

Discover  
Northern  
Grampians



2025-29

# COUNCIL PLAN

and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

To love where we live

Northern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges Traditional Owners; Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagalk and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples who are the Traditional Custodians of the land we call Northern Grampians Shire.

We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to our other Aboriginal clans.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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## 1.1

## From the Mayor



**On behalf of my fellow councillors, we are proud to introduce the 2025-29 Council Plan – our first as new council.**

All councils must produce a council plan – a key document used to set organisations' medium-term priorities – every four years.

Our 2025-29 Council Plan includes a series of strategic objectives, along with detailed explanations about how we plan to achieve them.

This plan sits hand-in-hand with many of our other plans and strategies, including our 10-year Asset Plan, 10-year Financial Plan and 10-year economic development strategy. It also provides direction for the four-year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, which you will find directly incorporated in this document.

The MPHWP helps guide our policies, partnerships and initiatives related to health and wellbeing, with a focus on collaboration, place-based approaches and health equity. This year we acknowledge our alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

All these above-mentioned plans take into account our Northern Grampians Community Vision 2041.

This vision – 'To love where you live' – was developed with community input as part of the 2021-25 Council Plan process and is at the forefront of this current Council Plan, informing the development of our latest goals, strategies, actions and tasks.

Just like our Community Vision, community input was vital to the development of our 2025-29 Council Plan.

Put simply, we could not have created this document without the input of our fantastic communities, and we thank everyone who filled in the community and youth council plan surveys, attended a listening post, or attended targeted community and stakeholder workshops.

Your efforts helped us determine what matters to our residents most and ensured we developed a plan that reflects our community's voice.

The 2025-29 Council Plan outlines our municipality's emerging challenges and opportunities, covering topics such as our ageing population; housing; vulnerability to natural disasters; renewable energy; health and wellbeing; financial sustainability; and economic diversification and business growth.

It also showcases our demographics, along with our new goals – 'Live it up', 'Build it up', 'Business buzz', 'Clean it up' and 'Do it well'.

I urge you to take the time to read through the strategies we will use to achieve these goals, along with the 40 key actions and hundreds of tasks we will pursue.

While our goals, strategies and actions will not change throughout the next four years, our tasks might, depending on annual considerations such as resource allocations and budgets.

This Council Plan outlines our direction for the next four years and how we will track our progress. We are committed to completing these goals and ticking off tasks throughout the next four years.

Councillors and staff have put in countless hours of work to develop this blueprint for our community and we hope you also feel a sense of pride and ownership of this document.

We all have a desire to see Northern Grampians Shire continue to prosper and ensure it is a progressive and supportive region in which to live, work, invest and visit.

**Cr Karen Hyslop,**  
Northern Grampians Shire Council Mayor

## 1.2

## Your Councillors

Northern Grampians Shire has six elected councillors, representing three municipal electoral wards. A council term is for a period of four years, with the current councillors elected to serve for the term November 2024 to October 2028.

In November 2024, Cr Karen Hyslop was elected Mayor and Cr Justine Hide was elected Deputy Mayor for a one-year term.

### Kara Kara Ward

Karen Probst  
Murray Emerson

### Central Ward

Karen Hyslop  
Jenny Greenberger

### Grampians Ward

Justine Hide  
Jack Blake



From left, back, Cr Jack Blake, Cr Murray Emerson and Cr Justine Hide; and front, Cr Karen Probst, Cr Karen Hyslop and Cr Jenny Greenberger.

## Council Values

Council's core values guide the way in which staff engage with the community and the work we undertake.



## Councils Role

Australia has three levels of government that work together to provide the services needed by the community. All levels of government raise money through collecting taxes (or rates) to pay for the services they provide to all Australians. At each level of government, representatives are elected to represent their respective communities.

As an organisation, Northern Grampians Shire Council works in partnership with all levels of government and local community to deliver over 60 services to Northern Grampians residents.



### Federal Government

Responsible for issues that affect all Australians (national issues)

- Medicare, Centrelink, payments and pensions
- Post, telephone networks and the internet
- Money
- Immigration
- International trade and defense

### State/Territory Government

Responsible for issues that affect people in that state or territory

- Public Transport
- Schools
- Hospitals and health services
- Police, prisons and emergency services
- Public housing
- Environmental protections and state parks
- Major roads and freeways
- National and State Parks

### Local Government (Councils)

Responsible for issues that affect local communities

- Rubbish collection and recycling
- Community infrastructure such as community buildings, local parks, playgrounds and sporting fields
- Cultural and community activities, and libraries
- Regulatory services such as Local Laws, Planning and Environmental Health Permits, and pet control
- Land use planning
- Local roads
- Maternal and Child Health
- Health promotion
- Reconciliation, Land Use Activity Agreements and Cultural Heritage Protection

There are various roles that council plays in leading, guiding and managing our townships and community, including:

- **Advocate.** We highlight the needs and priorities of the Northern Grampians community to state and federal governments and key stakeholders, and we support or lead campaigns that drive positive change.
- **Partner.** We build strong, trusted relationships, both formal and informal, to collaborate with others and work toward shared goals.
- **Deliver.** We deliver a variety of services, infrastructure, and support to meet the needs of individuals and community groups. We offer support including grants and contributions to help local groups and organisations grow, deliver services, and enhance infrastructure. We provide information, raise awareness, and develop skills and knowledge to enable individuals and groups to succeed.
- **Seek funding.** We actively pursue external funding from Federal and State Governments, and other entities such as development partners, to support and deliver the community's priorities.
- **Fund.** We offer support including grants and subsidies to help local groups and organisations grow, deliver services, and enhance infrastructure. We provide information, raise awareness, and develop skills and knowledge to enable individuals and groups to succeed.
- **Investigate.** We proactively plan services, programs, and infrastructure to meet the current and future community needs.
- **Regulate.** We safeguard the public interest through effective governance by controlling or directing activities in accordance with legislation, policies, and standards.



## Community Vision

The community vision was created by the community as part of the development of the 2021-2025 Council Plan. Community engagement undertaken to inform the development of the 2025-2029 Council Plan reconfirmed this is as the Community Vision. The Community Vision is a shared hope of how our community sees life here in the next 15 years. It is all about what the community wants

and hopes for people living in the Northern Grampians. It serves as a guide for collective action and decision-making to make that vision a reality.

This vision is at the forefront of this Council Plan, informing the development of the goals, strategies, initiatives and actions.

### OUR VISION

## To love where we live



### GOAL 1

**Live it up**  
Health, wellbeing and  
community goals

- 1.1 People feel connected, included and safe
- 1.2 Supporting healthy communities
- 1.3 Improving outcomes for children and young people



### GOAL 2

**Build it up**  
Education, housing and  
skills goals

- 2.1 Unlock land and housing
- 2.2 Building our workforce



### GOAL 3

**Business buzz**  
Agriculture, economy and  
tourism goals

- 3.1 Supporting farming and rural industries
- 3.2 Building vibrant local businesses
- 3.3 Enhancing tourism experiences



### GOAL 4

**Clean it up**  
Sustainability, climate and  
waste goals

- 4.1 Climate adaptation and preparedness
- 4.2 Cut waste and recycle properly
- 4.3 Drive energy efficiency
- 4.4 Protect our land, water and wildlife



### GOAL 5

**Do it well**  
Infrastructure, finance and  
corporate services goals

- 5.1 Asset Renewal and Maintenance Program
- 5.2 Financial viability
- 5.3 Responsive, innovative and efficient



1.6

## Our shire at a glance

### People & Place


**11,948**

Residents

**49**

Median age

**5,918**

sq. kms in size

**3,370**

kms of local roads

**1,342,450**

sq. m of open space

#### NGS

One of the most culturally diverse Local Government Areas in Western Victoria

**229**

Residents are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**50.1%**

Male


**49.9%**

Female


**35%**

Aged over 60


**5.1%**

Identify as LGBTIQA


**18.8%**

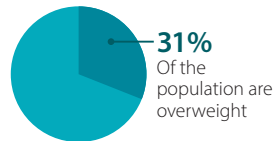
Born overseas


**5.9%**

Born in non-English speaking countries



### Health & Wellbeing


**31%**

Of the population are overweight

**7.72%**

Of population have a severe or profound disability (SA 6.1%)

**13.5%**

People experience food insecurity

**35.7%**

Have a chronic health condition (SA 27%)

**59%**

65 and over have two or more chronic conditions (SA 46%)

**26%**

Experience high to very high psychological distress



Lower than state average access to GP's


**74%**

Children with at least one decayed, missing or filled tooth


**3077**

Family violence incidents in 2023-24 (SA 1418)


**59%**

Alcohol-related ambulance attendances

**18%**

Of adults currently smoke tobacco


**77%**

18-24 year olds identified boredom/nothing to do as their primary concern

**14%**

Young people have a long-term mental health condition (SA 10.6%)

SA: State Average

## Our shire at a glance

### Economy & Education


**\$1,037B**

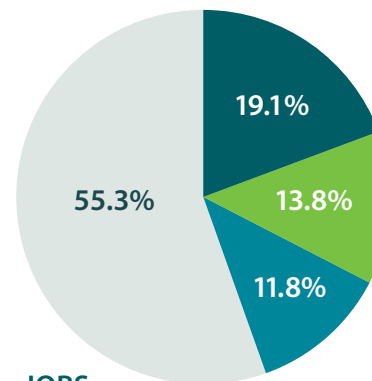
Gross regional product

**1,213**

Local businesses

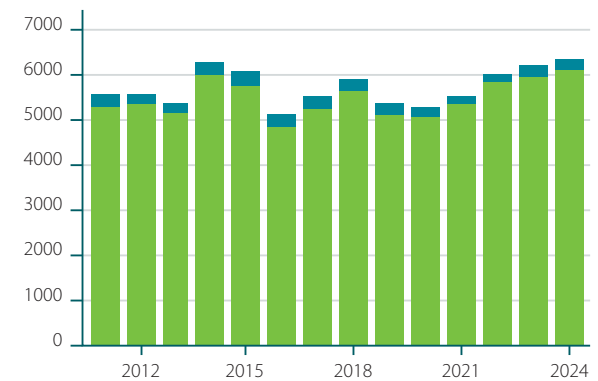
**500,000+**

Annual visitors



#### JOBS

- Health care & social assistance
- Agriculture, forestry & fishing
- Manufacturing
- Other



Employed Unemployed

The number of employed residents in June 2024 is estimated at 6,112 people, with 253 people unemployed


**53%**

Labour force participation rate (SA 62%)


**4%**

Unemployment rate (SA 3.7%)


**50%+**

More than half of households within Northern Grampians Shire are classified as low-income


**38%**

Completed Year 12 or its equivalent (SA 59%)


**77%**

Of 16 year olds engaged in full-time secondary education (SA 88.55%)


**⦿**

Education and employment, cost of living and climate/natural disasters identified as top challenges for young people

SA: State Average



## Our shire at a glance



## 2. UNDERSTANDING THIS DOCUMENT



## 2.1

## The Council Plan

The Council Plan is more than a formal document, it is a four-year guide for how council will support the Northern Grampians Community Vision 2041, "To love where we live." Created with community input in 2021 and updated in 2025, this vision statement represents the community's aspiration for the future.

The plan will help council focus on what matters most, tackling key challenges and making the most of opportunities across the region within council's capacity and resources. Council's four-year plan was shaped by community feedback, current data, long-term strategies such as the 10-year Economic Development Strategy, and other state and regional plans.

Just as importantly, it is a practical plan, one that balances the community's needs with the council's capacity and financial realities. It will ensure council is putting its resources where they count, staying realistic while aiming high.

### How to read this plan

The Council Plan outlines the strategic framework that guides council's planning and decision-making over the current council term.

It sets out a clear direction for how the council will work towards delivering long-term community vision while

In this Plan, the term 'community' is used in its broadest sense to acknowledge the many diverse groups who live, work and visit our municipality. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people of all ages, abilities, genders, and faiths - each bringing unique ideas, strengths and needs that enrich our community.

The plan will inform council's annual budget and business planning, guiding everyday decisions and actions within council.

Council will continue working closely with the community throughout the life of the council plan process, monitoring and reporting on our progress at both quarterly and annual intervals, and staying aligned with our shared vision, while being clear-eyed about what is achievable.

responding to current priorities and challenges. The framework is structured around seven key components. Each element of the plan plays a vital role in shaping the future of the shire. Together, they provide a roadmap for meaningful action and measurable progress.

<b>Community Vision</b>	The long-term vision that outlines the aspirations of the community.
<b>Goals</b>	The five (5) goals (outcomes) that council seeks to achieve over the next four years.
<b>Strategies</b>	The fifteen (15) strategies council will use to achieve each goal.
<b>Actions</b>	The forty (40) actions council will pursue to achieve each strategy.
<b>Tasks</b>	Specific tasks council will focus on over the four-year period to support achievement of the above actions. A list of annual tasks will be set for each of the strategies (please see appendix 1 for further information).
<b>Performance Measurement</b>	This is how council will monitor and report on our progress in achieving the overarching goals across the council term, with a 70% task completion rate benchmark established each financial year aligned with annual budgetary and resourcing considerations. This means council is aiming to complete, or substantially complete, at least 70% of the deliverables defined in the Annual Budget material.
<b>Supporting Strategies and Plans</b>	Key supporting strategies and long-term plans that align with the achievement of the Council Plan goals.

It is important to note that while the annual tasks may change, the four-year goals, strategies and associated actions outlined in this Council Plan will remain consistent over the council term, ensuring a stable yet flexible approach can be adopted.

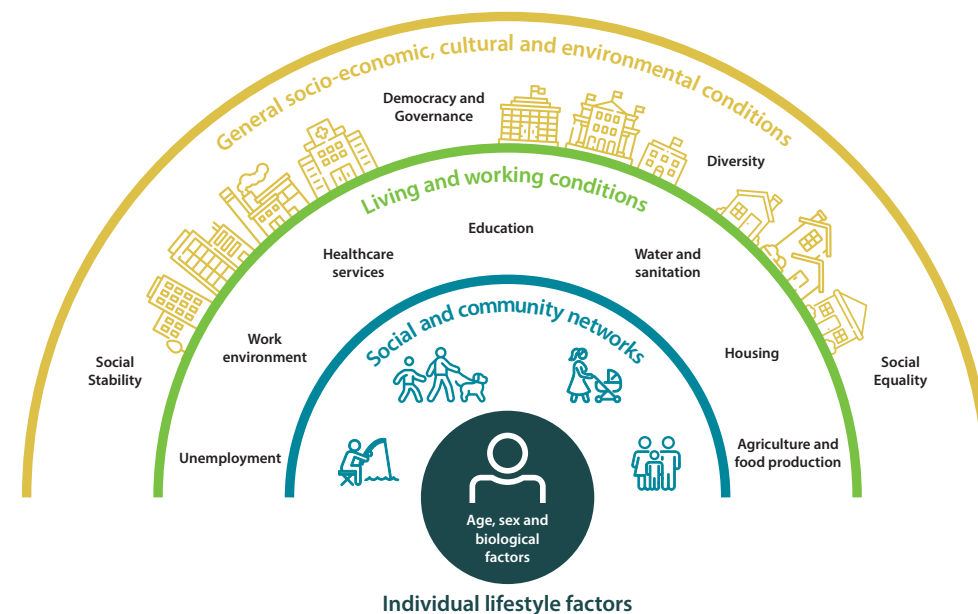
## 2.2

## The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, councils must develop a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan every four years. This plan guides council's policies, partnerships and initiatives related to health and wellbeing, with a focus on collaboration, place-based approaches, and health equity.

Council acknowledges that health and wellbeing are essential for a resilient, connected community and are key to sustaining a productive workforce and a strong local economy. Council is committed to supporting the community in achieving the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes.

Promoting community wellbeing starts with understanding the factors that influence our health and the important role local government plays in shaping certain outcomes. With its unique position, council can foster safe environments, facilitate access to essential services, and promote equity and inclusion, enabling all individuals to participate in education, economic opportunities and community life. In particular, council has the ability to influence social, community, cultural, environmental and economic conditions that drive health outcomes, known as the social determinants of health (see figure 2 below).



Determinants of Health (Source: Adapted from Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)

Council also understands that not everyone has the same opportunities to achieve good health, and that a range of social, economic and environmental determinants can significantly influence health outcomes, both positively and negatively. As a result, some groups within our community experience poorer health and encounter greater barriers in accessing the care and support they need.

To promote health equity, council will continue to serve the broader municipal population while placing particular emphasis on those who are most vulnerable. Our priority groups include older people; children and young people; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (also respectfully referred to as First Nations peoples); people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds; people with disabilities; and LGBTQIA+ communities.



## The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (cont'd)

### How health and wellbeing priorities were identified

In order to develop the health and wellbeing priorities, strategies and initiatives detailed in the plan, council has:

- Undertaken a municipal scan to assess the health status of the shire.
- Considered relevant legislation, including the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, *Local Government Act 2020*, *Gender Equality Act 2020*, *Climate Change Act 2017*, and the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*.
- Reviewed the actions and achievements of the 2021–25 Council Plan and the 2021–25 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Engaged with council officers and external partners to identify emerging priorities and community needs.
- Analysed community engagement insights.

Further details of the municipal scan and shire profile can be found in our Background Report available on our website via [https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/document-resources/communications/2025-29-council-plan-background-report\\_public.pdf](https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/document-resources/communications/2025-29-council-plan-background-report_public.pdf)

A full list of the external partners who contributed to the development of this plan via the engagement process can be found at appendix 2.

Council has also considered the 2023–27 Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan as the statewide (statewide) framework for improving health. The 10 critical priorities in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan include:

1. Improving sexual and reproductive health;
2. Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use;
3. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health;
4. Preventing all forms of violence;
5. Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health;
6. Reducing injury;
7. Increasing active living;
8. Increasing healthy eating;
9. Improving wellbeing; and
10. Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use.

Alignment between the relevant strategic priorities within this plan, and the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan priorities can be found in appendix 3.

Council's strategic health and wellbeing priorities, formulated through the above process, have been integrated into the broader Council Plan Actions and are identified with the following symbol ♥

## The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (cont'd)

### A partnership approach

This plan outlines council's commitment to working collaboratively and strategically to enhance the physical, social, natural, cultural and economic environments that support community health and wellbeing. Achieving this vision is not something we can do alone, it requires a collaborative effort from a range of diverse partners including health service providers, community organisations and the community itself. This partnership approach was prioritised from the outset, with numerous health and community organisations contributing to its development. In implementing this plan, council is dedicated to partnering with others via a range of roles and strategies including professional networks, partnerships, advocacy and resource sharing.

Specific collaboration activities will include:

- Partner with local and state health agencies to implement public health programs and initiatives (e.g. partner with the Grampians Public Health Unit to deliver the Heat HELP project).
- Engage with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Traditional Owner groups (Barengi Gadjin Land Council and DJAARA) to identify partnership opportunities to implement Country Plan goals and enable positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Provide and support networking and collaboration opportunities between community organisations, local health services, education, specialist health bodies, neighbourhood houses, community groups and Victoria Police (e.g. council leadership on the Northern Grampians Family Violence Network meeting).
- Engage community members through advisory groups, consultations, co-design, and funding programs.

### Commitment to violence prevention and gender equity

Northern Grampians Shire Council has been a committed member of the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance since 2016, working in partnership with local stakeholders, including Women's Health Grampians, to advance gender equality and prevent violence. The CoRE Alliance represents a collective of organisations united by a shared vision for safe, equitable, and respectful communities.

In 2024, council further reinforced its commitment to gender equality, becoming a signatory to the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter. With family violence rates in our shire remaining above the state average, prevention will continue to be a strategic priority in the 2025–29 Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

With high rates of family violence in the Northern Grampians Shire, preventing family violence and violence against women has been identified as a key priority in this plan, reflecting a strong community commitment to safety and respect for all people. This plan includes actions that align with all four domains of influence, as detailed in the Local Government Guide for Preventing Family Violence and all forms of violence against women.

### Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Council is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to ensure their voices, cultures and knowledge systems are respected and embedded in council planning and decision-making. This includes collaborating closely with Traditional Owner groups, Barengi Gadjin Land Council and DJAARA, to implement Recognition and Settlement Agreements, Country Plans, and supporting inclusive practices that reflect the rights, aspirations and priorities of Traditional Owner and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people communities. Through ongoing engagement and relationship building, council aims to promote genuine inclusion and strengthen outcomes for Traditional Owner and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all areas of its work.

## 2.3

## Alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Northern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global blueprint adopted in 2015 to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. These 17 goals address the world's most-pressing social, economic and environmental challenges.

While council hasn't formally adopted the SDGs, many of our priorities such as community wellbeing, climate action, and local jobs, support the aims of the Global Goals. Council's 2025-29 Council Plan, which also serves as our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, aligns strongly with these SDGs.

Our goals and strategies are designed to promote equity, resilience, sustainability, and opportunity for all residents reflecting the shared principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Please refer to appendix 3 to see how our local priorities connect with global action.

## 2.4

## Our strategic planning approach

The Council Plan is supported by a 10-year Asset Plan and a 10-year Financial Plan. These plans outline the financial and non-financial resources, along with the technical elements required for managing assets to achieve the objectives set out in the plan. Additionally, the Council Plan provides direction for the four-year Northern Grampians Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The 2025-29 Northern Grampians Health and Wellbeing Plan aims to equip council and our community with a strategic framework to integrate health and wellbeing priorities into our priorities. Within this plan, key initiatives linked to our 2025-29 Northern Grampians Health and Wellbeing Plan will be marked with a unique, specific icon. Council will collaborate with the Northern Grampians Shire community to implement the 2025-29 Council Plan. Regular updates on our progress will be provided to the community through various reporting mechanisms, such as council's Annual Report.

The Council Plan will be reviewed annually and adjusted to maintain its relevance, respond to changing circumstances, seize new opportunities, and reflect completed actions accordingly.

## 2.4

## Our strategic planning approach (cont'd)

### Bringing Health and Wellbeing into the Heart of Council

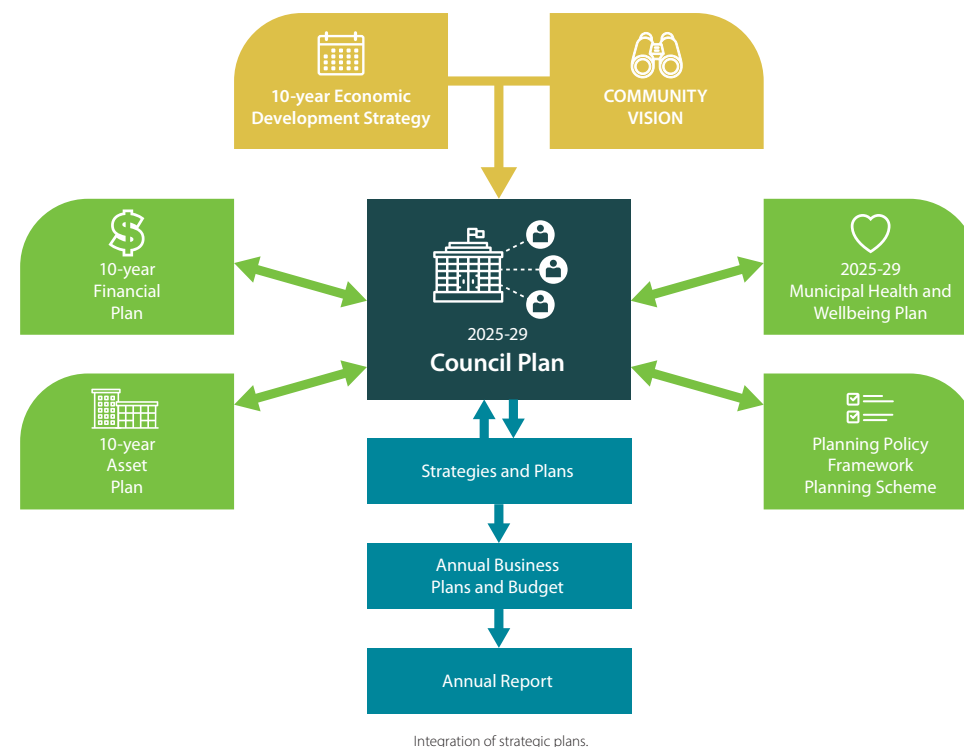
Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, councils are required to create a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) every four years. However, the act also allows councils to integrate health and wellbeing priorities directly into their Council Plan as well, resulting in a single strategic direction that aligns both sets of priorities alongside each other. This is the path Northern Grampians Shire Council is taking this time.

By integrating health and wellbeing themes and desired outcomes into the 2025-29 Council Plan, we are centralising these goals alongside broader council objectives as opposed to having them featured in a separate document and addressed in a separate conversation.

This approach has tangible planning, execution and reporting benefits, including:

- It creates one clear, high-level plan that features health and wellbeing across all areas of council;
- It streamlines our planning and budgeting processes, helping us work more efficiently and make better use of our resources;
- It strengthens transparency and accountability; progress on health and wellbeing will be tracked and reported through the Council Plan mechanisms.

This decision reflects how seriously council takes our role in supporting the health and wellbeing of people across the Northern Grampians. It is also a practical step towards creating a healthier, more connected, and more inclusive community.





## 2.5

## Our community engagement approach

Our goal throughout the engagement process was to better understand what matters most to our community, and what people think council should focus on over the next four years. As part of this, we committed to keeping the community informed, listening openly to people's concerns and aspirations, and making sure everyone felt heard. While not every idea is included, the Council Plan seeks to reflect the community's priorities as clearly as possible.

To shape the 2025-29 Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, council connected with the community through an inclusive but structured process for community input and reflection. This approach is known as a deliberative engagement approach, required by the *Local Government Act 2020*. That means we did not just ask for opinions, we sought to create space for real conversations, shared learning and respectful discussion of different perspectives.

This was a vital step to ensure the plans reflect what matters most to people living in the Northern Grampians over the next four years. We planned our engagement carefully to reach a wide range of voices across the shire. A strong communications strategy supported a community-wide survey that captured emerging priorities. From there, we analysed the feedback for key themes and local insights. These findings became the starting point for face-to-face community discussion forums where participants also reviewed local demographic data and shared ideas about how council can best achieve shared goals. These forums were designed to encourage an open and balanced dialogue so people could listen, question, reflect and contribute in a way that felt collaborative and constructive.

This process also meets Section 26 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, which requires that communities are involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of their local health and wellbeing plan. As part of this engagement, we also gathered input to help shape the shire's Asset Plan and Financial Plan, ensuring alignment across all key strategic documents.

To make participation accessible we used a mix of tools and channels, including:

- Community and youth surveys, both digital and paper-based copies;
- Pop-up in-person listening posts; and
- Targeted community and stakeholder workshops for the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

These efforts helped surface what is most important to people in the Northern Grampians and provided a strong foundation for building plans that reflect the community's collective voice. For further information on the engagement process, how council promoted the engagement, and engagement statistics, please refer to the 2025-29 Community Engagement Report available on our website via <https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Council/Vision-and-Goals/2025-2029-Community-Engagement/Review-the-Community-Engagement-Report>.



## 3. COUNCIL PLAN

### GOALS



## 3.1

## Emerging challenges and opportunities

There are a range of challenges and opportunities facing Northern Grampians Shire. The identification of the challenges and opportunities have been informed by the background report and community consultation process.



### Ageing population

Ageing population was identified as the biggest challenge facing the community over the next four years. Like many rural areas, Northern Grampians Shire faces challenges related to an ageing population and the outmigration of younger residents to larger cities for education and employment opportunities. An ageing population places higher demands on healthcare and aged care services. In rural and remote areas, access to healthcare and aged care services are often limited. Many elderly residents live alone, contributing to concerns about isolation and loneliness, which are exacerbated by unmet needs for formal assistance. This demographic shift is shaping local priorities, such as healthcare, social services, and accessible community infrastructure, particularly given the growing prevalence of age-related health conditions.

The Council Plan identifies the following action relating to an ageing population:

- Provide for opportunities for older people to stay active and connected, and to access the care they need.



### Housing

Housing was identified as the second biggest challenge facing the community over the next four years. Northern Grampians Shire (NGS) faces a critical housing shortage, significantly impacting businesses' ability to attract and retain workers, particularly in sectors like healthcare, manufacturing and agriculture. The region's low housing vacancy rate (0.17%) forces many workers to commute from neighbouring areas, hindering economic and population growth and contributing to an ageing demographic and limiting regional economic growth. Increasing housing supply and diversifying housing stock are essential to making the shire an attractive place to live and work. The population of NGS is expected to grow by 16% by 2051, necessitating 1,064 new homes, an 18% increase in housing stock (please refer to Residential Land Supply and Demand Assessment, Hansen Partnership, 2023).

The Council Plan identifies three actions relating to housing supply:

- Activate underused land and buildings. Reform planning policies, and partner with stakeholders to deliver diverse, affordable housing across the shire.
- Make statutory planning approvals simple, fast and clear.
- Support partnerships, advocacy and direct action to expand access to affordable, social, and emergency housing, ensuring vulnerable residents have a clear path from crisis to stable, long-term homes.

## 3.1

## Emerging challenges and opportunities (cont'd)



### Vulnerability to Natural Disasters

Vulnerability to natural disasters was identified as the third biggest challenge facing the community over the next four years. Climate change, environmental degradation, population growth, increased urbanisation and development have all contributed to an increase in disaster events globally. Climate change has been described as one of the greatest threats to public health in the 21st century.

The direct impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat, bushfires, droughts and floods, are not the only threats to communities. These events also lead to indirect effects such as changes in water quality, food safety, air quality, and land use. Together these direct and indirect impacts affect key social determinants of health, including housing, education, socioeconomic status and food security. As a result, a range of health issues emerge, such as respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and mental illness.

Northern Grampians Shire has been subject to several recent extreme weather events including floods (2022), droughts (2024-2025), bushfire and extreme heat (summer 2024-2025). These events have had significant impacts on the community, health, the economy and the environment.

The Council Plan identifies seven actions relating to vulnerability to natural disasters:

- Help our community be ready for a changing climate.
- Lead the way within the community on climate resilience.
- Empower young people to act on climate change.
- Support local produce growers to strengthen their resilience against the impacts of climate change.
- Engage regularly with local farmers, producers and industry groups to understand emerging challenges, support needs, and opportunities for growth and resilience in the agricultural sector.
- Lead by example in reducing emissions and building a clean energy future.



### Community Health and Wellbeing

Access to healthcare and community health and wellbeing were identified as the fourth and fifth biggest challenges (respectively) facing the community over the next four years.

Data shows Northern Grampians Shire has higher levels of chronic disease and obesity, alcohol-related incidents, self-reported fair or poor health, higher rates of psychological distress and lower levels of psychology services than either the Western Victorian region or Victoria as a whole. Social isolation, alongside reduced access to educational and economic opportunities, are a likely contributor to poor mental health outcomes in our region. Relatively low access to mental health services is also noted, which is a risk factor for mental ill-health. Early years data for Northern Grampians reflects several areas of concern for the municipality, particularly regarding developmental vulnerability, speech and language difficulties, and behavioral/emotional wellbeing.

Northern Grampians performs better in terms of maternal health check attendance and physical health and wellbeing domains. Educational attainment in Northern Grampians lags behind the state average, with only 37.9% of the population having completed year 12 or its equivalent, compared with 59.5% in Victoria. The number of Northern Grampians young people who are not in paid work or enrolled in any education is almost double the Victorian average for 15-19-year-olds. Family violence rates are significantly higher than the state average, with 3077 incidents per 100,000 people, compared with 1418 across Victoria.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' SEIFA Index of Relative Social Advantage and Disadvantage also ranks Northern Grampians Shire as the sixth-most disadvantaged Local Government Area in Victoria. Many people in the area, especially in Stawell and St Arnaud, live in disadvantaged conditions. This disadvantage contributes to preventable differences in health and makes it harder to access things that support good health, such as safe places to exercise, healthy food and medical care.



## 3.1

## Emerging challenges and opportunities (cont'd)

**Community Health and Wellbeing (cont'd)**

The Council Plan identifies 10 actions relating directly to community health and wellbeing:

- Foster a community where everyone can live free from violence.
- Build up local arts, culture, events and the places that bring people together.
- Strengthening cultural inclusion and celebrating diversity.
- Strengthen social connection, community capacity and resilience by empowering residents to lead and participate in community activities and programs, supported through training, resources, programs and access to inclusive places and spaces.
- Empower people with disabilities to actively participate.
- Provide active living opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds.
- Promote healthy eating and improve food security.
- Work with key partners to deliver education and information promoting good mental health, and to support people to access the mental health services they need.
- Support initiatives for young people (middle years and youth) that deliver leadership and engagement opportunities, resources and environments that support good physical and mental health, and social and recreational activities.
- Build capacity of parents and carers during early childhood, and improve access to, and navigation of, services for children and families.

**Renewable Energy**

The Victorian State Government is in the process of transitioning away from coal-powered energy generation, with a focus on moving to more renewable energy sources. Our shire is at the forefront of that transition for several reasons.

Along with other parts of Victoria, the Northern Grampians Shire is seen as being a naturally rich wind zone making it a high-interest location for potential renewable energy projects. Additionally, there are two proposed transmission lines passing through the shire, the Western Renewable Link (WRL) and the Victorian New South Wales Interconnector (VNI).

Given these developments, the Victorian Government has identified a proposed Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) in the draft Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP).

Agriculture is the backbone of our shire's economy, community, landscape and lifestyle. Many in the farming community have raised serious concerns about how the renewable energy transition is being managed with a significant lack of meaningful consultation. Council has also taken a lead in the region advocating for our farming community in this regard, through hosting regular transmission forums and initiating a regional renewables and mining impact study.

Victoria's renewable energy transition presents opportunities to attract regional investment and diversify local economies. However, balancing these opportunities with the protection of agriculture and community wellbeing remains a critical challenge.

The Council Plan identifies the following action relating to renewable energy:

- Take a strong, proactive role in ensuring renewable energy projects respect local values, and protect agricultural land and natural assets.

## 3.1

## Emerging challenges and opportunities (cont'd)

**Financial Sustainability & Viability**

As a small rural council, we have long operated under significant financial constraints. This is largely due to our expansive geographic footprint, a dispersed population across the shire, and a low rating base. Our two major towns, Stawell and St Arnaud, are 76km apart requiring two depots and workforces. We also manage one of the largest infrastructure networks per capita in the region, with over \$44,000 worth of assets per resident.

The size of our shire and the make-up of our rural townships, including topography and agricultural economy, necessitate an extensive road network. Our location at the top of the catchment area means we are also responsible for maintaining hundreds of bridges and culverts. Maintaining this vast infrastructure with limited financial resources is an ongoing financial sustainability challenge.

In short, council revenue is not keeping pace with the increasing costs associated with maintaining ageing infrastructure. Our current budget only covers 45% of the projected work required. While community expectations for service and infrastructure remain high, our ability to meet these needs is increasingly constrained by factors beyond our control.

As a result, we are very reliant on grant funding to not only maintain, replace and upgrade the infrastructure we have, but to provide the level of services our community expects. Over the past few years, particularly during the post-Covid-19 period, council has been highly successful in securing funding opportunities. This has enabled us to deliver significant upgrades across the shire with major enhancements to main streets in three towns and significant improvements to many of our sporting facilities. However, this period of high funding has now concluded with council now transitioning from a growth phase into one of financial restraint.

A range of pressures are compounding our financial challenges, including:

- Operating under a rate-capped environment;
- Rising inflation and material costs;
- Reduced state and federal funding opportunities;
- Widening funding and asset renewal gaps;
- A changing and ageing demographic; and
- The need for increased staffing to meet emerging demands.

Given our low rating base and large asset responsibilities, our focus remains on financial viability, ensuring a minimum healthy cash surplus and doing our utmost to maintain our assets to a level of service the community can afford.

The Council Plan identifies the following actions relating to financial sustainability:

- Ensure our roads, footpaths and drainage systems are safe, functional and aligned with community needs, with investment directed where it matters most.
- Improve infrastructure outcomes by working with the community, using evidence-based planning, and applying smart, cost-effective asset management practices.
- Ensure long-term financial viability and a healthy annual cash surplus so the organisation can deliver its services and goals.
- Secure better funding arrangements and partnerships that reduce pressure on local ratepayers and enable delivery of major projects and essential services.

## 3.1

## Emerging challenges and opportunities (cont'd)



### Economic Diversification and Business Growth

Northern Grampians has a diverse economy, built largely on healthcare, agriculture and manufacturing. While these service industries contribute significantly to the local economy and employment, there is a need for continued diversification of the local economy to ensure long-term sustainability and job creation. In comparison with Victoria, where economic output is more diverse, Northern Grampians' economy is more vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices and climate conditions affecting agriculture.

Strong opportunities for economic growth in Northern Grampians exist in agricultural innovation. Encouraging innovation in farming practices, such as regenerative agriculture and value-added food production, has the potential to boost local income and sustainability. Main-street viability and retailing remains a challenge post the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council Plan identifies the following actions relating to economic diversification and business growth:

- Enhance main street vibrancy through retail activation, improved shopfronts, local partnerships and support for tenants, landlords and entrepreneurs.
- Support business growth, collaboration and innovation across the shire by improving infrastructure, encouraging entrepreneurship and fostering resilient, connected local economies.
- Facilitate diverse, well-run events that bring life to our towns and attract visitors year-round.
- Support great visitor experiences through better attractions, access, partnership with Traditional Owners, cultural celebration and local stories.

## 3.2

## Monitoring and reporting

This Council Plan, incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP), outlines our direction for the next four years and how we will track our progress.

It is important to note that reporting will occur at both quarterly and annual intervals and summarise task and action performance, which cover strategies for both the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. This results in a unified reporting approach to support our new combined planning approach.

#### Legislative requirements

Under the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)* and the Planning and Reporting Regulations, council must regularly monitor and report on progress through transparent processes. In addition, under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*, council must:

- Conduct an annual review of the MPHWP and amend it if necessary (s. 26(4)).
- If the MPHWP is integrated into the Council Plan, also review the Council Plan annually (s. 27(2)(b) and (c)).
- Report on measures specified every two years to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community. Council will also comply with the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in relation to workplace gender equality.

Lastly, whilst it's not required by law, council will annual performance reporting to the Department of Health.

#### Task planning and prioritisation

Appendix 1 outlines a full list of potential activities council can prioritise for delivery over the four-year term. These are grouped under:

- Goals – what we aim to achieve. These are fixed and will not change over the coming term.
- Strategies – how we will work towards each goal. These are fixed and will not change over the coming term.
- Actions – individual initiatives we will pursue. These are fixed and will not change over the coming term.
- Tasks – specific incremental steps we will take that collectively achieve an action. These tasks are fluid and will be modified, expanded, or potentially removed at the conclusion of each reporting year to allow for flexibility in our approach.

Not all tasks will be prioritised each year. This flexible framework allows council to respond to changing community needs, operational priorities and funding opportunities.

Tasks will be prioritised annually following a community engagement and consultation process and subsequently align with council's annual budgetary review requirements.

Council's progress in completing these tasks will be reported on quarterly via our Council Meetings and annually in our Annual Report.

#### Annual performance indicator

In accordance with Section 90(2)(d) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, strategic indicators are used to measure progress. These are reported annually and reflect council's direct contribution to achieving the overarching goals.

A 70% task completion rate benchmark is established each year, which provides a clear, high-level measure of how effectively council is delivering on the plan. This metric essentially reports that council has delivered a minimum of 70% of the things we said we would over the coming year, which contributes to achieving all actions outlined in this plan over the four-year term.

#### Keeping our community informed

Council is committed to transparent communication. We will provide regular updates via newsletters, our website and social media channels. We will also engage local media outlets where appropriate to share reporting outcomes. We will also engage with community through our connections with advisory, community and sporting groups to aid in disseminating relevant and timely updates.

These activities ensure our community stays informed and involved in our progress over the coming four-year term on a consistent and transparent basis. Please see below for further information about our annual and quarterly reporting processes.

## 3.2

## Monitoring and reporting (cont'd)

### Annual Reporting Process

While there is no legislative requirement for an annual review of the Council Plan, council will undertake an annual reporting process in the weeks prior to a new financial year to coincide with financial year planning and resource allocation. This schedule ensures alignment with the annual budget process and enables council to adjust the scale of activities based on available resources and external funding opportunities.

Adopting an annual reporting process helps to:

- Ensure plan actions and associated tasks are implemented effectively and achieve intended outcomes.
- Identify any actions or associated tasks that need to be refined, reduced or replaced.
- Guide resource allocation, inform related strategies and strengthen department collaboration and partnerships.

### Annual Report

Yearly outcomes will be featured in council's Annual Report material which is made available to the community every September/October.

This will include insights regarding the achievement of the previous year's prioritised tasks and their contribution towards achieving the plan's overarching actions, ensuring council is reaching the annual 70% task completion milestone.

The Annual Report is published on our website under <https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Council/Governance-and-transparency/Council-publications/Annual-Report> and communicated to the community through channels such as our social media platforms, community and business newsletters, and local media outlets.

### Annual Budget

Council's Annual Budget is disseminated to the community every June/July. The Budget sets out council priorities and associated resourcing allocations for the forthcoming 12 months.

As part of our annual reporting process, council will also feature the forthcoming year's tasks and prioritised actions within the Budget material. These will be decided following community feedback and supported by resource allocation for the next 12 months. This ensures we are including annual Council Plan priorities alongside other operational and community priorities and setting a clear and centralised direction for council for the coming period.

The Annual Budget is published on our website under <https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Council/Governance-and-transparency/Council-publications/Budget> and is also communicated to the community through channels such as our social media platforms, community and business newsletters, and local media outlets.

### Quarterly Reporting Process

Quarterly reporting outcomes will be tabled for discussion at a Council Meeting. This reporting schedule ensures council is keeping abreast of any changing operational or community requirements that could affect the completion of annual tasks.

Adopting a quarterly reporting process helps to:

- Ensure plan actions and associated tasks can be modified to capitalise or mitigate changing environmental circumstances.
- Identify any actions or associated tasks that need to be refined, reduced or replaced.
- Provide incremental performance insight to the community on the actions and associated tasks they requested we deliver.

The Council Meeting schedule is published on our website under <https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-Meetings> along with meeting agendas and past minutes. Council will also communicate any quarterly reporting insights to the community through channels such as our social media platforms, community and business newsletters, and local media outlets.

## 3.3

## Goal 1: "Live it up"

### Health, Wellbeing and Community

To build community where everyone can live well, staying healthy, active and connected, with fair access to services and opportunities that support physical, mental and social wellbeing.

#### What you [the community] told us:

- You want more for young people: youth spaces, events, mental health support, and civic leadership.
- Delivering accessible, affordable active living (like walking and bike paths, play spaces, shade, free activities) is important.
- You want stronger mental health services and promotion of mental wellbeing.
- Better support for growing older at home, elder abuse awareness, and intergenerational connection was raised.
- Community safety, social connection, arts and culture, and events were identified as vital to liveability.
- You want better street lighting, safer roads, improved signage, and more seating and shading in public spaces.
- Access to facilities like libraries, pools, dog parks, and community hubs is highly valued.

#### How this contributes towards health and wellbeing:

These priorities are designed to build healthy and resilient communities, where people feel safe and connected, and have good physical and mental health. They work towards ensuring access to food, promote active lifestyles, and strengthen inclusion across all life stages, from early childhood through to healthy ageing. Community arts and events help strengthen belonging and identity.

#### Plans and strategies relevant to Goal 1:

- Library Review 2023
- SSAC Feasibility Study
- Youth Strategy 2024-28
- Open Space and Active Transport Strategy 2024-34
- Sports and Active Recreation Strategy 2024-34
- Building Community Resilience Strategy 2024
- General Local Law
- Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25
- Gender Equality Commission Report 2023
- Market Square St Arnaud Master Plan 2019
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2020-24

#### Business-as-usual services relevant to Goal 1:

- Maternal and Child Health
- Supported Playgroups
- Immunisation
- Early Learning
- Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre
- St Arnaud Pool
- Stawell and St Arnaud Libraries
- Community Care
- Arts and Culture
- Community Grants Program
- Multicultural Action
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Community Safety
- Infrastructure
- Parks and Facilities
- Roads and Road Infrastructure



## 3.3

## Goal 1: “Live it up” (cont’d)

Please note, the symbol ♥ featured in the following table highlights actions which have a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan alignment.

HOW (the strategies we will use)	WHAT (action we will pursue)
<b>1.1 People feel connected, included and safe</b> Foster a strong, positive community where people feel connected, included and safe.	Provide opportunities for older people to stay active and connected, and to access the care they need. ♥
	Foster a community where everyone can live free from violence. ♥
	Build up local arts, culture, events, and the places that bring people together. ♥
	Strengthen cultural inclusion and celebrate diversity. ♥
	Recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Traditional Owners by supporting self-determination, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring they have a meaningful voice in decision-making. ♥
	Strengthen social connection, community capacity and resilience by empowering residents to lead and participate in community activities and programs, supported through training, resources, programs and access to inclusive places and spaces. ♥
	Empower people with disabilities to actively participate. ♥
<b>1.2 Supporting healthy communities</b> Supporting good health and wellbeing outcomes through healthy food systems, opportunities for active living, prevention and education, and access to health services.	Provide active living opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds. ♥
	Promote healthy eating and improve food security. ♥
	Work with key partners to deliver education and information promoting good mental health, and to support people to access the mental health services they need. ♥
	Work with others to provide health information, help prevent illness, and make sure people can get the physical health services they need. ♥
<b>1.3 Improving outcomes for children and young people</b> Improve outcomes for children and young people	Support initiatives for young people (middle years and youth) that deliver leadership and engagement opportunities, resources and environments that support good physical and mental health, and social and recreational activities. ♥
	Build capacity of parents and carers during early childhood and improve access to, and navigation of, services for children and families. ♥

## 3.4

## Goal 2: “Build it up”

## Housing, Skills and Education

Strengthen our communities by increasing access to affordable and diverse housing, growing local skills and training pathways, and expanding job opportunities, ensuring people can live, work, and thrive in our region.

## What you [the community] told us:

- Housing is a major challenge, with not enough affordable, suitable, or available options, especially for essential workers and in tourism towns like Halls Gap.
- Stronger investment in services, jobs and local training is essential to help people live, work and stay in the region long-term.
- You want more for young people, educational outcomes and local job pathways.

## How this contributes towards health and wellbeing:

Affordable and accessible housing, local employment pathways and access to learning opportunities are essential for safety, wellbeing and liveability in the shire, contributing to social connection, community pride, mental health, financial stability and growth.

Please note, the symbol ♥ featured in the following table highlights actions which have a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan alignment.

HOW (the strategies we will use)	WHAT (action we will pursue)
<b>2.1 Unlock land and housing</b> Unlock housing to meet community and economic needs	Activate underused land and buildings. Reform planning policies and partner with stakeholders to deliver diverse, affordable housing across the shire. ♥
	Make Statutory Planning Approvals simple, fast and clear.
	Support partnerships, advocacy and direct action to expand access to affordable, social, and emergency housing ensuring vulnerable residents have a clear path from crisis to stable, long-term homes. ♥
<b>2.2 Building our Workforce</b> Attract and grow employment opportunities	Support pathways to employment for our young people. Support schools, training providers, and industry to expand education, apprenticeships and job opportunities so young people can learn, work, and build their future close to home. ♥
	Promote liveability to attract essential workers.

## Plans and strategies relevant to Goal 2:

- Stawell Structure Plan (2021)
- Northern Grampians Shire Heritage Study (2024)
- Northern Grampians Shire Thematic History (2024)
- St Arnaud Framework Plan (2023)
- Northern Grampians Planning Scheme

## Business-as-usual services relevant to Goal 2:

- Strategic Planning
- Statutory Planning
- Infrastructure
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Economic Development

## Goal 3: “Business buzz”

### Agriculture, Economy and Tourism

To build a strong local economy where businesses succeed and grow.

#### What you [the community] told us:

- Local businesses and main streets need support to grow and thrive, including help with retail diversity, co-working spaces, and revitalisation.
- Tourism towns need better infrastructure and year-round liveability, with improved support for events, signage, and showcasing natural and cultural assets.
- You want agricultural and community values protected from renewable energy development.
- There is a desire to activate and beautify town centres, shopfronts.

#### How this contributes towards health and wellbeing:

A strong local economy contributes to health and wellbeing by creating stable employment, increasing access to goods and services, enabling financial stability, fostering community pride, and ensuring residents can live and work in the region.

#### Plans and strategies relevant to Goal 3:

- Stawell Aerodrome Master Plan
- Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2021-31
- Stawell Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022-32
- St Arnaud Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022-32
- Northern Grampians Shire Council Investment Prospectus
- Tourism Events Strategy 2023-33
- Halls Gap Village Action Plan (2018)
- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2024-34
- Stawell and St Arnaud Brand Strategy and Identity (2023)
- Stawell Western Highway Urban Design Framework (2021)
- Wayfinding Signage Strategy (2024)

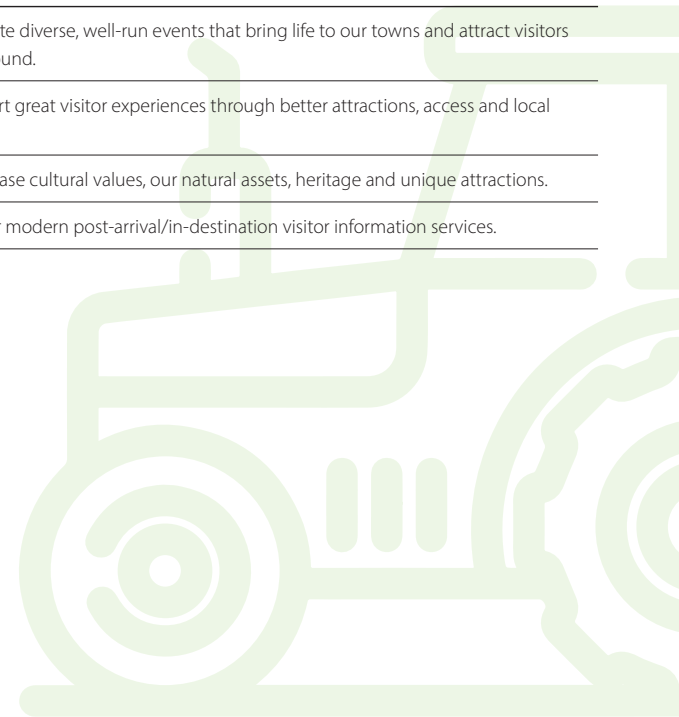
#### Business-as-usual services relevant to Goal 3:

- Visitor Information Services
- Event Concierge
- Event Grants Program
- Event Promotion
- Discover Northern Grampians
- Economic Development
- Small Business Mentoring Program
- Business Permit Concierge
- Shopfront Improvement Program
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Infrastructure
- Roads and Road Infrastructure
- Parks and Facilities
- Community Grants Program
- Arts and Culture

## Goal 3: “Business buzz” (cont’d)

Please note, the symbol ♥ featured in the following table highlights actions which have a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan alignment.

HOW (the strategies we will use)	WHAT (action we will pursue)
<b>3.1 Supporting farming and rural industries</b> Work with and advocate for our farming and rural industries, our region's largest sector, to protect agricultural land, support sustainable growth, and help the sector adapt to future challenges.	Take a strong, proactive role in ensuring renewable energy projects respect local values, and protect agricultural land, cultural values and natural assets. ♥
	Support local produce growers to strengthen their resilience against the impacts of climate change. ♥
<b>3.2 Building vibrant local businesses</b> Build vibrant, resilient local businesses	Engage regularly with local farmers, producers and industry groups to understand emerging challenges, support needs, and opportunities for growth and resilience in the agricultural sector. ♥
	Enhance main street vibrancy through retail activation, improved shopfronts, local partnerships, and support for tenants, landlords and entrepreneurs.
<b>3.3 Enhancing tourism experiences</b> Support great visitor experiences through better attractions, access, partnership with Traditional Owners, cultural celebration and local stories.	Support business growth, collaboration, and innovation across the shire by improving infrastructure, encouraging entrepreneurship, and fostering resilient, connected local economies.
	Facilitate diverse, well-run events that bring life to our towns and attract visitors year-round.
	Support great visitor experiences through better attractions, access and local stories.
	Showcase cultural values, our natural assets, heritage and unique attractions.
	Deliver modern post-arrival/in-destination visitor information services.



## 3.6

## Goal 4: “Clean it up”

## Sustainability, Climate and Waste

Implement sustainable practices, strengthen climate resilience, and manage our natural resources for a healthier, safer and more sustainable future for our community.

## What you [the community] told us:

- You want more leadership from council on sustainable energy, waste reduction and climate action.
- Calls for more recycling options, free green waste and hard-rubbish disposal were strong.
- Advocated for climate education, energy-efficient housing, and nature-based solutions.
- Greater coordination is needed around fire risk management, weed control, and waste responsibilities.
- Community batteries, local solar initiatives and EV infrastructure were seen as key enablers.

## How this contributes towards health and wellbeing:

Environmental health is closely linked to physical and mental wellbeing. Access to clean air and water, reduced waste, and climate resilience help protect vulnerable people, reduce health impacts, minimise disaster impacts, and support safer, healthier and sustainable communities.

## Plans and strategies relevant to Goal 4:

- Tree and Nature Strip Management Plan
- Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan
- Waste Management Strategy 2020-30
- Waste Action Plan 2020-30
- Municipal Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2022-27
- Walkers Lake Management Plan (2022)
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2023-26

## Business-as-usual services relevant to Goal 4:

- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Strategic Planning
- Statutory Planning
- Waste Management
- Emergency Management
- Community Safety
- Roadside Weeds and Pests
- Parks and Facilities
- Open Space Planning

## 3.6

## Goal 4: “Clean it up” (cont’d)

Please note, the symbol ♥ featured in the following table highlights actions which have a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan alignment.

HOW (the strategies we will use)	WHAT (action we will pursue)
<b>4.1 Climate adaptation and preparedness</b> Support climate adaptation and preparedness.	Help our community be ready for a changing climate. ♥
	Lead the way in the community on climate resilience. ♥
	Empower young people to act on climate change. ♥
<b>4.2 Cut waste and recycle properly</b> Make it easier to cut waste and recycle properly.	Deliver the mechanisms to reduce waste and recycle properly. ♥
<b>4.3 Drive energy efficiency</b> Drive energy efficiency across council and the community to cut emissions, lower costs and build a cleaner, more resilient future.	Lead by example in reducing emissions and building a clean energy future. ♥
<b>4.4 Protect our land, water and wildlife</b> Work with local groups, landholders, Traditional Owners and others to protect our land, water and wildlife, acting together for a cleaner, greener and more sustainable shire.	Deliver coordinated on-ground efforts to manage land, water and biodiversity in a culturally and environmentally sustainable way. ♥



## Goal 5: “Do it well”

### Infrastructure, Finance and Corporate Services

To look after what we have, spend wisely, and deliver reliable services through a well-run, forward-thinking organisation.

#### What you [the community] told us:

- Roads are a top priority, especially sealing roads to homes, farms and businesses, and improving gravel road maintenance.
- People want more frequent grading of gravel roads, especially in rural areas.
- The community supports investing in essential infrastructure over building new or non-core projects.
- Many are open to cost-saving options, like keeping some roads unsealed if the money is used for higher priorities.
- There is strong interest in fairness and transparency around how council decides which projects go ahead.
- Some residents are willing to pay more (through rates or special charges) if it means speeding up important works.
- Better communication is needed about who is responsible for road maintenance, council or State Government.
- People want smarter, long-term planning to ensure assets are well-maintained and costs are kept under control.
- The community expects council to manage its budget carefully, avoiding overspending or duplication.
- There is support for more state and federal funding to reduce the burden on local ratepayers.
- Borrowing is supported in some cases, especially for big projects that bring lasting community benefit.
- Some want to see internal savings and efficiencies before rate increases or new borrowings are considered.

#### How this contributes towards health and wellbeing:

Appropriately maintained infrastructure supports health and wellbeing via enhanced safety, access and inclusion. Shaded, walkable and inviting public spaces support social interaction, physical activity and local economic vibrancy. Transparent asset planning builds trust, while opportunities to be heard enables people to help shape their community and in turn fosters a sense of belonging and feeling valued.

#### Plans and strategies relevant to Goal 5:

- Road Management Plan (2021)
- North Park Masterplan 2022-32
- 2025/26 Annual Budget
- Asset Plan 2022-32
- Financial Plan 2021-31

#### Business-as-usual services relevant to Goal 5:

- Infrastructure
- Roads and Road Infrastructure
- Parks and Facilities
- Finance
- Governance
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- Business Transformation
- Media and Communications

## Goal 5: “Do it well” (cont’d)

Please note, the symbol ♥ featured in the following table highlights actions which have a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan alignment.

HOW (the strategies we will use)	WHAT (action we will pursue)
<b>5.1 Asset Renewal and Maintenance Program</b> Sustainable and Transparent Asset Renewal and Maintenance Program	Ensure our roads, footpaths, and drainage systems are safe, functional, and aligned with community needs with investment directed where it matters most. ♥
	Improve infrastructure outcomes by working with the community, using evidence-based planning, and applying smart, cost-effective asset management practices.
<b>5.2 Financial Viability</b> Ensure Financial Viability through responsible spending for a stronger future	Ensure long term financial viability and a healthy annual cash surplus so that the organisation is able to deliver its services and goals.
	Secure better funding arrangements and partnerships that reduce pressure on local ratepayers and enable delivery of major projects and essential services.
<b>5.3 Responsive, innovative, and efficient</b> To build on our strengths by becoming more responsive, innovative, and efficient so we can keep delivering reliable services that meet our community's changing needs.	Foster strong, inclusive and culturally safe engagement by improving how we listen, communicate, and work with our community and stakeholders to inform decision-making and build trust. ♥
	Enable a culture of collaboration and innovation by improving integration across teams, encouraging shared problem-solving, and aligning systems and processes.
	Foster a capable and committed workforce by attracting skilled talent, supporting staff wellbeing and development, and reducing turnover through a positive, purpose-driven workplace culture.

## 4. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection

The tables in Appendix 1 show the full list of potential tasks over the four-year period, identified during development of the Council Plan.

These are grouped by:

- **Goal** – what we want to achieve
- **Strategy** – how we will work towards it
- **Actions** – individual initiatives we will pursue
- **Tasks** – specific steps we will take

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## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Goal 1: "Live it up"

## Strategy 1.1 – People feel connected, included and safe.

**Action: Provide opportunities for older people to stay active and connected, and to access the care they need.**

REF.	TASK
11101	Advocate for quality and affordable community care services for older people.
11102	Deliver existing healthy ageing support via Thrive 50+ Hubs enabling older people to access the services and supporting social connection initiatives.
11103	Deliver free platinum memberships at SSAC for community members aged 75-plus.
11104	Seek funding and opportunities to deliver intergenerational programs.
11105	Support active living opportunities for older people.

**Action: Foster a community where everyone can live free from violence.**

REF.	TASK
11201	Investigate mandatory gender equity training modules as part of council staff induction and training requirements.
11202	Deliver Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) training across all council departments.
11203	Support uptake of gender equity programs among community groups and sporting clubs via council's grant process.
11204	Partner on delivery of the Northern Grampians Family Violence Network Group, supporting advocacy, partnership and collaboration of family violence and gender equity initiatives and campaigns.
11205	Seek funding to resource a council-based Family Violence Officer role.

**Action: Build up local arts, culture, events, and the places that bring people together.**

REF.	TASK
11301	Deliver Arts and Culture grants and capacity building initiatives, and support community-led events, which enable arts and culture participation, raise the arts profile, and activate places and spaces.
11302	Seek funding for improvements to the Stawell Entertainment Centre theatre to ensure it meets contemporary accessibility and performance facility benchmark, and work with user groups on implementation of improvements.
11303	Investigate the feasibility of a Cato Park Sound Shell and determine next steps.
11304	Support communities in the development of localised and consolidated sources of information and events.
11305	Support Halls Gap Neighbourhood House to explore funding opportunities for a dedicated space or community hub, with council providing advice and assistance as needed.

**Action: Strengthening cultural inclusion and celebrating diversity.**

REF.	TASK
11401	Deliver and implement a NGSC Multicultural Action Plan.

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 1.1 – People feel connected, included and safe. (cont'd)

**Action: Recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Traditional Owners by supporting self-determination, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring they have a meaningful voice in decision-making.**

REF.	TASK
11501	Support activities that recognise Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (National Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day and NAIDOC Week).
11502	Support partnership opportunities with local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and cooperatives.
11503	Partner with Traditional Owners to identify and support shared outcomes in council planning, policy and service delivery.
11504	Partner with Traditional Owners to work with the wider community on Country, to increase awareness and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and history.

**Action: Strengthen social connection, community capacity and resilience by empowering residents to lead and participate in community activities and programs, supported through training, resources, programs and access to inclusive places and spaces.**

REF.	TASK
11601	Deliver a flexible community funding program that includes a range of grants and sponsorships, adapted to reflect emerging community needs and local priorities.
11602	Deliver programs and initiatives through libraries to strengthen their role as vibrant community hubs, fostering social connection, learning and inclusion.
11603	Deliver and support initiatives that build on the "Community Strengthening" program to enhance community capacity, resilience, and connection, including a Community Connector initiative.
11604	Deliver a coordinated promotion campaign to increase awareness and participation in community activities, events and local interest groups.
11605	Seek funding and explore opportunities to establish a coordinated approach to volunteering across the shire, to enhance collaboration, accessibility, inclusion of young people, and community impact.
11606	Investigate a model or framework to strengthen community groups and support their long-term sustainability and determine next steps.
11607	Investigate outreach library services to support rural communities and determine next steps.

**Action: Empower people with disabilities to actively participate.**

REF.	TASK
11701	Seek funding to deliver a Northern Grampians Shire Council Disability Access and Inclusion Action Plan.
11702	Partner with key stakeholders to support the meaningful representation of people with a disability in council's planning processes.
11703	Deliver an audit and community engagement process to address barriers with accessing public facilities and services.
11704	Deliver a Footpath Improvement Program that enhances pedestrian access, safety, walkability and social inclusion.
11705	Seek funding for an accessible fishing platform in Stawell.



## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 1.2 – Supporting healthy communities

**Action: Provide active living opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds.**

REF.	TASK
12101	Deliver a Cycling and Active Transport Program that improves safety, comfort, social inclusion and health outcomes through accessible, connected and inclusive infrastructure (please refer to Open Space and Active Transport Strategy, 2024-34).
12102	Deliver Activation Plans for council managed facilities and precincts to increase participation in arts, culture, sport and active recreation, including programming (please refer to Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2024-34).
12103	Partner with state sporting authorities to bring recreational activities to the shire, including free non-team-based sports/active events (please refer to Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2024-34).
12104	Support community-led initiatives that promote active living, via community development support and targeted grants processes.
12105	Support sporting clubs' implementation of the Get Active Kids Voucher Program.
12106	Deliver affordable gym, aquatics and sports programming from SSAC, that meets community need.
12107	Seek funding for the upgrade of Central Park netball court.
12108	Seek funding for the upgrade of Central Park netball change rooms.
12109	Deliver outdoor exercise equipment in St Arnaud.
12110	Deliver review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan (please refer to Domestic Animal Management Plan, 2021-25).
12111	Support Great Western Memorial Park development.
12112	Support the St Arnaud Bowling Club precinct Master/Strategic Plan/Concept Design, and determine next steps for council's role in assisting implementation of endorsed recommendations.
12113	Support the Stawell Golf Club to attract State or Federal Government funds for facility upgrades.
12114	Advocate for funding opportunities for SSAC redevelopment.
12115	Promote shaded, green public spaces that support accessible and safe recreation while reducing heat impacts.

**Action: Promote healthy eating and improved food security.**

REF.	TASK
12201	Deliver healthy food choices at council-run facilities such as the Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre (SSAC).
12202	Support healthy food systems and food security initiatives via council's community grants program, and advocacy and collaboration initiatives.
12203	Partner on implementation of healthy food systems education and programming at St Arnaud Kindergarten.

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 1.2 – Supporting healthy communities (cont'd)

**Action: Work with key partners to deliver education and information promoting good mental health, and to support people to access the mental health services they need.**

REF.	TASK
12301	Support community-led and collaborative mental health initiatives for farmers, co-designed with the farming community, stakeholders and relevant service providers.
12302	Support community-led preventative initiatives that strengthen social connections.
12303	Advocate for improved mental health service accessibility across the shire.
12304	Deliver community education initiatives that increase awareness of mental health services and referral pathways.

**Action: Work with others to provide health information, help prevent illness, and make sure people can get the physical health services they need.**

REF.	TASK
12401	Investigate water fluoridation in Stawell and St Arnaud.
12402	Support key partners to promote and deliver local sexual and reproductive health services and resources.
12403	Support collaborative work on tobacco and e-cigarette use, via membership of the GPHU Reducing Harm from Tobacco and E-cigarette Alliance.
12404	Investigate improved mapping and sign-posting of designated smoke and vape-free environments and determine next steps.
12405	Advocate for improved access to specialist health services within the shire.



## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 1.3 – Improving outcomes for children and young people

**Action: Support initiatives for young people (middle years and youth) that deliver leadership and engagement opportunities, resources and environments that support good physical and mental health, and social and recreational activities.**

REF.	TASK
13101	Partner on delivery of the Northern Grampians Youth Collaborative Network meeting, supporting collaboration, service promotion, and advocacy opportunities across sectors (please refer to Northern Grampians Youth Strategy, 2024-28).
13102	Seek funding and work with partners to deliver youth leadership, civic engagement and volunteering initiatives (please refer to Northern Grampians Youth Strategy, 2024-28).
13103	Seek funding and partnership opportunities to deliver preventative resilience-based programs and to support youth mentoring initiatives (e.g. Live4Life, MATES) and determine next steps.
13104	Support drug and alcohol-free recreational activities and events for young people (with a specific focus on priority groups), including spaces for young people to gather.
13105	Deliver Library Strategy and determine next steps.
13106	Deliver outdoor gym equipment in St Arnaud.
13107	Deliver review of Market Square Masterplan and seek funding for Market Square Youth play upgrades.
13108	Partner with schools, local groups and organisations to strengthen healthy and secure food systems initiatives for young people.

**Action: Build capacity of parents and carers during early childhood, and improve access to, and navigation of, services for children and families.**

REF.	TASK
13201	Deliver a shire-wide Early Years Strategy and determine next steps.
13202	Advocate for improved access to specialist health services within early years services across the shire.
13203	Support uptake of the two-year funded kindergarten program and offer inclusive support with enrolment.
13204	Support families to access help by offering clear information on health and community services and referral pathways.
13205	Deliver flexible and inclusive Supported Playgroups that meet the needs of the community.
13206	Partner with key stakeholders to investigate an oral health prevention campaign.
13207	Partner to support delivery of body safety programs to kindergarten children across the shire.
13208	Support and expand on tailored and place-based literacy programs within early years services.

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Goal 2: “Build it up”

## Strategy 2.1 – Unlock land and housing

**Action: Activate underused land and buildings. Reform planning policies, and partner with stakeholders to deliver diverse, affordable housing across the shire.**

REF.	TASK
21101	Advocate to the State Government for more streamlined and less onerous Planning Scheme Amendment process.
21102	Deliver ‘Infill Housing Facilitation Project’ for Stawell and St Arnaud, including feasibility assessments, development of medium-density housing guides, and workshops with landowners to identify and overcome barriers to infill development.
21103	Deliver priority recommendations in the Stawell Structure Plan, 2021. <a href="https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/document-resources/council-plans/stawell-structure-plan.pdf">https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/document-resources/council-plans/stawell-structure-plan.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Projects-and-Consultation/Council-structure-study-and-safety-projects/The-Stawell-Future-Growth-Area-Master-Plan">https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Projects-and-Consultation/Council-structure-study-and-safety-projects/The-Stawell-Future-Growth-Area-Master-Plan</a> .
21104	Deliver priority recommendations in the St Arnaud Framework Plan (please refer to St Arnaud Framework Plan, 2023).
21105	Deliver a coordinated street sealing, drainage, and kerb and channel upgrade program to support housing development, protect residential areas from flooding, and enhance livability in growing communities.
21106	Facilitate landowners and developers through medium density housing initiatives, rezoning and subdivision processes.
21107	Deliver heritage protection for key Main Street precincts (please refer to Northern Grampians Heritage Study, 2024).

**Action: Make statutory planning approvals simple, fast and clear.**

REF.	TASK
21201	Investigate means to modernise council's planning process through continuous improvement, AI integration, and customer self-help tools to enhance service quality and accelerate outcomes, and determine next steps.
21202	Facilitate collaboration with developers and the planning industry by introducing standardised referral conditions and clear pre-application guidance to build confidence and consistency.
21203	Advocate for a simplified, transparent state planning system that reduces the burden on smaller developments and supports efficient local decision-making.

**Action: Support partnerships, advocacy, and direct action to expand access to affordable, social, and emergency housing, ensuring vulnerable residents have a clear path from crisis to stable, long-term homes.**

REF.	TASK
21301	Advocate to state, federal, and non-government bodies for increased investment in public, social and affordable housing.
21302	Support opportunities for cross-sector collaboration to reduce the impacts of homelessness.
21303	Promote CoRE Alliance membership to address the family violence drivers of homelessness.

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 2.2 – Building our workforce

**Action: Support pathways to employment for our young people.**

REF.	TASK
22101	Partner with education providers, LLENs and industry in support of volunteering, industry engagement and structured workplace learning opportunities.
22102	Support key stakeholders in advocating for local TAFE, tertiary and training opportunities.
22103	Investigate opportunities to support female participation in trades and determine next steps.
22104	Provide work experience opportunities and traineeships at NGSC.

**Action: Promote livability to attract essential workers.**

REF.	TASK
22201	Promote investment attraction videos and new residents guide.

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Goal 3: “Business buzz”

## Strategy 3.1 – Supporting farming and rural industries

**Action: Take a strong, proactive role in ensuring renewable energy projects respect local values, and protect agricultural land, cultural values and natural assets.**

REF.	TASK
31101	Deliver the Renewable Readiness Study.
31102	Deliver renewable energy information and advocacy to the community via council's website.
31103	Advocate for early, clear and respectful engagement between renewable energy developers, governments and the community.
31104	Advocate for benefit sharing that is transparent, equitable, and aligned with the priorities and needs of local communities.
31105	Advocate for clear identification and mitigation of cultural, environmental, visual, agricultural and social impacts of renewable developments.

**Action: Support local produce growers to strengthen their resilience against the impacts of climate change.**

REF.	TASK
31201	Advocate for the Southern Wimmera and Northeast Pyrenees Water Supply Project.
31202	Support and further advocate for the East Grampians Rural Pipeline.
31203	Deliver a review of council's public bore network to support domestic, agricultural, and emergency water needs.

**Action: Engage regularly with local farmers, producers and industry groups to understand emerging challenges, support needs, and opportunities for growth and resilience in the agricultural sector.**

REF.	TASK
31301	Support engagement with Agriculture Victoria on regional drought resilience projects.
31302	Deliver agriculture support information and support via council's website.
31303	Deliver an annual Agriculture Forum with the sector in partnership with Agriculture Victoria.

## Strategy 3.2 – Building vibrant local businesses

**Action: Enhance main street vibrancy through retail activation, improved shopfronts, local partnerships, and support for tenants, landlords and entrepreneurs.**

REF.	TASK
32101	Deliver a review of council's Retail Strategy and continue implementation.
32102	Investigate a Main Street 'task force' for Stawell and St Arnaud and determine next steps.



## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 3.2 – Building vibrant local businesses (cont'd)

**Action: Support business growth, collaboration and innovation across the shire by improving infrastructure, encouraging entrepreneurship, and fostering resilient, connected local economies.**

REF.	TASK
32201	Promote buy-local campaigns and networking events.
32202	Support establishment of a Halls Gap and St Arnaud Business network to support collaboration/working together to address common challenges and opportunities.
32203	Deliver promotional campaign to increase uptake of Business Directory and CommunityConnect app.
32204	Support attraction of new industries and businesses to the shire by supporting investment enquiries and promoting council's Investment Prospectus and GWM Tourism's investment prospectus (please refer to Northern Grampians Investment Prospectus 2024). and Grampians-Tourism-Investment-Prospectus.pdf).
32205	Deliver council's 'Business Growth Program', including funding accelerator program and business mentoring (please refer to Northern Grampians Business Growth Program).
32206	Deliver a Transport Development Program that enhances freight movement, supports rural industries, and improves connectivity through strategic upgrades to local rural roads.
32207	Advocate for Heath Street upgrades through state and federal funding to support the development of the Halls Gap Village Centre, enhance walkability, and activate outdoor dining and retail spaces (please refer to Halls Gap Village Action Plan, 2018).
32208	Advocate to deliver the Stawell Aerodrome Master Plan through partnerships with business and government agencies (please refer to Stawell Aerodrome Master Plan Review, 2023).
32209	Advocate for the timely upgrade of the Western Highway from Ararat to Stawell to enhance road safety, improve traffic efficiency, and support regional economic growth through better connectivity and infrastructure.

## Strategy 3.3 – Enhancing tourism experiences

**Action: Facilitate diverse, well-run events that bring life to our towns and attract visitors year-round.**

REF.	TASK
33101	Investigate in partnership with the community night-time economy lighting and ambiance features for Halls Gap such as low-light walkways, decorative lighting, safe routes to night venues and accommodations, and determine next steps.
33102	Deliver NGS Tourism Event Strategy (please refer to Northern Grampians Events Strategy, 2023-33).
33103	Promote accessibility to Events Officer (event concierge).
33104	Investigate streamlining processes to reduce red tape in event registration/approval process.
33105	Deliver event planning workshops to assist community.
33106	Deliver a revised Events Planning Handbook in the form of a fact sheet.

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 3.3 – Enhancing tourism experiences (cont'd)

**Action: Support great visitor experiences through better attractions, access, partnership with Traditional Owners, cultural celebration and local stories.**

REF.	TASK
33201	Advocate for Halls Gap Zoo Shared Path link (please refer to Sport and Active Recreation Strategy, 2024-34).
33202	Deliver priority recommendation in council township Tourism Action Plans (please refer to Stawell Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2022-32 and St Arnaud Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2022-32).
33203	Investigate and seek funding for extension/completion of the Heatherlie Rail Trail and Halls Gap Rail Trail (please refer to Sport and Active Recreation Strategy, 2024-34).
33204	Deliver detailed design for key elements of the Great Western Memorial Park Master Plan.
33205	Work with Great Western Future Committee on the delivery of the Memorial Park sculpture.

**Action: Showcase cultural values, our natural assets, heritage and unique attractions.**

REF.	TASK
33301	Support GWM Tourism to deliver regional destination marketing (please refer to DMP & Invest in our region   Visit Grampians).
33302	Advocate for the delivery of the Stawell Underground Physics Lab and experience centre.
33303	Investigate a regional self-drive touring loop that connects Stawell, Halls Gap, St Arnaud, Great Western and surrounding townships, and determine next steps.

**Action: Deliver modern post-arrival/in-destination visitor information services.**

REF.	TASK
33401	Deliver priority actions in 'NGS Wayfinding Strategy' to ensure clear and accurate wayfinding for our region including traditional ownership recognition (please refer to Northern Grampians Tourism Signage Strategy, 2024pdf).
33402	Deliver a Tourism Action Plan and brand identity for Great Western and Halls Gap as outlined in the Stawell Tourism Strategy and St Arnaud Tourism Strategy (please refer to Stawell Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2022-32, and St Arnaud Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2022-32, and Stawell and St Arnaud Brand Strategy, 2023).
33403	Advocate for the Federation Park rest area detailed design (please refer to page 28 of Stawell Western Highway Urban Design Framework, 2021).
33404	Support Community tourism ambassadors as outlined in the Stawell Tourism Strategy and St Arnaud Tourism Strategy (please refer to Stawell Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2022-32, and St Arnaud Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2022-32, and Stawell and St Arnaud Brand Strategy, 2023).

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Goal 4: "Clean it up"

## Strategy 4.1 – Climate adaptation and preparedness

**Action: Help our community be ready for a changing climate.**

REF.	TASK
41101	Deliver street tree planting and beautification through the Tree and Nature Strip Management Plan, increasing canopy cover, shade access, and urban greening (please refer to Tree and Nature Strip Management Plan, 2024).
41102	Support Agriculture Victoria's work in the identification, planning and maintenance of adaptable community green spaces to enhance regional resilience, accessibility and livability during drought conditions.
41103	Advocate for comprehensive fire and extreme weather preparedness through integrated community education, property and firerisk management, enforcement of fire safety responsibilities, and proactive seasonal readiness planning.
41104	Facilitate community-led initiatives that strengthen community connection, social cohesion and build local capacity in preparation for extreme weather events and times of disruption.
41105	Support the GPHU Heatwave HELP Project via partnership model, supporting localised community education and prevention initiatives relating to climate and heat-related illnesses.
41106	Support community initiatives that strengthen community knowledge and skills to increase and/or maintain canopy cover and green space to support UV protection and reduce heat impacts.

**Action: Lead the way in the community on climate resilience.**

REF.	TASK
41201	Seek funding for a role to deliver integrated climate resilience by advocating for progressive climate and renewable energy policies, embedding climate resilience into council operations and planning, supporting circular economy models, and implementing local flood mitigation initiatives.
41202	Deliver a Great Western Flood Study.

**Action: Empower young people to act on climate change.**

REF.	TASK
41301	Deliver the Building Resilience for Children and Young People, Let's Talk About Big Weather project in St Arnaud and explore opportunities to adapt or expand the initiative in other communities.
41302	Support opportunities to facilitate young people's involvement in conversations about climate and extreme weather events, to express their views, and contribute to advocacy and action.

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 4.2 – Cut waste and recycle properly

**Action: Deliver the mechanisms to reduce waste and recycle properly.**

REF.	TASK
42101	Deliver a review of the Waste Strategy and Action Plan to meet Circular Economy legislation, reduce waste, boost resource recovery, and support local circular economy partnerships.
42102	Investigate wastewater reuse options at Memorial Park, Great Western. Consider recycling or non-potable access.
42103	Investigate feasibility and affordability for hard rubbish collection services across the shire and determine next steps.
42104	Investigate placement of more public bins in parks and high-traffic areas with a view to divert recycling away from landfill, and determine next steps.
42105	Deliver a review of waste transfer station services across the shire, including fees, free metal and green waste drop-off, and FOGO incentives.
42106	Advocate for more container deposit facilities in central locations.
42107	Investigate solutions to address litter created by kerbside bins being tipped over by animals and determine next steps.
42108	Investigate providing recycling services for industrial and commercial items and determine next steps.
42109	Investigate for garden mulch to be provided from processed green waste in St Arnaud and determine next steps.
42110	Deliver communication on current waste management practices (e.g. what is recycled, where it goes), including clearer recycling instructions and determine next steps.

## Strategy 4.3 – Drive energy efficiency

**Action: Lead by example in reducing emissions and building a clean energy future.**

REF.	TASK
43101	Investigate opportunities to enhance energy-efficient upgrades across Council-owned buildings and determine next steps.
43102	Investigate the electrification of council's vehicle fleet and the installation of supporting EV charging infrastructure to reduce emissions and modernise operations, and determine next steps.
43103	Develop a Council Carbon Neutral (Net Zero) Policy to guide emissions reduction across operations, infrastructure and services.

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Strategy 4.4 – Protect our land, water, and wildlife

**Action: Deliver coordinated on-ground efforts to manage land, water and biodiversity in a culturally and environmentally sustainable way.**

REF.	TASK
44101	Deliver the review of the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (please refer to Municipal Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, 2022-2027).
44102	Partner with water authorities and community stakeholders to review rehabilitation options for Mooney Dam and determine next steps for potential stormwater, wetlands and recreation benefits.
44103	Investigate opportunities to transform urban creeks in Stawell and St Arnaud into vibrant, connected green corridors by determining a conceptual model that addresses the intent at a reasonable cost and determine next steps.
44104	Advocate and support efforts to preserve Teddington Reservoir as a valued destination for community recreation activities.
44105	Deliver priority actions in the Walkers Lake Management Plan, 2022 (please refer to Walkers Lake Management Plan, 2022).

## APPENDIX 1

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

## Goal 5: “Do it well”

## Strategy 5.1 – Asset renewal and maintenance program

**Action: Ensure our roads, footpaths and drainage systems are safe, functional and aligned with community needs, with investment directed where it matters most.**

REF.	TASK
51101	Deliver maintenance guided by usage and condition, underpinned by service standards that align with long-term asset sustainability.
51102	Deliver a future-focused road infrastructure renewal program that meets contemporary standards while optimising long-term lifecycle costs through strategic upgrades to bridges, culverts, floodways, and road surfaces based on community priorities.
51103	Deliver targeted road sealing and safety upgrades on rural and residential roads to improve access, reduce risk, and enhance reliability in line with Safe System principles.
51104	Seek funding for the structural repair of the Central Park No. 1 Grandstand.
51105	Seek funding for the renewal of the North Park Athletic Track (please refer to North Park Stawell Master Plan, 2022-32).

**Action: Improve infrastructure outcomes by working with the community, using evidence-based planning, and applying smart, cost-effective asset management practices.**

REF.	TASK
51201	Deliver long-term capital works and infrastructure programs in a staged, transparent manner that prioritise sustainability, adopt tiered service models, and leverage cost-saving innovations to optimise lifecycle performance.

## Strategy 5.2 – Financial viability

**Action: Ensure long-term financial viability and a healthy annual cash surplus so that the organisation is able to deliver its services and goals.**

REF.	TASK
52101	Deliver agreed program of service reviews. Those that are currently planned include; waste management, cemeteries, roads, community care and the early learning centre.
52102	Deliver long-term cash surpluses.
52103	Deliver financially responsible budgets that prioritise high-impact projects aligned with community needs.
52104	Investigate borrowings only where they fund projects that deliver long-term community value and have a clear repayment strategy.



## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

### Strategy 5.2 – Financial viability (cont'd)

**Action: Secure better funding arrangements and partnerships that reduce pressure on local ratepayers and enable delivery of major projects and essential services.**

REF.	TASK
52201	Advocate for increased state and federal government funding to reduce the burden on ratepayers for essential infrastructure and community services.
52202	Support partnerships that enable co-investment in regional projects or services.
52203	Investigate alternative funding mechanisms to supplement council revenue and determine next steps.
52204	Deliver an advocacy prospectus outlining projects council is seeking state and federal funding support for.
52205	Advocate for zero co-contribution to state and federal grants.
52206	Advocate for increased state and federal government funding to reduce the burden on ratepayers for essential infrastructure and community services.

### Strategy 5.3 – Responsive, innovative, and efficient

**Action: Foster strong, inclusive and culturally safe engagement by improving how we listen, communicate, and work with our community and stakeholders to inform decision-making and build trust.**

REF.	TASK
53101	Deliver clear and transparent communication on how rates, borrowings, and grants are used to fund infrastructure and services.
53102	Deliver improvements to council's engagement tools, templates and internal coordination mechanisms.
53103	Deliver IAP2 Engagement Training and plain English communication training for staff.
53104	Deliver easy to understand reporting that demonstrates long-term financial sustainability.
53105	Deliver improvements to content and structure of the website to ensure usability and enhance the overall community experience.
53106	Deliver council content across different mediums (i.e. print, digital, audio) and channels (social media, website, newspaper, radio, podcasts, flyers etc.) to ensure we are reaching as many people as possible despite their consumption behaviors.

## Four-year tasks for annual selection (cont'd)

### Strategy 5.3 – Responsive, innovative, and efficient (cont'd)

**Action: Enable a culture of collaboration and innovation by improving integration across teams, encouraging shared problem-solving, and aligning systems and processes.**

REF.	TASK
53201	Deliver Business Continuity Plan.
53202	Ensure annual mandatory councillor professional development training requirements are met.
53203	Deliver the cyber security action plan.
53204	Deliver cloud-based software to manage proactive and reactive maintenance actions and responsibilities.
53205	Investigate cloud-based software for OH&S (JSA and SWMs) and determine next steps.
53206	Investigate GPS and fleet management systems for the heavy plant fleet and determine next steps.
53207	Develop a Compliance and Enforcement Framework to standardise regulatory processes across teams, ensuring consistency, transparency and improved service delivery.
53208	Investigate a Shared Building Services model with other regional councils and determine next steps.
53209	Deliver a review of council's Project Management Framework.

**Action: Foster a capable and committed workforce by attracting skilled talent, supporting staff wellbeing and development, and reducing turnover through a positive, purpose-driven workplace culture.**

REF.	TASK
53301	Maintain the focus on employee safety (psycho-social and OH&S).
53302	Deliver actions from the annual People Matter Survey and deliver on actions.
53303	Deliver the annual Psychosocial Survey and develop and implement the Psychosocial Action Plan.

## APPENDIX 2

## List of external health and wellbeing partners

List of external partners who contributed to the development of this plan via the engagement process.

- Budja Budja Aboriginal Cooperative
- Central Grampians LLEN
- Concongella Primary School
- DFFH Community Partnerships
- East Wimmera Health Service
- Grampians Community Health
- Grampians Health GPHU
- Grampians Multicultural Hub North
- North Central LLEN
- Pinnacle Inc.
- Stawell Secondary College
- The Orange Door
- Wimmera Women's Health Grampians

## APPENDIX 3

## 2023-27 Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan Priorities alignment

The following table outlines where council's 2025-29 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing priorities contained in this plan align with those defined by the Department of Health.

		Northern Grampians Shire Health and Wellbeing Priorities 2025-29									
		People feel connected, included and safe	Supporting healthy communities	Improving outcomes for children and young people	Unlock land and housing	Supporting farming and rural industries	Support climate adaptation and preparedness	Cut waste and recycle properly	Drive energy efficiency	Protect our land, water and wildlife	Asset renewal and maintenance
Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan Priorities 2023-27	Improving sexual and reproductive health		✓	✓							
	Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use		✓	✓							
	Tackling climate change and its impacts on health					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Preventing all forms of violence	✓			✓						
	Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health										
	Reducing injury										
	Increasing active living	✓	✓	✓							✓
	Increasing healthy eating		✓	✓			✓				
	Improving wellbeing	✓	✓	✓			✓				
	Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use		✓	✓							

## APPENDIX 4

## Mapping Northern Grampians Shire Council's goals to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The goals and strategies contained within this plan are designed to promote equity, resilience, sustainability, and opportunity for all residents reflecting the shared principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Please refer to the below table to see how our local priorities connect with global action.

Northern Grampians Council Plan Goal (2025–29)	Aligned UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
<b>Goal 1: Live it up</b> (Health, Wellbeing and Community)	SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing SDG 4: Quality Education SDG 5: Gender Equality SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
<b>Goal 2: Build it up</b> (Education, Housing and Skills)	SDG 1: No Poverty SDG 4: Quality Education SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
<b>Goal 3: Business buzz</b> (Agriculture, Economy and Tourism)	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production SDG 15: Life on Land
<b>Goal 4: Clean it up</b> (Sustainability, Climate and Waste)	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production SDG 13: Climate Action SDG 15: Life on Land
<b>Goal 5: Do it well</b> (Infrastructure, Finance and Corporate Services)	SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions