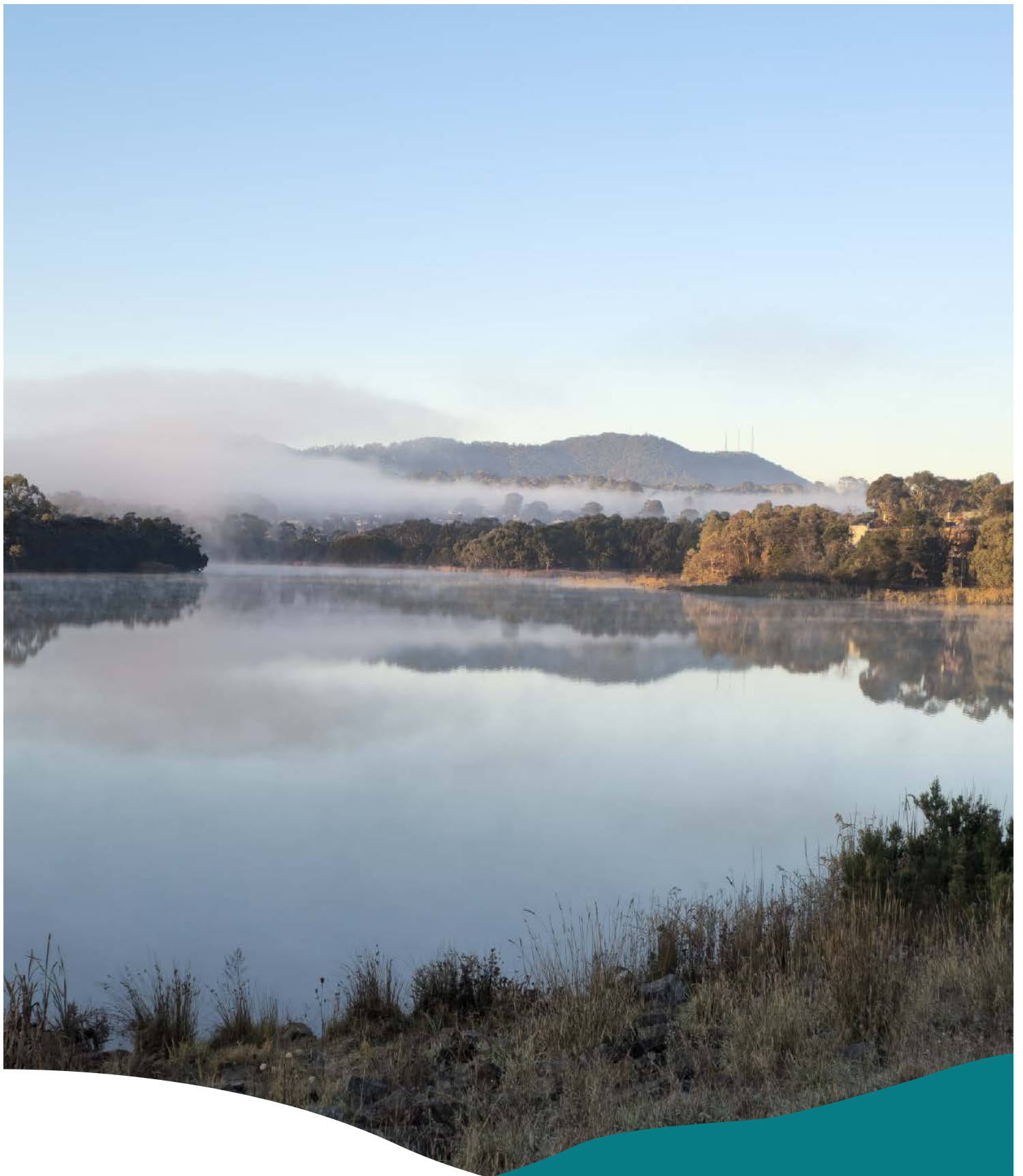




Yarra Ranges **Council**

Council Plan 2025–2029





Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples 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.

Value of History

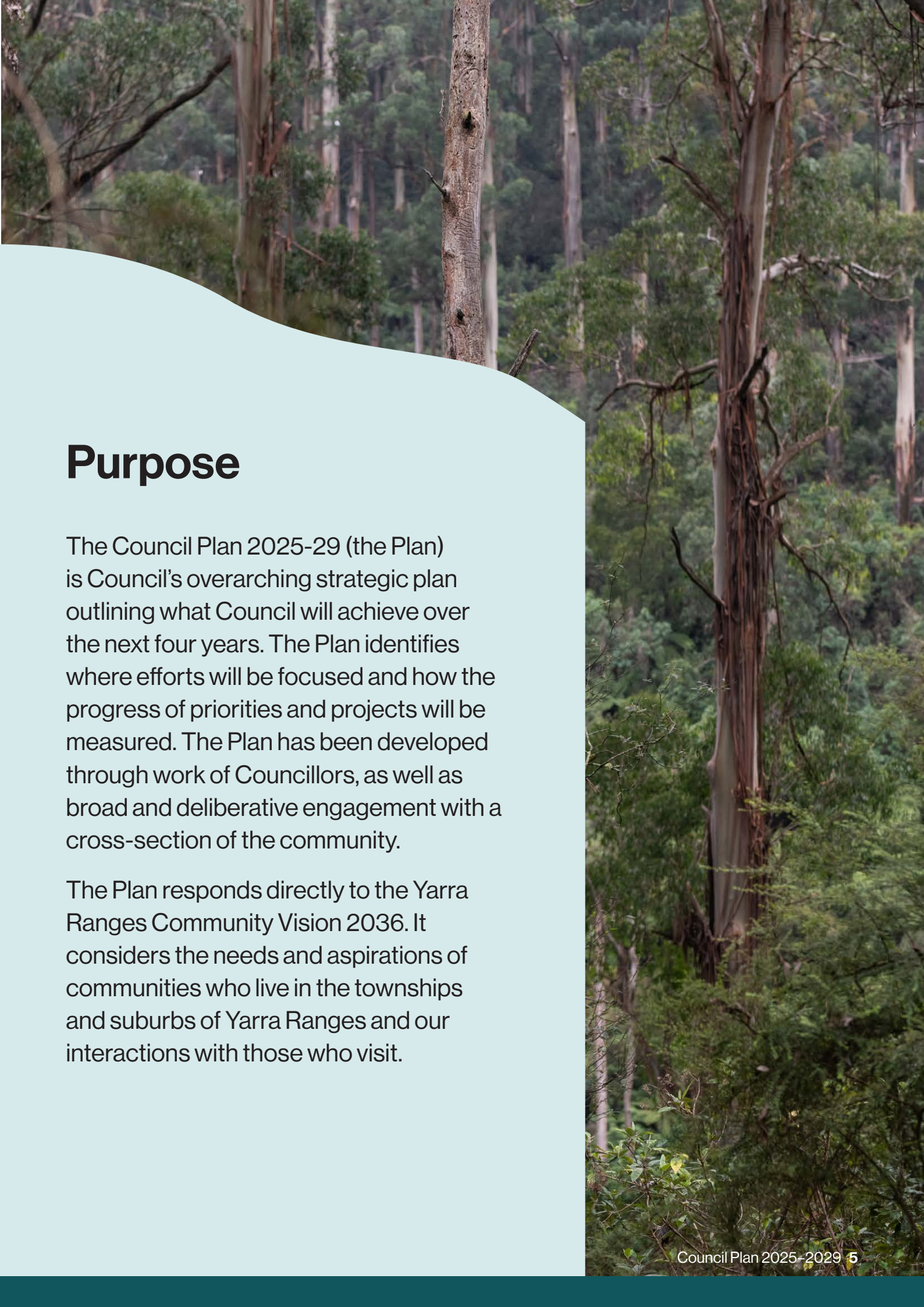
We acknowledge that history shapes our identities, engages us as citizens, creates inclusive communities, is part of our economic well-being, teaches us to think critically and creatively, inspires leaders and is the foundation of our future generations.

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Introduction





Purpose

The Council Plan 2025-29 (the Plan) is Council's overarching strategic plan outlining what Council will achieve over the next four years. The Plan identifies where efforts will be focused and how the progress of priorities and projects will be measured. The Plan has been developed through work of Councillors, as well as broad and deliberative engagement with a cross-section of the community.

The Plan responds directly to the Yarra Ranges Community Vision 2036. It considers the needs and aspirations of communities who live in the townships and suburbs of Yarra Ranges and our interactions with those who visit.

Message from the Mayor



Cr Jim Child,
Mayor
Yarra Ranges Council

Welcome to our Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2025-2029.

We are delighted to present this plan and its positive vision for the future of Yarra Ranges. As we embark on an exciting new chapter for our community, this Plan details how we can best support our community of more than 165,000 people over the next four years and build on the strong foundations of the previous Council Plan.

Feedback from our community is clear - you want us to demonstrate leadership and focus on getting the basics right. And when you say basics, you mean clear communication and decision making, improving drainage and waste management, being equipped to respond to emergencies, taking care of our unique environment and ensuring our townships and suburbs are well maintained in collaboration with local communities.

Our communities are also looking to Council to ensure we get the balance right between protecting local liveability and our natural environment with welcoming visitation to our region. We know tourism will continue to play a significant role in our future with visitor numbers projected to double in the coming decade to over nine million. That also brings an estimated \$80 million annual boost to the local economy and the potential for over 500 local jobs. However, while these are promising opportunities for Yarra Ranges, we understand the need to ensure tourism is balanced, sustainable and of benefit to all in our local communities.

The impacts of cost-of-living pressures affecting many households across Yarra Ranges has also been a key consideration in the development of this Council Plan. That's why this Plan has been carefully designed to balance community needs with responsible financial management. We remain focused on ensuring we deliver our services efficiently and are taking a practical approach to managing our infrastructure and community assets, continuing to advocate strongly to the state and federal governments, and working with local communities to make informed decisions.

We look forward to delivering the commitments outlined in this Plan so that together, we can fulfill our community's vision of "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".

Message from the CEO



Tammi Rose,
Chief Executive
Officer
Yarra Ranges Council

As we embark on an exciting new chapter for our community, I am delighted to share the new Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2025-2029.

This Plan is more than just a roadmap for today - it outlines the vision and commitments to fostering a vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yarra Ranges now and into the future. The Plan is centred around four key objectives:

- building healthy and connected communities where everyone is safe, resilient, feels included and connected to others.
- protecting and enhancing our extraordinary natural environment, ensuring that Country is healthy and can be enjoyed by future generations.
- designing liveable places and delivering quality infrastructure that support our townships and suburbs to be hubs of activity.
- fostering a vibrant local economy which creates jobs, attracts sustainable investment and promotes community wellbeing.

Our commitment to excellence drives us to be an organisation dedicated to achieving our community vision. We strive to be future-focused, responsible, fair, transparent, and efficient. Council will track and report on progress each year to ensure accountability.

All local government areas face their own challenges, however for Yarra Ranges, ours are especially unique. As the largest local government area in metropolitan Melbourne, with thriving urban centres and character villages, through to forested ranges and vast agricultural regions, the needs of our communities are as diverse as Yarra Ranges itself. Ensuring equitable distribution of our services and support across our municipality has been core to the development of this Council Plan, as has anticipating some of the future opportunities and challenges for our communities.

Despite the current challenging financial environment, we are confident this Council Plan will deliver what is most important to our community in an efficient and effective manner. We will also continue to engage closely with our communities and respond to their needs, ensuring we preserve the unique qualities that make Yarra Ranges special, while also laying the foundations for a vibrant and healthy future.

Your Councillors

The municipality is divided into nine wards with one Councillor representing each ward.

The nine Councillors, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Yarra Ranges Council work together to achieve the best outcomes for the whole municipality, including future generations.

Contact details for our Councillors are available at: <https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au>



O'Shannassy Ward
Mayor,
Cr Jim Child



Chirnside Ward
Deputy Mayor,
Cr Richard Higgins



Walling Ward
Cr Len Cox OAM



Billanook Ward
Cr Tim Heenan



Streeton Ward
Cr Jeff Marriott



Melba Ward
Cr Mitch Mazzarella



Ryrie Ward
Cr Fiona McAllister



Lyster Ward
Cr Peter McIlwain



Chandler Ward
Cr Gareth Ward

The role of Council

The role of Council is to provide good governance for the benefit of current and future communities.

Council provides a range of services and manages community assets that people use every day. Council also works in collaboration with other levels of government, industry partners and communities to achieve the best outcomes.

These roles definitions are used within this Plan and other Council documents.



Provider

Responsible for delivery of services, programs, infrastructure and support to individuals and groups.



Educator

Share information, raise awareness, develop knowledge and skills to empower individuals and groups.



Partner

Build relationships and partner with others to enable things to happen and work towards common goals.



Advocate

Raise awareness and show leadership for the interests of local communities, to other decision makers e.g. State and Federal Government.



Planner

Use evidence, including community views to plan for current and future community needs and priorities.



Regulator

Prioritise safety and regulate compliance of activities through local laws and legislation.



Our commitment

To achieve our Community Vision and best serve our communities, Council is committed to being:



Future-focused – anticipating challenges and opportunities, demonstrating continued leadership to build resilience, climate adaptation and make decisions that benefit us now and generations in the future.



Responsive – meaningfully engaging, listening and addressing community needs in a timely and appropriate manner.



Fair – ensuring equitable access to services, resources and opportunities across our diverse communities.¹



Efficient – making the most impact with our resources, minimising waste and delivering quality cost-effective services.



Transparent – being open, inclusive and accountable in our decision-making processes.

This commitment to excellence underpins all our actions and drives us to be a high performing organisation dedicated to achieving our Community Vision and serving our communities in the best way possible.

We are focused on ensuring every action and decision we take is responsible, transparent and efficient, maximising impact while delivering strong value for money. With a future-focused mindset, we continuously seek smarter, fairer and more sustainable ways to serve our community, ensuring our resources are positioned to meet current and future needs.

Council will track and report on progress against these principles each year, using the indicators on page 33 to ensure we remain accountable to our residents.

About our region



Snapshot of Yarra Ranges

Located in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs and spanning 55 townships, our region is a prized place to live and visit.



2,500 km²
land area (approx.)¹



Largest
LGA in Melbourne



51%
of Birrarung (Yarra River)
catchment in Yarra Ranges²



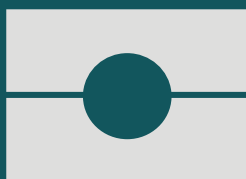
#2nd
highest tree canopy in
Australia³



2% Council land, **30%** is in
private ownership, and
68% is Crown land⁴



165,000+
residents⁵



1,713
Indigenous residents⁶



16.8%
born overseas⁷



17.2%
of the population aged
over 65⁸



**Emerging
trends**



185,000+
residents by 2041⁹



19.8%
of the population aged
over 65 by 2034¹⁰



Visitors to the region are
expected to double to
over **9 million** per year in
the next decade.¹¹

Our housing

Households in Yarra Ranges live in a mix of low to medium density housing dispersed across the area's rural and urban areas and townships.



61,480
dwellings¹²



\$840,000
median house price
(Dec 2023)¹³



53%
of the population live
in the 7.4% of Yarra
Ranges that is urban¹⁴



10,700
new dwellings and
greater housing diversity
needed by 2040¹⁹

Our economy

Yarra Ranges has a diverse economy, with manufacturing as the leading sector. Other important sectors include tourism, construction, property and business services, retail trade and agriculture.



55,544
local jobs¹⁵



13,991
local businesses¹⁶



57,323
local jobs estimated
by 2032²¹



\$1.2 bn
visitor expenditure¹⁷



\$7.58 bn
estimated Gross Regional
Profit (GRP)¹⁸



\$9.1 bn
estimated GRP by 2032²⁰

Our unique places

As the largest local government area (LGA) in metropolitan Melbourne, Yarra Ranges is unique.

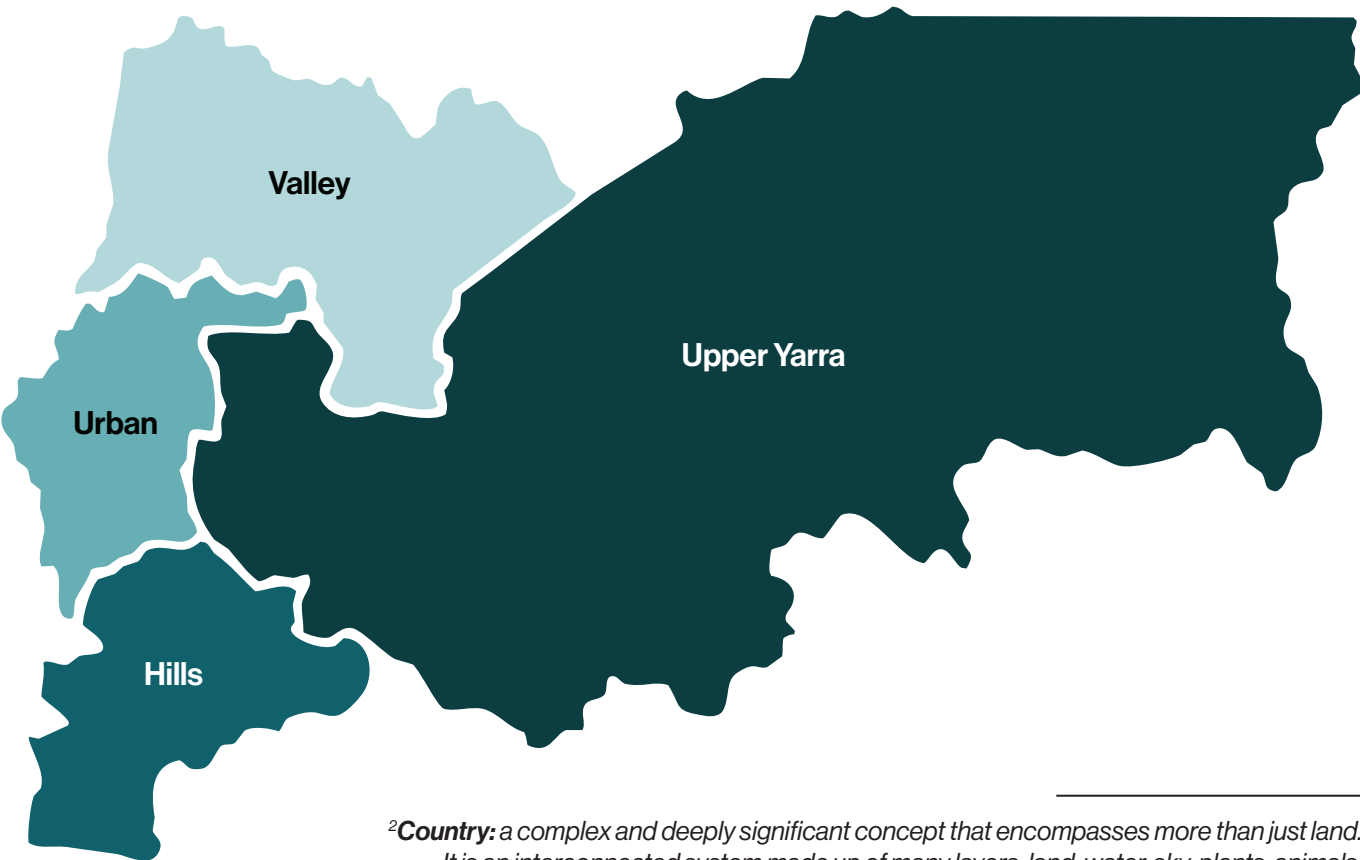
Our region features diverse landscapes and communities, spanning urban areas and commercial centres, townships, agricultural areas, forested valleys, hills, and waterways including the Yarra/Birrarung River. Council recognises the enduring connection to Country² and shared custodianship of the Wurundjeri, Taungurung and Bunurong, as the Traditional owners of the lands and waterways within Yarra Ranges.

Ensuring equitable distribution of our services and support across our municipality has been core to the development of this Plan, as has anticipating some of the opportunities and challenges for our communities in the future.

The map of Yarra Ranges below (Figure 1) shows four regions used to understand and plan for our large and diverse municipality.

Ward	Planning Region
Billanook	Upper Yarra & Urban
Chandler	Hills, Upper Yarra & Urban
Chirnside	Urban
Lyster	Hills
Melba	Urban
O'Shannassy	Upper Yarra
Ryrie	Upper Yarra, Urban & Valley
Streeton	Hills & Urban
Walling	Urban

Figure 1. Map of Yarra Ranges



²**Country:** a complex and deeply significant concept that encompasses more than just land. It is an interconnected system made up of many layers-land, water, sky, plants, animals, ancestors and spirit. For Aboriginal peoples, Country is identity, culture, language, lore, and community. It's deeply spiritual and has supported life for tens of thousands of years.

Council Plan



Overview of Council Plan

Community Vision 2036

The Community Vision was developed with the community to describe the aspirations for the long-term future of our municipality. It also shapes the strategic direction and priorities of this plan. Through this plan, and all strategies, initiatives, and services, Council works diligently to deliver the Community Vision.

Strategic Objectives

**Healthy
Connected
Communities**

**Protected and
Enhanced
Natural
Environment**

**Quality
Infrastructure
and Liveable
Places**

**Prosperous
Community
and Vibrant
Economy**

Four strategic objectives are aligned to the Community Vision. These are delivered by a high performing organisation that ensures all activities contribute to its success. These objectives provide the framework for the priorities, strategies, services and initiatives that Council will deliver under this plan.

Each strategic objective includes:

Priority areas

Priority areas of focus over the next four years

Initiatives

High priority projects for the next four years

Council strategies

Lead and supporting strategies which will enable Council to deliver to our community

Council services

Services to be delivered

Indicators

Targets across our Strategic Objectives and our commitment

Action Plan

Detailed annual Action Plan for delivering 16 initiatives each year under the four strategic objectives. The Action Plan provides greater detail on each initiative, including key milestones

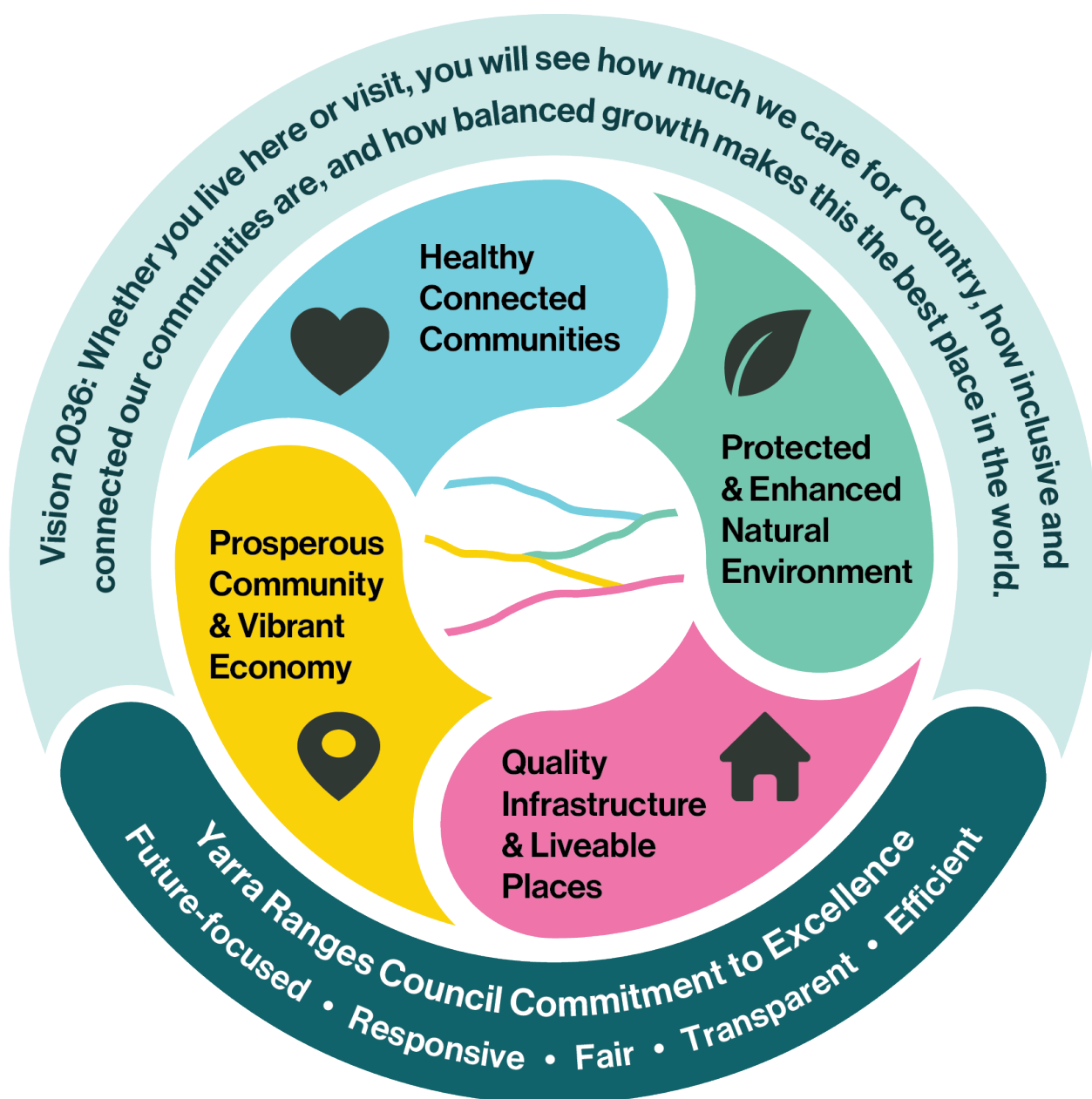
Our strategic direction

To support the achievement of the Community Vision, this Council Plan is centred on four strategic objectives and provide the strategic direction for all Council services, strategies and workplans.

These objectives have been developed in response to our communities' priorities and the challenges facing Council.

Our commitment to excellence drives us to be a high performing organisation dedicated to achieving our Community Vision. We are focused on ensuring every action and decision is informed by this commitment and serves our communities in the best way possible.

Figure 2. Council Plan roadmap



Yarra Ranges 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.

In 2036 Yarra Ranges is a wonderful place to live, and a world-class destination for visitors and investors who make a significant contribution to prosperity within the region.

Community members are proud of where they live. Our values are respected, we feel connected, and our health and wellbeing are a priority.

The municipality's natural beauty, stunning landscapes and reputation for exceptional local produce are enhanced and have a significant influence on decisions made regarding sustainable growth, and development in the region. A focus on responsible eco-tourism projects, access to digital services, networks and infrastructure and balanced economic development has enhanced the region's reputation and improved quality of life for all.

The look and feel of our residential, commercial and industrial areas, and their environmental characteristics, has improved. Our roads, paths, facilities and other infrastructure are well maintained. Our townships are welcoming and designed to improve liveability and support health and wellbeing through improved footpaths, trails, lighting and infrastructure.

Advocacy for innovative and state of the art transport solutions has improved access to important community services, new and upgraded facilities, infrastructure and jobs.

'Gateways' into Yarra Ranges and other areas throughout the municipality now strengthen the identity of our First Nations people, their culture, stories, history and continuing progress towards Reconciliation. This connection strengthens our collective identity, our culture and heritage and creates a sense of belonging for our diverse community.

Continued...

Educational facilities build the skills of our people and develop our leaders to strengthen all communities and support local employment. Our community is passionate about where we live. We contribute our time, volunteering to support people in need and use our voices to provide feedback to Council on issues that affect us.

A local planning approach enhances the strength and sense of place of local communities, recognising their diversity and different needs to support our health, safety and wellbeing while also embracing the commonalities we share in calling Yarra Ranges home.

Yarra Ranges is known for prioritising sustainability, careful land management and the protection of biodiversity and habitat. Regenerative farming practices are used to protect precious agricultural land that offers our community access to healthy, locally grown food. Our community has taken steps to actively mitigate against climate change and to be prepared for natural disasters, including bushfire planning.

Services are accessible, gender equitable and inclusive, catering to all ages, genders cultures, and abilities. Our community is healthy and active, with easy access to recreational facilities and cultural activities that are available to everyone. Residents experiencing disadvantage are well supported through partnerships between government, business and community organisations.

At the heart of the Community Vision is an authentic desire for Council to engage and listen to all members of our community, including our young people, and respond to their needs and aspirations. Our Council are visible, transparent, accountable and communicate clearly and honestly.

Council resources are managed responsibly, and principles of fairness and consistency are applied to avoid unnecessary burdens for rate payers. Through expertise, insight, technology and creativity, Council is a leader in striving for excellence and delivering best practice services for the community.

We work together to create a better future.

This Community Vision was developed with the Yarra Ranges community and describes their aspirations for the future of our municipality in 2036. Originally created in 2016, it is based on the priorities of more than 1000 members of our community. It was checked with community in 2021 and again in 2024 and it continues to reflect the community's future aspirations for the municipality.

Our challenges

This Plan has been shaped by several complex challenges identified by our local communities and Council. Some of the key issues include:

Extreme weather and changing climate

Extreme weather events - including floods, storms, heatwaves and bushfires - are increasingly impacting our communities. These climate related challenges require continued leadership from Council in mitigating climate change and adapting to the impacts. Council recognises its role in achieving net zero emissions across the region.

Growth and development

Both residential population and visitor numbers are predicted to significantly increase. This brings both opportunities but also increased pressure on our workforce, jobs, housing, infrastructure, resources and services. Balancing growth with township character, liveability, biodiversity and sustainability will be an ongoing challenge.

Staying healthy and safe

It is important for Council to proactively plan for different life stages including those of seniors, young people and children. This involves developing inclusive, safe, age friendly places and providing accessible services and support that enable residents to be active, connected, and supported.



Political context

Council will continue to be impacted by the changes in the political and policy context of the state and federal governments, and must adapt to changes in relevant budgets, legislation and regulations. We will continue to provide opportunities for local civic participation and strive to provide greater transparency, information and meaningful engagement in decision making.

Efficient and effective services

Council recognises our community is facing increasing need to provide maximum value for residents. State government cost shifting, escalated material costs and reduced grants increases pressure on the sustainability of Council services. We continue to explore ways to increase efficiencies through cost reduction and increase revenue. This includes collaboration for share services with the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG).

Our community told us

This Council Plan was developed through, and informed by extensive community engagement, Councillor and staff workshops over 15 months.

Key priorities:

For detailed information on the community engagement process, please visit:
<https://shaping.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/yarra-ranges-shape-your-future/shape-your-future-community-engagement>



Keeping the community informed and engaged

Transparency and good governance were emphasised, with the community feedback indicating a need for better communication (including non-digital) about Council activities and decisions, and meaningful community engagement.

The findings show that information should be easily accessible and indicates a need for stronger relationships between Council and the community.



Looking after the natural environment

Environmental stewardship is a critical priority, with the community feedback supporting climate action initiatives, energy-efficient facilities, and sustainable tourism practices.

Feedback also highlighted strong interest in the value and preservation of local bushland and green spaces, as well as embracing sustainable technologies, such as micro-grids and solar power.





Looking after our roads, local area and townships

Feedback indicates a desire for clean, well-maintained local areas. Roads, drains, housing, and transport accessibility were emphasised as key to improving daily life now and into the future.

Significant support exists for preserving local character while addressing development pressures.



Planning for the future

Financial responsibility was also highlighted, with calls for prudent spending, strategic asset management, and the exploration of alternative revenue sources.

There is community interest in Council planning beyond electoral cycles to address challenges and the long-term sustainability of the region.



Include everyone in community life

Community inclusion was identified as vital, with calls for support and inclusion across all life stages.

Key community priorities included housing affordability and homelessness, and improving access to safe spaces, health, education, and childcare services.



Supporting the local economy

Community feedback highlighted the benefits of local tourism, as well as the challenges of being a popular tourist destination.

The findings show that tourism should benefit the local economy and create job opportunities without straining infrastructure and the environment. Residents are keen to support local traders and access goods from local food producers.

Impact of extreme weather

The community feedback shows a desire to feel prepared for extreme weather events, emphasising the need to build community resilience against extreme weather, changing climate, and emergencies.

This includes planning, maintaining, and advocating for infrastructure that strengthens the community's ability to handle and recover from severe weather conditions.



The next four years



Healthy Connected Communities



This objective focuses on fostering communities that are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive and socially connected with quality services accessible to everyone.

Priority areas

To achieve this, the following four priority areas have been identified: **connected and resilient; inclusive and safe; healthy through life stages and access to local services.**

Council will regularly share how Yarra Ranges is progressing in these priority areas, using the indicators on page 33 to monitor change in our communities over the long term.

Initiatives

Initiative Council will deliver over the next four years	Council Role
1. Place-based approach to achieve local priorities. Work with local communities to identify and coordinate place planning to create town centre plans for services and infrastructure that address local priorities.	Partner
2. Work with partners to advocate for local priorities. Collaborate with partners, including the Eastern Region Group of Councils, to advocate for and advance shared priorities.	Advocate
3. Deliver and enhance multi-use Community Pavilions across the municipality. Deliver the Don Rd Healesville and Seville Community Pavilions and program of upgrades for existing pavilions to ensure they are fit-for-purpose, future proofed and designed to meet the needs of people of all genders, ages, abilities and diverse backgrounds.	Provider
4. Planning for an urban aquatic and leisure facility. Progress planning for an aquatic and leisure facility within the urban area.	Planner

Council Strategies

Over the next four years, Council will implement, lead and support strategies to support our healthy and connected communities. These include:

Lead strategy: Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029

- Create inclusive and accessible local opportunities for children, young people and families to have a say and get involved in shaping their community and Council services.
- Design and maintain parks, play spaces, and outdoor exercise equipment to encourage all ages and abilities to participate.
- Facilitate learn-to-ride programs to encourage the uptake of cycling as an accessible physical activity.
- Embed equity, safety and accessibility into Council spaces, services and culture.

Support strategies

- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026
- Disability Action Plan 2025-2029
- Creative Communities Strategy
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Aquatic and Leisure Strategy 2022-2033
- Domestic Animal Management Plan

Council Services

Council delivers a range of services to the community that contribute to healthy and connected communities.

This includes:

Community safety

- Animal Management
- Emergency Management
- Local Laws and Regulatory Compliance
- School Crossings

Community wellbeing

- Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Indigenous Development
- Community Strengthening
- Social Infrastructure Planning

Community services

- Early and Middle Years Services
- Healthy Active Ageing
- Maternal and Child Health
- Youth Development

Health services

- Immunisation
- Public and Environmental Health
- Public Health and Wellbeing

Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment



This objective focuses on caring for Country together and ensuring the environment is healthier for future generations.

Priority areas

To achieve our Strategic Objective, the following four priority areas have been identified: **local biodiversity; energy, climate, disaster and resilience; water management and circular economy.**

Council will regularly share how Yarra Ranges is progressing in these priority areas using the indicators on page 33 to monitor change in our communities over the long term.

Initiatives

Initiative Council will deliver over the next four years	Council Role
5. Enhance energy and infrastructure resilience for Council and communities before, during and after extreme weather events. Enable Council and community to achieve sustainable infrastructure design by enhancing infrastructure resilience and energy efficiency, to reduce climate and weather-related impacts.	Partner
6. Increase and protect biodiversity links and tree canopy connections. Restore and protect connected natural landscapes and healthy waterways to enhance local biodiversity, and maximise the cooling effect.	Provider
7. Use nature-based solutions to increase resilience of natural landscape in a changing climate. Partner with Traditional Owners to utilise traditional owner land management practices and other solutions that work with nature to reduce the impact of natural hazards (e.g. storms, flooding and fire).	Partner
8. Use nature-based solutions to increase resilience of natural landscape in a changing climate. Deliver programs that strengthen community's climate adaptation and resilience to climate impacts. Support the transition to a low carbon future, by increasing the use of renewable energy, improving energy efficiency and promoting sustainable practices in local businesses and homes.	Deliver

Council Strategies

Over the next four years, Council will implement, lead and support strategies to protect and enhance natural environments. These include:

Lead strategy: Environment Strategy

that will ensure:

- Our water resource is improved and preserved.
- Our native plants and animals are protected, and their habitat is enhanced.
- Our communities are resilient in the face of a changing climate and more extreme events.
- All who live and work in the Yarra Ranges see themselves as stewards of our environment.
- Our local communities are strengthened by environmentally sustainable activities and circular economy.
- Reduce Council's energy consumption in line with Council's Liveable Climate Plan and support the community to reduce theirs.

Support strategies

- Nature Plan 2024-2034
- Liveable Climate Plan 2030
- Community Waste and Resource Recovery Plan 2023-2030
- Integrated Water Management Plan
- Energy Transition Plan
- Tree Canopy Strategy 2024-2044
- Burndap Birrarung Burndap Umarkoo (Yarra Strategic Plan) 2022-2032

Council Services

Council delivers a range of services to the community to ensure we protect and enhance natural environments.

This includes:

Nature enhancement

- Biodiversity
- Land management
- Planting programs

Liveable climate

- Climate adaptation
- Energy and emission management
- Landfill management
- Resource recovery

Healthy resilient waterways

- Stormwater management
- Water management
- Waterway biodiversity

Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places



This objective focuses on facilities and infrastructure that meets current and future needs; places that are well planned hubs of activity fostering wellbeing and innovation.

Priority areas

To achieve this, the following four priority areas have been identified: **roads and drainage; paths, trails and green open space; clean and well-planned townships and urban areas and fit-for-purpose assets and facilities.**

Council will regularly share how Yarra Ranges is progressing in these priority areas using the indicators on page 34 to monitor change in our communities over the long term.

Initiatives

Initiative Council will deliver over the next four years	Council Role
9. Reduce stormwater and flood risks. Proactively manage stormwater to safeguard our community, promote sustainable development practices and preserve natural ecosystems.	Provider
10. Activate Ridges and Rivers. Deliver funded stages and operating models of ngurrak-barring/Ridge Walk, Yarra Valley Trail and Warburton Mountain Bike Park while continuing to advocate for future funding.	Provider
11. Facilitate diverse housing options. Work with partners and industry to increase opportunities for diverse housing around transport hubs, employment centres and key services.	Partner
12. Improve safety and maintenance of local roads. Plan and deliver road maintenance in accordance with local priorities and advocate for further funding opportunities.	Provider

Council Strategies

Over the next four years, Council will implement, lead and support strategies to ensure quality infrastructure and liveable places. These include:

Lead strategy: Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme

to be updated with the introduction of the following actions:

- Place Plans, Structure Plans, Township Design Frameworks and Masterplans will all result in changes to the Planning Scheme - Initiative 1: Place-based approach to achieve local priorities.
- Implementation of the Stormwater Management Plan will result in changes to the planning scheme through new flood mapping (see Initiative 10 Reduce storm water and flooding risk).
- Introduction of the Housing Strategy into the Planning Scheme (see Initiative 12 Facilitate diverse housing options).
- New Green Wedge Management Plan – will result in changes to the planning scheme (see Initiative 16).

Support strategies

- Strategic Asset Plan
- Housing Strategy
- Aquatics Strategy
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Open Space Strategy
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Paths and Trails Plan
- Play Space Plan
- Structure Plans
- Township Design Frameworks

Council Services

Council delivers a range of services to the community that contribute to quality infrastructure and liveable places.

This includes:

Placemaking

- Building services
- Place planning and design
- Statutory Planning
- Strategic Projects

Roads and transport

- Carparks
- Footpaths
- Local roads
- Public Lighting
- Traffic Management

Recreation and sporting

- Aquatics
- Pavilions and Club Houses
- Recreation facilities
- Sports fields
- Trails

Community facilities

- Cultural venues and Community halls
- Libraries
- Property and leasing

Parks and open space

- Buildings
- Open spaces
- Parks
- Play spaces
- Townships
- Tree management

Prosperous Community and Vibrant Economy



This objective focuses on fostering an economy, tourism sector and industries that actively support our communities, and investment attraction that underpins sustainable economic wellbeing and local job creation.

Priority areas

To achieve this, the following four priority areas have been identified; **local industry and producers; local business; balanced tourism and local jobs.**

Council will regularly share how Yarra Ranges is progressing in these priority areas using the indicators on page 34 to monitor change in our communities over the long term.

Initiatives

Initiative Council will deliver over the next four years	Council Role
13. Enhance local amenity and walkability. Continue improving and maintaining the look, feel and walkability of townships and local areas in collaboration with communities.	Provider
14. Strengthen tourism destination management across the region. Collaborate across the new Visitor Economy Partnership and local communities to cohesively manage the impact of new and existing tourism assets on established communities and infrastructure.	Partner
15. Support local Agri-Food Futures Centre of Excellence and Innovation. Work with industry, education, Traditional Owners, community and government partners to establish an industry hub and centre of excellence.	Planner
16. Develop a new Green Wedge Management Plan. Develop a new, contemporary Green Wedge Management Plan that addresses emerging agricultural practices and industry needs related to land use.	Planner

Council Strategies

Over the next four years, Council will implement, lead and support strategies, to ensure a prosperous community and vibrant economy. These include:

Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032

that will deliver:

- Support more local employment opportunities
- Support business development, innovation and resilience
- Attraction and facilitation of appropriate investment into the region
- Manage tourism destination

Support strategies

- Destination Management Plan
- Investment Attraction Plan
- Green Wedge Management Plan

Council Services

Council delivers a range of services to the community that contribute to a prosperous community and vibrant economy.

This includes:

Economic development

- Business and Industry support
- Investment attraction
- Tourism destination management

Measuring success

The following table outlines the 20 indicators used by Council to measure progress towards our Community Vision.

These indicators provide clear targets across the four strategic objectives and our commitment in this Plan. All of Council's services, strategies and initiatives collectively work towards the community vision and deliver on the strategic objectives, which are monitored through these indicators.

Tracking community outcomes and regularly reporting on these indicators, contributes to a high performing organisation and responsive, transparent governance²². This approach ensures Council's actions actively contribute to our community's long-term vision for the future. We also recognise that Council's work generates positive outcomes towards the Community Vision beyond these 20 indicators.

Changes in the indicators are influenced by the actions of the Council, other stakeholders, and environmental factors. While specific changes cannot always be attributed to the individual efforts of a single stakeholder, monitoring and sharing these outcomes will:

- keep stakeholders informed about community progress
- guide future planning with evidence-based insights and
- strengthen collaborative efforts to achieve the Community Vision.

In addition to annual indicator reporting, Council publishes a detailed annual report which includes:

- progress updates on the 16 initiatives in this Plan, measured against the action plan milestones.
- performance of essential Council services using the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework²³.

Plus, dedicated annual progress reports for each lead strategy are prepared for Councillor review. In addition, Gender Impact Assessments will be undertaken for all initiatives with direct and significant community impact to support inclusive and equitable outcomes.

Table 1: Council Plan Indicators

	Indicator	Target
Healthy Connected Communities	a. Access to services and facilities	Residents rate their experience of local high-quality health services at 6.5 or above out of 10.
	b. Sense of community	Maintain the level of residents who volunteer at 15.5 percent or above. Residents rate their experience of a strong sense of community in their local area at 6.5 or above out of 10.
	c. Feeling secure	Residents rate their personal financial circumstances at 6 or above out of 10. Residents rate their experience of feeling safe in their local area at 7 or above out of 10.
	d. Mental health and wellbeing	Reduced level of residents (all ages) with at least one long-term health condition. Residents rate their physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing and social wellbeing at 7 or above out of 10.
Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment	e. Biodiversity protection and enhancement	Restoration and revegetation work achieves a 50 percent increase by 2028. At least 200 land stewards improve the biodiversity on their land each year.
	f. Council greenhouse gas emissions	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent on 2005 levels by 2025 (6,400 tCO ₂ e or lower). Net zero emissions by 2040.
	g. Prepared for weather events	Increased confidence of residents in their local area's ability to adapt to the effects of climate change. Maintain or increase community satisfaction with Council's emergency preparedness.
	h. Waste diversion	Divert 90 percent of waste from landfill by 2030. Cut the volume of organic material going to landfill by 60 percent by 2030.

	Indicator	Target
Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places	i. Roads and drainage	Reduced levels of Stormwater discharge and gross pollutants. Maintain average rating of 43.5 or above, for condition of local roads and footpaths.
	j. Diversity of housing supply	Meet the Victorian housing target of an additional 25,000 new homes in Yarra Ranges by 2051. Increased proportion of medium density and one and two bedroom housing as part of the total housing mix.
	k. Community facilities usage and demand	Increase in occupancy rates of facilities by local community.
	l. Access to open space and walkability	By 2036, walking circuits of one to five kilometres in all 55 townships. Increased walkability score of townships.
Prosperous Communities and Vibrant Economy	m. Local employment	Number of local jobs increased to 57,323, and 50 percent of local jobs filled by local people, by 2032.
	n. Diversity of local economy	Employment in local industries with comparative competitive advantage increased by 2032.
	o. Overnight stay tourism	Percentage of overnight stays increased in line with regional target of 18 percent, by 2032.
	p. Business Friendly Council	Increased satisfaction with Council's business concierge program among small businesses by 2029.
Council's Commitment	q. Community decisions	Community satisfaction with Council decision making increased to 50 or above, by 2029.
	r. Value for money	Community perception of value for money increased to 45 or above, by 2029.
	s. Customer satisfaction	Increase percentage of customer interactions that customers rate positively in timeliness and helpfulness.
	t. Consultation and engagement	Increase community satisfaction with Council's consultation and engagement to at least 50 by 2029.

Developing this plan



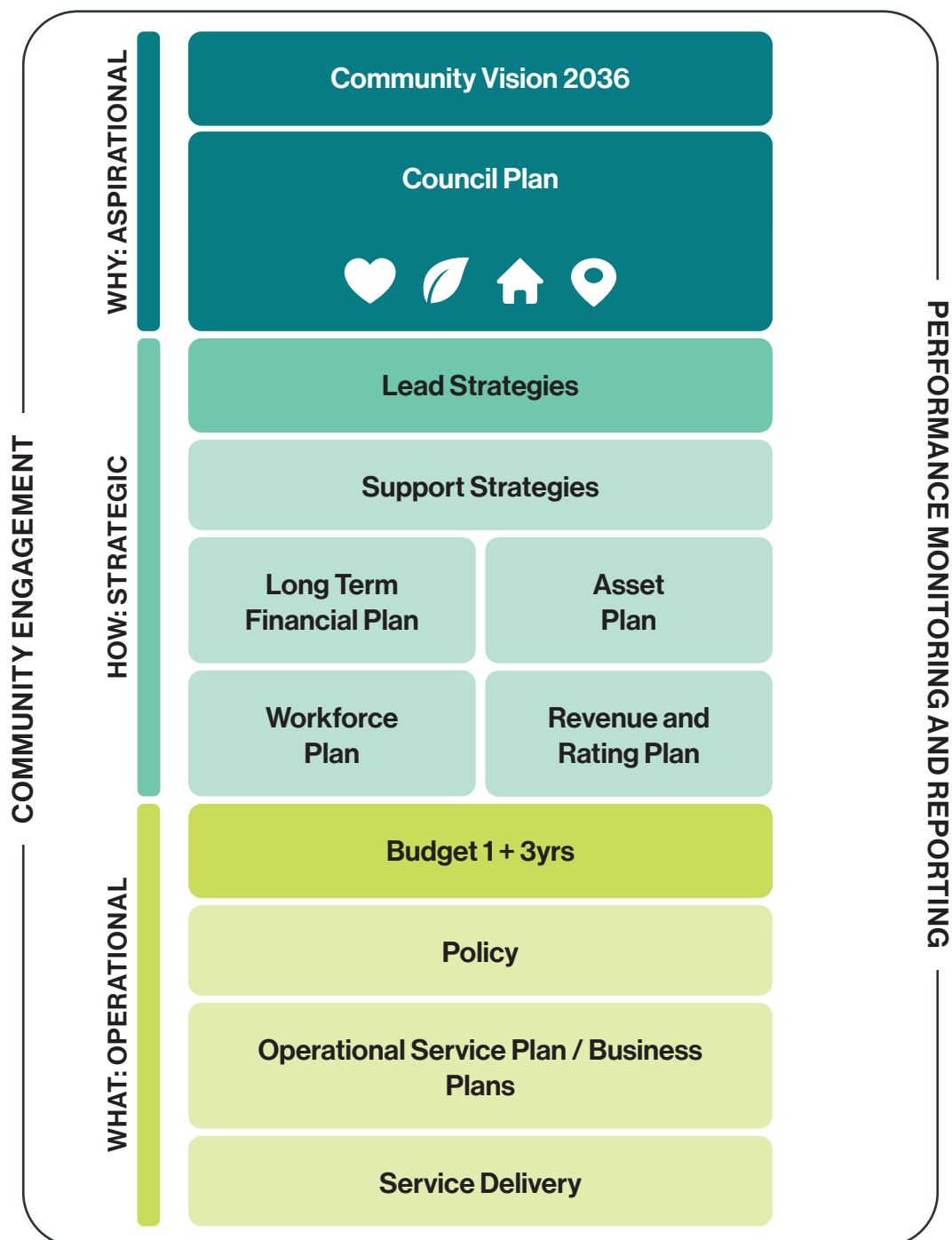
Planning framework

All of Council's planning and decision-making are guided by the community's aspirations for the future.

These are informed by evidence, state and federal legislation and policy, community engagement and a commitment to continuous improvement. This provides clear direction and accountability, reflecting Council's financial and resource capacity.

The figure below illustrates how Council's various plans and strategies are integrated.

Figure 3. Planning Framework



How this Plan was developed

The Plan was developed using a range of engagement methods to gather diverse perspectives and ensure it meets the communities needs and priorities.

Community engagement data

A range of community engagement activities gathered diverse perspectives and priorities, including:

- Broad community surveys
- Community summits
- Targeted focus groups
- Deliberative workshops

Councillor insights and feedback

Councillor involvement throughout the development of the plan ensured alignment with community views and expectations.

- Three interactive Councillor workshops
- (Pending: Council meeting for consideration to adopt Council Plan 2025-2029)

Eastern Region Councils and other Councils

- Peer review and collaboration for best practice and regional perspective.

Evidence and grey literature

A review of current evidence, grey literature, subject matter insights including:

- Yarra Ranges Health Profile ²⁴
- Profile id²⁵
- Voice of customer data
- Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey²⁶
- Human Services Needs Analysis²⁷
- Background papers, reports and strategies
- Gender Impact Assessment in line with Gender Equality Act 2020



Community engagement

Since March 2024 we have received direct feedback from over 1,250 people and reached over 6000 community members including:

Stage 1

March – May 2024

Broad community engagement

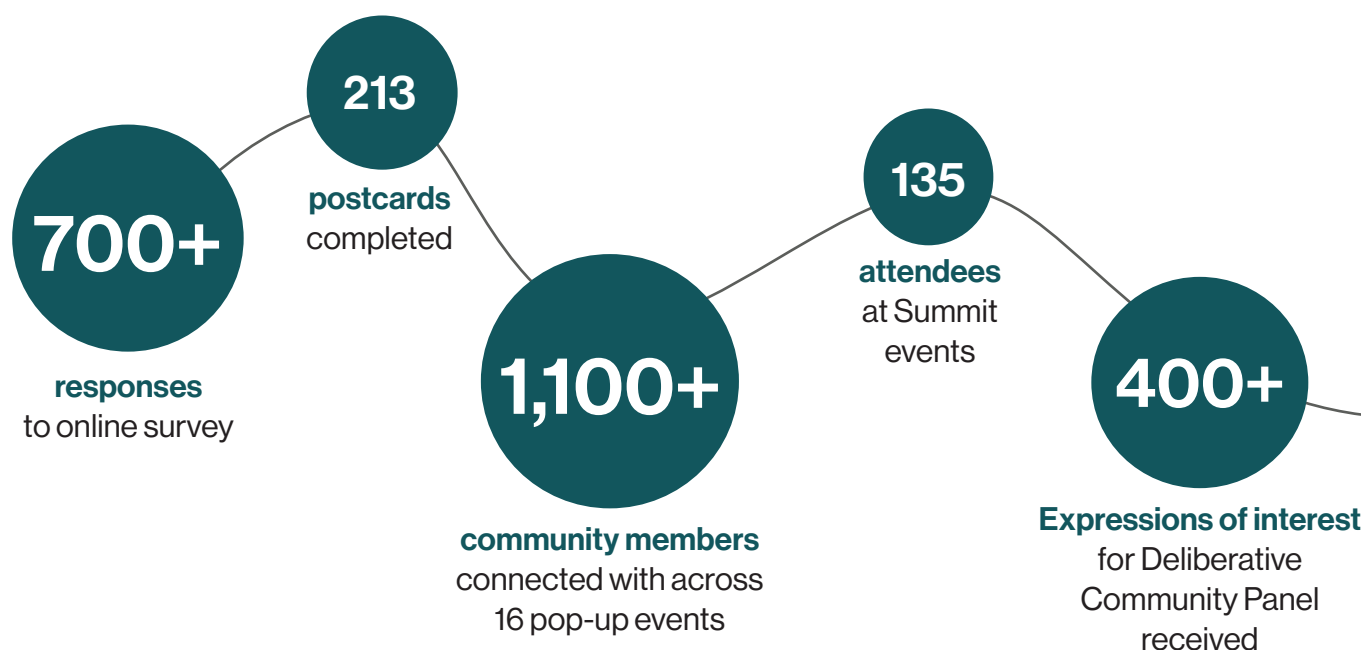
- Survey and postcards
- Pop-up events
- Community and stakeholder summits

Stage 2

July – August 2024

Deliberative Community Panel

- Open expressions of interest for community panel
- Panel members (representative of the diverse community) selected by an independent consultant
- Workshops discussed and debated Council priorities and challenges
- Panel report presented to Councillors



For more information on the community engagement that has helped shaped this plan and to view the full Community Engagement Reports please visit: <https://shaping.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/yarra-ranges-shape-your-future/shape-your-future-community-engagement>

Stage 3

November 2024 – March 2025

Checking in on what we heard

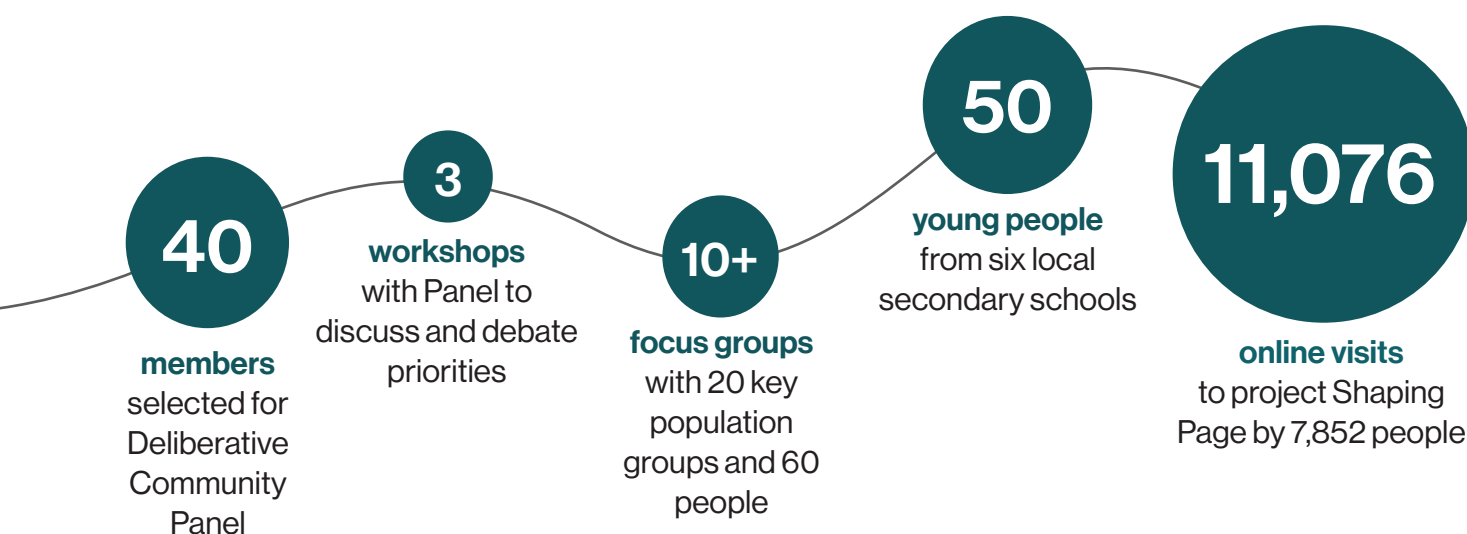
- Reported back findings and key themes
- Focus Groups and activities – youth groups, townships groups, members of the Disability Advisory Group, Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee, Indigenous Advisory Committee, Positive Ageing Reference Group, Rural Advisory Committee, Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Group
- Dedicated Youth Summit
- Focused survey on Place and Priorities for budget

Stage 4

July 2025

Draft released for comment

- In person pop-up events
- Online engagement through Shaping page
- Community group feedback



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Annual Action Plan

The annual Action Plan provides detail on each initiative, including key milestones to ensure we achieve the desired outcome.

The Action Plan is an attachment to the four year Council Plan and is reviewed annually to ensure what we do is still relevant to providing high quality services that meet the needs of the community.



Contact information

Community Links

Civic Centre - Lilydale Community Link
15 Anderson Street

Healesville Community Link
110 River Street

Monbulk Community Link
21 Main Road

Upwey Community Link
40 Main Street

Yarra Junction Community Link
2442–2444 Warburton Highway

National Relay Service

133 677 for callers who have
a hearing, speech or
communication impairment
and for Text Telephone or
modem callers

1300 555 727 for callers using Speech to
Speech relay

9658 9461 TTY

Translation and Interpreting Service

131 450 Translating and Interpreting Services
(TIS) National. An interpreting service is
available if required.

Copies and further information

This Council Plan - and all supporting documents – are available as printed documents or via our website. To obtain a copy, please contact us on **1300 368 333** or visit **www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au**.

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