

Draft Council Plan 2025-29

June 2025

Prepared by:

Cardinia Shire Council

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Acknowledgment of Country

Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways across our region.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise their deep and enduring connection to Country.

Guided by our community, we strive for a future grounded in truth, respect, equity, and cultural safety, where everyone feels connected and has the opportunity to thrive.

Our inclusivity statement

Cardinia Shire Council encourages a sense of belonging within our shire.

We support an inclusive community comprised of people from diverse backgrounds, including and not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, those identifying as LGBTIQ+, people of faith, and people of all ages, genders and abilities.

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Executive Summary

The Council Plan 2025–29 is Cardinia Shire Council's key strategic document that will help guide Council's activities and decision making over the four years of the Council term. It sets out our aspirations for how we will respond to community needs and the opportunities and challenges facing Cardinia Shire.

The Council Plan strives to reflect the community's priorities and provides a roadmap for Council to deliver on the long-term Community Vision 2040, which articulates the community's aspirations for what Cardinia Shire will be like in 2040.

The Council Plan is structured around five strategic objectives:

- Thriving communities
- Vibrant places
- Adaptive environments
- Prosperous economies
- Responsible leaders

These objectives have been informed by priorities identified by the Community Panel during the deliberative engagement process. The panel reviewed and updated the Community Vision 2040 and identified a number of key focus areas that have helped to inform the strategic objectives. Under each of these strategic objectives is a series of strategies and initiatives, and how we will achieve them and measure our success.

The Council Plan 2025–29 will also help us to respond to the shire's rapid growth and challenges over the coming years. As one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities, we welcome three new households to our shire every day and our population is expected to grow by almost 40,000 over the next 10 years. As a result, demand on our community infrastructure and services also continues to increase.

Cardinia Shire Council, along with the broader local government sector, continues to face significant financial sustainability challenges, including rising costs and cost shifting from other levels of government. Council remains committed to delivering the services, projects and infrastructure our community needs, while ensuring we remain financially sustainable in the long-term.

We will also continue to work with all levels of government to advocate for increased support and investment in our shire.

This Council Plan will help us deliver on our commitment to the community and help ensure that our shire remains a vibrant and liveable place that people are proud to call home.

Objectives	Objective statement
Thriving communities The programs, facilities and places that we support are safe, inclusive, and enhance participation, wellbeing and resilience.	With our many partner agencies and community groups, we promote community wellbeing, resilience, and a strong sense of belonging across our diverse and multicultural municipality. We provide opportunities for meaningful engagement and expression, support volunteerism, and maintain safe and accessible places and spaces.
Vibrant places We value our well-designed towns and infrastructure that fosters belonging and connections.	Our vibrant places are built on thoughtful planning that balances growth with the preservation of Cardinia's unique character and natural landscapes. Residents feel a strong sense of belonging and pride in their distinctive local identity. We plan and advocate for the infrastructure that our growing and changing community needs.
Adaptive environments We care for our natural environment and support recovery from challenges.	We take a collaborative approach to environmental stewardship, working alongside community and partners to build climate resilience and mitigate the impacts of climate change. We continuously improve our practices, promote circular economies, and strengthen our collective capacity to respond to environmental challenges.
Prosperous economies We encourage urban and rural business and local employment to grow.	We work to position our shire for long-term investment, attract new industries, encourage innovation, and generate jobs within our community. We balance our unique local history and opportunities, with our role in regional planning.
Responsible leaders We demonstrate responsible leadership and financial stewardship.	We aspire to set the standard for responsible governance through community engagement, service excellence and prudent financial management. Our decisions are transparent and accountable. Through careful resource management and forward-thinking decision-making, we provide for current residents and generations to come.

Welcome from the Mayor

On behalf of Cardinia Shire Council, I'm proud to present our draft Council Plan 2025–29.

This draft plan has been informed by input from our community as part of the initial phases of community engagement, and we're now seeking your input before we formally adopt it.

The Council Plan is our key document that will help guide our direction and decision making for this Council term, outlining how we will deliver on the long-term Community Vision, work towards our key strategic objectives, respond to challenges and leverage opportunities.

I want to thank everyone who has participated in the community engagement activities to date that have helped to shape our new Council Plan, particularly the Community Panel.

The Community Panel played an integral role during the deliberative engagement process to help inform our key strategic objectives. I also thank community members who provided their valuable feedback on these objectives as part of the first round of consultation. Your feedback has helped to set the direction of the updated Council Plan and has informed our key strategies, including the long term financial, asset and liveability plans.

As one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities, it's important that we plan for our future to ensure our Shire remains a great place to live, work and play. This draft Council Plan outlines our approach to respond to the Shire's rapid growth and challenges over the coming years, while supporting us to deliver on our commitment to the community.

I look forward to an exciting four years ahead as we work together towards achieving our Community Vision, shared goals and creating a Cardinia Shire we can all be proud of.

Cr Jack Kowarzik
Cardinia Shire Mayor 2024–25

Our Council

Cardinia Shire Council is led by interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Peter Benazic. Our strategic direction is determined by the elected Council and is managed operationally by our CEO and Executive Leadership Team.

The Executive Leadership Team comprises our CEO, and three General Managers, each of whom leads one of our three groups.

Our role

Australia has three tiers of government: federal, state and local.

Local government is closest to the community and acts as a conduit for the community to influence the decisions that affect them while providing best-for-community services.

The Local Government Act 2020 defines the purpose and responsibilities of local government in Victoria.

The act defines the role of Council “is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community”.

The act sets out overarching governance principles that include prioritizing best outcomes for the community, engaging the community in strategic decision making, and transparency in Council decision making.

You can learn more about the Local Government Act 2020 by visiting www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au

Cardinia Shire Council fulfills its commitments to the Local Government Act 2020 and the community it serves in various ways.

Cardinia Shire at a glance

Our shire

Cardinia Shire is one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities and is located 55 kilometres south-east of Melbourne's central business district

Spanning an area of 1,280km², Cardinia Shire features three distinct areas.

Our urban areas of Beaconsfield, Pakenham and Officer and our railway towns of Nar Nar Goon, Tynong, Garfield and Bunyip are a mix of traditional country towns and new metropolitan areas. These areas support affordable living and are close to essential services and facilities. They are located near emerging employment areas that deliver a diverse mix of jobs to the shire and access to the metropolitan rail service and V-Line services to regional Victoria.

Our hills area sits at the Dandenong Ranges foothills and is home to country charm villages, including Emerald, Gembrook, Cockatoo and Upper Beaconsfield. The hills offer unique lifestyle living, rolling farmland, adventure, villages to explore and local cuisine to enjoy.

Our southern rural area has rich, productive landscapes that support local farming, food production and rural living across our townships, including Koo Wee Rup and Lang Lang. This part of the shire is home to the Koo Wee Rup swamp and Western Port Bay.

Our community

- An average of three new households move into the shire every day.
- The estimated population is 135,147 as of 2024.
- Cardinia Shire's population is predicted to rise by almost 40,000 over the next 10 years.
- The median age of residents is 34, which is three years younger than that of Greater Melbourne.
- The largest percentage of Cardinia Shire's population are parents and homebuilders aged 35-49 (21%), followed by young people aged 12-24 (16%), and finally the young workforce aged 25-34 (16%).
- Cardinia Shire has a higher proportion of young children aged 14 years and under (23%) compared with Greater Melbourne (18%) and a lower proportion of people aged 60+ (17%) than Greater Melbourne (20%).
- In the 2021 Census, residents who spoke a language other than English represented 18% of the Cardinia Shire population, a significant increase from 11% reported in 2016. The most common birth countries of non-Australian born residents were India, United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, and the Philippines.
- Cardinia Shire has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of 1,145 residents representing 1% of the population and remaining in line with Victorian trends. This figure has risen from 780 in 2016.
- Around 38% of households comprise couples with children, a figure greater than the Melbourne average of 33%.
- Other households are comprised of couples without children (approximately 26%), one-parent families (11%) and single residents (19%).

- The 2021 Census found that 52% of residents had completed Year 12 or equivalent, in comparison to the metropolitan Melbourne average of 64%.
- The 2021 Census results found that 18,840 residents were employed in jobs within Cardinia Shire, while more than half of the working population travelled outside the area to work (62%).
- 95% of those able to work are employed and 4.3% of the population is unemployed, a figure that is slightly lower than metropolitan Melbourne (5.3%).
- Construction (14%), health care and social assistance (13%), retail (10%), and manufacturing (9%) are the top four industries of employment among Cardinia Shire residents

Our challenges and opportunities

As one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities, Cardinia Shire faces a range of challenges and opportunities as we strive to deliver the best outcomes for our community.

While many of the challenges we face are similar to other councils across Victoria, we also face a number of unique challenges and complexities.

Meeting the needs of our growing community

Cardinia Shire is one of Victoria's fast-growing municipalities, with demand on our community infrastructure and services continuing to grow along with our population. This places greater importance on planning and sustainability.

Our population growth continues to be a challenge for providing critical services and assets in a timely way. We welcome an average of 3 new households to our shire every day, and our population is expected to increase by almost 40,000 over the next 10 years. With more and more people moving to our shire, our infrastructure is unable to keep up with demand.

Our shire spans an area of 1,280km, with diverse areas including urban neighbourhoods, rural farmland, railway townships and hills communities. Our diverse shire has more than 800km of unsealed roads and nationally significant farming areas. Our rural and hills areas present a number of unique challenges and complexities; currently we're missing key links to connect our rural communities to our growing suburbs.

We also want to continue to work towards providing equitable access to important services and facilities. This includes attracting new services to our shire to help fill critical gaps and exploring innovative service models.

Council remains committed to working with all levels of government to secure support and investment for the shire.

Supporting our diverse communities

There are a number of challenges that face our culturally diverse communities when settling in Cardinia Shire, including language and communication barriers as well as a lack of access to key services and support. Attracting culturally specific services and programs to the shire that are close to transport and retail hubs is crucial.

Attracting services for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities also continues to be a focus for Council. We recognise that these services are best placed to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents as they are likely to be more effective in designing and delivering culturally appropriate community services.

Council is committed to working towards providing equitable access to important services and facilities. This includes attracting new services to Cardinia Shire to help fill critical gaps, in addition to exploring innovative service models.

Protecting our natural and built environments

Managing the natural and built environments of the shire is an ongoing challenge for Council. This includes balancing our conservation efforts and preservation of the natural environment with the need for further development to meet the needs of our ever-growing community.

Tackling climate change and its impact on our environment, economy and community is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Australians are already seeing more warm spells, frequent and intense downpours, and longer fire seasons.

Climate change impacts our biodiversity, water supplies, energy demand, and our health — particularly that of our more vulnerable community members.

Council's Sustainable Environment Policy 2018–28 recognises that every action we take influences our environment. We strive to ensure that influence is as positive as possible. How we adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts will require a holistic approach, from how we drive sustainable development to how we grow our local industries.

Financial sustainability

The local government sector continues to face significant financial sustainability challenges, and Cardinia Shire Council is no exception. The Victorian Government's rate cap continues to challenge the local government sector, particularly where it does not factor in rising costs.

Rate capping reinforces that Council must be financially prudent in anticipating the long-term needs of the community. Council is unable to increase rates in line with the cost of delivering programs and services, leading to a budget shortfall which compounds over the years and can pose a potential risk to Council's ability to deliver the programs and services our community deserves.

With much of the shire's growth stemming from new development, Council is required to provide new infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, drainage and community facilities to meet the future needs of the community. While developer contributions support delivery of this infrastructure, Council covers the funding shortfalls and is responsible for the ongoing maintenance and renewal of these assets. Cost shifting from other levels of government is another significant challenge facing Council.

Council is exploring strategies to address these challenges and their impact on our ability to deliver services and projects while minimising cost of living pressures for residents. Our focus is to ensure we can continue to meet the needs of our community while remaining financially sustainable in the long term.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan aims to ensure that Council manages its resources responsibly to enable us to support the achievement of the Community Vision and Council Plan objectives.

Fostering a prosperous local economy

When it comes to supporting local industry development and creating local jobs, we need a clear direction for leveraging our productive land and employment land to grow local industries, increase jobs in the area, and keep our skilled workforce. This will help protect our agricultural land and improve our shire's appeal as an employment hub.

Council strives to position itself to attract investment to help support local residents to live and work locally. The shire features state significant industrial land, proximity to productive agricultural land in Gippsland, and development opportunities for industry, making it an appealing choice for investment.

Council aspires to be a leading local authority that leverages the strength of the region in advocacy, regional planning and investment whilst supporting and creating the opportunity for local jobs and business. We want our shire to be a place in which our community and visitors thrive and prosper, with a local economy that fosters innovation and supports local jobs.

About this plan

Strategic framework

The Council Plan outlines the elected Council's strategic direction and priorities.

The Council Plan guides Council's work over the next 4 years towards the shire's long-term aspirations. It directly informs Council's legislated governing strategies

- **10-year Financial Plan:** provides a long-term view of Council resources and use of those resources.
- **Asset Plan:** how Council proposes to manage its portfolio of assets that it owns and controls.
- **Budget:** a rolling 4-year budget that outlines how resources have been allocated across services, programs, initiatives and capital works.
- **Revenue and Rating Plan:** outlines the financial envelope in which Council will operate. It provides a framework for the setting of rates, statutory charges, service fees and other sources.
- **Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (Livability Plan):** has been developed to provide a clear framework for public health planning within the shire. The framework outlines the common agenda that Council, partners, and the community, will collectively work towards over the next 4 years.



How the plan was developed

Community engagement has been vital in developing the Council Plan and informing the long-term asset, liveability and financial plans.

In line with the Local Government Act 2020, we undertook a deliberative engagement process in February 2025 with a representative panel of community members.

The panel met over four sessions and considered the challenges and opportunities facing Cardinia Shire, informed by a wide range of data and information. This included Cardinia Shire Council's service catalogue and budget, local economy and industry statistics, community health and wellbeing data, Council's advocacy priorities and an overview of Council's asset and financial plan processes.

From this information the panel updated the Community Vision 2040 which was created in 2021. The panel also recommended priorities that the Council should focus on to achieve this vision.

The panel's priorities helped shape the draft strategic objectives for the next Council Plan. We sought feedback from the broader community on how well the draft strategic objectives respond to the community panel priorities. Of the 177 responses received, all five of the draft strategic objectives received at least 70% support (Strongly Agree or Agree).

Feedback from our community has helped to set the direction of the Council Plan 2025–29 and will inform the long term financial, asset and liveability plans.

The consultation process has supported the development of key strategic plans that are relevant and reflect our community's vision.

Timeline

- **December 2024 – January 2025:** Expression of interest invited and Community Panel selected.
- **February 2025:** Community Panel workshops.
- **March 2025:** Community Panel recommendations considered.
- **April – May 2025:** Broader community feedback invited on the draft strategic objectives.
- **May 2025:** Community feedback considered, draft strategic objectives updates and initiatives developed.
- **July 2025:** Community feedback invited for the draft Council Plan and draft Liveability Plan.

Community Vision 2040

One of the key roles of the Community Panel was to review and update the Community Vision 2040. The updated vision below has been endorsed by Council.

Community vision statement

“We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people.

“We understand, value and incorporate these contributions, past and present. We empower everyone to have a voice. We speak with the optimism and insight of our people, the energy of our community members and the wisdom of all those that came before us.

“We support all people of Cardinia so that they are strong, resilient, safe, socially connected and physically and mentally well. We do this by strengthening community cohesion through engagement and advocacy.

“We care for our country. We take preventative and mitigative actions on climate change in our community, environment, and the planet in everything we do.

“We are sustainable in the way we live, we work close to home, we grow food and we make valuable contributions to the nation. We protect our community, farms, industries, landscapes and biodiversity to ensure they are resilient.

“We provide fit for purpose infrastructure and services that cater for the growth of the community. Growth will be managed prudently and sustainably so that it enables our progress towards community priorities.

“Through advocacy and community engagement, the infrastructure, local community and healthcare services are in place to meet our needs.”

Strategic objectives 2025-29

The Council Plan is structured around five strategic objectives: thriving communities, vibrant places, adaptive environments, prosperous economies and responsible leaders.

These objectives underpin the overarching strategic direction for the next four years. Under each strategic objective is a series of strategies, initiatives and indicators.

Objectives	Describes the strategic objectives of the future state Council will focus its efforts on to achieve its vision. These seek to respond to the challenges and opportunities Council faces in reaching the 4-year vision.
Strategies	A set of approaches that describe how Council will implement each strategic objective. Strategies connect to ongoing services, priority projects and programs.
Initiatives	Key priority activities that are in addition to business-as-usual. They directly support Council delivering on its vision and priorities. It is not a comprehensive list of all initiatives needed to deliver on each strategy. Additional initiatives will be developed in business unit operation plans.
Indicators	These are high-level performance indicators that will be used to measure and report on what we have achieved through the delivery of the Council priorities.

1. Thriving communities

The programs, facilities and places that we support are safe, inclusive, and enhance participation, wellbeing and resilience.

Cardinia Shire is a great place to live, work and play. How we plan and grow creates places that enhance our community's health and wellbeing and protects what we love.

Objective statement

With our many partner agencies and community groups, we promote community wellbeing, resilience and a strong sense of belonging across our diverse and multicultural municipality.

We provide opportunities for meaningful engagement and expression, support volunteerism, and maintain safe and accessible places and spaces.

Strategies

1.1	Community culture and identity We enrich local identity and foster opportunities for the community to make meaningful connections through creative arts, events and cultural expression.
1.2	Partnerships and volunteers We recognise the work of volunteers in supporting our community, and we partner with community groups and providers to support and encourage volunteerism in the municipality.
1.3	Wellbeing and livability With diverse partner agencies we work to protect, improve and promote community health and wellbeing by implementing the Cardinia Shire Council Livability Plan 2017-2029.
1.4	Community services We support, advocate for, and seek to attract accessible health and community services to meet the needs of a growing and diverse community.
1.5	Safe and accessible places We plan for, provide and maintain safe, inviting and accessible public spaces and places, to promote pride of place and improve wellbeing.
1.6	Community safety We work with partners to create safer communities, by performing the roles set out in the Community Safety Framework.

Initiatives and phasing

		2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
1.7	Volunteers' strategy Develop a Volunteers' Strategy to support volunteers and encourage volunteer participation.	•			
1.8	Volunteers' strategy Implement the Volunteers' Strategy.		•	•	•
1.9	Arts and events Support the delivery of an annual calendar of events, programs and grants that celebrate our diverse community, its arts and culture.	•	•	•	•
1.10	Liveability Plan Co-ordinate public health planning processes in partnership with local agencies.	•	•	•	•
1.11	Youth action and advisory committee Establish a Youth Action & Advisory Committee to ensure that the voices of young people are heard and considered.	•	•	•	•
1.12	Reconciliation We engage with our first nations communities to develop and implement Reconciliation Action Plans 2025-2027.	•	•	•	
1.13	Arts and culture strategy Implement Arts & Creative Industries Strategy.	•	•	•	•

Strategic indicators

1.14 Volunteer strategy

Increase in number of volunteers supporting Council facilities, reserves and services.

1.15 Safety

Increase in residents who report feeling safe living in Cardinia Shire.

Livability /coordinating public health role

1.16 Maintain level of trust in Council as a backbone organisation implementing the Livability Plan.

Wellbeing indicators

1.17 Key wellbeing indicators sourced from publicly available data.

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2. Vibrant places

We value our well-designed towns and infrastructure that fosters belonging and connections.

Objective statement

Our vibrant places are built on thoughtful planning that balances growth with the preservation of Cardinia's unique character and natural landscapes.

Residents feel a strong sense of belonging and pride in their distinctive local identity. We plan and advocate for the infrastructure that our growing and changing community needs.

Strategies

2.1	Strategic planning
	Ensure the Cardinia Shire Planning Scheme delivers high quality outcomes that preserve the liveability and identity of the municipality and protecting our natural environment, while also accommodating for population growth and economic development, while preserving the liveability and identity of the municipality and protecting our natural environment.
2.2	Annual capital project planning Identify and deliver capital projects that provide and renew public infrastructure.
2.3	Road network We partner with agencies to plan, deliver and maintain an integrated transport network that supports connected communities into the future.
2.4	Road advocacy We advocate for State and Federal Governments for increased investment in infrastructure for all modes of transport, public transport infrastructure and services, and enhanced road safety treatments.
2.5	Community and open space infrastructure We plan, deliver and maintain recreation facilities, open spaces and places that support community connection and promote the health and wellbeing of the community.
2.6	Infrastructure funding Advocate to and partner with all levels of government to deliver projects that improve our community infrastructure, open spaces and precincts to meet the needs of our growing Shire

Strategies (cont.)

2.7	Advocacy growth/funding Advocate for fair and equitable funding to ensure Cardinia is equipped with the infrastructure and services needed to support the existing and growing population, increases in housing and employment and to help it thrive as a connected, sustainable and inclusive community.
2.8	Heritage We work to protect sites of heritage significance within the Shire for future generations.
2.9	Asset planning and management We manage assets on behalf of the community to sustainably deliver services with the optimal balance of whole of life costs and performance.

Initiatives and phasing

		2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
2.10	Asset planning and management Develop 10-year Asset Plan.	•			
2.11	Road and asset works Plan and deliver infrastructure upgrades to our road network and public assets to meet the needs of the current and future population.	•	•	•	•
2.12	Unsealed roads Develop an Unsealed Roads Strategy to improve the maintenance of unsealed roads and improve the resident experience, and then implement the adopted strategy.	•	•	•	•
2.13	Drainage strategy Develop a Drainage Strategy to improve the operation and maintenance of our drainage networks and implement the adopted strategy.		•	•	•

Initiatives and proposed phasing (cont.)

		2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
	Active transport / recreation paths				
2.14	Review the Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy, including options for the enhancement of the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail, the Gippsland Odyssey trails, and other significant rail and tourist trails within Cardinia.	●			
	Recreation and community infrastructure				
2.15	Plan and deliver accessible and inclusive recreation and community facilities.	●	●	●	●
	Cardinia Life				
2.16	Advocate for further funding to expand and redevelop Cardinia Life.	●	●	●	●
	Pakenham revitalisation				
2.17	Deliver funded stages of Pakenham Revitalisation, and advocate for funding for additional stages.	●	●	●	●
	Strategic planning				
2.18	Review the Cardinia Shire Planning Scheme.	●			
	Strategic planning				
2.19	Develop and endorse a Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges and Southern Ranges Green Wedge Management Plan.	●	●	●	
	Strategic planning				
2.20	Deliver a 4-year schedule of strategic planning priority projects and policies	●			
	Officer library				
2.21	Plan for a library and community facilities in the Officer Town Centre and advocate for funding to ensure the successful delivery of the facilities.	●	●	●	●
	Officer township activation				
2.22	Work with partners to progress the Officer Town Centre.	●	●		

Initiatives and proposed phasing (cont.)

		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
	Deep Creek Reserve				
2.23	Assess the feasibility of the Golf Course at Deep Creek Reserve, and develop a plan for identified future use.	●	●	●	
	Facility utilisation				
2.24	Undertake an audit of all facility utilisation and develop a strategy to maximise community benefit	●	●		
	Township beautification				
2.25	Undertake cost-effective works across townships to improve amenity and presentation, including garden bed renewal, tree planting and street furniture maintenance.			●	

Strategic indicators

- 2.26 **Planning function**
% of planning permit applications processed within statutory timeframes.
- 2.27 **Annual capital works program / delivery**
Value of annual capital works program delivered.
- 2.28 **Annual capital works program / delivery**
% of capital works projects completed on time.
- 2.29 **Unsealed roads**
Reduction in number of unsealed road requests / 100km unsealed roads.
- 2.30 **Sealed roads**
Reduction in number of sealed road requests / 100km sealed roads.
- 2.31 **Road sealing**
Total linear kilometers of road sealing (presented by road category)
- 2.32 **Recreation facilities**
Increase in the community satisfaction index score for the performance of recreational facilities.
- 2.33 **Arts centres and libraries**
Increase in the community satisfaction index score for the performance of arts centres and libraries.

3. Adaptive environments

We care for our natural environment and support recovery from challenges.

Objective statement

We take a collaborative approach to environmental stewardship, working alongside community and partners to build climate resilience and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

We continuously improve our practices, promote circular economies, and strengthen our collective capacity to respond to environmental challenges.

Strategies

3.1	Biodiversity We protect our biodiversity and enhance our natural assets and diverse ecosystems.
3.2	Emergency preparedness We partner with the community to strengthen our readiness and resilience to climate-related events and other emergencies.
3.3	Climate change We partner with the community and business to respond to, and build resilience against, the impacts of climate change.
3.4	Sustainable practices We seek to reduce Council service impacts on the environment.
3.5	Waste We collaborate with the community, industry and all levels of government to reduce our reliance on landfill and enhance resource recovery, with a focus on long-term sustainable services.
3.6	Community partnership We partner with the community to build climate resilience and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Initiatives and phasing

		2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
3.7	Continue adopted strategies				
	Implement initiatives in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2022-2033, the Biolinks Plan 2023-2033 and the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019-2029 and Weed Management Strategy 2019-2029.	•	•	•	•
	Towards zero emissions plan				
	Develop a Towards Zero Emissions Plan to ensure progress towards Zero emissions and carbon neutrality, and implement the Plan.	•	•	•	•
	Integrated water				
3.9	Develop new Integrated Water management Plan, and implement the plan.		•	•	•
3.10	Waste strategy				
	Develop a future Waste Resource and Recovery Strategy 2026-2036, and implement the actions under the strategy.	•	•	•	•
3.11	Review sustainable enviro framework				
	Review the Sustainable Environment Policy 2018 -2028.			•	

Strategic indicators

- 3.12 Biodiversity**
Indicators drawn from public sources that illustrate the biodiversity of the municipality.
- 3.13 Emergency preparedness**
Maintain the number of partner organisations represented on the Municipal Relief and Readiness Sub-committee.
- 3.14 Waste services**
Increase in the percentage of kerbside waste diverted from landfill.
- 3.15 Community partnerships**
Number of community environmental education and capacity building initiatives delivered and/or supported by Council.

4. Prosperous Economies

We encourage urban and rural business and local employment to grow.

Objective statement

We work to position our shire for long-term investment, attract new industries, encourage innovation, and to generate jobs within our community. We balance our unique local history and opportunities, with our role in regional planning.

Strategies

4.1	Investment attraction We advocate for major infrastructure projects and investment that secure and enhance the economic potential of the municipality.
4.2	Advocacy and partnerships We collaborate with our regional partners to drive growth and prosperity in the region and foster economic opportunities.
4.3	Community workforce development We advocate to improve the education and employment pathways that provide meaningful employment opportunities for our residents and develop the local workforce.
4.4	Visitor economy We work to enhance the development of the local tourism industry and visitor economy with our partners of Tourism East.
4.5	Business and industry development Enhance and develop local economy through industry development, programs and initiatives.

Initiatives and phasing

		2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
	Major infrastructure				
4.6	Partner with GSEM and key stakeholders to progress planning and advocacy for a South East Melbourne Airport and Thompsons Road Upgrade and Extension, that supports regional economic growth, freight movement, and improved access to national and global markets.	•	•	•	•
	Investment attraction				
4.7	Implement initiatives in accordance with the Investment Attraction Plan	•	•	•	•
	Agribusiness				
4.8	Develop a Food and Agribusiness Strategy that builds on the findings of the 2025 Agribusiness Audit, and implement the actions of the strategy.	•	•	•	•
	Tourism / visitor attraction				
4.9	Support implementation of the Tourism East Destination Management Plan and report progress annually.	•	•	•	•
	Service attraction				
4.10	Conduct a comprehensive gap analysis of community and human services, and education and skills with recommendations to support advocacy and funding to attract service providers (ie integrated community information and support hubs, financial counselling, education providers and health services) to operate in Cardinia Shire.	•			
	Service attraction framework				
4.11	Develop a framework to implement the recommendations of the gap analysis, and implement the framework.		•	•	•
	Economic development strategy				
4.12	Review and refine the Economic Development strategy, while implementing key initiatives to drive business & industry development.	•	•	•	•

Strategic indicators

- 4.13 Business and industry development**
Increase in the gross regional product (GRP) of Cardinia Shire.
- 4.14 Business and industry development**
Increase in the number of local jobs.
- 4.15 Business and industry development**
Increase in the number of GST registered businesses in Cardinia Shire.
- 4.16 Agribusiness (also strategic planning)**
Retention of the area (hectares) of green wedge zoned land and significant agricultural special use zoned.
- 4.17 Agribusiness**
Indicators that track the strength of the agricultural sector.

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5. Responsible leaders

We demonstrate responsible leadership and financial stewardship.

Objective statement

We aspire to set the standard for responsible governance through community engagement, service excellence and prudent financial management. Our decisions are transparent and accountable.

Through careful resource management and forward-thinking decision-making, we provide for current residents and generations to come.

Strategies

5.1	Customer focus We deliver customer-centered service that is clear, accessible, and responsive.
5.2	Engagement We build trust and encourage participation in Council decision-making by providing ongoing opportunities to have their say, ensuring the diverse voices of the community are heard and considered.
5.3	Long term financial sustainability We manage Council's resources prudently and efficiently to ensure the long-term financial sustainability.
5.4	Advocacy We act as a proactive and powerful advocate for our community, influencing outcomes that improve and enhance quality of life, access to services and future opportunities for our residents.
5.5	Continuous improvement We take advantage of emerging technologies to continuously improve our customer experience, ensure our services are efficient, scalable and secure.
5.6	Service quality and review Our services are designed and reviewed to ensure that they address changing community needs, are efficient, effective, effective, respond to risks and fulfill Council's legal obligations.
5.7	Governance We maintain a high level of transparent, accountable, unbiased and representative governance.

Strategies (cont.)

5.8	Employee
	We provide a safe and supportive workplace that attracts, develops and retains high quality employees.
5.9	Gender and social equity
	We think about gender and social equity when making decisions, and we take steps needed to work towards equality.

Initiatives and phasing

		2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
5.10	Engagement				
	Provide opportunities for meaningful, informed and representative community engagement to guide Council's decision-making.	●	●	●	●
5.11	Advocacy				
	Adopt the Advocacy Agenda 2025-2029, and annually review Council advocacy priorities and report on efforts and outcomes.	●	●	●	●
5.12	Digital transformation				
	Develop a Transformation Roadmap to enhance Council processes and systems, improve customer experience, and are future-ready, and implement the roadmap.	●	●	●	●
5.13	Investment body				
	Develop an Investment Policy and Advisory Committee to guide potential investment and revenue opportunities.	●			
5.14	Investment body				
	Identify, assess and implement alternative revenue and investment opportunities.		●	●	●
5.15	Service reviews				
	Undertake focused service reviews to ensure alignment to the Council Plan and optimal service delivery.	●	●		

Initiatives and proposed phasing (cont.)

		2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
5.16	Long term financial planning				
	Develop and review Financial Plan to ensure that it supports long term financial sustainability.	•	•	•	•
5.17	Revenue and rating strategy				
	Undertake a review of Council's Revenue Rating Strategy.		•		
5.18	Gender and social impact assessments				
	Undertake Gender Impact Assessments when developing or reviewing any Council policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public, and ensure our organisation progresses against our (internal) Gender Equality Action Plan.	•	•	•	•

Strategic indicators

- 5.19 Community engagement**
Improvement in the customer satisfaction index score for the performance of community consultation and engagement.
- 5.20 Financial sustainability**
Maintenance of adjusted underlying financial results, within appropriate risk levels for financial sustainability.
- 5.21 Financial sustainability**
Maintenance of adequate financial liquidity, within appropriate risk levels for financial sustainability.
- 5.22 Financial sustainability, continuous improvement**
Retention of the area (hectares) of green wedge zoned land and significant agricultural special use zoned.
- 5.23 Financial sustainability, advocacy**
Expenses per head of population.
- 5.24 Financial sustainability, advocacy**
Total value of grant funding received.
- 5.25 Continuous improvement**
Increase in digital self-service transactions for customer enquiries.
- 5.26 Governance and transparency**
% of Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public at a level lower than state average.



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