

5.2 MONASH COUNCIL'S 2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Responsible Director: Chief Executive Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Annual Report for the 2019/2020 year, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989.

INTRODUCTION

Council has prepared a detailed account of its financial and operational performance for the 12-month period ending 30 June 2019 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 September 2020.

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 25 August 2020. 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 2019/2020). As the Annual Report demonstrates, Council performed strongly in the 2019/20 year, in spite of the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Council listed four Major Initiatives to be achieved in 2019/20 in its *Council Plan in 2017-2021*. Three out of the four Major Initiatives were achieved.

There was a total of 60 Council Plan initiatives in 2019/20 with 55 (92%) achieved and five (8%) progressing (to be carried through to 2020/21). Amendments to nine actions were approved by Council at the 26 May Council meeting.

Some of Council's major activities in 2019/20 included:

Response to COVID-19

Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been guided by State Government advice and that of the Chief Health Officer (CHO).

This well planned and coordinated approach has placed Council in a position to quickly respond to State Government announcements and CHO directions.

Council also proposed a 10% waiver of rates to all ratepayers (businesses, residential, investment) to provide relief and support during a period of insecurity for many. We also offered deferral of rates without interest until June 2021 and waived fees and charges until that time.

Council has continued to keep the community informed with updates and changes across several platforms including our website, monthly Bulletin, e-newsletters and social media, keeping residents up-to-date about current situations and emerging local issues whilst also promoting important health information to the community.

Oakleigh Recreation Centre

Work progressed on the \$25.4 million centre including the construction of five new indoor basketball courts, gymnasium upgrade and conversion of the existing stadium to a state level gymnastics facility for the Waverley Gymnastics Centre. The centre is expected to open in November 2020.

Great new space for Monash Youth Services

A new space for Monash youth opened on level one of the Euneva car park. Co-located with counselling and support service Wavecare, the \$2.5 million hub is a central point for these important services in the heart of Glen Waverley.

Introducing food waste recycling

Work was undertaken during 2019/20 for the introduction of food waste recycling in Monash. This service was planned for introduction in June 2020 but was delayed by a month to start in July 2020. Preparation included the production of benchtop food waste caddies, design of a comprehensive information booklet and related communications, as well as green waste bin audits.

Princes Highway Reserve West sportsground redevelopment

Works were completed on the \$1.2 million redevelopment of Princes Highway Reserve West sportsground in June 2020. The works significantly improved the sportsground surface quality and drainage, with the installation of the drought resistant turf and a highly-efficient irrigation system.

Council's response to climate change

Monash Council committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2025 at its February 2020 meeting. It came after a significant amount of work on greenhouse gas emission modelling and is in line with Council's *Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016-2026)*.

Leading the way to address homelessness

Council led the initiation and coordination of the *Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Charter 2020* achieving the support of 13 CEOs (east and south east Councils). The Charter was determined following a forum in late 2019, hosted by Monash Council and comprising Local Government CEOs, senior staff, housing providers, peak bodies and State Government.

Advocacy campaigns

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

- A Back our Businesses – Shop Local campaign to support traders through the challenges of COVID-19, which is having a serious impact on businesses
- The Monash Civic Centre and Euneva Car Park were lit red on 1 December to commemorate World AIDS Day and show our support for people living with HIV in our community
- Council supported the Together for Respect at Home social media campaign, championing messages of respect, gender equity and prevention of violence against women, especially important during COVID-19
- Council joined the road safety advocacy project BikeSpot 2020 survey, an initiative of the cycling safety charity Amy Gillett Foundation and CrowdSpot, a digital crowd-sourcing map project
- Council recognised World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June and in the lead-up by sharing information on how to safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older people. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, planned events couldn't proceed however the Civic Centre was lit up purple for a week to raise awareness of the issue
- Council joined 16 Days of Activism, a global campaign to raise awareness about violence against women and its impact on a woman's physical, psychological, social wellbeing and economic security. The campaign was shared on social media over the 16 days.

CONCLUSION

That Council considers and adopts the Annual Report for the 2019/2020 year, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*.