

12 March 2024 Council Meeting Attachments

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ARBITRATION PURSUANT TO DIVISION 5 OF PART 6 OF THE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (2020)

Internal Arbitration Process – Hobsons Bay City Council, IAP 2023-20

Applicant: Councillor Antoinette Briffa

Respondent: Councillor Daria Kellander

DECISION

The Arbiter has determined that there was a breach of the relevant Standards in relation to Allegation 1 of this Application and that therefore a finding of misconduct is made.

Cr Kellander is suspended from the office of Councillor for a period of 7 days in relation to this breach. This suspension is to commence the day after the next Council meeting following this decision.

In relation to Allegations 2 and 3, no breach of the relevant Standards has been found and therefore no findings of misconduct are made.

Dr Lily O’Neill

Arbiter

1 March 2024

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Application and Hearing

1. The Application dated 31 October 2022 by the Applicant, Cr Antoinette Briffa, alleges that the Respondent, Cr Daria Kellander, breached several of the Standards of Conduct as contained in Schedule 1 of the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020* ('Standards of Conduct'). The Application seeks findings of misconduct to be made against Councillor Kellander.
2. The allegations contained in the Application relate to an email and a Facebook post made by Cr Kellander. In summary, the comments made by Cr Kellander relate to a meeting called by Cr Briffa, about which Cr Briffa wrote (in part):

'Given the election for the next Mayor and Deputy Mayor is on 10 November, I would like the Councillor group to get together to discuss who is interested in standing for these roles, any questions councillors have for each candidate, what support the prospective candidates have from each councillor, and what support/training the prospective candidates might need ahead of the vote.'

(email from Cr Briffa to all councillors, dated 21 September 2023, Subject: In confidence: Discussion re next Mayor & Deputy).

3. The response to this email from Cr Kellander included a 29 October 2023 email (to all councillors and two council staff), and a 31 October 2023 Facebook post on her councillor Facebook page.
4. The 29 October 2023 email stated:

'Hi All,

I'd like to note that given that this meeting is now 2 days away, only one Councillor has reached out to me to share an intention to run for mayor. This is unlike previous years. Noting that the current mayor wanted to have this meeting behind closed doors a month in advance to anoint the "new mayor" I suggest that a deal has already been done, of which I have no interest in being part of. Operation Sandon made it very clear that predetermining decisions in pre organised meetings of the Councillor group like this, was collusive conduct and denies the community the ability to see decisions made. This conduct should stop and I will not be a party to this discussion.

Kind regards Daria'

5. The 31 October 2023 Facebook post stated:

'I'll be out trick or treating with my 4-year old tonight, and not in a closed door Councillor only meeting being told who they've chosen for Mayor. Happy Halloween.

Tonight, Council is holding a closed door Councillor only meeting to predetermine who the Mayor / Deputy Mayor will be. To date only one Councillor has reached out to me to share an intention to nominate for Mayor, who I suspect will be unsuccessful. This is unlike previous years. Noting that the current Mayor wanted to have this meeting behind closed doors a month in advance to anoint and mentor the "new Mayor" I suggest that a deal has already been done, of which I have no interest in being a part of.'

6. The Application and accompanying material from Cr Briffa alleges that Cr Kellander breached several Standards of the Standards of Conduct (the relevant ones being appended to this Decision), being:

Allegation 1: That Cr Kellander 'failed to treat other Councillors and the Mayor with fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect in her email to them and several staff on 29 October 2023.' A breach of Standard 1 – Treatment of others is alleged in relation this allegation.

Allegation 2: That 'Cr Kellander's public social media post of 31 October failed to treat other Councillors and the Mayor with fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect.' A breach of Standard 2 – Performing the role of Councillor is alleged in relation to this allegation.

Allegation 3: 'Cr Kellander (a) failed to ensure her behaviour does not bring discredit upon the Council, and (b) deliberately misled the public about the conduct of the other Councillors, the Mayor and the process of the election of Mayor by publishing her social media post of 31 October, and allowing that post and the responses maligning Councillors, the Mayor and the Council to remain published.' A breach of Standard 4 – Councillor must not discredit or mislead Council or the public is alleged in relation to this allegation.

7. In a Directions Hearing on 11 January 2024, I set this matter down for a full hearing on 5 February 2024, to be heard online. Neither the Applicant nor the Respondent called any witnesses. Oral evidence was given at the hearing by both the Applicant and the Respondent. The hearing was transcribed.

Applicant's Evidence

8. Cr Briffa's evidence comprised her application, written material provided pre-hearing, and oral evidence given during the hearing. She gave evidence during the hearing that the councillor only meeting she called was a meeting that was held every year to discuss the upcoming mayoral elections. It was not intended to function as a de-facto election. She believed that this meeting served as a courtesy to other councillors to have a private discussion about who was thinking of running for Mayor and deputy Mayor, as well as to provide guidance about what each role requires. She was very upset at the implication, contained in both the email and Facebook post, that there was something improper about calling such a meeting.
9. Cr Briffa was further aggrieved by the reference in the email, and in comments to the Facebook post, to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission's (IBAC) investigation 'Operation Sandon'. In the hearing she stated 'any allegation ... of being corrupt, I find really offensive and disturbing.' I note that while the email referred to 'collusive conduct', both Cr Briffa and Cr Kellander in the hearing used the term 'corrupt'. I am satisfied that, for the purposes of adjudicating the issues in this matter, the two terms can be used interchangeably.

Respondent's Evidence

10. Cr Kellander's evidence comprised written material provided pre-hearing, and oral evidence given during the hearing. She gave evidence during the hearing that she did not believe it was appropriate to have a Councillor only meeting to have detailed discussions about upcoming mayoral elections. She believed that they acted to ensure the 'deal has already been done' to elect a mayor. She conceded that while it would be appropriate to discuss whether a councillor may want to run for Mayor with other councillors on an informal basis, it was not appropriate to do so at Council premises, with all Councillors invited, without the public being present. I note that the purpose of the meeting, according to Cr Briffa's email, was also to air 'any questions councillors have for each candidate, [and] what support the prospective candidates have from each councillor'.
11. In both the hearing and her written material, Cr Kellander referenced the Australian Constitution's implied freedom of political communication and the extent to which this freedom is applicable to the Standards of Conduct from the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020* (Vic). She cited the Councillor Conduct Panel Decision of *Hely v Lew* (2022) which had cited part of Kirby J's judgment in *Coleman v Power* (2004) 220 CLR 1 ('*Coleman*'). For example, in her pre-hearing written material she wrote, quoting some of Kirby J's judgment:

‘the standards of my conduct when engaged in debate ought to be judged by the standards required of all politicians (including Federal politicians) ... I am engaged in the struggle of ideas. In Australia I am entitled to use insult and emotion, calumny, and invective in my armoury of persuasion’ (p. 1).

12. Cr Kellander stated that she had not meant to imply that Cr Briffa was corrupt in calling the meeting. In the hearing she stated that she had read IBAC’s Operation Sandon report and conceded that the Operation Sandon investigation primarily involved findings of improper conduct by councillors in relation to planning matters, including for personal benefit, and that those matters could not be compared to the meeting called by Cr Briffa. In the hearing she also conceded that she understood why it might be inferred that was the implication she was trying to make, and offered to apologise to Cr Briffa.

Arbiter’s Findings and Reasoning

13. A debate about what is appropriate behaviour around election time very clearly falls within ‘robust political debate’ as outlined in Section 5 of the Standards. Cr Kellander’s argument is that such matters should occur with the public present. Cr Kellander is entitled to hold the view that it was inappropriate to hold a Councillor only meeting to discuss the upcoming mayoral elections. She is also entitled to broadcast that view. However, engaging in ‘robust political debate’ does not give free reign to breach the other Standards.
14. Allegation 1 is that Cr Kellander’s 29 October 2023 email breached Standard 1 – Treatment of Others. I find that she did breach this Standard when she referred to ‘Operation Sandon’ and ‘collusive conduct’ in relation to the meeting being called. The Australian Macquarie Dictionary (‘the Dictionary’) defines collusion to be, among other things, an ‘agreement or cooperation, usually secret, for the purpose of fraud, deception, or the gaining of an advantage at the expense of others.’
15. I find that referring to ‘Operation Sandon’ and ‘collusive conduct’ as an explanation for why she thought the meeting was inappropriate contains a clear implication that she believed that the meeting was collusive conduct. I make this finding despite Cr Kellander saying that it was not her intention to imply collusive conduct.
16. Collusive conduct is an extremely serious breach of public trust and allegations of collusion should not be made lightly. They could cause extreme damage to Cr Briffa’s reputation. These comments are clearly in breach of the need to ‘treat other Councillors ... with dignity, fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect’ (Standard 1). For this breach I order that Cr Kellander be suspended from the office of Councillor

for a period of 7 days pursuant to my power under s 147(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic). This suspension is to commence the day after the next Council meeting following this decision.

17. Allegation 2 is in relation to Cr Kellander's 31 October 2023 Facebook post, specifically that this post breached Standard 1 – Treatment of Others. I note that Cr Kellander did not reference Operation Sandon or collusive conduct, but instead stated, in part, that 'Council is holding a closed door Councillor only meeting to predetermine who the Mayor / Deputy Mayor will be ... I suggest that a deal has already been done'.
18. As I have stated previously, Cr Kellander is entitled to her view that this meeting was inappropriate. Standard 1 requires her to express this view while treating her fellow Councillors, among others, with 'dignity, fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect'.
19. I am in two minds about whether this post, taken as a whole, contains the same lack of dignity, fairness, objectivity and respect, and particularly the suggestion of collusion, as the 29 October 2023 email. The Dictionary states that 'predetermine' means, among other things, 'to determine or decide beforehand'. Further, the Dictionary defines the word 'deal' as, among other things, 'a bargain or arrangement for mutual advantage, as in commerce or politics, often a secret or underhand one'. Taken together, these definitions are very close to the definition of collusion. However, in light of the importance of Standard 5's 'robust political debate' protection, I am inclined to give Cr Kellander the benefit of the doubt. I therefore find that her post did not amount to treatment that would contravene Standard 1, and therefore Cr Kellander did not breach Standard 1 in relation to Allegation 2.
20. Allegation 3 is that Cr Kellander breached Standard 4 'Councillor must not discredit or mislead Council or public' in her 31 October 2023 Facebook post, and in allowing certain comments by members of the public to remain published on that Facebook page. For the same reasons as outlined in paras 13, 17-19, I find that Cr Kellander's Facebook post did not breach Standard 4.
21. In relation to Facebook comments by members of the public, I think that Councillors, in certain circumstances, can be found to have breached the Standards for allowing comments by others to remain published on their Councillor social media pages. For example, I was provided with a comment from a member of the public that was published on former MP Bernie Finn's Facebook page that contained a nasty reference to Cr Briffa's gender identity – allowing that kind of comment to remain published would breach the Standards in my view.

22. However, I am not convinced that the comments I have been provided with that were posted on Cr Kellander's Facebook page could be said to discredit or mislead Council or the public. This is primarily because I do not think a reasonable person would give them much weight. I would describe the tenor of most of these comments as a social media pile-on, without much credibility.
23. One comment referenced Operation Sandon's recommendation that local councils improve transparency around their decision making, among other related matters. This comment does not mention collusion or corruption. I think that allowing this comment to remain online falls into the 'robust political debate' protection. (I also note that Cr Kellander offered to remove this post during the hearing.) I therefore find no breach of the relevant standards in relation to Allegation 3.

Implied freedom of political communication

24. The broader point that Cr Kellander made about how Standard 5 interacts with the other four standards needs to be addressed here. I say this primarily because the High Court has provided more recent case law on the implied freedom of political communication than *Coleman*.
25. A more directly analogous case to the facts at issue here was decided by the High Court in 2019, that of *Comcare v Banerji* [2019] HCA 23 ('*Banerji*'). This case clarified that the implied freedom of political communication is not unfettered and could be limited by the Australian Public Service's (APS) Code of Conduct.
26. Ms Banerji was an employee of a federal government department who had her employment terminated because of many tweets from her anonymous Twitter account that were highly critical of her Department, fellow employees, and government policies and politicians.¹ Ms Banerji did not dispute that these tweets contravened the APS Code of Conduct.² Rather, she asserted that she had an implied freedom of political communication that protected this speech.
27. In *Banerji*, a majority in the High Court emphasised that the implied freedom of political communication is not a personal right of free speech.³ Rather, successive Australian court decisions have emphasised that '[i]t is a restriction on legislative power', i.e. prevents governments' from passing certain laws, and that:

[T]he question of whether the law imposes an unjustified burden on the implied freedom of political communication is a question of the law's effect on political communication *as a*

¹ *Comcare v Banerji* [2019] HCA 23 [2] (majority judgment Kiefel CJ, Bell, Keane, Nettle JJ).

² *Ibid* [18]

³ *Ibid* [19, 20]

whole. More specifically, even if a law significantly restricts the ability of an individual or a group of persons to engage in political communication, the law will not infringe the implied freedom of political communication unless it has a material unjustified effect on political communication as a whole.⁴

28. The Court said that laws that prohibit or limit political communication can still be valid if they do not have an impact on the ‘totality of political communication’.⁵ The next question is whether such an ‘effective burden’ on political communication can be justified.⁶ This question requires applying a two part test, namely, (1) is the law in question for a ‘legitimate purpose consistent with the system of representative and responsible government mandated by the *Constitution*’ (2) ‘whether that law is reasonably appropriate and adapted to the achievement of that objective.’⁷
29. On the first question of the test, the Court found that the APS Code of Conduct was designed to maintain and protect ‘an apolitical and professional public service’, and that this public service was essential to representative and responsible government, and that therefore the Code of Conduct had a legitimate purpose.⁸ On the second question of the test, the Court emphasised that the Code of Conduct was a ‘plainly reasoned and focussed response to the need to ensure that the requirement of upholding the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS’.⁹
30. The Standards of Conduct in the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 (Vic)* clearly fall within an analogous category to the APS Code of Conduct. For example, the explanatory memorandum to the *Local Government Bill 2019 (Vic)*, as was, states that the Standards of Conduct were introduced to ensure that ‘standards of integrity and oversight’ of Councillors are met (p.1). Following *Banerji*, the Standards of Conduct are not invalid because of the implied right to political communication. Any suggestion otherwise should be rejected.

⁴ Ibid [20]

⁵ Ibid [29]

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid [31]

⁹ Ibid [42]

Appendix

Relevant Standards of Conduct from the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 (Vic)*

1 Treatment of others

A Councillor must, in performing the role of a Councillor, treat other Councillors, members of Council staff, the municipal community and members of the public with dignity, fairness, objectivity, courtesy and respect, including by ensuring that the Councillor—

- (a) takes positive action to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in accordance with the **Equal Opportunity Act 2010**; and
- (b) supports the Council in fulfilling its obligation to achieve and promote gender equality; and
- (c) does not engage in abusive, obscene or threatening behaviour in their dealings with members of the public, Council staff and Councillors; and
- (d) in considering the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community, treats all persons with respect and has due regard for their opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities.

2 Performing the role of Councillor

A Councillor must, in performing the role of a Councillor, do everything reasonably necessary to ensure that the Councillor performs the role of a Councillor effectively and responsibly, including by ensuring that the Councillor—

- (a) undertakes any training or professional development activities the Council decides it is necessary for all Councillors to undertake in order to effectively perform the role of a Councillor; and
- (b) diligently uses Council processes to become informed about matters which are subject to Council decisions; and
- (c) is fit to conscientiously perform the role of a Councillor when acting in that capacity or purporting to act in that capacity; and
- (d) represents the interests of the municipal community in performing the role of a Councillor by considering and being responsive to the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community.

4 Councillor must not discredit or mislead Council or public

- (1) In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must ensure that their behaviour does not bring discredit upon the Council.
- (2) In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must not deliberately mislead the Council or the public about any matter related to the performance of their public duties.

5 Standards do not limit robust political debate

Nothing in these standards is intended to limit, restrict or detract from robust public debate in a democracy.

Chief Executive Officer

REPORT ON OPERATIONS

February 2024



**Hobsons
2.0**

Issue 80

Published March 2024

Presented at the Council Meeting of Council on 12 March 2024

The CEO Report on Operations is a regular report that is published by the Hobsons Bay City Council.

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and the community of recent issues, initiatives and projects undertaken across Council. The report is provided on a monthly basis.

CEO update

During February 2024, the Chief Executive Officer participated in a number of events, meetings and discussions about a range of matters relevant to Hobsons Bay and the local government sector.

Many of the events and meetings attended by the CEO during this period were related to regional initiatives and collaboration such as:

- attendance at the M9 meeting of CEOs;
- attendance at the Western Region CEO's meeting, hosted by Hobsons Bay City Council;
- attendance at a meeting with the Hon. Melissa Horne MP, Member for Williamstown together with Mayor Cr Tyler to discuss Council's advocacy priorities;
- attendance at various meetings with executives from Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP), to discuss the new level crossing projects within the municipality;
- attendance at a meeting with Simon Newport, CEO Homes Victoria;
- attendance at the Trader Presidents meeting together with Mayor Cr Tyler, Cr Hemphill, Rachel Lunn Director Sustainable Communities and Council officers; and
- attendance at a meeting with Executives from Viva Energy together with Cr Hemphill, Jake Trevaskis Acting Director Infrastructure and City Services and Council officers to discuss options for the level crossing removal works at Champion Road.



Aaron van Egmond
Chief Executive Officer

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Delivering for our community

Library services



Libraries

February 2024

Physical loans (books etc.): 22,888
eLibrary loans (eBooks etc.): 6,138
Renewals: 6,178
Total: 35,807
Library visits: 59,346

Loans have decreased 19.1 per cent compared to January 2024.

Year to date loans have increased 3.9 per cent compared to February 2023.

eLibrary loans have decreased 11.08 per cent compared to January 2024.

Year to date eLibrary loans have decreased 18.9 per cent compared to February 2023.



Image: Water and fruit were offered at Council+ sites when temperatures hit over 35 degrees on 13 February 2024



Image: Talented Lego enthusiasts are loving after school programs

Tai Chi at Logan Reserve

Over 50 community members joined Tai Chi at Logan Reserve as part of Lunar New Year Celebrations.



Image: Tai Chi at Logan Reserve

Library Lovers Day

The community were encouraged to leave messages on why they love their library during Library Lovers Day on 14 February.



Image: Messages from the community

Community Hubs and Centres



Laverton Community Hub

There were 403 Bookings at Laverton Community Hub during February.

There were 1,168 people who took part in the active program.



Image: Vietnamese Dancing at Laverton Community Hub to celebrate Lunar New Year

Newport Community Hub

There were 142 Bookings at Newport Community Hub during February.

Seabrook Community Centre

There were 94 Bookings at Seabrook Community Centre during February.

Seabrook Community Centre and the Hobsons Bay Art Society celebrated the completion of beautiful artwork created for the Seabrook Community Centre at a morning tea on 16 November.

Youth services



Youth counselling

Council's generalist youth counselling service delivered 42 face-to-face and online counselling sessions this month to 30 young people. At the end of the month there was an eight-week waiting period for a young person to access youth counselling services.

Youth programs and activities

Council ran 16 youth program and activity sessions, resulting in 73 contacts with young people. This month, activities and programs included the drop in programs at Newport, Laverton and Altona, and the 2024 FReeZA Committee. Twelve sessions of teen Mental Health First Aid were run in schools for 300 participants.

Youth focused capacity building programs

Four sessions were held for 44 parents and stakeholder contacts to support and empower young people. These included the Tuning into Teens program and the Western Region Youth Counselling Network.

Immunisations



Immunisations

During February 2024, Council's immunisation team held 16 immunisation sessions, 13 home visit sessions and administered 787 immunisations to 343 clients. Sessions were held at Williamstown Town Hall and Laverton Community Hub.

The secondary school immunisation program commenced, visiting Laverton College. Forty-five DTP and 44 HPV vaccines were administered to Year 7 students and 60 meningococcal ACWY vaccines were administered to Year 10 students.

Early years and family services



Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

In February 2024, there were a total of 98 infants born to Hobsons Bay families. The highest numbers of infants born were in Altona. The Universal MCH Service completed 931 consultations/appointments.

The Enhanced MCH Service received 14 new referrals and provided 70 ongoing consultations for vulnerable families. Thirteen families received support packages from either St Kilda Mums or the Victorian Government Nursery Equipment Program for vulnerable families.

Parenting programs

During February 2024, the following parenting support programs were delivered.

- 27 First Time Parenting groups
- 6 Sleep Support groups
- 27 Sleep Support Outreach appointments
- 6 Breast Feeding Support sessions
- 2 Baby Makes Three sessions
- 4 Circle of Security sessions

Family/Social work support (MCH)

Council's MCH social worker responded to one new family violence referral. Six further consults were conducted in relation to family violence.

Preschool Field Officer

The Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program supports Kindergarten Educators to develop capacity and skills in delivering inclusive programs for all children, including those with additional needs. The PSFO program received 23 referrals in addition to providing 10 consultations to Educators in February.

Kindergarten registration

In February, 88 three-year-old and 25 four-year-old registrations for kindergarten were processed.

Occasional Care

Seventeen children (between 0-5 years) attended Council's Occasional Care program on Thursdays and Fridays, totalling 79 sessions.

Supported Playgroups

Twenty-seven smalltalk groups, 12 supported playgroups and four one-to-one sessions were provided to vulnerable families.

Services for older residents and residents with disabilities



Planned Activity Groups (PAG)

During February, 34 Planned Activity Group sessions were provided to 68 clients.

Community transport

Seniors transport provided 17 trips to 19 clients. Two social transport trips were provided to eight clients.

Aged assessment

The Assessment team undertook 77 assessments and 137 support plan reviews for services required by older residents.

Delivered meals

During February, 139 residents received a meal delivered to their home. In total 1,877 meals were provided to eligible residents.

Home maintenance

Twenty residents received a service through Council's Home Maintenance program.

Events, Arts and Culture



Williamstown Town Hall

Council resumed weekly immunisation sessions during February, presented the Citizenship Ceremony, while producer bookings included a Filipino community event drawing people from around Melbourne.

Old Laverton School

During February Coastal Steps Dance Studios and The Laverton Community and Education Centre commenced weekly use of the venue with El-Shaddai Samoan AOG Church continuing their Sunday bookings.

Altona Theatre

Altona City Theatre Company are in residence rehearsing its latest work for young people, "Hansel and Gretel" in the theatre this month. The show season will run between 1 and 23 March 2024.

Jubilee Fountain

The heritage fountain at the Williamstown Botanic Gardens in Williamstown underwent conservation treatment and repairs to replace piping and to improve the condition of the asset. The fountain has now been restored to full working capacity.



Image: Repaired Jubilee fountain

Airtime Flags: new exhibition

The Women of Hobsons Bay by Madison La Belle celebrates Hobsons Bay’s local environment and the diversity of local women. Airtime is a temporary public art project that showcases the creative talents of young people on a series of large flags at Queen Street Skate Park in Altona Meadows. The exhibition is on display until 29 April 2024. It is also promoted as part of International Women’s Day on 8 March 2024.

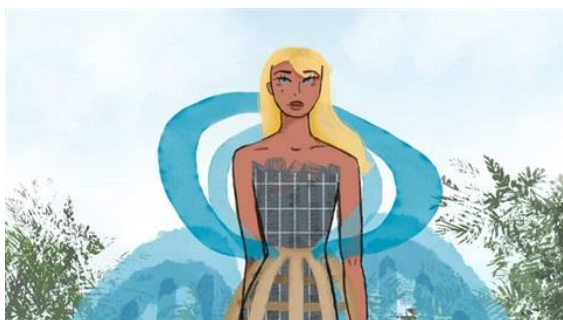


Image: By artist Madison La Belle

Midsumma Westside

Council delivers or supports local activities and events as part of the statewide Midsumma program. The program is delivered locally under the banner of Midsumma Westside, a partnership between Hobsons Bay, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley and Wyndham councils in a celebration of the LGBTIQ+ community in Melbourne’s west. The program during February included the following events.

Midsumma Pride March

Council and community members joined thousands of people in St Kilda for the Midsumma Pride March on 4 February as a positive and strong affirmation for LGBTIQ+ community.



Image: Council and community at the Midsumma Pride March

Queer Photo 2024

Presented by Midsumma and Photo2024, supported through Creative Victoria’s Go West program, Queer Photo is a first-of-its-kind collaboration, taking place across seven locations in Newport, Werribee and Footscray. It comprises artist commissions of large-scale outdoor artworks, gallery exhibitions and an interactive public performance program. In Hobsons Bay, featured artists or collectives include FAFSWAG, a Queer Polynesian collective from Aotearoa/NZ; Leilani Fuimoana representing the Maori and Pacific Island community; students from Greentree Acting School with Persian artist Sammaneh Pourshafighi and Ukrainian artist Vic Bakin.

Queer Photo runs until March 2024, at The Outside Gallery, Paine Reserve and The Substation in Newport.

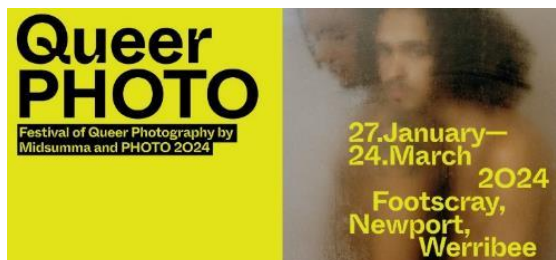


Image: The Outside Gallery Leilani Fuimoana promotional image



Image: The Outside Gallery Leilani Fuimoana promotional image

Laneway Gallery, Laverton

Finally *The Sun* by Olivia Mroz, is exhibited at Laneway Gallery, the outside billboards at Woods Street Arts Space, Laverton until 29 February, also as part of Midsumma Westside.



Image: Olivia Mroz exhibition promotional image

Woods Street Arts Space

Following a call out for programmers and producers interested in using Woods Street Arts Space in Laverton, the new semester program (February – July) is published and distributed. The program features exhibitions, art, theatre and dance classes, music performance and studio workshops.

New initiatives include:

- Project Pohewa: a family friendly Maori run space including weaving and poi-making
- Co-design your creative space: a workshop for children under 12 to craft, make, design and spend time at Woods Street Arts Space
- Creative Exchange Lab with a Creative producer: a free weekly drop in space for artists to receive tailored advice for their professional and creative development. Support includes project development, curating, grant writing and editing.

Woods Street Arts Space is operated by Council, activated by programs that enable local artists and producers to use the space at no cost, so long as there are creative outcomes for the community.



Image: New semester program: artist and producers Meet & Greet at Woods Street Arts Space Laverton

HobArchies by the Hobsons Bay Arts Society

The annual HobArchies portrait exhibition launched on 16 February 2024 in the foyer gallery of the Civic Centre in Altona. Visitors are encouraged to vote in the People’s Choice award for the favourite person or animal portrait. The artworks are on display until 27 March.



Image: Hobsons Bay Arts Society works at the HobArchies exhibition

Council’s summer events program: Live at the Rotunda

A live and local music program was curated by members of the Newport Fiddle & Folk Club, enabling music at the Rotunda at Commonwealth Reserve every Saturday during January, and at the Gazebo at Logan Reserve on dates in January and February. Genres include jazz, acoustic, gypsy and folk.

Council’s summer events program: Movies by the Bay

Council presented the final of its season of Movies by the Bay evenings, featuring street theatre and circus play space and Barbie, at Commonwealth Reserve in Williamstown on 2 February 2024. Approximately 950 people attended over the season, with no weather cancellations.



Image: Attendees at Commonwealth Reserve



Image: Barbie screening - Movies by the Bay at Commonwealth Reserve

Council’s summer events program: Lunar New Year

Council hosted two Lunar New Year events on 17 February 2024, the day starting with what is now an annual performance from local musician Qi Qi Music at the Rotunda at Commonwealth Reserve Williamstown with roving performers, followed by a full program of music, entertainment including food trucks at Homestead Run Reserve and Seabrook Community Centre in Seabrook. About 700 people attended the event, with 250 people going through the mask-making workshop inside the community centre. The Lunar New Year program was in response to a successful 2023 Pitch Your Project application from residents.



Image: Wei Qi playing the guzheng



Image: Baby Argo, Dragon in a basket by A Blanck Canvas.



Image: Madison Lu performing a fan dance



Image: Lion dance at Homestead Run Reserve



Image: Choi Sun, God of Prosperity, at the Rotunda



Image: Dragon dance at Homestead Run Reserve



Image: Parks tree giveaway and community consultation



Image: Mask-making workshop in Seabrook Community Centre



Image: Tai chi demonstration on Homestead Run Reserve



Image: Mask-making workshop in Seabrook Community Centre



Image: Wei Qi playing the guzheng and Madison Lu the fan dancer



Image: Dragon welcome sign at side of Homestead Run Reserve



Image: Emcee Wayne, Choi Sun and fan dancer Madison Lu



Image: Baby Argo, dragon in a basket, by A Blanck Canvas

Council's summer events program: Summer Sounds

Council hosted the final in its Summer Sounds series on 24 February 2024, featuring local artist Yusupha Ngum and the Affia Band and Tek Tek, at Commonwealth Reserve in Williamstown.

Laverton Festival

Hosted by the Laverton Traders Association and community partners, the Laverton Festival took place at Curlew Community Park in Laverton on 18 February 2024. The event was supported through Council's Make it Happen grants program.

Hobsons Bay Men's Shed 11th Anniversary Classic Car & Bike Show

The Hobsons Bay Men's Shed celebrated their 11th Anniversary Classic Car & Bike Show on 25 February 2024 at Apex Park. The event featured vintage, veteran, and classic cars as well as festival activities. The event was supported through Council's Make it Happen grants program.

Australian Lacross National Championship

Altona Lacrosse Club hosted the national championship event for the second time in Altona. Teams from WA, SA, VIC, NSW and QLD participated.

Circus Royale

Circus Royale started its bump in at Apex Park in Altona between 26 and 28 February 2024, for a season that runs between 1 and 17 March 2024.

Footscray Cycling Club Summer Criterium

The summer criterium took place around Drake Boulevard in Altona every Saturday during February.

Rainbow Beach Tennis Festival

Run by Rainbow Beach Tennis Victoria, this event was at Weaver Reserve and Altona Beach on Saturday 24 February 2024.

Western Metro Region Track and Field Carnival

Williamstown Little Athletics hosted this carnival for athletics aged 8-17, at the Newport Athletics Track in Newport on Saturday 10 February 2024.

Western Suburbs Triathlon Summer Series and Girls Secondary School Triathlon

The Western Suburbs Triathlon Club held their third summer triathlon along the Esplanade in Altona and Altona Beach on 18 February 2024. It held the Girls' Secondary School closed road triathlon event on 25 February 2024.

Filming

Seven filming applications were received in February 2024, which included two low impact. Four filming permits were issued during this period.

Markets

A number of markets take place on public land across the city. In February, monthly markets were held including the Regional Farmers Market in Altona Meadows and Williamstown, the Spotswood Slow Food Market, the Altona Lions Club Cherry Lake Market and the Williamstown Craft Market.

Event and Festivals Plan community consultation

Council continued to undertake community consultation to inform its next events and festivals plan at various sites around the city during February 2024.

Hobsons Bay Visitor Information Centre

Hobsons Bay Visitor Information Centre welcomed 1,952 visitors to the service during February 2024. Forty-seven per cent were from Victoria, 27 per cent were international, nine per cent were from interstate and 27 per cent from within Hobsons Bay.

An information session was held for new potential volunteers and two volunteers have started their training. A volunteer tour and meeting were held at Truganina Explosives Reserve on 26 February 2024.

Community Development



2024 Make it Happen Grants

The Make it Happen Grants first round closed for assessment with 47 applications received, requesting just under \$400,000.

The program is open for applications during March and April 2024.



Image: Make it Happen Grants, promotional material

Planning workshops for grant applicants

Applicant support sessions were held in February including an information session, grant writing and project plan and design workshops, 22 community members attended.

External grant program support

Council officers encourage local groups to apply to funding sources beyond Council's own program, such as those offered locally via Community Bank grants, Hobsons Bay Community Fund and Westgate Neighbourhood Fund grants.

Council officers attended the Westgate Neighbourhood Fund briefing to gain a greater understanding of the process and guidelines should local groups, clubs and agencies be preparing an application.

Hobsons Bay Inter-Agency Network meeting

The first Hobson Bay Inter-Agency Network meeting for 2024 took place on 27 February 2024 at Altona Civic Centre. This was well attended by 56 local service providers coming together to exchange information about trends and activities.

Homestead pop up coffee cart

After a short break over Christmas, coffee gatherings at Homestead Run in Seabrook have recommenced with the pop up coffee cart appearing monthly again from February until June 2024. The activity is supported through a successful 2023 Pitch Your Project proposal.



Image: Homestead Run Coffee Cart at Seabrook

Brooklyn Community Hall

Early years presence in Brooklyn

In response to community need, Maternal Child Health, immunisation and playgroups commenced regular programs at Brooklyn Community Hall in February 2024 with an overwhelming response, making Tuesdays at the hall a buzzing, community environment.



Image: Brooklyn Community Hall programs

Brooklyn Community Hall committee

Brooklyn Community Hall's committee of management has become an incorporated association and held its first meeting in February 2024. Council will be supporting the committee during 2024 to activate the hall and further develop policies and procedures to ensure sustainable and good practice into the future.

Vibrant Brooklyn Leadership program

Participants met fortnightly during February 2024, working on the planning and implementation of their first event to be held 1 March 2024, being Brooklyn Movie Night. Open to the Brooklyn community, the event is an opportunity for the leadership participants to engage with the local community and talk all things 'Brooklyn'.

Crisis and Emergency Relief Network

The crisis relief services operating across Hobsons Bay met during February to discuss service demands, current challenges and needs within the community. The group provided overviews of their current service models and funding changes impacting their services and clients.

Reconciliation Action Planning

Council endorsed the development of the new Hobsons Bay Reconciliation Action Plan in February, with an engagement plan underway.

Council officer attended the Reconciliation Employment webinar offered by Reconciliation Victoria, to be across best practice cultural safe workplace practices for staff.

The key stakeholders managing the Deadly Western Connections (DWC) website, met to look at funding and operational needs for the program. DWC is a website and information portal to ensure local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island residents across Melbourne's west are aware of services, events, employment opportunities and programs they may wish to engage in or be eligible for.

Strategy, Economy and Sustainability

Economic development



Business Networking

The February Business Networking morning was held at Hobsons Bay Farm in Altona on 6 February 2024. Business representatives from across Hobsons Bay attended for the opportunity to promote their business and network with others.



Image: Business Networking morning, Hobsons Bay Farm, Altona

Business workshop

Business owners had the opportunity to attend this Business Victoria workshop, aimed at those who are looking to start, or have a new small business. This workshop left participants armed with practical tools and templates, expert tips and advice, and a head start on where to access the right support in the future. The workshop was held in person on 20 February 2024.

Channel 9 Postcards

On 18 February 2024, Channel 9's Postcards aired a segment highlighting Hobsons Bay. Livinia Nixon hosted with Mandy and Sammi from Mamma Knows West presenting the Capture Hobsons Bay Photography Tour as the perfect way to spend a day in Hobsons Bay.

Commonwealth Reserve/Nelson Place, The Williamstown Botanic Gardens, Truganina Coastal Park and Newport Lakes were featured in the segment with the Experience Hobsons Bay Tourism Bus mentioned as a great way to get to all of the locations.



Image: Behind the scenes filming for Postcards



Image: Filming for Channel 9's Postcards

Environmental Sustainability



Waste education via street furniture

Strategic waste education messages were installed on select bus stops across Hobsons Bay in February as part of the 'Small Acts, Big Impact' waste education campaign being funded by Sustainability Victoria.

The street furniture panels are estimated to reach almost 80,000 people through the lifetime of the campaign activity, which will run until 21 April 2024.



Image: Waste education on bus shelter outside Altona Gate Shopping Centre

Reusables Rebate

Over 60 residents applied for Council's 'Reusables Rebate' in February 2024. The rebate offers residents up to \$65 cash back when they purchase reusable nappy, sanitary and/or incontinence products.

This initiative is the result of a successful 2023-24 community Pitch Your Project.

Extra green waste collection services for storm-affected residents

Council quickly mobilised to scale up its green waste collection service to accommodate residents cleaning up garden debris after the windy storm on 13 February 2024.

In addition to promoting our free hard waste collection service, Council offered an extra free green waste collection for storm-affected residents up until 15 March 2024.



Social & Strategic Planning

Preliminary engagement: updating Council's Alcohol Harm Prevention Policy

In February, Council concluded preliminary engagement to inform the update of its Alcohol Harm Prevention Policy. Activities commenced on 28 November 2023 and continued until 2 February 2024. Preliminary feedback was obtained via a community survey that was published on the Participate Hobsons Bay website. A total of 41 survey responses were received. Almost half of the respondents indicated they had been affected by antisocial behaviour arising from other people's use of alcohol. Feedback was also collected from sporting clubs and community organisations about the impact of harm from alcohol. All feedback will be reviewed to develop the Draft Alcohol Harm Prevention Policy. It is anticipated that the draft policy will be available for further public consultation in mid-2024.



Emissions reduction

Seaweed foraging walk on Altona Beach

Residents enjoyed a wander along Altona Beach with seaweed foraging expert Chris Rockley on 25 February 2024. Participants looked for seasonal seaweeds, learn where they grow and their ecological role in the bay, plus which ones are edible and how to use seaweed in the garden.

This was a free event hosted by Council's *My Smart Garden* program as part of a successful 2023-24 community Pitch Your Project.

Empowering residents to climate-proof their homes

Council delivered a free online webinar in partnership with the Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action for Hobsons Bay Residents on 15 February 2024. Attendees received practical advice on how to build, renovate and/or retrofit their home in the face of extreme weather. A recording of the webinar will be made available on our website.

My Smart Garden program featured in Gardening Australia Magazine

Council's award-winning *My Smart Garden* program was featured in the February 2024 issue of the ABC's *Gardening Australia* Magazine.

The feature highlights some of the residents who've reaped the rewards of Council's highly esteemed gardening program, which is designed to help connect, support and sustain residents and the environment.

Soil contamination webinar with EPA's Chief Environmental Scientist

On 8 February 2024, EPA Victoria's Chief Environmental Scientist and soil contamination specialist, Professor Mark Patrick Taylor, hosted an online webinar covering soil contamination in home food gardens.

Ninety-two residents attended the free webinar which was delivered as part of Council's *My Smart Garden* program.



Image: My Smart Garden in Gardening Australia Magazine

Planning, Building and Health Update

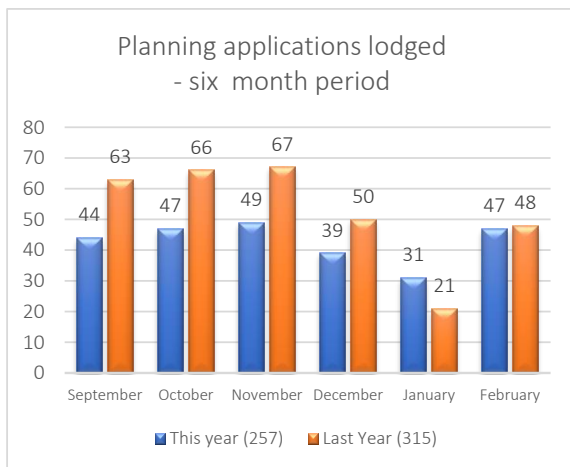
Planning



Planning applications received

Council received 47 planning permit applications during February 2024.

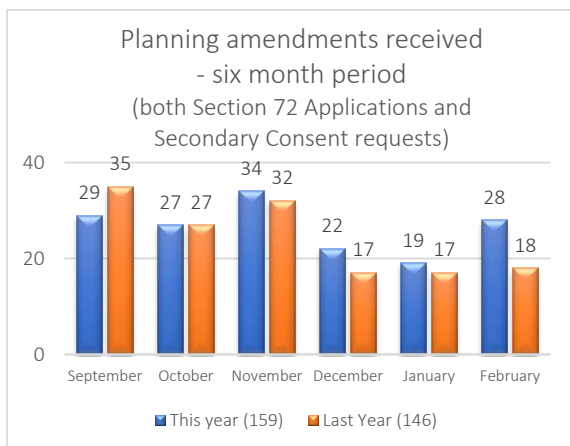
For the six-month period from September 2023 to February 2024, 257 planning permit applications were received, an 18 per cent decrease from the same period last year.



Amended permit applications lodged

Council received 28 planning permit amendment applications during February 2024.

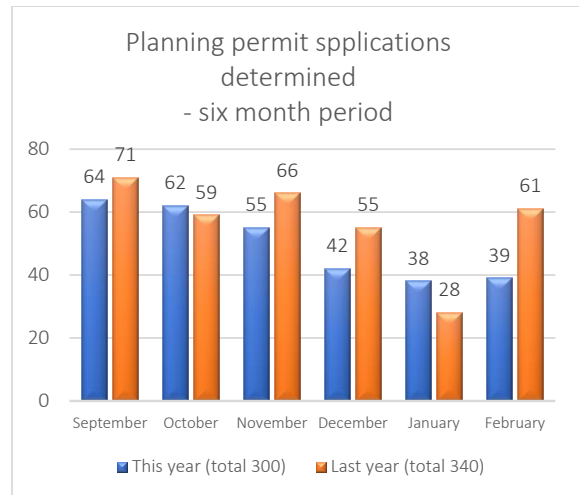
For the six-month period from September 2023 to February 2024, 159 planning permit amendment applications were received, a nine per cent increase from the same period last year.



Planning applications determined

Council completed 39 planning permit applications during February 2024.

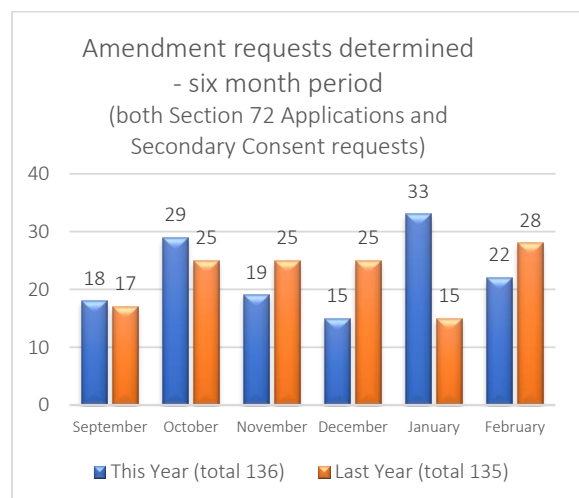
For the six-month period from September 2023 to February 2024, 300 planning permit applications were completed, a 12 per cent decrease from the same period last year.



Planning amendment requests determined

Council completed 22 planning amendment applications during February 2024.

For the six-month period from September 2023 to February 2024, 136 planning amendment applications were determined, a one per cent increase from the same period last year.



VCAT

The Town Planning Department received the following appeal decisions:

Address: 481 Melbourne Road, Newport
Proposal: To construct two or more dwellings on a lot under clause 32.08-6. To demolish or remove a building or construct a building or construct or carry out works under clause 43.01-1.
Delegate Decision: Permit Refusal
DPC Decision: N/A
VCAT Decision: Permit Approved
Made by consent order? No

Address: 62-64 Hook Street, Altona Meadows
Proposal: Construction of four dwellings on a lot under clause 32.09-7
Delegate Decision: Permit Refused
DPC Decision: N/A
VCAT Decision: Permit Approved (Varied)
Made by consent order? No

Delegated Planning Committee (DPC)

There were no applications considered at the Delegated Planning Committee in February 2024.

Planning applications of interest

There are no new applications of interest to report this month.

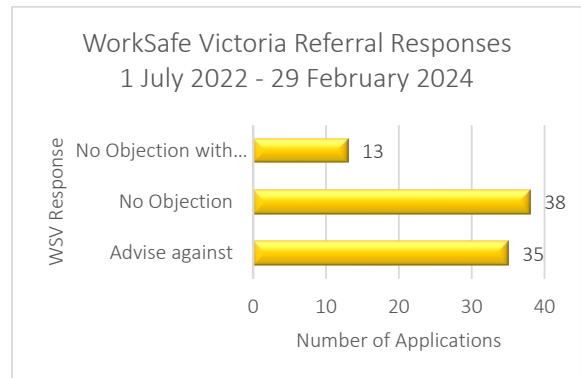
Major Hazard Facilities

There are nine Major Hazard Facilities (MHF) in Hobsons Bay. WorkSafe Victoria (WSV) are the authority that provides advice to Council on planning applications for use and development in proximity to an MHF.

Council developed and adopted the Interim Management of Land Use Planning Around Major Hazard Facilities Guidelines (the Guidelines) to guide planning decisions. The Guidelines outline the Inner and Outer Advisory Areas around MHFs to determine whether an application should be referred to WSV.

Since 1 July 2022, Council’s Statutory Planning team have referred 86 planning permit applications to WSV. WSV have provided the following responses:

- Opposed 35 applications
- Support 13 applications (subject to conditions)



An analysis of these responses has confirmed that WSV has requested either the removal of any use that proposes a significant attraction of people or have requested placing significant limits on the number of people that can work at or visit these sites.

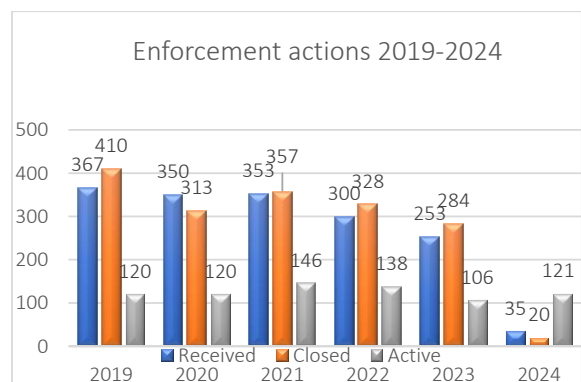
Of the 86 Applications referred to WSV, 36 involve warehouses or other low-intensity industrial uses. There is a very small population expectation at these properties.

Whilst it appears that WSV in raw statistics supports development, the analysis of the response has confirmed that WSV generally oppose any use which seeks to significantly increase population growth and population attracting uses around MHF’s.

The expansion of the Inner and Outer Advisory Areas would favour MHF operations.

Active and significant enforcement matters

Council received 25 planning enforcement issues in February 2024.



Building



Permits and consents

- Council's Municipal Building Surveyor issued 0 building permits
- 68 building permits were issued by private building surveyors
- 14 report and consent dispensation requests were determined

Inspections and enforcement

- 5 building notices/orders were issued
- 11 notices/orders were resolved/completed/cancelled
- 154 inspections occurred

Building information requests

Council processed 218 requests for information and 50 general enquiry applications during February 2024

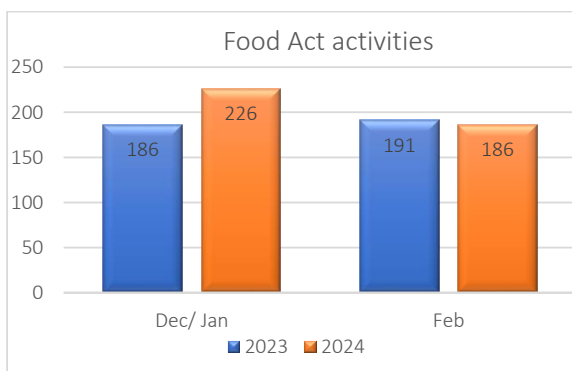
Health



Food Act activities

The following activities were recorded in February 2024, with the main activities being:

- 74 mandatory food assessments and inspections (Class one = 8, Class two = 37, Class three = 29)
- 6 new food premises registration inspections
- 12 plans assessments
- 8 progress inspections
- 18 site visits



Client managed premises

Council has 21 client managed premises.

Food sampling

Thirty-nine samples were taken from Class two premises during February 2024.

Food recalls

Three food recalls were received during February 2024 due to undeclared allergens (milk and gluten) and foreign matter contamination.

Outbreaks

One Single Case investigation was conducted concerning Salmonella in a nursing home during February 2024.

FoodTrader

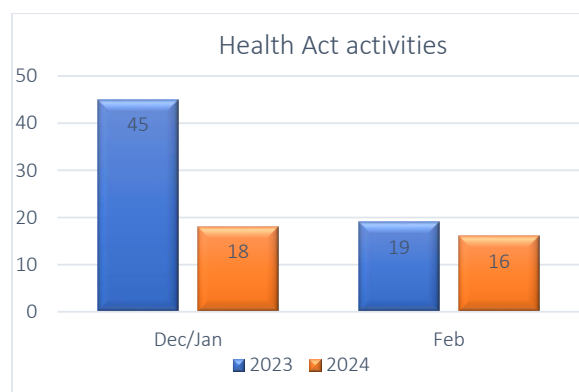
The following mobile and temporary food activities were recorded in February 2024.

- 95 Statements of Trade lodged with Council
- 1 new registration issued

Public Health and Wellbeing Act activities

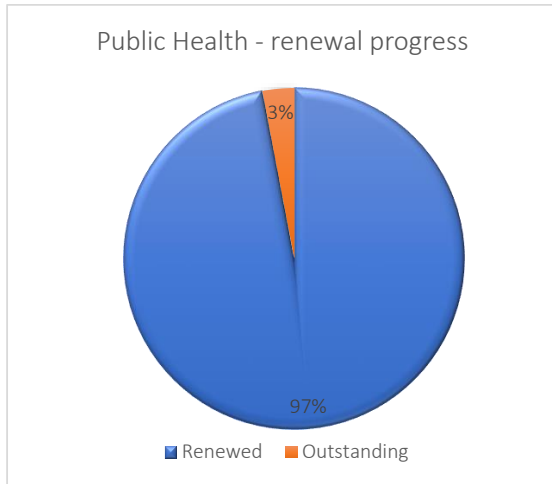
The following activities were recorded during February 2024.

- 5 mandatory public health inspections
- 4 new premises registration inspections
- 1 progress inspection
- 6 site visits



Public Health Act renewals

Public Health premises operate from 1 January to 31 December each year. All premises were notified to renew and pay their Food Act registration on 21 November 2023. All fees were due 31 December 2023. As of 29 February 2024, 97 per cent of premises have renewed their registration.



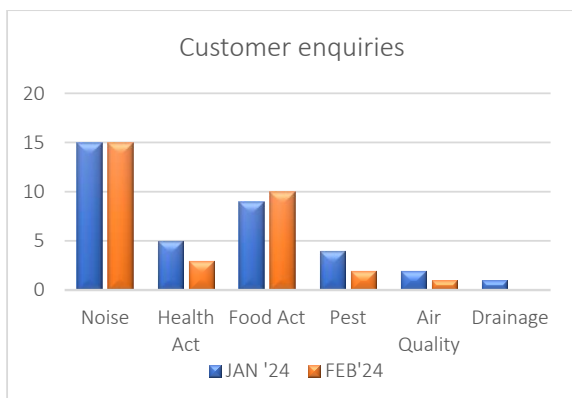
Tobacco Act activities

During February 2024, eight tobacco education visits were conducted.

Customer enquiries

Both CHARM and the CRM were used to obtain this month's figures. During February 2024, 31 customer requests were received, relating to:

- Noise 15
- Health Act 3
- Food Act 10
- Pest control 2
- Air quality 1
- Drainage 0



Governance

Governance



Council Meeting Timetable

Council Meeting was held on 13 February 2024.

Councillor Delegates to Council and Community Committees

- Cr Peter Hemphill attended the meeting of the Hobsons Bay Community Fund on 7 February 2024
- Cr Jonathon Marsden attended the meeting of the Association of Bayside Municipalities on 9 February 2024
- Cr Peter Hemphill attended the meeting of the Substation Board on 27 February 2024
- Cr Matt Tyler and Cr Jonathon Marsden attended the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee on 28 February 2024

Citizenship Ceremony

Citizenship Ceremony for 120 conferees was held at the Williamstown Town Hall on 23 February 2024. The Ceremony was attended by Mayor Cr Matt Tyler, Cr Diana Grima, Cr Jonathon Marsden, The Hon. Mathew Hilakari and Sergeant Anthony Quirke.

Record of Meetings attended by Councillors

Councillors attended the following meetings held between 1 February to 29 February 2024:

- Cr Matt Tyler, Cr Antoinette Briffa, Cr Diana Grima and Cr Peter Hemphill were in attendance at the 13 February 2024 Council Meeting. No conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Documents for Sealing

There were no documents that required sealing during the period.

Local Laws

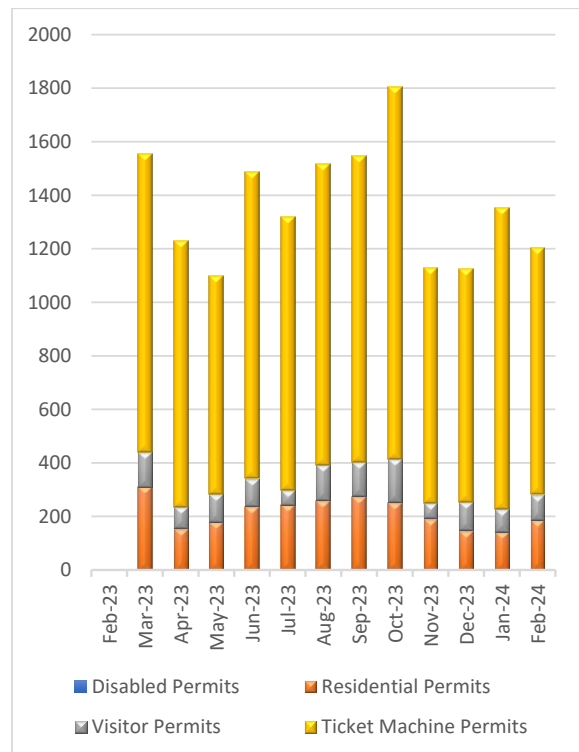


Permits

- issued 0 disabled parking permits
- issued 186 residential permits
- issued 95 visitor permits
- issued 924 ticket machine permits
- logged 128 CHARM assignments
- impounded 1 derelict/abandoned vehicles
- issued 23 local law infringement

Parking

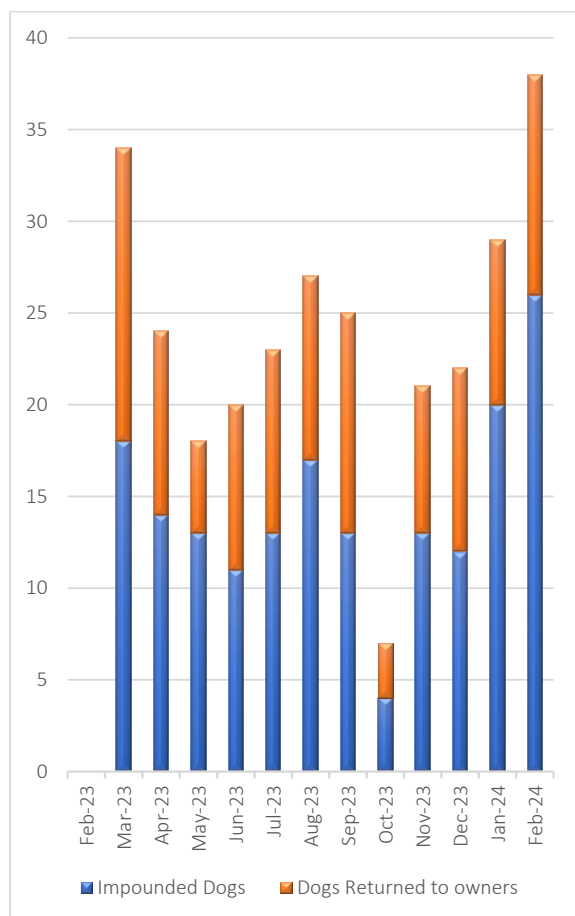
- 177 logged CHARM assignments
- issued 1,109 parking infringements
- issued 67 warnings
- percentage of warnings issued were 6 per cent



Above: The graph above illustrates the number of permits issued for February 2024

Animal management

- logged 78 CHARM assignments
- 14,307 animals registered
- 12 impounded animals at Lost Dogs Home (as at 30 January 2024)
 - dogs – 11 dogs impounded, 7 released
 - cats – 1 impounded, 0 released
- 12 animals returned to their owners by Council officers



Above: The graph above reflects the number of dogs impounded and the number of dogs returned home by Council Rangers

Communications and Engagement




Communications

Corporate social media

February 2024

Council manages corporate social media accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Social media is measured as below:

- Reactions – like, love, angry, haha, wow, sad

- Impressions – number of times our content is displayed in someone’s newsfeed
- Reach – total number of people who saw that content
- Engagement – number of times someone engaged with our content through clicks, reactions, shares, comments

Total performance summary across all corporate social media accounts

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

<u>Impressions</u> 440,446 ↘ 16.7%	<u>Engagements</u> 17,410 ↘ 49.1%	<u>Post Link Clicks</u> 2,582 ↘ 51.9%
<u>Engagement Rate (per Impression)</u> 4% ↘ 38.9%		

Follower growth across all corporate social media accounts

Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Total Audience	37,773	↗ 0.5%
Total Net Audience Growth	191	↘ 35.9%
<u>Facebook Net Follower Growth</u>	49	↘ 66.7%
<u>Instagram Net Follower Growth</u>	74	↗ 4.2%
<u>LinkedIn Net Follower Growth</u>	68	↘ 15%

Total followers per social media accounts

Facebook

Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers	21,612	↑ 0.2%
Net Follower Growth	49	↓ 66.7%
Fans	19,098	↑ 0.3%
Net Page Likes	60	↓ 60.3%
Organic Page Likes	75	↓ 57.1%
Paid Page Likes	0	→ 0%
Page Unlikes	15	↓ 37.5%

Instagram

Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers	8,018	↑ 0.9%
Net Follower Growth	74	↑ 4.2%
Followers Gained	102	↓ 8.1%
Followers Lost	28	↓ 30%

LinkedIn

Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers	8,143	↑ 0.8%
Net Follower Growth	68	↓ 15%
Organic Followers Gained	69	↓ 13.8%
Paid Followers Gained	0	→ 0%
Followers Lost	1	↑ —

Performance per social media account

Facebook

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

Organic and Paid

<u>Impressions</u> 363,420 ↓ 21.9%	<u>Engagements</u> 15,748 ↓ 51.3%	<u>Post Link Clicks</u> 2,440 ↓ 52.9%
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Engagement Rate (per Impression)

4.3% ↓ 37.6%

Instagram

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

Organic and Paid ▼

<u>Impressions</u> 74,312 ↗ 21.6%	<u>Organic Engagements</u> 1,479 ↘ 10%	<u>Profile Actions</u> 141 ↘ 34.4%
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Engagement Rate (per Impression)

2% ↘ 26%

Instagram stories

Story Metrics	Totals	% Change
<u>Published Stories</u>	6	↘ 25%
<u>Story Replies</u>	5	↗ 66.7%
<u>Story Taps Back</u>	77	↘ 50.6%
<u>Story Taps Forward</u>	2,972	↘ 36.8%
<u>Story Exits</u>	773	↘ 22.8%
<u>Story Impressions</u>	4,913	↘ 32.1%
<u>Average Reach per Story</u>	814.83	↘ 9.3%

LinkedIn

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.


<u>Impressions</u> 2,714 ↗ 43.9%	<u>Engagements</u> 183 ↘ 11.6%	<u>Post Clicks (All)</u> 142 ↘ 23.7%
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Engagement Rate (per Impression)


6.7% ↘ 38.6%

Highest engagement posts for 1 to 29 February 2024

Facebook

 **Hobsons Bay City Council**
Tue 2/27/2024 7:15 pm PST

 Awesome news alert - Cherry Lake is healthy again! We've heard from Melbourne Water that the red colouring on the surfac...




Total Engagements	1,923
Reactions	345
Comments	51
Shares	7
Post Link Clicks	—
Other Post Clicks	1,520

 **Hobsons Bay City Council**
Thu 2/15/2024 1:01 pm PST


 Tune into Postcards on Channel 9 this Sunday 18 February @ 5.30pm to watch our very own Mamma Knows West take Livinia...



Total Engagements	1,335
Reactions	216
Comments	14
Shares	13
Post Link Clicks	132
Other Post Clicks	960


 **Hobsons Bay City Council**
Mon 2/12/2024 9:42 pm PST


It's been a hot and stormy day with high winds causing branches to fall. Our team is out helping to make affected areas safe. If...




Total Engagements	1,266
Reactions	80
Comments	54
Shares	6
Post Link Clicks	—
Other Post Clicks	1,126

Instagram

 **hobsonsbaycc**
Tue 2/27/2024 7:15 pm PST

 Awesome news alert - Cherry Lake is healthy again! We've heard from Melbourne Water that the red colouring on the surfac...




Total Engagements	273
Likes	265
Comments	5
Shares	—
Saves	3


 **hobsonsbaycc**
Thu 2/15/2024 1:01 pm PST


 Tune into Postcards on Channel 9 this Sunday 18 February @ 5.30pm to watch our very own Mamma Knows West take Livinia...



Total Engagements	205
Likes	155
Comments	2
Shares	43
Saves	5

 **hobsonsbaycc**
Wed 2/7/2024 3:15 pm PST

 Not sure what the blue matting is at our beaches? It's our beach matting that makes it easier for people using wheelchairs...



Total Engagements	145
Likes	131
Comments	2
Shares	10
Saves	2

LinkedIn

Hobsons Bay City Council

Mon 2/5/2024 10:23 pm UTC

🌈 We were proud to take part in the Midsumma Pride March in St Kilda on Sunday. Mayor Matt Tyler and Council staff joined representatives from Western Bulldogs Community...



Total Engagements **142**

Reactions 38

Comments 0

Shares 1

Post Clicks (All) 103

Website top pages viewed

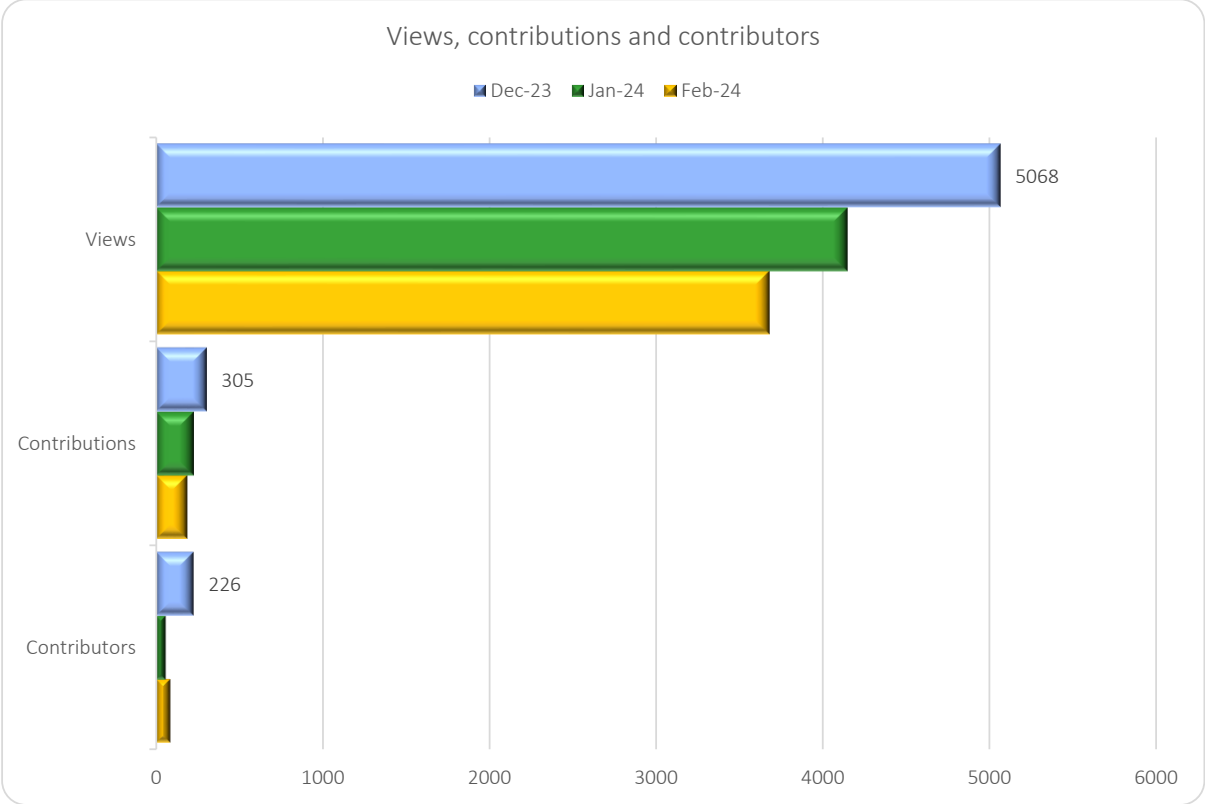
Page path and screen class	↓ Views	Users	Views per user	Average engagement time
	160,234 <small>100% of total</small>	47,142 <small>100% of total</small>	3.40 <small>Avg 0%</small>	59s <small>Avg 0%</small>
1 /Home	23,264	13,986	1.66	24s
2 /Libraries	10,130	4,396	2.30	25s
3 /Website-Information/Search-Results	6,858	3,310	2.07	34s
4 /Community/Whats-On	3,537	964	3.67	1m 21s
5 /Services/Planning-Building/Find-a-planning-application-in-Greenlight	3,211	1,674	1.92	22s
6 /Services/Waste-Recycling/Hard-waste	2,984	1,664	1.79	52s
7 /Council/Work-Opportunities	2,869	1,816	1.58	8s
8 /Services/Waste-Recycling	2,471	1,606	1.54	20s
9 /Services/Payments-Permits/Parking-permits-register-renew-and-cancel	2,337	1,430	1.63	46s
10 /Services/Payments-Permits/Infringements	2,215	1,382	1.60	15s

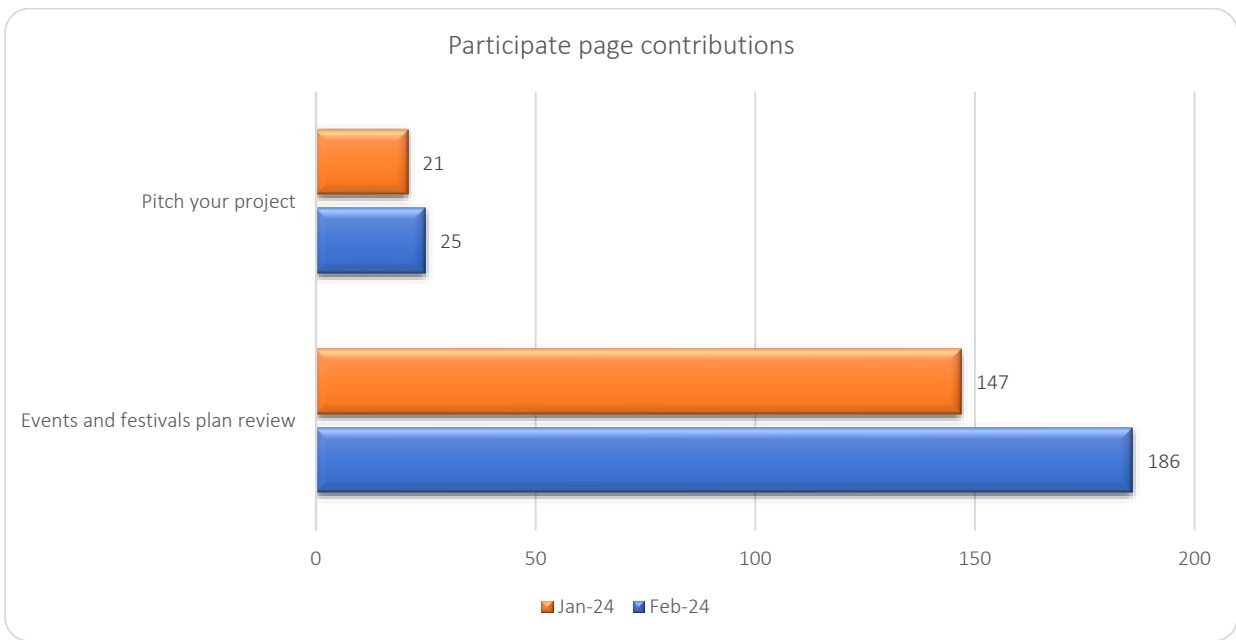
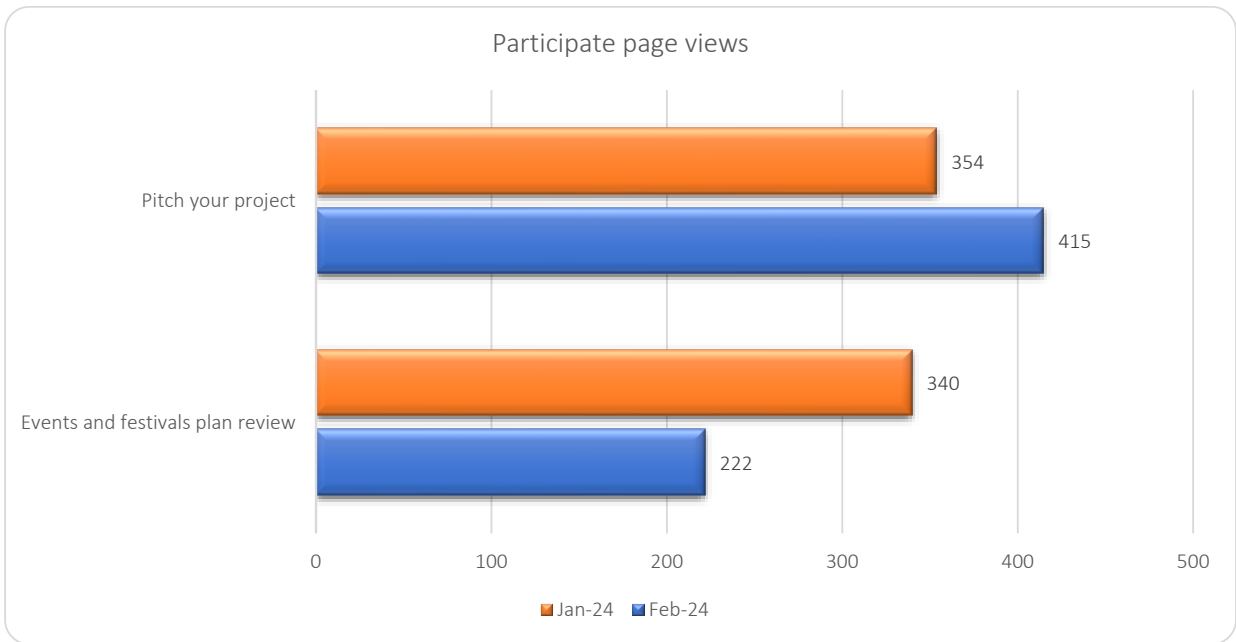
Engagement





Participate Hobsons Bay statistics

Participate Hobsons Bay, the online community engagement website participate.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au received the below highlights across February 2024.





Current consultations – February 2024

<p>Events and Festivals Plan Review</p> 	<p>Council is currently reviewing its Events and Festivals Plan. From neighbourhood initiatives to major events, Hobsons Bay City Council supports a vibrant annual program of events and festivals across our community spaces.</p> <p>The Hobsons Bay Events and Festivals Strategy provides a framework for the planning and delivery of events and festivals in the city, helping to ensure that the impacts, resources, and benefits are balanced across themes and areas of special interest, across locations and throughout the calendar year.</p> <p>Community consultation is from Dec 2023 to 24 March 2024</p> <p>Share your thoughts here</p>
<p>Pitch your Project</p> 	<p>Do you have a great idea for Council to deliver?</p> <p>We're looking for projects that will make Hobsons Bay an even more vibrant, welcoming and exciting place to live, work, study and visit. Projects that deliver something special to support people in our community.</p> <p>Capital work projects will not be considered.</p> <p>Each idea must fall within the \$50,000 idea cap. The selected projects will be delivered by the team at Hobsons Bay City Council in the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>Community consultation was from 1 Dec 2023 to – 29 February 2024</p> <p>Pitch your project here - the submissions period has ended. Assessments will take place over the next two weeks.</p>

Advocacy



Champion Road Level Crossing removal (LXRP)

Council continued to advocate on behalf of the community to urge the State Government to reconsider the proposed closure of Champion Road as part of level crossing removal works.

In December, Council wrote to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Danny Pearson MP seeking an urgent meeting to discuss alternatives to closing the road.

Council has now also written to the State Premier, Jacinta Allan and the Treasurer, Tim Pallas, seeking an urgent meeting to discuss possible alternatives to closing the road.

We look forward to meeting with representatives from the State Government as soon as possible to raise the community's concerns. We also continue to work closely with State Member for Williamstown, Melissa Horne on this issue.

Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre

As part of our advocacy efforts to the Federal Government for financial investment in the Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre, Council has applied to the Federal Government's Urban Rivers and Catchment grant program for funding for the Centre. We will know if our application is successful in mid 2024.

Council is also updating our advocacy strategy and advocacy materials to highlight Council's construction of the first stage of the Centre due to commence in the coming months. We continue to work closely with the Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Committee's advocacy efforts. We believe the construction of the first stage will excite and inspire financial investment from the state and federal governments.

Upgrade to Altona-Racecourse Road

Council is seeking funding from the Federal Government's Bridges Renewal grants program for an upgrade to the culvert over Kororoit Creek on Altona-Racecourse Road, Altona.

This section of the road is continually inundated after storm weather events.

Altona-Racecourse Road is a critical local road connecting the communities of Altona, Seaholme and Williamstown, and we are hoping the Federal Government will work with Council on this important road upgrade.

Kororoit Creek Trail – Stage 4 & 5

Council is continuing its advocacy to the state government for funding to complete the Kororoit Creek Trail. Council is currently preparing a program of advocacy activities to inform the community and seek funding for this wonderful community project.

Western Aquatic and Early Years Centre

Council is also continuing its advocacy to the federal government for investment in the Centre this year ahead of a possible Federal Election in late 2024/early 2025. We are preparing a program of advocacy activities and meetings with Federal Government representatives to occur over the coming months.

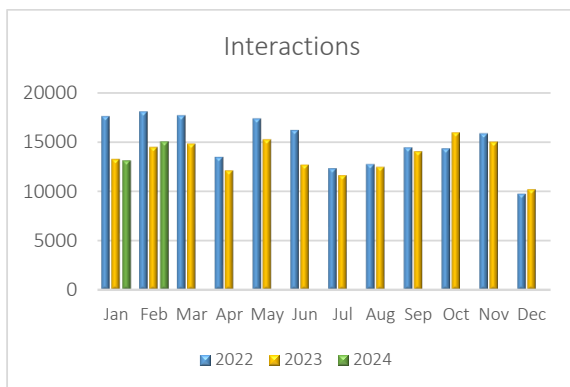
Our Performance

Customer Service



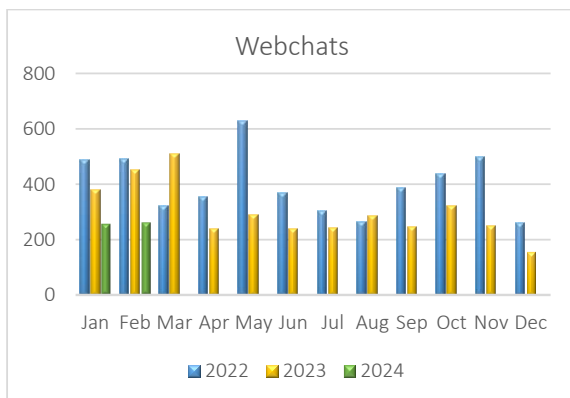
Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to improving our performance and better responding to our community needs.

One way in which we do this is to capture how our community approaches us to ensure we can make that process the best it can be to assist our customers with access to the information needed.



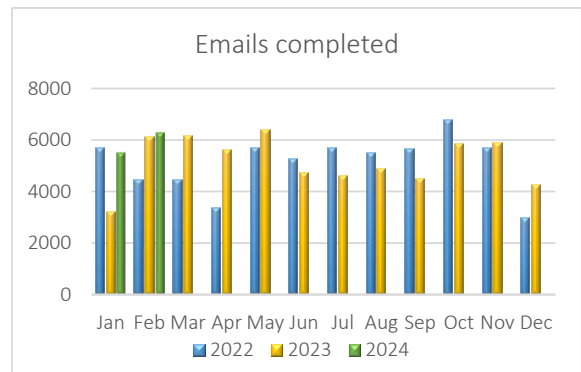
Top enquiries coming from incoming calls are for the following service areas:

- Local Laws (755)
- Waste (626)
- Assets (458)
- Town Planning (368)
- City Works & Amenities (286)
- Community care (266)
- Animals (242)
- Rates (241)



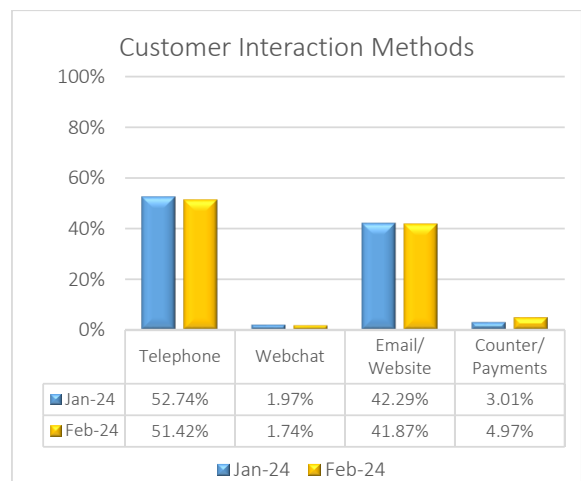
Top reasons our customers contacted Council via Web Chat related to the following service areas:

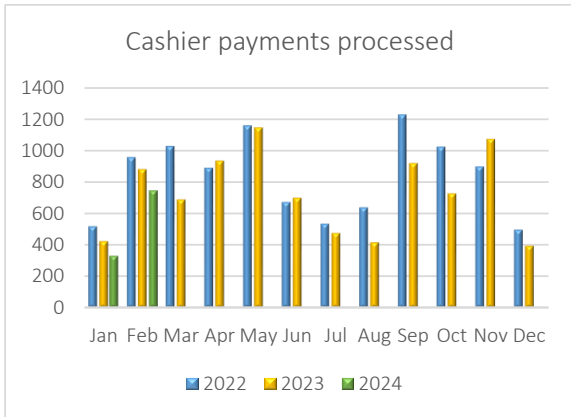
- Waste (45)
- Rates (29)
- City Works & Amenities (28)
- Local Laws (28)
- Animals (22)
- Assets (19)
- Town Planning (13)
- Building (9)



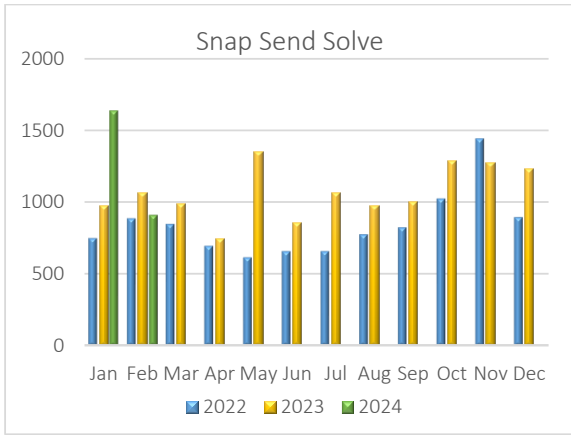
Top enquiries coming from emails are for the following service areas:

- City Works & Amenities (1,047)
- Local Laws (438)
- Waste (415)
- Rates (318)
- Cashier inbox (197)
- Animals (93)
- Facilities (77)
- Town Planning (51)

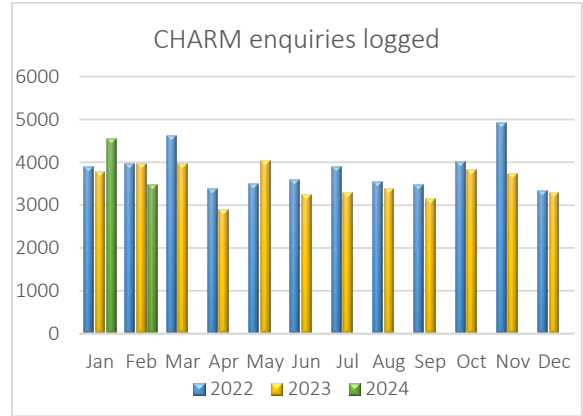




Snap Send Solve is a free app for iPhone or Android devices that allows visitors and residents of Hobsons Bay to easily report issues to Council by capturing a photo of an issue and having this information sent directly to Council for review.

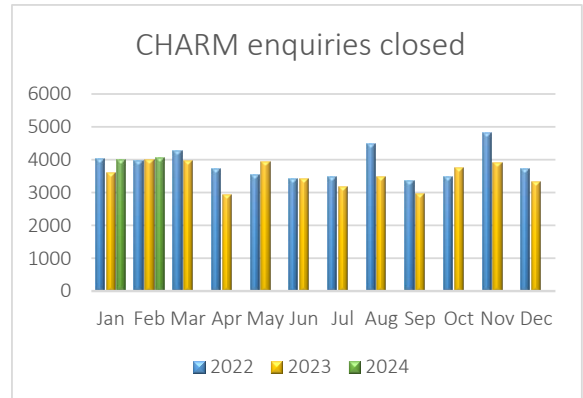


Council's Customer Help and Resolution Management (CHARM) system is used to record customer requests, which are primarily received via phone, Snap Send Solve and email.



Top CHARM requests logged related to the following service areas:

- Street trees (615)
- Council building maintenance (394)
- Dumped rubbish (242)
- Garbage (233)
- Parking (205)
- General waste (149)
- Local Laws (131)



Top CHARM requests closed related to the following service areas:

- Street trees (547)
- Council building maintenance (361)
- Dumped rubbish (306)
- Parking (267)
- Garbage (267)
- Local Laws (250)

Financial Management

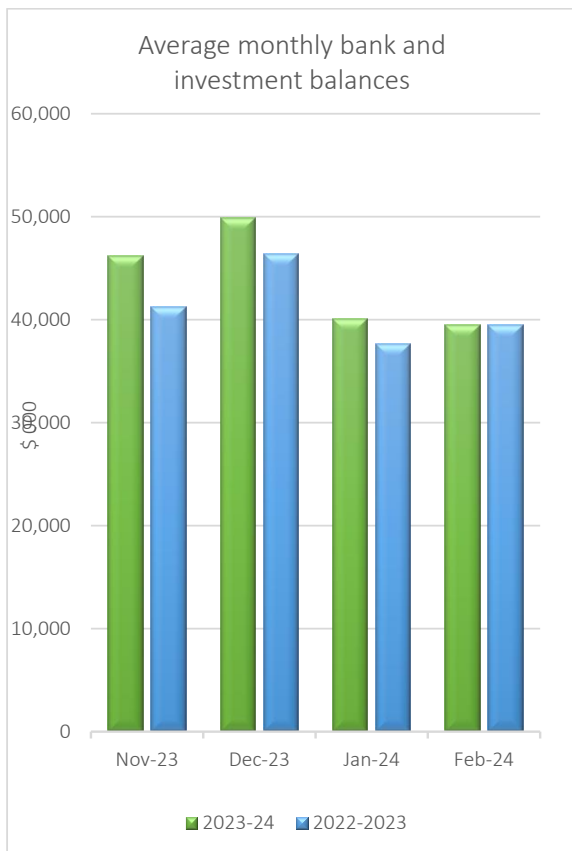


Financial statistics

The average balance of cash and investments during February 2024 was \$39.521 million. This compares to the average balance of \$40.076 million in January 2024 and an average balance of \$49.935 million in December 2023.

The closing balance of cash and investments at the end of February 2024 was \$47.887 million. Compared to \$34.019 million at the end of January 2024 and \$45.087 million at the end of December 2023.

Council investments at the end of February 2024 included cash and at call investments of \$8.887 million and term deposits of \$39.000 million, with an average date to maturity of 124 days and an average interest rate of 4.96 per cent.



The balance of outstanding debtors for February 2024 was \$1.935 million compared to an average balance of \$2.465 million over the last twelve months.

The value of receivables invoices issued in February 2024 was \$1.079 million compared to \$1,459 million in January 2024.

Amounts outstanding over 90 days at the end of February 2024 total \$723,000 representing 37.3 per cent of total debts.

The most significant debtor groups over 90 days are Property and the Westgate Tunnel Project.

The provision for doubtful debts at the end of February 2024 is \$784,000 or 40.4 per cent of total debts.



Hardship Policy

Any person who currently requires financial assistance can apply on-line and may be invited to enter into an interest free repayment plan and /or assessed for a waiver of rates if they provide evidence for consideration and meet the criteria as set out in Council's hardship policy.

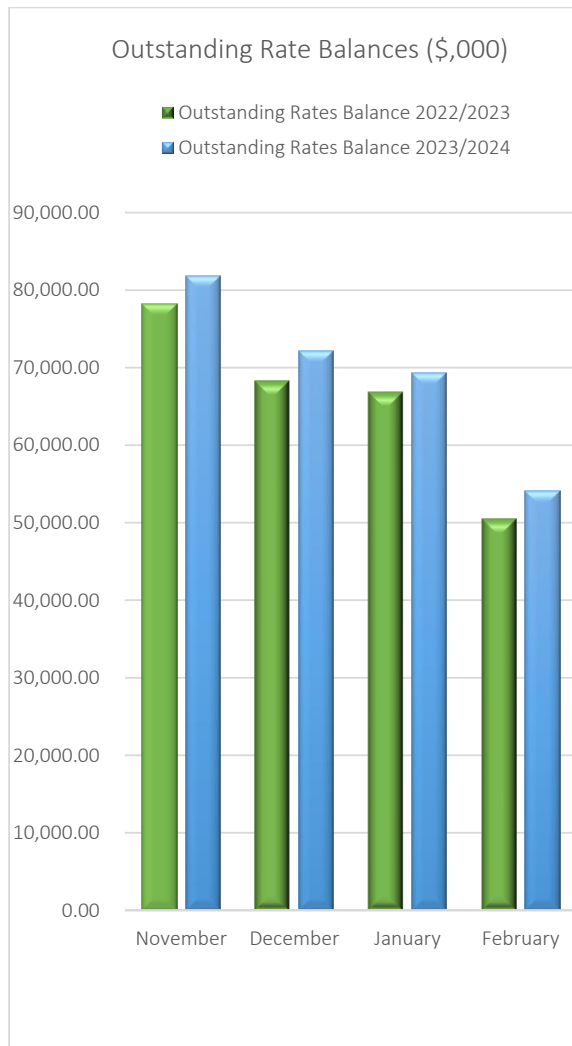
As of 29 February 2024, there is a total of 396 ratepayers, with arrears totaling \$1.77 million, listed on the Council's interest free repayment register. Council has waived over \$265,000 in interest charges since the start of the 2023/24 financial year. Council continued to receive regular payments in the month of February and the total amount of arrears outstanding as of 29 February 2024 is just under \$53 million.

Revenue statistics



Rates income as of 29 February 2024 was \$88.260 million compared to the year-to-date budget of \$77.864 million. This is made up of general rates (\$78.346 million), waste collection charges (\$8.729 million), and interest on rates (\$647,000). These are offset against hardship rate waivers (\$11,133) and concession rebates (\$434,000).

The Outstanding Rates Balance as of 29 February 2024 was \$54.131 million. This is made up of general rates (\$53 million) and hardship group (\$0.403 million).



Procurement



Tenders have been called for the following:

- 2023.47 – Altona Beach Entry and Esplanade Upgrade
- 2023.51 – Altona Hockey Club Pavilion Redevelopment
- 2023.50 – Alton North Library Refurbishment

The following tenders have been closed and are being evaluated:

- 2023.05 – Roads and Drainage Maintenance Services
- 2023.18 – Civil Works Panel - Category 1 Minor Works
- 2023.18 – Civil Works Panel - Category 2 Major Works
- 2023.23 – Pipeline Reserve Seabrook
- 2023.42a – McCormack Park Footbridge
- 2023.49 – Technical Consultant Panel

Enhancing our community

The Infrastructure and City Services Directorate has delivered and continues to deliver a range of projects and services across the municipality.

West Gate Tunnel Project



During February WGTP carried out major works on the West Gate Freeway, Wurundjeri Way and Footscray Road as part of the summer campaign works.



Image: West Gate Freeway widening works looking east from Grieve Parade

In the West Zone, there has been considerable progress with the resurfacing works along the West Gate Freeway between Millers Road and the M80 interchange, including multiple gantry installations since the beginning of the year.

In the East Zone, the second stage of widening works at Wurundjeri Way are well underway, with the road closed until early March. Crews are also continuing work to build new connections linking CityLink to the West Gate Tunnel, and the elevated motorway above Footscray Road including building new walking and cycling path cable bridge above Footscray Road at Waterfront Way.



Image: West Gate Freeway West Zone Works - Outbound



Image: West Gate Freeway West Zone Works – Gantry Installation

In February, there was a traffic switch at the M80 interchange heading outbound, approaching Grieve Parade. Drivers are now advised to stay in the two left hand lanes to head Ballarat bound, while drivers wishing to head to Geelong need to stay in the two right hand lanes. Additional signage has been installed to help inform and navigate drivers through the new arrangement (see below).



Image: New outbound traffic switch arrangement at the M80 interchange

Williamstown Road Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) works were undertaken in early February with the completion of traffic signalling and street lighting on the Williamstown Road freeway ramps and on Williamstown Road between Thomas Street and The Avenue. These works will allow for the reopening of the inbound ramp and will help better manage the flow of traffic through this area.

Works commenced on refurbishing the existing steel beams of the Newport Rail Bridge within the rail corridor and will continue to mid-April. This involves the use of high-pressure hoses and spray coating to repair and strengthen the existing bridge columns. Noise curtains will be used around the work areas to decrease the noise levels.

The shared walking and cycling path connecting Stony Creek Reserve to near Spotswood station and the Kororoit Creek Shared User Path is nearing completion. Installation of feature lighting has been completed at the M80 interchange. The graffiti removal program along the West Gate Freeway, interchanges and ramps is continuing.



Image: Feature lighting at the M80 interchange

West Gate Neighbourhood Fund (WGNF)

The West Gate Neighbourhood Fund is a \$10 million community grants program established by WGTP MTIA to support communities in Melbourne's inner west, prioritising those who are most affected by the construction of the West Gate Tunnel Project.

The latest round of applications opened in February 2024 for the West Gate Neighbourhood Fund in two components - grants and partnerships. Grant applications close on 18 March 2024.

Grants will provide funding for one off activities or events, and partnership funding will support infrastructure projects that provide a significant and lasting outcome.

A wide range of projects are eligible including those that celebrate heritage, history or diversity, focus on arts and culture, emphasis learning and development, or enable greater participation of community members.

Level Crossing Removal Projects



Champion Road and Maddox Road

Council continues to advocate for the retention of a Champion Road crossing due to the impacts of the proposed road closure on the community as part of the level crossing removal program and has written to State Government Ministers and Members of Parliament.



Image: LXR plan for Champion Road and Maddox Road

To help inform the project design, LXR commenced investigation works in February, collecting soil samples, conducting traffic counts and investigating utilities at various locations throughout the project area. This will continue until late April 2024. Locations include:

- Within the rail corridor between Newport Station and Paisley Drain
- Maddox Road, near the level crossing
- Champion Road, near the level crossing
- Railway Parade
- Blackshaws Road
- Kororoit Creek Road
- Millers Road
- Market Street, between Challis and Woods Streets.

Maidstone Street

LXRP are also in the planning and investigation stage to remove the level crossing at Maidstone Street, Altona where the level crossing will be removed by building a road bridge by 2027.

Initial works have commenced on traffic surveys on Maidstone Street and adjacent roads. Council staff continue to provide input into the project's planning and design, guided by the adopted Principles for grade separations in Hobsons Bay.

To help inform early planning, site investigations commenced in the area in February and will continue into March 2024, including land and utility surveying across the site and rail corridor and conducting environmental assessments.

The two-Level Crossing Removal Community Interest Groups established by Council for the Champion Road and Maddox Road, Newport and Hudson Road, Spotswood level crossing projects met in early February.



Image: Hudsons Road level crossing to be removed by 2028

Pavilion and Reserves



HC Kim Reserve Upgrade

The works on all three pitches at Kim Reserve have been completed. The pavilion works are progressing well with the completion of external brickwork, installation of the roof and windows. The internal framing is currently underway, and the project remains on track for completion in mid-2024.



Image: Kim Reserve pavilion works



Image: Kim Reserve completed pitch

New Public Toilets

The new public toilets located at PA Burns Reserve Dog Off-Leash Beach are now open to the public. The toilet block is located adjacent to the carpark and includes three cubicles, dog hitching handles and a water fountain.



Image: Public Toilet block at PA Burns Reserve

Dennis Reserve Stage 3

The new pavilion at Dennis Reserve in Williamstown is tracking well with completion scheduled for mid-April 2024.



Image: Dennis reserve external brick works

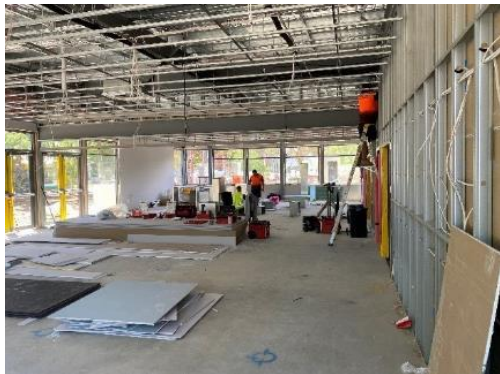


Image: Dennis reserve multi-purpose rooms 1&2

J.J. Ginifer Reserve Playspace Improvements

Improvements to the playspace at J.J. Ginifer Reserve are complete and now open for the public to enjoy.

The playspace features a new play tower, flying fox, additional swings, a new sheltered gathering space with a drink fountain and enhancements to the basketball activity court. Tree and garden bed planting have also been completed to enhance the amenity and provide shade.



Image: JJ Ginifer Reserve Playspace equipment

Road, Drainage and Footpaths



Road Safety Upgrade works

Four speed humps have been installed as part of the road safety infrastructure upgrade works. These works will enhance pedestrian safety and reduce the risk of incidents in high-traffic areas such as Borrack Square along Duke Street and McArthurs Road in Altona North.



Image: McArthurs Road Altona North

Drainage and Roadworks

New drainage and roadworks have commenced in Melbourne Road Williamstown. The works will include underground drainage and new drainage pits along Melbourne Road and Pasco Street.

The kerb and channel along both sides of Melbourne Road, and on the south side of Pasco Street between Verdon Street and Melbourne Road is being replaced to facilitate better water flow into the new pits and improve drainage efficiency.



Image: Drainage being installed in Melbourne Road Williamstown

Toll Drive, Altona Resurfacing

The commencement of resurfacing works on Toll Drive is a positive development for the industrial access roads within the municipality. These works are much needed to ensure the continued safety and functionality of the road infrastructure.

A specially designed asphalt mix with the polymer-modified binder is being used. This mix not only improves the durability and longevity of the road surface but also helps reduce the volume of asphalt required for the project. Considering the potential impact on the industrial premises in the area, the works are being carried out during night hours. Resurfacing works are expected to be completed by early March 2024.



Image: Newly laid asphalt base course at Toll Drive

Sporting projects



Alan Lwer Box Court hosting National Championships

On 21 February 2024 the Alan Lwer Box Court was officially unveiled to host the opening ceremony of the National Box Lacrosse Championships.

The event brought together the best lacrosse players from across Australia and provided an opportunity for the lacrosse community to celebrate Alan Lwer's significant contribution to the sport and specifically the new box court in Hobsons Bay.



Image: Alan Lwer Box Court

Laverton Swim and Fitness Centre Update

Following the conclusion of Garsel Recreation’s management tenure at the Laverton Swim and Fitness Centre (LSFC) on 31 December 2023, BlueFit Pty Ltd took over management responsibility, reopening the facility on 2 January 2024. Bluefit is an experienced operator who manage a range of facilities across Australia including Bayfit Leisure Centre in Altona North. As part of their commitment to the management of the centre, BlueFit proposed a range of improvement works including a refurbishment of the amenity areas, aesthetic enhancements to the foyer and pool deck, the conversion of the group fitness room into a new gym, the installation of new spa facilities, an infrared sauna, and pool deck showers. To fund these enhancements, council has allocated \$500k from its 2023/24 budget as a contribution to structural elements associated with the works, while BlueFit is contributing approximately \$1.3m.

To facilitate the upgrade works, LSFC is temporarily closed for approximately three to four months. During this time, members will be granted reciprocal access to BayFit in Altona North, while swim school operations and other water-based programs including the Rainbow Swimming Club will operate from Bayfit with minimal disruption.

Regular updates on the project's progress will be provided to keep stakeholders informed throughout the upgrade period.

Other projects



HD Graham Reserve Water Meter Upgrade

Upgrades have been carried out to the existing water meter at HD Graham Reserve in Altona Meadows for fire services. New conduit and meters have been installed to service the public toilets, the Altona Sports Centre, HD Graham Reserve Pavilion and the onsite irrigation tank.

Emma McLean Kindergarten

The works at the new modular kindergarten in Spotswood have been completed. The project was funded by the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) with a contribution from Council. The new kindergarten also includes external landscaping which enhances the aesthetics of the kindergarten, creating a welcoming environment for learning and play. The new three-room kindergarten opened for the start of Term one.

Seaholme Kindergarten and Parkside Crescent

The works at Seaholme Kindergarten have been completed and opened in late-January 2024. This is a modular built facility by the VSBA with Council contribution.

Works are underway to construct indented parking along Parkside Crescent to address traffic and accessibility concerns in the area. Completing these works will enhance children drop-off and pick-ups for families attending the kindergarten, as well as improving access for residents navigating the narrow road.



Image: Seaholme Kindergarten

Additional roll out of public bins along the foreshore

Council is undertaking a proactive approach to address the increased waste during the summer period.

To accommodate the higher demands, 90 additional bins have been placed along the foreshore and surrounding areas. In addition, an extra 20 bins have also been placed within Commonwealth Reserve.

During the summer period on days over 26 degrees, the bins are emptied twice a day to minimise overflowing litter and maintain cleanliness in these recreational areas.

As a result of more frequent bin servicing, the total amount of waste collected throughout the summer period has risen from 500kg a day to approximately two tonnes per day. This translates to roughly an additional 3-10 tonnes of waste per month during the summer season.

Port Phillip Coastal Hazard Assessment

In January 2024, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) released the Port Phillip Coastal Hazard Assessment (PPBCHA). The coastal hazards examined in the PPBCHA include coastal inundation, coastal erosion and changes in groundwater due to rising sea levels and climate change.

Hobsons Bay, along with other bay councils, received an overarching briefing from DEECA about the PPBCHA with further work needing to be done to understand the implications of the hazard assessment at the local level.

As the impacts of rising sea levels on our community are a regional rather than a local issue, Council is advocating that state and federal governments should be actively funding and driving an appropriate adaptation and planning response, including a state-led amendment to implement the new data into Victorian Planning Schemes.

Council will be working closely with the state government and other regional partners and bayside Councils to ensure that the impacts of sea level rise on our community are considered and addressed.

All the hazard maps, summary and technical reports can now be downloaded from the Coastal Programs website at Port Phillip Bay Coastal Hazard Assessment (marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au).

Parks



2024 Tree Planting Programs

2024 is set to be another big year of tree planting with 7,000 trees being planted throughout streets, parks and reserves.

This will include 1,500 advanced trees allocated to the street tree planting program, 500 semi-advanced trees to be planted throughout parks and reserves and 5,000 tube stock through the More Trees for a Cooler Greener West initiative. Tube stock will be planted at AB Shaw Reserve Altona Meadows, HD Graham Reserve Altona Meadows and Doug Grant Reserve Altona.

Tree planting will occur throughout the cooler months of year with street tree planting being carried out between May and September.

Lagunaria Replacement Program

The Lagunaria replacement program continues this year with the removal of nominated Lagunaria Patersonia (Norfolk Island Hibiscus) trees. Removals are scheduled to take place between mid-February and April 2024.

Recent Storm event

The severe storms on 13 February 2024 resulted in widespread damage to trees throughout the city, prompting 198 customer calls and requests from residents. Council's response began promptly, with staff working into the night to attend to urgent enquiries. Over the following days, the arboriculture team deployed teams to make areas safe for the public. Debris was cut down to smaller sizes, stacked on nature strips and logged for clean-up by the chipper team.

By 14 February 2024 there were 69 outstanding tree related enquiries, primarily concerning fallen branches and requests for tree inspections following the high winds. The chipper teams worked to tidy up the affected areas, while an Elevated Work Platform (EWP) was used for trees requiring aerial works.

Crews transported branches to designated reserves for storage until the chipper teams could mulch them. These reserves include Ducrow Reserve Newport, Long Reserve Williamstown North, Grant Reserve Altona and AB Shaw in Laverton.

Certain streets, such as Oberon Way in Newport were particularly affected. To assess the remaining trees in Oberon Way an external consultant is being engaged to provide management recommendations.

Furthermore, efforts are being made to collaborate with the sustainability team to explore ways to support residents with waste collection from private trees damaged during the storm.



Image: Ford Street Newport

Conservation news



Fencing at Truganina Park

Fencing work is about to begin in the Cole Grant area at Truganina Park. The purpose of the fencing is to reduce vandalism and bikes from entering the reserve. The site is listed for Ramsar international significance for its migratory wading bird life and having a large coastal corridor that adjoins Cheetham wetlands.

Jute Matting at Altona Coastal Park

Now that we have some drier conditions the Conservation team have prepped the area at Altona Coastal Park for a future planting site.

Towards the end of 2023, Council laid jute matt as an extension on a previous revegetation project. Recently the area has been mowed and sprayed where the trees are located. Mulching will be carried out shortly at the site.



Image: Altona Coastal Park

Community events



Truganina Explosives Reserve Open Day

The first 'Friends' group event for 2024 was held on 4 February 2024 and received a great turn out.

Among the visitors was a life-long Williamstown resident who donated photos that he took in the 1970's and 1980's of the lighters (barges) in a working capacity after the Explosives reserve had ceased operations.



Image: Lighters (barges) after the Explosives reserve had ceased operations

Nocturnal Night

Local zoologist Rob Gration joined the Conservation rangers to hold a “Nocturnal night” on 9 February 2024.

Focussing mainly on bats, 30 participants could get up close and personal with amazing nocturnal wildlife like this little critter (below).



Image: Microbat

Better Places Project

The Better Places model is focused on a design-led and place-based approach to projects. It helps provide a clear vision and understanding of the elements required to make better places and therefore provides better outcomes for the community.

It is about an approach where the whole “place” is considered and driven by a community vision for the suburb.

The Better Places Project is a unique program which provides an opportunity for the community to actively participate in helping shape the future direction of their suburb.

To date, four Place Guides have been shaped by community and endorsed by Council which are progressively being implemented:

- Laverton
- Spotswood & South Kingsville
- Brooklyn & Altona North
- Seabrook & Altona Meadows

Laverton

Laverton was the first suburb to experience the Better Places model. The Laverton Place Guide was endorsed by Council in September 2020. A copy can be found at: participate.hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au/better-places-laverton

Better Places & Spaces – McCormack Park

A Masterplan for McCormack Park was endorsed by Council in December 2022, it includes three (3) stages. A copy of the Masterplan document can be found [here](#).

McCormack Park is a beloved community park in Laverton, placed either side of the stunning Laverton Creek. A place for residents to relax, exercise, play and skate for many years; its reimagining will provide greater opportunities for community to connect with each other and nature.

On 18 February 2024 a great day was held at the Laverton Festival speaking with locals about the Stage 2 play space upgrade. The concept is based on the endorsed Masterplan document. The design of this inclusive play space includes five key ‘activity zones’:

- Fast - *The Swamp Wallaby Bushland*
- Challenging - *The Dragonfly Perch*
- Water play - *Water Snail Play Pen*
- Nature based - *The Lorikeet Patch*
- Slow - *The Koala Den*



Image: Laverton Festival

Love Laverton Parks - Cropley Reserve

Works commenced early November 2023 and are due for completion in March 2024. The reserve will include an upgraded play space as the heart of the reserve and, new equipment for toddlers and older children. The southern section will remain as a flexible use open grassed area. New native tree planting will help encourage local pollinators such as birds and butterflies.

Cropley Reserve will be the crowning accomplishment of the Love Laverton Parks project. Eight local park upgrades, and four pocket parks, as part of the community led Better Places Laverton program. A single coordinated project that creates a complementary suite of parks which offer choice, plus a variety of functions and activities for people of all ages; whilst also applying the principles of achieving a 'cleaner and greener' Laverton.



Image: Cropley Reserve Concept Plan

Spotswood and South Kingsville Place Projects

The [Better Places Spotswood + South Kingsville Place Guide](#) was endorsed by Council on 12 October 2021.

Recent Place Guide project highlights include:

STREETS for People – 40km road zones

Better Places Spotswood & South Kingsville community consultation noted that the area is very car dominated. The local community want to see the streets changed to make them more pedestrian or bike friendly. The focus of this project is to lead the shift throughout Spotswood and South Kingsville towards creating ‘streets for people’ - reducing vehicle speeds and through traffic, undertaking works to make the villages and neighbourhood streets feel safer, and more attractive for use by pedestrians and cyclists.

It is not about being anti-car, it’s about trying to reduce the dominance of cars, by giving more attention and priority towards pedestrians and cyclists. The extension of 40km/h road zones north of Hudsons Road in Spotswood has now been approved by the State Government Department of Roads and Planning. All streets within the green section of the map will be 40km. New Street signage is planned for installation over the coming weeks.

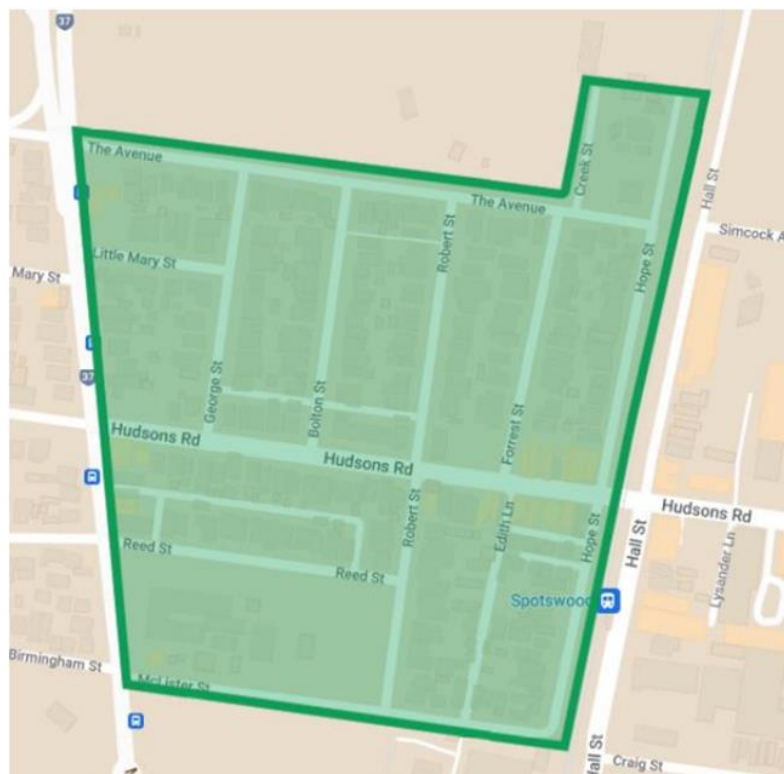


Image: New 40km road zone area in Spotswood to be implemented

Pop Up Community Spaces

Throughout Better Places consultation it became clear that community value the village character and 'local feel' of the area, expressing a desire to be more actively involved in shaping the place they live in. This project aims to create more of those opportunities by initiating pop-up placemaking projects and events that encourage direct community involvement.

The Better Places Spotswood & South Kingsville Local Leaders Focus Group completed visioning exercises to discover where Pop Up trials might occur. Forrest Street (Hudsons Road end) was agreed by the group as an idea to investigate further hence community engagement began last July. Over 80 per cent voted yes to supporting the idea of a temporary road closure for a trial pop up place.

Parking was noted as a concern hence traffic and transport surveys have occurred, and Council officers are awaiting the final report. To keep up to date or to read the survey results via 'What we heard' reports, please see the Participate page [here](#).



Better Places Brooklyn & Altona North

The Better Places [Brooklyn + Altona North](#) final Place Guide was endorsed by Council in December 2022. A copy can be found at participate.hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au/betterplaces-brooklyn-and-altona-north. Three key themes were uncovered from thousands of pieces of community feedback:

Key Themes

THEME ONE
Improving the liveability and amenity of the area.
Icon: Tree and bench.

THEME TWO
A place that is easier and safer to move around.
Icon: Person on bicycle.

THEME THREE
Bringing the community closer together.
Icon: Group of people.

Liveability and Amenity
For many residents in the local area, their first priority is to reduce air, noise, and rubbish pollution, and focus on making the area a healthier, cleaner and greener place to live.

Move with safety
Making Brooklyn and Altona North more walkable and bike-friendly, and developing new initiatives and projects that will promote a shift towards public transport and active transport into the future.

Closer Community
Continuing to celebrate and strengthen the diversity and different characters Brooklyn and Altona North while finding new ways to bring the community closer together.

The abovementioned themes drive [Place Guide](#) projects for the community... by the community. A mix of both shorter-term projects that can be implemented quickly, as well as longer term projects that are larger and more complex and will require more extensive design and consultation. The programme spans from 2023 to 2028.

Love Our Parks - Patch in the Park Community Garden

Council has been working with the local Brooklyn community to develop a detailed design for a community garden within Brooklyn Reserve. The group have obtained a local parks grant through the support of Local MP Melissa Horne. Works on the garden are expected to commence in April 2024 and be ready for planting at the end of June 2024.

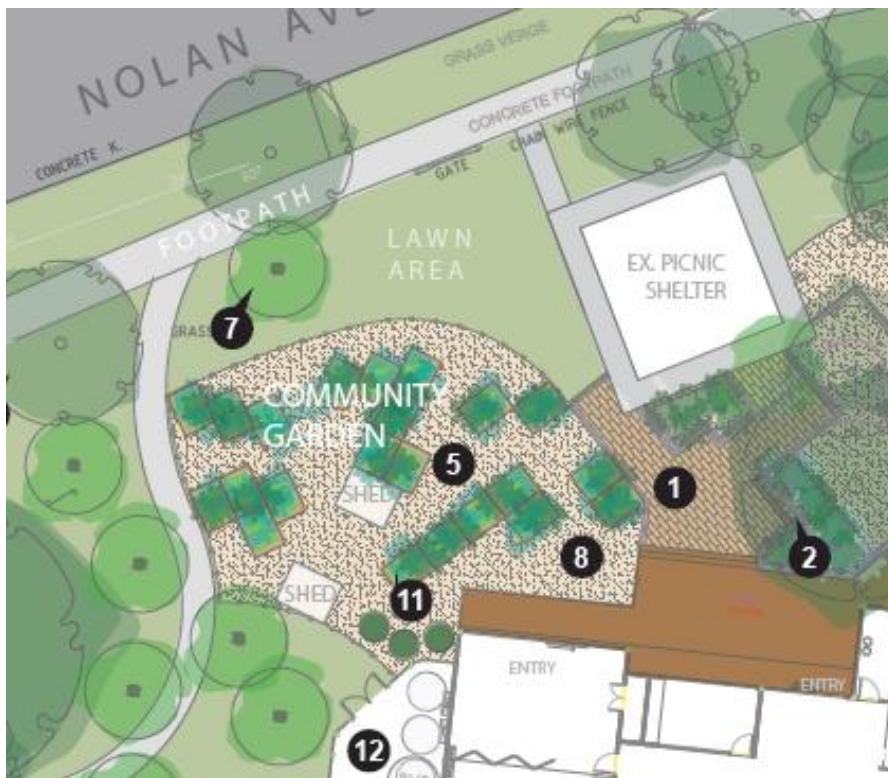


Image: Design of community garden

Better Places Seabrook and Altona Meadows

[The final Seabrook & Altona Meadows Place Guide was endorsed by Council at the 12 September 2023 meeting.](#)

The Place Guide provides a mix of both shorter-term projects that will be able to be implemented quickly, as well as longer term projects that are larger and more complex requiring more extensive design and consultation.

The Place Guide provides six overarching projects in response to community feedback received through multiple stages of community engagement to be implemented throughout 2023-2028.

Love Our Parks – Pipeline Reserve Seabrook, community play space and park upgrade

Following several years of consecutive community submissions via the Pitch Your Idea Program and an extensive community consultation process, this project is well and truly underway. Council is currently assessing tenders for the construction of a community play space that has been specifically designed for children on the autism spectrum as well as families and children of all ages.

Community engagement revealed a significant number of families living in the Seabrook and Altona Meadows area who have children on the autism spectrum. Demographic data, in addition to customer requests to Council from families over the past seven years, has indicated the need to provide a safe and inclusive family space for all local children. The playground will be fully fenced and include family and social recreation spaces as well as a range of play options for children. Construction of the playground and park commenced in February 2024, and is estimated for completion by the end of May 2024.



Attachment 1

Champion Road and Maddox Road - Level Crossing Removals

Draft Specific Principles and Objectives – February 2024

1. An integrated precinct

- Ensure that the level crossing removals are well integrated with the surrounding area creating a highly accessible and inclusive environment. Consider land use, access and connectivity, urban design, social, environmental, amenity and economic impacts.

2. A connected community

- Ensure the development provides for efficient and safe road, public transport, pedestrian, and off-road cycling connections between the suburbs of Newport and Williamstown, residential areas north and south of the railway line, future development, and other key community destinations such as the various schools, childcare facilities, shops, recreation areas and Williamstown hospital.
- Improve the pedestrian and cycling connectivity of the precinct with links to local paths, creating safer and more accessible ways to get around by ensuring provision of direct, accessible connections to Newport and North Williamstown Stations, linkages to the shops and schools and other key destinations.
- Ensure that the road crossings of the rail lines is maintained and that any changes benefit the network and keep traffic moving safely and efficiently.

3. Quality public places

- Retain, improve and create new safe and accessible high quality public spaces with adequate lighting.
- Maintain and improve significant tree canopy and vegetation to achieve comfortable and attractive public places.
- Improve the appearance and sense of arrival at this key gateway to Newport and Williamstown.

4. Minimise impacts on adjacent land

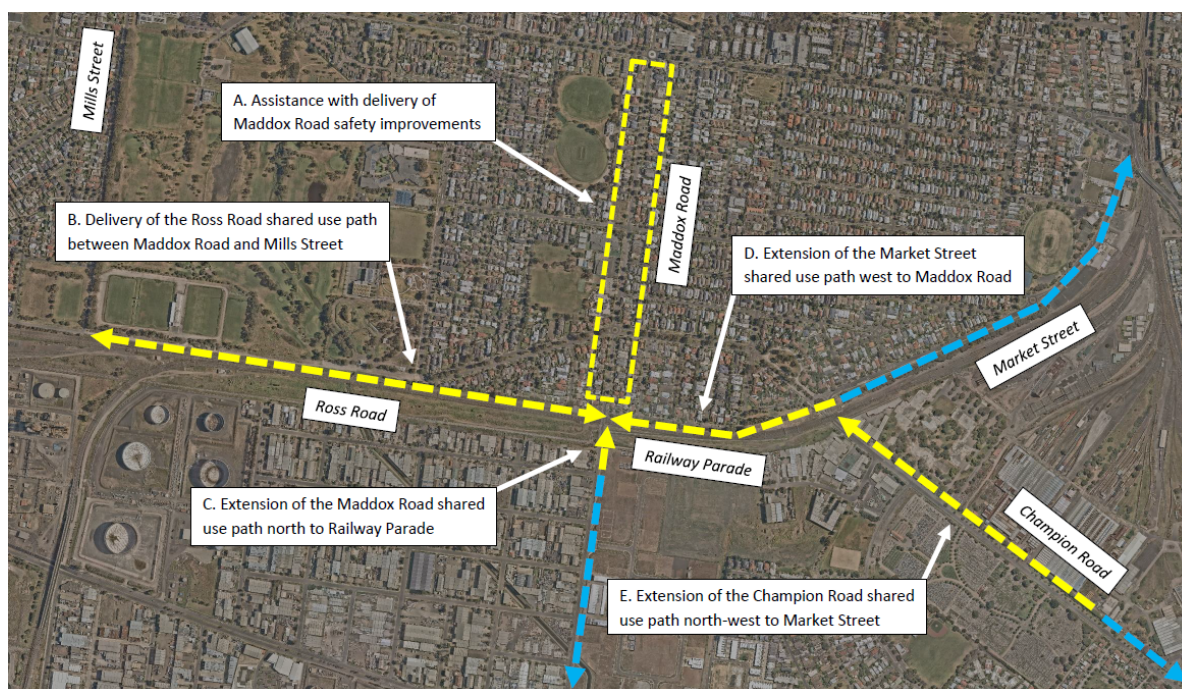
- Undertake comprehensive flood modelling to understand and mitigate the impacts of new infrastructure.
- Consider and minimise impacts on access and amenity to adjacent industry and businesses and residents.

5. Conservation of special values and neighbourhood character

- Ensure that views from adjacent residences, public spaces and businesses are preserved or improved.
- Ensure that the design of any required infrastructure is attractive and respectful of the local industrial and residential precincts and conservation character of the area.

6. Opportunities for local Infrastructure improvements

- Ensure that the development addresses the current infrastructure and amenity needs of the area and that project design outcomes at both sites incorporate key Council and community infrastructure priorities including:
 - Integration with and assistance with the delivery of Maddox Road safety improvements.
 - Delivery of the Ross Road shared use path between Maddox Road and Mills Street.
 - Extension of the Maddox Road shared use path north to Railway Parade.
 - Extension of the Market Street shared use path west to Maddox Road.
 - Extension of the Champion Road shared use path north-west to Market Street.



7. Minimal disruption from construction

- Manage the construction process to limit noise, dust, traffic and amenity impacts on the surrounding area and maintain access to residents and businesses.
- Ensure the surrounding residents and businesses are kept informed through an effective and regular communications and consultation process.