

Mount Alexander Shire Council

Annual Report 2022-2023

Working together for a healthy, connected shire



Acknowledgement of country

Mount Alexander Shire Council acknowledges that the traditional custodians of this land, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples, proudly survive. We acknowledge their continued practise of custom and their close cultural, spiritual, physical, social, historical and economic relationship with the land and waters that make up their country, which includes Mount Alexander Shire.

Council recognises the Victorian Government's Recognition and Settlement with both the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council.



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Cover image of Werpila Larnuk (Eagle's Nest), created by master weaver Aunty Marilyn Nichols. Werpila Larnuk is made from natural materials and is on display at the Castlemaine Market building as part of the Boorp Boorp Boondyil exhibition. Find out more about how Council supported the development of this unique exhibition on page 22. Photography by Penny Ryan.

Inside cover acknowledgement artwork by local artist Daikota Nelson.

Introduction

About our Annual Report

Mount Alexander Shire Council's Annual Report informs our community about Council's operations and performance in the past financial year.

Like all Victorian Councils, we are required to prepare the Annual Report in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

The report is based upon the vision, principles and pillars of our Council Plan 2021-2025, and measures our progress

against our three pillars:

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

It also includes annual highlights and challenges, service performance indicators, and information about our finances and governance.

Our vision, principles and pillars

Our vision: Working together for a healthy, connected shire

Our principles: How we will work

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



Our pillars: What we want to achieve



A healthy, connected and inclusive community



An environment for people and nature



A resilient and growing economy

Our shire

Mount Alexander Shire – a snapshot

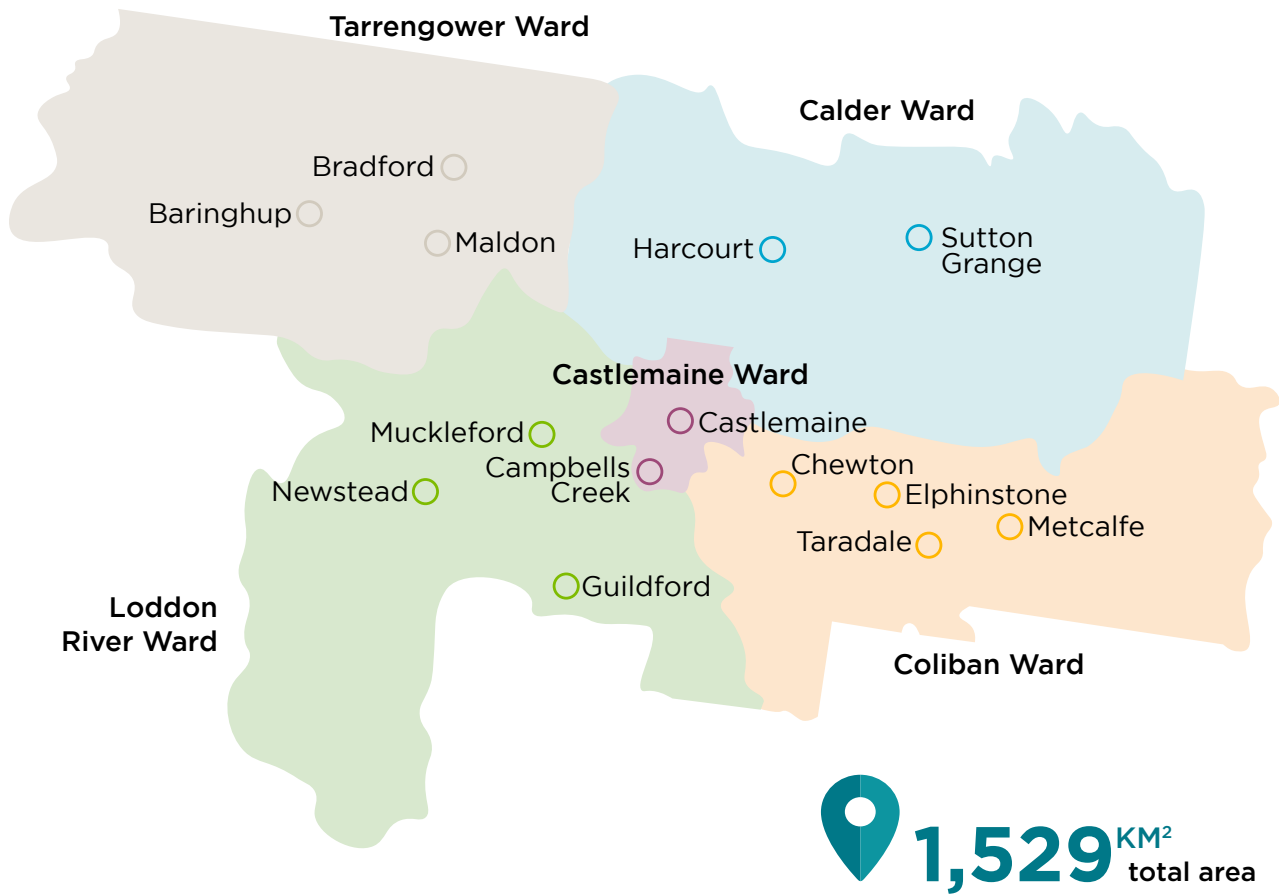
Mount Alexander Shire is diverse, with urban and rural communities. It has much to offer: beautiful heritage streetscapes and picturesque towns, stunning natural surroundings, a thriving local economy, and a vibrant cultural life.

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 offers.





Mount Alexander Shire – fast facts



137 babies born in the shire each year

\$674 median weekly income

\$455 median rent for a house per week

51 years median age

20,253 population

51.2% in the workforce

80.5% born in Australia

1.3% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background

1513 jobs in the largest industry - Manufacturing

4.8% speak another language at home

10.1% Year 12 educated



Our towns

Most of the community live in the main townships, each with individual characteristics that help define Mount Alexander Shire as a great place to live, work and invest.



Maldon

A charming gold rush town that attracts visitors for its retail, cafes, natural landscape and rich heritage.

Population 1,665



Harcourt

The area has a long history of apple and pear growing, and more recently cider production. Also home to a world class mountain bike park.

Population 1,038



Castlemaine

A town with a rich gold rush history and a growing reputation as a fine food, arts and shopping destination.

Population 7,506



Elphinstone

Characterised by undulating hills, with diverse flora and fauna.

Population 633



Taradale

A scenic town with walking trails linking historic landmarks.

Population 524



Chewton

A picturesque village surrounded by bushland and the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park.

Population 762



Guildford

A welcoming community on the banks of the Loddon River between Daylesford and Castlemaine.

Population 298



Campbells Creek

Shares its name with a line of billabongs flowing south towards the Loddon River, and is a diverse and growing community.

Population 2,071



Newstead

On the Loddon River, has a genuine village feel with cafes, a gallery, artists' studios and a commitment to switch to renewable energy.

Population 820

Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer



Councillor Rosie Annear
Mayor
Mount Alexander Shire Council



Darren Fuzzard
Chief Executive Officer
Mount Alexander Shire Council

On behalf of Councillors and staff, we are pleased to present Mount Alexander Shire Council's 2022-2023 Annual Report, a collation of some of Council's achievements, highlights and challenges over the past financial year.

The Annual Report also outlines progress on priorities from our 2021-2025 Council Plan, and shares key financial information.

Our Council vision of 'Working together for a healthy, connected shire', is illustrated in the plan's front cover image of Auntie Marilyne Nichols' Eagle's Nest, from our Boorp Boorp Boondyil exhibition.

Auntie Marilyne is a Multi-Clans master weaver. Her Eagle's Nest, Werpila Larnuk, is made from natural materials found on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

The raffia fibre and twigs have value on their own, but when woven together they create something more, and form a strong, connected, and beautiful artwork. It's a wonderful analogy for the collaboration between Council and community - we're stronger and have more of an impact when we work together.

The artwork is also an example of Council's commitment to elevate more Indigenous stories and voices, as set out in our Reconciliation Action Plan. There is so much we can learn from Boorp Boorp Boondyil and our Country's history and first peoples, and we're proud to have this incredible (and award-winning) exhibition open to all in the heart of Castlemaine.

Looking at the financials for 2022-2023, we're pleased to report that in the last 12 months we've delivered \$13.32 million in capital works initiatives. This includes projects across the shire to increase road safety, create footpaths, upgrade recreation facilities, enhance streetscapes, and work on flood management, among many other things.

We've invested significantly in improving recreational opportunities across the shire, with major projects at Harcourt Recreation Reserve, Bill Woodfull Recreation Reserve, and Campbells Creek Recreation Reserve. Many of these projects focus on improving access and equity so that people of all genders and abilities can play sport.

We've also continued to invest in projects to upgrade roads and bridges, to improve flood protection in Castlemaine and Campbells Creek, and to develop important waste management strategies. One of the major projects we've completed this year is capping the Castlemaine landfill: a huge achievement for Council!

We know that one area of great concern in our community is the lack of affordable housing. We've continued our commitment to address this through work on a number of short and long-term initiatives.

Our commitment to improving access and inclusion for people with disability was solidified through our Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027. This document focuses on how we can remove barriers to participation in shire life, so that everyone who lives, works, or visits our shire can feel included and valued.

Something we weren't expecting, but were prepared for, was the extreme flood event in October 2022, which impacted properties, roads, parks and trails, community infrastructure, and importantly, community itself.

Our amazing team quickly responded to the event by establishing a flood recovery and information centre. We also had a number of other flood recovery initiatives, including easily accessible skips, waiving fees at the transfer stations, community meetings, and many more.

We're really proud of the way Council and community worked together, both in the wake of the flooding, and since. We know that the changing climate puts us at higher risk of more extreme weather events, and working together to plan for the future and build resilience is an important part of our work.

We continued to have a very high level of community engagement over the last 12 months. It's pleasing to see so many residents have their say on projects, give their feedback on Council plans and strategies, and generally get involved with their local government. We know that our best successes happen when Council and community work together, and we're excited to build on this into the future.

In our roles as Mayor and CEO, we've also had the opportunity to meet and speak with many residents from around the shire, to hear your concerns and aspirations for the region. Local government is the closest tier to community, so we know how important it is to stay connected to the people who live here.

We always try our best to provide services and deliver projects to a high standard, despite having limited resources, and acknowledging the challenges posed by the rate-capping environment, and the increasing expectations of the role and responsibilities of local government.

Thank you to all Councillors, staff, and everyone in our community, who has supported the valuable work that we've done over the last 12 months.

We look forward to more exciting projects, initiatives, and consultations, and continuing to serve our community in the years ahead.

Year in review

Below is a snapshot of our achievements in the 2022/2023 financial year. More detailed information is provided in the 'Progress Report' and 'Performance Statement' sections of this report.



July 22



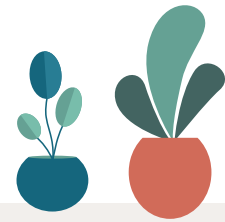
- Began works to improve the health and condition of significant trees along the Guildford Avenue of Honour.
- Rehabilitation of Castlemaine landfill one step closer following Councillors appointing the contract to Apex Earthworks Pty Ltd.
- Opened Winter Art exhibition at the Market Building in Castlemaine, an initiative that celebrates local artists by displaying their art and supports their efforts with a space to sell their work.
- Began investigation into reducing the risk of roadside bushfires, with two information sessions open to the community.



August 22

- Following Maldon's win for Mainstreet of the Year 2021, the Phee Broadway Theatre hosted the Mainstreet Australia Regional Conference.
- Battle of the Bands took place, a music competition for young people aged 12-25.
- Small business workshops began, a program run in collaboration with Business Victoria that offers free workshops to local businesses.
- Received \$1.2M in Federal Government funding to improve Fogartys Gap Road, setting the project in motion.
- Completed streetscape improvements in Guildford and Chewton town centres.
- Completed stage one restoration works at Guildford Avenue of Honour.
- Installed new gates at the entrance to Campbells Creek Community Park, which were designed by a local artist and feature wildlife.
- Installed a pedestrian crossing on Barker Street in Castlemaine to ensure the safety of pedestrians and motorists.





September 22



- INVEST Loddon Mallee launched, a new online initiative for businesses and entrepreneurs interested in relocating, or contributing, to the region's extensive supply chain.
- Completed the revitalisation of Old Bank Corner in Maldon, with new plants, furniture upgrades and an enhanced pavement surface.
- Began restorative works on the former Wesleyan Church in Chewton, which focused on rising damp, roof plumbing works and improvements to drainage.
- Awarded 18 local groups with a share in almost \$50,000 as part of the Community Grants program.
- Finished repairing the retaining wall along Forest Creek at Western Reserve in Castlemaine.

October 22

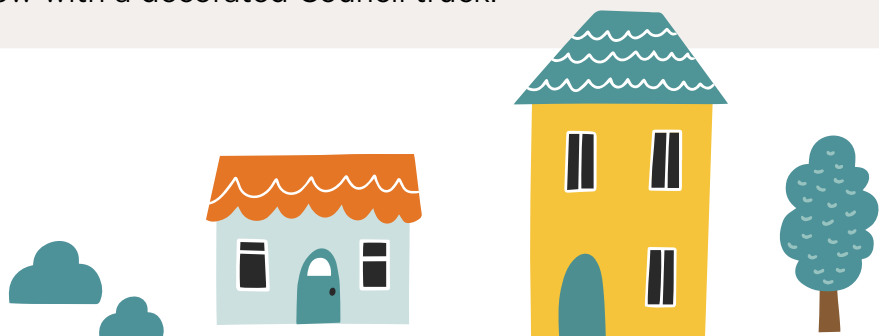
- Completed the Maldon Shopfront Improvement Program, which is part of the broader Maldon Streetscape Revitalisation Project. Council's Economy and Culture team managed the Maldon Shopfront Improvement Program which saw 16 businesses receive funding to make improvements to their shopfronts.
- Worked with emergency service providers to host the Castlemaine Emergency Expo, which offered trucks and emergency vehicles, preparatory information, presentations, information on how to become a volunteer, and food, drinks and live entertainment.
- Received State government funding to improve sports lighting at the Harcourt Recreation Reserve and Bill Woodfull Recreation Reserve, as well as undertake pavilion improvements at Bill Woodfull Recreation Reserve.
- Responded to severe flooding in a timely manner, provided flood response updates and set up an information centre at the Castlemaine Senior Citizens Centre (read more about our flood response and recovery efforts on page 24).
- Councillors voted to allocate air rights over two sites in Castlemaine for the purpose of creating affordable rental housing.
- Opened nominations for the 2023 Australia Day Awards, which were announced at the Australia Day - Survival Day community event.



November 22



- Hosted the Mount Alexander Youth Awards Festival, which celebrated the contributions that young people make to our community.
- Co-organised a workshop held by DJAARA, exploring how local councils and Traditional Owners can work collaboratively towards climate and environmental goals.
- Opened Boorp Boorp Boondyil to the public, a permanent exhibition in Castlemaine dedicated to sharing Jaara stories and teachings.
- Adopted the 2021/2022 Annual Report.
- Began 'Hunt for heritage': a campaign that involved inviting the community to nominate a site in Castlemaine that could be of heritage significance. This was then used to develop a heritage gap analysis for Castlemaine.
- Awarded 15 local groups with a share in almost \$34,000 as part of the Event Grants program.
- Asked the community how they move around the shire, which informed the draft Active Transport Strategy 2023-2033.
- Awarded six local young people with Mount Alexander Youth Awards in the categories of social impact, STEM and trades, music and the arts, environment, and sports and recreation.
- Conducted community consultation on the Climate Change Strategy, asking residents to help prioritise spending to fund climate action.
- Councillors elected Cr Rosie Annear as Mayor and Cr Matthew Driscoll as Deputy Mayor.
- Showed support for the prevention of gender-based violence by participating in the annual Rotary Truck Show with a decorated Council truck.





December 22



- Provided funding via the Small Town Christmas Celebration Grants program to the towns of Guildford, Elphinstone, Taradale, Fryerstown, Harcourt, Newstead, Sutton Grange and Castlemaine.
- Hosted a free Christmas celebration event in Mostyn Street in Castlemaine with a choir performance, a visit from Santa and ice cream. Installed Christmas trees and decorations in Castlemaine and Maldon.
- Conducted community consultation on the draft Early Years Plan 2022-2026, asking residents to read the plan and provide feedback.
- Conducted community consultation on the future of disability, access and inclusion in the shire, which informed the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027.
- Announced upgrades to Bill Woodfull Recreation Reserve after securing State Government funding.
- Adopted the Development Contributions Policy, which applies to landowners in the shire and will ensure a fair and equitable approach to the collection of development contributions.





January 23

- Offered additional free green waste disposal for residents following the severe flooding event in October 2022.
- Hosted a free, family-friendly community event for Australia Day – Survival Day, which included a Welcome to Country, a citizenship ceremony, the presentation of Australia Day Awards, a live concert and catering.
- Invited community feedback on Council’s Christmas decorations and celebrations, which will inform festivities for December 2023.
- Conducted community consultation about the draft 2023/2024 Budget, asking residents to provide feedback on their spending priorities.
- Invited community feedback on the future of aged care services in the shire ahead of Federal Government changes to the sector.



February 23



- Successfully transitioned to in-house operation of the Castlemaine and Maldon waste facilities.
- Conducted community consultation on a potential reform to Local Law 13: camping on private property without a permit.
- Opened applications for round one of the Event Grants program, offering funding to local groups running public events.
- Asked the community how they prefer to hear from Council, which then informed the draft Communications and Engagement Strategy.

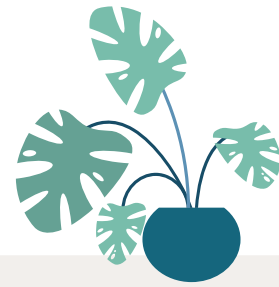




March 23

- Established a cultural precinct within the Mechanics Lane area in Castlemaine (opposite the library) in a partnership between the Castlemaine Fringe and State Festivals. The site hosted a number of events between March and June 2023, showcasing local musicians, dancers and community groups.
- Hosted the Regional Zero Emissions Forum, a free event that explored local opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region. This was run by Regional Development Victoria, City of Greater Bendigo and the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance. This will lead to a Regional Zero Emissions Roadmap for the Loddon Campaspe, Mallee and Grampians region.
- Created a 'StoryWalk' in partnership with Goldfields Libraries and Healthy Loddon Campaspe, which placed pages from the children's book Australian Backyard Buddies along a popular walk in Castlemaine, encouraging literacy and exercise.
- Small business workshops began, a program run in collaboration with Business Victoria that offers free workshops for local businesses.
- Resealed roads to improve road safety in the towns of Castlemaine, Fryerstown, Metcalfe, Newstead and Guildford.
- Upgraded Yeats Street in Castlemaine from gravel to sealed surface.
- Promoted the Women Leading Locally Fellowship, a Victorian Government program that aims to increase the representation of women in government.
- Began road safety works along Fogartys Gap Road, a popular route that links Maldon and the Calder Freeway.
- Promoted Healthy Loddon Campaspe's Adventure Bingo, a fun initiative that encourages the community to get physical by walking along a local trail and spotting points of interest.
- Updated the community on flood recovery following the severe flooding event in October 2022.
- Mount Alexander Planning Scheme was amended to introduce the Maldon Design Guidelines, which provide detailed design criteria for new development in specific areas in the township of Maldon.
- Supported Business Mount Alexander to install the work of local artists in Council buildings as part of the Castlemaine Fringe Festival Art Windows Trail.





April 23



- Adopted the Mount Alexander Shire Early Years Plan 2022-2026, which outlines our priorities and actions for supporting children aged 0-8 and their families living in the shire.
- Completed upgrades to Dave Bennett Reserve in Muckleford. Works include new table drains, the installation of storm water culverts, and the formation of a new section of road.
- Awarded design contract for National School Lane levee in Campbells Creek
- Started construction of footpath on Gaffney Street to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility
- Completed installation of irrigation system at Bill Woodfull Reserve in Maldon.
- Promoted and supported local operators and attractions to run activities during Australian Heritage Festival.
- Mayor Cr Rosie Anear was appointed to the 2023 Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel. This is a group that provides legislative, regulatory, strategic and policy decisions that impact the local government sector, as well as present ideas and opportunities to improve local government.
- Announced key dates for the proposed 2023/2024 Budget and invited community input on the draft.
- Awarded 18 local groups with a share in almost \$50,000 as part of the Community Grants program.
- Opened applications for the Phee Broadway Theatre Foyer Exhibition Program, an initiative that displays a selection of local artists' work in a high-traffic area.
- Installed a rainbow bench outside the Castlemaine Library to increase visibility, raise awareness and show our support for our LGBTIQ+ community.





May 23



- Awarded 15 local groups with a share in almost \$33,000 as part of the Event Grants program.
- Began road works along Walker Street in Castlemaine to improve pedestrian and road safety, accessibility, and the footpath network.
- Renamed a local creek to Larni Barramal Yaluk, in collaboration with Hepburn Shire Council, North Central Catchment Management Authority and DJAARA.
- Commemorated Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week with a number of events open to the community. This program was created in partnership with Nalderun, and aimed to commemorate, educate and nurture the entire community.
- Awarded Design contract for Elizabeth Street, Castlemaine Cabin and Van Park and Campbells Creek Township levees.
- Upgraded change rooms at Harcourt Leisure Centre.
- Completed restoration of historic entrance gates and fountain at Castlemaine Botanical Gardens.
- Opened entries for the COscars, a competition for filmmakers aged 8-25 years that offers an opportunity for young people to showcase their films, tell stories, network and compete for prizes.
- Began maintenance works on the Castlemaine Skate Park to improve safety, remove graffiti and update amenities for the entire community.
- Adopted the Domestic Wastewater Management

Plan, to improve the management of domestic wastewater in the shire.

- Celebrated IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia) with a display of colourful artwork and photos of staff members in the Castlemaine Library foyer.
- Hosted a workshop with 38 middle years students in the Council chambers to hear directly from children and understand their challenges. This was used to inform the draft Middle Years Plan 2023-2026.
- Installed public art in Newstead following community consultation. The artwork was designed and created by local artists.
- Amendment C7malx was gazetted into the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme.



June 23



- Completed capping of all remaining cells at the Castlemaine Landfill site. This will allow Council to capture and flare all legacy methane gasses which will result in lower CO2 emissions from Council into the future.
- Launched the 2023 Phee Broadway Theatre Foyer Exhibition Program showcasing 12 local artists into 2024. Artists are given free use of the foyer space to exhibit and sell their works along with Council support of the planning, marketing and installation of their exhibition.
- Diverted the following waste from landfill during the financial year: 38 tonnes of e-waste, 550 tonnes of steel, 735 mattresses and 1684 tonnes of commingled recyclables.
- Saved over 23 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions during the financial year by providing community electric vehicle chargers which power cars through 100% renewable energy instead of fossil fuels.
- Purchased two new replacement graders during the financial year. The purchases are part of Council's plant replacement program, which is carefully calculated to ensure plant is replaced at the optimum time to ensure reliability and continuity of our operations.
- Announced sporting facility upgrades for Campbells Creek Recreation Reserve, which includes a new competition standard netball court.
- Launched a new website, which focuses on user-experience, making it easier for the community to access essential services.
- Adopted 2023/2024 Budget following extensive community consultation.
- Hosted a Disability Inclusive Emergency Preparedness Forum to educate the community on, and understand more about, how Council can make emergency management more inclusive of people with disability.
- Completed Maldon Streetscape Revitalisation Project works.



Case study: We're improving access and inclusion

Council is committed to improving access and inclusion for people with disability in Mount Alexander Shire.

One step that we've taken to solidify this commitment is drafting the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027.

This plan is the first of its kind for us, marking a shift from being incorporated as part of Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, to being its own stand-alone Action Plan.

It focuses on how we can remove barriers to participation in shire life, as well as deliver genuine and achievable results that will make our community more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

The draft plan was created in consultation with residents with disability, carers, service providers, general members of the community and members of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan Working Group.

The working group was created to assist with the development of the draft plan and ensure genuine representation. It's made up of a diverse selection of community members with disability, as well as Council staff and Councillors including Mayor Cr Rosie Annear.

The plan, which is scheduled to be adopted by Council in September 2023, will improve access and inclusion through a number of concrete actions.

The draft plan is a work of collaboration that aims to deliver genuine, meaningful and achievable results, which will have a positive impact on the lives of community members.

Another way that we're improving access and inclusion in the community is through inclusive emergency management planning.

In June 2023, Council's Emergency Management team organised an Inclusive Emergency Preparedness Forum, working closely with Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group and Windarrang.

The forum was a successful and informative event that benefitted Council, emergency management organisations, people with disability and carers. It's a great example of the whole community coming together to educate and learn from one another.



Artwork from the Disability Inclusion Action Plan: Olivia Newton John by Ned Middleton

Case study: We're planning for children and families

Council is prioritising the health and wellbeing of children and families in Mount Alexander Shire.

Two steps that we've taken to deliver on this commitment is drafting an Early Years Plan and a Middle Years Plan, following extensive community consultation.

Both plans aim to support the needs of families and children. They will guide Council and the community in working together to improve the health and wellbeing, and learning opportunities for children.

The Early Years Plan 2022-2026 will focus on children aged 0-8 and was adopted by Council in April 2023. The Middle Years Plan 2023-2026 will focus on children aged 8-12 and will go to Councillors for adoption in September 2023.

The two plans were heavily informed by community consultation and feedback.

When engaging with residents on the draft Early Years Plan we heard from over 225 children aged 3-8, twelve service providers, over 110 parents and carers, and received valuable advice from the Mount Alexander Early Years Steering Group.

When engaging with residents on the draft Middle Years Plan we heard from more than 200 children aged 8-12, 95 survey responses from parents, carers and service providers, three key informant interviews with school principals and two reflection workshops with the Bulortj Children and Youth Network.

We also hosted a workshop in the Council Chamber with 38 middle year students, representing nine local primary schools and the home schooling community, who helped Council further develop the Middle Years Plan's actions and priorities.

It was valuable to hear directly from local children and understand more about what it means to be young today, what's important to children and their families, and what worries they have.

We're proud to have created two detailed plans that reflect the needs and priorities of local children and families.

The knowledge and expertise of the Mount Alexander Shire community is a valuable resource, and we're grateful to have the support of passionate and engaged residents, schools and service providers.



Artwork from the Early Years Plan by Hunter - Castlemaine North Primary School

Case study: We're learning from and elevating Indigenous stories and voices

Council is proud to be on Jaara Country, and to learn from the rich history of the Dja Dja Wurrung People.

One way that we've shown this is through the facilitation of Boorp Boorp Boondyil, a new permanent exhibition in Castlemaine that shares the stories and teachings of the Jaara People.

Boorp Boorp Boondyil means passing knowledge to our children and is a name gifted by local Dja Dja Wurrung Elder, Uncle Rick Nelson.

It gives residents and visitors a chance to walk through an interactive space, where they will learn the history of the area. It features the story of the Eagle, the Bat and the Crow, the creation story of the Dja Dja Wurrung in the Mount Alexander region, as told by the Nelson family.

It also includes important cultural lessons about living on Country. It teaches us about bush foods, medicine, waterways and weaving.

The exhibition's development was led by Uncle Rick Nelson who was employed by Council to deliver this important exhibition to the community, ensuring the longevity of Jaara stories and teachings.

Artists featured in the exhibition include Aunty Marilyn Nichols, Alvin Darcy Briggs, Georgie Rose and Paul Turbitt. Their work and creativity contributed to a beautiful collection.

The exhibition was launched in October 2022 and is the recipient of two awards:

2023 Maggolee Awards

This award celebrates and recognises strong partnerships between Victorian local government and First Nations Peoples. It is an initiative of Reconciliation Victoria.

2023 National Awards for Local Government - Indigenous Recognition category.

This award highlights initiatives implemented by local governments that are innovative, make a difference to their local communities, display excellence and have outcomes that are replicable across the country.

We're proud to have delivered Boorp Boorp Boondyil with Uncle Rick Nelson - a joyful and generous exhibition that we can all enjoy and learn from for years to come.



Left: Dja Dja Wurrung Elder, and project co-designer Uncle Rick Nelson (second from left), celebrating the launch of the Boorp Boorp Boondyil exhibition. Right: 2023 Maggolee Award for Boorp Boorp Boondyil, 2023 National Awards for Local Government (Indigenous recognition).



The **Woolly Acheulean** have been found on both the east and west sides of the hill which are of different ages, and they had stone tools to use. The tools are not made of wood and stones but of flint.

The woolly Acheulean had a stone in that shape as they were big with the woolly Acheulean. The woolly Acheulean had the most common stone tool of flint and they were not far from the Acheulean. The woolly Acheulean had the most common stone tool of flint and they were not far from the Acheulean.

Woolly Acheulean



Case study: We're prioritising flood recovery

In October 2022 the shire was impacted by a severe flooding event which impacted properties, roads, parks and trails, and community infrastructure.

During the event

Council quickly establishing a flood recovery and information centre at the Castlemaine Senior Citizens Centre. Staff were on site to offer a chat and a cuppa, as well as flood information and support as needed.

We also placed large skip bins at the Campbells Creek Community Centre car park and the Campbells Creek Bowling Club for residents to drop off flood-damaged materials free of charge.

In addition, the Castlemaine Transfer Station was accepting flood-damaged items for free during October and for months afterwards.

We also utilised social media to disseminate this information and ensure the community was aware of the various emergency payments and grants available.

After the event

We focused our attention on repairing and upgrading roads, and improving levees.

We've inspected the shire's entire road network to assess damage, and have begun to systematically repair roads.

We're also advocating for flood recovery assistance from government agencies to supplement the current budget.

Communications have been a key aspect in the overall flood recovery process. We hosted two flood recovery meetings in Newstead and Campbells Creek where Council staff, key emergency management agencies and the community came

together to discuss the flood event and next steps.

Staff used social media to inform the community during the event, and also used print advertising, newsletters, website updates and face-to-face time to keep residents up-to-date after the event.

While the flooding event was a difficult time for the entire community, it exhibited Council's ability to respond quickly in a crisis and work together with the community for the best possible outcome.



Sandbags being placed to prevent flooding.

Case study: We're revitalising playgrounds

Council is revitalising playground across the shire, ensuring safe, accessible and fun outdoor spaces for the entire community.

We're doing this by improving Newstead Memorial Park Playground, Stanley Park North Play Space, Harcourt Recreation Reserve Playground and Norwood Hill Playground.

When beginning the development of Newstead Memorial Park Playground we conducted extensive community consultation – the aim was to have the park reflect the wants and needs of the Newstead community.

The improved playground will include new play equipment, fencing, park furniture, a water fountain and upgrades to the barbecue.

The Stanley Park North Play Space sits in the centre of Harcourt and was developed with community input and feedback.

The park includes a natural feel play space with established trees, accessible swings, a climbing wall, a wheelchair accessible carousel, and a rock and spinner.

This play space was a particularly proud project for Council because it won LGPro's Community Assets & Infrastructure Initiative for \$5 million and under. This prestigious award recognises initiatives that benefit the community, showcase partnerships and manage community assets.

The Norwood Hill Playground is in the middle of improvement works which are being undertaken in two stages.

Stage one, which is complete, included shade trees, gardens and a new path network to increase accessibility. There is a new nature play section, and enhancements were made to the barbecue

shelter and park furniture. There are also improvements to the existing playground with a double swing set, two climbing elements and a digger in the sandpit.

Stage two is now in progress, and includes the revitalisation of the hard courts to create a teen space with parkour equipment, a hit-up wall, and netball and basketball courts.

The final play space we revitalised is the Harcourt Recreation Reserve Playground. Improvements to this space include a new playground, an accessible concrete ramp and landscaping.

This play space is now inclusive, accessible, fun and beautiful!

These playgrounds showcase our dedication to the health and wellbeing of our community, as well as upholding our commitment to fostering a healthy, connected shire.



Norwood Hill Recreation Reserve Playground

Case study: We're aiming to increase affordable housing options

Council is aware of barriers to affordable housing and has been working hard to increase options for residents across the shire.

This is a complex challenge which requires the combined efforts of Council, community organisations, all levels of government, and private and public organisations.

We're committed to addressing the issue of affordable housing and have taken the following steps to support our community now and into the future:

- Reforming Local Law 13: Camping on private property with a dwelling.
- Managing permanent housing through the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme.
- Hiring a Housing Solutions Broker.
- Planning to develop medium-density affordable housing on Council-owned land.

The June 2023 Council meeting saw a reform to Local Law 13: A local law related to camping on private property where there is an existing dwelling.

Previously, anyone camping or staying in a caravan or tiny house for up to six months on private property needed to have a permit.

Councillors unanimously voted to remove those permit requirements, which means people are now able to camp, or occupy a caravan or tiny house on wheels, on property where there is an existing dwelling, for an indefinite period of time with no permit required.

This is a small change but is a big step in the right direction towards affordable housing. It's also a change that the community supported with an overwhelming 91% showing their support for the reform.

Local Law 13 does not cover permanent or non-moveable housing – this is where building regulations and the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme come in.

The scheme includes strategies that aim to deliver more affordable housing close to jobs, transport and essential services. We're now looking at ways we can achieve this through the preparation of housing strategies for specific towns.

We're currently working on two Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategies: Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Chewton, and Maldon and Newstead.

Through research and community consultation, we've learned of a mismatch between household sizes and available housing.

Within these towns, dwellings with three or more bedrooms make up approximately 70% of dwellings, while one- and two-bedroom houses only make up approximately 29% of dwellings.

The projected increase in single person households in these areas is largely a result of an ageing population, and points to the need for smaller homes.

Our strategies seek to encourage the development of more one- and two-bedroom dwellings in these areas.

Another step in the direction towards affordable housing is the hiring of a Housing Solutions Broker.

Our broker, Clare Richards, dedicates her time to addressing affordable housing in the shire.

Her key tasks include:

- investigating the use of Council land to create affordable housing
- exploring short and long-term solutions for affordable housing in the shire

- negotiating with the State Government around the use of state-owned land to create affordable housing
- connecting private land holders with affordable housing developers to advocate for the needs of our community.

Council has also taken the first step in developing medium-density affordable housing in the heart of Castlemaine.

Councillors voted to assign air rights to Council-owned land on Templeton Street,

following overwhelming community support for the idea.

Our Chief Executive Officer, Darren Fuzzard, is currently working in partnership with Haven Home Safe to find the most sustainable funding model for this project.

These initiatives are positive steps towards solving the current housing crisis, and we're incredibly proud and grateful to have the support of our community while we find solutions.

Council has been working hard to increase affordable housing options for residents across the shire.



Advocacy, partnerships and engagement

Advocacy

Council is committed to advocating on behalf of its current and future communities to represent the needs and views of the community to decision and policy makers to build a creative, innovative and connected community. In the 2021-2025 Council Plan, Council acknowledges the critical role it will play in advocating to State and Federal Governments, and other authorities on matters that impact the diverse needs and interests of the Mount Alexander Shire community.

Advocacy efforts aim to raise awareness and reduce service gaps, seek improved funding or funding models to help raise revenue to perform council functions, and improve the health, safety and wellbeing of the community. Council recognises the importance of being clear and consistent about investment priorities, and has advocacy priorities to facilitate action and results. Funding priorities aim to build the liveability of our shire by building better community infrastructure with improved roads, community facilities that are safe and fit for purpose, expanding the footpath and trail network, improving water and sewerage infrastructure, affordable housing and improved access to services and better health facilities. Council works in partnership to influence policy, tackle challenges, leverage new opportunities and support partner initiatives that align with our strategic objectives. CEO Darren Fuzzard and Mayor Rosie Annear met regularly with State and Federal Members of Parliament throughout the year, and staff and Councillors are involved in many industry and regional working groups to share information, and work on common challenges.

Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into October 2022 floods

Council's Emergency Management team played a key leadership role in a submission to the inquiry into the 2022 Flood Event in Victoria on behalf of the Northern Victorian Emergency Management Cluster. The development of this submission occurred after Council's Emergency Management team helped to lead workshops and other forms of consultation with the five LGAs involved in the cluster.

The final 17-page submission contains strong advocacy for the needs of our residents following the flood events, and in relation to future planning.

The Hub Foundation

Council advocated for The Hub Foundation by providing a testimonial to support their application through the Premier's Sustainability Awards for the Yes In My Back Yard (YIMBY) community composting project.

Prevention of all forms of violence - Statement of Commitment - Collective Action for Respect and Equality (CARE) Stewardship Committee

Council has committed to being an active member of the Loddon Mallee Collective Action for Respect and Equality (CARE) partnership. The prevention of violence against women is everyone's business.

- We know we all have a role to play to help promote gender equality and prevent violence against women, and that our organisation can take action to make a difference.
- We know by working together we can build safer, respectful communities for everyone in the Loddon Mallee region.

- We know that while all women can experience violence, discrimination and disadvantage, some women may experience it more often. We understand that this happens because of structural barriers and attitudes towards aboriginality, age, ability, sexuality, cultural identity, and social 'class'.
- We will create a workplace and community which promotes social justice, gender equality and respect for all women.
- We will be active members of the CARE partnership and provide at least two key contacts from our organisation to

promote this work with the support of Women's Health Loddon Mallee.

- We will complete a CARE partner organisation survey each year, provided by Women's Health Loddon Mallee.

Advocacy for Orange Door services in the shire

Council is committed to supporting initiatives that prevent violence against women, and advocated for an Orange Door service to be established in Castlemaine to the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, The Hon. Ros Spence MP.





Partnerships

As an advocate for our shire, Council works in collaboration with all levels of government and state and federal organisations that provide services to the community. We also work in partnership with special interest and community groups to improve services and outcomes for the shire. We have established many partnerships and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and work with our partners to develop action plans, deliver projects and advocate for the community. Some examples of our partnerships are below:

Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation

Council ratified its first Memorandum of Understanding with Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation at a Council meeting in August 2022. The MOU documents the shared desire of Council and Nalderun to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in Mount Alexander Shire.

The MOU:

- outlines the partnership between Mount Alexander Shire Council and NEAC
- details the reciprocal support Mount Alexander Shire Council and NEAC will provide to the other
- defines the relationship, expectations, roles, and obligations of Mount Alexander Shire Council and NEAC under this agreement.

Social Prescribing Pilot Project

Council partnered with Castlemaine Community House (CCH), Dhelkaya Health and Goldfields Medical Group to develop the “Get Connected” Social Prescribing Pilot project launched in March 2023. GPs at the Goldfields Medical Group have been

referring people experiencing loneliness and isolation to the “Get Connected” link worker who has facilitated involvement in social activities as a means of improving people’s sense of connection and positive wellbeing.

Drawing on the pilot project, Council has been working in partnership with CCH and Dhelkaya Health to advocate for further support and funding for an ongoing social prescribing service in our shire.

VECO

Council participated in the Steering Committee for the Victorian Energy Collaboration, which powers 51 councils with renewable energy.

Mechanics Lane community hub

Building on previous years, we increased our partnership with both the Castlemaine Fringe Festival and Castlemaine State Festival in 2023, where we created a hub in Mechanics Lane with free entertainment. The Phee Broadway Theatre also took part with several shows hosted by Council and Castlemaine Fringe Festival occurring in March.

This space will continue to be available for use by our partners, Castlemaine Fringe Festival and Castlemaine State Festival, and the library along with any local groups that are looking for an outdoor space to run events or just come together.

Seniors Festival

Partnering with Castlemaine Community House to deliver a seniors festival for the shire through the provision of an expo on services for older adults.

With support from the State Government of Victoria Seniors Festival a dedicated concert for older adults was held at the Castlemaine Town Hall to capacity audience to experience the brilliance of Broderick Smith.

Project partners

Some of our key project partners are below:



A healthy, connected and inclusive community

Health and wellbeing	Department of Health, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Dhelkaya Health, Loddon Mallee Primary Health Unit, Women’s Health Loddon Mallee, Windarring, State and Federal Governments, Bendigo Health, Maldon Neighbourhood House, Castlemaine Community House, Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation, Loddon Mallee Group of Councils, ELM (Every Life Matters), Australian Breastfeeding Association, Healthy Loddon Campaspe, Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group, Bulortj Children and Youth Network, Castlemaine Secondary College, Goldfields Local Employment and Education Network, Department of Transport, Department of Education and Training, Goldfields Library Corporation, Victoria Police, Lifeline, Stride, Municipal Association of Victoria, Alcohol Drug Foundation, Sports Recreation Victoria, Coliban Water, Northern Victorian Emergency Management Cluster, Castlemaine Secondary College, Connectors, primary schools across the shire.
Aged and disability services	Dhelkaya Health, Loddon Mallee Primary Health Unit, Loddon Mallee Local Government Group of Councils, Maldon Neighbourhood House, Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group, Department of Health, Veterans Home Care.
Age-friendly	Mount Alexander Positive Ageing Advocacy Group, Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group.
Young people and families	Department of Education and Training, local preschools, kindergartens, playgroups childcare centres, primary and secondary schools, Municipal Association of Victoria, Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation, Goldfields Library Corporation, Maldon Neighbourhood Centre, Castlemaine Community House, YMCA Bendigo, Central Victorian Primary Care Partnerships, Bulortj Children and Youth Network, Dhelkaya Health, Victorian Local Government Association, Department of Health, Department of Families, fairness and Housing, Women’s Health Loddon Mallee, Australian Breastfeeding Association, Youth Advisory Group, FReeZA Committee, Goldfields Local Employment and Education Network, Victoria Police.

Emergency management and preparedness	Dhelkaya Health, Loddon Mallee Primary Health Unit, Victorian Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group, Northern Victoria Emergency Management Cluster, Australian Red Cross, Salvation Army, Victorian Council of Churches, City of Greater Bendigo, Campaspe Shire Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, Loddon Shire Council, Hepburn Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, State Emergency Services, Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, Emergency Management Victoria, Municipal Association of Victoria, Department of Health, Department of Families Fairness and Housing.
Diversity, access and inclusion	Castlemaine Health, CHIRP Castlemaine District Community Health, Central Victorian Primary Care Partnerships, Central Victorian Municipal Emergency Management Enhancement Group, Northern Victoria Emergency Management Cluster, Australian Red Cross, Salvation Army, Victorian Council of Churches, City of Greater Bendigo, Campaspe Shire Council, Central Goldfields Shire Council, Loddon Shire Council, Hepburn Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, State Emergency Services, Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, Emergency Management Victoria, Municipal Association of Victoria, Department of Health, Department of Families Fairness and Housing.
Indigenous heritage	Local Indigenous elders and community members, Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation, Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation, Dhelkaya Health, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Department of Health, Castlemaine Art Gallery, Castlemaine Community House, Regional Centre for Culture, Castlemaine State Festival, and representatives from Reconciliation Victoria.
Housing	Department of Health, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, University of Technology Sydney, Latrobe University.



An environment for people and nature

Streetscape and town improvements	Maldon Streetscape Revitalisation Project working groups, including: External Steering Committee, Heritage Sub-Committee, Tree Working Group, Business and Property Owners Working Group, Underground Power and Lighting Working Group, and Pedestrianisation Working Group, Campbells Creek Matters Inc, Elphinstone Progress Association, Taradale Community Forum, Guildford Progress Association, Newstead 2021 Inc, Chewton Domain Society, Regional Development Victoria.
Sports and recreation	State and Federal government, YMCA Victoria, Sports and Recreation Victoria, Committees of Management, VicHealth, clubs/user groups, Healthy Loddon Campaspe, Sports Focus, Bike Bendigo, CycleSafe Mount Alexander, Newstead Walks and Wheels.
Roads and transport	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Loddon Mallee Regional Cluster, Department of Transport and Planning, Regional Roads Victoria, Regional Development Australia, Transport Accident Commission (TAC), VicTrack, V/Line.
Environment	Connecting Country Incorporated, local Landcare and friends groups, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn Murray Water, Parks Victoria, Sustainability Victoria.
Sustainability and climate change	Mount Alexander Sustainability Group, Hub Foundation, Wararack, Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance including local councils, Cities Power Partnership, Better Building Finance, Sustainable Australia Fund.
Flood management	North Central Catchment Management Authority, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.
Waste management	Recycling Victoria, Sustainability Victoria.
Heritage	Heritage Victoria, Castlemaine Art Gallery, Buda Historic Homestead, Victorian Goldfields Railway, National Trust.



A resilient and growing economy

Business growth and employment	Regional Development Victoria, Small Business Victoria, Business Mount Alexander, Maldon Inc, People Plus, Elliott Midland Newspapers, City of Greater Bendigo.
Tourism development	Bendigo Regional Tourism which includes shires of Mount Alexander, Loddon, Central Goldfields and City of Greater Bendigo, Daylesford Macedon Ranges Tourism, Visit Victoria, Tourism Working Group, Local tourism operators.
Cultural Development	Municipal Association of Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria, Creative Victoria, Music Victoria, Central Victorian Culture and Arts Network, Castlemaine Art Museum, Castlemaine State Festival, Castlemaine Fringe Festival, Storyland, We Push Buttons, Buda Historic Home and Garden, MainFM, Youth Advisory Group, FReeZA Committee, Village Festival, Castlemaine Electronic Workshop, 3451 Culture, Business Mount Alexander, Maldon Folk Festival, Hobo Theatre Company, Regional Development Victoria, VicHealth, MasUmano.
Land use planning	Department of Transport and Planning, Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, Coliban Water, Country Fire Authority, Goulburn-Murray Water, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Environment Protection Authority, Agriculture Victoria.
Education and training	Dhelkaya Health, School Focussed Youth Services, Goldfields Local Learning & Employment Network, Castlemaine Police, St Luke's Anglicare, Bendigo TAFE, Castlemaine Secondary College, Nalderun, Maldon Neighbourhood Centre, Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership.

Engagement

Community engagement is defined as the range of opportunities for public involvement in Council decision-making, relationship building and community strengthening.

Council is committed to effective engagement with the community to ensure the needs of the community are acknowledged in key Council projects, plans and strategies.

Council's Community Engagement Policy, Community Engagement Framework and Youth Engagement Charter guide community engagement activities and continuous improvement.

In February 2023, Council began work on the development of a new Communications and Engagement Strategy, which will set a benchmark for how we communicate and engage with our community in the coming years. The draft strategy has been informed by more than 700 pieces of feedback from the community, Councillors and staff. It is due to go before Councillors for consideration in October 2023.

In February 2022, Council appointed a Community Engagement Coordinator on a fixed-term contract to guide the organisation in building capacity to genuinely engage with the community.

In June 2023, Councillors acknowledged the value the role has brought to the organisation and resolved to make the role permanent. This was determined through Council's budget process for 2023/2024.

Shape Mount Alexander

During the 2022/2023 financial year there were a number of opportunities for the community to provide input into plans, strategies and service design via Council's online engagement platform, Shape Mount Alexander - www.shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au.

The online platform is being used to engage the community on a range of consultations.

Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, there were 31 active projects on Shape Mount Alexander, with projects collectively receiving more than 32,500 views, 22,800 visits to the website, and more than 4,200 contributions to projects from community members.

Some examples of community consultations undertaken during the 2022/2023 financial year are listed here:

- Developed a draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan, which aims to ensure the shire is genuinely inclusive of people with disabilities. For more information about the consultation process, read the case study on page 20.
- Actively consulted with the Community Waste Reference Group to assist in the development of Council's 10-year Waste Management Strategy, due to be considered by Councillors in 2023/2024.
- Climate Change Strategy 2023-2033 was adopted by Councillors in June 2023. The strategy was heavily informed by the community, and sets the direction for Council's climate action now, and into the future.
- Asked the community for feedback on the Christmas decorations and activities that occurred in 2022. This feedback has been used to inform plans for Council Christmas decorations and activities in 2023.
- Sought feedback from residents on how to reduce the risk of roadside bushfires as part of the development of a draft Roadside Fuel and Bushfire Risk Report.
- Invited community input on the draft Maldon Historic Central Area Review.

- Encouraged community members to provide feedback on uses and improvements for the Castlemaine Railway Precinct. The consultation process also included the formation of a project working group. Input provided from community and stakeholders will inform the draft master plan for the site.
- Gathered input on a range of short, medium and long-term initiatives to address the housing affordability challenge in our community.
- Received input on Council's proposed Budget 2023/2024.
- Invited community members to be part of project advisory groups for the Castlemaine Heritage Study, and Neighbourhood and Character Studies in Chewton, Castlemaine, Campbells Creek, Maldon and Newstead. The development of each study involves community input, which will inform each of the draft papers.

- Sought feedback on proposed updates to internal processes that impact Council meetings.
- Received input on Council's draft Middle Years Plan.
- Adopted the Early Years Plan, which will provide strategic direction for the development and coordination of early years programs, activities and other local community development processes that impact children aged 0-8 and their families.

Shape consultations that attracted the most interest from the community in the 2022/2023 financial year included overwhelming support to amend Local Law 13, which ultimately resulted in removing the need for a permit when camping on private property.

The community was almost equally split when it came support for the concept designs for improvements at Castlemaine's Camp Reserve and there was high engagement with Council's Active Transport Strategy.





Description of operations

Mount Alexander Shire Council delivers more than 100 services to the community including family and children’s services, youth programs, aged and disability care, business and economic development, community planning and development, waste management, library services and emergency management. Council manages and maintains a variety of community assets such as recreation and leisure facilities, local roads, bridges, footpaths, drains, parks, playgrounds, community buildings and much more. Council strives to balance the provision of services to meet current community needs with maintaining our ageing infrastructure and preparing for future needs and demands.

The delivery of our services, facilities, support, community engagement, advocacy and decision making is measured by the different performance and capacity indicators in this report. Our services are guided by plans and strategies adopted by Council along with our responsibilities under Victorian and Australian legislation. The 2022/2023 Annual Plan and 2022/2023 Budget deliver on our commitment to achieve the vision, goals and strategic objectives outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

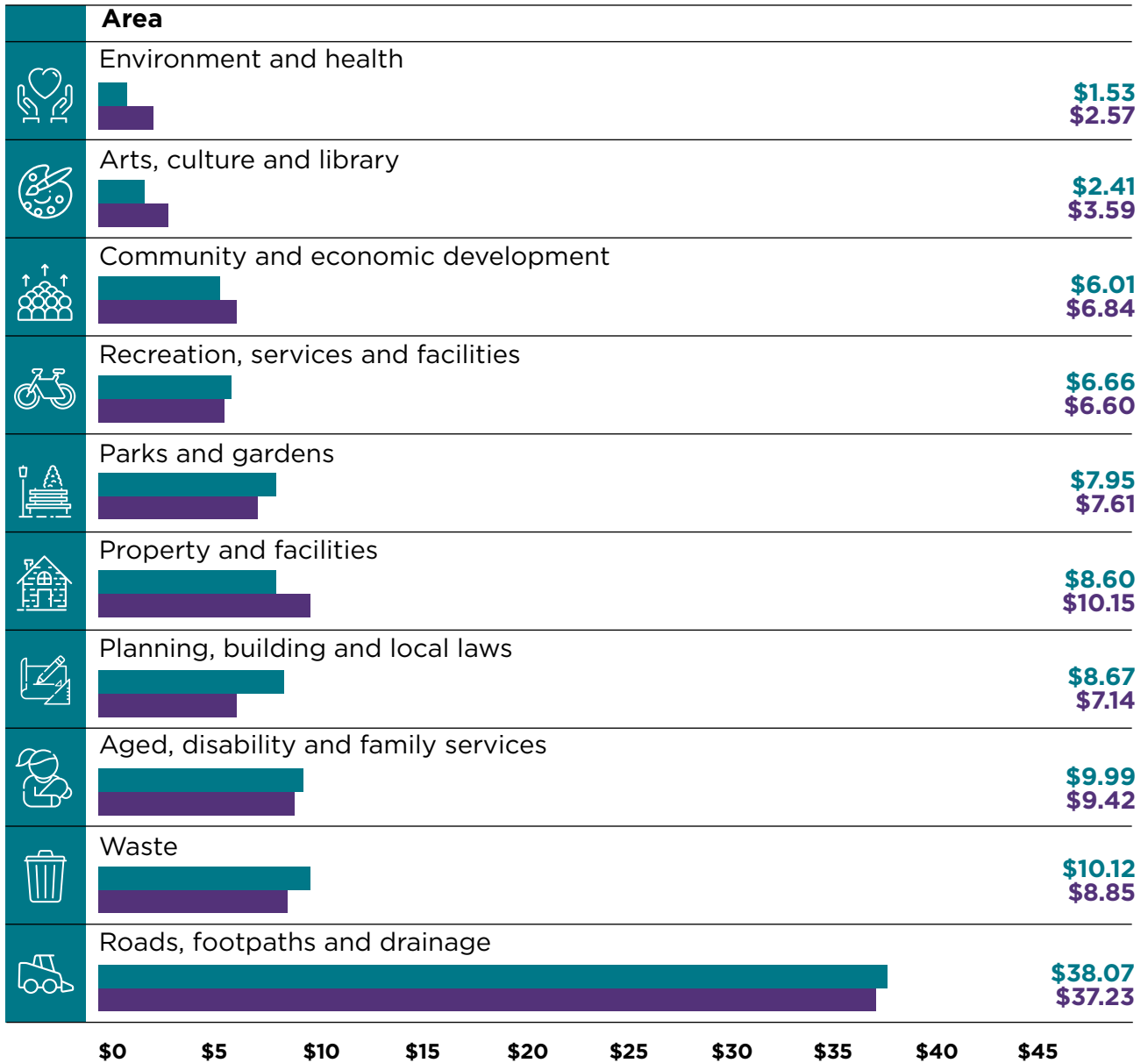
Major capital works



Council spending on services per \$100

2022-2023

2021-2022



The prior year's figures have been adjusted to remove losses on fair value adjustments for future landfill rehabilitation costs. This expense should not have been included and artificially inflated the spend per \$100 allocated to waste.



Financial performance summary

In brief

Council recorded an operating surplus of \$7.20 million, which is favourable compared with the adopted budget of a \$2.05 million surplus. The variance of \$9.20 million has arisen predominantly due to the receipt of unbudgeted operating grant income (\$9.67 million more than budget). This is partially offset by smaller fluctuations in other line items.

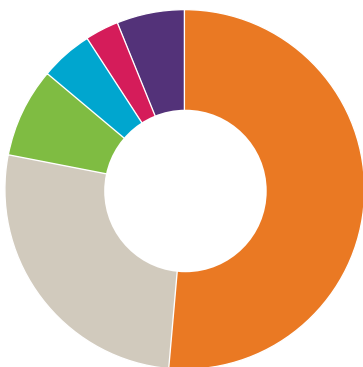
Council ended the 2022/2023 financial year with a cash balance of \$31.15 million, with restrictions in place on the use of \$27.08 million of these funds.

The value of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment increased from \$406.32 million to \$416.47 million as a result of capital expenditure of \$11.02 million and the revaluation of land, building and infrastructure assets (\$9.69 million).

Revenue

Council's total revenue for the 2022/2023 year was \$50.93 million compared to \$44.50 million in 2021/2022. The graph below shows the different sources of revenue for Council, with rates and charges the greatest proportion at 52%.

Revenue

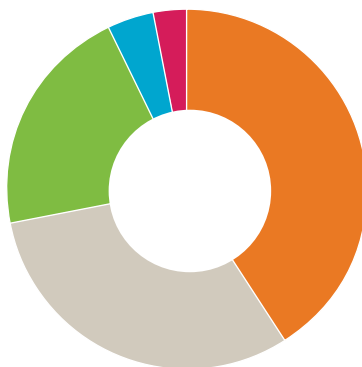


- 52% Rates and charges
- 27% Operating grants
- 8% Capital grants
- 5% Fees, fines and charges
- 3% Contributions
- 6% Other income

Expenditure

Council's total operating expenses for the 2022/2023 year were \$43.73 million (compared to \$45.62 million in 2021/2022).

Expenditure



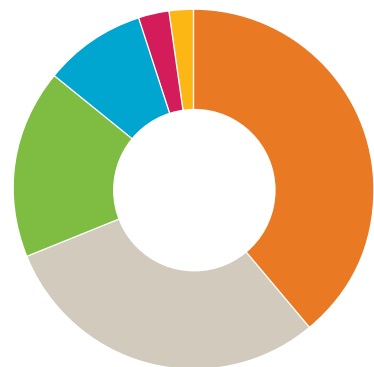
- 41% Employee costs
- 31% Materials and services
- 21% Depreciation
- 4% Other expenses
- 3% Asset disposal
- 0% Borrowing costs

Capital works

During the financial year, Council completed \$11.02 million of capital works projects (\$11.39 million in 2021/2022).

Infrastructure related projects, such as roads, drainage and bridges, accounted for 53% of the capital spend.

Capital works

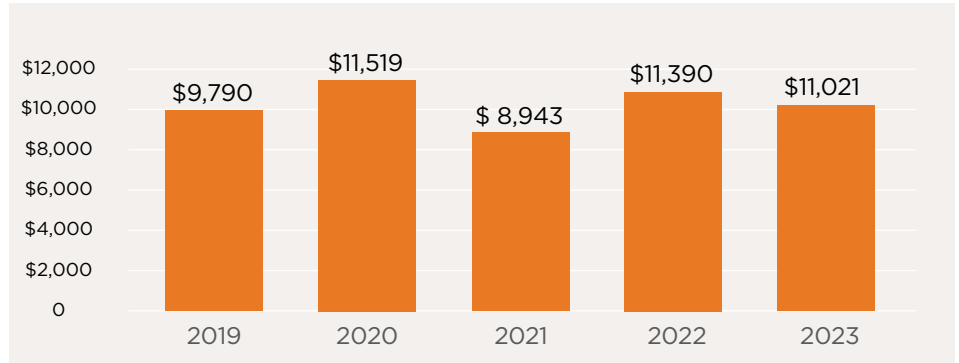


- 39% Roads
- 30% Property
- 17% Plant, vehicles and IT
- 9% Footpaths and cycleways
- 3% Bridges
- 2% Drainage
- 0% Other

Capital spend over time

Council continues to invest significantly in buildings and infrastructure assets such as roads, bridges and footpaths to address the issue of ageing infrastructure. The graph below highlights the extent of this investment.

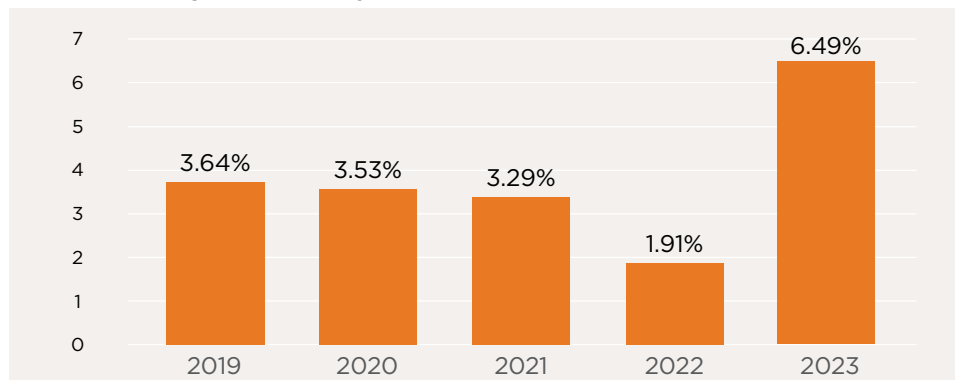
Debt servicing and redemption costs / rate revenue (%)



Debt service ratio

The debt servicing and redemption ratio assesses the degree to which rate revenues are committed to the repayment and servicing of loans. This has been calculated using rates revenue excluding waste charges. In 2022/2023 the ratio was 1.26%, well below the guidelines of 10%.

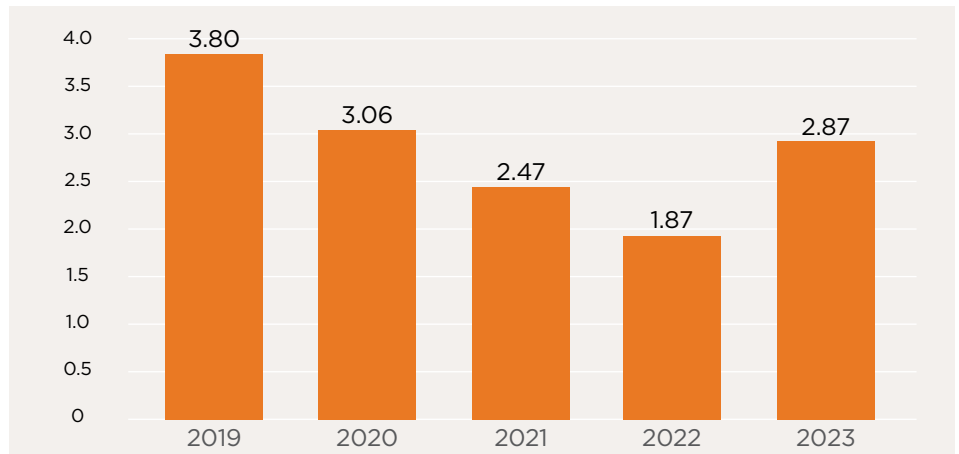
Debt servicing and redemption costs / rate revenue (%)



Adjusted working capital ratio

The ratio expresses the level of current assets the Council has available to meet its current liabilities. Current liabilities have been reduced to reflect the long service leave that is shown as current but is not likely to fall within the next 12 months. The ratio at 2.87 is financially prudent.

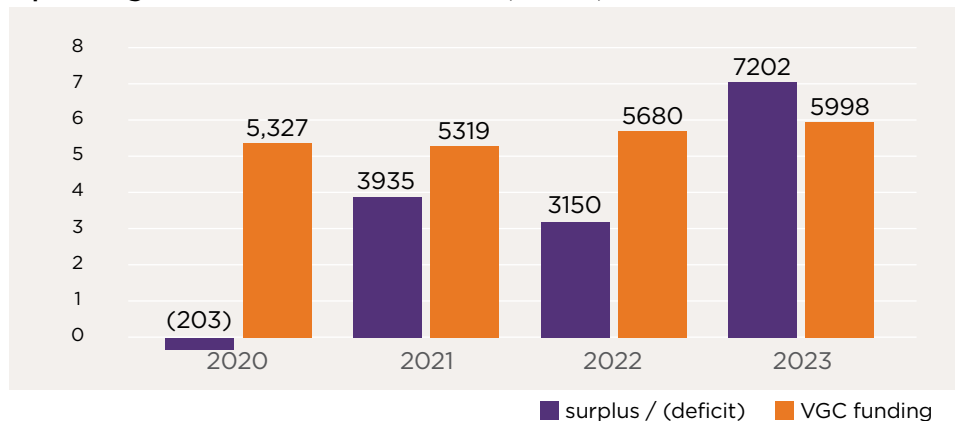
Adjusted working capital ratio



Operating result before revaluations

Council's 2022/2023 operating result, before asset revaluations, was a surplus of \$7.20 million. The main contributor to the surplus is the receipt of unbudgeted operating grant income.

Operating result before revaluations (\$'000)



Our services

We provide more than 100 services to the community that help us work towards our vision of working together for a healthy, connected shire.

The teams listed below help to deliver our services. These range from helping the youngest members of our community through our maternal and child health programs to supporting our seniors through aged and disability care. Our teams also provide business and economic development opportunities, community planning, waste collection and management, and of course, they manage vital community assets like roads, bridges and footpaths.



A healthy, connected and inclusive community

Aged and Disability Services

Assesses and provides services for older people and people with people with disability to enable them to remain living independently in their own homes. Services provided include domestic assistance, shopping, personal care, respite, delivered meals, home safety and social support programs for isolated older people.

Civic Compliance

Improves safety and amenity in the shire by supervising school crossings, control of domestic animals and livestock, regulating parking, issuing local law permits and infringement notices, and providing information and advice to the community.

Communications and Engagement

Ensures that the community receives timely, relevant and engaging information about what's happening in the shire through numerous channels including our website, social media, email, media engagement, advertising, community newsletters, and more. Supports and advises staff on best practice communication strategies, tools and community engagement.

Community Partnerships

Works with local residents, community organisations and service providers to build community capacity and strengthen our engagement with the community.

Corporate Services

Provides policy, systems and support in the areas of continuous improvement, corporate planning and performance reporting.

Customer Service

Assists customers with general enquiries in person, by email and by telephone. It also shares information with the community and connects the community with relevant Council staff, registers community requests for services and processes payments.

Venue Coordination and Events

Provides hire and management services for public venues, as well as cleaning and maintenance of public restrooms.

Executive

Strategically manages the organisation in keeping with the requirements of good governance, legislation and strategic policy.

Emergency Management

Develops and implements strategies to increase the emergency management capability of the shire and community. Undertakes prevention measures to reduce risk from hazards.

Environmental Health

Conducts inspections and maintains registrations for food and public health businesses, including registration and approval of temporary food permits. Assesses septic tank applications and investigates complaints.

Library Operations

Provides accessible information and resources for the recreational, cultural, educational and social development of our community. The service is provided by Goldfields Library Corporation via the library located in Castlemaine.

Maternal and Child Health

Provides consultations, information, referrals, advice and support for children from birth to school age and their families.

People and Culture

Provides strategic and operational organisation capability support including human resource and industrial relations strategies, policies and procedures.

Records

Stores, retrieves and archives records and ensures legislative and privacy requirements are met.

Youth Development

Works in partnership with young people and the community, organisations and service providers to support and promote initiatives, activities and programs that strengthen young people's connections and place within the community.

Active Communities

Provides advice on local recreational needs, and facility use and planning, develops master plans and strategies to promote and develop healthy physical activity in the shire, and supports sports and recreation clubs.

Healthy Loddon Campaspe

Works to improve health in the region through projects that focus on encouraging healthy eating and getting more people, more active, more often.



An environment for people and nature

Community Buildings

Prepares and delivers maintenance and management programs for our buildings, pavilions and other community assets to maximise value and use.

Environment and Sustainability

Develops environmental policy, coordinates and implements environmental projects and works with other services to improve our environmental performance, including climate change initiatives.

Engineering

Designs, contract manages and supervises our capital works program. Undertakes safety and condition inspections of roads, bridges and footpaths, and maintains the asset management system while overseeing community infrastructure development.

Parks and Gardens

Manages and maintains key parks and recreation areas including Castlemaine Botanical Gardens, Maldon Gardens, Stanley Park North and Victory Park. Oversees tree management and provides tree pruning, planting and removal in addition to working closely with Landcare groups to enhance, protect and maintain our natural environment areas.

Property Management

Facilitates management and strategic planning for our building, land, commercial and community leases and licences.

Recreation Facilities

Oversees the management, use and development of sporting reserves, pavilions and the Castlemaine War Memorial Stadium as well as Council's four outdoor pools. Provides advice on recreational needs, facility use and planning to provide access to well-maintained sport and recreation facilities.

Works: Roads, Bridges, Paths and Drainage

Undertakes maintenance and renewal of our roads, bridges, paths and drainage. This includes maintenance grading, patrol patching, periodic gravel and bituminous resurfacing, road and intersection renewals, road line markings, signage, drain clearance and street sweeping.

Street Beautification

Manages street trees, coordinates new lighting installations and maintains public toilets. The service also provides annual inspections, programming and implementation of power line clearance requirements in Castlemaine and Maldon.

Waste Management

Manages the waste management facilities at Castlemaine and Maldon. Provides kerbside waste, recycling collection and develops and implements waste and resource recovery strategies.

Building Services

Provides building compliance services including emergency management responsibilities, fire safety inspections, swimming pool barrier audits, and investigates complaints and illegal works.

Cultural Development

Provides advocacy and support to help develop and promote arts, cultural and creative activities across the shire.



A resilient and growing economy

Economic Development

Undertakes initiatives to build the local economy including support for the growth of local businesses and industry networks along with reducing barriers for business development. Works towards creating and maintaining an environment that ensures the shire is a desirable location for people to visit, work, live and invest.

Financial Services

Manages finances through preparation and monitoring of the budget, payment of accounts, procurement of services, and the raising and collection of rates and charges, and valuation of properties.

Governance

Coordinates Council meetings, Councillor-related activities and provides support and oversight of compliance with the Local Government Act.

Information Services

Provides, supports and maintains cost effective communications and IT systems enabling Council to deliver services in a productive and efficient way.

Planning Services

Manages land use and development in the municipality in accordance with the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme. The service provides planning information and advice, assesses planning permit applications and undertakes compliance activities. It develops and implements urban and rural planning strategy and maintains an effective planning scheme through regular reviews and planning scheme amendments, while ensuring appropriate support for our heritage.

Tourism Services

Provides visitor information, marketing and industry development for the shire. Supports economic and social benefits of tourism through operation of Visitor Information Centres in Castlemaine and Maldon. Provides accommodation and tour booking services. Significantly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

Our Council

Mount Alexander Shire Council is comprised of seven Councillors in five wards.



Castlemaine Ward

Councillor Rosie Annear
Mayor

Email: castlemaineannear@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
Mobile: 0407 345 744



Loddon River Ward

Councillor Matthew Driscoll
Deputy Mayor

Email: loddonriver@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
Mobile: 0437 108 458



Castlemaine Ward

Councillor Bill Maltby

Email: castlemainemaltby@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
Mobile: 0437 089 841



Castlemaine Ward

Councillor Gary William McClure

Email: castlemainemcclure@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Mobile: 0408 017 655



Calder Ward

Councillor Tony Cordy

Email: calder@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Mobile: 0466 004 629



Coliban Ward

Councillor Christine Henderson

Email: coliban@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Mobile: 0466 004 628



Tarrengower Ward

Councillor Stephen Gardner

Email: tarrengower@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Mobile: 0407 991 403

Good governance

Our Councillors aim to govern in an open and transparent way, showing integrity and leadership, and make decisions in the long-term interests of the community. They strive to responsibly manage assets and finances, advocate on behalf of the community and work with Council, residents and organisations to secure a strong future for the shire.

Councillors committed to the following values and behaviour in a Code of Conduct they developed after being elected in October 2020.

Councillors:

- will let people have their say
- are open, fair and respectful
- will listen to each other
- will value other perspectives
- are accountable for their decisions
- will always consider the environment
- will always consider financial sustainability
- will always consider the social impacts
- will foster inclusivity, diversity and equity
- will ask clarifying questions and give constructive feedback on information provided
- will work together towards common goals.

Council elections

Mount Alexander Shire Council's seven Councillors are elected by residents and ratepayers from the five wards. The Coliban, Calder, Tarrengower and Loddon River wards comprise one Councillor, and there are three Councillors in the Castlemaine Ward, elected under the proportional representation system of voting.

On 20 November 2022, Councillor Rosie Annear was elected Mayor for twelve months. Councillor Matthew Driscoll was elected Deputy Mayor to provide back-up when the Mayor is unavailable for public speaking engagements and attending Council meetings.

Committees

Council has a number of Advisory Committees and Community Asset Committees established under the provisions of the Local Government Act. Councillors play an important part in representing Council on external committees.

Advisory committees and reference groups

Council's advisory committees and reference groups help guide and support decision making across a range of areas within the shire. They include the Community Waste Reference Group, Audit and Risk Committee, Youth Advisory Group, Mount Alexander: A Healthy Shire Community Advisory Committee, Indigenous Roundtable, Early Years Steering Group, LGBTIQ+ Steering Group, Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2025 Working Group.

Community asset committees

Special committees of Council (community asset committees) are established by Council to assist with the everyday operation and management of a number of Council-owned community facilities. Community asset committees are formally established under the provisions of Section 65 of the Local Government Act 2020 and each committee is governed by the same legal requirements as Council. Appointed members are required to comply with the powers and responsibilities provided under their Instrument of Delegation. There are currently 20 community asset committees for the following facilities:

- Barfold Hall
- Baringhup Hall
- Bill Woodfull Reserve
- Camp Reserve
- Campbells Creek Community Centre
- Campbells Creek Recreation Reserve
- Castlemaine War Memorial Stadium
- Elphinstone Community Facilities
- Guildford Hall
- Guildford Recreation Reserve
- John Powell Reserve
- Maldon Community Centre
- Metcalfe Hall
- Muckleford Community Centre
- Newstead Community Centre
- Sutton Grange Hall
- Taradale Hall
- Taradale Recreation Reserve
- Wattle Flat Reserve
- Wesley Hill Facility



Our Organisation

Executive Team

Council is the governing body that appoints a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is accountable for the overall management and performance of the organisation in line with the strategic directions in the Council Plan 2021-2025. The organisational structure is based on the functional activity of two directorates – Corporate and Community Services and Infrastructure and Development. The directorates work collectively to provide services, programs and initiatives to meet Council’s strategic goals.



Darren Fuzzard, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Darren Fuzzard commenced his role as Chief Executive Officer in July 2016. Darren is accountable for the overall management and performance of the organisation. As Chief Executive Officer, Darren chairs the Executive Team which comprises the CEO and Directors. The Executive Manager People and Culture, Manager Economy and Culture and the Housing Solutions Broker report directly to the CEO.



Lisa Knight, Director, Corporate and Community Services

The Director Corporate and Community Services is responsible for delivering services which aim to strengthen the community as well as internal corporate services. The directorate delivers services for young people, older people, families, children and people with people with disability as well as leading Council’s partnerships and emergency management services. Corporate services critical to the successful operation of the organisation include business performance, IT, finance, procurement, customer service, visitor services, communications and engagement. The directorate also supports the Healthy Loddon Campaspe/Health Broker partnership.



Michael Annear, Director, Infrastructure and Development

The Director Infrastructure and Development is responsible for the delivery of statutory functions including land use planning, development and building control, environmental health and waste management. Other key responsibilities include maintaining the shire’s physical infrastructure including community buildings, roads, bridges, parks and sporting facilities. The directorate also supports community participation in sport and recreation, and safety and amenity.

Staffing profile

Council employs a diverse and skilled staff. All staff are employed under the Local Government Authorities Award 2001 and the Mount Alexander Shire Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement No 7, with the exception of the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Officers.

The table below shows the staffing profile across the organisation for the year to 30 June 2023. The total number of full time, fixed term, part time and casual employees is 265. The actual number of staff at 30 June in any year may vary as a result of positions in the process of being filled.

Equal employment opportunity

As an equal opportunity employer with a diverse workforce, Council will continue to employ people from a wide range of backgrounds including mature aged workers, young people, people with disability, Indigenous Australians, people from overseas and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Staffing profile

Directorate	Ongoing	Fixed term	Casual	Total
CEO	16	8	9	33
Corporate & Community Services	84	19	13	116
Infrastructure & Development	100	9	7	116
Total	200	36	29	265

Gender profile

Management level	Female	Male	Intersex indeterminate	Total
Executive	1	2	0	3
Management	7	4	0	11
Other	139	112	0	251
Total	147	118	0	265

Organisational structure





Governance and other information

Governance

Meetings of Council

Council meets each month in the Council Chamber. These meetings are open to the public unless confidential matters are dealt with. In 2022/2023 there were 11 scheduled and one unscheduled meeting of Council (see table below).

In response to COVID-19, temporary provisions were inserted in the Local Government Act 2020 (LGA 2020) to allow councils and regional libraries to conduct virtual meetings. Changes to the Local Government Act 2020 took effect on 2 September 2022 and will enshrine virtual attendance at Council meetings.

Council continued the video recording and live streaming of Council meetings via YouTube to ensure meetings were transparent and available to members of the public who could not attend.

Live streaming has proven to be very successful with many people watching the live feed or viewing recorded sessions after the meeting. The archive and minutes of Council meetings are also posted on Council’s website to enable citizens to examine key decisions.

Councillor	Ordinary Meetings	Special Meetings
	Attended	Attended
Councillor Annear	11	1
Councillor Driscoll	11	1
Councillor Cordy	11	1
Councillor Gardner	11	1
Councillor Henderson	10	1
Councillor Maltby	10	1
Councillor McClure	11	1

Councillor briefings

Briefing sessions are held three times a month, on a Tuesday afternoon, to inform Councillors on issues relating to Council business, some of which may go to an Ordinary Meeting of Council. The briefing sessions are confidential and only limited

information is made available to the public.

Information by way of documents and reports are made available to Councillors during the briefing sessions so they have

sufficient information and an opportunity to ask questions of Council officers about matters that may be decided in a full meeting of Council. While such reports often include the proposed recommendation to be considered at a future Council meeting, no decision is sought from Councillors at the briefing. Councillors are reminded that they are not able to make decisions at briefing sessions.

Policies

Council approved the following governance policies during 2022/2023.

- Revenue and Debt Collection Policy – Adopted 23 March 2023
- Pricing Policy – Adopted 21 February 2021
- External Grant Funding Policy – Approved by Executive Team – May 2023
- Child Safe Policy – Approved by Executive Team – December 2022
- Developer Contribution Policy – Adopted by Council – December 2022
- Addressing Unreasonable Conduct Policy – Approved by Executive Team – July 2022

Policies are available on Council's website under Policies.

Code of conduct

The Councillor Code of Conduct commits Councillors to working effectively together and provides for effective participation and accountability of Council to its community. Council adopted the Councillor Code of Conduct on 16 February 2021 and is available on Council's website.

Conflict of interest

Councillors are required to declare any interests before discussing at Council meetings. The Local Government Act defines interests and conflicts of interest. Council also has guidelines in place to assist Councillors and staff on this important issue.

Councillor allowances

The Local Government Act 2020 prescribes that Councillor allowances are to be set by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal. This process is outlined in the Council Expenses Policy.

On 7 March 2022, in accordance with section 23A of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 (Vic) (VIRTIPS Act), the Tribunal made the Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2022.

The Tribunal is required to make an annual adjustment to the values of allowances. On 30 June 2023, the Tribunal made the allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Annual Adjustment Determination 2023. This Determination adjusts the values of allowances with effect from 1 July 2023.

Current annual Councillor allowances are set at the maximum limit for a Category 1 Council being:

Mayoral allowance – \$79,492

Deputy Mayoral allowance – \$39,746

Councillor allowance – \$25,650.

The allowances are in two parts. Part A is the base allowance and Part B is the equivalent of the superannuation guarantee contribution (currently 10%).

Council is required to set the allowances by 30 June of the year following a general election. These allowances are then adjusted annually in accordance with the Ministerial direction.

Allowances and expenses

Councillor*	Allowance \$	Travel & motor vehicles \$	Phone \$	Internet, access & consumables \$	Conference & training \$	Total \$
Councillor Annear	68,620	3,690	213	282	7,761	80,565
Councillor Cordy	27,229		252	282		27,763
Councillor Driscoll	36,597		210	282	2,272	39,361
Councillor Gardner	27,229		189	282	4,021	31,721
Councillor Henderson	27,229		210	317	82	27,838
Councillor Maltby	48,652		201	395		49,248
Councillor McClure	27,229		204	282		27,715
Total \$*	262,785	3,690	1,479	2,121	14,135	284,212

*Excludes shared costs

Citizenship ceremonies

During the year Council held three citizenship ceremonies, including one livestreamed online on Australia Day.

A total of 35 residents took the Australian Citizenship Pledge before the Mayor. The new citizens came from many countries including the United Kingdom, India, Netherlands, Ireland, Finland, United States of America, Denmark, Argentina and Phillipines.

Council plays a significant role in the citizenship process by liaising with the Department of Home Affairs. Arrangements include organising the

venue, arranging for the attendance of candidates, relatives and friends, and hosting the function. It is an important event for the new citizens as they take the pledge to become an Australian citizen. Each function has proven to be a special day for conferees.

Risk management

Risk management is a structured approach to understanding the organisation's risk environment and proactively managing risks to achieve its objectives. The Governance and Risk team is responsible for managing Council's insurance portfolio, overseeing insurance claims and

developing an operational and strategic risk management framework.

The Risk Management Framework currently includes:

- an Audit and Risk Advisory Committee and Health and Safety Committee
- a comprehensive risk register
- relevant policies, procedures and systems
- standard job safety analyses for common manual tasks
- health and safety guidelines for contractors
- online health and safety inductions for contractors and staff
- a detailed Business Continuity Plan and unit sub-plans
- a comprehensive insurance portfolio.

Audit and Risk Advisory Committee

The Audit and Risk Advisory Committee is an independent advisory committee of Council, established in accordance with Section 53 of the Local Government Act 2020. The main role of the committee is to provide oversight and advice on financial and performance reporting processes, the effectiveness of internal control and risk management systems and the performance of internal and external auditors.

During the year the committee reviewed and considered the following matters:

- Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement
- Internal Audit Reviews
- Council's Financial Management
- Strategic risk register
- Council policies

Statutory information

The following information is provided in accordance with legislative and other requirements that apply to Council. Documents available for public inspection. In accordance with the Local Government Acts 1989 and 2020, the Local Government (General) Regulations 2015, Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 and Council's adopted Public Transparency Policy, the following information, but not limited to this, is available at the Civic Centre, corner Lyttleton and Lloyd Streets, Castlemaine during office hours and on Council's website:

- A register of the interests of Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer, members of Special Committees and nominated officers.
- Minutes of Ordinary and Special Council Meetings held in the previous 12 months, except for meetings closed to the public. Minutes are available on Council's website.
- Minutes of meetings of Community Asset Committees established under Section 65 of the Local Government Act 2020 and held in the previous 12 months, except for meetings closed to the public.
- Register of Delegations, under Section 47 of the Local Government Act 2020.
- Details of all leases involving land entered into by Council as lessor, including the lessee and the terms and value of the lease.
- A register of Authorised Officers appointed under Section 224 of the Local Government Act 1989.
- A register of gifts, established in line with section 138 of the Local Government Act 2020.

- A list of donations and grants made by Council during the financial year, including the names of persons or bodies which have received a donation or grant and the amount of each donation or grant.
- A copy of local laws in force in the municipal district.

Freedom of information

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 gives members of the public rights of access to official documents held by Council. Council's Freedom of Information Section II Statement, which explains the types of information held and how members of the public can access information, can be found on our website. Requests for access to documents must be made in writing and be accompanied by the fee of \$31.80. Nine valid requests were received and processed during the year.

Public interest disclosures

The purpose of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 is to encourage and facilitate disclosers of improper conduct by public officers, public bodies and other persons and detrimental action taken in reprisal for a person making a disclosure under the Act. It also provides protection for persons who make disclosures and provides confidentiality of the content of those disclosures and the identity of persons who make disclosures. Council has detailed Protected Disclosures Procedures available on its website to facilitate the making, handling and notification of protected disclosures. During 2022/2023 there were no notifications of a disclosure.

Contracts

During the year Council did not enter into any contracts for services valued at more than \$150,000 or works with a greater value of \$200,000 or more without engaging in a competitive process.



Governance and management checklist

The following are the results in the prescribed form of Council's assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist.







Checklist

Governance and management items	Assessment	
<p>Community engagement policy (Policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest).</p>	<p>Policy New policy adopted: 16 February 2021</p>	✓
<p>Community engagement guidelines (Guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community.)</p>	<p>Guidelines Updated 23 June 2021</p>	✓
<p>Financial plan (Plan under section 91 of the 2020 LGA outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 10 financial years.)</p>	<p>Plan The Financial Plan was adopted on 19 October 2021, and was updated and adopted again on 21 June 2022. It has again been updated and is scheduled for adoption on 19 September 2023.</p>	✓
<p>Annual budget (Plan setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken over the next 12 months, and the funding and other resources required.)</p>	<p>Budget The 2023/2024 Budget was adopted by Council on 20 June 2023. The budget contains information on the services provided and initiatives undertaken.</p>	✓
<p>Asset management plans Asset Plan (Plan that sets out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years.)</p>	<p>Plans Date of operation of current plans: Open Space February 2022 Bridges June 2020 Pathways June 2020 Castlemaine Waste Facility Master Plan November 2013 Investing in Sport Master Plan all reserves December 2010 Buildings December 2009 (update adopted July 2023) Roads - October 2019 (drafted August 2022, not yet adopted) Drainage - (drafted August 2022, not yet adopted)</p>	✓
<p>Revenue and rating plan (Plan setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges.)</p>	<p>Strategy Council adopted its Revenue and Rating Plan on 21 June 2022. It has again been updated and is scheduled for adoption on 19 September 2023.</p>	✓

Checklist

Governance and management items	Assessment	
<p>Risk policy (Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations.)</p>	<p>Policy Date of operation of current policy: 15 September 2020. A Risk Management Policy is in place that provides a framework for identification, evaluation and mitigation of Council's strategic, operational and project risks.</p>	✓
<p>Fraud policy (Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risk of fraud.)</p>	<p>Policy Date of operation of current Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy: 19 May 2020</p>	✓
<p>Municipal Emergency Management Plan (Plan under section 20 of the Emergency Management Act 1986 for emergency prevention, response and recovery.)</p>	<p>Plan A redeveloped plan to meet legislative requirements has been endorsed by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee in August 2023. This is scheduled for endorsement by the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee late August 2023. The Plan no longer requires Council approval (due to legislation requirements) as it is now an all agency plan that is required to meet assurance guidelines.</p>	✓
<p>Procurement policy (Policy outlining the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to all purchases of goods, services and works by Council.)</p>	<p>Policy Policy adopted: 16 November 2021</p>	✓
<p>Business continuity plan (Plan setting out the actions that will be taken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster.)</p>	<p>Plan Date of operation of current plan: 23 March 2016</p>	✓
<p>Disaster recovery plan (Plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to recover and restore business capability in the event of a disaster.)</p>	<p>Plan Council has a Disaster Recovery Plan, which was reviewed, and approved on 30 September 2021.</p>	✓
<p>Risk management framework (Framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the council's operations.)</p>	<p>Framework A Risk Management Policy, adopted 15 September 2020 and procedures provide the framework for identifying, evaluating and mitigating Council's strategic, operational and project risks. This framework is currently being reviewed and updated.</p>	✓

Checklist

Governance and management items	Assessment
<p>Audit and Risk Committee (Advisory committee of Council under sections 53 and 54 of the LGA.)</p>	<p>Committee Q1 – November Q2 – February Q3 – May and Q4 – August Council operates an Audit and Risk Advisory Committee that meets four times per year. A Council adopted charter in place, approved 21 July 2020.</p> 
<p>Internal audit (Independent accounting professionals engaged by Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving council's governance, risk and management controls.)</p>	<p>Supplier engaged 1 November 2018 Council's internal auditor completed a program of reviews as approved by the Audit and Risk Advisory Committee.</p> 
<p>Performance reporting framework (A set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance, including the performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act.)</p>	<p>Framework Council undertakes annual reporting of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF), as required as part of the Annual Report process.</p> 
<p>Council Plan reporting (Report reviewing the performance of Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the financial year.)</p>	<p>Report Dates of report: Q1 – September, Q2 – December, Q3 – March and Q4 – June. Council is provided with a quarterly report at Ordinary Meetings, detailing progress against Annual Plan actions. Council Plan 2021-2025 was adopted by Council on 19 October 2021. Annual Plan actions were approved on 19 July 2022.</p> 
<p>Quarterly budget reports (Quarterly statements to Council detailing progress against year to date budget.)</p>	<p>Report Dates of report: Q1 – September, Q2 – December and Q3 – March. Council is provided with a quarterly report detailing progress against year to date budget. This is presented at an Ordinary Meeting of Council. 2022/2023 financial reports have been presented at Council Meetings in December 2022, March 2023, and June 2022. No fourth quarter financial report is produced; annual financial statements are produced instead.</p> 
<p>Risk reporting (Six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies.)</p>	<p>Reports Council's Risk Management Policy was adopted by Council in September 2020. The Strategic Operational Risk Register was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in August 2021, November 2021 and May 2022.</p> 

Checklist

Governance and management items	Assessment
<p>Performance reporting (Six-monthly reports of indicators measuring the results against financial and non-financial performance, including performance indicators referred to in section 98 of the Act).</p>	<p>Reports Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) reports are reported to Executive, Council and the Audit and Risk Committee on an annual basis. Monthly financial management reports are provided to Executive, while quarterly financial management reports are provided to Council and the Audit and Risk Committee. These include various financial and non-financial performance indicators.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">✓</p>
<p>Annual report (Annual Report under sections 131, 132 and 133 of the LGA 1989 to the community containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements.)</p>	<p>Report The 2021/2022 Annual Report statements were presented to Council on 20 September 2022 and adopted on 18 October 2022. The 2022/2023 Annual Report is scheduled to be presented to Council on 19 September 2023.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">✓</p>
<p>Councillor Code of Conduct (Code setting out the conduct standards to be followed by Councillors.)</p>	<p>Code Council Code of Conduct is current. Date reviewed: 16 February 2021</p> <p style="text-align: right;">✓</p>
<p>Delegations (Document setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff.)</p>	<p>Delegations Dates of review: Schedule 6 – Instrument of Delegation: Council to Staff – 22 December 2021 Schedule 5 – Instrument of Delegation: Council to CEO – 31 October 2021 Schedule 7 – Instrument of Sub-Delegation: CEO to Council Staff – 28 March 2018</p> <p style="text-align: right;">✓</p>
<p>Meeting procedures (Governance rules for the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees.)</p>	<p>Rules Meeting Procedures Local Law was adopted by Council on 21 February 2023.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">✓</p>

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



Michael Annear
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Dated: 19 September 2023



Cr Rosie Annear
Mayor
Dated: 19 September 2023

Service performance indicators

Indicator / measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	Material variations & comments
Transparency Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public (Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council, or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors) x100	5.94%	9.62%	2.15%	3.80%	Three resolutions were passed at closed Council meetings.
Consultation and engagement Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement.	51.00	55.00	54.00	51.00	Council has worked hard to increase community consultation and engagement using a number of strategies including: media, briefings and streaming of Council Meetings on YouTube.
Attendance Councillor attendance at council meetings [(Attendance Councillor attendance at council meetings [The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each ordinary and special Council meeting / (Number of ordinary and special Council meetings) (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election) x100	94.81%	99.05%	92.86%	97.62%	Two Councillors were absent on two separate occasions.
Service cost Cost of elected representation (Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)	\$31,739.57	\$29,883.29	\$35,721.29	\$41,655.55	Service costs are returned back to pre-pandemic levels.
Satisfaction Satisfaction with Council decisions (Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed in making decisions in the interests of the community)	49.00	55.00	50.00	48.00	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.

Community satisfaction survey results

Each year Council participates in the Community Satisfaction Survey. The majority of Victorian Councils participate in the survey, which is undertaken by JWS Research.

Council's results are compared to similar sized Councils and the state-wide average. The 2023 results for core measures are summarised below.

Performance measures

Measure	2021	2022	2023	2023	2023
	Mount Alexander			Large rural	State-wide
Overall performance	58	55	52	52	56
Community consultation & engagement	55	54	51	49	52
Community decisions	55	50	48	48	51
Sealed local roads	56	51	47	40	48
Waste management	58	59	48	65	66
Customer service	70	68	68	65	67
Overall Council direction	52	45	41	44	46



Mount Alexander Shire Council
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