

5.2 MONASH COUNCIL'S 2017/2018 ANNUAL REPORT

(JR: File No. 5.2)

Responsible Director: Chief Executive Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Annual Report for the 2017/2018 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 2018. The resulting Annual Report was submitted to the Minister for Local Government on 30 September 2018, meeting the legislative deadline. Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council must formally consider the Annual Report within 30 days after it is submitted to the Minister.

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 28 August 2018. 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 2017/2018)*. As the Annual Report demonstrates, Council performed strongly in the 2017/18 year. Council set seven Major Initiatives in its Council Plan in 2017-2021 to be achieved in 2017/18. Of the seven initiatives, five were achieved and two are progressing.

There were a total of 63 Council Plan initiatives in 2017/18 with 56 (89%) achieved, six (10%) progressing and will be carried through to 2018/19, and one (1%) was abandoned.

Some of Council's major activities in 2017/18 included:

New Sporting facilities

Sporting facilities in Monash received a significant boost in 2017/18 with the completion of major projects at a number of Council reserves. The building of a new \$2.9 million pavilion at Scammell Reserve in Oakleigh South was funded by Council with the State Government contributing \$500,000. The pavilion includes female friendly change rooms, a unisex toilet, new change rooms for umpires, a community meeting space, undercover spectator area and improved storage facilities. It was completed in June 2018.

A \$1.7 million redevelopment of the sports pavilion in Columbia Park in Wheelers Hill started in October 2017 and is expected to be completed in December 2018. The State Government contributed \$300,000 to this project.

A \$1.6 million pavilion at Central Reserve in Glen Waverley was completed at the end of 2017.

Refurbishment of Mount Waverley Community Centre and Mount Waverley Youth Centre

Council is undertaking a \$3.2 million project to redevelop the Mount Waverley Community Centre and Mount Waverley Youth Centre to bring the 1970s buildings into the modern era and provide a comfortable community space where people can participate in a wide range of activities.

Two well-known Mount Waverley organisations, the Monash Waverley Community Information and Support Services and The Highway Gallery, will relocate to the upgraded facilities.

At the Mount Waverley Community Centre, internal space will be redeveloped, a gallery space and office accommodation created and the roof and floor coverings replaced. At the Mount Waverley Youth Centre, the ceiling and hall area have been refurbished and the toilet upgraded.

Recycling issue

Council secured its household recycling service with Visy Recycling, despite the volatility of the recycling industry in the wake of the global crisis triggered by China's ban on accepting some recycling materials from Australia.

However, this has come at a significant cost. The China ban has resulted in recycling companies no longer offering a rebate to Councils as they have in

the past for processing some recycling materials. Instead, they will now charge a fee for processing of household recycling.

Where Council previously received approximately \$700,000 in rebates each year from our contractor for household recycling, from April 2018 we are required to pay \$800,000 to maintain the collection service. This resulted in a net loss to Council of \$1.5 million.

Council applied to the Essential Services Commission to increase rates in 2018/19 from the State Government's rate cap of 2.25% to 3.53% to cover the increased cost. The ESC approved a rate cap variation of 0.32%, however Council was disappointed with this decision as it did not meet the increased costs. Instead, Council will introduce a limited recycling levy to every ratepayer (excluding eligible pensioners) of \$22 per year in 2018/19 to meet these increased costs.

Oakleigh Recreation Centre redevelopment

The development of plans for one of Council's biggest ever projects, the upgrade of the Oakleigh Recreation Centre, is progressing.

In March 2017, Council committed an additional \$3.3 million to the project to deliver an integrated multi-purpose sports precinct in Monash with five indoor basket courts and a gymnastics facility.

Victoria's lowest average rates

Monash remains the metropolitan Council with the lowest rates on a rate per assessment basis and the Council with the lowest rates in Victoria on a per capita basis.

The rate increase in Monash in 2017/18 was 2% ensuring that our ratepayers paid hundreds of dollars less on average than those in other Victorian municipalities.

Review of hard waste collection

Council undertook a major community consultation as part of a review of our hard waste collection.

In November 2017, we sent letters to 105,785 residents and ratepayers in Monash inviting them to have their say on how hard waste should be collected in the future.

They were presented with two hard waste collection options based on responses received in our 2021 and Beyond Survey.

A total of 30,900 responses were received in the survey, with 77% choosing the first option.

In January 2018, Council voted to support option one and retain the current once a year hard waste collection service with an option for residents to add one at call collection each year. The new service was introduced from 1 July 2018.

Focusing on our green city

Council is continuing to work to protect and enhance the 'garden city' character of Monash which is a defining feature of our City and is highly valued by our residents.

We have developed a draft Monash Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy to look at what defines our 'garden city' character, what can be done to improve this characteristic and how to balance development and the greening of the landscape.

Council also finalised the development of the Monash Open Space Strategy which sets out a range of key parameters for the provision of public open space across Monash now and in response to population growth.

Advocacy campaigns

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

- Continuing the campaign to have a youth mental health service established in Monash as mental health continues to be the number one concern for young people in Monash.
- Advocating to the Municipal Association of Victoria for a greater commitment from the State Government for increased support services to tackle the increasing number of community members sleeping rough on Monash streets. Meetings were also held with the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing on this issue.
- Calling on the Department of Health and Human Services and the Minister for Housing, Ageing and Disability to review the significant reduction in funding by the State Government for the Home and Community Care – Program for Younger People following the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme by the Federal Government.

After a commitment to continue funding was not forthcoming from the State Government, Council made the difficult decision to stop administering the service from 30 June 2018. Council will continue to play a role in advocating for residents to ensure that those with disabilities and their carers receive all the support they require to live independent and engaged lives within Monash.

- Advocating to the State Government to make further improvements to the Oakleigh Station Precinct. This follows the government's announcement in its budget in May 2017 for \$10 million in improvements to the station.

CONCLUSION

That Council considers and adopts the Annual Report for the 2017/2018 year, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*.