

18 May 2022

DRAFT BUDGET DELIVERS ON COUNCIL PLAN

Hepburn Shire Council invites the community to have a say on its \$58.06M draft budget, a budget that aligns closely to the Council Plan 2021-2025 and aims to balance community expectations and Council resources.

The draft budget outlines investment in projects around the Shire, including delivery of a record \$21.25M in capital works.

“This budget focuses on the delivery of more than 100 Council services, along with considerable investment in asset construction and renewal,” said Mayor, Cr Tim Drylie.

“We’ve undertaken a thorough process in the development of this budget, building on the community engagement undertaken as part of the Hepburn Together project, but it’s important for the community to let us know if we’ve got it right,” said Cr Drylie.

“Take a look at the draft budget via our Participate Hepburn website at <https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au>, or drop in and read a copy at our Council hubs and libraries. We’ll accept submissions until 5pm on Tuesday 31 May,” he said.

“The budget delivers a range of new projects across the five focus areas outlined in our Council Plan, which were the priorities identified by our community.”

Focus area: A resilient sustainable and protected environment

Initiatives towards a resilient sustainable and protected environment include a new officer role to identify opportunities for a circular economy (\$110,000), along with funds to deliver actions included in the Sustainable Hepburn Strategy (\$225,000), which will be adopted in coming months.

Investment includes waste management and cleaning services (\$5.065M), along with spending on sustainability (\$122,000), natural resource management (\$142,000) and emergency management (\$228,000).

Focus area: A healthy supported and empowered community

Initiatives that help our focus area towards a healthy supported and empowered community include construction of Hammon Park trailhead (\$1.41M), completion of Trentham Sports Ground pavilion (\$1.69M), implementation of actions in our recently adopted Aquatics Strategy (\$263,000), construction of the Trentham Community Hub (\$4.4M) and a range of activities to assist our community to age positively.

Draft budget priorities includes record investment in assets, roads and maintenance (\$12.96M), along with programs that benefit the community through family services (\$641,000), library services (\$433,000), recreation (\$831,000), community development (\$1.29M), environmental health (\$443,000), parks and open space (\$2.22M), and compliance (\$483,000).

Focus area: Embracing our past and planning for our future

Initiatives relating to the focus area of embracing our past and planning for our future include further studies to inform Council's Environmental Effects Statement submission on the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (\$50,000), undertaking the next stage of our Reconciliation Action Plan, and significant investment in planning resources to support the increase in planning permits being processed, as well as continue our strategic land use planning. This includes investment in statutory and strategic planning (\$2.548M), building (\$356,000), along with property and facilities (\$739,000).

Focus area: Diverse economy and opportunities

Initiatives towards the focus area of diverse economy and opportunities include implementation of the Youth ACE Strategy and continuation of the Economic Development Strategy. This includes investment with ongoing work with local businesses and key sector partners to support economic recovery through development of key regional attractions, events and business opportunities (\$935,00). Other items include a range of youth programs (\$175,000), along with creation of up to four new traineeship opportunities with Council.

Focus area: A dynamic and responsive Council

Initiatives towards achieving a dynamic and responsive Council include improvements to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure to enhance the customer experience and staff efficiency, along with development of a Customer Service Strategy, which will build on a new website to be launch in June 2022. Council intends to invest in a range of programs and projects across the following areas - financial services (\$1.497M), ICT (\$1.821M), culture and performance (\$818,000), customer experience (\$871,000), governance and risk (\$1.652M) and communication (\$252,000).

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