

DRAFT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2025-2029 FOR ENDORSEMENT

Report Author: Executive Officer Health and Wellbeing

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

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (the Act)*, councils must prepare a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) every 4 years, within 12 months of a general council election. The Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 meets these requirements; a Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 Final Evaluation Report is provided as Attachment One.

Council must now prepare a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 (the Strategy), due to the Department of Health in October 2025. This report is intended to present the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029- Draft; included in this report as Attachment Two. The Strategy is informed by the Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Data Profile (Attachment Three) and four weeks of community engagement; Community Engagement Summary Report as Attachment Four.

Following Council endorsement of the Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029, a further four-week community engagement period will run over July and August 2025. Council will then review and finalise the Strategy, ready for submission in October 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 (Attachment 2) and support a further four weeks of community engagement.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council endorsed Draft Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 in July 2020 (Item 7.2, 27/07/21)

Council endorsed Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 in October 2021 (Item 7.5, 12/10/21)

Council endorsed Appointment of Health & Wellbeing Committee 2022-2026 in January 2023 (Item 10.2, 31/01/23)

Council endorsed Health & Wellbeing Plan YR 2 Progress Report in October 2023 (Item 10.4, 10/10/23)

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires councils to prepare a MPHWP every four years, within 12 months of a general council election. The MPHWP provides a strategic framework to guide council's role in promoting community health and wellbeing, based on where council has responsibility, influence, and resources.

Yarra Ranges Council's current Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2025 meets this legislative requirement. The next iteration of this plan is referred to as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 (the Strategy). It is Council's lead strategy to achieve the key strategic operation of a Healthy and Connected Community as part of the Council Plan 2025-2029 (in development). The Strategy is due to the Department of Health in October 2025.

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires that the MPHWP:

- Uses local health data to inform priorities;
- Involves the community in its development, delivery and review;
- Sets evidence-based goals and strategies to improve community health;
- Specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community; and
- Have regard to climate change, as required under the *Climate Change Act 2017*.

The Strategy ensures that Council meet these legislative requirements and are able to monitor and report on the progress of the Strategy annually.

Options considered

Only one option was considered.

Recommended option and justification

It is recommended that Council endorse the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029- Draft and support a further four weeks community engagement.

Council has a stand alone MPHWP as it is the lead strategy for achieving Healthy and Connected Communities as identified as a key strategic objective of the Council Plan 2025-2029 (in development). The Strategy has been deliberately prepared in alignment with other developing strategies and plans for Council and is on track to ensure that Council meet all legislative requirements and deadlines under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The total budget for developing the MPHWP is \$47,000. This has come from the Health and Wellbeing operational budget FY 24-25, with minor costs carrying into FY 25-26 as the Strategy is finalised.

Implementation of the Strategy will occur through partnerships with key stakeholders both internally and externally and be funded through operational budget lines with respective Council departments. Grant opportunities will be sought where feasible.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

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

Council Plan (2021-2025) Healthy and Connected Communities Vision:

- We want to make sure communities are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive and socially well-connected. Quality services should be accessible to everyone. We'll be implementing priority actions from strategies, like our upcoming Health and Wellbeing Plan and our Healthy and Active Ageing Plan, to ensure that our spaces are age-friendly and help promote good health. We'll update our Aquatics Strategy to plan the provision of our aquatic facilities, and we'll advocate for better public transport connections.

Yarra Ranges Council Community Vision 2036:

- 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.

RELEVANT LAW

- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Climate Change Act 2017*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Municipal Strategic Statement/Municipal Planning Scheme.

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Victorian Disability Act 2006*

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

When developing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029, consideration must be given to the State Budget and pending legislative impacts e.g.; the independent review of the *Mental Health Act 2022*, which reinforces the need for councils to embed mental health and wellbeing considerations across all their work—planning, infrastructure, community programs, and partnerships. Council must have strategic foresight and agility in the Strategy to both position Council to obtain funding and to support the delivery of the priorities and actions included in the strategy. Where appropriate, Council must partner with government, services and community to undertake a collective impact approach, working towards a common agenda for sustainable health and wellbeing outcomes as outlined in the Strategy.

Social Implications

The social determinants of health can influence health equity in both positive and negative ways. These include; income, housing, education, employment, food security, social inclusion, early childhood development, access to health services, life conditions and structural conflict. These need to be considered in the development and implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029, where Council has a role to make a positive difference. The Strategy identifies a set of Principles that ensure health equity and a place based lens is applied across all priority areas of the Strategy.

Environmental Implications

Climate change presents a range of significant risks for Council to respond to as it delivers on its vision for the community. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 must have regard to the *Climate Change Act 2017* and should have close alignment and the Liveable Climate Plan 2020-2030 recognising Councils existing commitment towards taking action on climate change. The link between environmental and extreme weather impacts on health and wellbeing is addressed within the Strategy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029- Draft has been shaped by rigorous health data analysis, along with stakeholder engagements and four weeks of community engagement. A summary of engagement methods and key stakeholders is included in this report as Health and Wellbeing Strategy Community Engagement Summary Report; Attachment Four.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council has collaborated with other councils, as well as key stakeholders such as the North Eastern Public Health Unit, Primary Health Network, community health services and other local community organisations. This has been valuable in reflecting back to Council lessons learnt over the previous plan and to identify alignment of key priority areas, and opportunities for collective impact over the next four years. These members form Council's Health and Wellbeing Steering Committee who meet quarterly.

Collaboration has occurred internally for Council to create the Strategy through inter-department engagement, attendance at advisory committees to Council and alignment with other developing strategies and plans for Council such as the inclusion of Health and Wellbeing as a key focus area of the Council Plan Summits in March 2024. Council acknowledge the Indigenous Advisory Committee, Disability Advisory Committee, Youth Ambassadors, Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee who have all helped shape the Strategy to date.

Led internally by the Health and Wellbeing team, a cross-Council project working group has significantly shaped the Draft Strategy. Senior and Executive leaders have contributed via the Executive Leadership Team, Corporate Leadership Team, Integrated Project Control Group and meetings with individual business units.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk	Severity (L,M,H)	Likelihood (L,M,H)	Mitigant
<u>Reputation and stakeholder relationship</u> Delay in securing formal endorsement to undertake phase 2, community engagement results in project timelines being pushed back, and Council being unable to submit the final endorsed Strategy to the Department of Health by October 2025 deadline. Publicised community concern, limited media coverage and relationships noticeably strained.	M	L	Strong project management and governance in place to meet required deadlines. Alignment with other developing plans for Council to avoid duplication and competition.

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. Yarra Ranges Council Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 Final Evaluation Report
2. Yarra Ranges Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 - Draft
3. Health and Wellbeing Data Profile of Yarra Ranges: Summary Report
4. Health and Wellbeing Strategy Community Engagement Summary Report