



Mount Alexander Shire Middle Years Plan

2023-2026

We acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Taungurung as the traditional owners of the lands and waters of the Mount Alexander Shire and recognise all other Indigenous people of the Shire and the vital role that the Traditional Owners play as custodians of the region

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About this Plan

This Plan has been developed to support the nearly 800 middle years children aged 8-12 living in Mount Alexander Shire.

We are deeply committed to ensuring our towns and communities are inclusive and welcoming for children and families, and this Plan reinforces Council’s endorsement of the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter in 2019.

This Plan has been developed in consultation with middle years children across Mount Alexander Shire. It highlights areas of focus, and the actions we believe are most important here and now. We want this to be a plan that can respond to the emerging needs of our community, our families and our children.

We are grateful to be working alongside our local schools, service providers, clubs and organisations to deliver for our children. And of course, we are always guided and inspired by the middle years kids – in all their diversity – in our Shire.

Our vision

All children aged 8 to 12 years and their families in Mount Alexander Shire are happy, safe, active and connected.

Our focus

Happy and included

Middle years children and families are happy, well-informed, included and ready to transition to high school.



Active and outside

Kids have opportunities to be physically active, to care for the environment and connect with Country.



Safe and Supported

Middle years children and families are safe and can access the support they need.



Why the middle years matter

The middle years of childhood (8-12 years of age) are an important period of individual growth and learning, characterised by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional and social development.

During this time puberty begins, children are finding a sense of self, growing and establishing peer relationships and making the transition from primary to secondary school.

This period of significant change and growth also sees children develop resilience and adaptability, and strategies to manage themselves in different situations.

These transitional years are an important time for establishing the foundations of future wellbeing. Children want to expand their play, to care for the environment and to learn. But they also need the right support to navigate the more complex problems they, and their families face.

Council's role

In December 2019 Council endorsed the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter. This means Council is committed to creating child-friendly towns, spaces and experiences across the Mount Alexander Shire. In addition, the Council Plan 2021-2025 supports a healthy, connected and inclusive community.

- For children 8-12, this looks like accessible and coordinated services, safety regardless of identity or circumstance, mental and physical wellbeing, connection to community and inclusion.
- It also reflects in our efforts to maintain, improve and celebrate our places and spaces for children and families, in harmony with nature.

The Middle Years Plan 2023-2026 will guide how Council, partners, service providers and the community can work together to achieve these outcomes, and more.

Each action states which stakeholder is the responsible organisation for its implementation as well as the role of Council in its delivery. Council's role has been defined as one of the following:

Lead: Council adopts full responsibility for delivery of the action, due to the action being either internal or at a policy level.

Facilitate: Undertaking a process involving other stakeholders, which will be driven by Council.

Support: Add value to activities that are initiated by, and the responsibility of, other agencies. This may include promotion, in-kind support or providing advice.

Advocate: Using Council’s role in the community to exert influence on external agencies to undertake an action.

Through this Plan, Council will continue to advocate for the services families need locally. While families in Mount Alexander Shire have access to a range of services for their middle years children, demand is growing – particularly for disability and additional needs support (Figure 1).

This Plan is guided by the pillars, objectives and strategies identified in the Council Plan 2021-2025. In particular, we recognise the mission “Working together for a healthy, connected shire”.

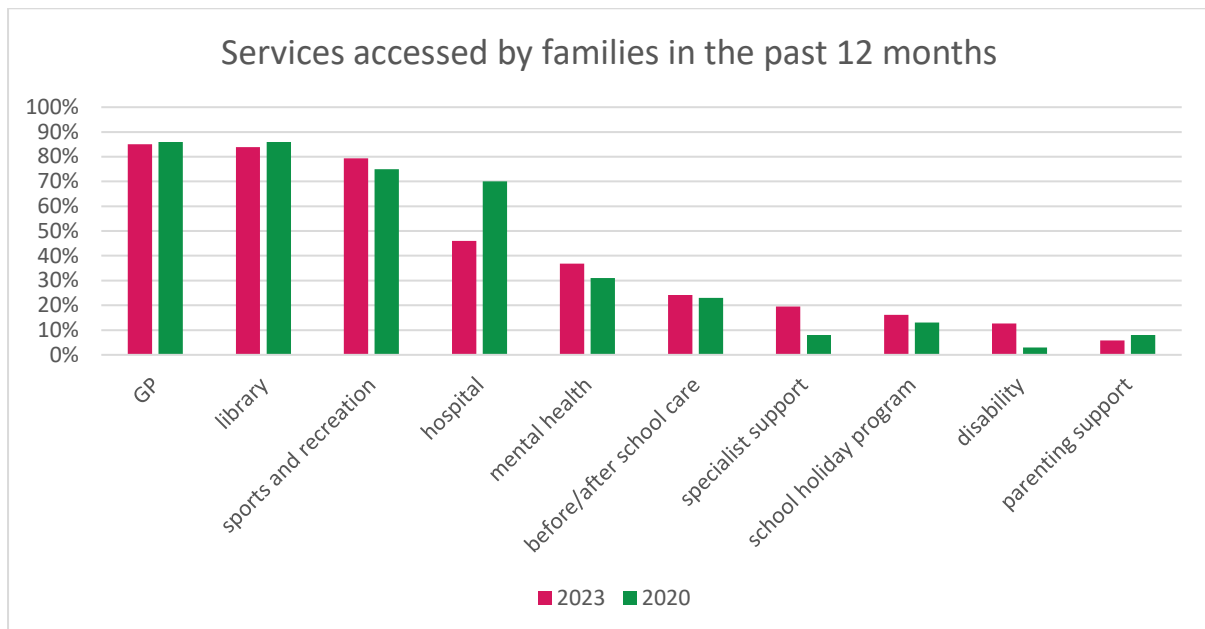


Figure 1. Services accessed by families in the past 12 months (2023). Comparison of survey responses from Mount Alexander Shire parents and carers in 2023 and 2020.

Bulortj Children and Youth Network

The Bulortj Children and Youth Network brings together organisations that provide services for 8-24 year olds who reside in the Mount Alexander Shire.

Bulortj, or the Cherry Ballart, is a symbol of cooperation and community. It is still in use today in age-old Djaara ceremonies of cleansing and renewal. Its use draws on the knowledge that, like children in their communities, the Bulortj cannot flourish unless it is attached to another tree. It is a reminder of the importance of cooperation between people if all are to thrive.

The Bulortj Children and Youth Network has been advocating for the needs of young people in the Shire for over a decade. It facilitates the sharing of resources and good practice, and develops and implements strategies to meet the needs of young people in Mount Alexander Shire.

The Network is facilitated by Council and includes the following member organisations:

- Castlemaine Secondary College
- Dhelkaya Health
- Goldfields Library Corporation (Castlemaine Library)
- Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation
- Primary schools
- School Focused Youth Service
- Victoria Police
- Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network
- Anglicare Victoria

A key role of the Network is to act as the steering group for the implementation of the Middle Years Plan.

What's changed since the last Plan?



Two years of social isolation, remote schooling and pandemic

Population growth in Mount Alexander Shire. Although this population growth has been more significant in older age groups, the increasing demand on health services has affected families.¹



More complex behavioural challenges among children locally.

Rising rates of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



More families are needing support to find housing locally, with many leaving the Shire to find affordable and secure housing.²

¹ Australian Early Development Census. 2021. *Community Profile: Mount Alexander*. p.9

² Central Victoria Primary Care Partnership. 2020. [Infrastructure Victoria Regional Victoria Submission](#). p.6

Who did we hear from?

This Plan has been developed in close consultation with our community. Most importantly, we listened to our middle years children across our Shire.

This involved:

187 middle years children completing surveys

38 middle years children attending an ideas workshop at Council

95 total survey responses from parents, carers and service providers

Three key informant interviews with school principals

Two reflection workshops with the Bulortj Children and Youth Network

Values

Children in their middle years value their families above all else, followed by friends and art and music. Gaming is increasingly valued among those surveyed – an 18% rise from 2020.

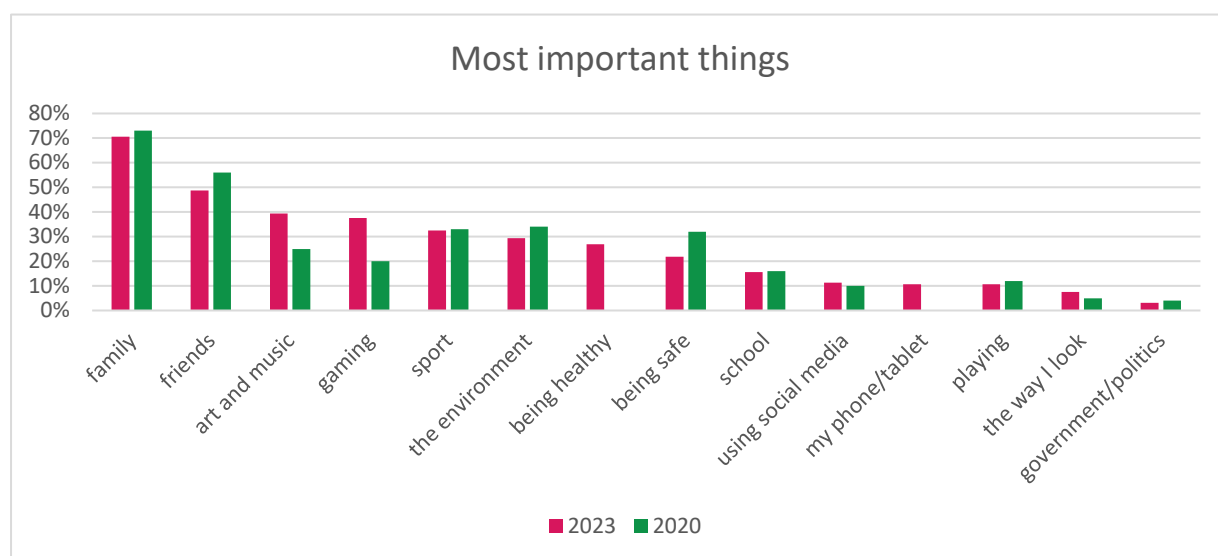


Figure 2. “Most important thing to me” according to 187 middle years children as cited in their 2023 survey responses and compared with 2020 responses.

Parents surveyed indicated health and wellbeing remains the most important consideration for their family, followed by education and social networks (which increased by 16% from 2020). Those valuing local facilities and safety in 2023 also increased markedly from surveyed parents in 2020.

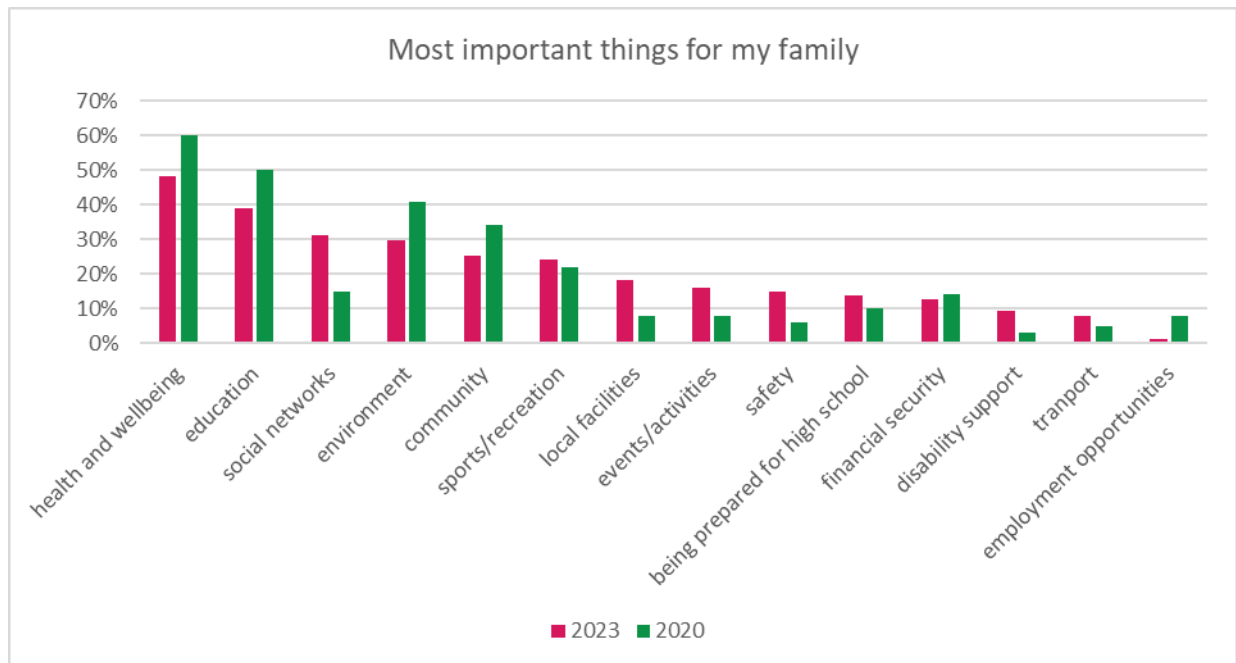


Figure 3. "Most important things for my family" according to Mount Alexander Shire parents and carers surveyed in 2023 and 2020.

What's working

Middle years children engaged in the consultation for the development of this Plan valued the natural surrounds of the Shire and the size and people of the towns they live in. Since 2020, more kids indicated their appreciation for local pools, food and shops and sport in the Shire.

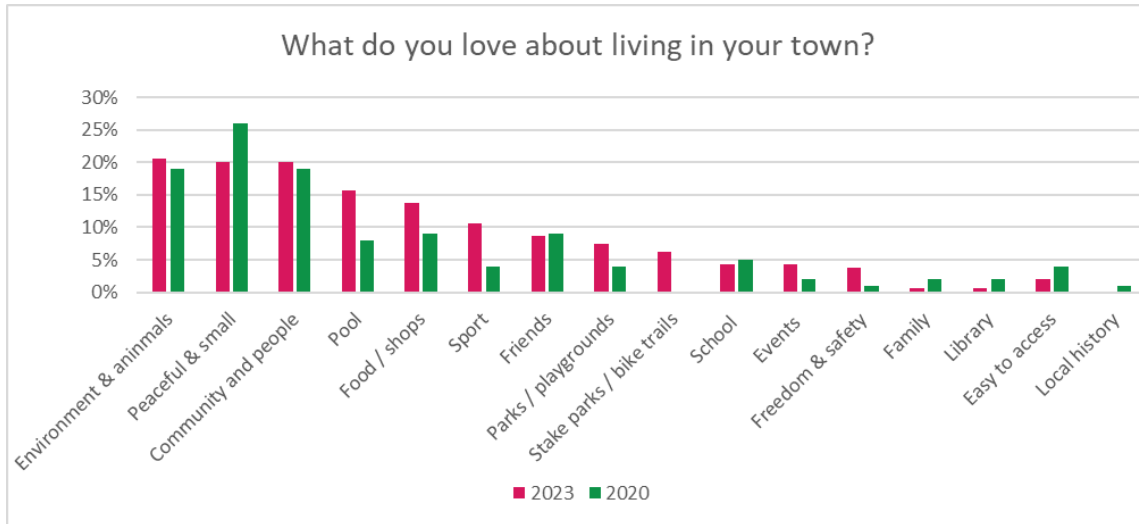


Figure 4. "What do you love about living in your town" according to 180 middle years children as cited in their 2023 and compared with 2020 responses.

Parents and carers of middle years children valued their communities, their lifestyle and local schools – largely consistent with results from 2020.

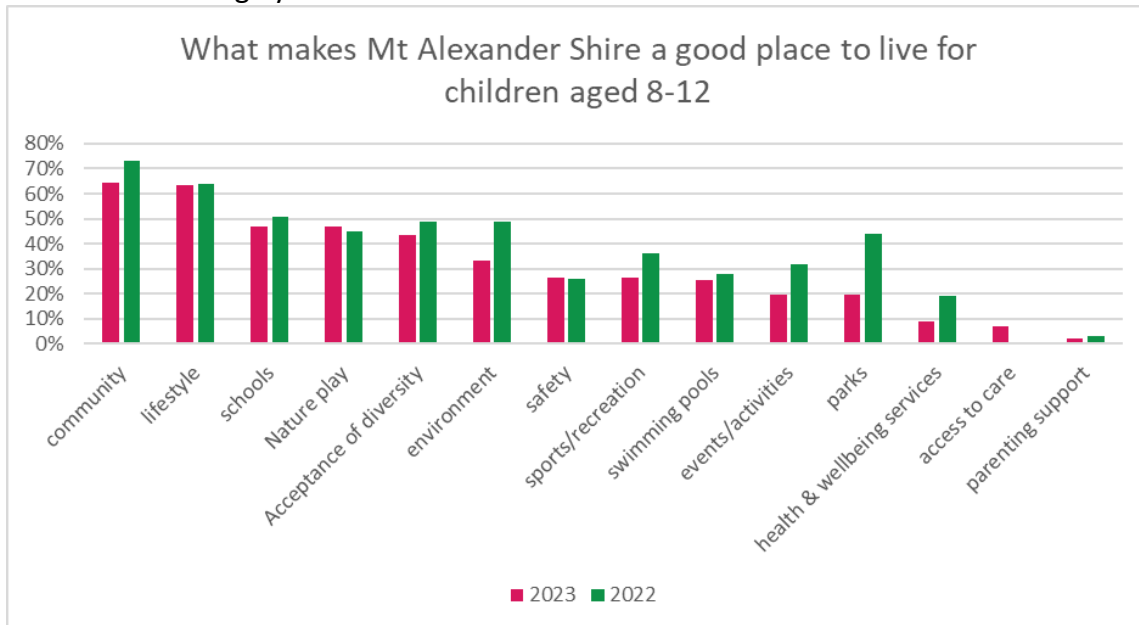


Figure 5. "What makes Mount Alexander Shire a good place to live for children" according to Mount Alexander Shire parents and carers surveyed in 2023 and 2020

Issues

We know the pressures on many families have grown in recent years. These are the big issues we heard this Plan needs to address.



Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on health, wellbeing and learning. More than half (54%) of parents and carers surveyed reported that their family's health and wellbeing was impacted or severely impacted by the pandemic. Half (51%) of families reported that their children's learning was impacted, including 17% who reported it had been severely impacted.



Access to local services is challenging. More middle years children are needing support – from neurological disabilities and learning challenges, to social anxieties and housing insecurity. Service providers also noted an increase in rates of non-suicidal self-harm. Wait-lists for specialised services such as child psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapists are extensive, with many families having to travel and/or pay privately for the support they need.



Online safety remains a priority. One in ten children surveyed locally placed a high value on using social media, while over a third (38%) valued gaming. 12% of children surveyed said they worry about being safe online, while 8% said they worry about cyber-bullying.



Parents are feeling stressed. Insecure housing and the rising cost of living is putting many local families under pressure. Parental stress impacts children's learning, emotional regulation and overall wellbeing.



Complex and additional needs are becoming more common. One in twenty children are estimated to have ADHD while around one in seventy are autistic. Around a third (31%) of families reported caring for a child with additional needs in 2023 compared to 8.5% in 2020. This means more demands on families, schools and services.



Expectations on teachers are rising. Teachers are at the front-line of learning, while also working as key social and wellbeing supports for their students. Placing more demands on local teachers to play a more central role in primary prevention or response to behavioural or neurological challenges is not sustainable.



Concerns about the effects of climate change. Children identified 'the environment' as their biggest worry and expressed a need for more climate change action.

Ideas

We asked our middle years kids what they would do if they were in charge for a day. Here are some of the responses.

“I would like there to be a **wildlife park in Campbell's Creek**”

“A **kids book club at a library**. I would want a tween book club in Castlemaine library on Sunday afternoon.”

“**More parks, clean up days, tree planting, another animal park**. I love animals.”

“Fix the **skate park** up.”

“I would make a **Minecraft club**. Free computers.”

“Plant more **TREES** in public spaces!!!”

“Build an **ice cream shop**”

“Create a **campaign for collecting as much rubbish** as you can...Create posters and make schools do it as well.”

“I'd give a **discount to kids** so they can buy things and **help their families**.”

“Cheaper **housing**.”

Figure 6 summarizes the project ideas of a workshop with 38 middle years students at Council.

Transition to high school	Care for the environment	Recreation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High school buddy program for Year 7 students• FaceTime calls for primary students with teachers and students at Castlemaine Secondary College (CSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly community tree planting events for young people• Environment education program - run by CSC outdoor education students in primary schools• Clean up school days to remove waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make the skate park accessible for all ages - using sustainable materials to make it easier and safer for younger kids

Our priorities

Kids in the middle years of childhood need and deserve a range of supports and opportunities. Some of these will be to empower kids, some to prevent potential challenges in adolescence and some to respond to challenges here and now. While the following priority areas outlined in this Plan have their own strategies and actions, we understand these are all – directly or indirectly, connected (Figure 7).

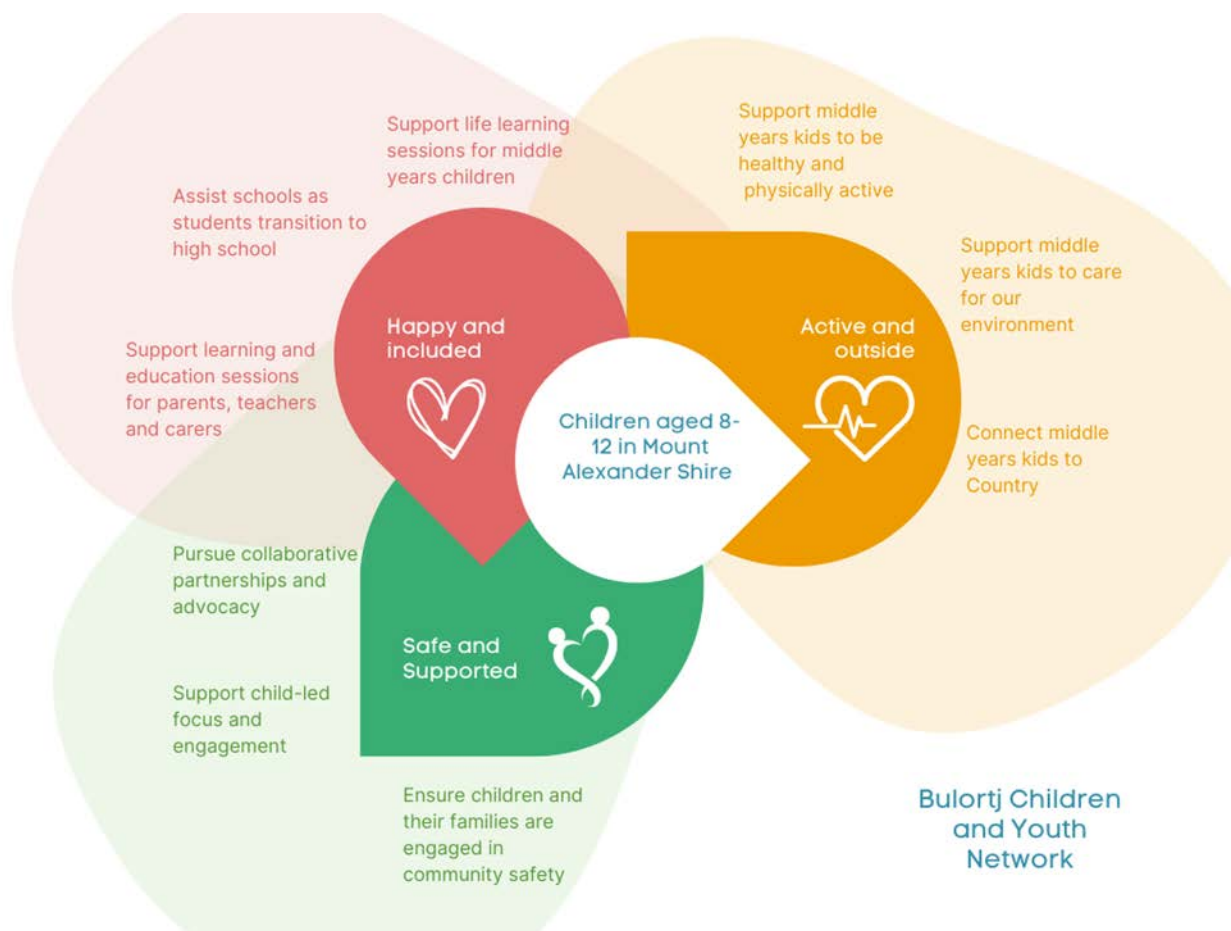


Figure 7. Interconnected priority areas and strategies

Priority Area 1: Happy and included

Objective: Middle years children and families are happy, well-informed, included and ready to transition to high school.

Strategies	These will include	Responsible stakeholder	Council's role
1.1 Support wellbeing education sessions for middle years children	1.1.1 Delivering kids' programs that respond to known and emerging needs, such as preparation for puberty, mental health, identity, positive masculinity, social skills, friendships and online safety	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Support
	1.1.2 Exploring ways to expand the activity program, including play-based learning, for middle years children at Castlemaine Library	Castlemaine Library	Support
1.2 Support learning and education sessions for parents, carers and teachers	1.2.1 Coordinating and promoting parental education sessions and programs for our families to improve middle years child wellbeing, online and physical safety and family resilience	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Support
	1.2.2 Coordinating the delivery of mental health training for teachers and school staff	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Facilitate
	1.2.3 Supporting training and initiatives that respond to the needs of families with children experiencing additional needs	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Support
	1.2.4 Promoting training for local schools, organisations and service providers to be more inclusive of diverse families	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Support
1.3 Support students to transition to high school	1.3.1 Exploring ways to better support students to transition to secondary school, especially those experiencing challenges	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Support

Priority Area 2: Active and outside

Objective: Kids have opportunities to be physically active, to care for the environment and connect with Country.

Strategies	These will include	Responsible stakeholder	Council's role
2.1 Support middle years kids to be healthy and physically active	2.1.1 Exploring ways to increase skate, scoot and cycling opportunities for middle years children and families	Council	Lead
	2.1.2 Ensuring the needs of children are considered when upgrading the walking and cycling network around local primary schools	Council	Lead
	2.1.3 Ensuring the needs of children are considered when designing playgrounds and play spaces	Council	Lead
	2.1.4 Supporting and championing all-abilities access to sport and recreation activities	Council	Facilitate
	2.1.5 Exploring ways to support growth and development through access to nutritious food	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Support
2.2 Support middle years kids to care for our environment	2.2.1 Increasing opportunities for children to engage in climate change action and implement environmental sustainability practices	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Facilitate
2.3 Connect middle years kids to Country	2.3.1 Promote resources that encourage children and families to connect to Djaara Country and Culture	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Support
	2.3.2 Continue to support Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation to deliver quality educational and cultural programs for First Nations children	Council	Support

Priority Area 3: Safe and supported

Objective: Middle years children and families are safe and can access the support they need.

Strategies	These will include	Responsible stakeholder	Council's role
3.1 Support child-led focus and engagement	3.1.1 Ensuring this Plan remains responsive to emerging needs as guided by children	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Facilitate
	3.1.2 Building capacity of children to be leaders and advocates for children's needs	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Facilitate
	3.1.3 Developing processes to ensure our middle years children and families are able to provide input into Council's planning and programs	Council	Lead
3.2 Pursue collaborative partnerships and advocacy	3.2.1 Facilitating opportunities for primary schools to identify and share information, data, learning and funding opportunities, events and other initiatives	Council, Local schools	Support
	3.2.2 Continuing to advocate for an increase in the number of health and wellbeing services available locally for middle years children and their families (e.g. counsellors, psychologists, General Practitioners)	Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Advocate
3.3 Ensure children and their families are engaged in community safety	3.3.1 Supporting the relationship between the local Police and community, and promoting a better understanding of how we can collaboratively increase community safety	Victoria Police	Support
	3.3.2 Continuing to work with our key partners to ensure emergency preparedness and planning specifically considers the needs of our children and their families	Council	Lead

Implementation costs

The implementation of the Mount Alexander Middle Years Plan 2023-26 will be predominantly undertaken with existing Council resources, and through the in-kind and financial support of key stakeholders as required.

External grants and resources will also be explored as and when required.

Review and evaluation

The outcomes in this Plan will take time to achieve. Being both systemic and individualistic in nature, monitoring their progress is crucial to the Plan's success.

The Bulortj Children and Youth Network, as the Steering Group for the Plan, will be critical to this process. The Network will meet quarterly to review progress, discuss opportunities and set a course for actions.

Regular conversations and forums will ensure that the community and key stakeholders are informed of the Plan's progress and successes, and that each achievement is acknowledged, shared and celebrated.

This approach will be supported by an annual review process that will allow for actions to remain responsive to new and emerging priorities and needs. Annual statements will also be produced to share the findings of each review and provide an outline of the focus for the following year.

In December 2026, an evaluation of the Plan will be undertaken with learnings and outcomes used to inform the development of future middle years planning.

Risk analysis

There are three main risks to delivering this Plan: maintaining engagement and collaboration among stakeholders; identifying appropriate funding for priority actions; and responding to emerging needs or crises. We will seek to manage these risks by:

1. Tasking the Bulortj Children and Youth Network with steering the implementation of the Plan, including the regular review and delivery of actions.
2. Developing annual implementation plans to identify actions that require external funding and those that can be undertaken within existing funding and through the support of key partners.

3. Ensuring stakeholders – including Council – continue to engage middle years children in planning and decision-making.

Appendix 1. Policy context

The development of this Plan has been guided by current data, research and feedback received from our community. It has also been developed within the context of local, State, Federal and international legislation, policies and strategies which has included, but is not limited to the following:

Local	<p>Mount Alexander Shire Council Plan 2021-25</p> <p>Mount Alexander Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25</p> <p>Mount Alexander Shire Council Child Safe Policy 2022</p> <p>Mount Alexander Environmental Strategy, 2015-25</p> <p>Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021-2025</p> <p>Loddon Campaspe Integrated Transport Strategy</p> <p>Mount Alexander Early Years Plan 2022 - 2026</p> <p>Mount Alexander Shire Council – Let’s Play 2014-2024: Investing in Play, 2014</p> <p>Reconciliation Plan 2020 – 2023</p> <p>Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010-2020</p> <p>Youth Engagement Charter 2013</p>
State	<p>Middle Years Literacy and Numeracy Support (MYLNS) initiative 2023, Victorian Government</p> <p>Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence, Victorian Government 2018-21</p> <p>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Victorian Government</p> <p>Child, Youth and Families Act 2005, Victorian Government</p>
Federal	<p>Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children, Australian Government, 2021-2031</p>

	<p>A stronger, fairer Australia: national statement on social inclusion, Australian Government 2009</p> <p>Shaping our Future: A ten year strategy to ensure a sustainable, high quality children’s education and care workforce, 2022-2031, Education Services Australia</p>
International	<p>Child Friendly Cities Initiative, UNICEF 2009</p> <p>Convention of the Rights of the Child, United Nations 1989</p>

Appendix 2: Mount Alexander Shire Council Child Safe Statement of Commitment

Mount Alexander Shire Council is committed to the prevention of harm and abuse to children and young people and will work in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

We recognise our legal and moral responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe from harm and promoting their best interests. We commit to ensuring that a culture of child safety is embedded into our practices and processes and that all Councillors, employees, volunteers, contractors, agency staff, consultants and students over the age of 18 understand that the safety of children and young people is everybody's business.

Every child and young person accessing our organisation and its services has the right to feel and be safe.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and will treat all complaints and allegations seriously and immediately.

We take a risk management approach in line with the Risk Management Policy to minimise or eliminate the potential for child abuse or harm to occur.

We embrace diversity and inclusion and in doing so we recognise that all children and young people, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family background and social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

We commit to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to the provision of a safe environment for children and young people with a disability, as well as other vulnerable groups of children and young people.

We create environments where all children and young people have a voice and are listened to, their views respected and they contribute to how we plan for, design and develop our services and activities. We are committed to the physical, emotional, psychosocial and cultural wellbeing of all children and young people.

All Councillors, employees, volunteers, contractors, agency staff, consultant and students over the age of 18 have a responsibility to understand and activate their role in preventing, detecting, responding and reporting any suspicions of child abuse to the relevant authorities and in maintaining a child safe culture.

We do not tolerate racism or discrimination and expect that Councillors, employees, volunteers, contractors, agency staff, consultants and students over the age of 18 will act on all incidents of racism.

DARREN FUZZARD

Chief Executive Office

DRAFT: Middle Years Plan 2023 - 2026

Summary of feedback received during public exhibition: 12 to 28 May 2023

(Submissions received: 6)



Reference	Submitted By	Response/Action
General comment	Community member #1	<p>Noted.</p> <p>No Changes to be implemented.</p> <p>The Plan includes proposed improvements for playspaces and skate park to be more accessible for middle years children.</p> <p>The Plan includes increased support for all abilities access to sport and recreation activities.</p>
p.6 Bulortj Children and Youth Network	Councillor feedback	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Changes to be made with Communications Team.</p>
p.14 Priority Area 1 "Health and included"	Notes from Bulortj workshop	<p>Noted. Change action 1.1.1 to include reference to friendships</p> <p>"Delivering kids programs that respond to known and emerging needs, such as preparation for puberty, mental health, identity, positive masculinity, social skills, <u>friendships</u> and online safety"</p>
p.14 Priority Area 1 "Healthy and included"	Notes from Bulortj workshop	<p>Noted. Change action 1.1.2 to include reference to play-based opportunities</p> <p>"Exploring ways to expand the activity program, <u>including play-based learning</u> for middle years children at Castlemaine Library"</p>
p.14 Priority Area 1 "Healthy and included"	Notes from Bulortj workshop	<p>Noted. Change action 1.2.1 to include explicit reference to online safety</p> <p>"Coordinating and promoting parental education sessions and programs for our families to improve middle years child wellbeing, <u>online and physical</u> safety and family resilience"</p>

<p>p.16 Priority Area 3 “Safe and supported”</p>	<p>Notes from Bulortj workshop</p>	<p>Noted. Change action 3.2.1 to clarify the work will be done with primary schools, not all schools.</p> <p>“Facilitating opportunities for <u>primary</u> schools to identify and share information, data, learning and funding opportunities, events and other initiatives”</p> <p>Change Council’s role to be “support”</p>
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Acknowledgement of country

Mount Alexander Shire Council acknowledges that the traditional custodians of this land, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples, proudly survive. We acknowledge their continued practise of custom and their close cultural, spiritual, physical, social, historical and economic relationship with the land and waters that make up their Country, which includes Mount Alexander Shire.

Council recognises the Victorian Government's Recognition and Settlement Agreements with both the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council.



Cover artwork: Susan working at Windarring
Artwork this page by Daikota Nelson.

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If you would like this plan in a different format please contact the Social Equity and Inclusion Officer on:

Phone: 03 5471 1700

Email: info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Mayor and CEO's message



Councillor Rosie Annear
Mayor

Mount Alexander Shire Council

I'm thrilled to present Mount Alexander Shire Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027.

From the start, we wanted this plan to be genuine, inclusive, and highly informed by the voices of people within our communities who live with a disability, care for someone with a disability, or provide disability support services.

Fundamental to achieving this, was the formation of the Disability Action Plan working group, who helped guide and shape this plan.

I was fortunate enough to sit on this group, and cannot thank the members enough for being so generous with their time, energy, and passion, and for sharing themselves and their stories so willingly. I learned a lot about the impacts of both visible and invisible disabilities, and the barriers that exist - in our shire and beyond - which are preventing many from having the same opportunities as those who live without a disability.

This plan is a work of collaboration and genuine intention to make our shire a place where everyone feels safe and like they belong, have access to the services they need and the spaces and places they want to be, and equal opportunities to participate in daily life.

It's important to remember that it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that we don't inadvertently create barriers for people living with a disability, through our language, attitudes, movements, places and spaces, and events. To truly achieve an equitable, accessible, welcoming, and safe community for everyone, we all have a role to play.



Darren Fuzzard
Chief Executive Officer
Mount Alexander Shire Council

In my early days at Mount Alexander Shire I had the privilege of experiencing a training session initiated by the Mount Alexander Shire Disability Action Group called The Realistic Race.

The purpose of the training was to give myself, and many other Council staff, a brief but powerful insight into the everyday challenges that people with disability experience in getting about our towns and in being a part of our community. It also showed me how brave you must have to be to feel so vulnerable but to do it anyway.

The many initiatives included in this plan are, I hope, a clear statement about how our organisation will do what we can to help make it easier for anyone with a disability to enjoy being an active, respected member of our community. I also hope it means anyone with a disability doesn't have to feel quite so brave to do that because they know they are in a community that values and cares about them.

The plan was developed in accordance with the Victorian Disability Act 2006 and relates directly to the strategic objectives outlined in our Council Plan 2021-2025. It focuses on the following key areas:

- Equal, respectful, and dignified access
- Opportunities and access to employment, volunteering, education, and economic participation
- Promote inclusion and participation and agency in civic life
- Change the attitudes and practices that lead to discrimination of people with disability
- Wellbeing and Safety

Within these five key areas are nearly 60 actions that will be led by teams throughout Council. In doing so, I know it is our whole organisation's hope that it will deliver genuine, meaningful and achievable results that have positive impacts on the lives of community members with disabilities for many years to come.



Disability Action Plan Working Group Message

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been developed through significant consultation with people with disabilities, their carers and families, and disability advocates and allies. This diversity extends to us, the working group, and as a collective we have been able to bring many interesting and valid perspectives to this plan. Our insights and experiences have helped to create a planning foundation for Council to dispel discrimination experienced by people with disabilities.

As a group we have illustrated how to improve the lives of people with disability, their families and carers so we can all enjoy a fulfilling life without barriers, have equal access and opportunities and feel included to participate in all aspects of life within the Mount Alexander Shire.

We have been very impressed by the commitment of the Council in listening to our voices to help inform a plan that really reflects the needs of the community.

Mount Alexander Shire Council is taking a role in these progressive steps to ensure that everyone within the Shire feels included, safe and welcome in the community.

What is an Action Plan?

An action plan is a way to develop, monitor and evaluate strategies and initiatives that Council undertakes. It's a framework we will use to make sure we're doing the best we can to support our community. This Disability Inclusion Action Plan includes activities that various Council teams will undertake over its four-year lifespan.

Throughout the implementation of this plan we will measure our progress allowing us to work towards our goals and ultimately improving our services and community for everyone.

How this plan was developed

We approached this plan by looking at disability through a model of social inclusion, human rights and social equity.

We worked with members of our Disability Action Plan Working Group, carers, service providers and individuals with disability, and consulted with the community in a variety of ways to make sure our plan reflects the needs of our community.

Members of the Working Group included the Mayor, Council staff, community members with disability, carers and representatives of Castlemaine Library and Sports Focus. The Working Group met regularly discussing research, data and best practice, and shared lived experiences. The group was also involved in workshops and undertaking broad community consultation including surveys and community drop in sessions.

We engaged with the different areas of Council to understand how disability intersects with each team's work and how, at Council, we can all improve. The development and implementation of this plan is a whole of Council commitment.

Most importantly, the foundation of this plan has been developed from all the stories, experiences and voices we heard from our community. It has been a privilege to speak with, listen to and learn from our community. The objectives, actions and outcomes of this plan are a reflection of these interactions.

From our consultation, we established a vision for where we'd like to see Mount Alexander Shire be in the future, and five key areas of focus to help to get us there.



“ We're excited that the Shire is taking this step to ensure that everyone within the Shire feels safe, welcomed and included in the community ”

Feedback from DAP Working Group member

Our Vision

Our shire is a place that embraces diversity and works together to remove barriers to become genuinely inclusive of people with disabilities.

Our shire is a safe place where everybody can be their authentic self without prejudice and where differences and individual successes are celebrated.

A note on language and terminology

Language is a powerful tool that can influence how a person with disability feels and sees themselves and how they are viewed and treated within society. Language can be used to nurture inclusion, change attitudes and foster disability pride.

The language we use should be respectful and considered and not reinforce existing stereotypes and produce unintended barriers. This plan acknowledges that language evolves with time and can be subjective.

In this plan, we were guided by our Working Group as well as the *Inclusive Victoria - State disability plan 2022-2026* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* to use 'person-first' language. Throughout this plan we say 'person with disability.' This terminology understands that a person's disability is not a defining feature of who they are.

However, we recognise that many people with disability have different preferences and may choose to use 'identity-first'

language. 'Identity-first' language puts a person's disability identity before the person, for example you would say 'disabled person'. For many, their disability is a key element of their identity that connects them to a community for which they proudly advocate.

Social model of disability

Definitions of disability are broad and vary across contexts such as medical, social, human rights and charitable. Not one definition works for every person or situation; however, defining disability can be helpful for people to understand medical needs, receive supports and services, and to fight discrimination.

In this plan, we use the term 'disability' in the context of the social model of disability, which describes disability as a social construct. The social model of disability recognises that it is the interaction between people with disability and inaccessible communities and environments that prevents full and equal participation.



Artwork: Guns and Roses by Ned Middleton

Disability in our Community

People with disability have the same rights as other members of the community (*Disability Act 2006*), this includes all disabilities, those that are visible and invisible, temporary or permanent. However, the statistics and anecdotal evidence show how people with disability are treated unfairly, have fewer opportunities and experience poorer health and wellbeing outcomes.

Every person within a community can play a role in reversing these statistics by being inclusive. An inclusive community works at its best when all citizens of the same community have the opportunity to live, work, contribute and participate without barriers or obstacles to do so. An inclusive community brings benefit to everyone.

“

Disability is a normal part of life. Disability is diverse and affects people of all ages. Much disability is not obvious and is invisible

”

Feedback from DAP Working Group member

National 2021



1 in 6 people in Australia have a disability

Half of these require daily assistance with self-care, mobility and/or communication

1 in 2 people over the age of 65 has a disability¹

1 in 4 disabilities are invisible, mental or behavioral²

5 in 10 people with disability are employed compared with 8 in 10 people without disability³

Mount Alexander Shire in 2021



20,253 people called Mount Alexander home

5.7% have disability that require daily assistance with self-care, mobility and/or communication

17% of people provided unpaid care to someone with disability or a chronic illness⁴

44% of people with disability left school before completing year 11 compared with 19% of those without disability⁵

3x People with disability are 3x more likely to experience family violence⁶



Image: Kate from Windarring

¹ ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2021, Census findings.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AIHW, People with disability in Australia 2022 report

³ Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan 2022-2026, Victorian Government 2022, p.14

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021, Census

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan 2022-2026, Victorian Government 2022, p.14

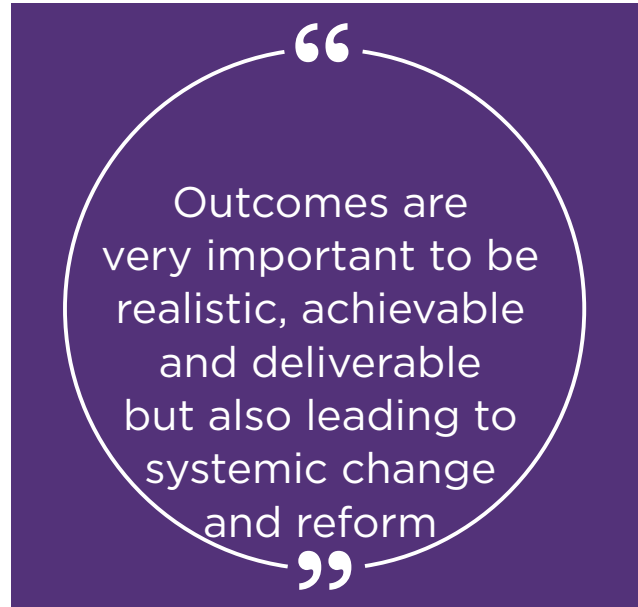
Council's role

We acknowledge that the work we do, and how we do it (our actions), has a direct impact on how people feel about living in our shire.

This plan outlines the steps that will be taken to contribute to our shire being a place where everyone feels safe, feels that they belong and has the opportunity to fully participate in daily activities. We have the ability and responsibility to ensure our policies, programs and services function in an inclusive way that has considered the needs of all people who move throughout the Shire.

This plan focuses on how Council can improve inclusion by removing barriers and increasing awareness, and aims to deliver genuine, meaningful and achievable results. We will look inward at how our organisation operates and behaves, and educate ourselves to improve the way that we work and interact with people. We will also work in partnership with people who experience

disability within our community and other organisations to achieve our vision.



Feedback from DAP Working Group member

Relationship between Disability Inclusion Action Plan and the Council Plan

		Vision: Working together for a healthy, connected shire		
Council Plan	Key Principle	We are engaging genuinely with the community		
	Key Pillar	 A healthy, connected, and inclusive community		
	Key Objectives	Services in our community are accessible and coordinated	Our community is inclusive and connected	
		Our community feels safe, regardless of identity or circumstances	Our community is supported to be physically and mentally healthy	
	Key strategies	Improve accessibility of Council services	Implementing the Disability Action Plan	
		Increase access to inclusive and usable spaces for all seasons	Recognise, support and celebrate the diversity within our community	
Related Plans and strategies	Foundational work	Disability Action Plan		Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
		Climate Change Declaration	Reconciliation Plan	Gender Equality Action Plan

The legislative environment

Local governments have many legal responsibilities to protect the rights of people with disability. Under Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, people have a right to be protected against discrimination due to their disability and councils have a responsibility to uphold this right.

Councils must act consistently with this Charter and comply with a range of Federal and State human rights laws that protect people from discrimination.

A list of local, state, national and international legislation, plans and strategies that relate to this plan is provided in Appendix 1.

Victorian Disability Act 2006

The *Victorian Disability Act 2006*⁷ requires all councils, as state entities, to develop a disability action plan. The Act sets out four key areas that the disability action plan needs to address:

1. reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities;
2. reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment;
3. promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability;
4. achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

These four areas form the basis of the first four Key Areas of this plan, along with a fifth Key Area focusing on wellbeing and safety.

It became evident through our consultation that a focus is required on people's emotional safety and wellbeing to acknowledge the risks many people with disability face due to vulnerable situations they experience, for example being isolated and reliant on others to complete daily activities.



Artwork: Bear by Tegwen Prest

⁷ During the time this plan was being developed the *Victorian Disability Act 2006* was being reviewed by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to ensure that legislation is 'contemporary' and 'fit for purpose'. The Department was considering issues to be incorporated into two separate pieces of legislation relating to safeguards and rights (*Disability Act Amendment Bill*) and inclusion for people with disability (*Disability Inclusion Bill*) and establishing an office of Disability Inclusion Commissioner. The proposed new Act would establish different responsibilities councils have in relation to Disability Action Plans. These requirements were not finalised and legislated at the time of the development of this Disability Action Plan.

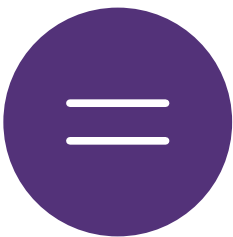


Image: Jason working at Windarring

Our five key areas

The Key Areas of this plan have been informed by our community and internal consultation. The community survey and key stakeholder interviews asked a variety of questions about how Council could improve its services, programs and facilities to be more inclusive of people with disabilities, as well as questions about how included people feel living and participating in our shire.

The following tables list our five Key Areas, their associated objectives and the intended impact we are aiming to achieve in each area. The themes that emerged from our community consultation and subsequently helped to inform each Key Area are also included in these tables.



**Equal,
respectful
and dignified
access**



**Opportunities
and access to
employment,
volunteering,
education
and economic
participation**



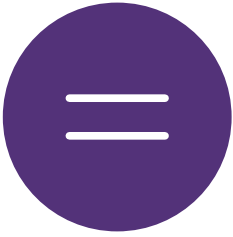
**Promote
inclusion,
participation
and agency in
civic life**



**Change the
attitudes and
practices
that lead to
discrimination
of people with
disability**



**Wellbeing and
Safety**



Key area 1: Equal, respectful and dignified access

What we heard from our community

Many people with disability and their carers do not feel equal to other people in our community. They feel as though infrastructure is designed without an understanding of their diverse needs.

Our community told us the difficulties they have traveling on uneven or unsealed paths, navigating around planted up nature strips and traders' items, and the limitations of how far you can travel due to the limited number of accessible paths. Accessible car parking was a significant concern, with the location, size, quantity and safe passage to the footpath highlighted as areas to be assessed.

Objectives

- Our policies, procedures and guidelines support disability inclusion and accessibility.
- Our workforce has the knowledge and skills to deliver projects, programs and services that have considered disability inclusion and accessibility.
- Our Council is committed to supporting accessible and inclusive projects.
- Council buildings, facilities, parks and infrastructure are inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Improve access to Council information.
- Improve the way we facilitate the Accessible Parking Scheme.
- Support clear access to businesses.

Intended impact

Our community has equal access to all areas of Council, including facilities, services and information.

“

Largely, this community is kind and if I do participate, it's ok. Getting there independently is the main issue as the pathways and roads are difficult to use.

”

Feedback from community survey respondent



Key area 2: Opportunities and access to employment, volunteering, education and economic participation

What we heard from our community

Council needs to lead as an employer of people with disability and take a leading role in supporting and educating businesses and organisations on the value of being inclusive of people with disability. Additional support is often required for those with a disability to succeed in their economic and education endeavours.

Objectives

- Create new opportunities for people with disabilities to join the Mount Alexander Shire Council (MASC) workforce.
- MASC will be a leader in disability inclusive employment.
- Support businesses to become successful disability employers.
- Champion Disability Enterprise.

Intended impact

Our community understands the value of diversity in the workforce and supports entrepreneurship and personal agency.

“

Employers and the broader community need not just focus on a person’s capability to achieve work or education outcomes, but the whole person and what they contribute to the work or education space over and above their role.

”

Feedback from disability service provider



Key area 3: Promote inclusion, participation and agency in civic life

What we heard from our community

Our community provided considerable feedback about what makes a person feel like they belong and how they are able to connect with their community. This feedback also related to people’s experiences of feeling respected and seen for who they are, not what their disability says about them. This extended to attitudes as well as physical access to spaces and information. People want to feel a part of something and have a purpose.

Objectives

- Council run events are accessible.
- Sports clubs, social clubs and committees are inclusive of people with a disability.
- Community events and activities are accessible.

Intended impact

Our community will feel valued, purposeful, connected and included.

“

See me, not just my disability

Having a valued role in the community
not just a recipient of service

”

Feedback from community survey respondents



Key area 4: Change the attitudes and practices that lead to discrimination of people with disability

What we heard from our community

Diversity of disability and the impact of overlapping of identities (e.g. gender, sexual orientation and age) needs to be understood and celebrated. There is a need for education and training in disability awareness, mental health and other specific disabilities to promote inclusion

Objectives

- Advocate for change.
 - Our workforce is educated, flexible and respectful.
 - Our community is educated, inclusive and respectful.
 - We will recognise and celebrate disability inclusion.
 - Support businesses, events & tourism operators to be more accessible and inclusive.
 - Support not for profit organisations to become accessible and inclusive.
-

Intended impact

Our community is welcoming and celebrates diversity and achievements. Our people are proud of our community.

“

People don't understand my disability, so my needs are not met and I can't engage

”

Feedback from community survey respondents



Key area 5: Wellbeing and Safety

What we heard from our community

Council programs and services need to be inclusive of people of all abilities. Our playgrounds need to be welcoming, fun spaces with better fencing and amenities so people feel comfortable and safe. People want more opportunities to connect with services, activities and each other. Older people and people with diverse needs require more consideration regarding their vulnerabilities.

Objectives

- Council run social support programs and youth programs are inclusive of people with neurodiversity.
- Parents and carers of children living with disability are informed and connected.
- Children of all abilities can play in a safe and welcoming environment.
- Accessible and affordable housing.
- Improve support for young carers.
- Support people with disabilities to plan for emergencies.
- Highlight the increased risk of family violence for people with disabilities.
- Advocate for older adults with disabilities.

Intended impact

Our community feels equal and safe, and is physically, mentally and socially healthy and resilient.

“

Crossing the road between the Botanical Gardens and the Mill is fraught and dangerous

More awareness and accommodations in place in community spaces, events, and facilities specifically for people with Autism and serious mental illness

”

Feedback top from Windarring participant

Feedback bottom from community survey respondent



Artwork: Golden Point by Lorraine Le Plastrier

Lorraine Le Plastrier

Measuring Progress

In accordance with the *Victorian Disability Act (2006)* a progress report will be provided each year in Council's Annual Report. In addition, Council Officers will meet at regular intervals with the Disability Inclusion Advisory Group to discuss implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and a progress report will be provided annually to this group.

This will ensure that progress and outcomes associated with this plan are measured, and that continuous improvement opportunities are sought.

Resourcing this Plan

Responsibility for implementing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan rests with all areas of Council.

Funding opportunities will be sought to assist with implementing projects, training and engagement of any consultants.



Artwork: Free Found signs installation by Tobias Richardson

Action Plan



Key Area 1: Equal, respectful and dignified access

Impact - Our community has equal access to all areas of Council, including facilities, services and information.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
1.1 Our policies, procedures and guidelines support disability inclusion and accessibility.	1.1.1 Develop an Implementation, Governance and Reporting structure for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.	Community Partnerships	1	A Disability Inclusion Advisory Group (DIAG) and internal working group convened.
	1.1.2 Conduct an audit of policies, procedures and guidelines creating a priority list of those that directly impact accessibility and inclusion and identify areas of improvement to increase accessibility, inclusion and safety for people with disability.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	1	Policies regularly reviewed and updated.
1.2 Our workforce has the knowledge and skills to deliver projects, programs and services that have considered disability inclusion and accessibility.	1.2.1 Develop Disability Impact Assessment (DIA) toolkits.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	3 & 4	All relevant staff have an understanding of DIAs, Universal Design Principles and DDA requirements, and the confidence to put this into practice.
	1.2.2 Provide training to staff on how to conduct a DIA.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	3 & 4	
	1.2.3 Provide training to staff on Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance, Universal Design principles and the Charter of Human Rights.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	1 - 4	

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
1.3 Our Council is committed to supporting accessible and inclusive projects.	1.3.1 Ensure accessibility is incorporated into Capital Works project designs.	Engineering	1 - 4	Council has demonstrated significant investment in accessibility improvement.
	1.3.2 Advocate and seek funding for major projects, including an All Abilities playground and a Changing Places toilet facility.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	
1.4 Council buildings, facilities, parks and infrastructure are inclusive of people with disabilities.	1.4.1 All designs for new or improved parks, community facilities or streetscapes will include a Disability Design Review.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities & Infrastructure	1 - 4	Disability Design Reviews are embedded into Council practice.
	1.4.2 Council's Project Management Framework to include Disability Design Reviews.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 & 2	
	1.4.3 Using the Building Accessibility Audit, engage the Disability Inclusion Advisory Group to provide input that will guide Council's ongoing capital works delivery.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1	Priorities established and reviewed annually with input from the DIAG.
	1.4.4 All new and upgraded public toilets will include an accessible toilet, and be promoted on the National Public Toilet Map.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities & Economy and Culture	1 - 4	An increase to the number of accessible toilets in the Shire.
	1.4.5 Engage with the DIAG to seek input into the prioritisation of new footpaths and renewal works.	Engineering	1 - 4	Works always consider accessibility.
	1.4.6 All new builds at recreation reserves to include the construction of accessible pathways to all elements of the facility including the playing surface.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	Improved access to community assets.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
	1.4.7 Explore opportunities to upgrade existing high use paths in parks to improve accessibility at the time of renewal.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	
	1.4.8 Undertake parking study of the accessible parking spaces in our townships.	Engineering	3 & 4	Accessible parking options meet the needs of our community.
	1.4.9 Explore ways to improve the safety of road crossing options for pedestrians within renewal and upgrade works on council managed roads.	Engineering	1 - 4	Crossing options have considered safety for people with disabilities.
1.5 Improve access to Council information.	1.5.1 Ensure the Council website aligns with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.	Communications and Customer Service	1	New website will include accessible features and use Plain English.
	1.5.2 Provide training to employees to use Plain English in public facing communications.	People and Culture & Communications and Customer Service	1,2,3,4	Consistent and clear Council communications.
	1.5.3 Investigate new opportunities to distribute information offline, including electronic notice boards at key locations around the shire.	Communications and Customer Service	1 & 2	More residents know what is going on and have an opportunity to participate.
1.6 Improve the way we facilitate the Accessible Parking Scheme.	1.6.1 Develop a communication tool to raise awareness of the Accessible Parking Scheme.	Development Services & Communications and Customer Service	1 & 2	The community is properly informed.
1.7 Support clear access to businesses	1.7.1 Raise awareness of DDA compliance with businesses, and update Local Laws permit conditions to better reflect DDA compliance.	Development Services & Economy and Culture	1 & 2	Businesses are supported to comply with the law.
	1.7.2 Support MASDAG to update the 'Disability Access Guide for the Mount Alexander Shire' and distribute to local businesses.	Community Partnerships	1 & 2	



Key Area 2: Opportunities and access to employment, volunteering, education and economic participation

Impact - Our community understands the value of diversity in the workforce and supports entrepreneurship and personal agency.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
2.1 Create new opportunities for people with disabilities to join the Mount Alexander Shire Council (MASC) workforce.	2.1.1 Review recruitment and onboarding processes for placements, traineeships, volunteer and employment positions to identify areas for improvement.	People and Culture	1 & 2	Our workplace is attractive and accommodating to people with disabilities.
	2.1.2 Work in partnership with key stakeholders to support pathways to employment at MASC for people with disability.	People and Culture	1 - 4	
2.2 MASC will be a leader in disability inclusive employment.	2.2.1 Use the outcomes of the staff survey to identify opportunities to improve the wellbeing of employees with disability.	People and Culture	2 & 4	The results of the staff survey will demonstrate satisfaction from employees with disabilities.
	2.2.2 Requests for workplace adaptations are considered and implemented where appropriate.	People and Culture	1	More requests for adaptations are fulfilled.
	2.2.3 Coordinate and promote training opportunities to support those that supervise employees with disabilities.	People and Culture	1 - 4	Training sessions included in the yearly training calendar.
2.3 Support businesses to become successful disability employers.	2.3.1 Provide opportunities to increase the capacity of local businesses to be inclusive employers.	Economy and Culture	1 - 4	Businesses are engaged with people with disabilities and continue to make adjustments as required to retain employees.
	2.3.2 Promote external supports and funding opportunities for businesses to be more inclusive.	Economy and Culture	1 - 4	
2.4 Champion Disability Enterprise.	2.4.1 Explore ways to support people with disabilities to be self-employed or sole traders.	Economy and Culture	1 & 2	Increased exposure of success stories.



Key Area 3: Promote inclusion, participation and agency in civic life

Impact - Our community will feel valued, purposeful, connected and included

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
3.1 Council run events are accessible.	3.1.1 Review the Council Events Guidelines to consider how Council run civic events can be more accessible.	Communications and Customer Service	2	Civic events are inclusive of all people.
3.2 Sports clubs, social clubs and committees are inclusive of people with a disability.	3.2.1 Champion all abilities access to sport and recreation activities.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	Increased participation and better health outcomes.
	3.2.2 Explore ways the Community Grants Program can better support accessibility initiatives and projects.	Community Partnerships	3	Community leadership and capacity increased.
3.3 Community events and activities are accessible.	3.3.1 Update the Event Toolkit to include advice on running sensory friendly events.	Communications and Customer Service	1	More venues and events are attended by people with disabilities.
	3.3.2 Explore ways the Events Grants Program can better support accessible and inclusive events.	Communications and Customer Service	1 & 2	Events are inclusive of more people.
	3.3.3 Investigate opportunities to encourage sensory friendly events for children and adults in our shire.	Communications and Customer Service	1 - 4	Our shire is more neurodiverse friendly.
	3.3.4 Promote the benefits of having a “quiet hour” to businesses and service providers.	Community Partnerships	3	



Key Area 4: Change the attitudes and practices that lead to discrimination of people with disability

Impact - Our community is welcoming and celebrates diversity. Our people are proud of their community

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
4.1 Advocate for change.	4.1.1 Advocate for structural and systemic change to other levels of Government, including for better transport options, NDIS outcomes and more localised health services.	Executive Team	1 - 4	Council uses its influence to amplify the voices of the community.
4.2 Our workforce is educated, flexible and respectful.	4.2.1 Provide staff with Disability Awareness training.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	1 - 4	Staff are knowledgeable and confident to work with the disability community.
	4.2.2 Provide specialist training to staff, including: Mental Health First Aid training, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	2 - 4	
	4.2.3 Explore opportunities to conduct a 'Realistic Race'.	Community Wellbeing	2	Evaluation survey shows an increase in awareness. Changes are reflected in work practices and attitudes.
4.3 Our community is educated, inclusive and respectful.	4.3.1 Increase awareness of neurodiversity and other 'invisible disabilities' within the broader community.	Community Partnerships	1	Deliver two Library Talks sessions.
	4.3.2 In partnership with local media, develop a 'Community Awareness' campaign that will raise awareness and educate the community on the diversity of disability.	Community Partnerships	3	The community is better informed.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
4.4 We will recognise and celebrate disability inclusion.	4.4.1 Work in partnership with community organisations to hold an event for International Day of People with a Disability in the shire.	Community Partnerships	1,2,3,4	People with disability feel personally valued, publicly valued and celebrated.
	4.4.2 Promote the Accessibility category of the Mount Alexander Shire Business Awards.	Economy and Culture	1 & 3	An increase in businesses nominated in the category.
4.5 Support businesses, events & tourism operators to be more accessible and inclusive.	4.5.1 Support the distribution of MASDAG's 'Guide to Organising Accessible Events' and the 'Disability Access Guide for the Mount Alexander Shire'.	Economy and Culture & Communications and Customer Service	1 - 4	Businesses have increased awareness of the economic and social benefits of inclusion.
4.6 Support not for profit organisations to become accessible and inclusive.	4.6.1 Provide tailored workshops and training on how to increase awareness of the value of being an inclusive connected organisation.	Community Partnerships	2 & 4	Community leadership and capacity increased.



Key Area 5: Wellbeing and safety

Impact - Our community feels equal and safe, and is physically, mentally and socially healthy and resilient.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
5.1 Council run social support programs and youth programs are inclusive of people with neurodiversity.	5.1.1 Programs are designed to consider the needs of people with neurodiversities.	Community Partnerships & Community Wellbeing	1 - 4	More people can participate in activities.
5.2 Parents and carers of children living with disability are informed and connected.	5.2.2 Continue to present and expand the Parent Talk series to include neurodiversity topics, and encourage parent support networks.	Community Partnerships	1 - 4	Parents and Carers know where to turn for help.
5.3 Children of all abilities can play in a safe and welcoming environment.	5.3.1 As part of the playground audit, review the level of accessibility and safety for children with disabilities.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1	Playgrounds are safer and more accessible.
	5.3.2 Explore opportunities to increase the security of existing playgrounds.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	
	5.3.3 Explore opportunities to seek funding for the first All Abilities playground in our shire.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	All funding opportunities have been explored.
5.4 Accessible & affordable housing.	5.4.1 The needs of older residents and people with disability are considered in any Council led housing initiatives and advocacy work.	Housing Solutions Broker & CEO	1 - 4	People with a disability have opportunities to live in homes that are fit for purpose.
5.5 Improve support for young carers.	5.5.1 Investigate ways to support young carers to participate in after school activities, recreation and social events.	Community Partnerships	1 - 4	We better understand the needs of Young Carers in our shire.
5.6 Support people with disabilities to plan for emergencies.	5.6.1 Deliver the Emergency Planning for At-risk Populations (EPAP) program.	Community Partnerships	2 & 3	People with a disability and their carers know what to do in an emergency.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
5.7 Highlight the increased risk of family violence for people with disabilities.	5.7.1 Develop dedicated material highlighting the increased risk of violence against women with disabilities, during the 16 Days of Activism campaign.	Community Partnerships	1,2,3,4	Increased community understanding of the risk of violence towards women with disabilities.
5.8 Advocate for older adults with disabilities.	5.8.1 Raise awareness of the increased needs for people with dementia from CALD and LGBTIQ+ communities.	Community Wellbeing	1 - 4	Intersectionality with disability is acknowledged and addressed.
	5.8.2 Deliver programs designed to improve digital literacy to increase access to information and services.	Community Wellbeing	1	The digital divide is reduced.



Artwork: Wombat by Tegwen Prest



Artwork: Eucalyptus Leaves by Lorraine Le Plastrier

Appendix 1: Legislation, policies and strategies

A list of the legislation, policies and strategies relevant to the Mount Alexander Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027

Mount Alexander Plans, Policies and Strategies

Active Transport Strategy 2023-2033

Outdoor Trading Policy 2023

Pathways - Asset Management Plan 2020

Council Plan 2021-2025

Child Safe Policy 2022

Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Open Space Asset Management Plan 2022

Commonwealth and State Legislation and Standards

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Victorian Disability Act 2006

Victorian Charter of the Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Carer Recognition Act 2010

Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Victorian Mental Health Act 2014

Access to Premises Buildings Standards 2010

National Construction Code 2022

International

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006

Appendix 2:

Glossary of terms

Ableism

Discrimination or prejudice towards people with disability.

Accessibility

The practice of making information, activities or environments easy to understand and navigate, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible.

Advocacy

Giving active support to an idea or cause.

Changing places

Adult changing facilities specifically designed for people who are unable to use the standard accessible toilets. These facilities include an adult-sized changing table, hoist, peninsula toilet and more circulation space. They provide more comfort and dignity for changing and disposing of incontinence products.

Disability Pride

Disability pride can mean being proud of who you are and embracing your disabled identity. It can also mean feeling confident and not hiding your disability.

Discrimination

The unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as ability, race, gender, age or sexual orientation.

Diversity

The differences between people in factors such as age, caring responsibilities, cultural backgrounds, disability, gender, Indigenous background, sexual orientation and socioeconomic background.

Inclusion

When people feel valued and respected, and have the resources, opportunities and capabilities they need to learn, work, have a voice and participate fully in life.

Intersectionality

An approach to understanding how different parts of a person's identity can overlap, exposing them to compounding forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Some of these intersecting identities include gender, ability, Indigenous background, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, faith, socioeconomic status and age.

Participation

When people join in with others and become involved. This may include having some decision making or planning control over an event or activity or joining in an activity that was planned by others.

Personal Agency

Personal agency is personal responsibility for who we are, what we experience, what we do about that experience, and how we shape our world to give us more of the experiences we want.

Universal Design

Design that's usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Designing and creating programs, services, tools and facilities that are useable, without modification, by the widest range of people possible. It involves considering the situation and the people who will use what is being created to design inclusive solutions. Universal design is not a product; it is the process of good design, which focuses on the needs of people.

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release. ABS Website, accessed 7 March 2023.

Australian Government Job Access - Driving disability employment www.jobaccess.gov.au/node/77746

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AIHW, People with disability in Australia 2022 report aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/about

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Disability Inclusion Bill Exposure Draft engage.vic.gov.au/disability-act

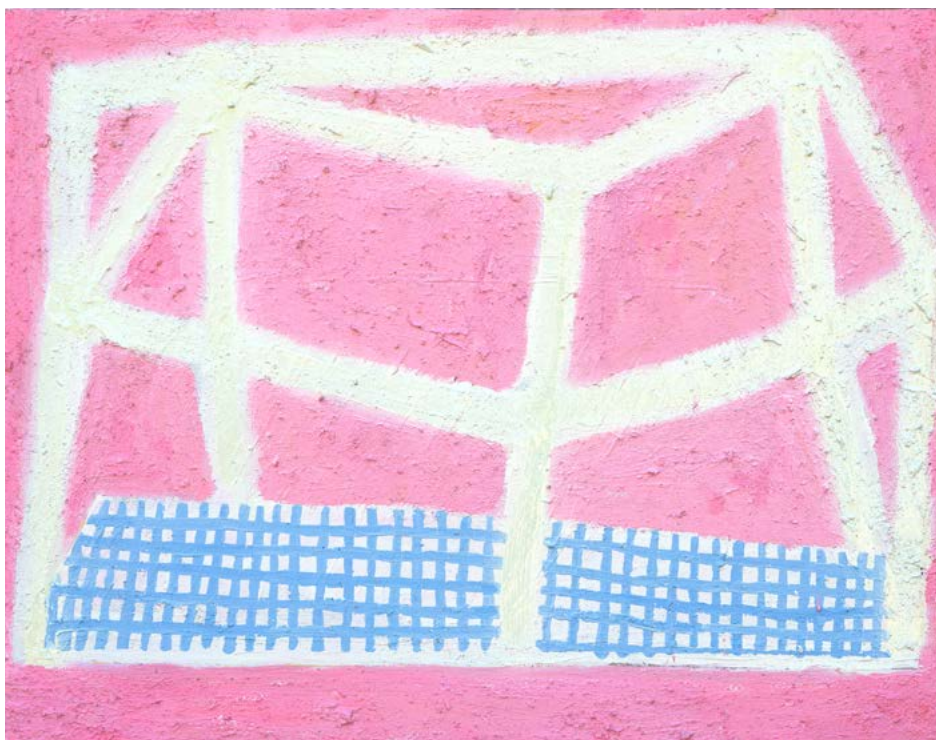
Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022-2026) vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan/our-language/social-model-disability

MASDAG (Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group), Disability Access Guide for the Mount Alexander Shire

PWDA, People with Disability Australia pwd.org.au/

World Health Organization who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health

Youth Affairs Council Victoria yacvic.org.au/ydas/resources-and-training/together-2/values-and-ideas/two-models-of-disability/#TOC-2



Artwork: Memory Cell by Tobias Richardson

About the artists

Ned Middleton

Local Castlemaine artist Ned Middleton was born in central Victoria and after 10 years living in South Australia returned to live in Castlemaine in 2006, completing his primary and secondary schooling in the area. Ned lives with Down syndrome and is very involved in artistic activities in Castlemaine, including dancing at movement zone, local radio content production, and Pub Sing appearances.

Ned's paintings are a result of nearly three years of studio practice at Lot19. Ned's two exhibitions, Lot19 Gallery 2022 and The Taproom, Castlemaine Fringe 2023 have been a huge success, and have spurred Ned on, with plans for exhibitions, commissions and other exciting projects. Working alongside artist Tobias Richardson, Ned paints bright, larger than life paintings of his favourite pop stars. Ned applies a raw, unedited style to his painting, tapping into his inherent feel for colour and line, and his love of music. His works are bold, tough and unique.
May 2023

Tegwen Prest

I was born in 1981. I have lived in Strangways since '82 with my family and animals. I always love animals and began drawing and painting them with mum and dad. I used to ride Gypsy the horse into Newstead and paint with Karyn Pierce. Next I painted at Windarring and now I drive into Lot 19 and paint with Toby.

I have recently had an exhibition in Merchants Campbell's Creek.
May 2023

Tobias Richardson

I have been a visual artist since the mid 80s, first studying and exhibiting in artist-run spaces in Sydney, then California and the Northern Territory and currently Castlemaine.

I have a studio-based arts practice of drawing, painting, sculpture and installation. My subject matter consists of themes of memory, history, abstraction, travel and psychology. Built environments underpin it all.

My practice also includes community arts through my teaching and support for local artist-run spaces.
May 2023

Lorraine Le Plastrier

Lorraine loves the creative development of ideas - ideas that take form in the visual arts, music and poetry. Her deep love of Country inspires much of her work and imagery - the mysteries, wonders, patterns and stories.



Artwork: Olivia Newton John by Ned Middleton

Mount Alexander Shire Council
Cnr Lyttleton and Lloyd streets
Castlemaine VIC 3450

Phone: (03) 5471 1700

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DRAFT: Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027**Summary of feedback received during public exhibition: 12 May to 9 June 2023**

Submissions received: 6 (includes the working group feedback) and 36 items for consideration

DOC/23/25712

Item no.	Reference	Submitted By	Response/Action
1	Pg.7	Working group	Noted: Diagram included.
2	Pg.12-20	Working group	Noted: Reviewed the actions table and current.
3	Pg.21	Working group	Noted: Data has been reviewed and removed as an appendix. A selection of statistics have been chosen by relevance and date to be used in the body of the plan under ' <i>Disability in our Community</i> ' pg. 6.
4	Pg.21	Community member	The data is correct but agree that the way it is presented could be confusing. The quantity and quality of presented data has been reviewed and the action taken has been to remove all data / statistics that don't add any value to the plan and remaining data has been integrated into the plan itself giving it context (see pg. 6).
5		Community member	Noted First thought: " <i>I suggest a part of inclusion and participation, is to contribute and initiate (self-determine) as an equal in society.</i> " Added to Area 2 " <i>Impact - Our community understands the value of diversity in the workforce and supports entrepreneurship and personal agency</i> ". Added the word 'agency' into the title of " <i>Key Area 3: Promote inclusion, participation and agency in civic life</i> ". Noted Second thought: <i>An additional objective could be 'Connecting to other to disability groups in regional and metro Melbourne?</i>

			Idea of developing a working relationship with external organisations will be considered where appropriate. An additional objective is not appropriate for this plan.
6		Working group	From the initial review of the plan it was discussed to use text from the body of the plan and use as content for the CEO, Mayor & WG message. The 'Thank you' was deleted but it will be added back within the Mayor's message.
7	Pg.6	Working group member	Text added under Disability inclusion in our Community <i>"People with disability have the same rights as other members of the community (Disability Act 2006), this includes all disabilities, those that are visible and invisible, temporary or permanent."</i>
8		Working group member	Noted: working with our Graphic Designer to include graphics.
9	Pg.17	Working group member	Noted: discussed and added text into Action 4.1.1 <i>"Advocate for structural and systemic change to other levels of Government, including for better transport options, NDIS outcomes and more localised health services.</i>
10	Pg. 9 & 16	Working group member	Agree and word connected added to text in title added to read <i>"Impact - Our community will feel valued, purposeful, connected and included"</i> .
11	Pg.12	Working group	Noted: the concerns of the working group were discussed during the last working group meeting. Explanations were given of the reasoning behind the development of the Outcomes and Indicators table and why targets and percentages are not used. Generally accepted by the group.
12	Pg.17	Working group member	Noted: No change, not an exhaustive list.
13	Pg.18	Community member	Added to indicator <i>"People with disability feel valued, publicly valued and celebrated."</i>
14	Pg.18	Community member	Noted: will be considered at the time of scheduling training.
15	Pg.17	Working group	Noted: Objective 4.2 and 4.3. the word kind has been replaced with the word ' respectful '.
16	Pg.18	Working group	Noted: added <i>'Work in partnership with community organisations to hold an event for International Day of People with a Disability in the shire'.</i>

17	Pg.18	Working group	Noted: added ' <i>Provide tailored workshops and training on how to increase awareness of the value of being an inclusive connected organisation</i> '.
18	Front Cover	Community member	Noted: discussions were already happening about utilising a photo of a community member instead.
19		Community member	Noted: Housing and parking are considered in Action 5.4 and 1.4.8
20		Community member	<p>a) Covered in Item 18</p> <p>d) Covered in item 11</p> <p>e) Baseline data will be gathered from the many actions of this DIAP.</p> <p>f) The act of working in partnership and co-design is stipulated throughout the plan.</p> <p>g) This will be considered depending on resourcing available.</p> <p>h) Through community consultation it was deemed that this plan would be used to bring a focus on all invisible disabilities but with an emphasis on intellectual and neurodiverse.</p>
21		Community member	Priority will be given to those staff whose role requires an understanding of Universal Design principles and DDA compliance.
22			Noted: comment is under consideration.
23			Works to meet the required standards for accessibility.
24			Wheelchair and mobility aid users are considered within the definition of pedestrian.
25			Noted that the term reads like jargon.
26			Noted: comment is under consideration.
27			Noted: comment is under consideration.
28			Baseline data will be gathered from the many actions of this DIAP

29			Noted: comment is under consideration.
30			Noted: comment is under consideration.
31			Noted: comment is under consideration.
32			Noted: comment is under consideration.
33			Noted: comment is under consideration.
34			Flagged as a vulnerable group who doesn't have a voice. All carers are considered throughout the DIAP.
35			Noted: comment is under consideration.
36			Noted: comment is under consideration.
			Content hadn't changed. The original submission was considered during the drafting the plan.



Partnership Agreement 2023 - 2025

Between

Mount Alexander Shire Council and MAINfm

mountalexander.vic.gov.au
info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
(03) 5471 1700

Cnr Lyttleton and Lloyd Sts
P.O. Box 185 Castlemaine VIC 3450
Jaara Country

abn 12 966 477 062

1. Purpose and Scope

The parties entering into and bound by this Partnership Agreement (Agreement) are Mount Alexander Shire Council and MAINfm

This Agreement is a statement of the shared principles and working arrangements that support a 2 year annual funding allocation of \$5,000 (totalling \$10,000) made to MAINfm by Council in its 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 budget.

This document is not legally binding. It is a statement of intent.

2. Term of the Agreement

This Agreement is current from 31 July 2023 until 30 June 2025.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. Mount Alexander Shire Council agrees to:

- a) Provide a two-year annual budget allocation of \$5,000 to MAINfm from the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 annual budget (totalling \$10,000) to support their operational budget.
- b) Acknowledge the partnership in publicity including website, social media, media releases, print and electronic documents.

3.2. MAINfm agrees to:

- a) Complete milestone reporting and acquittal processes for each annual reporting period to Council for the annual \$5,000 allocations.
- b) Provide updates to Council on the outcomes resulting from the annual \$5,000 allocations.
- c) Support Council via in-kind support, including advertising, promotion of community consultation opportunities, events and activities occurring across Mount Alexander Shire.
- d) Acknowledge the partnership in publicity in Mount Alexander Shire, including website, social media, media releases, print and electronic documents via use of the Mount Alexander Shire Council logo.

3.3 Together, Council and MAINfm will:

- a. Interact in a courteous, respectful and supportive manner, appreciating the differences between local government and community organisations for example by understanding and acknowledging the approval process timeframes of Council.
- b. Maintain regular, informal Officer contact to maximise opportunities for collaboration and information sharing.
- c. Ensure that contacts across both organisations are mapped and aligned with the agreed priorities for collaboration.
- d. Commit to review this Partnership Agreement before its end date, 30 June 2025.
- e. Participate in formal partnership meetings every six months to discuss areas for collaboration and to review the operation of the Partnership Agreement.

4. Dispute Resolution

- 4.1. Both partners will work constructively in a spirit of goodwill, recognising that the position of each might at times differ. If one partner believes the substance of this Agreement is not being fulfilled, it will initiate discussions with the other party to resolve the issue or concern.
- 4.2. If the parties are unable to reach a satisfactory resolution to a dispute, the matters may be referred to a specially convened meeting with senior members of each organisation, or their nominees, for final determination. Such final determination may include an agreement to terminate this Agreement.

5. Termination

This Agreement shall only be terminated by:

- a) Mutual agreement between the parties; or
- b) 30 days after the receipt of written notice of termination given by either party to the other.

Signed for and on behalf of:

MAINEfm

ABN:

Name:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

Mount Alexander Shire Council

ABN: 12 966 477 062

Name: Lisa Knight

Title: Director Corporate and Community Services

Signature:

Date:

Graffiti Management Policy

Document Type:	Council Policy	TRIM reference:	DOC/23/24115
Document Status:	Draft		
Policy Owner (position):	Director Infrastructure and Development		
Internal endorsement required:	Not Applicable		
Final Approval by:	Council		
Date approved:	Click here to enter a date.		
Evidence of approval:	Council – Refer to Notes in TRIM		
Version Number:	Choose an item. 1	Frequency of Review:	5 years
Review Date:	Click here to enter a date.		
Date rescinded:	Click here to enter a date. OR <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable		
Related legislation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 • Local Government Act 2020 • Planning and Environment Act 1987 		
Related strategic documents, policies, or procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan 2021-2025 • Community Engagement Policy, 2021 • Mount Alexander Shire Planning Scheme • Mount Alexander Shire Council General Local Law, 2020 • Public Art Policy, 2022. 		

Date	Version Number	Details of Version	Modified by
7/07/2023	1	Draft	Director Infrastructure and Development

1. Purpose

Mount Alexander Shire Council is committed to providing safe and welcoming public spaces. Graffiti can impact on people's perception of safety, feelings of inclusion, and may be considered offensive. The presence of graffiti may also increase feelings of fear and disorder in the local community and can distort perceptions of the actual level of crime and safety.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a coordinated approach to managing, preventing and removing unauthorised graffiti within the Shire of Mount Alexander.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Graffiti and street art placed on all Mount Alexander Shire Council managed fixed assets without permission.
- Graffiti and street art placed on private property without permission of the owner, where the graffiti is visible from a public place and deemed to have a significant impact on public amenity.

This policy does not apply to:

- Graffiti and street art that is authorised under Mount Alexander Shire Council Public Art Policy, 2022.
- Graffiti and street art placed on private property with the permission of the owner, and complies with planning and heritage regulations.
- Fixed assets that are not owned or maintained by the Mount Alexander Shire Council such as: poles, cabinets, post boxes, telephone boxes, substations, bus stops, signs and some roads and bridges. The removal of illegal and offensive graffiti is the responsibility of the organisation that owns or manages the fixed asset.

3. Policy

This policy seeks to improve overall public amenity through employing a number of interventions to manage graffiti within Mount Alexander Shire.

3.1. Prevention

Prevention is considered the most effective approach for discouraging graffiti. Combined action including education, urban and environmental design, partnerships and public art projects form part of a broader approach to the management of graffiti.

Council will:

- Consider graffiti management during the planning and design of buildings and public place fixed assets. Including the use of graffiti resistant materials, protective coatings to assist with removal and installation of security cameras.
- Activate public spaces through public art installations in line with Council's Public Art Policy, 2022.
- Through urban and environmental design, develop safe and welcoming public spaces that improve perceptions of safety, encourage crime prevention and provide opportunity for positive social engagement.
- Engage and/or partner with the residents, community organisations, Victoria Police and public authorities to
 - improve community awareness and understanding of the collective responsibility for the management of graffiti
 - improve the recording and registration of graffiti within Mount Alexander Shire
 - engage in partnerships where relevant to support a coordinated response through collective action.

3.2. Removal

The timely recording and removal of graffiti is paramount to reducing exposure time, the impact on public amenity and to discourage recurrence.

Council will:

- Remove graffiti on Mount Alexander Shire Council managed fixed assets in a timely manner, according to Council resources and funding availability. Specific timeframes are dependent on the location and if the graffiti is deemed offensive.
- Prioritise graffiti removal on Mount Alexander Shire Council managed fixed assets where graffiti is visible from a public place, including on building frontages, high profile public spaces and hotspot areas where graffiti regularly occurs.
- Remove graffiti in line with heritage conservation principles, and Council asset management plans.
- Replace surfaces of Mount Alexander Shire Council managed fixed assets where graffiti cannot be removed (i.e. due to being etched) according to Council resources and funding availability.
- Remove graffiti from public art assets managed by Mount Alexander Shire Council with due care, and in consultation with the commissioner and/or owner of the work if specialist information is required.
- Require private property owners to remove graffiti where it is visible from a public place and has a significant impact on public amenity (i.e. is deemed offensive). In such circumstances the cost of graffiti removal will be borne by the property owner.

3.3. Enforcement

The enforcement of graffiti management is regulated under the Victorian Graffiti Prevention Act 2007, which defines illegal graffiti as a criminal offence.

Council will:

- Utilise section 17 Unsightly land of Mount Alexander Shire Council General Local Law 2020, to enforce the removal of graffiti from private property, after notification and warning process have been followed.
- Collaborate with Victoria Police to provide graffiti management data such as graffiti images, CCTV footage (where available), graffiti hotspot locations, graffiti tagger IDs, and graffiti removal costs.

3.4. Collaboration

Within Mount Alexander Shire there are many private and public organisations that own and maintain fixed assets. A collaborative approach between organisations enables effective graffiti management across the shire.

Council will:

- Collaborate with organisations to encourage a consistent approach to graffiti management across all fixed assets located within the Shire.

4. Definitions

A table of terms and their definitions as they relate to the policy

Term	Definition
Graffiti	Unauthorised writing, drawing, marking, scratching or otherwise defacing property by any means so that the defacement is not readily removable by wiping with a dry cloth. Graffiti can include images, writing, posters, stickers and stencils, but is often word based and can span complex or abstract letter based designs called tagging.
Fixed assets	Are long term tangible pieces of property or equipment
Offensive graffiti	Is obscene in nature and would offend a reasonable person. It often includes defamatory remarks or slurs about race and gender and includes offensive words, phrases or graphics.

Private Property	Means any fixed asset within the municipality that is not owned or managed by a public authority.
Public Art	<p>Is art work located in public spaces that enriches our experience of those spaces. Public art can include forms or approaches that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• installations integral to a place, including cultural markers such as Reconciliation Stones, or environmental art• stand-alone, three-dimensional public art such as sculptures• 'landmark' artworks conceived from the outset as a destination or cultural icon• features applied to an exterior surface, such as mosaics, murals or reliefs• creative activation that may be transitory in nature, such as digital art.
Public amenity	The pleasant or satisfactory aspects of a public space which contribute to its overall character and the enjoyment of residents or visitors.
Public organisation	An institution or entity, usually controlled by the government, which provides public services for the society.
Street art	<p>Street art is a two-dimensional, visual art form presented on surfaces in public places. It can include murals, graffiti stencilled painting, paste up or sticker art, video projection, sculpture or material surface treatments.</p> <p>For the purposes of this policy, illegal street art is encapsulated into the term graffiti.</p>

Active Transport Strategy 2023-2033

Working towards a safe, sustainable, accessible and connected network to encourage our community to become more active, more often.



Acknowledgement of country

Mount Alexander Shire Council acknowledges that the traditional custodians of this land, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples, proudly survive. We acknowledge their continued practise of custom and their close cultural, spiritual, physical, social, historical and economic relationship with the land and waters that make up their country, which includes Mount Alexander Shire.

Council recognises the Victorian Government's Recognition and Settlement with both the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council.



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Mayor's message



Councillor Rosie Annear
Mayor
Mount Alexander Shire
Council

Growing up in Castlemaine, I lived at the top of a hill, with a mum who didn't drive. Suffice to say, I spent the majority of my childhood getting from here to there on foot.

I don't think I appreciated the benefits of walking everywhere at the time, but there were so many: health, fitness, wellbeing, connection to people and nature. More than these, though, I learned the shape of my town and community, its context, how places connected to each other – and this knowledge and appreciation has served me well over the years.

These days, with kids of my own, and a busy life, I don't have as much time for active transport as I'd like. But we still walk, cycle, scoot and skate when we can.

The Active Transport Strategy acknowledges the many direct and indirect benefits of active transport. It also demonstrates Council's commitment to promoting and improving ways for our community to engage in active transport in the shire, regardless of age or ability.

We are grateful for the amount of input and engagement that community members provided to inform the development of this strategy. We appreciate the passion there is within our community to improve and extend active transport opportunities in the shire.

In developing this strategy, we tried to find a happy medium between aspirational and achievable. We wanted the document to set out our intentions and directions regarding active transport over the next ten years (and beyond). We were also mindful of the limitations and challenges we face as a small local government area, and the needs and expectations of our community. We considered it vital that the strategy be flexible enough to ensure we could respond to changing Council and community needs and priorities, and pursue opportunities as they arise.

I am pleased to present Council's Active Transport Strategy 2023-2033, and look forward to being guided by it in the years ahead. I'm confident that Council and community can work together to achieve improved active transport opportunities for all.

CEO's message



Darren Fuzzard
Chief Executive Officer
Mount Alexander Shire
Council

As the saying goes, it's not the destination but the journey that matters. And that concept is really at the heart of our new Active Transport Strategy.

No matter our circumstances, we can all find reasons not to leave the car at home and instead walk, ride or scoot to where we need to be.

By delivering on this strategy over time and doing our part to make the Shire's roads, footpaths and trails easier and safer for all to enjoy, it is our hope that we can help reduce some of those reasons.

We also hope that through helping more people to know and consider the personal benefits of having active transport more often in our daily lives, many more of us will choose to do so.

As always, community input has helped guide and develop this strategy together with its goals and the initial actions that we have committed to.

The nature of the strategy means that we will need to continue to draw on the wisdom and passion of our community over time as we determine priority projects amongst the many possibilities that exist within the resources available to us. So we thank you in advance.

I look forward to seeing more people, more active, more often.



Purpose

The purpose of this document is to detail the strategy for improving active transport participation within Mount Alexander Shire over the next decade and beyond.

The strategy drives focus on three key outcome areas: raising awareness around active transport options through advocacy, education and communication; increasing participation in active transport to enhance community health and wellbeing outcomes through active transport activities; and planning and delivering a safe, connected and sustainable network.

The scope of the strategy covers all modes of active transport so that we can address the needs of as many active transport users as possible. This includes:

- A broad range of community outcomes that can be achieved through greater participation in active transport
- Community perspectives and local data to support decision making
- The intersection with other Council plans and strategies reinforcing a holistic perspective in what we do
- Engagement with community organisations and programs to deliver positive active transport outcomes
- An evaluation and review framework to measure outcomes against key actions.



What is active transport?

This Active Transport Strategy acknowledges and incorporates a wide variety of active transport activities supporting our community members to travel to key destinations whilst reducing the reliance on motor vehicles.

For the purposes of this strategy, Active Transport describes walking, cycling and the use of mobility devices (eg. scooters, wheelchairs, walking aids) and small wheeled transport (e.g. skateboards, skates) on paths, roads & trails, for the whole or part of the journey.



Active Travel

Getting from place to place through physical activity for the whole or part of the journey. For example to/from school, work or shops.

Active Living

Physical movement that is part of everyday life and contributes to physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Active Recreation

Physical, non competitive activities engaged in for the purpose of relaxation, health and wellbeing or enjoyment.



Key themes

This strategy is informed by the implementation of the Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010-2020, advances in transport safety, recreation and infrastructure standards, guidance from peak body organisations, as well as being informed by community input.

The following themes have been identified, which have informed the development of the strategy goals and future direction.

Safety - For active transport participants safety is a key concern, and an overarching principle that has informed the development of this strategy. The increased provision of safer active transport infrastructure is a strong enabler of active transport participation. The creation of a safe environment builds confidence in all age groups and all levels of ability, allowing young people the opportunity to learn and build their skills, families to transit and move together and more mature participants the time and opportunity to maintain their movement. Providing safer and more connected infrastructure promotes active transport participation across all ages, as does providing facilities that promotes increased accessibility. Path or route conditions and increased options for secure end of trip facilities could break down barriers for all modes of active transport



Public and Community Transport

Connection – plays an increasing role in encouraging and facilitating active transport participation. Active transport users wish to increase the connection with and use of public and community transport as a component of their journeys. This is evident more so, in the connection of the shire's outer lying townships to Castlemaine and the services provided within our urban centres (employment, school, shopping, medical etc.).

Actions such as advocating for improved public transport scheduling and route connections, increasing end-of-destination facilities at public transport hubs to cater for increasing patronage or improved accessibility to public transport services with active transport equipment (bicycles, scooters, prams, wheelchairs, etc.) will be considered within the strategy delivery.

New Residential Areas - Mount Alexander Shire, like many regional areas, is experiencing population growth, and has planned for this with new residential development areas in McKenzie Hill, Campbells Creek South and Harcourt. Connecting new residential and commercial developments to existing networks, or having them inform new routes, and providing the infrastructure to encourage safe active transport participation is a key area which this strategy aims to address.

Emerging modes of Transport – new and emerging modes of transport, especially mobility scooters, cargo bikes and e-bikes requires specific consideration for route infrastructure and capacity. They also require consideration of end of trip facilities that provide increased security for user property, to avoid this becoming a barrier to participation.

Health and Wellbeing - the engagement in active transport activities is seen as a positive influence on people's mental health, and physical health and wellbeing. Connection to other people, and to the natural environment are intrinsically linked to an individual's wellbeing. While facilities that enable people to socialise and interact with others provides the building blocks for enhancing community cohesion.

Intergenerational consideration - whilst active transport may start with the young, many of the shire's participants are older adults. Benefits to remaining active during middle to later life are magnified, particularly in terms of health and social connections, and often provide different perspectives on active transport from purely a fitness or transport option.

Creating a network that caters for all abilities and ages will provide increased active transport participation opportunities, and deliver better outcomes (health & wellbeing, social connection, environmental and financial) for more community members.



Vision

Mount Alexander Shire Council worked closely with the community in 2020 to produce the following 10-year vision which represents our aspirations for the next decade:

In 2031, our community is connected to each other, and comes together to build and celebrate an inclusive, creative shire. We are a healthy community that values the natural beauty of the Djaara Country we live on. We know that preserving our natural environment means living sustainably and caring for country. We are protecting our shire from the threat of climate change by working together at the local level. We are a welcoming community where everybody has access to services and supports, and opportunities for housing, education, employment and creative and social pursuits. We're known as a vibrant place which draws upon its creative spirit and shared heritage. We're building a place where everyone can enjoy the beauty, history and friendliness of the shire.

The Community Vision 2021-2031 of a connected, inclusive, healthy community continues to inspire the development of current and future Council strategies and plans including the Active Transport Strategy 2023-2033.

The Active Transport Strategy Vision 2023-2033

Inspired by the Community Vision and developed in consultation with the community, the following vision guides all aspects of the Active Transport Strategy.

“We will work towards creating a safe, sustainable, accessible and connected network to encourage our community to become more active, more often”

Our vision:

“We will work towards creating a safe, sustainable, accessible and connected network to encourage our community to become more active, more often”



Strategy goals

The strategy is guided by three overarching goals that will help achieve the Community Vision and increase active transport participation across our shire. A number of action areas have been defined that will guide the achievement of each goal. Collectively the three goals respond to the key themes which were identified during the development of the strategy.

Goal 1 - Increase active transport awareness

Supporting improvement in active transport outcomes will require strong advocacy, engaging communication and comprehensive education programs. These actions will strive to achieve increased participation through a greater understanding of accessibility needs, safety requirements and behaviour change.

The consideration of the social determinants of a health model when identifying active transport routes for community members for whom active transport may be a necessity and not a recreation activity will further inform our future actions.

Action Area One

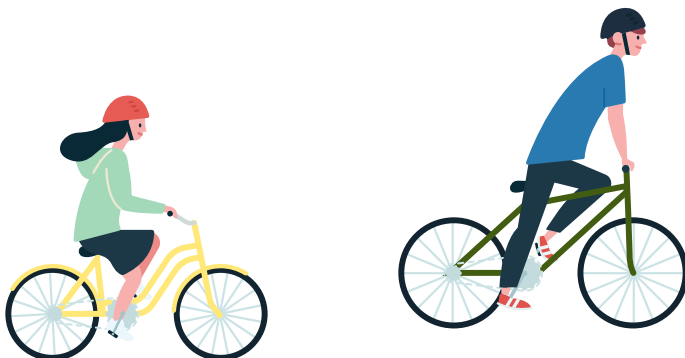
Advocate to reduce active transport barriers for participation

Action Area Two

Establish communication platforms to support and promote active transport awareness

Action Area Three

Support programs which improve active transport opportunities across the shire



Goal 2 - Develop and deliver safe, connected and sustainable active transport infrastructure

The provision of infrastructure standards (Appendix One) relevant to the purpose of an active transport route will create greater connection opportunities and deliver a safer environment to promote increased participation. The establishment of active transport routes that when combined form a wider active transport network within, and between townships (Appendix Three) will enable the long-term aspiration of providing an environment where people feel confident, safe and encouraged to participate in active transport activities across the shire.

This will be achieved by seeking innovative and courageous solutions in the delivery of sustainable and accessible transport routes that address intergenerational requirements of active transport participation. While also reducing or eliminating (where possible) the interaction with motor vehicles. Providing and maintaining quality infrastructure across the breadth of the network is intrinsic to delivering this goal.

Action Area One

Active transport routes enables safe connection throughout the network

Action Area Two

Active transport infrastructure renewal and development promotes a safe and efficient network

Action Area Three

Accessibility and sustainability improvements are considered within the active transport network

Goal 3 - Enhance community health and wellbeing outcomes through active transport activities

Driving positive active transport health and wellbeing outcomes through increased participation in active transport activities is at the core of this strategy. Council and community partner programs are important facilitators in the creation and delivery of active transport activities for groups of people who may not have the means, confidence, support or opportunity to participate.

Health and environmental benefits are widely promoted as key benefits of active transport activities, as participation in active transport activities can provide social connection, friendship, support and motivation for vulnerable groups in the community. Direct and indirect support of community active transport participation programs (through this strategy) will provide flow on benefits to individuals, and the broader community.

Action Area One

Implement innovative solutions to increase active transport participation

Action Area Two Implement measures to evaluate active transport participation

How will Council deliver this strategy?

It is recognised that enabling increased active transport participation requires a long-term perspective building existing active transport networks and informing societal change. In responding to this need, the three strategic goals have been designed to support Council's vision of working together for a healthy, connected shire.

Action areas outlined above have been identified for each strategic goal. These will be achieved through the establishment of annual action plans, detailing individual actions, time frames and resource requirements. Annual action plans will be informed by the current and future Council Plans and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans. Aligning annual action plans to each four year Council term will also guide how active transport outcomes

are integrated into Council's Annual Plan and other Council initiatives and strategies, whilst informing external advocacy to support delivery of the strategy.

This strategy will support, and be supported by, other Council plans and strategies which commit to and guide prioritisation and decision making in areas which effect active transport infrastructure and participation.

The following outlines the alignment of the Active Transport Strategy with key strategic plans such as the Council Plan, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, the Annual Council budget, Federal and State Government strategies and plans, and related Council Strategies and plans.



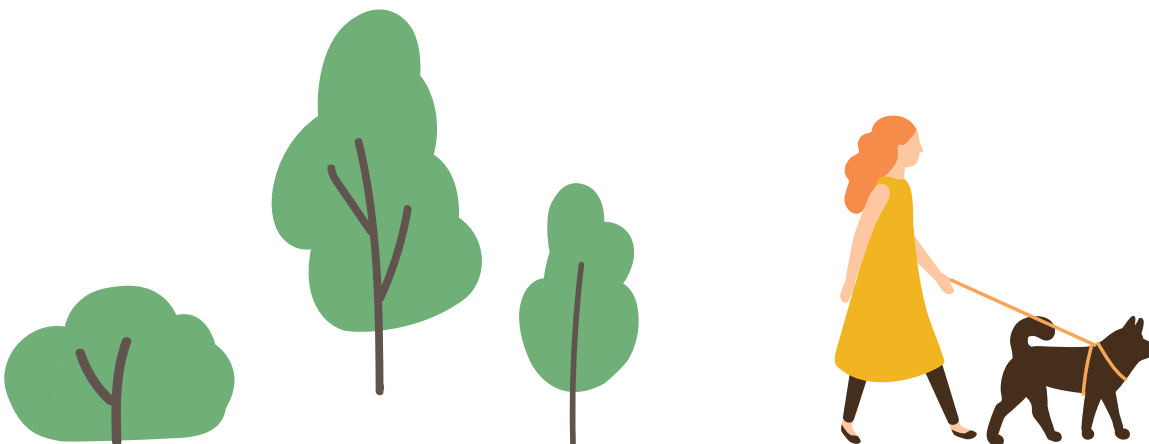
Evaluation and review

An Evaluation and Review Framework (Appendix Two) is critical for monitoring delivery against action areas, and track performance against goals and targets developed after baseline data is finalised. The framework establishes how evidence will be captured, while specific indicators are contained in annual action plans.

A key aspiration of the strategy is to provide an ongoing evidence base for informed decision-making. Supporting data will be collected through community engagement to ensure consideration is given to providing active transport opportunities for all, as well as monitoring the achievement of agreed actions.

Data and information collected through the development of the strategy and ongoing evaluation of active transport participation will be analysed and retained to provide the platform for future discussion and decision making.

Central to the evaluation will be aligning the review periods to key Council events, future Council Plans and strategies. The strategy will be reviewed, and action plans developed annually in line with the Council term.



Strategic alignment

The following plans and strategies have influenced the review and development of this strategy.

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Public Open Space Strategy 2016
- Castlemaine Urban Waterways Management Plan 2018
- Castlemaine Streetscape Plan and Design Standards 2020
- Maldon Streetscape Plan and Design Standards 2018
- Mount Alexander Planning Scheme
- Mount Alexander Shire Council – Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality 2020-2025
- Resourcing Recreation 2019
- Infrastructure Asset Management Plan – Part B Pathways -2020
- Open Space Asset Management Plan 2021
- Climate Change Strategy 2023
- Road Management Plan

This strategy has also been informed by other key strategies and plans in development relating to access and inclusion, sustainability, economic development and strategic planning.

References and acknowledgements

- Mount Alexander Shire Council Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010-2020
- Active Living Census 2019
- Strava Metro data
- Victorian Strategic Cycling Corridors Overview Document – October 2019
- Department of Transport
- Healthy Loddon Campaspe

Community members

Council would like to acknowledge the individuals, community groups and project working groups who provided valuable information which helped to guide and develop the strategy, goals and actions, along with the many community members who took part in engagement activities.



Appendix One: Active Transport infrastructure considerations

The Active Transport network will establish transport routes that when combined form a wider network provide an environment where people feel confident, safe and encouraged to participate in active transport activities.

The network will comprise of a variety of infrastructure components responding to the varied needs of the community and will be informed by:

- defining the 'main purpose' of use for each route
- connecting education facilities within the Shire
- enhancing linkages to public transport options and central business districts across the shire
- accessibility to key community assets such as hospitals, and public meeting places like parks and recreation reserves
- the recognition of the physical connection and social interaction that active transport provides

Importantly the active transport network will provide the vision for where active transport journeys prevail. Where a combination of infrastructure standards will strive to create a safe and efficient network, whilst meeting the needs of participants across their various activities. Creating levels of infrastructure to support and enhance participants experience will lead to greater participation and enjoyment. Traffic stress, for cycling in particular, demonstrates the correlation of the provision of safer infrastructure and participation confidence.

The following provides a brief outline of the infrastructure elements that will be included within the collective active transport network. The elements listed are a guide, and will evolve and be complemented by future infrastructure innovations that are yet to be developed.

Ideally, infrastructure is delivered to the highest available standard (eg. shared pathway), but in each case this will be

determined by a large number of factors including but not limited to: environmental conditions and capacity, level of activity, available resources and community benefit.

Footpath network

Sealed footpaths

Sealed footpaths for active transport participants. May or may not abut a roadway or include kerb, channel and crossings. Provide structured routes for pedestrians, with surface treatments enabling greater accessibility than unsealed paths. Sealed footpaths provide direct and legible routes from residential areas to retail/commercial centres, schools, community amenities and local attractions. They typically have surface treatments (including tactile indicators) that enhance safety for people with visual and mobility impairments.

Unsealed footpaths

Unsealed footpaths for active transport participants. Surface remains in natural state, formed by informal use.

Urban network

Shared Pathway

Shared pathways in road-reservations that are physically protected from vehicles; can be one or two-way (i.e. on one or both sides of the road); aimed at providing optimal safety conditions for active transport participants including less experienced cyclists (e.g. primary school students); would provide sealed pathways in neighbourhoods/streets where footpaths are scarce or non-existent.

Separated Cycle Lanes

Dedicated pathways in road-reservations where cycling lanes abut a vehicle lane (road shoulder); cycling lanes typically provided on both sides of road; both lanes separated by on-road markings and, where appropriate, flexible bollards; on-road markings have 'thickness' to promote

safe/legal distance between cyclists and passing vehicles; aimed at improving road safety for more experienced cyclists using busier streets and arterials (e.g. Barker and Forest Streets).

Shared lanes

Shared lanes integrate vehicle and cyclist movements into a single lane. Traffic levels and vehicle speeds in shared lanes are reduced to enhance the real and perceived safety of cyclists. On street markings and signage make it clear that vehicles and cyclists have an equal right to use the street. Crucially, reducing vehicle speeds not only enhances cyclist safety but can also enhance the safety of pedestrians including children and older people and people with a disability. Shared lanes will generally be utilised by cyclists with a high level of confidence

Trail network

A combination of sealed and unsealed tracks and paths providing access through and between townships, including shared pathways that follow creeks or other natural features (i.e. not in road reservations). These can be sealed or unsealed depending on local conditions (e.g. expected usage, local character or engineering requirements), but typically sealed in urban areas and unsealed outside of urban areas, provide access to, and alternative connections within, the urban network.

This network will provide the majority of connections between townships within the Shire. The benefit of a trail network

is separation from motor vehicle traffic which will provide the optimal safety environment for participants.

There are many formal and informal trails throughout the Shire. Connection to and between these networks will provide greater opportunities for active transport activity.

Town Centre Zones

Town centre zones see the greatest volume of traffic, the highest interaction between active transport users and motor vehicles. Safety and infrastructure considerations in these zones remains paramount.

Footpaths that provide maximum accessibility for pedestrians and mobility assisted movement, road and gutter crossings that are clearly marked and visible to motor vehicle traffic, traffic calming measures (reduced speed limits, raised pedestrian crossings, speed humps etc) and informative wayfinding signage all contribute to a safer active transport environment.

Provision of end of destination facilities such as secure bicycle storage (for a wide range of cycles in use - including cargo bikes, electric bikes etc) will assist in the promotion of active transport as a valid and viable alternative to motor vehicle use within these zones.

Enhancements, and greater access, to public transport infrastructure will also play a role in supporting active transport journeys.



Image: *Level of traffic stress for cycling.* The Mineta Transportation Institute

Appendix two: Strategy evaluation framework

Goals	Monitoring and evaluation questions	How we will answer the monitoring and evaluation questions
1. Increase Active transport awareness	What advocacy has Council undertaken to reduce active transport barriers for participation?	<p>Record details of advocacy submissions, partnerships and meetings.</p> <p>Record advocacy actions developed with the Community Active Transport Reference Group.</p> <p>Record external partnerships driving active transport participation.</p> <p>For the internal review of the strategy, conduct an audit of Council documents and decisions to understand how active transport considerations are being integrated (e.g. Council reports; new strategies, action plans and policies; major projects documentation; media releases, human resource documentation).</p>
	Have communication platforms been established which support and promote active transport awareness?	<p>List key platforms, programs and outcomes which have been delivered.</p> <p>Record communication delivered from the Community Active Transport Reference Group.</p>
	Has there been Council support provided to programs which improve active transport opportunities across the shire?	<p>Record any resources Council provides local groups and organisations for active transport initiatives.</p> <p>Record of partnerships established to promote engagement in active transport.</p>

Goals	Monitoring and evaluation questions	How we will answer the monitoring and evaluation questions
2. Develop and deliver safe, connected and sustainable active transport infrastructure	What has Council done to encourage connection throughout the network?	List key programs and advocacy, renewal and upgrades, and outcomes delivered and link to connection impacts. Conduct an annual review and updating of township aspirational active transport network maps.
	How has Council's active transport infrastructure renewal and development promoted a safe and efficient network?	List relevant renewal and upgrades delivered, and link to safety and efficiency impacts. List key advocacy approaches to State Government infrastructure managers that support a safe and efficient network.
	How has Council delivered accessibility and sustainability improvements within the active transport network?	List relevant upgrades delivered, and link to accessibility and sustainability impacts. List key advocacy approaches to State Government infrastructure managers that support improved accessibility.
3. Enhance community health and wellbeing outcomes	What innovative solutions has Council explored to increase active transport solutions?	Details of active transport initiatives including programs, infrastructure trials, traffic calming measures, etc.
	What measures has Council implemented to evaluate active transport participation?	Record data collected and data collection initiatives. Where relevant, include the number of participants for programs and initiatives.



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Aspirational Active Transport Network Maps



Aspirational Active Transport Network Maps

These maps provide reference for potential future routes and infrastructure development. Routes and infrastructure elements will be subject to review and may change throughout the life of this strategy.

Connections between townships are a key aspiration for increased active transport participation. Whilst there are already some existing trails, significant detailed work will be required to explore new off road connections between townships.

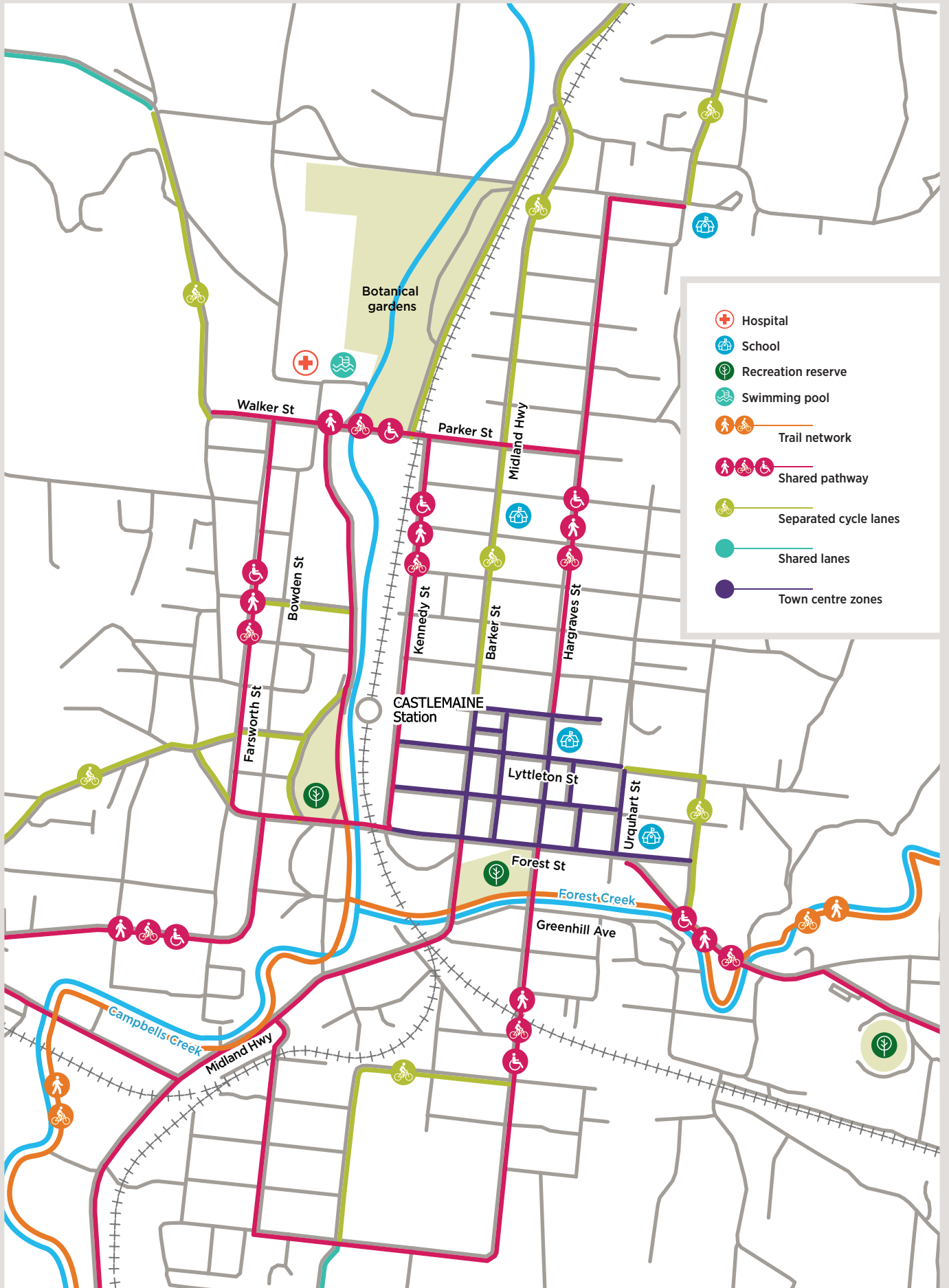
Note: The Sealed Footpath Network and Trail Network have not been mapped in detail. This will require deeper analysis as part of the Initial Action Plan.



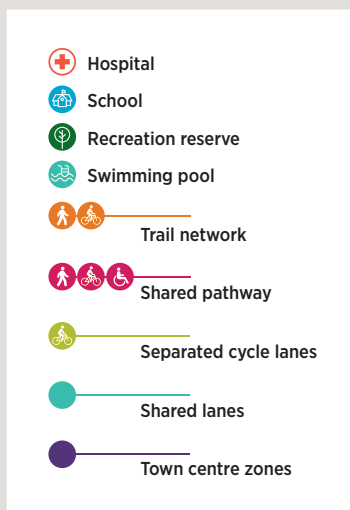
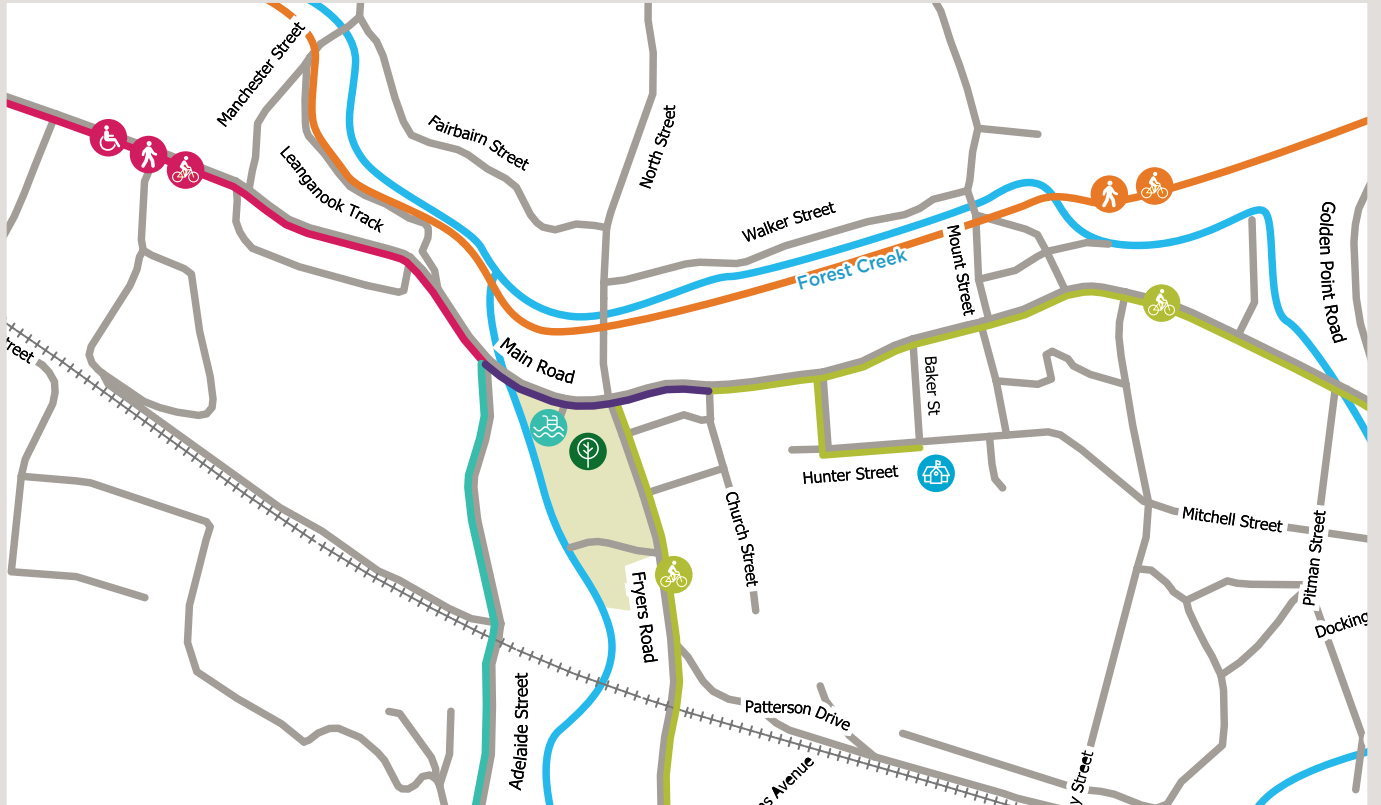
Campbells Creek



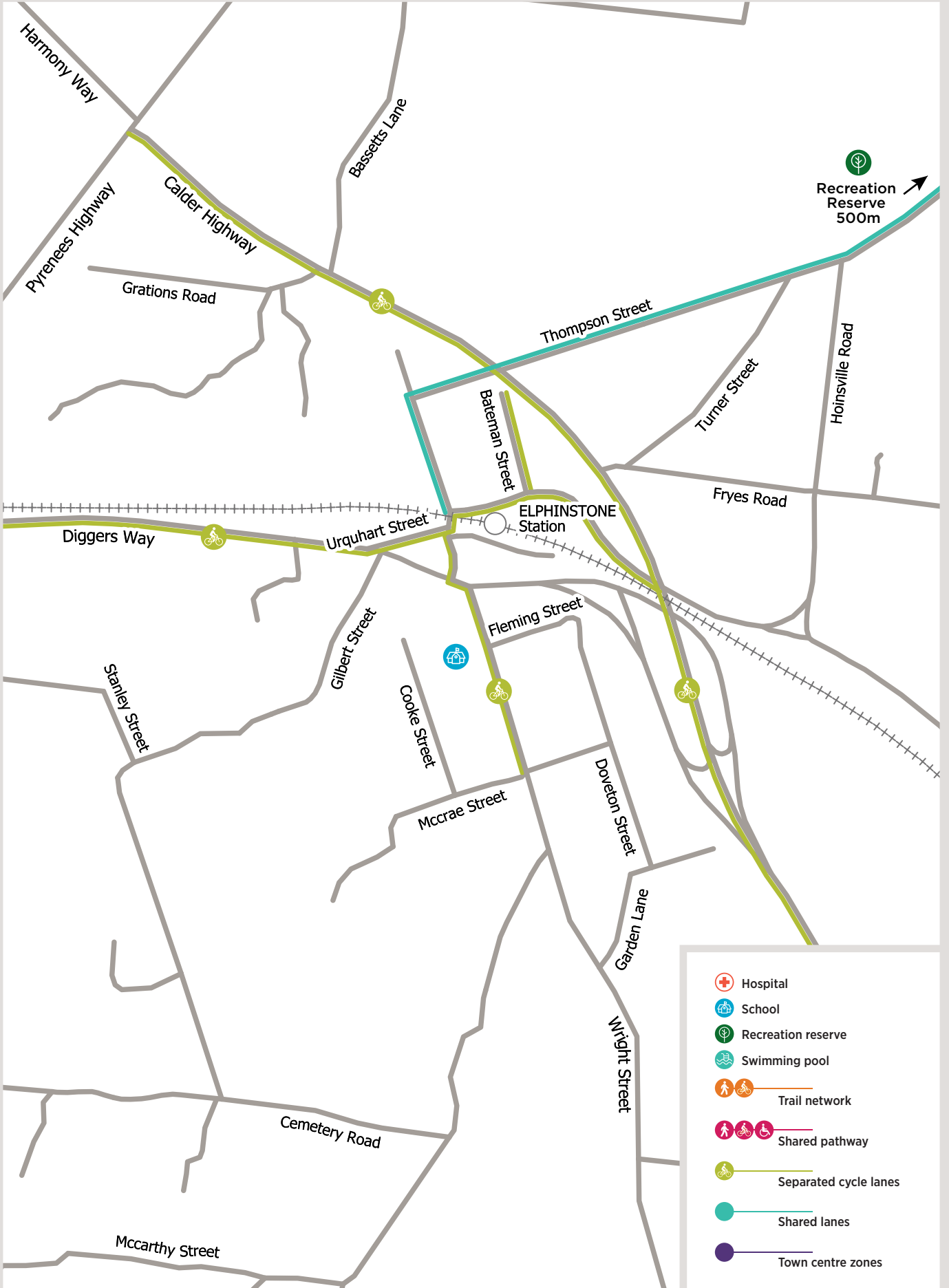
Castlemaine



Chewton



Elphinstone



Harcourt



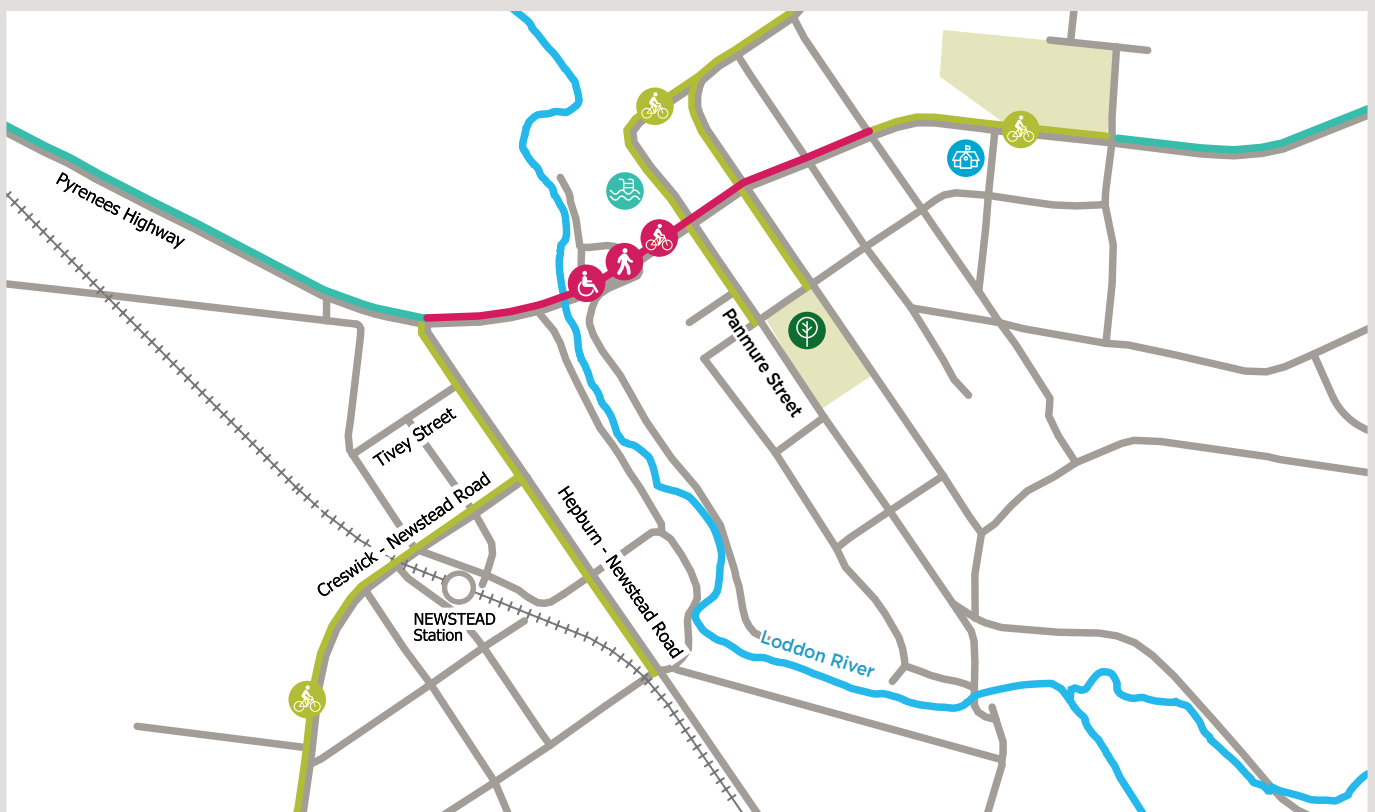
Maldon



McKenzie Hill



Newstead



Taradale



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Initial Action Plan

Active Transport Strategy First 20 months of strategy implementation



Initial actions	Establishment of working groups	Indicators
ATS Internal	Establishment of an Internal Working group to guide implementation of the Active Transport Strategy.	Internal Working Group established, terms of reference defined, quarterly meetings undertaken.
ATS External	Establishment of an External Working Group to support ongoing community input into Active Transport activities and outcomes.	External Working Group established, terms of reference defined, 6 monthly meetings undertaken. Action Plan activity specific workshops and meetings undertaken.
Goal 1		
Goal 1 - Increase active transport awareness		
G1. Action Area 1		
Action 1 - Advocate to reduce active transport barriers for participation		
1.1.1	Advocate for greater coordination of scheduling between public transport providers to assist with improved active transport connections.	Investigation report into public transport scheduling throughout the Shire. Recommended actions to improve connections incorporated into future annual action plans..
1.1.2	Advocate for the State Government's Strategic Cycling Corridors to be aligned to this strategy.	State Cycling Corridor mapping to be revised and updated to align to Mount Alexander Shire aspirational mapping routes.
G1. Action Area 2		
Action 2 - Establish communication platforms to support and promote active transport awareness		
1.2.1	Embed an active transport mapping tool into the MASC website, to be utilised for the identification, review and rectification of issues and opportunities identified by the community. Promotion campaign to build awareness of the mapping tool and active transport benefits within the community.	Active transport mapping tool included into MASC website. Community awareness communication campaign to be completed.
G1. Action Area 3		
Action 3 - Support programs which improve active transport opportunities across the shire		
1.3.1	Support, directly and indirectly, community based active transport programs across the shire.	Investigation report to identify community programs which support active transport education and participation. Identify program requirements for incorporation into future annual action plans and possible future grant funding/ annual budget bids.
Goal 2		
Goal 2 - Develop and deliver safe, connected and sustainable active transport infrastructure		
G2. Action Area 1		
Action 1 - Active transport routes encourage connection throughout the network		
2.1.1	Complete review of existing maintenance and asset renewal program for existing tracks, trails, and paths - to include condition audit, accessibility and climate impact to inform investment considerations.	Complete an analysis of existing footpath network and provide recommendations for future network enhancements to improve active transport safety and participation, aligned with Pathways Asset Management Plan.

2.1.2	Support and advocate to State and Federal Governments for off-road routes providing connections between townships.	Seek support and funding to explore off road connections between townships to enhance safer network connections for active transport participation.
2.1.3	Internal working group and external working group to finalise draft aspirational active transport network maps in consultation with community.	Active transport network maps for all townships to be finalised, including identification of offroad linkages between townships.
G2. Action Area 2	Action 2 - Active transport infrastructure renewal and development promotes a safe and efficient network	
2.2.1	Advocate to State and Federal Governments for funding to implement safety recommendations from existing traffic studies.	Seek State and/or Federal funding to implement safety recommendations from existing primary school traffic studies which align to active transport participation.
2.2.2	Advocate for the Department of Transport and Planning to incorporate active transport infrastructure renewal and upgrade requirements into their annual program.	Provide Department of Transport with active transport projects for consideration.
G2. Action Area 3	Action 3 - Accessibility and sustainability improvements are considered within the active transport network	
2.3.1	Review potential accessibility and sustainability enhancements to network, and consider implementation into action plan.	Investigation report on accessibility and sustainability enhancements to improve active transport network for improved participation and environmental outcomes. Recommendations to be incorporated into future annual action plans and possible future grant funding/annual budget bids.
Goal 3	Goal 3 -Enhance community health and wellbeing outcomes through active transport activities	
G3. Action Area 1	Action 1 - Explore innovative solutions to increase active transport participation	
3.1.1	Evaluate accessible communication methods (audio, visual, mobility and language) to support the participation needs of all active transport users.	Investigation report on desired communication outcomes to improve active transport network accessibility, supported by MASDAG. Recommendations to be incorporated into future annual action plans and possible future grant funding/annual budget bids.
G3. Action Area 2	Action 2 - Implement measures to evaluate active transport participation	
3.2.1	Establish a consistent data capture program to create baseline data, for relevant active transport activity and benchmarking.	Baseline data captured for adopted participation programs: - National Ride to School day, National Walk to Work day, Bicycle Network Supercounts Create and distribute an annual active transport participation survey.

Active Transport Strategy

Community Consultation Overview

Contents

- Initial Community Consultation Report – February 2023
- Post Exhibition feedback SHAPE page results – July 2023

Active Transport Strategy

Community Consultation Report

February 2023

Overview -Data Collection

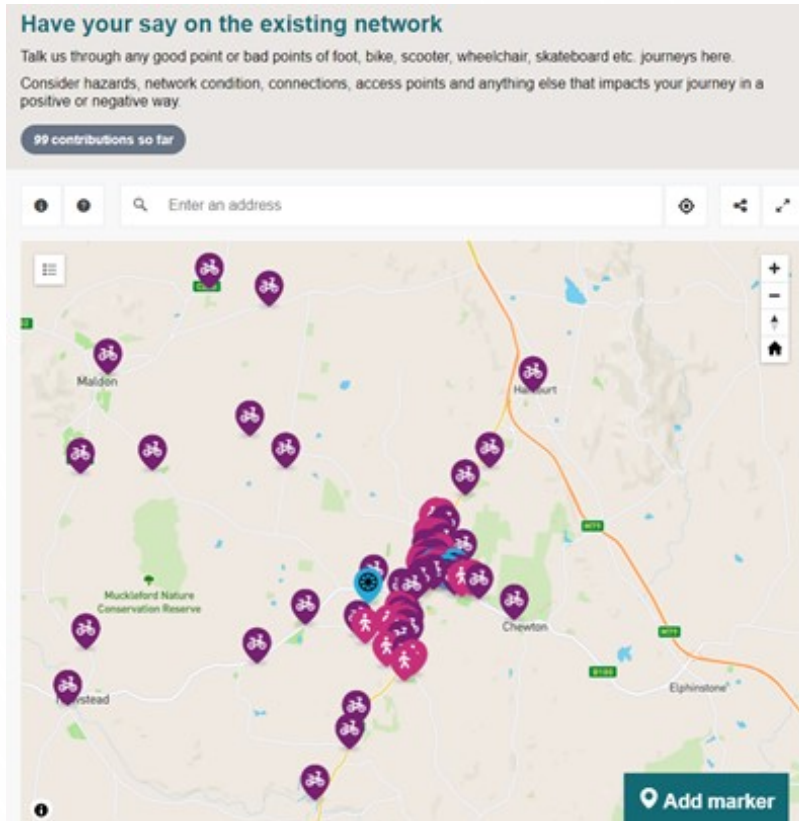


Image: Active Transport Shape Page Social Mapping Tool

- In order to provide source data for evidence based decision making, the approach to seek local community feedback was paramount.
- A range of engagement platforms were utilised, in particular the Council Shape page which included information on the strategy development, details of drop in sessions, an online survey and a social mapping tool to provide detailed location based comments.

On Line Survey Results

- On line survey: 271 online surveys completed (Shape 214 & Menti 57) *note: Menti is an interactive presentation software platform, used for interactive real-time voting.
- Shape page mapping : 108 location-mapped comments
- Shape page visitation: 1000 visits with 572 unique visitors
- A number of the survey questions allowed multiple answers, leading to a higher volume of answers for these questions

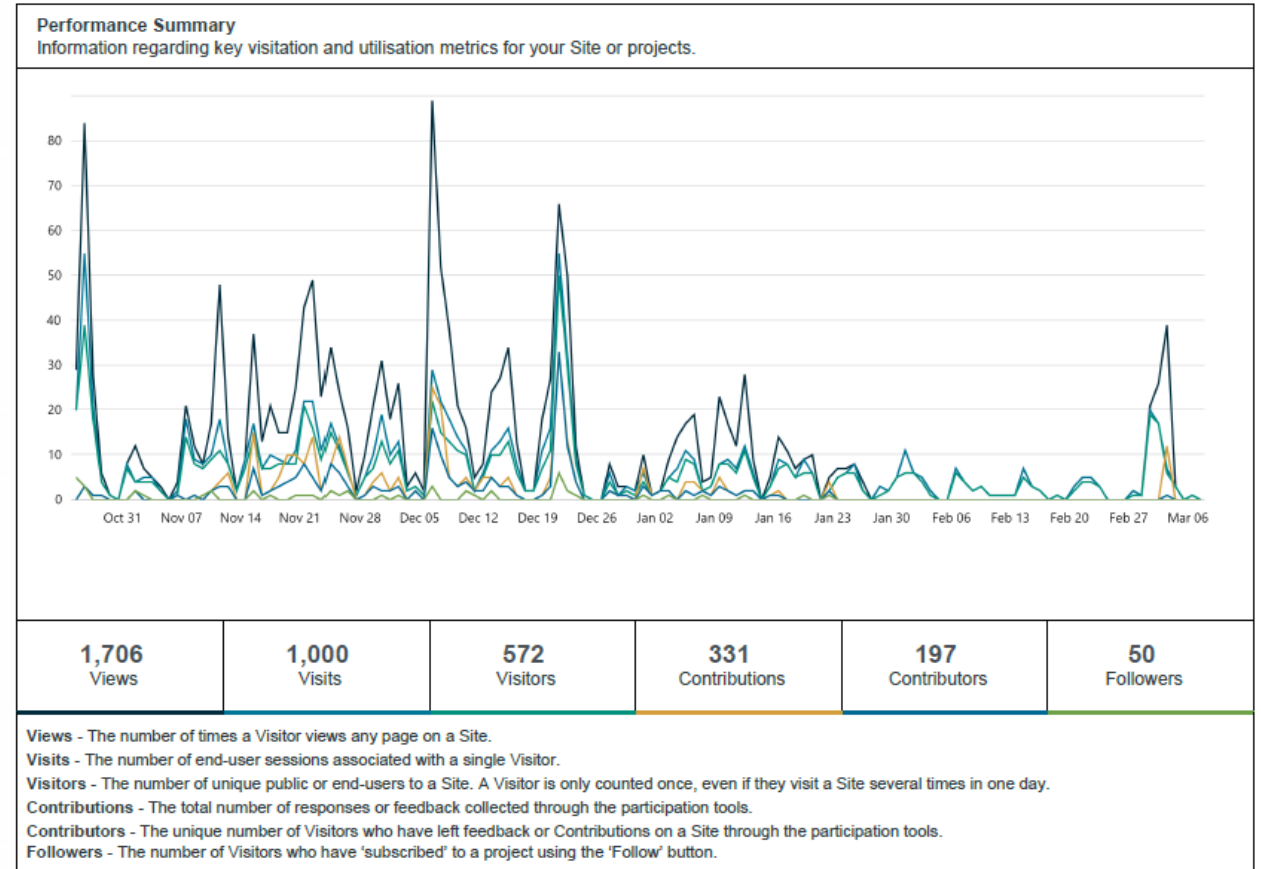
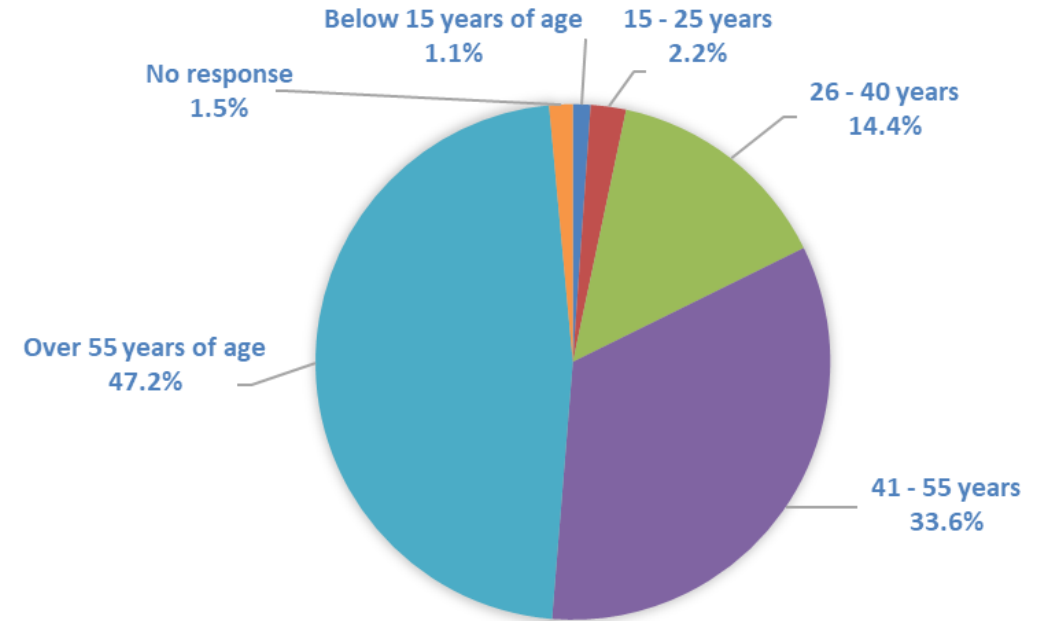
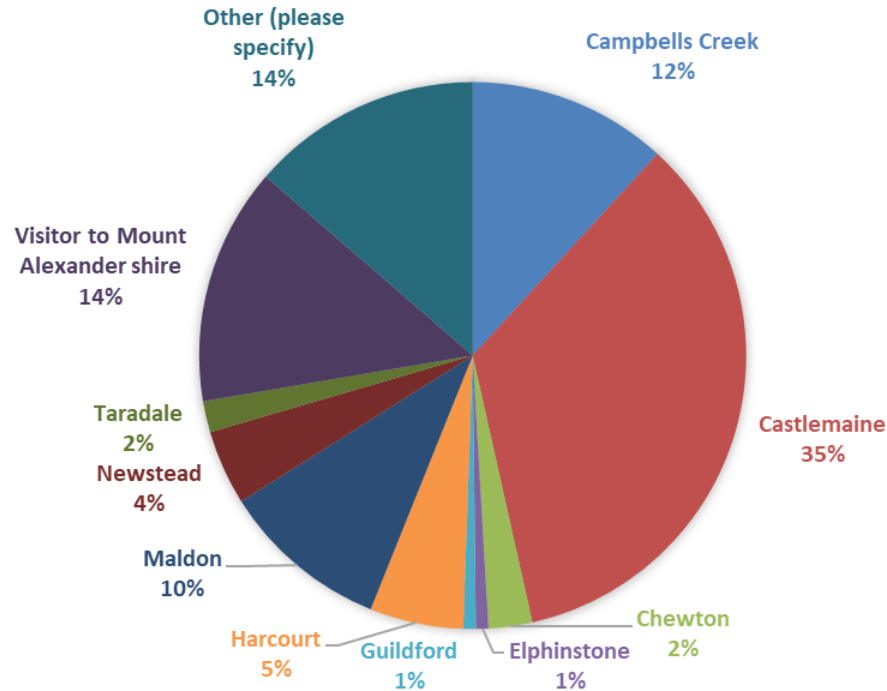


Image: Active Transport Shape Page Data Analytics

On Line Survey Results

- Castlemaine residents provided the greatest number of survey results (94 or 34.7%), followed by Campbells Creek (32 or 11.8%), Maldon (27 or 10.0%) and Harcourt (15 or 5.5%) - 38 or 14.0% of survey's completed were by visitors to the Shire

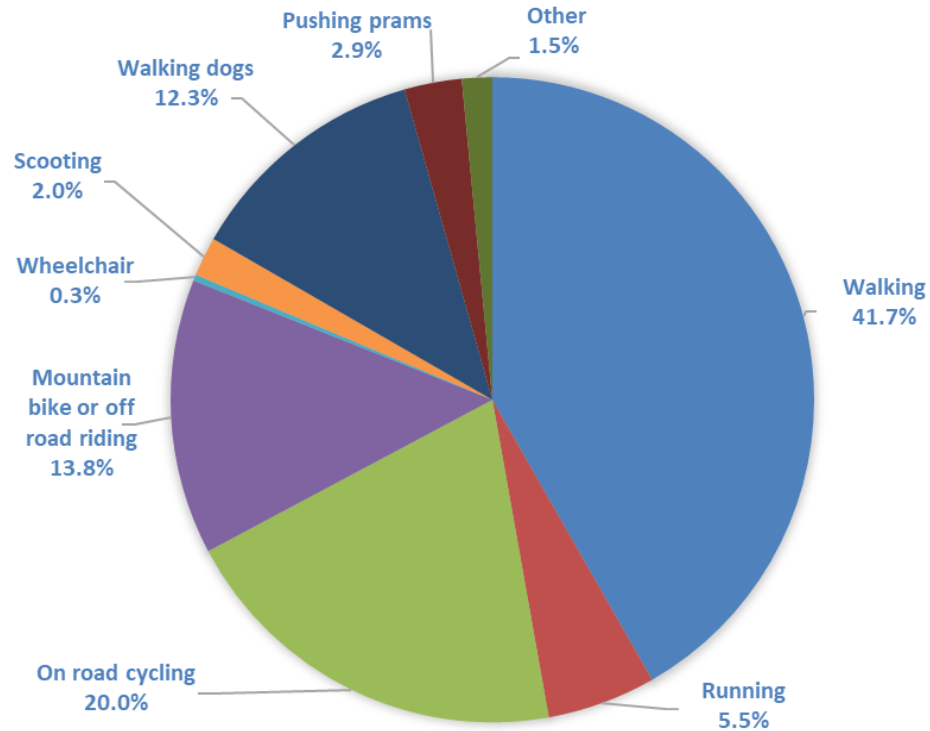
WHERE IN MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE DO YOU LIVE?



HOW OLD ARE YOU?

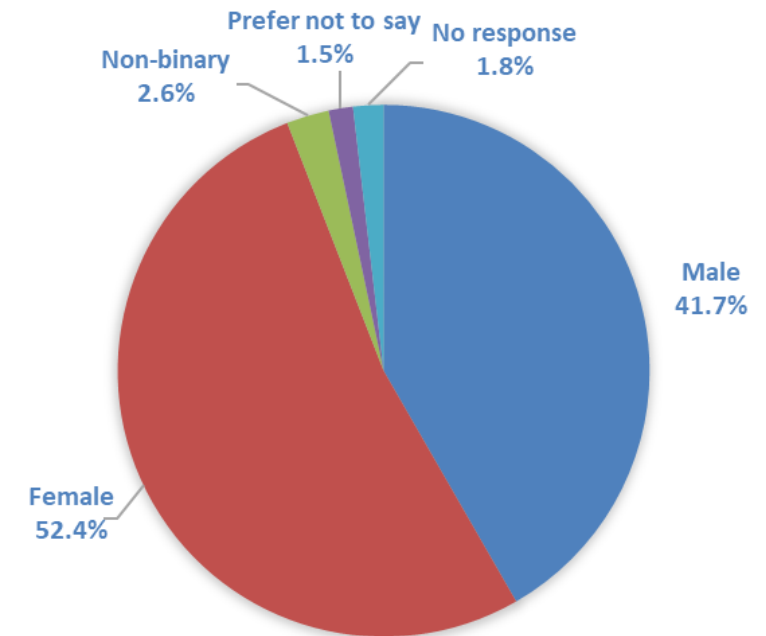
- The most represented age group within the survey results were those over 55 (128 or 47.9%) with 41-55 year olds providing (91 or 34.1%) of the responses. Only 9 responses (3.5%) were received from the below 15 & 15-25 year old age brackets.

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN FORM OF ACTIVE TRANSPORT ACTIVITY?



- 41.7% of respondents indicated that walking was a key active transport activity for them, along with 12.3% walking their dogs. Running made up 5.5% of responses.
- The cycling community was led by 20.0% on road cyclists, followed by 13.8% who considered mountain bike riding/off road riding as a key form of activity. Pushing prams (2.7%) and scooting (1.8%) also registered as part of the 659 responses.

On Line Survey Results

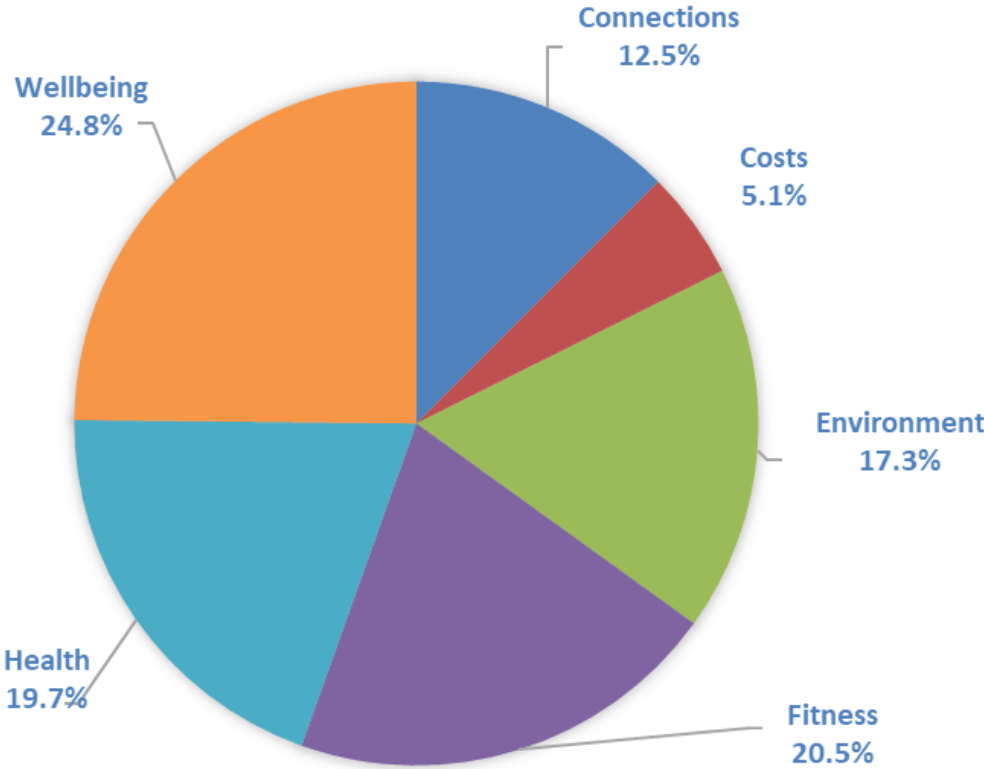


HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOUR GENDER?

- Females led the way with 53.4% of responses followed by males 42.5%

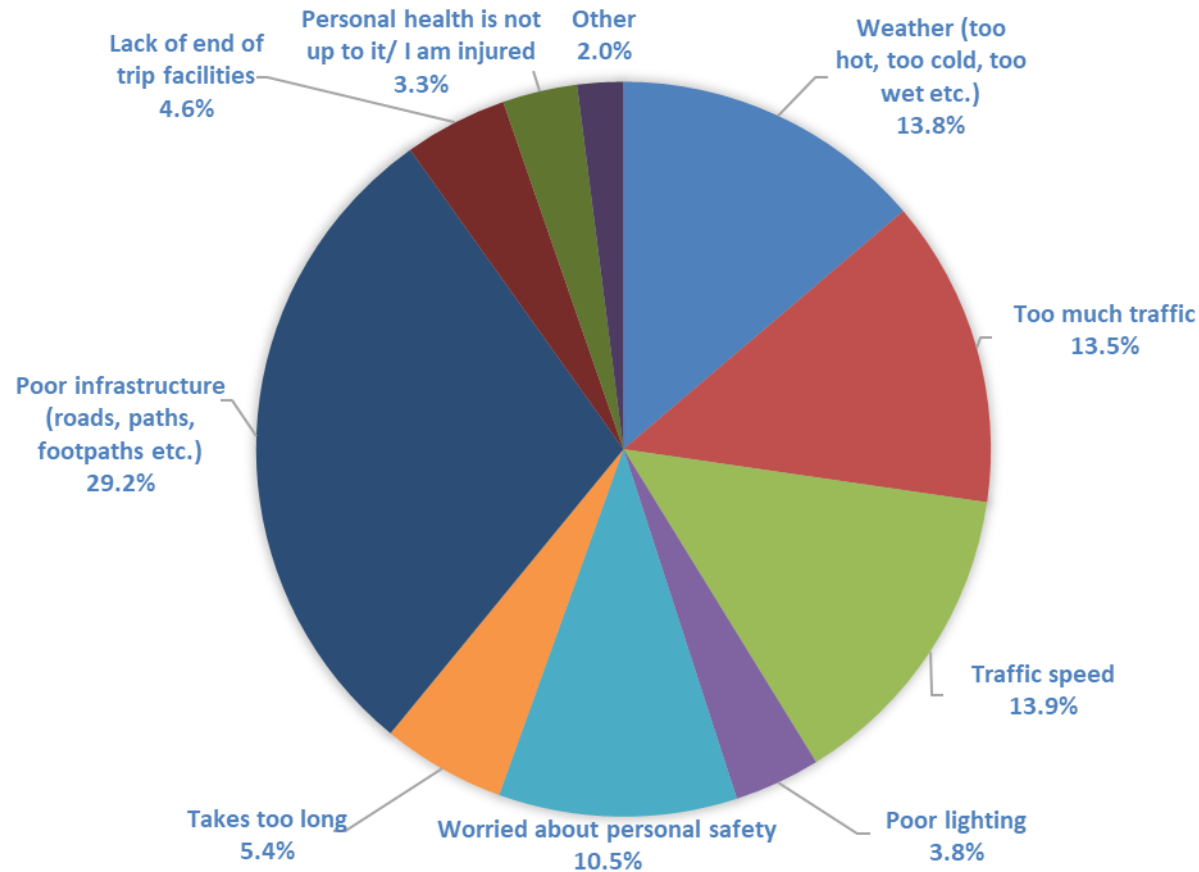
On Line Survey Results

DESCRIBE THE BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRANSPORT ACTIVITIES FOR YOU



- Community feedback regarding the benefits of active transport was collated into 6 themes
- 624 comments were provided
- Wellbeing – including positive impacts on mental health made up 24.8% of responses
- Fitness recorded 20.5% of responses
- Health recorded 19.7% of responses
- Environment – Being in nature, and environmental sustainability made up 17.3% of responses
- Connections – Getting from A to B, along with social connections - 12.5%
- Costs – financial savings 5.1%

IDENTIFY THE MAIN BARRIERS THAT PREVENT YOU FROM PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVE TRANSPORT ACTIVITIES



On Line Survey Results

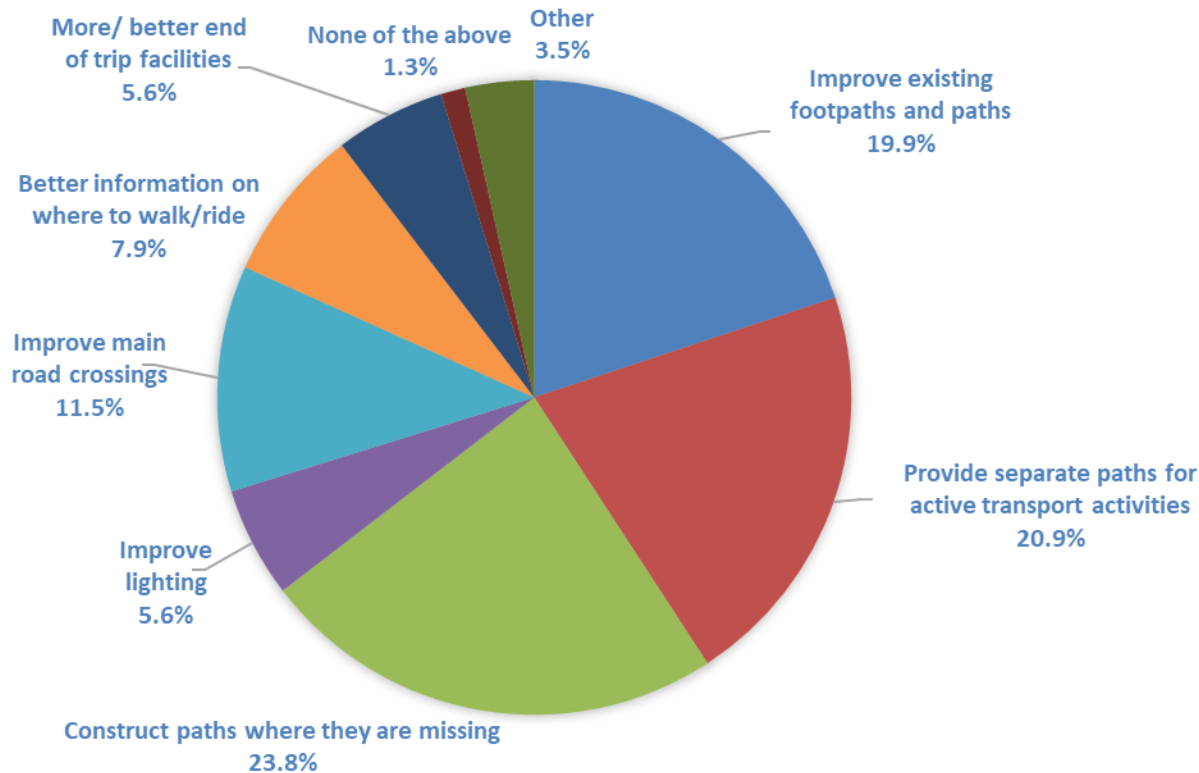
Of the 791 responses received, poor infrastructure (roads, paths & footpaths etc.) was the key barrier to participation - 231 or 29.2%.

Traffic implications – speed 13.9% & too much traffic 13.5% was a major barrier to people.

Worries about personal safety whilst participating in active transport activities made up 10.5% of responses.

The weather also provided a barrier for 13.8% of respondents

WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO PARTICIPATE MORE IN ACTIVE TRANSPORT?

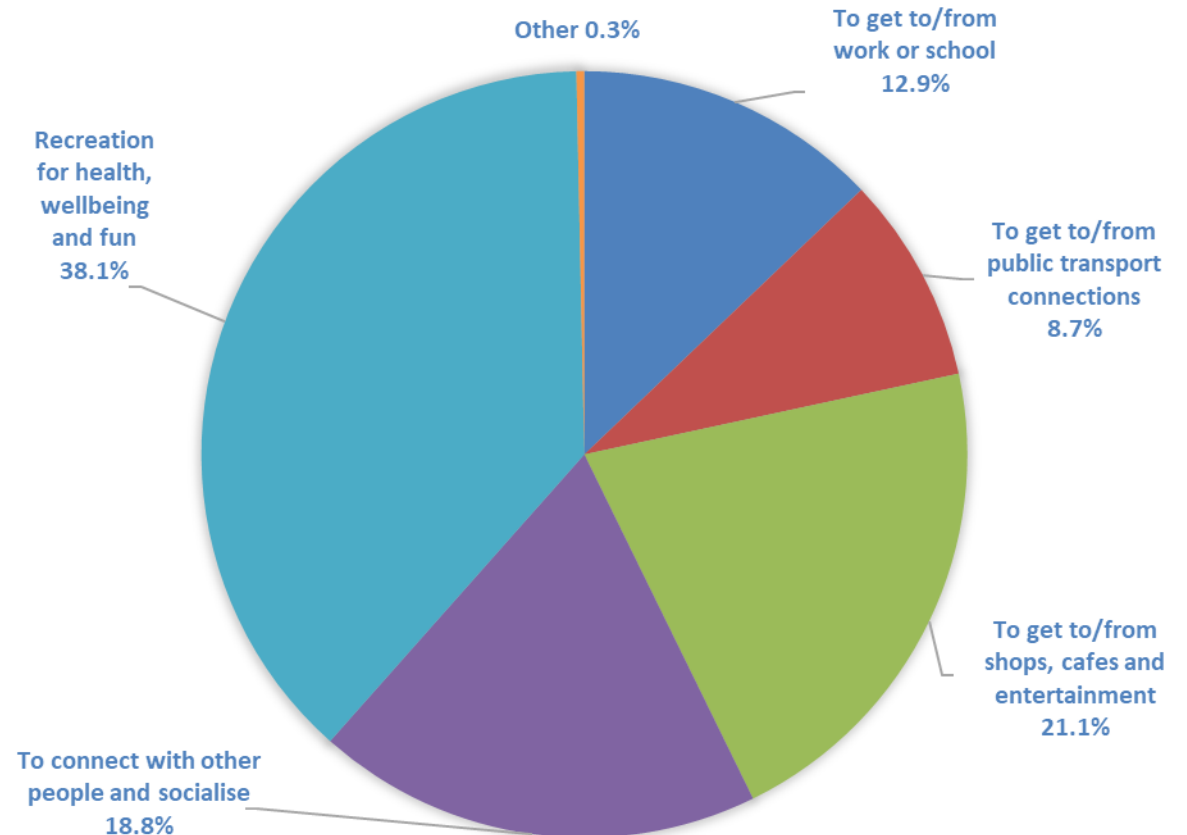


On Line Survey Results

- 799 responses were received regarding participation encouragement, with the construction of paths where they are missing 23.8% the main opportunity, along with another 19.9% wanting improvements in the existing path network. 20.9% of responses desired separated paths for active transport users. 11.5% desired improved main road crossings. Better information on where to walk/ride was highlighted by 7.9%, better end of trip facilities 5.6% and improved lighting 5.6%

On Line Survey Results

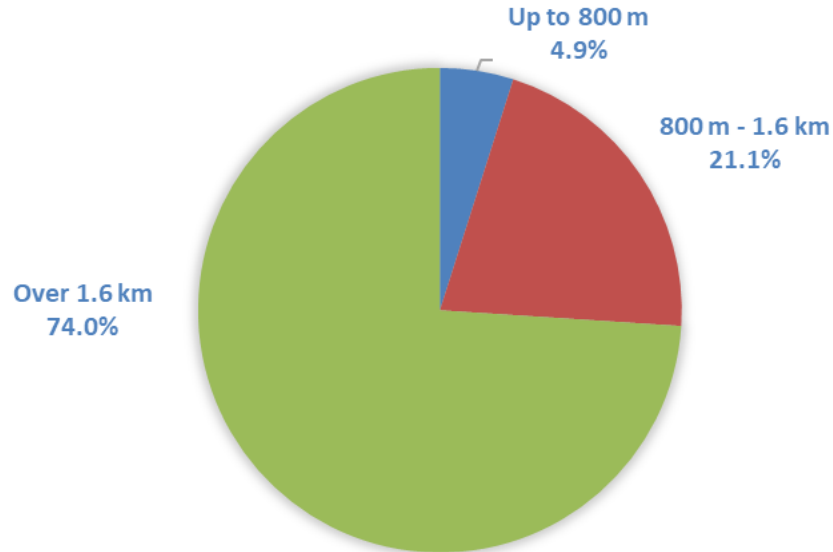
WHAT IS YOUR MAIN PURPOSE OF YOUR ACTIVE TRANSPORT ACTIVITY?



- Recreation, Health & Wellbeing was the key reason for active transport participation with 38.1% of the 606 responses.
- 21.1% utilised active transport to get to/from shops, cafes & entertainment
- 12.9% to get to/from work or school
- 8.7% to get to/from public transport connections.
- 18.8% of respondents used active transport to connect with other people and socialise.

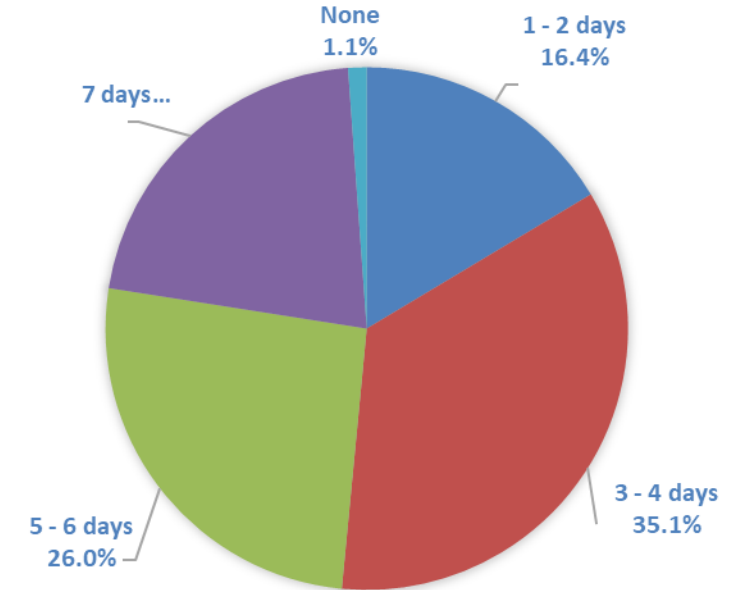
On Line Survey Results

WHAT WOULD BE THE AVERAGE DISTANCE OF YOUR AVERAGE JOURNEY BE?



- Only 4.9% of respondents indicated an average journey of less than 800m.
- 74.0% of activity was over 1.6km.
- The remaining 21.1% of respondents had journeys of between 800m & 1.6km

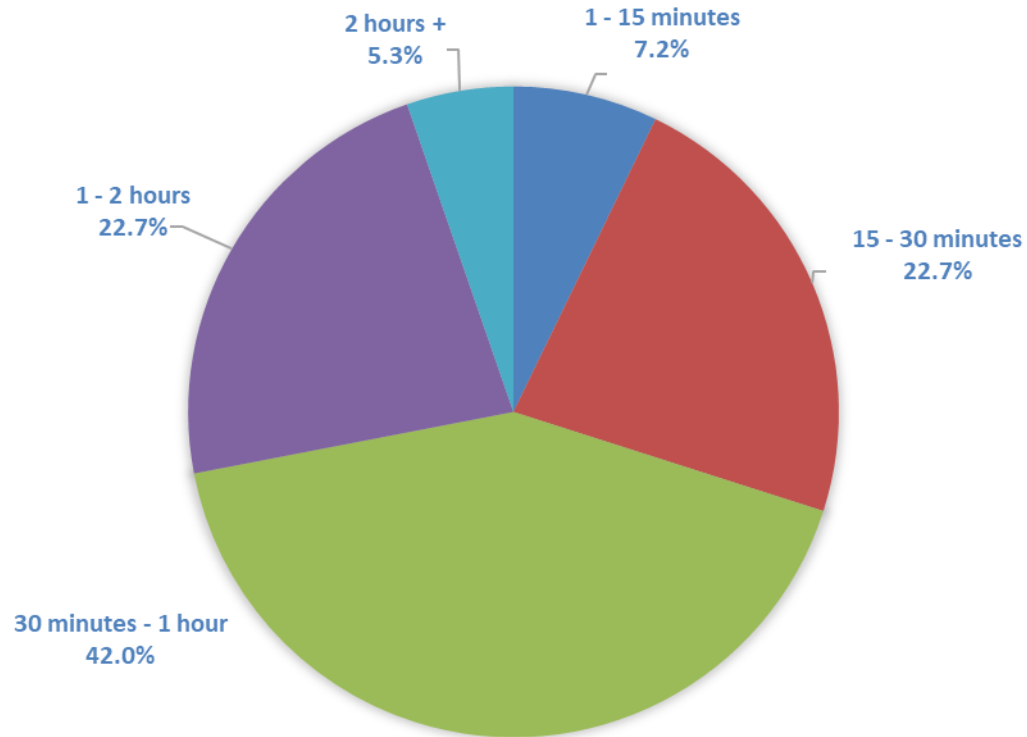
HOW MANY DAYS A WEEK DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVE TRANSPORT ACTIVITIES?



- Participation rates were evenly spread with 21.4% active 7 days a week, 26.0% 5-6 days per week, 35.1% 3-4 days per week and 16.4% active only 1-2 days per week.

On Line Survey Results

HOW LONG DOES YOUR AVERAGE ACTIVE TRANSPORT ACTIVITY TAKE YOU?



Time spent on active transport activities showed 7.2% spent 1-15 minutes, 22.7% spent between 15 min & 30 min, 30 min to 60 min was the average journey time for 42.0% of respondents.

22.7% spent 1-2 hours and 2 hours+ accounted for 4.2% of the respondents

Drop In Sessions



- Community drop in sessions were conducted in 6 locations across the shire

Maldon, Newstead, Chewton, Campbells Creek, Castlemaine (Market Building) & Harcourt

- All sessions were conducted outdoors
- 116 people attended these sessions

- Initially targeted as intercept survey's (directly communicating with the public in locations within the community), with the aim of having surveys – either hard copies or online completed on the spot.
- It was identified early in these activities that there was a reluctance for people to stop and complete these surveys.
- The engagement with people was successful and provided an important means of gathering information, but the method required re-consideration.
- A5 sized flyers, including a QR code directing respondents to the active transport shape page (containing strategy development information, online survey and social mapping tool) became a successful tool, as these were distributed to community members for consideration at their convenience.

Intercept Activities

Let's keep talking

Thanks for taking the time to find out about the Active Transport Strategy we're developing.



You can share your feedback with us anytime.

- Scan the QR code
- Visit www.shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au
- Call Council team member Steven Oliver on 5471 1700, and let's keep talking.



Intercept Activities



Image: Ongoing Reference Group community member John Carruthers at the Castlemaine Railway Station

- One measure of the success was the survey analytics of shape in the 24 hours following, with approx. 25% of flyers distributed resulting in completed surveys.
- Success also translated through engagement with community members and awareness of the development of an active transport strategy
- Activities were conducted at the Castlemaine Railway Station, Botanical Gardens & the Gingell Street walking/cycle path.
- 117 flyers were distributed

Initial Working Group

- The establishment of an Initial Working Group, consisting of targeted community members with skillsets/connections related to community based active transport, was a key objective of the strategy development. This included representatives from Council (heritage and urban design), Department of Transport, Healthy Loddon Campaspe, Newstead Walks and Wheels, Mount Alexander Cycling and nordic pole walkers. A number of these representatives also had background skills in consultancy work within active transport environments.
- The Initial Working Group tested themes and concepts developed via benchmarking, a literature review and a review of Council's previous Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010-2020. This work provided the platform for the draft strategy. Reviewing the community activity plan, revising the Terms of Reference for the Ongoing Reference Group and commencing work on the evaluation and review framework for the strategy were tasks undertaken by the Initial Working Group.
- The Initial Working Group was chaired by Councillor Christine Henderson.

Ongoing Reference Group

- Sourcing members of the public for the Ongoing Reference Group was through an Expression of Interest campaign, which included direct contact to key stakeholder groups, online and media exposure and posters in prominent community locations (IGA supermarkets and Castlemaine Railway Station).
- A diverse range of applications were received and reviewed by the Initial Working Group and Council officers.
- Two (2) members of the Initial Working Group continued their involvement and transition into the Ongoing Reference Group
- The Ongoing Reference Group was chaired by Councillor Christine Henderson



Are you passionate about supporting people to get out of their cars and move more ?

Apply now to join Mount Alexander Shire Council's new Active Transport Ongoing Reference Group.

Active Transport is a term which describes many forms of physical travel and movement, across a range of activities including walking, cycling, scooting, using prams, mobility scooters and wheelchairs.

The group will work with Council to plan the future of active transport in the shire.

Council's looking to hear from residents who are passionate about active transport, and have an association with, or are engaged in active transport.

If you want to get Mount Alexander Shire moving towards more active transport, visit

www.shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/active-transport-strategy

and express your interest by Friday 4 November.



Ongoing Reference Group

- Three (3) sub groups were established to provide a deeper insight into emerging themes identified through the data analysis of both online surveys and face to face community consultation results:

Sub group 1: Community Partnerships

Establish a list of current programs and identify gaps, to support active transport participation accessibility and inclusivity.

Sub group 2: Public Transport Connections

Determine existing public transport connectors (routes, times, frequency, locations, capacity etc) to identify gaps and advocacy opportunities.

Sub group 3: Review of Networks, Routes & Zones

Review of the previous strategy routes and networks and provide amendment recommendations, include key destinations – education, health, business, public transport.

- Sub groups reported back to the Ongoing Reference Group, with findings considered in the development of the draft strategy.

All Staff Meeting

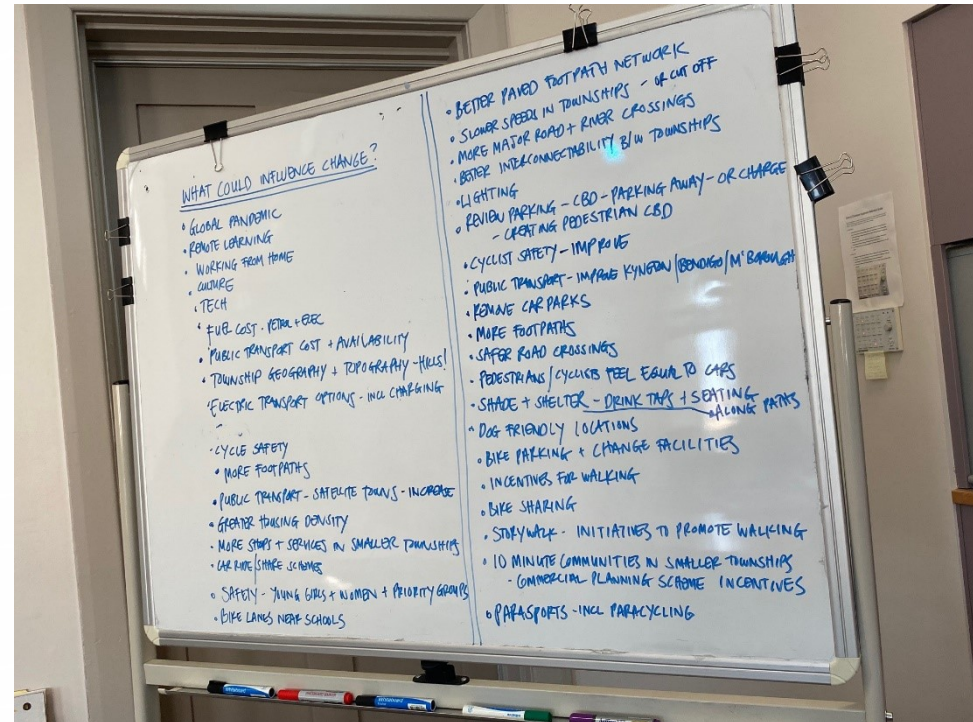
- Presentation to Council staff at an all staff meeting on the 30th November 2022, enabled broader awareness of the active transport strategy internally.
- Staff were presented with an overview of the strategy components and how they could become involved.
- Staff members were encouraged to complete an online survey (using the Menti platform) with 57 responses provided. This information has been included in the survey results. *note: Menti is an interactive presentation software platform, used for interactive real-time voting.

Councillor Workshop

- Council officers conducted a workshop with Councillors on the 11th October 2022.
- Councillors completed a number of exercises with results guiding the strategy development.

Topics included:

- Guiding principles of the strategy
- Priorities for the strategy outcomes
- What may influence change



Community Stakeholders

The Active Transport Strategy project was communicated through the following organisations, during Expression of Interest period for potential Ongoing Reference Group participants:

- Mount Alexander Shire Disability Action Group
- Mount Alexander Sustainability Group
- Goldfields Walking Track Group
- Dhelkaya Health
- U3A Castlemaine
- Positive Ageing Advocacy Group
- Mount Alexander Youth Advisory Group
- Castlemaine Support Services
- Friends of Ironbark Forest and others

Community Stakeholders

- A direct email campaign on the 7 December 2022 to all education and pre-school institutions was aimed at reaching a broader audience, through the school community networks

The following organisations were contacted:

Castlemaine Secondary College	Castlemaine Kindergarten	Castlemaine Child Care Co-Operative
Castlemaine Primary School	Harcourt Preschool	Ray Street Children's Centre
Castlemaine North Primary School	Maldon Preschool	Busy Bees Castlemaine
Winters Flat Primary School	Newstead Preschool	
Campbells Creek Primary School	South Castlemaine Kindergarten	
Olivet Christian College		
Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten		
Chewton Primary School		
Elphinstone Primary School		
Harcourt Valley Primary School		
Langley Primary School		
Maldon Primary School		
Newtsead Primary School		
St Mary's Catholic Primary School		
Taradale Primary School		

Community Engagement Outcomes

Community engagement activities identified several emerging themes within the active transport space including,

- The desire for greater coordination with providers of public transport services and infrastructure to improve accessibility.
- The emerging modes of transport, the increase in the usage of these modes and the infrastructure required to support these modes.
- The role active transport participation plays in positive wellbeing outcomes, particularly supporting mental health.
- The importance the role of community programs that support active transport participation play in reaching more vulnerable members of the community.
- Connection of population growth areas within the Shire to the active transport network is required.

Barriers & Benefits

Barriers to active transport, as identified from community engagement responses, have been summarized below.

In order to create an environment where people will participate in active transport as their chosen method of movement, elimination or reduction in the barriers is paramount.

Growing community expectation of higher standards in infrastructure, including separation from motor vehicles, the desire for connection across the network – through and between townships, identifies that barriers to participation may continue to grow.

What did the community tell us?

Limited infrastructure was identified as the major barrier to active transport participation. Common frustrations included ongoing maintenance, surface quality, lack of appropriate wayfinding signage and obstructions on roads, paths, trails and footpaths across the network.

Personal safety was also cited as a major barrier. People consulted were especially concerned with traffic interactions, traffic speed and volume.

Weather conditions also deterred active transport activities.

Other barriers identified during engagement activities included poor lighting, personal health or injury, time taken to complete active transport activities, and a lack of end of trip facilities.

Barriers & Benefits

Benefits of active transport, as identified from community engagement responses, have been summarized below.

The many health, social, environmental and economic benefits of participating in active transport are well documented.

From improved physical fitness and mental health for individuals, to the financial advantages associated with walking, cycling and other active transport activities, to social and environmental benefits that reduced motor vehicle use achieves, all contribute positively to our broader community.

Connection to other people, and to the natural environment are intrinsically linked to the wellbeing of individuals and the broader community. By participating in active transport our community experiences the interaction and social opportunities that build better community cohesion.

Regardless of the motivating factor/s (lower cost, improved fitness or getting from a to b etc.) Any active transport activity will provide outcomes that deliver against council's 2021-2025 vision: working together for a healthy, connected shire.

Many of our active transport users fall in to the mature-age category, clearly demonstrating that people understand the benefits to remaining active during middle to later life. This group are more likely to be seeking the wellbeing and social outcomes associated with active transport.

Infrastructure that is safer, more connected and can accommodate more transport modes will make it easier for more people to connect to public transport for longer parts of their journeys.

What did the community tell us?

The community responses identified six main themes when it comes to benefits associated with active transport:

Wellbeing: where the benefits included improved mental health, enjoyment and social connection

Fitness: where people participated in active transport for exercise and fitness outcomes

Health: people appreciated the improvement to their overall physical health

Environment: community members participated in active transport for sustainability outcomes and for the time spent outdoors in nature

Connections: people used active transport for connection to other people and places, and for movement between destinations.

Active Transport Strategy

Public Exhibition feedback
– SHAPE page results

July 2023



Shape Mount Alexander

Report Type: Project

Project Name: Active Transport Strategy

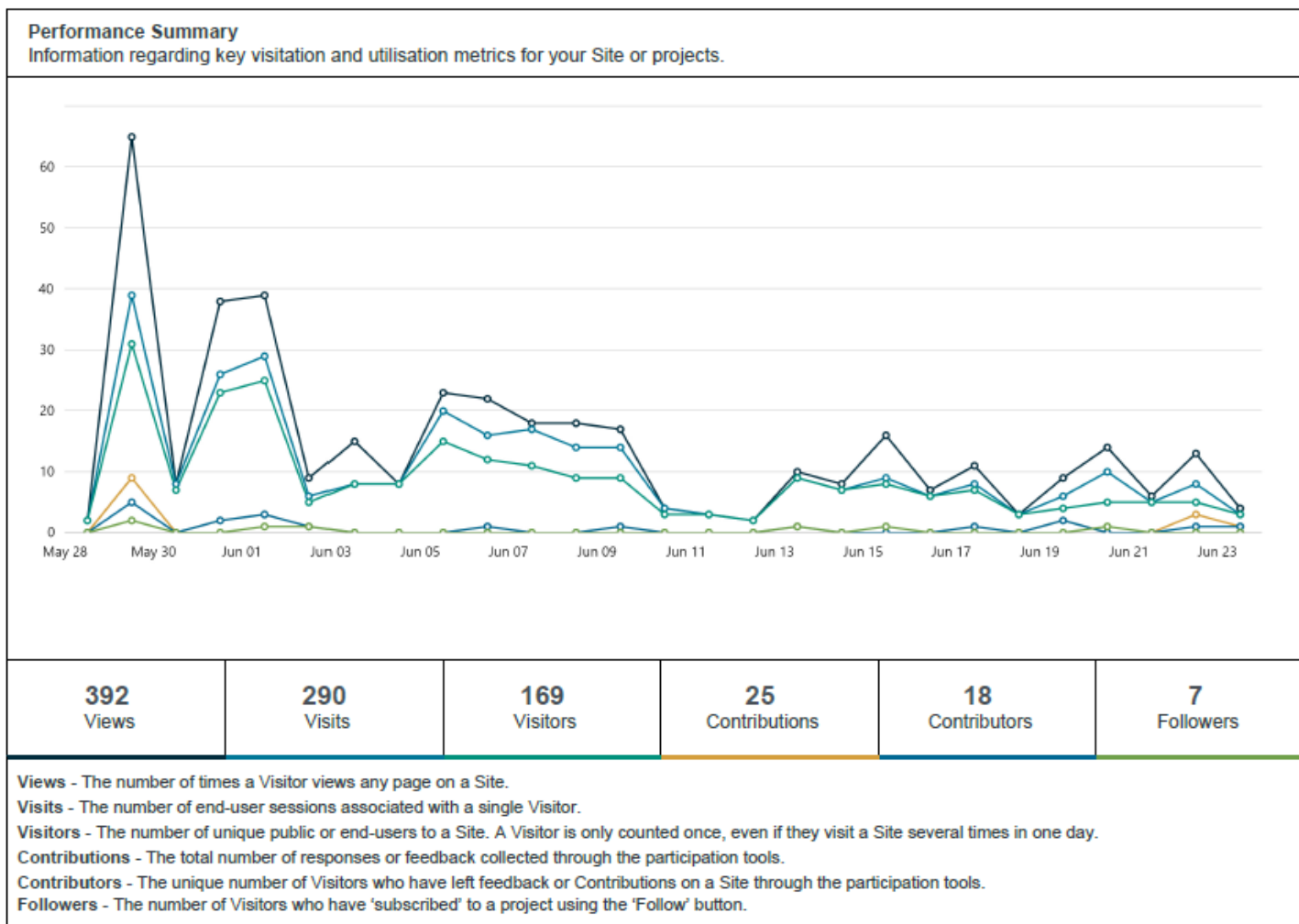
Date Range: 28-05-2023 - 23-06-2023

Exported: 23-06-2023 11:48:00

9 Submissions provided additional to the Shape Page

5 private submissions along with submissions from:

- Castlemaine Rocky Riders
- Castlemaine Maryborough Rail Trail
- Mount Alexander Cycling
- Newstead Walks & Wheels

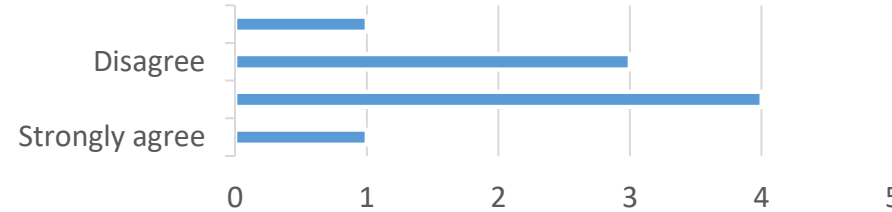


Strategy Survey

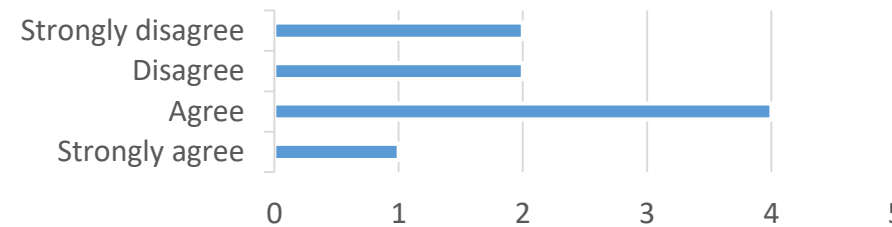
9 survey responses

	Do you feel this strategy will guide the Council on active transport activities?	Do you think that the strategy will be able to support delivery of active transport improvements?	Have we got the themes from the community feedback right? (see Community consultation report for details)
1	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
3	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
4	Agree	Agree	Agree
5	Agree	Agree	Agree
6	Agree	Agree	Disagree
7	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	Agree	Agree	Agree
9	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree

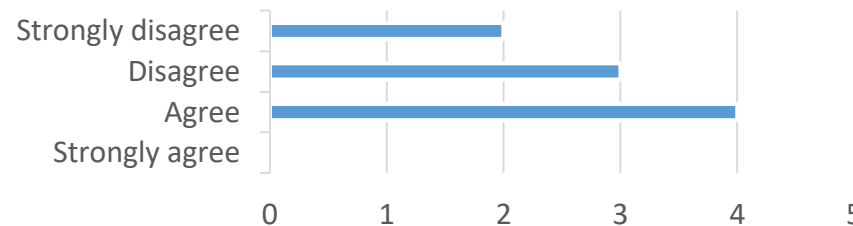
Question 1 - Do you feel this strategy will guide the Council on active transport activities?



Question 2 - Do you think that the strategy will be able to support delivery of active transport improvements?



Question 3 - Have we got the themes from the community feedback right? (see Community consultation report for details)



Strategy Survey

Comments:

I hope that priority is given to sealed footpaths over unsealed paths as these are better suited to young children who are learning to ride and bikes and scooters.

This document does not provide a clear strategy to progress Active Transport in the Shire

Weak strategy. Poorly researched.

Based on the report, the consultation process looks very limited

What is Council really going to deliver?, when? and what are the indicative costs?

The ATS provides too little detail on WHAT actions WILL actually be taken. WHAT timelines WILL be undertaken. WHO will be consulted with from organisations advocating for better representation for sustainable and accessible transport options?

There is no detail about where and when bikes lanes and paths will be implemented or improved.

There is no recognition of the potential of the CMRT.

No information on how the outlying towns beyond Castlemaine (but in the shire) will benefit from the ATS.

Road cyclists made up a significant proportion of respondents. Shared pathways are not always a suitable option for road cyclists and we more often than not find ourselves sharing roads with motor vehicles. In some cases marked bike lanes are provided but these are frequently poorly maintained having potholes, loose gravel and rubbish/debris on them. If marked bike lanes are considered as part of this strategy then the means of maintaining them must be part of the consideration.

No mention of timelines for fixing existing trails damaged by flood waters. Failing this urgent seperated walking and cycling solution and speed lowering solution needed on Gaulton St bridge, very dangerous

Why is the main goal of the ATS to, "increase active transport awareness" when sufficient data suggests that public awareness of the benefits of active transport is high?

Indeed, "limited infrastructure" was identified as the main barrier to active transport participation in Council's Community Consultation Report (page 22)

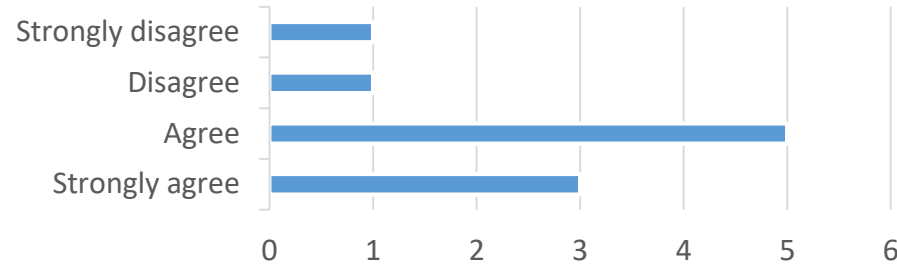
Why isn't improving infrastructure a major goal in the Active Transport Strategy?

Mapping Survey

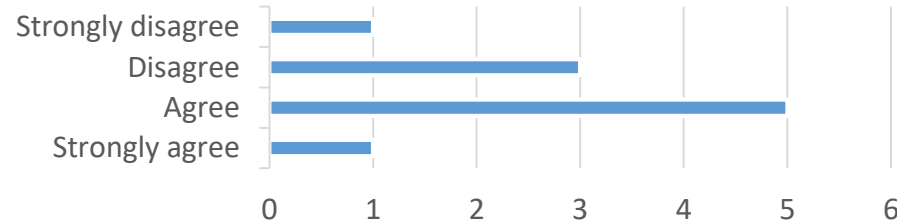
10 survey responses

	Do you support the network infrastructure elements?	Do you feel these aspirational maps address the future opportunities for active transport development in the Shire?	Would these routes get you where you want to go, for the purpose of your journey?
1	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
3	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree
4	Agree	Disagree	Agree
5	Agree	Agree	Agree
6	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
7	Agree	Agree	Agree
8	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
9	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
10	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

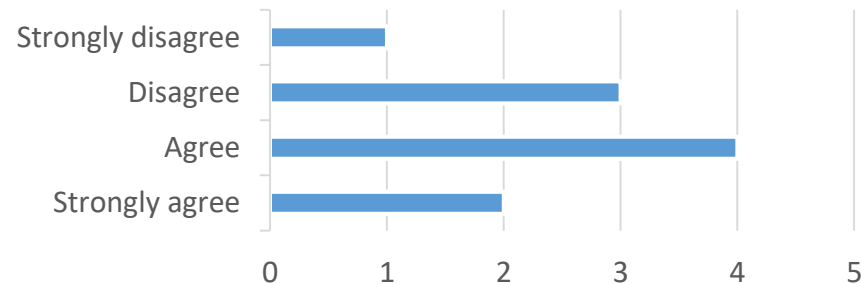
Question 1 - Do you support the network infrastructure elements?



Question 2 -Do you feel these aspirational maps address the future opportunities for active transport development in the Shire?



Question 3 - Would these routes get you where you want to go, for the purpose of your journey?



Mapping Survey

Comments:

The maps are vague with no information about why particular routes/ treatments are chosen and no details about existing infrastructure. There is also no information about connections between town, which require both on- and off-road facilities

Great improvements! I would add Moscript street in Campbells Creek as an area that needs improvements. I see school children riding down there all the time commuting to school, parents with prams and people walking there dogs. It feels dangerous to me with parked cars etc. And it's quite a thoroughfare for traffic

I look forward to Aspirational Mapping of major routes between towns - in particular a cycle track from Harcourt to Castlemaine

As a Maldon resident, I don't see the need, aspirational or otherwise for paved footpaths in Templeton Street, Church St or the eastern sections of Adair St. These are areas with a heritage overlay, and the addition of paved pathways would detract significantly from these rural streetscapes. These are quiet, wide roads with very wide verges, and residents seem very happy to walk on the road or edges. There is some logic for a footpath along Lowther St between Reef St and the Bridgewater Rd.

Lacking footpath or shared pathway along Rowe and James Streets in Castlemaine (between Johnston Street and William Streets). In Mount Alexander's 2010-2020 Walking and Cycling Strategy, this strip forms is part of the primary footpath network yet no pavements have been constructed. This is a truck diversion route and has a high frequency of pedestrians, elderly scooter users and cyclists all using the road making it unsafe and more risky of accidents between vehicles and active transport users.

I believe the Duke st/McGrath st shared footway could be a major step forward - riding along Duke st is currently incredibly dangerous. With the coming Woolworths store on Forest St, however, I'd argue that it would be even better if the shared footway went along Forest Creek south of both the Woolworths and the tennis courts. Cyclists and pedestrians could then access the town center from Wheeler St. This would avoid clashing with cars accessing the Woolworths carpark on Forest st.

These look good. There needs to be a focus on lowering speeds too (in town zones, at the Forest St crossing on the Campbells Creek trail etc). Much more focus on building the infrastructure and advocacy to make it happen needed. Awareness is there, it is about safety and comfort for all ages and abilities. Also need to never have the Camp Reserve gate locked, as this is a critical safe transport corridor

Muckleford has been completely left off once again. It is unclear on the McKenzie Hill map how far the shared pathway is planned to reach.

Similarly, how far will the separated bike lane reach along Princes St. Ranters Gully Rd? Will bikes be able to safely travel from Muckleford to Campbells Creek?

Will bikes be able to travel from Muckleford to Castlemaine?

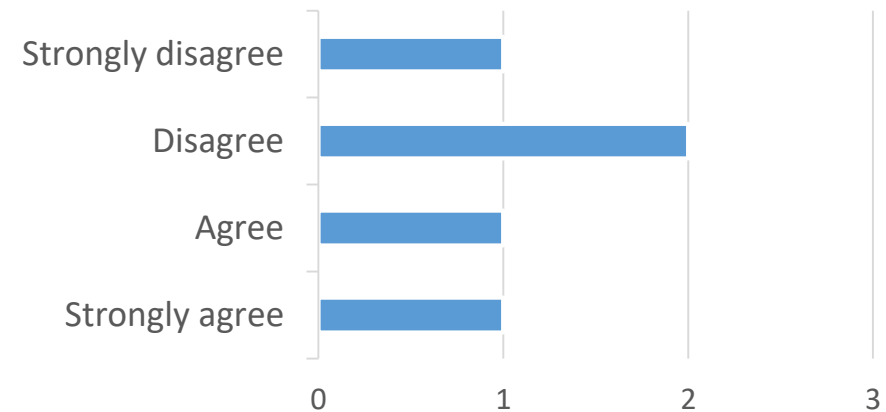
Action Plan Survey

5 survey responses

Question 1 - Do you support the goals identified in the Strategy and the Initial Action Plan?

	Goal 1: Increase active transport awareness	Goal 2: Develop and deliver safe, connected and sustainable active transport infrastructure	Goal 3: Enhance community health and wellbeing outcomes
1	Agree	Agree	Agree
2	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree
3	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree
4	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
5	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

Question 2 - Do you think the Initial Action Plan will provide active transport benefits?



Action Plan Survey

Comments:

The "aspirational maps" suggest plenty of scope for worthwhile useful infrastructure improvements. There appears to be very little in the strategy that will make them anything other than "aspirational", however. The strategy proposes lots of "review", "evaluate", "advocate" activity but no targets for actually delivering any outcomes on the ground.

The Action Plan is vague with little detail, no targets or measures, and no priorities resulting from the Strategy

It is unclear how the initial action plan will lead to implementation of the Aspirational Active Transport Network Maps. None of the actions even mention it (or advocacy to make it happen). It might be captured in other actions, but not clear.

It is unclear how much of the IAP is funded. Therefore, difficult to judge any benefits that may come from it. Increasing awareness is easy and cheap. The infrastructure element will be much more difficult. There are significant gaps for residents 'just out of town', including Muckleford, along the Newstead Rd. This plan is not clear about which infrastructure will be action first.

Downloads

:

Documents provided for public exhibition were downloaded, as follows

<i>Draft Active Transport strategy</i>	<i>- 99 downloads</i>
<i>Draft Aspirational mapping</i>	<i>- 120 downloads</i>
<i>Draft Initial Action Plan</i>	<i>- 58 download</i>
<i>Community Consultation Report</i>	<i>- 14 downloads</i>

Shown site boundary perimeters are approximate only and are for the purpose of planning submission only - to be verified by qualified surveyor

Client:	Tim Matheson
Project:	Proposed Single Storey Dwelling
Project Address:	No. 59 Carrs Road, Barkers Creek, 3451
Revision:	

Scale:	1:1000
Drawing Issue:	05 of 05
Origin Date:	01/07/2022
Current Dwg Date:	29/07/2022
Ak Reference:	A - 010722

Contact: **M 0439 722 782** **DP-AD 38695 Reg**
dennis@arkgroupdesign.com.au



Refer to Land Capability Assessment or the local health authority for septic tank recommendations, requirements, effluent fields, dimensions and setbacks.
 Exact location of proposed buildings, shedding, ect to be verified on site by contractor/surveyor prior to construction.
 Stormwater from proposed buildings to discharge into PROPOSED rainwater tanks to local authority requirements and approval.
 Gens to be taken to ensure adequate fall from guttering into RAINWATER TANKS (min. 300mm)
 Effluent waste to connect into PROPOSED septic tank system with health inspector to verify approval on site.
 Levels shown are APPROX only and are to be confirmed on site by builder prior to commencement of works.
 Concrete slab to be set approx. 400mm from finished site cut level

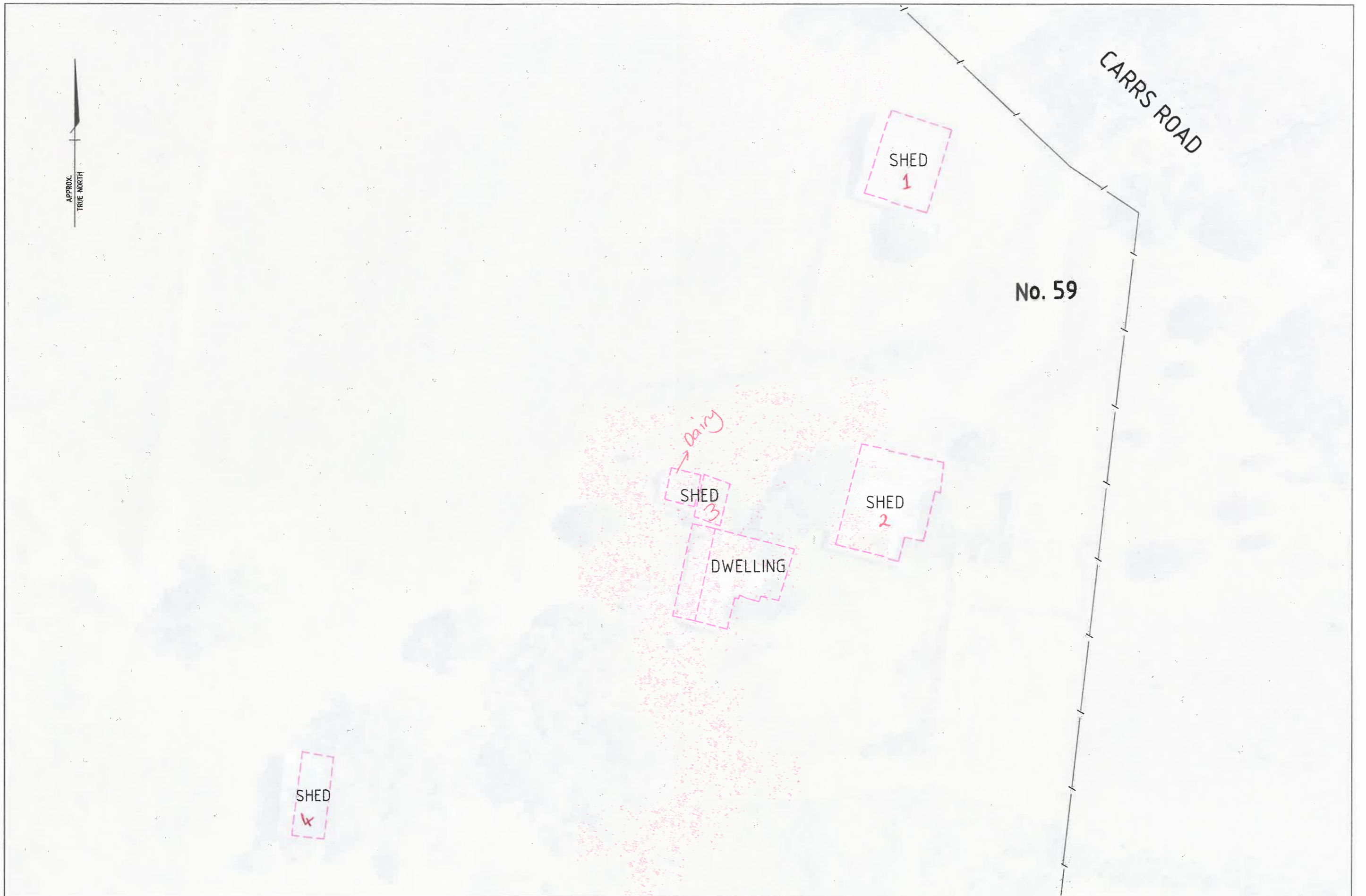
Heritage Overlay (HO) (HO441) Subject Site

PROPOSED SUBJECT SITE LAYOUT 1:1000

Relevant Planning Zones

- Rural Living Zone (RLZ)
- Bushfire management Overlay (BMO)
- Erosion management Overlay (EMO)
- Heritage Overlay (HO) (HO441)

WIND CLASSIFICATION - N3 (41m/s)
 SITE WIND CATEGORY CLASSIFICATION AS PER AS 4055.
 BRACING AND THE DOWN REQUIREMENTS TO COMPLY WITH AS 1684



REV	REVISION DESCRIPTION	DATE	APP'D
B	PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE	10/01/2023	10/01/2023
A	DRAFT	-	-

GENERAL NOTES AND LEGEND
 [Red dashed box symbol] EXISTING DWELLING & SHEDS: TO BE DEMOLISHED

Total Property Developments
 www.totalpropertydevelopments.com.au

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	SCALE
-	M. Kiley	D. Cranage	HOR - 1:2,000
	10/01/2023	10/01/2023	HOR -20 -10 0 20 40
APPROVED			ORIGINAL SHEET SIZE A3
DAMIEN CRANAGE			LENGTHS ARE IN METRES - LEVELS ARE TO AHD
PE0002497			

TIM MATHESON
CARRS ROAD
 59 CARRS ROAD, BARKERS CREEK
SITE DEMOLITION PLAN

COUNCIL: MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL
 WATER AUTHORITY: COLIBAN WATER

FILE REF:	22039.1
DRAW REF:	SDP01
REVISION	B
SHEET	1 OF 1

Peter Andrew Barrett

Architectural Conservation
Consultant

Melbourne
San Francisco

Level 31
120 Collins Street
Melbourne
Victoria 3000
Australia

T: 61 3 9639 2646
E: info@pabarrett.com
W: www.pabarrett.com

26 April 2023

MEMORANDUM OF HERITAGE ADVICE

ATTENTION: TIM MATHIESON

REGARDING: PROPOSED REMOVAL OF A HOUSE,
FORMER DAIRY AND OTHER
OUTBUILDINGS ON A SITE SUBJECT TO A
HERITAGE OVERLAY AT 59 CARRS ROAD,
BARKERS CREEK

Thank you for contacting me in regard to this matter.

I understand that you would like me to comment on a proposal to remove a house, former dairy and six outbuildings, as part of works that will involve the construction of a new dwelling on another portion of this site.

A portion of this site is subject to a heritage overlay in the *Mount Alexander Planning Scheme* – HO441 Farm with Cool Room, 59 Carrs Road, Barkers Creek. Crown Allotment 5, Section 9, Parish of Walmer.

I have now inspected this site, including the interiors of all buildings, and make the following comments from a heritage perspective.

The portion of the site that is subject to the HO441 heritage overlay contains a derelict house in poor structural condition; a former dairy, also in poor structural condition; and six other outbuildings in varying levels of condition (fair to poor condition).

The purpose of a heritage overlay, as defined by Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay of the *Mount Alexander Planning Scheme*, is to conserve and enhance heritage places, and to ensure that new development does not adversely affect them.

In all instances, site's subject to a heritage overlay should have a statement of significance that provides clear guidance as to what needs to be conserved and enhanced to retain the intrinsic heritage values of a place (using HERCON Criteria - Refer to: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay). Council has advised that no statement of significance exists for this site; and in the absence of this, the heritage overlay schedule, which notes 'Farm with Cool Room', provides little guidance.

Peter Andrew Barrett

It is assumed, the 'Cool Room' refers to the former brick dairy. As to the 'Farm' it is assumed it refers to the other buildings within the boundaries of this heritage overlay. If this assumption is correct, the intrinsic values of these elements and the extent of their fabric of significance is not defined, nor can it be ascertained from the information at hand whether their significance is derived from historic, aesthetic, social, representative values etc and how these values should be retained and enhanced.

It is established from an inspection of all buildings that most have come to the end of their habitable/useful lives; and this is concluded in the report received from Consulting Engineer, Haydn Morrell, Site Design Group, report dated 20 April 2023.

The report advised that the former dairy would need to be demolished and rebuilt using the existing bricks; and the house completely demolished and rebuilt using new materials. There are signs large portions of the house have already been rebuilt in recent decades including the rear (west) portion which is clad in mid-twentieth century concrete block. Apart from two masonry sheds, the other sheds will also need to be demolished and rebuilt with new materials.

The amount of new fabric and intervention that needs to occur on most buildings is extensive. It goes beyond general maintenance and repair and/or structural stabilisation. If conservation measures are embarked upon on the dwelling and sheds 1, 2, 3 and 4 all fabric will need to be replaced. Only the brick of the dairy is deemed re-useable. The more fabric removed from a building affects the intactness of that heritage place, and replacing so much original fabric works to be counterproductive to the intent of conserving and retaining the heritage place. In this case, a complex of facsimile structures would be the end result if rebuilding the house, dairy and sheds was to occur.

In terms of demolition of a heritage place, there is provision for this in the *Mount Alexander Planning Scheme*. Clause 15.03-1S generally discourages demolition, except in situations such as this where:

- *The building is structurally unsound;*
- *The original fabric of the building has deteriorated to such an extent that a substantial reconstruction would be required to make the building habitable.*

The dwelling, dairy and most of the outbuildings (sheds 1, 2, 3 & 4) are consistent with this policy. They are assessed as structurally unsound and that substantial reconstruction using new materials will be required.

Peter Andrew Barrett

In the absence of a statement of significance for why this site is important and what its heritage controls aim to conserve and enhance; and given that retention and conservation of existing fabric to make the buildings habitable/useable is not achievable, the removal of the buildings (apart from the two masonry sheds that are structurally sound) is an acceptable heritage outcome.

Any minor impacts from the removal of the buildings can be mitigated by preparing a photographic survey of the buildings prior to their removal; and re-using what materials that can be salvaged and re-used on the new dwelling, or on other buildings, on this site.

As requested, my curriculum vitae accompanies this memorandum of heritage advice.

I trust that this is of assistance. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Barrett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Barrett
Master of Architectural
History & Conservation (Melb.)

Peter Andrew Barrett



11 July 2023

Attention: Keith Longridge
 Mount Alexander Shire Council
 PO Box 185
 Castlemaine, 3450

Dear Keith,

59 Carrs Road, Barkers Creek, VIC 3451

Thank you for engaging Extent Heritage to provide heritage advice in relation to proposed works at 59 Carrs Road, Barkers Creek (subject site). The subject site is a farm complex that comprises a dwelling, a dairy, and four sheds. It is affected by a Heritage Overlay under the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme (HO441). The application (PA207-2022) proposes to, amongst other things, demolish the dwelling, dairy, and two of the four sheds.

I previously undertook a site inspection on 27 July 2022 when I was engaged (in a previous capacity) as a Heritage Advisor for Mount Alexander Shire. At that time, I gave verbal advice to the applicant that the demolition of an individually significant place would not normally be supported and that to justify the demolition a Heritage Impact Statement would need to be provided. I further indicated that, if the applicant wished to rely on the poor condition of the building/s as justification to support demolition, an engineer's report would also be required.

Extent Heritage have recently been appointed as Heritage Advisors to Mount Alexander Shire and on 6 July 2023 I was provided with an application for the subject site comprising a set of plans from Total Property Developments dated 10/01/2023, together with an engineer's report from 4Site Engineers dated 20/04/2023 and a Memorandum of Advice prepared by Peter Andrew Barrett (Architectural Conservation Consultant) and dated 26/04/2023. I was also provided with a Request for Further Information (RFI) signed by you, which advises that the Memorandum of Advice, which appears to have been provided in response to an earlier RFI request, fails to satisfy that earlier request and that, as a result:

A Heritage Impact Statement should be prepared by a heritage consultancy to accompany the proposal. This will establish the significance of the structure and can make recommendations for the proposal. The statement should note all structures, however the main concern for me is the proposed demolition of the original cottage and cool store.



I understand that no further information has been received from the applicant at this time. Extent Heritage has now been asked to review the information provided and give advice on whether the latest RFI request is justified.

It is noted that no Statement of Significance exists for the subject site. The absence of any information on the significance of the site is clearly an impediment to the assessment and management of its values – which is required under Clause 15.03-1S and 43.01-8 of the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme. While I acknowledge that the site is in poor condition – something confirmed by the engineer’s report – I don’t consider that an informed decision can be made in the absence of some information about the site’s history, evolution, and significance. The documentation doesn’t need to be exhaustive, but it does need to be sufficiently detailed to inform an assessment of the impact of the proposed demolition against the provisions of the Planning Scheme.

We would be happy to undertake an assessment of the application itself once this additional information has been provided.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leo Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail.

Dr Leo Martin

Associate Director, National Technical Lead – Heritage Places | Extent Heritage