

Mount Alexander Shire Council

Progress Report 2022-2023

Working together for a healthy, connected shire



Progress report

Planning and reporting

We have a legislative planning framework that helps link the strategies in our four-year Council Plan to the actions in our annual plan and budget each year.

The Council Plan 2021-2025 includes strategic objectives under three pillars:

- A healthy, connected and inclusive community
- An environment for people and nature
- A resilient and growing local economy

This report demonstrates progress against our objectives by reporting on major initiatives, service performance indicators, financial indicators and sustainable capacity. Refer to pages 42-43 for a description of services funded in the budget.

There are opportunities for community and stakeholder input at each stage of the planning, budget and reporting cycle.

The 2022/2023 Annual Plan was adopted by Council on 9 July 2022, with actions presented under our objectives (listed below).

Our pillars



A healthy, connected and inclusive community



An environment for people and nature



A resilient and growing economy

Our objectives

Services in our community are accessible and coordinated

Our community is inclusive and connected

Our community feels safe, regardless of identity or circumstance

Our community is physically and mentally healthy

We are working locally to address the climate emergency

We are maintaining, improving and celebrating our places and spaces

Our community is growing in harmony with nature

We are focused on the housing affordability challenge in our community

We are facilitating managed growth of our towns while protecting natural assets

Our local economy is diverse and resilient

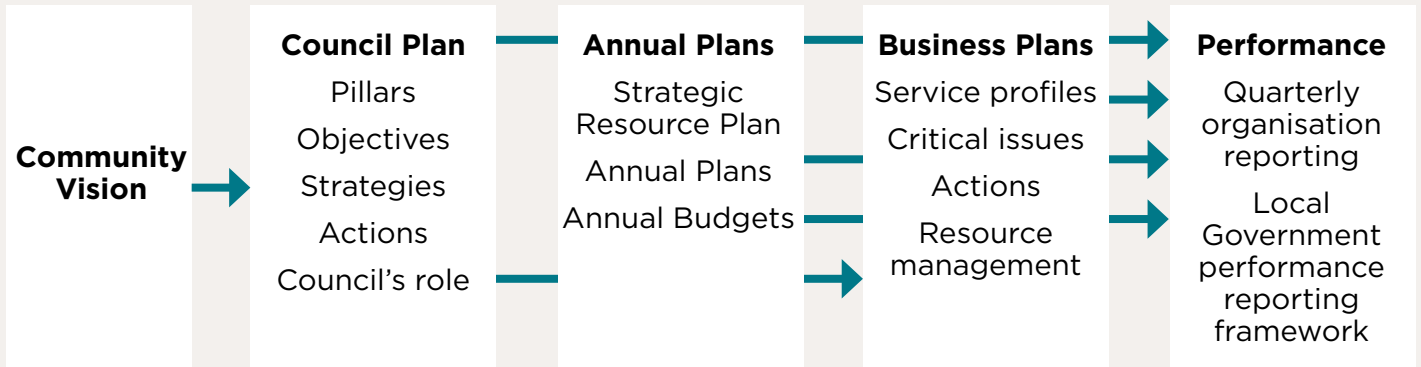
We are supporting continuous learning and personal growth

We are helping businesses make their work simpler and more sustainable

We are attracting and building investment in our cultural and creative community

Corporate reporting framework

The following diagram shows the relationships between our key planning and reporting documents.



Strategic objectives

Our principles

- We are engaging genuinely with the community
- We are always improving
- We are delivering together

Progress

Our community feels heard and is able to influence and participate in the decisions that impact upon them

Project	Description	%	Comments
Improve our capability to apply our Community Engagement Framework	Adopt a Community Engagement Strategy	80%	The strategy is due to be endorsed by Council at the October 2023 Meeting.

Council is response to the needs of the communities it serves

Project	Description	%	Comments
Rebuild our website	Rebuild our website	100%	Site successfully launched on 20 June 2023 with very positive initial feedback.

Strategic objectives



A healthy, connected and inclusive community

Population | Health | Wellbeing | Support | Resilience | Partnerships | Social services | Connections

Services in our community are accessible and coordinated

- Partner with community groups and agencies to deliver better services
- Improve accessibility of Council services
- Enhance Council's services to be more coordinated and collaborative
- Support organisations to provide a safe, healthy and engaging environment for volunteers.

Our community is inclusive and coordinated

- Recognise, support and celebrate the diversity within our community
- Increase access to inclusive and useable spaces for all seasons
- Support events that celebrate our community and bring people together
- Ensure Council is a leader in equity and gender equality.

Our community feels safe, regardless of identity or circumstance

- Improve the safety and wellbeing for LGBTIQ+ and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) members of our community
- Build community resilience by working together with the community, key stakeholders and emergency service providers to plan and prepare for, respond to, and recover from health and environmental emergencies
- Implement initiatives to change the behaviours and attitudes that contribute to family violence in our community.

Our community is supported to be physically and mentally healthy

- Increase active transport options
- Support healthy eating locally
- Improve access to mental health services locally
- Improve access to information and services for older people and people with disability
- Build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Progress

Services in our community are accessible and coordinated

Project	Description	%	Comments
Progress the Health Precinct Master Plan	Advocate for completion of the Hub Master Plan, to inform the Health Precinct Master Plan	10%	Awaiting announcement of completion of Health Hub Masterplan by the Health Building Authority.
Implement the Disability Inclusion Action Plan	Establish the Disability Inclusion Action Plan Working Group	100%	Group established comprising six community representatives and four Council Officers. Meetings have now commenced.
Respond to Age Care reforms	Undertake an independent review to determine the position of Council prior to the rollout of Federal Government reforms commencing 2023/2024	90%	Draft Aged Care Service Review report completed and scheduled for consideration by Council in September 2023.

Our community is inclusive and coordinated

Project	Description	%	Comments
Upgrade community recreation facilities	Install sports ground lighting at the Newstead Recreation Reserve	100%	Project complete and officially opened by Maree Edwards MP in October 2022.
Connecting walking and cycling trails	Completion of the Campbells Creek walking and cycling trail	20%	Cultural Heritage Management Plan, preliminary design, and vegetation assessment complete. Design due in August 2023. Awaiting extension advice from funding body.
Walking and Cycling Strategy	Adopt the Active Transport Strategy	90%	Public feedback will be presented to Councillors in August 2023. Strategy scheduled for adoption at the September 2023 Council meeting.

Our community is supported to be physically and mentally healthy

Project	Description	%	Comments
Improving active transport	Develop localised active transport initiatives that support health and wellbeing	100%	Awaiting further grant funding rounds to be announced late 2023 for any future funding and delivery options to be explored.
Improving road safety	Completion of Fogarty's Gap Road stage 1 upgrade	50%	Works have been postponed due to environmental issues; expected to recommence November 2023.
Disability Inclusion Action Plan	Adopt the Disability Inclusion Action Plan	90%	Plan is scheduled for adoption at September 2023 Meeting of Council.



Service performance indicators

The following statement provides the results of prescribed service indicators and measures.

Animal management

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Timeliness Time taken to action animal management requests (Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests)	1.64	1.41	1.84	1.76	All Animal Management requests are actioned within 1-2 business days.
Service standard Animals reclaimed (Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected) x 100	41.12%	46.92%	45.51%	40.84%	There has been a 20% increase in animals reclaimed. However, there has been a 193% increase in surrender of dogs by the public. This is due to the fact people bought dogs during the pandemic and now that most people have returned to the workplace they can no longer care for the dog/want the dog.
Service standard Animals rehomed [Number of animals rehomed / Number of animals collected] x100	44.38%	40.41%	44.85%	45.79	Animals rehomed continued to improve.
Service cost Cost of animal management service per population [Direct cost of the animal management service / Population]	\$19.51	\$17.10	\$19.86	\$24.59	An increase to permanent staff during 2022/2023 has increased employee costs.
Health and safety Animal management prosecutions [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	100%	100%	100%	0.00%	No animal prosecutions were undertaken for 2022/2023.

Food safety

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Timeliness Time taken to action food complaints (Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints)	1.00	5.67	3.50	4.14	Internal staff shortages and changeover created disruption and setbacks compared to prior year's performance and achievements.
Service standard Food safety assessments (Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984 / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984) x 100	95.33%	100%	52.17%	51.14%	Internal staff shortages and changeover created disruption and setbacks compared to prior year's performance and achievements.
Service cost Cost of food safety service (Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984)	\$349.24	\$365.81	\$320.79	\$328.50	While there has been an increase of 8% in the number of registered premises, there has been a 13% increase in the cost of providing the service compared to 2021/2022.
Health & safety Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications (Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises) x 100	100.00%	16.22%	61.54%	90.91%	Similar to the improvement in 2021/2022, critical and major non-compliance follow-ups increased as inspection routines return to normal after several years of COVID-19 lockdowns.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Service standard Infant enrolments in the MCH service [Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100	100.74%	102.82%	100%	99.27	All births were enrolled in the Maternal and Child Health service.
Service cost Cost of the MCH service (Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses)	\$66.37	\$70.77	\$68.46	73.65	MCH Enhanced services commenced in the 2019/2020 year but these costs were excluded from this indicator in error. If this service was included in the costs, the result adjusts to \$76.30 for 2019/2020. There has been a 5% increase in service costs and a 2% decrease in MCH nurse hours worked compared to 2021/2022.
Participation Participation in the MCH service (Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service) x 100	86.50%	87.34%	84.66%	82.39%	Attendance decreased by 2.6% while enrolments remained stable.
Participation Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children (Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service) x 100	77.78%	96.77%	87.88%	86.84%	Low numbers of Aboriginal children (9 in 2019/2020, 15 in 2020/2021, 16.5 in 2021/2022, 19 in 2022/2023) can skew the percentage change between years.
Satisfaction Participation in 4-week Key Age and Stage visit [Number of 4-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100	96.30%	92.25%	86.79%	97.81%	Two children were born in June therefore not eligible for 4-week KAS visit.



Strategic objectives



A flourishing environment for nature and people

**Buildings | Sport and recreation facilities | Roads | Footpaths | Drainage | Trails
| Playgrounds | Gardens | Natural environment | Waste | Recycling | Heritage**

We are working locally to address the climate emergency

- Partner with the community to reduce emissions across the shire
- Reduce Council emissions to zero by 2025
- Protect our biodiversity values
- Protect and celebrate our Indigenous and European heritage
- Foster connection to place
- Protect urban and landscape character.

We are focused on the housing affordability challenge in our community

- Ensure there is sufficient residential land that caters for the existing and future community needs
- Support state-wide initiatives to increase affordable housing supply
- Encourage diverse housing options and infill residential development in appropriate locations.

Our community is growing in harmony with nature

- Manage sustainable township growth and development
- Reduce waste and increase resource recovery
- Review, maintain, renew and expand sustainable assets of our community
- Partner and support the community to deliver green infrastructure outcomes
- Promote sustainable use of water.

We are facilitating managed growth of our towns while protecting natural assets

- Coordinate land use, urban design and infrastructure planning for towns
- Ensure there is sufficient residential, commercial and industrial land to meet demand
- Protect agricultural land that contributes or can contribute to local food systems from residential development.

Progress

We are working locally to address the climate emergency

Project	Description	%	Comments
Address the Climate Emergency	Adopt a ten-year Climate Change Strategy	100%	Adopted at 20 June 2023 Council Meeting.

We are maintaining, improving and celebrating our places and spaces

Project	Description	%	Comments
Planning Scheme amendment - Maldon Design Guidelines	Complete the Planning Scheme amendment to introduce the Maldon Design Guidelines (C96malx) into the Planning Scheme	100%	Amendment C96malx - Maldon Design Guidelines was approved by the Minister and were introduced to the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme on 30 March 2023.
Small town streetscape upgrade	Completion of small town streetscapes in Campbells Creek, Chewton, Elphinstone, Guildford, Newstead and Taradale	100%	All works are complete, with the exception of installation of decorative discs in Newstead and town entry sign in Taradale.
Manage Council's public art	Adopt a Public Art Policy	100%	Policy adopted at Meeting of Council December 2022.

Our community is growing in harmony with nature

Project	Description	%	Comments
Improve the function of community facilities	Complete the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects that deliver upgrades to recreation reserves, community buildings and roads	95%	All projects are complete apart from the kitchen upgrade at the Chewton Senior Citizens Centre, which is due for completion in August 2023.
Campbells Creek Master Plan	Update the Master Plan for the Campbells Creek Recreation Reserve	100%	The Campbells Creek Master Plan was adopted at the November 2022 Meeting of Council.
Improving community facilities	Detailed design of the Camp Reserve Pavilion and associated hardcourts	40%	The procurement phase for a Town Planning Consultant and a Project Manager is currently underway and will complete in August 2023, with the aim to submit the town planning application late 2023/early 2024.
Castlemaine Urban Waterways Management Plan	Complete construction of the National School Lane levee and commence construction of Castlemaine and Campbells Creek levees	15%	National School Lane design contract awarded. Construction to commence in 2023/2024.
Castlemaine Landfill Cell Capping	Complete cell capping at the Castlemaine Landfill	100%	Completed in May 2023.
Building Asset Management Plan	Adopt a ten year Building Asset Management Plan	95%	The draft Building Asset Management Plan will be presented at the July 2023 Council meeting for adoption.
Bridge construction	Commence construction of the Vaughan-Tarilta low level bridge	20%	Design review is underway, with cultural heritage and vegetation assessment due August 2023. Funding body has granted an extension to June 2024. Retendering for contractors planned for October 2023.

Our community is growing in harmony with nature

Project	Description	%	Comments
Manage sustainable township growth and development	Adopt a Domestic Wastewater Management Plan	100%	The Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2023-2027 was adopted by Council on 16 May 2023.
Glass recycling trial	Completion and evaluation of trial	50%	Glass skip bins and recycling trailers delivered. Trial on hold awaiting clarification from the State Government regarding the four-bin system.
The future of waste	Adopt an updated ten year Waste Strategy	50%	Draft strategy to be exhibited publicly in July 2023.

We are focused on the housing affordability challenge in our community

Project	Description	%	Comments
Affordable housing	Investigate options for affordable housing in the shire	75%	Development of Council's Templeton Street sites is progressing in partnership with Haven Home Safe. Developments on State Government and private land also being pursued. Harcourt Planning Scheme Amendment to enable significant land release is 95% complete.

We are facilitating managed growth of our towns while protecting natural assets

Project	Description	%	Comments
Industrial land review	Undertake a shire-wide industrial land supply and demand study	10%	Consultant has been appointed. Discussion paper to be released for community engagement in late 2023.



Service performance indicators

The following statement provides the results of prescribed service indicators and measures.

Roads

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Satisfaction of use Sealed local road requests (Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads) x100	43.72	49.62	2.76	5.87	The number of local road customer requests received in 2022/2023 increased by 17 from 2021/2022, but still remain low (total 32). The outcome could be the result of more defects being identified and repaired as a result of regular maintenance activities and council Road Management Plan inspections.
Condition Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards (Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads) x100	96.64%	94.45%	97.02%	97.25%	The majority of sealed roads are in good condition, according to a recent survey of road conditions in 2020/2021.
Service cost Cost of sealed local road reconstruction (Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed)	\$71.04	\$30.20	\$24.47	\$52.00	Road reconstruction unit rates vary depending on a variety of variables, including project value, specifications, the length, width, and depth of the road, material types, design criteria, and other related works, such as minor drainage, shoulders, cut/fill, and resource availability. Therefore, price fluctuation on road reconstruction projects is unavoidable for a rural council. In comparison to the 2021/2022 financial year, the unit rate nearly doubled in 2022/2023. It might be the cause of the project's scope and the increased demand for civil contractors following the pandemic. However, the unit rate is within the targeted range.

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Service cost Cost of sealed local road resealing (Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed)	\$6.71	\$12.55	\$8.02	\$8.51	Road resealing unit rates depend on a variety of parameters, including seal designs, road lengths, widths, aggregate sizes, material types, functionalities of the road, associated preparation work, resources on hand, etc. Therefore, a rural council cannot avoid price fluctuations for road resealing projects. Due to the aforementioned factors, the unit rate was slightly raised from 2021/2022 to 2022/2023. However, the unit rate falls within the targeted range.
Satisfaction Satisfaction with sealed local roads (Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads)	50.00	56.00	51.00	47.00	There was a slight decline in customer satisfaction reported in the 2022/2023 survey, but overall, there haven't been any significant changes in the way Council provides services. The recent flood events may have contributed to the drop in satisfaction, but the council is still making great efforts to restore the roads to their pre-flood conditions.

Aquatic facilities

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Service standard Health inspections of aquatic facilities (Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	All pools were inspected and water quality tested during the financial year.
Utilisation Utilisation of aquatic facilities (Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population)	0.90	0.78	1.03	0.96	Council has four outdoor seasonal pools open from December through to the second Monday in March. This season patron attendances were slightly down on the previous year due to cooler summer temperatures. Also, due to these cooler temperatures the pools were closed for 20 days, which affected attendances.

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Service cost Cost of aquatic facilities (Direct cost of aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to aquatic facilities)	\$27.37	\$32.26	\$25.65	\$29.70	This summer saw a 6% decrease in attendances than the previous year (20,767 in 2021/2022), while costs increased by 8%. This was mainly due to an additional cost of undertaking a pool shell integrity audit.

Statutory Planning

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Timeliness Time taken to decide planning applications (The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application)	33.50	35.00	56.00	80.00	Higher staff turnover resulted in delays on planning decisions compared to 2022/2021.
Service standard Planning applications decided within required time frames (Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100	83.59%	87.74%	56.38%	26.43%	Significant change in staffing arrangements impacted decision timeframes.
Service cost Cost of statutory planning service (Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received)	\$1,458.05	\$1,290.11	\$1,049.84	\$2,419.53	Legal costs increased by 150% in 2022/2023 with a number of complex VCAT issues that required legal representation, compared to 2021/2022. In addition, employee costs increased by 38% due to higher than average staff turnover.
Decision making Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT (Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications) x100	33.33%	75%	66.67%	80.00%	There were five VCAT decisions during this reporting period, with four being upheld by VCAT. Numbers of appeals made to VCAT were three in 2021/2022 and four in 2020/2021.

Waste Collection

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Satisfaction Kerbside bin collection requests (Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households) x 1000	136.31	136.45	141.82	149.01	Kerbside bin collection requests increased slightly compared to 2021/2022.
Service standard Kerbside bin collection missed (Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts) x 10,000	6.22	5.76	7.28	7.60	Increased number of rural households with a kerbside waste/ recycling service can cause occasional collection issues.
Service cost Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service (Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins)	\$121.85	\$139.22	\$161.24	\$167.32	There has been a 6% increase in the costs of processing general waste compared to 2021/2022.
Service cost Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service (Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins)	\$77.96	\$90.63	\$75.41	\$71.33	There has been a 1% decrease in the costs of processing recyclables compared to 2021/2022.
Waste diversion Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill (Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins) x100	36.30%	34.08%	34.09%	35.02%	Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill has improved by 2.75% compared to 2021/2022.



Strategic objectives



A resilient and growing local economy

Business | Economy | Jobs | Education | Creativity | Innovation | Tourism | Culture | Events

Our local economy is diverse and resilient

- Partner with local businesses to build a regional, circular economy
- Support tourism sector to respond to new opportunities and recover from the COVID pandemic
- Promote economic opportunities for social inclusion
- Advocate for improved digital access and connectivity
- Develop tourism products that champion our cultural, environmental and social values.

We are supporting continuous learning and personal growth

- Support and advocate for high quality education for people of all ages
- Promote an accessible range of services for all, including children, young people and families
- Support training for career and life transitions.

We are helping businesses make their work simpler and more sustainable

- Simplify how businesses can work with Council
- Support the business community to work together.

We are attracting and building investment in our cultural and creative community

- Promote and build capacity of creative arts and industries
- Support innovative industries and individuals
- Encourage resurgence of live music and events locally
- Continue to work with change to the local Indigenous community and First Australians to celebrate Indigenous culture.

Progress

We are helping businesses make their work simpler and more sustainable

Project	Description	%	Comments
Supporting Business Mount Alexander	Support Business Mount Alexander to develop a strategic plan	70%	New delivery time for the strategy is September 2023.
Economic Development Strategy	Adopt an Economic Development Strategy	10%	Draft strategy proposed for exhibition in second quarter of 2023.

Our economy is diverse and resilient

Project	Description	%	Comments
Welcome to Country	Complete the Boorp Boorp Boondyil installation in the Market Building	10%	The exhibition was successfully launched in November 2022.
Early Years Plan	Adopt an updated four-year Early Years Plan	100%	Early Years Plan adopted by Council at the April 2023 Meeting of Council.
Middle Years Plan	Adopt an updated four-year Middle Years Plan	90%	The plan is scheduled for adoption at the September 2023 Meeting of Council.
Increase education, training and work opportunities	Work in partnership with local training and education providers to boost education and training opportunities	70%	The Passion and Pathways Program 2022 is completed. State election commitment to increase Bendigo Kangan Institute (BKI) services in Castlemaine being explored in partnership with local MP, BKI and Castlemaine Health.

Service performance indicators

The following statement provides the results of prescribed service indicators and measures.

Libraries

Service / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Utilisation Physical library collection usage (Number of physical library collection item loans / Number of physical library collection items)	4.87	5.22	5.33	5.79	In 2020/2021 the library was closed for 87 days during COVID-19 lockdowns, reducing the access of borrowers to the collection. For 2022/2023 loans have increased by 3% while collection items have decreased by 5%, compared to 2021/2022.
Resource standard Recently purchased library collection (Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items) x100	72.10%	72.10%	72.10%	72.10%	No change in library collection items purchased.
Participation Active library borrowers in municipality (Number of active library borrowers in the last three years/the sum of the population for the last three years) x100	23.10%	20.22%	17.85%	18.04%	In 2020/2021 the library was closed for 87 days during COVID-19 lockdowns, reducing the ability of people to be active borrowers. Average borrower numbers over the last three years (2020/2021 to 2022/2023) have increased by 2% each year while average population over the last three years has only increased by 1%.
Service cost Cost of library service per population (Direct cost of the library service / Population)	\$27.93	\$27.85	\$28.09	\$28.37	No change in cost of library services.



Performance statement

For the year ended 30 June 2023

Our shire

Our community comprises more than 20,000 people with most living in and around the townships of Castlemaine, Harcourt, Maldon, Campbells Creek, Newstead, Elphinstone, Guildford, Chewton and Taradale.

Located within commuting distance of Melbourne and Bendigo, the popularity of the shire continues to grow as new residents move to the area to make the most of the lifestyle and all the shire has to offer.

Further information is detailed in the Annual Report 2022/2023.

Sustainable capacity indicators

The following statement provides the results of prescribed service indicators and measures.

Population

Indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Population Expenses per head of municipal population (Total expenses / Municipal population)	\$1,977.02	\$2,151.62	\$2,268.87	\$2,154.89	Expenses in 2021/2022 were higher than usual mainly due to the increase in the provision for landfill liability to reflect the estimated costs associated with cell capping at the Castlemaine landfill. With the cell capping works completed in 2022/2023 expenses have decreased by 4%.
Population Infrastructure per head of municipal population (Value of infrastructure / Municipal population)	\$16,974.79	\$17,152.89	\$18,075.10	\$18,422.53	\$9.7 million (net) in asset revaluations were undertaken on buildings, roads, bridges, drainage, kerb and channel, and footpath asset classes in 2022/2023. In addition, capital works to maintain the Shire's assets and infrastructure continue in line with the long term Financial Plan, with the assistance of grant funding, while population growth remains low.

Indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Population Population density per length of road (Municipal population / Kilometres of local roads)	13.86	14.03	14.10	14.22	Population growth remains low (1%) with minimal change in length of local roads.
Own-source revenue Own-source revenue per head of municipal population (Own-source revenue / Municipal population)	\$1,385.64	\$1,495.28	\$1,444.69	\$1,569.39	2022/2023 includes a decrease to the estimated future provision for the cost of landfill rehabilitation (\$933k) that is required to be recognised as income. In addition, interest earned on term deposits is \$746,494 greater than in 2021/2022. Population growth continues to remain low.
Recurrent grants Recurrent grants per head of municipal population (Recurrent grants / Municipal population)	\$427.10	\$442.28	\$543.37	\$564.75	A greater increase to recurrent operating grant funding occurred in 2022/2023 with 100% (\$6.31 million) of the 2023/2024 allocation of Federal Assistance Grant funding brought forward, while population growth remains low.
Disadvantage Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by decile)	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	Socio-economic disadvantage index remains stable compared to prior years.
Workforce turnover Percentage of staff turnover [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x100	16.0%	15.1%	34.2%	18.7%	An error was identified in calculating staff turnover in 2021/2022 whereby casuals and fixed term resignations/terminations were included. The result should have been 22.83%. Comparing to the correct measure, year-on-year, staff turnover has decreased by 18.22% and appears to be returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Definitions

Infrastructure

Non-current property, plant and equipment excluding land.

Local roads

Sealed or unsealed roads for which Council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004. It includes right-of-ways and laneways.

Own-source revenue

Adjusted underlying revenue excluding revenue which is not under the control of Council (including government grants).

Non-recurrent grants

Operating or capital grants obtained on the condition that they may be expended in a specified manner and not expected to be received again during the period covered by the Financial Plan.

Population

Means the resident population of the municipal district estimated by Council.

Recurrent grants

Operating or capital grant other than non-recurrent grants.

Relative socio-economic disadvantage

In relation to a municipality, means a general socio-economic index that summarises a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area. The index includes only measures of relative disadvantage and is expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year of the area in which the municipality is located according to the Victorian Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (Catalogue Number 2033.0.55.001).

Resignations and terminations

All permanent employees (including senior officers on contract) that leave Council and includes resignations, terminations, retirements and redundancies. This should exclude short term contingent workers i.e. contracts of less than six months.

Total expenses

Total expenditure or costs incurred or required.

Service performance indicators

Indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Utilisation Utilisation of aquatic facilities (Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population)	0.90	0.78	1.03	0.96	Council has four outdoor seasonal pools open from December through to the second Monday in March. This season patron attendances were slightly down on the previous year due to cooler summer temperatures. Also, due to these cooler temperatures the pools were closed for 20 days, which affected attendances.
Health and safety – Animal Management Animal management prosecutions (Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions) x100	100%	100%	100%	0%	No animal prosecutions were undertaken for 2022/2023.
Health and safety – Food Safety Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications (Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises) x100	100.00%	16.22%	61.54%	90.91%	Similar to the improvement in 2021/2022, critical and major non-compliance follow-ups increased as inspection routines return to normal after several years of COVID-19 lockdowns.
Satisfaction – governance Satisfaction with council decisions (Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community).	49	55	50	48	Council has endeavoured to raise public awareness of its decisions, meetings, and activities through media releases, live streaming of Council meetings to the internet, and actively encouraging community involvement in projects via our online community engagement platform.
Participation – libraries Active library borrowers in municipality [Number of active library borrowers in the last three years / The sum of the population for the last three years] x100	23.10%	20.22%	17.85%	18.04%	In 2020/2021 the library was closed for 87 days during COVID-19 lockdowns, reducing the ability of people to be active borrowers. Average borrower numbers over the last three years (2020/2021 to 2022/2023) have increased by 2% each year while average population over the last three years has only increased by 1%.

Service performance indicators

Indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
<p>Participation — Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Participation in the MCH service (Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service.) x100</p>	86.50%	87.34%	84.31%	82.39%	Attendance decreased by 2.6% while enrolments remained stable.
<p>Participation — Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children (Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once [in the year] / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service) x100</p>	77.78%	96.77%	87.88%	86.84%	Low numbers of Aboriginal children (9 in 2019/2020, 15 in 2020/2021, 16.5 in 2021/2022, 19 in 2022/2023) can skew the percentage change between years.
<p>Satisfaction — roads Satisfaction with sealed local roads (Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads).</p>	50	56	51	47	There was a slight decline in customer satisfaction reported in the 2022/2023 survey, but overall, there haven't been any significant changes in the way Council provides services. The recent flood events may have contributed to the drop in satisfaction, but the council is still making great efforts to restore the roads to their pre-flood conditions.
<p>Decision making — statutory planning Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT (Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications.) x100</p>	33.33%	75.00%	66.67%	80.00%	There were five VCAT decisions during this reporting period, with four being upheld by VCAT. Numbers of appeals made to VCAT were three in 2021/2022 and four in 2020/2021.
<p>Waste collection — waste diversion Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill (Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins.) x100</p>	36.30%	34.08%	34.09%	35.02%	Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill has improved by 2.75% compared to 2021/2022.

Retired measures

Indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Health & safety — animal management Animal management prosecutions (Number of successful animal management prosecutions)	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	This measure was replaced by Animal management prosecutions (%) for 2020.

Definitions

Aboriginal

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Active library borrower

Borrower of a library who has borrowed a book or other resource from the library.

Aquatic facility

A Council operated facility that includes at least one wet area for swimming and/or water play. The facility may be operated on a seasonal basis or available for use all year round. It excludes facilities where council does not have operational control.

Book or other resources

All print material (such as books, magazines, serials, maps, plans, manuscripts), audio visual and digital materials (such as audio books, CDs, CD-ROMs, videos, computer games, e-books), toys, games and equipment on hand (that can be reserved or borrowed) at the end of the reporting period. This includes music streaming services and other such digital services where the borrowing of the service can be quantified. This does exclude the booking of library facilities e.g. meeting and conference rooms or outdoor areas.

Children

Children aged 0 to 3.5 years.

Critical non-compliance outcome notification

A notification received by Council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984, or advice given to Council by an authorised officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health and must be followed up by Council. This includes

situations where there is a serious risk of food being sold that is unsafe to eat. Each case must be examined on its merits, in deciding what outcome to assign to a compliance check.

Follow-up

Follow up of a critical non-compliance outcome notification or a major non-compliance outcome notification will normally involve Council inspecting the premises. It can include Council verifying that a non-compliance, which was originally detected at the initial audit phase by an auditor or authorised officer (and notified to Council under section 19N(3) of the Food Act) has been remedied by the business. In this case, Council must receive written confirmation of this fact from the auditor or authorised officer. Where a non-compliance outcome notification requires multiple follow up visits, only the first follow up visit is to be counted. The subsequent follow up visits should not be counted.

Kerbside collection bin

A container used as part of Council's formal kerbside collection systems.

Local road

A sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004. It includes right-of-ways and laneways.

Major non-compliance outcome notification

A notification received by a Council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984, or advice given to Council by an authorised officer under that Act, if it

relates to a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but which may do so if no remedial action is taken and must be followed up by the council. Typically, auditor or authorised officer notifications that fall into this category will be received under section 19N(4) at the conclusion of the audit process.

A number of major non-compliances may result in the outcome of the compliance check being categorised as critical, if when taken together they pose an immediate serious threat to public health. Judgement must be exercised about whether non-compliances detected amount to a critical or major non-compliance.

A number of major non-compliances may result in the outcome of the compliance check being categorised as critical, if when taken together they pose an immediate serious threat to public health. Judgement must be exercised about whether non-compliances detected amount to a critical or major non-compliance.”

MCH

The Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a Council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age.

Not set aside

Where the tribunal has found in favour of the original decision. The decision ‘Not Set Aside’ includes upheld, varied, affirmed, not appealed and remitted. In this context, ‘not appealed’ refers to VCAT’s decision not being appealed by the parties involved. The measure is concerned with decisions that are made by VCAT in support of Council’s decision.

Planning application

A completed regular or VicSmart planning permit application on the prescribed form lodged with a Council (the responsible authority) accompanied by a complete description of the proposal and the prescribed fee.

Population

The resident population of the municipal district estimated by Council.

Sealed local roads

Sealed local roads means sealed roads under the control of the municipality and includes the road pavement and road seal (and kerb and channel where applicable).

Successful animal management prosecutions

Any charge (excluding unpaid fines) brought by Council under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 against a defendant and found in favour of Council in a court of law, or where successfully appealed, in the appeal court. This would include the issuing of good behaviour bonds or court diversions. Where a group of charges is brought against a defendant, the group should be counted as one prosecution.

Total number of animal management prosecutions

Any charge (excluding unpaid fines) brought by Council under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 against a defendant in a court of law, or in the appeal court. Where a group of charges is brought against a defendant, the group should be counted as one prosecution.

VicSmart

A streamlined planning permit assessment process for low impact applications.

VCAT

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal hears cases and resolves disputes through negotiation, mediation and hearings

VCAT decisions

All decisions on applications for review by VCAT as per Part 4, Division 2 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. It does not include consent orders approved by VCAT or applications withdrawn..

Visit

A visit to an aquatic facility in person. It also includes attendees at carnivals.

Financial performance indicators

Dimension / indicator / measure	Forecast								
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Material variations
Efficiency expenditure level Expenses per property assessment (Total expenses / Number of property assessments)	\$3,285	\$3,561	\$3,711	\$3,537	\$3,553	\$3,615	\$3,642	\$3,707	Expenses in 2021/2022 were higher than usual mainly due to the increase in the provision for landfill liability to reflect the estimated costs associated with cell capping at the Castlemaine landfill. With the cell capping works completed in 2022/2023 expenses have decreased by 4%. Forecast results expect an average increase of 1%.
Efficiency Revenue level Average rate per property assessment (General rates and Municipal charges / Number of property assessments)	\$1,650	\$1,687	\$1,711	\$1,753	\$1,815	\$1,844	\$1,879	\$1,916	"Increase is in line with the Fair go Rate System (FGRS). Forecast results are conservatively averaging 2.2% rate caps, with property assessment numbers expected to remain stable."
Liquidity working capital Current assets compared to current liabilities (Current assets / Current liabilities) x100	300.02%	244.90%	186.20%	284.33%	392.05%	347.91%	403.20%	424.59%	Current liabilities decreased by 32% at 30 June 2023 with the completion of cell capping works (paid from the landfill provision) at the Castlemaine landfill). In comparison current assets increased by 3%. The ratio increases in forecast years to reflect the reduction in loan borrowings as existing loans are paid off.
Liquidity unrestricted cash Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities (Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities) x 100	-1.68%	-0.93%	-47.21%	-73.48%	-12.16%	70.95%	90.42%	103.86%	An error was identified in calculating unrestricted cash in prior years and results should have been 2019/2020 +27.02%, 2020/2021 -15.94% and 2021/2022 -47.03%. Council's term deposits are invested for periods of up to twelve months and these funds are not included in the calculation of unrestricted cash. If these funds were included, Council's unrestricted cash ratio would be 106.21% for 2022/2023. Carried forward capital works and conditional grants unspent are unknown and not considered for unrestricted cash in future years.

Dimension / indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Forecast			Material variations
						2025	2026	2027	
Obligations loans and borrowings Loans and borrowings compared to rates (Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue) x100	14.30%	12.76%	7.52%	6.55%	5.85%	5.24%	0.49%	0.00%	No new loans occurred during the year, while principal repayments were made across the year that reduced the level of borrowings. No new loans have currently been budgeted for.
Obligations loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates (Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue) x100	2.68%	1.55%	5.30%	1.04%	0.69%	0.67%	4.80%	0.48%	One loan was paid off during 2019/2020 year. Two loans were paid off during 2021/2022 year, including one that required a \$1M balloon repayment, and two loans were paid off and no new loans were drawn down in 2022/2023 year. No new loans have currently been budgeted for.
Obligations Indebtedness Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue (Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue) x100	34.15%	24.99%	14.82%	12.42%	13.60%	8.86%	7.72%	7.27%	Non-current liabilities decreased from June 2022 to June 2023 due to the decreased non-current provision for landfill rehabilitation costs as capping of the Castlemaine landfill was completed in May 2023. The continuation with declining own source revenue growth is expected in forecast years due to rate capping while non current liabilities are reducing with borrowings being paid off.

Dimension / indicator / measure	Forecast							Material variations	
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		2027
Obligations Asset renewal and upgrade Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation (Asset renewal and asset upgrade expense / Asset depreciation) x100	118.03%	67.75%	81.99%	84.86%	127.47%	119.88%	110.05%	118.21%	\$7.4M of renewal works were completed. during 2022/2023 and \$3.4M of new capital works was also completed. Forecast years focus more on completing renewal works and some upgrade works with the indicator returning to above 100% in 2023/2024.
Operating position Adjusted underlying result Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) (Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue) x100	-5.92%	2.88%	-9.03%	8.11%	-5.21%	-8.27%	-7.21%	-7.24%	Overall, income was 29% greater than budget, while expenses were 5% greater than budget. In terms of income, the 2023/2024 Federal Assistance Grants was paid early in 2022/2023 (\$6.3M), an unbudgeted amount of \$933k was recognised for a reduction in the expected future cost of landfill rehabilitation works, interest income was greater than budget by \$703k, and contributions, both monetary and non-monetary, were greater than budget by \$1.22 million.

Dimension / indicator / measure	Forecast								Material variations
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Stability Rates Concentration Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue (Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue) x100	65.30%	56.51%	61.54%	55.59%	65.76%	67.68%	67.88%	68.08%	Total rate revenue (including waste charges) increased by 2.7%. The adjusted underlying revenue increased by 13.7% in 2022/2023, due to an increase in operating grants received. This increase in grants is not expected to continue in forecast years.
Stability Rates effort Rates effort — Rates compared to property values (Rate revenue / CIV of rateable properties in the municipality) x100	0.45%	0.42%	0.40%	0.32%	0.30%	0.29%	0.29%	0.28%	Capital improved values (CIV) have increased at a greater rate than rates revenue and is expected to continue in forecast years.

Retired measures

Indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Efficiency — Revenue level Average residential rate per residential property assessment (Residential rate revenue / Number of residential property assessments)	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	This measure was replaced by Average rate per property assessment for 2020.
Obligations — Asset renewal Asset renewal compared to depreciation (Asset renewal expense / Asset depreciation) x100	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020	This measure was replaced by Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation for 2020.

Definitions

Adjusted underlying revenue

Total income other than:

- non-recurrent capital grants used to fund capital expenditure; and
- non-monetary asset contributions; and
- contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above.

Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)

Adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure.

Asset depreciation

Council's use of its physical assets through a systematic reduction in their value over time, usually to reflect wear and tear. Refers to total depreciation of all assets, not just the depreciation on renewed or upgraded assets.

Asset renewal expenditure

Expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability.

Asset upgrade expenditure

Expenditure that enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service or increases the life of the asset beyond its original life.

Capital improved value (CIV)

The market value of a property and is measured at the end of the year and includes all valuation adjustments (e.g. supplementary valuations).

Current assets

Assets that Council expects to recover or realise within the following financial year.

Current liabilities

An obligation or liability that is due to be settled, or paid, within one year.

Interest bearing loans and borrowings

A loan or borrowing in which the debt is expressed as a principal amount and interest is calculated, charged, and collected on unpaid balances.

Interest and principal repayments

Repayments made on principal amounts and/or interest from interest bearing loans or borrowings, where the debt is expressed as a principal amount and interest is calculated, charged, and collected on unpaid balances.

Non-current assets

All assets other than current assets.

Non-current liabilities

All financial liabilities that provide financing on a long-term basis and are not due for settlement within 12 months after the reporting period.

Non-recurrent grants

Operating or capital grants obtained on the condition that they be expended in a specified manner and not expected to be received again during the period covered by the Financial Plan.

Number of property assessments

Number of rateable properties as at 1 July.

Own-source revenue

Adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of Council (including government grants).

Population

The resident population of the municipal district estimated by council.

Rate revenue

Means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges (e.g. garbage, recycling and organic charges) levied on rateable properties.

Recurrent grants

Operating or capital grants other than a non-recurrent grant.

Restricted cash

Cash and cash equivalents and financial assets, within the meaning of the AAS, that are not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted and includes cash that will be used to fund carry forward capital works from the previous financial year. Items which are considered to be restricted under the definition are:

- trust funds and deposits
 - statutory or non-discretionary reserves
 - cash held to fund carry forward capital works
 - conditional grants unspent.
- term deposits with an original maturity of greater than 90 days (i.e. other financial assets) are also considered to be restricted under this definition.

Total rate revenue

Total revenue leviable from general rates, municipal charges and supplementary rates on rateable properties as at 1 July. This excludes service rates and service charges.

Unrestricted cash

All cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash.

Other Information

1. Basis of Preparation

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

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

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year and for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the results forecast by the council's Financial Plan. The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 requires

explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The forecast figures included in the performance statement are those adopted by Council in its Financial Plan on 20 June 2023 and which forms part of the council plan. The Financial Plan includes estimates based on key assumptions about the future that are relevant at the time of adoption adjusted to match definition required for performance statement reporting and aimed at achieving sustainability over the long term. Detailed information on the actual financial results is contained in the General Purpose Financial Statements. The Financial Plan is available on Council's website.

2. Impact of COVID 19 pandemic on Council operations and 2022-2023 performance statement

During 2022-23 the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact on Council's operations, however there were no significant impacts on its financial operations.

Certification of the Performance Statement

In my opinion, the accompanying Performance Statement has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government (Finance and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.



Carolyn Ross, Certified Practising Accountant (CPA)

Principal Accounting Officer

Date: 19.09.2023

In our opinion the accompanying Performance Statement of the Mount Alexander Shire Council for the year ended 30 June 2023 presents fairly in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

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

As at the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.

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



Councillor Rosie Annear

Mayor

Date: 19/9/2023



Councillor Matthew Driscoll

Councillor

Date: 19/9/23



Michael Annear

Acting Chief Executive Officer

Date: 19/09/2023



Independent Auditor's Report

To the Councillors of Mount Alexander Shire Council

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance statement

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

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

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

MELBOURNE
26 September 2023



Travis Derricott
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Mount Alexander Shire Council
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Castlemaine VIC 3450

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