

Attachments

Council Meeting

Monday 17 April 2023

10.1	Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee (WYRC) 2022 Annual Report	
	Attachment 1 WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL	3
10.3	723-725 Whitehorse Road, Mont Albert – Use of the land for a restricted recreation facility (gymnasium) and alteration of access to a transport zone category 2	
	Attachment 1 Site Plan.....	23
	Attachment 2 Letter provided by applicant responding to forum	24
10.5	Independent Review of Australian Carbon Credit Units	
	Attachment 1 Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets	28
10.6	Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report	
	Attachment 1 Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report	47

10.1 Whitehorse Youth Representative
 Committee (WYRC) 2022 Annual
 Report

Attachment 1 WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL



2022 Annual Report



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

Table of Contents

1. Meet the committee <i>by Samthita Manjuranth</i>	2
2. Background <i>by Sankara Santosa</i>	4
3. Induction + Meet the Major <i>by Lalita Aiman</i>	5
4. Training <i>by Cate Mead + Samthita Manjunath</i>	6
5. Young Person of the Month <i>by Sirasi De Silva</i>	8
6. Youth Plan consultations <i>by Piyumi De zoysa</i>	9
7. Whitehorse News <i>by Piyumi De Zoysa</i>	10
8. Annual Youth Forum <i>by Anna Naidoo</i>	11
9. Online Workshops <i>by Anna Niadoo</i>	14
10. Spring Festival <i>by Sirasi De Silva</i>	16
11. Environmental sustainability <i>by Akira Mieu</i>	17
12. Conclusion <i>by Sirasi De Silva</i>	18

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

1. **Meet the committee** by Samthita Manjuanth

2022 has been a year of bouncing back for all. It has been a challenging year for many people struggling to get by, however it has also been an extraordinary year of solidarity, community and kindness. We as the members of the Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee (WYRC) hope and aim to embody these values and share them with the rest of the community. In the year of 2022 the WYRC has been given a countless number of opportunities from Whitehorse Council and the community. There have been a number of successful in-person events this year, which were designed to encourage and promote the voices of young people in Whitehorse represented by the WYRC.



**Jacqueline Piper &
Monica San Martin**



Sirasi De Silva



Piyumi De Zoysa:



Anna Naidoo



Sankara Santosa



Lalita Aiman

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL



Samhita Manjunath



Cate Mead



Akira Mieu



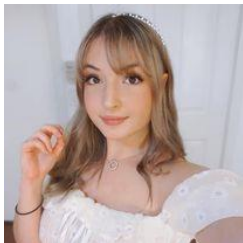
Jessica Chung



Sophia Liu



Max Colett



Suzanne Parrish

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

2. **Background** by Sankara Santosa

The Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee (WYRC) is a group of young volunteers between the ages of 12 and 25 who want to advocate for and give a voice to all young people in the City of Whitehorse and help Council address issues affecting young people. The group meets every two weeks for the year at Youth ConneXions in Box Hill and, when necessary, virtually.

Aim

The main goal of the Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee is to give young people aged 12-25 a voice in Council and the decisions that affect them. The primary aims are:

- Gives insight and educate Council and the wider Whitehorse community on important issues that affect the young people
- Advocate by gathering information on important issues that affect young people and sharing with Council
- Offering young people of Whitehorse a way to express their ideas and interests through a committee that can boost their creativity and give them positive experiences
- Offering young people in the Whitehorse community to socialise with their peers at initiatives and events and reduce social isolation

Benefit

Members of WYRC will be able to work with and collaborate with like-minded young people from various backgrounds in the Whitehorse community. There are many skills and benefits that come with being a member of the WYRC

- Experience in public speaking
- Experience in problem-solving
- Experience in event managing
- A chance to meet and make friends with likeminded people
- An opportunity to develop leadership qualities and skills
- Participation in different training programs and modules
- Attending public events that represent Whitehorse and young people aged 12-25

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

Recruitment

Young people with ties to the City of Whitehorse through residency, education, employment or significant connection between the ages of 12 and 25 are eligible to apply for a position on the committee. Annually through November to January recruitment is widely publicised via: Seek.com, 'Whitehorse News', schools, and youth services social media channels. Candidates go through an interview where the objectives, expectations, and duties of membership are discussed. This is done through a formal process intended to give young people practical experiences with life skills, specifically the employment process.

3. Induction + Meet the Mayor by lalita Aiman

The 2022 Induction meeting was able to be held in person this year, which was a great way for everyone to meet and connect for the first time together as a committee. This meeting took place on the 23rd of February at Youth ConneXions, just like most of our meetings throughout the year. We began by introducing ourselves so that we would understand more about each person. During the meeting, we accomplished various tasks, went through our induction manuals and took this opportunity to get to know each other better. A fortnight later, on March 9th our first meeting was held at the Nunawading Civic Centre where we met the Mayor, Tina Liu. It was a pleasure to meet the Mayor. We also took a detailed tour of the Council Chambers where we discussed our ideas on youth issues with the Mayor and what we should implement in the year ahead as part of the WYRC. Mayor Tina Liu also talked us through the Council's purpose, the work they do for the community, and how our volunteer work positively impacts the Council and community.



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

4. **Training** by Cate Mead + Samthita Manjunath

Training: Cultural Awareness

Our cultural awareness training facilitated by the Migrant Information Centre (MIC), showed us the ways in which cultural stereotypes that exist within our own Australian society and how they can impact our beliefs of other cultures unlike our own. Through activities such as 'Stopover in Tacaal' we were able to see our own abilities to jump to conclusions, and alternatively then learn to apply a level head in unique scenarios and not judge foreign customs. The facilitators were very kind and understanding, and they made sure we understood the feelings of migrants coming to Australia and could offer more empathy. It also provided an opportunity to talk about our own different cultures and interact with the Whitehorse FReeZA Committee.

Training: Youth Advocacy/Activism with Nevo

A prominent part of our committee training this year was our advocacy training with Nevo. With their background in activism, Nevo was able to offer us a unique perspective giving us very feasible ways to become aware of 'advocate burnout' and how to look after our own mental wellbeing while taking a stand against issues important to ourselves. Their training was very helpful to us, as it really established the grounds of what we were doing as part of the committee, and reminded us all why we were involved and how we could realistically achieve our goals. Building this connection with Nevo continued on to our Whitehorse Youth Forum 2022, in which we asked them to provide a Keynote presentation to the attendees.

Training: SYN Radio

In 2022 the members of the WYRC and FReeZA were given the opportunity to participate in a radio basics training coordinated by SYN Media. SYN Media is a youth 'not for profit' media organisation. The training was held on the 1st of August at RMIT University in Melbourne CBD at SYN. During the training there was a mixture of theory, interactive parts and hands-on experience. We were taught the process and steps of running and designing a radio show. After the



theory we got the opportunity to create, design and record our own radio show. This training was extremely beneficial for everyone who participated in it and also taught us to appreciate the hard work and dedication gone into creating radio shows suitable for young people.

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

Training: First Aid

This year committee members from both the WYRC and FReeZA were given the opportunity to complete a basic course in First Aid and CPR. This training was given online by the St John's across November and December. The training was thorough and consisted of many parts, including a questionnaire, practical/interactive activities and theory. The course was beneficial for everyone, whether they wanted a refresher on first aid or if they were earning their certificate for the first time. First Aid is a vital skill and having the confidence and training to do it could mean the difference between life and death in an emergency. Upon completing everyone earned their 'Provide First Aid' and CPR certificate.

Training: Event Management

Through the event management training with facilitator Seanzel He, we were able to further advance in the planning for our annual Whitehorse Youth Forum. This helped us significantly in the planning process as we further brainstormed what our event would look like, the areas we would focus on, and how we would go about achieving our goals for the event. We were able to gain insights from FReeZA Committee members as well and further engage in activities that got us to ideate and brainstorm. This training allowed us to go on and get speakers and workshops for our forum, and we were able to hold a successful event for young people aged 12-17 in Whitehorse an important goal for the committee this year.



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

5. Young Person of the Month by Sirasi De Silva

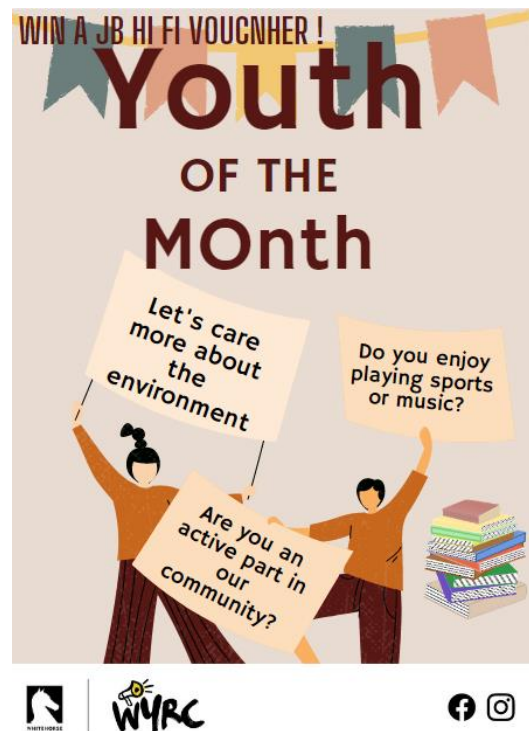
The Whitehorse City Council's Young Person of the Month Award acknowledges young people from the ages of 12 to 27 for their extraordinary achievements and for making exceptional contributions to the Whitehorse Community.

The Young Person of the Month Award can be awarded to any young person that has proved remarkable efforts in various areas such as education, music, sport, art and other commitments that involve or improve our local community. Nomination can be submitted to the Whitehorse City Council's website by anyone in the community including senior and junior members that have witnessed a young person's achievements and contributions.

Young Person of the Month Award is a wonderful achievement to gain and allows the Whitehorse City Council to acknowledge the astounding work of young people within our community. The award provides the winner the opportunity to have a feature in Whitehorse News publication as well as an appearance on the Council social media platforms.

In 2022 we received a few nominations for Young Person of the Month Award. However, the rate and amount of nominations were unfortunately low. This may be a negative effect we are seeing post-covid as the community is still returning to its original activity.

The Young Person of the Month Award is an important part of the Committee as it lets us recognize and acknowledge the brilliant work of the young people in our community and believe it should be strongly promoted in 2023. To improve the program the Committee has discussed new strategies. We think a key issue is the lack of exposure therefore to increase attraction more promotion will be needed in 2023. This can be done through the WYRC social media and other council media outlets.



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

6. Youth Plan Consultations by Piyumi De zoysa

The City of Whitehorse creates a Municipal Youth Plan. This Plan outlines how Council and Youth Services will support young people across a 4 year term. This support may include identifying prevalent youth issues and seeing what services could assist them in the short and long term.

The Municipal Youth Plan is currently a work in progress with consultations scheduled in the first 6 months of 2023. These consultations will involve discussing potential services with groups such as WYRC and other council groups.

The 2021 WYRC Committee initiated the idea of an online Annual Youth Survey, a 5 minute questionnaire covering 4 major themes of focus: Healthy Relationships, the LGBTQIA+ Community, Social Media & Body Image and International Students. The idea of the survey was to gain some valuable insights into the thoughts/experiences of young people every year on the chosen youth issues. The WYRC 2022 Committee attempted to continue developing this survey with Councils Communications Department but were unsuccessful in their efforts to have this implemented. In 2023 the previous efforts of our 2021 and 2022 annual survey will be incorporated into the Municipal Youth Plan consultation process. We would like to thank previous our previous WYRC Committees who played a big role in organizing the survey. The WYRC will aim to implement an ongoing annual survey as an affective consultation tool exploring youth issues moving into the future.

We look forward to seeing the finalised Municipal Youth Plan and seeing it in action and wish the 2023 WYRC the best in achieving this! We would also like to recognise the efforts of the WYRC Committees from the past few years as the development of the Youth Plan ss an ongoing project that has continued to grow from work across the years.



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

7. Whitehorse News Articles by Piyumi De Zoysa

The Whitehorse City Council publishes the 'Whitehorse News' each month, both in electronic and print format. The physical newspaper is available throughout Whitehorse and community facilities such as libraries.

The publication includes information about events and local news stories from the City of Whitehorse. It also includes reports directly from Councilors. As a Youth Committee, the WYRC is passionate about the double page dedicated to all things Youth! Youth information includes up and coming Youth ConneXions activities, creative youth competitions and Young Person of the Month Award.

Like past years, WYRC members have had the opportunity to write topics on an article of their choosing. As the main demographic targeted by the publication is Whitehorse's aging population however, the articles can help connect older and the younger people. The topics for the articles have ranged from self-esteem to the impacts of social media.

As identified in past years, the 'Whitehorse News' does not receive a steady stream of youth articles each month. It would be very important to continue publishing articles from young people each month, helping to ease the gap between the different generations of Whitehorse. A few ideas to take into consideration include:

1. Reaching out to local schools and inviting them to submit articles.
2. Promoting the publication more frequently at Youth ConneXions, the Youth Forum and perhaps the Spring Festival.
3. Organising different prompts each month and inviting young people to share/debate their views on the topics.

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

8. Annual Youth Forum by Anna Naidoo

On the 21st of October the WYRC facilitated its Annual Youth Forum at the Box Hill Town Hall. Over 60 school students from local schools attended the forum which focused on the topics of 'relationships and consent', 'self identity' and 'independence and future skills'.

Event - Anna Naidoo

As in previous years, the Committee members arrived at Box Hill Town Hall at 7:30 am to set-up various rooms for the workshops that took place during the day, as well as the Expo room and the break room. At 8:00am representatives of the organisations attending the Expo, and those who were running the workshops, arrived with their banners and educational material.

We were extremely fortunate to have these organisations attending:

- *Expo:* EACH (Eastern Access Community Health), The Butterfly Foundation, the Migrant Information Centre, and Headspace.
- *Workshops:* The Butterfly Foundation, Helen Zee (Yoga and Meditation), Elephant Education, and Mario D'Souza (Ever Onward)



To start the day at 9am our committee MC's began with an Acknowledgement of Country, before introducing Whitehorse Mayor, Tina Liu. Mayor Liu graciously opened the forum by emphasizing the importance of young people and their wellbeing, and the benefit to the community when youth lean-in and contribute. Next was a wonderful key note address given by Nevo Zisin who shared their experience with self-identity and transgender and gender diversity when growing-up as a teenager. They also recommended their books 'Finding Nevo' (2017) and 'The Pronoun Lowdown' (2021) as an accessible way for students and their families to navigate these topics.

The workshops were incredible, and each presenter used a powerpoint presentation to engage the students, as well as practical exercises. At registration, before the forum started, the students were able

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

to choose which 3 workshops they wished to attend, and therefore what suited their interests. The presenters were passionate and highly energetic, which encouraged great participation from everyone (further incentivized by the prospect of winning a gift-card in each workshop).

During the morning tea and lunch breaks, WYRC planned catering which was both healthy and delicious, and was available to everyone - including the teachers, students and organisation representatives. These meal breaks also provided an opportunity for students to visit the Expo and for everyone to connect. The Expo representatives were incredibly kind and generous with their time during the day, and created eye-catching displays and pamphlets for the students to read as well as a welcoming space where attendees could ask these youth-support staff questions and to have informative discussions.

At the end of the day, our MC's wrapped-up the forum with a questionnaire which students could fill-out in order to win a prize in a raffle. Students provided valuable feedback which will contribute to the success of the forum in the future.

Reflection

The forum itself, after 2 years of not occurring due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was a success on the whole. The WYRC has collated feedback from the attendees of the forum, and have themselves reflected on the forum, which we hope will inform future committees.

Attendee's feedback:

Students felt that the keynote address should have been more general in nature, despite that the keynote speaker was fully well-received for their insightful talk. Further, some attendees found that the workshops were not interactive enough, and that it would have been more engaging if there had been games / tangible things to do during the presentations.

In regards to the organisation and layout of the forum, students wanted greater input on music suggestions, and the games that were available during meal breaks. Further, students stated that they wanted more organisations to turn-out at the Expo, as well as for the Expo room to be closer to the break room.

Some students felt that there was not enough variety in refreshments and meals for vegan attendees and people with allergies (however this was provided-for on the form schools dispensed to students when signing-up for the forum). Also, some students felt that it would have been better if food had been made available earlier (such as putting the morning-tea break before the first workshop, or having a breakfast available upon registration in the morning).

Attendee feedback will be passed onto to the 2023 WYRC for consideration in the planning of their Annual Forum.

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

WYRC reflection:

The WYRC did a tremendous job and are extremely proud of what they achieved on the 21st October.

The WYRC generally agrees that a lot of time was allocated to the planning stage of the forum, and that this pushed the forum back too far into the year. Future committees should pay particular attention to school dates (holidays, exam periods and long weekends) to ensure that they maximise the impact of social media and other mediums of communicating the forum to young people. This will likely increase the number of attendees on the day as well.

Additionally, the Committee found that the Expo perhaps did not need to attend the forum from 8am-2:45pm, and rather that there should be a specifically allocated time for the Expo to take place.

However, the Committee found that the turnout for the forum was good and that there was general consensus amongst the attendees that they would return if they had the opportunity the next year.



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

9. Online workshops by Anna Niadoo

The WYRC (2023) were set to deliver two online workshops that the WYRC (2022) planned to undertake, and which will encompass the themes of 'job and career support' and 'healthy relationships and consent'. These online workshops will be held for young people aged 18-25.

The workshops were originally going to be held in November 2022 but this time of year was not suitable for this age group so the appropriate adjustments were made to get maximum attendance and benefit.

For this particular age group, the committee found that holding it online would be most accessible for young adults who have less availability, and more responsibilities. We have made this observation from the previous online workshops held during the COVID-19 lockdowns. These workshops will similarly be free, and will be marketed via social media and through channels, local youth service providers, the youth services team and in Box Hill Institute and Universities.

Due to screen fatigue and the challenging nature of connecting with our 18-25 year olds in Whitehorse the 'healthy relationships and consent' workshop as outlined below did not end up being delivered in workshop form due to the low registration numbers. The WYRC provided one on one support for those who registered on the day and are working with Sexual health Victoria to reach this target group via alternative avenues.

Job and Support Online Workshop

When: Monday March 20th from 6.30 – 7.30pm

Where: Online via Zoom – you will get the link upon registration

Who: 18 – 25 year olds

Presented by: Mario D'Souza from Ever Onward

Cost: Free!

About the workshop.....



Learn 7 powerful principles and techniques, when put together well, can ensure that you get that job! Followed by a Q&A to answer your burning job search or career questions. Workshop by Mario D'Souza - NLP consultant, career counsellor and youth coach with 23 years of experience helping young people find jobs they love.



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

Healthy Relationships and Consent Online Workshop

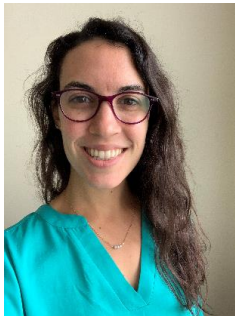
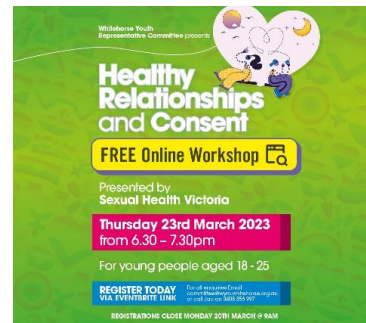
When: Thursday March 23rd from 6.30 – 7.30pm

Where: Online via Zoom – you will get the link upon registration

Who: 18 – 25 year olds

Presented by: Chrissy Keenan from Sexual Health Victoria

Cost: FREE!



About the workshop.....

Healthy relationships and consent for 18-25 year olds'. This workshop will explore relationships topics, including attributes of healthy relationships, such as socializing online. It will provide an overview of consent through different lenses; legal, ethical, affirmative, and enthusiastic consent and an opportunity for Q&A. This workshop is LGBTIQ+ inclusive.

Chrissy Keenan works as a Schools Educator at Sexual Health Victoria. She has a strong history in all things related to sexual and reproductive health, including working as a birth doula. She started her journey in this field roughly 10 years ago through sexual violence prevention and awareness activism on university campuses. She's taught relationships and sexuality education to secondary and university students in Los Angeles, CA and New York, NY, and now thoroughly enjoys teaching this important content to young people of all ages in Victoria. Her next goal is to train as an abortion doula to be able to support people seeking terminations.

10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

10. Spring Festival by Sirasi De Silva

On the 23rd of October 2022, the Whitehorse City Council presented the Spring Festival for all the residents and community members of Whitehorse. The Spring Festival offered over 50 different wonderful community stalls that allowed our whole Whitehorse community to come together to celebrate the spring season. It was a free event offered by Council that provided live music and dancing with 35 local artists and community groups performing across 5 different stages.

The Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee, FReeZA Flying Pig Events and Youth Services organised the youth area. The youth area included free fresh fruit smoothies to our fellow community members. The blend bikes were used to make the mango and berry flavored fresh smoothies. Each person that wanted a cup of juice had to blend their own smoothie on the bike by riding which blended the smoothie.

This activity was very popular, in fact we had a long line for hours and we received lots of positive feedback from the people that attended the Spring Festival. In fact, we could've been more prepared by having extra fruit and juice for the smoothies since there were so many people interested. Other activities in our youth area included the FReeZA Flying Pig Events stage where young musicians showcased their music, stall by the Guide Dog Association of Victoria, Youth Services information stall, Photo booth, and the East Box Hill Cricket Club who ran cricket activities for all to join in with. Overall, our youth area was an amazing success and the entire WYRC team enjoyed being a part of the event.



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

11. **Environmental Sustainability** by Akira Mieu

The important issues of Climate change and the environment were identified early on by the WYRC this year during our initial brainstorm of youth issues we wanted to focus our energies on. Ideas we had as a committee to address included:

- Local action groups – tree planting event
- Positions for young people on internal council enviro groups – work towards this has begun
- Climate Change festival
- YRC's across the east meet for an eastern collaboration
- Repair location for appliances to stop them going into landfill and be used
- Plant swap and weeds management initiatives
- Parks and gardens and environmental departments in council

Around our other commitments we did manage to advocate for young people to be on internal environmental Council committee and giving young people a voice within council and making sustainable change this way. This was done in collaboration with Cassie Lukes, the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer at Council. A member from our WYRC 2021 and our 2022 committee attended an online meeting with Cassie as a starting point and this partnership will continue into 2023.

One of the key initiatives for us this year has been the implementation of renewable energy sources and being mindful around the purchases we make. During our annual Forum, we had everything wrapped and packaged in recyclable and sustainable materials. Similarly for our youth area at Spring Festival we made sure to purchase recyclable items such as paper cups for the Bike and Blend smoothie making bikes. These initiatives have been vital in reducing our dependence on plastics and recycling them.



10.1 – ATTACHMENT 1. WYRC 2022 Annual Report FINAL

18. Conclusion by Sirasi De Silva

The year of 2022 for the Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee was filled with several exciting events, training and experiences. The main event of the year was the Youth Forum where countless hours of hard work and effort was put towards planning and organizing the wonderful day for our young people to enjoy and learn. Our Committee is passionate about spreading awareness about important youth issues. The training that we received through the program helped improve our knowledge and enhanced our passion to advocate for our peers. We believe that it is so important to hear and understand youth issues from young people and help construct effective solutions. Overall, the experience provided an amazing opportunity for the 2022 WYRC members and helped us all improve our skill sets. We are all very grateful for the year that WYRC offered and will always remember the memories created. We thank the Whitehorse Council for the great opportunity to be part of the Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee in 2022.

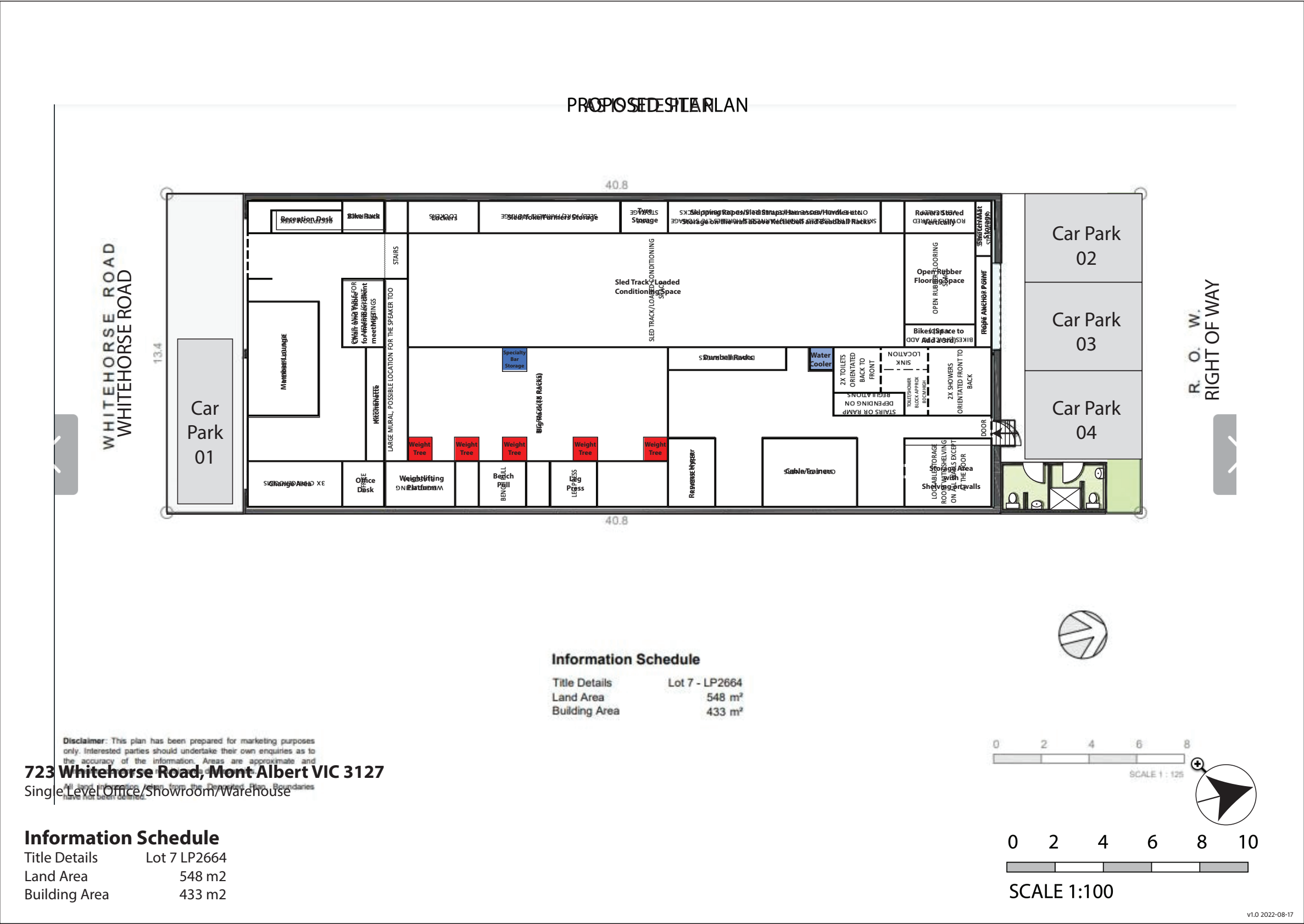


10.3 723-725 Whitehorse Road, Mont
Albert – Use of the land for a
restricted recreation facility
(gymnasium) and alteration of
access to a transport zone
category 2

Attachment 1 Site Plan

Attachment 2 Letter provided by applicant responding
to forum

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. Site Plan



10.3 – ATTACHMENT 2. Letter provided by applicant responding to forum



Below is a summary of the additional adjustments/alterations to the permit application. Most of them I had already sent to your [REDACTED] but to save digging through a number of emails I thought it would be easier to have them in one place. At the bottom I have also added an update to our proposed patron limits that includes what the parking survey recommended as maximum numbers, what we initially applied for, and what we are prepared to change to. Each point generally refers to a key objection that was made. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

- Outside classes: There is no plan to ever run sessions in the rear car park, or anywhere else outside the facility. We are happy to put that in writing for those who may be concerned.
- External cameras facing the laneway: These would be positioned in a manner that would cover our carparks and a section of the common access laneway, but not looking into the residential backyard or garages. We would have it covering part of the laneway only to have footage of any incidents (traffic, damage or criminal) that occur in and around the rear of the gym. We would be more than happy to show the residents the coverage once up and running and make adjustments to their satisfaction.
- Numbers of people in the gym outside staffed areas: [Here](#) is a link to the system we use and how you can manage occupancy. It's not a perfect solution, but we can limit the number of scan ins per hour to prevent people from gaining access if a certain number of people have already scanned in during the 60 min preceding them.
- Music noise: We do not run classes that have a backing beat to them, any music we have is more in the style of radio/spotify as ambient music for the space. This music will only be available during the staffed hours and staff will be responsible for monitoring the volume.
- Concerns about creating a 24 hour meeting point for illicit activity: Any activity that happens in our facility or at the entrances of our facility would be covered by security cameras which should be a deterrent for illicit activity rather than fostering it.
- Doors being open: The rear access door will have a self closing and magnetic locking system that will only allow it to be open when being held open by an individual or when the lock has been opened via Exit button, access tag or access pin There is no plans to open the roller door at any time other than when receiving deliveries of large equipment which will only really occur during our setup phase.
- Time between group sessions: We have proposed 15 minutes between group sessions to help minimise traffic impact, but it also makes things easier for our staff and have no desire to remove those intervals.
- Parking: Due to our prime hours being outside those of the other businesses along the strip that we are located in it would be expected that our patrons would primarily be using those car parks available on Whitehorse Road. We would strongly discourage patrons parking in permit zones and in residents driveways, part of our induction would include showing a map of the local parking outlining spaces that are not available due to permits, but I'm not sure what we can do beyond that. Happy to hear ideas.

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 2. Letter provided by applicant responding to forum

- Classes on public holidays: We generally don't run classes on public holidays, and if we do it is on a reduced schedule.
- The mention of other gyms in the area: Both "Kieser" and "Your Gym" have a very different style and setup to what "Barbell Samurai" offers, we feel that our business should not have much crossover in clients with either of them, so an increase in market saturation I don't think is a factor.
- Heating/cooling/ventilation: We have no current plans to add heating or cooling to the space (although there previously was some sort of cooling in the building that is no longer functional). Our current location has some 'whirly birds' on the ceiling to help dissipate heat on hot days, but is otherwise a big tin shed. At this stage that is the most we would do to alter air coming in/going out of the building, we would look to have some floor and possibly wall mounted fans, but nothing that would cause excess noise or smells to enter surrounding properties.
- Bike storage: We are happy to add more bike storage externally if it is deemed necessary.
- Cleaning and waste removal: The cleaning that would create a noise increase (vacuuming primarily) would be performed during the middle of the day in our quietest time periods (generally 11am-4pm), any emptying of bins done by staff would generally occur at a similar time.
- Parking at the rear of the building: This would primarily be for staff, and we would be expecting staff to park as close to the building to minimise any impact our cars have on the laneway and other cars being able to access their garage or use the laneway as a thoroughfare from their property.
- Access through the rear of the property: We are willing to limit this access to staff only, with the entry point for patrons being only through the front door. For safety purposes we need to be able to exit through both the front and rear doors, but this would strongly encourage patrons to be parking to the front of the property which will help minimise noise.
- Proposed numbers, this would be controlled by using the system to limit unique scans per 60 minute period. The +4 refers to the number of staff. For the out of hours times the combined number refers to combined staff and patrons.

	Surveyed max. limit	Initial application	Updated
Mon-Fri 9:30pm-5.55am:	40+4	10 total	5 total
Mon-Fri 5.55am-8am:	30+4	30+4	25+4
Mon-Fri 8am-5pm:	20+4	20+4	20+4
Mon-Fri 5pm-9:30pm:	40+4	30+4	25+4
Sat & Sun 9:30pm-6am:	40+4	10 total	5 total
Sat & Sun 6-9am:	25+4	25+4	20+4

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 2. Letter provided by applicant responding to forum

	Surveyed max. limit	Initial application	Updated
Sat & Sun 9am-2:30pm:	15+4	15+4	15+4
Sat & Sun 2:30-9:30pm:	30+4 (40+4 after 5)	15+4	15+4

Regards,

Shawn Connor

10.5 Independent Review of Australian Carbon Credit Units

Attachment 1 Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and
Offsets

Attachment 1 - Foundation Paper: Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

Table of Contents

1	Carbon Offsets Overview	3
1.1	What are carbon offsets?	3
1.2	Why use carbon offsets?	3
1.3	Carbon offset project types	4
1.4	Eligible offsets under the Climate Active program.....	5
2	Carbon Offset Criticisms and Chubb Review Findings.....	10
2.1	Criticisms around carbon offsets.....	10
2.1.1	Over-reliance on offsets can reduce urgent near-term carbon emission reductions	10
2.1.2	Variable quality of offsets	10
2.2	Independent Review of Australian Carbon Credit Units	11
3	Carbon Offset for Council.....	12
3.1	Carbon offset prices.....	12
3.2	Offset purchasing practices of Victorian councils.....	13
3.2.1	Types of offsets purchased	13
3.2.2	Procurement approach.....	15
3.3	Indicative costs to become Climate Active certified	15
4	References.....	17

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

1 Carbon Offsets Overview

1.1 What are carbon offsets?

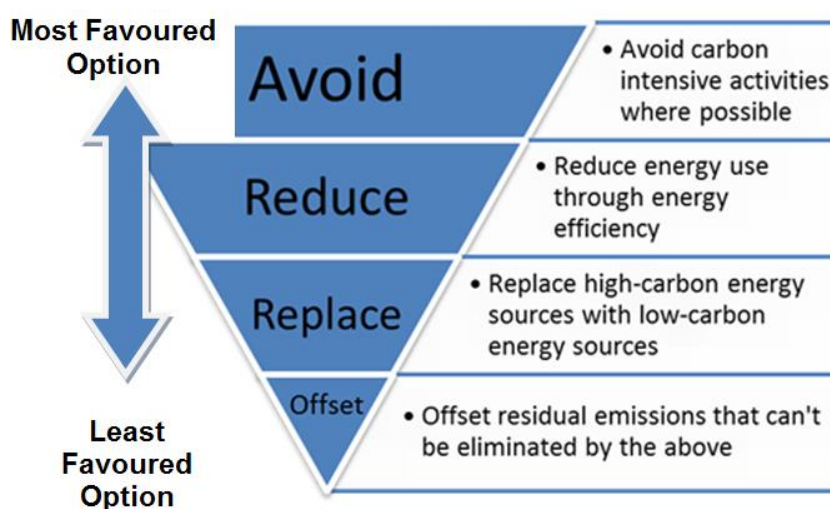
Carbon offsets (or carbon credits) are created by projects that avoid, reduce, remove or capture greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere. One carbon offset represents one metric tonne of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions avoided, removed or captured from the atmosphere.

The majority of international carbon offset projects are in developing countries, including China and India. Many of these projects can have additional positive social, environmental and economic impacts that go beyond carbon emission abatement. These are referred to as “co-benefits” ([Climate Active](#), 2019).

1.2 Why use carbon offsets?

Carbon offsets can be used by organisations to meet their carbon emissions compliance obligations, or to become voluntarily carbon neutral. A carbon neutral organisation is one that has achieved an overall balance between carbon emissions produced, and carbon emissions removed from the atmosphere.

To become carbon neutral, an organisation measures its greenhouse gas emissions and reduces these emissions where possible through actions such as switching to renewable energy or upgrading to more energy efficient lighting and appliances. Carbon offsets are then purchased to ‘offset’ the remaining emissions down to zero. Offsetting is considered the final stage of this process ([Climate Active](#), 2019). The priorities for managing carbon emissions for Council, and becoming carbon neutral are shown in the Carbon Management in Figure 1 below. .



10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

Figure 1. Council's Carbon Management Hierarchy

1.3 Carbon offset project types

There are three main ways that carbon offset projects reduce or remove the amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere ([Climate Active, 2019](#)):

- **Avoid** greenhouse gas emissions - for example, replacing fossil fuel-derived energy with energy from renewable sources.
- **Removes** emissions from the atmosphere - for example, planting more trees, which capture carbon from the atmosphere and store it long term.
- **Captures and destroys** emissions - for example, capturing methane from wastewater.

There are many different types of offset projects around the world. These span initiatives such as re-vegetating cleared land; clean energy from renewables (such as wind or solar); storing carbon in soil; and savannah fire management (Refer to Figure 2).

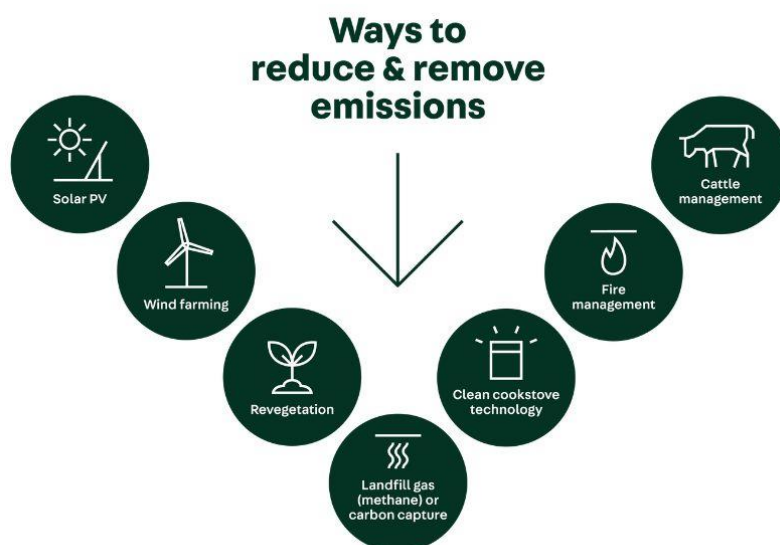


Figure 2. Types of carbon offset projects ([Climate Active, 2019](#)).

The most common carbon offset projects types include:

- **Nature based** – for example, reforestation; land restoration; forest protection; sustainable land management and carbon-storing agricultural practices.

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

- **Renewable energy** – for example, hydropower projects; wind projects; solar power; and geothermal.
- **Waste-to-energy** – for example, biogas from landfill and industry; and biomass.

Carbon offsets can be purchased from an extensive range of domestic and international projects that reduce or remove emissions from the atmosphere.

1.4 Eligible offsets under the Climate Active program

For an organisation to become carbon neutral they may purchase offsets from projects in Australia or overseas. This is because wherever the project is based, it will involve a reduction or removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

The Australian Government's voluntary carbon neutral certification scheme is called Climate Active (formerly National Carbon Offset Standard (NCOS)). To be certified as carbon neutral under this scheme, organisations must purchase "offsets that result in genuine emissions reduction" ([Climate Active, 2019](#)).

Not all offsets and projects are the same and it is important that each project is assessed carefully to ensure that the project is credible. Higher quality carbon offsets are usually verified under a reputable standard.

The Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard has developed a set of 'Offsets integrity principles' that all carbon offsets must meet in order to be eligible for use by organisations wanting to be certified carbon neutral ([Climate Active, 2022](#)).

This is to "ensure that any unit used to offset emissions as part of a carbon neutral claim against the Organisation Standard represents a genuine and credible emissions reduction" (Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, 2019).

The integrity principles require that carbon offsets are:

- Additional (it must result in emissions reductions that are unlikely to occur in the ordinary course of events/ existing commitments)
- Permanent
- Measurable
- Transparent (provide access to detailed information about the project)
- Address leakage (deduct for any increases in emissions elsewhere)
- Independently audited
- Registered.

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

Table 1 below lists the types of Climate Active eligible carbon offsets. The indicative cost is for one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂-e) stored or avoided by a project.

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

Table 1. Climate Active eligible carbon offsets types (Source: [Clean Energy Regulator](#))

Carbon Offset Type	Issued by	Description	Indicative cost (\$AUD)
Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs)	The Clean Energy Regulator (an Australian Government body responsible for accelerating carbon abatement for Australia)	ACCUs are tradeable, Australian government-regulated financial products. ACCUs are generated from Australian projects that result in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from eligible energy efficiency, renewable energy generation and carbon sequestration projects. ACCUs are the main type of carbon offset issued by projects in Australia.	\$36.50 (Note that this is the spot price on 6 March 2023, (Core Markets , 2023))
Certified Emissions Reductions (CERs)	The Clean Development Mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	CERs are earned by projects in developing countries after a comprehensive verification process managed by the United Nations Climate Change secretariat. Many of these projects bring sustainable development co-benefits to the host community.	\$2-3 (Note that this the average price for Q3, 2021, (Clean Energy Regulator , 2021))
Verified Emissions Reductions (VERs)	The Gold Standard (A voluntary carbon offset program established by the World Wildlife Fund and	Gold Standard VERS are generally considered to be high quality international offsets. The Gold Standard focusses on carbon offset projects that benefit the local community's financial, social, and	\$5-8 (Note that this the average price for Q3, 2021, (Clean Energy Regulator , 2021))

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

	other international non-government organisations (NGOs)	<p>environmental outcomes. The majority of these projects are in developing, low and middle-income countries.</p> <p>(Note that there are other Verified Emissions Reductions that are developed and calculated in compliance with several Verified Emissions Reductions Standards (not Gold Standard), but these are not eligible carbon offsets with Climate Active.)</p>	
Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)	Verra (Not-for-profit organisation that developed and manages the Verified Carbon Standard)	<p>The Verified Carbon Standard is broadly supported by the carbon offset industry (project developers, large offset buyers, verifiers, and projects consultants) and the world's most widely used voluntary emissions reduction standard.</p> <p>The Verified Carbon Standard focuses on greenhouse gas reduction attributes only and does not require projects to have additional environmental or social benefits. Many projects do still have some sustainable development benefits that improve the quality of life in project communities.</p>	<p>\$4-5</p> <p>(Note that this the average price for Q3, 2021. (Clean Energy Regulator, 2021))</p>

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

Removal Units (RMUs)	Countries operating under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with a Kyoto Protocol target. Includes Australia.	RMUs robust offsets as they are created only by countries with binding economy-wide targets, and the Kyoto rules prevent double-counting. RMUs are issued for emissions stored or avoided through eligible human induced land use, land use change and forestry activities. RMUs are not temporary credits—if the sequestration is reversed in the future, the selling country is responsible for the emissions. Therefore, RMUs do not create the same risks and costs as temporary CERs from forestry projects in developing countries.	Price unavailable
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10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

2 Carbon Offset Criticisms and Chubb Review Findings

2.1 Criticisms around carbon offsets

A number of criticisms around carbon offsetting methodology and quality exist and are outlined below. The procurement of offsets will carefully consider how to avoid these potential pitfalls.

2.1.1 Over-reliance on offsets can reduce urgent near-term carbon emission reductions

Carbon offsets are relatively cheap on an annual basis compared to upfront costs of energy efficiency implementation. Therefore some organisations may choose to offset their emissions first, rather than investing in efficiency measures that permanently reduce emissions.

However, there are growing expectations for genuine emissions abatement to be prioritised over the purchase of offsets; and for offsets to be reserved for hard to abate 'residual' emissions. Furthermore, organisations are being encouraged to pivot towards 'removal offsets' as opposed to 'emissions avoidance-based offsets', based on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) recent findings that removal offsets are critical for achieving net zero by 2050 ([Energetics](#), 2022). Additionally, urgent near-term emission reductions are needed to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and meet Australia's Paris Agreement obligations ([United Nations](#), 2022).

It is important that organisations like Council, focus on driving down their own greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy and energy efficiency projects before purchasing voluntary carbon offsets. This approach has the added benefit of reducing the annual cost of carbon offset purchasing to maintain carbon neutral status. (Refer to Council's Carbon Management Hierarchy in Figure 1.)

2.1.2 Variable quality of offsets

In February 2022, a report by the Climate Change Authority, an independent statutory agency, stated "the voluntary carbon market is largely self-regulated and not subject to a single standard or centralised register for the tracking or trading of units." For example, a comprehensive analysis of California's forest carbon offset program, the largest such program in existence, revealed that nearly 30 percent of its offsets did not result in real climate benefits and were over credited (Badgley et al 2021). Additionally, many trees planted and sold as offsets through this program were burned in California's 2021 bushfires.

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

In Australia, Professor Andrew Macintosh from Australian National University published a series of papers ([Fearon, 2022](#)) that criticised the methods and calculation tools used by the government for determining abatement for certain land sector methods. He stated that 75 per cent of ACCUs were issued for projects utilising just three methodologies: “avoided deforestation”; “human induced regeneration (HIR)” of native forests; and the combustion of methane from landfills. However he claimed that around 70 to 80 per cent of these types of ACCUs do not represent real and additional abatement. The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and the Australia Institute had similar concerns, that ‘avoided deforestation’ projects do not represent genuine abatement as in most cases the areas were never going to be cleared ([Australian Conservation Foundation \(ACF\) and The Australia Institute, 2021](#)).

2.2 Independent Review of Australian Carbon Credit Units

In response to growing concerns about the integrity of carbon credits, the Australian Government appointed an independent panel led by the former Australian chief scientist and senior academic, Professor Ian Chubb to conduct a review of Australia’s carbon credit units (ACCUs).

The Panel report was published on 9 January 2023 ([Chubb et al, 2023](#)). The Panel concludes that the ACCU scheme arrangements are essentially sound. The Panel made 16 recommendations for significant reforms that largely address the bulk of concerns that have previously been raised by critics about the scheme, and improve its governance, transparency and integrity ([Energetics, 2023](#); [Let Me Sum Up, 2023](#)).

All 16 recommendations been agreed to in principle by the government ([DCCEEW, 2022](#)). The implementation of these recommendations as well as strengthened requirements of the Safeguard Mechanism coming into effect in July 2023, will likely see ACCU prices rise as demand outstrips supply ([Energetics, 2023](#); [Let Me Sum Up, 2023](#)).

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

3 Carbon Offset for Council

3.1 Carbon offset prices

The carbon offset market is volatile with large fluctuations in spot prices making it hard to predict the expected cost of abating emissions.

Globally, the cost of high-quality offsets (like ACCUs) is expected to increase as many organisations, like Whitehorse, implement carbon neutral or net zero targets to meet Paris Agreement targets ([Energetics](#), 2023; [Let Me Sum Up](#), 2023).

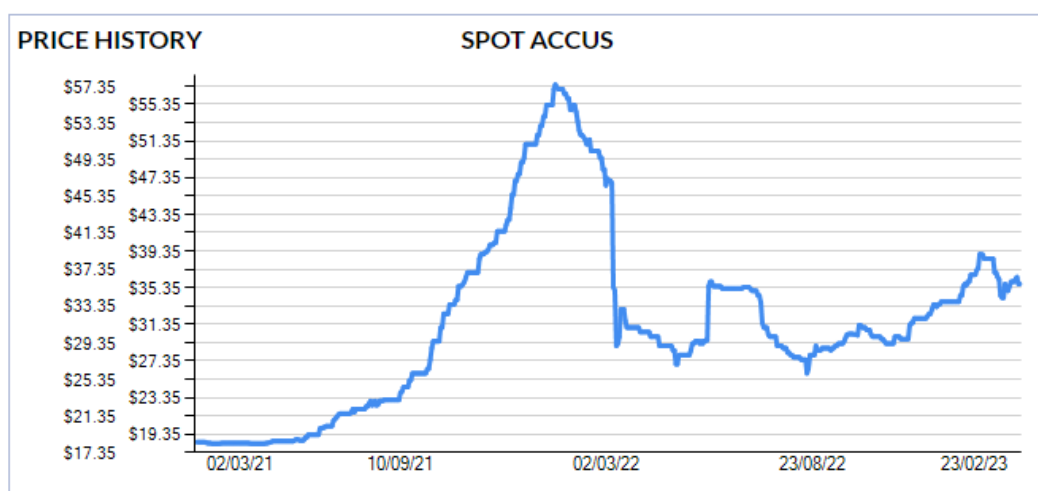


Figure 3. Price history of Australian Carbon Credit Units over the last two years. ([Jarden Australia](#), 2023)

ACCUs are more expensive than most international offsets (see indicative costs in Table 1). This price is expected to rise due to the implementation of Chubb review recommendations as well as strengthened Safeguard Mechanism requirements from July 2023 causing demand to outstrip supply ([Energetics](#), 2023; [Let Me Sum Up](#), 2023).

The Safeguard Mechanism requires Australia's largest greenhouse gas emitters (which make up 28% of Australia's emissions) to keep their net emissions below an emissions limit (a baseline). They are required to purchase ACCUs for any excess emissions. The Australian Government is proposing to gradually reduce baselines to help Australia reach net zero emissions by 2050 ([Clean Energy Regulator](#), 2022).

The tightening up offset methodologies as the government implements the Chubb review recommendations will decrease the supply of ACCUs, particularly offset utilising the avoided deforestation method that is being phased out.

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

3.2 Offset purchasing practices of Victorian councils

3.2.1 Types of offsets purchased

The types of carbon offsets purchased in FY 2020/2021 by all the Victorian Councils who are certified carbon neutral through the Australian government's Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard are detailed Table 2 below. This information was collected from their Climate Active Public Disclosure Statements (PDS) ([Climate Active](#), 2019).

The most commonly purchased types of offsets purchased by Victorian councils were Verified Carbon Units (VCUs). Globally, these are the most widely purchased voluntary carbon offsets.

Only two out of nine councils purchased ACCUs - Mornington Peninsula Shire and Surf Coast Shire. The percentage of ACCUs purchased was 10 per cent or less of their total amount of offsets purchased. The low uptake of ACCUs may be due to their relative high cost compared to international offsets as well as concerns about their credibility.

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

Table 2. Carbon offsets purchased by Climate Active Victorian councils.

Council	Achieved Carbon Neutral (and maintained since)	Details of Carbon Offsets Purchased in 2020/2021			
		Type of Offset Unit	Project Type	Project Location	% total offsets purchased
Darebin City Council	2021	Verified Carbon Units	Wind Power	India, China, Mongolia	96.5
		Verified Emissions Reductions (Gold Standard)	Methane capture	China	3.5
Bayside City Council	2020	Verified Carbon Units	Solar Power, Wind Power, Cogeneration	Vietnam, India, South Korea	43
		Verified Emissions Reductions (Gold Standard)	Wind Power	Taiwan	57
City of Melbourne	2012	Verified Carbon Units	Hydropower, Wind Power	Indonesia, India, China	100
Yarra City Council	2012	Verified Carbon Units	Cogeneration	India	100
Maroondah City Council	2021	Verified Carbon Units	Wind Power, Solar Power, Hydropower, Methane	India, China, Netherlands	100
Mooney Valley City Council	2020	Verified Carbon Units	Wind Power, Energy Efficiency in Manufacturing	India	100
Merri-bek City Council (formally Moreland City Council)	2012	Verified Emissions Reductions (Gold Standard)	Wind Power	New Caledonia, Turkey	100
Mornington Peninsula Shire	2021	Verified Carbon Units	Hydropower, Biomass,	India, China	90
		Australian Carbon Credit Units	Fire Management, Land Regeneration	Australia	10
Surf Coast Shire	2022	Australian Carbon Credit Units	Regeneration	Australia	5
		Verified Carbon Units	Forest Protection	Australia, Peru	3
		Certified Emissions Reductions	Wind Power	China, India	92

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

3.2.2 Procurement approach

Carbon offsets are usually purchased through registered brokers and consultancies that specialise in carbon finance and offsets. They help to vet carbon offset projects to ensure that organisations are getting what they pay for to offset their carbon emissions and their expertise mitigate reputational risks by selecting projects that align with an organisation's values and are credible.

Five Victorian Climate Active councils (Merri-bek, Darebin, Bayside, Melbourne and Yarra) were contacted to see how they purchase offsets. All of these councils use a request for quote (RFQ) process where the selection criteria is based on their carbon offset principles.

Notable differences include:

- Darebin City Council and Bayside City Council developed a one year contract with the option to extend if they are satisfied with the organisations offering of offsets for purchase (e.g. 1+1+1 years etc.).
- City of Melbourne forward-purchased offsets for future years' emissions to take advantage of low prices at the time of RFQ.

3.3 Indicative costs to become Climate Active certified

The process for Council to become Climate Active certified is summarised below ([Climate Active](#), 2019), where Table 3 and Table 4 provide indicative costs for initial and ongoing certification:

1. Calculate corporate emissions for 2021/22 (base year) and 2022/23.
2. Purchase carbon offsets to abate Council's corporate emissions for 2022/23.
3. Engage a Climate Active certified consultant to conduct a technical assessment and verify Council's emissions.
4. Submit application documents for carbon neutral certification to Climate Active for approval.
5. Retire carbon offsets for 2022/23 emissions and promote carbon neutral status when certification is approved.

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

Table 3. Indicative costs for initial Climate Active certification.

Requirements	Cost (\$)
Certification	\$13,569
Third-party technical assessment and verification (based on two quotes received Feb 2023)	\$20,000
Carbon Offsets (estimate) (based on purchasing 20% ACCUs and 80% international offsets using 2021/22 emissions data)	\$171,887
TOTAL	\$205,456

Once carbon neutral status is achieved for an organisation, there is a reputational expectation that carbon neutral certification is maintained (though this is not compulsory).

Table 4. Indicative annual costs involved in **maintaining** carbon neutral certification.

Requirements	Cost (\$)
Certification	\$13,569
Third-party Verification *Note that an additional technical assessment (see Table 3 above) for maintaining certification is required every 3 years or whenever base year recalculation is required.	\$7,000
Carbon Offsets (estimate) (based on purchasing 20% ACCUs and 80% international offsets using 2021/22 emissions data)	\$171,887
TOTAL	\$192,456

The actual cost of maintaining carbon neutral certification is based is dependent on the cost of carbon offsets.

10.5 – ATTACHMENT 1. Foundation Paper - Carbon Neutrality and Offsets

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10.6 Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report

Attachment 1 Biannual Audit and Risk Committee
Report

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

Audit & Risk Committee Biannual Report to Council

For the period October 2022 to March 2023

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Role of the Committee.....	1
3. Members, Meetings and Agenda.....	2
4. Activities of the Committee.....	3
4.1 Compliance of Council Policies and Procedures	3
4.2 Financial and Performance Reporting	3
4.3 Risk Management and Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls	4
4.4 Internal and External Audit	4
4.4.1 Internal Audit.....	4
4.4.2 External Audit.....	6
4.5 Organisational Update	6
5. Annual Self-Assessment of Committee Performance.....	7
6. Acknowledgements	8

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

1. Introduction

Whitehorse City Council has established an Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) pursuant to Section 53 of the *Local Government Act (Act)*.

The *Audit and Risk Committee Charter (Charter)* and Section 54(5) of the *Act* requires the Committee to:

- prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Committee and includes its findings and recommendations; and
- provide a copy of the biannual audit and risk report to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for tabling at the next Council meeting.

This biannual report is for the period October 2022 to March 2023.

The last biannual report for the period April 2022 to September 2022 was made to Council on 14 November 2022.

2. Role of the Committee

The primary role of the Committee is to support Council in discharging its oversight responsibilities related to financial and performance reporting, risk management, fraud and corruption prevention systems and controls, maintenance of a sound internal control environment, assurance activities including internal and external audit, and Council's performance with regard to compliance with its policies and legislative and regulatory requirements.

The Committee is an advisory committee with no delegated authority or decision-making abilities.

In accordance with Section 54(1) of the *Act*, Council must prepare and approve a *Charter*. The *Charter* must specify the functions and responsibilities of the Committee including the following:

- a) Monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with—
 - (i) The overarching governance principles; and
 - (ii) This *Act* and the regulations and any Ministerial directions;
- b) Monitor Council financial and performance reporting;
- c) Monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls; and
- d) Oversee internal and external audit functions.

The *Charter* was last reviewed and endorsed by the Committee at the November 2022 meeting, and approved by Council on 30 January 2023.

The latest version of the *Charter* is available on Council's website.

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

3. Members, Meetings and Agenda

The Committee comprises of five members: three independent members and two Councillors, appointed by Council.

As per the *Charter*, the Committee meets five times a year. The schedule of meetings is developed annually and agreed by members. The scheduled meetings for the 2022 and 2023 calendar years are:

2022	2023
15 March	20 March
17 May	15 May
29 August	28 August
19 September	18 September
21 November	20 November

The members, meetings held and attendance of each member for the period October 2022 to March 2023 are shown in the table below:

Name	Member Type	Term	21 Nov 2022	20 Mar 2023
Ms Lisa Woolmer	Independent (Chair)	September 2017 to present	✓	✓
Mr Jonathan Kyvelidis	Independent	March 2021 to present	✓	✓
Ms Binda Gokhale	Independent	October 2022 to present	✓	✓
Cr Denise Massoud	Councillor	November 2016 to November 2022	✓	N/A
Cr Andrew Davenport	Councillor	November 2021 to November 2022	–	N/A
Cr Blair Barker	Councillor	November 2022 to present	N/A	✓
Cr Trudy Skilbeck	Councillor	November 2022 to present	N/A	✓

✓ : present in meeting
– : apology recorded

N/A : not a Committee member at the date of the meeting therefore not required to attend

The CEO, Executive Leaders, Manager Governance and Integrity, Coordinator Controls, Compliance and Process, and Coordinator Risk and Insurance attended all meetings during the period, as did Council's internal auditor (Crowe).

Council's external auditor (RSD Audit, as contracted agent for the Victorian Auditor-General's Office) attended the March 2023 meeting.

The agenda for all meetings was in accordance with the *Audit and Risk Committee Work Plan 2022/23 (Work Plan)*, which was developed, discussed and approved by the Committee. The *Work Plan* is the primary tool used to track completion of responsibilities in the Committee *Charter*.

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

4. Activities of the Committee

Minutes of Committee meetings summarise activities of the Committee and are available to Council following each meeting. Agenda and papers are also available to Council.

Key activities and observations of the Committee during the reporting period are summarised below demonstrating how the Committee has fulfilled its role in accordance with the Committee *Charter*.

4.1 Compliance of Council Policies and Procedures

The Committee continued to monitor Council's compliance with the *Act*, other regulations, and Council policies and procedures. Council has demonstrated an appropriate approach to understand and respond to its compliance obligations during the period.

The Committee received the following reports from management:

- Assessment of compliance with obligations in relation to pool and spa safety regulations including against the recommendations in the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) Report – *Regulating Private Pool and Spa Safety*.
- Update on *IT Disaster Recovery Policy* and IT Disaster Recovery Exercises
- Update on *Cloud Security Policy* and cyber security framework.
- *CEO Expense Report* for the period 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022.
- *Councillor Expenses Report* for the period 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022.
- Updates on implementing improvements in relation to child safety, volunteer management and gender equality in response to assessments against obligations and good practice frameworks.
- Approach to updating policies and procedures as a result of Council's transformation program including Oracle ERP implementation.

4.2 Financial and Performance Reporting

The Committee monitored Council's financial and performance reporting including:

- *Quarterly Performance Report for the quarter ended December 2022* – This reports on Council's activities, performance and future direction in alignment with the *Council Plan 2021-2025*.
- *Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ending 30 June 2023* – This provides an overview of RSD Audit's planned approach to the annual audit of the financial report, performance statement and known acquittals of Whitehorse City Council.

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

- *Quarterly Data Analytics* – Management provides comprehensive data analytics report each quarter covering accounts payable, procurement, payroll and rates. The reports include the results of testing performed, trend analysis, and explanation of movements.

As a whole, the Local Government sector continues to face financial pressures due to: the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic; global and domestic economic and societal conditions; workforce / resource shortages; supply chain issues and the shifting of cost / regulatory burden to Local Government. The Committee has been monitoring this situation, with reference to MAV and other commentary, and will continue to receive updates from management on any emerging issues.

4.3 Risk Management and Fraud Prevention Systems and Controls

The Committee monitored, and observed ongoing improvement in, Council's risk management framework, particularly in relation to risk reporting through the introduction of a risk dashboard.

Updates were also received on:

- *Risk Management Policy.*
- Risk Management Framework.
- Strategic and Key Operational Risks – changes to risk exposure and mitigation actions.
- Fraud and corruption control, occupational health and safety, major projects, and cyber security positioning.
- Training including mandatory compliance and additional training in response to emerging issues and/or changed obligations, policies or procedures.

The *Fraud and Corruption Control Policy* and *Fraud and Corruption Control Plan* will be reviewed by the Committee at the May 2023 meeting.

4.4 Internal and External Audit

4.4.1 Internal Audit

Council's internal auditor (Crowe), conducts internal audits in accordance with the *Strategic Internal Audit Plan – July 2022 to June 2024 (SIAP)*. Individual projects may focus on areas such as governance, risk, compliance, internal controls, information technology, security, compliance with regulation or standards, maturity analysis and/or benchmarking.

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Prior to the commencement of each internal audit, the Committee is provided with a project scope document which is developed by the internal auditor with input from management, and discussed and endorsed by the Committee.

After fieldwork is performed, the Committee receives an internal audit report which contains findings and recommendations. For each recommendation, management provides a response, including action plans, responsible officers and target dates for completion.

The Committee noted the following reports tabled by Council's internal auditor:

Name	21 Nov 2022	20 Mar 2023
Internal Audit Reports		
Statutory Building	✓	
Leases and Licences		✓
Maternal and Child Health		✓
Project Scoping Documents		
Maternal and Child Health	✓	
Infrastructure Asset Management	✓	
Occupational Health and Safety	✓	
Project Management – Whitehorse Performing Arts Centre	✓	
Other		
Internal Audit Progress Report	✓	✓

The Committee monitors the implementation of management actions to address findings at subsequent Committee meetings until they are resolved. During the period, 25 findings were identified by internal audit and management is in the process of implementing actions to address these.

At each meeting, the Committee also receives, and discusses a "Curious Eyes" paper from the internal auditors which contains a summary of recent reports and publications by government integrity agencies and other sources that may impact on public sector agencies and local government. Management provides a comment on its approach to each subject area raised, assisting the Committee to identify areas that may require further exploration. As a result of this report and other developments, focus areas during the period have included cyber security, ongoing recovery and impacts from the pandemic, economic and societal conditions, global "Top 10" risks, and fraud and corruption control.

The Committee holds in-camera discussion with the internal auditors at least annually with the next one scheduled for August 2023.

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

Internal Audit Services Contract

The current internal audit contract reaches conclusion at 30 June 2023, requiring Council to go to market for these services. The Committee held an in-camera session in the November 2022 meeting with the CEO, Director Corporate Services, Manager Governance and Integrity, and Coordinator Control, Compliance and Process to discuss requirements for the new internal audit services tender.

4.4.2 External Audit

Council's external audit has been conducted by RSD Audit, as agent for VAGO, since the year ended 30 June 2022. As reported previously, Council received unmodified audit reports on the financial and performance statements for the year ended 30 June 2022.

At the March 2023 meeting, the RSD Audit Partner briefed the Committee on the *Audit Strategy Memorandum* for the year ending 30 June 2023. The Committee reviewed and discussed the document, including the key areas of external audit focus for 2022/23:

- Valuation of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment.
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the financial report.
- Accounting for government grants.
- Implementation of a new finance system.
- Performance statement compliance with applicable legislative requirements.

The Committee also monitored actions in response to internal control findings and business improvement opportunities raised by the external auditors in the previous year's audit. These are rated low risk and are expected to be resolved by management and cleared by VAGO during the 30 June 2023 audit.

The Committee meets with the external auditors in-camera at least annually, the last in-camera discussion being held at the Committee meeting on 19 September 2022.

4.5 Organisational Update

The Committee continued to receive organisational updates from the CEO and Executive Manager Transformation with a focus on the following:

- Service Review Program Pipeline and Program Status Update
- ERP Project Implementation

The Committee understands that Council receives information from management on these programs. The Committee plays a role, through its quarterly meetings, to monitor the frameworks for governance and risk management in relation to these significant programs of work.

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

The Committee commends Council for embarking on these programs and notes the need for management to continue to pace their implementation appropriately. While the ERP project implementation has placed significant pressure on resourcing during the period, management advice is that ERP implementation is expected to address deficiencies in legacy systems and result in benefits over time. Looking ahead, the Committee will seek post-implementation assurance through a range of sources including external audit as part of the 30 June 2023 audit, and from internal audit as part of the 2023/24 internal audit plan.

5. Annual Self-Assessment of Committee Performance

The *Charter* and Section 54(4) of the Act requires the Committee to:

- undertake an annual self-assessment of its performance against its Charter; and
- provide a copy of the annual assessment to the CEO for tabling at the next Council meeting.

To meet the above legislative requirement, a *Self-Assessment Survey* was developed and sent to all members. The survey was structured in two parts – ‘Part A: Measuring Effectiveness’ and ‘Part B: Performance against Key Responsibilities of the Charter’.

The results of the completed surveys were compiled into a report and provided to the Committee at the November 2022 meeting. The Committee concluded it had complied with its *Charter* and that the *Charter*, combined with the *Work Plan* of the Committee, continues to provide an appropriate basis to guide Committee activities.

The outcomes of the annual self-assessment were provided to Council on 12 December 2022.

10.6 – ATTACHMENT 1. Biannual Audit and Risk Committee Report



Whitehorse City Council

6. Acknowledgements

At the November 2022 meeting, the Chair welcomed Ms Binda Gokhale as the third independent member of the Committee following the departure of Mr Michael Said in September 2022.

At the March 2023 meeting, the Chair acknowledged the appointment of Cr Blair Barker and Cr Trudy Skilbeck as the new Councillor Representatives of the Committee. The Committee also thanked Cr Denise Massoud and Cr Andrew Davenport for their significant contribution to the Committee and wished them well.

The Committee acknowledges the work of management, internal audit, external audit and others in supporting it to fulfil its role during the period. The Chair also acknowledges the ongoing commitment and contribution of independent and Councillor members, both at and between Committee meetings.

This report has been reviewed and approved by Committee members.

Ms Lisa Woolmer
Chair of Audit and Risk Committee
Whitehorse City Council