

Hindmarsh Shire Council
Council Plan 2021-2025 and
Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan
2021-2025
& Action Plan 2024/2025

Review



Council Plan Review 2021-2025

Blue items are *ongoing advocacy actions*.

Theme 1 : Our Community		
Objective	What we are going to do	Status
A community well informed and engaged	Use a broad range of communication and engagement techniques with information accessible in different languages	Delivered
	Redevelopment of Council's website to allow for easier navigation	Delivered
	Continue to engage with the community through Council-Community Conversations to provide an alternative avenue of engagement, consultation and promotion	Delivered
	Support and celebrate our volunteers	Delivered
	Provide opportunities for our LGBTIQ+ community to inform Council on barriers to accessing council services and facilities	Delivered
	Support local community organisations through the Community Action Grants Program	Delivered
Communities that feel safe and are resilient	Work with key stakeholders to develop and implement plans and policies that assist our communities to prepare and recovery from emergencies and natural disasters	Delivered
Provide arts and cultural activities that strengthen social connection	Facilitate and support arts, music, and cultural community events, celebrations and activities to build social connection.	Delivered
	Support significant days and events important to our multicultural community	Delivered
A range of effective and accessible services to support the health and wellbeing of our community	Further develop and provide library services to facilitate a range of activities for residents	Delivered
	Continue to support and facilitate Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council including the development and implementation of a Youth Strategy	Delivered
	Provide infrastructure and support to early years services within Hindmarsh	Delivered
	Advocate for a range of learning and skill development opportunities for all ages	Ongoing
	Advocate and lobby for improved mental health services for all ages in our community	Ongoing
Support healthy living and pro-vide services and activities for people of all ages and	Provide Home and Community Care Services to enable our aged and vulnerable community to retain independence to remain in their homes for longer	Delivered until services ceased in 2023/2024
	Facilitate a range of events and activities to engage and support our elderly community	Delivered
A range of transport options	Advocate for improved public transport services, including the return of passenger rail to the Wimmera	Delivered

	Provide transport options for school holiday activities to ensure no student is disadvantaged	Delivered
Assist our Community to recover from COVID-19	Support a range of events and activities within Hindmarsh to bring communities back together	Delivered
A diverse community	Support and encourage refugee or migrants to relocate and invest in Hindmarsh	Delivered
	Provide opportunities for our Karen and all other multicultural communities to inform Council on barriers to accessing council services and facilities	Delivered
Recognise, respect and support Traditional Owners	Acknowledge and preserve Aboriginal values and culture through partnerships, land management practices and understanding in order to deliver positive outcomes	Delivered
	Consider our Indigenous heritage when planning for new community facilities, projects or spaces	Delivered
Digital connectivity to support learning and work	Promote the strength of digital connectivity in the Shire	Delivered
	Advocate for improved mobile phone coverage, including a telecommunications tower west of Rainbow	Ongoing
Theme 2 : Built and Natural Environment		
Well-maintained physical assets and infrastructure to meet community and organisational needs	Maintain the condition of our existing local road network prioritising capital works investment into renewal on roads and road related infrastructure.	Delivered
	Upgrade parks and open spaces as funding stream are available, including lighting for increased night time use, safety and security.	Delivered
	Completion and installation of the pathways hierarchy and pathways expansion program to provide inclusive footpaths and kerbing.	Delivered
	Regularly review Council's asset management plans, and update the Assets Register	Delivered (Assetic Upgrade to be completed in 2025/2026)
	Advocate for the continuation of State and Federal Government funding to support the maintenance and upgrades of Council's extensive road network and infrastructure needs.	Ongoing
	Develop master plans for all Recreation Reserves, multi-use facilities and active outdoor open spaces.	Partially Delivered
	Develop and implement a strategic roads strategy to support agriculture and communities	RMP Adopted and Reviewed in 2025/2026
Environmentally sustainable practices	Implement a range of environmentally sustainable practices throughout the Shire including solar/wind powered infrastructure and water efficient appliances	Delivered
	Encourage the community to implement waste minimisation and management strategies through education and promotion	Delivered


	Continuous improvement of our waste management and transfer stations through upgrades and establishment of rural collection points for increased recycling use and waste services, including transition to a new waste strategy	Delivered
Attractive streetscapes	Maintain attractive streetscapes, open spaces, and public places	Delivered
	Encourage and support residents and ratepayers to maintain the cleanliness and good order of their properties.	Delivered
	Continue to replace and increase green space with regular tree planting in accordance with Council's adopted tree strategy and sustainable watering systems	Delivered
Theme 3 : Competitive and Innovate Economy		
Facilitating and supporting economic development	Review and implement Council's Economic Development Strategy	Delivered
	Facilitate business networking sessions and showcasing Hindmarsh businesses	Delivered
	Provide support to Hindmarsh businesses through buy local campaigns, Council purchasing locally and promote business assistance grants	Delivered
	Advocate for affordable and available rental accommodation through the Wimmera Development Association regional housing taskforce	Ongoing
	Actively participate in the Wimmera Development Association and Rural Councils Victoria	Delivered
	Review and update Council's town planning scheme to allow for urban and commercial development	Delivered
Develop and promote local tourism opportunities that attract visitation	Promote Hindmarsh Shire as a destination of choice by increasing and improving tourism signage to encourage people to stop, stay and play in Hindmarsh Shire.	Delivered
	Develop master plans for all Council owned and operated caravan parks and seek funding to support the implementation of actions and upgrades including cabin accommodation	Delivered
	Establish camping facilities along the Wimmera River Discovery Trail phase 1 and advocate for funding for the completion of the whole trail	Delivered
	Online bookings and payment options available for Hindmarsh Shire managed caravan parks	Delivered
	Support community initiatives such as markets, pop up shops and appropriate events / activities	Delivered
Theme 4 : Good Governance and Financial Sustainability		
Strong governance practices	Ensure compliance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>	Delivered (Ongoing)
	Continue online streaming of Council meetings to uphold the principles of public transparency and accessibility	Delivered



	Provide a range of engagement and communication methods to ensure open, easily available and transparent communication between Council and the community.	Delivered
	Work collaboratively with, and support appropriate community organisations, to plan community initiatives and mitigate community issues.	Delivered
Long-term financial sustainability	Continue to focus on responsible financial management in budgeting and long term financial planning	Delivered
	Enhance our financial management systems through the Rural Council Transformation Project	Delivered
	Continue to advocate State and Federal Governments for sustainable funding models for small rural councils	Ongoing
Ensure responsible risk management principles	Further develop and implement Council's Risk Management Framework and ensure all key risks have been measured and adequately controlled.	Delivered
A skilled Council and workforce capable of meeting community needs	Enhance our workforce through the development of a Workforce Plan that supports the needs of the organisation and encourages diversity	Delivered
	Provide for a safe working environment and develop a productive and skilled workforce.	Delivered
	Provide professional development opportunities including diversity and cultural awareness education and training for Councillors and staff	Delivered
	Provide opportunities for culturally diverse and young people through activities such as work experience, cadetships, certificates, apprenticeships and traineeships	Delivered
	Promote benefits of being a Councillor encouraging diversity on Council	Delivered
Gender Equity respect and leadership	Demonstrate leadership on gender equity and promote respectful relationships through partnerships, programs, activities, spaces and education and Council's implementation of the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>	Delivered

Council Plan Action Plan 2024/2025 Review

Theme One – Our Community




Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Continue to implement and develop effective communication methods to ensure the community is engaged and informed about Council projects, plans and services, including e-news and newsletters, advertisements and media releases, website development and social media.	<p>We have continued producing monthly and quarterly newsletters and fortnightly e-newsletters. In total, 39 fortnightly, monthly and quarterly newsletters were circulated.</p> <p>In 2024/2025, we published over 1,035 Facebook posts across all Council managed pages, with reach of 124,000+ on the main Hindmarsh Shire Council page, and 223,000+ across all pages. We gained 520 followers on the main Hindmarsh Shire Council Facebook page</p> <p>122 media releases were published and circulated, keeping the community informed about Council decisions, projects and services.</p>	Delivered
Deliver community safety and education initiatives around Council's Local Laws as well as Fire Prevention and animal management.	<p>Local Laws communications plan developed for 2025 calendar year, tying with key enforcement periods, including the animal registration renewal period and fire danger period.</p> <p>This action will continue into the future, as actions form part of the revised Domestic Animal Management Plan.</p>	Ongoing
Continue to provide programs and services that promote the health and social engagement of our ageing community, including seniors concert and social connection activities, with a focus on ensuring activities are inclusive and accessible.	<p>Classic movies in each of the four towns were screened this year through funding from FRRR. The Council-funded Classic Movies also continued in Nhill, with 38 movies being screened in total across all cinema services (youth, early years, open).</p> <p>Concerts were held in all towns in June for Seniors, with fantastic feedback from the community and more than 270 total attendees.</p>  	Delivered


Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Support and coordinate the Volunteer Taxi Service in Nhill.	This service continued to be offered, with one new volunteer coming on board in the final quarter of the year. A review of this service is underway.	Delivered
Develop a Sports and Recreation Strategy to support sports infrastructure, sports organisations and active living in Hindmarsh Shire.	The Sports and Recreation Strategy project plan and engagement strategy have been developed, with the development timeline now extended into the 2025/2026 financial year. As Council is developing numerous strategies and plans in line with legislative requirements throughout 2025, it was determined that delaying this Strategy would enable alignment with the Council Plan 2025-2029 and ensure various Council engagements are spaced out to encourage community participation and engagement.	Delayed
Facilitate delivery of infrastructure projects in partnership with the Department of Education to provide four-year-old kinder services as of 2025 in Nhill and Dimboola.	<p>Nhill and Dimboola Kindergartens completed and operational from day one of Term 1 2025.</p>  <p>The image contains two architectural perspective drawings of a long, single-story building. The top drawing is labeled '1 FRONT PERSPECTIVE VIEW' and shows the building from a side-on angle, highlighting a covered walkway with a dark railing. The bottom drawing is labeled '2 REAR PERSPECTIVE VIEW' and shows the building from a rear/side angle, featuring a large glass-enclosed section and several air conditioning units on the ground level.</p>	Delivered
Continue to advocate for after school care and an increase in childcare in Hindmarsh Shire.	<p>Advocacy was undertaken in year for support of By-Five's funding extension, including communications and a letter to the Minister.</p> <p>Additional work has been undertaken between Council and By-Five, and local Federal and State representatives to increase childcare opportunities throughout the Shire, pushing for policy reform that broadens the ability for centres to operate in rural and regional areas.</p>	Ongoing
Continue to deliver Council's youth program, including delivery of the Hindmarsh Shire Youth Strategy, school holidays activities and the Youth Council.	School Holidays programs were held in July, September/October and April 2025 with over 1,237 attendees throughout the year. Activities ranged from cinema screenings, physics, craft, yoga, tiny goats, sports and karaoke!	Delivered


Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
		
Support significant days/weeks for groups represented within the Shire, including International Day of People with a Disability and Harmony Day.	<p>Events to promote Harmony Day, and Cultural Diversity Week have been held in 2024/2025 along with celebrations around International Women's Day and Men's Health Week.</p> 	Delivered
Deliver service and document reviews, events, activities, and statements that promote reconciliation and advance the objectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the community.	<p>A Reconciliation Action Plan is in its final form, with adoption delayed due to Council elections. This will be revisited after the adopted of the Council Plan.</p> <p>NAIDOC Week was celebrated in July 2024 with and Art Exhibition in Dimboola.</p> <p>An interview with Tracey Rigney was published as part of Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Day celebrations.</p>	Delivered
Advocate for and host a range of learning and skill development opportunities for all ages throughout Hindmarsh	<p>Learning and development opportunities delivered as part of school holidays programs for young people, and in partnership with local Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres, including budgeting basics scheduled for early 2025/2026.</p>	Delivered

Theme Two – Built & Natural Environment

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Commence construction at Davis Park, Nhill, on the AFL compliant changerooms with undercover seating.	<p>The changerooms and tiered seating are well-underway, with construction has experienced slight delays with the completion of the concrete tiered seating area. This should be completed over the next 5-6 weeks and the project completed by the end of the first quarter 2025/2026.</p>	Delivered (to be completed in 2025/2026)


Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
	 <p>Davis Park Grandstand and Changerooms</p>	
Complete Nhill Aerodrome upgrades including drainage and pavement works.	<p>Completed in early 2024/2025.</p> 	Delivered
Continue to advocate for funding for a new weir at Jeparit.	Funding secured for feasibility study through CMA. A consultant has been engaged to undertake feasibility study.	Delivered (Ongoing)
Seek funding to install solar on Council buildings and halls.	Council is waiting for funding opportunities but has prepared proposals for Council's 5 highest power use buildings ready to submit with applications.	Delayed
Develop and implement an up-to-date Domestic Wastewater Management Plan.	<p>Onsite wastewater management plan was adopted in August 2024.</p> <p>https://www.hindmarsh.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-Resources/Plans-and-Strategies/Onsite-Wastewater-Management-Plan</p>	Delivered
Explore funding options for installation of solar heating at the Dimboola Swimming Pool.	<p>Solar heating was installed at Dimboola Swimming Pool in time for the opening of the 2024/2025 swimming season.</p> 	Delivered

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Consider options for delivery of Weeds, Pest and Plant program following the changes to the Landcare network in the region.	This program is complete for 2024/2025. 116 Kms of road ripped for rabbit control and 174km of road treated for weed control.	Delivered
Adopt a Climate Adaption Strategy that supports community resilience, risk mitigation and reduced negative environmental impact within the Shire.	The Climate Adaption Strategy was adopted by Council on 28 August 2024.	Delivered
Increased building and planning enforcement activity to protect Council's environment.	This is progressed on an ongoing basis when the need arises. Having Manager of Planning and Environment and Planner position filled internally means that enforcement capability will keep increasing.	Ongoing
Facilitate Hindmarsh Heavy Transport and Freight Working Group.	The first meeting was held in June 2025, with the next meeting scheduled for September 2025.	Delivered
Successful delivery of Council's Capital Works program as contained within the 2024-2025 Hindmarsh Shire Council Budget.	<p>Four projects have not commenced either due to lack of sufficient budget or lack of approval from other agencies. Two major projects are progressing due to them being multiyear projects. Some of the plant and fleet items are yet to be delivered but procurement has been finalised. Overall, it has been a good year.</p> 	Delayed
Sealed road construction works on Dimboola Minyip Road (subject to funding).	Complete.	Delivered
Ensure Council representation on Western Highway Action Committee and Wimmera Regional Transport Group.	Director Infrastructure Services and Mayor, Cr Ron Ismay, represented Hindmarsh on the committee.	Delivered
Implement Assetic Cloud as an effective Asset Management software system, improving the financial efficacy, sustainability and usability of our asset management functions.	Data migration complete. Implementation of maintenance management system to commence in 2025/2026.	Delivered
Install recycling and glass collection bins in main	Complete.	Delivered

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
street in Dimboola, Jeparit, Nhill and Rainbow.		
Hold free green waste month in September and encourage residents to tidy their properties prior to the fire season.	Completed in September 2024.	Delivered
Work closely with conservation partners including the Wimmera CMA to educate the community on land management and conservation strategies.	Council worked closely with conservation partners including the Wimmera CMA to educate the community on land management and conservation strategies.	Delivered
Continued implementation of the Nhill Streetscape Plan.	Works have commenced to complete stage two of the project and expected to be completed in early 2025/26.	Delivered
Seek funding to upgrade Rainbow Public Amenities and install new all-abilities amenities and ramp into MECCA Supper Room.	Council continues to advocate for funding for this project and prepare plans to best position Council should a funding opportunity become available. This project was included in Council's Advocacy work leading up to the 2025 Federal Election.	Ongoing
Continue development and implementation of the Hindmarsh Playground Strategy.	The Playground Strategy is scheduled to be presented to Council in draft form in 2025.	Delayed
Complete construction of new Mechanics workshop at Jeparit Depot.	Construction completed.	Delivered
Consider opportunities and seek funding for lighting in public areas.	Lighting posts included as part of the Nhill Streetscape Masterplan Implementation at Centenary Park. Council will continue to seek additional opportunities to improve public lighting.	Ongoing


Theme Three – Competitive and Innovative Economy

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Participate in the Visitor Economy Partnership and commence development of Destination Management	Ongoing work with GWMT for regional marketing underway. Council staff and GWMT team attended caravan and camping show, also had representation (brochures/banner) at Grand Prix, and Ballarat camping show.	Delivered

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Plans and industry development activities.		
Continue delivery of Silo Art project at Llew Schilling Silo in Rainbow.	<p>The Silo Tower sections have arrived onsite, and cladding completed. Electrical upgrades for the elevator have been completed including installation of a new Mains board. Artist has been appointed to undertake Art Activation once construction allows. Tower will be erected early in first quarter of 2025/2026.</p> 	Delivered (to be completed in 2025/2026)
Deliver a Business Assistance Grants program responsive to the changing economic interests within the Shire.	2024/2025 Business Assistance Grants program fully expended.	Delivered
Promote Hindmarsh as a tourism destination to stop, play and stay.	Continued promotion of Hindmarsh as a tourism stopover.	Delivered
Host quarterly business networking sessions in Hindmarsh for businesses to come together, network and learn.	The second business networking session was cancelled due to low number of responses. Economic Development and Tourism staff will survey to work out what support businesses are looking for from Council.	Partially Delivered
Undertake a review of the Hindmarsh Planning Scheme.	The review was adopted by Council at the meeting on the 5th of March 2025.	Delivered
Seek funding for continued development of Hindmarsh Shire Caravan Parks and implement upgrades to the Nhill Caravan Park as contained in the Nhill Caravan Park Masterplan.	Funding secured through the Regional Tourism Investment Fund for cabins at the Nhill Holiday Park.	Delivered
Commence implementation planning for Council's Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028.	<p>Shopfront business list compiled with home-based business contact information currently being collected. Relationship development has been strong focus, as well as improving internal processes relating to business development and support.</p> <p>Industrial land project business case under development.</p>	Delivered
Provide financial and in-kind support to regional community events held in	2024/2025 Regional Events Grants Program not fully subscribed. Council has requested more thorough reporting for attendance	Delivered

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Hindmarsh that increase economic benefit.	and financial benefits to inform improved design of events and grants processes.	
Actively seek funding to upgrade key freight routes for our agricultural economy.	Application submitted for Dimboola Minyip Road and Lorquon Netherby Rd under Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program. Secured funding for pedestrian crossing under TAC grant. Working with TAC to deliver \$2M Safer Local Roads and Streets Program.	Delivered

Theme Four – Good Governance & Financial Sustainability

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Deliver proactive activities aimed at encouraging candidature for the 2024 Council elections, including the MAV Stand for Council Program.	Completed in Q1-2. 	Delivered
Prepare for, and deliver, a compliant caretaker and election period for the 2024 Local Council Elections.	Completed in Q1-2.	Delivered
Review existing, and develop new, Councillor induction processes (including a training program) to facilitate compliant and effective transition into a new Council period.	Completed in Q1-2.	Delivered
Review and adopt critical Council policies as per Council's policy review cycle.	In 2024/2025, Council adopted the Councillor Expense Entitlements Policy, Fee Waiver and Reduction Policy, Councillor Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Advisory Committee Policy.	Delivered
Further develop and maintain a panel of preferred suppliers for critical services areas to ensure the efficiency of Council business.	Tendering opening for Panel of Approval Suppliers – Goods and Services in early July 2025.	Delivered
Continue to promote transparency and accessibility of Council meetings through streaming meetings online and including closed captioning where possible.	Technical issues experienced throughout 2024/2025 were rectified with new equipment, with Council taking all reasonable measures to ensure that meetings are livestreamed.	Delivered

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
Continue to consider trainee, apprenticeship, and work placement opportunities to providing bringing pathways to employment at Council.	Council has supported staff to train on-the-job through the Learning and Development Policy, including cadetships and structured workplace learning.	Delivered
Develop a guide to assist the community and to provide clarity on the process of public Council meetings and how to participate.	This will be completed in 2025/2026.	Delayed
Implement the Community Engagement Policy and provide appropriate consultation and engagement methods for policies, projects and plans.	Significant consultations have been delivered in this 2024/2025 including CEO drop-in sessions, Listening Posts, targeted engagement for the Council Plan 2025-2029 and the 2025/2026 Council Budget, including a deliberative panel.	Delivered
Develop and integrate organisation-wide framework for managing all complaints relating to Council's functions and services and framework for monitoring success of complaints management processes.	Complaints training and guidance documents produced and circulated to staff. Complaints Handling Policy under review and endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee. Customer Relationship Management System planned for implementation in 2025/2026.	Delayed
Update Council's Long Term Financial Plan.	The long-term financial plan is to be prepared in conjunction with the 2025/2026 budget and will be presented to Council in June 2025.	Delivered
Continue implementation of Gender Equality Action Plan.	A gender equity lens is applied to the development of all internal and external programs, policies and procedures that have a direct and significant impact on the community. The results of Council's performance against the gender equality indicators has been published.	Delivered
Continue to collaborate with Horsham Rural City Council and Loddon Shire Council to implement the Rural Council Transformation Project.	Collaboration formalised through an extended MOU that will enable delivery of a Standard Operating Environment program through 2025/2026. Considerable shared work has been undertaken with upgrading our Financial Management System and creating payroll and accounting efficiencies. Online timesheets and community engagement will be rolled out when they become available through the software supplier. Standard Operating Environment and CRM system implementation project plans under development for 2025 implementation.	Delivered
Maintain the Business Continuity Plan as an active document, ensuring that it is responsive to changing risk environments.	Business Continuity Plan updated annually, provided to the Audit and Risk Committee for endorsement in September 2024.	Delivered
Enhance the organisations information, communications and technology (ICT) capabilities and systems,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Email Phishing Campaigns initiated to regularly test users' ability to recognise potentially malicious emails and record statistics on 	Delivered

Action Item	Q4 Update	Progress
including strengthening our cyber-security capability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Physical Firewall Infrastructure Capabilities with a plan to update and replace existing hardware with higher capacity equipment to ensure not drop in system capabilities. Additional Physical Firewalls added to external/remote sites to increase the security and capacity for users at each site. Removing reliance on end user-based VPN connectivity Review and Changes to password policy to add complexity and decrease the frequency of required changes to be more in line with current best practices. 	
Deliver actions within the Hindmarsh Shire Council Cultural Audit to improve the accessibility of Council services and the diversity of our workforce.	Key documents continue to be translated into Karen. Inclusive photo gallery in process for use in Council communications. Access, Equity and Priority Policy to be developed and adopted in 2025/2026.	Delivered
Engage local sporting clubs in the development and implementation of the Fair Access components of the Sports and Recreation Reserves Allocation and Use Policy.	Council engaged with Sporting Clubs in Q1 to inform the Fair Access Policy Action Plan. Sports and Recreation Strategy scheduled for development in 2025 – this will involve additional engagement and incorporation of Fair Access Action Plan objectives.	Delivered
Undertake review of the Hindmarsh Shire Council Workforce Plan.	Council has engaged a facilitator to consult with staff and develop the Workforce Plan in line with legislative timelines.	Delivered