

COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 - CONSIDERATION FOR ADOPTION

Report Author: Corporate Planning and Performance Co-Ordinator
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 presents the Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2025-2029 (Attachment One and Two) for Council's formal consideration.

Over the past 18-months Council has undertaken extensive engagement with our community, as well as collaboration between Councillors, and with relevant stakeholders to develop the Yarra Ranges Council Plan for the next four years.

This Council Plan sets out the medium-term direction for Council and a positive vision for the future of Yarra Ranges. It reaffirms the Yarra Ranges long term Community Vision and meets the obligations under the Local Government Act 2020.

A Council Annual Action Plan has also been produced to be released alongside the Council Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Adopt the Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2025-2029.**
- 2. Adopt the Yarra Ranges Council 2025-2029 Annual Action Plan.**
- 3. Authorise the Director Corporate Services to update existing strategy and policy documentation in line with the Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2025-2029.**

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The Council Plan 2021-2025 was adopted at the Council Meeting on 26 October 2021.

The Draft Council Plan, Draft Asset Plan and Draft Long-term Financial Plan were approved for community consultation at the Council Meeting on 8 July 2025.

DISCUSSION

The Council Plan is the overarching strategic plan, that outlines what Council aims to achieve over the next four years, where efforts will be focused and how progress will be measured.

Informed by evidence and shaped by the priorities of the community, the Council Plan meets the obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*. It is the result of an iterative development process that included both broad and deliberative engagement with a cross-section of the community.

This Plan is focused on getting the basics right and ensuring Council has clear direction, so all Council services, strategies and initiatives are working towards the same vision.

The Plan strengthens Council's commitment to excellence and delivers on what the community has said is important to them. It includes the Community Vision 2036 and four Strategic Objectives that provide the framework for 16 Initiatives and 20 Indicators.

Community Vision 2036

Yarra Ranges Council's Community Vision 2036 articulates the future aspirations for local communities and the municipality as a whole.

Yarra Ranges Council's 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.

Strategic Objectives

The Council Plan includes minor updates to the 2021-25 Council Plan strategic objectives. These refreshed objectives have been developed in response to community feedback, communities' priorities, the big issues facing Council, Councillor feedback to date and align to the current Community Vision.

The Strategic Objectives are highlighted in the Diagram One below, that brings them together with the Community Vision and Council's Commitment to Excellence.

Diagram One. Strategic Objectives



All activities completed by Council over the coming four years will contribute to one or more of the Council Plan Strategic Objectives. To further guide Council's work each Strategic Objective has: Community Priorities, Lead and Supporting Strategies, Council Services and a list of Indicators to measure how Council is tracking in alignment to each Strategic Objective.

Initiatives, Action Plan and Indicators

This Council Plan identifies 16 high priority projects under the four objectives for the next four years. The annual Action Plan (Attachment Two) provides greater detail on each initiative including key milestones.

The plan also includes 20 indicators Council that will be utilised to measure long term change in community outcomes and progress towards the Community Vision. These indicators provide clear targets across the four strategic objectives and Councils' commitment to Excellence.

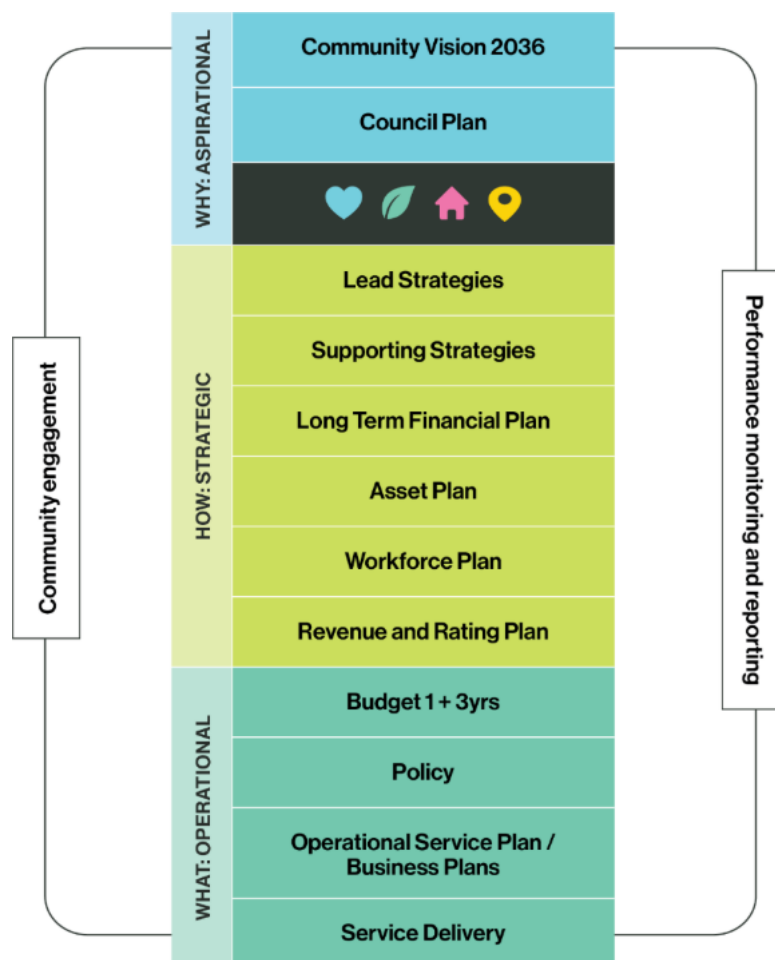
FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The costs of delivering the Council Action Plan are funded from operating budget allocations. The projections of the Long-Term Financial Plan indicate Council is maintaining overall financial sustainability for the period of the Council plan.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

Diagram Two, below shows how the Council Plan and other strategic Council plans link together. Informed by evidence, state and federal government legislation and policy and community engagement, these plans guide the delivery of all Council strategies, services and actions to help achieve the Community Vision. Ranging from medium to long-term these plans direct what Council is working towards and how resources will be used.

Diagram Two. Planning Framework



RELEVANT LAW

The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) mandates that all councils develop and maintain several key strategic documents to ensure effective governance and planning. Section 90 of the Act specifically requires the development of a Council plan that should align with the community's vision and priorities.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Council Plan will have a range of Economic, Social and Environmental implications.

Economic Implications

The Council Plan identifies the following priorities to focus on supporting Prosperous Communities and Vibrant Economy.

- Local industry and producers
- Local business
- Balanced tourism
- Local jobs

Social Implications

The Council Plan sets the strategic objectives of Healthy and Connected Communities. Specifically, the following priorities:

- Community connections and resilience
- Access to local services
- Safe and inclusive
- Healthy through life stages

Environmental Implications

The Council Plan sets the strategic objective to 'Protect and Enhance the Natural Environment'. It identifies the following priorities:

- Local biodiversity
- Energy, disaster and climate resilience
- Water management
- Circular economy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Council Plan has been developed and informed using extensive engagement with our community, and collaboration between Councillors and other relevant stakeholders over a 18-month period. During that time Council received direct feedback from over 1,250 people and informed over 6000 community members in the development of the plans.

The feedback received was used to inform the Deliberative Engagement process where an independently appointed panel of 40 diverse participants selected from

over 400 applicants discussed and responded to key challenges across three workshops.

Council then returned to community with a summary of these insights and delved deeper with 80 members of key groups including Youth groups; Townships groups; and members of the Disability Advisory Group, Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee, Indigenous Advisory Committee, Positive Ageing Reference Group, Rural Advisory Committee, Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Group, local services and 50 Students from six local secondary schools at a Youth Summit.

These insights, along with Councillor workshops and evidence, informed the Draft Council Plan that was opened for community feedback from the 9 July to the 10 August 2025. The feedback from this final phase of community engagement resulted in further amendments to improve the clarity of the Draft Council Plan.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The success of the community engagement program and development of the Council Plan has been supported by collaboration across Council's and our partner agencies. Council officers and CEO's from across the Eastern Region have met to discuss shared community priorities and opportunities for partnership.

The Council Plan identifies the importance of collaboration stating that 'It is important for Council to work together with other levels of government, industry partners and communities to achieve the best outcomes.' The Council Plan also outlines indicators designed to inform evidence-based planning, innovation and continuous improvement.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The following steps have been taken to mitigate risk associated with the development and implementation of the Council Plan:

- Adequate community engagement and consultation ensure alignment with community needs.
- Developing the Council Plan and Action Plan under an integrated framework alongside the 2025-2026 Annual Budget, Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Plan ensures realistic objectives across all strategic documents.
- Annually reviewing the Council Action Plan ensures organisational efforts are focused on achievement of Council Plan objectives.

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 Plan 2025-2029
2. Yarra Ranges Council Annual Action Plan 2025-2029