



Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Annual Highlights Report 2022-2023



Acknowledgement of country

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Acknowledgement of partners

Thank you to the many partner agencies contributing to the Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 and annual action planning.

Notes

Acronyms

LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer and questioning (An inclusive umbrella abbreviation to encompass a range of diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics.)
WHWP	Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Further information

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Contents

Introduction	4
Monitoring and Evaluation	4
Review of the Annual Action Plan 2022-2023	5
Snapshot of Achievements 2022-2023.....	5
Mental Wellbeing	6
Physical Activity	7
Social Connection.....	9
Social Inclusion (incl. Digital Inclusion)	12
Climate Change Mitigation.....	13

Introduction

As required under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Act), the [Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025](#) (WHWP) describes the work Council will undertake in partnership with the community and with key state and local organisations over four years to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Whitehorse. The four-year WHWP included the first year's actions.

The WHWP recognises and builds on the strengths, or foundations, that make up the diverse and vibrant City of Whitehorse. These are the existing infrastructure, systems, natural environment, organisations, programs, services, social networks and people. On an annual basis, Council plans and implements actions to progress the WHWP, in consultation with its partners. The annual review enables Councils to explore opportunities to extend, build and strengthen local partnerships to improve public health and wellbeing.

The Act requires councils to conduct an annual review of the WHWP and if appropriate, amend the plan (s. 26(4)). The results of the review are reported to Council and the measures Council has implemented to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community (s. 26(4)(A)) are reported to the Department of Health when requested.

The Annual Highlights Report 2022-2023 draws on information contributed by Council departments as well as partner organisations through this review process. It presents a snapshot of achievements that relate to health and wellbeing under each of the five priority areas of the WHWP: mental wellbeing, physical activity, social and neighbourhood connection, social inclusion (including digital inclusion) and climate change mitigation.

The results of the review inform the Annual Action Plan 2023-2024 which describes the actions that Council and partners will do in the third year of the WHWP across the financial year 2023-2024. The actions are described under the health and wellbeing objectives and strategies across the eleven domains of the WHWP, as well as the impact indicators that will help us measure progress towards achieving them in two years' time.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The WHWP is monitored and reported on as part of Council's quarterly and annual reporting cycles. Engagement with partner organisations is part of this process.

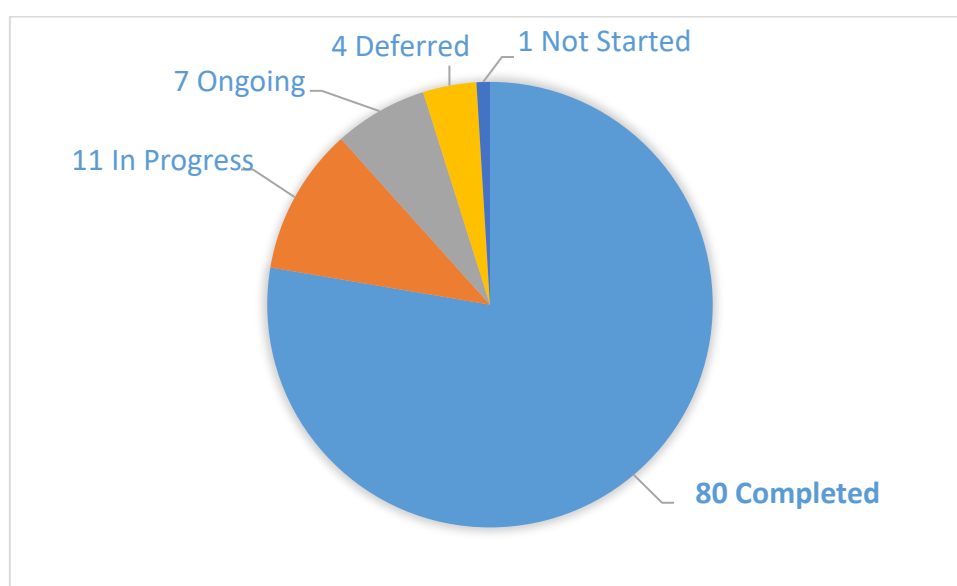
The longer-term four-year objectives/impacts will be thoroughly evaluated in 2024-2025 and reported to Council.

Review of the Annual Action Plan 2022-2023

Review of the Annual Action Plan 2022-2023 entailed eleven meetings across Council departments each focused on a different domain of the WHWP and drawing on information collected throughout the year. Representatives of partner organisations participated in reviewing collaborative actions in the Plan.

In all, there were 104 actions described in the Annual Action Plan 2022-2023. At the end of June 2023, 77.6% were completed.

Figure 1: Number of Actions by Progress Measure



A number of actions will continue in future years of the WHWP because these activities take more than one year to be achieved (in progress). Others were postponed (deferred) to the next year so that Council could respond to presenting priorities or because Council was unsuccessful in obtaining a government grant.

The WHWP responds to emerging trends and priorities. Some actions have been revised and rewritten for the Annual Action Plan 2023-2024 to better reflect the current context.

Snapshot of Achievements 2022-2023

The snapshot of achievements for the period 2022-2023 highlights some key activities and outcomes across the five key priority areas of the WHWP.

In summary over the course of the last year

- 72 different programs and initiatives across Council were implemented to support our community's health and wellbeing (some of these are detailed in this report)

- 26 of these involved working collaboratively with partner organisations.
- 75,769 people participated in these programs and initiatives, contributing positively to their health and wellbeing.



Mental Wellbeing

A growing program of activities for children and young people is happening at Strathdon House and Orchard Precinct with tool-making workshops and expanded school holiday programs that engage young people in participating in teams and using their imagination to bring their work to life. The successful Bring Light to the Night intergenerational will be held again next year.

Gambling Harm & Young People session participant feedback demonstrated that, of respondents:

- 87%, *agreed they knew more about gambling harms that may impact young people,*
- 91% *feel more motivated to take action against gambling harm, and*
- 96% *know where to get support for gambling harm.*

Collaboration with neighbouring Councils in delivery of a series of virtual programs reached 107 people to promote mental wellbeing. Included a session about Gambling Harm & Young People and a screening of the documentary film Happy Sad Man which offered touching insights into the emotional lives of five very different men.

The fortnightly Neighbourhood Friendship Group at the Kerrimuir Neighbourhood House for families with children 0-3 years encouraged families to make friendships and connections within their community while learning about services, activities, and providers across Whitehorse. One family who came to the group felt confident to start their own Rainbow Playgroup at the same venue in 2023.

Virtual parenting information programs covering topics such as ‘Parenting with Less Stress’ and ‘Navigating your Teen’s Mental Health’ were attended by a total of 343 people, strengthening parenting and family support within our community.

Council's Wellbeing Support Cards are now tailored for the LGBTIQ+ community and available to download from Council's website. Developed in collaboration with Family Access Network, hard copies have been distributed to parent groups, youth services, libraries, neighbourhood houses and across Council.

Great time, location, amount of people.

Loved it.

Great activity. Thank you!

Thank you for creating more awareness on gender equality and emotional intelligence.

Really enjoyed this program lots of great information.

Thank you!

Feedback about Ways to Play Program at Burwood Brickworks, December 2022

As a partner in the Eastern Metropolitan Region Together for Equality and Respect Strategy, Council delivered a campaign and activities for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence reaching 275 people of all ages in live events and a social media campaign reaching 6,465 and people of all ages participated in person at live events. Activities included the new parents' healthy relationships program for

Chinese background families (in Mandarin) called 'Building strong families' which had 20 parents and carers engaged. Another was Ways to Play Program with 18 parents and carers which also focussed on young families.

A Whitehorse Community Grant enabled FVREE (formerly EDVOS) to adapt their Leaders for Change program, currently delivered in secondary schools, to people with disability in the program. FVREE partnered with Nadrasca, a local disability service, to adapt it and then run it for 18 Nadrasca participants. Now rebranded as Champions for Change, the program promotes leadership and helps to reduce the exposure to violence for people with a disability. The Nadrasca Champions have produced their own video depicting a variety of scenarios in which people show how to practice respectful relationships socially and in the workplace.



Physical Activity

With the introduction of the Victorian Fair Access Roadmap, Council has increased opportunities to promote gender equity in access to sporting facilities in the municipality. We are partnering with other Eastern Region Metro LGAs to deliver a regional framework for the Roadmap, as well as with stakeholders in the Inner East Inclusive Clubs program.

Council has been developing strategic documents that will guide future capital works programs including the Open Space Strategy, East Burwood Masterplan and the Play Spaces and Social Recreation Action Plan. Community engagement for the Open Space Strategy included a number of pop-up sessions that were held in public open spaces across the municipality. In the coming year, partnerships with Melbourne Water and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action will enhance funding opportunities to help promote and activate public open space.

Community engagement about the Fair Access Roadmap, Open Space Strategy, Aquatics Feasibility Study and Signage in Sporting Reserves Policy informed equity in access to Council leisure and recreation facilities and spaces, which includes facilities for approximately 120 sporting clubs.

Opportunities for physical activity with dogs being off lead in under-utilised reserves continue to be expanded. The second stage of dog on and off lead signage has been completed, with positive responses from the community. In total Council has now added more than 240 new signs to our parks and reserves, with a QR code linking residents to information regarding off lead park locations. A community consultation about proposed changes to the Council Order for on and off leash areas and managing dogs in parks and reserves was conducted this year and received 1,258 submissions. Outcomes informed a review of off-lead provisions that was presented to Council in May.

Morning sessions were added to Mont Albert Reserve on-demand lighting this year. Council is extending the program to other sites at Springfield and Morton Parks, with infrastructure now in place. Community engagement is currently underway, the results of which will inform availability of the on-demand lighting in these parks.

Over 200 people improved their confidence and skills in bike riding through participation in a Council Bike skills program or activity. We work with local schools and community groups to promote the health and environmental benefits of riding bikes, with this year featuring a community led E-Bike and E-Trike expo at Nunawading Community Hub in March 2023.

The Aqualink Fab Living Program caters for retired and semi-retired people aged over 60 years, helping our ageing community to improve heart health, mobility, coordination, and balance, increase muscle density, manage diabetes better and improve energy and mood. At the end of June 2023, 913 people were Fab Living members.

The Spring in to Aqualink, Commonwealth Games, and Goodbye 2022 campaigns, and a new Mega Wellness class, saw memberships increase at Aqualinks this year. Body scan technology is now available at the centre. Peak membership number of 7,484 for the year was achieved in March 2023.

Walking is safer with improvements in Kingsley Gardens path, the Prospect Street Pedestrian crossings, and Thames/Avon Streets in Box Hill due to upgrades this year.



Social Connection

The Youth Art Competition and Exhibition featured work by 85 young people. A collaboration between Box Hill Community Arts Centre and Council's Youth Services team and FReeZA youth committee, over 150 people attended the opening night in November 2022. FReeZA members organised musicians, decorated the space and created a perfectly youth-friendly event. Due to the success and interest in this event, it is likely to become a biannual offering.

IDAHBOIT day was celebrated through a community event at Box Hill Mall which featured service information from collaborating partner organisations, a selfie station with dress ups, snacks and badge making. This public celebration promoted awareness of LGBTIQ+ priorities.

Approximately 70 young people aged 14–21 years enjoyed the Rainbow Ball in May 2023. Organised in partnership with Q Alliance (a network of organisations attendees enjoyed live music, entertainment, photo booth, dancefloor, seated dinner, chill out space, runway, prizes and show bags.

For Cultural Diversity Week Council delivered a Harmony Day Concert and activities at Strathdon House and Precinct. Called 'Everyone Belongs', community groups involved in the design and delivery of activities included the Whitehorse Interfaith Network, African Percussion Group, Hung Gar Yau Shu Lion Dancers, and the Victoria Hua Xin Chinese Women's Association.

One hundred and eleven volunteers achieved Significant Years of Service award certificates and gifts presented by the Mayor at the 2022 Thank You celebration to recognise and thank Council's 300 volunteers for the positive contribution they make to the community. Held at Box Hill Town Hall, 128 people were in attendance enjoying a delicious afternoon tea, entertainment, raffles, and door prizes. A volunteer thank-you video was also screened on Council's social media, website and LinkedIn.

"I would like to thank you for organising the community event at Aqualink Box Hill yesterday. It was a fun and valuable event. My family and I learn how to stay safe here and know what we have in our community, including the Aqualink. We didn't know it before. We hope this event will be regular, so we can connect with our diverse community members and learn more about lives in Australia. Thank you!"

Participant comment about International Students Welcome Event.

The Welcome to International Students project, a partnership with Boroondara and Manningham Councils, saw an event held in each municipality. Whitehorse City Council collaborated with Deakin University, the SES and Rotary to host an event at Aqualink Box Hill in which 47 people attended.

The Life Stories Intergenerational Program this year was wholeheartedly embraced by 15 students from a local primary school and older people who participate at Mountain View Cottage. Sharing stories is a special way for different generations to learn from and value each other. A celebration event at the school involved older participants, children, parents, and care givers who heard speeches and saw the presentation of the Life Story Books.

Throughout October 2022, Council and the community celebrated positive ageing with the Whitehorse Seniors Festival. Always popular, more than 1,400 people attended the festival, with a broad range of free or low-cost events on offer.

Established in 2022 to support and connect young families post-COVID restrictions, the Neighbourhood Friendship group ran at Kerrimuir Neighbourhood House with between 3 and 8 families each week. Members connect with each other outside the group, supporting each other through the challenges of early parenting. One family who came to the group felt confident to start their own Rainbow Playgroup at the same venue in 2023.

The 2022 Youth Forum created a real buzz in October with over 60 young people attending.

Creative experiences at the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, in home or at school reached over 700 children and youth. Many community arts programs are adapted for home-schooled children providing arts support and development tutors to engage young people across a range of arts media. The Box Hill Community Arts Centre engaged kindergarten children and indigenous work experience students through educational visits to the centre.

Place Activation pods have been popular during school holidays with activities delivered in partnership with local dance schools, Alkira, Zero Waste Victoria, and community groups.

'Many patrons claimed the show Enchanted Evening in October 2022 to be Council's best Midweek Matinee to date! The show featured the timeless music and Rodger and Hammerstein plus multiple costume changes of stunning formalwear and glamorous gowns.'

Arts and Cultural Services Team
member

The Midweek Matinee is an opportunity to meet up with friends and see affordable quality entertainment. This year Council delivered five performances to a total of 1,615 patrons.

Professional theatrical or musical performances were back in full swing in 2022-2023 financial year featuring twenty productions reaching a total of 5140 audience members. With so many cancellations due to COVID in 2020 and 2021 patrons expressed joy at the experience of live shows once again. The family show Alphabet of Awesome Science combining scientific surprises with a speedy voyage through the alphabet brought science and laughter to patrons of all ages.

An estimated 2000 people attended the joyous 2023 Harmony Day Concert event 'Everyone Belongs' at Strathdon House and Orchard Precinct. Performing on Wurundjeri land, the headline act featured proud Gamilaraay man Mitch Tambo, whose powerful rendition of The Voice in Gamilaraay language inspired the audience to stand up and saying no to discrimination. African drumming workshops, dancing, and supporting the local women who perform as part of the Victoria Hua Xin Chinese Women's Association further immersed the audience in the harmony theme.

Spring Festival 2022 was a vibrant and inclusive celebration of the diversity of the Whitehorse community. An estimated 20,000 people attended and over 80 diverse community groups and performers were involved.

An estimated 10,000 people attended the Whitehorse Carols 2022. With support from Creative Victoria, the diversity of programming increased engagement with Victoria's contemporary live music. Whitehorse Churches Care were involved in the event with representatives and performers from over 30 local churches participating.

Social Inclusion (incl. Digital Inclusion)



A Digital Inclusion Workshop facilitated by Council in October 2022 brought together organisations who have played a role in facilitating the digital inclusion of people in our community. Fifteen people from nine organisations were engaged through sharing knowledge and identifying gaps and opportunities to improve digital inclusion in Whitehorse. Outcomes of the Workshop were the establishment of an ongoing Digital Inclusion Network hosted by Council from February 2023 and a project plan to bring together Seniors with 1:1 digital support.

The Disability in Whitehorse Action Plan 2022-2026 was developed and addresses access in the priority areas of: services and programs; information; the built environment; and employment, education, and training.

Collaboration through the Whitehorse Food Group has facilitated links between local food relief agencies and Foodbank Victoria, leading to trials of local fresh food distribution in Whitehorse. Council developed a new publication called Food Finders for distribution via food relief agencies and download from Council's website. To improve community access to food relief, Council has included a Food Support subcategory under Health & Wellbeing category in the online Community Directory.

This year Council assisted ten Seniors CALD groups in person, phone and by email support with their 2023 Community Grant using the Smarty Grants application process.

This year Council has participated in several initiatives with healthAbility and other stakeholders to promote the health and wellbeing of local residents living in public housing post-COVID restrictions. One, funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, provided place-based activities to promote social connections and provide information for residents aged over 55 at two estates in Nunawading, reaching approximately 50 people. The other, a community event delivered by healthAbility and other members of the Wattle Hill Stakeholder Group and Foodbank Victoria brought together more than 130 community members.

Free or low-cost educational opportunities were provided for the business community on topics such as Digital Solutions, the Digital Jobs Program, Cyber Security and current Scam alerts.

A significant undertaking this year was engaging with Whitehorse's diverse business community for the consultation phase of the Investment and Economic Development

Strategy. Translated postcards and use of QR codes made it easy for people who read simplified Chinese and focus groups and drop-in sessions in Mandarin and Cantonese enabled face-to-face discussions. Large print hard copy surveys were available.

Council's monthly Community Groups e-newsletter was shared with more than 400 Not-For-Profit organisations. At least 30 of these groups support and/or have the capacity to reach new migrants.

Increasing requests for information from the community this year illustrate the growing interest in Aboriginal History. Council refers these requests to the traditional custodians, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

This year Council has engaged more regularly with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to build relationships and increase understanding of each organisation. Council engaged in three Cultural Consultation meetings with Elders from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and now hosts monthly consultation Meet the Elders sessions with Council's Reconciliation Advisory Committee and with different departments across Council.

Council marked National Sorry Day with the annual Flag Raising Ceremony, with 200 people attending (many of whom were local primary and secondary school students) and featuring a Welcome to Country by Uncle Colin Hunter.

The Community Grants Program Review resulted in an increased accessibility of the grants program through translations of Grant Guidelines, delivery of language specific Grants information session and interpreters at other sessions, 1:1 support to CALD groups applying for grants and promotion of the program in the Community Groups e-newsletter sent to many diverse groups in the community. One-hundred and sixty-eight applications were received and assessed.



Climate Change Mitigation

The Box Hill Car Share trial continues with this year seeing a focus on community education and promotion to ensure residents and workers are aware of the trial and to build a successful user base. Utilisation remains strong, with bookings averaging over 6hrs/day for all three cars, which is well above the target of 4hrs/day. Council

and GoGet have agreed to install an additional two car share cars, with two new car share parking spaces added on Nelson Rd in mid-June 2023.

93% of evaluation participants reported learning something new from attending an Event or Challenge as part of the pilot Healthy Me, Healthy Planet program.

The partnership project Healthy Me-Healthy Planet wrapped up in August 2022. The program evaluation of the pilot Healthy Me, Healthy Planet program suggests that it enhanced participants' health and wellbeing and their pro-climate/environmental knowledge and attitudes. Importantly, the findings indicate that participants increased their confidence to make lifestyle changes and the program allowed them to feel more motivated to promote the health co-benefits of action on climate change.

Throughout the year, activities at Strathdon House and Orchard engaged people of all ages in preparing and sharing food, seasonal cooking, and urban gardening. Community members lead many activities, sharing their knowledge of growing and using vegetables and herbs, and when the weather permitted activities were held outdoors to encourage physical activity while learning. Planning is underway for additional programs that promote healthy eating, including a monthly Urban Harvest Day.

A broad range of activities to encourage resource efficiency, gardening, healthy eating, and waste reduction engaged over 3,000 people from across the municipality, including children, businesspeople, and seniors. Residents can borrow Energy Monitoring Kits through their local library, join in events during Sustainable Living Week, Spring Festival and Seniors Festival, learn new skills at Strathdon House and Orchard Precinct or access discounted composting products and online educational resources. Thirteen local schools participated in the ResourceSmart Program.