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Bunjil's 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 Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

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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 Four 2024/25 of the Council Plan.

This Council Plan – Year Four 2024/25 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 Four 2024/25, 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 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.

Council looks forward to hearing more from the community about what has been developed from the deliberative process.

From the Chief Executive Officer

I am pleased to present this year's Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Four), which outlines proposed strategic priorities relevant to the Budget 2024-25 and represents a fourth financial year of this key guiding document, first endorsed in October 2021.

The Council Plan progresses themes derived from the Community Assembly's development of Council's Community Vision. This work and other key Council documents – including the Financial Plan and Asset Plan – are up for review by the end of October 2025, to ensure that we evaluate what we currently have in place and potentially identify opportunities for improvement.

We made significant headway on strategic priorities identified in 2023-24, and we'll look to continue building on that momentum through a range of additional or ongoing priorities identified for this financial year.

Actions and outcomes are detailed throughout this plan, but some specific actions include:

- Progressing the Macedon Ranges Shared Trails project between Woodend and Riddells Creek to completion for 30 December 2025 and continuing to advocate for external funding support for planning works to enable the Daylesford to Hanging Rock Rail Trail project, in partnership with Hepburn Shire Council.
- Following the adoption of the draft Romsey and Gisborne Structure Plans, commence their implementation including introducing the protected settlement boundary, and progressing associated plans.
- Advocating for funding of Stage 3 of the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct.re

In addition to the above, there are a range of key strategies, policies and plans that Council will either be reviewing, developing for the first time, or finalising based on work already started in 2023-24. This includes examples such as Council's Heritage Strategy, , Lancefield Park Recreation Reserve Master Plan, and Open Space Strategy.

All of these valuable community-driven outputs are guided by – and attributed to – our four strategic objectives: *Connecting communities; Healthy environment, healthy people; Business and tourism; and Deliver strong and reliable government*. We're continuing to work to maintain our built environment, protect our natural environment, provide support to our valuable community groups and volunteers, enable our local economy to diversify and grow, and demonstrate good governance through our systems, practices and culture.

On behalf of myself and Councillors, thank you for your continual feedback and support as a community, to ensure that we're delivering on your behalf and to hold us to account. We've already made some great achievements and progress in the time this current Council Plan has been in place, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and despite the challenges faced here and globally, particularly in relation to increasing cost of living pressures and natural disasters. I look forward to what's to come in this financial year, through this document, and beyond.

Bernie O'Sullivan

Chief Executive Officer

May 2024



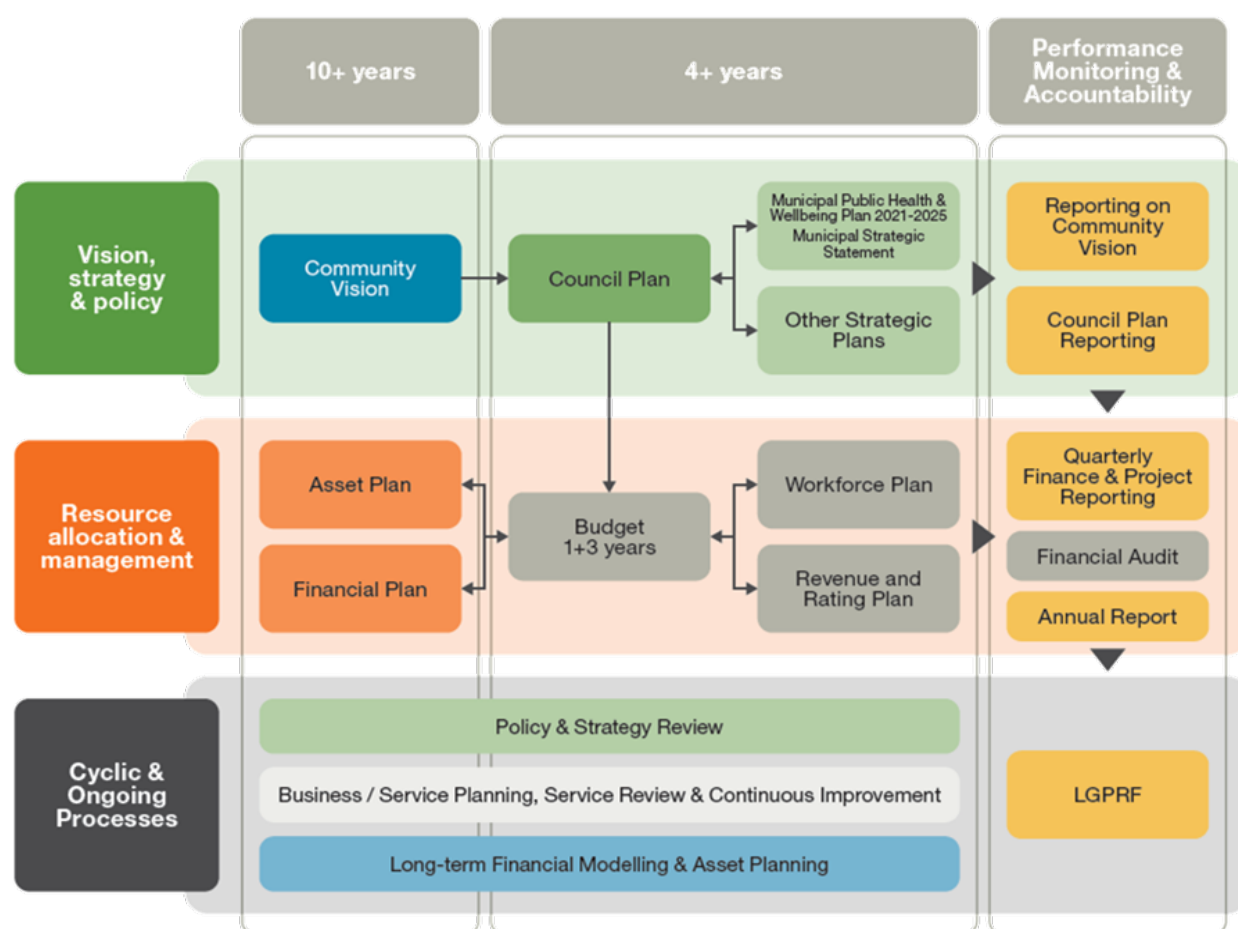
What is the Council Plan?

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 Four 2024/25 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 Four 2024/25 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.



Bike riders in Autumn

Strategic objectives

Community Vision – themes	Council Plan – strategic objectives
Connecting communities	
<p>A connected community is where people have access to the services they need and are empowered to contribute, creating a sense of belonging.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>We will provide support for volunteers, community groups and organisations, in recognition of their work in contributing to social connections.</p>
Healthy environment, healthy people	
<p>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.</p> <p>Resilient communities and robust economies rely entirely on a healthy environment.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We will take action to reduce waste in order to protect public health and the environment.</p>
Business and tourism	
<p>Business and tourism is about prioritising and promoting the people, resources, services and our regional identity, to ensure economic growth.</p> <p>Economic development is crucial for the continued growth of the economy of the Macedon Ranges Shire.</p>	<p>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.</p>
Deliver strong and reliable government	
<p>While this was not part of the Community Vision Assembly's discussions, it is a requirement of Council's responsibility under the Act.</p>	<p>We will demonstrate the qualities of good governance, including a clear vision and culture, transparency, respect, consistency, accountability and responsiveness.</p>

Strategic priorities

Strategic objectives	Strategic priorities
Connecting communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Four 2024/25 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 2024/25	Council role
Improve connectivity and movement, and provide transport choices to the community, including walking trails and bike paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the construction of the Macedon Ranges Shared Trails project towards completion by 30 December 2025 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 to the Victorian Government for improvements to bus and rail public transport services, with a focus to identify township issues throughout the year Continue to advocate for increased State Government funding for supervised school crossings and consider alternative safe crossing methodologies for schools 	Deliver Advocate Advocate Advocate
Integrate land-use planning, and revitalise and protect the identity and character of the shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the Kyneton Town Centre Urban Design Framework to Council for decision Following the adoption of the draft Gisborne Futures Structure Plan commence the implementation process including the introduction of the protected settlement boundary associated changes to the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme Following the adoption of the draft Gisborne Futures Structure Plan, continue to finalise the draft Gisborne Futures Urban Design Framework Plan and Neighbourhood Character Study to guide future development and investment in public realm improvements Following the adoption of the draft Romsey Structure Plan, commence the implementation process including the introduction of the protected settlement boundary and associated changes to the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme. Finalise Council's Heritage Strategy to guide Council's priorities for further heritage protection Investigate options to progress delivery of a framework plan for Kyneton South 	Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2024/25	Council role
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the preparation of a new Open Space Strategy towards adoption. Advocate for funding of the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct for Stage 3. Complete stage 2 of the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct design, documentation and tender preparation Commence construction of Stage 2 of the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct Deliver the annual capital works program within budget Undertake a feasibility for the best location for a skate park in Gisborne. Implement the Romsey Skate Park, in conjunction with Lancefield Romsey Lions Club and the recommendations from the shire wide Skate park and BMX strategy Finalise the Lancefield Park Recreation Reserve Master Plan Advocate for funding to realise the delivery of the Woodend Community Centre in line with priority projects 	<p>Deliver Advocate Deliver</p> <p>Deliver</p> <p>Deliver Deliver</p> <p>Partner/Facilitate</p> <p>Deliver Advocate</p>
Target community needs through development programs and grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote community centres, neighbourhood houses, and their programs to encourage community participation 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 Collaborate with Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre and across Council to coordinate, support, engage and recognise volunteers Promote the library programs of the Goldfields Library Corporation to engage the community Advocate for possible funding opportunities to support the Goldfields Library Corporation to undertake construction works for the Gisborne Library 	<p>Deliver</p> <p>Deliver</p> <p>Partner/Deliver</p> <p>Partner/Deliver</p> <p>Advocate</p>
Continue to deliver improved outcomes for and recognition of our First Nations People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to advance Indigenous reconciliation, working with First Nations People and broader community by integrating the remaining actions from Council's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (which concluded in June 2024) into the new Council Reconciliation Plan for 2024–2027 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 Upon endorsement, commence implementation of a Council Reconciliation Plan 2024–2027. 	<p>Partner/Deliver</p> <p>Partner/Deliver</p> <p>Deliver Partner/Deliver</p>

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2024/25	Council role
Promote a more inclusive community by supporting community groups and vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to demonstrate leadership in advancing gender equality, through implementation of Council's Gender Equality Action Plan, including delivery of year three actions • Oversee delivery and collaboration with the community to facilitate approved Council recognition days (or weeks) • 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 • Deliver the Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme actions to link an older vulnerable person with a dedicated volunteer to decrease social isolation • Acknowledge and promote community volunteers through Council's Annual Community Awards 	<p>Deliver</p> <p>Deliver</p> <p>Advocate</p> <p>Deliver</p> <p>Deliver</p>
Explore opportunities for affordable and social housing in the shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement Council's Affordable Housing Policy including to support the implementation of the Loddon Mallee Housing Action Plan • Continue to work with the Victorian Government and housing providers to increase the supply of social housing, in the shire, including consideration of Council owned seniors housing stock 	<p>Deliver</p> <p>Advocate/Partner</p>

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 2024/25	Council role
Protect the natural environment and enhance biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver the actions for the Biodiversity Strategy 2018 including community education and engagement program and biolink plan Continue the Healthy Landscapes – Practical Regenerative Agricultural Communities project 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 Review and update the Pest Animal and Weed Strategy 2014-2024 Continue annual biodiversity monitoring program including fauna and flora surveys through the Bird Blitz, Nest Box Monitoring, and Spotlighting Surveys Continue to advocate to the Victorian Government for Barrm Birrm to become a State Park due to its significant flora and fauna 	Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver Advocate
Lessen the severity of climate change, through actions that enable Council and the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement very high and high priority actions in the Climate Emergency Response Plan Provide opportunities for the community to mobilise and participate in individual, household and collective local climate action Deliver the Year 2 actions in Council's Zero Net Emissions Plan for Operations Conduct a scoping study and commission detailed design work to enable very high and high priority sites and small Council owned sites to transition off gas Continue participation in the Regional Community Carbon Offset Pilot Project led by North Central Catchment Management Authority 	Deliver Deliver Facilitate/Deliver Deliver Facilitate/Deliver

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2024/25	Council role
Improve the quality of recycling, minimise the generation of waste and establish alternatives to landfill disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to decrease tonnes of waste to landfill per-capita Finalise the new circular economy education and engagement plan and commence its implementation 	Deliver Deliver
Provide opportunities to experience open space and bushland reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Eastern base circuit track repairs, development and installation of wayfinding signs and ongoing engagement with the Taungurung to build rapport and to inform cultural content for interpretive signs and features at Black Hill Reserve 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 Complete the Woodend Racecourse reserve Master Plan Complete the Macedon Ranges Community Equestrian Facilities Master Plan 	Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver
Improve the management of water, including flooding risk, water quality of creeks and waterways, and the efficient use of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue priority waterway restoration works that implement adopted waterway environmental plans including Bunjil, Howey, Djirri Djirri Waterway and Jacksons Creeks and Nursery Road Waterway Implement actions in the Woodend Five Mile Creek Master Plan and Romsey Five Mile Creek Master Plan 	Deliver Deliver
Maintain systems, capacity and capability to manage, respond to and lead recovery after emergency events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to leverage partnerships with key agencies and community groups to improve response to, and recovery from, emergency events Contribute to Municipal Emergency Management Planning, learning from emergency management responses to improve future responses 	Facilitate/Partner Facilitate/Partner
Encourage active and healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise accessibility and usage of open space and facilities, through a program of development and renewals for open space, playgrounds and sporting infrastructure 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 Work in partnership with Healthy Loddon Campaspe to deliver actions specific to Macedon Ranges Shire Continue to deliver the actions for the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2025 Continue to deliver the 2024-25 actions for the Disability Action Plan 2021–2025 Continue to deliver the actions for Elevate – Council's Youth Strategy 2018–2028 Continue to deliver the actions for Participate – Council's Positive Ageing Plan 2020–2025 	Deliver Partner Partner/Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver Deliver

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2024/25	Council role
Engage families to promote the importance of early childhood education and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Continue to provide and support access to quality kindergarten programs across the Shire Continue to deliver actions for Council's Early Years Plan – CREATE Continue to strengthen municipal planning of early years services Continue to explore the feasibility of Macedon Ranges Shire becoming a "Child Friendly Community" 	Facilitate/Partner Deliver Deliver Facilitate/Partner Facilitate/Deliver
Support our community to ensure better access and connection for facilities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor the impacts of aged care reforms and work with service providers to advocate for the needs of older people 	Advocate
Assist to improve mental wellbeing within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments to advocate for improved youth mental health services in the Macedon Ranges Shire Independently assess the effectiveness, impact and efficiency of the current Live 4 life program in Macedon Ranges to inform future developments 	Advocate/Partner Deliver

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 2024/25	Council role
Encourage economic vitality (including tourism, agribusiness, buy local and local employment options)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement key actions contained in Year 2 and 3 of Council's Economic Development Strategy 2021–2031, including support for local businesses and community stakeholders to develop and implement township plans, and support the delivery of Council's RAP and delivery actions to increase employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Deliver the Autumn Festival Continue delivering actions from the Arts and Culture Strategy 2018–2028 Identify and support initiatives that involve participatory arts practices Deliver the 2025 Events and Festivals grant funding program Seek external funding to improve signage/ way finding within our town business centres 	Implement/Facilitate Deliver Deliver Deliver Partner/Deliver Advocate/Deliver
Support local industry sectors that align with our Community Vision and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support local business and tourism associations (BATAs) and industry-sector peak bodies, and look to have geographic and industry-sector coverage Deliver the 2024 Macedon Ranges Business Excellence Awards program Continue to promote local purchasing and the circular economy Support Startup CentralVic to deliver support to new startup businesses across the region 	Partner Deliver Deliver Advocate
Support small business and the local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain <i>Small Business Friendly Charter</i> status, including relevant increasing responsiveness, engagement, process streamlining, and facilitating 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to advocate for improved telecommunications infrastructure, with a focus on blackspots Actively participate in government reviews and initiatives to increase provision of service and awareness of issues 	Advocate Advocate/Partner

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 2024/25	Council role
Ensure sustainable financial management and the strategic allocation of resources to deliver planned infrastructure and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop Council's ongoing continuous improvement and service review program • Continue to review and update long-term financial and infrastructure planning to guide our budget decisions, to ensure they are responsible and sustainable; noting the development of the new plans (Council, Financial, Revenue and Rating and Asset Plan) must be adopted by Council by 31 October in the year following a general election • Meet financial reporting requirements, in line with the Local Government Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework • Commence program of service planning across which will enable Council to continuously plan, strategically review and improve its services 	<p>Deliver Deliver</p> <p>Deliver Deliver</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement actions arising from the 2024 Employee Engagement Pulse survey, and integrate responses to feedback into organisational actions and plans. • Complete the roll-out of Council's capability focused training and development program to ensure continuous improvement across our capability framework whilst offering access to required skills and compliance training • Progress the redevelopment of Council's suite of core Plans and Strategies in line with the requirements of Local Government Act 2020 following the Council election • Review the software requirements and solutions of Council to ensure that they support our organisational needs in accordance with relevant IT Strategies 	<p>Deliver</p> <p>Deliver</p> <p>Deliver</p> <p>Deliver</p>
Lead advocacy engagement and enhance relationships with all tiers of government and key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Facilitate Deliberative Engagement following the election of the new Council and enhance ongoing community consultation practices • Work with the Victorian Electoral Commission to deliver a successful election during October 2024, including attracting candidates, providing facilities, and information as required 	<p>Partner/Facilitate Partner/Facilitate</p> <p>Facilitate/Deliver</p> <p>Facilitate/Deliver</p>
Enhance customer experience through the transformation of our services, to ensure they are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement actions from the review of the Customer Request System, with the aim of improving our customer service experience and response times for ratepayers 	Deliver

Four-year strategic priorities	What we will do in 2024/25	Council role
easy to access and provide user-friendly experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the actions of the Information Services Digital Strategy 2022-26 so they are delivered in accordance with the yearly Work Plan, ensuring digital platforms are accessible and fit for purpose for all community members 	Deliver
Support transparent and evidence-based decision making, through sharing Council data and clear reporting on our measures of success to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with legislative external reporting and disclosure obligations, and progress the redevelopment of internal monitoring and reporting frameworks to demonstrate transparency to the community Complete the induction and training of elected councillors to enable effective decision making by ensuring understanding of the Governance role of Council, Council's performance, and priorities for the community 	Deliver 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 capital works program	Deliver capital works completion rates to 80% by 30 June 2025, with a stretch target of 85%.
	Gender Equality Action Plan embedded across the organisation	Implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022/25: Year 3 implemented and Year 4 actions progressing. Gender Impact Assessments conducted, as part of the development process for all significant facing policies, strategies and plans required under the Act.
	Collaboration 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.
	Support outcomes for a range of diverse community groups through funding to enhance facilities and enable programming.	Delivery of Council's community grants programs to support community groups to deliver community, cultural and environmental projects, and enhance community places.
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 2024/25 will reduce compared with the prior 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 2 Actions of the Zero Net Emission Plan for Council Operations	Year 2 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	Maintain <i>Small Business Friendly Council</i> status
	Delivery of the Autumn Festival	Increase in community and business 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's compliance with key obligations in the Act, including performance against this Plan.
	A review of Council policies and frameworks	Timely implementation of Workplan for Strategies, Plans and Policies Framework, including on-time renewal of key registered documents.
	Our staff completing relevant training to ensure continuous improvement	100% of Council staff complete mandatory compliance and onboarding training.
	The implementation of the Community Engagement Policy, which will strengthen community engagement practice and consultation with the community	Refined community consultation approaches implemented, and Community Engagement policy reviewed in preparation for update following Council election. 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 Vision 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 CO2 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