

Yarra City Council

Council Plan 2025-29



Welcome

We're excited to share our Council Plan to help achieve our Community Vision and build a great future for Yarra.

Our priority is to work together to support the people who live, work, visit and play in Yarra so it remains a fantastic place for generations to come.

The plan is based on the feedback and ideas shared with us via extensive community engagement including the hard work of our Community Working Group, who helped to inform our priorities and decision making.

The overwhelming message from our community is that you love Yarra, and you want to protect the things that make it unique. We recognise our challenges, including balancing the needs of a growing population. We are focused on practical action and doing the things we need to set our community up for a vibrant future!

You told us you wanted Yarra to be a safe, welcoming and inclusive place for locals and visitors. A community where we support businesses to be successful, work together to inject new life into our high streets and include the services and support we need at all ages and stages of life.

Over the coming Council term, we will deliver for our City by:


- Supporting equitable access to a range of housing options.
- Making our streets cleaner, greener and safer for everyone to enjoy.
- Helping people travel and commute more easily via all modes of transport.
- Providing more parks and green spaces to relax in and help cool our City.
- Working to renew and revitalise our activity centres, in particular Victoria Street.
- Giving easier and more convenient access to EV charging options.
- Helping business owners to more quickly and easily apply for permits and navigate planning processes.
- Providing services and spaces for people to feel part of our community and less isolated and alone.
- Improving how our community can participate in Council meetings.

We're focused on being ready for the future. We want to ensure we have green spaces for our community to enjoy and streets that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of different users. Our assets and infrastructure will respond to the needs of our growing community into the future.


That's why financial sustainability and being focused on delivering the services essential to our community will be central to everything we do. As a Council, we will deliver this by being accountable and transparent in our decision making so you know what we're doing and why. We will provide clear, consistent and accessible communication, host new community forums to give you a voice on critical issues and ensure our services reflect ongoing community needs.

We're passionate about our community and working as a new Council to make Yarra a great place for everyone, now and into the future!


Yarra City Council




Cr Sharon Harrison
Boulevard Ward




Cr Edward Crossland
Curtain Ward




Cr Stephen Jolly
MacKillop Ward




Cr Sophie Wade
Hoddle Ward




Cr Evangeline Aston
Langridge Ward




Cr Andrew Davies
Lennox Ward



Cr Meca Ho
Melba Ward



Cr Kenneth Gomez
Nicholls Ward



Cr Sarah McKenzie
Yarra Bend Ward

Our Council Plan

Our Council Plan 2025-2029 guides the Council's work for the next four years to ensure we deliver on our Community's Vision by 2036.

The plan outlines four Strategic Objectives (or areas of focus) and related Strategies under which we will deliver a range of Initiatives (or actions) to move us towards achieving our Community Vision.

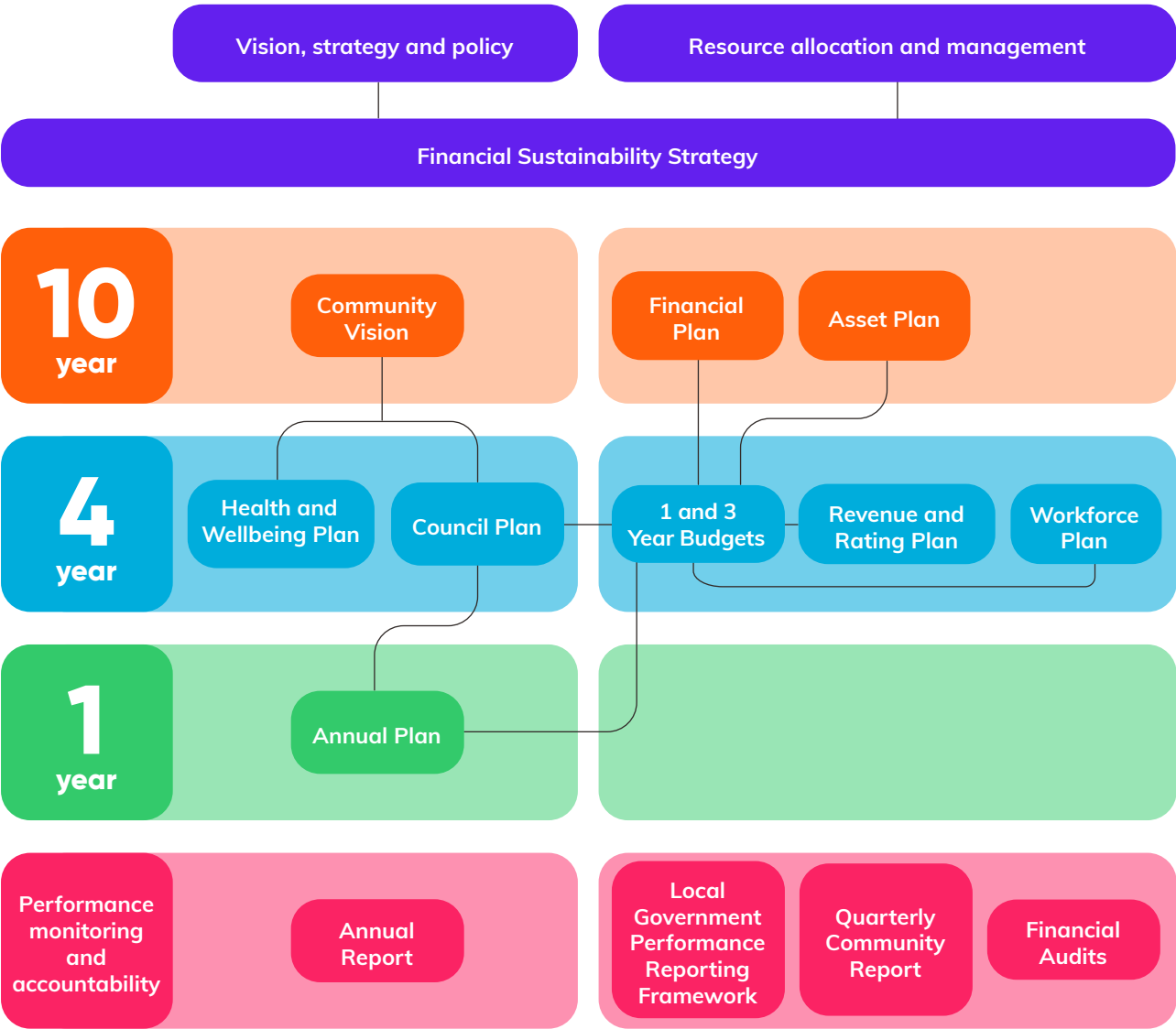
The plan includes 15 Strategic Indicators under the heading 'Monitoring Success' for each of the four Strategic Objectives.

These are supported and detailed by Strategic Indicator Performance Metrics that are available on Council's website.

Our Integrated Strategic Planning Framework

Our Council Plan 2025-2029 is the strategic document which guides our work and is supported by an annual action plan, a range of operational plans and budget. Together, these ensure Council has the assets, funds, workforce and resources to deliver on the Council Plan in line with the community's expectations.

Our Integrated Strategic Planning Framework below shows how the Community Vision, Council Plan and key planning documents are related as well as how we report progress to our community.



Community Vision

Background

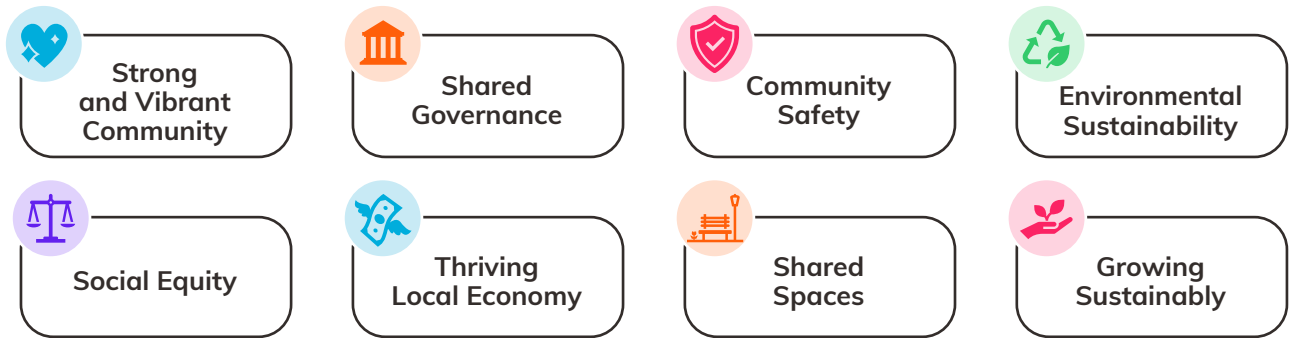
Our Yarra 2036 Community Vision was created in 2020/21 based on community feedback, including input from a Community Working Group with representatives of our diverse community.

The Community Vision consists of a statement and eight themes and related priorities.

Our Vision Statement

Yarra is a vibrant, safe and inclusive environment. We celebrate and embrace our diversity and connection to each other and the land. Our community is empowered to work together and support one another with respect and trust.

The eight Vision Themes are:



2025 Reflection and Update

As part of creating this Council Plan, we provided our community with the opportunity to reflect on the Vision to test if it's still relevant to Yarra in 2025 and beyond.

Overall, the community felt the Vision was still reflective of their aspirations for Yarra's future. However, some updates were provided to refine the Vision's existing themes and new considerations were identified to help the Vision be more forward looking and relevant to current priorities.

The following were provided to refine existing themes:

- **Community safety:** Safety is described as everything an individual or community requires to feel safe. It includes safety to be yourself, cultural safety, economic security, democratic safety, secure housing, accessibility and access to services.
- **Affordability:** Affordability is an emerging issue, which must include access to affordable housing, services, transport, food, energy and community spaces. Yarra should be a place where everyone can afford to live.
- **Transport is integrated and place based:** This must be a priority through working with local communities and businesses to understand transport needs and planning for all modes of transport and advocating to State Government.

- **Financially sustainable and transparent decision making and communication:** This is a priority and essential to delivering core services. Consideration of creative use of assets and opportunities for generating new revenue should also be included.
- **Broader approach to sustainability:** This includes integrating environmental, economic and social factors.
- **Maintaining our liveability:** Our growth is well balanced with provision of community infrastructure and assets including transport planning.

The following were provided as new considerations:

- **Yarra's vibrant arts scene and cultural heritage** are thriving, and First Nations history is prioritised.
- **We are a diverse, multicultural and inclusive community** with equitable access to services, housing and the local economy.
- **Yarra is an innovative, responsive leader** focused on collaboration and community engagement to guide decisions.

These updates are reflected in the 2025 Community Vision Reflection and Update Addendum

Strategic Direction

Building a great future for Yarra

As our population grows, we want to work with our community to ensure that Yarra remains a place where people love to live, visit, work and celebrate.

To support this, we're focusing on four Strategic Objectives:



Over the next four years, the Council will be guided by a series of principles which describe how we work together and deliver for our community:



Living in the City

We are a City for everyone.
We are welcoming, friendly and connected, where everyone is safe and supported.

-  Strong and Vibrant Community
-  Community Safety
-  Social Equity
-  Shared Spaces

1. Make our streets and shopping strips safer and more beautiful.

- 1.1 Implement improvements in our streets and public spaces to keep them clean and reduce waste, litter and graffiti.
- 1.2 Implement improvements to green our streets and public spaces, including expanding the tree canopy throughout the City.
- 1.3 Implement improvements to enhance safety in our streets and public spaces.
- 1.4 Renew and revitalise our activity centres.

2. Provide places and services to support engagement in community life.


- 2.1 Deliver programs and make better use of existing places to foster connection, and support people of all ages and backgrounds to live a healthy and fulfilling life.
- 2.2 Advocate to external stakeholders to support at risk communities in Yarra.
- 2.3 Support families to access early years services and programs in their neighbourhood.
- 2.4 Implement the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Monitoring Success: Living in the City

- Our streets are safer, cleaner and greener.
- More of our community members feel connected to community life.
- More people have access to services and places that support their health.
- Improved support for diverse and at-risk communities.

Building the City

We have the infrastructure we need to accommodate a growing community.

-  Environmental Sustainability
-  Growing Sustainability
-  Shared Spaces
-  Social Equity
-  Community Safety

3. Ensure people can move safely across the city using all modes of transport.

- 3.1 Maintain and develop our cycling network.
- 3.2 Develop and implement a Kerbside and Parking Management Strategy, to make our footpaths and kerbside spaces safe, equitable, reliable and able to accommodate a variety of demands.
- 3.3 Review, update and implement the Transport Action Plan.

4. Enable equitable and planned housing growth to keep Yarra livable.

- 4.1 Partner with State and Federal Governments to increase the availability of social housing for local essential workers of Yarra.
- 4.2 Advocate to State and Federal Governments to improve Community and Public Housing availability and options.
- 4.3 Identify opportunities to incentivise genuinely affordable housing options to support housing security and equity.
- 4.4 Identify strategic redevelopment sites to support new housing development across the City.

5. Provide infrastructure that responds to the current and future needs of a growing Yarra.

- 5.1 Invest in the maintenance and upgrade of Yarra's stormwater drain network to lessen the impacts of future extreme weather events.
- 5.2 Advocate to the State Government and agencies to improve State owned infrastructure, including stormwater.
- 5.3 Implement the community infrastructure plan so that Yarra has facilities to meet a diversity of needs.
- 5.4 Increase options for EV charging across the City.

6. Provide green spaces and beautify the city.

- 6.1 Increase multi-use and accessible open spaces.
- 6.2 Pursue shared space agreements to broaden access to spaces around our City.

Monitoring Success: Building the City

- More people with greater access to green space nearby.
- More people are able to call Yarra home.
- Transport networks are better connected and accessible.

Working and Playing in the City

We have a thriving economy with a variety of opportunities to work, create, play and celebrate.

-  Thriving Local Economy
-  Strong and Vibrant Community
-  Growing Sustainability
-  Shared Spaces

7. Enhance our activity centres with events and festivals.

- 7.1 Partner with local community and cultural groups to deliver annual events that contribute to our vibrant community.
- 7.2 Partner with local trader groups and associations to deliver events that boost our local community and economy.

8. Make it easier for local businesses to thrive.

- 8.1 Expand the Business Concierge service to assist businesses with the processes of running a business in Yarra.
- 8.2 Improve permit processes and timelines.
- 8.3 Support strategic economic growth opportunities across the City.

9. Support the arts and creative industries across Yarra.

- 9.1 Deliver new artwork in public spaces.
- 9.2 Support new creative projects that enhance our community fabric.
- 9.3 Identify opportunities with private developments, businesses and other stakeholders to support the arts and creative industries.

Monitoring Success: Working and Playing in the City

- More successful businesses across the City.
- Our activity centres are more vibrant.
- Arts are more accessible and enrich daily life.

Running the City

We are transparent and accountable, making evidence-based decisions to ensure the sustainability and health of Yarra.

-  Shared Governance
-  Growing Sustainability
-  Shared Spaces
-  Social Equity
-  Environmental Sustainability

10. Ensure all decisions are financially sound, transparent and accountable to the community.

- 10.1 Implement the Financial Sustainability Strategy.
- 10.2 Build trust by ensuring clear, consistent, and accessible communication on decision making, projects, and governance.
- 10.3 Consistently define and measure outcomes through implementation of a benefits management framework.

11. Ensure we deliver services that are fit for purpose and provide value to the community.

- 11.1 Develop a long-term Waste and Recycling Strategy for the City to improve service, environmental and financial sustainability.
- 11.2 Deliver a program of service reviews to ensure service mix and levels are responsive to community needs and sustainable.
- 11.3 Continue with engagement and research to understand the needs of different community groups in relation to services.

12. Engage in broad partnerships with First Peoples of Yarra.

- 12.1 Work in partnership to embed culturally responsive practices across our services and programs.
- 12.2 Advance the goals of reconciliation with First Peoples by meeting our commitments, including those specified by State and Federal government.

13. Manage Council's land and building assets to maximise value to the local community.

- 13.1 Implement the Property Strategy to identify ongoing efficiencies and optimise community benefit.

14. Make it easier to contact and engage with Council.

- 14.1 Enhance our customer service systems.
- 14.2 Improve the way in which Advisory Committees offer strategic advice to inform Council's future focused decision making.
- 14.3 Invest in Community Forums to engage the community on targeted issues.
- 14.4 Continue to improve how community members can participate in Council Meetings.

Monitoring Success: Running the City

- More people have trust and confidence in Council.
- More people are satisfied with core Council services.
- More people are satisfied with waste management.
- Financial position of Council has improved.
- Increased and strengthened partnerships with Aboriginal Controlled organisations to progress Closing the Gap socio-economic outcome areas.



Creating our Council Plan

Thank you to our community for making this our most successful ever Council Plan engagement.

We received feedback from people across Yarra in three stages of community engagement in late 2024 to early 2025.

Throughout the plan's development we considered our obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*. We have worked to ensure our engagement was as representative as possible and our diverse community had a voice.

Stage 1: Community engagement	Stage 2: Deliberative community engagement	Stage 3: Public exhibition
<p>In late 2024, we undertook broad community engagement through Your Say Yarra, our online consultation platform, and a social research project.</p> <p>Our broad community engagement received almost 1800 responses.</p> <p>We also spoke to 36 community-based stakeholder groups and Advisory Committees as well as 142 children and young people.</p>	<p>We worked with independent consultants to recruit a representative sample of the Yarra community through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to form a Community Working Group (CWG).</p> <p>The 45 member CWG reflected a cross section of the Yarra community.</p> <p>Our CWG attended four sessions to provide priorities, feedback and ideas to inform our Council Plan, Community Vision and other key planning documents.</p>	<p>Over four weeks in April and May 2025, our community had the opportunity to provide final feedback on the draft Council Plan.</p> <p>We held nine community engagement pop-up events and received more than 90 responses.</p> <p>We greatly value the community's input in shaping this important document.</p>

Key community engagement themes

Our community told us the following themes were important to them:

- Evidence-based and transparent decision making.
- Foster and promote community wellbeing and cohesion.
- Build for a better future accommodating growth.
- Operational excellence and accountability.
- Sustainability and holistic decision making.

Sharing our progress

We want to ensure we deliver your Council Plan 2025-29, and keep you updated about how we're going. To make sure you're kept in the loop, we'll share our progress with you through Quarterly Community Reports and Annual Report on our website.

What Yarra will look and feel like in 2029

By the end of this Council term, Yarra will be better equipped for the future.

A future where we continue the tradition of being a place where everyone can feel included in our vibrant community.

Our City will have more people who call it home, because we'll have supported access to a range of affordable and secure housing, upgraded community facilities and improved access to our local services.

We'll have invested in our streets to help people walk, bike, scoot and drive through the City with confidence and safety. We will be a city where people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities are connected, able to contribute to our shared success and feel supported for who they are.

We're also committed to delivering on this future through our existing and future policies and plans, including:

- Access and Inclusion Policy
- Ageing Well Policy
- LGBTIQ+ Policy
- Multicultural Partnership Policy
- Yana Ngargna Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

A future where our economy is thriving and our creativity is flourishing, in a built and natural environment that is adaptable, resilient and able to thrive in the changing climate.

Our City will be greener, cooler and more prepared for the impacts of climate change. We'll have expanded tree coverage and green space, made low-emissions transport easier through new EV charging and a refreshed approach to waste and recycling. We'll have upgraded stormwater infrastructure and community facilities to prepare our City for extreme weather.

And in this green, resilient and adaptable city, Yarra's local economy will be thriving. High streets will feel more active and alive, supported by events, festivals and creative projects. Local businesses will have easier access to advice and permits.

Yarra's creative industries will be more visible and celebrated. Local artists and performers will continue to help shape the fabric of daily life, and we'll support new opportunities for creative expression across the City.

We'll deliver this future through existing plans and strategies, including:

- Climate Emergency Plan
- Transport Strategy and Action Plan

A future where the community and Council are in partnership with each other.

We'll be making better decisions, informed by evidence and shaped through genuine community input.

Our partnership with First Nations communities will be stronger, and our commitment to equity more visible in how we deliver services and create spaces.

Our systems will be easier to navigate, our communication clearer, and our meetings more accessible. People will feel more informed, better heard, and more confident in the decisions being made.

A future where we can all enjoy living, working and playing in this beautiful City together.



Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

This publication is available in alternative accessible formats on request.

Electronic copy

PDF versions of this report can be downloaded from yarracity.vic.gov.au

National Relay service

TTY 133 677 then (03) 9205 5555
or relayservice.gov.au

Yarra Council language line

العربية 9280 1930

中文 9280 1937

Ελληνικά 9280 1934

Italiano 9280 1931

Español 9280 1935

Tiếng Việt 9280 1939

Other 9280 1940

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