FUTURE WELLINGTON

Your Vision, Our Mission.

COUNCIL PLAN

2025-29

WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

Acknowledgement of Country

Wellington Shire Council acknowledges our offices are located on the traditional lands of the Gunaikurnai nation. We pay our deep respects to their Elders past, present and future and acknowledge their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to their land and waters.

Aunty Eileen Harrison
(born Australia 1948)
Gunaikurnai
Celebration of our Culture, 2018

Acrylic on canvas, 140 x 240cm
Collection Gippsland Art Gallery
Purchased with the assistance of the Robert Salzer Foundation and the Friends of the Gallery, 2025

© The artist

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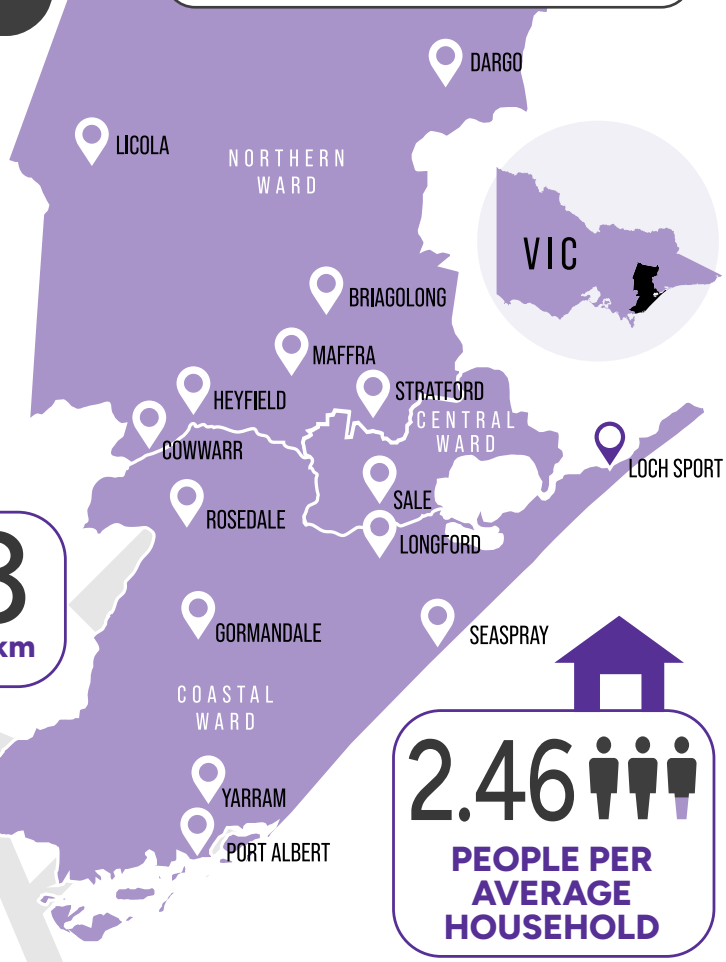
WELLINGTON SHIRE

Profile

WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

11,000 Square kilometres



Population

46,533

Male 50.4%

Female 49.6%

Families 11,979

4.23 Persons per sq km

23,503 PRIVATE DWELLINGS

5.5% HOUSEHOLDS WHERE A NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS USED

2.46 PEOPLE PER AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD

23%	29.5%	9.1%	28.2%	2.1%	8.1%
Couples with children	Couples without children	One parent households	People living alone	Visitor only households	Other households

industry

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES 4,327

TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS 19,315

20.7%	43.7%	13.2%	18.8%
Employed full-time	Work part-time	Employed, away from work	Unemployed

Top 6 industries make up 63.1% of employment

1. Health care & social assistance **15.2%**
2. Agriculture, forestry and fishing **11.5%**
3. Construction **9.6%**
4. Public administration and safety **9.4%**
5. Retail trade **8.9%**
6. Education and training **8.5%**

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Mayor's Message

On behalf of Wellington Shire Council, I am proud to present the Council Plan 2025–29.

Our vision for the future of Wellington is connected, inclusive communities, a thriving economy, a resilient environment and a sustainable future. This vision guides the development of our Council Plan, which is built around four strategic objectives and underpinned by six guiding principles that shape Council's direction for the next four years.

To ensure the plan reflects the priorities of our people, we invited feedback from across the municipality through our extensive engagement program – *Future Wellington*. This included a broad range of activities to capture the voice of our diverse community, such as the formation of the Future Wellington Think Tank.

We acknowledge the distinct character of our local communities, the diverse demographics and the geographic spread of our Shire, and thank everyone who contributed time and ideas throughout the process.

Developed in partnership with our community, the Council Plan 2025-29 is one of the most important pieces of work for the next four-year term. It reflects the aspirations shared with us and is built around four key strategic objectives:

- Healthy and Connected Communities – Vibrant, healthy, connected and inclusive communities. Quality services accessible to everyone.
- Dynamic and Diverse Economy – An economy that enables sustainable growth, and enhances the social environment, lifestyle and unique characteristics of our communities.
- Infrastructure, Spaces and Places – Strategically planned, designed and well-maintained infrastructure, spaces and places.
- Natural Environment – A healthy natural environment, protected and nurtured for generations to come.

These strategic objectives will help us stay focused on our region's strengths and our community's aspirations. They will also guide how we respond to current challenges and prepare for future opportunities.

The Council Plan 2025-29 gives Council, staff, partners, stakeholders and the wider community a clear path for day-to-day actions, working towards the Community Vision 2041.

We look forward to working with our community to bring this vision to life and to stay accountable for our progress across the next four years. We are committed to making Wellington the best place to live, work, study and play for everyone.

Cr Scott Rossetti
Mayor

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OUR COUNCILLORS

WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

Cr Liz Foat
Central Ward

Cr Scott Rossetti
Central Ward

Cr Geoff Wells
Central Ward

Cr Catherine Bannerman
Coastal Ward

Cr Cindy Madeley
Coastal Ward

Cr Garry Stephens
Coastal Ward

Cr Edward Lowe
Northern Ward

Cr Carmel Ripper
Northern Ward

Cr John Tatterson
Northern Ward

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

Strategic Objective One:

Healthy Connected Communities

Vibrant, healthy, connected and inclusive communities. Quality services are accessible to everyone.

- Enabling utilisation, access and movement across places and spaces.
- Celebrating, respecting and embracing the Gunaikurnai people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.
- Enriching community experiences through creativity, culture and history for all ages and abilities.
- Aligning services through a community-centred organisation.

Strategic Objective Two:

Dynamic and Diverse Economy

An economy that enables sustainable growth, enhancing the social environment, lifestyle and unique characteristics of our communities.

- Supporting job growth and diversification of our economy.
- Leveraging our natural environment and community assets to promote tourism, events and activation.
- Planning to support future growth and changing needs of our community.
- Guiding responsible, sustainable development that protects, values and celebrates our unique heritage.

Strategic Objective Three:

Infrastructure, Spaces and Places

Strategically planned, designed and well-maintained infrastructure, spaces and places.

- Providing high quality places and spaces to enhance our townships and community.
- Developing and promoting safe and suitable transport infrastructure.
- Coordinating facilities and infrastructure to meet growth and evolving needs.
- Fostering inclusive and accessible spaces for community connection, creativity and activities.

Strategic Objective Four:

Natural Environment

A healthy natural environment, protected and nurtured for generations to come.

- Contributing to the protection and revitalisation of natural landscapes, biodiversity, and waterways.
- Encouraging and supporting sustainable practices.
- Strengthening natural disaster resilience and emergency response preparedness.
- Empowering the community and businesses to drive positive environmental outcomes.

About this plan

What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020* and is the key strategic document that describes the commitments Council makes to its community.

Created in close collaboration with our community the Council Plan sets the course for our work over the next four years and outlines how Council will support the achievement of the Community Vision 2041, respond to the unique challenges and opportunities facing our Shire, and meet the statutory responsibilities placed on councils.

This document serves as a roadmap, shaping all actions and priorities. The Council Plan 2025-29 sets the strategic direction around four Strategic Objectives to realise the aspirations of the community.

Our role

Local Government is one of the three levels of government that actively works within and for the community. Council's main responsibilities are to set the overall directions and goals for the municipality and then monitor their implementation and success.

There are many challenges facing the community that Council does not have direct control over. This includes areas that fall under State and Federal Government jurisdiction, such as major transport infrastructure, public transport and arterial roads. However, Council actively works to influence and facilitate service and infrastructure provision in other ways as outlined in the table below:

Provider	Council operates and delivers the service
Funder	Council does not directly provide the service but provides funding for its delivery to the community
Regulator	Council is responsible for enforcing legislative requirements relating to the service
Facilitator	Council doesn't directly deliver the service but promotes or facilitates its delivery
Advocate	Council uses a range of methods to advocate on behalf of the community, depending on the issue. Advocacy can include submissions, regional partnership groups and forums, discussions with Ministers and lobbying.

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How do the Community Vision 2041 and the Council Plan 2025-29 connect?

The Council Plan 2025-29 outlines four Strategic Objectives and accompanying Strategies that shape Council's Strategic Direction and support the achievement of the community's aspirations.

These are aligned with the Community Vision 2041 as shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1 Community Vision 2041 and Council Plan 2025-29

The connection between the Community Vision 2041, Council Plan 2025-29 and linkages to the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan – Live Well in Wellington are detailed in *Figure 2*.

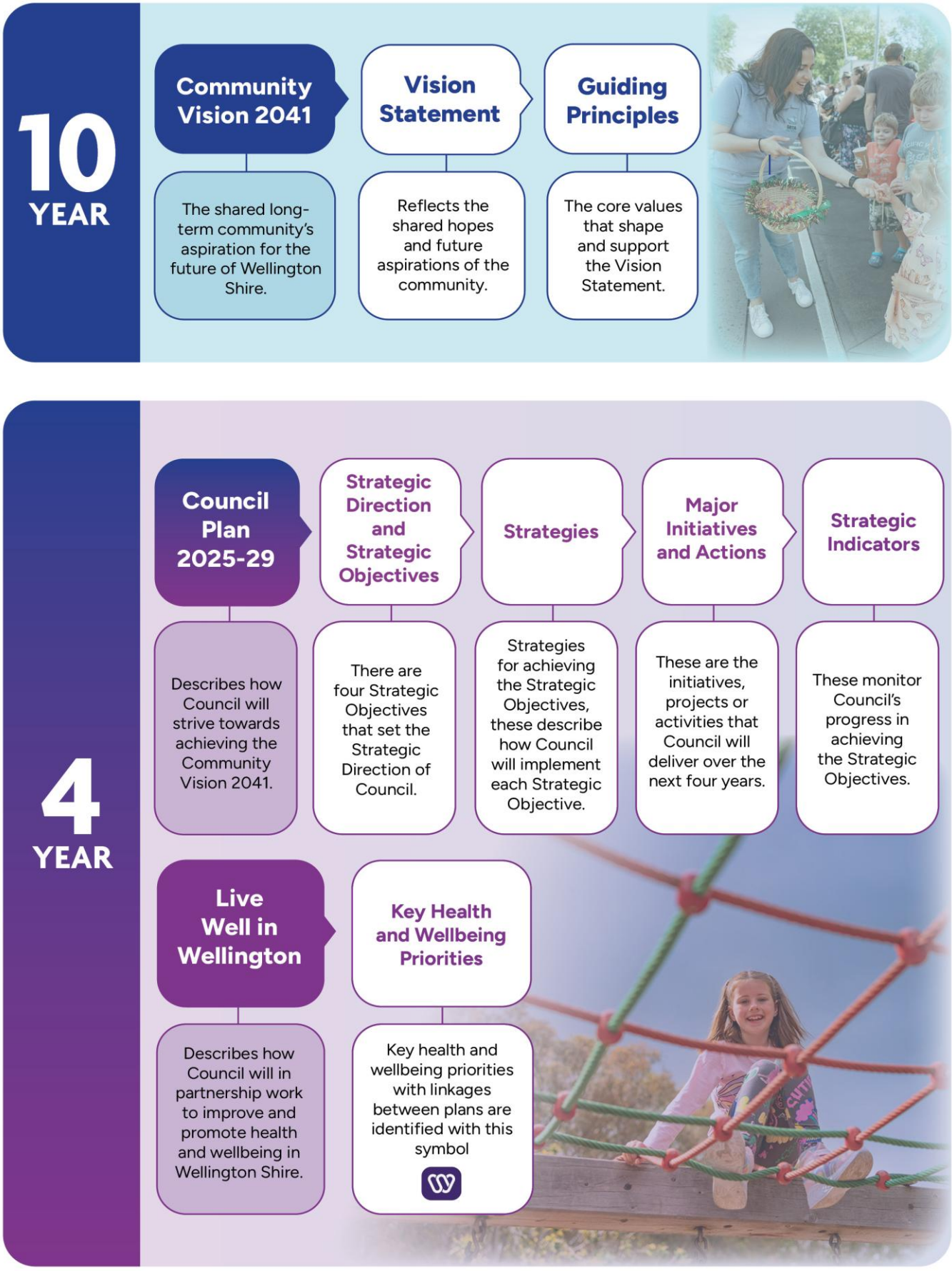

Figure 2 Interconnected plans

Linkage to strategic documents

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils to develop and maintain a series of key strategic documents that guide their decision-making and service delivery over the medium to long-term. These documents ensure councils operate transparently, meet community expectations, and fulfil legislative obligations.

Figure 3 Statutory strategic documents with a 4-10 year life span

Figure 3 illustrates the statutory documents required as follows:

Community Vision (a minimum of 10-years)

Developed in partnership with the community, this outlines the long-term aspirations and guiding principles for the Wellington Shire. It sets the foundation for all future planning.

Council Plan (4-year term)

Adopted by each newly elected Council, the Council Plan details the strategic objectives, strategies, major initiatives and actions to be delivered over the Council's four-year term. It aligns with the Community Vision and informs annual budgeting and reporting.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (4-year term)

This plan identifies the key health and wellbeing priorities of the community and outlines the strategies Council will undertake to support improved public health outcomes.

Financial Plan (at least a 10-year term)

This plan ensures Council's financial sustainability over the long term. It forecasts income, expenditure, and funding needs to support strategic goals and service delivery.

Asset Plan (at least a 10-year term)

This plan outlines how the Council will manage its infrastructure and other assets responsibly to meet community needs now and into the future.

Budget & Capital Works (4-year term)

The budget outlines Council's planned income and expenditure for the year, while the capital works program details major infrastructure projects such as roads, buildings, and community facilities.

Revenue & Rating Plan (4-year term)

This plan establishes the revenue raising framework within which Council proposes to work.

Workforce Plan (4-year term)

This plan ensures Council has an adequate supply of people skills, knowledge and experience required to achieve its Strategic Objectives, efficiently and effectively into the future.

These plans along with a comprehensive suite of strategies underpin the delivery of services and initiatives, ensuring alignment with the Council Plan 2025-29 and the long-term aspirations of the Community Vision 2041.

A listing of strategies and plans is available on the Wellington Shire Council website by following this link **Strategies and Plans (wellington.vic.gov.au)**.

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How the community was engaged

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that councils develop or review their Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

Wellington Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy outlines an organisational commitment to genuine and effective community engagement in council planning and decision making.

Council follows the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum which focusses on five engagement levels – inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

Engaging the community

An extensive community engagement process was undertaken between July 2024 and March 2025 to inform the development of Council's new Community Vision, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan, and Asset Plan that together, guide the direction and priorities of the local community for the next four years.

This was called Future Wellington and took place over three stages:

- **Stage 1 - Community check-in process (July to August 2024)**

  The community check-in focused on broad engagement that aimed for maximum community participation by offering a range of different ways for people to share their feedback to ensure the diversity of the community was included.

  Through the community check-in process, approximately 1900 people were engaged, who provided feedback about their aspirations for the future and community priorities and services to be delivered under the Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan, and Asset Plan.

  In recognising the unique character of local townships and the geographic spread of the municipality, a wide range of activities were offered for community members to provide their feedback. There were over 40 different locations across the municipality where people could contribute.

  A range of community engagement strategies were utilised to capture diverse perspectives, ensuring that gender and intersectionality considerations were comprehensive and inclusive. In particular, the range of activities offered through the stage 1 engagement allowed us to gather input from a wide array of community members.

  Consultation activities included:

  1. **Survey** - available via Your Wellington Your Say page. Hard copy surveys made available.
  2. **Workshops** – in-person facilitated workshops held across different locations.
  3. **Drawing competition** – tailored engagement approach to include a strong focus on involving children and young people.
  4. **Photo competition** – accessible engagement for people who prefer to engage through visual storytelling.

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5. **Postcards** – quick response cards, submitted via collection boxes available in numerous different locations across the municipality.
6. **Popups and events** – attendance at various community events including markets.

A summary of the engagement results is provided in the Future Wellington Community Check-in Findings Report and was presented to the newly elected Councillor group in December 2024.

The Future Wellington Community Check-in Findings Report can be found at **Your Wellington Your Say**.

- **Stage 2 – Deliberate engagement (February to March 2025)**

  Council established the Future Wellington Think Tank, a representative group of 22 community members to make recommendations to Council for the new Community Vision and Guiding Principles.

  This deliberative engagement process met the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and aligned with industry best practice for deliberative engagement.

  The stage 2 engagement was based on forming a group of members who were representative of the community. By actively involving individuals from different backgrounds, the aim was to ensure that as many views as possible contributed to the development of the Council Plan 2025-29.

- **Stage 3 - Reporting back and exhibiting the draft Council Plan 2025-29 (June to July 2025)**

  Community members and stakeholders were invited to review the draft Council Plan 2025-29 and had further opportunity to comment on whether it met their needs and aspirations, as identified in earlier stages of engagement.

The Future Wellington Think Tank

In October 2024, residents were invited to express their interest in joining the Future Wellington Think Tank to participate in a deliberative engagement process. The expression of interest process was promoted during the community check-in process and then publicly advertised on-line via the Council website, social media, and through direct emails.

The Future Wellington Think Tank was established following an expression of interest (EOI) process, which received a total of 45 EOIs. From these, a pool of 30 potential members, considered a representative sample of the Wellington community, was recommended. Although 27 community members accepted the invitation to join the Future Wellington Think Tank, the final number of participants was 22. An external consultant was responsible for recommending the composition of the group, using criteria designed to reflect the demographic makeup of Wellington Shire, thereby promoting diversity and commitment to the deliberative engagement process.

Through a series of four workshops the Future Wellington Think Tank deliberated over the Future Wellington Community Check-in Findings Report, heard from subject matter experts, learnt from each other about local priorities, shared their own perspectives and weighed up options about the future of Wellington Shire and made recommendations about the new Community Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.

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The Future Wellington Think Tank process met the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and aligned with the seven industry best practice principles of deliberation as shown in *Figure 4*.

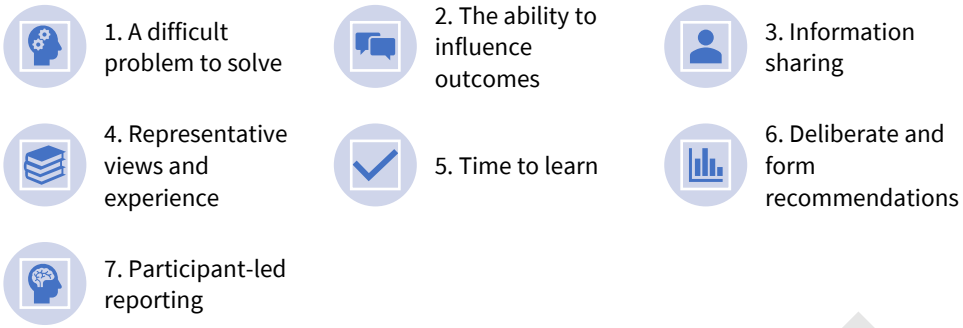

Figure 4 Seven Principles of Deliberative Engagement

The Vision Statement and six interconnected guiding principles were adopted by Council in 2025 and have informed the development of the Council Plan 2025-29.

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Linkage to Live Well in Wellington

As required by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, Council has developed a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, referred to as Live Well in Wellington to outline the health and wellbeing priorities for the Wellington Shire. This plan covers the next four years from 2025 to 2029.

Live Well in Wellington has been developed alongside the Council Plan 2025-29 and recognises health and wellbeing as the foundation for every community member to live full and productive lives.

Live Well in Wellington focuses on three key health and wellbeing priorities and objectives as shown in *Figure 5* below. These priorities were chosen for their potential to achieve the greatest impact on the health and wellbeing of the local community, while also aligning with the role of Council and ensuring effective collaboration for collective impact with local health services and organisation partners.

Priority 1: Safe and Respectful	**Priority 2:** Mental Health and Wellbeing	**Priority 3:** Healthy and Active
Objectives	**Objectives**	**Objectives**
• Reduce all forms of gendered violence. • Embed gender equity by addressing structural barriers and fostering inclusive policies, environments, and community culture. • Reduce harm from alcohol and other drugs. • Reduce harm from tobacco and vapes. • Reduce the influence of harmful industries.	• Build connection to culture, country, and community. • Ensure diverse and marginalised communities are included, represented, and celebrated. • Increase community knowledge and capacity to support mental health and wellbeing. • Reduce social isolation and strengthen community connections.	• Improve and create social and physical environments that support healthy eating. • Improve and create social and physical environments that support active living.

Figure 5 Health and Wellbeing Priorities and Objectives

The Council Plan 2025-29 includes Strategic Objectives and Strategies that also support our health and wellbeing priorities. This icon is used throughout the Council Plan 2025-29 to indicate linkages to Live Well in Wellington.

Our Context

Our Shire

Wellington Shire Council is located in Gippsland and is Victoria's third-largest municipality, covering nearly 11,000 square kilometres. The Shire was established in 1994 following the amalgamation of the Shires of Alberton, Avon, Maffra, the City of Sale and parts of Rosedale. It is situated on the traditional land of the Gunaikurnai People. Gunaikurnai country stretches across coastal and inland areas beyond Wellington's boundaries, including parts of the southern slopes of the Victorian Alps. The municipality is divided into three wards: Central, Coastal and Northern.

Known as *The Middle of Everywhere*, Wellington Shire is recognised for its diverse and striking natural landscape, ranging from pristine beaches and rainforests to mountain ranges, and expansive wetlands. Iconic locations such as the Ninety Mile Beach, Alpine National Park, and the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park make the region a hub for tourism, economic activity, and sustainable development.

Wellington's geography and climate also bring environmental challenges, including bushfires, flooding, salinity, erosion, and the growing impacts of changes to environmental conditions.

Home to more than 30 communities and over 46,000 residents, most people live in and around the main centres of Sale, Maffra, Rosedale, Yarram, Stratford, and Heyfield. Council manages more than $1.4 billion in assets and infrastructure, and the population is expected to grow to over 57,000 by 2041, increasing the need for housing and supporting services.

Our Community

Wellington Shire has an ageing population, with 31% of residents aged 60 and over. This is significantly higher than the Victorian average of 22.4%. A total of 11% of residents were born overseas, and the top three languages spoken at home other than English are Mandarin, Tagalog (a Filipino dialect), and Vietnamese. Lone-person households are also more common in Wellington Shire, making up just over 28.2% of all households, compared to 22.4% across Victoria.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 2% of the Wellington Shire population. This is higher than the Victorian average. In addition, just shy of 10% of residents identify as LGBTQIA+. A significant portion of the population at almost 30% self-report having a disability, with 7.1% requiring assistance with core daily activities.

The type of housing across Wellington Shire is diverse, including rural properties, coastal homes, farms, and medium to higher-density housing. Future planning suggests that there is strong potential to increase housing diversity and make better use of urban land and infrastructure. As household sizes shrink and the population ages, there is a growing need for housing options such as apartments, shop-top living, villa units and townhouses. Increasing the supply of social and affordable housing is essential to maintaining Wellington Shire's liveability, productivity and inclusiveness.

Employment across the Shire is expected to grow by 4,000 jobs by 2041. This growth will be supported by early planning and the availability of commercial and industrial land. Much of this employment growth will be in industries that require larger land areas and building footprints, such as primary industries. Significant job increases are forecast for urban centres, particularly in Sale and Maffra, with industrial expansion likely to occur on the outskirts of these towns and other communities.

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Our Future

Wellington's economy is strong and diverse, supported by long-established industries such as Defence, aviation, oil and gas, construction and tourism. Healthcare, social assistance and agriculture are the largest employment sectors, with local farmers playing a key role in Gippsland's $7 billion food and fibre sector. The region is also home to Fulham Correctional Centre, a medium-security prison for men with a capacity of nearly 900 inmates.

Wellington Shire sits at the centre of Australia's first declared offshore wind zone, which has a proposed capacity of 25GW and an estimated $40 billion in investment. Supporting Australia's move to new energy is a strategic priority, and attracting renewable energy investment is essential for the region's transition and economic future. Over the next decade, the Shire will face a number of challenges, including the need for new transmission infrastructure, grid connections, accommodation for a growing workforce and funding for local infrastructure. Planning requirements and ongoing consultation processes may also place pressure on community and Council resources. Collaboration with neighbouring councils, including South Gippsland and Latrobe City, and strong advocacy to state and federal governments will be critical.

Wellington Shire's aviation industry is also a growing asset that extends well beyond the Royal Australian Air Force Base in East Sale. Council operates both West Sale and Yarram Airports, supporting a strong and passionate local aviation sector. The region continues to benefit from more than $400 million in ongoing Defence aviation investment at the RAAF Base, home to Defence's Basic Pilot Training School under Project Air 5428.

This activity, along with the development of a 30-year master plan for West Sale Airport, will deliver a significant economic boost to the Shire and position Wellington as a hub for aviation training, infrastructure and innovation. It all ties into our unique identity *The Middle of Everywhere* - with the biennial ANZAC Weekend Airshow at West Sale Airport serving as a major regional attraction, driving tourism, economic activity and strengthening our profile as a key player in the aviation space.

Although Wellington is undergoing major economic shifts, such as the decline of the oil and gas industry, the end of native timber harvesting and the closure of coal plants across Gippsland, it remains well-positioned for growth. Its natural assets, strategic location and established industries provide a strong foundation for expansion in renewable energy, Defence and other emerging sectors.

Key Partners

Delivering the major initiatives and actions in this Council Plan will take more than Council working alone. Each Strategic Objective includes strategies designed to create positive change over the next four years, and many of these will rely on collaboration.

State and Federal Funding Context

Wellington Shire Council is committed to delivering the initiatives and actions outlined in this Council Plan over the next four years. However, unexpected events such as natural disasters or changes to local industries and employment continue to create new needs and opportunities that require Council to adjust its focus.

Many State and Federal Government programs rely on local councils to deliver their priorities. Where possible, Council will align these external funding opportunities with the goals and priorities already outlined in this plan. However, Council may also pursue funding for projects that fall outside the plan if they offer clear benefits to our community.

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When considering projects outside the plan, Council will carefully assess their social and economic impact. This includes evaluating long-term factors such as the cost of maintaining new assets or infrastructure.

Wellington Shire Council also takes a regional approach to funding and advocacy through its involvement in One Gippsland and the Gippsland Regional Plan. As one of six Gippsland councils, we work together to address regionally significant issues and attract investment for transformative projects that benefit the wider region.

These shared priorities guide advocacy efforts with State and Federal governments, supported by organisations like Regional Development Australia, Regional Development Victoria, and Regional Partnerships.

Federal funding programs, such as Growing Regions and the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program often require alignment with the Gippsland Regional Plan. By collaborating at a regional level, Wellington Shire Council strengthens its ability to secure funding, leverage shared resources, and deliver projects that support long-term growth and wellbeing across Gippsland.

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The Middle of Everywhere campaign has been a resounding success for Wellington Shire, transforming regional perception, driving tourism, attracting investment, and fostering a renewed sense of local pride. Launched as a bold and unifying identity, the campaign has elevated the Shire's profile across Victoria and beyond generating millions in visitor spending, securing national recognition, and providing a strong platform for economic development. By redefining the region as connected, vibrant, and full of opportunity, The Middle of Everywhere has become a powerful catalyst for community confidence, growth, and resilience.

However, The Middle of Everywhere is more than just a slogan, it's a lifestyle brand and regional identity that captures the essence of life throughout the diverse and expansive region. This campaign celebrates the region's unique geographical position and the richness of its landscapes, communities, and opportunities.

Situated just 2.5 hours east of Melbourne, Wellington Shire offers a compelling mix of coastline, high country, farmland, and vibrant towns making it one of Victoria's most dynamic and liveable regional areas. From the tranquil waters of the Gippsland Lakes to the sweeping sands of the Ninety Mile Beach, and from the lush rainforest trails of Tarra Bulga National Park to the fertile farmlands and heritage towns of the interior, Wellington Shire is defined by its extraordinary natural beauty and variety. Whether you're after adventure, serenity, or a sense of belonging, the region offers space to roam and room to grow.

By positioning itself as "The Middle of Everywhere," Wellington Shire flips the script on regional identity. It is not isolated or removed but connected in every meaningful way: to nature, to community, and to opportunity. It is a place where life feels grounded, spacious, and full of possibility, a region where you're never far from the things that matter most. This clever, optimistic messaging has been embraced by local businesses, residents, and community groups, creating genuine grassroots momentum, something other councils often find difficult to achieve.

The campaign also shares real stories from residents, small business owners, farmers, artists, and young families. This human-centered content shows the diversity and richness of life in Wellington Shire, making the brand relatable and aspirational. It's not just about tourism, it's about lifestyle, connection, and potential.

The campaign's success similarly extends to local engagement. Businesses, community groups, and residents have embraced the brand, integrating it into signage, marketing materials, and local events, reinforcing a collective identity and enhancing the visibility of the region. The Middle of Everywhere messaging has provided a unifying theme that encourages collaboration across towns and industries. Economically, the campaign has contributed to a growing interest in Wellington Shire as a place to live, work, and invest.

By highlighting the region's connectivity, affordability, and quality of life, The Middle of Everywhere brand has supported efforts to attract new residents and businesses, particularly those seeking to relocate from metropolitan areas in search of greater space and lifestyle flexibility.

Councils often struggle to tie branding efforts to economic outcomes, so the demonstrable return on investment sets this campaign apart.

- Economic uplift through tourism, events, and investment
- Increased population interest from regional relocators
- National award recognition for marketing excellence
- Community buy-in and civic pride across towns
- A regional brand now known across Victoria and Australia

By promoting Wellington Shire as a connected and liveable region, not remote, but "the middle of everywhere" the campaign appeals to:

- Investors looking for affordable, well-serviced areas for development
- Professionals and remote workers seeking lifestyle relocation opportunities
- Entrepreneurs and start-ups drawn to lower operating costs and lifestyle advantages

Helping grow the working-age population, stimulates housing development, and creates demand for new services.

The campaign has garnered national attention, being a finalist in the 2021 and 2024 National Economic Development Awards for Excellence in the Economic Development Marketing and Promotion category. This recognition underscores the effectiveness of the campaign in promoting the region's assets to a wider audience .

Overall, The Middle of Everywhere campaign has been a transformative initiative for Wellington Shire, significantly elevating the region's profile on both a state and national scale. By crafting a bold and memorable identity, the campaign has not only drawn increased attention from tourists and potential investors but also instilled a renewed sense of pride among local residents.

It has effectively positioned Wellington Shire as a place that offers the best of all worlds; natural beauty, community spirit, and economic opportunity without the compromises often associated with regional living.

Wellington Shire isn't just proud of The Middle of Everywhere we see it as a defining success story that reflects the spirit and future of the region and will continue to expand and evolve the campaign.

Overview

In response to the aspirations of the Community Vision 2041, Council has developed four strategic objectives for the next four years to form the direction of the Council Plan 2025-29:

1. **Healthy and Connected Communities**

   Vibrant, healthy, connected and inclusive communities. Quality services are accessible to everyone.

2. **Dynamic and Diverse Economy**

   An economy that enables sustainable growth, enhancing the social environment, lifestyle and unique characteristics of our communities.

3. **Infrastructure, Spaces and Places**

   Strategically planned, designed and well-maintained infrastructure, spaces and places.

4. **Natural Environment**

   A healthy natural environment, protected and nurtured for generations to come.

Each Strategic Objective is supported by:

- four Strategies,
- a set of Major Initiatives and Actions, and
- Strategic Indicators for measuring success

These are outlined in more detail within the next section of this plan.

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Strategic Objective One

Healthy Connected Communities

Vibrant, healthy, connected and inclusive communities.
Quality services are accessible to everyone.

Strategic Objective One:

Healthy Connected Communities

Vibrant, healthy, connected and inclusive communities.
Quality services are accessible to everyone.

Strategies: what we will deliver			
Enabling utilisation, access and movement across places and spaces.	Celebrating, respecting and embracing the Gunaikurnai people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.	Enriching community experiences through creativity, culture and history for all ages and abilities.	Aligning services through a community-centred organisation.

Major Initiative (MI) and Actions (A): how we will deliver		
MI	1.1	Support initiatives that improve access, encourage movement, and increase community use of local places and spaces through education, infrastructure activation, and promotion of active and safe travel.
MI	1.2	Partner with the Gunaikurnai community to build better relationships and outcomes.
MI	1.3	Deliver transparent and consistent community engagement, providing opportunities for input and how community feedback is considered.
MI	1.4	Advance inclusion and engagement of socially and culturally diverse communities through a range of arts and culture programs.
MI	1.5	Implement key initiatives of the Information and Communication Technology Strategic Plan, including regional shared services initiatives, that support community facing services and emergency management responsiveness.
A	1.6	Provide ongoing internal training in inclusive practices, cultural safety, and accessibility.
A	1.7	Lead a collaborative procurement initiative to acquire upgraded leisure management software that provides a user-friendly customer experience.
A	1.8	Provide resources, training, and recognition opportunities that strengthen volunteering and community groups.
A	1.9	Strengthen public transparency through enhancing accessibility to reporting and decision-making information.
A	1.10	Continue to grow Wellington Shire's reputation as a cultural centre for Gippsland through major arts, culture events and festivals.

- indicates a linkage to Live Well in Wellington

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Strategic Objective One:

Healthy Connected Communities

Vibrant, healthy, connected and inclusive communities.
Quality services are accessible to everyone.

Strategic Indicators: How we will measure success	**Baseline** 30 June 2024	**Target** 30 June 2029
Community satisfaction with Council's customer service.	Wellington Shire Council result 71/100 Large Rural Council result 65/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Community satisfaction with Council's community and culture activities.	Wellington Shire Council result 64/100 Large Rural Council result 64/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Community satisfaction with Council's local street and footpath network.	Wellington Shire Council result 56/100 Large Rural Council result 46/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Satisfaction with Council's community consultation and engagement.	Wellington Shire Council result 53/100 Large Rural Council result 48/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Participation at Council-run performing arts events.	21,342 visits	Maintain
Participation in Gippsland Art Gallery programs and events.	57,337 visits	Maintain

Relevant Strategies and Plans	
Arts and Culture Strategy	Road Management Plan
Community Engagement Strategy	Urbans Paths Plan

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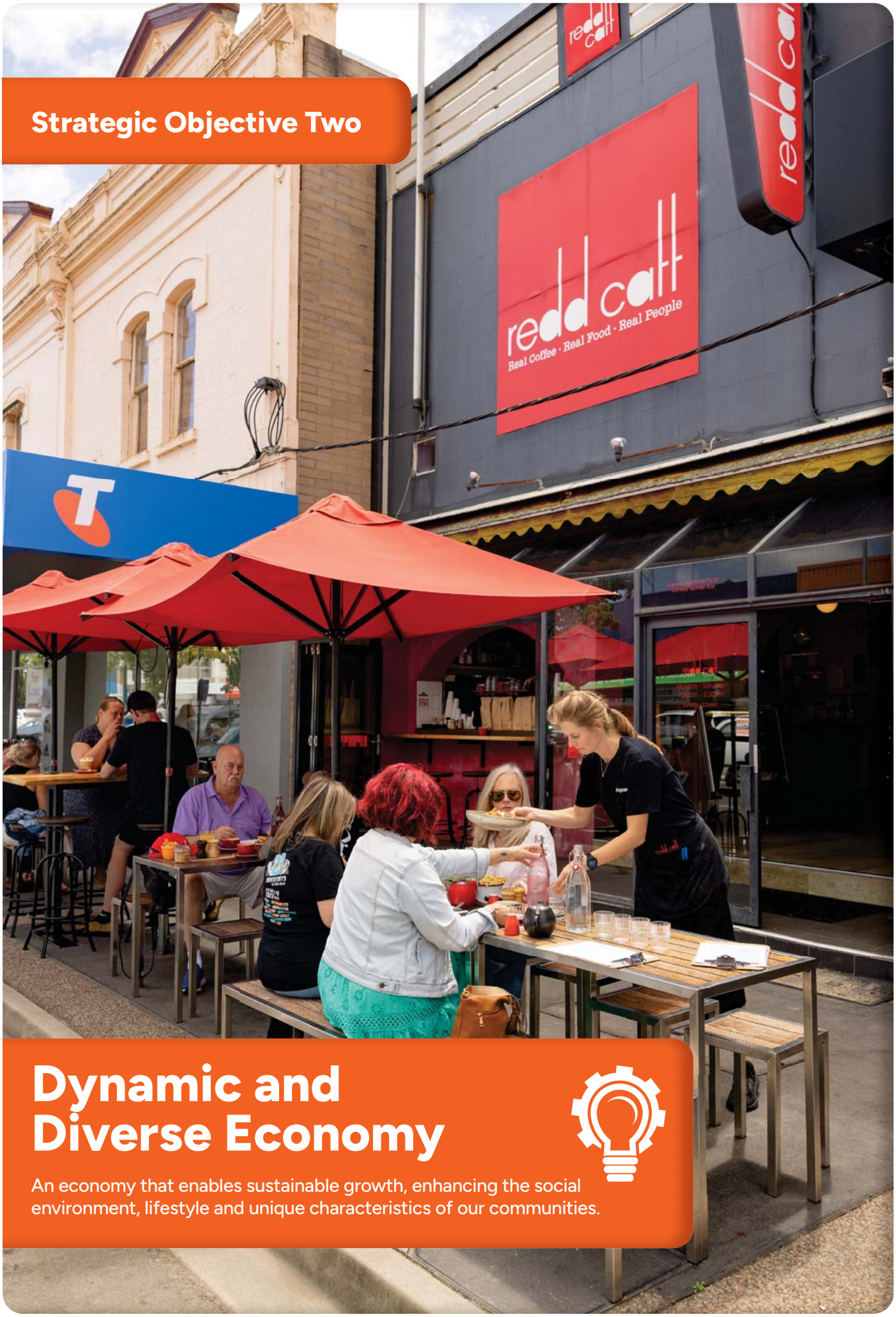

Strategic Objective Two

Dynamic and Diverse Economy

An economy that enables sustainable growth, enhancing the social environment, lifestyle and unique characteristics of our communities.

Strategic Objective Two:

Dynamic and Diverse Economy

An economy that enables sustainable growth, enhancing the social environment, lifestyle and unique characteristics of our communities.

Strategies: what we will deliver			
Supporting job growth and diversification of our economy.	Leveraging our natural environment and community assets to promote tourism, events and activation.	Planning to support future growth and changing needs of our community.	Guiding responsible, sustainable development that protects, values and celebrates our unique heritage.

Major Initiative (MI) and Actions (A): how we will deliver		
MI	2.1	Provide support to existing, new and emerging businesses and industries to contribute to their sustainability and growth.
MI	2.2	Deliver integrated, place-based planning for community infrastructure and services with a focus on housing diversity, equitable access, and long-term social and physical infrastructure requirements.
MI	2.3	Collaborate with industry and government partners in attracting new investment to advance renewable energy solutions.
MI	2.4	Maximise Council's current and future investment in The Middle of Everywhere branding and collateral.
MI	2.5	Facilitate the delivery of zoned land for residential, industrial and commercial growth and land supply.
MI	2.6	Progress the West Sale industrial precinct to facilitate economic development.
A	2.7	Progress initiatives and projects to maximise returns to Council by leveraging its assets.
A	2.8	Review the Wellington Planning Scheme.
A	2.9	Partner with and advocate for our local agricultural industry, to support and add value to horticulture, dairy, timber, animal husbandry and other key agri-business sectors.

- indicates a linkage to Live Well in Wellington

Strategic Objective Two:

Dynamic and Diverse Economy

An economy that enables sustainable growth, enhancing the social environment, lifestyle and unique characteristics of our communities.

Strategic Indicators: How we will measure success	Baseline 30 June 2024	Target 30 June 2029
Community satisfaction with the support given by Council to business, community development and tourism.	Wellington Shire Council result 61/100 Large Rural Council result 55/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Community satisfaction with Council's planning and building permits.	Wellington Shire Council result 55/100 Large Rural Council result 41/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Annual growth rate of real Gross Regional Product (GRP).	Wellington Shire Council $4.667B - 20.78% growth Gippsland $23.126B - 15.40% growth	Equal to or greater than the growth rate of Gippsland
Unemployment rate.	Wellington Shire 4.1% Gippsland 5.0%	Equal to or lower than the Gippsland average
Domestic travel visitors to Wellington Shire.	1,168,000 visitors	Increase
Population growth of Wellington Shire.	46,533 (0.88% growth)	Increase

Relevant Strategies and Plans	
Economic Development Strategy	Wellington Growth Management Strategy
Residential Stocktake and Facilitation Strategy	West Sale Airport Masterplan
Sale and District Feasibility Study	

Strategic Objective Three

Infrastructure, Spaces and Places

Strategically planned, designed and well-maintained infrastructure, spaces and places.

Strategic Objective Three:

Infrastructure, Spaces and Places

Strategically planned, designed and well-maintained infrastructure, spaces and places.

Strategies: what we will deliver			
Providing high quality places and spaces to enhance our townships and community.	Developing and promoting safe and suitable transport infrastructure.	Coordinating facilities and infrastructure to meet growth and evolving needs.	Fostering inclusive and accessible spaces for community connection, creativity and activities.

Major Initiative (MI) and Actions (A): how we will deliver		
MI	3.1	Maintain a network of local parks, open spaces and urban forest to support community activity, wellbeing and connection to the natural environment.
MI	3.2	Explore alternative, cost-effective models for delivering cultural, leisure, and recreation facilities and programs.
MI	3.3	Advocate and plan for early years infrastructure provision and developments that support inclusive access to appropriate facilities.
MI	3.4	Improve physical accessibility, enhance safety and ease of use for all ages and abilities, and embed inclusive design features.
MI	3.5	Deliver a targeted activation plan for the newly redeveloped Aqua Energy leisure facility.
MI	3.6	Develop and deliver a renewed Aquatic and Leisure Strategy.
MI	3.7	Undertake review of libraries to ensure improved effectiveness of service delivery without compromising community satisfaction.
MI	3.8	Work to ensure that our town centres are activated, safe, well presented, have appropriate facilities and are well-maintained.
MI	3.9	Undertake a review of the Community Managed Facilities Strategy to ensure continued community access to a well-managed, well-maintained spaces that prioritise high-use and multi-purpose venues.
A	3.10	Ensure the proactive maintenance, renewal, and management of Council infrastructure assets.
A	3.11	Deliver The Wedge Performing Arts Centre refresh project and operating model.
A	3.12	Revise the Residential Road and Street Construction and Urban Paths Plans.
A	3.13	Revise the Recreational Boating Facilities Plan.

- indicates a linkage to Live Well in Wellington

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Strategic Objective Three:

Infrastructure, Spaces and Places

Strategically planned, designed and well-maintained infrastructure, spaces and places.

Strategic Indicators: How we will measure success	**Baseline** 30 June 2024	**Target** 30 June 2029
Community satisfaction with the appearance of Council's public areas.	Wellington Shire Council result 71/100 Large Rural Council result 66/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Community satisfaction with Council's recreational facilities.	Wellington Shire Council result 69/100 Large Rural Council result 64/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Community satisfaction with Council's Art centres and libraries.	Wellington Shire Council result 79/100 Large Rural Council result 71/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Community satisfaction with Council's overall performance.	Wellington Shire Council result 59/100 Large Rural Council result 50/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Utilisation of aquatic facilities.	169,984 visits or 3.69 visits per head of population	Maintain
Library visits per head of population.	246,762 visits or 4.56 visits per head of population	Maintain

Relevant Strategies and Plans	
Community Infrastructure Plan	Recreational Boating Facilities Plan
Community Managed Facilities Strategy	Recreational Vehicle Strategy
Early Years Infrastructure Plan	Road Management Plan
Open Space Plan	Sporting Infrastructure Plan

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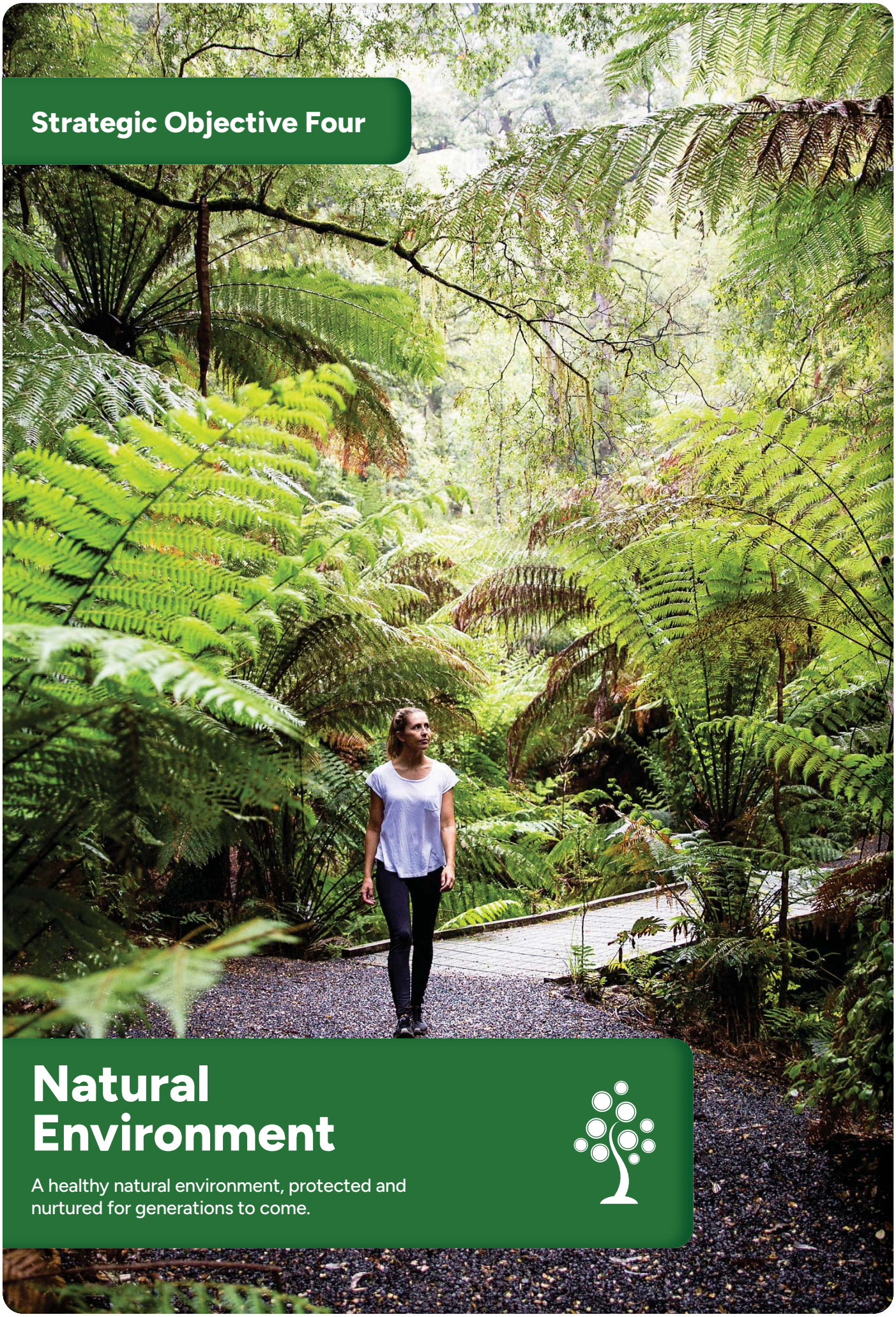

Strategic Objective Four

Natural Environment

A healthy natural environment, protected and nurtured for generations to come.

Strategic Objective Four:

Natural Environment

A healthy natural environment, protected and nurtured for generations to come.

Strategies: what we will deliver			
Contributing to the protection and revitalisation of natural landscapes, biodiversity, and waterways.	Encouraging and supporting sustainable practices.	Strengthening natural disaster resilience and emergency response preparedness.	Empowering the community and businesses to drive positive environmental outcomes.

Major Initiative (MI) and Actions (A): how we will deliver		
MI	**4.1**	In partnership with community and business, encourage sustainability initiatives and take actions to reduce Council's impact on climate.
MI	**4.2**	Enhance the extent and quality of the urban forest across our townships.
MI	**4.3**	Continue involvement in regional Integrated Water Management forum and consider funding opportunities where aligned with Integrated Water Management Plan.
MI	**4.4**	Encourage the reuse of items through the provision of a quality library service.
MI	**4.5**	Ensure emergency management plans are developed collaboratively with lead agencies and communities to improve community preparedness.
MI	**4.6**	Progress updates to the flooding provisions within the Wellington Planning Scheme.
A	**4.7**	Manage waste production and resource recovery, supporting both waste reduction and diversion from landfill.
A	**4.8**	Enhance the reuse and recycling of resources, minimise waste and support the development of circular economy initiatives.
A	**4.9**	Educate the community on the importance of environmental stewardship, sustainable living, and climate resilience.

- indicates a linkage to Live Well in Wellington

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Strategic Objective Four:

Natural Environment

A healthy natural environment, protected and nurtured for generations to come.

Strategic Indicators: How we will measure success	**Baseline** 30 June 2024	**Target** 30 June 2029
Community satisfaction with emergency and disaster management by Council.	Wellington Shire Council result 65/100 Large Rural Council result 65/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Community satisfaction with Council's approach to environmental sustainability.	Wellington Shire Council result 59/100 Large Rural Council result 58/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Community satisfaction with the management of waste by Council.	Wellington Shire Council result 64/100 Large Rural Council result 65/100	Equal to or greater than Large Rural Council result
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill.	30.02% waste diversion	Maintain
Achieve an annual nett gain of street and park trees through the Urban Forest Renewal Program.	TBC	Increase

Relevant Strategies and Plans	
Domestic Animal Management Plan	Municipal Fire Management Plan
Emergency Animal Welfare Plan	Municipal Relief and Recovery Plan
Integrated Water Management Plan	On-site Wastewater Management Plan
Municipal Emergency Management Plan	Sustainability Strategy

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Plan review and updates

The Council Plan 2025-29 is developed every four years to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs and long-term aspirations of the community.

This statutory review process provides a strategic framework that guides priorities, informs decision-making, and supports alignment across key stakeholders.

How progress is reported

Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Council Plan 2025-29 is a key responsibility of Council. Progress will be measured through the Strategic Indicators outlined in the Council Plan 2025-29, with annual updates provided to the community via the Annual Report.

In addition, quarterly updates on Major Initiatives and Actions will be published on the **Wellington Shire Council** website. These updates support Council's oversight responsibilities, ensuring initiatives are delivered on schedule and within budget.

Service delivery

Wellington Shire Council delivers over 100 services that support the daily lives, wellbeing, and prosperity of our community. Council is committed to delivering quality, accessible, and responsive services that meet the needs of our diverse and growing population.

Further information about the type of services delivered is available by visiting **Wellington Shire Council**.

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WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Yarram Service Centre
156 Grant Street, Yarram Victoria 3971
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