

MURRINDINDI SHIRE 2021-25

MUNICIPAL PUBLIC HEALTH
AND WELLBEING PLAN



Murrindindi
Shire Council



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Acknowledgement of Country and First Nations Peoples

Murrindindi Shire Council is proud to acknowledge the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land we now call Murrindindi Shire.

We pay our respects to First Nations leaders and elders, past, present and emerging, who are the keepers of history, traditions, knowledge and culture of this land.

We commit to working in collaboration with traditional owners of this land in a spirit of reconciliation and partnership.



INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present to our community the Murrindindi Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 (Our Plan). Our Plan has been developed in collaboration with Council, the Murrindindi Shire Health and Wellbeing Consortium and the community, and aims to align our focus for health and wellbeing initiatives over the next four years.

It provides a strategic framework to support positive health outcomes in our Shire, and aims to build healthy, resilient and connected communities. Our Plan embodies the shared direction of Council, the Consortium and the community and our commitment to work cohesively to ensure that all people have the opportunity to achieve good health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the community with a public health challenge unlike any we have seen before. While residents of Murrindindi Shire have shown extraordinary resilience and community spirit in light of these challenges, the flow-on effects are likely to be felt for years to come. We recognise the ongoing impact of the pandemic and are committed to supporting our community to respond, adapt and recover now and into the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR PARTNERS

We would like to acknowledge the support from the Murrindindi Shire Health and Wellbeing Consortium (The Consortium) in the development, delivery and evaluation of Our Plan.

We are thankful for the time and expertise that members of the Consortium have contributed and look forward to continuing to work in partnership to improve health and wellbeing across Murrindindi Shire.



OUR SHIRE AND OUR PEOPLE

Murrindindi Shire is located north east of the city of Melbourne and encompasses 3,873 square kilometres. Its southern and south-western boundaries border the urban fringe of Melbourne while the remaining boundaries pass through rural environments.

At the 2016 Census, the residential population was 13,732 residents, with an annual growth rate of 0.9%. The median age of the Shire was 47.8 years old, compared to the state average of 37 years old. Murrindindi Shire is projected to have a slower population growth than other municipalities at a similar distance from Melbourne. This provides an opportunity to carefully plan our future, ensuring that we retain the Shire's rural character and scenic beauty that our community highly values.

Like many regional areas, Murrindindi Shire has an ageing population with fewer young people and more people over fifty than the Victorian average. This trend is more evident in the eastern side of the Shire than the western side. Public transport is a challenge for residents, we tend to rely on private vehicles and the help of community networks to get us where we need to go.

As a result of our rural location, we often have to travel long distances to access services including health and education. Climate change is a leading public health risk (WHO 2015) and our communities are highly vulnerable to the impacts of bushfires, heat waves, ecological deterioration and lower agricultural productivity, all of which are projected to increase in severity as the climate becomes hotter and more variable.

OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25 (Our Plan) outlines the high-level strategic health and wellbeing priorities for the Shire. Our Plan is a collaborative document which brings together the key objectives of existing Council and Consortium member policies, plans and strategies which contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of our Shire.

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 recognises the key role of councils in improving the health and wellbeing of people in their municipality, both across internal departments and in collaboration with the community.

Our Plan is underpinned by a partnership approach, which aims to create more effective processes in the delivery of strategies that support long-term positive health outcomes for our communities.

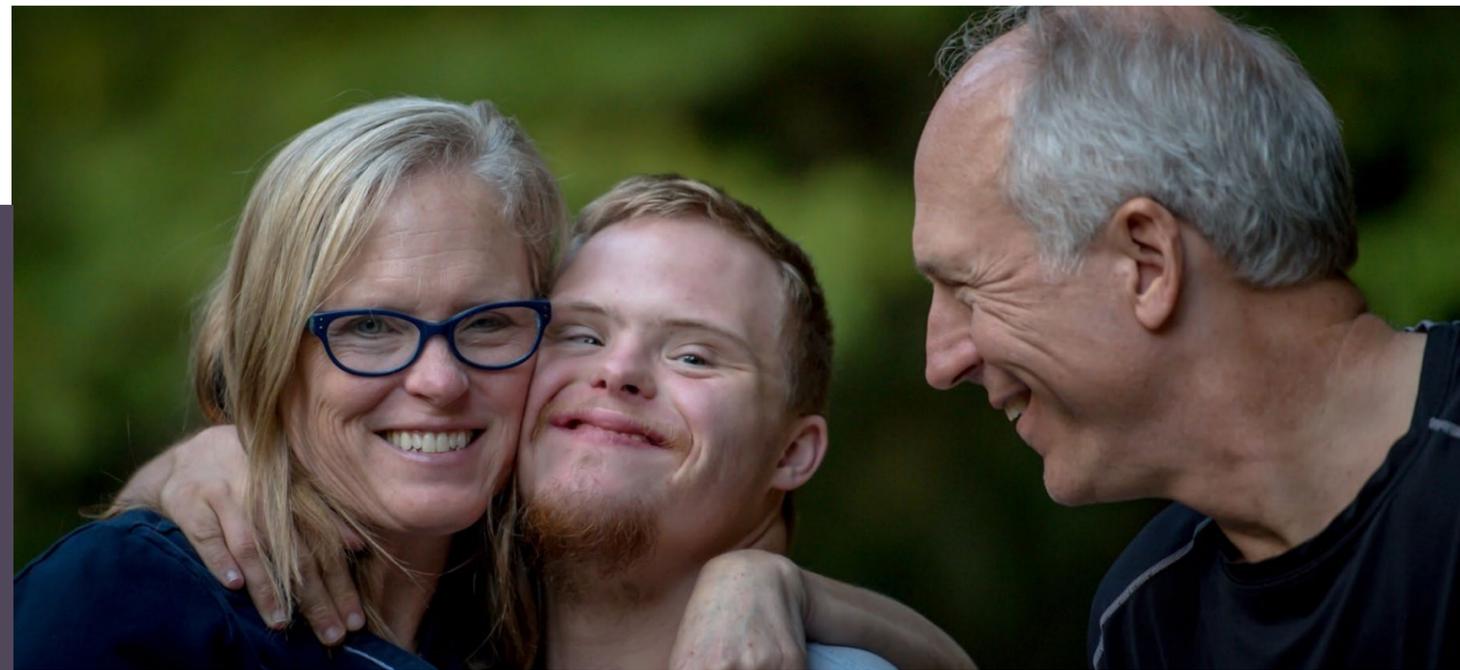
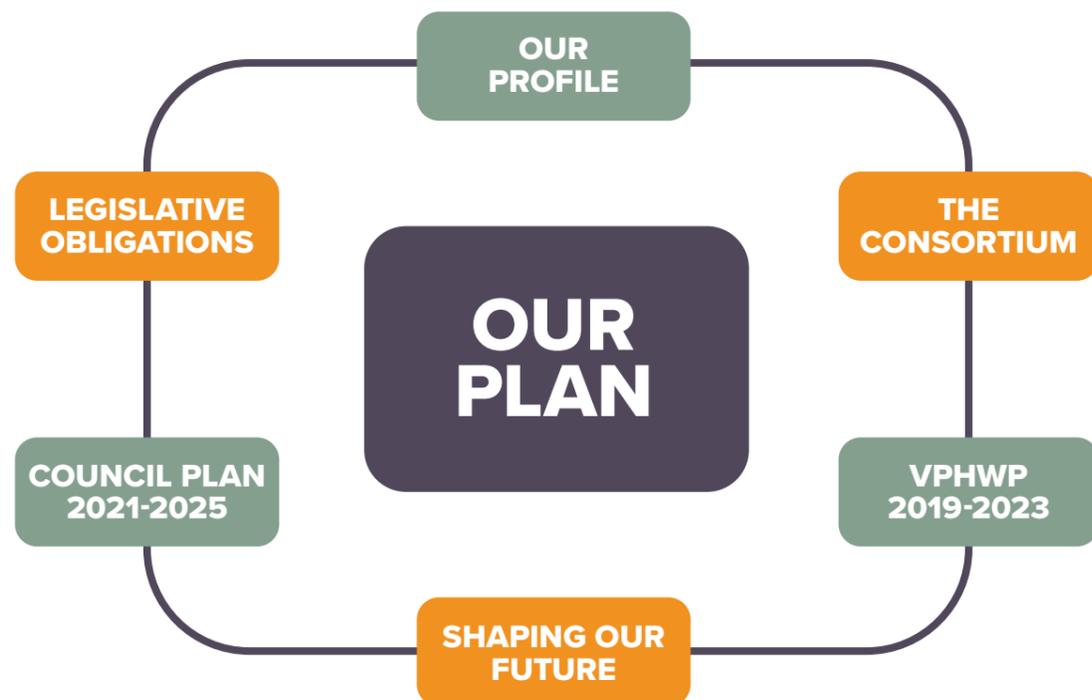


HOW OUR PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

Our Plan reflects a range of influences, including community feedback gathered in the 'Shaping Our Future' community engagement project, conversations with the Murrindindi Shire Health and Wellbeing Consortium and our legislative requirements.

These influences are reflected in the image below, and each of these influences are explained in further detail.

WHAT INFORMS OUR PLAN



THE MURRINDINDI SHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONSORTIUM (THE CONSORTIUM)

To develop Our Plan, Council has worked in partnership with a number of external agencies involved in delivering health-related outcomes in our community. Together with Council, these agencies form The Consortium, and will work alongside Council to deliver Our Plan. Council and members of The Consortium will work collaboratively to deliver on actions and each agency will take on a variety of roles throughout the four-year plan, including project lead, facilitator, collaborative partner, advocate or project funder.

We would like to thank all members of The Consortium for their time and expertise. We look forward to continuing to work together to support and encourage active and healthy communities in the Shire.

The Consortium members include

- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - Goulburn Area - East Division
- Alexandra District Health
- Yea and District Memorial Hospital
- Nexus Primary Health
- Lower Hume Primary Care Partnership
- Menzies Support Services
- Family Care
- Alexandra HUB
- Yea Community House
- Flowerdale Community House
- Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House
- Toolangi Castella Community House
- Primary Care Connect
- Valley Sport
- Victoria Police
- Central Ranges LLEN
- AFL – Eastern Division

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

In March and April 2021, Council conducted the 'Shaping Our Future' community engagement project, designed to inform our 10-Year Community Vision, and the Council Plan 2021-2025. This engagement also provided valuable input which we used to help design our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Over 500 community members who live, work and play in Murrindindi Shire provided valuable feedback in the first stages of the Shaping our Future project, with feedback gathered forming the basis of the 10 year Community Vision, the Council Plan 2021-2025 and Our Plan.

The first stages of the Shaping Our Future project were delivered across March and April of 2021, with 434 survey and 'ideas board' responses captured on Council's online engagement platform, The Loop. 28 Easy English short surveys were completed, capturing the thoughts of community members with lower literacy or with English as a second language. In addition, many people shared their thoughts and feedback with Councillors and Council staff at our events and pop-up kiosks.

The community told us what they value most about living in Murrindindi Shire and about their hopes for the future.

From this, the 10-Year Community Vision was created.

Murrindindi Shire 10-Year Community Vision

Through our combined efforts, our community is vibrant and resilient. We

- are inclusive, embrace diversity and encourage the participation of all
- welcome new residents and visitors to enjoy and contribute to our Shire
- respect and celebrate the cultural heritage of our First Nations People and those who have come before us
- actively support the current and future needs and aspirations of people of all ages and abilities
- enjoy, participate in and promote culture and the arts, sport and recreation
- are leaders in waste reduction and combating climate change
- protect our natural environment and biodiversity and preserve our rural landscapes
- grow through managed land development, business entrepreneurship and enhanced learning opportunities

During the Shaping our Future project, our community emphasised the importance of improving opportunities for good health and wellbeing, including

- opportunities for people to connect with each other and to feel safe, healthy and engaged
- celebration of our vibrant, diverse and creative communities
- support for our children, young people and older adults to be happy and healthy, in collaboration with our community
- valuing our natural environment and unique rural opportunities
- promotion of recreational activity within our Shire

Our Profile

Our Profile is a comprehensive collection of evidence collated from local, state and federal data sources. This document has been used as an evidence base to support the strategies and actions that will be delivered throughout Our Plan.

Our Profile aims to

- provide an overview of the health and wellbeing status of people in the Shire, and identify key priority areas
- present data on the wider determinants of health that also influence health and wellbeing outcomes in the Shire
- provide an evidence-based resource for use by Council and community stakeholders to inform decision making, planning, action and investment in health and wellbeing
- inform emergency and recovery planning, including COVID-19

The following data reflects some of the key findings presented in Our Profile:

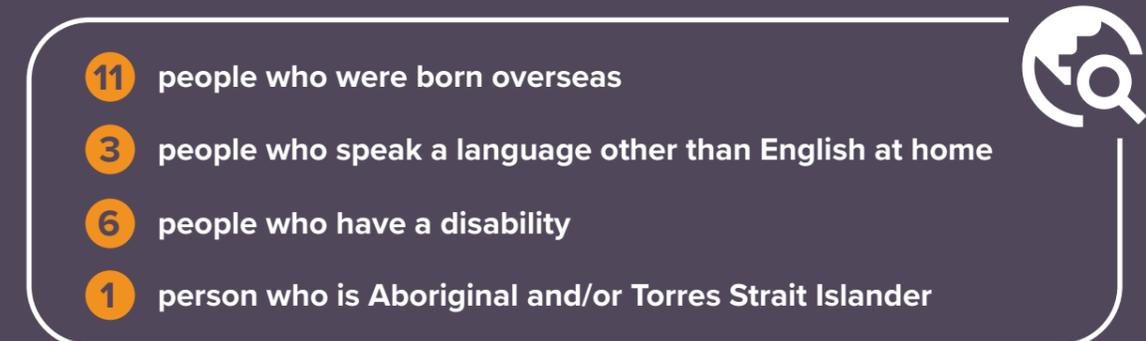
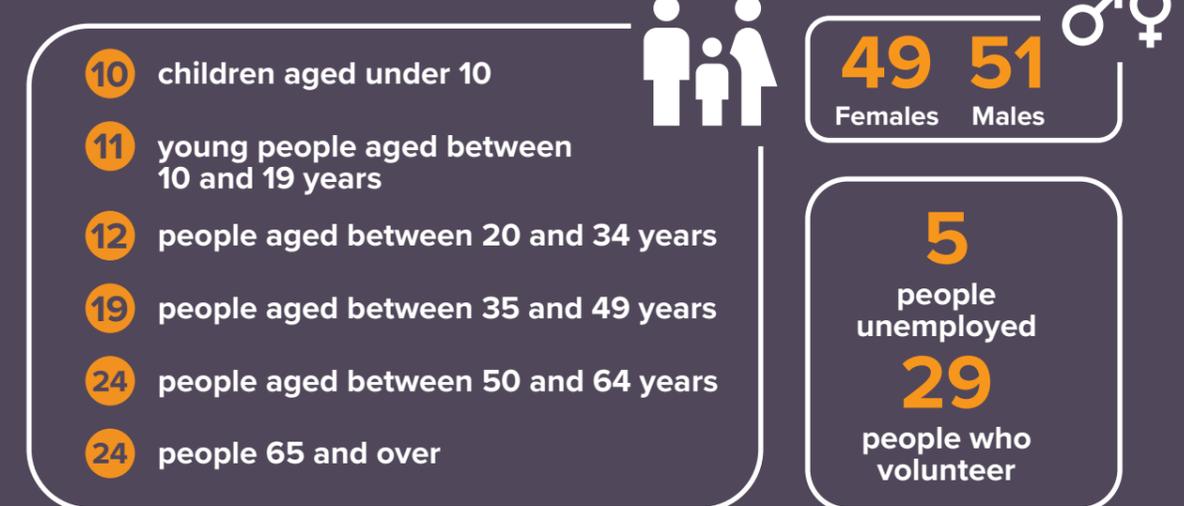
Total Population: 13,732

If we were 100 workers, we would be:



Note: you may note that figures don't always add up to 100 as in some cases we have only shown the main categories.
Data sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census. Victorian Women's Health Atlas, 2021 REMPLAN Economy Report.

If Murrindindi Shire was made up of 100 people there would be:



LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS

Our Plan has been developed with reference to a range of relevant legislation, including

- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Climate Change Act 2017
- Local Government Act 2020
- Environment Protection Act 2017
- Tobacco Act 1987 & Tobacco Regulations 2017
- Planning and Environment Act 1987

VICTORIAN PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2019–23 (VPHWP)

The VPHWP is the overarching framework for guiding improvement to public health and wellbeing in Victoria. In the development of their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans, councils must have regard to the VPHWP. This is to encourage state and local governments to work together to strengthen the health and wellbeing of communities.

The VPHWP identifies ten state level priorities for the improvement of health and wellbeing outcomes for all Victorians. These priorities have been selected as they are

- the greatest contributors to the burden of disease
- a source of identified health inequalities
- emerging threats or challenges to the public's health and wellbeing
- likely to result in significant future health burdens if no action is taken

Many of these priorities are co-beneficial in nature and the strategies presented in Our Plan are designed to maximise benefits for our community.

Co-benefits are the positive effects that an action aimed at one objective has on other objective. For example, reducing harmful alcohol and drug use has the co-benefit of improving mental wellbeing.

VICTORIAN PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN

2019-2023 Priorities



Reducing tobacco related harm



Increasing active living



Increasing healthy eating



Tackling climate change and its impact on health



Reducing injury in the community



Reducing harmful alcohol and drug use



Preventing all forms of violence



Decreasing the risk of drug resistant infections



Improving mental wellbeing

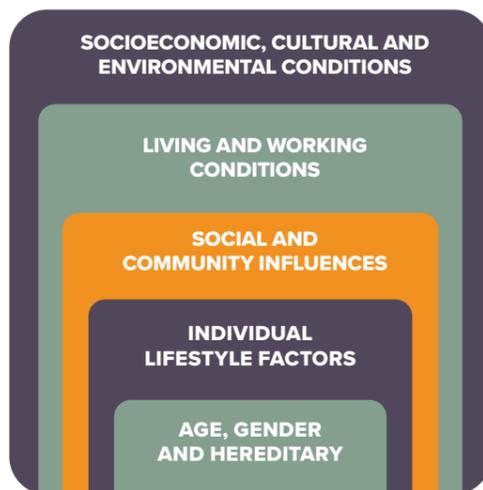


Improving sexual and reproductive health

THE DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

In addition, in developing the strategies that create Our Plan we have given consideration to the known determinants which impact our health and wellbeing outcomes.

Many factors combine together to affect the health of individuals and communities. These are conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. Whether people are healthy or not is largely determined by their circumstances and environment (WHO, 2020).



Adapted from Dahlgren & Whitehead 1991

Determinants of health may include

- Income and social status
- Employment and job security
- Education
- Food security
- Gender
- Early childhood development
- Social inclusion
- Access to health services

Recognising and responding to the wider determinants of health is consistent with the VPHWP and is the best way to improve equality of health outcomes for all. Public health and wellbeing issues are complex and require a broad, inclusive systemic approach to impact change and reduce health inequalities across the population.





OUR PROMISE

Our Promise is a set of guiding values that will direct the work of partner agencies as we work collectively to support the health and wellbeing of the people who live, work and play in Murrindindi Shire.

- **Collaborate:** Work together and coordinate our efforts to improve health and wellbeing within the community.
- **Innovate:** Develop and trial new ideas and create innovative solutions to health and wellbeing priorities.
- **Communicate:** Ensure our communities are aware of and involved in creating and supporting programs that meet their needs.
- **Participate:** Commit to delivering and monitoring the actions in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

OUR STRATEGIC THEMES

The strategic themes, strategies and key focus areas of Our Plan reflect the priorities of the

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- 10-Year Community Vision
- Victorian Public Health And Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023
- Priorities of our partner organisations

To promote and protect health and wellbeing at a population-level, actions need to help improve daily living conditions and address health inequities. The strategic themes and strategies of Our Plan are intentionally broad and allow for flexibility in The Consortium's response to emerging issues and opportunities alongside the unique needs of our communities.

The strategies allow for changes to political, economic, natural and social environments across the four years of Our Plan.



OUR STRATEGIES

Based on each of our strategic themes, we have developed a vision, strategies and key focus areas to guide the direction of our actions over the life of the plan. Each year, we will revisit our strategies to ensure they continue to align with the priorities of our community and our partner organisations.

Our Connected Communities		
<i>Our vision: We will build resilient communities where people are accepted, safe and feel they are a valuable part of the place where they live. We will aim to support vulnerable people in our communities and provide opportunities for all people to connect.</i>		
Strategies	Key focus areas	VPHWP key and co-benefits
<p>Together we will:</p> <p>1.1 support our diverse and inclusive communities, and we will promote the respect, safety, and participation of all people</p> <p>1.2 recognise and celebrate the cultural heritage of our First Nations People</p> <p>1.3 seek to understand and respond to the unique needs of children, youth and older people in our Shire</p> <p>1.4 work alongside community groups and volunteers, and support our communities to plan for their future</p>	<p>Promote inclusion of all people regardless of their age, gender identity, sexuality, disability and cultural or religious beliefs</p> <p>Understand and respond to the challenges of family violence and gender inequality</p> <p>Create strong partnerships with Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations through joint initiatives</p> <p>Deliver and collaborate on diverse programs that benefit children and young people</p> <p>Support the needs of older people and seek to understand and respond the challenges of our aging population</p> <p>Support vulnerable people and people with diverse needs to reduce social isolation and increase access to services</p> <p>Recognise, collaborate with and provide support to our volunteers and community groups</p> <p>Work with the community to deliver events that connect people and enhance community participation</p>	  

Our Active Environments		
<i>Our vision: Our physical and social environments are vibrant, inclusive and accessible. We want to celebrate the natural environment we live in, and create spaces where people feel motivated and comfortable to participate.</i>		
Strategies	Key focus areas	VPHWP key and co-benefits
<p>Together we will:</p> <p>2.1 promote and provide opportunities for participation in recreation, sport and active living</p> <p>2.2 encourage community exploration and care of our beautiful natural environment and rural lifestyle</p> <p>2.3 recognise the relationship between climate change and our health and aim to achieve resilient and safe communities in light of future challenges</p> <p>2.4 support culture and the arts by exploring new creative opportunities to develop and showcase local initiatives</p> <p>2.5 remove barriers to participation and support flexible and accessible opportunities for community members to engage with initiatives, programs and services</p>	<p>Promote, improve and provide access to information about our local tracks, trails and paths</p> <p>Seek to provide and promote appropriate, accessible and high quality recreation and sporting facilities</p> <p>Collaborate in the future development of our local sporting and recreation clubs</p> <p>Recognise, promote and collaborate on initiatives that encourage people to connect with our natural environment for physical activity, leisure and caring for country</p> <p>Promote active living initiatives and explore opportunities for active transport programs</p> <p>Identify and promote the co-benefits between health and wellbeing and climate change initiatives</p> <p>Collaborate with the community to deliver arts and cultural events across the Shire</p> <p>Promote an accessible and inclusive approach to service delivery, respond to the needs of the community and investigate opportunities for improvement</p>	   

Our Healthy People		
Our vision: We aim to increase access to healthier options for people that live, work and play in Murrindindi Shire to support improved physical and mental health outcomes. We will aim to empower our communities and promote co-ownership of health and wellbeing initiatives.		
Strategies	Key focus areas	VPHWP key and co-benefits
<p>Together we will:</p> <p>3.1 respond to emerging issues and challenges to health and wellbeing for all members of our community, including the Covid-19 pandemic</p> <p>3.2 recognise opportunities to achieve healthier outcomes, and introduce new initiatives that are accessible, affordable and appropriate for our communities</p> <p>3.3 work with our partners to increase access to healthier food and drinks and support our communities to make healthier choices</p> <p>3.4 promote community involvement and joint ownership of health initiatives, and support community-led partnerships and programs</p>	<p>Recognise the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on our Shire and continue to lead and collaborate on initiatives to support our communities</p> <p>Investigate and plan for future challenges in emergency management</p> <p>Recognise the importance of food security and local food networks, collaborate on initiatives that respond to local issues and broader regional priorities</p> <p>Increase access to healthy food and drink in Council facilities and within our communities. Understand challenges in this space</p> <p>Ensure health and wellbeing information is accessible to all and promote increased health literacy</p> <p>Collaborate on mental health and wellbeing initiatives and promote access to information and services</p> <p>Review tobacco control initiatives and environmental tobacco management policies</p> <p>Support new health initiatives and explore opportunities to collaborate with community groups, non-government organisations and other government agencies</p>	    

Our Strong Partnerships	
Our vision: We recognise that improving health and wellbeing is the responsibility of all. We will work cohesively as partners and within our communities to achieve our common goals and objectives, sharing our successes and challenges.	
Strategies	Key focus areas
<p>Together we will:</p> <p>4.1 collectively advocate for improved services and facilities within Murrindindi Shire</p> <p>4.2 promote the availability of services within our Shire and connect community members to health and wellbeing opportunities</p> <p>4.3 maintain our strong community partnerships and continually seek opportunities to collaborate on the delivery of health and wellbeing programs</p> <p>4.4 promote community ownership of health and wellbeing initiatives to ensure that our programs are reflective of the needs of the people they serve</p>	<p>Work alongside our partner organisations to attract skilled health professionals to Murrindindi Shire</p> <p>Advocate for the continued improvement of health and wellbeing services available to residents of Murrindindi Shire</p> <p>Seek State and Federal funding to allow us to achieve connected, safe and healthy communities</p> <p>Continually review service delivery in line with community input and feedback to ensure accessibility for all</p> <p>Empower our communities to increase control over their health and wellbeing outcomes, ensuring that harder to reach voices are elevated</p> <p>Recognise opportunities for co-ownership of health and wellbeing initiatives across organisations and our community</p> <p>Retain, strengthen and grow community and organisational partnerships to best serve the needs of our communities</p> <p>Maintain and update Our Profile with the latest health and wellbeing data for our Shire to guarantee our programs have a robust evidence base</p>

DELIVERING AND EVALUATING OUR PLAN

While recognising that local government has a leadership role in a strategic planning, advocacy, and coordination of a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing plan, partnerships with the community, service providers and other local stakeholders are essential in achieving success. Building communities with the tools for good health and wellbeing is a broad, complex task. It is a responsibility that is shared between government and non-government agencies, professional, business, community groups and individuals.

Council will review Our Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend it to ensure the focus areas remain current and relevant to the needs of our communities and any emerging issues. Each year, we will create an implementation plan that outlines our actions for the coming 12 months. The implementation plan will provide detail on activities, timeframes, responsibilities and measures of success and progress will be reported on annually. Our Profile will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis as new health and wellbeing data becomes available from state, federal and local sources.

Our Plan recognises that the best approaches to improving health outcomes are often built from the ground up. We welcome and encourage the involvement of our communities and groups, non-government organisations and other levels of government in the development and delivery of our actions over the four years of Our Plan.

Our goal is to achieve optimal health and wellbeing outcomes for all those that call Murrindindi Shire home.





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