Council Plan
2021–2031 (Year Three 2023–2024)
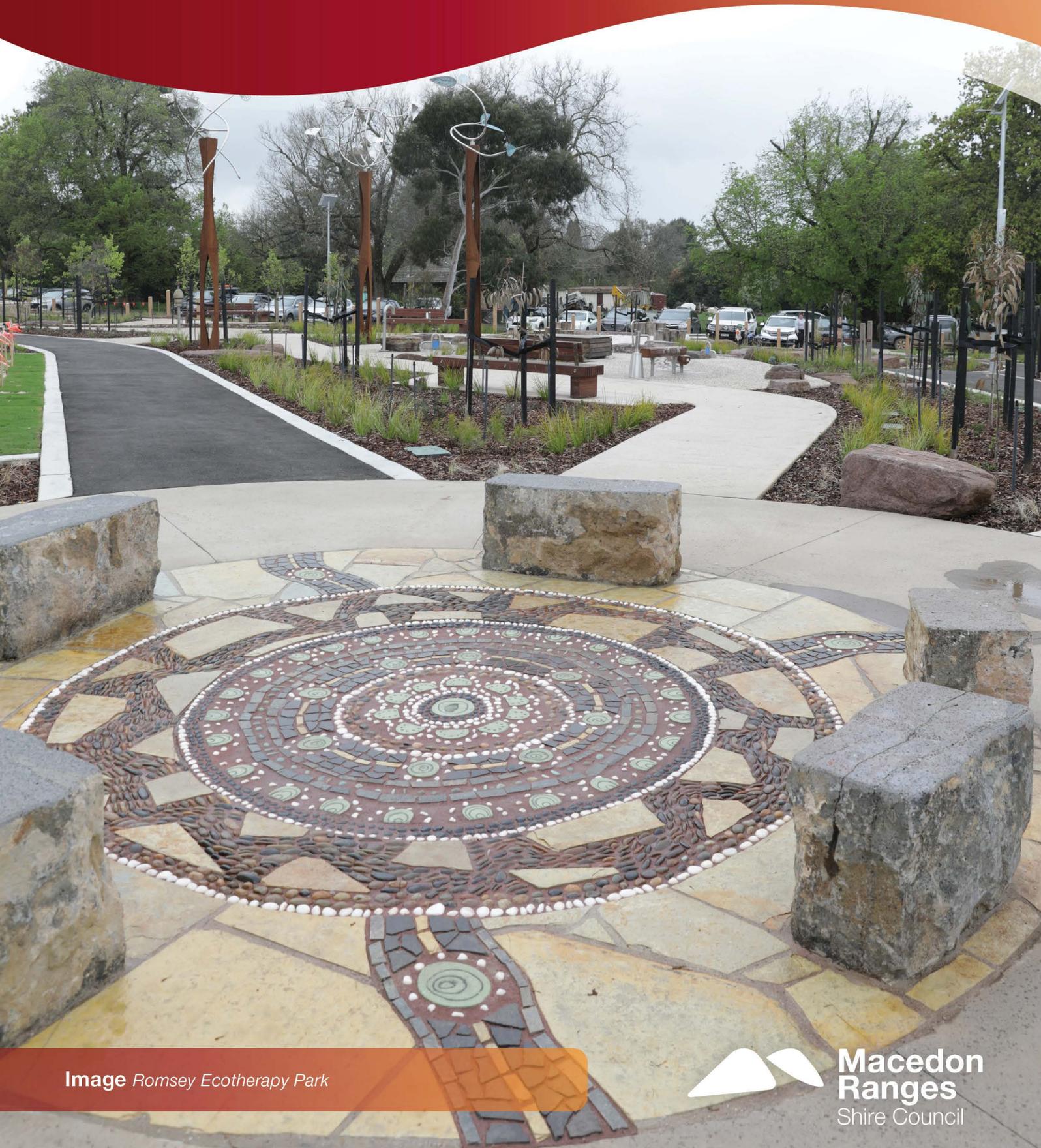
Image *Romsey Ecotherapy Park*

Macedon Ranges
Shire Council

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Bunjils nest, Reconciliation Week

Acknowledgement 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.

Contents

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Page

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How we developed our plan

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Council Plan must be prepared within the period of six months after each general election or by 30 June, whichever is later. Following the Council election in 2020, Council adopted a Council Plan on the 27 October 2021.

Each year, Council is required to update the actions that will be undertaken to assist in achieving the strategic priorities and strategic objectives of the Council Plan.

This update highlights the actions to be undertaken – Year Three 2023/24 of the Council Plan.

This Council Plan – Year Three 2023/24 was built on:

- the inclusion of multi-year actions provided as part of the Council Plan 2021-2031
- the consideration of new actions from feedback from the community and officers in progressing our services to the community
- removal of completed actions
- ensuring we meet our legislative requirements.

Council's strategic priorities were used as the basis for framing the conversations held with the Community Vision Assembly. Strong and reliable government, as a key administrative focus, was excluded from their remit discussions, on the basis that this function supports all others, and ensures appropriate compliance with our regulatory and statutory obligations.

How we used your input

In developing the Council Plan – Year Three 2023/24, Council has considered:

- the existing Council Plan
- the feedback received from the Community Vision Assembly
- community needs and aspirations for the future, as expressed in the Macedon Ranges Shire's Community Vision 2021–2031
- community input via the consultation process in November/December 2022 and the current consultation process in April/May 2023
- Council's role, and organisational capacity and capability, over the term of this plan.

Much of the new information used in updating the Council Plan 2021–2031 came from the deliberative engagement process we undertook with the Community Vision Assembly.

Council is committed to using the work produced by the Community Vision Assembly to inform our strategies and plans for the future of the Macedon Ranges Shire. Council is also committed to delivering the intent of the Local Government Act and Council's engagement policy, to strengthen the relationship with the community.

The broader shire community was provided with an opportunity for formal submissions on the plan during a statutory public consultation period from 27 April to 19 May 2023.

An annual message from the Mayor and Councillors

In October 2021, Council endorsed the Council Plan 2021-2031, based on the themes derived from the work the Community Assembly undertook in developing Council's Community Vision. Each year, Councillors must update the plan and ensure annual actions are supported via the budget to enable the Strategic Objectives of the Council Plan to be achieved. The Council Plan outlines the actions we will take, the areas where we will focus our advocacy efforts, and the issues we will address through partnerships or facilitation to enhance services. This document outlines the Year Three (2023/24) actions to report upon for Council in delivering on the Council Plan.

Building on the first two years actions, this year will see Council continue to invest in the maintenance of roads, drains, buildings and paths, including finalising our shire-wide skate park master plan, and an ongoing focus on reducing waste to landfill through the finalisation of the new circular economy education and engagement plan. We will continue our work since declaring a climate emergency by delivering actions from our Zero Net Emissions Plan for Council operations to achieve our goal of zero net emissions by 2030.

We continue to develop a Climate Emergency Response Plan which will act as guide for both Council and the community to address climate change, as we know this is imperative. We will also continue to facilitate a program of community climate change plans to drive further action across our townships, building upon the success in those towns that have already benefited from the Cool Changes program. We will also protect and enhance our biodiversity by supporting land care groups and monitoring our fauna. We will also continue to invest in and develop sustainable design in our buildings and develop a policy for Council to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the shire.

We have a number of key priority projects including the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct Stage one (MRRSP), which is due to be completed by the mid 2024, planning will continue for Stages two in 2023-24. It will deliver a 15-hectare regional park providing facilities for a range of team sport and other recreation activities, enabling improved social connections and health outcomes for the Macedon Ranges community.

Construction is planned to be finalised on the Shared Trails project (Woodend to Riddells Creek), which will deliver a 24km trail for walking, running, low-volume cycling, and commuting – linking rural landscapes, towns and heritage places. We will continue to partner with Hepburn Shire Council to develop detailed design and pre-project works for a rail trail that will run from Daylesford (from our border at Tylden) to Hanging Rock. Projects such as these will encourage active and healthy lifestyles for people of all abilities, whilst also increasing the economic benefits to the shire through tourism.

Land use planning improvements across the shire and key projects such as movement network studies, site-specific master plans, urban design, and structure plans in the towns of Kyneton, Gisborne, Romsey, Woodend and Riddells Creek will continue.

We remain committed to supporting our local businesses and tourism industry by working closely with our business community and advocating for improved telecommunications. Arts, culture and tourism have played a vital role in the recovery of our shire, with outdoor dining, events and festivals taking centre stage in our community life. These activities have provided significant support for businesses as they strive to recover from the disruptions of the past couple of years. The Autumn Festival has emerged as a major attraction for tourism, inviting

visitors to our shire to appreciate the stunning autumn leaves and everything that our villages have to offer. The Council Plan will continue to provide further funding and support for these initiatives.

In our commitment to reconciliation, we will develop a new Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan to further improve outcomes and recognition for our First Nations People. We will continue to advance indigenous reconciliation and celebrate the rich culture and traditions of First Nations People in our community. By learning from and working alongside our First Nations People, we hope to deepen our understanding and appreciation of their history, culture, and ongoing contributions to our community.

In the area of delivering strong and reliable government, maturing our approach to risk management is a priority in this plan along with a focus of information services and ways we can enhance our customer experience.

There is so much more to what Council can achieve with the community, through partnerships, and working together to deliver key action items within the plan. Every year we take into consideration the areas our community has previously highlighted as being important to you.

On behalf of the Councillors and myself, thank you for your feedback on how we are doing, and your suggestions for future work. We hope that you continue to enjoy the places and spaces where you live, work and visit; and that our Council Plan action items assist you to see how Council is working for you to achieve this.

Mayor Annette Death

June 2023

Left to right: Cr Geoff Neil, Cr Mark Ridgeway, Cr Dominic Bonanno, Cr Janet Pearce, Cr Rob Guthrie, Deputy Mayor Jennifer Anderson, Cr Anne Moore, Mayor Annette Death and Cr Bill West

What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan 2021–2031 is our strategic direction for the future of the Macedon Ranges Shire. It outlines our key priorities for the next four years, covering the term of the current elected Council, and supports the achievement of the Community Vision through planned objectives and strategies.

The *Local Government Act 2020* introduced strategic planning principles for Victorian councils, which include an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting.

This Council Plan – Year Three 2023/24 forms part of the core legislated elements of the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework.

Figure 1. Integrated Strategic Planning and Framework
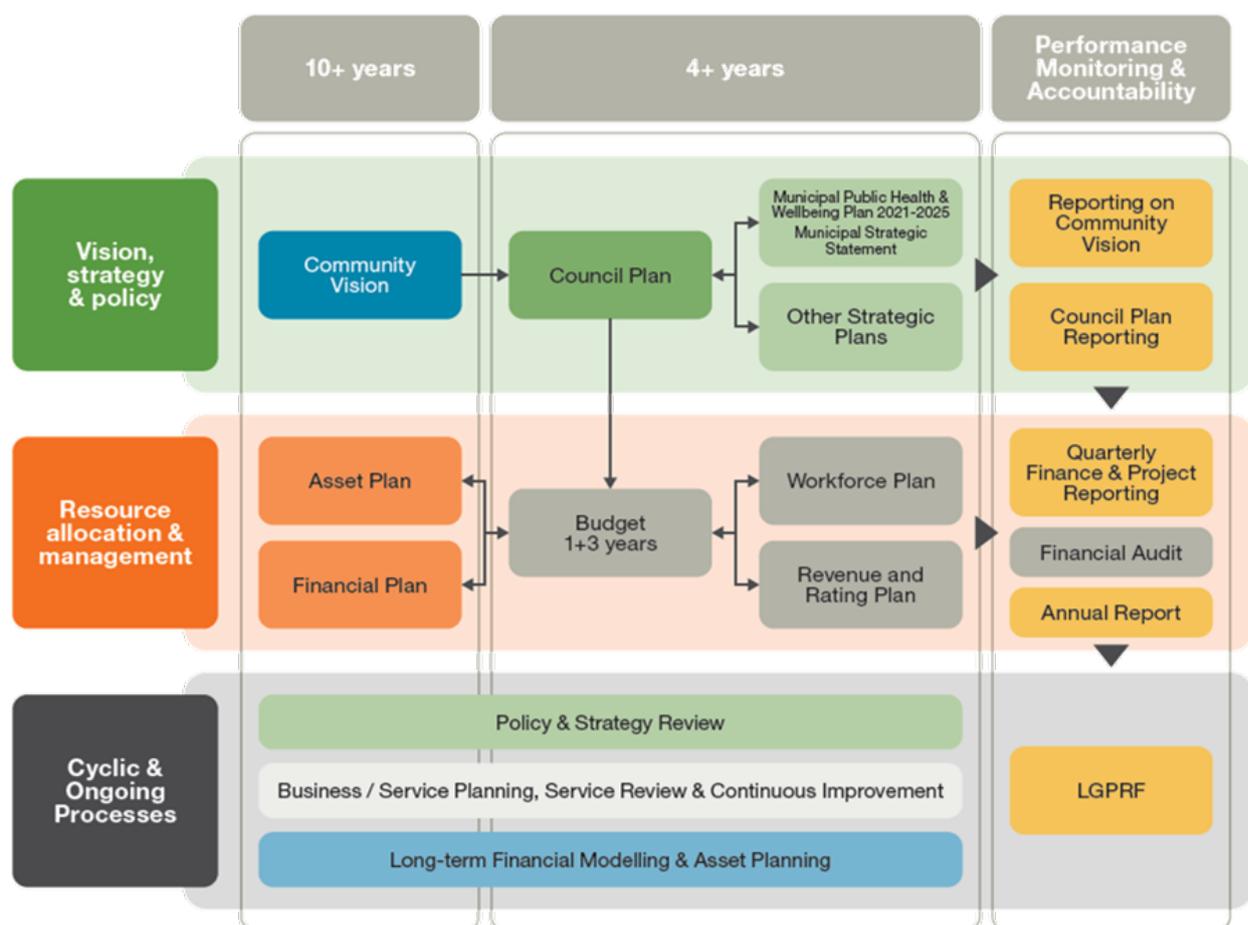
Source: Victoria State Government Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Council regularly reports its performance in its quarterly reports, the Annual Report, and performance statements, which are published on the Macedon Ranges Shire Council website. Council also prepares an annual submission on performance against a set of key performance targets as part of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework, which contributes to the Local Government Sector Performance Report, published annually by Local Government Victoria.

Our framework

The community's vision for Macedon Ranges Shire Council has been developed by the 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 this Council Plan, 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 we have used to shape this Council Plan, along with delivering strong and reliable government.

Further details on the Community Vision can be found on Council's website or by contacting Council on (03) 5422 0333.

Figure 2. Community Vision Assembly's Vision Statement and themes

The Community Vision becomes the plan

Our Council Plan has been developed to improve four key outcomes for Macedon Ranges Shire Council. The Council Plan brings together the themes of Council's Community Vision Assembly and links the themes to the strategic objectives of the Council Plan. This Council Plan – Year Three 2023/24 is required to be prepared under the Local Government Act 2020. Councillors have recognised a number of strategic objectives that will enable them to serve the community during the current Council's four-year term.

Our strategic priorities describe what we will focus our resources towards to ensure we achieve our strategic objectives.

Annual actions are identified and linked to a strategic priority, and resources are allocated annually to achieve the actions.

Finally, at year-end, our actions are measured against what was set out to be undertaken during the prior 12 months. This process forms part of our key performance indicators (KPIs).

The Council Plan process is represented in the graphic below.

Community Vision → Community Vision themes → Strategic objectives → Strategic priorities → Annual actions → Annual KPIs

Bike riders in Autumn

Strategic objectives

Community Vision – themes	Council Plan – strategic objectives
Connecting communities	
A connected community is where people have access to the services they need and are empowered to contribute, creating a sense of belonging. Our community is diverse and has a range of needs. We need to ensure we are addressing all of them. We also need to bridge any gaps between Council actions and community expectations.	We will maintain our built environment – including roads, paths, buildings, open space and other assets – in a fiscally, environmentally and socially sustainable way. This includes effective land-use planning, which has a direct impact on the liveability of our shire. We will provide support for volunteers, community groups and organisations, in recognition of their work in contributing to social connections.
Healthy environment, healthy people	
The community prioritises the protection of the natural environment and recreational facilities. There is also strong community support for initiatives to minimise our shire's impact on the earth and its resources. Resilient communities and robust economies rely entirely on a healthy environment.	We will contribute to positive health and wellbeing in our community, by proactively supporting mental health, the prevention of violence against women, healthy lifestyles for all ages and abilities, social connection and inclusion, community safety, and arts and culture. We will protect our natural environment through proactive environmental planning, advocacy, and policy to address climate change, support biodiversity and enhance water catchment quality. The Macedon Ranges Shire declared a Climate Emergency in 2021. We will take action to reduce waste in order to protect public health and the environment.
Business and tourism	
Business and tourism is about prioritising and promoting the people, resources, services and our regional identity, to ensure economic growth. Economic development is crucial for the continued growth of the economy of the Macedon Ranges Shire.	We will foster economic vitality in a way that promotes positive individual and community health outcomes, including business diversity, housing, transport, information and communication technology, and employment options. Investment attracted to the shire will be consistent with the Community Vision.
Deliver strong and reliable government	
While this was not part of the Community Vision Assembly's discussions, it is a requirement of Council's responsibility under the Act.	We will demonstrate the qualities of good governance, including a clear vision and culture, transparency, respect, consistency, accountability and responsiveness.

Strategic priorities

Strategic objectives	Strategic priorities
Connecting communities	• Improve connectivity and movement, and provide transport choices to the community, including walking trails and bike paths • Integrate land-use planning, and revitalise and protect the identity and character of the shire • Provide well-designed, fit-for-purpose, multi-use open spaces and infrastructure for the community to connect, engage and participate in a financially sustainable way • Target community needs through development programs and grants • Continue to deliver improved outcomes for and recognition of our First Nations People • Promote a more inclusive community by supporting community groups and vulnerable groups • Explore opportunities for affordable and social housing in the shire
Healthy environment, healthy people	• Protect the natural environment and enhance biodiversity • Lessen the severity of climate change, through actions that enable Council and the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions • Improve the quality of recycling, minimise the generation of waste and establish alternatives to landfill disposal • Provide opportunities to experience open space and bushland reserves • Improve the management of water, including flooding risk, water quality of creeks and waterways, and the efficient use of water • Maintain systems and capacity to manage and respond to emergency events • Encourage active and healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities • Engage families to promote the importance of early childhood education and health • Support our community to ensure better access and connection for facilities and services • Assist to improve mental wellbeing within the community
Business and tourism	• Encourage economic vitality (including tourism, agribusiness and local employment options) • Support local industry sectors that align with our vision and strategies • Support small business and the local economy • Engage with emerging technology solutions and initiatives to increase the liveability of the shire
Deliver strong and reliable government	• Ensure sustainable financial management and the strategic allocation of resources, to deliver planned infrastructure and services • Enhance strategy, policy and plan development, and identify alignment to allow for prioritisation of services that are efficient, well planned, accessible and meet community needs • Lead advocacy engagement and enhance relationships with all tiers of government and key stakeholders • Enhance customer experience through the transformation of our services, to ensure they are easy to access, and provide seamless transactional and interactional experiences • Support transparent and evidence-based decision making through sharing Council data and clear reporting on our measures of success to the community

Council Plan – Year Three 2023/24 actions

Strategic objective 1. Connecting communities

We will maintain our built environment – including roads, paths, buildings, open space and other assets in a fiscally, environmentally and socially sustainable way. This includes effective land-use planning, which has a direct impact on the liveability of our shire.

We will provide support for volunteers, community groups and organisations, in recognition of their work in contributing to social connections.

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
Improve connectivity and movement, and provide transport choices to the community, including walking trails and bike paths	• Continue to improve continuous accessible paths of travel to key destinations, such as recreation and community facilities, through the funding of the Footpath Construction Program	Deliver
	• Complete the construction of Stages 1 and 2 Macedon Ranges Shared Trails project by 30 June 2024	Deliver
	• In partnership with Hepburn Shire Council, advocate to the Victorian Government for support to undertake preconstruction planning for the Daylesford to Hanging Rock Rail Trail project	Advocate
	• Finalise the review of the Kyneton Movement Network Study (2018) to develop and guide the planning of future infrastructure requirements (multi-year)	Deliver
	• Continue to advocate to the Victorian Government for improvements to bus and rail public transport services, with a focus to identify township issues throughout the year	Advocate
	• Finalise the review and update the 2018 Shire Wide Footpath Plan	Deliver
	• Continue to advocate for increased State Government funding for supervised school crossings and consider alternative safe crossing methodologies for schools	Advocate
Integrate land-use planning, and revitalise and protect the identity and character of the shire	• Progress the Kyneton Town Centre Urban Design Framework to Council for decision, and consider implementation into the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme	Deliver
	• Following community consultation of the Draft Gisborne Futures Project, (incorporating the Gisborne Structure Plan, Neighbourhood Character Study and Town Centre Urban Design Framework Plan), present the final draft of the Gisborne Futures project to Council for a decision and consider implementation into the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme	Deliver
	• Following community consultation of the Draft Romsey Structure Plan, present the final draft of the Romsey Structure Plan to Council for decision, and consider implementation into the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.	Deliver

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
	• Implement the Riddells Creek Structure Plan and preparation of the Riddells Creek Movement and Network Strategy through consideration of planning scheme amendments that are proposed in line with the Structure Plan, to respond to the township's population growth and associated impacts	Facilitate/Deliver
	• Continue to progress the Macedon Ranges Shire Thematic Environmental History to Council decision and consider implementation into the Macedon Ranges Planning scheme.	Deliver
	• Progress the Heritage Strategy to guide Council's priorities for further heritage protection	Deliver
	• Finalise the review of Council's Developer Contributions Plans (Gisborne and Romsey), and consider any future changes to the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme recommended by its findings	Deliver
Provide well-designed, fit-for-purpose, multi-use open spaces and infrastructure where the community can connect, engage and participate in a financially responsible way	• Progress the preparation of a new Open Space Strategy and consider implementation into the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme	Deliver
	• Finalise the construction on stage 1 of the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct project and continue advocacy for funding towards future stage delivery	Deliver/Advocate
	• Commence stage 2 of the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Complex design and documentation, including schematic design, stakeholder/community consultation, detailed design and tender document preparation for construction in the future.	Deliver
	• Deliver the annual capital works program within budget	Deliver
	• Complete the Macedon Ranges Shire Wide Skate Park Master Plan, to provide prioritised strategic guidance, regarding the future renewal, upgrade and new facility requirements for the shire	Partner/Deliver
	• Continue planning for the Gisborne Skate Park upgrade in conjunction with the recommendations from the shire wide skate park master plan	Deliver
	• Commence work with the State Government to scope and plan works for the Romsey Skate Park in conjunction with the recommendations from the shire wide skate park master plan	Partner/Facilitate
	• Undertake a masterplan of the Lancefield Park Recreation Reserve	Deliver
Target community needs through development programs and grants	• Promote community centres, neighbourhood houses, and their programs to encourage community participation	Deliver
	• Continue Council's community grants programs (the Community Funding Scheme and the Small Projects Grants) to support community groups to deliver community, cultural and environmental projects, and enhance community places	Deliver
	• Collaborate with Loddon Mallee partners and across Council to coordinate, support, engage and recognise volunteers	Partner/Deliver

Macedon
Ranges
Shire Council

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
	• Promote the library programs of the Goldfields Library Corporation to engage the community • Contribute financially to the Goldfields Library Corporation to undertake design and quantity surveyor plans for the Gisborne Library.	Partner/Deliver Partner/Deliver
Continue to deliver improved outcomes for and recognition of our First Nations People	• Continue to advance Indigenous reconciliation, working with First Nations People and broader community on implementing Council's current Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan • Celebrate and participate in National Reconciliation Week, by providing opportunities to build and maintain relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians • Continue to recognise Indigenous culture at Macedon Ranges Shire Kindergartens • Work with an experienced First Nations consultant to engage internal and external stakeholders in developing a new Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for Council • Form a Cultural Advisory Group made of up representatives of the Traditional Owner Organisations to assist with the creation of the Stretch RAP and provide ongoing guidance to Council regarding its implementation	Partner/Deliver Partner/Deliver Deliver Partner/Deliver Partner/Deliver
Promote a more inclusive community by supporting community groups and vulnerable groups	• Continue to support targeted initiatives, programs and activities for young people of diverse backgrounds that enable them to express their identities, such as raising the Rainbow Flag on International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia, program enhancements to Youth spaces and increasing engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People in services across the Shire • Continue to demonstrate leadership in advancing gender equality, through implementation of Council's Gender Equality Action Plan, including delivery of year two actions • Oversee delivery and collaboration with the community to facilitate approved Council recognition days (or weeks). • Commission and promote the availability of a designated modular change room at the Gisborne Aquatic Centre, which enables Council to meet Child Safe requirements, and improve service provision and accessibility • Provide information and guidance on available external funding opportunities to support sustainability of community programs delivered by Neighbourhood Houses, and continue to advocate to the Victorian Government for increased funding • Implement year three of Village Hubs – a project to give older people the opportunity to connect for social activities and mutual support	Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver Advocate Deliver

Macedon Ranges
Shire Council

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
Explore opportunities for affordable and social housing in the shire	• Implement Council's updated Affordable Housing Policy • Continue to work with the Victorian Government to increase supply of affordable housing, including social housing, in the shire • Implement the Loddon Mallee Housing Revitalisation Strategy and actions as relevant to the Macedon Ranges Shire • Continue to work with housing providers to seek Victorian Government funding to renew and, where appropriate, expand Council-owned or managed social housing stock	Deliver Advocate/Partner Advocate/Partner Advocate/Partner

Strategic objective 2. Healthy environment, healthy people

We will contribute to positive health and wellbeing in our community by proactively supporting mental health, the prevention of violence against women, healthy lifestyles for all ages and abilities, social connection and inclusion, volunteers, community safety, and arts and culture.

We will protect our natural environment through proactive environmental planning, advocacy and policy to address climate change, support biodiversity and enhance water catchment quality. The Macedon Ranges Shire declared a Climate Emergency in 2021.

We will take action to reduce waste in order to protect public health and the environment.

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
Protect the natural environment and enhance biodiversity	• Continue to deliver the actions for the Biodiversity Strategy 2018 including community education and engagement program and biolink plan	Deliver
	• Continue the Healthy Landscapes – Practical Regenerative Agricultural Communities project	Deliver
	• Implement priority actions outlined in the Roadside Conservation Management Plan 2021 including annual roadside weed program, complete the Ute Guide to the Roadside Conservation Management Plan and design and install first round of significance roadside vegetation signs	Deliver
	• Continue to protect, preserve and enhance biodiversity on Council land, through implementation of Environmental Management Plans, including pest plant and animal management, tree assessment and mitigation, ecological burning, and liaison with community	Deliver
	• Protect and enhance biodiversity on private land through the facilitation of local biolink action and support for Landcare groups and networks	Facilitate/Deliver
	• Continue annual biodiversity monitoring program including fauna surveys through the Bird Blitz, Nest Box Monitoring, Spotlighting Surveys, and flora surveys for Clover Glycine and Slender Tick-trefoil	Deliver
	• Continue to advocate to the Victorian Government for Barrm Birrm to become a State Park due to its significant flora and fauna	Advocate
Lessen the severity of climate change, through actions that enable Council and the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	• Adopt a Climate Emergency Response Plan to be a guide for both Council and the community to address climate change	Deliver
	• Deliver the first year of Council's Zero Net Emissions Plan for Operations to guide our efforts in achieving zero net emissions by 2030	Facilitate/Deliver
	• Continue to undertake environmental upgrades to Council buildings to enhance energy efficiency and environmental performance	Deliver

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
	• Incorporate the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles into all new Council building projects	Deliver
	• Continue to provide support to community in the implementation of climate change action plans across the shire's townships	Deliver
	• Investigate solar power generation to offset emissions from council operations	Deliver
	• Develop a policy on Council support for electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the shire and seek funding opportunities for public chargers in Gisborne, Romsey, Riddells Creek and Malmsbury.	Facilitate/Deliver
	• Participate in the Central Victoria Community Carbon Offset Pilot Project to explore options for future carbon offsets for Council operations.	Facilitate/Deliver
Improve the quality of recycling, minimise the generation of waste and establish alternatives to landfill disposal	• Continue to promote the use of reusable nappies through the Maternal and Child Health Service	Facilitate/Deliver
	• Continue to resource and fund the implementation of the actions identified in the Waste and Resource Recovery Management Strategy 2021–2026	Deliver/Partner
	• Continue to decrease tonnes of waste to landfill per capita	Deliver
	• Finalise and start implementation of the new circular economy education and engagement plan.	Deliver
Provide opportunities to experience open space and bushland reserves	• Complete and adopt a revised Environmental Management Plan and Infrastructure Master Plan for Stanley Park	Deliver
	• Complete repairs of the Black Hill Reserve Trail Network	Deliver
	• Continue implementation of recommended master plan actions at the Gisborne, Kyneton and Malmsbury Botanic Gardens	Deliver
	• Provide opportunities for the community to experience open space and bushland reserves and learn about nature via monthly environment e-news and seasonal environment event program	Deliver
	• Complete the Woodend Racecourse reserve Master Plan	Deliver
Improve the management of water, including flooding risk, water quality of creeks and waterways, and the efficient use of water	• Continue priority waterway restoration works that implement adopted waterway environmental plans.	Deliver
	• Implement actions in the Woodend Five Mile Creek Master Plan and Romsey Five Mile Creek Master Plan	Deliver

Macedon Ranges
Shire Council

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
Maintain systems, capacity and capability to manage, respond to and lead recovery after emergency events	• Continue to leverage partnerships with key agencies and community groups to improve response to and recovery from emergency events	Facilitate/Partner
	• Contribute to Municipal Emergency Management Planning, learning from emergency management responses to improve future responses	Facilitate/Partner
	• Identify nominated potential relief centres/community support locations in each town, and implement a process for the annual review of the planning, readiness and resilience of these locations, and any emergency supplies deployed at these locations	Partner/Deliver
Encourage active and healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities	• Optimise accessibility and usage of open space and facilities, through a program of development and renewals for open space, playgrounds and sporting infrastructure	Deliver
	• Work in partnership with health, education and community organisations, including sporting clubs and community groups, to enhance opportunities for improved health, and participation in passive and active recreation	Partner
	• Continue to deliver the actions for the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2025	Deliver
	• Continue to deliver the 2023-24 actions for the Disability Action Plan 2021–2025	
	• Continue to deliver the actions for Elevate – Council's Youth Strategy 2018–2028	Deliver
	• Continue to deliver the actions for Participate – Council's Positive Ageing Plan 2020–2025	Deliver
		Deliver
Engage families to promote the importance of early childhood education and health	• Continue to partner with the Department of Education and Training to support current education reforms, such as the rollout of three-year-old kindergarten in the Macedon Ranges Shire and School Readiness Funding	Facilitate/Partner
	• Continue to provide and support access to quality kindergarten programs across the Shire	Deliver
	• Improve social connection for children and families with barriers to social engagement	Facilitate
	• Continue to deliver actions for Council's Early Years Plan – CREATE	Deliver
	• Continue to strengthen municipal planning of early years services	Facilitate/Partner
	• Explore feasibility of Macedon Ranges Shire becoming a "Child Friendly Community"	Facilitate/Deliver
	• Continue to deliver maternal and child health, and early childhood services and programs, including immunisation, breast feeding support, sleep settling and supported playgroups	Deliver
Support our community to ensure better access and connection for facilities and services	• Continue to monitor the impacts of aged care reforms and work with service providers to advocate for the needs of older people.	Advocate

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
Assist to improve mental wellbeing within the community	• Continue to increase community awareness and resilience in relation to mental health, through initiatives such as Live4Life, the primary school based mental health and wellbeing model and support to Macedon Ranges Suicide Prevention Action Group	Facilitate
	• Support and promote mental health by continued training of mental health first aid sessions through Live4Life	Facilitate/Deliver
	• Continue to work with the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments to advocate for the establishment of a youth mental health service in the Macedon Ranges Shire	Advocate/Partner

Strategic objective 3. Business and tourism

We will foster economic vitality in a way that promotes positive individual and community health outcomes, including business diversity, housing, transport, information and communication technology, and employment options. Investment attracted to the shire will be consistent with the Community Vision.

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
Encourage economic vitality (including tourism, agribusiness, buy local and local employment options)	• Implement key actions contained in Year 2 and 3 of Council's Economic Development Strategy 2021–2031 • Progress the Events Strategy 2021–2025, including ongoing development and delivery of the Autumn Festival • Continue delivering actions from the Arts and Culture Strategy 2018–2028 • Identify and support initiatives that involve participatory arts practices • Continue to support the development of local festivals, events and cultural activities across the shire • Continue to support the community and businesses to create their own festive season decorations • Seek external funding to improve signage/ way finding within our town business centres	Implement/Facilitate Deliver Deliver Deliver Partner/Deliver Partner Advocate/Deliver
Support local industry sectors that align with our Community Vision and strategies	• Continue to support local business and tourism associations (BATAs) and industry-sector peak bodies, and look to have geographic and industry-sector coverage • Continue to increase the engagement of the business community with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Business Awards • Continue to promote local purchasing and the circular economy • Attract investment in the region by actively supporting the Invest Loddon-Mallee website	Partner Deliver Deliver Advocate

Support small business and the local economy	• Consolidate delivery obligations under the Small Business Friendly Charter:
	   o Deliver 14-day payments to local suppliers
	   o Engage with businesses
	   o Streamline business applications
	   o Help set up and support local business networks
	• Support the local economy by encouraging procurement to be undertaken locally
		Deliver
		
		Advocate

Engage with emerging technology solutions and initiatives to increase the liveability of the shire	• Continue to advocate for improved telecommunications infrastructure, with a focus on blackspots	Advocate

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

	• Actively participate in government reviews and initiatives to increase provision of service and awareness of issues	Advocate/partner
	• Advocate for funding to support the investigation and provision of Wi-Fi in Shire townships to increase telecommunications connectivity	Advocate

Strategic objective 4. Deliver strong and reliable government

We will demonstrate the qualities of good governance, including a clear vision and culture, transparency, respect, consistency, accountability and responsiveness.

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
Ensure sustainable financial management and the strategic allocation of resources to deliver planned infrastructure and services	• Finalise the implementation of a new Risk Management Framework • Continue to review and update long-term financial and infrastructure planning to guide our budget decisions, to ensure they are responsible and sustainable • Meet financial reporting requirements, in line with the Local Government Victoria framework	Deliver Deliver Deliver
Enhance strategy, policy and plan development, and identify alignment to allow for prioritisation of services that are efficient, well planned, accessible and meet community needs	• Conduct the 2023 Employee Engagement 'Pulse' survey, and integrate responses to feedback into organisational plans and strategies • Continue to provide appropriate training and development of staff to ensure continuous improvement and access to the required skills • Finalise the review of Local Law 10, which provides the procedures for the administration of all Council's Local Laws • Review Council's current software providers to determine if an enterprise solution is available to meet Council's needs	Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver
Lead advocacy engagement and enhance relationships with all tiers of government and key stakeholders	• Continue to actively participate in community and government networks and regional alliances • Continue to actively meet local members and key decision makers to influence positive outcomes for the Macedon Ranges community	Partner/Facilitate Partner/Facilitate
Enhance customer experience through the transformation of our services, to ensure they are easy to access and provide user-friendly experiences	• Implement actions from the review of the Customer Request System, with the aim of improving our customer service and response times for ratepayers • Continue to implement the Community Engagement Policy • Continue to improve our digital platforms, ensuring they are fully accessible for all residents and ratepayers • Implement Council's newly developed Customer Charter to further enhance our service excellence to the community • Continue to implement the actions of the Information Services Digital Strategy so they are delivered in accordance with the yearly Work Plan	Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver
Support transparent and evidence-based decision making, through sharing Council data and clear	• Continue to comply with legislative external reporting and disclosure obligations, and ensure internal reporting frameworks are delivered to demonstrate transparency to the community • Finalise the Community Engagement Guidelines	Deliver Deliver

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2023/24	Council role
reporting on our measures of success to the community	• Report on the delivery of Year 2 actions of the Council Plan	Deliver

How we will measure success

Strategic indicators provide Council with measures to monitor how we are progressing towards our outcomes. Council's level of influence over the result of each measure is shown, as often Council does not control the results, but seeks to influence with advocacy, partnerships and the community.

Connecting communities	If we are successful, we will see:	Outcome measures
	Delivery of the annual footpath construction program	Delivery of a minimum 80% of the projects included in the 2023/24 budget are completed
	Delivery of the annual capital works program	Improve capital works delivery completion rate to 80% by 30 June 2024, with a stretch target of 85%. This will reduce carry-forward of projects and improve capital works delivery completion in the future
	The new Gender Equality Action Plan being used across the organisation	Implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022/25: Year 1 actions implemented and Year 2 actions progressing. Gender Impact Assessment conducted, as part of the development process for all significant facing policies, strategies and plans
	Collaborate with Loddon Mallee partners and across Council to coordinate, support, engage and recognise volunteers	Development and provision of induction, training opportunities and recognition activities during International Volunteer Day.
	Increased engagement and participation at events which celebrate LGBTIQA+ people, including but not limited to raising Rainbow Flag event for International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), youth focused initiatives and events held in partnership with key stakeholders	Active partnerships with key organisations and community stakeholder resulting in a minimum of 6 activities and events throughout the year, including but not limited to the LGBTIQA+ Dance Party, Flag raising and ongoing engagement of the IDAHOBIT working group

Healthy environment, healthy people	If we are successful, we will see:	Outcome measures
	A reduction in Council's corporate net-zero emissions	Council emissions in 2023/24 will reduce from the previous year
	A decrease in tonnes of waste, with an increase in kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill per capita	An increase in the percentage of waste diverted from landfill
	Deliver Year 1 Actions of the Zero Net Emission Plan for Council Operations	Year 1 actions of the plan delivered

Business and tourism	If we are successful, we will see:	Outcome measures
	Council continuing to meet with business networks	Hold at least four meetings during the year
	A commitment to being a small business friendly Council	Implement goals of the Small Business Friendly Charter within 12 months
	Delivery of the Autumn Festival	Increase in business and community events registered as part of the festival

Deliver strong and reliable government	If we are successful, we will see:	Outcome measures
	Council continuing to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020	Monitor and report on the Council Plan actions each quarter
	A review of Council policies and frameworks	Implement a new Risk Management Framework
	Our staff completing relevant training to ensure continuous improvement	100% of Council staff complete required online training
	The implementation of the Community Engagement Policy, which will strengthen community engagement practice and consultation with the community	Finalise the development and implement the Community Engagement Guidelines Increase in community satisfaction with community consultation and engagement

Evaluation and reporting

Our Council Plan 2021–2031 consists of a range of actions that will contribute to the achievement of our priorities and vision.

The Action Plan shows only a small part of what we will do in the coming year, with many other activities contributing to achieving the Macedon Ranges Shire Community Vision 2021–2031.

Council regularly reports its performance in its quarterly reports, Annual Report and performance statements, which are published on the Macedon Ranges Shire Council website.

It is the role of the Mayor to ensure that Council reports, at least once a year, on the implementation of this Council Plan. We commit to communicating our progress, both positive and negative, to the community through our many communication channels, including media releases, our website and social media.

V/Line railway heading towards Woodend Station

Strategic planning principles

The Local Government Act 2020 contains a number of key requirements in Section 89 regarding the need for a Council Plan to be prepared in accordance with the outlined strategic planning principles. The following summary outlines the correlation between those principles and this Council Plan.

In terms of needing an integrated approach to planning, the Council Plan has been updated to reflect the new Community Vision, which was developed through a deliberative engagement process by the Macedon Ranges Community Vision Assembly. The Assembly's vision and themes have been incorporated into this document. In addition, a number of the strategies that the Assembly developed have either been incorporated into the Council Plan as new items, or have enhanced existing strategies.

In developing an integrated approach between the outputs from the deliberative engagement process and the key strategic documents of Council, it became evident that many of the goals identified in this process could not be achieved without effective correlation with the Budget document. This key strategic document outlines the funds that will be made available to deliver outcomes, and many of the ideas out of the Community Vison Assembly will require further assessment, evaluation, prioritisation and funding before they can progress.

To ensure there is integration, those items are included as a separate section of this Council Plan for consideration in future budget processes when funds are allocated.

Romsey Ecotherapy Park

Outlined within the next section of this Council Plan are those items that will require further evaluation in regards to the resources required for their effective implementation. The Community Vision Assembly has developed some ideas that Council is not currently resourced to deliver.

In order to ensure clarity and transparency regarding those items, they are identified within this document for future consideration. This will ensure that matters relating to the resources required for their effective implementation can be taken into account and funding requirements identified, before they are considered for progression.

The ideas of the Community Vision Assembly that cannot be completed without additional resources need to be further evaluated and considered, in order to ensure that resources can be allocated and those ideas are not constrained by other factors.

The separate identification of these ideas and their referral to Council for further evaluation allows for other matters to be considered, such as alignment or otherwise with legislation and existing policy, constraints to delivery, and the role already played by others in helping deliver outcomes for our community.

A Community Vision Assembly idea may transform from seeking Council to be initially responsible, to working with existing partners and/or advocating for an outcome from another organisation.

This Council Plan contains a number of specific actions for which monitoring of their progress will occur in Council's quarterly report.

Consistent with Council's past practice, it is also intended to review the Council Plan annually to ensure annual actions are reviewed and set, and that strategies can be conferred to be in line with any changing circumstances.

Resources are provided by Council each year to ensure business-as-usual activities continue and to deliver new initiatives that are specifically highlighted for funding.

Therefore, where an idea is outside the capacity of current organisational resources, consideration will need to be given to prioritising that idea within the financial constraints that exist.

There are not unlimited funds for new initiatives as Council is largely reliant on revenue from rates, which are restricted by a rate cap.

Children playing at Riddells Creek Kindergarten

Community Vision Assembly focus ideas for future evaluation

Consistent with Section 90 of the Local Government Act 2020, the Council Plan must be reviewed in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices. This Council Plan reflects the outcomes of the deliberative engagement process that has been conducted, and integrates the vision and themes of the Community Vision Assembly.

It also reflects the Assembly's strategies, and seeks to enhance and reinforce the existing strategies in the Council Plan.

Council needs to ensure that what we set out to achieve is able to be resourced, and continues to reflect priorities as external and internal factors change.

The following are ideas of the Assembly that will be considered in future annual action plans of the plan. Those ideas that could not be completed within Council's existing resources are outlined below, both for the purpose of transparency, and for referral to future processes that evaluate and then provide funding for the delivery of those outcomes.

Connecting communities

- Implement local transport options for towns not currently serviced (such as similar to Gisbus and Woodend Flexiride)
- Greater consideration to the connection of developments to existing community services and infrastructure, given the increase in population in the coming decades
- Signage for amenities to aid different demographics of the community
- Cycling pathways, outdoor exercise equipment, sporting facilities, signage with distance and approximated timeframes, and gradients for all walking trails, making them accessible for everyone
- Ensure amenities are immaculate

Healthy environment, healthy people

- Greater commitment to community health programs and initiatives
- Access to health services locally for those who can't afford it
- Better connection between services (include 24 hours) and Council as a conduit (for example, for domestic violence)
- Reduce the stigma associated with mental ill-health, suicide and suicide prevention, making it easier for people to seek help and support, especially concentrating on the impact of COVID-19
- Respond to socioeconomic disadvantage and equity
- 'Diversity' will come from equitable processes, such as mandatory inclusion of low-cost housing and community facilities, and upgrades to public transport in all new housing estate developments
- Services to address mental health issues
- Mental health connection to our economic groups of where we go for that financial assistance – how do we get the messaging out?
- Prioritise car-use reduction through an inter-town and intra-town network of safe walking and cycling tracks, and effective, easy and cheap public transport

- Consideration of innovative closed-loop resource use (for example, the local biodiesel facility using waste oil from within the region to produce fuel)
- Regulations for new developments, such as a 7-star rating, in the planning process
- New subdivisions to include the capacity for solar
- Council to provide native plants (bird/bee/butterfly attractants) for local residents to plant at home
- Continue the focus on Biolinks revegetation with greater investment required
- Defined walking and cycling trails to protect the surrounding environment within flora and fauna areas
- Emissions from agriculture/livestock or potential resource recovery (for example, could proactively work with a university for cattle CO_2 methane reduction or reuse as an energy source)
- Prioritise solar and wind power
- Protection against urban sprawl development on large farming areas
- A clear concise environment plan (long term)
- Achieve 100% renewable energy by Council, residents and business
- Council to transition to electric transport by 2030 and implement an electric vehicle policy for all operators in the shire

Business and tourism

- Local online shopping interface promoted and managed by Council
- Showcase local produce, products and services within and beyond the region
- In lieu of outdated business awards, fortnightly spotlight on local businesses, community groups and individuals, to showcase local activity. This could be online, but also in local print media, including small-town-specific publications and in local community facilities, such as the library
- Reduce friction between Council and the business community by reducing red tape, permits and fees, and simplifying processes
- A business directory
- Provide resources and facilities for small businesses, such as a tool library and training
- Council should facilitate innovation and development, without the pressure to invent them itself
- Community-led and driven activities to engage residents and encourage a local focus with support of Council (for example, waiving venue hire fees)
- Attracting diverse industries (and their jobs) to the region through incentives, including a reduction in bureaucracy and offering rated deductions over the first few years
- Council should audit developments prior to approval to see if development really 'needs' to be approved (for example, are they fit for purpose, and why approve development for four shops when there are already nine empty shops?)
- Blueprint developments – communication of what's needed, and better access to development applications and information

Deliver strong and reliable government

- Community-triggered review of Council decisions, more deliberative engagement