

Agenda

Special Meeting of Council

10:30 am, Wednesday 3 September 2025
Council Chamber, Tallangatta Council Office
32 Towong Street, Tallangatta, Victoria

Our Community Vision

Towong Shire will be the ideal place to be: welcoming, vibrant and diverse communities with quality facilities and services.

This information is available in alternative formats on request

**Agenda for the Special Meeting of Council to be held at
32 Towong Street, Tallangatta, Victoria
on Wednesday 3 September 2025 commencing at 10:30 am**

Commonly Used Acronyms

Abbreviation	Title
Council Officers	
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DIE	Director Infrastructure and Environment
DCP	Director Community and Planning
DCOD	Director Corporate and Organisational Development
MF	Manager Finance
SAE	Senior Asset Engineer
Government/Organisation	
CH	Corryong Health (formerly Upper Murray Health and Community Services)
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DJSIR	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
GMW	Goulburn Murray Water
HRGLN	Hume Region Local Government Network
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
NECMA	North East Catchment Management Authority
NERPEN	North East Regional Procurement Excellence Network
NEW	North East Water
NEWRRG	North East Waste and Resource Recovery Group
RCV	Rural Councils Victoria
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
THS	Tallangatta Health Service
VGC	Victorian Grants Commission

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1 Opening Prayer

"Almighty God, we ask that you be present at this meeting to assist us in our service to the Community through Local Government.

We pray that our decisions will be wise and taken with goodwill and clear conscience.

Amen."

2 Councillor and Officer Presence at the Meeting

Councillor Attendance

Crs Whitehead, Anderson, Wortmann, Tolsher and Pitman

Officer Attendance:	Title:
Ms Phelps	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Heritage	Director Infrastructure and Environment
Mr Florence	Director Community and Planning
Ms Taylor	Director Corporate and Organisational Development

3 Apologies and Granting of Leave of Absence

4 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Section 130 of the Act requires that a 'Relevant person' (which means a person who is a Councillor, a member of a delegated committee who is not a Councillor or a member of Council staff) disclose any conflict of interest in the manner required by Council's Governance Rules and exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to the matter including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting.

Council's *Governance Rules* state as follows:

A2 Obligations with regards to conflict of interest

Councillors, members of delegated committee, and Council staff are required to:

- a. Avoid all situations which may give rise to conflicts of interest;*
- b. Identify any conflicts of interest; and*
- c. Disclose or declare all conflicts of interest.*

A3 Disclosure of a conflict of interest at a Council meeting

A Councillor who has a conflict of interest in a matter being considered at a Council meeting at which he or she:

A3.1 is present must disclose that conflict of interest by explaining the nature of the conflict of interest to those present at the Council meeting immediately before the matter is considered; or

A3.2 intends to be present must disclose that conflict of interest by providing to the Chief Executive Officer before the Council meeting commences a written notice:

A3.2.1 advising of the conflict of interest;

A3.2.2 explaining the nature of the conflict of interest; and

A3.2.3 detailing, if the nature of the conflict of interest involves a Councillor's relationship with or a gift from another person, the:

a. name of the other person;

b. nature of the relationship with that other person or the date of receipt, value and type of gift received from the other person; and

c. nature of that other person's interest in the matter, and then immediately before the matter is considered at the meeting announcing to those present that he or she has a conflict of interest and that a written notice has been given to the Chief Executive Officer under this sub-Rule.

The Councillor must, in either event, leave the Council meeting immediately after giving the explanation or making the announcement (as the case may be) and not return to the meeting until after the matter has been disposed of.

5 Organisational Improvement

5.1 Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 - DCOD

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Narelle Taylor, Director Corporate and Organisational Development.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to present the *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* for approval to be placed on public exhibition and seek feedback for a period of 28 days.

Summary:

It is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020* to develop a Council Plan and Community Vision to set the strategic direction, objectives, strategies and initiatives to guide the Council over the elected term. The council plan must be adopted by 31 October in the year following a general election. The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* has been prepared following extensive community consultation, community surveys and workshops with staff.

The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* aims to balance the need to maintain our existing infrastructure and service levels to the community with the demand for new infrastructure and expanded services.

Asset renewal is a key priority to ensure that our existing infrastructure is serviceable, safe and meets the needs of the community. There is also demand for additional infrastructure to provide:

- The Peninsula with a community space and commercial/retail opportunities;
- Increased capacity to meet demand at almost all of our Early Years centres, encompassing both long day care, outside school hours care and Kindergarten services;
- Improved road network with gravel roads progressively sealed;
- Upgraded parks and open spaces across the shire;
- Enabling infrastructure to support tourism and the expansion of the High Country Rail Trail.

There is growing demand for community services that supports community connection and well-being, through our Neighbourhood House programs, libraries, Emergency Management Services, Maternal Child Health services to name a few.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* inclusive of the *Community Vision* be approved in-principle;
2. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to make the proposed *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* available for public inspection and invite public submissions, with submissions closing at 5pm on 3 October 2025;
3. At the Council Meeting on 22 October 2025:
 - a. Any submission in relation to the *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* and *Community Vision* be considered; and
 - b. The adoption of the *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* inclusive of the *Community Vision* be considered.

Attachment:

1. TSC Council Plan 2025 Draft [5.1.1 - 34 pages]

Background/History:

Under Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA 2020), a Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for at least the next four financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

The Council Plan must include the strategic direction of Council; the strategic objectives for achieving the strategic direction; initiatives for achieving the objectives and strategic indicators for monitoring achievement of the objectives.

Section 88 of LGA 2020 requires Councils to maintain a Community Vision that is developed in consultation with the community and describes the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality. The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* has been developed inclusive of the Community Vision. We asked our community if the Vision is still relevant and 70% of respondents confirmed that the Community Vision is still relevant and therefore has not changed.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The *Local Government Act 2020*

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* has been prepared based on extensive community

consultation and developed in order to deliver the best outcomes for the community over the current Council term.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* includes a strong focus on sustainability; be it the economic sustainability of our municipality or the environmental sustainability and the impact that we have and contribution we can make to minimise this impact.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Significant community consultation has been undertaken with 17 engagement sessions in halls and community spaces across the shire and through promotion of our online survey.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Continuous improvement is reflected throughout the Council Plan with initiatives focussing on improving and enhancing services and infrastructure.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Collaboration is promoted through several Council Plan initiatives; advocacy to state and federal governments and the promotion of opportunities to identify opportunities to undertake shared service arrangements.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Council has incorporated the planned initiatives and priorities in the Draft Long Term Financial Plan, currently released for public consultation.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

All relevant regional, state and national plans and policies have been taken into account in the development of the *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029*.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:
Not applicable.

Council Policies:
Not applicable.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* includes a number of initiatives to support the future financial sustainability of the organisation, promote good governance and risk management.

Officer's View:

The *Draft Council Plan 2025-2029* and *Community Vision* have been drafted based on considerable community engagement and it is now appropriate to release the Plan for public exhibition and to invite submissions.

5.2 Contract 2025/26 - 005 Colac Colac Caravan Park Management Agreement - DCOD

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Ms Narelle Taylor, Director Corporate and Organisational Development.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to recommend the appointment of Camp Crusty as the successful tenderer for the short-term management and operation of Colac Colac Caravan Park.

Summary:

A request for tender for the short-term management and operation of Colac Colac Caravan Park was released on tenders.net on 29 July 2025 for a period of approximately 3 weeks. An online information session and onsite inspection was held during this period. Four tenders were received, and the panel assessed each submission with the two most competitive tenderers invited to present to the panel. The evaluation matrix has been completed and provided to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Recommendation:

That:

1. Contract No 2025/26 - 005 be awarded to Camp Crusty Operation Pty Ltd; and
2. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to sign the Colac Colac Management Agreement, inclusive of the Proposal B fixed payment to Council.

Attachment:

Nil

Background/History:

The 21-year lease of the Colac Colac Caravan park expires 30 September 2025 and the existing lessees declined to proceed with a new lease agreement and have been working with Council to ensure a smooth transition to a new operator/lessee. To

ensure continuing operation of the park while an expression of interest process is undertaken for a new lease arrangement, a request for tender for a short-term management agreement was released on 29 July 2025. The tender period closed 21 August 2025. Four (4) submissions were received and evaluated with two (2) tenderers invited to present further to the panel.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

Not applicable.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):**Option 1**

Award contract No 2025/26 - 005 to Camp Crusty Operation Pty Ltd for the period 15 September 2025 to 30 April 2026. The tender submission provided a conforming remuneration fee Proposal (A) and a non-conforming remuneration fee Proposal (B). The non-conforming Proposal B is recommended.

Option 2

Award contract No 2025/26 - 005 to Belgravia Pro for the period 15 September 2025 to 30 April 2026.

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):*Economic*

Colac Colac Caravan Park is one of the largest accommodation providers in the municipality and supports visitation to the area which in turn supports the economic sustainability of the businesses in the Upper Murray. Ensuring the Caravan Park remains open and well-managed over the summer tourist season is important to supporting economic sustainability.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

Not applicable.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

Not applicable.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

Council have engaged a consultant to provide support to Council, utilising their experience of negotiating lease arrangements between Councils and lessees as well

as extensive industry knowledge.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

The recommended tenderer submitted a proposal with two options for the Financial Model in the Management agreement. The request for tender nominated that under the Financial Model the Contractor will operate the Park for Council and:

- Collect all Revenue from the Park, including booking fees, deposits, laundry and other ancillary revenue.
- Pay all reasonable operating expenses incurred in the operations of the Park, provided such expenses are incurred within a budget to be agreed in writing between Council and the Contractor prior to commencement of the services and
- On a monthly basis pay or transfer any surplus of revenue to Council after payment of all above operating expenses.

Camp Crusty provided Proposal A in line with the above Financial Model. They also provided an alternative Proposal B to pay Council a fixed amount over the term of the management agreement, guaranteeing a fixed return to Council, and incentivising the active management of park performance over the term to maximise the return to Camp Crusty; this model also aligns with the arrangements that will be proposed under the lease agreement.

Proposal B provides Council with a guaranteed return, that was the – the lowest risk proposal.

Proposal A from Camp Crusty also allowed for the same return; however was not guaranteed, it would vary depending on the revenue collected over the period. If revenue is higher than the prediction made by Camp Crusty, then the return to Council could be higher. If the revenue is lower than the prediction made by Camp Crusty, then the return to Council would be lower.

The proposal from Belgravia provided the second highest forecast return to Council, noting that the proposal provided by Belgravia would see the return to Council vary according to the variability of income.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Not applicable.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

Not applicable.

Council Policies:

Procurement Policy

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Of the two preferred tenderers there are different potential benefits and risks.

Belgravia is well established with Park management experience, good reputation and more robustly documented evidence of the systems and processes that will support the running of the Park. This poses low risk to the turnover figures for the Park.

Camp Crusty have less experience in Park management with less mature background systems that support park management. However, this risk may be offset by the non-conforming Proposal B where the return to Council over the seven months is guaranteed, and there is further potential upside through cost savings in completion of works.

Officer's View:

The decision of Council hinges on the risk appetite for a reputable performer with a strong focus on top line numbers versus a less experienced operator that has guaranteed a return and the potential future cost savings in completion of Works in the Park. The recommendation made by the officer reflects the outcome of the evaluation panel, however the evaluation scores were very close and therefore we have included the alternative tenderer, Belgravia as an option to award the contract, depending on the risk appetite of Council.

6 Community Wellbeing

6.1 Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan - DCP

Disclosure of Interests (S.130):

This report was prepared by Mr Michael Stanton, Manager Community Wellbeing.

At the time of preparation of this report, the officer did not have a general or material conflict of interest in any matter to which the report or advice relates.

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to place the Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 on Public Exhibition for comment and feedback prior to finalisation.

Summary:

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (the Act) recognises the significant role of councils in improving the health and wellbeing of people who live, work, study, and play in their municipality. The Act require councils to develop a municipal public health and wellbeing plan every four years (within 12 months of each general election of the council); the next municipal public health and wellbeing plans are due in October 2025.

The draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (MHWP) has been developed over the past six months which has included significant data review and various consultation, largely through the members of Towong Alliance.

This MHWP contains actions that are designed to deliver improved population health and wellbeing outcomes, to be implemented in collaboration with the Towong Alliance and other key stakeholders across the municipality. The MHWP is part of the wider public health unit response to improve health and wellbeing across the regional Ovens Murray Catchment and Victorian state level.

The MHWP sits alongside the Towong Alliance Partner's and other stakeholders plans and policies to deliver a health and wellbeing response across the municipality.

Council approval to place the Draft Plan on Public Exhibition is being sought.

Recommendation:

That:

1. The *Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 – 2029* be approved in-principle;
2. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to place the *Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 – 2029* on public exhibition and invite public submissions, with submissions closing at 5pm on Sunday 5 October 2025; and
3. In the event that no submissions are received, the *Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029* be adopted.

Attachment:

1. Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 (5) [6.1.1 - 29 pages]

Background/History:

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 mandates that local governments have a responsibility to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within their municipalities. The Act requires councils to develop a MHWP every four years (within 12 months of each general election of the council), which is consistent with the Council plan prepared under Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Council's existing Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan is for 2021-2025 so a new plan has been drafted for the years 2025-2029.

Towong Council has developed the *Draft Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029* in partnership with the Towong Alliance to ensure health and wellbeing is central to all that we do in Towong. The Towong Alliance is a partnership between Towong Shire Council, Corryong Health, Tallangatta Health Service and Walwa Bush Nursing Centre. By working together, the Alliance, stakeholders and the community can achieve a municipality wide response to health and wellbeing through the MHWP.

This MHWP contains actions that are designed to deliver improved population health and wellbeing outcomes, to be implemented in collaboration with the Towong Alliance and other key stakeholders across the municipality. The MHWP is part of the wider public health unit response to improve health and wellbeing across the regional Ovens and Murray Catchment and Victorian state level. The MHWP sits alongside the Towong Alliance Partner's and other stakeholders plans and policies to deliver a health and wellbeing response across the municipality.

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027 provides an overarching policy framework for improving public health and wellbeing in Victoria including identifying the following ten priority areas which the Draft MHWP contains actions across. These have been prioritised in the following order:

1. Preventing all forms of violence;
2. Improving wellbeing;
3. Increasing healthy eating;
4. Improving sexual and reproductive health;
5. Increasing active living;
6. Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use;
7. Tackling climate change and it's impacts on health;
8. Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use;
9. Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health;
10. Reducing injury.

Some of the key actions for these priority areas include awareness campaigns, strengthening community knowledge, placing mental health at the forefront, embracing diversity, inclusion and fostering social connection.

Relevant Law (s.9(2)(a)):

The Local Government Act 2020.

Options – Best Outcomes for the Community (s.9(2)(b)):

The Draft Towong Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029 presents a municipality wide response to the requirements of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

The draft plan aligns to our Community Vision 2031. "Towong Shire will be the ideal place to be: welcoming, vibrant and diverse communities with quality facilities and services"

Sustainability Implications (s.9(2)(c)):

Social

Partnering with key stakeholders to achieve improved health and wellbeing will be a central priority of the MHWP to ensure the community can achieve optimal health outcomes across all population cohorts.

Environmental/Climate Change

Tackling climate change and it's impacts on health is one of the 10 priority areas of the Draft MHWP with several actions under this priority listed in the document.

Community Engagement (s.9(2)(d)):

The Draft MHWP was developed with the direct input from Towong alliance members, other relevant organisations and stakeholders who work within the health and/or wellbeing areas.

Many of the actions in this draft document relate to other Council strategic documents such as the draft Council Plan 2025-2029, Recreation Strategy, Youth Strategy and place plans. These documents have all been recently developed and involved significant community engagement.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement (s.9(2)(e)):

The development of this Draft MHWP provides some direction for Towong Shire Council and our health partners in relation to many health and wellbeing areas which is aimed at continually improving health and wellbeing services, programs and initiatives for our residents. From 2025 – 2029.

Collaboration (s.9(2)(f)):

The development of the Draft MHWP involved collaboration and consultation with a number of stakeholders. Many of these stakeholders are listed as partners for the delivery of the Actions listed in the document to maximise the outcomes of the Actions under the various priority areas.

Financial Viability/Budget Impact (s.9(2)(g)):

Budget requirements and availability have been confirmed, grant funding has and will be sought where possible and all expenditure is being monitored and managed within agreed budget allocations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies (s.9(2)(h)):

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023 – 2027.

Council Plans and Policies:

Council Plans:

This report supports the following *Council Plan 2021-2025* priorities.

2. Community Wellbeing - Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.

- 2.3 Maintain a contemporary Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan which reflects our community priorities
- 2.4 Support the development of recreational activities and infrastructure to encourage active lifestyles for all ages and stages
- 2.7 Expand and improve early years services across the Shire to support young families
- 2.8 Renew the Youth Plan to embed the 'youth voice' in all aspects of service delivery
- 2.9 Advocate for the development of a variety of housing options to match community needs, particularly for older people
- 2.10 Encourage the establishment of innovative, sustainable transport solutions for remote communities
- 2.11 Support our communities to ensure that Shire places are welcoming to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and LGBTIQ+ communities and are inclusive and connected
- 2.12 Build relationships and develop understanding of aboriginal people and consider the commitment to an ongoing reconciliation action plan process
- 2.13 Participate in key networks to support communities and key stakeholders on solutions to address family violence, suicide and mental health

5. Environmental Sustainability - Integrate sustainable environmental management practices into all of our activities.

- 5.12 Develop a climate change action plan (including actions to reduce carbon emissions, electric vehicle charging, etc)

6. Organisational Improvement - Maintain a high performing customer-centred organisation that works with the community to develop and deliver priorities.

- 6.1 Continue to improve awareness, engagement and involvement of the community in relation to matters that affect them
- 6.3 Continually improve processes to support improved service delivery

Council Policies:

Climate Adaptation Policy.

Transparency of Decision (s.9(2)(i)) :

It is the officer's view that it is appropriate to consider this matter in a Council meeting that is open to the public.

Risk Assessment:

Placing the Draft MHWP on Public Exhibition may inadvertently convey to the community that Council is positioned to financially support and resource all actions within the document.

Communication on the plan will be clear that Towong Shire Council's role is not in direct service provision for all actions listed in the plan. The emphasis emphasis will be on outlining whether the Council leads, advocates, funds or partners for specific actionable objectives within the plan".

Officer's View:

The *Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029* has been informed by data, research and consultation, namely member organisations of the Towong Alliance, community consultation and developed by experienced staff in this area.

The development of an updated MHWP was required given Victorian legislation and the timeframes of the most recent Plan was 2021 – 2025. In addition to legislative requirements it's important that we are able to have such a document aimed at improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of Towong residents.

It is the officer's recommendation that the *Draft Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan* be placed on Public Exhibition.

7 Asset Management

There are no Asset Management reports.

8 Land Use Planning

There are no Land Use Planning reports.

9 Environmental Sustainability

There are no Environmental Sustainability reports.

10 Economic and Tourism Development

There are no Economic and Tourism Development reports.

11 Closure of Meeting

Special Council Meeting - 3 September 2025 Attachments

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Towong Shire Council

—
Draft Council Plan
2025–2029

Towong Shire... the ideal place to be

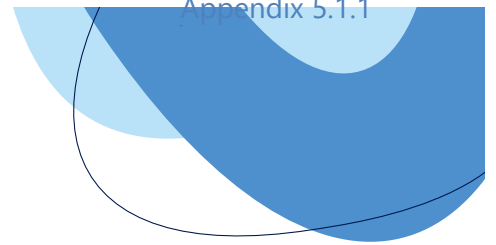
towongshire 

Front cover image: Two cyclists ride side-by-side along a quiet road in the Upper Murray.

The whole of Towong Shire has many sealed and 'champagne' gravel roads as well as the High Country Rail Trail, which is ideal for riding enthusiasts.

Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the beautiful lands of Towong Shire. We pay respect to Elders past and present and thank them for their continued care of country, their wisdom and sharing of knowledge. We also pay respect to other First Nations people that now call this region home.



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About the Council Plan

The Council Plan 2025–2029 outlines what matters most to our communities and how Council will work to bring the ten-year Community Vision for Towong Shire to life.

This Council Plan focuses on setting clear priorities for the next four years, while aligning with the broader goals of our long-term vision of Towong Shire being the ideal place to be.

To develop this Plan, Council undertook comprehensive community engagement, including in-person consultation with communities across the Shire, along with online and paper-based surveys. More than 600 individual pieces of constructive feedback were received and considered.

During the engagement process, we asked the community to share their views on key infrastructure and community priorities, and to reflect on whether our Community Vision still rings true.

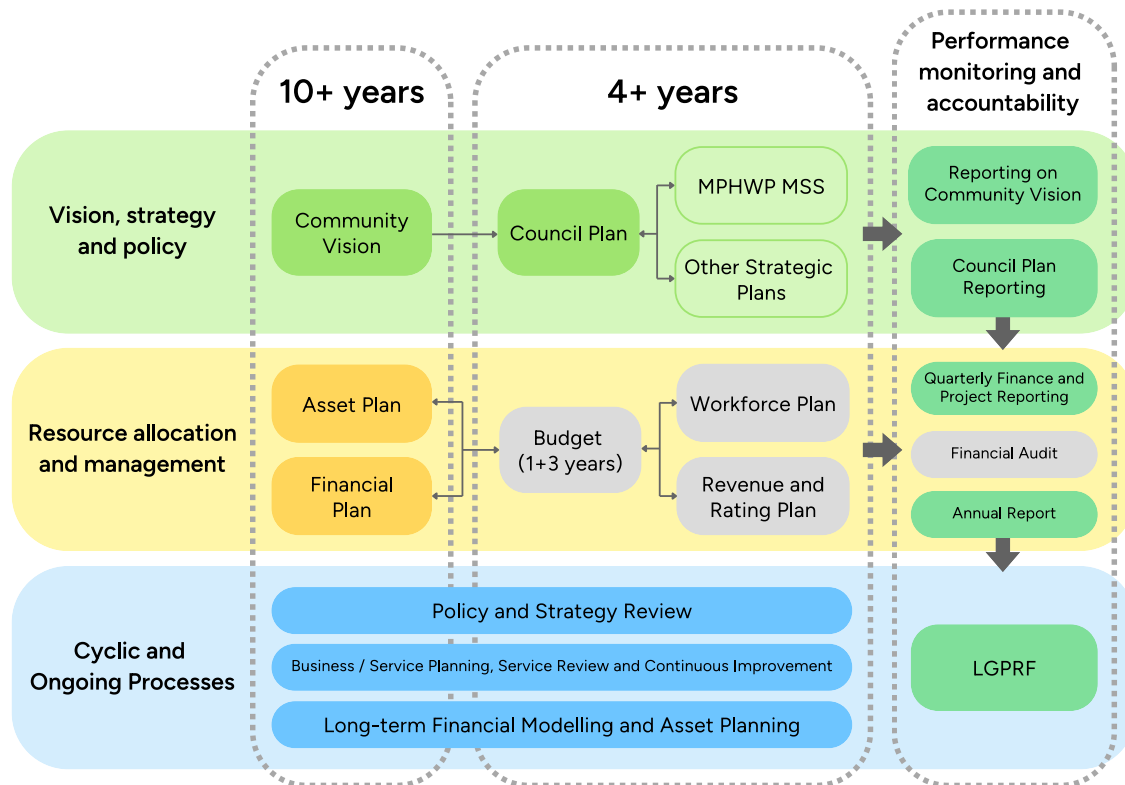
We also used input received over the past two years during community engagement activities for the development of the 'Our Towns' Place Plans and various other masterplans and strategies including recreation, youth, inclusion/diversity and public health and wellbeing.

The resulting Council Plan outlines our strategic objectives, strategies and priorities for the next four years, and the strategic indicators that we will use to track our progress.

The Plan is a key strategic document that will help to inform our capital works and community planning as well as budget and resource allocations. We will report back to the community on our progress through regular Council Plan Reporting and our Annual Report.

Our Planning and Reporting Framework

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF) below shows how the Community Vision and Council Plan relate to our other major planning and reporting documents. It demonstrates how each element might inform or be informed by other parts of the integrated framework.



*Adapted from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. (2021). Local Government Better Practice Guide 2021–2022 (p. 10).

Message from the Mayor and Councillors



We are very pleased to present the Council Plan 2025-2029, our blueprint for fulfilling our Community Vision, where Towong Shire is the *ideal place to be*.

We want to ensure our communities are welcoming, vibrant, and well-positioned for sustainable growth. We are committed to providing quality facilities and services and we will deliver critical projects to support ongoing economic and social development.

We are pleased that funding and plans are already in place for projects such as the Corryong Elyne Mitchell Library upgrade, the construction of the Bethanga Recreation Reserve Pavillion and upgrades to many community buildings to ensure they meet community needs into the future particularly in emergencies.

We will work to increase access to quality childcare services that meet the needs of families, and we will continue to advocate to the State and Federal Governments on issues that are important to our ratepayers and residents.

We will continue to implement actions from our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), walking alongside First Nations communities in the spirit of respect, healing and partnership. We remain proud supporters of our LGBTIQA+ community, strengthening inclusion through events, storytelling, and visibility across the region.

Our libraries will continue to serve as vibrant, inclusive community hubs and our collaboration with Murray Arts will help us nurture creativity and cultural expression throughout the Shire, celebrating local talent and stories.

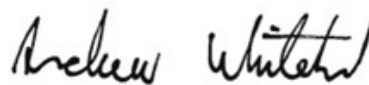
We will continue to drive economic development across the Shire. Agriculture is the mainstay of our economy, and we are committed to supporting its resilience and growth in the face of future challenges. We are committed to fostering collaboration across farmer and industry groups through coordinated planning, communication and support.

We are committed to expanding our tourism offering and will actively seek funding opportunities to grow local businesses and experiences, such as the Pine Mountain Experience and the Shelley Wilderness Trail. We will also continue to advocate for critical infrastructure improvements, including better telecommunications and reliable power supply and improvements to State roads.

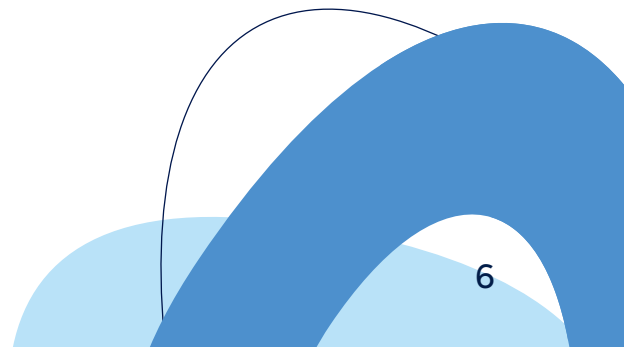
The jewel in our crown and one of our major attractions is our pristine environment. We will embed sustainable practices across all areas of our work and empower our communities to do the same. This includes supporting climate change action, encouraging responsible waste management, and promoting a deeper understanding of sustainability.

Our work will be driven by a high-performing organisation that partners with the community to deliver shared priorities. We are committed to placing community interests at the heart of our decision-making, while consistently providing exceptional customer service. Strong governance and sound financial management will be at the core of everything we do, ensuring the long-term sustainability of Council. We will continue to lobby the State and Federal Governments for increased funding for local roads, bridges and infrastructure.

We would like to thank our communities and staff for their contributions to the development of this Council Plan. We look forward to working with our communities over this Council term to make Towong Shire the *ideal place to be*.



Cr Andrew Whitehead
Mayor



Our Councillors



Cr Andrew Whitehead | Mayor

Cr Andrew Whitehead is currently serving his fourth year as Mayor. He was first elected to Council in October 2016 and was re-elected for his third term on Council in November 2024. Cr Whitehead has been an active volunteer in the Upper Murray for over 40 years. He grew up in the Upper Murray and after completing school at Corryong High School, was a mechanic for 30 years as well as working on the family beef and sheep farm at Towong Upper. Cr Whitehead is married to Brenda and they have four children, and he now works full-time on the family farm.



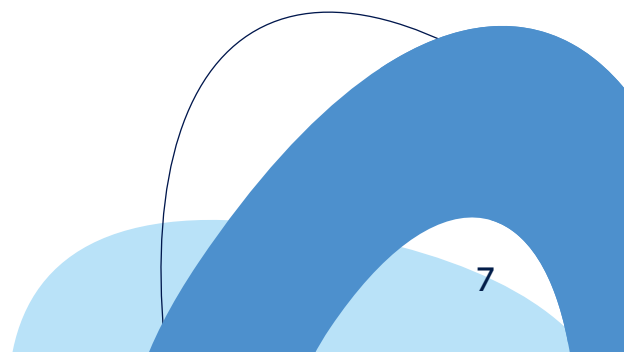
Cr Peter Tolsher | Deputy Mayor

Cr Peter Tolsher has been a resident of Tallangatta since 1976. He is married to Joanne, who was the Librarian at Tallangatta for 35 years, and has two children and two grandchildren. His professional career spanned 40 years including a senior management role at North East Water before retiring in 2022. His dedication extended beyond his professional role, actively contributing to the Water Industry Operators Association as a voluntary board member for over 10 years. Cr Tolsher previously served as a Councillor on Towong Shire Council from 2016 to 2020. He is passionate about improving local infrastructure and services for ratepayers and residents across the Shire.



Cr David Wortmann

Cr David Wortmann has a long history of service to Towong Shire Council. He was first elected to Council in November 2008 and re-elected for a fifth term in November 2024. He has served six terms as Mayor and is Council's representative to the peak body for Local Government, the Municipal Association of Victoria. A lifelong resident of Granya, Cr Wortmann is married with two adult children and runs a beef and sheep farm as well as operating a school bus service. He has been a CFA volunteer for 46 years and is also Secretary of the Granya Cemetery Trust.



Our Councillors



Cr Denise Anderson

Cr Denise Anderson was elected to Council on 24 October 2020 for her first term. She has been a resident of Towong Shire for 22 years and has lived in the region all her life. Together with her husband Bill, she has three adult children. Cr Anderson has owned a small business and has experience working in the banking and medical industries in the areas of customer service and management. She has been involved with a variety of school and community organisations such as Community Recovery Committees and has been a strong voice advocating for her community on Local, State and Federal Government issues.



Cr Jon Pitman

Cr Jon Pitman is married to Caz and since moving to Corryong in 2001, he has been involved in the community in many ways from the Man from Snowy River Bush Festival to Sacred Heart School, as well as being a long term member of the local CFA brigade. He has been on the committee for the Corryong Recreation Reserve and a member of a number of other local community groups. Cr Pitman's career experience covers domestic and civil construction and maintenance, tourism, education, small project and site management. Cr Pitman's focus is on bringing community together and a sustainable legacy for our future.



Our Senior Management Team



Juliana Phelps | Chief Executive Officer

Juliana is passionate about the sustainability of rural communities and small rural councils, and is committed to ensuring that the residents and ratepayers of Towong Shire have access to quality services and infrastructure. Juliana has served as Chief Executive Officer since 2009, having previously held the position of Director of Community and Corporate Services. She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Chartered Accountant, with experience auditing private and public organisations. Juliana holds a Master of Business Administration from Charles Sturt University and a Bachelor of Business (Accounting and Economics). Before joining Council, Juliana held a senior management position in the manufacturing sector in Albury-Wodonga and Melbourne. In 2020, Juliana was recognised as one of the Top 50 Public Sector Women in Victoria.

Jamie Heritage | Director of Infrastructure and Environment

Jamie has a passion for civil works and has been the Director of Infrastructure and Environment since 2024. With a background in Mechanical Engineering, he brings extensive experience from both the private and public sectors, having held operational and engineering roles in local government. Throughout his career, Jamie has been committed to delivering practical, innovative solutions that benefit communities. He is guided by his motto: "Find reasons why we can, not reasons why we can't."

Narelle Taylor | Director of Corporate and Organisational Development

Narelle has served as Director Corporate and Organisational Development since 2023 and is passionate about the future direction and sustainability of towns in local and rural areas. With a background in the accounting industry, she specialises in audit and compliance while also bringing extensive operational and strategic leadership skills. She holds a Bachelor of Business (Accounting).

Mark Florence | Director of Community and Planning

Mark is dedicated to fostering community wellbeing and development. He works to enhance community services, ensuring that families and residents in Towong Shire have better access to support and facilities. Mark has held the position of Director of Community and Planning since August 2024, having previously worked within local government and the education sector. He has experience in youth services, recreation, community development, and planning. Mark is a graduate of the LGPro Executive Leadership Program and holds a range of diplomas in education and management.

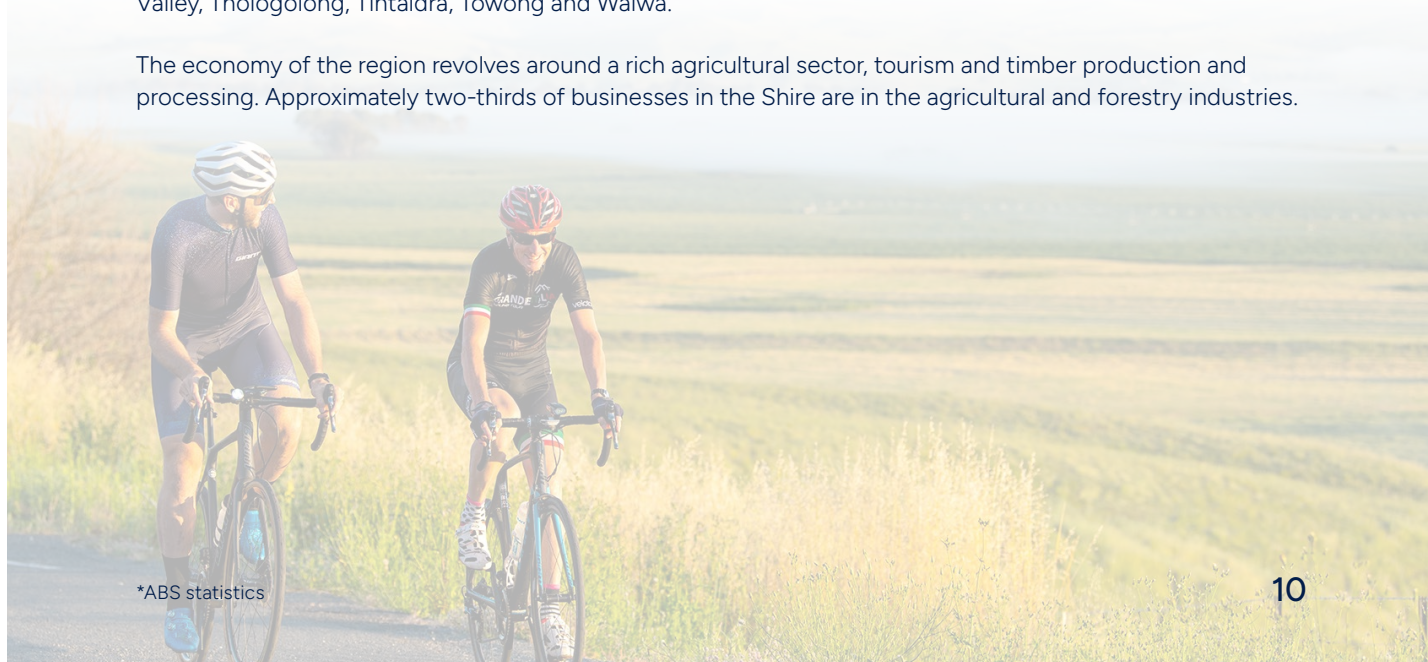
Our Shire



Towong Shire, in far North East Victoria, enjoys some of Australia's most pristine environments. Our unique wilderness areas, lakes, rivers and streams create diverse landscapes that are enjoyed by around 6,223* residents and many more visitors across an area of 6,635 square kilometres.

Our municipality includes many diverse townships and localities including Bellbridge, Bullioh, Berringama, Bethanga, Biggara, Burrowye, Corryong, Cudgewa, Dartmouth, Eskdale, Granya, Guys Forest, Koetong, Lucyvale, Mitta Mitta, Mt Alfred, Nariel, Old Tallangatta, Shelley, Talgarno, Tallandoon, Tallangatta, Tallangatta Valley, Thologolong, Tintaldra, Towong and Walwa.

The economy of the region revolves around a rich agricultural sector, tourism and timber production and processing. Approximately two-thirds of businesses in the Shire are in the agricultural and forestry industries.



*ABS statistics

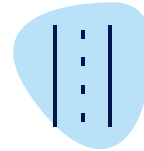
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Facts, Statistics & Characteristics



Population

Population - **6,223**¹
 Area - **6,675km**¹
 Private dwellings - **3,106**



Roads & Transport

Council Roads - **1,183km**
 Arterial Roads - **483km**
 Number of registered vehicles - **4,696**
 (excluding heavy vehicles and motorbikes. Number may be higher due to households with more than 3 vehicles uncounted)¹
 People who live near public transport² - **5.3%**



Economy

Businesses¹ - **925**
 Employment participation rate¹ - **88.8%**
 Median weekly household income¹ - **\$1,282**



Individuals & households

Median age¹ - **52**
 Average household size¹ - **2.2**
 Access to internet at home¹ - **74.2%**



Social & Health

People who rated their community as a pleasant environment² - **85%**
 Children fully immunised between 24 and 27 months⁴ - **91.3%**
 Kindergarten participation³ - **88.9%**
 People who are members of a sports group² - **58.5%**

Data sources:

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (<https://dbr.abs.gov.au>)

² Vic Health (https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Vic161_Towong_indicator_v5.pdf)

³ State Government of Victoria (<https://discover.data.vic.gov.au/dataset/the-child-children-and-young-people-participate-in-learning-and-education/resource/3809bb4d-0c67-440c-927c-f5486e54fd25>)

⁴ Australian Government Department of Health (<https://www.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation/immunisation-data/childhood-immunisation-coverage/current-coverage-data-tables-for-all-children>)

Unless otherwise indicated, statistics are taken from the latest year available. The statistics on this page are presented for information purposes and may differ from the data sources used for performance reporting purposes. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole from ABS 2021 census data.

If Towong Shire consisted of 100 people there would be...



51 males
49 females



56 who completed higher education
44 who did not complete a higher education



20 aged under 19 years
16 aged between 20 and 39 years
35 aged between 40 and 64 years
29 aged over 65 years



51 who owned their home outright
31 who held a mortgage
18 who rented or other tenure type

Discover more facts about our Shire...



56 work full time
33 who work part time
11 not in the labour force
28 engaged in volunteerism in the past 12 months,
significantly higher than the state average.

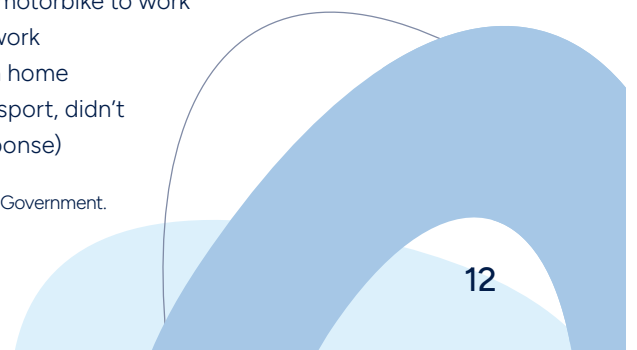


3 that were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
18 that were born overseas
72 were born in Australia
19 had at least one parent born overseas



61 who drove to work or rode a motorbike to work
7 who walked to work
18 who worked from home
10 other (took public transport, didn't
go to work or no response)

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 2021 Census QuickStats. Australian Government.
Canberra Accessed at <https://dbr.abs.gov.au>



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How we engaged with our community

In 2024, we engaged with communities across the Shire to develop 10-year 'Our Towns' place plans that are our strategic blueprints for how Tallangatta, Corryong, Bellbridge, and Mitta Mitta will grow and develop over the next decade. These sessions helped identify key priorities for structure planning, housing, and community development.

In 2025, to shape our Community Vision and four-year Council Plan, we hosted 17 engagement sessions in halls and community spaces across the Shire. At these sessions, we sought input to inform the Draft Council Plan 2025–2029, review our Community Vision, and refine priorities from previous consultations. This process allowed us to focus on the big ideas and determine the actions and objectives most important to the community over the next four years.

We also heard from hundreds of residents who were unable to attend in person through our online survey and other engagement channels, ensuring a broad range of voices contributed to the process.

Where we engaged our community



What we heard

We heard a range of priorities and concerns from community members across a range of different areas. From this, we were able to compile priorities and determine what Council is capable of delivering within a four-year period.



Tourism

Extension and development of the High Country Rail Trail (HCRT), along with promotional material to increase awareness and infrastructure that supports a positive tourist experience. Support for existing and potential businesses to capitalise on new and emerging opportunities within the Shire, driving economic growth.



Infrastructure

We heard that maintaining our roads and bridge network is a top priority – particularly the sealing and upkeep of gravel roads. There is also a strong need for infrastructure upgrades that improve access and safety for our ageing population (such as safe crossings, parking spaces and an expanded footpath network), while also creating more opportunities for active lifestyles for younger people. In addition, building key infrastructure to support community connection is important, including new community facilities in Bellbridge and the expansion of Early Years centres.



Community and Early Years

Promoting opportunities for the community to come together through targeted programs, outreach activities, accessible facilities, and local events. Addressing the waitlist for Kindergarten and Long Day Care services is also a priority, with access to these services being critical to supporting families and positioning the Shire as an ideal place to live..



Advocacy

Ensuring the needs of our community are voiced to state and federal agencies on a range of critical issues, including healthcare, communication, housing, road safety, and the maintenance of state roads.

Note: The comments above were received from community members during the Council Plan engagement activities and through our online survey.

Community Vision 2031

“Towong Shire will be the ideal place to be: welcoming, vibrant and diverse communities with quality facilities and services.”

The Community Vision 2031 was first developed in 2021 based on the feedback received during our previous Council Plan engagement. To determine if we should refine or change our community vision we asked the community if the statement was still relevant to them. We conducted a survey in the first half of 2025 where 70.5% of respondents indicated our Community Vision was still relevant. Based on this feedback, the Community Vision will remain the same.



70.5%

of respondents indicated that the Community Vision first drafted in 2021 is still relevant for them.



9.5%

of respondents no longer believed the Community Vision was relevant but did not leave comment.



20.5%

of respondents made comments to help us refine the vision. Of these comments, the key concerns raised were that the goal needed refining to be more specific and understanding that Council was still working to deliver levels of service, improved facilities, and progress on issues such as housing availability.

Mission & Values

“To provide strong leadership and to work with our communities to enhance their social, economic and environmental wellbeing.”

Our Mission expresses our core purpose and guides our Councillors and staff in the pursuit of the Community Vision. It is underpinned by our Values which guide how we work with one another, our communities and stakeholders.

Our Values



Teamwork

We will help others to achieve by being positive, enthusiastic and confident.



Integrity

We will be honest with strong moral principles.



Pride

We will always take care in what we do.



Respect

We will listen and consider other perspectives and treat each other with courtesy.



Strategic Objectives

In pursuit of the Community Vision 2031, Council will focus on six strategic objectives.

These strategic objectives are supported by specific strategies, priorities and initiatives, together with strategic indicators (measures of success), which are detailed on the following pages.



1. Community Wellbeing

Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.



2. Asset Management

Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.



3. Economic & Tourism Development

Expand economic and employment opportunities across our Shire in a sustainable way.



4. Land Use

Ensure that Council's planning, building and environmental health services support all aspects of liveability and sustainable population growth.



5. Environmental Sustainability

Integrate sustainable environmental management practices into all of our activities.



6. Organisational Improvement

Maintain a high performing customer-centred organisation that works with the community to develop and deliver priorities.

1. Community Wellbeing



Encourage and support all people in our Shire to be healthy, happy, connected and resilient.

Four-year strategies and initiatives

Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To enhance the health and wellbeing of all residents and communities through access to a range of inclusive and culturally diverse activities, programs, and facilities.	Library memberships.	Implement the actions from the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 - 2029.	●	●	●	●
		Promote opportunities for communities to access libraries as a community connection hub and educational resource.	●	●	●	●
		Facilitate the Murray Arts partnership to support arts and culture groups, individuals and activities throughout the Shire.	●	●	●	●
	Visits per head of population.	Implement the actions from the Youth Strategy 2025-2029.	●	●	●	●
		Advocate for the development of a variety of housing options to match community needs, particularly for older people.	●	●	●	●
	Percentage of all implementation actions achieved.	Implement actions from the Reconciliation Action Plan.	●	●	●	●
		Implement the recommendations from the LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Wellbeing Consultation Report.	●	●	●	●
	Delivery of services at the former Corryong Junior Campus site.	Advocate for the establishment of innovative and sustainable transport solutions for remote communities.	●	●	●	●
		Actively support programs, initiatives, policies and guidelines that promote a gender equal society.	●	●	●	●
		Participate in key networks to enhance social, economic and environmental wellbeing across the community.	●	●	●	●
		Actively participate and support networks, events, programs and secure funding for the wellbeing of seniors in the community.	●	●	●	●
		Identify options for delivering the key strategic priorities from the adopted place plans.	●	●		

1. Community Wellbeing



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To improve the opportunities for residents and communities to participate in physical activity and recreation.	Successful completion of all recreation facility projects. Increase in visitation to Council pools. Delivery of a planned program of engagement with community sport and recreation groups.	Finalise funding and construction of a new cricket training facility at Bethanga Recreation Reserve.	●	●		
		Complete the Bethanga Recreation Reserve Pavillion Project.	●	●		
		Complete the Tallandoon Tennis Courts Redevelopment project.	●			
		Implement the actions from the 2022/23 Towong Shire Recreation Strategy.	●	●	●	●
		Assess and implement the preferred management model for the Corryong and Tallangatta Pools.	●			
		Develop a detailed Asset Management Plan for Corryong and Tallangatta.	●			
		Complete the Bullioh Recreation Reserve Female Friendly Facility project.	●			
		Complete the Cudgewa Recreation Reserve Lighting project.	●	●		
		Actively engage with community sporting groups in planning and actioning initiatives to support sustainability and volunteer participation.	●	●	●	●

1. Community Wellbeing



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To maintain and develop quality and efficient Early Years services.	Continued reduction of numbers on Early Years services waiting lists.	Continue to implement the priority actions and processes from the 2024/2025 Early Years Review.	●	●	●	●
		Develop and implement a system to ensure compliance with all Early Years policy and operational requirements.	●	●	●	●
	Permanent Early Years licence at Walwa Primary School achieved.	Finalise and implement priorities from the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan (KISP) and Childcare Demand Assessments.	●			
	Facility infrastructure priorities confirmed and delivery progress made.	Undertake required actions to secure the permanent Early Years licence at Walwa Primary School.	●	●		
		Develop options for a possible stand alone kindergarten in Tallangatta to free up more child care places.	●	●	●	●
	All Early Years Services rated at "meeting" required service quality and performance standards.	Continue to plan for the mandatory provision of free 30 hours per week 4 year old kindergarten and 15 hours per week 3 year old kindergarten.	●	●		
	100% participation in Maternal Child Health services by all relevant cohorts.	Collaborate with the Victorian Department of Education to expand Kindergarten capacity in Corryong to meet increased operational demand.	●	●		
		Develop options to improve the building used for Bellbridge Early Years services to better meet the needs of the service and secure funding to implement modifications.	●	●	●	●
	Reduction in cost of Maternal Child Health Services.	Conduct a review of the Maternal Child Health Service.	●			

1. Community Wellbeing



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To maintain Emergency Management Co-ordination and activities to strengthen community preparation and resilience for future emergency events.	Resilient Building Project, and Rebuild Program delivered. All required MEMPC meetings and processes delivered. Emergency Management resource allocations and training programs delivered.	Chair and provide Secretariat support to the multi-agency Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC).	•	•		
		Deliver the Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) funded Resilient Buildings Project.	•	•	•	•
		Complete the remaining elements of the bushfire related Rebuild program.	•			
		Maintain and enhance Council readiness for future emergency events.	•	•	•	•
		Advocate for funding for necessary civil and community infrastructure to achieve the State Government housing target of 550 by 2051 for Towong Shire.	•	•	•	•
		Continue to lead the delivery of community planning, preparedness, and resilience activities and programs.	•	•	•	•

2. Asset Management



Maintain and improve our Shire's infrastructure to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.

Four-year strategies and initiatives

Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Maintain and improve our road and bridge network to meet the levels of service established in consultation with our communities.	100% of annual renewal budget spent.	Deliver the annual Capital Works Program.	●	●	●	●
		Continue the upgrade of Georges Creek Road.	●		●	
		Complete upgrades of Hanson Street, Corryong from Sugarloaf Road to Kiel Street in staged increments.	●	●	●	●
		Progressively deliver the upgrade of the unsealed sections of Lake Road.	●	●	●	●
		Progressively deliver the upgrade of Flagstaff Road, Bethanga in staged increments.		●		●
		Seek funding to deliver a rolling program for the maintenance of identified limited access roads.	●	●	●	●
		Improve Lake Road – between Bellbridge and Kurrajong Gap Road Intersection.			●	●
		Advocate for the upgrade of the Benambra–Corryong Road from Stacey's Bridge for 40km southward.	●	●	●	●
		Seek funding to deliver upgrades of key transport routes and hazardous road alignments to improve efficiency and safety.	●	●	●	●
		Seek funding to deliver upgrades of load limited bridges on strategic transport routes.	●	●	●	●
		Continue to deliver the upgrade of unsealed streets in urban areas program.	●	●	●	●

2. Asset Management



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To create inviting, accessible town centres that provide excellent amenity for locals and visitors.	Strategic disabled parking plan developed and adopted by Council.	Complete streetscape upgrades in Dartmouth and Mitta Mitta.		●		●
		Implement streetscape upgrades in Towong, Tintaldra and Cudgewa.			●	●
		Continue to deliver the strategic footpath network improvement program in urban areas including access and egress for the elderly, school children and other critical paths.	●	●	●	●
		Develop a strategic disabled parking plan that links to the strategic footpath plan for access and egress for older people throughout the Shire.		●		
		Collaborate with schools, hospitals, and businesses to resolve parking issues throughout the Shire.	●	●	●	●

2. Asset Management



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To create safe, clean open spaces and playgrounds that allow for passive and active recreation activities.	Open Space Strategy developed and adopted by Council.	Develop and implement a Shire-wide Open Space and Playground strategy.	●	●	●	●
		Consider Koetong Recreation Reserve upgrades within the Open Space and Playground strategy.		●	●	●
		Investigate options for additional boat ramps.			●	●
		Advocate for increased funding for enhanced access and recreational use at Lake Hume, Dartmouth Pondage, and Banimboola storage.	●	●	●	●
		Undertake critical infrastructure upgrades at Colac Colac Caravan Park.	●	●	●	
		Seek funding to deliver improved public toilets across the Shire.	●	●	●	●
To manage our assets over the long term in a cost effective, sustainable way.	100% of required asset inspection activities completed as per requirements of the Road Management Plan.	Implement an Asset Management system for all Council owned assets.	●	●	●	●
		Deliver annual asset inspection and renewal programs per asset management and Road Management Plan requirements.	●	●	●	●
		Review the operation and ongoing maintenance of the Corryong Saleyards and consider options for the future of the Saleyards.			●	

3. Economic & Tourism Development



Expand economic and employment opportunities across our Shire in a sustainable way.

Four-year strategies and initiatives

Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Tourism infrastructure and events to promote Towong Shire's attraction to visitors.	Mitta Mountain Bike Park project delivered.	Seek funding for the implementation of the Mount Elliot Masterplan.	●	●	●	
		Continue to support Mitta Valley Inc plan, and develop the Mitta Valley Mountain Bike Park.	●			
		Seek funding for the Shelley Wilderness Trail.	●	●	●	●
		Seek funding to broaden the Pine Mountain Experience.			●	●
	New tourism events and signage projects delivered.	Seek funding to extend the High Country Rail Trail from Berringama to Colac Colac.	●	●	●	●
	Container Cafe project at Bellbridge completed.	Prioritise projects identified in the Activating Lake Hume Masterplan and seek funding for implementation.	●	●	●	●
	Eskdale Visitor Information Centre upgrade completed.	Seek funding for a planning and design project for the development of a shared pathway at Dartmouth Dam.	●	●	●	●
		Establish a new adventure tourism event in the Mitta Valley that supports economic development.	●			●
	Progress made on securing Committee of Management status of the Tallangatta Caravan Park.	Create a plan for the delivery of Shire entry, and town entry signage across the Shire and seek funding for implementation.	●	●	●	
		Establish a container café and Council service hub in Bellbridge.	●			
		Review the scope, scale, funding and location of a Bellbridge Project to deliver community and commercial facilities.	●	●	●	
		Seek opportunities to apply the destination brands across the Shire.	●	●	●	●

3. Economic & Tourism Development



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
(continued) To seek opportunities to develop tourism infrastructure, events and profile.	Funding programs identified and grant applications submitted as approved by Council.	Revitalise the Eskdale Visitor Information Centre and amenities block.	●			
		Secure Committee of Management status of the Tallangatta Caravan Park.	●	●	●	●
		Expand the reach of tourism marketing and promotional materials, with a particular focus on the Lake Hume and Mitta Valley.	●	●	●	●
	Projects delivered or completed.	Seek funding to deliver a range of public toilets on the High Country Rail Trail (HCRT).	●	●	●	●
	Progress made on securing Committee of Management of the Tallangatta Caravan Park.	Collaborate with Lifecycle Upper Murray to seek funding for the development of a social enterprise business plan for the ongoing maintenance of the proposed HCRT extension, and Mount Elliot Adventure Park.	●			

3. Economic & Tourism Development



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To contribute to the economic sustainability of the Shire through enhanced business development opportunities.	Business development events conducted.	Seek funding to develop plans for the secure exhibition and storage of Old Tallangatta assets.	●	●	●	●
		Connect businesses to learning, development and networking opportunities to increase capacity.	●	●	●	●
	Strategy for future use and development for Corryong Aerodrome completed.	Inspire and support small business through the delivery of motivational capacity building workshops.	●	●	●	
		Seek funding for a resource to facilitate business opportunity and development.	●	●		
To support the agricultural industry with education, commercial partnerships and diversification opportunities.		Seek funding for a planning study for the future expansion and activation of the Corryong Aerodrome.	●	●	●	●
		Collaborate with other partners and stakeholders to support and strengthen existing and developing farming and agricultural industry groups across the Shire	●	●	●	●
		Partner with key stakeholders to seek funding to strengthen the capability of developing or expanding agricultural innovations and initiatives.	●	●	●	●
		Seek support for the growth of value-add product and diversification opportunities for the agriculture industry.	●	●	●	●

4. Land Use



Ensure that Council's planning, building and environmental health services support all aspects of liveability and sustainable population growth.

Four-year strategies and initiatives

Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To support the development and management of land and properties through the delivery of quality Land Use Planning, Building, and Environmental Health Services.	Planning applications decided within required time frames.	Facilitate the development and management of land and properties through the delivery of quality Land Use Planning, Building, Environmental Health, and Compliance Services.	●	●	●	●
		Complete the authorised Planning Scheme Amendment process relating to Rural zoning.	●	●		
	Planning Scheme Amendments finalised.	Seek funding to extend the Heritage Study.		●		
	Building Shared Service Agreement finalised and implemented.	Continue to update planning scheme overlays as identified and as funding allows.	●	●	●	●
		Maintain the service level standards prescribed in the Environmental Health contract.	●	●	●	●
	100% achievement of all food premises and health inspection and registration requirements.	Continue to implement and refine the Greenlight systems for Planning and Building Services.	●	●		
	Greenlight System fully operational and satisfying customer needs.	Establish and formalise a new agreement for the delivery of the Building Services Shared Service with Indigo Shire Council.	●			
		Advocate for support to enhance domestic wastewater management.	●	●	●	●

5. Environmental Sustainability



Integrate sustainable environmental management practices into all of our activities.

Four-year strategies and initiatives

Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To maximise waste management opportunities through recycling, education, and specific projects.	Improvement to amount of waste diverted from landfill.	Continue to seek funding for integrated water management projects to maximise the use of recycled and raw water sources for public amenity and climate change mitigation.	●	●	●	●
		Continue to implement recycling service operations as per Victorian Government Circular Economy Strategy to deliver a system for waste and recycling collection including separation of glass, green waste and organics.	●	●	●	●
		Improve the use of recycled materials in infrastructure projects e.g. crushed concrete, glass and rubber.	●	●	●	●
		Seek funding to investigate options and feasibility for the establishment of a recycling industry within the Shire.	●	●	●	●
		Invest in community education programs to improve waste and recycling separation.	●	●	●	●
		Investigate options for hard waste, green waste and agricultural waste management.	●	●	●	●
		Implement required measures to ensure management of closed landfills is compliant with EPA requirements.	●	●	●	●

5. Environmental Sustainability



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Integrate sustainable environmental management practices into all of our activities.	Climate Variability Action Plan developed, adopted and implemented.	Investigate and implement options for the management of roadside vegetation.	●	●	●	●
		Continue to implement Climate Adaptation objectives to achieve increased coverage in urban streets.	●	●	●	●
		Develop a Climate Variability Action Plan (including actions to reduce carbon emissions, electric vehicle charging, improve health and wellbeing impacts on our aging population).		●		
		Seek funding to establish a network of electric car charging stations.		●	●	●
		Explore the option of establishing a native vegetation offset site withing the Shire.		●		

6. Organisational Improvement



Maintain a high performing customer-centred organisation that works with the community to develop and deliver priorities.

Four-year strategies and initiatives

Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To be financially sustainable into the future to allow us to serve our communities.	Working capital. Adjusted underlying surplus.	Implement appropriate systems and processes for the regular review and reporting of budgets, long term financial plan and financial sustainability.	●	●		
		Create a register of all leases and hire agreements for Council buildings, facilities and land, and policy for the consistent, fair and efficient management of these assets.		●	●	
		Implement and manage a comprehensive Grants Register that provides oversight for the progress and acquittal of all grant related activities.		●	●	●
Embed a customer-focused approach to customer service, advocacy, communication, consultation and engagement.	Consultation and engagement score in Community Satisfaction Survey.	Review and refine the Communications and Engagement Strategy to ensure we achieve extensive reach and effective community engagement and information sharing.	●			
		Provide customer service, community consultation and engagement, and local government training to all staff.			●	
	Customer service score in Community Satisfaction Survey.	Continue to improve the Customer Relationship Management system to enable timely response and resolution to enquiries and requests.	●	●	●	●
		Advocate on behalf of our community and the local government sector on issues of importance.	●	●	●	●

6. Organisational Improvement



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
To promote strong governance across the delivery of Council services, ensuring corporate knowledge is documented and enduring.	Community decision score in Customer Satisfaction Survey.	Implement the SharePoint based Records Management System to ensure all Council records are managed in accordance with legislative requirements.	●	●		
		Conduct a review of the functions and services delivered by Council and the organisational structure to ensure Council remains financially sustainable.	●	●		
		Conduct a service review of every service (both internal and external) during the period of this Council Plan.	●	●	●	●
		Progressively create procedural documents to facilitate retention of corporate knowledge.	●	●	●	●
To improve efficiency and compliance through adoption of business technology that promotes collaboration and integration.	New systems implemented.	Improve service delivery and reduce costs through process improvement and shared services.	●	●	●	●
		Implement Occupational Health and Safety software to ensure we keep our staff, contractors and elected representatives safe and well.	●	●		
		Implement a Human Resource Management system to ensure efficient and accurate management of the employment lifecycle.	●	●		
		Implement an asset management system that manages Council-owned assets.		●	●	●
		Develop a strategy to migrate operating systems to the Cloud.	●	●		

6. Organisational Improvement



Strategy	Measures	Initiative	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Attract and retain talented employees, through a whole of employment lifecycle management approach (preferred employer) and provide a safe and healthy environment for our staff to work.	Staff satisfaction score.	Develop and implement a People Plan to ensure we have a high performing, engaged and skilled workforce.	●	●	●	●
		Ensure all safety procedures, processes and systems are compliant with all legislative and regulatory requirements.	●	●	●	●
		Continue to provide training and skill development opportunities for staff to ensure the retention and attraction of staff in key service units.	●	●	●	●

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Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

—
2025 - 2029

towong.vic.gov.au

Front Cover Image: A family on the banks of Lake Hume near Tallangatta

Lake Hume is a major reservoir on the Murray River, with the townships of Bellbridge and Tallangatta located on its shoreline. The lake is a popular spot for fishing, boating and swimming, and is surrounded by numerous walking and cycling trails that connect visitors to the surrounding landscape.

Acknowledgement of Country

Towong Council acknowledges all the Traditional Custodians throughout Towong Shire, we recognise their continued care of lands and waters, their living knowledges and wisdom. We pay our respect to Elders past and present, we honour their stories, leadership and strength. We understand that their voice holds the knowledges that has carried them for thousands of years, we are committed to listening and working together to help build a stronger and more inclusive society.

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Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion

Towong Council will make every effort to ensure that all our facilities, programs and events are respectful and inclusive of everyone in our community, including LGBTQIA+ people, people with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse people. Towong Council will foster a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

Contributors

Towong Shire Council would like to thank and acknowledge the time, input and expertise from all who have contributed and been essential in the development of the Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 – 2029.

Document prepared by Ms Danielle Brooke, Senior Community Development Officer, Culture and Inclusion.

Introduction

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* mandates that local governments have a responsibility to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within their municipalities. The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* recognises the significant role of councils and local health services in improving the health and wellbeing of people who live, work, study and play in their municipality. The Act requires councils to develop a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan every four years (within 12 months of each general election of the council), which is consistent with the Council plan prepared under Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Municipal Strategic Statement prepared under section 12A of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Section 26 of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* requires Council to review the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan every twelve months and be inclusive of the following:

- Specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community in the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan as detailed in Section 26 (2) (ba) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.
- Promote gender equality through applying a gendered lens to its work when developing policies and programs and delivering services. Additionally, the council is required to conduct gender impact assessments, to enable policies, programs and services to be designed to benefit all Victorians as per the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.
- Consider risks and public health impacts of climate change in decision making and actions of the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan under Section 17 of the *Climate Change Act 2017*.
- Section 26(3) of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* requires councils to have regard to the state plan in developing their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023–2027 is the overarching policy framework for improving public health and wellbeing in Victoria.

The *Towong Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029* presents a municipality wide response to the requirements of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023–2027* provides an overarching policy framework for improving public health and wellbeing in Victoria.

From this plan, 10 health priorities have been identified:

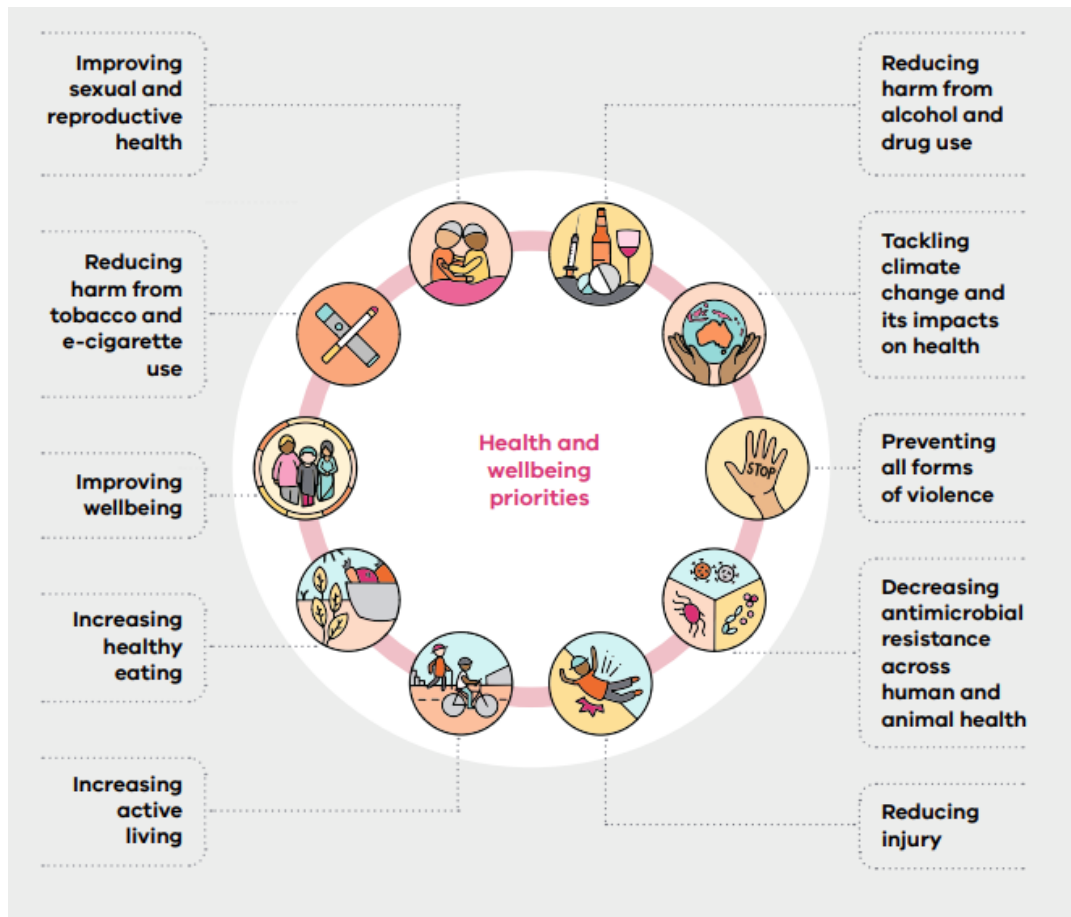


Figure 1: Victorian Government Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027 ten priority areas

Municipality wide response to health and wellbeing

Towong Shire Council has developed the *Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029* in partnership with the Towong Alliance to ensure health and wellbeing is central to all that Towong Shire does in Towong. The Towong Alliance is a partnership between Towong Shire Council, Corryong Health, Tallangatta Health Service and Walwa Bush Nursing Centre. By working together, the Alliance, stakeholders and the community can achieve a municipality wide response to health and wellbeing through the *Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029*.

This *Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029* contains actions that are designed to deliver improved population health and wellbeing outcomes, to be implemented in collaboration with the Towong Alliance and other key stakeholders across the municipality. The *Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029* is part of the wider public health unit response to improve health and wellbeing across the regional Ovens Murray Catchment and Victorian state level. The *Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029* sits alongside the Towong Alliance Partner's and other stakeholders plans and policies to deliver a health and wellbeing response across the municipality.



About this plan

Towong Shire Council know that a good *Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan* should reflect the community's needs, concerns, priorities and aspirations.

In 2021 council developed a long-term community vision under the obligations of the *Local Government Act 2020*. In review of all responses, clear themes emerged which have been crafted into the **Community Vision 2031** capturing the communities' aspirations for the future. The Community Vision is central to ensuring that good health and wellbeing outcomes are delivered for all people who live in and visit Towong Shire.

**"Towong Shire will be the ideal place to be:
welcoming, vibrant and diverse communities
with quality facilities and services."**

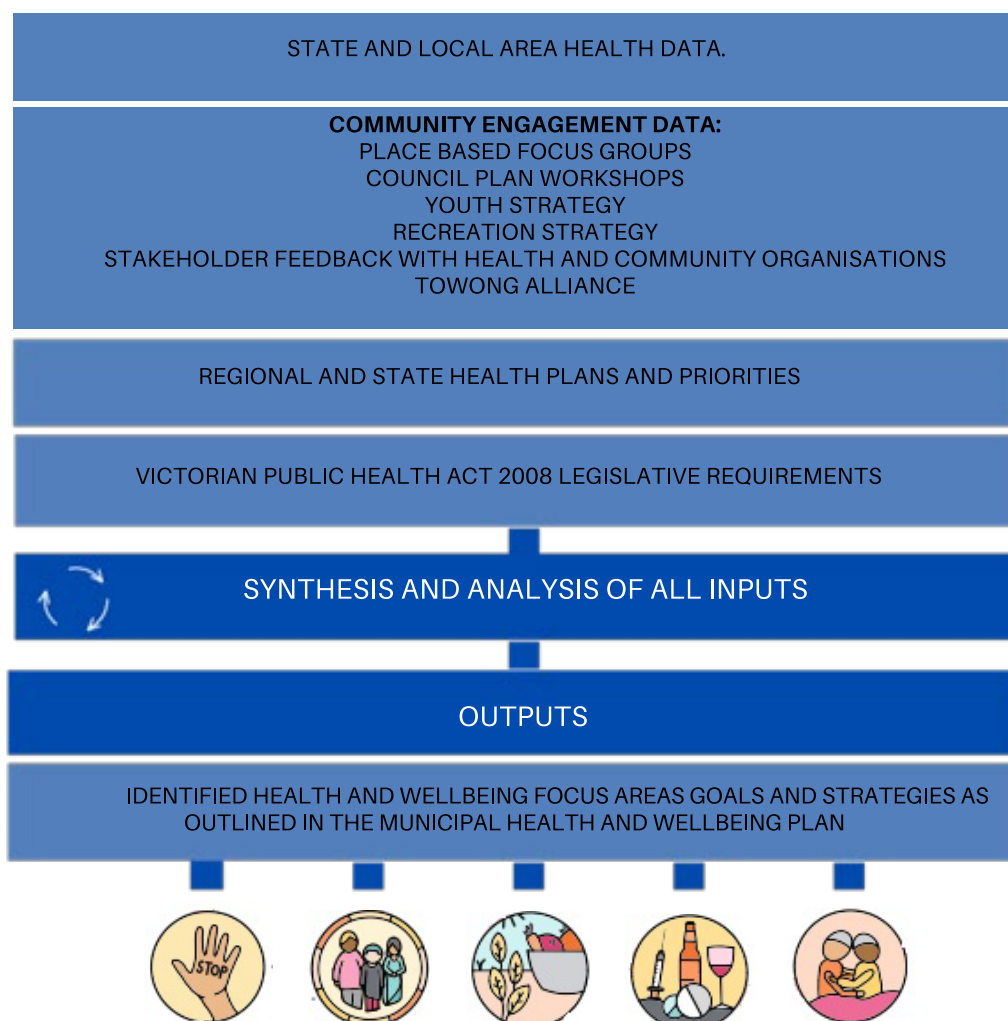
The Community Vision 2031 links to the Council Plan 2025-2029 and the *Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029* which are informed by other council plans and strategies.



Figure 2: Council Plans

How we developed the Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029.

The following process was used to develop the Towong Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 goals:



Social determinants of health

The World Health Organisation defines the social determinants of health as:

“the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, age, and play and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life” (World Health Organisation, 2025).

The Social Model of Health identifies that the social determinants of health are economic, environmental and social conditions that influence individual and community health outcomes. How people live their daily lives and external factors such as access to employment and education, level of social connection, access to healthcare services and the physical environment affects their health and wellbeing. Towong Shire Council is committed to creating environments that improve health outcomes for community members at every life stage.

Towong Shire’s Social Determinants were mapped using the Dahlgren and Whitehead model to identify which social determinants within Towong Shire influence health and highlights the interplay of factors determining health outcomes. Individual lifestyle factors are the personal behaviours and choices that affect health such as diet, exercise and consumption of alcohol and tobacco. Social and community networks consider family, relationships, community networks and supports. Living and working conditions include housing, employment, education and access to health care. General socioeconomic, cultural and environmental conditions reflect the broader factors which influence health such as economic policies and environmental conditions. A simplified visual of the mapped social determinants can be seen in Figure 3 below.

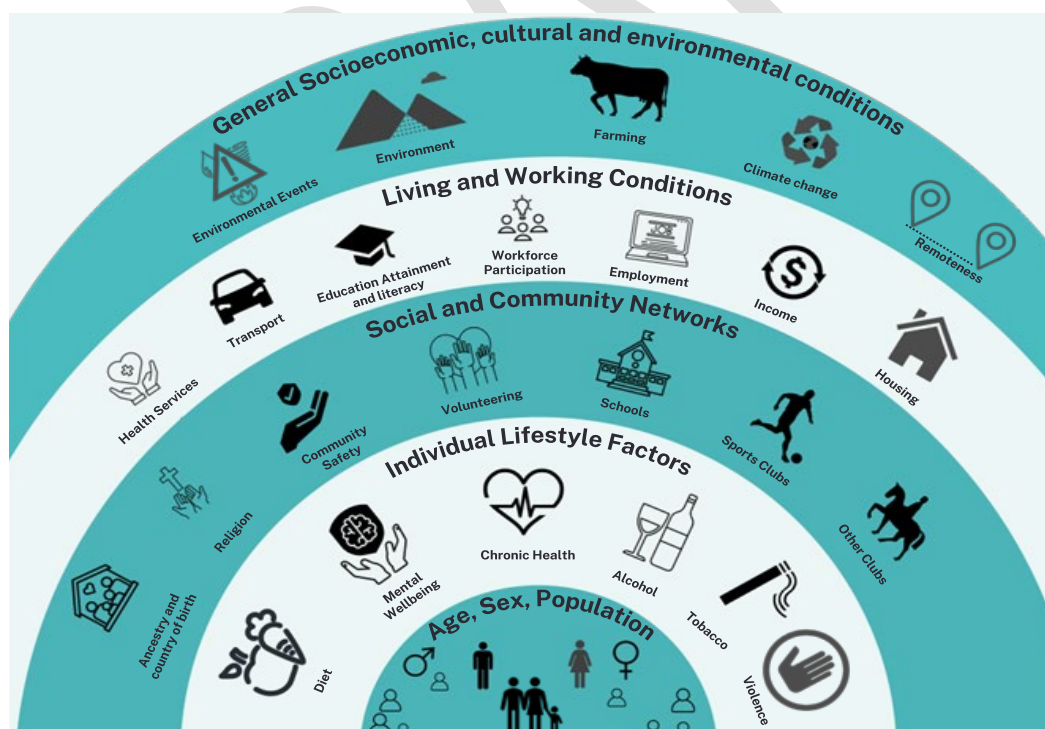


Figure 3. Towong Shire Social Determinants of health: Dahlgren and Whitehead 1991, model graphic representation.

Pictured: A family at Conic Rocks north of Koetong in Towong Shire.



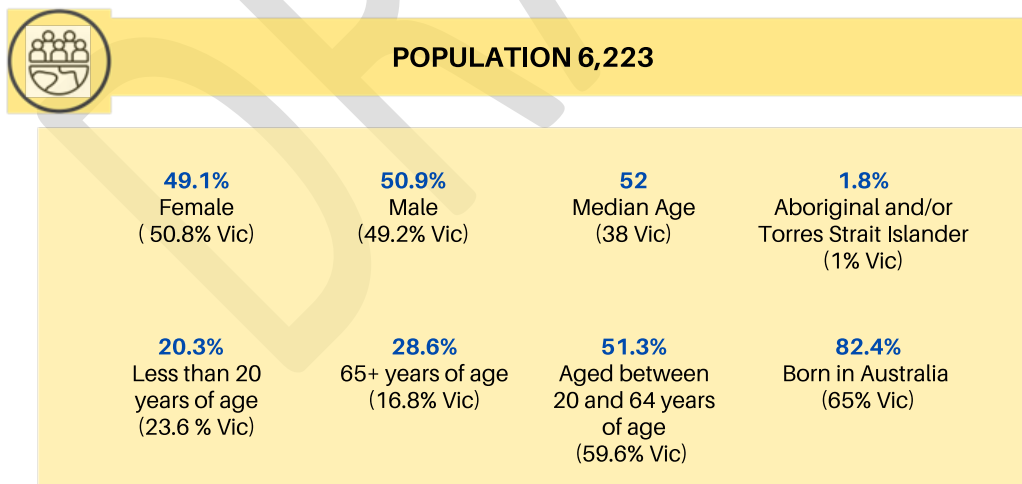
About our population

The Towong Shire population of 6,223 people is predominantly rural and distributed over an area of 6,675 km² with half of the population living in the towns of Corryong and Tallangatta and the other half dispersed across small villages and farms throughout Towong Shire. The main industries are agriculture, tourism, hospitality and timber production.

The population comprises higher proportions of children under 15 and adults over 55, creating greater demand for children's services, health care, aged care and independent living support services. Age and disability needs are closely related, and the proportion of the population aged over 65 are more likely to require assistance with core activities.

Applying a gender lens to Towong Shire's ageing population has implications for women's health and wellbeing. Women live longer, increasing susceptibility to chronic health conditions, disability and social isolation as they age. Women also provide more caregiving, which reduces lifetime earnings, career progress, and impacts superannuation balances making women more vulnerable to poverty. Elder abuse along with reduced social participation, health care access and lack of employment opportunities are also more prevalent for women.

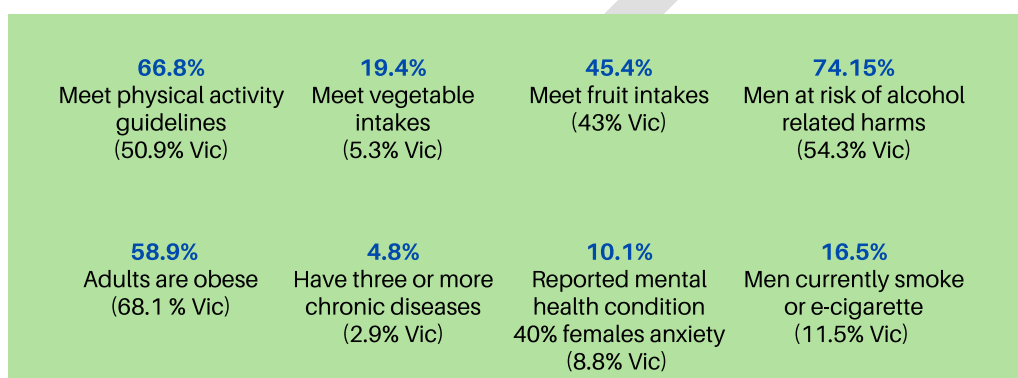
Towong Shire has a larger proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than Victoria. Systemic racism, intergenerational trauma and socioeconomic inequality continues to affect First Nations people in Australia's when accessing health care, employment and social inclusion. In Towong Shire there is a higher proportion of First Nations young people and older people, and inclusive health and wellbeing initiatives will assist in contributing to the wellbeing of First Nations people in Towong Shire. The Towong Shire LGBTQIA+ community also face challenges in community acceptance, safety and wellbeing making inclusion and safety initiatives important for this community.



Individual lifestyle factors such as how much physical exercise people do, what people eat and whether people drink alcohol, smoke or take drugs are factors which contribute to overall health and wellbeing. Towong Shire's population participates in more physical activity than the average Victorian, however not all cohorts within the population participate in physical activity such as older or isolated residents and women's participation levels are lower. Overall Towong Shire's residents eat more vegetables and fruit than the Victorian average, however the rates are still low. Indicators which are concerning are chronic disease rates being almost double the Victorian average, high reported poor mental health rates for women and high alcohol consumption and smoking rates for men. Alcohol and drug use also contribute to all forms of violence and poor mental health rates.



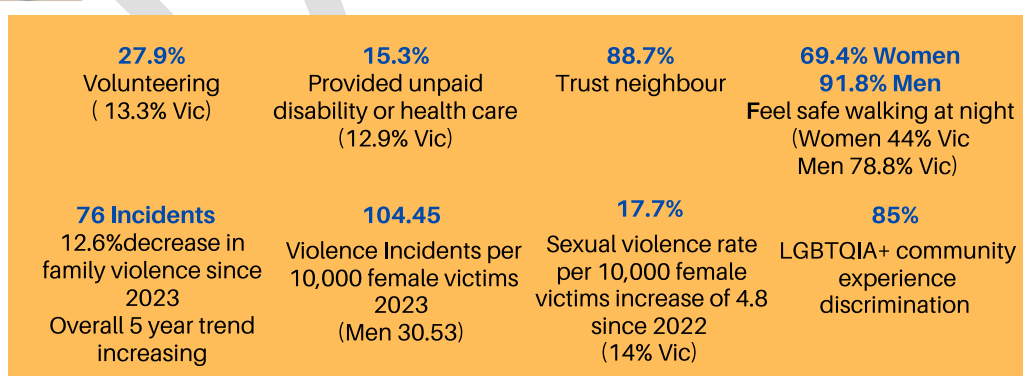
INDIVIDUAL LIFESTYLE FACTORS



Social networks, community participation and trust are higher in Towong Shire than in Victoria. Volunteering is almost double the Victorian average; neighbourly trust is also high and overall feelings of safety are higher. Some groups within the community experience disproportionately more adversity than others in relation to violence, discrimination and inclusion.



SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORKS



Towong Shire's remoteness combined with limited access to higher education, affects the population's potential to earn income and socioeconomic circumstances. Towong Shire is located 367 km northeast of Melbourne and 28km from the regional centre of Wodonga at the closest boundary and 170 km at the furthest boundary. There is limited public transport aside from private vehicles, making it difficult to access multiple services, including medical, and higher education. Completion rates of higher education are significantly lower than state averages, higher education affects occupation, income levels and overall socioeconomic wellbeing. Housing diversity is limited with most housing being standalone houses, with few options for smaller dwellings for single occupants, relief housing options or supported disability accommodation.

Exposure to climate change impacts significantly affect the Towong Shire community. These impacts affect the agricultural industry through drought, fire and floods, flowing on to affect farming income and local business income. Climate change also disproportionately affects lower income groups within the community who reside in lower quality housing which contributes to higher energy consumption for heating and cooling.



GENERAL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL FACTORS

55.9% Employed full time (56.2% Vic)	56.3% In labour force (62.4% Vic)	\$689 Personal weekly income (\$803 Vic)	21.5% Total household income less than \$650 per week (16.4% Vic)
367km Remoteness from Melbourne	49.9% Housing owned outright (32.5% Vic)	1.9% Occupy town house or flat (26% Vic)	23.2% Completed higher education (69% Vic)

The levers to improve health and wellbeing.

Optimal health outcomes enable individuals to increase control over and improve their health and wellbeing. To obtain the best physical, mental and social health and wellbeing outcomes individuals and communities should be able to recognise and reach their aspirations, meet their needs and have resilience to manage challenges. Fundamental requirements to optimal health and wellbeing are peace, equity, social justice, housing, education, access to healthy food, sufficient income, and stable climate ecosystem, outlined in the social determinants of health mapping.

In 1986 the World Health Organisation created the Ottawa Charter which provides a framework to providing a foundation for the fundamental requirements for achieving optimal health and wellbeing, refer to Figure 4.

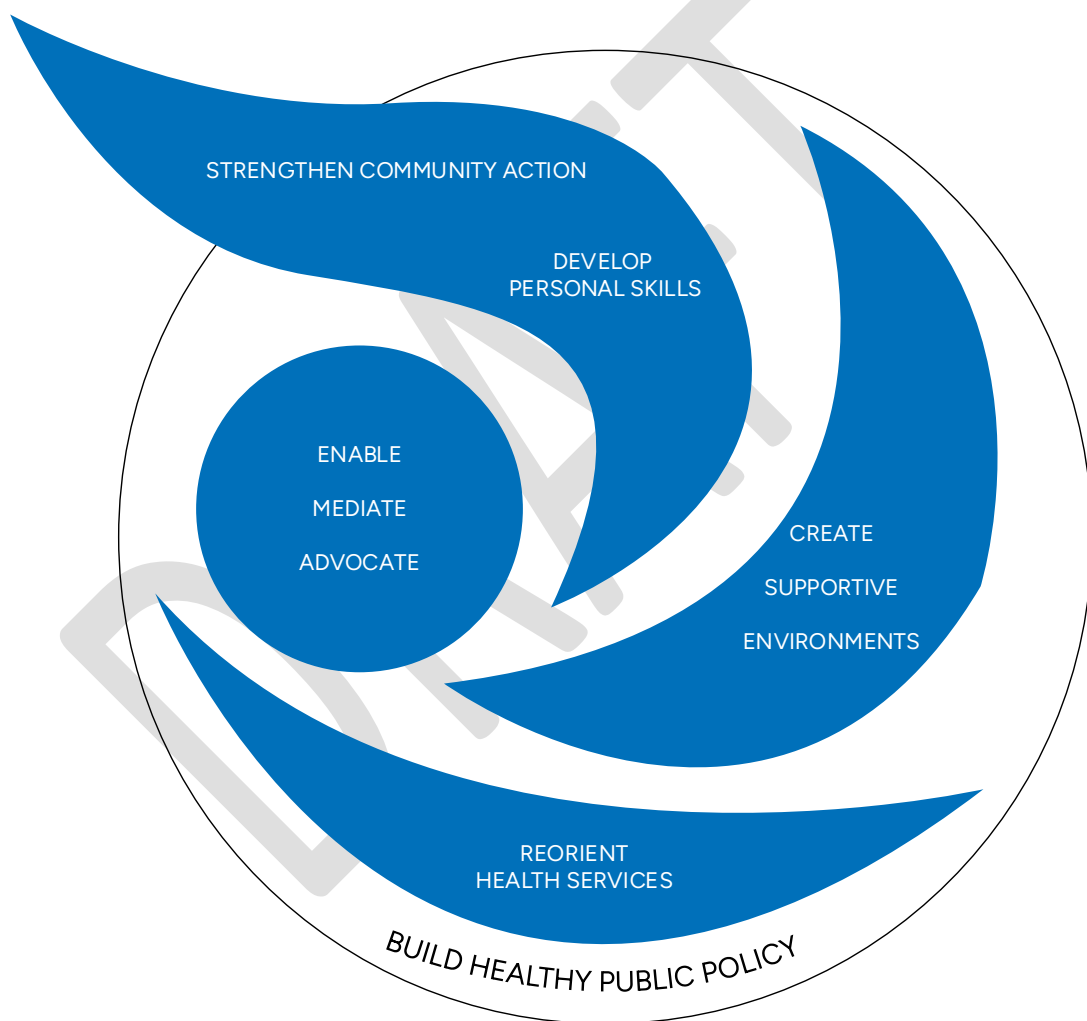


Figure 4. World Health Organisation, Ottawa Charter 1986

The Towong Alliance's role for community health and wellbeing will be to lead in creating supportive environments to help individuals and community in their individual efforts in achieving optimal health and wellbeing.

The Ottawa Charter framework identifies the following ways the Towong Alliance can create a supportive environment:

Lead

Towong Shire Council delivers programs, services or initiatives where council has resources, expertise and responsibility to act.

Advocate

Towong Shire Council uses its voice and networks to influence decision-makers on social, political and economic factors which assist in creating favourable conditions in achieving optimal health for all by advocating for change on issues outside council direct control.

Partner

Towong Shire Council works collaboratively with other organisations, service providers and community groups to achieve shared goals.

Funder

Towong Shire Council provides in-kind or financial help to community groups, not-for-profit organisations and local initiatives to deliver projects that promote health and wellbeing, foster inclusion, encourage participation and strengthen community connections.

Enable

Assist in enabling health equity by supporting those most disadvantaged and all genders access to opportunities and resources to achieve health and wellbeing.

Mediate

Participate in action between all stakeholders; government, organisations, non-government, community groups, industry, economic sectors and individuals to collectively mediate between different interests to achieve the best health outcomes for all.

Strengthen Community Action

Assist, support and encourage stakeholders and community groups whose actions contribute positively to health and wellbeing outcomes in place-based settings.

Develop Personal Skills

Promote and support skill training and education organisations, to deliver opportunities to optimise health literacy to improve knowledge of health choices for optimal health.

Create Supportive Environments

Support access to facilities and information for life skills and opportunities by encouraging collaboration between council, the Towong Alliance, stakeholders, community and individuals to assist in enabling healthy life choices.

Reorient Health Services

Shifting focus from individual behaviour towards a wide range of social and environmental interventions through health promotion to enable people to increase control and improve their health.

Build Public Health Policy

Ensure all public policy is considered with health at the forefront.

What does the evidence tell us about our priorities for the new plan?

Synthesis of Towong Shire's social determinants mapping on population, general social, economic and cultural factors, social and community networks and individual lifestyle factors enabled ranking in terms of primacy of the ten Victorian Health and Wellbeing priorities.

The issues of most concern that impact health and wellbeing in Towong are:

- Increasing trends of family and sexual violence.
- Increased rates of diagnosed mental health issues.
- Disproportionately higher rates of anxiety in women.
- Increased rates of youth suicide.
- Discrimination and low rates of social acceptance towards diverse populations.
- The low rate of community support for gender equality in relationships.
- Low levels of education attainment.
- Income disparity between rural and urban areas increasing income disadvantaged risk.
- Low compliance with recommended dietary guidelines.
- Increasing rates of chronic illness and body weight.
- Limited opportunities for individualised physical activity for women and older adults.
- Increasing rates of alcohol, drug and gambling harms.
- Low rates of housing diversity for changing population needs.
- Average age cohort of the population transitioning to older age.
- The impacts of climate change on health especially the consequences of extreme weather.

Community assets which provide protective factors include:

- Supporting the high levels of community social cohesion and trust that already exists.
- Community citizenship, sense of place and shared purpose.
- Ensuring ageing volunteers are well supported, and community organisations can sustain their invaluable contributions.
- Strong community participation in sports clubs and group sports.
- Non-sport physical activities and outdoor recreation.
- Access to National Parks, picturesque scenery and natural surrounds.
- Affordable housing.
- Work life balance.

Towong Shire's ten priorities and actions

1. Preventing all forms of violence:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
1.1. Community feels safe and free from violence.	Lead Partner Funder	Towong Alliance	1. Support campaigns and strategies which raise awareness of all forms of violence (gendered and non-gendered family violence and abuse). 2. Implement the Child Safe Standards across Towong Shire to promote safety of children, prevent child abuse.
1.2. Build community capacity and capability for improved supported services, for those experiencing violence.	Lead Partner Advocate	Towong Alliance Orange Door Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation Education providers Gateway Health Upper Murray Family Care Department of Families Fairness and Housing	1. Support and strengthen community knowledge of Orange Door services. 2. Support families with access to services and referrals. 3. Advocate for improved infrastructure to support stakeholders responding to violence. 4. Support educational workshops on violence to strengthen community capacity. 5. Continue to provide family violence screening and referral through Early Years Services, Maternal and Child Health Services, Medical Centres and Hospitals. 6. Advocate for better telecommunications in areas of notable poor reception like the Mitta Valley. In line with the Council Plan 2025 – 2029 Advocate for the development of a variety of housing options to match community needs including those experiencing violence.
1.3. Reduce impact of harm resulting from gambling, tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.	Partner	Towong Alliance Gateway Health AOD Networks	1. Participate in Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) services networks to ensure unified support and outreach services for those experiencing violence due to gambling, tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

2. Improving wellbeing:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
2.1. Support mental health and wellbeing via mediation of stakeholder delivery of physical and outreach services.	Advocate Partner Funder	Towong Alliance Gateway Health Outreach providers Upper Murray Family Care Agribusiness Assist	1. Work in partnership with Towong Alliance and key stakeholders to establish a Mental Health Framework inclusive of the following: 2. Establishing strong partnerships between stakeholders. 3. Enabling actions to address population cohorts of women and youth experiencing disproportionate mental illness, anxiety, and suicide. 4. Delivery of mental first aid (or similar) to build community capacity. 5. Assist, support, and enable services which improve knowledge and awareness for parents, grandparents, and children. 6. Support and enable providers of mental health services. 7. Advocate for higher frequency of services and shorter specialist wait list times. 8. Advocate for dual specialist referral pathways for school ready children. 9. Advocate, investigate and enable outreach higher education provision. 10. Support and enable support services database with neighbourhood houses and stakeholders. In addition to the above Implement strategic priority actions listed in the Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025 - 2029 which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: Strategic Priority 3: Stronger Partnerships and Local Solutions Actions 3.1, 3.6 and 3.9 Strategic Priority 4: Advocacy for Accessible Health and Wellbeing Supports Actions 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.7 Strategic Priority 5: Leadership, advocacy, and Celebration Action 5.4 Strategic Priority 6: Future Prepared Youth Actions 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3
2.3. Providing infrastructure support for outreach services, both physical and digital.	Lead Funder	Towong Alliance	1. Provide physical locations for community to access outreach services. 2. Promote opportunities for communities to access libraries as inclusive, free community connection hubs for mental wellbeing, activities, and education resource. 3. Provide physical and internet services for telehealth outreach services. In addition to the above Implement strategic priority actions listed in the Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025 - 2029 which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: Strategic Priority 2: Youth Friendly Spaces and Facilities Actions 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5 Strategic Priority 3: Stronger Partnerships and Local Solutions

			Action 3.5 Strategic Priority 4: Advocacy for Accessible Health and Wellbeing Supports Action 4.6
2.4. Embrace diversity and inclusion.	Lead Partner Advocate Funder	Towong Alliance	1. Continue to implement actions of Reconciliation Action Plans across municipality. 2. Advocate and create supportive environments for inclusion in libraries and community buildings. 3. Lead and advocate for cultural awareness in diversity and inclusion. 4. Mediate reference group to support LGBTQIA+ inclusion and wellbeing as outlined in the inclusion report.
2.5. Recognise the need for gender equality by raising community awareness.	Lead Partner Advocate	Towong Alliance	1. Consider gender and intersectional data, completing gender impact assessments and applying a gender lens across all health and wellbeing priorities, organisational processes and systems. 2. Advocate and actively support programs, initiatives, policies, and guidelines that promote a gender equal society. 3. Support women's health initiatives and regional women's health organisations. 4. Support and enable inclusion and mental health training in sports clubs and community groups.
2.6. Support community events and engagement to improve community connection and inclusion.	Lead Partner Advocate Funder	Towong Alliance Community Groups	1. Lead and promote awareness for diversity and inclusion through events. 2. Include activities across all ages and life stages. 3. Support and enable neighbourhood houses accidental counsellor training initiatives, and community connect initiatives. 4. Investigate and support neighbourhood house activities into smaller villages. In addition to the above Implement strategic priority actions listed in the Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025 - 2029 which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: Strategic Priority 2: Youth Friendly Spaces and Facilities Actions 2.1 and 2.3 Strategic Priority 3: Stronger Partnerships and Local Solutions Action 3.4 Implement objectives and actions listed in the Recreation Strategy for Towong Shire (2022 – 2033) which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: Objective: People – To encourage and support increased participation in physical activity by the community. Actions – 3, 4 and 5 Objective: Places – To provide a diversity of quality and accessible sport and active recreation places and spaces for the community: Action- 2

			Objective: Partners – To work in partnership with community organisations, government agencies and the private sector to facilitate sport and active recreation opportunities for the community. Action - 2 In line with the Council Plan 2025 – 2029 actively support for community, recreation and sporting groups across the Shire to develop, increase membership and participation, sustainability, succession planning and volunteer support.
2.7. Positive Ageing	Lead Partner Advocate Funder	Towong Alliance	1. Apply positive ageing lens to infrastructure and Towong Shire Council initiatives. 2. Advocate and actively support programs, initiatives, policies, and guidelines that promote positive ageing across Towong Shire. 3. Assist, support and encourage stakeholders and community groups whose actions contribute to positive ageing and wellbeing in place-based settings.
2.8. Disability Strategy	Lead	Towong Alliance	1. Conduct a disability audit for disability inclusion across Towong Shire. 2. Prepare a disability strategy with the assistance of a disability advisory group.

3. Increasing healthy eating:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
3.1. Mediate and collaborate with food systems stakeholders to improve food access and equity.	Partner Advocate	Towong Alliance Food Share Northeast Food Group Women's Health Goulburn North East	1. Support and enable food relief services. 2. Mediate to reduce food relief stigma within community. 3. Advocate for reduced wait lists for food bank boxes at local schools. 4. Communicate and distribute health literacy initiatives and education on healthy eating through place-based initiatives. 5. Advocate for fresh food suppliers to deliver fresh food to Corryong.
3.2. Support initiatives which promote access to nutritious foods and healthy eating.	Partner Advocate	Towong Alliance Community Garden groups Sports Clubs	1. Support and enable neighbourhood house food pantry initiatives. 2. Support and encourage community group actions which contribute to healthy eating. 3. Support and encourage a wide range of community organisations to offer healthier food and drink options for kids under the Vic Kids Eat Well program.
3.3. Support Early Years and Maternal Health Services deliver healthy eating programs.	Lead	Towong Alliance	1. Support and enable Smiles 4 Miles program in Early Years Services 2. Support parents' awareness of Early Year programs on healthy eating

3.4. Promote and support initiatives which build knowledge of healthy food choices.	Partner	Towong Alliance Neighbourhood houses Education providers	1. Support and enable healthy eating education, cooking classes and other food knowledge initiatives from neighbourhood houses. 2. Support stakeholders delivering healthy eating skills, knowledge, and education
3.5. Mediate and support community groups to strengthen action in improving community healthy eating and food knowledge.	Partner Funder	Towong Alliance Community Garden groups Community Groups	1. Support and enable community garden projects. 2. Support and enable community groups who promote healthy eating
3.6. Breast feeding.	Lead	Towong Alliance	1. Support public breast-feeding friendly spaces.

4. Improving sexual and reproductive health:

Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
4.1. Advocate for outreach services in sexual and reproductive health.	Advocate Partner	Towong Alliance Health Services	1. Advocate for improved sexual and reproductive health services such as: 2. Clinics and vaccination at local health services 3. Regular services and care continuity. 4. Antenatal services and stability of General Practitioners who provide antenatal care. 5. Female General Practitioners. 6. Enable integrated service options in main towns.
4.2. Enable better access to sexual and reproductive education and products.	Advocate Partner	Towong Alliance Health Services	1. Secure supply of sexual and reproductive health products for Maternal Health Nurses (condoms, pregnancy tests and period products). 2. Support programs that provide free sexual and reproductive health products (period poverty health project in two community libraries). In addition to the above Implement strategic priority actions listed in the Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025 - 2029 which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: a. Strategic Priority 4: Advocacy for Accessible Health and Wellbeing Supports Actions 4.1, 4.3 and 4.7
4.3. Support stakeholders who deliver sexual and	Partner	Towong Alliance Health Services	1. Support and enable stakeholders such as Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health (CERSH), the Towong Alliance in delivery of sexual health information and education.

reproductive health services and education.			2. Support school-based programs which deliver programs for positive body image, social media use and healthy respectful relationships education. In addition to the above Implement strategic priority actions listed in the Towong Shire Youth Strategy 2025 - 2029 which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: a. Strategic Priority 4: Advocacy for Accessible Health and Wellbeing Supports Actions 4.1, 4.3 and 4.7
4.4. Support sexual and reproductive health across all life stages.	Advocate Partner Funder	Towong Alliance Health Services	1. Support menopause awareness, acceptance, and support, through workshops, education, and networking with Australasian Menopause Society.
5. Increasing active living:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
5.1. Continue to build infrastructure to enhance, enable and encourage activity in open spaces.	Lead Partner Funder	Towong Alliance Community Sports Clubs Sport Northeast	To achieve this, implement objectives and actions listed in the Recreation Strategy for Towong Shire (2022 – 2033) which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: a. Objective: People – To encourage and support increased participation in physical activity by the community. Actions - 3 and 4 b. Objective: Places – To provide a diversity of quality and accessible sport and active recreation places and spaces for the community: Actions - 1, 2, 3, and 7 c. Objective: Partners – To work in partnership with community organisations, government agencies and the private sector to facilitate sport and active recreation opportunities for the community. Actions - 3, 6, and 7 d. Objective: Processes – To provide a strategic framework to guide Council's decision making and investment in sport and active recreation. Actions - 2, 3, 5 and 6
5.2. Support and promote opportunities for active lifestyle choices.	Lead Partner Funder	Towong Alliance Neighbourhood houses	1. Use data and tools to Improve our open space, active recreation and playground infrastructure and programs across the municipality. 2. Support annual active events and initiatives, such as walk and ride to school, Park Run, Pub to Pelican, Run Upper Murray and alternative exercise classes/programs such as Tai Chi at Tallangatta Neighbourhood House.

			To achieve this, implement objectives and actions listed in the Recreation Strategy for Towong Shire (2022 – 2033) which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: a. Objective: People – To encourage and support increased participation in physical activity by the community. Actions – 5 and 6 b. Objective: Places – To provide a diversity of quality and accessible sport and active recreation places and spaces for the community. Actions – 2, 3 and 7 c. Objective: Partners – To work in partnership with community organisations, government agencies and the private sector to facilitate sport and active recreation opportunities for the community. Actions - 2, 5, and 6 d. Objective: Processes – To provide a strategic framework to guide Council's decision making and investment in sport and active recreation. Actions – 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6
5.3. Support sporting clubs and community groups in championing physical activity.	Partner Funder	Towong Alliance Community Sports Clubs Sport Northeast	To achieve this, implement objectives and actions listed in the Recreation Strategy for Towong Shire (2022 – 2033) which are in relation to this initiative, specifically: a. Objective: People – To encourage and support increased participation in physical activity by the community. Actions – 3, 4 5 and 6 b. Objective: Places – To provide a diversity of quality and accessible sport and active recreation places and spaces for the community. Actions – 1 and 4 c. Objective: Partners – To work in partnership with community organisations, government agencies and the private sector to facilitate sport and active recreation opportunities for the community. Actions – 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 d. Objective: Processes – To provide a strategic framework to guide Council's decision making and investment in sport and active recreation. Actions – 4 and 5

6. Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
6.1. Mediate and collaborate with alcohol and other drug (AOD) health services to improve community access to services.	Partner	Towong Alliance Gateway Health AOD Network	1. Mediate and support AOD providers. 2. Advocate for and collaborate with AOD services to provide clear pathways for those requiring AOD support.
6.2. Assist and support stakeholders to respond to indicators of alcohol and drug use.	Lead Partner	Towong Shire Council	1. Train Early Years, Maternal Health, Library and Customer Service staff to recognise and know how to respond to people who appear intoxicated.

7. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
7.1. Apply Council Climate Adaption policy.	Lead Partner	Towong Alliance Deakin University	1. Apply climate adaption lens to policy and practices to mitigate the impacts of climate change. 2. Support development of community skills to reduce waste and improve recycling and waste separation. 3. Investigate opportunities to tackle climate change by partnering with Deakin University. 4. Enable and mediate sustainability educational practices, worm farms, composting, and vegetable gardens. 5. Implements relevant recommendations from Council Plan, Towong Planning Scheme, Municipal Emergency Management Plan, Strategic Plan for Agriculture, Municipal Economic Development Strategy, Heatwave Plan and Municipal Climate Adaption Plan.
7.2. Support activities and stakeholders who provide practical solutions to climate change impacts.	Lead Partner	Towong Alliance Deakin University	1. Advocate for better quality public housing to reduce energy consumption. In line with the Council Plan 2025-2029. In partnership with Riverine Plains and other Agriculture services, increase farmers awareness of practices and innovations that can enhance on-farm productivity, efficiency, and sustainability, as well as strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate change.
7.3. Effectively prepare for, respond to and recovery from emergencies	Lead Partner	Towong Alliance Emergency Recovery Victoria	1. Support the revision and development of Community Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs) for localities within the shire. 2. Collaborate with Emergency Services to engage with communities around preparedness and resilience for emergencies. 3. Complete the delivery of the Resilient Building Project providing solar, battery, water tanks, communications, whitegoods to twenty-eight community facilities across the shire provide outreach recovery services after emergency events

8. Reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
8.1. Support and mediate with health outreach services who work to reduce harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use.	Partner	Towong Alliance VicHealth Quit Cancer Council	1. Support public health policy initiatives that reduce harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use. 2. Ensure display of non-smoking/vaping signs across Towong Council facilities and other public reserves where applicable.
8.2. Ensure tobacco and e-cigarette use regulations are effective throughout Towong Shire.	Lead Partner	Towong Alliance	1. Audit and update signage to include vaping in all public areas. 2. Support and continue health compliance officer's work.

9. Decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
9.1. Support and mediate with health services who work to reduce antimicrobial resistance.	Partner	Towong Alliance	1. Support and enable local health services actions to reduce antimicrobial resistance
9.2. Support public health regulations and policy initiatives that reduce antimicrobial resistance.	Lead Partner	Towong Alliance	1. Follow food safety practices and council requirements in Early Years Services, Maternal and Child Health Services, and Hospitals. 2. Risk assessments in place for animal participation in Early Years Services 3. Support and promote responsible pet ownership programs. 4. Support and continue Towong Shire's health compliance officer's work.

10. Reducing Injury:			
Objectives	Council's Role	Key Action Agencies	Actions
10.1. Support public health policy and occupational health and safety policy to reduce injury.	Partner	Towong Alliance	1. Follow OH&S requirements to create safe environments. 2. Support children to learn and explore with considered risk in navigating physical environments. 3. Gross motor development in Early Years learning and development
10.2. Support Victorian road safety regulations	Partner	Towong Alliance	1. Support and where applicable promote road safety guidelines, regulations, and programs.

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