



YOUNG COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

2024 - 2028



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which Moorabool Shire sits, the Wadawurrung, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples. On behalf of the municipality, Council pays respect to their Elders, past, present and future.

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A Message from the Mayor

Councils, like families, have a responsibility to help raise children to be healthy, active and engaged individuals. We also know that families and children need to be connected with supports across all developmental stages. This is why, for the first time, Moorabool Shire Council has combined the Municipal Early Years Plan and Youth Strategy to develop a fully integrated plan for the 0-25-year-old age group.

The Young Communities Strategy has been developed in consultation with our local families, parents, carers, children and young people as well as local service providers, schools, kindergartens and early learning centres. Community feedback will set the direction for the work we will do over the next four years.

I would like to thank all the parents, grandparents, children, young people, carers, service providers, education and care services for their input into the development of this Strategy.

As the Mayor of Moorabool Shire, I look forward to watching this Young Communities Strategy come to life and making our Shire an even better place for children and young people.

Mayor Cr Ally Munari

ACHIEVING OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Vision

We advocate for and facilitate access to services and programs, promoting the health, wellbeing and learning of children, young people and families. By fostering purposeful partnerships, we create opportunities to enhance and empower our community.

Our Principles

We will deliver this vision by:

1. Facilitating the strategic planning, development and management of inclusive services for children, young people and their families, to meet current and future community needs.
2. Providing accessible and high-quality infrastructure and public spaces.
3. Advocating to state and federal government departments on behalf of our community for funding and services.
4. Actively engaging with children and young people to ensure their voices are heard and valued.
5. Pursuing robust partnerships and collaborating with other service providers to develop and enhance services for children, young people and their families.

Our role:

Moorabool Shire Council plays a pivotal role in supporting families and leading the co-ordination of local services for children, young people and families. A long established commitment to diverse services is offered by various agencies and organisations, including Council. While Council may not directly provide all services to families, children and young people, it actively contributes to planning and influencing the delivery of these services within the municipality.



STRATEGY CONTEXT

Moorabool Shire Council adopts a whole-of-Shire approach to long-term planning for the direction of our communities. Moorabool 2041 sets the vision for the type of community and place Moorabool Shire will be in 2041.

The Young Communities Strategy recognises and builds on existing Council policies, especially those with a specific focus on children, young people and families. The Young Communities Strategy supports the directions of Moorabool 2041 and the Moorabool Council Plan, as well as providing leadership and context for child and youth related planning, reports and studies.



Council Strategies and Policies

The Young Communities Strategy builds on actions and strategies reflected in other Council strategies and policies. The following strategies and policies currently guide and inform the Young Communities Strategy:

- Age Well Live Well & Access and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2022-2032
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Community Vision 2030
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2024
- Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027
- Moorabool Shire Workforce Plan
- Moorabool Community Road Safety Strategy 2020-2024
- Recreation and Leisure Strategy

BENEFITS OF A BIRTH TO 25 LIFE JOURNEY PLAN

For the first time, Moorabool Shire Council has combined the Municipal Early Years Plan and Youth Strategy to develop a fully integrated plan for the 0-25 years age group; the Young Communities Strategy 2024 - 2028.

The Young Communities Strategy recognises that the holistic development— cognitive, social, emotional and physical—of children and young people starts at birth and extends until the age of 25. A key benefit of this strategic approach is ensuring the needs of the 8-12 years age group are not overlooked.

Council recognises that our children of today are our young people of tomorrow and values the pivotal role families play in nurturing the wellbeing and connectedness of children and young people. Through the Young Communities Strategy, the intention is to achieve a birth to 25 life journey plan, ensuring all stages of children, young people, and families are considered and responded to.

“ I’m all for progress and development of the town, and expect to be here with my family for many years to see it as it changes and my kids grow.
- Parent ”



THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Early Years

Birth to Eight Years of Age

- An especially important stage to lay the foundations of a child's life.
- The prenatal period through the first years of life is a period of rapid brain growth and development.¹
- Stable and caring relationships with parents and non-parent caregivers are essential for healthy development.²
- The home is the main influence on language and cognitive development in the early years.³

“
I like to ride my bike
and take a walk.
- Kindergarten Child
”

- Attending early childhood education and care services and school are key milestones for children to develop necessary learning and social skills.
- The link between early experiences and later health outcomes supports the argument for greater investment in social and economic interventions the early years⁴ for children and families.
- Early intervention is key to improving long-term health, social, education and employment outcomes.

Middle Years

Nine to 12 Years of Age

- During this period, children go through many physical, social, emotional and cognitive changes as they shift from childhood to adolescence.
- Children are beginning to be able to see things from another's perspective and show empathy. They start to develop a strong need for mastery and competence as part of their self-image.⁵
- If children are experiencing difficulties with their schoolwork or delays with other aspects of their development, they may become frustrated, feel embarrassment, experience social distress or display behavioural issues.⁶
- While adults are still important role models for children, towards the end of this stage the influence of their peer group becomes stronger, and friendships are often centred on a common interest.⁷
- Developmental plasticity means that childhood development continues to be shaped by experiences and environments over the lifespan, thus adverse consequences of early adversity can be addressed with effective interventions.⁸

“
Most people are kind and
respectful to each other and
there is always an adult or
someone to talk to.
- Grade 6 Student
”

Young People

13 to 25 Years of Age

- This period encompasses adolescence and early adulthood.
- Further significant physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth and development occurs. •

The brain undergoes considerable changes relating to managing impulses, making decisions, and regulating emotions. Subsequently, adolescents and young adults can be more inclined to undertake risk-taking behaviour.

- While a growing desire for independence and autonomy from parents and authority figures emerges during this time, supportive relationships between young people and parents continues to be important into early adulthood.⁹
- The search for a sense of self and personal identity becomes a central focus, and adolescents and young adults start to think more about their future, including career aspirations and educational goals.
- Effective interventions promote health and wellbeing outcomes through a range of supports including teachers and schools, healthcare professionals, community organisations and specialised services.¹⁰

“

It's important there are places to get help or support when struggling with mental health or other issues.
- Year 9 Student

”

¹ Center on the Developing Child (2007). The Impact of Early Adversity on Child Development (InBrief). Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

² Center on the Developing Child (2007). The Impact of Early Adversity on Child Development (InBrief). Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

³ Yu & Daraganova, 2015, cited in Australia's children, Child learning and development- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)

⁴ Australia's children, Child learning and development- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au).

⁵ Understanding child development: Ages 9-12 years- Emerging Minds.

⁶ Understanding child development: Ages 9-12 years- Emerging Minds.

⁷ Understanding child development: Ages 9-12 years- Emerging Minds.

⁸ Investing in early Childhood Education and Care The Wellbeing Case (rch.org.au).

⁹ What works with adolescents? | Australian Institute of Family Studies (aifs.gov.au).

¹⁰ Community Interventions to Promote Mental Health and Social Equity- PMC (nih.gov).



Demographic Snapshot

Moorabool Shire is a friendly, picturesque, and rapidly growing peri-urban municipality located between metropolitan Melbourne and the regional centres of Ballarat and Geelong. The Traditional Owners of Moorabool Shire are the Wadawurrung, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and the Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples.

Spanning more than 2,110 square kilometres and home to 64 localities, hamlets and towns, the Shire uniquely combines two urban centres (Bacchus Marsh and Ballan), large tracts of rural land and natural assets (including State and National Parks) to offer appealing lifestyle attributes for its residents and visitors.

The Shire's population is forecast to almost double in size over a 20-year period, from 38,494 in 2021 to 78,000+ in 2041. The rate of population growth (+2.7 p.a.) is considerably higher than the average for Regional Victoria (1.3% p.a.). Increasing demand for housing and proximity to Melbourne have contributed to historic growth in the local property market in the past five years, with population growth being driven by the young workforce (25-34 years) and parents and homebuilders (35-49 years).

Population



38,494

called Moorabool home in 2021



5,814

have moved to Moorabool since 2016



78,000+

people are estimated to call Moorabool home by 2041



6%

of people living with a disability



550

First Nations People call Moorabool home (1.5% of the population)

In Moorabool, the highest proportion of the population is aged between 25 and 59 years

Median Age is 40



14%

of the population was born overseas. An increase from 12% in 2016



11%

of those born overseas arrived in the past 5 years



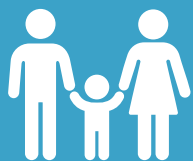
10%

of the population speak a language other than English. Increased from 8% in 2016

Top five languages spoken other than English

1. Punjabi
2. Maltese
3. Italian
4. Hindi
5. Spanish

75.3% of population are family households, of that:



45.1%

are couple family with children



15.2%

are one parent family



38.4%

are couple family without children



1.2%

are related individuals 15 years+ (not couple or one parent family)



19,143

people participate in the labour force



4%

of the Moorabool population were unemployed

Most commonly worked industries

1. Construction
2. Health Care & Social Services
3. Education & Training
4. Public Administration & Safety
5. Retail Trade



33%

of the population live and work in Moorabool



63%

of the population are employed outside Moorabool

53%

of people aged 15 years and over hold a formal qualification (bachelor or higher degree, advanced diploma, or diploma vocational qualifications)

25%

of people aged 15 years and over hold a vocational qualification

5%

of people attend university

2%

attend TAFE or Vocational institution

8%

of young people aged 15-24 years old are disengaged with employment and/or education



92%

of people own a car

Top two modes of transport to work



59%

car as driver



19%

worked from home

Population information provided is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (ABS) conducted on 10 August 2021.

Children and Young People



Population of Children and Young People (2022) ¹



Growth in birth notifications from July 2019 to June 2023 ²



Kinder enrolment and participation (2022)

471

enrolled in 4-year-old kindergarten program

364

enrolled in 3-year-old kindergarten program ³

Percentage of total age group that have a need for assistance with core activities (2021): ⁴



Destinations of Year 12 or equivalent completers who exited school in 2020: ⁶



0-4 years: 1.4%
5-9 years: 6.3%
10-19 years: 5.3%

82.3%

of young people aged 15-19 years are engaged in work and/or study (2021) ⁵

In further education or training: 72.4%

Employed and not continuing in further education or training: 19.8%

Looking for work: 6.9%

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) Domain Results (2018-2021) Average age of children at completion 5 years 8 months ⁷

		2018 %	2021 %	Significant change
Physical health & wellbeing	On track	86.3	80.2	Decrease
	At risk	9.0	10.3	No change
	Vulnerable	4.7	9.5	Increase
Social competence	On track	84.7	75.4	Decrease
	At risk	9.9	12.9	No change
	Vulnerable	5.4	11.7	Increase
Emotional maturity	On track	85.4	75.2	Decrease
	At risk	9.9	14.3	Increase
	Vulnerable	4.7	10.5	Increase
Language & cognitive skills (school-based)	On track	87.5	81.6	Decrease
	At risk	9.8	11.2	No change
	Vulnerable	2.8	7.2	Increase
Communication skills & general knowledge	On track	88.0	80.9	Decrease
	At risk	9.2	12.2	No change
	Vulnerable	2.7	6.9	Increase

The AEDC measures the development of children in Australia in the first year of fulltime school. The AEDC helps communities understand how children are developing and what is being done well and what can be improved. The AEDC can be used to help identify services, resources, and support to meet the needs of their community. For more information, please see the link below.

[Australian Early Development Census \(aedc.gov.au\)](https://aedc.gov.au)

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Region summary: Moorabool*. Retrieved from <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=25150>.
2. Victorian State Government, Department of Health. Child Development Information System.
3. Victoria State Government, Department of Education. *2022 Moorabool (S) ECE Profile*.
4. .id. *Moorabool Shire, Need for Assistance*. Retrieved from <https://profile.id.com.au/moorabool/assistance>.
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Region summary: Moorabool*. Retrieved from <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lyr=lga&rgn=25150.6>
6. Victorian State Government, Department of Education. On Track 2021, Survey Results. Retrieved from <https://www.vic.gov.au/on-track-survey>.
7. Australian Government. *Australian Early Development Census, Community Profile 2021*. Retrieved from <https://aedc-gov-au-static-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/community-profiles/20051.pdf>.



Developing the Young Communities Strategy

An important part of developing the Young Communities Strategy has been engagement with the community and service providers.

Using a combination of focus groups, interviews, school surveys and a Have Your Say Survey, we consulted with:

- Parents and carers
- Community members
- Kindergarten, primary school and secondary school students
- Service providers
- Council officers

“ We intentionally moved to this community because it’s a nice community and the growth in multicultural families. - Parent ”

What the Community told us

Key findings from focus groups, interviews and school surveys

Parents and Carers

- Families highlighted their appreciation of well-maintained facilities, excellent maternal child health services and a pleasant community environment with a growing number of multicultural families.
- Families felt future preparations should address infrastructure keeping pace with population growth, strategies to alleviate teenage boredom, increased supports for parents dealing with behaviour challenges and the need for more low-cost or free activities for young people and families.
- Areas for improvement included the need for increased access to allied health services, enhanced communication channels for busy parents, more events to foster cultural connection, and addressing limited indoor spaces and activities to reduce the need for families to travel outside the municipality.
- Families identified that some parks needed improvements to be more toddler-friendly and most parents expressed concerns about limited options for secondary schooling.



Children and Young People

- Children in pre-school enjoy visiting the pool, riding their bikes and playing in parks.
- For children in primary school, their most important priorities were being healthy in their bodies, receiving help during and after emergencies like bushfires, taking care of the environment, feeling safe in their community, and getting help for kids and families when needed. They like how friendly and safe the community feels, and they enjoy the parks and sporting facilities.
- For young people, their most important priorities were keeping their body healthy, having access to opportunities at secondary school, having access to opportunities for further education and feeling safe where they live.

“ I like going to the park and everyone is kind and caring.
- Grade 6 Student ”

Service Providers

- Service providers spoke positively about the provision of early childhood education and intervention services, along with existing networks and partnerships among local service providers which promote collaboration.
- Service providers felt future preparations should consider the increased incidence of family violence and youth perpetrators and developing strategies to mitigate the negative impact of a small minority of youth offenders on the broader community. Consideration also needs to be given to ensuring adequate funding for the growing population and the implications of increased government debt and potential funding cuts.
- Areas for improvement included enhanced communication about available services, increased understanding among providers of services available, improved referral processes and the need for staffing shortages to be addressed.
- Rural zoning and the necessity to travel were identified as barriers to service access, alongside concerns about mental health in young people and engaging young people who attend schools outside the shire.
- To address challenges, recommendations included establishing regular network meetings for service providers, increased advocacy, improved referral pathways and expanding place-based services.

“ How can we ensure parents know what services are available to support them?
- Service Provider ”



Key findings from 'Have Your Say' survey

For 0-6 Years:

- Respondents highly valued the library, the free programs on offer and playgrounds in the community.
- Top priorities included physical health, access to services within Moorabool and feeling safe in the community.
- Main concerns revolved around road safety, access to paths, behaviour of young people in public spaces, and limited access to allied health and mental health services, particularly in rural areas.
- Barriers to improving education, health and overall well-being outcomes included long waitlists for services, and limited options for secondary schools and childcare.

“ I most value free programs and activities, like the library programs are great. - Parent ”

For 7-11 Years:

- Respondents highly valued the library and sports activities but expressed a desire for more variety in sport offerings.
- Top priorities were physical health, mental health, access to educational facilities and feeling safe in the community.
- Main concerns included youth crime, long mental health waitlists and limited supports for children with physical disabilities.
- Barriers to improving the education, health, and overall well-being outcomes for children included the tendency for this age group to be overlooked, limited before and after-school care options, limited access to allied health and affordable mental health services and the impact of the rising cost of living.

KEY FINDINGS FROM 'HAVE YOUR SAY' SURVEY

For 12-18 Years:

- Respondents highly valued music and arts programs, the skate park and BMX track, sports like basketball, football and netball, and public transport.
- Top priorities included mental health, reducing harmful addictions, feeling safe in the community, access to public transport and connecting with others.
- Main concerns revolved around mental health, a need for increased support for young people with learning difficulties, a need for greater focus on the arts and more opportunities for youth with disabilities to connect.
- Barriers to improving the education, health, and overall well-being outcomes for adolescents included limited secondary school options, the necessity for increased outreach efforts and the need for more diverse options for this age group.

“ I most value the Moorabool Shire YES program and Moorabool Shire Youth Services.
- Young Person ”

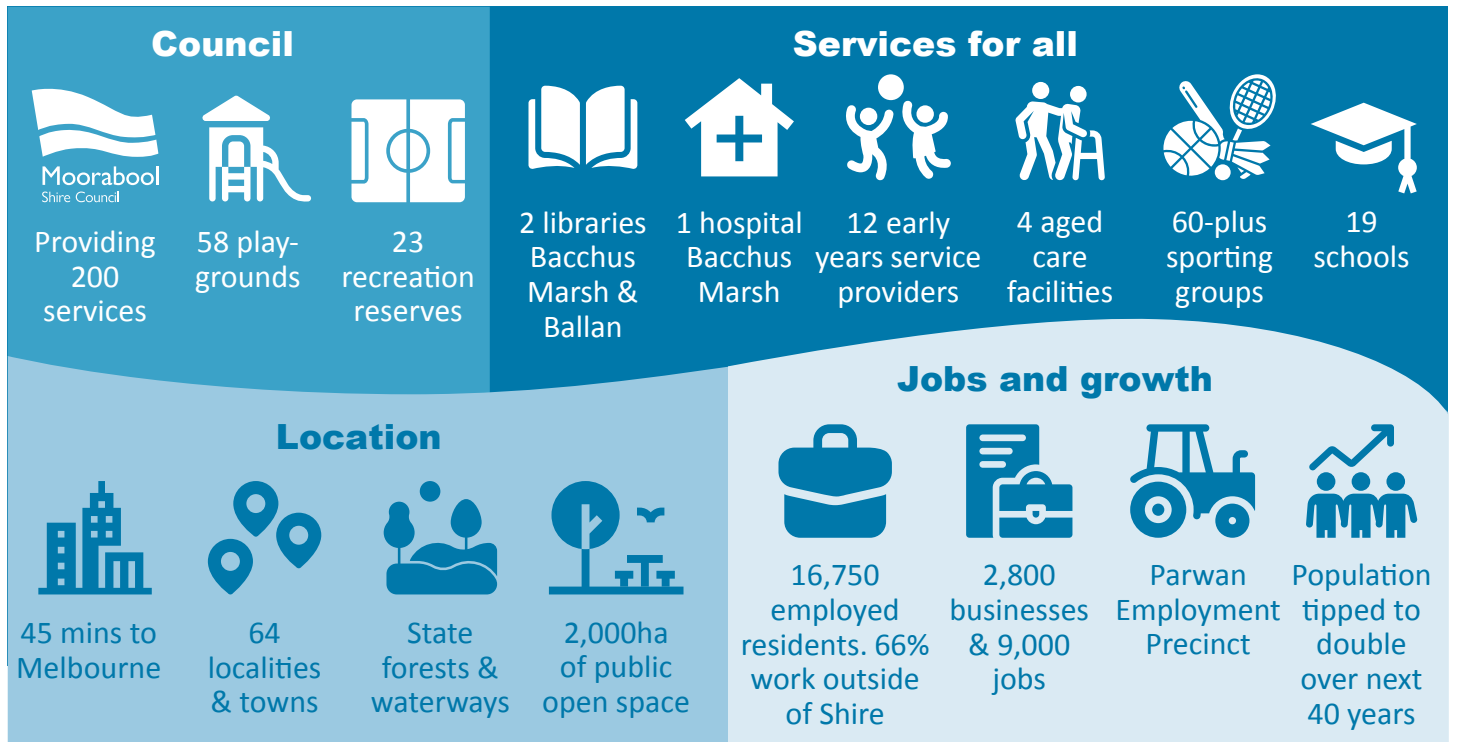
“ Young people who lack agency and capacity to make safe choices for their own wellbeing need more specialised supports.
- Service Provider ”

For 19-25 Years:

- Respondents highly valued the YES program and Shire youth services.
- Top priorities were access to public transport, local employment opportunities, feeling safe in the community, reducing harmful addictions and mental health.
- Main concerns included the need for increased supports for LGBTQIA+ youth, addressing youth crime, managing the ongoing impacts of trauma, increased mental health support, assistance for youth experiencing homelessness and substance addiction, and a lack of available social groups for this age group.
- Barriers to improving the education, health, and overall well-being outcomes for young people included the distance to tertiary education institutions, limited local employment opportunities, limited access to health services, the need for supports for those coping with trauma and the rising cost of living.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

Moorabool Shire Council's Community Connections & Wellbeing team provides child, youth and family services of high quality that support good health, education, developmental and social outcomes for children, young people and their families.



Services for children, young people and families

Service	Program (Sub Service)	Description
Early Childhood Education and Care	Supported Playgroups	Supported Playgroups deliver the Smalltalk Program. Programs are facilitated in Darley, Ballan and West Maddingley. This program also includes individual sessions in participants' homes.
	Kindergarten Partnerships and Central Registration	Central Registration supports the enrolment of children in funded three- and four-year-old kindergarten programs in partnership with kindergarten providers.
	Management of Early Years Facilities and Early Years Planning	Through a collaborative approach, gaps in service delivery are identified and addressed to support the needs of community.

Service	Program (Sub Service)	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Maternal Child Health (MCH) Service</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Universal Maternal Child Health</p>	<p>Key Age and Stage (KAS) appointments involve health and development monitoring of children 0-6 years of age. Includes: Maternal /family health and wellbeing (physical and mental) guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical assessments, including growth, height, oral health and gait • Developmental assessments using Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status Screening (PEDS) and Brigance Screening, vision screening, mental health and family violence screening • Identification of risk factors, smoking, sleeping risks, family violence, prevention of injury • Health promotion and education: breastfeeding, nutrition, healthy eating and immunisation education • Promotion of language, learning and literacy • Provide referral pathways to support/ health services • New Parent Groups, Parenting sessions and sleep settling sessions • Mental Health Group sessions: mental illness and bereavement support • Community engagement projects: pram walks, pop up playgroups.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Enhanced Maternal Child Health</p>	<p>Focuses on children and families who are considered vulnerable or at risk of poor outcomes. Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional consultations • Home visits • Parent support groups
	<p style="text-align: center;">Breastfeeding Service</p>	<p>Supports families with breastfeeding issues and promoting breastfeeding.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Imagination Magic</p>	<p>A fun, creative and interactive performing arts and literacy program for children (0-5 years) and their families.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Best Start</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Networks and Partnerships Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) Cycles</p>	<p>Best Start partnerships use local data and community knowledge to identify those who are experiencing vulnerability at their sites. Communities and service providers collaborate to address issues as they are experienced at a neighbourhood and/or regional level.</p>



As a growing town, keeping up the funding and resources to cater for more youths is an emerging issue. – Service Provider



Service	Program (Sub Service)	Description
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Youth Services</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FReeZA</p>	<p>FReeZA delivers events and learning opportunities for young people in creative arts, recreational activities, and cultural celebrations. The Youth Services Team supports the FReeZA committee in the planning and delivery of youth-friendly events.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Youth Holiday Program</p>	<p>Our Youth Holiday Program runs during the school holidays and has a range of activities for young people across the 12-25 age range.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Youth Engagement Support</p>	<p>The Youth Engagement Support (YES) program is facilitated by our Youth Services team and works with young people between the ages of 12-25 who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging with education and employment pathways. Through one-on-one mentoring and attendance at group sessions, young people are provided with opportunities to learn about school and job readiness, mental health and wellbeing, healthy lifestyles, and skills for social connection.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Youth Action Group</p>	<p>The Youth Action Group (YAG) is comprised of young people between the ages of 12-25 who live, study or work in Moorabool Shire. The YAG consists of young people who are driven to share their perspectives and contribute to their community. As an action group, the YAG is a representative voice for the diverse young people in communities across Moorabool.</p> <p>Some important events designed by the YAG are the annual Moorabool Youth Awards and Youth Forum.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Youth Spaces</p>	<p>Our Youth Spaces welcome all young people between the ages of 12-17 to connect with one another, chat with members of our Youth Team, play games, create arts and crafts, share delicious food, and have a lot of laughs.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Moorabool Agencies and Schools Together</p>	<p>Moorabool Agencies and Schools Together (MAST) is a network of schools, service providers, and local agencies focused on creating collaborative partnerships to foster positive outcomes for local children and young people.</p>



Themes



Health and Wellbeing Services and Supports

We will support children, young people and families to improve health and wellbeing outcomes through improving access to health facilities, services and supports, promoting healthy and active strategies, programs and initiatives, and strengthening networks, partnerships and advocacy.



Community Engagement and Participation

We will foster increased community engagement and participation through targeted programs, events, and initiatives, investigating opportunities for community capacity building and actively strengthen networks, partnerships and advocacy.



Education and Learning

We will strive to improve educational outcomes for children and young people through providing and promoting formal and informal learning opportunities, by building a highly skilled and responsive workforce, and collaborating with education professionals and other partners.



Safety and Inclusion

We will advance safety and inclusion within our community by focusing on inclusive and accessible Council programs, services, and spaces that meet diverse needs, the safety and accessibility of built and online environments, and through proactive networks, partnerships and advocacy.

PRIORITY AREAS AND STRATEGIES

Theme 1: Health and Wellbeing Services and Supports

“ Early intervention services are critical.
- Service Provider ”

“ If there are resources and support to help with mental health in the children, I wouldn't know how to reach out and get the support.
- Parent ”

Key Priority Areas	Strategies	Action	Timeframe (Years)
Access to health facilities, services, and supports	Deliver Key Age and Stage appointments through Maternal Child Health to support children and families to remain on track with developmental milestones.	1.1 Key Age and Stage visits scheduled within 10 days of birth notification being received. 1.2 Provide Enhanced Maternal Child Health to families who require extra support. 1.3 Provide outreach Maternal Child Health services to families in response to individual needs.	1-4
	Provide ongoing access to parent support groups.	1.4 New Parent Groups offered within 6 weeks. 1.5 Provide parent education and social connection. 1.6 Provide Sleep and Settling support. 1.7 Provide lactation support.	1-4
	Collaborate with stakeholders to increase and strengthen knowledge of referral pathways.	1.8 Advocate for mental health and allied health providers to be placed based in our municipality to support young people and the broader community.	1-2
		1.9 Create an engagement plan with stakeholders to investigate referral pathways, processes and resources.	1-2

Key Priority Areas	Strategies	Action	Timeframe (Years)
	Use service mapping to identify and communicate the scope of services and supports available to children, young people, and families.	1.10 Identify information on key areas (healthy lifestyle, education and employment, and mental health) and distribute to families, young people, schools, and community services and organisations. 1.11 Investigate an online directory of services for children, young people and families.	2-3 3-4
Healthy and active children, young people and families	Ensure play spaces meet the needs interests and abilities of children of varying ages and abilities.	1.12 Partner with internal Council departments to conduct a play-value analysis of places and spaces to identify gaps, and plan for future advocacy. 1.13 Engage the voice of children and young people in the design of leisure and recreation spaces. 1.14 Develop communication strategies to promote play-value of places and spaces within the community.	1-4 1-4 2-3
	Develop strategies to effectively deliver healthy lifestyle programs and initiatives for children, young people, and families.	1.15 Deliver a variety of programs to children, young people and families on topics such as healthy eating, sleep, active bodies and harmful substances. 1.16 Improve access to drug and alcohol counselling for young people.	1-4 1-2
Networks, partnerships and advocacy	Explore and build on opportunities to collaborate with internal Council teams involved in health and wellbeing initiatives.	1.17 Collaborate with internal partners to implement the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.	1-4
	Explore and strengthen external partnerships to increase collaboration for improved health and wellbeing outcomes.	1.18 Partner with schools and local service providers to improve health and wellbeing outcomes through prevention programs and campaigns.	1-4

Theme 2: Community Engagement and Participation

“The focus is always on sports but when you have children who are arty rather than sporty it can be difficult to find options.
- Parent”

“It’s a very welcoming community.
- Grade 6 Student”

Key Priority Areas	Strategies	Action	Timeframe (Years)
Targeted programs, events and initiatives to build social connectedness for children, young people and families	Review existing programs, events and initiatives and implement opportunities to build social connectedness for children, young people and families.	2.1 Review one-on-one mentoring for young people to promote positive engagement with community.	1-2
		2.2 Explore options for families to transition to community playgroups.	2-3
		2.3 Promote local opportunities for social engagement and connectedness.	1-4
	Investigate opportunities to run pop-up events and other free events across the municipality.	2.4 Engage with children, young people and families in rural areas to identify and facilitate activities to support social connection.	1-4
	Explore strategies to capture and incorporate the voice of the child and young person into the activation of community spaces, programs and services.	2.5 Design and deliver FReeZA events across community spaces with and for young people.	1-4
		2.6 Early years activities informed by the voice of the child.	1-4
	Create opportunities for youth leadership.	2.7 Deliver a series of ‘Young Leaders’ workshops with elected Grade 6 leaders to facilitate connection and skill development.	2-3
		2.8 Empower the Youth Action Group to design and deliver events and programs for the annual Youth Fest.	1-4
		2.9 Support and empower young people to self-advocate through channels such as access to community grants and informing Council plans.	2-3
		2.10 Investigate the Youth Charter and provide opportunity for redesign with the Youth Action Group.	1-2

Key Priority Areas	Strategies	Action	Timeframe (Years)
	Investigate and develop a Communications Strategy focused on promoting targeted programs, events and initiatives for children, young people, and families.	2.11 Design, implement and review annual Communications Plans for children, young people, and families. 2.12 Investigate and utilise social media platforms for the promotion of programs and events for children, young people, and families.	1-4 2-3
Community Empowerment	Investigate strategies and opportunities to increase a sense of belonging for our community.	2.13 Deliver annual Children’s Week event and other early years activities. 2.14 Deliver the annual Moorabool Youth Awards to celebrate and recognise young people across the municipality. 2.15 Engage First Nations organisations to develop an understanding and appreciation of Country for children and young people. 2.16 Support the diversity of families through acknowledging and celebrating cultural and inclusive events.	1-4
	Investigate new opportunities to foster intergenerational connectedness.	2.17 Deliver activities and events that enable children and young people to share experiences with older generations.	1-2
	Investigate opportunity to increase participation and engagement in volunteer opportunities.	2.18 Promote volunteer opportunities that exist in community organisations.	2-3
Networks, partnerships and advocacy	Strengthen child and youth service networks.	2.19 Identify and participate in networks for children, young people and families across Moorabool.	1-2
	Explore and build on opportunities to collaborate with internal Council teams involved in increasing community engagement and participation.	2.20 Partner with internal teams to deliver programs and events with young people.	1-4
	Advocate for efficient and effective public transport options across the municipality to promote easy access to child and family services.	2.21 Explore opportunities to improve access to services across the municipality.	2-3

Theme 3: Education and Learning

“ Distance for students to travel to university or Tafe is a barrier to improving outcomes of young people.
- Parent ”

“ How do we raise the awareness of the importance of education, from birth to adulthood?
- Service Provider ”

Key Priority Areas	Strategies	Action	Timeframe (Years)
Formal and informal learning opportunities for children, young people and families	Promote existing formal and informal learning opportunities for children, young people and families.	3.1 Partner with Highlands LLEN, Djerriwarrh Community Education, The Laurels and Ballarat Group Training to investigate existing learning opportunities for young people. 3.2 Promote Kindergarten through Central Registration and Enrolment. 3.3 Promote Neighbourhood House educational programs. 3.4 Promote parent education programs.	1-4
	Maintain and expand the use of focus groups to educate parents and carers about child and youth development.	3.5 Facilitate referrals into parent/carer support programs. 3.6 Promote parents and carers as a child's first teacher through Small Talk and MCH programs.	1-4
	Plan and implement for 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten provision in line with Best Start Best Life Early Childhood Reform.	3.7 Support kindergarten teachers to strengthen School Readiness Funding outcomes. 3.8 Support and strengthen knowledge of Early Childhood Reforms amongst partners and other stakeholders. 3.9 Undertake Kindergarten Infrastructure Service Planning. 3.10 Deliver Kindergarten Central Registration and Enrolment Service to our community. 3.11 Promote the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026 with Early Years Managers. 3.12 Promote the Pre-School Field Officer Program within kindergarten programs.	1-4 1-2 1-2 1-4 2-3 1-2
	Investigate opportunities to expand the provision for learning and activities in the arts.	3.13 Partner with the Arts & Culture team to promote and investigate opportunities for learning and the exhibition of children and young people's art. 3.14 Deliver skill development workshops for FReeZA committee members in partnership with lead organisation, the Push.	1-4 1-4

Key Priority Areas	Strategies	Action	Timeframe (Years)
	Explore and build on opportunities to collaborate with internal Council teams involved in education and learning.	3.15 Partner with Libraries to promote Early Years and Youth programs. 3.16 Promote sustainability within educational settings in partnership with Council's Environment team.	1-4 1-2
Building a highly skilled and responsive workforce	Promote professional development opportunities to ensure contemporary practice.	3.17 Allocate department-specific training for Early Years and Youth Services teams in response to staff learning needs. 3.18 Encourage engagement within industry through communities of practice, conferences, and networks. 3.19 Investigate and promote cultural safety training for Community Connections & Wellbeing teams.	1-4 1-4 2-3
	Develop and strengthen cohesive collaborative practice in an integrated hub environment.	3.20 Establish Hub Advisory networks within the West Maddingley and Darley Early Years and Community Hubs.	1-2
	Strengthen the Early Childhood Education and Care workforce.	3.21 Promote collaborative partnerships between consultant and Early Years Managers in relation to developing a Moorabool Workforce Strategy.	1-2
Networks, partnerships and advocacy	Develop strategies to strengthen relationships with local schools.	3.22 Investigate opportunities to engage with secondary schools adjacent to our municipality that educate young people who live in Moorabool. 3.23 Co-design and deliver programs with Bacchus Marsh College to support young people's learning.	1-2 1-4
	Investigate partnerships to support education-related transitions at different stages.	3.24 Create and deliver a Grade 6-Year 7 Transition Program in partnership with local primary and secondary schools. 3.25 Deliver a Careers Expo for young people aged 15+ to support transition from secondary to tertiary or other alternate education and employment pathways. 3.26 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Outreach officer, Supported Playgroup, Best Start, and Maternal and Child Health promote transition to kindergarten and school.	1-4 2-4 1-4

Theme 4: Safety and Inclusion

“
 What is the reality of safety versus perceived safety in this community?
 - Service Provider
 ”

“
 Continue to support young people who identify as LGBTQIA+
 - Parent
 ”

Key Priority Areas	Strategies	Action	Timeframe (Years)
Inclusive and accessible Council programs, services and spaces to meet the needs of our diverse community	Review referral documents to enhance inclusive accessibility for diverse communities.	4.1 Review and investigate options for accessibility for Permission and referral forms within Youth Services.	1-2
		4.2 Identify documents to be translated into languages other than English.	2-3
		4.3 Identify language diversity within Moorabool community for translation of documents.	1-2
		4.4 Promote inclusive accessibility for people with disability through accessibly published documents.	2-3
	Explore programs and spaces to ensure they meet the needs for inclusive accessibility.	4.5 Early Years and Youth Services to complete comprehensive Gender Impact Assessment on programs.	1-2
		4.6 Accessibility audit completed for all venues used for Community Connections & Wellbeing programs.	2-3
Investigate the service needs of culturally diverse communities in the provision of services for children and young people.		4.7 Provide translation services (Language Loop) to facilitate access to Kindergarten Central Registration and enrolment.	1-4
		4.8 Offer supports for culturally and linguistically diverse families enrolling into early years services.	1-4
Investigate methods to engage with local First Nations community.		4.9 Implement strategies to support the Koori Early Years Engagement Team.	1-2
		4.10 Provide opportunities for awareness raising and celebration of First Nations community through events such as NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week.	1-4
		4.11 Advocate within Council for a Reconciliation Action Plan.	2-3
		4.12 Build partnerships with Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation, Ballarat and District Aboriginal Corporation (BADAC), and Babaneek Booboop.	2-3

Key Priority Areas	Strategies	Action	Timeframe (Years)
	Investigate methods to engage with and support local LGBTQIA+ communities.	4.13 Deliver LGBTQIA+ group for young people. 4.14 Provide opportunities for LGBTQIA+ awareness raising and celebration through events such as IDAHOBIT and Pride.	1-4 1-4
Safe and accessible built and online environments	<p>Implement the Child Safe Standards Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Standard 1 - Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected. • Child Safe Standard 2 - Embed information sharing, record keeping and governance arrangements to ensure the creation of a Child Safe culture. • Child Safe Standard 3 - Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. • Child Safe Standard 4 - Inform and involve families and communities in promoting child safety and wellbeing. • Child Safe Standard 5 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice. • Child Safe Standard 9 - Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed. 	<p>4.15 Child Safe Standard 1 4.15.1 Display Aboriginal flag at Early Years Hubs and seek guidance from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations on further culturally safe initiatives.</p> <p>4.16 Child Safe Standard 2 4.16.1 Apply Family Violence Information Sharing and Child Information Sharing practice. 4.16.2 Undertake Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework training.</p> <p>4.17 Child Safe Standard 3 4.17.1 Investigate learning opportunities for young people to inform them about their rights relating to education, employment, and legal systems. 4.17.2 Deliver activities for children and young people that support positive peer relationships.</p> <p>4.18 Child Safe Standard 4 4.18.1 Investigate opportunities for families and communities to provide input on policies and activities that impact children and young people. 4.18.2 Provide Child Safety information and processes targeted to families and communities at all Community Connections & Wellbeing venues.</p> <p>4.19 Child Safe Standard 5 4.19.1 Undertake Gender Impact Assessments on Youth Services, Maternal and Child health Service and Early Years services.</p> <p>4.20 Child Safe Standard 9 4.20.1 Facilitate learning opportunities for safe social media use for children and young people.</p>	1-4 1-4 1-4 1-4 1-4 1-2 1-2 1-4
	Review signage at Council Community Connections & Wellbeing venues and facilities.	4.21 Investigate opportunities to improve accessibility.	1-2



The Moorabool Shire Young Communities Strategy was prepared by Hello Learning and Acosh Design in collaboration with Moorabool Shire Council.