



People  
Place Future



## Background Report for panel members

# Acknowledgement

*Surf Coast Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung People and Eastern Maar People.*

*We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, and pay respect to their Elders past and present and emerging.*

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## About this booklet

This document has been prepared by Surf Coast Shire Council to assist panel members to understand some of the challenges and opportunities facing our community, municipality and Council in the short and long term.

It includes population figures and forecasts what will happen to our population in the future, as well as background information on some of the dilemmas we face.

Reading this document will give you the background necessary to effectively contribute to the Surf Coast Shire Community Panel.

We suggest reading this report carefully before day one. Take a highlighter and go through it as much as you can. Understanding what is in this report will help you make your best possible contribution to the panel.



## Welcome from the Mayor

Welcome to our People Place Future community panel. On behalf of Council my sincere thanks to each of you for joining us on this very important project. I appreciate it is a significant undertaking to take part in the community panel but I hope you will find the experience rewarding.

At a personal level I am a passionate believer in the value of participating in community life, both for the value it brings to our community and for the personal benefits it can bring.

I can assure you Councillors are very much looking forward to learning about your insights and experiences as you work through the People Place Future project.

You will have plenty of support along the way. Our engagement specialists will be working with you to ensure your meetings are enjoyable and productive. And you will have access to the feedback we received during the public survey as well as information gathered by subject matter experts from Council and elsewhere.

Finally I encourage you to be bold and think of what our collective future can and should be in Surf Coast Shire. To have a shared vision is to have a share in our future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "L. Stapleton".

Cr Libby Stapleton  
Mayor Surf Coast Shire Council

# What is People Place Future?

People Place Future is the community engagement project that will inform the key strategic documents that Council must prepare in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. These include a long term Community Vision, a four year Council Plan, a 10 year Financial Plan and a 10 year Asset Plan.

The vision will be the statement that captures our community's collective hopes for the shire. It will have a long term horizon and will provide the overall strategic direction for the other strategies. The Council Plan will be the guiding document for the four year term of the Council and will incorporate Council's four year Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Financial Plan and Asset Management Plan will both have a 10 year time frame and feedback received through the People Place Future project will also inform these plans.

Think of the Community Vision as everyone's shared hope for our shire. Think of the Council Plan as Council's blueprint that sets out how it can support that shared hope.

## The remit or challenge

### **The challenge that the community panel needs to resolve is this:**

*From our traditional owners to our newest arrival, and from our youngest resident to our furthest-travelled visitor, we value the Surf Coast Shire as a special place. Our diverse community has many different needs and interests.*

*To ensure that Surf Coast Shire is a great place to live, work and play for everyone, we need to make choices about where we focus our efforts. What is our future vision for our community, and how do we balance our differing interests and needs over the next four years?*

## Cultural heritage

The Surf Coast Shire is located in south-western Victoria and has a land area of 1,552 square kilometres. The northern edge of the shire is about 10 kilometres from Geelong and 75 kilometres from Melbourne. Surf Coast Shire is made up of coastal and hinterland areas and its major townships include Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Bellbrae, Deans Marsh, Fairhaven, Freshwater Creek, Gherang, Gnarwarre, Jan Juc, Lorne, Modewarre, Moggs Creek, Moriac, Torquay, Wensleydale and Winchelsea.

The region is the traditional home of the Aboriginal nations of the Wadawurrung, consisting of 25 clans, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud people of the Eastern Maar.

Local Aboriginal cultural heritage is evident in many ways including middens, scar trees, fossils along the cliff lines, cultural heritage walks and gathering places.

# Surf Coast Shire at a glance

Demographic data from the 2016 census, estimated population data from 2019 via the Australian Bureau of Statistics

## We are growing

Census year	Population	Growth compared to previous census
2019	33,456	13.9%
2016	29,384	13.6%
2011	25,868	N/A

The yearly average population growth rate for Surf Coast Shire is 2.7%, compared to 1.9% for the G21 Region. (G21 – is a regional alliance of five Councils: Surf Coast Shire, City of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway, Golden Plains and the Borough of Queenscliffe).

## We have a high numbers of senior residents

Largest age group: people aged 40-49 years.

Fastest growing age group: 70-79 years.

Residents aged 60 – 74 years make up 13.3% of the total population.

Residents aged 75+ make up 11.1% of the Surf Coast Shire population.

Between now and 2036 Surf Coast Shire is forecast to experience an 84% increase in numbers of people aged 60 years and more.

## We have fewer young adults

### Younger age cohorts. Surf Coast Shire versus Victorian average

	Surf Coast Shire	Victorian average
Couples with children	34%	31%
People aged 35-49 years	21.4%	20.4%
Children aged 0 - 4 years	6%	6.3%
Children aged 5 – 11 years	10%	8.8%
Young people aged 12 – 17 years	10%	8.8%
People aged 18-24 years	6%	9.5%
People aged 25-34 years	9.9%	15%
	Surf Coast Shire	G21 region
People aged 20-29 years	8.4%	12%

Surf Coast Shire has more couples with children than the state average and more of the 'parents and home builder' group (35-49 years) than the state average. There are more 'middle years' children (5-11 years) and more 'older school age' children (12-17 years) in Surf Coast Shire than the Victorian average. In the 'tertiary education/independence' group (18-24 years) Surf Coast Shire has less than the state average and the same applies in the 'young workforce' group (25-34 years) with Surf Coast Shire at 9.9% compared to 15% Victoria wide.

## We have mostly single dwellings

90.7% of dwellings in the Surf Coast Shire are separate houses.

Separate houses grew by 3,534 (15.64%) between 2011 and 2016

Medium density housing decreased by 242 (14.07%) between 2011 and 2016

High density housing grew by 44 (68.8%) between 2011 and 2016

## Generally our income is higher than average

### Income

	Surf Coast Shire	Victoria
Median weekly income	\$1,568	\$1,416

### Labour force

	Surf Coast Shire	Victoria
Percentage of population in labour force	63%	60%

	Pre COVID	Post COVID
Percentage unemployed	3.8%	9.8%

An estimated 1,287 jobs were lost in Surf Coast Shire due to the COVID pandemic.

## Housing costs are higher than average

	Surf Coast Shire	Victoria
Median property value Source: Corelogic December 2020	\$1,038,253	\$630,000
Percentage of residents with a mortgage**	35%	33.5%
Median weekly mortgage payment**	\$428	\$411
Weekly median rent** (20% of Surf Coast residents are paying rent)	\$367	\$325

\*\* source 2016 Census

## We are more qualified than average

	Surf Coast Shire	Victoria
Tertiary qualification	27%	24%
Trade qualification	20%	17%

## Limited diversity

0.7% of Surf Coast Shire residents identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decent.

11.4% of Surf Coast Shire residents were born overseas and 7.2% were from English speaking countries.

4% of residents speak a language other than English at home.

In 2016, same-sex couples made up 1.0% of Victorian households. The Census only collects information on same sex couples living together. It does not capture same sex couples who do not live together, sexual orientation or gender diversity, and is largely not reported at a local government level.

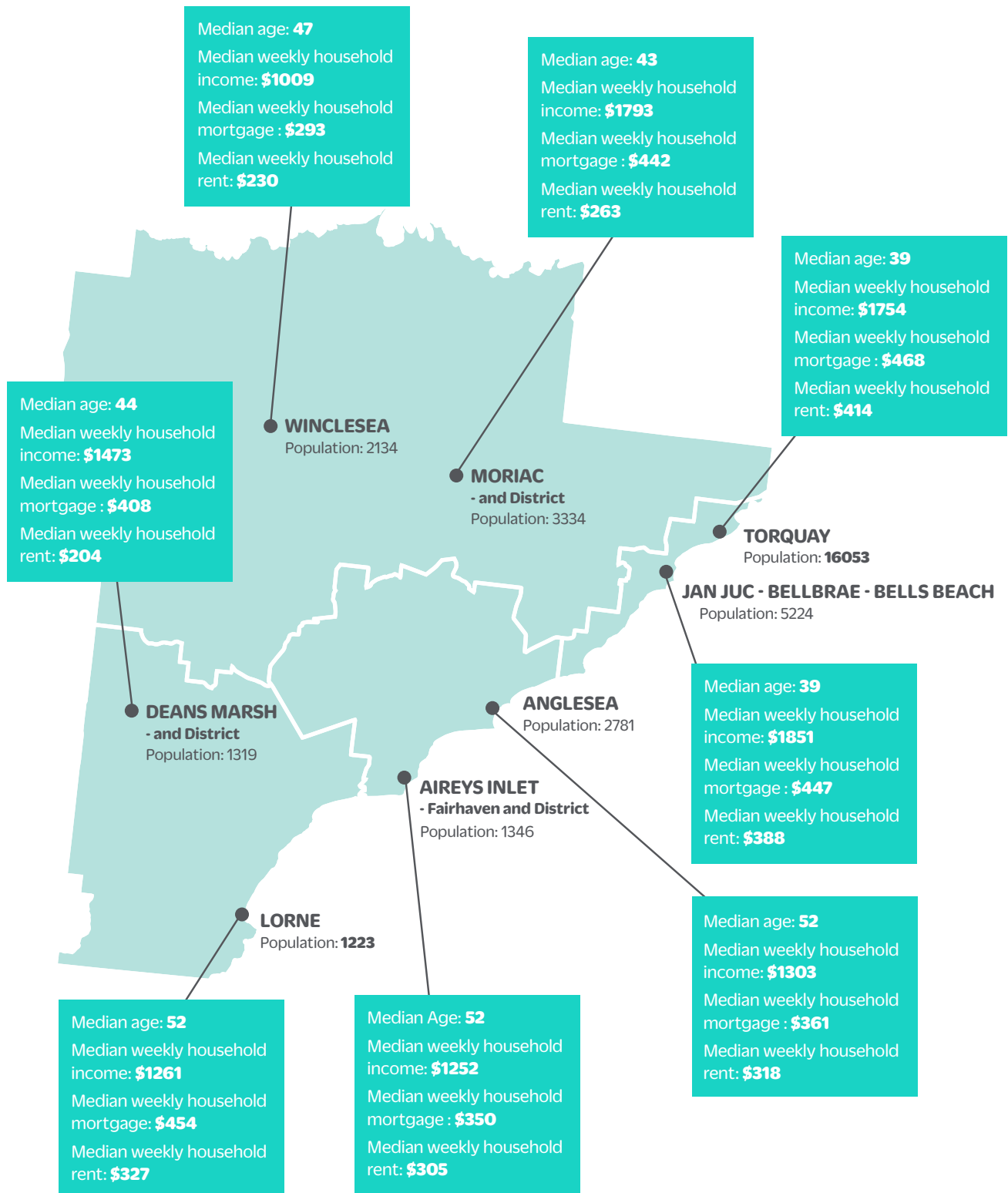
Census data records 1,043 people (or 3.5% of the population) in Surf Coast Shire reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare indicates the Census data may be under reporting the total with its own 2018 survey showing the percentage of Australians living with disability is 18%.



# District profiles

These figures are based on most recent available Census data and given the dynamic nature of the housing market we know figures have changed, including the median rent. For example real estate sales sites were quoting an average rent for Torquay in March 2021 at \$530 per week. We provide this summary for the comparison it provides between areas.





**Dilemmas are described individually to assist your reading. In reality, the dilemmas we face are inter-twined. For example housing affordability, noted in the dilemma titled 'Somewhere to Live' is relevant to our economy, our health and wellbeing, the notion of fair access for all, the impact of growth, land use and climate change.**

As you read, look for examples of how the dilemmas relate to each other and you will begin to gain a perspective of the complex choices we face.

## 1. Council income and spending

**The Surf Coast Shire Council provides more than 100 services to our community and maintains \$800 million worth of assets to support both the local population and the three million people who visit the area each year.**

When it comes to providing services and maintaining infrastructure, Council has a responsibility to current and future communities and this dual responsibility poses a particular challenge:

- An increasing number of existing assets, such as buildings, roads and drains, have reached the point where they need to be renewed if they are to remain available for use by the community.
- Meanwhile the community is growing and expects new infrastructure and new, or expanded, services.

Surf Coast Shire Council relies on rate revenue for much of its income, and doesn't have access to income sometimes available to other Councils such as paid parking or commercial income streams.

The Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates system sets a maximum limit for average rate increases each year, which means Council cannot increase rates beyond the limit set by the government, even if unexpected issues or desired projects arise. The allowable rate revenue increase is typically around the Consumer Price Index increase each year – currently about 1.5%.

Council's non-rates income comes from service charges, such as planning fees, animal registration, parking fines, developer contributions and grants from Victorian and Federal Governments. Sports clubs and community groups also pay fees to use certain public facilities but these fees are generally well below the amount required to cover the cost of these facilities.

Existing assets such as buildings, roads, drains and open space assets are prioritised for renewal according to a formal assessment of their condition. Given the age of some of these assets increasing numbers are approaching the time where they will be due for renewal and therefore additional investment is required.

Current modelling shows that an increase of 9.5% in asset renewal funding is required every year for the next 20 years. This totals \$7 million per year in 2020, increasing to \$17 million per year in 2030.

The majority of Council's financial reserves are allocated to existing commitments, however Council does have some reserves which it can use in the short term to enable it to continue to make discretionary allocations to important new projects and initiatives. However drawing on reserves does not solve the underlying issue and is not sustainable.

Council must very seriously consider the services it provides in the future and how these should be delivered in the coming years. Surf Coast Shire's capable, well-resourced and innovative communities are well positioned to play an even greater role in shaping the future of this place.



### **What's the dilemma? (questions to consider)**

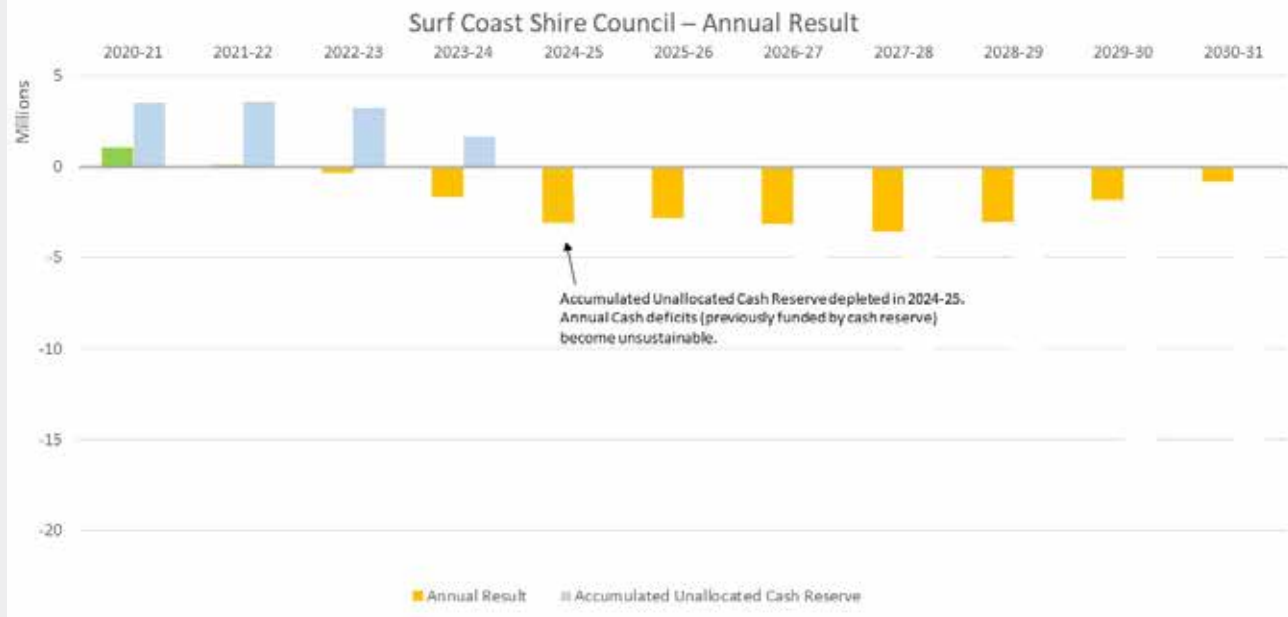
*The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.*

Now more than ever, Council can't do everything for everyone - so how should we decide what to focus on and for whom? Council subsidises the cost of many of its services and facilities in recognition of the public benefit that is derived from them. How should Council balance this approach with the need to pay for the maintenance and renewal of existing facilities and the construction of new infrastructure? Should Council continue to provide the same level of service and the same standard of facilities into the future? Should we subsidise services or ask people to pay a higher price for the service they are using? Should Council look closer at what assets and services could be rationalised or disposed of? How can Council support local people, organisations and communities to play a greater role in shaping the future of this place?

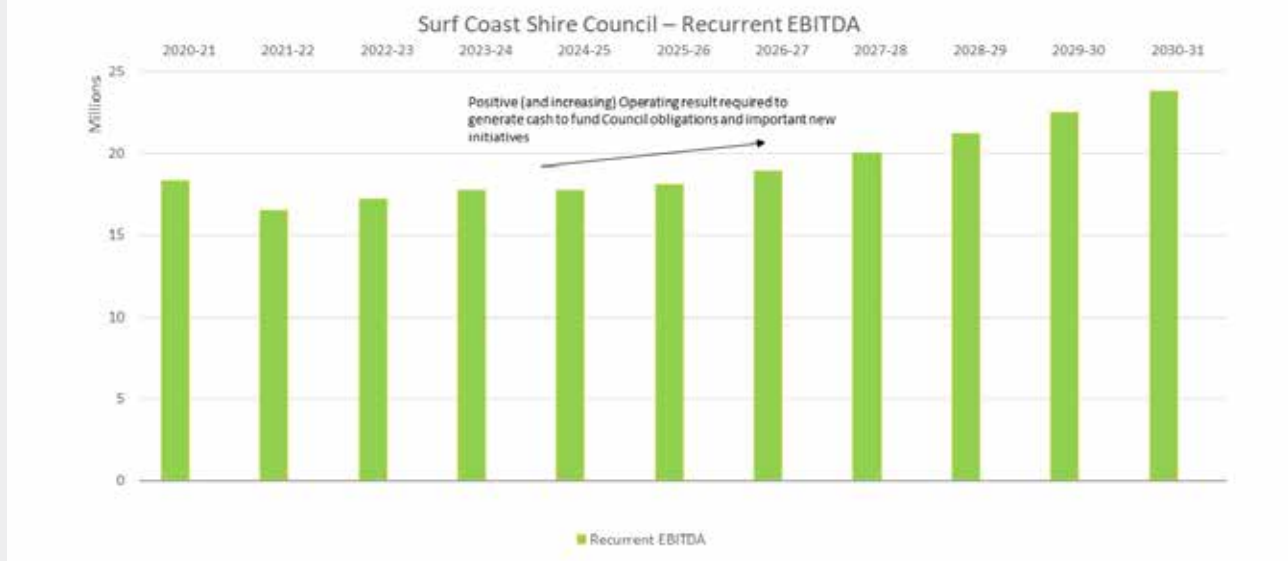
## Data snapshot

### Forecast impact Council's cash reserves if we don't take action

The Annual Result represents the cash surplus or deficit from both operating and non-operating activities in any given year. The Accumulated Unallocated Cash Reserve represents available cash reserves. The chart below shows the AUCS reserve (blue column) being depleted in 2024-25. Council must address this to afford long-term financial sustainability.



Recurrent EBITDA represents the cash result from Council's delivery of day-to-day operations. Surpluses in our day to day operations allow Council the ability to fund non-operation costs such as loan repayments, capital expenditure, or projects.





## 2. Growth pressure

**People love living in the Surf Coast Shire. Our lifestyle and coastal and hinterland environments are very appealing. Fifty-six per cent of local businesses are here because of lifestyle. (source: Surf Coast Shire Business Barometer 2019)**

The Surf Coast Shire population is expected to reach almost 46,000 by 2036. Torquay/Jan Juc and Winchelsea are designated residential growth zones in state level planning policy. Building approvals in Surf Coast Shire reached a peak of 725 in 2018-2019. In the last financial year there was just on \$197 million worth of developments approved in the shire.

Surf Coast beaches and natural environments attract people who live in other areas. Our shire is next to Geelong, the largest regional city in Victoria, and just one hour from Melbourne. The population in the Geelong – West Melbourne corridor is expected to grow by 500,000, and in all of greater Melbourne, by 1.8 million, in the next 15 years. (source: Id Consulting)

The identity of many of our townships is attached to a moment in time when we had a lot fewer residents. There is a strong attachment to a perceived coastal or rural character which equates to housing that is low in height and spread out.

Sharp increases in property values, a higher standard of living and greater mobility of workforces has led to a renewed interest in coastal and rural living. Townships that may once have had a high proportion of weekenders and retirees are attracting a new wave of people and with them comes new expectations for services and infrastructure.

A consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is more people working from home. This has created a wave of city people seeking to relocate to coastal and rural settings in pursuit of an improved lifestyle. As a result, house prices in Surf Coast Shire have surged, pushing out many long term renters.

There is anecdotal evidence of tensions between well-established residents and those newer to the area. This is most evident in Torquay. People are attracted by the natural environment and lifestyle. Some expect to have access to services and infrastructure they are used to in metropolitan areas. Torquay has changed significantly, even in the past decade. It is common to hear residents of all durations bemoan the next wave of arrivals as they threaten to further change 'their' town.



### **What's the dilemma?** (questions to consider)

*The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.*

What will be the impact of growth on the character and lifestyle that is so prized in Surf Coast Shire? How do we manage the impact of growth that occurs inside and outside our municipal boundary? How do we fund the infrastructure needed to manage greater numbers of people and cars? How do we grow in a way that preserves what we think is special about the shire? How do we ensure a balanced mix of ages can live here if supply of residential land dries up and demand and prices continue to increase? How do you foster harmony among the multiple generations of residents that make up our communities?



## Data snapshot

### Population forecasts

	2021 Population	2036 Population	Growth percentage
Surf Coast Shire	34,230	45,717	33.6%
City of Greater Geelong	268,984	393,216	46.2%
City of Wyndham (includes Werribee, Hoppers Crossing, Point Cook)	302,650	512,591	69.37%

### Number of building approvals per year in Surf Coast Shire

Year	Building approvals
2008-2009	380
2009-2010	470
2010-2011	490
2012-2013	341
2013-2014	319
2014-2015	419
2015-2016	418
2016-2017	425
2017-2018	598
2018-2019	725
2019-2020	564



### 3. The importance of tourism and events

**Surf Coast Shire's proximity to Melbourne and Geelong, and its outdoor recreational opportunities, major events, and natural environment make it a major drawcard for visitors. The internationally recognised 12 Apostles to the west pull visitors through the Surf Coast on their way along the Great Ocean Road. More than seven million visitors experience the Great Ocean Road region each year.**

In 2019 we welcomed a record 3 million visitors to the Surf Coast Shire. Our coastal and natural environment is a primary reason why more than 1.1 million of visitors come to the Surf Coast between December and February.

While a five year trend shows that visitor numbers, nights and expenditure is increasing, length of stay has reduced from 2.8 nights to 2.4 nights per visitor. The growth of the west Melbourne corridor has also seen an increase in day trip visits.

If this trend continues, the Surf Coast is at risk of becoming a high volume, low yield tourism destination. Improved visitor infrastructure (tracks, trails, cycle routes, toilets, roads and lookouts) and diversity in quality, place appropriate accommodation will help tourism's potential to contribute positively to the Surf Coast Shire economy.

Small permanent populations mean many local businesses rely on visitors and tourists to sustain them through the peaks and troughs of the year. Visitors typically spend over \$540 million each year. In the summer months over 75% of expenditure in Surf Coast Shire is attributed to visitors. A strong tourism season can be the difference between a local business surviving the off season or not.

As a sector, tourism (1,419 jobs) has now overtaken construction (1,350) to be the Surf Coast Shire's largest job provider.

Tourism that is highly seasonal can cause road congestion, particularly in the peak Christmas – mid January period and Easter. Achieving slower, more purposeful visitation would help alleviate this.

Events are often a celebration of a town's strengths and identity. They create a sense of place and bring joy, pride, vibrancy and community connectedness. Events are also critical to sustaining local economies - particularly in the off peak periods. They create the desired more purposeful visit resulting in higher levels of expenditure and length of stay, and often lead to repeat visits at other times of the year.

In total, events staged in the Surf Coast Shire are estimated to attract 240,000 participants and spectators that spend approximately \$100 million each year. An estimated 100 million people view our major events via TV and digital platforms, achieving audience numbers beyond the reach of any marketing campaign Council or regional tourism bodies could undertake.



#### **What's the dilemma?** (questions to consider)

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Surf Coast Shire is a local, national and international destination. How do we share this area with visitors, for whom it is a special place, whilst protecting it from the impacts of what has sometimes been poorly-managed visitation? What is the fairest way for Council to provide the facilities and services needed to support visitors? How can we best support the extra demand on public facilities such as parks, recreation facilities, rubbish collection and toilets? How do we get the balance right between servicing a permanent population and catering for the visitors our tourism economy depends on? How can visitor and permanent populations co-exist when both groups are likely to grow? Given beautiful environments are tourist drawcards how can we best manage these locations? How do we encourage visitors and day-trippers to stop, stay and spend locally?



## Data snapshot

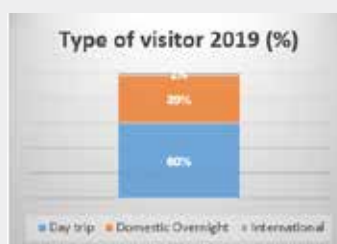
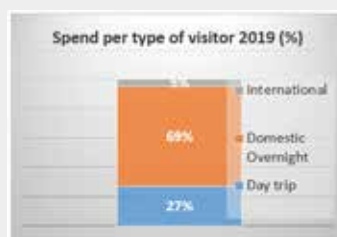
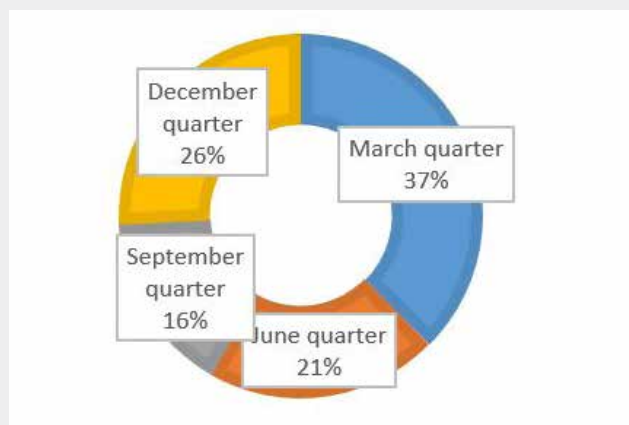
In 2019, the region attracted more than 3 million visitors for the first time ever. The growth in visitor numbers is greater than the number of nights people stayed in the area and expenditure (the amount visitors spend while they are here). The Surf Coast Shire accounts for 45% of visitation to the Great Ocean Road Region and 39% of all visitor nights.

A five year trend shows that visitor numbers, nights and expenditure is increasing. However, the length of stay has reduced from 2.8 nights to 2.4 nights per visitor.

Total visitor numbers	3.04 M	Up 20%
Total Nights	3.12M	Up 13%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$ 581.97M</b>	<b>Up 16%</b>

	Domestic Day Visits	Domestic Overnight stays	International Visits
People visiting	1,813 million	1.17 million	56 million
Accommodation (nights)	-	2.86 million	269,000
Spend	156 million	400 million	26 million

### Visitors per quarter (2019)



### Origin of visitors

Day Trip	Melbourne (66%): Hoppers Crossing, Melbourne, Werribee, Hillside; Geelong & Bellarine (16%)
Overnight	Victoria (91%): Melbourne, Geelong & Bellarine, Mornington
International	UK (17%), Germany (10.5%), China (9.86%)

## 4. Responding to Climate Change

**Climate change is a threat to our existence. Human activity, including burning of fossil fuels, has led to an increase in global temperatures. Historically, the Earth's climate has cycled between ice ages and warmer periods but the current rate of warming has not been seen before and atmospheric carbon dioxide (Co2) levels are the highest in recorded history (see [www.climateNASA.gov](http://www.climateNASA.gov)).**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that:

- Greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide trap heat within the atmosphere
- Human produced greenhouse gas emissions, largely Co2, have caused much of the observed increase in temperature over the past 70 years
- Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1 degree Celsius of global warming above pre-industrial levels.

Changes to weather patterns are occurring, species extinction is accelerating and heat related human deaths have increased. Reducing emissions will require systemic change in areas such as economics and trade, energy generation, food production and transport.

The Barwon South West region has been getting warmer and drier. In the future we can expect increases in daily maximum temperature of 0.8 to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the 2030s.

Rainfall will be variable and continue to decline in winter and spring. When it does rain there will be more intense downpours.

By the 2050s, the climate of the Geelong region could be more like the current climate of Shepparton, and Colac will be more like Wodonga.

Surf Coast Shire can expect harsher fire weather and longer fire risk seasons.

### **Council Climate Change obligations**

Councils are legally required to consider climate change in their strategic work.

The **Local Government Climate Change Adaptation Roles and Responsibilities 2020** requires Councils to consider:

Impacts of climate change on human health; natural environment; infrastructure; urban development and housing; sport and recreation; Council operations; future generations, etc.

The *Local Government Act 2020* states:

In the course of performing its role a Council must give effect to overarching governance principles which include climate change mitigation and planning for climate risks.

Under the *Climate Change Act 2017*, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans must have regard to climate change, which is identified as an emerging threat for current and future generations.

Carbon emissions for Surf Coast Shire have increased significantly since 2005.

The major source of these emissions is road transport. There is a large reliance of car travel for commuting and tourism, which is a major industry sector, is heavily dependent on road transport.

The second largest source of emissions in the Surf Coast Shire is electricity consumption.

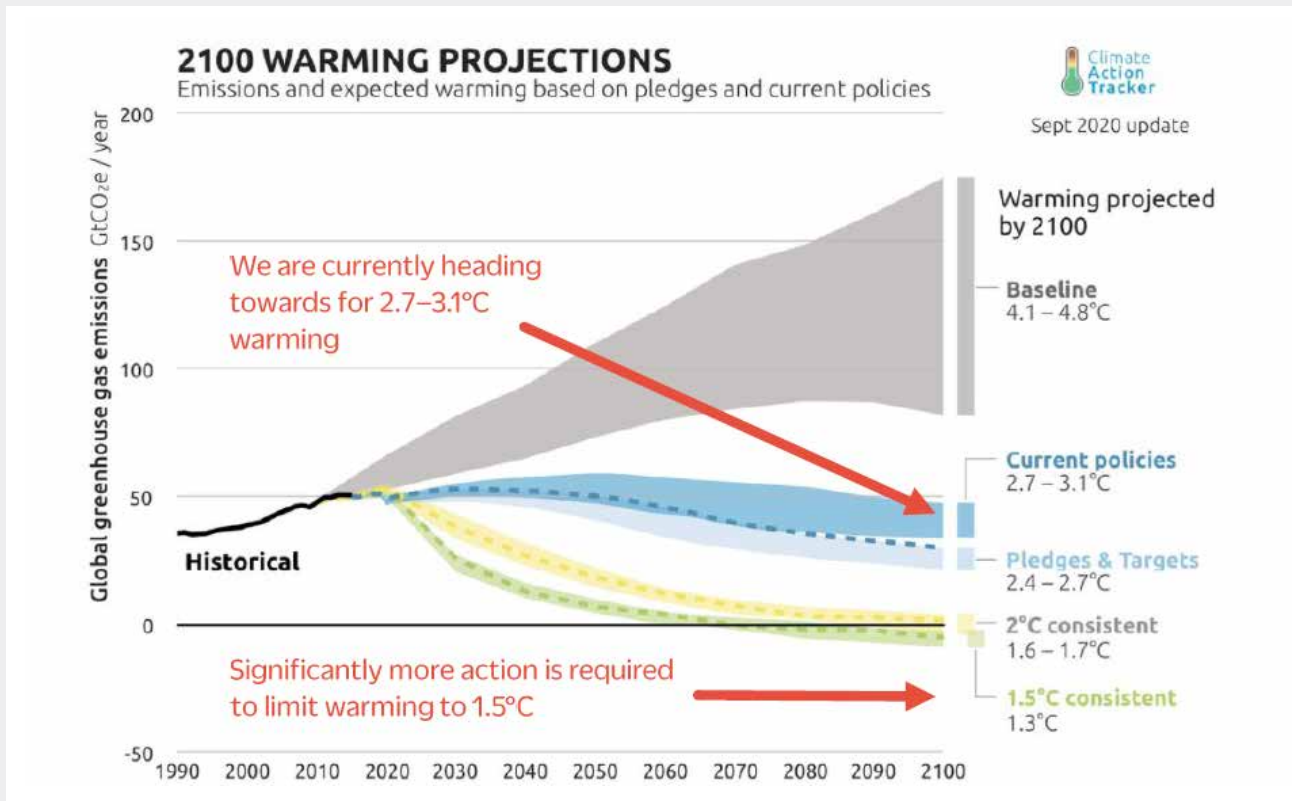


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Emergencies require immediate and concerted responses, possibly at the expense of other things – is our community willing to address the Climate Emergency as a priority? Can we do things differently at a community level to reduce emissions? What positive steps can we take? What needs to change? What can we do to prepare for the effects of climate change – such as extreme weather, erosion and bush fire risk? What role should local government play? How much should Council lead the community and how much should Council follow the community? To what degree should we protect the natural environment when people want to live amongst the natural environment? How supportive of windfarm and solar installations should Council be?

## Data snapshot



### Victorians' Perceptions of Climate Change Report – Sustainability Victoria

Results for Barwon Region, September 2017

#### Climate change is happening and requires action

**94%**

say climate change exists and humans are contributing to it;

**77%**

agree that climate change is an issue that requires urgent action now

**80%**

believe their actions can help reduce the impact of climate change

#### The community want action on climate change from:



**90%**

State Government



**84%**

Local Government



**93%**

Business & industry



**100%**

All individuals

### Surf Coast Shire emissions by sector

Source	Sector	Emissions (t CO <sub>2e</sub> )*
Electricity	Residential	99 800
	Commercial	57 200
	Industrial	21 700
Gas	Residential	20 800
	Commercial	0
	Industrial	300
Transport	On road	203 700
	Domestic air travel	0
Waste	Landfill	7 600
	Water	3 900
Agriculture		98 200

\* CO<sub>2e</sub> is the shorthand for carbon dioxide equivalents. It is the standard unit used in carbon accounting to quantify greenhouse gas emissions.

## 5. Somewhere to live

**Median house prices in some Surf Coast Shire towns have surpassed \$1 million. Rental prices have risen sharply and many properties are only available for part of the year. This is great news for some but a major challenge for others. Housing affordability and availability of a place to live is a problem for people of all ages. It's particularly difficult for those on relatively lower incomes whether they're seasonal workers, younger singles or couples, young families including separated parents, or older singles. It's increasingly difficult to live in the community where you grew up.**

These kinds of residents offer much to communities and their loss to other places can be felt in different ways. Young people can bring innovation and energy. Art and culture is an area that thrives from the input of young ideas and voices. Local businesses rely on young people for key roles, in hospitality, retail and tourism especially in the summer months. Community organisations such as the CFA and surf lifesaving clubs need new young members to remain viable.

Our events industry, which is important to our economy, will also suffer if a lack of affordable accommodation impacts on our pool of volunteers. For many events volunteer support is critical.

Surf Coast Shire has a growing older population. Our fastest growing age group is 70 to 79 years. Between now and 2036 Surf Coast Shire will experience an 84% increase in those aged 60 years or more.

The growth in older aged groups coincides with higher life expectancy through improvements in health care and standard of living. Ideally, communities can support their older members to age well in the place they already know and love. Overall Surf Coast Shire scores highly for community connection and wellbeing but there are some areas in our shire where this is not the case.

Our geography presents challenges for both younger and older people. Our reliance on car travel is a particular challenge. Our towns are spread far apart, public transport must cover long distances for relatively low passenger numbers and there are limited specialty health services.

Renters with low incomes are those most likely to be paying more than 30% of their income on rent (those paying greater than 30% are considered to be experiencing rental stress). Based on 2016 data at least 350 people require access to social (subsidised) housing in Surf Coast Shire. Given rent rises since then and the reduction of available rental properties due to the rise of the short-stay market (e.g. Airbnb), that figure of 350 is likely to be an underestimate in 2021.

Surf Coast Shire has long had a significant part-time population with homeowners choosing to live in their properties only some of the year. COVID-19 has seen a rise in part-time homeowners relocating to their Surf Coast Shire properties for longer periods and in some cases permanently.

In March 2021, property market analysts, Corelogic, reported that Surf Coast Shire had an effective rental vacancy rate of zero. In other words there were no available residential rental properties.

A further challenge is the clash between the type of housing preferred by some residents to preserve a town's character and that which supports affordability. Higher density living, such as flats or townhouses on smaller blocks (possibly sub-divided), can provide relatively cheaper housing options but may not be the type of housing that some wish to see in our communities. Are people willing to see alternative options such as granny flats in next door's backyard or a few tiny houses or a seasonal camp site on a rural block over the road?

Space for housing and accommodation is limited by our topography, including the presence of large tracts of state forest, which means development is largely limited to Torquay, Winchelsea and Moriac.

More affordable options exist in Winchelsea, Colac-Otway Shire or the City of Greater Geelong. For those with connections within the shire (e.g. family or work) it forces physical separation and increases the need to travel/commute (mostly by car) with its negative impacts. It affects the ability of employers in the shire to attract workers, particularly into lower paid, less secure jobs.





### What's the dilemma? (questions to consider)

The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.

How can we influence affordability when coastal properties are highly sought after? What innovative solutions should we consider? Where should new housing be located given the limits of our topography? How do we ensure affordability for a diversity of people and age groups? What impact does increased housing supply have on township character? What is the impact of new housing on infrastructure and services? Are higher densities, and increased height limits and pop-up accommodation compatible with people's views on township character? What needs to change to enable younger people to stay living in Surf Coast Shire? How do we support older people to live in place? Many of the forces affecting this situation are market-driven and within the remit of other governments. Is there a role for Council and if so what is it? What should Council do when issues of town character or people's amenity clash with affordability?



## Data snapshot

	Surf Coast Shire	Victoria
People aged 18-24 years	6%	9.5%
People aged 25-34 years	9.9%	15%
	Surf Coast Shire	G21 region
People aged 20-29 years	8.4%	12%

- Fastest growing age group: 70-79 years.
- Residents aged 60 – 74 years make up 13.3% of the total population.
- Residents aged 75+ make up 11.1% of the Surf Coast population.
- Between now and 2036 Surf Coast Shire will experience an 84% increase in numbers of people aged 60 years and more.

### Median house prices\*

Torquay	\$833,000
Jan Juc	\$868,000
Bellbrae	\$1,154,000
Bells Beach	\$1,590,000
Anglesea	\$846,700
Aireys Inlet	\$999,000
Lorne	\$968,800
Regional Victoria	\$486,000

\* source Core Logic September 2019



## 6. Keeping our economy strong

**The economy of Surf Coast Shire is unique - comprising traditional sectors such as construction, health, retail and education and non-traditional sectors such as the surf industry, tourism, events, creative and home based business. Prior to COVID-19, the Surf Coast Shire's economy was estimated to be \$2.69 billion in terms of output, providing more than 9,300 jobs.**

Locally established global surf brands Quiksilver and Rip Curl dominated our economic identity for many years. But fifty years since the founding of these companies, the local economy has diversified to become much more than surfing.

Our close proximity to Geelong and Melbourne has influenced the way our economy functions. Home to a workforce of more than 14,000 people the Surf Coast Shire does not provide jobs for all its workers. Just 44% of Surf Coast Shire residents live and work locally.

Of the 56% of locals with jobs elsewhere, many are based in Geelong and Melbourne, and work in sectors such as finance, health, education, commerce and engineering.

Thirty-three percent of workers come from Geelong to the Surf Coast Shire. These workers tend to have lower paying jobs in accommodation, food services and education. Geelong based workers also fill many of the shire's summer seasonal jobs.

A summer based tourism industry results in significant proportions of part time work as well as aspects of under employment. This is particularly so for female and young workers who tend to work part time.

The Surf Coast is largely a small business economy, with relatively few larger employers. Small and micro sized businesses have been growing. Approximately 98 per cent of businesses employ fewer than 20 people, 90% employ fewer than four.

Lifestyle, a highly skilled and entrepreneurial workforce, new ways of working, close proximity to Geelong and Melbourne and advances in data speed and capability has resulted in a rapid expansion of home-based businesses in Surf Coast Shire.

There are an estimated 8,428 home-based businesses, (including; independent trades-people, professional services, financial, consulting, creative, allied health, small scale manufacture/wholesale, and recreation.

The region has a history of creativity and innovation, originally associated with the surf industry, but now diversified to include creative and entrepreneurial activities. This includes photography, music, art, fashion, graphic design, architecture and product design.

The agriculture sector is strengthening. Accounting for more than 540 jobs, mixed farming and grazing are the dominant forms of agricultural land use.

While most agricultural businesses are small scale there are several large ventures in the northern and western hinterland where larger property sizes, less variable topography, and lower levels of urban encroachment support larger operations.

Food and fibre is an important sector in the hinterland and wineries, berry growers and niche branded meat producers are becoming more prevalent.

Job creation is essential to maintaining Surf Coast Shire's prosperity and lifestyle. A diverse range of local jobs reduces the need to travel for work, sustains communities, attracts new families and provides more opportunities for young people to stay in their home towns.

There are environmental benefits too. Having more jobs that can be done locally would mean fewer workers would need to drive a long distance to access work. This would reduce emissions, noting road transport is currently the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in our region.

An additional 2,695 jobs will be needed in the Surf Coast Shire by 2036 to keep pace with projected population growth.

This figure is based on the projected population of people aged between 15 and 69 years and takes into account workforce participation rates, current levels of worker containment and levels of unemployment.

To maintain the current ratio of where people work, and support people's existing lifestyle, the new jobs would need to be distributed as follows:

- 1816 jobs for Surf Coast Shire locals
- 879 for workers from Geelong and surrounds.
- 2,312 jobs outside the Surf Coast Shire (for Surf Coast residents).



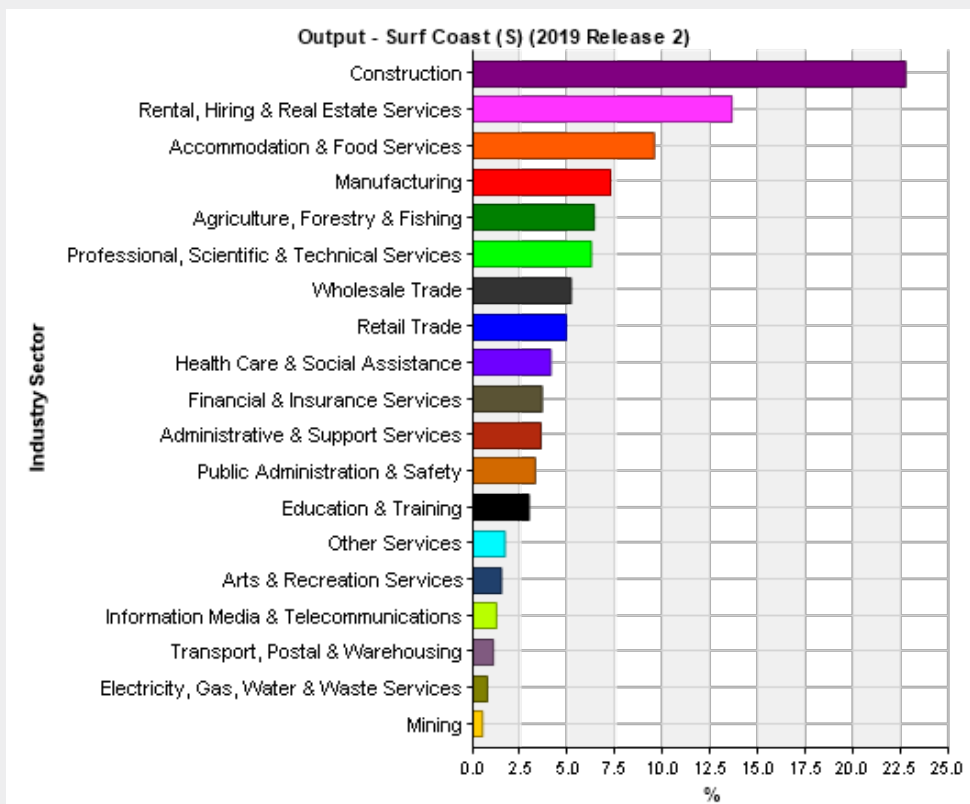
### What's the dilemma? (questions to consider)

The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.

How do we further develop a resilient local economy? What can be done to ensure there are enough jobs to support our growing population? What will be the long term effect of the pandemic on local economies? What will be the long term effects of the pandemic on our local economy? How can local businesses adapt to a market with fewer international visitors? What impact does an increase in unemployment have on our communities? What is the role of governments in supporting economic recovery?

## Data Snapshot

### Top industry sectors in Surf Coast Shire



### The three local economies in Surf Coast Shire

#### TORQUAY ECONOMY

- 14% jobs construction based
- 13% jobs tourism based
- Internationally significant events
- Dominated by at home businesses
- Cottage industry servicing global markets
- Strong surf history
- Entrepreneurs seeking lifestyle.
- Provides skilled labour to Geelong & Melbourne
- Main population centre

#### COAST ECONOMY

- 22% jobs tourism based
- 15% jobs construction based
- Seasonal visitor market
- Emerging visitor products
- Significant major events
- Low population growth
- High property prices and low rental availability
- High percent of holiday homes
- Difficult to attract & retain skilled staff

#### HINTERLAND ECONOMY

- 39% jobs agriculture & forestry based.
- Services regional & national markets
- 19% jobs construction based.
- Services Torquay & greater Geelong
- Receives 3% of Surf Coast visitation
- Emerging agritourism
- Affordable housing
- Areas of unproductive land

## 7. Land use

**Land use is guided by the Surf Coast Shire Planning Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to provide a framework for decisions about the use and development of land.**

The planning scheme takes into account state, regional, local and community expectations for the areas it covers. It must also support the implementation of state, regional and local policies. One of these policies is the requirement to ensure 15 years supply of residential land based on growth projections. In Surf Coast Shire, Torquay and Winchelsea are both identified growth zones.

Township structure plans are developed to identify the long term strategic goals for a given location. The plans consider current and identified future needs. Structure plans consider issues such as availability of commercial land, supply of community facilities and physical constraints such as bushfire or erosion risks.

Planning zones are used to identify which areas are suitable for which use. Different zones can provide for residential living, commercial and agricultural activities, recreational space and for conservation of natural areas.

### **Distinctive Area and Landscape**

In 2019 the Victorian Government declared part of the Surf Coast Shire a Distinctive Area and Landscape to recognise and protect its landscape and character. Planning controls are now being proposed to support the declaration. The Surf Coast Statement of Planning Policy is expected to be adopted by September 2021. The policy will have a 50 year forward view.

### **Competing demands**

Tension can occur when there are competing demands for land use. This is exacerbated when growth, and therefore change, occurs rapidly. Coupled with this is the impact on property values.

Real estate in Surf Coast Shire is expensive. Land zoned for residential development generally brings a higher financial return than if the same land was reserved for agricultural use. Local primary producers are increasingly having to compete with large scale industrialised farms. Local food production can deliver better environmental outcomes than food grown elsewhere in Australia or overseas and shipped here.

Industrial and commercial zones are an important means to support jobs growth. Lifestyle is a known attractor for business operators to come to Surf Coast Shire.



### **What's the dilemma?** (questions to consider)

*The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.*

What is the best use for land in our shire? What controls are available to support different land uses? How do we achieve the best balance of land use? How do we protect the character of the area whilst supporting the needs of growing communities? What should we do when new or changed land uses challenge those that are more established? How do we achieve the right mix of commercial and industrial land? How do we as a community support the continued use of land for agriculture? How can land use support efforts to combat climate change? Can tourism and primary production operate side by side?



## Data snapshot

### Residential lot supply

According to a September 2018 analysis Surf Coast Shire has:

- 5 to 7 years of residential land supply.
- 9 – 12 years if unzoned broad hectare and major infill residential land is included (this includes the Spring Creek land release area, which may be subject to change).
- Which equates to 6,773 new dwellings:
  - 2,642 zoned lots (39%)
  - 4,131 unzoned lots (61%)

### Population growth by location

Annual average population growth between 2011 and 2017:

- 724 people per year in Torquay-Jan Juc
- 35 people per year in Lorne-Anglesea
- 18 people per year in remaining rural areas

Torquay-Jan Juc accounted for more than 93% of all population growth in the shire between 2011 and 2017.

### Dwelling numbers and growth

Locations	2017 Dwellings		2011-2017 Dwellings	
	Total 2017	Distribution	Average annual growth	Distribution of average growth
Torquay- Jan Juc	9,498	51%	274	78.2%
Lorne-Anglesea	6,690	36%	59	16.7%
Winchelsea	969	5%	5	1.5%
Remaining rural areas	1,619	9%	13	3.7%
Surf Coast Shire	18,776	100%	351	100%



## 8. Build or maintain?

Surf Coast Shire Council has more than 300 public buildings on its assets register. Some are brand new while others are many decades old. At the same time Council has a network of more than 1,000 kilometres of roads to maintain, along with 317 kilometres of drains, 230,000 square metres of footpaths and cycleways, 18 bridges and more than 5,000 separate recreational facilities including parks, gardens and sports reserves.

Council funding is limited. Our population is relatively small for our geographic area and rates income is capped by the Victorian Government.

In 2015 Council commissioned asset renewal modelling to understand how much funding would be required to meet the costs of asset renewal for the next 20 years. The average annual funding requirement was found to be \$7 million over 20 years (to 2035). Accounting for CPI the average annual increase was 7%.

Council list of assets has a replacement value of \$874 million.



### **What's the dilemma?** (questions to consider)

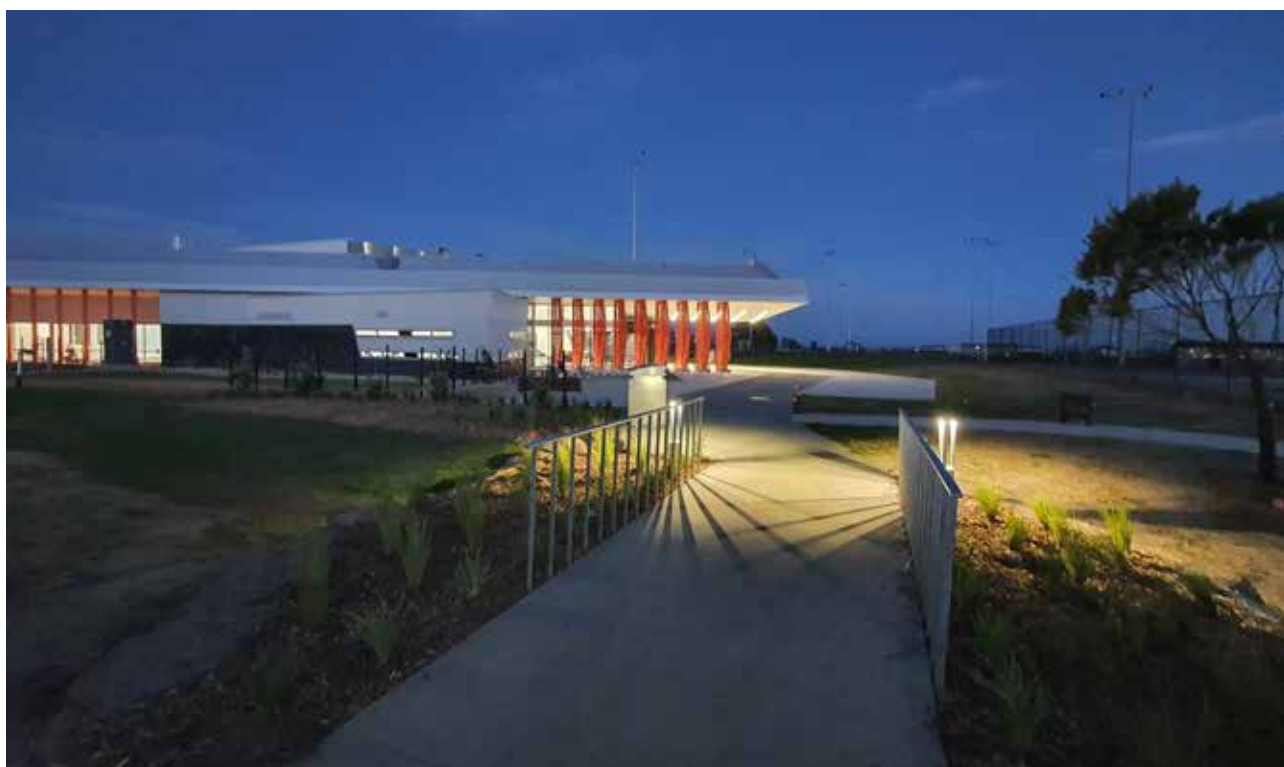
*The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.*

What are community expectations regarding services levels, such how many types of buildings are needed, how should they be shared, and how far should people travel to use them? Are community expectations different to technical service levels which prescribe maintenance service levels for specific assets? Are Council's service levels right or are we offering a gold standard when a bronze standard would be adequate to meet needs?

When is an asset, and therefore a service, so underutilised that the asset should be decommissioned? What are the pros and cons of asset disposal?

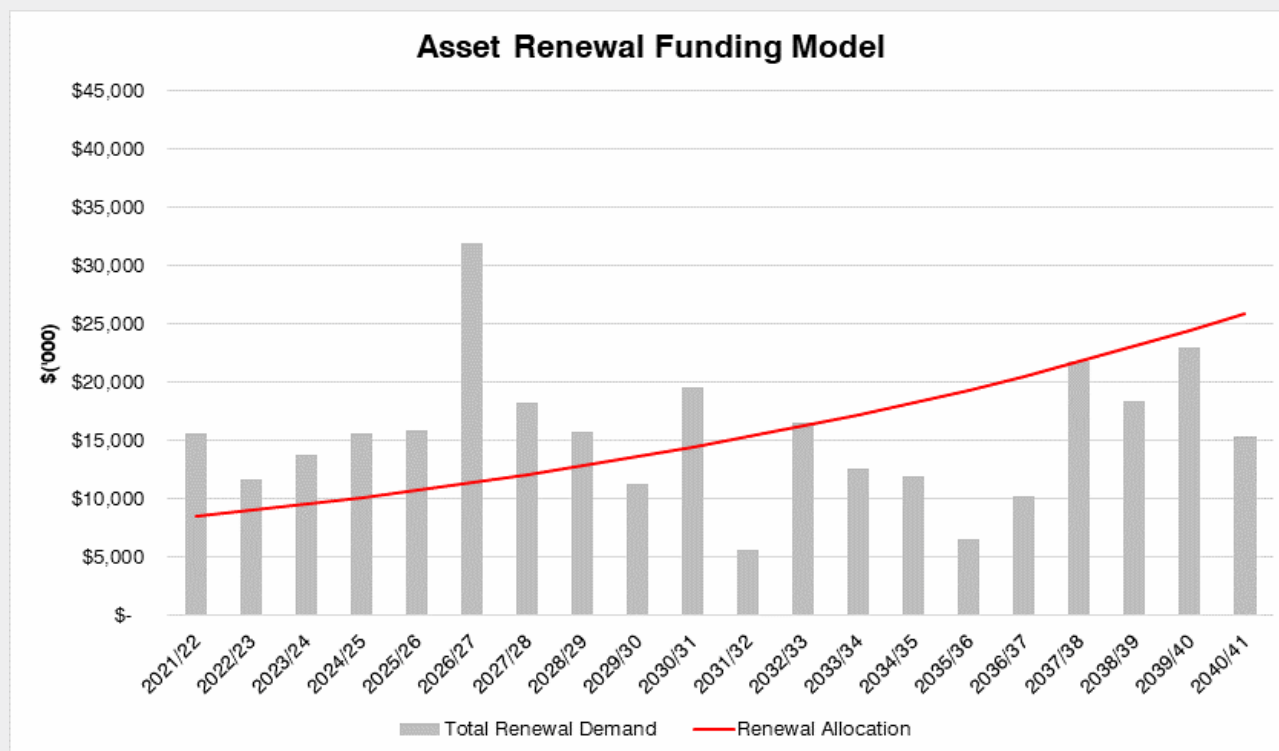
How do we ensure equity for this generation as well as the coming generations of residents? What things should future generations fund? When might it be appropriate to borrow money to pay for infrastructure?

When should Council not manage crown land, ie, community has a direct relationship with State Government?



## Data snapshot

### Projected asset renewal costs



### Amount and cost of assets maintained by Surf Coast Shire Council

Category	Replacement Cost (\$,000)	Indicative Quantity
Land	\$203,082	1064.6 Ha
Buildings	\$99,906	312 structures
Plant & Equipment	\$12,804	Fleet – 47 Small Plant – 138 Heavy Plant – 56
Roads	\$395,268	6,391,168m <sup>2</sup>
Bridges	\$5,024	18 structures
Footpaths and Cycleways	\$30,016	229,148 m <sup>2</sup>
Drainage	\$75,174	317 km Pipes & 11089 Pits
Water & Sewer	\$573	5 Systems
Recreational, Leisure & Community	\$24,717	5144 Items
Parks Open Space & Streetscapes	\$15,554	
Off-street Car Parks	\$11,888	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$874,006</b>	Included in roads

## 9. Traditional Owners

**The Victorian Government recently launched an inquiry into the dispossession and genocide of Aboriginal people during colonisation. The Yoo-rrook Justice Commission will investigate both historical and ongoing injustices against Aboriginal Australians. In the Wemba Wemba language Yoo-rrook means truth.**

The recommendations of the commission will be fed into the development of a treaty.

The commission will host public hearings about social, economic and health disadvantage, and the role colonisation and discriminatory government policy have played in fostering that disadvantage.

### **Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006**

As a planning authority and land manager, Council is required to consider the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance. , by:

- Identifying, assessing and documenting places of Aboriginal cultural significance with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) for inclusion in the Planning Scheme.
- Providing for the protection and conservation of pre- and post-contact Aboriginal cultural heritage places.
- Ensuring that permit approvals align with recommendations of any relevant Cultural Heritage Management Plan approved under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

### **Local Country Plans**

Surf Coast Shire spans the lands of two Traditional Owner groups. Each has produced a Country Plan which sets out their vision and goals for each nation's Country.

### **Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation**

Eastern Maar are the eastern landholding group of a larger Aboriginal nation - the Maar Nation. The western landholding group of the Maar nation are the Gunditjmara, with whom Eastern Maar share the lands and waters between the Eumeralla and Shaw Rivers. The Country to the east of the Shaw River to the Leigh and the Barwon catchment basins, and the area from the sea in the south to the Great Dividing Range in the north belongs to Eastern Maar.

Before the arrival of Europeans, there were over 200 clan groups belonging to the Maar nation. Following colonisation, introduced diseases, starvation and slaughter led to a rapid reduction in the population of Maar citizens.

Today some Maar citizens continue to identify with the respective Maar clan groups of their ancestors. Other

citizens identify as part of the broader Eastern Maar group without identifying with a particular clan.

The Eastern Maar Country Plan, is titled *Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorryeeyt*. *Meerreengeeye* means 'Our Country' in Maar language, which includes the land and waters, plants and animals, stories and spirits, and citizens. *Ngakeepoorryeeyt* means 'far seeing'.

The plan describes the values and knowledge that bind Maar citizens together as a nation. These include kinship, connection to Country, language and cultural obligations, the protection of cultural heritage and the ecological knowledge that enables Maar citizens to interact with Country and its plants and animals in ways that ensure a sustainable supply of resources.

Meerreengeeye ngakeepoorryeeyt sets out the Eastern Maar's vision for the future and identifies six goals that will help to focus efforts and realise the vision

The following is an excerpt from the vision:

***"We look to a future in which we have secured our rightful place in society and on Country. A future where Eastern Maar citizens are a free people, proud of our heritage and our achievements. Where we are respected as the Traditional Owners of our lands and waters, living in harmony with the rest of society.***

***"We started out as a free People, and we look towards a future where we are free again. We are the Eastern Maar nation; and we are proud."***

### **Goals**

- 1: Eastern Maar citizens are physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy
- 2: Young people are active and engaged on the path to reaching their full potential
- 3: Our community is proud of our identity and we are respected as Traditional Owners
- 4: Our Country is healthy and our natural resources are managed and used sustainably
- 5: Our unique culture is getting stronger and we keep our Dreaming going
- 6: Our community is building wealth - creating a future for our young people

Click to see the full Eastern Maar Country Plan [\*\*Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorryeeyt\*\*](#).

### ***Paleert Tjaara Dja Healthy Country Plan***

Let's make Country good together 2020 – 2030

### **Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation**

Wadawurrung Country extends from the Great Dividing Range at Ballarat to the coast from Werribee River to Aireys Inlet including Geelong, the Bellarine Peninsula and the Surf Coast. The Wadawurrung care for Country in accordance with Bundjil's lore. In their Country Plan, the Wadawurrung describe how safeguarding their knowledge and the ability to remain on Country has helped them endure the violence and dispossession wrought by colonisation.

Performing ceremonies, dancing and singing in language, teaching young people Wadawurrung stories, showing them how to hunt and harvest food, medicine and resources sustainably, managing waterways, restoring cultural flows and maintaining aquaculture systems are essential elements to keeping Wadawurrung people and culture healthy.

The Wadawurrung Country Plan 2020 – 2030 is called '**Paleert Tjaara Dja**' which means let's make Country good together.

Paleert Tjaara Dja contains the following vision:

*"Wurrurrwilwa gupma bengadak Wadawurrung wurring-wurring baap dja"*

All people working together to make Wadawurrung Country and culture strong.

The plan also lists the values, or 'building blocks', that the Wadawurrung identify as important things to look after:

- Wadawurrung culture and people
- Enterprise and employment
- Wadawurrung cultural sites and places
- Bush tucker, medicines and resources
- Yulluk - Waterways, Rivers, estuaries and wetlands
- Inland country
- Coastal Country
- Warre - Sea country
- Native animals

Then there are identified threats to Wadawurrung values:

- Lack of Capacity
- Lack of recognition
- Vandalism
- Inappropriate vitiation
- Urban development
- Weeds
- Location of coordination between land managers
- Location of windfarms
- Water extraction

- Sea level rise
- Drought
- Cinnamon fungus
- Weeds
- Foxes and cats
- Rabbits
- Rising sea temperatures
- Bushfires

The Wadawurrung have developed three programs to both improve the health of their values and reduce the impact of the threats:

#### **Gobata Dja baap Ngubiyt**

Taking care of Country and waters – includes caring for Country, Country and water acquisition, co-management, cultural burning and management of artefacts.

#### **Gobata bengadak tjaara**

Us supporting us – Cultural Strengthening – includes culture and language education, a cultural resource centre, and elders support.

#### **Wurrurrwilwa Wadawurrung Corporation**

Strengthening Wadawurrung Corporation – includes employment and mentoring, enterprise development, recognition and respect, Treaty and reform of the corporation.

Click to read '**Paleert Tjaara Dja**' Wadawurrung Country Plan 2020 – 2030.



#### **What's the dilemma?** (questions to consider)

*The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.*

Is Aboriginal history and culture recognised and embraced in the Surf Coast Shire as it should be? What is Council's role? What can we do to advance the cause of reconciliation? What can we do to begin to understand the experiences of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities?



## 10. A place for all

### Is this a place for everyone? Is it inclusive and can everyone enjoy participating in community life?

Surf Coast Shire is not a very diverse community compared to what you might find in other parts of Victoria. On many indicators our minority cohorts are smaller than you would find elsewhere. Diversity is often acknowledged as an inherently good thing for societies and yet what are people's experiences of living in a community when they're in the minority?

The vast majority of residents have an Australian, English, Scottish or Irish ancestry. 2016 Census data identifies several minorities in our community:

- 3.5% of the population reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability
- 0.2% identify as Aboriginal Australian.
- 14.2% are low income households
- 3.8% unemployment rate
- 9.9% of households do not have an internet connection at the dwelling
- 2.4% of households don't have access to a motor vehicle
- 2.8% of households are single parent with young children
- 48 people were homeless
- Unfortunately we don't yet have good quality data on sexual orientation, sex or gender identity

These are signs of difference. When societies are typically constructed around the needs and wants of the majority, minorities can experience disadvantage.

For example, people with a disability have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and statistically are at greater risk of harm from natural disasters. People with a disability have lower employment rates than the broader population and are at greater risk of housing insecurity. The Surf Coast Shire is known for its environmental values including beaches and forests yet these locations are difficult or impossible to access for many people with a disability.

The majority of any population tend to attract the greatest attention. They can have the loudest voices and can attract the most resources and services. And yet arguably those in the majority are not those that need the greatest assistance from public bodies like Council.



### **What's the dilemma?** (questions to consider)

*The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.*

How do we welcome and celebrate diversity? What are the implications for Council and community? Should Council direct more time, energy and resources to improving the lives of the majority or the minority? What is the right balance?



# 11. Health and wellbeing

**Council is required to prepare a Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, every four years. This plan will be incorporated into the Council Plan and will address the most significant issues which are impacting on the health and wellbeing of our community. Health and wellbeing is affected by many things – people’s access to employment and education, their level of social connection, access to healthcare services, the physical environment and more.**

Based on existing data we already know some things about our community’s health and wellbeing. In recent years Council has been working, as part of an effort across the wider Geelong/G21 region, to address health and wellbeing problems in the following areas: healthy eating, physical activity, mental wellbeing, addressing harm caused by alcohol and other drugs and preventing violence against women.

We are generally a healthy community but we are far from perfect.

We’re more physical active than the state average, are less obese and are more likely to protect ourselves from the sun.

However nearly 2 in 3 adults do not meet fruits and vegetables based on current guidelines, 3 in 4 adults are drinking at levels that put them at ‘lifetime risk of alcohol related’ harm and there was a 21.5% increase in the numbers of family violence incidents between 2019 and 2020.

Council is not a health provider like Barwon Health or Hesse Rural Health. The only medically trained professionals we employ are immunisation and maternal and child health nurses. But we can have a big impact on people’s health in almost everything we do. We plan and design buildings and spaces that can support people to socialise, volunteer and be active. We run services like kinders and stadiums that can encourage healthy behaviours. We are a big employer in the community, can share information and ideas and can lead by example.



Some believe that councils shouldn’t get involved in things like what people eat, how much they exercise and how men behave towards women. And yet the state government legally requires all councils to focus on health and wellbeing, and some in the community fully support their rates being used to create change. Sometimes the connection between Council’s work and people’s wellbeing is not clear.

Data combined with community feedback and experience will assist in informing and shaping health priorities for the next four years.



## **What’s the dilemma?** (questions to consider)

*The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no ‘one right answer’. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.*

We think that everything we do has an impact on people’s health and wellbeing but how do we make the biggest difference? How healthy are we in Surf Coast Shire? What is the story behind the data? What role can Council play in reducing harm from alcohol and reducing violence given the concerning statistics? What role does Council play in emerging areas of concern such as mental wellbeing? What is it like to live with a disability or health impairment in our community? What health and wellbeing services and programs should be available to our communities? Surf Coast Shire has higher levels of physical activity than the state average, how could Council ensure physical activity levels continue to improve? The COVID restrictions have had a profound impact on people’s lives. How will this impact on our health and wellbeing profile in the months and years to come?



## Data snapshot

### Healthy Eating in Surf Coast Shire

- 2.4 Average number of serves of vegetables per day (Victorian average 2.2)
- 5.3% adults consume sugar sweetened beverages daily (Victorian average 10.1%)
- 17.1% adults eat takeaway meals/snacks more than once a week (Victorian average 15.3%)
- 19% adults rated their dental health Fair/Poor (Victorian average 24%)
- 58.2% adults do not meet fruit and vegetable consumption guidelines (Victorian average 51.7%)
- 5.1 number of cups of water consumed a day (Victorian average 5.4)
- 5.4% have experienced food insecurity (Victorian average 4.6%)
- 84% children 9-12 presenting with at least one decayed or missing tooth (Victorian average 59%)

### Alcohol and other drugs

- 59.2% adults are at increased risk of alcohol related harm from single occasion drinking (binge drinking) (Victorian average 43%)
- 74.1 % residents aged 18 years and over are drinking at levels that put them at 'lifetime risk of alcohol related' harm (Victorian average 59.5%)
- 32.5% adults believe getting drunk every now and then is okay. (Victorian average 27.9%)
- 17.7% residents over 18 currently smoke (Victorian average 16.7%)

### Mental wellbeing

	Surf Coast Shire	Victoria
Adult population who sought help for a mental health related problem	14.5%	17.6%
Adult population ever diagnosed with anxiety or depression	18.7%	27.4%
Persons reporting high/very high psychological distress	9.1%	15.4%
High personal resilience	6.9%	6.4%
Subjective wellbeing index	80.5%	77.3%

### Family violence in Surf Coast Shire

288

family violence incidents recorded in 2020

21.5%

increase in family violence incidents between 2019 (237) and 2020 (288)

5 in 10

family violence incidents occur between current or former partners

89%

family violence incidents took place in the home

If you or anyone you know is at risk of family violence, for help and support contact Safe Steps 24/7 crisis service on **1800 015 188** or email **safesteps@safesteps.org.au**.

## 12. Art, culture and heritage

**Art, culture and heritage are all around us but are they celebrated as they should be? For some these things are central to their everyday lives; for others these may not seem to have any relevance to them.**

The Surf Coast Shire's distinctive environment and accessibility to Melbourne and Geelong has contributed to a large number of creative practitioners making this place their home. Do we make the most of our natural advantage as a creativity hotspot?

Visual artists, musicians, software developers, architects, designers and manufacturers are now so concentrated in the area that the Surf Coast Shire has the fourth highest proportion of jobs in the creative sector throughout regional Australia, compared to jobs in other industries. (Regional Growth Prospects Research Report – Regional Institute of Australia 2018).

Culture and creativity have long played a role in the economic success of the Surf Coast Shire. The development of the surf industry arose out of a response to the sport and recreational culture of surfing and illustrates the role of creativity in entrepreneurship, design and manufacture.



Creative occupations make up 5.3% of all jobs in the Surf Coast Shire.

In addition to economic benefits, VicHealth's Arts Strategy 2019-23 explains that "participating in the arts has multiple benefits for health and wellbeing: it reduces social isolation, strengthens community connection and builds self-esteem, as people pursue creative activity alone or in groups."



### **What's the dilemma?** (questions to consider)

*The following questions are some of the areas Council needs to make decisions on but finds difficult as there is no 'one right answer'. These dilemmas are for you to consider when answering the overall remit.*

What is the place of art, culture and heritage in our community? How important are they to the character and community of this place? Are we celebrating them as we could? Do we make the most of our natural advantage as a place for creatives? Are these things priorities? How should Council think about and act on this topic in the future?



### **Data snapshot**

**Surf Coast Shire is ranked 4th in Australia for proportion of creative jobs:**

(Source: Regional Growth Prospects Research Report – Regional Institute of Australia 2018)

- Total jobs 8,201
- Creative Industry jobs 503

**Highlights from Surf Coast Shire Creative Places survey 2019 (800 responses)**

- 86% of respondents rated recognition of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage 4 or 5 in terms of priority
- 85% of respondents rated Place Making 4 or 5 in terms of priority
- 73% of respondents rated Creative Industries 4 or 5 in terms of priority
- 66% of respondents rated Showcasing our Best and Brightest 4 or 5 in terms of priority

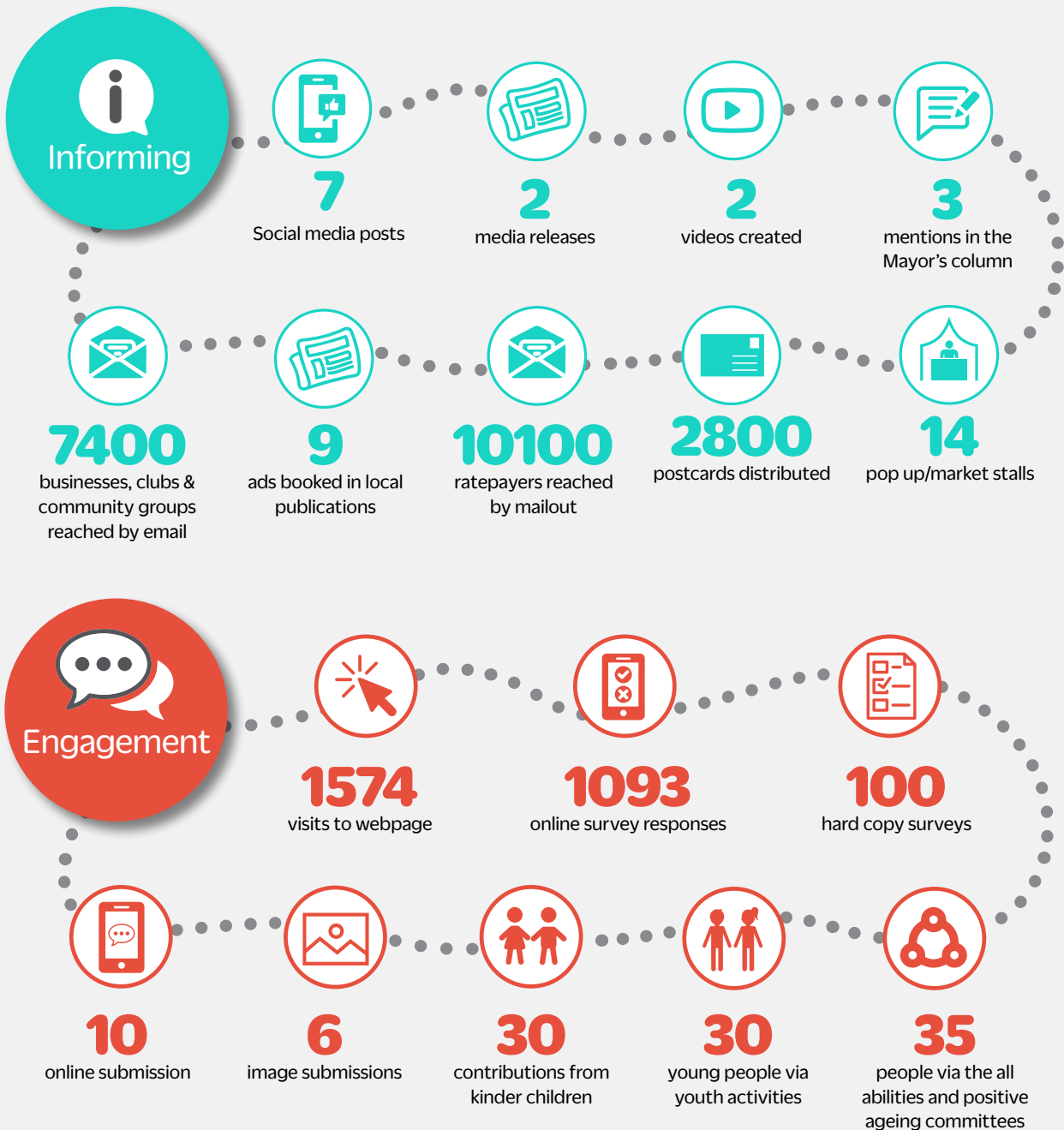
# Community involvement in People Place Future

## Community engagement methodology

The aim for People Place Future was to develop and deliver a community engagement approach that encouraged broad community participation, and actively sought diverse views.

The methodology was also designed to ensure Council meets its requirements under the Surf Coast Shire Council Community Engagement Policy, and the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## Over a 6 week engagement period...





**1. Participatory Phase  
January – March 2021 (completed)**

The participatory phase aimed to seek broad community and stakeholder input, through surveys, online submissions, targeted contact with stakeholders, and in person discussions at pop up stalls.

**Influence & commitment:** Council will invite public input in-person and online using a range of methods. Council will review and consider all input received, and also provide this to the Community Panel for further analysis.

**Outcome:** 1093 surveys were completed, 20 online submissions were received, and around 100 people had their views captured in person at pop up events.

**2. Deliberative Phase  
March – May 2021 (underway)**

At the centre of our engagement program is a deliberative panel; a representative group of community members, who are chosen at random from an expression of interest process.

Council has developed this deliberative element of the engagement process in line with the specific requirements of the new *Local Government Act 2020*.

**Influence & commitment:** Council has convened a representative panel of community members, selected by an independent consultant, to deliberate on key issues. Recommendations will be used to inform Council decision making.

**Outcome:** 239 expressions of interest were received, with 35 recruited for the community panel.

**3. Review Phase  
June – July 2021**

Once the Community Vision and Council Plan have been drafted, Council will seek community submissions prior to endorsing these documents. This opportunity will be widely promoted to community members, including those who have been involved in previous phases of the project.

**Influence & commitment:** Council will report back on the decisions made, and the ways community input have influenced the draft report. Feedback from a submission process will be reviewed and considered prior to a final plan being adopted.

# What we heard

The following is a brief summary of what we heard during the participatory phase. For a detailed picture read the People Place Future Community Engagement Report.

## Main themes

Respondents rated protection and enhancement of the natural environment the highest when asked what they most valued in their community. Managing growth in a sustainable way was the next highest priority with community health and wellbeing scoring third highest.

When asked specifically about health and wellbeing issues, respondents said increasing physical activity was the top priority, followed by tackling climate change and its impact on health. Improving social connection and mental health and wellbeing were the next most important themes.

When asked to comment on a vision for our community amongst the most commonly discussed themes were retaining a small town feel and ensuring development did not adversely impact on township character.

Also important were a community that is welcoming and inclusive and where people look out for each other. Living and working in area of natural beauty rated highly.

Active transport such as walking and cycling and public transport attracted a sizeable number of comments. The nurturing of creative industries and action to tackle climate change were also discussed.

## Liveability scores

The survey asked people to rank the things that they felt most contributed to the liveability of their town. The results were ranked according to how important an attribute was and how well it was currently performing.

## Strengths

(Attributes that the community cares about and that are performing well)

Elements of natural environment	66%
Sense of character or identity that is different from other neighbourhoods	46%
Sense of neighbourhood safety	46%
Landscaping and natural elements	43%

## Priorities

(Attributes the community cares about but that are currently underperforming)

Protection of the natural environment	70%
Sustainable behaviours in the community	46%
Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity	55%
General condition of public open space	54%
Quality of public space	52%
Amount of public space	47%

## Place values

The survey asked people to rank what was most important to them where they lived.

The top ranking values were:

- Protection of natural environment
- Elements of natural environment\*
- Walking, jogging, bike paths that connect housing to communal facilities
- General condition of public open space
- Quality of public space
- Amount of public space
- Sustainable behaviours in the community

\*refers to natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water and wildlife.

# Other reading

Visit the People Place Future website to access the below documents.

Click on the Document Library tab available at this web address: [www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/peopleplacefuture](http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/peopleplacefuture)

- Council Plan 2017-2021 (incorporating the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- 2020-2021 Annual Budget.
- Asset Renewal Funding Strategy
- Community Development Policy, Framework and Action Plan
- Healthy Eating and Active Living Action Plan
- Alcohol and Other Drugs Action Plan
- Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy
- Accessible and Inclusive Surf Coast Shire 2014-2024
- Creative Places Strategy
- Prosperous Places (Surf Coast Economic development research)
- Our Financial Story
- Towards Environmental Leadership and Climate Emergency Info Paper 2021
- Surf Coast Shire Climate Change Survey Results
- Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile

## External resources

- Wadawurrung Healthy Country Plan
- Wadawurrung Healthy Country Summary
- G21 Regional Growth Plan
- Great Ocean Road Region Visitor Economy 2015-2025
- Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape Draft Statement of Planning Policy
- Barwon Climate Projections 2019
- Barwon South West Renewable Energy Roadmap

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