

Council Meting

Agenda

Tuesday, 13 May 2025
Council Chamber - Civic Centre
and via Videoconference

Information for Councillors and the community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.



COUNCIL VISION

Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we care for country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how sustainable balanced growth makes this the best place in the world.

VALUE OF HISTORY

We acknowledge that history shapes our identities, engages us as citizens, creates inclusive communities, is part of our economic well-being, teaches us to think critically and creatively, inspires leaders and is the foundation of our future generations.

COUNCILLOR COMMITMENT

We'll be truthful, represent the community's needs, be positive and responsive and always strive to do better.

OUR COUNCILLORS

Billanook Ward: Tim Heenan Chandler Ward: Gareth Ward Chirnside Ward: Richard Higgins Lyster Ward: Peter Mcilwain Melba Ward: Mitch Mazzarella O'Shannassy Ward: Jim Child Ryrie Ward: Fiona McAllister Streeton Ward: Jeff Marriott Walling Ward: Len Cox

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & DIRECTORS

Chief Executive Officer, Tammi Rose Director Built Environment & Infrastructure,

Hjalmar Philipp

Director Communities, Leanne Hurst

Director Corporate Services,

Vincenzo Lombardi

Director Planning and Sustainable Futures,

Kath McClusky

GOVERNANCE RULES

All Council and Delegated Committee meetings are to be conducted in accordance with Council's Governance Rules, which can be viewed at: https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Corporate-documents/Policies-strategies/Governance-rules

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- making a verbal submission for up to 5 minutes on matters not listed on the agenda.
- submitting a question.
- speaking for up to 5 minutes to a specific item on the agenda. For planning applications and
 policy issues, the Chair will invite one person to speak on behalf of any objectors and one person
 to speak on behalf of the applicant. For other matters on the agenda, only one person will be
 invited to address Council, unless there are opposing views. At the discretion of the Chair,
 additional speakers may be invited for items of large interest.
- speaking for up to 5 minutes to a petition to be presented at a meeting.

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CONTACT US

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Council Meeting 13 May 2025

Agenda

1.	COUNCIL MEETING OPENED	7
2.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	8
3.	INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS PRESENT	9
4.	APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE	10
5.	DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	11
	In accordance with Chapter 7, Rule 4, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.	
6.	MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS	12
7.	CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS	13
8.	QUESTIONS AND SUBMISSIONS FROM THE PUBLIC	14
	In accordance with Chapter 3, Rules 57 and 59, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.	
9.	PETITIONS	15
	In accordance with Chapter 3, Rule 60, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.	
	9.1 Petitions to Council	16 - 17
10.	BUSINESS PAPER	
	Planning and Sustainable Futures	

Council Meeting 13 May 2025

Agenda

	Communities		
	10.2	2026 Annual Grant Program	143 - 178
	Corpo	orate Services	
	10.3	Audit and Risk Management Committee - Independent Member Appointment	179 - 182
	10.4	Quarterly Financial Report - March 2025	183 - 197
	Built E	Environment and Infrastructure	
	10.5	Special Charge Scheme Policy	198 - 218
11.	COUN	NCILLOR MOTIONS	219
	devel	cordance with Chapter 3, Division 4, of the Governance Rules oped by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local rnment Act 2020.	
12.	ITEM	S THROUGH THE CHAIR	220
13.	REPO	ORTS FROM DELEGATES	221
14.	DOC	JMENTS FOR SIGNING AND SEALING	222
	Comr	cordance with Clause 87 of the Meeting Procedures and Use of mon Seal Local Law 2015, as prescribed by Section 14(2)(c) of ocal Government Act 2020.	
15.	INFO	RMAL MEETING OF COUNCILLORS	223 - 229
16.	URGE	ENT BUSINESS	230
	In ac	cordance with Chapter 3 Rule 24 of the Governance Rules	

In accordance with Chapter 3 Rule 24 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

Council Meeting 13 May 2025

Agenda

17.	CONFIDENTIAL	LITEMS
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231

In accordance with section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

232 - 233

YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

AGENDA FOR THE 623^{RD} COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY 13 MAY 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.00PM IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, ANDERSON STREET, LILYDALE / VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

1. MEETING OPENED

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.



3. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS PRESENT

OUR COUNCILLORS

Billanook Ward: Tim Heenan

Chandler Ward: Gareth Ward

Chirnside Ward: Richard Higgins

Lyster Ward: Peter Mcilwain

Melba Ward: Mitch Mazzarella

O'Shannassy Ward: Jim Child

Ryrie Ward: Fiona McAllister

Streeton Ward: Jeff Marriott

Walling Ward: Len Cox

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & DIRECTORS

Chief Executive Officer, Tammi Rose

Director Built Environment & Infrastructure, Hjalmar Philipp

Director Communities, Leanne Hurst

Director Corporate Services, Vincenzo Lombardi

Director Planning & Sustainable Futures, Kath McClusky

4. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

There were no apologies received prior to the commencement of this meeting.

5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Chapter 7, Rule 4, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

The Local Government Act 2020 defines two categories of conflict of interest:

- a general conflict of interest, which is defined as "...a relevant person has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty", and
- a material conflict of interest, which is defined as "...a relevant person has a material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. The benefit may arise or the loss incurred (a) directly or indirectly; or (b) in a pecuniary or non-pecuniary form."

In accordance with section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020, a conflict of interest must be disclosed in the manner required by the Governance Rules and the relevant person must exclude themselves from the decision-making process.

No Conflicts of Interest have been received prior to the Agenda being printed.

6.	MAYOR	ΔΙ ΔΙ	NNOUNCMENTS
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7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held Tuesday 8 April 2025, as circulated, be confirmed.

8. QUESTIONS AND SUBMISSIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

In accordance with Chapter 3, Rules 57 and 59, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

A person may make a submission to Council on matters that are not listed on the Agenda. A submission may be on any matter except if it:

- (a) is considered malicious, defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial, or objectionable in language or substance;
- (b) is substantially the same as a submission made to a Council meeting in the preceding 12 months;
- (c) relates to confidential information as defined under the Act;
- (d) relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- (e) relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person.

There were no Submissions from the Public received prior to the Agenda being printed.

9. PETITIONS

In accordance with Chapter 3, Rules 60, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

A person may submit a petition to Council on matters that are not listed on the Agenda. Every petition or joint letter submitted to Council must:

- a) identify a 'Lead Petitioner' who Council can correspond with;
- b) be legible and in permanent writing;
- c) be clear and state on each page the matter and action sought from Council. Every page of a petition or joint letter must be a single page of paper and not be posted, stapled, pinned or otherwise affixed or attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the petition or joint letter;
- d) not be derogatory, defamatory or objectionable in language or nature;
- e) not relate to matters outside the powers of Council; and
- f) clearly state the names and addresses of at least seven (7) people who live, work, study or do business in the Municipal district.

PETITION TO COUNCIL

Report Author: Senior Governance Officer
Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
Ward(s) affected: Ryrie; Walling; Chandler;

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

The following petitions be received:

General Petition

- Request Yarra Ranges Council provide the funding for the auditing, replacement and ongoing maintenance of the existing CCTV cameras in Healesville, to ensure that the Healesville community and traders can feel a stronger sense of security and safety.
 - 140 valid signatures.
- 2. Request that Yarra Ranges Council assess whether a speed zone change is required for Bickleigh Vale Road and Edna Walling Lane in Mooroolbark. If a reduction is warranted, ask that the Council follow its standard procedures to implement the change.
 - 20 valid signatures.
- Request Yarra Ranges Council make improvements to drainage along Outlook Drive, Ernest Road and connecting Roads, Kalorama, as water runoff is causing significant damage to some properties, driveways and roads.
 - 30 valid signatures.

RECOMMENDATION

That the following General Petitions be received, noted and referred to the appropriate officers.

- 1. Yarra Ranges Council to investigate funding the auditing, replacement and ongoing maintenance of the existing CCTV cameras in Healesville.
- 2. Yarra Ranges Council to investigate a speed zone change for Bickleigh Vale Road and Edna Walling Lane, Mooroolbark and if it determines that the speed zone be reduced to follow its procedures to implement the change.
- 3. Yarra Ranges Council to investigate improvements to drainage alone Outlook Drive, Ernest Road and connecting Roads, Kalorama.

YARRA JUNCTION PLACE PLAN - CONSIDERATION FOR ADOPTION

Report Author: Manager Design and Place

Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Sustainable Futures

Ward(s) affected: O'Shannassy;

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

The final Yarra Junction Place Plan has been developed with extensive involvement from the community. The Plan establishes a vision that will help guide decisions about Yarra Junction, lays the foundations for design, captures the values and qualities of the place, and directs future investment for the township.

The draft Place Plan was on public exhibition between 8 August to 8 September 2024. There was high level engagement with 762 visitors to the project's Shaping Page, 49 face to face interviews and 3 written submissions were received. The Plan has been heavily informed by a collaborative representative community working group that was convened across several sessions and directed feedback on actions and content as it was developed.

The final Yarra Junction Place Plan (Attachment 1) has applied the methodology and model from previous Place Plans and will be used as a mechanism to program and plan future projects.

Feedback received has been incorporated into the final Plan. The refined Action Plan has been internally reviewed to ensure that all actions align with Council strategies, plans and works programs. Actions have also been shared with the Community Reference Group members to ensure the changes have not lost the original intent of the actions.

This report seeks Council to note the findings from community consultation and consider adoption of the final Yarra Junction Place Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Note the findings from community consultation on the Yarra Junction Place Plan.
- 2. Adopt the Yarra Junction Place Plan 2025.
- 3. Advise the Yarra Junction community on the outcome of this meeting.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council was briefed on the draft plan prior to the draft Yarra Junction Place Plan going out on public exhibition between 8 August to 8 September 2024.

DISCUSSION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of community feedback of the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan, following public exhibition which occurred between 8 August to 8 September 2024.

The report explains how the community engagement undertaken throughout the process of developing the Place Plan has informed the priorities and actions of the final version of the Place Plan.

Finally, this report presents the final version of the Yarra Junction Place Plan (Attachment 1) seeking Council consideration of adoption.

Background

The Living Places Framework identifies Place Planning as an important tool for understanding a place, by identifying issues and opportunities, understanding what a community values and developing a vision to direct future planning. The Place Plan model is unique to Yarra Ranges, functioning largely as a broad Issues and Opportunities paper, and the current version has been patterned on the previously adopted Place Plans. Place Plans outline Council's long-term strategic intent for a place by providing a clear vision for the future and outlining specific actions to achieve this vision, over 20 years or more.

Following on from learnings in completing the Lilydale and Warburton Place Plans, the Yarra Junction Place Plan was approached with an intent to involve community in not just informing the Place Plan, but to be actively involved in the development of the Plan itself. This has been achieved through diverse community engagement opportunities and collaborative workshops.

A welcome and unplanned outcome of the Community Representative Group workshops was the recent establishment of the Yarra Junction Township Group. This community led

initiative is a positive outcome from collaborating with community in planning, with this group now inspired to begin an independent community planning exercise that will empower the community to achieve outcomes that align with the Plan's vision.

Engagement Stages

Yarra Ranges Council's community engagement is based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement, summarised in Attachment 4. A brief overview of the different stages of engagement on this project is outlined below. Detailed engagement reports that have been shared with the community are provided as attachments to this report:

- Yarra Junction Place Plan Engagement and Directions Paper December 2023 (Attachment 5)
- Yarra Junction Place Plan Consultation and Engagement Report December 2024 (Attachment 6)

Stage 1: Initial Engagement

Initial Conversations

Timing	September – November 2023	
Type (IAP2)	Inform / Consult	
Objectives	Hear from community:	
	What community values/loves about Yarra Junction	
	Where are the opportunities for improvement	
	What community wants for the future	
Actions	Allowing a diverse range of views to be collated through an extensive engagement period involving detailed conversations from a broad range of community members.	

Engagement and directions paper

Timing	April 2024
Type (IAP2)	Inform
Objectives	Report to community: What we heard, key themes, demographic data
Actions	Reporting back to the community on the feedback received, as well as beginning to provide a township profile through exploring demographic data.

Community representative group workshops

Timing	April – May 2024
Type (IAP2)	Inform / Consult / Involve / Collaborate
Objectives	 Work with community: explore key themes. establish priorities. develop action plan. create community vision
Actions	A series of interactive workshops with 22 community representatives from different sectors of the community; including clubs, groups, service providers, business owners, parents, seniors, carers and residents. Allowing community to collaboratively develop an Action Plan and Vision with Council.

Stage 2: Draft Place Plan Engagement

Community Engagement – Draft Place Plan

Timing	August – September 2024
Type (IAP2)	Inform / Consult
Objectives	 Share with community: publicly exhibit the Draft Place Plan receive community feedback
Actions	Present Draft Place Plan to the community and provide a diverse range of opportunities for community to provide feedback.

Engagement report

Timing	December 2024
Type (IAP2)	Inform
Objectives	Report to community: 11. What we heard, how we will respond in the final Place Plan and why
Actions	Reporting back to the community on the feedback received, how and why we will respond to this in the final plan.

Final Yarra Junction Place Plan

Timing	Mid 2025 (planned - confirm on adoption)
Type (IAP2)	Inform
Objectives	Share with community: 12. Release and promote the adopted Yarra Junction Place Plan with community

Community feedback

Community priorities

The draft Yarra Junction Place Plan was developed to respond to community feedback and includes a vision and action plan developed with community.

What community values most about Yarra Junction:

- People are friendly and strong community culture.
- The natural environment.
- Yarra Centre facilities and activities.
- Service centre for Upper Yarra health, education and business.

Key issues raised by the community:

- Roads, parking & transport
- Community infrastructure
- Pedestrian movement and trails
- Shopping centre diversity and aesthetics
- Planning and development housing and industry
- Town aesthetics
- Accessibility infrastructure and services
- Diversity of business
- Emergency services health and emergency management
- Young people services, activities and spaces

Yarra Junction Place Plan

The final version of the Yarra Junction Place Plan has been refined to respond to community feedback. Attachment 2 provides a marked-up version of the plan to show the changes made and Attachment 3 provides a list of key changes.

Key community feedback on the Draft Plan:

- Refine the Action Plan to eliminate overlap of objectives.
- Ensure the actions are clearly defined.
- Simplify and ensure consistency with the document language.
- Provide indicative timeframes.
- Be accountable by clarifying measures.
- The priorities of the Draft plan resonated with community.
- No new priorities were raised giving confidence we haven't missed anything.

Final response to feedback:

- Actions were reassessed, with the action plan being refined from 21 to 15
 actions. The refined action plan was shared with the Community Reference
 Group to ensure the original intent of the actions was not lost.
- The language and content of information provided in the Place Plan has been reviewed with clearer, more simplified messaging in the final draft.
- The actions required to achieve the plan are outlined in the final draft, indicating short, medium and long-term priorities as well as ongoing commitments.

Options considered

Option 1 – Adopt the final Yarra Junction Place Plan

The Yarra Junction Place Plan has been developed with extensive community input, the draft has been considered internally and externally, and the Plan as presented provides direction to achieve the future vision the community desires. There would be a high reputation risk in not proceeding with adoption of the final Plan.

A major piece of work coming out of this plan, Action 3.2 Township Design Framework, is due to commence late 2025. To delay endorsement will affect the team's ability to achieve this work in the planned timeframes.

Option 2 - Defer adoption of the Yarra Junction Place Plan

Officers are not aware of any conflicts or initiatives that would warrant deferring adoption of the Plan. The extensive community engagement and pausing for the Caretaker Period in 2024 has meant this project has extended over an 18-month period, to extend this further is unnecessary and may diminish the momentum built in community through the engagement process.

Option 3 - Abandon the Yarra Junction Place Plan

This option would see the loss of a comprehensive vision and action plan to direct future investment, projects and decisions for Yarra Junction. It would pose a high

reputation risk as the community has been so involved in the development of the plan.

There is a program of work lined up to follow adoption of the Place Plan, abandoning the Plan will result in a lack of direction and potential missed opportunities.

Recommended option and justification

It is recommended Option 1 be pursued. This will enable formal adoption of the Yarra Junction Place Plan and provide a clear vision and action plan for the Township. Having an endorsed Place Plan will help to inform Council decision making, guide future projects and direct investment in the centre. There are no identified risks that would justify delaying or abandoning adoption of the Place Plan.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

No capital funding is committed to any projects proposed within the Yarra Junction Place Plan.

Many of the actions are aligned with Council projects and business plans and will be achieved over time with relevant departments. Department managers have been involved in reviewing the Action Plan and agree to the actions that reflect on their business unit.

The action list has been aligned with the following future work that Council is currently committed to move forward with:

- Yarra Junction Township Design Framework
- Planning Scheme provisions
- Social and Affordable Housing Framework
- Storm Water Management Plan
- Yarra Junction Community Infrastructure Options Study
- Accessibility Standards Infrastructure Program
- Parking Framework
- Yarra Centre / Aquatics Master Plan
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Emergency Resilience Community Programs
- Community and Small Business Grants Program
- Investment Attraction Plan
- Local Development Strategy

Any large-scale building works, public realm projects or streetscape projects, including design, architectural, surveyor and permit costs; site preparation costs; project management costs; construction costs; and other associated costs will firstly

need to be identified and detailed through the Yarra Junction Township Design Framework or precinct Master Plans before seeking project funding. Future funding streams may include but are not limited to capital works (Council funding) and available grants.

Whilst the Yarra Junction Township Design Framework is developed it would be beneficial for the community to see some physical outcomes from the Place Plan. This could be achieved through smaller, easily achievable Place Making projects such as public art, lighting, landscaping or community activations. Project ideas will be developed with a focus on youth involvement. Funding of these projects may be secured through future capital funding bids or potential grant opportunities.

The objectives of these types of projects would be to minimise the use of internal resources, engage community skills, involve young people to foster positive involvement in the community, and provide early outcomes to support the long-term vision for the township.

Action Items that may require short term financial investment include:

Action	Team	Estimated Cost	Year
Community art project	Design & Place Creative Communities Youth	\$20,000 Budget to be confirmed	2025-26
Community activation**	Design & Place Creative Communities Community Development Youth	\$5,000 Budget to be confirmed	2025-26
Traffic Review	Traffic & Infrastructure Services Design & Place	\$15,000 Cost already incorporated in 2024-25 operational budget	2024-25
Parking Review	Traffic & Infrastructure Services Design & Place	\$10,000 Cost already incorporated in 2024-25 operational budget	2024-25

^{**}Note: With the development of the Yarra Junction Community Group coming out of the Place Plan engagement process, there is potential that Council's role in community activation may be to support the group through the Community Grants Program. Empowering the community to drive positive community activation is a much stronger outcome for community long term, than for Council to run one activity.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

Connected and Healthy Communities

"Communities are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive, and socially well connected. Quality services are accessible, gender equitable and inclusive catering for all ages, genders, and abilities. Our community is healthy and active, with easy access to recreational facilities and cultural activities that are available for everyone. Disadvantaged residents are well supported through partnerships between government, business, and community organisations."

Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places

"Quality facilities and infrastructure meets current and future needs. Places are well planned and are hubs of activity that foster wellbeing, creativity and innovation."

Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment

"A healthier environment for future generations."

Vibrant Economy, Agriculture and Tourism

"Our tourism, agriculture, health, manufacturing, and other industries are leading and dynamic. Strong investment and attraction underpin sustainable economic growth and job creation."

High Performance Organisation

"An innovative, responsive organisation that listens and delivers quality, value for money services to our community".

Major Initiatives 2021 – 2025 include:

<u>Major Initiative 5:</u> Improve mental health outcomes for the community, strengthen social connections, and advocate for equitable and accessible mental health services across the municipality.

<u>Major Initiative 6:</u> Undertake and deliver integrated place planning for priority activity centres and town centres to achieve coordinated community outcomes across Yarra Ranges, in accordance with the Living Places Framework.

Other plans and policies the Place Plan responds to:

- Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme
- Living Place Framework 2023
- YRC Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 (under Review)

- Environment Strategy 2015-2025
- YRC Aquatics Strategy 2022-2033
- YRC Recreation and Open Space Plan (under review)
- YRC Liveable Climate Plan 2020-2030
- YRC Green Wedge Management Plan (under review)
- YRC Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032
- YRC Creative Communities Strategy
- YRC Equity Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023 (under review will be superseded by Draft Disability Action Plan)
- YRC Healthy and Active Ageing Plan 2019-2023 (superseded by draft Key Life Stages)
- YRC Early & Middle Years Strategic Action Plans 2019-2021 (superseded by draft Key Life Stages)
- YRC Integrated Transport Strategy 2020-2040

RELEVANT LAW

A Gender Impact Assessment has been completed as part of this project and will continue to be referred to as individual projects are progressed through the Action Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Yarra Junction Place Plan acknowledges the role Yarra Junction has in the Upper Yarra Corridor in terms of servicing the many townships of the Upper Yarra and providing an emergency management and recovery hub.

It is important to be mindful of the increasing risks that the communities of the Upper Yarra will face due to climate change, including higher numbers of extreme heat days, increased severe weather events, flooding and fire.

Ensuring sustainability measures are included in all planning and establishing a resilient and connected community that is prepared to respond to emergency events is a critical focus for the Place Plan. The concern for community is to ensure ongoing digital connectivity during an emergency event, and a road network that can support movement and accessibility to emergency infrastructure.

Economic Implications

Actions listed in the Yarra Junction Place Plan support economic outcomes, including develop township identity and character, sustainable development, balanced tourism development, industry development, development of retail and hospitality sectors, youth opportunities and roads, transport and parking solutions; foster positive investment for Yarra Junction by diversifying economic and retail activity supporting business growth and providing employment opportunities.

Social Implications

Actions listed in the Yarra Junction Place Plan encourage better community connections and overall improved community health outcomes. Including prioritising pedestrian movement, improved accessibility of community infrastructure and public realm spaces, positive activation of public spaces, youth focused activities and spaces, developing town identity and character, protecting the natural environment, promotion of services, and advocacy for strengthened local health and social services.

Environmental Implications

The community of Yarra Junction highly values the natural assets and environment in the area. It is an important item of the Plan, to ensure continued celebration and protection of natural assets such as the Yarra and Little Yarra Rivers and surrounding forests. The future Township Design Framework will need to respond to this by incorporating Environmentally Sustainable Design and Water Sensitive Urban Design solutions.

Increasing accessibility and prioritising pedestrian movement will have positive implications on the natural environment as active transport solutions become more feasible in the township.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive community engagement has taken place in developing the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan as detailed above under Background and detailed in the Engagement Reports (Attachments 4 and 5). This process has been intensive and involved many months of interaction with the community and was undertaken in accordance with the Council's adopted Community Engagement Framework.

It was intended that the engagement of the Yarra Junction Place Plan allowed for many opportunities for community to provide feedback, whilst developing a network of community stakeholders to help promote these opportunities.

Opportunities to engage were promoted via:

Website – Shaping Yarra Junction page.

- A full graphic pdf version of the Draft plan accompanied by a plain text accessible word full version and plain text accessible word summary version of the Plan.
- Animated video explaining the Place Plan process and key priorities identified by community.
- Engagement activities including a quick survey, prioritising activity and allowance for detail submission.
- Survey The community survey focused on the Action Plan, asking community to rate priorities and providing opportunity to comment on listed actions.
- Social media Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, promoting opportunities to engage.
- Email Council's E-newsletter and Upper Yarra Community E-newsletter.
- Mail out Letter promoting project sent to Yarra Junction residents.
- Drop-in sessions advertised times where Council officers were available for discussion at Yarra Junction Community Link.
- Roving Pop Ups staff dropping in to talk to community at key centre locations such as the Shopping Centre, Library, Yarra Centre, school drop off zones, recreation reserve and trails network.
- Local radio interviews 99.1 Yarra Valley FM.
- Signage and posters around the centre and community facilities.
- Utilising stakeholder networks many engaged community clubs and groups promoted the project through their networks.
- Youth specific engagement –Upper Yarra Secondary College student's pier led workshops.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The actions of the Yarra Junction Place Plan have been developed through direct involvement from the Yarra Junction Community Reference Group, who invested their time to a series of workshops, discussions, and preparation. Council officers from different departments in Council supported the workshops and provided relevant expertise and insights to different topics being discussed. This collaborative effort led to a vision and action list that not only responds to community, but community is invested in. This has already been seen by the development of the Yarra Junction Township Group who have begun the process of community planning.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan provides the necessary evidence-based context to guide future work, such as a Township Design Framework, Community Infrastructure Study and others listed in the Financial Analysis section of this report. As well as guiding future planning and development projects, the holistic approach will assist in informing a wide range of Council service delivery areas of the specific opportunities and challenges to consider in the Yarra Junction area and maximise the Council's response to community expectations.

The community has been heavily engaged in the development of the Plan and failure to deliver it will have a high reputational risk that may lead to disengagement from the community and loss of opportunities for cohesion and cooperation. It is important that the Plan is embraced, and actions followed through in a timely manner to maintain the strength in relationships and trust that has been developed through the Place Planning process.

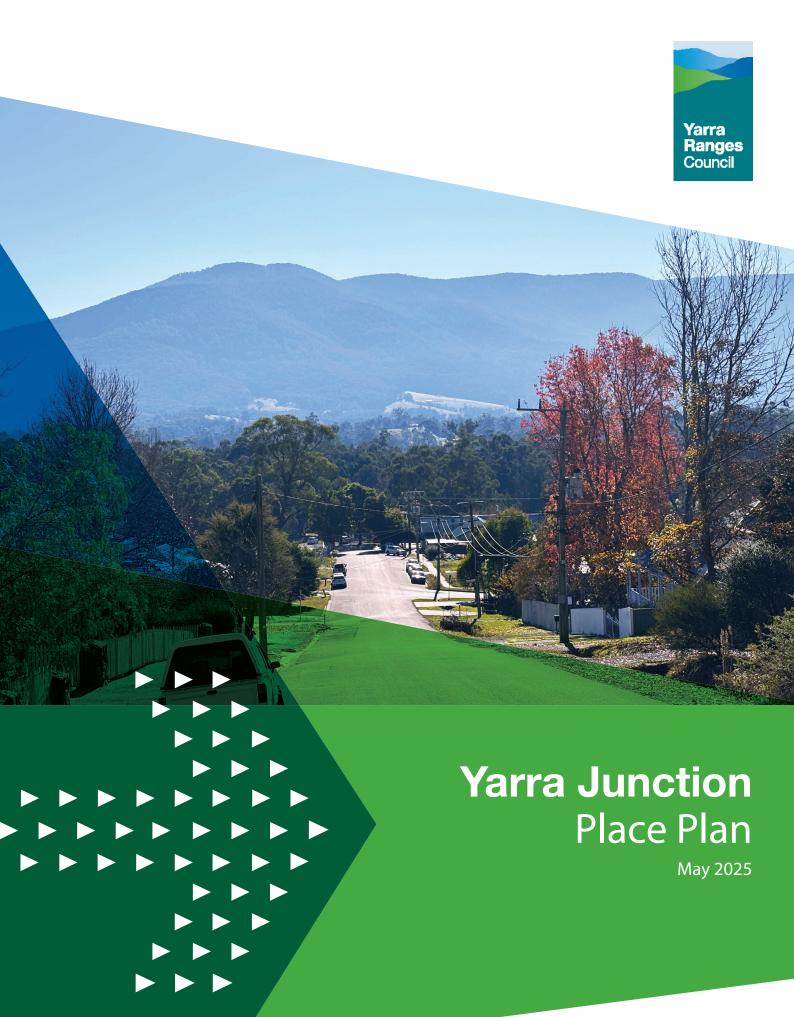
As capital funding has not been committed to delivering infrastructure through the Place Plan, it is important to provide clear messaging on the steps to achieve the Plan's vision. Future work such as the Township Design Framework and precinct Master Plans will be required to secure funding for delivery of any major infrastructure projects. There is a risk that the community will expect to see immediate changes on adoption of the Plan. Clear communications outlining the next steps and delivering some smaller Place Making projects short term will help mitigate this risk.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

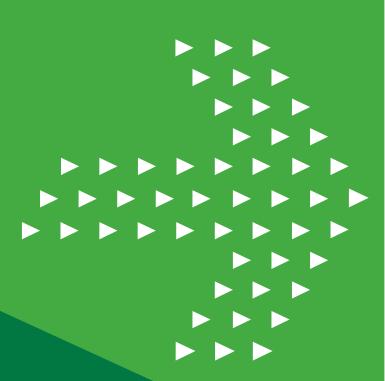
ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

- 1. FINAL Yarra Junction Place Plan May 2025
- 2. Draft YJPP mark up of changes
- 3. YJPP Summary of proposed changes
- 4. YJPP Engagement and Directions Paper December 2023
- 5. YJPP Consultation and Engagement Report December 2024
- 6. IAP2 Community Engagement Summary
- 7. Yarra Junction Place Plan Project Timeline



Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.



Published by Yarra Ranges Council 2025

This document and all associated reports are available on Council's website. Hard copies are available at any of our five Community Links. To request a copy, email or phone our Customer Service Centre using the details below:

yarraranges.vic.gov.au mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au Phone: 1300 368 333

Contents

Executive Summary2
A Vision for Yarra Junction4
1. What is a Place Plan?5
2. Why a Place Plan for Yarra Junction?6
3. What is the Strategic Context for the Place Plan?
4. How was the community involved in developing the Yarra Junction Place Plan? 8
5. What did the community tell us?9
6. A Plan for Action 10
7. Bringing the Place Plan to life 13
8. How will we measure progress? 14
Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot 16
Glossary

Executive Summary

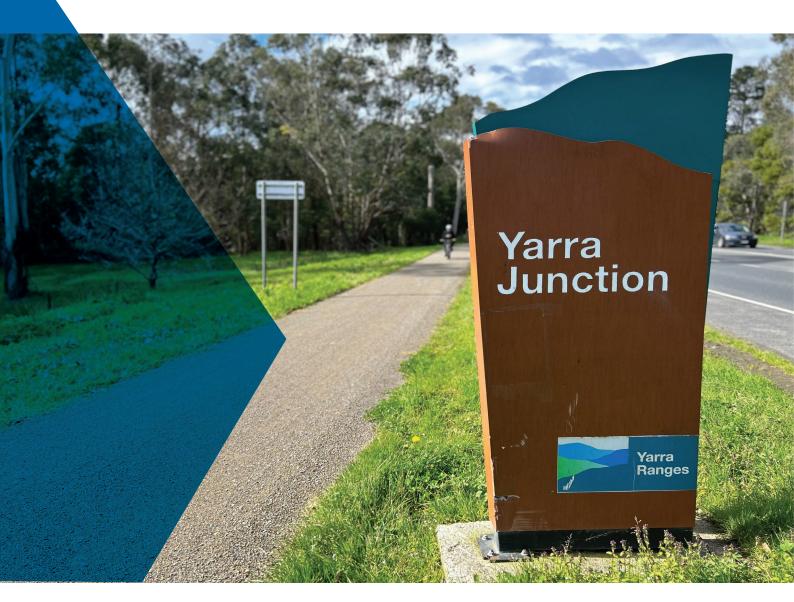
Yarra Junction is known for its beautiful landscapes and strong community spirit. The town values its friendly atmosphere and natural surroundings. To plan for the future, we need a vision that ensures balanced growth, protects the environment, and preserves the town's character.

Over the past year, Council has worked with the community to create the Yarra Junction Place Plan. This plan sets out Council's long-term goals for the township, based on extensive community input and research.

The Yarra Junction Place Plan:

- Presents a vision and action plan.
- Identifies issues and opportunities.
- Lays the foundation for detailed design plans.
- Provides a basis for Government and private investment advocacy.

Community engagement started in late 2023 and continued throughout 2024. Reports on this engagement can be found on the Council website.



Action Plan

A Community Reference Group of 22 members helped shape the Action Plan and Community Vision. The final Action Plan includes 15 actions across five priority areas:

1. Culture and Character

- 1.1 Develop township identity and character
- 1.2 Natural environment
- 1.3 Sustainable development

2. Transport & Accessibility

- 2.1 Road maintenance and safety
- 2.2 Transport reliability and safety
- 2.3 Parking

3. Community Infrastructure

- 3.1 Township Design Framework
- 3.2 Community facilities
- 3.3 Positive activation of public spaces

4. Partnerships

- 4.1 Health and support services
- 4.2 Emergency resilience
- 4.3 Youth focused support and initiatives

5. Business and Employment Opportunities

- 5.1 Balanced tourism development
- 5.2 Local industry development
- 5.3 Development of the retail and hospitality sector

Details of the Action Plan can be found in Section 5 "A Plan for Action" in this report.

The Place Plan will help guide and prioritise future projects. Actions will be included in Council's annual business and project plans. Specific tasks will be assigned to different teams with annual reporting of the Plan's progress available through Council's website.

A Vision for Yarra Junction

Community Vision

"Yarra Junction is a proud and welcoming township uniting people, founded by nature and culture."

Vision

Yarra Junction aims to be a proud community that prioritises its people, celebrates its unique identity, and fosters well-being and resilience. Known for its thriving local businesses, flourishing local industries, and protected natural assets.

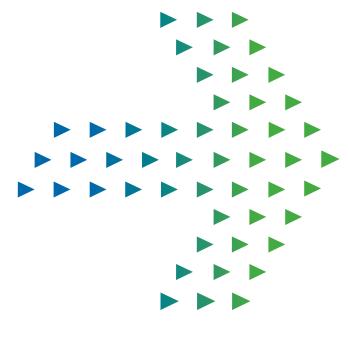
Yarra Junction will feature vibrant, accessible and inclusive public spaces that prioritise community connections and activity, with safe streets, paths and trails allowing accessible movement around the town centre.

Proudly maintaining its role of servicing the Upper Yarra, emergency resilience will be a key focus, with robust community infrastructure designed for consistent digital connectivity and a road network that supports accessible movement.

Our youth will be involved in the development of dedicated spaces and activities, and benefit from the increased opportunities coming from expanding local business investment.

Protecting our cherished natural environment, we will balance increased tourism with community needs, ensuring a future that is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.





1. What is a Place Plan?

Place Plans outline Council's long-term strategic intent for a place by providing a clear vision for the future and outlining specific actions to achieve this vision, over 20 years or more.

These plans are developed through extensive community engagement and thorough research, which is guided by five key principles, shown below. Place Plans establish Council's long-term goals and vision for the area, identifying key challenges and opportunities for improvement.

They also serve as a foundation for more detailed planning and design efforts, offering a clear evidence base to support planning decisions and advocate for funding and investment. Involving local community in the development of a Place Plan ensures that the areas growth aligns with the needs of the community and Council's strategic goals.



PRINCIPLE A: Culture, community & service needs

What is the current population telling us about this township?

Appropriate policies, support services and resources are based on a clear understanding of the community's aspirations, needs and culture.



PRINCIPLE B: Economic prosperity

How can we improve resilience and help a township flourish through changes occurring on a global scale?

Working together based on local connections to create shared values and a strong, resilient community, maximising benefits for the economy, health, and environment.



PRINCIPLE C: Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure

How can we best use common land in our townships?

Well-structured and welcoming public spaces integrate multiple functions, such as public transport and active transport, recreation and conservation areas, vibrant and attractive streets and meeting places.



PRINCIPLE D: Future land use & development

How will townships in Yarra Ranges respond as Melbourne develops?

Policy, planning and investment attraction help guide development and use of private land and buildings in order to support public and social activity.



PRINCIPLE E: Leadership & governance

How will we sustain and manage Council and community effort?

Planning for place and making those plans a reality involves many different parties and processes. Ongoing management is required to implement actions and evaluate their effectiveness once completed.

В

C

D

Ε

2. Why a Place Plan for Yarra Junction?

The Yarra Ranges Council vision statement for the entire municipality states:

"Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we care for Country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how balanced growth makes this the best place in the world."

Yarra Ranges Community Vision 2036



The Yarra Junction Place Plan takes the first step towards realising this vision in Yarra Junction. It will help guide decisions about Yarra Junction, lays the foundations for design, captures the values and qualities of the township, and will direct future investment.

Geographically, the town is set on flat and undulating land near the junction of the Yarra and Little Yarra Rivers, flowing from sources beyond Warburton and Powelltown respectively. With the water flowing to create a physical connection between the many townships of the Upper Yarra, Yarra Junction has traditionally and will continue to be the natural connection point for the people of the Upper Yarra area.

Yarra Junction continues to play a role in emergency management today, being home to the Yarra Junction Country Fire Authority (CFA). The centre is identified as an emergency relief hub, and the recreation reserve listed as a place of last resort.

The Place Plan seeks to capture a clear understanding of the Yarra Junction community and ensure that the values and culture of Yarra Junction are enriched as the township evolves and changes over time.

3. What is the Strategic context for the Place Plan?

The Yarra Junction Place Plan will work alongside existing planning rules to guide development decisions.

The town is recognised as a Large Neighbourhood Activity Centre, offering a mix of community, health, recreational, retail, and commercial services that also support nearby rural communities of the Upper Yarra.

The Design & Development Overlay 12 (DDO12) sets guidelines for building and town character.

The Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25 (currently under review) highlights that Yarra Junction faces higher levels of disadvantage than other areas in Yarra Ranges. This has also been reflected in 2021 Census data that demonstrates more residents experiencing mental health issues, disabilities, or long-term health conditions compared to state averages.

The Place Plan aims to:

- Encourage growth in local industries
- Provide more training and job opportunities
- Strengthen the town's character
- Enhance local services

The Place Plan provides a clear direction and evidence base for advocacy and planning for funding future projects.



4. How was the community involved in the Yarra Junction Place Plan?

Yarra Ranges Council engaged community through interviews, surveys, workshops, pop-up stalls, social media, and events. Over 400 people participated directly, and thousands more were reached through various outreach efforts.

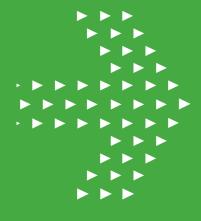
The project team collaborated with Upper Yarra Secondary College to involve youth, providing leadership opportunities to six students who led a workshop with their peers.

A community reference group of 22 members worked in April and May 2024 to refine broader community feedback, set priorities, develop an Action Plan and create a community vision for the Place Plan.

The draft Place Plan was open for community engagement in August 2024, with feedback being used to refine the final Plan.

Detailed community engagement reports explaining the ways community was engaged and what community told Council can be found on Council's website.





5. What did the community tell us?

The people of Yarra Junction value their strong sense of community and the protection of their natural environment. They want balanced growth with better services and amenities to support a vibrant town centre.



Key themes from community feedback include:

- Roads and Transport: Well-maintained roads to handle more traffic and improve safety, with more local transport options.
- **Community Infrastructure**: Accessible facilities, with focus on developing spaces with and for young people.
- Town Centre: Pedestrian-friendly with minimal barriers, encouraging visits from surrounding paths and trails.
- Revitalisation: Adding vibrancy to public spaces, celebrating town pride with attractive streetscapes, public art, and lighting.
- Economy: A strong economy with diverse business and industry development, providing local job opportunities.
- Services and Healthcare: Filling gaps in services, especially local emergency healthcare.
- Youth Support: Safe spaces and activities for youth, with diverse training and employment options to encourage them to stay.
- Tourism: An attractive town centre with signage to encourage tourists to stop and spend time.
- **Environment**: Caring for and celebrating the natural environment.
- Housing: Diverse and affordable housing options with a focus on sustainable design.
- Infrastructure: Effective drainage, roads, and communications for the whole community.

6. A Plan for Action

The Place Plan for Yarra Junction outlines five key priority areas, all of which are essential to achieve the vision. While no funding is currently allocated for infrastructure projects, ongoing planning and design will help develop costed projects to seek funding through State and Federal Government. The Plan's actions will be integrated into annual business planning and reporting processes.

Priority 1 – Culture and Character

Action 1.1 - Develop township identity and character

Establish strong connections to place by celebrating the history of the area through youth-focused community art projects.

Support revitalisation of the town centre by encouraging pedestrian movement and fostering community connections. Promote and support the township's ongoing role as a service centre for the Upper Yarra catchment.

Action 1.2 - Natural environment

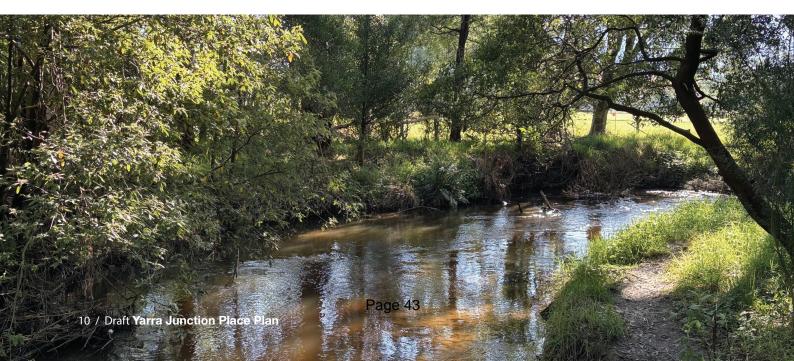
Continue to celebrate and protect our natural assets, such as the Yarra and Little Yarra Rivers. Ensure balanced planning and development of the township, that is sensitive to the natural environment and embeds Ecologically Sustainable Development.

Action 1.3 - Sustainable development

Explore opportunities to increase housing diversity in the activity centre, including social & affordable housing. With considered decision making ensure preservation of the natural environment and neighbourhood character is balanced with community needs in planning & development.

Benefits

- Boost town centre activity.
- Enhances community connections and wellbeing.
- Preserves and values natural assets.
- Fosters a sense of belonging and community pride.
- Increases community perceptions of safety.
- Supports balanced development for a growing community.
- Offers diverse housing options for all ages.



Priority 2 – Transport and Accessibility

Action 2.1 - Road maintenance and safety

Complete a traffic safety review of the activity centre and respond to identified safety hot spots with traffic conditioning treatments and interventions. Explore a local network solution that can alleviate traffic pressure during events and emergencies.

Consider longer lasting maintenance treatments on local roads. Advocate to State Government for traffic calming treatments and interventions to increase safety for road users and pedestrians, particularly on Warburton Highway.

Action 2.2 – Transport reliability and safety

Partner with the State Government to develop innovative solutions that increase local access to, frequency and safety of public transport. Explore the opportunity for alternate local transport services such as a Flexi Bus network.

Action 2.3 - Parking

Develop a Yarra Junction Parking Strategy, identifying adequate accessible and short-term parking solutions in the heart of the activity centre and explores identified safety concerns. Develop a program of short, medium and long term projects for delivery.

Benefits

- Enhances safety for pedestrians and drivers.
- Reduces car dependence and congestion.
- Improves accessible movement.
- Supports positive travel experiences for locals and visitors.
- Encourages active transport and walkability.
- Removes barriers in the town centre.
- Ensures reliable movement during emergencies.

Priority 3 – Community Infrastructure

Action 3.1 – Township Design Framework

Develop a Township Design Framework based on the Place Plan priorities. This framework will integrate building design, public spaces, and movement, providing clear design goals to attract project funding. Prioritise pedestrian movement in the centre of the township with a focus on accessibility and traffic management. Identify and deliver missing connections to the pedestrian network. Involve young people in designing youth-focused spaces to foster positive relationships with these areas.

Action 3.2 - Community infrastructure

Complete a community infrastructure review and consider the consolidation of community facilities, focusing on accessibility, integration of services and resilience.

Action 3.3 - Positive activation of public spaces

Identify design solutions and a series of projects to be delivered, that focus on reimagining public spaces to encourage positive activation. Involve young people in the development of accessible community spaces supporting a diverse range of community activities that are inclusive to all abilities and ages.

Page 44

Benefits

- Preserve and enhance Yarra Junction's character.
- Foster a vibrant and connected community.
- Improve accessibility and promote inclusion.
- Provide better services and integrate activities.
- Boost youth's sense of belonging.
- Create opportunities for intergenerational connections and more community events.

Priority 4 – Partnerships

Action 4.1 - Health & support services

Understand service needs and advocate for a consistent local healthcare network providing comprehensive care, including medical, social, emergency services, and support for homelessness, mental health, and substance abuse. Focus on filling service gaps, improving cross-service referrals and promotion of available services to community.

Action 4.2 - Emergency resilience

Encourage community emergency resilience by supporting preparedness programs and planning resilient infrastructure with a focus on digital connectivity and accessibility. Advocate to State Government for an improved road network and consistent means of communication in emergencies.

Action 4.3 - Youth focused support & initiatives

Work with agencies to co-design and activate youth-focused community spaces and initiatives in partnership with young people.

Benefits

- Improve community health.
- Build a prepared and resilient community.
- Enhance youth development and safety.
- Foster a connected community with a shared vision.
- Ensure support is accessible to those in need.

Priority 5 – Business and Employment Opportunities

Action 5.1 - Balanced tourism development

Support balanced tourism development including exploring ways to increase visitation from the users of the trails network. Seek funding to develop a business case for the introduction of a visitor information centre, potentially including social enterprise or maker spaces to boost local industry.

Action 5.2 - Local Industry development

Preserve industrial land for local light industry. Encourage small businesses, local industry and emerging industries with grants, maker spaces, workspaces, and training, especially for young people.

Action 5.3 - Development of the retail & hospitality sectors

Revitalise the activity centre with a focus on pedestrian movement and accessibility. Enhance township character by creating public spaces that feel inclusive for young people, and invite positive activation through outdoor dining, public art, and lighting.

Benefits

- Boosts the local economy and industry growth.
- Enhances day and night-time activity in the town centre.
- Creates more local jobs.
- Inspires future generations to stay and thrive in Yarra Junction.
- Promotes a diverse and resilient economy and community.
- Expands tourism opportunities and benefits.

6. Bringing the Place Plan to life

As a 20 year plan, the actions signal strategic intent for Yarra Junction and surrounds.

Funding is not currently allocated for major infrastructure improvements identified through the Place Plan. These key next steps will ensure the Place Plan progresses towards the delivery of real projects and community outcomes over time.

1

Adoption

Council adoption of the Yarra Junction Place Plan, aligning it with key strategies and actions in the annual Corporate Action Plan.

2

Township Design Framework

After adoption of the Place Plan, a Township Design Framework will be developed to translate the principles into actual designs and projects prepared for delivery.

3

Masterplans and Place Making Projects

Solutions that can be readily delivered will be designed and costed in order to seek funding for delivery in the short and medium term.

4

Major Infrastructure Projects

Planning for major infrastructure projects will begin with the Township Design Framework, Yarra Centre Master Plan, and other work. Long term advocacy and funding commitments are needed to deliver major infrastructure.

5

Annual Action Plan

The actions will be integrated into Council's annual business and project planning, with specific actions allocated to teams for delivery.

6

Reporting

Progress on actions and projects reported annually. Performance and monitoring publicly available through Council's on-line presence.

7

Review

The Yarra Junction Place Plan will be reviewed and evaluated over time to ensure it is current, relevant and adapted to any changes that have arisen.

8. How will we measure progress?

Place Planning is all about working together to create vibrant, thriving communities. It helps everyone agree on a shared vision and guides future development, making it easier to advocate for investment and funding.

The results of a Place Plan take time to see and can include both physical improvements and positive impacts for the community, the town and the natural environment. By gathering data as the plan progresses, we can track how well we're achieving our goals.

Measuring changes in built environment

» Conduct a Place Assessment for Yarra Junction with follow up assessment every five years.

Measuring changes in economic performance

- » Compare local economic profile to baseline data.
- » Target:
 - Increase in visitor economy.
 - Increased economic activity within the activity centre.
 - Increase local employment opportunities for people under the age of 30.

Measuring changes in cultural environment

- » Compare measures of community activity with baseline.
- » Targets:
 - Increased community activity and events in public spaces.
 - Young people involved in the design and development of public spaces.
 - Yarra Junction Township Group established and sustained by community.

Measuring changes in transport networks

- » Compare use of public and active transport with baseline data.
- » Targets:
 - 20 percent increase in the number of people walking past the same locations after major capital works are complete.
 - Increase in public transport services or introduction of alternate local transport options for community.

Measuring changes in traffic

- » Compare traffic movement and safety to base line traffic data.
- » Targets:
 - Decrease of speed and congestion in the activity centre.





Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot

The following overview of Yarra Junction has been arranged around the five Principles of Place (see section 1. What is a Place Plan?)



Culture, community and service needs

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

Yarra Junction has experienced 25% growth over the past 10 years. (2021 census data indicates a population of 2,875 people compared to 2,297 people in 2011).



43

MEDIAN

AGE

A large percentage of people in the 1-14 years old and 70-74 years old age groups, with a median age of 43 years old (slightly higher than the Greater Melbourne median age of 37).



High level of residents aged 60 plus, with concerns around housing diversity and services to allow people to age in place. Growing concern about the limited opportunities for young people, including a lack of activities, lack of transport options and limited employment opportunities.



HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND INCOME



Yarra Junction currently has only a small supply of developable residential land, with an existing demand for smaller dwelling types.



A high level of one parent families and people living alone; and a low level of married or de facto couples.



The median weekly household income is \$1,302, lower than the Yarra Ranges median weekly household income of \$1,881.





SOCIAL ISSUES AND SERVICE PROVISION

There is growing concern about the social and emotional wellbeing of young people in Yarra Junction and the limited support services available to them locally.



Yarra Junction is recognised as the service centre for the broader Upper Yarra area.



SERVICE CENTRE

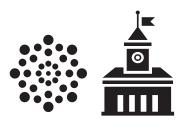






Services have noted an increase in people with financial hardship and homelessness requiring support.

HERITAGE AND CHARACTER



There is a strong desire to tell Heritage (Indigenous and European) stories to shape place.

Yarra Junction has traditionally provided emergency support to surrounding townships in the Upper Yarra area.



The areas Natural Assets, such as the rivers and surrounding hills and bushland, are highly valued by community.

HIGHLY VALUED



Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot



TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

TOP THREE PROFESSIONS

Top three professions held by residents of Yarra Junction:

21%

working as Technicians and Trades Workers 14%

working as Community and Personal Service Workers 13%

working as Clerical and Administrative Workers

VERY LOW LEVEL

Very low level of residents attending or have attended tertiary education – 10.5% 10.5%





25% of households have an income of less than \$650 per week

\$650 PER WEEK

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Trade workers are the predominant workforce in this area, many of these workers are travelling out of the region for their daily work.

The largest sector for economic output in Yarra Junction is the Health Care and Social Assistance sector.



The township does not currently take advantage of the economic benefits available from the regions increased tourism.





The town's role as an employment hub has declined since the 1970's, with the slowing of local industry.

HOUSING

74%



74% of households in Yarra Junction are purchasing or fully owned their home, with 19.3% of owners paying more than 30% of their income on their mortgage.



LIMITED RENTAL STOCK

There is very limited rental stock available in the area.









There is limited diversity in the housing available, creating pressures on young people and the ageing population.

13.7% of households in Yarra Junction were renting privately, with 45.2% of renters paying more than 30% of their income on rent.



45%

PAYING 30% OR MORE OF INCOME ON RENT



Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot



Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure

PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION



The town is lacking a central community space that connects community events with the activity centre.



Safety is a concern for some, particularly lighting, passive surveillance, and activity at night.



The activity centre lacks appeal and requires revitalisation.





NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The township value the visual connection to the natural environment.







Community would like accessible public spaces that support community events and activity.

PARKING



Community is concerned about the quality of parking options around the activity centre.

There are requests for more accessible and short-term parking options in centre.



Parking on Warburton Highway limits line of site and creates safety hazards.





ACCESS AND MOVEMENT



WARBURTON HIGHWAY

The Warburton Highway acts as a barrier for movement around the town centre.

Community would like to see pedestrian movement prioritised in the town centre.



Limited public transport service provision.



Accessibility around the centre is very poor, with narrow and inconsistent paths.





Increasing traffic is causing concern to community in terms of safety and emergency management.



Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot



Future land use and development

ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

There are dormant sites and undeveloped Special Use Zone sites in Yarra Junction that have great potential for positive impacts if developed.



OPPORTUNITIES

Some would like to see opportunities for creative and light industry development.









Community would like to see more vibrancy in centre, particularly with outdoor dining options to increase a night-time economy.

COUNCIL ASSETS



There are many ageing Council facilities fragmented across the township.



The Yarra Centre is highly valued by community, who would like to see further investment in this facility with particular focus on a warm water pool.

SERVICES
AND ACTIVITIES

Many community members do not know what services and activities run in Council owned facilities.







Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot



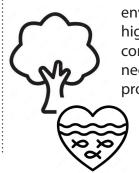
Leadership and governance

COMMUNITY





There is opportunity for better communication or co-operation amongst community groups and clubs in Yarra Junction.



The natural environment is highly valued by community and needs continued protection.



RESILIENCE PROGRAMS

Council is committed to supporting Community Resilience Programs to ensure preparedness for emergencies.

NEW INVESTMENT AND ADVOCACY



Council will continue to explore opportunities to encourage new investment in the area.

Tourism visitor numbers are expected to increase.





Community would like to see balanced growth.

BALANCED GROWTH





Council will continue with State Government advocacy for roads and infrastructure to accommodate increased population.



Glossary

Accessibility - The ease of reaching destinations. Highly accessible locations, enable a person, regardless of age, ability or income, to reach many activities or destinations quickly. People in places with low accessibility can reach fewer places in the same amount of time.

Activity centre - Activity centres are a focus for services, shopping, employment and social interaction. They are where people meet, relax, work and often live. Usually well-served by public transport, they range in size and mix of uses from local strip shopping centres to traditional town centres and major regional centres.

Affordable housing - Housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of low to moderate income households, and priced so these households are able to meet their other essential basic living costs.

Community Infrastructure – Infrastructure provided in the public domain for community use, which is generally maintained by Council. This could range from facilities or parks through to park benches and bins.

Governance – The system by which something is controlled or operates, and the way in which authorities or people are responsible for something.

Land use - The purpose for which the land has been or is being or may be developed. The activity on the land.

Neighbourhood activity centres - Local centres that provide access to local goods, services and employment opportunities and serve the needs of the surrounding community.

Precinct - The designated area of a town highlighted due to similar land uses or defined by major edges including roads, rivers, or land uses.

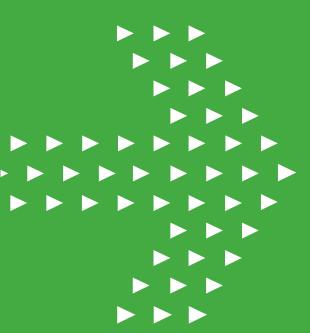
Priorities – The things that are regarded as the most important.

Traffic - Devices, such as speed humps, installed in streets to slow or reduce vehicle traffic and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. These measures can slow cars speed to between 15 and 40km per hour.

Vision – Is a statement defining the future priorities for a township or place, it should be aspirational yet realistic. The vision sets a direction, outlining goals and priorities to be worked towards over time.

Walkability - Walking environments that best balance safety, connection, accessibility and enjoyment.





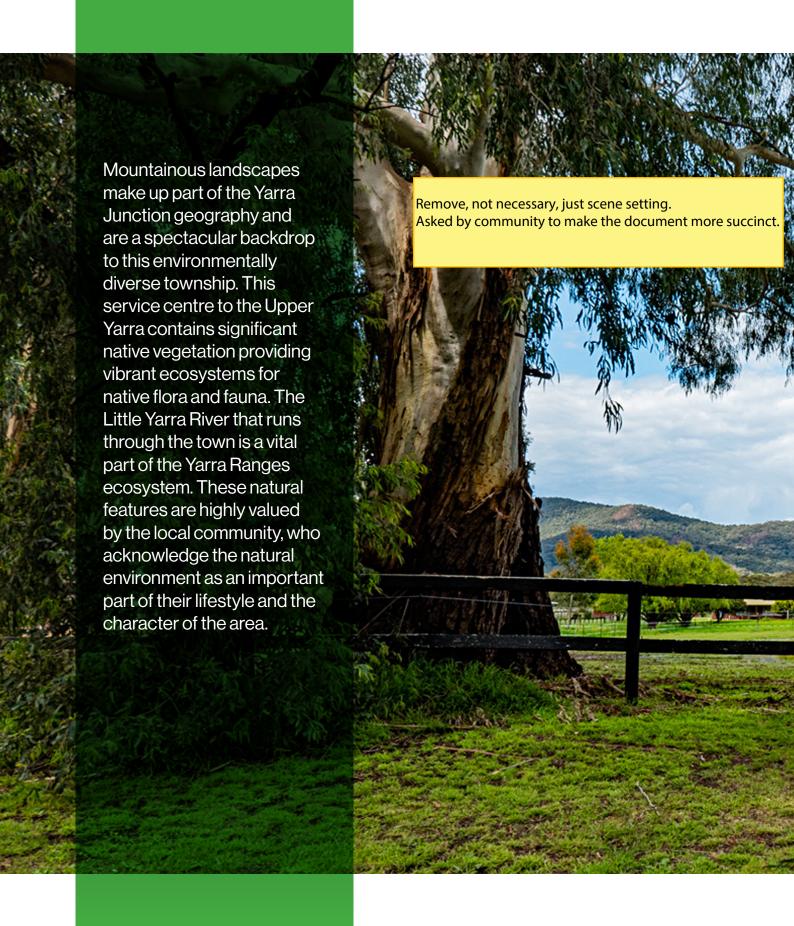




Yarra Junction Place Plan

June 2024

Update date of proposed month for adoption.





Acknowledgement of Country

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Contents

Executive Summary	2
A Vision for Yarra Junction	4
1. What is a Place Plan?	7
2. Why a Place Plan for Yarra Junction?	8
3. What is the Strategic Context for the Place Plan?	9
4. How was the community involved in developing the Yarra Junction Place Plan?	10
5. What did the community tell us?	11
6. A Plan for Action	16
7. Bringing the Place Plan to life	20
8. How will we measure progress?	21
Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot	22
Glossary	30

Executive Summary

Simplify: more succinct - provide high level what, why, how.

Yarra Junction is cradled by a majestic landscape and has a proud history of supporting and servicing the Upper Yarra area. Adapting to changes and always showing resilience, the people of Yarra Junction value the friendly community that they live in.

A unifying vision is needed to guide future planning, allowing balanced growth that protects the natural environment and celebrates the character of the township.

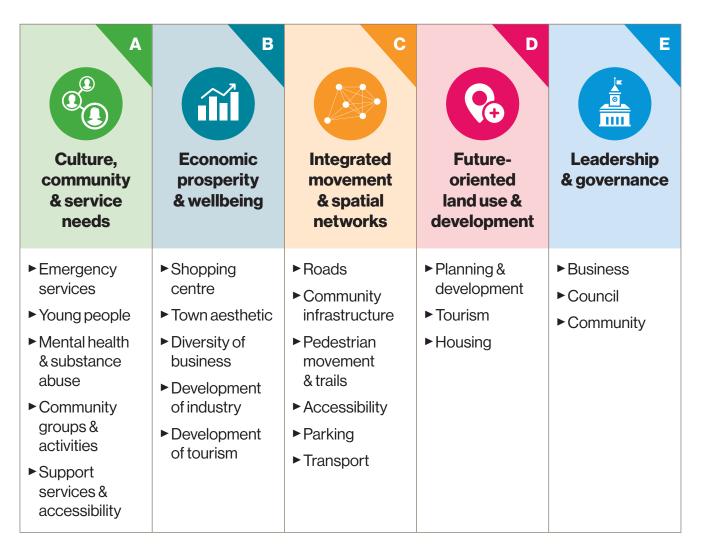
The Yarra Junction community have outlined their thoughts on what they value for their township, during late 2023. These findings were summarised in an engagement and directions paper early 2024.

A community reference group was established, which saw 22 community members attend a series of workshops and explore the feedback provided by the broader community. Their role was to identify actions that responded to the community feedback. These actions were then refined, prioritised, and supported with an over-arching vision statement.



These 5 principles of planning are confusing community with the 5 key priorities. Don't need this level of detail here, it is available in the What is a Place Plan Section. Provide a high-level summary of outcomes instead.

The key themes that came through community consultation when discussing opportunities and future vision include:



A Vision for Yarra Junction

Simplify: Community feedback suggested this was too wordy, use simple English, remove the jargon.

Community Vision

"Yarra Junction is a proud and welcoming township uniting people, founded by nature and culture."

Council Vision

Yarra Junction will be a thriving and vibrant hub that prioritises pedestrian movement, celebrates our unique identity, and fosters community well-being. We envision a place where local businesses thrive, creative industries flourish, and our natural assets are protected. Working together with community we will create a town centre that is accessible, connected, and cherished by all.

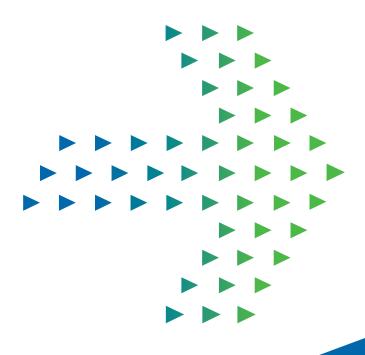
Through advocacy and investment in maintenance and network improvements, we will have safer streets and paths that allow for accessible movement around the town centre, including parking and transport options that support the local community and visitors.

Yarra Junction will have vibrant and inclusive public spaces that prioritise community connections and activity. Through sensitive development, landscaping, public art, and lighting, we'll create accessible areas for diverse activities, fostering well-being and community culture. Our design guidelines will emphasize resilience, integration of services, and youth-focused spaces, ensuring a harmonious and thriving community.

Proudly maintaining the role of servicing the Upper Yarra, we will partner in providing a seamless network of healthcare and social services, filling gaps in service provision, enhancing cross-service referrals, and addressing critical needs. Emergency resilience will be at the forefront, with robust community infrastructure designed for communication and accessibility. Our youth will be supported with youth-focused spaces and activities, fostering development and safety.

As we plan for growth, housing diversity, training and employment opportunities, support for local and creative industries, as well as vibrant activation of public spaces, we will encourage young people to stay and thrive as valued members of our community.

Protecting the natural environment that our community values so deeply, we will balance an increase in tourism with the communities' needs. Working with a clear vision, ensuring an economic, environmental and socially sustainable future.







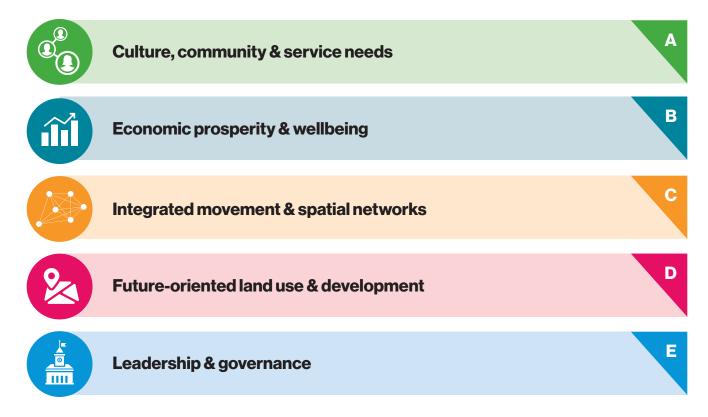
1. What is a Place Plan?

Provide clarity on the Why, what do we get out of it?

Through meaningful community engagement and rigorous research Place Plans establish Council's strategic intent for a place over 20 years or more, based on five overarching principles.

Principles

Place Planning at Yarra Ranges is driven by five key principles:



This Yarra Junction Place Plan:

- ► Articulates a shared vision
- ► Describes the issues and opportunities for Yarra Junction and Council's strategic intent
- ► Creates a foundation for substantial design plans such as a Township Design Framework and detailed Masterplans, to enable projects to be delivered
- ► Identifies an Action Plan for Council
- ► Provides an evidence-based advocacy platform for Government and investment

2. Why a Place Plan for Yarra Junction?

The Yarra Ranges Council vision statement for the entire municipality states:

"Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we care for Country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how sustainable balanced growth makes this the best place in the world."

Yarra Ranges Community Vision 2036

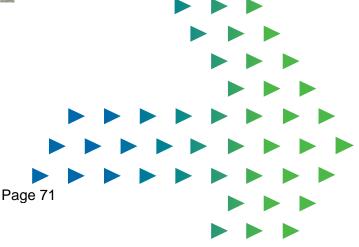


The Yarra Junction Place Plan takes the first step towards realising this vision in Yarra Junction. It will help guide decisions about Yarra Junction, lay the foundations for design, capture the values and qualities of the place, and direct investment for the township.

Geographically, the town is set in flat and undulating land near the junction of the Yarra and Little Yarra Rivers, flowing from sources beyond Warburton and Powelltown respectively. With the water flowing to create a physical connection between the many townships of the Upper Yarra, Yarra Junction has traditionally and will continue to be the natural connection point for the people of the Upper Yarra area.

Yarra Junction continues to play a role in emergency management today, with this service centre identified as an emergency relief hub, recreation reserve a place of last resort and hosts the Yarra Junction Country Fire Authority (CFA).

This Place Plan seeks to provide a clear understanding of this community and ensure that the values and culture of Yarra Junction are enriched as the township evolves and changes over time.



3. What is the Strategic Context for the Place Plan?



The Yarra Junction Place Plan will complement existing Planning Scheme provisions that form the basis of any decisions made regarding development within Yarra Junction.

The Municipal Planning Strategy identifies Yarra Junctions as a Large Neighbourhood Activity Centre, which is reflected in the mix of services consisting of community, civic, health related, recreational and some retail and commercial uses. These facilities serve catchment areas that extend into the rural hinterland performing a significant role in the provision of community and civic services.

In addition, the existing Design & Development Overlay 12 (DDO12) outlines guidelines and requirements for built form and township character within Yarra Junction.

The Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–25 identifies Yarra Junction as an area of higher disadvantage than other areas in Yarra Ranges which could have flow on effects for overall health and wellbeing for this population group. This is also reflected in 2021 Census data that demonstrated higher levels of people living with mental health conditions, disability or long-term health conditions compared to State averages.

The Place Plan seeks to focus consideration of future changes to the Planning Scheme to facilitate growth in local industries providing more variety in training and employment opportunities, strengthening the character of the town, supporting diversity in housing development and strengthening the service provision to the area.

4. How was the community involved in developing the Yarra Junction Place Plan?

Simplify: Too long. Detail can be found in previous Engagement reports.

From September 2023 to June 2024
Yarra Ranges Council completed a
broad ranging community engagement
process including interviews, surveys,
workshops, pop up stalls, social media and
other community events to ensure that
opportunities to engage irrespective of
age, gender, social status or affiliations.

More than 400 people engaged directly with the process through interviews, having pop up discussions, submitting feedback to our Shaping Page, written letters and workshops. With the project team reaching out to many thousands of community members through direct mail, promotion on local radio, social media, street signage and attendance at community events such as the Cire Teddy Bears Picnic, Halloween Street Party, and Over 50's Friendship Group Lunch.

With support from the Upper Yarra Secondary College the project team were able to engage directly with youth, by providing a leadership development opportunity to six students who in turn ran a youth engagement workshop with peers.

An Engagement and Directions Paper was published in March 2024 providing an initial summary of findings from this first round of engagement.

A community reference group was established with 22 community members who attended a series of workshops during April and May 2024. This community reference group explored the broader community feedback in detail, identifying priorities and key actions to sit within the Place Plan, as well as establishing a community vision.



5. What did the community tell us?

Simplify: Too long. Condense duplicate points, use consistent wording.

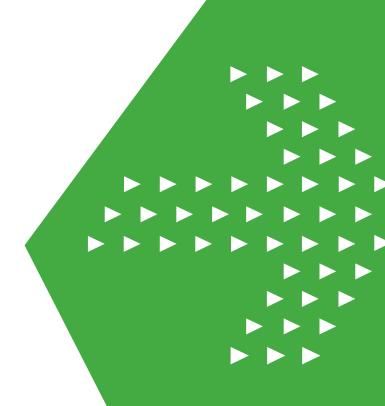
The community have told us that they value their strong sense of community and protection of their natural environment.

They want to see balanced growth, ensuring improved services and amenities to support a vibrant service centre.

The following themes came from community feedback when asked what they would like to see for the future:

- ► Well maintained road networks to accommodate increasing traffic and safety concerns, with increased local transport options.
- Accessible community infrastructure in the township, with a strong focus around spaces for young people.
- ► The town centre is accessible with a pedestrian focus, barriers are minimised, and people are encouraged to visit the centre from surrounding paths and trails.
- ► Revitalisation of the activity centre adds vibrancy and activation to public spaces, town pride is celebrated through attractive streetscapes, public art, and lighting.
- A strong economy that allows for diversity of business and industry development, providing opportunities for more people to work locally.
- Gaps in services & healthcare provision are filled with particular interest around local emergency healthcare.
- ► Youth are supported with safe spaces and activities to help them develop and young people are encouraged to stay in the community with diverse training and employment options.

- ► An attractive town centre and wayfinding encourages tourist travelling through the township to stop and spend time here.
- ► The natural environment is well cared for and celebrated by community.
- ► Diverse and affordable housing options in the town centre, developed with a focus on environmentally sustainable design.
- ► Township infrastructure such as drainage, roads and communications are working well for the whole community.



What did the community tell us?

The top five priority areas are outlined in the following table.

Remove: Table confusing, not necessary, this detail can be found in the Engagement reports. Adds complexity to the document. Incorporate the benefits into the action list.

What is important from the research?	What have we learnt from Community?	What will Council do? Directions	What will this deliver? Benefits	What is influential? Principles
Culture & Character	Community value their connections in the township and to the natural environment. They appreciate the towns role as a service centre and would like to ensure services and infrastructure are accommodate for future growth.	Develop a Township Design Framework to establish design guidelines that support the revitalisation of the town and embrace the towns culture and character. Raise the profile of highly valued natural assets, ensuring ongoing protection is balanced with sustainable development of the town.	A connected and proud community, with integrated community spaces that support activity and inclusion. Diversity in housing that allows for young people and the ageing to remain in place. Ongoing protection of the natural assets that are so important to community.	 Culture, community & service needs Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure Future land use & development

What is important from the research?	What have we learnt from Community?	What will Council do? Directions	What will this deliver? Benefits	What is influential? Principles
Transport and Accessibility	Community is concerned about safe and accessible movement around the town centre. They are concerned that current infrastructure can not cater for growth in the area.	Design a pedestrian focused town centre, as well as exploring opportunities to advance delivery of missing links in footpaths leading into town. Design a pedestrian focused town centre, as well as exploring opportunities to advance delivery of missing links in footpaths leading into town. Undertake a traffic and parking review of the township. This includes assessment of current parking occupancy, and travel behaviours, investigating opportunities to reduce demand in the centre of town and explore a local network solution that may move through traffic and heavy vehicles around the town centre.	An accessible and safer town to get around with a strong pedestrian focus, quality roads and public transport infrastructure.	 ▶ Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure ▶ Future land use & development

What is important from the research?	What have we learnt from Community?	What will Council do? Directions	What will this deliver? Benefits	What is influential? Principles
Community Infrastructure	Current community infrastructure is not meeting community expectations, with a lack of understanding of what or where facilities are. There is a strong desire for accessible community spaces that encourage activation and connection as well as spaces that better cater for youth.	Complete a Community Infrastructure Options study to understand the current state of community facilities and guide direction of the Township Design Framework. Provide opportunities for youth involvement in the development of spaces to ensure positive relationships with the spaces.	A connected community with strong sense of belonging, activating quality community spaces. Infrastructure and facilities that better service the community.	 Culture, community & service needs Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure Future land use & development
Partnerships	Being the service centre for the Upper Yarra area, there is a strong desire to fill gaps in health and social services. There are opportunities for groups, business and services to work better together to achieve positive outcomes for community, and there is an ongoing need for community to remain resilient to emergencies.	Support the development of a Township Group. Advocate for the improvement of health and social services in Yarra Junction, as well as the connection of current services to improve referral and service needs. Continue to support community preparedness programs and develop accessible and sustainable community infrastructure.	A resilient and connected community that works together towards a shared vision. Stronger health and social services network that supports the needs of community.	➤ Culture, community & service needs ➤ Future land use & development



What is important from the research?	What have we learnt from Community?	What will Council do? Directions	What will this deliver? Benefits	What is influential? Principles
Business & Employment	Increase tourist visitation from trails networks and affirming the town as a destination. Providing opportunities for creative and light industry growth.	Focus on wayfinding, walkability and visual connection of the town centre to the trails network in the Township Design Framework. Identifying potential land or abandoned buildings that could be appropriate for creative or light industry growth.	Yarra Junction has increased opportunity to prosper as the town grows with a more diverse and sustainable economy.	► Economic prosperity► Future land use & development

6. A Plan for Action

Simplify language. Condense and reduce number of actions, some feel like they overlap. Add benefits. Explain how this will be achieved.

Priority 1 - Culture and Character

Action 1.1 – Develop township identity and character

Establish design guidelines to support revitalisation of the town centre and encourage pedestrian focused movement. Establish a strong connection to place through celebrating the Indigenous and European history of the area. Explore opportunities to develop the town identity in partnership with young people with a focus on community art projects.

Action 1.2 - Natural environment

Continue to celebrate and protect our natural assets, such as the Yarra River, ensuring balanced planning and development of the township that is sensitive to the natural environment and considers Environmentally Sustainable Design.

Action 1.3 - Promotion of service centre

Identify and promote community services and groups in the Upper Yarra, to ensure the community understands the services available to them. Support community events that promote health and wellbeing services, creative industries, and local business.

Action 1.3 "Promotion of Service Centre" Community acknowledged that Yarra

Explor Junction has always been the service centre for the Upper Yarra and plays and important role in emergency response. Feedback included that the focus should remain on the local service centre role rather than prioritising Tourism. Many agree this is a opport characteristic of the town that they value. Green Removed as a separate action as many Include identified this as a key to the township streets identity and character. So has been Plannii incorporated into Action 1.1 "Develop township identity and character"

Benefits

- ► Increased activity in the town centre, creating a more vibrant environment and improved perceptions of safety
- ► Improves health and wellbeing, and develops connections across community
- ► Values and sustains our natural assets
- ► Increases a sense of belonging and pride of place in community
- Allowing for balanced development to accommodate growing community
- ► Diversity in housing that supports the young and ageing to remain in place

Priority 2 – Transport and Accessibility

Action 2.1 – Prioritise pedestrian movement

Prioritise pedestrian movement in the centre of the township with a focus on accessibility, safety and traffic management. Identify and deliver missing connections to the pedestrian network. Advocate to State Government for the addition of pedestrian crossings and traffic conditioning treatments to increase pedestrian safety.

Action 2.1 "Prioritise pedestrian movement" There was strong community support to
Cor improve accessible movement around the
cen activity centre. Feedback included identifying
with hazards and area that pedestrian focused
and interventions could be put in place. Some felt it
is a vehicle dependent community.
Removed as a separate action as it will not be
responded to as an independent action but will
be incorporated into Action 3.1 "Township
Design Framework", as a priority for design
Part development.

inno to, fi

Explore the opportunity for local transport services such as a Flexi Bus network.

Action 2.4 "Road network improvements" - Suggestions were made by community for infrastructure improvements to better manage traffic around the activity centre and alleviate traffic in the main street. Many felt this is a road safety focus, with come community nervousness as to how roads will manage high levels of movement in an emergency situation. Removed as a separate action as there was such a strong safety overlap and incorporated into Action 2.2 "Road maintenance and safety"

Action 2.4 - Road network improvements

Explore a local network solution that provides alternate transport routes for large trucks and through traffic to move congestion out of the main activity centre and can alleviate traffic pressure during events and emergencies.

Action 2.5 - Parking

Develop a Yarra Junction Parking and Traffic Strategy that identifies adequate accessible and short-term parking solutions in the heart of the activity centre, and identifies a program of short, medium and long term projects for delivery.

Benefits

- ► Increase pedestrian and driver safety
- ► Reduces car dependence and congestion
- ► Improves accessibility for all of community
- ► Supports positive travel experiences for locals and visitors
- ► Encourage active transport and walkability
- ► Removes barriers that have traditionally divided the town centre
- ► Provides reliable movement in times of an emergency

Priority 3 – Community Infrastructure

Action 3.1 - Community infrastructure

Complete a community infrastructure review and consider the consolidation of community facilities. Establish design guidelines that include a focus on accessibility, integration of services, resilience and intergenerational spaces.

Action 3.2 – Township Design Framework

Development of a Township Design Framework, responding to the identified priorities in the Place Plan. This framework will interrogate design of built form, public realm and movement, providing a clear design intent for the township that can be used for attracting funding for individual projects.

Action 3.3 – Positive activation of public spaces

Identify design solutions and a series of projects to be delivered, that focus on reimagining public spaces to encourage positive activation through sensitive development, landscaping, public art, and lighting. Develop accessible community spaces that support a diverse range of community activities that are inclusive to all abilities and ages.

Action 3.4 - Youth focused public spaces

In partnership with young people, plan the development of youth focused spaces and potential youth activations to encourage positive relationships with the spaces.

Action 3.4 "Youth focused public spaces" Many people support the development of youth focused spaces. It was agreed that young people should be included in planning of youth focused spaces and public artworks, although some would like us to ensure a multigenerational approach to community spaces. Removed as a separate action to help consolidate the action list and incorporated into Action 3.1 "Township Design Framework" as a priority for design development and engagement.

- ► Increased sense of belonging for youth
- Opportunities for intergenerational connections and increased community activities and events

Priority 4 - Partnerships

Action 4.1 – Health & support services

Advocate for a strengthened local healthcare network benefiting all community members in Yarra Junction and surrounding townships. Providing comprehensive care, including medical, social, and emergency services as well as homelessness, mental health & substance abuse supports. Focusing on filling gaps in service provision and improving cross-service referrals.

Action 4.2 - Emergency resilience

Encourage emergency resilience in community by ensuring ongoing support to community preparedness programs and planning resilient community infrastructure focusing on communication and accessibility.

Advocate to local authorities for increased visible presence in the activity centre.

Action 4.3 – Township group

Support community in the development of a Township Group with representatives from community groups, clubs, businesses, Council, agencies and schools, that can ensure strong communication within the township and work together with a shared vision.

Action 4.4 – Youth focused support & initiatives

Develop youth focused community spaces in partnership with young people, while working with agencies to encourage youth focused programs to support out-of-school supervision, development opportunities and safety.

Benefits

- ► Stronger health outcomes for community
- ► A prepared and resilient community that can respond to emergencies
- ► Better supports for the development and safety of our youth
- ► A connected community working towards a shared vision
- ► Ensure those who need support can access it when required



Action 4.3 "Township Group" - There was community support towards the role of a township group for Yarra Junction and the important function they would play in community. It was highlighted that this action has already been achieved with the Yarra Junction Township Group forming in response to the community representative workshops for the Place Plan.

Removed as a separate action and incorporated into Action 1.1 "Develop township identity and character" as this service to community supports the valued character of the

Priority 5 – Business and Employment Opportunities

Action 5.1 – Balanced tourism development

Support balanced tourism development including exploring ways to increase visitation from the users of the trails network. Explore funding opportunities to develop a business case for the introduction of a visitor information centre, which may include social enterprise or maker spacers to support the development of local industry.

Action 5.2 – Industry Development

Explore opportunities to future proof areas of industrial land for the development of local light industry. Encourage the development of small business and industry through small business grants, maker spaces or workspaces.

Action 5.3 – Development of the retail/hospitality sector

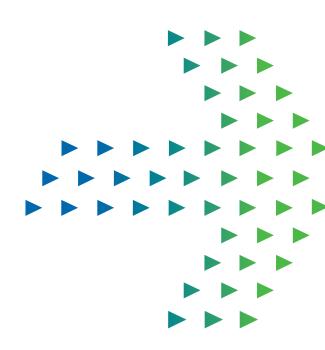
Encourage the revitalisation of the retail and hospitality sector, ensuring a focus on pedestrian movement and accessibility in the activity centre and encouraging public spaces that invite positive activation and build township character through outdoor dining, public art and lighting solutions.

Action 5.4 – Opportunities for young people

In partnership with young people, explore opportunities to respond to barriers keeping young adults from staying in Yarra Junction, including diversity in training and employment opportunities, lack of nightlife and public transport options.

Benefits

- ► Supports the local economy and promotes industry growth
- ► Increases day and night-time street activity in the town centre
- ► Increases local employment opportunities
- ► Builds the confidence of future generations to stay and thrive in Yarra Junction
- ► Supports a more diverse and resilient economy and community
- ► Encourages opportunities to increase potential benefits from tourism



Action 5.4 "Opportunities for young people", Many in community would like to see more opportunities for local training and employment in skills-based jobs for young people, including development of local light industry, creative industries and hospitality.

Removed as a separate action and incorporated as a priority for Actions 5.2 "Local Industry Development" and 5.3 "Development of the retail and hospitality sectors".

7. Bringing the Place Plan to life

Community asked us to be accountable to timeframes, wanting to know when we will deliver infrastructure - we need to set clear expectations here. We can indicate short term, medium term, long term and ongoing commitments, but as more detailed planning is required to understand how Council will best achieve the Vision, and funding has not been committed to any project yet, we are unable to give clear time

As a 20 year plan, the actions signal strategic intent for Yarra Junction and surrounds.

These key next steps will ensure the Place Plan progresses towards the delivery of real projects and community outcomes:



Adoption

Yarra Junction Place Plan adopted by Council and aligned to delivery of key strategies actions included in Council's annual Corporate Action Plan.

2

Township Design Framework

A Township Design Framework to be developed to translate the principles into actual designs and projects prepared for delivery.

3

Quick wins

Solutions that can be readily delivered will be designed and costed in order to seek funding for construction.

4

Annual Action Plan

The Actions will be integrated into Council's annual business and project planning with specific actions allocated to department and teams for delivery.



Review

The Yarra Junction Place Plan will be reviewed and evaluated over time to ensure it is current, relevant and adapted to any changes that have arisen.

8. How will we measure progress?

Some community members were concerned that Council needs to be accountable to the Plan. Measures have been re-reviewed internally to ensure they are realistic.

Progress will include completion of physical works and positive outcomes for the Yarra Junction community, the town and natural environment. Re-collecting data once the Place Plan is under way will tell us what has been done and how effective the actions have been.

Measuring changes in economic performance

- ► Compare local economic profile to baseline data
- ► Targets
 - Increased economic activity within the activity centre
 - Increased employment opportunities for young people

Measuring changes in cultural environment

- ► Increased public expressions of cultural identity including events and public art
- ► Targets
 - Increase in community events and activations of public space



Measuring changes in traffic

- ► Compare traffic movement and safety compared to base line traffic review data
- ► Targets
 - Decrease in speed and congestion in the activity centre

Measuring changes in transport networks and environment

- ► Compare use of public and active transport with baseline data
- ► Targets
 - 20 per cent increase in the number of people walking past the same locations after major capital works are completed
 - 10 per cent increase in the number of people using public transport in Yarra Junction

Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot

The following overview of Yarra Junction has been arranged around the five Principles of Place (See section 1. What is a Place Plan?)



PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

Yarra Junction has experienced 25% growth over the past 10 years. (2021 census data indicates a population of 2,875 people compared to 2,297 people in 2011).





MEDIAN AGE A large percentage of people in the 1–14 years old and 70–74 years old age groups, with a median age of 43 years old (slightly higher than the Greater Melbourne median age of 37).



High level of residents aged 60 plus, with concerns around housing diversity and services to allow people to age in place. Growing concern about the limited opportunities for young people, including a lack of activities, lack of transport options and limited employment opportunities.



HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND INCOME



Yarra Junction currently has only a small supply of developable residential land, with an existing demand for smaller dwelling types.



A high level of one parent families and people living alone; and a low level of married or de facto couples.



The median weekly household income is \$1,302, lower than the Yarra Ranges median weekly household income of \$1,881.





SOCIAL ISSUES AND SERVICE PROVISION

There is growing concern about the social and emotional well being of young people in Yarra Junction and the limited support services available to them locally.



Yarra Junction is recognised as the service centre for the broader Upper Yarra area.



SERVICE CENTRE





Services have noted an increase in people with financial hardship and homelessness requiring support.



Anti-social behaviour, drug use and drinking culture were raised as concerns by community.

HERITAGE AND CHARACTER



There is a strong desire to tell Heritage (Indigenous and European) stories to shape place.

Yarra Junction has traditionally provided emergency support to surrounding townships in the Upper Yarra area.



The areas Natural Assets, such as the rivers and surrounding hills and bushland, are highly valued by community.





HIGHLY VALUED

Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot



TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

TOP THREE PROFESSIONS



Top three professions held by residents of Yarra Junction:

21%

working as Technicians and Trades Workers 14%

working as Community and Personal Service Workers 13%

working as Clerical and Administrative Workers

VERY LOW LEVEL

Very low level of residents attending or have attended tertiary education – 10.5% 10.5%





25% of households have an income of less than \$650 per week

\$650 PERWEEK

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Trade workers are the predominant workforce in this area, many of these workers are travelling out of the region for their daily work.

The largest sector for economic output in Yarra Junction is the Health Care and Social Assistance sector.





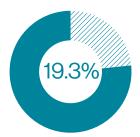
The township does not currently take advantage of the economic benefits available from the regions increased tourism.





The town's role as an employment hub has declined since the 1970's, with the slowing of local industry.

HOUSING



74% of households in Yarra Junction were purchasing or fully owned their home, with 19.3% of owners paying more than 30% of their income on their mortgage.



LIMITED RENTAL STOCK

There is very limited rental stock available in the area.













There is limited diversity in the housing available, creating pressures on young people and the ageing population.

13.7% of households in Yarra Junction were renting privately, with **45.2% of renters** paying more than 30% of their income on rent.



45.2%

PAYING 30% OR MORE OF INCOME ON RENT



Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot



ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

WARBURTON HIGHWAY

The Warburton Highway acts as a barrier for movement around the town centre.



Community would like to see pedestrian movement prioritised in the town centre.





Limited public transport service provision and infrequency of bus services. Accessibility around the centre is very poor, with narrow and inconsistent paths.





Increasing traffic is causing concern to community in terms of safety and emergency management.



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PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION



The town is lacking a central community space that connects community events with the activity centre.



Safety is a concern for some, particularly lighting, passive surveillance, and activity at night.



The activity centre lacks appeal and requires revitalisation.





NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The township value the visual connection to the natural environment.





ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC SPACES

Community would like accessible public spaces that support community events and activity.



PARKING



Community is concerned about the quality of parking options around the activity centre.

There is requests for more accessible and short term parking options in centre.



Parking on Warburton Highway limits line of site and creates safety hazards.

Appendix A: Yarra Junction Snapshot



ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

There are dormant sites and undeveloped Special Use Zone sites in Yarra Junction that if activated would bring economy, energy and improved access to services.



OPPORTUNITIES

Some would like to see opportunities for creative and light industry development.





VIBRANCY ON THE STREETS

Community would like to see more vibrancy on the streets, particularly with outdoor dining options to increase a nighttime economy.

COUNCIL ASSETS



There are many ageing Council facilities fragmented across the township.



The Yarra Centre is highly valued by community, who would like to see further investment in this facility with particular focus on a warm water pool.

SERVICES
AND ACTIVITIES

Many community members do not know what services and activities run in Council owned facilities in town.









COMMUNITY





There is a perception of lack of communication or co-operation amongst community groups and clubs in Yarra Junction.



The natural environment is highly valued by community and needs continued protection.



Council is committed to supporting Community Resilience programs to ensure preparedness for emergencies.

NEW INVESTMENT AND ADVOCACY



Council will continue to explore opportunities to encourage new investment in the area.

Tourism visitor numbers are expected to increase.







Community would like to see balanced growth.

BALANCED GROWTH





Council will continue with State Government advocacy for roads and infrastructure to accommodate increased population.

Glossary

Accessibility – The ease of reaching destinations. Highly accessible locations, enable a person, regardless of age, ability or income, to reach many activities or destinations quickly. People in places with low accessibility can reach fewer places in the same amount of time.

Activity centre – Activity centres are a focus for services, shopping, employment and social interaction. They are where people meet, relax, work and often live. Usually well-served by public transport, they range in size and mix of uses from local strip shopping centres to traditional town centres and major regional centres.

Aesthetic – Urban aesthetics refers to the way we perceive, asses and feel about towns and cities. This can include the buildings, the use of space, the overall population density. Urban aesthetics includes both the appearance (beauty) and the functionality (accessibility, services, etc.).

Affordable housing – Housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of low to moderate income households, and priced so these households are able to meet their other essential basic living costs.

Collaboration – The action of working together to achieve something.

Community Infrastructure – Infrastructure provided in the public domain for community use, which is generally maintained by Council. This could range from facilities or parks through to park benches and bins.

Governance – The system by which something is controlled or operates, and the way in which authorities or people are responsible for something.

Neighbourhood activity centres – Local centres that provide access to local goods, services and employment opportunities and serve the needs of the surrounding community.

Land use – The purpose for which the land has been or is being or may be developed. The activity on the land.

Precinct – The designated area of a town highlighted due to similar land uses or defined by major edges including roads, rivers, or land uses.

Stewardship – The job of supervising or taking care of something, in the context of Place Planning this may include working towards a shared vision established to achieve a thriving community.

Subdivision – The act of subdivision means the division of a land parcel into two or more parts. It is also a term used for the resulting pattern of blocks and lots, and streets.

Traffic calming – Devices, such as speed humps, installed in streets to slow or reduce vehicle traffic and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. These measures can slow cars speed to between 15 and 40km per hour.

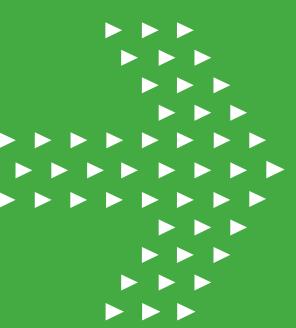
Vision – Is a statement defining the future priorities for a township or place, it should be aspirational yet realistic. The vision sets a direction, outlining goals and priorities to be worked towards over time.

Priorities – The things that are regarded as the most important.

Quality-of-life – A perception or measure of a community's wellbeing in the context of the place that they live.

Walkability – Walking environments that best balance safety, connection, accessibility and enjoyment.





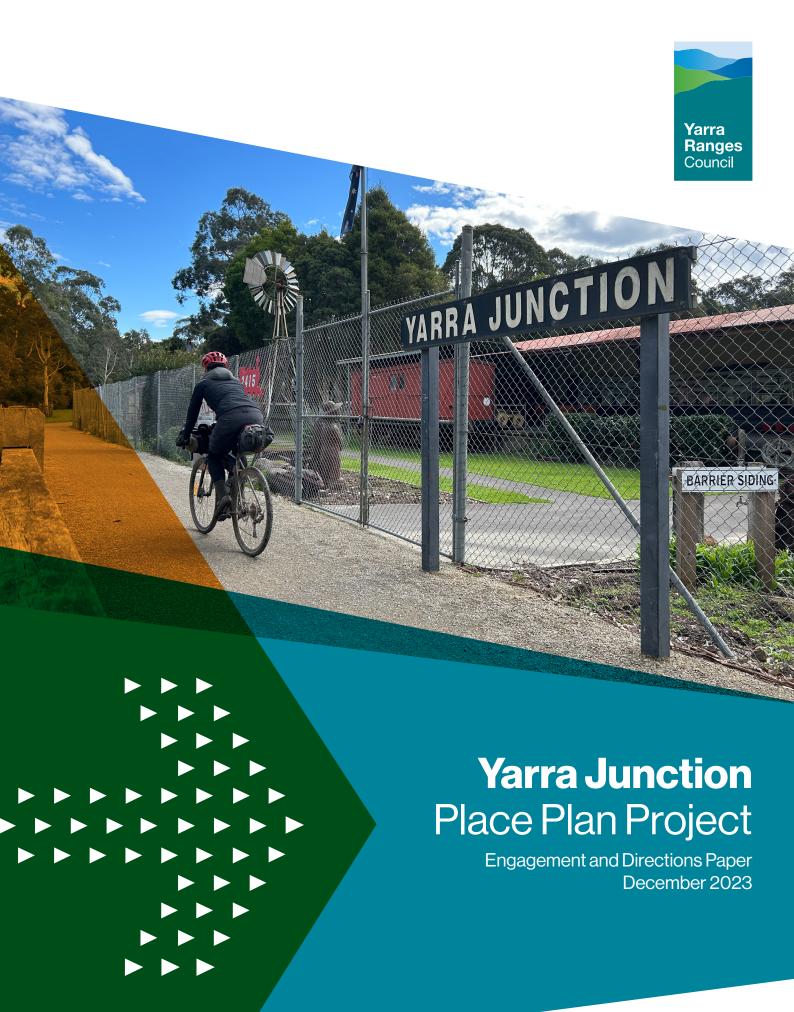
SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

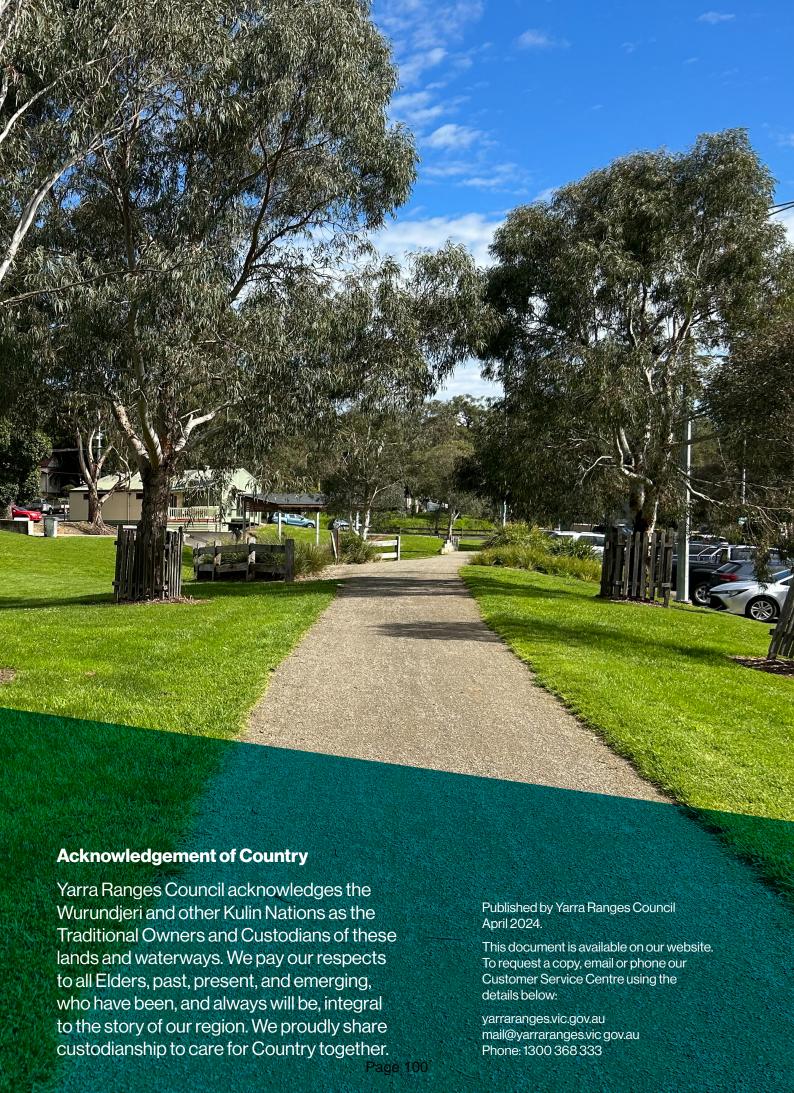
Yarra Junction Place Plan – responding to community engagement on Draft

Chapter or Section	Draft Place	Description of Change
	Pan PDF	
	page no.	
Title Page	1	Update date of proposed month for adoption.
Opening	2-3	Remove, not necessary, just scene setting. Asked by community to make the document more succinct.
Executive Summary	6	Simplify: more succinct - provide high level what, why, how.
Executive Summary	7	These 5 principles of planning are confusing community with the 5 key priorities. Don't need this level of detail here, it is available in the What is a Place Plan Section. Provide a high-level summary of outcomes instead.
Vision	8	Simplify: Community feedback suggested this was too wordy, use simple English, remove the jargon.
Section 1: What is a Place Plan?	11	Provide clarity on the Why, what do we get out of it?
Section 2: Strategic Content	13	Simplify: use common English
Section 4: Community involved	14	Simplify: Too long. Detail can be found in previous Engagement reports.
Section 5: What did community tell us?	15	Simplify: Too long. Condense duplicate points, use consistent wording.
Section 5: What did community tell us?	16-19	Remove: Table confusing, not necessary, this detail can be found in the Engagement reports. Adds complexity to the document. Incorporate the benefits into the action list.
Section 6: A plan for action	20-23	Simplify language. Condense and reduce number of actions, some feel like they overlap. Add benefits. Explain how this will be achieved.
Section 6: A plan for action	20	Action 1.3 "Promotion of Service Centre" – Community acknowledged that Yarra Junction has always been the service centre for the Upper Yarra and plays and important role in emergency response. Feedback included that

		the focus should remain on the local service centre role rather than prioritising Tourism. Many agree this is a characteristic of the town that they value.
		Removed as a separate action as many identified this as a key to the township identity and character. So has been incorporated into Action 1.1 "Develop township identity and character"
Section 6: A plan for action	20	Action 2.1 "Prioritise pedestrian movement" – There was strong community support to improve accessible movement around the activity centre. Feedback included identifying hazards and area that pedestrian focused interventions could be put in place. Some felt it is a vehicle dependent community.
		Removed as a separate action as it will not be responded to as an independent action but will be incorporated into Action 3.1 "Township Design Framework", as a priority for design development.
Section 6: A plan for action	21	Action 2.4 "Road network improvements" – Suggestions were made by community for infrastructure improvements to better manage traffic around the activity centre and alleviate traffic in the main street. Many felt this is a road safety focus, with come community nervousness as to how roads will manage high levels of movement in an emergency situation.
		Removed as a separate action as there was such a strong safety overlap and incorporated into Action 2.2 "Road maintenance and safety"
Section 6: A plan for action	21	Action 3.4 "Youth focused public spaces" Many people support the development of youth focused spaces. It was agreed that young people should be included in planning of youth focused spaces and public artworks, although some would like us to ensure a multigenerational approach to community spaces.
		Removed as a separate action to help consolidate the action list and incorporated into Action 3.1 "Township Design Framework" as a priority for design development and engagement.
Section 6: A plan for action	22	Action 4.3 "Township Group" – There was community support towards the role of a township group for Yarra Junction and the important function they would play in community. It was highlighted that this action has already been achieved with the Yarra Junction Township Group forming in response to the community representative workshops for the Place Plan.

		Removed as a separate action and incorporated into Action 1.1 "Develop township identity and character" as
		this service to community supports the valued character of the town.
Section 6: A plan for action	23	Action 5.4 "Opportunities for young people", Many in community would like to see more opportunities for local training and employment in skills-based jobs for young people, including development of local light industry, creative industries and hospitality.
		Removed as a separate action and incorporated as a priority for Actions 5.2 "Local Industry Development" and 5.3 "Development of the retail and hospitality sectors".
Section 7: Bringing the Plan to Life	24	Community asked us to be accountable to timeframes, wanting to know when we will deliver infrastructure - we need to set clear expectations here. We can indicate short term, medium term, long term and ongoing commitments, but as more detailed planning is required to understand how Council will best achieve the Vision, and funding has not been committed to any project yet, we are unable to give clear time commitments. Remove the words "quick wins" – some community members said this sounds like they are insignificant.
Section 8: Measures	25	Some community members were concerned that Council needs to be accountable to the Plan. Measures have been re-reviewed internally to ensure they are realistic.





Contents

What is place planning?	2
Principles	2
Project plan	3
Yarra Junction Place Plan	4
What we heard	6
What does the data tell us	8
About Yarra Junction	12
Yarra Junction's natural environment	.13
Emergency management role	.14
Yarra Junction's history & cultural heritage	.14
Yarra Junction's people	.16
Housing	17
Yarra Junction's economy	.18
Who we spoke to	19
How did people hear about the project?	.19
How did people give feeback?	.19

What we heard	20
PRINCIPLE A:	
Culture, community & service needs	20
PRINCIPLE B:	
Economic prosperity & wellbeing	21
PRINCIPLE C:	
Transport, movement, public space	
&infrastructure	22
PRINCIPLE D:	
Future land use & development	23
PRINCIPLE E:	
Leadership & governance	24
Glossary	25

What is place planning?

Place planning is a collaborative, long-term approach to building thriving communities delivered in a defined geographic location. This approach is characterised by developing a shared vision, stewardship, and accountability for outcomes and impacts. Place-based approaches are often used to respond to complex, interrelated, or challenging issues.

While place-based approaches in planning have been used by local governments in Australia to address urban renewal or town centre revitalisation, they have not been widely used as a whole-of-Council approach to planning for communities. For local governments, place planning shifts the focus from outputs of various departments to outcomes delivering on quality-of-life improvements for communities. As such, community is central to the development and delivery of a place plan so that issues can be pursued in a more collaborative way to identify economic, social and environmental priorities.

Council will then work with the community to identify an action plan to address the issues and opportunities, providing a road map for future project development and enabling advocacy for future investment and funding.

Principles

Place Planning at Yarra Ranges is driven by five key principles:

	Culture, community & service needs	Α
	Economic prosperity	В
	Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure	С
<u>%</u>	Future land use & development	D
	Leadership & governance	Е

Project plan

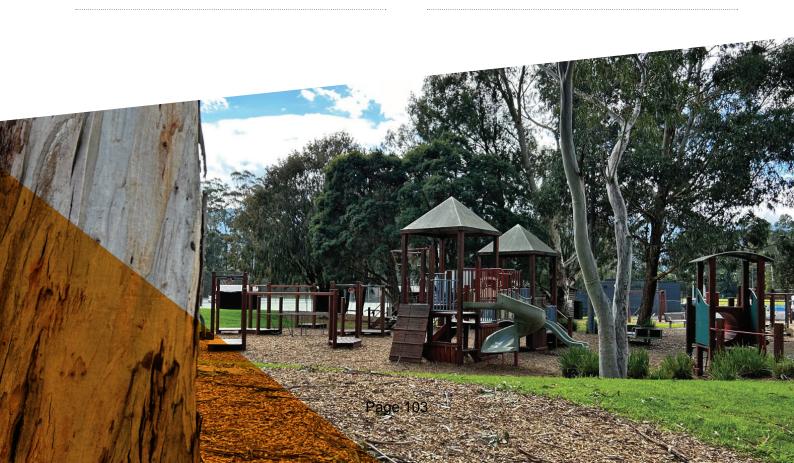
Extensive community engagement will inform the Yarra Junction Place Plan. This includes interviews, community pop ups, involvement in community events, workshops with community representatives, and online feedback opportunities.











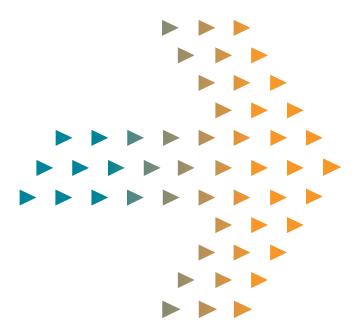
Yarra Junction Place Plan

The Yarra Junction Place Plan Project set out with the intention to hear from the local community, what they love about Yarra Junction, where are the opportunities for improvement and what the future vision should strive for. This will allow community to guide the strategic direction and establish the opportunity for Council to work with community and various stakeholders in delivering improvements to Yarra Junction with a shared vision, guiding the delivery of infrastructure, programs and services.

Yarra Junction is a township that services the broader community of the Upper Yarra, as such the feedback received by community members is not only focused on the centre of the township, but also reflective of the lived experience of residents in the surrounding areas in the Upper Yarra that may rely on the township for services, employment, education, or sport and recreation.

The feedback received through the initial round of community engagement will be considered, along with data and background reports to identify priorities and develop Council actions in the Place Plan.

These actions will be developed in collaboration with a Community Reference Group, who will work through the key themes that have appeared in community consultation in a series of community representative workshops. It is intended that the resources, strengths, and values of community are considered during these workshops to help develop a shared vision that provides direction for both Council and community.

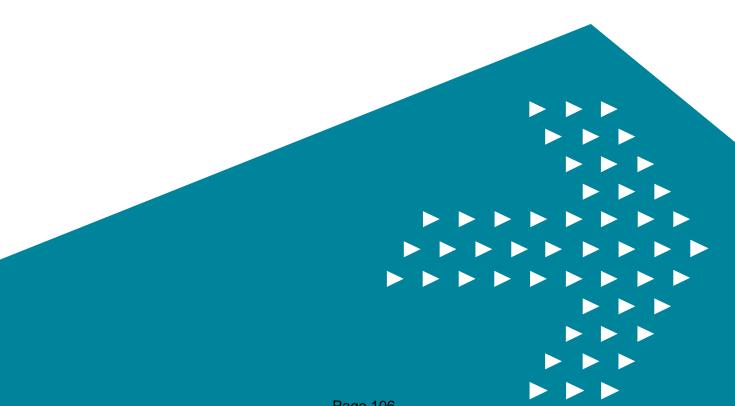




What we heard

The following word cloud represents the most commonly used words when people were asked what they love about living in Yarra Junction. Overwhelmingly the responses focused on the **people**, the **environment**, and the **Yarra Centre**.





The key themes that came through community consultation when discussing opportunities and future vision include:

Culture, community & service needs	Economic prosperity	Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure	Future land use & development	Leadership & governance
 ► Emergency services ► Young people ► Mental health & substance abuse ► Community groups & activities ► Support services & accessibility 	 ► Shopping centre ► Town aesthetic ► Diversity of business ► Development of industry ► Development of tourism 	 ▶ Roads ▶ Community infrastructure ▶ Pedestrian movement & trails ▶ Accessibility ▶ Parking ▶ Transport 	▶ Planning & development▶ Tourism▶ Housing	▶ Business▶ Council▶ Community

What does the data tell us

Statistical data compiled from the 2021 Census

POPULATION

In 2021, Yarra Junction had 2,875 residents.



RESIDENTS

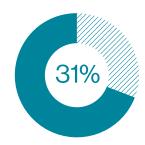
Yarra Junction has a high level of residents aged 60 plus, and a low level of residents aged 15-49.



1.8 average number of children in families.







31% of the population live in lone person households



HOUSEHOLD TYPE & INCOME

A high level of one parent families and people living alone; and a low level of married or de facto couples.



ONE PARENT FAMILIES

A high level of level of people living in medium to high density dwellings; and in marginal housing such as caravans or improvised homes

MARGINAL HOUSING





A high level of dwellings being rented, or homes being lived in under alternative tenure types (e.g., rent free); and a low level of households with mortgages.

HIGHLEVEL OF DWELLINGS RENTED

OF INCOME ON **RENT OR MORTGAGE**

An extremely high level of rental stress and a very high level of mortgage stress, in terms of households spending more than 30% of their income on rent or mortgage payments.

Very low incomes, with 25% of households with incomes of less than \$650 per week



PUBLIC SPACE AND COUNCIL FACILITIES



The town is fragmented with the highway creating a pedestrian barrier

PEDESTRIAN BARRIER

Some facilities are under utilised and others working beyond capacity



AGEING FACILITIES

Facilities are ageing and not meeting acceptable levels of service





VERY POOR

Accessibility and people movement are very poor

CULTURAL EXPRESSION



89.5% of households only speak English

89.5%

SPEAK ONLY ENGLISH

53.1%

53.1% residents with no religion





79% of residents are Australian born



1.3% of the population is made up of Indigenous residents

Statistical data compiled from the 2021 Census

JOBS, BUSINESS SECTORS & TRAINING

VERY LOW LEVEL

A very low level of residents attending or have attended tertiary education – 10.5%

10.5%





24.7% of residents have a household income of less than \$650 – per week.

TOP THREE PROFESSIONS



21.1%

working as Technicians and Trades Workers 13.6%

working as Community and Personal Service Workers 12.8%

working as Clerical and Administrative Workers

COMMUNITY SERVICES & HEALTH

An above average level of residents with a mental health condition – 11.3%



ABOVE AVERAGE 11.3%



32.6% of residents report one or more long-term health conditions

TRANSPORT NETWORKS & CAR USE

WARBURTON HIGHWAY

The Warburton Highway runs through the centre of the activity centre creating a barrier for pedestrians





The bus service is the only public transport option in the area







There are gaps in the local pathway network limiting pedestrian access to town



About Yarra Junction

Yarra Junction is located approximately 57 kilometres to the east of the centre of Melbourne, with a driving distance of approximately 65 kilometres. The primary access is from the Warburton Highway which connects the town to Lilydale and the metropolitan area to the west and Warburton to the east. There is a road connection to Powelltown to the southeast, which in turn leads on to Noojee, Mt Baw Baw and Warragul.

Geographically, the town is set in flat and undulating land near the junction of the Yarra and Little Yarra Rivers, flowing from sources beyond Warburton and Powelltown respectively. The wider area is valley geography, dominated by high hills/low mountains with extensive forest cover.

The main area of the town as defined by the Urban Growth Boundary is approximately 204 hectares. The town has a well-developed recreation reserve precinct encompassing a range of recreation facilities plus the former railway station environs and senior citizens' centre which totals approximately 11 hectares, plus a further 20 hectares of residential area east of the Little Yarra River which, while physically is part of the Wesburn town area, is within the Yarra Junction postcode.

Yarra Junction became the administrative centre of Upper Yarra Shire until the creation of the Shire of Yarra Ranges in 1994. It became a civic and recreation hub for the Warburton Highway corridor. In particular, the recreation reserve has an extensive range of facilities including sports ground, netball and tennis courts, basketball stadium, indoor aquatic centre, children's playground, and general-purpose hall. The town is also a commercial hub, with the



Woolworths supermarket which was the sole full-line supermarket beyond Lilydale up until the opening of the Seville Woolworths supermarket in 2014.

Yarra Junction is one of the destinations along the well-known cycle and walking tracks, The Lilydale to Warburton Trail and the O'Shannassy Aqueduct Delight Trail loop. These trails offer tourist and locals the opportunity to actively engage with Yarra Ranges environment along with giving townships such as Yarra Junction a place on the map for tourism and possible economic gain.

Forecasts for Yarra Junction include population data for Milgrove and Wesburn. The population in 2023 is 5,720 people, with 13.2% forecast growth which could lead to an expected population of 6,475 by 2046. This forecast predicts a peak in residential developments in the area over the coming 10 years. (Source Forecast.id.com.au)

2021 Census data indicates a 15% increase in the Yarra Junction population reaching retirement age by 2031, and a 6.3% increase in population reaching working age.

Yarra Junction's natural environment

The Wurundjeri peoples occupied the lands of the Yarra River catchment for tens of thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans. In the 1840's surveyor William Hoddle led an expedition to locate the Yarra River's source, completing a detailed survey of the river from present day Woori Yallock to the headwaters in the east, establishing a camp in the now Yarra Junction recreation reserve during this period.

Yarra Ranges is recognised for its natural beauty and diverse habitats, the natural environment is dominated by hills and trees, and these features will continue to be its most defining characteristics. The combination of national parks, state forests, private gardens,

and its proximity to Melbourne combine to make the area unique. Some of Victoria's most environmentally important areas are located in the Yarra Ranges.

The mountainous landscapes make up a part of the Yarra Junction geography and are a spectacular backdrop to this environmentally diverse township. This area, known for its timber, contains significant native vegetation providing vibrant ecosystems for native flora and fauna. The Little Yarra River that runs through the town is a vital part of the Yarra Ranges ecosystem. These natural features are highly valued by the local community, who acknowledge the natural environment as an important part of their lifestyle and the character of the area.





Emergency management role

The people of Yarra Junction have historically taken on the role of supporting Upper Yarra townships in times of emergency. The Upper Yarra Valley Historical Society have records of residents of Yarra Junction assisting Launching Place residents to fight bushfires as early as 1900. With the first town Fire Brigade being formed in 1927, assisting surrounding townships. Including protecting Powelltown which was surrounded by fire during the Black Friday bushfires of 1939.

Yarra Junction continues to play a role in emergency management today, with this service centre identified as an emergency relief hub, recreation reserve a place of last resort and hosts the Yarra Junction Country Fire Authority (CFA).

Yarra Junction's history & cultural heritage

Yarra Junction sits within the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations who have had a continuous presence in the area for over 40,000 years. Although Wurundjeri peoples occupied the lands of the Yarra River catchment, early surveys suggested the Wurundjeri people were never present in large numbers in the Upper Yarra area, evidently finding the Yarra Glen, Yering, Mooroolbark, and Lilydale areas more suitable.

Following the first pastoral settlement in the area by the Ryrie brothers in the 1830s, pastoral settlement of the Upper Yarra expanded in the 1840's, with the Home Hotel in Launching Place established shortly after.

By the 1860's gold was discovered in Little Yarra River and Britannia Creek, which led to the small settlement known as Britannia. The exploration for gold continued for two decades with underground mining bringing more people to the area. As gold mining declined new industries developed in the area and by the mid 1880's the timber industry and farming had grown in importance.

The township of Yarra Junction progressed with an increased population and developing infrastructure. People took up land selection, building houses and planting crops such as strawberries, raspberries and currants.

In the early 1880s the land now occupied by Yarra Junction was first made available for settlement. William McKay took up a lease in 1885 and shortly afterward established a general store. A slaughterhouse and public hall were established soon afterward, and a community village settlement evolved, including the development of a primary school and police station in the 1890s.



Activity grew after the opening of the railway to Warburton in 1901, with Yarra Junction becoming a major transshipment point for timber and agriculture. A tennis club, cricket club and football club were formed, and a post office added by 1910, and the population of 58 recorded in the 1901 census had grown to 470 by 1911.

To support the increasing timber industry, a tramway connection from Yarra Junction to Powelltown was established in 1913 to support the passage of passengers and timber. The devastating Black Friday bushfires of 1939 resulted in a substantial restructuring of the timber industry, with isolated sawmills and their small settlements deep in the bush replaced with town-based mills. By the 1960s five timber mills were operating in Yarra Junction and these formed the economic base of the town.

The Lilydale to Warburton railway closed mid-1965, as automobiles became a more popular means of transportation in the area. During the 1980's a group of residents identified the railway land as an ideal route for a Rail Trail, and after some time lobbying with Local and State Governments the Rail Trail came into fruition with its official opening in 1996. The development of the Rail Trail has opened access to high numbers of new tourists for towns like Yarra Junction, that are set along the trail.

The Shire of Upper Yarra was first proclaimed in 1888. While Warburton was the largest town in the municipality, Yarra Junction became favoured for administration due to its proximity and access to downstream settlements, and it became the administrative centre from 1910 until amalgamation into the Shire of Yarra Ranges in 1994. New offices were constructed in 1924, which were replaced by the current building on the corner of Warburton Highway and Hoddle Street in the 1980s.

Yarra Junction's people

While there are many longstanding residents and families connected to the Upper Yarra area, recent residential growth, the appeal of the natural environment and convenient locality to the Urban area, has seen an increase in recent residential arrivals around Yarra Junction.

In 2021 Yarra Junction was populated by 2875 people compared to the population of 2,297 in 2011. Meaning Yarra Junction has seen 25% growth over the past 10 years.

Most of the population of Yarra Junction is English speaking.

- ▶ 43.9% of residents identify as Australian
- ▶ 43.1% of residents identify as English
- ▶ 1.3% of residents identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, which is slightly higher than the Greater Melbourne population of 1%.

Yarra Junction is a multigenerational community, with a median age is 43 years old.

The largest percentages with regards to age groups are:

- ► 7% 10-14 years old
- ► 6.9% 35-39 years old
- ► 6.7% 70-74 years old

2021 Census data indicated that:

- ► 52.9% of the Yarra Junction population works full-time
- ►35.2% works part-time
- ►3.8% are unemployed
- ► At the time of the census (August 2021) 9.0% of the population was away from work, likely due to Statewide restrictions in response to the Global Pandemic.

When compared against national benchmarks Yarra Junction has slightly higher than average disadvantage.¹

- ► Bottom 40% of suburbs and localities on the Index of Relative Socia-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)
- ► Bottom 30% of suburbs and localities with socio-economically advantaged residents
- ► Bottom 30% of suburbs or localities for the Index of Education and Occupation (IEO)
- ► 25% of households in Yarra Junction have incomes of less than \$650 per week compared to 14.5% of households in Yarra Ranges
- ► Median income is well below average, at \$1,302 per week compared to the national medium income of \$1,881

Top three professions held by residents of Yarra Junction:

- ► 21.1% working as Technicians and Trades*
 Workers
- ► 13.6% working as Community and Personal Service Workers
- ► 12.8% working as Clerical and Administrative Workers
- *Trade workers are the predominant workforce in this area, many of these workers are travelling out of the region for their daily work.

Top industries providing employment in Yarra Junction:

- ► Supermarket and Grocery Stores at 3.7%
- ► Primary Education and Aged Care Residential Services at 3.4%

The 2021 Census data also identified Yarra Junction as having higher levels of people living with mental health conditions, disability or long term health conditions:

- ► 11.3% of the Yarra Junction population identified living with mental health conditions compared to the State average of 8.8%
- ► 32.6% of the Yarra Junction population identified as living with one or more long-term health conditions compared to the State average of 27.4%
- ▶ 9% of Yarra Junction residents need assistance with activities of daily living compared to the the State average of 5.9%
- ► 13.5% of people aged 15+ were providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition or old age (314 people), compared to the National Average of 11.9%

Community engagement indicated a general concern regarding socio-economic issues and substance abuse within the community. While the Australian Bureau of Statistics' SEIFA index shows average levels of socio-economic disadvantage across the Yarra Ranges, there are some pockets of disadvantage highlighted in the Upper Yarra, which would be reflective of the feedback received by the Yarra Junction community.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/2021



Housing

In Yarra Junction there are 1,187 private dwellings with an average of 2.5 persons residing in each.

Yarra Junction currently has only a small supply of developable residential land, with an existing demand for smaller dwelling types. Council is currently preparing a new Housing Strategy which will consider how to better respond to housing pressures across the Shire.

Yarra Junction was a part of the community sewerage program undertaken by Yarra Valley Water with the Launching Place Sewerage Projects that was completed in May 2021. All properties in Yarra Junction can now connect to these sewerage systems. This improved infrastructure will allow for possible future subdivision and housing.

The median weekly household income is \$1,302.

- ► Median monthly mortgage repayments in Yarra Junction sit at \$1,800
- ► 19.3% of owners are paying more than 30% of their income on their mortgage
- ► Median weekly rent in Yarra Junction is \$300-, almost 19% less than the Victorian median
- ► 45.2% of renters in Yarra Junction are paying more than 30% of their income on rent
- ► The State median of renters paying more that 30% of their income on rent is 30.9%

Yarra Junction's economy

The Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, Clause 02.03 states that Yarra Ranges has a narrow economic base with a limited range of higher-level employment opportunities. Many of the resident's travel outside the municipality for jobs and highorder services, including tertiary education and regional shopping centres. Local employment is mostly within manufacturing and retailing sectors.

Yarra Junction Town Centre is located on the Warburton Highway and performs an important role in the provision of retail, commercial, civic, community and recreational facilities for people who reside in the Warburton Corridor.

Yarra Junction employs approximately 936 people most of whom are residents in the town or surrounding districts. 289 people work in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. The largest industry sector for economic output in Yarra Junction is Health Care & Social Assistance with \$39.1 M accounting for 19.13% of total output across the Yarra Valley.

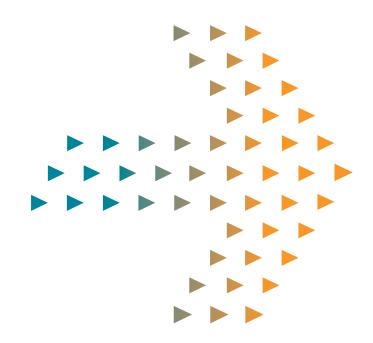
The top industries for economic output within Yarra Junction include:

- ► Health and Social Assistance
- ► Education
- ► Construction
- ► Retail Trade
- ► Accommodation and Food Services
- ► Arts and Recreation Services

The Yarra Junction Activity Centre contains a strongly performing Woolworths supermarket, which is the only full line supermarket in the town, a variety of specialty shops, with a focus on convenience retailing and food catering.

Yarra Junction is considered a Large Neighbourhood Activity Centre in State and Local planning policy, providing services and some public amenities to the surrounding hinterland communities.

The town's role as an employment hub has declined since the 1970s, with the slowing of local industry.



Who we spoke to

From September through to December 2023, the project team spent time in Yarra Junction connecting with community groups, sports clubs, service providers, organisations, local businesses and community.

This involved talking to people at the Yarra Centre, Library, Community Link, Shopping Centre, Yarraburn Centre, Yarra Junction Primary School drop off zone, Recreation Reserve and visits to local businesses; about what they loved about Yarra Junction, where they saw opportunities for improvement and what were their priorities for the future.

How did people hear about the project?



A letter was mailed out to over 1000 households in the Yarra Junction area to inform the community of the project and ways to provide feedback.



1,895 people registered with interest in Yarra Junction received an email notification regarding the Shaping Page.



2 months of social media for the project promoting ways to engage.



Business in the main shopping strip were approached to advertise the project with flyers in the shops.



Radio interview promoting the project and engagement opportunities on 99.1 Yarra Valley FM.



Signage was displayed around the activity centre in Yarra Junction, promoting the project.

How did people give feeback?



Community feedback was received through 268 Face to face interviews and written submissions.



112 quick submissions were received on the Shaping Yarra Ranges page with 568 votes.



16 detailed submissions were received on the Shaping Yarra Ranges page with 13 votes.



Council officers attended community events including the Halloween Street Party, Teddy Bears Picnic and Over 50's Friendship Group Lunch to talk with community.



A peer led youth workshop was held at Upper Yarra Secondary College to ensure strong youth feedback was included in the engagement.

What we heard



PRINCIPLE A: Culture, community & service needs

Feedback has told us that the community of Yarra Junction:

A

Emergency services

- ▶ is concerned about the lack of emergency healthcare in the region.
- would like to have a stronger police presence in their area.
- want to continue to work towards being prepared for bushfire in the area.

Young people (12-25 years old)

- ► are concerned about the social & emotional wellbeing of young people.
- ► would like to see more activities focused around supporting and engaging young people.
- would like to see spaces developed for young people.

"Really passionate community and some great township groups"

Mental health & substance abuse

- ► are concerned about the amount of anti-social behaviour they see in the township.
- ► are concerned about the culture of substance abuse in the area and social issues surrounding this.
- would like to know there are adequate support services for mental health and substance abuse in the centre.

"Many People are doing it tough in YJ"

Community groups & activities

- would like to see more community activities and events in the township.
- would like to see community groups working together and supporting each other.

"Community events such as Christmas pageants or markets"

"There is not enough for young people in this town"

Support services & accessibility

- ► are aware that many people are struggling and require a strong network of support services.
- ► want to know there are local support services and programs available to support families.
- would like to see more services available to support people living with a disability and their carers.
- ► are concerned about how dis-engaged or isolated some elderly community members are.



PRINCIPLE B: Economic prosperity & wellbeing

Feedback has told us that the community of Yarra Junction:



"Grow the shopping centre – Change Shop Mix"

Shopping centre

- would like to see improvements in the aesthetic of the activity centre and revitalisation of street & shop frontages.
- would like to see more and better-quality parking options around the shopping centre.

Town aesthetic

► see a lot of opportunity to improve the look and feel of the town.

"Better infrastructure for tourism – make it a place to come to."

Diversity of business

- would like to see opportunities to increase employment and revitalise the township.
- would like to see an increase in quality local hospitality and entertainment options.
- would like to see more competition in centre to provide better options for local shopping.

Development of industry

► Some people would like to see opportunities to develop local industry.

Development of tourism

- Some people would like to see an increased focus on tourist attracting infrastructure and activities.
- Some people do not want to see an increase in tourism and would prefer the town to remain a local service centre.

"Not enough local employment"

"Don't encourage tourism, infrastructure is not coping"



"Investment towards local jobs –
perhaps pockets of industry to
provide jobs that suit local skill sets
– people have to bare the cost of
travelling down the line to
work in factories"



PRINCIPLE C: Transport, movement, public space & infrastructure

Feedback has told us that the community of Yarra Junction:

Roads & transport

- ► is concerned about the increase in use of Warburton Highway and see many opportunities to improve safety, amenity and improve congestion.
- are not satisfied with the maintenance of roads infrastructure in the area and can see many opportunities to improve safety and amenity.
- are concerned about the speed of some vehicles and growing amount of traffic through the centre of town, and would like to see measures put into place the protect the community.

"Seal our dirt roads, especially when you are allowing massive subdivisions to take place"

"Fix the pot holes"

Pedestrian movement & trails

- see many safety concerns regarding pedestrian movement around the activity centre. They would like to see infrastructure improvements that encourage and support pedestrian movement, with a strong focus on increased paths and pedestrian crossings.
- would like to see big improvements to the footpath network in and around town. They also see many opportunities to improve the trails network in the wider area.

"Highway is too busy for the middle of town, creates a pedestrian barrier"

"The highway is very busy with large trucks passing very close to pedestrians"



Accessibility

would like to see improvements to infrastructure to allow accessible and safe movement into and around the centre.

Parking

would like to see more parking options around town, that move cars away from parking on the side of the Highway. They would also like to see improvements to the current parking provision.

Transport

- would like to see more regular public transport options to service the area and feel that safety is a concern.
- want better access to transport that can support the local community.

"Crossing Warby Hwy is really dangerous – need extra crossings"



PRINCIPLE D: Future land use & development

Feedback has told us that the community of Yarra Junction:

"Careful balance with developments – appreciating the character of the town" "YJ used to be affordable, but families and single parents can't keep up with the increase in rents now."

Planning & development

- would like to see controlled development that does not exceed infrastructure upgrades and maintains the neighbourhood character.
- would like a review of current zoning to allow for controlled growth in housing and industry.
- have concerns with the reliability of power and communications in the area.
- are unhappy with the drainage system in the area and believe incidents of flooding are increasing due to developments in the area.

"Fix the drains"

"Generally drainage is a big problem

- more subdivision = less capacity
to manage heavy rains - LOTS of
flooding issues in YJ"

"Regular power outages a problem – effecting my neighbour who has a pace maker"

"Rezone some of these big parcels of land to allow more housing"

Housing

- ► are concerned about the affordability and diversity of housing in the area.
- ► Environmentally sustainable energies and developments are important to the community of Yarra Junction, who want to protect the natural environment around them.

"Some more units and housing diversity needed"



"Continued protection of environmental assets"



PRINCIPLE E: Leadership & governance

Feedback has told us that the community of Yarra Junction:



- have suggestions on how Council could improve leadership and governance.
- ► see opportunities for development of communication and unity within the community.
- ► would like to see local businesses work together to improve community outcomes.

"Want to see better unity with clubs and increased township pride" "Weed management needs to improve, especially around the water ways – DEWLP & Council need to work together."

"Change the classification of the area to Rural – we are not Urban."

Glossary

Accessibility – The ease of reaching destinations. Highly accessible locations, enable a person, regardless of age, ability or income, to reach many activities or destinations quickly. People in places with low accessibility can reach fewer places in the same amount of time.

Activity centre – Activity centres are a focus for services, shopping, employment and social interaction. They are where people meet, relax, work and often live. Usually well-served by public transport, they range in size and mix of uses from local strip shopping centres to traditional town centres and major regional centres.

Aesthetic – Urban aesthetics refers to the way we perceive, asses and feel about towns and cities. This can include the buildings, the use of space, the overall population density. Urban aesthetics includes both the appearance (beauty) and the functionality (accessibility, services, etc.).

Affordable housing – Housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of low to moderate income households, and priced so these households are able to meet their other essential basic living costs.

Collaboration – The action of working together to achieve something.

Community infrastructure – Infrastructure provided in the public domain for community use, which is generally maintained by Council. This could range from facilities or parks through to park benches and bins.

Governance – The system by which something is controlled or operates, and the way in which authorities or people are responsible for something.

Neighbourhood activity centres – Local centres that provide access to local goods, services and employment opportunities and serve the needs of the surrounding community.

Land use – The purpose for which the land has been or is being or may be developed. The activity on the land.

Precinct – The designated area of a town highlighted due to similar land uses or defined by major edges including roads, rivers, or land uses.

Stewardship – The job of supervising or taking care of something, in the context of Place Planning this may include working towards a shared vision established to achieve a thriving community.

Subdivision – The act of subdivision means the division of a land parcel into two or more parts. It is also a term used for the resulting pattern of blocks and lots, and streets.

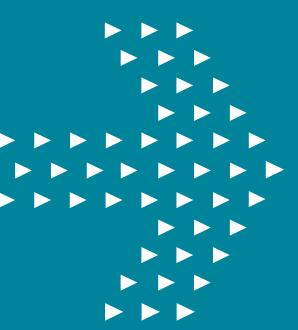
Traffic calming – Devices, such as speed humps, installed in streets to slow or reduce vehicle traffic and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. These measures can slow cars speed to between 15 and 40km per hour.

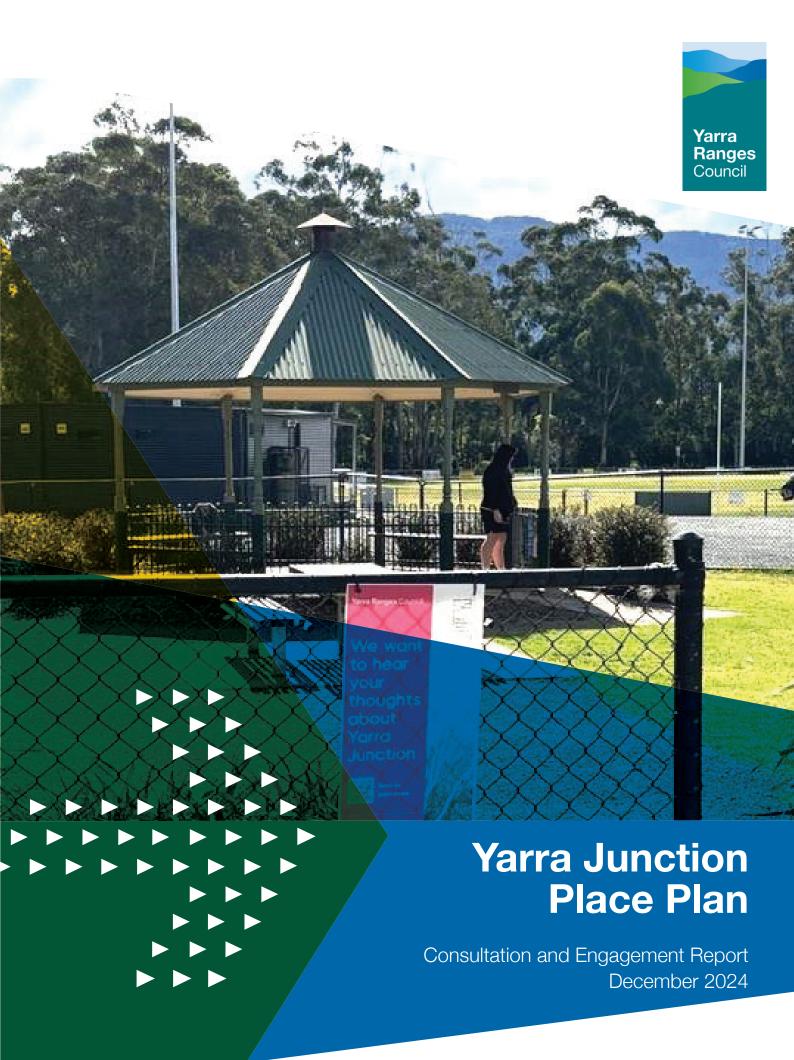
Vision – Is a statement defining the future priorities for a township or place, it should be aspirational yet realistic. The vision sets a direction, outlining goals and priorities to be worked towards over time.

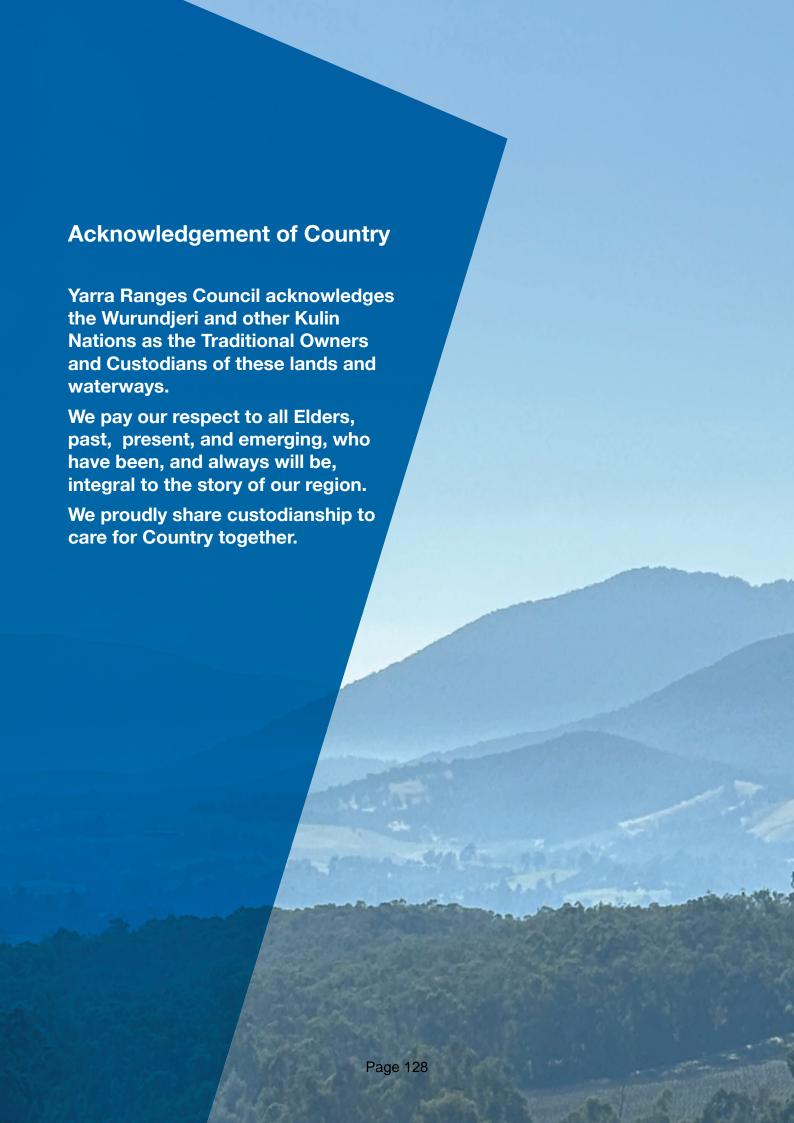
Priorities – The things that are regarded as the most important.

Quality-of-life – A perception or measure of a community's wellbeing in the context of the place that they live.

Walkability – Walking environments that best balance safety, connection, accessibility and enjoyment.







Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan

Consultation and Engagement Report

Council has been working with the community of Yarra Junction over the past 12 months to develop the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan. Place planning is a collaborative, long-term approach to building thriving communities. The Draft Place Plan aims to:

- Articulate a shared vision;
- Describe the issues and opportunities for Yarra Junction and Council's strategic intent;
- Create a foundation for design plans such as a Township Design Framework, which can inturn be used to seek funding for projects to be delivered;
- Identify an Action Plan for Council;
- Provide an evidence-based advocacy platform for Government and investment.

This report provides a summary of consultation and engagement activities that took place to develop the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan, and feedback received from community regarding the Draft Plan.

Associated documents:

- Yarra Junction Place Plan Engagement and Directions Paper December 2023
- Draft Yarra Junction Plan Plan June 2024

Published by Yarra Ranges Council 2024.

This document and associated documents are available on our website.

Hard copies are available on request at any of our five Community Links. To request a copy, email or phone our Customer Service Centre using the details below:

yarraranges.vic.gov.au mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au Phone: 1300 368 333

How We Engaged

The Yarra Junction Place Plan project team has focused on ensuring extensive community engagement, by providing a broad range of opportunities for community to have their say.

Phase One Engagement



A two month Consultation and Engagement period opened the place plan conversation with community (running August to October 2023).

Community were asked three open questions:

- What do you love about Yarra Junction?
- Where do you see opportunities for improvement?
- What do you want to see for the future?



A letter was mailed out to over 1,000 households in Yarra Junction to inform the community of the project and explain how to provide feedback.



Advertised drop in sessions were held at the Yarra Junction Family Centre with Council staff available to provide information and collect feedback.



1,895 people who registered their interest in Yarra Junction received an email notification regarding Council's Shapping Yarra Ranges engagement page. Two months of social media promoting ways to engage.



Flyers were placed in some shops and signage was placed around the activity centre, as well as radio interviews discussing the project and engagement opportunities on 99.1 Yarra Valley FM.



Council officers attended meetings and had interviews with community groups, sports clubs, service providers and schools.



268 face to face interviews and written submission were received.



112 quick submissions with 568 votes, and 16 detailed submissions with 13 votes were recorded on Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges web page.



Engagement with Council's Disability Advisory Committee, including a township accessiblity assessment with Disability Advisory Group members, demonstrating lived experience of moving around the centre of Yarra Junction.



A peer led youth workshop was held at Upper Yarra Secondary College.



Council officers spent time talking to community by visiting businesses, spending time at the shops, library, Yarra Centre, school drop off zones, and attended community events including the Halloween Street Party, Teddy Bears Picnic and Over 50's Friendship Group Lunch.



An Engagement and Directionspage of Sourmarising community feedback was published (April 2024).

Community Workshops

Phase Two Engagement



Five workshops were held with a Community Representative Group, involving 22 representatives including local business owners, service providers, community groups and residents.



In these workshops our Community Representative Group explored the community feedback received in Phase One Engagement and developed a Community Vision and Action Plan to sit within the Place Plan.

Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan

Phase Three Engagement



Four weeks community consultation on the Draft Place Plan (running August to September 2024).



Hard copies of the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan were made available at Yarra Junction Family Centre / Community Link.



Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges web page was visited by 762 visitors, with 38 contributions to an activity designed to prioritise the action items, and 13 quick poll contributions.



An online video presentation explaining the process of developing the Draft Place Plan and the Action Plan was available on Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges web page.



Advertised drop in sessions were held at the Yarra Junction Family Centre with Council staff available to provide information and collect feedback.



1,895 people who registered their interest in Yarra Junction received an email notification regarding Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges web page. 1 months of social media promoting the Draft Place Plan and ways to engage.



Signage was placed around the activity centre, adverts in school newsletters and radio interview discussing the project and engagement opportunities on 99.1 Yarra Valley FM.



Council officers attended Yarra Junction Market to talk with community and promote the Draft Place Plan.



Council Advisory Committees were provided details on how to review and provide feedback on the draft. Officers attended a Disability Advisory Committee meeting to receive in person feedback on the draft.



52 face to face interviews and written submissions were received.



Consultation and Engagement Report summarising engagement phases and community feedback on the Draft Place Plan was published (December 2024).

Responding to community feedback

Community feedback was generally supportive of the draft Place Plan. Many submissions and conversations recognised the key issues responded to in the Draft Action Plan.

The Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan was open for community feedback for four weeks, offering many opportunities for people to share their thoughts both in person and online.

The feedback mainly focused on the priorities in the Action Plan, indicating that the Place Plan was generally well-received. The extensive consultation and collaboration with the community during the first two rounds of engagement ensured that the Draft Place Plan reflected community views.

This Consultation and Engagement report summarizes the key feedback provided by the community about the Draft Place Plan. Much of this feedback will be used to inform adjustments to the Draft Yarra Junction Place Plan, which will be finalised and put forward for Council consideration for adoption in early 2025.

If the Place Plan is adopted by Council, a Township Design Framework will be created to turn the vision into actual designs. Projects can then seek funding for delivery. Progress on actions and projects will be reported annually.

We've received some feedback regarding the document's format. Specifically, we've been asked to simplify the Place Plan and refine the Action Plan to ensure that actions have a clearer impact, eliminate any overlap, and include timeframes and measures.

We'll review the Place Plan with this feedback in mind. This document sets the direction and priorities for the Council at a high level, and funding for actions hasn't been committed yet. Therefore, while we can't confirm exact timings, the final Plan will indicate short, medium, and long-term goals, as well as ongoing commitments.



Priority Actions

Community were asked to rate the actions in the Draft Action Plan. The following five actions were the highest supported actions, for each priority area.

- Road maintenance & safety
- Develop township identity and character
- Community infrastructure
- Health & support services
- Development of retail/hospitality sector

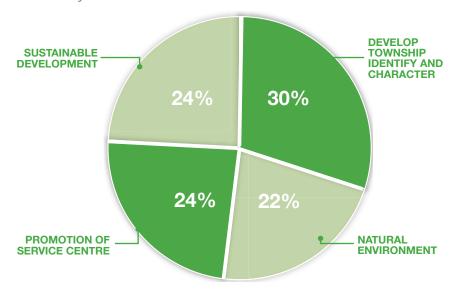
The ratings were widespread, with no significantly high responses for any given action. This indicates that the action list effectively addresses the many priorities important to the community. However, a few actions rated quite low and may be reconsidered when refining the action list for the final Plan.

Community feedback requesting a focus on key priorities in the draft Action Plan will be carefully considered in the final Place Plan. We'll ensure that the intent of any actions is not lost during this refinement process.



Priority 1 - Culture and Character

Yarra Junction's community values it's township identity and character, the natural environment and it's role as a service centre to the Upper Yarra community.



"Yarra Junction is a small regional town, most people live here for that reason. You should put more effort into maintaining the existing infrastructure."

"We are already seeing development in some areas and the infrastructure such as drains and roads aren't coping. We need the infrastructure to catch up with development"

FEEDBACK

Action 1.1 Develop township identity & character

The history of the region and character of the community are highly valued by the people of Yarra Junction.

People felt that acknowledging the heritage of the region would increase community pride.

Young people agreed that township heritage is important, but also want to see acknowledgement of Indigenous heritage for the area as well.

Action 1.2 ural environment

Support was given to maintaining and protecting the natural assets in the area.

Many people commented that the natural assets are a key reason for loving Yarra Junction.

The Yarra and Little Yarra River were highlighted as important features of the township, as well as the surrounding views and trails.

Some would like better access to the rivers, allowing for recreational use, whilst still protecting the environment.

Action 1.3 Promotion of service centre Community acknowledged that Yarra Junction has always been the service centre for the Upper Yarra and plays an important role in emergency response.

This action could be incorporated as part of the township identity action item (1.1).

Community support maintaining focus on the local service centre role, rather than prioritising tourism.

Action 1.4 Sustainable development There were many concerns raised by community as to what this meant and whether updates to the Planning Scheme would cause unacceptable growth.

People generally accepted that some growth and increased diversity in housing is necessary, but do not want to loose the neighbourhood character of the township.

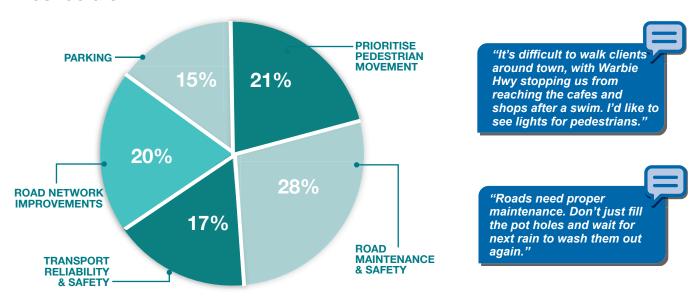
Some people felt that this response is too late and are unhappy with developments that have already taken place around the activity centre. Requesting more control in decision making in future.

Page 134

^{*} Actions as ranked in the draft Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

Priority 2 - Transport and Accessibility

The community want Yarra Junction to be a safe and accessible town to move around, with a strong pedestrian focus, quality roads and public transport infrastructure.



^{*} Actions as ranked in the draft Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

FEEDBACK

Action 2.1 Prioritise pedestrian

There was strong support to improve accessible movement around the activity centre. Feedback included identifying hazards and areas that pedestrian focused interventions could be put in place.

Some felt that this is a vehicle dependent community.

Action 2.2 Road maintenance safety

∞ಶ

Strong support came in for improved maintenance and safety in the road network, with many comments focusing on the safety of Warburton Highway.

A large amount of feedback focused on the ongoing maintenance of local roads and Warburton Highway. Some requests were made for a review of the maintenance program and better solutions for dealing with recurring potholes.

Some concerns were raised about the loss of funding for sealing local dirt roads in the area.

Action 2.3 Transport Ibility & safet The community wants more frequent transport service available, suggestions were made about increased bus services, flexiride, or ride share services in the area.

Safety concerns around bus infrastructure, including safe bus shelters, accessible paths to bus stops and pedestrian crossings near bus stops.

Action 2.4 Road network improvements Suggested were made for infrastructure improvements to better manage traffic around the activity centre and alleviate traffic in the main street.

This action should be considered with the road safety actions (2.2).

There is some nervousness as to how roads will manage high levels of movement in an emergency situation.

Action 2.5 Parking There was a lot of feedback the poor condition of the private shopping centre car park.

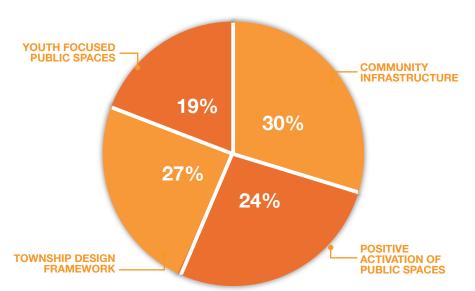
Community would like to see improvements to accessible parking around the centre.

Some would like to see parking restricted or removed from Warburton Highway in areas of the activity centre to provide better vision and safety on the Main Street.

Page 135

Priority 3 - Community Infrastructure

Community would like integrated and accessible spaces that celebrate the natural environment, support positive health outcomes, and increase social connections.



"Revitalise the streetscape to make more attractive and help businesses."

"A hydro therapy pool is absolutely necessary at the Yarra Centre. There is an ever increasing ageing population in the area and no facility for a warm pool for therapy."

"It's great to see investment in Yarra Junction's future, but it needs to be balanced and appropriate."

FEEDBACK

Action 3.1 Community

Community Infrastructure is ageing and not meeting communities' expectations.

Community would like to see Council committed to maintaining and upgrading current infrastructure, to allow for better accessibility, technology and functionality.

The Yarra Centre is highly valued by community and people would like to see further investment in maintaining and upgrading this centre, with particular interest in a hydrotherapy pool.

Action 3.2 Township Design Framework

Community wants to see Council progress with planning and delivering township improvements.

Many detailed suggestions were provided during all phases of consultation, which will be considered in developing the Township Design Framework. Focus areas include:

- Pedestrian movement and accessibility
- Town aesthetic and beautification
- Public spaces
- Shopping centre precinct
- Recreational spaces & connections to trails network
- Signage, public art and heritage influences

Action 3.3 Positive activation of public spaces

Community would like to see infrastructure established that can allow for more community events.

cused

People would like to see increased activity outside the shopping centre including outdoor dining, artwork and lighting, creating a safe and positive atmosphere.

Many people support the development of youth focused spaces.

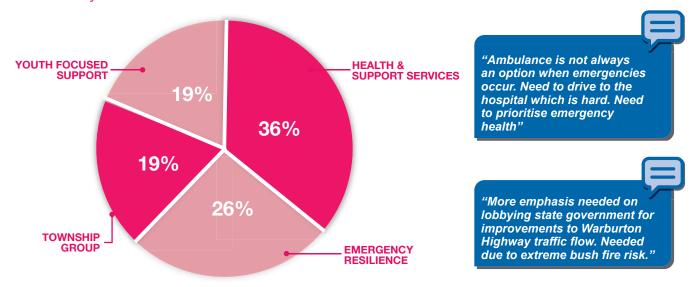
Young people should be included in the planning of youth focus spaces and public artworks.

Some felt this action could be considered as a priority for the Township Design Framework (3.2).

^{*} Actions as ranked in the draft Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

Priority 4 - Partnerships

Working towards a resilient and connected community with a shared vision. With strong health and social services networks that supports the needs of all community.



^{*} Actions as ranked in the Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

FEEDBACK

Action 4.1 Health & Support Services

Community would like to see additional resources for emergency healthcare and other health services in the centre.

Many people accept that they need to travel "down the line" to reach specialist health care services.

People commented that they are happy with the services available locally. They would just like to see them available more consistently.

Action 4.2 Emergency Resilience Community acknowledged that emergency resilience must remain a priority in Yarra Junction.

There are some concerns about the reliability of infrastructure to support communication and the road network supporting mass evacuation, in times of emergency.

The role of community in emergency resilience is important, with many feeling confident that Yarra Junction as a community would support each other in times of emergency, with reflections on this being part of the town character and heritage.

Action 4.3 wnship Group There was support towards the role of a township group for Yarra Junction, and the important function they would play in community.

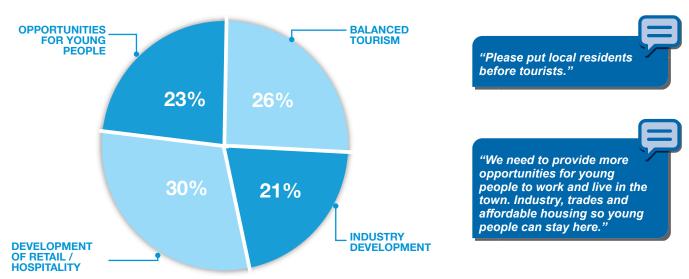
Some acknowledged that this action is already taking place, with the newly formed Yarra Junction Township Group.

Action 4.4 fouth focused support

Some want to see more support services for youth including out of school activities and training opportunities.

Priority 5 - Business & Employment Opportunities

Community want to see increased opportunity to prosper and thrive as the town grows, with a diverse and sustainable economy that supports local jobs growth.



^{*} Actions as ranked in the Yarra Junction Place Plan survey

FEEDBACK

Action 5.1 Fourism Developn There is inconsistent opinion on the role of tourism in Yarra Junction. Some people feel that too much emphasis is placed on tourism infrastructure in the Upper Yarra area and would like to see Council concentrate investment on infrastructure for the local community.

Some people believe that Yarra Junction could better attract users of the local trail network to ensure economic benefit for the local community.

Suggestions to support tourism included signage to direct visitors, improved township aesthetic and outdoor dining, as well as better parking and movement options in centre. There were some suggestions of tourist attraction activities, the most popular being based around heritage and nature based tourism.

Action 5.2 Industry Development Community would like to see development of light industry and creative industry opportunities in Yarra Junction.

There was community concern about the closure of the native timber industry and what new industries may be developed to reinvigorate the economy in the broader Upper Yarra area.

Action 5.3 Development of Retail / Hospitality sector

Community would like to see the retail centre reinvigorated, with improved aesthetic, outdoor activation, revitalised streetscape and diversity in businesses.

Many people would like to see a stronger night-time economy, providing more local jobs for young people and positive activity in centre.

Action 5.4 Opportunities fo Young People

Many would like to see more opportunities for local training and employment in skills based jobs for young people, including development of local light industry, creative industries and hospitality.

Next Steps

The Yarra Junction Place Plan establishes Council's long term strategic intent. No funding is currently allocated to the delivery of actions in this Plan. These key next steps will ensure the Place Plan progresses towards the delivery of real projects and community outcomes over time.

Yarra Junction Place Plan Consideration of Adoption by Council Yarra Junction Place Plan considered for

Yarra Junction Place Plan considered for adoption by Council, and aligned to delivery of key strategies. Actions to be included in Council's annual Corporate Action Plan.

Township Design Framework and potential short term projects

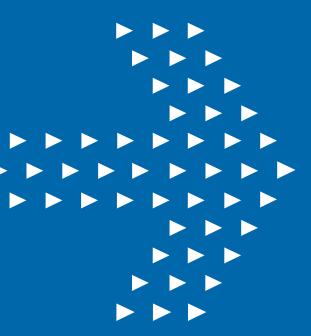
short term projects
A Township Design Framework to be developed to translate the principles into actual designs and projects prepared for delivery. Solutions that can be readily delivered will be designed and costed in order to seek funding for construction.

Yarra Junction Place Plan Action Plan, Reporting and Review

The Actions will be integrated into Council's annual business and project planning with specific actions allocated to directorates and teams for delivery. Progress on actions and projects will be reported annually.

The Yarra Junction Place Plan will be reviewed and evaluated over time to ensure it is current, relevant and adapted to any changes that have arisen. Performance and monitoring will be publicly available through Council's on-line channels.





How Council will engage

Deciding the level of engagement

Yarra Ranges Council's community engagement is based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement, illustrated in the table below. This spectrum identifies and defines five levels of engagement and details our promise to the community for each level of engagement.

Levels of engagement may be different for separate phases of a project and for different stakeholders based on interest, influence and impact.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
	Comn	nunity Engagemer	nt Goal	
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision making in the hands of the public
		Council's promise		
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to, and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions	We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
Tools	for each engagem	ent level may inclu	ide, but are not limit	ted to:
Social media, Council website, Media, Newsletters, Emails, SMS,	'Shaping Yarra Ranges', Surveys, Submissions, Roadshow popups,	Focus groups, Workshops, Advisory Committees	Community panels, Stakeholder meetings	Ballots, Delegated decision

^{*}adapted from the IAP2 Spectrum. Copyright © International Association for Public Participation. Please visit www.iap2.org for more information.

Sept - Nov 2023

Engagement & Directions Paper

Community Engagement

Apr - May 2024

Community Reference Group Workshops

6 August 2024

Council Forum - Draft Engagement Paper

8 Aug - 8 Sept 2024

Page 142

Community Engagement Draft Place Plan

December 2024

Consultation & Engagement Paper

31 March 2025

ELT - Final Draft

15 April 2025

Council Forum - Final Draft

13 May 2025

Council Meeting - consideration for adoption

May 2025

Share adopted Plan with Community





2026 ANNUAL GRANT PROGRAM

Report Author: Executive Officer Partnerships & Community Building

Responsible Officer: Director Communities

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

Each year Council offers an Annual Grants program to not for profit community groups and artists. These grants provide funds for community-led projects that build stronger communities. The criteria for success for those applying are linked to the goals of Council's strategic plans.

The 2026 Annual Grant round is due to open on 2 June 2025, closing mid-July and is for projects happening in 2026. Applications are assessed by independent panels and the recommendations of the community assessment panels are presented to Council for endorsement in October 2025.

The report recommends minor changes to the Monthly Grants, consolidating two separate budgets into one program that supports vibrant and connected communities, with grants for not-for profit traders incorporated into that program.

This report seeks Council endorsement of the 2026 Annual Grant Guidelines, and the draft budget allocation in the 2025-26 financial year of \$575,000 for the Annual Grants and \$150,000 for the Monthly Grant program.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Yarra Ranges Grants 2026 Annual Grant Guide.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

In 2024 the Council endorsed an increase in funds for the *Annual Grants* from \$500,000 to \$575,000. Council also approved increases to the *Monthly Grants* program as follows:

- \$20,000 for the Vibrant and Connected Communities program to a total of \$120,000.
- \$18,000 additional funds for the Economic Development program for grants and \$12,000 for capacity building for not-for-profit trader groups.

Council also approved a change to the limit of the monthly grants from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

DISCUSSION

Section 9(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020 states: "priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations". The projects funded through Council's Grants help build the foundations for the future, through supporting strong connected communities where people have a sense of belonging and purpose.

Purpose and Background

Council's Grant Policy states:

"Council commits to providing grant programs which are inspired by Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles with a focus on discovering community assets, strengths, and passions, nurturing positive community relationships and partnerships and mobilising community led initiatives."

Each year an *Annual Grants* program is developed and offered to communities across the municipality. It is highly sought after, well-funded compared with many other local governments, and generally well regarded.

Council's *Monthly Grants* program provides quick turn-around funding for a broad range of community endeavours. Like the annual program it is based on ABCD principles. Changes to the funding limit for *Monthly Grants* in 2024, resulted in greater demand. The increase to the funding limit and a noticeable increase in the number of applications is driving the additional call on funds. On the other hand, the *Economic Development* grants are under-expended.

The increase in applications is taken as a sign that communities are actively participating in community life and this is positive. Yarra Ranges has highly engaged volunteers, artists, heritage groups and community groups and this is a strength that the grants leverage.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide information about the upcoming 2026 Annual Grant round, key dates, the strategic criteria and the governance of the grant round, primarily the assessment and decision-making processes.
- Recommend a consolidation of budgets for the *Monthly Grant* program, to meet increased demand and bring not for profit trader groups into one Vibrant and Connected monthly program.

Annual Grant Program

There are three streams in the Annual Grants:

- Arts and Heritage
- Community Development
- Festivals and Events.

Assessment Panels will be convened to score and deliberate on applications as part of a three-step process: 1. officer reflections to support the panels 2. individual panel members' assessment online, then 3. a deliberation day where the panel members meet to agree on final recommendations for endorsement by Council.

Based on the increase in applications last year, officers will determine the number of panels needed to manage the volume. The panels are primarily volunteer community members, and the work of assessing is significant.

Features of the Panels

The aim is for panel members to represent our regions as best as possible, have a gender mix and include young person/s. Other considerations are to have members who bring relevant expertise in community development or the arts. Council has been fortunate to have skilled and committed panels over many years and their contributions are valued.

Festivals and Events

Yarra Ranges Council has long had a decentralised, community led approach to bringing communities together to celebrate and strengthen local identity through the grant programs. This was a deliberate strategy to respond to the many diverse places and communities of Yarra Ranges and to support local creativity and imagination. Community groups across Yarra Ranges deliver quality festivals and events with distinct character and feel through the grants they receive.

Options considered

In developing options for the 2026 Annual Grants, lessons from past rounds were considered:

- The need to manage the workload of the panels, notably in the Arts, Heritage, Festivals and Events streams.
- Incorporating Planning considerations such as permits, particularly in the festival and events stream.
- The importance of the festival and event registration process for applicants.
- A review of the criteria and eligibility to ensure they are current.
- Observations of the high quality of applications, indicating strong alignment of community energy, creativity and imagination with the strategic goals of Council and confirming the Guidelines are still highly relevant.

Recommended option and justification

The recommended option for the *Annual Grants* is to:

- Endorse the strategic criteria for the three streams outlined in Attachment 1.
- Maintain Annual Grant funding at \$575,000 and the allocations across the three streams, outlined in the recommendations.
- Approve the updated eligibility including that Council does not fund camps, rides or jumping castles.

Further, for the Monthly Grant program the recommended option is to:

 Combine the Vibrant and Connected Communities stream and Economic Development stream into one program, making a total of \$150,000, starting for the May 2025 round.

Over many years, applications for monthly *Economic Development* grants have been low. These grants are only for not-for-profit trader groups. The recommendation is to wrap the economic criteria into one Vibrant and Connected program.

Council's Skill Building program offers free workshops targeted to meet community needs. These are relevant and of value to trader groups. The workshops are usually online, out of hours and thus very accessible and will be promoted to trader groups.

This proposal addresses the increased demand on the Monthly Grants following Council's decision in 2024 to increase the limit of the grants to \$1,500 per year, per applicant.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The draft 2025-2026 budget allocation for the *Annual Grant* program is \$575,000. The allocation across the three Annual Grants streams is:

- Arts and Heritage, Festivals and Events streams \$300,000
- Community Development stream \$275,000.

The *Monthly Grants* budget is proposed as \$150,000 for applications that support Vibrant and Connected Communities incorporating criteria for not-for-profit trader grants. This can be accommodated by combining two elements of the draft 2025-26 budget.

As noted above, demand in the *Monthly Grant* program is both increasing and the amount being funded is higher. Between July and Jan in the previous financial year there were 61 grants approved and in the same period for this financial year, 89 were approved.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

No regional, state or national plans or policies are applicable to the recommendation in this report.

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

A healthy and connected community.

The grants are a major way that Council partners with communities to deliver responses to its strategic plans such as:

- Health and Wellbeing Plan invites projects that increase social connection, support healthy eating, promote gender equity to increase mental wellbeing.
- Creative Communities Strategy supporting arts, heritage, cultural development and festivals/events, while also delivering on mental wellbeing, a goal of the Heath & Wellbeing Plan.
- Environment and Liveable Climate Plans projects that involve skills development, engaging with nature and environmental projects.
- Disability Action Plan promoting more inclusive communities.
- Reconciliation Action Plan strengthening culture and Country.
- Key Life Stages Plans (early, middle, youth and older residents) supporting social connection, responding to local needs, harnessing creativity across life stages.

RELEVANT LAW

The grant program helps drive inclusion through the criteria and through prompts in the applications process and the information sessions for community applicants. A Gender Impact Assessment is underway. This is also required for the update of the Grants Policy due later in 2025.

Child Safe Standards were incorporated into the Grants some years ago and workshops and information are provided by experts, to assist community groups to feel confident in what is needed to keep children safe.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

There are some economic benefits from the grant programs, notably in the festival and events category. Community festivals deliver benefit through employment of local artists and performers, drawing people to activity centres and other locations and increasing local expenditure. There are also opportunities for local vendors to participate in events.

In a less obvious way, there are economic benefits through volunteering which builds community wellbeing and the positive health impacts of being involved. Skill development, leading to employment options can also happen through volunteering in community grant projects, such as artists developing skills to support their arts practice or volunteers building project management and administrative skills.

Social Implications

The partnership between Council and community organisations over decades has proven the social benefits of the *Annual Grant* program. These benefits include increased social connection and a sense of belonging, fostering creativity, connecting people to the history of their area and addressing social issues.

The grants enable communities to develop specific projects to build on opportunities or address needs. Over the years examples include projects that support people experiencing loneliness or isolation, addressing gender stereotypes, promoting inclusion for people with disability, and the many events that reflect local identity and culture. The creativity and innovation of local volunteers and artists that comes through the grant programs is extensive.

Each of the three streams delivers social benefits using very different delivery modes; from heritage projects to arts, activities that foster connection to place, and many other diverse projects that strengthen social connection and help build community wellbeing.

Environmental Implications

Grant projects include some with environmental impacts. Stand outs in the past are projects led by community gardens and local environmental groups. The grant application form also suggests ways that grant projects can be environmentally responsible in their delivery such as being waste wise.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While the grant application process involves ongoing conversations with community members and with the assessment panels. No deliberate engagement on decisions for this round was undertaken. Ongoing feedback is sought and considered to improve and adapt the value of the grants.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The grant criteria invite community projects that respond to Council's strategic objective of a healthy and connected community. This requires collaboration across Council, importantly between Creative Communities and Community Support. The program also requires consideration of Planning. Many areas of Council contribute to the *Annual Grants*, supporting projects in their area. Examples of this intersection include disability inclusion, health and wellbeing, Indigenous Development environment, healthy active ageing, young people and families and children. Officers in these teams support successful grants for example with the reporting acquittal process.

Reflections on each round result in incremental improvements or changes. These may be refining or updating criteria or changes to way we inform communities to ensure wide access to the grant program. The 2024 round involved extensive changes to the program after a review and led to refining and simplifying the application process for community members and to Council increasing the funds available.

RISK ASSESSMENT

There are risks in managing grant programs. These were the subject of an Auditor General (AG) report in 2022. Yarra Ranges was not part of the audit, but a cross reference of the findings showed the systems in place for Council grants are robust and in line with the AG's recommendations. A summary of the program risks and mitigation is in the Table below.

Risk	Mitigation
Conflicts of Interest (COI)	A COI declaration is signed by applicants, assessors and the panel members. There is a clear process during assessment for managing COI with panel members not assessing projects they are involved in or discussing them with others.
	Officers monitor and follow up any conflicts or perceived conflicts.
	The role of Councillors is designed to avoid any actual or perceived conflict: e.g. no letters of support from Councillors, Councillors not being

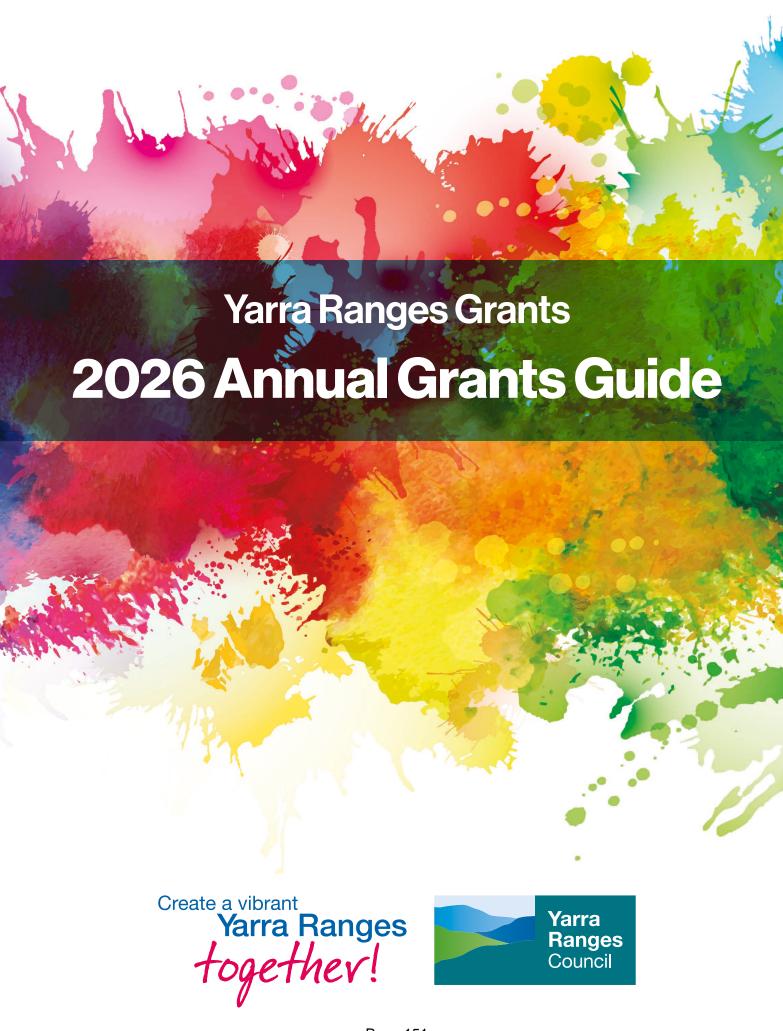
Risk	Mitigation
	involved in the assessment process and the practice of Council endorsing the recommendations of the community panels.
Financial	Grant payments are managed through SmartyGrants and processed through Council's financial system.
	A process for variations, checking of acquittals is also managed through SmartyGrants. This assists with managing the volume of grant funded projects.
Permit Requirements	Grant projects proposed on private land may require a planning permit. This process is unlikely to fit within grant timelines. Approaches to assist include suggesting alternate venues or locations.
	A comprehensive registration process is in place to manage risks related to events and festivals and comprehensive resources and processes are in place to inform organisers about likely permits and other information, to assist with planning events.
Reputational risk	Past experiences show the potential for reputational risk is most likely when applicants are not successful. This is managed by clear messaging that not all projects can be funded, referral to other grant opportunities, offers of feedback and help with how to increase likelihood of success in future.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. 2026 Draft Annual Grants Guidelines for Endorsement



Contents

1.	Acknowledgement	3
2.	Introduction	4
3.	Key Dates	4
4.	Grant Categories and Priorities	5
5 .	Eligibility Criteria	6
6.	Selection Criteria	8
	6.1 Community Development Stream	8
	6.1a Overview	
	6.1b Selection Criteria	
	6.2 Arts and Heritage Stream	14
	6.2a Overview 6.2b Project Outcomes	
	6.2c Selection Criteria	
	6.3 Festivals and Events Stream	16
	6.3a Overview	
	6.3b Project Outcomes	
	6.3c Selection Criteria	
	6.3d Important Information when applying for a festival or event	18
7.	Application Process	19
<i>'</i> .	7.1 How to apply	19
	7.2 Budget	19
	7.3 Supporting Documentation	19
	7.4 Venues and Open Spaces	20
	7.5 Unincorporated Applicants & Auspice Organisations	20
	7.6 Assessment and Approval	20
	7.7 Funding Agreement and Payment Arrangements	20
8.	Guiding Values	21
•	8.1 Good Governance	21
	8.2 Child Safety Standards	21
	8.3 Gender Equity	21
	8.4 Environmental Impact and Sustainability	22
	8.5 Diverse and Inclusive	22
9.	Acknowledgement of Council	23
10.	Acquittal	23
11.	Key Documents and Contacts	24
12.	Jargon Buster	26

1. Acknowledgement

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

2. Introduction

The Annual Grants program harnesses community energy and ideas to promote a more connected and healthy Yarra Ranges.

These grants help groups and organisations respond to opportunities, creative inspiration and local needs to deliver outcomes in communities.

Grant funded projects leverage local knowledge, nurture networks, and support organisations, community groups and artists to promote community wellbeing.

To be successful, applicants need to meet the eligibility requirements, demonstrate alignment with strategic priorities and selection criteria, provide the necessary supporting documentation and evidence and demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively.

3. Key Dates

Grant round opens	Monday 2 June 2025 yarraranges.smartygrants.com.au
Grant Information Sessions	Wednesday 21 May 2025 1pm - 2.30pm & 6.30pm - 8pm (Online)
Steps to Grants Success Workshop	Thursday 5 June 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Applications close	Monday 14 July 2025 (3pm)
Funding announcements	November 2025
Grant celebration/networking event	December 2025
Grant payments	30 days after funding agreement is returned
Grant projects to commence	From January 2026

4. Grant Categories and Priorities

The Annual Grants Program provides funding in the following categories:



1. Festivals and Events



2. Arts and Heritage



3. Community Development



5. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants need to meet the following eligibility requirements:

Applicants need to be:

- An incorporated not-for-profit community group*/organisation with an ABN: OR
- An unincorporated not-for-profit community group/organisation auspiced by an incorporated organisation; OR
- An individual/artist, in the Arts & Heritage funding category only (must be auspiced by an incorporated organisation):
- Organisations, community groups and artists/individuals applying for a grant must demonstrate how their project will directly benefit residents of the Yarra Ranges. Applicants based outside the region can apply if the project outcomes benefit and occur in Yarra Ranges.
- Applicants must commit to obtaining all necessary permits related to the funded activity, particularly for festivals, see section on Planning and other permits at page 18.

Council funding cannot be provided unless all necessary permits are in place.

- Applicants must have successfully completed all reporting requirements for previous Yarra Ranges Council grants and have no outstanding debts with Council. If unsure, please contact the Grants Team.
- Applicants must provide evidence of at least \$10 Million Public Liability insurance.

- Child Safe Standards compliance is required if projects involve direct or incidental contact with children.
- Applicants agree to acknowledge funding from Yarra Ranges Council in promotion, consistent with Council's branding quidelines.
- Applicants must consent to providing evidence of how funds were spent and outline project benefits through an acquittal process.
- Purchase of food associated with community relief projects is capped at \$500.
- The grant activity must take place during 2026.
- Applicants must submit all supporting material when applying. Late submission of supporting documents will not be accepted.
- Only one application can made in each stream of the Annual Grants. Organisations cannot receive more than two grants in total.
- Applicants must talk through their project ideas with a Council Officer before applying. Please see contact details at the end of this document.

2025 Successful Grant Recipients

Applicants are encouraged to view last year's successful grants to see the range of projects funded.

A list of funded 2025 projects is available here

^{*} Please refer to the definition of a community group as it relates to our Grants Program in the Jargon Buster section of these guidelines.

Funding will not be granted for:

- A program, service or activity that is primarily considered the responsibility of State or Federal Government; for example, the core business of schools, hospitals or other services.
- Activities that take place outside the Yarra Ranges (including touring costs).
- A new building, capital works or facility maintenance works.
- Ongoing staff salaries or administration costs not specific to the project.
- Purchase of equipment only. Funding for equipment will be considered for a small component of the project (up to 15% of the requested grant amount).
- Activities that take place at inappropriate venues; for example, gambling venues.
- Activities that are sponsored by gambling businesses.
- Political organisations will not be funded.
- Applications with the singular purpose of promoting religion.
- Training, study or academic research in Australia or overseas.
- Applications that are solely for attending forums, workshops, conferences or for organising conferences.
- Overnight camps/activities
- Competitions, prizes, award exhibitions or exclusively fundraising events.

Programs cannot be funded retrospectively (i.e. they cannot have already occurred).

Major Council Partners are not eligible to apply and have been notified. This **does not** refer to 2023-27 Partnership Program recipients.

Requests for petting zoos and animal attractions including pony rides will only considered if the animal attractions proposed are integral to the event, and will be subject to specific Terms & Conditions, including that the event organiser must seek additional insurance coverage for these activities.

Jumping castles and inflatables are not permitted on Council land.



6. Selection Criteria



6.1 Community Development

6.1a Overview

Council's Annual Grants help community organisations to deliver projects that build more inclusive, healthy and connected communities. They harness community strengths, opportunities and aspirations, and enable communities to respond to local needs with confidence and creativity.

What is Community Development?

Community development recognises the many strengths in communities, tapping into their wisdom and experience to build resilience. It draws on the principles of justice, equity, inclusion and respect. Importantly, in the context of Council grants, community development is also about connecting with others and building a sense of belonging through grant funded projects.

Who will community development funded projects involve?

Community development can involve anyone in a community. The grant criteria also includes initiatives that increase the participation of diverse groups within our communities, including: people living with disability, unpaid carers, people across all ages and life stages, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQA+ community members, women and girls, and those experiencing social isolation.

For community development enquiries please contact:

Urban Community Development Officer Hills Community Development Officer Valley Community Development Officer Upper Yarra Community Development Officer

Disability Inclusion Officer or call 1300 368 333



The following areas reflect key priorities in our communities. Your application should tell us how your project will address one or more of the following priorities.

Health and Wellbeing

Council invites applications that address the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

One of the most powerful ways to support good health and wellbeing is through building social connections and a sense of belonging. Almost all grant projects aim to do this in some way.

Council encourages applications that are locally focused, creative and respond to health and wellbeing issues. We invite strength-based projects that tap into local skills, knowledge, and energy to meet needs and take up opportunities to build more connected and vibrant communities.

For example: Yarra Ranges residents can increase social connection through participation in group activities. This can be particularly important for people who may be more vulnerable or isolated.

This category looks to foster connected and healthy communities through projects that:

- Build and enable mental wellbeing by supporting strong and sustainable social connections.
- Promote and support physical health.
- Nurture thriving local communities.
- Build our food system, increasing access to healthy food and skills to grow and cook food.
- Build respect and inclusion.
- Increase participation of people with disability.
- Welcome people from all backgrounds.
- Build disaster resilience by strengthening social connection and networks, and increasing knowledge, skills, and planning for emergencies.

 Include people from diverse cultural backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and LGBTQIA+ community members.

Applicants can find out more by exploring Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy here.

Applicants applying for projects that focus on Health and Wellbeing must first speak with the Health and Wellbeing team. Please contact Rachel Giddens r.giddens@yarraranges.vic.gov.au or ph 03 9294 6882

Environment

This category supports environmental sustainability.

Priority will be given to applications that address one or more of the following:

- Nature Conservation: projects that restore, protect and enhance local biodiversity.
- Environmental Stewardship: initiatives that raise community awareness about environmental issues, fostering conservation and sustainability understanding.
- Climate Resilience: projects that improve community resilience and adaptation to climate change and extreme weather.
- Water Resource Management: initiatives that conserve water, improve water quality, and/or protect freshwater ecosystems.
- Innovative Sustainability: projects that use innovative tech and practices for sustainability, such as waste reduction, energy efficiency and sustainable transport, with clear impact measurement outcomes.

Applications can find out more by exploring Council's Environmental Strategy here.

Reconciliation

Projects in this category will strengthen the relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Priority will be given to applications that address one or more of the following:

- Celebrate and protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.
- Break down stereotypes and discrimination.
- Increase understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing.
- Enhance community driven initiatives that contribute to community wellbeing, economic participation, and cultural strengthening.

Applicants applying for projects that focus on Reconciliation must talk with a member of Council's Indigenous Development team before submitting an application.



Young People

If you are a not-for-profit organisation, you can apply or auspice a young person to apply for an Annual Grant under this category. Your program must support Yarra Ranges young people aged 12 to 25 years.

The need for your program must be identified by young people. This can be done by a co-design process, data, research, or consultations with young people.

Programs that engage young people in the diverse locations of Yarra Ranges will be prioritised. These include Warburton. Healesville, and the small townships across the region.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Promote opportunities for young people to engage in their community, build social connections, and give young people a voice in decision-making.
- Target culturally diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, all ability and LGBTQIA+ community members.
- Strengthen respectful relationships and focus on building resilience and promoting gender equality.
- Increase soft skills and pathways to employment for young people.

Applicants must talk with the Youth Development Coordinator Dudu Orman on 03 9294 6134 or

d.orman@yarraranges.vic.gov.au prior to applying.

Note: Council will not fund camps and overnight camps/activities for children and young people.

Early Years, Middle Years and Families

This category is for innovative projects that enhance the wellbeing and resilience of children and young people 0-14 years, and their families living in the Yarra Ranges.

Priority will be given to applications that address one or more of the following:

- Children, young people and their families have access to initiatives that are culturally safe and support connection.
- Design and deliver initiatives with a focus on improving wellbeing outcomes and promoting access to supports for children, young people and their families.
- Design and provide opportunities for children, young people and families to actively engage in their community and be involved in decision making.

Applicants must discuss proposed application with the Early or Middle Years Partnerships Coordinator Loren Hedger I.hedger@yarraranges.vic.gov.au prior to applying.

Note: Child Safe Standards compliance is essential. Council does not fund overnight camps /activities for children and young people.

For more information about Child Safe Standards see here.

For more information about Council Grants Child Safe requirements see attachments here.

Healthy and Active Ageing

The Healthy Ageing category aims to promote innovative activities and initiatives that support individuals aged 50 years and over living in Yarra Ranges.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Provide opportunities for people aged 50 years and over to actively engage in their communities of choice.
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally diverse, LGBTIQA+, people living with dementia and all abilities.
- Address issues of ageism
- Improve outcomes for individuals experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

Applicants must talk with the Healthy and Active Ageing Officers Ellie Thompson e.thompson@yarraranges.vic.gov.au or Melissa Manfelds M.Manfelds@yarraranges.vic.gov.au prior to applying.



6.1b Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the desired outcomes and priorities for the Community Development Stream and following criteria:

Project Outcomes what you will do

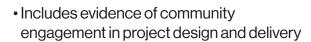
 How the project responds to community opportunities or need/s



- Alignment with one or more Council key strategies or priorities
- Backed by evidence (data, consultation findings, letters of support) where appropriate
- Identifies what your project seeks to change (short or medium term impacts of the initiative)

Partnership and collaboration - who you will do it with

• Demonstrates strategic partnerships between existing and new groups, or across sectors



 Harnesses volunteer effort and builds community capacity to respond to local opportunities, issues or needs

Organisational capacity how you will do it

 Have a clear and well defined project plan



 Demonstrates capacity to effectively deliver the program or service, including evidence of good governance (transparent, documented policies)

Budget - how much will it cost

 Includes a budget that directly links to what you plan to do in your project



- Project is achievable within the proposed budget
- Project has funding and/or in-kind support from other sources, including from the applicant1

Diversity and Inclusion

 Demonstrates how you aim to increase inclusion including culturally and linguistically diverse groups, gender diversity, LGBTIQA+, people living with disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

1 Please indicate in your budget if you have applied for other funding and mark whether the funding is confirmed.



6.2 Arts and Heritage

6.2a Overview

The Arts & Heritage stream of the Annual Grants program supports local groups, not-for-profits organisations, individuals, and artists to express themselves in diverse ways, connect with each other and to the place they live through projects that contribute to the rich arts, culture and heritage of the Yarra Ranges.

Arts, cultural and heritage activity, and engagement are integral to community identity, social connection and wellbeing. Projects may include exhibitions, performance, public art, workshops, heritage and historical projects, storytelling, documentation, and digital work. These projects may respond to community needs, support artistic practice, and/or enable creation of new work.

The creation of extraordinary cultural experiences that echo our shared history and creativity.

Support the development of a thriving and authentic **Yarra Ranges Creative Industry that attracts** artists and embeds creativity within the region.

Develop vibrant and active public places that express and celebrate our creativity and heritage.

6.2b Project Outcomes

The Arts & Heritage stream supports the Creative Communities Strategy and delivers in three key areas:

People & Experience

- Deepen community understanding of local people, history and culture.
- Broaden knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, continuity and culture in Yarra Ranges.
- Facilitate programming that puts audience experience and their participation at the centre.

Production & Industry

- Provide opportunities for our local creative talent.
- Raise the profile, reach and impact of Yarra Ranges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and creative professionals.

Place and Environment

- Increase public visibility of contemporary and historical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- Increase visibility of the cultural, historical and artistic diversity of the region within townships
- Activation of community and cultural venues and public spaces through creative and cultural engagement.

6.2c Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the desired outcomes and priorities for the Arts and Heritage stream and following criteria:

Project Outcomes – what you will do

 Deliver a high-quality project that meets Council's identified strategic priorities.



Partnership and collaboration – who will you do it with

Where appropriate:

- Public outcomes demonstrating creative collaborations with community, artists, heritage practitioners and/or other groups.
- Evidence of how community could engage with the project consultation.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation and permissions.



Diversity & Inclusion

Demonstrate consideration of inclusion principles, specifically including culturally and linguistically diverse groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, gender diversity, and people living with disability.

Organisational capacity – how will you do it

 Demonstrate capacity to deliver the project including experience, people and resources.



Budget – how much will it cost

- Include a clear and well documented budget.
- Project is achievable within the proposed budget.
- Ensure all workers / artists are paid at industry rates.
- Have funding and/or in-kind support from other sources, where appropriate.

6.3 Festivals and Events

6.3a Overview

The Festivals and Events stream of the Annual Grants program supports groups, and organisations to deliver activities that enhance local culture. celebrate community spirit and contribute to the liveability of Yarra Ranges.

Festivals and events provide an opportunity for community to celebrate their unique identity and contribute to the creativity and cultural diversity of the region. They build social connection through sharing knowledge and experience.

All projects funded must engage with Council's event registration process and ensure delivery of safe, compliant events with minimal environmental impact. Please review the guidance on Planning and other Permits that may be essential to your project, at page 18.

The creation of extraordinary cultural experiences that echo our shared history and creativity.

Support the development of a thriving and authentic **Yarra Ranges Creative Industry that attracts** artists and embeds creativity within the region.

Develop vibrant and active public places that express and celebrate our creativity and heritage.

6.3b Project Outcomes

Under the Creative Community Strategy, Council identifies three strategic areas - People & Experience, Production & Industry and Place & Environment. Projects in this stream should deliver at least one of these outcomes:

People & Experience

- Deepen community understanding of local people, history and culture.
- Broaden knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, continuity and culture in Yarra Ranges.
- Facilitate active community involvement in shaping events at every stage of delivery.
- Strengthen wellbeing in local communities through the opportunity to connect.
- Develop a sense of place and increase the experience of belonging.

Production & Industry

- Provide opportunities for our local creative talent.
- Raise the profile, reach and impact of Yarra Ranges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and creative professionals.

Place and Environment

- Increase public visibility of contemporary and historical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- Increase visibility of the cultural, historical and artistic diversity of the region within townships
- Activation of community and cultural venues, recreation areas, play spaces and other public spaces through creative and cultural engagement.

6.3c Selection Criteria

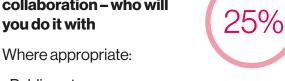
Applications will be assessed against the desired outcomes and priorities for the Festivals and Events stream and following criteria:

Project Outcomes – what you will do

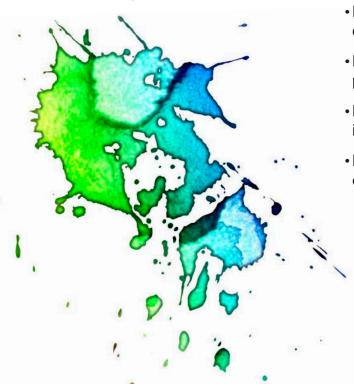
 Deliver a high-quality project that meets Council's identified strategic priorities.



Partnership and collaboration - who will you do it with



- Public outcomes demonstrating creative collaborations with community, artists, heritage practitioners and/or other groups.
- Evidence of how community could engage with the project consultation.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation and permissions.



Diversity & Inclusion

 Demonstrate consideration 15% of inclusion principles, specifically including culturally and linguistically diverse groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, gender diversity, and people living with disability.

Organisational capacity how will you do it

 Demonstrate capacity to deliver the project including experience, people and resources.



Budget - how much will it cost

- Include a clear and well documented budget.
- Project is achievable within the proposed budget.
- Ensure all workers / artists are paid at industry rates.
- Have funding and/or in-kind support from other sources, where appropriate.

6.3d Important Information when applying for a festival or event

Grant projects from any of the three streams may include an event. Council's website has a guide to assist with event and festival planning - Planning a Festival or Event

There are many well equipped public spaces and community halls across Yarra Ranges which are great locations for events. If you're planning an event on private land, you may need a Planning Permit. Council funding cannot be provided unless all necessary permits are in place. This may include food handling, traffic management and Place of Public Entertainment (PoPE) permits.

To find a suitable venue or park/open space please see our website.

Parks & Recreation Yarra Ranges Council

Community Halls & venues for hire Yarra Ranges Council

Events on Public Land

- Please refer to the Planning a Festival or Event page on Council's website to establish if you need to register your event. You'll also find the Event Quick Guide, packed with helpful information to support your event planning.
- If you need to register your event this must be done at least 12 weeks prior to the event date. This ensures enough time to process your registration and provide any support that may be needed.
- If your event is on public land, you won't need a Planning Permit, but you may need a PoPE (Place of Public Entertainment) Permit. When you register your event, we'll let you know if this is required, and it can be issued within 12 weeks.

Events on private land

• If your event is being held on private land a Planning Permit is likely to be required, and you will be referred to Council's Planning team to check if you can hold the event on the proposed site. We suggest you get advice before you make a grant application by calling the Planning Duty Officer on 1300 368 333.

A Planning Permit can take 6 to 12 months to process, so choosing a public place for your event might be a better option. If you decide to apply for a Planning Permit, please allow enough time to work through this before applying for a grant.

Click here to find out more

For further information please contact: festivals@yarraranges.vic.gov.au or grants@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

7. Application Process

7.1 How to apply

Applications for Annual Grants can be made by completing an online application form at yarraranges.smartygrants.com.au

The form will be made available once the grant round is open.

Please ensure that applications and all supporting material are submitted by 3.00pm on Monday 14 July 2025. Submissions will not be accepted after this time.

If you have difficulty using the online application form, please contact the Grants Team for assistance on 1300 368 333.

If you are having difficulty accessing SmartyGrants or require support please contact SmartyGrants directly on (03) 9320 6888 or service@smartygrants.com.au.

7.2 Budget

The Annual Grants program is a significant investment by Council and there are reporting requirements to account for this use of public funds.

Applicants are required to provide a budget aligned with outcomes for the project. Budgets need to balance and demonstrate planning, be realistic and justified for the proposed application. A quote is required for each expense item that exceeds \$750.00 (only for expense items requested as part of this grant).

If your organisation is registered for GST with the Australian Tax office, Council will add 10% GST to the grant which must then be paid to the Tax Office as per usual GST processing. If you have a project auspice, they will process the GST on your behalf.

7.3 Supporting Documentation for **Applications**

All applicants must upload the following supporting documents as part of their submission through SmartyGrants:

- Most recent Annual Report, including annual financial statement. If an application is being auspiced, these will need to be provided by the auspicing organisation.
- A copy of the certificate of cover of the applicant's public liability insurance. (\$10million Public Liability). If an application is being auspiced, this may be provided by the auspicer.
- Evidence of partnerships, such as a letter of support (on letterhead) from individuals/ organisations detailing their contributions and why they support, the project.
- You may also wish to include any evidence (reports or other documents) that demonstrate the need and support for the project.
- If an application is auspiced, an auspicing agreement signed by both parties, must be uploaded with the application.

7.4 Venues and Open Spaces

Yarra Ranges Council has a variety of venues & open spaces available for community use.

PLEASE NOTE: If your project or event requires the use of a Yarra Ranges Council venue or open space, you will need a quote to include with your application in the budget section. Please note in-kind support is only available for some venues. If available this will be confirmed when you place your booking.

Quotes may take up to two weeks so please prepare early.

7.5 Unincorporated Applicants & **Auspice Organisations**

Applicants that are not incorporated must have their application 'auspiced' by an eligible incorporated organisation.

The auspice organisation is legally responsible for the funds and enters into a Funding Agreement with Council.

Information on the auspicing body will need to be provided in the application, including their ABN, financial report, and contact details.

It is important that the auspicer and the applicant enter into an agreement to ensure clarity around roles and expectations of each party. Applicants can allocate a small auspicing fee as part of budget in the application.

Please note that unincorporated applicants must still demonstrate that they have experience delivering similar projects.

Further information on auspicing arrangements can be found at: www.nfplaw.org.au/auspicing

7.6 Assessment and Approval

All applications undergo a pre-assessment eligibility check conducted by a Council Officer.

All eligible applications are assessed by an independent panel of community members and Council officers with subject matter expertise.

Please note: it is not appropriate to ask Councillors to provide letters of support or lobby them about a grant application.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will receive formal notification of their submission outcome.

Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to seek feedback from Council Officers.

7.7 Funding Agreement and Payment **Arrangements**

Funding agreements will be finalised and distributed within six weeks of Council approval. It is essential that all grant recipients and auspicing bodies enter into a funding agreement before the project commences and funds are released. Grant payments will be made within 30 days of the completed funding agreement being returned to Council.

8. Guiding Values

8.1 Good Governance

Yarra Ranges Council is dedicated to ensuring the Annual Grants Program is run in a fair and transparent manner. We commit to managing an effective grants program that responds to community opportunities, ideas and needs and is a sound use of public funds. This commitment is expressed through openness to constructive feedback and a desire for continuous improvement.

Successful grant recipients must have robust governance structures in place.

8.2 Child Safety Standards

The introduction of Child Safe Standards by the Victorian Government stipulates that all organisations that provide services for children or receive government funding are now covered by mandatory reporting requirements. Grant recipients that have direct and incidental contact with children during the course of their project, will be required to provide additional documentation if their application is successful.

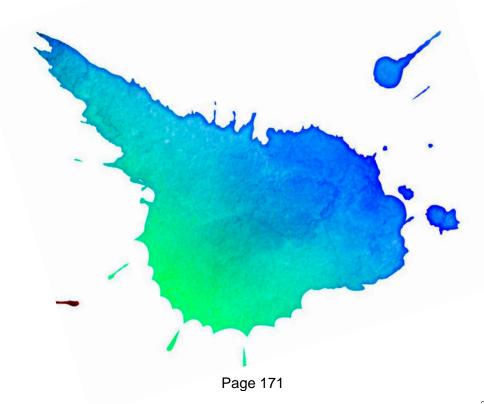
8.3 Gender Equity

Yarra Ranges Council is committed to gender equity and works alongside our grant recipients towards achieving this.

Women, men and gender diverse community members can face different expectations and challenges based on social conditioning and subtle biases. Consequently, designing or delivering a project treating all people as the same may not necessarily result in equal inclusion and impact.

It is important that grant applicants apply a 'gender lens' when drafting their application. This involves considering the different needs and circumstances of people of all genders within the target group.

Further information on running gender-wise projects can be found at: fundingcentre. com.au/help/gender-lens. Alternatively, applicants are invited to contact Council's Gender Equity Officer on 1300 368 333 for ideas on integrating gender-aware practices into your organisation's work.



8.4 Environmental Impact and **Sustainability**

Yarra Ranges is renowned for its natural beauty and Council is committed to maintaining the health and significance of the region's environment.

All applications are encouraged to consider activities that improve sustainability and minimise unnecessary environmental impacts. For more information or support on this please contact Council's Sustainability Officer on 1300 368 333.

8.5 Diverse and Inclusive

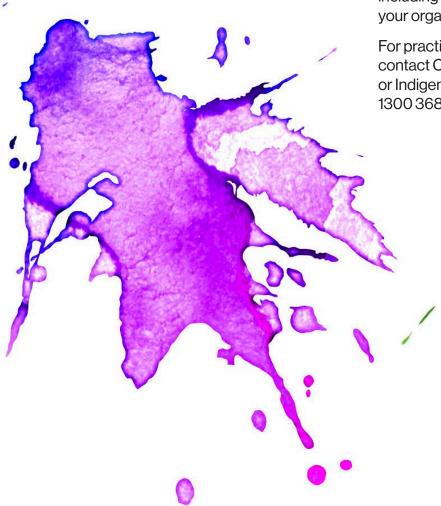
Diversity is a strength within Yarra Ranges and something grant projects can promote. Grant submissions from groups and individuals of all backgrounds, cultures, age groups, genders and sexual orientation are strongly encouraged.

Including people with diverse needs

Council is committed to increasing access and participation by people with disability and their carers. Grant projects can lead the way in this.

Consideration of how projects will reach out and include people with a disability is encouraged e.g. promotion, physical access, including performers with disability and on your organising committee.

For practical ideas and considerations please contact Council's Disability Inclusion Officer or Indigenous Development Officer on 1300 368 333.



9. Acknowledgement of Council

Acknowledgement of support provided by Council should be made in accordance with the Yarra Ranges Council Acknowledgement Guidelines. Successful grant recipients will be provided with further information as part of the Funding Agreement package.

10. Acquittal

All Annual Grants recipients are required to report on the success, outcomes, lessons learnt, and financials through a final report. Any interesting stories or photographs are also welcomed!

A template will be provided by Council through SmartyGrants to support grant recipients with this process.

Successful recipients will be required to substantiate financial information. You will only be required to provide receipts for expense items above \$750 as part of the acquittal process.

Please note that random audits may occur.



11. Key Documents and Contacts

Council has goals for improving the social connection and community wellbeing across Yarra Ranges. Grants are an important tool in realising these goals. It is important to consider how your proposed projects contributes to the overall achievement of these goals.

The table below details key strategy documents and the relevant Council Officer you can speak to about these community focused Council priorities. Council Officers can be contacted on 1300 368 333.

Council Strategy or Plan	Relevant Council Officer
Creative Communities Strategy 2019	Arts & Culture - Emma Buckley Festivals and Events - Melinda Ballard Public Art - Yolande Pickett Exhibitions - Kelly Toghill Heritage - Sarah Sato
Community Development Officer contact details	Community Development (Hills) - Janette Scott Community Development (Urban) - Santha Press Community Development (Upper Yarra) - Michael Goodrich Community Development (Valley) - Kellie McPherson
Health and Wellbeing Strategy Plan	Community Mental Wellbeing - Rachael Giddens
Reconciliation Framework for Action 2013-2023	Indigenous Development - Garry Detez Arts focused Indigenous projects - Sam Piper
Environment Strategy 2015-2025	Sustainability - Chelsea McNab
Child and Youth Strategy Youth Strategic Action Plan	Youth Development - <u>Dudu Orman</u>
Middle Years Strategic Action Plan	Early and Middle Years - Loren Hedger
Healthy and Active Ageing Plan	Healthy & Active Ageing Officers - Ellie Thompson or Melissa Manfelds
Equity Access & Inclusion Strategy	Disability Inclusion Officers - Amanda May or Jenna Hepburn

Need further assistance?

For further information on the Annual Grants Program please contact a member of the Grants Team on 1300 368 333.

Privacy Statement

Yarra Ranges Council (Council) is committed to protecting your privacy. In compliance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) Council will use the Personal Information (name, address, phone number, email) collected from you is for the primary purpose of processing your grant application and related purposes such as providing information about other funding opportunities and events that may support you or your organisation. Information is held securely and used solely by Council for this specific purpose and/or a limited directly related purpose, and will not be otherwise disclosed without your consent or as required or permitted by law. Your personal information is only accessed by authorised persons and may be stored in Yarra Ranges Council records management database, used for statistical research, information provision, promotion or evaluation of Council's grant programs. If your application is incomplete, Council will not be able to process your grant application.

By submitting an application you consent to Yarra Ranges Council publishing the Group/ Individual name, project description and amount funded on Council's public website.

You may access your information by contacting the Grants Team on 1300 368 333 or grants@yarraranges.vic.gov.au. For more information, see Council's Privacy Policy.



12. Jargon Buster

The following section breaks down some key terms when talking grants and grant requirements.

Acquittal – a written report submitted following the completion of a project. The acquittal should detail what was achieved by the project, lessons learnt and how the grant funding was spent. Council will provide grant recipients with an acquittal form.

Advocacy – is the act of promoting, supporting or arguing in favour of an idea, need, cause or policy.

Auspice – an organisation that receives and manages grant money on behalf of an unincorporated grant applicant. To be eligible and auspicing body must be incorporated and have a current ABN.

Community group – a group of people working collectively in a voluntary capacity to deliver accessible community activities for the benefit of the broader community.

To apply for Yarra Ranges Council funding, a community group must be able to provide evidence, on request, that they have:

- multiple people involved in planning activities (including the provision of contact details, details of relevant skills/experience to deliver the initiative)
- delivered at least one community initiative (exceptions may be considered in the case of an urgent need or newly established aroup)
- been in existence for at least 3 months (exceptions may be considered in the case of an urgent need or newly established group)

Capacity – refers simply to the skills or abilities of an individual or organisation to plan, deliver and achieve project outcomes.

Capacity building – is more than just training. It refers to the process by which communities, organisations or individuals strengthen competencies and abilities to identify and achieve their development objectives. It is an ongoing and dynamic process.

Evidence based – Provides the proof that a project or approach is best placed to respond to a community need. This may include research, community consultation or data.

Incorporation - is a voluntary process where a not-for-profit or community group can apply to become its own 'legal body'. This means that the group can enter into a contract, sign a lease or employ people. For further information please contact the Consumer Affairs Helpline on 1300 55 8181 or visit the Not-For-Profit Law Information Hub's website.

In-kind support – is in place of monetary support. It could take the form of goods from businesses through to services and time from volunteers. Examples of in-kind support provided by Council include free training, networking and promotion opportunities.

Outcomes - are the changes, benefits or other effects that occur as a result of the project. Examples could include increased skills as a result of involvement in a project, increased confidence in nutritional meal preparation or increased event management skills.

Project – is a set of organised activities or steps that are planned to achieve a particular aim or outcome. It will have a start and end date.

Reconciliation – is about building positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider Australian community.

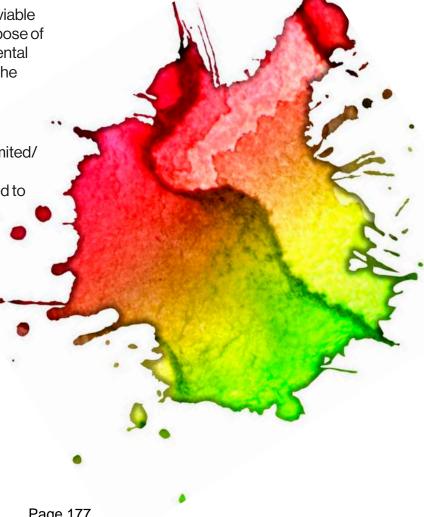
Social enterprise – is a commercially viable business with the clear and stated purpose of generating positive social or environmental impact. They exist primarily to benefit the community.

rather than shareholders or owners.

Social disadvantage - People have limited/ no access to the services, resources. opportunities and capabilities they need to learn, work, engage and have a voice.

SmartyGrants – is an online grants management platform. All Council grant submissions must be made through this system. The system is easy to use and supports the goals of an effective and efficient, transparent granting process.

Variation – is any change to the project compared to the original grant application, Council understands that sometimes variations are required; however these changes must be discussed with the Community Partnerships Officers before the completion of the funding period.









AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - INDEPENDENT MEMBER APPOINTMENT

Report Author: Executive Officer - Governance, Risk & Compliance

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

This report recommends the appointment of Mr Jonathan Kyvelidis as an Independent Member of Yarra Ranges Audit and Risk Management Committee (the Committee) for a three-year period commencing 1 July 2025 with remuneration of \$1,504.93 (excl. GST) per meeting.

This report also reconfirms a previous decision of Council that the remuneration for all existing Independent Audit and Risk Management Committee members is increased in line with the proposed rate cap of 3 per cent, effective 1 July 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse

- 1. The appointment of Mr Jonathan Kyvelidis as an Independent Member of the Yarra Ranges Council Audit and Risk Management Committee for a three-year term commencing 1 July 2025 with remuneration of \$1,504.93 (excl. GST) per meeting.
- 2. The remuneration for all Independent Members of the Yarra Ranges Council Audit and Risk Management Committee be increased by 3% effective 1 July 2025.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council approved the Audit and Risk Management Committee Charter (the Charter) on 11 February 2025.

DISCUSSION

Background

The Committee has been established by Council under Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and is comprised of five members, with the majority being independent members. The terms of reference of the Committee are outlined in the Yarra Ranges Committee Charter (Charter).

The term of Mr. Stephen Schinck, Chair and Independent Member, expires on 30 June 2025. As per the Charter, Independent Member terms of appointment are limited to a maximum of three terms, with each term being a maximum of three years. The concluded term was Mr Schinck's third and final term as an independent member. As such, a recruitment process has been undertaken to appoint a new independent member to the Committee.

The Charter requires that the composition of the Committee include:

- Maximum of five member.
- Three independent members.
- Two Councillor representatives.
- Chairperson to be appointed by Council from the Independent Members for up to three years.

Over recent months the Director Corporate Services, with assistance from Management and Committee Independent Member, Katie Baldwin, conducted interviews for a new Independent Member. This recruitment process canvassed a strong pool of candidates with a broad range of skills in the context of the Committee's Charter and duties, a skills matrix assessment of current Committee members, and the organisation's emerging risks.

Following a highly competitive recruitment process, Mr Jonathan Kyvelidis is recommended for the role of Independent Member for a three-year period commencing 1 July 2025.

Mr Kyvelidis brings over twenty years of experience in external audit, business management, and financial services, currently serving as an independent member of eight Council Audit and Risk Management Committees.

Previously, Mr Kyvelidis led the external audit of every Council in Victoria as the Director of Local Government within the Victorian Auditor-General Office's (VAGO) financial audit division. This role gave him unique insights into the diverse challenges, risks, and operational complexities faced by metropolitan, regional, and peri-urban Councils across the state.

Remuneration

Section 12.5 of the Charter states that remuneration will be paid to each Independent Member and the Chair on a per meeting basis, with fees being indexed

in alignment with the rate cap percentage each 1 July. Remuneration will be reviewed at the appointment of a new Independent Member.

From 1 July 2025, recommended remuneration is (inclusive of indexation for the 2025-26 rate cap):

- Independent Members: \$1,504.93 per meeting (excluding GST and based on 5 meetings per year); and
- Chair: \$1,825.66 per meeting (excluding GST and based on 5 meetings per year).

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The financial implications of supporting the Committee are forecast within current and future operating budgets.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The appointment of Independent Members to the Committee links to the Council's Key Strategic Objective – High Performing Organisation and meets Council's obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RELEVANT LAW

Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to establish an Audit and Risk Management Committee.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

The appointment of Mr Kyvelidis as an Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Management Committee contributes to economic sustainability of Council by ensuring effective oversight of financial management practices.

Social Implications

Mr Kyvelidis' appointment enhances social sustainability by fostering trust and transparency within the community. Effective governance and risk management practices, overseen by the Committee, contribute to the public's confidence in the council's operations. This, in turn, promotes social cohesion and engagement, key components of social sustainability.

Environmental Implications

The appointment of Mr Kyvelidis and, therefore, the effective functioning of the Committee can indirectly support environmental sustainability efforts. By ensuring sound financial management practices, the Committee enables Council to allocate

resources efficiently, including funds earmarked for environmental initiatives such as sustainability measures, waste management, and renewable energy projects.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement has been undertaken in preparing this recommendation.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

No specific external collaboration, innovation or continuous improvement initiatives were undertaken in preparing this recommendation.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Committee provides independent assurance to Council in respect of Council's management of risk, and as such the recommended appointment of a new Independent Member will ensure the continuation of a high performing Committee, therefore reducing Council's overall risk exposure.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS

NIL

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT - MARCH 2025

Report Author: Executive Officer Management Accounting

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

SUMMARY

This report outlines Council's financial performance and financial position for the period ended 31 March 2025.

The Income Statement shows an overall favourable year to date (YTD) variance of \$268,000 representing 2.3 per cent of YTD Budget. This reflects the combined result of higher than budgeted operating income of \$6.047 million and higher than budgeted operating expenses of \$5.924 million.

Council's overall financial position at the end of this quarter is sound.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Finance Report for the quarter ended 31 March 2025.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Not applicable.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Council adopted the 2024-2025 Budget.

Budgeted surplus reflects the amount by which operating revenue exceeds operating expenses, in accordance with relevant accounting standards.

Operating expenditure excludes non-operating transactions such as capital works and investments, which are separately detailed in the report.

The report compares actual performance to budgeted targets at this stage of the financial year.

Summary of year-to-date results

Comprehensive Result (Net Surplus)

Year To Date (YTD) comprehensive result of \$11.9 million is \$268,000 above the adopted budget. This is due to:

- Overall revenue is \$6 million above budget, this predominantly relates to the receipt of storm recovery grants and the timing difference in financial assistance grants from the Victoria Local Grants Commission.
- Overall expenses are over budget by \$5.9 million, this predominantly relates to:
 - Overspend in Employee benefits \$0.5 million due to the EBA salary increase of 2.75 percent compared to budget of 2.25 percent.
 - Materials and services are \$4.8 million over budget due to the external contract costs associated with storm recovery works.
 - Depreciation and amortisation \$0.5 million due to the capitalisation of assets in the prior year.

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet reflects Council's financial position at 31 March 2025 and is prepared in compliance with the Australian Accounting Standards

The Balance Sheet presents a working capital of \$16.7 million (total current assets of \$98.1 million less total current liabilities of \$81.4 million). This reflects Council's ability to meet its short term obligations as they fall due.

Cash Flow Statement

The statement of cash flows captures Council's actual cash transactions for the period.

Council is showing a cash position of \$46.7 million after all transactions for the period to date. The \$46.7 million includes a loan \$20.4 million being drawn down as per the budget.

Capital Program

The capital works report detailing YTD spend by asset class.

Year to Date capital expenditure of \$40.7 million is \$8.7 million or 17.5 percent below the YTD Adopted Budget of \$49.4 million. Underspend is due to delays expected external approvals in the projects planning, design and permit stages.

Relevant Law

Local Government Act 2020, section 101 financial management principles. Local Government Act 2020, section 97 quarterly budget report. Australian accounting standards.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The attached report outlines the financial performance and position of Council's activities as at the end of March 2025 with variance commentaries on overall performance.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Sound financial management and reporting of Council's activities forms part of Council's commitment to be a High Performing Organisation, one of the five Key Strategic Objectives outlined in the Council Plan.

RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment has been considered in relation to the financial report and deemed an acceptable level of risk

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Financial Report – March 2025



Financial Report

for the period March 2025

Table of Contents

Financial Statement	3
Income Statement	3
Balance Sheet	4
Statement of Cash Flows	5
Detailed Analysis	6
Income Statement Variance Analysis	6
Statement of Capital Works	9
Treasury	10
Rates Analysis	11
Grant Activity	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Income Statement

For the financial year to date 31 March 2025

	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Varia Fav / (Uni	fav)	Annual Budget
	\$	\$	\$	%	\$
Income					
Rates - General	135,670	136,886	1,216	0.9	180,893
Rates - Special Rates and Charges	943	1,734	, 791	83.8	1,258
Statutory Fees and Fines	2,821	2,051	(770)	(27.3)	3,761
User Fees	4,829	5,037	208	4.3	6,394
Contributions - Cash	2,281	1,516	(765)	(33.5)	3,113
Grants - Capital	15,847	12,592	(3,255)	(20.5)	21,129
Grants - Operating	22,346	32,211	9,865	44.1	29,250
Other Revenue	1,178	1,622	444	37.7	1,715
Interest	1,801	824	(978)	(54.3)	2,402
Contributions - Non Monetary Assets	2,250	1,541	(709)	(31.5)	3,000
Total Income	189,966	196,014	6,047	3.2	252,916
Expenses					
Employee Benefits	60,263	60,811	(549)	(0.9)	80,230
Materials and Services	80,202	85,091	(4,888)	(6.1)	104,814
Bad and Doubtful Debts	48	2	46	95.5	64
Depreciation and Amortisation	29,690	30,172	(483)	(1.6)	39,586
Other Expenses	6,899	6,969	(70)	(1.0)	8,906
Finance Costs (Interest)	1,159	1,139	20	1.7	1,546
Total Expenses	178,262	184,185	(5,924)	(3.3)	235,146
Net Gain/(Loss) on Disposal	-	144	144	-	-
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	11,705	11,973	268	2.3	17,769
Operating (Underlying) Surplus/(Deficit)	(4,212)	(651)	3,561	(84.6)	(3,453)

Balance Sheet

For the financial year to date 31 March 2025

	31-Mar-25 \$	30-Jun-24 \$
Current Assets	Ÿ	7
Cash & Cash Equivalents	46,757,078	24,741,515
Trade & Other Receivables	35,038,685	43,657,778
Other Assets	16,315,819	14,617,071
Total Current Assets	98,111,582	83,016,363
Non Current Assets		
Trade & Other Receivables	6,833,032	6,098,518
Investments in Associates	2,923,748	2,923,748
Ppty, Plant & Equip. and Infrastructure	1,627,717,393	1,614,724,828
Intangible Assets	6,393,000	5,625,154
Right-of-use Assets	15,786,955	17,447,627
Total Non-Current Assets	1,659,654,127	1,646,819,874
TOTAL ASSETS	1,757,765,709	1,729,836,237
Current Liabilities		
Trade & Other Payables	38,244,885	54,772,570
Trust Funds & Deposits	24,948,269	8,589,222
Provisions	16,079,142	16,575,145
Interest-Bearing Loans & Borrowings	500,648	639,596
Lease liabilities	1,618,976	2,211,301
Total Current Liabilities	81,391,920	82,787,834
Non Current Liabilities		
Lease liabilities	14,543,140	15,634,354
Provisions	9,178,152	8,832,000
Interest-Bearing Loans & Borrowings	18,097,644	-
Total Non Current Liabilities	41,818,936	24,466,354
TOTAL LIABILITIES	123,210,856	107,254,187
NET ASSETS	1,634,554,853	1,622,582,050
Equity		
Accumulated Surplus	645,777,718	645,628,718
Reserves	976,804,332	976,953,332
Current Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	11,972,803	-
TOTAL EQUITY	1,634,554,853	1,622,582,050

Statement of Cash Flows

For the financial year to date 31 March 2025

	31-Mar-25	30-Jun-24
	YTD \$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	ý	7
Rates and charges	171,977	168,769
Statutory fees and fines	3,095	2,266
User fees (inclusive of GST)	5,283	6,630
Grants - operating (inclusive of GST)	31,579	16,679
Grants - capital (inclusive of GST)	3,471	6,707
Contributions (inclusive of GST)	52	3,681
Interest received	958	2,961
Trust funds and deposits	(5,171)	8,374
Other receipts (inclusive of GST)	1,631	5,365
Net GST refund	11,461	18,323
Materials and Services (inclusive of GST)	(104,197)	(143,889)
Employee costs	(60,773)	(79,565)
Other payments	(7,589)	(11,692)
Net cash provided by operating activities	51,777	4,609
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(43,552)	(71,341)
Payments for intangibles	(1,762)	(710)
Proceeds from property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	327	1,134
Payment for investments	-	(2,000)
Net cash used in investing activities	(44,987)	(72,917)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Finance costs	(393)	(101)
Proceeds from loans	20,448	-
Repayment of borrowings	(2,489)	(2,472)
Investments in associates	-	-
Interest paid - lease	(657)	(742)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(1,684)	(2,285)
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	15,225	(5,600)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	22,015	(73,908)
Opening Bank Balance	24,742	91,150
Closing Bank Balance	46,757	17,242

Income Statement Variance Analysis

a. Operating Income year to date:

	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Variance Fav / (Unfav)		Annual Budget
	\$	\$	\$	%	\$
Income					
Rates - General	135,670	136,886	1,216	0.9	180,893
Rates - Special Rates and Charges	943	1,734	791	83.8	1,258
Statutory Fees and Fines	2,821	2,051	(770)	(27.3)	3,761
User Fees	4,829	5,037	208	4.3	6,394
Contributions - Cash	2,281	1,516	(765)	(33.5)	3,113
Grants - Capital	15,847	12,592	(3,255)	(20.5)	21,129
Grants - Operating	22,346	32,211	9,865	44.1	29,250
Other Revenue	1,178	1,622	444	37.7	1,715
Interest	1,801	824	(978)	(54.3)	2,402
Contributions - Non Monetary Assets	2,250	1,541	(709)	(31.5)	3,000
Total Income	189,966	196,014	6,047	3.2	252,916

Significant variance commentary:

Rates and Charges (\$1.2m favourable YTD)

- Waste charges \$0.6m higher than budget due to resident selection of waste collection options.
- Interest on rates \$0.8m above budget due to level of rates arrears. This was budgeted as \$0.4m YTD in the interest income line.
- Supplementary rates \$0.4m less than budget due to the timing of supplementary valuations and issuing of supplementary rates notices.

Rates - Special Rates and Charges (\$0.8m favourable YTD)

- Additional income of \$0.5m for Special Charge Schemes originally budgeted in the prior year.
- Timing difference of \$0.3m YTD due to phasing of income recognition compared to budget.

Statutory Fees and Fines (\$0.8m unfavourable YTD)

- Planning fees \$0.4m lower than budget due to a lower volume of planning applications than anticipated.
- Food Premises & Surveillance Program \$0.3m less than budget YTD. This varies based on the level of enforcement action required.

User Fees (\$0.2m favourable YTD)

- Container Deposit Scheme income \$0.5m YTD which wasn't budgeted.
- Animal Management Program fees \$0.4m less than budget YTD mostly due to timing difference compared to budget.
- Cultural Facility venue hire and related income \$1.2m higher than budget due to additional usage of facilities.

<u>Contributions – Cash (\$0.8m unfavourable YTD)</u>

• Public open space contributions \$0.6m less than budget. The quantum and timing of these contributions are dependent on subdivision activity.

Page 191 6

Grants - Capital (\$3.3m unfavourable YTD)

- Preparing Australian Communities / GSF grants capital portions \$0.6m less than budget however this is offset by the operating grant portions being significantly higher than budget.
- Other capital grants differences to budget due to timing of project delivery (including Roads for the Community Initiative \$1.0m higher than budget YTD, Yarra Valley Trail Northern Loop \$1.2m less than budget YTD, Morrison Recreation Reserve District Playspace \$0.7m less than budget YTD, Maddens Lane, Gruyere \$0.7m less than budget YTD)

Grants - Operating (\$9.9m favourable YTD)

- Commonwealth Government Financial Assistance Grants \$4.5m higher than budget YTD due to timing of grant receipt being different to budgeted.
- Storm recoveries \$1.5m, as current year storm events are not budgeted (\$4.7m recovery), and prior year claim submission outcomes (\$3.3m recovery reversal).
- Preparing Australian Communities grant \$1.9m higher than budgeted due to increased spending in final year
 of the grant offsetting underspend in prior year. This is also partially offset by lower Capex portion noted
 above.
- \$1.2m of grants originally budgeted in the prior year but received in the current year.

Interest (\$1.0m unfavourable YTD)

- Interest on investments \$0.6m less than budget reflective of lower cash holdings due to the timing of borrowing drawdowns and the timing of cash outflows.
- Interest on rates budgeted at \$0.4m YTD now reported in Rates income.

<u>Contributions – Non Monetary Assets (\$0.7m unfavourable YTD)</u>

• Assets gifted to council as part of development activity are \$0.7m less than budgeted YTD.

Page 192 7

b. Operating Expenditure year to date:

	YTD YTD Budget Actual		YTD Variance Fav / (Unfav)		Annual Budget
	\$	\$	\$	%	\$
Expenses					
Employee Benefits	60,263	60,811	(549)	(0.9)	80,230
Materials and Services	80,202	85,091	(4,888)	(6.1)	104,814
Bad and Doubtful Debts	48	2	46	95.5	64
Depreciation and Amortisation	29,690	30,172	(483)	(1.6)	39,586
Other Expenses	6,899	6,969	(70)	(1.0)	8,906
Finance Costs (Interest)	1,159	1,139	20	1.7	1,546
Total Expenses	178,262	184,185	(5,924)	(3.3)	235,146

Significant variance commentary:

Employee Benefits (\$0.5m unfavourable)

• EBA salary increase of 2.75% compared to budget of 2.25%. This increase is tied to the annual rates cap percentage set by the Victorian Government.

Materials and Services (\$4.9m unfavourable)

- Storm recovery expenses of \$7.4m from 3 YTD events this is partially offset by grant recovery income.
- Additional trees expenditure of \$2.9m due to increase in requests due to storms and safety responses.
- Additional agency/temporary staff to cover vacant positions (\$1.2m) and Storm & Preparing Australian Communities work requirements (\$0.2m).
- Preparing Australian Communities \$1.3m of additional operational expenditure with grant ending. This is fully recovered by grant income.
- Building maintenance \$1.8m less than budget YTD predominantly due to less reactive maintenance demand YTD.
- Waste collection and disposal costs \$1.4m less than budget YTD including a timing difference of \$0.6m related to timing of hard waste collection.
- Delayed timing of landfill site works has resulted in decreased spend of \$1.1m YTD. This work is reflective of EPA requirements.
- Bushlands maintenance, climate and nature programs are \$1.2m less than budget YTD due to seasonality but are expected to be in line with budget for the full year.
- Motor vehicle fleet costs \$0.5m less than budget due to savings in fuel, servicing and registrations costs compared to budget.

Depreciation and Amortisation (\$0.5m unfavourable)

Reflective of the timing of capitalisation of assets.

Page 193 8

Statement of Capital Works

For the financial year to date 31 March 2025

Asset class	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Varian Fav / (Unfa		Annual Budget
	\$	\$	\$	%	\$
Infrastructure - Asset Management	600	3,757	(3,157)	(526.1)	5,509
Infrastructure - Bridges	349	142	207	59.2	466
Infrastructure - Community & Recreation	4,988	3,211	1,777	35.6	6,651
Infrastructure - Drainage	2,590	1,102	1,487	57.4	3,453
Infrastructure - Footpaths & Cycleways	1,434	852	582	40.6	1,912
Infrastructure - Off-street Carparks	285	171	114	39.9	380
Infrastructure - Open Space	11,324	6,768	4,556	40.2	15,099
Infrastructure - Roads	13,662	11,947	1,715	12.6	18,216
P&E - Computers & Comms	1,780	1,817	(36)	(2.0)	2,374
P&E - Fixtures, Fittings & Furniture	14	-	14	100.0	19
P&E - Plant, Machinery & Equipment	1,835	1,224	611	33.3	2,447
Property - Buildings	10,580	9,675	905	8.6	14,107
Property - Land	-	103	(103)	-	-
TOTAL	49,443	40,769	8,674	17.5	70,633

Significant variance Commentary:

• Infrastructure - Asset Management (\$3.2m unfavourable):

YTD Variance due to a change in treatment to the Capitalisation of salaries. Overall, the balance is tracking on budget for the year.

• Infrastructure - Community & Recreation (\$1.8m favourable):

YTD Variance due to delays in expenditure for Morrison Reserve Mountain Bike track and \$2m in funding for Chirnside Urban Park already expended in FY24.

• Infrastructure – Drainage (\$1.5m favourable):

General delays in projects including Britton Road, Station Street and North Ave. Cobden Crescent has been carried back from FY26 to FY25 replace Britton Road.

• Infrastructure - Footpaths and Cycleways (\$0.6m favourable):

General delays across the whole program of Footpath new and upgrades

• Infrastructure - Open Space (\$4.6m favourable):

Delays in Yarra Valley Trail and Warburton Mountain Bike Destination with funding to be Carried Forward into FY26.

• Infrastructure – Roads (\$1.7m favourable):

Delays - Edward Rd/Paynes Rd Roundabout, Chirnside Pk (Blackspot and R2R) and Tainton Street and Railway Parade, Wandin North (RFCI)

• P&E - Plant, Machinery & Equipment (\$0.6m favourable):

Delays in expenditure within Council's fleet renewal program

• Property – Buildings (\$0.9m favourable):

Delays in Aquatics Renewal for relining of the Yarra Centre.

In summary: There were the delays across majority of the projects in the planning and design phase, which were generally caused from longer than anticipated external approvals during the design phase and permit phase's. Therefore, resulting in the delivery of capital works being behind the budget.

Page 194 9

Treasury

a. Loans

Financial Institution	Loan Term	Maturity Date	Interest Rate	Loan Amount \$	Current Balance \$
TCV	5	21/08/2029	4.295%	15,000,000	13,639,314
TCV	5	21/08/2029	4.755%	5,448,000	4,958,978
Total			-	20,448,000	18,598,292

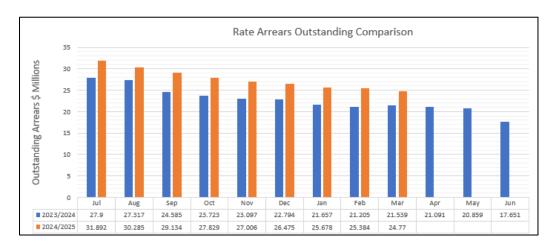
b. Investments

Account Name	Balance \$'000s	Interest Rate
Operating Cash Accounts Cash Management (Westpac Operating Account)	43,963	4.45%
Cash Management (Westpac Operating Account) Cash Management (Commonwealth)	2,380 414	4.55% 0.01%
Cash Management (Commonwealth)	46,757	0.01%

Rates Analysis

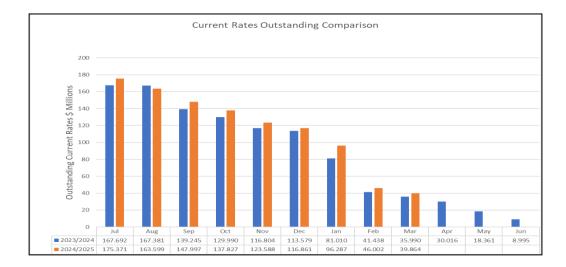
Rate Arrears

Rate arrears compared to the same period last year has increased by 13.02%



Current Rates Outstanding Comparison.

Current compared to the same period last year has increased by 7.23%



Grant Activity

The following table provides a summary of grant funding greater than \$50,000 received for Council activities during the period from 1 July 2024 to 31 March 2025, including unearned income funds.

Project Description Recurrent Operating Grants Commission Funding Local Roads Funding United Author Care Search Cacces Supported Play Grant Operations MCH Coordination EM Major Grants EM Major Grants EM Major Grants Supported Play Grave Operations More Care Search Access January Care Search Access Acces			
Page		Actuals	
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SPECIAL RATE AND CHARGE SCHEME POLICY

Report Author: Executive Officer - Design and Delivery
Responsible Officer: Director Built Environment & Infrastructure

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

Yarra Ranges Council manages a large road network which is valued at \$389M in replacement value.

The extent of the unsealed network, along with community expectations of Council's service levels and approach to sealing, requires an overarching management plan.

This report outlines updates to Council's Special Rate and Charge Scheme Policy based on the following amendments:

- Seal roads under a proactive program and petition basis.
- Re introduction of the landowner ceiling for road construction projects.

The contributions to road construction projects funded by the Special Charge Scheme proactive sealing program initiative are proposed to be considered with a landowner ceiling for projects at \$20,000 per development unit. Petition based programs are proposed to be considered based on landowner's contributing 80% of the funds and the Council contribution a standard 20% of the funding in accordance with the Policy.

The overall funding and approval of the Special Charge Schemes are to be subject to the annual budget process and Capital Funding allocations based on funding sources such as Roads to Recovery (R2R) program.

The policy document has undergone a review by the Council's legal representatives. It has been modernized and rewritten as a formal policy document, now accompanied by separate guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Endorse the Yarra Ranges Council Special Rate and Charge Scheme Policy 2025.
- 2. Note the proposed approach to funding road sealing based on additional funding received from the Federal Road to Recovery (R2R) Grant 2024 to 2029.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Councillors provided feedback on key concerns and/or considerations to inform the development of an unsealed road management plan at Forum on 21 November 2023 and 17 August 2024.

DISCUSSION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek proposed Council endorsement for the updated Special Rate and Charge Scheme Policy, based on the following amendments:

- Seal roads under a proactive program and petition basis.
- Re introduction of the landowner ceiling for road construction projects.

The funding and approval of the Special Charge Schemes are to be subject to the annual budget process and Capital Funding allocations based on funding sources such as Roads to Recovery (R2R) program.

The proposed funding model for each project is subject to Council approval, with the opportunity to utilise Road to Recovery as part of the annual Capital Works Expenditure process.

Background

Yarra Ranges Council manages a large road network which is valued at \$389M in replacement value. The network consists of unsealed roads.

The extent of the unsealed network, along with community expectations of Council's service levels and approach to sealing, requires an overarching management plan.

Experience has indicated that most landowners and road users prefer the sealed surfacing, however cost of construction and funding mechanisms remains the issue.

Special Charge Scheme Policy (Special Rate and Special Charge Policy):

Council's Special Charge Scheme Policy has been re-titled Special Rate and Special Charge Policy to better reflect the legislative terminology within the Local Government Act 1989 ('the Act')

The Local Government Act 1989 ('the Act') enables councils to levy a special rate, a special charge, or a combination of these, to help pay for any council service or activity that specifically benefits a particular group of property owners.

Special Rate and Special Charge Policy recognises the need to achieve the best value of funds allocated by Council towards infrastructure improvement works. The Policy has a focus of ensuring that a fair, reasonable, and consistent approach is maintained in the process of engaging landowners and landowner groups in contributing funds towards infrastructure improvement works through the implementation by Council of a scheme in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act).

Currently, Council and landowners form a partnership to fund construction of unsealed roads utilising the Special Charge provisions of the Act.

Ministerial Guidelines associated with the Act require a Council contribution towards a Special Charge Scheme where the works or services will provide tangible and direct benefits to the broader community, other than those landowners determined as being liable for the special rate or charge.

To ensure that the broader community benefits from road improvement works, the Council uses a specific ratio to determine contributions based on the comparison of local traffic use to through traffic use of the road. The following guidelines apply:

Contribution Ratios:

Through Traffic < 20%: • Council contributes 20% of the cost.

Local traffic contributes 80% of the cost.

Through Traffic > 20%:

• For every 3% increase in through traffic volume

above 20%, the Council's contribution

increases by 2%.

Traffic Assumptions:

- Each Development Unit is assumed to generate six trips per day on the road.
- For community or commercial facilities, a study will be conducted to establish the actual number of trips per day.

Special Charge Scheme Funding Cap (Contribution Ceiling)

Prior to the Roads for Community Initiative (Federal Funded subsidised program) the 2018 Special Charge Scheme Policy, landowner contributions towards road construction projects were capped at \$15,500 per Development Unit.

In 2016, the cap was fixed at \$15,500 per Development Unit after 16 years of indexation from a base of \$10,000 in 2000.

In bushland and rural areas landowners may be disadvantaged by the longer road lengths to be constructed and the smaller number of larger blocks, limiting the ability to share the cost of the works. This results in higher contributions for landowners in these areas. Therefore, to make the participation in a scheme more affordable and desirable, a ceiling amount has been applied to the apportioned costs.

Council Guidelines may include when and how the ceiling will apply and how it will be applied to offset existing Council or Landowner contributions, noting there is no legal obligation to apply the cap in every relevant Scheme, this is still at Councils discretion.

Council's future funding of Special Charge Schemes should consider the option of incentivising sealing roads that are identified and ranked as candidate roads for sealing. It is proposed based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) (approx. 16% *over 6 years) and increases in construction cost measured by Producer Price Index for Road Construction (approx. 22%**over 6 years) that a ceiling be re-introduced at \$20,000 from \$15,500.

In addition to the two indices that outline cost increases, Council's Tendering process has seen increased pricing project to project from an average of \$1,100 per lineal metres in 2019 for an urban construction to between \$1,350 to \$1,900 per lineal metres in 2024. An increase between 23%-73% in costs over a 5-year period.

Council's policy of placing a ceiling on landowner contributions for road improvement Special Charge Schemes, is based on a systematic and strategic approach to seal roads within Council's unsealed road network.

Generally, the maximum ceiling amount for projects undertaken is \$20,000 per Development Unit, reviewed annually as part of Council's budget process. In cases where this general maximum of \$20,000 might be exceeded, Council may consider the overall contribution to the Scheme, ensuring that its total contribution does not exceed 40% of the combined Landowner and Council contributions to the Scheme.

Having regard to the limited resources available for road improvement projects, it is proposed that Council's contribution to Petitions should be limited to existing policy guidelines of 80% Landowner and 20% Council Contribution, as subsidising the level of landowner contributions to these projects is not sustainable.

The funding mix should also consider scenarios whereby landowners can elect to pay the full amount of the scheme (i.e. 100%), with delivery by Council to the appropriate standards.

Pro-active Program - Candidate roads for upgrade to sealed.

Following the removal of the RCI Federal Funding discussions were held on how to continue to offer and progress sealing of roads via the Special Charge Scheme process.

Roads for the establishment of a pro-active program are proposed to be assessed based on the following criteria:

Table 2

Category	Description	Weighting (%)
Properties	Abuttal density. Properties that will receive a benefit and can share the cost of works	30
Community & Social factors	Including landowner support from questionnaires or petitions and completed designs from the RCI (Roads for the Community Initiative) program	20
Socio Economic Factors	Roads within industrial or commercial businesses area and/ or will complete a strategic link or local network.	10
Maintenance Costs/Requests	Including drainage issues that impact the road condition	25
Traffic Hierarchy & Volumes	Average and peak numbers of vehicles	5
Road Access	Accessibility with consideration to other access routes and dead-end roads.	5
Environmental / Planning Overlays	Bushfire Management Overlay (BM) – bushfire risk Erosion Management Overly (EMO) – landslip risk Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO) – flooding risk Special Building Overlay (SBO) – flooding risk	5
Total		100

In addition to discussing the assessment criteria and assigning weightings, the standard of road construction and the determination of when each standard is appropriate are considered within the Special Charge Scheme process.

The establishment of a pro-active roads program is one approach to sealing roads, Officers understand that Petitions will still be received, and Council will continue to Advocate for road sealing programs.

Figure 1: Unsealed Road Sealing Prioritisation



Petition Based Schemes

Currently there are a total of 24 Petitions covering 34 roads registered to be considered for Schemes. Several of these petitions have been received recently

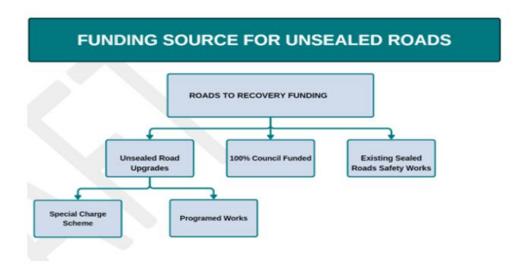
where landowners of a number of roads have sought to have their road constructed through a Special Charge Scheme following the cessation of the Roads for Community Initiative (RCI).

It is proposed that Council develop a basic standard of works and cost estimate for the roads. A survey of landowners would be carried out. If support is received from landowners, the project would then be referred to the Capital Expenditure Program for consideration of funding in a future year, based on the Special Charge Scheme process.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The Capital Expenditure funding for the sealing of roads is proposed to come from the Roads to Recovery (R2R) Budget 2024 to 2029 allocation which has recently been increased from an approximate budget figure of \$10.7 M to \$18.88 M per annum for the next 5 years. It is proposed that the \$8M (\$1.6 M per annum) from the uplift in budget be allocated to road sealing projects.

Figure 2: Funding Source for Unsealed Roads



The Financial commentary within this report is consistent with Council's Asset Management Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan. It assumes current funding and service levels are satisfactory.

The allocation of the proposed funding uplift of \$8M over 5 years to seal roads, is subject to annual budget process and agreement. There are a number of scenarios to be considered as part of the future Pro-active and Petition approach.

A Pro-active approach is to work through a catalogue road in a systematic order, or alternatively consider a balance approach by Ward, Urban Growth Area and / or Proximity (<800 m) to Township Centres Proposed Works Program (2024 to 2029 – 5-year Scenario).

The landowner/Council funding mix for future Special Charge Scheme Road construction projects will be reviewed to achieve a balanced approach to deliver and justifiably fund projects across the entire municipality.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The Unsealed Road Management Framework guides management of existing assets and identifies strategic opportunities for future projects.

This Unsealed Road Management Framework aligns with Council's 'Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places' and 'Protected and Enhances Natural Environment' Strategic Objectives, Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, Yarra Ranges Council's Asset Management Plan, and outlines Yarra Ranges Council stance on facilitating high quality sustainable development.

Over the past four years Council's focus has been on delivering the Roads for the Community Initiative (RCI) which provided the opportunity to seal a significant number of unsealed roads within the municipality.

Under the RCI program - the Federal Government was set to provide \$150M in funds, but this has since been reduced to \$47.7M. The reduction in funding has resulted in many roads being removed from the program which now contains 32km of road, or just 4% of the unsealed network.

The reduction in the 9-year RCI program means that, unless advocacy efforts are successful, Council will need to provide service to the community through these unsealed road assets for the foreseeable future.

The Special Rates and Charge Scheme Policy has been comprehensively reviewed and updated by Council's legal representatives to ensure its content is accurate and current. Over time, the original policy had evolved to include guideline-style content, resulting in a document that was a blend of both policy and guidelines. To address this, the policy has now been reworked to clearly reflect a policy-based approach, focusing on high-level principles and Council's strategic intent.

In addition, the supporting guidelines have been rewritten and separated from the policy document. This ensures that the policy and guidelines are now distinct, with the policy outlining the mandatory requirements and the guidelines providing practical advice and operational detail. This modernised structure enhances clarity, governance, and usability for both Council and the community.

RELEVANT LAW

Council, as a road authority, explains how it manages the roads for which it has a duty to maintain through a Road Management Plan, which specifically talks about road inspections, maintenance, and repair.

During the review of the Road Management Plan (RMP), the need for a strategic condition assessment of unsealed roads was identified. This assessment has been

adopted and incorporated into the inspection regime with other assets to be delivered this year and then every 3 years ongoing.

Council also provides a register of roads within the municipality, as required by the Act. This register lists roads that have been identified within the municipality, providing a road classification, and listing the authority responsible for the roadway, including when the responsible authority is a private entity rather than a local government or state Government entity. Council is responsible to maintain the roads listed on this register as public roads and required for public use.

The Road Management Plan responds to the requirements of the Road Management Act 2004 and conveys Council's commitment to the community in relation to the inspection, repair and maintenance of road and road related infrastructure.

The Unsealed Road Management Plan was developed to outline the specific maintenance objectives and is complimentary to the existing RMP 2021.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The presence of unsealed roads results in various economic, social and environmental impacts, the significance of which varies for each individual road.

Economic Implications

The identification of strategic unsealed roads with a higher priority for upgrade works may result in the need for Council to allocate a greater proportion of funds to the construction of these roads above the standard rates. This could be offset by roads which are not identified as a higher priority receiving less funding.

An evaluation of the benefits of constructing specific unsealed roads will be undertaken to establish whether the desired benefits (e.g. reduced maintenance, improved access) are achieved after a designated time period. This could feed into future reviews of the criteria for the strategy.

Social Implications

Special Charge Schemes for road construction require sizeable contributions from abutting landowners. These contributions can lead to social and economic impacts for affected landowners. Council's Policy notes that those landowners with a demonstrated financial hardship may apply for assistance in accordance with Council's Rate Recovery and Financial Hardship Policy.

Environmental Implications

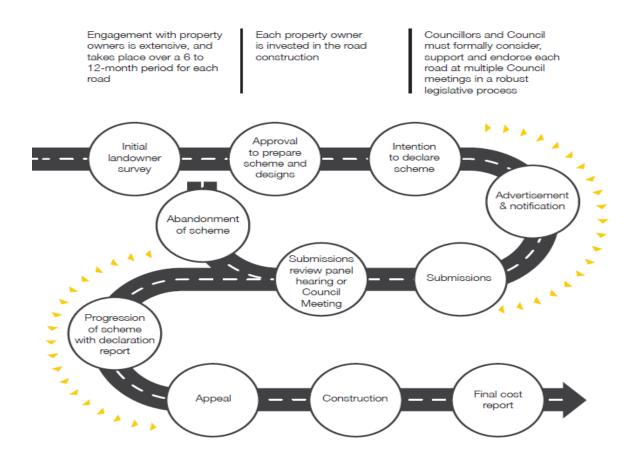
The content of this report does not lead to Environmental Impacts, however projects that may be delivered into the future as an outcome of this policy discussion will be considered in the context of how they integrate with the local environment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Internal consultation has occurred across the Infrastructure Services Department, including staff involved in daily local area traffic management, road design and construction and road maintenance of the Yarra Ranges Road network.

Council's process for initiating a Special Charge Scheme includes extensive consultation with landowners. It is proposed that Council's normal approach in liaising with landowner groups will occur in developing proposed Special Charge Schemes where consultation will occur with abutting owners to ensure that there is majority support for their involvement in the project prior to the statutory process being implemented to levy a Special Charge.

Process of IMPLEMENTATION



COLLABORATION. INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The update of the Special Rate and Charge Scheme Policy would inform and maximise Council's investment and address the need for strategic direction across this area.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Construction of roads under a Special Rate and Charge Scheme approach would provide the following benefits/risk reduction to landowners:

- Continued and safer vehicular access to and from properties abutting the road.
- Improved stormwater drainage runoff control directed towards the road from abutting properties, and protection of low side properties from stormwater runoff from the road.
- Enhanced physical and environmental amenity for abutting properties.

If the proposed construction of a road does not proceed, reports to Council identify whether an unacceptable or unmanageable risk would be experienced by Council.

KEY UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS TO POLICY

The revised Special Rate and Charge Scheme (SCS) Policy 2025 document includes several key changes and updates:

Nature of the Document:

- The document is now more in the nature of a "Policy" document.
- It covers all schemes, not just infrastructure schemes, although infrastructure schemes remain the majority focus.
- The Policy title has been amended from Special Charge Scheme Policy to Special Rate and Charge Scheme (SCS) Policy 2025.

Flexibility:

- The revised policy gives back flexibility by removing extra tests that the previous policy imposed regarding the percentage required in the "vote" to support a scheme.
- It makes provisions for non-binding Council "Guidelines".

Ceiling Increase:

• The ceiling for the special charge and rate scheme for roads has been proposed to increase from \$15,500 (in 2018) to \$20,000.

Minimum Response Requirement:

Clarification on what constitutes a significant majority for a scheme to progress.
 For example, in a scheme with 10 properties, the minimum response and majority needed are specified.

Level of Support:

- The Act requires notice to property owners affected and if more than 50% of all properties that are affected object the Scheme cannot proceed.
- The Council Policy has (as policy) additional considerations in relation to landowner support. These Council measures are not mandatory, rather they assist consideration.
- Road and Footpath Improvement Schemes there is a preference for a support level of greater than 50% of affected landowners, in order for the project to be referred for consideration of inclusion within Council's Capital Works Expenditure Program.

Drainage Apportionment:

 The community expects the Council to cover 100% of drainage costs, but the policy clarifies that property owners who receive a 'special benefit' from specific infrastructure works or services may be charged.

Small Second Dwellings:

• The concept of "Small second dwellings" has been added, with a suggested contribution percentage of 0.3, similar to the 0.2 for B&B rooms.

<u>Federal Funding Reference – Roads for Community Initiative (RCI):</u>

• The reference to Federal funding has been removed from the policy document but reference retained with the Guidelines document. The Guidelines outline that if, this or similar funding is obtained in the future, similar modified Schemes, with a greater Council contribution may be considered.

Cost of Works:

 Clarification on how the reduced cost of works should be apportioned, ensuring that individual payments do not increase if properties are removed.

Process for Establishing a Special Charge Scheme:

 Detailed steps for initiating, surveying, reporting, and resolving objections to a special charge scheme are outlined

Policy Review:

 The Policy has a review period of every 2 years with the added recommendation for review within 12 months following the appointment of a new Council.

Guidelines for Infrastructure Special Rates and Charge Schemes:

 The Guidelines for Infrastructure Special Rates and Charge Schemes are developed as a separate, internally approved operational document to provide practical direction and support the consistent application of the Policy.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Special Rate and Charge Scheme Policy 2025



Yarra Ranges Council Special Rate and Charge Scheme Policy 2025

Version:	1.0
Approved by Council/ELT:	May 2025
Review Date:	May 2027
Policy Owner:	Manager Design and Delivery & Manager Infrastructure Services (Operations)
Applicable to:	Built Environment and Infrastructure; Directorate & Planning and Sustainable Futures Directorate staff

Acknowledgment of Country

Yarra Ranges Council (Council) acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

Yarra Ranges Community Vision 2036

The Yarra Ranges Community Vision 2036 has been developed to describe the communities and Council's aspirations for the future of the municipality. It's based on input from over 1,000 community members and reflects the local communities aspirations for the municipality.

Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we care for Country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how balanced growth makes this the best place in the world.

What We Want to Achieve

Council has five goals to describe what we are working towards and how we want Yarra Ranges to be in the future. These goals have been developed in response to our communities priorities and the big issues facing Yarra Ranges. All policies and activities completed by the organisation contribute to one or more of these goals.



Connected and Healthy Communities

Communities are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive and socially well connected. Quality services are accessible to everyone.



Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places

Quality facilities and infrastructure meets current and future needs. Places are well planned and are hubs of activity that foster wellbeing, creativity and innovation.



Protected & Enhanced Natural Environment

A healthier environment for future generations.



Vibrant Economy, Agriculture and Tourism

Our tourism, agriculture, health, manufacturing and other industries are leading and dynamic. Strong investment and attraction underpins sustainable economic growth and job creation.



High Performing Organisation

An innovative, responsive organisation that listens and delivers quality, value for money services to our community.

1. Purpose

This Policy relates to "Special Rate and Charge Schemes" for infrastructure improvements and economic development. Such Schemes allow for the recovery of part or all of the cost of works and actions undertaken by or at Council direction to provide the Special Benefit.

This policy is not legally binding but should be followed by Council officers and Council itself in considering and implementing Schemes unless there is good and documented cause to do otherwise.

2. Scope

This policy provides direction for the process, implementation and delivery of works, services and special purpose Schemes under the *Local Government Act 1989* and related regulatory framework.

Such Schemes providing funding to the Council through the recovery of costs, or part of the costs, from property owners where the works, services or special purpose Scheme will provide a "Special Benefit" to those properties.

Schemes may generally include, but are not limited to:

- infrastructure works, including but not limited to:
 - o new sealed roads:
 - sealing unsealed roads;
 - o traffic management;
 - kerb and channel;
 - o drainage;
 - o footpaths;
 - o lighting; and
 - o township improvements
- marketing, promotion and economic development.

This Policy Outlines the decision-making process for Officers and Council both in determining Special Benefit and when determined, implementing a Scheme to provide that benefit to those properties; and provides guidance in determining when the Council will contribute to the cost of such Schemes both when there is a broader community benefit and when it is fair and appropriate to do so.

3. Definitions

Act	means the Local Government Act 1989
Council	means Yarra Ranges Shire Council and /or Yarra Range Council
Council Guidelines	means the Guidelines created and adopted at a Department level to guide the investigation and implementation of potential Schemes
Development Unit	is a measure used to apportion costs among properties in a Special Rate and Charge Scheme for infrastructure improvements. Properties are typically assigned one development unit, but this can vary based on factors like property use, potential for development, and abuttal to the works.
Landowner	is someone who owns property that may be included in a Special Rate and Charge Scheme. These schemes involve contributions from property owners for infrastructure improvements that provide a special benefit to their properties. The general term Landowner is the "person liable to pay" as per the Act and refers to individuals or entities who are required to pay special rates or special charges.
Ministerial Guideline	means the Special Rates and Charges Ministerial Guideline 2004
Policy	means this to Special Rate and Charge Schemes" for infrastructure improvements and economic development.
Scheme	means a Special Rate or Special Charge scheme carried out under the provisions of the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>
Special Benefit	means a benefit received by the property (and through that the benefitting property owners) included in the Scheme. The Act and Ministerial Guidelines define "special benefit" for properties liable under a proposed Scheme.
VCAT	means the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Table 1. Definitions

4. Policy Statement

Yarra Ranges Council is committed to:

- Work in partnership with property owners and businesses to improve Community infrastructure through the implementation of Schemes.
- Ensure a fair, reasonable and consistent approach is applied to properties and businesses involved in Schemes.
- Seeking best (or better) value
- Maintain fair, reasonable and consistent approaches in engaging individual and groups of property owners and other stakeholders.

5. Special Charges and Special Rates: Policy and Implementation

The Act does not separately define a "special charge" versus a "special rate", noting:

- for infrastructure projects the term special charge will generally be used, where the liability of properties will be based on the characteristics of and benefit to, those properties; and
- the term special rate will be appropriate for projects such as township marketing or economic development promotion proposals.

This policy assists the implementation of schemes in accordance with the Act, decision of the VCAT and the courts, and other policy and direction of government. It specifies Council direction and preference but does not create fixed rules or legal requirements.

Council has established procedural guidelines to assist in the implementation of Special Rate and Charge Schemes. These guidelines provide practical explanations and direction for implementing schemes. Different guidelines may be adopted for different types of schemes, such as the more common Infrastructure Schemes.

The following guidelines establish the considerations in implementation and adherence to the policy.

5.1 Scheme Investigation and Implementation Procedures

Investigation

A Scheme investigation may be initiated by Council officers, Landowner requests to Council, or requests from other public bodies. Council officers will develop, maintain and update a list of projects, prioritised based on need and risk or other factors. For example, inclusion in Council's Capital Expenditure Program.

Requests by property owners for Schemes where the Scheme involves a larger number of properties may see Council request, from property owners, a petition, to test the level of Landowner support. Schemes, with a small number of owners, which are effectively voluntary, may see Council seek written consent from every participating landowner. Investigation of potential Schemes will occur with a focus on community engagement, evidence, risk, needs and public support basis.

Level of support

The level of Landowner support, together with demonstratable benefits of a Scheme will impact decisions to proceed with Schemes. An effective consultation process must be undertaken to ensure the appropriate level of support.

Legislated Support Levels

The Act (at section 163B) requires notice to property owners affected and if more than 50% of all properties that are affected object the Scheme cannot proceed.

Note – this 50% requirement does not apply:

- If Council pays for more than one third (34% or greater) the Scheme cost;
- If Council declares it is a drainage Scheme required for public health reasons; or
- The Scheme is exempt by regulation (no such regulation yet exists).

Council Support Options

The Council has added (as policy) additional considerations in relation to landowner support. These Council measures are not mandatory, rather they assist consideration.

For Road and Footpath Improvement Schemes there is a preference for a support level of greater than 50% of affected landowners, in order for the project to be referred for consideration of inclusion within Council's Capital Works Expenditure Program.

5.2 Special benefit

The Act and Ministerial Guidelines refer to "special benefit" that may apply to properties liable for a proposed Scheme. Each project should be assessed on its merits to identify special benefit to landowners involved in accordance with the Ministerial Guidelines.

The Ministerial Guidelines state:

A special benefit is considered to be provided to a property if the proposed works or services will provide a benefit that is additional to or greater than benefit to other properties.

···..is not necessary for the benefit to be actually used by the particular owners or occupiers at a particular time in order for a special benefit to be attributed···

A number of principles apply to the concept of what constitutes a special benefit which are drawn out of past legal decisions. Those include:

- The word "special" does not mean that the benefit is the exceptional or extraordinary, that the relevant property actually obtains a benefit;
- That the benefit to be considered is the benefit to the property, not to the present occupiers or owners of the land;
- The present expressed intentions of the owners of the land not to take advantage of any benefit in question does not deny that the benefit exists;
- That the Council should consider the potential uses of the relevant land not just its current use when deciding whether there is a special benefit; and
- The decision maker should consider the potential uses when deciding the relevant contribution or proportion to be levied against the land
- Each project should be assessed on its merit to identify the special benefit to landowners involved having regard to the Act, Ministerial Guidelines, this Policy and any Guidelines adopted within Council.

5.3 Apportionment of Scheme Costs

Council has an obligation under the Act and the Ministerial Guidelines to establish a fair and reasonable method of apportionment of costs associated with a Scheme.

Council should develop in its Guidelines additional tools to explain and assess the appropriate levels of Landowner and Council contribution.

Objections to Schemes together with rights of review in VCAT exist. Generally, it is not sufficient for the Landowner to demonstrate an alternate method of apportionment could have been used but rather, to demonstrate that the method used is wrong or unreasonable.

Non-rateable and Crown land

Section 221(3) of the Act identifies how non-rateable and crown land should be treated. This section allows non-rateable land to be included in a special rate or charge, however, gives exemption to Crown land.

The Council can still choose not to include non-rateable land. In instances where Crown land is involved in a proposed Scheme, and when property owners may be disadvantaged it is open to the Council to consider a contribution itself towards the Scheme. This is an option, not a legal requirement.

Council contribution for benefit received by Council

A Council contribution may be appropriate under the following circumstances:

- For a Council owned property included in a Scheme extent of contribution based upon the existing or potential equivalent benefit received, relative to other properties;
- For modification or reinstatement of existing infrastructure affected by the proposed Scheme project;
- On behalf of a non-contributing Government Authority which has a property within the boundary of the Scheme, (for example crown land); and
- For works included in the project that are for principally for the benefit of the broader community outside the area of the Scheme.

5.4 Ministerial Guidelines

The Ministerial Guidelines provide community benefit and assessment and should be consulted by officers of Council in assessing such benefit to which Council may contribute.

5.5 Council incentive contribution

Council may contribute as an incentive to landowners and to recognise the benefit to Council of the Scheme.

5.6 Council contribution for broader community benefit

A Council contribution having regard to the broader community benefit will often be warranted.

Council may through its Guidelines (including through suggested ratios) set out guidance for when and how much contribution is appropriate Council contribution defined in this section recognises the benefit to Council and the broader community of the project.

5.7 Landowner contributions

Apportionment methodology may have a number of variations; however, it is preferred to maintain a simplified approach in determining the contributions for each property. All such apportionment applied by Council must accord with the Act and any Ministerial Guidelines.

Council Guidelines will be prepared to assist in the apportionment assessment and method for Schemes.

In apportioning costs amongst properties the following will generally be considered:

- Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme zones and overlays, including tenement provisions if these apply;
- Existing use or development potential of a property.
- Road abuttals to works; and
- Area of a property (generally drainage Schemes).

5.8 Landowner contributions - Additional options/elements

Council may apply various more detailed elements or incentives as part of different Schemes. Some of these may be detailed in the Council Guidelines and may include:

- Rebates for lot consolidation: and/or
- Different rates for mixed land uses.

Such detail or variation must not result in the contribution of other property owners increasing unfairly.

5.9 Voluntary / Privately Funded Upgrades

On occasions, the community may request a scheme, often for road improvements, however, the Council might find for a number of reasons, it is not in a position to contribute to the works and/or fully fund projects upfront. In such cases, the road improvement scheme may proceed on a voluntary basis. This would require that all affected landowners support the project, with the knowledge that the total cost of the works will be calculated and divided among all contributing property owners. Generally, Council will not contribute financially.

The Voluntary/ Privately funded road improvements may be by direct agreement (Including as 173 Agreement under the Planning and Environment Act 1987) and may not be a Scheme at all. The agreement may also be paired with a Special Charge Scheme.

Council may also require as part of the Scheme, or a separate "maintenance" Scheme, that voluntary contributors are levied in relation to ongoing maintenance.

Council Guidelines may provide direction for the evaluation and implementation of arrangements.

5.10 Repayment Period and Financing Costs

As part of the declaration of the Scheme, Council is required to determine the period that the Scheme remains in force. The repayment period of the Scheme is generally adopted as 10 years. In addition, the financing cost is determined by Council for those landowners who wish to pay the contribution over the period of the Scheme.

5.11 Financial Hardship

Property owners experiencing financial hardship may apply for assistance under the **Rate Recovery and Hardship Policy**. In accordance with sections 170 and 171A of the Local Government Act, special circumstances, such as the levying of a Special Charge Scheme, may qualify for assistance under section 3.5.1 (Special Circumstances) of the Hardship Policy.

5.12 Final cost of works

The Act makes provision for costs of the works to be reapportioned using the actual construction costs, including allowance for project management, design, administration and supervision. Surplus funds must be returned to the owner of the contributing property at the time of any refund. Higher costs equal to or greater than 10% may not be recovered from the affected properties, unless a further notice, objection and potential VCAT review opportunity is provided.

5.12 Ceiling amount for a special rate or charge

To make the participation in a Scheme more affordable and desirable, a ceiling amount or cap in contribution may be applied to the landowners' apportioned costs for specified Schemes.

This ceiling applies to individual residential properties. The ceiling does not apply to properties used for commercial or industrial purposes or for properties utilised for home-based industry. Council will contribute for individual Landowner costs above the ceiling (excluding financing costs).

The ceiling amount may be reassessed by Council each year during the process of setting Council's the annual budget and may change without the amendment of this Policy.

Council Guidelines may include when and how the ceiling will apply and how it will be applied to offset existing Council or Landowner contributions, noting there is no legal obligation to apply the cap in every relevant Scheme, this is still at Councils discretion.

Generally, the maximum ceiling amount for projects undertaken is \$20,000 per Development Unit, reviewed annually as part of Council's budget process. In cases where this general maximum of \$20,000 might be exceeded, Council may consider the overall contribution to the Scheme, ensuring that its total contribution does not exceed 40% of the combined Landowner and Council contributions to the Scheme.

6. Related Documents

- Unsealed Roads Management Framework;
- Footpath Prioritisation Framework;
- · Rate Recovery and Hardship Policy;
- · Road Management Plan;
- Stormwater Management Plan

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of this policy will be overseen by the Manager Infrastructure Services (Operations) and Manager Design & Delivery. The Built Environment and Infrastructure Services Department will conduct reviews to assess the effectiveness of the policy and the process. Reporting of these findings will go to the leadership team to review and refine the policy and related guideline if required.

8.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years. From time-to-time circumstances may require minor administrative amendments to be made to this document. Where such an amendment does not materially alter the intent of the document, this may be made administratively with approval of the Director without the need to be approved by ELT or Council.

The Council has introduced measures to support landowners, which are optional and meant to help with decision-making. It is recommended that this policy review aligns with related strategies and capital works programs. Additionally, the policy should be reviewed within 12 months after a general council election to ensure it stays relevant and effective.

9.0 Document Control

Version #	Approval Date	Approved By	ECM reference
1.0			

11. COUNCILLOR MOTIONS

In accordance with Chapter 3 Division 4 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

There were no Councillor motions received prior to the Agenda being printed.

12. ITEMS THROUGH THE CHAIR

13. REPORTS FROM DELEGATES

14. DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNING AND SEALING

In accordance with Clause 87 of the Meeting Procedures and Use of Common Seal Local Law 2015, as prescribed by Section 14(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 2020.

There were no Documents for Signing and Sealing listed for this meeting prior to the Agenda being printed.

15. INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

Report Author: Governance Officer

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public

SUMMARY

Chapter 8, Rule 1, of the Governance Rules requires that records of informal meetings of Councillors must be kept and that the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the Minutes of that Council meeting.

An 'informal meeting of Councillors' is defined in the Governance Rules as a meeting of Councillors that:

- is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- is not a Council meeting, Delegated Committee meeting or Community Asset Committee meeting.

The records for informal meetings of Councillors are attached to the report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the records of the Informal Meetings of Councillors, copies of which are attached to the report, be received and noted.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

- 1. 1 April 2025 Council Briefing
- 2. 1 April 2025 Council Forum
- 3. 15 April 2025 Council Forum
- 4. 24 April 2025 Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee



Informal Meeting of Councillors Public Record

Meeting Name:	Council Briefing		
Date:	01 April 20	Start Time: 6.13pm Finish Time: 6.34pm	
Venue:	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference		
Attendees:	Councillor	rs: Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair), Cr McAllister, Cr Cox, Cr Heenan, Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott	
	CEO/Direc	ctors: Tammi Rose, Kath McClusky, Vincenzo Lombardi, Hjalmar Philipp, Jane Sinnamon (Acting Director Communities), Amee Cooper	
	Officers:	Gina Walter, Andrew Edge, Ben Waterhouse, Mel Villani, Joanne Hammond, Kirsten Vernon and Stuart Wilson	
	Externals: Nil		
Apologies:	Leanne Hurst		
Disclosure of COI:	Councillor Child declared a general conflict of interest for Item 11.1 - Councillor Motions – Gippsland Kangaroo Harvest Zone – Cr Cox.		
Matter/s Discussed:	This briefing covered the following items of business to be considered at the 8 April 2025 Council Meeting.		
	10.1	10.1 Yarra Ranges Health Service Location – Community Needs Assessment	
	10.2	YR-2022/923 - 304-322 Main Street, Lilydale VIC 3140 - Planning Report	
	10.3	Council Plan Mid-Year Report	
	10.4	Councillor Code of Conduct	
	10.5	Visitor Economy Partnership	
	11.1	Councillor Motions – Gippsland Kangaroo Harvest Zone – Cr Cox	
Completed By:	Gina Walter		



Informal Meeting of Councillors

Public Record

Meeting Name:	Council Forum			
Date:	1 April 2025		Start Time: 5.30pm Finish Time: 8.44pm	
Venue:	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference			
Attendees:	Councillors: CEO/Directors:		Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair), Cr McAllister (From 5.35pm), Cr Cox, Cr Heenan, Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott	
			Tammi Rose, Kath McClusky, Vincenzo Lombardi, Hjalmar Philipp, Jane Sinnamon (Acting Director Communities), Amee Cooper	
	Officers:		Gina Walter, Andrew Edge, Ben Waterhouse, Mel Villani, Joanne Hammond, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart Wilson, Katie Douglas, Amanda Kern, Bumeke Jayasinghe, Jason Chu, Nathan Islip, Sarah Bond, Corinne Bowen, Alison Fowler, Isha Scott, and Nick Cherrie	
	Via Zoom:		Jenny Davies and Natalie Montano	
	Externals	:	Nil	
Apologies	Leanne Hurst			
Disclosure of COI:	Councillor Child declared a general conflict of interest for Item 3.1 - Kangaroo Control – Advocacy Opportunity. A written notice was provided to the Chief Executive officer under Local Laws Chapter 7 sub-rule 3 (b).			
	1.1	Ackno	owledgement of Country	
	1.2	1.2 Declaration of Interest		
	1.3	2.0 Review of Planning Applications 2.1 YR - 2022/923 - 304-322 Main Street, Lilydale VIC 3140 - Planning Report		
	2.0			
	2.1			
	3.0			
	3.1	Kanga	aroo Control – Advocacy Opportunity	

	4.0	Review of Council Agenda – 08 April 2025
	5.0	Briefing Session Two
	6.1	Recent Planning Reforms – Verbal Update
	6.2	2026 Annual Grants Initiation
	6.3	Council Plan – Mid-Year Report
	6.4	Councillor Code of Conduct
	7.0	Mayor & CEO Update
	8.0	Councillor Discussion Time
	9.0	General Business
	9.1	Hardy and John Street Safety – Verbal Update
	10.0	For Noting
	10.1	Audit and Risk Management Committee Meeting – Draft Minutes – 17 February 2025
Completed By:	Gina Walt	ter



Informal Meeting of Councillors

Public Record

Meeting Name:	Council Forum			
Date:	15 April 2025		Start Time: 5.30pm F	inish Time: 8.50pm
Venue:	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference			
Attendees:	Councillors:		Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair) (From 5.37pm), Cr Cox, Cr Ward and Cr Marriott	
	Via Zoom	: (Cr Mazzarella and Cr McAllister (Ex	kited at 8.49pm)
	CEO/Directors:		Tammi Rose, Leanne Hurst, Kath McClusky, Vince Lombardi, Kim O'Connor (Acting Director Built Environment and Infrastructure), Amee Cooper	
	Officers:		Gina Walter, Beck Stevens, Ben Wa Hammond, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart V Sarah Bond, Nathan Islip, Tamara N Kern, Katie Douglas, George Avra Harrison, Amy Gregorovich, Isha So Sinnamon	Wilson, Amber Smits, Meadows, Amanda mopoulos, Jessica
	Via Zoom: Alison Fowler and Jonathon Makaay			
	Externals: Andrew Natoli and Paul Beeson from Equipe Lawyers			
Apologies	Cr Heenan, Cr McIlwain and Hjalmar Philipp			
Disclosure of COI:	• Nil			
	1.1	Acknov	wledgement of Country	
	1.2	Declara	ation of Interest	
	1.3	Action and Agreement Record – 1 April 2025)25
	2.0	2.0 Briefing Session One		
	2.1 Yarra Junction Place Plan Community Engagement outcom and consideration for endorsement			ngagement outcomes
	2.2	Yering	Billabongs Project Update	
	4.0	Briefing	g Session Two	

	4.1	Tiny Homes - External Presenters		
	4.2	EOI6246 Solar & Battery System Specialists Panel Refresh		
	4.3	Improving Township Amenity in Kallista		
	4.4	Special Charge Scheme		
	4.5	Councillor Statement of Intent		
	5.0	Mayor & CEO Update		
	6.0	Councillor Discussion Time		
	7.0	General Business		
	7.1	Verbal Update - 6 May 2025 Meeting Agendas Review		
Completed By:	Gina Walter			

Informal Meeting of Councillors Public Record



Meeting Name:	Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee		
Date:	24 April 2025		Start Time: 5.30pm Finish Time: 7.30pm
Venue:	Confe	rence Room	B, 15 Anderson Street Lilydale
	Coun	cillors:	Councillor Peter Mcilwain
Attendees:	Other	attendees:	Rowan Barr (member), Emily Russo (member), Ann-Maree Graham (member), Brenda Dobia (member), Jackson Ellis (member), Jennifer Lyndon (member), Madeline Anne Brenker (member), Maxine Harrison (member), Robin Oakley (member), Oliver McLeod (member), Peter Martin (member)
	Manager:		Corinne Bowen
	Office	ers:	Jessica Harrison, Suzanne Burville, Anna Obrien
Apologies	Sarah Bond (YRC), Jared Wake (member)		C), Jared Wake (member)
Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest:	None		
Matter/s Discussed:	1.1	Health and Wellbeing Strategy	
	1.2	Yarra Ranges Climate Data	
	1.3	Yarra Ranges Environment Strategy	
Completed By:	Suzanne Burville		

16. URGENT BUSINESS

In accordance with Chapter 3 Rule 24 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

In accordance with Chapter 3 Rule 24 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

There were no Confidential Items listed for this meeting.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Council is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 27 May 2025 commencing at 7.00pm, at Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference.



In providing for the good governance of its community, Councillors are reminded of their obligation to abide by the provisions as set within the Local Government Act 2020 and the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

When attending a Council Meeting, Councillors should adhere to the procedures set out in the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

The following is a guide for all Councillors to ensure they act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of Yarra Ranges as a whole.

- Councillors will respect the personal views of other Councillors and the decisions of Council.
- 2. Councillors may publicly express their own opinions on Council matters but not so as to undermine the standing of Council in the community.
- 3. The Mayor is the official spokesperson for Council.
- 4. Councillors will incur expenditure in a responsible manner and in accordance with the Councillor Expenditure and Policy.
- 5. Councillors will avoid conflicts of interest and will always openly disclose any direct and indirect interests where they exist.
- 6. Councillors will act with integrity and respect when interacting with Council staff and members of the public.
- 7. Councillors will demonstrate fairness in all dealings and conduct and be open with and accountable to the community at all times.
- 8. Councillors will conduct themselves in a manner that does not cause detriment to Council or the Yarra Ranges community.