



**WHITEHORSE
CITY COUNCIL**

Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029

ABRIDGED

29 April 2025

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which Whitehorse City Council is situated and we pay our respect to Elders past present and emerging.



Mayor's Message

TO BE CONFIRMED

DRAFT

Introduction

Background Information

Where are we

Nestled just 15 kilometres east of Melbourne's central business district, the City of Whitehorse spans 64 square kilometres of vibrant urban landscape. Our thriving municipality is home to over 178,369 residents, creating a dynamic community at the doorstep of Victoria's capital.

Whitehorse boasts one of Melbourne's most culturally diverse communities, with nearly half of residents (44.9%) born overseas according to the 2021 census. The multicultural character of Whitehorse is evident in everyday life, with 44.3% of residents speaking languages beyond English. Walking through Whitehorse, you might hear conversations in Mandarin, Cantonese, Greek, Vietnamese, or Hindi—the area's most common languages.

Whitehorse City Council delivers high-quality services across multiple sectors. These include community services, environmental initiatives, responsive customer service, health and wellbeing services, as well as planning and building activities.

Council manages over 631 hectares of open space, creating an urban oasis within metropolitan Melbourne. Residents enjoy access to bushland reserves, well-maintained parks, formal gardens, and an extensive network of recreational trails. Council's commitment to preserving tree-lined streetscapes has fostered a pleasant urban environment where nature and city life coexist.

Our community

Population overview

All data is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021 unless specified otherwise.

Place of birth (44.9% born overseas compared to Greater Melbourne 35.7%)

Birthplace	Whitehorse %	Greater Melbourne %
China	13.0	3.4
India	3.9	4.9
Malaysia	3.3	1.2
United Kingdom	2.6	3.3
Hong Kong	1.6	0.5
Vietnam	1.6	1.8
Sri Lanka	1.5	1.3
New Zealand	1.0	1.7
Greece	0.9	0.9
Philippines	0.8	1.2

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders (523 residents or 0.3% compared to 0.7% for Greater Melbourne)

Languages spoken at home (44.3% Non-English used at home compared to 34.1% for Greater Melbourne)

Language (excludes English)	Whitehorse %	Greater Melbourne %
Mandarin	16.2	4.3
Cantonese	5.5	1.6
Greek	2.3	2.1
Vietnamese	1.4	2.3
Hindi	1.3	1.3
Sinhalese	1.0	1.0
Italian	1.0	1.7
Korean	0.8	0.3
Persian	0.8	0.4
Punjabi	0.7	2.0

Ages

Age group (years)	Whitehorse %	Greater Melbourne %
0 to 4	4.6	5.9
5 to 11	7.8	8.7
12 to 17	7.0	6.9
18 to 24	9.9	8.9
25 to 34	14.0	16.0
35 to 49	20.5	21.5
50 to 59	12.4	11.9
60 to 69	10.1	9.5
70 to 84	10.5	8.6
85 and over	3.2	2.0

Disability

14.9% of people in Whitehorse had a self-reported disability, compared to 19.9% for Victoria (Victorian Population Health Survey 2023).

Employment & Education

- Students / Tertiary qualifications
 - o 27.6% attending an education institution compared to 26.1% for Greater Melbourne
 - o 41.7% of people aged 15 and over have a Bachelor or Higher degree qualification compared to 32.8% for Greater Melbourne
- Income (medium weekly income = \$1,841 compared to \$1,901 for Greater Melbourne)
- Local Businesses operating (19,243 in 2024, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits)
 - Unemployment (4.2% - 2024 September Qtr., Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets)
- Those who work in municipality (26.7% live and work in the area, 69.5% live in the area, but work outside)

Industry types

Industry sector	Whitehorse %	Greater Melbourne %
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	0.3	0.6
Mining	0.1	0.2
Manufacturing	5.3	6.9
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1.0	1.0
Construction	6.7	9.3
Wholesale trade	3.1	3.0

Retail Trade	9.6	9.4
Accommodation and Food Services	6.8	6.1
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3.1	4.9
Information Media and Telecommunications	2.1	1.8
Financial and Insurance Services	6.0	4.7
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1.8	1.6
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	11.7	9.6
Administrative and Support Services	3.2	3.2
Public Administration and Safety	5.0	5.4
Education and Training	10.3	8.8
Health Care and Social Assistance	14.6	13.5
Arts and Recreation Services	1.7	1.8
Other Services	3.3	3.4

Local jobs 84,600 jobs in 2023 (National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, 2024)

Household

Family composition

Households by type	Whitehorse %	Greater Melbourne %
Couples with children	33.1	33.1
Couples without children	23.8	23.5
One parent families	9.7	10.2
Other families	1.4	1.2
Group household	4.6	4.1
Lone person	24.4	23.7

Housing tenure

Tenure type	Whitehorse %	Greater Melbourne %
Fully owned	34.8	28.7
Mortgage	30.8	35.6
Renting - Total	28.4	29.2
Renting - Social housing	2.2	2.3
Renting - Private	26.1	26.8
Renting - Not stated	0.2	0.1

- Rental stress (32.6% compared to 30.9% for Greater Melbourne)
- Mortgage stress (19.7% compared to 16.8% for Greater Melbourne)
- Homelessness (1,491 homeless people in Whitehorse, including 785 living in boarding houses, 366 living in crowded or severely crowded housing and 244 living in supported accommodation for the homeless)

Health and Wellbeing

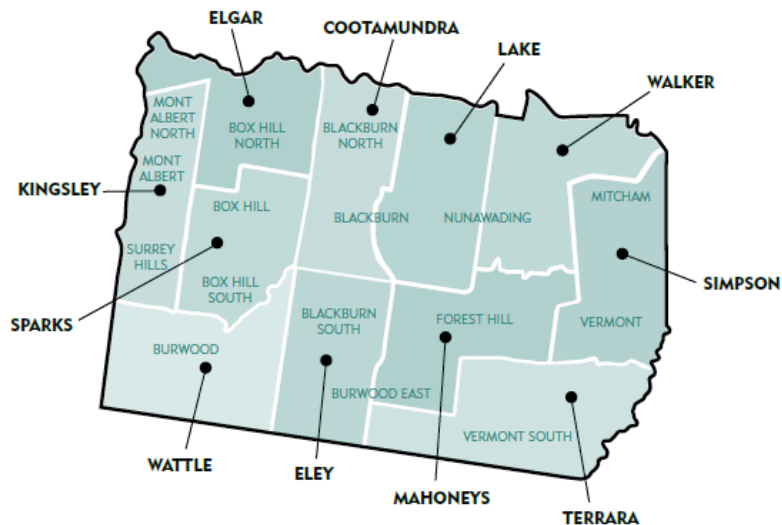
- Exercise / physical activity - 33.1% of adults in Whitehorse usually spend eight or more hours sitting on an average weekday, compared to 27.9% for Victoria (*Victorian Population Health Survey 2023*)
- Obesity - 17.9% of people are obese in Whitehorse, compared to 23% for Victoria (*Victorian Population Health Survey 2023*)
- Smoking/vaping - 12.2% of people in Whitehorse smoke tobacco or vape, compared to 18.5% for Victoria (*Victorian Population Health Survey 2023*)
- Food security - 7.7% of people in Whitehorse experienced food insecurity in the last year, compared to 8.0% for Victoria (*Victorian Population Health Survey 2023*)
- Takeaway food - 1,109.3m average distance to closest fast-food outlet compared to 1,045.2m average distance to closest healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer) (*Australian Urban Observatory, 2021*)
- Mental health - 14.9% of people in Whitehorse have high/very high levels of psychological distress, compared to 19.1% for Victoria (*Victorian Population Health Survey 2023*)
- Violence against women & Gender Equality - 837.5 incidents of family violence per 100,000 of the population, compared to 1,418.1 for Victoria (*Crime Statistics Agency, June 2024*)

Infrastructure

- Sports fields (53)
- Km of footpath (1,180km on road footpaths + 82km of park paths)
- Total parks (349, approximately 609.95 hectares of land area)
- Bushland area (134 hectares)
- Bike and shared paths (28km)
- Playgrounds (176)
- Hectares of open space (705 – 10.8% of the municipality)
- Leisure facilities (9)
- Arts and community facilities (15)

Who we are

Elected by the community, Whitehorse City Council is the decision-making body that sets the strategic direction of the municipality, in response to the needs of the people living, working, studying and playing in the municipality. The City of Whitehorse is divided into eleven wards consisting of one elected representative for each Ward. These are detailed below;



The current group of Councillors was elected to Council in 2024 for a four-year term. Collectively, they have responsibility for developing policy, identifying service standards and monitoring performance in response to what the local community is telling Council is important to them. The Mayor of Whitehorse is elected by the Councillors to serve as the principal ambassador for the City for a 12-month term.

- Wattle Ward – Mayor Cr Andrew Davenport
- Simpson Ward – Deputy Mayor Cr Prue Cutts
- Cootamundra Ward – Cr Kieran Simpson
- Eley Ward – Cr Daniel Griffiths
- Elgar Ward – Cr Blair Barker
- Kingsley Ward – Cr Kirsten Langford
- Lake Ward – Cr Hayley Weller
- Mahoneys Ward – Cr Jason Martin
- Sparks Ward – Cr Peter Allan
- Terrara Ward – Cr Jarrod Gunn
- Walker Ward – Cr Ben Stennett

Whitehorse City Council Executive Leadership Team

- CEO – Simon Mc Millan
- Director Community Services – Lisa Letic
- Director Infrastructure – Steven White
- Director Corporate Services – Stuart Cann
- Director Planning – Jeff Green
- Executive Manager Transformation – Siobhan Sullivan

Role of Council

As per the *Local Government Act 2020*, the role of a Council is to provide good governance for its municipal community. This means acting in the best interests of the community by making decisions that promote social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Council serves to ensure its municipality runs effectively, sustainably, and in line with the needs and expectations of its community.

Key Roles and Responsibilities of Council:

1. Strategic Leadership
 - Develop and adopt a Council Plan that sets long-term goals.
 - Ensure financial and resource planning aligns with community needs.
2. Policy Development and Decision-Making
 - Make local laws and policies that reflect community priorities.
 - Oversee service delivery and infrastructure management.
3. Community Engagement
 - Foster meaningful engagement with residents.
 - Ensure transparency in decision-making processes.
4. Advocacy
 - Represent community interests to other levels of government.
 - Seek funding and partnerships to support local initiatives.
5. Stewardship of Resources
 - Ensure the Council's financial sustainability.
 - Efficiently manage public assets and services.
6. Accountability and Transparency
 - Report to the community on performance and governance.
 - Uphold the principle of ethical conduct.

Council provides numerous services to the Whitehorse community, along with the delivery of key projects and programs to maintain and enhance the City.

Council Services for the community

Council delivers over 100 legislated and non-legislated services for the Whitehorse community.

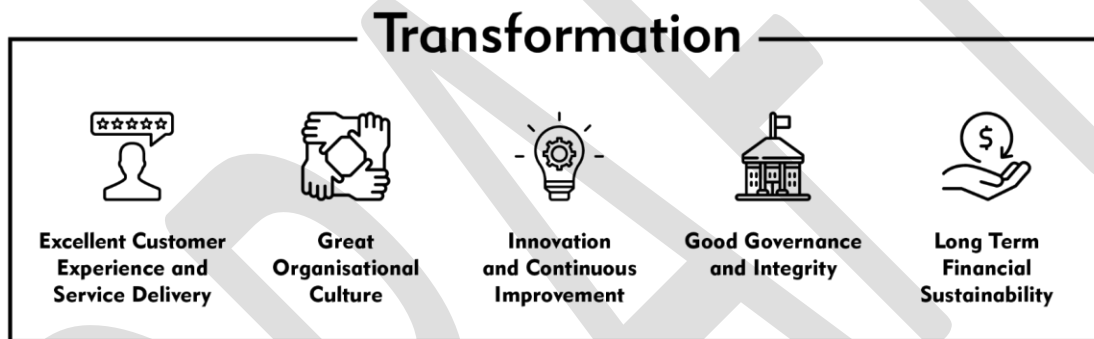
Pet registration and education Libraries Building permits and services Land use planning inc. permit Leisure facilities Sports pavilions Sports fields Parks, gardens, and playgrounds Tree management and maintenance Arts and culture programs Festivals and events Heritage programs, historical societies Community safety and crime prevention programs Street lighting and signage Waste, green waste and recycling – kerbside bins On call kerbside hard waste Whitehorse Recycling and Waste Centre Street sweeping	Road and footpath management Drain management Traffic signs, line marking and roadside Local laws education and enforcement Community publications Customer service Gender equity and violence against women program Graffiti removal and prevention Parking management Watts & Harrow Streets car parks Environmental sustainability education and initiatives Sustainable transport planning Active transport Infrastructure planning and facility management Facilities for community meeting spaces Community grant program Volunteering programs and opportunities Maternal and child health	Immunisation School crossing supervision Youth services Food and health business registrations and regulation Business support and education Placemaking Business networking opportunities Positive ageing Childcare Property and leasing Animal management Community hubs / houses Community halls Asset protection City cleansing and city maintenance Advocacy Municipal health partnerships
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Each community-facing service is supported by a range of internal corporate Council services that are enablers of community service delivery.

Council Transformation

The Whitehorse community is changing and growing, which means Council needs to adapt and respond. Council is transforming to ensure it continues to meet the needs and expectations of its community. The transformation program is designed to achieve five objectives (outlined in the figure below) by creating sustainable changes such as:

- balance investment decision-making with long-term financial sustainability.
- systematically review all of Council’s services over time.
- expand our Continuous Improvement Program and approach to deliver sustained financial and customer benefits.
- invest in technology and systems to improve customer experience; and
- build and sustain a great organisational culture that puts community at the heart of what we do.



Whitehorse Manningham Libraries

The Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation provides public library and information services to residents and visitors across the cities of Whitehorse and Manningham.



Through its network of 8 branch libraries and website, it provides free access to physical and virtual resources that support lifelong learning and reading.

Branches in Whitehorse are located in Nunawading, Box Hill, Blackburn and Vermont South.

Eastern Region Group of Councils



Comprising the Mayors, Deputy Mayors and CEOs of Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges, the ERG is a catalyst for collaboration on regional priorities through advocacy, integrated planning, shared services and joint procurement. The group continues to strengthen each year, building stronger relationships across member council and with stakeholders to benefit the region's communities.

Council actively collaborates with local government peak bodies, industry groups, issue-based groups and regionally to improve community outcomes.

As a member of the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) we can amplify our Council's voice and impact, be more efficient and effective, and improve community access to infrastructure and services across the region.

Whitehorse City Council participates fully in priority projects to address the common challenges detailed in the ERG [Strategic Plan](#).

We are committed to working with ERG members to undertake the foundational work required to develop opportunities for shared services, joint procurement and the shared use of community infrastructure

More information about the ERG is available at www.easternregiongroup.org.au

An Integrated Approach

Council Plan integration with Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP)

As per the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Council Plan describes the strategic direction of Council, including its strategic objectives and strategies for at least the next four financial years. The *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic) also requires Council to prepare a MPHWP every four years. It is a municipal-wide plan that works in partnership with community stakeholders and health service providers.

The key expectation of Councils in undertaking Integrated Council Planning is that it considers the outcomes of public feedback. All parts of the plan should be linked and interdependent. This helps guide how resources are used, supports decision making, and ensures we can track our progress and be accountable in a transparent way.

An innovation for the next four years 2025-2029, is the integration of the Council Plan with the MPHWP, called the 'Integrated Council Plan'. Integrating these two plans is allowable under S27 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. Some additional legislative requirements of the MPHWP include developing health priorities, respond to climate change and family violence prevention and doing so through partnership work.

Benefits of integrating these plans include:

- elevating the importance and impact of community health and wellbeing
- streamlining planning and reporting processes and artifacts (which has both efficiency benefits and community benefits)
- elevating partnership work within the community.

Council will ultimately adopt one Integrated Council Plan (inclusive of the MPHWP), and the community partners outlined within the MPHWP components of the Plan will be engaged via a MPHWP Steering Committee to help monitor progress of the plan.

A further advancement of this 2025-2029 Plan is the development of two annual action plans that will supplement the broader strategy document (the Integrated Council Plan) and will be developed each year for the four-year period; the Council Plan Annual Action Plan and the MPHWP Annual Action Plan. The latter will be focused on highlighting initiatives that will be delivered in partnership with Council's health and wellbeing partners. Any linkage through the Integrated Council Plan strategic hierarchy will be indicated with a heart icon ♥.

This will provide a more adaptable and responsive platform for Council to take action and the development of the associated annual budget, whilst keeping track of progress toward long-term strategic directions and Community Vision.

Shaping Whitehorse

Shaping Whitehorse is the name for the community engagement process undertaken to inform the 2025-2029 key strategic planning documents as per the *Local Government Act 2020*. It considers both broad and deliberative community engagement and is an important legislative input in the review and development of Council’s strategic documents, including:

- The Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision
- Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029, including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Annual Budget 2025-2026
- 10-year Asset Plan
- Long-term Financial Plan

These plans affect everybody in Whitehorse and guide the day-to-day and long-term decisions of Council. Shaping Whitehorse is Council's commitment to make sure the community has a real say in how these key strategic documents are created and reviewed.

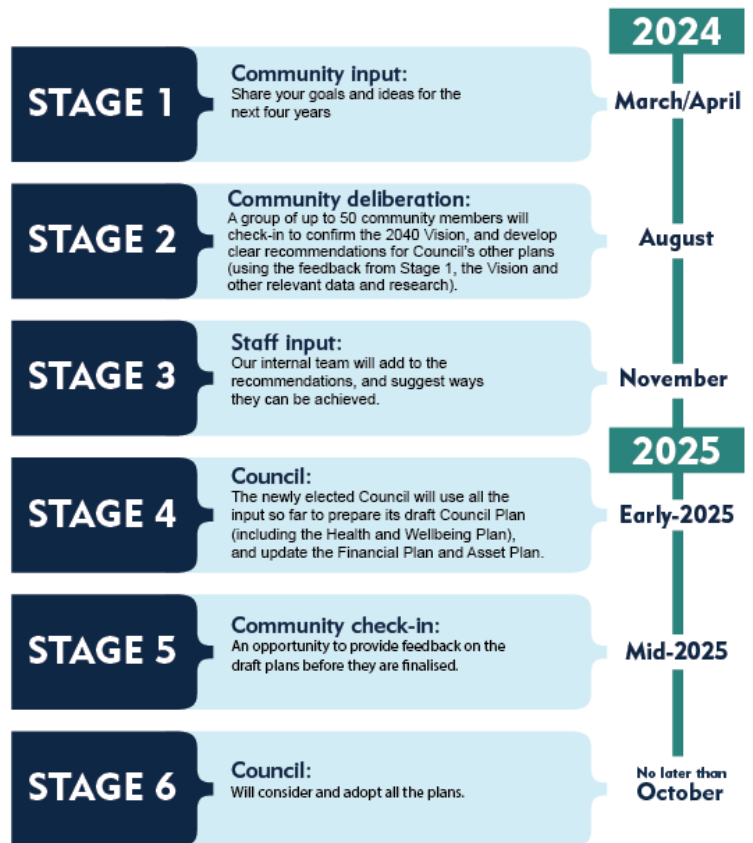
In line with the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council’s Engagement Policy, the Shaping Whitehorse community engagement program ran from March 2024 to October 2025. It included six key stages designed to give the community and stakeholders the opportunity to provide input and to make sure local priorities and needs are heard and reflected in the strategic plans.

Stage 1 involved seven weeks of broad community engagement, from Monday 18 March to Sunday 5 May 2024. Approximately 1,431 people provided input.

Stage 2 involved ‘deliberative engagement’ with the Shaping Whitehorse Community Panel, a small group of community members that broadly represent the wider Whitehorse community. The Panel’s role was to review the Stage 1 community feedback, as well as other research to develop recommendations to help inform Council’s key plans for the next four years.

You can find the Shaping Whitehorse Broad Engagement Findings Report (July 2024) and the Panel Recommendations Report (September 2024) on the project webpage:

www.yoursay.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/shaping-whitehorse



Whitehorse Community Vision 2040

“Whitehorse is a resilient community where everyone belongs.

We are active citizens who value our natural environment, history and diversity.

We embrace sustainability and innovation.

We are dynamic. We learn, grow and thrive.”



The Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision was originally developed by the community in 2021 - people who work, live, study, or own a business across Whitehorse, to reflect the community’s aspirations and priorities for the next 20 years. The Vision was developed with the Shaping Whitehorse Community Panel. The extensive process comprised of a broad community engagement. The results of this went to a deliberative panel that demographically represents the community of Whitehorse.

Our 2024 Shaping Whitehorse community engagement showed Council that the community felt that the vision still represented the aspirations for the future, with an overwhelming majority of responses of 74% of community members indicating it did.

The overarching Vision Statement is underpinned by themes and key priorities to achieve our desired long-term future:

- Theme 1: Diverse and Inclusive Community
- Theme 2: Movement and Public Spaces
- Theme 3: Innovation and Creativity
- Theme 4: Employment, Education and Skill Development
- Theme 5: Sustainable Climate and Environmental Care
- Theme 6: Whitehorse is an Empowered and Collaborative Community
- Theme 7: Health and Wellbeing

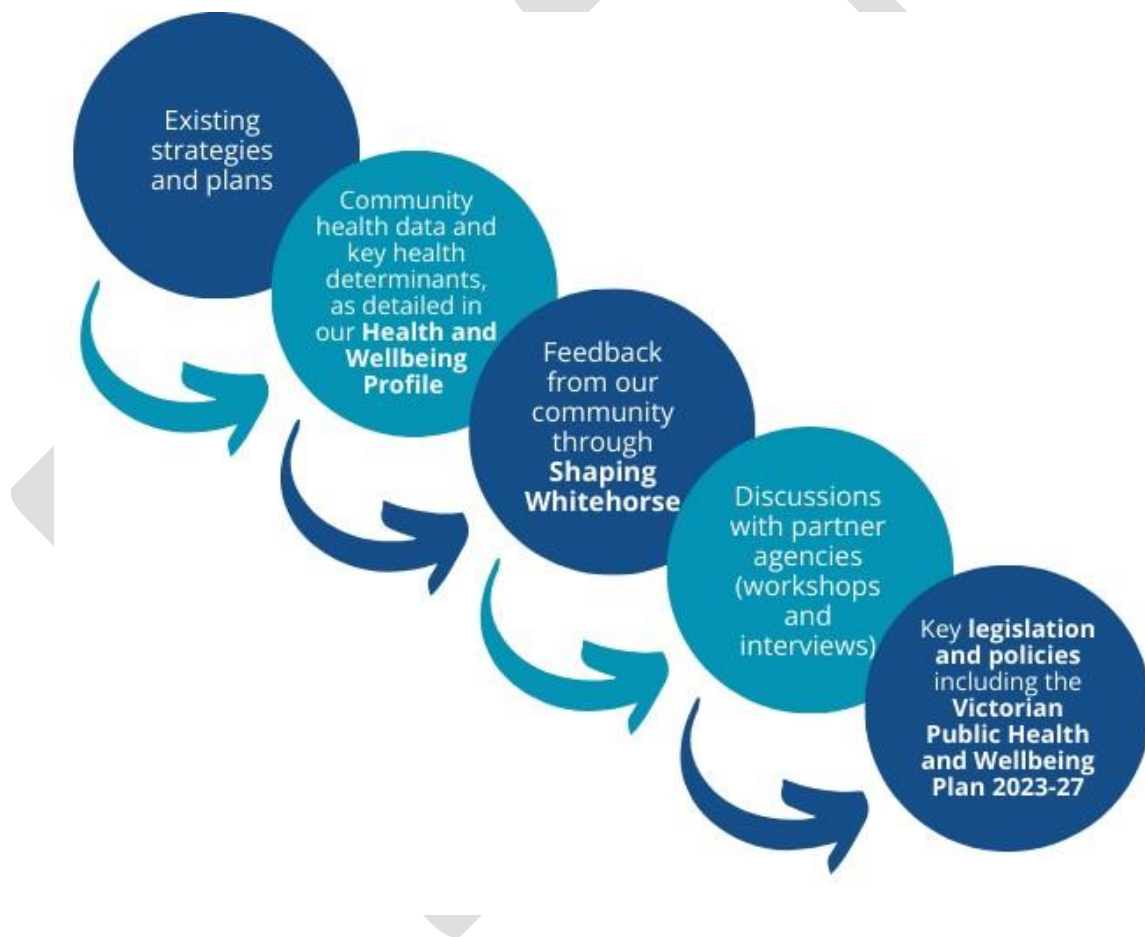
When creating the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029, we made sure to connect the Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision to our new Strategic Directions. This helps both the Council and the community clearly see how we’re working together to achieve the Vision.

Health and Wellbeing Strategies

At Whitehorse City Council, we care deeply about the health and wellbeing of our community. Previous Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans (MPHWP) were created as a standalone document, however this time around it is incorporated into our Council Plan, ensuring that public health and wellbeing remain a priority in everything we do.

Our Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 reflects our dedication to enhancing community health and wellbeing. By integrating the MPHWP with the Council Plan, we strengthen our commitment to working alongside our community and key stakeholders to support a healthier, happier Whitehorse.

To shape our MPHWP, we draw on a range of valuable insights and directives, including:



Through this process, which is described more fully in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5, we have identified five key focus areas for the next four years:

<h1>1</h1>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 2024 and 2041, the number of people aged over 65 in Whitehorse will increase by approximately 6,920 people. • New migrants and refugees face well known language and cultural barriers to social inclusion • More than one in six people with disability experience social isolation. • 36% of LGBTQ+ Victorians have faced social exclusion. • The prevalence of loneliness was twice as high among young adults than older people in Victoria in 2023: 32% of 18-24 year-olds compared with 16% of people 65 or older. 	<h2>Strategy</h2> <h3>Foster social connections and a sense of belonging</h3>
<h1>2</h1>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers have the lowest wellbeing of any group and are 40% more likely to suffer from a chronic health condition. • Only 5.5% of Whitehorse residents meet the Australian guidelines for daily vegetable intake • 66.0 % of people in Whitehorse did not obtain sufficient exercise for good health • 17.9% of 15–17 year-olds and 38.0% of 18–24 year-olds had used vaping devices • Between 2016 and 2050 the prevalence of dementia in Whitehorse is expected to almost double from 3,767 to 7,444. 	<h2>Strategy</h2> <h3>Support community initiatives to promote health & prevent disease</h3>
<h1>3</h1>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Whitehorse 1,524 incidents of family violence were recorded in 2023/2024. 71% of victims were female compared to 29% males. 353 people sought assistance from Homelessness Services and 105 presented to emergency departments because of family violence. 601 people accessed Specialist Family Violence Services • It is estimated that Australian children are present in between 36 – 59 per cent of family violence incidents • In Australia in the past year around 1 in 6 (15%) of older people living in the community had experienced elder abuse. 	<h2>Strategy</h2> <h3>Prevent and respond to family violence (including elder abuse)</h3>
<h1>4</h1>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Whitehorse in 2023, 15% of adults reported high or very high levels of psychological distress, 20% were lonely and 17% had sought professional help for a mental health related problem in the last year. • Young females aged 18-24 years experienced the highest psychological distress levels of any age group or sex in 2023 at 41.6 percent (high or very high) • In the Shaping Whitehorse community survey (n=346) 24% of people continue to experience negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. 	<h2>Strategy</h2> <h3>Partner to enhance mental health and build resilience</h3>
<h1>5</h1>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions, is causing a rise in average global temperatures and disruption of ecosystems. Whitehorse faces climate hazards such as extreme heat & higher intensity rainfall. • It is predicted that Whitehorse will experience temperatures greater than 35°C, on average, 16 days/year by 2050 (compared to 11 days/year now). • People aged 65 and over are the most hospitalised group for heat related injuries. • Males in the age groups 25-44 & 45-64 years are twice as likely than females to be hospitalised due to extreme heat. 	<h2>Strategy</h2> <h3>Partner with the community to achieve positive environmental & health outcomes that reduce climate change impacts</h3>

We recognise that achieving these goals requires collaboration. That's why we're committed to working closely with our community, other levels of government, and local partners. Together we can address broader challenges and implement evidence-based initiatives that make a real difference.

In 2025 Council is hosting a newly formed MPHWP Steering Committee, a new strategic group to meet twice yearly and guide the implementation of collaborative health and wellbeing initiatives for Whitehorse. Membership will include organisations we will partner with to implement the MPHWP.

Each year, our MPHWP Annual Action Plan outlines how organisations and stakeholders contribute to these health and wellbeing priorities. By working together, we can create a thriving, connected, and resilient Whitehorse community.

Measures to prevent and respond to family violence

At Whitehorse City Council, we are committed to creating a safe and supportive community for everyone. In line with the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, we take important steps to help prevent family violence, support those affected, and report on our efforts to the Department of Health every two years.

Violence against women, including family violence and elder abuse, is preventable. As a workplace, service provider, connector, and community leader, Council has an important role to play in prevention, as well as response.

Working together with our community, we will act at all levels—from individual and relationship to organisational and society as a whole—to foster awareness, collaboration, and meaningful change, so that Whitehorse is safer, more equal and respectful for everyone.

For 2025-2029 our focus will be to:

- Partner in the regional prevention strategy (Together for Equality and Respect).
- Participate in the Regional Family Violence Partnership.
- Educate Council staff to respond to family violence including customer services and outdoor workers.
- Inform Council staff of Council's Family Violence Resources Kit, supports and entitlements for leave.
- Train Maternal Child Health (MCH) services in Multi-Agency Referral and Assessment Management (MARAM) framework and practice to respond to clients at risk or experiencing FV.
- Lead local prevention and health promotion initiatives, for example in community settings, in collaboration with regional or Victorian projects.
- Implement a whole of service gender equality framework in MCH and in future, Early Years services.

- Fund community organisations through Community Grants Program to deliver prevention initiatives.
- Support regional initiatives to increase access for young people who experience family violence.
- Strategically engage with multi-cultural communities.
- Implement requirements of the Gender Equality Act, that is, the Council Gender Equality Action Plan and Gender Impact Assessments.
- Apply a gender lens to policies, programs, communications and services.
- Apply a gender lens to planning of facilities and open space, as well as in urban design.

Climate change and health

Under the Victorian Climate Change Act 2017, local governments are required to consider climate change when developing a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP).

Taking action on climate change isn't just good for the environment—it also benefits our mental and physical health. Simple changes, such as eating more fresh and local produce, reducing packaged foods, driving less, spending time in nature, and choosing to walk or cycle more often, can all contribute to a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle.

At Whitehorse City Council, we recognise the important role we play in addressing climate change and that by working together as a community, we can create a healthier future for both our people and our planet. Council's adopted [Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030](#) and [Climate Response Plan 2023-2026](#) outline our response and aligns with the Objectives of the MPHWP.

CASE STUDY: Healthy me, healthy planet

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries and Whitehorse City Council joined forces with Deakin University's Health Nature Sustainability Research Group in 2021-2022. The aim was to design, deliver and evaluate 'Healthy me, healthy planet', an evidence-informed program promoting the health co-benefits of climate action. Evaluation found the program enhanced participants' health and wellbeing and their environmental knowledge and attitudes. It increased participants' confidence to make healthy lifestyle changes and motivation to promote the health co-benefits of climate action. It also showed that libraries are effective venues for health promotion due to their trusted, supportive position and strong community networks.

Reference: State of Victoria (2024). Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing planning – Guidance for local government 2024, Department of Health, Melbourne. Page 40. Access at [Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing planning: Guidance for local government](#)

How climate change is affecting our community

Climate change is already having an impact on our municipality, and some of the biggest challenges for our community's health include:

- Sports fields becoming too dry or too wet, making them unusable
- Less green space and declining vegetation
- Changes in pests and diseases
- Damage to our beloved environmental sites
- Increased pressure on emergency services
- More heat-related illnesses and deaths
- Disruptions to food production and supply chains

Looking ahead, extreme heat days (above 35°C) in Whitehorse are predicted to rise from 11 to 16 days per year by 2050.

This is especially concerning because Whitehorse has a higher proportion of older residents than the Victorian average, and older people are more vulnerable to extreme heat. Plus, where you live matters—denser residential and industrial areas tend to get much hotter, making it even more important to increase greenery and reduce hard surfaces to help keep everyone cool and healthy.

Whitehorse Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030

To combat the loss of vegetation and large shade trees on private land due to development, we're continuing to expand our urban forest on public land and improve plant and wildlife biodiversity across the municipality.

We're committed to delivering services and infrastructure in a way that tackles climate change and keeps Whitehorse resilient. That means making sure our assets can withstand changing conditions while also supporting and empowering our community to take action. We'll work together with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to create meaningful change—and we'll continue advocating for strong climate action at the State and Federal levels.


Our community has shown strong support for climate action, and in response, Council declared a Climate Emergency on 12 September 2022—joining over 100 Australian councils that have done the same.

How to read this document

This document makes reference to five key documents; the Community Vision, the Integrated Council Plan which includes the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, and the Annual Action Plans for both the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Community Vision		
YEAR 10	Whitehorse 2040	Describes the community's aspirational vision for the future of the municipality
	Vision Statement	The community's 'call to action' guiding all Council planning

Integrated Council Plan		
4 YEAR	Council Plan	The Council Plan outlines how the Council will deliver actions and initiatives for the Community, that help us get closer to realising the Community Vision.
	Strategic Direction	Strategic Directions reflect how Council will achieve the desired long-term future.
	Objectives	Objectives describe where we want to be in four years, and help us to set goals aligned to our strategic direction.
	Strategies	Strategies describe how Council will progress towards the Objectives.
	Major Initiatives	Major initiatives are important projects that will deliver on Council's Objectives and Strategies.
	Indicators	Indicators help us to understand our progress toward achieving our Objectives.
Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan		
	Partnerships	The Health and Wellbeing Plan is integrated into the Council Plan as both seek to deliver similar outcomes for our community and strengthen our commitment to work alongside our community and key stakeholders to support a healthier, happier Whitehorse.
	<p>The  symbol throughout this plan denotes which strategies Council will deliver in partnership to address our City's health and wellbeing.</p>	

Annual Action Plans		
1 YEAR	Council Plan Action Plan	MPHWP Action Plan
	The 12-month action plan, created each year for the four years, lists the discrete projects Council will deliver in response to the Objectives and Strategies. Where an action also contributes to a Major Initiative, it will be identified with this symbol  .	The 12-month action plan, created each year for the four years, lists the discrete projects Council will deliver in partnership with Health and Wellbeing partners to progress toward the identified Objectives and Strategies.

Council Plan 2025-2029 -Our Priorities

Whitehorse City Council’s Council Plan 2025-2029 fulfils the legislative requirements under section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. It integrates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan under section 26 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic), subject to the Secretary of Health approval under section 27 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic). Our detailed plan below describes the objectives, strategies and major initiatives we are aiming to deliver over the next 4 years in response to the Community Vision.

Plan on a page

The table below provides a high-level summary of the Strategic Directions and Objectives of Council for the next four years. More detail on each is contained within the following sections.

Strategic Directions	Objectives
Community	<p>In four years, we aspire to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An involved and connected community ♥ • A community that fosters social inclusion, cohesion and respect • A healthy and active community ♥ • A community where people feel safe
Built	<p>In four years, we aspire to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and accessible public places • Community facilities and shared spaces that are well used • Sustainable planning and infrastructure to respond to population change • A desirable and well-presented City
Economy	<p>In four years, we aspire to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thriving local economy • Local businesses supported through change • Diverse education, employment & volunteering opportunities • A City that attracts investment and jobs
Natural	<p>In four years, we aspire to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced and protected natural and green spaces • An environmentally sustainable and climate resilient City ♥ • A Council that responsibly and sustainably manages waste
Governance	<p>In four years, we aspire to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An open, transparent, accountable and responsible Council • A Council that delivers core services that are fit for purpose and good value • A Council that is well governed, efficient and financially sustainable

♥ denotes a linkage to the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing focus areas

Strategic Direction 1: Community

Community is about making sure people can easily meet and connect with others and feel they belong. It's about being active, having fun, making people feel welcome and respected.

We foster these connections through recognising our shared experiences and unique differences. Our community thrives when people feel safe, healthy, and valued. Through partnerships and thoughtful initiatives, we build connection, promote wellbeing, and create the foundation for a city where everyone can participate, contribute, and find their place.

Objectives and Strategies

These are our strategic priorities for 2025-2029

Objective 1.1 An involved and connected community ♥

Strategies:

- Facilitate opportunities for groups and individuals to connect
- Provide festivals, events and programs
- Foster social connections and a sense of belonging ♥
- Provide accessible information about Community services, activities and programs

Objective 1.2: A community that fosters social inclusion, cohesion and respect

Strategies:

- Provide welcoming and inclusive spaces for our community
- Deliver initiatives to promote respect and promote the value of community diversity

Objective 1.3: A healthy and active community ♥

Strategies:

- Support community initiatives to promote health and prevent disease ♥
- Prevent and respond to family violence (including elder abuse) ♥
- Partner to enhance mental health and build resilience ♥

Objective 1.4: A community where people feel safe

Strategies:

- Partner with local agencies to improve perceptions of community safety
- Deliver assets to support a safer community

How we will measure our progress

INDICATOR	
TBC – this process is currently underway	

The major initiative we will undertake to support this strategic direction include:

Major Initiative	
Major Initiative TBC Description	

What our community said through Shaping Whitehorse

The community values sports, events, festivals, and open spaces as ways to connect with one another.

Residents want Council to help strengthen these connections by bringing different community groups together and ensuring everyone—especially those born overseas—feels included and has opportunities for cultural exchange.

Easy access to information about community services and activities is also essential for fostering a more inclusive and connected community.

Having a connected community is important for everyone's mental health ...I would like council to... continue to provide workshops and other meetings at the local libraries, sports facilities and arts facilities. Council generally does a good job with these things.
[50-59 yrs old, Female, Born in Australia]

Social engagement is key for mental health and meaningful events, activities and sports that speak to the multicultural nature of Whitehorse are key.
[35-49 yrs old, Female, Born overseas]

Low cost, all ages/abilities sports plus lots of amenities (including sun/rain shelters) in public open spaces so people can have more social time in outdoor places.
[50-59 yrs old, Female, Born overseas]

Community courses, outdoor places to sit & walk/play sport. Kids activities. Markets. Pet day/expo.
[35-49 yrs old, Female, Born in Australia]

Strategic Direction 2: Built

The spaces we create shape how we live, move, and interact. Our built environment reflects our values of accessibility, safety, and sustainability. Through thoughtful design, we craft public spaces that invite activity and connection while providing infrastructure that makes daily movement easier for everyone. We focus on doing the basics well, like fixing roads, filling potholes, and maintaining footpaths, while preserving important open spaces where everyone can feel safe.

We look beyond today, planning for growing populations and changing needs, creating versatile facilities that serve multiple purposes, are highly used and adapt over time. The character of our neighbourhoods, the functionality of our shared spaces, and the resilience of our infrastructure all contribute to a city that works for its people now and into the future.

Objectives and Strategies

These are our strategic priorities for 2025-2029

Objective 2.1 Safe and accessible public places

- Plan for and provide safe and easy to access public spaces through better design
- Plan for and deliver transport infrastructure that supports safe and active transport uptake
- Promote local opportunities to encourage active transport throughout the City

Objective 2.2 Well used community facilities and shared spaces

- Plan for and deliver spaces to support a range of activities
- Plan for and provide suitable and accessible recreation spaces for all

Objective 2.3 Sustainable planning and infrastructure to respond to population change

- Advocate and plan for open spaces to meet increasing demand
- Plan and advocate for future infrastructure that meets community need
- Plan for emergency management and safety for an increased population and greater density living
- Improve waterway management and minimise the impacts of flooding

Objective 2.4 A desirable and well-presented City

- Deliver works that maintain and improve the look and feel of our City
- Deliver programs and services to the community that support a clean City

How we will measure our progress

INDICATOR	
TBC – this process is currently underway	

The major initiative(s) we will undertake to support this strategic direction include:

Major Initiatives	
Major Initiative - TBC Description	

What our community said through Shaping Whitehorse

The community values open green spaces and safe, accessible travel—whether by car, foot, or bike—along with opportunities for active transport.

Residents are feeling the effects of increased development, including congestion and wear on roads and pathways. They prioritize well-maintained roads, footpaths, and bike paths to ensure safe and active transportation.

Safe, well-kept community facilities are also essential to support Whitehorse’s diverse activities. Ensuring fair access for all groups will help maximize their use and benefit the entire community.

All our parks need updated...Need more BBQ facilities and seating like Halliday park. It is a beautiful serene space. Very happy with the beautiful walking track south east water is making just now...

[60-69 yrs old, Female, Born overseas]

Consider another community hub, similar to Nunawading Community Hub but where younger people would feel more welcome - consult young people to gauge what they want and what they envisage a safe space looks like...Better lighting along all park paths, particularly near transport stops to make the community feel safer...

[50-59 yrs old, Female, Born in Australia]

Strategic Direction 3: Economy

A thriving economy creates opportunity, fosters innovation, and builds prosperity. Local businesses and industry form the backbone of our economic landscape — they create jobs, provide essential services, and give our area its unique character. We understand that economic health requires both stability and adaptability, supporting established businesses while nurturing new ventures and encouraging investments. Through education, employment pathways, and strategic investment, we contribute to an economy that's resilient to change and accessible to everyone. When we strengthen our local economy, we create a community where people can live, work, study, volunteer and fulfil their aspirations close to home. This is how we position ourselves to thrive in tomorrow's economy.

Objectives and Strategies

These are our strategic priorities for 2025-2029

Objective 3.1: A thriving local economy

Provide support and enable partnership opportunities for businesses and business associations

Enable and support the creation of clean, safe and welcoming places to shop, access services, do business, exchange and visit, and promote the benefits of shopping and supporting local

Plan for a strong tourist and visitor economy

Objective 3.2 Local businesses supported through change

Provide innovative and responsive support to local businesses to navigate disruption

Work collaboratively with, and advocate to the State Government for local business and groups affected by disruption

Objective 3.3: Diverse education, employment & volunteering opportunities

Support and partner with local organisations to promote local education, employment and volunteering opportunities.

Promote lifelong learning through our libraries and community spaces

Objective 3.4 A City that attracts investment and jobs

Facilitate strategic investment in activity centres, industrial and commercial areas

Support placemaking and activation

Advocate to attract jobs and investment in Whitehorse

How we will measure our progress – measures the objective

INDICATOR	
TBC – this process is currently underway	

The major initiative(s) we will undertake to support this strategic direction include:

Major Initiative	
Major Initiative - TBC Description	

What our community said through Shaping Whitehorse

The Whitehorse community values its libraries and wants more free programs, especially for young people and families, to help people connect in these spaces.

Residents are eager to support local retail businesses but believe improvements in their appearance and variety of offerings are needed. They also see a role for the Council in promoting local assets and encouraging community involvement through volunteering and lifelong learning opportunities.

Encourage small business, make processes easier for new businesses coming into area...Would be nice to spend \$ locally....
Promote shopping strips better
[50-59 yrs old, Female, Born in Australia]

Keep things clean, support business with help to improve efficiency and sustainability outcomes.
[35-49 yrs old, Female, Born in Australia]

Work regionally to support small business with education. Improve parking opportunities in strip shopping centres with parking permits.
[35-49 yrs old, Born in Australia]

Strategic Direction 4: Natural

Our natural spaces provide more than beauty — they sustain life, clean our air, cool our streets, and nourish our wellbeing. We recognise that healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are essential partners in creating a liveable city, which becomes increasingly important with a growing population. Trees, waterways, parks, and wildlife corridors form a green network that supports both nature and people. We face environmental challenges that require both immediate action and long-term planning. By protecting and enhancing our natural environment, we create a more climate resilient, sustainable city where both community and nature can flourish together for generations to come.

Objectives and Strategies

These are our strategic priorities for 2025-2029

Objective 4.1 Enhanced and protected natural and green spaces

- Plan for and use existing corridors and wildlife paths to connect open space
- Deliver bushland conservation and plant more trees and plants
- Improve parks, open space, and waterways for community and wildlife (urban forest)
- Provide well maintained open space, encouraging community involvement and connection

Objective 4.2 An environmentally sustainable and climate resilient City ♥

- Take local action to address current and future climate challenges
- Partner with the community to achieve positive environmental and health outcomes that reduce climate change impacts ♥
- Plan for and deliver sustainable and climate resilient infrastructure

Objective 4.3 A Council that responsibly and sustainably manages waste

- Work with partners to increase resource recovery and reduce waste to landfill
- Educate the community and deliver programs about the circular economy principles of reduce, reuse, repair and recycle

How we will measure our progress

INDICATOR	
TBC – this process is currently underway	

The major initiative(s) we will undertake to support this strategic direction include:

Major Initiative	
Major Initiative - TBC Description	

What our community said through Shaping Whitehorse

The Whitehorse community deeply values its local environment, especially trees, and wants the Council to take stronger action on sustainable waste management.

Residents strongly support protecting and enhancing trees and green spaces, recognizing their benefits for both the environment and community well-being. They expect the Council to improve recycling and waste management efforts. Additionally, they appreciate initiatives like regular park clean-ups, which help foster a sense of responsibility and connection to nature.

More trees are always the answer - we need to look after our surroundings much better. I am proud that we recycle our food now...

[35-49 yrs old, Female, Born in Australia]

...Plant additional trees in parks and gardens; Enhance Cycling paths, including providing designated mountain bike paths...

[35-49 yrs old, Born in Australia]

We need more proactive action from Council on this...100% of any planting should be natives, and there needs to be an immediate ban on removing older trees from properties without planting twice as many trees to cater for the loss of canopy, making the area hotter than it should be.

[35-49 yrs old, Male, Born in Australia]

Strategic Direction 5: Governance

Good governance is the foundation that supports everything we do as a Council. It means making decisions openly, managing resources wisely, and always being accountable to the community we serve. We understand that effective governance requires both listening and acting — hearing diverse community voices and translating that feedback into meaningful outcomes. Services that are accessible, adaptable, and deliver real value reflect our commitment to continuous improvement. Through responsible and sustainable financial management and strong advocacy, we secure the resources for today and the future, needed to fulfil community priorities. Good governance isn't just about following rules — it's about earning trust through actions that consistently put community interest first.

Objectives and Strategies

These are our strategic priorities for 2025-2029

Objective 5.1 An open, transparent, accountable and responsible Council

Deliver clear and transparent reporting and communications

Objective 5.2 A Council that delivers core services that are fit for purpose and good value

Improve internal processes to enhance customer experience

Provide easy access to Council services

Evaluate Council Services to meet the changing needs of the community

Objective 5.3 A Council that actively engages with the community for genuine feedback and input

Provide tailored approaches to community engagement to listen and respond to a variety of community voices

Provide updates to the community on how their feedback has contributed to Council decisions (close the loop)

Objective 5.4 A Council that is well governed, efficient and financially sustainable

Continuously improve the way Council operates

Advocate for sustainable and equitable funding that supports community priorities

How we will measure our progress

INDICATOR	
TBC – this process is currently underway	

The major initiative we will undertake to support this strategic direction include:

Major Initiative	
Major Initiative - TBC	
Description	

What our community said through Shaping Whitehorse

The community wants to collaborate with the Council and have more opportunities to be consulted, especially for marginalized groups. They also want to know how their input influences decisions.

Whitehorse residents are passionate about their community and want their ideas to be genuinely heard and considered. They regularly share feedback through surveys and engagements.

When it comes to Council operations, residents strongly advocate for greater transparency, better communication, and more meaningful engagement. They want clear evidence of how their feedback is used and expect the Council to "close the loop" by reporting back on consultation outcomes.

Key priorities also include improving customer service accessibility and timeliness, ensuring information reaches all community members—including new arrivals.

Speech Bubble 1 (Top Left):
 I have always found the staff at the council very helpful and friendly. I have no idea how you manage finances, it certainly is not evident by the state of the streets and footpaths. [70-84 yrs old, Female, Born in Australia]

Speech Bubble 2 (Top Right):
 ...Work to access harder to reach communities, CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse), youth, people with a disability, indigenous etc. Amplify marginalised voices, prioritise consulting these communities. Listen to the community, implement the community’s vision and ideas.
 [35-49 yrs old, Male, Born in Australia]

Speech Bubble 3 (Bottom Left):
 ...We have so many surveys to fill out but where does the information go? There doesn't seem to be a process or a place on the website of the outcomes of so many surveys...
 [50-59 yrs old, Female, Born in Australia]

Speech Bubble 4 (Bottom Right):
 Greater transparency and earlier consultation before activities are underway. Before rezoning or big developments are announced take communities on the journey...
 [35-49 yrs old, Male, Born in Australia]

Monitoring and Reporting

To facilitate transparency and accountability, the actions listed in this annual action plan will be reported back to the Community on a quarterly basis in the Whitehorse Quarterly Performance Report. This report is made available on Council's website after being presented to Council for each quarter of the financial year. You can find all of Councils Quarterly Performance Reports here:

<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/about-council/what-we-do/publications/corporate-documents/performance-reports>

To support the development and evaluation of the MPHWP Action Plan, Council has established a MPHWP Steering Committee that will meet twice yearly and guide the implementation of collaborative health and wellbeing initiatives for Whitehorse specifically for the MPHWP Action Plan. Membership includes organisations we partner with to implement the MPHWP.

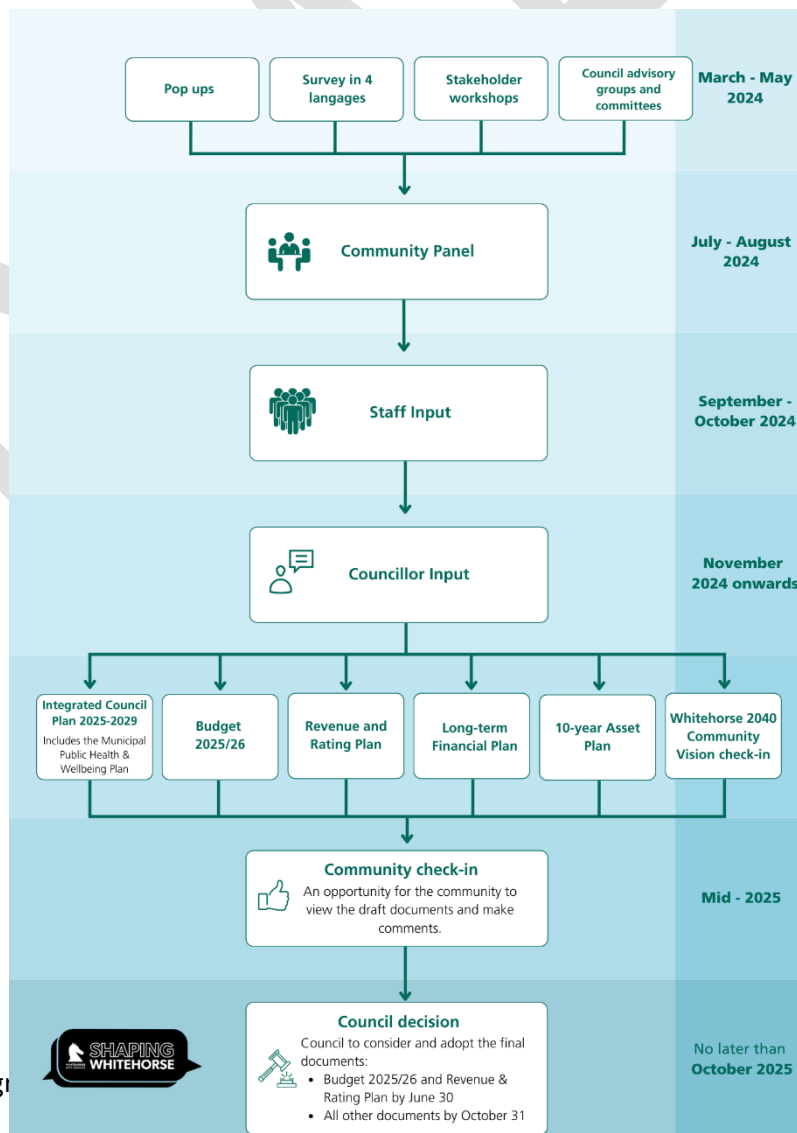
Appendices

Appendix 1: How this plan was developed

Shaping Whitehorse Engagement Process

The diagram below describes the process Council has undertaken deliver the Shaping Whitehorse Community Engagement approach. This engagement program provided important Community, Staff and Councillor inputs to inform the development of Council’s key strategic documents, leveraging the planned deliberative engagement:

- Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029, including the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Annual Budget 2025-2026
- Revenue and Rating Plan
- Long-Term Financial Plan
- 10-Year Asset Plan
- Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision check-in.



Whitehorse City Council engagement policy

The Local Government Act 2020 specifies that a Council must adopt and maintain a community engagement policy that gives effect to the following community engagement principles:

- a community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope
- participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation
- participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement
- participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement
- participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.

The Act specifies that the community vision, council plan, financial plan and asset plan must be developed or reviewed in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

Council values everyone's participation and wants to hear different opinions, thoughts and views so that Council can make informed decision that impact the community. This policy sets out Council's commitment and approach to engagement including legislative requirements.

Community engagement is about harnessing a range and diversity of views and opinions, experience and expertise within our community to help Council make better, more informed decisions.

Deliberative engagement

Deliberative engagement is a particular approach to involving people in decision-making. It is different from other forms of engagement in that it is about giving participants time to consider and discuss an issue in depth before they come to a considered view. Deliberation is one form of 'high influence' community engagement. The expectation is that Council will implement the recommendations to the greatest extent possible. However, it does not replace or take away from the decision-making powers of elected representatives. Council will undertake deliberative engagement:

1. Where it is a legislative requirement (including Community Vision, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Plan).
2. Where Council resolves that it wants its decision-making on a matter or initiative to be informed by this model of community engagement.
3. Where the matter has a certain level of complexity and/or significance to the community.

Community consultation

Visit Council's Shaping Whitehorse Your Say page here for more detailed information and access to the reports mentioned in this plan: <https://yoursay.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/shaping-whitehorse>

Stage 1 Broad Engagement

Stage 1 engagement process ran from Monday 18 March to Sunday 5 May 2024. The primary objectives of Stage 1 were to gather stakeholder and community feedback on:

- Priorities for the next four years across five themes: A strong and connected community; Suitable buildings and spaces; Local business, jobs and learning; A healthy natural environment, and How Council works
- Managing and prioritising community assets
- Health and wellbeing challenges and improvement opportunities
- Whitehorse 2040 Vision- does it still reflect the community's aspirations for the future?

To achieve broad reach and participation, comprehensive community engagement was undertaken. This included a variety of methods including:

- Online and hard copies surveys available in English, Simplified Chinese, Greek, and Vietnamese
- 10 pop-ups at various locations across Whitehorse
- Stakeholder workshops and interviews conducted with external organisations, staff, and local health and wellbeing service providers
- Interactive sessions with existing community groups, including advisory committees and community forums
- Written submissions received from residents or resident groups
- Council staff information sessions

Extensive promotion of the engagement activities was carried out to support Stage 1 including website project pages, social and digital media posts (including WeChat in Mandarin/Cantonese), Google Ads, articles in the Whitehorse News (hard copy and e-newsletters), YourSay Newsletters, dedicated email marketing, community development newsletters and signage and displays at various community locations.

The Stage 1 engagement reached over 1,400 stakeholders from the Whitehorse community, including residents and special interest groups. The findings from Stage 1 are presented in the Stage 1 findings report and were used to inform the subsequent stages of the Shaping Whitehorse process.

Stage 2 Deliberative Panel

Stage 2 involved the establishment of the Shaping Whitehorse Community Panel, a group of community members selected to represent the wider Whitehorse community.

The Community Panel's two main goals were to review the Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision and focus on the key areas of importance based on stage 1 feedback to help inform the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029, Budget, Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

The Panel:

- Was open to residents and business owners in Whitehorse aged 18 years or over
- 133 people applied
- A panel of 36 people were appointed using independent stratified sampling to broadly reflect the Whitehorse community based on age, gender, residential suburb, birthplace, and business owner/operator status

Deliberative Engagement Approach:

- The Panel was given a specific 'remit': "What should Council prioritise for 2025-2029 to best meet community needs, stay financially sustainable and continue to work towards the community's 2040 Vision?"

Panel Process and Inputs:

- The Panel met four times; three times in-person and once online
- They received a range of information including a panel handbook, reports (including the Stage 1 engagement findings), pre-recorded and live presentations, copies of Council's current strategic documents, fact sheets, and responses to their questions
- The sessions involved brainstorming, ideas generation, Q&A, group discussions, and deliberation on priorities and trade-offs
- The Panel ultimately developed and voted on recommendations. A supermajority of 80% or above was required for a recommendation to be considered an official recommendation.

Outcomes and Recommendations:

- the Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision remained valid; no changes required
- The Panel developed 24 recommendations to inform Council's development of the 2025-2029 Council Plan, with 21 recommendations across the five Strategic Directions and three specifically relating to Health and Wellbeing priorities.
- They also reviewed the current Guiding Principles for Sustainable Financial and Asset Management Decisions and developed two recommendations for improvement that achieved supermajority support.

The recommendations from the Panel reflect broad community sentiment and have been used in the design of Council's key strategic and resource plans, including the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029. Council also committed to reporting back to the Panel on how their recommendations were considered.

Appendix 3: Our Regulatory Framework

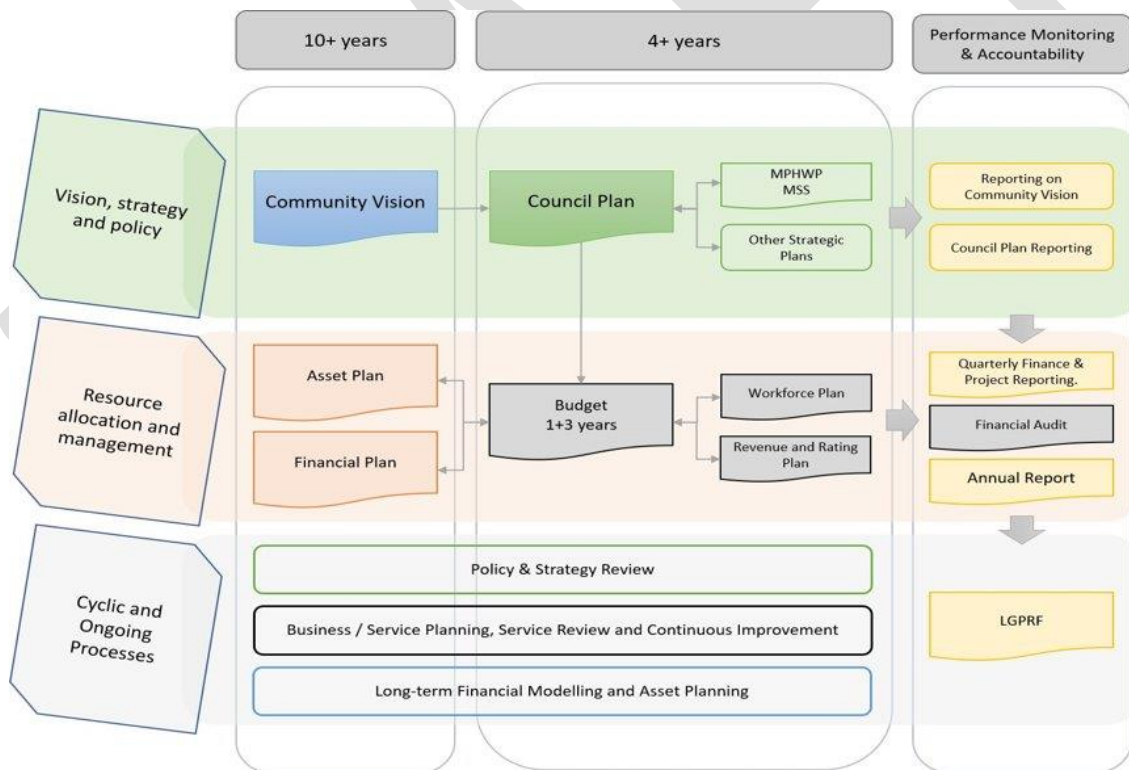
Local Government Act 2020

S90 (1) A Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next 4 financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

Strategic Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

The *Local Government Act 2020* details a principles-based approach to planning and financial management. The rules for creating key strategic documents, budgets, and annual reports set out strategic planning principles for Victorian councils, emphasising a flexible, integrated approach to planning, monitoring, and performance reporting.

Each of these key strategic documents and reports have different deadlines for development, review, and approval. However, they are all connected, with community engagement playing a central role. To help understand these relationships, the visual below has been developed to illustrate the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework (ISPRF):



International Legislation

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights

Australia is a signatory to both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1978) and the International Covenant of Civic and Political Rights. Australia is committed to the protection and promotion of human rights for not only all Australians, but for all humankind.

Australia became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008.

Federal Legislation

The Racial Discrimination Act (1975)

The Racial Discrimination Act (1975) focuses on the elimination of all forms of discrimination on the basis of a person's race, colour or national ethnic origin. Councils, as well as all members of the Australian community are obliged to eliminate discrimination under this Act.

Sex Discrimination Act (1984)

The Sex Discrimination Act (1984) makes it against the law to discriminate on the basis of sex, marital or relationship status, and pregnancy. It also protects against sexual harassment. The Act was amended in 2013 to make discrimination on the basis of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status against the law.

Disability Acts

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Victorian Disability Act 2006 provide the framework for addressing barriers experienced by people with disability through the development of Council's Disability Action Plan. This legislation states:

Disability Act 2006 – Section 38

The Victorian Disability Act 2006 requires all public bodies including local government to develop a Disability Action Plan which identified the following four key areas that must be addressed:

- a. Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- b. Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
- c. Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability
- d. Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability

Councils are required to report the outcomes of the Disability Action Plan in their Annual Report.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 – Section 61

This broad rights-based legislation aims to eliminate as far as possible discrimination towards people with disability. The action plan must include provisions relating to:

- a. The devising of policies and programs to achieve the objects of this Act; and
- b. The communication of these policies and programs to persons within the action planner; and
- c. The review of practices within the action planner with a view to the identification of any discriminatory practices; and
- d. The setting of goals and targets, where these may reasonably be determined against which the success of the plan in achieving the objects of the Act may be assessed; and
- e. The means, other than those referred to in paragraph(d), of evaluating the policies and programs referred to in paragraph (a); and
- f. The appointment of persons within the action planner to implement the provisions referred to in paragraphs (a) to (e) (inclusive).

Victorian Legislation

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)

Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 describes the twenty fundamental rights contained in the legislation promote and protect the freedom, respect, equality and dignity of all people in Victoria. The Charter requires that all levels of government and other public bodies comply with these rights and consider the relevant human rights contained in the legislation when developing laws, policies and when making decisions.

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005: Child Safety Standards

To help ensure the safety of children Victoria introduced compulsory minimum standards (under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*) that apply to organisations providing services for children. These were implemented in Council services from January 2016.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management (MARAM) Framework

Established in law under *Part 11 of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008* the MARAM Framework outlines and underpins the necessary policies, practice and procedural considerations required for Information Sharing Entities, including Councils, to align with to be compliant with the legislated requirements for information sharing about family violence and child safety: *Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act (FVPA) 2008* and the *Family Violence Protection (Information Sharing and Risk Management) Regulations 2019* and *41ZA of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act*.

Climate Change Act 2017

The *Climate Change Act 2017* recognises that Victoria's climate is changing and requires certain decision-makers to have regard to climate change and to consider its potential impacts and

contributions to greenhouse gas emissions. Local government is identified as a decision-maker that must consider climate change when preparing a municipal public health and wellbeing plan.

Gender Equality Act 2020

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* Whitehorse City Council is a defined public entity. The Act requires defined public entities to promote gender equity in the workplace and when developing policies and programs and delivering services to the public.

DRAFT

Appendix 4: Development of Health and Wellbeing Partnership Strategies

Overview

Councils are required to develop a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan every four years. Because it is a municipal-wide plan, the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires that Council must:

2(c) provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the public health and wellbeing plan.

2(d) 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.

Whitehorse City Council has ensured the involvement of our broad community and the organisations we will be working with to achieve the MPHWP objectives (goals and strategies) through:

- Broad community engagement and community panel deliberation as part of Shaping Whitehorse
- Engaging partners and stakeholders in community needs and priority identification

The steps Council has undertaken and the outcomes of these processes are described below.

Key steps

1. Community engagement

Stage 1 of the Shaping Whitehorse program gave the community the opportunity to provide input to ensure local priorities and needs are heard and reflected through the strategic plans under development. It involved seven weeks of broad community engagement from Monday 18 March to Sunday 5 May 2024. Approximately 1,431 people provided input including feedback about health and wellbeing around a number of topics.

Engagement topic
Internet access
Asking for help from neighbours
Sense of belonging in local community
Recognition of First Nations people
Awareness of what's happening in neighbourhood
Access to Council support and services

Experiences of racism
Awareness of support services
Council understanding of the needs of the community
Contributing to Council decision making
Ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic
Experiences of volunteering
Main health and wellbeing challenges in the community

Shaping Whitehorse identified two major themes around health and wellbeing and the relationship between them – **social needs** and the **natural environment**.

Details of findings are available on the Shaping Whitehorse webpage:
<https://yoursay.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/shaping-whitehorse>

2. Municipal profile and Victorian priorities

Council prepared a municipal [Health and Wellbeing Profile 2024](#) which enabled us to assess where our community health challenges aligned with the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027 priorities, as well as areas that were of particular significance to Whitehorse. See Appendix 5.

From this assessment we identified 11 draft health and wellbeing priorities for Whitehorse under consideration for the 2025-2029 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP).

3. Partner/stakeholder engagement

In March 2024, we held Health and Wellbeing Partnership workshops (and interviews for those unable to attend workshops) with local health and wellbeing providers to explore these priority areas further. A total of 33 people participated representing 25 local organisations.

Partnership Workshops	Interviews
Avenue Neighbourhood House	Victoria Police
Bennettswood Neighbourhood House	Network of Inner East Community Houses
Blackburn North Neighbourhood House	Eastern Community Legal Centre
Box Hill South Neighbourhood House	Centre for Holistic Health
Burke and Beyond	Women’s Health East
EACH	Eastern Health

Eastern Alcohol and Drug Service	Crossways
Eastern Health	Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network
Family Access Network	
Health Ability	
Migrant Information Centre East Melbourne	
Nadrasca	
North East Public Health Unit	
Scope Australia	
Sexual Health Victoria	
Turning Point	
Whitehorse Manningham Library	

A further 40 people attended the Interfaith Forum early May 2024, adding the perspectives of diverse communities in Whitehorse and nominating priority areas of focus.

From the workshops, forum and interviews we identified what the priority focus areas for collaboration could be for the next four years. and potential strategies to address them.

4. Community deliberation

The Shaping Whitehorse Deliberative Panel in August 2024 considered the outcomes of these partnership discussions, alongside the findings of Council’s broad community engagement, to inform recommendations to Council for the Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 that includes the MPHWP. The key health and wellbeing issues arising from Panel recommendations were:

- Community connections, loneliness
- Youth development
- Intergenerational approach
- Benefits of volunteering
- Financial literacy to assist with cost of living
- Ageing population challenges
- Impacts of major projects
- Link between open space and physical and mental wellbeing
- Access to information for services, volunteering opportunities and health and wellbeing information

5. Priority identification

We analysed and distilled all these important inputs into eight priority areas for health and wellbeing. We called these Key Strategic Partnership (KSP) opportunities, outlined below:

1. Cost-of-living pressures (including financial literacy and affordable housing)
2. Social isolation and inclusion, loneliness
3. Resilience and overall wellbeing (mental health)
4. Access to fresh food
5. Youth development and mental wellbeing (employment, volunteering, social media, anxiety, harms from vaping and AOD)
6. Access to, and increasing, physical activity
7. Family violence including elder abuse (legislative must do)
8. Tackling climate change and health impacts (legislative must consider) and addressing climate change justice

The second stage of sector engagement as a part of the development of Whitehorse's Integrated Council Plan involved a follow up workshop in November 2024 to look at Health and Wellbeing Partnership Priorities. The aim was to narrow down and locate the four to five key areas of **partnership** to best improve the health and wellbeing of Whitehorse over the next four years.

Nineteen representatives of 12 organisations participated in the workshop. Sixteen additional people were registered and did not attend on the day.

Partnership Priorities Workshop
Alkira
Burke and Beyond
Eastern Health
Family Access Network
Headspace
healthAbility
Mind
Mitcham Community House
Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network
North East Public Health Unit
Victoria Police
Whitehorse Manningham Libraries

In the Partnership Priorities Workshop, we narrowed the eight KSPs down to four areas that Council and partners **together** could make the most impact over the next four years:

1. Social isolation, inclusion and loneliness
2. Family violence
3. Resilience and overall wellbeing
4. Youth development (mental wellbeing, vaping)

Following on from the workshop, the Integrated Council Plan Project Working Group reviewed the identified priorities for partnership efforts in light of other proposed strategies of the Integrated Council Plan (Council's strategies) and developed five Key Health and Wellbeing Strategies:

1. Foster social connections and a sense of belonging
2. Support community initiatives to promote health & prevent disease (e.g. loneliness, nutritious food access, active living, vaping)
3. Prevent and respond to family violence (including elder abuse)
4. Enhance mental health and build resilience
5. Activate the community to achieve positive environmental, health, waste and climate change outcomes

(Consideration of gender impact assessment findings and identification of population cohorts will be undertaken during development of the annual action plan.)

6. Council review and adoption

The draft Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 Objectives and Strategies (include the MPHWP), were reviewed by Council in February 2025, with some changes to the MPHWP Key Health and Wellbeing Strategies to now read:

1. Foster social connections and a sense of belonging
2. Support community initiatives to promote health & prevent disease
3. Prevent and respond to family violence (including elder abuse)
4. Partner to enhance mental health and build resilience
5. Partner with the community to achieve positive environmental, health and climate change outcomes

These Objectives and Strategies along with identification of Major Initiatives and Candidate Projects (key actions), are to be endorsed by Council by end of March 2025. Following on will be a period of Community Feedback with a projected adoption of the Integrated Council Plan by Council by the end of June 2025.

Appendix 5: Alignment with Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan Priorities 2023-2027

In the first phase of development of health and wellbeing key strategies for Whitehorse we considered the priorities of the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027 and what the local health data documented in the [Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Profile 2024](#) tells us. Eleven priority areas for the City of Whitehorse emerged.

Aligned Victorian priority	Our focus*
1. Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use	Vaping/e-cigarettes
2. Improving wellbeing (mental health)	Gambling, loneliness, dementia, neurodiversity, disengagement, anxiety/depression, caring
3. Increasing healthy eating	Vegetable intake, food security (access to fresh food)
4. Increasing active living	Daily exercise, sedentary jobs
5. Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use	Alcohol, pharmaceuticals
6. Tackling climate change and its impact on health	Heatwaves, air quality, new threats
7. Preventing all forms of violence	Family violence
8. Reducing injury	Falls in the home
Other local priorities	
9. Access to affordable housing	Social housing, rental stress
10. Discrimination due to age, race, gender, sexual identity, ability	Social cohesion, gender equality
11. Social inclusion and connection	Digital access, engagement in local community, inclusive employment

*Different approaches are used to address whole population or specific cohorts of people – including for example: age or gender as well as the needs of groups who experience discrimination or disadvantage (people on low incomes, unemployed; people with a disability; the LGBTIQ+ community; people of CALD, carers).

Areas of Alignment with Victorian Health and Wellbeing Priority Areas 2023-2027

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
<p>Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use*</p> <p>*Precautionary Principle: Where a health risk poses a serious threat, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason to postpone measures to prevent or control the health risk.</p>	<p>In 2020 16.4 per cent of the Victorian population were daily smokers and 10.1 per cent of people living in Metropolitan Melbourne smoked daily.</p> <p>Rates of smoking are disproportionately higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people who have a mental health condition.</p> <p>Use of e-cigarettes has doubled from 3.0 per cent to 6.1 per cent over three and a half years (2018-19 to 2022) in Victoria. There is a strong association between the use of e-cigarettes by non-smoking youth and future smoking.</p> <p>Males vape and smoke at higher rates than females, however use of e-cigarettes by females aged 18-24</p>	<p>In 2020 8.2 per cent of people in Whitehorse identify as daily smokers. This is significantly <i>lower</i> than the Victorian average of 16.4 per cent and lower than the Metropolitan Melbourne average of 10.1 per cent.</p> <p>The rate of e-cigarette use in Whitehorse is not known.</p> <p>A post-pandemic consultation by Whitehorse City Council in March to May 2023 with a total of 720 young people aged 12-25 living in Whitehorse found that young people are concerned about the peer pressure associated with vaping.</p>	<p>Educate retailers and enforce regulations pertaining to sale of cigarettes and e-cigarettes.</p> <p>Youth services to support social connections and mental wellbeing of young people.</p> <p>Waste management and environmental protection.</p> <p>Coordination of collaborative approach to public health, health promotion response.</p> <p>Develop and implement policies aimed at reducing</p>	<p>Whitehorse Waste Management Strategy 2018-2028</p> <p>healthAbility health promotion strategic priorities (partner organisation)</p> <p>Other Eastern Metro Region (EMR) LGAs</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
	<p>has increased more than 5-fold from 2018-19 to 2022 in Australia.</p> <p>Waste from e-cigarettes is harmful to the environment and may cause fires.</p>		<p>exposure of children to harmful products.</p> <p>Promote alternatives (healthy activities), supports for quitting and influencing attitudes through social marketing messaging in collaboration with stakeholders.</p>	
Improving wellbeing (mental health)	<p>Anxiety and depression are the most frequent forms of mental illness in Australia.</p> <p>Diagnosed long term mental health conditions (which include anxiety and depression) are experienced by 8.8 per cent of Victorians and 8.1 per cent of people living in Metropolitan Melbourne. 8.9 per cent are female and 5.8 per cent are male.</p>	<p>In Whitehorse in 2017, 20.6 per cent of people experienced anxiety or depression; 23.6 per cent were female and 17.2 per cent were male.</p> <p>Diagnosed long term mental health conditions (which include anxiety and depression) are experienced by 7.4 per cent of people living in Whitehorse, compared to 8.8 per cent of Victorians and 8.1 per cent of</p>	<p>Advise Council through the advisory groups and networks</p> <p>Support and strengthen broad community and targeted cohorts through supporting organisations to apply for funding and initiatives</p> <p>Plan and provide accessible arts/culture,</p>	<p>Arts & Cultural Strategy 2014-2022</p> <p>Whitehorse Recreation Strategy 2015–2024</p> <p>Other EMR LGAs</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
	<p>In Victoria, the proportion of adults who experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress significantly increased from 18.1% pre-pandemic in 2019 to 23.4% in 2020 during the first year of the pandemic. This was significantly higher in the younger age groups—35.0% of adults aged 18-24 years and 27.8% of adults aged 25-34 years.</p> <p>Women, incl. pregnant and postpartum women, people who had been hospitalised with COVID-19, children and young people, carers, people who became unemployed owing to the pandemic, international students and those with pre-existing psychiatric conditions had a higher risk of adverse mental health consequences during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.</p>	<p>people living in Metropolitan Melbourne.</p> <p>The number of hospital admissions in 2018, where it was determined that the injury or poisoning was purposely self-inflicted, per 1,000 persons in Whitehorse was 1.30 female and 0.86 male, higher than the Metropolitan East rates of 1.2 female and 0.6 male.</p> <p>A post-pandemic consultation by Whitehorse City Council in March to May 2023 with a 720 young people aged 12-25 living in Whitehorse found young people aged 12-25 are concerned about their mental health in general, the effects of (cyber) bullying, the peer pressure associated with vaping, being socially isolated and feeling overwhelmed by the information generated by social media. A sense of having no free</p>	<p>leisure/recreation facilities, programs and services</p> <p>Plan and provide family, children and youth services, and navigation and support for older people.</p> <p>Collaborate and partner with stakeholder organisations to promote wellbeing for broad population and targeted cohorts through community education and information, promote healthy activities, and influencing attitudes through social marketing messaging.</p> <p>Advocate for accessible services to support</p>	

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
	<p>Risk factors for elder abuse that increased during the pandemic response include increased ageism, social isolation, less access to health care and exercise, more reliance on the use of technology, financial stress, and carer stress.</p> <p>Carers have the lowest wellbeing of any large group measured by the Australian Unity Wellbeing index. They are 40 per cent more likely to suffer from a chronic health condition. Back problems, anxiety and depression are directly linked to caring.</p>	<p>time where there is no pressure and of pessimism about the future gives further insight to how young people in Whitehorse are feeling.</p> <p>[Findings of the Positive Ageing Survey will inform the health and wellbeing needs of people aged over 55 in Whitehorse.]</p> <p>Because of the ageing population profile, between 2016 and 2050 the prevalence of dementia in Whitehorse is expected to almost double from 3,767 to 7,444.</p>	<p>mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>Local prevention and health promotion initiatives, e.g. in community settings, in collaboration with regional projects.</p> <p>In future Local Government will likely be funded to establish and coordinate a Social Inclusion Action Groups (SIAGs) as a sector change arising from the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System.</p>	
Increasing healthy eating	In 2017, 56.8 per cent of Victorians did not meet the vegetable consumption guidelines, 15.3 per cent of Victorians consumed take-	In 2017, 57.4 per cent of people in Whitehorse did not meet the vegetable consumption guidelines which is similar to all	Promote healthy eating for broad population and targeted cohorts through community education and	healthAbility health promotion strategic

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
	<p>away food more than once a week and 10.1 per cent of Victorians consume sweetened drinks daily. Men were less likely to meet the dietary guidelines for healthy eating than women.</p> <p>36 per cent of Australian households experienced moderate to severe food insecurity and a further 23 per cent are severely 'food insecure'.</p>	<p>Victorians at 56.8 per cent. In Whitehorse 17.3 per cent of people consumed take-away food more than once a week, more than the 15.3 per cent of Victorians. 6.1 per cent of people consume sweetened drinks daily in Whitehorse, compared to 10.1 per cent of Victorians. Men were less likely to meet the dietary guidelines for healthy eating than women</p> <p>Local charities observe and respond to a considerable increase in need for food relief in the Whitehorse area.</p> <p>In Whitehorse, residents are well serviced by access to fresh food, with less distance to travel on average than to access fast food. The average distance to the closest healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer) is 1046 m, slightly less than the</p>	<p>information, promote healthy activities, and influencing attitudes through social marketing messaging.</p> <p>Develop and implement policies aimed at reducing exposure of children to harmful products.</p> <p>Partner or lead local healthy eating initiatives, e.g. in community settings, in collaboration with regional projects.</p> <p>Develop healthy catering policy for Council meetings and events.</p> <p>Advocate for nutritious food options as easy choices in Council facilities.</p>	<p>priorities (partner organisation)</p> <p>Other EMR LGAs</p> <p>NEPHU Catchment Plan</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
		average distance to the closest fast-food outlet, 1105 m.	<p>Plan the urban environment and transport to promote easy access to fresh food outlets.</p> <p>Liaise with and support local initiatives to provide nutritious food to people who are food insecure.</p> <p>Provide locally accessible community gardens.</p>	
Increasing active living	<p>In 2017, 44.1 per cent of people in Victoria did not obtain sufficient exercise for good health, with 26.5 per cent spending seven or more hours sitting on an average weekday.</p> <p>Metropolitan Melbourne has an average Social Infrastructure Index* score of 7, with wide variation across the city.</p>	<p>In 2017, 46.6 per cent of people in Whitehorse did not obtain sufficient exercise for good health, with 29.3 per cent spending seven or more hours sitting on an average weekday. Whitehorse percentages are higher than the Victorian percentages on both measures.</p>	<p>Promote physical activity for broad population and targeted cohorts through community education and information, promote healthy activities, and influencing attitudes through social marketing messaging.</p>	<p>Whitehorse Recreation Strategy 2015–2024</p> <p>Play Space Strategy</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
		<p>The Whitehorse Well-being Profiler Survey (2017) of 3,000 students in Whitehorse highlighted how physical activity participation for young people declines as they progress through secondary school, particularly for girls. Of all students 58 per cent reported spending 4 hours or more each day engaging in sedentary activities at home such as watching television, doing homework, or playing games.</p> <p>People in Whitehorse have good access to transport relative to other municipalities.</p> <p>Nearly seventy per cent of dwellings in Whitehorse are within 400m of a public transport stop with a regular service at least every 30 minutes on weekdays between 7am and 7pm</p>	<p>Partner or lead local physical activity initiatives, e.g. in community settings, in collaboration with regional projects.</p> <p>Implement the Victorian Fair Access Policy Roadmap to increase access to Council sports facilities for women and girls (and other cohorts with barriers to participation).</p> <p>Support the development of non-structured physical activity.</p> <p>Provide access to recreation and leisure facilities.</p> <p>Plan the urban environment, open space,</p>	<p>Whitehorse Integrated Transport Strategy 2011</p> <p>Cycling Strategy 2016</p> <p>healthAbility health promotion strategic priorities (partner organisation)</p> <p>Other EMR LGAs</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
		<p>(71st percentile; Range from 0.0 to 100.0%).</p> <p>Whitehorse has a Social Infrastructure Index* of 7.9 (This score is in the 65th percentile; Range from 2.3 to 13.7/16). This is a higher score than the average for Metropolitan Melbourne with a score of 7.</p>	<p>and transport to enable safe physical activity.</p> <p>Liaise with and support local initiatives to provide nutritious food to people who are food insecure.</p>	
Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use	<p>In Victoria, the hospital admission rate for alcohol in 2021/2022 was 574 per 100,000 people and 167 per 100,000 people for pharmaceutical drugs.</p> <p>The rate of hospital admissions due to illicit substances in Victoria is 272 per 100,000 population and the Metropolitan rate is 279 per 100,000.</p>	<p>Whitehorse alcohol and pharmaceutical drug hospitalisation admission rates in 2021/2022 were 737 and 207 per 100,000 people, respectively. This highlights an increase in alcohol admission rates since 2017/2018 (when alcohol admissions were 620 and pharmaceutical drug admissions were 228 per 100,000 people). These hospital admission rates are higher than Victorian</p>	<p>Promote alternatives to alcohol use for broad population and targeted cohorts through community education and information, promote healthy activities, and influencing attitudes through social marketing messaging.</p> <p>Develop and implement policies aimed at reducing harms from alcohol, e.g.</p>	Other EMR LGAs

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
		<p>and Melbourne Metropolitan rates.^{ccii}</p> <p>The hospital admission rate in Whitehorse for pharmaceutical drugs was higher for females compared to males (115 and 91 per 100,000 people respectively) in 2020/2021. These hospitalisations may be related to prescription drug misuse, polypharmacy, or complications with ageing.</p> <p>The rate of hospital admissions due to illicit substances in Whitehorse (290 per 100,000) is similar to the Victorian rate (272 per 100,000) and the Metropolitan rate (279 per 10,000). Males account for more admissions (158 per 100,000) than females (113 per 100,000) in Whitehorse.</p>	<p>servicing of alcohol policy for Council meetings and events, hours of alcohol availability at sports clubs.</p> <p>Support local harm reduction initiatives, e.g. in community settings, in collaboration with regional projects.</p> <p>Advocate for improved access to Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) services for groups who face barriers.</p>	

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
<p>Tackling climate change and its impact on health</p>	<p>The broad social determinants of health, such as income, employment, or food security, are also affected by climate change.</p> <p>The projected number of extreme heat days in Melbourne in the 2050s under a high emissions scenario is between 13 and 21 days on average, or between 10 to 16 days with medium emissions.</p> <p>A Victorian study exploring data from 2010 to 2022 explored whether changes to morbidity occurred during or directly after these heat health alerts, and how this differed for certain population groups. The study found an increase in heat-related ED presentations with the greatest impact on people aged 65 years and older, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those living in the most disadvantaged areas were groups more likely to</p>	<p>The City of Whitehorse experiences temperatures greater than 35°C, on average 11 days per year. This is predicted to increase to 16 days per year, on average, by 2050</p> <p>In Whitehorse urban heat temperatures are higher in denser residential and industrial areas of the municipality and lower in areas such as Blackburn Lake Sanctuary, Morack Public Golf Course, Mullum-Mullum Creek, and surrounds, and along Gardiners Creek.</p> <p>1,410 households in Whitehorse comprise people renting public housing.</p> <p>In Whitehorse, 19.9 per cent of the adult population have been diagnosed with asthma at some time in their life.</p>	<p>Mitigation, response and adaptation to climate change and extreme weather events, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy • Community education and incentives for action • Urban design • Asset management and building design • Emergency management • Reduce travel by car • Increase canopy cover • Reduce emissions • Waste management 	<p>Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030</p> <p>Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2031</p> <p>Whitehorse Waste Management Strategy 2018-2028</p> <p>Integrated Water Management Strategy 2022 – 2042</p> <p>Open Space Strategy 2023 – 2037</p> <p>Cycling Strategy 2016</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
	<p>record heat-related presentations and admissions. People living in public housing are at increased risk of heat related morbidity due to poor thermal capability of housing stock. State-wide research in 2019 found that more than half of all Victorians in public housing were too hot last summer or too cold last winter and that as a result, 45 per cent of residents had to leave their home. In Victoria climate changes will cause an overall decrease in total rainfall, contributing to longer and more severe droughts; however, individual rainfall events and storms will become more intense with a greater risk of flash flooding.</p> <p>Climate change is likely to be a factor in thunderstorm asthma events. An unprecedented thunderstorm event in Melbourne</p>	<p>Whitehorse has a significant population of people of Asian or Indian background, who may be at higher risk of future thunderstorm asthma hospital admissions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water management • Open space management 	<p>Whitehorse</p> <p>Integrated Transport Strategy 2011</p> <p>Other EMR LGAs</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
	<p>in November 2016 caused an exceptionally large number of emergency department admissions and hospitalisations for respiratory-related presentations, especially individuals of Indian or Sri Lankan birth and south-east Asian birth. Ten individuals died; of these six were of south-east Asian birth or Indian birth.</p>			
<p>Preventing all forms of violence</p>	<p>Violence is a gendered issue. Community and family violence is mostly perpetrated by men.</p> <p>The rate of <i>recorded</i> crimes against the person in Victoria in 2022/23 was 987.5 per 100,000 people.</p> <p>Violence is a gendered issue. Community and family violence is mostly perpetrated by men. ^{cxliii}</p>	<p>The rate of <i>recorded</i> crimes against the person in Whitehorse in 2022/23 was 573.8 per 100,000 people, lower than Victoria as a whole (987.5/100,000).</p> <p>The rate of <i>recorded</i> family violence incidents in Whitehorse in 2022/23 was 839 per 100,000 population. The City of Whitehorse has almost half the rate of recorded family violence <i>incidents</i> for Victoria. However,</p>	<p>Local governments are required to include measures to respond to and prevent Family Violence in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.</p> <p>Educate Council Staff to respond to family violence (FV) including customer services and outside workers.</p>	<p>EMR Together for Equality and Respect Strategy (signatory)</p> <p>Regional Family Violence Partnership (member)</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
		<p>there were still 1,470 family violence incidents reported in 2022/2023: an average of 28 incidents every week. It is estimated that only 25 per cent of family violence incidents are reported to the police so the true annual number of family violence incidents in Whitehorse may be closer to greater than 5,880 per year, equating to 113 incidents per week.</p> <p>The rate of crimes against the person which were family <i>offences</i> in Whitehorse in which women were victims is higher for women than for men.</p>	<p>Train Maternal Child Health services in MARAM framework and practice to respond to clients at risk or experiencing FV.</p> <p>Prevent gender-based violence through implementation of Gender Equality Act (undertaking Gender Impact Assessments to polities, programs and services).</p> <p>Lead local prevention and health promotion initiatives, e.g. in community settings, in collaboration with regional projects.</p> <p>Fund community organisations through grants.</p>	<p>healthAbility health promotion strategic priorities (partner organisation)</p> <p>Other EMR LGAs</p> <p>Whitehorse GEAP</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
<p>Reducing injury</p>	<p>The rate of hospital admissions due to falls by people who live in Victoria in 2020/2021 was 846 per 100,000 for Victoria. Most falls occur in the home.</p> <p>Falls are related to both gender and age. In the 65 years and older group, females accounted for more hospital admissions and emergency department presentations than males.</p> <p>Falls were the leading cause of injury among hospital admissions (36.7%) and emergency department presentations (48.4%) for unintentional injury in Victoria in 2021/2022.</p> <p>Hospitalisations due to transport injury for people in Victorian occur at a rate of 220 per 100,000).</p>	<p>The rate of hospital admissions due to falls by people who live in Whitehorse in 2020/2021 was 856 per 100,000, higher than 846 per 100,000 for Victoria. The rate of admissions for females (1056/100,000) was significantly higher than for males (709/10,000).</p> <p>Hospitalisations due to transport injury for residents of Whitehorse in 2020 occur at a rate of 158 per 100,000 people, lower than the Victorian rate of 220/100,000. 38.4 per cent of hospitalisations are for Whitehorse residents who are car occupants, 35.1 per cent for cyclists, 11.6 per cent for motorcyclists and 8.3 per cent for residents who are pedestrians. The rate for males is higher (at 194/100,000) than for females (122/100,000).</p>	<p>Injury in the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban design • Road maintenance • Community education <p>Falls in the home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service navigation and support • Provide accessible facilities and programs for strength and balance training. • Collaborate with service sector organisations for community-based positive ageing programs, community awareness and education. 	<p>Whitehorse Integrated Transport Strategy 2011</p> <p>Age Friendly Cities</p>

Victorian Priority Area	Victorian profile	Whitehorse profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic Alignment
		In Whitehorse during the period 2014-2018 pedestrian fatalities and injuries were most common in people aged 18-25 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence attitudes about ageing through social marketing messaging. 	

*The Social Infrastructure Index (SII) developed by the Australian Urban Observatory measures 16 individual service types including Community Centres, Culture and Leisure, Early Years, Education, Health and Social Services and Sport and Recreation which were used to calculate the presence of service mix within a threshold distance. A maximum score of 16 represents the highest mix of social infrastructure with all service types present.

Detail about other priority areas

Priority area	Profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic alignment
<p>Access to affordable housing</p>	<p>Housing plays a critical role in ensuring individuals can fully engage in community life, both economically and socially, and is becoming less affordable across the whole of Melbourne. In September 2023, only 1.1 per cent of rental housing in Whitehorse was considered affordable, in comparison to the Victorian average of 8.8 per cent.</p> <p>The proportion of renters in housing stress in Whitehorse has increased from 30.9 per cent in 2016, to 32.6 per cent in 2021, above the Victorian average of 30.9 per cent. R</p> <p>ntal housing stress is highest in Box Hill, accounting for 44.4 per cent of all renters. This is followed by Burwood and Blackburn South, both accounting for 35.3 per cent of renters.</p> <p>In September 2023, the percentage of available affordable lettings in Whitehorse was just 1.1 per cent; significantly lower than Victoria at 8.8 per cent and Metropolitan Melbourne at 4.5 per cent. In the year previous, Whitehorse only had 2.3 per cent affordable lettings.</p> <p>Whitehorse has a higher proportion of mortgage holders in housing stress (19.7 per cent) when compared to Victoria (15.5 per cent). Mortgage stress is greatest in Box Hill and Burwood East, accounting for 28.9 and 25.4 of mortgagees.</p> <p>Although Whitehorse is overall a relatively affluent community enjoying good health, the municipality has greater social disparity with</p>	<p>Partner with LGAs to advocate for accessible, affordable housing through relevant networks</p> <p>Apply gender lens to implementation of Affordable Housing Policies</p>	<p>Whitehorse Affordable Housing Policy 2023</p> <p>Eastern Region Group of Councils</p> <p>Other EMR LGAs</p>

Priority area	Profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic alignment
	<p>more high-income earners and more low-income earners than other local government areas.</p> <p>In Whitehorse 30.9 per cent of households in the bottom 40 per cent of incomes spend more than 30 per cent on housing costs.</p> <p>Gender differences in working aged adults reveal distinct differences in income in Whitehorse, affecting access to housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The female median weekly income is \$648 (persons aged 15+) • The male median weekly income is \$958 (persons aged 15+) • 43.6 per cent of females are employed full-time • 64.4 per cent of males are employed full-time <p>81 per cent of lone-parent households in Whitehorse have a female head.</p> <p>Whitehorse has the second highest number of homeless people in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (1,491 people), at 0.9 per cent. In 2021-22, a total of 1,712 people received specialist homelessness services in Whitehorse. Of those receiving assistance, 986 were female (58 per cent) and 726 were male (42 per cent).</p> <p>Homelessness refers to people living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out, in supported accommodation for the homeless, staying temporarily with other households, in boarding houses, in other temporary lodgings, and living in severely crowded dwellings.</p>		

Priority area	Profile	Examples of Local Government roles	Local Strategic alignment
<p>Discrimination due to age, race, gender, sexual identity, ability</p>	<p>There are systematic gender differences in material well-being regardless of an individual’s socioeconomic level. Gender inequality is a characteristic of most societies, with males on average faring better in social, economic, and political hierarchies.</p> <p>The average individual weekly gross income for males in Whitehorse was \$958 while for females it was \$648. 27.7 per cent of females in Whitehorse were in the lowest Metropolitan Melbourne income quartile (earning less than \$336 per week).</p> <p>Gender inequality is perpetuated not just through unequal access to and control over material resources but also through gender norms and stereotypes which reinforce gender roles and constrain the behaviour of both women and men in ways that lead to inequality. Gender is one part of a person’s identity. Intersectionality is an approach to understanding how various parts of a person’s characteristics or identity intersect to diminish or magnify the experience of discrimination or disadvantage for the person or the group.</p> <p>People with disability are twice as likely as those without a disability to be unemployed (10 per cent) and have lower rates of labour force participation. Men with disability are more likely to be employed (56.1 per cent) compared to women with disability (50.7 per cent). Labour force participation declines with severity of limitation. People</p>	<p>Advise Council through relevant advisory groups and networks.</p> <p>Conduct Gender Impact Assessments, and once introduced, Disability Impact Assessments for Council policies, programs and services.</p> <p>Plan and provide accessible arts & cultural, leisure & recreation facilities, programs and services.</p> <p>Plan and provide accessible family, children and youth services, and navigation and support for older people.</p> <p>Develop and implement accessible employment programs.</p>	<p>Various Federal and State Government Acts</p> <p>Charter of Human Rights</p> <p>Arts & Cultural Strategy 2014-2022</p> <p>Whitehorse Recreation Strategy 2015–2024</p> <p>Whitehorse Gender Equality Action Plan, Disability Action Plan</p> <p>Other EMR LGAs</p>

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	<p>with autism are less likely (40.8 per cent) to participate in the workforce, when compared to people with no reported disability.</p> <p>Thirty-five per cent of people in Australia aged 55-65 years have experienced some form of age discrimination, and for those aged 65+ the percentage is 43 per cent. The most common types of age-related discrimination, experienced by over 50 per cent of older Australians, are being turned down from a position, being treated with disrespect and being subjected to jokes about ageing. Age discrimination can affect workers' ability to remain in the workforce: one third (33%) of people who had been discriminated against gave up looking for work because of experiencing age discrimination. Whitehorse has an increasingly ageing population. Currently more than 18.5 per cent of people are over the age of 65, and between 2024 and 2041, the number of people aged over 65 will increase by approximately 6,920 people.</p> <p>Despite increasing acceptance of LGBTIQ+ people in Australian they are still more likely than the general population to experience discrimination, prejudice, violence, and abuse in everyday life. Fifty-eight per cent of LGBTQ+ Victorians have faced unfair treatment based on sexual orientation, while 77.7 per cent of trans and gender diverse Victorians have faced unfair treatment based on their gender identity. It is estimated there is a total of 9,830 people who identify as LGBTIQ+ residing in Whitehorse.</p>	<p>Implement the Victorian Fair Access Policy Roadmap to increase access to Council sports facilities for women and girls (and other cohorts with barriers to participation).</p> <p>Fund community organisations through grants to support local initiatives, in line with strategic priorities.</p> <p>Implement the Gender Equality Act (undertaking Gender Impact Assessments to polities, programs and services)</p> <p>Influence attitudes about gender and sexuality diversity, disability, cultural differences, and</p>	

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	<p>While the numbers of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people are comparatively small in the City of Whitehorse, there exist longstanding inequalities in health and life chances between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal Australians.</p> <p>People with lower levels of digital access risk missing essential information and access to beneficial services and supports. Senior people report the expectation that everyone has access to information technology as a form of discrimination.</p>	<p>ageing through social marketing messaging.</p>	
<p>Social inclusion and connection</p>	<p>Socioeconomic disadvantage is considered the greatest cause of health inequality in Victoria as in other parts of world.</p> <p>Substantial numbers of Australians continue to experience affordability stress when it comes to internet access, meaning they would need to pay more than 5 per cent of household income to maintain quality, reliable connectivity. These include people with disability (55.1 per cent), people living in public housing (64.1 per cent), people over the age of 75 (65.2 per cent), and people who are currently unemployed (69.4 per cent). People with lower levels of digital access risk missing essential information and access to beneficial services and supports.</p> <p>Over one in six people with disability experience social isolation.</p> <p>People with disability are less likely to participate in sporting activities or physical recreation, attend cultural events or venues than people</p>	<p>Plan and provide accessible arts & cultural, leisure & recreation facilities, programs and services</p> <p>Plan and provide accessible family, children and youth services, and navigation and support for older people.</p> <p>Support and strengthen the broad community and targeted cohorts for</p>	<p>Arts & Cultural Strategy 2014-2022</p> <p>Whitehorse Recreation Strategy 2015–2024</p> <p>Social Enterprise Policy 2023</p>

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	<p>without disability. Also, people with disability were less likely to have had daily face-to-face contact with family or friends living outside the household than a person without a disability, more likely to have cared for a person with a disability, long term health condition or old age in the last four weeks, more likely to experience some form of discrimination and more likely to assess their health as poor or fair.</p> <p>The rate of caring for others usually increases with age where we see the highest proportion of 19.7 per cent of people aged 55 to 64 years. Overall, women were 2.5 times more likely than men to be a primary carer (5.0 per cent compared with 2.0 per cent), the average age of a primary carer was 54 years.</p> <p>People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, particularly new migrants, and refugees, are at greater risk of poorer quality health care, service delivery and poorer health outcomes compared with other Australians due to language barriers, lower health literacy, and experience difficulties navigating an unfamiliar health and welfare system.</p> <p>A sizeable number of international students study in the City of Whitehorse and many also reside in the municipality. These students are particularly vulnerable to a number of health and wellbeing risk factors, including lack of access to health care and social support services, social isolation, increased risk of assault, housing insecurity,</p>	<p>increased social cohesion and connection through Community Development funding and initiatives.</p> <p>Collaborate and partner with stakeholder organisations to promote social cohesion and connection through community education and information, promote social activities, and influencing attitudes through social marketing messaging.</p> <p>Lead local initiatives that build social infrastructure.</p> <p>Negotiate Social Enterprise initiatives.</p> <p>Implement the Accessible Employment Program</p>	

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	<p>exposure to scams, gambling, and unemployment and/or mistreatment whilst in employment.</p>	<p>Promote the availability of local services, including Council, to international students in Whitehorse.</p> <p>In future Local Governments will likely be funded to establish and coordinate a Social Inclusion Action Groups (SIAGs) as a sector change arising from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.</p>	