



WHITEHORSE  
CITY COUNCIL

# Whitehorse City Council

## AGENDA

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### **Special Council Meeting**

on

**Monday 21 October 2024 at 6:00 PM**

**To be held in the  
Willis Room  
Nunawading Civic Centre**

**Members:** Cr Denise Massoud Mayor  
Cr Andrew Davenport Deputy Mayor  
Cr Blair Barker  
Cr Raylene Carr  
Cr Prue Cutts  
Cr Mark Lane  
Cr Tina Liu  
Cr Amanda McNeill  
Cr Andrew Munroe  
Cr Trudy Skilbeck  
Cr Ben Stennett

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## AGENDA

### 1 Welcome and Apologies

#### Prayer for Council

We give thanks, O God, for the Men and Women of the past whose generous devotion to the common good has been the making of our City.

Grant that our own generation may build worthily on the foundations they have laid.

Direct our minds that all we plan and determine, is for the wellbeing of our City.

**Amen.**

#### Acknowledgement of Country

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land we are meeting on and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from communities who may be present today.

### 2 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

### 3 Council Reports

### 3.1 2023/24 Annual Report

**Department** Corporate Planning and Performance  
Director Community Services

Attachment

#### SUMMARY

The Annual Report 2023/24 is a report to our community in relation to the achievement of the Council Plan 2021-2025 and the Budget 2023/24, the report contains audited annual Financial Statements and the audited Performance Statement.

The Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statements were approved by Council in principle at its meeting held 30 September 2024.

In line with section 100(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Annual Report is to be presented at a Council meeting open to the public. In the year of a general election the Council meeting must be held on a day not later than the day before election day (by Friday 25 October 2024).

Council is currently in the election (caretaker) period with the general election being held on 26 October 2024. A special meeting of Council was called to present the Annual Report during the current election period in accordance with both Council's Governance Rules and Election Period Policy to meet the requirements of section 100(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Annual report as attached to this agenda is in reduced format to ensure Council is meeting its requirements of the Election Period Policy. The final full version of the Annual report will be published after the election.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses the 2023/24 Annual Report, which includes the audited Financial Statement and Performance Statement, inclusive of the Mayor and CEO signing the Governance and Management Checklist
2. Notes that the Mayor's message and highlights sections will be added to the final version of Annual Report at the conclusion of the election period and will be published on Council's website.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make minor adjustments to the Annual Report that do not materially alter the content.
4. Notes this is not a 'Prohibited Decision', as defined in section 69(2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, or a 'Significant Decision' within the meaning of Council's Election Period Policy.

## KEY MATTERS

The Annual Report is a whole-of-Council legislated publication, as defined in the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), and an opportunity for Whitehorse City Council to share with the community its achievements and challenges of the past financial year. These include progress updates on the Council Plan strategic indicators and actions alongside the financial statements for the period.

In an election year, the election period prior to the election does not affect the obligations of councils to complete and present their annual report in the specified timeframes. There are, however, considerations set out under section 69(2) and (3) of the Act that prohibit the use of council resources (including the Annual Report) in a way that is intended to influence or is likely to influence voting at the election. This requires the report to be presented in a reduced format to comply during the election period. The attached 2023/24 Annual Report for the Special meeting of Council on 21 October will not contain any promotion of council's achievements for the year beyond the statutory requirements.

At the conclusion of the election period, a full version of the 2023/24 Annual Report will be made available on Council's website which will contain community and council highlights including imagery, along with the Mayor's message.

### Key Highlights:

- As per the enhancements to last year's Annual Report, the format of the 2023/24 Annual Report continues to be improved to ensure a more community focused format and reader-friendly layout.
- The creation of this Annual Report has been a cross-organisational collaboration effort, engaging multiple departments to ensure data integrity and that the community is well represented.
- The section labelled 'Our Performance' consolidates all updates for the Council Plan 2021-2025 progress including strategic indicators, and the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF).
- All compliance detail has been included under the headings 'Our Governance', 'Audit Operations' and 'Our Statutory Information'.
- Financial Statements and Performance Statement are at the end of the document and include the final signed Victorian Auditor-General's report.

## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Annual Report aligns to both the Council Plan 2021-2025 and Community Vision 2040.

The report supports Strategic Direction 1: An Innovative Council that is well lead and governed. It supports the Objective *Council will be a trusted organisation that embraces innovation.*

## **Policy**

In the election year, the Annual Report is considerate of the requirements detailed in the Whitehorse City Council Governance Rules, Whitehorse City Council Election Period Policy and the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **BACKGROUND**

Section 98 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires a Council to prepare an annual report in respect of each financial year.

An annual report must contain the following—

- (a) report of operations of the Council;
- (b) an audited performance statement;
- (c) audited financial statements;
- (d) a copy of the auditor's report on the performance statement;
- (e) a copy of the auditor's report on the financial statements under Part 3 of the *Audit Act 1994*;
- (f) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

## **Discussion and Options**

The structure of the 'Our Performance' section of the Annual Report is aligned with the Community Vision 2040, Council Plan 2021-2025 and the Budget 2023/24. This section outlines the strategic directions and related objectives and strategies Council will work towards over the life of the four-year plan to achieve the Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision.

Of the 42 actions listed for year three 2023/24 of the Council Plan 2021-2025, over 71% (30) were completed and the remaining 29% (12) are on track.

The Financial and Performance Statements have previously been presented to and considered by the Audit and Risk Committee, and endorsed by Council at its meeting on Monday 30 September 2024 prior to lodgement with the Victorian Auditor-General.

The Financial Statements and Performance Statement have been passed by the Victorian Auditor-General's office, confirmation received by Council on 3 October 2024, both of which have been included in the Annual Report.

## **SUPPORTING REPORT DETAILS**

### **Legislative and Risk Implications**

Section 100(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, requires the Annual Report to be presented at a Council meeting open to the public. In the year of a general election the Council meeting must be held on a day not later than the day before election day.



Section 69(3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, prohibits the use of council resources (including the annual report) in a way that is intended to influence or is likely to influence, voting at the election.

In considering how the annual report is to be presented to this meeting during an election period, a reduced version has been drafted with the removal of the highlights and Mayor's message.

### **Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations**

In developing this report to Council, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

### **Community Engagement**

No community engagement was required for this report.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

An overview of Council's financial performance is presented in the Annual Report 2023/24 in addition to Council's audited financial statements for the year. There is a guide for the reader on how to understand the detailed financial report which includes audited financial statements. The Financial statements have been passed by the Victorian Auditor-General's office.

### **Innovation and Continuous Improvement**

The format of the Annual Report has built on last year's report with enhancements to provide a more contemporary and community focused look and feel, including better arrangement of information within the document.

### **Collaboration**

This report has been a cross-organisational collaboration effort, engaging multiple departments to ensure data integrity and that our community is well represented.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff, and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council, to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

### **Conclusion**

The Annual Report fairly represents Council's operations, financial position and the Council Plan 2021-2025 performance in respect of the 2023/24

financial year. The information presented satisfies all legislative requirements.

Upon endorsement, and following the conclusion of the election period, a version of the 2023/24 Annual Report will be made available for viewing on Council's website and Council's customer service centres and libraries to include a Mayor's Message and performance highlights.

#### **ATTACHMENT**

1 2023-24 Annual Report Caretaker Version.

4 **Close Meeting**