

# Council Plan 2025-2029

Including Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-29



Latrobe City Council acknowledges that it operates on the traditional land of the Brayakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

## **Introduction**

The Latrobe City Council Plan sets out our vision, priorities, and strategies for the next four years, shaping the future of our region. It guides decision making, resource allocation, and service delivery to meet the needs of our community.

## **Our Community Vision**

***In 2035, Latrobe City is a vibrant, thriving, healthy, connected and welcoming regional community where everyone feels safe and involved.***

***Our local businesses prosper, create diverse job opportunities, foster a highly skilled workforce and draw significant investment. Latrobe City is a hub of growth, learning, opportunity, and innovation.***

***We have stunning natural surroundings and outstanding creative, educational, recreational and cultural opportunities that underpin exceptional wellbeing and renowned visitor experiences.***

## **Our Council Plan**

The Council Plan, reflecting our Community Vision, centres around the following strategic directions:

- **Our Economy – *Investment, Jobs, Growth***
- **Our City – *Liveable, Sustainable, Connected***
- **Our Community – *Healthy, Inclusive, Safe***

supported by

- **Our Organisation – *Leadership, Collaboration, Capability***

## Plan Development

To develop the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) we have involved the community in a variety of ways to explore themes residents valued most, including:

### *Community Engagement*

Community input was collected through:

An online survey – the survey identified that respondents

- rated assets and infrastructure, the local economy and community wellbeing as being the most important
- liked several characteristics about living in Latrobe City – with its location in Victoria and the access to family and friends rating the highest, closely followed by our natural environment and parks & gardens

Community pop-ups held in Traralgon, Morwell and Moe with –feedback received on the following themes:

- Economic Development & Business Support
- Urban Development & Planning
- Safety & Crime
- Infrastructure & Transport
- Environment & Community Activities
- Council Performance
- Community Wellbeing

A Community Workshop program that involved 21 participants reflecting the gender, age and location mix of Latrobe City's community. The workshop reviewed and renewed the Community Vision.

Further input was gathered from representatives of different communities to identify specific health and wellbeing priorities. The priorities that emerged from these consultations were:

- Public Safety
- Family Violence
- Social Connection
- Housing & Homelessness
- Alcohol, Drugs & Gambling

### *Councillor Engagement*

Councillors analysed the community feedback to identify a range of areas they want to see addressed through the Council Plan, these included:

- Economic Development & Business Support
- Infrastructure & Public Facilities
- Employment, Training & Education
- Public Safety
- Civic Involvement
- Tourism
- Health & Social Services
- Environment & Sustainability

### **Plan Integration**

For the first time, Latrobe City Council will integrate its Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) with the Council Plan. The intention of our MPHWP is outline our strategies to improve Latrobe City's health and wellbeing over the next four years. The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and Ageing Well Latrobe Plan are also incorporated within the Council Plan and MPHWP's objectives, principles and priorities.

Integrating the MPHWP within the Council Plan is one way to ensure a health and wellbeing perspective is applied to all Council activities. It also ensures key health and wellbeing issues affecting Latrobe City community are identified and prioritised and Council works in partnership with Department of Health and other agencies to achieve the health and wellbeing goals outlined in this plan.

While Latrobe City is unique in many ways, we know that some of the barriers to good health and wellbeing faced by our community are also present for people across the state. The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (VPHWP) provides an important framework from which to base our priorities. All but two of the VPHWP priorities are specifically identified in the Council Plan (improving sexual and reproductive health and decreasing antimicrobial resistance across human and animal health).

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1****Our Economy – Investment, Jobs, Growth**

*We are committed to working with our community and key stakeholders to grow our local economy to provide a wide range of job opportunities, economic diversification, and attract investment.*

**How does our economy relate to health and wellbeing?**

*Our municipalities' prosperity, employment and education opportunities all impact health and wellbeing. For example, there is a connection between income levels and psychological distress, with 16% of people who earn \$100,000 or more reporting high or very high psychological distress compared with 37% of people who earn under \$40,000 a year.*

**Key Objective 1 - Investment**

Actively pursue investment in emerging industries and industries that diversify our local economy to create jobs and increase economic growth.

- Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy
- Deliver infrastructure that will support new industry and businesses to establish, grow and create new jobs in Latrobe City
- Continue to support the development of Advanced Air Mobility at the Latrobe City Regional Airport

**Key Objective 2 - Workforce\***

Partner with businesses, schools and training providers to support workforce strategies that meet industry needs, support young people, and enable workers to pursue new opportunities

- Support the development of our education and training institutions, promoting skill development within our local workforce and to address the skills required for the region.

**Key Objective 3 - Local Business\***

Support the growth and development of our local businesses, through programs that support businesses to diversify and expand, create jobs and strengthen our economy.

- Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy
- Promote small business and local enterprise
- Reduce or simplify the fees, charges and associated regulatory costs to establish and undertake business in Latrobe City

**Key Objective 4 - Visitor Economy\***

Capitalise on the City's tourism strengths to drive economic outcomes.

- Implement the Latrobe City Events and Visitor Economy Strategy
- Attract and promote region leading events that activate our major facilities (e.g. GPAC, GRAC, GSEP, GRISS, LRG)
- Promote and activate the Latrobe Regional Gallery including displaying the gallery's permanent collection
- Promote our local tourism industry and tourist attractions
- Develop and implement Place Brand Strategy

**Key Objective 5 – Regional Identity**

Promote Latrobe City as a Regional City with a focus on work, investment, visitation, and liveability.

- Promote our role as Gippsland's Regional City
- Develop and implement Place Brand Strategy

*Council Plan Indicators*

- Latrobe City's Gross Domestic Product
- Latrobe City's Workforce Participation
- Latrobe City's Business Registrations
- Vacancy rates of retail/commercial premises

*Health and Wellbeing Indicators\**

- Increase in employment
- Increase in educational attainment

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2****Our City – Liveable, Sustainable, Connected**

*We are committed to working with our community and key stakeholders to create a physical environment that offers liveability and connection and protects our natural environment for future generations.*

**How does our city relate to health and wellbeing?**

*People's health and wellbeing is impacted by climate change and the physical environment around them, and the access they have to it due to things like disability, gender, lifestyle or age. For example, active travel, like cycling and walking reduces mortality, chronic diseases, feelings of anxiety and depression as well as risk of dementia.*

**Key Objective 1 – Infrastructure & City Centres\***

Develop well planned and maintained infrastructure and assets that underpin services and improve liveability, and community connection. Create vibrant city centres with high levels of presentation and urban amenity.

- Improve the amenity and presentation of town entrances and CBD streetscapes, activity centres and public spaces through:
  - increased cleaning and beautification programs
  - signage improvements
  - provision of ample parking spaces
  - focus on garden maintenance and plantings
- Ensure road maintenance budgets are adequately funded to enable roads to be maintained to a high standard
- Review Asset Strategy and Asset Plan
- Develop Streetscape Strategy
- Develop Plans as identified as further strategic work in the Latrobe Planning Scheme including:
  - Integrated Transport Plan
  - Social Infrastructure Plan
- Implement:
  - Public Toilet Plan
  - Recreation Needs Assessment & Recreation Infrastructure Funding Policy
- Undertake further consideration in relation to the preservation of historically significant buildings within the municipality.

**Key Objective 2 - Land Use\***

Plan for improved outcomes for housing, liveability, urban design and job creation.

- Prioritise the delivery of infrastructure and/or planning scheme amendments that will support increased land supply to support residential housing growth in key precincts
- Work towards the delivery of Victorian Government Latrobe City Housing Targets
- Progress strategic work for planning scheme amendments for 5483 and 5495 Princes Highway, Traralgon and 280A Princes Street, Traralgon
- Deliver further strategic work as identified in the Latrobe Planning Scheme including:
  - progression of the South East Traralgon Precinct
  - removal of redundant coal overlays
- Advocate for the construction of the Traralgon Bypass to address local traffic congestion and safety issues



***Key Objective 3 - Natural Environment & Open Space\****

Protect our biodiversity by maintaining our natural assets and open space, encourage use of the natural environment, and strengthen waste management programs and practices.

- Develop and promote campaigns targeting roadside litter and illegal rubbish dumping
- Develop and implement Active Transport Strategy that covers the inter-township trail network, missing links and linking townships, improved street and park lighting and bike trails
- Review Waste Management Strategy
- Progress the staged development of off-leash dog parks in accordance with the Fenced Dog Park Implementation Plan.
- Explore future single site opportunities in utilisation of geothermal technology and biogas energy generation for energy intensive users.

***Key Objective 4 - Climate Change Adaption\****

Advance climate change planning and adaptation through climate risk mapping, appropriate asset design and maintenance.

- Continued implementation of Sustainability Action Plan
- Continue to work with partners in the rehabilitation of mines
- Prepare for extreme weather events

***Council Plan Indicators***

- Community satisfaction with street, footpaths and roads
- Community satisfaction of appearance of public areas

***Health and Wellbeing Indicators\****

- Increase access to different housing
- Increase in active lifestyles



**STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3****Our Community – Healthy, Inclusive, Safe**

*We are committed to working with our community and stakeholders to create a healthy and safe community that celebrates volunteering and community pride and enhances social connection.*

**How does our community relate to health and wellbeing?**

*The physical and social characteristics of a community can promote healthy behaviours and reduce barriers to achieving good health and wellbeing. For example, volunteering is associated with better mental health and quality of life, especially for older people, unemployed people and people with chronic health conditions.*

**Key Objective 1 - Healthy Lifestyles\***

Support improved physical and mental health through a range of programs and partnerships.

- Promote the benefits of physical activity and encourage use of council facilities, halls and open spaces across the municipality
- Provide spaces and services that support the community's physical health and mental wellbeing
- Advocate for greater support to enhance food security and emergency food supplies

**Key Objective 2 - Lifelong Learning**

Support lifelong learning through access to local learning facilities to address current and future needs.

- Continue to support excellence in maternal and child health and early childhood services
- Work with stakeholders to plan for the implementation of Early Childhood Reform
- Support the development of our education and training institutions through partnerships and workplace placements promoting skills development within our local workforce
- Deliver accessible library services with a focus on addressing barriers to participation

**Key Objective 3 - Community Safety\***

Work with partners to reduce harm to members of the community and increase the overall feeling of safety and security.

- Advocate for resources to improve public, pedestrian and road safety in all areas of the municipality.
- Advocate for resources that decrease instances of anti-social behaviour in central business district areas
- Partner with stakeholders and the community to reduce instances of family violence and improved mental health support
- Advocate for more 24 hour police stations and increases in permanent police staffing levels

**Key Objective 4 – Inclusion and Connection**

Create opportunities for the community to connect with each other and to Council services.

- Deliver a broad range of activities and events to build community pride, celebrate diversity and enhance liveability
- Implement Reconciliation Action Plan
- Promote and continue to deliver our community grants program to support connection, inclusion and enhanced participation in the community

**Key Objective 5 - Community Activation**

Build community pride through the activation of community facilities and spaces.

- Support volunteering programs and community group and club networks
- Design and deliver programs, events, services and facilities to ensure accessibility for all members of the community
- Promote local arts sector
- Support free entertainment in public parks and art in public spaces

**Council Plan Indicators**

- Total visits to Council managed facilities (leisure centres, galleries and performing arts)
- Number of major events
- Number of community events supported

**Health and Wellbeing Indicators\***

- Increase in healthy and inclusive lifestyles
- Decrease in prevalence of crime
- Decrease in severe food insecurity

**Our Organisation – Leadership, Collaboration, Capability**

*We are committed to the operation of a high-performing, efficient organisation that underpins the delivery of our strategic direction (economy, city and community).*

**Key Objective 1 – Leadership and Governance\***

We will act with integrity and transparency when delivering services for our community.

- Administer Governance Rules
- Implement the Workforce Plan

**Key Objective 2 – Financial Sustainability**

We will allocate resources responsibly (in particular rates income) and make value for money decisions.

- Develop and implement the long-term financial plan
- Develop and implement the long-term asset plan

**Key Objective 3 – Customer Focus\***

We will ensure we listen and that services are accessible, efficient and responsive to the community's requirements.

- Implement the Customer Experience Strategy
- Implement the Community Engagement Policy

**Key Objective 4 – Advocacy and Engagement\***

We will engage relevant stakeholders to prioritise and advocate for our community's needs and aspirations.

- Develop and implement an Advocacy Strategy
- Implement our Community Engagement Policy

## Our Commitment to Health and Wellbeing

Council's commitment to achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes for all is demonstrated throughout this Plan. This approach recognises that many factors influence whether we stay healthy or not. The World Health Organisation advises these factors, as illustrated below, can account for up to 55% of health outcomes.



Source: Adapted from Dahlgren & Whitehead 1991

## Our City – Community Profile

This profile offers valuable insights into the people living in Latrobe City and their experiences, helping to inform our health and wellbeing priorities and shape the MPHWP.

- Latrobe City Population
  - Current population of 78,845, growing to 90,000 within the next 20 years.
  - 2.2% of the population in Latrobe City is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
  - Median age of 42 years with 17.8% aged 14 years and under, and 41.3% of population aged 55 years and above.
- Employment
  - Income breakdown: 11.2% earn over \$91,000, 42.6% earn between \$26,000 and \$90,999, and 28.9% earn \$25,999 and under.
  - For the population 15 years and over, 54.1% are in the labour force. Of those, 33.8% work part time, 6.6% are unemployed and 7.3% were away from work.
- Most prevalent cultural groups and languages spoken:
  - 20.6% of people in Latrobe City were not born in Australia.
  - England and NZ 3.7%, Netherlands and Philippines both 8%, India and Italy both 7%; and
  - 8.8% - speak a language other than English, Italian 0.8%, Greek 0.4%, Mandarin 0.4%, Malayalam 0.3%, Tagalog 0.3%
- Disability
  - 8.9% of people in Latrobe City have a severe or profound disability and 14% provide unpaid assistance to people with a disability.
  - 12.2% have a diagnosed mental health condition.

## Health and Wellbeing Principles

The following principles will guide Council to ensure a health and wellbeing perspective is applied to all Council activities/services. In particular, the principles will inform how Latrobe City can reduce barriers to accessing services, employment and increase inclusion and participation for those with a disability.

### *Fairness*



We take a needs-based approach to service delivery, recognising different people, experiencing different situations, need different types and levels of support.

### *Accessibility*



We strive to ensure that all in our community have access to services and activities by making sure they are affordable and inclusive.

### *Shared responsibility*



We recognise the importance of a structured approach to addressing complex issues and acknowledge we can't do everything on our own.

### *Prevention*



We focus on preventing poor health and wellbeing outcomes through an understanding of the barriers our community faces.

### *Principles in action*

Council will:

- Meaningfully engage with community and partners in the development or review of services, to ensure they reflect current needs.
- Examine the overall health status of our community with a particular focus on those who face greater barriers to good health and wellbeing to inform our service delivery.
- Plan for and evaluate the impact of the services we deliver on community health and wellbeing.
- Partner with local people and agencies to develop, implement and evaluate our services as a collective.

## Health and Wellbeing Priorities

There are some particular barriers to good health and wellbeing that our community prioritised, supported by the examination of available data<sup>1</sup>. The below areas outline where Council will focus its health and wellbeing efforts. Where there is a direct link to these priorities and our Council Plan strategic directions, it will be marked with an asterisk\*.

### *Public Safety*

Safety means different things to different people and can include feeling safe at home or in public, road safety as a pedestrian or driver, experiencing crime or fearing crime might occur. Certain groups within our community (for example women) are less likely to feel safe and less likely to actually be safe.

Council's role in improving community safety outcomes includes:

- Education and awareness programs and activities
- Improving public spaces through good urban design, lighting and tree planting
- Public health regulations and education
- Emergency preparedness

### *Family Violence*

Our community tells us that family violence is a concern and that addressing family violence is a priority. The impacts of family violence are far reaching as it not only causes immediate harm but also leaves lasting emotional, physical, and psychological effects. Family violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. By addressing family violence, we can significantly improve the overall safety and well-being of the community.

Council's role in preventing and reducing the incidence of family violence includes:

- Providing or ensuring the provision of community support services
- Education and awareness for community and council
- Promoting equity and respect in the community and workplaces.

### *Housing and Homelessness*

Housing in Latrobe City has historically been affordable relative to income, with more than half of our population either owning their home outright or with a mortgage. Nearly 50% of renters in Latrobe City experience housing stress as are 11% of people with a mortgage. Increasing cost of living pressures are making it harder to obtain home ownership or rental properties. Community feedback and data are reflective of the growing concern about housing costs and an increase of homelessness.

Some people in Latrobe City are 'marginally' homeless which includes people relying on temporary lodging, crowded dwellings and caravans. Service providers have indicated an increase in numbers while noting that homelessness is often under-reported because it relies on people going out to 'count' during census.

Council's role in reducing homelessness and the impacts of homelessness includes:

- Influencing different types of housing stock with a focus on affordability
- Supporting community access to employment opportunities
- Emergency relief to help those experiencing financial difficulties
- Working to prevent family violence

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<sup>1</sup> Refer Appendix A

### *Social Connection*

Social connection is an influential factor for health and wellbeing outcomes, with many in Latrobe City experiencing loneliness, isolation and feeling not valued by society.

Almost 30% of people in Latrobe City aged over 65 live alone, accounting for nearly 5,000 individuals; they are more at risk of social isolation and loneliness. More than 20% of people aged 15 to 24, are not engaged in school, further education or training, or employment. This lack of engagement can impact their connectedness to the wider community.

Discrimination also adds to poor social connections and wellbeing outcomes. Our First Nations community faces much higher rates of unemployment and poor health. People from multicultural backgrounds often experience difficulties in accessing services. People from First Nations or multicultural backgrounds also face significant discrimination.

Council's role in improving social connectedness includes:

- Assisting community to access to activities and services by considering things like cultural background or age
- Addressing concerns preventing community from participating e.g. perceptions of safety
- Activating streets and parks
- Promoting and supporting diversity in the community

### *Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling*

Latrobe City faces challenges due to the impact of alcohol and drug use, leading to high lifetime risk of harm to an individual (with men at a greater lifetime risk) and poor perceptions of community safety impacting a person's sense of connection to the community. The significant losses from gambling impacts health outcomes, employment, housing and social connections.

Council's role in reducing harm from alcohol, drugs, smoking, vaping and gambling includes:

- Community education and awareness
- Focussing on prevention
- Support community access to social support services

### **Annual Review and Reporting**

Latrobe City Council is committed to an annual review of the MPHWP 2025-2029. A report reviewing the MPHWP and the progress of the objectives and priorities will be included annually in the Latrobe City Council Annual Report. The Annual Report is published on the Council website and available to the community.



## **Appendix A – Supporting Information**

### *References*

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, 2021 (as displayed in Remplan, 2025)
2. Victorian Population Health Survey, 2014; 2020
3. Public Health Information Development Unit, Social Health Atlases of Australia: Local Government Areas, 2024
4. Gippsland Primary Health Network, Population Health Planning Hub, 2022
5. Gippsland Public Health Network, 2022
6. Crimes Statistics Agency, 2024
7. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2025
8. Parliament of Victoria, Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria, Final Report, 2021
9. Victorian Council of Social Service, 2023
10. Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission, 2024
11. Cancer Council Victoria, 2022
12. ACOSS/UNSW Sydney Poverty & Inequality Partnership Report No.8