

# Progress Snapshot

Cardinia Shire's Liveability Plan  
Action Agenda 2023-24







# Acknowledgments

Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands we call Cardinia Shire. We pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Statement of inclusion

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 all cultural backgrounds, those identifying as LGBTIQ+, people of faith and people of all ages, genders and disability.

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# Introduction

The Annual Progress Report shares how we are progressing towards achieving the priorities set out in Cardinia Shire's Liveability Plan 2017-29 (The Plan).

The aim of the Plan is to achieve maximum levels of health and wellbeing for all, through identifying public health issues in the community, and strategies and actions to minimise or prevent them.

The Plan has a focus on the social determinants of health, or the conditions in which people are born, learn, live, work and age, and the actions required to improve liveability, health, and wellbeing of all people in the shire.

Reporting on each outcome area, we highlight key collective achievements from July 2023 – June 2024, and areas of focus for the next 12 months.

Find more information about liveability, health, and wellbeing in Cardinia Shire here:

**[www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/healthandwellbeing](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/healthandwellbeing)**

Our shared long-term health and wellbeing outcomes are:

- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Improve social cohesion
- Improve safety
- Improve healthy eating and active living
- Reduce family violence
- Improve financial wellbeing and resilience
- Reduce harm from tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and gambling.

# Cardinia Shire's Liveability Partnership

Cardinia Shire's Liveability Plan is delivered by the Liveability Partnership; a group of 68 organisations leading the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Liveability Plan, and associated Action Agendas. The Partnership consists of a Steering Group, a Lead/Backbone Team and five Action Teams.

We would like to acknowledge the collective efforts of the hundreds of staff and volunteers involved in bringing to life, actions within the Liveability Plan Action Agendas. Their collective effort to guide the vision of work, share measurement, build public will, mobilise funding, and deliver aligned activities is based on the shared understanding that social change, requires broad cross-sector coordination.

Cardinia Shire Council (Council) provides 'backbone support' to the Partnership, as a key function under the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. This report has been prepared by Council on behalf of the Liveability Partnership Steering Group and associated Action Teams.

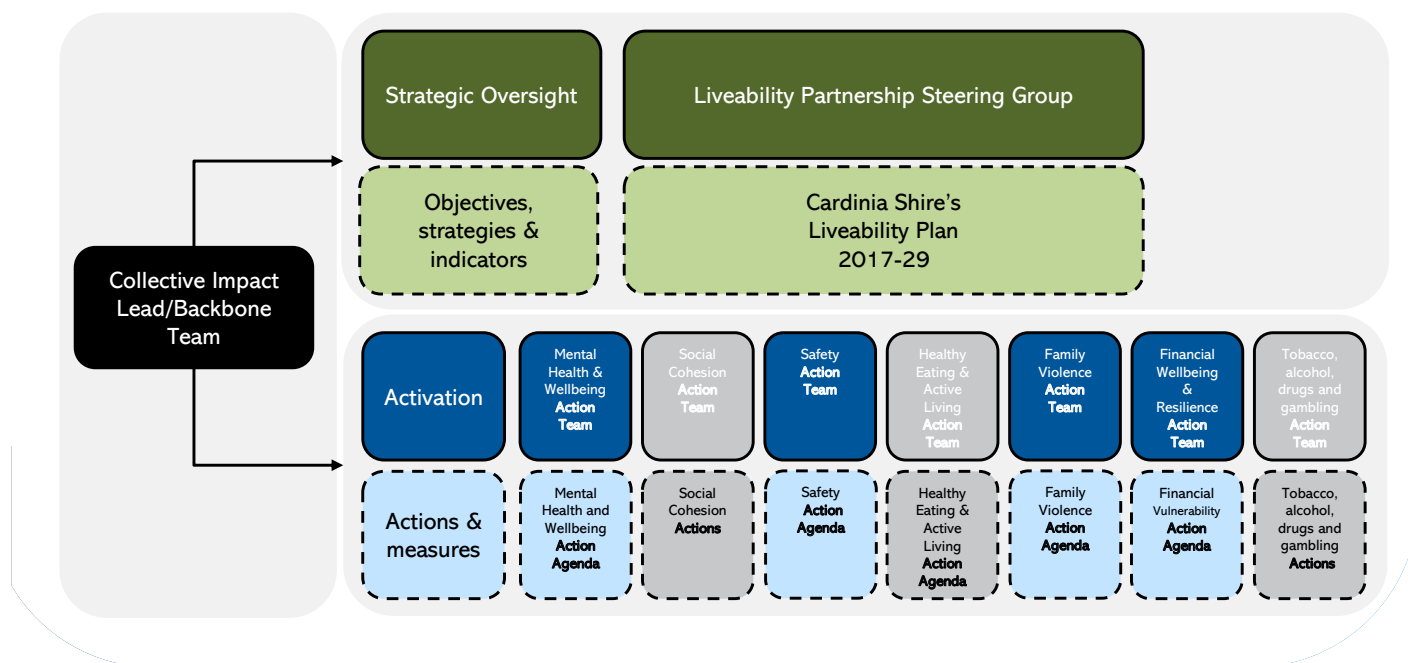


Figure 1. The governance structure of the Cardinia Shire Liveability Partnership in 2023-24.

Note: Blue denotes that an action team is operated by Council under this outcome area, grey denotes that no action team currently exists however work is still being completed by Council and stakeholders towards the outcome area.



## The Liveability Partnership Steering Group includes:

- Aligned Leisure
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Enliven
- Kooweerup Regional Health Service
- Monash Health Community
- MyLi
- South East Public Health Unit
- Outlook
- South East Community Links
- South East Local Learning and Employment Network
- South East Water
- Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre
- Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Victoria Police
- WAYSS
- Windana
- Women's Health in the South East

## Feedback from the Liveability Partnership is gathered annually, and in 2024<sup>1</sup> found that:

**93%** members feel a sense of common purpose

**73%** members find the partnership meetings valuable

**87%** members trust council as the backbone organisation

### As a result of participating in the partnership:

**67%** had collaborated with other partners in the Liveability Partnership

**47%** had increased promotion of services within Cardinia Shire

**40%** had taken on board learnings from the Partnership to improve their work

**33%** had expanded or adapted existing projects to align with liveability plan outcomes

**33%** had used data provided by the Liveability Plan/ partnership in advocacy or grant applications.

## Focus for 2023-24

The Liveability Plan 2017-2029 is due to be reviewed in 2025, in line with the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. This review will provide an opportunity to reflect contemporary policies, strategies, community context, and health and wellbeing data in the Liveability Plan.

Partnership members have affirmed their interest to continue to strengthen collective governance and shared measurement of the Plan, while exploring methods to enhance communication and engagement both within the Partnership and with the broader community.

An extensive engagement process consisting of internal and external engagement, will commence in late 2024, with the update of the Liveability Plan to be finalised by October 2025.

<sup>1</sup> Cardinia Shire Liveability Partnership Survey 2024 (n=15).

# Liveability Update

We monitor seven liveability indicators to signal how we are tracking towards our long-term health and wellbeing outcomes in the Plan. We know that neighbourhoods with higher liveability are more likely to produce better long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.



## Active Travel

- Use of footpaths increased from 35% in 2019 to 44% in 2023.<sup>2</sup>
- Use of shared bike paths has doubled from 7% in 2019 to 14% in 2023.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2023, the main barriers to active transport were:
  - Weather (32%), higher among females (38%)
  - Too much to carry (29%, higher among females (38%))
  - Prefer to use the car (28%)
  - Takes too long (26%)
  - Nothing close by (23%)
  - A quarter (26%) of those aged 70+ said that a physical disability prevents them from using active transport.<sup>2</sup>
- 10% walk, ride or scoot for local trips instead of driving, most commonly to access non-competitive outdoor exercise, children's playgrounds and parks.<sup>2</sup>
- 33% of households are located within 400m of a bus stop, however only 8.3% of households have access to a regular 30-minute weekday service (between 7am-7pm).<sup>3</sup>



## Education

- 52.4% of people aged over 15 years had completed year 12 schooling (or equivalent) as of 2021 (compared to the Victorian average of 59.5%).<sup>4</sup>
- More people (23.9%) in Cardinia Shire had a vocational qualification in 2021 (compared to 16.7% across Victoria), while a lower proportion (19.1%) had a bachelor degree or higher compared to the Victorian average (29.2%).<sup>4</sup>

- In 2023, 94% of Cardinia Shire children were enrolled compared to the state average of 96%.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2021, 11.8% of residents reported doing some form of volunteering. This has decreased from 18.2% in 2016.<sup>4</sup>



## Employment

- 30% of residents experienced workplace stress in 2023, a decrease from 38% in 2021.<sup>2</sup>
- Between 2021 to 2023, there has been a decrease in underemployment (12% down to 9%) and unemployment (11% down to 6%).<sup>2</sup>
- In 2021, 8.3% of 15- to 24-year-olds in Cardinia Shire were disengaged from employment and education, compared to 7.5% in Victoria.<sup>4</sup>
- The jobs to resident workers ratio for Cardinia Shire in 2022/23 was 0.58, meaning that there were less jobs than resident workers.<sup>6</sup>



## Food

- In 2023, 33% of households paid more than 30% of their household income on food.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2023, households indicated that:
  - 12% had cut the size of meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food
  - 24% said there are too many other things to pay for (such as rent, bills, medicines etc.) compared to 18% in 2021
  - 40% said the food in the shops or supermarket costs too much compared to 25% in 2021
  - 14% said there was not enough time to cook or shop





- 7% ran out of food and couldn't afford to buy more (compared to 4% in 2021).
- 5% of residents feel that food that is familiar or appropriate for their culture is not available.
- In 2021, 35% of households were within 1 kilometre of a supermarket.<sup>3</sup>



## Community infrastructure and services

- Majority of residents can access a doctor (65%), dental (58%), allied health (54%), and/or food support (52%) within the Shire, however many go outside of the shire to access mental health (64%), housing (72%) and alcohol and drug rehabilitation (70%) services.<sup>2</sup>
- 25% of residents in 2023, did not visit a general practitioner (GP) when needed, compared to the Victorian average of 20%.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2021, the average distance from residential dwelling to a GP clinic with bulkbilling is 1.6 kilometres, similar to the average distance to the closest activity centre (1.6km).<sup>3</sup>
- The community facilities and services that the residents most like to use are markets and festivals, followed by children's playgrounds and libraries.<sup>2</sup>



## Housing

- Support for "housing that is specifically built and/or allocated to assist members of the community who have very low incomes, disabilities, or are impacted by family violence, or who are unable to find housing themselves" has remained stable over time (70% in 2019, 65% in 2021 and 66% in 2023).<sup>2</sup>

- Between 2021 and 2023 the proportion of residents spending more than 50% of their household income on housing costs rose from 7% to 20%. This was more common among younger respondents (30% under 35-year-olds), those who speak a language other than English (32%), those paying a mortgage (28%) and single parents (45%).<sup>2</sup>
- Homelessness is becoming more visible, with 44% of respondents in 2023 saying they had seen someone who is homeless in their local area, up from 36% in 2021 and 22% in 2019.<sup>2</sup>
- 19% and 9% said they had difficulty finding a suitable property to purchase or rent, respectively, within their budget (up from 14% and 7% respectively in 2021).<sup>2</sup>
- 28% reported experiencing rental or mortgage stress in the year prior, up from 13% in 2019 and 2021.<sup>2</sup>
- 2% indicated that they had used housing or homelessness support services in the 12 months prior to interview, up from 0% in 2021.<sup>2</sup>

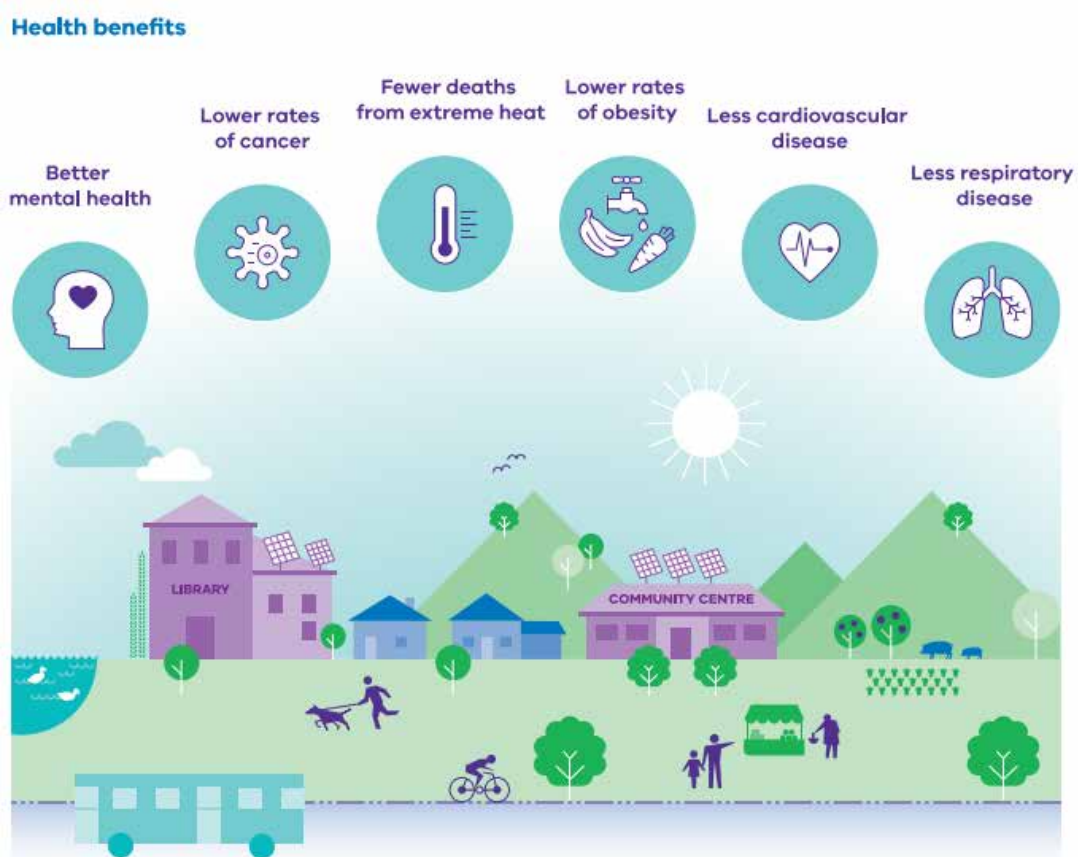


## Environment and open space

- 81.6% of households are within 400 meters of public open space.<sup>3</sup>
- The proportion of residents who visit native bushland decreased to 51% in 2023, compared to 58% in 2021.<sup>2</sup>
- Visiting a local park / open space decreases with age, from 74% of 18–35-year-olds, down to 38% of 70+ year olds. Those who speak a language other than English show a higher instance of liking visiting local parks and open space (71%, compared to 61% English only speakers).<sup>2</sup>

# Climate change and health

Climate change poses a significant risk to public health and wellbeing. It affects all aspects of liveability, intensifying pre-existing vulnerabilities within communities. To address this, the Liveability Plan integrates strategies for both mitigating and adapting to climate change, aiming to safeguard health of present and future populations (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Climate change and health co-benefits of mitigation efforts<sup>8</sup>**

Monitoring community perceptions and impacts of climate change are part of this Plan. The Household Liveability Survey conducted in 2023, found that while 19% of residents have done nothing to prepare for extreme weather events, many prepare by obtaining insurance for potential damage (51%), remove rubbish from their property (51%) and clean their gutters (48%).

To minimise climate impacts, residents put food waste in a compost/worm farm/green bin (62%), buy/eat local produce (56%), avoid buying plastic products

(55%), and plant native plants/enhance garden habitat for plants (52%).

When thinking about their concerns for the future impact of climate change, residents were most likely to indicate damage to infrastructure (roads, electricity or communication 61%, 60% and 49% respectively), increase food costs (57%), damage human-health (asthma (43%), mental health (25%), increase heat stroke (19%), isolation (19%) and worsening of health conditions (18%) as the main negative impacts.

<sup>8</sup> Victorian Government - Department of Health and Human Service. Tackling climate change and its impacts on health through municipal public health and wellbeing planning: Guidance for local government, 2020.





## Outcome 1

# Improve mental health and wellbeing



**26%** of residents experienced negative impacts from mental health issues in 2023, down from 34% in 2021. This was higher among people under 35 years old (34%), renters (34%) and those with a mortgage (28%).<sup>2</sup>

Negative impacts relating to body image increased in 2021 (15%, up from 7% in 2019) and remains high in 2023 (14%).<sup>2</sup>

**22%** of residents experience high/very high psychological distress, compared to 19% Victorian average.<sup>7</sup>

**15%** of residents had used mental health services in the last 12 months. This was higher amongst females (20%, compared to 10% males), those under 35 years old (20%, compared to 6% 70+ year olds), renters (24%, compared to 10% of those who own their home outright), one person households (32%) and single parents (32%, compared to <10% of couples with or without children).<sup>2</sup>

**65%** of residents accessing mental health services, did so outside of Cardinia Shire.<sup>2</sup>

**24%** of residents experienced loneliness in 2023, similar to 23% of Victorians.<sup>7</sup>

In 2023, a higher proportion of children have reported being bullied across Cardinia Shire in school years 4-6 (19.7%) and years 7-9 (20.4%), compared to Victoria at 17.1% and 16.9% respectively.<sup>5</sup>

## Our objectives

- 1.1 Increase access to equitable mental health services
- 1.2 Increase resilience of communities to adapt and thrive
- 1.3 Increase connection to an involvement in nature

## Action Team

*The Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Team includes representatives from:*

- Aligned Leisure
- Cardinia Shire Council
- EACH community health
- Eastern Region Mental Health Association (ERMHA)
- Hope Assistance Local Tradies (HALT)
- Kooweerup Regional Health Service
- Better Health Network
- Headspace Pakenham
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Australia
- Monash Health Community
- Outlook Australia
- Uniting Victoria
- Wellways
- Women's Health in the South East (WHISE)
- My Local Library (Myli)
- WAYSS

*15 Action Team Members*

*6 Action Team meetings held*

## Key achievements

- Enliven Victoria delivered the ‘multicultural community heat heroes’ through climate health messaging on how to keep yourself and your community safe in a heat wave. On behalf of enliven Victoria, AfriAus iLEAC ran a community engagement information session in February on heat health in Officer, which 50 people attended.
- Council delivered 240 projects, initiatives and education sessions relating to preserving the environment, with spending time in nature linked to a sense of personal investment and help people overcome feelings of hopelessness and anxiety.<sup>7</sup>
- WHISE launched the Social Planners’ Gender and Mental Wellbeing Network and delivered the ‘Rethinking Mental Health Promotion’ resource for local Councils to embed Gender Transformative Practice and Theory for Positive Mental Health Outcomes, into Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.
- Council, SELLEN, Myli and Asuria delivered ‘Pathways to employment’ workshops at Pakenham Library, with 106 registrations across 3 sessions. The format of these sessions is being reviewed to enhance accessibility for students and families.
- Council, South East Water, and the Cardinia Foundation delivered a grants webinar. This received 37 registrations, and 25 attendees.
- Five editions of the Liveability Partnership e-newsletter were sent in 2023/24 to an average of 165 recipients, to inform local organisations of grants, events, partnership opportunities and projects.
- Cardinia Shire Youth Services engaged with 4,356 young people across a range of services, programs and workshops, and facilitated 21 events.
- Cardinia Shires Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Team designed the Mental Health Month social marketing campaign in October 2023, which saw 18 events listed on What’s on Cardinia. These events included a mixture of activities around general wellbeing, social connection and awareness raising around mental health.
- Council’s Economic Development Team is working towards an Investment Attraction Plan, which will identify actions required to attract businesses, including health services, to Cardinia Shire.

## Spotlight on

### Hope Assistance Local Tradies (HALT) and Gamblers Help Southern collaborate on gambling harm prevention among tradies

In 2023-2024, HALT engaged with Gamblers Help Southern (Better Health Network) to create tailored education sessions for people in trades-occupations, focussed on the link between gambling harm and mental ill-health. Three sessions were delivered to over 310 attendees across Cardinia Shire.

This project coincides with the review of Cardinia Shire’s Responsible Gambling Policy, which was reviewed through stakeholder and community consultation to the new ‘Gambling Harm Prevention & Minimisation Policy’ (See Case Study under outcome area 7). This new policy reflects the contemporary approach to reducing gambling related harm in our community, as a public health issue.

## Focus for 2024-25

In anticipation of the Victorian Governments Wellbeing in Victoria: A Plan to Promote Good Mental Health, and the establishment of Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Boards, the Action Team will look to identify opportunities to align and support local implementation.

## Outcome 2

# Improve social cohesion

Negative personal or family experiences of antisocial behaviour in the last 12 months, increased from 12% in 2019, to 15% in 2023.<sup>2</sup>

Almost half (42%) have an interest in attending community festivals. This is more common in those aged under 35 (44%) and 35-49 (53%), and those who speak a language other than English (57%).<sup>2</sup>

Between 2021 and 2023, there has been increasing interest in participating in local libraries (from 33% to 37%), cultural events (from 31% to 32%), and leisure centres (from 26% to 29%).<sup>2</sup>

20% feel 'no connection' to the local community; an increase from 2021 (15%). This was more common amongst renters (33%), and males (23%). Those with 'not enough' connection were more likely to be under 35-year-olds (34%), those who speak a language other than English (37%), and those with a mortgage (32%).<sup>2</sup>

A lower proportion of residents (56%) feel that multiculturalism definitely makes life in the local area better, compared to the Victorian average (67%).<sup>7</sup>

Experiences of discrimination:<sup>2</sup>

- 15% of 60-69 year olds experienced discrimination based on their age
- 6% of people experienced weight/body shape discrimination, which was higher among 35-49 year olds (11%)
- 7% experienced discrimination based on cultural background (31% amongst those who speak a language other than English)
- 9% of females experienced gender-based discrimination.



## Our objectives

- 2.1 increase social connection within and between neighbourhoods
- 2.2 Increase sense of belonging and acceptance
- 2.3 increase community volunteering and participation

## Action Team members

While an exclusive Action Team addressing social cohesion has not been established, several networks and committees are currently supporting this work including, but not limited to:

- Cardinia Seniors Network
- Cardinia Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Multicultural Advisory Group



## Key achievements

- In June 2024, Council hosted the Fusion Festival, to unite the whole community through a fun and enlightening experience. This year's theme was 'Finding Freedom' with a focus on celebrating the shared values of resilience, strength, and unity that define our multicultural community. The event was attended by over 200 people and 24 service providers.  
The Cardinia Seniors Network continues to run with an average attendance of 40 people at each of the 6 sessions.
- The Ageing Well Expo was held in May 2024, featured a range of service provider stalls and guest speakers on the topics of falls prevention and staying connected for good mental wellbeing. The event was attended by over 200 people.
- Across Seniors Festival, a calendar of local events was facilitated by a range of community organisations was collectively attended by over 500 participants.
- As part of National Reconciliation Week, the following events were hosted:
  - A Welcome to Country and traditional smoking ceremony by Bunurong Land Council, Didgeridoo performance (Yidaki), and raising of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Australian flags.
  - A reconciliation event, featuring Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony by local Wurundjeri man Alex Kerr (for Wurundjeri Land Council), and presentations from local children and young people about Reconciliation Week's theme, 'Now More than Ever'.
  - An art exhibition 'Dancing Between the Echoes', by First Nations artist Emmy Webbers, (also known as Wurruck Yambo). The exhibition went beyond individual stories to create a collective masterpiece and showcase a profound connection to the land, spirituality, and community.
- Sixteen community members graduated from the 2023 Cardinia Community Leadership Program. Graduates joined the Program Alumni which now has over 100 graduates.
- 

## Spotlight on

### Cardinia Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (CAIAC)

- Fifteen residents are members of the CAIAC, who in 2023-24, collectively provided information and advice to Council on issues impacting upon people with disability to support full inclusion in community life. This included advice, advocacy and feedback on projects including:
  - Pakenham Revitalisation Project
  - Disability Action Plan
  - Council 2024-25 Budget
  - Access Upgrade Program
  - The 'Expression' Art Exhibition
  - Universal Design Policy.
- For the latter, the Universal Design: Built Environment and Service Delivery Policy, aims to enhance the experience of community life and reduce discrimination by creating accessible spaces, places and services. This aligns with Cardinia Shire Council's Plan, Liveability Plan and Disability Action Plan. Universal design encourages the infrastructure and services delivered by Council to be more accessible and inclusive to meet the needs of all people in our community. The Policy was endorsed in August 2024, with further work to embed the policy at Cardinia Shire.

### Focus for 2024-25

Finalising the development of Councils Social Justice and Equity Policy, while working with community members and groups to update local plans including Reconciliation Action Plan, and Cultural Diversity Action Plan.

## Outcome 3

# Improve safety



Rating footpaths as good or very good safety increased to 59% in 2023, up from 51% in 2021.<sup>2</sup>

Personal or family experiences of crime or safety issues were higher in 2019 (24%), than in 2021 (18%) or 2023 (19%).<sup>2</sup>

Experiences of dangerous driving has been decreasing over time (from 26% in 2019 to 14% in 2023).<sup>2</sup>

A total of 5,493 recorded offences were committed in Cardinia in the year ending June 2024, an increase of 17.8% on the previous year.<sup>9</sup>

## Our objectives

- 3.1 Increase road, pedestrian and cyclist safety
- 3.2 increase perceptions of safety
- 3.3 Increase preparedness for climate hazard events
- 3.4 Reduce crime and anti-social offending
- 3.5 Reduce injury in public places

## Action Team members

The Safety Action Team, also known as the Safer Communities Partnership Committee, includes representatives from:

- Anglicare
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Dept. of Justice and Community Safety
- Eastern Region Mental Health Association (ERMHA)
- Victoria Police
- Crime Stoppers
- Kooweerup Regional Health Service
- Department of Education and Training (DET)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Southeast Local Learning and Employment Network (SELLEN)
- Windana
- The Orange Door
- Youth Support Advocacy Service (YSAS)
- Berry Street
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- Neighbourhood Watch- Pakenham

16 Action Team Members

5 Action Team meetings held

## Key achievements

- Councils hireable Bicycle Trailer resource was reinstated, now open for schools and community organisations to hire at no cost, to conduct cycling safety training with students.
- Mobile CCTV trailers were deployed to 29 various locations across Cardinia. As a result, there was increased response to emerging crime, including commercial burglaries, car thefts, intentional fires and anti-social behaviour.
- Cardinia Shire's Community Safety Framework was endorsed. The Framework recognises that safety is about being and feeling safe, protecting people from danger and preventing harm where there are known hazards or risks to personal safety. The framework is intended to provide a comprehensive evidence-based framework for how Council approaches community safety within the municipality.
- Multiple 'Coffee with Community' events which are an opportunity for the Community to Connect with Council and Emergency Services to discuss community safety concerns.
- Greater engagement with safety partners through Safer Communities Partnership Committee meeting.
- The "Wiser driver" training program was delivered in Emerald in partnership with U3A, reaching 25 participants. Delivered over 4 weeks, the informal tutorial-style sessions encourage active participation in discussions and sharing of driving experiences.

## Spotlight on

Executing people to people (P2P) approach, 'Coffee with a community' is a backbone of council's outreach activity to improve the perception of community safety among the general population by enabling an environment where residents engage safety discussion with their local police and other safety stakeholders. This outreach activity has fostered coordination and cooperation for social cohesion and communal harmony. The outreach is regularly organised in partnership with Victoria Police in different geographical locations within Cardinia Shire.

In June this year, a 'coffee with community' was organised in Lang Lang. The event was requested by the Lang Lang District Business and Community Group and followed on from a community meeting with Victoria Police held in 2023 where the Lang Lang community requested greater police presence in the town. On the occasion, more than 50 residents embraced the opportunity to discuss with their local Council's departments (Community Strengthening, Compliance, and Emergency Management), and Victoria Police.

## Focus for 2024-25

Adopting people to people (P2P) approach for the implementation of the Safety Action Agenda 2024-25 in consultation with the Safer Communities Partnership Committee.



## Outcome 4

# Improve healthy eating and active living

The proportion of residents playing organised sport remained low in 2023 (17%), compared to pre-Covid levels in 2019 (21%).<sup>2</sup>

In 2023, going to a sportsground to play team sport was more common amongst 35–49 year-olds (32%), compared to the general population (19%).<sup>2</sup>

Visiting parks and open spaces (63%), native bushland (51%), and children’s playgrounds (41%) are among the most common activities community members like to participate in.<sup>2</sup>

Daily consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks has increased from 12% in 2021, to 14% in 2023. This was more frequent amongst males (16%) and 12-17 (17%), 18-24 (23%), and 25–34-year-olds (22%).<sup>2</sup>

Half (49-51%) of residents meet Australian Dietary Guidelines for fruit consumption and 7% meet the vegetable consumption guidelines.<sup>2</sup>

The Shire has a low walkability score of -2 (in the 15th percentile across Victoria), ranging from 1.2 in Pakenham, to -4.5 in Cardinia (suburb).<sup>3</sup>

In 2021, 34% of households were within 1 kilometre of a supermarket.<sup>3</sup>

63.5% of people travel to work in a car, 2.7% use public transport and 1.2% ride a bike or walk, while 18.8% work at home.<sup>4</sup>

Between 2016-2020, the Shire experienced a higher rate of avoidable deaths from diabetes, circulatory system disease and cancer, compared to the rest of Victoria.<sup>10</sup>



## Our objectives

- 4.1 increase sustainability and resilience of the local food system
- 4.2 Increase consumption of fresh produce and drinking water
- 4.3 Increase walking and cycling for transport
- 4.4 Increase participation in active leisure, recreation, and sport

## Action Team members

The Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Action Team includes representatives from:

- Aligned Leisure
- Beaconhills College – Pakenham Campus
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Centre for Multicultural Sport
- Enliven Victoria
- Kooweerup Regional Health Service
- Monash Health Community
- My Community Library (Myli)
- Outlook Australia
- South East Water
- The Community Grocer
- GippSport

12 Action Team members

2 Action Team meetings held

The HEAL Action Team disbanded in late 2023, due to Victorian health sector reform resulting in the formation of several partnership groups focussed on healthy eating and physical activity prevention-based activities. Liveability Partnership members continue to collaborate through the following forums:

- Monash Health Southeast Food and Nutrition Network
- South East Public Health Unit, Active Living Regional Expert Advisory Group

## Key achievements

- South East Water and Council delivered the water fountain project, with seven drinking water fountains installed. Locations were prioritised based on climate-health impacts for community members participating in outdoor activities and people experiencing homelessness.
- Council made a submission into the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Victoria's Food Supply System.
- The Women and Girls Sport and Participation Network expanded its membership by 7 people. The network secured sponsorship to provide members with a 'Play Like a Girl' training and are working on key projects such as the Active Girls Brunch for 2025.
- Two sporting clubs have completed the Rainbow Ready Clubs program.
- Council endorsed the Fair Access Policy.
- Monash Health delivered the 'healthy sponsorship in sport' research project, which investigated the current partnerships and perceptions of clubs towards sponsorship arrangements.
- Through the VicHealth Local Government Partnership, Council continued the 'future proofing farming' project, including:
  - Delivery of co-design workshops to investigate opportunities to improve education and employment pathways for young people in agriculture.
  - The 'Grow' Art Exhibition, featuring photographs of 17 farms showcasing the rewards of farming, complimented by artworks by young people exploring the 'future of farming'. The exhibit was visited by 1629 people.

- Development of a video mini-series of local farmers exploring the rewards of farming, opportunities to grow, and pathways to explore.
- Commenced collaboration with schools, SELLEN, DET, and farms to explore opportunities for farm tours, work placements and traineeships.
- Aligned Leisure delivered the Tiger PAW Program to 1,000+ students across 10 schools.
- Monash Health Community, worked with 13 sports clubs in Cardinia Shire to create health-promoting programs, environments and policies through the Healthy Sports Clubs Program.

## Spotlight on

The Community Grocer (TCG) is a non-profit fresh-produce market dedicated to enhancing access to local, affordable, culturally diverse produce in a serene, sensory-controlled environment. TCG weekly markets in Pakenham provide fruit and vegetables at prices up to 35% lower than nearby fresh food outlets. With a dedication to food security and empowering residents facing economic hardship with the dignity of choice, TCG has attracted over 2,180 customers to the market in 2023-24; two-thirds of which were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and 80% were either low-income earners or unemployed.

TCG offers five product lines sourced from regenerative farms including the United African Farm in Cardinia; with an ambitious goal to transition 20% of its supply chain to local and regenerative sources. TCG has partnered with Cardinia Life, Living & Learning Pakenham, and Officer City Soccer Club to offer after-hours pick-up points for produce boxes, and expanded the Grocer Gift program in Cardinia Shire; this donation-based initiative provides a weekly fruit and vegetable box to Windermere free to residents and has successfully distributed over \$3,500 in Grocer Gift cards to community members in financial hardship in 2023-2024.

TCG is cultivating the future workforce, with six volunteers at the Pakenham Market contributing 240 hours of support in 2023-24. TCG plans to work with young people to offer workplace training in the future, equipping them with skills in sustainable food supply systems that yield lasting social impact.

## Focus for 2024-25

Following the release of 'A Plan for Victoria' (replacing Plan Melbourne 2050), anticipated in late 2024, a key focus will be identifying opportunities to leverage this policy through the Action Agenda, and regional network and partnerships.

## Outcome 5

# Reduce family violence



The proportion of residents who perceive the topic of family violence to 'not be a serious problem' in the community has increased (2% 2019, 2% 2021, 5% 2023).<sup>2</sup>

The proportion of residents who perceive family violence to be 'extremely common' has remained relatively stable over time (13% 2019, 14% 2021, 15% 2023).<sup>2</sup>

In the previous year ending June 2024, there were 1,669 incidents of family violence reported to police; 9.0% more than the previous year. 79% of victims of these incidents were females and 29% of victims were aged 35-44 years, and 10% of these victims were children <18 years.<sup>9</sup>

## Our objectives

- 5.1 Increase awareness and attitudes towards gender equality
- 5.2 Increase capacity of individuals, organisations, and communities to promote respectful relationships
- 5.3 Increase social support and services for people experiencing family violence

## Action Team members

*The Family Violence Action Team (Together We Can Roundtable) includes representatives from:*

- Aligned Leisure
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Department of Education and Training (DET)
- My Community Library (Myli)
- Orange Door (Family Safety Victoria)
- Relationships Australia (VIC)
- Sikh Australia Support for Family Violence
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
- Victoria Police
- WAYSS
- Windermere
- Women's Health in the South-East (WHISE)

*12 Action Team Member Organisations*

*6 Action Team meetings held*



## Key achievements

- The Walk Against Family Violence was held in November 2023, coordinated by the Casey-Cardinia Family Violence Network. The event was attended by between 250-300 people.
- Council partnered with DV Safe Phone to collect old smartphones that can be re-purposed to help people experiencing family and domestic violence. DV Safe Phone collect, repair and provide free mobile phones to people experiencing family and domestic violence (DV) through a range of support agencies across Australia. Six DV Safe Phone boxes were located across the Shire: Hills Hub – Emerald, Eco Centre - Kooweerup Regional Health Service, Cardinia Shire Council Civic Centre, Outlook Community Centre, Pakenham Library, and Cardinia Life.
- Women’s Health in the South East organised several events that championed women’s leadership including the Better Together Conference, International Women’s Day, and learning webinars.
- Council trained several staff to become Gender Impact Assessment champions.
- Staff from Cardinia Life, Community First Aid Responders and Pakenham Secondary College participated in the Preventing First Aid Training.
- WHISE delivered ‘gender and disaster’ training to nine professionals from a range of community services working with people who have been impacted by disasters.
- Council convened the internal Respect and Equity Committee.
- WHISE continued to lead the Promoting Respect & Equality Together Strategy, Good Health Down South Network and promote the Critical Friends Network.
- WHISE delivered the webinar on mental health & prevention of gender-based violence – ‘Connecting the Dots’.

## Spotlight on

### ‘Gender What?’ Conversations

As part of the Together We Can partnership, Council, WHISE and Myli delivered a ‘Gender What?’ Conversation with young people from Councils Chill and Skill program to capture their thoughts and attitudes towards gender equity.

The forum discussed themes including gender equity, gender stereotypes and feeling safe regardless of gender. Participants thoughts were captured as part of an artwork in the session which was displayed in the White Ribbon Art Show in November and is permanently on display in Councils youth facility, My Place.

Two additional ‘Gender What?’ sessions were proposed involving older residents and new parents however there was no uptake for these sessions. The working group took this as a key learning on how different community groups require different approaches to the conversation about gender equality.

## Focus for 2024-25

The The Family Violence Action Team will investigate how to engage men and boys into the prevention of family violence over the next year as well as engaging with multicultural and faith-based communities in Cardinia Shire.

## Outcome 6

# Improved financial wellbeing and resilience



In 2023 16% residents couldn't afford to pay bills in the 12 months prior, up from 12% in 2021.<sup>2</sup>

In 2021, 15.1% of Cardinia Shire's households with a mortgage and 31.4% of renting households were paying >30% of income on their mortgage/rent.<sup>4</sup>

In 2023, 26% reported experiencing negative impacts from expensive medical services, up from 21% in 2021.<sup>2</sup>

In 2023, 23% reported experiencing financial difficulties in the year prior, up from 18% in 2021.<sup>2</sup>

## Our objectives

- 6.1 Decrease cost of living in growth areas related to liveability
- 6.2 Increase financial literacy and access to financial support services
- 6.3 Increase environmentally sustainable living practices

## Action Team members

*The Financial Wellbeing and Resilience Action Team includes representatives from:*

- Anglicare
- Berry Street
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Casey North CISS
- Connect Health
- ECHO Youth & Family Services
- Good Shepherd
- Living Learning Pakenham
- My Community Library (Myli)
- Peninsula Legal Community Centre
- South East Community Links (SECL)

*The Financial Wellbeing Response Taskforce comprises organisations that directly respond to community experiencing financial hardship and works alongside the Action Team improve financial wellbeing and resilience.*

*11 Action Team Members*

*6 Action Team meetings held*

## Key achievements

- Council's Cardinia Support Website continues to be enhanced as a service directory, with over 12,000 views between April 2023 and April 2024, across over 160 services listed.
- Local networks with service providers continue to work towards improved access for community, including through the Community Workers in Cardinia Shire (CWICS) network.
- Anglicare Victoria hosted the annual Speed Networking Event in August 2024 with attendance from over 80 community services.
- Council made a submission to the Department of Social Services review of Financial Wellbeing Capability programs.
- Council continued to advocate for the delivery of additional kindergarten infrastructure to support the delivery of the Best Start Best Life reform. Council works in partnership with the State Government on this matter.
- Council in partnership with Salvation Army, Follow Bless Collective, ADRA and Campeyn group, facilitated Christmas Together in 2023 supporting 450 local families with food, toys and financial aid for the end of year period.
- Berry Street delivered Money Minded Coach Training, upskilling 36 members of the local community sector workforce to support clients with money management.
- A newly established three-year licence for the use of Pakenham Hall, supported Follow Bless Collective to serve hot meals to 80+ community members each week. In partnership with ADRA, community can also access fresh produce and material aid from the community bus located on site.
- A national first, Salvation Army's 'You're The Boss' financial literacy program was translated into Dari and Pashto to respond to the growing Afghan community in the Shire. This resource is available nationwide via the Salvation Army Website for all to access.
- Council's committee for reviewing financial hardship applications continued, with 80 hardship applications assessed, and application form reviewed to include the addition of direct referrals from Council staff to local Financial Counselling services.

## Spotlight on

### Cardinia Shire's First 'Bring Your Bills Day' – a big success!

Council supported South East Community Links (SECL) to host their first 'Bring Your Bills Day' in Cardinia Shire on Monday 27 November 2023. The event saw 90 community members attend Outlook Community Centre to seek assistance with utility bills, energy usage, fines, tenancy, and government payments. SECL hosted events across the region in Pakenham, Noble Park, Cranbourne West and Dandenong with a total of 500 community members attending, \$160,000 in debt resolved, and 52 concessions and grants facilitated for people experiencing financial hardship.

The Cardinia Shire event was a fantastic opportunity for Councils' Rates Team, Environment Education and Community Support Officers to pro-actively engage with residents and community about reducing bills through improved home energy efficiency, local services available on Cardinia Support, and queries regarding Council rates notices.

Community members also had opportunities to speak directly with South East Water, NAB and Commonwealth Bank hardship teams, Services Australia (Centrelink), Energy and Water Ombudsman, Fines Victoria, Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, Peninsula and Community Legal Centre, Southeast Community Link, Financial Counselling, No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS).

These events were received extremely well in the community, with 100% of attendees saying they would recommend Bring Your Bills Day to family and friends. The 2024 Bring Your Bills Day was on 24 September at Pakenham Hall.

### Focus for 2024-25

Resource development for building financial literacy within the community and reviewing Council funding model for the provision of Emergency Relief in line with Department Social Service outcomes.



## Outcome 7

# Reduced harm from tobacco, alcohol, drugs and gambling

**3%** residents have experienced a negative impact on themselves or their family from alcohol addiction or binge drinking (down from 7% in 2019).<sup>2</sup>

**3%** have experienced a negative impact on themselves or their family from drug usage (down from 5% in 2019).<sup>2</sup>

Rate of serious road injuries during high-alcohol hours is higher in Cardinia Shire (18.9/100,000 population), than the Victorian average (13.7/100,000).<sup>11</sup>

The proportion of residents who smoke (cigarettes or vape) is similar at 9% over the last 3 years. Males more often smoke cigarettes (7%, compared to 5% females), as do 55-64 year olds (13%). Smoking vapes with nicotine is more common among 18-24 year olds (6%).<sup>2</sup>

**9.7%** of residents smoked during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy (compared to 7% of Victorians).<sup>12</sup>

In 2023 there was a reduction in the proportion of adults who said they drink alcohol daily or most days (11%, down from 14% in 2021), as well as a reduction in binge drinking (17% drank 4+ drinks per session in 2021, dropping to 13% in 2023).<sup>2</sup>

**77%** agree that harm from gambling is a public health issue. Perceptions that 'the community should have less exposure to gambling advertising' are higher amongst males (61%), compared to 54% of females, and 60-69 year olds (71%, compared to 50% under 35s), and those who speak a language other than English (66%, compared to 56% English only).<sup>2</sup>



## Our objectives

- 7.1 Decrease exposure to smoking
- 7.2 Decrease short- and long-term impacts of alcohol and drug use
- 7.3 Decrease harm from gambling among individuals and communities

## Action Team members

*While an exclusive Action Team addressing tobacco, alcohol, drugs and gambling has not been established, several organisations are currently supporting this work, including, but not limited to:*

- Cardinia Shire Council
- Cardinia Shire Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Team
- Gambler's Health Southern
- Monash Health Community
- South East Community Links
- Victoria Police
- Windana
- Cardinia Shire Safer Communities Partnership

## Key achievements

- Council successful in funding from VicHealth for the development of a Community Alcohol Profile.
- All 43 smoke-free outdoor area inspections undertaken across childcare centres, sporting clubs, schools, playgrounds, skate parks and outdoor pools were compliant.
- Monash health facilitated a schools community of practice each term. In early 2024, the CoP focussed on vaping and was attended by 21 schools. The CoP highlighted school curriculum resources, school policy templates and signage updates. Of the participants that completed the post-session survey, 90% found the CoP useful.
- Funded by the Victorian Responsible Gaming Foundation (VRGF), Libraries After Dark program at Pakenham Library offered a variety of after-hour activities. The program is designed to provide at-risk groups with a range of social or recreational options during the evening.

## Spotlight on

### A contemporary approach to gambling harm prevention in Cardinia Shire!

Cardinia Shire's Responsible Gaming Policy, had not been reviewed since it was created in 2009.

In the 2022-23 financial year, over \$35 million was lost to Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) in Cardinia Shire – an average loss of \$96,005 per day or \$365 per adult resident.

The new Cardinia Shire Council's Gambling Harm Prevention and Minimisation Policy, reflects a contemporary approach to gambling harm as a public health issue. Formed through key stakeholder consultation, the policy addresses new regulatory reforms and outlines Council's roles and responsibilities in minimising and preventing the health, social and economic harms associated with gambling in our community.

## Focus for 2024-25

After the adoption of the final Gambling Harm Prevention & Minimisation Policy in 2024-25, Council will work with key partners to enact the changes.

In 2023-24, Council was successful in a grant from VicHealth to develop a Community Alcohol Profile and Alcohol Harm Prevention and Minimisation Policy. This work will commence in 2024-25.



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