



WHITEHORSE
CITY COUNCIL

Whitehorse City Council

AGENDA

Council Meeting

on

Monday 26 May 2025 at 7:00 PM

**To be held in the
Council Chamber
Nunawading Civic Centre**

Members: Cr Andrew Davenport Mayor
Cr Prue Cutts Deputy Mayor
Cr Peter Allan
Cr Blair Barker
Cr Daniel Griffiths
Cr Jarrod Gunn
Cr Kirsten Langford
Cr Jason Martin
Cr Kieran Simpson
Cr Ben Stennett
Cr Hayley Weller

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AGENDA

1 Welcome

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 Apologies

3 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

4 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the Council Meeting 12 May 2025

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Council Meeting 12 May 2025 be confirmed.

5 Urgent Business

6 Requests to Speak

7 Public Question Time

8 Petitions

9 Notices of Motion

10 Council Reports

10.1 2024/25 Q3 Quarterly Performance Report

Department

Corporate Planning and Performance

Director Community Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the Q3 Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) January to March 2025, including our performance and achievements. The Q3 report is a streamlined report (when compared to Q2 and our Annual Report), containing high-level status and highlights for the quarter only.

The Quarterly Performance Report fairly represents Council's operations, financial position and Council's performance to date in respect to quarter three of the 2024/25 financial year. The information presented satisfies all legislative requirements.

Upon the report being considered at the Council meeting, it will be made available to the community for viewing on Council's website.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the 2024/25 Quarter 3 Quarterly Performance Report

KEY MATTERS

- This report covers Quarterly highlights – January to March 2025
- Progress toward Council Plan 2021-2025 – Year 4
- The Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing plan highlights
- Transformation program
- Capital Works program highlights
- Performance against 2024/25 Annual Budget

10.1 (cont)

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Council Plan

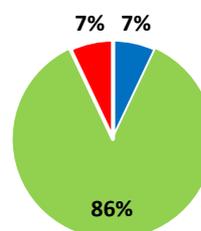
The 2024/25 year is the fourth and final year of the Council Plan 2021-25.

This quarter’s report contains an overview of Council Plan 2021-2025 (Year 4 Actions).

Performance against Council Plan 2021-25 Yr4

Of the **29** actions within the annual plan:

- 25 are In Progress
- 2 are Complete
- 2 are Off track



■ Completed ■ In Progress ■ Off Track

Exceptions – Status = ‘Off Track’

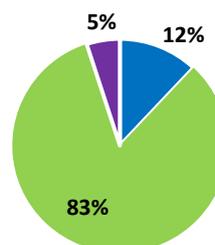
Action Name	Comment
Launch and implement the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	In February 2025 Officers reviewed the currency of actions contained in the Draft Reconciliation Action Plan, checking if they remained relevant and achievable. A Council Briefing on an updated plan was prepared for Councillor consideration on 31 March to inform next steps.
Implementation of Whitehorse Council Child Safe Standards Action Plan 2022-25	Awareness of child safety continues to grow however shifting indicators from partially in place to in place has slowed down due to the complexities of implementing activities across multiple areas of Council (as opposed centrally coordinated). Work this quarter includes building out risk assessments, indicators and controls to contribute child safety risks into individualised management plans (CS9); updating Whitehorse Child Safe commitment and child safety pages on Whitehorse (sub-) websites; building child safety clauses including reportable conduct for use in contracts as examples.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP)

The 2024/25 year is year 4 of the MPHWP 2021-25.

Of the **84** actions within the plan:

- 70 are In Progress or Ongoing
- 10 are Completed
- 4 are Not Started or Deferred



■ Completed ■ In Progress / Ongoing ■ Deferred / Not Started

10.1 (cont)

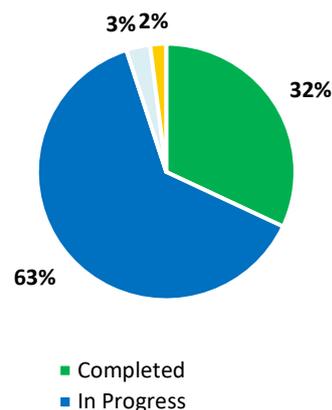
Transformation Program

A Q3 summary of the Transformation program with overviews of improvements in Customer Experience, process and financial benefits.

Capital Works Program

The status of the Capital Works Program at the end of Quarter Three was as follows:

- year to date capital expenditure was \$26.75M, which was \$728k behind the year to date budget of \$27.48M,
- the full year forecast capital expenditure for 2024/25 has been revised down to \$46.98M, and
- of the 154 capital works projects and programs:
 - 49 were Completed
 - 98 were In Progress
 - 3 were On Hold, and
 - 4 were No Longer Required.

**Performance against Annual Budget 2024-25**

The year to date (YTD) financial result as of 31 March 2025 was a surplus of \$60.68m, \$10.45m favourable to the YTD Adopted Budget.

Income was \$10.06m higher than budget primarily reflecting higher than budgeted monetary contributions (\$4.03m, largely from public open space contributions), interest income (\$2.39m), user fees (\$1.43m), statutory fees and fines (\$1.34m), rates and charges (\$880k) and other income (\$673k), partly offset by lower capital grants (\$1.06m). Expenditure was \$393k lower than budget primarily reflecting lower materials and services expenditure (\$3.30m), partially offset by higher employee costs (\$2.03m) and depreciation and amortisation (\$914k). Further explanations of significant variances are detailed in this report.

Council revised the 2024/25 annual forecast in August to reflect final carry forward of unspent funds from 2023/24 into 2024/25. The revised full year forecast in August 2024 was a surplus of \$15.22m, \$501k favourable compared to the \$14.72m annual Adopted Budget.

A subsequent review of the annual forecast was completed in September 2024, projecting a year-end surplus result of \$14.74m, \$485k unfavourable to the August forecast and \$16k favourable to the 2024/25 Adopted Budget.

A recent review of the annual forecast was finalised in February 2025, presenting a year-end surplus of \$21.25m, \$6.51m favourable compared to the September forecast and \$6.53m favourable to the Adopted Budget.

10.1 (cont)

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>Council Plan 2021-2025 and Community Vision 2040.</p> <p>The report supports Strategic Direction 1: An innovative Council that is well led and governed and supports the following objective:</p> <p>Objective 1.1: Council will be a trusted organisation that embraces innovation.</p>
Financial and Resource Implications	There are no financial or resource implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Legislative and Risk Implications	There are no legal or risk implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.
Community Engagement	No community engagement was required for this report.
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Collaboration	No collaboration was required for this report.
Conflict of Interest	Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

ATTACHMENT

- 1 2024-25 Q3 Quarterly Performance Report

10.2 Carbon Offsets and Carbon Neutrality

Department City Services
Director Infrastructure

Attachment

SUMMARY

This report is in response to the resolution from the Council Meeting on 3 February 2025 regarding Item 9.2, Notice of Motion No. 3, that Council:

“Receives a report on the costs and implications of ceasing the purchase of carbon offsets to be a Carbon Neutral organisation. The report should explore redirecting these funds towards local environmental and biodiversity initiatives, as well as measures for local carbon sequestration and emissions reduction.”

Council’s current adopted Climate Response Strategy is for Council to be a carbon neutral organisation. This has been achieved and is certified under the Federal Government’s Climate Active program. This involves the purchase and retirement of carbon offsets on an annual basis. Further, the current Strategy strives for Council to achieve net zero corporate emissions by 2032, and this requires ongoing work to reduce organisational carbon emissions to the lowest amount possible before any offsetting.

In response to this Notice of Motion, this report presents the option of moving away from a reliance on paid accredited carbon offsets and ceasing to be a certified carbon neutral organisation. Funds previously used to purchase carbon offsets can be re-directed to actions that reduce Council’s corporate greenhouse gas emissions or local environmental and biodiversity projects.

As background to this consideration, a report on the progress of the current Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030 (the Strategy) and Climate Response Plan 2023-2026 (the Plan) is provided in **Attachment 1**.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes that this report is in response to the resolution on 3 February 2025 for Notice of Motion No 3.
2. Amends the Climate Response Strategy to remove the objective to be a Carbon Neutral Organisation under the Climate Active Scheme.
3. Reallocates the budgeted funding of \$240,000 per year currently allocated for purchase of carbon offsets to projects primarily to reduce Council’s corporate greenhouse gas emissions (as outlined in Option 2 in this report) or to local environmental and biodiversity projects (as outlined in Option 3 in this report).
4. Continues to monitor and report on Council’s corporate greenhouse gas emissions.

10.2 (cont)

KEY MATTERS**Background - Difference between carbon neutrality and net zero emissions**

As background, the following definitions and differences are provided:

- Carbon neutrality is achieved when the greenhouse gas emissions associated with an organisation's activities, products, services and events are 'balanced out' by removing an equivalent amount from the atmosphere, typically through purchasing carbon offsets on an annual basis.
- Net zero emissions involves making major upfront changes to reduce carbon emissions as much as possible, typically through energy efficient design, generating on-site renewable energy, buying off-site renewables, eliminating fossil fuels such as gas or petrol, and minimising transport and waste emissions. Only then are small amounts remaining and unavoidable emissions balanced out through purchasing carbon offsets on an annual basis.

Background - Strategy

On 12 September 2022, Council declared a Climate Emergency, acknowledging the urgent need for action at all levels of government, including local councils, to address the current and future challenges posed by climate change.

On 27 November 2023, Council adopted the Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030 (the Strategy) and Climate Response Plan 2023-2026 (the Plan). Detailed background and progress on the Strategy and the Plan is provided in **Attachment 1**.

The Strategy includes the following targets:

- Maintain carbon neutral status for corporate emissions.
- Source 100 per cent renewable electricity for Council operations by 2025.
- Achieve net-zero corporate emissions by 2032.
- Aspire for net-zero community emissions by 2040.

The strategy to maintain carbon neutral status for corporate emissions is supported by the Council's Carbon Offset Purchasing Principles through the purchase and retirement of carbon offsets.

On 11 December 2023, Council received a report titled 'Review of Climate Active Certification – Carbon Neutral' and resolved to continue its commitment to Climate Active carbon neutral certification. Climate Active is a Federal Government certification scheme with reporting consistent with the best-practice international carbon accounting standards such as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and ISO14000 series.

Purchasing and Retiring of Carbon Offsets

To maintain Climate Active carbon neutral status, carbon offsets must be purchased and then retired after being applied to emissions for a specific year. For Climate Active certification for 2022/23, the total emissions were

10.2 (cont)

17,550 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂-e), and carbon offsets to the value of \$208,548.95 were retired.

For Climate Active certification for 2023/24, the total emissions were 19,182 tCO₂-e, and carbon offsets to the value of \$185,353.80 were retired. This included 15% of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) retired with an average cost of \$43.65 per ACCU. Currently, ACCU prices can range between \$35 to \$55 per ACCU depending on market prices.

The 2023/24 Climate Active certification documentation has been submitted and pending approval. Reportable emissions have increased due to changed requirements of the certification scheme and improvements in Council's data capture.

Guided by Council's Carbon Offset Purchasing Principles, Council has typically allocated 15% of ACCUs out of the total carbon offsets required to be purchased and retired for that year's carbon emissions. If 100% international offsets were purchased for 2023/24, the alternative cost to Council would be \$110,554.

Council currently holds 4,092 retired offsets that are proposed to be allocated to future years that were purchased for \$80,078.40. These cannot be sold because they have been retired.

If Council were to decide to withdraw from the Climate Active certification program, this would need to be done by 31 May 2025, providing one month's notice prior to the end of the financial year.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Item 9.2 Notice of Motion No. 3 – Council Meeting 3 February 2025 is that Council:

“Receives a report on the costs and implications of ceasing the purchase of carbon offsets to be a Carbon Neutral organisation. The report should explore redirecting these funds towards local environmental and biodiversity initiatives, as well as measures for local carbon sequestration and emissions reduction.”

Options Analysis

There is no statutory obligation to continue to seek carbon neutrality certification and purchase carbon offsets. A summary of options for carbon neutrality is provided in **Attachment 2**. The options include:

- Option 1 - Maintain carbon neutrality as per Strategy – Status quo option
- Option 2 - Cease carbon neutrality and divert carbon offset budget towards direct emission reduction initiatives
- Option 3 - Cease carbon neutrality and divert carbon offset budget towards local environmental and biodiversity initiatives
- Option 4 - Cease carbon neutrality and the target for net zero corporate emissions
- Option 5 - Self-certify carbon neutral status (Alternative to Option 1-3)

Certified Carbon Offsets (Option 1)

10.2 (cont)

This option allows for Council to purchase Climate Active eligible offsets to achieve carbon neutral certification.

It is not feasible for Council to develop local projects eligible to be classified as Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs), a Climate Active eligible offset. This has been explored and reviewed by various councils. If the option for local action was to be pursued, measurement of any reductions associated with the local initiatives would not be able to be quantified under a carbon neutral certification scheme, and reporting would be on Council's assessed carbon emissions and the impact of the local action.

For context, according to recent Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action research and based on 2023/24 corporate emissions, Council would need to revegetate approximately 75 hectares annually to offset its corporate emissions for one year. In comparison, Council currently maintains a total of 590 hectares of open space of which approximately 117 hectares is bushland. Further detailed modelling would be required to calculate a more exact figure, including Council resource capacity to deliver additional mass revegetation projects.

Cease to Purchase Carbon Offsets (Option 2, 3 and 4)

These options move away from paid accredited carbon offsets and ceasing to be a certified carbon neutral organisation. Funds currently allocated for the purchase of carbon offsets could be re-directed to actions that reduce Council's corporate emissions (Option 2) or enhance and support local environmental and biodiversity projects (Option 3). Council could continue to publicly report on its annual emissions profile.

Review of the Climate Active program is ongoing by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. In addition, the Federal Government released its Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Review Implementation Plan in June 2023 following the Independent (Chubb) Review of ACCUs in 2022. These ongoing reforms seek to improve the scheme's integrity and effectiveness, which may affect Climate Active by changing the requirements for using ACCUs to achieve carbon neutral certification.

There is ongoing debate about the veracity of carbon offset schemes.

There have been other councils that have left the scheme in the past two years with their decision to re-direct funding to initiatives that reduce corporate emissions and support local environmental and biodiversity projects. Benchmarking of what other councils are doing regarding carbon neutral and towards net zero targets is provided in **Attachment 3**.

Self-Certify Carbon Neutral Status (Option 5)

Council could pursue a form of self-certification instead of Climate Active certification. To do this, it would need to undertake its own review of best practice standards and create its own bespoke methodology. Self-certification would not enable Council to align with any existing certification scheme or to benchmark against other councils.

Under any alternate arrangement, it is not recommended that Council seek to claim carbon neutral status. Council could be accused of 'green-washing'

10.2 (cont)

if there were claims made about carbon offsetting, carbon neutrality, or a plan towards net zero emissions if it is not aligned to a recognised standard such as Greenhouse Gas Protocol or ISO 14000 standards.

Redirecting of Funds

There is currently a budget allocation of \$240,000 per year to purchase carbon offsets. For Options 2 and 3, these funds could be re-directed to:

- Actions that reduce Council's corporate emissions, with projects subject to favourable Business Case assessments. These could include:
 - Changing appliances and equipment from gas to electric.
 - Reducing emissions from Council's fleet of vehicles.
 - Implementing solar and battery projects. These would not reduce Council's carbon emissions as all electricity is purchased from a 100% renewable source, however would permanently contribute to reducing Council's demand for electricity.
- Projects to enhance and support local environmental and biodiversity projects. These could include initiatives like:
 - Green Corridor Plan implementation.
 - Revegetation opportunities from new Master Plans.
 - Landscape improvements.
 - Active transport projects.

These projects can be directed by actions from existing strategies such as the Climate Response Plan, Urban Forest Strategy and Integrated Water Management Strategy that do not have existing budget approval. All projects should consider ongoing maintenance requirements and be reflected in ongoing operational budgets.

Consideration could be given through the budget process of accumulating the funding to a larger amount over a number of years, rather than allocating funding of \$240,000 each year.

As an indication, Council's aquatic centres account for 80% of the total gas consumption, at a cost of around \$800,000 per year, which is 12.4% of Council's total emissions. Electrifying these facilities (using 100% renewable electricity) is a key step toward reducing emissions. It would require capital investment to change these facilities to electric instead of gas, hence the business case development to allow the benefits and costs to be assessed.

10.2 (cont)

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

<p>Strategic Alignment</p>	<p>Draft Council Plan Strategic Direction 4 - Natural Objective 4.2 An environmentally sustainable and climate resilient City</p> <p>Whitehorse 20240 Community Vision Strategic Direction 5 – Sustainable climate and environmental care, with key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.1: Take a leadership role in tackling climate change. • 5.2: Focus on the environment whilst also balancing the social and economic needs of Whitehorse
<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p>	<p>There is currently a budget allocation of \$240,000 per year for purchase carbon offsets.</p> <p>Council currently holds 4,092 retired certified offsets that were purchased for \$80,078.40. These are retired offsets that cannot be sold.</p>
<p>Legislative and Risk Implications</p>	<p>The Victorian Climate Change Act 2017 requires local governments to consider climate change when undertaking this public health and wellbeing planning.</p> <p>The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires local governments to have regard to climate change then preparing municipal public health and wellbeing plans.</p> <p>The Local Government Act 2020 contains overarching principles that must be considered by councils, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 9(2)(b) Councils are required to give priority to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations. • Under 9(2)(c) Councils are required to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including human centric and planning for climate change risks. • Under 9(2)(h) regional, state, and national plans and policies are to be taken into account during Council's strategic planning. <p>Council's Strategic Risk 3 – <i>'Changes to climate impacting council's ability to deliver services to the community and manage Council assets in a</i></p>

10.2 (cont)

	<p><i>restricted financial environment</i>'. One of the main risk controls is implementing the Strategy and Plan adopted by Council on 27 November 2023, where EAGA is identified as a key partner.</p> <p>Council can still comply with the legislative requirements and have adequate local controls for the risk of climate change without maintaining a carbon neutral status.</p>
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<p>In developing this report, 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 there are no issues that are required to be addressed.</p> <p>A gender impact assessment was completed for the development of the Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030.</p>
Community Engagement	<p>Extensive community consultation was conducted to develop the endorsed Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030 and Climate Response Plan 2023-2026. For further details, refer to Council Meeting 27 November 2023.</p> <p>Future opportunities are available to consult with groups including the Environment and Sustainability Reference Group on local projects.</p> <p>Partnership and co-contribution opportunities with government entities and authorities are ongoing to identify and implement projects that provide shared benefits.</p>
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	<p>This report explores options for Council to address carbon emissions from its operations and discusses options to address this for the future.</p>
Collaboration	<p>No collaboration was required for this report, however information has been derived from Council's participation in the network of local government climate change alliances.</p>
Conflict of Interest	<p>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

ATTACHMENT

- 1 Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030 Progress
- 2 Carbon Neutrality - Options Table
- 3 Summary Benchmarking Councils Carbon Neutrality

10.3 Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) Memorandum of Understanding 2025-2029

Department City Services
Director Infrastructure

Attachment

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support Whitehorse City Council's (Council) ongoing participation in the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029.

Since its inception in 2012, Council's involvement in EAGA and the wider Victorian Greenhouse Alliance (VGA) has provided opportunities for collaboration at scale to deliver climate mitigation and adaptation measures across the Eastern region and State. This has supported Council to implement its previous sustainability strategies and the Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030 (the Strategy).

Council's ongoing participation in EAGA supports the delivery of this Strategy and its Climate Response Plan 2023-2026, where EAGA is identified as a key partner. EAGA implements joint initiatives that provide economies of scale, where without EAGA, Council would not be able to achieve on its own within current resources.

This is an example of a regional collaboration for shared services. The annual membership fee results in Council being able to access more resources than would be possible without the membership. The combined contributions of member councils employs two staff that are available to contribute to both regional and local programs and projects. Any expenditure on projects or programs in addition to the membership fee is at the discretion of Council.

EAGA's project work is complemented by advocacy, capacity building and regional partnerships. This extends across the broader network of eight Greenhouse Alliances, which represent 70 of the 79 municipalities across Victoria.

It is recommended that Council continues its participation in EAGA due to the financial and environmental benefits gained from this shared service model by being an alliance member and authorises the signing of the next 4-year EAGA MoU shown in Attachment 1.

10.3 (cont)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the deliverables and achievements made as a participating member of the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA), and
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to sign the next Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2025-2029 as shown in Attachment 1.

KEY MATTERS**EAGA's role**

The Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) is a formal collaboration of eight councils in Melbourne's east working together on regional programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and facilitate adaptation. It was first established and has been ongoing since 2012. EAGA implements joint initiatives that provide economies of scale and enable projects typically beyond the reach of an individual council.

EAGA is also part of a broader network of eight like Alliances across Victoria that represent 70 of the 79 municipalities. Councils are not required to be part of an arrangement like EAGA and in metropolitan Melbourne, Frankston City Council is the only council not currently a member of an Alliance. The decision of Frankston City Council to withdraw from the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance from 2024/25 is detailed in its Council Minutes on 3 June 2024.

Whitehorse membership

EAGA is a collaboration of regional councils and Whitehorse benefits from the economies of scale of this shared service model. Council's annual membership contribution provides access to the EAGA staff and a range of research and programs. This avoids the need for Council to directly engage additional staff. EAGA membership also provides access to regional, State and National resources through the network of greenhouse alliances and provides a foundation for joined up advocacy on a regional or State basis, rather than Council acting alone.

EAGA outcomes are provide in Attachment 2 and the most significant financial outcome from the collaboration is summarised below:

- Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO) – Savings across participating councils total \$9 million, with Council recording savings of \$251,579 through participation in VECO since 2021, and a further \$237,069 in savings being forecast over the next 4 years (savings based on energy pricing at the time).

10.3 (cont)

EAGA's governance structure

Along with Whitehorse City Council, EAGA members include Boroondara, Glen Eira, Knox, Maroondah, Monash, Stonnington City Councils and Yarra Ranges Shire Council. EAGA is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and is supported by an Executive Officer and Project Officer who are hosted at Maroondah City Council. EAGA is governed by an Executive Committee with representation from councillors and senior management, supported by a Steering Committee with representation from Council officers.

The current MoU for participating councils expires on 30 June 2025. The next MoU period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029 needs to be considered by all participating councils, and a copy is provided in Attachment 1 – EAGA MoU 2025-2029.

EAGA's current deliverables are guided by the following key documents:

- EAGA Strategic Plan 2021-2025
- EAGA Annual Implementation Plan 2024/25
- Joint Advocacy Position Paper 2024/2025

Further information can be accessed on the EAGA website, <http://eaga.com.au>.

EAGA's deliverables and achievements

Key deliverables and achievements accomplished during this MoU 2021-2025 period to date are included in Attachment 2 – EAGA MoU 2021-2025 Progress Update and Attachment 3 - EAGA Annual Report 2023/24.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

In summary, the two options for Council are:

OPTIONS	COMMENTS
<p>Option 1 Continue participation in EAGA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to realise the financial and environmental benefits achieved by collaboration with other councils, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient implementation of Council's Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030 or other climate response actions determined by Council. • Effective collaboration increasing the project reach and impact, and local government voice and perspectives in state and federal arenas where they impact on local communities. • Expanded ability to advocate achieving incremental change including and within the three levels of government – Federal, State and local governments, and strong partnerships with

10.3 (cont)

	<p>other community organisations, industry networks and associations for local solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-benefits from successfully implementing priority energy reduction programs and the proposed areas of advocacy resulting in long-term financial savings through reduction in utility costs, correction of tariffs, fuel efficiencies, lower street lighting costs, local climate change mitigation activities and additional grant funding. • Access to additional resources of the EAGA staff and the ability to leverage off joint council projects. • Membership cost is \$37,000 in 2025/26 and increases each year by 2.5%.
<p>Option 2 Do not continue participation in EAGA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council would need to explore alternative corporate and community climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives within existing operational budget. • The level of resourcing available for environmental sustainability related activities would reduce. • There is no legislated requirement and no membership related cost or penalties to not continue participation in EAGA.

Based on current information and indications, it is understood that all other EAGA councils are planning to commit to the next MoU 2025-2029 and participate in EAGA for the next four years.

Financial and Resource Implications

The delivery of EAGA's Annual Implementation Plans and the salaries of the Executive Officer and Project Officer are funded by member councils' annual membership fees and grant monies that EAGA is successful in obtaining.

The resources available through the EAGA membership supplement Council's resources.

Memberships fees for the upcoming MoU 2025-2029 period are:

Financial Year	Membership Fee (excl. GST)
2025/26	\$37,000
2026/27	\$37,925
2027/28	\$38,873
2028/29	\$39,845

EAGA's 2025-2029 annual membership fees are \$19,000 less than the average when benchmarked against the other metropolitan Greenhouse Alliances.

10.3 (cont)

There is an increase in membership fees for 2025/26 compared to the current fees of \$28,0000, to reflect Maroondah City Council's budget forecasts over the coming MoU period. The fee structure also covers operational costs and a small surplus to address employment contract risks for Maroondah City Council as host the EAGA staff.

There is an occasional requirement for additional funding for some EAGA projects. Any request for additional funding is made as part of the development of the Annual Implementation Plan to ensure that EAGA councils that wish to participate in the particular project can make provision for any required funding in their respective annual budget process.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitehorse 20240 Community Vision Strategic Direction 5 – Sustainable climate and environmental care, with key priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.1: Take a leadership role in tackling climate change. • 5.2: Focus on the environment whilst also balancing the social and economic needs of Whitehorse
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>Annual EAGA membership fees (\$37,000 in 2025/26) are allocated within the proposed operational budget.</p> <p>There are no new resource implications in Council's ongoing commitment to EAGA.</p>
Legislative and Risk Implications	<p>There are no legal or risk implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report. There is no requirement for Council to be a member of an Alliance like EAGA.</p> <p>Council's participation in EAGA and partnership with the wider Victorian Greenhouse Alliance does, however, support Council in meeting its requirements under the following legislations:</p> <p>The Victorian Climate Change Act 2017 requires local governments to consider climate change when undertaking this public health and wellbeing planning.</p> <p>The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires local governments to have regard to climate change then preparing municipal public health and wellbeing plans.</p>

10.3 (cont)

	<p>The Local Government Act 2020 contains overarching principles that must be considered by councils, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 9(2)(b) Councils are required to give priority to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations. • Under 9(2)(c) Councils are required to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including human centric and planning for climate change risks. • Under 9(2)(h) regional, state, and national plans and policies are to be taken into account during Council's strategic planning. <p>Council's Strategic Risk 3 – 'Changes to climate impacting council's ability to deliver services to the community and manage Council assets in a restricted financial environment'. One of the main risk controls is implementing the Strategy and Plan adopted by Council on 27 November 2023, where EAGA is identified as a key partner.</p>
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.
Community Engagement	<p>No community engagement was required for this report.</p> <p>Community feedback has informed the Community Vision, Council Plan and the relevant climate and greenhouse gas reduction strategies of Council.</p>
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	Membership of EAGA provides an avenue to explore and implement activities and programs not viable for a council acting alone.
Collaboration	EAGA is an example of coordinated collaboration across the participating councils aimed at achieving outcomes and results that would not be possible for a council acting alone.
Conflict of Interest	Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

10.3 (cont)

ATTACHMENT

- 1 EAGA MoU 2025-2029
- 2 EAGA MoU 2021-2025 Progress Update
- 3 EAGA Annual Report 2023/24

10.4 Victorian Electoral Commission Report: Council General Election 2024

Department Governance and Integrity
Executive Manager Corporate Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

On Saturday 26 October 2024 the general election was held for Whitehorse City Council (Whitehorse Council). Victorian local government elections are held every four years as required by the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) must deliver a report to the Chief Executive Officer within 6 months to provide an overview about the conduct of the election.

The VEC report details end-to-end service delivery of electoral activities such as voting, results and election statistics. A summary about the key matters detailed in the VEC's report is provided in this report. The report is at Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note and receive the Victorian Electoral Commission's Report on the conduct and results of the Whitehorse City Council general election 2024.

KEY MATTERS

- General elections were held for 78 of the 79 Victorian Councils on Saturday 26 October 2024 including Whitehorse Council.
- Whitehorse Council is comprised of 11 wards, each represented by a single Councillor. In the general election, all 11 wards had a vacancy to be filled.
- Recount requests were submitted for three wards, Lake, Mahoneys, and Sparks. Of these, only the Sparks Ward recount proceeded, while the requests for Lake and Mahoneys were not conducted.
- The VEC is the statutory election service provider for the conduct of local government elections in Victoria and the Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020 (the Regulations) provide that the VEC must prepare a report to the Chief Executive Officer on the conduct of the election within the period of 6 months after election day.

10.4 (cont)

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS**Key Changes**

The *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* required a number of changes to the election process compared to the 2020 general election. These changes are summarised below.

Close of roll	The date for close of the roll was extended from 57 to 80 days before the election.
Certification of the roll	The timeframe for roll certification was extended from 13 to 23 business days.
Candidate statement word limit	The word limit was reduced from 300 to 200 words.
Rejection and amendment of candidate statements	The time allowed for candidates to amend their statement was reduced from 39 to 38 days before the election day.
Close of candidate statements, photos and questionnaires	The deadline for candidates to submit their candidate statements, photos and questionnaires was amended to the same time as the close of nominations Tuesday 17 September at 12 noon.
Mailout of ballot pack	The timeline for mailout was extended from 3 to 4 business days.

Refer to Attachment 1 (pages 6 and 7 respectively) for the details of these changes and the election timeline.

Voting

At certification, the voters' roll for the 2024 Whitehorse Council general election included 106,117 enrolled voters.

Voter Turnout		
Whitehorse 2020	State Average (excluding Melbourne City Council)	Whitehorse 2024
85.62%	81.46%	86.25%

The VEC mailed 106,110 ballot packs between Monday 7 and Thursday 10 October 2024. The voter turnout is measured by the number of ballots counted as a percentage of the voters on the voter's role.

Informal voting represents those ballots papers that are lodged but are either incorrectly completed or left blank.

10.4 (cont)

Informal Votes		
Whitehorse 2020	State Average	Whitehorse 2024
2.34%	3.47%	2.46%

Results

At the close of nominations, 49 candidates had nominated for the 11 vacancies for election. After nominations closed, one candidate from Eley Ward was retired from the election.

Summary of candidates nominations			
Ward	Candidates	Ward	Candidates
Cootamundra	6	Simpson	2
Eley	5	Sparks	5
Elgar	4	Terrara	2
Kingsley	7	Walker	6
Lake	4	Wattle	3
Mahoneys	4		

The results of the 2024 Whitehorse City Council general election were officially announced at 3.00 pm on 12 November 2024. The following candidates were declared:

- Cootamundra Ward – Kieran Simpson
- Eley Ward – Daniel Griffiths
- Elgar Ward – Blair Barker
- Kingsley Ward – Kirsten Langford
- Lake Ward – Hayley Weller
- Mahoneys Ward – Jason Martin
- Simpson Ward – Prue Cutts
- Terrara Ward – Jarrod Gunn
- Walker Ward – Ben Stennett
- Wattle Ward – Andrew Davenport

Three recount requests were made for Lake, Mahoneys and Sparks Wards. Of these, only the recount for Sparks Ward proceeded. As a result of the recount Peter Allan was officially declared the successful candidate for Sparks Ward at 4.00 pm on 13 November 2024.

10.4 (cont)

Complaints

The VEC have a complaints process during elections. Complaints must be lodged in writing, then processed at their head office. For the 2024 local government elections, feedback and complaints could be provided online.

Complaints alleging a breach of the Act are forwarded to the Local Government Inspectorate.

Complaint Summary for Whitehorse City Council		
Number of Complaints	Referred to the inspectorate	Main Nature of Complaint
28	12	Misleading and deceptive material

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	<p>Strategic Direction 8: Governance and Leadership</p> <p>Objective 8.3: Good Governance and Integrity.</p> <p>By providing this report to Council and making it publicly available, transparency is demonstrated in the conduct of the 2024 general election. This ensures that the community is informed about the election process, outcomes, and any relevant observations, thereby reinforcing trust in the integrity and accountability of the electoral process.</p>
Financial and Resource Implications	<p>There are no financial or resource implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.</p>
Legislative and Risk Implications	<p>In accordance with section 263(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>, the VEC is the statutory election service provider for the conduct of local government elections in Victoria.</p> <p>The Regulations detail that the VEC must prepare a report to the Chief Executive Officer on the conduct of the election within the period of 6 months after election day (r 83(1)).</p> <p>In accordance with r 83(3) of the Regulations, the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that the report is submitted to the Council at the earliest practicable meeting of the Council held after the report is received.</p>
Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights Considerations	<p>It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.</p>

10.4 (cont)

Community Engagement	No community engagement was required for this report.
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	There are no innovation and continuous improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Collaboration	The Election Report Whitehorse City Council 2024 Local, government elections April 2025 (Attachment 1) was provided by the VEC and provides the statistics used in this report.
Conflict of Interest	<p><i>The Local Government Act 2020</i> 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.</p> <p>Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.</p>

ATTACHMENT

- 1 Whitehorse City Council - VEC 2024 Election Report

10.5 CEO Employment Matters - Policy review and appointment of the Independent Advisor

Department Governance and Integrity
Executive Manager Corporate Services

Attachment

SUMMARY

The CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy (Policy) which was last revised and adopted in February 2023 is due to be reviewed. Following a review no changes to the Policy are proposed.

An Independent Advisor must be appointed to provide professional advice in relation to the matters dealt with under the Policy and to support the CEO Employment Matters Committee (Committee).

The term of the current Independent advisor role expires July 2025, as such expressions of interest for the position were sought in March. Council received 11 applications. Three candidates were shortlisted and interviewed on 23 and 24 April 2025.

Referee checks of the preferred candidate who scored the highest during the interviews was undertaken. After this process, the Committee has recommended the candidate for appointment.

A summary of the shortlisted candidates, including their areas of expertise, experience and hourly rate or daily rates and the referee checks on the highest scoring candidate is provided in confidential attachments to this report.

The Independent Advisor is to be appointed for an initial period not exceeding three (3) years after which they will be eligible for extension or re-appointment, for a further three (3) year term.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note that following a review of the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy (2023) no changes are proposed to be made at this time; and
2. Appointunder Whitehorse City Council standard consultant terms to be the Independent Advisor to the Chief Executive Officer Employment Matters Committee for a three (3) year term commencing on 1 June 2025 at the remuneration rate as detailed at attachment 2 to this report.
3. Thank David Preiss for his contribution to the CEO Employment Matters Committee as Independent Advisor.

10.5 (cont)

KEY MATTERS

Policy

Council first adopted its CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy in December 2021. This Policy was reviewed and updated in February 2023 (refer attachment 1).

The Policy sets out a process and framework for evaluating performance, determining the CEO remuneration and outlining the reappointment process in accordance with the requirements of section 45 of the Act.

To ensure the Policy remains fit for purpose it has been reviewed against the legislative requirements to ensure it continues to be consistent with those provisions. No changes are proposed. The next date for the review of the Policy will be May 2028 or if required at an earlier date.

Independent Advisor appointment

David Preiss the current Independent Advisor has finalised the term and did not provide an expression of interest to continue in the role.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Cr Langford and Cr Barker interviewed the three short listed candidates for the role of Independent Advisor to the CEO Employment Matters Committee in the week commencing 21 April 2025.

The Committee's recommendation regarding the appointment, details about the short-listed candidates and reference checks is at confidential attachment 2.

The Policy provides the Council will determine the term of the appointment of the Independent Advisor and their remuneration.

DISCUSSION, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Recruitment process

Expressions of Interest for the position of Independent Advisor were advertised on Seek and closed on 1 April 2025.

Eleven expressions of interest were received, and three candidates were shortlisted for interviews.

Interviews were conducted with the shortlisted candidates in the week commencing 21 April 2025 with a panel consisting of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Cr Langford and Cr Barker.

Referee checks for the preferred candidate were conducted by the Mayor and the Manager Governance and Integrity.

At its meeting on Monday 12 May 2025, the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee, consisting of all Councillors, resolved to express its appreciation to David Preiss for his advice and support over three years as the former Independent Advisor.

The Committee also resolved to recommend the Panel's preferred candidate for appointment to the position.

10.5 (cont)

The appointment is proposed for an initial period of three years and subject to Council extension of a further term.

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Report Details

Strategic Alignment	Strategic Direction 1 An innovative Council that is well led and governed
Financial and Resource Implications	The cost of the Independent Advisor will be covered in Council's operational budget. Attachment 1 includes the details of the preferred applicant's rate.
Legislative and Risk Implications	Under section 45 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , Councils are required to develop, adopt and keep in force a Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy. Section 45(2)(a) provides the Policy must: <i>Provide for the Council to obtain independent professional advice in relation to the matters dealt with in the Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy.</i>
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 <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i> . It is considered that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.
Community Engagement	No community engagement was required for this report.
Innovation and Continuous Improvement	There are no Innovation and Continuous Improvement matters arising from the recommendation contained in this report.
Collaboration	Collaboration was taken during recruitment with Council's People and Culture Department to ensure the questions and selection criteria aligned with Council's recruitment processes.
Conflict of Interest	The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> 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.

10.5 (cont)

ATTACHMENT

- 1 CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy - Revised 27 February 2023 - May 2025
- 2 Independent CEO Employment Matters Advisor Appointment

Whitehorse City Council designates this attachment and the information contained in it as Confidential Information pursuant to Section 3 (1) g(ii) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. This ground applies because the matter concerns private business information.

10.6 Records of Informal Meetings of Councillors

Department Governance and Integrity
 Manager Governance and Integrity

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Records of Informal Meetings of Councillors.

Pre-Council Meeting – 12 May 2025 – 6.30pm – 6.37pm

Matter/s Discussed:	Councillors Present	Officers Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Meeting Agenda 12 May 2025 	Cr Andrew Davenport Mayor Cr Prue Cutts Deputy Mayor Cr Peter Allan Cr Blair Barker Cr Jarrod Gunn Cr Daniel Griffiths Cr Kirsten Langford Cr Jason Martin Cr Kieran Simpson Cr Ben Stennett Cr Hayley Weller	S McMillan S Cann J Green L Letic S White A Ghastine V Ferlaino C Robinson K Woods
Others Present: N/A		
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest: Nil		
Councillor attendance following disclosure: N/A		

11.1 (cont)

Professional Development Program – 19 May 2025 – 6.30pm – 7.30pm		
Matter/s Discussed:	Councillors Present	Officers Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory Professional Development Program - Conduct, Creating and Maintaining a Safe Workplace 	Cr Andrew Davenport Mayor Cr Prue Cutts Deputy Mayor Cr Peter Allan Cr Blair Barker Cr Jarrod Gunn Cr Daniel Griffiths Cr Kirsten Langford Cr Jason Martin (online) Cr Kieran Simpson Cr Ben Stennett Cr Hayley Weller	S McMillan S Cann J Green L Letic S White A Ghastine V Ferlaino C Robinson K Woods
Others Present: Catherine Dunlop - Maddocks Lawyers		
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest: Nil		
Councillor attendance following disclosure: N/A		

Councillor Briefing – 19 May 2025 – 7.30pm – 9.35pm		
Matter/s Discussed:	Councillors Present	Officers Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor Internal Resolution Process Customer Service Centres - Implementation of Council Decision Waste Management Strategy 5 Year Action Plan 2024/25 Q3 Quarterly Performance Report Draft Agenda 26 May 2025 	Cr Andrew Davenport Mayor Cr Prue Cutts Deputy Mayor Cr Peter Allan Cr Blair Barker Cr Jarrod Gunn Cr Daniel Griffiths Cr Kirsten Langford Cr Jason Martin (online) Cr Kieran Simpson Cr Ben Stennett Cr Hayley Weller	S McMillan S Cann J Green L Letic S White A Ghastine V Ferlaino C Robinson K Woods M Thompson S Kinsey C Clarke
Others Present: N/A		
Disclosures of Conflict of Interest: Nil		
Councillor attendance following disclosure: N/A		

11.1 (cont)

11 Councillor Delegate and Conference / Seminar Reports

11.1 Reports by Delegates and Reports on Conferences / Seminars Attendance

Department	Governance and Integrity
	Manager Governance and Integrity

Verbal reports from Councillors appointed as delegates to community organisations/committees/groups and attendance at conferences and seminars related to Council Business.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the:

1. Reports from delegates, and;
2. Reports on conferences/seminars attendance.

12 Confidential Reports

13 Close Meeting