

MURRINDINDI SHIRE 2021-25 COUNCIL PLAN



Murrindindi
Shire Council



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Acknowledgement of Country and First Nations Peoples

Murrindindi Shire Council is proud to acknowledge the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land we now call Murrindindi Shire.

We pay our respects to First Nations leaders and elders, past, present and emerging, who are the keepers of history, traditions, knowledge and culture of this land.

We commit to working in collaboration with traditional owners of this land in a spirit of reconciliation and partnership.



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

We are pleased to present Murrindindi Shire Council's 2021-2025 Council Plan.

This Plan is the result of collaboration between Council and the communities of Murrindindi Shire. The Plan outlines our shared goals and aspirations for the future and provides concrete and achievable actions for Council to deliver.

We have all had a chance to think about what is important to us during the COVID-19 pandemic and we have tried to capture our renewed aspirations in this Plan. We are confident that this Plan can help us create a better future for our Shire.

In March 2021, we invited our communities to help 'Shape Our Future' by contributing ideas and thoughts to this Plan and our 10 year Community Vision to let us know what you value for our Shire's future. We are pleased to say that more than 500 of you got in touch. We heard from you in a variety of ways, including online and in person at pop-up kiosks around the Shire, where Councillors and staff captured thoughts and ideas through conversations with you.

We distilled five main themes from what you told us and these form the backbone of this Council Plan. Helpfully, these themes build on the four themes of the previous Council Plan, but now include a greater emphasis on protecting our environment.

- **Resilient Communities**
- **Beautiful Townships and Rural Settings**
- **Growth and Opportunity**
- **Our Protected Environment**
- **Transparency, Inclusion and Accountability**

“ This Plan is a roadmap towards achieving our Community Vision. We will work to deliver on our commitments, monitor progress and measure success in delivering on this Vision for our community over the next four years. ”

You want our communities to be strong, connected and inclusive, with the opportunity for individuals and businesses to grow and thrive. You want our Shire to be an even better place to live and one in which we preserve the rural character and natural beauty of our towns and countryside. You want to protect our natural environment, to be environmentally sustainable and move toward net-zero emissions no later than 2035. You want Councillors and our organisation to listen, be transparent and responsive and to innovate while we help deliver great services to our communities.

We have also identified a range of important strategic advocacy goals to support delivery of the following key initiatives and objectives

- implementation of the Lake Eildon Master Plan
- the ability to embed sustainable practices across the municipality to reduce impact on climate change.
- support for workers, businesses and communities through the State Government's implementation of the Victorian Forestry Plan, which includes phasing out of all native forest harvesting by 2030
- appropriate rezoning of land to enable sustainable residential, commercial and industrial growth
- attaining adequate funding to support implementation of waste and recycling reforms and the crucial shift to a circular economy, including potentially through fairer access to the State Government's Landfill Levy

As is clear in this Plan, we are committing to delivering a range of ambitious strategies for our communities. It is important to note that we do so at a time when an increased burden is being placed on local government to do more – ranging from new governance obligations, climate change mitigation and adaptation, deeper and wider community consultation and communication – while still maintaining the assets and services expected by our communities. We also need to ensure at the same time that we adapt to changing technologies and systems which deliver our services in the best way for our community, including by operating both in the digital and 'real' worlds to meet the different needs and expectations of our community.

This means we will need to continuously review the services we provide and how we provide them. We may need to make hard decisions if warranted, including about Council assets which are under-utilised. This will be an ongoing challenge for Council, but one it is important for us to meet in order for us to maintain a strong long-term financial position.

This Plan is a roadmap towards achieving our Community Vision. We will work to deliver on our commitments, monitor progress and measure our success in delivering on this Vision for our community over the next four years. We will report on our activities to our communities.

This is a Plan for our Shire and for all our communities – it is your Plan. We look forward to working with you to make our Shire an even better place in which to live.



Left to right - Cr Ilona Gerencser, Cr John Walsh, Cr Karine Haslam, Cr Eric Lording, Cr Sandice McAulay, Cr Damien Gallagher and Cr Sue Carpenter.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The Council Plan 2021-2025 is Council's key strategic document. The Plan also contains Council's 10 year Community Vision and 10 year Financial Plan.

The development of this Council Plan was undertaken in challenging circumstances, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We know the emotional and financial effects of the pandemic and related restrictions on our community have been far-reaching. This Plan incorporates measures to help mitigate those impacts on the community, while also advancing a range of other important issues, like further strengthening our engagement with the community - including our First Nations Peoples - and taking urgent action on climate change.

This Plan is ambitious on many levels and represents the collaborative efforts of the community, Councillors and Council officers. It is a credit to staff and Councillors that this Plan is the result of a comprehensive community engagement process, despite on-again, off-again restrictions.

While the opportunities available to us are exciting, like other councils we must find the right balance between our commitment to keep rates as low as possible, while also delivering on our community's expectations and improving upon the services we offer. Like other councils, our rates increases will be limited by the Victorian Government's rate cap. For us, however, this comes on the back of Council's decision to forego a 2% rates increase in the 2020/2021 budget, absorbing CPI increases to deliver a 0% property rate rise, in recognition of the financial burden imposed on our community by the pandemic.

As a small rural Shire, spread over a large geographic area and with dispersed townships, we will always have more requests for services and works than we can afford to deliver. This means we need to assess carefully how we allocate our resources across the Shire.

We have created this Plan to help us negotiate this tricky landscape to deliver great outcomes for our communities. We will continue to advocate for better government policy, improved services and infrastructure for our community, including by seeking funding from other tiers of government to augment our revenue streams. We will also seek to reduce our operating costs through innovative technology, new ways of working, and shared service arrangements with other councils and regional bodies.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the community – individuals, community groups, business operators – who have contributed to this Plan. We trust this Plan meets your expectations. I look forward to working in collaboration with you through the life of this Plan to make our Shire an even better place in which to live, grow, play and work.

Livia Bonazzi, CEO



While the opportunities available to us are exciting, like other councils we must find the right balance between our commitment to keep rates as low as possible, while also delivering on our community's expectations and improving upon the services we offer.

ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

Total population: 13,732

If Murrindindi Shire was represented by 100 workers, there would be:

5 
people walking to work

68 
people driving to work

9 
people working from home

-  **17** working in agriculture, forestry and fishing
-  **12** people working in tourism
-  **11** people working in education and training
-  **10** people working in health care and social assistance
-  **10** people working in construction
-  **8** people working in retail trade
-  **2** people working in accommodation and food services
-  **6** people working in public administration and safety
-  **5** people working in manufacturing

If Murrindindi Shire was made up of 100 people there would be:

- 10** children aged under 10
- 11** young people aged between 10 and 19 years
- 12** people aged between 20 and 34 years
- 19** people aged between 35 and 49 years
- 24** people aged between 50 and 64 years
- 24** people 65 and over



49 **51** 
Females Males

5 people unemployed
29 people who volunteer

- 11** people who were born overseas
- 3** people who speak a language other than English at home
- 6** people who have a disability
- 1** person who is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



- 51** people who are eating enough fruit
- 5** people who are eating enough vegetables
- 45** people who are overweight
- 15** people who are obese
- 18** people (over 18 years of age) who smoke
- 14** people with food insecurity
- 13** people with high or very high psychological distress
- 76** people who feel safe on the street alone
- 7** people who are at an increased lifetime risk of alcohol-related harm
- 5** people who have experienced family violence



Note: you may note that figures don't always add up to 100 as in some cases we have only shown the main categories.
Data sources: Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census. Victorian Women's Health Atlas, 2021 REMPLAN Economy Report.

OUR COMMUNITY'S PRIORITIES

The Council Plan 2021-2025 has been guided by the ideas, priorities and feedback from our community as part of the 'Shaping Our Future' community engagement project. During March and April 2021 we heard from more than 500 community members.

We received community input in a variety of ways, including the following:

- We conducted a detailed online survey via Council's online platform, Dindi – In the Loop (The Loop). This survey encouraged informed participation by sharing current information such as key statistics and details about Council expenditure, before participants responded to questions.
- The survey was also available in paper form at our Library and Customer Service Centres.
- We also hosted a series of pop-up kiosks at local events, markets and community gathering spots, where Councillors and Council staff were able to chat to community members about their ideas and opinions.
- A shorter version of the survey was also available online on The Loop at the pop-up kiosks.
- An 'Easy English' version of the short survey was developed to help people who find it hard to read and understand English.
- We carried out a 'Youth Voice' engagement process with 64 young people from across the Shire.

Through those engagement processes, our community told us a lot about what they value most in our Shire, including

- the spirit of a community where people care for one another
- our wide open spaces and rural lifestyle, but still with close proximity to Melbourne
- our gorgeous natural environment, scenic beauty and healthy lifestyle options available to us all
- the volunteers, community groups and lots of opportunities to get involved and contribute to the community
- access to a wide range of amenities and facilities, including shops, schools, community hubs and sporting facilities
- vibrancy of our attractions, towns and localities which help the community to stay active and reduce isolation

“You want our communities to be strong, connected and inclusive, with the opportunity for individuals and businesses to grow and thrive.”

We also heard some great ideas about how we can make our Shire an even better place to live and visit.

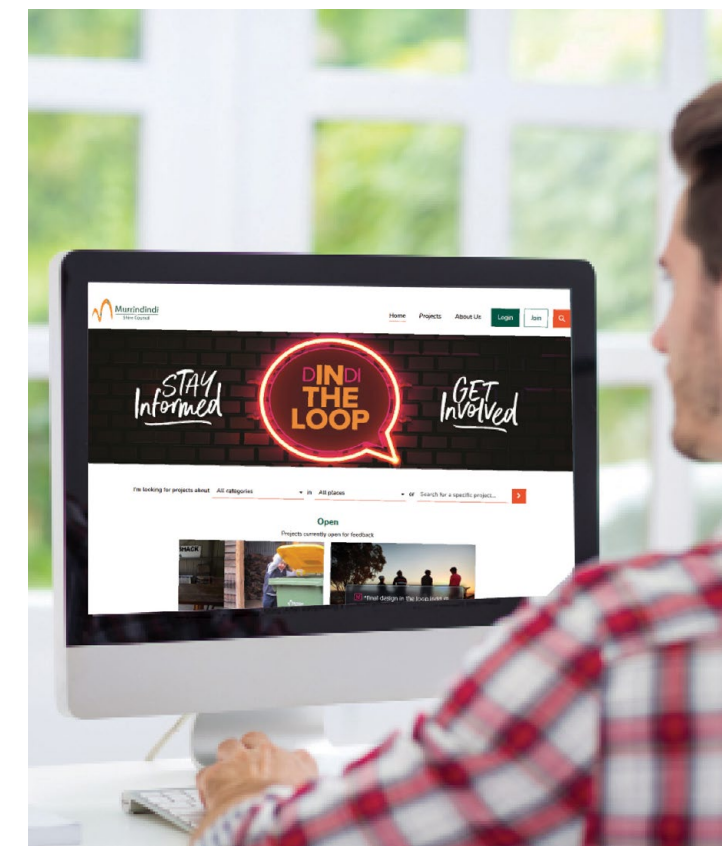
Our community told us they want Council to focus on

- protecting our natural environment and taking action on climate change
- supporting healthy and connected communities, with a particular focus on our youngest and oldest community members
- ensuring we remain inclusive, embrace diversity and encourage everyone to get involved in community life
- honouring our heritage, both First Nations and those coming after
- improving access to health and community services, including mental health
- supporting our volunteers and valuing our community groups
- nurturing our artist community and promoting creativity
- further developing the recreational opportunities for improved community health and wellbeing
- supporting new and existing businesses, with a particular focus on support for the timber industry during the phasing out of native forest timber harvesting
- improving disability-access of our buildings, paths and walkways, as well as public transport between townships across the Shire
- improving liveability of our towns through tree planting and drinking taps
- making sure we balance growth within our Shire with protection of heritage and our environment
- ensuring Council manages its finances and rates responsibly
- building on our communication and engagement with the community
- improving Council's business practices and customer service, focusing on transparency sustainability and innovation

We also talked with young people from across the Shire, asking them what Council could do to support them in 2021 and beyond.

They told us they would like to see

- more music and arts programs
- initiatives to support physical and mental health and wellbeing of young people
- community events and sporting opportunities
- a focus on employment pathways and improved public transport
- increasing the presence of young people in decision making processes



MURRINDINDI SHIRE'S 10-YEAR COMMUNITY VISION

Through our combined efforts, our community is vibrant and resilient. We

- are inclusive, embrace diversity and encourage the participation of all
- welcome new residents and visitors to enjoy and contribute to our Shire
- respect and celebrate the cultural heritage of our First Nations People and those who have come before us
- actively support the current and future needs and aspirations of people of all ages and abilities
- enjoy, participate in and promote culture and the arts, sport and recreation
- are leaders in waste reduction and combating climate change
- protect our natural environment and biodiversity and preserve our rural landscapes
- grow through managed land development, business entrepreneurship and enhanced learning opportunities

Our Community Vision describes our community's long-term hopes, dreams and aspirations for Murrindindi Shire. This Vision belongs to both Council and the Murrindindi Shire community and can only be realised through our partnership and collaboration.

The Community Vision has guided the development of this Council Plan and will also inform development and implementation of our annual Priority Action Plans, key strategies and other influential documents. It will also be used for advocacy and grant-seeking as Council works to build our Shire.

Our Community Vision describes our community's long-term hopes, dreams and aspirations for Murrindindi Shire.

OUR COUNCIL VALUES

As the seven Councillors democratically-elected to represent the community as the Murrindindi Shire Council, we are committed to working together in the best interests of the people who live in, conduct business in or visit our municipality.

Implicit in our Councillor Code of Conduct are the following values, to which we commit in carrying out our roles as Councillors:

INTEGRITY

We will always act with honesty and integrity and demonstrate high standards of professionalism. We will:

- be open and honest in all dealings with the community, other Councillors and with Council staff
- follow through on commitments
- represent our views truthfully
- support one another and staff if treated unfairly or without respect
- be open to constructive feedback
- accept responsibility for mistakes, treating them as a learning opportunity

RESPECT

- respect the views, contributions, feelings, wishes and rights of others
- actively seek to understand others' experiences, ideas and perspectives
- embrace and appreciate diversity of origin, viewpoint, experience and lifestyle
- recognise the achievements of others

INCLUSION

We will value the contribution and individuality of others and commit to develop open and positive working relationships. We will:

- foster community cohesion and encourage active participation within the community
- embrace each other's differences, values, culture and perspectives
- commit to early advice and *no surprises*
- freely share information and knowledge with one another
- cooperate, collaborate with and encourage others
- be objective and flexible and willing to compromise
- ensure Council decisions are focussed on the best outcomes for the entire municipality

COLLABORATION

We will:

- operate cohesively
- work together with the community through accessible and inclusive engagement
- strive to build effective working relationships

LEADERSHIP

We will strongly represent and advocate on behalf of the community and exercise courage in our leadership and decision-making. We will:

- welcome the opinions of the community and respect their right to be heard
- champion issues on behalf of the community in a constructive and timely manner
- advocate the interests of the local community to other communities and governments
- take pride in representing the community and the municipality
- make decisions based on the perceived best interests of the entire municipality
- present Council as a cohesive and effective working unit
- act without fear or favour.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND HONESTY

We will:

- make decisions openly and publicly whenever possible
- take responsibility for our actions and decisions
- honour commitments
- act with integrity and honesty in all dealings
- openly report our performance and acknowledge our mistakes

INITIATIVE

We aim to achieve continuous improvement in performance and the highest standards and outcomes for the Murrindindi Shire. In doing so we will:

- question the way things have been done in the past
- always look for better ways to work together and to achieve outcomes on behalf of the community
- be result and outcome focused at all times
- encourage a positive culture focused on results and high-quality customer service
- strive to exceed community expectations
- adopt straightforward and realistic approaches
- acknowledge good results to staff when noticed

6 You want Councillors and our organisation to listen, be transparent and responsive and to innovate while we help deliver great services to our communities.



COUNCIL PLAN FRAMEWORK

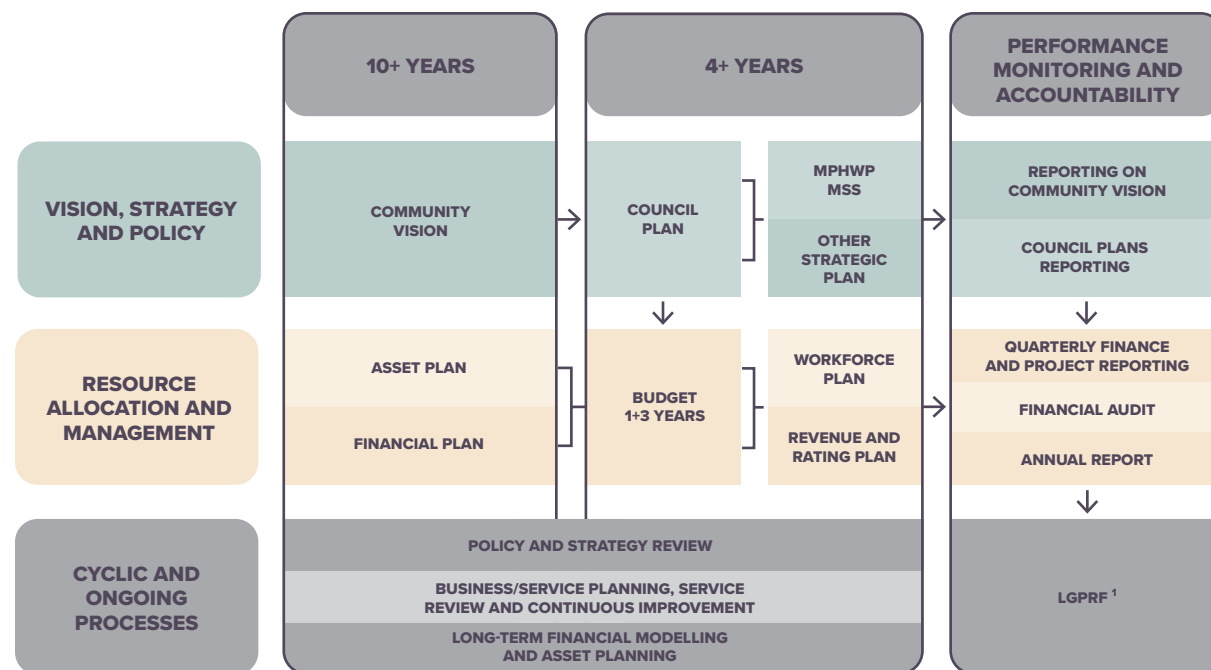


Figure 1 - Source Local Government Victoria

The Murrindindi Shire 10-year Community Vision developed in partnership with the community sets out the goals, opportunities and aspirations of our community. This Vision provides a guide to Council in setting its objectives and strategies.

The Council Plan 2021-2025 sets out what Council is undertaking to achieve over its four-year term and the resources that are needed to deliver the Plan.

The main components of the Council Plan are

- strategic directions aligned to key areas our community and Councillors deemed a priority to address
- strategic objectives which describe the overall goals we aim to achieve
- strategies for achieving the objectives over the next four years
- strategic indicators to measure our success in meeting our objectives
- a 10-year Financial Plan which sets out the financial resources required

The development of the Council Plan 2021-2025 has been informed by extensive community consultation, in line with Council's commitment to continuing to engaging more deeply with its community and in order to comply with new provisions of the Local Government Act 2020. Community input is critical for us to understand our community's needs and for us to effectively deliver for our community.

Each year we prepare a Priority Action Plan and an Annual Budget that ensure we remain focussed on concrete delivery of the Council Plan and have the resources allocated appropriately to do so. At the end of each year we publish an Annual Report which informs our community of Council's performance against our strategies and actions and our other statutory obligations.

Each year we also review the strategies in the Council Plan to ensure they remain focused on achieving our Vision and the Plan's broader objectives. Our community is invited to make comment on any proposed adjustments before any changes to the Plan are adopted.

Community input is critical for us to understand our community's needs and for us to effectively deliver for our community.

¹LGPRF: Local Government Performance Reporting Framework. More information at [knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au](https://www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au)

OUR COMMITMENT

OUR OBJECTIVES

We have committed to five strategic objectives under five strategic directions which will drive the work we do, and the services we deliver over the next four years, in partnership with our community.

The strategic directions and objectives reflect the values, priorities and aspirations of the Murrindindi Shire community as expressed in our 'Shaping Our Future' community engagement.

They address the things about Murrindindi Shire that our community told us are important to create opportunity and improve quality of life, wellbeing and the liveability of our towns and places.

Each year we also review the strategies in the Council Plan to ensure they remain focused on achieving our Vision and the Plan's broader objectives. Our community is invited to make comment on any proposed adjustments before any changes to the Plan are adopted.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Our five strategic directions are represented in the diagram below with our Community Vision at the centre of what we do. We acknowledge that all our efforts to deliver a 4-year Council Plan must be with our community and their future in mind.



1. RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Objective: To ensure we are welcoming, inclusive, caring and connected.

We recognise that resilient communities are connected communities with access to services that support physical and mental health in a safe environment. We value the community's diversity and are committed to inclusion, access and equity for everyone. We will build on this quality by encouraging participation and involvement. These principles foster cohesiveness, empower people and improve resilience and the wellbeing of the community.



1. RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Objective: To ensure we are welcoming, inclusive, caring and connected.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

‘Our communities are involved and connected with each other to maintain healthy lifestyles for all ages.’

‘Our community is healthy with a vibrant local culture, we listen to and work with the Taungurung.’

‘Embracing and supporting the vibrant arts and culture of the region.’

‘Encourage a strong sense of community.’

‘Inclusive to all ages, all abilities, all life choices and religions.’

Our community asked for:	• more support for community groups • improved accessibility to health and community services • provision of programs for families, youth and children • strengthened engagement with the community • greater focus on diversity and inclusion within our communities • promotion and support for volunteerism and participation
We will:	1.1. celebrate the community’s vibrant, diverse and creative people 1.2. deliver, support and promote opportunities for all people to connect with each other, collaborate and plan for our future 1.3. advocate for improved access to health and community services 1.4. in collaboration with our community, support our children and young people to be happy, healthy and engaged 1.5. engage with the community and partner organisations to enable older and vulnerable people to live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved 1.6. provide and promote safe, passive and active recreational opportunities that will enhance the health, and wellbeing of residents and visitors
We will know we have succeeded if we have:	• increased community events supported by Council • community satisfaction with family support services (External) • maintained a strong position in relation to participation in library programs and provided programs for all ages and stages of life (Local Government Performance Reporting - LGPRF) • maintained strong position in relation to active library memberships (LGPRF) • increased participation by young people in Council activities and services • maintain high levels volunteerism in the municipality (External) • increased participation in Council’s engagement activities (The Loop) • improvements in Maternal Child Health indicators (External) • improvements in aquatic facilities indicators (LGPRF)
Council Services supporting Resilient Communities:	• Community Services – including Youth, Recreation, Children and Maternal Child Services • Murrindindi Library Service • Emergency Recovery
Relevant Strategies / Plans	• Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan • Municipal Emergency Management Plan • Municipal Fire Management Plan • Municipal Recovery Plan • Recreation and Open Space Strategy • COVID Community Recovery Plan • Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan • Community Engagement Policy • Arts and Culture Policy • Child Safe Policy

2. BEAUTIFUL TOWNSHIPS AND RURAL SETTINGS

Objective: To create a better place for our community and visitors to live in harmony with our rural character, natural beauty and heritage.

The unique character, history, scenic beauty and ambience of our places, spaces and the health of our natural environment are highly valued by our communities. We will ensure our built environments are well planned to enable sensible growth that does not compromise the natural environment, nor the liveability, accessibility and character of our towns and localities.

2. BEAUTIFUL TOWNSHIPS AND RURAL SETTINGS

Objective: To create a better place for our community and visitors to live in harmony with our rural character, natural beauty and heritage.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

‘Make our towns as attractive and as liveable as possible.’

‘Cooperative mix of rural and residential lifestyles.’

‘It’s important to make sure our parks, gardens and reserves will be able to deal with climate change.’

‘Acknowledging traditional owners.’

‘Inclusive to all ages, all abilities, all life choices and religions.’

‘We should also be looking to maintain our heritage buildings and main streetscape.’

‘Easy access to buildings, footpaths, car parks and shops.’

Our community asked for:	• more tracks, trails and pathways for walking and cycling • a greater focus on accessibility across our towns and townships • protection of our open spaces • more parking including for larger vehicles • continued focus on streetscapes with more trees and better signage • better roads between our communities
We will:	2.1. connect our communities through improved roads, footpaths and public transport 2.2. deliver efficient, sustainable land use planning outcomes to enhance liveability, protect our unique rural character and natural beauty, and to enable growth 2.3. provide fit-for-purpose infrastructure that meets current and future service demands and needs of our community 2.4. provide spaces within our towns that are vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible
We will know we have succeeded if we have:	• delivered >80% of the Annual Capital Works Program • reduced number of accidents on roads and footpaths within the municipality • increased participation in public transport • increased participation in Moving Murrindindi Community Transportation • increased community satisfaction with the appearance of public areas • increased community satisfaction with Council’s (land use) Planning Policy • improved Customer Satisfaction Survey and LGPRF results for indicators relating to roads • increase in number of planning applications • >70% of planning applications completed within 60 days (LGPRF) • Above average results for LGPRF indicator for Aquatic Facilities when compared to similar sized councils
Council Services supporting Beautiful Townships and Rural Settings:	• Infrastructure Maintenance • Environmental Programs • Land Use Planning, Community Safety, Building Approvals, Environmental Health • Waste Management and Recycling • Emergency Response
Relevant Strategies / Plans	• Municipal Strategic Statement • Murrindindi Shire Heritage Study • Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy • Municipal Emergency Management Plan • Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan and Design Framework • Yea Structure Plan • Eildon Structure Plan • Domestic Animal Management Plan • Domestic Wastewater Management Plan • Roadside Weed and Pest Animal Control Plan • Proposed Recreation Action Plan • Proposed Environment Action Plan



3. GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY

Objective: To prioritise and promote a culture in which the economy, businesses and community can grow and thrive.

We recognise that growth and opportunity are key to supporting individual aspirations and our communities. We will ensure that opportunities to encourage our businesses, social enterprises and industry sectors to grow and thrive are pursued. We will support businesses to start, grow or transition, promote tourism, facilitate access to support and training, and embrace activities that help boost local employment and investment.

3. GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY

Objective: To prioritise and promote a culture in which the economy, businesses and community can grow and thrive.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

‘More focus on supporting young people to get jobs.’

‘Focus on ways to harness sustainable tourism.’

‘Improve telecommunications across Murrindindi (Shire), get rid of blackspots.’

‘Forestry and transitioning impacted workers into new sustainable work.’

‘Melbourne people are beginning to realise how close the Shire is, hence we should concentrate on encouraging people to visit.’

‘Supporting new business and ventures, where possible, focussing on those that create job opportunities.’

Our community asked for:	• support for existing and attracting new business to foster new and innovative industries • sustainable, environmentally-focused tourism sector • education and employment opportunities • support for events and attractions that bring visitors to the area • job opportunities and pathways for youth • improved telecommunications
We will:	3.1. boost local investment and employment opportunities through activities that encourage businesses, social enterprise and industry sectors to thrive and grow 3.2. support and promote our tourism and events sector to boost the economy through increased visitation 3.3. partner with community members, businesses, and other organisations affected by the state-government-led transition out of native forest harvesting
We will know we have succeeded if we have:	• increased interaction with our businesses • increased business investment • an increased number of new planning approvals • increased visitation to the Shire • 75% completion/implementation rate of relevant strategies and plans
Council Services supporting Growth and Opportunity:	• Tourism and Events • Land Use Planning Policy and Approvals • Building approvals • Environmental Health
Relevant Strategies / Plans	• Lake Eildon Masterplan • Tourism and Events Strategy • Great Victorian Rail Trail Strategic Development Plan • Activating Growth in Murrindindi – An Implementation Plan • COVID-19 Business Recovery Plan



4. OUR PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT

Objective: To protect and enhance our natural environment, supporting environmental sustainability, community resilience, innovation and adaptation to climate change to achieve net-zero emissions by 2035.

We are fortunate to live in one of the most diverse and beautiful places in the world. We recognise that the prosperity and wellbeing of our communities depends on a healthy environment, and a healthy environment depends on us making ecologically-sustainable choices. We will continue to value our natural landscapes and biodiversity and share the responsibility of being climate ready and leaders in resource management to help our Shire grow and thrive.

4. OUR PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT

Objective: To protect and enhance our natural environment, supporting environmental sustainability, community resilience, innovation and adaptation to climate change to achieve net-zero emissions by 2035.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

‘Climate change mitigation and environmental protections have to be the number one lens through which we plan everything until atmospheric gases that are blanketing the earth are stabilized/reversed.’

‘Better maintenance of our bushland reserves is needed especially regarding pest plants and pest animals such as foxes and rabbits.’

‘Capitalise on the abundant natural beauty we are surrounded by.’

‘Our environment underpins the health of our community and should be the first consideration in everything that we do, it is what we all love about the place, and we are nothing without it.’

‘The Indigenous people of Australia walked gently on this land - I would like us to acknowledge and listen and learn from them.’

Our community asked for:	• climate change action and emergency preparedness and related community education • biodiversity protection and habitat restoration • improved waste management, including recycling of soft plastics and green waste • genuine partnership with First Nations Peoples and organisations • protection of our waterways and wetlands • support for efficient and regenerative agricultural practices
We will:	4.1. minimise waste and increase recycling to reduce our environmental footprint 4.2. in partnership with the community, provide education and training to improve ecologically-sustainable outcomes 4.3. in partnership with the community, develop and deliver climate adaptation and mitigation programs and practices to reduce our environmental impact 4.4. protect our waterways and improve associated human health outcomes
We will know we have succeeded if we have:	• increased waste diversion from landfill (LGPRF) • maintained high levels of community satisfaction with Waste Services • strengthened community engagement in safety planning and preparation • community satisfaction with Council's (Land Use) Planning Policy • reduced Council's emissions • increased expenditure on recycled products as a percentage of overall expenditure • reduction of Co2 emissions from Council's fleet
Council Services supporting Our Protected Environment:	• Environmental Programs • Land Use Planning, Community Safety, Building Approvals, Environmental Health • Waste Management and Recycling
Relevant Strategies / Plans	• Municipal Strategic Statement • Murrindindi Shire Heritage Study • Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy • Municipal Emergency Management Plan • Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan and Design Framework • Yea Structure Plan • Eildon Structure Plan • Domestic Animal Management Plan • Domestic Wastewater Management Plan • Roadside Weed and Pest Animal Control Plan

A full-page background image showing two women hiking on a dirt path through a sun-dappled forest. The woman on the left is wearing a green sweater and black leggings, while the woman on the right is wearing a light blue shirt, dark shorts, and a backpack. The path is covered in dry leaves and surrounded by tall trees.

5. TRANSPARENCY, INCLUSION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Objective: To ensure our services, people and systems deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities now and into the future.

Our organisation will be innovative, accountable and focused on achieving the community's needs and priorities. Our workplace is equitable, flexible and focused on health, safety and wellbeing, as our staff are integral in effective and responsive service delivery. We value working with our communities to prioritise, plan and advocate for the needs now and into the future.

5. TRANSPARENCY, INCLUSION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Objective: To ensure our services, people and systems deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities now and into the future.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

‘Listen to community and think big.’

‘Transparency and fairness, equality when accessing Council.’

‘Sustainable, connected, with people who are happy, employed and empowered.’

‘A focus on using new technologies as well as the existing statement items.’

‘Dynamic, responsive, responsible.’

‘Community consultation, responsive to local needs and safe caring community.’

‘Respectful partnerships. Being heard...listened to.’

Our community asked for:	• community-focused customer service • increased innovation in Council services • a greater focus on financial sustainability • efficient and effective use of Council's resources • fair and equitable facilities and services for all communities • better communication and consultation with the community • support to empower communities to plan for the future
We will:	5.1. put the customer first in everything we do 5.2. ensure Council remains financially-sustainable through sound management, forward planning, innovative service delivery and asset consolidation as appropriate 5.3. evaluate and pursue new commercial opportunities 5.4. provide a workplace that is flexible and inclusive to support the health and wellbeing of our employees 5.5. maintain transparent, inclusive and accountable governance practices 5.6. communicate effectively using multiple methods with our customers and communities about our work and services 5.7. improve emergency readiness through active emergency management planning to enhance community preparedness and resilience 5.8. establish a team approach in partnership with our communities to represent our collective interest to the State and Federal Governments
We will know we have succeeded if we have:	• increased community satisfaction with our consultation and engagement • increased community satisfaction with our lobbying on behalf of the community • increased community satisfaction with our customer service • increased customer satisfaction with our customer service • positive trends in the Victorian Auditor General's ratings of Council's financial sustainability • maintained high levels of staff satisfaction working at Council • completed all annual items in the Gender Equality Action Plan • improved results for our Gender Equality Audit indicators • reduced Lost Time Injury Rates • 100% completion of training programs • Continuous improvements in condition index of Asset Categories • improvements in relevant LGPRF indicators when compared to similar councils
Council Services supporting Transparency, Inclusion and Accountability:	• Integrity and Governance • Finance • Human Resources • Risk Management including OHS • Procurement and Probity • Communications • Community Engagement • Customer Service • Infrastructure Assets
Relevant Strategies / Plans	• Rating Strategy • Enterprise Risk Management Guidelines • IT Strategic Plan • Business Continuity Plan • Protective Data Security Plan • Annual Fraud and Corruption Control program • Communication Strategy • Social Media Strategy



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