



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Agenda

For the Scheduled Council Meeting  
5 Daniel Lane, Glenrowan  
**6:00 PM 23 September 2025**



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## Rural City of Wangaratta Live Stream

Clause 25 of the Governance Rules provides the following:

*“This public meeting is being recorded to improve access to the meeting for our community. The recording will be published and will be retained by Council in accordance with Council’s legal obligations. As a visitor in the public gallery, your presence may be recorded.”*

### 1. Acknowledgement to Country

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, on which the Rural City of Wangaratta communities reside.*

*We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures.*

*We are committed to walking beside all traditional owners as we move toward reconciliation.*

### 2. Opening Prayer

*Almighty God, we humbly ask thee to bless and guide this council in its deliberations so that we may truly preserve the welfare of the people whom we serve. Amen*

### 3. Present

### 4. Absent

### 5. Acceptance of Apologies & Granting of Leave of Absence

## Order of Business

### 6. Citizen Ceremony

### 7. Confirmation of Minutes

#### Recommendation:

That Council read and confirm the Minutes of the Scheduled Meeting of 26 August 2025 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting.

### 8. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

In accordance with section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 a councillor who has a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by Council's Governance Rules and exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter and any action in relation to the matter.

Clause 28.1 of Council's Governance Rules requires a councillor to indicate that they have a conflict of interest by clearly stating:

- (a) the item for which they have a conflict of interest; and
- (b) whether their conflict of interest is general or material; and
- (c) the circumstances that give rise to the conflict of interest.

**Immediately prior to the consideration of the item in which they have a conflict of interest, a councillor must indicate to the meeting the existence of the conflict of interest and leave the meeting.**

A councillor who discloses a conflict of interest and leaves a Council meeting must not communicate with any participants in the meeting while the decision is being made.

### 9. Reception of Petitions

### 10. Hearing of Deputations

## **Presentation of Reports**

### **11. Councillor Reports**

Nil

## **Officers' Reports**

### **12. Executive Services**

Nil

## 13. Corporate and Leisure

### 13.1 Risk Appetite Statement

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025
Category:	Operational
Author:	Governance & Reporting Advisor
Approver:	Director Corporate and Leisure

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

#### Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council to adopt the Risk Appetite Statement.

#### Recommendation:

That Council adopts the Risk Appetite Statement 2025 as attached.

#### Background

Council's Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) outlines the amount of risk that Council is willing to accept in pursuit of its strategic goals. This RAS considers the most significant categories of potential risk to Council and provides an outline as to how much risk Council is willing to accept in this area.

The RAS must be reviewed annually. Council officers have undertaken a review of this RAS and it is presented for formal Council adoption today.

#### Implications

##### Policy Considerations

Council's Risk Management Framework and Risk Management Policy provide the overarching risk management framework across Council and this Risk Appetite Statement is to be read alongside these documents.

##### Financial/Economic Implications

There are no financial or economic implications identified for the subject of this report.

##### Legal/Statutory

There are no legal/statutory implications identified for the subject of this report.

##### Social and Diversity

There are no social impacts identified for the subject of this report.

**Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)**

There are no equity impacts identified for the subject of this report.

**Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

There are no environmental/ sustainability impacts identified for the subject of this report.

**Strategic Links****Update: Council Plan 2021 – 2025**

This report supports the 2021-2025 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

**1. Strengthening our Leadership**

1.2.3 Proactively manage risk across all areas of Council

**Risk Management**Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Failure to have a current Risk Appetite Statement can result in certain areas not having sufficient understanding of risk appetite to guide their actions and appropriately manage their risks.	3 - Possible	Moderate	6 – Medium	Conducting a thorough review of Council's Risk Appetite Statement to ensure its currency and coverage.

**Consultation/Communication**

Officers believe that appropriate internal consultation has occurred and the matter is now ready for Council consideration.

**Options for Consideration**

Councillors may elect to request additional work and/or consultation be undertaken prior to formal endorsement (not recommended) or adopt the proposed Risk Appetite Statement as proposed today.

### Conclusion

The Risk Appetite Statement has been reviewed to ensure its currency and is presented formal adoption by councillors today.

### Attachments

- 1 Risk Appetite Statement 2025  

### 13.2 Unreasonable Conduct Policy 2025

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025
Category:	Operational
Author:	Governance & Reporting Advisor
Approver:	Director Corporate and Leisure

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

#### Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council to consider adopting the Draft Unreasonable Conduct Policy 2025.

#### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Adopts the Unreasonable Conduct Policy 2025.

#### Background

The Draft Unreasonable Conduct Policy 2025 ('Policy') provides an approach for Council to manage unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour, ensuring (i) the safety and wellbeing of staff, Councillors, contractors, customers, and the broader community, and (ii) the appropriate and proportionate deployment of Council resources for the benefit of the community as a whole.

The Policy outlines clear definitions of unacceptable conduct including unreasonable persistence, excessive demands, lack of cooperation, unreasonable arguments, and unsafe behaviours such as aggression or threats. It establishes a risk-based process for identifying, recording, and responding to incidents, with a strong emphasis on proportionality, human rights, and regular review of any restrictive measures.

The Policy empowers staff to cease unsafe interactions and escalate incidents to management, who may implement communication restrictions or temporary exclusions from Council facilities as a last resort. It also outlines how an unreasonable conduct assessment and appropriate control measures should be determined.

The CEO is responsible for decisions regarding exclusion or suspension, and the Policy ensures that such measures are regularly reviewed and remain fair and compliant with relevant legislation.

#### Implications

#### Policy Considerations

There are no specific Council policies or strategies that relate to this report.

**Financial/Economic Implications**

There are no financial or economic implications identified for the subject of this report.

**Legal/Statutory**

The Policy requires that relevant legislation is considered when conducting an Unreasonable Conduct assessment. Relevant legislation is listed at section 8 in the Policy.

**Social and Diversity**

This Policy helps ensure that Council resources are deployed in ways that provide a proportionate service to the broader community.

**Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)**

An Equity Impact Assessment has been conducted for this Policy.

**Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

There are no environmental/ sustainability impacts identified for the subject of this report.

**Strategic Links****Council Plan 2021 – 2025**

This report supports the 2021-2025 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

**1. Strengthening our Leadership**

1.1.1.6 – Continue to provide transparency for the community regarding the information being considered in decision making processes

**2. Nurturing our Wellbeing**

2.3.4.2 – Ensure safe and easy access to all Council owned facilities, including well-maintained and accessible toilets.

**Risk Management**

This draft policy sits within Council's Risk Appetite for Health and Safety (the rating is Low).

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Failure of having an unreasonable conduct policy risks ineffective deployment of council resources and/or lack of protection from unsafe interactions with	3 – Possible	2- Minor	5 – Medium	Development and scheduled reviews of the Unreasonable Conduct Policy.

members of the public.				
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### Consultation/Communication

Governance has consulted with People & Culture team members and other business areas most likely to be impacted by unreasonable conduct, including front line customer service.

The Policy has also undergone independent review by Council's legal advisors.

Officers believe that appropriate consultation has occurred and the matter is now ready for Council consideration.

### Options for Consideration

Councillors can either adopt the Policy in its presented form today (recommended) or request further work be undertaken on the Policy to be presented at a later date if they would like changes to be made (not recommended).

### Conclusion

The Draft Conduct Policy 2025 has been reviewed to ensure that it remains current and operationally viable and is being presented for councillor consideration today.

### Attachments

- 1 Draft Unreasonable Conduct Policy 2025  

## 14. Community and Infrastructure

### 14.1 Award of Contract 95642 Swan Street Road Reconstruction

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Project Manager
Approver:	Director Community and Infrastructure

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

#### Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council with the recommendation to award contract 95642 Swan Street Road Reconstruction.

#### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Awards contract 95642 Swan Street Road Reconstruction to Wangaratta Excavations & Dry Hire.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to sign contract 95642 Swan Street Road Reconstruction.
3. Discloses the contract price of contract 95642 Swan Street Road Reconstruction.

#### Background

Due to the failure of the existing kerb and road pavement, this project has been prioritised as a road drainage upgrade and is scheduled for reconstruction under the FY25/26 urban road reconstruction program. Part of this work will include Muntz Street and Larking Street drainage upgrade works.

Council Officers reviewed the opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies but couldn't find any suitable for this project.

#### Implications

#### Policy Considerations

Council's procurement policy outlines the approved methods and processes for procurement.

**Financial/Economic Implications**

The Council's 2025-26 capital works budget has allocated \$1.34M for Swan Street Road Reconstruction which is eligible for funding under the Roads To Recovery program.

**Legal/Statutory**

The Local Government Act 2020

**Social and Diversity**

There are no social impacts identified for the subject of this report.

**Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)**

There are no equity impacts identified for the subject of this report.

**Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

There are no environmental/ sustainability impacts identified for the subject of this report.

**Strategic Links****Council Plan 2025 – 2029**

This report supports the 2025-2029 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

Strengthening our Leadership

1.1 - An engaged and connected community

1.1.1 - Provide open and transparent communication to the community to build trust, respect and understanding

**Other strategic links**

This report supports the Asset Plan

**Risk Management**Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Not achieving the proposed timelines	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Medium (6)	Project manager to monitor
Unsatisfactory quality of works	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Medium (6)	Project Manager to monitor
Residents unable to access their property	Possible(3)	Minor(2)	6	Project Manager to monitor & advise residents

**Consultation/Communication**

Level of public participation	Promises to the public/stakeholders	Tools/Techniques
Inform	Work commencement	Letterbox drop & social media posts, website
Consult	Road closures	VMS boards, letterbox drop & social media posts, website, email
Involve	RCoW departments – MarComs, Waste	Email

Officers believe that appropriate consultation has occurred, and the matter is now ready for Council consideration.

**Options for Consideration**

1. Award contract 95642 Swan Street Road Reconstruction to Wangaratta Excavations & Dry Hire.
2. Not award contract and retender publicly as per Council's procurement policy.

**Conclusion**

Following an internal evaluation against pre-determined evaluation criteria and weightings, contract 95642 Swan Street Road Reconstruction is recommended to be awarded to Wangaratta Excavations & Dry Hire in accordance with approved evaluation report.

**Attachments**

- 1 Evaluation Report and Award Recommendation 95642 Swan Street Road Reconstruction - Confidential

## 14.2 Community Asset Committee Nominations

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Community Group Officer
Approver:	Director Community and Infrastructure

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

### Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council to endorse the nominations of volunteers to committees of management (COM) under the Community Asset Committee Instrument of Delegation. These are additional community members who have requested spots on their local committees of management, and Council officers are in support:

1. Carboor Memorial Hall and Recreation Reserve
2. Whorouly Public Hall Library

The nominations are for a period of three years. A list of nominated members is attached.

### Recommendation:

That Council endorses and appoints the nominations in the attached report to the following Community Asset Committees subject to WWCC

1. Carboor Memorial Hall and Recreation Reserve
2. Whorouly Public Hall Library

### Background

All appointments to Community Asset Committees are made in line with Council's policy governing appointments to Council Committees.

The Instrument of Sub-Delegation details in section 3.1(8) that all appointments to the committees will be made by Council in accordance with the Council policy governing appointments to Council Committees.

### Implications

#### Policy Considerations

The Community Asset Committee Instrument of Delegation and the Appointment to Council Committees Policy apply to these nominations.

**Financial/Economic Implications**

There are no financial or economic implications identified for the subject of this report.

**Legal/Statutory**

The requirement for nominations is made in accordance with the Local Government Act

**Social and Diversity**

The Community Asset Committees provide an important service to their communities, providing a gathering place and social centre for their rural communities. A strong and vibrant committee will benefit the community, and close links between the committee and Council will create greater awareness of needs in that community.

**Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)**

There are no equity impacts identified for the subject of this report.

**Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

COM's are responsible for the management of any environmental issues relating to the land upon which their facilities are situated.

**Strategic Links****Council Plan 2021 – 2025**

This report supports the 2021-2025 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

**1. Strengthening our Leadership**

1. Continue to support the delivery of the Rural Placemaking Plans in partnership with our rural communities.

**2. Nurturing our Wellbeing**

1. With support and training, ensure that our community groups and committees have strong governance and are inclusive and viable.
- 2.3.3 Increase opportunities for people to connect to their community and each other.
- 2.3.4.1 Provide quality and accessible community facilities based on community needs.

**3. Expanding our Economy**

- 4.4.2 Enhance the activity in our rural townships

**Risk Management**Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Governance risk associated with the sub-delegation of powers from the CEO to Community	3 - Possible	3 - Moderate	6 - Medium	The appointment of members by a formal resolution of Council reduces governance risk

Asset Committees				by ensuring that all members appointed to a committee are covered by Council's public liability insurance.
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### Consultation/Communication

Officers believe that appropriate consultation has occurred and the matter is now ready for Council consideration.

### Options for Consideration

- That Council endorses the nominations to the following Community Asset Committees
- That Council does not endorse the nominations to the Community Asset Committees.

### Conclusion

Council officers have reviewed the nominations received for endorsement to the relevant Community Asset Committees which will delegate the control, management and maintenance of its council owned community assets and uphold Councils requirements under the Local Government Act.

### Attachments

- 1 Community Asset Committee Nominations - Confidential

### 14.3 Road Management Plan 2025-2029

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Manager Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
Approver:	Manager Infrastructure Planning and Delivery

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

#### Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council to provide a summary of the public consultation undertaken on the draft Road Management Plan (RMP) and, as there have been no substantive changes resulting from this consultation, to proceed with the formal adoption of the Road Management Plan.

#### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Considers the Community Engagement Report and the summary of submissions made on the draft Road Management Plan.
2. Adopts the Road Management Plan without further amendment

#### Background

Following consideration of the draft RMP at the July Council meeting it was resolved to invite community submissions on the plan and to review and consider these submissions at a future scheduled Council Meeting.

At the commencement of this engagement period, council officers produced short videos to develop understanding in the community of council's road management responsibilities, which were shared through council's social media platforms. These videos provide clarity of the responsibilities of main roads and give some context as to how council manages road defects.

A connect Wangaratta website was setup to provide the community an opportunity to view the draft road management plan, make a submission and complete a survey. There were 271 visits to the website during the exhibition period, with 10 people making a submission.

Two drop in sessions were held over the engagement period, one in Wangaratta and one in Cheshunt. We had approximately 50 separate pieces of feedback during these sessions.

We offered the opportunity during this period for community members to contact council officers and discuss the draft road management plan. One appointment was made for a speed zone request.

Due to the small number of survey responses, no discernible themes emerged. At the two community drop-in sessions the overwhelming sentiment was that our roads are in reasonably good condition and community members were satisfied with our maintenance response.

A community engagement report and a summary of the submissions received and the responses provided by council are presented here for Council consideration.

### Implications

#### Policy Considerations

The Road Management Plan is a part of the Asset Management Framework and as such plays an important role in the management of Council's transport assets.

#### Financial/Economic Implications

The intervention timeframes set out in the Road Management Plan have a financial impact to council, requiring appropriate staffing and materials to meet intervention levels.

#### Legal/Statutory

The *Road Management Act*, 2004 requires that Council undertakes a review of its Road Management Plan every four years and that both the revised plan and a summary document detailing any substantive changes.

#### Social and Diversity

There are no social impacts identified for the subject of this report.

#### Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)

There are no environmental/ sustainability impacts identified for the subject of this report.

#### Environmental/Sustainability Impacts

There are no environmental/ sustainability impacts identified for the subject of this report.

### Strategic Links

#### Council Plan 2021 – 2025

This report supports the 2021-2025 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

#### 5. Enhancing our Lifestyle

##### 5.1 Accessible and sustainable transport management

### Risk Management

#### Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Road & Footpaths Assets are not maintained in	3 - Moderate	3 – Moderate	9 – Medium	Proactive maintenance programs are undertaken on our roads to minimise the extent of defects that

accordance with the road management plan, with damage of a number of assets				meet the intervention levels identified in Council's Road Management Plan, coupled with regular monitoring of defect response timeframes in accordance with road management plan timeframes
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### Consultation/Communication

Officers believe that appropriate consultation has occurred and the matter is now ready for Council consideration.

### Options for Consideration

1. Council endorses the Draft Road Management Plan for adoption
2. Council does not endorse the draft Road Management Plan 2025-29 and requests further changes.

### Conclusion

Council Officers have reviewed the the feedback and submissions received on the Road Management Plan and believe no substantive changes to the draft document are required. The Road Management Plan 2025-29 is recommended for adoption.

### Attachments

- 1 Connect Wangaratta Summary Report  
- 2 Road Management Plan 2025-29  
- 3 Consultation Response Summary  

## 14.4 Waste Management Policy 2025

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Waste Management Coordinator
Approver:	Manager Infrastructure Planning and Delivery

The following Council officers and contractors have provided advice in relation to this report and have disclosed a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration:

### Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council to adopt the Waste Management Policy 2025.

#### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Endorses the Waste Management Policy 2025.

### Background

At the July Council meeting Council endorsed the draft Waste Management Policy 2025 for community engagement.

Council invited community submissions on the draft Waste Management Policy 2025 for 28 days from 25th July 2025 to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025 via the Connect Wangaratta webpage.

Of the 12 visitors to the project page, 3 surveys were completed with the following feedback:

- “Is the plan to continue with the use of 'yellow top' bins in public areas?”
- “Great to have a more circular economy”
- “There should be an annual kerbside hard waste collection, which many other councils”

Council currently maintains the use of yellow-top recycling bins in public areas, with no changes planned to this service. In response to community feedback requesting an annual kerbside hard waste collection, Council acknowledges the interest but notes that such a service is currently beyond the financial scope of the existing waste program. Instead, the Council provides a cost-effective alternative through its voucher system, which allows residents to responsibly dispose of bulky waste at designated facilities.

No further changes are required to existing draft Waste Management Policy 2025

### Implications

### Policy Considerations

Local Law No1. – Community Amentity 2025 , Waste Management Policy 2025

**Financial/Economic Implications**

Implementation of the Policy assists in ensuring that appropriate fees are obtained to safeguard financial viability of the kerbside waste collection services.

**Legal/Statutory**

Section 76(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) provides that a local law may *incorporate* policies etc. that support the implementation of that local law. These supporting policies are not in effect until they are endorsed by Council.

Council is delivering services in accordance with the requirements of the Circular Economy Act.

**Social and Diversity**

The policy considers households caring for members of our community with additional waste needs.

Under Section 76(3) of the Local Government Act 2020 Council must publish on Councils website policies once they have been approved

**Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

Better management of public waste services will help to reduce littering and illegal dumping in hotspot areas.

**Strategic Links****Council Plan 2021 – 2025**

This report supports the 2021-2025 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

**3. Valuing our Environment**

- 3.2 Reduce waste and enhance resource recovery
- 3.2.1.1 Develop the new Waste Strategy in consultation with the community.
- 3.2.1.2 Ensure service delivery is in accordance with the Recycle Victoria Policy
- 3.2.1.3 Ensure services and facilities are operated in compliance with the updated Environmental Protection Act.
- 3.2.1.4 Explore feasibility of commercial options to divert materials from waste and recycling streams.
- 3.2.1.5 Introduce a third glass-only bin into the community. Provide educational resources to households to ensure a successful uptake.

**Rural City of Wangaratta 2033 Community Vision**

This report supports the 2033 Community Vision through the following objectives:

Environment – Reduce Waste and Enhance Resource Recovery

- M1 Service our community by managing our waste and recycling streams
- M2 Strengthen positive behaviours throughout the community to minimise the negative impact of waste
- M3 Reduce waste and waste generation from Council Operations
- M4 Establish our community as leaders in the organics waste processing and associated resource recovery

### Risk Management

#### Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
The Waste Management Policy 2025 is not revised and remains outdated	Low	Medium	Medium	The Policy is reviewed and updated alongside sector guidelines and operational requirements

### Options for Consideration

1. Endorses the Waste Management Policy 2025.
2. That Council does not endorse the Waste Management Policy 2025.

### Conclusion

An update of the Waste Management Policy 2025 has been undertaken to strengthen the existing policy with the implementation of the kerbside glass collection service ensuring that it remains accurate and applicable to service delivery.

### Attachments

- 1 Waste Management Policy 2025 – Engagement Summary.  
- 2 Waste Management Policy 2025  

## 15. Sustainability and Culture

### 15.1 Draft Youth Strategy

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025
Category:	Strategic
Author:	Youth Development Officer
Approver:	Director Sustainability and Culture

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

#### Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council to present the draft Level Up Youth Strategy 2026-2030 (**Attachment 1**) for the purposes of consultation.

The draft strategy is designed for all young people aged 12 to 25 living in the Rural City of Wangaratta, as well as Council and key community partners who work with youth, such as secondary schools, youth service providers, sporting clubs, and local groups. It stands as a shared commitment and a roadmap for Council and stakeholders, aiming to ensure young people are supported to grow, lead, and shape their future in ways that reflect their aspirations, strengths, and potential.

The draft strategy was co-developed by Council staff and youth, with insight from both internal and external contributors, including nearly 900 young people. The strategy outlines how Council intends to work with and for young people. It sets out three central pillars (deliverables) of **engage, elevate, and empower** youth and describes how these goals will be implemented across five priority areas that will be the strategic initiatives, they are:

- Safety & Belonging
- Health & Wellbeing
- Youth Voice & Leadership
- Places & Spaces
- Participation in Education, Training & Work

The matrix of deliverables and priority areas provides a high-level overview of key activities that can be documented, shared and tracked in annual implementation plans for each year of the five-year strategy.

If endorsed by Council, the draft strategy will be presented to our community for public exhibition and consultation. The outcome will be a youth led strategy that provides a dedicated approach for our youth services and stakeholders for the benefit of our young people.

**Recommendation:**

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Level Up Youth Strategy 2026-2030 for the purpose of consultation for a period of 30 days.
2. Reviews and adopts the Level Up Youth Strategy 2026-2030 at a future meeting, taking into consideration any submissions made.
3. If no submissions requesting changes to the draft Level Up Youth Strategy 2026-2030 are received, adopts the strategy without further resolution of Council.

**Background**

The Rural City of Wangaratta recognises the importance of providing a safe and inclusive environment in which young people can thrive. With a significant number of young people aged between 12 and 25 residing in the region, it is essential to create a comprehensive and inclusive Youth Services Program that caters to their social, recreational, artistic, and educational needs.

The draft Strategy attempts to take a strategic model that engages and supports young people in the community, providing them with the tools and resources to succeed in life. Council's approach to youth services is grounded in the principles of equity, accessibility, and inclusivity. The goal is to create a safe and welcoming environment for young people where they can feel supported and empowered to pursue their goals and aspirations.

The draft Strategy outlines the deliverables and actions over a five-year period that responds to the data collected via the 'What YOUTH Want' Census rolled out earlier in 2025. The Census was part of an extensive consultative process of engagement that provided a platform to capture the voice of our youth.

The following community engagement activities occurred throughout March, April and May to gain data from the Youth Census for the draft Strategy:

**In person Engagement Activity & Consultation Sessions:**

- 31 March – Synergy Youth Hub
- 3 April - Wangaratta Sports and Aquatic Centre
- 5 April - Netball/Football matches
- 11 April - Skate Jam at Mitchell Ave
- 12 April - Farmers Market
- 15 April - McDonalds/Zamberos/Scoops Ice Creamery
- 16 April - Postcard drop offs to hairdressers/gyms/performing arts centre
- 1 May - KFC and Library
- 8 May - Schnitz and Co-store

**Survey Online response:**

874 young people completed the census from 29 March to 11 May.

A detailed Community Consultation Engagement Report is available in **Attachment 2**.

The data gathered, combined with the guidance of the Co-Design youth representative group and the consultant team Youth Gurus, has established a purpose driven draft Strategy that focuses on three pillars of engage, elevate and empower. These pillars respond to the strategic initiatives as outlined in the draft Strategy - Implementation Plan (**Attachment 3**). The Implementation Plan will be established and reviewed annually with Youth Council members, internal and external stakeholders relevant to the youth voice. This will be carried out in format of an annual forum for Youth.

If the draft Youth Strategy 2026-2030 is endorsed for public exhibition, further consultation with our young people and community stakeholders will be delivered via Connect Wangaratta and additional in-person consultation sessions.

### Implications

#### Policy Considerations

There are no specific Council policies or strategies that relate to this report.

#### Financial/Economic Implications

The approved 25/26 budget includes an amount of \$10,000 to implement the Youth Strategy.

This project funding has been supported in the 25/26FY to align and deliver the outcomes from the Strategy with the view to continue this support over the next three to five years. Other deliverables will be enabled by in-kind contributions and collaboration with other departments in Council to deliver events and activities.

Further consultation which is to occur on the implementation plan will take place with Youth Council and youth services stakeholders to prioritise the use of this funding against the prioritised actions.

#### Legal/Statutory

There are no legal/statutory implications identified for the subject of this report.

#### Social and Diversity

The draft Strategy will allow the opportunity for 2-way engagement between Council and young community members. Council welcomes and encourages diverse representation from the community through this consultative process.

#### Equity Impact Assessment (EIA)

Equity impacts have been considered, and an assessment has been completed.

#### Environmental/Sustainability Impacts

There are no environmental/ sustainability impacts identified for the subject of this report.

### Strategic Links

#### Council Plan 2021 – 2025

This report supports the 2021-2025 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

**1. Strengthening our Leadership**

2.2.3 Ensure young people are engaged, recognised, and supported within the community.

2.2.4 2.2.3.1 - In partnership with our Youth Council, develop our Rural City of Wangaratta Youth Strategy.

**2. Nurturing our Wellbeing**

2.2.3.2 Continue to partner with young people on priority projects that respond to their emerging needs and trends.

2.3.3.2 Support equitable access to community activities, sports and events through the development and implementation of projects that address the barriers to participation – especially for children and young people. \*

2.2.4.1 Advocate to ensure that members of our community can access the services they need to support their mental, physical, and sexual health and well-being.

**Rural City of Wangaratta Community Vision 2045**

This report supports the 2045 Community Vision –

*The Rural City of Wangaratta is a place for everyone*

*We are a welcoming, connected, and caring community. We value our urban and rural communities, ensuring shared opportunity and quality of life.*

*Our natural environment supports our wellbeing and forms a strong part of our cultural identity.*

*Our strength is our resilience and active participation in shaping a future for everyone to thrive.*

**Risk Management**Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
The draft strategy is not endorsed for consultation.	2	Minor	8 - Medium	Further consultation with Councillors and community to determine the next steps.
Community opposition to the draft strategy.	2	Minor	8 – Medium	Seek further advice from young people and their advocates.

**Consultation/Communication**

Level of public participation	Promises to the public/stakeholders	Tools/Techniques
Inform	Yes	Communicate via media online and local. Correspond directly with local community groups, youth groups, services and individuals.

Consult	Yes	Deliver meetings during consultation period targeted to a youth audience.
Involve	Yes	Ask community members for feedback and needs.
Collaborate	Yes	Respond to community feedback and requests.
Empower	Yes	Act on community feedback and requests.

Officers believe that appropriate consultation has occurred and the matter is now ready for Council consideration.

#### Options for Consideration

1. That Council endorses the draft Level Up Youth Strategy for the purposes of consultation, as recommended.

OR

2. That Council does not endorse the draft Level Up Youth Strategy for the purposes of consultation.

#### Conclusion

Officers recommend the endorsement of the draft Strategy for consultation purposes.

The successful Youth led census and community consultation process has informed the draft Strategy which sets a clear way forward for youth services and programs in the coming years.

#### Attachments

- 1 Draft Level Up Youth Strategy 20026-2030  
- 2 Youth Strategy Engagement Report 2025  
- 3 Draft Level Up Youth Strategy Implementation Plan 26-30  

## 15.2 Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029

Meeting Type:	Scheduled Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025
Category:	Operational
Author:	Compliance Coordinator
Approver:	Director Sustainability and Culture

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

### Executive Summary

This report is presented to Council to endorse the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2025-2029 for community consultation.

Council has a legislative responsibility under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan every 4 years.

The Plan details how Council will manage domestic animals (dogs and cats) within the municipality including ensuring animals are registered with Council.

### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for community consultation.
2. Invites submissions regarding the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for a period of 28 days.
3. If submissions are received that request changes to the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029, considers a further report at the next available Council meeting with the view to adopt the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029.
4. If no submissions are received that request changes to the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan, adopts the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 – 2029 attached to this report.

### Background

Council has a statutory obligation under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to prepare a DAMP and submit it to State Government for approval. The DAMP is a four-year document that is reviewed annually.

Council's current DAMP is due to expire in December 2025. An updated draft DAMP has been prepared and is ready to go out for community consultation.

Council's updated draft DAMP 2025-2029 is attached to this report (see **Attachment 1**). The revisions (see **Attachment 2**) include an update of statistics and dates, inclusion of an overview of

an order under Section 26 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Dogs on leash), and a revision of actions that will help guide activities for animal management of the next 4 years.

The draft DAMP 2025-2029 sets out how Council applies its statutory obligations to the management of domestic and semi-feral animals (feral animals that have contact or interaction with humans). It is underpinned by Local Law No1. Community Amenity 2025.

The draft DAMP details Council's commitment to:

- Programs and strategies that will assist Council to meet its animal management responsibilities.
- Education and events on responsible pet ownership, community safety and awareness.
- Maximising the number of cats and dogs registered within the municipality.
- Complying with the relevant provisions of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

### Implications

#### Policy Considerations

Local Law No1. Community Amenity 2025 is relevant to this report and provides the guidance for implementing certain sections of the DAMP.

#### Financial/Economic Implications

There are no financial or economic implications identified for the subject of this report as implementation of the DAMP will be carried out by the community compliance team as part of their general duties.

#### Legal/Statutory

There is a statutory obligation under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to prepare a DAMP and this is the subject of this report to Council.

#### Social

The DAMP promotes responsible pet ownership and animal registration, domestic Animals (cats & dogs) are noted to benefit wellbeing of owners.

#### Environmental/Sustainability Impacts

It is acknowledged that domestic animals can have an adverse impact on native fauna populations. The DAMP aims to educate, and work with animals' owners to reduce the risk domestic animals have on the environment.

### Strategic Links

#### Council Plan 2021 – 2025

This report supports the 2021-2025 Council Plan through the following objectives and actions:

**1. Strengthening our Leadership**

N/A

**2. Nurturing our Wellbeing**

2.2.1.2 - Ensure that key projects engage people, including people of all abilities in the design process, to ensure the needs of all community members are considered.

2.6.2.3 - Ensure all cats and dogs are registered with council to meet statutory obligations while enabling animals to be returned to owners and incidents related to wandering animals to be dealt with promptly.

**3. Valuing our Environment**

N/A

**4. Expanding our Economy**

N/A

**Rural City of Wangaratta Community Vision 2045**

This report supports the 2045 Community Vision –

*The Rural City of Wangaratta is a place for everyone*

*We are a welcoming, connected, and caring community.*

*We value our urban and rural communities, ensuring shared opportunity and quality of life.*

*Our natural environment supports our wellbeing and forms a strong part of our cultural identity.*

*Our strength is our resilience and active participation in shaping a future for everyone to thrive.*

**Other strategic links**

Local Law No1. Community Amenity 2025  
Environment & Sustainability Strategy

**Risk Management**Risk Management Framework

Risks	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Mitigation Action
Non-conformity with the Domestic Animals Act & Local Law	Moderate	High	Moderate	Approve DAMP
Potential lack of control on domestic animals	Moderate	High	Moderate	Approve DAMP
No control of animal businesses that provide	Moderate	High	Moderate	Approve DAMP

a service relating to domestic animals				
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### Consultation/Communication

Level of public participation	Promises to the public/stakeholders	Tools/Techniques
Inform	Advertise DAMP	Public exhibition including DAMP available at Council offices, on website and advertisement in the local paper of consultation period
Consult	Request for comments and submissions	Comments and submissions on DAMP received
Involve	Comments and submissions will be considered	Comments and submissions, if any, will be reviewed and may result in the DAMP being revised

Officers believe that appropriate consultation, will be carried out, when the Draft DAMP is endorsed for consultation.

### Options for Consideration

1. That Council endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for community consultation and invites submissions to the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for a period of 28 days **(Recommended)**.
2. That Council does not endorse the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for community consultation and does not invite submissions regarding the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for a period of 28 days **(Not Recommended)**.

### Conclusion

There is a statutory obligation on Council to undertake a review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. The draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2030 has been updated and is now ready to be considered for community consultation.

### Attachments

- 1 Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan  
- 2 Changes - Domestic Animal Management Plan  

## **16. Special Committee Reports**

Nil

## **17. Advisory Committee Reports**

Nil

## 18. Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings

### 18.1 Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings

Meeting Type: Scheduled Council Meeting  
Date of Meeting: 23 September 2025  
Author: Councillor and Executive Services Support Officer

No Council officers or contractors who have provided advice in relation to this report have declared a conflict of interest regarding the matter under consideration.

#### Executive Summary

Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings and committee reports are reported to Council for information (please refer attachments.)

Date	Meeting details	Refer
20 May 2025	Audit and Risk Committee	Attachment

#### Recommendation:

That Council notes the minutes of these Advisory Committees.

#### Attachments

- 1 20 May Audit and Risk Committee Minutes  

**19. Notices of Motion**

Nil

**20. Urgent Business**

**21. Public Question Time**

**22. Confidential Business**

Nil

**23. Closure of Meeting**  
**Attachments**



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### Risk Appetite

Risk Management is an essential component of Council's governance framework and supports the achievement of Council's goals and objectives. Effective risk management increases the probability of successful outcomes whilst protecting the reputation and sustainability of Council.

The risk appetite is the amount of risk an organisation is willing to accept in pursuit of its strategic goals. The Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) considers the most significant categories of potential risks to Council and provides an outline as to how much risk Council is willing to accept in this area.

Council's strategic objectives are set out in the Council Plan. In deciding the approach to achieving strategic objectives and ensuring the sustainable operation of services, council must consider the risks involved and its appetite for such risks.

Those with responsibility for achieving strategic objectives and delivering council services must explicitly understand risk appetite when formulating strategy and actions and allocating resources. They must identify risk and determine whether the risks are within the risk appetite. If the risk appetite is exceeded, risk management controls and treatments are required to bring the risk back within the accepted range. It requires consideration of both opportunities and negative outcomes.

Having a documented risk appetite statement:

- allows for a better understanding of our strategic objectives, culture, context, and sensitivity to risk;
- identifies different risk in different parts of the business; and
- informs the development of risk tolerances for various activities and decisions.

Council, its Sub-Committees, Delegated Committees and Audit and Risk Committee, management and staff (including contractors and volunteers) will consult Council's Risk Appetite in both strategic and operational decision making. The Council's vision and strategic objectives will necessitate that Council accept some risks that accompany growth, transformation, innovation and are proportionate with the potential reward.

Overall, Council has a balanced approach to its risk appetite aligned to its strategic objectives. Council's approach to risk appetite is to minimise our exposure to risks to our people and their safety, our reputation and corporate governance whilst accepting and encouraging an increased degree of risk in pursuit of our key strategic directives.

The key challenges in achieving this balance are to ensure:

- ethical and effective governance practices including responsible stewardship of resources
- realisation of opportunities and allowing growth, transformation and innovation while avoiding unnecessary negative impacts
- avoidance of a risk averse culture which stifles growth, transformation and innovation rather than supports it through the correct assessment and management of risks

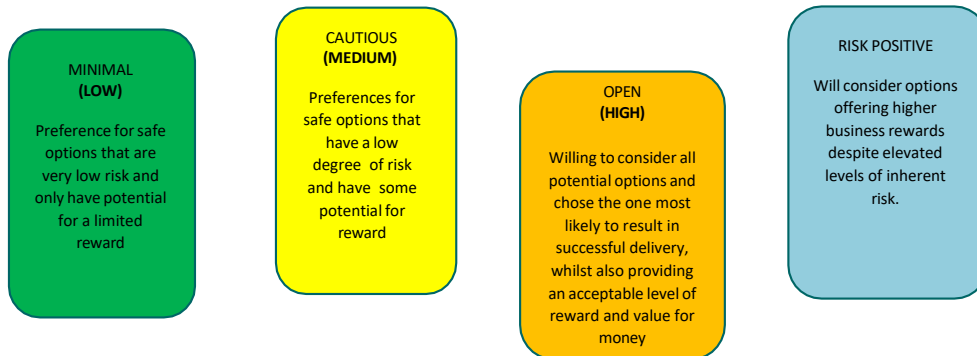
It is acknowledged that Council may at times undertake activities that inherently carry greater risk. The Risk Management Framework will detail requirements for identifying and managing risks at activity or project level.

### Risk Appetite Ratings

Council categorises its level of risk appetite into four categories as can be seen below:



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### Risk Tolerances

Risk tolerances are the boundaries set for risk taking. The risk appetite statement informs risk tolerances for Council

While risk appetite is a qualitative statement, risk tolerances operationalise the statement by using quantitative measures where possible to better enable monitoring and review.

The Risk Appetite will set the tone for risk taking in general, whilst the tolerance informs:

- Expectations for mitigating, accepting, and pursuing certain types of risk
- Boundaries and thresholds for acceptable risk taking
- Actions to be taken or consequence for acting beyond appropriate tolerances

### Implementation of the Risk Appetite Statement (RAS)

Council's appetite for and tolerance of risk as outlined in the RAS forms the basis of our approach to managing risk in our day-to-day activities. The RAS informs the Risk Management Policy and Framework which provide the structure for our risk management processes.

### Review

This Risk Appetite Statement will be reviewed annually or whenever there is a significant change to the Council's operating environment. This review will be coordinated by the Governance & Reporting Advisor. Changes to the Risk Appetite Statement must be approved by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and are presented to the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) for review and comment before providing to Council for endorsement.

**Risk Appetite Statement****GUIDELINE****Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW) Risk Appetite Statement**

Below are the Risk appetites and tolerance levels determined for RCoW. Our risk appetites and our risk management framework support our decision making and ensures Council makes appropriate and informed decisions.

Risk Category	Context	Risk Appetite Rating	Risk Tolerance Levels	
			Council will tolerate	Council will not tolerate
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<p><i>We support a safe and healthy workforce that treats everyone fairly.</i></p> <p><i>Council has minimal appetite for work practices, actions or inactions that compromise the wellbeing and safety of people including staff, contractors, volunteers and community.</i></p>	<b>LOW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor unforeseen incidents or injuries that arise from time to time while undertaking normal activities.</li> <li>Minor morale issues relating to improving workforce performance.</li> <li>Minor staff grievances that can be dealt with through normal internal mechanisms.</li> <li>Practices that are not in line with best practice but safety and duty of care is not compromised.</li> <li>Minor morale and staff grievances due change within the organisation due to innovation or change management processes leading to more efficient and effective outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions or behaviours that are deliberate and willingly contravene the Code of Conduct and WHS policies and procedures.</li> <li>Actions which do not align to RCoW values.</li> <li>Practices that knowingly compromise staff well-being, workplace or community safety (including discrimination, harassment or bullying).</li> <li>Activities that result in reasonably foreseeable and preventable fatalities, harm, serious injuries or illnesses to our Community, Customers, Councillors or Employees.</li> <li>Events that occur arising from untrained employees or failed internal processes.</li> <li>Unsafe infrastructure and work environments.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Assets</b>	<p><i>Council is committed to continuous improvement in order to provide excellent infrastructure services that provide benefits to our community.</i></p> <p><i>Council is open to taking moderate levels of risk to enhance our infrastructure.</i></p>	<b>HIGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate financial and reputational impacts arising from the implementation of new innovative technologies.</li> <li>Impacts leading to term disruption to community due to implementation of construction procedures which provide value for money provided community has been informed</li> <li>Moderate short-term financial impact on capital costs of projects where there are demonstrated long term sustainable gains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure of third-party contractors to provide services within budget and agreed timeframes.</li> <li>Non-completion of a significant portion of new or renewal infrastructure projects beyond financial year (or scheduled completion period if project runs across multiple years).</li> <li>Significant delays to projects that are considered within Council control.</li> <li>Asset failure significantly earlier than the projected lifespan of the asset.</li> <li>Failure to administer and manage contracts appropriately.</li> </ul>

Risk Appetite Statement			GUIDELINE
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate impacts to infrastructure due to implementation of new technology, innovation initiatives or projects.</li> <li>• Unforeseen interruptions of up to 2 days to critical infrastructure from uncontrollable events where Council responds and communicates promptly to impacted stakeholders.</li> <li>• Minor unforeseen and unavoidable cost variations in capital projects within the established contingency allocated to each project</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant foreseeable variations in contract price due to aspects of the project within the control of Council</li> <li>• Failure to escalate critical infrastructure damage or issue within 2 hours.</li> <li>• Failure to develop plans to respond to a disruption and ensure continuity of operational infrastructure.</li> <li>• Activities that result in reasonably foreseeable and preventable fatalities, harm, serious injuries or illnesses to our Community, Customers, Councillors or Employees.</li> <li>• Financial variation outside the budget variation policy</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	<p><i>Council delivers a range of community services, events and facilities which contribute to our community.</i></p> <p><i>Council is open to creativity and innovation and is willing to take some level of risk to deliver efficiencies, enhance capabilities and provide a service to be proud of to our community.</i></p> <p><i>Council is open to taking moderate risk to enhance service delivery.</i></p>	<b>HIGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unforeseen interruptions of up to 2 days to critical business functions from uncontrollable events where Council responds and communicates promptly to impacted stakeholders.</li> <li>• Unforeseen interruptions of up to 7 days to less critical business functions from uncontrollable events where Council responds and communicates promptly to impacted stakeholders.</li> <li>• Moderate reputational impact from community complaints relating to service quality or new initiatives to deliver enduring benefits to our community.</li> <li>• Moderate impacts to service delivery due to implementation of new technology, innovation initiatives or projects.</li> <li>• Moderate impacts arising from innovations and ideas that contribute and encourage creating a flexible workforce.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to significantly meet our service commitments and community expectations.</li> <li>• Failure to demonstrate a commitment to delivering quality services to our Community, Councillors, Customers and Employees.</li> <li>• Failure to document and follow policies and procedures that impairs the quality of service delivery or results in service interruptions.</li> <li>• Failure to develop plans to respond to a disruption and ensure continuity of critical business functions.</li> <li>• Failure to escalate a critical business function outage within 2 hours.</li> </ul>

Risk Appetite Statement			GUIDELINE
<b>Environmental &amp; Public Health</b>	<p><i>Council recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing our environment and understands that sustainability considerations in all council decisions is important.</i></p> <p><i>Council has a cautious appetite for environmental impacts arising from normal business activities, however, is open to innovative practices for the betterment of the environment.</i></p>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental impacts offset by other activity resulting in an overall environmental benefit.</li> <li>• Minor environmental impacts from uncontrollable or unforeseen events or in order to deliver enduring benefits to our community well into the future.</li> <li>• Changes to procedures and practices to accommodate improved environmental outcomes.</li> <li>• Minor cost impacts in the selection of products, services that have a significant positive impact on the environment.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions that do not appropriately consider the principles of environmental sustainability.</li> <li>• Failure to minimise significant impacts on biodiversity and reduce our environmental footprint.</li> <li>• Decisions, activities, and practices that result in long term or irrevocable environmental damage or negative climate impacts, threatens biodiversity, including extinction of flora and fauna, or is hazardous to human life.</li> <li>• Activities and practices that knowingly compromise the environment, are reasonably foreseeable and preventable.</li> <li>• Failure to meet environmental commitments or legal requirements resulting in EPA or other statutory fines or penalties.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial</b>	<p><i>Council recognises the financial risks involved in delivering a wide range of services, programs and capital projects.</i></p> <p><i>Council has a cautious appetite for variation in financial performance as long as long-term financial sustainability is not threatened</i></p>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor unforeseen and unavoidable cost variations in capital projects within the established contingency allocated to each project</li> <li>• Short Term (less than 12 months) negative performance below expected levels from commercial business aspects if core services are not affected.</li> <li>• Minor losses, or capital outlays, attributable to new processes or innovation to improve services to meet community needs.</li> <li>• Calculated financial risks to deliver infrastructure, improve service delivery or promote ecological sustainability.</li> <li>• Minor cost impacts of the implementation of weighted scoring in procurement to benefit local competent suppliers.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial activities and/or investment practices that contravene legislated or policy requirements.</li> <li>• Failure to maintain or implement effective systems, processes and controls which adequately protect Council from fraudulent activity.</li> <li>• Fraudulent or corrupt financial transactions.</li> <li>• Actions that have a significant negative impact on long term financial sustainability.</li> <li>• Available funds below target over a five-year period.</li> <li>• A five-year average operating deficit.</li> <li>• Failure to act within Financial policy, quarterly review process and budget variation process to obtain approval for changed or unplanned financial performance.</li> </ul>

Risk Appetite Statement			GUIDELINE	
Information Technology	<p><i>Our assets (including information) are vital in maintaining our business practices and therefore Council has a cautious approach to safeguarding from both external and internal threats, misuse, modification and unintended damage.</i></p> <p><i>Council's aim is to protect our assets contained within our ICT systems and services. We will be successful through the application of appropriate internal controls, a cyber aware workforce, effective governance, timely remediation of identified control weaknesses, persistent review of the external threat landscape and consistent management of our third-party providers.</i></p> <p><i>Council has an open appetite for risks associated with Information Technology Systems.</i></p>	MEDIUM	<b>Cyber Security</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some cyber threats which if they were successful would have a minor or limited impact upon Council's business because they do not compromise the integrity, confidentiality or availability Council information or assets.</li> <li>Timely remediation of identified cyber security control weaknesses.</li> </ul>	<b>Cyber Security</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cybersecurity threats that could have been prevented through judicious application of technical and behavioral controls.</li> <li>An unprepared response in the event of an external cyber attack.</li> <li>Significant threats to assets arising from external malicious attacks.</li> <li>Misuse, inappropriate distribution or loss of sensitive or confidential council information due to the actions of staff.</li> </ul>
		HIGH	<b>ICT Systems and Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduled outages that are agreed to by the business owners and are regarded as part of normal business activities.</li> <li>Implementation of new technologies which create new opportunities for business improvement and innovation of systems which also could involve some minor to moderate risk.</li> </ul>	<b>ICT Systems and Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prolonged unplanned outages of critical Council systems and services.</li> <li>Failure to maintain systems and services which adequately protect Councils data and information and maintain adequate audit trails.</li> <li>A lack of diligence in relation to information security the procurement and implementation of ICT systems and services.</li> <li>Data loss due to inappropriate data management processes.</li> <li>Failure to comply with information governance requirements.</li> <li>Failure to maintain recovery plans in place and test plans on a regular basis.</li> </ul>

Risk Appetite Statement			GUIDELINE	
<b>Governance</b>	<p><i>Council is committed to good governance and meeting legislated and regulatory requirements in a consistent and fair manner.</i></p> <p><i>Council has minimal appetite for significant breaches of legal obligations or contractual agreements that result in fines, penalties or reputational damage.</i></p> <p><i>Council will seek innovative approaches to governance practices subject to compliance with legislation and protection of our interests</i></p>	<b>LOW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions made on merit in accordance with Council values that are not in line with professional advice.</li> <li>• Minor technical breaches that have been considered by Council.</li> <li>• Temporary non-compliance due to unrealistic regulatory timeframes.</li> <li>• Risks which may give rise to isolated complaints that are incidental to normal business activities despite best efforts to avoid or mitigate</li> <li>• Streamlined governance processes subject to effective controls remaining in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corrupt or fraudulent conduct by staff, councillors or contractors.</li> <li>• Unreasonable delays when reporting, investigating or correcting any fraudulent, improper, unethical or corrupt conduct.</li> <li>• Any instances where Council Officials knowingly break the law, fail to comply with legal obligations or recklessly breach internal policies.</li> <li>• Material breaches of legislation or the Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Failure to consider expert / professional legal advice.</li> <li>• Unauthorised release of confidential information.</li> <li>• Any behaviour which gives rise to extensive litigation and indictable offences.</li> <li>• Failure to comply with Government Directions or orders.</li> </ul>
<b>Reputation</b>	<p><i>Council recognises the importance of protecting its reputation.</i></p> <p><i>Council does however understand that negative publicity may occur where there is competing priorities and interests in the Community.</i></p> <p><i>Council has a cautious appetite for significant impacts on Council's reputation.</i></p>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate adverse local media and social media scrutiny or a number of complaints relating to action which delivers longer term benefits to the community.</li> <li>• Isolated minor incidents, concerns and complaints that can be resolved by management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper, unethical, corrupt, unprofessional behaviour or failure to exercise respect and duty of care in accordance with our Council values and policies.</li> <li>• Material breaches of the Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Failure to uphold the probity of council decision-making.</li> <li>• Any failure to avoid or appropriately manage conflicts of interest.</li> <li>• Failure to act in a fair, honest, transparent and accountable manner.</li> <li>• Decision-making that is not open, honest and transparent and reflects the long-term interests of the community.</li> <li>• Failure to notify CMT of significant incidents that may impact Council reputation in less than 24hrs of the incident occurring.</li> </ul>

Management review and approval			
Review Date	Changes/modifications	Reviewed By	Approved By
02/04/2025	Annual review	A.Lovett	CMT



## Unreasonable Conduct Policy 2025

<b>Document Type</b>	Council Policy
<b>Department</b>	Council-wide
<b>Date of Council Endorsement</b>	TBC
<b>Date for Review</b>	4 years (date to be added)
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Manager Governance
<b>Authorising Officer</b>	Director Corporate and Leisure
<b>Version Reference Number</b>	1.0
<b>SIM Reference Number</b>	TBC

### 1. Introduction

The Rural City of Wangaratta (Council) is committed to ensuring that Council and its staff can conduct the business of Council in an effective and uninterrupted manner. This Policy supports Council's responsibility to provide a safe and inclusive environment by setting clear expectations for behaviour when interacting with Council staff and representatives. It recognises that while community engagement is essential to democratic governance, it must occur in a manner that upholds the dignity and safety of all involved.

Council acknowledges its obligation to ensure that its operations are not disrupted by unreasonable conduct. This Policy enables Council and its staff to carry out their duties effectively and without undue interference, ensuring that resources are directed toward delivering services and outcomes that benefit the broader community.

Council is committed to ensuring a safe and respectful workplace for all employees, contractors, and others associated with Council. The health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce is paramount to delivering high-quality services to our community.

### 2. Purpose

Council is committed to being accessible and responsive to the community it serves, in a manner that is, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe and welcoming for all, and serves the community needs.

Council recognises there will be occasions when some customers will not be satisfied with how Council has managed their specific issue and may express their dissatisfaction in ways that can potentially become unsafe for Council employees, or that may place an unreasonable demand on Council resources (thereby risking the ability to provide Council services to the broader community).

In line with Council's Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Occupational Violence and Aggression Procedure, this Policy provides a process for Council management to respond to a customer whose conduct is considered unreasonable and / or unsafe for Council employees and/or other community members.

Council expects its customers to act in a reasonable manner when interacting with Council employees and Councillors and when attending a Council facility.

### 3. Scope

In line with the Occupational Health and Safety Policy, Occupational Violence and Aggression Procedure, and the Governance Rules, Council will refer to this Policy when considering a customer's unreasonable or unsafe behaviour. This document entails:

#### 3.1 A Risk Management Approach

Council will consider appropriate risk controls to address unreasonable or unsafe behaviour appropriate to the risk arising for Council employees, contractors, Councillors and/or members of the community. Council will consider the frequency, duration and severity of the unreasonable or unsafe behaviour in measuring the harm or impact that may result from the behaviour.

#### 3.2 Ceasing interactions with customers during an incident

Council supports its employees to cease interactions with a customer behaving unreasonably where it may be unsafe for the employee, including asking a customer to stop, asking them to leave Council's premises and/or terminating a phone call.

#### 3.3 Addressing a customer's conduct after an incident

Council supports its employees and managers escalating concerns to management about unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour. Management will then take appropriate measures to prevent or reduce risks arising from future behaviour from that customer.

### 3.4 Restrictions on communication

Council may, where appropriate and proportionate, put in place communication protocols to restrict how a customer engages with Council employees and/or Councillors. This may include restricting communications through one email address and/or Council contact.

### 3.5 Exclusion from service and facilities

Council may, when appropriate and proportionate, exclude a customer from accessing some or all Council premises (including event sites or temporary Council sites) for a period. This will be a measure of last resort and applied after careful consideration of all available information.

## 4. Policy Statement

All employees have a right to a safe working environment. Council is committed to providing a safe working environment for employees and others in the workplace or at Council premises or events, so far as reasonably practicable.

Unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour is defined in Section 5 of this Policy. It has the potential to create substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for our organisation, our staff, other service users and people making complaints to us (including the person themselves) whether taking place during or outside working hours or in our outside the workplace.

Where there is a risk to an employee's or Councillor's safety (physical and/or psychological), or to Council's ability to function appropriately, because of unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour, Council management will take proportionate steps to prevent or reduce further harm to its employees and to ensure Council facilities remain a safe, effective and welcoming environment for its employees and Councillors. Council has zero tolerance for aggression and violence in the workplace.

This behaviour can be divided into five categories:

1. Unreasonable persistence;
2. Unreasonable demands;
3. Unreasonable lack of cooperation;
4. Unreasonable arguments; and
5. Unreasonable or unsafe behaviour.

### 4.1 Unreasonable persistence

Unreasonable persistence is continued, incessant and unrelenting conduct by a customer that has a disproportionate and unreasonable impact on our

organisation, staff, services, time and/or resources. Some examples of unreasonably persistent behaviour include:

- An unwillingness or inability to accept reasonable and logical explanations, including final decisions that have been comprehensively considered and dealt with.
- Persistently demanding a review simply because it is available and without arguing or presenting a case for one.
- Pursuing and exhausting all available review options when this is not warranted and refusing to accept Council's position when told that further action cannot or will not be taken on their requests or complaints.
- Reframing a request or complaint in an effort to get it taken up again.
- Bombarding our staff/organisation with phone calls, visits, letters, emails (including cc'd correspondence) after repeatedly being asked not to do so.
- Contacting different people within our organisation and/or externally to get a different outcome or more sympathetic response to their request or complaint.

#### 4.2 Unreasonable demands

Unreasonable demands are any demands (express or implied) that are made by a customer that have a disproportionate and unreasonable impact on our organisation, staff, services, time and/or resources. Some examples of unreasonable demands include:

- Issuing instructions and making demands about how we have/should handle their request or complaint, the priority it was/should be given, the outcome that was/should be achieved, or imposing self-executing timeframes.
- Insisting on talking to the CEO, executive or senior management personally when it is not appropriate or warranted.
- Insisting on outcomes that are not possible or appropriate in the circumstances – e.g. for someone to be sacked or prosecuted, an apology and/or compensation when there is no reasonable basis for expecting this.
- Demanding services that are of a nature or scale that we cannot provide when this has been explained repeatedly.

#### 4.3 Unreasonable lack of cooperation

Unreasonable lack of cooperation is an unwillingness and/or inability by a

customer to cooperate with our organisation, staff, or request and complaints processes that results in a disproportionate and unreasonable use of our services, time and/or resources. Some examples of unreasonable lack of cooperation include:

- Sending a constant stream of incomprehensible and/or disorganised or voluminous information without clearly defining any issues of complaint or explaining how they relate to the core issues being complained about – only where the customer is clearly capable of doing this.
- Providing little or no detail with a request/complaint or repeatedly supplying information that is insufficient or incomplete.
- Refusing to follow or accept our instructions, suggestions or advice without a clear or justifiable reason for doing so.
- Arguing frequently and/or with extreme intensity that a particular solution is the correct one in the face of valid contrary arguments and explanations.
- Displaying unhelpful behaviour – such as withholding information, acting dishonestly and misquoting others.

#### 4.4 Unreasonable arguments

Unreasonable arguments include any arguments that are not based in reason or logic, that are incomprehensible, false or inflammatory, or trivial and that disproportionately and unreasonably impact upon our organisation, staff, services, time, and/or resources. Arguments are unreasonable when they:

- fail to follow a logical sequence.
- are not supported by any evidence and/or are based on conspiracy theories.
- lead a complainant to reject all other valid and contrary arguments.
- are trivial when compared to the amount of time, resources and attention that the complainant demands.
- are false, inflammatory or defamatory.

#### 4.5 Unreasonable or unsafe behaviour

Unreasonable behaviour is conduct that is unreasonable in all circumstances – regardless of how stressed, angry or frustrated that a customer is – because it unreasonably compromises the health, safety and security of our staff, other service users or customers or the customer themselves. Some examples of unreasonable behaviours include:

- Acts of aggression, verbal abuse and derogatory, racist or grossly defamatory remarks.
- Harassment, intimidation or physical violence.
- Rude, confronting and/or threatening behaviour in person, by phone, online or in correspondence.
- Threats of harm to self or third parties, threats with a weapon or threats to damage property, including bomb threats.
- Stalking (in person or online)
- Emotional manipulation.

## 5. Process

### 5.1 Identifying unreasonable or unsafe Customer Behaviour

#### 5.1.1 WHAT IS AN UNREASONABLE OR UNSAFE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR?

Unreasonable customer behaviour refers to actions or communication from a person that, because of its nature (severity), frequency and/or duration, risks the safety or productivity of staff, or the ability of the organisation to deliver services effectively.

Unsafe customer behaviour is any behaviour by a person, which, because of its nature (severity), frequency and/or duration, creates a risk of harm to Council employees, Councillors, contractors and/or members of the public, including children.

The behaviour can occur in person, over the phone, via email, letter or social media, or through any other means of interaction.

#### 5.1.2 TYPES OF UNREASONABLE OR UNSAFE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR

The customer behaves and or displays any of the following, including but not limited to:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye rolling and sneering</li> <li>• Yelling, swearing, calling names</li> <li>• Physical intimidation, such as standing over someone</li> <li>• Spitting, shoving tripping, grabbing, hitting, punching</li> <li>• Threats of violence, threats with weapons</li> <li>• Slamming, kicking, throwing objects and property</li> <li>• Physical assault, including sexual assault</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreasonable persistent behaviour or demands (includes unrelenting behaviour once an issue has been addressed)</li> <li>• Unreasonable and argumentative behaviour that is targeted at individuals and does not respect the impact on those individuals</li> <li>• Defamatory and/or personally abusive conduct</li> <li>• Unreasonable attempts to intrude into a Council employee or Councillor's personal life</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### 5.1.3 CUSTOMER MAY BE EXPERIENCING A HEALTH EPISODE

Employees must consider their own safety before attempting to assist a customer displaying unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour that the employee considers may be symptoms of the customer experiencing a personal health episode.

When balancing the provision of care and customer service with one's own personal safety, Council employees' personal safety is the priority and comes first.

Any person may experience the emotional grievances of health and personal life issues (including but not limited to political and societal issues in and on Council facilities). Health episodes may include behaviour and conduct related to:

- Drug, alcohol intoxication or withdrawal
- Mental health conditions
- Psychotic episodes, incl. distress, irrational response, cry for help
- Medication poisoning, effects or withdrawal
- Medical episodes
- Other unknown health impacts

### 5.2 Addressing a customer's unreasonable or unsafe behaviour

#### CONTACT WITH CUSTOMER

If the customer is known to Council, management may consider it appropriate to

contact the customer and initiate communication regarding appropriate future interactions. A customer should be given a reasonable opportunity to modify their behaviour as well as the opportunity to address concerns about their behaviour.

Management may consider	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting the customer and discussing the incident where the customer displayed unsafe behaviours. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussing the customer's concerns with Council and reach an agreement, noting that the resolution must ensure safety for Council employees.</li> <li>○ Reiterating the conditions of entry and confirming that future acts of unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Writing to the customer explaining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Council is reviewing the incident and their behaviour, and that Council will communicate the outcome of the review.</li> <li>○ How the customer can contact Council, via a designated email address, while the review is occurring.</li> <li>○ Where appropriate and proportionate, indicating that until the outcome is formalised, they are not permitted to enter some or designated Council premises, and indicating that, if they enter, they may be considered as trespassing such that Victoria Police may be called.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Council employees will remain professional but are encouraged to be assertive during interaction.</p> <p>Incident reviews must be given priority, and staff will be consulted pursuant to OHS obligations.</p> <p>Customers will be given a timeframe of any actions and review dates.</p>

### 5.3 Considering a Customer's right to participate in public affairs and engage in freedom of expression

When making decisions about measures to address unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour, Council must give proper consideration to the relevant human rights of the customer. These human rights, which are set out in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, may include (but will not necessarily be limited to) the right to:

- recognition and equality (section 8);
- freedom of expression (section 15); and

- take part in public life (section 18).

#### 5.4 Council's considerations

Council's decisions about measures taken to address unreasonable or unsafe behaviour will take account of the rights noted in 5.3 above and what is known about any relevant medical conditions/attributes, while also considering the following in accordance with Council policy and relevant legislation:

- The group and number of individuals at risk from the unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour, including children, and the harm or impact that has and/or may result from that behaviour;
- The frequency, duration and severity of the unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour(s), compliance with Council directions, previous warnings and the psychosocial hazard and impacts on the organisation arising from the behaviour(s);
- The likelihood that the unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour will be repeated without the measures, and the degree to which the risk will be reduced by the proposed measures;
- The proportionality of the proposed measures against the risk arising from the unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour; and
- If there are other less restrictive or less potentially discriminatory measures that could reduce the risk.

#### 5.5 Warning and seeking information from a Customer

Council will, when reasonably practicable, provide a warning to a customer when it intends to take action to address unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour that will impact on the customer's ability to communicate with Council or access Council services or facilities.

That warning will also provide an opportunity for the customer to:

- Refute or explain the unsafe behaviour; and
- Provide information of any relevant attribute (including any medical condition) that is relevant.

#### 5.6 Exclusion/Suspension of service

Council has a low appetite for excluding community members from its services and facilities. Temporary exclusions (or suspensions) for particular customers may be put in place when the CEO considers that other measures have not prevented or will not prevent unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour.

Suspension of a customer will not be indefinite. Customers who are suspended

will have their suspensions regularly reviewed at least every six months, to ensure they have access to Council services and facilities, taking into account the considerations noted at 5.4 above.

Customers who continue to engage in unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour may remain on a timed suspension from entering a Council facility or facilities or engaging with certain Council services.

Suspension of a customer will not prohibit members of their family or acquaintances attending Council facilities or accessing Council services, provided that the customer does not accompany them.

#### 5.7 **Appealing a restriction**

Customers are entitled to one appeal of a decision made to restrict their access to our services. This review will be undertaken by a senior staff member who was not involved in the original decision. This staff member will consider the person's arguments along with all relevant records regarding the person's past conduct and advise the person of the outcome of the appeal by letter signed by the CEO.

If a person continues to be dissatisfied, they may seek an external review from the Victorian Ombudsman. We will provide information to the person about their right to an external review and any relevant contact information.

#### 5.8 **Records**

All records relating to unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour and measures proposed or implemented to address the behaviour will be maintained in accordance with Council's Privacy and Data Protection Policy.

### **6. Decisions made under this Policy**

At any time, Council staff may take immediate action, consistent with Council's Occupational Violence and Aggression Procedure, to address immediate risks to health and safety.

When unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour is reported, a manager, in consultation with an OHS Advisor (for safety-related matters), or a Governance Officer (for non-safety related matters), may request that measures are taken to address the behaviour. Decisions about measures other than suspension / exclusion will be made by Council management in line with relevant policies and legislation. Any decisions to exclude a customer from Council facilities or to exclude them from services and any decisions about unreasonable or unsafe customer behaviour directed at Councillors will be made by the CEO.

## 7. Responsibilities

Party	Roles and responsibilities
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to de-escalate situations involving unreasonable behaviour, when possible and safe to do so.</li> <li>• Terminate communication or interaction with any customer behaving unsafely.</li> <li>• Report and escalate safety issues to their Line Manager.</li> <li>• Report incidents on Council's incident reporting system as soon as possible after the incident, providing details of the customer and unsafe or unreasonable behaviour, as well as immediate steps taken to make the situation safe.</li> <li>• Participate in incident debriefing and investigation.</li> <li>• File written police report, where relevant.</li> </ul>
Line Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the safety of their employees as the priority.</li> <li>• Provide Employee Assistance Program information to employees after any reported safety incident involving unsafe customer behaviour.</li> <li>• Step in and manage uncomfortable customer interactions for their employees and terminate interaction if required.</li> <li>• Request that measures be put in place to address unsafe or unreasonable customer behaviour.</li> <li>• Ensuring immediate safety of their employees by issuing temporary suspension letter to person of interest/customer whilst an investigation determines the endorsed outcomes.</li> <li>• Escalate any issues that are placing unreasonable demand or impact upon their team or the broader organisation.</li> </ul>
People & Culture (Safety) and Governance (non-Safety)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review procedure as required.</li> <li>• Provide guidance and advice as necessary.</li> <li>• Undertake investigations in line with this policy if required.</li> </ul>
Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all employees, and others in Council facilities.</li> <li>• Step in and manage uncomfortable customer interactions for their employees and enact appropriate management steps contained in this procedure.</li> </ul>

Party	Roles and responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake investigations in line with this policy if required.</li> <li>Issue temporary suspension letter to person of interest/customer whilst there is consideration of whether measures are to be adopted.</li> <li>Issue warning letters to persons of interest/customers and make decisions about measures to address unsafe or unreasonable customer behaviour (other than exclusion/suspension).</li> <li>Escalate suspension or other recommendations to the CEO.</li> <li>Review measures on a regular basis and upon request.</li> </ul>
CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all employees, Councillors, and others is paramount by providing a safe working environment without risks to health.</li> <li>Consider measures to address unsafe or unreasonable customer behaviour that impact on employees Councillors and/or the broader organisation.</li> <li>Issue Suspension/Exclusion letters.</li> </ul>

## 8. Related Legislation and Policies

There are a range of legislation, codes and Council documents that inform and support this Policy. These include, but are not limited to:

Legislation	Council documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</li> <li>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</li> <li>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</li> <li>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OHS Policy 2023</li> <li>Governance Rules</li> <li>Complaints Policy</li> <li>Complaints Procedure</li> <li>Occupational Violence and Aggression Procedure</li> <li>Associated OVA tools and letters</li> <li>Social Media Policy</li> </ul>

### Community Consultation

This Policy will be communicated to members of the community when adopted by Council to ensure that all members of the public are aware of the requirements of the Policy and its implications.

9. Gender Impact Assessment

This Policy has considered and applied Council's Gender Impact Assessment Template and satisfies the provisions established in the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic).

10. Monitoring and evaluation

This success of this Policy will be determined by the understanding of unsafe and unreasonable behaviour by Council representatives and the ease in which such conduct is managed by Council.

11. Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least once every four years to ensure currency, or whenever required due to legislative, strategic or operational requirement.

Version History		
Version Number	Date of change	Reasons for change
1.0	July 2025	Re-structure of Council's Unreasonable Conduct Policy.
2.0	July 2025	Updated based on feedback
3.0	August 2025	Updated following further internal and external legal review



## Connect Wangaratta - Community Engagement Report

### ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN – ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The requirement for a Road Management Plan (the plan) is set out in the *Road Management Act 2004* (the Act). The objective of the plan is to define our road management functions and to establish a set of performance standards around the inspection of our roads and pathways, the identification of defects and the timeliness of our maintenance responses. The Act requires that this plan is reviewed every four years, following the Council elections.

The primary purpose of this engagement is to communicate the proposed performance standards in the plan, to understand if they meet community expectations.

Engagement on the plan began with a series of short videos outlining such things as which roads Council is responsible for and the purpose of the Road Management Plan. We also updated the information on Council's website about our roads and road management functions. Following release of the draft plan, community members were encouraged to review the plan and to provide us feedback through completing a survey, attending drop-in sessions or contacting Council directly.

### What we heard



After **28** days  
of engagement



There were  
**271** visits to  
the site



**10** participants  
completed the  
online survey



We held **2**  
Community  
drop in  
sessions

[connect.wangaratta.vic.gov.au](https://connect.wangaratta.vic.gov.au)



Due to the small number of survey responses, no discernible themes emerged. At the two community drop-in sessions the overwhelming sentiment was that our roads are in reasonably good condition and community members were satisfied with our maintenance response.

**What we are doing**

A summary of the feedback received, how it impacts the project or action required and a delivery timeline is in the table below.

Feedback Item	Action/Info	When	Strategy Change
<b>The majority of feedback related to annual maintenance and renewal programs and was not directly related to the RMP</b>	Where appropriate this feedback will be passed on to Field Services.  This feedback will also inform the review of our Road Asset Management Plan.	Road Asset Management Plan to be reviewed in Q1 2026.	Not Recommended

**Next steps**

A summary of the Community Consultation feedback will be presented to Council. As no substantive issues were raised that might require an amendment to the draft plan it is expected the plan will be adopted without further consideration.



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Road Management Plan 2025-29



Document Control

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Name	Content Manager File Reference	Date	Description of Edits

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## Definitions

Arterial Road	Refers to freeways, highways and declared main roads, which are managed by the Victorian Government, through Head Transport for Victoria (as the co-ordinating road authority).
Co-ordinating road authority	The organisation which has the responsibility to co-ordinate works. Generally, if the road is a freeway or arterial road, this will be Head Transport for Victoria. Generally, if the road is a municipal road, this will be Council.
Council	Refers to the Rural City of Wangaratta
Demarcation agreement	A formal agreement between Council and another organisation that defines areas of responsibility.
Motor vehicle	Refers to a vehicle that is propelled by an in-built motor and is intended to be used on a roadway. This does not include a motorised wheelchair or mobility scooter which is incapable of travelling at a speed greater than 10 km/h and is solely used for the conveyance of an injured or disabled person.
Municipal road(s)	Road for which the municipal council is the co-ordinating road authority. The Road Management Act 2004 imposes specific duties on the municipal council with respect to the inspection, repair and maintenance of these roads and associated road-related infrastructure.
Non-road infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure in, on, under or over a road, which is not road infrastructure. This includes (but is not limited to) such items as gas pipes, water and sewerage pipes, cables, electricity poles and cables, tram wires, rail infrastructure, bus shelters, public telephones, mailboxes, roadside furniture and fences erected by utilities, or providers of public transport.
Other roads	Include roads in state forests and reserves, and roads on private property. Municipal councils are not responsible for the inspection, repair or maintenance of these roads.
Pathway	Refers to a footpath, bicycle path, shared path or other area that is constructed or developed by Council for members of the public (not motor vehicles) to use.
Plan	Refers to this Road Management Plan.
Public Road	As defined by the Road Management Act 2004 and includes a freeway, an arterial road, a municipal road declared under section 14(1) of the Act and a road in respect of which Council has made a decision that it is reasonably required for general public use and is included on the Register of Public Roads.
Road	Has the same meaning as in the Road Management Act 2004, being inclusive of any public highway, any ancillary area and any land declared

	to be a road under section 11 of that Act or forming part of a public highway or ancillary area.
Road infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure which forms part of a roadway, pathway or shoulder, which includes structures and materials.
Road-related infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure installed or constructed by the relevant road authority to either facilitate the operation or use of the roadway or pathway, or support or protect the roadway or pathway.
Road Reserve	Refers to the area of land that is within the boundaries of a road. Example: any nature strip, forest, bushland, grassland or landscaped area within the road reserve would be roadside.
Roadside	Refers to any land that is within the boundaries of the road (other than shoulders) which is not a roadway or pathway. This includes land on which any vehicle crossing or pathway, which connects from a roadway or pathway on a road to other land, has been constructed. Example: any nature strip, forest, bushland, grassland or landscaped area within the road reserve would be roadside
Roadway	Refers to the area of a public road that is open to, or used by, the public, and has been developed by a road authority for the driving or riding of motor vehicles. This does not include a driveway providing access to a public road, or other road, from adjoining land.
Shoulder	Refers to the cleared area, whether constructed or not, that adjoins a roadway to provide clearance between the roadway and roadside. This does not refer to any area that is not in the road reserve.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 What is the purpose of this Plan

Section 50 of the Road Management Act 2004 sets the following objectives for a municipal road management plan:

- 1) To establish a system for our road management functions, which is based on policy, operational objectives and available resources.
- 2) To set a performance standard for our road management functions.

Although it is termed a 'plan' in the legislation, it is functionally an operational protocol document, describing the systems and rules we use to make decisions and meet obligations within our available resources. The plan forms part of a larger Asset Management Framework related to maintenance and operations.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Plan is a road management plan for the purposes of Section 39 of the Road Management Act 2004.

### 1.2 Legislation guiding this Plan

In addition to the Road Management Act 2004, the plan also considers the following Acts, regulations and codes of practice:

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Ministerial Codes of Practice
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Planning And Environment Regulations 2015*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016*
- *Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015*
- *Road Safety Act 1986*
- *Wrongs Act 1958*.

### 1.3 Technical References

- AS ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management – Guidelines
- Integrated Asset Management Guidelines for Road Networks (AP-R202) 2002, Austroads Inc.
- International Infrastructure Management Manual (IIMM) 2015, IPWEA
- VicRoads Risk Management Guidelines
- VicRoads Standard Specification Section 750 – Routine Maintenance

### 1.4 What is covered in this Plan?

The Plan is divided into six sections:

1. Introduction.
2. Rights and Responsibilities – covers legislation and local laws relevant to road management.
3. Road Management Systems - how we classify roads, streets and footpaths – known as our asset hierarchy – and the plans and processes we use to maintain roads and road-related infrastructure.

4. Register of Public Roads – what's in it, how to access it and the process for making changes.
5. Technical References.
6. Attachments:
  - a. Attachment 1, Road Hierarchy – Urban Roads
  - b. Attachment 2, Road Hierarchy – Rural Roads
  - c. Attachment 3, Pathway Hierarchy
  - d. Attachment 4, Inspection Requirements
  - e. Attachment 5, Inspection Frequencies
  - f. Attachment 6, Defect Intervention Levels and Intervention timeframes

### 1.5 Updating the Plan

This Plan must be updated within a set period following a Council election. Outside of this cycle, changes may be required from time to time.

The following process will be used to manage these changes:

- If material changes are made to standards and specifications, a report will be presented to Council, along with a brief explanation as to why such changes are necessary. The review process must follow the steps as set out in the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016 Part 3 – Road Management Plans.
- When changes do not alter these technical aspects of road management, changes will be approved by the Director Community & Infrastructure.

These changes will be made in accordance with the processes prescribed by the Road Management Act 2004. To assist with version control, these changes will be numbered as follows:

- Versions presented to Council will be renumbered by whole numbers – for example, from Version 1.00 to 2.00.
- Those approved by the Director will be renumbered by decimals – for example, from Version 1.00 to 1.01.

### 1.6 Exceptional Circumstances

Council will make every effort to meet its commitments under its Plan.

However, there may be situations or circumstances that affect Council's business activities to the extent that it cannot deliver on the service levels of the Plan. These include but are not limited to, natural disasters such as fires, floods or storms, or a prolonged labour or resource shortage, due to a need to commit or redeploy Council staff and/or equipment elsewhere or due to the effects of pandemic and or government intervention.

#### 1.6.1 Suspension of the Plan

In the event that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Council has considered the impact of such an event on the limited financial resources of Council and its other conflicting priorities, and determined that the Plan cannot be met, then pursuant to Section 83 of the Wrongs Act 1958, the CEO will write to Council's Officer in charge of the Plan and inform them that some, or all, of the timeframes and responses in Council's Plan are to be suspended.

#### 1.6.2 Reinstatement of the Plan

Once the scope of the event/s have been determined, and the resources committed to the event response have been identified, then there will be an ongoing consultation between Council's CEO and Council's Officer responsible for the Plan, to determine which parts of Council's Plan are to be reactivated and when.

#### 1.6.3 Communication and documentation around Plan suspension

Council will provide information/statements to residents about the suspension or reduction of the services under its Plan, including:

- How the work that will be done have been prioritised; and
- The period for which it is likely to be affected.

This information will be provided by the Council on its website where its Plan is located and other channels as appropriate such as press releases or social media.

Where Council has suspended, in part or whole, its Plan, associated documents (e.g. communications, meeting minutes, schedules, etc.) will be recorded and stored.

#### 1.6.4 Inspections and repairs during suspension of Plan

The suspension of the Plan will not necessarily mean that all inspections and repairs halt. However, it may mean that only certain categories of inspections and repairs are undertaken. These will be based on a risk assessment and resources available to the Council, considering the resources needed to address the impact of the trigger event. For example, some reactive inspections may take place and repair (temporary or permanent) of roads/footpaths which pose a high risk may be undertaken, depending on the resources available to the council and the accessibility of each asset.

### 1.7 Responsibility for the Plan

Overall responsibility for administering and implementing the Plan rests with the Director of Community & Infrastructure.

## 2. Rights and Responsibilities

### 2.1 Public Roads

Public roads are defined in the Road Management Act 2004 as including:

- a freeway
- an arterial road
- a road declared under section 204(1) of the Local Government Act 1989
- a municipal road declared under section 14(1) of the Road Management Act 2004
- a road in respect of which Council has made a decision that it is reasonably required for general public use and is included on the Register of Public Roads.

## 2.2 Public Roads not managed by Council

Roads within the Rural City of Wangaratta municipal boundaries, where Council is not the coordinating authority and hence are not managed by Council, fall into one of two categories:

- Roads which are not Municipal Roads. These include freeways and arterial roads (RRV Responsibility); Roads on Crown Reserve Land or Crown Tenure (responsibility of relevant land manager) and private roads (e.g. body corporate roads).
- Municipal roads which are deemed by Council not to be 'reasonably required for general public use'.

### 2.2.1 Roadside Vegetation

A road authority does not have a statutory duty or a common law duty to maintain, inspect or repair land of any public highway that is not a constructed path or roadway (Road Management Act s.107). In accordance with Clause 52.17 of the Victoria Planning Provisions, Council is exempt from the requirement to obtain a permit for native vegetation removed, destroyed, or lopped to **the minimum extent necessary** to maintain the safe and efficient function of an existing road

## 2.3 Key stakeholders

The key stakeholders impacted by this Plan include:

- the general community (for recreation, sport, leisure and business)
- residents and businesses adjoining the road network.  
pedestrians
- vehicle users with motorised vehicles, such as trucks, buses, commercial vehicles, cars and motorcycles
- users of smaller, lightweight vehicles, such as pedal-powered bicycles, motorised buggies, wheelchairs, prams and so on
- tourists and visitors to the area
- emergency agencies (Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, Ambulance Victoria, State Emergency Services)
- the military (in times of conflict and emergency)
- traffic and transportation managers
- managers of the road network asset
- construction and maintenance personnel, who build and maintain asset components.
- utility agencies using the road reserve for infrastructure (water, sewerage, gas, electricity, telecommunications)
- state and federal governments, who periodically provide funding for roads.

## 2.4 Coordinating & Responsible Road Authority

Section 35 of the Road Management Act 2004 provides that a road authority has power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions under the Act.

Section 36 of the Road Management Act 2004 outlines which road authority is the coordinating road authority. According to subsection (c), the coordinating road authority is:

*If the road is a municipal road, the municipal council of the municipal district in which the road or part of the road is situated.*

However, there are instances where several authorities are responsible for components of the road within the road reserve. Section 37 of the Road Management Act 2004 identifies who is the responsible road authority in particular circumstances.

## 2.5 General Functions of a Road Authority

The general functions of a road authority are described within Section 34 of the Road Management Act 2004.

## 2.6 Rights of the Road User

The rights of public road users, which are legally enforceable, are set out in Sections 8 to 10 of the Road Management Act 2004.

## 2.7 Obligations of Road Users

### 2.7.1 General Usage

The common law requires that a road user must take reasonable care for their own safety (see *Ghantous v Hawkesbury City Council*).

The *Road Safety Act 1986* sets out obligations on road users, including section 17A which requires that a person who drives a motor vehicle on, or uses, a highway must drive in a safe manner having regard for all relevant factors, including without limiting their generality, the following:

- (a) physical characteristics of the road
- (b) prevailing weather conditions
- (c) level of visibility
- (d) the condition of any vehicle the person is driving or riding on the highway
- (e) prevailing traffic conditions
- (f) the relevant road laws and advisory signs
- (g) the physical and mental condition of the driver or road user.

Section 17A of the *Road Safety Act 1986* also requires that a road user must take reasonable care:

- (a) to avoid any conduct that may endanger the safety or welfare of other road users.
- (b) to avoid any conduct that may damage road infrastructure and non-road infrastructure on the road reserve.
- (c) to avoid conduct that may harm the environment of the road reserve.

### 2.7.2 Incident Claims

If a person proposes to make a claim in relation to a public road or infrastructure for which Council is the responsible road authority, that person should contact Council and Council will initiate respective investigation and insurance reporting processes.

In accordance with Section 110 of the Road Management Act 2004, Council is not legally liable for property damages where the value of the damage is equal to or less than the threshold amount.

In cases where the claim relates to assets Council does not own or is not responsible for on the road reserve, the person who proposes to make a claim must refer the claim to the other authority or person responsible for those assets.

#### 2.7.3 Permits for work within a road reserve

In cases where an individual or organisation proposes to carry out works within the road reserve that may impede public access, or interfere with road infrastructure, they must apply for a 'works within road reserve' permit. There are some exemptions, as noted in the Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015.

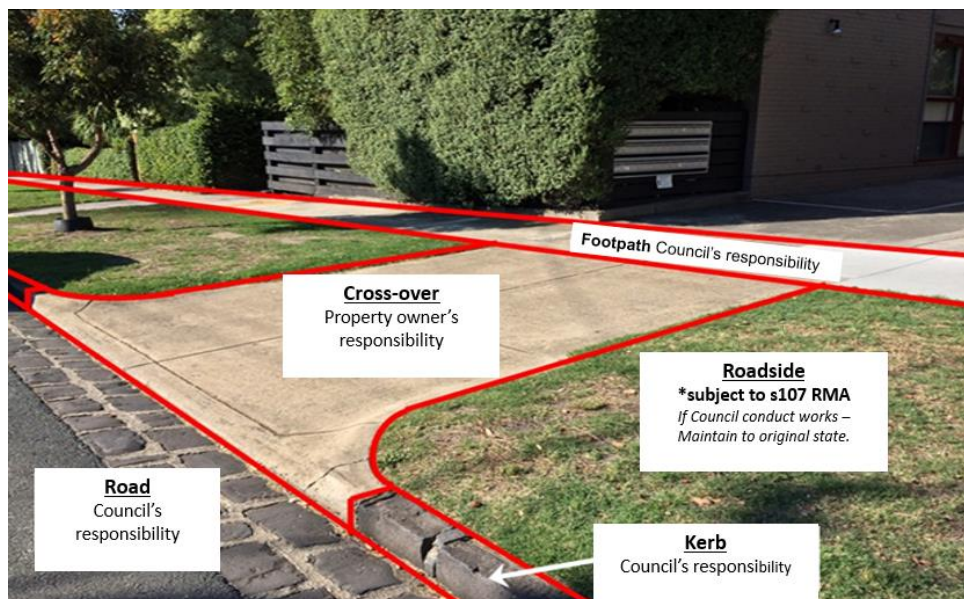
Local laws also require property owners to apply for a vehicle crossing permit if they plan to build a driveway.

In both cases, a fee applies to cover the costs of the administration and inspection of the work.

#### 2.7.4 Obligation of others

There are several assets within the road reserve that we do not have an obligation to inspect and/or maintain. These include:

- **Non-road infrastructure** – This includes (but is not limited to) such items as gas pipes, water and sewerage pipes, cables, electricity poles and cables, tram wires, rail infrastructure, bus shelters, public telephones, mailboxes, roadside furniture and fences erected by utilities, or providers of public transport.
- **Vehicle driveways** – the vehicle crossing (including Cross-over), located between the carriageway and the property boundary, must be maintained by the adjoining property owner. However, Council is responsible for the portion of the driveway where the constructed pathway is reasonably required by the public in accordance with the following diagram.



- **Single property stormwater drains** – for drains constructed within the reserve that carry water from a single property to an outlet in the kerb, or other drain.
- **Utilities** – including, but not limited to; telecommunication, power, water, gas and rail authority assets.
- **Roadside** – as per Section 107 of the Road Management Act, Council has no “*statutory duty or a common law duty to perform road management functions in respect of a public highway which is not a public road or to maintain, inspect or repair the roadside*”, described as “*any land that is within the boundaries of the road (other than shoulders) which is not a roadway or pathway*”. This includes landscaped tree plots within the footpath/pathway where the surface of the tree plot is not constructed with the intention of providing a trafficable pedestrian surface.

Where Council becomes aware of a hazard created by the defective condition of assets / infrastructure owned by another party, Council may at its absolute discretion:

- If located within assets / infrastructure for which Council is responsible (e.g. footpaths, road surfaces, etc.), or otherwise presents an immediate and significant risk to members of the public, undertake temporary measures to reduce the risk to members of the public until such time as the respective owner can implement permanent repairs (subject also to Council's available resources),
- Report in writing (e.g. email or letter) the presence of the hazard to the responsible party and request that repairs be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.
- Where repairs are not completed by the responsible party within the respective timeframe, Council may complete necessary repairs and invoice the responsible party for the costs.

However, where another party has a duty in relation to the asset / infrastructure, and Council has a discretionary power to take remedial action in relation to that matter, only that other

party with the duty is liable in a subsequent proceeding, in accordance with s.104 of the Road Management Act 2004.

### 3. Road Management Systems

#### 3.1 Background & Process

Road asset management involves managing both physical assets and uses and operation that have the potential to impact their condition. It applies to all road assets, including:

- the road – pavement and surface, as well as footpaths, kerb and channel
- structures – bridges, culverts and traffic management devices
- road infrastructure – traffic signals and on-road electrical assets.

The aim of our road management system is to deliver a safe and efficient road network and meet community needs to the best of our ability, within available resources.

To create a road asset management system that would best meet our needs when inspecting, maintaining and repairing public roads, we used the following nationally recognised asset management frameworks:

- International Infrastructure Management Manual (IIMM) 2015, IPWEA
- IPWEA National Asset Management Systems (NAMS+)
- Other references, as listed in Technical References.

The system is designed to set the direction for our asset management activities. It is also linked to the annual business planning cycle.

#### 3.2 Asset Hierarchies – Municipal Road Network

All roads and footpaths within the municipal road network are classified according to a hierarchy that considers how they are used, who uses them and how often.

The hierarchy classification is used to determine the levels of service required, prioritise works programs and determine defect intervention responses.

The three levels in the hierarchy are:

##### 3.2.1 Rural and Urban Road & Street Network

Covers the residential area of Wangaratta township and all other roads, including small townships outside of the residential area of Wangaratta City. This is further divided into four categories, as follows:

- Link
- Collector
- Access
- Limited Access

Please see Attachment 1 for more information.

##### 3.2.2 Pathway network

This is divided into 3 categories, as follows:

- Category 3: High pedestrian volume and/or located in high activity areas and precincts.

- Category 2: Low pedestrian volume and/or located in low activity areas and precincts.
- Category 1: Designated Bike paths and all Rail Trails.

### 3.3 Our Road Network

More information about the Council's Road network is shown in the tables below.

*Table 3.1 – Road length by hierarchy – date last updated: 2/07/2025*

Hierarchy	Length (km)	% of Network
Link Roads - Urban	13	1
Link Roads – Rural	220	12
Collector Roads – Urban	32	2
Collector Roads – Rural	309	16
Access Roads– Urban	155	8
Access Road – Rural	1085	57
Limited Access Roads – Urban	1	<1
Limited Access Roads – Rural	78	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1893</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 3.2 – Road Length by Surface Type – date last updated: 2/07/2025*

Surface Type	Length (km)	% of Network
Sealed	713	38
Unsealed	1180	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>1893</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.4 Maintenance Management System

#### 3.4.1 Maintenance Management

Council has responsibilities to road users and the community to maintain public roads to a reasonably safe and suitable standard, within our available funds and resources. By developing long-term maintenance programs for our assets, we are better able to plan how we do this.

The following maintenance requirements shape our annual program and budget:

#### **Routine maintenance standards**

Standards vary across the network depending on the asset type and relevant risk factors, such as traffic volumes and composition, operating speeds, the susceptibility of assets to deterioration and the cost effectiveness of repairs. Competing priorities for funding are also relevant.

Defect intervention levels have been established using the *VicRoads Standard Specification Section 750* and adapting it to local conditions.

The standards will be reviewed periodically to make sure they are adequate (see Section 1.4).

#### **Defect Intervention Actions**

Appropriate intervention actions are determined depending on the severity and location of the defect. Response times are determined using local knowledge and experience, and past performance as a guide.

Response times are monitored and will be periodically reviewed (see Section 1.4).

#### **Temporary mitigation measures**

These are temporary works designed to reduce the risk of an incident, until such time as repair or maintenance works can be completed.

Response times and safety measures – for example warning signs, flashing lights, and safety barriers – are determined by reference to the risk to safety, road type and traffic volume.

#### **Emergency works**

Works that result from emergency incidents and must be undertaken immediately, for the safety of road users and the public.

Emergency works might include traffic incident management, responses to fires, floods, storms and spillages, and any assistance required under the Victorian State Emergency Response Plan and Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

#### **3.4.2 Asset Management Plans**

Our asset management plans guide the development of long-term asset renewal programs, helping us to plan and finance asset renewal and replacement. Our Road Asset Management Plan provides guidance on the maintenance, renewal and upgrade of our roads and road related infrastructure including table drains, kerb and channel, culverts, pits, and other drainage infrastructure within the road formation which are essential for supporting the trafficable surface.

#### **3.4.3 Maintenance Surveys and inspections**

A four-tier regime is used to inspect our road network assets. It covers safety issues, incidents, defects and condition inspections.

##### **1. Reactive inspections**

These inspections are conducted in response to requests from the community. The inspection is carried out by a Council employee and assessed according to the Hazard intervention levels, contained within Attachment 6.

##### **2. Proactive Inspections**

Regular timetabled inspections that are scheduled depending on traffic flow, the types of defects likely to impact the asset and the perceived risks of these defects.

##### **3. Condition Inspections**

These inspections identify structural integrity issues which, if untreated, are likely to adversely affect the network overall. These issues may impact short-term serviceability, as well as the ability of the asset to perform for the duration of its intended life span.

These inspections are carried out in accordance with the Council's asset management plans. They are undertaken by external consultants on a five to six yearly schedule.

#### 3.4.4 Maintenance responsiveness and performance targets

The following information is recorded when we receive a Customer Service Request (CRMS) from the community:

- Date the request was received
- Details of the request, including the location and nature of the reported hazard/defect (including any specific measurements if provided), name of the person making the request, copies of any photographs provided, etc.
- The personnel / department to which the request has been assigned for action
- Date by which the request must be actioned (based on the target response times specified in Attachment 6)
- Date when the request was actioned and/or completed (this typically involves someone carrying out an CRMS inspection, as described in section 3.4.3, followed by any necessary repair works conducted).

By recording this information, we can monitor compliance against target response times – that is, the time it takes from receiving a request to carrying out an inspection and ultimately completing necessary works.

Customer requests will be inspected and assessed in accordance with timeframes specified in Attachment 6. Following are some possible outcomes from a reactive inspection:

- If a defect identified exceeds Intervention Levels specified in Attachment 6, a works order would be created with a date for completion of works in line with respective specified Intervention timeframes.
- If repairs are significant – for example, rehabilitation works are required – temporary mitigation measures may be undertaken to reduce the risk posed by the hazard/defect until the proper works can be undertaken (and subject to available resources).
- If the defect is assessed as below the Intervention Level specified in Attachment 6, it would be noted (including why), but no remedial action will be conducted.

In all cases, the action taken would be noted against the original request.

Target response times and intervention times are based on 'normal' conditions. The same level of service would not apply in cases where the Plan has been suspended, under Section 1.5.

### 3.5 Asset Levels of Service

Five elements are considered when determining appropriate levels of service for the road network. These are:

- Community expectations
- Technical standards
- Organisational capacity
- Performance measures and targets

- Safety of road and footpath users

## 4. Register of Public Roads

Council maintains a road register – called the Register of Public Roads – with the details of all public roads and ancillary areas for which we are responsible. The process for making changes to the Public Road register is described in Council's Roads Procedure.

The Register of Public Roads and the Roads Procedure are available on Council's website. A hard copy is made available at our Customer Service Centre, 62-68 Ovens St, Wangaratta VIC 3677 upon request.

### 4.1 Maintenance Demarcation (Boundary) Agreements

Where there are boundary agreements between us and other road authorities or private organisations, the schedule of roads affected, and agreements are listed in the Municipal Road Register.

We have agreements with the following road authorities:

- Regional Roads Victoria (VicRoads)
- Alpine Shire
- Rural City of Benalla
- Indigo Shire
- Mansfield Shire
- Moira Shire
- ARTC

### 4.2 Roads not listed on the Register.

The following roads are not listed on our Register of Public Roads:

- Roads which are the full responsibility of the state government, or a private enterprise
- Unused roads for which we have not accepted responsibility
- Roads drawn out on a plan of subdivision, until such time that we accept responsibility for these roads
- Roads which we have determined are not reasonably required for general public use

## Attachment 1: Road Hierarchy – Urban Roads

Category	Description*
<b>Link</b>	<p>These carry heavy volumes of traffic including commercial vehicles, and act as main routes for traffic flows in and around the municipality. Key features typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplementary to arterial road system</li> <li>• Connector between arterial roads and lower order streets</li> <li>• Cater for, but may restrain, service and heavy vehicles.</li> <li>• Provide access to significant public services.</li> <li>• Minimum two clear traffic lanes (excluding parking)</li> </ul>
<b>Collector</b>	<p>These carry significant volumes of traffic and provide access, by linking residential areas to arterial roads. They also provide links between the various collector roads. Key features typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-continuous connector (do not cross arterial roads)</li> <li>• Limited through traffic (not promoted, or encouraged)</li> <li>• Cater for, but may restrain, service and heavy vehicles.</li> <li>• Minimum two clear traffic lanes (excluding parking)</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b>	<p>These carry only local traffic. The primary function is to provide access to private and business/industrial properties. Key features typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short distance travel to higher level roads</li> <li>• Minimum one clear traffic lane (excluding parking)</li> </ul>
<b>Limited Access</b>	<p>These perform a very minimal function as local access roads. Key features typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A side or rear entry lane, generally providing secondary access to properties.</li> <li>• Low traffic numbers</li> </ul>

\* Categories follow the Infrastructure Design Manual for residential streets

## Attachment 2: Road Hierarchy – Rural Roads

Category	Description*
<b>Link</b>	<p>These roads act as links between population centres and are supplementary to the arterial road network. Key features typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High percentage of truck &amp; commercial vehicles</li> <li>• Access to major industries</li> <li>• Minimum 2 clear traffic lanes (excluding parking)</li> </ul>
<b>Collector</b>	<p>These carry moderate volumes of traffic between and provide access, by linking local areas to link and arterial roads. They also provide links between the various collector roads. Key features typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-continuous connector (do not cross arterial roads)</li> <li>• Limited through traffic (not promoted, or encouraged)</li> <li>• Cater for, but may restrain, service and heavy vehicles.</li> <li>• Minimum two clear traffic lanes (excluding parking)</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b>	<p>These carry only local traffic. The primary function is to provide access to private properties and properties used for primary production. Key features typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short distance travel to higher level roads</li> </ul> <p>In the case of an unsealed local access road providing access to a single property, the road will only be maintained to the closest boundary of that property. The balance will be maintained as a limited access track (see below)</p>
<b>Limited Access</b>	<p>These perform a very minimal function. They typically act as fire access, or as a secondary or seasonal access road to large rural / farming properties. Key features typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides secondary access to properties.</li> <li>• Unsealed roads, often unformed or with minimal material</li> </ul> <p>Due to the limited function and use of these roads, they are not subject to a proactive inspection regime or the same hazard intervention levels of other roads.</p>

\* Descriptions follow the Infrastructure Design Manual for residential streets

## Attachment 3: Pathway Hierarchy

### Footpaths

Category	Area	Description*
<b>Category 3</b>	High-use Areas	<p>The category of 'highest use' that includes all footpaths in Central Business District of Wangaratta and select tourist/shopping precincts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North End Ovens Street</li> <li>• Faithfull Street</li> <li>• East End Rowan Street</li> <li>• End Docker Street</li> <li>• Ford Street</li> <li>• Murphy Street</li> <li>• Reid Street</li> <li>• Chisholm Street</li> <li>• Victoria Parade</li> <li>• Baker Street</li> <li>• Senior Citizen Centres</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Community Centres</li> <li>• Railway Station</li> </ul>
<b>Category 2</b>	Low-use Areas	<p>Provides All Weather pedestrian and disability access in urban areas.</p> <p>Provide access to and from abutting properties.</p> <p>Caters generally for low volumes of pedestrians and disability vehicles.</p> <p>Consists of all Paths within residential areas, that are not included in the high use category.</p>
<b>Category 1</b>	Other Areas Recreational	<p>The category includes pathways used by commuter &amp; recreational cyclists and select tourist pathways.</p> <p>Shared Pathways</p> <p>Rail Trails</p> <p>Bike Tracks</p> <p>Walking Tracks</p>

## Attachment 4: Inspection Requirements

Inspection Type	Purpose	Inspection and Reporting Requirements
<b>Reactive – Request for Service (RFS)</b>	Reactive inspections are designed to confirm the nature of defects/hazards reported by members of the public or Council employees and identify any that exceed the intervention levels specified in Attachment 6.	Performed by a Council representative with knowledge of Description / Intervention Levels (Attachment 6) and road maintenance techniques who may then call in a higher level of expertise if necessary. All Reactive inspections are conducted on foot, with defects measured and photographed as specified in Council's Standard Operating Procedures. The report is required to identify specific safety defect, time first reported, time inspected and by whom, subsequent action and time of completion.
<b>Proactive Inspection</b>	Inspection undertaken in accordance with a formal programmed inspection schedule to determine if the road asset complies with the levels of service as specified. A record of each asset is to be completed detailing the name of the inspector, the inspection date, and a description of any defects found that exceed the intervention levels specified in Attachment 6. In addition, details of the inspection will be electronically recorded against the particular asset inspected.	Proactive Inspections of roads are conducted via a slow moving vehicle, while Proactive Inspections of all other asset types are conducted on foot, with defects measured and photographed as specified in Council's Standard Operating Procedures. Performed by a dedicated Plan inspector.
<b>Night Inspections</b>	Inspection undertaken in accordance with a formal programmed inspection schedule to assess the reflectivity of road signage, cat's eyes and roadside guideposts, and the visibility of line marking at night.	Conducted via a slow moving vehicle with standard driving lights (low beam), with visibility/legibility/reflectivity assessed by eye from distances specified respective of each asset defect type. Performed by a dedicated Plan inspector.

## Attachment 5: Inspection Frequencies

Asset Group	Hierarchy Category	Reactive Inspection Timeframe WD = Working Days H = Hours	Proactive Inspection Frequency M = Months	Night Inspections Y = Years
<b>Sealed Roads</b>	Link	10 WD	6 M	5 Y
<b>Unsealed Roads</b>	Collector	10 WD	6 M	5 Y
<b>Regulatory, Warning and Hazard Signs</b>	Access	10 WD	12 M	5 Y
<b>Kerb &amp; Channel</b>	Limited Access	10 WD	N/A	N/A
<b>Footpaths</b>	Category 3 (High Use)	10 WD	12 M	n/a
	Category 2 (Low Use)	10 WD	24 M	
	Category 1 (Recreational)	10 WD	24 M	
<b>Bridges</b>	Level 1 Bridge Inspections	10 WD	12 M	n/a
<b>Emergency Response – All Asset / Categories</b> * Reported Incidents / Hazards that present an immediate and significant risk to members of the public. Temporary measures (e.g. installing barriers, signage, closing the road/footpath, etc.) will be implemented to reduce the risk to users of the road network until such time as appropriate repairs can be completed.		12 H	n/a	n/a

\* If a Proactive Inspection Frequency elapses on a Weekend or Public Holiday, the actual due date will be the next Working Day.

## Attachment 6: Defect Intervention Levels and Repair Timeframes

### NOTES:

\* If a Repair Timeframe elapses on a Weekend or Public Holiday, the actual due date will be the next Working Day.

\*\* In cases where a defect is not due to be repaired in less than 4 weeks, temporary measures, such as installing warning signage, erecting barriers, or painting the defect with a bright contrasting colour, may be implemented at the time of identification to reduce the risk as much as is reasonably practicable until permanent repairs can be completed in line with the specified Intervention timeframes.

### Sealed Roads

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Intervention timeframes by hierarchy WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months			
		Link	Collector	Access	Limited Access
<b>Pothole</b>	Potholes in sealed pavement >75 mm in depth and >300 mm in diameter Potholes located in dedicated/marked bicycle lanes >75 mm depth and >300 mm diameter.	2 W	4 W	6 W	NA
<b>Edge break</b>	Edge breaks >300 mm laterally over a 20m or greater length from the nominal seal line	4 W	5 W	6 W	NA
<b>Edge drop</b>	Edge drops onto an unsealed shoulder >100 mm in depth over a 100m or greater length	4 W	5 W	6 W	NA
<b>Depressions /deformations</b>	Depression / deformations in the traffic lane of a sealed pavement >50 mm in depth under a 3m long straight edge	4 W	5 W	6 W	NA
<b>Missing pit lids</b>	Missing Council drainage pit lids	1 WD	2 WD	3 WD	4 WD
<b>Damaged pit lids</b>	Damaged Council drainage pit lids (such that they are potentially structurally unsound)	4 W	5 W	6 W	2 M
<b>Roadside Vegetation – Overhead clearance</b>	Vegetation intruding into the road envelope: <5.0 m clearance (guidepost to guidepost), unless signed due height restriction.	6 M	6 M	12 M	12 M

## Unsealed Roads

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Intervention timeframes by hierarchy WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months			
		Link	Collector	Access	Limited Access
<b>Pothole</b>	Potholes in unsealed pavement >100 mm in depth and >450 mm in diameter	1 M	2 M	3 M	24 M
<b>Wheel ruts / scouring</b>	Wheel ruts or scouring on an unsealed road >150 mm in depth, width greater than 200mm	1 M	2 M	3 M	24 M
<b>Corrugations</b>	Corrugations on an unsealed road >100 mm in depth and >50 m in length	1 M	2 M	3 M	24 M
<b>Roadside Vegetation – Overhead clearance</b>	Vegetation intruding into the road envelope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;5.0 m clearance (guidepost to guidepost), unless signed due height restriction</li> </ul>	6 M	6 M	12 M	12 M

## Traffic Control Devices

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Intervention timeframes by hierarchy WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months			
		Link	Collector	Access	Limited Access
<b>Missing / Damaged Signage / Delineation / Obscured</b>	Regulatory, warning and hazard signs and or delineation missing, illegible, damaged, or obscured making them substantially ineffective when viewed.	2 M	3 M	4 M	NA
<b>Missing / Damaged Guard Rail or fencing</b>	Guard rail/fence damaged or missing making them substantially ineffective	4 W	6 W	2 M	NA
<b>Missing / Damaged Pavement Markings</b>	Pavement markings which are missing or faded making them substantially ineffective via annual program.	12 M	12 M	12 M	12 M

## Footpaths

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Intervention timeframes by hierarchy WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months		
		Cat 3	Cat 2	Cat 1
<b>Vertical Displacement</b>	Vertical Displacement >25 mm in height	4 W	6 W	1 M
<b>Loose segmented pavers</b>	Loose and unstable segmented pavers (i.e. bluestone, bricks, etc.) that move underfoot	4 W	6 W	2 M
<b>Cracking</b>	Cracking in footpaths >40 mm wide	4 W	8W	2 M
<b>Undulations</b>	Undulations (depressions / bumps) >75 mm in depth/height under a 1.5m straight edge	6 M	12 M	12 M
<b>Potholes</b>	Potholes >150 mm in length/width and >25 mm in depth	4 W	6 W	1 M
<b>Missing pit lids</b>	Missing Council drainage pit lids	1 WD	2 WD	3 WD
<b>Damaged pit lids</b>	Damaged Council drainage pit lids (such that they are potentially structurally unsound)	2 W	4 W	2 M
<b>Vegetation overhead clearance</b>	Vegetation intruding into the footpath envelope: • <2.5 m over footpath surface	12 M	12 M	12 M
<b>Dislodged / missing tactile indicator</b>	Damaged or missing	2 M	4 M	4 M

\* Pram crossings / ramps providing transition between road and footpath levels are treated as part of the footpath for the purposes of the application of description / intervention levels.

## Kerb and Channel

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Intervention timeframes by hierarchy WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months			
		Link	Collector	Access	Limited Access
<b>Vertical Displacement</b>	Vertical displacement – uplift section >80 mm	2 W	4 W	2 M	3 M
<b>Horizontal Displacement</b>	Horizontal displacement section >50 mm	2 W	4 W	2 M	3 M

## Bridges and Culverts

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Intervention timeframes by hierarchy WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months			
		Link	Collector	Access	Limited Access
<b>Bridge &amp; Culvert defects</b>	Visible damage likely to pose an immediate and significant risk to members of the public	2 W	4 W	2 M	3 M

### Summary of responses to Road Management Plan Community Consultation

Response Summary	Issue	Action
1 Council fails to do preventive maintenance of small defects before frost season which allows water into the road surface and when freezing causes potholes to form. Inspect for cracks and seal before frost	Maintenance	Communicated to respondent that we're undertaking a crack sealing program this year and sourcing improved improved binders in our emulsion to address this issue.
2 Concern about approved roadside plantings being removed without consultation	Maintenance	Emailed respondent seeking further information on this feedback to better understand the issues. No further response at this stage.
3 Cyclist concerned about cracking, root intrusion and edge breaks on bike paths and rail trail	Maintenance	Phoned 25/8 and left a message to call back to discuss these issues. No further response at this stage. Passed on to Field Services to inspect specific locations identified in response.
4 Request to upgrade segments of Witherow Lane and Lee Morrison Road from Limited Access to Access.	Road Register	Advised that neither of these segments qualify for upgrade to Access standard as they provide secondary access only to grazing properties.
5 Concerned that grading of rural roads cutoff drains are not done enough, shoulders on sealed roads are not done enough, culverts are not cleaned enough and fire prevention is too hard to achieve.	Maintenance	Advised respondent the issues he raised were valid but not relevant to the RMP but rather the Asset Management Plan. Agreed to pass on these maintenance concerns to Field Services.
6 Request that the Draft 2025-29 Road Management Plan give consideration to Farm Access Tracks being recognised in the Road Register as Access Roads and regularly graded and re-sheathed.	Road Register	Advised that the Farm Access Tracks do not meet the criteria for roads or road segments to be added to the Road Register, as defined in Council's Public Roads Procedure. Also advised of the significant budgetary impact of adding these roads to Council's Road Register.
7 Concern that Council's exemption for removal of native vegetation on Council roads is not referenced in the RMP	Legislation	Added a reference at section 2.2.1
8 Concern that the Planning & Environment Act 1987 and the Planning and Environment Regulations 2015 are not included in the list of legislation guiding the RMP	Legislation	Added a reference at section 1.2
9 Concern that the RMP does not include a detailed reference to road related infrastructure	Infrastructure	Added a reference at section 3.4.2
10 RMP should list those roads listed in the Municipal Emergency Plan (MEP) that require inspection and maintenance prior to the fire season	Emergency Management	Advised that Council's Emergency Management Project Coordinator confirmed that the MEP does not include such a list of roads. Currently the process is that the CFA advises Council, via the Fire Management Planning Committee, of any roads that require work, to enable emergency vehicle access, prior to each fire season.



## Connect Wangaratta - Community Engagement Report

### Waste Management Policy 2025 – Engagement Summary.

This community engagement campaign has been launched to gather feedback on the Waste Management Policy 2025. Although the policy was reviewed and adopted by Council in June 2025, the introduction of a kerbside glass collection service has prompted a further review to ensure alignment with waste service standards.

The Rural City of Wangaratta Waste Management Policy 2025 recognizes the growing challenges of increased waste generation due to population growth and urban expansion, alongside the need to reduce environmental impacts and reliance on landfill. It aims to deliver a clear, responsive, and sustainable waste management system that aligns with Victorian Government standards, supports community needs, and promotes resource recovery.

Council invited community submissions on the draft Waste Management Policy 2025 for 28 days from 25th July 2025 to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025 via the Connect Wangaratta webpage.



28 days



4

[connect.wangaratta.vic.gov.au](https://connect.wangaratta.vic.gov.au)



**What we heard**

Due to the timing of this review occurring shortly after similar recent engagement activities, community feedback was limited. This level of response is consistent with previous engagement undertaken by the Waste team over the past 24 months in relation to other strategies and policies, reflecting a pattern of consultation fatigue or reduced public interest in closely spaced reviews.

Three items of feedback were received:

- “Is the plan to continue with the use of 'yellow top' bins in public areas?”
- “Great to have a more circular economy”
- “There should be an annual kerbside hard waste collection, which many other councils”

**What we are doing**

Of the 12 visitors to the project page, 3 surveys were completed with the following feedback:

- “Is the plan to continue with the use of 'yellow top' bins in public areas?”
- “Great to have a more circular economy”
- “There should be an annual kerbside hard waste collection, which many other councils”

Council currently utilises the use of 'yellow top' bins in public areas with no changes planned for this service provision.

Feedback Item	Action/Info	When	Strategy Change
“There should be an annual kerbside hard waste collection, which many other councils”	While we acknowledge the value of this initiative, it currently falls outside the financial scope of our existing service framework and budget allocation	Nil	Nil



**Next steps**

Present to Council to Endorses the draft Waste Management Policy 2025 for adoption

RURAL CITY OF WANGARATTA Waste Management Policy July 2025 Update Council Approved Version (002).docx - Read-Only

Main document changes and comments		
Page 4: Commented [Maddocks1]	Maddocks	12/03/2025 10:48:00 AM
We note that this goes well beyond what is currently included in Council's Waste Services Policy. We suggest that Council considers whether any or all of these additional requirements are necessary and/or appropriate for Council and varies them as desired. We can then review the final version of these requirements, if requested.		
Page 7: Commented [Maddocks2]	Maddocks	7/03/2025 4:01:00 PM
Council has not previously made provision for replacement services, would it like to do so in this policy?		
Header and footer changes		
Text Box changes		
Header and footer text box changes		
Footnote changes		
Endnote changes		



Rural City of  
Wangaratta

Our strategy to  
engage, elevate,  
and empower  
young people  
in our region.

# LEVEL UP YOUTH

ENGAGE, ELEVATE, EMPOWER



## 2026-2030



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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, on which the Rural City of Wangaratta communities reside.

We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures. We are committed to walking beside all traditional owners as we move toward reconciliation.



# FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of the Rural City of Wangaratta, I am proud to present our Level Up Youth Strategy 2026–2030. The Level Up Youth strategy incorporates the feedback of more than 870 young people and reflects their experiences and aspirations. From mental health and employment to safe spaces and community connection, it sets a clear path to guide our efforts to create a more inclusive, vibrant, and supportive community for all young people.

I want to thank every young person who took part in the survey and contributed their ideas to help shape this strategy that will assist Council to deliver programs based on your specific needs.



**Mayor Irene Grant**



# WELCOME

# MESSAGES

## FROM THE CO-DESIGN CREW

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Welcome to Level Up Youth  
– the Youth Strategy for the  
Rural City of Wangaratta.

This strategy has been co-designed  
by young people, for young people.  
It's a framework for action and a tool  
for Council and community to better  
understand, support, and respond to the needs  
of youth in our region. But more than that, it's a  
message of hope, pride, and progress.

Level Up Youth is built on three pillars: Engage, Elevate, and Empower.

Engage is where we are now — how we connect with young  
people and build stronger relationships.

Elevate is about lifting youth voices and creating real, short-term impact.

Empower is our long-term commitment — to ensure young people  
flourish and feel part of shaping their own futures.

This isn't just a document to sit on a shelf. It's a living strategy, designed to  
grow and change as our needs evolve. It reflects the real experiences of  
young people, our concerns, our ideas, and our goals. Whether you shared  
feedback, filled out a survey, or joined our co-design team, you've helped  
make this possible. Being part of this project has been something special.

As one of our young co-designers said:

***“It was so special to see such an amazing project  
come to light. I hope Council continues to prioritise  
youth and amplify our voices.”***

Level Up Youth is here to make sure we all get a say in the future we are  
building together. Thank you for being part of the journey. Let's level up –  
for our youth, for our future, and for the Northeast.

**The Level Up Youth Co-Design Crew**



# LEVEL UP YOUTH



## WHAT

Level Up Youth is a whole of council strategic approach to engaging, elevating, and empowering all young people within our region.

The term Level Up comes originally from video game culture, where it means advancing to the next stage, gaining new abilities, or unlocking new opportunities. Today it's associated with growth, achievement, removing disparity and moving forward.

We are calling our Youth Strategy "Level Up Youth" because it's a call to action for council, key stakeholders and community to level up to our young people by working more collaboratively and strategically with them and for them.

This strategy is about raising the bar for how we engage with, support, and back young people in the Rural City of Wangaratta, so together we can invest in their potential, celebrating their leadership, and ensuring they have what they need to grow, belong, and thrive.

## WHO

**This Youth Strategy is for all young people aged 12-25 within the Rural City of Wangaratta.** It is also for Council and key stakeholders who work with young people (eg. secondary schools, youth services providers, sporting clubs, community groups) in our region.





# SNAP SHOT

## WHY

This Youth Strategy is a commitment to all young people and a roadmap for Council and all key stakeholders in the pursuit of a shared vision that:

***“Every young person in Wangaratta is supported to grow, lead, and shape their future, and our community, in a way that reflects their hopes, strengths, and potential.”***

## HOW

Level Up Youth has been co-designed by Council staff and young people with input from internal and external stakeholders including almost 900 young people.

It explains how we will work with and for young people. Clearly articulating our three key deliverables – to engage, elevate and empower young people - and how these play out across our five priority areas for young people.

- 1 Safety & Belonging
- 2 Health & Wellbeing
- 3 Youth Voice & Leadership
- 4 Places & Spaces
- 5 Participation in Education, Training & Work

The matrix of deliverables and priority areas provides a high-level overview of key activities that can be documented, shared and tracked in annual implementation plans for each year of the five-year strategy.

Refer to our Implementation Plans on pages 40-43



# DID YOU KNOW?



**According to ABS 2021 Census data Victoria has the second highest population of young people with over one million young people aged 12-25 living in Victoria.**

In the Rural City of Wangaratta, individuals aged 12-24 account for 14.2% of the total population. Of these 4,246 young people, approximately two thirds reside within the township of Wangaratta.

Last year Mission Australia surveyed 4,335 young Victorians (that is 89 less than our total youth population) who were aged 15-19, the data reflects the following statistics.


**56% of them thought the cost of living was the most important issue in Australia today.**

**55% of them believed alcohol and 65% of them believed drugs are a problem.**

**54% of them felt proud to be a part of their community.**

The Australian Youth Affairs Coalition and the Youth Affairs Council Victoria are the peak bodies for young people at a national and state levels respectively, and along with Youth Central which is the Victorian Government's website for people aged from 12 to 25, these services offer important resources and information for young people.





The Rural City of Wangaratta (Council) provides services for our young people within our community in several ways. Our work is guided by State Government programs under the 'Our Promise, Your future: Victoria's youth Strategy 2022–2027, the Rural City of Wangaratta's Community Vision and the Council Plan.

**Community Vision**  
The Rural City of Wangaratta is a place for everyone

**Community Wellbeing**  
We want our community to feel connected, inspired and treated with respect. To have access to programs, services and infrastructure that help us lead fulfilled and healthy lives.

**Council Plan 2025–2030**  
Provide a platform for young people to advocate for the issues that matter to them.

Of 4,335 young Victorians (aged 15-19)

- 56% thought the cost of living was the most important issue in Australia today.
- 55% believed alcohol and 65% of them believed drugs are a problem
- 54% felt proud to be a part of their community.

# COMMUNITY VISION

2045

The Rural City  
of Wangaratta  
is a place for  
everyone.

We are a welcoming, connected,  
and caring community.

We value our urban and rural communities,  
ensuring shared opportunity and quality of life.

Our natural environment supports our wellbeing  
and forms a strong part of our cultural identity.

Our strength is our resilience and active  
participation in shaping a future for  
everyone to thrive.



## COMMUNITY WELLBEING

We want our community to feel connected, inspired  
and treated with respect. To have access to programs,  
services and infrastructure that help us lead fulfilled  
and healthy lives.

# COUNCIL PLAN

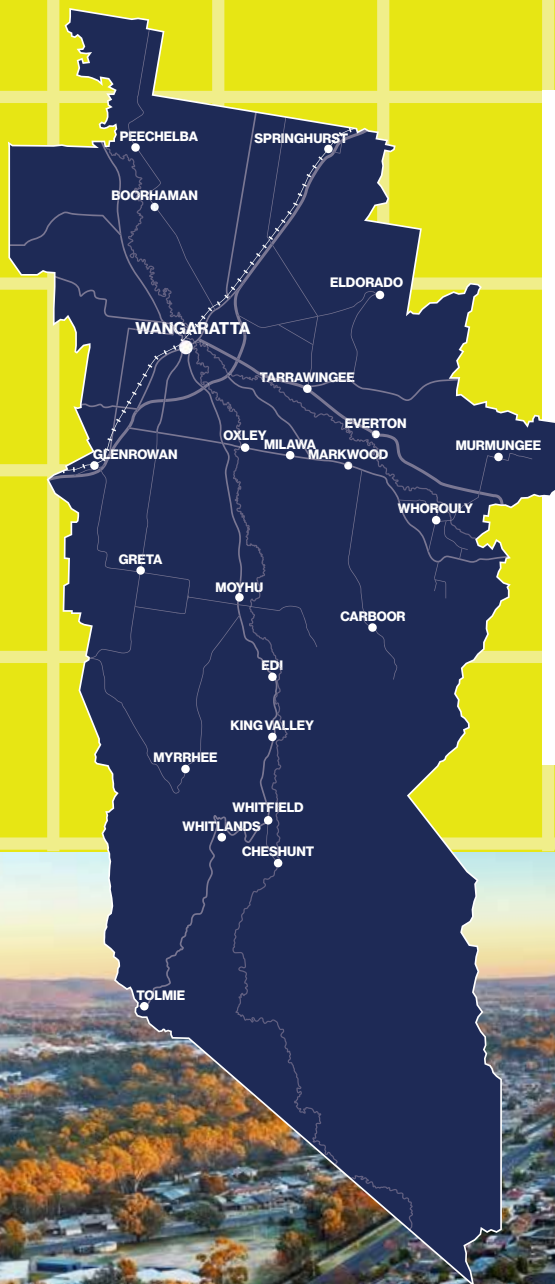
Provide a platform for young  
people to advocate for the  
issues that matter to them

2025  
-2029



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# HOW YOU MIGHT KNOW US



The Rural City of Wangaratta covers 3,646 sq kms, has a current population of 30,002 and borders onto six other local government areas.

You might know us for looking after your rates, roads and rubbish, but you might also know us from many of our services that regularly provide a variety of activities, events and dedicated services and spaces to young people in the region.



# OUR SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

## Youth Services

Providing direct services, engagement, and opportunities to our regions Young People.

- Youth Council Program
- Annual Engage & Amplify project funding support and delivery
- Youth Hub venue and connected programming

## Wangaratta Sports & Aquatic Centre

- Employment opportunities
- A space to be active, engaged and involved.
- A place to meet and be seen.

## Wangaratta Performing Arts & Convention Centre

- Theatre programming for young people, with a focus on school theatre programs connected to curriculum
- Theatre Trainee Program partnership with the Arts Centre Melbourne and Council
- Perform on stage or work behind the scenes with local school, dance, music and drama productions

## Wangaratta Art Gallery

- Education programs, activities and workshops specifically designed for young people.
- Dedicated educational programs aligned with school curricula.
- Offer internships, work experience and student placements for young people
- Provide a space to be engaged or involved



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## Wangaratta Library

- Dedicated Youth Space
- Dedicated Youth programs such as the annual Geek Con Event
- Free access to printed books and online resources including eBooks, eMagazines, eComics and online streaming platforms.

## Events

- Delivering free and low-cost events on behalf of Council to the community ensuring inclusion and accessibility for young people.
- Support community groups and commercial organisations to deliver events within Wangaratta for the benefit of the residents, visitors and economy.
- Allow access to events and activities via the 74 open areas including sporting fields, courts and parks, 2 skate parks, parkour and pump track, our public parks and gardens.



# WHAT WE

In the first half of 2025 the Rural City of Wangaratta took the following steps to develop Level Up Youth – our new five-year Youth Strategy 2026-2030.

1

**Got talent:** We partnered with a consultant (Youth Gurus), to lead the development of our draft Youth Strategy 2026-2030, including a Youth Census and a Youth Co-design process.

2

**Reviewed key documentation:** We conducted a literature review of key documents including but not limited to Rural City of Wangaratta's Council Plan, Rural City of Wangaratta Draft Youth Strategy (2010), Rural City of Wangaratta 2022 Youth Survey, and Victorian State Government Youth Strategy documents.

3

**Recruited local talent:** We recruited a small but dynamic Youth Co-design Crew (including young people previously and currently involved with Youth Council, Amplify and other council run programs) who met in-person and online eight times across a six-month period to inform the development and design of this strategy.





# WHAT WE HEARD



This section highlights the key issues and ideas (clustered by theme) that were raised by young people aged 12-25 in the WHAT YOUTH WANT Youth Census.

## Community and Environment

- **Vibrant and Welcoming Community:** Many young people appreciate the sense of belonging and the friendly community atmosphere in Wangaratta. However, there is a call for a more vibrant environment with expanded retail options and more diverse entertainment facilities.
- **Safety Concerns:** Safety is a significant concern, particularly at night. Young people have expressed the need for more street lighting and safer public spaces.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** There is a strong demand for fixing potholes and improving road conditions outside Wangaratta. Additionally, better public transport and more reliable bus services are needed to enhance connectivity.

## Opportunities and Activities

- **Employment and Education:** Young people are seeking more job opportunities, especially in emerging fields like technology and creative industries. There is also a need for job systems that accommodate students' schedules and provide work experience opportunities.
- **Recreational Activities:** The youth have expressed a desire for more recreational activities, such as arcades, mini-golf, and laser tag. They also want more spaces to hang out, relax, and engage in non-sporting activities.
- **Cultural and Creative Opportunities:** There is a call for increased support for arts and music, including more youth acting opportunities, music events and cultural events.





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### Health and Wellbeing

- **Mental Health Support:** Many young people have highlighted the need for better mental health support, including more accessible services and support groups, particularly by the 16 yrs + age bracket.
- **Substance Abuse and Crime:** Concerns about youth crime and substance abuse, particularly vaping, are prevalent. There is a need for more initiatives to address these issues and provide healthier alternatives for entertainment and socialisation.
- **Bullying:** real life experience, concerns and fears were captured, especially for the ages 12-16yrs.

### Inclusivity and Representation

- **Youth Involvement:** Young people want more opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives. They seek platforms where their voices can be heard and lead to real change.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** There is a desire for more inclusive spaces that cater to diverse needs, including neurodiverse-friendly areas and support for various cultural and religious communities.

### Cost of Living and Housing

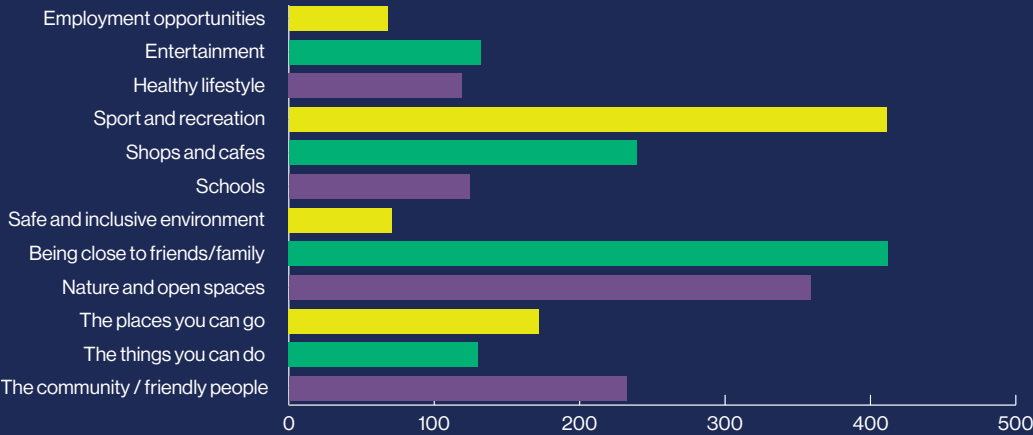
- **Affordability Issues:** The high cost of living and housing is a significant concern for young people. They are worried about future financial stability and the ability to afford necessities.
- **Housing Availability:** There is an identified need for more affordable and appropriate housing options for young people. This concern was captured from the 16+ age bracket.

**There is a call for increased support for arts and music**

# WHAT WE HEARD



## What Young People Like Most About Living in the Region

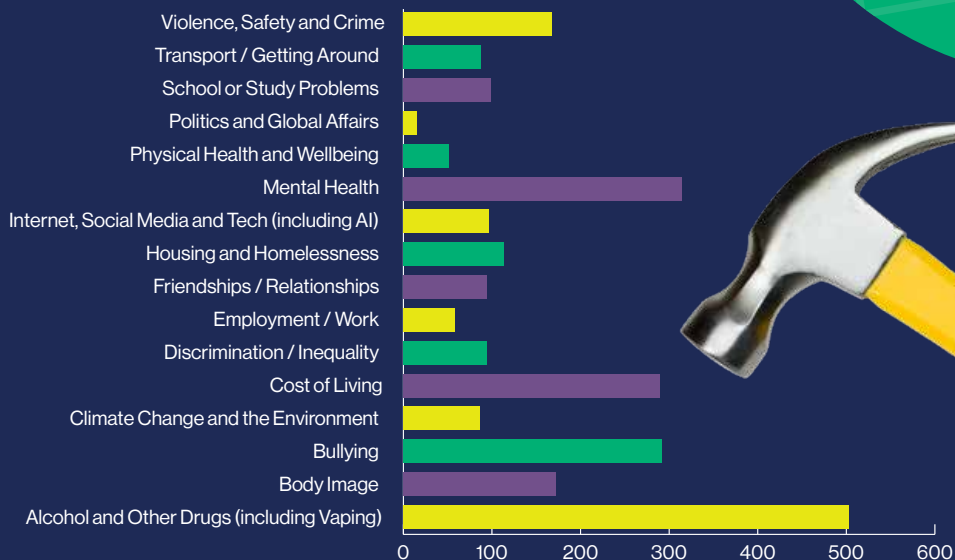


Young people in Wangaratta value social connectedness, sport and recreational opportunities, access to outdoor spaces, and the welcoming community atmosphere. These align with broader research such as Mission Australia's 2023 report, which highlights relationships, recreation, and belonging as key wellbeing drivers.



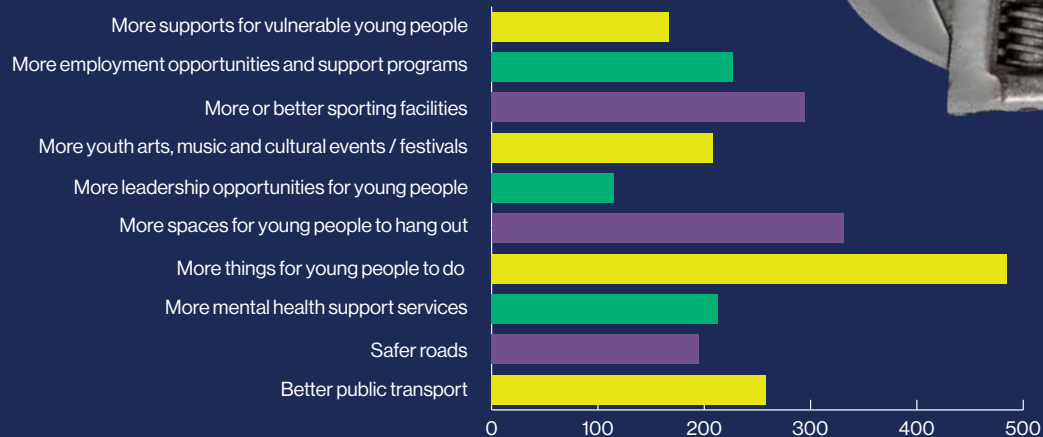
19

## Most Important Issues Identified by Young People



Concerns around vaping, mental health, bullying, and cost of living mirror national trends. Youth vaping has risen significantly (Cancer Council, 2023), and mental health remains the most cited concern among Australian youth (Headspace, 2022).

## What Would Improve the Region for Young People



More than half of all young people who completed the Youth Censes want more things - activities, events and programs – for young people to do. Calls for more youth friendly spaces, better sporting facilities and better public transport were also frequently mentioned.



# OUR KEY DELIVERABLES

The ***Level Up Youth Strategy 2026 - 2030***  
is built around three bold action areas or deliverables



ENGAGE

ELEVATE

EMPOWER

– that together reflects how we'll work with and for  
young people across the Rural City of Wangaratta.

These key deliverables are **more than just words.**

They're our commitment to young people and the way we will work  
in partnership with young people and other key stakeholders to  
turn our shared vision into action.

Whether it's through meaningful participation, access to  
new opportunities, or platforms for leadership, these  
deliverables outline what young people can expect  
to see, feel, and be part of over the next five years  
across all five of our priority areas.

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# ENGAGE

**Definition:** *To participate or become involved in.*

**Synonyms:** connect, interact, involve, attract, immerse

We will engage young people by creating inclusive, welcoming spaces where they can connect, contribute, and belong—whether that's through local programs, creative activities, or simply having a place to be themselves. We commit to listening, involving, and valuing young people in all areas of community life.

## CASE STUDY

### Wangaratta Library – Geek Con Event

GeekCon is Wangaratta's very own comic, gaming, and pop culture convention, designed to be inclusive and engaging for people of all ages and abilities. Inspired by the major conventions held in capital cities, GeekCon was created to give rural communities access to the excitement of pop culture without the need to travel long distances. The event features a wide range of activities including cosplay competitions, gaming tournaments, creative workshops, and themed market stalls, all aimed at celebrating fandom and creativity in a welcoming environment.

By hosting GeekCon locally, Wangaratta Library and its partners have made comics, gaming, and pop culture more accessible to people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend large-scale conventions. The event has become a highlight on the community calendar, drawing in families, teens, and enthusiasts from across the region. Geekcon aims to help people get creative, enjoy gaming, and brings the community together through shared interests and fun activities.



# ELEVATE

**Definition:** *To raise or improve to a higher level.*

**Synonyms:** uplift, raise, boost, promote, advance, grow

We will elevate young people by championing their ideas, talents and ambitions—amplifying their voices through creative platforms, learning opportunities and recognition. We will invest in spaces and experiences that celebrate youth potential and support personal and professional growth.

**CASE STUDY**

## Wangaratta Sports and Aquatics Centre (WSAC)

WSAC have recently introduced a Recreational Gymnastics program which is staffed by young people employed at the centre. The team have been trained in Fundamental Gymnastics skills and have been empowered to design and implement a program for children aged 2-12.

The program has engaged primary school aged children in safe, fun, non-competitive physical activity and is planned and coached by 18-25yo staff members. Many of the team involved also work in other areas of WSAC, and this program has allowed them to expand their learnings and employment opportunities

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# EMPOWER

**Definition:** *The process of equipping young people with the skills, confidence, and opportunities to actively shape their own lives and contribute to their communities.*

**Synonyms:** strengthen, invest, enable, equip, give agency to

We will empower young people by backing them with the tools, skills, and confidence they need to lead, make decisions, and shape their own futures. We commit to sharing power, building leadership, and creating real pathways for youth-led change.

## CASE STUDY

### Youth Council – Edward Browne

The opportunities that the council and the Youth Services team have given to me over the past two years have been nothing short of wonderful - I love the events highlighting the talent of our local young people that the team dedicate so much time and effort to - we all really do appreciate it.

In 2024 the help and support in the first half of the year for the sport and rec fest was terrific and Kayla, Lucy and I would have not been able to do any of it without the Youth Services team providing their vast community connections.

Late last year I began advocating with Jake Fehily & Julia Baron from VicSRC about getting an official 'Rural Vic Youth Congress' program. I'm really excited for this opportunity, and I can't wait to work with the new youth council about this in early 2026!!!!

Youth Council has opened opportunities for me like the Co-Design consultation group for the Strategy. In addition to that, I have also applied to the Yacvic and Victorian University's Centre for excellence - young people and disasters which I'm proud to now be part of.

Youth Council and the service Council provide for me and my desire to advocate and have a say has changed my life.



# OUR **5** PRIORITY AREAS

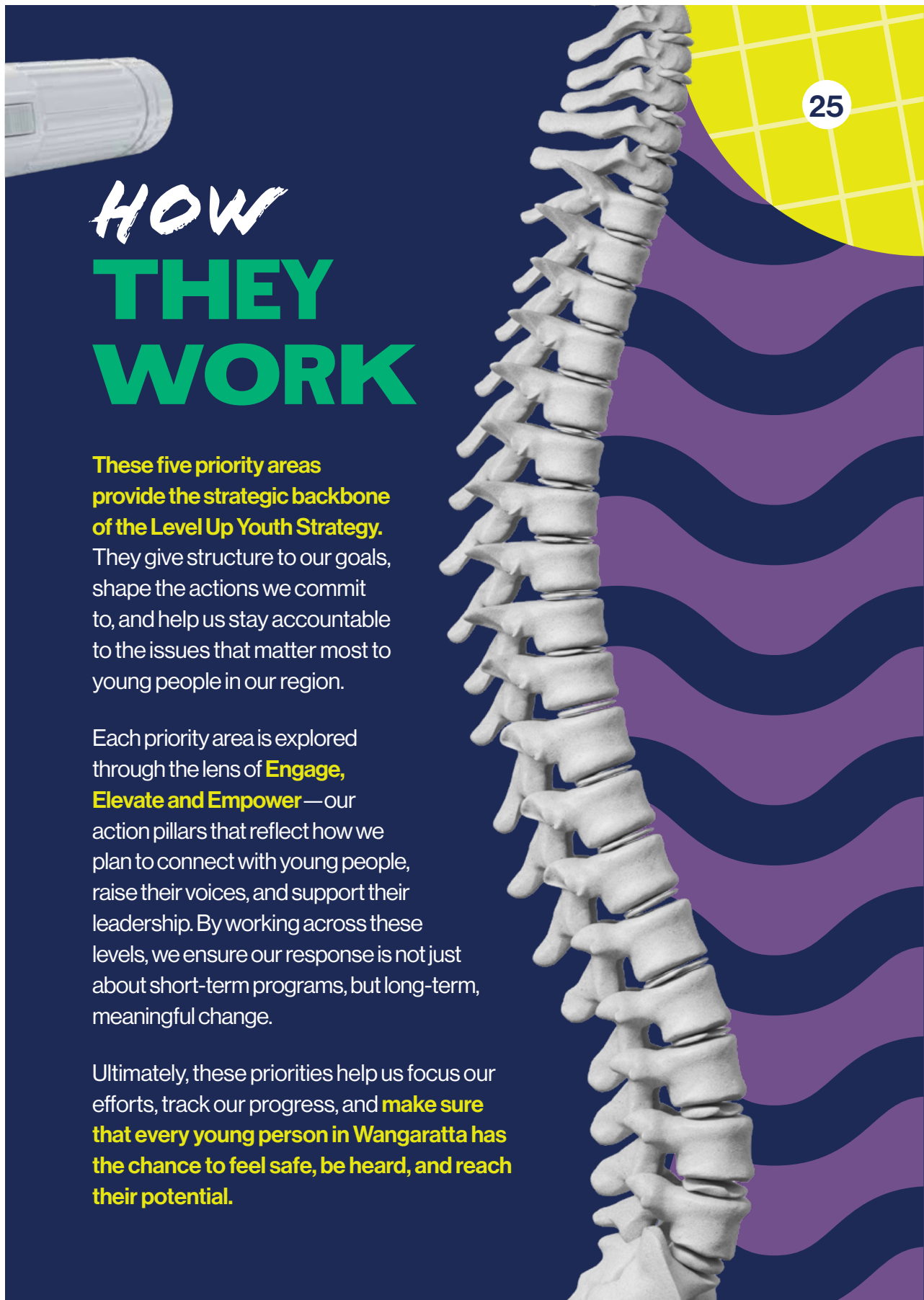
Our five priority areas in the *Level Up Youth Strategy 2026–2030* reflect the real and evolving needs of young people in the Rural City of Wangaratta. These priorities are grounded in youth voice, informed by community data, and shaped by Council's capacity to act.

- 1 Safety & Belonging**
- 2 Health & Wellbeing**
- 3 Youth Voice & Leadership**
- 4 Places & Spaces**
- 5 Participation in Education, Training & Work**

The priority areas chosen to represent the spaces where Council can lead, partner or advocate effectively, and make a meaningful difference with and for young people.

While we can't solve every issue alone, Council is well placed to convene partners, invest in programs, influence local decision-making, and create environments where young people can thrive.





**HOW  
THEY  
WORK**

**These five priority areas provide the strategic backbone of the Level Up Youth Strategy.** They give structure to our goals, shape the actions we commit to, and help us stay accountable to the issues that matter most to young people in our region.

Each priority area is explored through the lens of **Engage, Elevate and Empower**—our action pillars that reflect how we plan to connect with young people, raise their voices, and support their leadership. By working across these levels, we ensure our response is not just about short-term programs, but long-term, meaningful change.

Ultimately, these priorities help us focus our efforts, track our progress, and **make sure that every young person in Wangaratta has the chance to feel safe, be heard, and reach their potential.**

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# SAFETY & BELONGING

**(Inclusion, Connection, Identity, Housing, Lighting, Bullying, Crime and e-safety)**

Every young person deserves to feel safe, accepted and like they belong, wherever they are in the Rural City of Wangaratta.

Young people have told us they want communities that are welcoming, respectful, and free from discrimination, bullying and violence. Whether it's in schools, on the street, in clubs, or online, feeling safe is a basic human right and the foundation for confidence, connection and identity.

This priority area focuses on building inclusive environments where all young people—regardless of background, ability, gender, culture or identity—feel valued and protected. It's about creating stronger connections between people and places, and building a community culture where difference is celebrated and belonging is the norm.

## What young people said:

”

*“I think Wangaratta is a great town to live in. The schools are amazing, the parks are the best and there are plenty of job opportunities. Most of all the people are amazing.”*

*“I think that Wangaratta just isn't safe around when the sun goes down as there are streetlights in the main streets but as soon as u leave that part of town there is not lighting and not as safe for teenagers to be walking home from work etc.”*

*“Overemphasis of sport - especially netball and football – culture in the town can be exclusive and isolating for those not involved. May be useful to have other outlets / activities.”*

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## OUR RESPONSE

The Rural City of Wangaratta plays a critical role in creating safe, inclusive environments where all young people feel they belong. As the level of government closest to community, Council has strong connections with schools, sporting clubs, community groups and service providers. Council can play a role in leading a local response to bullying, discrimination and social isolation.

Through inclusive policies, youth-friendly events, and thoughtful urban design, Council can foster spaces and systems that reflect the diversity of young people and promote a culture of welcome, respect and connection.

## EXAMPLE ACTIONS

### ENGAGE

Host, partner and participate in inclusive youth pop-up events across the municipality that celebrate diversity and promote safe, welcoming environments.

### ELEVATE

Support peer-led anti-bullying and respect campaigns in schools and online, co-created with local young people.

### EMPOWER

Engage our Youth Council, Amplify Youth Group, and future representative youth groups to advise on policies, strategies, and services that impact people in underrepresented and minority groups

2

# HEALTH & WELLBEING

*(Mental & Physical Health, Bullying, Vaping, Alcohol, Drugs, Fitness, Body Image)*

Young people across Wangaratta have told us loud and clear: health and wellbeing are a top concern. From the pressures of school, friendships and body image to the growing impacts of vaping, substance use, social isolation and the cost of living, young people need more support, earlier.

This priority area recognises the importance of accessible, youth-friendly mental health services, stronger education around health and safety, and spaces to simply unwind, play sport or be with friends.

Promoting wellbeing also means tackling the root causes of harm – like bullying and stigma – and supporting recreational options that are healthy, fun and inclusive. When young people feel mentally and physically well, they're more likely to thrive in all areas of life.



## What young people said:

”

*“I would like for it to be easier to reach out to people for help with things like bullying, vaping/drugs addiction, and more.”*

*“We need to ban vapes.”*

*“The cost of living is not viable for people to live and puts lots of stress on young people.”*

*“I should be thinking about my work and uni NOT how much things cost.”*

*“I'd appreciate better support for teens mental health. As someone who has faced a variety of issues the lack of clarity and response has made it difficult, there are issues such as bullying and harassment present both in person and online and the lack of initiative is poor.”*





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## OUR RESPONSE

While Council is not a direct health service provider, it is uniquely positioned to support youth wellbeing by partnering with local health agencies, creating safe and inclusive public spaces, and delivering programs that promote mental health, active lifestyles and harm reduction. Council is obliged to support the health of the community as outlined in the Public Health and Wellbeing Act and linked into the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Council Plan.\*

By coordinating efforts across sport, recreation, arts, youth outreach, and community development, Council can ensure that young people in Wangaratta have access to positive environments, relevant supports, and the tools they need to thrive both physically and mentally.

## EXAMPLE ACTIONS

### ENGAGE

Work with local organisations to promote healthy lifestyles and mental, emotional, physical and sexual health in young people.

### ELEVATE

Partner and support youth-designed mental health awareness programs in schools and education services.

### EMPOWER

Enable opportunities for young people to be trained as Mental Health Youth Champions to lead peer conversations, provide first-point support, and advocate for system change.

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# YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP

*(Advocacy, Youth-led, Co-design, Decision Making, Leadership Opportunities)*

Young people aren't just the future, they're right now. Across our region, young people want to be involved in decisions that affect them. They want to be taken seriously, supported to lead, and given the chance to shape their community. This priority area is about shifting from "talking about youth" to "working with youth."

That means creating real roles for young people on committees, in planning and advocacy, and in designing the programs and services that serve them.

It's about building leadership pathways for all young people, not just the loudest voices, and recognising that youth voice isn't a one-time consultation, it's a long-term commitment to power-sharing.



## What young people said:

”

*"I think it's pretty cool that there's an organisation where youth get a say in things."*

*"Young people in North East Victoria need more opportunities to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them... We want to feel like our voices actually matter and do lead to real change."*

*"I would love to get the opportunity to work with you guys... Let's work together on making our town a place where everyone feels valued and connected."*

*"If you really want to help us you should hold more things that we are able to give our opinion to help better the community."*

*"I think that it is great that you have given us an opportunity to share our view on things."*



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## OUR RESPONSE

Council is in a powerful position to embed youth voice in local decision-making. As the body responsible for strategic planning, community engagement and enabling service delivery, the Rural City of Wangaratta can directly influence how young people are heard and how their ideas shape real outcomes.

Through youth councils, advisory groups, consultations, and co-design processes, Council can model meaningful youth participation and create pathways for young leaders to be seen, supported, and taken seriously across the region.

## EXAMPLE ACTIONS

### ENGAGE

Create accessible platforms (e.g. online polls, idea walls, youth cafes) for young people to share feedback on Council decisions.

### ELEVATE

Enhance the reach and impact of the Rural City of Wangaratta's Youth Council and provide leadership workshops, guest speaker sessions, and drive success through project delivery.

### EMPOWER

Develop youth focused leadership through programs for young staff and community members.

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## PLACES & SPACES

***(Transport, Accessibility, Safety, Upgrading Facilities, Youth Hub, Social Spaces)***

Young people need safe, accessible, and inviting places to be, places to connect with friends, try something new, express themselves, or simply hang out. In a regional area like Wangaratta, there aren't always enough spaces designed with young people in mind.

This priority area focuses on making local places—both built and natural—work better for youth. That means improving parks, sports facilities, and youth hubs. It also means addressing issues like poor lighting, transport gaps, and the lack of spaces that feel safe for all people.

When young people feel welcome in the spaces around them, their connection to community grows.



### What young people said:

”

*“Better routes for busses and more frequent as it can be hard getting from town to town.”*

*“I feel there is often not enough affordable, fun things for us to do.”*

*“I come to Wangaratta often from Myrtleford as there is almost nothing for the older half of the youth to do in Myrt... and I would love to see more Neurodiverse friendly spaces.”*



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## OUR RESPONSE

Council has direct influence over many of the places where young people live, learn, play and connect, parks, libraries, sports facilities, halls, streets, and community spaces. This gives the Rural City of Wangaratta the ability to make real changes to how safe, accessible and welcoming those environments are.

Through smart planning, youth-informed design, and ongoing investment in public infrastructure, Council can ensure that young people feel ownership over local spaces and are invited to shape how they look and feel.

## EXAMPLE ACTIONS

### ENGAGE

Ensure Young people are engaged on Council and community capital works and place making projects that impact youth activity and connection to place.

### ELEVATE

Work with young people to co-design upgrades to public spaces, including seating, shade, Wi-Fi, lighting, and public art.

### EMPOWER

Identify and attract funding opportunities to enable youth-led placemaking projects, such as murals, pop-up skate jams, or community garden activations in rural towns.



# PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION, TRAINING & WORK

Education, training and work are key pathways to independence, but not all young people in Wangaratta have equal access to those opportunities. Some face barriers like transport, financial pressure, lack of work experience, or limited course options.

This priority area is about removing those barriers and creating smoother, more supported transitions from school into training, work or further study. It includes building stronger partnerships with schools, TAFEs, local businesses, and employers to provide real-world experience and mentoring.

We want all young people to feel prepared, supported, and confident in taking their next steps, wherever that may lead.

## What young people said:



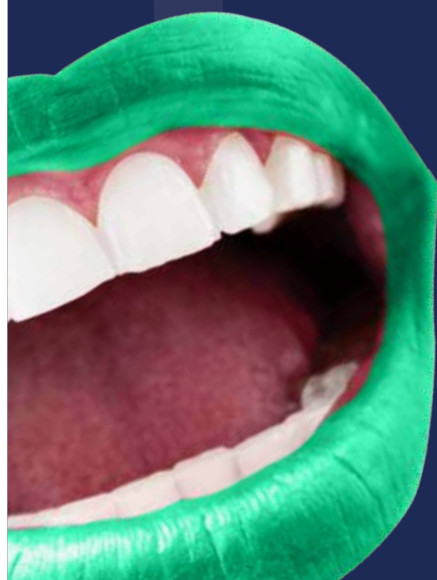
*"There should be more opportunities for young people to explore what kind of jobs they would enjoy when they're older. Such as workshops held for young people or opportunities for work experience."*

*"I need lots of help getting a job."*

*"I would like if there were more employment opportunities for younger people, especially ones that don't require much work experience for people who are looking for their first job."*

*"I feel that Wangaratta is severely lacking in safety, as well as opportunities for youth in the sense of employment... I would immediately choose to live in a different town if I had the means."*

*"Living in Wangaratta is awesome as there are essential shops, good places to eat out and the education and facilities are great."*



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## OUR RESPONSE

While Council doesn't oversee education systems, it is a key convener and connector across the local economy. The Rural City of Wangaratta is well placed to bring together schools, TAFEs, employers, industry groups and youth services to open up local training and employment pathways.

Through advocacy, partnerships, and program funding, Council can support initiatives that make it easier for young people to access skills, experience and job opportunities, especially those who may face systemic barriers.

## EXAMPLE ACTIONS

### ENGAGE

Partner with education providers and future organisations to showcase career pathways and local training providers

### ELEVATE

Partner with local businesses to offer youth-specific internships, work experience, training opportunities and mentoring programs.

### EMPOWER

Establish a Youth Enterprise Microgrant Program to support young people to start social enterprises, creative businesses, or community impact projects.

# WHAT WE WILL DO

## Annual Implementation Plans

Our annual implementation plans are where the Level Up Youth Strategy becomes real. Using the matrix of key deliverables (engage, elevate, empower) and our five priority areas we will map out our actions that will deliver on our Youth Strategy on an annual basis.

Prior to the start of each calendar year, we will hold Youth Strategy Planning Sessions with young people (including Youth Council), our community partners and service providers and council staff/representatives.

These sessions will help us shape up our implementation plans by reflecting on what our community and young people need, what's working (and what's not), where we need to grow/change, and how we can adapt or tailor our actions going forward.



# ACTIONS



Actions identified within our implementation planning process will be worked up with tangible tasks, timelines, responsibilities, and success measures develop for each action within a **Theory of Change** framework:

- **What we will do** (e.g. "Deliver mental health drop-in sessions in youth-friendly venues")
- **Who is responsible** (e.g. the Youth Services team, in partnership with headspace)
- **When it will happen** (e.g. quarterly sessions starting mid-2026)
- **What will it achieve and how will it be measured** (eg. Increased confidence in young people's ability to recognise the signs and symptoms of a mental health problem, measured through pre and post surveys)
- **Resources needed** (e.g. venue hire, youth facilitators, promotional materials)
- **Partnerships** (e.g. NESAY, Department of Health, local schools)

A summary of our Annual Implementation Plans will then be made publicly available via our social media and the youth section on our website.

The power of this youth strategy is in its ability to provide everyone, inclusive of young people, community, Council and key stakeholders, with a clarity of purpose and direction for the next five years, whilst also allowing for change and growth related to the wants and needs of young people.

This strategy clearly articulates how Council will work with and for young people - engage, elevate, empower - across the five priority areas, but remains flexible and dynamic in how this is actioned year to year via youth-informed annual implementation plans ensuring that the strategy and what it delivers is as relevant, responsive and fit for purpose in year five as it is in year one.

# TRACK OUR PROGRESS

**Monitoring and evaluating is key to making sure the Level Up Youth Strategy doesn't just sit on a shelf—it lives, evolves, and delivers meaningful outcomes for young people in the Rural City of Wangaratta.**

It's about keeping the strategy responsive, youth-led, and grounded in the real experiences of young people in our community.

**Our approach to this will focus on three main areas:**

**1**

## Tracking Delivery of Key Actions

**Each action within our annual implementation plan will be tracked annually through an internal delivery plan. This includes:**

- What we've delivered (events, programs, consultations, campaigns)
- Where and how it was delivered
- Participation numbers and demographic reach
- Who we partnered with

This helps us stay on course and ensures accountability across Council teams and partners.



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## 2

## Measuring Outcomes for Young People

**Beyond activities, we want to understand what's changing in the lives of young people. We'll measure short- and medium-term outcomes aligned with our Theory of Change. For this we'll be using a mix of tools, including:**

- Youth surveys (including a follow-up to the Youth Census)
- Feedback forms from events and programs
- Case studies and personal stories
- Focus groups and youth-led reflection sessions

## 3

## Reflecting, Learning and Adapting

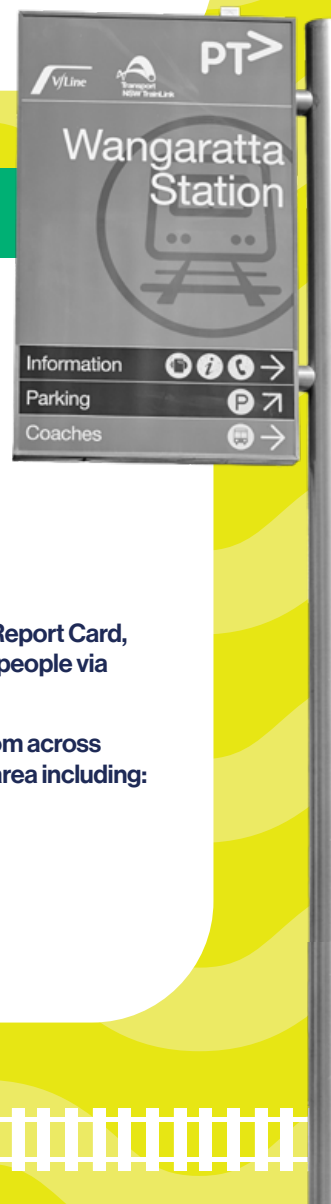
**We will embed a culture of reflection across the strategy. Each year, we'll hold a Youth Strategy Reflection Session with young people, Councilstaff, and community partners to:**

- Review progress
- Share what's working (and what's not)
- Identify emerging needs
- Adjust actions as needed

**These sessions will also guide our annual Youth Strategy Report Card, which will be made available to the community and young people via our social media and the youth section on our website.**

**Our Report Card will capture and share key information from across the year and will highlight key actions within each priority area including:**

- A snapshot of a successful initiative or event
- Quotes or reflections from young people involved
- Photos, artwork or short videos
- Key lessons learned and how we'll build on them



# IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

7	SAFETY & BELONGING		Responsibility	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
ENGAGE	<b>Host, partner and participate in inclusive youth events across the municipality that celebrate diversity and promote safe, welcoming environments.</b>		Youth Services / Arts Culture and Events / Community & Recreation / Grit & Resilience Services					
	• Plan and deliver safe and inclusive events through the Amplify Program and other Youth event opportunities		Youth Services Team					
	• Support and foster partnerships with local organisations in running safe and inclusive events that highlight calendar highlights such as Harmony Day, Pride Fair, Reconciliation week or NAIDOC events.		Youth Services Team/Community & Recreation / Events team / Library Team					
	• Work towards opportunities to establish youth peer groups that focus on fostering inclusivity and diversity across the municipality.		Youth Services Team Leader					
ELEVATE	<b>Support peer-led anti-bullying and respect campaigns in schools and online, co-created with local young people.</b>		Youth Services Team Leader					
	• Support and promote the 16 days of activism via partnerships and awareness campaigns		Youth Services Team					
	• Continue to deliver and advocate the E-safety online program via local educational providers and secondary schools		Youth Services Team					
	• Support and advocate for education on consent through the 'Respectful Relationships' or 'Love Bites' Program in local secondary schools		Youth Services Team Leader					
	• Promote and support Centre Against Violence Consent programs, within local sporting clubs		Youth Services Team / WSAC Team / Community & Rec Team					
	• Research the capacity and opportunity to deliver 'Youth 4 for Life' in partnership with local secondary school providers		Youth Services Team Leader					
EMPOWER	<b>Engage our Youth Council, Amplify Youth Group, and future representative youth groups to advise on policies, strategies, and services that impact people in underrepresented and minority groups.</b>		Youth Services Team					
	• Encourage youth representative platforms to actively engage with the council through advocacy and key roles, ensuring a strong youth voice in planning and delivering events and programs.		Youth Services Team / Marketing & Comms					
	• Work with local secondary school providers and local health services to access expert strategies and advice on removing stigma for young people regarding Inclusion and Diversity groups.		Youth Services Team Leader					

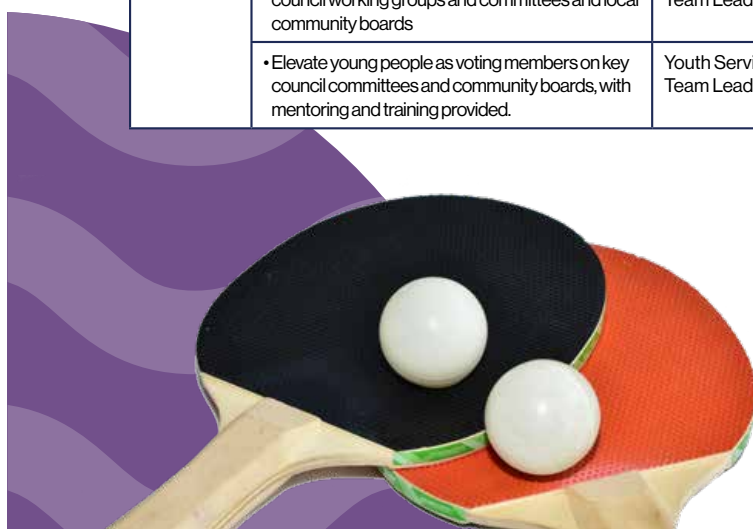
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2 HEALTH & WELLBEING								
ENGAGE	Work with local organisations to promote healthy lifestyles and mental, emotional, physical and sexual health in young people	Youth Services Team Leader						
	• Run regular drop-in wellbeing sessions in youth-friendly venues in partnership with local health providers (e.g. headspace, NESAY).	Youth Services Team						
ELEVATE	Partner and support youth-designed mental health awareness programs in schools and education services.	Youth Services Team Leader						
	• Identify opportunities for RCoW Creative and Cultural Services to deliver online, or in person programs (for example) using creative formats like podcasts, zines, or short films, visual arts or other creative practices.	Youth Services / Arts Culture and Events / Community & Recreation / Grit & Resilience Services						
	• Promote youth designed mental health awareness programs to secondary schools and service providers	Youth Services Team Leader						
	• Provide educational lectures, workshops and forums that focus on positive outcomes of health, resilience & wellbeing for young people.	Youth Services Team / WSAC Team / Gallery Team / Library Team						
	• Promote access to mental, sexual & physical health resources.	Youth Services Team / WSAC team						
	• Ensure Inclusion of sport and recreation in youth activities designed within the youth services events program.	Youth Services Team / WSAC team						
EMPOWER	Enable opportunities for young people to be trained as Mental Health Youth Champions to lead peer conversations, provide first-point support, and advocate for system change.	Youth Services Team						
	• Provide training or workshops in mental health and wellbeing to Youth Councillors and other youth panels or groups.	Youth Services Team Leader						
	• Provide opportunities for young people to showcase their talents, through performance events, exhibition opportunities and creative expression.	Youth Services / Arts Culture and Events / Community & Recreation / Grit & Resilience Services						

## IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

**3**

<b>YOUTH VOICE &amp; LEADERSHIP</b>		<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>ENGAGE</b>	<b>Create accessible platforms (e.g. online polls, idea walls, youth cafes) for young people to share feedback on Council decisions.</b>	Youth Services Team Leader / Marketing & Comms Team					
	• Ensure opportunities of young people's decision-making platforms have advocacy through training and governance guidance of the Youth Councillors	Youth Services Team Leader					
	• Continue to consult and ensure the desire of music and creative outlets are enabled via the Amplify program	Youth Services Team					
	• Provide POP up and temporary youth cafes, coffee vans and activation events to ensure young people can share feedback in decisions affecting them.	Youth Services Team					
<b>ELEVATE</b>	<b>Enhance the reach and impact of the Rural City of Wangaratta's Youth Council and provide leadership workshops, guest speaker sessions, and drive success through project delivery.</b>	Youth Services Team Leader					
	• Provide training, workshops and speakers to develop young people's leadership potential including established youth representative groups (Youth Council and Amplify) and additional Youth Forum opportunities for other young people.	Youth Services Team Leader					
	• Plan and review the Youth Council membership and relevance of Advisory Committee Charter to the Young people interested in advocacy and governance.	Youth Services Team Leader / Governance Team / Manager Arts Culture & Events					
<b>EMPOWER</b>	<b>Develop youth focused leadership through programs for young staff and community members.</b>	Youth Services Team					
	• Connect and embed young people's voice on key council working groups and committees and local community boards	Youth Services Team Leader					
	• Elevate young people as voting members on key council committees and community boards, with mentoring and training provided.	Youth Services Team Leader					



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4	PLACES & SPACES		Responsibility	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
ENGAGE	Ensure Young people are engaged on Council and Community Capital works and place making projects that impact youth activity and connection to place.		Youth Services Team Leader / Infrastructure Services					
	• Launch a "Rate My Space" youth survey to gather feedback on local hangouts, parks, and facilities across the region.		Youth Services Team Leader / Infrastructure Services					
	• Ensure consultation occurs with youth advisory groups in planning stages of capital works, asset renewals and redevelopments of council owned property.		Youth Services Team Leader / Infrastructure Services					
ELEVATE	Work with young people to co-design upgrades to public spaces, including seating, shade, Wi-Fi, lighting, and public art.		Youth Services Team Leader / Infrastructure Services					
EMPOWER	Identify and attract funding opportunities to enable youth-led placemaking projects, such as murals, pop-up skate jams, or community garden activations in rural towns.		Youth Services Team Leader / Manager Arts Culture & Events					

5	PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION TRAINING & WORK		Responsibility	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
ENGAGE	Partner with education providers and future organisations to showcase career pathways & local training providers.		Youth Services Team / Learning & Development					
	• Partner and promote education & training, work experience and work placement opportunities to secondary schools, youth advisory groups and community.		Youth Services Team / Learning & Development					
ELEVATE	Partner with local businesses to offer youth-specific internships, work experience, and mentoring programs.		Youth Services Team / Learning & Development					
	• Provide a pathway for young people to obtain qualifications to enter the workforce (e.g. continue to foster traineeships such as the Wangaratta Performing Arts and Conventions Centre Traineeship - Certificate III in Live Production & Technical Services through funding support and partnerships.		WSAC team / Venue Manager WPACC / Youth Services Team Leader / Learning & Development / People & Culture					
	• Continue to attend local secondary schools career days promoting local government career pathways		Youth Services Team / Learning & Development					
EMPOWER	Investigate the possibility of establishing a Youth Enterprise Microgrant Program to support young people to start social enterprises, creative businesses, or community impact projects.		Youth Services Team Leader / Economic Development Team					



## References

**Page 6:** Victoria has the second highest population of young people with over one million young people aged 12-25 living in Victoria. ABS 2021 Census

Author, Australian Bureau of Statistic,  
<https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region>

**Page 6:** Last year Mission Australia surveyed 4,335 young Victorians (that is 89 fewer than our total youth population) who were aged 15-19, the data reflects the following statistics.

Author, Mission Australia, annual Survey Data,  
Annual Youth Survey | Mission Australia

**Page 7:** Rural City of Wangaratta Council Plan 2025-2030  
([link to be provided](#))

**Page 19:** Rural City of Wangaratta Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Council Plan.  
([link to be provided](#))

# YOUTH



Rural City of  
Wangaratta

## CONNECT WITH US

 @wangyouth |  @wangerattayouth |  @wangyouth

 [youth@wangeratta.vic.gov.au](mailto:youth@wangeratta.vic.gov.au) | [wangeratta.vic.gov.au](http://wangeratta.vic.gov.au)



## Connect Wangaratta - Community Engagement Report

### Youth Strategy – ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

This community engagement campaign has been established to directly inform the development of the Rural City of Wangaratta's new five-year Youth Services Strategy, 2026-2030.

The Rural City of Wangaratta recognises the importance of providing a safe and inclusive environment in which young people can thrive. It is essential to create a comprehensive and inclusive youth services program that caters to their social, recreational, artistic, and educational needs. It is also for Council and key stakeholders who work with young people (eg. secondary schools, youth services providers, sporting clubs, community groups) in our region.

To ensure that this project was youth-led, a small but dynamic Youth Co-design Crew (group) was established. This group of five young people aged between 13-21 years, met in-person and online eight times across a six-month period to inform the development and design of this strategy. The consultation model was guided by expert Youth Consultant team, Youth Gurus and Council's Youth Services staff.

The consultation included a Youth Census marketed to ensure relevance and appeal. This Census was titled 'What YOUth Want' and was designed to get valuable feedback and data for the design of the Strategy. The approach was to meet the young people where they were at.



The census ran from  
March 29 to May 11



874 young people responded  
to the online survey.



11 Pop up engagement  
sessions over 6 weeks

[connect.wangaratta.vic.gov.au](https://connect.wangaratta.vic.gov.au)

## Youth Strategy – Youth Census Engagement Report

The most popular community engagement session was at the WJ Findlay Oval during a local football and netball match day where over 130 young people completed the online youth census and engaged directly with Council's Youth Services team.

The following community engagement activities occurred throughout March, April and May 2025 to gain data from the Youth Census for the draft Youth Strategy:

### **In person Engagement Activity & Consultation Sessions:**

- 31 March – Synergy Youth Hub
- 3rd April - Wangaratta Sports and Aquatic Centre
- 5th April - Netball/Football matches
- 11th April - Skate Jam at Mitchell Ave
- 12th April - Farmers Market
- 15th April - McDonalds/Zamberos/Scoops Ice Creamery
- 16th April - Postcard drop offs to hairdressers/gyms/performing arts centre
- 1st May - KFC and Library
- 8th May - Schnitz and Co-store

After concluding the Youth Census the data and findings were shared with key stakeholders, the Co-Design group and internal Council staff. Further input from key stakeholders and the Co-Design group via an online workshop, and targeted outreach via an online survey.

### **What we heard**

The Youth Census survey asked three main questions:

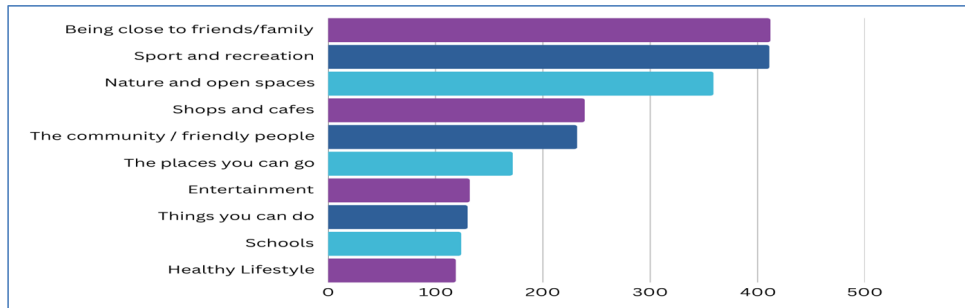
- What three things do they value most about where they live
- What are the three most important issues for young people in North East Victoria
- What three things would make Wangaratta/NE Victoria better for you and other young people

Most respondents were in the 13–16-year-old age group. Overall, the responses were very similar, and consistent themes are evident in the feedback.

Young people in Wangaratta value social connectedness, sport and recreational opportunities, access to outdoor spaces, and the welcoming community atmosphere. Many of their concerns are vaping, mental health, bullying, and cost of living.

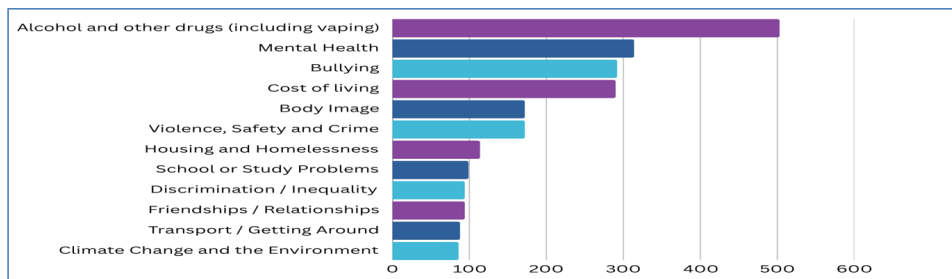
## Youth Strategy – Youth Census Engagement Report

### What Young People Like Most About Living in the Region



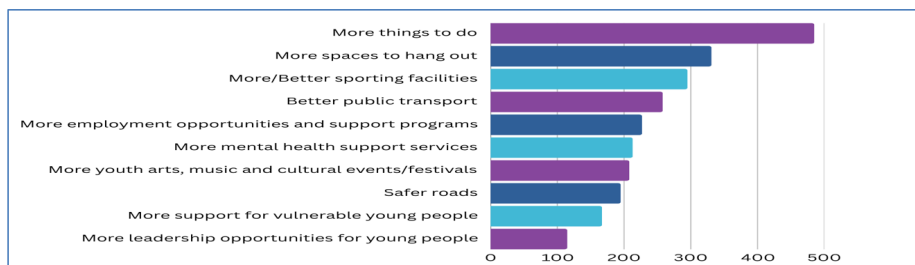
Young people in Wangaratta value social connectedness, sport and recreational opportunities, access to outdoor spaces, and the welcoming community atmosphere. These align with broader research done by the team which highlights relationships, recreation, and belonging as key well-being drivers.

### Most Important Issues Identified by Young People



Concerns around vaping, mental health, bullying, and cost of living mirror national trends. Youth vaping has risen significantly (Cancer Council, 2023), and mental health remains the most cited concern among Australian youth (headspace, 2022).

### What Would Improve the Region for Young People





## Youth Strategy – Youth Census Engagement Report

More than half of all young people who completed the Youth Censuses want more things - activities, events and programs – for young people to do. Calls for more youth friendly spaces, better sporting facilities and better public transport were also frequently mentioned.

Participants were also able to leave text responses. Those responses and the above were grouped by themes.

- **Community and Environment**
- **Opportunities and Activities**
- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **Cost of Living and Housing**
- **Inclusivity and Representation**

### **Community and Environment**

Young people appreciated Wangaratta for being vibrant and welcoming overall with a good sense of community and family. However, this was juxtaposed against safety concerns, and a desire for infrastructure improvements especially those that linked rural to urban areas.

### **Opportunities and Activities**

Young people want more job opportunities in technology and creative industries, flexible job systems, recreational activities, and support for arts and music.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

There is a need for better mental health support and initiatives to address youth crime and

### **Cost of Living and Housing**

Young people are concerned about the high cost of living and housing and seek more affordable and appropriate housing options.

### **Inclusivity and Representation**

Young people desire more involvement in decision-making processes and inclusive spaces that cater to diverse needs, including neurodiverse-friendly areas and support for various cultural and religious communities.

## Youth Strategy – Youth Census Engagement Report



(What YOUth Want Connect Wangaratta Marketing Campaign)

### What we are doing

Our five priority areas in the *Level Up Youth Strategy 2026–2030* reflect the real and evolving needs of young people in the Rural City of Wangaratta. These priorities are grounded in youth voice, informed by community data, and shaped by Council's capacity to act.

1. **Safety & Belonging**
2. **Health & Wellbeing**
3. **Youth Voice & Leadership**
4. **Places & Spaces**
5. **Participation in Education, Training & Work**

We will focus on these three pillars across all priority areas, ensuring every action strengthens connection, raises youth voice, and builds lasting capacity for young people to thrive.

**Engage** – Connect with young people through meaningful opportunities and programs.

**Elevate** – Amplify their voices and ensure they are heard in decisions that affect them.

**Empower** – Support their growth, skills, and leadership for lasting change.



## Youth Strategy – Youth Census Engagement Report

### **How we will implement this:**

#### **1. Develop & Deliver Yearly Implementation Plans**

- Create annual action plans aligned with the five priority areas and the three pillars (Engage, Elevate, Empower).
- Base actions on direct youth feedback, community data, and evaluation of the previous year's activities.

#### **2. Engage – Connect with young people**

- Host regular youth events, programs, and initiatives that create meaningful connections.
- Increase awareness of opportunities for young people to get involved in Council programs.
- Partner with schools, community groups, and service providers to reach a broader audience.

#### **3. Elevate – Amplify youth voices**

- Create opportunities for young people to contribute ideas and feedback on Council decisions.
- Use surveys, forums, and creative engagement methods to capture youth voices.
- Present youth perspectives to Council and community leaders to influence decision-making.

#### **4. Empower – Build skills and leadership**

- Deliver training, mentoring, and leadership programs for young people.
- Support youth-led projects and initiatives with resources and guidance.
- Provide opportunities for young people to take active leadership roles in events and decision-making.

#### **5. Advocate & Communicate – For needs outside Council's responsibility**

- Identify issues impacting young people that fall outside Council's direct remit.
- Advocate for young people across Council, service providers, and community organisations to address these needs.
- Clearly communicate using youth-friendly platforms to young people what Council can and cannot address.

Level Up Youth - Implementation Plan 2026-2030							
Safety & Belonging							
		Responsibility	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Engage	<b>Host, partner and participate in inclusive youth events across the municipality that celebrate diversity and promote safe, welcoming environments.</b>	Youth Services / Arts Culture and Events / Community & Recreation / Grit & Resilience Services					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plan and deliver safe and inclusive events through the Amplify Program and other Youth event opportunities</li></ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support and foster partnerships with local organisations in running safe and inclusive events that highlight calendar highlights such as Harmony Day, Pride Fair, Reconciliation week or NAIDOC events.</li></ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work towards opportunities to establish youth peer groups that focus on fostering inclusivity and diversity across the municipality.</li></ul>					
		Youth Services Team Leader					
Elevate	<b>Support peer-led anti-bullying and respect campaigns in schools and online, co-created with local young people.</b>	Youth Services Team Leader					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support and promote the 16 days of activism via partnerships and awareness campaigns</li></ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to deliver and advocate the E-safety online program via local educational providers and secondary schools</li></ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support and advocate for education on consent through the ‘Respectful Relationships’ or ‘Love Bites’ Program in local secondary schools</li></ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote and support Centre Against Violence Consent programs, within local sporting clubs</li></ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Research the capacity and opportunity to deliver ‘Youth 4 for Life’ ‘in partnership with local secondary school providers</li></ul>					
		Youth Services Team Leader					
Empower	<b>Engage our Youth Council, Amplify Youth Group, and future representative youth groups to advise on policies, strategies, and services that impact people in underrepresented and minority groups.</b>	Youth Services Team					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Encourage youth representative platforms to actively engage with the council through advocacy and key roles, ensuring a strong youth voice in planning and delivering events and programs.</li></ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with local secondary school providers and local health services to access expert strategies and advice on removing stigma for young people regarding Inclusion and Diversity groups.</li></ul>					
		Youth Services Team Leader					
Health & Wellbeing							
Engage	<b>Work with local organisations to promote healthy lifestyles and mental, emotional, physical and sexual health in young people</b>	Youth Services Team Leader					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Run regular drop-in wellbeing sessions in youth-friendly venues in partnership with local health providers (e.g. headspace, NESAY).</li></ul>					
		Youth Services Team					
Elevate	<b>Partner and support youth-designed mental health awareness programs in schools and education services.</b>	Youth Services Team Leader					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities for RCoW Creative and Cultural Services to deliver online, or in person programs (for example) using creative formats like podcasts, zines, or short films, visual arts or other creative practices.</li> </ul>	Youth Services / Arts Culture and Events / Community & Recreation / Grit & Resilience Services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote youth designed mental health awareness programs to secondary schools and service providers</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team Leader	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide educational lectures, workshops and forums that focus on positive outcomes of health, resilience &amp; wellbeing for young people.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team / WSAC team / Gallery Team / Library Team	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote access to mental, sexual &amp; physical health resources.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team / WSAC Team	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Inclusion of sport and recreation in youth activities designed within the youth services events program.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team /WSAC team	
<b>Empower</b>	<b>Enable opportunities for young people to be trained as Mental Health Youth Champions to lead peer conversations, provide first-point support, and advocate for system change.</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide training or workshops in mental health and wellbeing to Youth Councillors and other youth panels or groups.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for young people to showcase their talents, through performance events, exhibition opportunities and creative expression.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team Leader	
		Youth Services / Arts Culture and Events / Community & Recreation / Grit & Resilience Services	
<b>Youth Voice &amp; Leadership</b>			
<b>Engage</b>	<b>Create accessible platforms (e.g. online polls, idea walls, youth cafes) for young people to share feedback on Council decisions.</b>	Youth Services Team Leader / marketing & Comms Team	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure opportunities of young people's decision-making platforms have advocacy through training and governance guidance of the Youth Councillors</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team Leader	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to consult and ensure the desire of music and creative outlets are enabled via the Amplify program</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide POP up and temporary youth cafes, coffee vans and activation events to ensure young people can share feedback in decisions affecting them.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team	
<b>Elevate</b>	<b>Enhance the reach and impact of the Rural City of Wangaratta's Youth Council and provide leadership workshops, guest speaker sessions, and drive success through project delivery.</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide training, workshops and speakers to develop young people's leadership potential including established youth representative groups (Youth Council and Amplify) and additional Youth Forum opportunities for other young people.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team Leader	
		Youth Services Team Leader	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and review the Youth Council membership and relevance of Advisory Committee Charter to the Young people interested in advocacy and governance.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team Leader / Governance Team / Manager Arts Culture & Events	
<b>Empower</b>	<b>Develop youth focused leadership through programs for young staff and community members.</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect and embed young people's voice on key council working groups and committees and local community boards</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevate young people as voting members on key council committees and community boards, with mentoring and training provided.</li> </ul>	Youth Services Team Leader	
		Youth Services Team Leader	

Places & Spaces				
Engage	<b>Ensure Young people are engaged on Council and Community Capital works and place making projects that impact youth activity and connection to place.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Launch a “Rate My Space” youth survey to gather feedback on local hangouts, parks, and facilities across the region.</li><li>Ensure consultation occurs with youth advisory groups in planning stages of capital works, asset renewals and redevelopments of council owned property.</li></ul>	Youth Services Team Leader / Infrastructure Services		
		Youth Services Team Leader / Infrastructure Services		
		Youth Services Team Leader / Infrastructure Services		
Elevate	<b>Work with young people to co-design upgrades to public spaces, including seating, shade, Wi-Fi, lighting, and public art.</b>	Youth Services Team Leader / Infrastructure Services		
Empower	<b>Identify and attract funding opportunities to enable youth-led placemaking projects, such as murals, pop-up skate jams, or community garden activations in rural towns.</b>	Youth Services Team Leader / Manager Arts Culture & Events		
Participation in Education, Training & Work				
Engage	<b>Partner with education providers and future organisations to showcase career pathways &amp; local training providers.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Partner and promote education &amp; training, work experience and work placement opportunities to secondary schools, youth advisory groups and community.</li></ul>	Youth Services Team / Learning & Development		
		Youth Services Team / Learning & Development		
Elevate	<b>Partner with local businesses to offer youth-specific internships, work experience, and mentoring programs.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide a pathway for young people to obtain qualifications to enter the workforce (e.g. continue to foster traineeships such as the Wangaratta Performing Arts and Conventions Centre Traineeship - Certificate III in Live Production &amp; Technical Services through funding support and partnerships.</li><li>Continue to attend local secondary schools career days promoting local government career pathways</li></ul>	Youth Services Team / Learning & Development		
		WSAC team / Venue Manager WPACC / Youth Services Team Leader / Learning & Development / People & Culture		
		Youth Services Team / Learning & Development		
Empower	<b>Investigate the possibility of establishing a Youth Enterprise Microgrant Program to support young people to start social enterprises, creative businesses, or community impact projects.</b>	Youth Services Team Leader / Economic Development Team		



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan

2025 - 2029



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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of this Domestic Animal Management Plan

Councils in Victoria are required under Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (**“the Act”**) to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (the “Plan”) at four-year intervals with the objective of outlining Council’s plans for animal management. The Plan is sent to Animal Welfare Victoria part of Agriculture Victoria.

The purpose of the “Plan” is to:

- Document programs and strategies that will assist the Rural City of Wangaratta to meet its animal management responsibilities;
- Assist pet owners to increase their knowledge of responsible pet ownership, community safety and awareness;
- Maximise the number of cats and dogs registered within the municipality; and
- Comply with the relevant provisions of the Act.

## DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

Under **Section 68A of the Act**, every Council must prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan, as follows:

Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary, Agriculture Victoria, prepare at 4-year intervals, a Domestic Animal Management “Plan”.

A Domestic Animal Management Plan prepared by a Council must:

- Set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Domestic Animals Regulations 2015;
- Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act in the Council’s municipal district; and
- Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
  - to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
  - to ensure that people comply with the Act, the Regulations and any related legislation; and
  - to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals;
  - to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
  - to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
  - to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
  - to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and the Regulations; and

- Provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
- Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
- Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the "Plan"

**Every Council must:**

Review its "Plan" annually and, if appropriate, amend the "Plan"; and provide the Secretary with a copy of the "Plan" and any amendments to the "Plan; and publish an evaluation of its implementation of the "Plan" in its annual report.

## RURAL CITY OF WANGARATTA PROFILES

### Demographic and Council Profile

The Rural City of Wangaratta is located in north east Victoria, with a total population of approximately 30,169 residents. The Rural City covers an area of 3,644 sq. km.

The municipality is truly diverse. As the start of Victoria's high country, Wangaratta is a tourist haven with an enviable food and wine offering, a multitude of tracks and trails to be explored and activities for those seeking adventure or a place to unwind.

Extensive waterways provide a stunning natural environment, important resources for agriculture as well as numerous recreational opportunities. Productive agricultural land is also a feature which is key to sustaining this unique food and wine region.

Key national road and rail routes pass through Wangaratta which provides exceptional access for the transport of goods and people. Wangaratta incorporates both the Hume Freeway and the North Eastern Railway Line, both critical links between Melbourne and Sydney.

While Wangaratta's traditional manufacturing base remains a key economic driver, other sectors of the economy are becoming increasingly important and supporting a more diverse economy.

Healthcare, education and administrative services are growing and providing additional local employment. Property services and construction have also been expanding and are major contributors to regional wealth.

With a growing population, diverse economic base, thriving tourism sector and stunning natural environment, the Rural City of Wangaratta will continue to deliver business, lifestyle and investment opportunities into the future.

DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS AND DATA

Category	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
<b>Dogs</b>			
Number Registered	4258	4367	4074
<b>Cats</b>			
Number Registered	1453	1439	1253

As per the above table, the municipality is currently in a good position in relation to animal registrations. The rate of animals registered has remained steady over the past three financial years. This may be attributed to an increase in public education as well as the introduction of reminder messages being sent to mobiles along with pro-active registration follow-up.



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Draft Domestic Animal Management  
Plan 2025 - 2029

## ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STAFFING AND STRUCTURE



## COMMUNITY COMPLIANCE TEAM OVERVIEW

### Services provided to the community relating to Animal Management

The Community Compliance team is responsible for the animal management function provided by Council. Key activities include:

- impounding of domestic animals and livestock;
- managing of complaints relating to domestic animals and livestock;
- promoting responsible pet ownership in the community;
- investigating dog attacks;
- ensuring compliance with legislation and the various codes of practice relevant to domestic animals and livestock;
- domestic animal registration process;
- investigating animal welfare issues;
- management of domestic animal businesses;
- providing advice to owners and the general community in relation to domestic animals;
- after hours animal emergencies; and
- prosecute breaches of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, Impounding of Livestock Act 1994 and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986.

### Wangaratta Rural City Council's Local Laws relating to Animal Management

The relevant extract of Local Law No 1 Community Amenity 2025 is found in **Appendix 1** and relates to all aspects of animal management in the municipality. This includes limits on the number of animals that can be kept, the general keeping of animals (animal welfare) and fencing.

## TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

### Current and Planned Training

A variety of training is offered and provided for all Authorised Officers. Training options are annually reviewed to ensure relevant and up to date material is provided. The training options include animal handling courses, investigation and statement taking courses, prosecution courses, information technology courses and industry related seminars, conferences and briefings from the Agriculture Victoria, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM) and other relevant associations.

### Objective 1:

Develop and maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training to maintain skills and knowledge.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Record each officer's name, completed training, along with proposed additional training opportunities in the HR training database	Ongoing	Annually review to ensure accuracy and to determine whether proposed training goals have been met for each Officer. This is achieved through the Council's annual review process.
Staff attendance at industry related seminars and training, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Breed Identification</li> <li>▪ Agriculture Victoria</li> <li>▪ Animal Welfare Victoria</li> <li>▪ Seminars</li> <li>▪ Dog Bite Minimization &amp; Bite Stick Training</li> </ul>	As offered	Review attendance against individual officer's training record.

## REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

All dogs and cats over the age of 3 months must be registered with the municipality as per Section 10 (1) of “The Act”. All animals must also be microchipped before registration can be accepted by Council.

New animal registrations for cats and dogs can be made in person at Council’s Customer Service Centre between 8.30am – 4.30pm Monday – Friday or by mail with the appropriate payment and copies of relevant proof required to: Rural City of Wangaratta, PO Box 238, Wangaratta VIC 3677.

Registration forms can be downloaded online from Council’s website <http://www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au> or collected from the Council’s Customer Service Centre.

Council has a contract with Albury City to provide pound facilities. Animals that are not registered and not micro-chipped must be micro-chipped at the Albury Animal Management Centre or Wangaratta Council prior to registration along with release of the animal when the appropriate fee has been paid by the owner.

Under Section 11 of “The Act”, animal registration periods expire on 9 April each year. Animal renewal notices are sent out every year in late February or early March, allowing pet owners to renew their animal’s registration via the internet or in person. The Council audits the registration renewal process every year to ensure animal registrations are renewed. The RSPCA pound also take registrations from members of the public on an ad hoc basis (walk-ins off the street).

Animals found unsecured or ‘at-large’ from their property that are identifiable by means of a microchip, Council registration and an allocated Council identification tag have a higher chance of being reunited with their owners. When dogs and cats are outside of the owner’s premises, Council identification tags must be worn as required under Section 20 of the Act.

The registration of animals provides the Rural City of Wangaratta with an understanding of the level of pet ownership in the community and in turn this helps Council plan for services, information and programs associated with pets in particular areas of the community.

Registration fees help fund the services provided by the Council in relation to animal management and the Animal Welfare Victoria’s responsible pet ownership campaigns and programs that are available within the municipality.

Council has entered into agreements under Section 84Y of “The Act” with all veterinary practices within the Municipality which allows for the veterinary surgery to scan animals for microchips and return the animals to their owners. Vets then notify council of the returned animals. Enquiries regarding animal registrations are then followed up by Authorised Officers at a later date.

### **Current and Education Activities**

Current education/promotion of registration and identification activities include:

- publicising the requirement to register pets over the age of three months in the Wangaratta Chronicle, Wangaratta Rural City Community Connect, social media and the Council’s on hold phone messages;
- animal registration renewal notices are mailed out in late February or early March each year for currently registered animals;
- pro-active registration door knocks take place following the registration period;
- council lifetime identification tags are obtained by pet owners on payment of the relevant registration fee; and
- brochures included in newly registered animal notices provide information regarding the importance and requirements of registration.

### **Current Compliance Activities**

Current compliance activities for registration and identification include:

- SMS messaging to all non-renewed domestic animals advising of expiry of registration and possible penalties for failing to renew registration;
- “Warm” calling of non-renewed domestic animals with payment taken over the phone and advising of possible infringements if not renewed by certain date;
- door knock targeting properties with no animals registered to identify any unregistered animals at the premises;
- door knock audit conducted each year for animal registrations that have lapsed;
- ensuring impounded and unregistered animals are micro-chipped and registered prior to release;
- issuing notices and/or infringements for animals found unregistered and wandering at large;
- prosecuting owners of unregistered animals where infringements remain unpaid, and animals remain unregistered;
- investigating Domestic Animal Business (DAB) notifications of animals being sold or given away to residents in the municipality without a “Source” number;

### Summary

The number of unregistered animals that enter Wangaratta Council's holding facility and Albury Animal Management Centre is still of a high rate, which suggests a large number of unregistered animals exist within the municipality.

The Council is currently recording data to determine the percentage of unregistered animals impounded and from where the owner resides. Such data will allow the Council to focus on education and compliance activities in the locations where higher rates of unregistered animals are found. These activities will include annual municipality wide door knocking of premises.



**Our Plans****Objective 1:**

To decrease / minimise the total number of properties required for the annual door knock audit.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Educate residents of the animal registration renewal period by means of advertising/media releases, mailing of renewal notices and by placing A Frame signs in areas where high levels of un-registered animals are kept.	March to May Annually	Review media release types available each year to determine most effective advertising.
Ensure each property is audited and infringements issued where animals found to be unregistered.	July to August Annually	Record total number of properties visited and infringements issued and compare to previous results.
Ensure animal registrations have been renewed and infringements paid. Lodge unpaid infringements with Fines Victoria or Magistrates Court.	September to October Annually	Record total number of infringements unpaid and animal registrations still unregistered and compare to previous results.
Seize animals still found to be unregistered where matter found proven in Court or infringement unpaid.	Month after the Date	Provide media releases to send the strong message for responsible pet ownership and compliance.
Mail out of infringements for failing to renew animal registrations where animals are not departed or deceased on council database following mail out of registration renewal notices.	May and throughout the year	Review of numbers of animals registered compared against infringements issued for failing to renew registration.

**Objective 2:**

Maintain or increase dog and cat registrations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Prior to every release	Review annual registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner.
Proactive door knocking in areas believed to have high number of unregistered animals via impound stats, to check for unregistered and un- identified dogs and cats Effective advertising prior to audit.	Annually	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner.
Compare council animal database against lists of microchipped animals supplied by licensed database registries.	Annually	Review annual list of animals microchipped to Wangaratta address.
Conduct “warm” calling of all owners of animals with contact numbers to accept payment over phone and advise of infringements if not renewed by 1 July.	Annually	Review annual registration numbers for comparison against outstanding Registrations.
Distribute SMS messages to all outstanding domestic animal registrations advising of expiry of registration and possible issuing of infringements.	Annually	Review annual registration numbers for comparison against outstanding registrations.

**NUISANCE**

**Current Situation**

Type of Nuisance	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
No. of barking dog complaints received	51	61	63
No. of cat traps hired	155	95	120

Council currently has 15 traps available for hire by the community. All traps are out on loan at any one time unless council officers are undertaking community cat trapping program to reduce feral cat numbers in identified problem areas.

**Legislation/Local Law Overview**

The Act regulates the dog and cat nuisance issues relating to noise, trespassing and wandering animals. In addition to the Act, the Local Law (No. 1 of 2025) helps to minimise nuisances occurring as outlined below.

**Local Laws Relating to nuisance**

Local Law No. 1 of 2025 – Community Amenity (and the supporting Local Laws Policies) outlines the requirements for the keeping of animals in residential areas and restricts both the number and type of animals that a resident can keep on a residential property without a permit. (*Appendix 1*).

This includes requirements regarding animal accommodation and the need for an owner or occupier of land to ensure that all animals on that land are housed in a clean, inoffensive and sanitary condition.

## Council Policies for nuisance complaints

### Barking Dogs

The Council acknowledges the impact barking dogs have on the lifestyles of residents and is continually seeking ways to shorten the barking resolution process. Officers consider the barking dog procedure to be a living document and they continually seek ways to improve processes. Council has trialled electronic barking monitors with varying success and will seek to improve on evidence gathering to reduce the onus on residents.

Electronic devices somewhat achieve this and have resulted in successful remediation in a couple of cases. Council also has a standard operating procedure for barking dog complaints to ensure all complaints received are handled in the same consistent manner by all Authorised Officers. The procedure steps out the required processes involved to investigate the complaint, liaise with the dog owner and surrounding neighbours. This process also involves the requirement of the complainant to agree to attend the Magistrates' Court to give evidence of the alleged offence, as well as contacting the Dispute Settlement Centre Victoria in the first instance to attempt mediation prior to council involvement.

Where nuisances are found to be proven pursuant to Section 32 of the Act, the Council can issue notices to the dog owner to abate the nuisance, issue infringements and/or have the matter heard in the Magistrates Court to seek an order from the local Court for the owner to abate the nuisance.



**Cats and Dogs at Large**

The Community Compliance Team have developed a Domestic Animal Procedure for dealing with domestic animals found at large. In circumstances where repeat offences for roaming/trespassing cats/dogs are found and the issuing of infringements and relevant impound release fees have not encouraged the pet owner to adequately secure the cat or dog to its property, Council will consider withdrawing Infringements to instead pursue the matter in the Magistrates' Court. This may result in a Court Order to require the owner to carry out works to ensure the animal is not able to escape from the owner's premises.

Rural City of Wangaratta will introduce an after-hours animal holding facility. Dogs that are found by the community are able to take the dog to this facility, place the dog in the secure cage and contact authorised officers. Prior to this facility being built, residents can continue to use veterinary facilities that allow and similar service. This has and will enable contact free dog drop off and collection.

**Current Education/Promotion Activities relating to nuisance animals**

- Providing barking dog information kits.
- Providing information relating to building cat enclosures.
- Information provided on the Council's website.
- Providing information brochures from Animal Welfare Victoria to the public.
- Articles in the Wangaratta Chronicle, Council website and social media.
- Encouraging the de-sexing of cats and dogs to reduce wandering and creating a nuisance.
- Encouraging dog owners to seek advice from professional dog trainers and trial barking dog citronella collars.

**Current Compliance Activities relating to nuisance animals**

- Investigating nuisance complaints in a timely manner to ensure minimal timeframes.
- Sending out barking dog formal complaint statements and barking dog log sheets with Statutory Declarations attached.
- Trial electronic bark detection and recording devices to speed up the resolution of barking dog complaints.

- Report outcomes of prosecutions when appropriate regarding each area of nuisance to local media to raise awareness in the community of the benefits of preventing dog and cat nuisance.
- Issuing notices to comply, notices of objection, infringements where necessary and taking the matter to the Magistrates' Court.
- Providing cat traps to residents.

### Summary

In order to reduce animal nuisance problems in the community, the Council will continue promoting and providing education and compliance activities while striving to improve the activities and identify/trial new initiatives.

Council will continue the cat trapping program to ensure the program is promoted efficiently and provides assistance to residents and continue media releases relating to the Council's stance on compliance with nuisance type complaints.

### Our Plans

#### Objective 1:

Investigate and develop a Cat Containment Policy

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate a Cat Containment policy	2025	Review similar guidelines and policies implemented by other Victorian Councils.
Seek Community Feedback	2025/2026	Seek community feedback on the proposed policy via surveys and direct community consultation.  Gather responses and provide feedback to the policy.
Implement	2026/2027	Finalise and implement new policy and provide community support throughout the implementation.

**Objective 2:**

Investigate and develop a Mandatory Cat De-sexing Policy

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate Mandatory Desexing	2026	Review similar policies implemented by other Victorian Councils
Seek Community Feedback	2026	Seek community feedback on the proposed policy via surveys and direct community consultation.  Gather responses and provide feedback to the policy
Implement Policy	2026/2027	Finalise and implement new policy and provide community support throughout the implementation

**DOG ATTACKS****Current data**

Authorised Council Officers investigate dog attack reports thoroughly. Evidence pertaining to the incident is collated to formulate a prosecution brief. This includes taking statements from all parties involved, vet/medical reports, photographs and providing a summary with recommendations.

The brief is then reviewed by the Compliance Coordinator who makes further recommendations to the Manager of Economic Development, Environment and Compliance in order for Council to decide on an appropriate course of action.

Possible courses of action include:

- infringements (where non-serious injuries sustained);
- menacing/Dangerous Dog Declaration;
- prosecution in Magistrates' Court;
- seek destruction/compensation orders by Magistrates;
- seek surrender of attacking dog;
- seek mediation between parties; and
- obtain a letter of no complaint from the complainant to allow Officers to take no further action.

Where injuries have occurred to a person or another animal by a dog that is of a serious injury (as defined by the Domestic Animals Act 1994), the Council will strive to have the matter heard in the Magistrates' Court if evidence is sufficient to form a prosecution.

Media releases of such results are also used to educate the community and promote responsible pet ownership. Animal registration fees include a subsidy to Agriculture Victoria, which help funds programs such as responsible pet ownership in schools, pre-schools, maternal health centres, hospitals.

#### **Current Education/Promotion Activities**

- Reporting outcomes of all dog attack prosecutions to local media to raise awareness in the community of the need to report dog attacks and the Council's action in relation to attacks to promote responsible pet ownership.
- Media releases relating to livestock attacks.
- Providing new residents with animal registration information.
- Promoting the effective confinement and control of dogs.
- Promoting puppy socialisation and obedience training.

#### **Current Compliance Activities**

- Investigating dog attacks thoroughly.
- Seizing and holding attacking dogs pending investigation/prosecution.
- Providing an after-hours service to respond to reports of aggressive or attacking dogs.
- Prosecuting matters pursuant to the Domestic Animals Act 1994.
- Issuing infringements for wandering dogs.
- Issuing infringements for minor attacks where non serious injury sustained.
- Proactive declarations for Menacing or Dangerous Dogs. Seeking destruction Orders from Magistrates' Court where necessary.
- Seeking confinement Orders from Magistrates' Court for dogs continually found wandering or not confined to property.
- Proactive patrols of parks and streets for wandering dogs.
- Proactive patrols for guard dogs on non-residential premises.
- Recording data of reported dog attacks in the municipality.
- Seizing impounded dogs in circumstances where the owners' properties are believed to be unsecure and ensuring animal can be secured prior to the release of the dog back to the owner.

**Summary**

The Rural City of Wangaratta will continue administering the Act and ensure compliance is met where any breach is detected.

**Our Plans****Objective 1:**

Provide targeted education and compliance campaigns in areas where data reporting shows higher numbers of dog attack incidents.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Collate and record data for dog attacks reported including date/time, suburb, dog type, dog attack on animal/person, dog unsecured/off lead, dog unregistered, gender.	Ongoing	Evaluate data annually to determine areas requiring specific education/compliance activities.
Initiate Education/Compliance Activities in the targeted areas to aim to reduce future incidents and to report roaming dogs etc. to prevent attacks occurring.	Annually	Evaluate this activity (and overall objective) by comparing number of dog attacks reported to council pre and post campaign.

**Objective 2:**

Education on the requirement to have all dogs on leash in public areas as noted in the Domestic Animals Act 1994 Section 26 (Dog on leash) Order.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Educate on Council's On-Leash Policy	Ongoing	Further promotion and education of the current legislation, policies, and on-leash and off-leash areas.

**Objective 3:**

To minimise the incidence of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Providing proactive education/Compliance activities in the targeted areas of higher dog attack incidents.</p> <p>Educating key dog attack prevention messages (e.g., confinement of dogs to property, leash laws) through media articles, mail outs, website information. Actively patrol areas for roaming, unsecure and/or unregistered dogs.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Compare number of reported dog attack incidents pre and post campaign.</p> <p>Consider a community survey pre and post campaign, to measure any changes in knowledge about dog attack prevention.</p> <p>Record type and number of education materials distributed.</p> <p>Numbers of campaign patrols conducted. Number of media articles published.</p>
Inform the community of outcomes of dog attacks prosecuted in Court.	Ongoing	As occurs.
Set key performance indicators for Officers to complete dog attack investigations within a 6-week timeframe	Ongoing	Review complaints annually to evaluate percentage completed within timeframe.

**DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS****Current situation – Declared dogs currently registered within the municipality**

The Rural City of Wangaratta has the following declared dogs currently registered within the municipality as of 1 July 2025:

Registered restricted breed dogs	0
Registered declared dangerous dogs	0
<b>Registered declared menacing dogs</b>	<b>2</b>

*The Act defines restricted breed dogs as any one of the following breeds:*

- Japanese Tosa
- Fila Brasileiro
- Dogo Argentino
- Perro de Prasa Canario (or Presa Canario)
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)

Owners of restricted breed dogs are required to abide by specific regulations, in particular; secure enclosures, warning signs on premises, having the dog muzzled and on a lead at all times in public, as defined by the Act and the Domestic Animals Regulations 2005 (the Regulations).

The Council must register all dangerous/menacing/restricted breed dogs with the Victorian Dangerous Dog Register (VDDR). This is a database that records all declared dogs for all relevant parties to see. Any dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dog entered into the VDDR is declared for the life of the animal and cannot be revoked by the Council. Microchip registries are also updated.

**As of July 2025, there are two declared menacing or dangerous dogs in the municipality.**

## Dogs On-Leash Policy

In the Rural City of Wangaratta, the dog on-leash policy plays a vital role in promoting responsible pet ownership and ensuring public safety. Section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 states that councils are empowered to designate where dogs must be leashed and enforce requirements through local laws.

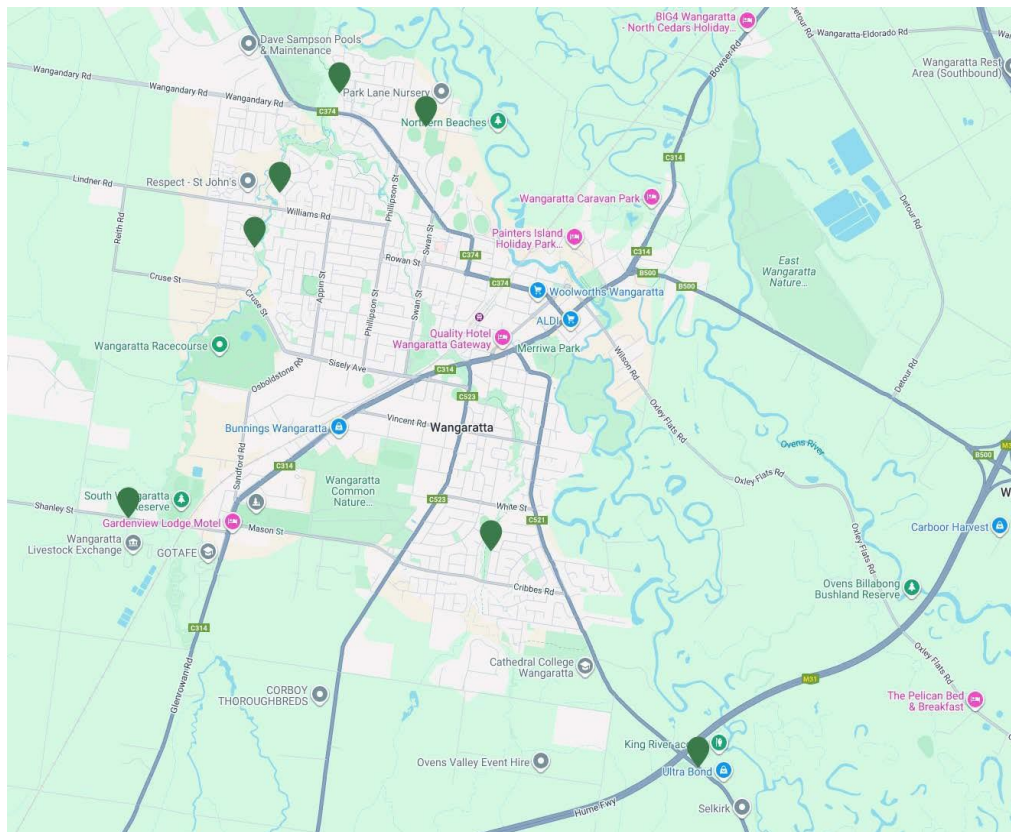
Dogs must be kept on a leash in all public areas unless explicitly designated as off-leash zones. This requirement helps prevent incidents involving uncontrolled dogs and supports harmonious community interactions and protects local wildlife. Council Compliance Officers actively monitor compliance, and infringements may be issued for breaches of this policy.

The following are Wangaratta's designated off-leash areas:

- Collyn-Dale Drive Parkland
- Creek View End Reserve
- Mitchel Avenue Dog Park
- Northern Beaches
- South Wangaratta Reserve
- Targoora Park
- Willow Park Reserve

## Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029

### Map View:



To support dog owners, the Council provides clearly marked off-leash parks where dogs can freely exercise under supervision.

The policy is reinforced through community education, signage, and ongoing engagement to encourage respectful and lawful behaviour.

**Current Education/Promotion Activities**

- Promoting the 'Dangerous Dog Hotline' (136 186).
- Media releases relating to legislation/changes/updates.
- Media releases relating to differences between Restricted Breed dogs and Dangerous Dogs.
- Providing information relating to declared, guard and menacing dogs.

**Current Compliance Activities**

- Ensuring all declared dogs are registered on the VDDR.
- Regularly conducting inspections on premises housing declared dogs to ensure compliance.
- Seizing dogs suspected of being Restricted Breed Dogs.
- Dog declarations made where applicable.
- Prosecution/Infringements issued for any determined breach.
- Assessing suspected restricted breed dogs via the gazetted standard
- Flagging certain breeds from registration database for assessment.
- Conduct proactive patrols after hours for unregistered guard dogs (dangerous dogs).

**Our Plan****Objective 1:**

Ensure declared dogs are compliant to relevant legislation and regulations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Random property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance.	Ongoing	Review checklists as occurs.
Prosecute repeat offenders or serious breaches detected.	As occurs	As occurs.
Educate the community about what is a declared dog.	Ongoing	Review complaints received.

**Objective 2:**

Flag certain breeds on registration database for restricted breed assessment.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Assess certain breeds with the gazetted standard for potential restricted breed dogs.	Ongoing	Number of Restricted Breeds Declared from registration database.
Cross reference microchip database information for potential restricted breed dogs requiring assessment.	Ongoing	Number of declarations compared to number of assessments.



**OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHENASIA****Current situation**

Category	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
<b>Dogs</b>			
Brought in by Council	130	123	115
Brought in by public*	53	42	20
Adopted for the year	52	35	21
Euthanised for the year	16	20	23
Reclaimed for the year	97	95	88
Category	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
<b>Cats</b>			
Brought in by council	240	231	224
Brought in by public*	205	101	29
Adopted for the year	232	90	40
Euthanised for the year	102	170	195
Reclaimed for the year	49	34	19

\*Includes animals surrendered by members of the public

Council is experiencing a large stray cat problem, particularly in relation to rural properties. Pro-active trapping programs at rural locations has seen a large increase in the number of feral cats impounded by council officers and subsequently being euthanised due to health issues and the effects of inbreeding amongst the local population. This has seen an increase in the euthanasia rate amongst cats in the Municipality. While cat euthanasia rates are slightly higher than the average, the percentage of cats euthanised will continue to be relatively high due to the amount of stray and/or feral cat population which breed out of human control.

**Current Education/Promotion Activities**

- Promoting benefits of de-sexing to decrease wandering animals.
- Promoting appropriate pet selection for the owner and accommodation.
- Promoting cat enclosures and build your own cat enclosures.

**Current Compliance Activities**

- Cat trapping program - traps are available to all residents within the municipality and are free of charge.
- Enforcement of current Legislation in relation to Cats found trespassing.
- Investigating unregistered breeding establishments.
- Micro-chipping all unregistered impounded animals prior to release to the owner.
- Enforcing the Local Laws relating to prescribed number of animals on a property.

**Our Plans****Objective 1:**

Continue encouraging desexing of animals.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Discount registration fees for cats and dogs that are desexed to encourage registration of animals over 3 months of age.	Ongoing	Number of new animals registered in category each year.

**Objective 2:**

Identify illegally operated Domestic Animal Breeding (DAB) Establishments in the municipality and ensure compliance and/or close down.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Media campaigns to raise awareness of DAB definition and code of practices that must be adhered to.	Ongoing	Evaluate number of complaints received and properties identified during inspection or otherwise.
Investigate advertisements of pets for sale.	Ongoing	Mandatory microchipping of animals from breeding establishments.
Audit DAB's randomly to ensure compliance.	Ongoing	Number of audits compared to number of follow ups required.

## DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

### Current Data

In Victoria, the Domestic Animals Act 1994 defines Domestic Animal Businesses as any of the following:

- (a) an animal shelter, Council pound or pet shop; or
- (b) an enterprise which carries out the breeding of dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) to sell, if the enterprise has 3 or more fertile female dogs and the proprietor is not a recreational breeder; or
- (c) an enterprise which carries out the breeding of cats to sell, if the enterprise has 3 or more fertile female cats and the proprietor is not a recreational breeder; or
- (d) an enterprise which trains or boards dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) or cats for the purpose of profit; or
- (e) an enterprise which rears or keeps dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) or cats—
  - i. for the purpose of profit or sale; or
  - ii. for a fee or for exchange of services.

There are currently seven registered domestic animal businesses within the municipality as of July 2025. These include 3 boarding establishments, 3 breeding establishments.

The Albury Animal Care Centre manage the Council animal pound for Wangaratta. The contract for this service is due to expire on 30 June 2027. Council will consider in 2026 how the service is to be provided into the future.

Registered domestic animal businesses are audited both randomly and on receipt of complaints.

The Council actively investigates the presence of animal businesses to ensure compliance with the relevant codes of practice and legislation.

### Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Providing information to registered domestic animal businesses.
- Promoting Animal Welfare Victoria information and codes of practices.
- Advertising new legislation amendments.

**Current Compliance Activities**

- Annual audits.
- Random audits during peak seasons for particular businesses.
- Investigating reports.
- Monitoring advertising sites.
- Renewal / Registration process.
- Inspecting suspected unregistered domestic animal businesses.
- Liaising with Planning Department to ensure planning conditions are adhered to practice.

**Objective 1:**

Ensure domestic animal businesses are compliant with relevant legislation and codes of practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Monitor the Council's registration database for owners with 3 or more fertile females.	Ongoing	Compliance with local laws and related legislation.
Encourage de-sexing of animals by reducing registration fees for desexed animals.	Ongoing	Relevant registration accepted.
Conduct searches for unregistered domestic animal businesses via internet/media/newspapers.	Ongoing	Relevant action taken.

## EMERGENCIES AND ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

The Rural City of Wangaratta is committed to creating and implementing an Animal Management Welfare Plan. This will outline Council's approach to managing animal welfare during emergencies, including bushfires, floods, disease outbreaks, and evacuations. It will compliment the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and supports the Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan.

Council's Compliance Team plays a central role in implementing the plan, supported by agencies such as Agriculture Victoria, DEECA, RSPCA, and the Australian Veterinary Association. Emergency Relief Centres are equipped to temporarily house and care for displaced animals, with procedures for identification, veterinary triage, and containment.

Animal owners retain primary responsibility for their animals, and the plan will encourage proactive emergency planning, including evacuation kits and safe relocation options. Council staff are trained annually, and inter-agency collaboration ensures a coordinated response.

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF “PLAN” AND ANNUAL REPORTING

As per 68A (3) of the Act, the Council will review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually to assess whether any amendments are necessary in order to ensure the Plan is relevant and can be completed within the required timeframes.

In the final year of the Plan (2029), the Council will undertake a major review and prepare the next domestic animal management Plan for the 2031-2035 period.

**APPENDIX 1 – Local Law 1 of 2025****PART G – ANIMAL MANAGEMENT****40. APPLICATION OF THIS PART**

- 40.1 This Part does not apply to:
- 40.1.1 an Animal Shelter owned or contracted by Council;
  - 40.1.2 a registered Animal Hospital or Veterinary Surgeon Practice;
  - 40.1.3 any Animal keeping permitted by the Municipal Planning Scheme; or
  - 40.1.4 any Animal in respect of which a Permit has been issued by another public authority.

**41. LIMITS ON NUMBER OF ANIMALS KEPT**

- 41.1 A Person must not, without a Permit, on any land in a Residential Area or a Commercial Area:
- 41.1.1 keep or allow to be kept any more of each species or group of Animals than is stated in Table 1 in this Clause 41; or
  - 41.1.2 keep or allow to be kept any more than three (3) different species or groups of Animals listed in Table 1 in this Clause 41, at any time.

**PENALTY: MAXIMUM TWENTY (20) PENALTY UNITS****TABLE 1**

Type of Animal or Bird	On land Less than 399m <sup>2</sup> In Townhouse, Apartments, Flats, Units	On Land 400-999m <sup>2</sup>	On Land 1000-3999m <sup>2</sup>	On Land 4000m <sup>2</sup> and Over (excludes Farm Zone)
Dogs	2	2	2	2
Cats	2	2	2	2
Poultry (except Roosters)	Prohibited	3	10	10
Roosters	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	0
Caged Birds (excluding Racing Pigeons)	3	5	10	20
Rabbits	1	2	4	4
Guinea Pigs, Ferrets and Hamsters	2	5	5	5
Reptiles	2	5	5	5
Racing Pigeons	Prohibited	20	20	20
Horse, Donkey, Alpacas or Similar	Prohibited	Prohibited	0	1 per 4,000m <sup>2</sup>

Cattle	Prohibited	Prohibited	0	1 per 4,000m <sup>2</sup>
Sheep & Goats	Prohibited	Prohibited	2	2 per 4,000m <sup>2</sup>
Pigs	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	1 per 4,000m <sup>2</sup>
Other Agricultural Animals	Prohibited	Prohibited	2	2 per 4,000m <sup>2</sup>

*\*where (0) is nominated animal allowed but permit required.*

#### 42. RACING PIGEONS

42.1 A person must not keep or allow to be kept any Racing Pigeons on any land in a Residential Area or a Commercial Area unless the Racing Pigeons are housed in a properly constructed pigeon loft or similar structure which is:

42.1.1 of a height not exceeding two (2) metres;

42.1.2 at least one point five (1.5) metres from the boundary of any adjoining premises; and

42.1.3 at least ten (10) metres distance from any dwelling whether on the same or on adjoining premises.

42.2 A person must not, on any land in a Residential Area or a Commercial Area, construct or use or cause or suffer or permit to be constructed or used any pigeon loft unless it has adequate roofing, drainage and a floor paved with impervious material to the satisfaction of an authorised officer and is constructed in such a way as to be rat proof.

#### PENALTY: MAXIMUM TWENTY (20) PENALTY UNITS

#### 43. REMOVAL OF ANIMAL FAECES

43.1 A person in charge of an Animal must:

43.1.1 remove any of that Animal's faeces that is deposited on any Road or Council Land; and

43.1.2 dispose of the Animal's faeces in a manner which does not cause any nuisance or health hazard to any person or detriment to the environment.

43.2 A person in charge of an Animal on any Road or Council Land must carry a Litter Device suitable to clean up any faeces left by any Animal under their care or control and must produce such device upon being requested to do so by an Authorised Officer.

#### PENALTY: MAXIMUM TWENTY (20) PENALTY UNITS

#### 44. ANIMAL HOUSING

44.1 The owner of an Animal and the Owner or Occupier of the land on which the Animal is housed must ensure that:

44.1.1 the animal housing is kept in a clean and sanitary condition to the satisfaction of an Authorised Officer;

44.1.2 the size of the enclosure or other form of housing is adequate to house the number of animals;

44.1.3 the animal housing meets the welfare needs of the Animal;

44.1.4 the animal housing is maintained in good repair so as to not cause nuisance to neighbouring premises;

44.1.5 the animal housing is constructed to prevent wastewater from entering into the stormwater system or discharging to adjoining premises; and

44.1.6 the land surrounding the animal housing is kept clear of materials which may harbour vermin.

**PENALTY: MAXIMUM TWENTY (20) PENALTY UNITS**

**45. PROVISION OF EFFECTIVE FENCING TO CONTAIN ANIMALS**

The owner of an Animal and/or Livestock and the Owner of the land upon which that Animal is kept must ensure that the land is adequately fenced so as to prevent any and all Animals and/or Livestock being kept on the land from escaping from that land and straying onto any Council Land or Road or otherwise being at large.

**PENALTY: MAXIMUM TWENTY (20) PENALTY UNITS**

**46. POWER TO IMPOUND ADDITIONAL ANIMALS**

Where a Magistrate has found a person to be in breach of Clause 41 and a Permit for additional Animals has not been granted, Council may enter the land on which the Animals are being kept and seize and dispose of any Animals being kept on land in breach of Clause 41 for the purpose of sale, re-homing or destruction.

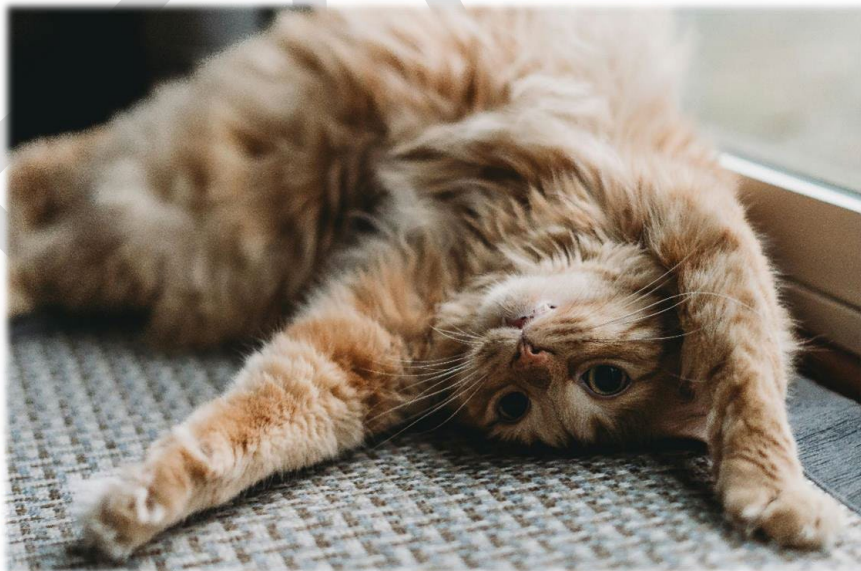
**PENALTY: MAXIMUM TWENTY (20) PENALTY UNITS**

**47. WANDERING ANIMALS**


47.1 The owner and person in charge of an animal must not allow that animal to wander from the property it is normally kept.

47.2 The owner and person in charge of an animal must ensure that the land in which the animal is normally kept is adequately fenced to prevent the animal from wandering at large.

**PENALTY: MAXIMUM TWENTY (20) PENALTY UNITS**



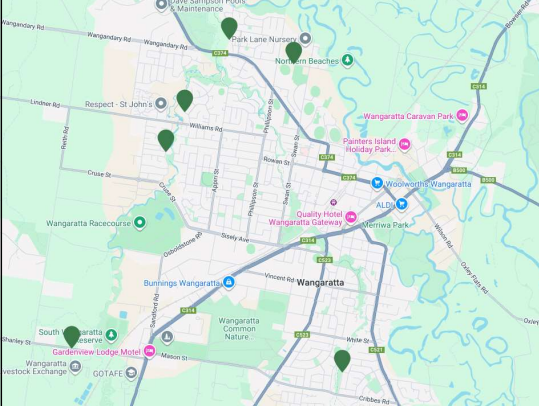


Section	Page	Change	Proposed Change	Why
	6	Add wording	The Rural City of Wangaratta is located in north east Victoria, with a total population of approximately <del>29,660</del> *29,808 residents. The Rural City covers an area of 3,644 sq. km.	Update population number in-line with most recent ABS census (2021)
	7	Replace	Update number of registrations	Update with information relevant to 2025
	8	Replace	 <pre> graph TD     COUNCIL --&gt; CEO     CEO --&gt; DIRECTOR["DIRECTOR&lt;br/&gt;SUSTAINABILITY &amp; CULTURE"]     DIRECTOR --&gt; MANAGER["MANAGER&lt;br/&gt;ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,&lt;br/&gt;ENVIRONMENT AND COMPLIANCE"]     MANAGER --&gt; COORDINATOR["COORDINATOR&lt;br/&gt;COMMUNITY COMPLIANCE"]     COORDINATOR --&gt; OFFICER["COMMUNITY COMPLIANCE&lt;br/&gt;OFFICER (X4)"]           </pre>	Update staffing structure in-line with current arrangements
	9	Add wording	The relevant extract of <del>Local Law 1 of 2018</del> Local Law No 1 Community Amenity 2025 is found in appendix 1 and relates to all aspects of animal management in municipality. This includes limits on the number of animals that can be kept, the general keeping of animals (animal welfare) and fencing.	Update to include new Local Law legislation to be gazetted.
	10	Remove wording	<del>March 2022 and ongoing</del>	Objective wasn't started, updated to new year
	11	Add wording	Council has a contract with <del>the RSPCA</del> Albury City to provide pound facilities. Animals that are not registered and not micro-chipped must be micro-chipped at the Albury Animal Management Centre or by Wangaratta Council prior to registration along with release of the animal when the appropriate fee has been paid by the owner.	Update the provider of pound services and add RCOW's capacity to provide microchipping

	12	Remove wording	Under Section 11 of “The Act”, animal registration periods expire on 9 April each year. Animal renewal notices are sent out every year in late February or early March, allowing pet owners to renew their animal’s registration via the internet or in person. The Council audits the registration renewal process every year to ensure animal registrations are renewed. <del>The RSPCA pound also take registrations from members of the public on an ad hoc basis (walk-ins off the street).</del>	Remove RSPCA mentions as they no longer provide services to RCOW
	14	Add wording	The number of unregistered animals that enter <del>the RSPCA pound</del> Wangaratta Council's holding facility and Albury Animal Management Centre is still of a high rate, which suggests a large number of unregistered animals exist within the municipality. The Council is currently <del>collecting data from the RSPCA</del> recording data to determine the percentage of unregistered animals impounded and from where the owner resides. Such data will allow the Council to focus on education and compliance activities in the locations where higher rates of unregistered animals are found. These activities will include annual municipality wide door knocking of premises.	Remove RSPCA mentions and update with RCOW's and Albury City's offerings
	17	Replace	Updated Statistics of cat trap hires	Relevant with 2025
	17	Add wording	The Act regulates the dog and cat nuisance issues relating to noise, trespassing and wandering animals. In addition to the Act, the Local Law (No. 1 of <del>2018</del> 2025) helps to minimise nuisances occurring as outlined below.	Update to new Local Laws
	17	Add wording	Local Laws Policies) outlines the requirements for the keeping of animals in residential areas and restricts both the number and type of animals that a resident can keep on a residential property without a permit. (Refer Appendix	Update to new Local Laws
	19	Add wording	<del>During the Covid 19 outbreak Council has been trialling dog cages at veterinary practices. Rural City of Wangaratta will introduce an after-hours animal holding facility. Dogs that are found by the community are able to take the dog to the veterinary practice this facility, place the dog in the secure cage and contact authorised officers. Prior to this facility being built, residents can continue to use veterinary facilities that allow a similar service. This has and will enable contact free dog drop off and collection.</del>	Remove reference to COVID-19, make reference to RCOW's after-hours pound to facilitate residents dropping off found dogs.
	21	Replace	Change 'Objective 1' mention of cat curfew to propose cat containment	Council will be seeking public feedback on a new Cat Containment Policy instead of a cat curfew

	21	Replace	Change 'Objective 2' mention of barking dog investigations to propose mandatory cat de-sexing	Council will be seeking public feedback on a new mandatory cat de-sexing policy in conjunction with the cat containment
	22	Add wording	The brief is then reviewed by the Compliance Coordinator who makes further recommendations to the <del>Manager Building, Planning and Compliance Services</del> Manager of Economic Development, Environment and Compliance in order for the Council to decide on an appropriate course of action.	Update Job title
	25	Remove wording	<del>Finalising adoption and introduction of Section 26 Order.</del>	This activity is complete and no longer relevant.
	25	Add wording	Better advertise and educate on Councils new On-Leash Policy <del>Review compliance and feedback</del> Better advertise the current legislation and educate residents.	Adjust wording for the on-leash policy objective to better suit RCOW's current position.
	27	Replace	The Rural City of Wangaratta has the following declared dogs currently registered within the municipality as of 1 July <del>2021</del> 2025:	Update number of Dangerous and Menacing dogs in RCOW
	28	Replace	As of July 2021, there are no officially registered "dangerous (Guard) dogs" within the Rural City of Wangaratta. As of July 2021, there are no declared dangerous dogs in the municipality. As of July 2021, there are no declared menacing or dangerous dog in the municipality.	Update number of Dangerous and Menacing dogs in RCOW

			<p><del>Section 34A (a) of the Act states: A dog is a dangerous dog if—</del> <del>The dog is kept as a guard dog for the purpose of guarding non-residential premises.</del> <del>As of July 2021, there are no officially registered "dangerous (guard) dogs" within the Rural City of Wangaratta. As per Section 34</del> <del>(1) of the Act, a dog may be declared dangerous:</del> <del>(a) if the dog has caused the death or serious injury to a person or animal by biting or attacking that person or animal; As of</del> <del>July 2021, there are no declared dangerous dogs in the municipality. As per</del> <del>Section 41A (1) of the Act, a dog may be declared menacing if:</del> <del>(a) the dog has rushed at or chased a person; or</del> <del>(b) the dog bites any person or animal causing injury to that person or animal that is not in the nature of a serious injury. The Council</del> <del>must register all dangerous/menacing/restricted breed dogs with the</del></p>	<p>Remove a large portion of the dangerous dog commentary, due to the very low numbers of dangerous or menacing dogs in the municipality, this space can be better used for off-leash descriptions.</p>
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			<p><del>Victorian Dangerous Dog Register (VDDR). This is a database that records all declared dogs for all relevant parties to see. Any dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dog entered into the VDDR is declared for the life of the animal and cannot be revoked by the Council. Microchip registries are also updated.</del></p>	
28	Remove wording			
29	Add wording			Add a page visually detailing the location of the off-leash parks.
32	Replace	Replace with updated statistics for euthanased population		Relevant to 2025

			<del>Dog euthanasia rates are particularly low due to high rates of dogs being returned to owners and successful re-homing rates. Over the last 3 years there has been a significant rise in the rate of dogs being returned to owners due to more identifiable dogs being impounded such as being micro-chipped and/or wearing Council identification. The increased rate of micro-chipped dogs is mainly due to the amendment to the Domestic Animals Act 1994 in 2007, which required all newly registered cats and dogs to be micro-chipped. In addition, the RSPCA (who manage Council's pound) has a successful re-homing program with cats and dogs.</del>	
	33	Remove wording		This paragraph doesn't relate with current year.
	35	Add wording	There are currently <del>seven</del> <ins>six</ins> registered domestic animal businesses within the municipality as of July 2021. These include 3 boarding establishments, 3 breeding establishments and <del>Council's contracted animal pound/shelter, namely the RSPCA Wangaratta.</del> <ins>no animal pound/shelter establishment</ins>	Update wording to reflect current numbers and remove RSPCA Wangaratta
	36	Add wording	The <del>RSPCA</del> <ins>Albury Animal Management Centre</ins> manage the Council animal pound in for Wangaratta. The contract for this service is due to expire <del>at the end of 2023</del> <ins>July 1st, 2026</ins> . Council will consider in <del>2022</del> <ins>2026</ins> how the service is to be provided into the future.	Update wording to reflect the current agreements in place.

			<p><del>The 2020 bushfires saw an unprecedented need to provide an animal relief centre in the municipality. Council provided this service at the Showgrounds in Wangaratta. This venue facilitated not only the looking after of animals by Council and RSPCA staff but enabled animals to stay with their owners as there were camping and caravanning facilities.</del></p> <p><del>This is an important Council function during emergencies as it promoted and assisted responsible pet ownership. Animals were not left to wonder at large but could remain with their owners or could be cared for by council or RSPCA staff.</del></p> <p><del>Council is now reviewing its Municipal Emergency Animal Welfare Plan to ensure currency with the learnings of the 2020 bushfires and associated animal relief centre provision.</del></p> <p>Rural City of Wangaratta is committed to creating and implementing an Animal Management Welfare Plan. This will outline Council's approach to managing animal welfare during emergencies, including bushfires, floods, disease outbreaks, and evacuations. It will compliment the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and supports the Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan. Council's Compliance Team plays a central role in implementing the plan, supported by agencies such as Agriculture Victoria, DEECA, RSPCA, and the Australian Veterinary Association. Emergency Relief Centres are equipped to temporarily house and care for displaced animals, with procedures for identification, veterinary triage, and containment. Animal owners retain primary responsibility for their animals, and the plan will encourage proactive emergency planning, including evacuation kits and safe relocation options. Council staff are trained annually, and inter-agency collaboration ensures a coordinated response.</p>	
	38	Replace		Remove old references to the 2020 fires and update to reflect councils current progress on the emergency animal management plan.
	39	Replace	Replace the old Local Laws Appendix with new 2025 local laws.	Update appendix and chart to reflect local laws 2025



Rural City of  
**Wangaratta**

# Minutes

For the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting  
Council Chambers  
62-68 Ovens Street, Wangaratta  
**3:00 PM 20 May 2025**

[wangaratta.vic.gov.au](http://wangaratta.vic.gov.au)



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## 1. Welcome

We acknowledged the traditional owners of the land on which we met. We paid our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and to Elders from other communities who may have been present today.

## 2. Present/Absent/Apologies

### Committee Members Present

Jane Watson (chairperson) – (virtual)  
Wilson Tang (virtual)  
Matt Fagence – (virtual)  
Vito Giudice – (virtual) late arriving 3:20pm

### Councillors Present

Cr. Irene Grant  
Cr. Harvey Benton  
Cr. Allison Winters

### Auditors

Brad Eade  
Danielle Mackenzie – (virtual)

### Staff Present

Brendan McGrath – Chief Executive Officer  
Tom Coelli-Donaghy -Acting Director Corporate and Leisure  
Andrew Lovett – Manager - Governance  
Zoe Giglio – Executive Assistant Corporate & Leisure

### Apologies

Sarah Brindley – Director Corporate and Leisure  
Andrew Scoffern – Governance and Reporting Advisor

## 3. Confirmation of Minutes

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee read and confirmed the Minutes of the Scheduled Meeting of 18 March 2025 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting was moved by Independent Member Matthew Fagence and Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

## 4. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

In accordance with sections 53 and 131 of the Local Government Act 2020 a member who has a conflict of interest in respect of a matter must disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by the Council's Governance Rules and comply with the procedures specified in the Governance Rules.

Nil conflicts were disclosed.

## 5. Reports

### 5.1 Financial Sustainability

The purpose of this report was to provide the Audit & Risk Committee information related to the external review of Council's Financial Sustainability

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Councillor Irene Grant and Councillor Harvey Benton and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

- Council officers provided a presentation on Long Term Financial Sustainability and advised it has been a focus area for Council for some time, initially introduced back in 2015 to cope with the rate capping challenges. In July 2024, Council undertook an external review of council's financial sustainability that covered three stages:
  1. A review of council's long term financial sustainability tool and its effectiveness in capturing necessary data and appropriateness of council's financial policy statements and measures
  2. Whether council is meeting its obligations under the Local Government Act 2020
  3. Recommendation of measures Council should implement to improve financial sustainability
- Long term financial sustainability continues to be an ongoing focus area for Council and more broadly presents challenges across the local government sector. Some of the measures council may explore to increase its financial sustainability included:
  - Increasing income from existing sources and creating new sources of income (where possible)
  - Reducing expenditure
  - Reducing capital works expenditure
  - Improving debtor management practices and reporting
  - Improving asset management practices and reporting capability to provide improved confidence on renewal targets
  - Reviewing debt management practices, including reviewing the Borrowings Policy
  - Reviewing budget management practices, including the Budget Variation Policy
  - Reviewing reserve accounting practices, including the Reserve Accounting Policy
- Interestingly, a rate cap variation of 10% at Hepburn Shire was approved by the Essential Services Commission (ESC), Mansfield has applied for a rate cap variation of 13.94% due to waste capping and Indigo Shire has also applied for a rate cap variation.

### 5.2 Local Laws Update

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and provided an update on the review of Local Law 1 – Community Amenity and the upcoming sunset ('end of life') of Local Law 4 – Major Council Policy Consultation.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Councillor Harvey and Independent Member Matthew Fagence and CARRIED.

### 5.3 Business Continuity and DRP Review - Testing

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and provided an update on the annual review process for the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans and sought guidance from the Audit and Risk Committee on a high quality, fit for purpose approach.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Wilson Tang and Councillor Member Harvey Benton and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

The Manager Governance provided an update on the business continuity plan and disaster recovery plans and advised that no significant changes have been required to be made.

**Cr Harvey Benton – “how does the disaster recovery plan communicate to the Emergency Planning Committee or the Municipal Emergency Management Plan - there is no lateral connection between the two?”** Council Management responded it's about how we recover critical business information as opposed to community recovery. The Manager Governance added that follow up would occur Emergency Management and Planning Coordinator to see if there were any points for connection.

**Independent Member Jane Watson “In relation to the disaster recovery plan, was cyber on the internal audit or anything relating to cyber security?”** The Manager Governance responded that cyber was addressed in the disaster recovery plan and was followed up internally with Crowe.

**Independent Member Wilson Tang “on page 220 of the agenda on the continuity plan in table 1 there are instances where accepted recovery time objective less than maximum acceptable outage. Is there any reason why?”** The Manager Governance responded that an amendment would be made to page 220 and noted that due to covid and the ability to work remotely has significantly impacted the way that the organisation can get on with its operations if there was an event that occurred.

### 5.4 Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement

The Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement were provided for the Audit and Risk Committee's noting.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Wilson Tang and Councillor Harvey Benton and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

The Manager Governance advised the Audit and Risk Committee the risk appetite statement was recently reviewed by council management and councillors and had undergone minor changes to align more closely to the policy and residual risk and appetite.

**Independent Member Matthew Fagence “are councillors comfortable with the risk appetite statement?”** Manger Governance responded that the risk appetite statement and policy has been presented to both council management and councillors for their level of comfort and noted that all council templates have a section on risk. Council meeting templates have a risk section that

requires completion of the level of risk according to council's policy. Councillor Grant advised that councillors are comfortable with the risk appetite statement and what is involved in the risks that Council takes; noting they are guided by the advice provided by council officers and the statutory legislation and regulations that are also tied into risk.

**Independent Wilson Tang** *“The risk register itself it should demonstrate an end-to-end picture – what could be strengthened is the risk register inherent risk and residual risk trends noting if it is within risk appetite. Suggest the inclusion of an additional column to explain if the risk is within the risk appetite statement or why it sits outside the risk appetite.”* Council management agreed it was an inclusion that should be incorporated for future reference.

#### **Actions**

Add an additional column to explain if the risk is within the risk appetite statement or why it sits outside the risk appetite.

### **5.5 CEO, Strategic, Emerging and Industry Risks Report**

The purpose of this report was to assist the Committee to monitor the risk exposure of Council, including the status of strategic and emerging risks, industry risks, major lawsuits and compliance investigations.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Vito Guidice and Independent Member Matthew Fagence and CARRIED.

#### **Discussion**

- Council Management provided an outline on the work being undertaken on financial sustainability as outlined in the report provided earlier. Council is undertaking more work in this space to refine budgets and will have a clearer understanding of its position once the final budget is adopted.
- Temporary roles have been put in place for a change management specialist and a systems enhancement analyst for technology enabled projects. These positions are in place to provide transitional support for officers across the organisation dealing with ‘fatigue’ and will assist with issues that can occur past ‘go live.’
- The Manager Governance advised council self-referred an anonymous complaint to the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) relating to the Wangaratta Livestock Exchange (WLE). IBAC has assessed the complaint and referred back to Council to undertake an internal investigation. Council will commence this work shortly and will inform the Audit and Risk Committee at the next meeting of progress and outcomes.
- The legislation for the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund has been passed and council has been tasked to administer the collection of the levy.
- Following the conclusion of the Victorian election, Council was advised of an estimated 1600 fines within our local government area of those that didn't participate in the election.
- **Independent Member Vito Guidice** *“does the remit of the Wangaratta Livestock Exchange Committee sit under Council?”* Council management responded “yes.”

**Actions**

- Council to provide an update on the IBAC investigation on WLE at the next Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.

**5.6 Committee Action Items and Annual Work Plan**

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the Annual Work Plan and monitored outstanding Committee, internal and external audit action items. This report provided the audit action status update.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the exceptions to the Committee's Annual Work Plan; noted the completion and closure of audit actions 81, 161, 251; and noted the Off Track and At Risk actions and supporting commentary for actions 179, 209, 211, 212, 248, 249 and 250 was moved by Independent Member Vito Guidice and Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

**Discussion**

- The Manager Governance provided an update on the committee actions and the annual workplan items. It was noted that due to resourcing some of the actions and reports were unable to be completed by the deadline.
- ***Independent Member Vito Guidice “In terms of risk culture is there a plan in place to address items that weren’t completed on time?”*** Manager Governance responded “yes.”

**5.7 Internal Audit Program and Status Update**

Council's internal auditor AFS sent through the updated internal audit program for the Audit and Risk Committee's consideration.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the internal audit program status update was moved by Member Wilson Tang and Independent Member Vito Guidice and CARRIED.

**5.8 Human Resources Risk Management Internal Audit - Final Report**

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and noted the findings presented in the Human Resources Risk Management Internal Audit – Final Report.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the findings and actions arising in the Human Resources Risk Management Internal Audit Final Report was moved by Independent Member Wilson Tang and Independent Member Vito Guidice and CARRIED.

**Discussions**

- Internal auditor Brad Eade provided the Audit and Risk Committee with an update on the HR internal audit. Overall and pleasingly:
  - Rural City of Wangaratta has a strong HR framework in place in comparison to other councils and is considered as a benchmark for the systems and processes in place.
  - 14 areas of strength were identified and there were 6 minor findings for implementation, all of which have been accepted by Management.

- Suggesting some minor actions risk identification and risk succession planning.
- Council management advised extensive work had been undertaken by officers over the last eighteen months to get to the framework into place. All minor recommendations have been factored into workplan over the coming period mid next year enacting.
- **Independent Member Vito Guidice “on psychosocial risks and noting the audit didn’t look at that topic – have you talked about it as management group and considered it as risk?”** Council management responded psychosocial hazards are listed on the risk register, noting the regulations are yet to be released. The OHS Workplan (including an item on psychosocial hazards) are regularly reported to management, councillors and the audit and risk committee. The Safety team have commenced a body of work on this over the last 12 months undertaking risk assessment with business units and is discussed in our Safety Committees.
- **Independent Member Wilson Tang “Does Council have recruitment and onboarding checks in place to monitor, police checks, working with children’s check or systematic processes to prompt qualification?”** Council management responded a range of checks are in place. All roles have been reviewed to ensure working with children’s check is supplied where required and it was noted police checks are required for all roles. During onboarding processes we have 100% clearance ensuring all required qualifications are supplied.

#### Actions

- As a risk in focus session topic, list psychosocial hazards and safeguarding training at a future Audit and Risk Committee Meeting

### 5.9 Draft Interim Management Letter

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the Draft Interim Management Letter from council’s external auditors.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the Draft Interim Management Letter report was moved by Independent Member Matthew Fagence and Independent Member Wilson Tang and CARRIED.

#### Discussion

- External auditor Dannielle Mackenzie provided an summary on the draft interim management letter that included:
  - Five new items were raised in the interim audit visit in early May.
  - There are four open items and one item has been closed out
  - New items raised at the interim audit included:
    - IT to consider a periodic review of user access within finance team covering roles making sure there is appropriate access to perform roles.
    - Privilege user audit logs system access – suggested that IT undertake a review on a periodic basis.
    - Grants register revenue recognition assessment – these are currently updated at year end and suggested that better controls are put in place such as introducing a monthly reconciliation process for better accuracy at year end point.

- Review of the Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan are due for review and suggest the plans are reviewed for currency and best practice.
- Process for the acquittals for the Roads to Recovery and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Fund had been significantly delayed and suggested project planning and improved communication between departments in accordance with timelines to improve outcomes.

#### **5.10 Property, Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment - Accounting Policy Requirements**

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee to address the recommendations made by VAGO in their 2023/24 Results of Local Government report

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Matt Fagence and Councillor Irene Grant and CARRIED.

##### **Discussion**

- The Manager Finance provided an update on assessing property, infrastructure, plant and equipment in line with accounting policy requirements. Overall:
  - The external valuer appointed is progressing well with land asset revaluations.
  - Four asset classes are being completed internally through our assets team and currently on track for end of year.
  - Highlighted inconsistencies of information shared between Finpro and VAGO which is challenging the understanding the impact of the accounting change and reporting impact. Officers are continuing to work on legislation changes and understanding.
- Danielle shared other councils are experiencing similar challenges. Working with VAGO and local government to hold round table discussions so understanding can be applied consistently across Councils.

#### **5.11 Quarter 3 Financial Statements and Aged Debtors Status**

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee to provide an update of Council's Quarter 3 financial performance and projected full year position.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee received and noted 2024/2025 Quarter 3 Forecast Review; and the status of Aged Debtors as of 31 March 2025 was moved by Councillor Harvey Benton and Councillor Irene Grant and CARRIED.

#### **5.12 Corporate Card Review**

This report to the Audit and Risk Committee outlined the findings from the Corporate Card Review.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the noted the findings of the Corporate Card

Review was moved by Independent Member Vito Guidice and Independent Member Matthew Fagence and CARRIED.

#### **Discussion**

Council officers provided the Audit and Risk Committee with an bi-monthly update on reporting of corporate cards. Compliance was noted as an issue with 45% percentage of transactions being incomplete from either missing ledger codes, missing tax invoices or transactions not being approved by the appropriate timeline. Council officers advised they were in the process of undertaking a review of the corporate card policy, approval processes and investigating a user platform system with a software supplier to automate processes to simplify.

**Independent Member Wilson Tang – Given the high number of incomplete transactions is this related to the culture or are there other protocols that could be used to improve compliance?** Council officers responded that overall the processes are in place are being met, however significant administration time is taken in following up card users to ensure timelines are met. Council management suggested to include them to follow up to compliance.

#### **5.13 CEO, Mayor and Councillor Expenses**

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and reviewed the most recent Councillor and Mayor expense reimbursements and CEO credit card expenses and the returns for the subsequent two financial years.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Vito Guidice and Independent Member Matthew Fagence and CARRIED.

#### **5.14 VAGO Report - Results on Local Government**

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee to note the findings of VAGO's audit report on 'Results of 2023-24 Audits: Local Government'.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Wilson Tang and Independent Member Vito Guidice and CARRIED.

#### **5.15 Council Plan Performance - Quarter 3 2024/25**

This report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on the Quarter 3 Council Plan Strategic Indicators and Actions update for 2024/25.

A motion that the Audit and Risk Committee noted the report was moved by Independent Member Vito Guidice and Independent Member Matthew Fagence and CARRIED.

## **6. Other Business**

## 7. Next Meeting

## 8. Closure of Meeting

The meeting closed at 4:40pm.

**Audit & Risk Committee Action Tracker**

Action Item	Agenda Item	Action	Responsible Officer	Status	Progress
5 December 2024	5.4 CEO, Strategic, Emerging and Industry Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sample of some of the operational risks to be presented bi-annually as a separate attachment in this report</li> </ul>	Andrew Lovett/Andrew Scoffern	New	
20 May 2025	5.4 Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add an additional column to explain if the risk is within the risk appetite statement or why it sits outside the risk appetite.</li> </ul>	Andrew Lovett / Andrew Scoffern	New	
20 May 2025	5.5 CEO Strategic Emerging and Industry Risks Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council to provide an update on the IBAC investigation on WLE at the next Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.</li> </ul>	Andrew Lovett	New	
20 May 2025	5.8 Human Resources Risk Management Internal Audit – Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a risk in focus session topic, list psychosocial hazards and safeguarding training at a future Audit and Risk Committee Meeting</li> </ul>	Tom Coelli-Donaghy	New	