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Foreword

Whitehorse City Council has been committed to promoting sustainability for nearly 20 years since it published its 5-year sustainability strategy ‘Our EcoVision’ in 2002. This has been followed by expanded commitments and an ongoing focus on enhancing sustainability practices across a broad range of Council actions and strategies. Notably, this has carried over into Whitehorse’s economic planning; sustainable development has occupied a privileged position as a key area of Whitehorse’s Economic Development Mandate since at least 2014.

In 2015, the international community validated these local commitments when 193 nations comprising the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda encompasses 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve a better, more sustainable future for all and ‘leave no one behind.’

As a development framework, the SDGs have also been adopted by local communities around the world, where real issues of human wellbeing are played out. This has been most significant in urban areas, which are expected to host a growing majority of the world’s population. In our local context, a range of public and private Australian Organisations have committed projects to advance the SDGs. Whitehorse has taken this first step to localise the SDGs in a partnership with the Deakin Business School, Deakin University. The Council is proud to present its first voluntary report on SDGs and recognises that the SDG may have an increasing role in inclusive development in the post-COVID pandemic world.

Jeff Green
General Manager City Development
Whitehorse City Council
Localising the Sustainable Development Goals in the City of Whitehorse: The 2020 Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signed by all member countries is the benchmark for sustainable development across all spheres of human endeavour. The UN has recommended that the best results of SDGs based development occurs when the SDGs are localised: i.e. the SDGs are interpreted in light of local wants and needs, stakeholder expectations and availability of adequate expertise and funds for this development agenda.

This report maps the alignment of Whitehorse City Council with the SDGs. This mapping exercise has identified target areas the Council is already committed to and is conducting appropriate activities, while recognising potential areas that the Council could be involved in that are consistent with its existing broad strategic plan and the broader SDGs agenda. We used a desktop assessment of Council’s plans and strategies for this mapping exercise. This assessment provides a clear view of the current alignment of the Council Vision’s Strategic Directions with the SDGs. We find that the Council Vision’s Strategic Directions are strongly aligned with the SDGs, and that Council Plans reflect this alignment. We are proud that Whitehorse City Council is at the forefront of sustainable development which will result in a more inclusive and prosperous world.

Granular analysis of council documents allows us to make specific recommendations for further alignment of the Strategic Directions and Council Plans with the SDGs to take localisation of SDGs to the next level. This strategic long-term alignment will increase the chance of success in achieving sustainable development in the City of Whitehorse. We use three case studies of SDGs implementation across the world by city councils as examples to demonstrate how such strategic long-term alignment has proven to be useful in other cities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant setback for the achievement of the SDGs around the world. It has exposed the vulnerability of health systems, most strikingly in countries thought to rank highly for healthcare and disaster preparedness. In the face of global upheavals related to the pandemic, extreme poverty, environmental degradation, and the other challenges of our age remain as well as being exacerbated. The SDGs can inform the COVID recovery and longer-term sustainable development to confront these challenges and work in partnership to leave no one behind (Sachs et al., 2020).

This report develops a framework which can act as a guide in the current COVID-19 climate and the future post COVID world by demonstrating how the SDGs can potentially provide a socially equitable, inclusive, sustainable and locally relevant development pathway. This framework can be used to develop a sustainable development roadmap for the City of Whitehorse, better aligned with the SDGs. This may be relevant to other city councils across Australia as well.
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The term Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was officially introduced and defined in the United Nations document, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations, 2015). The agenda in this document came about through a deliberative process involving the United Nations 193 member states, as well as global civil society, made up of large businesses, non-government organisations and civil action groups. This agenda, setting out 17 broad goals (or SDGs) encompasses all aspects of sustainable development and was accepted as United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 by all member states on 25th September 2015. The agreed Agenda specifies 169 targets within the 17 SDGs in order for countries to be able to form policies in respect to such targets and thus measure progress in achieving these overall goals. Appendix A lists the 17 SDGs. As stipulated in Paragraph 54 of the Agenda:

Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances.

Further, the same paragraph opens by noting that the SDGs and their accompanying targets “are integrated and indivisible”. This clearly means we all live in one ecosystem called Earth and that it is unviable to separate each goal or target as one individual item merely to tick off on a checklist.

Further, Paragraph 55 states the need for each country “setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances” and ensuring the targets specified are “incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies”. Thus, the goals cannot ignore local context nor merely accept development policies that are based on mainstream economic models that maximise economic growth to the detriment of overall sustainable development.

For the SDGs to become established and be effective, supporting implementation strategies are required that operate as separate core activities – but within one broad-based SDGs strategy – by public (sub-national governments and State authorities), private (corporate) and social (cooperative) organisations. Such organisations need to operate in a coordinated manner to support programmes that reinforce the national commitment and extend this national commitment. This approach by all organisations below the national government level, including local councils, needs to provide cumulative development in the use of invested equipment (e.g. machines and workspace), other physical objects (e.g. plant seeds and electronic software) and skill enhancement of humans (education and training) in the context of commercial (for profit), social (for equity) and environmental (for conservation) outcomes.

From a local council’s perspective, while there are 169 targets sitting underneath the 17 goals, each goal can be localised to address specific issues that are relevant in a local context that work to contribute to the global effort. There are no mandatory requirements for publicly stating a level of commitment, minimum agreed targets, ongoing compliance or performance reporting imposed by the United Nations. This means Whitehorse City Council does not need to commit to all the goals or any of the global targets. They are a guide that an organisation can align with in terms of one or more SDGs in relation to local issues (e.g. recycling) and
choose relevant targets (e.g. waste reduction). Then indicators can be set to assess progress in the targets identified. This is a process called localisation—specifying an exact way of achieving (say) waste reduction and recycling to help advance the global effort articulated in the goals. As the City of Melbourne (2017, p.3) states:

As a result, SDGs can be utilised by organisations, including local governments, as a practical global reference point to think holistically about sustainable development, while providing a common language to engage and communicate with people to enact positive change.

This report identifies, highlights and develops areas where Council activity is already effective in the SDGs space. It also seeks to identify and recommend areas of development for consideration by the council to better align its activities and strategic plans with the SDGs identified as relevant to council activity. We also propose a framework of reference against which Whitehorse City Council and potentially other City Councils can map their own trajectories towards SDG-guided sustainable development. This framework is set out in detail towards the end of this document, after all the SDGs are examined.

THE CITY OF WHITEHORSE

Located roughly 15 kilometres east of Melbourne’s Central Business District (CBD), the City of Whitehorse is an important suburban hub for healthcare, education and business. Within Whitehorse’s 64 square kilometres, 180,000 residents form a diverse community representing over 160 distinct cultures. Nearly 40% of residents were born overseas, including a large number of international students attending Deakin University, Box Hill TAFE and other educational institutions.

Whitehorse contains some of Melbourne’s most liveable suburbs, with tree-lined streets forming an urban forest with 26% canopy cover. The municipality boasts 170 playgrounds, over 20 bushland reserves and more than 350 parks. The area enjoys easy access to the CBD, supported by extensive public transport services and important road networks including the Eastern Freeway and Eastlink. These networks also provide strategic access to the southern bayside, the Yarra Valley eastern tourism regions and Melbourne Airport.

Whitehorse is supported by state-of-the-art health facilities alongside world-class educational institutions. About 36% of residents hold a bachelor’s degree or higher (compared to around 27.5% in Greater Melbourne), and this is translated into a knowledge-intensive economy, with the largest industries being Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional Scientific and Technical Services, and Education and Training. Among the 79 Local Government Areas of Victoria, Whitehorse ranks 7th and 9th respectively in life expectancy for male (81 years) and female (85 years) residents at birth.

In addition to maintaining its extensive reserves and parklands, Whitehorse has made significant investments to enhance sustainability in the municipality’s activities. Since 2008, Whitehorse has significantly reduced carbon emissions and corporate water consumption, invested significantly in Environmentally Sustainable Design and replaced most of its streetlights with energy-efficient globes.

Council’s adoption of fundamental Strategic Directions to enhance both its built and natural environments inform all sustainability achievements and plans. These primary values, alongside enhanced capacity from regional leadership and uniquely skilled and diverse residents, make Whitehorse an ideal candidate to provide leadership in the localisation of the UN SDGs among Australian Local Governments.
RESEARCH METHOD

A desktop review of 19 Council documents and strategies examined how current plans and strategies operate and align with specific SDGs. These strategic documents were prioritised and identified as relevant by Council. They are broadly divided into i) high-level planning and ii) specific strategies; both in line with the existing Council framework for planning and strategy (see Figure 1). The reviewed documents are listed in Appendix B. The council provided all relevant documents “in-confidence” to the researchers. Individual privacy was maintained, and no specific individual from the Council was identified or named in the report to Council.

The desktop review was conducted in two stages. Firstly, the SDGs were broken down into their 169 targets and then localised to the Whitehorse context (preliminary target localisation). Secondly, critical Council documents and strategies were studied to identify aligned actions and local indicators which would reveal the extent to which Council plans and actions were consistent with the SDGs (strategic document review). This made it possible to offer some preliminary recommendations to enhance the alignment of Council planning and action with the SDGs. These two stages are further detailed below.

**Preliminary Target Localisation**

The 17 SDGs were analysed at the granular level of their 169 targets. These targets were localised and made relevant to Council activity through a careful study of the targets and local needs identified in collaboration with Council staff. This process had the following results:

- SDG targets which were not relevant were excluded from further analysis.
Localising the Sustainable Development Goals in the City of Whitehorse: The 2020 Report

- SDG targets which were directly relevant to the municipality were left untranslated.
- SDG targets which were indirectly relevant to the municipality were translated into meaningful localised target where appropriate.
- Where appropriate, particular SDGs were translated into corresponding ‘focus areas’ aligned with the SDGs and informed by its targets.

**Strategic Document Review**

Once the SDGs had been translated into localised targets, an assessment of key Council strategic documents was conducted to review their alignment with the localised targets. This was done by studying each strategic document to identify local actions and indicators that could provide evidence of alignment with the SDGs strategy, and any localised targets. This process began with high-level planning documents and continued with the analysis of specific key strategies and action plans. Through this study, appropriate Council plans were mapped against localised SDG targets, and recommendations made where Council could do more to align its strategies with the SDGs.

![Blackburn Lake Sanctuary](image-url)
WHERE ARE WE NOW

Desktop analysis of Council documents has demonstrated a remarkably strong alignment of the Whitehorse City Council to the SDGs. The Council identified five Strategic Directions for its plans, to which key strategies and actions are linked. We reviewed the Council Vision’s Strategic Directions and mapped their alignment with the SDGs. Depicted in Table 1, in the second column, are SDGs which can be directly associated with aspects specified in Council plans and strategies; while in the third column are SDGs that implicitly relate to the particular strategic direction specified.

Table 1: Alignment of the City of Whitehorse Council Vision 2013-2023 Strategic Directions to the SDGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Strategic Direction</th>
<th>Strongly aligned SDGs</th>
<th>Indirectly aligned SDGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Direction 1:</strong> Support a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Direction 2:</strong> Maintain and enhance our built environment to ensure a liveable and sustainable city.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Direction 3:</strong> Protect and enhance our open spaces and natural environments.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Direction 4:</strong> Strategic leadership and open and accessible government.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Direction 5:</strong> Support a healthy local economy.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LOCALISING THE SDGs

The UN SDGs agenda is a set of aspirational targets that does not necessarily translate into clear directions and goals for all levels of government. In the Australian system of government, the federal and state governments are empowered and have the requisite funds to plan and act on any development agenda. Local government, in the form of city and shire councils in Australia, have to generate their own finances mainly from rates and charges, disposal of fixed assets, grants, user fees, and statutory fines to fund their activities. Major expenditures for local government include employee costs, materials and services. They receive little or no state or federal government financial support. The Australian system is closest to that of the UK, where the fiscal and legal authority is concentrated in the UK Parliament (see Case Study 2: Bristol and the SDGs). Similarly, local government in Australia does not have fiduciary, legislative or planning imprimatur granted by the constitution to allow it to generate revenue to fund development activities. This makes it necessary for local governments to seek alternate sources of revenue for sustainable development activities. This lack of federal and state government funding requires the engagement of other stakeholders and players in this space including the private and not-for-profit sectors.

This exploratory study defines the status of localisation of SDGs already achieved by Whitehorse City Council as evidenced by its “Strategic Directions” and other plans. Whilst all SDGs are inexorably interlinked, given the distribution of power and jurisdiction between federal, state and local governments in Australia, a council like Whitehorse has little or no control over many SDGs. Nonetheless, recognising the role of local governments in localising the SDGs and their limited resources, the UN has developed specific guidelines for local government (see Case Study 1: Localising the 2030 SDGs). Further, local government direct reporting on SDGs is an option (see Case Study 3: New York).

Desktop review of Whitehorse City Council documents highlights the progress towards localisation of the SDGs. The following section describes the localised targets identified for each SDG, and the relevant indicators in Council documents. Each SDG is contextualised in respect to the Australian context and its relevance to the local region of Whitehorse. The Council has done a commendable job in identifying the relevant localised SDG targets, and described corresponding indicators in its documents. We use these localised targets and indicators to provide specific recommendations for each SDG to enable further alignment of Council activities to the SDGs agenda. Our recommendations formalise the general direction already taken by the Council. Since many Council initiatives, plans and programs influence multiple SDGs, we have tried to tease out the most relevant programs and policies for each SDG to avoid repetition. Despite all such efforts, there are some SDGs that are addressed by the same policies.
CASE STUDY 1: LOCALISING THE 2030 AGENDA: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN recognises that local governments at all levels are the foundation for development using the SDGs agenda. The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTLRG) was created in 2013 with the agenda of implementation, localisation, monitoring and reporting of the SDGs.

Localisation of the SDGs agenda is considered to be the key force in promoting inclusive development, uniting all levels of government and stakeholders. It promotes efficiency and delivery of the SDGs. Localisation promotes a bottom-up approach and guides the development of a local policy agenda. It enables local governments to ensure strategic prioritisation of the SDGs as a development agenda and framework. The global taskforce has developed:

- tools to allow LRGs to support follow-up at the national level and encourage localisation and alignment of SDGs with local plans;
- a global reporting mechanism to promote the involvement of LRGs in National Voluntary Reviews and build specifically upon local governments’ experience of implementation and localisation to contribute to the high-level political forum;
- awareness raising to involve local communities and citizens in the implementation of the SDGs at local levels; and
- mobilisation of financial resources.

The global task force developed many activities to promote this agenda which included:

- training modules for local governments
- a toolbox for localising the SDGs
- peer review and exchange
- multi-stakeholder partnerships and awareness raising
- development of well-defined indicators, and
- development of reporting guidelines and a review process

The Global taskforce suggested that SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14 are of particular relevance to local governments.

SDG1: No Poverty

**Council Localised Targets**

- Improve food insecurity, homelessness, affordable housing opportunities (see Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan) in the municipality.
- Funding schemes directed at homelessness, food insecurity, living expenses (e.g. Solar rebates), disability support and families on very low incomes.
- Support for HACC (Home and Community Care) programs in the municipality, community infrastructure, & youth and mental health support services.
- Provision of rates relief where needed (See Rates Hardship Assistance Policy)
- Readiness to support needy in case of extreme events like fires, floods, pandemics (see Emergency Management Plan and Coronavirus Response including upkeep of essential services, digital support and $4.5 million Relief & Recovery Packages).
- Collaborate with major stakeholders and businesses throughout Whitehorse to facilitate sustainable investment and economic viability within the municipality.
- Poverty eradication through improved economic development in the municipality.
- Promote and support ongoing prosperity of retail activity centres, industrial precincts, and business parks.

**Recommendations**

- Build on recent developments in relief and housing solutions related to stay at home orders to help eliminate homelessness.
- Council can plan specific sustainability and food security/self-efficacy programs for the homeless and struggling members of the community.
- Council can confirm action on existing recommendations of staff, councillors and the community: e.g. by developing a comprehensive municipal food policy and dedicating public land for local food production, specifically for those who may need it most.
- Work with non-governmental bodies such as universities and community organisations to further promote housing for young people.
**SDG2: Zero Hunger**

**Council Localised Targets**

- Improve uptake of safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all people in Whitehorse, particularly the poor and vulnerable (see Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan and Municipal Early Years Plan).
- Programs to address child obesity, promote breastfeeding and immunisation, improve outcomes for the elderly, etc (see Municipal Early Years Plan and Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan).
- Sustainable gardening, including food gardening, establishing and maintaining community gardens and encouraging local food production initiatives.
- Develop a community education program on food resources and biodiversity.
- Develop a local / sustainable catering policy for Council.
- Council’s role in productive food planting on public land.
- Advocate for simplified nutrition food labelling (e.g. traffic light system).

**Recommendations**

- Plan specific sustainability and food security programs for the homeless and struggling members of the community.
- Develop a comprehensive municipal food policy as recommended by staff.
- Dedicate public land for local food production.
- Develop growing guides for the public including summaries of local regulations.
- Support innovative and cost-effective methods of local food production that can fulfil corporate catering needs (e.g. automated vertical farming). This may be done through specific grants or partnerships.
- Develop partnerships with food retailers (e.g. supermarkets) to enhance safe access by disadvantaged groups to food that may otherwise be wasted.
- Work with educational institutions to promote and possibly provide sufficient nutritious food to all children.
SDG3: Good Health and Well-being

**Council Localised Targets**

- Improve maternal and child health services and immunisation rates.
- Promote and deliver public & school immunisation programs.
- Deliver mental health and well-being programs.
- Support and implement programs to reduce harmful alcohol, cigarette and drug use.
- Promote and improve sexual and reproductive health (see Health and Wellbeing Plan & Municipal Youth Plan).
- Plan and deliver a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities for older people to remain connected, actively engaged and participate in the local community, and maintain health and wellbeing.
- Work towards a dementia-friendly community where people living with dementia are able to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value.
- Continue to safeguard the rights, dignity, health and independence of older people through action to prevent elder abuse.
- Increase access to shared spaces for physical activity and social connections by building multi-use, youth-friendly infrastructure.
- Ensure Council facilities are accessible and safe for all people, including children, people with disabilities and older people.
- Provide quality, accessible, flexible, affordable and integrated services to support and promote young people’s health and wellbeing.
- Promote the rights and inclusion of people with disability in the life of the community, including people with a mental illness.
- Increase health literacy for men and women in identified health and wellbeing priority areas, including mental health, harmful use of alcohol and violence prevention.
- Manage and maintain local roads and off-road walking and cycling infrastructure & improve road safety (see Community Road Safety Strategy).
- Reduce chemical spills and other pollution through community laws.
- COVID response: maintain essential services (e.g. Meals on Wheels) and provide remote solutions for restricted services (e.g. Youth worker phone consultations).
- Run strategic road safety education programs. These may be directed to school students and P platers (probationary drivers).
**Recommendations**

- Increase the quality and timeliness of health statistics & invest further in digital health solutions (e.g. telehealth).
- Enhance mental health services with Heads Up/Headspace and other providers.
- Develop specific plans to enhance mental health and wellbeing for families of young children.
- Provide immunisation against more diseases.
- Increase council-run public dental services.

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*A sculpture of the ‘White Horse’ symbolising the City’s identity outside the Whitehorse Civic Centre in Nunawading, Victoria*
4 QUALITY EDUCATION

SDG4: Quality Education

Council Localised Targets

- Provide support to Educators in Council (e.g. within Council’s Sustainability Strategy – through the Eastern Alliance for Sustainable Learning, Sustainability grants, the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program and the Blackburn Lake Education Program).
- Support quality early childhood education and care.
- Provide child health care services (through maternal and child health program).
- Promote 3-year-old kindergarten and other pre-kindergarten programs.
- Facilitate increased participation in 4-year-old kindergarten, in particular for vulnerable families.
- Improve the flexibility and accessibility of childcare.
- Advocate to local school communities for an increase in the number of affordable school holiday programs.
- Work with kindergarten committees to develop strategies for increasing the availability of kindergarten places for both 3 and 4-year-old children.
- Support local school projects and participation in English As a Second Language (EASL) programs (e.g. Parkswide education program, classroom talks, visits to recycling facilities, and support to participate in the Sustainable Schools program, sustainable transport programs and recycling/waste reduction projects).
- The Community Grants Program supports not-for-profit agencies to provide a range of free, low-cost services and affordable services (e.g. Lifelong Learning - Neighbourhood Houses & University of the Third Age).
- Support young people to access training and apprenticeships, be prepared for and access employment and attend tertiary education (Municipal Youth Plan).
- Support internships and start-up business skills.
- Increase employment opportunities for young people, including those from diverse backgrounds (Whitehorse Tertiary Business Skills Program).
- Identify opportunities to provide services and support to young people to prepare for and secure employment, particularly through the provision of free resume writing.
- Identify opportunities to provide young people not engaged in education and training settings with access to career counselling and guidance.
- Support the Learn Local Program to increase community access into the workforce and business.
- Encourage vulnerable members of the community (including persons with disabilities, indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations) to access all levels of education and vocational training (see Whitehorse Disability Action Plan and Municipal Youth Plan).
- Support literacy and numeracy in the municipality.
- Enhance the creativity, skills, knowledge and social connections of the community through the delivery of accessible community arts programs.
- Promote volunteering and community participation.
- Delivery of accessible, affordable performing arts and art exhibitions.
- In collaboration, increase the participation of people with disabilities in cultural events, the arts and sporting, recreational, social, religious and cultural activities.
- Redevelop the Whitehorse Centre as a cultural and community facility for Whitehorse and beyond.
- Better integration and collaboration with Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library.
- Work with the Library Corporation and Neighbourhood Houses to develop a process for increased collaboration in the arts and cultural planning and programming.
- In partnership with key stakeholders, further develop and implement cultural heritage programs. Both the Box Hill and Whitehorse Historical Societies provide valuable archival and collection services for the community.
- Promote Whitehorse’s growing knowledge economy focusing on the leading sectors.

Recommendations
- Develop guidelines for sustainability education.
- Enhance and develop stronger partnerships with early childhood educators and family day care providers to improve learning outcomes.
- Develop partnerships with local educational institutions to increase the availability of affordable childcare.
- Develop publicly accessible pre-primary education programs through libraries and other public facilities. Such programs can be specifically designed and promoted to 'prepare for school'.
- Council can provide scholarships in partnership with local businesses, industry and other stakeholders for training at local institutes such as Box Hill Institute or Deakin.
- Work with Aboriginal community/advocacy groups to define viable strategies to increase Indigenous access to relevant education and training.
- Develop partnerships with educational businesses in the area to organise tutoring services for disadvantaged young people. Student eligibility can be based on Socio-Economic Status (SES) indicators and tutors may be recruited from local educational institutions and residents.
- Make specific plans to promote adult literacy including financial literacy by partnering with advocacy groups, local businesses, educational institutions, financial institutions and superannuation funds.
- Create an urban environmental education centre to showcase sustainable living practices, biodiversity and local food production such as the redevelopment of existing community facilities.
• Develop strategies to support international students to build resilience through COVID-19 and beyond. This can be done in coordination with Deakin University, Box Hill Institute and other educational or community organisations.
• Build on recent developments and invest further in online education services/tools to harness digital transformation.
SDG5: Gender Equality

Council Localised Targets

- Identified targets in Council’s Health and Wellbeing Plan and around female employees.
- Support sexual health programs.
- Promote leadership and development opportunities for Council employees.
- Support and strengthen secure, safe, involved and caring family environments and healthy personal relationships.
- Create a safe, welcoming and inclusive community for all young people, regardless of cultural background, religion, language, gender, sexuality, ability or socio-economic status, including international students.
- Collaboratively plan and deliver evidence-based strategies to increase the capacity of Council and the community to respond to and prevent family violence and violence against women.
- Design and deliver affordable business skills education and mentoring opportunities for new and emerging businesspeople, with a focus on women returning to the workforce, work-life balance and the promotion of entrepreneurship.
- Promote an understanding of the link between gender inequity and violence against women and children.
- Promote healthy and positive relationships between men and women across Council and the community.
- Uphold principles of gender equity in mainstream Council operations, strategies, policies and service delivery.
- Advocate for gender equity principles and practices to be upheld across the community in a broad range of settings including but not limited to workplaces, recreation, education and social arenas.
- Advocate for a stronger and more coordinated service response for women and children affected by family violence, including both justice and legal responses as well as community support services.
- Employment-related decisions based solely on merit.
- A workplace free from discrimination.
- Protection of reasonable flexibility in working arrangements.
• Support and strengthen secure, safe, involved and caring family environments and healthy personal relationships.

**Recommendations**

• Set specific goals/directions for women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership.
• Enhance communication regarding the options available to employees seeking dispute resolution, especially for sexual harassment and sexual discrimination.
• Make plans to counter the increasing threats to young people online (e.g. cyber-bullying, sexual predators, privacy breaches).
• Develop a digital literacy and safety plan.
• Review the Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Policy to reflect positive recommendations and obligations contained in the Gender Equality Act 2020.
SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Council Localised Targets

- Build and maintain public toilets.
- Implement community water conservation education programs on an annual basis. This could include water audits, competitions, incentives and working with partners such as Yarra Valley Water.
- Reduce chemical spills and other pollution through community laws.
- Support Waterwatch program at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary and Koonung Creek.
- Protect the natural environment, enhance the built environment, and lead in environmental sustainability to substantially increase water-use efficiency in the municipality. Target 40% reduction in corporate water use by 2030 (from 2012 baseline).
- Develop and support integrated water management projects with Yarra Valley Water and Melbourne Water.
- Strengthen parks policy, water bodies and wetlands policy, Yarra river protection, and Blackburn Lake Sanctuary protection.
- Continue to implement water sensitive urban design and minimise the risk of pollution of drains and waterways within the municipality.
- Implement regular targeted litter campaigns in accordance with the Stormwater Management Plan, Waste Management Plan or identified littering priorities, particularly in litter hotspots upstream from waterways and drainage inlets.
- Develop and operate stormwater reuse systems.
- Continue providing rebates for residents who purchase water tanks, greywater systems and other sustainable equipment.
- Continue to retrofit council and community buildings with energy and water-efficient features as appropriate and within budget limits.
- Continue to use Water Sensitive Urban Design principles in the design and construction of infrastructure such as drains, roads, car parks, parks and buildings.
- Review Council's environmental data management system and consider upgrading current arrangements to ensure accurate capture and effective monitoring of all relevant energy, water, waste and greenhouse related data.
- Consider actions to increase the use of smart water-saving technology, upgrade infrastructure and voluntary water restrictions to minimize unnecessary water use.
- Fast track the installation of real-time water monitoring systems for Council’s major sporting fields to measure water usage and detect/quantify water leaks.
Localising the Sustainable Development Goals in the City of Whitehorse: The 2020 Report

**Recommendations**

- Increase the number of public toilets and drinking water fountains in public spaces.
- Engage academic institutions (Deakin University and Box Hill Institute) to develop public information.
- Update council documents and plans where required.
- Develop appropriate timelines for all activities.
- Publish detailed timelines, goals, targets and review processes for all major actions.
- Review the Emergency Management Plan for access to clean water considering learnings from COVID-19 as well as recent fires, drought and other disasters.

*Blackburn Lake Sanctuary*
**SDG7: Affordable and Clean Energy**

**Council Localised Targets**

- Support the effective implementation of the Environmental Sustainability Development (ESD) Policy by providing applicants with information resources and workshops, continuing Planning Officer training, and resourcing the Sustainable Design for the Planning Process (SDAPP). Monitor the number of planning permits reviewed and how many go through the SDAPP process.

- As part of Council’s membership in the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA), implement the agreed annual priority projects for energy-efficiency, renewable energy, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, and adaptation to climate change. Project examples may include solar savers, Ecodriver, voltage optimisation, working with energy distributors, and adapting buildings to climate change impacts.

- Target sustainability and climate change adaptation assistance to low-income households, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)-oriented households (e.g. providing home energy and water assessments to a number of eligible households each year).

- Expand community education and engagement program to promote energy and water-saving measures that will help address the impacts of rising utility bills.

- Complete the replacement of all mercury vapour streetlight lamps with energy-efficient lamps.

- Develop a workshop program for residents and businesses to undertake energy, water and waste self-audits, to enable them to implement effective energy and water-saving retrofits.

- Increase renewable energy for Council’s corporate programs (Sustainability Strategy).

- Target 45% reduction in corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 2022 (from 2002 baseline) and Carbon Neutrality by 2022.

- Progressively increase the use of renewable energy by Council.

- Continue to retrofit Council and community buildings with energy and water-efficient features as appropriate and within budget limits.

- Ensure energy efficiency for all Council assets as part of the capital works programs.

- Encourage community members to improve energy efficiency, and corporately for Council to improve its energy efficiency (Sustainability Strategy).
Recommendations

- Make provisions for access to energy resources among the most disadvantaged (e.g. power outlets for safe use by the homeless, use HACC workers to encourage energy efficiency).
- Incorporate sustainable energy targets for all new buildings.
- Provision of solar power outlets or similar on council land.
- Encourage electric cars by providing charging stations and related car parking facilities.
- Provide a detailed timeline for retrofit of council property to new standards.
- Provide and participate in community schemes for the bulk purchase of solar panels, energy-efficient devices, other renewable energy sources or green power.
- Accelerate the implementation of energy-saving measures in Council buildings such as technology improvements, battery storage for solar power, energy-saving guarantee contracts and partnering arrangements that might provide economies of scale benefits.
- Showcase a community solar energy project and promote to the community.
- Develop partnerships with industry for the bulk purchase of solar panels, energy-efficient devices, other renewable energy sources or green power for the Council and community.
SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Council Localised Targets

- Work in partnership to support the development of a sustainable and growing local economy which contributes to economic activity and employment growth.
- Support the community (including those with a disability and young people) to undertake internships, employment opportunities and entrepreneurship.
- Revitalise small business precincts to create hubs for community gathering and opportunities for employment.
- Promote innovative and creative small business models and practices to increase business activity and sustainability.
- Support young people to access relevant and valuable work experience including through the Council.
- Support young people to access training and apprenticeships.
- Increase employment opportunities for young people, including vulnerable young people and those from diverse backgrounds (Whitehorse Tertiary Business Skills Program).
- Provide free resume writing facilities for young people.
- Provide access to career counselling and guidance.
- Continue to support the Learn Local Program to increase community access into the workforce and business.
- Promote investment in mixed-use/multi-purpose development to increase local employment opportunity.
- Design and deliver affordable business skills education and mentoring opportunities for new and emerging businesspeople, with a focus on women returning to the workforce, work-life balance and the promotion of entrepreneurship.
- Continue to facilitate knowledge sharing for businesspeople, including cross-cultural investment opportunities and the link between employee health and productivity.
- Continue to promote Box Hill as a multi-cultural food destination.
- Give preference to tenders that will deliver a social benefit to the local community in addition to or as part of delivering the required goods or services.
- Give preference to local, social and sustainable (including recycled products) outcomes when commercial viability and fitness for purpose can be obtained.
- Need for an arts and cultural marketing and communications plan.
- Promote Whitehorse’s growing knowledge economy focusing on the leading sectors.
• Provide relevant and effective support to local businesses and business associations (e.g. Whitehorse Business Group).

**Recommendations**

• Develop a list of local providers that the Council can use for supplies/sustainability to be reviewed annually.
• Build on recent developments to enhance relevant digital services in career and business support.
• Develop a business incubator with business mentors.
• Establish lists of partners for sustainable growth.
• Enhance partnerships with Deakin University and Box Hill Institute for industry-focused research and training programs.
• List specific support for small and medium-sized businesses and start-ups in Whitehorse.

*Box Hill Institute in Box Hill, Victoria*
SDG9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

**Council Localised Targets**

- Support state-level economic development programs.
- Encourage businesses to be environmentally sustainable.
- Work within the planning scheme to ensure businesses are developing in the appropriate areas (e.g. industrial parks/areas).
- Support local small and medium-sized businesses to be financially successful.
- Promote innovative and creative small business models and practices to increase business activity and sustainability (partners include Small Business Victoria).
- Design and deliver affordable business skills education and mentoring opportunities for new and emerging businesspeople, with a focus on women returning to the workforce, work-life balance and the promotion of entrepreneurship (partners include Small Business Victoria).
- Promote innovative businesses in the area.
- Plan and advocate for opportunities arising from the Suburban Rail Loop, major state government infrastructure project.

**Recommendations**

- Develop a business incubator.
- Develop a list of industries/businesses in the Municipality and seek input from those that are struggling to enhance advocacy on their behalf at the State/Federal level.
- Review formal industry/business continuity and support strategies, along with emergency management plan, in light of learnings from COVID-19 pandemic.
- State clearer objectives to help sustainable businesses and to make existing businesses more sustainable.
- Build on recent developments and promote digital services and industries across the knowledge-intensive Whitehorse economy (e.g. telehealth).
**SDG10: Reduced Inequality**

**Council Localised Targets**

- Council to promote equal opportunities (e.g. internally at Council through the ‘Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Policy’).
- Facilitate opportunities of social connectedness and support for older residents and their carer partners, especially those with special needs such as dementia, CALD background, social isolation and those experiencing elder abuse.
- Celebrate diversity, promote reconciliation and connect people of the Whitehorse community through the safe and effective delivery of events and activities for the whole community.
- Foster greater cultural awareness, connectedness and understanding within the community through the delivery of accessible, affordable performing arts and art exhibitions.
- Plan, promote and deliver a range of amenities and programs to enable all people to access health and fitness, wellness and social activities across the municipality.
- Increase understanding of the impacts of the transition to the NDIS for people with disability, their families and carers, the community and Council services.
- In collaboration, increase the participation of people with disabilities in cultural events, the arts and sporting, recreational, social, religious and cultural activities within the community.
- Plan and implement the Disability Action Plan (DAP) in response to local priorities for people with a disability in Whitehorse.
- Continue to build Council and partner agencies’ capacity to engage with, understand, respond to and promote the rights and needs of sexually diverse (LGBTI+) people.
- Advocate and inform improvements in the service system to respond to the needs of migrant and refugee people.
- Explore partnerships and opportunities for collaboration with culturally specific service providers to reduce social isolation of vulnerable older people of immigrant, non-English speaking background.
- Strengthen reconciliation in Whitehorse by working in partnership to raise awareness of Aboriginal culture, build strong relationships and increase participation for Aboriginal people in the life of the community.
- Make open spaces more welcoming to older people to increase their social connections and physical activity.
Communicate health and wellbeing information in community languages through Council customer services to increase health literacy and access to services.

Advocate for the removal of inter-zone inequalities in public transport fares (e.g. around Box Hill Institute and Deakin University).

Advocate for an increased span of hours of public transport services, in particular buses during the evening periods and weekends.

Advocate to the state government and Department of Transport to accelerate the upgrade of all public transport (tram, trains and buses) infrastructure to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 requirements.

As part of its future service planning, give priority to facility provision gaps at the Whitehorse Centre in the areas of performance space, rehearsal space, studio and workshop space, exhibition space, music performance opportunities and venues, and access for all abilities to facilities; consider opportunities for improved access to diverse music options within the City of Whitehorse.

Improve facilities to meet the service needs of community and capacity for arts and cultural activities.

Community Festivals and Events should be designed to be accessible for all.

Continue to work with indigenous and other cultural groups to develop arts & cultural programs.

Recommendations

- Develop specific cells/ departments/ officials charged with a specified quota of jobs for which they are the main point of contact for the public: for example, NDIS (National Disability Insurance Agency).
- List contacts for support services on the website.
- Further develop and establish partnerships with diverse cultural organisations.
- Build on recent experiences to enhance the capacity for digital services to reach a wider group of people and promote equity.
SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Council Localised Targets

- Council is committed to supporting affordable housing through inclusive planning, regulation, partnership and advocacy (see Affordable Housing Policy 2010).
- Council will minimise adverse environmental impacts in the procurement of goods, services and works to the best of its ability.
- Minimise waste by using the waste hierarchy to assess purchases (Avoid, Re-use, Recycle, Treatment, Containment & Disposal).
- Consciously and thoughtfully procure goods and services that conserve water and are free of toxic or polluting materials as far as possible.
- Continue to capture methane gas for energy at Council’s closed landfill in Clayton South and investigate forms of renewable energy for future uses of the site.
- Advocate and work with partners to expand the range of materials and opportunities where items can be easily reused or recycled.
- Continue to deliver and improve waste management in Whitehorse and more broadly to reduce waste to landfill and recover and recycle waste resources.
- Encourage an increased shift toward public transport by advocating for the provision of improved infrastructure and services; and promote sustainable transport (Integrated Transport, Road Safety and Cycling strategies).
- Progressively implement the actions within the Box Hill CAA Car Parking Strategy that addresses parking issues in the vicinity of the central area of Box Hill, hospital precinct and Box Hill Institute.
- Key targets for 2022 based on a 2002 baseline measurement: 65% diversion of kerbside waste from landfill, 45% reduction in corporate greenhouse gas emissions, 30% reduction of corporate water consumption and Carbon Neutrality by 2022.

Recommendations

- Include an explicit target to eliminate homelessness as part of the council vision for a healthy community and built environment.
- Include strategies which encourage increased participation of disadvantaged groups in local government.
- Concrete projects in social housing or other housing aid (e.g. secured and staffed parking lots for persons who live in vehicles).
- Establish partnerships with non-government bodies for housing services and solutions (e.g. universities, community organisations).
**SDG12: Responsible Consumption and Production**

**Council Localised Targets**

- Participate in relevant national, regional and State-wide waste management programs that benefit the local community.
- Increase uptake of Council’s garden organics services and raise awareness of the benefits of keeping organics out of landfill in preparation for the introduction of food waste collection.
- Expand promotion of the benefits of home and onsite composting to the community as the preferred option to deal with food waste.
- Review bin inspection and rewards program to further assist those contaminating recycling and generating the most garbage, mainly through improved waste education.
- Annually review waste education plan with a focus on dumping, waste avoidance, reduction and contamination.
- Minimise unnecessary purchasing through the conscious and thoughtful purchasing of goods and service.
- Minimise greenhouse gas emissions by considering the energy efficiency rating of products, including the manufacture & transport energy costs.
- Minimise soil degradation by using goods and services that do not degrade or pollute the soil, or result in erosion through their use.
- Maximise recycled content by giving preference to high-quality products containing recycled content.
- Maximise water efficiency by purchasing goods or services that conserve water.
- Continue to retrofit Council and community buildings with energy and water-efficient features as appropriate and within budget limits.
- Council to support reducing food waste going to landfill (Whitehorse Waste Management Plan).

**Recommendations**

- Publish detailed timelines, goals, targets and review processes for all major actions.
- Review supply chain dependencies for strategic equipment and materials & review local stockpiling policies for essentials.
- Set and promote clear objectives to promote sustainable development.
- Provide education to the public about sustainable development.
**SDG13: Climate Action**

**Council Localised targets**

- Climate Change Adaption Plan: Document is entirely designed to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change. This document is currently being updated as a Climate Response Plan 2020-2022.
- Develop an external climate change communication and engagement strategy.
- Investigate opportunities for reducing runoff from storms to reduce the risk of flooding.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) procedures in extreme weather conditions and are appropriately trained to respond to extreme weather events.
- Provide adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to staff to cope with increased emergency incidents associated with more frequent/intense extreme events.
- Upkeep of essential services (e.g. Meals on wheels) and provision of digital support services (e.g. telehealth consultations) for the community during extreme events.
- Conduct debriefs and reviews following extreme weather events.
- Review insurance arrangements to ensure that current insurance cover is appropriate for dealing with potential climate change impacts.
- Vulnerability assessment of existing Council assets and prioritise those most at risk of climate change impacts.
- Review Council design and construction standards to identify whether climate change is adequately considered.
- Retrofit Council assets to be more energy and water efficient and address any structural issues identified in vulnerability assessment.
- Raise awareness among staff and volunteers regarding how climate change is likely to impact their service and work practices.
- Work with and prepare the business community on environmental matters including climate change (e.g. the Lean Deployment Business Program).
- Promote actions for the community to prepare private property for extreme events.
- When reviewing planning policies, structure plans, and Council’s Municipal Strategic Statement, ensure that appropriate allowances are made for the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme events and changes in average climatic conditions, and the need to make private properties more sustainable in their energy and water use.
- Make use of the Victorian Government alert system for providing early warning to the community about the type and scale of extreme weather events with support from emergency service agencies (e.g. Melbourne’s heat alert system).
- Ongoing review of existing emergency response systems and service delivery models in relation to climate change impacts, especially extreme weather events.
- Work with neighbouring Councils through EAGA for the development and implementation of a regional climate change adaptation plan.
- Advocate and apply for climate change adaptation funding opportunities.
- Consider developing neighbourhood-based cells of citizens or network with existing groups (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch) supported by Council and emergency service agencies, to assist with responding to extreme weather events.
- Review drought-management actions and if required develop a specific drought management plan to ensure that this includes adequate climate change measures.
- Review the availability and capacity of contractors and volunteers to provide extra resources during and following extreme weather events.
- Identify further opportunities for stormwater use and wastewater recycling within the municipality, including water sensitive urban design.
- Encourage localised food production to reduce dependence on centralised distribution systems that are vulnerable to climate change impacts.
- Consider establishing arrangements for temporary adult and childcare facilities to be set up for assisting staff to attend work during extreme events.
- Explore opportunities to fund the Victorian State Emergency Services (SES) to provide additional assistance during and after extreme weather events.
- Consider upgrading sports field surfaces to artificial or more water-efficient surfaces over time, where applicable and cost-effective.
- If the current usage arrangements for sporting fields become unsustainable, explore potential different uses for sports fields or alternative scheduling arrangements.
- Consider providing additional funding to help manage increases in expenditure caused by climate change impacts.
- Whitehorse Municipal Emergency Management Plan: to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of the municipality to all emergencies.

Recommendations
- Publish detailed timelines, goals, targets and review processes for all major actions.
- Increase the quality and timeliness of environmental statistics.
- Build on recent developments and further promote wide-ranging digital transformation to accelerate progression toward carbon neutrality.
SDG14: Life Below Water

Council Localised Targets

- Council to support the sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems through litter reduction, reducing dumped rubbish in waterways and reducing pollution to waterways (examples of this are through Council’s Waterwatch program and community laws that regulate pollution and waste management).
- Continue to implement water sensitive urban design and minimise the risk of pollution of drains and waterways within the municipality.
- Support and provide an annual residents education program aimed at increased understanding of activities which support healthy waterways within the municipality.
- Implement regular targeted litter campaigns in accordance with the Stormwater Management Plan, Waste Management Plan or identified littering priorities, particularly in litter hotspots upstream from waterways and drainage inlets.

Recommendations

- Establish partnerships with local businesses, academics and researchers, in particular for studying, protecting and managing the marine and coastal ecosystems which are affected by Whitehorse.
- Promote awareness of product lifecycles within Council procurement teams and the wider public to discourage the use of corporate/consumer products with harmful materials and to encourage responsible waste management.
- Install educational boards/materials in identified litter hotspots to safeguard waterways and promote ecological awareness.
- Install more quality water fountain stations to discourage the purchase of plastics; these stations can incorporate educational materials.
SDG15: Life on Land

Council Localised Targets

- Continue to implement the Whitehorse Tree Education Program, which raises the awareness of the benefit of trees, promotes the planting of new trees, and encourages the protection of existing trees on private land.
- Expand the community engagement actions and materials first developed as part of the Whitehorse Urban Forest Project to assist residents to grow healthy trees through education and incentives.
- Support the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular bushland/reserves and wetlands.
- Protect and enhance open spaces and natural environment.
- Accelerate the implementation of actions from the Open Space Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy that improve the habitat corridor links and values of the existing linear open space system of Whitehorse.
- Consider any suitable opportunity to create an urban environmental education centre to showcase sustainable living practices, biodiversity and local food.
- Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into local planning, development processes and accounts at Council.

Recommendations

- Include particular target natural ecosystems to restore and/or protect in the Sustainability Strategy Action Plan.
- Further promote awareness of invasive/harmful species by, for example, installing educational materials in parks or commercial areas where people purchase plants.
- Strategically communicate with relevant audiences by highlighting the social, economic and other benefits of ecosystem services such as pest and disease control.
- Facilitate affordable soil tests for the public to encourage safe management and growing on private land. Encourage reporting/communication of results to identify degraded locations in the municipality.
SDG16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Council Localised Targets
- Reduce violence in the community.
- Continue to work with the community and stakeholders in relation to community safety, including family violence, mental health, drugs and alcohol.
- Collaboratively plan and deliver evidence-based strategies to increase the capacity of Council and the community to respond to and prevent family violence and violence against women, the elderly and those with disability.
- Continue to enhance workforce capacity of direct service providers to respond to elder abuse, family violence and child safety concerns.
- Increase community safety for residents, businesses and visitors of Whitehorse.
- End abuse, exploitation and all forms of violence against children.

Recommendations
- Enhance partnerships with relevant organisations for family welfare including domestic violence shelters and other social work groups.
- Develop and publish a good governance and transparency strategy including actions for how Council will ensure that residents’ concerns are heard and how Council will progress working relationships with bodies like the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) and the Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA).
- Council can consider national leadership by pursuing a UN ‘Child Friendly City Initiative’. No such initiatives have been reported in Australia according to the child friendly cities website (see childfriendlycities.org/initiatives/?location=au).
**SDG17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals**

**Council Localised Targets**

- Whitehorse Council efforts to build bridges, networks, and committing support to other organisations in meeting the SDGs. These organisations can be both inside the municipality (like a local food bank or fire station), or outside (like other councils that are similar to Whitehorse, or overseas international links e.g. “sister city” (some councils have sister city relations with a town in Timor-Leste to assist in poverty reduction, e.g. Ballarat Council and Ainaro, Port Phillip and Suai)).
- Arts and music partnerships with industry/schools/TAFE/ university.
- Start-up action plan.
- Within its current strategy framework, Whitehorse activity is organised to be conducted in partnership with key organisations such as:
  - Victoria State Emergency Service, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria Police, Red Cross, Community Housing Ltd, and others (emergency management)
  - Yarra Valley Water and Melbourne Water (water conservation)
  - Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (Living Links program & regional sustainability)
  - Procurement Australia, ERM Power, Alinta Energy and other energy suppliers (energy policy)
  - VicRoads, Transport Accident Commission, Department of Education and Training, and schools (road safety)
  - Local school and kindergarten communities (Youth/child and cultural policy)
  - and others.

**Recommendations**

- Build further relationships with organisations working in target areas: for example, with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission with regard to safeguarding employee (including International Students) rights in the Municipality.
- Build specific partnerships with other organisations/municipalities that are committed to achieving the SDGs.
CASE STUDY 2: BRISTOL AND THE SDGs

The City of Bristol, United Kingdom (UK) formulated the Bristol SDG Alliance and the Bristol Green Capital Partnership in a collaborative project with Bristol University to tackle the SDGs. This local council in the South West of the UK declared a climate emergency in 2018 and set a target of carbon neutrality by 2030. It launched the Bristol One City Plan in 2019 to provide a collaborative inclusive pathway for making Bristol a sustainable city by 2050, following the UN SDG framework. Recognising the limited powers and fiscal constraints of the local government in the UK, this plan aims to engage all stakeholders through the Bristol SDG Alliance in the process of making the city sustainable. Bristol prepared its first SDG “Voluntary Local Review” in 2019.

Partnership with the University of Bristol resulted in:

- the development of a One City plan,
- measures to tackle inequality,
- identification of priority areas by monthly consultative “drop-in sessions” by the city council with stakeholders,
- each thematic area (SDG) having an associated board comprising city leaders in their respective areas meeting every three months, to assess progress and make recommendations,
- engagement of business and community leaders with resources and influence able to support transformative change,
- alignment of city objectives with the SDGs,
- development of international relationships with the Cities of New York and Los Angeles (USA), and the Municipality of Santana de Parbaiba (Brazil), and
- localisation of each SDG as demonstrated in the Voluntary Local Review of Progress report 2019.

CASE STUDY 3: NEW YORK: FIRST CITY TO REPORT SDG DIRECTLY TO THE UN

The City of New York (NYC) implemented its OneNYC strategy in April 2015, a sustainable development plan with clearly defined goals, timelines and assessment criteria. The launch of the SDGs in September 2015 demonstrated the overlap between the global agenda and OneNYC, and prompted the city to establish the Global Vision Urban Action Program. The Global Vision Urban Action Program uses the SDGs as a guide to find solutions for the development challenges faced by the city of New York.

The office of the Mayor of New York reports¹ that since April 2015:

- all OneNYC initiatives have launched and are already underway,
- over 80% of OneNYC indicators are stable or improving, and
- of the 564 milestones set for the end of 2017, 86% were either completed or partially completed.

In 2018, during the High-Level Political Forum of the UN, NYC announced its intention of becoming the very first local government in the world to report on its sustainable development achievements to the UN. In 2018, this included its stellar achievements all demonstrated to UN diplomats by site visits:

- SDG12: the development and successful running of the USA’s largest recycling facility, demonstrating responsible consumption. This clearly demonstrated the work the council had done to reduce the environmental footprint of NY on the planet.
- SDG6: ride on a sludge vessel to demonstrate the work undertaken towards ensuring sustainable development of water and sanitation for all.
- SDG15: development of a community garden.

In addition, NYC partnered with local action groups to increase the use of sustainable solar energy across the city. The Mayor’s office acknowledges that NYC needed to work on transport issues, unequal distribution of wealth and cultural assets across the city.

In 2019, NYC launched OneNYC 2050, a strategic plan through which NYC committed to providing the UN with a formal SDG report every year. The focus now includes SDGs 8, 10, 13, 16, and 17 as well.

FRAMEWORK

The UN Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTLRG, 2016) identified four steps in the localisation of the SDGs: Awareness Raising, Advocacy, Implementation and Monitoring. All the four steps can be enhanced by following the recommendations of the GTLRG (2016). Some of the recommendations are:

- **Awareness Raising**: public awareness-raising, formal and informal education, appointing celebrities as SDG champions, writing to state and federal governments;
- **Advocacy**: capacity building of council and partners, establishing measures to monitor and assess performance, forming a national urban strategy, effective decentralisation of fiduciary power, provide a voice for local government in national dialogue;
- **Implementation**: establish priorities, identify and build on synergies, align existing plans with SDGs, set up local institutional plans for SDG alignments, mobilise human resources and involve all stakeholders, peer to peer learning, forge links with relevant ministries; and
- **Monitoring**: collect, monitor and analyse data, develop localised indicators, participate in national SDG monitoring, promote stakeholder participation and support other local governments.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2017) in its description of the Rapid Assessment Tool suggests that the responsible ministry for each SDG program implementation be identified. However, in the context of local councils, it may be more relevant to identify the responsible department and list its contact details on the program. The UNDP further states that local and regional governments need to evaluate the relevant SDGs for them or exclude those that may not be at all relevant.

![Figure 2: FRAMEWORK TO LOCALISE THE SDGs AGENDA](image-url)
The four steps as described by the GTLRG can present a daunting task for cash strapped local governments struggling with the added burden imposed by COVID-19. Even so, the first two steps of Awareness Raising and Advocacy may be performed in some manner by most councils. A further detailed review of such processes is required to make relevant conclusions. This study has not analysed these steps for Whitehorse.

Our work has concentrated on the Implementation step in GTLRG; a large task, given the 169 components of the SDGs and linking them to 19 Council documents (see Appendix B). This exploratory study has identified the linkages between Council programs and the SDGs. Using the GTLRG report as a guide, we suggest a simplified framework to guide the effective localisation of the SDGs by Whitehorse Council (see Figure 2). This step-by-step framework simplifies the process of localisation of the SDGs agenda, and is applicable to any organisation which wants to localise its SDG actions within a specific local area or region. This report is essentially Steps 1 and 2 of our framework (Figure 2) for aligning the Council’s development agenda with the SDGs. Steps 3 to 8 if completed will enhance the synchronisation of Whitehouse Council’s strategic direction and plans with the SDGs Agenda.

FUTURE WORK

Further analysis of the progress of localisation of the SDGs agenda by Whitehorse Council will require firstly the assessment of its activity in Awareness Raising and Advocacy, the first two steps of GTLRG localisation. This is required as a prelude to proceeding with Steps 3 through to 8 of our proposed framework (Figure 2).

If Whitehorse Council decides to pursue adoption of SDGs as part of their organisation-wide framework for policy development, the following process is recommended.

This process will have to commence with firstly raising awareness of the SDGs within the council and amongst the stakeholders by methods described in the GTLRG (2016) Roadmap. In addition, the council can commence the incorporation of existing key strategy renewals and practices that the Council has already identified but not made a commitment or seen a way to progress any action. This is a critical review of existing systems in Council and how they integrate (or not) towards achieving sustainable development. It will require discussions with appropriate council staff and other stakeholders. Subsequently, mapping Council policies against State and/or National SDGs policies are the critical next steps that will allow the council in consultation with major stakeholders to identify the most relevant SDGs. These recommendations can be further developed according to local contexts before going through a process of validation. This process would involve consulting with relevant policy leaders and experts, conducting a detailed mapping of the recommendations with existing Council commitments, and making informed determinations about which recommendations to adopt (Bromaghim & Comer, 2019). This is based on the Council identifying those SDGs that best align with its own development agenda. The mapping exercise should also identify opportunities that exist for the Council to join with other local governments to build on existing programs for stronger SDG policies and actions. Two examples are:

i) becoming a member of the UNESCO Learning Cities that link to a number of SDGs as set out in UNESCO (2017) – Cities of Melton and Wyndham are Victorian members.
endorse the ICAN Cities Appeal to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as part of SDG16 (see Appendix C on the appeal) – City of Melbourne and 9 other Victorian councils have signed the appeal.

Following the mapping exercise (Step 3), a report to the Council and all stakeholders (including all residents) should be produced (Step 4). The report, together with stakeholder workshops and consultation, forms the basis for the Council ascertaining how to move forward in deepening its commitment to the SDGs (Step 5). Once that has been agreed to, then Council staff need to set out the four localisation steps for implementing all SDG commitments and identifying any gaps in the localisation steps for any implementation strategies (Step 6). Council will have to address any gaps that require external (from Council) technical support and funding (Step 7). Then progress reports should be scheduled and produced to be submitted to UN Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTLRG) as final Step 8 in Figure 2.

The importance of such critical analysis is to conduct a circular analysis (not linear analysis), such that one positive attempt to achieve one SDG may actually result in deterioration to another SDG. For example, a policy of zero emissions by the Council may have a negative effect on the poorest members of the local community as the cost of basic services rises and availability is reduced. Another important tool is to conduct focus group discussions with various departments within Council on the practicality of achieving certain goals, and stakeholder focus groups in Council’s supply chains, and with final consumers of Council services. A survey of local residents and businesses may also be seen as useful but this will have to be determined in consultation with key staff in Council (for example, there may be existing surveys that could be adequate for the needs of mapping). A timeline for implementing such future-oriented actions can be presented, such that a dynamic roadmap is displayed and could be distributed to all ratepayers. Council will need to muster the support of stakeholders and partners for effective SDG advocacy with the state and federal governments. Goals for SDGs, timelines, monitoring and reporting guidelines need to be established and made transparent. This will pave the way for the ultimate goal of submitting regular voluntary progress reports to the High-Level Political Forum of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments that is under the purview of the UNDP, the custodian of the SDGs. It will be a feather in the cap of the council to be able to reach this level in the future.
Appendix A: The SDGs

Goal 1. No Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2. Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3. Good Health and Well-being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4. Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5. Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6. Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7. Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10. Reduced Inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12. Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13. Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14. Life Below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15. Life on Land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Partnerships for the Goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
Appendix B: List of Whitehorse City Council Documents Reviewed

**Broad high-level planning documents**
1. Council Vision 2013-2023
2. Council Plan 2017-2021 Year Three

**Specific strategies and plans**
1. Sustainability Strategy 2016-2022
2. Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021
3. Community Local Law 2014
5. Procurement Policy June 2019
7. Affordable Housing Policy 2010
9. Urban Forest Strategy 2018
11. Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2011
12. Road Safety Strategy 2013
13. Integrated Transport Strategy 2011
14. Municipal Early Years Plan 2014-2018
15. Municipal Youth Plan 2014-2018
17. Investment & Economic Development Extension Strategy 2020-2022 (Draft)
Appendix C: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Cities Appeal

About the Appeal

Nuclear weapons pose an unacceptable threat to people everywhere. This is why, on 7 July 2017, 122 nations voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. All national governments are now invited to sign and ratify this crucial global agreement, which prohibits the use, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and lays the foundations for their total elimination. Cities and towns can help build support for the treaty by endorsing the ICAN Cities Appeal.

How to endorse the Appeal

The mayor or administrator of the local government should send an email to info@icanw.org indicating that the city/town has agreed to endorse the ICAN Cities Appeal. This appeal is for local governments of cities/towns in nations that have not yet ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Suggestions for further action

1. Write to the national government: Inform the foreign minister or other relevant official that your city/town has endorsed the ICAN Cities Appeal.
2. Inform the media: Issue a press release announcing that your city/town has joined the call for the national government to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
3. Inform your residents: Distribute information or hold a public exhibition about the threat of nuclear weapons and global efforts to eliminate this threat.
4. Divest public funds: Take steps to ensure that funds administered by your city/town are not invested in companies that produce nuclear weapons. See www.dontbankonthebomb.com.

Text of the Appeal

“Our city/town is deeply concerned about the grave threat that nuclear weapons pose to communities throughout the world. We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat. Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment. Therefore, we warmly welcome the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations in 2017, and we call on our national government to sign and ratify it without delay.”
Appendix D: References


Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. (2016). Roadmap for localising the SDGs: implementation and monitoring at subnational level. UNDP, Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UN Habitat. Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/commitments/818_11195_commitment_ROADMAP%20LOCALIZING%20SDGS.pdf


