

## 5.5 MONASH COUNCIL'S 2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT

Responsible Senior Officer: Dr Andi Diamond, Chief Executive Officer

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council adopts the Annual Report for the 2020/21 year, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Council has prepared a detailed account of its financial and operational performance for the 12-month period ending 30 June 2021 as required under the *Local Government Act 2020*. Due to COVID-19, the legislative submission deadline was extended to 30 November for councils to submit annual reports. Monash Council's Annual Report was submitted to the Minister for Local Government ahead of deadline on 29 October 2021.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Annual Report provides a comprehensive account of Council's performance over the 12-month period. The report details Council's key achievements and demonstrates our commitment to transparency, accountability and good governance.

### **DISCUSSION**

The report includes the Financial and Performance Statements that were considered by Council at its meeting on 31 August 2021. These Statements were subsequently certified by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

In addition to these Statements, the Annual Report outlines how Council performed against its stated objectives in the Council Plan (major initiatives and services for 2020/21). As the Annual Report demonstrates, Council performed exceptionally in the 2020/21 year, despite the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Council listed five Major Initiatives to be achieved in 2020/21 in its Council Plan in 2017-2021 with all five Major Initiatives achieved.

There was a total of 43 Council Plan initiatives in 2020/21 with 41 (95.3%) achieved and two (4.7%) progressing (to be carried through to 2021/22).

Some of Council's major activities in 2020/21 included:

#### **Response to COVID-19**

Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be guided by advice from the State Government and the Chief Health Officer with the safety and welfare of our staff and the community our priority.

Our efforts continue to focus on:

1. Emergency Management – supporting State-wide and regional emergency responses

2. Being a model employer – by providing a safe workplace for our staff, customers and visitors
3. Community leadership – information sharing and public messaging
4. Supporting the community – working with local community groups to support residents and helping businesses

Council established an Incident Control Group (ICG) at the start of the pandemic, to liaise with the State Government through the Department of Health, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Emergency Management Victoria and the State Control Centre.

To support all ratepayers, Council has extended its deferral of rates without interest for a second year until June 2022 and has also waived fees and charges for a second year.

Council responded to the critical need for up-to-date information and provided this to the community through social media, website updates and use of Council newsletters and the Monash Bulletin. This included warnings of exposure sites for COVID-19 cases in Monash and information on testing and vaccination sites.

#### **Oakleigh Recreation Centre**

Construction of the \$26.4M centre was completed and the centre was officially reopened in January 2021 with celebratory activities, classes and events for the community. The transformed centre includes five new indoor basketball courts, gymnasium upgrade and conversion of the existing stadium to a state level gymnastics facility for the Waverley Gymnastics Centre.

#### **Upgraded sporting pavilions across Monash**

2020/21 saw the completion of two major sporting pavilion upgrades at Brentwood and Caloola Reserves. Works were completed on the \$2.2M facility redevelopment of the Brentwood Reserve Pavilion in May 2021, and the opening of the \$3.5M Caloola Reserve Multi Sport Pavilion completes the Oakleigh Sports Hub.

#### **Wellington Child and Family Hub – a first for Monash**

Construction has commenced on a new purpose-built child and family centre in Mulgrave, replacing the ageing Wellington Kindergarten and co-located Maternal and Child Health Service. Construction is due to be completed in late 2021.

#### **Council's response to climate change**

In-line with Council's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2025, Monash joined a collective of 46 councils to pool their electricity needs into one long-term contract with Red Energy which will provide the VECO (Victorian Energy Collaboration) group with renewable energy generated from wind farms in Victoria. From 1 July 2021, that renewable energy will be used to power our council-owned infrastructure, like streetlights, major facilities and community buildings, giving an eight percent reduction in our electricity bills.

#### **Imagining Monash in 2040**

Council has embarked on Imagine Monash 2040 – a huge project that imagines the possibilities for Monash 20 years into the future and sets our vision and priorities. Council asked the community for their ideas, thoughts and aspirations to guide the

development of the Community Vision, the next Council Plan, and long-term plans for managing our assets and finances through a Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

### **Advocacy campaigns**

Over this 12-month period, Council advocated on a number of issues on behalf of our community including:

- 13 Councils Homelessness Campaign – 13 Councils representing two million residents in Melbourne’s east and south east have joined together in a unified voice calling for urgent action for more social housing to end homelessness
- Back our Businesses – Shop Local campaign to support traders through the challenges of COVID-19, including an online business directory, social media, bus stop posters, downloadable posters, stickers, signage and articles online and in the monthly business e-newsletter and Monash Bulletin
- Council recognised World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June. The Monash Civic Centre was lit up purple, the colour of the campaign, and the World Elder Abuse Day banner displayed on Springvale Road for a week to raise awareness of the issue
- In a first for the Monash Council, Active Monash hosted its first ever Pride Night in April 2021. The evening was held to promote inclusive and accessible physical activity for the LGBTIQ+ community and their allies
- Council is proud to be partnering with VicHealth for This Girl Can Week to encourage local women to get active – however, wherever and whenever they choose, without being judged. Council received a \$15,000 grant from VicHealth to promote the campaign to local women and host a series of events. Due to COVID-19 restrictions some events were adapted or moved online
- In 2021, Council publicly acknowledged and supported the newly established Yoo-rrook Justice Commission that will examine the lasting effect of colonisation on the social, economic and health outcomes for First Peoples.

### **CONCLUSION**

That Council considers and adopts the Annual Report for the 2020/21 year, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.