

King Street M: 0409 166 891 **Hours:** Thursday 9.00am - 3.30pm

Dingee

Bush Nursing Centre, King Street M: 0409 166 891 **Hours:** Monday (weeks 1 and 3)
9.00am - 4.00pm

Inglewood

Grant Street M: 0409 166 891 **Hours:** Wednesday 8.30am - 4.00pm

Pyramid Hill

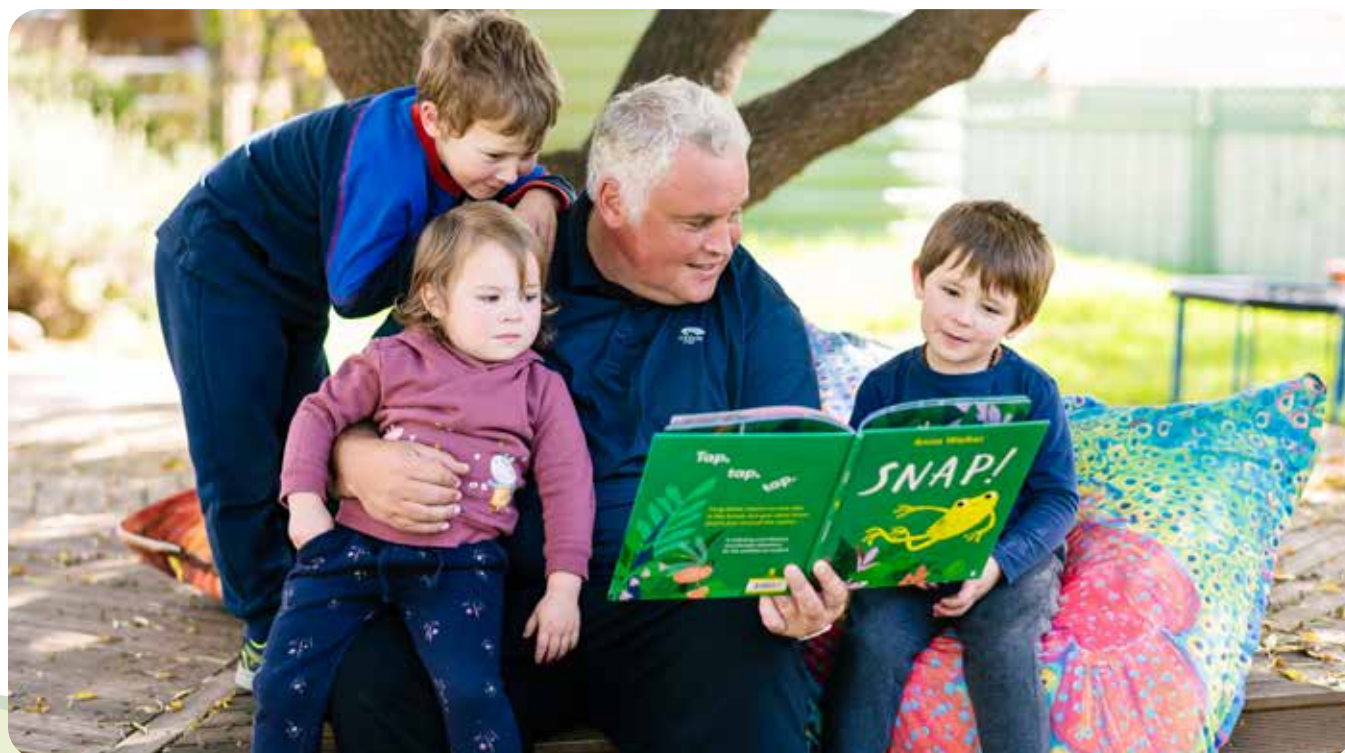
Senior Citizens Centre, McKay Street M: 0409 166 891 **Hours:** Monday (weeks 2 and 4)
9.00am - 3.00pm

Serpentine

Loddon Shire Council Office,
37 Peppercorn Way M: 0409 166 891 **Hours:** Tuesday (week 1)
9.00am - 12.00pm

Wedderburn

Community Centre, Wilson Street M: 0409 166 891 **Hours:** Tuesday (week 2 and 4)
9.00am - 3.30pm



Storytime at Loddon Shire kindergarten.

Kindergartens

Council operates five kindergartens.

Location/contact and hours

Boort Pre-school

123 - 127 Godfrey Street, Boort, 3537

P: (03) 5455 2292 M: 0498 707 799

Hours: 4 year olds Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8.45am - 1.45pm

3 year olds Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8.45am - 1.45pm

Dingee Pre-school

785 Dingee-Serpentine Road, Dingee, 3571

P: (03) 5436 8401 M: 0498 606 345

Hours: 4 year olds Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 8.45am - 1.45pm

3 year olds Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 8.45am - 1.45pm

Inglewood Kindergarten

75A Grant Street, Inglewood, 3517

P: (03) 5438 3533 M: 0498 505 277

Hours: 4 year olds Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8.45am - 1.45pm

3 year olds Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8.45am - 1.45pm

Pyramid Hill Pre-school

67 Kelly Street, Pyramid Hill, 3575

P: (03) 5455 7230 M: 0498 606 023

Hours: 4 year olds Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8.45am - 1.45pm

3 year olds Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8.45am - 1.45pm

Wedderburn Kindergarten

77 Ridge Street, Wedderburn, 3518

M: 0498 707 005

Hours: 4 year olds Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8.45am - 1.45pm

3 year olds Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8.45am - 1.45pm

Landfill and transfer stations

Council operates three unlicensed landfills and three transfer stations.

Landfills are the most widely utilised solid waste management option. The waste is typically compacted in order to increase its density and stability, and covered to prevent the attraction of pests.

A transfer station is a building or processing site for the temporary disposal of waste.

All transfer stations and landfill facilities are closed on public holidays and Code Red days.

Location and hours

Boort landfill

Off Boort-Quambatook Road

Hours: Tuesday 8.00am - 12.00pm

Sunday 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Dingee transfer station

Lawry's Road

Hours: 1 April – 30 September

Third Sunday of month
10.00am - 2.00pm

1 October – 31 March

First Wednesday of month
8.00am - 12.00pm

Third Sunday of month
10.00am - 2.00pm

Inglewood transfer station

Inglewood-Salisbury Road

Hours: Wednesday 8.00am - 12.00pm

Saturday 8.00am - 12.00pm

Newbridge landfill

Ryan Street

Hours: Wednesday 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Sunday 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Pyramid Hill landfill

Ballast Road

Hours: Tuesday 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Sunday 8.00am - 12.00pm

Wedderburn transfer station

Godfrey Street

Hours: Thursday 8.00am - 12.00pm

Sunday 8.00am - 12.00pm

Councillors

Council elections were last held in October 2020.

The Council area is divided into five wards. There is one Councillor for each ward. Councillors have responsibility for setting the strategic direction for the municipality, policy development, identifying service standards and monitoring performance across the organisation.

Representing the community

Councillor representation on committees

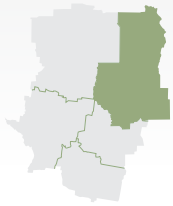
Councillors provided representation on many local committees. This representation helps to ensure the community has access to Council and their voices are heard.



L to R: Cr Wendy Murphy, Cr Gavan Holt, Mayor Dan Straub, Cr Neil Beattie, Cr Linda Jungwirth



Cr Dan Straub
Terrick Ward



First elected: 2020

As a local, choosing Tandarra as the place to start his family and buy a property was an obvious choice for Dan Straub. He believes the rural lifestyle and farming culture is one of the great strengths of Loddon Shire and something that he is passionate about.

Cr Straub has worked within the agricultural and construction industries, and as a husband and father of two young girls, understands the pressures on young families and the importance of local services.

His passions include working and advocating with rural communities on future farming practices, land access issues, recreational use of public land, water and environmental issues and the traditional Australian way of life.

Representation on committees

- Local Government Women's Charter (substitute)
- Loddon Campaspe Councils
- Murray River Group of Councils
- North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation
- North Central Local Learning Employment Network
- Rural Councils Victoria

Section 65 Community Asset Committees

- East Loddon Community Centre
- Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall



Cr Neil Beattie
Boort Ward



First elected: 2005

Neil Beattie, now retired from farming, lives on the edge of Lake Boort, enjoying the scenery.

Cr Beattie continues to operate a trucking company, and now owns Boort's newsagency. He credits these businesses, along with all of his community activities, with helping to keep his mind active.

He says that "travel and fishing make life pretty complete".

Cr Beattie is chair of Grain Co-op, in addition to representing Council on several other committees.

Representation on committees

- Audit and Risk Committee (substitute)
- Municipal Association of Victoria (substitute)
- Rail Freight Alliance

Section 65 Community Asset Committees

- Boort Aerodrome
- Boort Memorial Hall
- Boort Park
- Korong Vale Mechanics Institute Hall
- Korong Vale Sports Centre
- Little Lake Boort
- Yando Public Hall



**Cr Linda
Jungwirth**

Tarnagulla Ward



First elected: 2020

Linda Jungwirth lives in Tarnagulla and understands the unique benefits of country life. As a parent, grandparent and carer, Cr Jungwirth has plenty of experience with life's challenges as well as good times.

With a strong belief in the ability of communities to influence their own outcomes, in addition to representing Council on several committees, Cr Jungwirth is a current member of the Tarnagulla Community Centre and the Tarnagulla Parks Committees, and involved with many other committees and community activities.

Cr Jungwirth loves living in southern Loddon surrounded by history and the natural environment and really enjoys connecting with people in the community. Her favourite pastimes are camping, fishing and spending time with family and friends.

Representation on committees

- Australia Day Committee 2023
- Integrated Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee



Cr Gavan Holt
Wedderburn Ward



First elected: 2003

Gavan Holt is a fifth-generation resident in the Wedderburn district with an extensive family history of local government involvement.

After completing a commerce degree from the University of Melbourne, he taught for 10 years at various secondary schools across Victoria and he is now a businessman with interests in farming, investment and hotels.

Cr Holt has been appointed a Mayor Emeritus by the Municipal Association of Victoria. He is also an alumnus of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government.

He lists his personal interests as politics, international affairs, travel and sport.

Representation on committees

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Calder Highway Improvement Committee (substitute)
- Municipal Association of Victoria

Section 65 Community Asset Committees

- Donaldson Park
- Hard Hill Tourist Reserve
- Wedderburn Community Centre
- Wedderburn Engine Park and Market Square Reserve
- Wedderburn Mechanics and Literary Institute Hall



**Cr Wendy
Murphy**
Inglewood Ward



First elected: 2020

A proud sixth generation Inglewood local, Wendy Murphy grew up on her family's poultry farm and has worked in local vineyards in Kingower, Bridgewater and Serpentine, and as a Laboratory Technician at an Echuca winery. Cr Murphy lives in Kurting with her husband and three children.

Completing a Bachelor of Applied Science (Natural Resources Management), Cr Murphy has worked at the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action for 19 years. Cr Murphy is active in the community, volunteering her time with numerous community groups and organisations. Cricket and local history are her main interests.

Cr Murphy took part in the Loddon Murray Community Leadership Program in 2017.

Representation on committees

- Australia Day Committee 2022
- Calder Highway Improvement Committee
- Local Government Women's Charter
- Loddon Healthy Minds Network

Section 65 Community Asset Committees

- Campbells Forest Hall
- Inglewood Community Elderly Persons Units
- Inglewood Community Sports Centre
- Inglewood Town Hall Hub



Wehla Sunset. Photo: La Toya Schroeder.

Our people



Organisation



Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO has responsibility for the day-to-day management of operations in accordance with applicable legislation and the strategic directions of the Council Plan.

The CEO and three directors form the Management Executive Group (MEG) and lead the organisation.

*Management Executive Group:
Wendy Gladman, Lincoln Fitzgerald,
Steven Phillips and Amanda Wilson.*

Chief Executive Officer

Lincoln Fitzgerald

Lincoln has a wealth of experience in local government, coming to Council from the City of Greater Bendigo and having previously worked for Mount Alexander Shire Council.

Lincoln has held diverse roles including project management of major projects, asset management, health promotion, strategy development, contract and facility management. Lincoln's career has focused on building, leading and managing diverse teams and large businesses in the region and overseas.

The Chief Executive Officer role of Council includes prescribed duties in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, providing leadership to the Council, strategic planning, promoting external relationships, and managing the operations of the Council.

Director Corporate

Amanda Wilson

Amanda Wilson joined Council in March 2022, having previously worked in local government for nine years in both Victoria and New South Wales. Prior to local government, Amanda worked in private enterprise and the not-for-profit sector.

Amanda has held diverse roles including financial management, human resources, change management, marketing, governance and occupational health and safety. Amanda has qualifications in accounting, business, human resources, and work health and safety.

The Director Corporate role is responsible for the management of finance, rates, procurement, governance, risk, occupational health and safety, human resources, payroll, records management, customer support and information technology.

Director Operations

Steven Phillips

Steven Phillips was appointed as Director Operations in November 2017 after holding the position of Manager Works at Loddon Shire Council since 2011.

Steven commenced with Council in 2009 as the Assistant Manager Works. Steven has a Diploma in Forestry from Melbourne University's School of Forestry, and has worked in the forestry and fire management sector, providing supervision and management of commercial timber harvesting operations, forest road infrastructure and fire management for several years before making the move to local government.

The Director Operations role is responsible for the management and ongoing delivery of a wide range of Council services including infrastructure policy and program development, works and maintenance, strategic and statutory planning, statutory building control, environmental and public health, local laws policy and compliance, contract management and engineering services.

Director Community Wellbeing

Wendy Gladman

Wendy Gladman was appointed as Director Community Wellbeing in July 2013 after holding the position of Manager Community Services since 2010.

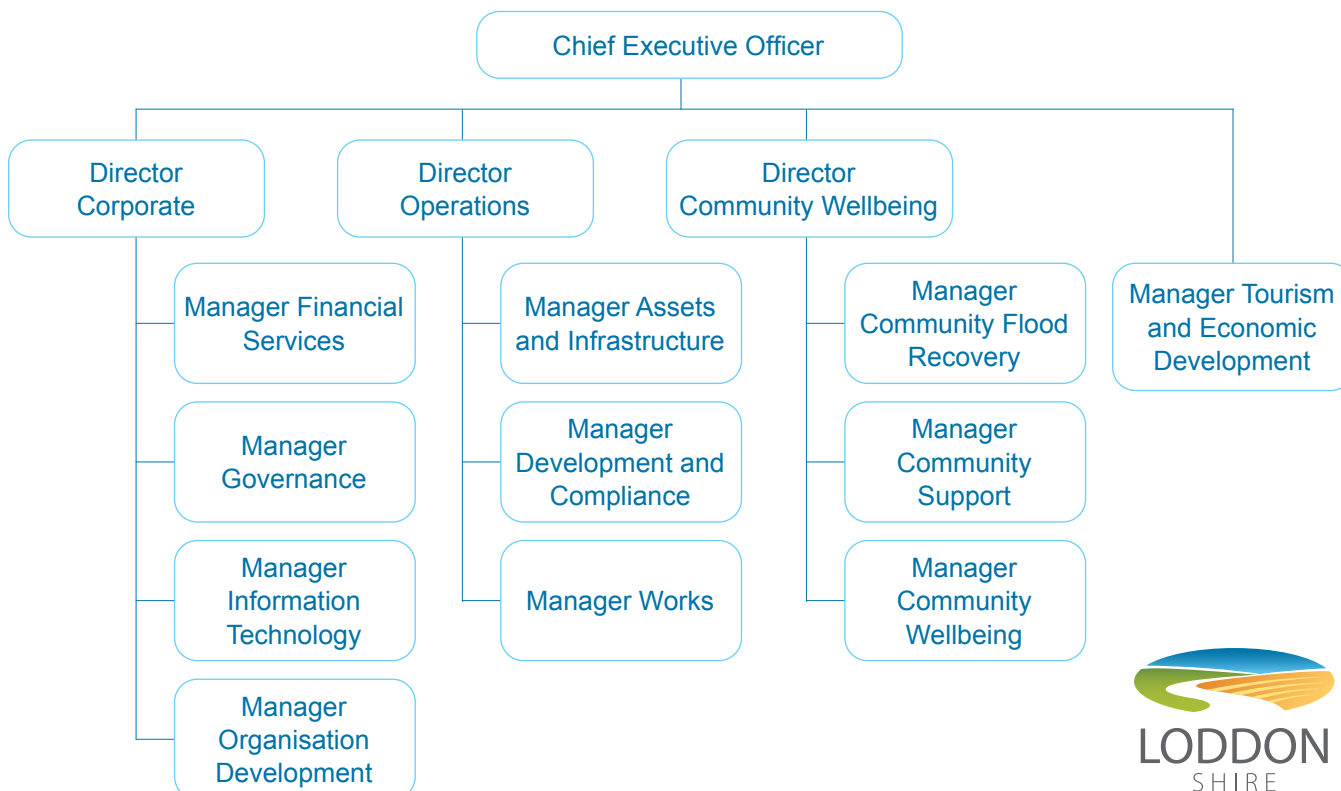
Wendy previously held a number of positions in aged and disability services since commencing with Council in 1995.

Wendy has extensive experience in local government, with a particular emphasis on delivery of community services and health and wellbeing.

Wendy has a Diploma of Business Management, a Diploma of Community Services Management, a Diploma of Business (Governance) and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

The Director Community Wellbeing role is responsible for the management and delivery of a wide range of community services including early years, youth, aged and disability, sport and recreation, community planning, emergency management, community recovery, rural access and municipal public health and wellbeing.

Organisational structure



Loddon Leaders

The MEG is supported by Loddon Leaders, members are:

Corporate Services Directorate



Manager Financial Services, Deanne Caserta

Deanne Caserta commenced work with Council in 2004 in an administration capacity. In 2007 Deanne commenced as a Cadet Accountant and was awarded an accounting cadetship through Council's Scholarship Program. In 2012 she graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce and achieved CPA status in 2016.

Deanne's role involves overseeing the preparation of key finance documents including financial plan, annual budget and financial statements along with development and review of key financial strategies and policies. She is responsible for reporting to various government departments and the functions of accounts payable, accounts receivable, property/rating and procurement.



Manager Governance, Lisa Clue

Lisa Clue commenced with Council in August 2022, having previously worked in a number of roles within the local government sector.

Lisa has qualifications and experience in risk management, OHS and emergency management, as well as experience in a diverse range of other Council functions.

The Manager Governance role leads and manages the governance, risk, occupational health and safety and communications functions, which includes insurance, compliance and decision making through both Council and officer delegations.



Manager Organisation Development, Janine Jackson

Janine Jackson has extensive experience in local government having commenced with Council in 2004 in an administration capacity and from 2005 to 2020 successfully gaining appointment to roles in finance, payroll and human resources. In November 2020 Janine was appointed to the role of Manager Organisation Development.

The role of Manager Organisation Development encompasses human resource management including volunteers, organisation learning and development, payroll services, customer service and records management– while providing programs that support the development of a positive, engaging collaborative culture.



Manager Information Technology, Daniel Hirth

Daniel Hirth joined Council in 2022 after working in the private sector, including for a multi-national company with primary offices in the United States and United Kingdom.

Daniel has a Diploma of Information Technology: Networking, and has worked on a number of projects dedicated to digital transformation and improvement. These projects include delivery of IT infrastructure and security, disaster recovery and business continuity planning, multi-vendor system implementations (supporting a single, unified solution), and testing and implementation delivery of new customer and consumer websites.

The Manager Information Technology role is responsible for implementing key strategies relating to information technology and information management.

Executive Directorate



Manager Tourism and Economic Development, David Stretch

David Stretch commenced at Loddon Shire in October 2022 as the Manager Tourism and Economic Development.

David brings extensive business experience to the Council, having performed in both private sector and local government roles in marketing, business development and management.

The Manager Tourism and Economic Development is responsible for the implementation of Loddon Shire's economic development strategy and the support of tourism growth in the Shire and region.

Operations Directorate



Manager Assets and Infrastructure, David Southcombe

David Southcombe commenced with Council in 2018 in the Assets and Buildings Coordinator position and was appointed Manager Assets and Infrastructure in 2019.

David's previous experience includes holding positions in asset management, energy efficiency and operations.

His role is responsible for contract and project management, capital works program development and implementation, civil engineering design, and asset management.



Manager Works, Daniel Lloyd

Daniel Lloyd commenced with Council in July 2002 in an administration and GIS (Geographic Information System) capacity for the Technical Services Department. In September 2011, Daniel was appointed as the Assistant Manager Works before being appointed as the Manager Works in December 2017.

The Manager Works role includes the management of Council's day labour workforce and all subcontractors involved in the delivery of maintenance and construction activities on Council's road and township street network as well as Council's parks and gardens network, building maintenance and waste services.

This position is also responsible for Council's maintenance contract, plant fleet management activities and Municipal Emergency Response.



Manager Development and Compliance, Glenn Harvey

Glenn Harvey commenced with Council in August 2015 as the Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS), after working in the building industry for 35 years, both in the private sector as a builder and building surveyor, and in building control in local government.

In 2016 Glenn was appointed as the Manager Development and Compliance which resulted in the expansion of his responsibilities to encompass the management and oversight of Council's town planning, public health, local laws, animal management and building control. With this appointment, Glenn manages the broader portfolio of development and regulatory services which Council provides or administers for the local community.

Community Wellbeing Directorate



Manager Community Support, Paul Scullie (acting)

Paul Scullie commenced at Loddon Shire in 2020 as the Active Loddon Recreation Officer and was appointed Acting Manager Community Support in 2022.

He is currently studying full time, completing a Bachelor of Business, majoring in Sports Management. Paul previously worked for the AFL in Queensland, as well as in retail management.

The Manager Community Support is responsible for the management of Council's grant schemes and swimming pools, strategic planning for community facilities, community planning, project management of capital works projects and emergency management.



Manager Community Wellbeing, Sarah Perry (acting)

Sarah Perry returned to Council in 2019 as Project Liaison Officer in the Community Support Department, and was appointed Manager Community Support in 2021 after 12 months acting in the role.

In 2022, Sarah was seconded into the Manager Community Wellbeing role to provide continuity and support to the department. Sarah's previous local government experience has been working for Loddon Shire and Campaspe Shire councils as a Statutory Planner.

The Manager Community Wellbeing is responsible for contributing to improved health and wellbeing outcomes for the Loddon community through the development and implementation of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, delivery of aged and disability services, children and youth services and other community service/wellbeing programs and by developing and culturing partnerships and collaborative working relationships.



Manager Community Recovery, Malcolm Brown

Malcolm Brown commenced at Loddon Shire Council in December 2022 as the Manager Community Recovery following the October 2022 flood event.

The Manager Community Recovery is responsible for managing the planning, programming and delivery of community recovery initiatives in partnership with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders.

The position facilitates the Municipal Flood Recovery Committee, and oversees the community recovery plan.

Council staff

Welcome to new staff

Alexandra Baldwin	Jon Lowther	Malcolm Brown	Ronald Bramley
Ashley Opie	Josie McKinnon	Malcolm Joyce	Sonia Galloway
Bradd Worrell	Julian Neale	Matthew Tansley	Stephen Gardner
Claire Harrison	Kalyan Khanal	Melissa Dowton	Tammy Peter
Coby Cunningham	Karen Apostol	Melissa Phillips	Toni Walton
Crystal-Lee Hardiman	Kylie Turnbull	Oswald Costello	Tracy Hunt
David Stretch	Lisa Clue	Peter Hamilton	
Erin McAlinden	Luke Last	Renae Colls	
Jessica Higgins	Luke McClelland	Robyn Vella	



*Council staff – Above left:
Executive directorate.*

*Above right: Community
Wellbeing directorate.*

*Right: Corporate
directorate.*

*Below: Operations
directorate.*



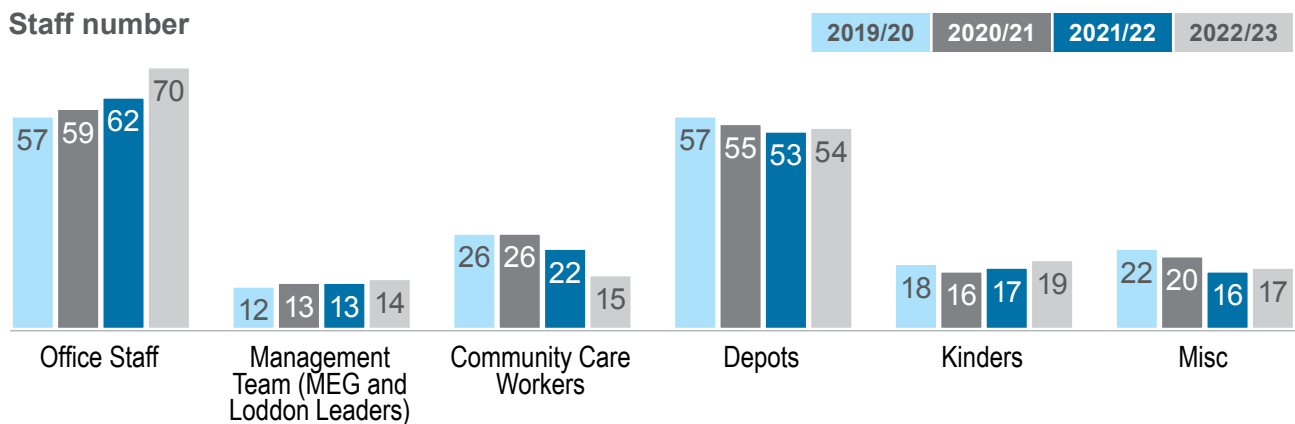
Staff analysis

Number

As at 30 June 2023, Council employed 189 staff in total, with an effective full-time equivalent staff of 141.70, an increase of six staff over the past 12 months. The increase is attributed to staff employed to assist with the recovery from the October 2022 flood event.

Most Council staff work from depots, in offices or as Community Care Workers.

Other Council worksites are pre-schools, recycling stations, school crossings and maternal and child health centres.



Status

Council employs 105 full-time, 58 part-time and 26 casual staff.

Gender

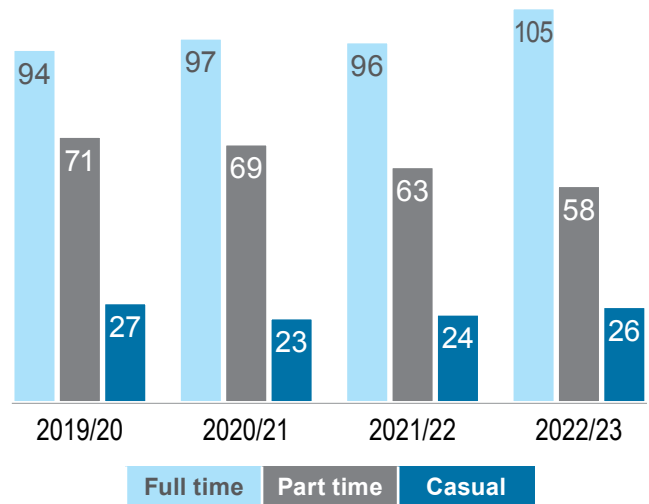
Of the 189 staff employed by Council, 51.85% are female and 48.15% are male, with zero per cent self-described.

There is a larger percentage of female staff working in areas such as community care, pre-school and administration areas.

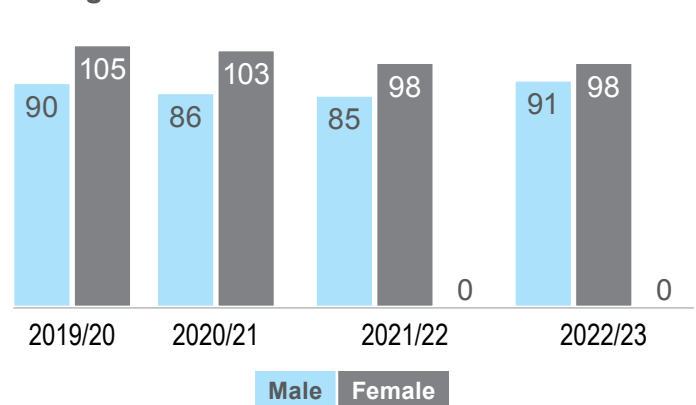
A larger percentage of male staff work within Council's five operational depots.

The management team has a slightly higher number of males than females (eight males compared with six females).

Staff status



Staff gender



Age

Council's age demographic continues to show a large proportion of staff over the age of 46.

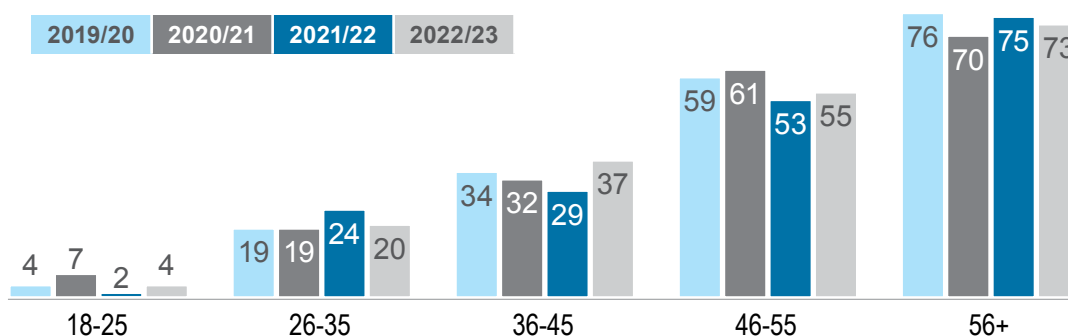
There has been considerable growth in the 34 to 45 age group, increasing by eight from the last financial year.

Council has seen growth in the 18 to 25 age group, increasing by two, however the 26 to 35 age group has decreased by four.

This data represents the challenges in workforce planning due to the high proportion of staff over the age of 46 and the slow increase of staff under the age of 35. There are some positive signs with the increase of staff in the 18 to 25 year age group.

Length of service

Staff age

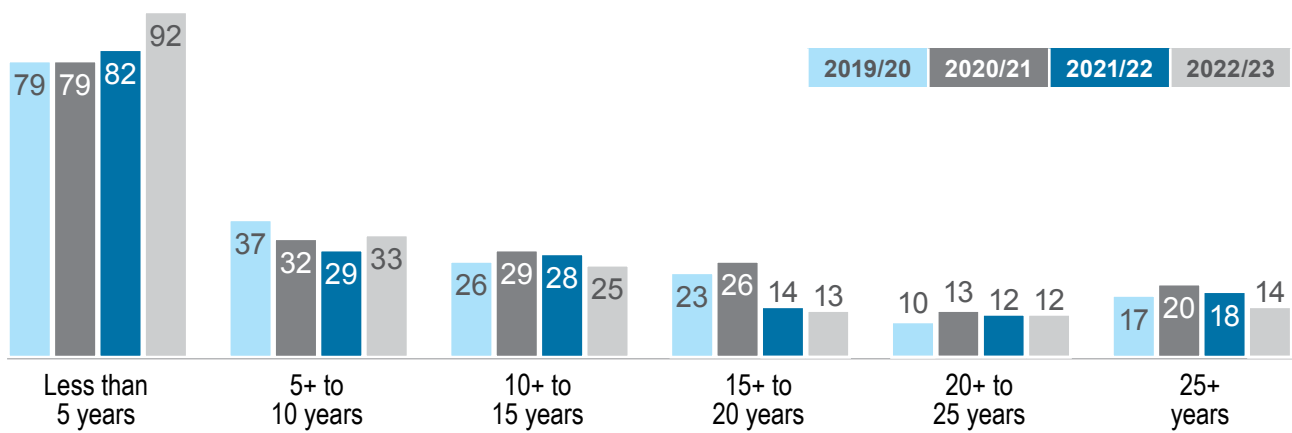




Staff member farewell at the Wedderburn Depot.

48.68% of staff have been employed by Council for less than five years, while 30.69% of staff have been employed for five to 15 years and 20.63% of staff have been employed for over 15 years.

Length of service



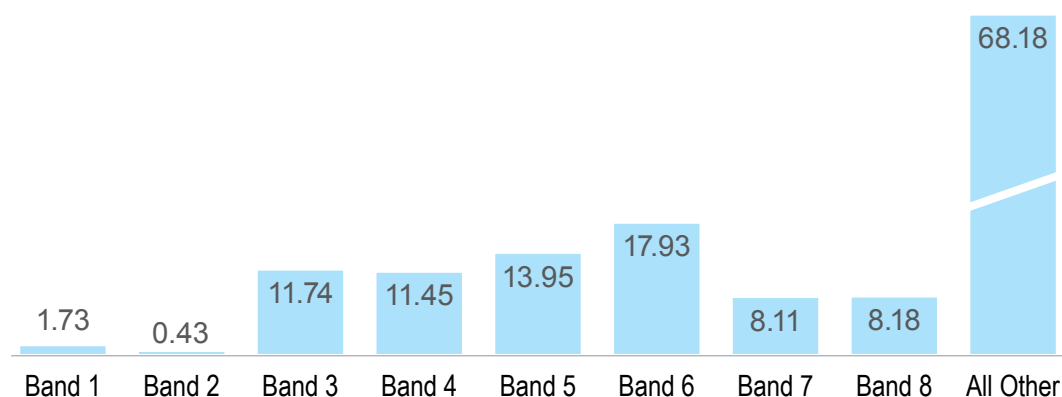
Council staff classification

Structure classification – employee type

A summary of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff categorised by employment classification and gender is set out below. Employment classifications are Band 1 to 8 as per the Victorian Local Government Award 2001. The column 'all other' includes the CEO, Directors, pre-school staff, nurses and staff who come under the 'outdoor staff' classification structure.

Structure Classification	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7	Band 8	All Other	Total
Permanent FT-F	0	0	0	5	4	5	3	3	0	20
Non-Permanent FT – F	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	3	8
Permanent FT – M	0	0	0	0	3	5	4	4	51	67
Non-Permanent FT-M	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	1	4	10
Permanent FT – X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Permanent PT – F	1.20		7.98	2.82	3.95	1.89	0.48	0	6.97	25.29
Non-Permanent PT – F	0	0	0	0.63	0	0.63	0	0	1.41	2.67
Permanent PT – M	0.42	0.41	1.61	0	0	0.73	0	0	0.90	4.07
Non-Permanent PT - M	0	0	0	0	0	0.68	0.63	0	0	1.31
Permanent PT - X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Casual - F	0.05	0	2.15	0	0	0	0	0.18	0.90	3.28
Casual – M	0.06	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.08
Casual - X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1.73	0.43	11.74	11.45	13.95	17.93	8.11	8.18	68.18	141.70

Structure classification – employee type

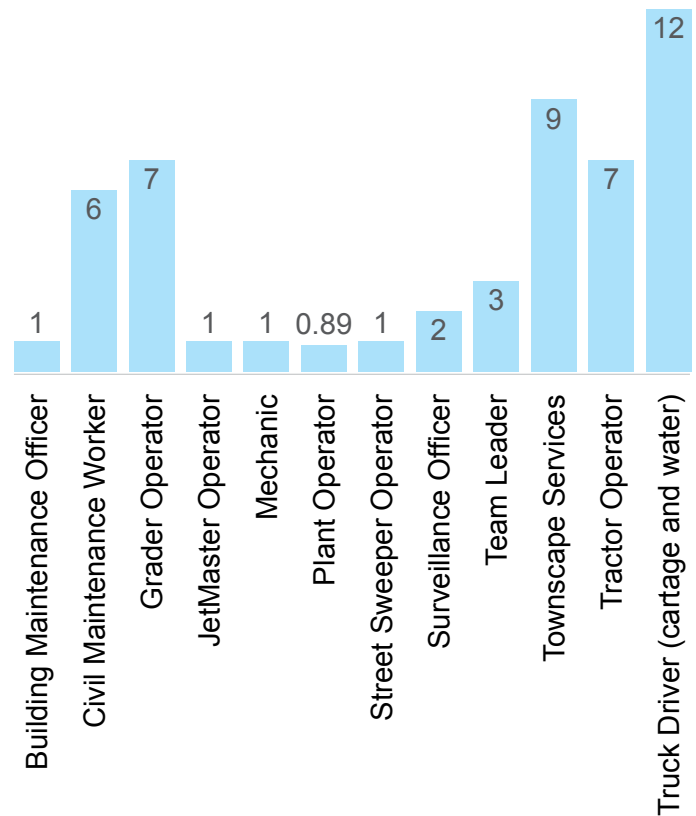


Outdoor staff – classification structure

A summary of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff categorised by the Loddon Shire outdoor staff employment classification structure and gender is set out below.

Position	Males	Females
Building Maintenance Officer	1	0
Civil Maintenance Worker	6	0
Grader Operator	7	0
JetMaster Operator	1	0
Mechanic	1	0
Plant Operator	0.89	0
Street Sweeper Operator	1	0
Surveillance Officer	2	0
Team Leader	3	0
Townscape Services	9	0
Tractor Operator	7	0
Truck Driver (Cartage and Water)	12	0
Total	50.89	0

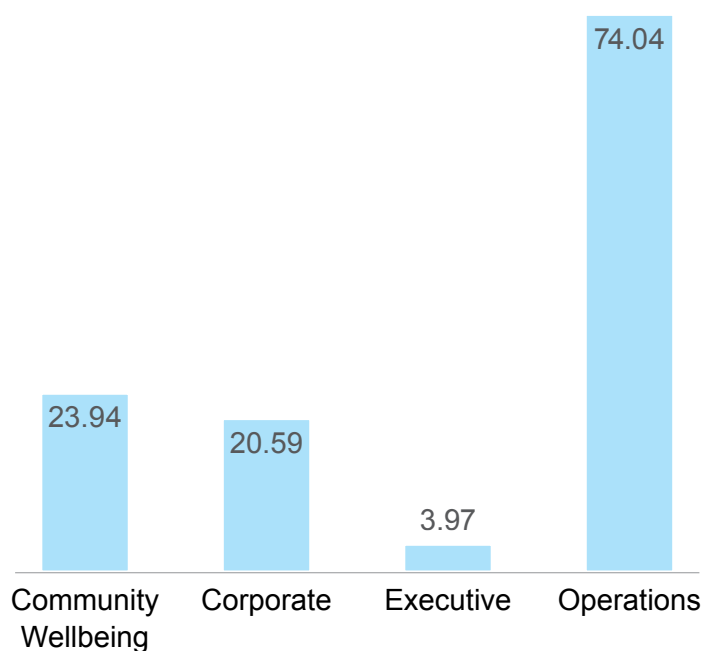
Outdoor staff – classification structure



Directorate – employee type/gender

A summary of the number of Council staff by organisational structure, employment type and gender is set out below.

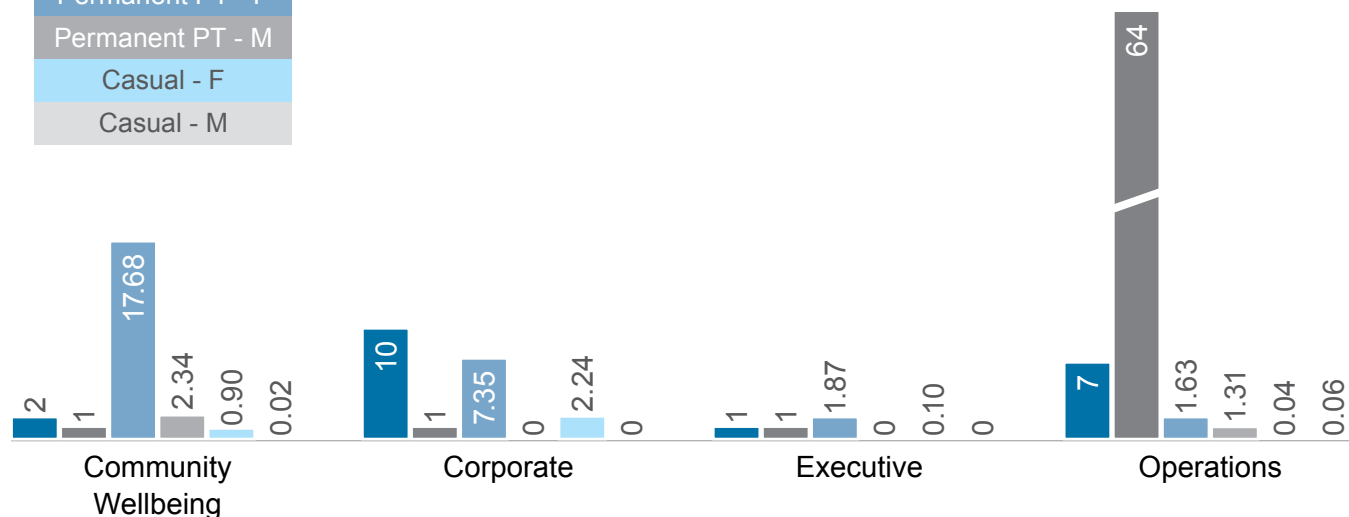
Directorate	FTE
Community Wellbeing	23.94
Corporate	20.59
Tourism and Economic Development	3.97
Operations	74.04



Employee Type and Gender	Community Wellbeing	Corporate	Tourism and Economic Development	Operations
Permanent FT- F	2	10	1	7
Permanent FT - M	1	1	1	64
Permanent PT - F	17.68	7.35	1.87	1.63
Permanent PT - M	2.34	0	0	1.31
Casual - F	0.90	2.24	0.10	0.04
Casual - M	0.02	0	0	0.06

Employee type and gender

Permanent FT - F
Permanent FT - M
Permanent PT - F
Permanent PT - M
Casual - F
Casual - M



Staff farewells

Over 50 years

Allan Jackson

Allan Jackson commenced with the Shire of Korong on 14 July 1973 as a Backhoe Operator. Following amalgamation in 1995, the Shire of Loddon was formed and Allan was appointed Team Leader of the road maintenance team on 27 May 1996.

A farewell celebration was held for Allan where he was acknowledged for 50 years of dedicated service to the Shire of Korong and then Loddon.



Allan Jackson provided 51 years of dedicated service to the Shire of Korong and Loddon Shire.

Over 40 years

Evelyn Morrison

Graeme Smith

Owen Bailey

Over 30 years

Denise Kosmatos

Michele Schmidt

Over 20 years

Julie Dean

Kerry Younghusband

Lorraine Fawcett

Peter Norman

Roslyn Stone

Over 10 years

Anja James

Irene Spencer

Kristy Simpson

Ross Conway

Tina Bone

Over 5 years

Catherine Lee

Daniel McNish

Dede-Jo Williams

Grant Jackson

Judith Knight

LaToya Schroeder

Leeanne Rollinson

Michael Thornton

Rodney Wilson

Sarah Todd



Owen Bailey, Evelyn Morrison and Graeme Smith retired after 40 years of service.



Staff recruitment and retention

Onboarding and induction

Council reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring a smooth induction process for new staff by introducing the Pulse induction system. This all-inclusive system allows all commencement and payroll documentation to be submitted electronically, as well as information about Council to be delivered in a modern and engaging way. Feedback has been positive with enhancements continuing to create greater efficiencies.

Further, Council's Organisation Development team run a biannual Corporate Induction day where new staff gather to learn more about how local government is structured, our Councillors, and to meet subject matter experts from all departments to better understand the wide range of services staff deliver for our community.

Staff Health and Wellbeing Program

Council is committed to looking after the health and wellbeing of all staff.

Council's Health and Wellbeing Committee provides the foundation at Council for developing activities and implementing initiatives that support the health and wellbeing of all employees.

These activities and initiatives include:

- workplace-specific programs to address lifestyle, health, fitness and safety issues
- proactively managing risk of illness
- encouraging and allowing staff to maintain a positive work life balance
- actively promoting exercise, healthy eating and a smoke-free environment to improve or maintain staff members' personal wellbeing
- providing targeted physical and mental health and wellbeing programs

- ensuring all staff have access to the Employee Assistance Program and regularly promoting its services
- providing relevant resources to staff pertaining to health and wellbeing via Council's dedicated intranet page.

Programs offered to all staff in 2022/23 included:

- Active April activities
- Flu vaccinations
- Healthy eating initiatives
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- MindFit at Work sessions
- Skin checks

Achievement Program

The Achievement Program is a Victorian Government initiative that aims to encourage healthier lifestyles and prevent lifestyle-related diseases. The program provides a framework for promoting health in the workplace. Council's Health and Wellbeing Committee organises regular activities for staff aligned with the goals of the program.

Employee Assistance Program

Council offers a free, confidential Employee Assistance Program for staff who are experiencing difficulties in their personal or professional lives.

Car pooling

Council has a car pooling program for staff travelling to the Wedderburn office.

Senior staff are rostered to drive their cars on specific days or in some instances staff are able to access a pool car to ride share. Staff meet at a central point and return to that point at the end of the day.

Enterprise Agreements

Council staff are employed under two Enterprise Agreements being:

- Loddon Shire Enterprise Agreement
- Early Education Employees Enterprise Agreement.





Loddon Shire Enterprise Agreement

An Enterprise Bargaining Committee was formed in August 2021 to negotiate a new Enterprise Agreement for Council employees. The new agreement was approved by the Fair Work Commission, and began operation from 5 September 2022. The nominal expiry date of this agreement is 30 June 2025.

Early Education Employees Enterprise Agreement

Council's early years staff are employed under the Early Education Employees Enterprise Agreement. This agreement is a multi-employer enterprise agreement.

The agreement is negotiated with the Australian Education Union by the Municipal Association of Victoria on behalf of the 22 councils involved.

In April 2021, the Early Education Employees Enterprise Agreement 2020 was approved by the Fair Work Commission and commenced operation from 28 April 2021. It has a nominal expiry date of 30 September 2024.

Communicating with staff

Staff newsletter

The staff newsletter is circulated periodically, featuring content inspired by both the organisation and its employees. It showcases stories, events, and milestones that encapsulate our experiences within the office and the broader community.

Five staff newsletters were circulated over the past 12 months.

Intranet

Council has an intranet site that is used to communicate information. All staff have access to Council's intranet.

All-staff meetings

All-staff meetings are held bi-annually and provide the opportunity to inform staff about current events, have presentations from external groups, provide training, recognise staff achievements (both personal and professional) and allow for staff to ask questions of the Management Executive Group.

Due to the October flood event, the October 2022 all staff meeting was cancelled. An all-staff meeting was held in March 2023 at the Serpentine Hall.

Staff years of service recognition

The Staff Recognition of Service Policy provides for staff to receive a Certificate of Service for each five years of service, with a Certificate of Service and badge at each 10-year increment.

Staff who had reached service periods of 10 and 20 years were presented with Certificates of Recognition and a Service Badge, and staff who had reached service periods of five, 15 and 25 years were presented with Certificates of Recognition.

These awards were presented to each staff member in November 2022 and March 2023.

The staff who received recognition for their service were:

50 year certificate and badge	20 year certificate and badge	15 year certificate	10 year certificate and badge	5 year certificate
Alan Jackson	Brian Gladman	Alison Dean	Carol Stephenson	Adam Cooper
	Denise Bridges	Bob Montebello	Fiona Turnbull	Ben Rose
	Lyn Don	Christine Coombes	Irene Spencer	Claire Leunig
		Heather Gale	Kristy Simpson	David Price
		Ron Kuno	Stacey Williamson	Melissa Downton
			Vicki Andrew	Olga Gontscharow
35 year certificate				
Darren Hunt				
30 year certificate and badge				
Travis Jackson				



Staff service awards Darren Hunt 35 years and Travis Jackson 30 years presented by Director Operations, Steven Phillips.

Other staff matters

Equal employment opportunity program

Council supports access and equity for all employees and recognises diversity as a valuable strength that will create benefits for employees and the community.

Council supports access and equity for all employees and recognises diversity as a valuable strength that will create benefits for employees and the community.

Council's Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy demonstrates that Council has zero tolerance to any unlawful discrimination both indirect and direct on the basis of attributes and areas listed under both State and Federal anti-discrimination legislation and the Fair Work Act 2009. Council regularly reviews its policies, procedures and practices to ensure equity and transparency for all staff.

Council regularly reviews its policies, procedures and practices to ensure equity and transparency for all staff.

Gender Equality Act 2020

The Gender Equality Act 2020 commenced on 31 March 2021 and requires defined entities such as Victorian councils to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality.

Requirements of the Act include:

- Develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan, which includes:
 - results of a workplace gender audit
 - strategies for achieving workplace gender equality
- Publicly report on progress in relation to gender equality via a Gender Equality Audit
- Promote gender equality in policies, programs and services that impact the public by completing gender impact assessments.

Council is required to submit a progress report to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector in February 2024.



Last day community care staff.

The progress report will include:

- the policies, programs and services that were subject to a gender impact assessment
- the actions taken as a result of each gender impact assessment
- progress in relation to the measures and strategies set out in our Gender Equality Action Plan
- progress in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators

Professional development

Staff training and development program

Council enables continuous learning and career growth in line with individual aspirations and Council's goals, and is committed to providing staff with access to development opportunities and training that is required for legislative purposes to keep qualifications current.

Every year, staff members identify job-related training and development they would like to undertake in the following year as part of their annual performance development review.

Council also offers study support to permanent staff with more than 12 months service.

During the year, Council staff undertook training courses in the following areas:

Managing risk

Dealing with Complex Behaviour

Fraud and Corruption

Health and Wellbeing

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid

Emergency First Aid Response in Education and Care Setting

Mental Health First Aid

MindFit

Loddon leadership and personal effectiveness

Birkman

Job-related training

Asset Edge Conference

Emergency Management training

FinPro Conferences

Fringe Benefits Tax Roadshow

Loddon Induction

Taxation and Payroll

Victorian Tourism Industry Council Summit

Visitor Information Services Summit (VTIC)

Australasian Management Challenge

A team of seven staff members named The Loddoneers travelled to Maroondah City Council to compete against 26 other teams and had 13 teams in direct competition including Stonnington, Melton, Boroondarra, Northern Grampians, Swan Hill, Darebin, Hepburn, Port Phillip, Merri-bek, Yarra Ranges, East Gippsland and South Gippsland.

The team was required to complete quite a number of challenges with competing deadlines including media releases, radio advert for waste management, community consultation plan, a performance review, consultation with a Minister's advisor, compilation of a number of reports and cost benefit and risk analysis, as well as a group presentation to conclude the day.

Scores from a pre-challenge task along with the weightings of each task are collated and the winners of the Victorian competition to go on to compete nationally.

Return to work information

Council actively supports injured workers to return to work by providing support such as:

- a dedicated Return to Work Coordinator
- regular contact and support
- collaboration in creating a return to work plan
- identifying alternative duties

Study support

Council has a staff study support program aimed at encouraging further study and reducing the financial burden of undertaking further study.

During the year, two employees had their application approved to undertake further study:

- Darcy Jackson – Bachelor Urban, Rural and Environmental Planning
- Paul Scullie – Bachelor of Business (majoring in Sports Management)



Staff member Darcy Jackson who has undertaken further studies.



Staff CPR training.

eLearning

Council partnered with Horsham Rural City Council, Gannawarra Shire Council and Central Goldfields Shire Council to purchase eLearning Compliance Modules. All staff are required to complete the following compliance modules:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Course
- Child Safe Standards
- Culture
- Disability Awareness
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Fraud and Corruption Awareness
- Gender Course
- Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Information Privacy
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Workplace Bullying and Harassment

Traineeships

Council supports staff who are prepared to undertake traineeships in their field.

The traineeship program was accessed during the year by Crystal Hardiman who commenced a Certificate II in business. Crystal has completed four modules and will complete the remaining modules during 2023.

During 2022/23 Council has been partnering with CVGT Employment with a vision to engage three trainees across various areas of Council in 2023/24.

Qualifications

The following staff graduated with qualifications during the year:

Catherine Lee – Certificate IV in Individual Care

Cheryl Fowler – Certificate IV in Individual Care

Genevieve Plozza – Diploma of Business

Joanne Rossiter – Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care

Council's support is provided in the form of time to attend required classes and in financial assistance for some of the cost of the course.

Work experience program

Council supports work experience programs and hosts students in Years 10, 11 and 12, and students undertaking tertiary studies.

During the year, Council hosted the following students:

- Crystal Hardiman
- Jubayer Arman
- Lauren Gawne
- Tyson Woodman

Tertiary student

Although Council did not host a tertiary student over the last 12 months, Council will continue to partner with universities for opportunities as they arise.

School-based apprenticeships and work placements

Over the years, Council has hosted many students under school-based apprenticeships. This program provides a learning environment in the workplace while students remain at school. During 2022/23 Council hosted Conrad Sugden who assisted our mechanics with vehicle and plant repairs.

Staff values workshop

In May 2023, workshops were held to allow staff to have their say on Council's current values and generate ideas to create a new set of values for staff. The workshops were delivered by the Human Resources Coordinator and utilised a 'bottom up' approach to allow for an inclusive and collaborative process. Feedback was then collated from each workshop, and sent out for consultation in the new financial year. Once consultation closes, one final workshop will be conducted to ensure the proposed values are clear and concise, before a final report is presented to the Management Executive Group for endorsement.

Volunteers

Council recognises that volunteers are the backbone behind its communities and in 2022 adopted the second Volunteer Strategy that captures Council's vision and approach to supporting and growing community volunteering across the Shire.

The Strategy includes four strategic directions:

- Promote and Recruit
- Quality and Culture
- Recognise, Celebrate and Value
- Support and Develop

The high-level strategic direction of this strategy allows for implementation to be achievable within existing resources.

In 2022/23 Council undertook the following initiatives in accordance with those strategic directions:

- collaborated with Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre for training opportunities
- continued to develop resources on a dedicated Council Volunteer web page
- ran a community focused 'Nominate a Volunteer Campaign'
- recognised and celebrated Council Volunteers during National Volunteer Week



Recognising the wonderful work of Loddon Shire volunteers during National Volunteer Week.

An aerial photograph showing a town with residential buildings, streets, and green spaces. A large body of water, possibly a lake or reservoir, is visible on the left side. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange shape at the top, which contains the text "Our performance".

Our performance

Integrated strategic planning and reporting framework

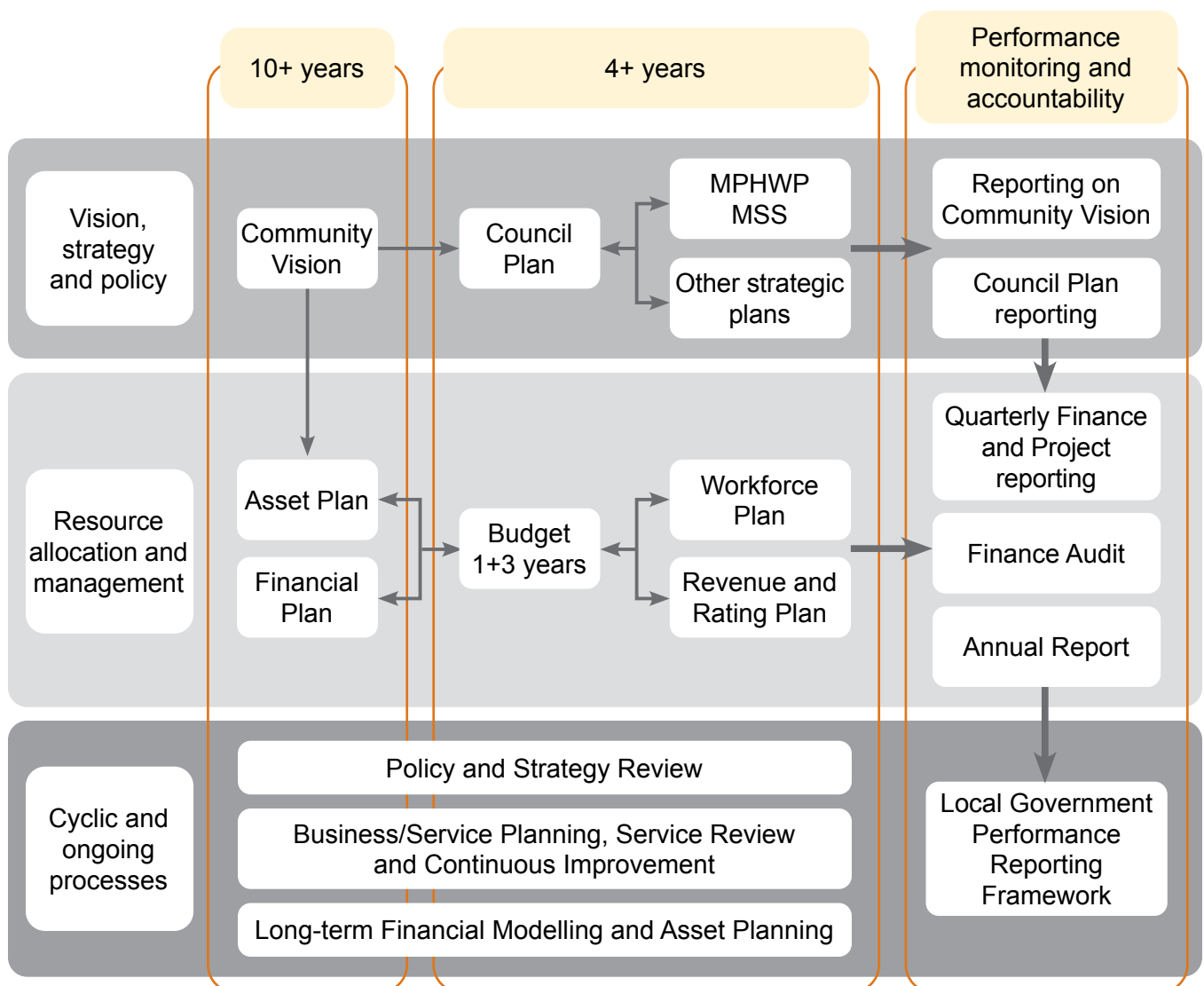
Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires councils to prepare the following:

- a Community Vision (for at least the next 10 financial years)
- a Council Plan (for at least the next four financial years)
- a Financial Plan (for at least the next 10 financial years)
- an Asset Plan (for at least the next 10 financial years)
- a Revenue and Rating Plan (for at least the next four financial years)
- an Annual Budget (for the next four financial years)

- a Quarterly Budget Report
- an Annual Report (for each financial year)
- financial Policies.

The Act also requires councils to prepare a Workforce Plan (including projected staffing requirements for at least four years).

The following diagram shows the relationships between the key planning and reporting documents that make up the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework for local government.



MPHWP Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan MSS Municipal Strategic Statement

Council Plan

The Council Plan 2021-2025 includes strategic objectives, strategies for achieving these objectives for the four-year period, strategic indicators for monitoring achievement of the strategic objectives and a Strategic Resource Plan.

The following are Council's five strategic themes, with their strategic objectives as listed in the Council Plan:

Council Plan 2021-2025



Performance against the Council Plan 2021-2025

Council's performance for the 2022/23 has been reported against each strategic objective to demonstrate how Council is performing in achieving the Council Plan 2021-2025. Performance has been measured as follows:

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

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



Pyramid Hill. Photo: Blake Slatter






Caption



Performance against the Council Plan 2021-2025

A sustainable built and natural environment

Finalise asset management plans and long term strategies for Council assets

Comments	Status
Review and implement the Building Asset Management Plan	
The Asset Management Plan has been completed and was adopted at the March 2022 Council meeting	 Completed
Review and Implement the Road Asset Management Plan	
The Asset Management Plan for roads has been completed and adopted at the March 2022 Council meeting. Council is operating in accordance with the new plan, the improvement projects in the plan will be delivered as resources permit.	 Ongoing
Review and Implement the Bridges Asset Management Plan	
The Asset Management Plan for bridges was completed and adopted at the February 2022 Council meeting. Council is operating in accordance with the new plan, the improvement projects in the plan will be delivered as resources permit.	 Ongoing
Review and Implement the Footpaths Asset Management Plan	
The Asset Management Plan for footpaths was completed and adopted at the November 2021 Council meeting. Council is operating in accordance with the new plan, the improvement projects in the plan will be delivered as per the schedule.	 Ongoing
Develop and Implement the Tracks and Trails Asset Management Plan	
Development of the Asset Management Plan for tracks and trails has been delayed due to re-prioritising resources to the flood recovery.	 Not started











Finalise asset management plans and long term strategies for Council assets (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Develop and Implement an Urban Drainage Asset Management Plan</p> <p>The Asset Management Plan for urban drainage was completed and adopted at the February 2022 Council meeting. Council is operating in accordance with the new plan, the improvement projects in the plan will be delivered as resources permit.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Develop and Implement a Recreational Leisure and Community Facilities Asset Management Plan</p> <p>The Asset Management Plan for recreational leisure and community facilities was completed and adopted at the January 2022 Council meeting. Council is operating in accordance with the new plan, the improvement projects in the plan will be delivered as resources permit.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Review and Implement the Parks, Open Space and Streetscapes Asset Management Plan</p> <p>The Asset Management Plan for parks, streetscape and open spaces was completed and adopted at the January 2022 Council meeting. Council is operating in accordance with the new plan, the improvement projects in the plan will be delivered as resources permit.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Develop and Implement an Asset Plan that has been informed by the completed asset management plans</p> <p>The Asset Plan was completed and adopted at the June 2022 Council meeting. Council is operating in accordance with the new plan, the improvement projects in the plan will be delivered as resources permit.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Develop and Implement a Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy</p> <p>The Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic strategy project brief has been developed and endorsed by Sport and Recreation Victoria, with procurement to commence in July 2023. The expected completion date will be early-mid 2024.</p>	 Progressing
<h3>Embed long term planning into project management framework</h3>	
<p>Develop and Implement a register which documents all projects from concept through to delivery and post project evaluation to provide information about timing of projects that can be incorporated into grant applications and the Financial Plan</p> <p>This project has commenced with a template developed to capture all income sources for a project, expected timing of progress reports along with expected delivery timeframes.</p> <p>This will be reviewed by key stakeholders to ensure it provides value and aligns with the Project Management Framework before being implemented.</p>	 Not due to start
<p>Review and Implement Project Management Framework to embed project register model including assessment matrices used to identify priority projects.</p> <p>This is progressing with the Project Management Framework and assessment matrices to be finalised in 2023/24.</p>	 Progressing
<p>Incorporate assessment of alternative energy and innovative design in planning for, or repurposing, Council facilities and infrastructure</p> <p>Planned for 2024/25.</p>	 Not started








Embed long term planning into project management framework (cont.)

Comments	Status
Provide resources for the development and delivery of projects through the Project Management Framework	
This is progressing with adequate resources provided to allow the Project Management Framework to be finalised in 2023/24. Council has recruited an additional project manager to develop and deliver projects through the Project Management Framework.	 Progressing
Work with communities to understand their strategic projects for consideration in long term planning	
Through the development of the 17 Community Planning plans, projects have been identified by the relevant committees and labelled with a degree of priority for each. Ongoing consultation with the community planning committees and relevant community organisations, identifies area for improvement in their respective communities.	 Ongoing
Complete funded major infrastructure projects in the planning phase	
Construct Pyramid Hill Community Centre Stage 1	
Concept and final tender issue plans for the Pyramid Hill Community Centre are complete. Project to continue in 2023/24.	 Progressing
Construct Donaldson Park Community Hub	
Construction in progress. It is anticipated the pavilion works will be complete in October 2023. Landscaping works will commence after this.	 Progressing
Deliver Pyramid Hill Streetscape Revitalisation Project	
Project is currently in the project delivery/construction phase and is progressing.	 Progressing
Deliver the Lake Boort Sporting Precinct Project	
Project is in the planning stage.	 Ongoing
Ensure Council assets are accessible	
Review and Implement actions in Access and Inclusion Plan	
Council officers have completed most of the actions in the Access and Inclusion Plan through the delivery of a workshop for staff on how to write in plain and easy English, staff induction and ongoing training module to be completed by staff every two years on disability awareness, partnered with CVGT to employ a trainee through the Champions of Change program, undertaken gender equality action plans and the utilisation of the Design for Everyone Guide for the planning, design and development of inclusive sport, recreation and community facilities.	 Progressing
Ensure new infrastructure projects consider opportunities to improve accessibility and convenience for all ages, abilities and stages of life	
All new infrastructure projects are developed with the assistance of the 'Design for Everyone Guide' which assists in the planning, design and development of inclusive sport and recreation facilities.	 Ongoing



Ensure community facility use is maximised









Comments	Status
<p>Work with community facility managers to identify new ways of expanding use of their facilities such as co-location opportunities</p>	
<p>Facility user groups will be involved in the consultation to inform the development of the Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy (ROSA) in 2023/24. This strategy will inform Council as to potential opportunities for co-locations and maximising the usage of relevant facilities.</p>	 Progressing
<p>Undertake an audit of current master plans for all community facilities to identify any gaps</p>	
<p>Council officers have reviewed the master plan requirements, identifying that Mitchell Park (Pyramid Hill), Mitiamo Recreation Reserve and Calivil Recreation Reserve require master plans as priorities.</p>	 Completed
<p>Prepare business cases to develop master plans for community facilities without a plan</p>	
<p>A budget bid was submitted as part of the 2023/24 Council budget process to develop a current masterplan at Mitchell Park (Pyramid Hill), Mitiamo Recreation Reserve and Calivil Recreation Reserve. Council officers will continue to seek funding opportunities to support the development of these plans.</p>	 Completed
<p>Implement master plans developed for various community facilities</p>	
<p>The Inglewood Sports Centre masterplan brief has been completed, and will be ready to commence procurement to engage a consultant in July 2023. The development of masterplans for the remaining eligible major recreation reserves and identified open spaces will be an ongoing process from 2024/25 onwards, following on from the development of the Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Partner with Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance to support the community to take advantage of opportunities around renewable energy</p>	
<p>Council continues to collaborate with the CVGA to support the community to take advantage of opportunities around renewable energy.</p>	 Ongoing



Loddon Plains Landcare Network event - Women by the Water Living and learning through connection to nature. The event was one of many sponsored by Loddon Shire Council in 2022/23.



Participate with regional groups to implement environmental priorities




Comments	Status
Implement the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan items related to mitigating the impacts of climate change on health and wellbeing	
Council administers the Vulnerable Persons Register. Shade options reviewed through delivery of Pyramid Hill Streetscape. Solar power options provided for Donaldson Park Hub redevelopment. Provision of a range of community capacity building initiatives delivered to support communities to manage and support each other during and after emergency events, for example Community dinner with psychologist Rob Gordon, providing tips on how best to look after yourself and support others after an emergency event. Secured funding to deliver the Community Recovery Officer and Community Recover Hub programs following the October 2022 flood event. Implementation of the Municipal Flood Recovery Committee and the Flood Recovery Health and Wellbeing Committee.	 Ongoing
Participate with regional groups to maximise opportunities to support biodiversity and habitat	
Partner with North Central Catchment Management Authority to implement the priorities in the North Central Catchment Partnership Agreement to protect and improve land, water and biodiversity	
Attend and participate in partnership meetings. Currently working with North Central Catchment Management Authority on a flood study in Korong Vale.	 Ongoing
Participate in the Integrated Water Management Forum for the region	
Attend forum meetings as required.	 Ongoing
Advocate for funding for weed management programs to support the natural environment	
Council staff continue to work with Department of Government Services (DGS) to deliver the Roadside Weeds and Pests Program (RWPP) and will continue to seek support for funding.	 Ongoing
Deliver effective waste management	
Deliver actions in Council's Waste Management Strategy 2020-2030	
Council staff continue to deliver actions from Council's Waste Management Strategy 2020-2030 including the continuation of waste vouchers, hard waste collection, and the development of landfill masterplans	 Ongoing
Actively participate in the regional waste and recycling management group	
Council staff continue to participate in regional group workshops and meetings.	 Ongoing
Investigate and implement where practical, the use of recycled or reclaimed products for Council's operations	
When practical Council continues to purchase and install recycled and reclaimed products throughout the Shire	 Ongoing
Promote the three R's – "Reuse, Reduce, Recycle" to the community	
Council staff continue to work with Recycling Victoria who provides leadership and oversight of waste and resource recovery services to support the circular economy.	 Ongoing






National Historical Machinery Tractor Trek. Photo: Wedderburn Historical Engine and Machinery Society.



Prepare for adverse weather events

Comments	Status
Advocate for funding for the continuation of the Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program (MERP)	
Advocacy for the continuation of the Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program (MERP) funding is included in Council's 2022 Priorities document and advocacy occurs as opportunities arise.	 Ongoing
Participate in the Northern Victorian Integrated Emergency Management Planning Committee	
Director Community Wellbeing and Emergency Management Coordinator attend the Northern Victorian Integrated Emergency Management Planning Committee (NVIEMPC) meetings and undertake associated strategic and operational tasks, including review of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and submission for assurance process and review of the Municipal Pandemic Plan.	 Ongoing
Develop a process for capturing infrastructure information to facilitate applications for grant funding from National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements	
Council secured funding through the Rural Roads Support Package funding stream to undertake a trial of photographing the road network. This trial is expected to be completed by December 2023. The outcome of this trial will be used to develop the process.	 Progressing

Implement infrastructure to protect towns

Complete delivery of flood mitigation works in Boort	
Design complete, construction yet to commence.	 Progressing
Complete delivery of flood mitigation works in Pyramid Hill	
Design complete, construction yet to commence.	 Progressing
Source funding to deliver flood mitigation works in Serpentine	
The sourcing of funding for flood mitigation works in Serpentine has not commenced.	 Not started



A sustainable built and natural environment

Services:

These Council services have directly contributed to being able to meet the following Council Plan objectives:

- We will implement financially and environmentally sustainable infrastructure that supports our social and economic needs
- We will work with our partners to preserve and protect our local environment. We will support our community to respond to the impacts of climate change.

Service	Description
Building surveyor services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: building permit and occupancy approvals and administering the Building Act.
Community planning	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: support in building Loddon communities through facilitation, logistical and financial means to improve the aesthetic of communities and develop key community assets, supporting communities to identify their strengths and opportunities, and facilitating novel approaches and solutions to local issues.
Infrastructure management	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: long-term asset management planning for roads, buildings, recreational facilities, pools, parks, waste facilities and bridges, development and delivery of annual infrastructure projects and programs, contract administration, survey and design and digital mapping.
Town planning services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: planning permit and subdivision approvals, planning scheme compliance and enforcement, changes to the planning scheme and protection of significant heritage, cultural and environmental assets within the Shire.






Flood cleanup at Loddon River in Bridgewater.




Performance against the Council Plan 2021-2025

A growing and vibrant community

Pursue development opportunities



Comments	Status
Implement remaining actions in Settlement Strategy	
Unlocking Loddon’s Growth Potential project, led by Loddon Shire’s Strategic Planning department, will report on residential development viability across key towns, identify the most viable opportunities, prioritise projects to enhance viability and determine other initiatives to encourage availability of this land.	 Progressing
Work with the community to lobby government to provide reticulated sewerage and water for Newbridge	
Advocating for water and sewerage is ongoing as opportunities arise, including discussions with local Members of Parliament and inclusion in the Loddon 2022 Priorities document.	 Ongoing
Undertake detailed assessment and costing of Wedderburn Housing Estate Stage 2	
A detailed assessment and costing of Wedderburn Ridge Street Stage 2 has been completed.	 Completed

Promote our Shire as a great place to live



In conjunction with regional partners, investigate opportunities to increase residential housing stock	
Draft Land and Building Development Policy was presented to Council at the February 2023 Council Forum. Streamlining for Growth project, developed by consultant Villawood Properties in 2023, will inform future actions to provide suitable land for housing and residential development.	 Ongoing




Promote our Shire as a great place to live (cont.)

Comments	Status
As opportunities arise, work with local partners, including employers and real estate, to develop a coordinated approach to marketing the municipality for new residents	
Officers have met with local and Bendigo-based real estate agents to discuss local and regional trends in commercial and residential property markets. Officers have met with Regional Development Victoria (RDV) to discuss the promotion and content of the Invest Loddon Mallee Website.	 Ongoing
Deliver marketing campaigns and media content that attract new residents and clearly positions Loddon Shire as a great place to live and work	
Officers have updated content on Loddon Shire Council Website and introduced marketing campaigns that highlight amenity and liveability of Loddon Shire. Regular content to digital and physical channels is provided.	 Ongoing

Support Community Asset Committees


Allocate a Council resource as the key contact for Community Asset Committees	
Manager Governance and Administration Officer Governance are available to assist and support community asset committee volunteers.	 Completed
Implement a governance framework for Community Asset Committees that is manageable for our volunteers	
A framework has been drafted and will be further progressed alongside reviews of CEO sub-delegations to members of Community Asset Committees during 2023/24 to ensure documents are fit for purpose and consistent.	 Progressing
Provide support documentation to the Community Asset Committees to help them understand their responsibilities to Council	
The Governance Framework for Community Asset Committees will include any responsibilities not already documented in CEO sub-delegations to members of Community Asset Committees, and link to existing support documents including templates.	 Progressing

Support volunteers

Deliver the Re-Engaging Volunteers in Rural Towns Projects	
The Re-engaging Volunteers in Rural Towns Project commenced in December 2021 and aimed to support the community to maintain high levels of volunteerism which are critical to achieving Councils vision and strategic objectives.	 Completed
An external consultant was engaged to deliver the project activities which included:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of a community based Volunteer Strategy • re-engaging volunteers post COVID • development activities with a particular focus on governance roles • a focus on youth and how to attract and retain this cohort of volunteers 	
A Volunteer Strategy 2022-2026 was completed and approved by Council in June 2022. It has four key strategic directions drawn from the community consultation, evidence, best practice and the national standards for volunteering.	
The Re-engaging Volunteers in Rural Towns Project was completed and acquitted in July 2022 with the final completion report submitted to RDV on 12 July 2022.	



Support volunteers (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Facilitate an event to celebrate our volunteers annually during National Volunteer Week</p> <p>Council hosted a lunch and presented certificates of appreciation to Community Asset Committee, Visitor Information Centre and Meals on Wheels volunteers at the Serpentine Recreation Reserve during National Volunteers Week in May 2023.</p> <p>Council ran a community focused 'Recognise a Volunteer' campaign during National Volunteer Week in May 2023.</p> <p>Council continues to identify opportunities in the volunteer area to promote and recruit, support and develop, recognise, celebrate and value, and partner and collaborate which are the key strategic directions in the Volunteer Strategy.</p>	 Completed

Support community groups

<p>Provide in kind and financial support to community planning groups</p> <p>On top of the financial support, Council provides in-kind support to community groups, as part of the Community Support Policy, by providing the following:</p> <p>Sport and recreation project management, road closures for events, support for waterway events, tourism and event promotions, Australia Day events, ANZAC commemorations, waste management support, reduction of food premises registration fees, Loddon Shire business and community directories, support for Section 65 Community Asset Committees and support for our staff who volunteer.</p>	 Ongoing
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Cr Linda Jungwirth celebrating Australia Day with Sue Horsely, recipient of the Tarnagulla Service Award.



Citizenship ceremony July 2022.









Support community groups (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Provide financial support to community groups through our policies and programs</p> <p>Throughout 2022/23, Council has provided the following financial support to community groups, through the Community Support Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Grants Program - \$147,860 - Public halls and recreation reserves allocation - \$118,828 - Event Promotion Scheme - \$24,400 - Major active recreation reserves water subsidy - \$8,980 - Community newsletter allocation - \$17,500 - Major recreation reserve oval mower replacement program - \$31,299 - Development, progress, tourism, and community plan committee administration allocation - \$17,750 <p>Council also provides support through the following as of right allocations - recreation waterway maintenance allocation, scholarships, LEAD Loddon Murray leadership program, sponsorship and donations and Australia Day events. Council also provides interest-free loans and sport and recreation co-contribution grants.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">  Ongoing </p>
<p>Promote community safety</p> <p>Work with Victoria Police to identify ways to promote community safety</p> <p>Council is a member of the Loddon Local Safety Committee facilitated by Victoria Police. The Loddon Local Safety Committee is made up of of key community groups and agencies from across the shire that meet regularly with Victoria Police to provide information that will assist them in understanding and acting on community safety issues within the Loddon community.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">  Ongoing </p>
<p>Review the Child Safe Standards Framework</p> <p>The framework and policy were reviewed to align with the 2022 standards. Council adopted the renewed framework and the policy at the June 2022 Council meeting. A working group has been established to implement the framework.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">  Completed </p>







Promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all

Comments	Status
<p>Promote reconciliation through respect, relationship building and promotion of opportunities with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the review and implementation of the Community Aboriginal Partnership Plan</p>	
<p>The review of the Community Aboriginal Partnership Plan has been delayed. Council continues to deliver components of the plan, such as the flying of the aboriginal flag during Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week and providing funding for community groups to host a Welcome to Country at a Loddon event.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Participate with the Loddon Campaspe Local Government Regional Settlement Network which provides a strategic platform to ensure migrants are supported within, attracted to and retained in the region</p>	
<p>Attendance at meetings and participation in the group continues.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Promote local events on social media and other media to ensure all members of the community are informed and have the opportunity to connect</p>	
<p>Council is proactive in promoting local events on the Loddon Shire website, social media, in media releases and via the Visit Loddon Valley Facebook pages.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Deliver official Citizenship Ceremonies to welcome and celebrate new Australian citizens in our community</p>	
<p>Five citizenship ceremonies were conducted during the year, granting citizenship to a total of 17 people</p>	 Completed
<p>Improve local learning and employment pathway opportunities through strategic partnerships</p>	
<p>Partner with schools to promote the work experience program</p>	
<p>In 2022/23 six work experience students were engaged at Council, in a variety of parks gardens, mechanic, preschools and administration roles. One student is considering an environmental health career after their work experience. The students were from East Loddon and Wedderburn College.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Council will connect with other schools to provide the same opportunities. Consideration is being given to a cluster being formed across local schools and Bendigo to identify work experience opportunities.</p>	
<p>Council continues to offer placement opportunities for work experience students</p>	
<p>Partner with and support organisations to provide employment opportunities for young people in the Shire</p>	
<p>An allocation has been included in the 2023/24 Council budget for three traineeships across each directorate of Council. Council is partnering with Central Victoria Group Training (CVGT) to recruit to these positions which are due to commence in the first quarter of 2023/24. In May the Manager Organisation Development attended the CVGT information session for businesses held at the Wedderburn College to find out what incentives are available to employers taking on a new Apprentice or Trainee. Collaboration with North Central LLEN is continuing to explore the possibility of supporting young people who are not in school, or who are in school and might like to participate in an activity outside of school hours (or possibly after they finish school in November). This initiative is part of the 'Youth Take Over' project. Current trainee in workplace skills continues to progress.</p>	 Ongoing



Improve local learning and employment pathway opportunities through strategic partnerships (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Support young people to join our workforce by providing programs in our Workforce Strategy</p> <p>An allocation has been included in the 2023/24 Council budget for three traineeships across each directorate of Council. Council is partnering with Central Victoria Group Training (CVGT) to recruit to these positions which are due to commence in the first quarter of 2023/24. Collaboration with North Central LLEN is continuing to explore the possibility of supporting young people who are not in school, or who are in school and might like to participate in an activity outside of school hours (or possibly after they finish school in November). This initiative is part of the ‘Youth Take Over’ project Current trainee in workplace skills continues to progress.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Maintain Councillor representation on the North Central Local Learning & Employment Network board to support pathways for employment opportunities and skill investment of our young people</p> <p>Collaboration with North Central LLEN is continuing to explore the possibility of supporting young people who are not in school, or who are in school and might like to participate in an activity outside of school hours (or possibly after they finish school in November). This initiative is part of the ‘Youth Take Over’ project.</p> <p>Mayor Dan Straub is the Council Representative and Chairman of the North Central LLEN board, his involvement includes Finance and Risk Committee member and L2P Program mentor.</p>	 <p>Progressing</p>
<p>Develop connections for our young people</p>	
<p>Finalise the Strong Youth Strong Communities Program model</p> <p>The Strong Youth Strong Communities Program model has been completed. The municipalities involved are working with North Central LLEN and other partners to progress implementation of the model.</p>	 <p>Completed</p>
<p>Work with other youth funded agencies to provide youth services and programs in the Shire</p> <p>Council works closely with local youth funded agencies including Northern District Community Health and the North Central LLEN through partnerships such as Strong Youth Strong Communities, the Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing Executive Network. Council provides inkind support through use of office space/ meeting rooms and promotes events being undertaken by youth agencies.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>



Boort District P-12 students launch Boort Adventure Bingo.



A growing and vibrant community

Services:

These Council services have directly contributed to being able to meet the following Council Plan objectives:

- We will promote population growth to support a growing and diverse community
- We will support a connected and inclusive community that provides opportunities for current and new community members at all ages, abilities, and stages of their life
- We will support our youth to access pathways for education and employment and the ability to connect to their community.

Service	Description
Community grants scheme	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: administration of various community grants.
Environmental health services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: septic tank and waste water management approvals, food safety inspections and certification, monitoring of tobacco and alcohol sales, compliance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Act and Environment Protection Act and their enforcement.
Library service	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: in collaboration with Goldfields Library Corporation, providing a wide range of relevant, contemporary library collections and services in library agencies and online, providing community spaces for individual and group study, reflection, activity and discovery, providing family, children and adult library programs and activities.
Local Laws services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: stock and domestic animal management permits, management of unsightly premises, roadside bushfire management works and local laws enforcement and compliance.
Loddon Healthy Minds Network	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: involvement in meetings and activities designed to boost mental health awareness and personal support for residents of Loddon Shire.
Recreation services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: financial and administrative support to sporting clubs, management of Council's swimming pools, applications for government grants and assistance with long-term strategies for recreation facilities.
Youth support services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: financial support for youth-related initiatives and long-term planning for youth development and retention.



Yung Balung Museum curator, Paul Haw, showing visitors some of the collection on display.



Performance against the Council Plan 2021-2025






A diverse and expanding economy

Leverage tourism opportunities

Comments	Status
Undertake a review of visitor information services and implement any recommendation from the review	
Partnered with tourism consultant Urban Enterprise to undertake a Visitor Servicing Review. The review examines the current visitor services provided by Council and explores the opportunities for Council to provide improved visitor services. Report will be tabled at August 2023 Council Forum and findings and recommendations considered for action.	 Progressing
Support local businesses, events and activities that contribute to the tourism economy	
Management and delivery of seasonal promotional campaigns. Management of Visit Loddon Valley website and social media channels. Planning for re-establishment of Business Networking Events. Attendance at tourism, progress and community committees across the Shire. Monitor Customer Relationship Management System (CRMS), newsletter templates developed and business database cleaned and re-segmented. Council have provided support for new (and redeveloped) events.	 Ongoing
Support Loddon communities in their efforts to facilitate tourism activities in their areas	
Continue to support local community tourism committees, events and activity. Have engaged with towns and communities across the Shire to develop coordination and consistency in messaging, promotion and Presentation of tourism product and activity.	 Ongoing



Leverage tourism opportunities (cont.)

Comments	Status
Promote and support tourism products and experiences for Loddon, including cultural, food and nature tourism	
Council's Tourism Team supports industry, business, community and visitors as it develops product and campaigns in Loddon Shire.	 Ongoing
Participate in the Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid	
Council's involvement with the World Heritage bid project team is ongoing, including participation in workshops and seminars, provision of relevant local information as input to the project, and connecting local historians with the project team.	 Ongoing
Enhance Loddon's visitor accommodation through well-managed, well-appointed and competitive caravan parks	
Implement upgrades to Boort, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn Caravan Parks	
Works at Pyramid Hill and Boort are complete. Installation of cabins and office at Wedderburn will be complete September 2023.	 Progressing
Complete purchase of Bridgewater and Wedderburn caravan parks from the Crown	
Completed August 2021.	 Completed
Implement leasing arrangements for Bridgewater and Wedderburn caravan parks	
Preparation of leases and procurement for Bridgewater and Wedderburn caravan parks was completed in June 2023. Agreements have been signed and a new lessee commences under contract from July 1, 2023.	 Completed



Visitor Information Centre volunteers tour of Inglewood Eucalyptus Museum.



Enhance Loddon’s visitor accommodation through well-managed, well-appointed and competitive caravan parks (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Deliver ongoing supervision, support and maintenance or operations at Council’s caravan parks</p> <p>Council officers continue to support and assist caravan operators. Officers provided additional support in October, November and December 2022, to repair and make safe caravan park facilities for re-opening, after major flood-related damage had occurred.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Implement strategic plans related to tourism activities

<p>Develop Boort Scarred Trees Master Plan and pursue opportunities for responsible parties to implement recommendations</p> <p>Monitoring for funding opportunities and seeking guidance/input from Parks Victoria and Dja Dja Wurrung.</p>	<p>Progressing</p>
<p>Pursue opportunities to implement recommendations from Skinners Flat Reservoir Master Plan</p> <p>Plans for implementation of master plan recommendations are on hold while plans for infrastructure works at Skinners Flat Reservoir are explored.</p>	<p>Progressing</p>

Leverage partnership opportunities to promote and support the local economy







<p>Collaborate with regional economic development and tourism development organisations to capitalise on broader opportunities</p> <p>Have contributed to partnership initiatives with Regional Development Victoria, Bendigo Regional Tourism and the Central Victorian Visitor Economy Partnership Working Group.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>In recognition of economic reliance on agriculture, advocate for water security (Murray Darling Basin Authority environmental water, potable water for townships) and right to farm</p> <p>Mayor and CEO contribution and advocacy at Murray River Group of Councils meetings.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Maximise opportunities for economic growth

<p>Implement the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2019 – 2024 and develop a new strategy for beyond 2024.</p> <p>Preparations for the development of a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy have commenced. Officers are formulating engagement approaches and framework options.</p>	<p>Progressing</p>
<p>Develop and implement an Industrial Land Strategy</p> <p>Industrial Land Strategy discussion paper was tabled at Council Forum (June 2023). The intention is that following discussion with Council, community consultation can occur through July and August 2023 based on the discussion paper with a view of providing a draft strategy to Council in October 2023.</p>	<p>Progressing</p>
<p>Manage sale, purchase and leasing of Council’s vacant land, residential and industrial property</p> <p>Ongoing, as opportunities arise.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



Maximise opportunities for economic growth (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Support initiatives to improve employment opportunities for Loddon residents and employers</p> <p>Businesses looking to expand or start up are supported by officers via a concierge process to assist with implementing initiatives. Marketing prospectus details through Invest Loddon Mallee is a platform developed with Regional Development Victoria to promote opportunities for investment.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Facilitate emerging niche food and beverages businesses into an integrated artisan food network</p> <p>Continue to leverage the Bendigo City and Region of Gastronomy delegation. We have connected with and supported food and beverage producers and purveyors, as well as developing and promoting experiences and itineraries.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Continue to support the management of The Loddon Shed and promotion of this initiative</p> <p>Have conducted meetings with the contractor to ensure service and fulfilment obligations. Have continued to support and promote the Loddon Shed and its offering of local products.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>
<h3>Promote better mobile and digital connectivity</h3>	
<p>Work with regional partners to advocate for faster and more stable mobile and digital connectivity across the region</p> <p>Collaborating with Telstra on the development of a Community Connectivity Plan, to identify key threats and opportunities in digital connectivity as an economic and community enabler. (Draft plan ready August 2023).</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>
<h3>Provide support to current and future local businesses</h3>	
<p>Deliver information, programs, workshops and training that support our local business capacity and capability</p> <p>Have “cleaned” and updated Monitor CRMS database to allow efficient and regular newsletter communications with business and community stakeholders. Planned for the reignition of regular business networking events - the first planned for July 2023. Partnered with Startup Central Victoria to support accelerator and mentor programs for local entrepreneurs.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Provide supportive services for new, existing and expanding businesses, including staff “facilitators” for investors, partnering with businesses as opportunities arise, and investigating business support packages for businesses</p> <p>Continue to partner with StartUp Central Victoria, Be.Bendigo, Birchip Cropping Group, Regional Development Victoria and Community Progress and Development Committees to support business in every sector.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>



A diverse and expanding economy

Services:

These Council services have directly contributed to being able to meet the following Council Plan objectives:

- We will promote our unique tourism opportunities and support our local tourism industry to increase visitation to our area
- We will support established businesses and seek to attract new businesses to grow our local economy.


Service	Description
Economic development	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: support to new and existing businesses through direct facilitation, development of networking opportunities, provision of information, leadership development, promotion and marketing of opportunities within the Shire, referral to internal and external agencies to encourage access to Shire, State and Federal development programs.
Industrial development	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: support to industry with access to infrastructure in developed and zoned industrial land which is appropriately located and priced to encourage the sustainable growth of industry.
Loddon Discovery Tours	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: assistance to the Loddon tourism industry, public speaking, marketing, promotion and booking of group tours, program delivery to improve customer service and business development, and financial support for promotion.
Tourism development	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: services, including facilitation of strategic projects, assistance to small business, development of marketing and promotional material, assistance with advertising, direct financial support of key projects, provision and maintenance of tourism promotional signage, advice to new and existing tourism businesses, developing tourism linkages between regional communities and key tourism bodies such as Tourism Victoria, Tourism Alliance, Goldfields Committee and Bendigo Tourism, and administrative support to the Loddon Visitor Information Centre.



Performance against the Council Plan 2021-2025






A supported and accessible community

Support and advocate for services that provide every child with the opportunities to have the best start in life

Comments	Status
<p>Advocate for the options identified in the Childcare Feasibility Study</p> <p>Council has identified childcare as its highest priority in its priorities document. A project to refine the planning and design for specific sites across Buloke, Gannawarra and Loddon Shires is being undertaken. Council has provided a copy of the Childcare Feasibility Business case to inform this work.</p> <p>Council continues to advocate Loddon’s position as a child care desert at all suitable opportunities.</p> <p>The State Government has announced 50 State built and operated Early Learning Centres to be built in areas of need across the state. Loddon has been announced as receiving one centre in the second tranche of the roll out. These centres are slated for delivery between 2026 and 2028.</p> <p>Council has provided the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) and Department of Education officials with local information, and a copy of the feasibility study/business case. The final decision on location of the facility in Loddon will be made by the State Government.</p>	<p> Ongoing</p>





Support and advocate for services that provide every child with the opportunities to have the best start in life (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Participate in, and advocate for funding to continue, the Strong Families Strong Children Program</p> <p>Council staff continue to participate in the Strong Families Strong Children Project Loddon, and have identified two priority areas of focus, childcare and local antenatal care. Council continues to participate in the Comprehensive Monitoring Project. Funding for the Strong Families Strong Children program has been identified in Council's priorities document.</p> <p>The Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing Executives Network has supported the development of an innovative rural antenatal program, currently being delivered to communities.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Develop and implement Municipal Early Years and Youth Plan</p> <p>Council has engaged a consultant to develop a State of Loddon's children and youth report which will then inform the development of an early years and youth plan.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Support the community to access maternal and child health and kindergarten services</p> <p>Kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services are operating across the municipality. Council is participating in the free kinder program, providing all enrolments with a fully funded kindergarten program. Implemented increased collaboration opportunities between Kindergartens and MCH to support access to kindergarten. Services promoted in media, online and project commenced to integrate more communication and engagement through dedicated parent portals. To avoid service closure, Council employed a roving kindergarten role to support backfill needs when permanent staff are unable to attend. Council has relocated the MCH service in Boort to Boort District Health in response to feedback from families using the service.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Support and advocate for activities that provide older residents with access to the services they need to age in place in Loddon</p> <p>Guide Council and the community through the transition to the new Commonwealth Support in the Home aged care program</p> <p>Council determined at the November 2022 Council meeting to not transition to the new aged care service provision model with the conclusion of the current service contract, subsequently Council ceased provision of the community aged care services on 30 June 2023. Council worked closely with the Commonwealth and State aged care teams and the three new providers in the Loddon area to successfully transition the service. Council has established an aged care navigation role to support residents if they require assistance to access services and supports.</p>	 Progressing
<p>Support and promote activities that encourage positive ageing</p> <p>Council has embedded full time employment (FTE) into a role at Council to specifically focus on positive ageing. Council provided activities during the 2022 Victorian Seniors Festival and held the combined seniors christmas lunch. Council provides support (including financial) and facilities for six Senior Citizens Centres within the municipality. Council has established an aged care navigation role to support residents if they require assistance to access services and supports.</p>	 Ongoing




Support and advocate for activities that provide older residents with access to the services they need to age in place in Loddon (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Participate in and deliver activities during the annual Victorian Seniors Festival</p> <p>Council participated in the 2022 Victorian Seniors Festival and provided a range of events, including Tania Kernigan in concert, meal vouchers and events provided by local community groups.</p>	 Progressing
<p>Advocate for high priority, significant services and projects to attract state and federal government funding</p>	
<p>Develop a community priority document to ensure Council can advocate for projects and maximise opportunities for funding</p> <p>The Loddon Shire 2022 Priorities document was published and circulated in 2022. The document is a reflection of the Loddon Shire community and its priorities, connecting with our Community Vision 2031 and Council Plan 2021-2025 – both of which were developed in consultation with our community.</p>	 Completed
<p>In conjunction with regional partners, advocate for increased roads funding</p> <p>This is happening through the Loddon Campaspe Transport Working Group.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>In conjunction with regional partners, advocate for the Murray Basin Rail Project</p> <p>This has been done at Councillor level with assistance from economic development.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>In conjunction with regional partners, advocate for water and sewerage for our towns where a positive business case has been developed</p> <p>Advocacy for water/sewerage services at Newbridge has been prioritised.</p>	 Ongoing











Advocate for high priority, significant services and projects to attract state and federal government funding (cont.)



Comments	Status
In conjunction with regional partners, advocate for broader and more reliable mobile phone and internet services across the Shire	
Have commenced a project with Telstra to develop a Community Connectivity Plan for Loddon Shire. The plan will identify priority actions to support local business and community, and assist in Telstra's future planning for services in Loddon Shire.	 Ongoing

Review Council processes

Improve long term financial forecasting through the development of the Financial Plan model that is reviewed annually	
Budget and Financial Plan has been reviewed and Budget developed and presented to Council in April 2023. Council resolved to advertise for public comment and adopted in June 2023. Parts of the Financial Plan are included in the Budget and no separate document will be published.	 Completed
Develop and implement a risk management framework to effectively manage the opportunities and risks across Council's operations and projects	
Council adopted the Risk Management Framework in May 2022. Implementation of the framework is occurring through the Risk Implementation Plan adopted in June 2022.	 Ongoing
Review and implement the Information Technology Strategy	
The Information Technology Strategy was approved by Management Executive Group in June 2023 and implementation of the actions within the strategy are now underway.	 Completed
Review and implement the Records Management Strategy	
The Data Management Team meetings have informed a review of the Records Management Strategy. The draft Strategy is scheduled for presentation at the Management Executive Group meeting in August. An action plan forms part of the Strategy and will guide the alignment of the Business Classification Scheme with Council's Records Management System. The data management team will continue to meet quarterly to discuss the progress of the action plan and if necessary make any changes or decisions within the scope of the strategy that will benefit the management of Council's records.	 Progressing
Develop and implement a Digitisation Plan to progress operating in an electronic records environment	
The digitisation of the building, planning and rates records is tracking on time and will be complete in November 2023. In line with Council's Digitisation Plan, documents in the the first phase of the project were securely destroyed in May 2023, with documents in phase two and three of the project scheduled for destruction by December 2023.	 Progressing
Review Council's Governance Rules to ensure they are operating effectively for Council Meetings	
Council's Governance Rules have been reviewed by Councillors and Officers in a number of workshops in the latter part of the year in preparation for Council endorsement of the Governance Rules for a period of community engagement in July.	 Progressing



Review Council's services

Comments	Status
<p>Upgrade Council's information technology services to increase security and efficiency</p> <p>Council has been investing in information technology security and efficiency with the migration to the Microsoft 365 Cloud platform and ongoing works to migrate to Civica Altitude as part of new software implementation which includes embedded information security tools.</p>	 Completed
<p>Develop a Workforce Plan to understand the current and future needs of workforce</p> <p>The 2021-2025 Workforce Plan was adopted in December 2023.</p> <p>The Workforce Plan aims to ensure Council has the people best able to contribute to its strategic direction, develop innovative approaches to complex issues, develop and maintain partnerships, deliver appropriate services effectively and efficiently, and engage productively with the community.</p> <p>The Plan includes an analysis against the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan and departmental plans and strategies • workforce profile • gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness • projected staffing requirements • external and internal influences <p>The findings from the analysis of each area inform the actions required over the life of the Plan.</p> <p>The development of the Workforce Plan is complete and progress on the actions will continue over the life of the Plan.</p>	 Completed








Cr Wendy Murphy with Inglewood Senior Citizen volunteers.



Review Council's services (cont.)



Comments	Status
<p>Undertake service reviews for internal services to understand the service levels required to support service delivery to the community</p>	
<p>Three comprehensive service reviews have been undertaken in the past year which have informed Council's decision making around the provision of those services. A four year Service Plan 2023-2027 has been developed to continue undertaking service reviews.</p>	 Completed
<p>Undertake service reviews for key services delivered to the community to understand the service level and the cost of service delivery to inform the Financial Plan</p>	
<p>Initial report of expected future timing of service delivery areas has been developed by the Director Corporate and is being reviewed by the CEO. At the point where input is required from Finance department to either assist in other key service delivery projects or the one for the finance function itself, full support and assistance will be given.</p>	 Progressing

Implement initiatives and advocate for services to support overall health and wellbeing of the community

<p>Facilitate the local mental health partnership, the Loddon Healthy Minds Network, to advocate for mental health supports and implement the actions in the Loddon Healthy Minds Network annual action plan to improve wellbeing outcomes for our community</p>	
<p>Council continues to facilitate the Loddon Healthy Minds Network (LHMN), coordinating bi-monthly meetings, distribution of information to member agencies and social media sharing of information. The LHMN facilitated the annual LHMN art competition with 136 entries received from eight schools in the Loddon region ranging from Grade Prep to Year 12, the largest number of entries since the art competition began. The delivery of the Suicide Prevention Forum 2022 was finalised but unfortunately the event was cancelled due to lack of registrations. The LHMN continues to provide information on available mental health and wellbeing supports, promotes a positive mental health message and continues to work openly to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.</p>	 Ongoing






Implement initiatives and advocate for services to support overall health and wellbeing of the community (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Deliver and implement the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025</p> <p>Four pillars support the implementation of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP): Family Violence Network, Strong Families Strong Children, Loddon Healthy Minds Network and Healthy Eating Active Living/Smoking Prevention.</p> <p>Activities include: Rural Smoking Research Project, operating within Child Safe Standards, Council participates in the Early Childhood Monitoring Program, free kinder funding, facilitation of Loddon Healthy Minds Network, promotion of mental health self care initiatives, planned delivery of 2022 Suicide Prevention Forum (cancelled due to lack of registrations), Healthy Loddon Campaspe program, BLG implementation of rural ante-natal support into Loddon. Information provided after major emergency event related to increased risk of family violence and the Orange Door service in Loddon. Stewardship participation in the Womens Health Loddon Mallee CARE partnership. Participation in the Loddon Mallee Primary Health Unit Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Sub-Committee.</p>	 Progressing
<p>Promote health promotion initiatives, such as Walk to School, Ride2Work, Smiles for Miles etc</p> <p>Council continues to promote health promotion initiatives including Smiles for Miles, Respect Victoria, health during emergencies, Royal Flying Doctor Services, mental health supports, Loddon Healthy Minds Network art competition, Older Not Alone campaign, Care Finder Program, Headspace programs, button battery awareness, library activities, Healthy Loddon Campaspe activities, Young Carers Connect, fitness stations, swimming programs, Japanese Encephalitis Virus (JEV) information, Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) provision, farm safety, Victorian virtual emergency department, carers week and 13Yarn.</p> <p>Council participates in the Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit Primary Health and Population Advisory Sub committee.</p>	 Ongoing





Implement initiatives and advocate for services to support overall health and wellbeing of the community (cont.)




Comments	Status
<p>Promote activities delivered through our library hubs within the Shire</p> <p>Council continues to promote activities delivered through our library hubs via social and other media, including Council’s website, with one example being monthly reminders of Story Time sessions.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Promote local events through social media to provide community members with the opportunity to connect</p> <p>Social media has been actively used to promote local events and initiatives, key messages from the Mayor and to keep the community informed.</p>	 Ongoing
<p>Advocate for mental health services that are available to residents when and where they need them</p> <p>Council is a member agency of the Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing Executive Network (BLG). A primary focus of the collaborative work of the BLG is to advocate for the delivery of appropriate mental health services in the BLG municipalities. The BLG has developed a research paper/advocacy document, ‘Increasing access to mental health supports in Buloke, Loddon and Gannawarra’, to inform the Loddon Mallee Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Regional Interim Body and other key stakeholders on feasible actions and opportunities to increase mental health supports through mental health system and workforce reforms.</p> <p>Council continues to facilitate the Loddon Healthy Minds Network and has continued to advocate for mental health service support, particularly following significant major events.</p> <p>Council participated in advocacy to the Education Department to support the delivery of the mental health practitioners in schools program in Loddon.</p>	 Ongoing






First Aid training session.




Partner with agencies in the Shire to promote good health and wellbeing

Comments	Status
Participate in the Loddon Healthy Eating Active Living & Smoking Prevention (HEAL-SP) group and support implementation of actions in the HEAL-SP annual action plan	
Council continues to participate in the Healthy Eating Active Living/Smoking Prevention group and has actively supported delivery of healthy eating active living activities through the Healthy Loddon Campaspe program and the Community Support policy outcomes. Council is involved in the Smoking research project facilitated through the Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing Executives Network (BLG).	 Ongoing
Participate in the Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing network	
Council is an active member of the Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing Executives Network. The Director Community Wellbeing is the current chair of the Network.	 Ongoing
Participate in and advocate for ongoing funding of the Healthy Heart of Victoria project	
Healthy Heart of Victoria has been extended and funded for a further four years. Loddon continues to participate. Planning for the next four years is underway.	 Completed

Provide informative media

Have an active and informative social media presence	
Social media continues to be actively used to promote local events and initiatives, communicate key messages from the Mayor, advertise career opportunities and connect lost pets with their owners as a few of the many examples.	 Ongoing
Utilise local media to provide important messages to the community	
Council continues a positive relationship with local media and regularly provides media releases, updates and comments to inform the community.	 Ongoing
Ensure Council's website has up to date and relevant information to inform the community about Council's activities	
Council webpages are managed by the relevant departments to ensure that information can be updated in a timely manner. The website also hosts past information such as Annual Reports and Bulletins should the community be interested in progress and past activities as well as current activities.	 Ongoing

Review engagement activities to ensure continuous improvement




Work with the Community Reference Group to understand the needs of the community around engagement	
Following an expression of interest process the Community Reference Group has been re-established. The members of the group have actively engaged and provided valuable feedback to inform a number of Council strategies.	 Ongoing



National Historical Machinery Tractor Trek. Photo: Wedderburn Historical Engines and Machinery Society







Review engagement activities to ensure continuous improvement (cont.)

Comments	Status
Review and implement the Community Engagement Policy, including the deliberative engagement process	
The current Community Engagement Policy, which includes deliberative engagement process, is under review as part of the standard policy review cycle.	 Progressing
Explore options for community engagement that other councils in the region are using to identify opportunities to expand our community engagement methods	
Council engages collaboratively with networks such as Loddon Healthy Minds Network, Healthy Eating Active Living/smoking prevention, Buloke Loddon Gannawarra Health and Wellbeing Executives Network, Loddon Family Violence Network, Loddon Mallee Primary Health Unit, Strong Families Strong Children and Strong Youth Strong Communities to deliver a range of health and wellbeing projects such as Smoking Research, Mental Health in Rural Communities, Healthy Minds Art Competition, 16 Days of Activism, childcare advocacy and many more.	 Ongoing
Undertake evaluation process following key community engagement activities	
The feedback provided, both verbally and via formal submissions from community engagement activities is considered by officers and this assists in decision making process, and for shaping what further and future community engagement activities are undertaken.	 Ongoing



Review engagement activities to ensure continuous improvement (cont.)

Comments	Status
<p>Review the Community Satisfaction Survey to understand the community's wants and needs around communication</p> <p>Councillors and key staff received a presentation from JWS Research on the results of the Community Satisfaction Survey. This included considering the comparison data of previous years, against similar sized Councils and against State averages. The results of the survey were made publicly available.</p>	 <p>Completed</p>
<p>Investigate an online community engagement portal</p> <p>Options for a suitable online platform to suit the needs of the Loddon Shire community has commenced. The platform needs to be one that is able to be managed and updated internally and easy to navigate for all users.</p>	 <p>Progressing</p>
<p>Review and implement the Customer Service Strategy</p> <p>The review of the Customer Service Strategy has commenced. The Community Reference Group was presented with an overview of the current Strategy and members have provided feedback on the the direction of the review. A customer service satisfaction survey is being developed for circulation to community members in the next quarter. An internal workshop will be held for frontline customer service staff to brainstorm initiatives that could improve the customer service experience.</p>	 <p>Progressing</p>
<p>Investigate the ability to increase online forms to facilitate easier processes</p> <p>Investigation into online forms has been completed and implementation of automated forms will gradually be rolled out over the course of the next 12 months as Council works to upgrade key systems.</p>	 <p>Completed</p>

Engage with community groups

<p>Engage with key stakeholder groups on projects they have an interest in</p> <p>Engagement has occurred with key stakeholder groups in relation to Donaldson Park Hub redevelopment, Pyramid Hill Streetscape, Pyramid Hill Community Centre and the Boort Foreshore Recreation project. Our Community Care team engaged with key stakeholders in the Aged Care transition. The Community Wellbeing team regularly engage with stakeholder groups relating to recreation and community planning projects and kindergarten parent committees in relation to projects being undertaken at kindergartens.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Represent Council at community group meetings to communicate current topics and to hear from community groups about their interests</p> <p>Councillors and staff have delegated roles for a number of community groups and attend many meetings throughout the year.</p>	 <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Represent Council on Community Asset Committees</p> <p>At the Special Meeting of Council in November 2022, Councillors were appointed to Community Asset Committees. This is ongoing with Councillors reappointed annually.</p>	 <p>Completed</p>



Kinder children at play.



A supported and accessible community

Services:

These Council services have directly contributed to being able to meet the following Council Plan objectives:

- We will deliver our core services and advocate for access to other services for our community
- We will listen to our community about how they wish to communicate with us and implement effective communication methods to achieve this. We will provide our community with opportunities to engage with us.

Service	Description
Access programs	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: disability access to improve accessibility in and around the Shire.
Aged services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: home, personal and respite care, property maintenance, senior citizens' centres, elderly persons' units and planned activity groups.



A supported and accessible community

Service	Description
Communication	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas: enhancing and protecting the Council's reputation, developing communication plans for key initiatives linked to the Council Plan, delivering advocacy campaigns in collaboration with the responsible officer/Councillor.
Council administration	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas: customer service and administrative support, records management, municipal building and equipment provision.
Council committees	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas: administrative support for Section 65 Community Asset Committees in managing compliance with the Local Government Act 1989.
Early years services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: maternal and child health, immunisations and cluster management of kindergartens.
Environmental management services	Provision of the following to the municipal community as a whole: weed management on Council property and development and implementation of Loddon's response to climate change.
Financial management	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas: preparation and management of the Council budget, preparation of financial statements and government statistical returns, collection of various revenue sources and payment of employees and suppliers.
Governance	Provision of the following to support Council's direct service delivery areas: Council, Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer and the Management Executive Group and administrative support, administering the conduct of Council meetings and elections, managing Freedom of Information, information privacy, protected disclosures and internal ombudsman functions, maintaining statutory registers, authorisations and delegations, coordinating civic events and citizenship ceremonies, administering the risk management framework.




Performance against major initiatives in the 2022/23 budget

Service Performance Indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of results in the comments.



Service Measure

		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
 Aquatic Facilities							
AF2	Health inspections of aquatic facilities	1 to 4 inspections	1.40	1.00	1.80	1.00	-44.44%
	Comment All five pools were inspected and found to be satisfactory upon first inspection in January 2023. The decreased percentage reflects the previous year requiring multiple inspections.						
AF6	Utilisation of aquatic facilities	1 to 10 visits	2.60	2.08	1.76	1.93	9.32%
	Comment There was a 13% increase on attendance levels throughout the 2022/23 pool season in comparison to the 2021/22 season. All five pools had an increase in attendance levels. The main contributing factor was that there were less days of closures due to resourcing challenges that impacted the 2021/22 season.						




		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
AF7	Cost of aquatic facilities	\$0 to \$30	\$28.98	\$22.34	\$59.06	\$44.36	-24.90%
		<p>Comment The 2021/22 season was higher than normal due to a new operations contractor facilitating the management of the pools. The decrease is reflective of no initial transition in costs and equipment that were experienced during 2021/22. There were also 795 hours of closures due to the temperature being below 24 degrees. The rise and fall clause in the contract meant that Council had savings at the end of the pool season. The rise and fall clause allows the price of a contract to increase or decrease in accordance with fluctuations in operating hours.</p>					





Animal Management

AM1	Time taken to action animal management requests	1 to 10 days	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00%
		<p>Council has remained highly responsive to animal management requests, responding within one day.</p>					
AM2	Animals reclaimed	30% to 90%	52.50%	41.38%	25.35%	8.47%	-66.57%
		<p>Comment Council takes a proactive approach in reuniting animals with their owners. Following all options being exhausted animals are, at a last resort, impounded. If the animal still remains unclaimed it is then rehomed through external pet rescue groups. The 66.57% decrease also reflects voluntary surrenders where people are no longer willing/able to care for their animal. Of the animals that were impounded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 animals were returned to their owner • 7 dogs were rehoused through animal rescue groups • 44 cats were rehoused through animal rescue groups. 					
AM5	Animals rehomed	20% to 80%	45.00%	58.62%	67.61%	86.44%	27.86%
		<p>Comment There has been a 27.86% increase in animals rehomed during the past 12 months. This number primarily reflects the rehoming of cats and dogs without identified owners through rescue groups. This is an action within the Domestic Animal Management Plan. Of the 44 cats rehoused, 24 were collected during the period 1 April to 30 June. Throughout the year and in particular during that quarter, Council has been working together with the community about unowned cat populations. These unowned cats have been rehomed through animal rescue groups, including desexing and microchipping for a new start in life and reflect a statistical increase in our unclaimed animal numbers through our pound system.</p>					
AM6	Cost of animal management service per population	\$3 to \$40	\$8.99	\$10.67	\$8.02	\$7.78	-3.00%
		<p>Comment The cost of animal management service per population has decreased slightly from the previous year and remains within the expected range.</p>					
AM7	Animal management prosecutions	0% to 200%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
		<p>Comment There has been no animal management prosecutions within the reporting period. Council continues to actively work with the community.</p>					

		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
 Food Safety							
FS1	Time taken to action food complaints	1 to 10 days	1.67	1.25	1.67	1.33	-20.00%
		<p>Comment Council actions food complaints as soon as possible following receipt. During the past 12 months Council received 2 complaints which were actioned in under 24 hours and one 1 complaint which was actioned within 48 hours. This complaint was received on a weekend and actioned on the first business day.</p>					
FS2	Food safety assessments	50% to 120%	111.46%	24.74%	46.88%	72.64%	54.97%
		<p>Comment The food safety assessment program has been impacted by resourcing being redeployed for immediate response to flood emergency and mosquito emergency response activities.</p>					
FS3	Cost of food safety service	\$300 to \$1,200	\$538.07	\$69.44	\$104.36	\$117.13	12.23%
		<p>Comment The increase in cost reflects the increase in the number of assessments that were undertaken last year.</p>					
FS4	Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications	60% to 100%	100.00%	100.00%	66.67%	100.00%	50.00%
		<p>Comment 100% of critical and major-non compliance outcome notifications have been followed up this year. The change in statistics is due to one notification in the prior year being followed up outside the timeframe due to staff absence.</p>					





Camping grounds at Tarnagulla Recreation Reserve.

		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
 Governance							
G1	Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public	0% to 30%	10.36%	10.62%	10.12%	9.82%	-3.02%
		Comment Council maintained a focus on listing as many reports as possible at meetings open to the public. Only 16 out of 163 resolutions were made in closed meetings.					
G2	Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement	40 to 70	57.00	58.00	56.00	52.00	-7.14%
		Comment Council maintain a focus on further developing engagement practices to assist with the management of community consultation and engagement across Council.					
G3	Councillor attendance at council meetings	80% to 100%	100.00%	100.00%	99.49%	96.57%	-2.93%
		Comment Councillors attended 35 meetings during the year including monthly forums, monthly briefings and monthly Council meetings most months as well as special meetings. One Councillor was an apology for the May 2023 Council Meeting.					
G4	Cost of elected representation	\$30,000 to \$80,000	\$45,372.20	\$58,413.00	\$44,495.60	\$44,495.60	0.00%
		Comment The cost of elected representation remained consistent with previous years and is within the expected range.					
G5	Satisfaction with council decisions	40 to 70	57.00	61.00	58.00	54.00	-6.90%
		Comment Over the past year community satisfaction remained within the expected range, however decreasing slightly from 58 to 54.					
 Libraries							
LB1	Physical library collection usage	1 to 9 items	2.57	2.54	2.60	2.32	-10.74%
		Comment The physical library collection usage as remained consistent this year and within the expected range.					
LB2	Recently purchased library collection	40% to 90%	72.00%	72.00%	72.00%	72.00%	0.00%
		Comment No variance and value remains within expected range.					
LB4	Active library borrowers in municipality	10% to 40%	7.30%	6.35%	5.50%	13.54%	146.44%
		Comment Library usage in the Loddon Shire is positive, with active library users within the expected range.					
LB5	Cost of library service per population	\$10 to \$90	\$28.23	\$28.85	\$27.43	\$26.61	-3.00%
		Comment The cost of the library service has remained steady while the population has continued to increase.					





Kinder children attending a performance.

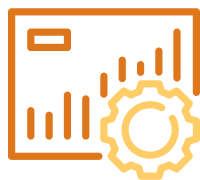
		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
 Maternal and Child Health (MCH)							
MC2	Infant enrolments in the MCH service	90% to 110%	101.64%	103.70%	100.00%	101.85%	1.85%
		Comment MCH enrolment numbers continue to increase which are a reflection of the increased birth rates within the past 12 months. The MCH team actively engage with hospitals and new parents within the community.					
MC3	Cost of the MCH service	\$50 to \$200	\$76.80	\$78.74	\$105.81	\$94.70	-10.50%
		Comment The majority of cost relates to ongoing employment, variations may occur when Council is required to engage casual staff.					
MC4	Participation in the MCH service	70% to 100%	83.37%	85.11%	87.30%	90.05%	3.15%
		Comment MCH participation rates have increased. This is a reflection of the birth rates within the past 12 months and the MCH team actively engaging with hospitals and new parents within the community.					
MC5	Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children	60% to 100%	85.71%	89.47%	77.78%	93.75%	20.54%
		Comment Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children continues to increase. The 20% increase is due to birth rates, relocation to the area and new engagement with the services.					
MC6	Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit	90% to 110%	91.80%	90.74%	95.77%	98.15%	2.48%
		Comment MCH service continues to have high participation rates. The 2.48% increase is a reflection on the birth rates within the past 12 months.					

		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
 Roads							
R1	Sealed local road requests	10 to 120 requests	11.95	7.90	9.41	15.67	66.60%
	Comment There has been a 66.60% increase in sealed local requests since last year. The flood event of 2022 had a significant impact on the Shire's road network resulting in increased requests.						
R2	Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards	80% to 100%	99.90%	100.00%	99.99%	98.51%	-1.48%
	Comment Council continues to maintain roads in line with the Road Asset Management Plan.						
R3	Cost of sealed local road reconstruction	\$20 to \$200	\$42.05	\$38.62	\$43.19	\$0.00	-100.00%
	Comment No sealed local road reconstruction occurred in 2022/23 due to delays associated with the October 2022 flood event and because of long lead times to procure materials such as culverts.						
R4	Cost of sealed local road resealing	\$4 to \$30	\$4.93	\$4.14	\$3.74	\$5.53	48.14%
	Comment A high proportion of the resealing comprised of resealing roads using a larger aggregate which is a higher relative unit rate. This is in addition to a general trend of escalation costs for road projects observed in 2022/23.						
R5	Satisfaction with sealed local roads	50 to 100	47.00	50.00	50.00	43.00	-14.00%
	Comment Satisfaction with location roads decreased slightly since last year. The road network has been significantly impacted by the flood event of 2022.						



		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
 Statutory Planning							
SP1	Time taken to decide planning applications	30 to 110 days	48.50	39.00	42.00	28.00	-33.33%
	Comment Median number of days for processing of all applications was 28 days, less than the target of 30 days.						
SP2	Planning applications decided within required time frames	40% to 100%	78.76%	83.46%	85.04%	97.32%	14.44%
	Comment The increased statistic reflects the 97% of applications assessed within the required timeframes.						
SP3	Cost of statutory planning service	\$500 to \$4,000	\$1,224.29	\$833.20	\$1,362.68	\$2,165.24	58.90%
	Comment Council is committed to providing an efficient effective statutory planning service, the increase is reflective of increased resourcing in Statutory Planning.						
SP4	Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT	0% to 100%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Comment Council has one appeal decision pending.						

 Waste Collection							
WC1	Kerbside bin collection requests	10 to 300 requests	69.63	61.62	59.74	69.89	16.99%
	Comment Since the introduction of a new customer service request tracking and reporting system and ongoing contract surveillance has resulted in better services for residents.						
WC2	Kerbside collection bins missed	1 to 20 bins	2.19	1.05	2.68	2.01	-24.94%
	Comment Staff continue to work with the contractor to improve mapping and driver consistency has also contributed to the reduction in missed bins.						
WC3	Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service	\$40 to \$150	\$138.75	\$143.89	\$151.04	\$145.96	-3.36%
	Comment Increased costs associated with legislative requirements.						
WC4	Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service	\$10 to \$80	\$78.86	\$83.82	\$93.60	\$101.88	8.84%
	Comment The increased costs per household for kerbside recycling collection is due to annual contract price increases and increased recycling sorting costs.						
WC5	Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill	20% to 60%	28.12%	29.59%	27.52%	28.46%	3.45%
	Comment The percentage of kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill in 2022/23 28.46% has remained relatively consistent with previous reporting periods. This result represents the total weight of all material recycled from kerbside bin collections as a per kerbside of total kerbside waste collected (i.e. waste diverted from landfill).						



Financial Performance Measures

		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
Efficiency							
E2	Expenses per property assessment	\$2,000 to \$5,000	\$3,948.74	\$4,190.23	\$3,938.48	\$4,687.72	19.02%
		Comment Expenses are higher during 2023 with the flood restoration program underway in response to the 2022 major flood event.					
E4	Average rate per property assessment	\$700 to \$2,000	\$1,226.81	\$1,244.14	\$1,256.83	\$1,276.55	1.57%
		Comment This indicator slightly increases through the years and rate revenue increases in line with the Ministers cap.					
Liquidity							
L1	Current assets compared to current liabilities	100% to 400%	744.86%	506.54%	604.47%	596.58%	-1.30%
		Comment Council has a large amount of cash on hand due to the upfront payment of Grants Commission funding along with major capital projects that are yet to be completed. In future years it is expected that this cash balance will fall considerably as projects are completed.					



Inglewood Town Hall Hub.



		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
L2	Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities	10% to 300%	3.10%	125.63%	53.31%	-42.16%	-179.08%
	<p>Comment Council has a significant amount of cash on hand but has a large unspent grants reserve and LSL provision that restricts cash. This cash has been placed into term deposits to gain a better financial outcome for Council. As the years progress it is expected that there will be significant decreases to cash each year which will result in reassessing the program of works for each of these years.</p>						





Obligations

O2	Loans and borrowings compared to rates	0% to 70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	<p>Comment Council does not have any current borrowings.</p>						
O3	Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates	0% to 20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	<p>Comment Council does not have any current borrowings.</p>						
O4	Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue	2% to 70%	11.85%	10.17%	8.32%	10.79%	29.72%
	<p>Comment This indicator has been slightly increasing over the years as revenue increases at a higher rate than the non current liabilities are.</p>						
O5	Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation	40% to 130%	57.71%	79.27%	60.11%	47.58%	-20.86%
	<p>Comment This is slightly lower than previous years with some significant spending on expansion of assets during 2023 on projects such as Donaldson Park and various caravan parks.</p>						



Council offices at Wedderburn.

		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
 Operating position							
OP1	Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)	-20% to 20%	-8.06%	-5.44%	3.94%	7.03%	78.43%
		Comment This indicator includes more than \$17M of impairment that occurred as a result of the 2022 floods.					

 Stability		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
S1	Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue	30% to 80%	38.60%	36.59%	36.34%	30.41%	-16.32%
		Comment Rate revenue remains constant, adjusted underlying revenue includes the 100% upfront Grants Commission funding.					
S2	Rates compared to property values	0.15% to 0.75%	0.49%	0.43%	0.44%	0.35%	-20.75%
		Comment This indicator has been slightly decreasing with the increase to rate revenue increasing at a lower rate than CIV within the municipality.					



Sustainable Capacity Indicators

		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
C1	Expenses per head of municipal population	\$800 to \$4,000	\$4,121.86	\$4,442.56	\$4,192.75	\$4,858.76	15.88%
		Comment Increase to expenses for 2023 due to the commencement of flood restoration works. This is expected to continue for a further two years.					
C2	Infrastructure per head of municipal population	\$3,000 to \$40,000	\$47,011.57	\$46,350.15	\$43,982.82	\$47,672.29	8.39%
		Comment The increase in infrastructure per head of population has increased in step with the increase in infrastructure valuations for the 2022/23 financial year.					
C3	Population density per length of road	1 to 300 people	1.59	1.58	1.59	1.64	3.25%
		Comment Loddon Shire's population increased by 3% while the road length remained similar to previous years which has resulted in the increased in population density per length of road.					
C4	Own-source revenue per head of municipal population	\$700 to \$2,000	\$1,930.36	\$1,990.76	\$1,998.78	\$2,126.54	6.39%
		Comment This indicator has been steadily increasing due to an increase of income and a fairly static population.					

		Expected Range	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	Variance
C5	Recurrent grants per head of municipal population	\$100 to \$2,000	\$1,771.22	\$1,850.13	\$2,244.69	\$2,318.14	3.27%
		Comment Grants commission funding had 100% funding paid in advance during 2023, during 2022 this was 75%.					
C6	Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage	1 to 10 decile	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00%
		Comment No material variations.					
C7	Staff turnover rate	5% to 20%	13.59%	12.82%	21.33%	17.81%	-16.52%
		Comment Council have exited Aged Care Services as at 30 June 2023. Although the majority of Home Care Staff stayed on to 30 June 2023 five staff left earlier to gain other work. This contributes to more turnover. There were also four retirements across the organisation.					

Community Satisfaction Survey



The Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey is conducted each year to gather data on how satisfied residents are with Council’s resources, facilities and services. The results provide data for the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework and an opportunity to consider improvements that would be valued by residents and ratepayers.

Survey fieldwork was conducted across four quarters from 16 June 2022 to 19 March 2023 and represents the opinions of 400 residents.

Council performs as well, or significantly higher, than the Small Rural group and State-wide averages on most service areas evaluated. Council’s top three performing areas in these results are:

- Appearance of public areas
- Recreational facilities
- Waste management

Further details and this year’s results are available at www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Our-Council/Community-Satisfaction-Surveys

Governance management



Governance

Introduction

Loddon Shire Council is constituted under the Local Government Act 2020 to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community. Section 8(1) of the Act states that the role of Council is “to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community”.

This is achieved by adhering to the following governance principles:

- Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law
- Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations
- The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted
- The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making
- Innovation and a continuous improvement is to be pursued

- Collaboration with other councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought
- The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured
- Regional, State and National plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making
- The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured

Council is committed to effective and sustainable forms of democratic and corporate governance as the key to ensuring that Council and its administration meet the community’s priorities. The community has many opportunities to provide input into Council’s decision-making processes including community consultation, public forums and ability to make submissions to Council.

Council’s formal decision-making processes are conducted through Council meetings. Council delegates the majority of its decision-making to Council staff. These delegations are exercised in accordance with the Act and a range of other acts and regulations.



Meetings of Council

Council conducts open public meetings generally on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Members of the community are welcome to attend these meetings and observe from the gallery or watch proceedings online. Council meetings provide the opportunity for community members to submit a question to the Council as detailed in the Governance Rules.

For the 2022/23 financial year, Council held 13 Council meetings, including one Special Council Meeting for the purpose of electing a Mayor for the 2022/23 year.

Attendances at Council functions

During the year, the Mayor and Councillors attended various functions on behalf of Loddon Shire Council.

Some functions were related to Councillors' representation on external and Community Asset Committees while others arose from invitations from community groups, local government bodies, politicians and other stakeholders.

In total, the Mayor attended 83 functions while the other Councillors combined attended 233.

Code of conduct

The Councillor Code of Conduct, most recently reviewed in 2021, sets out minimum standards of conduct for councillors in their role and documents Loddon Shire Councillors' commitment to working together in the best interests of the people within the municipality and to discharging their responsibilities to the best of their skill and judgement.

Community Asset Committees

Section 65 of the Local Government Act 2020, provides for the establishment of Community Asset Committees for the purpose of managing community assets throughout the municipality.

Council's Community Asset Committees consist of dedicated community members who give their time and energy to managing their respective Community Asset Committees.

By instrument of delegation, the Chief Executive Officer delegates a range of powers, duties and functions of the Council to members of Council's Community Asset Committees to support management of the community assets.

Council respects and appreciates the contribution made by our volunteer Community Asset Committee members to enrich our community, and provide a much broader range of services and activities than Council could provide without this support.

Loddon Shire Council has established Community Asset Committees to manage the following community assets;

- Boort Aerodrome
- Boort Memorial Hall
- Boort Park
- Campbells Forest Hall
- Donaldson Park
- East Loddon Community Centre
- Hard Hill Tourist Reserve
- Inglewood Community Elderly Persons Units
- Inglewood Community Sports Centre
- Inglewood Town Hall Hub
- Korong Vale Mechanics Institute Hall
- Korong Vale Sports Centre
- Little Lake Boort
- Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall
- Wedderburn Community Centre
- Wedderburn Engine Park and Market Square Reserve
- Wedderburn Mechanics and Literary Institute Hall
- Yando Public Hall



Melville Caves. Photo: La Toya Schroeder.

Conflict of interest

Councillors are elected by the residents and ratepayers to act in the best interests of the community. This is a position of trust that requires Councillors to act in the public interest. When Council delegates its powers to a Council officer or a committee, the committee or officer must also act in the public interest.

A conflict of interest occurs when a personal or private interest might compromise the ability to act in the public interest. A conflict of interest exists even if no improper act results from it.

Council's Governance Rules contain processes for the disclosure of a conflict of interest.

Disclosure of a conflict of interest is a standing agenda item for Council and committee meetings.

While the conflict of interest disclosure procedures vary depending on the particular role and circumstances, in general they involve disclosing the relevant interests in a specific way and then stepping aside from the decision-making process, or from the exercise of the public duty.

During 2022/23, four Councillor conflicts of interest were disclosed at a Council meeting.

Councillor allowances

In accordance with section 39 of the Local Government Act 2020, Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance for performing their duties as a Councillor. The Mayor is entitled to receive a higher allowance.

The State Government sets the upper and lower limits for all allowances paid to Councillors and Mayors. Councils are divided into three categories based on the income and population of each council. In this instance, Loddon Shire Council is recognised as a Category One Council.

In March 2022, the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal completed a formal review of 'Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors'. This review did not apply a set percentage increase to existing amounts, but did reset the base for allowances going forward. This allowance also no longer refers to the Superannuation Guarantee, this is now all in one allowance component, making the determination simpler going into the future.

The following table contains a summary of the allowances relating to each Councillor during the year.

Name of Councillor	Councillor allowance paid 2022/23
Cr Dan Straub (Mayor)	\$76,588.45
Cr Neil Beattie	\$24,702.45
Cr Gavan Holt	\$24,702.45
Cr Linda Jungwirth	\$24,702.45
Cr Wendy Murphy	\$24,702.45
Total	\$175,398.25

Councillor expenses

In accordance with section 40 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council is required to reimburse a Councillor for expenses incurred while performing their duties as a Councillor. Council is also required to adopt and maintain a policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors. The Councillors Support and Reimbursement of Expenses Policy provides guidance for the reimbursement of expenses and the provision of resources,

facilities and other support to the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to discharge their duties. Council publishes in its Annual Report the details of the expenses, including reimbursement of expenses for each Councillor and members of a Council committee.

The details of the expenses including reimbursement of expenses for each Councillor for the 2022/23 year are set out in the following table:

Name of Councillor	Travel	Car mileage	Carer and dependent related expenses	Information and communication expenses	Conferences and training expenses	Total expenses
Cr D Straub (Mayor)	\$0	\$18,000.00	\$0	\$139.73	\$2,830.61	\$20,970.34
Cr N Beattie	\$0	\$4,036.00	\$0	\$776.10	\$3,205.11	\$8,017.21
Cr G Holt	\$0	\$1,417.60	\$0	\$139.73	\$3,607.23	\$5,164.56
Cr L Jungwirth	\$0	\$4,824.56	\$1,102.62	\$139.73	\$5,427.45	\$11,494.36
Cr W Murphy	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$139.73	\$5,281.29	\$5,421.02
Total	\$0	\$28,278.16	\$1,102.62	\$1,335.02	\$20,351.69	\$51,067.49

* The current Mayor has been elected since November 2021.



Boort Lake sculpture.



Audit and Risk Management

October floods- Pyramid Hill.

Audit and Risk Committee

Council has an established Audit and Risk Committee, and prepared and approved an Audit and Risk Committee Charter in accordance with sections 53 and 54 of the Local Government Act 2020.

The Audit and Risk Committee's role is to oversee and monitor the effectiveness of Council in carrying out its responsibilities for accountable financial management, good corporate governance, maintaining an effective system of internal control and risk management, and fostering an ethical environment.

Council's five member Audit and Risk Committee consists of four independent members and one Councillor representative. Current membership is:

- Cr Gavan Holt (Cr Neil Beattie as alternate)
- Mr Rodney Baker (Chair)
- Ms Rachelle Tippett
- Mr Rod Poxon
- Mr Jarrah O'Shea (to February 2023)

Cr Holt was reappointed to the Audit and Risk Committee at the Special Meeting of Council held 8 November 2022.

On the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, at its meeting on 28 February 2023, Council appointed Rod Baker Chair of the Committee to 28 February 2024.

Council's Chief Executive Officer and Director Corporate attend the meetings in an advisory capacity.

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and subsequently adopted by Council on 23 May 2023.

Audit and Risk Committee meetings are generally held on the first Monday in August, November, February and May, with minutes or a summary of each meeting reported by the Chief Executive Officer to Council.

Internal audit

Council's internal audit function provides independent and objective assurance that the appropriate processes and controls are in place across Council.

The function is resourced under contract by HLB Mann Judd.

A four-year Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) is developed and reviewed annually to ensure the audit resources remain focused on appropriate areas. The review process considers Council's Risk Management Framework; the Council Plan; the impact of any change to operations, systems or the business environment; prior audit coverage and outcomes; and management input.

The Audit and Risk Committee receives reports at each meeting on the status of the SIAP, implementation of audit recommendations and findings of completed reviews.

The following audits were conducted during the year, concluding the SIAP 2019 – 2023:

- Procurement and Contract Management (April 2022)
- Governance Framework (July 2022)
- Fraud and Corruption Control Framework (October 2022)
- Data Governance (January 2023)

External audit

Council is externally audited by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO). VAGO utilises contractors for audit fieldwork, which for the Loddon Shire Council in 2022/23 was RSD Audit.

The external auditor's primary role is to provide assurance that the financial statements fairly present the performance and financial position at the end of the year.

The external auditors presented the draft External Audit Strategy to the February meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, while the External Audit Interim Management Letter was presented to the May meeting.

Actions arising from the external audit are included on the Audit and Risk Committee's outstanding action list to be completed within the timeframe included in the report.

Risk management

Risks have the potential to impact Council's ability to meet its objectives. While many risks cannot be eliminated, they can be identified, managed and monitored.

Council's suite of risk management documents, including the Risk Management Policy and the Framework and Risk Appetite Statement, adopted in May 2022 articulate how Council will identify, manage and report on its risks.

Council officers continue to encourage and provide support for proactive and embedded risk management throughout the organisation.

During 2022/23, the Audit and Risk Committee received regular risk-related reports on business continuity, insurance, the Risk Management Framework and Appetite Statement and Risk Management Implementation Plan.



Audit and Risk Committee members.

Governance and management checklist

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

Item ID	Governance and Management Item	YES or NO	Date if YES (single item/ date)	Date if YES (multiple items/dates)
GC1	Community engagement policy	YES	23/02/2021	Community Engagement Policy (approved by Council)
GC2	Community engagement guidelines	YES	3/04/2019	Community Engagement Procedure (approved Management Executive Group)
GC3	Financial Plan	YES	28/06/2022	Financial Plan only required to be adopted during the first 12 months of the election period. Last version updated and adopted by Council was 28/6/2022
GC4	Asset Plan	YES	28/07/2022	The Asset Plan was adopted on 28/07/2022
GC5	Revenue and Rating Plan	YES	24/06/2021	Revenue and Rating Plan needs to be adopted directly after the election period. Current document adopted by Council 24/6/2021
GC6	Annual budget	YES	27/06/2023	2023/24 Loddon Shire Council Budget for Year Ended 30 June 2024 (adopted by Council)
GC7	Risk policy	YES		Risk Management Policy V6 (adopted by Council 24/04/2022) Risk Management Framework V3 (adopted by Council 24/04/2022) Risk Management Implementation Plan V1 (adopted by Council 28/06/2022)
GC8	Fraud policy	YES	25/06/2019	Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (adopted by Council)
GC9	Municipal emergency management plan	YES	23/06/2020	Northern Victorian Integrated Municipal Emergency Management Plan - Loddon Shire v7.0 endorsed by Council; the most recent version of the MEMP is currently undergoing the assurance process
GC10	Procurement policy	YES	26/04/2023	Version 12 adopted by Council on 26 April 2023.
GC11	Business continuity plan	YES	7/11/2022	Business Continuity Plan (adopted by Council)

Item ID	Governance and Management Item	YES or NO	Date if YES (single item/date)	Date if YES (multiple items/dates)
GC12	Disaster recovery plan	YES	11/09/2019	Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan (IT DRP) 2019 (adopted by the Management Executive Group - internal document)
GC13	Risk management framework	YES	24/05/2022	Risk Management Framework V3 (adopted by Council)
GC14	Audit and Risk Committee	YES	23/05/2023	Audit and Risk Committee Charter V11 (adopted by Council)
GC15	Internal audit	YES		Internal Auditor engaged 2023-2026
GC16	Performance reporting framework	YES	26/05/2020	Performance Reporting Framework (endorsed by Internal Audit Committee, and Council)
GC17	Council Plan report	YES	22/02/2022	Update on Annual Plan 2021-2025 provided to Council
GC18	Quarterly budget reports	YES		Quarterly reports submitted and noted by Council
GC19	Risk reporting	YES		The Audit and Risk Committee noted the progress of the actions within the Risk Management Implementation Plan in November 2022 and May 2023
GC20	Performance reporting	YES		Financial and Performance Statements reported to Audit and Risk Committee, and Council in August 2022
GC21	Annual report	YES	25/10/2022	Consideration of the Annual Report for the period ending 30 June 2022 adopted by Council
GC22	Councillor Code of Conduct	YES	27/04/2021	Councillor Code of Conduct V6 (adopted by Council)
GC23	Delegations	YES	27/06/2023	Various powers, duties and functions delegated to Council staff by Council at its June 2023 meeting
GC24	Meeting procedures	YES	26/07/2022	Governance Rules (adopted by Council)



Lincoln Fitzgerald
Chief Executive Officer

Dated: 30/6/2023



Cr Dan Straub
Mayor

Statutory information

The following information is provided in accordance with legislative and other requirements applying to Council.

Documents available for public inspection

In accordance with legislation and Council's Public Transparency Policy, the following documents were available for public inspection, including on the website or at the Council office in Wedderburn:

- Agendas for, and minutes of, Council Meetings other than those agendas and minutes relating to part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public under the Act and are confidential information within the meaning of section 3(1) of the Act.
- Council's Governance Rules
- Council's Budget, Annual Report, Council Plan, Community Vision and Public Transparency Policy
- Reporting from Advisory Committees to Council (via Council Minutes)
- Register of travel undertaken by Councillors or Council staff
- Register of Conflicts of Interest disclosed by Councillors or Council staff
- Register of gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to Councillors or Council staff
- Public submissions made by Council
- Register of donations and grants made by Council
- Register of leases entered into by Council, as lessor and lessee
- Register of Delegations
- Register of Authorised Officers
- Summary of Personal Interests Returns
- Summary of Election Campaign Donation Returns
- Submissions received under section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 (until its repeal) or feedback received through a community engagement process undertaken by Council.



Borella Park Korong Vale war statue.



2022 RUOK staff morning tea with Cindy Gould, Community Consumer and Volunteer Engagement Officer, from IDHS.

Health Records Act 2001

Council collects health data, particularly in the community service area, to be used solely for the primary purpose for which it is collected or directly related purposes.

Council may disclose this information to other health professionals for continuity of care. If a referral to another health professional is required, consent is obtained unless exempted by other legislation.

Carers Recognition Act 2012

The Carers Recognition Act 2012 defines every council in Victoria as a 'public service care agency' and therefore a 'care support organisation'. As a consequence, councils are required to comply with the Act and to report on this in their annual reports from 2012/13 and thereafter.

This reporting requirement impacts across a wide range of Council activities, including human resources, home and community care, aged and disability services, leisure and recreation, community services, and family and children's services.

Child Safe Standards

Council is committed to protecting the interests and safety of children. Council has zero tolerance for child abuse. As part of its commitment, an organisational-wide approach has been developed to embed a child safe environment. In June 2022 Council revised the Child Safe Standards Statement of Commitment and adopted an updated Child Safe Standards Policy and Child Safe Standards Framework that incorporate the amendments made to the Child Safe Standards as at 1 January 2023.

Council has taken all practicable measures to comply with its responsibilities outlined in the Act. Council has promoted the principles of the Act to people in care relationships and to the wider community by distributing printed material through relevant Council services, displaying posters at Council community venues and providing information to organisations represented in Council and community networks.

Council has also taken all practicable measures to ensure that staff, Council agents and volunteers working for us are informed about the principles and obligations of the Act by including information on the care relationship in Council induction and training programs for staff working in home and community care and disability services.

Contracts

Council did not enter into any other contracts valued at \$250K or more for goods or services without engaging in a competitive process.

Disability Action Plan

In accordance with the Victorian Disability Act 2006, Council adopted its fourth Disability Action Plan in February 2018. The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021, now known as the Access and Inclusion Plan (AIP), was extended to March 2023. The Access and Inclusion Plan will form one of the key pillars in the upcoming Inclusive Communities Plan which also encompasses positive ageing.

Achievements to date include:

- Embedding the Community Engagement Policy and Procedure to support staff to engage respectfully and inclusively with, and consider the needs of, community members during engagement processes.
- Continued consideration of universal design principles in all applicable infrastructure projects. Examples include the Bridgewater Foreshore and Inglewood Swimming Pool projects; Activating Open Spaces Strategy; Healthy Loddon Campaspe projects such as the Boort, Pyramid Hill, Wedderburn and Inglewood outdoor exercise equipment; and the Donaldson Park play space project plans.

- Updating Council website software to ensure compatibility with the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- Continued delivery of disability awareness training during staff induction.
- Delivery of training to relevant staff on how to write in easy English.
- Partnering with City of Greater Bendigo to implement the Champions for Change project to increase supports for persons living with a disability to secure employment.

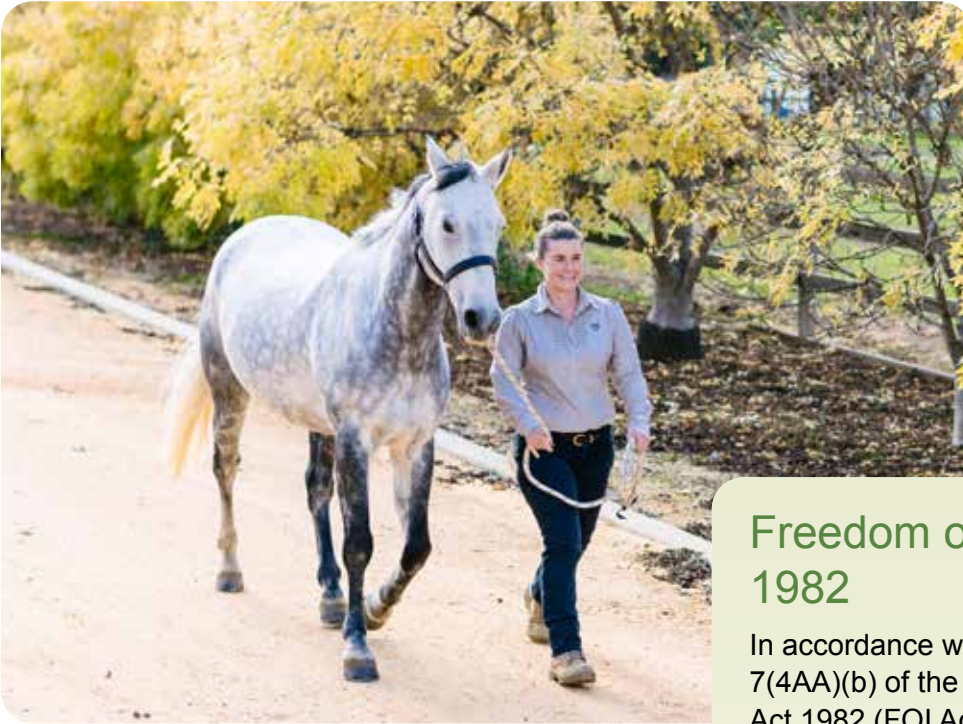
Domestic Animal Management Plan

Council is required to evaluate its implementation of domestic animal management initiatives in the annual report. Staff continue to implement initiatives from the 2018-21 plan, with some aspects being impacted or otherwise delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A new Domestic Animal Management Plan will be prepared in accordance with State Government timeframes.

The occurrence of stray and feral cat populations continue to be a source of complaints from residents. Programs in Inglewood, Boort, Wedderburn, Pyramid Hill and Tarnagulla, in partnership with local residents, enabled feral cats being trapped and other stray/unclaimed cats finding new forever homes. Cat traps were also distributed generally throughout the municipality upon request.



Corporate staff meeting July 2022.



Council's continued initiative in promoting the benefits of 'register your dog/cat, get it back for free' were particularly advantageous throughout this time, with several successful pet returns to owners reducing costs to pet owners and ultimately reducing instances of impounded animals. Staff place an emphasis on avoiding impoundments wherever possible.

Animal control staff have also noted an increase in pet surrenders and general requests for assistance with rehoming pets or seeking financial help to meet the costs of desexing pets.

Other actions have included:

- inspecting domestic animal businesses
- conducting joint inspections with RSPCA officers regarding various dog breeding activities
- investigating and resolving potential dangerous or menacing dog complaints, including dog attacks
- participating in online animal welfare forums and workshops
- assisting in the Victorian Government Pet Exchange Register
- undertaking appropriate staff training and development programs

Freedom of Information Act 1982

In accordance with section 7(4AA)(a) and 7(4AA)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act), Council is required to publish certain statements in its annual report or separately such as on its website, concerning its functions and information available. Council has chosen to publish the statements separately, however provides the following summary of the application and operation of the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

Access to documents may be obtained through written request to the Freedom of Information Officer, as detailed in section 17 of the FOI Act and in summary requests should:

- be in writing
- identify as clearly as possible which document is being requested
- be accompanied by the appropriate application fee (the fee may be reduced or waived in certain circumstances).

Requests for access to information under the FOI Act should be addressed to the Freedom of Information Officer and lodged in person, via post or by email.

Further information regarding Freedom of Information requests, including applicable fees and charges is available from Council's website.

During the year, Council received five valid requests under the FOI Act.

Food Act Ministerial Directions

In accordance with section 7E of the Food Act 1984, Council is required to publish a summary of any Ministerial Directions received during the financial year in its annual report.

No such Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the 2022/23 year.

Protected Disclosures

In accordance with section 69 of the Protected Disclosure Act 2012, a council must include in its annual report information about how to access the procedures established by the council under Part 9 of that Act. It is also required to provide certain information about the number and types of protected disclosure complaints investigated during the financial year.

The Protected Disclosure Act 2012 aims to ensure openness and accountability in government by encouraging people to disclose improper conduct within the public sector and provide protection for people who make disclosures. Procedures on how to make a disclosure are outlined in Council's Public Interest (Protected Disclosure) Policy which is available to the public on Council's website.

During 2022/23 no disclosures were notified to Council officers appointed to receive disclosures, and no known disclosures were notified to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

Road Management Act Ministerial Directions

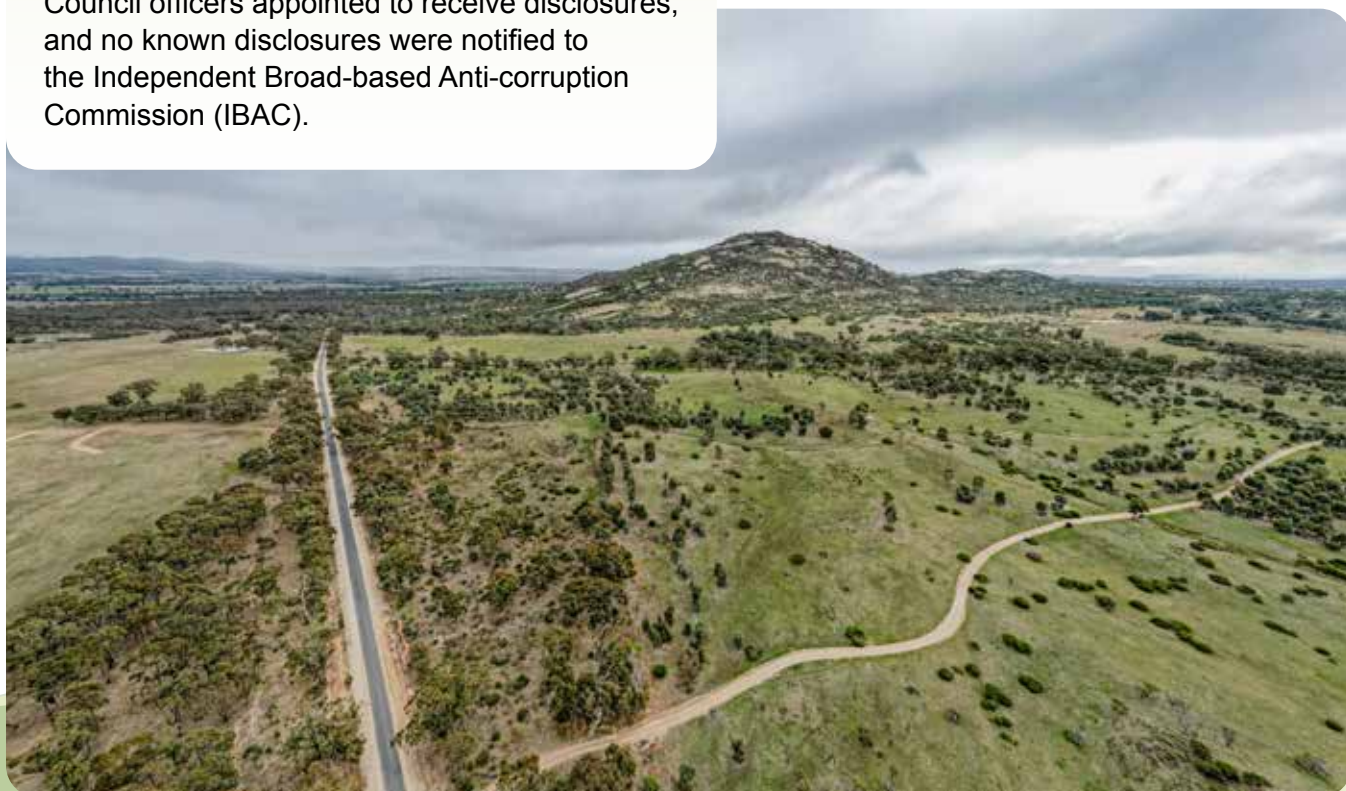
In accordance with section 22 of the Road Management Act 2004, Council must publish a copy or summary of any Ministerial Direction in its annual report.

No Ministerial Directions were received by Council during the 2022/23 year.

Infrastructure and development contributions

In accordance with section 46GM and 46QD of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, a council that is a collecting or development agency must prepare and give a report to the Minister for Planning on infrastructure and development contributions including levies and works in kind. The report must be published in Council's annual report.

For the 2022/23 year there were no infrastructure and development contributions.



Mount Korong



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