

MINUTES SCHEDULED MEETING

WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL – 4:00PM Monday 6 July 2026

VENUE:

Reception Room, 25 Liebig Street, Warrnambool

COUNCILLORS:

Cr. Ben Blain (Mayor)

Cr. Debbie Arnott

Cr. Willy Benter

Cr. Billy Edis

Cr. Vicki Jellie AM

Cr. Matthew Walsh

Cr. Richard Ziegeler

Copies of the Warrnambool City Council's Agendas & Minutes can be obtained online at www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au

Andrew Mason
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Video Recording of Council Meetings

All Open and Special Council Meetings will be video recorded, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the agenda. This includes public participation sections of the meeting. Video recordings of meetings will be made available for download on the internet via the Council's website by noon the day following the meeting and will be retained and publicly available on the website for 12 months following the meeting date. The videos will be retained for the term of the current Council, after which time the videos will be archived and destroyed in accordance with applicable public record standards. By participating in Open and Special Council meetings, individuals consent to the use and disclosure of the information that they share at the meeting (including any personal/sensitive information), for the purposes of Council carrying out its functions.

Behaviour At Council Meetings

Thank you all for coming – we really appreciate you being here. These meetings are the place where, we as Councillors, make decisions on a broad range of matters. These can vary greatly in subject, significance and the level of interest or involvement the community has. As part of making these decisions, we are presented with comprehensive information that helps us to form our position – you will find this in the agenda. It should also be remembered that the Council meeting is a “meeting of the Council that is open to the public”, not a “public meeting with the Council.” Each Council is required to have Governance Rules that pertains to meeting procedures. Warrnambool City Council has followed best practice in this regard and its Governance Rules provides regulations and procedures for the governing and conduct of Council meetings. Copies of the Conduct and Behaviour excerpt from Warrnambool City Council's Governance Rules can be obtained online at www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au. We thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter.

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MINUTES OF THE SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE
RECEPTION ROOM, WARRNAMBOOL CIVIC CENTRE, 25 LIEBIG STREET, WARRNAMBOOL ON
MONDAY 6 JULY 2026 COMMENCING AT 4:00 PM

PRESENT: Cr. Ben Blain, Mayor/Chairman
Cr. Debbie Arnott
Cr. Willy Benter
Cr. Billy Edis
Cr. Vicki Jellie AM - Virtual
Cr. Matthew Walsh

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer
Mr Peter Utri, Director Corporate Services
Mr Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures
Mr Peter Russell, Acting Director City Wellbeing
Mr James Plozza, Manager Governance
Ms Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

1. Opening Prayer & Original Custodians Statement

Almighty God
Grant to this Council
Wisdom, understanding and sincerity of purpose
For the good Governance of this City
Amen.

Original Custodians Statement

Council acknowledges the Peek Whurrong and Kirrae Whurrung Peoples of the Maar Nation, their land, waterways and skies within the Warrnambool municipality. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

2. Apologies

Cr Richard Ziegeler

MOVED: CR DEBBIE ARNOTT
SECONDED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

That the apology from Cr Richard Ziegeler be accepted.

CARRIED - 6:0

3. Confirmation Of Minutes

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

SECONDED: CR BILLY EDIS

That the Minutes of the Scheduled Meeting of Council held on 1 June 2026, be confirmed.

CARRIED - 6:0

4. Declaration By Councillors And Officers Of Any Conflict Of Interest In Any Item On The Agenda

Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) (**the Act**) provides that a relevant person must disclose a conflict of interest in respect of a matter and exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee meeting and any action in relation to that matter.

Section 126(2) of the Act sets out that a relevant person (Councillor, member of a delegated Committee or member of Council staff) has a conflict of interest if the relevant person has a **general conflict of interest** within the meaning of section 127 of the Act or a **material conflict of interest** within the meaning of section 128 of the Act.

A relevant person has a **general conflict of interest** in a matter if an impartial, fair minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

A relevant person has a **material conflict of interest** in a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken. Councillors are also encouraged to declare circumstances where there may be a perceived conflict of interest.

- *Cr Willy Benter - Item 7.4 - Onsite Wastewater Management Plan - Material Interest - Owns a property in Allansford that has a sewer.*

5. Mayoral Presentation

It's been a really big month here at City Council, Cr Benter, the CEO and I were up in Canberra for the Australian Local Government Association, National General Assembly. It was really great to see so many of the other member councils and we did an awful lot of work around motions and really pushing for the financial sustainability around local government and making sure local government are getting the funding that they need to actually be able to deliver the key services and infrastructure that we actually do.

We have also been in Melbourne with the Regional Cities Victoria to see the Roads Minister, Ros Spence. We had the Victorian Farmers Federation, Rural Councils Victoria, Victorian Tourism Association and the Livestock and Transporters Association there meeting with the Minister and really pushing for that \$2 billion of investment that we want to see across rural and regional roads, because every single one of us is driving these roads every day and we can see them going into worse and worse condition.

Warrnambool and District Artist Society Annual Awards; I had the privilege this month of opening that, it was a great event, over 100 pieces by over 35 local artists.

On the weekend I was down at KidFEST. It was a really great event, really well put on by Emma and Tina. It got \$10,000 worth of festival and events funding from Council and it was really great to see it really well supported and I think it's still going on it's last day today. Make sure you support these events especially with the work that Tina and Emma have been doing putting them on because if we don't support them, you know they won't be here. It was really packed on Saturday when I got to go down there and open it.

6. Public Question Time

Nil.

7. Reports

7.1. Community Satisfaction Survey 2026

DIRECTORATE : *Community Strategies*

Purpose:

This report provides information on the results of the 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey.

Executive Summary

The annual Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey measures perceptions of Council performance across a range of services and measures.

The survey covers eight core services which are listed in the table below, along with last year's measure and the state and regional averages.

Core measure	WCC 2026	Change 2025	State 2026	Change	Regional city 2026	Change
Overall performance	52	-6	58	+4	57	+4
Spending public funds	43	-7	51	+4	50	+3
General direction	46	-5	48	+2	49	+1
Customer service	65	-5	68	+2	71	+3
Opportunities to give feedback	48	-3	55	+5	56	+7
Waste management	68	-4	72	+6	71	+6
Making decisions	46	-4	52	+3	53	+5
Sealed local roads	49	-4	54	+9	51	+4

The results show that while most measures are close to the state and regional city averages, there were declines in each of the eight core measures compared to the 2025 results.

Along with eight core measures, the survey assessed performance perceptions for 21 other services.

This revealed a number of stronger results. Services that recorded scores above 60 included the Library (82), waste management (68), appearance of public areas (65), customer service (65), the art gallery (63) recreational facilities (62), community events and cultural activities, elderly support services, business and community development and tourism, family support services and environmental sustainability (all 60).

The surveys have been conducted for more than a decade with the outcomes strongly influenced by prominent local issues at play while the surveys are undertaken.

Over February and March, at the time the survey was conducted, Council was undertaking work to renew the roundabout at the intersection of Timor and Gilles streets. The work also included resurfacing of De Grandi Lane, installing a compliant footpath and changing De Grandi Lane to become one-way only access into Ozone Car Park. There were some objections to the project, and these were covered extensively by local media.

Council was also addressing an error related to superannuation budgets that drew negative media coverage.

Another influence over the results was that the Victorian Government changed its preferred survey provider to Klein Research. This allowed Council to change survey methodology. This involved changing from 100 per cent telephone responses to a mix of telephone (75%) and online (25%).

Klein's analysis indicated the changed methodology using online surveys via social media recruitment "may have allowed respondents to be more critical" when scoring Council on consultation and engagement and on making decisions.

Another change was the shift to social media as being more preferred method of receiving Council information (31%) where previously this was a newsletter sent by email or via mail.

MOVED: CR DEBBIE ARNOTT

SECONDED: CR BILLY EDIS

That:

- 1. Council notes the findings of the 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey;**
- 2. Council posts the survey results to the Council website.**

CARRIED - 6:0

Background

The Community Satisfaction Survey gathered 400 responses, a sample of the city's population considered statistically significant and likely to yield accurate results.

The survey has been conducted in various forms since 2001.

This year's key strengths were the library, where Council was clearly ahead of other regional councils the result revealed that residents rated their direct experience of libraries highly.

Planning for population growth was also a strength although it contrasted with the score for town planning.

The customer service experience was the strongest of the engagement measures and well ahead of overall perceptions of Council. The report found this "points to a capable front line: where residents deal with Council directly, the experience holds up better than the broader sentiment captured elsewhere in the report".

The survey used regression analysis to determine which areas of operation matter most to Council and which therefore have the greatest impact on perceptions of Council.

This analysis revealed that the most influential areas were advocating for the community, making decisions in the interest of the community, town planning, having opportunities to provide feedback on local issues and planning for population growth.

While Council scored highly for services including waste management, the library and appearance of public areas, these were considered to have less influence on overall perceptions of Council performance.

Council's score for informing the community increased by one point to 56 while the preferred means of receiving information is illustrated below. There is a shift towards preferring social media as the means of receiving information from Council.

Method	WCC %	State %	Regional %	18-34 %	35-49 %	50-64 %	65+ %	Male %	Female %
Newsletter via social media	23	33	24	10	19	27	33	26	19
Social media	31	19	28	52	40	27	10	27	35
Newsletter via mail	17	21	17	13	12	19	22	17	16
Ads in newspapers	6	6	10	4	5	5	11	8	5
SMS	10	12	10	13	7	11	9	8	12
Council website	4	2	2	3	3	5	4	4	3
Newspaper insert	3	2	3	1	2	3	4	4	2
Other	2	2	1	0	6	1	2	2	3
Don't know	2	2	2	0	2	3	2	1	2

Issues

Some of the results cannot be easily explained. For example, Council's score for sealed local roads dropped by four points despite Council's roads being in generally sound condition. It may be that dissatisfaction with roads managed by the Victorian Government (which include Raglan Parade/Princes Highway) had a negative influence on perceptions of Council's performance on road maintenance.

At the time the survey was conducted there was also considerable frustration locally over the rail service and this may have had some spillover influence on the survey results.

Given the likelihood of perceptions being shaped by immediate news events, Council has opted to have the next survey done across four intervals rather than in a single concentrated period (4 x 100 surveys).

Financial Impact

The cost of the survey is in the order of \$17,000 and provides information that is required to be included in Council's annual report.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

5 City Leadership

5.5 Our City promotes organisational culture and performance.

5.7 Our City is committed to sound governance, transparent decision-making and operating with integrity.

Timing

With Council having received the survey in June it is now in a position to share the survey results.

Internal / External Consultation

The survey is a consultation exercise asking respondents directly about their perceptions and experience of Council and its services.

Council is now proposing to inform the community of the results.

Legal Risk / Impact

N/A

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil.

Collaborative Procurement

N/A

Conclusion

Council is in a position to share the results of the Community Satisfaction Survey and consider actions to improve the results.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Community Satisfaction Survey 2026 [7.1.1 - 75 pages]

Warrnambool City Council

Community Satisfaction Report 2026

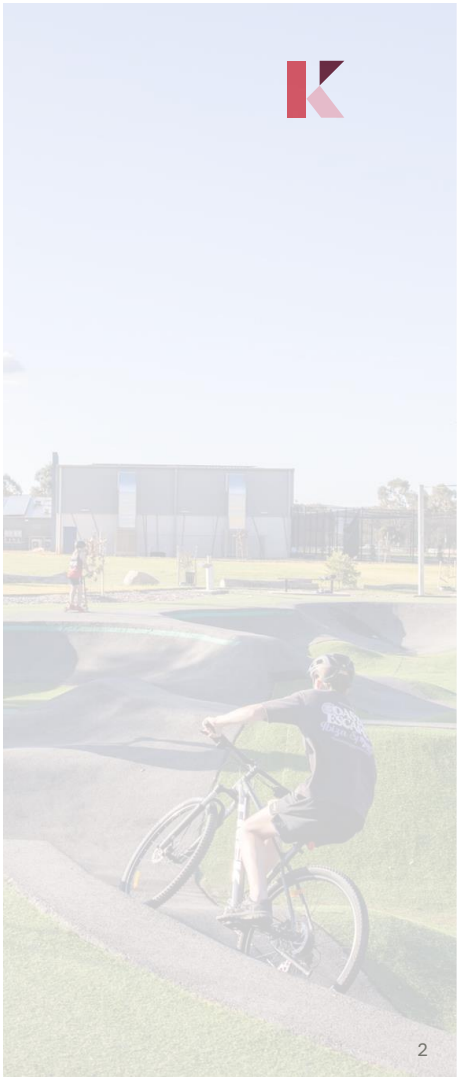


klein

Coordinated by the Department of Government
Services on behalf of Victorian councils

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Executive Summary



Warrnambool City Council Community Satisfaction



52

Overall Performance
-6 since last year

58

State Performance
+4 vs last year

57

Regional City Performance
+4 vs last year

Key Takeouts



Warrnambool City Council's overall performance is 52, a significant decrease from the previous year. The decrease in sentiment was more pronounced amongst female residents and residents aged 25-49 years.

Top performing areas

82

Libraries*



68

Waste management*



65

The appearance of public areas



Lowest performing areas

46

Making decisions



47

Traffic management



48

Council's general town planning policy



49

-10



56

-2

Aged 18-24 40 -4

Aged 25-34 47 -9

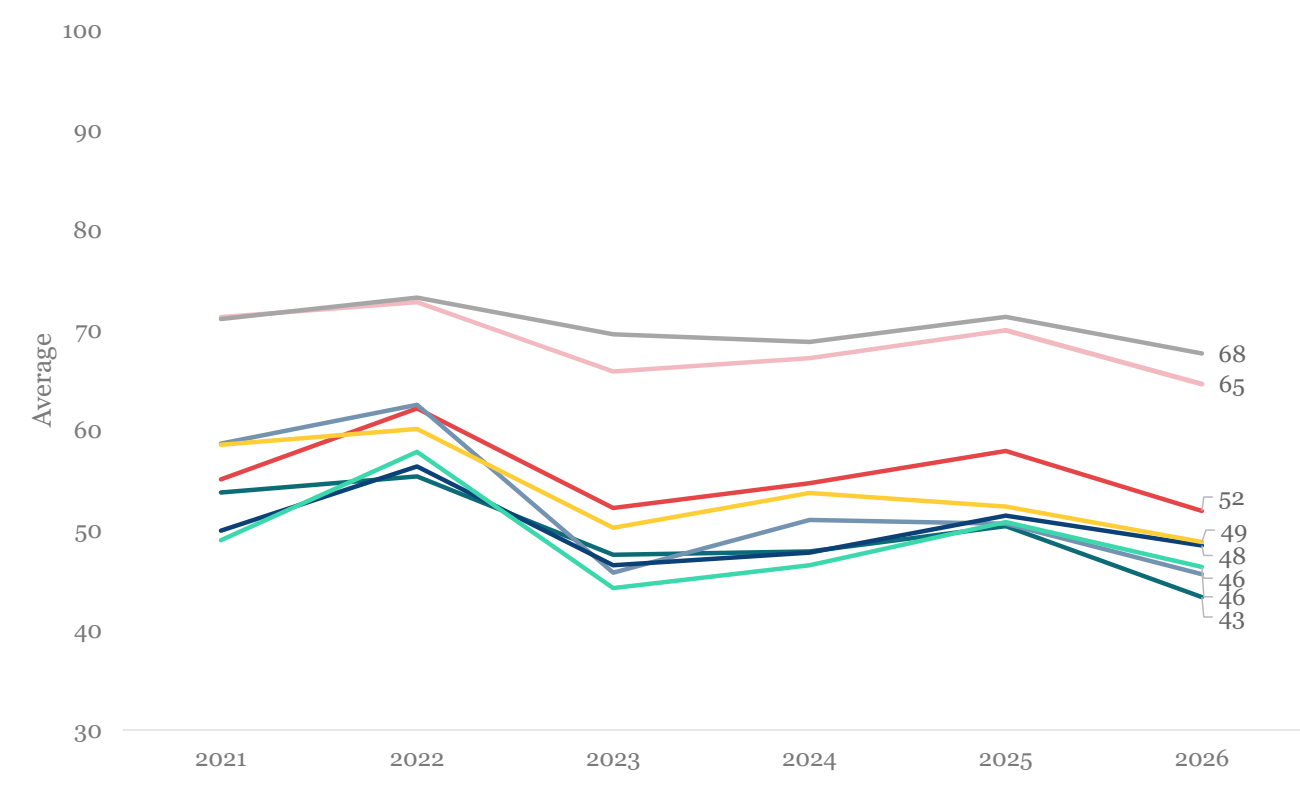
Aged 35-49 49 -10

Aged 50-64 57 +4

Aged 65+ 56 -6



Core Measures by Year



Change on Previous Year

-6	Overall Performance	
-7	Spending Public Funds*	
-5	Direction of council	
-5	Customer Service	
-3	Opportunities to give feedback*	
-4	Waste Management*	
-4	Making Decisions*	
-4	Sealed local Streets*	

Changed questions are marked with an asterisk.

LGV Core Summary



		Warrnambool CC 2026	Chg vs 2025	State 2026	Chg vs 2025	Regional City 2026	Chg vs 2025
Overall Performance		52	-6	58	+4	57	+4
<i>Overall Performance of Council</i>							
Spending Public Funds		43	-7	51	+4	50	+3
<i>Spending public funds... in ways that benefit the community</i>							
General Direction		46	-5	48	+2	49	+1
<i>Views on direction of council's performance</i>							
Customer Service		65	-5	68	+2	71	+3
<i>...on most recent contact, rate Council for Customer Service</i>							
Opportunities to Give Feedback		48	-3	55	+5	56	+7
<i>Opportunities offered by Council to give your feedback on key local issues</i>							
Waste management		68	-4	72	+6	71	+6
<i>Waste Management including garbage, recyclables and green waste</i>							
Making decisions		46	-4	52	+3	53	+5
<i>Making decisions in the interest of the community</i>							
Sealed local streets		49	-4	54	+9	51	+4
<i>Condition of sealed local streets</i>							

Changed questions are marked with an asterisk.

6

Performance of Council Services – Summary by Service Area



Governance, Engagement & Advocacy 			Infrastructure & Maintenance 			Community Services & Support 			Planning & Development 			Community Facilities & Recreation 		
2026 vs 2025			2026 vs 2025			2026 vs 2025			2026 vs 2025			2026 vs 2025		
Keeping the community informed	56	+1	The appearance of public areas	65	-5	Waste management*	68	-3	Emergency and disaster management	63	-3	Libraries	82	NA
Advocating for the community*	50	-	The condition of footpaths	51	-6	Family support services	60	-3	Business and community development and tourism	60	-	Arts Centres	63	NA
Opportunities to give feedback*	48	-3	Condition of sealed local streets*	49	-3	Elderly support services	60	-3	Environmental sustainability	60	+1	Recreational facilities	62	-6
Making decisions in the interest of the community*	46	-5				Disadvantaged support services	57	-1	Enforcement of local laws and regulations	58	-6	Community events and cultural activities	62	-2
						Traffic management	47	-14	Developing and promoting the local economy	55	-3	Parking facilities	50	-4
									Planning for population growth	52	-4			
									Planning and building permits	50	-1			
									Council's general town planning policy	48	-3			

Changed questions are marked with an asterisk.

Executive Summary – Key Strengths of Warrnambool City Council



Libraries

Libraries is the strongest-performing service area measured in this report, and one of the few where Warrnambool City Council sits clearly ahead of its peers. It scores 82, well above both the State benchmark (75) and the Regional City group (77). With residents rating their direct experience of libraries highly, this is one of Council's most established positions across the service areas measured.



Planning for population growth

Planning for population growth is a high-influence service (one residents see as central to how Council performs) and Council is ahead of the State benchmark here, scoring 52 against a State average of 45. Performance sits just below the Regional City group (55), but standing seven points above State on a service this influential is a genuine strength for Council to build on.



Customer service experience

Residents who contacted Warrnambool City Council in the past year rate their customer-service experience at 65; the strongest of the engagement measures and well ahead of overall perceptions of Council. This points to a capable front line: where residents deal with Council directly, the experience holds up better than the broader sentiment captured elsewhere in the report.

Executive Summary – Key Opportunities for Council to Address



Opportunities to give feedback on local issues

This is a high-influence service where Warrnambool City Council has lost ground while peers advanced. It scores 48, down three points year-on-year, while the State rose to 55 and the Regional City group to 56 leaving Council five to seven points behind benchmarks that are now moving in the opposite direction.



Making decisions in the interest of the community

Among the most influential drivers of how residents judge Council overall, this is the lowest-scoring service area measured in the report, at 46. Its combination of high influence and weak performance makes it the clearest gap between what residents value most and what they currently perceive.



Overall performance and direction of Council

Community sentiment softened across the headline measures this year. Overall performance fell six points to 52 - below both the State (58) and Regional City (57) benchmarks, which each rose four points - and views on Council direction (46) and spending public funds (43) also declined.



Council's general town planning policy

Town planning is a high-influence area flagged in the report as warranting attention. While planning for population growth sits above the State benchmark, residents are less assured about the broader planning policy that shapes how the municipality develops – a gap that carries weight given its influence on overall perceptions.

Summary of Approach



About the LGV CSS program

What the program is

Program overview

The **LGV Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS)** is a state-wide program that measures how residents rate the performance of their local council. It provides councils with an independent, consistent and comparable view of community perceptions across key service and performance areas, helping them to:

Understand strengths and areas for improvement	1	Track performance over time	3
Benchmark against similar councils and the wider sector	2	Support planning, service improvement and community accountability	4

The LGV CSS program provides a common framework for understanding and benchmarking council performance from the community perspective.



About Klein

What the program is and Klein's role in its next phase

Klein's appointment to the program

Klein is the newly appointed and Government-endorsed provider for the LGV CSS program. Our appointment through a robust and competitive procurement process provides confidence in the strength of the approach and the quality of delivery.



A new phase for the program

As the new provider, Klein brings energy, curiosity and a modern perspective — helping to refresh the program while maintaining the integrity, comparability and credibility that councils rely on.

Independent. Comparable. Credible. Refreshed for the program's next phase.

The LGV CSS program provides a common framework for understanding and benchmarking council performance from the community perspective.

About Klein

- 30 years' experience in community and customer satisfaction tracking.
- Diverse expertise in public-sector, local-government and stakeholder engagement, as well as commercial clients.
- Proven in managing large tracking programs.
- A “safe set of hands” - independent, transparent, and responsive.



Explanation of Survey Metrics

How the key survey measures should be interpreted



Key metrics included in this report

This report includes a range of measures to understand how residents view Council's performance, services and role in the community.

Key Performance: Measures overall views of Council, including overall performance, value for money and direction.

Core measures: Covers key areas such as decision-making in the interests of the community, waste management, opportunities to give feedback, and the condition of sealed local streets.

Importance of council services: Measures how important different services are to residents.

Performance: Measures how residents rate Council's performance in each area over the past 12 months.

Experience: Measures whether residents or anyone in their household has used particular services in the past 12 months.



Service reporting categories

For ease of interpretation, service results are grouped into the following categories

Governance, Engagement & Advocacy

Infrastructure & Maintenance

Community Facilities & Recreation

Community Services & Support

Planning & Growth



How results are reported

Results are typically shown for

Total Council sample

Demographic sub-groups within the Council such as age, gender and region

Similar councils for benchmarking

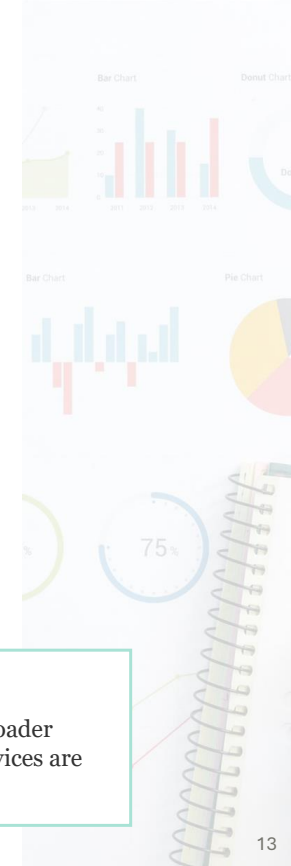
State-wide results for broader comparison



Note on interpretation

Residents may rate Council based on either direct experience or broader perceptions. Both are valuable, as they help show not only how services are experienced, but also how Council is seen by the wider community.

This report includes a range of measures to understand how residents view Council's performance, services and role in the community.





Benchmarking and comparison

How Council's results are interpreted in context

Why Benchmarking matters	Benchmarking helps put Council's results into context by comparing performance with relevant peers, historical results and key resident groups.
What it helps show	Benchmarking helps answer four key questions: • How is Council performing overall? • How is Council performing compared with all participating councils? • How is Council performing compared with similar councils? • Which results reflect Council-specific issues versus broader sector-wide patterns?
Important note	Comparisons are based on a common methodology and question set. Where differences are observed, significance testing is used to identify whether Council is <i>meaningfully above or below</i> benchmark.

Benchmark comparisons used in reporting

Comparator	What it helps show
State-wide average	How Council compares with all participating councils across the program
Council group average	How Council compares with similar councils, providing the most relevant peer context
Previous years	Whether performance is improving, stable or declining over time
Resident sub-groups	Which groups score higher or lower, and where perceptions differ across the community



Warrnambool City Council is classified as a **Regional Centres** council. The **Regional Centres** group includes: Ballarat, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura.

Benchmarking helps distinguish between council-specific performance and broader patterns seen across the sector.



Mixed method control

How online surveying was introduced while maintaining comparability

Methodology change

Why online was added

In 2026, the LGV CSS program introduced online surveying via social media recruitment alongside the traditional CATI (telephone) methodology.

Online was added to broaden participation and improve the representativeness of the sample, rather than relying only on residents who are reachable by phone.

This also provides greater access to younger, digitally engaged and other harder-to-reach residents.

CATI remains a core part of the methodology; online has been added to improve coverage and respondent mix.

How the mixed method approach is controlled

Same questionnaire and measurement framework
Telephone and online respondents answer the same questions, using the same scales and core question order.

Mode review before merging
Each response is flagged as telephone or online, allowing results to be checked by mode before they are combined.

Comparison of results
Klein reviews demographic profiles and key results across modes to identify whether any meaningful differences are present.

Integrated weighting
Once verified, telephone and online results are combined and weighted together to align with ABS population benchmarks.



What this means
The mixed method approach improves access, engagement and representativeness, while the control process helps maintain continuity and comparability with previous CATI-only results.

Online was introduced to improve reach and representation, with controls applied to preserve comparability and produce a single combined dataset.

Enhanced Questions

Question wording review and comparability assessment



CORE MEASURES



In consultation with Local Government Victoria and participating councils, a number of questions used in the Community Satisfaction Survey were reviewed and updated to improve clarity and relevance.

As wording changes can affect comparability with historical results, a split-sample approach was used to assess the impact of the main revisions. One group received the historic wording and another received the enhanced wording.

The following table summarises the changes made and the extent to which the revised wording affected results.

Enhanced Wording	Historic Wording	Estimated Impact	Outcome
How would you rate [COUNCIL NAME] at spending public funds on infrastructure and services in ways that benefit the community	How would you rate [COUNCIL NAME] at providing good value for money in infrastructure and services provided to your community?	N/A	Not tested. The historic question focused on perceptions of value for money, while the revised measure assesses perceptions of how effectively council directs public funds to generate community benefit. As these are related but not equivalent concepts, direct trend comparability was not assumed.
The opportunities offered by [NAME OF COUNCIL] to give your feedback or engage on key local issues.	Community consultation and engagement	+1pts	No material impact detected. Results are considered comparable.
Condition of sealed local streets in your area. This includes local streets but does NOT include highways and major arterial roads such as [INSERT UP THREE LOCAL EXAMPLES].	The condition of suburban sealed local roads in your area. This includes local streets and roads managed by your council but excluding highways and main roads that are managed by VicRoads.	+2pts	No material impact detected. Added specificity does not appear to have materially changed responses.
Waste management including the collection of garbage, recyclables and green waste	Waste management	+6pts	Material impact detected; revised wording appears to have increased positive ratings likely by making the measure more concrete and inclusive.
Making decisions in the interest of the community	Decisions made in the interest of the community	-1pt	No material impact detected. Results are considered comparable.
Advocating for, and representing the community to government and other organisations	Lobbying on behalf of the community	+2pts	No material impact detected. Results are considered comparable.
Developing and promoting local tourism	Tourism Development	-3pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation.
Developing and promoting the local economy	Business and community development	-3pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation.
Enforcement of local laws and Council regulations	Enforcement of local laws	-5pts	Potential material impact detected. Expanded reference to "Council regulations" may have broadened respondents' frame of reference and contributed to lower ratings.
The condition of footpaths in your area	The condition of local streets and footpaths in your area	+2pts	No material impact detected. Revised wording appears comparable.
Keeping the community informed on council services, events and programs	Informing the community	+3pts	No material impact detected. Revised wording appears comparable.

Changed questions are marked with an asterisk.

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Enhanced Methodology

The incorporation of Online and comparability assessment



In 2026, the LGV CSS program expanded beyond its traditional CATI (telephone interviewing) approach, with online surveying via social media recruitment available as an option for councils.

This reflected a desire to modernise the program while retaining the consistency and comparability of the long-standing methodology.

Where used, online broadened participation and improved the representativeness of the sample, particularly by improving access to younger, digitally engaged and other harder-to-reach residents.

Index Score	Score Impact	Impact of including Online
Overall Performance	0 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
Spending Public Funds	-1 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
General Direction	-1 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
Customer Service	-1 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
Consultation/ Engagement	-1 pts	Material impact detected; the introduction of online approach may have allowed respondents to be more critical.
Waste management	0 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation
Making decisions	-2 pts	Material impact detected; the introduction of online approach may have allowed respondents to be more critical.
Sealed local streets	0 pts	No material impact detected. Movement appears within expected variation



After weighting for demographic differences, CATI and online results were broadly aligned.

Any remaining differences were generally small and mostly within expected variation.

Importantly, the differences observed are generally small and not statistically significant, supporting a combined dataset that improves reach while maintaining comparability.



How to interpret results

Statistical significance and margin of error

Statistical significance

Statistical significance testing at the 95% confidence level has been applied to key comparisons in this report.

Where a difference is highlighted, it is unlikely to be due to chance alone. Where no difference is highlighted, the results should be treated as broadly similar.

95%

Reading the charts and tables



Up arrow or green text = significantly higher



Down arrow or red text = significantly lower



Circle / marker or black text = not statistically significant, but may still be noteworthy

Approximate margins of error used in this report

All survey results are subject to a margin of error, which varies depending on sample size.

Sub-Group	Sample	Margin of error
Warrnambool CC	403	+/-4.9 pts
State	17,730	+/-0.7 pts
Regional City	2,616	+/-1.9 pts
18 to 34	69	+/-11.8 pts
35 to 49	124	+/-8.8 pts
50 to 64	85	+/-10.6 pts
65+	126	+/-8.7 pts
Male	201	+/-6.9 pts
Female	202	+/-6.9 pts

Larger groups have a smaller margin of error; smaller groups have a larger one.

Margins of error are approximate and are shown to support interpretation of key results and sub-groups.

Why the sample size is appropriate

Understanding the Sample



Sample size

This survey includes enough interviews to give a reliable overall picture of community views.



Margin of error

All surveys have a small amount of natural variation. A bigger sample reduces this (and Councils have the option to increase sample size), but the improvement in accuracy becomes smaller as sample size increases.



Confidence level

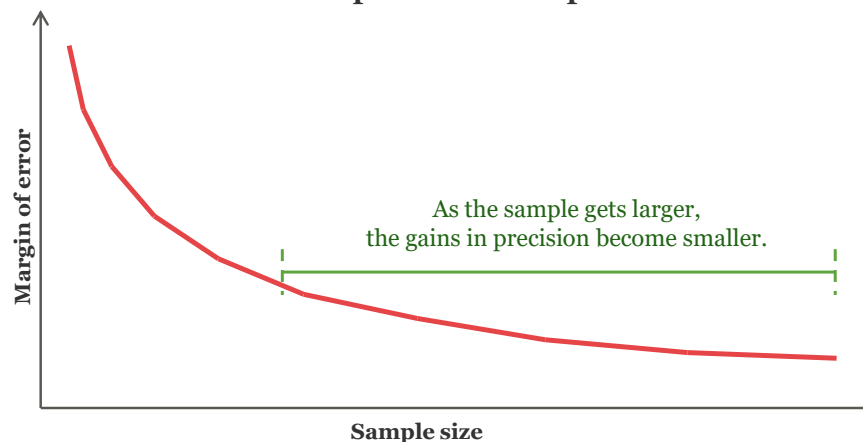
We use the standard "95% confidence level". In simple terms, this means we can be highly confident the survey gives a trustworthy picture of wider community views.



Statistical significance

In our analysis, we test whether differences and movements in scores are large enough to be meaningful, rather than just normal survey variation. These are highlighted through the report.

How sample size affects precision



What this means

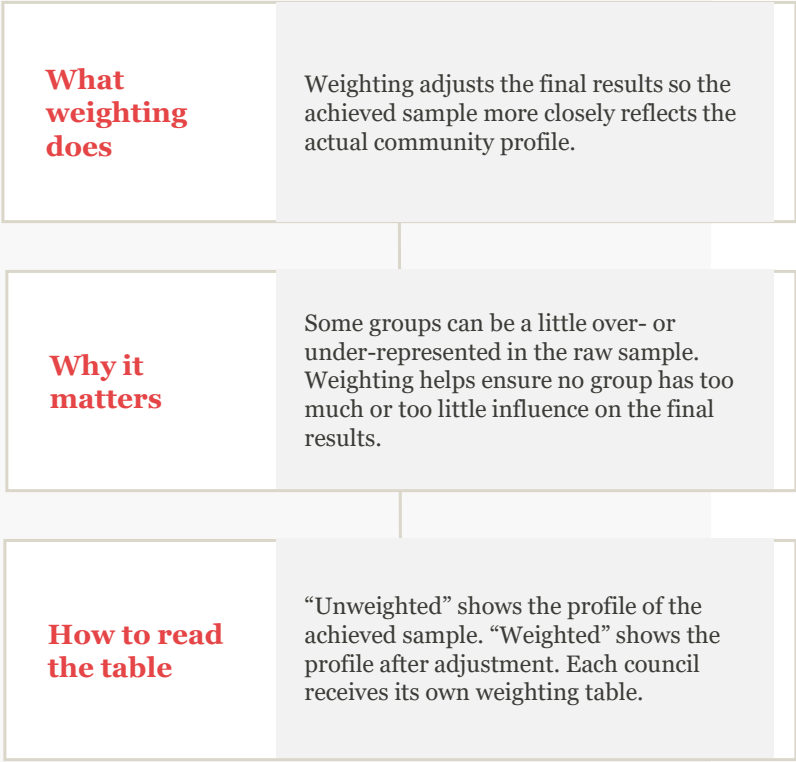
Larger samples can improve precision, but after a point they are unlikely to materially change the overall story.

Results are weighted to reflect the community profile (for example age and gender), helping ensure the findings are representative.

19



How weighting is used



Sample weighting

Age	Unweighted	Weighted
18-24	3%	4%
25-34	14%	21%
35-49	31%	23%
50-64	21%	21%
65+	31%	30%
NET	100%	100%

Gender	Unweighted	Weighted
Male	50%	47%
Female	50%	53%
NET	100%	100%



Weighting improves representativeness, but it does not change what respondents said. It simply helps ensure that each group is reflected in the right proportion in the final results.

Weighting tables are provided for each council to show how the achieved sample compares with the final weighted profile.

Comparative Benchmarks



In addition to the core LGV questions, each council was able to select additional service areas to assess. As a result, the number of councils in the benchmark for each questions varies. The following are the number of councils for each service area assessed within this report. Where there is only one other council in the benchmark, we have not provided a benchmark and labelled it as NA.

Performance	State	Regional City
Art centres*	12	3
Business and community development and tourism	10	3
Disadvantaged support services	4	1
Planning and building permits	12	3
Council's general town planning policy	6	1
Emergency and disaster management	14	4
Libraries*	17	4
Enforcement of local laws and regulations*	16	3
Advocating for the community*	20	4
Community events and cultural activities *	15	2
Environmental sustainability	19	4
Recreational facilities	20	4

Performance	State	Regional City
Keeping the community informed	19	3
Traffic management	4	2
Parking facilities	6	2
Family support services	12	3
Planning for population growth	7	3
Elderly support services	8	1
The appearance of public areas	23	4
Condition of sealed local streets*	38	6
Decisions in the interest of the community*	38	6
Opportunities to give feedback on key local issues*	38	6
Waste management*	38	6
The condition of footpaths*	15	4
Developing and promoting the local economy*	11	3



How Performance Index Scores are Calculated

A simple guide to how 5-point ratings are converted into a 0 to 100 index

In simple terms

Performance is asked on a 5-point scale from Very poor to Very good.

Responses are then converted into an index from 0 to 100 so results can be compared consistently.

Scale



Index Values

- 0 Very poor
- 25 Poor
- 50 Average
- 75 Good
- 100 Very good

Can't say is excluded from the calculation

Worked example

Each response 'share' is multiplied by its index value. The contributions are then summed to create the score.

Response	Index Value	Share	Contribution
Very good	100	25%	25.0
Good	75	30%	22.5
Average	50	20%	10.0
Poor	25	10%	2.5
Very poor	0	10%	0.0
Can't say	-	5%	Excluded
Total index score		100%	60.0

How to interpret scores

Higher scores indicate stronger performance.

Band	Interpretation
85+	Very strong performance
75-84	Positive performance
50-74	Mixed or passable performance
40-49	Underperforming
<40	Clear community dissatisfaction

Direction in the past 12 months

The same principle is used for the Direction metric: Improved = 100, Stayed the same = 50, Deteriorated = 0. "Can't say" responses are excluded.

How to read the results slide - Performance Distribution



Guide to reading results

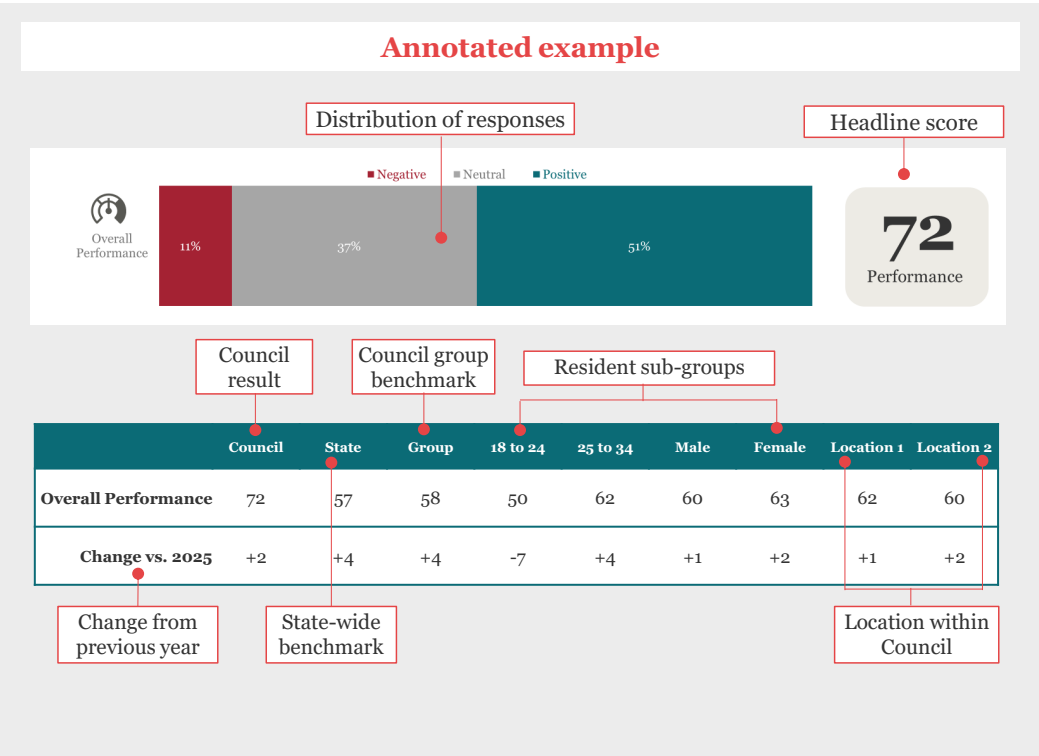
What this slide shows

This slide shows the overall result, the distribution of responses, and how results vary across benchmarks and key sub-groups.

- It helps the reader see:
- How Council is performing overall
 - How the result compares with key benchmarks
 - Which groups score higher or lower
 - Whether the result has improved or declined over time

What the table categories mean

- Council** - result for this Council
- State** - average across all participating Councils
- Group** - average for similar councils
- Age / gender / location columns** - results for key sub-groups within the Council area
- Change vs. previous year** - movement since last year



How to read the line chart slide - Performance



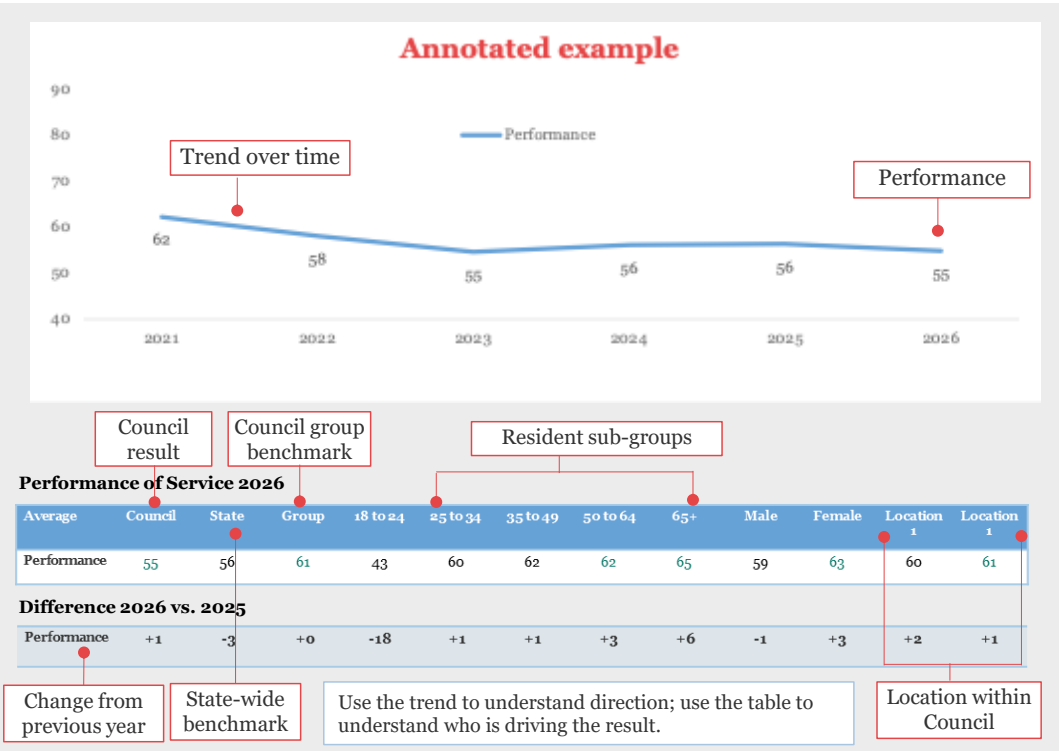
Guide to reading results

What this slide shows

- These slides show how importance and performance have changed over time, and how the current year result varies across benchmarks and sub-groups.
- The top chart shows the trend over time.
- The table below shows the current year results by benchmark and sub-group.
- The change table shows movement compared with the previous year.
- Importance = how much the area matters to the community
- Performance = how residents rate Council on that area

Table categories

Council, State and Group provide benchmarks; age, gender and location columns show resident sub-groups.



Fieldwork Summary

Who?	Residents of Warrnambool City Council aged 18+ Minimum quotas of gender within age groups were applied during fieldwork. Post-survey weighting was then conducted to ensure accurate representation of the ABS age and gender profile of the council area.
What?	9-minute survey Conducted by Telephone and Online
How Many?	n=403 n=300 Telephone recruited from sourced residential sample list n=103 Online recruited via social media
When?	Fieldwork conducted February/March 2026



Key Performance Measures



Overall Council Performance



Overview

This section provides a summary of overall community perceptions of Council performance. It presents key headline metrics and a high-level view of how Council is performing across the municipality.

Specifically, this section includes:

- Overall performance score
- Perceptions of Council direction
- Views on how well Council spends public funds
- Benchmark comparisons (where applicable)
- Results by key subgroups (e.g. age, location)

Together, these results provide a clear snapshot of overall community sentiment and set the foundation for the deeper insights that follow in the report.



Summary of results

Key measures:

- Community views of overall performance were less positive in 2026, with Council's result decreasing by 6 points to 52.
- Residents were also more negative about Council direction in 2026, which decreased by 5 points to 46.
- Spending public funds to benefit the community fell to 43 (-7 vs. 2025).

Vs. Benchmarks

- Council's overall performance score of 52 sits below both the State (58) and Regional City (57) benchmarks.
- Compared with 2025, Council's overall performance decreased by 6 points, while the State increased by 4 points and the Regional City increased by 4 points.
- Council direction scores 46 and is slightly below the State (48) and slightly below Regional City (49).

Sub-group differences:

- Residents aged 65+ were more positive on spending public funds to benefit the community.
- Females were more critical of overall performance, Council direction, and spending public funds to benefit the community.
- 18-24 year olds were far less positive on Council direction than in 2025.

Performance Summary – At a Glance

Council performance summary.
Results shown are index scores out of 100.



52

Overall
Performance



46

Direction
of Council

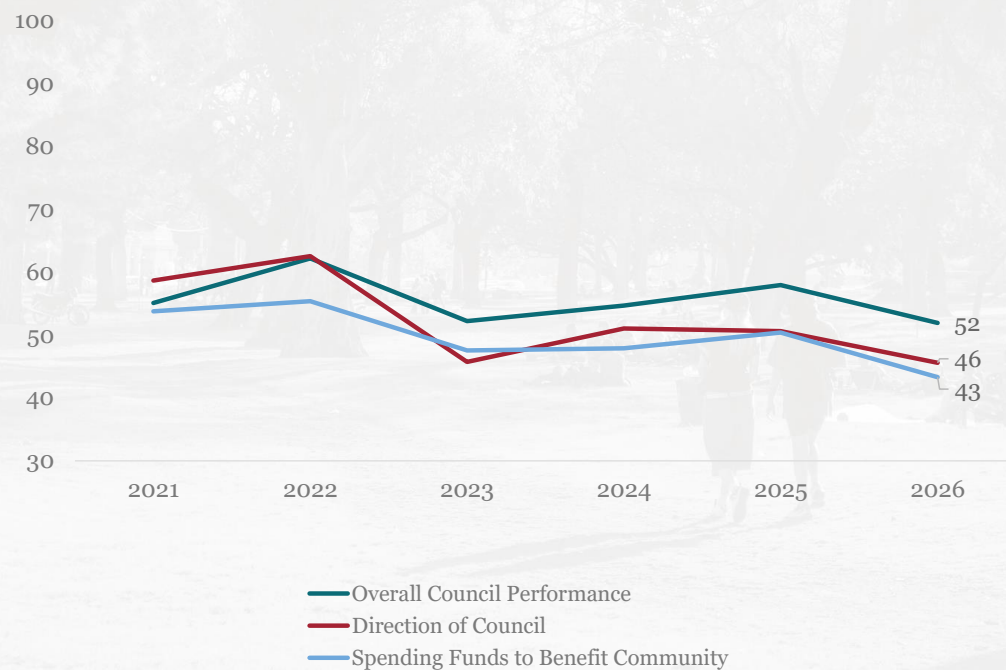


43

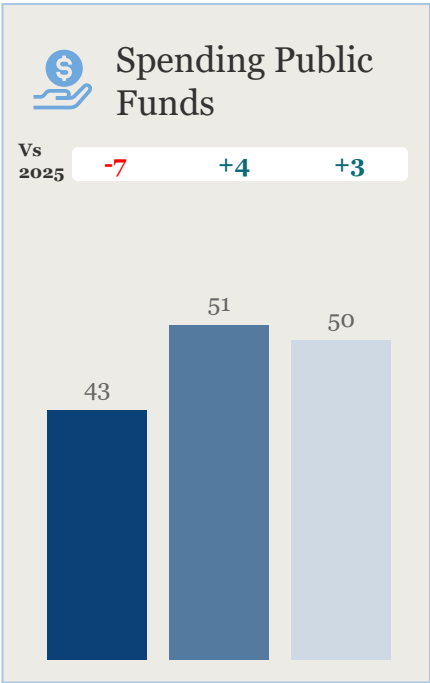
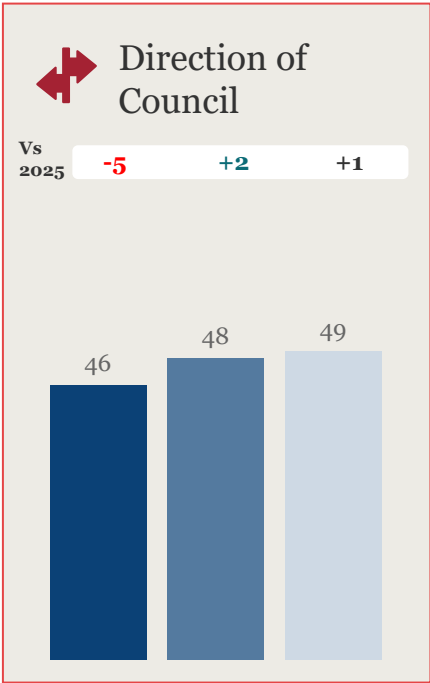
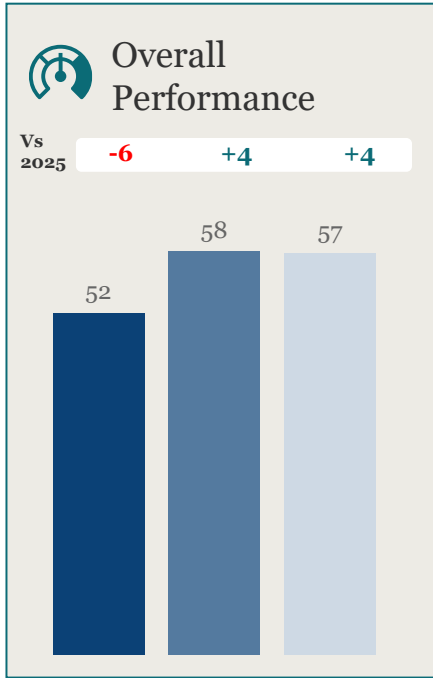
Spending Public
Funds



Council Performance by Year



Overall Performance – Council vs. Benchmarks

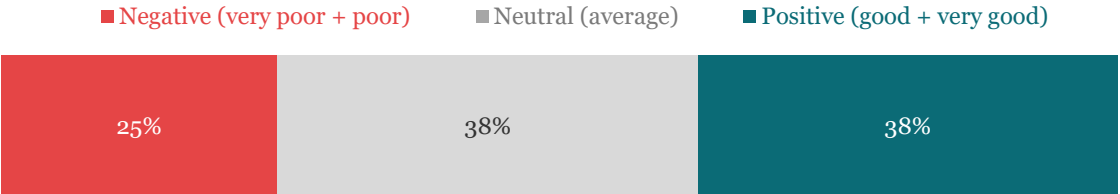


■ Warrnambool ■ State ■ Regional City

Overall Performance – Distribution of Results 2026



These results show the distribution of responses for **Overall Performance** (categorized into negative, neutral and positive), and by sub-group to give deeper insight into community perceptions



52

Score

	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Overall Performance	52	58	57	46	49	57	56	56	49
Change vs. 2025	-6	+4	+4	-9	-10	+4	-6	-2	-10

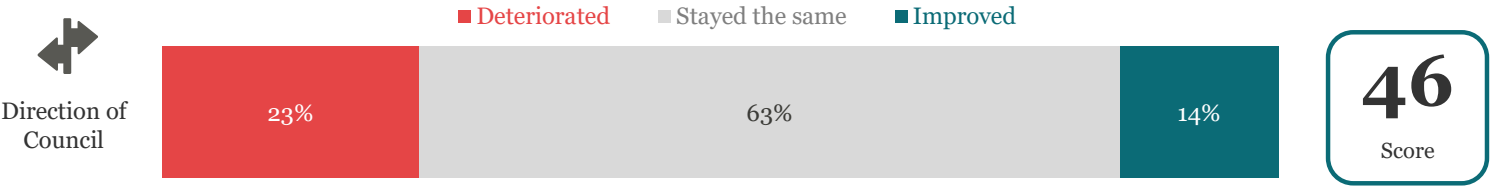
Q3. ON BALANCE, for the last twelve months, how do you feel about the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues, BUT OVERALL across all responsibility areas? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

30

Direction of Council – Distribution of Results 2026



These results show the distribution of responses for **Direction of Council** (improved, stayed the same, deteriorated), and by sub-group to give deeper insight into community perceptions



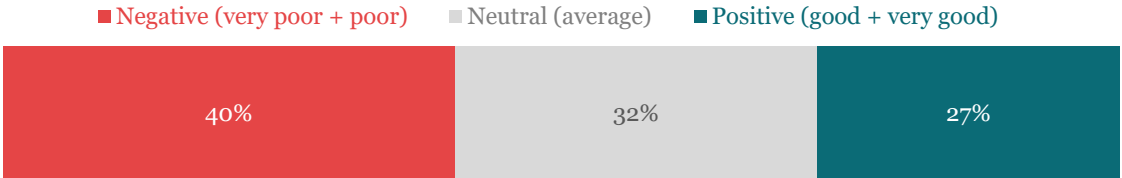
	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Direction of Council	46	48	49	41	45	50	47	48	43
Change vs. 2025	-5	+2	+1	-9	-7	+7	-7	-1	-9

Q6. Over the last 12 months, what is your view of the direction of Council's overall performance? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Spending Public Funds to Benefit Community – Distribution of Results 2026



These results show the distribution of responses for **Spending Public Funds** (categorised into positive, neutral and negative), and by sub-group to give deeper insight into community perceptions



43

Score

	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Spending Funds	43	51	50	39	39	45	49	48	39
Change vs. 2025	-7	+4	+3	-9	-5	+1	-11	-2	-12

Q3b. How would you rate Council at spending public funds on infrastructure and services in ways that benefit the community? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Performance of Council Services



Performance of Council Services



Overview

This section provides a summary of community perceptions of performance across key Council service areas. It highlights how well residents believe Council is delivering services and where performance is strongest or may require improvement.

Specifically, this section includes:

- Performance ratings of Council services
- Trends over time

Council service areas are grouped into five key categories:

- Governance, Engagement & Advocacy
- Infrastructure, Waste & Maintenance
- Community Facilities & Recreation
- Community Services & Support
- Planning, Development and Growth



Summary of results

Key measures:

- Libraries was the strongest performing service area, scoring 82.
- The lowest service results were for decisions in the interest of the community and traffic management, scoring 46 and 47 respectively.
- Compared with 2025, Council's score on traffic management had the largest decline, decreasing by 14 points to 47.

Vs. Benchmarks

- Libraries performed more strongly for Council (82) than State (75) and Regional City (77).
- Opportunities to give feedback on key local issues declined 3 points to 48 for Council, but grew to 55 for State (+5) and 56 for Regional City (+7).
- Council outperformed State on planning for population growth (52 vs. 45) but fell short compared to Regional City (52 vs. 55).

Sub-group differences:

- Males rated Council's performance more positively than Females across nearly all services.
- 18-24 year olds were more positive on keeping the community informed but gave weaker ratings across most other services.
- Residents aged 25-34 gave notably lower ratings for traffic management.

Performance of Council Services – by Year

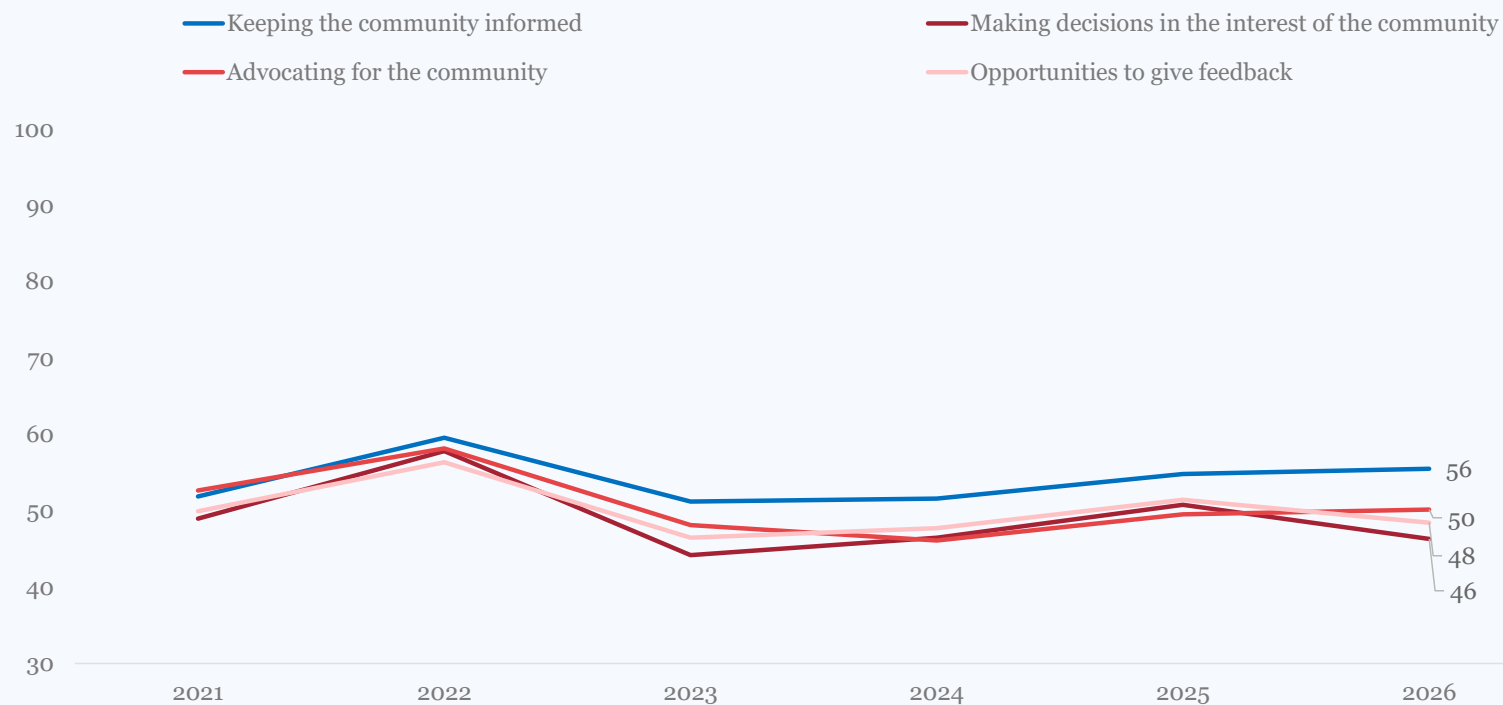


	Warrnambool CC 2026	Chg vs 2025	State 2026	Chg vs 2025	Regional City 2026	Chg vs 2025
Libraries*	82	NA	75	NA	77	NA
Waste management*	68	-4	72	+6	71	+6
The appearance of public areas	65	-5	63	-5	65	-3
Emergency and disaster management	63	-3	63	-2	65	-
Art centres*	63	NA	64	NA	70	NA
Recreational facilities	62	-6	66	-2	68	-1
Community events and cultural activities *	62	-2	65	-	64	-
Elderly support services	60	-3	59	-5	NA	NA
Business and community development and tourism	60	-	59	+3	58	+1
Family support services	60	-4	61	-1	63	-
Environmental sustainability	60	-	61	+2	62	+2
Enforcement of local laws and regulations*	58	-6	56	-3	61	-
Disadvantaged support services	57	-2	55	-2	NA	NA
Keeping the community informed	56	+1	60	+4	59	+5
Developing and promoting the local economy*	55	-3	54	-	56	+2
Planning for population growth	52	-3	45	-3	55	+3
The condition of footpaths*	51	-6	53	+2	56	+4
Planning and building permits	50	-1	48	+5	54	+6
Advocating for the community*	50	+1	54	+4	54	+5
Parking facilities	50	-4	55	+1	52	-
Condition of sealed local streets*	49	-4	54	+9	51	+4
Opportunities to give feedback on key local issues*	48	-3	55	+5	56	+7
Council's general town planning policy	48	-3	48	-	NA	NA
Traffic management	47	-14	49	-5	53	-2
Decisions in the interest of the community*	46	-4	52	+3	53	+5

Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

35

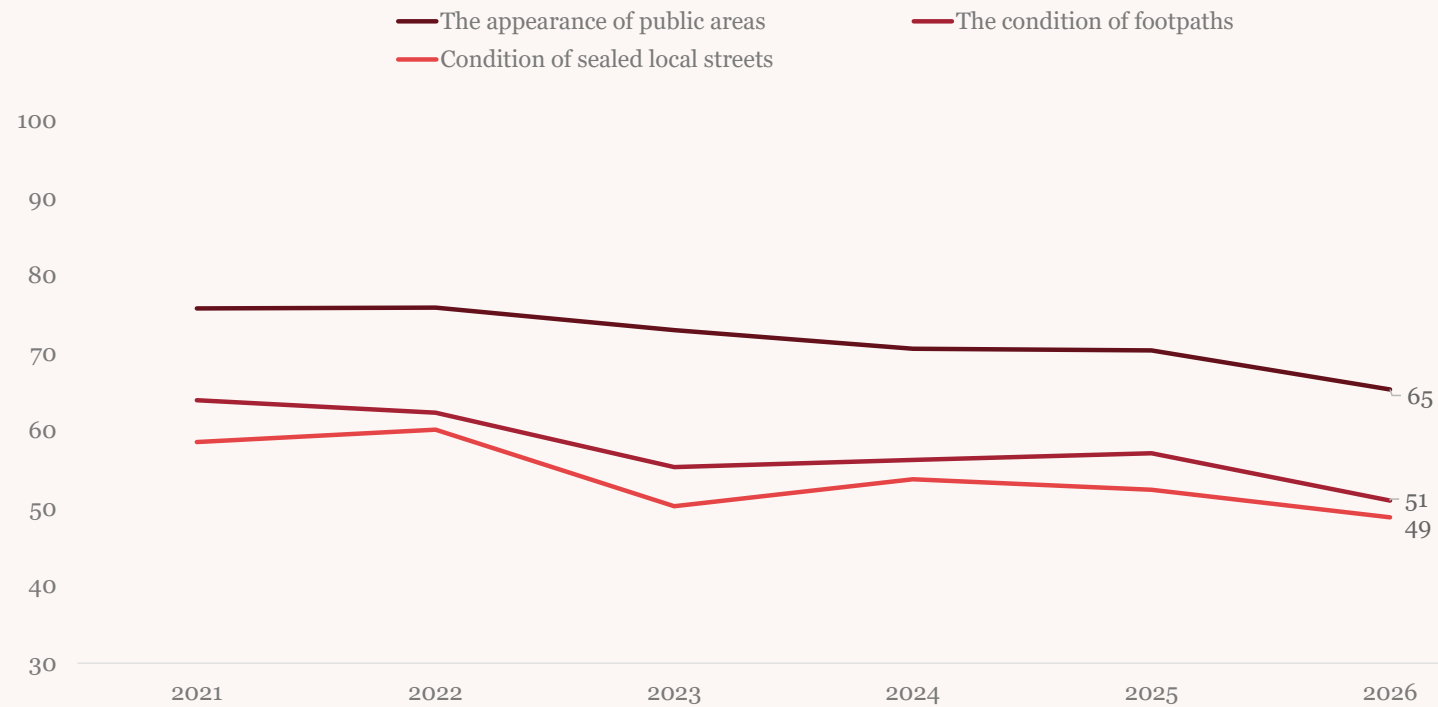
Performance of Council Services – Governance, Engagement & Advocacy



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

36

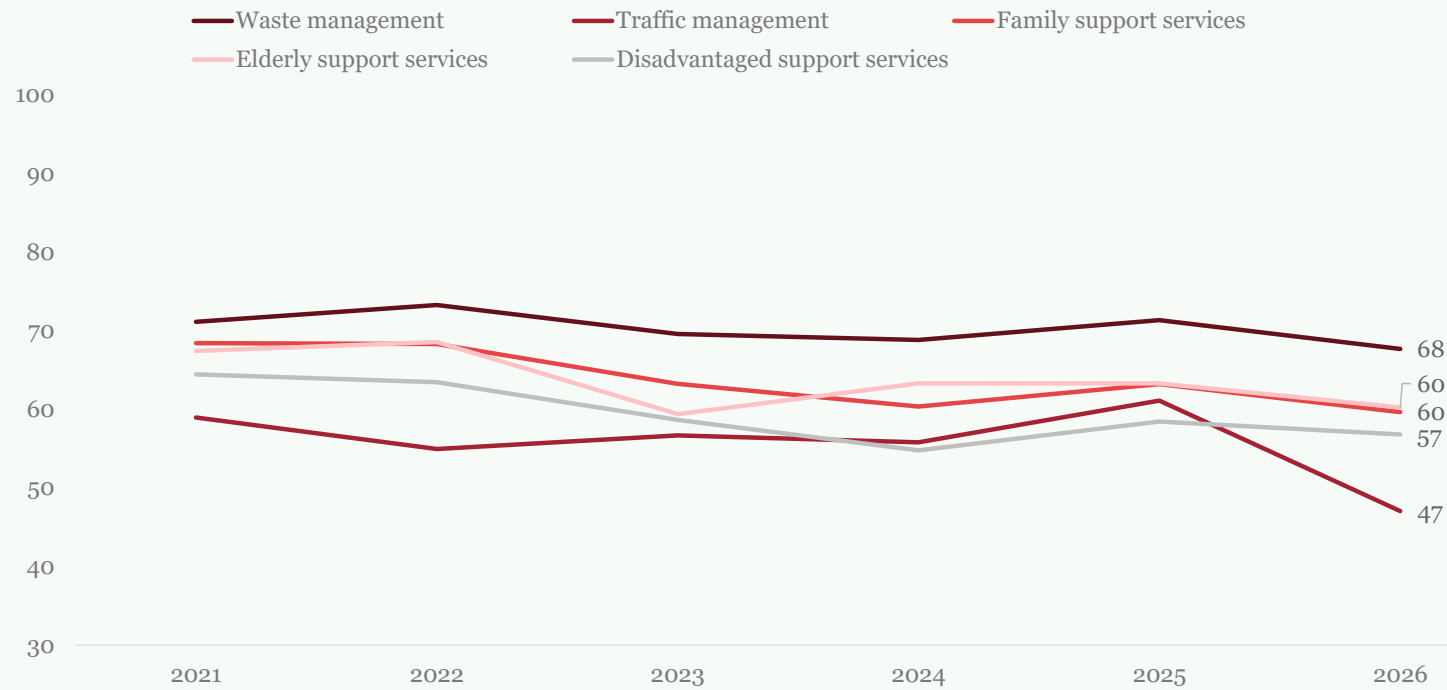
Performance of Council Services – Infrastructure & Maintenance



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

37

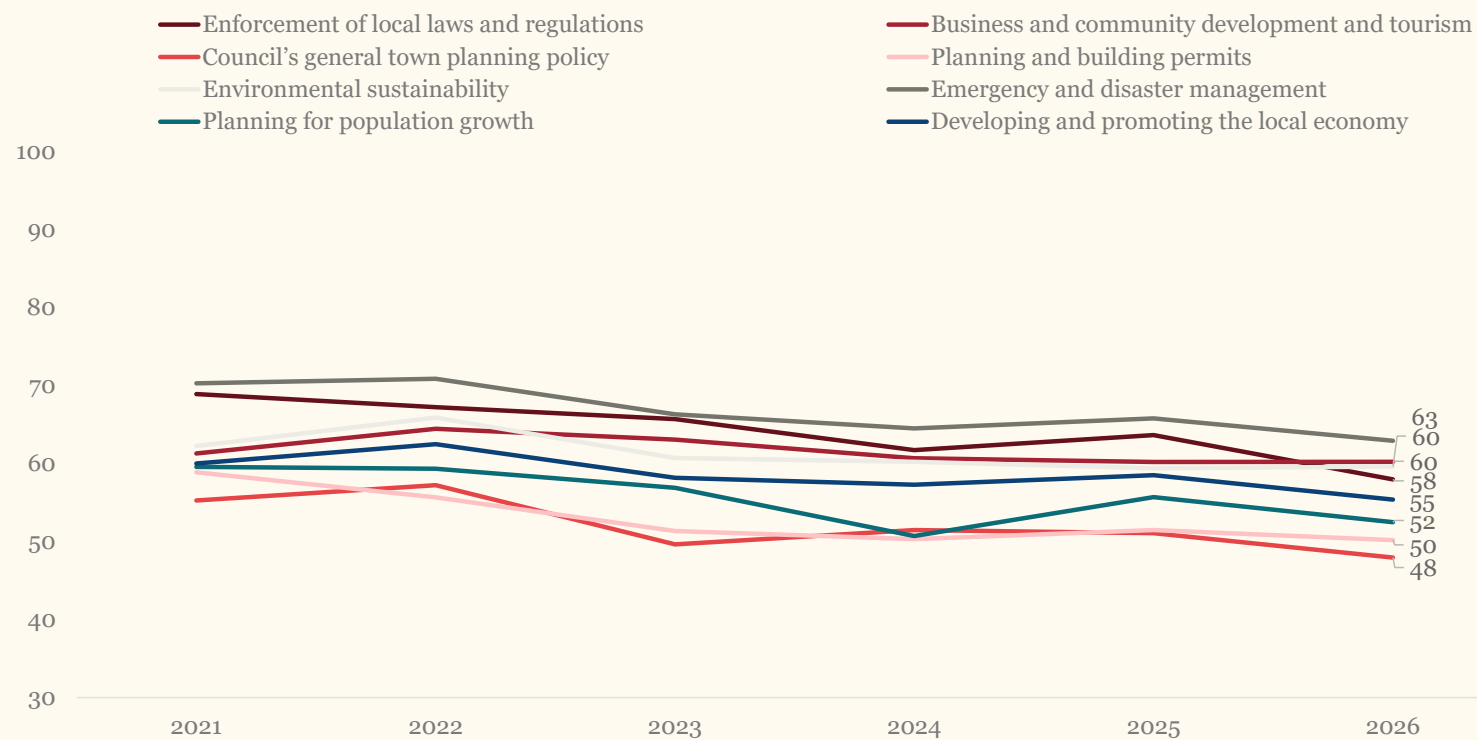
Performance of Council Services – Community Services & Support



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

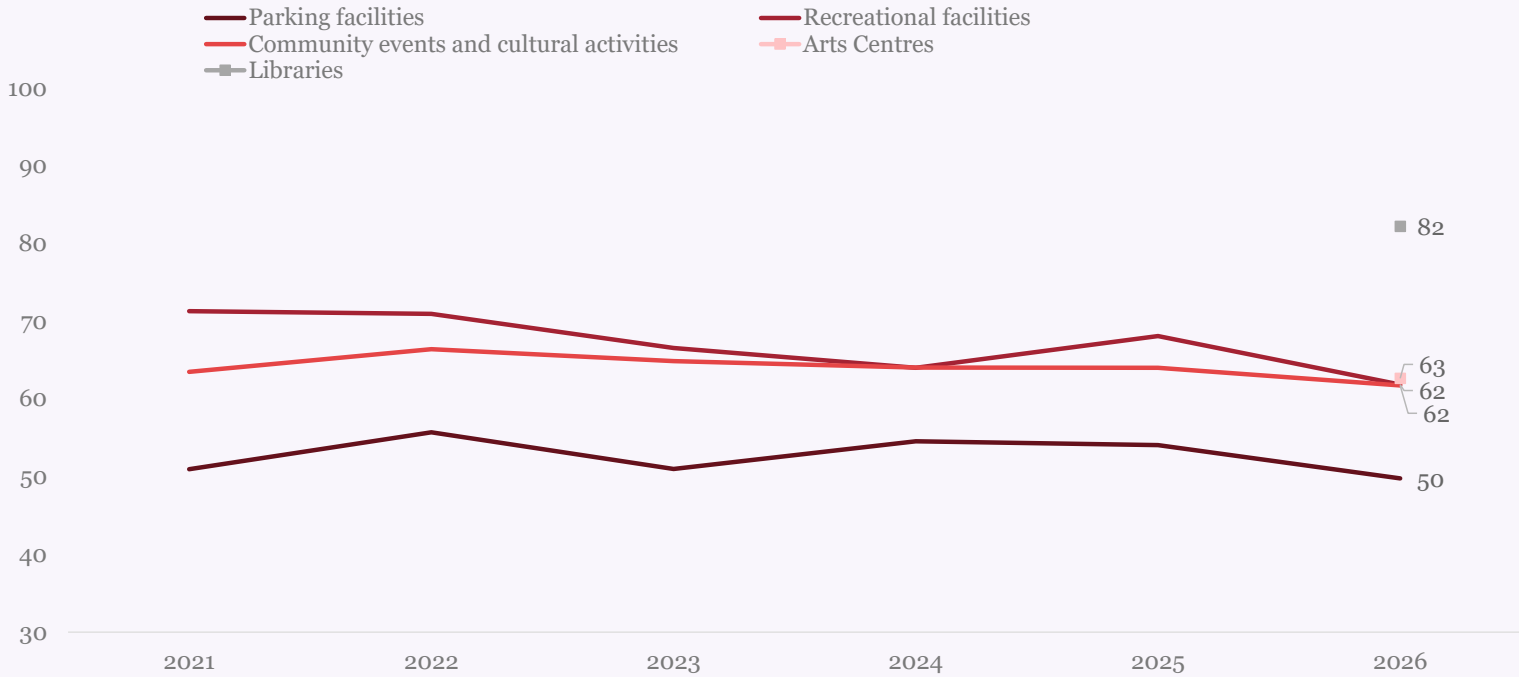
38

Performance of Council Services – Planning & Development



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Performance of Council Services – Community Facilities & Recreation



Q2. I would now like you to rate the performance of Council over the last 12 months. Firstly, how has Council performed on [SERVICE] over the last 12 months? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Influence-Performance Matrix

Analysis Framework

How to read the Matrix

The influence-performance matrix helps show which areas matter most, and where improvement is likely to have the greatest impact.

- **Influence**

is based on regression analysis, this indicates which attributes matter most to overall satisfaction. Derived influence is often preferred over asking directly (stated importance) because it uncovers subconscious drivers, hidden priorities, and actual behaviour. All aspects are important; some are more powerful at driving overall sentiment.

- **Performance**

is based on respondents' ratings of Council on each attribute.

Together, these dimensions help identify priorities for action.

High influence, high performance - important areas where Council is performing well

High influence, lower performance - highest priorities for improvement.

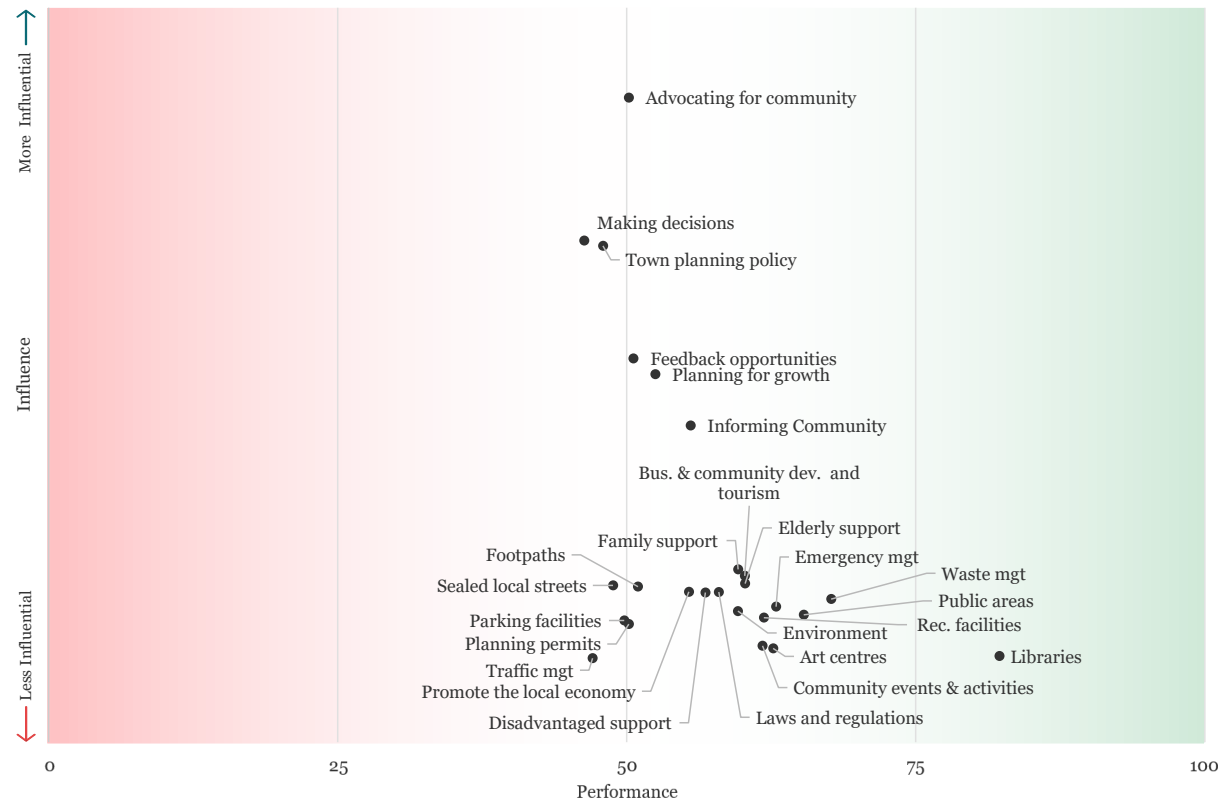
Lower influence, high performance - performing well, but less influential overall.

Lower influence, lower performance - lower priority areas for improvement.



Influence on the matrix is derived from regression analysis, while performance is based on respondents' ratings of Council attributes.

Influence vs. Performance – Service Delivery 2026



The influence analysis gives a clearer sense of which service areas are most likely to shape overall perceptions of Council.

The areas with the strongest case for attention are:

- Advocating for, and representing, the community
- Making decisions in the interest of the community
- Council's general town planning policy
- Opportunities to give feedback on key local issues
- Planning for population growth

Whilst footpaths, streets, parking and traffic management are relatively low scoring, due to their lower influence they are lesser priorities for improvement.

Engagement with Council



Engagement with Council



Overview

This section provides an overview of how residents engage with Council services and their experiences when doing so. It highlights the extent of contact with Council, satisfaction with customer service, and how engagement differs across the community.

Specifically, this section includes:

- Contact with the Council in the last 12 months
- Satisfaction with customer service
- Importance and performance ratings, with comparisons between those who have contacted Council and those who have not
- Subgroup differences
- Preferred channels for accessing information

Together, these insights provide a clear view of how residents interact with Council, the effectiveness of current service delivery, and opportunities to enhance the customer experience.



Summary of results

Key measures:

- Over half of residents had contact with Council in the past 12 months (56%), decreasing by 5 points from 2025.
- The customer service rating also decreased by 5 points, falling to 65.
- This slide should be read as both a contact-incidence measure and a service-experience measure among those who contacted Council.
- 31% of residents selected social media as their preferred channel for Council news and information, a sharp rise in popularity of +13%. It now places firmly ahead of newsletter via social media (23%) and newsletter via mail (17%), which were more preferred in 2025.

Vs. Benchmarks

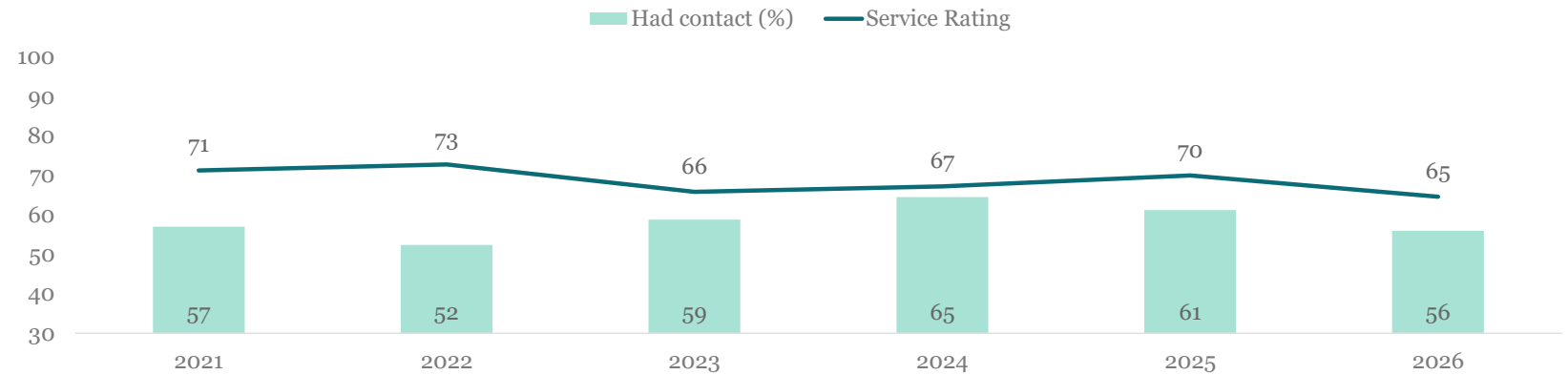
- Compared with 2025, Council's contact rate decline of 5 points was on par with State but smaller than the 8-point decline for Regional City.
- While Council's service rating declined, State and Regional City had increases of 2 and 3 points respectively.

Sub-group differences:

- Residents aged 25 to 34 year olds were significantly less likely to have contact in 2026 and were less positive about the customer service.



Contact with Council and Satisfaction with Service During Contact



Contact with Council and Customer Service Rating: 2026 by Demographic Groups

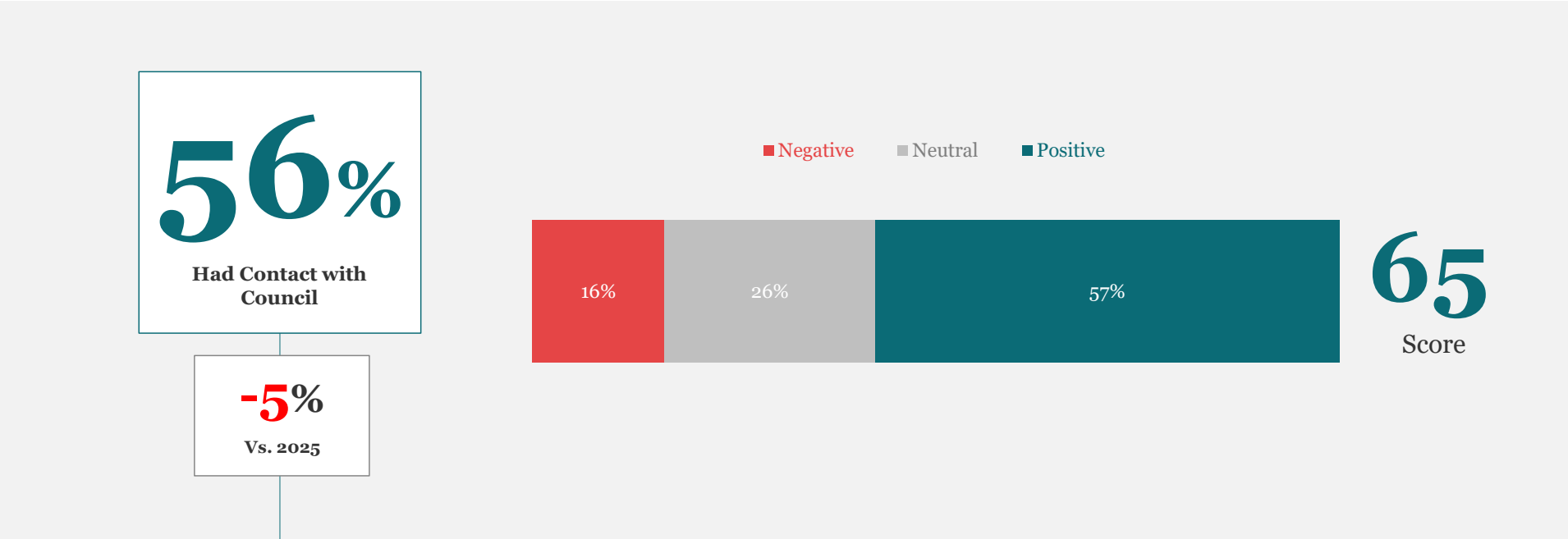
Average	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Had contact (%)	56	58	55	46	68	66	49	52	60
Service Rating	65	68	71	56	68	66	67	67	63

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Had contact (%)	-5	-5	-8	-16	-3	-	-3	-6	-5
Service Rating	-5	+2	+3	-13	-3	-5	-2	-4	-7

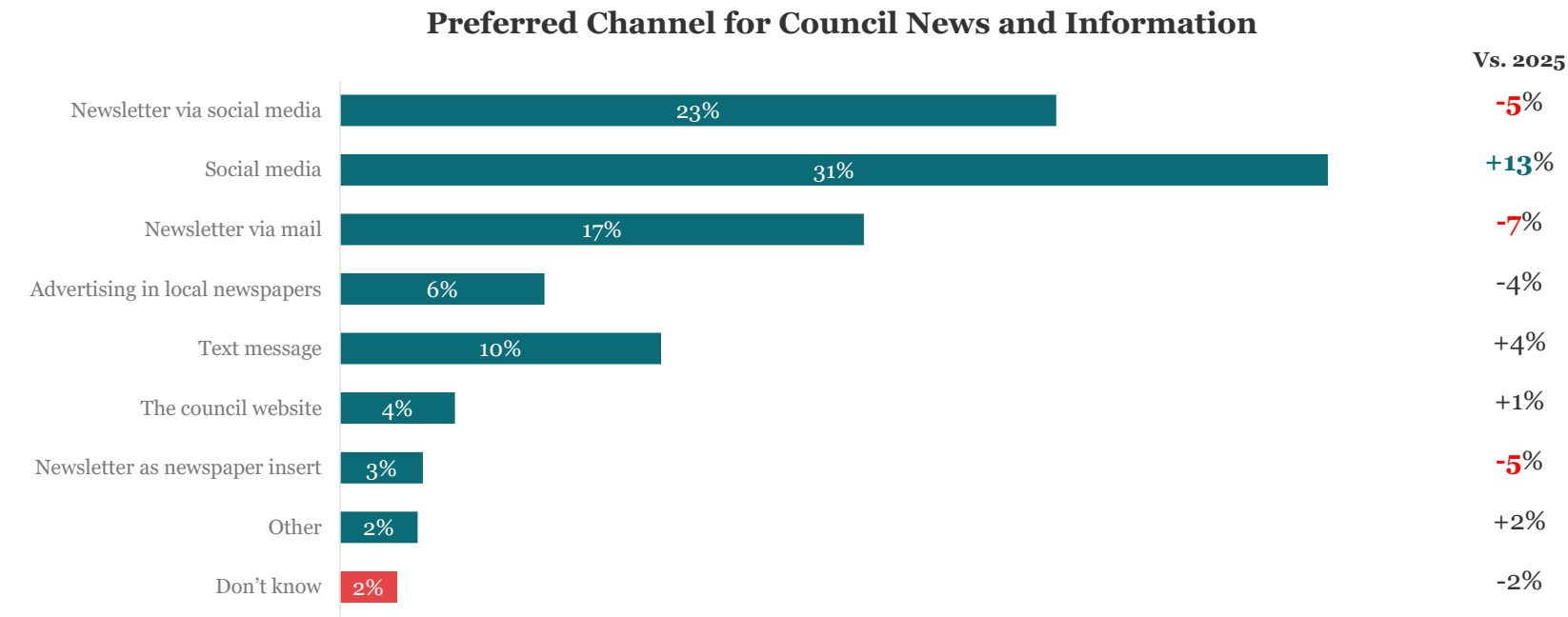
Q5. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had any contact with [INSERT COUNCIL NAME]? Q5A. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had any contact with Council in any of the following ways? Q5C. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Council for customer service? Please keep in mind we do NOT mean the ACTUAL OUTCOME. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Satisfaction with Customer Service During Contact



Q5C. Thinking of the most recent contact, how would you rate Council for customer service? Please keep in mind we do NOT mean the ACTUAL OUTCOME. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Preferred Channel for Council News and Information 2026



Q13A. If Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate to you? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Preferred Channel for Council News and Information 2026



Column %	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Newsletter via social media	23%	33%	24%	10%	19%	27%	33%	26%	19%
Social media	31%	19%	28%	52%	40%	27%	10%	27%	35%
Newsletter via mail	17%	21%	17%	13%	12%	19%	22%	17%	16%
Advertising in local newspapers	6%	6%	10%	4%	5%	5%	11%	8%	5%
Text message	10%	12%	10%	13%	7%	11%	9%	8%	12%
The council website	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%
Newsletter as newspaper insert	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%	4%	4%	2%
Other	2%	2%	1%	0%	6%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	0%	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%

Q13A. If Council was going to get in touch with you to inform you about Council news and information and upcoming events, which ONE of the following is the BEST way to communicate to you? For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

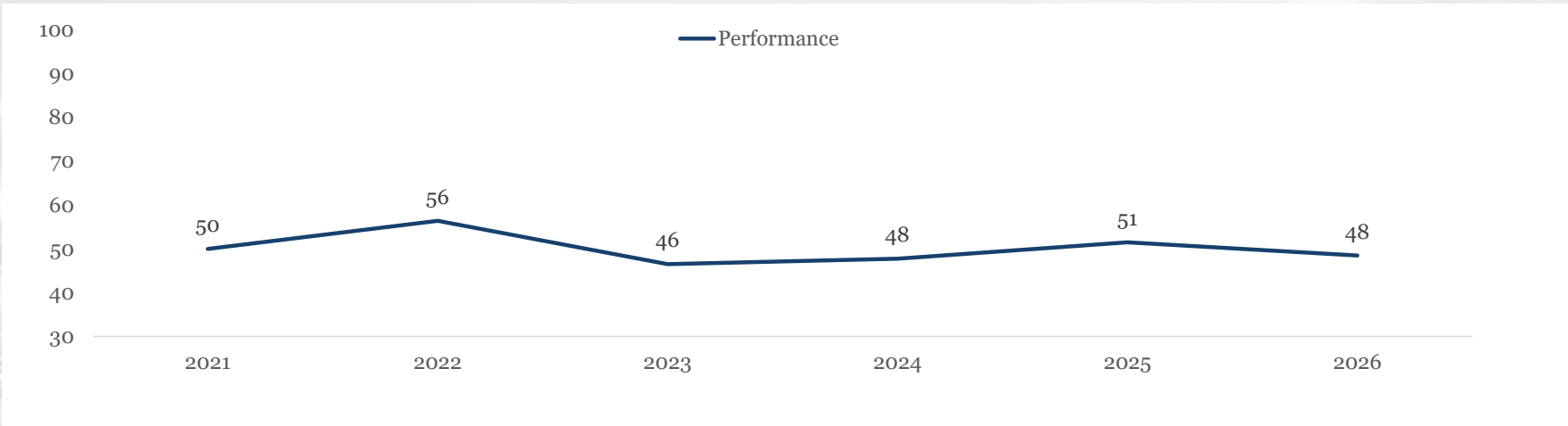
48

Council Service Areas

Performance by Year and Demographic Groups



Council Services – Opportunities to Give Feedback on Key Local Issues



Performance of Service 2026

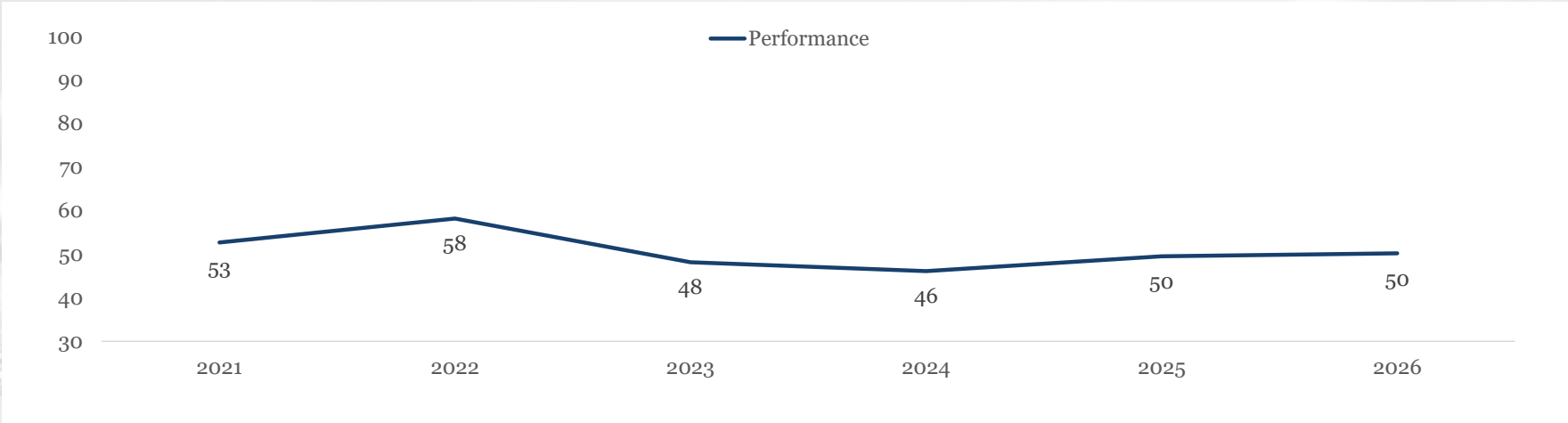
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	48	55	56	43	49	54	48	54	43

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-3	+5	+7	-9	-2	+9	-6	+2	-8
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? The opportunities offered by Council to give your feedback on key local issues. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Advocating for the Community



Performance of Service 2026

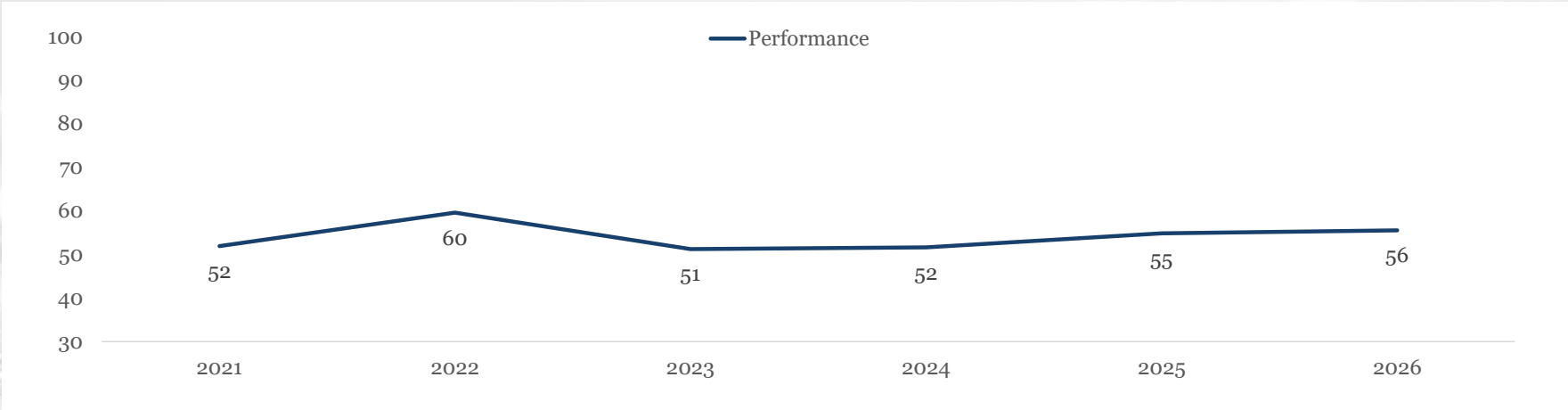
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	50	54	54	46	49	52	54	51	49

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	+1	+4	+5	-4	+4	+6	-1	+3	-1
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Advocating for, and representing the community to government and other organisations. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Keeping the Community Informed



Performance of Service 2026

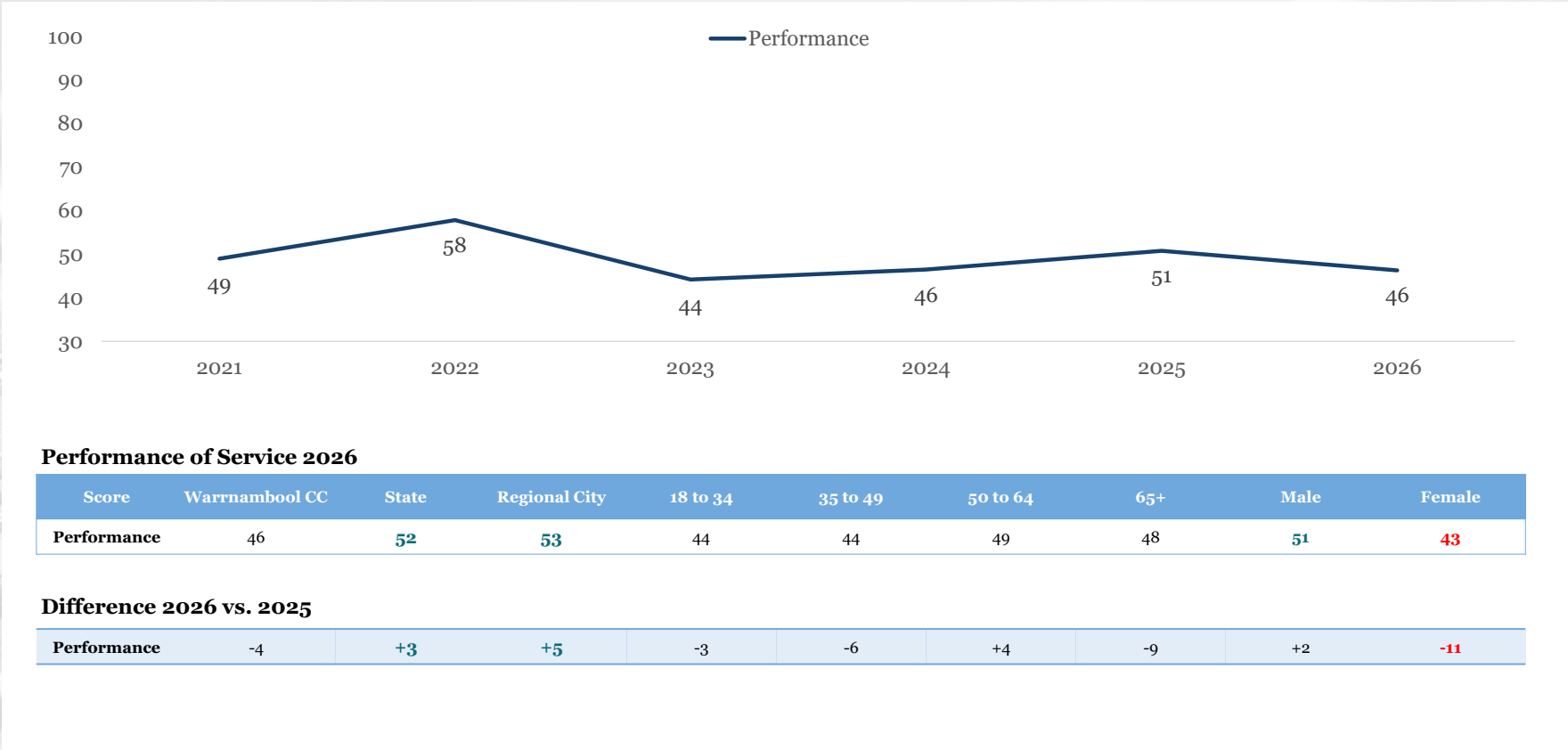
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	56	60	59	57	57	54	54	59	53

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	+1	+4	+5	+1	-	+6	-2	+3	-2
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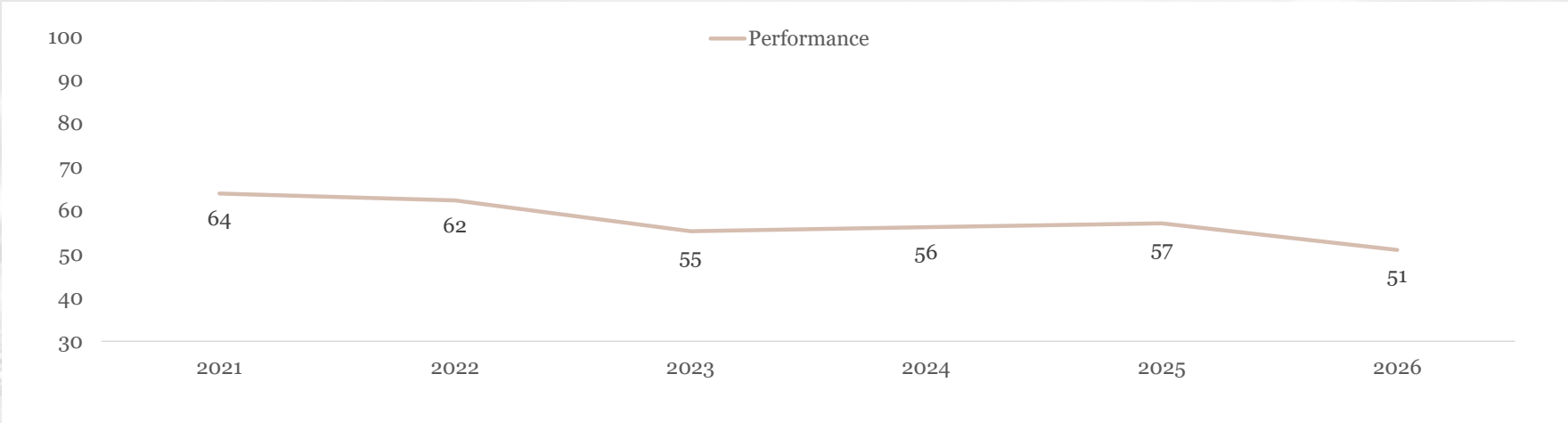
Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Keeping the community informed on council services, events and programs. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Making Decisions in Interest of Community



Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Making decisions in the interest of the community. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Condition of Footpaths



Performance of Service 2026

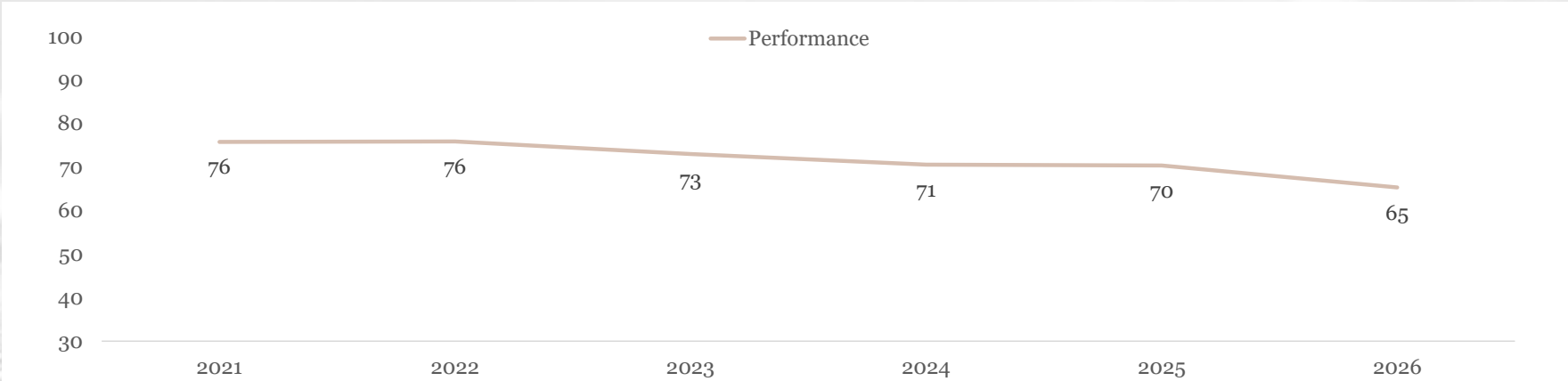
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	51	53	56	48	51	53	52	54	48

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-6	+2	+4	-7	-7	-3	-7	-6	-7
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? The condition of footpaths in your area. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Appearance of Public Areas



Performance of Service 2026

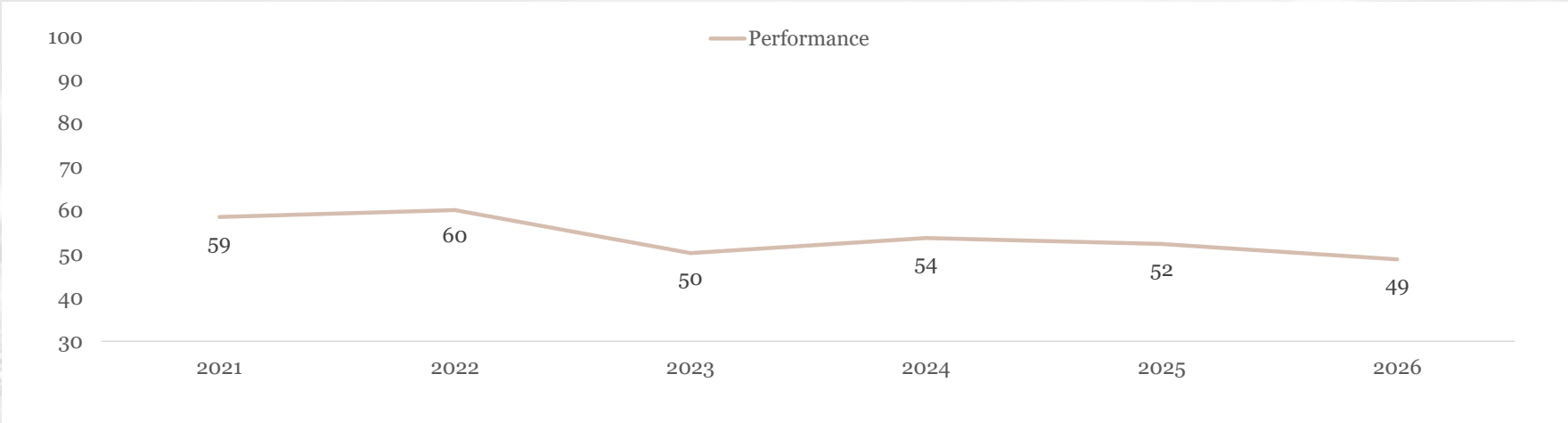
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	65	63	65	61	66	68	67	68	63

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-5	-5	-3	-6	-6	-2	-5	-1	-9
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? The appearance of public areas. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Condition of Sealed Local Streets



Performance of Service 2026

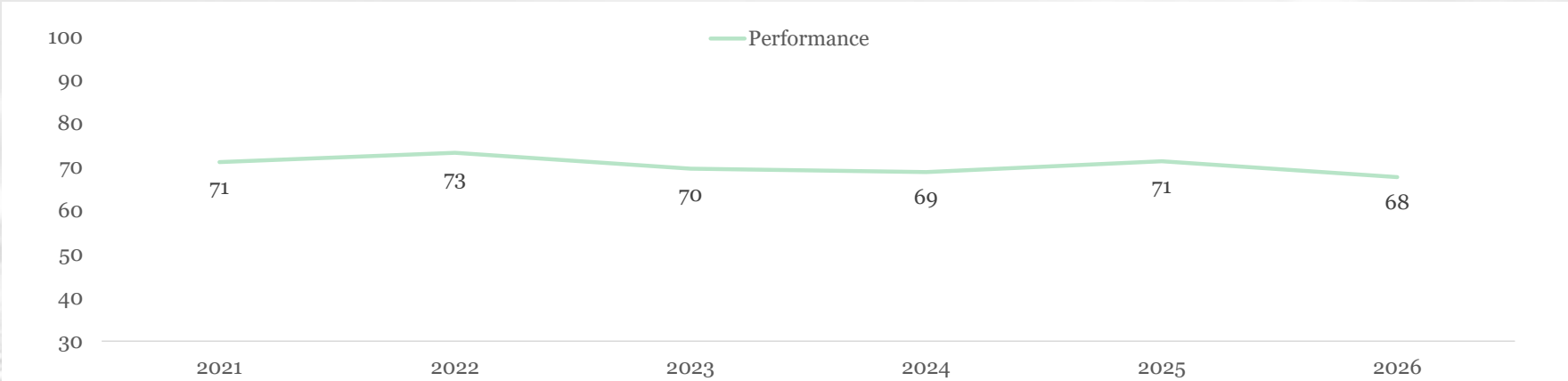
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	49	54	51	46	51	48	50	53	45

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-4	+9	+4	-7	-1	+1	-5	-1	-6
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Condition of sealed local streets in your area. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Waste Management



Performance of Service 2026

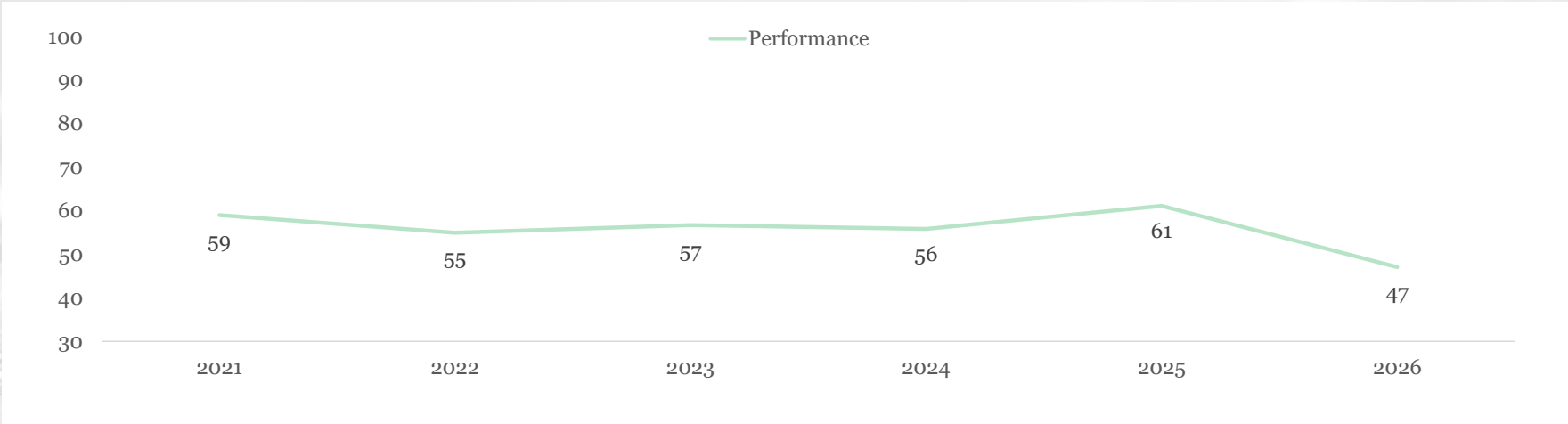
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	68	72	71	63	63	71	72	69	67

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-4	+6	+6	-3	-6	-0	-4	-2	-5
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Waste management including the collection of garbage, recyclables and green waste. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Traffic Management



Performance of Service 2026

Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	47	49	53	41	51	48	48	49	46

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-14	-5	-2	-23	-13	-7	-11	-10	-18
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Traffic management. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Family Support Services



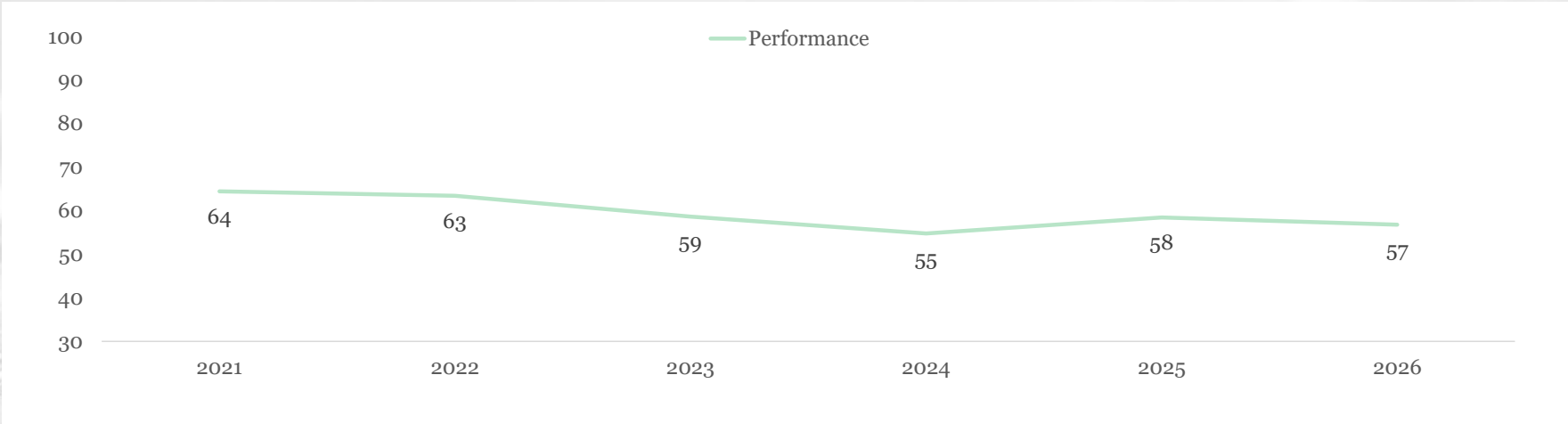
Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Family support services. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Elderly Support Services



Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Elderly support services. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Disadvantaged Support Services



Performance of Service 2026

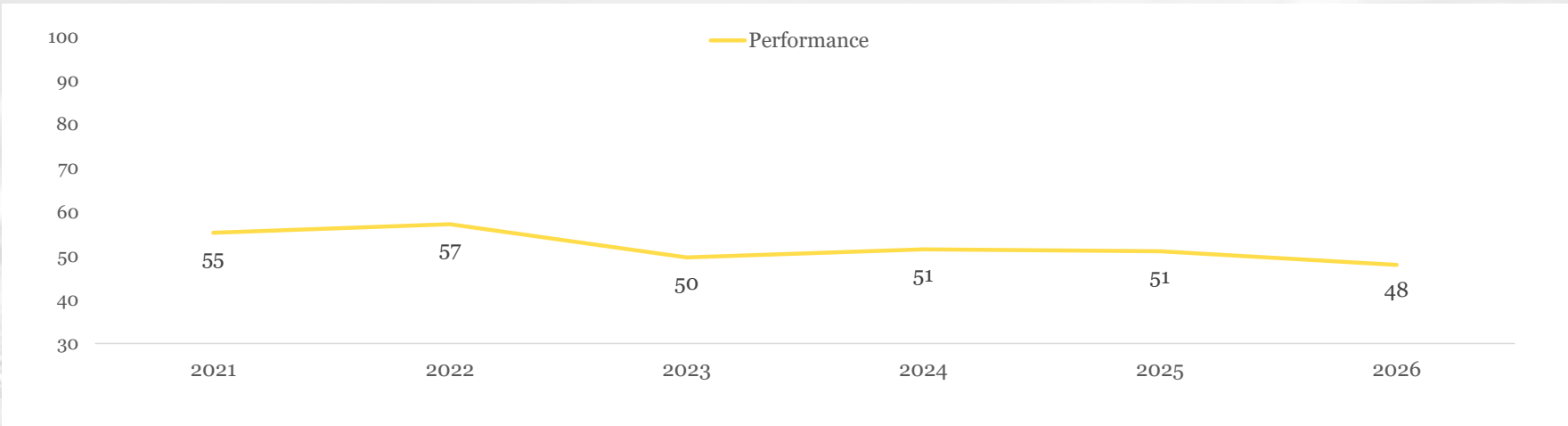
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	57	55	NA	50	59	61	58	64	50

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-2	-2	NA	-11	+4	+5	-2	-1	-2
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Disadvantaged support services. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Council’s General Town Planning Policy



Performance of Service 2026

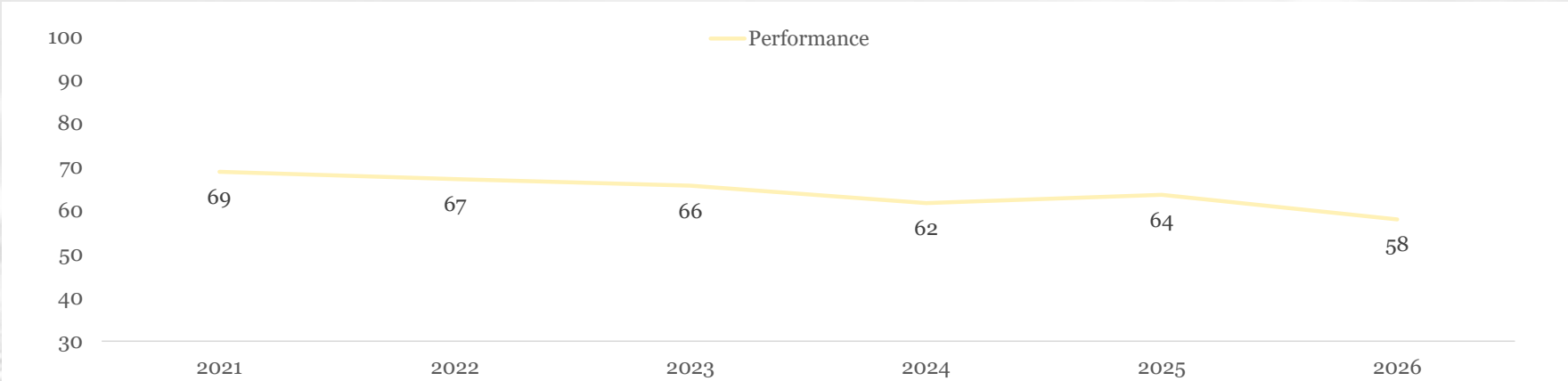
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	48	48	NA	43	50	49	50	50	46

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-3	-	NA	-6	+2	-1	-5	-	-7
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Council’s general town planning policy. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Enforcement of Laws and Regulations



Performance of Service 2026

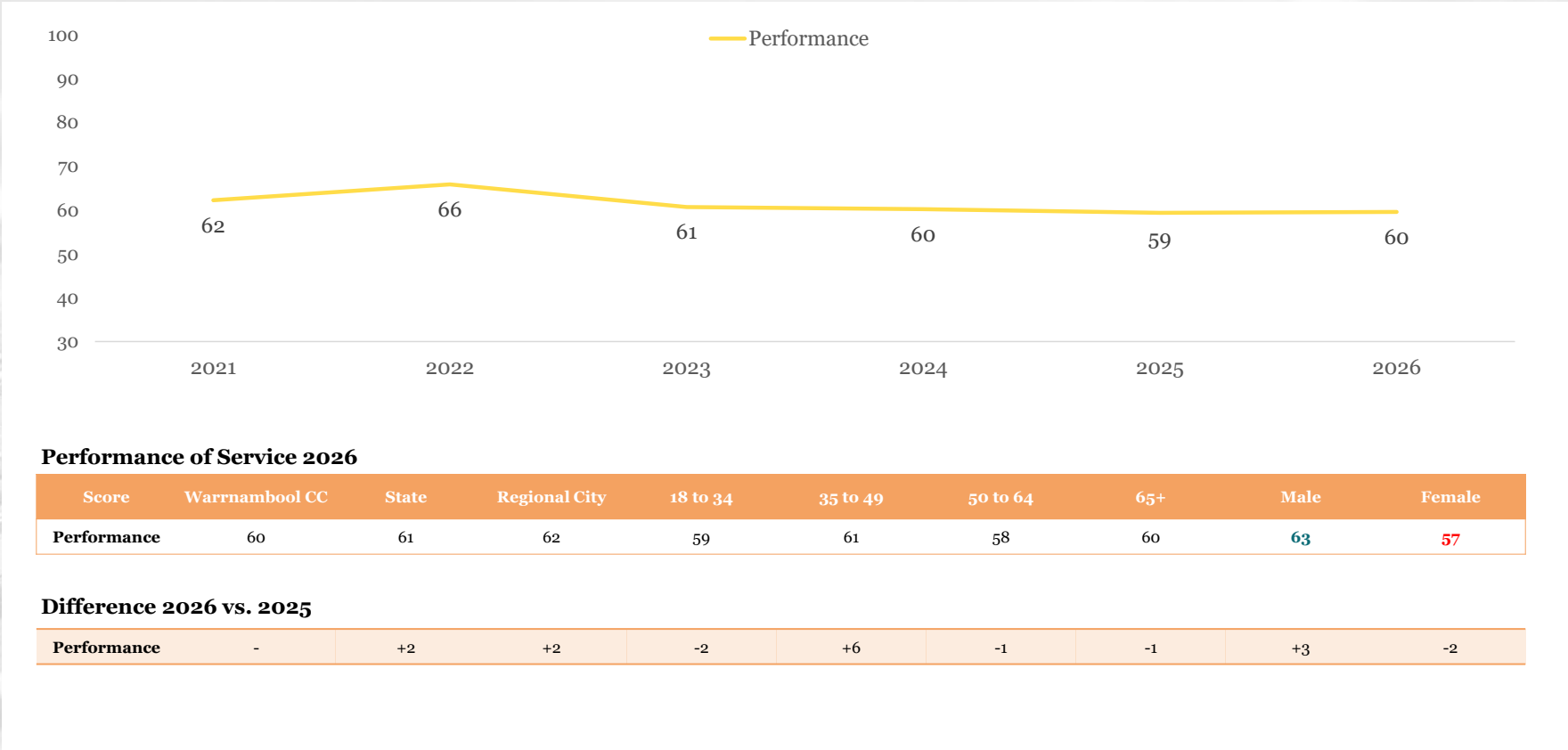
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	58	56	61	59	59	58	56	59	57

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-6	-3	-	-8	-3	-6	-6	-1	-10
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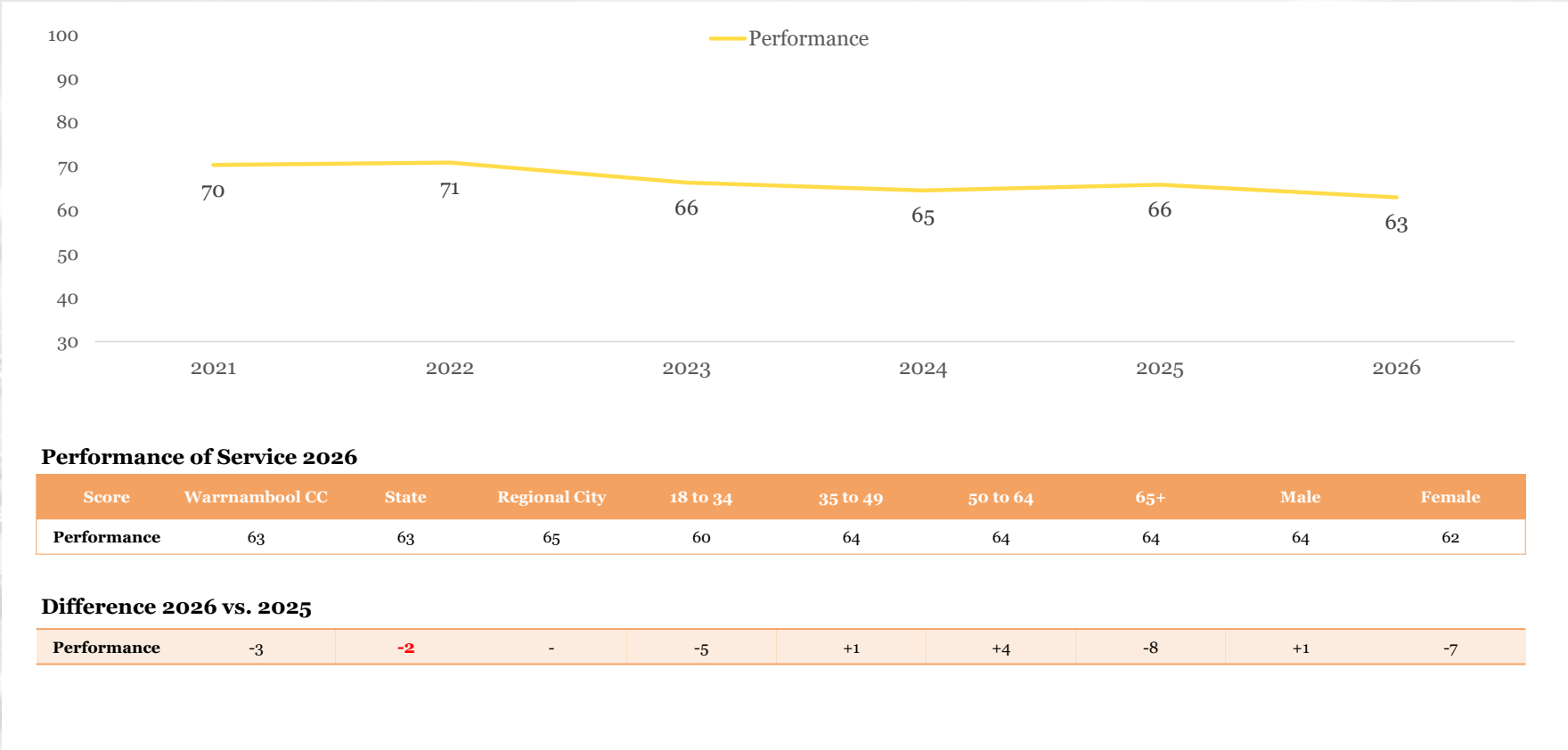
Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Enforcement of local laws and Council regulations. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Environmental Sustainability



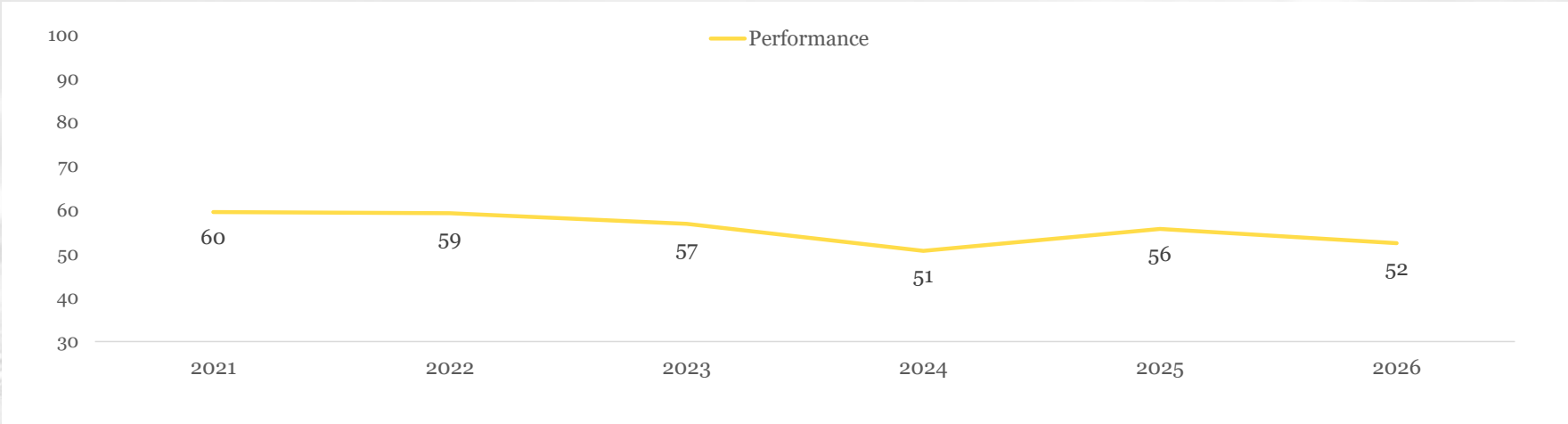
Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Environmental sustainability. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Emergency and Disaster Management



Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Emergency and disaster management. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Planning for Population Growth



Performance of Service 2026

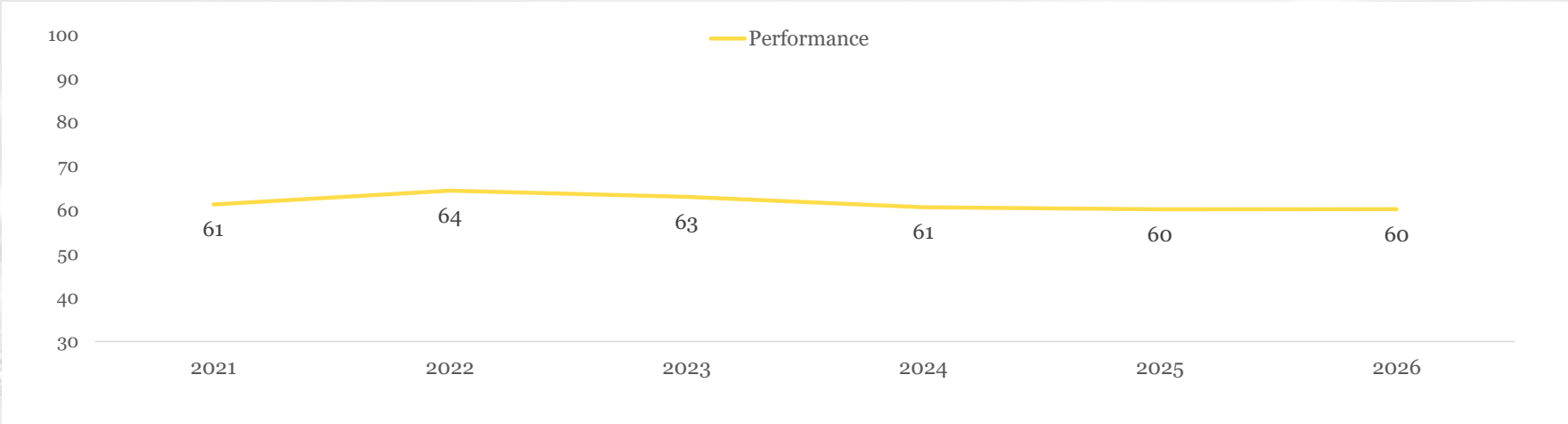
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	52	45	55	51	52	54	54	57	48

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-3	-3	+3	-5	-2	+1	-5	-	-6
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Planning for population growth in the area. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Business and Community Development and Tourism



Performance of Service 2026

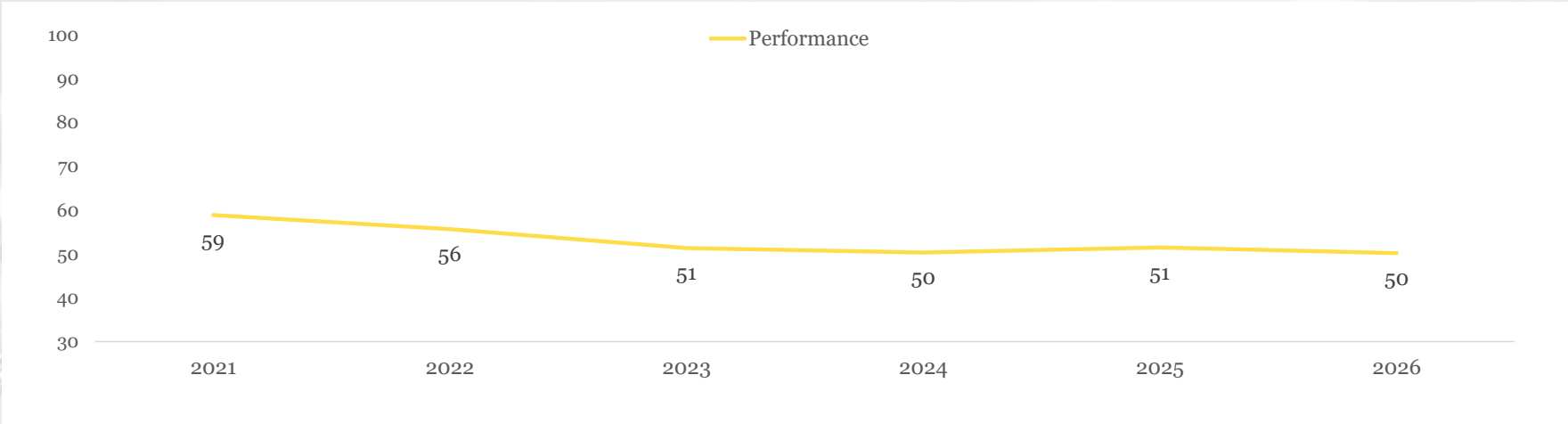
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	60	59	58	59	62	62	59	62	58

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-	+3	+1	+7	-1	+1	-6	+4	-4
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Business and community development and tourism. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Planning and Building Permits



Performance of Service 2026

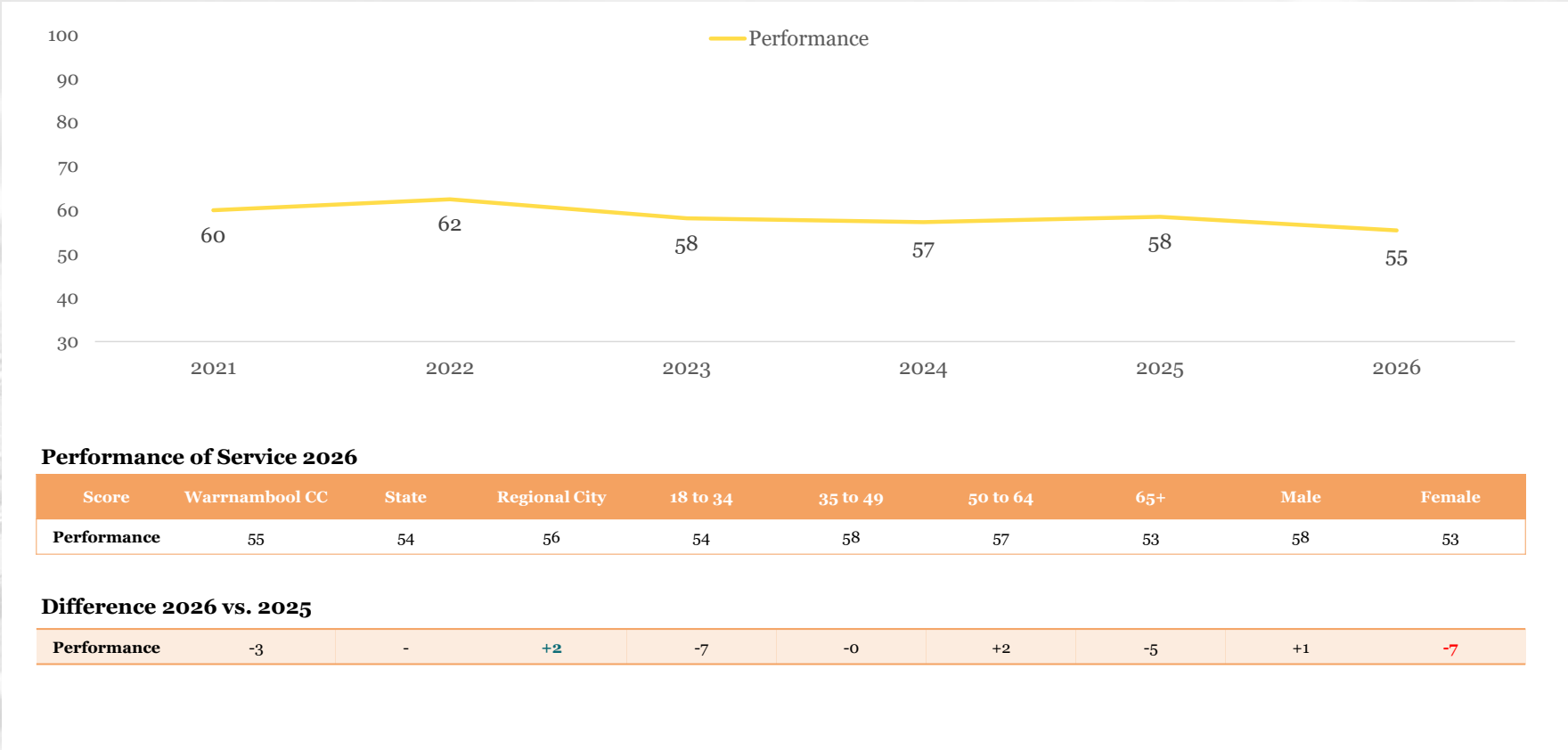
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	50	48	54	50	51	48	51	50	50

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-1	+5	+6	-2	+1	-4	-1	+1	-4
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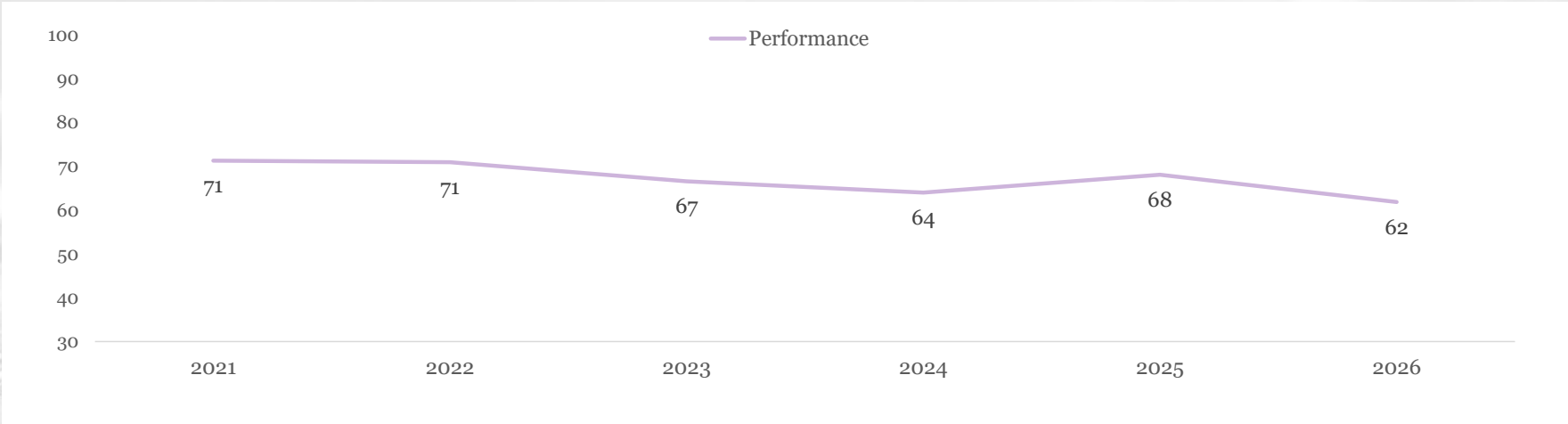
Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Planning and building permits. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Developing and Promoting the Local Economy



Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Developing and promoting the local economy. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Recreational Facilities



Performance of Service 2026

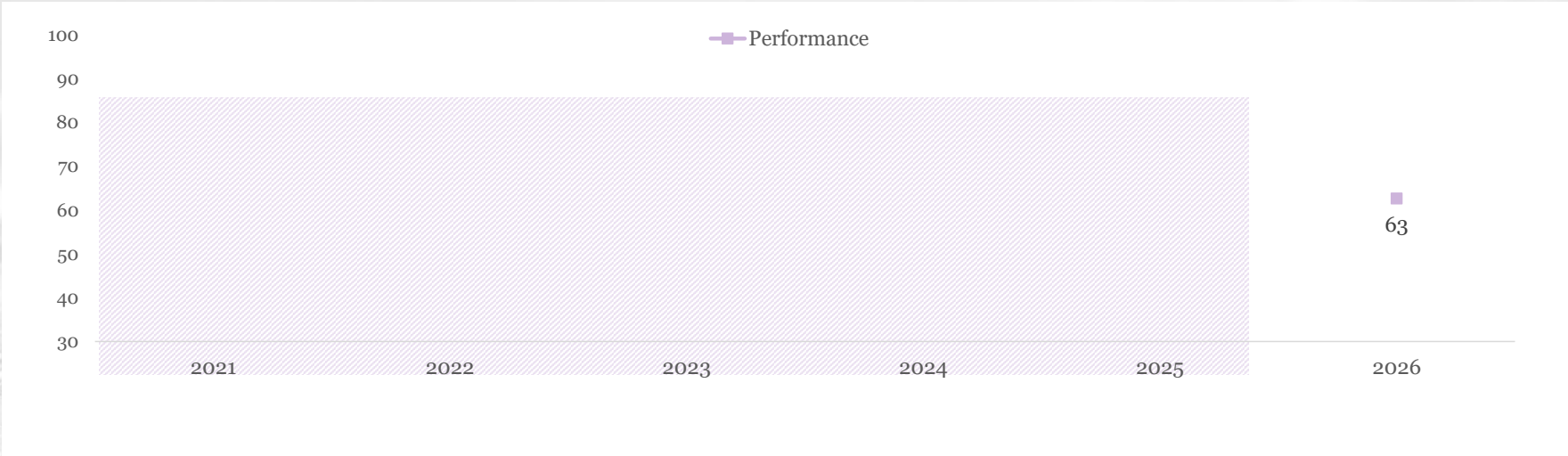
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	62	66	68	54	58	69	67	66	59

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-6	-2	-1	-15	-6	+6	-7	-3	-10
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Recreational facilities. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Art Centres



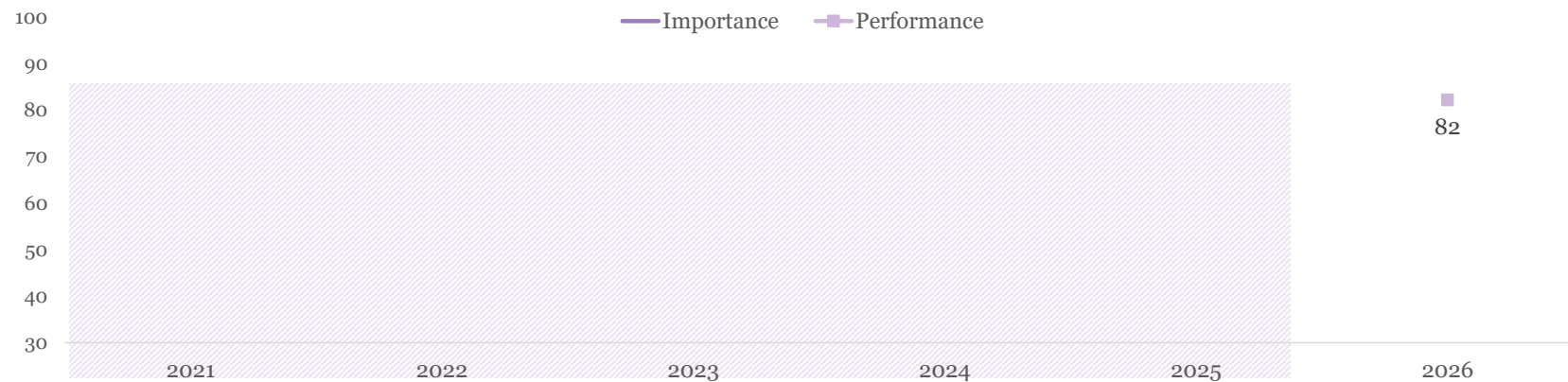
Performance of Service 2026

Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	63	64	70	59	64	67	61	65	60

Note: Performance of art centres has not been historically asked

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Arts centres. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Libraries



Performance of Service 2026

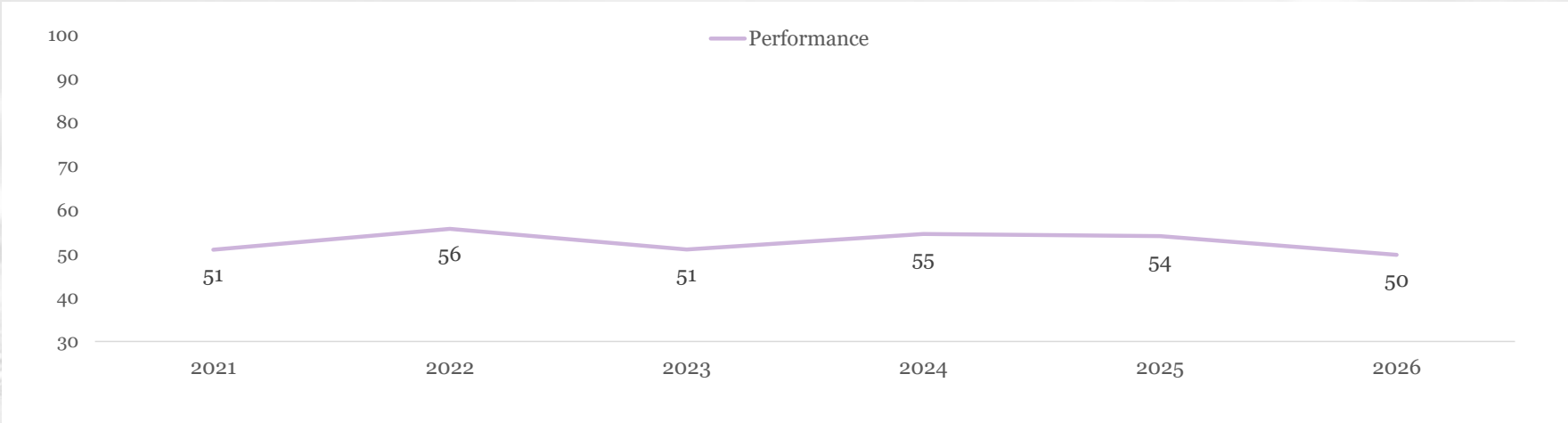
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	82	75	77	81	85	79	83	81	83

Note: Performance of libraries has not been historically asked

Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Libraries. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

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Council Services – Parking Facilities



Performance of Service 2026

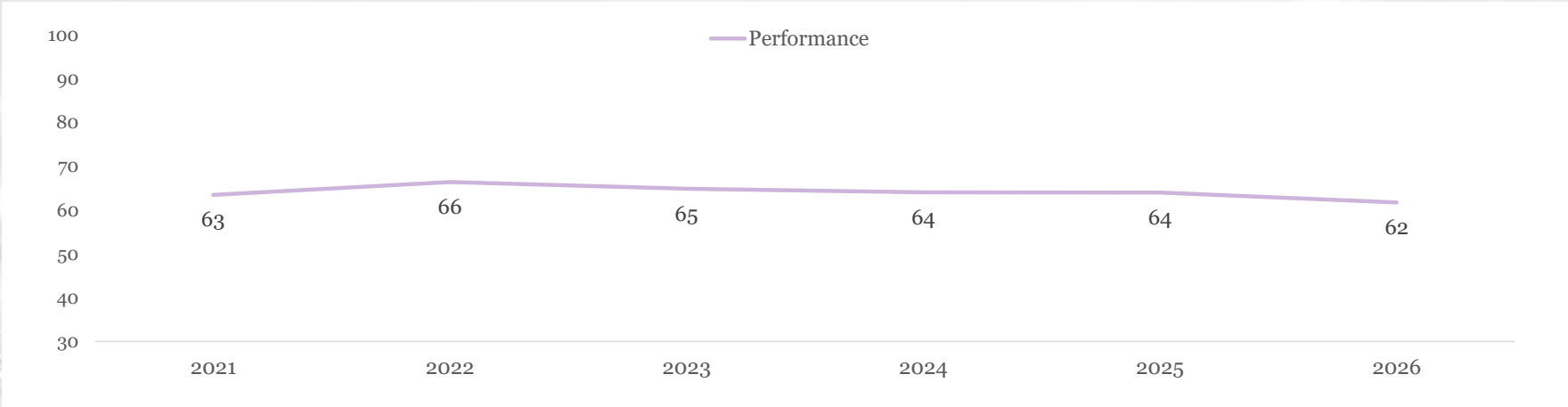
Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	50	55	52	45	52	50	52	53	47

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-4	+1	-	-11	-2	-3	-1	-1	-8
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Parking facilities. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.

Council Services – Community Events and Cultural Activities



Performance of Service 2026

Score	Warrnambool CC	State	Regional City	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+	Male	Female
Performance	62	65	64	62	59	66	61	62	61

Difference 2026 vs. 2025

Performance	-2	-	-	-6	-1	+2	-4	-1	-4
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Q1. How important should this be as a responsibility for Council? Q2. how has Council performed on this over the last 12 months? Community events and cultural activities. For base sizes, please refer to slide 19.



Thank you

Contact us for more info:

General enquiries

viccouncils@kleinresearch.com.au

Address

Klein Research
Level 4
54 Wellington St
Collingwood
VIC 3066

Phone

+61 3 9087 7333

7.2. Warrnambool Gaming Policy - Policy Review

DIRECTORATE : City Wellbeing

Purpose:

This report provides information on the review of the Warrnambool Gaming Policy and recommends it be revoked.

Executive Summary

The Warrnambool Gaming Policy was established in April 2011 with the intent of communicating “Council’s position in relation to gaming within the Municipality”. The policy is aimed at limiting the economic and social impact of Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) on less socio-economically advantageous areas of the City.

As the regulator, the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC) manages the licensing and allocation of EGMs across the state. Under this structure, Council had limited influence in controlling the distribution of machines within the municipality. Applications to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to overturn the decisions of the VGCCC have had little success.

Recognising the impact of gambling in the community, Council included “harm from gaming...” as one of the pillars in the Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2026-29. This has permitted the development of programs that address the determinants of problem gambling. Council’s planning scheme also guides the distribution of gaming venues by restricting planning permission in certain areas of the city.

Recognising the regulatory role of the VGCCC in managing the number and location of EGMs and addressing problem gambling through population health programs permits the removal of this policy.

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

SECONDED: CR DEBBIE ARNOTT

That Council revoke the Warrnambool Gaming Policy 2011.

CARRIED - 5:1

Crs Walsh, Arnott, Edis, Jellie and Blain voting for the motion.

Cr Benter voting against the motion.

Background

Gambling was brought to Australia with the new settlers and was quickly established as a popular leisure activity among all social groups. In contrast to the moralistic and prohibitive regimes in Britain and the United States, Australia had a relatively liberal approach to gambling and was an essential feature of its popular culture¹ with gambling being associated with community activities such as card games, two-up and horseracing. Despite this, many forms of gambling associated with these activities were initially banned, including off-course betting, casinos and two-up dens.

In the 1960s, as a response to the “failure of regulatory and law enforcement agencies to control the almost obsessive determination of gamblers to partake in illegal gambling”², governments across Australia relaxed access to gambling through the introduction of TABs, lotto, pools and casinos.

Victoria resisted the introduction of both electronic gaming machines and casinos in the 1970s and early 1980s. But by the late 1980s, changes in the economic fortunes of the State, and public opinion, paved the way for their introduction³. By the time the proposed legislation to legalise casinos and EGMs reached the Victorian Parliament in 1991, both sides of politics supported policies permitting these forms of gambling. In 2003 the State Government introduced the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* which permitted “responsible gambling” and the promotion of economic development.

In the following decade, research indicated that gambling increased in the community from 75% to 86%⁴ and that people at risk of problem gambling had more than doubled from 0.9% to 2.4%⁵. In response to this local governments, including Warrnambool City Council, developed policies addressing the increased prevalence of EGMs and attempted to restrict their distribution through refusing planning permits. Evidence indicated that this mechanism had little chance of success, with VCAT regularly supporting the decisions of the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation to grant licenses to gaming operators against the wishes of councils and the community.

In 2015, the *Gambling Regulations 2015* were introduced with the intent of ensuring the integrity, safety, and fairness of the gambling industry by minimising harm, preventing criminal influence, and enforcing transparent operating standards⁶. The harm minimisation strategies included a pre-commitment scheme, mandatory Responsible Service of Gaming training, and enforced limits on cash withdrawals and player loyalty systems. These regulations have expired, and the revised regulations came into effect on 12 June 2026. Changes to the regulation include a load limit of \$100 per machine and restrictions on limits on gaming room operating hours.

Warrnambool currently has 100% of its allocated EGMs in operation, which includes 234 machines across 8 venues⁷. Losses to EGMs are on track to reach \$25.56M for the current financial year, up 5.5% on last year⁸.

¹ Australian Gambling Comparative History and Analysis. Australian Institute of Gambling Research, 1999

² Gambling in Australia. Australian Institute of Criminology, 1990

³ The Royal Commission into the Casino Operator and Licence. Hon. Ray Finkelstein AO QC, 2021

⁴ The Victorian Gambling Study, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2016

⁵ Problem Gambling Prevalence Statistics – Australia 1999-2019. Australasian Gaming Council

⁶ Regulatory Impact Statement Gambling Regulations 2015. Victoria Department Justice and Regulation, 2015

⁷ Pokies Across Victoria. Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2024

⁸ Monthly Expenditure Data by Local Government Area (LGA) - Report. Victorian Gaming and Gambling Commission, June 2026

Issues

Council control of EGMs is hampered in that their regulation is undertaken by the VGCCC, who allocate licenses and control the location and number of machines within the municipality. When an application to increase or relocate EGMs is sought, Council can comment on it.

The feedback is restricted to information concerning the economic and social impact⁹ of the proposed EGMs and is assessed on a “no net detriment” criteria to the community. As Warrnambool is at its maximum number of EGMs which are located over a small geographic area, it would be difficult to achieve this threshold and prevent the relocation of machines within the city. This was demonstrated in 2012 when Council initially refused planning permits for the Flying Horse Hotel and Rafferty’s Hotel to install EGMs but were subsequently permitted after appeals to VCAT. A review of 142 applications for EGM by the Municipal Association of Victoria in 2014 showed the 94% of applications were approved and only 6% rejected¹⁰. Where councils did address the economic and social impact of EGMs, this argument was countered by the increase in employment through construction of gaming venues and the provision of ongoing jobs.

The existing policy also focuses on EMGs and does not address the growing prevalence of online gambling. Currently, 56% of Australian gamblers participate online¹¹ and lose \$8.4 billion annually¹². In response to this Council’s Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-29 identified “harm from gambling...” as one of its seven pillars of action. Taking a neutral approach to gambling gives Council the capacity to develop and implement actions which address the social determinants of problem gambling and influence attitudes and behaviours to improve outcomes. This work is supported through partnerships with organisations such as Meli, Warrnambool’s gambling help provider.

Warrnambool’s planning scheme (Ordinance 52.28) also supports the control of EGMs, requiring a permit to “install or use a gaming machine”. The ordinance aims to:

- Ensure that gaming machines are situated in appropriate locations and premises.
- Ensure the social and economic impacts of the location of gaming machines are considered, and
- Prohibit gaming machines in strip shopping centres and Gateway Plaza Shopping Centre.

The strategic objectives of the Gaming policy are addressed through other policies or plans elsewhere in Council. For example, projects are currently being developed through the Healthy Warrnambool Plan, which impacts all forms of gambling. Specifically, each of the objectives of the Gaming policy are addressed through the following actions.

⁹ <https://www.vgccc.vic.gov.au/for-gambling-providers/venue-operators-and-poker-machines/gaming-premises#appeal-a-decision>

¹⁰ Review of decisions of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation: Electronic Gambling Machine Applications. MAV & Monash University, 2014

¹¹ Gaming Participation in Australia 2025. Australian National University, 2025

¹² Gambling reform is a safe bet. Grattan Institute 2024

1. Provide a strategic policy context that assists with the ongoing implementation and good governance of gaming

Council's obligation under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* includes the development of a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan that identifies and puts in place actions that address the determinants of health. Council has identified the "Prevention of Harm from Gambling...." as one of its 7 pillars of action in its current health and wellbeing plan. This gives Council the strategic context to develop and implement actions to address the gambling issue within the Warrnambool community.

2. Promote economic, social and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipality

Council's overarching strategic plan, the Council Plan, address these objectives through individual strategies which include:

- a. Our City encourages business growth and development.
- b. Our City encourages opportunities for innovation and creativity, increasing community connectedness.
- c. Our City will collaborate with other agencies to achieve positive environmental outcomes.

The goals are also supported by other council plans such as the Economic Development & Investment Strategy, Retail Strategy, Warrnambool Community Services Futures Plan, and site-specific environmental management plans.

3. Improve the quality of life of the people by promoting principles of equity and access by limiting particular disadvantage via the implementation of the "no-disadvantage test"

The Healthy Warrnambool Plan identifies the "prevention of harm from gambling..." as one of its 7 strategic pillars. This was developed through consultation with the community and gambling harm prevention specialist resulting in Council's capacity to develop, instigate and support actions which directly influence an individual's decision to gamble as well address the underlying causes which impact the social determinants of problem gambling such as the lack of alternative leisure options¹³.

4. Provide leadership by establishing strategic objectives for gaming and monitor their achievement

As a pillar in the Healthy Warrnambool Plan, Council has recognised the importance of gaming to the social wellbeing of the community and will undertake a review of the prevalence and impact of gambling in its annual report.

5. Provide the capacity to advocate for the economic and social impact of electronic gaming machines will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the City's community

Council's Healthy Warrnambool Plan is managed through a series of Communities of Practice which operate to coordinate activities within each of the pillars to implement actions and achieve positive outcomes. Many of the actions undertaken by members of the CoP are to advocate for change at a systematic and individual level.

¹³ Background Paper – Risk Factors for Problem Gambling: Environmental, Geographical, Social, Cultural, Demographic, Socio-Economic, Family and Household. Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, 2015
Warrnambool City Council

The reliance on Council's strategic documents, particularly the Healthy Warrnambool Plan, to mitigate harm from gambling allows Council to develop and enact programs that it has the capacity to deliver and that are responsive to the needs of the community. This effectively makes the existing Gambling Policy redundant.

Financial Impact

The removal of the Gaming policy will have no financial impact on Council.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

4 City Wellbeing

4.1 Our liveable City promotes access to housing, places and activity for all.

4.5 Our City provides learning pathways and opportunities for education and development.

4.6 Our nurturing city supports growth and development through high quality service delivery.

Internal / External Consultation

Council officers have engaged senior staff to understand the relevance of the Warrnambool Gaming Policy in the application of their duties and to ensure that the removal of this policy has been considered and will not negatively impact any outcomes being generated from its implementation.

Legal Risk / Impact

Nil

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil

Collaborative Procurement

Nil

Conclusion

The Warrnambool Gaming Policy is recommended to be revoked because it has not influenced the number or distribution of EGMs, as was intended, due to the responsibility for the regulation of EGMs laying with the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission. Where Council has tried to influence the outcome of the VGCCC through appeals to VCAT, it has been unsuccessful.

Council has identified "harm from gambling" through the Healthy Warrnambool Plan and is developing and supporting programs with expert service providers for all forms of gambling.

The distribution of gaming premises is also guided by the Warrnambool Planning Scheme, which is currently under review; however, it is not intended to change any of the provisions related to gaming.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Warrnambool Gaming Policy [7.2.1 - 8 pages]
2. Ordinance 52 28 Gaming [7.2.2 - 3 pages]



Warrnambool Gaming Policy

DRAFT DATE: MARCH 2011

APPROVAL DATE: 18 APRIL 2011

REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2014

Warrnambool Gaming Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	Warrnambool Responsible Gaming Policy
Policy Type:	<i>COUNCIL</i>
Responsible Branch:	<i>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</i>
Responsible Officer:	<i>DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</i>
Document Status:	<i>APPROVED</i>
Approved By:	<i>COUNCIL</i>
Adopted Date:	<i>18 APRIL 2011</i>
Review Date:	<i>APRIL 2014</i>

Warning - Uncontrolled when printed.**Page 2 of 8**

Document Set ID: 10764505

Version: 3, Version Date: 30/04/2025, Policy Type: Council, Responsible Branch: Community Development | Approved Date: 18 APRIL 2011 | Review Date: APRIL 2014

Warrnambool Gaming Policy

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Warrnambool Gaming Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Losses from Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) in Warrnambool and ratio of machines to adults are high when compared with the rest of the Victorian community¹. As a result, in 2006 the Victorian Department of Justice imposed a regional cap of 234 EGMs for the City. This is due to be reviewed in 2011.

Whilst it is recognised that electronic gaming has some economic benefits, the social impact is also significant with research showing gaming losses result in diminished standards of living, not just for gamblers but also for their children and other dependents.

The Gambling Regulation Amendment (Licensing) Act 2009 sets out new arrangements for electronic gaming from 2012. This builds on previous legislation that outlines a role for Council in the areas of planning. Council's response to this role, along with its other legislated leadership and community support roles, is outlined in this policy.

1.2. Purpose:

The purpose of the Responsible Gaming Policy is to communicate Council's position in relation to gaming within the Municipality. The policy response will formalise the City's approach to gaming. It will provide transparency and accountability for the City's overall position on gaming which aims to achieve the following strategic and planning objectives:

- i. Provide a strategic policy context that assists with the ongoing implementation and good governance of gaming
- ii. Promote economic, social and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipality
- iii. Improve the quality of life of the people by promoting principles of equity and access by limiting particular disadvantage via the implementation of the "no-disadvantage test"
- iv. Provide leadership by establishing strategic objectives for gaming and monitor their achievement.
- v. Provide the capacity to advocate for the economic and social impact of electronic gaming machines will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the City's community

1.3. Scope

This policy has been developed within the legislative frameworks and policy contexts for the State of Victoria which requires the Warrnambool City Council to facilitate the implementation of ongoing licensing and management of electronic gaming as a legal activity within the municipality.

The Council's gaming policy approach will support Council decision-making and also help applicants in relation to gaming to understand Council's objectives and requirements in relation to the operation of gaming venues within the municipality.

¹ Warrnambool has: high levels of gaming losses per electronic gaming machine (\$765 / adult 2009/10) when compared with other the Victorian average (\$611/adult 2009/10), and 9.36 EGMs per adult, approximately 30% more machines than the state average of 6.28 EGMs per adult.

Warrnambool Gaming Policy

The Gaming Policy is based on the following principles:

- Gaming is a legal activity with the State of Victoria
- Whilst the total number of EGMs in the municipality exceeds the state wide average, Council will not support any additional machines in Warrnambool.
- Council will not consider the transfer of machines from a more socio-economically advantageous area to a less socio-economically advantageous area.
- That gaming is carried out in an environment that develops and reinforces a commitment to responsible gambling.

1.4. Definitions

EGMs:	electronic gaming machines, or „pokies“
Gaming	those activities which give rise to and facilitate the operation of Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs).
Gaming venue:	a hotel or club approved by the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR) as a premises suitable for EGM gaming

1.5. References

- 1.1.1. Warrnambool Planning Scheme, Municipal Strategic Statement
- 1.1.2. Gambling Regulation Act (2003)
- 1.1.3. Local Government Act (1989)
- 1.1.4. Taking action on problem gambling in South West Victoria. Southwest Primary Care Partnership. May 2010.
- 1.1.5. Problem gambling from a public health perspective. Victorian Department of Justice. September 2009.
- 1.1.6. Gambling: A Review of Issues for Local Government. H Brown. City of Greater Dandenong. Sept 2010
- 1.1.7. Productivity Commission, Gambling: Productivity Commission Draft Report, October 2009
- 1.1.8. 2003 Victorian Longitudinal Community Attitudes Survey, The Centre for Gambling Research, Australian National University
- 1.1.9. Electronic gaming machines: Expenditure and location, Victorian Commission for Gaming Regulation
- 1.1.10. International Principles for Social Impact Assessments
www.socialimpactassessment.com/resources-sia.asp?ID=38
- 1.1.11. Gambling Policy: City of Greater Dandenong. December 2009
- 1.1.12. Council Strategic Gaming Policy, City of Greater Geelong, June 2009
- 1.1.13. Warrnambool Municipal Public Health Plan, 2009

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Warrnambool Gaming Policy

2. POLICY

2.1. Policy Statement

Council will plan, advocate and respond to the needs of its community, with the objective that the net economic and social impact of electronic gaming machines will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the City's community.

2.2. Planning

Council will not support planning proposals where the venue is situated in, or adjacent to¹, residential areas of relative socio-economic disadvantage².

Council may support the transfer of EGMs from one part of the municipality to another, if the proponent can demonstrate net economic and social benefit through an impact assessment complying with International Principles for Social Impact Assessments.

Council will give preference in approving any potential transfer of EGMs to proposals that do not result in additional venues within the municipality.

Council will not support planning proposals which are located within convenient walking distance (400m) of strip shopping centres and shopping complexes, community centres, transport hubs and other areas where people go about their daily routines, unless an impact assessment demonstrates that the proposal will deliver net economic and social benefit.

Notwithstanding the above, Council will give preference to planning proposals for venues located close to other opportunities for social participation and entertainment.

Council will not support planning proposals near venues where activities are targeting children, families or young people.

Council will favour planning proposals at venues which offer a variety of recreational opportunities, not just a focus on electronic gaming.

Council will not support planning proposals for venues that offer extended hours of operation.

Council will not support a proposal if there are reasonable grounds to consider that the operation of the gaming venue and its associated activities may adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding area, due to the gambling itself, opening hours of the venue, management of patrons, generation of noise or disturbance, or other causes.

Applications for new venues or additional EGMs should include impact assessments that identify the economic and social impacts on the community. The methodology used should be in accordance with the International Principles for Social Impact Assessments.

Applications should include a local community consultation process, the methodology of which should be developed in consultation with Council Officers

¹ "adjacent to" is considered to be within convenient walking distance (400m)

² "relative disadvantage" is considered to be CCDs in the lowest quintile (1st & 2nd deciles) using the SEIFA Index of Disadvantage.

Warrnambool Gaming Policy

2.3. Advocacy

Council will not support, and will proactively advocate against, the lifting of the local cap of 234 EGMs while the relative losses in the city remain higher than the state wide average. Council will support the use of pre-commitment technology. Council will advocate for a greater return to the community of funds allocated to the State Government's Community Support Fund. Council will advocate for increased transparency in the allocation of the gaming revenue of local clubs to activities that benefit the community. Council will support, with information and guidance, efforts of community groups to inform residents about gambling related issues or to advocate for gambling reform. Council will participate with other councils in state-wide and regional forums, to exchange information and resources, advocate for gambling reform and collaborate to achieve reductions in gaming losses from EGMs.

2.4. Community Benefit Fund

Council will work with club gaming venues to facilitate allocation of their community benefit funds on activities that benefit the local community.

2.5. Code of Conduct

Council will require that all planning proposals incorporate an in-house Responsible Gaming Policy consistent with contemporary standards that aim to minimise problem gambling occurring within the venue.

2.6. Sponsorship

Council will not seek or approve Council sponsorship of gambling related events.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1. Owner

Director of Community Development

3.2. Review

The Director of Community Development will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than 3 years after its formulation or after the last review.

3.3. Compliance Responsibility

i. **Executive Management Team**

- The Chief Executive & Directors are responsible for ensuring Managers, Supervisors, and Employees, under their control comply with actions detailed in this policy.

ii. **Managers and Supervisors**

- Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring Employees under their direct control comply with actions detailed in this policy (and related procedures).
- Demonstrate Warrnambool City Council values through being positive role models for this policy.

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Warrnambool Gaming Policy

- Ensure any revised or newly developed policies/procedures are communicated appropriately to all relevant staff

3.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

Ordinance 52.28

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

GAMING

52.28-1

Historic

18/10/2006

VC39

Purpose

To ensure that gaming machines are situated in appropriate locations and premises.

To ensure the social and economic impacts of the location of gaming machines are considered.

To prohibit gaming machines in specified shopping complexes and strip shopping centres.

52.28-2

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

Gaming objectives

A schedule to this clause may specify objectives to be achieved in relation to the installation or use of a gaming machine.

52.28-3

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

Permit requirement

A permit is required to install or use a gaming machine.

This does not apply in either of the following circumstances:

- Clause 52.28-4 or Clause 52.28-5 specifically prohibit a gaming machine.
- the gaming machine is in an approved venue under the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 on 18 October 2006 and the maximum number of gaming machines for the approved venue on 18 October 2006 is not exceeded.

52.28-4

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

Prohibition of a gaming machine in a shopping complex

Installation or use of a gaming machine is prohibited on land specified in a schedule to this clause.

This does not apply to a gaming machine in an approved venue under the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 on 18 October 2006; and the maximum number of gaming machines for the approved venue on 18 October 2006 is not exceeded.

52.28-5

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

Prohibition of a gaming machine in a strip shopping centre

Installation or use of a gaming machine is prohibited in a strip shopping centre if:

- the strip shopping centre is specified in the schedule to this clause.
- the schedule provides that a gaming machine is prohibited in all strip shopping centres on land covered by this planning scheme.

This does not apply to a gaming machine in an approved venue under the Gambling Regulation Act 2003 on 18 October 2006; and the maximum number of gaming machines for the approved venue on 18 October 2006 is not exceeded.

A strip shopping centre is an area that meets all of the following requirements:

- it is zoned for commercial use;
- it consists of at least two separate buildings on at least two separate and adjoining lots;
- it is an area in which a significant proportion of the buildings are shops;
- it is an area in which a significant proportion of the lots abut a road accessible to the public generally;

but it does not include the Capital City Zone in the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

52.28-6

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

Locations for gaming machines

A schedule to this clause may specify guidelines relating to locations for gaming venues and machines.

52.28-7

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

Venues for gaming machines

A schedule to this clause may specify guidelines relating to venues for gaming machines.

52.28-8

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

Application requirements

An application must be accompanied by any information specified in a schedule to this overlay.

52.28-9

Historic

31/07/2018

VC148

Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines of Clause 65, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- The compatibility of the proposal with adjoining and nearby land uses.
- The capability of the site to accommodate the proposal.
- Whether the gaming premises provides a full range of hotel facilities or services to patrons or a full range of club facilities or services to members and patrons.
- Any other matters specified in the schedule to this clause.

7.3. Domestic Animal Management Plan

DIRECTORATE : City Futures

Purpose:

This report seeks Council adoption of the Domestic Animal Management Plan for 2026-29.

Executive Summary

- Council is required to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act).
- The DAMP provides a strategic framework for the management of domestic animals within the municipality and ensures Council meets its statutory obligations under the Act, including promoting responsible pet ownership, protecting community safety, and supporting animal welfare outcomes.
- A review of the current DAMP was undertaken, incorporating feedback from both internal stakeholders and external community consultation.
- Notable changes in this Plan include updated data and performance metrics, revised organisational roles and responsibilities, improved directory information, and an increased focus on proactive compliance activities such as Local Laws patrols, risk-based enforcement, and targeted community education programs.

MOVED: CR DEBBIE ARNOTT

SECONDED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

That Council adopt the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-29.

CARRIED - 6:0

Background

Animal ownership provides well-documented physical, mental, and social benefits. Council recognises the important role pets play in supporting community wellbeing and social connection. Council's Local Laws play a key role in providing opportunities for exercise and social interaction for animal owners, while balancing the needs of the wider community and protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

Warrnambool currently has approximately 4,276 registered dogs and 1,596 registered cats within the municipality. The DAMP provides a strategic framework for the management of these animals and ensures Council meets its statutory obligations under the Act.

The DAMP identifies and prioritises key responsible pet ownership behaviours, which, together with targeted education and enforcement, remain a central focus of domestic animal management within the municipality. A strong emphasis is placed on community safety, particularly in reducing the incidence of dog attacks, animals at large and public complaints. The DAMP also promotes desexing of pets as a key strategy to reduce unwanted litters and manage animal population growth, helping to alleviate pressure on Council's animal shelter services.

Feedback received through the consultation process has informed an increased focus on community education initiatives. Key topics include pet owner responsibilities, such as picking up dog waste, ensuring cats are contained between sunset and sunrise, and complying with requirements designed to protect the environment and support animal health and safety.

Additional core responsibilities of pet ownership include ensuring animals are registered and microchipped, effectively managing nuisance behaviours (such as barking) and maintaining 'effective control' of dogs in public places.

Issues

Animal ownership is a complex and often polarising issue within the community, with differing expectations regarding access, enforcement and amenity. As a result, any review of animal access provisions or regulatory controls generates strong and conflicting community views.

There has been a moderate reduction in reported dog attacks, with 43 incidents recorded in the past year compared to 56 two years prior. While this overall trend is positive, a recent increase in incidents has reinforced that dog attacks remain a significant and ongoing public safety risk. Incidents involving animals at large and inadequate control in public places continue to contribute to community concern and service demand.

The effective management of domestic animals relies on a combination of responsible pet ownership, community education and proportionate enforcement activities. Ensuring compliance with requirements such as secure confinement, registration and effective control in public places remains an ongoing challenge.

The DAMP recognises the critical role of Local Laws officers in delivering risk-based enforcement and proactive education initiatives, with a focus on preventing incidents, improving compliance and responding to community concerns. Balancing proactive engagement with targeted compliance action is essential to achieving improved safety and amenity outcomes across the municipality.

Financial Impact

The review of the DAMP has been undertaken internally using existing Council resources, with no additional costs associated with the preparation of the Plan.

Costs associated with the implementation of the DAMP will be managed within Council's existing City Safety recurrent budget. These costs are partially offset through animal registration fees, in accordance with Council's adopted Schedule of Fees and Charges.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

1 City Futures

1.2 Our City puts public health and safety as a priority

1.5 Our City is activated to be attractive to residents and visitors.

3 City Sustainability

3.4 Our City will monitor and manage pest animals and plants on land owned and/or managed by Council.

4 City Wellbeing

4.3 Our active City provides recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)* requires all Victorian councils to prepare and adopt a DAMP at least every four years. This ongoing review process ensures that animal management strategies remain effective, evidence-based and responsive to emerging community needs, service demands, and identified risks.

The DAMP forms a key mechanism through which Council demonstrates compliance with its statutory responsibilities for the management of dogs and cats within the municipality.

Timing

The DAMP is prepared and presented for adoption every four years in accordance with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Council undertakes an annual review and evaluation of the DAMP to monitor progress, assess effectiveness and ensure the Plan remains responsive to emerging risks and community needs.

Actions identified within the DAMP will be delivered progressively over the life of the Plan, with timeframes, responsibilities and priorities outlined within the document.

Internal / External Consultation

Council undertook community and stakeholder engagement to ensure local perspectives were considered and integrated into the development of this DAMP.

Engagement activities included a municipality-wide online survey, a staffed community feedback booth at the Warrnambool Library and targeted consultation with key stakeholders, including domestic animal businesses and individuals with a demonstrated interest in animal management matters.

The consultation process sought feedback from the community on:

- the draft DAMP and its proposed actions
- perceptions of domestic animal management within Warrnambool
- pet ownership and general location within the municipality.

A total of 17 responses were received. Overall, respondents indicated that the draft DAMP provides an effective foundation, while also highlighting the need for strengthened enforcement, stricter cat containment measures, enhanced responsible pet ownership behaviours, and improved protection of wildlife and public safety.

Key themes identified through consultation and incorporated into the revised DAMP include:

- Increased community education regarding responsible pet ownership, including the importance of night-time cat containment and desexing.
- A stronger focus on protecting wildlife from roaming cats.
- Enhanced enforcement of on-lead requirements for dogs, including increased patrols in high-use areas.
- Improved investigation and management of barking dog complaints.
- Additional supporting infrastructure, such as dog waste bag dispensers and rubbish bins to encourage responsible pet ownership.

An additional theme raised through consultation that falls outside the scope of this DAMP will be considered as part of the future Local Law Review process (scheduled for 2029):

- Review of permitted dog access arrangements on beaches, including consideration of extended on-lead access hours.

Legal Risk / Impact

The DAMP provides an overview of the management of domestic animals within our municipality and ensures the Council meets its statutory requirements in relation to the *Domestic Animals Act*.

Identified risks associated with not having a current DAMP or poorly managing animal control functions exposes a council to a mix of statutory non-compliance, legal liability, governance risk and reputational harm. These are summarised as:

- Legal - Breach of *Domestic Animals Act*
- Litigation - Negligence claims, co-liability in attack
- Public safety - Increased dog attacks and injuries
- Financial - Compensation, legal, insurance costs
- Governance - Audit findings, oversight scrutiny
- Reputational - Media backlash, community distrust
- Operational - Inefficient, reactive service delivery.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil

Collaborative Procurement

N/A

Conclusion

The Warrnambool City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-29 provides a structured framework for the management of domestic animals within the Warrnambool municipality over the next four years.

It reflects Council's commitment to meeting its statutory obligations under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, while balancing community expectations, public safety and animal welfare outcomes.

Through a combination of education, engagement and risk-based enforcement, the Plan aims to promote responsible pet ownership, reduce animal-related incidents and enhance community amenity.

The actions and priorities outlined in this Plan have been informed by data analysis, operational experience and community feedback, ensuring a practical and responsive approach to local animal management challenges.

Ongoing monitoring, annual review, and continuous improvement will be critical to ensuring the effectiveness of the Plan and responsiveness to emerging risks and community needs over time.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 4229 Warrnambool City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 [7.3.1 - 23 pages]



Domestic Animal Management Plan

2026-2029

Draft for Consultation



www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

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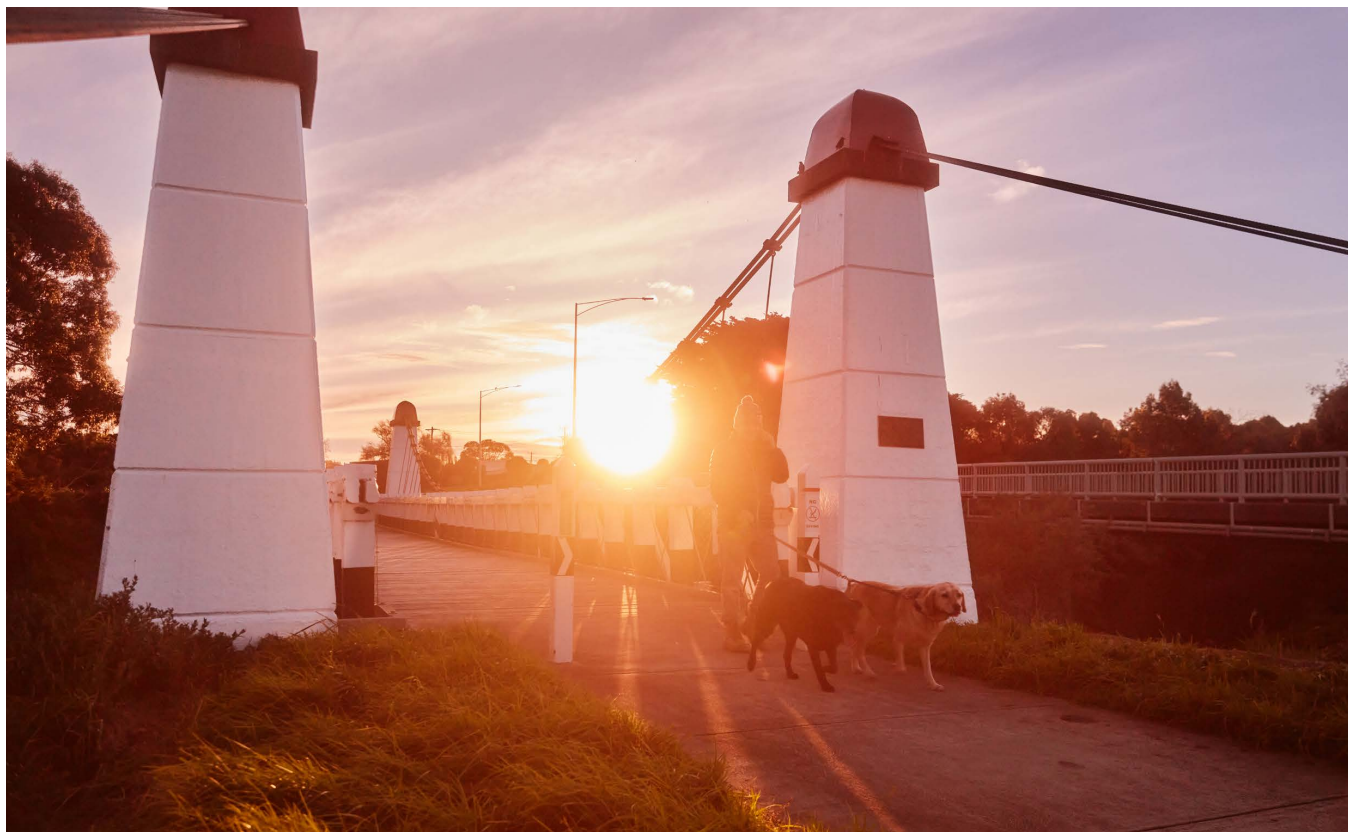
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Document Control

Document title:	Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan
Policy type:	Council
Responsible branch:	City Safety
Responsible officer:	Coordinator Local Laws and Emergency Management
Document status:	Draft
Approved by:	
Adopted date:	
Review date:	Annually

Review type:	Review date:	Completed by:
Public (initial)	August 2017	Manager, Coordinator and officers of the Animal Control department.
Public	October 2021	Manager City Amenity Coordinator Local Laws and Local Laws Officers.
Public	April 2026	Manager City Safety Coordinator Local Laws and Emergency Management





1. Introduction

Animal management is one of Council's primary responsibilities. The Warrnambool City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) for 2026 - 2029 provides a clear overview of the Council's role and actions for the current and future management of domestic animals within the Warrnambool City Council (WCC), and ensures statutory compliance.

The Plan highlights the most important aspects of responsible pet ownership which, together with education, will be a particular focus for domestic animal management within the municipality. There is a strong emphasis on community safety and the need to reduce the number of dog attacks, animals at large and public complaints.

The Plan also discusses the importance of pet owners having their pets desexed, which will help reduce unwanted litters of puppies and kittens placing pressure on our shelter services that contributes to increased operating costs.

Basic pet ownership responsibilities, including picking up your dog's waste and ensuring your cat is contained between sunset and sunrise, help protect the environment and ensures pets are kept safe and healthy. Registration, microchipping, controlling barking dogs and maintaining 'effective control' over your dog when out walking are all key responsibilities of pet ownership.

Council aims to offer our community a fair and balanced environment – where everyone can enjoy our community and the many open public spaces, regardless of whether or not they are a pet owner.

Residents have access to a range of dedicated off and on-lead areas, including beach locations, a large enclosed off leash park and most sporting precincts, which are listed on Council's website. For the remainder of the municipality, owners are required to keep their dogs on a lead at all times.

The WCC Domestic Animal Management Plan for 2026 – 2029 provides Council with the framework to work with the community to ensure animal management services are sufficient for the municipality's population of pets.

For the purpose of this plan, a "domestic animal" is defined as an animal covered by the Domestic Animals Act 1994, which are predominantly dogs and cats.

2. Legislative requirements

Under Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act, every Council must prepare a domestic animal management plan, as follows:

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (of the Department of Agriculture), prepare at 4 year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
- (2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
 - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
 - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
 - (c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
 - (i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
 - (ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
 - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals;
 - (iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
 - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs / cats;
 - (vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
 - (vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations;
 - (d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
 - (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
 - (f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
- (3) Every Council must—
 - (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
 - (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
 - (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

3. Purpose of the plan

This Plan sets the future guidelines of domestic animal management for the Warrnambool City Council.

The Plan identifies strategies and actions to implement the vision, aims and objectives for animal management. It contains recommendations to be implemented in a structured program. These actions enable Council to maintain a balance between all interested parties and to meet all legislative requirements.

Council's Local Laws Officers developed the Plan, with data and information from the following internal and external parties:

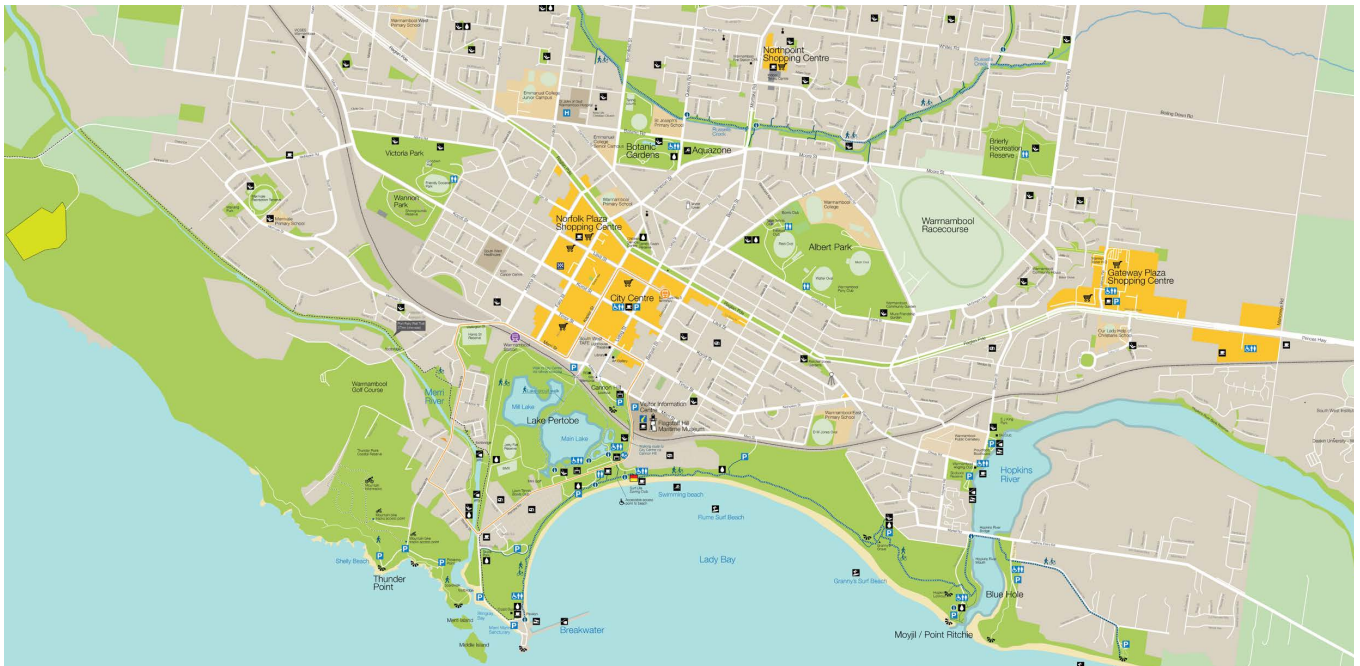
- Warrnambool Animal Shelter
- Warrnambool veterinary clinics;
- Dog obedience / training clubs;
- The public

The community is invited to comment on the draft Plan for two weeks prior to being submitted to Council for adoption. Any submissions will be referred to Council and where necessary incorporated into the Plan.

The current Plan (2021–2025) is available at the Council Offices and on the Council website.

The Plan is reviewed annually and any improvements suggested by the community during the year may be considered and added to the Plan or considered for further investigation and discussion as part of the annual review process.





4. Warrnambool - municipal demographic

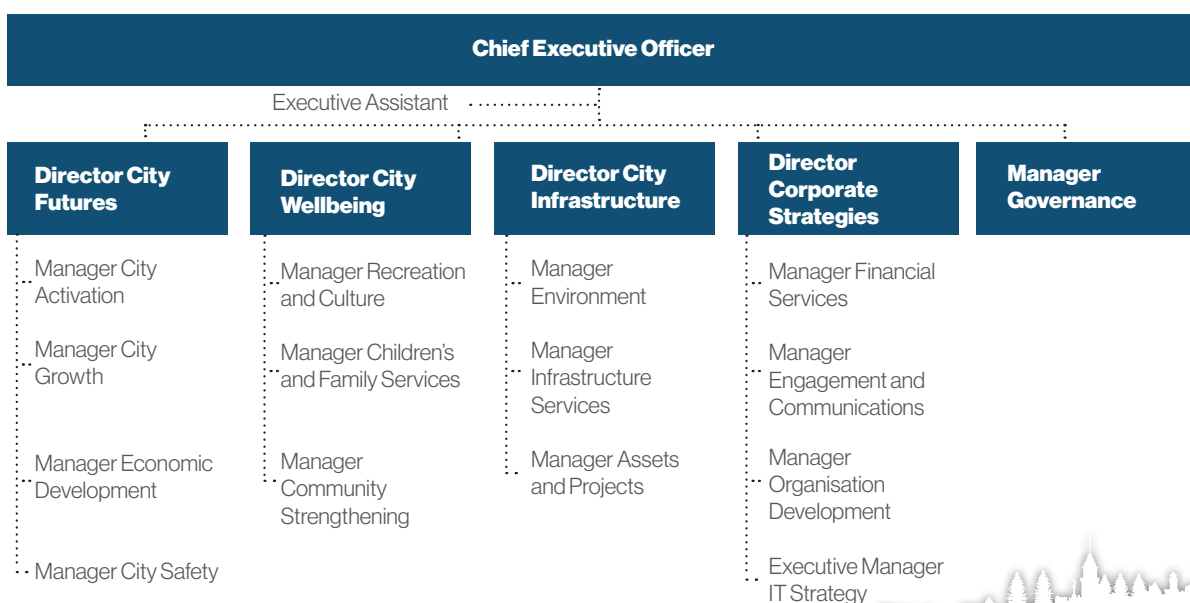
The City of Warrnambool is in Southwest Victoria; approximately 260km west of Melbourne and covers approximately 120sqkm.

The City is surrounded by the Shire of Moyne and the Southern Ocean.

It has a population of approximately 36,000 residents which also includes the townships of Allansford, Bushfield, Dennington and Woodford.

The City economy is based on tourism, education, farming and food processing.

5. Council organisational structure



6. Current Services provided to assist with Animal Management statistics.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Officer weekend patrols	37	63	97	67 Covid Lockdown	N/A	80	104	104
24 hour emergency contact	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Cage Request for stray cats	71	63	51	26	24	49	45	67
Provide trial barking aid equipment	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
Investigate nuisance complaints	233	210	227	220	291	262	364	339
Dog at large complaints	135	128	135	168	156	214	146	254
Investigate reported dog attacks	29	16	22	41	39	56	45	43
Return dogs home	26	37	68	70	51	24	21	33
Community Information Sessions	3	5	3	2	N/A	N/A	0	1
Door knock / Letter registration follow up	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

Current Animal data:

Warrnambool City Key Statistics	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2020 - 21	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2023 - 24	2024 - 25
Council:								
Population	31,060	31,466	31,791	32,180	32,901	33,410	33,905	36,170
Area	120sqkm	120sqkm	120sqkm	120sqkm	120sqkm	120sqkm	120sqkm	120sqkm
Current, not for profit or future properties (approx. tenements)	18,000	18,000	18,500	18,800	19,108	19,467	19,791	20,212
Domestic Animal Businesses								
Declared Menacing (currently in City)	24	17	9	21	N/A	N/A	14	9
Declared Dangerous (currently in City)	3	2	0	1	1	1	2	2
Declared Restricted Breed (currently in City)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dogs:								
Registered	4204	4297	4318	4,478	N/A	N/A	4,211	4,276
Council Impounded	228	137	103	115	96	158	148	216
Public Admitted	122	137	143	116	95	115	92	123
Returned to owner	207	143	100	104	72	114	105	66
Rehoused	118	102	102	87	75	111	83	92
Euthanized	18	16	17	13	21	25	32	31

Warrnambool City Key Statistics	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2020 - 21	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2023 - 24	2024 - 25
Cats:								
Registered	1603	1681	1739	1,833	N/A	N/A	1,542	1,596
Council Impounded	70	66	82	40	94	47	98	111
Public Admitted	423	445	525	341	369	399	329	384
Returned to owner	33	28	29	24	30	13	14	7
Rehoused	348	268	430	352	355	366	325	271
Euthanised	83	109	102	58	68	65	66	45

7. Training of Authorised Officers

The purpose of this section is to ensure all Animal Management Officers are skilled and appropriately trained to deliver the Council services and programs under Section 68 A(2)(b) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Warrnambool City Local Laws Team consists of:

- a Coordinator;
- one full-time Supervisor;
- two permanent full-time officers;
- four permanent part-time officers
- two City Amenity Operations Officer

The Local Laws officers manage animal complaints relating to nuisance, attacks, registration and dogs at large.

Officers assist the promotion of responsible pet ownership by conducting foot patrols along the city walking paths, also talking to schools and service support groups.

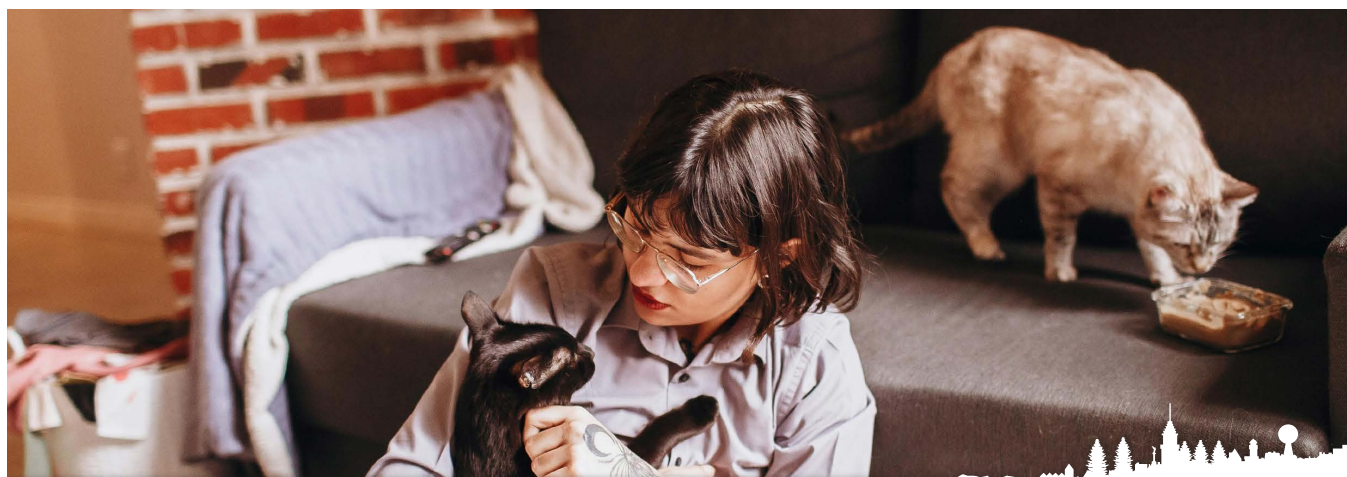
Animal control is one component of the Authorised Officer duties, which include traffic management, local laws, fire and litter control.

Current and Planned Qualifications and Training

All Local Laws Officers are appointed under Section 224 of the Local Government Act 2020 to administer the Environmental Protection Act 2017, Tobacco Act 1987 & Local Laws.

As employees of Warrnambool City Council, Officers are certified as General Inspectors under section 18 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and are authorised to exercise powers of a general inspector under Part 2A and Part3A of that Act.

Furthermore, Officers are at times asked to attend training to advance their understanding of animal behavior and law enforcement. One such course is the Certificate IV Animal Control & Regulation.



Actions:

Ensure that all Animal Management Officers receive training to a level that they can complete all requirements of the Act, Regulations and Local Laws in accordance with relevant Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) guidelines and community needs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Coordinator to identify minimum training requirements and updates for the position.	During annual Council appraisal program	Training needs to be finalised and incorporated into the Organisational Development plan by October each year.
Identify additional training needs by consultation with Organisational Development Dept.	Ongoing	Course dependent.

Ensure completion of the Certificate 4 in Statutory Compliance & Animal Control by all full-time Animal Management Officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
This qualification is preferred in the position description for staff as it covers all aspects of the position.	12 month qualification. Dependent on the service provider.	Receiving accreditation from the service provider. Recorded with the Organisational Development Dept.

Ensure all Animal Management Officers have completed their minimum in-house training requirements within 6 months of appointment.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Basic animal handling. Computer training. Internal procedures.	Within 6 months of appointment (or when suitable training is available)	Coordinator to monitor and maintain records.





8. Responsible Pet Ownership & Compliance with Legislation

Council is committed to providing a visible presence with officers wearing distinct uniforms and driving dedicated vehicles with Local Laws and Animal Control identification.

This creates public awareness of the Local Laws team and patrols that extend after hours, including weekends. Local Laws Officers, where practical, will also conduct patrols on foot to engage with the public, particularly during busy holiday periods (i.e. foreshore precinct during summer).

There is also information on domestic animal ownership available on Council's website, www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au and information pamphlets at the Civic Centre reception.

Council will continue to promote the benefits and legal requirements of microchipping, desexing of pets, the off-lead areas within the city, cat curfews and dog litter collection.

Officers carry poo bags and pamphlets on patrol and proactively distribute to assist local residents and tourists within the area.

Council will also:

- Door-knock an area if there are specific ongoing concerns;
- Conduct promotions and education through social and traditional media;
- Promote the availability of cages for hire to contain feral or nuisance cats.

During the summer of 2025, Local Laws Officers have increased the number of patrols conducted on beaches along Lady Bay in order to create a culture of respect for all beach users.

Governance

Council Local Laws provide a comprehensive description of regulations governing pet ownership, the responsibilities of the Council and the responsibilities of pet owners.

Council policies, procedures and legislation describe the processes Council will follow to ensure compliance with Local Laws to ensure that domestic animal owners can enjoy their pets and that non-owners are not adversely impacted by domestic animals within the municipality.

- Use of lifetime tags for dogs and cats.
- Renewal notices are generated and mailed to all previously registered animals.
- Registration forms are available from customer service and the website.
- Registrations are paid at the Warrnambool City Council Civic Centre, or online at www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au.
- Council charges additional fees for dangerous / restricted breed dogs
- Dangerous / restricted dogs must be microchipped, desexed and housed according to legislation prior to registration.
- Pensioner discounts are available on request.
- Local Laws' vehicles are complete with computer access, plus scanners to link directly to Council records and Central Animal (microchip) Records for assistance in returning pets to owners.
- Enforcement of unregistered animals.

Compliance

Council will use a number of strategies to ensure compliance with Domestic Animals legislation, including:

- Patrolling for dogs at large.
- Patrolling for owners with dogs off lead.
- Monitoring dogs in prohibited areas and playgrounds etc.
- Monitoring Declared Dogs for compliance.
- Issue infringements for impounded dogs.
- Issuing renewal notices annually.
- Door knocking / phone call for non-renewed registrations.
- Door knocking "problem areas" for compliance.
- Opportunistic registration checks whilst completing other investigations.
- Leaving business cards requesting contact.
- Enforcement of dog littering.
- Advice on barking dogs (including a sheet of tips on causes and what to do).
- Hire bark control and citronella collars.
- Cat curfew under Local Laws.
- After hours patrols, door knocks, phone calls and SMS message reminders.
- Confirm animal information of all pets at a property of complaint.
- Promote the owner's responsibility relating to animal litter.
- Hire cat cages for feral / nuisance cats.
- Council Local Law restricting the number of animals at a property.
- Use of warning notices in some situations.
- Monitoring housing compliance of Declared Dangerous Dogs.
- Enforcement of animal registration.

Council website provides information on designated areas, including on and off lead locations. This information is also available in a pamphlet format from the Council office, information centre and relevant locations.

Policies and Procedures

Local Laws relating to registration and identification include:

- Local Law 2 (33) the owner of any cat must confine the cat to the owner's property, between the hours of sunset and sunrise;
- Local Law 2 (31) relates to the control of dogs or cats in certain areas; (Prohibited areas, off leash areas and playgrounds etc);
- Local Law 2 (30)(1) relates to the number of animals that may be kept at a property without a permit; and,
- Local Law 2 (35) (1)(2) relates to animal litter.



Actions:

Update brochures:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and update brochures.	As required	Use and feedback.

Council website:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Update Council website and links to relevant sites with Council communication team.	Annual review or updated as necessary.	Use and feedback.

After-hours Patrols:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Record officer patrol sheet and feedback to vary patrol times.	Ongoing	Public interaction.

Warrnambool Responsible Pet Campaign:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and implement a targeted domestic animal education and behaviour change campaign aligned to the Plan that delivers clear, consistent and data-informed messaging to improve responsible pet ownership across Warrnambool. The framework will focus on key issues such as responsible cat containment and environmental protection, dog control and off-leash compliance, barking dog management, pet registration awareness, and picking up after animals, using a mix of digital outreach, community engagement, partnerships, and on-ground activities to drive behavior change and support community safety, amenity, and compliance.	December 2026	• Animal registration compliance rates. • Complaint numbers. • Dog attacks incidents. • Engagement metrics.



9. Animal population and euthanasia

Section 68 A(2)(c)(iv) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 relates to overpopulation & euthanasia compliance.

Council encourages pet owners to take responsibility for environmental issues associated with roaming pets and encourages desexing of domestic pets.

The chart below highlights:

- Low euthanasia & high reclaim percentages for dogs.
- Higher euthanasia & lower reclaim percentages for cats.
- Consistent percentage of dogs rehoused & high percentage for cats.

DOGS	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Impounded Council & Public	374*	350*	274*	246*	231*	191*	273*	240*	339#
Total euthanized	32	18	16	17	13	21	25	32	31
%	9	5	6	7	6	11	9	13	9
Reclaimed by Owner	228	207	143	100	104	72	114	105	66
%	61	59	52	41	45	38	42	43	20
Rehoused	114	118	102	102	87	75	111	83	92
%	30	34	37	41	38	39	41	35	27
Total dogs registered	4211	4204	4297	4318	4478	N/A	N/A	4211	4276
Total desexed	---	---	---	3435	3871	N/A	N/A	3620	3744
%	---	---	---	80	86	--	--	86	87

*RSPCA data does not tally due to rescue, foster & feral animals & movement between shelters etc.

- Total includes 150 dogs transferred back to Glenelg Shire in accordance with management agreement.

CATS	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Impounded Council & Public	441*	493*	511*	607*	381*	463*	446*	427*	384#
Total euthanized	82	83	109	102	58	68	65	66	45
%	19	17	21	17	15	15	15	15	12
Reclaimed by Owner	29	33	28	29	24	30	13	14	17
%	7	7	5	5	6	15	15	15	4
Rehoused	276	348	268	430	352	355	366	325	271
%	63	71	52	71	92	77	82	76	71
Total cats registered	1591	1603	1681	1739	1833	N/A	N/A	1542	1596
Total desexed	---	---	---	1568	1818	N/A	N/A	1532	1549
%	---	---	---	90	99	--	--	99	97
Requests for cat cages	60	71	63	51	26	37	27	83	45

* RSPCA data does not tally due to rescue, foster & feral animals & movement between shelters etc.

- Total includes 51 cats transferred back to Glenelg Shire in accordance with management agreement.



Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- Warrnambool City does not require pets to be de-sexed prior to registration.
- Council Local Law 2 (30) (1) allows 2 dogs & 2 cats without a permit.
- Registration discount incentive for animals that are de-sexed, over 10 years old, working dogs, membership of applicable organisation and dogs with accredited training).
- Officers conduct patrols after hours, and on weekends which includes animal control, speaking with and explaining to pet owners about Local Laws, off lead areas, benefits of de-sexing and possible infringements for dogs at large.
- Hire of cat cages for stray / nuisance cats in residential areas.
- Local Law 2 (33) the owner of any cat must confine the cat to the owner's property, either within the dwelling or within another escape proof building between the hours of sunset and sunrise.
- Council does not support immediate euthanasia after the mandatory holding period. All animals are assessed by a professional trainer to determine whether the animal is qualified to be rehomed.

Education and Promotion - animal population control

- Promote the Animal Welfare Victoria programs including education and promotion of de-sexing programs.
- Support the purchase of pets from the animal shelter as they are de-sexed and microchipped.
- Whilst on patrol, engage with the public in regard to animal control, laws, infringements etc.
- If an animal is returned to the owner, explain the reason and possible costs for an animal at large.
- Provide pamphlets & Council webpage information to the public.
- Speak to public service groups and local veterinary clinics.

Compliance

- Animals may be euthanised after the required holding period of the Domestic Animals Act if they do not pass the temperament test etc.
- Cat cages are hired or loaned to the public for feral / nuisance cats.
- Officer patrols, including weekends, for dogs at large.
- Local Law 2 (33) the owner of any cat must confine the cat to the owner's property, either within the dwelling or within another escape proof building between the hours of sunset and sunrise.
- 24hr emergency service provided.

Actions:

Monitor cat cage requests.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Record the number of requests to Council to hire a cat cage. Collate the number of cats collected, how many were de-sexed, reclaimed, re-housed or euthanized.	Ongoing.	Collate the figures annually. Number of • Cage requests • Cats caught • De-sexed • Reclaimed • Rehoused • Euthanised

Promote public awareness of issues with roaming cats.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Providing information on Council website explaining the importance of keeping cats inside at night.	Ongoing	• Measure number and type of education materials distributed • Number of media stories published • Measure uptake on any promotions to encourage people to take responsible ownership of cats

10. Registration and identification

This section outlines the strategies to encourage pet registration, required for compliance under Section 68A (2)(c)(v) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

The Warrnambool City Local Laws team deals with a broad range of issues associated with the management of domestic animals in our community.

The table below summarises registration totals and impounded animals.

Dogs	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	204-25
Total registrations	4064	4211	4211	4297	4318	4478	N/A	N/A	4211	4,276
Council impounded	264	236	228	137	103	115	96	158	148	216
Public admitted	130	138	122	137	143	116	95	115	92	123
Reclaimed	245	228	207	143	100	104	72	114	105	66
Adopted	117	114	118	102	102	87	75	111	83	92
Euthanized	32	32	18	16	17	13	21	25	32	31

Cats	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total registrations	1490	1591	1603	1681	1739	1833	N/A	N/A	1542	1596
Council impounded	36	49	70	66	82	40	94	47	98	111
Public admitted	269	392	423	445	525	341	369	399	329	273
Reclaimed	22	29	33	28	29	24	30	13	14	7
Adopted	234	276	348	268	430	352	355	366	325	271
Euthanised	49	82	83	109	102	58	68	65	66	45

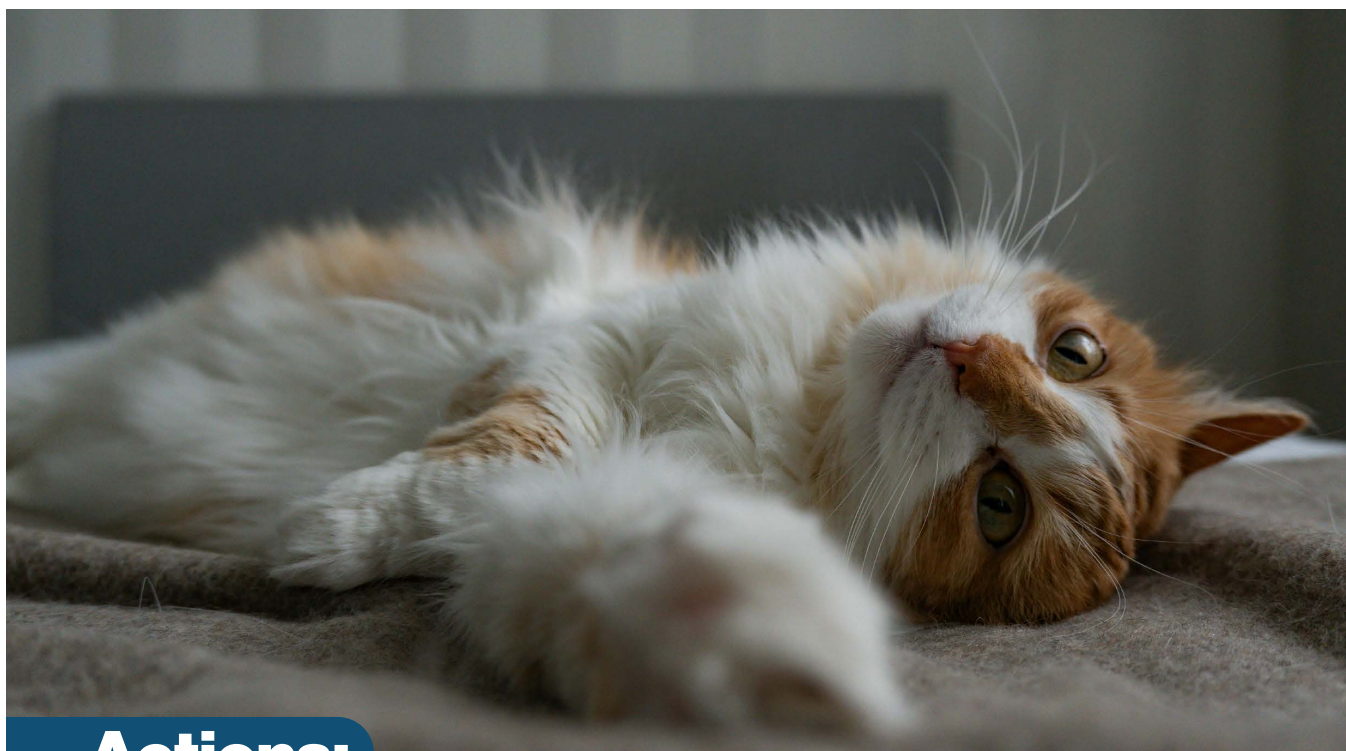
Council provides several initiatives to assist with registration & identification, these include:

- Provision of advice to the community in relation to animal matters;
- Dealing with customer questions and complaints;
- Providing the collection of lost, stray and/or unwanted dogs and cats;
- Investigations into alleged dog attacks;
- Inspections / registration of relevant animal businesses;
- Inspection of dangerous/restricted breed dog premises for compliance;
- Educating and promoting responsible pet ownership to residents;
- Ensuring Council completes its legislative duty of care;
- After-hours emergency service;
- Working cooperatively with the RSPCA, and other councils;
- Educational activities;
- Weekend bike & foot patrols talking to the public about any concerns;
- Provides registration discounts for concession card holders, and desexed animals;
- Random door knocks to discuss animal issues including registration, benefits, such as the ability to return a pet home instead of impounding.

When an animal is collected by an officer the first priority is to return it to the owner.

The vehicles have computer access to the Council registration system, and Central Animals microchip data base.

When returning the animal, the officer will discuss registration and provide advice if the dog is escaping on a regular basis.



Actions:

Conduct a media campaign highlighting the requirement and benefits of pet registration:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct an annual media campaign before the April 10th registration renewal date (include press releases, adverts renewal notices, providing pamphlets through Customer Service, to highlight benefits of registration.	February/March	Compare registration figures from previous years

After April 10th conduct a follow up for non-renewed registrations:

Activity	When	Evaluation
- Officers' conduct door knocks in different locations across the city. - Follow up phone calls and SMS messages to owners of unpaid renewals.	May	To be compared with the total registered pet numbers from the previous year

Improve records by cross-referencing data:

Activity	When	Evaluation
- Registration paid at office. - Pound purchase data. - Data collected during a complaint investigation, or random door knock. - Requesting mobile & e-mail.	Prior to a new registration or release.	Ongoing

Continue to promote benefits of registration:

Activity	When	Evaluation
- In conjunction with Vets promoting microchipping days. - Walking tracks, off lead areas. - After hours patrols. - Improvements to facilities, including off lead areas and fenced dog parks. - Public information sessions.	Ongoing	Public feedback and registration numbers.

11. Nuisance

To minimise the potential for a dog or cat to create a nuisance as outlined in Section 68A (2)(c)(vi) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

To encourage people to manage pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animals, maximises the companion benefits of their pet and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others.

In 2019, Council opened another off-leash enclosure, taking the total to two. These enclosures are both highly utilised and encourage responsible ownership. This was designed and constructed by a committee of Council staff and members of the public.

Council has a cat curfew that requires all cats to be confined to the residence, or a cat enclosure, between sunset and sunrise. This assists in preventing nuisances such as spraying and fighting, as well as protecting native wildlife.

Council logs all complaint and request data electronically.

Council has witnessed a spike in complaints and incidents related to dogs at large.

Complaint	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Nuisance	182	189	137	233	210	227	220	291	262	364	330
Dog at large	152	172	163	210	97	135	168	156	214	146	251
Dog attacks	24	32	22	29	16	22	41	39	56	45	43
Cat cage requests	48	64	64	71	63	51	26	37	27	83	41
Stock on roads	34	56	74	52	64	54	25	13	10	10	25

Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- Local Law 2 (33) states that the owner of any cat must confine the cat to the owner's property between the hours of sunset and sunrise.
- Local Law 2 (31) relates to the control of dogs or cats in certain areas. (Prohibited areas, off-leash areas, playgrounds etc).
- Local Law 2 (30) (1) relates to the number of animals that may be kept at a property without a permit.
- Local Law 2 (35) (1)(2) relates to animal litter.

Council provides a 24-hour emergency service for attacks, dogs at large, stock on roads and injured animals.

A customer request record is initiated once Council receives a complaint.

Local Laws officers will attempt to reunite animals with owners through available owner details, use of scanners and 24-hour computer data access.

Council hires cat traps to the public to assist with feral and stray cats.

Council also hires out citronella collars and bark houses for the public to try prior to purchasing their own.

A door knock on neighbors and an assessment of the property will be completed before a permit to house extra animals is issued.

Education and Promotion about nuisance animals

To assist the public:

- Pamphlets are issued during registration door knocks.
- After-hours patrols in residential areas are carried out and bike patrols along bike paths.
- Signage and mapping is being improved along walking tracks.
- Pet ownership pamphlets will be updated to reflect any changes in off-lead and prohibited areas and pamphlets will be made available from City Assist (customer service area at the Civic Centre) and information on the Council website.
- Cat cages will be hired out for feral and nuisance cats.
- Where required media releases will be issued and advertisements placed with local media.
- Desexing of pets will be encouraged to reduce pets at large.
- Local Laws Officers will carry pamphlets to educate residents and visitors about collecting their pets' waste.

Compliance

Council use several strategies to reduce nuisance complaints:

- Barking procedure, which includes issuing information on causes and tips.
- Cat curfew will be enforced.
- After-hours patrols, door knocks, phone calls and SMS reminders may be issued.
- Accuracy of information on file will be confirmed at the property about which a complaint has been made.
- Prohibited areas will be patrolled for dogs.
- Warning notices may be issued in some situations.
- Housing compliance for Declared Dangerous Dogs will be monitored.
- Dog littering laws will be enforced.

Actions:

Continue to provide and improve weekend and after-hours patrols:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Officers patrolling in vehicles and on foot. Activities include: public relations, dogs off-leash or in prohibited areas, animal litter control and to improve signage on walking tracks.	Ongoing	Positive public feedback. Monthly collation of figures from patrol sheets.

Off lead park improvements:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Build Off-lead Dog Park at Queens Road Reserve	2027 (funding dependent)	Public satisfaction and feedback.

Improve and promote prohibited / off-leash area information:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Update Council information for prohibited and off lead areas to include any new areas and and required information. Focus education on dogs at large.	2029 (in line with Local Law review)	Feedback during the holiday season. The number of requests for information and complaints

New technology:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Further investigate new products to assist the reduction in nuisance complaints.	Ongoing	Public satisfaction and feedback.

Reduce stock on road:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure we issue warnings and infringements when suitable to increase compliance.	Ongoing	Monitor number of stock on road call outs.



12. Dog attacks

This section highlights Council's service and strategy to minimise the risk of a dog attack on a person or pet, compliant with Section 68 A(2)(c)(iii) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Council is proactively trying to minimise the risk of injury or fear in the community due to the presence or actions of a dog.

Because dogs at large have the potential to attack, or rush without provocation, officers patrol regularly, including at weekends and provide a 24-hour emergency service.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Dog attacks	32	22	29	16	22	41	39	56	45	43

Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- Local Law 2 (31) relates to the control of dogs or cats in certain areas. (Prohibited areas, off leash areas, playgrounds and sporting grounds etc.)
- Local Law 2 (30) (1) regulates the number of dogs and cats that may be housed at a property without a permit.
- All complaints / requests are recorded on the Council Customer Request system.
- Officers will collect any dog at large and may return it to the owner if there is a microchip and registration. Otherwise, the animal will be impounded.
- All dog attacks, declarations and seizures are investigated and acted on in accordance with the Domestic Animal Act.
- Council has developed a procedure manual for incident investigations.
- Dogs must be on leash, unless in a designated off lead area.

Education and Promotion about dog attacks

The importance of avoiding dog attacks are assisted by initiatives including:

- After-hours patrols are conducted across the city in vehicles, on foot and bicycle.
- Officers provide information to the public when required.
- Animal welfare information is sent out with registration renewals.
- Relevant information is made available on Council's website and newsletter and, where required, via media release.

Compliance

All incident reports are investigated immediately, that includes:

- All dog attack reports will trigger an immediate response from Local Laws officers, with Council providing a 24-hour emergency service.
- Weekend patrols will be conducted along with regular patrols in higher incident areas.
- Random inspections of declared dangerous dog enclosures and signage are conducted.
- Dogs declared dangerous, menacing or restricted are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Register.

Actions:

Improve officer patrol procedure:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Officers to discuss and collate patrol running sheets after weekend shifts.	Weekly	Public feedback and improved information collated from running sheets.
Improve interaction with public (frequent patrols)	Ongoing	Public confidence in the service provided by Council.

Recording devices:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Purchase Body Worn Cameras to assist with incident investigation interviews.	2026	Accurate evidence and information retention.

13. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 Section 68 A (2)(c)(vii) relates to effectively identifying all Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs in the City and to ensure housing etc. compliance.

The Council objective is to minimise the risk of injury or fear in the community due to the presence or actions of a declared dog.

Compliance and control measures around dangerous dogs and dog attacks include:

- All dog attack reports receive immediate response from officers.
- Council provide a 24hour / 7days a week emergency service.
- Conduct weekend patrols.
- Conduct patrols in high incident areas.
- Promote ramifications for having a dog off-leash or at large.
- Conduct patrols in prohibited areas for dogs.
- All dogs declared (dangerous / menacing / restricted) are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Register.
- Local Laws Officers carry a current register of all declared dogs whilst on patrol, in case an animal with the distinguishing collar is observed.
- Council Officers randomly inspect the premises of Declared Dogs to ensure compliance of housing requirements.

Warrnambool currently has 1 Declared Dangerous dog, 8 Declared Menacing dogs and no Restricted Breed dogs listed on the Victorian Declared Dog Register, housed in the Municipality.

Declared menacing by breed	No. in Warrnambool	Declared dangerous by breed	No. in Warrnambool
Bull Terrier	1	American Staffy	1
German Shepherds	2		
Great Dane	1		
Mastiff	1		
Jack Russell	1		
Cattle Dog	1		
Staffordshire Terrier	1		

Local laws, council policies & procedures

Council declarations are governed by the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act:

- Council does not refuse the registration of a declared dog that meets all legislative and Council requirements of the declaration.
- Higher registration fees are charged for Declared Dangerous & Restricted Breed dogs but not Menacing dogs.
- Following an investigation, Council will issue a letter of proposed declaration explaining the incident, reasons and requirements. This may be followed by a letter including reasons for the declaration.
- Declared dogs are listed on the Victorian Declared Dog Register.
- All declared dogs, at a minimum are required to be on lead at all times & muzzled.





Education and Promotion about dangerous, menacing and restricted breeds

Council officers assist the public by:

- Providing pamphlets to the community about the legislative requirements of Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs.
- Media releases following an incident when possible.
- Educational media releases when possible.
- Officer patrols in the industrial area for guard dogs.
- Regular contact with owners of dogs on the register to monitor the dog, provide advice and assistance.
- Information sessions at schools and local service groups as requested.

Compliance

- Ensure all dogs declared by Council are registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Register.
- Conduct unannounced inspections of declared dogs to maintain the requirements of the declaration.
- Communicate and assist with region RSPCA inspectors.
- Ensure the details on the register are updated.
- Immediate response to complaints relating to declared dogs.

Actions:

Effectively inspect and audit all declared dog premises to ensure they are implementing all legislative requirements:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Unannounced visits to the listed address of a declared dog to ensure requirements of the declaration are implemented.	Twice yearly	Meeting the requirements of the declaration. Keep a record of results and required actions.

Regularly review procedure manual and educational material:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Discuss procedure manual following any major incident to ensure it is current. Maintain a supply of Animal Welfare Victoria and Council pamphlets to assist with education.	Ongoing	Investigations completed with relevant information recorded. Public feedback.

14. Domestic animal businesses

Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) are managed appropriately and comply with Section 68 A(2)(c)(ii) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

The Warrnambool City Council objective is to work in partnership with domestic animal businesses to achieve State Government Legislative requirements. Warrnambool currently has 5 registered domestic animal businesses.

- 2 boarding facility (cats).
- 1 pound (Warrnambool Animal Shelter).
- 2 pet shops.

These businesses are registered and inspected once a year.

Council staff are trained in dealing with conflict and difficult customers.

Actions:

Identify and register all domestic animal businesses in the municipality:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify any businesses that should be registered.	Ongoing	Compare number of registered DABs from the previous year

Annually inspect and audit all registered domestic animal businesses:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Visit all registered businesses and check for compliance and animal condition.	September	Those requirements of the Act are met.



15. Other matters

This section provides for the review of other matters related to the management of animals in the City, and compliant with Section 68 A (2)(e) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Animals play a significant role in our lives. Victorians' own dogs, cats, birds and horses. In addition, there are cattle and sheep, pigs and poultry, and many more.

While it is difficult to quantify wildlife populations, human interest in the welfare of native animals can be reflected in the wildlife shelters, foster carers currently authorised to rehabilitate wildlife in Victoria, and the native animals which are treated in Victorian shelters each year.

Many types of emergencies in Victoria inevitably affect animals. Furthermore, recent disasters in Australia and overseas highlighted that bonds between people and animals strongly influence decision making in times of crisis. The lack of adequate planning for the management of animals and their welfare in emergencies often results in poor, last minute decisions with dangerous or fatal consequences for animals and their owners or carers.

Before, during and after an emergency, people in charge of animals retain the ultimate 'duty of care' to provide for the needs of animals in their charge. In the event of an emergency, Government acknowledges the supporting role it can play in helping owners or carers meet their requirements.

Victoria's emergency management arrangements define the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions as the primary agency for livestock and companion animal welfare support services during an emergency response. As the closest level of government to the affected community, local government also has a key role in supporting emergency animal welfare activities. Numerous non-government organisations assist in the management of animal welfare, with the RSPCA, Australian Veterinary Association and Animal Welfare Victoria having specific capacities to assist.

Actions:

Develop a local animal emergency welfare plan:

Activity	When	Evaluation
In conjunction with relevant local parties & government departments, create a local sub plan to the Municipal Emergency Plan, with a contact list for emergency situations for Local Law Officers.	2027	Adopted plan

16. Annual Review of the Plan and Reporting

Section 68A (3) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 states: Every Council must—

- (a) Review its domestic animal management plan annually, and if appropriate, amend the plan.
- (b) Provide the Department of Agriculture Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan.
- (c) Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

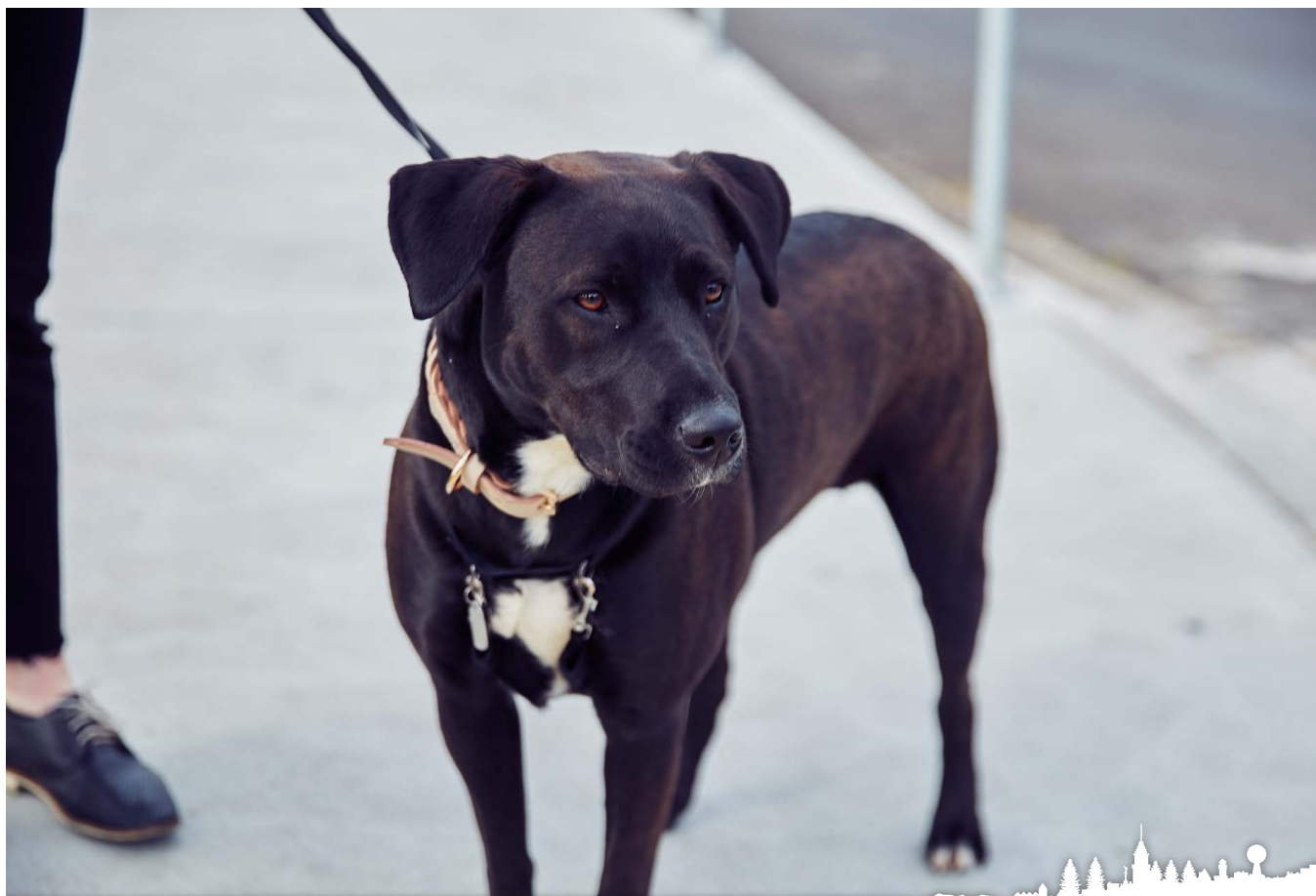
Actions:

Conduct an annual review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct an annual, internal department review of the current plan.	November	Comparison with previous plan.

Reporting of results:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide results for Council's annual report. Notify the Secretary (of the Department of Agriculture) of review. Conduct a major review every four years	Annually. Annually. Four-yearly	Evaluate results against the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.



7.4. Onsite Wastewater Management Plan

- *Cr Willy Benter declared a conflict of interest and left the meeting at 4.33pm.*

DIRECTORATE : City Futures

Purpose:

This report seeks Council adoption of the Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP) for 2026-2030.

Executive Summary

This report presents a revised Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP) 2026–2030 for adoption.

The OWMP establishes a risk-based framework for Council to manage wastewater from approximately 1,000 onsite wastewater systems (commonly known as septic systems) across the municipality where reticulated sewerage is not available. Poorly performing or ageing systems can pose risks to groundwater, waterways and public health if not effectively managed.

The plan ensures Council's approach complies with the *Environment Protection Act 2017*, including the General Environmental Duty (GED) under section 25, which requires the identification and management of risks to human health and the environment so far as reasonably practicable. Consistent with this framework and EPA guidance, councils are expected to implement an OWMP to systematically identify, assess and manage risks associated with onsite wastewater systems.

To address these risks, the OWMP outlines targeted actions including improving system data, delivering audit, education and compliance programs and enhancing coordination with external stakeholders such as Wannon Water.

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

SECONDED: CR BILLY EDIS

That Council adopt the Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030.

CARRIED - 5:0

Background

Council previously adopted a Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) 2020–2025 to guide the management of onsite wastewater systems across the municipality. The DWMP established a foundation for understanding system distribution, environmental constraints, and management challenges in unsewered areas.

Since adoption of the DWMP, the regulatory framework in Victoria has significantly changed with strengthening of the *Environment Protection Act 2017*. This change in legislation introduced the GED, which requires managers of land (particularly Council) to minimise risks of harm to human health and the environment so far as reasonably practicable. It also strengthened Council's role in regulating onsite wastewater systems and established clearer expectations for proactive, risk-based management.

In response, councils are required to implement contemporary OWMP that apply a risk-based approach consistent with the *Environment Protection Act 2017*. This includes identifying reasonably foreseeable risks of harm to human health and the environment arising from onsite wastewater systems, assessing those risks, and implementing measures to eliminate or minimise them so far as reasonably practicable in accordance with the GED and the OMLI.

The OWMP 2026–2030 has been developed to replace the previous DWMP and align Council's approach with current legislative and regulatory requirements. The plan reflects local conditions, including the presence of approximately 1,000 onsite wastewater systems, varying soil types, unsewered townships, and proximity to sensitive waterways such as the Merri and Hopkins Rivers. The OWMP provides a structured framework to support improved decision-making, better integration with land use planning, and coordination with key stakeholders such as Wannon Water, ensuring wastewater risks are managed in a consistent and strategic manner across the municipality.

Issues

Key issues identified through the OWMP development include:

- Aged and unregistered systems: A proportion of systems pre-date permit requirements and may not meet current standards.
- Cumulative impacts: High-density areas such as Bushfield and Woodford are approaching thresholds where wastewater loads may impact groundwater.
- Soil and site constraints: Poorly draining clays and highly permeable coastal sands increase failure and contamination risks.
- Flooding and inundation risk: When applicable, flood studies and mapping are considered to minimise the risk of hydraulic overloading and system failure.
- Data gaps: Incomplete records of system locations and conditions limit effective risk management.
- Public awareness: Limited understanding among property owners regarding maintenance obligations and signs of system failure.

The OWMP addresses these issues through a range of actions developed in the Risk Evaluation and Treatment Plan, including the progressive auditing of existing systems, improving data collection and system registration, targeted education and compliance initiatives and alignment with local land use planning controls, such as the minimum 1ha allotment sizes proposed within the Woodford-Bushfield Strategic Framework Plan.

High-risk areas will be prioritised for assessment and management, and collaboration with key stakeholders will support consistent and effective outcomes.

Financial Impact

The OWMP was developed internally by Council's Environmental Health unit using its existing recurrent budget allocation. This budget is partially funded through fees and charges associated with the installation and alteration of onsite wastewater management systems.

Benchmarking against other municipalities indicates that OWMP development is commonly undertaken by external consultants. Delivery of the OWMP in-house is estimated to have achieved a cost saving of approximately \$50,000.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

1. City Futures

1.2 Our City puts public health and safety as a priority.

Council is required to develop an OWMP to comply with the *Environment Protection Act 2017*. The Act is supported by the OMLI, which require Council to take a proactive and structured approach to managing risks associated with land and infrastructure, with regard to onsite wastewater systems.

The OWMP gives effect to these requirements by providing a framework for the identification, assessment and management of risks arising from onsite wastewater systems across the municipality.

Timing

Actions contained within the OWMP will be implemented over its lifespan in accordance with the Risk Evaluation and Treatment Plan.

Internal / External Consultation

Initial engagement was conducted with internal and key external stakeholders, building on the previous Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). Internal stakeholders included Records Management, Strategic and Statutory Planning, and GIS/Mapping. External stakeholders included Wannon Water and the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA). This stage involved early briefings and the collection of preliminary feedback, which informed the scope, priorities and initial direction of the OWMP.

Following preparation of the draft plan, further consultation with industry stakeholders was undertaken over a two-week period. This included engagement with Wannon Water, the EPA, GHCMA and local plumbers. Feedback from this process, particularly including input from Council's Strategic Planning team and Wannon Water has been incorporated into the final plan.

The draft OWMP was subsequently made available to the broader community via Council's Your Say platform for a period of three weeks. No material concerns were raised through this process.

Legal Risk / Impact

Risks may arise where site constraints are not adequately considered or where decisions are not supported by appropriate evidence. The OWMP provides Council with the ability to demonstrate that decision-making and actions are informed, consistent and aligned with its statutory obligations.

Key environmental constraints such as soil limitations, flooding and proximity to waterways have the potential to significantly influence system performance and increase the likelihood of off-site impacts. These factors are addressed in the relevant sections of the OWMP for consideration and assessment.

To mitigate risk, decision-making will be guided by the best available information at the time, including site-specific assessments such as Land Capability Assessments, together with the information detailed within the Township Profiles of the OWMP. This approach ensures that decisions are informed, proportionate to the level of risk, and consistent with Council's obligations.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil.

Collaborative Procurement

Nil.

Conclusion

The draft OWMP 2026–2030 provides an updated framework for managing onsite wastewater systems across the municipality. It responds to legislative changes, identifies key risks and outlines practical strategies to protect public health and the environment. Adoption of the plan will enable Council to proactively manage wastewater risks, support sustainable development whilst meeting our statutory obligations under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030 [7.4.1 - 50 pages]

- ***Cr Willy Benter returned to the meeting at 4.37pm.***



Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



Document control

Revision No.	Date	Description of change
1.1	22/4/26	Draft Plan developed by Environmental Health in line with updated legislation and guidance. Circulated for review with internal and external stakeholders.
1.2	15/5/26	Amended to incorporate feedback received internally through WCC City Growth (Statutory and Strategic Planning) and externally through Wannon Water (Water Authority).

Acknowledgement of Country

Warrnambool City Council acknowledges the Peek Whurrong and Kirrae Whurrung Peoples of the Maar Nation, their land, waterways and skies within the Warrnambool municipality.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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Responsible Branch: Environmental Health | Approved Date: DRAFT | Review Date: DRAFT

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Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



1. Introduction and context

The Warrnambool City Council (WCC) Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (OWMP) establishes Council's strategic framework for managing risks to human health and the environment associated with approximately 1,000 onsite wastewater management systems (OWMS) across the municipality. This OWMP applies to existing systems whilst also providing a framework to guide the assessment and installation of new OWMS, ensuring systems are appropriately designed and sited in areas where reticulated sewer services are unavailable. OWMS includes but is not limited to septic tank systems, Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems (AWTS) and reed bed systems with various dispersal methods such as trenches, beds, mounds and subsurface irrigation. These systems are installed within unsewered residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational settings within the municipality.

WCC is the responsible authority for OWMS with a design capacity of 5,000 litres per day or less and is delegated to assess and issue permits to construct, install, alter, or decommission these systems. The Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) is the responsible authority for approving systems larger than 5,000 litres per day which are outside the scope of this OWMP.

Through the OWMP, Council will apply a risk-based approach to ensure onsite wastewater is managed in a manner that protects human health and the environment, and addresses both site-specific and cumulative risks.

The OWMP outlines the measures Council will apply to ensure systems are planned, installed, operated, and maintained in accordance with the General Environmental Duty (GED) and the Obligations of Managers of Land or Infrastructure (OMLI), as described in Section 1.2 Legislative Framework of this OWMP.

This plan builds on the Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (2020–2025), incorporating existing data, mapping, and township characteristics. This OWMP adopts an evidence-based risk framework to meet new legislative obligations and to manage both individual system performance and the cumulative impacts of onsite wastewater systems across unsewered areas of the municipality.

1.1. Risks associated with wastewater

OWMS play a critical role in protecting public health and the environment in unsewered areas. When well-designed, correctly installed, and properly maintained, these systems can operate effectively for long periods. However, they also present inherent risks, particularly when they are ageing (legacy) systems, poorly managed, or located in constrained or sensitive environments. Identifying and understanding these risks underpins the risk-based management approach used throughout this OWMP.

Legacy systems are defined as OWMS that were installed before 1996 that either don't have a permit, operate without adequate maintenance, or were previously approved to discharge wastewater offsite.

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Human health risk

OWMS treat and dispose of wastewater near where people live, work, and recreate. If a system fails or is not adequately maintained, untreated or partially treated effluent can surface above ground and potentially even migrate offsite. This can expose people to pathogens and increase the likelihood of illness.

These risks are particularly elevated in:

- periods of prolonged wet weather
- small or densely developed lots
- areas with high groundwater
- properties with older systems installed prior to contemporary design and performance standards

A risk-based assessment ensures these factors are considered when determining system suitability and ongoing management requirements.

Environmental risk

Wastewater contains nutrients, organic matter, pathogens and other pollutants that can harm sensitive environments if not properly treated. Poorly performing or unsuitable systems can impact groundwater, local drainage lines, and surface water bodies.

The most sensitive and controlled environments are Special Water Supply Catchment Areas (SWSCAs), which are formally declared areas that provide water resources for drinking water and domestic water supply purposes. There are no SWSCAs located within the boundaries of the WCC municipality. It is noted that the South Otway pipeline is supplemented by bore water obtained from Albert Park, although this is located within the declared sewer district in Warrnambool's township.

For WCC, environments such as the Merri River, Hopkins River, Russells Creek, Yarrup Creek, Yangery Creek, and coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to even small increases in nutrient or pollutant loads. Soil conditions in these areas generally consist of highly permeable coastal sands or poorly draining clays. These soil categories are more likely to contribute to run-off or contamination of groundwater. These constraints are considered within the risk-based assessment to avoid environmental degradation.

Land use and development interface

OWMS must operate within the limits set by land capability, lot size and development intensity. Some settlements contain small lots or legacy systems that no longer meet current standards, increasing the potential for cumulative environmental and public health impacts.

As Warrnambool's population grows and land use patterns evolve, ensuring that wastewater risks are appropriately assessed is essential for responsible and sustainable development. This includes defining where reticulated sewerage may be a more appropriate long-term solution, particularly in areas where collaboration with Wannon Water can support the transition away from legacy onsite systems. This OWMP

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



supports investment in reticulated sewerage or suitable alternatives (such as cluster systems) in unsewered areas.

Why these risks matter

Understanding risks at a high level provides the foundation for:

- applying and complying with the GED
- establishing clear permitting, monitoring and compliance processes
- assessing cumulative impacts within and across catchments
- developing targeted strategies to minimise harm to human health and the environment

More detailed analysis, including township-specific risk profiles, soil capability, system density and environmental sensitivity is provided in the detailed Risk Assessment section of this OWMP.



Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030

1.2. Legislative framework

The management of onsite wastewater systems in Victoria is governed by a risk-based legislative framework designed to prevent harm to human health and the environment. This framework establishes clear duties for system owners, councils and land managers, and sets the minimum regulatory requirements for the installation, alteration and ongoing management of OWMS as described in Figure 1 below.

Environment Protection Act 2017	- See Section 25 of the Act: Creates a general environmental duty for all Victorians including those who own or operate an OWMS - See Section 46 of the Act: Permits required for all permit activities
Environment Protection Regulations 2021	- A permit from the relevant local government is required to construct, install or alter an OWMS (Regulation 33) - See EP Regulations Part 3.3: Permits for prescribed permit activities to be administered by councils (Regulation 25) - See EP Regulations Part 5.7: On-site wastewater management systems
Other supporting legislation	- The Victoria Planning Provisions under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 set out the planning policy framework for wastewater management. <i>Buildings Act 1993</i> and <i>Building Regulations 2018</i>: Building permits are issued by registered building surveyors in accordance with the Building Act 1993 and Building Regulations 2018 - Compliance with <i>Plumbing Regulations 2018</i> (NCC Vol. 3 - Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA)) required for installation of pipework <i>Water Act 1989</i> and the <i>Water (Estimation, Supply and Sewerage) Regulations 2014</i> sets out the provisions for reticulated sewerage. <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> sets out the framework for the integrated management and protection of catchments.
Supporting guidelines	- How to manage your own on-site wastewater system (EPA webpage) - EPA Publication 1974: Regulating on-site wastewater management systems (local government toolkit) - EPA Publication 1976: Guidance for owners and occupiers of land with an OWMS equal to or less than 5,000 litres on any day (including septic tank systems) - EPA Publication: Guideline for onsite wastewater management - EPA Publication: Guideline for onsite wastewater effluent dispersal and recycling systems - Victorian land capability assessment framework (Municipal Association of Victoria, 2014) - under review - Onsite wastewater management plans: guidelines for developing, reviewing and updating - under development - Planning permit applications in special water supply catchment areas (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, 2024) - Environmental information on emerging contaminants, including PFAS (EPA webpage)

Figure 1: Regulatory framework for OWMS in Victoria, EPA May 2024 - Guidelines for Onsite Wastewater Management

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



1.3. Summary of Victorian state legislation

Environment Protection Act 2017

The Environment Protection Act 2017 provides the foundation for all onsite wastewater management in Victoria. It shifts the regulatory model from a prescriptive approach to one centred on preventing harm before it occurs.

Key obligations under the Act include:

- **General Environmental Duty (GED)**
All owners and occupiers must minimise risks of harm to human health and the environment so far as reasonably practicable. This applies to the installation, use, maintenance and replacement of all OWMS, including older legacy systems.
- **Permissions framework**
OWMS with a daily design capacity of $\leq 5,000$ L/day require a council-issued permit (A20 Activity) to construct, install or alter a system.
- **Obligations of Managers of Land or Infrastructure (OMLI)**
Councils must manage wastewater-related risks on land they control, assess environmental impacts, and ensure appropriate controls are in place.

Environment Protection Regulations 2021

The Regulations provide the detailed requirements that support the Act.

Key obligations under the Regulations include:

- detailing the permit requirements for OWMS (Regulations 41–43 and 57)
- setting performance expectations for operation and maintenance
- providing Council with regulatory tools including:
 - Regulation 163 - Maintenance Orders
 - Section 271 - Improvement Notices (under the Act)
- requiring appropriate commissioning, desludging, monitoring and repair of systems
- mandating that wastewater be managed without creating odours, overflows, surface ponding or the pollution of land or waterways

These Regulations directly support councils in evaluating system suitability, compliance, cumulative risk and long-term environmental impacts.

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



Planning and Environment Act 1987

- Governs the subdivision and development of unsewered land.
- Sets expectations for minimum lot sizes, overlays and development constraints.
- Integrates OWMS considerations into the planning permit process.

Water Act 1989

- Supports the transition from onsite wastewater systems to reticulated sewerage in serviced or serviceable areas under Section 147. Whereby the local water authority may require the owner of a property, via legal notice, to connect to the sewerage works of the authority.
- Provides consideration of cumulative impacts of unsewered development on surface water and groundwater at a catchment scale.
- Integrates onsite wastewater management within land use planning, drainage and waterway protection functions.
- Provides strategic justification for discouraging further OWMS reliance in areas identified for future sewer connection.

Building Act 1993 and the Building Regulations 2018

- Requires that a Permit to Install or Alter an OWMS is approved and provided to the relevant Building Surveyor prior to issuing of a Building Permit of a development in an unsewered area.
- Stipulates that a Certificate of Occupancy is not to be issued until essential services are operational. For developments in unsewered areas, a Certificate Approving the Use of an OWMS is required.

Plumbing Regulations 2018

- Identifies certain plumbing work associated with OWMS is classified as notifiable plumbing work.
- Stipulates that licensed plumbing practitioners must issue a Plumbing Compliance Certificate for notifiable work, including sanitary and drainage work connected to an OWMS.
- Stipulates that a copy of the compliance certificate must be lodged with the Victorian Building and Plumbing Commission, with a copy provided to both the owner and Council, verifying compliant installation prior to the issue of a Certificate Approving the Use of an OWMS.



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1.4. Supporting guidelines and standards

EPA Guidelines for Onsite Wastewater Management (2024)

These guidelines provide councils with the current assessment framework, including:

- land capability assessment (LCA) requirements
- system selection based on soil constraints and site sensitivity
- performance standards
- appropriate setbacks from watercourses, bores, escarpments and drains
- environmental risk considerations, including cumulative impacts

EPA Guidelines for Effluent Dispersal (2024)

These guidelines set out:

- acceptable effluent loading rates (hydraulic and nutrient)
- design and sizing principles for land application areas
- infiltration testing requirements
- methods for designing sustainable irrigation, trench and other dispersal systems

Together, these guidelines provide the current technical foundation for all OWMS assessment and permitting decisions by councils. They replace the previous EPA Code of Practice – Onsite Wastewater Management (Publication 891.4 – July 2016).

AS/NZS 1547:2012 – On-site Domestic Wastewater Management

- Establishes the technical and performance standard governing the design, installation, operation, and ongoing management of onsite domestic wastewater systems.

Victorian Land Capability Assessment Framework 2014

- Provides the methodology for Land Capability Assessors to assess land suitability for onsite wastewater management.



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1.5. Purpose and goals of OWMP

This OWMP sets out Council's strategic approach to managing the risks associated with onsite wastewater systems across the municipality. With around 1,000 systems operating in unsewered areas of Warrnambool, effective oversight is essential to protect public health, safeguard sensitive environments and support sustainable land use and development.

This OWMP responds to the modern, risk-based requirements introduced under the Environment Protection Act 2017, the Environment Protection Regulations 2021 and Council's OMLI. It provides a structured framework for identifying, assessing and minimising risks from onsite systems, including legacy systems on smaller or constrained allotments.

The purpose of this OWMP is to:

- establish a consistent, risk-based approach to onsite wastewater assessment, monitoring and compliance
- guide decision-making for both existing systems and new development in unsewered areas
- ensure Council meets its duties under the Act, including the GED and OMLI requirements
- protect human health, groundwater, surface waterways and environmentally sensitive landscapes
- reduce cumulative wastewater impacts, particularly in areas with higher system density or known soil constraints
- improve wastewater data, mapping and system visibility to support long-term planning
- support residents, developers and consultants by providing clear expectations and assessment pathways

Through this OWMP, Council aims to proactively identify wastewater risks, prioritise areas where intervention or additional controls are needed, and provide a transparent foundation for regulatory activity, community engagement and infrastructure planning.

This OWMP has four overarching goals that guide its strategy and implementation:

1. Protect Human Health and the Environment

Ensure all OMWS (new and existing) operate in a way that prevents risks to people, waterways, groundwater and surrounding land.

2. Support Sustainable Land Use and Development

Ensure land use planning, subdivision and development decisions are informed by a risk management framework, incorporating land capability, soil conditions, system density, and cumulative impacts. This is particularly important within special townships such as Bushfield, Woodford and coastal areas including Hopkins Point Road.

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**3. Strengthen Compliance, Data and Risk Management**

Improve system mapping, identify unpermitted or legacy systems, conduct audits and utilise findings to inform actions, utilising regulatory tools such as Maintenance Orders and Improvement Notices where required.

4. Enable Collaboration and Planning

Work with Wannon Water and other relevant agencies to identify where reticulated sewerage or alternative solutions may be appropriate, especially in high-risk or high-density areas, and support the long-term transition of legacy systems in sewered districts.

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Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



2. Risk assessment

2.1. Scope of risk assessment

The scope of the onsite wastewater risk assessment defines the geographic boundaries, environmental endpoints and risk types as well as site-specific and cumulative factors to be considered when evaluating risks associated with OWMS within the municipality.

The assessment framework is based on AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management, ensuring a process that is integrated, structured, consistent, evidence-based, transparent and responsive to changing conditions. The framework is consistent with the Environment Protection Act 2017, the GED, and the OMLI.

In accordance with ISO 31000 principles, risk assessment under this OWMP is applied across all unsewered areas of the municipality to ensure risks are systematically identified, analysed, evaluated and managed in a manner proportionate to their potential impact on human health and the environment.

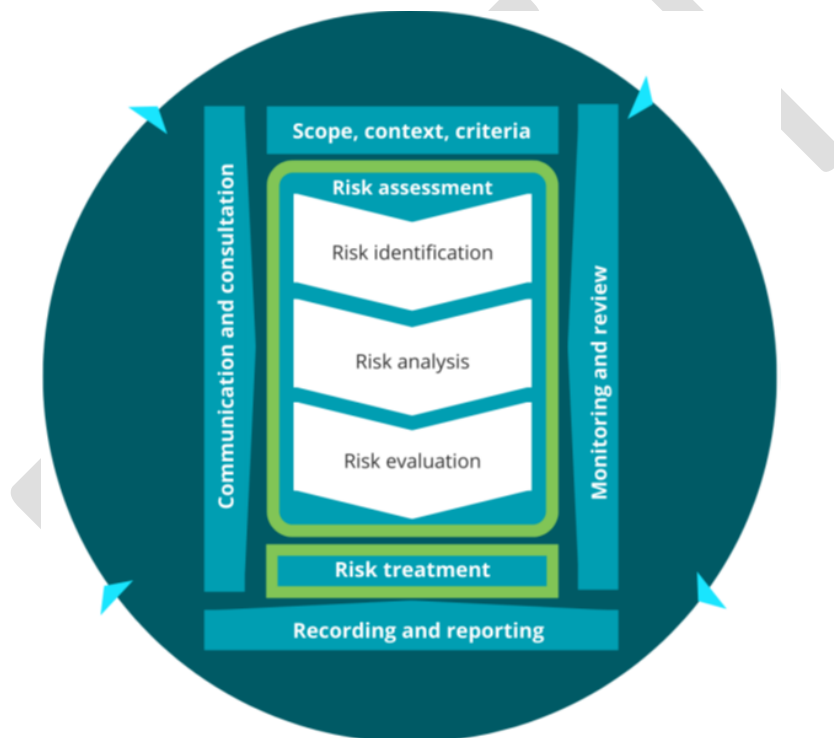


Figure 2: Risk management process (ISO 31000) – risk identification

Department of Environment Land Water and Planning June 2022 – OWMP Risk Assessment Guidance Final Report

Site-specific risk assessments (allotment scale)

Site-specific risk assessment evaluates risks associated with individual OWMS on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Figure 2 above. This assessment focuses on the performance of the system in relation to site

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



conditions, system design and proximity to sensitive receptors. Site-specific assessment informs and supports:

- OWMS selection and system design, including effluent dispersal methods
- the use of compliance and enforcement tools
- owner/occupier education and engagement

Optional or additional risk factors

Optional or additional risk factors may also be considered as part of OWMS assessment, potentially requiring officer discretion. These may include but are not limited to:

- unregistered bores
- perched or seasonal groundwater
- shading or vegetation that restricts evapotranspiration
- stormwater that cannot be diverted from disposal areas
- bushfire overlay constraints
- high-water-use households and/or uses
- historical evidence of failure
- limitations on access for servicing or desludging

It is anticipated that if such constraints exist, an LCA should support the design of the OWMS.

Cumulative risk assessment (township and locality scale)

Building on the extensive mapping undertaken within the previous 2020–2025 Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, this assessment identifies cumulative and strategic risks that may not be apparent when considering site specific assessments in isolation. This assessment is structured around township areas and localities with known OWMS constraints.

The township areas and locality profiles included within the scope of this assessment are:

- Woodford
- Bushfield
- Allansford
- Hopkins Point/Logans Beach
- Dennington/Illova
- North of Wangoom Road
- Drylakes Road

These areas contain the majority of the municipality's onsite wastewater systems and represent landscapes where wastewater-related risks may accumulate over time or directly influence surface waters and groundwater, including the Merri and Hopkins River, and Russells Creek. These waterways are the most sensitive and significant receptors because they are environmentally sensitive, widely used for recreation, have strong community value, and receive inflows from drainage lines and tributaries.

Council acknowledges that some legacy systems exist outside the areas listed above. These systems are addressed through site-specific risk assessment, complaint response, audit programs and ongoing data improvement initiatives.

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Relationship between assessment scales

Site-specific and cumulative risk assessments are applied in parallel and inform each other. A locality may be identified as medium or high cumulative risk even where individual systems appear to be functioning adequately, and conversely, a high-risk individual system may warrant intervention regardless of broader locality classification.

Integration with the classification of risk factors

This Scope of Risk Assessment sets the foundation for the structured evaluation of constraints identified in Table 1. The Classification of Risk Factors applies this scope by assigning each site constraint a Low, Medium, or High risk rating based on lot size, soil type, topography, setback compliance, groundwater depth and flood-proneness, the culmination of risk factors then uses Table 2 & 3 below to determine the final risk classification for the site. This final classification determines whether a proposed system is appropriate, whether an LCA is required, and how individual sites and township areas are prioritised for ongoing management throughout the life of the OWMP per Table 4.

2.2. Risk identification – site specific

This section applies to site-specific risk identification. Cumulative risks arising from broader sub-catchment scale impacts are addressed separately through the Township and Locality Profiles.

Risk identification is undertaken prior to risk analysis and risk evaluation to ensure subsequent assessments are based on a clear and evidence-based understanding of hazards, pathways and receptors.

Hazards

The following site-specific hazards represent mechanisms which result in onsite wastewater causing harm:

- **Hydraulic failure**, leading to surfacing or ponding of effluent, indicated by boggy ground or persistent odour.
- **Treatment failure**, where wastewater is inadequately treated prior to land application.
- **Containment failure**, resulting in wastewater migrating beyond the intended land application area.
- **Groundwater contamination**, through vertical or lateral leaching of nutrients or pathogens.
- **Surface water contamination**, via runoff or connection to drains, creeks, rivers or coastal receiving environments.
- **Flooding of OWMS**, where inundation redistributes effluent and contaminants.
- **Human exposure**, through direct contact with wastewater onsite or via contamination of environments.
- **System overload**, resulting from changes in use or increased occupancy.
- **Non-compliant or unpermitted systems**, where design, installation or maintenance history is unknown.

Site-specific risk factors

The factors listed below are the property site-specific characteristics that influence the likelihood and/or consequence of the previously identified hazards occurring. The factors are guided by the Onsite Wastewater Management Plans – Risk Assessment Guidance (ATOM Consulting 2022):

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- Lot size/available land application area
- Soil type and permeability
- Topography/slope
- Setback distances to bores and watercourses
- Flood-prone area status
- Depth to groundwater considered in combination with soil permeability.

If the system is existing, the following factors also require consideration:

- System age/type and maintenance evidence (where known)
- Permit status/system history (where known)

Risk identification uses a combination of:

- council records (application documents such as site plans, inspection outcomes, LCAs (when available))
- aerial mapping and available datasets (soils type, depth to groundwater, flood information where relevant)
- site inspection observations (available dispersal area, site drainage behaviour, visible failure indicators)

Where evidence is incomplete, the assessment applies a precautionary approach and escalates information requirements (e.g. requesting maintenance records) consistent with a risk-based framework.

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2.3. Risk analysis

2.3.1 Characterisation framework

The following framework has been developed as part of this OWMP to assist Environmental Health Officers assess the risk of new or existing OWMS:

Table 1: Risk categorisation based on site characteristics

	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Constraint			
Lot Size	> 1 hectare	0.4 – 1 hectare	< 0.4 hectares
Soil Category¹	3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 4c	2b, 5a	1, 2a, 5b, 5c, 6a, 6b, 6c
Slope – Conventional Disposal Method¹	< 5% slope	5 – 15% slope	> 15% slope
Slope – Irrigation Disposal Method¹	< 10% slope	10 – 30% slope	> 30% slope
Bores – Setback Requirements¹	Setback can be met	–	Setback cannot be met
Watercourses – Setback Requirements¹	Setback can be met	–	Setback cannot be met
Distance to Groundwater¹	Setback can be met	–	Setback cannot be met, or soil category = 1 or 2a regardless of depth
Flood-Prone Areas²	Above 1% AEP ³	1–5% AEP	Below 5% AEP

¹Note: Parameter determined by the methodology described in AS/NZS 1547:2012

²Note: Flood mapping and flood advice available at the time of assessment is based on the best available regional information, as directed by the relevant floodplain authority. Flood conditions may change over time due to climate variability, land use change, drainage modifications, and updated hydrological modelling.

³Note: AEP - Annual Exceedance Probability – the statistical likelihood of a flood event occurring in any given year

2.3.2 Likelihood and consequence

Risk analysis assesses the nature of identified risks by considering the **likelihood** that a hazard event will occur, and the **consequence** of harm if it occurs. Existing controls must be taken into account prior to reaching a determination.

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Where the Risk Characterisation Framework may not provide an outcome, the matrix below determines the inherent risk level.

Likelihood	Consequence				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	High
Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
Possible	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High	Very high
Likely	Low	Moderate	High	High	Very high
Almost Certain	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Very high

Table 2: Risk assessment matrix

Likelihood describes how probable it is that an OWMS hazard event could occur at a site, taking into account site constraints, system condition and existing controls.	Consequence describes the severity of harm that could occur if an OWMS failure event takes place, considering the sensitivity of receptors and the strength of exposure pathways.
Rare: Failure would be highly unlikely. Site constraints are minimal, system design is well suited to conditions, and there is no evidence of underperformance.	Insignificant: No measurable impact on human health or the environment.
Unlikely: Failure could occur but is not expected under normal operating conditions. Minor constraints may exist but are readily managed through design and maintenance.	Minor: Localised impact contained onsite and short-term. Minor environmental disturbance with no lasting harm.
Possible: Failure may occur, particularly under adverse conditions such as prolonged wet weather or reduced maintenance. One or more constraints are present that may affect performance.	Moderate: Offsite impacts may occur and require management. Potential for localised environmental degradation or limited human exposure.
Likely: Failure is expected to occur in many circumstances. Multiple site constraints or system issues increase the probability of underperformance or failure.	Major: Significant environmental harm or public health risk. Offsite migration likely, affecting waterways, groundwater or neighbouring properties.
Almost certain: Failure is expected to occur or is already occurring. Evidence of system failure, non-compliance or severe site constraints indicates a very high probability of harm.	Catastrophic: Widespread or sustained harm to human health or the environment. High-value receptors affected, with long-term or irreversible impacts.

Table 3: Risk assessment matrix descriptors

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2.3.3 Risk level outcomes and council response

Risk Level	Meaning	Council Response
Low	Risk manageable with standard controls	Standard OWMS assessment process; general conditions apply
Moderate	Requires additional controls or design considerations	Additional permit conditions or design requirements; general owner/occupier education; enhanced monitoring
High	Significant constraints; increased likelihood of offsite discharge	Detailed design required; requires controls identified in LCA and supported by Environmental Health; targeted owner/occupier education; audit priority
Very High	Unacceptable risk under current conditions	Development unsuitable; risk must be lowered to a tolerable risk level through controls identified in LCA and supported by Environmental Health; Upgrade or replacement required if existing system

Table 4: Final site assessment outcome and requirements

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2.4. Township and locality profiles

The preceding risk assessment framework (Sections 2.2 to 2.4) establishes a site-specific approach for identifying and analysing risks associated with individual OWMS. While this allotment-scale assessment is essential for permit decision-making and compliance action, it does not fully capture the cumulative and interacting risks that may arise where multiple systems operate within shared environmental constraints.

WCC is a comparatively small local government area (LGA) with a limited number of unsewered townships and localities. This scale enables Council to assess onsite wastewater risks at a finer, sub-catchment level, providing a more detailed understanding of local conditions and cumulative impacts.

The majority of baseline information used to inform the Township and Locality Profiles has been drawn from recent plans, assessments and frameworks, including the:

- 2020–2025 Domestic Wastewater Management Plan
- North Wangoom Land Capability Assessment
- Bushfield-Woodford Strategic Framework Plan (Draft 2025)

These documents provide established assessments of land capability, settlement patterns, wastewater constraints and cumulative risk, and remain relevant in identifying areas of known or emerging concern. This OWMP does not seek to replicate that work, but rather to consolidate, refine, and re-interpret it through the lens of the risk-based framework.

Note: This OWMP is based on currently available information and will be updated as new information and data becomes available.

By treating individual townships and localities as sub-catchments, Council is able to:

- build on existing evidence to identify localised wastewater risks
- recognise cumulative impacts that may not be apparent at a municipal scale
- apply proportionate, targeted management responses consistent with the GED

The following Township and Locality Profiles therefore represent an evolution of previous work, integrating historic assessments with current regulatory expectations, available spatial data, and contemporary risk management principles to guide future compliance, planning, and infrastructure decisions.

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2.4.1 Bushfield

Settlement context

Bushfield is a rural-residential township located north of Warrnambool and east of Woodford. It has a long history of small-lot development, with many dwellings established prior to 1996 and a high proportion of onsite wastewater systems that are either unrecorded or pre-date contemporary design standards. Bushfield and Woodford are increasingly functioning as a single settlement and share similar onsite wastewater constraints. The township drains to the Merri River and its tributaries, which represent sensitive environmental receptors.

Bushfield is predominantly residential in character and has experienced recent growth as an alternative housing option to Warrnambool, valued for its semi-rural setting.

Zoning and development pattern

Bushfield contains a mix of Farming Zone (FZ), Rural Living Zone (RLZ), and Low-Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) land. The earliest subdivisions, adjacent to the Hopkins Highway, comprise historic small lots (often <0.5 ha) that are highly constrained for sustainable wastewater treatment. Another dense area of small lots (<0.5 ha) is located along both Bellmans Road and Quinns Road. Larger lots occur to the west along Bridge Road toward Woodford. Surrounding FZ land presents potential future pressure for subdivision and rezoning.

Within the LDRZ, a minimum lot size of 0.4 ha currently applies, which further compounds wastewater constraints in areas with poor soils and high system density.

Environmental and site constraints

Bushfield is characterised by highly weathered volcanic soils with a high clay fraction, reflecting historic intensive dairy farming and long-term soil compaction. Medium to heavy clay soils (Category 5–6) dominate, resulting in poor permeability and limited effluent absorption, particularly during winter months.

Topography varies across the township, with ridgelines along Bridge Road and north-sloping land toward the Merri River. Soil depth is often limited on ridgelines, while steeper slopes and riverine areas increase the risk of off-site effluent migration. Portions of the township lie within the Merri River floodplain and are subject to an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO).

Onsite wastewater risk profile

Bushfield has a very high density of OWMS, exceeding 40–80 systems per square kilometre in central areas. The township contains a high proportion of ageing and legacy systems, many without permits or formal records. Combined with constrained lot sizes, impermeable soils, proximity to the Merri River, and limited capacity for further septic loading, Bushfield has been assessed as having a high cumulative wastewater risk rating. Central residential areas and land proximal to waterways represent the highest risk locations.

Strategic planning considerations

The Bushfield–Woodford Strategic Framework Plan Draft (2025) identifies onsite wastewater management as a critical constraint to the sustainable development of the combined settlement. The Plan recognises that the current reliance on onsite wastewater systems, given high system density, constrained lot sizes,

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impermeable clay soils, proximity to the Merri River, and a prevalence of ageing and unpermitted systems presents an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment if unmanaged.

Consistent with this assessment, the Strategic Framework Plan confirms Council's policy position to defer further growth and subdivision in Bushfield until sustainable wastewater management solutions are resolved, noting that continuation of current practices is not a viable long-term response. The Plan supports the introduction of stronger planning controls to manage wastewater risk, including a minimum lot size of 1 hectare within the LDRZ where onsite wastewater systems are proposed, and prioritisation of improved or alternative wastewater servicing before facilitating infill or additional development.

The Strategic Framework Plan also emphasises the need to balance protection of Bushfield's rural village character and environmental values with the long-term sustainability of the Bushfield-Woodford settlement. Investigation of sewerage or alternative wastewater infrastructure, in partnership with relevant servicing authorities, is identified as a key enabler for reducing cumulative risk, improving environmental outcomes, and supporting any future growth.

Management implications and recommended actions

Given the identified constraints and risk profile, the following management responses are recommended for Bushfield:

- Implement risk-based wastewater performance monitoring and targeted audits, particularly in high-density areas and locations proximal to waterways.
- Prioritise identification and assessment of legacy and unpermitted systems, particularly within 30 m and 60 m watercourse setback areas.
- Require an LCA for all new or replacement OWMS.
- Prioritise secondary treatment systems for new or upgraded installations.
- Apply a minimum 1 hectare lot size for future LDRZ development where onsite wastewater treatment is proposed, consistent with the proposal in the Bushfield-Woodford Strategic Framework Plan Draft (2025).
- Monitor stormwater quality in conjunction with relevant authorities to assess potential impacts on the Merri River and its tributaries.
- Where evidence of significant or increasing risk is identified, or where community demand for development increases, investigate the feasibility of reticulated sewerage or alternative wastewater solutions in collaboration with Wannon Water. As part of the consultation involved through the Bushfield Woodford Strategic Framework Plan Draft (2025), providing reticulated sewer to this area was deemed unviable due to cost and lack of community support.

Key wastewater constraints

- Very high OWMS density (40–80 systems/km²)
- Medium to heavy clay soils (Category 5–6)
- Proximity to the Merri River and mapped floodplain

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- Steep slopes and shallow soil depths in parts of the township
- High proportion of legacy and unpermitted systems
- High cumulative risk rating

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2.4.2 Woodford

Settlement context

Woodford is an unsewered rural-residential township located approximately 5 kilometres north of Warrnambool. It shares a common catchment, development history and wastewater risk context with Bushfield, with settlement extending along the Merri River valley and Yarpurk Ck. Development consists of a mix of rural lifestyle and residential lots containing dwellings of varied age, resulting in a corresponding range of OWMS of varying age, design, and performance.

The township includes Jubilee Park, a defined recreational precinct around the primary school. Development patterns are strongly influenced by the Merri River and its tributaries. Woodford and Bushfield increasingly function as a combined settlement and experience similar cumulative wastewater constraints.

Zoning and development pattern

Woodford comprises a mix of RLZ and LDRZ land, with additional heritage, design and development, and environmental overlays influencing development. Minimum lot sizes vary across the township, including RLZ areas generally accommodating larger parcels and LDRZ areas subject to a minimum lot size of 0.4ha.

Historic subdivision patterns have resulted in clusters of small lots, particularly the area adjacent to Jubilee Park and the primary school. These historic titles, often less than 0.5 hectares, are highly constrained for sustainable onsite wastewater treatment, particularly when combined with floodplain and watercourse setback limitations. Conversely, some larger RLZ areas, such as the Cilmerly Crescent precinct, provide improved wastewater outcomes due to larger lot sizes and more recent development.

Environmental and site constraints

Woodford is characterised by ex-volcanic, highly weathered clay-based soils with light to medium clay textures that exhibit poor permeability and seasonal saturation. These soil conditions significantly limit effluent absorption and increase the likelihood of lateral subsurface flow, particularly during winter months.

Riverine and floodplain landscapes dominate areas of Woodford proximal to the Merri River and its tributaries. Sloping land toward the river, shallow soil depths in parts of the township, and extensive 30 m and 60 m watercourse setbacks further constrain wastewater system siting and performance.

Onsite wastewater risk profile

Woodford contains a mix of OWMS ages and system types. A 2019 audit identified several systems located within watercourse setback areas that rely on pumping effluent away from waterways. While this approach can be managed through ongoing monitoring and maintenance, it is not considered an optimal long-term solution, particularly where systems are ageing or located on constrained lots.

Historic small lots near the village precinct include properties that are simultaneously affected by constrained lot size, watercourse setback requirements, and flood inundation risk. Many of these properties have no recorded OWMS permit and rely on ageing primary treatment systems that now require upgrade. These overlapping constraints elevate both site-specific and cumulative wastewater risk.

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While larger RLZ parcels provide greater long-term wastewater resilience, the township overall is assessed as having a high wastewater risk rating, warranting targeted monitoring, audits, and system upgrades.

Strategic planning context

The Bushfield–Woodford Strategic Framework Plan Draft (2025) identifies wastewater management as a fundamental constraint to the sustainable development of Woodford. The Plan recognises that impermeable clay soils, riverine and floodplain constraints, constrained historic lot sizes, and reliance on onsite wastewater systems limit the township's capacity to accommodate further growth without unacceptable risk to human health and the environment.

Consistent with this assessment, the Bushfield–Woodford Strategic Framework Plan Draft (2025) supports a deferred growth approach for Woodford until sustainable wastewater solutions are resolved. It emphasises the need to prioritise investigation of sewerage or alternative wastewater treatment options, in partnership with servicing authorities, before facilitating significant infill or additional development. The Plan also supports the application of stronger planning controls, including minimum lot size provisions, to manage wastewater risk and protect the Merri River and its environs.

Management implications and recommended actions

Given the identified constraints and risk profile, the following management responses are recommended for Woodford:

- Implement risk-based wastewater performance monitoring and targeted audits, with priority given to properties within watercourse setbacks and flood-prone areas.
- Prioritise identification and assessment of legacy and unpermitted systems, particularly those relying on primary treatment.
- Require LCAs for all new or replacement OWMS.
- Prioritise secondary treatment systems for system upgrades and replacements.
- Monitor stormwater quality to assess cumulative impacts on the Merri River and its tributaries.
- Assess existing block density and investigate planning and policy mechanisms to manage wastewater risk to sustainable levels.
- Where evidence of significant or increasing risk is identified, or where community support emerges, investigate the feasibility of reticulated sewerage or alternative wastewater treatment solutions in collaboration with Wannon Water.

Key wastewater constraints

- Clay-based soils with poor permeability and seasonal saturation
- Proximity to the Merri River and tributaries
- Parcels within 30 m and 60 m watercourse setbacks

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- Floodplain exposure within the 1-in-20-year inundation extent
- Historic small lot titles (<0.5 ha) near the village precinct
- High proportion of ageing and unpermitted systems
- Reliance on pumped effluent disposal in constrained locations
- High cumulative wastewater risk rating

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2.4.3 Allansford

Settlement context

Allansford is a partially sewered township located approximately 10 kilometres east of Warrnambool on the Princes Highway. Established in the 1860s, the settlement comprises the historic township, surrounding RLZ subdivisions and FZ land. The township is situated along the Hopkins River and includes floodplain and river-proximal areas with sensitive riparian environments. Allansford is identified as having moderate growth capacity, with development constrained by flooding, environmental sensitivity and servicing limitations.

Zoning and development pattern

Land within the Allansford township is zoned Township, LDRZ, RLZ and FZ. Sewer reticulation services the central, established township, while unsewered development persists on the township fringe and within RLZ and FZ land. Historical development patterns include small residential and industrial allotments, particularly within older parts of the township and an industrial precinct to the east, some of which continue to manage wastewater onsite. More recent RLZ development generally consists of larger allotments with greater capacity to accommodate onsite wastewater systems.

Environmental and site constraints

The Hopkins River traverses the western edge of the study area and represents a key environmental receptor. Flooding of the river, combined with flat topography and limited drainage infrastructure, constrains development and onsite wastewater management in low-lying areas. Parts of the study area include limestone geology, karst topography and sinkholes, particularly to the south and east of the township, which can limit effective effluent disposal despite appearing suitable for development. In their report Coffey Geotechnics (2008) identified 21 sinkholes west of the Warrnambool Cheese and Butter factory. Sandstone-based subsoils in the Tooram area further constrain onsite wastewater performance. Soils across much of the study area consist of ex-volcanic medium clay textures that have been compacted through historical agricultural use, resulting in poorly draining, winter-ponded conditions.

Onsite wastewater risk profile

Onsite wastewater risk in Allansford is influenced by proximity to the Hopkins River, flood-prone land, poorly draining clay soils and geological constraints. Smaller historical allotments and older onsite wastewater systems, particularly within sewered areas, increase the likelihood of system failure and off-site impacts during wet conditions. RLZ areas generally present lower risk where larger lot sizes allow for compliant effluent management, although soil and drainage constraints remain relevant.

Strategic planning considerations

Strategic planning for Allansford must balance moderate growth expectations with flood risk, environmental sensitivity and servicing constraints. The presence of unsewered development within and adjacent to the township, including legacy sites within sewered areas, requires careful consideration in land use planning, subdivision design and future servicing strategies. Ongoing coordination with Wannon Water is important to manage sewer availability and transition opportunities.

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Management implications and recommended actions

Given the identified constraints and risk profile, the following management responses are recommended for Allansford:

- Prioritise identification, audit and transition of legacy onsite wastewater systems within sewered areas.
- Enforce sewer connection requirements where reticulation is available.
- Apply higher assessment standards for systems in flood-prone and river-proximal areas.
- Closely assess new or altered systems on clay, limestone and sandstone soils.
- Maintain coordination with Wannon Water to manage cumulative risk and servicing opportunities.
- Target compliance and education activities in older residential and industrial precincts.

Key wastewater constraints

- Proximity to the Hopkins River and sensitive riparian environments
- Flood-prone land and limited drainage infrastructure
- Poorly draining ex-volcanic clay soils with winter ponding
- Limestone and sandstone geology limiting effluent disposal
- Small historical allotments in township and industrial areas
- Legacy onsite wastewater systems within sewered districts

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2.4.4 Hopkins Point/Logans Beach

Settlement context

Hopkins Point / Logans Beach is a low-density coastal township located south of the Hopkins River, extending along the coastline toward Allansford and adjacent to the Logans Beach whale nursery. Development is predominantly residential in character, taking advantage of coastal and estuarine outlooks, with a mix of rural and lifestyle properties. The area includes land overlooking the Hopkins estuary and the Southern Ocean and is highly valued for its landscape and environmental attributes.

Zoning and development pattern

The study area includes a mix of FZ, RLZ and General Residential Zone land. While FZ provisions support large minimum lot sizes, many existing farming allotments are below 40 hectares, with the largest approximately 23 hectares and average sizes generally less than 15 hectares. The Warrnambool Planning Scheme permits lot sizes of 15 hectares in the FZ, and there is ongoing pressure for house-lot excisions and boundary realignments to facilitate additional dwellings. The Banksia Drive area includes smaller residential lots with minimum sizes of approximately 0.4 hectares, which can constrain onsite wastewater disposal options, particularly where watercourse setbacks apply. Parts of the area have been recently sewered.

Environmental and site constraints

Soils across the Hopkins Point / Logans Beach area are primarily derived from ancient coastal dune systems adjoining fertile lava flow landscapes associated with more recent volcanism. Sandy loam soil textures dominate, with an increasing clay fraction toward the eastern extent of the study area. Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) and ESO apply across much of the area, requiring retention of vegetation and protection of landscape and environmental values. Coastal acid sulphate soils are present in the eastern part of the study area adjacent to the Hopkins River and represent a constraint to onsite wastewater management.

Onsite wastewater risk profile

Onsite wastewater risk is influenced by highly permeable sandy soils that allow rapid infiltration of effluent, increasing the potential for nutrient movement. This risk is typically mitigated through the use of secondary treatment systems, water-efficient fixtures, subsurface irrigation and evapotranspiration-based disposal areas. Groundwater depth is generally not a limiting factor across most of the area, reducing the need for more restrictive design measures. Smaller lot sizes, particularly in residential areas and where future subdivision occurs, increase wastewater management risk. It is likely that limestone geology is a similar constraint in this area as identified in the Coffey Geotechnics (2008) report, considering the cliff survey incorporated the mouth of the Hopkins River.

Strategic planning considerations

Strategic planning for the Hopkins Point/Logans Beach area must balance strong demand for coastal living with protection of sensitive coastal, estuarine and landscape values. While larger existing lot sizes and incremental sewer provision have historically supported sustainable wastewater outcomes, future subdivision pressure within the FZ and residential areas has the potential to erode these outcomes if not carefully managed.

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Management implications and recommended actions

Given the identified constraints and risk profile, the following management responses are recommended for Hopkins Point/Logans Beach:

- Maintain minimum lot sizes that support sustainable onsite wastewater outcomes in unsewered areas.
- Apply heightened scrutiny to subdivision, house-lot excisions and boundary realignments.
- Require secondary treatment and advanced disposal methods in highly permeable soils.
- Protect vegetated disposal areas to meet wastewater and overlay objectives.
- Monitor cumulative impacts near the Hopkins River and coastal environments.

Key wastewater constraints

- Highly permeable sandy soils with rapid effluent infiltration
- SLO & ESO across the area
- Coastal acid sulphate soils in eastern areas
- Watercourse setbacks to the Hopkins River
- Small residential lot sizes in some precincts
- Ongoing pressure for further subdivision

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2.4.5 Dennington/Illowa

Settlement context

Dennington is a largely sewered urban area located to the west of Warrnambool, with only small pockets of older development remaining unsewered. Illowa comprises rural living and coastal allotments west of the city, adjacent to sensitive dune and estuarine systems. The Dennington/Illowa study area includes a mix of urban, rural, and coastal land parcels (predominantly west of the Merri River) with development influenced by historical agricultural use and proximity to key wetlands and the Merri River.

Zoning and development pattern

Land within the study area includes Township, Residential, RLZ and FZ allotments. Sewer reticulation services most of Dennington, with unsewered development concentrated in older pockets and rural areas where sewer extension has not reached. A cluster of FZ lots south of the Princes Highway and west of the Merri River presents particular wastewater management challenges due to soil and site constraints. Parcel sizes vary across the study area depending on zoning, with some allotments located within watercourse setbacks and flood-affected areas.

Environmental and site constraints

Environmental and site constraints across the Dennington/Illowa area include proximity to the Merri River, watercourse setbacks of 30–60 metres, and exposure to both 1-in-100-year and 1-in-20-year flood events. Parts of the western study area are characterised by shallow, fast-draining sandstone-based soils, while larger areas consist of volcanic-derived medium to light-clay soils with reduced permeability during winter. More favourable light-clay soil textures occur in areas of historic deposition within watercourse and floodplain environments east of the Merri River.

Onsite wastewater risk profile

Onsite wastewater risk varies across the study area and is influenced by soil type, lot size, flood exposure and proximity to waterways. Sandstone-based soils exhibit high infiltration rates, which can increase the risk of effluent movement and require specific system design considerations and ongoing surveillance. Clay-based soils across much of the area have reduced permeability during wet periods, increasing the potential for seasonal performance issues. A recent audit of high-risk sites within watercourse setbacks indicates that most systems have been designed to avoid critical setback areas and that property owners are generally aware of system risks.

Strategic planning considerations

Strategic planning for Dennington/Illowa must account for the largely sewered nature of Dennington, the presence of unsewered rural and farming areas, and the sensitivity of waterways and floodplains associated with the Merri River and tributaries. Future planning intentions, including potential changes to lot size or development patterns, may alter the current balance between land availability and onsite wastewater sustainability.

Management implications and recommended actions

Given the identified constraints and risk profile, the following management responses are recommended for Dennington/Illowa:



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- Continue prioritisation of legacy systems for sewer connection.
- Maintain oversight of unsewered properties west of the Merri River.
- Apply site-specific design requirements on sandstone and flood-affected land.
- Monitor and review systems within watercourse setbacks.
- Integrate wastewater considerations into future planning and zoning decisions.

Key wastewater constraints

- Proximity to the Merri River and tributaries
- Flood risk (1-in-20 and 1-in-100-year events)
- Watercourse setbacks (30–60 metres)
- Shallow sandstone soils with high infiltration rates
- Seasonal permeability limits in clay-based soils
- Residual legacy systems within sewer areas

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2.4.6 North of Wangoom Road

Settlement context

The North of Wangoom Road locality comprises a semi-rural area located immediately north of Wangoom Road, characterised by dispersed rural-residential development and agricultural land uses. The area is unsewered and development has historically relied on individual OWMS. Settlement patterns reflect incremental subdivision and dwelling establishment that largely pre-date contemporary environmental risk and land capability frameworks.

While population growth has been limited, the locality remains attractive for rural living due to its proximity to Warrnambool. This has generated periodic pressure for rezoning, infill development and increased residential densities, which must be carefully managed considering the area's documented environmental constraints.

Zoning and development pattern

The North of Wangoom Road study area comprises approximately 51 hectares of FZ and RLZ land, with varying lot sizes. A small portion of the area is serviced by a sewerage pump station discharging to the reticulated system south of Wangoom Road. While onsite wastewater management systems presently service most properties in the study area, future land use planning and subdivision proposals should be informed by both environmental risk and community expectations. Where there is demonstrated community demand and an environmental or public health benefit, connection to, or extension of, the existing reticulated sewerage network should be actively considered in collaboration with Wannon Water. In the absence of sewerage, minimum lot sizes must be sufficient to support sustainable long-term onsite wastewater management.

Environmental and site constraints

The North of Wangoom Road locality is subject to significant environmental and site constraints that directly limit the sustainable management of onsite wastewater.

A Land Capability Assessment commissioned by WCC in 2018 identified that soils across the locality are predominantly medium to heavy clays with shallow profiles and poor permeability, particularly during winter months. These conditions substantially reduce the capacity for effective effluent treatment and dispersal and increase the likelihood of surface ponding and lateral movement of effluent (North Wangoom Land Capability Assessment Report, February 2018).

The locality drains to Russells Creek and the wider Merri River catchment. Portions of the area are affected by watercourse setback requirements and land subject to periodic flooding. These factors heighten the risk that failing or poorly performing onsite wastewater systems may result in offsite impacts to surface water quality and downstream environments.

Onsite wastewater risk profile

North of Wangoom Road is identified as predominantly high-risk locality due to constrained soil conditions, proximity to waterways, seasonal waterlogging and cumulative septic system density.

The LCA identified that many allotments provide limited effective area for effluent dispersal, system upgrades or future replacement. Winter soil saturation further reduces system performance and increases the

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likelihood of system failure during prolonged wet periods (North Wangoom Land Capability Assessment Report, February 2018).

Existing septic densities in parts of the locality approach or exceed levels where cumulative impacts to surface water and groundwater quality become increasingly likely. Further subdivision or residential intensification would materially increase environmental and public health risk.

Strategic planning considerations

Strategic planning for the North of Wangoom Road locality must adopt a precautionary and risk-based approach consistent with the findings of the LCA. The assessment provides clear evidence that unconstrained residential intensification is not compatible with sustainable onsite wastewater management in this locality.

Planning controls should continue to limit further subdivision, maintain larger minimum lot sizes, and require robust demonstration of long-term wastewater sustainability for any new development. Any consideration of future growth should be closely linked to investigations into reticulated sewerage servicing in collaboration with Wannon Water.

Management implications and recommended actions

Given the identified constraints and risk profile, the following management responses are recommended for North of Wangoom Road:

- Identify North of Wangoom Road as a priority risk locality within the OWMP for compliance, education and system auditing.
- Require a detailed LCA for all new or altered onsite wastewater systems, particularly on small lots or within watercourse setback areas.
- Discourage further subdivision or residential intensification where wastewater sustainability cannot be demonstrated in accordance with contemporary standards.
- Undertake targeted inspections of older and unpermitted systems, with a focus on lots affected by poor drainage, flooding or proximity to waterways.
- Provide targeted education to landowners regarding system maintenance obligations, warning signs of failure and the GED.
- Continue engagement with Wannon Water regarding long term sewerage servicing options or staged transition pathways.

Key wastewater constraints

- Predominantly medium to heavy clay soils with poor winter drainage.
- Shallow effective soil depth limiting effluent treatment and dispersal.
- Seasonal waterlogging and flood affected land.
- Proximity to waterways and downstream sensitive environments.

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



- High cumulative density of onsite wastewater systems.
- Limited capacity for system upgrades or replacement on small allotments.
- Absence of reticulated sewerage infrastructure.
- Small lots where there is not enough available space to contain all wastewater without advanced system design.

DRAFT

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



2.4.7 Drylakes Road

Settlement context

Drylakes Road is a rural-residential precinct located to the East and Northeast of Warrnambool, characterised by mixed lot sizes and land historically used for sheep grazing on the basalt plain. The area is low-lying and forms part of a broader wetland and basin landscape, with development constrained by soil, drainage and hydrological factors. The area represents an established unsewered settlement where onsite wastewater systems remain the primary means of onsite wastewater management.

Zoning and development pattern

All land parcels within the Drylakes Road study area are zoned RLZ, comprising approximately 50 allotments. Lot sizes typically range between 1 and 3 hectares, with an overall range from approximately 0.8 hectares to 19.6 hectares. While current lot sizes generally support onsite wastewater management, future subdivision intentions have the potential to reduce lot sizes and increase cumulative wastewater risk. Planning for any further subdivision must therefore address site-specific wastewater constraints and system density considerations.

Environmental and site constraints

The Drylakes Road area is typified by low elevation landscapes with medium to heavy clay soils and limited topsoil depth. Winter waterlogging is a defining feature of the area and significantly constrains land capability for effluent disposal.

The area forms part of a fragile wetland system, with evidence of underlying sandstone and limestone formations, including subterranean cave and spring systems linked to the Maam Reserve. These hydrological features increase environmental sensitivity and limit the suitability of conventional onsite wastewater disposal methods.

Onsite wastewater risk profile

Onsite wastewater risk in the Drylakes Road area is influenced by poor soil drainage, shallow soil profiles and widespread winter waterlogging. Effective wastewater treatment in these conditions often requires raised or mounded effluent disposal areas to achieve adequate separation and evapotranspiration. A relatively high number of onsite wastewater systems without permits have been identified, many of which coincide with winter waterlogged zones, elevating environmental and compliance risk. The current septic system density is at the accepted threshold of approximately 15 to 25 systems per square kilometre, indicating limited capacity for additional systems without increasing cumulative risk.

Strategic planning considerations

Strategic planning for Drylakes Road must account for the combined constraints of soil drainage, seasonal waterlogging and system density. Mapping of winter waterlogged areas would assist in informing future land use and subdivision decisions. The environmental sensitivity of the area, including its connection to broader wetland and groundwater systems, reinforces the need for cautious planning and long-term servicing considerations.

Management implications and recommended actions

Given the identified constraints and risk profile, the following management responses are recommended for Drylakes Road:

- Prioritise compliance and follow-up of unpermitted onsite wastewater systems.

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



- Require raised or mounded disposal areas in waterlogged zones.
- Map winter waterlogging to inform planning and subdivision decisions.
- Limit further subdivision where cumulative wastewater risk is elevated.
- Investigate sewer extension or centralised wastewater servicing options.

Key wastewater constraints

- Low-lying terrain and wetland basin landscape
- Medium to heavy clay soils with poor drainage
- Limited topsoil depth
- Widespread winter waterlogging
- Fragile groundwater and wetland systems
- High onsite system density at accepted thresholds
- Presence of unpermitted systems
- Environmental sensitivity due to the proximity to wetlands

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



3. Risk evaluation and treatment

The preceding risk assessment has identified the key hazards associated with onsite wastewater management in WCC unsewered areas. The purpose of this assessment is not only to describe risk, but to determine whether identified risks are being managed so far as reasonably practicable. This requires Council, as a manager of land and infrastructure, to systematically evaluate the likelihood and consequence of harm occurring and to prioritise interventions where risks are unacceptable or insufficiently controlled.

The following section applies an ISO 31000-aligned risk evaluation framework to assess the relative significance of identified onsite wastewater risks, considering existing controls, regulatory mechanisms, known data gaps and targeted treatment of high risks previously identified. The Risk Evaluation and Treatment Plan translates this assessment into a structured program of actions, responsibilities, and timeframes focused on risk reduction through improved planning controls, compliance and enforcement, system audits, data improvement, education, and strategic infrastructure collaboration, establishing Council's transparent and defensible approach to managing onsite wastewater risks in accordance with the OMLI over the life of the OWMP 2026–2030.

3.1. Risk Evaluation and Treatment Plan**3.1.1. Risk Identification and Assessment**

Action	Description	Priority Areas	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measure of Success
OWMS Data Audit	Identify, verify and map all known properties with OWMS, prioritising unpermitted and legacy systems.	LGA-wide	Environmental Health	Year 1–3	Geographic Information System (GIS) layer updated; data gaps reduced
High-Risk Area Mapping	Implement low-medium-high risk mapping across unsewered allotments in GIS.	LGA-wide	Environmental Health	Year 1–2	Risk maps completed
Cumulative Impact Assessment	Assess system density (>40 systems/km ²) and proximity to waterways (30 m and 60 m setbacks) in GIS.	High-risk allotments	Environmental Health/GIS	Year 2–3	Priority risk areas formally identified

3.1.2 Land Use Planning and Growth Management

Action	Description	Priority Areas	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measure of Success
Minimum Lot Size Controls	Support minimum 1 ha lot size in LDRZ where sewer is unavailable	Woodford & Bushfield	Planning	Ongoing	Reduced approval of undersized unsewered lots
Deferred Growth Policy	Maintain deferred growth approach in LDRZ until sustainable wastewater solutions are confirmed	Woodford & Bushfield	Planning	Ongoing	Growth sequencing aligns with wastewater capacity
Cumulative Impact	Provide education to mapping overlay on cumulative risk consideration where densities approach 40-50 systems/km ²	LGA-wide	Environmental Health	Year 2-3 (post-completion of 3.1.3)	Education provided to Strategic and Statutory Planning



Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030

3.1.3 Compliance, Monitoring and Enforcement

Action	Description	Priority Areas	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measure of Success
Digitalisation	Collate data from multiple databases, including physical information on legacy systems, into one central system.	LGA-wide	Environmental Health	Year 1-2	All known data is assembled in one database to facilitate further actions
Targeted Audit Program	Implement a risk-based audit program focusing on older systems and high-risk areas.	Woodford & Bushfield; legacy systems	Environmental Health	Ongoing (3-year cycle)	Completion of audits for all suspected non-compliant systems, focusing on high-risk area
Enforcement Escalation	Apply enforcement proportionate to risk, including maintenance orders and improvement notices where necessary	Audited OWMS; legacy systems	Environmental Health	Ongoing	No high-risk systems left unmanaged

Warning - Uncontrolled when printed.

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Responsible Branch: Environmental Health | Approved Date: DRAFT | Review Date: DRAFT



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3.1.4 Education, Partnerships and Continuous Improvement

Action	Description	Responsibility	Timeframe	Measure of Success
Owner Education Program	Deliver digital resources on installation, approval and maintenance	Environmental Health	Year 1–5	Increased owner awareness
Targeted Communication	Focus education in high-risk areas and for new property owners	Environmental Health	Ongoing	Reduced complaints and failures
Collaboration	Participate in the Integrated Water Management Forum and partner with Wannon Water to identify sewer extension priorities	Environmental Health / Wannon Water	Ongoing	Shared priority areas identified
Progress Audit	Conduct a progress audit at least every 3 years, at the direction of the annual Council Plan.	Environmental Health	Year 3 (2028)	Progress report confirming action plan on-track
Plan Review	Complete a full review of this OWMP	Environmental Health	Year 5 (2030)	Complete review

4. Consultation and engagement

In accordance with the OMLI, this OWMP has been developed through consultation with relevant internal and external stakeholders to identify wastewater-related risks from unsewered land, understand cumulative impacts, and determine proportionate and practical management responses.

4.1. Internal stakeholders

4.1.1. Environmental Health

- Lead unit responsible for the development, implementation, review, and ongoing administration of the Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026–2030.
- Statutory regulation of OWMS under the Environment Protection Act 2017, including administration of permits to construct, install or alter systems (A20 activity).
- Identification and assessment of public health and environmental risks associated with onsite wastewater systems, including cumulative impacts.
- Delivery of audits, inspections, compliance and enforcement activities, and coordination of education and engagement initiatives to support compliance with the GED.
- Lead coordination of consultation with internal Council units and external stakeholders relevant to onsite wastewater management.

4.1.2. Statutory and Strategic Planning

- Integration of onsite wastewater constraints into land use planning and decision-making.
- Application of minimum lot size requirements, growth policies, and planning controls in unsewered areas.
- Alignment with structure plans and strategic framework plans, including the Bushfield–Woodford Strategic Framework Plan Draft (2025).

4.1.3. Records Management

- Management and retention of records associated with onsite wastewater management in accordance with statutory record-keeping requirements.
- Support for the compilation of information, including accessibility of historical records relevant to legacy systems, unpermitted installations, and cumulative risk assessment.

4.1.4. Strategic Assets Management (GIS)

- Management and use of Council's spatial data systems to support identification, mapping and analysis of OWMS risks.
- Ongoing spatial analysis to support risk-based prioritisation and targeting of audits and compliance programs under the OWMP.

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**4.2. External stakeholders****4.2.1. Wannon Water**

- Provision of strategic input regarding unsewered areas with elevated public health or environmental risk, in accordance with the Water Act 1989.
- Collaboration on long-term planning for reticulated sewerage expansion and servicing constraints in growth and established areas.
- Collaborator to assist with opportunities to transition legacy onsite wastewater systems in declared sewer districts.
- Information sharing to support risk-based prioritisation and alignment between the OWMP and future sewerage planning.

4.2.2. Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA)

- Operate in accordance with functions set out under the Water Act 1989, including the Statement of Obligations for Catchment Management Authorities, by providing advice to local government on matters relating to waterway health, water quality and catchment protection relevant to onsite wastewater management.
- Support for alignment between onsite wastewater management and broader catchment protection, and water quality objectives.
- Input into identification of sensitive receiving environments and cumulative risk considerations, particularly within the Merri and Hopkins River catchments.

Consultation with external stakeholders has focused on identifying shared risks, cumulative impacts, and coordinated management responses, consistent with the OMLI.

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5. Monitoring and review

WCC will monitor and review the implementation of this Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026–2030 to ensure actions remain effective, proportionate to risk, and aligned with Council's obligations under the Environment Protection Act 2017.

Monitoring will focus on Council's progress in delivering the actions identified in this OWMP. A risk-based approach will be applied to prioritise effort toward high-risk locations, system types and land capability constraints, including areas with cumulative system density, poor soil drainage, proximity to waterways, or known compliance issues.

Council's monitoring activities will include:

- tracking progress against this OWMP action plan, including timeframes, responsibilities and outcomes.
- ongoing improvement of Council's wastewater system data to support evidence-based decision-making.
- use of inspections, audits and investigations where required to inform whether actions are reducing risk to human health and the environment.
- periodic review of compliance and enforcement data to identify trends, emerging risks and priority areas.

Review of the OWMP will occur at two levels:

- **Implementation review**, undertaken at least every three years, to assess whether actions are being delivered as intended and remain appropriate to the identified risks.
- **Plan review**, undertaken at least every five years, or earlier where there are significant changes to legislation, environmental risk, land use, or servicing arrangements.

Findings from monitoring and review will be used to:

- refine and reprioritise actions over the life of the Plan.
- inform education, compliance and enforcement activities.
- support integration with land use planning and collaboration with relevant authorities.
- demonstrate compliance with the OMLI through continuous improvement.

This approach ensures the OWMP remains adaptive, transparent and focused on reducing risk so far as reasonably practicable.

Onsite Wastewater Management Plan 2026-2030



6. Appendices

6.1. Glossary of acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
A20	Prescribed activity under the <i>Environment Protection Regulations 2021</i> requiring a permit to construct, install or alter an onsite wastewater management system with a design capacity of ≤ 5,000 litres per day
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability – the statistical likelihood of a flood event occurring in any given year
AS/NZS	Australian Standard / New Zealand Standard
AWTS	Aerated Wastewater Treatment System – a secondary treatment onsite wastewater system
DWMP	Domestic Wastewater Management Plan – the predecessor planning framework to the OWMP (2020–2025)
EPA	Environment Protection Authority Victoria
ESO	Environmental Significance Overlay
FZ	Farming Zone (Planning Scheme zoning)
GED	General Environmental Duty – the duty under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> requiring risks of harm to human health and the environment to be minimised so far as reasonably practicable
GHCMA	Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
GIS	Geographic Information System – spatial data systems used for mapping, analysis and risk assessment
IWM	Integrated Water Management – a collaborative approach to water cycle planning across agencies and sectors
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
LCA	Land Capability Assessment – an assessment of land suitability for onsite wastewater management
LDRZ	Low Density Residential Zone (Planning Scheme zoning)
LGA	Local Government Area
OMLI	Obligations of Managers of Land or Infrastructure – duties under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> applying to councils and other land or infrastructure managers
OWMP	Onsite Wastewater Management Plan (2026–2030)
OWMS	Onsite Wastewater Management System/s
RLZ	Rural Living Zone (Planning Scheme zoning)
SLO	Significant Landscape Overlay
SWSCAs	Special Water Supply Catchment Areas
WCC	Warrnambool City Council

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6.2. Effluent dispersal area sizing methodology

This Appendix provides pre-determined minimum effluent dispersal area sizes for the two most encountered soil categories and effluent dispersal methods within WCC (Soil Category 2b – Sandy loam and Soil Category 5a – Light Clay).

Absorption Trenches

Soil Category 2b – Sandy Loam		Length (m) of trench at 1m wide	
Number of Habitable Rooms	Daily Flow (L/day)	Primary effluent	Secondary effluent
3	600	40	12
4	750	50	15
5	900	60	18
6	1050	70	21
7	1200	80	24

Soil Category 5a – Light Clay		Length (m) of trench at 1m wide	
Number of Habitable Rooms	Daily Flow (L/day)	Primary effluent	Secondary effluent
3	600	120	50
4	750	150	62.5
5	900	180	75
6	1050	210	87.5
7	1200	240	100

Subsurface Drip Irrigation

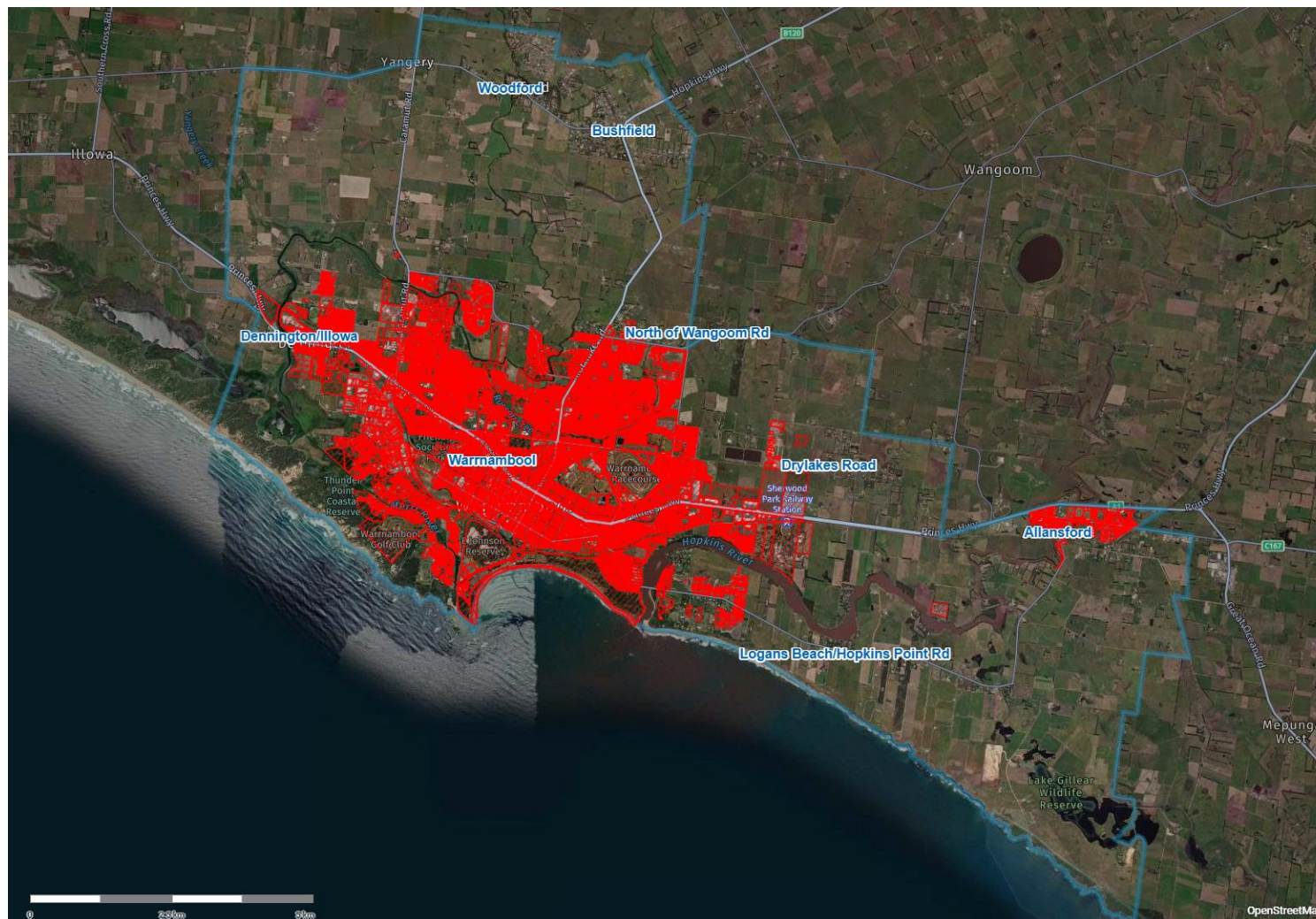
Soil Category 2b – Sandy Loam		Subsurface Drip Irrigation Area (m ²)		
Number of Habitable Rooms	Daily Flow (L/day)	Slope <10%	Slope 10% to 20%	Slope 21% to 30%
3	600	120	150	240
4	750	150	187.5	300
5	900	180	225	360
6	1050	210	262.5	420
7	1200	240	300	480

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<i>Soil Category 5a – Light Clay</i>		<i>Subsurface Drip Irrigation Area (m²)</i>		
<i>Number of Habitable Rooms</i>	<i>Daily Flow (L/day)</i>	<i>Slope <10%</i>	<i>Slope 10% to 20%</i>	<i>Slope 21% to 30%</i>
3	600	200	250	400
4	750	250	312.5	500
5	900	300	375	600
6	1050	350	437.5	700
7	1200	400	500	800

6.3. Map of sewer serviced land parcels - 2026



Map 1. Sewered service areas shown in red, above.

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7.5. Warrnambool Moyne Youth Strategy Annual Report

DIRECTORATE : City Wellbeing

Purpose:

This report provides an update on the first year of implementation of the joint Moyne Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council Youth Strategy 2025–2030, including delivery outcomes for the 2025–2026 financial year and the establishment of the Youth Advisory Board.

Executive Summary

Warrnambool City Council (WCC) and Moyne Shire Council (MSC) have successfully delivered the first year of the [Youth Strategy 2025–2030](#), following its adoption by Council in March 2025.

A key achievement has been the establishment of the joint Youth Advisory Board (YAB), comprising 18 young people across both municipalities. The YAB has been embedded as a core mechanism for youth engagement, providing structured input into Council planning, strategy development, and service delivery.

More broadly, delivery of the Youth Strategy has resulted in strong participation outcomes across both municipalities, with high engagement in events, programs, and skills development opportunities.

The first year demonstrates a strong foundation for achieving the Strategy's long-term objectives, with continued focus required on addressing barriers such as transport, cost of living, and equitable access to opportunities as well as outcomes aligned with key strategies in Council's Plan.

MOVED: CR DEBBIE ARNOTT

SECONDED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

That Council receives the report on the first year of implementation of the joint Moyne Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council Youth Strategy 2025–2030.

CARRIED - 6:0

Background

The Moyne and Warrnambool Youth Strategy 2025–2030 was developed through a collaborative process between WCC and MSC, underpinned by extensive engagement with young people and stakeholders.

The Strategy establishes a coordinated, cross-municipal approach to youth engagement, recognising that young people access services, education, employment, and recreation across local government boundaries.

Implementation commenced in 2025, with a focus on delivering priority actions aligned to the Strategy's three key areas:

- Creating better spaces and places
- Improving accessibility and participation
- Fostering belonging and acceptance

Central to delivery is the Youth Advisory Board, designed to support ongoing engagement with young people and embed youth voice across Council functions.

Issues

The first year of implementation has had many positive outcomes, including

Youth Advisory Board:

Successful establishment and operation of the Youth Advisory Board as a formal advisory mechanism, including the development of leadership, communication and governance skills among participating young people; and demonstrating the value of youth input in shaping Council strategies and projects.

Reimagining volunteering:

Warrnambool City Council successfully secured \$30,000 grant funding from Volunteering Victoria to undertake a community scoping project towards identifying the barriers and opportunities for Youth Volunteering across Moyne and Warrnambool.

Collaborative event programming:

Warrnambool City Council delivered 35 youth-focused events and programs to over 21,000 people.

Skills development training:

Warrnambool delivered 17 skill development training sessions, including the Social Innovators, Business Leadership and Road Safety Awareness Programs. Workshops were delivered to 587 young people.

Support for employment opportunities:

Council paid 97 young people as artists, creators, workshop facilitators and advisors and created the *Warrnambool Sessions*, a regular open mic opportunity for emerging musicians.

Celebrating young people:

Multiple programs were delivered in Warrnambool showcasing and highlighting young people and their contribution within the community, including Inspire Warrnambool Youth In Action; Youth Showcase; Artolesence; Tunes in the Park; Up in Lights; and Young Citizen of the Year.

Inspire Warrnambool – Youth in Action, a program designed to celebrate young people who are making a difference in our community was promoted across Council social media channels achieving over 35,000 views

There are also some considerations that have been identified:

- Transport access remains a significant barrier to participation, particularly for rural young people.
- Cost of living pressures continue to impact engagement in programs and activities.
- Access to safe and inclusive spaces for young people remains an ongoing issue with limited opportunities for young people to access supervised, welcoming spaces outside of school hours.
- Some initiatives, including youth volunteering pathways, remain in early stages and require further development.
- External factors, including school resourcing constraints, have impacted partnership opportunities.

Financial Impact

Implementation of the Youth Strategy was assigned \$15,000 in the 2025-26 budget to progress Year 1 actions. An amount of \$15,150 has been assigned in the 2026-27 budget to progress actions as identified for Year 2 of Youth Strategy.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

4 City Wellbeing

4.2 Our City encourages opportunities for innovation and creativity, increasing community connectedness.

4.3 Our active City provides recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

4.4 Our inclusive and diverse City is welcoming to all.

4.5 Our City provides learning pathways and opportunities for education and development.

4.6 Our nurturing city supports growth and development through high quality service delivery.

Timing

The Youth Strategy 2025–2030 is a five-year plan.

This report reflects the completion of the first year of implementation, including the establishment phase of the Youth Advisory Board and delivery of initial program areas. Ongoing implementation will continue across the life of the Strategy, with annual reporting informing progress and future priorities.

Internal / External Consultation

The inaugural YAB has delivered strong outcomes as a collaborative platform for meaningful youth engagement. Monthly meetings were held across the year, where participation in structured leadership training and internal Council consultations were co designed with YAB members to maximise the impact of their contributions.

Across five structured meetings, YAB members contributed valuable insights to a broad range of Council strategies, plans, and community initiatives, including:

- Warrnambool 2040 Plan
- Warrnambool Futures Project
- Active Warrnambool Strategy
- Open Spaces Project
- Healthy Warrnambool Plan
- Moyne Shire Economic Development Strategy
- Library services, aquatic and environmental strategies
- Arts and cultural programming

In addition, the group provided input into key areas including:

- Youth pathways and employment
- Volunteering
- Child safety policy and
- Community infrastructure projects including the Koroit Youth Space

Legal Risk / Impact

Implementation of the Youth Strategy has been undertaken in accordance with relevant legislative and policy requirements, including:

- Adherence to Child Safe Standards in all youth engagement activities
- Appropriate duty of care in program and event delivery
- Standard risk management processes across activities

No significant legal risks have been identified in relation to the first year of delivery.

A gender impact assessment was completed during the development of the Strategy, with an ongoing commitment to inclusive and equitable participation.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil

Collaborative Procurement

The Youth Strategy represents a key collaboration between the municipalities of Moyne and Warrnambool. It recognises a joint approach to youth beyond municipal boundaries.

Conclusion

The first year of implementation of the Youth Strategy 2025–2030 has delivered strong foundational outcomes across Warrnambool and Moyne.

The establishment of the Youth Advisory Board represents a significant achievement, embedding youth voice into Council processes and strengthening engagement with young people.

Broader program delivery has supported participation, skill development, and community connection, aligning with the strategic objectives of both Councils.

While challenges remain, particularly in relation to transport, access to safe, inclusive spaces and cost barriers, the first year of delivery demonstrates a clear and effective framework for ongoing implementation. Continued collaboration, investment, and responsiveness to community needs will support the long-term success of the Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Youth Strategy Annual Report 2025 [7.5.1 - 14 pages]

YOUTH STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT

January – December 2025

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1 Highlights

Joint highlights

- Establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Moyne Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council to deliver a combined Youth Strategy and partnership
- Delivery of Amplify Band Camp, a music development program for young people
- Establishment and success of the Youth Advisory Board and training program

Moyne Highlights

- Youth input into upgrades of public spaces across Moyne, including the Port Fairy Skate Park and street furniture in Koroit and Mortlake
- Delivery of training and skills development programs, including Social Innovators, the Business Leadership Program, First Aid courses, Food Handling courses, creative workshops, and future workforce needs workshops.
- Delivery of the Future Folk Music Development Program in its sixth year, in partnership with the Port Fairy Folk Festival
- Establishment of a new youth stream in the Moyne community assistance fund.

Warrnambool Highlights

- *Inspire Warrnambool – Youth in Action*: promoted young people across council social media channels, achieving over 35,000 views
- Development of monthly youth newsletters to promote opportunities for young people
- Delivery of training and skills development programs, including Social Innovators, the Business Leadership Program, and RYDA – Road Safety Awareness Program
- Young people planned, delivered, and led creative workshops—for young people, by young people
- Establishment of *Warrnambool Sessions*, a regular open mic opportunity for emerging musicians

Setbacks/ Barriers

- **Transport** remains a major barrier, particularly for rural young people, limiting consistent participation in events, training, and volunteering opportunities despite targeted transport support.
- **Cost-of-living** pressures continue to impact young people's capacity to engage in programs, events, and development opportunities.
- Reimagining Volunteering remains in its early stages, with cultural and operational change required within community organisations to make opportunities genuinely youth-friendly; large-scale impact is dependent on further research and **securing longer-term funding**.
- **Reduced school funding** and uncertainty following Victorian Government budget decisions have limited schools' capacity to engage in partnership programs, youth

leadership initiatives, and preventative wellbeing activities beyond core classroom delivery.

2 Activities

The Moyne and Warrnambool Youth Strategy include 12 program areas, supported by an evolving series of behind-the-scenes actions. Some of these are joint initiatives where the councils work together, and others are undertaken independently.

2.1 Program activity

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD An advisory board the councils convene, report to and consult with on key business impacting young people. Its members receive training in governance and actively participate in driving the Youth Strategy.	There were 10 committee members for Moyne and 8 from Warrnambool. Three Youth Advisory Board meetings and three training sessions were held in 2025.
<i>Member survey results indicated strong positive outcomes. Participants reported a high level of satisfaction, with a weighted average score of 4.6 out of 5 indicating that they felt listened to by council presenters and that their ideas were valued. In addition, participants reported improvements in their skills, with a weighted average score of 4 out of 5 for enhanced communication and leadership skills.</i>	
REIMAGINING VOLUNTEERING An ambitious long-term project to enhance young people's participation in volunteering opportunities. This includes working with organisations to adjust the way they offer and manage volunteer opportunities, as well as developing new ways of engaging and supporting young people to take them up.	Moyne Shire Council applied for the VicHealth Partners in Place Grant. If successful, this would provide \$500,000 in funding across five years. Warrnambool Council successfully secured \$30,000 from Volunteering Victoria to start surveying the community to identify the barriers to Youth Volunteering across Moyne & Warrnambool.
COLLABORATIVE EVENT PROGRAMMING Create a consistent and engaging calendar of events for young people across the urban and rural parts of the region.	Moyne Shire Council delivered 33 Youth-focused events. Eleven of the events were youth-led attracting 12,400 attendees. Warrnambool City Council delivered 35 youth-focused events and programs to over 21000 people. 17 of the events were Youth Led. A number of these events were collaborations between Moyne and Warrnambool

Young people benefited from the cross promotion and collaboration of events this year with numbers increasing at events across both Warrnambool & Moyne

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Provide training opportunities that fill gaps not covered by other organisations, with an eye to creating pathways that support skill development.

Moyne delivered 18 skill development training sessions and workshops, delivered to 340 young people

Warrnambool delivered 17 skill development training sessions and workshops, delivered to 587 young people

A range of skills and training was delivered including first aid, food handling, story writing, drama workshops, business leadership courses, innovation and music development programs.

PUBLIC SPACE UPGRADES

Identify and pursue opportunities to create spaces for young people to gather, connect, and hang out in unstructured ways.

Moyne delivered three public space upgrades.

Youth Advisory Board had input into Warrnambool Futures and Warrnambool Open Space Projects.

Port Fairy Skate & Play, new smart city furniture Koroit & Mortlake locations.

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Work with partners in government, academia and industry to establish new job opportunities for the region's youth.

Moyne paid 64 young people as artists, creators, curators and advisors.

Warrnambool paid 97 young people as artists, creators, workshop facilitators and advisors.

Warrnambool and Moyne collaborated with Warrnambool City Council Economic Development team to deliver BOP – an entrepreneurial program for young people.

RESOURCE AND OPPORTUNITIES HUB

Make the assets, resources, and opportunities available to young people visible and accessible.

164k views on Facebook 1.2k views on Instagram with a combined 433 content interactions. 933 visits to the Youth pages on the Moyne website. As well as a quarterly newsletter to over 400 youth subscribers.

	Warrnambool City Youth Facebook page had over 177k views, the instagram page had 195k views, and combined they had over 5800 interactions. Page views on the WCC Youth webpage were 1,280. Other youth-related pages that saw notable traffic were the Warrnambool Youth Environment Summit (788), Youth Strategy (254) and Youth Advisory Board (198). Warrnambool Youth Team also created a monthly Youth Newsletter sent out via email to young people, schools and relevant organisations.
<i>The introduction of social media restrictions for under 16 year olds prompted both councils to develop their online e-newsletters.</i>	
STRATEGIC CONNECTION FORUMS Regularly bring together key stakeholders to align activities and planning, and consider insights, needs and opportunities.	Both Warrnambool City Council and Moyne sit on many youth networks including (YSAG) Youth Strategic Advocacy Group
<i>WCC and Moyne will re-establish Youthlink network meetings in 2026</i>	
ADVOCACY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS Represent the needs of young people to government bodies and push for changes to make their lives better.	Mayoral visits to schools across Moyne Shire Talking Transport Inquiry Session – South Coast Victoria Workshop YSAG advocacy reports to state government: Transport & Education Inquiry into public school funding Youth Advisory Board
<i>Moyne & Warrnambool Youth Advisory Board has been valuable in assisting young people to advocate and have input into issues that affect them across Warrnambool & Moyne areas.</i>	
PLANNING AND STRATEGY INCLUSION Undertake genuine engagement with young people when developing new strategies or	Moyne had 48 young people consult on 18 key projects and programs across Moyne.

major projects to ensure their needs are considered.	18 YAB members had input on 12 strategies and projects for local government across Moyne & Warrnambool. Warrnambool had 79 young people provide significant input into the planning, development and delivery of 28 events and programs.
<i>Overall, these engagements demonstrate a strong commitment to meaningful youth inclusion across Moyne and Warrnambool.</i>	

CELEBRATE YOUNG PEOPLE Promote the incredible achievements and diversity of our region's young people.	The establishment of a new Moyne Nextgen Instagram page and youth newsletter, Young Citizen of the Year awards, Youth Showcase Events and the Moyne Virtual Gallery. Warrnambool delivered multiple programs showcasing and highlighting young people and their contribution within the community, these included - Inspire Warrnambool Youth In Action, Youth Showcase, Artolesence, Tunes in the Park, Up in Lights and Young Citizen of the Year.

YOUTH GRANTS Opening up access to the councils' community grants programs for young people to deliver initiatives for their peers, either through dedicated streams or targeted promotion.	\$3000 invested in youth-led projects through the NEW youth stream in the Moyne Shire Community Assistance fund. \$5,000 was also invested in Moyne Academic Scholarships. Grants were promoted to young people across social media channels and through the Youth Advisory Board.
<i>One project was supported through the youth grant from one submission at Moyne. Round two had strong enquiry, however no applicants. More work needs to be done to assist young people in the application process.</i>	

2.2 Behind the Scenes Actions

2.2.1 Completed actions

ACTION	STATUS	RESPONSIBILITY	NOTE
Formalise collaborative processes between the two councils	Complete	Joint	
Establish internal collaboration mechanisms within each council	Complete	Both	
Design the Youth Advisory Board and training program	Complete	Joint	
Convene the Youth Advisory Board	Ongoing	Joint	
Develop scope, pitch and project plan for the Reimagining Volunteering initiative to take to potential funders	Ongoing	Joint	Application to VicHealth Partners in Place Funding Youth and community surveys circulated to determine barriers to youth participation.
Design and deliver year-round Amplify programs, identifying collaborative opportunities with relevant partners	Complete 2025 Ongoing 2026	Both	Future Folk Music Development Program Band Camp Moyne Sessions Live Movies under the stars Creative workshops
Review training and skills development options for young people, and identify gaps, opportunities, and potential partners to meet these needs	Ongoing	Both	Surveys, School Visits, Youth Advisory Board input and surveys ongoing.
Design and deliver training and skills development programs with Engage funding	Complete 2025	Both	Business Leadership Program, Skills based training such as Food Handling, First Aid and future of workforce needs workshops.
Establish a youth stream within the community grants program	Complete 2025	Moyne	
Promote opportunities within community grants programs to young people	Ongoing 2025	Warrnambool	Promoted via Social Media channels

Identify improvements to street furniture in laneways	Ongoing 2025	Warrnambool	
Scope potential enhancements to Koroit Youth Space	Ongoing 2025	Moyne	
Scope potential enhancements to Mortlake Market Square	Ongoing 2025	Moyne	
Identify potential upgrades or changes to public spaces across the municipalities	Ongoing 2025	Both	
Explore adjusted opening times for libraries to create after school hang out spaces	Ongoing 2025	Both	Trialing extended opening times targeted and year 11 & 12 students. Libraries presented to YAB for input into getting young people back into libraries.
Consider establishing dedicated spaces for young people to stage events without Council involvement	Not started 2025	Both	
Engage industry to understand future workforce needs and advocate for local job opportunities	Ongoing 2025	Moyne	Future Of Festival workshops, Business Entrepreneur program.
Engage stakeholders to understand future workforce needs and advocate for local job opportunities	Ongoing 2025	Warrnambool	
Establish a free public art wall	Ongoing 2025	Warrnambool	
Regularly meet with schools, service providers and community groups to understand current situation, needs and opportunities	Ongoing	Joint	Youth-Link
Monitor funding bodies for relevant opportunities	Ongoing	Both	Moyne and Warrnambool were both successful in the Youth Fest Grant in 2025.
Regularly profile young people from across the region on council channels	Ongoing	Both	Inspire Warrnambool – Youth in Action

Host strategic connection forums throughout the year to bring relevant stakeholders together	Ongoing	Joint	Begin setting up Youth-Link to commence in 2026
Youth Officer participation on strategic working groups relevant to young people	Ongoing	Both	YSAG
Report on progress of strategy and update on behind the scenes actions annually	Ongoing	Joint	
Consider access processes for community assets and consider changes to improve youth participation	2026	Both	
Develop a scope for a collaborative online resource and opportunities hub	2026	Joint	Meeting with Parliament of Victoria officer Naomi _ youth led online resource opportunities hub in process.
Identify improvements to bike paths and footpaths to foster greater use by young people	Ongoing 2026	Both	
Advocate to relevant authorities for upgrades to public transport options and safer roads	Ongoing 2026	Joint	YSAG advocacy piece. Attending talking transport Warrnambool-Community sessions across South West Coast. Public transport became free for under 18s.
Work with transport partners to investigate holiday services to key facilities and events	Not Started 2026	Joint	
Apply to Amplify and Engage for new round of funding	2027	Both	

2.2.3 New actions

ACTION	STATUS	NOTE

3 Outcomes

The Moyne and Warrnambool Youth Strategy outline the short, medium, and long-term goals it aims to deliver. The following indicators, while imperfect, provide an insight into the effect of the Strategy on the Shire.

3.1 Short term outcomes

Young people are able to participate in community life more easily

Strong engagement was achieved across Moyne Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council, supporting young people to more easily participate in community life. Over the year, 927 young people took part in free skills and development programs, building confidence, capability, and social connections. Where required, transport assistance was provided to reduce barriers and ensure equitable access to opportunities. In addition, 68 youth-focused events and programs were delivered across the region, reaching an audience of more than 33,400 people and providing inclusive, youth-friendly spaces for connection, creativity, and visibility.

Participation was further strengthened through joint planning and collaboration between councils, including a shared events calendar and coordinated promotion via social media, newsletters, and youth webpages. This made it easier for young people to discover and access opportunities across both municipalities. New and expanded programs such as Band Camp, Warrnambool Sessions, Future Folk, and youth-led workshops created pathways for leadership, volunteering, training, and creative expression.

The establishment of the Youth Advisory Board enabled young people to directly influence council decision-making and identify barriers to participation. Financial support through paid opportunities, youth grants, and scholarships further supported inclusive participation, ensuring young people could engage regardless of their circumstances.

3.2 Medium term outcomes

Young people have an improved sense of belonging and connection to the community

Through Moyne and Warrnambool programming, targeted efforts have been implemented to reduce participation barriers and strengthen youth voice. Through the co-design of the Youth Strategy, young people consistently expressed that they value the region and want to feel connected, recognised, and valued within their communities. Actions to address transport and financial barriers have enabled broader and more diverse participation across the region, supporting stronger connections with peers, Councils, and the wider community.

Support delivered through the Youth Advisory Board, including transport assistance, enabled young people to engage more consistently and meaningfully. Young people reported feeling

listened to and valued by Council, with increased confidence and leadership skills supporting deeper civic engagement and connection to their communities.

Youth-led events, creative programs, and public space activations further strengthened peer relationships, pride, and connection across the region. Ongoing collaboration between councils, alongside increased celebration and visibility of young people's achievements, reinforced positive perceptions of young people and strengthened their sense of belonging.

While these initiatives have had a positive impact, transport access and financial pressure remain significant barriers to participation for many young people. Both councils continue to prioritise measures that reduce these barriers within available resources, while also advocating to state and regional partners for broader, systemic solutions to address the cost of living and transport challenges affecting young people. Continued investment, collaboration, and advocacy will be critical to sustaining and strengthening these outcomes over the medium term.

3.3 Long term outcomes

Young people are living flourishing lives in the region.

Over the long term, the outcomes achieved through the Moyne and Warrnambool Youth Strategy contribute to young people living flourishing lives in the region, where they feel connected, supported, and confident to build their futures locally. By reducing barriers to participation, valuing youth voice, and investing in youth-led, place-based initiatives, both councils are strengthening the foundations for young people to remain engaged with their communities and access meaningful opportunities over time.

Young people are developing confidence, leadership, and transferable skills through ongoing participation in governance, training, employment, creative programs, and volunteering, supporting positive pathways into education, work, and civic life. Improved access to paid opportunities, skills development, creative industries, and leadership roles is helping young people see viable futures within the region.

Stronger and more consistent connections between young people, councils, industry, community organisations, and services support long-term regional resilience and wellbeing. Youth participation in planning and strategy development ensures that community spaces, services, and policies continue to reflect young people's needs as they evolve over time. Ongoing advocacy around transport, public space, education, and workforce development, alongside sustained investment in youth leadership, participation, and wellbeing, will be critical to ensuring young people not only remain in the region, but thrive socially, economically, and culturally well into the future.

7.6. Connecting Warrnambool Motion

DIRECTORATE : City Futures

Purpose:

To seek support and call for State Government investment into arterial connections between Warrnambool and the nearby centres of Allansford and Bushfield /Woodford.

Executive Summary

The “Connecting Warrnambool” group is advocating for improvements to the Hopkins Highway between Bushfield and Warrnambool, including speed reduction, road safety improvements and provision of footpath/trail provision for cycling and walking. Along with this they are calling for improvements to the connection between Allansford and Warrnambool.

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

SECONDED: CR BILLY EDIS

That Council:

1. Acknowledges the work done by “Connecting Warrnambool” and thank them for their continued advocacy for safer connections between Warrnambool and nearby townships.
2. Calls on the State Government to prioritise investment into road improvements and safe walking and cycling provision on the Hopkins Highway between Bushfield and Warrnambool and the Princes Highway between Allansford and Warrnambool.

CARRIED - 6:0

Background

The “Connecting Warrnambool” group attended a Council informal meeting in June and presented their survey findings and advocacy focus. The group has done significant community consultation on issues around safe roads and active transport between the communities of Bushfield / Woodford and Warrnambool, as well as Allansford and Warrnambool.

The group is advocating for improvements to the Hopkins Highway between Bushfield and Warrnambool, including speed reduction, road safety improvements and, provision of footpath / trail provision for cycling and walking. Along with this they are calling for improvements to the connection between Allansford and Warrnambool.

Issues

Both the Hopkins Highway and Princes Highway are State controlled roads, as such Council supports the groups calls for greater investment into these important links.

Financial Impact

Nil

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

2 City Infrastructure

2.4 Our City neighbourhoods will have a well-connected network of footpaths.

2.8 Our City will continue to improve pedestrian, cycling and vehicle movement.

2.11 Our City will advocate for renewal and upgrade of arterial roads and for improved rail services.

Internal / External Consultation

- Inform

Legal Risk / Impact

Nil

Officers' Declaration of Interest

None

Collaborative Procurement

No procurement.

Conclusion

Council supports Connecting Warrnambool's advocacy for improved safety and connections between Warrnambool and its surrounding towns.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Connecting Warrnambool_-_A Safer Healthier and More Connected Community 08 E 2 t Kmfi 0 S Z 21 QM Y [7.6.1 - 12 pages]



COMMUNITY SURVEY

CONNECTING WARRNAMBOOL

This document has been prepared to provide background context, emerging community sentiment and key themes identified through early community engagement regarding safer and more connected access into Warrnambool.

Survey results and community engagement figures current as at 8 May 2026.
Community participation and responses continue to grow daily.

www.jotform.com

Connecting Warrnambool Survey Results

Visualize and present your data in seconds.

Safe Bike & Walking Connection into Warrnambool Background Briefing Document

A community survey capturing the voices of **194+ residents** from Warrnambool, Bushfield, Woodford, and surrounding areas — united by a shared vision for safer active travel.

Families living in **Bushfield, Woodford** and surrounding areas consistently speak about feeling disconnected from Warrnambool despite being only a short distance from town.

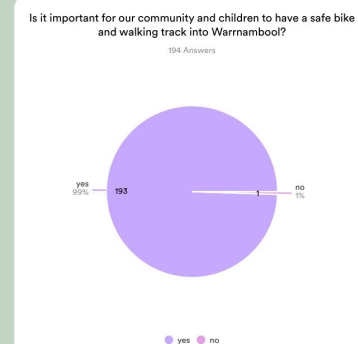
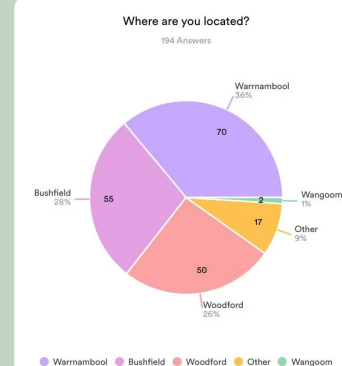
For many children and young people, there is currently **no safe way to independently access school, sport, friends, beaches, shops, the pool or broader community activities** unless they are driven by car or catch a bus.

While the discussion has naturally centred around road safety and infrastructure, the strongest message emerging from the community feedback is that this is about far more than a bike path or road upgrade. At its heart, this is about connection, accessibility, inclusion and planning for the future growth of our region.

The **Hopkins Highway / Mortlake Road** corridor is already a critical gateway into Warrnambool and an increasingly important growth corridor. With growing residential areas, increasing sporting participation, school travel and active transport use, the need for safer access and improved planning will only continue to grow.

The community has also strongly expressed the importance of creating opportunities for young people to participate more independently in community life — whether that be accessing school, sport, recreation or social connection safely and confidently.

What has been particularly striking is how strongly this resonates across the wider community — not only with families living north of Warrnambool, but also with Warrnambool residents themselves, who recognise the importance of creating safer and more connected access for everyone as our city continues to grow.



The Community Has Spoken: An Overwhelming YES

194+

Community Responses

An overwhelming response from families, residents and community members across the region.

99%

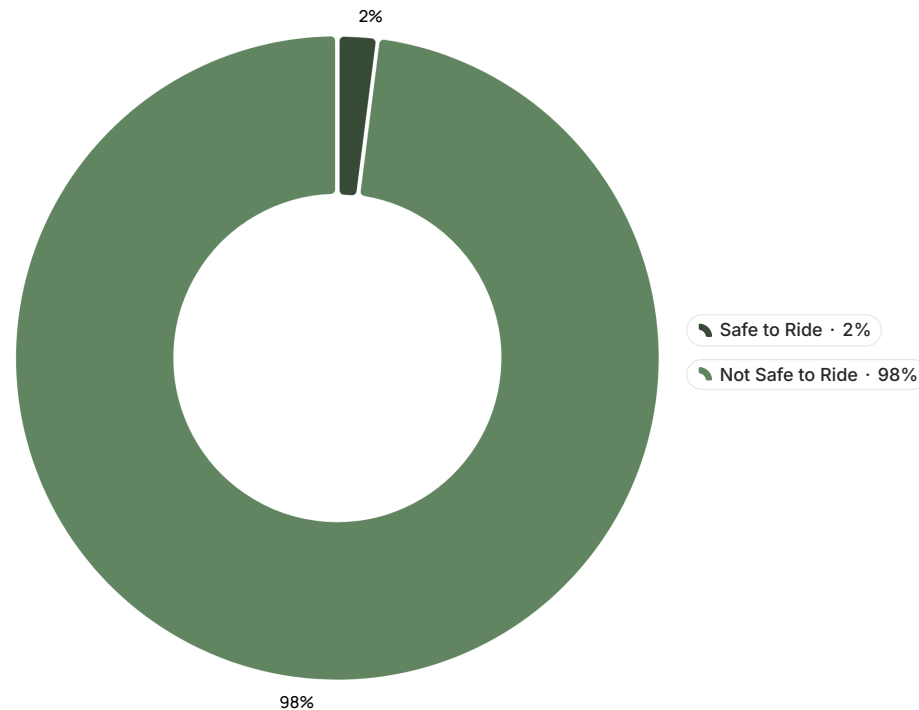
Say It's Important

Believe a safer, dedicated connection into Warrnambool is important for the community.

98%

Feel Unsafe Riding

Do not currently feel safe riding into Warrnambool along the existing corridor.



This level of community consensus is extraordinary — 99% agreement is a powerful mandate for action.

Why This Matters

While the discussion has naturally centred around road safety and infrastructure, the strongest message emerging from the community is that this is about far more than a bike path or road upgrade.

This is about connection, accessibility and planning for the future growth of our region.

Children & Youth

Children currently have no safe way to independently access school, sport, friends, the pool or broader community life without being driven by car.

Isolation

Families in Bushfield, Woodford and surrounding areas feel disconnected from Warrnambool despite being only a short distance from town.

Active Transport

There is currently a lack of safe active transport options — cycling and walking infrastructure that would serve the whole community.

Future Growth

As Warrnambool continues to grow, thoughtful and future-focused investment in connectivity is essential for safety, liveability and participation.



What Families Are Saying

The strongest themes emerging from the community are **safety, youth independence, accessibility** and **connection**.

"There is currently no way for adolescents to independently get into Warrnambool safely."

"We are only 7km from town and our kids are unable to get into town by themselves."

"The highway is far too dangerous for kids."

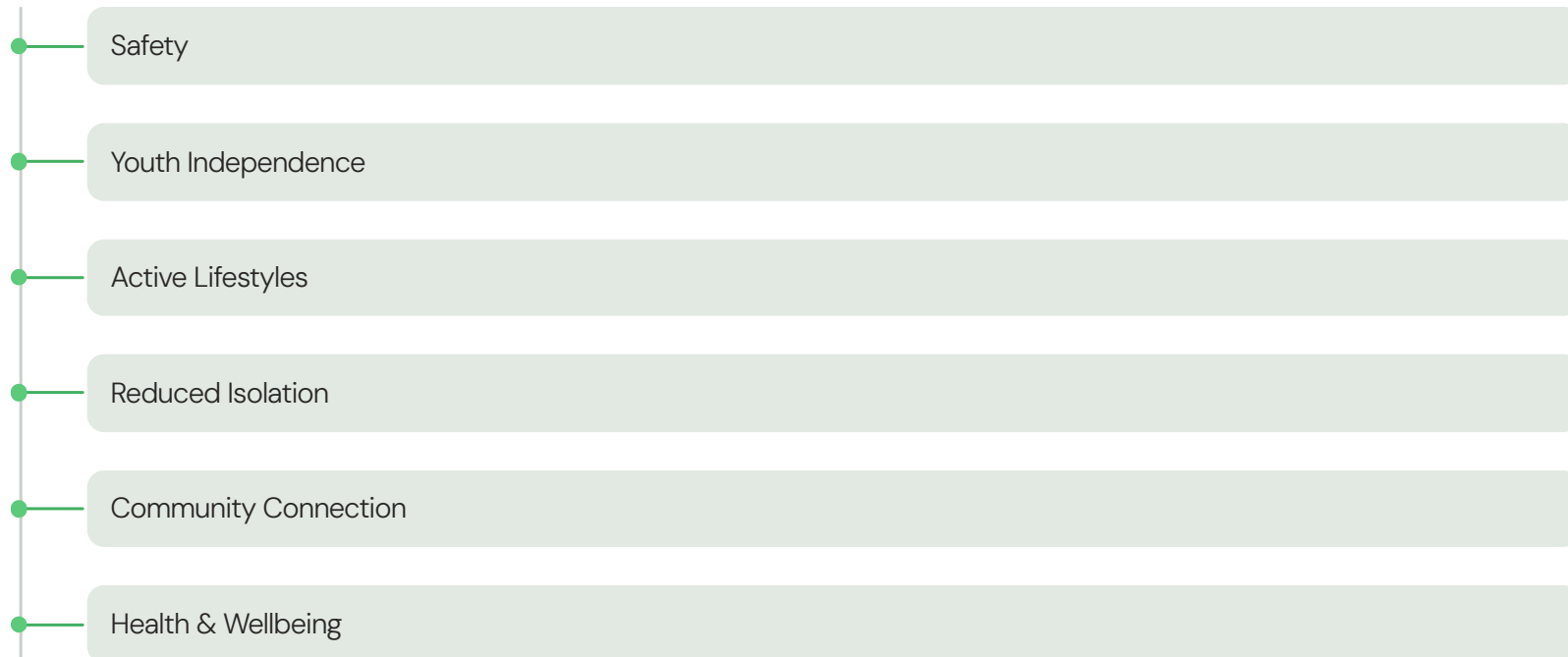
"I'm a paramedic and I have unfortunately witnessed preventable deaths due to the lack of safe bike paths."

"It feels isolating with no other way into town other than to drive."

"I'd love my teens to have more independence and ride safely into Warrnambool."

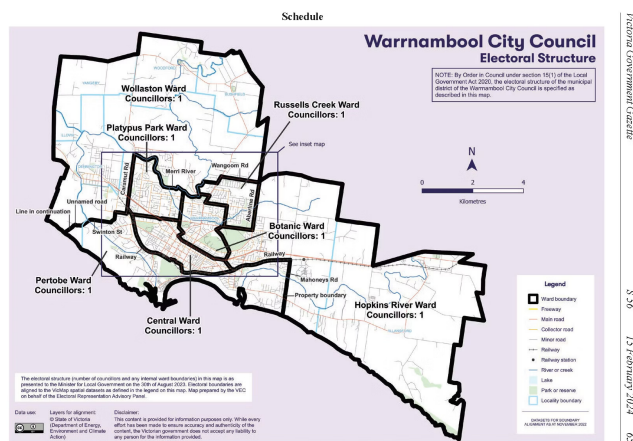
"We are so close, yet completely disconnected without a car."

"We would love a safe walking and bike track into Warrnambool as it would benefit our local community immensely."



Bigger Than One Road — A Vision for the Whole Region

Although much of the feedback has focused on the Mortlake Road / Bushfield Corridor, **Connecting Warrnambool** is exploring a number of important future connection opportunities across the region — because healthy, connected communities need more than one path forward.



Warrnambool City Council Electoral Structure — showing the broader region this initiative aims to serve.

This is about giving voice to our community and aims to encourage long-term discussion, planning and collaboration around the infrastructure needed to support a safer, more connected and more livable regional city for future generations.



Mortlake Road / Bushfield Corridor

The most urgent priority — a safer, separated walking and cycling path connecting Bushfield, Woodford and Wangoom to Warrnambool for families, students and cyclists.



Allansford–Deakin Connection

A vital link connecting the growing Allansford community and Deakin University precinct — supporting students, staff and residents with safe active transport options.

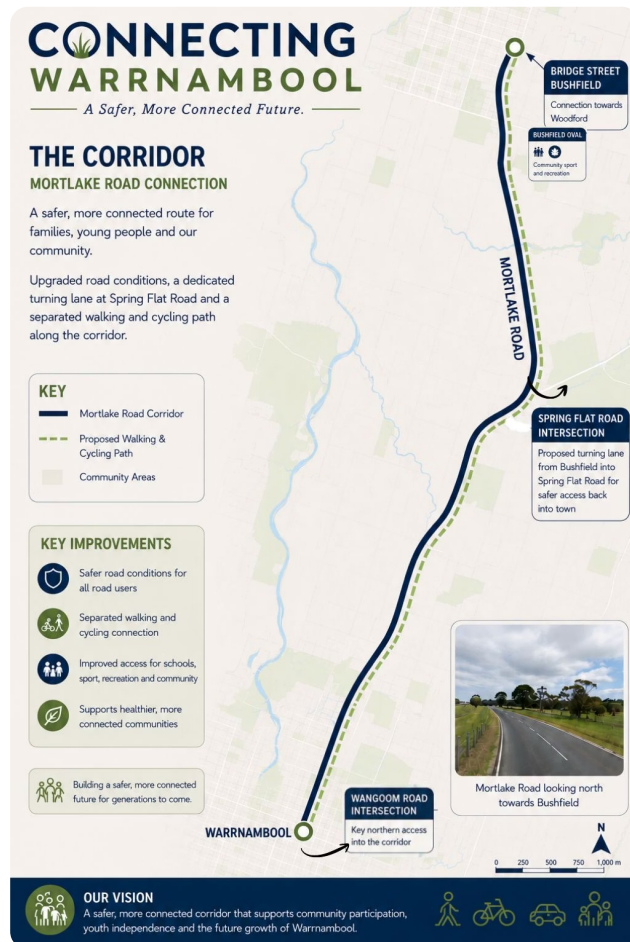


Broader Active & Community Transport Links

Long-term planning for active transport corridors across the region — creating a safer, more liveable and more connected Warrnambool for future generations.

The Mortlake Road / Hopkins Highway Corridor

Connecting Bushfield, Woodford, Wangoom and beyond to Warrnambool City



The Hopkins Highway / Mortlake Road corridor is already a critical gateway into Warrnambool and an increasingly important growth corridor.

Key Points

- Wangoom Road starting point
- Spring Flat Road intersection
- Bushfield Oval
- Bridge Street Bushfield
- Mortlake Road / Hopkins Highway corridor

Proposed Works

- Separated walking and cycling path
- Upgraded road corridor
- Dedicated turning lane from Bushfield into Spring Flat Road
- Future community connectivity

"I have many friends that use the roadways in to Warrnambool to join us on rides. I am genuinely concerned for their safety every time. I would love to see a safe route available for them and many others."

Shaun King, Warrnambool

"We are a thriving community isolated ! It is 4km from Bridge Rd to Wangoom Rd. It is so over due to have a substantial path linking us to Warrnambool."

Campbell Thompson, Bushfield

Safety Concerns Along The Corridor

A critical timeline of reported incidents highlights urgent safety issues along the Hopkins Highway / Mortlake Road / Spring Flat Road corridor.



Timeline of Reported Incidents

This timeline compiles publicly reported crashes, near misses, and community safety incidents:



April 2026
P-plater loses control at Spring Flat Rd. bend and crashes through farm fence.

13 October 2019: Bushfield crash near Spring Flat Road

An elderly driver lost control on a bend, crashing after hitting gravel. This incident raised initial concerns about road geometry and shoulder conditions.

23 August 2023: Truck trailer forces vehicle off road

A serious near-miss occurred when a truck trailer fishtailed, forcing an oncoming vehicle into a ditch. This gained media attention, highlighting issues with heavy vehicle movement and intersection safety.

March 2026: Fatal cyclist collision (nearby)

A fatal cyclist collision in Cudgee reinforced broader regional concerns about cyclist safety and the lack of protected active transport infrastructure in mixed traffic environments.

1

2

2020–2022: Multiple community-reported rollovers

Local reports documented numerous vehicle rollovers and rescues, fueling concerns over narrow shoulders, high-speed traffic, and increasing volumes from growth areas.

3

4

December 2024: Two-vehicle collision at Hopkins Hwy & Spring Flat Rd

Emergency services responded to a significant two-vehicle collision. The incident further drew attention to the intersection as a growing risk point.

5

Emerging Themes Identified Across Incidents

Increasing traffic volumes

Driven by growth in Bushfield/Woodford.

Dangerous road conditions

Narrow shoulders, high-speed traffic, and sweeping bends.

Heavy vehicle interactions

Concerns about trailer fishtailing and limited recovery space.

Lack of safe infrastructure

Absence of dedicated cycling and walking paths for all users.

This corridor is no longer just a rural connector; it's a vital commuter, school, and freight route. Its current infrastructure struggles to meet safety and demand expectations.



VISION

A Safer, More Connected Future



Safer Access for Children

Enabling children and young people to independently access school, sport and community life safely and confidently.



Healthier, Active Lifestyles

Encouraging active transport, recreation and participation in sport – benefiting health and wellbeing across all ages.



Youth Participation

Giving young people the independence to participate in sport, recreation and social life on their own terms.



Stronger Community Connection

Bridging the gap between regional growth areas and Warrnambool so no family feels isolated from town.



Future-Focused Planning

Integrating growing residential areas into Warrnambool's future transport and liveability planning for the next generation.



Improved Liveability

Creating a more liveable, connected region where active and independent movement is safe for everyone.





Community Support & Engagement

Support and engagement has already emerged strongly from across the community. We are grateful to our community leaders for their support in progressing this important community initiative.

Local Families & Residents

Hundreds of families across Warrnambool, Bushfield, Wangoom, Woodford and surrounding areas have responded with overwhelming support.

Sporting Clubs & Community Groups

Local sporting clubs, youth leaders and community organisations are beginning to lend their voice to this important initiative.

Schools & Youth Leaders

Younger residents are becoming active voices in this initiative, recognising the importance of safe connection, accessibility and participation within their community both now and into the future.

Councillors & Political Representatives

Elected representatives and local councillors are engaging constructively with the community on this issue.

Local Media

Local media is continuing to help amplify the community's voice, raising awareness of the need for safer active transport connections.

Health & Wellbeing Sector

Health professionals and wellbeing organisations are recognising the important role community connectivity, active transport and safer access can play in improving physical health, mental wellbeing, participation and community safety outcomes.



Moving Forward Together

Thank you again for your advocacy, ideas and support on something that clearly matters deeply to many families, residents and future generations across our growing community.

01

Safer Community Connections

Exploring opportunities to improve safety, accessibility and active transport connections across Warrnambool and surrounding communities.

02

Future Corridor Planning

Identifying important current and future community corridors that support participation, accessibility, education, recreation and regional growth.

03

Active Transport & Accessibility

Encouraging safer walking, cycling and active transport opportunities that improve community wellbeing, independence and connection.

04

Integrated Future Growth Planning

Working collaboratively to ensure future connectivity and accessibility are considered as Warrnambool and surrounding areas continue to grow.

05

Community-Led Engagement

Continuing open and constructive conversations with residents, schools, sporting groups, businesses, health services, organisations and representatives to help shape future priorities together.



Connecting Warrnambool – A Safer, Healthier & More Connected Future.

Together, we are helping shape a stronger and more connected community for generations to come.

Prepared by

Elise McKinnon - EM Advisory - Communications & Marketing Strategist and local Bushfield Resident. Mobile: 0438 191817

 ENGAGE & SHARE

Connect With Us: Share Your Feedback

Your voice is crucial in shaping a safer and more connected future for Warrnambool. We invite you to share your thoughts, experiences, and suggestions through our dedicated feedback form.



Click on the link below to access the community feedback form:

<https://www.jotform.com/261202452835047>

Please feel free to share this link with your family, friends, and community networks to ensure as many voices as possible are heard.

7.7. Informal Meetings Of Council Reports

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with copies of Informal Meetings of Council (previously known as "Assembly of Councillor Records") as previously required under section 80A(2) of the Local Government Act 1989.

Background Information

Section 80A(2) of the Local Government Act 1989 required the record of an Assembly of Councillors to be reported at an ordinary Council meeting.

Assembly of Councillor Records are no longer a requirement in the Local Government Act 2020 as of 24 October 2020. However, under Council's Governance Rules, a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are required to be tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

Report

The record of the following Informal Meetings of Council are enclosed:-

1. Tuesday 9 June 2026 – refer **Attachment 1**.
2. Monday 15 June 2026 – refer **Attachment 2**.
3. Monday 22 June 2026 – refer **Attachment 3**.
4. Monday 29 June 2026 – refer **Attachment 4**.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Assembly of Councillors Record 9 June 2026 [7.7.1 - 1 page]
2. Assembly of Councillors Record 15 June 2026 [7.7.2 - 2 pages]
3. Assembly of Councillors Record 22 June 2026 [7.7.3 - 2 pages]
4. Assembly of Councillors Record 29 June 2026 [7.7.4 - 1 page]

MOVED: CR BILLY EDIS

SECONDED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

That the record of the Informal Meetings of Council held on 9, 15, 22 and 29 June 2026, be received.

CARRIED - 6:0

Informal Meeting of Council Record

Name of committee or group (if applicable):	Informal Meeting of Council (Councillor Briefing)
Date of meeting:	9 June 2026
Time meeting commenced:	2.09pm
Councillors in attendance:	Cr. B. Blain, Mayor Cr. D. Arnott Cr. W. Benter Cr. B. Edis Cr. V. Jellie AM Cr. M. Walsh Cr. R. Ziegeler – left the meeting at 5.09pm
Council officers in attendance:	Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Brooke Love, Director City Wellbeing Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures – left the meeting at 3.23pm Julie Anderson, Acting Director City Infrastructure & Environment James Plozza, Manager Governance Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant Nick Higgins, Manager Engagement & Communication – 3.49pm – 4.40pm
Other persons present:	Elise McKinnon and Gavin Prentice, Connecting Warrnambool – 2.09pm – 2.54pm
Apologies	Nil.
Matters considered:	• Connecting Warrnambool presentation. • Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation Meeting Minutes. • Heritage Works. • Sister City trip to Miura, Japan and Changchun, China. • 2026 Community Satisfaction Survey.
Council and officer items raised	• Port Fairy Folk Festival sponsorship. • Ausnet Wellington Street property. • Key worker housing tender. • Friendly Societies Reserve redevelopment. • Budget items.
Councillor Conflicts of Interest disclosures:	
Nil.	
Meeting close time:	5.17pm
Record completed by:	Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

Informal Meeting of Council Record	
Name of committee or group (if applicable):	Informal Meeting of Council (Councillor Briefing)
Date of meeting:	15 June 2026
Time meeting commenced:	2.00pm
Councillors in attendance:	Cr. B. Blain, Mayor Cr. D. Arnott Cr. W. Benter Cr. V. Jellie AM Cr. M. Walsh
Council officers in attendance:	Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Brooke Love, Director City Wellbeing Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures – left the meeting at 3.23pm Julie Anderson, Acting Director City Infrastructure & Environment James Plozza, Manager Governance Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant Amy Cumming, Open Space Planner – Virtual – 2.00pm – 2.25pm Shelly Fanning, Coordinator Strategic Planning – 2.00pm - 2.25pm Julie McLean, Manager City Growth - 2.00pm – 2.30pm Rod Sanderson, Acting Manager Environment - 2.58pm – 3.30pm Lauren Edney, Manager Recreation & Culture - 2.58pm – 3.30pm, 3.37pm – 3.54pm Bruce Alexander, Acting Service Manager Warrnambool Stadium- 2.58pm - 3.30pm Kyme Rowe, Service Manager Recreation - 3.37pm – 3.54pm
Other persons present:	Jo Noesgaard, SGS Economics and Planning – Virtual – 2.00pm - 2.23pm
Apologies	Cr. B. Edis Cr. R. Ziegeler
Matters considered:	- Warrnambool Open Space Project - Part 2 Public Open Space Contributions Report. - Nature Strip Policy Review. - Flagstaff Hill. - Warrnambool Stadium Annual Report. - Easter Maar Aboriginal Corporation Meeting Minutes. - Licence Valuation Increase.
Council and officer items raised	- MAV - Rural and Regional Planners Conference. - Winter Solstice event. - Brierly Recreation Reserve visit and meeting with Bev McArthur MP. - Pertobe Road rehabilitation works. - South Warrnambool Flood Study. - Rotary caravan park usage. - Lighthouse Theatre Strategy. - Deakin University update. - Bromfield Street property development. - Garden beds on Whalers Hotel corner. - Cleaning of footpaths along outside eating areas. - Watering of flower boxes in Liebig Street. - Uneven footpath outside Rollerbowl in Timor Street. - Watering of roundabouts after rain. - Timor Street property and rubbish. - Logans Beach Road flooding. - Tidy Towns Grants. - EV Charger at Flagstaff Hill. - Land use in Hopkins Point Road. - Roundabout surfaces. - Otway Way crossing completion.

	• Open Space Funds Reserve. • West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House World Knit in Public Day.
Councillor Conflicts of Interest disclosures:	
Nil.	
Meeting close time:	4.22pm
Record completed by:	Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

Informal Meeting of Council Record

Name of committee or group (if applicable):	Informal Meeting of Council (Councillor Briefing)
Date of meeting:	22 June 2026
Time meeting commenced:	3.00pm
Councillors in attendance:	Cr. B. Blain, Mayor Cr. D. Arnott Cr. W. Benter Cr. B. Edis Cr. V. Jellie AM Cr. M. Walsh
Council officers in attendance:	Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Brooke Love, Director City Wellbeing Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures Julie Anderson, Acting Director City Infrastructure & Environment James Plozza, Manager Governance Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant Lauren Edney, Manager Recreation & Culture – 3.45pm – 4.25pm Kyme Rowe, Service Manager Recreation - 3.45pm – 4.25pm Peter Russell, Manager Community Strengthening – 4.53pm – 5.11pm Maree Wyse, Service Manager Healthy Engaged Communities – 4.53pm – 5.11pm Lotti Dumesny, Youth Engagement Coordinator – 4.53pm – 5.11pm
Other persons present:	Warrnambool Youth Advisory Board – Maiya Steele, Shanra Rogers, Liam Flaherty – 4.53pm - 5.11pm
Apologies	Cr. R. Ziegeler
Matters considered:	• Councillor Training. • Mountain Bike Trail Reinstatement – Thunder Point Coastal Reserve. • Staff Survey. • Warrnambool Moyne Youth Strategy Annual Report and Youth Advisory Board Review. • Organisational Structure.
Council and officer items raised	• Bird Flu outbreak in Western Australia. • Warrnambool Lawn Tennis Club lighting project official opening. • National General Assembly of Local Government conference. • Meeting with Bev McArthur MP, Member for Western Victoria and Graham Watt. • Horses on beaches. • Warrnambool RSL building. • Chitticks site, Albert Street, Warrnambool. • Solstice Search Party 2026. • Warrnambool Gift Card promotion. • Shipwreck Bay key worker cabin tenders. • State Government amendments to Local Government Act 2020. • State Government funding of \$82,500 for footpath at Brierly Street and on-road Deakin link signage. • Aged Care Act proposed changes to Aged Care responsible persons definition. • Warrnambool Seniors Festival high commendation at LGPRO Positive Ageing and Wellbeing awards. • 2027 Kindergarten enrolments. • Visit by Minister Michaela Settle, Minister for Regional Development. • Recent South West Victoria Alliance Board Meeting.
Councillor Conflicts of Interest disclosures:	

Nil.	
Meeting close time:	6.00pm
Record completed by:	Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

Informal Meeting of Council Record

Name of committee or group (if applicable):	Informal Meeting of Council (Councillor Briefing)
Date of meeting:	29 June 2026
Time meeting commenced:	2.00pm
Councillors in attendance:	Cr. B. Blain, Mayor Cr. D. Arnott Cr. W. Benter Cr. B. Edis Cr. V. Jellie AM Cr. M. Walsh
Council officers in attendance:	Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Brooke Love, Director City Wellbeing Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures Julie Anderson, Acting Director City Infrastructure & Environment James Plozza, Manager Governance Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant Mark Handby, Manager City Safety – 2.07pm – 2.29pm Tim Brosowsky, Coordinator Local Laws & Emergency Management – 2.07pm – 2.29pm James Habel, Coordinator Environmental Health – 2.07pm – 2.29pm James Pigdon, Environmental Health Officer – 2.07pm – 2.29pm Peter Russell, Manager Community Strengthening - 2.29pm – 2.38pm
Other persons present:	
Apologies	Cr. R. Ziegeler
Matters considered:	• Community Satisfaction Survey 2026. • Domestic Animal Management Plan. • Onsite Wastewater Management Plan. • Warrnambool Gaming Policy. • Connecting Warrnambool motion. • Mayoral Diary Update.
Council and officer items raised	• Chief Executive Officer leave. • National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra. • Coastal Connect Go Live. • Bird Flu. • Morris Road house fire and Council assistance. • Additional immunisation services. • Optus Tower on Mortlake Road. • CBD speed limit reductions. • Logans Beach Whale viewing platform and fire in the car park. • Open Space Reserves. • Rotary Club of Warrnambool Central changeover.
Councillor Conflicts of Interest disclosures:	
Cr W. Benter – Item 2.3 – Onsite Wastewater Management Plan – Material conflict – let the meeting during this item.	
Meeting close time:	3.14pm
Record completed by:	Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

7.8. Mayoral & Chief Executive Officer Council Activities - Summary Report

Purpose

This report summarises Mayoral and Chief Executive Officer Council activities since the last Ordinary Meeting which particularly relate to key social, economic and environmental issues of direct relevance to the Warrnambool community.

Report

Date	Location	Function
3 June 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Community Launch of Warrnambool City Council Reconciliation Strategy & Action Plan.
4 June 2026	Portland	Chief Executive Officer – Attended RDA Barwon South West Meeting.
5 June 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Met with Alison Byrne, Executive Officer, South West Community Foundation.
6 June 2026	Warrnambool	Cr Edis – Attended the Warrnambool & District Football Umpires Association 80 th Anniversary Dinner.
10 June 2026	Virtual	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Regional Cities Victoria Executive Management Group meeting.
11 June 2026	Virtual	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer– Regional Cities Victoria General Meeting.
19 June 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Met with Fire Rescue Victoria Deputy Commissioner and Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
	Warrnambool	Mayor – South West Victoria Alliance Board meeting.
22 June 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Warrnambool Lawn Tennis Club light project official opening.
23 June 2026	Melbourne	Mayor – Regional Cities Victoria – Roundtable meeting with Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Hon, Ros Spence.
24-25 June 2026	Canberra	Mayor, Cr Benter and Chief Executive Officer – Attended the National General Assembly of Local Government.

Date	Location	Function
26 June 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Visit of Minister for Regional Development Michaela Settle MP to Bridge Road/Woodford Primary School footpath and shared zone project .
	Warrnambool	Mayor & Councillors – Visit and meeting with Bev McArthur, MP, Member for Western Victoria.
	Warrnambool	Mayor -Opened Warrnambool & District Artist Society Annual Awards.
	Warrnambool	Cr Benter – Attended the Rotary Club of Warrnambool Central 2026 President Changeover Dinner.
30 June 2026	Warrnambool	Deputy Mayor – Attended the Rotary Club of Warrnambool Inc Changeover.
1 July 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer– Met with Jacinta Ermacora MP.
	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Met with Leigh Howard, Victoria’s Greater China Commissioner, Brian Keranas, Global Victoria and Ivan Veljkovic, Global Victoria, Senior Trade Manager Food and Fibre Exports.
2 July 2026	Port Campbell	Chief Executive Officer – Attended Great South Coast Regional Partnership meeting.

MOVED: CR DEBBIE ARNOTT

SECONDED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

That the Mayoral and Chief Executive Officer Council Activities – Summary Report be received.

CARRIED - 6:0

8. Notice Of Motion

No Notices of Motion have been received.

9. General Business

Nil.

10. Urgent Business

Nil.

11. Close Of Meeting

The meeting closed at 4.59pm.

CHAIRMAN