

# Council Plan Progress Report End of Year Three

Council Meeting 16 September 2024

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**





## 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 End of Year 3

- Council's Reflect, Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is on track to be delivered by the end of 2024. Of 59 actions under the strategic headings of: Relationships, Respect, Opportunities, 33 are complete, 10 are almost complete, 7 are underway and 9 are likely to carry over into the next RAP – innovate, due either to the need to pursue them at a deeper level or to fine tune them to meet local needs.
- RAP working group is meeting regularly and includes First Nations staff and representatives from Reconciliation Victoria.
- Innovate RAP – registered with Reconciliation Australia to begin drafting in November 2024.
- Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners plaques installed in kindergartens on Wadawurrung Country.
- 'Journey on Wadawurrung Country' - an immersive truth telling experience : Council supported WTOAC to share the exhibition with the Surf Coast community for 3 weeks including Reconciliation Week. Community volunteers were supported to work alongside Traditional Owners for the exhibition, significantly deepening their understanding of Wadawurrung culture. Over 1,700 people attended the exhibition sharing reflections such as: 'humbling', 'beautiful', 'serene', 'important' and 'powerful'. The exhibition had a profound impact on the many people who visited and has seen increased interest from community members in becoming volunteers to support Council's reconciliation efforts, or drive reconciliation efforts themselves through

the creation of groups focused on this.

- Cultural experiences are included in education programs at kindergartens and early years services.
- Cultural awareness training program, including Walking on Country, Unconscious Bias and Cultural Heritage training program continues for staff and Councillors.
- Cultural awareness and Cultural Heritage training program continues with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation on Gadubanud Country at Lorne.
- Cultural Safety is a focus project for officers participating in the Developing Leaders Program.

### What We'll Do – Focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Finalise delivery of Reflect RAP and begin development of the next Innovate RAP.
- Deliver town signage project including Wadawurrung language.
- Finalise support guidelines for staff and Councillors – broadened focus from acknowledgement only to include protocols for engagement and knowledge to build understanding.

### 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.
- Balancing First Nations events within existing budgets.





## 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 of the layers of legislation involved 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 End of Year 3

- 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.
- Appointment of two identified Aboriginal Staff in the First Nations engagement advisor role (Worimi Man and Kuku Yalangi Woman) is deepening our understanding of how to create true cultural safety.
- 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. Native Title in the Victorian context training provided to Councillors and Senior leaders by Special Counsel for Native Title & Public Interest Law.

### What We'll Do – Focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Create a training strategy for staff ensuring targeted, relevant training for teams, including a focus on training opportunities for staff based outside the civic building and increasing organisational understanding of Cultural Heritage and Native Title.
- Support developing community-led Reconciliation groups with appropriate capacity building, reducing pressure on key partners and contributing to the cultural safety of these groups e.g. Surf Coast for Reconciliation.

- 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.
- Strengthen and grow in the Moodji partnership with Reconciliation Victoria. Moodji means friendship in Gunditjimarra language and the partnerships offers a way for Reconciliation Victoria to engage, collaborate and allocate resources.
- Deliver staff training on cultural safety.
- Create strengthened 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 – this will form part of Council's future Reconciliation Action Plans.
- Support WTOAC to deliver the 3rd Pilk Purriyn event safely and impactfully.

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

- All staff survey to monitor growth in understanding of Cultural Heritage and Reconciliation as a meaningful process – this will be included in a more holistic staff survey instead of stand alone to avoid engagement fatigue.





## 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.

\$12 million in external grants secured to plan and deliver places, spaces and services.

The Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre project has reached a significant milestone concept confirmed and public tender process undertaken.

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

### Key progress at End of Year 3

- Anglesea Community and Health Hub Precinct concept plan adopted by Council July 2024. Further detailed planning to be undertaken in 2024/25.
- Surf Coast Hockey Facility (Torquay) project underway and progressing to tender.
- Stribling Reserve Pavilions upgrade minor works in progress.
- Stribling Basketball Stadium flooring replacement.
- Torquay Scouts Facility Upgrade complete.
- Anglesea Netball Pavilion complete.
- Globe Theatre flooring replacement.
- Winchelsea Pool Redevelopment construction in progress and tracking to reopen in the summer season.
- Deans Marsh Community Hub Facility Development Plan adopted by Council in March 2024.
- Surf Coast Aquatic and Health Centre project tender closed.
- Multi-Arts Centre concept progressing.
- Safer Cycling Strategy complete.
- A range of Road Safety Strategy projects complete and in progress.
- Barwon River Loop Walk stage 2 in progress.
- Federally-funded Stadium Seating Upgrade (Wurdi Baierr) and Spring Creek Reserve Pavilion Upgrade projects

progressing.

- Jan Juc to Bellbrae shared pathway project planning progressing.
- Process and methodology developed to conduct Gender Impact Assessments on key programs or projects. Gender Impact Assessments now being completed.
- Contemporary lease and license agreements developed and being rolled out.

### What We'll Do – Focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Continue to ensure all new or redeveloped facility designs meet best practice including universal design and equity assessments.
- Continue to progress the Our Places and Spaces State of Play towards a policy framework and community engagement.
- Seek funding for the detailed design phase of the Anglesea Community Hub Project.
- Deliver projects underway.
- An increase in proactive facilities inspection through 2024-25 budget.

### 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....

In partnership with key stakeholders, 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.

Community Houses continue to be key partners in ensuring community health and wellbeing.

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

A reinvigorated commitment to volunteering has seen us 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 End of Year 3

- Responsible Service of Alcohol sessions delivered across community houses and other community organisations.
- Several successful health promotion campaigns including: Choose Water, Good Sports Program, Food Security program in partnership with HESSE Rural Health, Vaping Education programs, impactful International Women's Day event.
- Community Houses – community lunch project and caring for the carers project. Council made a \$31,200 financial contribution to Community Houses across the shire.
- Volunteer Statement of Commitment ensures that volunteering remains responsive to the community – new volunteer role created: "First Nations events".
- Gender Champions group created to continue to embed understanding of Gender Equality and the requirements of the Gender Equality Act across teams at Council.
- Finalised implementation of the Community Development Action plan – focusing on removing barriers to enable community participation, delivering councils grants program, continuing to expand community planning.
- Undertaken local engagement to determine community led approach to support of LGBTQIA+ community.
- Community House Policy drafted.

### What We'll Do – Focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Continue to build on Gender Equity work including delivery of 2024 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence campaign ("Respect Is...).
- Begin work on the next Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing plan, including going back to the community to ask what is

important to them about their health and wellbeing.

- Bring Community House Policy to Council for adoption.
- Support local primary schools to participate in Walk to School Month in October, encouraging children and their families to walk safely to school, learning about the impact they can have on their own health and climate change in the process.
- Implement community led support of LGBTQIA+ community.
- Implementation of Health and Wellbeing Grants program – September round. Partnering with the community to deliver meaningful health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Continue to improve processes and upskill staff in Gender Equity to meet our obligations for Gender Equality Act 2020.
- Continue to implement programs and seek partnership opportunities to progress the 5 pillars of the Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan.
- Review the Community Development policy and develop a new Community Development Action Plan which recognise community members as experts in their own lives with significant skills and knowledge which can contribute to a thriving community and environment.
- 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 End of Year 3

- Torquay Wayfinding Strategy consultation complete and final strategy to be considered by Council in coming months.
- A range of pathway, Road Safety Strategy and Safer Cycling Strategy projects completed including Anderson Street pathway Moriac, assessment of 10 high risk pedestrian crossing locations, and 'Share the Road' signage on priority routes.
- Projects identified and confirmed for Federal Blackspot funding.
- Completed fit for purpose, general accessibility and travel accessibility audit on Council facilities and car parks to inform the Integrated Social Infrastructure Framework (in progress).
- Barwon River Loop Walk stage two design is nearing completion.
- Jan Juc to Bellbrae shared pathway project planning in progress.
- 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 to input to the Integrated Social Infrastructure Framework.

- Delivered pedestrian and cycling improvements on Fischer Street, Beach Road and around Grossmans school precinct.

### What We'll Do – Focus areas for 12 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 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, Anglesea.
- Speed limit reductions in various rural roads.

### 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.

Ongoing successful implantation of revised community grants program with multiple streams responding to community need.

Continued support of Community Houses.

Delivered several successful grant rounds, including climate emergency grants involving community pitch and vote sessions.

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

### Key progress at End of Year 3

- \$168,947 worth of community projects funded through grants program.
- Implemented new grant finder tool to improve referral pathways for community groups to other grant streams.
- Revised grants policy and program guidelines adopted to improve consistency and equity of grant allocations.
- 98 community project proposals were provided support and advice for community ideas through the community projects portal and community initiatives assessment panel.
- Support provided for community-led projects including: Winchelsea Mud Hut Redesign, Quay Reserve Community Orchard Irrigation Upgrade, Modewarre FNC Electronic LED scoreboard which attracted multiple funding partners contributing to the value of \$73,000.

### What We'll Do – Focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Deliver community initiatives, minor capital works, health and wellbeing, environmental, artists and creatives grants with an emphasis on equitable distribution of resources – focus on promotion to groups who we don't normally hear from.
- Create an opportunity for hinterland community members to come together and share learning from community planning with Anglesea community planning group, prior to the development of the Anglesea Community Plan.
- Support development of a Community Plan in Anglesea.

- Review Community Development Policy and develop new community development action plan - including support for community houses.
- Support community led initiatives through established processes, continue to evolve these processes.
- Support Council staff to understand how community plans can inform other Council services and projects.
- Work more on place planning, ensuring community plans and community values are at the heart of the work and inform the new Council Plan.
- Continue to mature our approach to volunteering, aligning our work with the principles of the Australian Volunteering Strategy.
- 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.
- National Volunteer Week continues to be delivered as a meaningful event at a slightly lower scale to fit with new initiatives.





## 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 neighbouring natural resource management agencies.

### Key progress at End of Year 3

- Supported Wadawurrung Gobata Dja (Taking Care of Country) team to heal Country, partnering with them to manage nature reserves within the Shire.
- Internal Think Environment campaign launched to promote protection of threatened communities and landscapes across the Shire – education and awareness for staff and contractors on responsibilities under the Environment Protection Act General Environmental Duty.
- Native vegetation offset site plan for Moonah Woodlands, Torquay finalised and approved by Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action.
- Delivered Council's annual pest plant and animal management program on Council owned and managed land, including habitat for listed threatened flora and fauna species and communities.
- Supported local community conservation efforts including planting 2,200 plants as well as weed works and grant funding application support.
- Comprehensive program of assessment and planning work for Karaaf stormwater management completed. Baseline environmental monitoring assessment of Karaaf complete and ongoing monitoring plan underway.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Continue revegetation of the carbon offset site at Buckley with community groups and staff planting days.
- 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 roadside signage 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.
- Project planning underway for Karaaf stormwater diversion project with diversion option design to be completed within the next 12 months .

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

- State of Environment reporting timeframes slowed to align with the Victorian State of Environment Report and GORCAPA's State of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Environment Report (2024/2025).



## 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 End of Year 3

- Implementation of the Climate Emergency 2023-2025 Action Plan is underway to continue delivering on our commitments in the Climate Emergency Response Plan 2021-2031.
- Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard certification achieved for 2022-23 FY. Corporate emissions rose by 43% due to a more comprehensive assessment required by our Climate Active certification. Non-landfill emissions under Council's direct control continue trending down with a 4.1% reduction from the previous year.
- Partnered with Geelong Sustainability to deliver the All Electric Homes campaign. Statistics for the Surf Coast region include: over 200 people attended the Surf Coast events; 164 EOIs were submitted and 42 participants followed through with installation of either solar, batteries, hot water heat pumps and/or split system air conditioning, saving an estimated \$31,893 per year in energy costs and 119 tonnes of CO2 per year.
- Delivered the 2024 Climate Emergency Pitchfest Grants. The two successful projects this year were: Common Ground Project and Lorne P-12 College for 'School for Climate: Regeneration and Climate Action in the Garden and Farm', and The Brainery and Geelong Regional Library Corporation for 'Arkit Sustainability Studio'.

- Council received Victorian Government funding in 2021 through the Destination Charging Across Victoria program to install four EV chargers across the shire. Following significant delays, DEECA have increased their grant funding from \$70,000 originally awarded, to \$343,022, enabling 50kW chargers to be installed at all four locations (Lorne, Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Winchelsea) to better meet EV driver demand in our region. The units will be installed by the end of 2024.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Continue progress on delivering Council's adopted target of zero non-landfill emissions by 2030.
- Continue Council's Solar and Energy Transition Program, including solar and electrification works on the Multi Arts Centre development, installation of electric vehicle chargers, and conducting analysis for the next suite of efficiency measures on Council facilities.
- Deliver the 2025 community-voted Climate Emergency Pitchfest Grants.
- Engage with the community to further develop community-led aspects of our Community Climate Mobilisation Program.

### 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 material with diversion rates over 71% for 2023/24.



### Key progress at End of Year 3

- 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.
- Increased the service life of all IT Laptops and spreading the number of laptops required across 4 years to reduce cost and waste.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan 2024-2027.
- Finalise 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.
- Refresh the 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 End of Year 3

- Internal audit of Council's Climate Adaptation Response and recommendations presented to the 15 May Audit and Risk Committee meeting. Audit results indicated Council had a proactive response to both climate change mitigation and adaptation, and that Council could further mature its response by embedding climate considerations into all critical decision making frameworks and undertaking climate scenario planning and 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. Detailed planning and scoping has occurred to undertake Phase 1 of our climate risk assessments, ensuring our methodology is robust, evidence-based and aligned with best practice.
- Began collecting data on the financial impact of weather events to build understanding of anticipated financial implications of climate impacts into the future.
- BSW Climate Alliance was successful in receiving \$243,000 in grant funding to undertake climate risk assessments across the region, which will support Council's own risk assessment process, particularly for assets.
- The Winchelsea Greening and Stormwater Upgrade, and Jan Juc Creek Daylighting Stage 2 Integrated Water Management projects are progressing with designs complete.

- Painkalac Creek Flood Study is progressing with the technical specification complete and collaboration continues to link this work with other projects in the region.
- Unsealed Road Review nearing completion which considers actions to manage the network into the future as the climate changes.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Complete Phase 1 of Council's climate risk assessments across the shire to identify areas and assets most vulnerable to climate impacts and help prioritise Council's adaptation efforts.
- 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.
- Undertake drainage catchment management studies in Anglesea and Aireys Inlet.
- Undertake critical drainage rectification works.
- 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

Nil





## Theme 4: Sustainable Growth

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



*Fraser Drive, Aireys Inlet*





## 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 End of Year 3

- Progressed the Urban Futures Strategy project – undertaking multiple phases of Shire wide community engagement to inform the development of a draft Strategy.
- Completed and adopted the Planning Scheme Review – identifying key priorities tasks to inform future land use planning policy.
- Commenced implementation of the State Government's Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Statement of Planning Policy.
- Completed a Shire wide bushfire landscape assessment to inform the development of the Urban Futures Strategy.
- 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 12 months ahead

- Finalise and implement the Urban Futures Strategy.
- Commence implementation of key recommendations of the Planning Scheme Review.
- 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

- 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.
- Changes to the Australian Fire Danger Rating system will result in more frequent Extreme and Catastrophic fire days being declared, impacting events and some Council services across the Shire.





## 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 lack of affordable housing for key worker and lower-income households in our towns remains a challenge for residents and businesses.

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

Community engagement on affordable housing projects, including co-design processes with Aireys Inlet and Anglesea community members, has been a key focus.

Council has been connecting with communities and agencies on innovative ways to address the challenge.



### Key progress at End of Year 3

- 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.
- Facilitated a community co-design process to develop a long-term vision, design principles and concept plan for the Anglesea Community and Health Hub. Tested the vision, principles and concept plan including affordable housing for key workers the broader Anglesea community.
- Responded to community enquiries and issued four permits as part of the Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOW) pilot.
- Continued engagement with business and community led initiatives to facilitate access to affordable housing for key workers.
- Advocated to Federal and State Governments, including on the roll out of the State Government of Victoria's Housing Statement, ie Small Second Dwellings and Housing Targets.
- Continued to implement internal processes and work with homelessness outreach programs to support people sleeping rough.
- Established a Housing Concierge service to assist applicants to contribute to delivering affordable and more diverse forms of housing.
- Revised Affordable Accommodation Action Plan 2024, adopted by Council May 2024.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Continue engagement on progressing the detailed

design phase of the Anglesea Community and Health Hub and identify options for additional affordable housing projects in Anglesea.

- Develop and implement funding strategies for social and affordable housing projects including leading and 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 and other social and affordable housing projects.
- 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 of Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOW) through the THOW pilot evaluation.
- Monitor the uptake and assess the value of Housing Concierge Service.
- Monitor and respond to proposed policy changes affecting housing affordability.
- 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

- Progress to detailed design and construction phases of social and affordable housing projects on Council land depends on our ability to leverage funding opportunities.



## 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....

Council commenced their journey towards Eco Destination Accreditation; a program that will enhance our sustainable practices and offer high-quality tourism experiences within our region.

Our two fully accredited VIC's – Torquay and Lorne – are exceeding their retail targets whilst seeing growth in visitor numbers.

Secured a federal grant of \$37,500 to deliver a new women's surfing event in Lorne - aiming to increase participation and awareness in women's surfing, whilst growing economic benefits to the region.

### Key progress at End of Year 3

- Commenced Eco Destination Accreditation Program with Ecotourism Australia. The full program involves reviewing existing practices in 91 areas that will bring us closer to the economy we need.
- 2024-25 Event Grant Program in progress.
- Retail sales across Torquay and Lorne Visitor Information Centres (VIC) YTD (May): \$406,905.
- Visitor enquires at VIC's for Lorne: 85,516, Torquay: 50,135 & Anglesea: 5,291.
- Secured a federal grant of \$37,500 to deliver a new women's surfing event in Lorne - aiming to increase participation and awareness in women's surfing.
- On track to help facilitate approximately 300 major and community events for 2024, with SC Events providing complimentary marketing and event delivery support.
- Welcome Wave (part of Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race) and Rising Stars (part of the Rip Curl Pro) successfully delivered.
- Secured the Bells Beach Longboard Classic - an International longboard event forming part of the newly established World Surf League (WSL) Longboard Championship Tour.

- Australian Surf Rowing League National Championships event held in Lorne in February 2024.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Continue to develop product offerings through digital capabilities at our Torquay and Lorne Visitor Centres.
- Promote our SC Events website by providing 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.

### 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 1.9% 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.

### Key progress at End of Year 3

- Established Commercial Activity Centre Committee to promote internal collaboration on commercial place plans and adopted strategies.
- Finalised Parklet Pilot Program at Beach Hotel Jan Juc, undertook community consultation (97% support) and developed new guidelines & processes connected to the Local Law to implement Parklets around the shire.
- 36 businesses supported through the full Business Concierge. A further 130 businesses supported beyond the Concierge.
- Doubled our business contact database in the last 12 months to enable us to share business support programs to over 8,300 businesses by location or sector.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Complete a Business Insights Survey with Surf Coast Shire businesses with results used to inform business support programs to be delivered.
- Deliver a Better Business Skills Program.
- Deliver the Aireys Inlet Top Shops Beautification Design Project which will create a detailed design for a small-scale, relaxed and green coastal village space and improve access, parking, and safety.

### 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 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 End of Year 3

- 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.
- Increased online business presence to 908 followers and a reach of 23,000 – a growth of 593% .

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Work with Barwon Water to complete the Business Case for the Large-Scale Recycled Water and Stormwater Grid.
- Deliver Encouraging Sustainable Business Practices program.
- Continue to connect businesses with ethical, social and sustainability initiatives.

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

### Key progress at End of Year 3

- In 2023 the Multi Arts Centre staged over 380 events with 9,460 attending, over 810 unique artists were profiled. In the January to March 2024 period, the facility staged 91 events, profiled 123 unique artists and received 2579 in attendance .
- 2023 Surf Coast Arts Trail delivered with over 200 participating artists across 70+ venues with over \$230,000 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 2023 with 55 artists participating and 316 people attended the 2-week exhibition. 5,000 calendars printed and distributed across the Shire.
- Shed Talk Series attended by 187 people in 5 sessions held between March 2023 and June 2024.
- Delivered NAIDOC week panel event at the Australian National Surfing Museum .
- Delivered the Creative Halls Project enabling small scale cultural infrastructure upgrades to facilities in Anglesea, Lorne, 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 12 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.
- Develop a Public Arts Policy and Maintenance Framework.

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

- Programs which do not 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 End of Year 3

- \$1.4 million MAC refurbishment project progressed now at point of confirming final cost plan and preparing tender documents.
- 17,539 attendees to the Australian National Surfing Museum from 1 July to 31 May.
- \$50,000 Creative Halls project commenced, providing enabling arts infrastructure into venues in Winchelsea, Anglesea and Lorne.
- Completed a public art audit to identify 297 public art assets in Surf Coast Shire and understand their condition.
- 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.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Complete a public art policy and maintenance framework.
- Complete the Creative Halls projects to enable community groups and professional artists to book community halls for exhibitions.
- Implement the Creative Places Strategy and ANSM Master Plan.
- Complete the \$1.4 million MAC refurbishment project.
- Complete updates of the Australian Surfing Hall of Fame in the Australian National Surfing Museum.
- Develop 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.**







## 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 End of Year 3

- Current 10 year Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) enables Council to continue to deliver services and facilities whilst navigating challenging years ahead.
- Council generated a surplus of \$1.9m at year end and is holding cash and investments allocated to deliver future projects and commitments.
- Council's business reform programs generated \$0.33m of savings during 2023-24 and \$0.54m has been embedded in the 2024-25 budget.
- To help inform the State and Australian Government on local government's long term sustainability challenges, Council made submissions to the Australian Government's Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability and Funding of Local Government and the State Government's Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Service Delivery in Victoria.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Continue our journey on ensuring Council's financial sustainability through collaboration with FinPro, the Victorian Local Government finance professionals.
- 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.
- Undertake the Integrated Council Planning 2025 to 2029 project including preparatory work prior to Council elections October 2024.
- Utilise outputs of improved asset renewal modelling for decision making.
- Continue efforts to identify budget savings to embed in the 2025-26 budget.

### 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 End of Year 3

- Community Engagement Policy was adopted in August 2023.
- Round one of a community engagement staff training program has been delivered, involving 60 staff.
- Implemented coordinated communications on placed based projects to local channels.
- Finalised the MPP-028 Community Engagement Management Procedure.
- Established a new Communications and Engagement request and workflow system for all new projects across Council.
- Developed 156 media releases, 129 media responses and 168 speech notes and columns over the 12-month period.
- Through our two main social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) we gained over 1,200 new followers, reached people more than 350,000 times, and had over 18,000 interactions with our content.
- Implemented new social pinpoint online engagement platform.
- Commenced implementing a new digital Customer Relationship Management system to transform the way customer requests are handled and to improve response time and improve customer satisfaction.
- Held Council meetings in the community and continued to livestream Council meetings.

### What We'll Do – New focus areas for 12 months ahead

- Monitor and refine Communications and Engagement request and workflow system for all new projects across Council.

- Rollout round two of online engagement training program for all staff.
- Continue implementation of the Communications and Community Engagement Strategy Action Plan.
- Stronger focus on proactive communications, thanks to additional resources.
- Expand the coordinated communications on local projects to other townships / locations.
- Continue the rollout of the new social pinpoint online engagement platform.
- Commence an internal community of practice for staff to share community engagement learning and coordinate activities.
- Commence data gathering in preparation for developing the new Council Plan and integrated plans which will be delivered after the Council election in October 2024.
- Design and deliver engagement activities to develop the new Council Plan and integrated plans.
- Implement Phase 1 of 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

Nil