

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



I am honoured to have been elected Mayor of Hepburn Shire Council by my colleagues. I appreciate their support, encouragement and confidence. I also acknowledge Cr Drylie's term as Mayor in what undoubtedly has been a challenging year for all of us.

In taking on the leadership role as Mayor I am mindful of the responsibility the role carries.

At the half-way point of our term as councillors the organisation is facing numerous challenges.

These include external factors such as extreme weather events and their effect on Council infrastructure, especially roads and drains.

Council is assessing the damage to roads and will implement repair works in a prioritised and systematic manner. Safety of road users is paramount.

There are also internal challenges within the organisation that must be addressed, most notably work to substantially improve council's financial outlook so that we become a more financially sustainable organisation in the medium to long term. Important decisions must be made in order to achieve that goal.

Most importantly, outward focussed performance in customer service is in need of improvement, as evidenced by customer satisfaction survey results. The timely processing of planning applications will always be a critical service and work to update planning regulations, sadly neglected in past years, must continue as a priority so that planning regulations reflect the community's aspirations for our built and natural environments.

It should be recognised that the cumulative impact of rate capping, cost shifting, the lack of economies of scale and geographical realities make the delivery of services for which Council is responsible increasingly difficult.

These are substantial challenges for any organisation and I look forward to tackling them with my colleagues in a strategic and prioritised manner.

A strong focus on core business in the coming year and addressing fundamental challenges will enhance Council's ability to better serve our community and ultimately embrace more aspirational projects. Addressing the underlying problems will also require action and support from the State Government.

Clear, timely, informative communication and consultation will be key, as it could be argued that in its absence the disparity between community expectations and Council's financial and human capacity will only linger. There are opportunities to improve in those areas.

I look forward to working with Councillors and staff to strengthen the Hepburn Shire Council in the coming year, working with all residents and continuing my role as Coliban Ward Councillor.

Cr Brian Hood

NEW MAYOR AND DEPUTY

Congratulations to new Mayor, Cr Brian Hood and Deputy Mayor, Cr Lesley Hewitt, who Councillors elected at a Special Council meeting last week. Thank you to former Mayor Cr Tim Drylie, and former Deputy Mayor Cr Jen Bray for all their work over the last 12 months.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We are seeking feedback on what Council can do to improve housing affordability in the Shire and invite you to read our issues and options paper. A survey is open until Sunday 4 December and you can register your interest to attend an Affordable Housing Solutions Forum in February 2023. Find out details at <https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au/affordable-housing> or at your local library or Council hub.

LISTENING POST

The last Listening Post for the year will be held at the Glenlyon Hall on Wednesday 23 November from 4pm to 6pm. Come along and meet Councillors and staff to discuss local issues or ask questions.

GREEN WASTE DISPOSAL

Don't forget that you can dispose of green waste for free at our Creswick, Daylesford, and Trentham transfer stations throughout November. This is your opportunity to get your property ready for the bushfire season. Green waste must be separated from other waste. No noxious weeds accepted. Conditions apply. For more details visit www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/transfer-stations.

PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY

In partnership with our Disability Advisory Committee, we are hosting events to celebrate International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD).

Community talk at Daylesford - Thursday 1 December from 2pm to 4pm at Victoria Park sports pavilion. Guest speakers include Karan Nagrani (blind advocate), Em Ireland (ChillOut) and Annabel Pitt (Vision Australia). You will also have the chance to inform the new Disability Action Plan.

Drop-in sessions – held on Friday 2 December to discuss ideas for the new Disability Action Plan.

Clunes – 10.30am to 12 noon outside The Warehouse – Clunes.

Creswick – 1pm to 2.30pm outside the IGA supermarket (wet weather location is inside Creswick Hub).

WALK AGAINST VIOLENCE

Come along for a short walk in Trentham, Daylesford, Creswick or Clunes as part of the international campaign of 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence. The walks will start at each town library at 3:30pm on Friday 25 November.

COUNCIL PLAN FOCUS AREAS



A resilient, sustainable and protected environment



A healthy supported, and empowered community



Embracing our past and planning for the future



Diverse economy and opportunities



A dynamic and responsive council

The Council Plan 2021-2025 describes how Council will strive towards our vision, where to focus efforts, and how to measure progress. Each Focus Area has a series of priority statements, with actions against each item.