

Council Plan Progress Report Mid Year Four

Council Meeting 25 March 2025

SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

Council Plan Incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025





Surf Coast Shire Council Acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Maar nation as the Traditional Owners of the land we now call Surf Coast Shire.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of our Surf Coast Shire community.

Community Vision from Council Plan 2021-25

“From the hinterland to the coast, from the first peoples to the children of the future, we are an active, diverse community that lives creatively to value, protect and enhance the natural environment and our unique neighbourhoods. We will leave the Surf Coast better than we found it.”





Theme 1: **First Nations Reconciliation**

Reconciliation with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community through respectful engagement, acknowledgement and collaboration



Theme 2: **Healthy Connected Communities**

To foster a thriving, connected, healthy community



Theme 3: **Environmental Leadership**

Protect our environment and help our community to thrive through environmental leadership



Theme 4: **Sustainable Growth**

Growth is not at the expense of environmental values or the unique heritage and character of our townships



Theme 5: **Diverse and Robust Economy**

Our economy is sustainable and supports a diversity of local enterprises and people



Theme 6: **Arts and Creativity**

Acknowledge the value of arts and creativity and nurture their growth



Theme 7: **Accountable and Viable Council**

Council has financial capacity to deliver services now and into the future and decision making is informed by community views.



Theme 1: First Nations Reconciliation



Reconciliation with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community through respectful engagement, acknowledgement and collaboration



Walk on Wadawurrung Country, 2024



Strategy 1: Work with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community to achieve Reconciliation.



Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

There is broad recognition and respect for the Wadawurrung People and the Gadubanud and Gulidjan Peoples of the Eastern Maar as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which the Surf Coast Shire is now situated.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Feedback from Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WTOAC) including Elders, Traditional Owners and staff is that the relationship, trust and support from Council is very strong. This was exemplified by Council's support of 'Journey on Wadawurrung Country' during Reconciliation Week 2024 which included over 30 community volunteers, expanding WTOAC relationship from Council to community.

Councillors and senior leaders have undertaken Cultural Awareness training on Country with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation as well as officers attending NAIDOC week art exhibition on Gulidjan Country. Relationships with other key stakeholders, including First Nations community members and Aboriginal organisations, including Wathaurong Co-operative, are also deepening our understanding and inclusivity of activities undertaken. Recently Council's Kindergarten team received training from WTOAC to deepen their understanding of language and ways to incorporate this into programming.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Council's Reflect, Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is nearing completion. Of 59 actions under the strategic headings of: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities, 46 actions have been completed with 13 to be carried forward into the next RAP.
- Council's Innovate RAP is the next RAP to be developed and planning to develop this plan is underway. This will contain actions to be delivered over a 2-year time period.
- RAP working group is meeting regularly and includes First Nations staff and representatives from Reconciliation Victoria.
- The third Pilk Purriyn truth telling and reflection event was again popular and successful. Council played a key partnership role in delivering this event with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation.
- Cultural experiences continued in education programs at kindergartens and early years services.
- Cultural awareness training program, including Walking on Country, Unconscious Bias and Cultural Heritage training program continued for staff and Councillors, including a session in Councillor induction.
- Cultural awareness and Cultural Heritage training program continues with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation on Gadubanud Country at Lorne.
- Cultural Safety was a feature in the Developing Leaders Program with participants developing a video for new staff focusing on inclusivity.
- Support guidelines for staff and Councillors have been developed.

What We'll Do – Focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Report on outcomes achieved in the Reflect RAP and bring the Innovate RAP to Council for consideration and subsequent implementation.
- Deliver town signage project including Wadawurrung language.
- Continue to build relationships with both Traditional owner groups as well as broader First Nations community with particular focus on working with Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative to deliver a Reconciliation Week Event.
- Conduct a review of cultural learning needs of Council and develop a strategic training package.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

- Pursuit of language agreements as well as co-management opportunities on hold due to capacity of Registered Aboriginal Parties.



Strategy 2: Ensure Council decisions consider and respect Traditional Owner perspectives, culture and knowledge.

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

A greater understanding of Traditional Owner culture and perspective is reflected in Council business and decision making.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Staff consistently seek guidance from Traditional Owners, early in project and program development. Staff are aware of and consistently seek opportunities to include First Nations culture, language and advice in their work.

Staff undergoing training to understand the way that the Registered Aboriginal Parties would like to work, above the legislated requirements of the Cultural Heritage Act.

Native Title advice sought and training collateral developed to further staff understanding the legislative requirements in working with Traditional Owners .

Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation undertaking land management on Country at Djarrak (Bells Beach) .

Acknowledging First Peoples and the history of place beyond European Settlement through a new model of strategic land use planning.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Standard process for engaging with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) is widely understood and embedded into project development. This has led to early engagement with RAPs in project delivery.
- First Nations representation on Social Equity, RAP and Gender Champions working group is deepening and progressing staff understanding of intersectionality and the way different people experience our services.
- Understanding of Native Title continues to evolve, ensuring staff are across the current local context and implications, as well as possible future implications for Council.
- Broader engagement has occurred with First Nations community through relationship building with Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative.
- Cultural heritage training for staff working on projects required under legislation helps mitigate associated risks.
- Training and support provided to community-led reconciliation groups, reducing pressure on key partners and increasing the cultural safety of these groups.
- Completed all-staff survey to inform continued growth and Reconciliation as a meaningful process. Feedback will be useful in developing the Innovate RAP and inform training package.
- Cultural Values Assessments have commenced for Winchelsea growth planning project.

What We'll Do – Focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Create a training strategy for staff ensuring targeted, relevant training for teams and continue increasing organisational understanding of Cultural Heritage and Native Title.
- Continue to expand opportunities to work with a wider variety of First Nations Community members by developing relationships with key stakeholders such as Wathaurong Co Op and Caracarmigen House, including inviting them to join Reconciliation Action Plan working group.
- Focus on expanded partnership opportunities during Reconciliation Week
- Deliver staff training on cultural safety.
- Create and update policies which support an increase in First Nations employment at Council.
- Conduct a cultural audit to map work we undertake across the organisation to identify gaps and opportunities .

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Nil



Theme 2: Healthy Connected Communities



To foster a thriving,
connected, healthy
community





Strategy 3: Facilitate the provision of social infrastructure and open space to enable healthy lifestyles



Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

The Surf Coast community has access to a sustainable network of facilities and open spaces, both structured and unstructured, that meets our needs now and as our community changes.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Major community infrastructure projects continue to progress and be completed.

Integrated approach to placemaking is now in practice with a focus on precinct planning and holistic outcomes.

External grants secured to plan and deliver places, spaces and services.

The Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre project has reached a significant milestone with construction commenced in January 2025.

Recently completed social infrastructure includes Anglesea Netball Pavilion, Winchelsea Common Walking Trail and Outdoor Shelter by the Barwon River in Winchelsea.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- State of Play (social infrastructure planning) report presented to Council and progressing to Draft Plan stage.
- Anglesea Community and Health Hub Precinct concept plan adopted by Council July 2024. Further detailed planning to be undertaken in 2025/26. Seek funding for the detailed design phase of the Anglesea Community Hub Project.
- Moriac Preschool – design development complete
- Stribling Reserve Pavilions upgrade minor works in progress.
- Stribling Indoor Stadium floor replacement and external drainage works nearing completion.
- Globe Theatre flooring replacement complete.
- Winchelsea Pool Redevelopment construction nearing completion.
- Wurdi Baierr Aquatic and Recreation Centre construction commenced.
- Multi-Arts Centre upgrade construction underway.
- Barwon River Loop Walk stage two design complete and to be tendered following planning approval.
- Federally-funded Stadium Seating Upgrade (Wurdi Baierr) and Spring Creek Reserve Pavilion Upgrade projects progressing.
- Jan Juc to Bellbrae shared pathway project planning progressing.

- Winchelsea Adventure Playground nearing completion.
- Grant secured for AFL planning project, Torquay College.
- Gender Impact Assessments for social infrastructure and open space projects now being completed.
- Netball court renewal projects progressing in Winchelsea, Anglesea and Lorne.

What We'll Do – Focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Continue to ensure all new or redeveloped facility designs meet best practice including environmentally sensitive and universal design and equity assessments.
- Continue to progress the Our Places and Spaces State of Play towards a policy framework and community engagement.
- Proactive facility inspections
- Lease and License agreement renewal
- Seek grants to fund priority projects
- Deliver projects underway, celebrate completion with community and commence operations..

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Nil



Strategy 4: Improve access to local services and programs that support people to be healthy and well



Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Community members have a greater awareness of supports available locally with an increase in community members participating in and accessing new and existing services and programs.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Delivered key health and wellbeing initiatives in achieving the Municipal Health and Wellbeing plan, including Responsible Service of Alcohol Training, Escape the Vape, Good Sports Program, Good Times Great Breaks in partnership with other organisations.

Council supported Community Houses to successfully deliver a 'caring for the carers' program and a highly popular community lunches program.

Commitment to volunteering has seen Council support training opportunities for community volunteers e.g. multicultural training for VIC volunteers, as well as the development of meaningful internal opportunities for volunteers e.g. First Nations events role – to support the delivery of Journey on Wadawurrung Country and NAIDOC exhibition at Anglesea Art Space.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Several successful health promotion campaigns including International Women's Day, Walk to School, Choose Water, Escape the Vape, Ride Safely to School Day, IDAHOBIT Day, and Winchelsea Food Pantry in partnership with HESSE Rural Health.
- Responsible Service of Alcohol sessions delivered across Community Houses and sporting clubs in Torquay, Anglesea and Winchelsea.
- Council continued support to Community Houses across the shire. Key activities delivered by the Houses include Community Lunches Program, 16 Days of Activism and National Volunteer Week activities.
- 16 Days of Activism campaign delivered including bringing 'The Lost Petition' artwork to Torquay and creating a call-to-action video with the artist. Additional activities included a social media campaign, The Clothesline project delivered in partnership with Community Houses and collaboration with the Afterglow Night Run event raising funds for Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre.
- 19 Gender and Equity Impact Assessments completed on policies, projects and services including Deans Marsh Community Hub, Winchelsea Pool, Ngardang Pupup, Fair Access Policy, Rabbit Management Strategy and Circular Economy Action Plan.
- Delivery of the 'Find Your Niche' program for youth. Including pottery, fishing, boxing, pot plant painting and up-cycling workshop.
- \$15,000 of grant funding distributed to 5 community groups for the September Health and Wellbeing Grants stream including an International Women's Day Women's Business Networking event, Highline Surf Festival, athletics track painting, Otway Ranges Choir and nutrition program for culturally and linguistically diverse women.

What We'll Do – Focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Deliver an event for International Women's Day focusing on the 2025 theme 'Accelerate Action'.
- Conduct community and stakeholder consultation on the next iteration of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (2025-2029), to identify what is important to them, and emerging health and wellbeing issues/needs.
- Bring Community House and Community Development Policies to Council for adoption.
- Co-design anti-vaping project with young people across the Surf Coast and deliver education programs and activities across schools.
- Celebrate Local Legends Awards during National Volunteer Week.
- Deliver the February and March Arts, Community Initiatives and Climate Emergency grant round.
- Continue to improve processes and upskill staff in Gender Equity to meet our obligations for Gender Equality Act 2020.
- Continue to facilitate the Social Equity Working group, and apply an intersectional lens to projects, events and strategic documents.
- Continue to partnership to progress the 5 pillars of the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan. .
- Continue to pursue opportunities to improve the volunteering experience at Council and to provide training opportunities to community volunteers.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Nil



Strategy 5: Make it easier for people to move around our towns and in nature without relying on cars



Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Greater use of active and public transport as a result of Council and partner programs and initiatives.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

A series of strategies setting the direction of Council's active transport work has been completed. This strategic work is providing a foundation for decision making and action and includes:

- G21 Integrated Transport Strategy
- Safer Cycling Strategy
- Torquay Wayfinding Strategy in draft.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Projects identified and confirmed for Federal Black Spot funding. Applications submitted including Bell Street and the Esplanade, Torquay
- TAC funding submitted for pedestrian and cycling pathways along Bristol Road.
- Success in TAC grant application for wombat crossing in Horseshoe Bend Rd at Quay Boulevard and Bike "Lit Light" data analysis Project
- Barwon River Loop Walk stage two design complete and to be tendered following planning approval.
- Bellbrae Primary School road safety improvements delivered, preferencing walkability.
- Key planning and land use decisions have considered improving opportunities for people to move around without cars.
- Pathway network mapping and baseline data has been completed and included to the Integrated Social Infrastructure Framework.
- Delivered pedestrian and cycling improvements on Fischer Street, Beach Road and around Grossmans school precinct.
- Jan Juc to Bellbrae shared pathway project (Ridgeline Trail) planning progressing.

What We'll Do – Focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Incorporate Road Safety Strategy recommendations and cycling / pedestrian centered design into new and renewal infrastructure projects.
- Implement the Torquay Wayfinding Strategy initiatives within budget available.
- Continue to participate in GORCAPA's Regional Shared Trails Strategy
- Continue to work with developers to deliver best practice active transport outcomes for new precincts.
- Complete construction of the Jan Juc to Bellbrae shared pathway.
- Advocate for funding in pedestrian and cycling safety
- Deliver road safety improvements at Bellbrae school and Anglesea.
- Speed limit reductions in various rural roads and township.
- Construct pathway link from Baines Crescent to Bristol Road along Geelong Road
- Construct pathway along Hendy Main Road, Moriac as part of Greenfields Loop Walk
- Install traffic signals at Bristol Road providing safe crossing point across the Geelong Road

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Nil



Strategy 6: Enable communities to strengthen their social connections and participate in community life



Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Expanded capacity of community to provide social connection programs and initiatives to increase people's participation.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Finalised Community Development Action Plan.

Continued successful implementation of revised community grants program with multiple streams responding to community need.

Continued support of Community Houses.

Continue to support community to develop and deliver projects through community projects portal and community initiatives assessment panel.

Council continues to enable people to participate in community life by engaging on projects and programs that affect them.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- \$65,583 worth of community projects funded through September grants ground across Community Initiatives, Minor Capital Works, Health and Wellbeing and Natural Environments streams.
- Implemented new grant finder tool to improve referral pathways for community groups to other grant streams.
- 38 community project proposals supported through the community projects portal and community initiatives assessment panel.
- Support provided for community-led projects including: Jan Juc Cricket Club storage shed, Winchelsea Bowls Club sports lighting, Winchelsea memorial grandstand upgrade, Anglesea Historical society insulation and accessible pathway and Winchelsea Arboretum. These projects have attracted multiple funding partners contributing to a value of \$345,000.
- Continued support and engagement with Positive Ageing Advisory Committee and All Abilities Advisory Committee.
- Continued capacity building programs for older adults including Wisser Driver, fall prevention, SCAM awareness, Digital literacy.
- Continued Youth Programs – ENGAGE, FReeZA, Good Times Great Breaks, and Youth Lounge which operates three nights per week at KMCC with approx. 60 youth through the doors each night.

What We'll Do – Focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Deliver Council's grants program with an emphasis on equitable distribution of resources – focus on promotion to groups who we don't normally hear from.
- Support the Anglesea community to develop a

Community Plan for their township, and support Deans Marsh community to refresh their 10 year Community Plan and vision

- Support National Volunteer Week activities including celebrating our Local Legends.
- Develop new community development action plan.
- Deliver training and skill development program for volunteers including social media training, First Aid training and Managing Difficult Conversations training.
- Deliver another Hinterland and Coastal Community Action Group networking event, to support groups to share their experiences, success and learnings.
- Continue to mature our approach to volunteering, aligning our work with the principles of the Australian Volunteering Strategy and making updates to our website that support individuals to find local volunteering opportunities.
- Work more on place planning, ensuring community plans and community values are at the heart of the work and inform the new Council Plan.
- Review existing grant finder tool and support community groups to have access to high quality tools and resources that make finding and applying for grants as easy as possible.
- Continue to support volunteering within Council services (approx. 3,500 hours per quarter) and deliver programs for community volunteer upskilling and retention.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

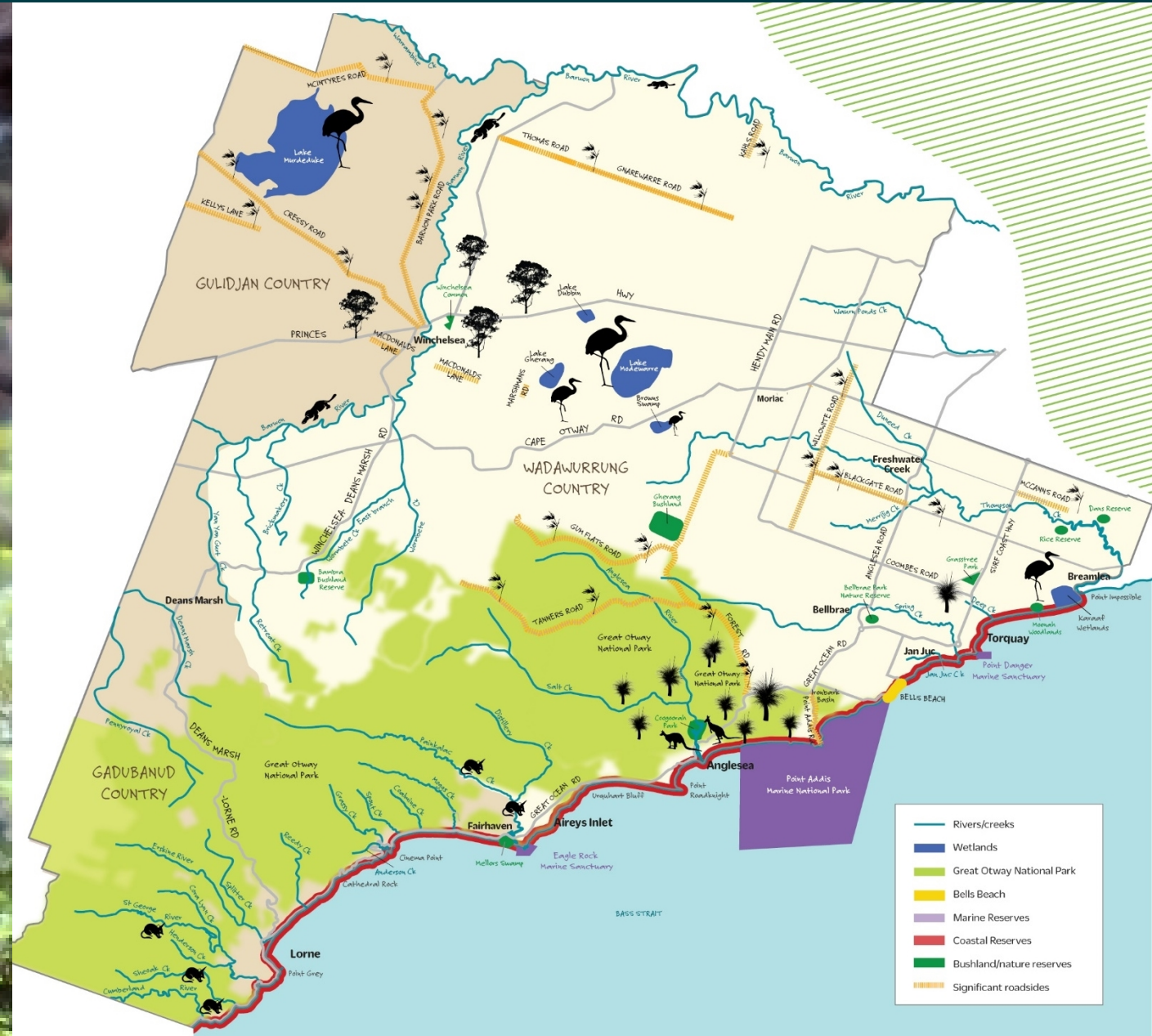
- Community leadership program will be scheduled later while we focus on community planning.



Theme 3: Environmental Leadership



Protect our environment and help our community to thrive through environmental leadership





Strategy 7: Protect significant habitats, landscapes and biodiversity

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Improved understanding and protection of biodiversity, local ecosystems, landscapes and natural features.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Council has improved protection of biodiversity through a combination of tree planting in both nature reserves and offset sites, support for community conservation efforts, pest plant and animal management and further protection of native vegetation through a new offset site at Moonah Woodlands.

Understanding of biodiversity and local ecosystems has been enhanced through the internal Think Environment campaign, the roll out of roadside exclusion zones, monitoring of vegetation at the Karaaf wetlands and collaborative projects with neighboring natural resource management agencies.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Ongoing support to staff and follow up advice on protecting threatened communities and landscapes across the Shire in operational works and with contractors to comply with the Environment Protection Act General Environmental Duty.
- Successful grant application for managing expectations about control of corellas in Winchelsea township.
- Ensuring Council and other agency projects consider vegetation management, environmental compliance, protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Delivering Council's annual pest plant and animal management program on Council owned and managed land, including removal of rabbit habitat and installation of rabbit proof fencing at Modewarre Recreation Reserve
- Supported local community conservation efforts through the environmental grant funding program
- Protected and enhanced biodiversity in nature reserves through planting of 3,960 plants and weed management and supported local Landcare and volunteer groups with weeding, planting and protection activities across nature reserves and private land.
- Comprehensive program of assessment and planning work for Karaaf Wetlands stormwater management completed. Baseline and first two years data collection and analysis complete for wetland vegetation assessments.

What We'll Do – focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Continue revegetation of the carbon offset site at Buckley with community groups and staff planting days.
- Undertake fencing and pest plant and animal control of Moonah Woodlands Offset site to protect natural assets in accordance with Offset Management Plan
- Work with Wadawurrung Gobata Dja team to heal Country as part of Stage 2 of the Jan Juc Creek daylighting project.
- Continue to roll out exclusion posts and educational materials on roads within the Shire that contain significant ecological values to reduce inappropriate activities.
- Continue to support community advocacy and agency initiatives to protect and improve the health of Anglesea River and the Painkalac Creek.
- Design of stormwater network upgrade to divert around 300 megalitres of freshwater away from the Karaaf wetlands.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Transfer of responsibility for estuary openings has transferred to GORCAPA. Council will play a supporting role in future.



Strategy 8: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the impact of climate change

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Council's greenhouse gas emissions are reduced and offset to achieve net zero emissions and households and businesses have taken their own steps to become more sustainable.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Since 1 July 2021, through the delivery of Council's Climate Emergency Corporate Response Plan, Council has reduced corporate emissions (excluding the landfill) by more than 2,140 tonnes (41%).

We've installed 316.4kW of solar and 64.3kWh of battery storage, bringing us to a total of 784kW of solar and 82kWh of battery storage across Council facilities.

For the remaining electricity we're not generating ourselves, Council now purchases 100% renewable electricity through the Victorian Energy Collaboration. These measures not only cut emissions but are realising financial savings for Council. Council has adopted a zero emissions target to ensure we continue to prioritise cutting emissions. For residual emissions, Council is now certified as carbon neutral, in line with the national Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard.

Key Progress at Mid Year Four

- Implementation of the Climate Emergency 2023-2025 Action Plan is nearing completion. This delivers on Council's commitments in the Climate Emergency Response Plan 2021-2031.
- Carbon accounting for corporate emissions in 2023-24 is complete and the annual Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard certification submission is underway. Corporate emissions for 2023-24 were 23,882.74 t CO₂-e, a 17.6% decrease from the previous year, largely attributed to a reduction in waste tonnage at the Anglesea landfill, which is Council's largest emissions source.
- Supported Geelong Sustainability to deliver the 2024 Electric Homes and Sustainable House Day programs. Over 100 people attended the Torquay electric homes event and over 1200 participated across the Geelong and Surf Coast region for Sustainable House Day. Outcomes of the program (i.e. uptake of solar, batteries, energy efficiency etc.) and statistics for the Surf Coast region will be available next reporting period.
- Continued emissions reduction in Council's fleet with Council's first fully electric vehicle for the Maternal and Child Health Nurses. The Child and Family Health team rely heavily on the fleet vehicle to deliver the M&CH service across the shire; the new MG 64kWh Excite will save an estimated 1.3tCO₂-e annually.

- A fast (50kW) electric vehicle charging station has been installed in Lorne to service the growing numbers of EVs on our roads. The first of four fast chargers to be installed with Victorian Government *Destination Charging Across Victoria* grant funding, chargers will be also installed at Aireys Inlet, Anglesea and Winchelsea by June 2025. Fee for use income will exceed Council's expenses.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Continue progress on delivering Council's adopted target of zero non-landfill emissions by 2030.
- Implement a local Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy in the planning scheme to strengthen emissions reduction in the local built environment.
- Continue Council's Solar and Energy Transition Program, including solar and electrification works on the Multi Arts Centre development, electrification of the civic office, feasibility studies for neighbourhood batteries and conducting analysis for the next suite of efficiency measures on Council facilities.
- Deliver the 2025 community-voted Climate Emergency Pitchfest Grants.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Nil



Strategy 9: Divert more material from the waste stream

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Our shire generates less waste through reduced consumption, and increased reuse and recycling initiatives.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Council's four-bin kerbside waste collection system incorporating Food Organics & Garden organics (FOGO) and separate glass bins continues to divert over 71% of waste away from landfill (23/24).



Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Adopted the Circular Economy Action Plan 2024-2027, which includes five key priority areas, 25 key actions and a range of targets to drive the transition to a circular economy.
- Established new contracts for Council's kerbside recycling and Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) services.
- Commenced community education and waste enforcement program targeted at reducing contamination and including resources for short-stay rental properties.
- Commenced key strategic waste projects: Anglesea Landfill Post-Closure Transition Plan and the Torquay Transfer Station Feasibility Study.
- Completed new cell liner at Anglesea Landfill.
- Delivered community workshop to promote the use of reusable nappies.
- Completed soft plastics collection trial
- Increased the service life of all council laptops to reduce cost and waste.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan 2024 -2027.

- Progress the Anglesea Landfill Post-Closure Transition Plan and the Torquay Transfer Station Feasibility Study projects.
- Finalise upgrades at Lorne Transfer Station.
- Review and update Council's Plastic Wise Policy.
- Continue working with Barwon Water and Geelong region councils to establish the Regional Renewable Organic Network (RRON) facility.
- Develop a soft plastics drop off at Anglesea Transfer Station
- Refresh Council's Digitisation Plan to reduce the volume of offsite storage and to digitise incoming records.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Nil



Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

We are better placed to manage the impacts of climate change on our community places, spaces, and services.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Three consecutive wet La Nina periods and a series of storm events have had significant impacts on Council. An El Nino summer, though milder than expected at the start, brought challenges in managing high / extreme fire risk days and heatwaves. As a key aspect of Council's climate emergency response, we will remain focused on building Council's organisational capacity to thrive in the changing climate.

To support our community to adapt, Council has continued a strong collaborative approach to emergency management to ensure we support our community effectively in emergency events and build community resilience to increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather.

Key progress at Mid Year 4

- Implementation of the recommendations from the internal audit of Council's climate adaptation response is underway, including:
 - Completing Phase 1 Climate Risk Assessments. Climate risk is determined by understanding what our current and future climate hazards are locally, and the exposure and vulnerability of Council's assets and services to the hazards. Phase 1 applied a climate lens over Council's strategic and enterprise risk registers, identified any emerging risks from the climate scenario planning and is working with teams to develop the corresponding actions to manage climate risks in their areas.
 - Improved data collection processes to better document and claim on extreme weather events.
 - Began analysing financial data from recent extreme weather events to model financial implications of future climate impacts.
 - Continued working with partners across the state and in our region to build comprehensive understanding and collaborative response to climate risks, including GORCAPA and the Victorian Climate Alliances.
- The Winchelsea Greening and Stormwater Upgrade, and Jan Juc Creek Daylighting Stage 2 Integrated Water Management projects are nearing completion. Both projects will improve stormwater quality and

management, improve biodiversity and provide cooling benefits.

- Painkalac Creek Flood Study is underway with funding from the Victorian Government Resilient Coast program to assess the coastal, riverine and overland flood risks, and analyse the effectiveness of associated interventions .

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Develop and implement a climate resilience screening tool to strengthen the consideration of climate change across Council assets and services, and better inform decision making.
- Complete drainage catchment management studies in Anglesea and Aireys Inlet.
- Undertake works to address critical weak points in Council's drainage network.
- Complete Phase 1 of the Painkalac Flood Study.
- Deliver the "My Resilience Profile" survey to community and begin to analyse data.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

- More Extreme and Catastrophic fire danger days are being declared, resulting in reduction of some Council services across the Shire on these days.



Theme 4: Sustainable Growth



Growth is not at the expense of environmental values or the unique heritage and character of our townships



Winchelsea Women's housing



Strategy 11: Protect heritage and township character

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Sense of the uniqueness of towns and neighbourhoods - their natural elements and character - is strengthened.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Two key strategic projects, the Urban Futures Strategy (UFS) and Planning Scheme Review (PSR) have been developed with comprehensive community engagement underpinning key recommendations and findings.

The Urban Futures Strategy provides a framework to guide future planning and decision making for housing in Surf Coast Shire. The UFS will ensure that growth occurs in appropriate locations to protect significant landscapes and environments. The PSR is a 'health check' to ensure the planning scheme can best achieve Council and community land use and development goals.

The adopted Moriac Structure Plan, developed in collaboration with the Moriac community, demonstrates the benefits of an integrated approach to placemaking and township structure planning.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Progressed the Urban Futures Strategy project – Publication of the draft Urban Futures Strategy following multiple phases of Shire wide community engagement.
- Completed and adopted the Planning Scheme Review – identifying key priorities tasks to inform future land use planning policy.
- Completed Stage 3 Heritage Study – identifying 22 properties for new heritage protection controls.
- Completed and adopted the Moriac Structure Plan 2023.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for next 6 months ahead

- Adopt and implement the Urban Futures Strategy.
- Commence implementation of key recommendations of the Planning Scheme Review.
- Led by state government, progress implementation of the Distinctive Area and Landscapes Statement of Planning Policy.
- Implement key actions from the adopted Moriac Structure Plan 2023.
- Commence development of a comprehensive place plan to guide future urban growth in Winchelsea.
- Commence preparation of a strategic plan for the Messmate Road Future Urban Area.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

- The Heritage Study Stage 3 – Implementation has been placed on hold pending the availability of team resources to progress the amendment towards exhibition.
- The Strategic Planning Team is prioritising project work that will facilitate the release of new land supply in line with recommendations from the Urban Futures Strategy technical reports.
- As we mature our understanding of the impacts of climate change (e.g. bushfire, storm surge and sea level rise) it will be important to balance these challenges with the need to accommodate population growth, now and into the future.



Strategy 12 : Improve access to affordable residential accommodation

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

People have access to more affordable and sustainable residential accommodation options.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

The 2024 Business Insights Survey indicates that 52% of businesses are having trouble finding staff due to a lack of affordable housing .

Council is working to align our efforts with funding and policy priorities of other levels of government to progress diverse and affordable housing projects.

Council is engaging with communities on affordable housing projects, including co-design processes with Aireys Inlet and Anglesea community members.

Council is connecting with communities, including Winchelsea, Lorne and Anglesea on innovative ways to address the challenge.



Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Aireys Inlet Affordable Housing Project progressing to facilitate social and affordable housing at Fraser Drive. Council has endorsed a community co-design concept and approved a long- term lease with Housing Choices Australia (HCA) and is supporting HCA in attracting funding for detailed design and construction.
- Council adopted the community co-designed Anglesea Community and Health Hub concept plan as a basis for further detailed planning and design. Council is seeking external funding to leverage a budget allocation for the next phases of design and community engagement.
- Four Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOW) pilot permits issued and one in the process of assessment. Planning for stakeholder interviews, as part of monitoring and evaluating the THOW pilot, completed.
- Continued engagement with business and community led initiatives in Lorne and Anglesea to facilitate access to affordable housing for key workers.
- Engaging with community on strategic aspirations for more diverse and affordable forms of well-located housing as part of our Urban Futures Strategy.
- Continued to implement internal processes and work with homelessness outreach programs to support people sleeping rough.
- Assisting applicants of developments delivering affordable and more diverse forms of housing through the Housing Concierge service.
- Winanglo’s Winchelsea Community Village is nearing

completion on land gifted by Council to facilitate ageing-in-place.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Seek funding for further design and engagement on the Anglesea Community and Health Hub and work with community to identify options for additional affordable housing projects in Anglesea.
- Develop and implement funding strategies for social and affordable housing projects including supporting funding applications to the State Government of Victoria’s Big Housing Build and the Federal Government’s Housing Australia Future Fund for the Aireys Inlet Affordable Housing Project.
- Work with the Lorne community on scoping an affordable housing for key worker project or partnership model.
- Elevate the importance of housing affordability and diversity in local planning policy.
- Monitor the uptake and assess the value of Housing Concierge Service and Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOW) pilot.
- Monitor and respond to proposed policy changes affecting housing affordability, including the State Government’s Short Stay Levy.
- Actively participate in growth area place planning work to ensure diversity in housing type.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

- Nil



Strategy 13 : Support tourism and events that encourage people to stay longer and appreciate and care for this place



Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Visitors stay longer in the off season to better utilise our capacity and they demonstrate respect for our environment.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Great progress has been made towards Council's journey towards Eco Destination Accreditation.

Average length of stay has increased slightly to 2.7 nights.

Major events are recording record numbers of participant and growth.

Community events remain strong and continue to be a key-way to connect community.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Continued work on the Eco Destination Accreditation Program with Ecotourism Australia. Expected completion at the end of 2025.
- Awarded 20 event grants, five Christmas Carol grants and two sponsored events under the 2024-25 Event Grant Program.
- Retail sales across Torquay and Lorne Visitor Information Centres (VIC) YTD: \$.427,440
- Visitor Information Centre (VIC) enquiries during 2024: Lorne - 73,210, Torquay - 52,359 and Anglesea - 5190. Anglesea VIC is only open Monday – Saturday, 10am-1pm.
- Assisted event organisers to deliver approximately 300 major and community events for 2024, providing complimentary marketing and event delivery support. This includes major events such as: Rip Curl Pro, Bells Beach Longboard Classic Great Ocean Road Running Festival, Amy's Gran Fondo, Surf Coast Century, Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race and the Australian Surf Rowing League National Championships.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Launch the digital What's On - a more comprehensive overview of what's happening on the Surf Coast, including art exhibitions and live music at private venues.
- Aim to complete our Eco Destination Certification for the Surf Coast Shire.
- Re-open the Winchelsea VIC and seek a complementary community tenant.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

- We will no longer be the project lead for the Rip Curl Pro, as Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve has now transferred over to GORCAPA.



Theme 5: Diverse and Robust Economy

Our economy is sustainable and supports a diversity of local enterprises and people





Strategy 14: Enable people to run successful local businesses that grow and create jobs in our changing economy



Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Businesses are emerging locally and succeeding, contributing to job creation and enabling more residents to work closer to home.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Business instability continues due to cost of living pressures which are being driven by inflation. Unemployment is very low at 1.4% for the Shire. Some businesses have closed down however these have been replaced by other local businesses that have expanded or businesses or new businesses to the Surf Coast.

The recent business survey identified that 70% of businesses are still positive, however the level of sentiment has declined.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Parklets enacted in Torquay and Winchelsea in response to new program. These have created new outdoor dining experiences.
- Shire wide business survey completed (128 respondents) which identified current business 'performing better or the same' over the past 12 months reduced from 89% in 2019 to 79% in 2024. Primary challenges included increased energy costs, wages and rent costs. The survey also identified businesses wished to invest in sustainability initiatives.
- Better Business Skills program commenced with Conflict Resolution (25 attendees), Effective Social Media (21 attendees), Guide to AI (16 attendees).
- Continued support for business via Business Concierge
- Aireys Inlet Top Shops Beautification Design Project commenced.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Deliver business sustainability workshops focused on reducing energy consumption.
- Complete Aireys Inlet Top Shops Beautification design.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Nil



Strategy 15: Foster an environment that enables businesses to operate according to ethical, social and sustainable principles

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

More businesses are in a better position to take steps to operate according to social, ethical and sustainable principles.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

The Ripple Surf Coast BCorp Chapter (sustainable business network) has gone from strength to strength attracting strong crowds to events.

Completed work on the Barwon Regional Drought Resilience Plan with Agriculture Victoria to plan for drought resilient communities.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Developed a framework to measure success of the Economic Development Strategy. 15 metrics have been identified and will be reported on annually.
- Supported new business networking groups to establish including Surf Coast Women in Business and the Ripple Surf Coast B-Corp Chapter.
- Participating in regional drought resilience program, supporting farmers impacted by drought conditions and linking to financial support.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Deliver Encouraging Sustainable Business Practices program.
- Continue to connect businesses with ethical, social and sustainability initiatives.
- Continue drought resilience support program

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why Nil





Theme 6: Arts and Creativity

Acknowledge the value of arts and creativity and nurture their growth





Strategy 16: Foster an environment where people with clever and creative ideas can make a difference in their communities

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

More people access capacity building supports and resources to develop or scale-up creative ideas that will make a difference in their community.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

DEVELOP arts grant created to support artists in skill and concept development.

\$100,000 grant program to support creative communities released under the Covid Recovery Grants Program. Six projects supported including artist in residence, major exhibitions, projection and attendance at Affordable Art Fair.

A greater focus on creative industry profiling and capacity building opportunities.

Adoption and implementation of the Creative Places Strategy providing a vision for the development of the creative economy on the Surf Coast.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- 2024 Surf Coast Arts Trail delivered with over 200 participating artists across 54+ venues with over \$179,000 in weekend sales and workshop bookings.
- Successfully delivered a sustainability of surfing seminar for Melbourne Design Week in 2024 with 42 people attending the panel discussion.
- Delivered the Surf Coast Community Calendar October 2024 with 78 artists participating, 13 winners and 429 votes received for the People's Choice award. 5,000 calendars printed and distributed across the Shire.
- Shed Talk Series attended by 217 people in 6 sessions held between March 2023 and December 2024.
- Delivered NAIDOC week panel event at the Australian National Surfing Museum (July 2024).
- Renewed the accreditation of the National Australian Surfing Museum
- Delivered the Creative Halls Project enabling small scale cultural infrastructure upgrades to facilities in Anglesea, Lorne, Deans Marsh and Winchelsea.
- Conducted a Public Arts Audit identifying the needs of 297 arts assets throughout the Shire.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Continue to deliver the Creative Places Strategy 2023 – 2031 actions.
- Deliver the DEVELOP grant initiatives awarded to enable creatives to pursue new skills.
- Deliver the Shed Talk program to connect artists with each other and further their professional development.
- Finalise a Public Arts Policy and Procedure Framework.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

- We will regularly review our programs to identify if any no longer achieve the aspirations of the Creative Places Strategy.



Strategy 17: Increase support for creative industries and arts

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Greater investment into the creative sector and more collaboration between businesses, and cultural and creative practitioners.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Hoop Gallery & Shoestring Playhouse were established under the Multi Arts Centre (MAC).

\$300,000 project to fit-out of the new MAC Torquay facility was completed delivering a space to Torquay Theatre Troupe and Hoop Gallery.

A new Master Plan for the Australian National Surf Museum was completed as well as a Significance Assessment on the ANSM's collection. It was identified as internationally significant.

Delivery of the Surf Coast Public Arts Audit to identify public art assets and inform their future care.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- \$1.4 million Multi-Arts Centre refurbishment project progressed now in construction. Completion June 2025.
- Over 17,000 attendees to the Australian National Surfing Museum from 1 January to 31 December 2024.
- \$50,000 Creative Halls project commenced, providing enabling arts infrastructure into venues in Winchelsea, Anglesea, Deans Marsh and Lorne.
- Completed a public art audit to identify 297 public art assets in Surf Coast Shire and understand their condition and commenced an initial maintenance strategy to address high priority items.
- Awarded 8 DEVELOP grants in a diversity of fields including Literature, Music, Aerial Performance, Playwriting and Visual Arts.
- Stronger focus on increasing support for professional artists.
- Established a pilot partnership with surf school.
- Completed updates of the Australian Surfing Hall of Fame exhibit.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Complete a public art policy and maintenance framework.
- Complete the Creative Halls projects to enable community groups and professional artists to activate spaces for cultural activities.
- Implement the Creative Places Strategy and ANSM Master Plan.
- Complete the \$1.4 million Multi-Arts Centre refurbishment project.
- Continue exhibition refresh in the Australian National Surfing Museum.
- Continue partnerships with surf schools and school camps.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

- Programs which do not achieve the aspirations of the Creative Places Strategy.



Theme 7: **Accountable and Viable Council**

Council has financial capacity to deliver services now and into the future and decision making is informed by community views.



Road Safety Improvements



Strategy 18: Establish a sustainable financial position

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Council can fund the delivery of services that are most important for the community.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

Council has maintained a sustainable financial position enabling the delivery of services and community projects.

Council has worked diligently to record cash surpluses over the last two financial years which will underpin financial sustainability when the long-term financial position is challenged by the growing renewal demand, external economic factors, large infrastructure projects and operating costs of new community facilities in years ahead.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Current 10 year Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) enables Council to continue to deliver services and facilities whilst navigating challenging years ahead.
- Developed a Service Profile for Council explaining what we do and why we are doing it.
- Initiated the Our Focus Our Future project for the development of the Council Plan (inc. Health & Wellbeing Plan) 2025-2029 with the first phase of community engagement well underway.
- Commenced development of the 2025-2029 Financial Plan which will integrate with Council's suite of strategic documents and provide a 10 year financially sustainable projection regarding how the actions of the Council Plan may be funded to achieve the Community Vision.
- Commenced development of the 2025-2029 Revenue and Rating Plan which provides the framework for setting of fees and charges, rates and other income sources.
- Participated in the Victorian Local Government Finance Professionals (FinPro), Future Focused Financial Sustainability Summit exploring and developing solutions for Local Government's financial sustainability issues.
- Improved asset renewal modelling was used to inform the Inpro 2024-25 Budget and the Long-Term Financial Plan.

- Undertook service planning across the organisation, to understand drivers, challenges and opportunities. This will inform priorities for future Business Improvement initiatives including service reviews.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Continue development of the 2025-2029 Financial Plan and Revenue and Rating Plan
- Continue our journey on ensuring Council's financial sustainability through collaboration with FinPro.
- Analyse and respond to changes in Victorian Government guidance on the use of waste service charges to ensure clarity and financial sustainability,
- Implement digital project management system to improve delivery and quality of performance reporting.
- Increase project delivery, including improve overall project readiness and selection, and program planning accuracy for future years, including increased due diligence for the pipeline of projects.
- Continue efforts to identify budget savings to embed in the 2025-26 budget.
- Develop a program of Service Reviews for future implementation

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

Nil



Strategy 19: Improve Council's credibility as a trusted decision maker through meaningful engagement

Council Plan Outcome (in four years we'll see)

Community members have increased confidence in Council as a trusted governor, financial manager and advocate and feel their input contributes to strategic decision-making.

Achievement towards the outcome so far....

A Communications and Community Engagement Strategy and reviewed Community Engagement Policy have been developed and adopted.

Staff training in community engagement has been delivered.

Improved community engagement processes have been implemented to improve tracking and coordination.

Online customer improvements including new kindergarten enrolments, all payments enabled online and improved customer request and complaints processes.

Ongoing focus on more Council decisions being made in open meetings sections rather than in confidential sections e.g. tender decisions.

Key progress at Mid Year Four

- Launched 'Our Focus Our Future' engagement to gather community input into the new Council Plan, due for finalisation October 2025.
- Launched an online Community Engagement staff training module, available as part of staff induction or at any time for employees.
- Community engagement processes open for over 20 Council projects in the reporting period.
- Delivered a Community Engagement 'community of practice' session for a group of employees to test and discuss innovative engagement ideas and techniques.
- Introduced a dedicated communications business partner for two areas of high community focus: Assets and Engineering, and Waste Management.
- Continued coordinated communications on place based projects to local channels.
- Developed dedicated web pages to provide updates on roadworks in progress, and place-based projects.
- Posts across our two main Surf Coast Shire social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) had a combined reach of over 920,000 during the six-month period and generated engagement (reactions, comments or shares) of 78,311.
- Continued planning for new digital Customer Relationship Management system to transform the way customer requests are handled and to improve response time and improve customer satisfaction.
- Council meetings livestreamed to the community.

What We'll Do – New focus areas for 6 months ahead

- Introduce and promote new monthly e-newsletter, Country and Waters.
- Finalise Council Plan engagement and begin community engagement on several key projects for 2025, including the Council Budget, Domestic Animal Management Plan, Winchelsea Place Plan, 10-year Asset Management Plan.
- Implement the Customer Relationship Management digital system which will improve the ability of Council to respond to customer requests and increase the community's ability to engage with Council through digital channels.

What will slow down or we'll stop doing and why

- Quarterly print publication Country and Waters (delivered to letterboxes) will transition to a monthly e-newsletter. This will enable more frequent and timely communication, save paper and deliver budget savings. Hard copies of the e-newsletter will be made available at community houses across the shire.