

KEY LIFE STAGES FOR ENDORSEMENT

Report Author: Executive Officer Social Infrastructure Planning
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

This report presents the Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029. The Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029 is a supporting strategy to the Council Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy illustrates Council's focus for the whole community's wellbeing. This strategy is supported by a number of other strategic documents (Disability Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Housing Strategy, Environment Strategy, Creative Communities Strategy, and the Key Life Stages Plan) that define Council's role in assisting sections of the community or our culture that require targeted support.

The Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029 (The Plan) recognises and addresses the unique opportunities and challenges that appear during some of the more vulnerable ages experienced over a person's lifetime. The Plan outlines how Council will target activities to best support our community's health and wellbeing through a whole-of-life approach. The Plan also acknowledges that support occurs within sectors where funded services and programs are designed for specific age ranges.

This plan replaces five standalone strategies (Early Years Strategic Action Plan 2019-2021, Middle Years Strategic Action Plan 2017-2021, Healthy and Active Ageing Plan 2019-2023, Youth Plan 2021-2023 & the Child and Youth Strategic Plan 2014-2024) with an integrated approach also better considers the co-dependency of life stages and the need to consider that in service provision.

As a third-tier strategic plan, the Key Life Stages Plan is more operational focussing on: communicating service intent; clarifying specific advocacy topics; and supporting integrated planning in the support service network across the municipality.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At the Council Meeting on 24 October 2023 Council resolved to transition out of being a provider of Meals, Transport and Social Support Group by 30 June 2024.

Part of this motion included the following item for Council to: Consider a proposed model for how Council will support Healthy Ageing at a future Council meeting. The Healthy & Active Ageing Plan portion of the Key Life Stages is the proposed model.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Key Life Stages refers to the phases in life that are associated with significant developmental changes and transitions. These stages include notable development or change in an individual's physical, cognitive, emotional and social experiences.

Council is moving from standalone age-focussed strategies to a Key Life Stages Plan that will better integrate and align Council's Early Years, Middle Years, Youth and Healthy Ageing Plans.

It will replace the five previous strategies that focussed on the critical ages in a lifespan:

- Early Years Strategic Action Plan 2019-2021
- Middle Years Strategic Action Plan 2017-2021
- Healthy and Active Ageing Plan 2019-2023
- Youth Plan 2021-2023
- Child and Youth Strategic Plan 2014-2024.

Through integrating this strategic planning, services can more inclusively, pre-emptively and consistently address the needs of people, across their key life stages and those who support them.

As a supporting strategy to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Key Life Stages Plan will support the vision of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Key Life Stages Plan's purpose is to outline our commitment to designing age specific supports, create greater clarity on Council's focus areas to enable better

partnerships with other age specific services and establish a strong advocacy platform for government funding applications.

There are many players supporting strong progress through individuals' life journeys. The Plan articulates the various roles Council plays in the each of the Age Cohort Action Plans.

Development of the Key Life Stages Plan

Research undertaken for the Plan's development involved a review of previous strategies and a scan across the relevant sectors. Each action plan also references guiding international, national and state strategies that shape their respective strategic contexts. Combining this research with local data ensured both a localised response and consideration of grant opportunities that may become available.

The research and local data provided an indication of key priority areas, that were then tested with community through a series of targeted engagement sessions through the initial consultation phase. This community engagement informed the development of three themes. The strategic actions within the Key Life Stages Plan, which support relevant age cohorts, are built around these themes which are:

1. **Connection:** Strong connections enhance community resilience. We strengthen community by linking people and supports (services, infrastructure, community networks) with each other.
2. **Places:** We plan and advocate for places that include buildings, parks, playspaces, community spaces and natural environment, all of which have a role in supporting communities to thrive and connect.
3. **Inclusion:** Embracing and valuing the diverse experiences, cultures, and abilities of all community members enriches our collective strength. We lead, partner and advocate for a community that is inclusive, welcoming, accessible, and celebrates everyone.

Options considered

Initially there was consideration of developing another suite of standalone strategies, but the benefit of integrated planning was clearly a stronger approach.

The consolidated draft Plan is offered for Councillor consideration, which has been developed utilising the significant whole-of-community engagement activities that were undertaken for the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy along with targeted discussions on the Key Life Stages Plan.

Recommended option and justification

The recommended option is to support the endorsement of the draft Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029.

The draft Plan has been informed by:

- Health and Wellbeing Data Profile of Yarra Ranges Council

- Gender Impact Assessments
- Other Council engagement projects – Middle Years Conversation, Youth Summit, Youth Survey, Youth Advisory Group meetings, Yarra Junction Place Plan Peer Led Youth Engagement, Young People and Emergency Management in Yarra Ranges, and Upper Yarra Partnerships Listen to Learn.
- Human Services Needs Analysis
- Initial phases of community engagement undertaken as part of the Council Plan, Disability Action Plan, and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Second Phase of Health and Wellbeing Strategy Community engagement
- Initial Phase of Key Life Stages Plan Community engagement
- Second Phase of Key Life Stages Plan Community engagement

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

No additional costs, outside of existing budget have been identified to implement the Key Life Stages Plan throughout its lifespan (2025-2029).

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan: This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan: Healthy Connected Communities. This objective focuses on fostering communities that are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive and socially connected with quality services accessible to everyone.

Key Life Stages specifically looks to provide a replacement for the following expired plans:

- Early Years Strategic Action Plan 2019-2021
- Middle Years Strategic Action Plan 2017-2021
- Healthy and Active Ageing Plan 2019-2023
- Youth Plan 2021-2023
- Child and Youth Strategic Plan 2014-2024

RELEVANT LAW

Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) were undertaken for each of the cohort action plans (Healthy and Active Ageing, Youth and Early and Middle Years) in the Key Life Stages Plan, as required under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

There are no economic impacts for this recommendation.

Social Implications

The social impact in moving to a Key Life Stages approach, aims to improve integration across services, which results in better support for people and families as they transition across life stages and service needs.

Environmental Implications

There are no environmental impacts for this recommendation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As a supporting strategy, the initial draft Key Life Stages Plan was developed using current, broadscale consultation undertaken for first and second tier strategies. This was supplemented with targeted engagement processes to understand the opportunities and pressures faced by specific age cohorts.

This approach recognises the potential engagement fatigue within the Yarra Ranges community given the multiple extensive consultation taking place and is in line with our engagement approaches for strategic work at this hierarchical level.

The current draft Key Life Stages Plan was refined using three sources of feedback:

- Councillors' feedback on the initial draft version
- Relevant comments received through the second phase of engagement associated with the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Feedback from those groups involved in the second phase of targeted consultation with the draft Key Life Stages Plan.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The key life stages approach is a new methodology at Yarra Ranges Council. The draft Plan has had input from the Corporate Leadership Team and project progress has been reported regularly to the Integrated Planning Project Control Group.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The primary risk to Council associated with the Key Life Stages Plan involves reputation and stakeholder relationships. Council's appetite for reputation and stakeholder relationship risk is low to medium.

The consultation for this Plan was assessed as having the potential for minor impacts to reputation and stakeholder relationships (e.g. community concerns voiced locally) with an unlikely possibility of that occurring. This assessment results in a low-risk rating.

The scoping for this project established the financial parameters for any action plans being developed. This ensured that there were no unexpected costs associated with implementing the Plan.

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. Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029