Healthy, Safe & Resilient Bass Coast

Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029



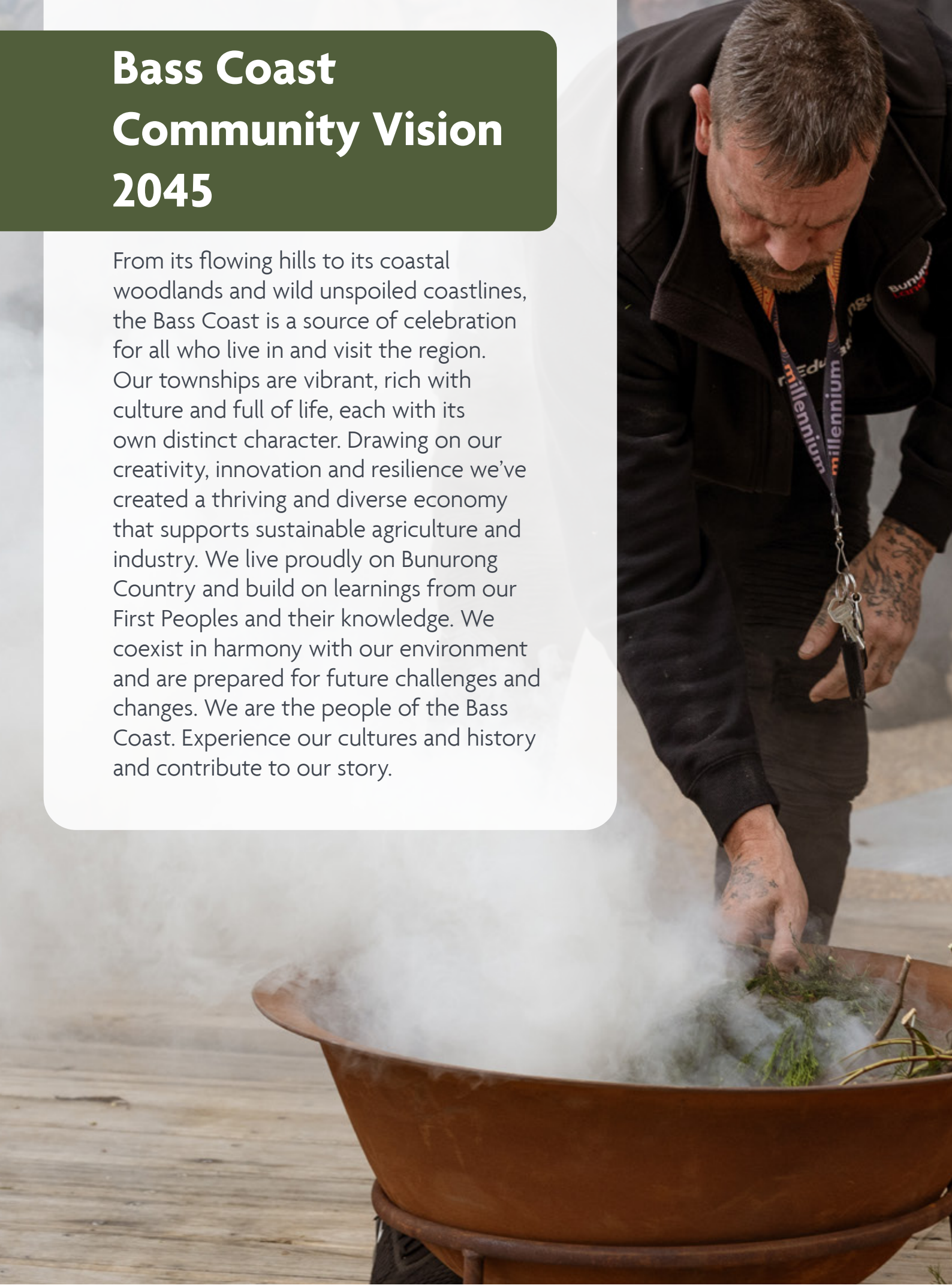




BASS COAST

Bass Coast Community Vision 2045

From its flowing hills to its coastal woodlands and wild unspoiled coastlines, the Bass Coast is a source of celebration for all who live in and visit the region. Our townships are vibrant, rich with culture and full of life, each with its own distinct character. Drawing on our creativity, innovation and resilience we've created a thriving and diverse economy that supports sustainable agriculture and industry. We live proudly on Bunurong Country and build on learnings from our First Peoples and their knowledge. We coexist in harmony with our environment and are prepared for future challenges and changes. We are the people of the Bass Coast. Experience our cultures and history and contribute to our story.





Acknowledgement of Country

Bass Coast Shire Council acknowledge the Bunurong as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and Lore.

Bass Coast Shire Council celebrates the opportunity to embrace and empower the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Communities in their diversity.

Bass Coast Shire Council will create opportunities for future recognition and respectful partnerships that will honour the Traditional Owners and Custodians, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Diversity and Inclusion

Bass Coast Shire Council celebrates the diversity of our communities. We acknowledge and respect the skills, insights and life experiences of all community members irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability, religious belief, sexuality or age.

Gender Impact Statement

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been undertaken when developing the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan, ensuring it reflects fairness, inclusivity and the diverse needs of our community.

Child Safe Statement

Bass Coast Shire Council is committed to child safety and wellbeing, actively working to prevent abuse by identifying and addressing risks early. This work is underpinned by Council's Child Safe Statement, which guides our commitment to ensuring the safety, inclusion and wellbeing of every child. (Policies | Bass Coast Shire).



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Definitions

Advocator	Council actively represents the interests of the community to influence decisions, secure funding, and shape policies at the local, state and federal levels.
Disadvantage	Unequal access to opportunities, services or resources that leads to poorer outcomes in health or participation driven by systemic barriers, not individual choice.
Enabler	Council removes barriers and creates conditions that make it possible for individuals, groups and communities to take action, access opportunities, and achieve better outcomes.
Circular economy	A model that designs out waste, keeps materials in use for as long as possible, and regenerates natural systems, delivering environmental, economic and social benefits.
Facilitator	Council brings people and organisations together to solve shared problems, builds strong networks, and leads by example to influence better outcomes across the sector.
World Health Organization (WHO)	The United Nations agency responsible for global health leadership, including setting standards and responding to health emergencies.

Promoter	Council actively shares information, raises awareness and encourages community participation to improve knowledge, engagement and positive health outcomes.
Intersectionality	Attitudes, systems and structures in society and organisations can interact to create inequality and result in exclusion. "Intersectionality" means that people can face overlapping forms of disadvantage. When these aspects or characteristics combine, there is an increased risk of people experiencing family violence and social isolation, and overall people find it harder to get the help they need.
Partner	Council works with state government departments, schools, sports clubs, other service deliverers in the region and Committees of Management.
Regulator	Council enforces local laws, policies and standards to protect public health, safety, amenity and the environment.
Resilient	Communities that can adapt, recover and thrive during disruptions or crises, while maintaining wellbeing and essential services.
Service Provider	Council directly delivers services to the community or contracts others to do so, ensuring quality, safety and equity in service delivery.



Message From Our Mayor

I am proud to present the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025–2029.

This Plan sets out our community's shared vision for health and wellbeing and our commitment to creating the conditions where every person in Bass Coast can thrive. It recognises that good health is more than the absence of illness. It is about connection, access, safety, equity, and the ability to live a full and meaningful life no matter your age, background or circumstance.

Our 2025–2029 Plan builds on the solid foundations of previous years but goes further. It shifts more decision-making to community level. It focuses deliberately on place and partnership, and it strengthens our commitment to those who face barriers to health and wellbeing whether because of geography, disability, discrimination, housing stress, or other factors.

The themes in this Plan healthy living, safety and inclusion, equitable access, thriving young people, and the deep connection between Country and climate, reflect what our community has told us matters most. They also align with broader national and state directions, while staying grounded in the lived experience of the people who call Bass Coast home.

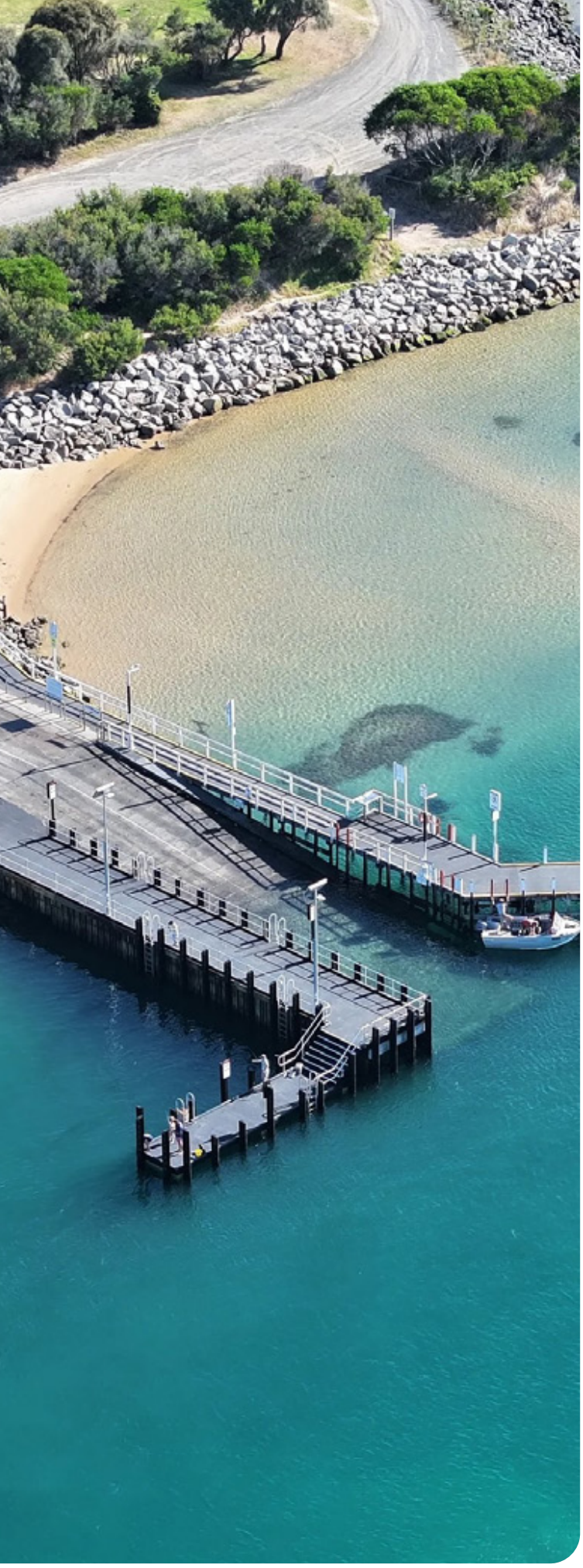
Council cannot do this work alone. The role we play, whether as advocate, provider, collaborator or connector, depends on strong, enduring partnerships across sectors and with our community.

Together, we are tackling long-term challenges with creativity and compassion. Whether it's reducing the impacts of cost-of-living pressures, improving digital inclusion, or designing communities that support wellbeing from the ground up this Plan gives us a clear, accountable and inclusive roadmap forward.

On behalf of Council, I thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this Plan and invite you to join us in bringing it to life.

Cr Rochelle Halstead

Mayor, Bass Coast Shire Council



Executive Summary

The Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025–2029 is Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, developed in line with the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*. It sets a clear, strategic direction for improving health, wellbeing, and equity for all who live, work and play in Bass Coast.

The Plan builds on the foundations of the 2021–2025 Plan and introduces a stronger focus on community-led, place-based and partnership-driven action. It responds to state and national health priorities, local data, and community insights across five key themes:

1. **Healthy and Active Living**
2. **Safe and Inclusive Communities**
3. **Equitable Access and Social Infrastructure**
4. **Thriving Children and Young People**
5. **Country, Connection and Climate**



Each theme outlines Council's roles from facilitator and collaborator to service provider and advocate alongside measurable indicators of success. This ensures accountability while focusing on what Council can influence, and where partnership is essential.

The Plan includes a Year 1 Action Plan and will be implemented through ongoing listening, co-design, delivery and evaluation. Council will report annually and review the Plan in four years to ensure it remains responsive to emerging challenges like cost-of-living, digital equity and climate resilience.

By embedding collaboration, human-centred design and cultural safety, the Plan aims to deliver long-term, system-level improvements particularly for those facing health inequities. It also aligns with Council's broader planning ecosystem, including the Council Plan, Disability Action Plan, Active Bass Coast Plan, Climate Change Action Plan and Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

This is not just a plan for Council, but a shared commitment to creating the conditions for everyone in Bass Coast to live well.

From Strong Foundations To Future Focus

The 2021–2025 Healthy Communities Plan established a strong base by promoting collaboration, partnerships and integrated planning to improve health and wellbeing. Over the past four years new pressures have emerged, from climate impacts and cost-of-living stress to increased mental health needs and widening inequities. These challenges demand more targeted, measurable and accountable actions.

The 2025–2029 Plan responds by shifting from broad aspirations to clear outcomes and shared accountability. It embeds health and wellbeing priorities across Council's work, from infrastructure and planning to community services and environment, ensuring decisions are aligned with long-term wellbeing. This forward focus strengthens Council's ability to address complex challenges in partnership with community and service providers.



Our Integrated Planning And Reporting Framework

Bass Coast Shire Council takes an integrated approach to strategic planning one that connects community needs, long-term priorities and service delivery across all levels of the organisation. At the centre of this approach is the Council Plan, which sets the overarching direction and guides how resources are allocated, how advocacy is prioritised, and how outcomes are delivered through a network of aligned strategies.

This includes:

- The Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan, which delivers on Council's legislative obligations and local priorities for community health and wellbeing.
- The Disability Action Plan, which drives equity, access and inclusion across Council's policies, services and built environment.
- A suite of supporting documents, including the Financial Plan, Asset Plan, and Climate Action Strategy, which provide the tools and frameworks to implement and resource Council's strategic intent.

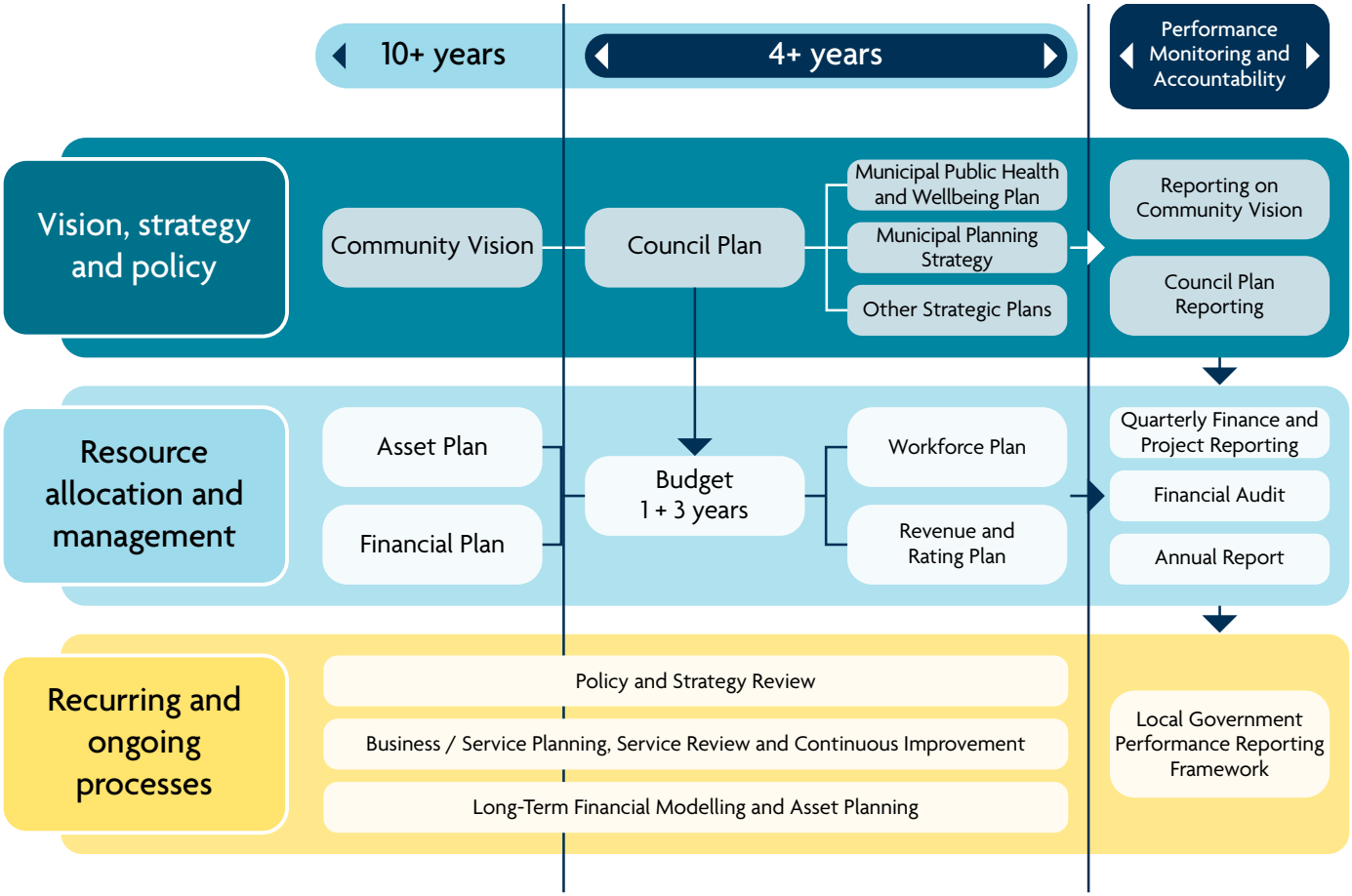
These plans are not developed in isolation. They are connected through shared objectives, co-designed monitoring and evaluation tools, and a unified delivery framework that ensures collective impact. Each plan aligns directly to one or more priorities within the Council Plan, enabling a whole-of-Council approach that is focused, measurable and community-driven.

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*, all Victorian councils must prepare a four-year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) within 12 months of a general election. In Bass Coast, this requirement is fulfilled through the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan, which supports Council to anticipate risks, direct investment and deliver targeted strategies that improve health outcomes across our communities.

Council's functions under the Act include:

- Creating environments that support healthier choices and empower individuals and communities to improve their wellbeing.
- Leading local health planning and implementing targeted policies and programs to improve public health outcomes.
- Partnering with local organisations and service providers to strengthen community health and wellbeing through shared action

Integrated Planning And Reporting Framework







Our Legislative Responsibility

The Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan is Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, developed under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*. It aligns with international, national, state and local health strategies and outlines Council's strategic direction for improving health, wellbeing and equity across our community.

Over the next four years, the Plan will guide our work in social planning, community development and service delivery. It reflects state health priorities, is informed by local data, and is shaped by the voices of our communities and partners.

The Plan meets Council's legislative obligations and provides a shared framework for action. It identifies opportunities to better support people facing poorer health outcomes and ensures alignment with both the Council Plan and the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Council has a unique and critical role in health prevention and promotion. Through our policies and actions, we help shape the physical, social, economic and natural environments that influence the health of people living in Bass Coast.

We support preventative health through safe, walkable neighbourhoods, improved infrastructure and services, inclusive community programs, strong partnerships, and proactive responses to emerging health risks, including climate change.



State

Strategic planning and oversight

Regional

Responsibility for bringing partners together at the regional level to embed preventions and health promotion at every opportunity

Local

Delivery of prevention and health promotion activity within a local community ('local stakeholders')

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)* describes Council's functions to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing by:

- Creating healthy environments that support people to live well and make healthier choices.
- Leading local health planning by identifying community needs and setting health and wellbeing goals.
- Developing and delivering public health policies and programs focused on prevention and wellbeing.
- Supporting local agencies, including schools, health services, emergency services, and community organisations.
- Coordinating and providing immunisation services for children living or studying in the municipality.

These actions help prevent health problems before they start. Our role is to make sure the community stays healthy.

Victorian government departments; peaks and specialist agencies (eg VicHealth, Municipal Association of Victoria); professional bodies

Local governments: Local Public Health Units: community, social and aged care: early childhood and schools; ACCOS PHNs; workplaces; specialist (e.g women's health organisations)

Hospitals; community health and primary care services; ACCOs; local government targeted services (eg women's health and reproductive health); family, social and other local services provider agencies

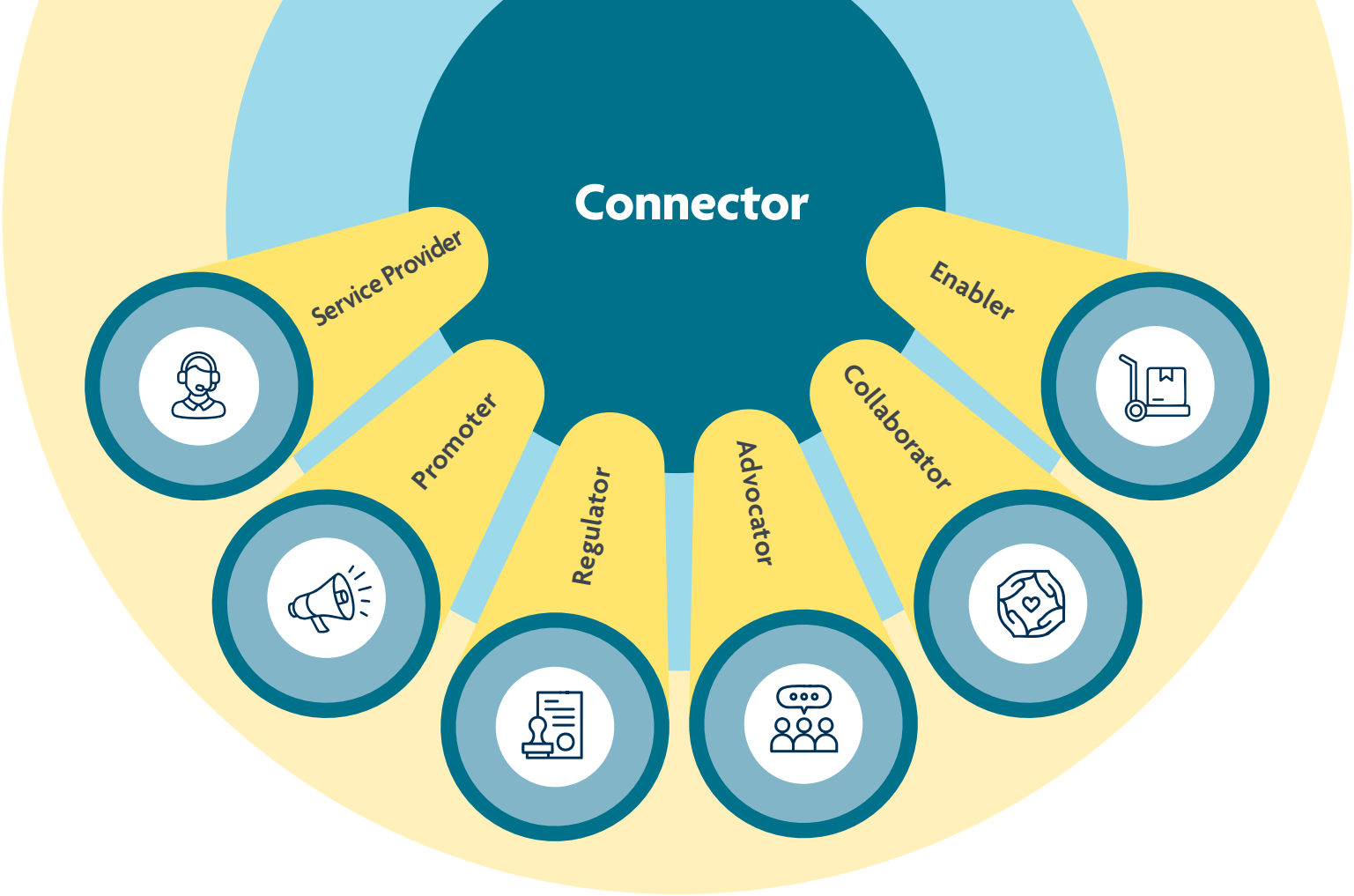


Working Together For Collective Impact

Council is not a direct provider of health services, but we play a vital role in creating the conditions for positive health outcomes across Bass Coast.

We do this by enabling inclusive planning, facilitating partnerships, advocating for community needs, and supporting collaboration between service providers, funders and community groups. Council is one player in a broad ecosystem of services and supports. Our impact relies on respectful partnerships with health providers, government agencies, and community groups who each bring expertise, insight and resources to the table.

Increasing positive health outcomes of our community relies on strong, respectful partnerships across government, non-government, and community sectors. Council recognises that no single organisation can address the complex, interconnected drivers of disadvantage and wellbeing alone. By working alongside our partners as equals we combine knowledge, resources, and lived experience to achieve better outcomes for our community.



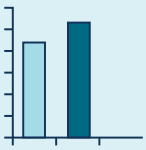
Partnerships strengthen our collective ability to address the full spectrum of health and wellbeing housing, infrastructure, social connection, education, economic opportunity, and the environment. A strong example is our Housing Strategy, developed through collaboration with those who bring expertise in housing, infrastructure and community support. It focuses on areas where infrastructure supports growth and wellbeing, while addressing social and economic challenges.

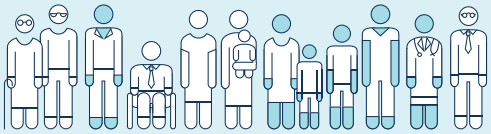
This collaborative approach reflects our commitment to understanding the ways that health, housing, education, income, culture and environment intersect. We recognise that some people face greater barriers to wellbeing, and we are committed to shaping responses that are inclusive, equitable and effective.

At its core, this Plan champions partnership as the foundation for a healthier, safer and more connected Bass Coast, where shared knowledge, mutual trust and aligned action leading to heathier communities.

Bass Coast – Fast Facts

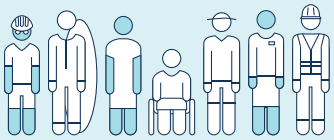
Population





Population in 2025 **43,557**

Projected Population by 2036 **47,408**



Median age **51**

Diversity and inclusion

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander **1.1%**



Born overseas **15.1%**



Speak a language other than English at home **5.1%**

Top 5 non-English languages:

Italian: **0.7%**

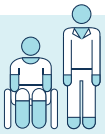
Greek: **0.4%**

German: **0.3%**

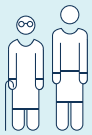
Spanish: **0.3%**

Mandarin: **0.3%**

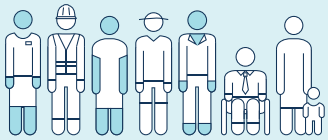
People in need of assistance due to a disability **7.1%**



People providing unpaid care to a person with a disability, long-term illness or old age (persons aged 15+) **14.6%**



Jobs



People working in Bass Coast **13,337**



Unemployment rate **3.8%**



Top business industries:

Health care and social assistance: **17.3%**

Retail: **12.6%**

Construction: **12.4%**

Housing tenure

Fully owned **44.6%**

Mortgage **27.3%**

Renting **19.5%**



Households

Households in 2021: **18,107**

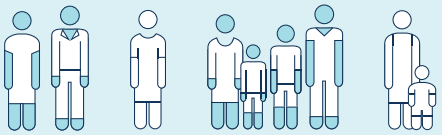


Couples without children: **31.3%**

People living alone: **29.5%**

Couples with children: **19.5%**

One parent families: **8.8%**





The Communities We Are Planning For

Bass Coast is a thriving and growing community, known for its beaches, friendly towns and strong sense of connection. As one of Victoria's fastest-growing regions, we are shaping a future where everyone has the opportunity to live well, recognising that growth brings both opportunities and challenges for health and wellbeing.

Our population is both growing and ageing. This increases demand for health care, housing, mobility and social connection. At the same time, young people and working-age residents are navigating challenges around education, employment, housing affordability and mental health. These issues impact people differently depending on their life stage. Our Plan is grounded in this understanding.

We recognise health is a journey and is influenced by age, ability, culture, income, and place. This Plan considers the distinct needs of children, young people, adults and older residents, ensuring people can stay active, connected and well throughout their lives.

We are also proudly diverse. Our community includes people from a range of cultures, abilities and backgrounds

who enrich our region. We acknowledge the Bunurong people as Traditional Owners and are committed to learning from and walking alongside First Nations communities. Inclusive, accessible services are vital to ensure everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Tourism is central to our identity and economy, attracting 3.25 million visitors each year. While it brings vibrancy and opportunity, it also places pressure on housing, infrastructure and local services, particularly in peak periods.

Being healthy is about more than health care. It's about feeling safe, connected, active and supported. It means having access to healthy food, transport, welcoming public spaces, and opportunities to engage in community life.

Bass Coast is changing. The Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025-2029 plan ensures we grow in a way that places people's health, wellbeing and inclusion at the centre no matter who you are, where you live, or your circumstances.







Pre Conception

0

Early Years

0-5

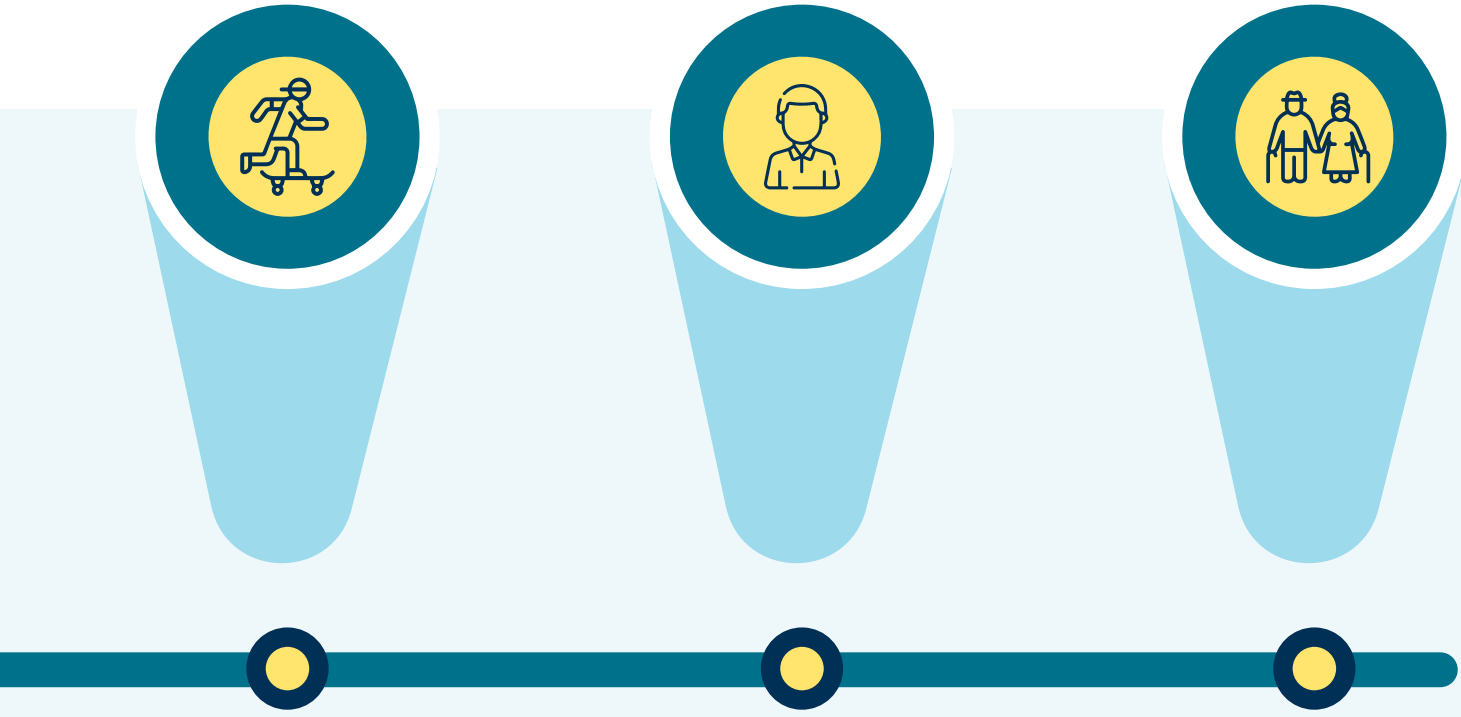
Middle Years

6-14

Life Course Approach

Health needs change as people move through different stages of life. A life course approach recognises these transitions and focuses on providing the right supports at the right time, from early childhood through to older age. This perspective helps ensure prevention and early intervention are prioritised, and that services and opportunities remain accessible as people's circumstances evolve. By embedding this approach across the Plan, Council and its partners can respond to key milestones in people's lives and strengthen wellbeing at every stage

Bass Coast's approach ensures our actions are tailored to those needs:



Young Person

15-25

Adult Person

26-64

Older Person

65+

Early Years

Recent data from the 2024 Australian Early Development Census shows more young children are starting life with challenges in physical health, emotional maturity and social connection. These early vulnerabilities can shape a child's lifelong wellbeing, learning and opportunities.

In Bass Coast, it's not always easy for families to access the right support at the right time. Local access to services like paediatrics, allied health and specialist programs is limited. Access to Maternal and Child Health services through Bass Coast Health plays a vital role in supporting families, but there's more to do to ensure every child gets the help they need when it matters most.

Early years services are more than health checks, they help build connection, confidence and community. By focusing on early intervention and improving access to health, development and education supports, we can give every child in Bass Coast the best possible start to grow, learn and thrive.



Young People



Young people are an important part of Bass Coast's future, but many face barriers that can impact their health, wellbeing and sense of belonging. Gippsland health data shows rising rates of psychological distress and declining emotional wellbeing among school-aged children and teens.

Challenges such as vaping, limited transport, and a lack of clear pathways to education and local careers narrow young people's choices and influence how they see their future in Bass Coast. Limited tertiary education and career pathways can leave young people uncertain about their future in Bass Coast and more likely to look elsewhere for opportunities.

Creating safe, inclusive environments, both at school and in the communities, is critical. When young people feel connected, supported and have access to services, education and opportunities to belong, it strengthens wellbeing and builds resilience for the future. Equitable access during these years can shape lifelong health outcomes.

Middle Years

Children aged 6 to 14 known as the middle years go through important physical, emotional and social changes that shape who they are and how they see the world. This stage plays a key role in building confidence, resilience, and healthy habits that can influence wellbeing into adulthood. While often overlooked in policy and programs, the middle years are a powerful time for early support. Positive peer relationships, inclusive environments and programs delivered in schools and communities, especially around key life transitions, can help prevent future mental health challenges and support children to thrive.

Adults

Many working-age adults in Bass Coast are balancing the pressures of work, caring responsibilities, rising living costs and limited access to timely healthcare. These daily challenges can make it harder for people to prioritise their health and wellbeing. Across Gippsland, data shows increasing rates of anxiety, depression and psychological distress among this age group.

Reduced physical activity, financial stress and delayed healthcare contribute to a growing risk of chronic disease, while some turn to unhealthy coping strategies, such as alcohol use. These pressures often compound over time, further impacting both mental and physical health.

Access to affordable mental health services, general healthcare and opportunities to stay active, connected and





involved in community life is critical. Low-cost or no-cost activities, such as walking groups, community events, open spaces and recreation programs, play a vital role in helping people maintain their health, build social connections and manage life's pressures.

Inclusive, accessible social infrastructure and health promotion activities help create environments where working-age adults can stay well, feel connected and build resilience. Supporting access to these opportunities is key to improving wellbeing and preventing poor health outcomes in our community.

Older Adults

Bass Coast's ageing population is growing faster than the state average, bringing increased demand for support with chronic disease, dementia, and reduced mobility. As more residents over 70 require help with daily tasks, the risk of social isolation and disconnection grows. Access to age-friendly spaces, preventative health care, and inclusive programs is essential for supporting older people to stay active, independent and connected to their communities.

What Our Communities Told Us

Bass Coast Shire Council undertook a broad and inclusive engagement process to strengthen our understanding of the current health barriers and enablers. We sought to reach diverse communities and to explore more deeply some of the issues which emerge from our population health profile.

What the community told us about their real-life experiences has helped shape and set key themes. Residents shared their experiences and priorities through engagement sessions and surveys.





Bass Coast has low crime rates, but many residents feel unsafe especially in isolated or poorly lit areas.

Safe spaces must be inclusive especially for women, neurodiverse individuals, and LGBTIQA+ communities.

Communities want more in-person support, especially for LGBTIQA+ and neurodiverse youth.

We need more accessible, inclusive, and smoke-free spaces that support movement, connection, and wellbeing.

Transport, housing stress, and service gaps make it hard for the community to access support.

People face gaps in mental health, housing, healthy eating, and transport. We need better coordination and access.

Our engagement sought input from people across all life stages, locations and backgrounds. Children and young people, people living with disability, older adults, First Nations people, culturally diverse residents and LGBTQIA+ community members shared their experiences, insights and ideas to help shape this Plan and its key themes.

Safety

Creating safer, more inclusive environments is a key priority. While Bass Coast has relatively low crime rates, many residents perceive safety concerns to be higher especially in poorly lit or isolated areas. These perceptions can significantly affect how people feel in and move through their community. Concerns have been raised about discrimination and unwelcoming spaces, especially for women, neurodiverse individuals, and LGBTIQA+ communities. Accessible parking, safe youth activities, and safe spaces for vulnerable groups, including those navigating family violence is vital. Supporting older adults to rebuild social confidence post-COVID is also an important focus.

Services

Timely and equitable access to services especially health, mental health, and social supports remains a challenge across Bass Coast. Transport limitations, housing insecurity, and service gaps affect older adults, young people, and marginalised groups. There's a need for stronger face-to-face



support, particularly for neurodiverse and LGBTIQA+ youth, and better promotion of existing services. Communities value positive service experiences and call for more inclusive, affordable options for staying active, learning, and participating in community life. Supporting literacy, wellbeing education, and non-competitive recreation are key to long-term health outcomes.



Spaces

Bass Coast's natural assets beaches, parks, and trails are deeply valued for their role in promoting physical and mental wellbeing. However, community feedback highlights a need for more inclusive, accessible and safe public spaces. Inadequate infrastructure, limited mobility access, and poor lighting create barriers, particularly for youth, people with disability, and those requiring safe environments for physical activity or family emergencies. There is also growing demand for inclusive facilities (e.g. breastfeeding spaces, gyms for LGBTIQA+ and neurodiverse people), smoke-free events, and spaces that support social connection and hobbies.

Service Gaps And Barriers

While many services exist, barriers to access remain. These include limited support for older adults and people with disability, gaps in mental health and healthy eating services, and a lack of affordable housing and crisis accommodation. Barriers to transport, financial constraints, cultural stigma, and fragmented service coordination further restrict participation. Youth and education providers are calling for better support, especially in transitions, life skills, and after-hours access. A more inclusive, coordinated system with simplified referral pathways and improved service promotion is critical.



What the Community Wants to See

Local people shared great ideas for making Bass Coast healthier, more connected and easier to live in.

Here's what they suggested:

- More free and low-cost outdoor activities like walking groups to stay active and meet others.
- Safe and welcoming community spaces that include everyone, especially people who often feel left out.
- Confidence-building programs like cooking, mental health support and fitness classes to help people feel good.
- Better paths, lighting and access so it's easier and safer to get around especially for people using mobility aids.
- Clear and inclusive signage that helps everyone feel safe and like they belong.
- Easier ways to get help by making sure services talk to each other and know where to refer people.
- One central website or app where people can find local activities, services, parks and events.

- Support for access to healthy food and ways to reduce food waste in the community.
- More places open after hours so people can meet, relax or access support when they need it.
- Increased access to public transport

We also heard strong concern about gambling harm, with calls for increased awareness and prevention. Community members raised the need for vaping and smoke-free expectations at Council events to better support health and safety. In addition, people consistently highlighted the importance of everyday infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, lighting and public toilets as being central to their health, wellbeing and ability to stay connected.

We analysed the information to uncover shared strengths, needs and challenges across our community. These formed the basis of our draft key themes, which were tested with local service providers, community organisations and government partners.

Together, we explored what the data and lived experience were telling us and identified where we could have the greatest collective impact. This helped shape shared priorities and lays the groundwork for stronger collaboration and better health and wellbeing outcomes for Bass Coast.



The New Plan

Our new Plan looks ahead with a long-term focus on creating lasting health and wellbeing outcomes.

We recognise that meaningful change often takes 10–12 years to show in population data, so this Plan lays the groundwork for those shifts by strengthening foundations now.

Taking a life course approach, the Plan acknowledges that people's needs evolve from early childhood through to older age, and that timely access to the right supports is critical. This perspective ensures that actions respond to key milestones and transitions across the lifespan, supporting people to live well and stay connected at every stage of life.

The Plan also sets the direction for how Council will work with partners and the community to address the most pressing challenges, while building resilience and opportunities for the future.





Key Themes

These themes reflect what we heard, what we know, and where we're heading. Each is informed by lived experience, guided by inclusion, and underpinned by equity.



Healthy & Active Living

Helping our community stay physically and mentally well at every stage of life.

Safe & Inclusive Communities

Creating spaces where everyone feels safe, valued, and connected.

Equitable Access & Social Infrastructure

Ensuring people can reach the essential services they need-when and where they need them.

Thriving Children & Young People

Supporting children and young people to grow, belong, and lead.

Country, Connection & Climate

Caring for our land, culture, and future together.

Together, the key themes recognise both the strengths and needs of our community. They reflect our role and acknowledge the barriers people face in achieving positive health outcomes at every stage of life. Whether that's accessing services, feeling safe and connected, or maintaining health and wellbeing, these themes are designed to work together, supporting our vision of a healthy, safe and resilient Bass Coast.

While each has a distinct focus, they all contribute to improving equity, strengthening connection, and creating environments where communities can thrive.

Our success measures are practical and reflect Council's unique role in each area. Not every key theme requires Council to act in the same way, sometimes we enable, sometimes we facilitate or advocate, and in some areas, we deliver services directly.

Across all key themes, we also play an important role as an information provider, identifying local gaps, sharing insights with partners, and ensuring communities needs are clearly understood. This role varies depending on the nature of the challenge and the partnerships already in place. Our monitoring focuses on what Council can influence through our policies, services, partnerships, information sharing and advocacy.





Healthy And Active Living

Helping our community stay physically and mentally well at every stage of their life.

Council supports healthy, active living by creating environments that make it easier to stay active, eat well and maintain mental wellbeing. Through partnerships, programs, infrastructure and advocacy, we make healthy choices part of everyday life and reduce preventable health issues. Community consultation highlighted mental health, smoking and vaping as key priorities for the future.

15% *of adults in Bass Coast do not meet physical activity guidelines.*

12% *of children in their first year of school are not physically on track.*

13% *of adults do no physical activity at all.*

38% *of residents say walking is their most popular form of physical activity.*

How Council Contributes to Success:

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Enabler	Brings together local service providers, partners and government agencies to improve alignment and coordination of programs, reduce duplication, and respond to identified service gaps.	Evidence of shared actions, stronger referral pathways, and streamlined service delivery models developed through stakeholder engagement.	Convene cross-sector stakeholder networks to consolidate existing and planned service delivery, programs and initiatives, and identify shared priority actions to be delivered over the next four years.
Enabler	Evidence of health considerations in Council strategies, capital works, planning schemes and design guidelines.	Embed health outcomes into Council's policies, planning and infrastructure to create environments that support active, healthy living.	Work with internal teams to map where health and wellbeing is currently embedded and explore future opportunities.
Collab-orator	Partner with health, sport, and community organisations to co-design programs that improve physical activity and wellbeing outcomes.	Number and diversity of collaborative projects delivered; participation and satisfaction data from joint initiatives.	Work within our key networks to map existing and potential joint initiatives. Work with organisations to develop programs that target the least active members of the community including older adults, people with a disability and youth.

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Facilitator	Facilitate access to inclusive programs, community spaces, and local grants that promote physical activity and healthy eating.	Uptake of relevant Council grants; utilisation rates of community spaces; community feedback on access and usability.	Promote access to current inclusive programs and grants supporting healthy living through communty channels and partner networks.
Promoter	Raise awareness of healthy lifestyle choices by sharing campaigns, programs, and local opportunities to live well.	Reach and engagement measures across communications channels; community recognition of health campaigns.	Develop and share an annual calendar of aligned health and wellbeing campaigns across Council and partner communications channels.
Advocator	Identifying and prioritising regional recreation facilities and open spaces	Logged; funding secured; delivery of new or improved facilities linked to advocacy efforts.	Support the Advocacy Strategy by identifying priority health infrastructure needs and developing short briefing materials for regional partners or funding bids.
Collaborator/ Promoter	Council partners with clubs, leisure providers, and health agencies to offer accessible programs.	Participation rates in older adult programs; feedback from users.	Expand "Active Seniors" recreation programs

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Promoter	Council amplifies and develops state and local quit funded campaigns, particularly targeting youth.	Number of campaigns delivered; engagement metrics.	Deliver a youth-led anti-vaping campaign in local schools in partnership with GRPHU.
Collaborator	Council works with partners (schools, sporting clubs, health services) to reinforce prevention.	Number of facilities with signage; number of partner organisations engaged.	Complete signage audit and Install smoke- and vape-free signage in Council playgrounds and sporting reserves.
Collaborator	Council partners with schools, food relief agencies, and community groups to increase awareness and improve access to nutritious food.	Number of joint programs delivered; participants supported.	Partner with Bass Coast food relief agencies, and schools to deliver healthy food programs and advertise food relief agencies within the municipality via the Community Service booklet.
Collaborator	Council invests in safe, accessible walking and cycling infrastructure, and works with partners to enable active transport choices across townships.	Number of active transport projects delivered; km of new/connected footpaths and cycleways; installation of bike racks/ parking; user participation data.	Deliver one priority "missing link" shared path from the Tracks and Trails Strategy 2022, and install bike racks on local buses through advocacy with the State Government. Aligned with the ITS recommendation.



Safe And Inclusive Communities

Creating spaces where everyone feels safe, valued and connected.

Council strengthens community safety and belonging through inclusive design, education and partnerships. We focus on prevention, respect and everyday safety so people feel welcome and connected.

Community feedback highlighted the importance of lighting, everyday facilities and safe spaces for young people and older adults.

27% *of young people listed violence, safety, or crime as a top concern.*

25% *of women with disability have experienced intimate partner violence.*

15% *of adults in Gippsland report being socially isolated.*

863 *family violence incidents were reported in Bass Coast in 2023-24.*

How Council Contributes to Success:

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Enabler	Embed principles of safety, accessibility and inclusion into Council's policies, public spaces, and service design.	Inclusion and safety objectives integrated into Council strategies, design briefs and project evaluations.	Review current and upcoming strategies, service designs and infrastructure projects and apply Council's Inclusive Design Guidelines to all new and renewed infrastructure projects
Facilitator	Enable access to programs and initiatives that strengthen community resilience, foster belonging and build inclusive communities.	Participation rates, demographic reach, and feedback from participants in resilience and inclusion-focused programs.	Promote participation in the Community Grants Program with a focus on projects that foster inclusion, belonging and resilience.
Collaborator	Work alongside Police, health services, community organisations and local agencies to prevent family violence and promote respectful relationships.	Number of joint initiatives (e.g. campaigns, training, referrals); increased awareness and engagement captured via partner reporting and community surveys.	Deliver Respectful Relationships training in partnership with community safety and family violence prevention networks.

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Advocator	Champion investment in services, spaces and systems that enhance community safety and connection.	Funding secured; progress on Master Plans and capital projects (e.g. Aquatic Strategy, Rec Reserves, Tracks and Trails); facility usage and satisfaction data.	Advocate for priorities outlined in the Active Bass Coast Plan and related strategies, including Phillip Island Rec Reserve and Aquatic Strategy, through the State and Federal funding channels.
Regulator	Regulates essential public health protections through contracted services, including: • Environmental Health • Food Safety and Regulatory Inspections • Septic System Management	Monitor performance of contracted services through regulatory compliance data, service request trends, inspection outcomes, and community feedback.	Review performance data from food safety, septic and environmental health services to assess community outcomes beyond compliance.
Collaborator	Council works with local services to run education and prevention campaigns	Number of campaigns delivered	Partner with Gambler's Help and Bass Coast Health to deliver a gambling harm awareness campaign.



Equitable Access And Social Infrastructure

Ensuring people can reach the essential services they need – when and where they need them.

Making it easier for everyone to participate in community life regardless of ability, background or circumstance is at the heart of equitable access. Council plays a key role in reducing barriers through inclusive planning, accessible infrastructure, advocacy and partnerships that centre community needs.

This focus is strongly aligned with our Disability Action Plan (DAP), which guides how we embed universal design and equity principles across Council services and projects. Together, the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan and the DAP reinforce our shared commitment to creating spaces and systems where all people feel welcome, supported and able to thrive.

Our contribution to access includes a combination of roles enabling inclusive policy and design, collaborating on shared infrastructure projects,



regulating public health and access standards, and advocating for improved transport, housing and affordability. These roles are reported through measurable outcomes like increased accessibility in built environments, compliance data, collaborative project delivery, and successful advocacy for better access across the Shire.

26% *of residents report having a disability.*

72% *of people with a disability needing assistance earn under $650 per week.*

21% *of people with limited English need daily living assistance*

1,864 *people provide unpaid care*

How Council Contributes to Success:

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Enabler	Integrate universal design, accessibility, and equity principles into infrastructure, land use planning, and community development.	Increased integration of access and equity considerations in capital works, planning schemes, and infrastructure guidelines.	Apply Council's Inclusive Design Guidelines and Universal Design principles to all new or renewed infrastructure and planning projects.

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Advocator	Champion policy and funding reforms that support equitable access to transport, housing, digital connectivity and essential services.	Record advocacy submissions, funding outcomes, and policy wins linked to improved access and affordability.	Contribute to state and regional advocacy priorities by documenting key infrastructure and service equity gaps for inclusion in funding bids and reform campaigns.
Collaborator	Partner with government, developers and service providers to improve physical and digital access across the Shire.	Record co-delivered infrastructure and access initiatives; monitor service availability, uptake, and user satisfaction.	Engage with infrastructure and service partners to identify joint opportunities to improve physical and digital access, particularly in growth areas.
Promoter	Foster inclusive and future-ready workplaces that reflect community values and build pride of place.	Staff engagement survey results; progress on workforce inclusion and pride initiatives.	Deliver pilot workforce initiatives that enhance inclusion and celebrate local identity.
Advocator	Council champions improved, frequent and reliable public transport services that connect townships and reduce car dependency.	Record of advocacy briefs delivered; number of advocacy meetings held with State Government; progress against ITS targets for service coverage and frequency.	Deliver 2 State advocacy briefs on public transport annually, aligned with the ITS recommendation for a formal bus review and more frequent services (eg early/late timetables, town bus connections).



Thriving Children And Young People

Supporting children and young people to grow, belong and lead.

Council invests in children and young people by embedding their needs in planning, services and partnerships. We support safe spaces, mental health, and pathways to education and employment. Young people told us vaping, safety and clearer opportunities for the future are top concerns.

31% *of young adults aged 20-24 did not complete Year 12.*

16% *of young people (15-24) are not in education, training or work.*

38% *of young people say mental health is their biggest barrier to achieving goals.*

42% *of youth aged 18-29 have never done work experience.*

How Council Contributes to Success:

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Service Provider	Delivers key services for children and young people through contracted services • Maternal Child Health • Youth Services • Early years Preschool Field Officer Delivers core preventative health services directly to the community, including: • Childhood and school-based immunisations • Community immunisation sessions Central Registration Enrolment Scheme (CRES)	Monitor performance of contracted services through KPIs, reporting, and participation data. Evaluate engagement and outcomes of programs and services.	Continue delivering core preventative health and youth services, and complete annual contract reviews for Maternal and Child Health (in partnership with Bass Coast Health and the Department of Education), Youth Services (in partnership with Anglicare Victoria and South Gippsland Shire Council), and CRES (in partnership with the Department of Education), to assess reach, access, and alignment with community need.

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Facilitator	Strengthen connections across the service system by bringing partners together to increase access to learning, wellbeing and connection opportunities for children and young people.	Co-delivered initiatives, participation data, service network engagement feedback, program outcomes.	Convene a cross-sector service roundtable focused on early years and youth to explore shared priorities and opportunities over the next 4 years. Collaboration via the Early years and YSP networks.
Collaborator	Work closely with kindergartens, schools, health services and youth organisations to support shared goals for the wellbeing of children and young people.	Number of co-designed initiatives, service referrals and increased access points.	Engage with local education and health partners to scope opportunities for joint programs or referral pathways that strengthen local support for young people and families.
Advocator	Champion investment in youth-focused services, transport and infrastructure that support development and participation.	Record advocacy actions and outcomes (increased services, new facilities).	Capture and consolidate youth-raised transport, infrastructure and access priorities into briefing material to inform strategic advocacy efforts over the next 4 years.





Country, Connection And Climate

Caring for our land, culture and our future together.

Council embeds sustainability, connectivity and cultural connection across all strategies and actions. We walk alongside Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop and deliver our Reflect RAP and future RAP commitments. This work will ensure Council is prepared to align with Victoria's progressing Treaty process in respectful partnership. We advocate for stronger climate action, strengthen emergency readiness, and respond to community calls for measurable progress on resilience and preparedness.

36°C *Mortality risk increases significantly during heat waves.*

136 *people were estimated to be homeless in Bass Coast in 2021.*

1.1 % *of Bass Coast's population identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander*

How Council Contributes to Success:

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Enabler	Embed climate resilience, sustainability, and cultural knowledge into Council policies, infrastructure, and everyday operations.	Record the integration of climate and cultural priorities across Council strategies, major projects, and planning documents.	Incorporate climate resilience measures and tree canopy targets from the Climate Change Action Plan and Urban Forest Strategy into the scoping or design phase of at least three new infrastructure or policy projects in Year 1.
Facilitator	Coordinate local programs and partnerships that strengthen environmental sustainability and support climate adaptation in our communities.	Record participation levels, reach, and outcomes of sustainability programs, partnerships and initiatives.	Deliver environmental education and community engagement activities aligned to the Climate Change Action Plan, with a focus on household sustainability and climate preparedness.
Collaborator	Walk alongside Traditional Owners and environmental partners to care for Country and deepen connection to place.	Increased partnership activities, co-designed initiatives, and cultural knowledge-sharing through collective impact and engagement reporting.	Support the preparation and advocacy for implementation of the Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy (SPP).

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Advocator	Advocate for policy change, investment and action that supports environmental health, climate resilience, and cultural protection.	Record advocacy efforts, funding secured, and initiatives influenced or delivered in partnership with Traditional Owners and environmental organisations.	Advocate for investment in climate and Country outcomes through state and federal policy channels.
Facilitator	Partner with Police, emergency services and community organisations to build community resilience during emergencies.	Community feedback post-emergency; number of joint preparedness and support activities; incident response reviews.	Continue providing emergency support services and strengthen cross-agency coordination for community resilience.
Promoter	Raise awareness of safe travel and local safety campaigns in partnership with TAC and visitor networks.	Visitor campaign reach and engagement; behavioural insights; incident reports.	Promote safe travel initiatives including "Stop, Revive, Survive" coffee stations and seasonal safety messaging.
Facilitator	Council co-chairs and participates in the Bass Coast Reconciliation Network, providing a regular forum for dialogue, collaboration and connectivity in shared planning.	Number of network meetings held; diversity of participation (Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, partners).	Continue to coordinate quarterly Reconciliation Network meetings, ensuring broad community and partner involvement.

Role	What This Looks Like	How We Monitor Change	Year 1 Action
Collaborator	Work alongside Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and community members to set reconciliation priorities.	Feedback from participants on meaningful engagement; actions co-designed through the Network.	Use the Network to guide development of the Reflect RAP and shape commitments for future RAP development.
Advocator	Position Council to align with Victoria's progressing Treaty process through respectful connectivity and partnerships with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.	Evidence of Council submissions, participation in state/local Treaty readiness activities.	Begin discussions within the Network on how Council can prepare for Treaty and align local reconciliation priorities.
Promoter	Households and businesses reduce emissions and energy costs by moving away from gas and fossil fuels.	Household/ business participation in electrification programs; number of all-electric appliances and zero-carbon energy systems installed.	Promote the reduction of energy use by encouraging the switch to all-electric and zero carbon energy where possible.



Putting Our Key Themes Into Action

Our 4-year plan takes a staged and strategic approach to improving communities' health and resilience outcomes. We know that lasting change happens over time not through one-off programs, but through deep listening, practical action, and strong partnerships that build capacity and connection.



We will bring this plan to life through a continuous cycle of listening, co-design, action and evaluation, building each year on what matters most to our communities. Our implementation approach is grounded in ongoing engagement, not just at a single point in time but throughout the life of the Plan. This ensures our actions are shaped by lived experience, shared expertise and practical insights from the people who live, work and play in Bass Coast.

Ongoing community engagement

it's how we work in the Bass Coast Shire

Evaluation

Providing transparency to outcomes and reviewing our actions with community will help us build trust and strengthen how we work together.

Informing

Sharing data and information with the community for an informed conversation. We seek feedback and ideas on the challenges, providing current information to assist evidence based discussions.

Consulting

Community tells us their stories to support and benefit our research, design, actions and evaluation of efforts. We encourage people to advocate based on their experience living in the community.

Involving

Community knowledge. skills and abilities enhance the way we all do things. Applying a strengths based approach, we aim to build from what we have.

Partnership

Through mutual respect we work together - Community members, Council and other stakeholders/partners to achieve better outcomes.

Co-Design

Community, our partners and Council are involved in design together to get it right.

How We Will Deliver The Plan Over Four Years

The four-year Plan sets the direction. The Annual Action Plan will translate this into specific deliverables, partners and measurable outcomes that respond to community feedback. Each year, new actions will reflect emerging needs raised through engagement, data and lived experience.

Year 1:

Explore and Set Key Actions

We will deepen our understanding of local needs, building on what we already know and listening closely to what's changing

This includes:

- Reviewing existing work aligned to each key theme
- Continuing delivery of core Council services and programs
- Identifying what matters most through engagement and data
- Mapping and planning collaborative projects with key partners
- Transitioning relevant Council-led initiatives to community leadership (where appropriate) to build program sustainability.

Year 2:

Consolidate Key Actions and Co-Design Solutions

With shared priorities identified, we'll move into co-design and early implementation.

This includes:

- Collaborating with partners and community members to design inclusive, locally relevant projects
- Co-designing and early implementation of value-added initiatives across key themes
- Continuing delivery of core Council services and programs



Year 3:

Deliver and Consolidate

Year 3 is focused on delivery and building momentum.

This includes:

- Rolling out key projects and programs
- Strengthening partnerships and refining approaches
- Embedding inclusive design and accessibility principles across initiatives
- Beginning to evaluate impact to inform future work

Year 4:

Reflect and Build for the Future

In the final year of the plan, we will reflect on what's worked, what we've learned, and look ahead.

This includes:

- Consolidating successful projects
- Capturing good practice and creating 'blueprints' for the next planning cycle
- Engaging community in reviewing outcomes and setting new directions

Throughout all four years, we will continue delivering core Council services across each of the key themes. Our commitment is to ensure business-as-usual continues while also driving innovation and long-term change.

In line with the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*, this Plan will undergo a formal review at the end of its four-year cycle. We will provide annual updates to Council, the communities and partners on how this plan is making a difference by sharing progress, learnings, and where we're heading next.



Implementation Risks And Mitigation

While this Plan sets out an ambitious and long-term vision, we acknowledge there are key risks that could impact delivery.

These include:

- Workforce limitations across Council, health services, and community organisations
- Funding constraints that may affect the scale and pace of delivery
- Digital inequity, limiting access to services and engagement opportunities
- Structural and systemic barriers, including service fragmentation and policy misalignment
- Limited access to timely data, which may impact evidence-based decision making

To mitigate these risks, we will embed agile project design, monitor delivery through annual evaluations, strengthen partnerships to share capability, and prioritise annual actions that improve equity and long-term system resilience.

Focusing On The Future

This Plan sets a clear direction for the next four years while laying the foundation for long-term change.

We recognise the expanding role of digital health, data and technology in how people access services, connect with community and maintain wellbeing. Embracing innovation through telehealth, digital platforms and AI-informed planning will future-proof our work and keep us responsive to emerging needs.





How We'll Keep The Plan Alive

Implementation will follow a deliberate, staged approach guided by best practice:

1. **Engage stakeholders**
   Bringing together partners, services and communities

2. **Communicate the scope**
   Clarifying the focus and shared vision

3. **Use our evaluation framework**
   Anchoring our approach in what matters

4. **Collect and share the data**
   Monitoring change and surfacing insights

5. **Analyse, consult, and establish outcomes**
   Turning evidence into direction

6. **Share findings and determine next steps**
   Reflecting, reporting and adapting



Monitoring Our Progress

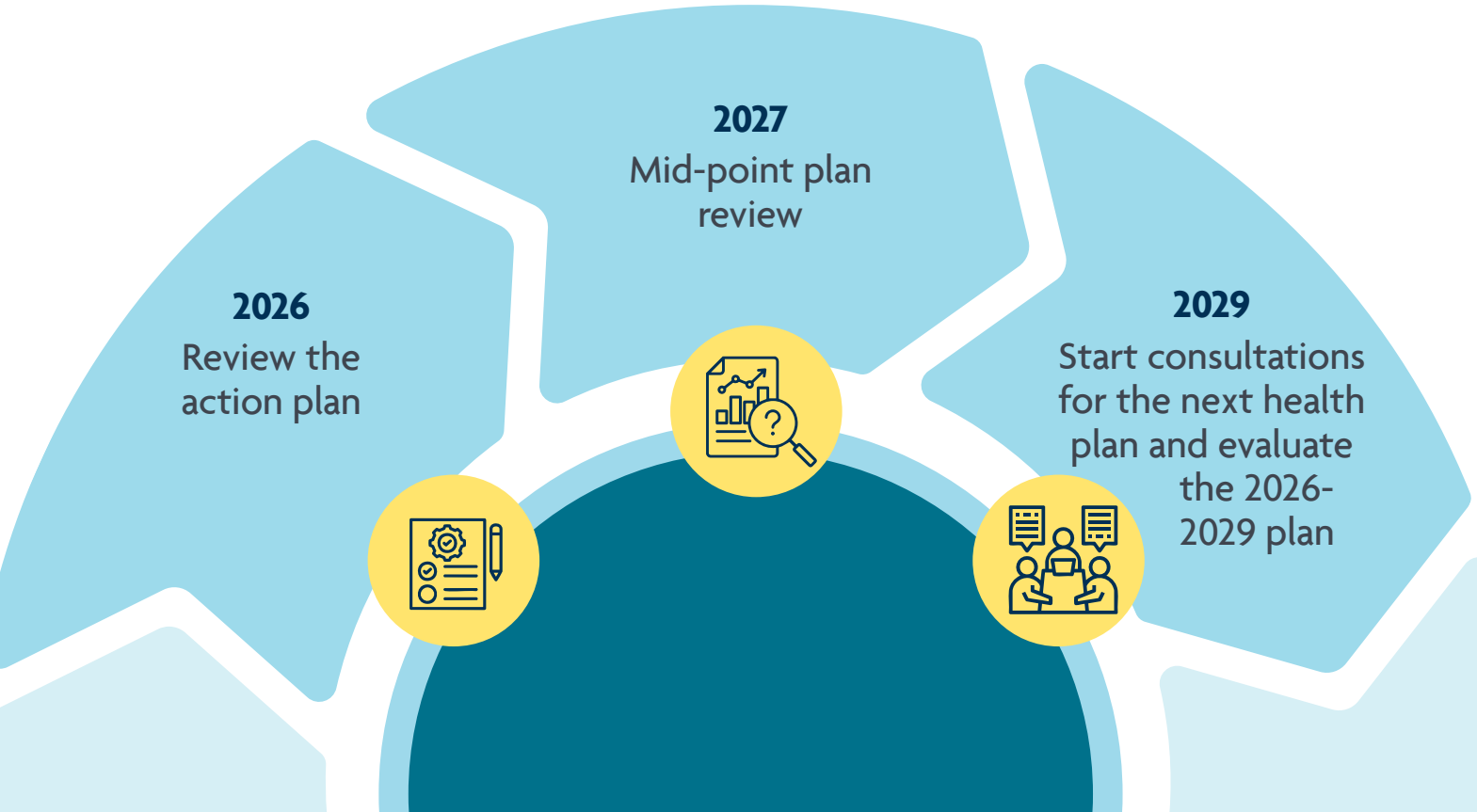
Monitoring progress is central to bringing this Plan to life. Each year we will assess how our work across the five key themes is making a difference, with results reported to Council, partners and the community. These reports will highlight progress, share insights and identify opportunities to strengthen impact.

This annual reporting meets obligations under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)* and aligns with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It ensures accountability, but more importantly, it helps us learn in real time and adapt to emerging needs.

While population-level outcomes may take a decade or more to show, we are committed to tracking early signs of change. These will include measurable indicators as well as community stories that reflect lived experience and real impact. Each year we will update our action plans and local profile to ensure the Plan remains relevant and responsive.

The future of Bass Coast is being shaped now. Through this Plan we commit to actions that build stronger, healthier and more connected communities, not just today but for generations to come.

With courage, respect and partnership, we will create a Bass Coast where everyone belongs and can thrive.





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