

BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

# LONG-TERM COMMUNITY VISION AND COUNCIL PLAN

## 2021-2025





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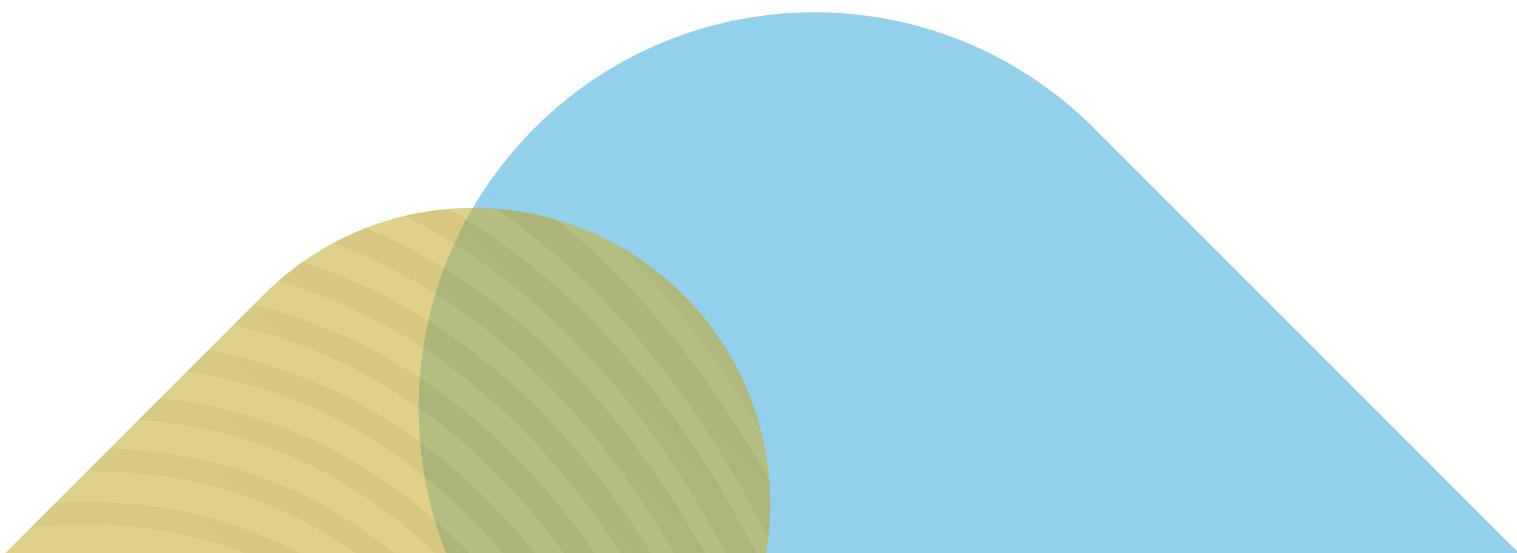
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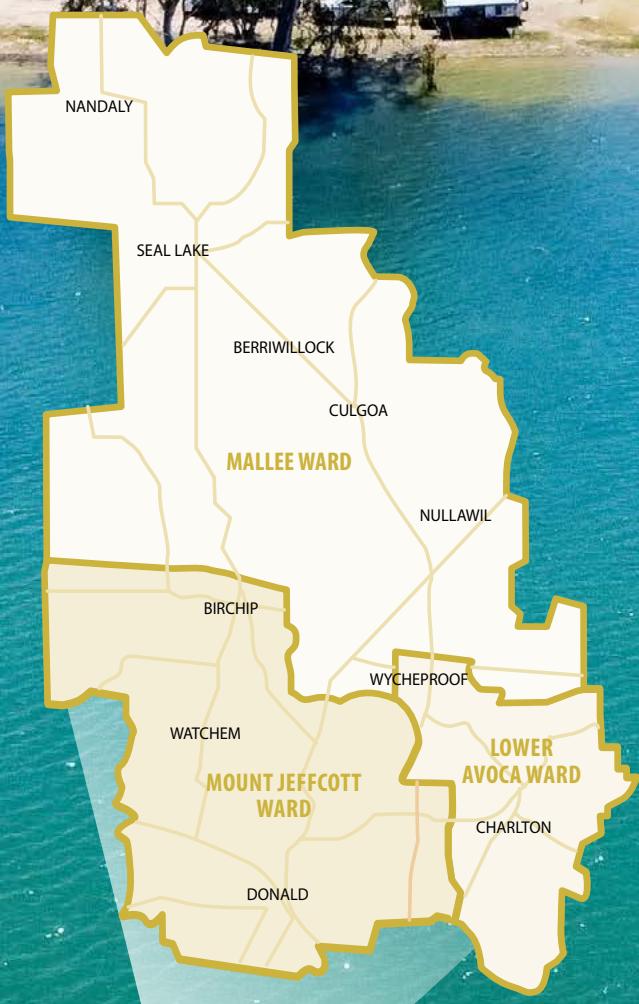
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# ABOUT BULOKE



**The Buloke Shire is located in the north west of Victoria between 210 and 360 kilometres from Melbourne.**

It is bounded by both the Mildura and Swan Hill Rural Cities in the north, Gannawarra and Loddon Shires in the east, Northern Grampians Shire in the south and Yarriambiack Shire in the west.

Buloke is a predominantly rural area. The main townships are Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheeproof. The Shire also comprises of the smaller townships of Berriwillock, Culgoa, Nandaly, Nullawil and Watchem.

Buloke encompasses a total land area of 8,000 square kilometres and is approximately 140 kilometres long and 60 kilometres wide.

Council maintains a road network spanning 5,302 kilometres. There are also 747 kilometres of roads under State Government control within Buloke.

The two main highways servicing the Buloke are the Calder Highway and the Sunraysia Highway. Both highways run north and south through the Shire.

Land is used largely for agriculture, particularly grain (wheat, oats and barley) production and sheep grazing.

The Buloke Shire is named after the 'Buloke' or 'bulloak' tree, *'Allocasuarina Luehmannii'* which is common in the area and the feature of the Buloke Shire logo.

# OUR VISION

**Building a Better Buloke - A healthy, connected, inclusive and prosperous community.**

# OUR VALUES

**Council addresses its key values through:**

- **Good communication**
- **Transparency in decision making**
- **Accountability for actions**
- **Working collaboratively with partners**
- **Taking responsibility**
- **Being responsive and timely**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Buloke Shire Council acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations and the Dja Dja Wurrung people as the traditional owners of parts of the land now known as Buloke. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and value their ongoing contribution to our heritage and our community.

Buloke has significant number cultural heritage places including an Aboriginal historical place, burials, artefact scatters, earth features, low density artefact distributions, scarred trees and a stone feature.

# WHAT IS THE COUNCIL PLAN?

Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next 4 financial years after a general election.

## The Council Plan must demonstrate:

- the strategic direction of Council
- strategic objectives for achieving that direction
- strategies for achieving the objectives (for at least 4 years)
- strategic indicators for monitoring achievement
- description of initiatives and priorities for services, infrastructure, and amenity

The Council must own the Council Plan and is responsible for developing, adopting, and maintaining the Plan.

The community must be consulted and involved through deliberative engagement and other consultation processes.

# WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY VISION?

Council must develop, maintain, and review a Community Vision with its municipal community using deliberative engagement practices.

The Community Vision has an outlook of at least 10 years and describes the municipal community's aspirations for the future of the municipality.

It should describe the social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspirations for the future of the municipality.

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)* requires the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to be consistent with the Council Plan prepared under section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (previously section 125 of the *Local Government Act 1989*) and the Municipal Strategic Statement prepared under section 12A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Councils are required to review the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend it; and to provide a copy of the current Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

For the second time the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing will be incorporated in this Council Plan.

The Community Vision will establish higher-order aspirations for the community and ambitious goals for Council and the community to work towards in collaboration.

It is informed by community engagement and a consensus view on aspirations and it is an influential document informing Council's strategic planning and broader partnerships with civil society, government and community organisations.

The Community Vision extends beyond Council's jurisdiction and provides a platform for collaboration with community, regional partnerships, and advocacy. It should reflect and consider relevant regional, state, and national plans.

The Community Vision is, in part, an expression of how Council will work with the community to apply and direct resources under its control towards achieving the desired future. The Vision will significantly influence and provide direction to the Council Plan and for other mandated plans and strategies.

## Section 26 of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act specifies what must be included in a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan:

- include an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district
- identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing
- specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community
- provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Public Health and Wellbeing plan
- specify how the Council will work in partnership with the Department (of Health and Human Services) and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the Public Health and Wellbeing plan.

# HOW THIS DOCUMENT WORKS AND WHERE IT FITS

There are some other important considerations to take into account in this new planning cycle. The events of 2020 rearranged many priorities, but in Buloke, the impacts felt were largely an exacerbation of issues our community had already told us needed attention, for that reason there will be reference to Covid-19 Recovery actions in the planning document. Many of these actions, if achieved, would address long-term aspirations of our Buloke communities. Examples of this are connected access to services, especially mental health services and addressing internet blackspots.

We have some strong data through the Primary Health Network, the Primary Care Partnership, the Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis and the State of Buloke's Children and Young People's Report. Critical partnerships with service providers and key stakeholders sit behind these reports which have given a great foundation for Council to continue to work towards prevention, early intervention and population health outcomes.

Alongside this planning, the Buloke Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy is being developed which presents some key actions to focus on as we move towards our vision.

Outcomes of our last Council Plan, including the Customer Service Charter, Inclusiveness Plan, updated financial systems, Volunteer Strategy, Rural Land Use and Settlement Strategy, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy will also play into this plan with the actions from those carrying through to what we are hearing from community in their aspirations.

Our newly adopted Community Engagement Policy has shaped the way we have put this document together.

There are many other considerations to take into our forward planning, including the proposed new Emergency Management Act, recent Royal Commissions and recommendations, the incoming *Disability Act 2020*.

The Gender Equality Act is only in its beginning stages as we write this document, but it brings with it significant and timely considerations to take into our forward planning work.

In 2018, Council undertook an extensive planning exercise which resulted in ten individual community plans, feeding into the Integrated Community Plan under the heading of "Building Buloke 2030". Under the new *Local Government Act 2020*, we have reviewed this vision to "Beyond 2030" to form Buloke's long term community vision. Much remains the same as that original 2018 aspiration as we take in the lessons of 2020 and build towards a better Buloke, led by our community.

In this document, we set out the ten year aspiration under each theme and then lead into the four-year strategies and actions which will guide Council in achieving these long term aspirations.

These will then form Annual Plans. The progress of these will be reported on each quarter. A full review of this document will be undertaken annually.

# COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A range of community consultation activities were undertaken to form this draft document which resulted in high quality feedback from community members.

Letters were issued to Community Forums in December 2020 explaining the upcoming community planning process and a suite of tools were provided to the groups to aid in the revision and renewal of their own community plans to feed into the process of this planning cycle.

Listening Posts and Street Walks were held in all ten communities, in conjunction with the Buloke Library Service. Both Councillors and Officers were in attendance.

Flyers were sent to all residents explaining the planning process and ways to get involved. Three key questions were included in the flyer as well as ways to get involved in the feedback process. These flyers were also distributed as an insert in all three local newspapers that cover the Buloke Shire area.

An online survey was made available, and hard copies also on offer for those unable to connect online.

A total of 68 people filled in the online survey, with each respondent spending at least 30 minutes answering the 16 open-ended questions. The depth of this engagement delivered more than 1,000 individual pieces of feedback

which have been analysed in the production of this document.

Councillor and Officer attendance at Community Forum meetings and key gatherings during the consultation period included explanation of the planning process, ways to get involved as well as feedback taken on the spot.

## Survey Results:



<b>328</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>31:52</b>
Number of views	Number of Submissions	Average Completion Time





In engaging the community during the draft stages of this document, and in support of the above traditional and face to face methods of engagement, Council undertook a social media campaign to capture the thoughts of residents and engage each individual community.

#### **Engagement results throughout the campaign were:**

**Facebook post** reach of 12,630 (average 790 per post).

**Twitter impressions** 3,386 (average 546 per post).

**LinkedIn impressions** 1,534 (average 384 per post).

During March (2021), a Community Summit was held with invited members of a diverse range of community sectors coming together in Wycheeproof (numbers capped due to gathering restrictions under Covid regulations) with Councillors, Officers and Senior Management. This deliberative engagement session formed around the four priority areas and empowered attendees with information, data and context as well as subject matter experts to help engage in the conversation and discuss strengths, challenges and opportunities for the ten-year vision and the next four years of Council's strategic direction.

This event resulted in more than 500 individual pieces of written feedback during the two-hour event. The theme that was the most active was the topic of Tourism and Housing with 40 individual points raised.

All the received feedback has been recorded and while not all of these individual points are able to be reflected in this document, the key themes and common points have been pulled through into the following strategies and actions.

The rich resource of the feedback will continue to guide this plan going forward as annual plans are established and work on individual community plans continues.

#### **Community Summit:**



**100**  
**Attendees**

**500**  
**Ideas and feedback**



**40 sticky notes**  
**Most popular feedback station - Tourism and Housing**

# MAYORS MESSAGE



The Councillors and I are pleased to present the Buloke Shire Council Long-Term Community Vision and Council Plan 2021-2025.

This document is Council's most important, everything we do on behalf of ratepayers and the community relates to what is set out under our four key themes:

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Our Built and Natural Environment

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Our Community Wellbeing

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Our Economy

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Our Council and Community Leadership

Buloke is on the bubble, adding layers to our economy that is so strongly underpinned by the agriculture sector.

We are an emerging tourism destination with enviable recreational lakes, the sightseeing phenomenon that is Lake Tyrell and an emerging street art collection to supplement our two Silo Art Trail stops.

The liveability and attraction of our towns is something that our communities continue to engage with Council about. We are setting in place strategies to improve the lifestyle in Buloke for our residents and to maximise the opportunities to turn visitors to our region into locals.

Our four key themes are our way forward, our objectives in the delivery of a better Buloke.

We also understand our challenges.

Strong consultation with our community over many years together with Council's work during the last Council Plan period has identified key challenges that we need to address. This at a time that the world is looking to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like the pandemic, issues around climate change and waste reduction are not unique to Buloke. Whilst locally we are challenged by the availability of quality housing stock, skills gaps, and digital connectivity. All of which will define our population and demography in the years to come.

If our population is to grow, critical issues such as these and support service like childcare need to be understood and addressed. This will give families the tools they need to not only survive, but thrive.

Council also needs to continue to appropriately fund its ageing infrastructure and control its asset renewal gap. Our road and drainage networks as well as an array of buildings and other assets place an enormous burden on our small ratepayer base.

Council and staff are looking forward to working with the community, all levels of government and external stakeholders in Building a Better Buloke.

**Cr Daryl Warren**  
Mayor

# OUR COUNCILLORS



LOWER AVOCAS WARD



CR CAROLYN STEWART

M: 0488 032 063

E: [cristewart@Buloke.vic.gov.au](mailto:cristewart@Buloke.vic.gov.au)

Cr Pollard is currently serving a fourth term as Councillor. David's extensive community outreach has included involvement with Ambulance Victoria, the CFA, Scouts Victoria, along with being the driver of the community purchase of Charlton's Rex Theatre. David's lifetime experience on the family farm near Wycheeproof brings an understanding of rural issues as well as urban concerns. A representative of the Lower Avoca Ward since 2008 David has served three terms as Mayor from November 2011, 2016 and 2017, as well as holding the role of Deputy Mayor twice.



MOUNT JEFFCOTT WARD



CR BRONWYN SIMPSON

M: 0419 126 911

E: [crmilne@Buloke.vic.gov.au](mailto:crmilne@Buloke.vic.gov.au)

Cr. Milne has begun his third term as Councillor representing the Mount Jeffcott Ward. Passionate about being a voice for the people, Graeme believes Buloke will continue to build on its successes and provide valuable outcomes for all ratepayers and residents. An active volunteer in the Watchem community, Graeme's skills are focused on providing strong representation for all across the wider Buloke region. Graeme served as Deputy Mayor from November 2016 to November 2017.

Cr. Simpson is commencing her second term on Council - this time as a representative for the Mount Jeffcott Ward where she holds part-time employment.

Bronwyn is focused on maximising the potential of the Council Plan, within budget, and in ways which will enhance the liveability of Buloke. Environment, economic development and advocacy for rural issues are highlighted, and her background in customer relations and committee membership are a plus for community engagement.



**MOUNT JEFFCOTT WARD**



**MALLEE WARD**



**CR DAVID VIS  
(DEPUTY MAYOR)**

**M:** 0488 032 723  
**E:** [crvis@Buloke.vic.gov.au](mailto:crvis@Buloke.vic.gov.au)

Cr. Vis has returned for a second term to represent the Mallee Ward. With a vision to help make Buloke a thriving place to live and visit, David has been a passionate advocate for his local area, and for the growth of the wider Buloke region. Building on his Council experience, David believes a good working relationship with Council's leadership team will bring continued progress over the next few years.

**CR DARYL WARREN  
(MAYOR)**

**M:** 0427 194 422  
**E:** [crwarren@Buloke.vic.gov.au](mailto:crwarren@Buloke.vic.gov.au)

Cr. Warren has been elected for a second term on Council. Daryl has been heavily involved in numerous community initiatives, and is keen to see Buloke as a vibrant, welcoming region. With a "can-do" attitude and an ability to respond willingly to resident's needs, financial accountability - now and for the future – is also an integral part of his vision. Daryl was voted in as Mayor in November 2020 and served as Deputy Mayor between November 2017 and November 2019.

**CR ALAN GETLEY**

**M:** 0437 876 726  
**E:** [crgetley@Buloke.vic.gov.au](mailto:crgetley@Buloke.vic.gov.au)

A first term Councillor, Cr. Getley is representing the Mallee Ward. Alan is keen to see employment opportunities grow through attracting more industry to Buloke, along with retaining young people in area. Building strong communication through greater community interaction and exploring ways of easing the rate burden are also key areas of focus. Alan has embraced leadership roles across many sectors of the Charlton community, and seeks to bring a fresh approach to Council.

# HOW WE WILL BUILD A BETTER BULOKE

## PRIORITY 1: OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### The vision:

Our future Buloke has quality, safe and accessible infrastructure valued by and responsive to the community alongside attractive streetscapes and a protected and celebrated natural environment reflecting Buloke pride.

## PRIORITY 2: OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

### The vision:

Our future Buloke... is a welcoming, well-connected and inclusive community built around social connections for all age groups and backgrounds and access to, as well as ongoing advocacy for, vital services.

## PRIORITY 3: OUR ECONOMY

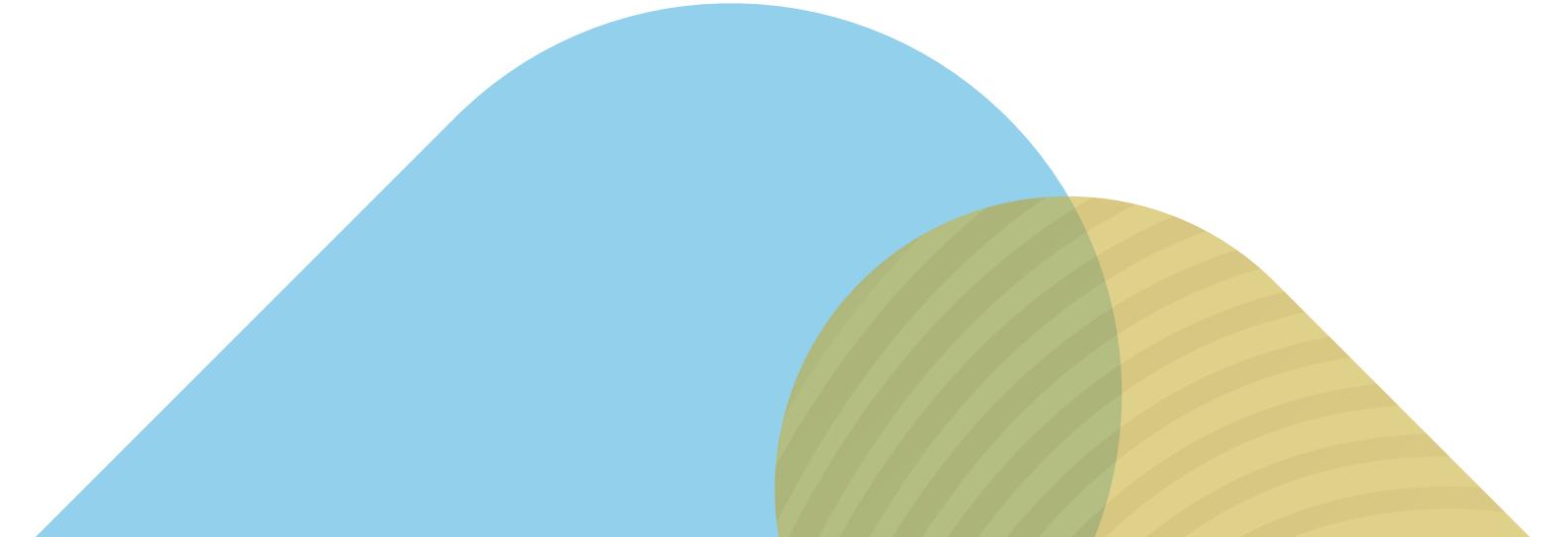
### The vision:

Our future Buloke... is an innovative and strong economy with agriculture, small business and industry capitalising on new ideas to provide a range of employment and tourism opportunities backed by the services, connectivity and housing to achieve population stability.

## PRIORITY 4: OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

### The vision:

Our future Buloke... is dynamically led by a council that informs community, has active partnerships, authentic advocacy and quality customer service delivering valued responsive community services in a responsible way.



# OUR COMMUNITY

## POPULATION:

2016 Census:

**PEOPLE 6,201**

**FEMALE 49.4%**

**MALE 50.6%**



## ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION:



**2016: 6,284**

**2021: 6,071**

**2026: 5,742**

**2031: 5,392**

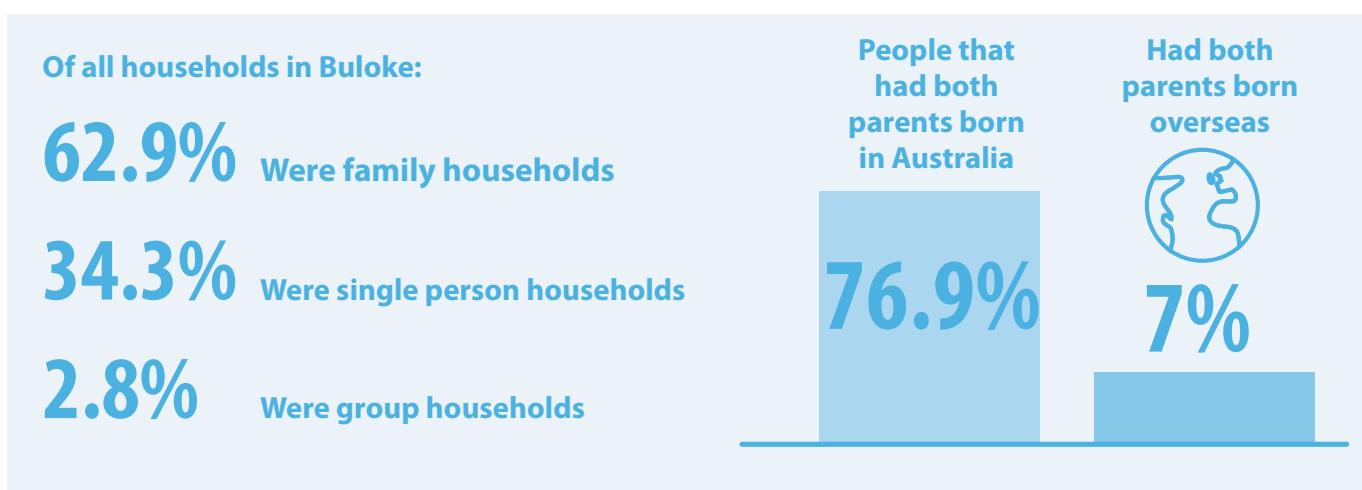
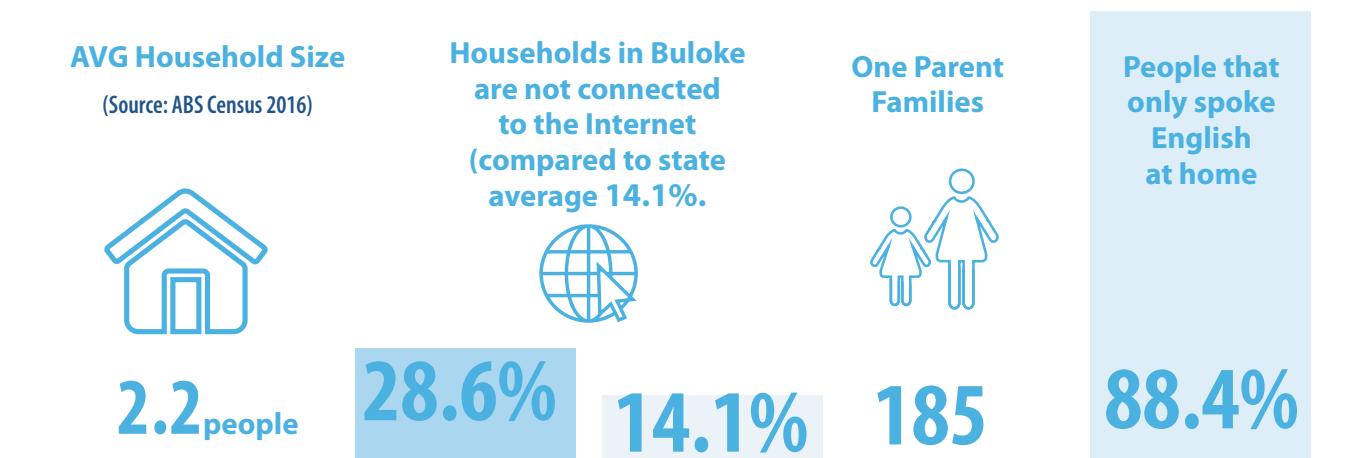
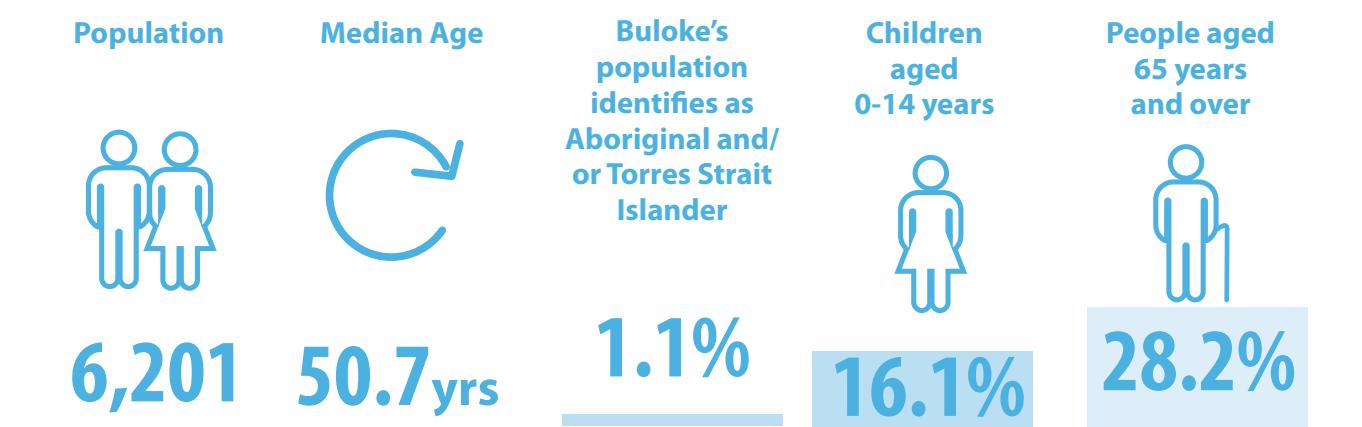
AGE	Buloke (S)	%
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>51</b>	-
0-4 years	253	4.1
5-9 years	357	5.8
10-14 years	383	6.2
15-19 years	345	5.6
20-24 years	195	3.2
25-29 years	252	4.1
30-34 years	215	3.5
35-39 years	245	4.0
40-44 years	307	5.0
45-49 years	402	6.5
50-54 years	454	7.3
55-59 years	516	8.3
60-64 years	519	8.4
65-69 years	486	7.9
70-74 years	340	5.5
75-79 years	345	5.6
80-84 years	234	3.8
85 years and over	336	5.4

Estimated resident population (ERP) is the official Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) measure of the population of areas in Australia according to a usual residence population concept. Usual residence is that place where each person has lived or intends to live for six months or more from the reference date for data collection. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality or citizenship, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months.

In census years, ERPs are derived using data from the Census of Population and Housing and Post Enumeration Survey, with an allowance for the number of residents temporarily overseas (ROs) at the census date. For post-censal years ERPs are calculated using mathematical models and indicator data such as dwelling approvals, Medicare enrolments managed by the Australian Government Department of Human Services and Australian Electoral Roll enrolments managed by the Australian Electoral Commission. Population estimates for Australia and the states and territories are updated by adding to the estimated population at the beginning of each period the components of natural increase (births minus deaths, on a usual residence basis) and net overseas migration.

Estimates of the resident populations as at 30 June are released annually for all Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2s) and Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Australia. The estimates are generally revised 12 months later and final estimates are available after the following census. (Remplan)

# DEMOGRAPHIC STATS



Median weekly  
**PERSONAL income**  
15+

\$  
**\$474**

Persons 15+  
Earning Less  
than \$300pw

\$  
**24.6%**

Employed people in Buloke:

**12.7%** Worked 1 to 15 hours

**10.9%** Worked 16 to 24 hours

**46.6%** Worked 40 hours or more



# OUR SERVICE STATS

## WASTE



### TWO landfills

located in Donald and Birchip.

### THREE Transfer Stations

located in Charlton, Wycheeproof and Sea Lake.

### ONE small recycle centre

in Watchem.

#### In 2019-2020

**2164**  
tonnes

Kerbside  
rubbish  
collected

**874**  
tonnes

Kerbside  
recycles  
collected

**602**  
tonnes

Green Waste  
collected at  
all sites

**16,205**

Drummuster  
Chemical  
Drums  
collected



### 5,913 HOURS

of service delivered into  
people's homes under the  
Commonwealth Home  
Support Program.

Council is considered a leader in the Local Government sector in its use of social media. Be it in times of celebration or emergency, Council has one of the broadest reaches to its community of all 79 Victorian Local Government Areas with around 45% of its population following Council's Facebook page. In February 2021 Council's Facebook page was evaluated as the second most engaging Facebook offering of all Victorian Councils by Shunt, an independent social media analytical authority. Council operates Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn accounts with a combined followership of 4,110. (\*Figure taken at 31 March 2021.) Council also operates a YouTube channel to broadcast Ordinary Meetings of Council and Story Time library resources amongst other media.



## OUR ROADS



**5,313km**  
of Roads

**900km**  
of Sealed Roads

**700km**  
of Gravel Roads

### Minor (3595km)

A Limited Access Road/Track provides primarily access to undeveloped properties in rural areas

### Collector (311km)

A Collector Road provides primarily a feeder service to Link Roads.

It provides access to local properties in both rural and town areas and access to moderate local rural industries

### Access (1196 km)

An Access Road provides primarily direct access to occupied residential properties and industries in urban and rural areas.

### Link Roads (211 km)

A Link Road provides primarily for collecting and distributing traffic from local areas to the wider Arterial Road Network.

# OUR COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

## AGRICULTURE

The Agricultural industry is by far the provider of the most jobs in the Buloke Shire. In the 2016 Census, 32.17% of Buloke's population were employed under the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Industry. The second highest employer by industry was the Health Care and Social Assistance area at 13.36%. The increasing diversity in the agricultural sector, through intensive agriculture, on-farm micro operations, and value-adding opportunities right through to farm-based tourism continues to be a key strength of the Buloke region. The industries servicing the sector, including machinery dealerships, rural supply businesses and research bodies also present a key strength as a flow on effect from the Agricultural sector. With a focus on the changing climate, paddock-to-plate, and renewed interest in regional Victoria, Buloke's agricultural sector is at the innovative leading edge and presents a wealth of potential.

## TOURISM

The 'trail experience' Buloke presents is gaining significant spotlight and momentum since the last Council Plan cycle. Lakes, local businesses, silo and mural art, playspaces, op shops all encourage visitors to spend time moving around the Buloke area. Infrastructure projects continue to build on this attraction with the lockdown experience of 2020 also injecting a renewed interest in local, regional tourism. Water-based tourism (lakes and rivers) is a key component of Buloke's attraction to visitors. Building on the attraction of campers and caravanners and permanent accommodation options continue to build on this strength.

## VOLUNTEERISM

In the 2016 Census, it was recorded that 46.1% of Buloke's population volunteer. This has been a long-held strength of Buloke. With the growing tourism opportunities, the events and attractions that make Buloke a great place to visit can almost always be traced back to a dedicated band of volunteers. Anecdotal evidence suggests the rate of Buloke volunteering is even higher than the census reported data as many giving their time in our communities don't recognise it as formal volunteering. Emergency response, sports and service clubs, community transport, events committees are just some of the groups based on volunteering in Buloke. The prevalence of volunteering contributes heavily to the sense of community and connectedness which came through as a key reason why people love Buloke in our community consultation for this document.

## OUR SPACE

On average, each Buloke resident has 1.3 square kilometres to themselves. The expansive area Buloke covers offers plenty of space to live, work and play. The open space and natural attractions are also gaining notoriety as a great place to visit with the big skies of Buloke sitting 276 kms from Melbourne and 265km from Mildura, served by the Calder and Sunraysia highways. The space of Buloke also offers great potential in key economic development and tourism areas.

## ACTIVATED COMMUNITIES

Led by Buloke's high rate of volunteerism, the communities and districts within the area show great motivation and action to respond to community need, take advantage of opportunities and work together to achieve great places to live. The forward-focus and activated nature of Buloke communities has seen a record investment in infrastructure projects across the footprint and robust, dynamic community plans which aid in bringing together the place-based vision to achieve long term goals. Innovative businesses, community enterprise and a solutions-focussed attitude also contribute to this strength.

**“Open space, the freedom to move around in a clean, quiet environment.”**

**“Resilient people.”**

**“Friendly communities.”**

**“Collaboration of friendships between towns”**

**“A great place to live.”**

# OUR COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

## DIVERSE AND QUALITY HOUSING STOCK

Demand for a range of quality housing options across sectors of the Buloke community has been a long-term challenge in the Buloke Shire. The extra pressure brought about by the 2020 lockdown, as well as the renewed interest in rural living has further exacerbated this challenge. Access to social housing, step-down housing for older residents looking to down size from their multiple bedroom detached dwellings or move into town from the farm, right through to family-friendly housing and that which suits the professional end of the market all present challenges for Buloke. Identification and availability of land to build and develop is also a key component of this challenge. Addressing derelict and vacant housing is also a key concern of the Buloke community.

## ASSET RENEWAL GAP

Ageing infrastructure has been a long-term challenge in the Buloke Shire. The enormous asset burden on a small rate payer base presents an ongoing challenge of sourcing appropriate funds to reduce the asset renewal gap on Buloke's extensive road network as well as key community infrastructure such as Town Halls, pools and sports precincts. Upgrading the ageing drainage network across Buloke and ensuring accessibility considerations are taken into account to cater for Buloke's population demographic all bring together the challenge of ensuring required investment into the priority areas.

## DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Black spot issues and sub-standard access to quality internet speeds has an impact across the population. This was also recorded as a community challenge in our 2017-2021 Council Plan. While some headway has been made on rectifying black spot areas, the lack of consistent access to online options has become considerably more noticeable following the sweeping move and focus on remote working, study, telehealth and finding connection through online means that 2020 brought about. Beyond mobile phone coverage, reducing the rural disadvantage in dwelling and business access to the internet is a key Buloke challenge.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

The wide-reaching impacts associated with Climate Change present an adaptation challenge for the Buloke Shire. Plenty of opportunity is also present in this adaptation challenge. Innovating new ways to achieve outcomes with a softer touch on the planet, adapting to a climate with more extremes, enhancing renewable options and understanding the combined community approach needed for the long-term risk reduction.

## WASTE

In March 2020, the State Government announced its Circular Economy Policy which will transform the recycling industry in Victoria. Working towards a reduction in waste to landfill, resource recovery and addressing illegal dumping alongside community education in a small, rural Shire such as Buloke.

## SKILLS GAPS

The 2019 Nous Report into Workforce and Training Need in the Buloke Shire found established demand for workers that cannot be met locally. Consequently, skills are a secondary priority to finding individuals that can turn up and do the work. This is most evident in community services and agricultural roles and some manufacturers. Selected businesses in other industries faced similar constraints. Critical issues exist around childcare which limits the ability for workers, particularly women, to work in the region and the scarcity of rental accommodation creates barriers for people to move to the region. This report also identified the risk of the Buloke Shire becoming disconnected from the tertiary education system.

## COVID RECOVERY

There was a significant impact on Buloke communities as a result of both the adaptation to CovidSafe living as well as the lockdowns, cancellation of sport and events, impact on businesses and loss of connection opportunities.

**“Grow the population, grow the jobs more housing.”**

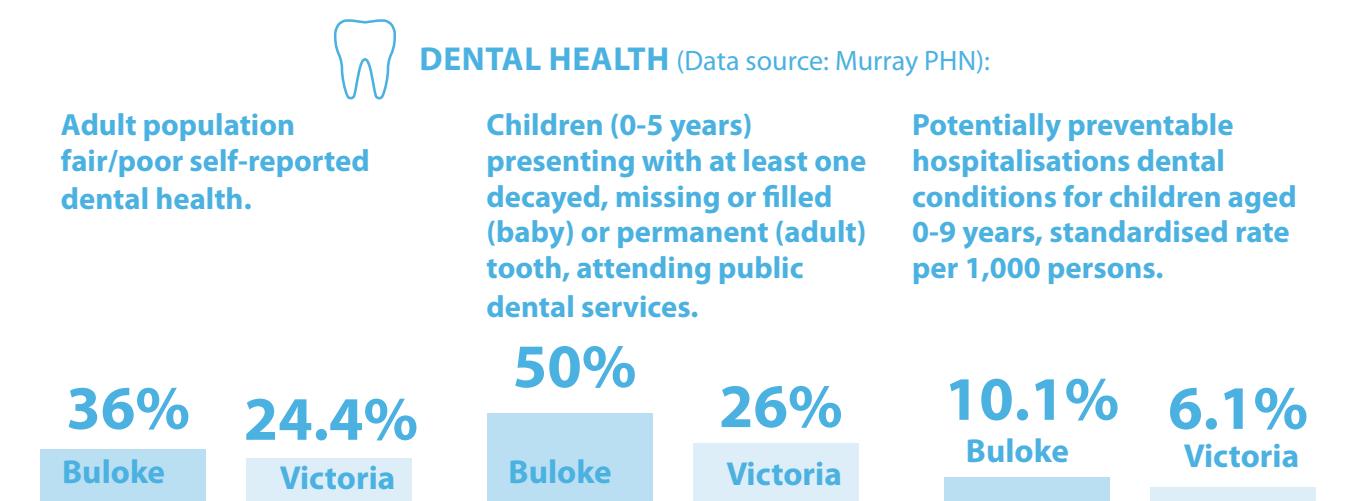
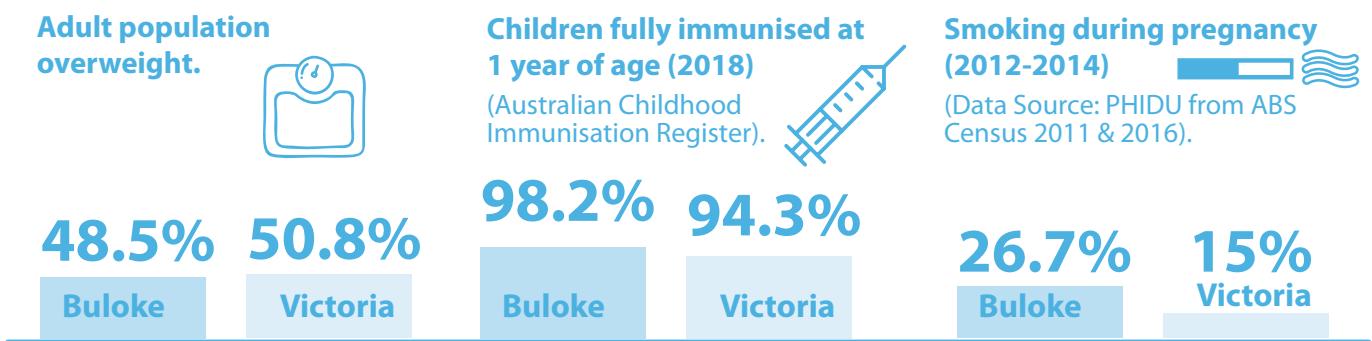
**“Investment in community to uplift practical sustainability initiatives”.**

**“Increased engagement and support of the local youth groups.”**

**“More money spent on rural roads”.**

# OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING





# OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING CHALLENGES

The Buloke 2030 Community Planning process, which was undertaken in 2018 identified the following health wellbeing challenges in Buloke, these were consistent with the 2020/21 Community Consultation in the process of forming this document:

Ageing community	Attracting and retaining GP's
Declining population	Maintaining and increasing place-based health and wellbeing services
High number of lone households	Travel required to access specialist medical services
Youth retention	Volunteer fatigue
Lack of access to childcare services	Access to public transportation
Accessing health and wellbeing services, particularly mental health services	Providing support for vulnerable residents; and
Continuity of health and wellbeing services	Ensuring residents across all socio-economic backgrounds are socially connected.
Reduced access to digital and telecommunication connectivity	

**Data shows that the Loddon/Buloke/Gannawarra region has over 1000 dependent children in over 600 families earning less than \$650 per week and over one third of all young people in the region:**



**have low wellbeing, with lower than average scores on optimism, self-esteem, happiness and absence of sadness**



**leaving/ left school early, which impacts on their income and life chances.**

**The State of Buloke's Children and Young People's Report identified the following Health and Wellbeing challenges for our younger residents:**

### Physical Health and Wellbeing

	Buloke	Victoria
<b>On Track</b>	71.2%	81%
<b>At Risk</b>	7.7%	10.8%
<b>Vulnerable</b>	21.2%	8.2%

\* Child is ready each day healthy and independent, and has excellent gross and fine motor skills.



Data Source AEDC 2018

### Social Competence

	Buloke	Victoria
<b>On Track</b>	69.2%	77.3%
<b>At Risk</b>	17.3%	13.9%
<b>Vulnerable</b>	13.5%	8.8%

\* Child gets along with others and shares, is self confident.



Data Source AEDC 2018

### Emotional Maturity

	Buloke	Victoria
<b>On Track</b>	69.2%	77.7%
<b>At Risk</b>	21.2%	14.2%
<b>Vulnerable</b>	9.6%	8.1%

\* Child is able to concentrate, helps others, not aggressive or angry.



Data Source AEDC 2018

### Language & Cognitive Skills

	Buloke	Victoria
<b>On Track</b>	82.7%	84.76%
<b>At Risk</b>	11.5%	9.0%
<b>Vulnerable</b>	5.8%	6.4%

\* Child is interested in ready or writing, can count and recognise numbers and shapes.



Data Source AEDC 2018

### Communication Skills & General Knowledge

	Buloke	Victoria
<b>On Track</b>	75.0%	79.4%
<b>At Risk</b>	13.5%	13.2%
<b>Vulnerable</b>	11.5%	7.4%

\* Child can tell a story, communicate with adults and children, articulate themselves.



Data Source AEDC 2018

### Vulnerable in 1 or More Domain(s)

**Buloke: 30.8%**

**Victoria: 19.9%**

### Vulnerable in 2 or More Domain(s)

**Buloke: 17.3%**

**Victoria: 10.1%**



Data Source AEDC 2018

### The Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Strategic Health Partnership identified four evidence based priority needs, which are:



Heart and Respiratory Health



Mental Health



Diabetes



Oral Health

Provide more opportunities for teenagers to have fun social interaction as a whole Buloke group.

Would be nice to have access to a dentist!

# OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRENGTHS

## SPORTS PARTICIPATION

A VicHealth Research Study into organised sport participation which was released in 2021 found the Buloke Shire has the **highest overall sport participation rate in the state**.

Participation was 31% in the Buloke Shire, in the Regional- other area. The highest participation rates in the other areas were: Regional- growth: Surf Coast, 25%; Metropolitan- other: Nillumbik 23%; and Metropolitan-growth: Cardinia, 14%. This report took into account player registrations across 12 key sports.

Strong player registration in organised sport links with the high rate of volunteerism in the Buloke Shire.

Membership of Sports Groups in Buloke also tops the state at 50.2% in the last Census.

## SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Respondents to the survey undertaken in the preparation of this document highlighted the sense of community as the thing they love the most about Buloke. Caring communities, connections between different communities and the willingness of community members to rally in tough times and support each other were all highlighted as key components in this. The community advocacy undertaken on behalf of health and wellbeing challenges, access to services and better connected approaches is also a strength in Buloke.

**Smoking rates are below the state average, The percentage of the adult population current (i.e. daily or occasional) smokers in Buloke is 13.2% compared to the Victorian average of 16.7%**



**13.2% 16.7%**

**Buloke**

**Victoria**

## IMMUNISATION RATES

The rate of children in immunisations in Buloke has consistently been above the State average.

	<b>Buloke</b>
Children fully immunised at 1 year of age %	98.2
Children fully immunised at 2 years of age %	96.4
Children fully immunised at 5 years of age %	100

# OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING PRIORITIES

Maintaining a sustained focus on preventable causes of poor health and wellbeing will lead to better community health outcomes. Section 26 of the Health and Wellbeing Act specifies a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan must identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing.

We are incorporating our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan into this core document because the factors of influence over the health and wellbeing in our communities are widespread throughout our organisation and partnerships and don't just stand alone in one area. As demonstrated by the above diagram (from page 7 of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023), these influencing factors are reflected throughout the following priorities and strategies outlined in both our four-year Council Plan and Long Term Community Vision.

In particular, following health and wellbeing priorities will be the focus for the next four years to not only build on existing work with our key partners and stakeholders, but also to address areas of concern highlighted in the data, continue to build on strengths and respond to the feedback from our community. These priorities have been imbedded across the key areas of the four-year Council Plan, below some examples are indicated where the priorities link with these strategies.

- Addressing Contributing Factors to Chronic Health Issues (2.1.1, 2.3.3, 2.4.3)
- Increasing Active Living (1.3.3, 1.4.3, 1.4.4)
- Improving Mental Wellbeing (2.1.1, 2.4.1, 2.4.3, 2.4.4)
- Tackling Climate Change and its Impact on Health (1.1.1)
- Address Access to Appropriate Housing (1.2)
- Improve Outcomes for the Early Years



Source: Adopted from Dahlgren & Whitehead 1991

(2.1.2, 2.3.2, 2.4.4, 3.3.3)

- Improve Outcomes for Young People's Health and Wellbeing (2.1.2, 2.1.4, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 4.1.3)
- Connect and Strengthen Partnerships for our Older Population (1.2.2, 1.4.4, 2.1.2, 2.2.4, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 3.3.3, 3.4.3)

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023 includes 10 priorities and 4 Focus Areas. Our Health and Wellbeing priorities align with two (Increasing Active Living and Tackling Climate Change and its Impact on Health) of these four focus areas as part of our Long-term Community Vision and Council Plan. Other Victorian Priorities (for example, Increasing Healthy Eating, Reducing Injury, Preventing all forms of violence , Improving Mental Wellbeing, Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health, Reducing Tobacco-Related Harm, Reducing Harmful Alcohol and Drug Use are reflected through work in addressing contributing factors to chronic disease, and increasing wellbeing outcomes for target cohorts).

Implementation and progress towards outcomes/impacts will be reviewed annually with our partners and processes established for ongoing community involvement.

## IMPORTANCE OF EQUITY

Fair and equitable access to our services and facilities is a key principle of our work, regardless of gender, age, background, location and abilities. As referenced in Strategy 2.2, Buloke Shire's Inclusiveness Plan has identified several key areas to focus on in order to continue to maintain an emphasis on equity.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are key to working towards better health and wellbeing outcomes for our communities. Our vision of "Building a Better Buloke" is just as much about building better place-based outcomes through partnerships as it is about building better infrastructure. Several of these partnership approaches are outlined

in the following pages. In particular, we have been successful in funding through a VicHealth Local Government Partnership to focus on increased wellbeing outcomes for our young people. This is a direct action of analysis of data (particularly the State of Buloke's Children and Young People's Report and the Inclusiveness Plan) and overwhelming feedback from our community on the need to re-set our focus in this area. This Partnership will span the duration of three years and be directly linked with our Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan with a key principle of being young people's voices through to Council Planning in a genuine way. This will link with our Strong Youth, Strong Communities partnership which spans three Local Government Areas and links with the health and education sector.

The Strong Children, Strong Families Partnership has a similar focus on the early years (0-8) with a goal of children arriving at school ready to learn by addressing systematic issues, one child at a time.

Both of these partnerships are backed by a robust research component which aims to connect the dots in data gathering in a comprehensive monitoring approach to shape evidence-based investment in interventions.

Based on these successful approaches, one of the actions for the next four years to create a similar approach for our older residents, building on the Royal Commission into Aged Care.

In an overall health approach, partnership opportunities through the Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership enable a community-led approach to key areas such a Gender Equality, Prevention of Violence Against Women and Mental Wellbeing.

The Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Partnership is also a key component to working towards these priorities. This partnership presents the ability to work together across geographical and sectorial boundaries on common issues.

# PRIORITY 1: OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

TYRRELL

## LONG TERM VISION:

**Our future Buloke has quality, safe and accessible infrastructure valued by and responsive to the community alongside attractive streetscapes and a protected and celebrated natural environment reflecting Buloke pride.**

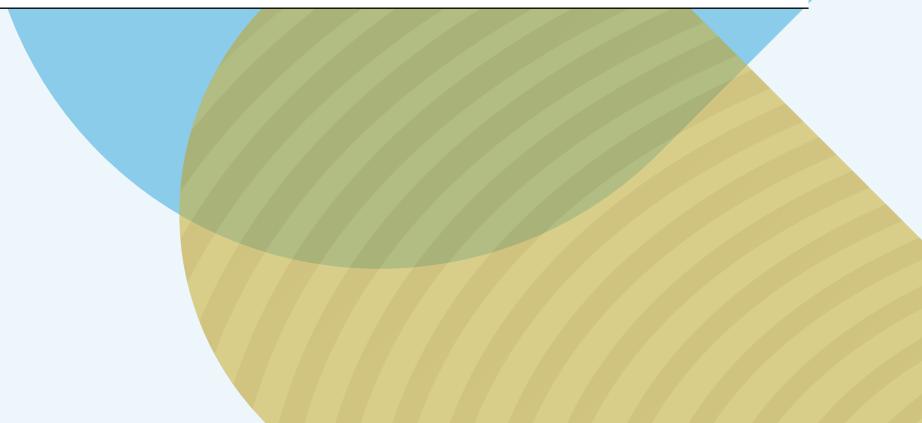
### Long Term Aspirations:

Accessible buildings and spaces.	A collaborative approach to safe, well designed and well maintained local and arterial road network.
Inclusive footpath and kerb planning.	Quality infrastructure and multi-use assets that are well maintained and used.
Attractive streetscapes and town entrances that are well maintained and presented.	Natural areas are preserved and enjoyed.
Effective waste and resource recovery.	Buildings and houses well kept and maintained to achieve collective town pride.
Upgraded drainage.	Housing diversity to suit various cohorts.
An environmentally aware community.	Renewable energy in action.
Effective weed and pest management.	Active outdoor spaces

# OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## Long Term Strategies:

Strategy	Council's Role
1. Maintain, develop and plan for viable, multi-use infrastructure and assets that respond to community needs and priorities.	Leader Provider
2. Enhance parks and public spaces so they are welcoming, safe and accessible to encourage active recreation and participation.	Leader Provider
3. Review built community assets and explore opportunities for shared facilities and resources.	Leader Facilitator
4. Work with key stakeholders to provide a safe road network and keep the community well informed.	Provider Partner Supporter
5. Work together with communities to activate town centres and entrances and keep these well maintained.	Leader Provider
6. Support local initiatives to encourage residents to tidy up their properties and the community.	Partner Facilitator
7. Develop and enhance walking and cycling paths with a connected approach.	Leader Provider
8. Improve accessibility to buildings and public facilities for all community members.	Regulator Supporter
9. Educate, promote and support the community in implementing waste minimisation and management strategies.	Leader Provider Regulator
10. Actively use, promote and support the use of renewable energy sources.	Leader Partner Supporter Facilitator
11. Protect, enhance and manage natural resources, flora and fauna and waterways.	Provider Partner



## OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

# COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 STRATEGIES

### **1.1 WORK TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY**

- 1.1.1** Develop and implement actionable plans from the Buloke Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy.
- 1.1.2** Implement key initiatives from the Buloke Shire Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2020-2025, including campaigns to target illegal dumping and reviewing the feasibility of extending the kerbside rubbish and recycling offering.
- 1.1.3** Partner with business and community to establish innovative solutions to rubbish removal.
- 1.1.4** Support, localise and track regional bulk-buy solar initiatives and support community groups and buildings to go solar.
- 1.1.5** Investigate opportunities to improve stormwater harvesting and the use of reclaimed/recycled materials in key community assets.

### **1.2 SUITABLE HOUSING OPTIONS**

- 1.2.1** Build on the Wimmera Southern Mallee Housing Study to identify opportunities for Council and the community to enhance diversity in housing stock.
- 1.2.2** Support Community Housing initiatives to provide suitable step-down housing for older population.
- 1.2.3** Advocate for quality and affordable social housing options.
- 1.2.4** Encourage housing development and investment suitable to community needs and professional housing options.

### **1.3 AN ATTRACTIVE AND WELL MAINTAINED BULOKE**

- 1.3.1** Develop and fund the implementation of drainage improvement plans in key flooding hotspots.
- 1.3.2** Prioritise the improvement of maintenance to town parks and other urban infrastructure across the Shire and enhance green spaces through irrigation and tree planting initiatives.
- 1.3.3** Implement the Buloke Playspace Trail and develop masterplans for playgrounds in other key locations.
- 1.3.4** Identify and seek funding for opportunities to rationalise Council's excess built assets and invest into multi-use facilities.

### **1.4 A SAFE AND ACTIVE BULOKE**

- 1.4.1** Strengthen relationship with Regional Roads Victoria and other transport authorities to engage and inform the community.
- 1.4.2** Prioritise capital works investment into renewal of roads and road-related infrastructure, informed by Council's Asset Plans.
- 1.4.3** Seek funding for the development and implementation of masterplans for active recreation facilities, including Aquatic Strategy, Walking and Cycling Plans and Birchip and Sea Lake Recreation Reserve Masterplans.
- 1.4.4** Identify accessible mobility maps in main townships, linking retail, health and community facilities.

# OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## INDICATORS

- Actions from Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy Achieved
- Uptake of Solar Bulk Buy Initiatives
- Reduce waste to landfill as per the waste strategy and resource recovery
- Real Estate indications on housing waitlists and uptake of housing options
- Maloney's road quality report
- Customer satisfaction survey results
- Parks and Urban maintenance requests

## CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

- Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy
- Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy
- Wimmera Mallee Housing study
- Regional Climate Strategies
- CMA Strategic Plans
- Inclusiveness Plan
- Rural Land Use and Settlement Strategy
- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
- Playspace Masterplan

## ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

- Social Housing
- Waste
- Road Asset Renewal Gap
- Funding Active Recreation Opportunities in preventative health space.
- Road, Rail and Transport Authorities
- Telecommunication Authorities



# PRIORITY 2: OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

## LONG TERM VISION:

**Our future Buloke... is a welcoming, well-connected and inclusive community built around social connections for all age groups and backgrounds and access to, as well as ongoing advocacy for, vital services.**

### Long Term Aspirations:

A well connected and inclusive community that is welcoming of diversity.	A collaborative approach to safe, well designed and well maintained local and arterial road network.
Free from violence.	Continuity of healthcare.
Early years focus.	A wide range of activities and connection opportunities for children and young people.
Support and connection for vulnerable residents.	Comprehensive and quality place based GP services.
Infrastructure and programs to support physical activity.	A connected Buloke where loneliness is reduced.
A connected approach to support young people in all aspects of their lives and have a genuine youth voice in Council Planning.	Affordable, accessible mental health services alongside reduced stigma.
Quality, well-supported schools.	

# OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

<b>Long Term Strategies:</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Council's Role</b>
1. Work with key stakeholders to lobby for effective place-based health and wellbeing services in the Buloke Shire.	Facilitator Supporter
2. Work with key stakeholders to increase community understanding of the availability of health and wellbeing services across the Buloke Shire alongside health literacy.	Supporter
3. Increase digital literacy to enable uptake of tele-health options and include as key advocacy point for reliable internet access.	Supporter
4. Advocate for fit-for-purpose rebate schemes (for example, Childcare Subsidy, Victorian Patient Transport Rebate).	Supporter
5. Create and support opportunities that encourage community wellbeing, social connections and inclusion and active and healthy lifestyles.	Provider Partner
6. Work with key stakeholders to address social disadvantage backed by data, evidence and lived experience.	Provider Supporter
7. Support community-led initiatives to welcome newcomers.	Leader
8. Continue to support community driven primary prevention responses to key issues of concern, including family violence, community inclusion and mental health.	Supporter Partner
9. Offer/actively support a range of non-sport activities, events and leisure opportunities for residents of all ages including children and young people.	Provider Partner
10. Provide a range of learning and skill development opportunities for all stages of life.	Supporter
11. Continue to lobby Government for improved, connected and viable transport services across, and beyond, the Buloke Shire.	Supporter
12. Work towards population attraction and retention.	Leader Supporter

## OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

# COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 STRATEGIES

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### 2.1 PARTNERSHIPS TO OUTCOMES

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- 2.1.1** Work within the Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis to address identified issues; heart and respiratory health, mental health, oral health and diabetes with health services.
  - 2.1.2** Strengthen and explore partnerships with a dedicated focus to cohorts: Strong Families, Strong Children Partnership (0-8); Strong Youth, Strong Communities alongside VicHealth Local Government Partnership (9-19) and continue to evolve this through to 60+ to address systems-based issues.
  - 2.1.3** Support and connect Young Professionals Networks and address skills training gaps as identified in the 2019 Nous Workforce Development and Training Needs in the Buloke Shire report.
  - 2.1.4** Facilitate a genuine youth voice in Council and Community Planning to achieve better outcomes for young people's health and wellbeing.
- 

### 2.2 INCLUSIVENESS PLAN IN ACTION

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- 2.2.1** Implement and regularly report on the Buloke Inclusiveness Plan and update as needed.
  - 2.2.2** Redefine, implement and report on a Gender Equality Plan and imbed Gender Equality Act into forward work.
  - 2.2.3** Work with local Registered Aboriginal Parties to strengthen relationships with Council and community.
  - 2.2.4** Create a "Holding Buloke's Wisdom" partnership for 60+ to help navigating services and ageing in place priorities.
- 

### 2.3 WELL SUPPORTED COMMUNITY

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- 2.3.1** Continue to develop the Library Service through a dedicated and updated service plan and VAGO recommendations and closer connection of customer service and library.
  - 2.3.2** Actively work with Early Years Providers to improve the early childhood care and education service offerings across the Shire.
  - 2.3.3** Strengthen Strategic Health Partnerships to overcome the many boundaries that cross the Buloke Shire.
  - 2.3.4** Understand and support Covid-19 recovery and adaptation strategies and actions in a place-based way.
- 

### 2.4 INCREASED COMMUNITY WELLBEING

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- 2.4.1** Continue to advocate for improved mental health services and utilise local resources such as the Five Ways to Wellbeing Framework to encourage healthy lifestyles
  - 2.4.2** Support the renewal and implementation of township community plans, including the development of masterplans, to drive improved community connectedness and outcomes.
  - 2.4.3** Champion advocacy on matters that improve connectivity of residents, including public and community transport needs, telehealth and programs offering social connection.
  - 2.4.4** Sustain advocacy around quality of care and access to services, both place based and outreach.
-

# OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

## INDICATORS

Progress on the Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis Action Plan.  
Progress Reports on the Buloke Shire Inclusiveness Plan.  
Positive shift in downward trends as identified in the State of Buloke's Children and Youth Report.  
Review of recommendations achieved from the 2019 Nous Workforce Development and Training Needs in the Buloke Shire report.  
All Community Plans reviewed and renewed.  
Covid Recovery Actions supported.  
Visible and genuine representation from young people.  
Gender Equity Plan and Act requirements upheld.

## CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Buloke Shire Inclusiveness Plan  
Ten Buloke Community 2030 Community Plans  
Buloke, Loddon, Gannawarra Health Needs Analysis  
State of Buloke's Children and Youth Report.  
Loddon Mallee Covid Recovery Plan  
State Youth Strategy  
Rainbow Ready Roadmap

## ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Funding for social connection and community activation opportunities.  
Access to general community wellbeing and mental health support and services.  
Skills and training gaps.



# PRIORITY 3: OUR ECONOMY

## LONG TERM VISION:

**Our future Buloke... is an innovative and strong economy with agriculture, small business and industry capitalising on new ideas to provide a range of employment and tourism opportunities backed by the services, connectivity and housing to achieve population stability.**

### Long Term Aspirations:

New industry and business including entrepreneurs and social enterprise.	Access to affordable (subsidised) childcare under a sustainable rural model.
A range of employment opportunities and action towards filling identified gaps.	Shop-local support from residents.
A range of suitable housing options.	Telecommunications that support modern day business, education and health needs.
Continue to build on exciting tourism attractions and events.	Population stability.

# OUR ECONOMY

<b>Long Term Strategies:</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Council's Role</b>
1. Support the attraction of diverse industries and businesses to the Buloke Shire and provide support for projects that create new jobs.	Leader Supporter Partner
2. Support existing business and industry and actively encourage social enterprise and entrepreneurs.	Leader Supporter Partner
3. Explore solar (renewables), recycling, waste diversion and agricultural industry opportunities.	Leader Facilitator Supporter
4. Provide strengthened leadership and resources to drive investment, economic development and tourism.	Leader Facilitator Supporter
5. Explore opportunities for art, culture and history-based tourism.	Leader Supporter Partner
6. Broadly promote Buloke Shire as a great place to live, work, visit and invest.	Leader Partner
7. Advocate for the increased provision of childcare services and rural models of subsidised childcare.	Facilitator Supporter
8. Determine current and future housing needs and explore innovative approaches that could better support a mixture of housing options e.g. units, retirement and rental housing.	Leader Supporter Partner
9. Undertake workforce planning to ensure future access to a flexible and skilled workforce for a range of business and industry.	Partner Facilitator
10. Improve access to telecommunication services.	Supporter
11. Continue to strengthen, promote and support the Agricultural industry and innovation to ensure a strong local future for the sector.	Facilitator Supporter

## OUR ECONOMY

# COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 STRATEGIES

### **3.1 TOURISM**

- 
- 3.1.1** Build on regional tourism opportunities and the Buloke 'trail' experience (art trail, playspace trail, train trail, shop and eat local trail).
  - 3.1.2** Develop a gap analysis on signage for key tourist wayfinding.
  - 3.1.3** Continue to develop Buloke's water-based tourism by promoting lakes and riverfronts as key tourist attractions for campers and caravanners and support projects such as on-site cabins.
  - 3.1.4** Work with Buloke Tourism to continue to identify and act upon arts and culture opportunities in line with local community plans.
- 

### **3.2 ATTRACTION AND PROMOTION OF LOCAL BUSINESS**

- 
- 3.2.1** Plan for the provision of facilities, such as incubator hubs and co-working spaces, that will support the start up of local enterprise and investigate alternative use for existing, vacant land and facilities for this purpose.
  - 3.2.2** Develop business cases for key opportunities, with a focus on renewable solutions and taking into account future workforce initiatives.
  - 3.2.3** Develop a Buloke events framework to enable local events to take place in the Covid normal environment.
  - 3.2.4** Agriculture-based tourism to promote and enhance local agriculture and value-add.
- 

### **3.3 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- 
- 3.3.1** Build on skills gaps studies, strengthen partnerships with Universities, Charlton Trade Training Centre, Birchip Cropping Group etc.
  - 3.3.2** Redevelop the Buloke Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.
  - 3.3.3** Focus on hospitality and care (aged, disability and early childhood) and key trade workforce gaps.
  - 3.3.4** Implement agreed actions Investment Attraction Guide and the Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy.
- 

### **3.4 DIGITAL CONNECTIONS**

- 
- 3.4.1** Review Blackspots and renew advocacy with increased emphasis on 'remote working'.
  - 3.4.2** Work with Mallee Regional Partnerships to implement key initiatives from the Mallee Digital Strategy.
  - 3.4.3** Identify, support and seek funding for place-based projects aimed at increasing digital literacy.
  - 3.4.4** Advocate for NBN upgrades to fibre connections across Buloke townships to support business growth and the attraction of new businesses.
-

# OUR ECONOMY

## INDICATORS

REMLAN Data on Economic Factors  
Actions and outcomes from Economic Development and Tourism Strategy  
Local Employment Rates  
Buloke Shire Visitor Rates  
Buloke Shire Community Satisfaction Survey  
Outcomes of population growth/ decline against projections  
Number of planned business development activities  
Planning and Building development data across the Shire

## CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Buloke Economic Development and Tourism Strategy  
Buloke Industry, Product and Services Gap Analysis  
Loddon Mallee Economic Recovery Strategy  
Mallee Regional Economic Growth Strategy  
Mallee Digital Strategy  
Mallee Regional Partnership Priorities  
Regional Tourism Plans and Priorities  
Individual Community Plans  
Skills and Workforce Gap Report  
Rural Land Use & Settlements Strategy

## ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Funding for blackspots and internet connection upgrades  
Funding for tourism infrastructure upgrades and a supported tourism industry  
Partnership with relevant universities, RTO's and industry for education and training opportunities  
Product Stewardship for all industries



# PRIORITY 4: OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

## LONG TERM VISION:

**Long Term Vision: Our future Buloke... is dynamically led by a Council that informs community, has active partnerships, authentic advocacy and quality customer service delivering valued community services in a responsible way.**

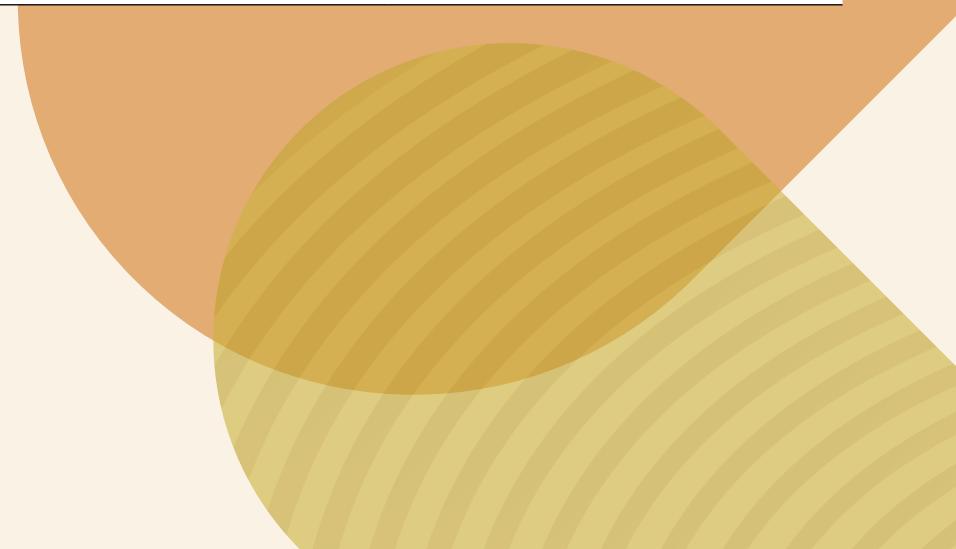
### Long Term Aspirations:

Active partnerships and good communication with Council.	Support community leaders with the skills and knowledge required to advocate for their communities.
Dynamic well supported and recognised volunteers.	Active local laws guidance and support.
Quality customer service and response times.	Valued, supported and recognised volunteers.
Less red tape.	

# OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

## Long Term Strategies:

Strategy	Council's Role
1. Encourage and make clear opportunities for community participation in Council decision making.	Leader Facilitator
2. Employ a range of effective communication methods to actively and openly share information with community members, as per Council's Engagement Policy.	Leader
3. Partner with community and town forums and other key groups to advance agreed community planning priorities and address emerging issues.	Leader Partner Facilitator Supporter
4. Work collaboratively to develop and build community leadership skills.	Supporter Partner
5. Strive for excellence in customer service delivery.	Leader
6. Support, encourage and recognise community volunteers.	Provider Supporter
7. Provide leadership to communities to strengthen relationships and collaboration between community groups and across towns.	Leader Facilitator
8. Work together with the Victorian Government to better support community innovation, investment and jobs through the reduction of unnecessary red tape.	Supporter Partner Regulator
9. Continue to advocate for funding structures, rules, regulations and service models that better fit small rural environments.	Supporter
10. Good connection to other levels of Government and their agencies.	Partner



## OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

# COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025 STRATEGIES

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### 4.1 ACTIVE LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS

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- 4.1.1 Redevelop and implement the Volunteer Action Plan.
  - 4.1.2 Support volunteer attraction initiatives from local community groups.
  - 4.1.3 Support opportunities that inspire leadership within communities, strengthen relationship with NCLLEN Youth Action Council.
  - 4.1.4 Invest in skill development of community groups and leaders, building on the community-led response demonstrated throughout 2020.
  - 4.1.5 Support communities to continue to strengthen the community plan process, timelines and framework to feed into the reviews of key strategic documents.
- 

### 4.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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- 4.2.1 Continue to enhance our online and traditional communication presence to reach all community members with Council information by developing a Communication Strategy.
  - 4.2.2 Provide high quality customer service and foster an all of organisation customer service approach through a revised Customer Service Strategy.
  - 4.2.3 Ensure all customer requests are actioned and recorded in a timely manner by giving all staff the tools to succeed.
  - 4.2.4 Enact Council's Community Engagement Policy by giving Council Officers the tools they need to engage effectively and meet the expectation of our community by establishing a Communications and Engagement Strategy which is regularly reviewed and monitored.
  - 4.2.5 Run regular information sessions on Council operations and opportunities and listening posts in conjunction with the Library Service.
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### 4.3 CONTINUOUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT FOR EFFICIENT AND FLEXIBLE SERVICES

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- 4.3.1 Undertake regular reviews of Council services.
  - 4.3.2 Continue to report on the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.
  - 4.3.3 Identify opportunities to upgrade and streamline Council's systems to create a better experience for residents and staff as identified through the Business Transformation Strategy
  - 4.3.4 Continue to innovate when considering service delivery, including exploring shared service opportunities
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### 4.4 A WELL GOVERNED AND HEALTHY ORGANISATION

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- 4.4.1 Develop responsible cash flow budgets to achieve long term financial sustainability and report quarterly against the delivery.
- 4.4.2 Annually review and adopt an Advocacy Strategy, with a continued focus on supporting the sustainability of rural Councils.
- 4.4.3 Actively pursue funding opportunities from Federal and State Government and other community and private investors.
- 4.4.4 Develop and implement a Workforce Strategy.

# OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

## INDICATORS

Achieve the financial results set out in the 10-year Financial Plan

Improve community satisfaction results for overall performance and customer service

Funding of projects identified in Council's Advocacy Strategy

Volunteer involvement numbers

Number of information sessions undertaken and attendance data

Service Review Data and Reports

Implementation of Workforce Strategy

Business Transformation Strategy Actions

## CURRENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Annual Budget

Financial Plan

Revenue and Rating Plan

Community Engagement Policy and Strategy

Customer Service Charter

Risk Register and Internal Audit Plan

Volunteer Action Plan

Inclusiveness Plan

Individual Town Plans

Business Transformation Strategy

## ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Volunteer support through funding and capacity building

Linkages to networks for community members further leadership skills

Resourcing for gaps identified through service reviews

Shared service opportunities

Advocacy Strategy Priorities





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