

Priority Projects

April 2023



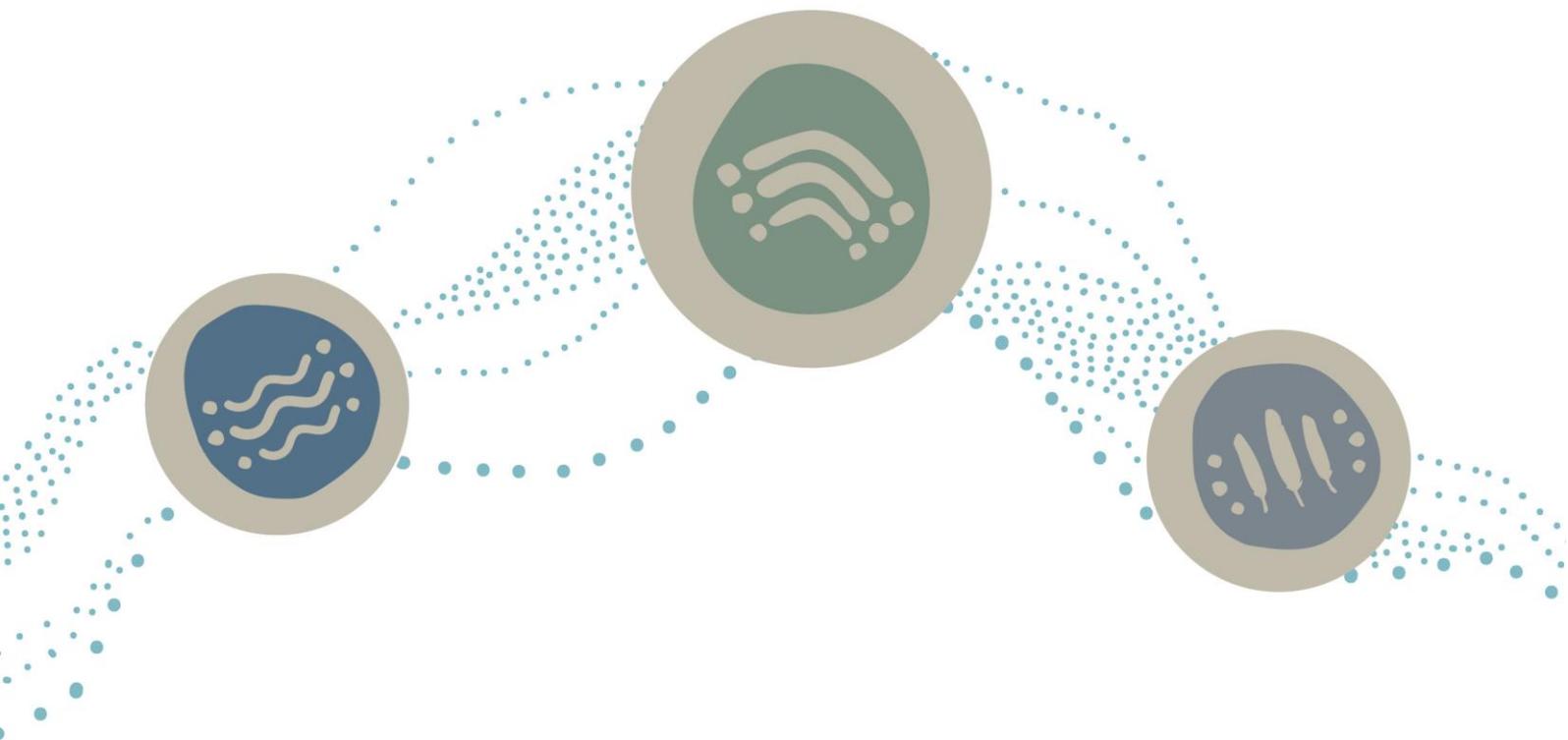
Image: Development at Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct, New Gisborne, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung country.

Acknowledgment of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, and present.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

Artwork by Taungurung artist Maddi Moser



Contents

A message from the Mayor and CEO	3
Our liveable shire	4
Our vision	5
Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct – Stage 2	6
Accessible sport for all	6
Daylesford to Hanging Rock and Kyneton Rail Trail	9
Linking local communities and tourism	9
Woodend Community Centre	12
A reimagined community hub	12
Kyneton Town Hall Reimagined	14
A contemporary theatre upgrade	14
Lancefield Kindergarten and MCH Centre	17
Improved facilities for young families	17
Barrm Birrm - A bushland worth protecting	19
Creating a new nature reserve in the Macedon Ranges	19
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	22
Charging the Macedon Ranges	22
Digital Connectivity and Communications	24
Mobile and high-speed broadband infrastructure	24
Affordable Housing	27
Victoria’s Big Housing Build	27
Mental Health Service for Young People	30
A vision for the future – Improved Mental Health Supports for Young People	30
Healthy Landscapes Private Land Conservation Program	34
Sustainable land management practices	34
Aquatic Facility Feasibility Study Macedon Ranges Shire Council (East)	36
An indoor aquatic facility in the east of the Shire	36
Contact	38

A message from the Mayor and CEO

Welcome to the Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

To complement our shire's stunning natural assets, we are committed to delivering a range of essential services and major infrastructure that will continue to make the Macedon Ranges an attractive place to live, work and explore. We strive to be forward-thinking, creative and adaptable, while constantly advocating to - and proudly partnering with - the Victorian and Australian governments wherever possible to achieve great outcomes.

The projects in this document complement existing government strategies and policies, and highlight our ability to work collaboratively with our community to plan and build for the future.

We are willing to discuss options for funding for any or all of these priority projects, and the bringing forward of timelines if necessary to meet the requirements of any state or federal funding.

We look forward to sharing more about our shire with you, and working with you on building a better community for all of our residents and visitors.



Cr Annette Death
Mayor



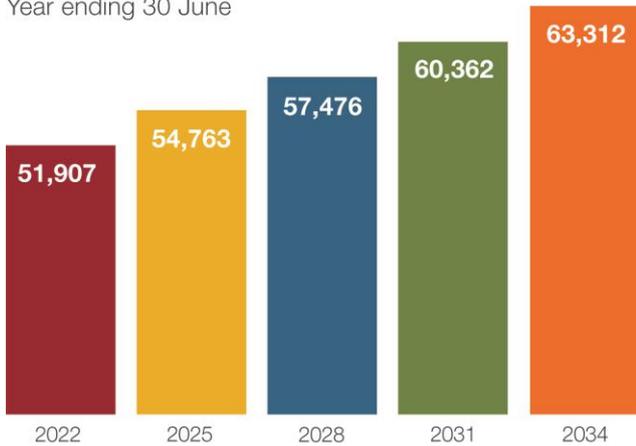
Bernie O'Sullivan
Chief Executive Officer

Our liveable shire

The Macedon Ranges is renowned for its semi-rural lifestyle, beautiful natural landscapes, historic towns and architecture, gourmet food and wine, and vibrant community life.

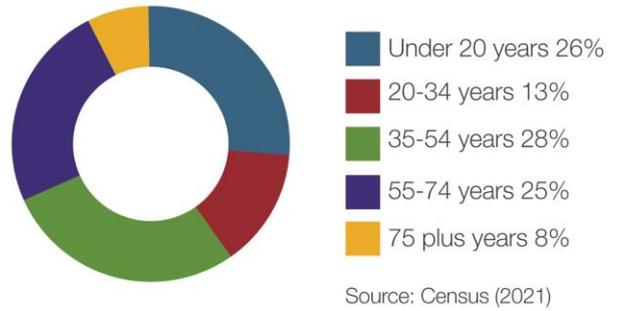
Population growth forecast (estimates)

Year ending 30 June



Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016–36, prepared by .id, November 2017.

Population age breakdown



37.6% Forecasted population growth 2016-2036

Shire infrastructure

Council maintains:

- 863 km** of sealed roads
- 815 km** of unsealed roads
- 335 km** of kerb and channel
- 227 km** of footpaths
- 151** bridges and culverts
- 65** footbridges
- 10,373** stormwater pits
- 282 km** of underground stormwater pipes

Sport and recreation

Year ending 30 June

- 24** sports grounds
- 71** playgrounds
- 64** tennis courts
- 6** skate parks
- 4** aquatic facilities
- 6** indoor stadiums
- 38** parks, gardens and nature reserves



Our vision

The community’s vision for Macedon Ranges Shire Council has been developed by our citizens, via a representative Community Vision Assembly. It forms part of Council’s strategic planning framework, guiding future planning across the shire, considering both short-term and long-term priorities that shape our adopted Council Plan 2021-2031, as well as the annual four-year projected budget and 10-year Financial Plan.

Council looks forward to working alongside the community and external partners to work towards the community’s vision for Macedon Ranges Shire Council. The Community Vision statement, as voiced by our community to shape our shire’s future:

With our unique regional identity, Macedon Ranges Shire embodies a caring, resilient approach to community through our robust local economy, protection of the natural environment and a collaborative commitment to inclusivity for all.

The Community Vision Assembly developed three community vision themes, which were used to shape our Council Plan 2021-2031, along with delivering strong and reliable government.



Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct – Stage 2

Accessible sport for all

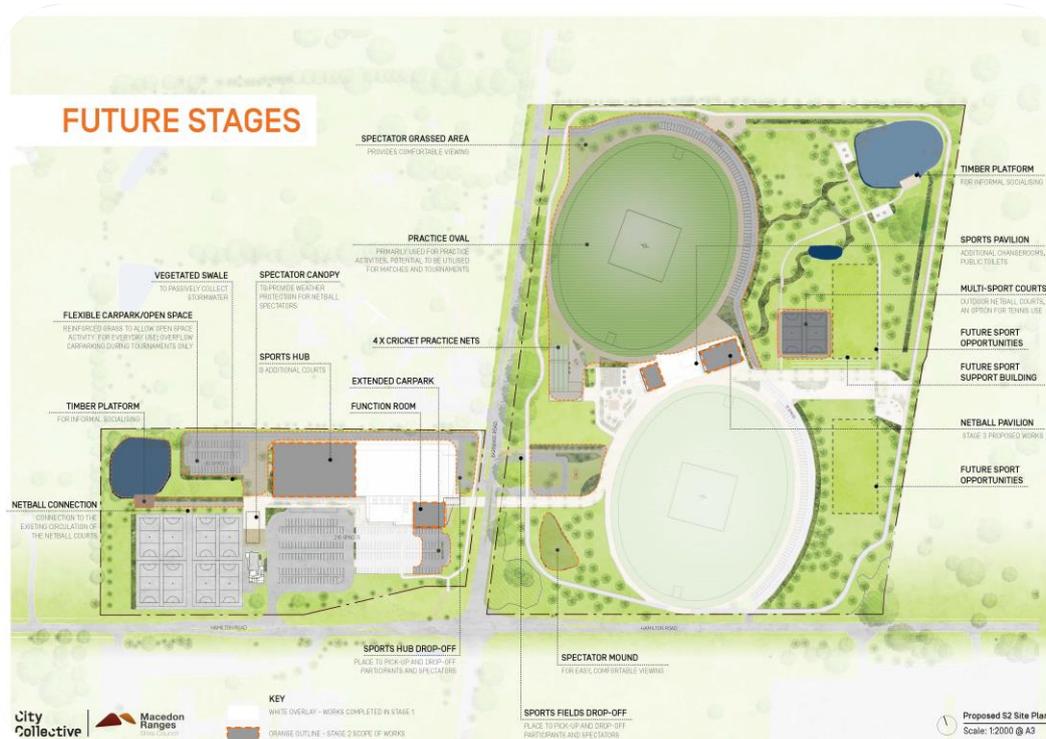
About the project

The Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct (MRRSP), a showcase project, will deliver a 15-hectare regional park providing facilities for a range of sport and passive recreation activities, enabling improved social connections and health outcomes for the growing Macedon Ranges community.

The Precinct Masterplan has been taken to schematic design, although funding constraints mean that the precinct needs to be delivered in stages. Stage 1 is fully funded and well underway, and will deliver a three-court Sports Hub, a natural turf oval and sports pavilion, passive recreation facilities, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

The project team continue to explore funding opportunities in order to realise Stage 2.

It is anticipated that Stage 2 will deliver three additional Sports Hub courts, a function room, additional car parking, a practise oval, outdoor multi-sport courts, additional Sports Pavilion amenities and further landscaping.



Benefits

- Aligns with each of the four Council Plan priorities – in particular, it will foster our healthy environment, healthy people theme by offering purpose-built sporting facilities with social and recreational spaces. This will support healthy lifestyles and social connection, and help build strength and resilience in the community.
- The precinct addresses the gap in parkland and sporting opportunity in the New Gisborne area. Due to increasing population growth and increasing participation, particularly in female sport, there is a documented shortage of indoor sports courts and outdoor playing fields. The precinct will address that shortfall and provide easy access to high-quality facilities for the community.
- The precinct will enable increased participation in basketball, futsal, AFL football and cricket; regional tournaments and carnivals; and large community events. It will relieve pressure on existing facilities and set a foundation for future expansion for growing demand.
- The precinct will provide a range of passive recreational opportunities, including walking and cycling paths, playground and open space areas providing opportunities for all sectors of the community.
- The regional significance of the precinct will encourage tourism and investment by facilitating exhibition games, large events and regional programs, and fostering economic vitality in a way that promotes positive individual and community health outcomes. This will have a positive flow-on economic benefit to our region as more events and competitors can be hosted.
- At the time of completing the economic assessment in the planning Stages of the MMRSP project, the estimated regional economic benefit of construction and the flow-on effects for developing the precinct is \$59.04 million. It is estimated that the construction of Stage 1 will support 68 direct and 93 indirect jobs during the construction period. Once fully operational, the Regional Sports Precinct is expected to support 23 direct and 11 indirect jobs.

Project Stage

Stage 1: Detailed design complete, funding confirmed and construction commenced August 2022.

Stage 2: Designed to end schematic design stage.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
<p>Stage 1 \$25.8 million</p> <p>This includes:</p> <p>Victorian Government funding of \$14.8 million (includes \$11.6 million and Growing Suburbs Funding of \$3.2 million)</p> <p>AFL Victoria funding \$100k</p>	<p>Stage 1 \$10.9 million</p>	<p>Stage 1 Fully funded/committed</p> 	<p>Stage 1 target dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender by end 2021 • Construction commenced August 2022 • Construction completed early 2024 • Facilities open early 2024
<p>Stage 2 \$26.5 million*</p>	<p>\$2 million (subject to Council approval)</p>	<p>Stage 2 Federal</p> <p>\$15 million – Federal</p>  <p>\$9.5 million – State</p>	<p>Stage 2</p> <p>Subject to funding, 2024</p>
<p>Total \$52.3 million</p>			

* **Stage 2** costing independently reviewed and updated September 2022.

Daylesford to Hanging Rock and Kyneton Rail Trail

Linking local communities and tourism

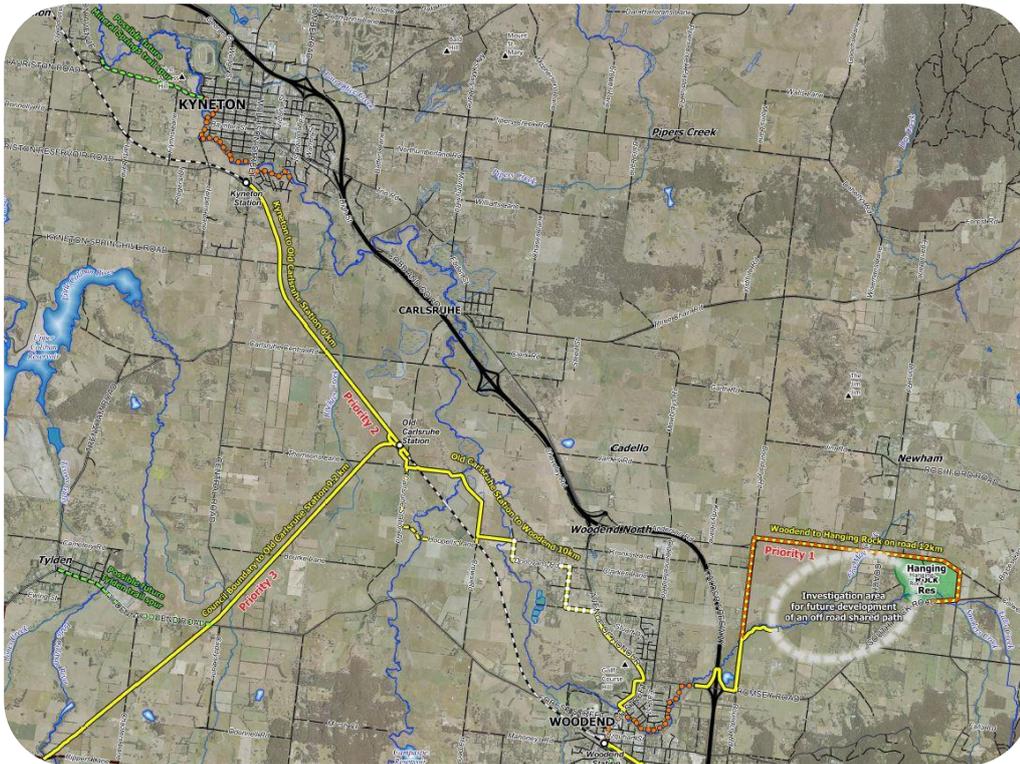
About the project

The Daylesford to Hanging Rock and Kyneton Rail Trail will see the development of a unique combination of rail trail and shared use trails. The Macedon Ranges Shire section of the shared trail project is Tylden to Hanging Rock and Kyneton. These will link communities through safe and enjoyable trails, inviting both locals and visitors to share our special landscape and distinctive areas.

Macedon Ranges trail sections	Proposed length
Council boundary to Old Karlsruhe Station	9.2km
Old Karlsruhe Station to Woodend	10km
Old Karlsruhe Station to Kyneton	6km
Woodend to Hanging Rock	12km

Council has agreed with Hepburn Shire Council to partner on the planning and delivery of this trail as a joint project.





Benefits

- The trail will provide the community and users with a unique trail experience linking rural landscapes, towns and heritage through the Macedon Ranges areas of Hanging Rock, Woodend, Kyneton, Carlsruhe and Tylden (then on to neighbouring Daylesford in Hepburn Shire).
- Attract between 4,460 and 6,690 annual visits by local residents.
- Increased domestic and international visitors to the shire, particularly for nature-based tourism; estimated at an additional 31,300 to 62,580 per annum.
- Increased appreciation and knowledge of our biodiversity, distinctive areas and significant landscapes.
- Increased economic yield for local businesses, including generating \$2 million to \$4 million per annum in direct and indirect expenditure.
- Increased support for the local economy, including 25 to 51 new jobs.
- Improved opportunity for physical activity for all ages.

Project stage

Initial feasibility study complete. Next step is to complete the detailed design work, including the next stage of planning, permits, assessments and land owner/land manager negotiations.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
Planning \$3.55 million (excluding any land use agreement costs)	\$550k	\$3 million	Subject to funding
Construction (four trail sections) \$16.255 million Macedon Ranges Shire Council costs only	\$1.255 million	\$15 million	

Woodend Community Centre

A reimagined community hub

About the project

The Woodend Community Centre, housing critical community spaces including the library, multi-purpose meeting spaces and a community hall/performance space, Council's customer service centre, and the Visitor Information Centre, will provide a well-designed, innovative and multi-purpose public space for the community now and into the future. The Woodend Community Centre space also incorporates the regular outdoor markets that showcase local produce and crafts.

The schematic designs for the Woodend Community Centre has been completed and costed for Stage 1. Stage 1 incorporates the library, multi-purpose meeting spaces, Council's customer service centre, the Visitor Information Centre and a small café to showcase local produce (operated by a social enterprise). Stage 2 requires design and will incorporate the community hall/performance space and revitalised market space, and is critical to complete the Centre and interaction with the outdoor space.

All stages of the project have strong community support from a range of user groups, who have been actively involved in the reimagined Centre design process.



Benefits

- A reimagined Community Centre that reflects community values and provides spaces for a modern and engaged community.
- Provision of a much needed upgraded library space that has dedicated spaces for all users of the library.
- Encourages greater community collaboration and gathering with beautifully designed dynamic, multi-purpose meeting spaces.
- Provision of multi-generational areas for children, youth, adults and seniors.
- The Centre has been designed to demonstrate best practice sustainable design, to include passive design principles, increased natural light, thermal comfort and ventilation. The roof is designed to accommodate solar panels and enable water capture and re-use.
- The design of the Stage 2 community hall/performance space will support the internationally known Winter Arts Festival as well as many and regular community performances.

Project stage

Construction funds now being sought.

Stage 1: Schematic design and costings completed.

Stage 2: Pre-planning; Council is seeking funding for the detailed design of Stage 2 – the community hall/ performance space and revitalised market space.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
Stage 1 \$10.9 million (Construction)	\$2.8 million	\$8.1 million	Subject to funding
Stage 2 \$500,000 (Detailed Design)	In-kind project management	\$500,000	Subject to funding

Kyneton Town Hall Reimagined

A contemporary theatre upgrade



About the project

The Kyneton Town Hall is an historically and culturally significant building for the Macedon Ranges, with a requirement to retain the National Trust of Australia (Vic) listed original 1878-9 and 1929 portions of the building.

In 2019 Council undertook a contemporary compliance check of the Kyneton Town Hall venue. This check identified a need to upgrade and refurbish the venue to meet current building requirements, community expectations and the objectives of the Arts and Culture Strategy.

This renovation project will provide an exciting, functional and flexible space, with contemporary facilities enabling programs and services for the local community.

Highlights include:

- Universal access across the venue including dressing rooms and audience areas
- Redesigned backstage, providing access for staging and deliveries
- Upgraded audio and sound in the theatre

- Better theatre seating
- A refurbished theatre interior
- High quality meeting rooms that can be used by the community and Council, and be hired by private groups
- A safer venue with upgraded fire and security systems meeting current standards

Council has completed the upgrade/refurbishment of the exterior of the town hall.

As a high class venue situated in the heart of town, the Kyneton Town Hall already attracts visitors who enjoy the cultural offerings as well as spend time at the many restaurants and shops. Visitors often take the opportunity to stay over and take time to explore the region. Upgrading the facilities enables a wider variety of cultural events to be staged, enhancing the value of the venue to all.

Benefits

- The Macedon Ranges Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028 recognises that broad community participation in creative activities creates the cultural vitality that is as essential to a healthy and sustainable society, as is social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability. Art is important to culture for many reasons including that it communicates in a way that cuts across many boundaries – racial, cultural, social, educational and economic.
- The project will deliver a modern and accessible performing arts venue to cater for a range of performers, programs and experiences.
- Supports our community's need for access to a range of diverse and vibrant cultural assets across the shire. The project will deliver an accessible and appropriately designed space, capable of hosting significant events and performances. The community will be able to experience these events without needing to leave the shire.
- Attract visitors from outside the regions to attend high class acts in a premier venue. These visitors will also be able to enjoy the surrounding shopping, dining and accommodation options that showcase what the Macedon Ranges has to offer.

Project stage

Pre-planning; Council is currently undertaking detailed design works and investigation. Council has applied for \$250,000 in funding to complete the schematic design stage (outcome is currently unconfirmed).

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
Planning & Design			
\$250,000	Staffing in-kind	\$250,000	Subject to funding
Implementation			
\$8.5 million	\$1 million	\$7.5 million	Subject to funding

Lancefield Kindergarten and MCH Centre

Improved facilities for young families

About the project

The Lancefield Kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Centre project involves the building of a three-room kindergarten and MCH service in Lancefield – to accommodate the increase in demand for both services in the Lancefield/Romsey area. The Victorian Government's progressive roll-out of 15 hours a week access to funded kindergarten for three-year old children, and the *Best Start, Best Life* reform offering 30 hours of four-year-old kindergarten, will further increase this demand situation in our shire.

In 2021, Council undertook service-modelling forecasting to inform Council's strategic direction in Early Years operations. The findings of this work noted some areas are likely to be strained in the future, particularly Lancefield. The current Lancefield kindergarten is leased, and will require significant financial investment in the coming years for it to be fit for purpose.

With no dedicated MCH service in Lancefield, the Romsey MCH centre currently services Lancefield and surrounds. Recent growth in the Romsey township, with its new housing developments and families moving into the area, has put increasing pressure on the Romsey MCH centre to accommodate appointments. The increase in demand has generated a higher workload for the service, resulting in an additional MCH nurse working offsite at the Romsey Hub on Wednesdays. The limited public transport between Lancefield and Romsey, combined with population growth in these areas, means it makes sense to provide a dedicated MCH service in Lancefield.

Feedback gathered from our community in the development of the Municipal Early Years plan CREATE 2021-2025, strongly emphasised the need for additional contemporary early years infrastructure in Lancefield to accommodate the growing community.

Following consultation with key stakeholders a Building Blocks Grant application has been submitted to the Victorian School Building Authority. Pending a successful application, planning will commence as soon as possible to enable this project to be completed and operational for the 2024 school year.



Benefits

- A contemporary, purpose-built kindergarten in Lancefield which accommodates all children that require a place.
- A dedicated Maternal Health Centre in Lancefield.
- Reduces the over demand at the Maternal Child Health Centre in Romsey (which currently also services Lancefield families).
- Improves accessibility for the community (including vulnerable families) to experience services locally, thereby reducing isolation.

Project stage

Application for grant funding via Victorian State Government outcome successful.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
Up to \$3.2 million – final project cost TBC	\$20k	State Up to \$3 million	Targeted to open January 2024



Barrm Birrm - A bushland worth protecting

Creating a new nature reserve in the Macedon Ranges

About the project

The purpose of this project is to resolve a historic planning decision that creates conflict and risk for the environment and adjacent Riddells Creek community, via the public acquisition of a piece of beautiful bushland.

This potential nature reserve is Barrm Birrm - place of many yam roots. The 118 hectare open forest is arguably the most intact flora and fauna area in the region which comes alive in spring with a vast diversity of groundcover plants and wildflowers – particularly Yam Daisies or Murnong.

The area is also known as “Riddells Ranges Estate” or the former Shone and Schultz sub-division in Riddells Creek. Unfortunately, due to a legacy of planning from the 1880s, this land is divided into 162 lots and owned by 98 different landowners. Due to the site’s natural values, high fire risk and lack of services, the land is not considered suitable for development. As a result, current planning controls prevent development in the estate – creating frustration for many of its owners.

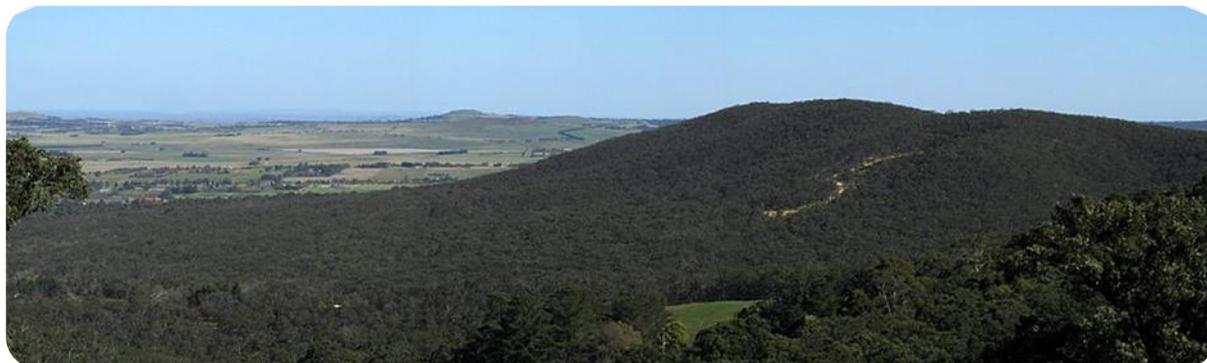
Council currently operates a “gift back” scheme to encourage the transfer of private land parcels to Council. This process is slow and relies on the voluntary participation of landowners. Through this process, Council now owns 56 of the lots. However, Council has found that with increasing land prices, this program has stalled.

Public acquisition has significant support from the local community. In 2005, residents formed Riddells Creek Landcare to care for Barrm Birrm, removing rubbish and invasive weeds, introducing the local community to its plant and animal life and advocating for its permanent protection.

Public acquisition of Barrm Birrm meets actions identified in multiple strategy documents:

- Council’s Biodiversity Strategy 2018 – actions aimed at achieving the transfer of Barrm Birrm properties to public ownership and, ultimately, the creation of a nature conservation reserve.
- Port Phillip Regional Catchment Strategy 2021 - New parks – significant areas of additional new parks established across this region providing improved security, extent and quality of native habitat.

- Victorian Government’s “Protecting Victoria’s Environment - Biodiversity 2037” plan – create new areas of permanently protected native vegetation.



Benefits

- Permanent protection of native vegetation of high conservation significance on the south east side of the Macedon Ranges, including over 27 species of native orchids and the only plant endemic to the Macedon Ranges Shire – the Hairy-leaf Triggerplant.
- Prevents use of the site by multiple landholders including destruction of flora from illegal camping, firewood collection, 4WD and dirt bikes.
- Allows for appropriate management of fire risk to adjoining Riddells Creek township.
- Open space for the Riddells Creek community for passive recreation such as bushwalking, picnics and appreciating local biodiversity.
- Opportunity for a nature reserve to attract visitors to Riddells Creek and create longer distance walking tracks linking up with adjoining public land including Conglomerate Gully Reserve, Sandy Creek Bushland Reserve and Mount Charlie Flora Reserve.
- Economic benefits – significantly rising land prices create an urgency around public acquisition.
- Landscape connectivity linking public land at Conglomerate Gully Reserve and providing habitat links for threatened species through to T Hill Flora Reserve and Mount Charlie Reserve.

Project stage

Council is currently undertaking detailed ecological and cultural heritage assessments that further demonstrate the significant ecological and heritage values of the site.

The next step is to generate the resources and support for public acquisition.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
\$6.36 million Land Costs. \$140,000 Legal, conveyancing and administration costs. Total \$6.5 million	Project management, in-kind works and support.	\$6.5 million + \$250,000 for planning scheme amendment (should Council be required to complete this work).	ASAP

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Charging the Macedon Ranges

About the project

Installation of public, fast-charging electric vehicle (EV) charging stations (50kW systems) in Riddells Creek, Gisborne, Romsey and Malmsbury, which support the establishment of an extended network.

Council has successfully advocated for installation of EV charging stations in Lancefield, Macedon and Kyneton. The new proposed locations would enable a regional network of charging stations.



Benefits

- A network of stations is critical to facilitating the transition to low emissions vehicles. This contributes to Council's response to the climate emergency by facilitating emission reductions across the shire.
- The network of fast-charging stations across the shire enables Council to take advantage of the market of electric vehicle drivers who plan their day trips and weekends away according to the location of charging facilities. Attracting these visitors will grow the region's tourism economy and directly support local businesses.

- The project deepens the electric vehicle touring routes made possible across central and northern Victoria as a result of the Victorian Government funded 'Charging the Regions' project.

Project stage

Ready to go.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
\$540k (four stations at \$135k each)	\$30k (project management)	\$540k	As soon as possible

Digital Connectivity and Communications

Mobile and high-speed broadband infrastructure

About the project

Now more than ever it is critical to deliver improved digital connectivity across our region. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that the transition and use of digital capabilities has been critical to ensuring social cohesion and business health and continuity.

A survey conducted in Macedon Ranges Shire in May 2021 identified that over 70% of respondents are not satisfied with their current reliability. Service reliability impacts on the ability of regional communities to actively plan and participate in business, social, learning and health activities online. The Macedon Ranges survey specifically asked respondents what services or activities they had been unable to undertake due to a lack of connectivity. Just under 60% of responses referred to being unable to access education; over 90% identified they were unable to work effectively from home.

Our shire has known mobile and connectivity black spots, including, but not limited to, parts of the townships of:

- Gisborne South
- Kyneton
- Lancefield
- Tylden, and
- Woodend.

In addition, localised connectivity issues are experienced throughout much of the shire.

Advocating for equitable, reliable access to digital connectivity and communications across the Macedon Ranges Shire, this project builds on recent survey data undertaken as part of the 100Gig City Region project. The survey identifies areas of shortfall for the provision of services.

Governments at all levels acknowledge the vital economic and social value of high-speed broadband infrastructure being universally available to businesses and residents.



Benefits

- Reduction or elimination of connectivity blackspots.
- Price and service quality in the shire through competitive services for residents and businesses.
- Adequate supply of, and access to, high speed broadband throughout the region will meet current and future demand, and support local innovation, business opportunities and growth.
- Support for the shire's visitor economy with improved and more reliable connection providing more options for cashless transactions.

Project stage

Requires support to identify, cost and fund tailored solutions appropriate to communities and our distinctive landscapes throughout the Macedon Ranges. Council continues to work collaboratively with telecommunications providers and other stakeholders to progress digital connectivity improvements, especially in the known blackspot areas.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
Costs dependent on required solutions	Significant and ongoing in-kind costs	Required funds to implement solutions tailored to communities and landscapes	As soon as possible

Affordable Housing

Victoria's Big Housing Build

Population growth is an underlying factor for housing demand and, without new dwellings, pushes up prices for both purchasing and renting. The population of Macedon Ranges Shire is projected to increase by 28% over the next fifteen years (2021-2036)¹. To meet this growth, a further 8,244 dwellings are needed².

It is projected that 1,790 social and affordable dwellings (about 7% of the total stock) may be required by 2036 to accommodate the number of homeless households, social housing households and very low, low and moderate income households in housing stress already living in the Shire³. The shire currently has 342 social housing dwellings⁴.

In November 2020, the Victorian Government announced Victoria's Big Housing Build. The program will deliver \$5.3 billion investment in social and affordable housing, building some 12,000 homes and creating an average of 10,000 jobs per year.

This program will see a minimum investment of \$30 million in Macedon Ranges Shire to build social and affordable housing⁵. Currently there are 9 projects underway in the Macedon Ranges to build 13 dwellings with an investment of \$5.5 million.

About the project

Affordable housing is identified as a priority area in the Council Plan 2021-2031 and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. In October 2021, Council endorsed a draft Affordable Housing Interim Policy 2021-2023 for public exhibition (a comprehensive Affordable Housing Policy for the shire will be completed by July 2023).

By 2036, 33.5% of residents in Macedon Ranges Shire will be aged over 55⁶. Persons over 55 is one of the most frequently cited cohorts in need of housing assistance.

Specialist aged care housing association Wintringham currently operates 49 one-bedroom social and affordable housing units for seniors in Gisborne, Romsey and Lancefield. The dwellings are owned or managed by Council and are valued at approximately \$8.8 million. Built in the 1970s and

¹ [Home | Macedon Ranges Shire | Population forecast \(id.com.au\)](#) accessed August 2021

² [Dwellings and development map | Macedon Ranges Shire | Population forecast \(id.com.au\)](#)

³ SGS Economics and Planning September 2021

⁴ Victorian State Government, Housing Assistance Additional Service Delivery Data 2019-2020 Updated 12 July 2021

⁵ [Regional investment | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#), accessed September 2021

⁶ [Population and age structure | Macedon Ranges Shire | Population forecast \(id.com.au\)](#)

1980s the units are nearing end of life and will require renewal or redevelopment. Some sites are well located and suitable as long term sites for social housing.

Council is advocating for State Government investment in these sites. Investment would align with Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051 advocating that the State government:

- Set targets to grow social housing – in the next year, set a transparent statewide social housing growth target to reach and maintain at least the national average of 4.5 social housing dwellings for every 100 households by 2031.
- Expand social housing in regional centres, in locations with good access – focus social housing investments in regional centres, near transport and services, for better access to health, social and economic support.
- Make social housing suitable for changing local climates – continue to deliver a long-term program of modifying social housing to be climate resilient by improving the energy efficiency and energy affordability of residences.

Further to this, Council has provided Homes Victoria with a shortlist of potential sites either owned by Council or by State Government that may be suitable for development under the Big Housing Build initiative.

Council will advocate for a strong partnership between state and local government that gives council a 'seat at the table' in identifying priorities for social and affordable housing growth in the Shire.



Benefits

- Regional Victoria is experiencing deteriorating housing affordability. The proportion of new rentals affordable to lower income households has fallen from around 60% to 35% in five years. Social housing infrastructure is central to the Victorian Government's response⁷.
- Well-located social housing, with good transport access, allows people to live close to jobs and services. Affordable housing can assist local economies to attract and retain staff to keep business open and grow industries⁸.
- Safe and appropriate housing contributes to health and wellbeing of people and communities⁹.
- Council owns or manages 49 seniors' housing units across Gisborne, Lancefield and Romsey valued at approximately \$8.8 million.
- Council is advocating for investment at these sites to achieve an increase in the overall supply of social housing in Macedon Ranges and improved amenity for tenants.
- Local governments that identify opportunities, such as on underutilised council land, have been encouraged to work with community housing providers to develop partnership proposals.

Project stage

Concept, pre-design.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
\$13 million	Council provides significant ongoing expenditure and in-kind support for the operation of 49 seniors housing units in Gisborne, Romsey and Lancefield.	State \$13 million	Big Housing Build grant process and/or announcement for 2022/23 budget year.

⁷ [Infrastructure Victoria, Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021-2051, 2021](#)

⁸ [Infrastructure Victoria, Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021-2051, 2021](#)

⁹ [Health of people experiencing homelessness - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#), accessed August 2021

Mental Health Service for Young People

A vision for the future – Improved Mental Health Supports for Young People

About the project

Young people in rural and remote areas are likely, as result of unique structural, economic and social factors, to have poorer mental health outcomes and a heightened risk of suicide compared to their metropolitan peers. Modelling by Orygen indicates an additional 82,000 young Victorians aged 12-25 years could experience mental health disorders because of COVID-19. This represents a 32% increase.

Elevate, the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Youth Strategy 2018-28, identified mental health as the most important issue for young people in the shire, with mental health having the greatest impact on survey respondents. The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System revealed the significant disadvantage rural young people experience in accessing mental health supports.

The geographical makeup of the Macedon Ranges is a unique factor that affects young people's ability to access mental health services. There is a lack of public transport between the nine townships in the shire, which is of particular concern for young people in our community with limited transport options and/or mobility. Currently, young people of the Macedon Ranges are expected to travel up to an hour to access youth-centred psychologists at headspace. Out of hours, access to mental health support services is currently almost non-existent, with most of the services in the shire providing a traditional business hours office-based model. These factors are prohibitive to engagement and increase the challenges our young people face when needing support. This underscores a call for immediate action in supporting youth mental health in the Macedon Ranges.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council have formed an advocacy group made up of persons with living experience and key service partners. Council has submitted a grant application for the living local regional grants program, to deliver phase one of this project. If successful the grant would be used to create and activate a youth space in a Gisborne site owned by Council. The Youth Mental Health advocacy group has been engaged in the development of this application and members have provided written support for the grant application.

Youth spaces will collaborate with public and private providers delivering Medicare funded services to ensure that pathways for more intensive and acute services are available for young people requiring specialised support and treatment. Services will come together via either a committee of management or consortium style approach to offer a range of coordinated and integrated services with distinct expertise to meet the needs of young people. Service offerings would include; youth recreation and engagement programs, mental health, physical health, drug and alcohol support, education, and employment services.

By developing a flexible and scalable service model, the Youth Space Project aims to overcome some of the unique structural barriers that exist for young people accessing supports in the shire. The construction of the primary Youth Space in the Gisborne town centre, close to public transport (bus), schools and businesses, will enhance opportunities for engagement for young people and families. In addition, integrating flexible service delivery ensures that the service can be scaled up and activated across towns with limited transport options, through a mobile and flexible service delivery model. Dependant on further funding, the Youth Space service will draw upon existing Council operated sites and facilities to activate the service across the shire.



Benefits

- Address the gap in mental health support and intervention for young people living the Macedon Ranges. This will have a positive effect on the community with direct correlation to a range of social, economic and personal benefits such as inclusion, reduced isolation and increased civic participation.
- Decrease the wait time for young people who require a mental health response in the shire, as well as in neighbouring local government areas where there is a service.
- Decrease the rate of hospitalisation because of serious mental health episodes in young people.
- Decrease the suicide rate of young people who reside in the Macedon Ranges shire.
- The Youth Space Project will create employment opportunities and attract mental health and wellbeing practitioners to rural mental health services, and retain those practitioners in such services.
- Employment services operating from the Youth Space primary site in Gisborne will ensure that young people have access to employment support, and pathways to jobs in local businesses and industries.

Project stage

Concept and design planning.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
Up to \$3 million total			
Stage 1: Co design and consultation with young people.		\$60,000	June 30 2023
Stage 2: Refurbish Gisborne Senior Citizens Building to create a youth base.	\$46,000	\$121,000	1 – 2 years
Stage 3: Funding for transport, program expenses and staff including a mental health nurse, clinical and generalist youth workers.	In-kind project management costs	Total \$530,000	1 – 2 years
Stage 4: Extend implementation of the program to towns across the Shire including staff, activation and/or refurbishment of appropriate buildings.	In-kind project management costs	\$500,000 per site	2- 3 years

Healthy Landscapes

Private Land Conservation Program

Sustainable land management practices

About the project

This three-year Private Land Conservation Program is aimed at building the capacity of farmers and rural land owners to implement sustainable land management practices through delivery of individual on-farm advice, workshops, field days, short courses and discussion groups.

The project aims to achieve on-ground practice changes that enhance biodiversity, improve soil health, increase carbon sequestration in soil, trees and vegetation, improve water quality and enable farmers to be resilient in the face of climatic and market volatility.

The project would build on the success of the Healthy Landscapes for Healthy Livestock project delivered between 2019 and 2021 which has been extended in partnership with Hepburn Shire Council, the City of Greater Bendigo, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Coliban Water, Melbourne Water and the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network under the branding “Healthy Landscapes: Practical Regenerative Agricultural Communities”.

Premier’s Sustainability Awards

It was very pleasing that the Healthy Landscapes for Healthy Livestock project won the Premier’s Regional Recognition Award at the November 2021 Premier’s Sustainability Awards. An evaluation from 110 participants indicated that 100% of respondents had positively changed their land management practices as a result of attending.



Benefits

- Over 80% of land in the Macedon Ranges is in private ownership, much of which is rural land managed by lifestyle property owners and farmers. As such, rural land owners play a critical role in contributing to Council’s response to the climate emergency through actions that reduce emissions and enhance ecosystem resilience.
- Previous surveys of farmers and rural land owners determined that rural landholders desire a combination of individual advice tailored to their property, along with peer to peer learnings and information from experts. This combination is critical to achieving on-ground practice changes.

Project stage

Ready to go.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
\$270k (three years at \$90k each year)	Council provides approximately \$400k per annum on environmental program	\$270k over three years	Subject to funding



Aquatic Facility Feasibility Study Macedon Ranges Shire Council (East)

An indoor aquatic facility in the east of the Shire

About the project

Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy identified the need for a future indoor aquatic facility in the east of the shire. Currently, residents must travel to Gisborne or Kyneton to access indoor facilities. In 2013, the requested facility was identified as hosting a projected 113,000 visits per annum.

Council developed high level, draft concept plans in 2013. These plans indicated the redevelopment of the Romsey Recreation Centre to include: an Indoor 25m, six-lane pool; beach entry toddler's pool; adjoining Learn to Swim/leisure water; spa; gymnasium; program room; upgraded amenities, reception and car parking.

Funding for a feasibility study is required. This study will test the current demand for an aquatic facility in the east of the shire in the context of the wider demand and utilisation across the municipality. Subject to need it will also determine the most appropriate location and enable the development of concept plans.



Benefits

- Test the current demand/need for investment.
- Subject to need, ensure the right site and scale for an aquatic facility development.

Project stage

Feasibility study.

Total estimated project cost	Council funds	Funding sought	Timeline
\$100k for feasibility study	Significant in-kind project management costs	\$100k	Subject to funding

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