



Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-2029



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Adopted by Warrnambool City Council, October 2025.

Acknowledgement of Country

Warrnambool City Council acknowledge the Peek Whurrong and Kirrae Whurrung Peoples of the Eastern Maar Nations as the Traditional Owners of the lands, waterways, and skies within Warrnambool municipality.
We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.



Message from the Mayor



Council's vision for Warrnambool is for the city to be a thriving regional leader, rich in opportunities and committed to fostering a sustainable and inclusive lifestyle.

That vision relies on a city where residents' health and wellbeing are paramount and where opportunities to pursue healthy lifestyles are provided equitably.

Warrnambool is widely considered one of the most liveable regional cities in Australia and this is a reputation that Council is passionate about and works hard to retain.

Our role in supporting a healthy city is to ensure that the built infrastructure supports sustainable, active lifestyles and to partner with and support organisations that are dedicated to supporting the health and wellbeing of the community.

The Healthy Warrnambool 2025-2029 Plan demonstrates Council's commitment to partnering with the community and local service providers to promote and implement actions that help build a healthy community.

The Healthy Warrnambool Plan was developed in consultation with key health agencies, health promotion organisations and the community.

The priorities for Warrnambool which were determined by a combination of our local needs and their alignment with the Victorian Government's Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027 are:

1.	Improving liveability
2.	Prevention of gender-based violence
3.	Improving social and emotional wellbeing
4.	Reducing harm from gambling, alcohol and other drugs (AOD)
5.	Increasing active living
6.	Increasing healthy eating and improving local food systems
7.	Improving resilience to the impacts of climate change

Working together, Council and dedicated health agencies can better address the barriers and issues that impact on our health and wellbeing.

I would like to thank all the stakeholders who provided input into the plan and I look forward to the prospect of some key measures moving in a positive direction over the next four years.

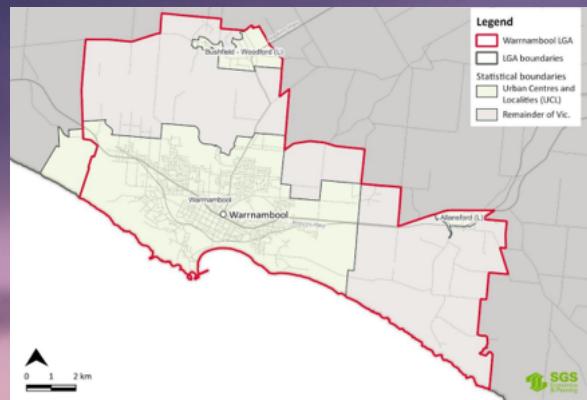
**Cr Ben Blain
Mayor, Warrnambool City Council**

Warrnambool - a snapshot

Warrnambool is situated on the traditional lands of the Eastern Maar people. Located approximately 260km west of Melbourne, it is Victoria's largest coastal regional City beyond Port Phillip Bay with a population of close to 36,000. It is the key regional centre for the Great South Coast.

The local government area includes the township of Warrnambool itself, as well as the smaller towns of Allansford to the east, and Woodford and Bushfield to the north and is bounded by the Merri River to the west and the Hopkins River to the east. The coast is a defining feature, with attractive beaches and rugged coastline located in the coastal reserve that runs along much of the southern boundary of the City.

The surrounding land includes highly productive agricultural land that supports mixed agriculture including cropping, dairy and beef production. Warrnambool City acts as the main service centre supporting the surrounding region.



About the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Victoria's Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 recognises the key role of Councils in improving the health and wellbeing of people in their municipality. Section 26 of the Act requires each Council to prepare a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing plan every four years.

The Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-2029 outlines Warrnambool's key health priorities and initiatives that will be implemented over the next four years, in line with the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027. Our plan considers preventative health as a key pillar of Australia's long term health plan and with local government closest to the community, Warrnambool City Council is uniquely positioned to respond to health and wellbeing priorities of the community.

The Healthy Warrnambool Plan recognises the importance of health equity, acknowledging that health outcomes are not evenly or fairly distributed across our communities. This approach recognises that those who live with greater social and economic disadvantages are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes. Achieving health equity means recognising that not everyone enjoys the same opportunities to lead a healthy life, and taking steps to correct this.

It is also recognised that a gendered intersectional approach is required to design effective health and wellbeing strategies that consider an individual's multiple and intersecting identities. The

list of priority population groups under each pillar is therefore provided as a starting point to help identify those facing greater barriers to achieving optimum health outcomes amongst individuals, families and communities within the Warrnambool municipality.

The following priority health pillars have been identified following a review of the population health data, engagement with our community and with the aim of building on the momentum of the previous Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2021-2025.

The below pillars are also aligned with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023- 2027 and the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework. The State government requires Councils to have regard to climate change in the Municipal Health and Wellbeing plan and address the prevention of family violence, including specifying measures to prevent family violence and responding to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community. These requirements are specified in the Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, Climate Change Act 2017, and the Gender Equality Act 2020.

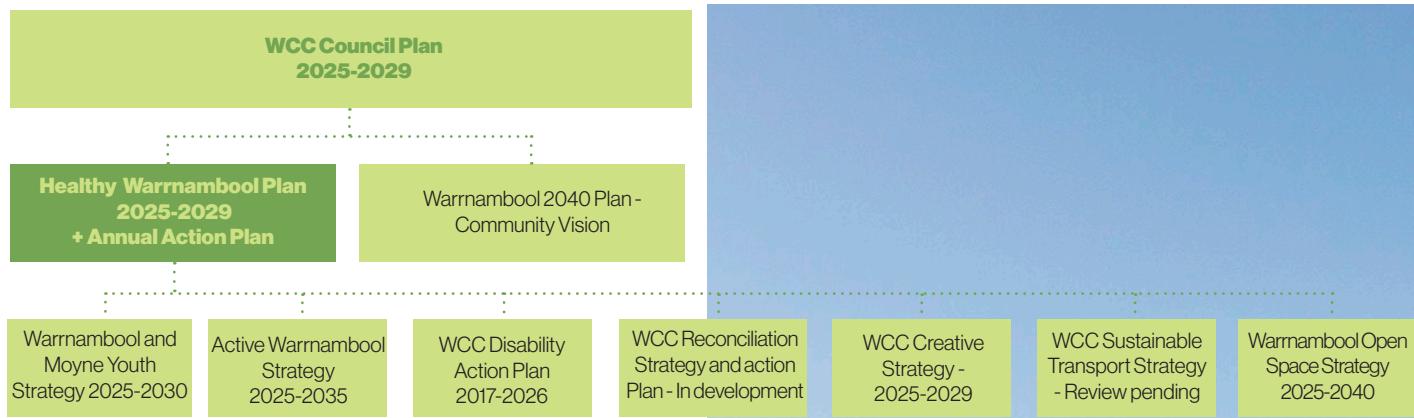
Priority health pillars

- 1. Improving liveability**
- 2. Prevention of gender-based violence**
- 3. Improving social and emotional wellbeing**
- 4. Reducing harm from gambling, alcohol and other drugs**
- 5. Increasing active living**
- 6. Increasing healthy eating and improving local food systems**
- 7. Improving resilience to the impacts of climate change**

Strategic context

The Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan is one of Council's key strategic documents.

The Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-2029 sits alongside the Warrnambool City Council Council Plan 2025-2029 and Warrnambool 2040 (W2040) community vision. The annual action plan will be guided by a wide range of area specific strategic plans as listed below.



Community profile

Population	35,406
Annual growth rate (AAGR) between 2011-2021	1%
Median age	42
Males	48.1%
Females	51.9%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	707 (2%)
Overseas born	10%
People with severe disabilities	6.6%

Demographic profile

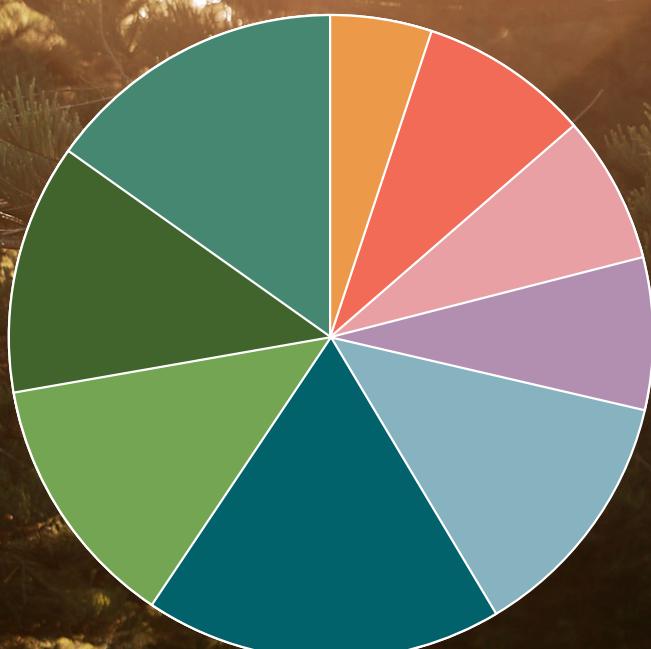
SEIFA index of disadvantage 2021	995
Homeless persons estimated (2021)	184
Households renting	27%
Households with a mortgage	31%
Participation rate (population in the labour force)	31%
Household income (>\$3,000 per week)	16%
Household income (<\$999 per week)	35.5%
Median weekly income	\$1,420
Median rental price	\$500 per week
Rental home stock	18%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 census.



Age distribution

Population by age groups (June, 2023)



0-4 years	5%
5-11 years	8%
12-17 years	7%
18-24 years	8%
25-34 years	13%
35-49 years	18%
50-59 years	13%
60-69 years	13%
70+ years	15%

Household income

\$/week	Number of households	%
0 - 1,000	4,717	36%
1,000 - 2,000	3,859	29%
2,000 - 3,000	2,585	19%
3,000 - 4,000	1,165	9%
4,000 +	963	7%
Total	13,289	100%

Source: profile.id.com.au/warrnambool/household-income

Long-term health conditions

(self-reported)

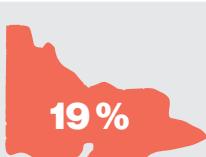
People with one or more long term health conditions	32.2%
Mental health condition	10.4%
Asthma	9.9%
Arthritis	8.4%
Diabetes	4.4%
Heart disease	4.2%
Cancer	3.0%
Stroke	1.0%
Kidney disease	0.9%
Dementia	0.6%

Source: ABS 2021 census

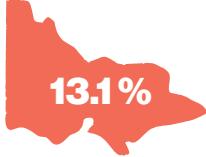
Australian Early Development Census Data

2024	Comparison to Victoria %	Trends/Observations
In 2024, 22.3% of children in Warrnambool were classified as developmentally vulnerable-requiring additional support to reach the required standards on one or more AEDC domains which describe children's development.	This figure correlates with the average for Victoria- for the same measure. 	Increased by 4.9% since 2021.
In 2024, 9.8% of children in Warrnambool were classified as developmentally vulnerable-requiring additional support to reach the required standards on two or more AEDC domains which describe children's development.	This figure is slightly lower than the average for Victoria for the same measure. 	No significant change since 2021.

Healthy eating

Victorian Population Health Survey data 2023	Comparison to Victoria %	Gender-based trends
 <p>In 2023, only 3% of adults in Warrnambool ate enough fruit and vegetables to comply with the Australian dietary guidelines.</p>	 <p>Slightly lower than the average for Victoria.</p>	<p>This figure for was lower for men (3.8%) compared to women (8.3%), with higher rates of women consuming 5+ serves of vegetables per day. This is similar to the same data for Victoria (4.4% for men, 9.1% for women).</p>
 <p>In 2023, 23.9% of adults in Warrnambool were daily consumers of sugar sweetened beverages.</p>	 <p>Slightly higher than the average for Victoria.</p>	<p>Daily consumption of sugary sweetened beverages was slightly higher for men (25.8%) than women (21.7%) in Warrnambool.</p>
 <p>In 2023, 6.2% of adults ran out of food and couldn't afford to buy more.</p>	 <p>Slightly lower than the average for Victoria.</p>	<p>The figures were similar for the proportion of men (6.2%), compared to women (6.3%). The figures for Victoria were higher for women (8.2%) compared to men (7.5%).</p>

Alcohol consumption

Victorian Population Health Survey data 2023	Comparison to Victoria %	Gender-based trends
 <p>In 2023, 16.7% of adults in Warrnambool consumed >10 drinks/week.</p>	 <p>This figure is slightly higher than the average for Victoria.</p>	<p>The figures were higher for men (21.1%) compared to women (13.0%). This is similar to the same data for Victoria, (men 18.6%, women 8.0%).</p>
<p>In 2023, 1.7% of people reported that their daily alcohol consumption was >4 drinks/day.</p>	 <p>This figure is lower than the average for Victoria.</p>	<p>Not available.</p>

Alcohol-related hospital admissions

Location	Measure
Warrnambool	Alcohol-related ambulance attendances (per 100,000) 641.2
Victorian average	393.5

(Source Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2022-2023)



Smoking rates



Victorian Population Health Survey data 2023	Source	Warrnambool LGA	Victoria
Estimated % of adults who currently smoke tobacco.	Victorian Population Health Survey	14.8	13.9
Estimated % of adults who currently vape.	Victorian Population Health Survey	4.8	7.2
Estimated % of dual users among adults who smoke and/or vape.	Victorian Population Health Survey	17.9	18.5

Active living

Victorian Population Health Survey data 2023	Comparison to Victoria %	What it means
 <p>In 2023, only 37.2% of adults in Warrnambool did more than 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous physical activity.</p>	 <p>Slightly higher than the Victorian average.</p>	<p>62.8% of adults are not meeting the physical activity guidelines for adults of between 150-300 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous activity each week.</p> <p>The figures were slightly lower for men 36.4% compared to women 38.2%. The Victorian average was higher for men compared to women (men 37.7%, women 32.9%).</p>

Mental health and wellbeing

Victorian Population Health Survey data 2023	Comparison to Victoria %	Gender based trends
<p>In 2023, only 19.8% of adults with low or medium life satisfaction.</p>	 <p>Slightly lower than the Victorian average.</p>	<p>The figures were higher for men 22.1% compared to women 17.9%.</p> <p>The Victorian average was similar for men and women (men 21.6%, women 21.8%).</p>
<p>In 2023, 21.7% of adults experienced loneliness (by 3-Item UCLA Loneliness scale).</p>	 <p>Slightly lower than the Victorian average.</p>	<p>The figures were similar for men 22.5% compared to women 21.2%.</p> <p>The Victorian average was slightly lower for men compared to women (men 22.2%, women 24.7%).</p>
<p>In 2023, 15.6% of adults reported high or very high psychological distress (K10 22+).</p>	 <p>Slightly lower than the Victorian average.</p>	<p>The figures were lower for men 12.6% compared to women 18.6%.</p> <p>The Victorian average was also lower for men compared to women (men 16.0%, women 21.5%).</p>

Family violence - the impact

Emergency Department patients

51



Ambulance patients

9



2023 - 2024

Number of clients receiving homelessness services because of family violence.



Source - Crime Statistics Agency Victoria.



How we compare

Area	Family violence incidents per 100,000 (2023)
Warrnambool	2,109
Victorian average	1,418

Source: Crime Statistics Agency Victoria

Gaming machine spend - Warrnambool

Electronic Gaming Machine expenditure per year

\$24.2 million

Total spent on Electronic Gaming Machines per day Warrnambool LGA (2024-2025)

\$66,372

Source: Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission.

Gambling losses in Victoria

Gambling type	Victorian player loss (\$million) 2024-2025
Electronic Gaming Machines	3,145.08
Melbourne Casino- Poker machines and table games	957.83
Lotteries (Victoria only)	766.64
Wagering and betting licensee	737.80
Wagering-other entities	1,726.70
Keno- Licensee	42.49
Keno- Lottoland	8.21
Keno-other entities	0.30
Total	7,385.05

Source: vgccc.vic.gov.au



How was the plan developed

February 2025

A review of the population data was undertaken to assess the priority health foci. Key population cohorts were identified to ensure an equity approach was taken in developing the community engagement plan.

April 2025

An “across Council” Project Control Group (PCG) was established. This ensured a collaborative approach to identify opportunities to improve health and wellbeing through Council’s services and to review the outcome of Project leads’ decisions.

June & July 2025

Engagement program commenced. A program of deliberate community engagement activities was undertaken with the community, partner organisations and priority population groups.

May 2025

Review of previous plan and relevant Council strategies undertaken to identify gaps in the Council’s strategy and inform the future direction of the new Healthy Warrnambool Plan.

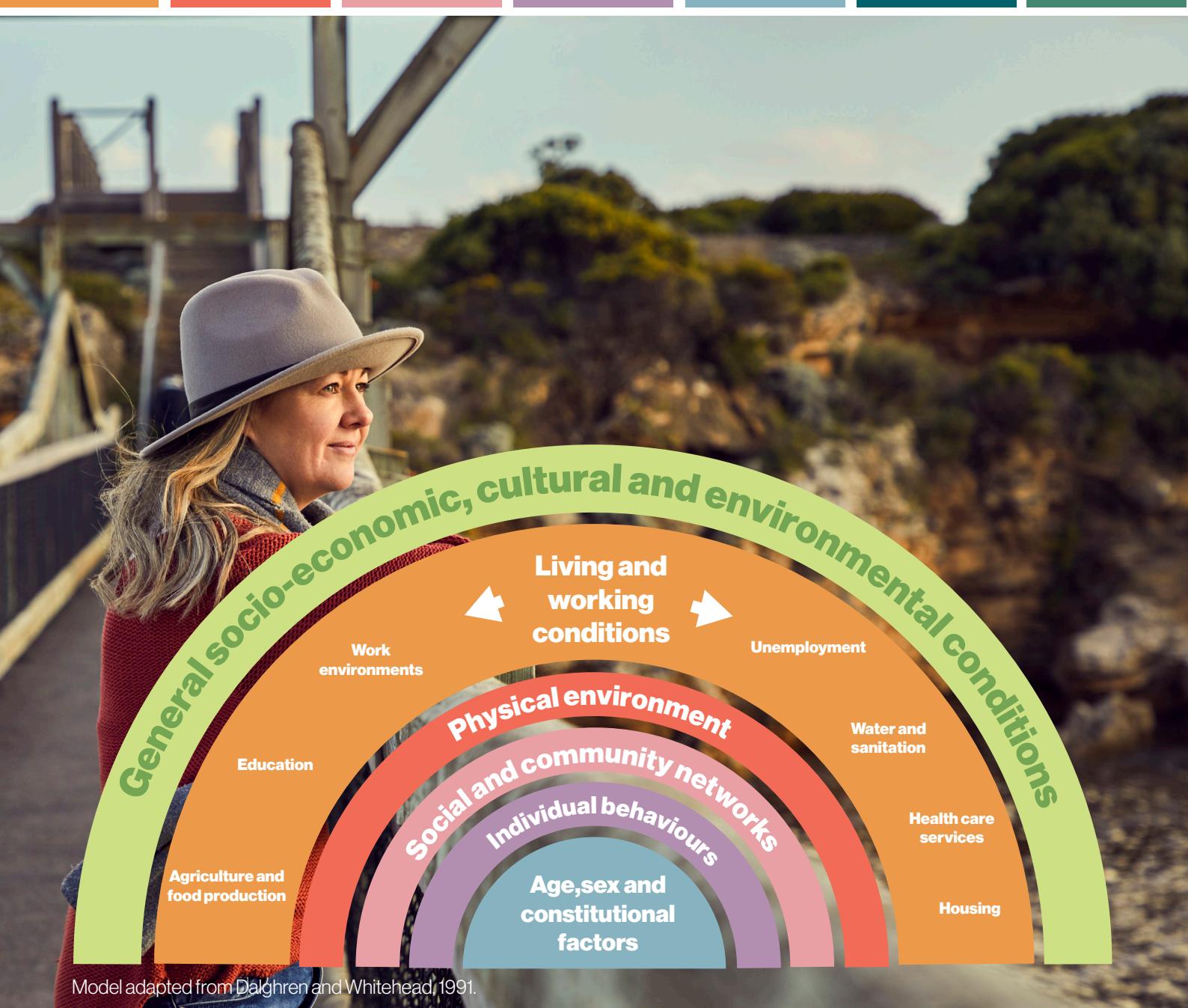
August 2025

Analysis of the engagement and interpretation of the narrative feedback from the community and focus groups. Draft report submitted to Council for approval.

September 2025

The draft report was approved for release for public comment by Council. The feedback was assessed and incorporated in the plan.





Approach and principles of the Plan

Five principles below underpin the goals and key action areas in this Plan and will guide implementation of the annual action plan.

1. The Plan will address the broader determinants of health, recognising that health is influenced by more than genetics, lifestyles and provision of health care, and that social determinants are critical.
2. Key action areas are based on the above socio-ecological model of health, identifying actions at a range of levels including the individual level, social and community and physical environment. This framework will guide evaluation and reporting on the implementation of the plan.

3. Encourage partnerships with the community, key health partners and expert service providers to ensure people contribute to what influences their health and wellbeing and to empower individuals and communities to take control of their own lives.
4. Decisions about allocation of resources will be based on an equity model helping to ensure every individual, family and community group may benefit from living, learning and working in Warrnambool.
5. The activities in the annual action plan will be within Council's capacity to deliver based on its responsibilities, budgets and timelines.

Priority pillars & goals

Priority pillar	Victorian health outcome	Warrnambool City Council Plan	Warrnambool 2040 - Community Plan	Healthy Warrnambool Plan – strategic goal
 1. Improving liveability	Victoria is liveable	Our liveable city promotes access to housing places and activity for all	Warrnambool will be a city where all people thrive	<p>1.a To promote access to factors that influence health and wellbeing such as housing, transport, health and community services.</p>
 2. Prevention of gender-based violence	Victorians live free from abuse and violence	Our City puts public health and safety as a priority	Warrnambool is a safe and connected community	<p>2.a To implement locally based programs designed to prevent family violence and improve gender equity.</p> <p>2.b To partner with health organisations and the community to advocate for early and effective prevention and support to reduce long-term harm from family violence.</p> <p>2.c To partner with health organisations to improve awareness and reduce the stigma of accessing sexual and reproductive health services.</p>
 3. Improving social and emotional wellbeing	Victorians are healthy and well	Our inclusive and diverse City is welcoming to all	Warrnambool prioritises health and wellbeing	<p>3.a To provide an environment which promotes mental wellbeing.</p> <p>3.b To enable community based programs that encourage social connectedness and inclusion.</p> <p>3.c To raise awareness and to encourage programs that promote mental health literacy and self-efficacy.</p>
 4. Harm reduction drugs, alcohol and gambling	Victorians are healthy and well	Our City puts public health and safety as a priority	Warrnambool prioritises health and wellbeing	<p>4.a To implement policies that minimise harm from the consumption of alcohol, drugs and gambling.</p> <p>4.b To advocate for treatment and rehabilitation services, including residential rehabilitation, in the local community.</p>
 5. Increasing active living	Victorians are healthy and well	Our active City provides recreational opportunities for people of all ages and ability	Warrnambool prioritises health and wellbeing	<p>5.a To provide accessible spaces that support a range of physical activity opportunities.</p> <p>5.b To support programs and activities that reduce barriers and enable people to be active every day.</p>
 6. Increasing healthy eating and drinking, improving local food systems	Victorians are healthy and well	Our City puts public health and safety as a priority	Warrnambool prioritises health and wellbeing	<p>6.a To support programs and activities that reduce barriers, encourage and enable people to eat healthy.</p> <p>6.b To work in partnership with community partners to address the drivers of food insecurity and support food secure people in resilient communities.</p>
 7. Improving resilience to the impacts of climate change	Victoria is liveable	Our City will take measures to limit the impact of climate change	Adaptable Warrnambool - we adapt to the impacts of climate change	<p>7.a To make positive changes to the design and management of physical places and spaces managed by council that increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>7.b To investigate the risks, seek funding and work with partners to build resilience to climate change.</p> <p>7.c To encourage the community to adopt environmentally sustainable practices and adapt to climate change.</p>



Improving liveability

Strategic goals

1.a To promote access to factors that influence health and wellbeing such as housing, transport, health and community services



Why is it important?

Health is influenced by the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play and age.

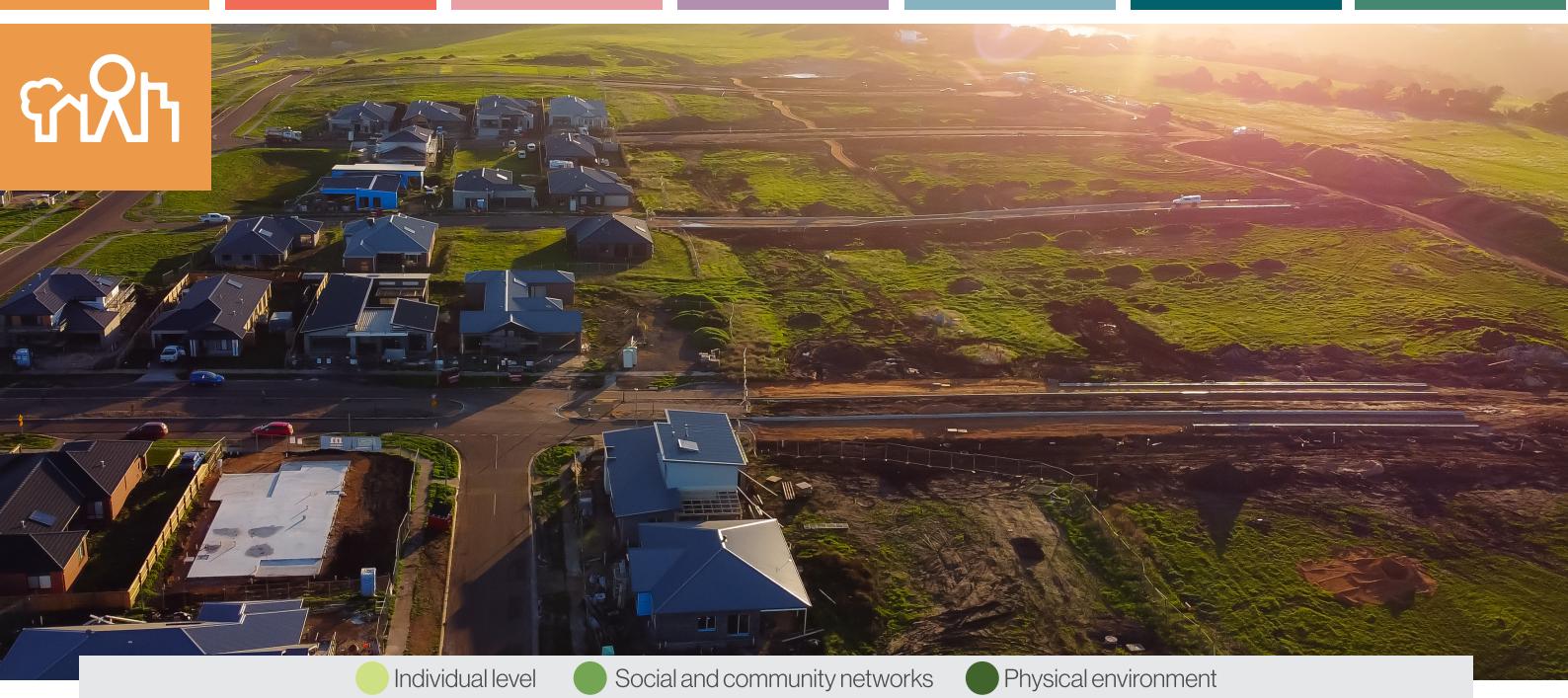
Liveable places are defined as safe, socially cohesive, inclusive and environmentally sustainable with affordable housing linked through public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, to employment, education, shops and services, public open space and social, cultural and recreational facilities.

Improving liveability requires collaborative approaches and partnership across Council, with community partners and across different levels of government. It includes improvements that can be made to existing neighbourhoods and new urban developments in the future, as well as key issues for council advocacy and partnerships.



Priority population groups

- Early years and children
- Young people
- Older people
- People with disability
- People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Culturally diverse communities
- Women and girls
- LGBTIQA+ community



Individual level

Social and community networks

Physical environment

1. Improving liveability action areas

1.1 Infrastructure and open space management

Implementing changes to infrastructure and open space management that promote access to factors that influence health and wellbeing such as housing, transport, health and community services.

1.2 Advocacy

Supporting partner organisations to advocate for improved access to health care services such as the Lookout residential rehabilitation centre - a dedicated alcohol and other drug residential rehabilitation facility for south-west Victoria.

Advocacy to increase housing diversity to ensure appropriate and affordable housing across all life stages.

Public transport- advocating for improvements to the public transport network for Warrnambool and surrounds.

1.3 Regional collaboration

Networking/collaboration with other community partners to take action on a number of issues including:

- improving access to childcare;
- encouraging a compassionate approach to homelessness and supporting connection of those experiencing homelessness to appropriate support and services; and,
- supporting the growth of local industries, festivals and events that bring employment and prosperity to the region.

Pillar 1. Plans and partners

Priority pillar	Relevant Council strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional level)
Improving liveability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warrnambool City Council Plan 2025-2029• Victoria's draft 30 year infrastructure strategy, Infrastructure Victoria, March 2025• Victoria's Housing statement, the decade ahead 2024-2034• Wellbeing in Victoria: A strategy to promote good mental health 2025-2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brophy Youth and Family Services• Salvation Army• Catholic Care• Mind Australia• Department of Families Fairness & Housing• Housing investors/developers/community housing agencies• Wellways• Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative• Women's Housing• Meli• Department of Transport and Planning• VLline• Warrnambool Bus Lines• South West All-Abilities Advocacy group• Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation



Prevention of gender-based violence

Strategic goals

- 2.a To implement locally based programs designed to prevent gender-based violence and improve gender equity.
- 2.b To partner with health organisations and the community to advocate for early and effective prevention and support to reduce long-term harm from gender-based violence.
- 2.c To partner with health organisations to improve awareness and reduce stigma regarding accessing sexual and reproductive health services.



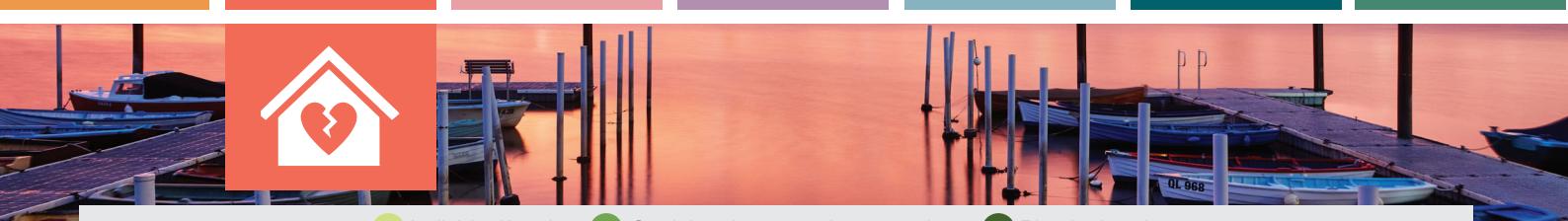
Why is it important?

Gender-based violence is a human rights violation. Freedom from violence is a fundamental human right, and gender-based violence undermines a person's sense of self-worth and self-esteem. It affects not only physical health but also mental health and may lead to self-harm, isolation, depression and suicidal attempts.



Priority population groups

- Women and girls
- Early years and children
- Young people
- Older people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- LGBTIQA+ community
- People with disability



2. Prevention of gender-based violence action areas

2.1 Infrastructure and open space management

Implementation of the outcomes of the Gender Impact Assessments and the fair access and use policy on new projects. Changes to buildings, sporting facilities and public spaces to improve gender equity and increase opportunities for all to participate.

2.2 Council as leaders and decision-makers

Support council to adopt and implement recommendations of the Gender Equality Act 2020, advocate for funding to support local programs and services targeting this issue such as the 'Safe at Home' early intervention program. To advocate for services that keep women and children safe in their own homes and reduce homelessness and improve access to integrated response systems to support those experiencing family violence.

Continue to implement the Fair Access and Use policy and action plan- to improve gender equitable access to and use of community sports infrastructure for women and girls, partnering with external organisations to support participation in community sport and active recreation.

2.3 Regional collaboration

Collaborate with external partner organisations to participate in the Respect 2040 partnership, local campaigns and events, such as the annual 16 days of Activism campaign and other programs aimed at community and societal level change.

2.4 Council as workplace

Implement the WCC Gender Equity Action Plan, including:

- creating an organisational culture that supports equity;
- diversity and respectful behaviour;
- improving equality in recruitment, promotion, leave and flexibility and renumeration policies and practices; and,
- undertaking Gender Impact Assessments on key projects and new and revised policies.

2.5 Skill building and education programs

Deliver programs through Council's Maternal Child Health and parenting education programs designed to give people skills to solve conflicts, manage emotions, promote equal and respectful relationships and address sexual and reproductive health issues.

Support skill-building programs in the community such as the Respectful Relationship program and sexual health awareness across a range of community settings through advocating for funding and cross promoting campaign messages.

Pillar 2. Plans and partners

Priority pillar	Relevant Council strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional level)
Prevention of gender-based violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032• Our Equal State- Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-2027• Change the story- A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (Our Watch),2021• WCC Gender Equality Action Plan• BSW Women's Health and Wellbeing- Sexual and reproductive health consultation survey- snapshot (2025)• Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West• South West Sport• Department of Education (plus local schools)• South West TAFE• Barwon South West Public Health Unit• Wannon Water• Kirrae Health Service• Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative• Victoria Police• Orange Door• SAFV Centre Warrnambool (Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre)• West Vic Public Health Network• Respect 2040 partnership



Improving social and emotional wellbeing

Strategic goals

- 3.a To provide an environment which promotes mental wellbeing.
- 3.b To enable community based programs that encourage social connectedness and inclusion.
- 3.c To raise awareness and to encourage programs that promote mental health literacy and self-efficacy.



Why is it important?

Wellbeing is crucial because it encompasses our overall health and happiness, influencing our physical and mental state, relationships, and even our ability to succeed in life.



Priority population groups

- Young people
- Older people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- LGBTIQA+ community
- Mid-life 35-60 years
- Culturally diverse communities
- People with disability
- People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage
- People experiencing a substance use disorder
- People experiencing unemployment



Individual level

Social and community networks

Physical environment

3. Improving social and emotional wellbeing action areas

3.1 Design and management of built environment and public space

Promote existing community infrastructure open spaces, natural and cultural spaces that support mental wellbeing. Improving inclusion and access for priority population groups and older people (>65).

Apply and integrate healthy design principles into land-use planning, creating spaces that promote mental health and wellbeing such as green spaces, active spaces, pro-social spaces and safe places for priority population groups.

3.2 Council as leaders and decision makers

Support, develop and encourage programs that act to prevent mental health conditions occurring by targeting key risk factors through policies and programs which prevent child abuse, child maltreatment, bullying, racism, discrimination and encourage positive parenting.

3.3 Regional collaboration

Collaborate with partner organisations to develop and support programs that aim to improve social connection and inclusion for priority population groups including: LGBTQIA+ community, youth, people from multi-cultural backgrounds and people with disability.

Collaborate with partner organisations as part of the South West Elder Abuse Prevention Network to raise awareness, increase knowledge and change attitudes towards ageing and elder abuse.

3.4 Social connection and wellbeing programs

Support and develop programs that promote protective factors, such as social connectedness, social inclusion, volunteering, social, emotional and psychological skills, participation in arts and culture, spending time in nature/gardening, active living and healthy eating across the lifespan, mental health and wellbeing literacy.

Implement community-based programs that target risk and protective factors to prevent mental health conditions occurring and promote high mental wellbeing. Seek to improve co-ordination between local programs, encourage programs in schools and workplaces.

3.4 Skill building and education programs

Collaborate with partner organisations to develop community programs and campaigns that raise the profile of priority population groups and highlight the importance of inclusion and social equity. This includes programs that seek to welcome people from culturally diverse backgrounds and provide information and support to connect with local services, language classes, sport and recreation opportunities and skill sharing programs.

Promote and support behaviours that promote mental wellbeing across the life-span, particularly pre-natal, early years, adolescence, mid-life and older years (65+), through skill building programs and evidence based programs.

Pillar 3. Plans and partners

Priority pillar	Relevant Council strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional level)
Improving social and emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian Government reports/strategies • Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System-final report • Wellbeing in Victoria: A strategy to promote good mental health 2025-2035 • Victorian Suicide prevention and response strategy 2024-2034 • VicHealth- The next 10 years 2023-2033 Reshaping systems together for a healthier, fairer Victoria • Pride in our future; Victoria's LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2022-32 • Barwon South West Public Health Unit Catchment Strategy • Western Victoria Primary Health Network needs assessments/strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRAD Health • Meli • Wellways • Lifeline • Let's Talk • Beyond the Bell • Neil Porter Legacy • Brophy Youth and Family Services • BSW Public Health Unit • Kirrae Health • Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative • Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative • Western Victoria Primary Health Network • Department of Education (plus local schools) • BigLife Warrnambool • South West All Abilities Advocacy Group • Warrnambool Multicultural Community • South West Healthcare • Wannon Water





Reducing harm from alcohol, other drugs & gambling

Strategic goals

- 4.a To implement policies that minimise harm from the consumption of alcohol, drugs and gambling.
- 4.b To advocate for treatment and rehabilitation services, including residential rehabilitation in the community.



Why is it important?

Reducing harm from alcohol consumption is beneficial because it lessens the risk of developing various health problems like cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and liver cirrhosis and reduces the likelihood of injuries and accidents. It also improves mental health and overall quality of life. Gambling can lead to serious harms to health. These include financial stress, relationship breakdown, family violence, mental illness and suicide.



Priority population groups

- Children and young people
- Older people
- LGBTIQA+ community
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Culturally diverse communities
- People with disability
- People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage
- People with co-occurring mental health conditions



● Individual level

● Social and community networks

● Physical environment

4. Reducing harm from alcohol, other drugs & gambling action areas

4.1 Design and management of built environment and public space

Use available planning, policy and regulatory controls to minimise harm from gambling and risky drinking behaviours and other alcohol and other drug issues.

Implement improvements to public places to mitigate anti-social behaviours.

4.2 Council as leaders and decision-makers

Review and design internal policies and procedures to support key harm minimisation strategies relating to alcohol consumption, vaping, smoking, and gambling harm.

4.3 Regional collaboration

Collaborate at the local level with partner organisations working in the prevention space to analyse local issues such as gambling harm, alcohol and other drug issues, access funding and develop evidence informed, place-based programs in response.

Support partner organisations including WRAD Health to advocate for improved access to treatment and rehabilitation services for alcohol and other drugs, including The Lookout, a proposed dedicated drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation centre for the South West.

Support sport and recreation clubs, community led campaigns and initiatives to develop programs and strategies to address local issues such as gambling harm, vaping and smoking, risky drinking behaviours and other drug issues.

4.4 Skill building and education programs

Support partner organisations who are providing harm minimisation programs in the community, by promoting campaign messages and providing a platform for speakers/programs at appropriate council facilities.

Pillar 4. Plans and partners

Priority pillar	Relevant Council strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional level)
Reducing harm from gambling, alcohol and other drugs (AOD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local Drug Action Team - Community Action Plan (in development 2025)Warrnambool Gaming Policy (2014- to be reviewed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MeliSouth West HealthcareAlcohol and Drug FoundationLocal Drug Action TeamWestern Victoria Primary Health NetworkWRAD HealthVictoria PoliceDepartment of JusticeBarwon South West Public Health UnitBrophy Youth and Family ServicesDeakin UniversityKirrae HealthWorn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operativeGunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative



Increasing active living

Strategic goals

- 5a To provide accessible spaces that support a range of physical activity opportunities.
- 5b To support programs and activities that reduce barriers and enable people to be active every day.



Why is it important

Regular physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers while helping regulate weight and mental health.

Priority population groups



- Children and Young people
- Older people
- Women and girls
- LGBTIQA+ community
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage
- Culturally diverse communities
- People with disability
- People with chronic health conditions





Individual level

Social and community networks

Physical environment

5. Increasing active living action areas

5.1 Design and management of built environment and public space

Improve access to, and promotion of, sport and recreation facilities, play-spaces and open space infrastructure for our growing community.

Implement the Principal Pedestrian Network to improve the safety and connectedness of the cycling network.

Increase and promote diverse opportunities for active recreation and social sport, reducing barriers such as access and inclusion for priority population groups.

Integrate healthy design principles into land-use planning - planning for infrastructure and spaces that support active living, active recreation and sport.

5.2 Regional collaboration

Support sport and recreation clubs, community led campaigns and initiatives that encourage and facilitate opportunities to incorporate physical activity into daily life.

Develop, support and or promote initiatives that reduce barriers for participation in physical activity for people more likely to experience disadvantage.

5.3 Skill-building and education programs

Develop, support and promote initiatives that reduce barriers for participation in physical activity for the priority population groups identified for this pillar. Example programs include the All Abilities Gym Program at AquaZone and strength-building classes and falls prevention programs at the Archie Graham Community Centre.

Training for sport and recreation clubs on topics such as gender inclusion and creating a welcoming environment for culturally diverse communities.

Support movement across the lifespan, particularly pre-natal, early years, adolescence, mid-life and older years (65+), through skill building programs and implementing evidence based programs.

Pillar 5. Plans and partners

Priority pillar	Relevant Council strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional level)
Increasing active living	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active Warrnambool Strategy• Sustainable Transport Strategy• Principal Pedestrian Network• Warrnambool Playground Strategy• Principal Bicycle Network• Lake Pertobe Master Plan• Women and Girls Participation Strategy (South West Region)• Blueprint for an active Australia- Heart Foundation• VicHealth- The next 10 years 2023-2033 Reshaping systems together for a healthier, fairer Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• South West Sport• Sport and Recreation Clubs/Associations• Barwon South West Public Health Unit• Allied Health Services - exercise physiologists, physiotherapists, general practitioners• Private gyms, personal trainers• Department of Education• Kirrae Health Services



Increasing healthy eating and improving local food systems

Strategic goals

- 6.a To support programs and activities that reduce barriers, encourage and enable people to eat healthily.
- 6.b To work in partnership with community partners to address the drivers of food insecurity and support food secure people in resilient communities.



Why is it important

Healthy eating is crucial for maintaining overall well-being and preventing chronic diseases. It provides the body with essential nutrients for optimal functioning, boosts energy levels, and supports a healthy weight.



Priority population groups

- People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage
- People experiencing unemployment
- People experiencing homelessness
- People with disability and chronic health conditions
- Children and Young people
- Older people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Culturally diverse communities



Individual level

Social and community networks

Physical environment

6. Increasing healthy eating and improving local food systems action areas

6.1 Design and management of built environment and public space

Utilise policy tools to reduce exposure to advertising of unhealthy foods, particularly in council facilities and public spaces.

Implement recommendations from the review of Breastfeeding friendly spaces in council owned facilities to provide appropriate facilities.

6.2 Regional collaboration

Improve community education and awareness of healthy eating and drinking, promote the availability of health eating and drinking options.

Collaborate regionally to understand the local food system and plan future interventions, share information, skills, resources, source funding to strengthen local food systems and address systemic barriers particularly for those most impacted by food insecurity.

6.3 Council as leaders and decision makers

Support community led healthy eating and drinking initiatives, backyard food growing, buy local (fresh produce), and programs aimed at food waste reduction and composting education and awareness.

Work in partnership with local community partners to build capacity, address the drivers of food insecurity and support food secure people in resilient communities.

6.4 Skill building and education programs

Promote and support healthy eating and drinking across the life-span, particularly pre-natal, early years, adolescence, mid-life and older years (65+), through skill building programs and evidence based programs.

Pillar 6. Plans and partners

Priority pillar	Relevant Council strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional level)
Increasing healthy eating and improving local food systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VicHealth- The next 10 years 2023-2033 Reshaping systems together for a healthier, fairer Victoria• South West Health Care- Food Insecurity in Warrnambool 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• South West Healthcare• Western District Food Share• Barwon South West Public Health Unit• Warrnambool Community Garden• Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre• Salvation Army - Warrnambool• Anglicare Victoria• Neighbouring councils & community health services• Kirrae Health• Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative• Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative



Improving resilience to the impacts of climate change

Strategic goals

- 7.a To make positive changes to the design and management of physical places and spaces managed by council that increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- 7.b To investigate the risks, seek funding and work with partners to build resilience to climate change.
- 7.c To encourage the community to adopt environmentally sustainable practices and adapt to climate change.



Why is it important

Our health and wellbeing depends on a healthy environment. Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024 summarises the observed and projected changes for Victoria's climate. For South West Victoria these include changes in the frequency and intensity of heatwaves and drought, increase risk of a longer fire season, more frequent days of significant fire danger and changes to rainfall patterns, flood patterns and sea level rise. Subsequent risks from these changes include coastal erosion, flooding from sea level rise, storm surges and larger riverine floods.



Priority population groups

- Children and Young people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Older people (particularly those socially isolated)
- Women (emergency situations and disaster impacts)
- People with disability and chronic health conditions
- People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage
- Culturally diverse communities
- People outdoors during extreme heat (e.g. gardeners, athletes, labourers)



Individual level

Social and community networks

Physical environment

7. Improving resilience to the impacts of climate change action areas

7.1 Infrastructure, open space and natural resource management

Implement recommendations from the WCC heat vulnerability study -Urban Forest Program, includes strategic revegetation projects to improve canopy cover in designated areas of the municipality.

Integrate urban heat adaptation strategies into maintenance and improvements to public spaces and infrastructure such as open space, river corridors, foreshore reserves, playgrounds, community and sporting venues.

Continue to investigate and manage the risks, seek funding and work in partnership to build resilience to climate risks, such as coastal erosion, flooding from sea level rise, storm surges and large riverine floods.

Improve drought preparedness across the city, implementing water saving and adaptation strategies.

7.2 Regional collaboration

Improve community preparedness for fast moving events such as high heat days, landscape fires, storms, flash flooding and power outages via community education and awareness, emergency management- planning and preparation.

Improve community awareness and preparedness for slower moving, long-term changes such as changes to flood risk and adaptation strategies.

Strengthen local food systems to prepare for increasing extreme weather events and other disruptions to food supply systems.

7.3 Support and encourage community-based action

Encourage and support local action to adapt to climate change and improve environmental sustainability, work with partner organisations to amplify community campaigns.

7.4 Skill building and education programs

Promote and support community education on actions to improve environmental sustainability and adapt to climate change, across a range of settings including early years, adolescence, mid-life and older years (65+).

Pillar 7. Plans and partners

Priority pillar	Relevant Council strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional level)
Improving resilience to the impacts of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate- Australian Local Government Association, June 2025Green Warrnambool Strategy 2018Warrnambool Foreshore Framework PlanWCC Extreme Heat Vulnerability Project- Urban forest StrategyWCC Heatwave Plan (Updated 2015)Warrnambool Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2023-26WCC Warrnambool Coastal Resilience Plan (2025)Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2026 (In development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Department of Energy, Environment and Climate ActionBarwon South West Climate AllianceGlenelg Hopkins Catchment Management AuthorityWannon WaterCountry Fire AuthorityState Emergency ServiceRed CrossWarrnambool Landcare and Coastcare NetworkDeakin University Centre For Farmer HealthBarwon South West Public Health NetworkSouth West HealthcareKirrae HealthWorn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operativeGunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative

Priority pillar	Relevant Council strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional)
 1. Improving liveability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warrnambool City Council Plan 2025-2029 Victoria's draft 30 year infrastructure strategy, Infrastructure Victoria, March 2025 Victoria's Housing Statement, the decade ahead 2024-2034 Wellbeing in Victoria: A strategy to promote good mental health 2025-2035 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brophy Youth and Family Services Salvation Army Catholic Care Mind Australia Department of Families Fairness & Housing Housing investors/developers/community housing agencies Wellways Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative Women's Housing Meli Department of Transport and Planning VLine Warrnambool Bus Lines South West All Abilities Advocacy group Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation
 2. Prevention of gender-based violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 Our Equal State- Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-2027 Change the story- A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (Our Watch), 2021 WCC Gender Equity Action Plan BSW Women's Health and Wellbeing- Sexual and reproductive health consultation survey- snapshot (2025) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West South West Sport Department of Education (plus local schools) South West TAFE Barwon South West Public Health Unit Wannon Water Kirrae Health Service Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Victoria Police Orange Door SAFV Centre Warrnambool (Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre) Western Victoria Public Health Network
 3. Improving social and emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State reports/strategies Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System-final report Wellbeing in Victoria: A strategy to promote good mental health 2025-2035 Victorian Suicide prevention and response strategy 2024-2034 VicHealth- The next 10 years 2023-2033 Reshaping systems together for a healthier, fairer Victoria Pride in our future; Victoria's LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2022-32 Barwon South West Public Health Unit Catchment Strategy Western Victoria Primary Health Network needs assessments/ strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WRAD Health Meli Wellways Lifeline Let's Talk Beyond the Bell Neil Porter Legacy Brophy Youth and Family Services BSW Public Health Unit Kirrae Health Service Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Western Victoria Primary Health Network Department of Education (plus local schools) BigLife Warrnambool South West All Abilities Advocacy Group Warrnambool Multicultural Community South West Healthcare Respect 2040 partnership
 4. Reducing harm from gambling, alcohol and other drugs (AOD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Drug Action Team - Community Action Plan (In development 2025) Warrnambool Gaming Policy (2014- to be reviewed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meli South West Healthcare Alcohol and Drug Foundation Local Drug Action Team Western Victoria Primary Health Network WRAD Health Victoria Police Department of Justice Barwon South West Public Health Unit Brophy Youth and Family Services Deakin University Kirrae Health Inc Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Wannon Water

Priority Pillar	Relevant Council Strategies & key partner plans	Organisations to partner with (local and regional level)
 5. Increasing active living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Warrnambool Strategy Sustainable Transport Strategy Principal Pedestrian Network Warrnambool Playground Strategy Principal Bicycle Network Lake Perto Master Plan Women and Girls Participation Strategy (South West Region) Blueprint for an active Australia-Heart Foundation VicHealth - The next 10 years 2023-2033 Reshaping systems together for a healthier, fairer Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South West Sport Sport and recreation clubs/associations Barwon South West Public Health Unit Allied health services - exercise physiologists, physiotherapists, general practitioners Private gyms, personal trainers Department of Education Kirrae Health Services
 6. Increasing healthy eating and improving local food systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VicHealth - The next 10 years 2023-2033 Reshaping systems together for a healthier, fairer Victoria South West Health Care - Food Insecurity in Warrnambool 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South West Healthcare Western District Food Share Barwon South West Public Health Unit Warrnambool Community Garden Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre Salvation Army - Warrnambool Anglicare Victoria Neighbouring councils & community health services Kirrae Health Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative
 7. Improving resilience to the impacts of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate- Australian Local Government Association, June 2025 Green Warrnambool Strategy 2018 Warrnambool Foreshore Framework Plan WCC Extreme Heat Vulnerability Project- Urban forest Strategy WCC Heatwave Plan (updated 2015) Warrnambool Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2023-26 WCC Warrnambool Coastal Resilience Plan (2025) Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2026 (in development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action Barwon South West Climate Alliance Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority Wannon Water Country Fire Authority State Emergency Service Red Cross Warrnambool Landcare and Coastcare Network Deakin University Centre For Farmer Health Barwon South West Public Health Network South West Healthcare Kirrae Health Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative

Partners

Warrnambool City Council would like to thank all the people and the following organisations for their contribution to the development of the Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-2029

- Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- Beyond the Bell
- Brophy Youth and Family Services
- Barwon South West Public Health Unit
- Department of Education
- Department of Justice
- Kirrae Health Service
- Meli
- SAFV Centre Warrnambool
- South West All Abilities Advocacy Group
- South West Health Care
- South West Sport
- South West TAFE
- Victoria Police
- Wannon Water
- Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West
- Warrnambool Multicultural Association
- Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative
- Worn Gundidj Aboriginal Co-operative
- WRAD Health
- Western Victoria Public Health Network