FUTURE WELLINGTON

Your Vision, Our Mission.

COMMUNITY VISION 2041

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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VISION STATEMENT

WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

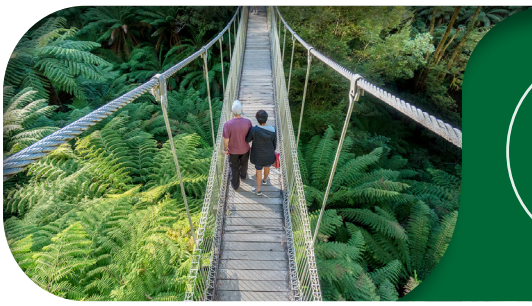
Connected, inclusive communities, a thriving economy, a resilient environment and a sustainable future.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

The Guiding Principles are interconnected and should not be considered in isolation.

1 Promote economic innovation and foster local prosperity to drive sustainable growth.



2 Commit to environmental stewardship and build resilience to protect our natural resources and ensure a sustainable future.

3 Engage with and support young people as key contributors to the future of our community.

4 Preserve and celebrate cultural heritage and diversity to enrich our community.

5 Foster connected and accessible communities that promote inclusivity, social integration, and access to services and transport, for all ages and abilities.

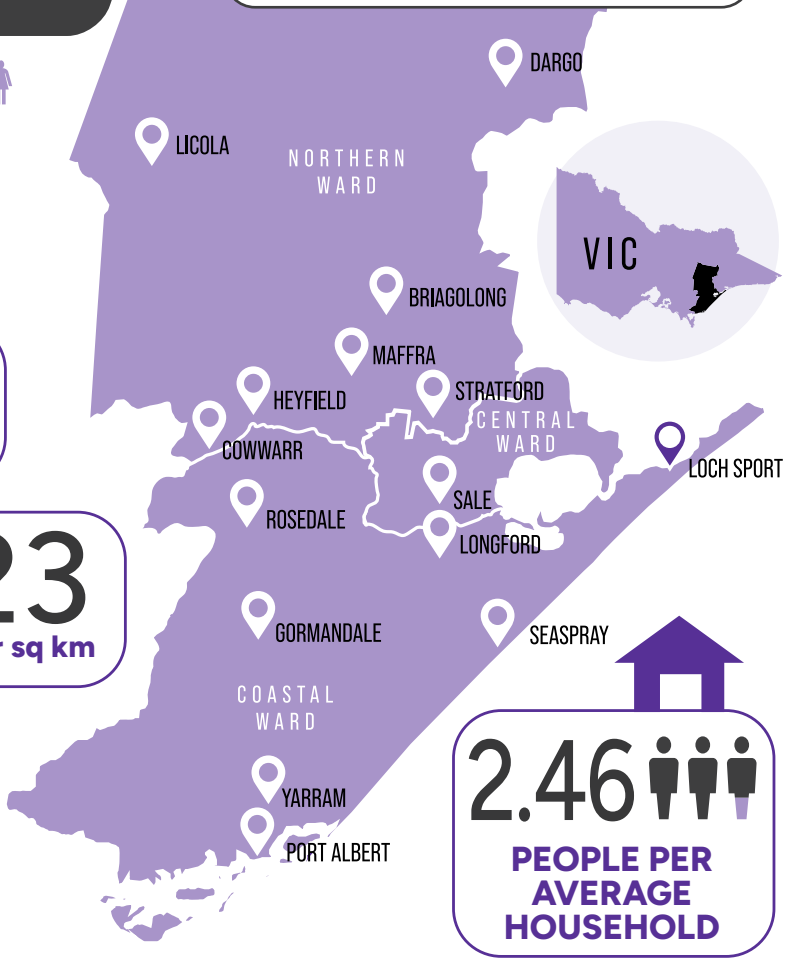
6 Listen to and actively seek feedback from the community; ensure transparent decision-making and communicate effectively with the community about available Council resources.

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%**

About this Community Vision

The journey to develop a Community Vision that represents the community's aspirations for the future, and guides the long-term planning, decision-making and expectations for Wellington Shire began in early 2024 when the Future Wellington project was launched.

What is Future Wellington?

Wellington Shire Council introduced Future Wellington to the community, a project to shape the future of our community.

Future Wellington involved reviewing the five long-term plans that guide our work and the priorities we deliver:

- Community Vision
- Council Plan
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Asset Plan
- Financial Plan

What is the Community Vision 2041?

The Community Vision 2041 is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020* and outlines the long-term aspirations and guiding principles for the Wellington Shire and sets the foundation for all future planning.

Council is responsible for developing the Community Vision, but it is owned by the community. While the Community Vision provides direction to the Council Plan and other long-term plans and strategies, it extends beyond Council's area of influence.

The Community Vision provides a platform for advocacy and collaboration amongst Council, the community, groups, local organisations and agencies.

How to read the Community Vision 2041

The Community Vision 2041, will guide the new Council Plan 2025-29 and other long-term planning and decision-making for the future of Wellington Shire.

The Community Vision 2041 includes a Community Vision Statement and six Guiding Principles crafted by the Future Wellington Think Tank and adopted by Council in March 2025.

The six Guiding Principles are interconnected and should be considered together, as collectively they reflect the priorities and aspirations of the community for the future of Wellington Shire.

How the community were 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.

The engagement process took place over three stages:

- **Stage 1 - Community check-in (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 inclusion of the diversity of the community.

  Through the community check-in process, approximately 1900 people were engaged, providing 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 input to be gathered from a wide array of community members.

  Consultation activities included:

  1. **Survey** - available via Council's Your Wellington Your Say webpage. Hard copy surveys were made available.
  2. **Workshops** – in-person facilitated workshops held across a range of 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.
  5. **Postcards** – quick response cards, submitted via collection boxes available in numerous different locations across the municipality.

6. **Pop-ups and events** – attendance at various community events including markets, focusing on meeting the community 'where they are'.

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.

  By actively involving individuals from different backgrounds, the aim was to ensure that as many views as possible contributed to the development of the new Community Vision.

The Future Wellington Think Tank

In October 2024, the community 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 period and then publicly advertised on-line via the Council website, social and print 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. The group made recommendations about the new Community Vision and Guiding Principles.

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 1.

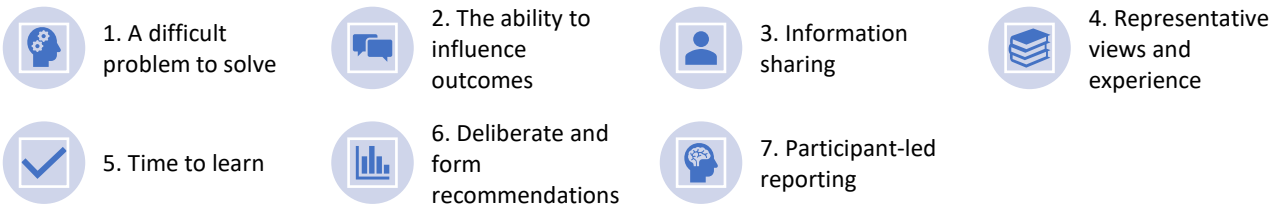


Figure 1 Seven Principles of Deliberative Engagement

The Community Vision Statement and six interconnected Guiding Principles were adopted by Council in March 2025.

Recognising the Future Wellington Think Tank

Wellington Shire Council proudly acknowledges the outstanding contribution of the 22 community members who formed the Future Wellington Think Tank as part of the deliberative engagement process. Their commitment, insight, and passion have shaped the new Community Vision 2041 and a set of six Guiding Principles to steer the future planning and decision-making of Wellington Shire.

This bold and inspiring vision stands as a testament to their dedication and collaboration. Council looks forward to continuing this journey together with our community to realise the aspirations of the Community Vision 2041.

Celebrating our community's contributions

Wellington Shire Council expresses its deepest gratitude to all individuals and organisations who have played a crucial role in shaping the Community Vision 2041. Every survey completed, every conversation at a pop-up event, and every workshop attended has contributed a unique perspective. The passion for the future of Wellington Shire is the driving force behind the Community Vision 2041.

Let us continue this journey together. Stay engaged and continue to share your ideas. Together, we can ensure that the Community Vision 2041 becomes a reality.

Turning the Community Vision 2041 into action

The Community Vision 2041 will be implemented through the Council Plan 2025-29.

The Council Plan 2025-29 sets the course for Council's 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 Wellington Shire, and meet the statutory responsibilities placed on councils.

The Council Plan 2025-29 is available on the Wellington Shire Council website: **www.wellington.vic.gov.au**.

WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL

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