

MITCHELL SHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2021 – 2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Mitchell Shire Council acknowledges the Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Mitchell Shire. We pay our respects to their rich cultures and to Elders, past, present and emerging, as well as other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live, work and play in the area.



We proudly fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to acknowledge and show respect for Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country	2
Message from our Mayor	4
Key Definitions	5
About our community	6
Introduction - how and why we developed this plan	7
Our greatest challenges	9
Our greatest assets	9
Planning Framework	10
Community Vision	11
Our plan	12
Active and Healthy	14
Informed and Connected	20
Safe and Respectful	26
Liveable and Thriving	32
Our partners	38
Evaluation and Monitoring	39

Front Page: Wallan community garden and young people, Local children at Wallan Community Bank Adventure Playground, Local kindergarten child, Greater Beveridge Community BBQ.

MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR



I am delighted to present this plan to our community. It's clear from our conversations with people across the Shire that few things matter more than our individual and collective health and wellbeing.

While developing a Municipal Public Health Plan is a legislative requirement of Councils set out in the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, this piece of work is so much more than that. It reflects our mutual desire to work hand-in-hand with community members and organisations to build a healthy and connected community.

In developing this plan, we considered complex and comprehensive demographic data and we consulted widely. Hundreds of community members and organisations told us what health means to them and how we can create a community where people live healthier lives. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to provide us with this valuable feedback.

Rhonda Sanderson

Cr Rhonda Sanderson
Mayor

Our actions in this plan are grouped into four broad priorities:

- > **Active and healthy:** All members of our community will have opportunities to be active. We will all have access to healthy food and will live in environments that enable and encourage positive health and wellbeing outcomes.
- > **Informed and connected:** Our community will be empowered and resilient and all people will have access to the services and supports they need to lead healthy lives.
- > **Safe and respectful:** All residents will feel safe, welcome and respected at home, and in the community, regardless of background and identity.
- > **Liveable and thriving:** Our community will rise to the challenges created by growth and climate change and be a liveable, prosperous and thriving place for all.

For each of these priorities, we have identified our goals and key strategies that Council will deliver. We have then described the outcomes we are working towards. This is an ambitious plan that seeks to deliver on our community's high expectations for Mitchell Shire to be a thriving, connected and healthy place to live.

I hope that you will read this plan and understand some of the ways in which we can all be involved in improving not only our own health, but the health and wellbeing of our families, workplaces and communities.

Mitchell Shire Council CEO Brett Luxford and Mayor Cr Rhonda Sanderson promoting the consultation community input for the Community Vision and Health and Wellbeing Plans.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Community Engagement

A deliberate process with the specific purpose of working with individuals and groups across a community to encourage active involvement, open dialogue, feedback and participation and to align decision making processes appropriately to actions undertaken to a problem, opportunity or outcome.

Gender Lens

Carefully and deliberately examining all the implications of our work in terms of gender.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing is a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society.

Intersectionality

The ways in which different parts of a person's identity can make it more likely for them to experience overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation due to gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, ability or sexuality. When we use an intersectional lens, this means we are considering how the different factors of a person's identity might impact them.

Self Determination

Self-determination is the understanding that when developing and implementing policies and programs, the communities impacted should be closely involved in the process, and consultation and engagement processes will be undertaken to facilitate this. There is a need to consider the self-determination whenever you are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or other peoples with a common racial, ethnic or cultural identity which has been built up over a long period of time.

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is the dynamic sense of belonging, support, and environment one may experience from family, friends and community through interaction and engagement.

ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

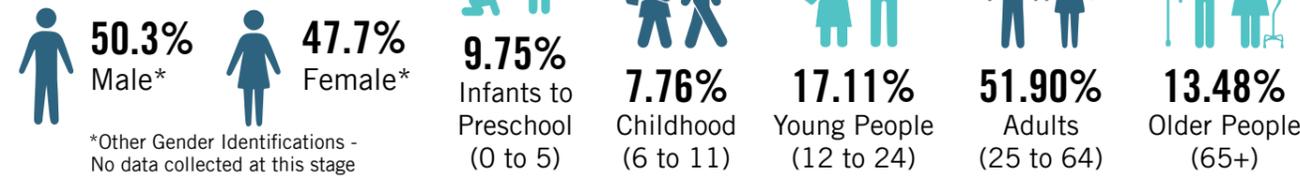
Who we are: an overview of our diverse community



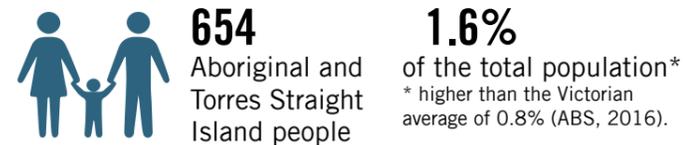
Breakdown by Township

	2021	2041		2021	2041
 Beveridge	4,632	72,040	Rural North East	2,889	3,022
Broadford area	5,333	9,839	Seymour	6,650	9,893
Kilmore - Kilmore East	9,781	21,012	Wallan	14,473	48,890
Pyalong - Rural North West	2,075	2,429	Wandong - Heathcote Junction	3,135	3,705

Gender split and age



Aboriginality in Mitchell Shire 2016



Country of Birth



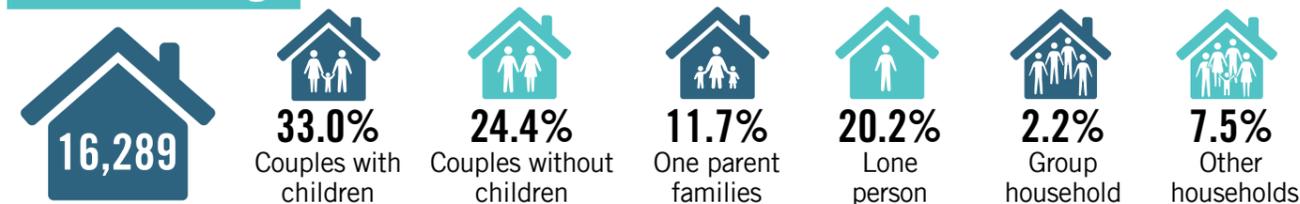
Tenure - Mitchell Shire in 2016



Languages - Most Spoken



Private Dwellings



INTRODUCTION

How and Why We Developed This Plan

Mitchell Shire Council in collaboration with our partners and the community present Mitchell Shire's Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025. This strategic plan provides direction on the priority health and wellbeing focus areas for Council, health service providers and partners in the municipality, to improve the health and wellbeing of all Mitchell Shire residents.

Council and its partners aim to protect, support the health and wellbeing of the Mitchell Shire community by addressing the preventable risk factors that can cause and impact chronic health conditions and poor health and social outcomes.

This plan provides an overarching strategic framework for Council and its health partners to work towards health and wellbeing outcomes through outlined strategic goals that address underlying social factors. Specific areas to be addressed are identified for the whole population of Mitchell Shire, and the plan emphasises the needs of certain population groups experiencing poorer health and wellbeing outcomes. The Plan will guide the development of new policies, strategies, programs, services and advocacy campaigns that promote health and wellbeing.

In developing this Health and Wellbeing Plan we have been guided by, and are complying with, several important pieces of State legislation:

- > The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*: we must prepare a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan within 12 months of each general election
- > The *Victorian Climate Change Act 2017*: climate change must be considered during the preparation of this Plan
- > The *Gender Equality Act 2020*: all councils employing 50 or more staff must undertake a

Gender Impact Assessment when developing or reviewing any plan that has a direct and significant impact on the public

- > The *Local Government Act 2020*, which outlines principles of community engagement and strategic planning and requires the need for deliberative engagement

In addition, the *Royal Commission into Family Violence* requires that councils' report on the measures they propose to take to reduce family violence and respond to the needs of victims in preparing their Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Our planning process has been informed by some recognised frameworks. These include:

- > **The Social Determinants of Health**
 - Socio-economic status
 - Early life circumstances
 - Social support networks
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Housing
 - Access to fresh and healthy food
 - Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality
 - Access to and use of health services
 - The liveability of the area
- > **Environments for Health:** Built, Social, Natural, Economic
- > **Gender Equality:** Considering and promoting gender equality across all goals, strategies and actions
- > **Intersectionality:** taking into account the different factors, influences and parts of people's identity or experience that can make it more likely for them to be exposed to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation

INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

Figure 1: The Wider Determinants of Health. Source Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, 2019-2023.



Source: Adapted from Dahlgren & Whitehead 1991

Importantly, our plan has also been informed by significant community consultation, including input from Mitchell Shire’s largest community engagement drive, the Mitchell 2050 Vision project, as well as significant targeted engagement with hard to reach and hidden communities. This process allowed us to capture the aspirations of our community in relation to health and wellbeing, furthermore this engagement informed the values and direction of the Plan. The importance we give to community voices can be seen in the presentation of community feedback at the beginning of each section of the Plan.

Goals and strategies in the Plan have been grouped in four broad priorities:

1. **Active and healthy** – Access to active living, healthy eating and reduction of harm in lifestyle choices

2. **Informed and connected** – including social connectedness, mental health and service access
3. **Safe and respectful** – safety in the home and in the community and freedom from all forms of discrimination
4. **Liveable and thriving** – planning communities and environments for health and wellbeing

We recognise the interconnection between many determinants of health, and we understand that there will be many areas of crossover between these priorities. As such, achieving the outcomes identified in this plan will take a whole of council approach. Importantly achieving these outcomes will also require collaboration with our partners and community and we thank you in advance for coming on this journey with us.

OUR GREATEST CHALLENGES/ASSETS

Our greatest challenges



School completion rates are low



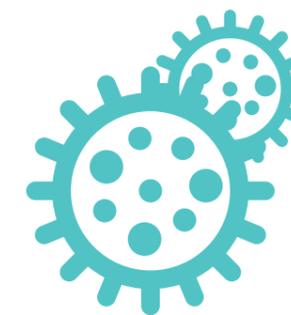
We are at high risk of alcohol related harm



Climate change is threatening liveability



Only 5% of the population are meeting nutrition guidelines



Covid-19 exacerbated many underlying vulnerabilities



Smoking rates are much higher than the Victorian average

Our greatest assets



Amazing natural environments



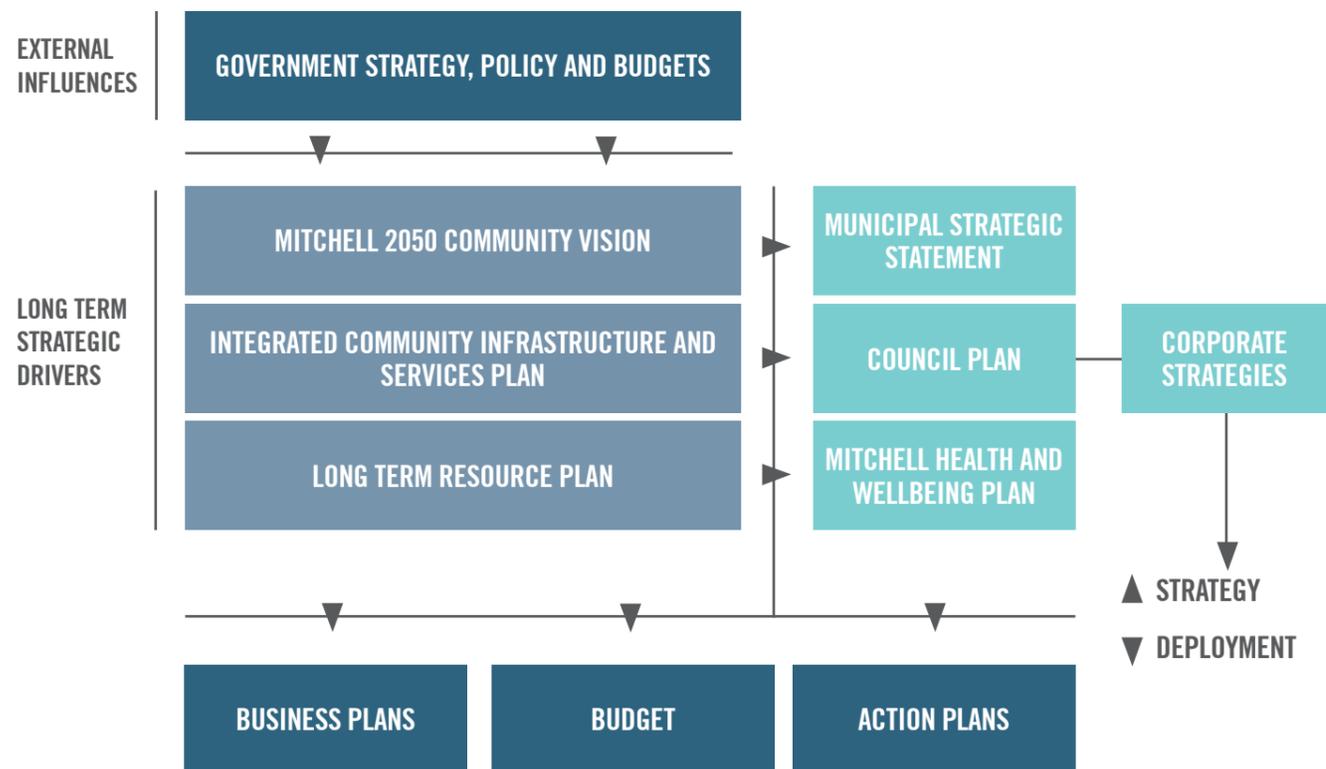
The opportunity to plan for our future



Diverse employment sectors and opportunities

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Mitchell Shire Council Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 is one of many strategic plans created by Council to develop the health, wellbeing and resilience of our community.



COMMUNITY VISION

The *Local Government Act 2020* has created a once in a generational opportunity for councils to work closely and deeply with their community to build a shared vision they can all be proud of. It is the key piece of work that unlocks how the council will position itself to respond to the community's expectations for the future.

Importantly the Community Vision acts as a medium for the community to have continued conversations with Council ensuring the Vision, themes and aspirations of the community are kept in check. The Mitchell 2050 Community Vision is a high-level plan that captures the long-term aspirations of the community. The 2050 Vision is driven, developed, and owned by the Mitchell community, with Council as the facilitator in the development process.

The Mitchell 2050 Community Vision has been built upon 6 key themes which arose through a range of consultations which took place with the community over April and May 2021. The themes are reflected on at various points within the Health and Wellbeing Plan which provides the community with the opportunity to see the line of site between the two documents.

The Health and Wellbeing Plan is informed by the following 6 Community Vision Themes:

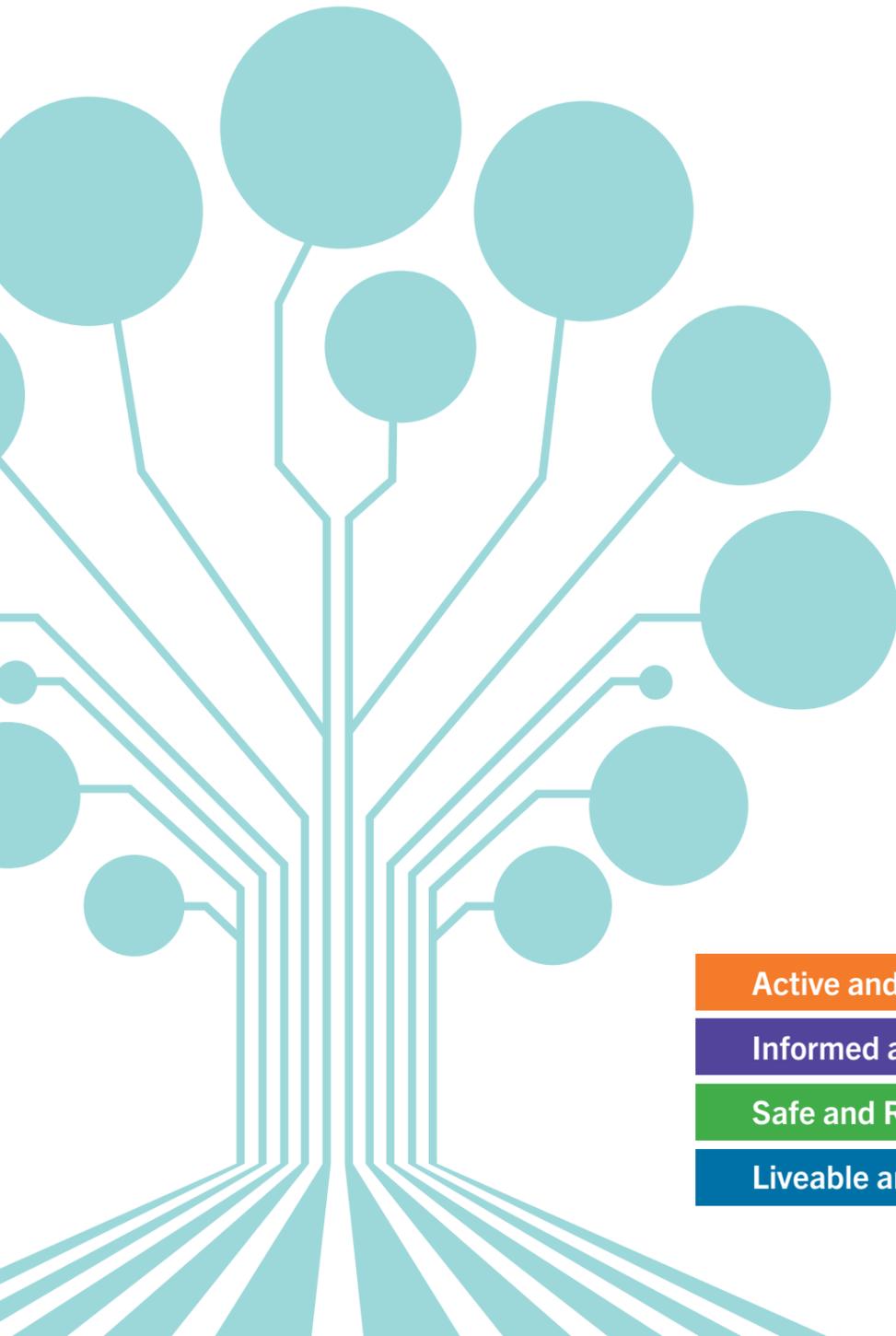
-  **THEME 1
VIBRANT COMMUNITIES**
-  **THEME 2
WORKING, LEARNING AND TOURISM**
-  **THEME 3
TRAVELLING AND GETTING AROUND**
-  **THEME 4
SHAPING NEIGHBOURHOODS**
-  **THEME 5
NATURE AND PARKS**
-  **THEME 6
CLIMATE ACTION**

While the community's primary aspiration for the future is:



“We are a healthy, vibrant and connected community that values nature, diversity and innovation.”

THE PLAN



- Active and Healthy
- Informed and Connected
- Safe and Respectful
- Liveable and Thriving



Active and Healthy

All members of the community will have opportunities to be active. We will all have access to healthy food and will live in environments that enable and encourage positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

Community members making a splash at the Broadford Outdoor Pool during summer.



What our community told us:

“Better sports facilities for all”

“Support more walking groups and other outdoor activities such as exploring parts of our Shire, such as walks along the Goulburn river, hiking at Mt Disappointment”

“Better walking tracks and bike tracks with an emphasis on family fitness”

“Our public institutions, schools, events, shopping centres, fuel stops should all be rewarded for offering sugar free, vegetable leaning food offerings and removing heavily processed foods”

“I am worried about alcohol, I see my friends use it because they don't know any better, it is also legal and so normal to rely on, I think even more education and support could make them less likely to be in trouble one day.”

“I love the idea of a town I can walk around, I would love more bike paths and walking paths so the kids and I can leave the car at home for good.”

“Access to fresh food - Seymour does not have a green-grocer. My experience is that the ‘big’ corporations have pushed everyone who has tried out.”

“Change the focus on healthy activities away from expensive and time-consuming sports to growing your own food and sharing the abundance with the community. Perhaps a well kitted community kitchen and hall where people can learn skills together.”



ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

What the data tells us:

- > In Mitchell Shire, **4.8%** of the population were consuming the daily recommended intake of fruit and vegetables, higher than the Victorian average of **3.6%**.
- > In Mitchell Shire, **39%** of residents do not meet the guidelines for physical activity.
- > Victorians **2017** Health indicators survey tells us that **62.7%** of adults in Mitchell Shire are overweight and obese, higher than the Victorian average of **50.8%**.
- > **73.2%** of Mitchell residents in total use their car to get to get to work higher than the Victorian average of **65%**.
- > **61%** of people are interested in improving their dietary habits.
- > **67%** of residents are at risk of harm from their alcohol consumption.
- > Drug related offences in the municipality went up significantly from **2019/20** to **2020/21**.
- > **24%** of residents smoke (Victorian average **17%**).
- > In **2019/20** **\$12.8** million lost on poker machines which equates to **\$353** per adult (Victorian average of **\$378**).
- > For people who increased alcohol consumption and smoking during COVID-19 lockdowns, around **42%** say it was due to feelings of anxiety, stress or boredom.



Mitchell community member using a local community garden to grow local produce.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Vision: All members of our community will have opportunities to be active. We will all have access to healthy food and will live in environments that enable and encourage positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

We will...

1. Increase healthy eating

- 1.1 Promote healthy eating and access to affordable nutritious food
- 1.2 Support initiatives that encourage consumption of fruit and vegetables across the life stages
- 1.3 Work with partners to support programs and initiatives which deliver healthy eating education and awareness in community and business settings
- 1.4 Implement initiatives that support the creation of local food supply and networks
- 1.5 Work to reduce barriers to accessing healthy, nutritious and low-cost food and food choices

2. Encourage active living

- 2.1 Promote the benefits of physical activity, active living and active travel through programs, policy's and projects
- 2.2 Support sporting clubs and associations in building healthy environments and in increasing participation rates with a focus on under-represented groups
- 2.3 Improve and promote accessibility to all parks, open space, reserves and recreational services for all abilities across the life stages
- 2.4 Improve walkability, accessible paths and bike paths within and between townships and links to public transport

Outcomes

Medium term

- Increase in the number of people meeting nutrition guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption
- Decrease in the number of people experiencing food insecurity
- Increased accessibility to local healthy food sources

Long Term

- Increased positive health outcomes related to lifestyle related preventable disease

Medium term

- Increase in the number of people walking and cycling for leisure and commuting
- Increase in the number of people participating in organised sports
- Increase in the number of people using parks and recreation reserves for informal exercise and activity

Long Term

- Increased positive health outcomes related to lifestyle related preventable disease
- An increased connection to and appreciation of nature and the local community

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

We will...

3. Reduce the impact and harm of alcohol, drugs and tobacco

- 3.1 Work with partners to educate on and address the local impacts of harmful alcohol and drug use and its intersections with family violence and poor health outcomes in Mitchell Shire
- 3.2 Promote and support access to services for people looking for assistance with tobacco, alcohol and drugs
- 3.3 Take a public health approach in advocacy to achieve reforms to prevent harmful behaviour by these industries and increase the availability of health services to respond
- 3.4 Use available compliance levers planning levers, and local laws to reduce access to, and prevent harm from tobacco and alcohol

4. Increase community understanding of, and address harms associated with gambling.

- 4.1 Take a public health approach to gambling related strategy, policy and advocacy
- 4.2 Take a leadership approach through advocating for gambling policy reform
- 4.3 Work with partners to educate on and address the local impacts of gambling and its intersections with alcohol, drug use and family violence in Mitchell Shire
- 4.4 Use available planning levers to prevent new gambling outlets and minimise harm

Outcomes

Medium term

- Greater community awareness about the harms associated with these products
- Reduction in rates of tobacco consumption by minors
- Increased uptake of smoking cessation supports
- Greater access and increased use to local health services to address addictions
- Reduction in rates of family violence, gambling and alcohol consumption

Long Term

- Increased positive health outcomes linked to tobacco
- A reduction in drug and alcohol related assaults
- A reduction in illicit-drug related Emergency Department presentations

Medium term

- Greater community awareness about the harms associated with gambling
- Increased use of gamblers help programs and local health services to address addiction
- Reduction in rates of family violence, gambling and alcohol consumption

Long Term

- Reduction in per capita electronic gaming machine losses
- Reduction in severity and frequency of family violence linked to consumption of alcohol and gambling



Seniors enjoying staying active and healthy.

Informed and Connected

Our community will be empowered and resilient and all people will have access to the services and supports they need to lead healthy lives.

Seymour locals undertaking cooking lessons.
Photo from My Mitchell Photo Competition 2020.



What our community told us:

"I have family members that have waited up to eight weeks to see a medical professional in the last 12 months."

"I see a psychologist, but they are out of the Shire. The waiting list was too long here, I would love to have some locally."

"It's hard with seeking help because I feel like no psych here will understand my experience as a multicultural person in a new country and a regional community, so I just stop going."

"Dad doesn't get it, he's from a different time, he thinks I'm being weak because I am so mentally unwell, it makes me feel so alone and slows down me getting better. It definitely stopped me getting help for a long time. I wish I knew research I could show him so he'd understand." - Student

"I get really lonely, I know I need to find my place in the community, but I don't know where to start."

"I also envisage a state of the art hospital, with an ED that will have a doctor on throughout the night, not just nurses, a far more expanded service from the hospital to support other tests etc for the community rather than having to go to another hospital."

"Better access to allied health. There is a shortage of OTs and Speech therapists, my family has been waiting for an OT service with a wait time of 6 months or longer. This is unacceptably long, especially for a child who needs OT."

"Support for community activities, groups, like Community Garden, Clubs, Men's Sheds. Lower or no charges for renting council facilities for these groups."

"More events and groups especially for young families and the elderly."

"Greater availability of social connection activities and events to enable residents to meet other people and connect with community and feel connected."



INFORMED AND CONNECTED

What the data tells us:

- > Mitchell Shire ranked poorly in terms of mental health, with the percentage of people within Mitchell Shire who feel valued by society (**46.5%**) amongst the lowest in the state.
- > The percentage of people reporting high/very high psychological distress in Mitchell Shire is **14.8%**, higher than the State measure of **12.6%**.
- > **31.3%** of women in rural and remote regions could not get medical appointments when they needed one. (Jean Hailes, 2020)
- > **23%** of people felt socially isolated or disconnected from their community (VicHealth, 2020A), for older people this reached **63%** (COTA Victoria, 2020).
- > Volunteer based community and sporting groups have reported a drop off of participation since the beginning of the Pandemic (Mitchell Shire Council, 2021).
- > Many of Mitchell Shire's young people (age 12-25) reported feelings of loneliness and not feeling part of their school or wider community (Mitchell Shire Council, 2021).
- > **55%** of men in Mitchell Shire over the age of **40** reported a need to feel involved in their community as compared, to **40%** of women (Mitchell Shire Council, 2021).
- > **10.9%** of residents are active library borrowers (Victorian average **14.9%**)



Youth councillors participating in a Youth Forum.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Vision: Our community will be empowered and resilient and all people will have access to the services and supports they need to lead healthy lives.

We will...

5. Maximum protection against vaccine preventable disease for the whole population

- 5.1 Deliver targeted initiatives and information to enhance immunisation uptake in children
- 5.2 Continue to support initiatives that educate and increase the accessibility of immunisations
- 5.3 Promote uptake of vaccination programs across the life stages

Outcomes

Medium term

- Increase childhood immunisation rates
- Increase in the proportion of the community who receive annual flu shot
- More community members will be encouraged partake in vaccine programs

Long Term

- A community which experiences reduced harms associated with vaccine preventable illness

6. All members of the community have access to culturally responsive health care when and where they need it

- 6.1 Promote available health services to all members of the community with a particular focus on groups with lower levels of access
- 6.2 Work with partners and health service providers to reduce barriers to access with a focus on under-represented groups
- 6.3 Plan and activate services and infrastructure for established and growth communities across Mitchell
- 6.4 Advocate for greater investment in health services and infrastructure across the Shire
- 6.5 Use the levers available to council to ensure that all health services are culturally responsive

Medium term

- Residents moving into Mitchell Shire will have knowledge of, and access to health services.
- New health services will be available in the Shire
- Under-represented groups will have greater access to appropriate health services

Long Term

- An integrated and responsive health service system in Mitchell Shire with an increased rate of uptake of local services

INFORMED AND CONNECTED

We will...

7. Our community has access to holistic mental health services that address the determinants of positive mental health outcomes

- 7.1 Advocate for the expansion of mental health services in Mitchell Shire
- 7.2 Develop and work in partnerships and to deliver a holistic mental health service
- 7.3 Deliver initiatives that educate our community on the relationship between healthy eating, physical activity and other lifestyle factors which contribute to positive mental health outcomes

8. Educate and empower the community to improve understanding of mental health and wellbeing

- 8.1 Deliver initiatives which de-stigmatise help seeking and promote access to mental health services

9. Our community will have means and opportunity to connect with others

- 9.1 Work to make council events and programs more accessible to all
- 9.2 Advocate for more funding for social and recreational community spaces and facilities
- 9.3 Promote the use of streets, parks and reserves for social events and activities
- 9.4 Promote volunteering and connect community members with volunteering opportunities
- 9.5 Support emerging community leaders to develop their skills in community leadership and engagement
- 9.6 Encourage environments that allow the seeding of community groups

Outcomes

Medium term

- The number of people able to access culturally responsive mental health services will increase
- Decreased reporting of barriers to up taking services

Long Term

- Improved life satisfaction rates across the community
- Decrease suicide rates
- Increased uptake of services, and participation in recreation, education and employment across the community

Medium term

- Decreased reporting of stigma and embarrassment as a barrier to uptake of services

Long Term

- Increased uptake of local Mitchell Shire mental health services

Medium term

- Increased visibility of volunteering opportunities in the community
- Increased visibility of council events council facilities for people from traditionally underrepresented groups
- An increase in the number of people who participate in community groups and activities

Long Term

- An increased proportion of our community will participate in volunteering activities
- Improved mental health and social connection

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

10. All members of our community will feel welcome at our public libraries, community hubs community leisure facilities and council buildings

- 10.1 Develop initiatives to encourage greater use of public libraries especially among under-represented groups
- 10.2 Reduce barriers and increase use of community centres, hubs and leisure facilities
- 10.3 Future needs for accessible libraries, community hubs and leisure facilities will be considered in all planning for growth areas

Medium term

- Increase in the proportion of residents who regularly use community facilities

Long Term

- Active users of our libraries will reach the Victorian average



Local kindergarten child exploring nature.

Safe and Respectful

All residents will feel safe, welcome and respected at home, and in the community, regardless of background and identity.

Broadford Youth Room graffiti prevention workshop with Victoria Police.



What our community told us:

"I don't even know who to turn too when I need help, and I don't have time to think about it, I'm too busy."

"We desperately need more services for domestic violence offenders, there needs to be men's behaviour programs that are available for men to join and not have a six month or more wait. Waiting that long could result in more domestic violence or murder."

"I see my friends in bad relationships that are controlling or verbally abusive and I worry for them, I worry they don't see the signs of it one day getting worse."

"Maintaining a rural feel to the community. Improving safety and decreasing the crime stats."

"A sense of belonging. The biggest struggle living in this community, there is nothing to hold onto. Need to belong to the community, but how do you belong when the community doesn't want you here."

"Sense of belonging. Everyone is treated as part of the community no matter what faith, skin colour, abilities for disabilities you have, or age you are. Being told "welcome" when new to the community."

"Women's refuges and support for escaping family violence, mental health providers and support, more LGBTQI+ resources and services, updated sex education in schools to properly cover consent as well as LGBTQI+ sex education, acknowledgment of our Aboriginal Communities at all of Mitchell Shire's facilities."



SAFE AND RESPECTFUL

What the data tells us:

- > In 2016, there were **654** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people living in Mitchell Shire, **1.6%** of the total population higher than the Victorian average of **0.8%**.
- > Overall, compared to the total Mitchell Shire population and the total Victoria population, Mitchell Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a higher percentage of school leavers, a higher percentage of renters compared to home owners, a higher percentage of persons earning less than \$500 weekly, and a higher percentage of persons needing assistance with core activities.
- > In **2016, 11.5%** of people in Mitchell Shire were born overseas, compared with **33.8%** in Greater Melbourne.
- > Between **2011** and **2016**, the number of people born overseas increased by **902** or **23.7%**. The largest changes in birthplace countries of the population in this area between 2011 and 2016 were for those born in:
 - India (+163 persons)
 - China (+114 persons)
 - Philippines (+113 persons)
- > Girls and women in Mitchell Shire reported on barriers to reproductive health care services, including lack of accessibility locally and lack of understanding and empathy in care
- > Women in Mitchell Shire reported the stress and pressure of needing to pre-plan and organise birthing arrangements due to lack of availability of options within Mitchell Shire.
- > Mitchell Shire is ranked **7th** out of **79** councils in the state for police callouts for family violence incidents.
- > Family violence increased **5.7%** in Mitchell Shire from March 2020 to March 2021.
- > Up to two thirds of women experiencing family violence in Victoria reported an escalation in violence and abuse throughout 2020 and reported this as being due to Pandemic related stress.
- > Women with a disability and LGBTIQ+ women were twice as likely to experience discrimination in accessing health care.
- > **82.5%** of men felt safe walking at night whilst only **44.7%** of women felt safe walking at night.
- > Currently, **4.9%** of Mitchell Shire population need help with day-to-day core activities. This percent rises within Mitchell Shire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population with **7.4%** needing assistance with core activities.
- > Unpaid carers make up **11.5%** of Mitchell Shire's population.



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Vision: All resident will feel safe, welcome and respected at home and in the community regardless of background and identity.

We will...

11. Develop a reconciliation action plan that respects, celebrates and promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge

- 11.1 Undertake deliberative engagement with the Traditional Owners of the Land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community to establish a Reconciliation Action Plan
- 11.2 Act to mitigate inequities that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians health and social outcomes
- 11.3 Identification, protection and where appropriate interpretation of places of significance for Indigenous people

12. Prevent family and gender-based violence in Mitchell Shire

- 12.1 Advocate for and support an increase in locally based family violence services
- 12.2 Deliver initiatives to promote accessible pathways for all people, including new and emerging communities, to feel safe to report family and gender-based violence across the life stages
- 12.3 Work with partners to support programs and initiatives that educate on and address the gendered drivers of family violence
- 12.4 Promote gender equity across all council and community activities
- 12.5 Work holistically with partners to advocate and address the shifting intersections and social determinants that are associated with gendered and family violence

Outcomes

Medium term

- Acknowledgement of Country is present at all Council events, programs, and in all policies and buildings
- Development of Reconciliation Action Plan

Long Term

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our Shire will experience health and well-being outcomes equal to those of the wider community

Medium term

- Increase in the number of women and children accessing family violence supports
- Increase in the number of men accessing integrated mental health services
- Increased understanding of the importance of tackling gender inequality in order to address family violence
- Decrease incidents of family and gender-based violence

Long Term

- Reduced rates of family and gender-based violence

SAFE AND RESPECTFUL

We will...

13. Enhance the real and perceived safety and amenity of public space

- 13.1 Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles in planning for all future precincts
- 13.2 Engage the community in the planning and delivery of community safety initiatives

14. Lead in addressing equity and fighting discrimination of all kinds

- 14.1 Apply an intersectional lens across all Council policies, plans and programs
- 14.2 Elevate hard to reach, hidden and emerging communities' voices
- 14.3 Continue to prioritise alignment within the entirety of Council to Mitchell Shire's Life Stages Strategy 2019

15. Improve awareness and knowledge of safe sexual and reproductive health

- 15.1 Work with partners to deliver education messages to empower the community on healthy relationship and consent practices
- 15.2 Work with partners to deliver education messages to empower the community on safe sexual and reproductive health
- 15.3 Promote and advocate for greater access to local services

Outcomes

Medium term

- Increased perceptions of safety in public spaces
- Improved design of new public spaces focussing on community safety

Long Term

- Reduce rates of violence in public spaces in the Shire
- Our community feel safe and welcome in all environments

Medium term

- Council services will be more gender inclusive

Long Term

- The Mitchell Shire community will be a safe and inclusive place for all
- Safe, equitable communities and organisations, inclusive of all genders, cultures, sexual orientation and ability

Medium term

- Community awareness about available sexual and reproductive health services will increase

Long Term

- Improved sexual health outcomes in Mitchell Shire
- Increased accessibility to women's health and reproductive services



Accessible venues around the Mitchell Shire.

Liveable and Thriving

Our community will rise to the challenges created by growth and climate change and be a liveable, prosperous and thriving place for all.

Beam and Seymour College partnership, learning about composting.



What our community told us:

"I understand some parts of climate change, but I am so nervous about it, what will it look like for us? How can I learn more?"

"I see mum and dad stress as fire season gets worse every year, we live on a big property, and it's getting scarier and scarier and they are grumpier and more angry around the house especially during summer or if climate change is on the news."

"We need public education programs about bush heritage, the larger cycles of bush and environmental health and Aboriginal lessons to care for Country are needed, otherwise we feel like a lone voice."

"Seymour and Beveridge are very different, and I can't wait for them to be planned for those differences in the future."

"I'd love more unis [universities] up here so I don't need to leave to Melbourne next year, I'm not ready to move but I want to go to uni!"

"Mitchell is different to the rest of Melbourne at the moment, growth is coming but we are still so regional. Planning needs to take that into consideration."

"a community where options for education are rich and diverse and where the idea of education is respected and valued."

"A lot more opportunities for young people to work."

"Action to support creative affordable housing options in and around towns such as co-operative housing and co-housing."

"Strategically designed estates/ towns/ precincts/ buildings that promote social connections and celebrate diversity. Prevention by design!"

"Better early education and support for young families, better opportunities for school engagement for all students and their families."



LIVEABLE AND THRIVING

What the data tells us:

- > Mitchell Shire comprises over **2,800** square kilometres of rural, regional and urban land.
- > The current population is **48,969**, projected to increase to **130,631** residents by **2036**.
- > Much of this growth is expected to occur within the southern townships of Beveridge, Kilmore and Wallan.
- > **38.8%** of people aged over 15 years had completed Year 12 schooling (or equivalent) this is lower than the Victorian average of **54.4%**.
- > The unemployment rate across Mitchell at the beginning of **2020** was **4.5%** lower than the Victorian average of **5.4%**.
- > Covid-19 resulted in many people in our community requiring income assistance - **5%** of Mitchell Shire residents needing financial assistance in November **2019** and **10.5%** utilising it in December **2020**, more than the Victorian average of **8.8%**.
- > Climate change can impact our health in many ways, direct impacts such as the increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as long heatwaves, floods and bushfires.
- > Climate change also impacts health outcomes through worsening air quality, changes in the spread of infectious diseases, risks to food safety and access to food and drinking water quality, as well as significant effects on mental health.
- > In a **2014** Victorian heatwave event there were **167** excess deaths and increase in heat-related public hospital emergency department presentations five times more than the same period in a non-heat wave event.
- > By **2050** there will be an extra **402** deaths per year in Victoria due to heatwaves if no adaptation measures are taken.
- > Long lasting mental health impacts are experienced after climate events, four years after the Victorian Black Saturday Bushfires, showed in low-medium affected fire communities an increase from **4.4%** of people with reported persistent PTSD before the event to **10%** four years after the fires as well as increased rates in depression and psychological distress related to the fires.
- > One in five women and almost half of all single mothers live in households with low economic resources. The existing barriers to accessing affordable, good quality, safe food will be exacerbated by climate change.
- > In Mitchell and Murrindindi Shire studies have shown an increase in reports of family violence in the aftermath of natural disasters.
- >  Under-represented groups are more likely to live in rented or public accommodation. Low income renters are especially vulnerable to poor social and environmental outcomes as they live in poorer quality housing, have less capacity to climate proof their homes and are more likely to suffer from higher energy and water prices.



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Vision: Our community will rise to the challenges created by growth and climate change and be a liveable, prosperous and thriving place for all.

We will...

16. The growth Mitchell is experiencing brings health and well-being benefits for the whole community

- 16.1 Take into account the diverse rural, regional and growth communities in Mitchell Shire in all planning, policies and programs
- 16.2 Use master plans and structure plans to plan for improved and accessible pedestrian and bicycle pathways
- 16.3 Align planning with the 20-minute neighbourhood initiative within Mitchell Shire's growth development planning
- 16.4 Ensure that the planning processes mitigate any health and social impacts
- 16.5 Insist on the early delivery of and access to services and infrastructure in new and emerging communities
- 16.6 Undertake the incorporation of Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles into all Council Planning

17. Increase community understanding of, connection to, and preservation of the natural environment to support health and wellbeing

- 17.1 Our infrastructure, land management and operational practices acknowledge Traditional Owner's, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander connection to country
- 17.2 Deliver initiatives that promote and encourage connection between community and nature
- 17.3 Deliver education programs to build the knowledge, skills and capacity of the community to understand and undertake sustainable land management practices

Outcomes

Medium term

- A health and social lens will be placed over the assessment of all planning applications
- Precinct plans will not be approved if sufficient infrastructure is not planned for delivery

Long Term

- The built environment in new communities will have community health and well-being at its heart
- All new communities will be walkable and cyclable with well-designed walking and cycling paths
- Diverse and inclusive opportunities for all community members to use accessible and safe public spaces

Medium term

- There will be more formal engagement with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in land management

Long Term

- Greater community understanding of, and connection to, nature

LIVEABLE AND THRIVING

We will...

18. Acknowledge and plan for the relationship between climate change and health outcomes

- 18.1 Education and empowerment of Mitchell Shire's diverse communities to increase understanding of climate change
- 18.2 Build awareness about climate change's impact on health and ongoing actions that can be taken to stay healthy in a changing climate
- 18.3 Work with communities identified to disproportionately be impacted by the effects of a changing climate to prepare for and mitigate harmful outcomes
- 18.4 Deliver awareness raising activities to assist people to stay safe and healthy in extreme weather events
- 18.5 Ensure all stages of planning accord with the relevant State and Local planning policies relating to mitigating the impacts of climate change

19. Prepare, respond and support community recovery from emergencies in Mitchell Shire

- 19.1 Ensure responses to disaster throughout Council are prioritised addressing health, economic and social consequences for community
- 19.2 Ensure all stages of planning accord with the relevant State and Local planning policies relating to mitigating the impacts of natural disasters

20. Increase local employment opportunities

- 20.1 Consider employment precincts and opportunities in all new precinct structure plans
- 20.2 Strengthened relationships between the local business sector, employment services and education providers
- 20.3 Work with partners to address the diverse intersectionality's and barriers to employment

Outcomes

Medium term

- An increased number of community members will have plans to manage extreme weather events

Long Term

- Reduced burden of disease from extreme weather events
- Increased community empowerment and ability to manage in a changing environment

Medium term

- Our community will be resilient in the face of emerging disasters

Long Term

- Mitchell Shire will be well equipped to manage all emergencies

Medium term

- Increased numbers of localised employment opportunities within Mitchell Shire

Long Term

- Reduction overall unemployment rate within Mitchell Shire

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

21. Support learning and access to education for all

- 21.1 Develop initiatives to reduce barriers to accessing all education opportunities in the community
- 21.2 Work with existing tertiary providers to adapt to changing learning environments
- 21.3 Work with the Department of Education and Training for the timely provision of new infrastructure

Medium term

- Increased access to education opportunities, including early delivery of inclusive schooling and education services
- Increased student employability and career development skills
- Advanced planning for new schools and education infrastructure

Long Term

- School completion rates will rise to Victorian average
- Diverse, accessible education opportunities throughout the community
- Strengthened facilitated pathways between the education sector and local business sector

22. Diverse housing options across Mitchell Shire that meet community needs

- 22.1 Advocate for housing that is accessible and adaptable to meet communities changing health, social and environmental needs
- 22.2 Use all available planning scheme levers to generate more diverse and affordable housing stock

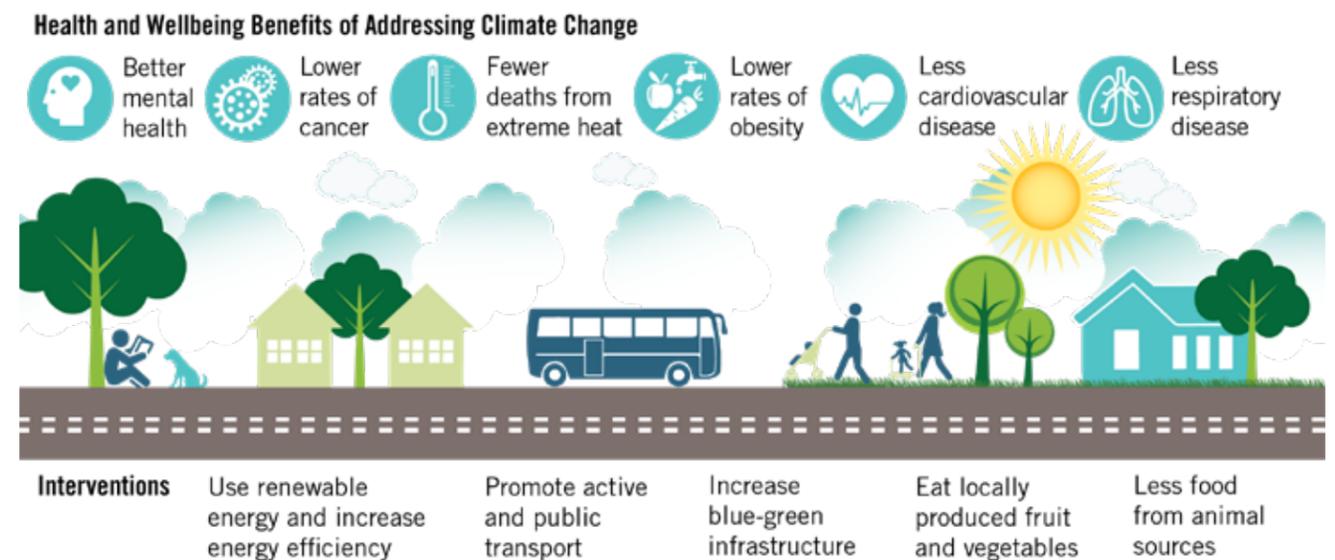
Medium term

- Increased diversity of housing options across Mitchell Shire

Long Term

- Housing that is affordable, accessible and adaptable to meet community needs across the life stages

Figure 2: Climate change and health co-benefits



OUR PARTNERS

We value our partners and look forward to working with you to realise this plan.

Health and wellbeing outcomes in our community are influenced by factors including the conditions in which people are born in, grow up, live, work and age. These dynamic conditions impact communities differently and cannot be influenced solely by Mitchell Shire Council. For this reason, we work closely with our local partners, hospitals and community health services, voluntary organisations, other levels of government and non-government organisations to address health and wellbeing and social factors across the community.

Our focus on a place-based approach draws on new and existing relationships with a range of community groups, service providers and other partners to deliver health-promoting projects and influence change in the Shire's priority areas.

We thank all partners:

- > Nexus Primary Health
- > Lower Hume Primary Care Network
- > The Bridge Youth Services
- > The Orange Door
- > Kilmore District Hospital
- > Family Care
- > Seymour Health
- > Goulburn Options
- > Kids First
- > Beyond Housing
- > Murray PHN
- > Victoria Police
- > Department Families Fairness and Housing
- > Taungurung Land and Water Council
- > Wurundjeri
- > Seymour Local Aboriginal Network
- > Women's Health Goulburn North East



EVALUATION AND MONITORING

The Community Development Team within the Life Stages department will be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the HWP as well as its subsequent action plans.

It is widely acknowledged in the field of public health that changes in population health outcomes occur over a long period and can be difficult to measure in the short-term. This plan outlines some strategic directions and the medium and long-term outcomes that Council will pursue over the next four years to support and enhance health and wellbeing in Mitchell Shire. In order to ensure we are on-track with delivery Mitchell Shire Council will monitor and assess health and wellbeing data and trends on an ongoing basis.

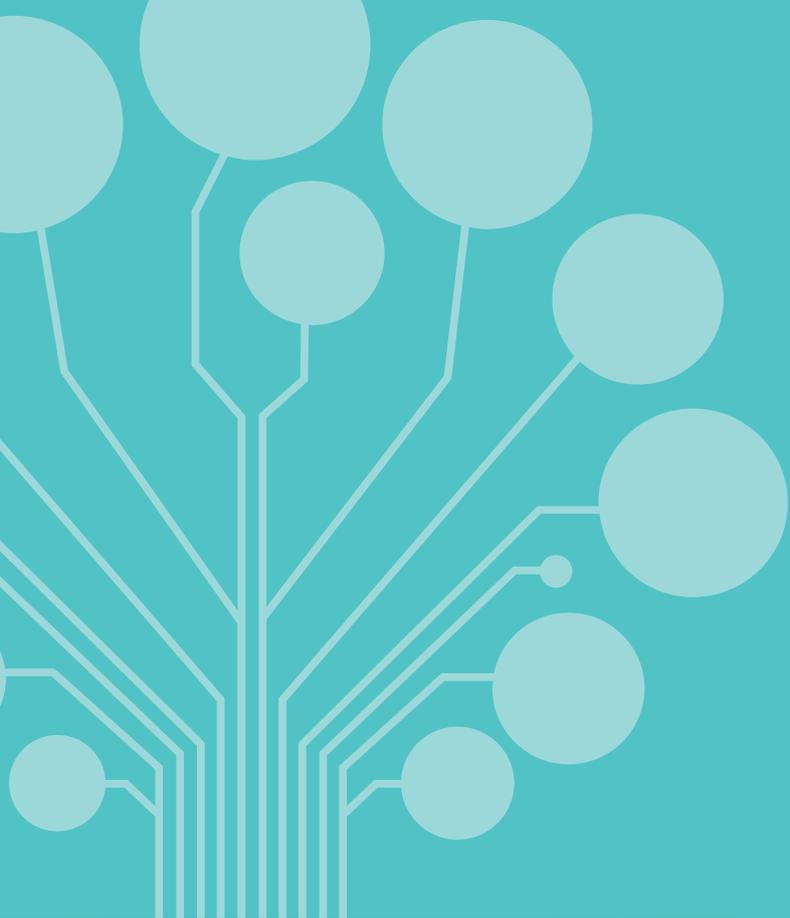
An action plan will be developed from Mitchell Shire's Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021- 2025 and includes specific actions, responsibilities, timeframes and resources.

The action plan will be evaluated on an annual basis and will include a series of indicators to monitor progress. Reporting of the action plan will be required from stakeholders on a quarterly basis and a half-yearly summary report will be distributed to Council followed by a final-year evaluation report and presentation.

References for all data presented in this plan can be found in the background paper.



Youth Council Clothes Swap event at Wallan.



mitchellshire.vic.gov.au

Two local youth with their final Contrast artworks.



MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL
113 High Street, Broadford 3658
t: (03) 5734 6200
e: mitchell@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au

