



21 September 2023

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File Ref: GOV9.14.041

Dear Board Member

### **NOTICE OF MEETING**

Notice is hereby given pursuant to the Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority Charter and Section 87(4) of the Local Government Act, 1999, as amended that a meeting for the **Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority** has been called for:-

**DATE:** 26 September 2023

**TIME:** 3pm

**PLACE:** The Encounter Room

Please find enclosed a copy of the Agenda for the meeting.

Yours faithfully

**Megan Whibley**  
**General Manager**

Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority

*Please be advised that filming, photography and audio recording may take place at this meeting when the public and media are not lawfully excluded under Section 90 of the Local Government Act 1999.*

Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority  
Board Meeting Agenda  
For meeting Tuesday 26 September 2023  
Commencing at 3pm at the Encounter Room



**1. Open Meeting/Welcome**

**2. Attendance**

Nigel Catt (Chair)  
Cr Carol Schofield AM  
Paul Brown  
Rachel Kennedy  
Natasha Hunt

Megan Whibley (General Manager VHHTA)

**3. Apologies**

Nil

**4. Reports for Decision**

4.1	Draft Annual 2022/23 Report	2
4.2	General Manager Remuneration Review	37

**Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 31 October 2023 at 3pm, The Stables , 11 Canton Place.

**Meeting Close**

**Please be advised**

- *That filming, photography and audio recording may take place at this meeting when the public and media are not lawfully excluded under Section 90 of the Local Government Act 1999.*



# General Manager Report

Meeting **Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority**  
Date **26 September 2023**  
From **Megan Whibley**  
Subject **Draft Annual 2022/23 Report**  
Report Number **4.1**

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## RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority Board receive and note the Draft Annual 2021/22 Report and the and the 2022/23 Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority Annual Financial Statements.**
- 2. That the Board endorse the Draft Annual 2022/23 Report as provided at Attachment A and provide the report to Council for approval.**
- 3. That the Board endorse the 2022/23 Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority Annual Financial Statements as provided under separate cover, and provide them in the Draft Annual 2022/23 Report to Council for approval.**

## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Draft Annual 2022/23 Report and the 2022/23 Financial Figures to the Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority (VHHTA) Board for endorsement.

## Background

In accordance with Clause 12 of Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act (the Act) the VHHTA is required to furnish an annual report to the Council. In accordance with the Charter, the VHHTA must provide the report to Council by 30 September each year.

Once endorsed by the Board, the Annual Report will be provided to Counsel on or before 30 September 2023 to go to the next Council meeting for Council approval. As a subsidiary of City of Victor Harbor, it is a requirement under the Act that the VHHTA Annual Report be included with the Councils Annual Report which is provided to the Minister.

## Commentary

A draft Annual 2022/23 Report has been prepared for endorsement by the Board and is provided with this report at Attachment A. The 2022/23 Financial Figures to be included in the draft Annual 2022/23 Report are provided under separate cover. Endorsement by the

Board at this meeting will ensure that the Annual Report and Financial Figures can be provided to Council for approval by 30 September 2023.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The risks associated with the recommendation have been assessed as follows:

**Corporate Governance** –The VHHTA was able to meet the required deadline for providing their Annual Report to Council. By the board endorsing the Annual 2022/23 Report at the 26 September 2023 Board meeting, the Annual Report will be provided to Council in time for inclusion with the Council’s Annual Report which is scheduled for endorsement at the November Council meeting. The VHHTA was in a good position to prepare financial statements in time for the 30 September deadline. The risk is assessed as **low**.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Budget Implications associated with the Board receiving and endorsing the draft Annual 2022/23 Report.





VICTOR HARBOR  
HORSE TRAM AUTHORITY

# 2022/23 Annual Report





# Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority Annual Report 2022/23

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## Introduction from the Chair

During 2022/23 the Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority (VHHTA) has had a wonderful year. The significant factors and obstacles of COVID-19 and the building of the new Causeway impeding and often halting the operation of the Tram are thankfully a distant memory.

The VHHTA team are always on point. I am continually impressed by their dedication to the horses, fitness and training programs for the horses, engagement with consumers and visitors all while together advancing the numerous projects outlined in the VHHTA Business Plan. My most heartfelt congratulations to all staff and management. The horses have never looked so polished and healthy, and again all horses received a 5-star health rating at their annual veterinary health checks. The horses are the VHHTA's major focus and key asset. Staff always ensure that they always look well-groomed and impressive. I think they must be the most adored animals in Australia.

The new Causeway has created an added focus to Victor Harbor which is evident in an increase in customer engagement and numbers of people traversing the new Causeway, enjoying the experience. The opening up of the Kiosk on the Island by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport has also enhanced visitor experience when visiting Granite Island.

The VHHTA was awarded a substantial grant from the Building Better Regions Fund, ensuring that a new Stable Complex is becoming an exciting reality. This tourist encounter will extend our service sector reach and enhance involvement by providing a focused Visitor Centre in the Complex, enabling the delivery of a first-class hands-on horse experiences. Together with the Equine Assisted Learning program, it will serve to create a better experience for visitors and extend the range of experiences that the VHHTA can offer. Not only will this facility attract a broad and varied visitor base to the Victor Harbor region but it will also serve to increase employment, provide an additional income source for the VHHTA and encourage extended holiday stays in the area.

COVID-19 severely impacted businesses across South Australia, and the Horse Tram was not immune. Our numbers overall were suppressed, and passenger seating available per trip was reduced to comply with COVID capacity restrictions. The lack of international visitors impacted as did border closures which stopped visitor numbers from all states.

A full year, post COVID has showed a very positive future for the iconic and important 'Horse Tram'. It has been impressive the way Megan and her team adjusted and pivoted during the COVID impacting period, but now without those restrictions the business is absolutely flourishing. Attention to detail and cohesive fiscal management has served to rationalise the business and allowed for inflationary cost increases. Also, internal maintenance has shaped extensive savings showing fiscal responsibility in what was, and continues to be, a difficult climate.

One of the major achievements has been the new merchandise area, which has seen a significant increase in sales, creating a substantial revenue stream for which we have Carol Schofield, and our wonderful volunteers, to thank.

When visiting the tram office in the mornings it is heart-warming to see the love and care that the horses are given and how passionate the VHHTA team is. Scores of people watch the horses being ridden along the beach and in the ocean, and see the horses being treated to massages by specialist mechanical devices to enhance their overall well-being, and the horses are just 'lapping it up'. They are a majestic sight adding exponentially to the Victor Harbor experience. Observing the VHHTA staff converse with the public, and how convivially they react with all visitors, it is obvious that it is a very cohesive team that enjoy their workplace. They are greatly appreciated as the face of the business.

Regular board meetings, together with internal and external assessment, serve to formalise ideas to recognise and guide a path to make the Victor Harbor Horse Tram a remarkable and special experience. The Horse Tram helps to showcase Victor Harbor as South Australia's #1 tourist destination through the world's leading horse drawn experience, delivering historic and authentic encounters that create lasting memories.

I want to thank the Board for their commitment and passion for the Horse Tram. Each member makes a tremendous contribution and brings a wealth of expertise, knowledge and diverse skill sets to the VHHTA, and works cohesively to achieve best practice.

Megan Whibley, as the VHHTA General Manager, has gone above and beyond in running a very diverse and unique business, while bringing new and fresh ideas to the VHHTA. Her passion and diligence is impressive. We have a great team of people working for, and with, the VHHTA, and a happy, healthy team of horses. The future of the Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority is looking positive, bright and exciting. Our thanks go to the whole team, but especially to the VHHTA management, Megan and Adrian, for their faultless service and attention to detail.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel. M. Catt  
**Dip.Ag., Grad.Dip.Sc.**

Chair – Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority







## About the VHHTA

The Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority (the VHHTA) is a subsidiary of the City of Victor Harbor (Council), established under section 42 of the *Local Government Act 1999*. The VHHTA is governed by a Charter approved by the Minister on 17 October 2018, which details its purpose, powers, functions, duties, funding, property and delegation as well as the role, function and requirements of the VHHTA Board, among other things. The Charter was gazetted on 25 October 2018.

The Horse Tram, like many other services, is subsidised by Council and provides a valuable service to the City of Victor Harbor community on behalf of ratepayers. It serves as an important and highly significant contributor to the economy of Victor Harbor. The Horse Tram is a part of what makes this city thrive.

## Strategic Direction

The Victor Harbor Horse Tram's Annual Business Plan outlines the strategic direction for the Authority.

**Vision Statement:** To deliver historic experiences and create memories.

**Mission:** To showcase Victor Harbor through the world's leading horse tram experience

**Goals:** High quality, efficient operation with a reduced financial reliance on City of Victor Harbor.



## The Board



### **Nigel Catt (Chair)**

Nigel Catt has been in the Australian Wine Industry since 1983 in various roles such as senior winemaker for a number of large and medium wine companies, as well as owning his own vineyards, wineries and wine brands.

During this time, Nigel has produced wines in other countries, consulted to other wineries and the State Government, run Industry Supply Companies at board and management level. He owned the Middleton Winery and Vineyards, developed and built the Flying Fish Café and has been a board member for 10 years at Encounter Lutheran College. National Sales and Marketing Consultant for Radoux, a French oak barrel company that he still represents here in Australia.

Nigel has supported and developed many businesses, and mentored young business-people, here and overseas. The majority of Nigel's focus and life has been spent in the Fleurieu Peninsula, specifically Victor Harbor, where he is based with his family.



### **Councillor Carol Schofield AM**

Councillor Carol Schofield AM is the City of Victor Harbor's Elected Member representative on the Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority Board. Carol was Chair of the City of Victor Harbor's Horse Tram Advisory Committee before it transitioned to form the Inaugural Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority. She brings to the Board skills in business management, event management, tourism and agribusiness.

Carol is a long-time resident of Victor Harbor and has been involved in many local organisations. She was a dairy farmer and established her own agriculture business in Inman Valley.



### **Rachel Kennedy**

Professor Rachel Kennedy (PhD, B.Bus(Hons), GAICD) is a globally recognised expert in marketing and evidence-based growth. As a co-founder and director of the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, she has a proven track record of successful industry engagements that profitably grow businesses and build and protect their iconic assets. She combines this with hands-on experience marketing a local tourism reliant business.

Rachel is passionate about her community in Victor Harbor where she can often be seen walking, at the beach patrolling or playing hockey with her family. She is excited to bring her skills and knowledge to our Horse Tram.



### **Paul Brown**

Paul Brown is the former owner of an internationally recognised tourism business. He has previously been the Chair of Tourism Kangaroo Island and the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) SA Branch, as well as a board member of ATEC nationally.

In addition to being a Board member of the Victor Harbor Tram Authority he is a Board member of the Summit Sport and Recreation Park (Mount Barker) and Owner/Director, Dauncey Street Investments Pty Ltd

A graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors course Paul has always sought to make a contribution to his industry and community, and in recent times has contributed to the Older Persons Health sector.



### **Natasha Hunt**

Natasha Hunt has over two decades of experience working in local government and the tourism industry. Having served on the Executive Team with the District Council of Yankalilla and Alexandrina Council she brings a wealth of knowledge in the areas of governance, strategic planning, community engagement, tourism, communications, and marketing.

Natasha represented the Fleurieu Peninsula on the South Australian Tourism Commission's Industry Skills Advisory Committee and was an inaugural member of the South Australian Accredited Visitor Information Centre Network.

Natasha grew up on the Fleurieu Peninsula on her family's farm where they operate two horse-based businesses. Natasha is passionate about the Fleurieu and has volunteered in many community organisations including the Normanville New Year's Eve Pageant, Yankalilla Football and Netball Club and the Fleurieu Horse and Pony Club.

## Audit and Risk Committee

In accordance with the Charter, the VHHTA established an Audit Committee. The Committee consists of three independent members and two Board members. Between them they bring an overwhelming volume of knowledge and specialist expertise. The VHHTA is thrilled to have them sitting on the Audit Committee, and appreciative to have members of their calibre, particularly given their non-remunerative status.

The Audit Committee is in its year third of oversight, and has, through recommendations to the VHHTA, made improvements to the VHHTA's policies, procedures and risk management resources.

The VHHTA Audit Committee consult with, and receive professional advice from, an independent financial specialist with expertise in local government finance, so as to report to Council in the form required.

### Audit Committee Membership

Member	Representative	Appointed	Expires
Independent Member(s)	John Morgan	23 November 2020	23 November 2024
Independent Member(s)	Kate Christ	22 February 2021	22 February 2025
Independent Member(s)	Laura Hodgson	26 July 2021	26 July 2025
VHHTA Board Member	Rachel Kennedy	23 November 2020	23 November 2024
VHHTA Board Member	Nigel Catt	26 July 2021	26 July 2025
Office Bearers			
Chairperson	John Morgan	22 February 2021	23 November 2024
Deputy Chairperson	Rachel Kennedy	22 February 2021	23 November 2024



## Our Team

The VHHTA Board provides strategic direction to the General Manager who is responsible for the day to day operations of the tram service.

Under the governance of the VHHTA the General Manager has successfully managed the Horse Tram through difficult circumstances and driven it forward in its journey towards independence.

Since the appointment of the General Manager the VHHTA's reliance on Council has been substantially reduced. In addition to the General Manager, the Horse Tram is supported by a highly experienced Assistant Manager, who has twenty three years of experience in the day to day operations of the Horse Tram and invaluable WHS knowledge.

The VHHTA is also responsible for the care and welfare of the Horse Tram horses. This is the VHHTA's highest priority, and this year received approval from Council to have the VHHTA Charter altered to reflect this. The VHHTA has a very dedicated horse husbandry team to ensure this priority is successfully realised.

The VHHTA now has a maintenance team and dedicated administration staff. As the team grows, employee talents and abilities are recognised, supported and strengthened.

The VHHTA is well on the way to having a fully qualified team able to deliver an Equine Assisted Learning program (EAL). EAL is a specialist process that partners clients with horses to address clients particular personal learning goals. It is a unique approach to experiential learning, where clients are offered safe experiences with horses for the purposes of enhancing social, emotional and relationship skills building, professional skills development, promoting self-awareness, awareness of others, as well as increasing clients capacity to negotiate life's hurdles.

The VHHTA's new merchandise store is a success story that has enabled the VHHTA to attract new volunteers to support the invaluable team of existing volunteers. The new and inviting space allows the VHHTA to cater for volunteers' needs in a way that it previously was unable to.

During 2022/23, the VHHTA was supported by a team of 15 staff, ranging from casual junior staff through to an assistant manager. For the reporting period there were four permanent full time equivalent (FTE) staff members, with the remainder engaged as casual employees. The merchandise store is supported by 7 valuable volunteers.



## Our Horses

Our Team of Clydesdales are such a magnificent part of the Victor Harbor Horse Tram. Our Team consists of:



**Albert** is our oldest and steadiest Clydesdale. Having said that, he is still young at only fourteen years of age. He really enjoys tram work and coming into the office. He has a regal attitude and performs his work with effortless elegance. Albert is a smooch with the staff and a favourite of all. Albert is now our lead horse when training junior drivers and equine youngsters, and reassures them with his soothing and Zen-like demeanour.



**Murray** is twelve years old and is that tram horse that everyone wants to drive. He always performs his best and tries to do everything right. He pulls the tram so fast, with calm forward-moving energy, and with him on the tram, it is up and back before you can believe it. Murray learns very fast, as he aims to please, and staff try hard to please Murray as well. Murray is a sensitive boy, and the staff have special soft, natural bristled brushes that they use especially for Murray so that he can enjoy his grooming experiences. Murray competed at the Wirrina Heavy Horse Trials in May 2023 and performed amazingly well. He has encouraged the Horse Tram to enter a whole team, if possible, in 2024.



**Isabella** is the princess of the team, but she is no shrinking violet. Boy can she really move a tram! She is all "I am woman, hear me roar - past". When Isabella is at rest, she is the softest, most serene being. People express honour just being in her presence. But when there is a job to do, she gets it done, and you'd better keep up. She is a brave, sensible, sweet and joyous horse. She adores being adored and knows full well that she deserves it - and more. At twelve years of age, she is wise beyond her years.



**Elliot** is our slowest and calmest team member even though he is only eleven. He is our steady horse used to train new drivers and staff. He is an irreplaceable member of the team. He is quite goofy and loving, and a long-term favourite of the public. He has a large following, with people returning frequently to visit him. Staff are often asked if Elliot is working that day and are met with either excitement or disappointment depending on the answer they give. The merchandise store needs to keep a ready stock of Elliot's horseshoes, as they are always in demand. Elliot regularly has a clip as he has quite a luxurious coat, not quite conducive to our summer climate. He loves having a short coat and it looks very stylish on him as well.



**Scotty** is the VHHTA's smallest working tram horse, but is still a sizeable guy at 16'3 hands high. He is a powerhouse and proving to be a reliable team member, despite his youthful age of eight. Scotty is adorable and full of cheeky character. He loves to play games with staff and his other horse team members. He enjoys time on the beach and is lovely under saddle. He is brave on the causeway and not much worries him, but he does need some encouragement to slow down and smell the roses. Staff describe Scotty as a little trooper. At nine, he is still a youngster and gets special attention to make sure he stays on track to become the tram horse he deserves to be.





**Archer** is an exciting new addition to the Horse Tram team. Archer is 17'3 hands high, nine years old and incredibly impressive. He has a sooty mane and a thick flaxen tail. Archer joined the Tram after spending some time in Melbourne with the VHHTA's specialist trainer there. Archer was already started in harness, so a significant portion of his training was focussed on ridden work. Archer, like Scotty, is nine years of age. He is incredibly sensible, smoochy and sensitive and has Alberts regal like presence. He adores treats, especially bananas. Archer's markings are very spectacular, with his face featuring its very own picture of a horse. He has fit in with the rest of the crew perfectly and is expected to make his tram debut in the second half of 2023.



**Leo** is a lovely little lad. He is just a baby at three years of age but has a confidence well beyond his tender years. Leo is a black Clydesdale cross Shire, so he is a little different from our other tram horses. Shires are similarly built to Clydesdales in height and width and have similar temperaments. He is fitting in with the herd perfectly and is even in charge sometimes. He has a winning personality and is adored by staff and the tram horses. The VHHTA have started his learning early with some professional training in Melbourne, to ensure he has the best start to his career. Leo has a couple of years to go before he can do anything heavy or demanding but he is the kind of horse who enjoys learning and being with people and will enjoy his 'light duties' lifestyle. Leo has been a star at the tram office horse yard at the foreshore and is getting used to his famous lifestyle.



**Finniss** and Norman are new arrivals to the Tram. They are half-brothers sharing the same sire, both 9 years old and born an hour apart. They are very close and it was preferable together. The boys are starting to settle in and get to know our other horses. Finniss has been trained in harness and cart. He was started as a two year old by his previous owner and breeder, and then has had professional retraining since the VHHTA purchased him. Finn is quite a solid boy and is very bold and forward in harness. He is a sensitive boy and the VHHTA are spending valuable time with him, building up his trust in the staff around him so that he can have a very confident start on the Tram. Since joining the Tram Team, Finn has gained some beautiful condition and his dapples are really starting to shine. He is indeed a sweetheart.



**Norman**, named after Normanville, was started in harness at the same time as his brother Finniss. He was also sent for professional retraining by the VHHTA to brush up his skill set. Norman is less forward in harness than his brother Finn but is more confident in himself with a calm head. Norm has started training across the Causeway, not yet pulling a Tram, but it won't be too far away. He has settled in well with the herd and although he is the smallest, he believes that he is the biggest. Norm is a big teddy bear and has a very loving personality. He tries his best to please in everything that he does and looks set to become a very valuable member of the team.

## Our Volunteers

The VHHTA's team of volunteer's support and facilitate the sale of merchandise in the new and fantastic merchandise store, situated in the refurbished Tram Office building. As the VHHTA now has inviting facilities for volunteers to work from, the volunteer team is growing. This year, for the first time the volunteers enjoyed protection from the weather, consistent working conditions and access to facilities. Establishing the merchandise store has solidified the volunteers' role as an integral part of VHHTA operations.



The merchandise store has been a great trading success, generating revenue to help reduce the VHHTA's reliance on Council. In 2022/23 the merchandise store exceeded budgeted expectations creating twice the revenue predicted. The VHHTA has plans to increase volunteer participation and is looking forward to growth in this area in 2023/24, especially with the new volunteering opportunities at The Stables, involving the 'Behind the Scenes' visitor experiences.

## 2022/2023 Achievements

### 2022 VHHTA Board Workshop

On 16 August 2022, Dan Aubin of Daring Humans facilitated a workshop with the Board, General Manager, Assistant Manager and Executive Coordinator. As part of the 2022 workshop, the group enjoyed some mind focus exercises so as to produce the best results possible for the flurry of ideas and business design inspirations that was to follow. There was a keen focus on the emerging new offerings for the 'Behind the Scenes' experiences that the VHHTA will be offering. The creative planning session successfully fleshed out some solid offerings, providing focus and direction for 2022/23.



### 2022 VHHTA Staff Workshop

For the first time, the VHHTA asked Dan Aubin of Daring Humans to facilitate a staff workshop, similar in style as the Board workshop. The workshop was a great way to harness and capture staff ideas and inspirations.



The VHHTA team cohesively built upon Board ideas, bringing their own talents and spin to original ideas, and building entire new experiences to offer. Staff were enthusiastic to contribute and share, with everyone included, from permanent staff to casuals. At the VHHTA all staff are valued and their input and ingenuity is invaluable.



## Financial Management

The VHHTA has experienced its first full year of operation since its inception. Horse Tram operations have been hampered in previous years by rail replacement on the island, the construction of the new Causeway, demolition of the old Causeway, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. With these hinderances becoming old news, the Horse Tram and VHHTA are now steaming ahead, increasing own source income, and reducing reliance on Council and rate payers of the City of Victor Harbor in a real way. Expert financial management has seen the Tram through the toughest of times without increasing its reliance on Council and is now making the most out of unrestricted operations and significantly increasing the VHHTA's self-reliance. Exciting times ahead!



## Staff Training for Exciting, New Offering



The VHHTA is well on the way to having a fully qualified team able to deliver an Equine Assisted Learning program (EAL) and timed to coincide with the completion of the Stable Complex and Visitor Centre at Canton Place. EAL is a specialist process of experiential learning for diverse clients addressing particular learning goals. The EAL includes personal development experiences for children and adults, or team and corporate development goals for professionals.

EAL may include psychosocial skills building, developing life skills and healthy relationship building. In the professional development setting, an EAL program will be focussed around developing organisational, business- and work-related skills such as working effectively in teams, leadership skills, and communication skills.

Certified EAL practitioners' partner with horses to offer 'equine experiences' to clients, in order to explore and address the learning needs and goals identified. In addition to offering EAL programs to a wide audience, the VHHTA is excited to also work with the local community to support mental health and relationships in the Fleurieu region.

The creation of our EAL program has produced, not just ongoing employment at the Victor Harbor Horse Tram, but careers for some of the highly skilled horse people in the team.

## Merchandise Store

The VHHTA has had its first full year of having a fully functional, stand alone, merchandise store. The store has been abundantly successful, making twice the profits budgeted for.

The merchandise store is completely operated by a team of volunteers. The success of the VHHTA volunteer program and merchandise store would not be possible without our amazing volunteer Team Leader, Cr Carol Schofield, who has given so much of herself and her time to make it happen, and still continues to do so.



The graph below shows the growth in merchandise income, comparing financial years from 2018/19 through to the end of 2022/23. The success of the new Merchandise Store is both obvious and phenomenal, resulting in a 258% increase in turnover from 21/22



Volunteers selling memberships through the Merchandise Store have seen an astronomical increase from 71 sold last financial year to a whopping 232 in 2022/23. Since its inception improvements have been made to the store including increases to storage and shelving areas, installation of a point of sale system, and an update of the volunteer communication system and financial reporting systems. Volunteers have generously donated a total of 2,359.5 hours in 2022/23, equating to an estimate of \$82,582.50 in value for the VHHTA.

## Safety First

The VHHTA puts the safety and well-being of its passengers at the forefront of everything it does. The VHHTA realises that safety is paramount for passengers. This year the VHHTA decided to take some significant steps to enhance its services. All of the VHHTA's staff and tram operators, underwent thorough first aid training. All staff are now certified and equipped with life-saving skills to handle medical emergencies confidently.

To further boost safety measures, the VHHTA placed automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and full-sized first aid kits on every Horse Tram. Passengers can now feel safe knowing that if anything unexpected happens during their ride, the VHHTA is prepared to respond swiftly and effectively.

The VHHTA is proud to be leading the way in the region with such safety measures. The well-being of passengers is its top priority, and the VHHTA believes that being prepared for any situation is the best way to serve the community. The VHHTA has received overwhelming support from local authorities and residents, and they've encouraged the VHHTA to keep up the good work.



The VHHTA firmly believes that combining the traditional Horse Drawn Tram experience with modern safety practices is the key to creating a memorable and secure adventure for everyone. With its staff now trained in life-saving skills and its Trams equipped with defibrillators and first aid kits, the VHHTA is confident that it's offering the best possible experience for its passengers.

It's the VHHTA's way of showing its commitment to the community and making sure that Victor Harbor remains a caring and responsible tourist destination. The VHHTA is thrilled to be offering safer Horse Drawn Tram rides, and it can't wait to welcome even more visitors safely on board!

## Creative Tram Themed Horse Float Wrap

The VHHTA has delighted residents and visitors alike with an innovative addition to their fleet - a creatively wrapped horse float that pays tribute to the iconic horse trams.

The VHHTA has transformed their new horse float into a charming replica of a Horse Tram, making the daily transportation of their Clydesdale horses a delightful spectacle.

The horse float wrap features a local artist's rendition of a Horse Tram, complete with detailed wood panelling, ornate trimmings, and the VHHTA's signature green and gold palette. The wrap showcases cartoonish illustrations of passengers enjoying the Horse Drawn Tram experience, capturing the nostalgic charm of the local icon.







The Horse Trams are the heart and soul of Victor Harbor's history, and the VHHTA wanted to share that magic with everyone who encounters the new horse float. The wrap is a moving advertisement for Victor Harbor and the Horse Tram, and adds a touch of fun to the daily routine of transporting the Clydesdales to and from work.

While the float is parked at the Horse Tram office, residents and visitors are seen taking selfies with the float and sharing the joy with friends and family, and on social media.

The VHHTA's passion for preserving history and providing unique experiences to visitors shines through in this imaginative project. The delightful tram themed horse float creates a fun addition to the city's cultural landscape, celebrating the iconic Horse Drawn Trams and their enduring place in Victor Harbor's heart.



### Clydesdales Training Underway

The VHHTA's dedication to training new Clydesdales for the special task of powering the Victor Harbor Horse Tram is at the heart of keeping the amazing icon alive. The training process begins with carefully selected young Clydesdales, each chosen for their temperament, strength, and willingness to learn. The next step was to build a strong bond between the horses and staff. Staff care for, groom, feed, and simply spend time with the new Clydesdales, earning their trust and affection.

Currently the VHHTA is training Leo, Archer, Finniss and Norman. All are now trained to harness and cart. Leo is still too young for regular work, but Archer, Finniss and Norman are nine years of age and ready to start tram life. As these Clydesdales grow more confident in their abilities, they will be ready for the next stage: integration into the actual tram service.



Archer in training for the Horse Tram



The VHHTA has a keen focus on training these amazing horses so that it is able to bolster the current team. The VHHTA has a goal to have several horses trained and operational before the 2023 summer school holidays with the remaining trained by the end of the 2023/24 financial year. The benefits of expanding the horse team, from five working horses to eight, are many, and are critically necessary improvements moving forward. Having eight working horses will mean that, for the first time, the Victor Harbor Horse Tram will be able to implement a spelling regime, enabling the horses to have a meaningful break from tram duties.

Currently in the off season the horses work one morning or one afternoon every two and a half days. In the busy season, which lasts for approximately four weeks, the horses work four out of five days. The horses are not overworked, however, much like with humans, horses still require periods of significant rest and time to just enjoy being a horse. A spelling regime will ensure that the horses get the genuine rest breaks that they deserve.

A larger horse team also means that the VHHTA can soon, for the first time, look forward to running three trams during busy periods in late 2023/early 2024. Operating with three trams shortens turnaround times, increases revenue and also increases the number of tram runs possible in a day. This increase in speed and tram journeys is not possible with our current team, as it increases the workload beyond what we can ask our horses to comfortably perform. A larger tram team will mean more horse changes are possible in a single day, enabling a three-tram operation to occur safely and sustainably. Wait times for passengers will be reduced on both platforms and three trams will come closer to servicing visitor demand at peak times, increasing the VHHTA's own source revenue.



**Norman and his brother Finnis**

The expanded horse team will also provide untold benefits for the VHHTA's Behind the Scenes Experiences and EAL program. With the VHHTA's previous team, a peak season tram day would have left only three horses available for visitors at The Stables.

The new team will mean that at any given time, even in busy periods, The Stables, the new 'Behind the Scenes' facility, is able to offer five well rested horses for visitors to share experiences with. A larger team also means that any illness or injury of a horse team member will not place an undue burden upon remaining horses. The benefits of the team expanding are undeniable, and the VHHTA is excited to have sourced such talented, trainable and highly recommended horses, and for a very reasonable outlay. 2023/24 will be exciting indeed!

### Causeway Permit and Access Management

The VHHTA secured a twelve month contract from the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, (DIT), to manage access to the Granite Island Causeway. Vehicles may only use the Causeway for approved reasons and with a valid permit.



Permits state clearly the rules and procedures for using the Causeway and permit holders agree in writing to abide by these, displaying hazard lights, travelling at no more than 10km's and not entering when there are other vehicles, including the Horse Tram, on the bridge.

Access to the Causeway is controlled by a boom gate, to which approved permit holders have boom gate access cards. The VHHTA is responsible for screening potential users, issuing and reissuing permits, tracking and deactivating obsolete cards, and educating Causeway users. The VHHTA is perfectly situated to oversee and manage user access, and to observe and ensure compliance with the rules of access.

One of the key advantages of this contract is the VHHTA's increased self-reliance in generating revenue. By taking on the responsibility of boom gate access management, the VHHTA gains a valuable source of income, reducing its reliance on Council funding. This financial independence enables the VHHTA to continue investing in its own operations, ensuring the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Horse Drawn Tram experiences. The VHHTA has completed one full year of boom gate management and is embarking on a renewed 12 month contract.

### Inaugural South Australian Heavy Horse Festival

In a showcase of equine excellence, Clydesdales and other heavy horse breeds competed at the inaugural South Australian Heavy Horse festival at Wirrina in May 2023. The VHHTA entered the competition with Murray, a twelve year old, bay Horse Tram gelding.

In order to compete at the two-day event Murray received competition specific training which paid off. On the first day in the led class, Murray's regal presentation earned him a deserving second place, really catching the judge's eye. Then with precision and unity, Murray and handler Brittany secured first place in the long reining event.

The second day consisted of a combined dressage and cross-country event, and a great performance landed Murray and his rider in fifth place amongst a competitive field. The VHHTA is very proud of the effort that Murray and Brittany made, and is excited to showcase even more Clydesdales at the next South Australian Heavy Horse Festival.

The VHHTA's presence at the inaugural event put a spotlight on VHHTA's dedication to their tram horses' well-being. Murray's outstanding condition underlines the VHHTA's commitment to their animals' care. This success at Wirrina was a great advertisement for the Horse Tram and also promoted the VHHTA's interest in community involvement and support for local events.



**Murray and handler, Brittany**



## Animal Communicator



  
**Animal Communication**  
*with Dagmar*

At the VHHTA we constantly wish our magnificent Clydesdales could talk – so we decided to have an animal communicator come in and listen to our horses and let us know what they are thinking. The results were helpful and at times amusing. The most pleasing thing was that all the horses said that they enjoyed being tram horses and enjoyed the work.

### **Albert**

Likes guidance. Sweet boy. Not keen on the bit, it's a bit solid for him, (we are trying out options to see what he likes best). Likes complements but also doesn't care. Thinks he has a gold medal in caring. Social butterfly. Happy in his role. Likes company when going in the ocean. Questioned why there is waves. Likes little kids. Says he is soft and gentle.

### **Murray**

Cool dude. Thinks he is the inventor. Thinks he has been at the Horse Tram the longest. Feels like he has a responsibility. Calm and obedient. Not an overreactor. After farrier feet feel tight. Likes the Tram job. Says he is a muscley boy. Thinks tram work is easy.

Lives in his own dreams. Happy, quirky funny boy. Good on his own. Lives in his own bubble. Cold in the ocean sometimes. Said he doesn't like seaweed and fish. Nice to cool off sometimes though. Where are my treats (we had switched up his treats and he was missing his old treats, so we've switched back). He has a favourite person but works well with all others. Doesn't want to say who as he doesn't want to hurt other's feelings.

### **Isabella**

Dreamer and a sweetheart. Doesn't like turning or going backwards. Not a fan of people in her space when on the Horse Tram. She likes the people she works with. Sensitive girl. Likes the ocean. She feels safe when ridden. Curious girl. Wants to be treated from the inside out. Echinacea, Garlic, Colloidal silvers. Determined girl. Has a boyfriend but says she can be picky. Likes her purpose.

### **Elliot**

Curious boy but likes to push others. Complex. Likes routine. Likes cuddles. Does his best all the time. Not keen on things he doesn't understand. Big softy. Sooks when he hurts himself. Private but funny. Wants to be safe around other horses. Doesn't mind being clipped, says little bit of discomfort - prickly but then its smoother. He understands why we do it for his sweating. Ocean is just standing in it. Tells Dagmar he is a good boy. Likes his job. Likes people more than horses. With other horses you never know. With people you know. Sensitive boy. Mummy's boy. Happy.

### **Scotty**

Sensitive soul but brave. He had a heart of gold. If he is feeling anxious just to explain what is happening throughout his shift. Not a fan of big crowds.

### **Archer**

Balanced. Knows he is pretty. Loves to have fun. Can be a bully. He is ok on his own. Doesn't like to be rushed. Needs everything to take its time. Not a rescue. Comfortable with himself. Smart big learner. Bit dominant and pushy. Fun and obedient, thinks he is quite good. Doesn't understand why horses come and go he – doesn't like it. Says give me some action. Don't need rescuing. Backing up is him defending him-self and his safe way to deal with situations. Can be distracted. Play is important to build a bond. Likes his new home. Like being paddocked not yarded. Likes food, especially carrots.



## Leo

Comfortable with himself. Smart big learner. Bit dominant and pushy. Fun and obedient. Thinks he is quite good. Doesn't understand why horses come and go. He doesn't like it. Likes Jay Jay. Needs entertaining. Others aren't fun, (Leo is much younger). Says boredom is an understatement. Start playing with him. Clicker training. Thinks he is cool and big. Growing pains. Loves going to the office but says surely that can't be it. Wants to be trained. I want to explore with you. I want to come. Says give me some action.

## Norman

Thinks he is very pretty. Bit of an elephant in a porcelain shop. Important job to do. Feels Important. Wants to help others. A nice leader. He and his brother are a bit sensitive. Thinks he is tall, (he is the smallest). Thinks he is good at pulling the cart. Things can startle him if in thought, but not spooky. Bit fidgety. Wanting to do his job. Likes his friends. There's stability and strength in herd. Feels like he replaced machinery. Feet sensitive. Relaxed. Confidence in company and routine. Wants to be better than he is. Has his own expectations. Desensitising working on confidence. Doesn't mind being away from Finniss. One big family. Apprehensive with water and puddles. Keep an eye on legs. Loves attention, it's a good distraction.

## Finniss

Make sure he feels safe and treated well. Is insecure and more attached to his brother. Doesn't like being on his own. He is an open book. Will let you know how he feels. Likes a job to do. Thinks he is a hot and sexy boy. He is a family boy. Thinks he is a teddy. Worried on his own. Confusion around being tied up. Brewer's yeast. With pulling the cart has a 'that's what we do' attitude. Fear around the unknown but once geared up is ok. Delicate and sensitive. Try focusing him on something, then harness up. Wants to feel secure. Food motivated. Likes routine. Talk and explain things to him. Confidence training. With being hard to catch there is a fear of being taken away.

## Barn Upgrade

The VHHTA has completed a lighting upgrade in the Barn where the Horse Trams are stored. This Barn is a Council-owned asset, and we've undertaken this improvement project to replace the old fluorescent lighting with new LED fixtures. The previous fluorescent globes were very old. Some had missing light covers and presented a danger, and the light covers that were present created dust traps and were difficult to maintain, making the space less safe and efficient.

The transition to LED lighting not only provides superior brightness, enhancing the Barn's lighting quality, but also ensures compliance with Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) standards. This upgrade reduces energy consumption, lowers maintenance costs, and modernizes the facility, aligning it with current lighting technology.



The VHHTA remains committed to not only maintaining Council assets in its care, but to improving them.

## Southern Expressway Billboard Advertisement and Survey

The VHHTA ran a successful advertising campaign right before the September 2022 school holiday break. An advertisement was placed on the Southern Expressway, and ran for two weeks. The VHHTA was able to utilise a still shot from drone footage captured by Duncan McKenzie, to advertise the beauty of Granite Island, ocean, new Causeway and the iconic Horse Tram. The VHHTA received glowing feedback regarding the advert.

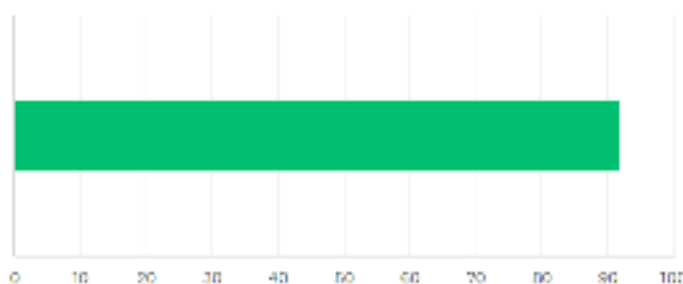


To engage with the community and gather public feedback on the billboard advertisement, the VHHTA ran an online survey. VHHTA staff put together a well-crafted online survey that included a mix of multiple-choice questions and open-ended prompts. The questions were designed to gauge various aspects of the public's reaction, such as the overall appeal, effectiveness and reach of the advertisement. Survey participants would access the survey by way of QR codes displayed on trams and on tram platforms. With the advent of QR codes used for COVID safe check-ins, and people's familiarity with the technology, the VHHTA saw an excellent opportunity to reach a broad audience and to collect and collate the public's reactions and opinions about their advertisement. The survey also requested feedback regarding passenger experiences and Horse Tram travel.

Responses were glowing. The advert was well received with no negative feedback. Participants that saw the advert reported really liking it and said that it made them want to visit the tram. Some reported being reminded about the Tram and a few said that they learned about the Tram's existence from the advertisement. All in all, it was a successful advert for both the Horse Tram and the City of Victor Harbor.

Survey participants reported having enjoyed their tram ride to and from Granite Island. There was a lot of great feedback about the fantastic condition of the Clydesdales, the cleanliness of the trams, what a great experience they had enjoyed, and expressing amazement and appreciation that kids ride for free with an adult. The most overwhelming feedback the VHHTA received was glowing praise for our staff, their friendliness, knowledge and skilled and efficient customer service as well as the love and empathy staff display for the horses.

Participants rated their experience on average at 92%.



## The VHHTA Junior Program

The junior program is moving ahead in leaps and bounds. This year all of our current juniors graduated from operating as Horse Tram driver assistants to Horse Tram Drivers. It has been a real joy to watch these juniors grow into their roles, acquire skills and confidence, and make the transition into drivers. The juniors are always accompanied and supported by experienced staff, who assist to continue junior's growth and knowledge. With the coming expansion of VHHTA offerings, (at the new stable complex), and the graduation of the VHHTA's current juniors into drivers, the VHHTA expects to soon be in a position to recruit a new crop of juniors. How exciting!



## Enhanced Clydesdales' Well-being and Tram Experience with Innovative Equissage Therapy



**Scotty having an Equissage**

The VHHTA has taken a giant leap forward in ensuring the well-being of the working Clydesdale horses while enhancing the passenger experience on the iconic Horse Tram to and from Granite Island. The VHHTA has recently invested in cutting-edge Equissage therapy, a groundbreaking approach to equine wellness, to ensure their Clydesdales are not only fit and healthy but also provide a relaxing and enjoyable journey for passengers.

Equissage therapy, renowned for its therapeutic benefits in equine care, has been seamlessly integrated into the VHHTA's daily routine. The Clydesdales, known for their strength and gentle demeanour, now receive regular Equissage sessions, providing a myriad of advantages. This unique therapy aids in muscle relaxation, improved blood circulation, and enhanced muscle conditioning. The VHHTA is committed to the well-being of our equine companions and are dedicated to responsible and compassionate horse care.

We are thrilled to introduce Equissage therapy to our Clydesdale team. Our horses are an integral part of the Granite Island Horse Tram experience, and it is the VHHTA's responsibility to ensure their health and happiness. Equissage therapy not only benefits our Clydesdales' physical well-being but also contributes to a calm and enjoyable journey for our passengers.

The Equissage therapy sessions have proven to be a hit with the Clydesdales, who seem to relish the soothing massage and gentle vibrations.

### **The Loss of Jay Jay**

Jay Jay had been owned by Council since he was a yearling. A purebred Clydesdale, he was selected as a future tram prospect by Council. Jay Jay was broken to harness as a five year old and performed Tram duties until he was twelve. Since the formation of the VHHTA Jay Jay had experienced good health and had received outstanding health assessments at his annual veterinary check-ups. Jay Jay had, however, made it clear to staff that he did not enjoy performing Tram duties, and the decision to retire Jay Jay from Tram work was made.

Jay Jay was retained as a member of the team to take on a prominent role in the up and coming 'Behind the Scenes Experiences' that the VHHTA will be offering in 2023/24. Jay Jay would have been performing harness demonstrations and spending time with visitors, all things that Jay enjoyed. Sadly, Jay Jay's health took a sudden and unexpected turn for the worst in early March 2023 and the VHHTA, following veterinary advice, made an end of life decision for Jay Jay.

VHHTA staff had noted that Jay Jay was off his food a little and had a slight swelling in his sheath area on Wednesday, 1 March 2023. Veterinary assistance was sought and during that week a local vet attended three times, examining Jay Jay and organising bloodwork and testing. Jay Jay was also started on antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. Results returned indicated renal changes.



On Tuesday, (7 March 2023), in consultation with the local vet, Jay Jay was admitted to Roseworthy Large Animal Vet Hospital. Jay Jay stayed in hospital for several days and received the best of medical care and attention. Despite all medical assistance available, Jay Jay failed to respond to treatment. The VHHTA were advised that kidney issues in horses are very hard to treat as there are limited drugs and treatment options available for the species. Due to his worsening condition, and grave prognosis provided during consultation with hospital equine specialist veterinarians, the decision was made to humanely euthanise Jay Jay on Friday, 10 March 2023.

The loss of Jay Jay was very sudden and impactful on VHHTA staff as the Horse Tram team have an extremely close connection to all their horses and were devastated by the loss of Jay Jay. The VHHTA actively encouraged staff members to seek support through the Employee Assistance Program to assist them at this sad time.

The veterinary bills and expenses for Jay Jay's medical treatment have been paid out of the VHHTA's 'Maintenance of horses' budget line.



Beautiful Jay

Jay Jay was the gentle giant of the Horse Tram team and will be remembered for his soft and sweet nature. He was a bold, brave and sensitive soul and is sorely missed by all staff and herd buddies..



Jay Jay and Friends

### Successful Grant Application

The Authority applied for a grant through the Building Better Regions program to match the funds for building the Stable Complex on the land at Canton Place. The success of this grant was announced in October 2021, and the VHHTA will receive \$203,000 in grant funding. With the project coming to completion the funds will be gratefully received, having helped with the staging of this project and develop the 'Behind the Scenes' offering. The VHHTA cannot thank the Building Better Regions Grant program enough for this substantial financial support to turn this project into a reality, and in turn building the Fleurieu Peninsula into a better region.



### Stable Complex Progress

The Stable Complex project is in its final stages, with a completed build expected by the August 2023. The Stable component of the project is expected to be built on-site while the Visitor Centre, for the 'Behind the Scenes' Experience' is being fabricated off site, and then delivered and installed in three sections, forming the one large building.

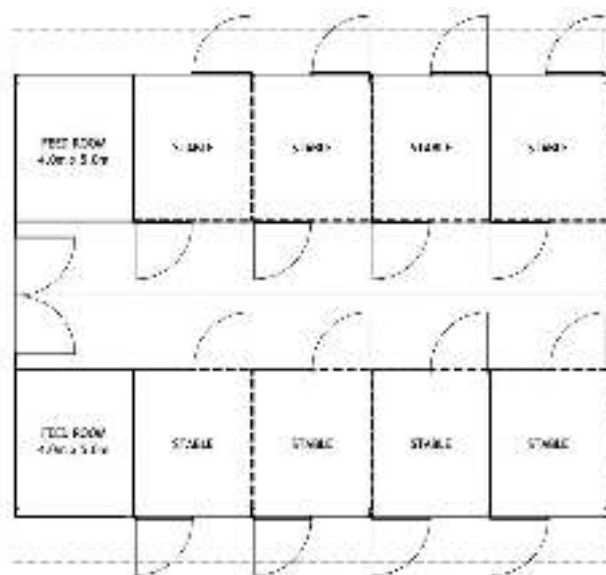


The Visitor Centre includes three bathrooms, a large kitchen for catering purposes, an office and an expansive floor area for functions, conferences, EAL and entertaining visitor groups. The space itself offers the opportunity for another income stream, from the hire of the facility.

The main floor area will host a second merchandise store, given the success of the first merchandise store that the VHHTA opened this year.

The stable hosts 8 large, Clydesdale sized stalls and two feed/storage rooms, equal in size to the stalls. This is intentional so that these rooms may be converted into horse stalls should the VHHTA have the need to in future.

The stable boasts a five metre wide by twenty-two-metre-long raceway, down the centre of the stable, offering the fabulous opportunity to host experiences, such as high teas and birthday parties in this space, with the inclusion of the horses in their stalls for horse appropriate events.



### The Development of the 'Behind the Scenes' Experience Packages

The VHHTA Board, management and staff have continued to develop and hone 'Behind the Scenes' experiences that will provide, up close and personal, opportunities to experience a side of the Horse Tram operations that has not previously been accessible to the public. As well as responding to demand from visitors and locals to get closer to our majestic Clydesdales, it creates the opportunity to diversify the operation into additional experiences which will allow higher margins, better returns and greater employment opportunities. These packages are really coming together.

The new service will:

- Provide insights into existing operations and the history of the Tram service which dates back to 1894;
  - Offer a range of experiences including equine training, educational information, and hands-on demonstrations;
  - Showcase the magnificent Clydesdales from the Horse Drawn Tram and introduce visitors to their home (stables and paddocks);
  - Offer unique experiences for a range of audiences including:
    - Up close and personal exclusive experiences
    - High Teas
    - Horse 'Meet and Greet's'
    - Tourist groups
    - School groups
    - Senior groups
- 
- Make it possible to market additional value add opportunities e.g., pony birthday parties, small group experiences, conference facilities for hire, and equine facility rental;
  - Facilitate additional merchandise sales; and
  - Allow for pre-bookings online for individuals and for coach tour groups, overcoming a limitation with the existing service (where weather makes pre-bookings problematic).





## Key Performance Results against 2020/23 Annual Business Plan

In 2019-20 the business plan was focused around operational set-up, change and staff development.

2023-2024 is about key project development:

**Priority 1: Finance & Operational growth**

**Priority 2: The Stables Project / Behind the Scenes Experiences**

**Priority 3: Communication Strategy**

**Priority 4: Office & Shop Renovation Planning**

The following pages outline objectives under each of these four key areas and corresponding actions the VHHTA plans to take over the period of the business plan in relation to achievements of these objectives.

### Priority 1: Finance & Operational Growth

The Authority has taken strategic steps towards sustainability and growth while ensuring core business operations continue to develop.

1.1 Secure Operational and Capital budget		
Actions	Indicator	Target
Operational budget approved by Board and Council	Approvals received to date	April 2021, 22, 23, 24 Achieved
Capital Budget Approved by Board and Council	Approvals received to date	April 2021, 22, 23, 24 Achieved
Provide quarterly budget/finance reports to the City of Victor Harbor	Quarterly reporting delivered	February, May September 2023 for EOFY November 2023, February, May September 2024 for EOFY Achieved
Undertake budget reviews in line with legislative requirements	Reviews submitted to Board & Council	March, October, December 2023 Mid-Year Review Achieved
1.2 WHS Processes		
Actions	Indicator	Target
Complete Sky trust set-up to track WHS compliance	Staff trained and using	Achieved
Review WHS policies and procedures within time limits required.	No policies or procedures overdue for review	Under review
1.3 Project & Development Funds		
Actions	Indicator	Target

Secure & manage 'Stables Project' budget	Approvals received	Achieved
Secure Sponsorship	\$15,000 secured	October 2023 In progress
Review and grow merchandise Establish online store	\$10,000 income Online store	June 2023 Income Achieved Online store in progress
Budget Office Reno for Budget Bid 21/22	Received by Board & Council	Complete – Office and merch store renovated
Budget Platform improvements for Budget Bid 22/23	Received by Board & Council	Complete – New Platforms built
Review ticket pricing schedule	Board report complete	Annual – February 2023 Achieved and ticket price increase scheduled for September 2023



**Drone Footage of Isabella Pulling Tram 3**

## Priority 2: The Stables Project / Behind the Scenes Experiences

This is an exciting development that will enhance care of the horses, WHS for staff and lead to exciting community engagement with 'Behind the Scenes' experiences. Initially the stables project was conceptualised to focus first on establishing the stables and staff facilities to meet the housing and care needs of the Clydesdales and staff. Board vision to reduce the VHHTA's reliance on Council, combined with tourism grant funding, via the Building Better Regions Fund – Infrastructure Projects Stream, has led to the development and building of the 'Behind the Scenes' experiences simultaneously and in conjunction with the stable project.

<b>2.1 Project Planning</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Confirm Project Team	Regular meetings	Complete
Draft Project Schedule	Consultation with Board mentors	Complete July 2022
Finalise Stage 1 Project Plans	Received by Board & Council	Complete
Plan approved by Council	Approval	Complete
<b>2.2 Project Implementation</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Secure land for Horses	Fenced and secure	Complete
Public Consultation	Feedback received	Complete – Ongoing
Approach Sponsors	5 Proposals & meetings	March 2023
<b>2.3 Build</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Confirm build team		Complete
Commence build	February 2023	May 2023
Complete build	Horses moved in, Council Member Tour	June 2023 Build completion date revised to August 2023
<b>2.4 Forward Planning</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Draft Behind the Scenes Experience Packages	Workshopped by Board	Achieved

## Priority 3: Communication Strategy

After strategic analysis of the communication priorities in the current climate, based on the situation of the Horse Drawn Tram, it became clear that developing effective relationships and strategic partners was more important than efforts towards customer attraction.



<b>3.1 Effective Communication</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Regular Council updates and dialogue	5 in person meetings	2021/22/23/24 Achieved
Regular staff and project team meetings	1 / fortnight	Ongoing
Partner with SA icons, as well as Visitor Experience/Tour Operators to increase Horse Tram promotions/exposure		March 2024
<b>3.2 Strategic Partnerships</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Meet with key government and SATC Stakeholders	5 Key Meetings	Ongoing
Open Communication lines with Cause-Way Project team to ensure Horse specific needs and safety are met.	Staff Member consulted	Complete
Partner with SA icons, and local Tourist Attractions and Venues to increase Horse Tram promotions/exposure	Key Relationships developed	June 2024
<b>3.3 Marketing</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Develop a One-page Marketing Plan based on Strategic Planning Workshop Findings	One-Page Plan in Business Plan	Achieved
Seek high-level media Opportunities & Stories	5 Media Stories	Ongoing
Consistent Social Media Content Publication	Weekly Stories	Ongoing
Full Marketing Plan through a consultant	Plan Complete	2023 In Progress

#### Priority 4: Office & Shop Renovation Planning

The Authority intends to improve point-of-sale/customer service experience at the tram office as well as staff facilities by renovating the current office and shop facilities. This will vastly improve the service, possible income streams and staff effectiveness, retention, WHS and wellbeing.

<b>4.1 Office and Shop Renovation</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Create Project team	Assembled and terms of reference agreed.	Achieved
Draft three designs based on functionality and attractive enhancements	Place received by Board	Achieved
Engage professional to draw up designs based on drafts and consultation.	Engaged & work completed.	Achieved
Cost the project	Budgeted	Achieved
<b>4.2 Merchandise</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Review current line	Review to Management	Annual – June 2022/23 Achieved
Establish online store	Store live on Website	June 2024

## Looking Ahead



Elliot's Stunning Blue Eye

With the new Stable Complex almost complete the VHHTA is about to embark on a transformational journey. The horses and staff will have a facility appropriate for the care and welfare of these amazing animals. Very soon the VHHTA will be able to invite visitors in for Behind the Scenes Experiences, where the public can spend time with the tram horses at the stables. They will be treated to entertaining and educational talks provided by their experienced hosts, receive demonstrations of the Clydesdale's skills and horse care, as well as horsey high teas and other exciting events.

Guests will be provided with the opportunity to interact with the horses, getting to know them in their home environment, an offering that is very frequently requested by tram passengers and the broader public. The Board, with its vast array of skills, ideas and talents can at times struggle to hold back its enthusiasm and marketing ideas for this amazing, iconic, public service that the VHHTA offers.

This year new staff were successfully trained, through the VHHTA's rigorous training program, reinforcing the professional nature of the iconic service. Moving forward, the VHHTA intends to improve on staff offerings, introducing an entertaining and educational piece, to be provided to passengers during their journey on the tram.

The VHHTA's knowledgeable staff will recount the Ramindjeri and Ngarrindjeri Dreaming stories embedded in the new Causeway—an endeavor that preserves and champions the heritage of Australia's First Nations while elevating the overall visitor experience. Staff are already adept at providing a vast array of information to individual consumers. The VHHTA is looking forward to improving and polishing these skills to ensure that the information can be conveyed to a larger audience.

The VHHTA has been supporting the accreditation of staff to deliver equine assisted therapies, which are used to improve mental health and for personal and professional development. Given the mental health crisis in South Australia, and only exasperated by COVID-19, the VHHTA is moving towards offering 'Equine Assisted Learning', (EAL), delivering personal and professional development initially, and into the future 'Equine Assisted Therapy' as staff skills and training are acquired. Four staff members are currently undertaking an EAL course, and one staff member has completed her qualifications and is currently expanding her experience as a practitioner.

The training will see the five-person team, trained and qualified, implement a program to provide EAL services to our local community. EAL is a unique approach to experiential learning, where clients are offered safe experiences with horses for the purposes of personal development, social, emotional and relationship skills building, enhancing quality of life and professional skills development, (e.g., leadership skills, team building and corporate goals), with horses as assistants, co-facilitators and teachers in this process. Feedback regarding the coming program has been positive, so watch this space.



**The VHHTA 2022/23 Herd**

Looking ahead, the VHHTA is feeling very positive about the future. The groundwork laid for new opportunities and offerings is expected to yield substantial dividends in the years to come. With uninterrupted tram services, the allure of 'Behind the Scenes' experiences, the multifaceted utility of the new Stable Complex and Visitor Centre, and the community-wide benefits of the VHHTA's EAL program along with an expanded equine team, the sky is the limit.



**Isabella's First Journey on the New Causeway**



## Financial Results

Budget Variance (1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023)

### Budget 2022/23

Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority  
For the year ended 30 June 2023

Account	2022/23 Final Figures	2023 March Budget Review
<b>Trading Income</b>		
CVH budget contribution	415,000.00	415,000.00
Donation Income	1,541.36	2,000.00
Group Sales	9,335.96	6,000.00
Interest Income	266.76	70.00
Other Income	36,259.94	4,500.00
Souvenir Sales	145,305.26	140,000.00
Ticket Sales	800,023.86	750,000.00
<b>Total Trading Income</b>	<b>1,407,733.14</b>	<b>1,317,570.00</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>1,407,733.14</b>	<b>1,317,570.00</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Causeway monitoring DIT payment	39,556.98	40,000.00
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>39,556.98</b>	<b>40,000.00</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Administration Charge - Corporate Support	69,134.08	73,000.00
Administration Charge - Rent on Assets	5,065.75	14,855.00
Advertising Expenses	39,822.00	32,000.00
Amortization ROU	33,145.39	33,145.00
Annual Leave Provision	8,897.84	6,000.00
Authority Board Expenses	14,856.76	15,000.00
Bank Fees	1,757.93	2,000.00
Building and Paddock Maintenance	34,114.20	30,000.00
Cleaning Expenses	5,412.79	6,000.00
Clothing and Safety Expenses	8,358.83	6,000.00
Consultants and Professional Services	21,090.20	20,000.00
Depreciation	18,493.30	18,231.00
Freight	777.27	0.00
Horse Care Expenses	113,951.64	75,000.00
Income protection Insurance	14,585.40	14,585.00
Insurance Expenses	33,067.17	45,000.00
Interest expense	2,448.78	4,718.00
Long Service Leave Provision	190.25	4,000.00
Merchant Fees	4,701.49	4,500.00
On Costs - Superannuation	60,242.52	66,000.00
On Costs - Workcover	4,529.03	7,000.00
Other Expenses	9,010.89	4,500.00
Personal Accident & Journey Injury Insurar	1,976.10	2,000.00
Phone and Data Expenses	2,782.07	4,000.00
Printing and Stationery Expenses	4,011.82	4,500.00
Salaries & Wages - Casual	204,842.65	290,000.00
Salaries and Wages - Permanent	413,539.15	340,000.00
Salaries and Wages - Provisions	6,038.23	7,000.00
Security Expenses	5,516.59	4,500.00
Souvenir Purchases	80,898.32	80,000.00
Staff Amenity Expenses	3,996.33	5,500.00
Training and Development Expenses	8,276.68	12,000.00
Tram and Equipment Maintenance	14,525.30	10,000.00
Utility Expenses	10,435.45	14,000.00
Vehicle and Travel Expenses	17,283.25	28,100.00
Volunteer Expenses	1,137.11	3,430.00
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>1,278,912.56</b>	<b>1,286,564.00</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>168,377.56</b>	<b>71,006.00</b>

## Financial Statements

(as provided under separate cover)

DRAFT



Meeting **Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority**  
Date **26 September 2023**  
From **Megan Whibley**  
Subject **General Manager Remuneration Review**  
Report Number **4.2**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That the Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority receive and note the General Manager Remuneration Review Report.**
- 2. That the Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority:**
  - (i) retrospectively approve the 3.5% General Manager wage for the previous year, consistent with the increase of other staff under the Enterprise Agreement, noting that it has already been applied; and**
  - (ii) having endorsed the General Manager Performance Review at the Board meeting on 12 September 2023, subsequently approve an 8.6% increase to base salary, consistent with the increase of other staff under the Enterprise Agreement, to be applied from 1 July 2023.**

## **INFORMATION**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to endorse an increase to General Manager Total Employment Contract (TEC) remuneration, following endorsement of the annual performance review at the previous meeting and to retrospectively approve the wage increase from the previous year (which has already been applied).

### **Background**

In accordance with the General Manager Employment Agreement, the Board must conduct an annual performance review of the incumbent. In line with this process, the review should typically include a review of TEC remuneration, as described in the General Manager's Employment Agreement, at clause 15:

*15.1 The Employee may undergo a TEC Package Review, typically in conjunction with the Performance Review as per Clause 17.1 of this Agreement.*

### **Commentary**

The General Manager's annual performance review was undertaken by Nigel Catt (Chair) and Board Member Rachel Kennedy. The assessment was reviewed and endorsed by the Board at the 12 September 2023 meeting, though remuneration was not considered at the time. Historically, the General Manager has received the same remuneration increase as



other staff who are covered by the Enterprise Agreement, noting that the General Manager is not covered under this agreement and requires Board endorsement for any remuneration increases.

In preparing this report, it was found that Board approval for the 2022 remuneration increase, which has been applied in line with the increase received under the Enterprise Agreement by other VHHTA staff, had not been formally sought and obtained. Discussions with Board Members have indicated that they were aware of and supportive of the increase having been applied and as such, the lack of formal Board approval is considered a corporate governance oversight that should be remedied through this report.

The following table shows the impact of the changes being proposed for approval by the Board:

<b>Component</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23 3.5%</b>	<b>2023/24 8.6%</b>
Annual base salary	\$99,576	\$103,061	\$111,924
Superannuation	\$ 9,957	\$ 10,821	\$ 12,312
Motor Vehicle	\$ 12,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000
Annual Leave Loading	\$ 1342	\$ 1517	\$ 1688
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 122,875</b>	<b>\$ 129,399</b>	<b>\$ 139,924</b>

*Note: there has been a change to the Superannuation Guarantee from 10% in 2021/22, to 10.5% in 2022/23 and 11% in 2023/24.*

Accordingly, a recommendation is provided to the Board to address the oversight from 2022/23 and to approve an 8.6% increase to the General Manager’s TEC package for 2023/24. Increases are linked directly with CPI Adelaide for the year to December and are in line with the VHHTA Enterprise Agreement. Staff covered by the Enterprise Agreement received their pay increase from 1 July 2023, and accordingly, it is recommended that the increase should also apply to the General Manager from this date, requiring backpay, subject to Board approval.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

**Corporate Governance** – The Board have a responsibility in accordance with the Charter to manage the performance of the General Manager, and to conduct the annual performance review. They are also responsible for reviewing and approving any increases to the TEC package of the General Manager in line with the Employment Agreement. It is acknowledged that approval for the remuneration increase for the General Manager in 2022 was not formally approved by the Board, however the recommendation provided with this report seeks to address this oversight. The risk is assessed as **low**.

**Financial Management** – An allocation for the proposed remuneration increase of 8.6% has been included in the adopted budget, as it is in line with the VHHTA Enterprise Agreement that applies to other staff (but not to the General Manager). The increase being retrospectively recommended for approval has already been applied, as the approval process was an administrative oversight following the previous performance review in 2022, and therefore does not require backpay. The risk is assessed as **low**.

## **REFERENCES**

Victor Harbor Horse Tram General Manager Employment Agreement  
Victor Harbor Horse Tram Authority Enterprise Agreement  
VHHTA Charter

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Approval of a remuneration increase as recommended would result in an 8.6% increase to the General Manager's TEC package in 23/24 as indicated in the table within the commentary section above. There is no budget implication from formally approving the 3.5% increase from the previous year, as this has already been applied across 2022/23.

This would not impact on the approved budget in 2023/24 as increases in line with the Enterprise Agreement were included in the budget allocation.

No additional funds are required.