Community Development Framework and Action Plan

2020-2022

Acknowledgment

The Surf Coast Shire proudly acknowledges the Guilijan and the Gadubanud peoples of the Eastern Maar and the Wadawurrung as the traditional custodians of the Surf Coast Shire region.

We pay our respects to their Ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging. As the oldest living culture on earth, we recognise and uphold their continuing relationship to their traditional lands.

Introduction

The Community Development Framework and Action Plan 2020-2022 animates the approach Council will take in utilising evidence based Community Development principles to support communities of place, identity and interest across the Surf Coast Shire to identify and achieve their aspirations.

What is Community Development?

Community Development is both a process and an outcome. Central to the notion of Community Development is 'doing with' rather than 'doing to' or 'doing for' communities.

Community Development approaches seek to harness all of the potential resources at the disposal of communities by bringing together individuals, community groups, social enterprises, businesses, government departments and regional bodies to make a positive difference in the development of healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities.

The United Nations (2014) defines Community Development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems."

Emerging from the shadow of top down, centralised approaches of urban renewal, Grass roots, participatory 'community organizing' movements began in Chicago in the 1930s.

Since that time, a number of Community Development approaches have emerged, adding to an understanding of the way Community Development is practiced.

A strengths-based Community Development approach seeks to build on an individual's strengths rather than any perceived deficits.

Similarly, an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach begins the process of working with communities by identifying and building on their assets rather than needs. Assets include physical infrastructure, places of natural or cultural heritage, services, skills networks (Kretzman & McKnight, 2005).

As Community Development approaches evolved, their practitioners began to recognise that the sense that individuals and communities have of themselves is inextricably linked to place and their unique natural environment, culture, lifestyle, industries and history. Place based Community Development approaches join up the efforts of all community stakeholders (citizens, industry, diverse non-government organisations and all levels of government) to improve the social, economic and physical wellbeing of a defined geographical location (State Government of Queensland, 2017).

More recently, Collective Impact approaches have endeavored improve collaboration between parties who share common goals and objectives (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Collective Impact approaches specify five conditions to achieve the desired change: a common agenda, continuous communication, mutually reinforcing activities, backbone support, and shared measurement (Ibid).

Community Development requires the redistribution of power to address the causes of inequality and disadvantage. A shift in power from public institutions to communities doesn't signify a 'hands off' approach. Along with the principles of empowerment, self determination and collective action, Community Development is grounded in human rights, inclusion and social justice. Community Development approaches recognise that inequities in health and wellbeing are socially and spatially patterned. Through Community Development initiatives, community members can become more empowered, such that they can increasingly recognise and challenge the conditions and structures that set up disempowerment or negatively impact their wellbeing (Ife, 2016).

Why Surf Coast Shire Council invests in Community Development

Investing in Community Development supports Surf Coast Shire Council to meet its commitments under various Acts of Victorian state government by enabling an environment that supports and strengthens the capacity of the community and individuals to achieve best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations with respect to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district (Local Government Act 2019).

Investing in Community Development also helps Council to achieve its purpose and direction.

Surf Coast Shire Councils exists 'to help our community and environment to thrive'.

Community Development principles seek to support healthy people and places through valuing the strengths of others and partnering with individual and communities to achieve their goals.

In line with the organisation's purpose and direction, the Surf Coast Shire 2017-2021 Council Plan commits to;

1. Develop and implement a program to support communities of place and interest, and provide a place for them to identify and achieve their aspirations

2. Facilitate and support high levels of volunteering in the community.

Community Development Policy.

Community Development is not a neat, linear approach. There is no rulebook or universally applicable prescriptive process. To support our diverse and ever-changing communities to be active and successful in achieving their aspirations, Council has adopted a Community Development Policy, which set outs guiding principles that are adaptive and may be drawn on in specific contexts to guide Community Development outcomes.

The Surf Coast Shire Council Community Development Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- community members are experts in their lives and communities, and consequently Council values their knowledge and wisdom

- each community member has knowledge, skills, care and connections. Feeling valued and capable depends on whether that knowledge and know-how can be shared and utilised

- community members are empowered to take the lead every stage, from deciding on issues, to identifying and building on assets, from selecting and implementing actions to monitoring and building improvements into future planning

- strong, productive relationships, nurtured over time, and a shared way of working are central to achieving lasting change

- the sense that individuals and communities have of themselves is inextricably linked to place. In working with communities Council considers the unique and interacting elements of nature, culture, lifestyle, industries and history of our towns and villages.

Council will working according to the Policy principles and makes a commitment to:

1. Seek out the diverse perspectives and experiences of Surf Coast Shire communities to ensure Council's understanding of communities' needs and strengths inform planning, decision-making and advocacy

2. Align supports to empower community members, groups and businesses to create the positive changes they want to see in their communities

3. Be flexible and responsive in its design and implementation of programs and services, trialling and evaluating new ways to achieve community outcomes

4. Consistently invest in developing social capital by prioritising relationship building among a diverse range of partners

5. Be principled and equitable in its planning and allocation of resources to support communities' access to infrastructure, open space, facilities, programs and services and networks.

Community Development Profile

Research and community engagement shows Surf Coast Shire has a strong culture of volunteering and Community Development, assets that support the community and environment to thrive.

This section will provide a snapshot of volunteering and Community Development on the Surf Coast currently in order to provide context and background.
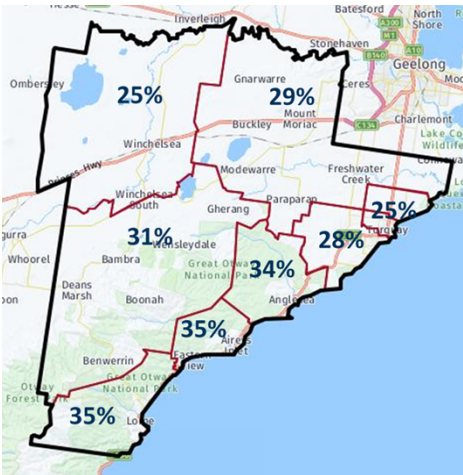
Volunteering rates

The data indicates there is a strong volunteer culture in Surf Coast Shire with higher than regional Victoria, metropolitan, state and national volunteer rates. In 2016, there were 6,514 volunteers in Surf Coast Shire representing 28% of the population 15 years and over[1].
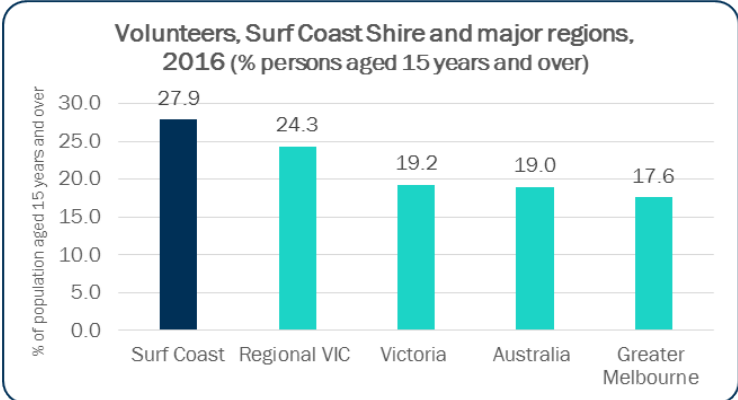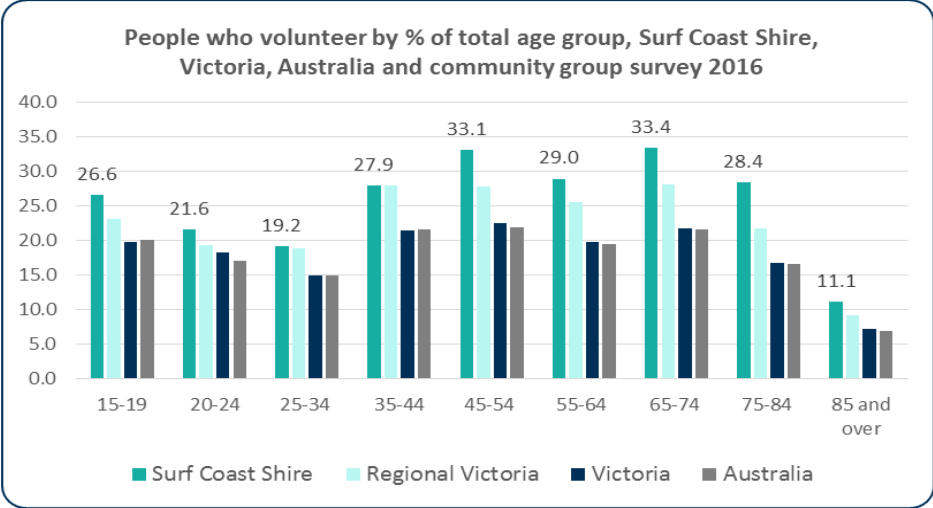

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Population and Housing Census)

The strong volunteer culture runs throughout the Shire with all major towns demonstrating a volunteer rate higher than the regional Victorian average.

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Population and Housing Census)

The age profile of Surf Coast Shire volunteers matches state and national trends with the highest rates of volunteering seen in the age groups of 65-74 years and 45-54 years age groups, followed by 55-64 years (29%) and then 75-84 years and 35-44 years (28%).

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Population and Housing Census)

Community Development and Participation

The Victorian Government ceased measuring the extent of Community Development or community driven action across the state in 2008. However, the Victorian Population Health Survey (2014) does show that Surf Coast has significantly higher levels of participation in community groups and community events compared to regional and state averages, except in religious groups.
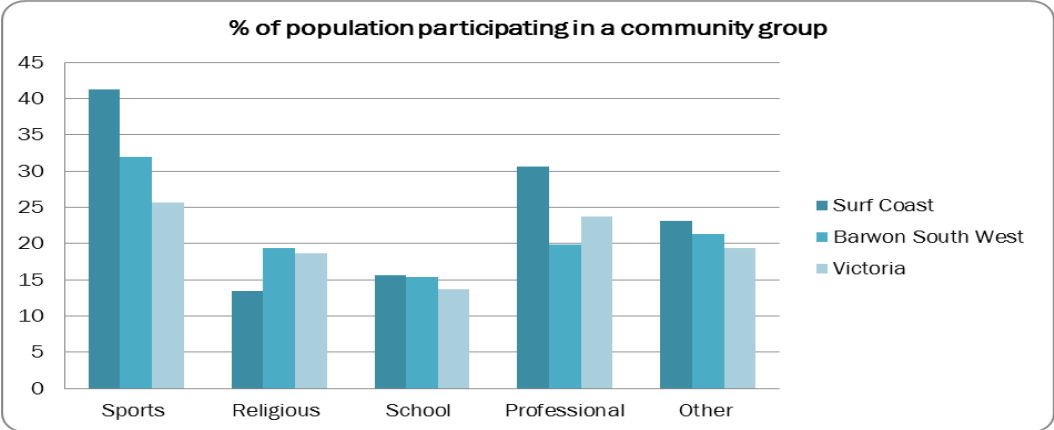
(Source: Department of Health and Human Services (2014) Victorian Population Health Survey)

% of population who attended a community event
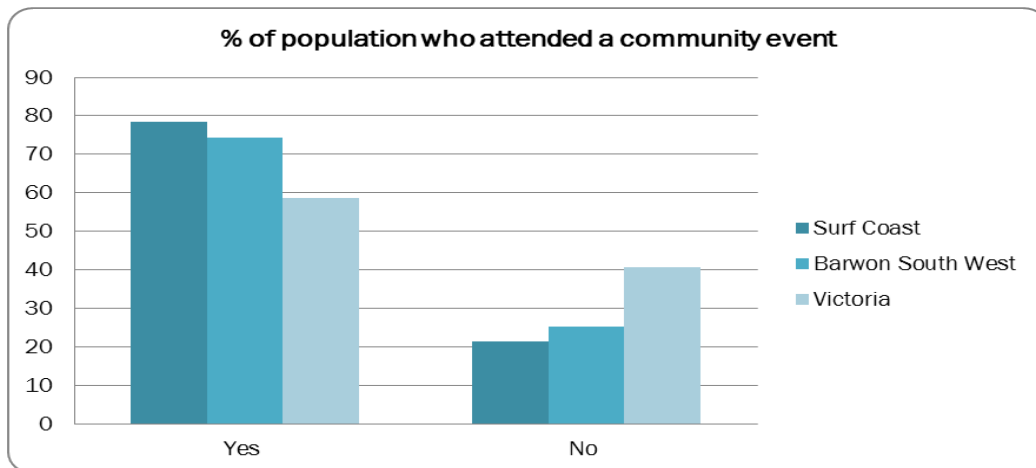
(Source: Department of Health and Human Services (2014) Victorian Population Health Survey)

The research identified over 600 community organisations or groups across the Shire providing programs and events focused on social, environment, cultural and political outcomes.

Surf Coast Shire Council's existing Community Development programs and services

Surf Coast Shire Council currently provides a range of programs and services aimed at supporting Community Development and volunteering across the shire. These programs and services include;
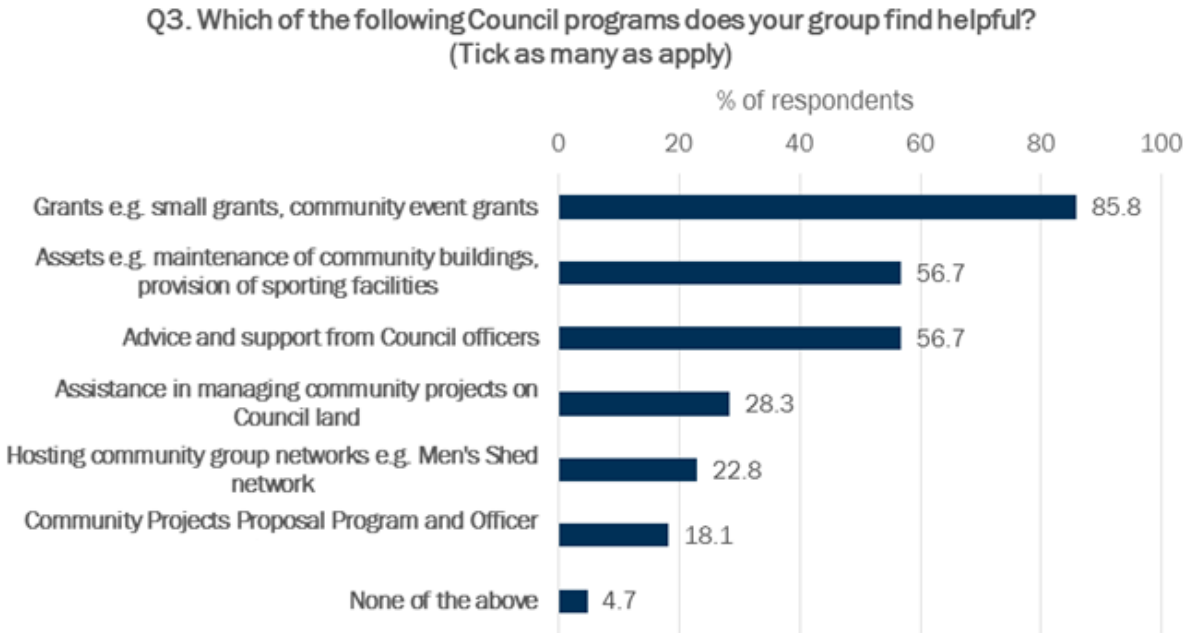
- Provision of grants: small grants, community event grants, art development seed funding, seniors' festival, volunteer week, etc.

- Provision of assets and facilities to support community organisations programs and operation

- Advice and information from Council officers in the areas of social, health, sports and recreation, environment and cultural and economic development to support community run programs, events and enterprises

- Developing community proposals including funding strategies and brokering access to relevant grant, funding, sponsorship sources through the Community Project Development Program

- Facilitating community group networks e.g. Heads of Sheds, Neighbourhood Houses, etc.

- Assistance managing community projects on Council land via the project management office

- Provision of access to skill and leadership development through the Casuarina and Environmental Leadership Programs, community group governance and volunteer training

- Provision of support for volunteers including volunteering opportunities at Council and in the community.
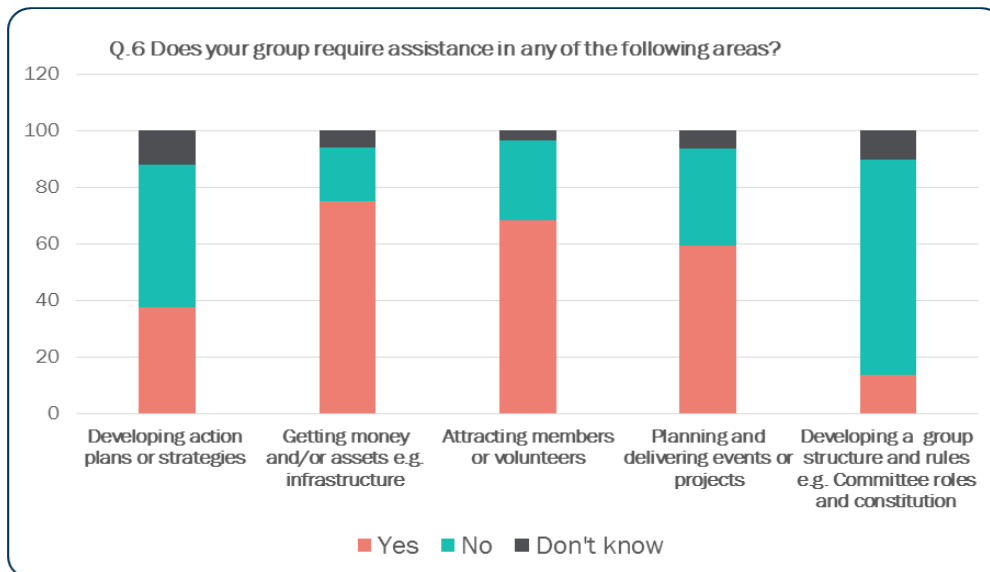
Community Engagement Results

Community engagement was undertaken to seek community organisations input to the development of this framework and action plan. Council received 124 responses from 75 community groups for the community group's survey and five focus group discussions were also completed.

The community engagement research found of Council's existing services the provision of grants, assets and advice from Council officers were the most helpful. However, it should be noted that grants, assets and general advice from officers are also the initiatives with the most breadth, in that they support the highest number of community groups. The Community Project Development Program, facilitation of networks assistance managing projects on Council land provides more intensive support to a smaller number of groups hence why they may have received a lower result.

Q3. Which of the following Council programs does your group find helpful? (Tick as many as apply)

% of respondents

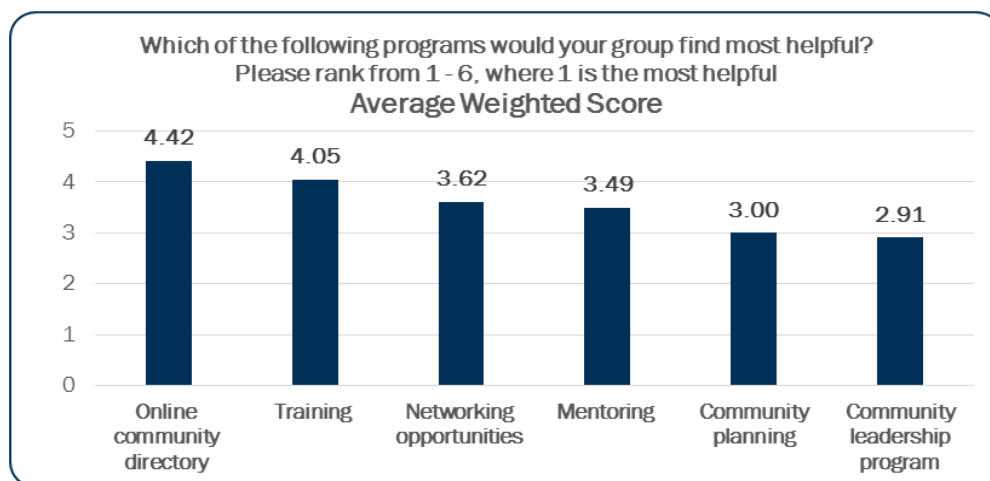| Program	%
Grants e.g. small grants, community event grants	85.8
Assets e.g. maintenance of community buildings, provision of sporting facilities	56.7
Advice and support from Council officers	56.7
Assistance in managing community projects on Council land	28.3
Hosting community group networks e.g. Men's Shed network	22.8
Community Projects Proposal Program and Officer	18.1
None of the above	4.7

(Source: Surf Coast Shire Council Community Groups Survey, 2019)

Community organisations on the Surf Coast also rated and listed additional programs and focus areas that Council could provide to support Community Development and volunteering. The top areas are represented by the tables below.
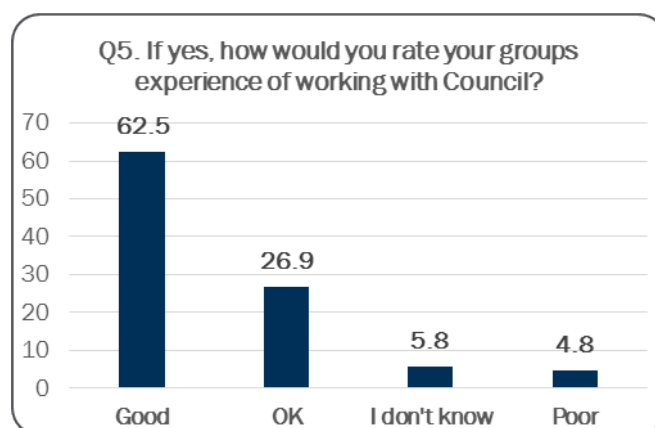
Q.6 Does your group require assistance in any of the following areas?

Categories (left to right): Developing action plans or strategies; Getting money and/or assets e.g. infrastructure; Attracting members or volunteers; Planning and delivering events or projects; Developing a group structure and rules e.g. Committee roles and constitution

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

(Source: Surf Coast Shire Council Community Groups Survey, 2019)

Which of the following programs would your group find most helpful?
Please rank from 1 - 6, where 1 is the most helpful
Average Weighted Score

Online community directory	Training	Networking opportunities	Mentoring	Community planning	Community leadership program
4.42	4.05	3.62	3.49	3.00	2.91

(Source: Surf Coast Shire Council Community Groups Survey, 2019)

74.5% of respondents outlined their group required information, permission or permits from Council to deliver a project or event. 62.5% outlined a good experience in working with Council, 26.9% as good and only 4.8% as poor.

Q5. If yes, how would you rate your groups experience of working with Council?

Good	OK	I don't know	Poor
62.5	26.9	5.8	4.8

(Source: Surf Coast Shire Council Community Groups Survey, 2019)

The three main themes that emerged from the five focus groups include;

1. Communications and Engagement; an opportunity for Council to improve communication and engagement especially with place based committees

2. Agency Coordination; a need for Council to play a larger role in support communities to liaise with the large number of public agencies often involved in their projects

3. Council's support for community planning processes was strong in some communities. Other communities feel that they had already undertaken this work or that it might not be useful.

Community Development Framework and Action Plan

The Community Development Framework references the guiding principles of the Community Development Policy and provides an extra layer of detail (the 'what', the 'why' and the 'how') in describing the strategies that Council will employ in the medium term (four years) to achieve its longer term vision of healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities (10 years).

The Community Development 2020-22 Action Plan provides further detail again in describing the initiatives that will be undertaken (the 'what', 'who' and 'when') in the next two years (short-term) that will help Council achieve these medium-term objectives.

The strategies selected in the Framework and the actions included in the Action Plan respond to the recommendations identified in the research findings and community engagement undertaken as part of this project.

Community Development Framework – the 'what', 'why' and 'how'.

The corollary of the Community Development Policy principle of recognising that community members **are experts in their lives and communities** is a commitment to diverse engagement. Seeking out different perspectives and valuing lived experience expertise will improve our understanding of communities' needs and strengths and ensure our decision-making is well informed and relevant. Council will undertake inclusive and accessible engagement to increase communities' investment in and ownership over strategic planning and decision-making that affects them.

In acknowledging that **each community member has the knowledge, skills, care and connections to contribute** to collaboratively making positive changes in their communities, Council commits to the development and empowerment of local leaders and community builders. Council will focus our knowledge, skills and resources to build the confidence and capacity of community members to identify and **deliver community projects**. Council will provide access to information, training, mentoring and resourcing opportunities to individuals, community groups and businesses.

Where **community members are empowered to take the lead every** stage, their priorities are better understood and met. Where communities pinpoint issues and identify assets that may be built on, where communities elect strategies to employ, design and implement initiatives and determine their measures of success, they are invested in and take stewardship over the process and the outcomes. A greater understanding of what our communities' value will enable Council to better direct its resources. More effective resource allocation will enable Council to better respond to the future demands of a growing population and shifting expectations in terms of planning and provision of infrastructure and services. Council will support communities to meet more their own needs by being flexible and responsive in its design and implementation of programs and services, trialling and evaluating new ways to achieve community outcomes.

Being flexible and responsive and working where there is already momentum in our communities will enable Council to identify and negotiate new ways of fulfilling the roles and functions of local government. This will encourage the development of new partnerships to enable a diverse range of

individuals, organisations and businesses to collectively implement strategic responses to local challenges. Council will invest in developing **strong productive relationships, nurtured over time and a shared way of working** to achieve lasting change.

The **sense that individuals and communities have of themselves is inextricably linked to** place. In working with communities, Council will consider the unique and interacting elements of nature, culture, lifestyle, industries and history of our towns and villages. In taking a place-based approach, Council will also consider the research that shows that independent of individual socio-economic position (compositional factors), characteristics of the places in which people live (contextual factors) affect health inequities (Corti et al 2016 p. 2). Well planned and governed townships working across the natural, built, social, economic and environmental aspect of policy systems can promote health and wellbeing. In supporting place based Community Development, Council will be principled and equitable in its planning and allocation of resources to support communities' access to infrastructure, open space, facilities, programs and services and networks.

The below spreadsheet sets out the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of the strategies that Council will utilise alongside the 'what', 'when ' and 'who' of the initiatives it will undertake over the financial years of 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Community Development Action Plan

It should be noted the two-year action plan is not intended to achieve the entire framework, but instead are the next steps in a longer-term commitment to Community Development and volunteering. The actions with a (new) next to them are initiatives that Surf Coast Shire Council has not previously implemented. Those without a (new) symbol have already been implemented or the action is to improve an existing program.

WE BELIEVE	WE COMMIT TO	STRATEGIES WE WILL EMPLOY	INITIATIVES WE'LL IMPLEMENT IN Y1-2	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME*
Community members are experts in their lives and communities, and consequently Council values their knowledge and wisdom	Seek out the diverse perspectives and experiences to ensure Council's understanding of communities' needs and strengths inform planning, decision-making and advocacy	Support broad community participation in formal governance processes and ensure strategic engagement reflects diverse perspectives and experiences	Support the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee to provide advice and direction relating to Positive Ageing/Age Friendly Communities.	Positive Ageing Officer	2020-22
			Trial real time feedback mechanisms including project and event participant/partner surveys to inform the continuous improvement of Council's customer experience program (new).	Coordinator Customer Experience	2020-22
			Facilitate inclusive community engagement to develop the Council Plan ten year vision and four year strategic plan incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (new).	Coordinators Corporate Planning and Community Relations	2020-21
			Establish a committee or alliance to support the design, implementation and review of strategies and initiatives to address Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan priorities.	Health and Wellbeing Advisor	2020 - 22

WE BELIEVE	WE COMMIT TO	STRATEGIES WE WILL EMPLOY	INITIATIVES WE'LL IMPLEMENT IN Y1-2	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME*
Each community member has knowledge, skills, care and connections. Feeling valued and capable depends on whether that knowledge and know-how can be shared and utilised	Develop the confidence, skills and connections of local leaders and community builders to work together to create the positive changes they want to see in their communities	Broker access to resources including information, data, methodologies, training, connections, funding opportunities, etc. for key partners in delivering community benefit	Scope the 'Thriveability' database and interface to facilitate access to information and data about how our community is faring (new).	Coordinator Community and Health Development	2020-21
			Scope a community portal to make it easier for residents to identify and join community groups and for groups to attract new members and volunteers (new).	Digital Transformation Project Manager	2021-22
			Develop an online Towards Environmental Leadership platform to help connect community organisations involved in environmental action to one another, tools and resources (new).	Coordinator Sustainability	2021-22
			Support Community Houses to identify sustainable funding models that enable an expansion of their inclusive social, recreational, education and vocational training programs.	Coordinator Community and Health Development	2020-22
			Align Council's grant funding streams to identify opportunities to further leverage to Council's investment in delivering social, cultural, economic, environmental outcomes. For example, pilot a live Small Grants round to seed place based community leadership training projects (new).	Coordinator Community and Health Development; Coordinator Events; Arts Development Officer	2020-21

WE BELIEVE	WE COMMIT TO	STRATEGIES WE WILL EMPLOY	INITIATIVES WE'LL IMPLEMENT IN Y1-2	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME*
			Design and deliver the Casuarina Community Leadership Program to develop the unique knowledge, skills, care and connections of participants to enable them to create the positive changes in their communities.	Coordinator Community and Health Development; Community Projects Officer.	2020-21
			Facilitate opportunities for peer and intergenerational learning, tapping into the depth of knowledge and skill held by older people in our communities.	Positive Ageing Officer	2020-22
			Work with community groups and Volunteer Involving Organisations to ensure their structures and systems are sustainable and support good governance and effective management and promote voluntary activity and active citizenship.	Volunteer Advisor	2020-21
Community members are empowered to take the lead every stage, from deciding on issues, to identifying and building on	Be flexible and responsive in its design and implementation of programs and services, trialling and evaluating new ways to achieve	Work with community to support community-led planning and project prioritisation processes to develop our	Continue to support Community Asset Committees and consider learnings of alternate models in the future management of reserves and facilities.	Coordinator Recreation Planning	2020-22
			Support the development of the Deans Marsh Community Plan and delivery of strategies and initiatives aligned to Council's strategic outcomes (new).	Coordinator Community Health and Development	2020-22

WE BELIEVE	WE COMMIT TO	STRATEGIES WE WILL EMPLOY	INITIATIVES WE'LL IMPLEMENT IN Y1-2	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME*
assets, from selecting and implementing actions to monitoring and building improvements into future planning	community outcomes	understanding of what is important to our communities and the most effective ways Council can contribute to achieving community outcomes	Support the Deans Marsh Festival Stand community-led project pilot and evaluate the project management and delivery model (new).	Community Project Development Officer	2021-22
			Continue to offer the Community Project Development Program to support community by filtering projects proposals through the most efficient design and delivery pathways.	Community Project Development Officer	2020-21
			Value the time and energy of the community by filtering and guiding community projects proposals through the most efficient project support pathway.	Community Project Development Officer	2020-21
Strong productive relationships, nurtured over time and a shared way of working are central to lasting change	Consistently invest in developing trust and social capital by prioritising relationship building among a diverse range of partners	Proactively network to share information and develop robust local and regional collaboration structures	Support and resource interest, identity and place based networks to maximise opportunities for collective learning, project collaboration, resource-sharing, etc.	Coordinator Community and Health Development	2021-22
			Provide a consistent and efficient process across on-line and face-to-face channels for community members to be able access information, services or maintenance.	Coordinator Customer Experience	2021-22
			Identify opportunities for collective impact partnerships to coordinate local and regional collaborative response to complex issues and achieve shared goals.	Community Strengthening Sustainability, Economic Development	2020-22

WE BELIEVE	WE COMMIT TO	STRATEGIES WE WILL EMPLOY	INITIATIVES WE'LL IMPLEMENT IN Y1-2	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME*
The sense that individuals and communities have of themselves is inextricably linked to place. In working with communities Council considers the unique and interacting elements of nature, culture, lifestyle, industries and history of our towns and villages	Be principled and equitable in its planning and allocation of resources to support access to infrastructure, open space, facilities, programs and services and networks	Take a collaborative, multidisciplinary and asset-based approach to local development to ensure neighbourhoods, public spaces and facilities reflect the needs and aspirations of those communities	Utilise place-knowing forums to share evidence, methodologies, evaluations, resource opportunities, training and network contacts for the purpose of testing place-making projects and developing our place based approach (new).	Coordinator Strategic Planning, Coordinator Recreation and Open Space Planning	2020-21
			Continue to work with sporting clubs and recreation groups to increase community input into the design, delivery and programming of community facilities.	Coordinator Recreation and Open Space Planning	2020-22
			Review access and allocation of Council facilities and spaces to improve equity and increase utilisation. For example, explore new community asset management models to support the changing needs and strengths of for Senior Citizen Clubs.	Coordinator Community Health and Development	2020-21
			Continue to provide communities with support and resources to run pop up and regular events and activities that promote the unique nature, culture, lifestyle, industries and history of their communities and districts.	Coordinator Events	2020-21

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

The Monitoring and evaluation framework may be found in Appendix A. The Community Health and Development Team will collect indicators and report to Council and community annually on progress. To see the detailed monitoring and evaluation plan please contact Councils Coordinator of Community Health and Development.

The Community Development Framework will be due for review in 2022. Its next iteration will be informed by what has been learned through the implementation and evaluation of this Framework and Action Plan, as well as the evidence base that supports the development of the integrated Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan in 2021.