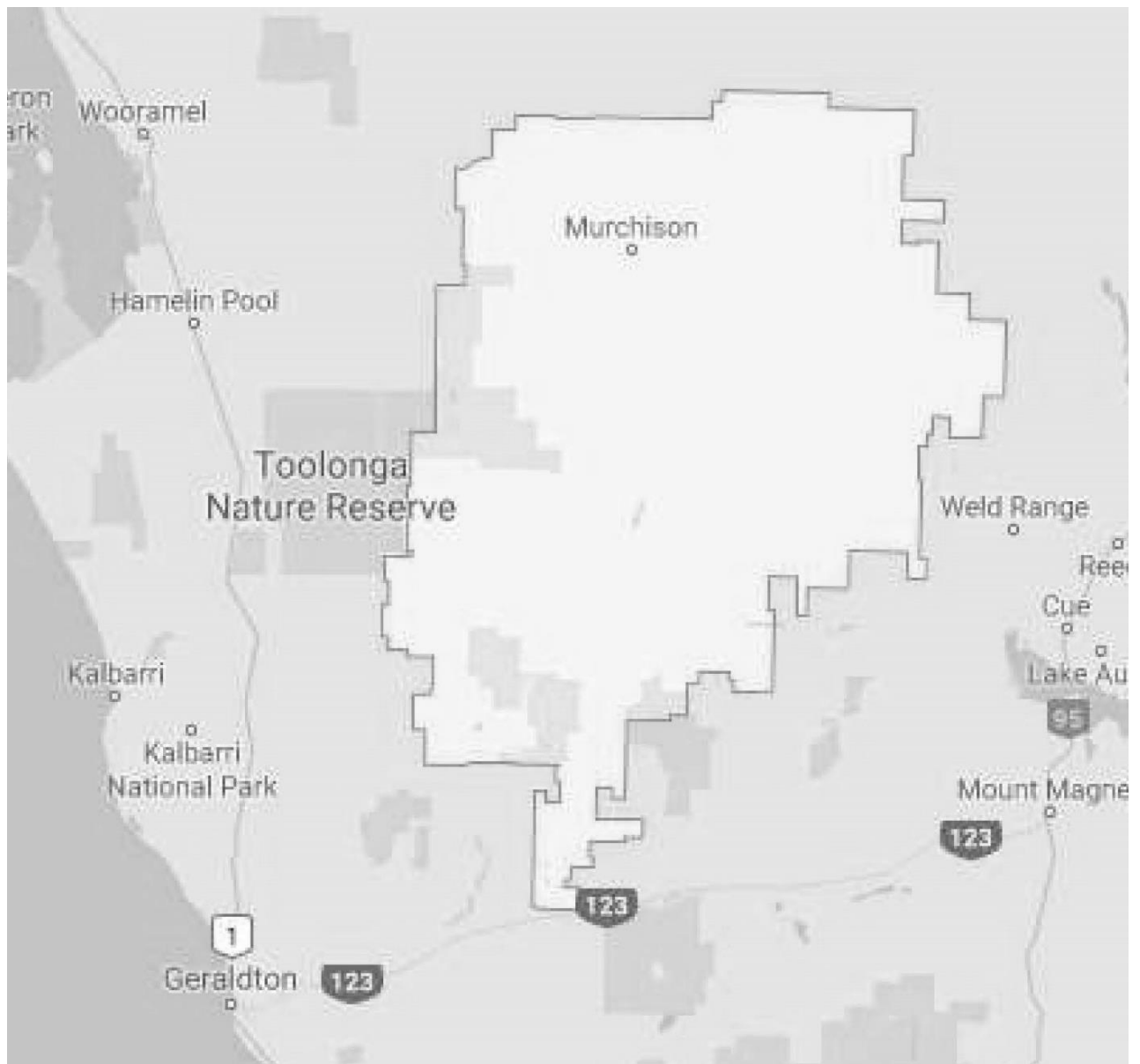




Murchison Shire Annual Report
for the year ending 30 June 2024

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Overview

Section 5.53 of the *Local Government Act 1995* requires Council to prepare, adopt and publish an Annual report for each financial year. Whilst the Act requires a raft of matters to be reported on, there is also an opportunity to highlight in summary form a range of features that make up the Murchison Shire Community, as well as actions undertaken throughout the year.

This year's 2023-24 Annual Report was finalised and adopted by Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 13 December 2024.



Shire Information

Shire Office and Chambers	3007 Carnarvon Mullewa Road, Murchison WA 6630		
Postal Address	PO Box 61, MULLEWA WA 6630		
Telephone	(08) 9963 7999		
Facsimile	(08) 9963 7966		
E-mail	admin@murchison.wa.gov.au		
Web Page	www.murchison.wa.gov.au		
Office Hours	8.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday		
Road Condition Reports	www.murchison.wa.gov.au/road conditions		
Population	153	Land Area	49,500 sq km
Electors	75	Length of sealed roads	142km
Employees	19	Length of unsealed roads	1,806 km
Local Government Classifications	WA - Band 4	Australian - Rural Remote Extra Small (RTX)	

Overview

The Shire of Murchison lies within the Mid-West region of Western Australia. The Murchison Shire Settlement is situated on 708 hectares excised from the Wooleen pastoral lease and vested in the Council. It is located some 669km from Perth, 300 kilometres north east of Geraldton and 200 km north of Mullewa on the Carnarvon Mullewa Road.

The Shire of Murchison is one of the older local governments in Western Australia, having its origins in the Murchison District Roads Board, established 31st August 1875, and the Upper Murchison Roads Board established 12th July 1907.

These two were amalgamated in 1911 as the Murchison Roads Board. In July 1961, under the provisions of the Local Government Act, the Roads Board became the Shire of Murchison. In 2004 a portion of the then Mullewa Shire was transferred to the Murchison Shire.

Until 1963 the Shire was administered from one or other of the stations, and in that year 400 hectares were excised from the Wooleen pastoral lease and vested in the Shire. A house, which contained the office, was built, as was a workshop and airstrip. These were followed by sporting facilities and, in 1986, a new office. Later, a museum and staff houses were constructed. The Murchison Settlement was proclaimed on 15th July 1988.

The name 'Murchison' was given to the region back in 1839 by early explorer Lt George Grey in honour of Sir Roderick Impey Murchison, the President of the Royal Geographical Society of London. The Murchison and Roderick Rivers were also named in his honour.

The Settlement has twelve dwellings, the Shire Office, the district museum, roadhouse, community centre, cricket pitch and practice nets, one tennis court and two lawn bowls rinks under lights, stables and horse yards, five polocrosse fields and three ablution/toilet blocks.

Since taking on management of the Roadhouse as a Community “focused operation” all of the people that reside in the Settlement are either Shire employees or related to Shire employees. Electricity and water supplies are owned and run by the Council. It is the engine room for the entire operation of the Shire.

“Murchison is the second least populated Local Government in Australia and is thought to be the only Shire in Australia without a gazetted town site.”

The surrounding country is mainly used for pastoral purposes, predominantly cattle and sheep. The Murchison River catchment has a significant influence, with sporadic and widespread flooding a feature to be managed.

Tourism continues to develop and expand, with some stations involved in station stays. The Murchison Oasis Caravan Park and motel units located at the Settlement provide facilities for tourists and contractors. There is also an increased number of mining/exploration companies within the Shire.

The Murchison Radio Astronomy site (MRO) has been developed by CSIRO on a portion of the Boolardy pastoral lease and is the location of the Australian component of the Square Kilometre Array, which is being developed as part of an international, ground breaking science project with state-of-the-art radio telescopes.



Branding

At its March 2018 ordinary Meeting, Council adopted a new tag line for the Shire of Murchison namely

"Ancient land under brilliant skies"

During the year, with the assistance of Cr E Foulkes-Taylor and Frances Pollock, graphic designers Identify Perth prepared various concepts which were presented to the February 2020 Council Meeting.

At this meeting Council adopted the logo as shown, with a capital M coloured to represent our ancient land and brilliant skies, and written as **murchisonshire** - a change from Shire of Murchison

Explanation and rationale for Council's new logo is as follows:



murchisonshire

Ancient land under brilliant skies

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Nights Sky
2. Green Foliage
3. Red Rocks
4. Murchison River
5. Low Clouds
6. Brilliant Stars



TYPOGRAPHY

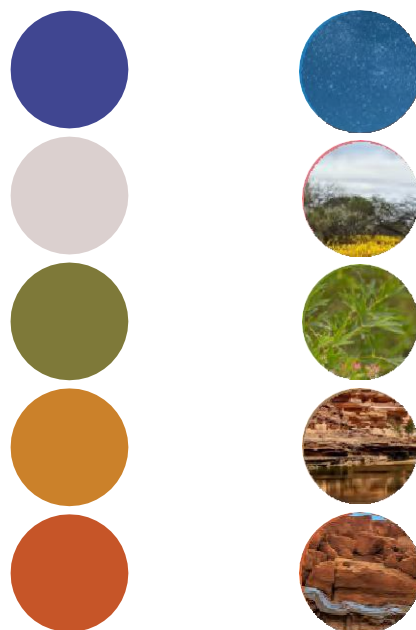
The strong, bold and confident typography that has been used for the key 'M' is accented with subtle rounded edges to give it a friendly feel.

Use of lowercase for 'murchison shire' was at the request of the client, to complement existing tone of voice - friendly and approachable - and is consistent with communications already in circulation.

The tagline 'Ancient land under brilliant skies' in a hand stroked script lettering underlines the words 'murchison shire' adding strength to the name and complementing the hand drawn style of the illustration.

COLOURS

The colour palette is inspired and taken from the vibrant spectrum of colours experienced and seen within Murchison. Used tastefully within the 'M' to create a colourful landscape. We have also drawn inspiration from the mural located in the Murchison Sports Community Centre that was said to encapsulate the *essence* of the Shire.



President's Report



Hello All,

Another year is behind us, and it was very heartening to get good mid-winter rains throughout the district in 2024.

The Shire has continued in attempting to make a reasonable fist of best directing our resources towards activities that

keep our community rolling along.

On September 8, 2023 a community picnic was held on the Carnarvon Mullewa Road to celebrate the completion of the sealing from the Murchison Settlement to where we join the City of Greater Geraldton. I mentioned on the day my sincere gratitude goes to all those that have worked towards this milestone.

Olive and Warren took up the Oasis Roadhouse and Caravan Park management and did a fine job while they were there but unfortunately had to head off earlier than they had hoped.

While not everyone is always happy, we continue to receive plenty of positive feedback about the service levels, standard of accommodation facilities and food at the roadhouse.

The SKAO project is now well and truly underway and during the year the Shire engaged several local contractors to assist with the constant road upgrades and maintenance that is required with the unprecedented volumes of traffic the project has created.

I would like to make special mention of the extra effort our Works Manager William (supported by Colleen) has put in to try and maintain reasonable road conditions for our locals to enjoy while juggling pressures from many different entities, all with their specific demands.

The fibre optic cable connection was just beginning to be installed at the very end of this financial year which is really good news.

The Shire welcomes Bec, Adam and Sydney Fogarty who have come down from their last home in Port Hedland to join us here in the Murchison. They have fronted up with great attitude and energy and we look forward to them being part of our community.

Thank you very much to the whole Shire crew, I certainly appreciate your efforts in contributing to the Shire's operations and day to day activities while living in the Settlement. Thanks also to my fellow Councillors for your support throughout the year.

Until next time.

Rossco Foulkes-Taylor
President



Governance

Elected Members

Council has a small, active team of elected members who work within and outside of Council for the betterment of the community.



Cr Rossco Foulkes-Taylor - Yuin Station

President

Term Expires Oct 2027

Member Audit Committee, Murchison Community Fund Management Committee, Local Emergency Management Committee, Plant Working Group, Settlement Drinking Water Working Group, Settlement Power Supply Working Group, SKA Stakeholder Meeting Representative, Murchison Regional Road Group and WALGA Zone Delegate



Cr Andrew Whitmarsh - Byro Station

Deputy President

Term Expires Oct 2027

Member Audit Committee, Plant Working Group, Wild Dog Control Working Group, Murchison Settlement Redevelopment Working Group, SKA Stakeholder Meeting Representative and WALGA Zone Delegate



Cr Quentin Fowler - Mt Narryer Station

Member

Term Expires Oct 2027

Member Audit Committee, Settlement Drinking Water Working Group.



Cr Emma Foulkes-Taylor - Yuin Station

Member

Term Expires Oct 2025

Member Murchison Settlement Redevelopment Working Group, Museum Working Group, SKA Stakeholder Meeting Representative and Murchison GEO Region Working Group, Camp Oven Muster Festival Working Group, WALGA Zone Delegate, Monologue Editor and Council Document Editor. Cr Emma Foulkes-Taylor has also been separately appointed as a Local Government Representative on the Mid-West Development Commission.



Cr Greydon Mead - Bullardoo Station

Member

Term Expires Oct 2025

Member Plant Working Group, Settlement Power Supply Working Group, Wild Dog Working Group and Information Bay Working Group



Cr Michelle Fowler - Mt Narryer Station

Member

Term Expires Oct 2025

Member Murchison Settlement Redevelopment Working Group, Museum Working Group

Councillor Meeting Attendance

There were 11 Ordinary Meetings, and 2 Electors Meeting of Council held between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024. A breakdown of Councillors' presence at meetings is detailed in the following table

Councillor		Term	Ordinary Meeting	Electors Meeting	Total
Cr Rossco Foulkes-Taylor	President	Full Year	11-11	2-2	13-13
Cr Andrew Whitmarsh	Deputy President	Full Year	11-11	2-2	13-13
Cr Quentin Fowler	Member	Full Year	10-11	2-2	12-13
Cr Emma Foulkes Taylor	Member	Full Year	11-11	2-2	13-13
Cr Greydon Mead	Member	Full Year	10-11	1-2	11-13
Cr Michelle Fowler	Member	Full Year	10-11	2-2	12-13

Other meetings attended also included Audit Committee, Local Emergency Management Committee and various Working Groups. External meetings included Regional Road Group and Murchison sub-Regional Road Group, SKA Stakeholders, Murchison GeoRegion Working Group and WALGA Zone Meeting (Cue Parliament).

Governance & Civic

Council formally deliberates on a large array of governance matters in its role in governing the Shire and meeting its statutory obligations. Councillors also attend various civic functions as per the following highlights:

Following consolidation of its 2005 Policy Manual in 2022-23 Council reviewed and updated Policies 3.1 Staff Matters, 4.1 Financial Operations and introduced a new policy, 5.8 Local Loyalty Scheme, on a 12-month trial, primarily in relation to the operation of the Roadhouse.

From time-to-time Council is requested to provide input into general governance improvements. During the year submissions were made to WALGA and the State Government relating to reforms associated with meeting procedures. A submission to the Commonwealth's House of Representative Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Local Government Sustainability Inquiry was also made.

Other important advocacy support included expressing the Shire's support for Mid-West Ports endeavours to be granted an upgrade in the Biosecurity (First Point of Entry) Approval status for the Geraldton Port.

Council continues to work well in the region and during the year endorsed the Murchison Regional Strategy document as prepared by the Murchison Executive Group of CEOs to promote sustainable development and economic growth in the Murchison Region. Council has also been an integral part of establishing the Murchison GeoRegion and was pleased to be able to endorse the Murchison Geo Region and Geopark Incorporated Constitution, thereby paving the way for an independent body to advance this important work.

Locally, Council finalised its support for CSIRO's request to close unused road reserves within Boolardy Station and adopted the revised Murchison Local Emergency Management Arrangements 2024-2029 and Recovery Plan.

Council also endorsed the overall suggestion to conduct a Camp Oven Muster Festival in August 2024 and that this be managed as a community – shire event through a Council Working Group established for such purpose.

Council again supported a request, previously from Shelly Fowler and now under the umbrella of the Murchison Arts Council, to provide matching funds, up to \$500, to aid in fundraising for the Cancer Council's 'Biggest Morning Tea' fundraising event. The event was a huge success. Future event donations will now form part of Council's budget.

At the July 2023 Annual Meeting of Electors, the matter of pricing of fuel was raised in General Business where it was resolved that, "Council be requested to investigate the price of fuel charged at the Roadhouse with such review including comparisons with other outlets in the region." This was subsequently done, with the current pricing policy retained and a new tender, and subsequent contract for the supply of fuels, to include a community access component was subsequently identified and formalised.

In July 2023 Council hosted a visit from the Hon. Peter Foster MLC for Mining and Pastoral who attended to open up dialogue of various issues of interest, as well as formally announce \$250,000 of funding from Lottery West for the Community Splash Pad component of the Settlement's Pool and Splashpad Project.



Lottery West Funding Presentation at Splashpad Project Site

Council was actively involved and attended in a number of civic functions during the year including; the 2023 Annual Christmas Tree celebrations, 2024 Anzac Service and accompanying Museum and Community Garden Working Bee, and the official opening of the Wooleen Station Café.

On Friday 8 September 2023 Council held a Community Picnic to celebrate the sealing of the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road between the Murchison Settlement and the Southern Shire Boundary. In 2022-23 the last section was completed, finalising the cumulation of 20 years' work to construct and seal 133.42km from 7.2km north of the Murchison Settlement to the Shire's southern boundary with the City of Greater Geraldton. The Shire is very proud of this achievement, with 35.42km having been constructed and sealed since 2021.



Chief Executive Officer's Report

Staff

The Shire is fortunate to have dedicated and committed councillors who are well connected to the community, understand the area's history and heritage, and contribute in many ways outside their formal roles.

Council's very small staff team punch well above their weight, actively assisting in a complementary fashion

Governance

Chief Executive Officer Mr Bill Boehm

Corporate Services

Community Officer Mrs Rebecca Fogarty from 15.04.24

Finance Officers Ms Sydney Fogarty from 15.04.24
Ms Robyne Hosking until 06.03.24

Administration Officer Ms Vicki Dumbris

Financial Accountant Mr Travis Bate (RSM) Contractor

Roadhouse

Roadhouse Managers Mr Warren Tomlinson from 16.04.24
Ms Martina Olive from 15.04.24
Mr Nick Drew until 03.07.24

Roadhouse Officer Ms Eyrl Phillips until 03.07.24

Various Casual Mr Joop van der Neut

Customer Services Ms Julia Sijpersma

Officers and Cleaning Ms Gwen Didden

Staff used during the Mr Jack Galecio

year including. Ms Winnie Lin

Ms Angela Pardoe

Ms Annabel Goetze

across a large array of areas and, where necessary due to our small size, utilise a range of external contract resources.

We once again take this opportunity to thank all members of staff and contractors for their service.

Works

Works Manager Mr William Herold

Executive Manager DCEO Mrs Lisa Keen

Mechanics Mr Michael Keen from 05.01.24

Mr Stuart Broad until 01.11.23

Plant Operators Mr Mark Jones

Mr Glen Pinnegar

Mr Ivor Dumbris

Mr Michael Hodder

Mr Brian Wundenberg from 11.09.23

Mr Michael Keen until 05.01.24

Mr Neil Combe until 28.08.23

Mr Brent Cowmeadow until 28.08.23

Mr Barry Panting 11.09.23 to 06.12.23

Mr Adam Fogarty from 15.04.24

Mr Gary Pardoe 11.09.23 to 23.01.24

Mr Des O'Brien until 01.08.23

Gardeners

Other Contract Staff

Environmental Health / Phil Swain Consulting
Building Officer

Ranger Mr Peter Smith
Canine Control



The backbone of the Shire's operation involves the management, maintenance, repair, construction and reconstruction of a vast Council Road Network. Council's small construction crew (5) and maintenance crew (2) are supplemented by various contractors.

Settlement Redevelopment

A program to review the extent of projects required in and around the Murchison Settlement for future years saw UDLA engaged in 2020-21 to undertake a Masterplan for the Settlement when Council formally adopted the Murchison Settlement Masterplan in 2021-22.



An extension to UDLA's work led to the development of concepts to develop in and around the Roadhouse.



This project was further developed and advanced through the Murchison Vast Sky Business Case, which was formally adopted during 2022-23.



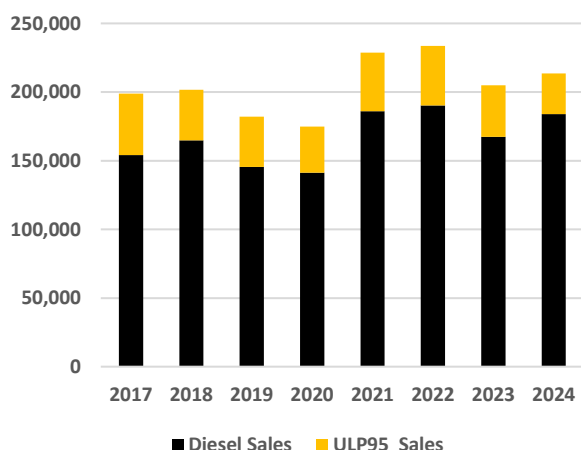
Murchison Oasis Roadhouse

2023-24 saw the third full year operation since assuming control of the Murchison Oasis Roadhouse and Caravan Park. New Roadhouse Managers Warren Tomlinson and Martina Olive took over from previous staff (Nick Drew and Eyrl Philips) and have continued to advance the operation as a community business under the shire's operations, ably assisted by a raft of casuals. Public feedback continues to be positive.



Historically diesel and unleaded ULP95 fuel has also been sold from the roadhouse utilising a 24hr operated swipe card facility.

Roadhouse Fuel Sold (litres)



Road Maintenance

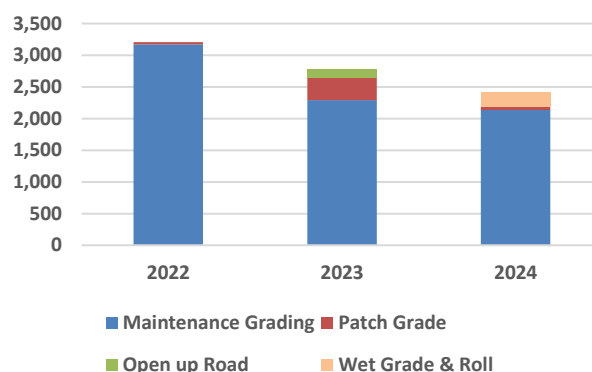
Council's Road network comprises some 1,948.17 km of formed, formed and surfaced and sealed roads, categorised by road hierarchy function as follows.

Category	Description	Length (km)
Cat A	Regional Distributor	279.87
Cat A	Local Distributor	828.42
Cat A	Local Feeder	215.18
Cat A	Local Access	331.83
Cat E	Local Station Access Only	292.87

Each category has its own level of strategic importance which, among other things, influence road maintenance practices.

Along with other road maintenance activities, regular maintenance grading and patching works are undertaken throughout the year, programmed according to the condition at the time and traffic generated, more or less in accordance with the relevant road category. During the year roads received maintenance grading either once or twice according to circumstances at the time. In 2023-24 additional contractor grading on the SKA Route was also undertaken

Road Maintenance Type (km)



Over the past few years Flood Damage Repairs associated with declared disaster events has seen significant fluctuations in the levels of road maintenance expenditure and revenue.

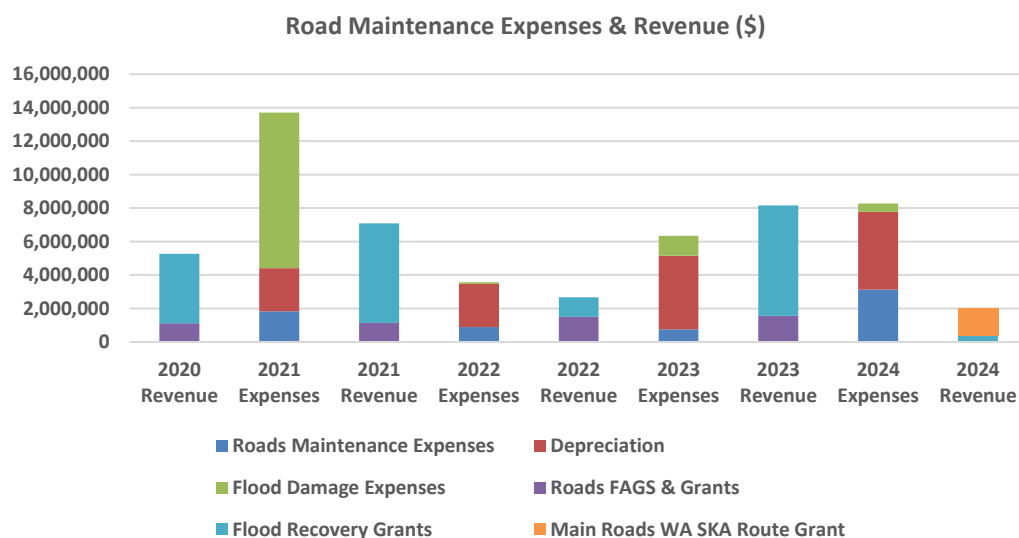
As shown in the following table, the time associated from the event being declared, obtaining an agreed scope of works and approved costing from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) invariably means that there are significant delays in undertaking flood restoration works. Unfortunately, this situation has not improved over recent years, a situation which effects many local governments.

More often than not, repair work for each event is spread over a number of years. In addition, extra works outside of this program are usually added at Council's cost to take advantage of contractors being on site.

A minimum local government funding contribution, which varies for each event, applies.

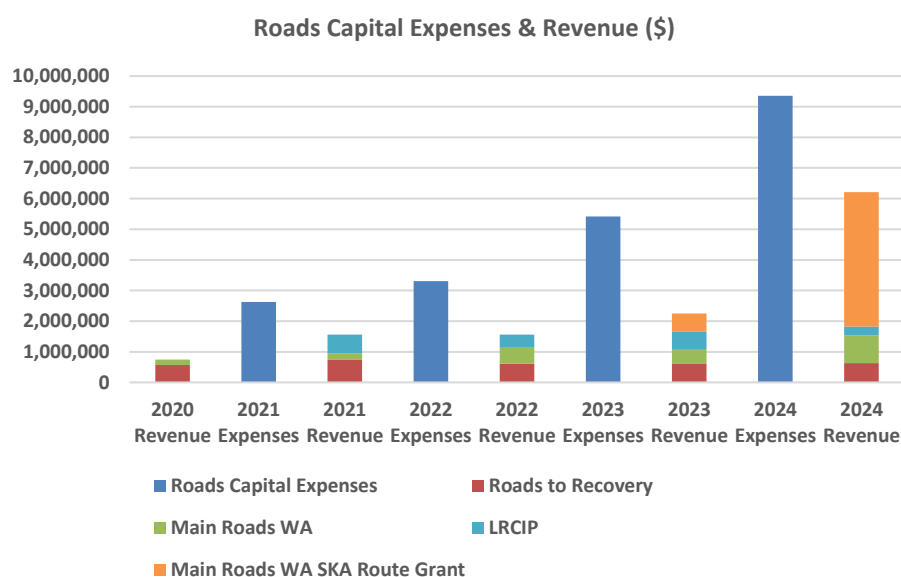
Flood Event			Cost Estimate	Years of Repair Work
AGRN863	Flood 6	11-14 April 2019	\$10,646,961	2020, 2021
AGRN899	Flood 7	4-9 Feb 2020 Tropical Cyclone Damien	\$398,024	2020, 2021
AGRN951	Flood 8	28 Jan-8 Feb 2021 Tropical Low	\$9,404,762	2021, 2022, 2023
AGRN974	Flood 9	29 - 31 May 2021 Rain Event	\$1,387,523	2022, 2023
AGRN1021	Flood 10	26 Mar – 3 April 2022	\$2,604,383	2022, 2023, 2024, 2025??
AGRN1062	Flood 11	Mar-April 2023	to be finalised in early 2024-25	2023, 2024, 2025??

These actions significantly impacted on Council's normal level of road maintenance operations. Depreciation, a non-cash expense, is also shown.



Road Construction

As indicated below, the extent of road construction activity is greatly influenced by the level of external funding provided. This includes Roads to Recovery and Main Roads WA funding, the latter of which has increased as Council has been able to increase the number of approved projects. In addition, since 2021/22 as part of a stimulus response to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the Commonwealth has provided additional roads funding under their Local Roads Community Infrastructure Program. In 2023-24 Council continued with road construction works on behalf of Main Roads WA on the SKA Route (Carnarvon-Mullewa, Twin Peaks-Wooleen, section of the Meeberrie-Mt Wittenoom, Boolardy-Kalli and sections of the Beringarra-Pindar and Boolardy-Kalli Roads).



This is also reflected in the \$9,354,885 in capital roadworks undertaken during year broadly comprising the following

Work Type	Km	Work Type	Km	Work Type	Km
Gravel Resheets Repairs	48.388	Sealed Upgrade	10.622	Reseals	3.063

Road	Location	Works	Funding
Beringarra-Pindar	288.05 – 309.50	Reshape resheet various floodway sections	Revenue, Grants
Beringarra-Pindar	Wreath Flowers	Completion of creation of dual one-way carriageways	Revenue
Beringarra-Pindar	SKA Route Sections	Reshape resheet various sections	Grants
Boolardy-Kalli	SKA Route Sections	Reshape resheet various sections	Grants
Boolardy-Wooleen	SKA Route Sections	Reshape resheet various sections	Grants
Meeberrie-Wooleen	SKA Route Sections	Reshape resheet various sections	Grants
Carnarvon-Mullewa	82.62 – 88.05	Resheet including floodways	Revenue
Carnarvon-Mullewa	208.68 – 241.74	Reconstruct widen and two coat seal narrow sections	Revenue, Grants
Carnarvon-Mullewa	208.68 – 241.74	Reseal various wide sections	Revenue
Carnarvon-Mullewa	154.04 – 208.68	Commence reconstruct & widen various narrow sections	Revenue, Grants
Twin Peaks-Wooleen	SKA Route Sections	Reshape resheet various sections	Grants
Various	Various	Grids Replacement	Revenue

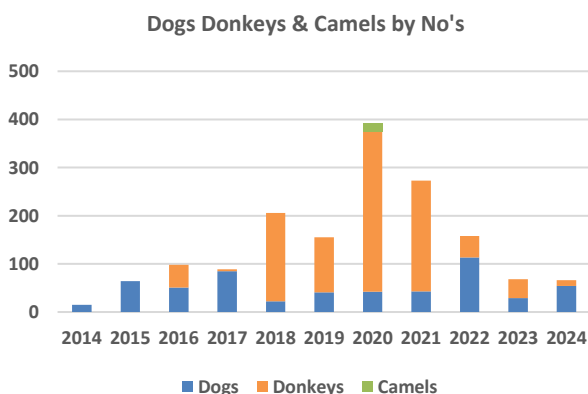


Vermin Control - Dog & Cat Management

Since 2014 the Shire has operated a Vermin Control Bounty Scheme to assist in the control of Wild Dogs, Donkeys and Camels. This scheme is a Shire initiative in addition to other State Government actions.

Prices for scalps are as follows: Wild Dogs \$100, Donkeys \$20 and Camels \$10.

Numbers recorded since the scheme's inception are shown as follows:



During 2022-23 year, following general review as to the effectiveness of this and other wild dog control work undertaken, it was recognised that whilst some additional financial support for local doggers could be seen as cost shifting, it was considered important to assist them in undertaking this essential work which involves significant effort, local experience and knowledge to eradicate what is a very difficult to find and destructive problem species.

An ex-gratia incentive payment of \$30 per day to local doggers operating within the Murchison Shire, capped at 160 days per annum rather than a variation in the per head bounty fee, was considered the most appropriate form of assistance and has been maintained during 2023-24.

Plant and Equipment

Replacement purchases of a Cat roller, Toyota Prado, Toyota Hilux, CF Moto UForce 600, 3x Genelite LG15Y-1 generators and IPS GS020-PTY generator.

Improved Water Supply

Work towards improving the quality of the water supply for Settlement residents and visitors continued, with a tender being called for and contract awarded to Murchison Gas and Plumbing for plumbing works. Works include a new ring main, pump equipment and connection to new bores, and ultimately to existing buildings. Works commenced in 2022-23 and are expected to be completed in 2024-25.

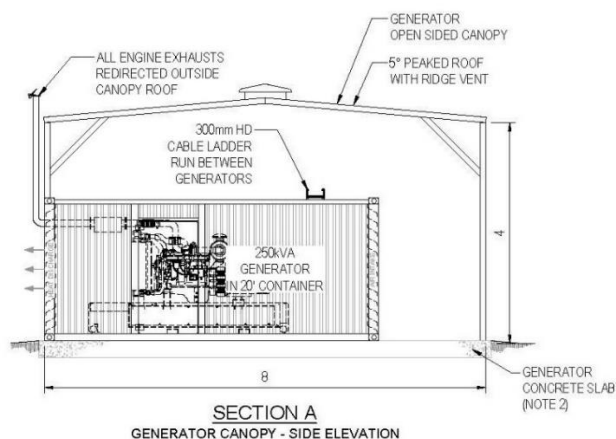
Meanwhile, following a successful funding application under the State Government's Infrastructure Development Program, works to provision a chlorinator to provide potable water are scheduled for 2024-25.



Settlement Power

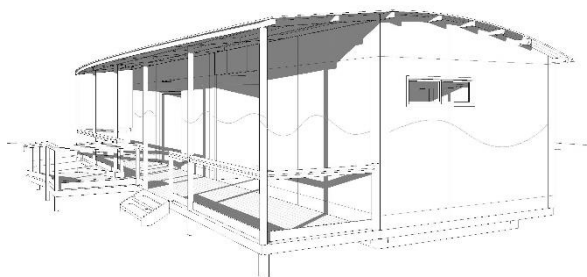
Work continued towards upgrading our Settlement power. During the summer period the existing generator capacity continued to be placed under significant stress. Whilst Council continues to work towards greening our power supply, a new generator was programmed for 2019-20, and subsequently installed in 2021-22.

Designs and specifications for a major upgrade to our power supply have been completed. Works are scheduled to commence in 2024-25 and be completed in 2025-26 following a successful funding application under the State Government's Infrastructure Development Fund.



Settlement Caravan Park Ablution Block

Tenders were called for a second ablution block for the Caravan Park. MI Global from Geraldton were successful and are scheduled to complete works in early 2024-25.



Settlement Pool & Splashpad

During the year \$250,000 funding from Lottery West for the Community Splash Pad component of the Settlement's Pool and Splashpad Project was secured. Additional funding of \$602,446 from the Commonwealth's Local Roads Community Infrastructure Fund was also obtained. As a result tenders were called, with Water Features by Design from Perth being successful. During the latter part of 2023-24-year design works and documentation were completed, with the pool an adjunct to the Settlement Caravan Park. Both projects are scheduled for completion in late 2024.



Community Economic Development

All residents and ratepayers are encouraged to respond to surveys and provide feedback to Council on an ongoing basis to help build a stronger and economically resilient community.

Council regularly updates and utilises its community email list to assist, as well as facilitating publication of the Murchison Monologue about life in the Shire of Murchison.

During the year, one newsletter was produced and distributed with regular monthly updates commencing in early 2024-25. The Murchison Polocrosse Tournament was again successfully held. This and the Shire's Christmas Tree and Anzac Day celebrations in December and April, continue to be the main stay of shire/community events held.

In February 2024 Council endorsed the suggestion to conduct a Camp Oven Muster Festival in August 2024 as a community – shire event. At the end of 2023-24 the Council Working Group established for this purpose was,

at the end of 2023-24, well advanced in undertaking this task including on the ground delivery.



The event program included camp oven cooking, wood carving and turning, wildflower walks, bush tucker taste and talk, construction and flying of kites, family games, community long table dinner, campfire sing-along, stargazing, astrophotography, line dancing, Murchison market, bush poetry, billy boiling, morning smoko and working dog demonstration with Q&A.

Potential for enhanced economic outcomes from the Community Garden have led to the potential upgrade and licensing of the kitchen in the Settlement Sports Club and further afield, potentially to residential kitchens within the Shire. The point-of-sale upgrades in the Roadhouse have created the operational viability for locally made produce to be sold through the roadhouse, thus supporting the development of cottage industry.

Plans to Collaborate with Art on the Move to establish an annual residency program were also put in place, with the aim to champion artists and galleries for the essential role they play in enriching Australian cultural life, creating opportunities for education, reflection, and exchange with advancement expected in late 2024.

During the stocktake of assets we uncovered collections of works, from banners to photos that require restoration. This includes hand painted banners from as far back as 2006. After some cleaning and repairs we intend to hang them on the banner poles on the main street.

Bill Boehm - Chief Executive Officer



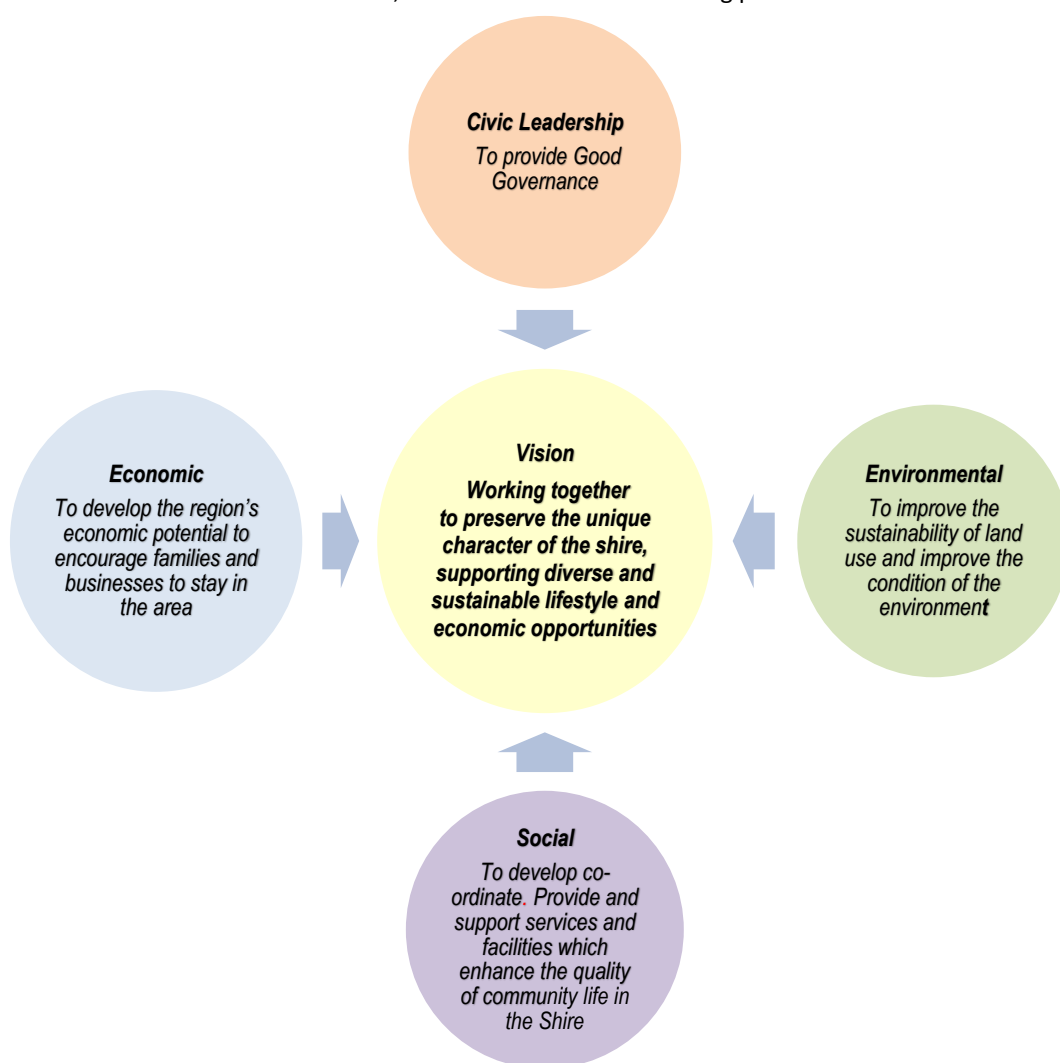
Strategic Community Plan

The Local Government Act and associated Regulations require a Local Government to ensure that a Strategic Community Plan is made for its district to:

- ~ Ensure that a Corporate Business Plan is made for its district and
- ~ Include in its Annual Report an overview of the Plan for the Future, including major initiatives planned to commence or continue in the next year.


In accordance with Integrated Planning and Reporting Requirements, initially the Shire of Murchison developed a ten-year Strategic Community Plan, a 15-year Long Term Financial Plan and a four-year Corporate Business Plan. In 2023 the Corporate Business Plan was significantly updated ahead of the 2023-24 Budget. In 2023-24 a 20-year Asset Management Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan was adopted alongside the 4-year indicative budget, with the aim that all four documents would be updated annually.

The Strategic Community Plan was originally developed in 2013 after extensive community consultation. The Plan reflects the Community's vision for the future and is the principal strategic guide for our future planning and activities. A full review of the plan was undertaken and the revised 2016-17 to 2026-27 Strategic Community Plan was adopted on the 29 March 2017 and as shown below, is built around four well-being priorities.



Since 2017 work has continued to develop the scope of works and deliver a range of Capital Works identified in the then Corporate Business Plan. However, various significant changes have occurred over recent years, with a range of strategic actions associated with the redevelopment of the Murchison Settlement including: the Murchison Settlement Masterplan, Murchison Settlement Roadhouse Precinct Detailed Concept Design and Murchison Vast Sky Experience Business Case as outlined in page 11 of this Annual Report. This has led to some minor tweaks to the Community Strategic Plan. Meanwhile, actions undertaken in relation to the Corporate Business Plan are shown in the following table:

Corporate Business Plan - Strategies & Actions Outline as aligned with the Strategic Community Plan 2016-17 – 2026-27

Strategy		Action No	Actions	Desired Trends & Comments
	Economic well-being			
	To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area			
	Outcome 1.1 Maintenance and upgrade of road network			<i>Aim for improved road safety and increased seal widening on the Carnarvon-Mullewa Road</i>
	1.1.1 To develop, maintain and improve an efficient road system to support the transport requirements associated with the pastoral and mining industries and tourism	1.1.1.1	Lobbying State and Federal Governments to adequately fund roads	Additional Road funding from the Commonwealth's Local Roads Community Infrastructure Program to supplement Roads to Recovery Funding) which is part of a 5-year program. Main Roads WA funding has effectively doubled from previous years due to submissions presented. In 2023-24 three projects have been funded with funding from works associated with two of the four 2024-25 projects also being included in 2023-24
		1.1.1.2	Maintaining an effective working relationship with Main Roads WA	Member of Main Roads Mid-West Regional Roads Group and Murchison Subgroup. CEO is a member of Main Roads WA Technical Working Group
		1.1.1.3	Continue road improvement program	Refer Roads Construction Section (pg14) Overall Gravel Resheets Repairs 48.388km, Sealed Upgrade 10.622km Reseals 3.063km Beringarra-Pindar 288.05 – 309.50 Reshape resheet various floodway sections Beringarra-Pindar Wreath Flowers Completion of creation of dual one-way carriageways Beringarra-Pindar SKA Route Sections Reshape resheet various sections Boolardy-Kalli SKA Route Sections Reshape resheet various sections Boolardy-Wooleen SKA Route Sections Reshape resheet various sections Meeberrie-Wooleen SKA Route Sections Reshape resheet various sections Carnarvon-Mullewa 82.62 – 88.05 Resheet including floodways Carnarvon-Mullewa 208.68 – 241.74 Reconstruct widen and two coat seal narrow sections Carnarvon-Mullewa 208.68 – 241.74 Reseal various wide sections Carnarvon-Mullewa 154.04 – 208.68 Commence reconstruct & widen various narrow sections Twin Peaks-Wooleen SKA Route Sections Reshape resheet various sections Grids Replacement at various locations New Entrance Signs previously installed in 2020-21
		1.1.1.4	Install safety signage at entry points to the Shire, including 'drive to conditions', UHF frequencies, 'no mobile service', carry enough water	

Strategy	Action No	Actions	Desired Trends & Comments
Outcome 1.2 Tourism Development			<i>Increase visitor numbers and longer duration of stay</i>
1.2.1 To promote and support a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Murchison	1.2.1.1	Construction / development of an Interpretive Centre in the Murchison Settlement	Part of Murchison Vast Sky Business Case which requires substantial funding for it to proceed
	1.2.1.2	Expansion of Murchison Settlement Caravan Park's accommodation facilities and construction of a camp kitchen	Refer Settlement Caravan Park Ablution Block Section (pg16). Tenders called for a new Caravan Park Ablution Block in December 2021, but no responses were received. Further follow up work has led to this project commencing in 2023-24 with the appointment of MI Global from Geraldton who have part completed the project
Outcome 1.3 Economic development			<i>Water and Electricity Supply upgraded</i>
1.3.1 Retain existing industries and encourage the establishment of new industries to broaden the region's economic base through the provision of residential and industrial land / buildings in Murchison Settlement	1.3.1.1	Explore options for the provision of land for residential and industrial development options in the Murchison Settlement	To be reviewed at a later date.
	1.3.1.2	Dissemination of information on employment and training opportunities within Shire and other organisations to the community	As part of standard practice Shire jobs are advertised including via local community email.
	1.3.1.3	Provide training and employment opportunities for the local community	Ongoing as opportunities arise. In 2023-24 training associated with the community garden was also undertaken.




Environmental well-being

To improve the sustainability of land use and improve the condition of the environment

Outcome 2.1 Waste Management

2.1.1 Develop and implement programs to reduce and control littering Develop and implement programs to encourage community ownership of the road side litter issue	2.1.1.1	Develop and implement programs to encourage community ownership of the road side litter issue	<i>Reduction in waste going to landfill</i> Ongoing as opportunities arise
	2.1.1.2	Better community engagement, signage encouraging 'respect for country' and encouraging people to take litter with them or leave it at rubbish facilities within the settlement.	Ongoing as opportunities arise
	2.1.1.3	Provision of more bins at the roadhouse and caravan park to deal with this	Ongoing review on an as required basis

Strategy		Action No	Actions	Desired Trends & Comments
			Outcome 2.2 Energy efficiency	Policy developed. Application incorporated into operational practices
2.2.1	Develop a policy to assess energy efficiency of appliances and other assets as part of the acquisition process	2.2.1.1	Develop a policy for assessing energy efficiency as part of the acquisition process for appliances and other assets	Reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis
		2.2.1.2	Replacement of existing appliances and other assets with more energy efficient models as part of the infrastructure maintenance and upgrade program	Ongoing brief with budgeted purchases
			Outcome 2.3 Environmental initiatives	As below
2.3.1	To protect and rehabilitate the Shires natural environment and support the pastoral industry	2.3.1.1	Continued support for community groups	Ongoing. Settlement Freight subsidy Contract. Annual Christmas Tree celebrations, ANZAC Day and Murchison Polocrosse support. Funding support for Biggest Morning Tea Cancer Fund Raising Event and Meekatharra School of the Air Parents and Citizens, Association (MSOTA)
		2.3.1.2	Develop a strategy for managing drainage in relation to flood and storm water on roads with other stakeholders	Policy developed. Incorporated into road design and road maintenance practices. Works Manager attended and presented roads for hydration methodology at a Cue Meeting of the Murchison Executive Group
		2.3.1.3	Pursue funding opportunities for control of noxious weeds and declared animals	Ongoing
		2.3.1.4	Continued support for community groups controlling noxious weeds and declared animals	Ongoing including for CRBA and Local Vermin Control Bounty Scheme. Additional financial support for local Doggers commenced in 2022-23 and maintained in 2023-24
		2.3.1.5	Continuation of Bunding and remediation of old Roads and Borrow Bits	Kalli-Roderick Road remediation deferred till 2024-25.
		2.3.1.6	Prepare an evidence-based report to support off reserve remediation work including downstream dispersal.	-
		2.3.1.7	Small scale support for vermin control	As per 2.3.1.4

Strategy		Action No	Actions	Desired Trends & Comments	
	Social well-being				
	To develop, co-ordinate, provide and support services and facilities which enhance the quality of community life in the Shire				
	Outcome 3.1 Infrastructure upgrade and improvement			<i>As below</i>	
	3.1.1	Maintain and improve infrastructure within the Shire to support social and economic activities (buildings and other infrastructure)	3.1.1.1	Explore and pursue funding opportunities to support the Shire’s capital works and maintenance programs	Council contribution to the Mid-West Development Commission’s Business Case Work for the Murchison Settlement by way of the Murchison SKA Interpretive Experience Planning Project and Murchison Roads Planning and Design Planning Project. Funding towards Community Pool and Splashpad secured.
			3.1.1.2	Follow up plans and ideas of disbanded cemetery committee	Ongoing
3.1.1.3			Complete development of the cemetery	Cemetery Niche wall completed in 2022-23	
3.1.1.4			Refurbish Community Centre	Part of Murchison Redevelopment Works Program.	
Outcome 3.2 Emergency services			<i>As below</i>		
3.2.1	Supply resources for, and co-ordinate delivery of, emergency services within the Shire	3.2.2.1	Bush fire brigade training	Ongoing	
		3.2.2.2	St John Ambulance First Aid training to be held at Murchison Settlement	Ongoing	
		3.2.2.3	Further development of the Local Emergency Management Operations	Ongoing. Adopted the revised Murchison Local Emergency Management Arrangements 2024-2029 and Recovery Plan	
		3.2.2.4	Bushfire Brigade Fast Attack purchase	Funding Application lodged but funding not successful	
Outcome 3.3 Provision of health service information			<i>As below</i>		
3.3.1	Shire to act as a reference point for the provision of health and well-being information for local residents	3.3.1.1	Gather information on health services provided in neighbouring communities and develop methodologies for communicating to the local community	Ongoing	
		3.3.1.2	Establish a central information hub advising contact details and resources for services available in surrounding districts	Ongoing maintenance of Community mailing list	
Outcome 3.4 Provision of Education Support			<i>As below</i>		
3.4.1	Provide support for access to educational opportunities.	3.4.1.1	Continue support of School of the Air and ICPA	Ongoing	
		3.4.1.2	Explore opportunities for inclusion of educational facilities in any upgrade of the Community Centre	Part of Murchison Redevelopment Works Program.	

Strategy



Civic Leadership well-being

To provide good governance to the Murchison Shire

Action No

Actions

Desired Trends & Comments

Outcome 4.1 Workforce planning

4.1.1	Development of a Workforce Plan to ensure human resources can be optimised to achieve the Shire's strategic objectives	4.1.1.1	Seek funding for development of a Community Development Officer position to implement actions to achieve Council's strategic objectives
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As below

Position incorporated into Shire Staff as matter of ongoing operation. New replacement commenced in April 2024.

Outcome 4.2 Regional collaboration

4.2.1	Work collaboratively with neighbouring shires, state and federal government and private enterprise to ensure the efficient and effective use of the Shire's scarce resources	4.2.1.1	Identify opportunities where collaboration can achieve greater outcomes for the local community than the Shire could achieve acting in isolation
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As below

Ongoing. Includes councillor representation on the WALGA Murchison Country Zone and CEO representation on the Murchison Executive Group. Partnering with the Mid West Development Commission on Murchison Vast Sky project. Financial support for a regional tourism marketing effort with other Shires associated with the Murchison Executive Group. Member and financial supporter of Murchison GeoRegion.

Outcome 4.3 Financial planning and management

4.3.1	To responsibly manage Council's financial resources to ensure optimum value for money and sustainable asset management	4.3.1.1	Identify opportunities where collaboration can achieve greater outcomes for the local community than the Shire could achieve acting in isolation
		4.3.1.2	Adopt an asset management and replacement strategy that minimises the net cost of replacing assets
		4.3.1.3	Assess all potential funding sources, particularly grants to enable the maximisation of community benefit from matching cash contributions by Council

As below

Ongoing.

Major review undertaken in 2022-23 with new plan adopted in August 2023. Annual updates thereafter.

Ongoing

Outcome 4.4 Strategic planning

4.4.1	Ongoing reviews of the Community Strategic Plan	4.4.1.1	A full review of the Strategic Community Plan will be scheduled for four years from when it is adopted
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Full review of Community Strategic Plan completed

A full review is anticipated some time in 2024-25. In the meantime, some minor tweaks to the Community Strategic Plan have been made within the current framework have been made annually as part of the review of the Corporate Business Plan.

Strategy		Action No	Actions	Desired Trends & Comments
Outcome 4.5 Asset management				As below
4.5.1	Meet the required level of service in the most cost-effective manner for present and future Residents.	4.5.1.1	Maintain an Asset Management Plan	Major review undertaken in 2022-23 with new plan adopted in August 2023. Annual updates thereafter.
Outcome 4.6 Communications Strategies with the Community including the more involvement with Pia Wadjarri & CSIRO				As below
4.6.1	Increase communication between the Council and all sectors of the community (both ways)	4.6.1.1	Publication and distribution of the Shires bi-monthly newsletter (the Monologue)	Ongoing with one newsletter produced and distributed during the year.
		4.6.1.2	Hosting Community Meetings and Forums	Ongoing
		4.6.1.3	Email communications on developing issues	Ongoing
		4.6.1.4	Shire councillors and staff to attend CSIRO Stakeholder meetings	Ongoing
		4.6.1.5	CSIRO & SKAO representatives to be provide with opportunities to address Council at Council Meetings	Standing invitation to CSIRO & SKAO. During 2023-24 representatives from CSIRO and SKAO attended as follows. August 2023 Meeting . SKAO. February 2024 Meeting . CSIRO & SKAO
		4.6.1.6	Shire representatives’ regular attendance at Pia functions.	CEO regularly attends Pia Wadjarri School Council Meetings
4.6.2	Assist and support -the Pia Wadjarri Community with cultural development opportunities	4.6.2.1	Support local workshops and cultural development opportunities where there is alignment with local community development actions	Ongoing



Statutory Reporting Requirements

The following are statutory reporting requirements for inclusion into Council's Annual Report

Public Interest Disclosures

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* facilitates the disclosure of public interest information and provides protection for those making such disclosure and those who are the subject of disclosures. The Act provides a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and for appropriate action to be taken. The Chief Executive Officer is the designated responsible officer under the Act and has complied with all obligations. There were no disclosures or complaints lodged during 2023-24.

National Competition Policy

Council operations in 2023-24 did not fall within the requirements of the National Competition Policy

Register of Certain Complaints of Minor Breaches

The Local Government Act requires the annual report to contain details about entries made during the financial year in the register of complaints, including:

- ~ the number of complaints; and
- ~ how the recorded complaints were dealt with; and
- ~ any other details that the regulations may require.

Generally, a minor breach is a breach of a local law or code of conduct and the action taken may be public censure, making the person say sorry or sending them to training. A register must be kept of all such breaches.

The Shire of Murchison does not have a designated Complaints Officer and so the Chief Executive Officer fulfils this role.

The Shire reports no complaints as defined under s5.110 (6) (b) or (c) of the Act for the period ending 30 June 2024.

Information About Certain Employees

In accordance with s5.53(2)(g) of the *Local Government Act 1995* and s19B of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*, the number of employees other than the CEO who have an annual salary of \$130,000 per annum or more is shown as follows.

Salary Band	Number of Employees	
	2024	2023
\$140,000 to \$149,999	1	1

The CEO's remuneration comprised \$196,802 (salary, superannuation, allowances & fees) and \$33,758 (non-cash benefits).

Freedom of Information

The Shire of Murchison complies with the Freedom of Information Act 1992 which, amongst other things, has as its objectives to:

- ~ Enable the public to participate more effectively in governing the state; and
- ~ Make the persons and bodies that are responsible for the State and Local Government more accountable to the public.
- ~ Make available details about the kind of information they hold and enable persons to ensure that personal information held by government agencies about them is "accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading

The Chief Executive Officer is the Shire's Freedom of Information Coordinator. Any formal application for the information that is not already freely available at the Shire may be made formally through the Chief Executive Officer.

It is the aim of the Shire of Murchison to make information available promptly, at the least possible cost and wherever possible, documents will be provided outside the freedom of information (FOI) process. During 2023-24 the Shire received no Freedom of Information applications.

Record Keeping

The State Records Act 2000 requires that the Shire maintains and disposes of all records in the prescribed matter. Council has prepared a Record Keeping Plan that is considered to comply with the Act. The record keeping plan is to provide evidence to address that:

- ~ The efficiency and effectiveness of the Shire's record keeping system is evaluated not less than once every 5 years.
- ~ The Shire conducts a record keeping training program.
- ~ Information sessions are conducted for staff as required.
- ~ The Shire's Induction Program for new employees includes an introduction to the local government's record keeping system and program, and information on their record keeping responsibilities.

The Record Keeping Plan must be reviewed at least every five years. Between reviews, the implementation and continuation of requirements is to be further developed.

The Shire of Murchison completed a full review of its record keeping plan in November 2018 which was submitted to the State Records Office. It is expected that

a significant amount of catch-up work will be required to implement the plan.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

The Disability Services Act 1993 requires a local government or regional local government that has a disability access and inclusion plan must include in its annual report with a report about the implementation of the plan.

The Murchison Shire Council Disability Access & Inclusion Plan was originally adopted in July 2008, then reviewed in

the later part of 2015 and the review adopted by Council in February 2016 and later in July 2021 after community consultation.

The Disability Access and inclusion Plan 2021–2025 includes seven outcomes and underpinning strategies to ensure that people with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of public authority.

The seven outcomes and achievements against strategies for 2023-24 are as follows:

Outcomes

- 1 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of and any events organised by a public authority.
- 2 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of public authority
- 3 People with disability receive information from a public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
- 4 People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of that public authority.
- 5 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to public authority.
- 6 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.
- 7 People with disability have the same opportunity as other people to obtain and maintain employment with public authority.

Achievements against Strategies

Shire services are monitored to ensure equitable access and inclusion, especially in regard to events being organised or funded.

The DAIP is considered a living document and is inclusive to all shire plans and strategies.

Consideration is given to providing wheelchair access for all new development works.

All recreational areas are accessible.

All Shire information is available in alternative format upon request.

Staff are aware.

Website meets contemporary good practice.

Staff and Council are aware of disability issues and provide a high standard of customer service to all who attend the Shire.

Grievance mechanisms are in place but have not yet been utilised by any people with disability.

Through our website, people with disability are encouraged to participate in any public consultation.

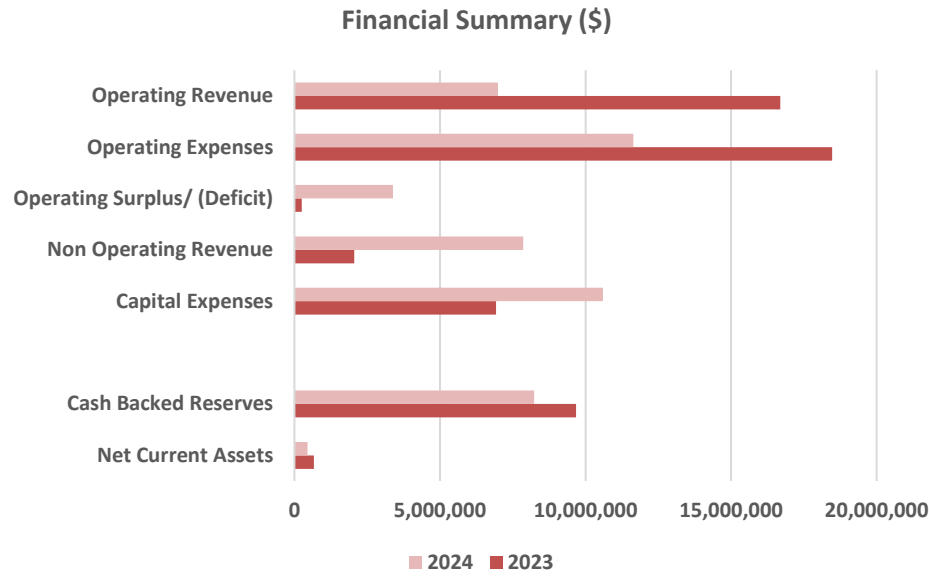
People with disability are encouraged to apply for any employment with the Shire.

Financial Overview

Financial Summary

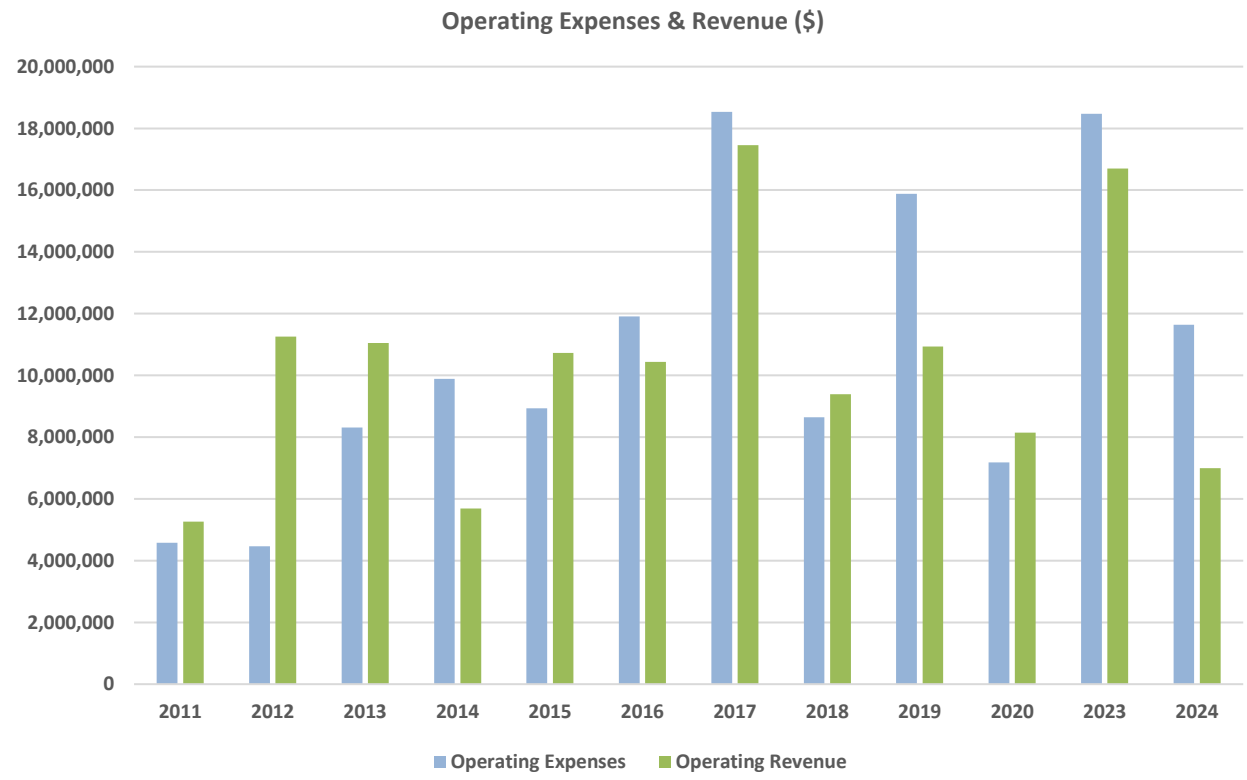
A summary of Council’s financial performance is shown as follows:

Depending on the circumstances during the year the financial performance may vary widely. The main influencing factor, that dramatically increased both operating income and operating expenses, involved repairs to Council’s Road network following continuation of flood restoration works associated with various events as previously described.

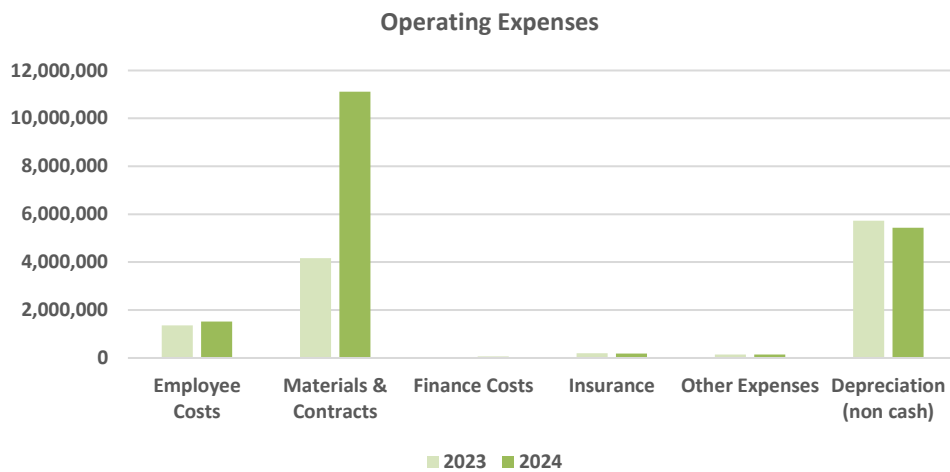
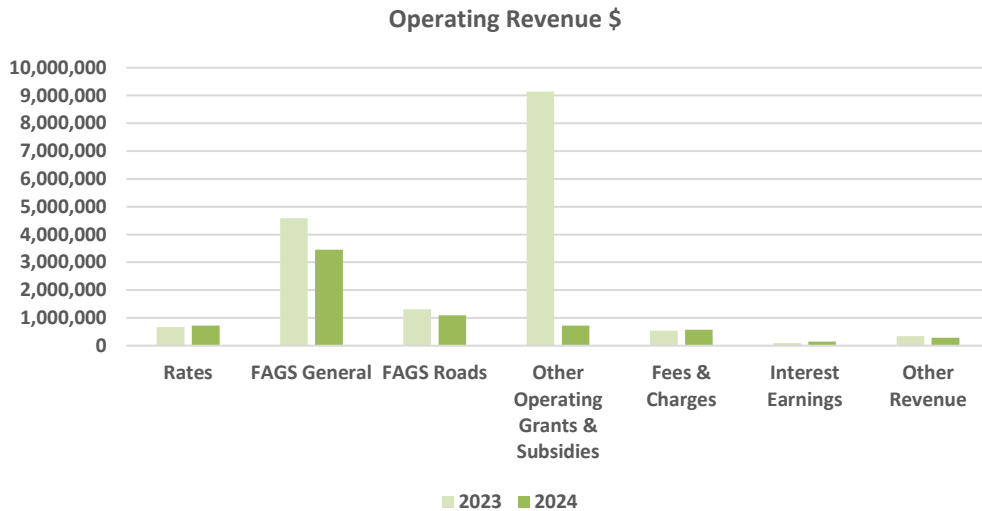


Operating Revenue & Expenses

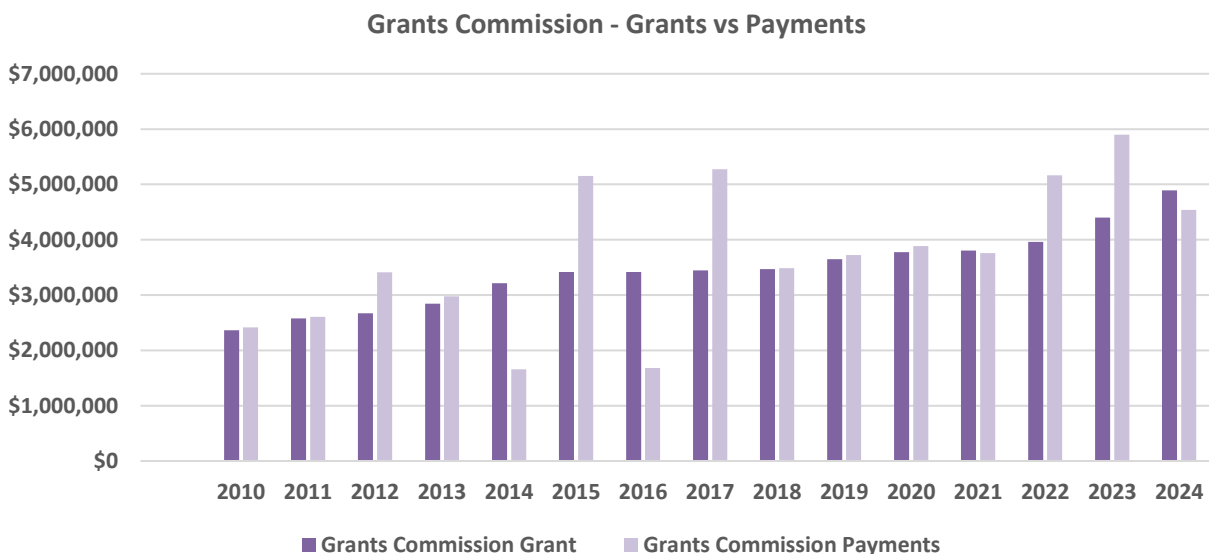
A summary of operating revenue and expenses (including depreciation which is non-cash) over several years is shown below.



Summary categorisation of operating revenue and expenses is shown as follows:

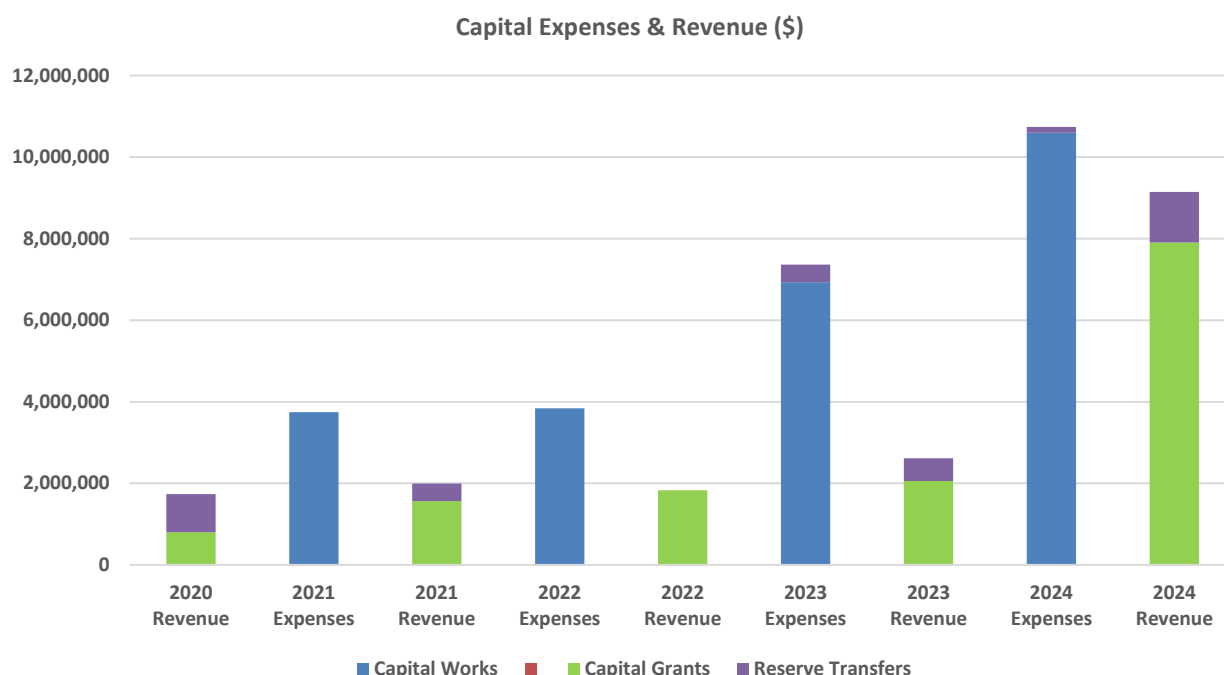


Summary of Grants Commission Payments shows the variation between the actual grant for each year compared to when payments are received. This distortion comes about by an advance commonwealth payment for the following financial year being received in June of the previous financial year. This distorts the real Net Current Assets position. As a means to minimise the impact, over the past two years the advance payment has been placed into a Grants Commission Reserve in June and then taken out in July.



Capital Expenses & Revenue

A summary of capital revenue and expenses is show below.



Financial Position

Many small councils in WA are heavily reliant on external funding, delivered through Federal and State Grants Commission (Financial Assistance (FAGs) and Road Grants), e.g. Roads to Recovery, Main Roads WA, Flood Damage (where applicable) and other sources. Rate Revenue represents a very small proportion of our operating revenue.

The Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries (DLGCSI) has, over recent years, developed various financial indicators including a Financial Health Indicator (FHI) as a measurement of a local government's overall financial health. It is calculated from the seven financial ratios that local governments are required to calculate annually and include in Annual Financial Report. Whilst these indicators are one aspect to consider in assessing overall performance, other factors include: the range of services offered, efficiency of services delivered, community satisfaction, sparseness, and major events such as flood repairs etc which, as previously indicated under Operating Revenue, have a significant impact.

For instance, in 2018/19 whilst the Debt Service Cover Ratio as outlined under Note 30 of the Notes to Financial Report is recognised as being "supposedly" below the (DLGCSI) standard, in reality this was influenced by \$1.55m in short-term loan payments which were outstanding at the end of the financial year, but later paid in 2019/20 from flood damage grants. For practical purposes Council is almost debt free.

The figure is also subject to question depending on the timing of an entity's asset valuation and the degree of sophistication of the Asset Management Plan which, in our case, was adopted in 2013. Much has changed since this time with a more relevant and updated version, which will form part of the 2023-24 Annual Report being adopted in August 2023.

Some of the definitions of ratios required to be calculated do not appear to be in accordance with contemporary practice, with the one size fits all criteria difficult to apply with any uniformity in such a widely varying state.

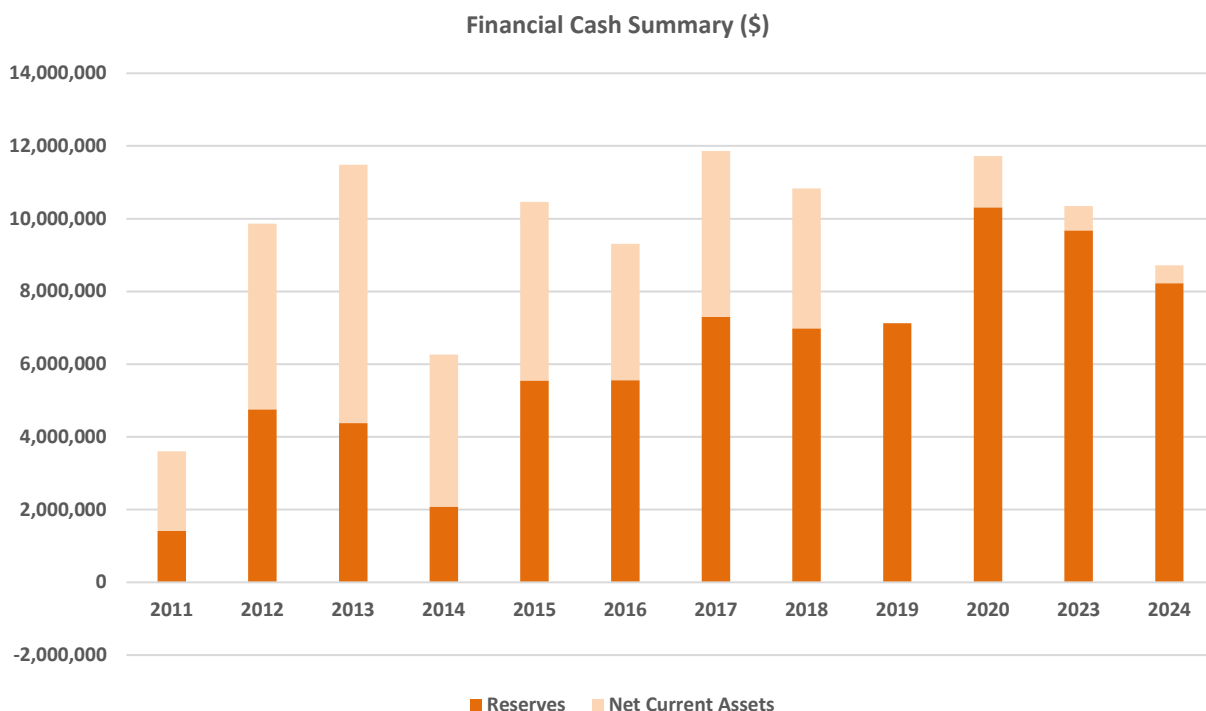
In 2019 WALGA commissioned an independent review of the current legislated financial indicators and have adopted a modified set with significantly different components.

It was also noted that:

"Financial Ratios measure financial performance and do not measure a local government's efficiency or effectiveness in delivering its programs and services".

It is considered that Council's current approach to measure the amount of available cash, as shown by the combined cash reserves and Net Current Assets Position and develop and continually update our asset management and long-term financial plans.

As shown below “cash wise” Council’s financial position has improved over time, notwithstanding an increase in the quantum of works undertaken.



Regardless of the figures, questions may be asked by the community about a local government’s revenue, expenses and service delivery.

This same question is asked at a Council level where it is recognised that having sound data and analysis is critical to good medium to long term decision making.

Council is committed to improvements in this area and during the year commenced detailed strategic work including:

Revalidation of Council’s RAMM Database and Road Condition Assessment leading, in part, to the adoption of a long-term sealing program and plant replacement through an adaptive model.

This is part of the adjacent continuous improvement approach that Council continues to embark on.

This saw an updated Corporate Business Plan adopted in June 2023, with a fit for purpose Asset Management Plan adopted in August 2023 and which will be updated annually.



Financial Report

Council's Financial Report for the year ending 30 June 2024 report comprises of:

- Statement by Chief Executive Officer
- Statement of Comprehensive Income
- Statement of Financial Position
- Statement of Changes in Equity
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Statement of Financial Activity
- Notes to and Forming Part of the Annual Report
- Independent Auditors Report



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