



Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Annual Highlights Report 2021-2022



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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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 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. 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 2021-2022 draws on information contributed by departments across Council 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 2022-2023 which describes the actions that Council and partners will do in the second year of the WHWP across the financial year 2022-2023. 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 four 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.

In April 2022, following a partnership workshop the previous month, Whitehorse City Council and healthAbility formed the Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Collaborative Action Group. The group's purpose is to bring together representatives from the respective organisations, and other invited organisations, to inform, identify and collaborate on actions to achieve the objectives of the WHWP. In addition, the group will:

- Participate in monitoring and evaluation of collaborative actions.
- Contribute information towards impact and outcome progress measures for shared activities in the WHWP.
- Participate in the evaluation of the WHWP.

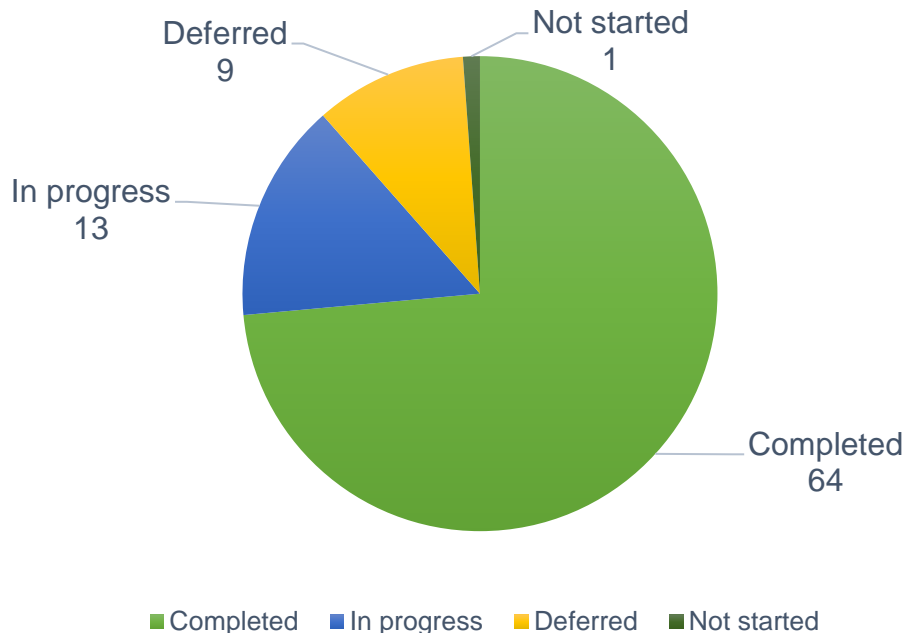
The longer term four-year objectives/impacts will be thoroughly evaluated in 2025 and reported to Council.

Review of the Annual Action Plan 2021-2022

Review of the Annual Action Plan 2021-2022 entailed eleven meetings across Council departments each focused on a different domain of the WHWP and drawing on information collected throughout the year. An engagement workshop was also held with the newly formed Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Collaborative Action Group, which has representatives from across departments at Whitehorse City Council and healthAbility the local community health service.

In all, there were 87 actions described in the Annual Action Plan 2021-2022. At the end of June 2022, 73.5% 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 occurring during the pandemic or because Council was unsuccessful in

obtaining a government grant. One action was not started as it was incorrectly scheduled, and is due to commence in 2023-2024.

The WHWP responds to emerging trends and priorities. Some actions have been revised and rewritten for the Annual Action Plan 2022-2023 to better reflect the current context.

Snapshot of Achievements 2021-2022

The snapshot of achievements for the period 2021-2022 highlights some key activities and outcomes across the five key priority areas of the WHWP. The quarterly and annual reports capture the full range of initiatives that work towards achieving the health and wellbeing objectives of the WHWP.

Over the course of the last year:

- 58 different programs and initiatives across Council were implemented to support our community's health and wellbeing (some of these are detailed in this report)
- 17 of these involved working collaboratively with partner organisations
- 13,990 people participated in these programs and initiatives, contributing positively to their health and wellbeing.

In addition, in 2021-2022 Council embarked on community engagement and development of seven plans that contribute to implementation of the WHWP in the future. These are:

- Diversity in Whitehorse Action Plan
- Volunteering in Whitehorse Action Plan
- Disability in Whitehorse Action Plan
- Reconciliation in Whitehorse Action Plan
- Sustainability Strategy
- Youth Plan
- Early Years Plan

Council and partner organisations have responded in creative ways to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to support and connect our community and provide information, and this is evident in many of the highlighted achievements.

Mental Wellbeing

Collaboration with neighbouring Councils in delivery of a series of virtual programs reaching 1196 people to promote mental wellbeing, including Good Food - Good Mood, Understanding Controlling Behaviour and Men's Habits for Happiness.



“Not a question but a comment. This is a fantastic initiative and exactly what Councils should be doing. Great work!”

[Participant in Men's Health Week event, Men's Habits for Happiness, June 2022]

The Jobs for Victoria program collaboration with Box Hill Institute, recovery support grants for 75 businesses, establishment of an outdoor equipment fund and providing information about mental wellbeing supported local businesses through the challenges of the pandemic and lockdowns.

People with lived experience of mental illness and, family members of carers and people with lived experience of mental illness participated in engagement for the Disability in Whitehorse Action Plan.

The Strathdon House and Orchard Precinct offered a drop-in activity to make a card for someone to spread messages of gratitude and improve wellbeing as part of Thinking of You Week in June 2022.

Virtual parenting information programs covering topics such as “Suicide Conversations for Parents & Carers” and “Supporting a Child's Social & Emotional Development” were attended by 685 people, strengthening parenting and family support within our community. The on-line format enabled two members of a household to attend a forum together. Live captioning was well received. “I cannot believe how accurate it is.” [Parenting information program participant in reference to live captioning of virtual forum, 2022]

A fortnightly Neighbourhood Friendship Group at the Kerrimuir Neighbourhood House for families with children 0-3 years was introduced to encourage families to make friendships and connections within their community while learning about services, activities and providers across Whitehorse.

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 over 2000 people. Participants learned about being an active bystander, family violence restorative justice, implementing prevention programs in a faith-based organisation and the impacts of violence against women with a disability.

The Women's Health East Our Culture Our Health project supported by Council promoted the social inclusion and mental health and wellbeing of Mandarin-speaking

women in the City of Whitehorse through education, information and social connection, reaching a total of 100 people. A key outcome was an increased understanding of mental health issues and their symptoms in over 90% of participants surveyed. A new Chinese Women's Mental Health Network was established, with nine organisations represented.

The Chinese new parents' project coordinated by healthAbility has progressed with the support of Council. In February 2022 14 people from five organisations attended a workshop to build their knowledge around gender equality and healthy relationships. Subsequently the five organisations joined a co-design process to adapt the healthy relationship messages to Chinese background families.

Over 500 of Council's Wellbeing Support Cards have been distributed to people attending events and programs this year. The Cards have also been distributed to Council's Customer Services Department and provided to the Local Laws Team to support community members they meet during their day-to-day work.

Twelve local sports clubs participated in a candid discussion during the Club Development Forum 'Providing a Positive Club Environment for Mental Health of Members' in December 2022.

Over 70 weekly social connection/welfare calls supported older residents at home during pandemic restrictions. Council also developed and distributed over 200 Activity Packs to engage isolated people in activities at home.

Physical Activity

Council engaged the community in a review of the dog off-lead provisions and established the Domestic Animal Management Advisory Committee, paving the way to expand opportunities for physical activity with dogs being off-lead in under-utilised reserves.



The On-demand Lighting Trial at Mont Albert Reserve was successful and supported by the community. On-demand lighting is now available in the Reserve both in the morning and the evening. Extension to other facilities is anticipated, dependent on further community consultation.

Community safety and access to the Box Hill Gardens multi-court space has been improved through lighting for night time use. Council continues to implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in open space design (increasing gender sensitive spaces).

Cycling and walking were promoted as active transport initiatives during lockdown. One-on-One Bike Skills Training and Electric Bike Come and Try Sessions increased the confidence of 44 participants.

Council has fast-tracked the delivery of the line marking and signage elements of the Easy Ride Routes, completing the line marking for almost all of the Top 6 Easy Ride Routes. Wayfinding signage for the Top 6 Easy Ride Routes will be completed early in 2022/23.

The Fab Living program is tailored for people over 60 and is integral to the group fitness timetables at Aqualink. The successful trial of a new Fab Strength Plus class has seen this class introduced at both Aqualink Box Hill and Nunawading. Fab Strength Plus classes involve weight bearing exercises using strength equipment and the individual's body weight, producing important health benefits to participants.

Aqualink Box Hill and Nunawading also offered a range of incentives to encourage members and the broader community to visit and engage in fitness activities and recreation programs.

Social Connection

The Working for Victoria (State funded) program enabled Council to employ 29 people across eight departments, four of whom focused on supporting older people with digital literacy and connection and developing intergenerational programs. Fifty of the 70 senior-focused groups in Whitehorse participated in this Digital Ladder Project.



As we emerged from lockdowns in 2021 retail precincts were activated with music and window art to celebrate Christmas and end of year festivities with a total of 13 performances across five locations.

The Activate Whitehorse Booster Fund was introduced; a mini grant of \$1000 that encouraged the community to host pop up events, workshops and activations in the pods in Box Hill, Britannia Mall and Brentford Square Shopping Centre.

Community access to Place Activation pods has increased, creating opportunities for communities to self-organise, meet in a public space and connect with community members through shared activities. Bookings for the year totalled 17.

Consultation occurred at Brentford Square, Britannia Mall and Box Hill Mall inviting resident and businesses to have their say about events, workshops, creative and wellbeing opportunities as part of Activate Whitehorse.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Council's children's community arts program reached over 500 children and the artist in schools program continues to

delight students, parents and teachers. Feedback from parents, particularly of students who were flagged as possible school refusers or reluctant to attend school, indicates that the program helps to make going to school a more positive experience for their children. One parent remarked she hadn't seen her child this happy and excited to be at school for years.

Cultural events and festivals were impacted by pandemic restrictions this year. Despite this, over 2000 enthusiastic patrons attended COVID safe performances as part of the Midweek Matinee program and the full Performing Arts Season that commenced in 2022. Patrons of the Christmas Midweek Matinee performance, mostly seniors, enjoyed coming together again for a live show and morning tea service after a long period of lockdown and isolation. A further 2000 people enjoyed in-person cultural events: Christmas Film Night, Harmony Day Celebration Concert and Moonlight Movie Night.

Over 100 older residents maintained social connections during pandemic restrictions through weekly facilitated group conference phone calls.

Social Inclusion (incl. Digital Inclusion)

Council hosted a growing Digital Connection Group, bringing together and enhancing partnerships with like-minded organisations who are working to address the digital divide.



Council is participating in the Over 55s Public Housing Tenants Health and Wellbeing Project, generating increased community connections for people living on two public housing estates in Whitehorse. Improving residents' digital access and therefore increasing access to services and information for health and wellbeing is one aspect of the project.

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 Digital Inclusion Map of the City of Whitehorse developed by healthAbility is now available to download from Council's website. Neighbouring inner east Councils also have maps for their municipality available.

People who participate in the National Disability Insurance Scheme are provided with assistance to access all classes at Box Hill Community Arts Centre. Two new all abilities classes, the 'Friday Mosaic's class and the 'Hands on Pottery' class were introduced offering an additional 12 placements combined.

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.

In May 2022 businesses were encouraged to share their stories as part of the Cultural Diversity Photography project. The project produced a guided photo walk capturing local stories and images that will form part of a public art exhibition later in the year.

The collaborative 2022 Tackling Ageism campaign reached total of 76,856 people with social media posts and brought about an increased awareness of ageism in 6796 staff across seven Eastern Metropolitan Region Councils, including Whitehorse City Council.

A diverse audience of young and old enjoyed Kutcher Edwards “Circling Time” song and storytelling at the Whitehorse Centre in May 2022.

Over 100 people, many of whom were local primary and secondary school students participated in the Whitehorse Sorry Day Flag Raising Event on 26 May, learning more about reconciliation and respect for country. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elder Alex Kerr provided the Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony.

Council liaised with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to inform the text and images to be used in five new information boards across Whitehorse; in parks, the Schwerkolt Museum and the Yarran Dheran Information Centre.

The Strathdon House and Orchard Precinct Heritage Trail includes acknowledgement of the traditional owners and further information is included on the trail regarding plants used for food and back burning practices of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

This year the Q-East Alliance LGBTIQ+ Support Groups & Safe Spaces - A Resource for young LGBTIQ+ people aged 12 – 25 years was updated.

Climate Change Mitigation

The Healthy Me Healthy Planet Challenge has successfully encouraged primary school children through to adults to make small changes like walking instead of driving, growing food and using reusable drink containers, with 210 registered users, 45 currently active participants and 777 challenges completed this year. In addition, 603 participants attended 30 Healthy Me Healthy Planet programs on diverse topics such as ‘Waterwise Gardening’ and ‘Smarter Living – a Chef’s Guide to Sustainable Food’. The increased skills and knowledge to improve personal health and wellbeing outcomes while reducing individual contribution to climate change is the subject of research by Deakin University Health Nature Sustainability Research Group, a partner in the project run by Whitehorse Manningham Libraries.



Well over 100 community members helped to plan the programs and activities at Council's new environmental precinct, the Strathdon House and Orchard Precinct which opened in December 2021. Members of the community are busy establishing and managing a shared educational kitchen garden and Council is delivering a program of workshops that engage the community with health and wellbeing, living more sustainably and developing and caring for gardens. The Winter Veggie Patch planning session and the Edible Forest Gardening workshop are recent examples.

This year, 785 street and 110 decorative lights have been replaced with LEDs as part of Council's lighting upgrade program and Council's largest buildings are being made more energy efficient. In 2021-2022, 168.8kW of total solar PV capacity was installed on Council. This brings total solar PV capacity to 921.9 kW, saving 222.3 tonnes CO₂-e per annum.

Energy audits were conducted at the Vermont South Tennis & Bowls Club and East Burwood South Pavilion & Sports Club to identify possible energy efficiency improvements of these facilities as part of Sustainability Victoria's Community Climate Change and Energy Action Program.

The Business Energy Saver Program encouraged local businesses to consider energy efficiency upgrades and saw 65 installations.

Virtual home assessments, tailored energy efficiency workshops and information were delivered to the Iranian and Mandarin speaking communities, as well as clients of Whitehorse Home and Community Services by the Australian Energy Foundation.

Council successfully planned for and implemented a Food Organic Garden Organic (FOGO) service where food is accepted in the existing garden organics bin, launching on 1 July 2022. An extensive education program was implemented including delivery of education 'kits' to households including a kitchen caddy to collect food scraps, compostable caddy liners, information booklet, fridge magnet, and outdoor bin lid sticker.

Residents learned about composting to create a valuable organic resource for their gardens and saved money on composting products as part of the Compost Revolution program. More than 400 residents have accessed tutorials or obtained discounts on compost bins, worm farms or related products this year.

Our community is more aware of recycling. Local people have had a virtual tour of the Visy Recycling Materials Recovery Facility to see how kerbside recycling bin contents are sorted ready for reprocessing or recycling. Children participated in a schools competition that helped them understand about recycling and what they recycle at home.

Whitehorse residents received rewards for recycling correctly as part of the Gold Star education program. Visual checks of household recycling and garbage bins enable Council teams to provide educational feedback tags.

Also, in a trial of HomeCycle – a new collection program for reusable items – over 400 collections were carried out.

People in Whitehorse are getting involved with sustainable living. During Seniors Month in October 2021, five different workshops, webinars and events were held covering a range of gardening, home composting, recycling, solar and energy efficiency topics. One hundred people attended these (mostly) on-line events.

In total, over 1000 people attended 18 diverse events as part of Council's annual Sustainable Living Week in May 2022. Some highlights of the week were a Gardening Masterclass with gardening experts, an Electric Vehicle Expo, solar and battery workshops, tours of Council's Food and Garden Organics Recovery Facility and the Burwood Brickworks Shopping Centre, a bird walk and talk at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary, an art exhibition highlighting the issue of plastic in our oceans, and children's nature play activities.