Community Health & Wellbeing Plan

2021-2025

Mildura Rural City Council

Acknowledgment of country

Mildura Rural City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land, which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people living throughout Victoria. Whilst the terms "Koorie" of "Koori" are commonly used to describe Aboriginal people of southeast Australia, we have used the term "Aboriginal" to include all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who are living in our municipality.

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Glossary of terms

Access/accessibility
Is about ensuring that information, spaces, services and programs reach everyone and are responsive to everyone's needs (Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement, 2021).

CHWP
This document, the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Cultural safety
Cultural Safety is being acceptable to difference, having the ability to analyse power imbalances, institutional discrimination, colonisation and relationships with settlers. Cultural safety is about providing quality health care that fits with the familiar cultural values and norms of the person accessing the service, that may differ from your own and/or the dominant culture (Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, 2014).

Diversity
Is about respecting and valuing what is unique about each of us including our backgrounds, personality, life experiences, beliefs, ethnicity, gender, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, communication style, career path, life experience, educational background, geographic location, income level, marital status, parental status and other variables that influence personal perspectives.

Equity
Means that available information, spaces, services and programs should deliver outcomes that are equal for all. This requires that services are able to consider and respond to the intersecting forms of disadvantage and discrimination to truly cater to all diverse needs (Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement, 2021).

Family violence
Family violence is defined in the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 as any behaviour by a person towards a family member where that behaviour is physically or sexually abusive; emotionally or psychologically abusive; economically abusive; or threatening, coercive, controlling or dominating in ways that cause fear for the safety or wellbeing of the family member (or that of another). Family violence is also behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, the behaviours above. A family member includes a current or former partner; someone who has, or has had, an intimate personal relationship with the person using violence; parents of children (including elderly parents of adult children); a sibling; those in blended families; those in extended families; and those living with disabilities who receive care from others.

Gender equality
Gender equality means equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes between persons of different genders.
Source Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020

Gender inequality
Gender inequality is the unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunities between men, women, trans, gender diverse and intersex people. Gender inequality results from a range of things, including laws and policies which constrain people of different genders rights and opportunities, and is reinforced through more informal norms, practices and structures.
Source – Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

Violence against women

Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to any person who identifies as a woman. This includes threats of harm or coercion and can occur in public or in private life. While violence against women often occurs in a family or relationship context, violence against women is broader than what is covered by the term family violence as it includes, for example, harassment at work or sexual assault by a stranger, neighbour, colleague or acquaintance.
Source – Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria.

Prevention of violence against women (PVAW)

In prevention of violence against women work, the terms prevention, primary prevention, violence prevention and PVAW are often used interchangeably. While they each have slightly different definitions, in this context all of these terms are generally understood to mean the primary prevention of violence against women. These terms are also understood to include the prevention of family violence. While there is an established evidence base around the drivers of violence against women, understanding of what drives other forms of family violence is still emerging.
Source – Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria.

Homelessness

A person will experience homelessness when there is a lack of suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:
Is in a dwelling that is inadequate;
Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
Does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

Intersectionality/intersectional lens

Refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Aspects of a person's identity can include social characteristics such as:
Aboriginality
gender
sex
sexual orientation
gender identity
ethnicity
colour
nationality
refugee or asylum seeker background
migration or visa status
language
religion
ability
age
mental health
socioeconomic status
housing status
geographic location
medical record
criminal record.
(Understanding Intersectionality, 2021)

LGBTQIASB+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Sistergirl, Brotherboy

Social cohesion

A socially cohesive society is one which works towards the wellbeing of all its members, minimises exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2014).

Our region

Located in north west Victoria, the Mildura Rural City Council area covers almost ten per cent of the State.

The region's landscape includes unique Mallee vegetation, broad acre grain properties, intensive horticultural farms and vibrant towns.

Mildura Rural City shares borders with New South Wales and South Australia, which makes it a strategically important regional service centre for three states.

The beautiful Murray River winds its way through much of the municipality and is a focal point for visitors and those who call the region home.

22,082km2
Land area
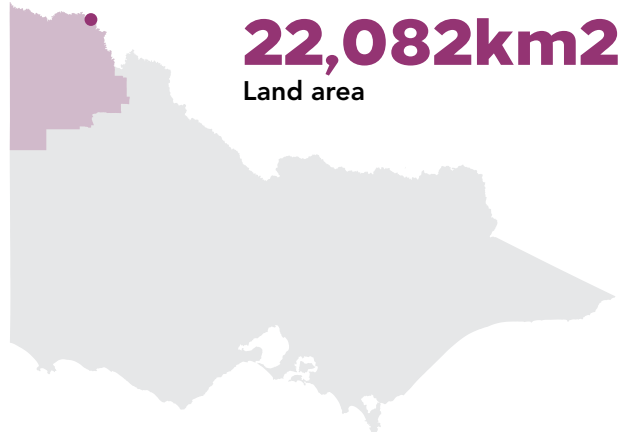
55,937
2021 estimated resident population

59,439
2031 projected resident population
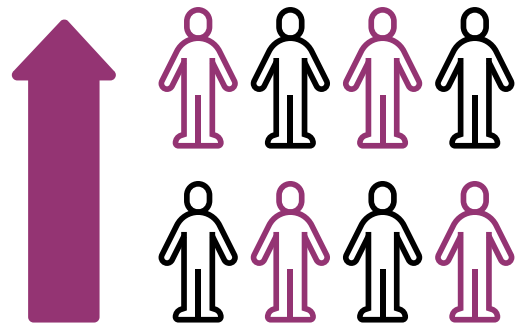
Key industries

Dryland farming, irrigated horticulture (table grapes, wine grapes, dried grapes, citrus, vegetables and nuts), tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services.

Our towns

Cabarita	Merbein	Ouyen
Cardross	Meringur	Red Cliffs
Colignan	Mildura	Underbool
Cowangie	Murrayville	Walpeup
Cullulleraine	Nangiloc	Werrimull
Irymple	Nichols Point	

Emerging industries

Renewable energy generation, aquaculture, mineral sands mining and recycling
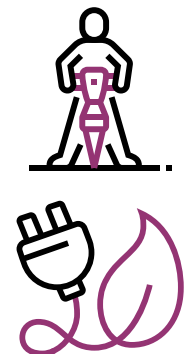
$6.839 billion
Annual economic output

10.4%
Born overseas
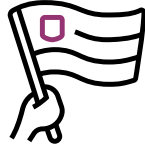
4.5%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

5,362
Businesses
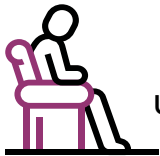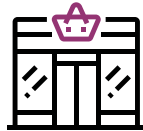
3.87%
Unemployment rate

6.8%
Need assistance with core activities

22,368
Jobs

9.5%
Speak a language other than English at home

Mayor's message

I am proud to present the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 – one of Mildura Rural City Council's key strategic documents.

Good health and wellbeing is central to the success of every community, with this document outlining key actions, priorities and partnerships to achieve this vision for our community.

As a community, we all deserve to be healthy and well, be safe and secure, have the means to participate, be connected and reside in a liveable community.

The Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 has been prepared following an extensive consultation process with key stakeholders and, most importantly, our community, and focuses on five domains and 17 local priorities. It also represents our region's contribution to many statewide initiatives and strategies.

We also have to take into account the negative impact the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had on our community's mental health. Recovery will be important, with many of the actions identified in this document to aid in this work.

Health and wellbeing goes far beyond just physical health, and I am proud to see collaborative efforts committed to as part of this plan, addressing 17 priority areas:
• Increasing healthy eating
• Reducing harmful alcohol and drug use
• Improving mental wellbeing
• Improving child and youth wellbeing
• Promoting healthy ageing
• Preventing and mitigating family violence
• Preventing child neglect and maltreatment
• Reducing and mitigating homelessness
• Promoting community safety
• Increasing active living
• Facilitating education and employment pathways
• Promoting disability accessibility
• Pursuing reconciliation
• Pursuing gender equality and preventing violence against women
• Pursuing equality, inclusion and diversity
• Implementing emissions strategy
• Mitigating urban heat

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this plan and offer our commitment to working together as a community to improve health and wellbeing over the next four years.

Jason Modica
Mayor

Our partners in health and wellbeing

Signed Endorsement

Council recognises there are many well-developed partnerships in place across our community which influence a range of health and wellbeing outcomes. This document has been prepared in conjunction with external partner organisation priorities common to our organisations which require a collaborative focus, strategic leadership and advocacy to achieve collective impact for the community.

This plan considers priority areas from the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023. It will be implemented through partnership Action Plans where required.

The Community Health and Wellbeing Plan will profile and progress agreed key partnership work to improve outcomes for health and wellbeing in the community.

The following partners, on behalf of their respective departments and organisations, have endorsed the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan, 2021-2025.

DFFH (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) is a Victorian state government department focused on child protection, housing, disability, the prevention of family violence, multicultural affairs, LGBTIQ+ equality, veterans, women and youth.

Craig Hocking
Senior Advisor

MFVE (Mallee Family Violence Executive) exists to promote an integrated approach to Mallee's family violence service system and drive improved coordination of services.

Joanne Sheehan-Paterson
Chair

Victoria Police serve the Victorian community and uphold the law to promote a safe, secure and orderly society.

Inspector Michelle Young
Local Area Commander

Christie Centre Inc is an NDIS registered disability provider offering individual, group and employment support for individuals with a disability.

Florence Davidson
Executive Officer

HANDS UP MALLEE

HUM (Hands Up Mallee) is a Social Impact Initiative which brings local leaders and community together to address social issues and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Jane McCracken
Executive Officer

Mallee Sports Assembly

The Mallee Sports Assembly actively works with communities in the Mallee to promote and encourage healthier lifestyles, wellbeing and active recreation through inclusion of all, including programs targeted to people with disabilities or those that are part of socially and economically disadvantaged groups.

Carmel McKay
Executive Officer

masp
'caring for our community'

MASP (Mallee Accommodation & Support Program Ltd) is a service provider and co-ordinator of NDIS & Disability Services, Homelessness Support, Family and Youth Services, Youth Mentoring and Foster Care.

Greg Robinson
Acting Chief Executive Officer

SCHS
Sunraysia Community Health Services

SCHS is a local community not for profit organisation that works with people across the lifespan to meet their health and social needs and live well within the community.

Simone Heald
Chief Executive Officer

MSAU (Mallee Sexual Assault Unity) – MDVS (Mallee Domestic Violence Services) provide support and care to victims/survivors of sexual assault and assistance to victims/survivors of domestic violence respectively.

Joanne Sheehan-Paterson
Chief Executive Officer

women's health
LODDON MALLEE

Women's Health Loddon Mallee Women's Health Loddon Mallee (WHLM) is the regional women's health service for communities across regional North-West Victoria.

Tricia Currie
Chief Executive Officer

phn MURRAY
An Australian Government Initiative

Murray PHN (Public Health Network) engages key partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of health services and improve the co-ordination of care.

Merryl Whyte
Place Based Trial Coordinator

MILDURA BASE PUBLIC HOSPITAL

MPBH (Mildura Public Base Hospital) is the main hospital in the region providing a wide range of health services.

Terry Welch
Chief Executive Officer

MTHCS
Mallee Track Health and Community Service

Mallee Track Health and Community Services (MTHCS) is a health service dedicated to improving the health of our residents in the Mallee Track area across all ages throughout the community.

Lois O'Callaghan
Chief Executive Officer

MDAS
MALLEE DISTRICT ABORIGINAL SERVICES

Mallee District Aboriginal Services provide health, family, early years and wellbeing services to better support Aboriginal communities across the Mallee region.

Jackie Turfrey
Chief Executive Officer

haven
HOME, SAFE

Haven are a homelessness services agency that provides a range of housing solutions and wrap-around supports to help people find and keep a place they can call home.

Trevor Gibbs
General Manager

smecc
Rise higher.

SMECC (Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council) provides representation, as well as a range of services, to culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the region.

Joelle Brown
Acting Executive Officer

Introduction

Mildura Rural City Council has a responsibility to improve health and wellbeing outcomes, reduce health inequalities and create healthy environments for everyone who lives, learns, works or plays in our community.

The Victorian Public Health & Wellbeing Act 2008 requires local government to develop a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan every four years. The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (or Community Health and Wellbeing Plan) provides a framework that supports the health and wellbeing of the community.

The development of this plan has been informed by extensive consultation with services, stakeholders, community and by analysing local community data. This has identified strategic actions that take a whole of community partnership approach to achieve.

The plan has been structured by:

- Aligning local strategies under five domains of health.

- Aligning each strategy with the ten priorities for public health and wellbeing as outlined by the State.

- Identifying local priorities alongside and in addition to the above ten priorities.

- Aligning lead and partner organisations to facilitate each strategy or action.

As a Municipality, we must focus on building a community that recognises and responds to issues that impact on community health and wellbeing. Our community has a strong history of working together to achieve great outcomes. Over the next four years we will continue to build partnerships, respond to challenges, changes and work to achieve the strategies in this plan.

Background

The Mildura Rural City Council Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 (CHWP) is a high-level plan that sets the goals and priorities for protecting, improving and promoting health and wellbeing within the Municipality.

The CHWP considers the work that impacts on the health and wellbeing of our community. In developing this plan, we made it clear that the plan was not to capture "business as usual" but more so to capture new collaborative work that could be achieved in the next four years.

The aim of the CHWP is to achieve maximum levels of health and wellbeing through identifying and assessing the actual and potential public health issues in the community and outlining strategies to prevent or minimise them.

The plan embraces a collaborative approach, informing, complementing and aligning with Council policies, strategies and plans. The plan demonstrates Council's commitment to work in partnership with a range of local health, human service and other organisations and community members by identifying initiatives that will enable an integrated and multi-sectoral approach.

Community health and wellbeing planning

Council has a range of functions prescribed by the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 that relate to the protection, improvement and promotion of the public health and wellbeing of the municipality.

They include:

- Creating an environment which supports the health of the local community and strengthens the capacity of the community and individuals to achieve better health.

- Initiating, supporting and managing public health planning processes at the local government level.

- Developing and implementing public health policies and programs within the municipal district.

- Developing and enforcing up-to-date public health standards and intervening if the health of people within the municipal district is affected.

- Facilitating and supporting local agencies whose work has an impact on public health and wellbeing.

- Co-ordinating and providing immunisation services to children living or being educated within the municipal district; and

- Ensuring that the municipal district is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

As stated in the Act, and as actioned in this plan, the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan must;

- include an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district.

- identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing.

- specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community.

- provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development,

implementation and evaluation of the public health and wellbeing plan.

- specify how the Council will work in partnership with the Department and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the public health and wellbeing plan.

- Be consistent with:
  - the Council Plan prepared under section 125 of the Local Government Act 1989; and
  - the municipal strategic statement prepared under section 12A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.
  - the municipal strategic statement prepared under section 12A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Community Health and Wellbeing Plan and The Council Plan

In March 2021 Mildura Rural City Council launched Imagine 2040 – a major project co-design process to support the community to develop a Community Vision.

A community vision is a long term aspirational view of a desired future for the future that extends beyond the jurisdiction of a Council. It highlights what the community values most and sets out long-term aspirations and key priorities that will inform the upcoming four year Council Plan.

Development of the Community Vision involves wide ranging community consultation and engagement as required under the Local Government Act (2020). Consultation consisted of three phases; the first phase was a geographically broad process which sought to understand the community's aspirations for the future, the second phase tested and confirmed key themes and the third phase is the presentation of the draft document to community for final review and refinement.

Five Community Vision themes and statements will provide the framework for the Council Plan 2021.

Community Vision themes and statements
This engagement work has helped to inform the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Environment

We will sustain and enhance our natural environment and resources for current and future generations

Community

We will be a healthy, respectful and connected community

Place

We will be a place to live, belong and visit with infrastructure and development that enhances our lifestyle

Economy

We will have a thriving economy that harnesses our strengths and capitalises on opportunity

Leadership

We will have responsible, collaborative leadership that puts community wellbeing at the heart of decision-making

Community Health and Wellbeing Plan – Integrated approach

Several existing Council strategies and plans have been identified for consolidation in the CHWP to integrate and streamline the implementation of aligned goals and actions.

Embedding these strategies in the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan recognises the importance of these areas for promoting health and wellbeing and facilitates a partnership approach to ensuring the systems, structures and services in our community are accessible, equitable and inclusive of all people in our community.

Strategies now integrated include the;

- Social Inclusion Strategy
- Healthy Ageing Strategy
- Disability Action Plan

These strategies / plans will now be deployed as annual action plans through the CHWP.

Document structure

This document responds to priorities of Council, our Partner Organisations and the State Government as expressed through the Council Plan, the strategic plans of our partners, and the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan respectively.

5 Domains

Community members are healthy and well	Community members are safe and secure	Community members have the capabilities to participate	Community members are connected to culture and community	The community is liveable

Local priorities

Increasing healthy eating Reducing harmful alcohol and drug use Improving mental wellbeing Improving child and youth wellbeing Promoting healthy ageing	Preventing and mitigating family violence Preventing child neglect and maltreatment Reducing and mitigating homelessness Promoting community safety	Increasing active living Facilitating sustainable employment Promoting disability accessibility	Pursuing reconciliation Pursuing gender equality and preventing violence against women and children Pursuing equality, inclusion and diversity	Implementing Emissions Strategy Mitigating Urban Heat

State priorities

- Tackling climate change and its impacts on health
- Reducing Injury
- Preventing all forms of violence

- Increasing healthy eating
- Decreasing the risk of drug resistant infections in the community

- Increasing active living
- Improving mental wellbeing
- Improving sexual and reproductive health

- Reducing tobacco-related harm
- Reducing harmful alcohol and drug use

Strategies

Priorities are addressed by actionable strategies

Five domains

Five domains of health provide a broad framework of objectives that fully encompass the positive initiatives that Council and its partners are conducting. The health and wellbeing actions of Council and its partner organisations fall under each of these domains.

Seventeen local priorities

Consultation with the community and Council partners identified several key areas of focus for the community. Some of these priorities align with the state priorities, some fall outside of them. It was important that we honoured this community health and wellbeing feedback and include these local priorities in our community's plan.

The local priorities are sorted by which domain they fall under, council's response to each local priority is discussed in detail in the strategies section below.

Ten state priorities

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023 (VPHWP) contains the state government's continuing vision for the public health and wellbeing of Victorians. The VPHWP sets the direction and provides a framework for coordinated action, ensuring Victorians of all ages are afforded the opportunity for optimal health and wellbeing so they can participate fully in their community, in education and/or in employment.

The most recent iteration of the VPHWP centres on ten priorities with five focus areas. These priorities identify and respond to specific emerging issues and threats.

The VPHWP also flags that organisations at the local and service level will play roles in delivering the outcomes of the plan.

The CHWP considers these key priorities and identifies strategies for council and partners to undertake.

Some ongoing positive initiatives conducted by Council and its partners go beyond the 10 priorities set out in the VPHWP, this is why the CHWP continues to be structured around the five domains.

Development of the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan

The CHWP has been developed through comprehensive engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, community members and data analysis. Each stage of the process included engagement, consultation and active feedback.

Consultation with community

Hearing the voice of community is fundamental in understanding the health and wellbeing needs of the community. Mildura Rural City Council has undertaken extensive community consultation in the development of the CHWP which has included the following.

- Consultation with over 1600 community members through development of the Community Vision and Community and Council Plan. The data was used to develop a document that drew together key themes specific to the CHWP and the 10 priority areas. The detailed themed analysis based on what community had to say about health and wellbeing was used to inform this plan.
- Surveyed 900 community members as part of the development of the Municipal Community Relief and Recovery Plan to determine the impacts of COVID-19 on the local community. Key themes that aligned with the 10 priority areas were included and used to inform this plan.
- Analysis of the Community Vision and Community and Council Plan research was themed separately with a social inclusion lens but an external consultant. The summary was used to develop the social inclusion priority areas outlined in the plan.

Consultation with organisations and stakeholders

The CHWP contains actions that are lead and implemented by Council and other local partner organisations and services. To develop these strategies, extensive consultation was undertaken with each of the partners who have signed up to this plan.

Fifteen individual consultations were held with identified stakeholders, where they were asked the following questions;

- What potential role do you see your organisation playing in this plan?
- Is there any current work your organisation is involved in that could be included in the CHWP?
- Does your organisations have any new or emerging work that could be implemented over the next 4 years?
- Do you see any future collaboration opportunities?

This information was then used to develop the strategies in this plan.

Analysis of data

A data review was undertaken as part of the project which included:

- Review of the Mildura Rural City Council's State of Mildura Rural City Report 2018 – a comprehensive demographic, health and wellbeing profile for the Mildura municipality.
- Consulted with internal Council staff regarding available data sets.
- Desktop review of all other current data sources

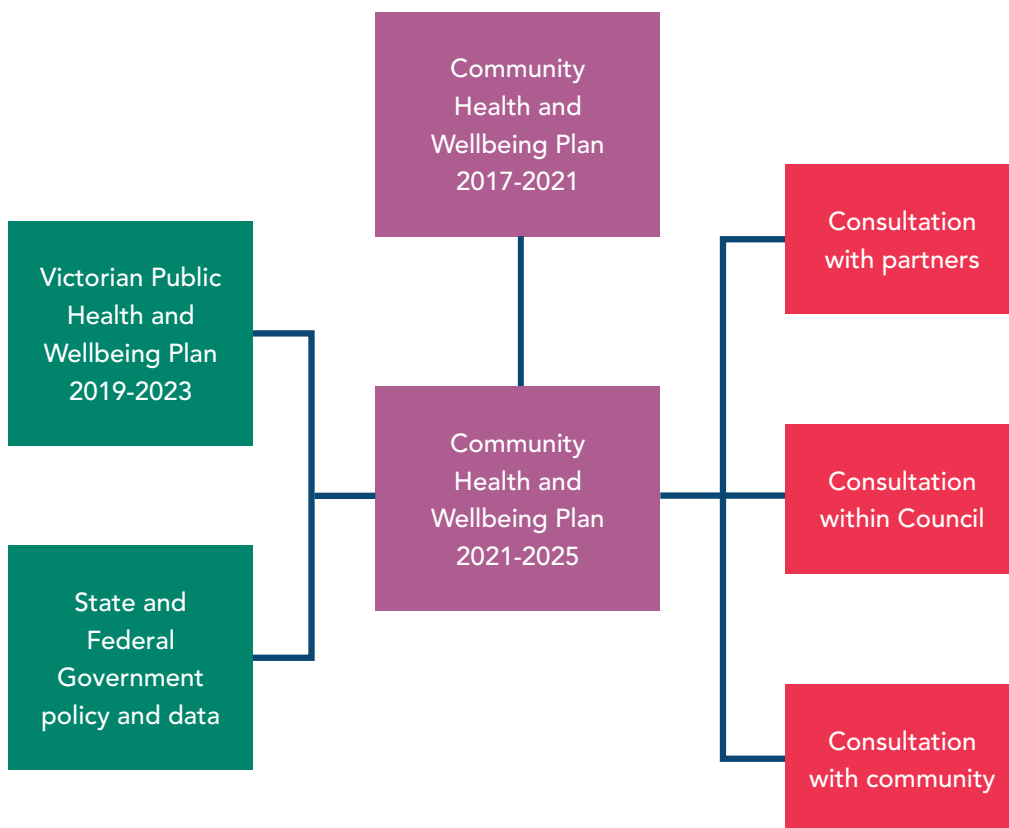available including state government data (eg crime stats).

- Profile of Australian Bureau of Statistics SA1 community stats (eg neighbourhood level).
- Socio graphic profile of municipal community.

Other research

Other research undertaken to understand and determine the health and wellbeing priorities for Mildura Rural City Council included:

- Review of Council plans and strategies from a health and wellbeing perspective.
- Relevant Federal and State policies, health priorities, frameworks and data, especially the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023.
- Review the previous Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021.

Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023

State and Federal Government policy and data

Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Consultation with partners

Consultation within Council

Consultation with community

Domain 1 - Community members are healthy and well

Our goal is to improve the prospects of long term health and wellbeing in our community.

Domain 1 addresses the direct determinants of mental and physical health. There is strong alignment between the priorities of the VPHWP and the areas of focus for the CHWP.

VPHWP priorities - Reducing injury, Increasing healthy eating, Decreasing the risk of drug resistant infections in the community, Increasing active living, Improving mental wellbeing, Improving sexual and reproductive health, reducing tobacco-related harm and reducing harmful alcohol and drug use.

Local Priorities

Council and partners have identified the following areas as being of particular importance in our community – Increasing healthy eating, Reducing harmful alcohol and drug use, Improving mental wellbeing, Improving child and youth wellbeing, Promoting healthy ageing.

Increasing healthy eating

Healthy eating and access to affordable nutritious food is vital to health and wellbeing. It is identified as one of the priorities in the VPHWP 2019-2023:

Many Victorians (are) not consuming enough of the foods and drinks required to keep us healthy (such as vegetables, fruit and wholegrain cereals) and consuming too many discretionary foods and drinks that are high in energy, saturated fat, added sugar, salt or alcohol.

This change has coincided with an increase in obesity and contributed to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and dental caries, as well as to poor mental health.

31.6% of the Mildura population have a body mass index of equal to or greater than 30 compared to 19.3% for Victoria (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2017). Men were significantly more likely to be pre-obese or obese, 64.8%, compared to women, 50.2%. In 2016 the proportion of the Mildura Population who do not consume sufficient fresh fruit and vegetables was 54.7% (6.1% above the state average). More recent state level indicates that the proportion of people who do not consume sufficient fresh fruit and vegetables is rising (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2019).

Council is committed to:

- Continuing to work with partner organisations to increase access to nutritious food and the opportunity for people to produce, sell and buy local food
- Improving food literacy, knowledge and skills across the municipality
- Ensuring effective governance of food safety and hygiene preparation practices across the municipality and according to the requirements of the Food Act 1984.
- Undertake a settings based approach to the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity

Relates to strategies: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.8

Reducing harmful alcohol and drug use

Harmful alcohol and drug use contributes to reduced outcomes in almost every measure of wellbeing, contributing to poor health, reduced mental wellbeing and violence. It is identified as one of the priorities in the VPHWP 2019-2023:

Alcohol and other drug problems are complex, affecting not only individuals but their families, their friends and their communities. We see the impacts of these problems in our health system, child and family services, family violence response and law enforcement. It is an issue that spans health, wellbeing, housing, community safety, child protection and mental health.

The proportion of the Mildura population who are at increased risk of alcohol related harm is 44.3% for women and 71.7% for men. For women this is slightly below the State rate of 50.6% and for men slightly higher at 69.0% (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2017).

While rates of harm in regional areas are higher than in metropolitan areas, members of the community also can face additional difficulties seeking help; the community has identified a pressing need for a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility within the district to support people to receive treatment locally.

Council is committed to:

- Continuing to work in partnership with organisations in relation to the social costs caused through alcohol and other drug use, with a focus on behavioural change that challenges social norms, attitudes and beliefs.

- Advocate for a residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility in the district.

Relates to strategies: 1.1, 1.9, 1.10, 1.16

Improving mental wellbeing

Council's support and advocacy for improved mental health is imperative, with improving mental wellbeing recognised as a key issue within the municipality, as well as in all of Victoria.

The statistics paint a troubling picture of the state of mental wellbeing in the Municipality. The reported life satisfaction of both adults and adolescents had decreased significantly since the last state of Mildura report, the satisfaction of adolescents is now well below the state average (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2019). In Mildura 19.4% of women and 15.6% of men reported high or very high psychological distress in the 2017 Victorian population health survey compared to 18% and 12.8% State averages for women and men. In the Municipality 40% of women and 29.7% of men were diagnosed by a Doctor with anxiety or depression compared to 33.6% and 21% for the State (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2017).

There are many possible causes of these trends, including high rates of self-reported isolation among adults (Mildura Rural City Council, Local Logic, 2018), and an above average and rising rate of children who report being bullied in school (VCAMS Indicators, 2015). Events and programs that promote social inclusion and connectedness, as well as the necessary support services to prevent and manage social, economic and environmental stresses can all play a role in improving the situation.

The need for support in this space is growing significantly, this is both a discouraging and a hopeful sign, the economic and social stress of lockdown, combined with other environmental factors have all likely contributed to poorer mental health, but awareness of this issue is growing and further activism in this space will hopefully lead to more people seeking the help they need.

Council is committed to:

- Supporting the mental wellbeing of all individuals, families and communities at all stages of life.

- Supporting residents to understand the factors that affect their own mental health and wellbeing and support them to access relevant services.

- Continuing to collaborate with partner organisations on projects and campaigns that promote the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

- Recognise the role that equity and cultural safety play in improving mental wellbeing (Domain 4).

Improving child and youth wellbeing

The Municipal Early Years Plan 2020-2025 acknowledges the critical importance of the early years, particularly for those who start from a position of disadvantage. If children start from behind, they often stay behind:

A child's environment and experiences in his or her early years set key pathways for life. Children's learning commences long before they enter school – children are born ready to learn. Each stage of brain development is cumulative and, consequently, children can enter school with clear differences in the cognitive and non-cognitive skills needed for school success (Municipal Early Years Plan, 2020-2025, p. 12)

22.30% of children in Mildura are developmentally vulnerable, which is 2.4% above the state average (Australian Early Development Census, 2018). However despite the above average risk, Mildura is ahead of the state in several key early years' health and wellbeing metrics, including visits to a maternal and child health nurse, and rates of vaccination at school entry. This indicates a strong interest among parents and the community in this area, and a good rate of provision and access to early year's health services. Mildura and the surrounding region can continue to grow in this area to support children to have the best possible start to life.

Council commits to:

- Continue to implement the Municipal Early Years Plan.

- Continue to collaborate with partner organisations on projects and campaigns that promote the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

As with early years, youth is also a time when patterns of health and wellbeing that will effect an individual later in life are established. The Youth Engagement Strategy was developed in collaboration with youth, and youth services groups, to guide council in its role supporting youth health and wellbeing.

Council commits to:

- Continue to implement the Youth Engagement Strategy.

- Continue to collaborate with partner organisations on projects and campaigns. that promote the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

Relates to strategies: 1.1, 1.9, 1.10, 1.16

Promoting healthy ageing

Healthy ageing is an important component of community health and wellbeing, and as such the strategy for healthy ageing has been included in this CHWP.

Mildura's population is ageing, with persons over 70 expected to experience the fastest growth of any age group category by 2036 (2016 Census, 2016). As the demographics change so do the health and wellbeing needs of the community. Whilst the ageing population can create social and economic challenges, it is also an opportunity to promote good health that enables older Australians to continue to contribute socially, culturally and economically to the community.

Mildura Rural City Council aims to provide opportunities to enable all community members to lead long, healthy and happy lives

Council commits to:

- Promote and support the status and inclusion of people in older age groups.

- Continue to collaborate with partner organisations to deliver aged and disability services and promote a community that fosters healthy ageing for all.

Relates to strategies: 1.20, 1.21, 1.22

Domain 1 - Local strategies

	Strategy	Lead	Partners
1.1	Lead collaboration to develop a plan to respond to existing and emerging health and wellbeing issues and trends.		Community Health and Wellbeing Steering Committee
1.2	Undertake a settings based approach to the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity - particularly through INFANT, Vic Kids Eat Well and Vibrant Futures Healthy Body and Healthy Minds initiatives	SCHS	MRCC Schools Workplaces Early Years Services
1.3	Engage local settings in the promotion of oral health - particularly through the delivery of the Smiles 4 Miles program in Early Childhood Services	SCHS	MRCC Early Years Services Dental Health Services Vic
1.4	Develop a municipal partnership and working group to address the rising smoking rates in the region through environmental, settings based and individual approaches	SCHS	MDAS MRCC Health Service Providers
1.5	Improve the food supply to the priority settings of Early Childhood Services, Schools, Workplaces and Community through targeted partnerships with suppliers and the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service	SCHS	Early Years Services Workplaces Sporting Clubs Food Suppliers Healthy Eating Advisory Service
1.6	Establish a partnership to investigate and further understand our community's diverse sexual and reproductive health needs, priorities and barriers to accessing services to inform evidence based action for strengthening local service provision	SCHS	Relevant stakeholder groups
1.7	Explore the impact on the health and wellbeing of refugees and migrants who have resettled through both Primary and Secondary migration streams	SMECC	Mildura Regional Development Regional Development Victoria MRCC SCHS Murray PHN Bendigo Health AMES Various industry Health and community services sector

1.8	Explore options to build on the success of the Sunraysia Food Hub by building a sustainable plan for the future	SMECC	MRCC Food Hub Victoria End user stakeholder organisations
1.9	Support the Mildura Base Public Hospital's Strategic Plan implementation which has a focus on increasing partnership work between MBPH and community based health and wellbeing services	MBPH	CHWP Steering Committee
1.10	Advocate for a drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation facility to be established locally	SCHS MDAS Odyssey House	HUM Victoria Police PHN MBPH
1.11	To build on evaluation and learning from the Suicide Prevention Trial and develop a localised transition and sustainability plan beyond the funded project (12 months left of funded trial 30 June 2022)	PHN	Northern Mallee Mental Health Alliance – Suicide Prevention Working Group
1.12	Develop a local model to support integration and coordination of Mental Health and Psycho-social Wellbeing (approaches and services) in Mildura municipality		Catholic Care MRCC PHN SCHS MDAS MBPH
1.13	Hands Up Mallee to utilise a place-based collective impact approach to improve outcomes for children aged 0-8 and their families through actions focussed on prevention and early intervention.	HUM	HUM partnership
1.14	Hands Up Mallee to utilise a place-based collective impact approach to improve outcomes for youth aged 9-18 through actions focussed on enhancing protective factors and reducing risk factors.	HUM	HUM Partnership
1.15	Increase access to social supports that promote health and wellbeing and access to services specifically in rural communities	MTHCS	MRCC

1.16	Explore collaborative, place based approaches to reduce the risk of alcohol and drug use in rural communities	MTHCS-LDAT	MRCC
1.17	Increase access to maternal and child health services and immunisations for all	MRCC	Best Start Partners
1.18	Implement the Best Start Model to support families and caregivers to provide the best possible environment, experiences and care for children aged from birth to eight	MRCC	Best Start Partners
1.19	Support ongoing service delivery and expansion of the Family and Child Hub – particularly focusing on services for vulnerable families	SCHS Family and Child Hub	
1.20	Sustain the Aged Care Planning and Advisory Network to promote open communication, collaboration, planning and coordination between services to foster positive outcomes for our aged community	ACPAN	ACPAN Members
1.21	Develop and implement an action plan to promote healthy ageing based on the World Health organisation's Age Friendly Cities Guide	MRCC	ACPAN
1.22	Promote healthy and active ageing through Council run programs and services and partnerships with community groups and organisations	MRCC	ACPAN

Strategies and plans

- Related Plans and Strategies
- Youth Engagement Strategy
- Municipal Early Years Plan
- State Food Strategy
- Healthy Ageing Action Plan

Domain 2 – Community members are safe and secure

Our goal is that all community members feel safe and can live their life free from abuse and violence.

Domain 2 addresses the drivers of direct and indirect violence in the community, as well as the risk factors that make a person more vulnerable to violence. Strong correlations can be observed between people feeling and being safe in their community and their overall health and wellbeing.

Includes VPHWP Priorities – Prevent all forms of violence.

Local priorities

Council and partners have identified the following areas as being of particular importance in our community – Preventing and mitigating family violence, Preventing child neglect and maltreatment, Reducing and mitigating homelessness, Promoting community safety.

Preventing and mitigating family violence

Council takes a strong stance against family violence in our community. Family violence can take many forms and can impact almost every area of a person's wellbeing. Family violence can lead to direct impacts on a person's physical and mental health, as well loss of housing, financial insecurity and isolation from systems of care and support. Reducing family violence is a key element of the VPHWP 2019-2023 priority to prevent all forms of violence.

The rate of police callouts for family violence incidents in Mildura is the fourth highest in the state, with almost 3000 callouts per 100,000 population a year. Mildura has a rate of definite/possible family violence incidents more than three times the state average (Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2021). It is clear that much needs to be done to bring these rates down.

Family Violence is a complex issue that requires a coordinated and committed approach by a very broad range of stakeholders and community to address at our local level. This plan brings with it a renewed focus on preventing the drivers of family violence by promoting gender equality and advocating for the rights and status of vulnerable members of the community.

Council, as a White Ribbon accredited organisation, will continue to:

- Maintain accreditation for the White Ribbon Workplace Program.

- Recognise White Ribbon Day and International Women's Day and conduct events to raise awareness with our staff and community at these times.

- Provide family violence leave and support to staff through our Enterprise Agreement.

- Provide training to staff on family violence.

- Work with new and existing White Ribbon ambassadors to develop avenues to engage more broadly in the organisation and community.

- Promote gender equality (discussed in detail in Domain 4)

- Introduce and mentor new workplaces through the White Ribbon accreditation process.

- Work with partner organisations to co-ordinate family violence services within the municipality.

Preventing child neglect and maltreatment

Family violence can be directed at any member of a household, and often children are the survivors and witnesses of family violence and abuse. Child abuse and neglect can have lifelong impacts on a child's mental wellbeing. Reporting of both family violence and child maltreatment has varied during the COVID-19 pandemic with concerns of under-reporting and increased risk for victims. Historically the rates of substantiated child abuse and neglect in Mildura have been much higher than the Victorian average at 17.6 per 1000 compared to 11.4 per 1000 respectively (Australian Institute of Health and Wellfare, 2018-2019).

Council is committed to:

- working in partnership with key stakeholders, agencies and the community to address and reduce child maltreatment

Relates to strategies: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.8

Reducing and mitigating homelessness

Few things are more important to a person's health and wellbeing than adequate and secure shelter. Like all forms of violence and social exclusion, homelessness can affect all parts of a person's health and wellbeing. As summarised in the final report of the inquiry into homelessness in Victoria:

Pre-existing health issues can be exacerbated in situations of homelessness, where individuals are unable to access or afford essential services. Furthermore, homelessness is more than just a lack of housing. Not having a space to call one's own can have significant impacts on a person's agency, resilience and sense of security. This can have acute and lasting effects on a person's mental health and their connection to community and public life; becoming exacerbated where the conditions of a person's homelessness are ongoing (Inquiry into homelessness in Victoria, 2021, p. XVII).

Mildura's homelessness rate is 40 per 10,000 compared to an average of 27 people per 10,000 for regional Victoria - Mildura has the fourth highest level of homelessness in regional Victoria (MRCC Submission to Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria, 2020). There are significant pressures on the availability of affordable housing in Mildura; in February 2020 Mildura's rental vacancy rate was 0.7%, the lowest in Victoria, and more recent reports suggest the situation hasn't improved.

Council is committed to:

- Continue to promote housing as a fundamental component of community health and wellbeing.

- Make planning decisions that result in a suitable supply of well-located affordable development.

Relates to strategies: 2.6.

Promoting community safety

The perceived and actual safety of public spaces is vital in ensuring those spaces are accessible and usable to all. When people do not perceive public spaces as safe their independence is reduced. Improving public safety will allow community members to fully engage with the community and public life at all hours, while providing more opportunities for outdoor exercise and encouraging more people to walk and cycle.

Mildura has experienced a slight rise in crime over the past five years, with close to steady rates of property crime, a moderate rise in violent crime, and a significant rise in drug crime driving that trend. In 2019/2020, Mildura had the fourth highest rate of crime in the state (Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, 2021).

The perception of safety in the community has not changed significantly in the past five years, with around 30% of Victorian women, and around 10% of Victorian men feeling unsafe walking down their street alone at night in 2019 (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2019). The significant disparity between men and women in this regard highlights the importance of gender equality measures in achieving community safety.

The Community Safety Action plan is a document developed by Council and updated annually in order to promote the perceived and actual safety of the community. It is developed in partnership with Victoria Police.

The high level priorities listed below reflect that the needs of the community will change over time, and by having an annual action plan the approach to safety is able to remain responsive and relevant:

Safe Places – To design and maintain our city to reduce crime and enhance public safety and perceptions of safety.

Safe People – To improve social inclusion and community participation to create strong safe and resilient communities.

Safe Facts – To increase community knowledge through education and information to help reduce the opportunity for crime and injury

Council is committed to:

- Work to ensure everyone feels safe to be in their community at all times

- Continue to work with partner agencies to prevent and mitigate crime

Relates to strategies: 2.9

Domain 2 - Local strategies

	Strategy	Lead	Partners
2.1	Support the development and implementation of the Mallee Family Violence Executive Strategic Plan to promote an integrated approach to drive improved coordination of family violence services across the municipality	MFVE	Mallee Family Violence Executive Partners
2.2	Advocate and seek funding to support the development and implementation of a whole of community Gender Equality and Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women Strategy	MSAU-MDVS MRCC	Relevant Stakeholders
2.3	Participate in the Loddon Mallee Collective Action for Respect and Equality (CARE) partnership to support, sustain and promote primary prevention momentum collaboratively across the region	WHLM	MSAU-MDVS SuniTAFE MRCC GEAS
2.4	Improve health outcomes for children in out of home care by integrating local health service systems	DFFH	Project Steering Group
2.5	Implement the Early Years Compact		MRCC DET DFFH
2.6	Mallee Homelessness Alliance to establish itself and take a strategic approach in working collaboratively as homelessness providers in the Mallee	MASP Haven	MDAS MFC MDVS MVAC Northern District Health Service (Kerang)
2.7	Continue to develop and update a yearly Community Safety Plan in conjunction with the CCTV Corporate and Public Safety Committee to ensure it meets current priorities	MRCC	Victoria Police
2.8	MRCC to remain engaged with the Victorian Local Governance Association's Gambling Working Group and explore opportunities to address gambling in our community	MRCC	

Strategies and plans

- Related Plans and Strategies
- Municipal Emergency Management Strategy
- CCTV Governance Framework
- Public Lighting Strategy
- Gender Equality Policy
- Community Safety Plan

Domain 3 – Community members have the capabilities to participate

Our goal is to create an economic and learning environment that supports people to realise their full potential.

Domain 3 centres on supporting members of the community to engage with the opportunities in their communities.

Includes VPHWP Priorities – Increasing active living, improving mental wellbeing.

Local priorities

Council and partners have identified the following areas as being of particular importance in our community – Increasing active living, Facilitating education and employment pathways, Promoting disability accessibility.

Increasing active living

The benefits of an active lifestyle reach into almost every aspect of health and wellbeing, as summarised in the VPHWP 2019-2023:

"Regular physical activity can help to prevent (and treat) many non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, some cancers, diabetes, musculoskeletal conditions and depression. Moreover, being physically active in combination with a healthy diet helps to reduce other risk factors for disease such as high blood pressure and overweight and obesity. Incorporating physical activity, preferably any type that you enjoy, into every day is associated with improved mental health, ageing well and increased levels of happiness."

Our community is fortunate to have excellent opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation, with a wide range of sporting facilities, natural areas and other recreational resources such as gyms'

While the portion of adults in the municipality who are sufficiently physically active was 4.2% above the state average in 2016, at 45.6% it was still less than half. Despite this Mildura had a rate of obesity 5.4% above the state average at 18.8% at the time, demonstrating the complex nature of obesity and the importance of other measures such as healthy eating (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2017). Since this data was collected, the rate of physical activity at the state level rose by 9.7%, it is unclear whether Mildura has followed this trend. What is clear is that there is significant room for increasing physical activity, and lowering obesity rates in the municipality.

The nature of physical activity is changing, an ageing population and health and wellbeing trends are prompting people to switch from organised sport to milder and more self-directed physical activity like walking and visiting the gym. The Recreation Strategy, along with the Mildura Public Open Space Strategy discusses the ways in which changing trends of physical activity can be accommodated in the future (Mildura Recreation Strategy, 2021-2031).

Planning and urban design also play a role in promoting active living by encouraging people to walk or cycle for regular trips. The CBD Access and Mobility Strategy is investigating ways active transport access can be improved'

The upcoming Council Plan will also provide more detail as to how the Council is promoting active living through recreational facilities, public open space, and transport and planning.

With this in mind, the CHWP focuses on the activism and awareness side of promoting physical activity:

Council is committed to:

- Support increased participation of marginalised groups in organised recreation, and increased access to informal recreation.

- Increase opportunities for social physical activity, especially in rural communities.

- Continue to promote and encourage active lifestyles.

Relates to strategies: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6

Facilitating education and employment pathways

For many people employment represents a key part of their day to day participation in the community. Access to consistent fulfilling work can be important for mental wellbeing by providing people with purpose, as well as social and support networks. A stable source of income also helps prevent financial stresses that create obstacles to good health and wellbeing.

Young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training are at greater risk of poor health, depression or early parenthood.

Unemployment rates in Mildura have been stable in recent years but they remain above the state average, at 7.6% compared to 6.6% (Unemployment Rate by State and Territory, 2021). The percentage of the population receiving unemployment benefits long term is almost double the state average, 8.0% and 4.1% respectively, and the portion of young people, aged 16 – 24 receiving an unemployment benefit is at 7.3%, compared to 2.7% state-wide (Department of Social Services, 2021).

Education and training opportunities are vital to support individuals to realise their full potential and provide a pathway to sustainable employment. Action in this space is especially important in the context of growing rates of people who have not completed year 12, with a rise of 5.4% to 60.1% across the last four years (a rate significantly above the state average of 42%) likely a result of falling year 12 retention rates, a pattern that has been seen state-wide (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2019).

Many school leavers go on to be engaged in other work or education opportunities, however, a significant portion, 63% nationally, do not go on to other pursuits (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Past experience has suggested the rate for Mildura in this area higher than the state and national averages. It is important that school leavers are engaged to support them to join the workforce.

Discrimination can also be a factor in young people having difficulty finding job opportunities. It is vital potential employers and the community are educated and prepared to provide inclusive workplaces that can be safe and accommodating.

Council will continue to:

- Facilitate job opportunities through state government initiatives.

- Promote social inclusion.

Relates to strategies: 3.1, 3.4

Promoting disability accessibility

Discrimination against people of different ability, whether mental or physical can pose a major barrier to access health and wellbeing services as well as taking a toll on the mental wellbeing of those involved. Ableism can occur in social environments through harmful assumptions or stereotypes, but also through physical environments which do not properly cater for a full range of potential users.

The incidence of disability rises with age, and promoting healthy ageing is linked with efforts to supporting differently able people's ability to participate.

There is a higher rate of people within the council area who access the disability support pension compared with the state average: 4.8% of Mildura's population, compared with 2.8% for the state (Department of Social Services, 2021). This suggests disability rates are likely higher than the state average within the region. This makes ensuring access to facilities, activities and services for disabled people especially important.

The strategies relating to disabled access have been prepared to demonstrate Council's commitment to the principles of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Act 2006 in the provision of equitable, dignified access to all its services, facilities, programs and processes. Council aims to embed the consideration of access and inclusion principles into everything it does.

Council is committed to:

- Promoting inclusion and participation in the community for people with disabilities.

- Changing attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with disabilities.

- Developing and implementing a disability action plan to stimulate positive change in our communities.

Relates to strategies: 3.1, 3.2, 3.7

Domain 3 - Local strategies

	Strategy	Lead	Partners
3.1	Promote inclusion, increase acceptance and build a higher expectation of people living with a level of impairment in our community through education	Christie Centre	
3.2	Coordinate Social Enterprise Network Victoria in the region to implement social procurement strategies that strengthen and develop the sector.	Christie Centre	
3.3	Increase opportunities in rural communities for participation in activities that promote social connection and physical activity	MTHCS	MRCC
3.4	Facilitate sustainable employment opportunities to encourage education advancement and future employment choices through the Jobs Victoria Employment Services and Employment Advocate Program	MRCC	MRCC Other relevant stakeholder groups
3.5	Support young people from CALD backgrounds to participate in learning and education opportunities	SMECC	JVES TAFE RTOs Mildura English language centre
3.6	In partnership with young people, increase healthy eating, active living and social connection opportunities to support a vibrant future	SCHS MRCC	HUM Vic Health
3.7	Co-design and implement a Disability Action Plan with the Disability Access Advisory Committee to reduce barriers and increase access for people with a disability to services, facilities and employment and to promote inclusion and participation in our community	MRCC	
3.8	Continue to build a sustainable regional sport and active recreation system with the capacity to deliver broad and inclusive participation opportunities	MSA	

Strategies and plans

- Related Plans and Strategies
- Youth Engagement Strategy
- Waste Resource and Recovery Plan
- Municipal Early Years Plan
- Jobs Victoria

Domain 4 – Community members are connected to culture and community

Our goal is that all people are socially engaged, live in inclusive communities and can celebrate and connect with their culture and identity.

The strategies under Domain 4 recognise the role Council has in supporting our community members to be socially connected, able to participate fully in life, feel valued and have their differences respected. They aim to improve health and wellbeing, particularly for marginalised people in our community by strengthening social cohesion and building a respectful and inclusive culture within Council and our community.

The Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 and Local Government Act 2020 also bring opportunities to strengthen our collaborative efforts and expertise in this domain.

Includes VPHWP Priorities – Increasing healthy eating, Increasing active living, Improving mental wellbeing, Preventing all forms of violence.

Local Priorities
Council and partners have identified the following areas as being of particular importance in our community – Pursuing reconciliation, Pursuing gender equality and preventing violence against women and children, Pursuing equality, inclusion and diversity

Pursuing reconciliation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories within and surrounding our municipality date back more than 40,000 years. Today Aboriginal people represent almost 4% of our community, the second largest population of Aboriginal people in regional Victoria. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016) We acknowledge the rich cultural wisdom and deep connection our Aboriginal community have with the land we live on and how it enriches our community and lives.

Council is committed to the journey of Reconciliation, to continuous learning, deep reflection and action. We recognise the influence Local Government has through direct connection with our community and how our local efforts support reconciliation at a national level. Through our Reconciliation Action Plan we commit to building respectful relationships between our Aboriginal community and Council, creating a culture that welcomes and includes Aboriginal people and creates opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate equally in our community.

Many Aboriginal people in our community enjoy good health, however as a group, Aboriginal people have a life-expectancy approximately 10 years lower than non-Aboriginal Australians and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes (Cheif Health Officer, Victoria, 2018). We acknowledge this is a result of the profound impacts of colonisation, dispossession and intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal people. We must support healing, address racism and transform the systems and structures that still exclude Aboriginal people to achieve equality in health outcomes.

We will continue to work for greater community health and wellbeing alongside Aboriginal people in our community, the Traditional Owners of the land we live and work on the First People of the Millewa Mallee and the Wotjobaluk Nations People, and the Aboriginal Action Committee. We recognise that greater health and wellbeing for Aboriginal community members relies on our systems, structures and services being culturally safe and appropriate and that they reflect their aspirations and needs.

Council is committed to:

- Working towards improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in an holistic way, to improve social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities through our commitment to Reconciliation.

- Understanding and addressing structural and hierarchal inequalities and barriers within our own organisation and creating/ promoting a culturally safe place/space for Aboriginal people.

- Partnering with Aboriginal community members, Traditional owners, our Aboriginal Action Committee, local ACCOs, Aboriginal Community Groups, Services and wider community to take action on racism and promote respect and social cohesion.

- Continue to work with partner organisations to deliver Aboriginal health and community services.

Relates to strategies: 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10

Pursuing gender equality and preventing violence against women and children

Violence is more damaging to the health of Victorian women aged 15–44 years than any other well-known risk factors, including high blood pressure, obesity and smoking (VicHealth, 2021) As discussed in depth in Domain 2, Nearly half of all 'crimes against the person' in our state are family violence related and the pandemic has compounded this. Our municipality is one of the worst effected in Victoria for family violence rates ranking in the top four in 2020. Violence against women is also widespread in other settings.

While violence against women happens across our whole community the groups of women who experience much higher rates are those with disabilities, Aboriginal women, culturally diverse women, trans and gender diverse people and those in remote and rural areas (VicHealth, 2021).

We know that gender inequality is a key driver of violence against women and that through primary prevention initiatives we can change the social conditions that enable and promote it. Gender equality is a human right and has far reaching benefits for lives of women and girls, it will give everyone equal opportunities, make our community safer and healthier and is good for the economy.

Council has been committed to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and children for many years through its White Ribbon Accreditation, Gender Equality Portfolio, ongoing support of Gender Equity Action Sunraysia and partnership work with local organisations.

Council is committed to:

- Continuing work with partner organisations and community to promote gender equality respectful relationships and the prevention of violence against women and children across our municipality.

- Continuing to promote gender equality and the prevention of violence against women in Councils own workplace, in our policies, programs and services particularly in line with the Gender Equality Act 2020.

- Applying an intersectional lens to our work to understand the overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation experienced by people in our community so that we can better respond to their diverse needs.

- Work with users of council recreation facilities to promote gender equality in recreation.

- Raise organisational and community awareness of the health, social and economic benefits that gender equality delivers to everyone in our community.

Relates to strategies: 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11

Pursuing equality, inclusion and diversity

Our municipality has a rich cultural, religious and linguistic heritage, stemming from the traditional owners of the land, contributions of Aboriginal people, multicultural communities that have made our municipality their home and the greater diversity across our community. Council is committed to creating a community that is inclusive and connected where all members feel valued and have the opportunity to fully participate in life.

But we have work to do. Many people in our community experience discrimination and exclusion as they go about their daily lives. And when aspects of a person's identity (e.g. Aboriginality, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, ability, socioeconomic status) overlap they experience even greater discrimination and marginalisation:

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Sistergirl, Brotherboy communities have high rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide caused by the inequality and discrimination they experience. Yet discrimination against LGBTQIASB+ people in healthcare settings in Victoria is a barrier to them accessing essential services (Rainbow Health Victoria, 2021)

- One in five Australian's has a disability. In 2018 one in ten people with a disability in Australia had experienced discrimination (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Disability-based discrimination accounts for the highest volume of complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission (Australian Network on Disability, 2019) and is associated with higher levels of psychosocial distress, poorer health and economic disadvantage.

- Research by Inclusive Australia in 2020 found that half of all Aboriginal people in Australia reported major or everyday discrimination in 2020 and everyday discrimination is more common for Aboriginal people than any other group (Inclusive Australia, 2021).

- In 2016 just 38.4% of adults thought multiculturalism definitely made life in our municipality their better, well below the state average of 55.4%. More recent state level figures indicate little progress has been made in this area (Victorian Population Health Survey, 2019).

Research shows that the social determinants of health, like racism, socioeconomic status and social support networks have a greater impact on poor health than the unhealthy behaviour of individuals (Department of Health and Human Services, 2017). Council and our local services have vast opportunities to positively influence these areas to support the diverse health and wellbeing needs across our community. Council is committed to:

- Deepen organisational understanding and respect for diversity, equality and inclusion to enable more accessible, inclusive and equitable practice and services.

- Deepening organisational understanding and respect through Aboriginal cultural awareness and inclusion training to ensure council is a culturally safe workplace.

- Developing strong relationships with our culturally diverse communities across our municipality.

- Supporting and facilitating initiatives that celebrate diversity, strengthen community cohesion and address racism.

- Promoting and fostering social inclusion through policy and strategies that engage with and support the needs of our diverse community, including but not limited to culturally diverse communities, new and emerging communities, Aboriginal community members, gender and sexually diverse, aged community and those with a disability.

- Researching and developing a community profile with an intersectional lens to assist Council and local organisations to provide accessible, equitable and inclusive services and systems.

- Continuing to support activities that build community and social networks and address barriers to accessing sport and recreation activities.

- Continuing to support opportunities in arts and heritage that promote and celebrate diversity in our community.

Relates to strategies: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9

Domain 4 - Local strategies

	Strategy	Lead	Partners
4.1	Continue to develop strong connections between Council and culturally diverse communities across the municipality.	MRCC	SMECC
4.2	Continue to work with Aboriginal community members and organisations towards reconciliation and advocate for services that meet the diverse needs of Aboriginal people and their human right to self-determination	MRCC	Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Action Committee
4.3	Implement Aged Care Sector Reforms, with the aim of facilitating continued access to relevant quality services	MRCC	
4.4	Develop and implement an activation strategy for Mildura South Regional Sporting Precinct	MRCC	
4.5	Establish a partnership with CHWP strategy owners to build knowledge and capacity across our local services sector that will strengthen inclusive, equitable and accessible practice and service delivery that meets the diverse needs of people in our community	MRCC	
4.6	Research, recommend and implement a best practice leadership and cultural change model to drive inclusion, diversity, equity and access across Mildura Rural City Council that will: - further promote and increase diversity and inclusion across Council's workforce; - understand and address structural inequalities and barriers for participation in Council's workforce and services; - ensure Council's services are delivered with an intersectional lens to reflect the diversity of voices and needs in our community and are accessible and equitable - support the effective implementation of the Gender Equality Act 2020 and Workforce Planning under the Local Government Act 2020 within Council.	MRCC	

4.7	Partner with services and community members to promote and acknowledge campaigns and days of significance to raise community awareness of key social issues and actions to address them	MRCC	
4.8	Develop a place based Anti-Racism Strategy in partnership with local services and community to take action against racism and promote respect, inclusion and social cohesion across the Municipality.	MRCC	
4.9	Supporting and facilitating community events and activities that are inclusive and accessible for all community members that celebrate and acknowledge diversity and facilitate community cohesion and connect community with local services	MRCC	
4.10	Implement the requirements of the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 including: a four yearly workplace gender audit and Gender Equality Action Plan; and Gender Impact Assessments on new or reviewed policies, programs or services with a direct and significant impact on the public.	MRCC	MRCC Mildura Base Hospital Mallee Track Health and Community Service
4.11	Support the work of Gender Equity Action Sunraysia to raise community knowledge about gender inequality and provide opportunities for community members to connect and be more empowered and informed about gender equality.	MRCC	MRCC Gender Equity Action Sunraysia

Strategies and plans

- Related Plans and Strategies
- Recreation Strategy
- Public Open Space Strategy
- Community Plans
- Reconciliation Action Plan

Domain 5 - Our community is liveable

Our goal is that we all belong to resilient communities that understand and value our natural environment.

Domain 5 addresses the environmental factors that contribute to health and wellbeing.

Liveability is influenced by a wide range of Council's activities, including planning, recreation, conservation and public open space, events and more. The overarching strategic direction for these activities will be provided in greater detail in the Council Plan. With that in mind, this document focuses on the key actions council is taking to address the main liveability priority of the VPHWP, tackling climate change and its impact on health.

Includes VPHWP Priorities – Tackling climate change and its impact on health.

Local Priorities
Council and partners have identified the following areas as being of particular importance in our community – Implementing emissions strategy, Mitigating urban heat.

Implementing emissions strategy
Climate change is already having adverse effects on health and wellbeing in our region. Extreme heat and extreme weather, including dust storms, create a risk of injury and death, especially for the region's most vulnerable people. Reductions in rainfall and greater rainfall variability impact on the wellbeing of those who depend on the land for their livelihoods.

The Loddon Mallee Climate Ready report (2015) outlines a projected annual average temperature rise of 2.7 degrees in the region by 2070 under high emission scenarios, this would give Mildura a climate more similar to Menindee and could have a significant impact on health (Climate Ready Victoria, Loddon Mallee, 2015). Taking strong measures to avoid this outcome is of critical importance.

Preventing the worst impacts of climate change will require doing our bit to achieve a significant reduction in CO_2 emissions.

Council is committed to:

- Implementation of the Council Emissions Strategy supporting document towards zero emissions.

- Development and Implementation of the Council Long Term Waste Strategy, addressing council's biggest source of emissions, the Mildura Landfill.

Council will continue to protect and enhance the natural environment for the use, wellbeing and enjoyment of current and future generations.

Relates to strategies: 5.2, 5.6

Mitigating urban heat

One of the most direct health impacts of climate change comes from extreme heat events.

On average between 1981 and 2010, Mildura experienced 7.8 days per year when the temperature exceeded 40°C. By the 2050s under a high emissions/business as usual scenario, this is expected to increase to between 15 and 23 days (Towards Zero Emissions Strategy, 2021-2050). Night time temperatures are also increasing, meaning during heatwave events there is less respite.

Prolonged exposure to high temperature can pose a direct risk of heatstroke and death, especially to the more vulnerable members of the community. It can also contribute to poorer long-term physical and mental health outcomes for all members of the community by interrupting sleep and preventing outdoor physical activity.

Extreme heat is often more pronounced in urban areas, this is due to waste heat from cooling systems, and an abundance of heat absorbing surfaces like buildings and asphalt. This is referred to as the urban heat island effect. The urban heat island effect can be reduced by providing tree canopy cover and green spaces. Providing cooler public spaces such as parks with shade also allows people without air-conditioning to seek respite during extreme heat events.

Council is committed to:

- Increasing tree canopy coverage in urban areas.
- Provide access to cool refuges, such as libraries and public buildings, during extreme heat events.
- Managing our environment to improve the resilience of key assets including our public open spaces, native vegetation and water.

Relates to strategies: 5.3, 5.4, 5.5

Domain 5 - Local strategies

	Strategy	Lead	Partners
5.1	Support small towns and rural communities in implementing Community Plans	MRCC	Relevant stakeholder groups
5.2	Implement the Council Emissions Strategy supporting document towards zero emissions	MRCC	Relevant stakeholder groups
5.3	Council to implement the Cool It program	MRCC	Relevant stakeholder groups
5.4	Develop and implement the Urban Forest Strategy	MRCC	Relevant stakeholder groups
5.5	Develop and Implement the Council Street Tree strategy	MRCC	Relevant stakeholder groups
5.6	Develop and Implement the Council Long Term Waste Strategy	MRCC	Relevant stakeholder groups

Strategies and plans

- Related Plans and Strategies
- Vegetation Management Plan
- Litter Strategy
- Environmental Education Plan
- Public Open Space Strategy
- Energy Management Plan
- Invasive Plants and Animals Plan

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The CHWP outlines the strategic health and wellbeing goals that Council will work towards over the next four years. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation are required to understand effectiveness, identify areas for improvement and learning and to enhance the evidence for current and future work in this space.

A Community Health and Wellbeing Steering Committee consisting of internal and external representatives who have actions in the plan will work in partnership to implement and evaluate the plan.

Yearly action plans will be developed for many of the actions, providing a more detailed and descriptive analysis of actions, targets, measures and outcomes and the work undertaken. These actions plans will form part of the analysis process.

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