



COUNCIL PLAN

2025-2029

DRAFT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Golden Plains Shire spans the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar People. We acknowledge them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians.

Council pays its respects to both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging.

Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Golden Plains Shire.



CONTENTS

04	Our Municipality
05	Our Community
08	Our Municipal Health and Wellbeing
11	Disability Action Plan Strategic Framework
12	Integrated Planning Framework
13	Community Vision 2040

15 PILLAR 1: COMMUNITY

16	Strategic Objectives
16	Key Priorities
17	Supporting Strategies/Plans
17	Major Initiatives

19 PILLAR 2: LIVEABILITY

20	Strategic Objectives
20	Key Priorities
21	Supporting Strategies/Plans
21	Major Initiatives

23 PILLAR 3: SUSTAINABILITY

24	Strategic Objectives
24	Key Priorities
25	Supporting Strategies/Plans
25	Major Initiatives

27 PILLAR 4: PROSPERITY

28	Strategic Objectives
28	Key Priorities
29	Supporting Strategies/Plans
29	Major Initiatives

31 PILLAR 5: LEADERSHIP

32	Strategic Objectives
32	Key Priorities
33	Supporting Strategies/Plans
33	Major Initiatives

OUR MUNICIPALITY

Renowned for its award-winning food and wine, community markets, iconic music festivals, rich gold mining history and character, and friendly communities – the Shire is an attractive destination to live, visit or socialise.

Situated between Victoria's two largest regional cities, Geelong and Ballarat, Golden Plains Shire (the Shire) is a large municipality of 2,705 square kilometres, with a socio-economically diverse population of approximately 25,000 people living in 56 vibrant rural communities, reflecting a population growth of approximately 2.4 per cent per annum.

Residents value the character of Golden Plains' small townships and communities, local facilities and services, and natural environment. Our sweeping landscapes, award-winning businesses and rugged bush landscapes combine with historic townships and growing communities to make a wonderful place to live, visit or socialise. New residents, particularly young families, are attracted to the area's rural lifestyle, affordable housing and proximity to the services and jobs available in the Shire, as well as those in Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, and the Surf Coast.

The Shire offers many opportunities for businesses, investment, sustainable development, and employment, with more than 2,100 businesses including farming, construction, retail, and home-based businesses.

There is a strong agricultural sector, with a history of wool, sheep, and grain production. More recently, the area is seeing strong growth in intensive agriculture, including poultry, pigs, beef, and goat dairy, as well as the expansion of viticulture in the Moorabool Valley. This in turn has driven an increase in the region's tourism offering, with visitors attracted to the region's picturesque wineries, gourmet food producers, agri-tourism, and the monthly Golden Plains Farmers' Market.

Golden Plains Shire is one of the leading producers of eggs and chicken meat in Victoria, producing nearly a quarter of Victoria's eggs. Council is encouraging continued growth and investment in intensive agriculture, by establishing the Golden Plains' Food Production Precinct, near Lethbridge, which is on track to become one of Victoria's premier areas for intensive agriculture development and expansion.

Golden Plains Shire Council has a keen sense of community with people working together to achieve common goals and outcomes. This sense of community benefits the entire Shire and Council will continue to have conversations with the community now and into the future.

The Shire is home to two Traditional Owner groups, who have lived within the region for more than 25,000 years. Most of the Shire is situated in Wadawurrung Country. The traditional boundaries of the Wadawurrung people span the coastline from the Werribee River to Lorne peninsula and traverse inland in a north-westerly direction towards Ballarat. The name Wadawurrung is a recognised tribe (community) which consisted of some 25 clans (or family groups) that forms part of the Kulin Nation of Aboriginal people. A small pocket of Golden Plains Shire south-east of Rokewood is under the Custodianship of the Eastern Maar people, who are the Traditional Owners of south-western Victoria, from Ararat to Warrnambool and the Great Ocean Road (Golden Plains Shire, 2022).

OUR COMMUNITY

An overview of our community

MUNICIPALITY DEMOGRAPHICS



2,702km²

Geographical size of the municipality, land area of 2,702 square km



1,700km

Council is responsible for managing over 1,700 kilometres of roads



376

Identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Male – 182
Female – 192
Median Age - 20

2

Traditional Owner groups – Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar



\$1,899

Median weekly household income



\$1,733

Median monthly mortgage repayments

\$338

Median weekly rent



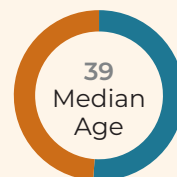
The average number of people per household is **2.9**

Population and forecast

24,985

Population

48.9%
Female
51.1%
Male



Predicted population by 2041, an increase of 70%

42,607



1,541
Aged 0-4



6,749
Aged 5-24



11,269
Aged 25-59



5,404
Aged 60+

8,691

Households in 2021

→ **14,941**

Predicted households in 2041

9,402

Dwellings in 2021

→ **16,081**

Predicted dwellings in 2041



OUR COMMUNITY

An overview of our community

KEY HEALTH AND WELLBEING STATISTICS



42.5%
of Golden Plains Shire
adults self-reported
to be in very good or
excellent health



19.4%
smoke or vape tobacco with
higher proportions of people
who both vape or smoke
tobacco daily
(GPS:19.4%, Vic: 18.5%)



76
Median age of death
is 76 years



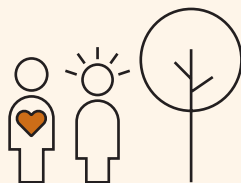
30.1%
Lower proportion felt that most
people could be trusted (GPS:
30.1%, Vic: 36.1%)



17.8%
experience loneliness



25.3%
Higher proportion report
fair or poor dental health
(GPS: 25.3%, Vic: 22.5%)



91.4%
Lower numbers regularly talk
to family and close friends
(GPS: 91.4%, Vic: 95.2%)



30.4%
Significantly higher proportion
of people who are obese
(GPS: 30.4%, Vic: 23.0%)



20.4%
Higher percentages are
not sufficiently active
(GPS: 20.4%, Vic:16.8%)

OUR COMMUNITY

Our current and future challenges

Population growth

Balancing population growth whilst preserving our unique character and natural environment is a significant challenge. Our Growing Places Strategy will guide future growth across the Shire in an orderly and sustainable way.

Climate Emergency Plan 2022-2032

The need for the Council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change impacts is addressed through the Climate Emergency Plan 2022-2032 which aligns with the Council Plan 2025-2029, Community Vision 2040, and the Environment Strategy 2019-2027.

Emergency Management Planning

By preparing for natural disasters, pandemics, and other emergencies, Council is committed to being ready both strategically and tactically. We will continue to work with the community and support agencies to ensure everyone's safety and well-being during crises.

Financial Plan, Revenue and Rating Plan

We understand that responsible financial practices are crucial for long-term stability and providing essential services to our community. The Council is committed to effectively implementing and monitoring its 10-year Financial Plan and Revenue and Rating Plan.

Maintaining our roads infrastructure

Managing over 1,700 km of roads within budget presents a significant challenge for Council. Our proactive maintenance schedule is guided by our recent road condition audit and ongoing road hazard inspections which provide innovative and cost-effective ways to efficiently undertake this critical work.

Social sustainability

Ongoing socio-economic disparities within our Shire highlight the need for initiatives that promote equal opportunities and social mobility.

Economic diversification

While agriculture is still a key part of our local economy, supporting new industries and local businesses helps create a balanced and strong economic landscape.

Accessible transport options

The Council has made better transport links a top priority to help our community thrive and stay connected. Improving transport across the Shire is crucial for economic growth, better accessibility, and a higher quality of life for our residents.

Meeting increasing access demand for health services

Access to primary health services is a major issue in Golden Plains Shire, especially with its growing population. The Council will keep advocating for support from Federal and State Governments, the Western Primary Health Network, and private providers to invest in health services.

OUR MUNICIPAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our Commitment

Golden Plains Shire is committed to creating environments that improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all our community, across every stage of life. Integrating health and wellbeing into the Council Plan reflects our view that: 'Health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility'.

Our plan demonstrates our commitment to work in a collaborative and coordinated way to ensure supportive, inclusive, and empowering environments that enable our community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. We are committed to addressing the broader social determinants of health, respond to diverse community needs and improve health inequities and outcomes by working with our community, the Department of Health and local health and community partners.

Our Community: Health and Wellbeing

In a healthy community, all community members have equitable opportunities to be healthy and well. This includes having access to healthy and culturally appropriate food, safe and accessible neighbourhoods with natural open spaces and inclusive sport and recreation opportunities. It also includes opportunities for social connection and an environment that promotes gender equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Being healthy is more than being free from illness and disease. Health and wellbeing are influenced by a complex interaction between individual characteristics, lifestyle, and the physical, social, and economic environments.

Health inequities are the differences in health status or the distribution of health resources between different population groups that arise from the social and environmental conditions in which people live, work, and grow.

Key health inequities for Golden Plains Shire include:

- Access to health services
- Access to transport
- Access to social support

Requirements for the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (26.1), local Councils have a responsibility to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within their municipalities. Councils are required to plan for the health and wellbeing of their local communities by developing a plan which includes:

- An examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district.
- Goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing.
- Specified measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the local community.
- Provision for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Specified ways that Council will work in partnership with the Department of Health and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects, and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Having regard to the State Public Health and Wellbeing Plan in developing the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The *Climate Change Act 2017* requires Councils to have regard to climate change when preparing a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires council to publicly report on their progress in relation to gender equality, and promote gender equality in policies, programs and services that impact the public.

Our Health and Wellbeing Priorities



Reducing tobacco and e-cigarette use



Improving wellbeing



Increasing active living



Preventing family violence and enhancing gender equity



Increasing healthy eating



Tackling climate change and its impact on health

Our six health and wellbeing priorities areas have been informed by an extensive examination of health status and health determinant data at a local level, widespread community and stakeholder engagements, legislation requirements and strategic planning. The plan is guided by the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023–2027.

Details of this examination can be found in the Golden Plains Shire Community Profile Report and summary on our website.

These symbols will be used throughout the Council Plan to identify the objectives and priority projects that contribute to addressing our health and wellbeing priority areas.



Preventing family violence and enhancing gender equity

The impact of family violence not only impacts the physical and mental health of the victim but can extend to loss of housing, financial insecurity and reduced family or social supports. It is detrimental to the development and wellbeing of children who are exposed to violence.

It is a highly gendered issue, with women significantly more likely to be the victims of violence. Other groups disproportionately impacted by violence include those with a disability, first nations people, older people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and people from LGBTIQ+ communities.



Improving wellbeing

Good mental health is an essential component of individual and community wellbeing. Feeling a sense of belonging, connecting to family and broader networks in the community and having capacity to contribute and be productive are all critical to mental health. Some community members are more vulnerable to poor mental health and illness due to unfavourable social, economic, and environmental circumstances. There is a large overlap of mental health conditions with chronic diseases and other issues such as social isolation and loneliness, problem gambling, alcohol, and substance misuse. Conversely, a healthy diet, physical activity and social connection are all very important for good wellbeing.

The impact of gender on mental health manifests in a multitude of ways. Men living in rural Victoria have higher rates of psychological distress when compared to men living in metropolitan regions. Gender stereotyping, inequality, sexual harassment, discrimination, gendered violence, economic disadvantage all impact health outcomes for women.



Increasing healthy eating

Our diet and the food environment have changed substantially over the past generation. Ease of access, affordability and the marketing of unhealthy food and drink choices, coupled with other socio-economic and environmental factors, strongly influence individual food choice. Poor diet also contributes to chronic diseases, dental disease, and poor mental health.

Food availability and access can impact people based on gender. Pressure to conform to traditional masculinities can result in men showing resistance to follow health promotion advice and be less involved in meal preparation, while lower incomes, time constraints, body image and diet culture, can influence food choices for women and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Food Security is impacted by the economic, social, health and wellbeing experiences of individuals where as food sustainability is impacted by climate change.



Increasing active living

Regular physical activity is associated with good mental health, healthy ageing, and increased levels of happiness. Incorporating any type of physical activity into each day not only improves physical and mental wellbeing but can also help prevent many chronic diseases. Walking or cycling to work, school, services or sport is called 'active transport' and provides a good opportunity to not only increase daily physical activity, but also to reduce car emissions and traffic congestion. For many people, sport and recreation provide opportunities for participating, spectating, coaching, and volunteering and are an integral part of their social life.

Some groups face added barriers to living an active life and this includes women and gender diverse people, senior Victorians, people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, people with disability, first nations people, people with health conditions or physical limitations and multicultural and multi faith communities.



Tackling climate change and its impact on health

Climate change can directly affect health by exposure to more frequent and intense extreme weather events such as heatwaves, floods, droughts and bushfires and the associated disruptions to work, home and social services. Indirect impacts include geographical changes to the spread of infectious diseases, risks to food safety and sustainability and drinking water quality, increased levels of family violence and reduced mental wellbeing. Sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency, urban planning and work to reduce emissions all helps to reduce climate change and the subsequent impacts on health.

The impacts of climate change are associated with an increase and intensification of violence against women during extreme weather events and disasters. Climate impacts are most pronounced for children and young people, pregnant women, people over 65 and those living alone, people experiencing homelessness, people with a disability, first nations people, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, LGBTQIA+ people, those living with chronic disease and people who work outside.



Reducing tobacco and e-cigarette use

Smoking rates can be as high as 40 per cent in some population groups including first nations people and people on low incomes. E-cigarette use (vaping) is increasing in Australia, particularly in young people.

Factors associated with smoking prevalence include low socioeconomic status, young parenthood and sole parenting, mental illness, violence and trauma, stress, poor physical health, peer pressure, fear of weight gain, Indigenous status and living in remote areas. Children who live in a household with a smoker are significantly more likely to suffer from respiratory conditions.

All people who smoke have an increased risk of developing cancers and heart disease; however, women experience additional risks related to pregnancy, oral contraceptive use, and increased risk of cervical cancer. Remote living is associated with greater social acceptance and norms regarding smoking.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To monitor and evaluate our Health and Wellbeing work, we have developed an action plan which presents a framework for the coordinated delivery of our actions. It captures and documents progress made annually under each priority area as well as the vital partnership work occurring between Council and key partners including;


- Health organisations
- Preventative health services
- Community groups
- Regional networks
- State Government
- Other Local Governments

It is widely acknowledged in the field of public health that changes in population health outcomes occur over long periods of time and can be difficult to measure in the short term. The action plan identifies indicators for measuring the outcomes of our health and wellbeing work whilst acknowledging that changes may not become evident throughout the life of this 4-year plan. The action plan can be found on our website.

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Disability Action Plan Strategic Framework provides a structure for Council to address access and inclusion issues across all areas of the organisation's operations for 2025-29. It sets a direction for Council to follow over the next four years to improve access and inclusion outcomes for residents, employees, visitors, and others.

It aims to address the structural, attitudinal and cultural barriers people with disabilities experience when participating in community life and to eliminate discrimination for people with disabilities who use services, facilities and infrastructure provided by the Council or are current or prospective employees of Council.

This plan is a short, concise overarching guide that articulates the framework which will align disability inclusion actions to Council Plan, Community Vision 2040, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan. The pillars within this framework will be embedded into the Council Plan and reported on annually. Look for the disability icon  throughout the document to identify actions aligned.

Our Vision: "Creating an inclusive community for all abilities"

1. Inclusive and Diverse Communities

Objective: To promote inclusion for all in Golden Plains Shire Municipality

- 1.1 Improving access and participation
- 1.2 Social Connection
- 1.3 Council infrastructure and community development
- 1.4 Universal access
- 1.5 Transport

2. Health and Support

Objective: To improve overall wellbeing and access to health and support services

- 2.1 Enhance awareness to health services
- 2.2 Disabilities support
- 2.3 Build a healthy community
- 2.4 Mental Health

3. Safety and Advocacy

Objective: To ensure a consistent approach in safety and advocacy

- 3.1 Community Safety
- 3.2 Current and emerging needs of people with disabilities
- 3.3 Emergency awareness
- 3.4 Safe access

4. Employment and Educational Opportunities

Objective: To embed the principals of access and inclusion across employment, education and or training

- 2.1 Workplace education and training
- 4.2 International Day of People with Disability
- 4.3 Employment and educational opportunities for community
- 4.4 Networking with stakeholders e.g. LGAs and MAV
- 4.5 Leadership

INTEGRATED PLANNING FRAMEWORK

What is a Council Plan?

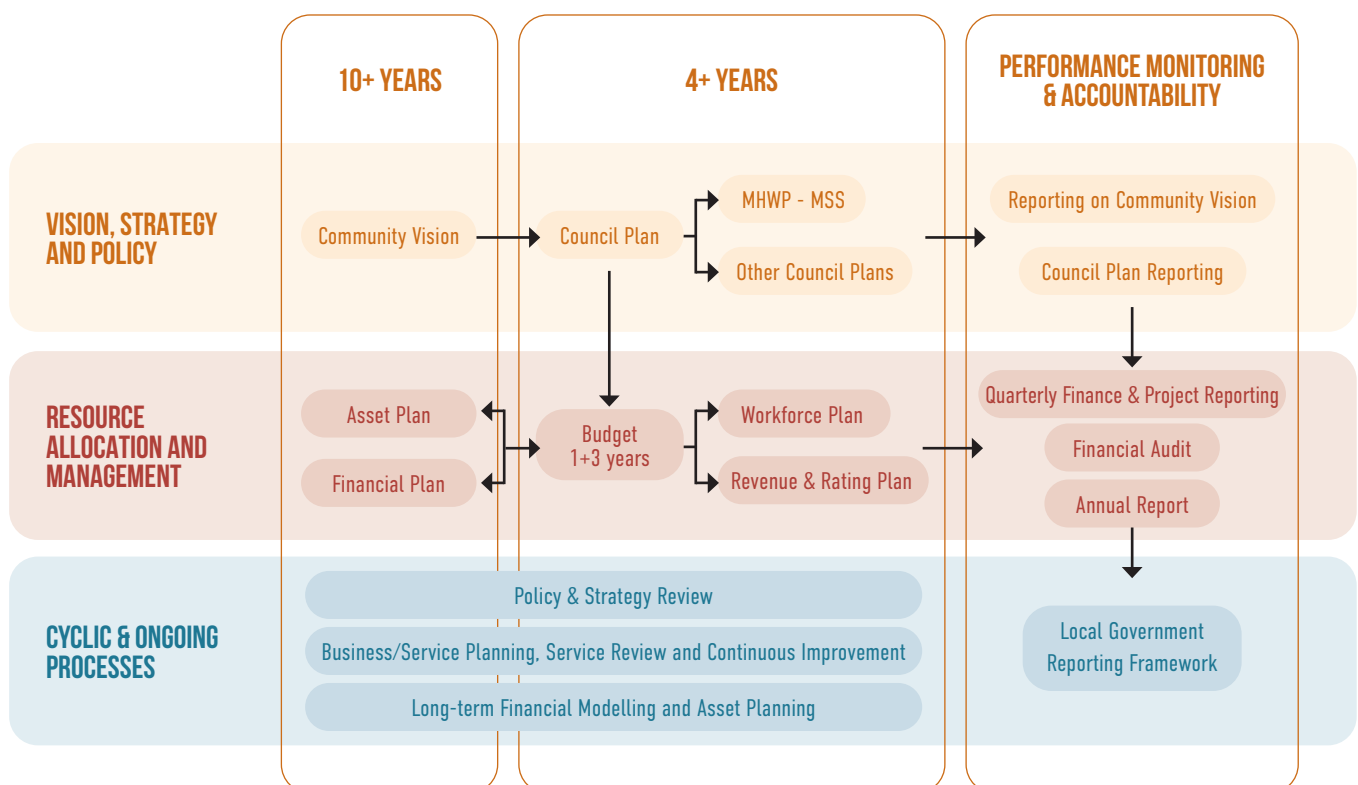
Each newly elected Council is required by legislation to develop a new Council Plan. The Council Plan is a four-year medium-term outlook. It is the foundation for everything we do and serves as a roadmap to guide our actions and decisions.

The Council Plan forms a fundamental part of Golden Plains Shire integrated planning framework. The Council Plan is the connection point between the external influences of government policy and population growth, 2040 Community Vision and Council's long-term planning processes.

We are committed to reporting on our progress towards achieving the strategies in this Council Plan. We will communicate our progress, both positive and negative, to the community

Our performance against the Council Plan is regularly and openly reported to our community in the Mid-Year Progress Report and the Annual Report.

The following diagram shows the relationships between the key planning and reporting documents that make up the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework for local government.



COMMUNITY VISION 2040

The Golden Plains Shire Community Vision 2040 is a plan that captures the hopes and aspirations of the whole community, and ensures we are planning a bright future for all.

The project to develop a Community Vision commenced in July 2019. Council Officers embarked on a broad engagement program with the community to capture the diverse perspectives of Golden Plains' residents and a dedicated Community Reference Group (CRG) was formed to assist with the engagement.



Community

Proud, Safe, Inclusive, Connected, Engaged, Resilient, Supported, Contributing.



Liveability

Health and Wellbeing, Rural and Urban living, Country Feel, Active and Passive Recreation Services and Facilities, Activities and Events, Connected Transport.



Sustainability

Environmental Stewardship, Value and Preserve Ecosystems, Nature and Cultural Heritage, Responsible Attitudes and Behaviours, Clean and Green Future.



Prosperity

Learning, Education and Training, Shopping, Goods and Services, Employment Opportunities and Pathways, Supporting Local Producers, Agriculture and Business, Advocacy and Partnerships.



Leadership

Information and engagement to involve our community in decision making, accountable and transparent governance and financial management.

Responsive service delivery supported by workforce planning, advocating, and innovating for the future systems, resources, and an engaged workforce.

COMMUNITY PILLAR





Community

Context

Golden Plains residents told us that they value communities that are welcoming, inclusive, engaged, resilient and safe. They want to take opportunities to value and celebrate our people, environment, heritage and feel connected to each other.

The community wants to see programs and initiatives that promote participation, foster connection, engagement and resilience so people can take pride in their community, feel a sense of belonging and connection and be motivated to contribute.

Effective emergency management and community safety planning is risk-based and grounded in preparedness. Council focuses on developing strong, active, and healthy communities that are adequately prepared for emergencies.

By promoting a sense of connection and engagement, we strive to build a vibrant, resilient community where residents are encouraged to participate, volunteer, and contribute to our local area.

Strategic Intent

Golden Plains Shire plays a crucial role in fostering our sense of community by implementing policies, programs and projects that promote engagement, inclusivity, and well-being through:

Connection and Cohesion: Initiatives that are designed to build strong connections among citizens, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support including local community events, volunteer opportunities, and programs.

Inclusivity: Actions are undertaken to include diverse voices, ensuring representation from various demographic groups, including First Nations, women, people with a disability, LGBTIQ+, children and young people, older adults, and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Support and Services: Focusing on enhancing the quality of life for residents through community safety programs, support services, and health and wellbeing initiatives, all of which contribute to the overall well-being, resilience, and sense of safety in the community.

Engagement: We actively engage with and involve residents in decision-making processes through reciprocal interactions which advise Council policies and actions through groups activities include workshops, community reference or advisory groups, surveys, focus groups, written submissions, and meetings with community.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES



- Activities and support services such as libraries, maternal and child health, kindergartens, youth engagement, facility booking and activation.
- Public health and harm minimisation programs such as prevention of family violence, responsible gambling, sustainable food systems, sport and recreational activities that improve overall health and wellbeing.
- Environmental health including food premises inspections, aged care and childcare facility standards, building and planning permit issuing, wastewater and building services, investigation of illegal and unsafe building works.
- Regulation and control of activities relating to local laws, including animal management, open air burning, use of motorised recreational vehicles and camping.
- Community Grants programs administered by Council and local partners.
- Municipal Emergency Management Planning, providing secretariat functions for all agency emergency management planning, response and recovery from emergencies.
- Preparedness including fire prevention works, annual roadside slashing program (sealed roads) and strategic fire burning of selected reserves to remove fire hazards.

Strategic Objective

Key Priority








Success Measures

- 1. We will celebrate our local volunteers while supporting volunteer groups to maintain local facilities and contribute to the resilience of their communities.**






Support community volunteers and groups to plan and implement community activities and to manage and maintain community spaces.

 - Volunteer rates in Golden Plains Shire
 - Utilisation rates of community infrastructure
- 2. We will engage strategically with all communities, ensuring the community is aware of the progress of local initiatives and they are part of the journey in our forward aspirations.**










Engage with our community to understand their needs to ensure they feel safe, healthy and well.

 - Annual review of the MPHWP 2025-2029 action plan (number, reach and range of HW programs, activities and services being delivered).
 - Number of Council consultations and individual responses.
 - Rates of family violence and self-reported safety.
 - The percentage of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment.
 - The percentage of critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications that are followed up by Council.
- 3. We will provide equal opportunities and remove barriers that prevent people from being active participants in the wider community.**

Engage with relevant population groups to implement programs, policies and actions that support inclusion.

 - Number of annual actions delivered: Reconciliation, Disability Strategic Framework and Rainbow Ready Roadmap.
- 4. We will consult with our community through varied methods and opportunities to ensure the community's voice and aspirations are considered in decision making and future priorities across the Shire that address challenges to necessary service and programs for residents.**

Engage with community to understand their aspirations to guide service provision, infrastructure planning and advocacy.

 - Number of formal Council/Community Engagement Activities (Engagement Register and Interactions data).
 - Number of towns participating in Community Planning.

Major Initiatives

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Provide training and development opportunities to build the capacity of community volunteers.	•	•	•	•
Deliver the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.	•	•	•	•
Develop a three-year Municipal Emergency Management Plan with key emergency management agency partners.	•			
Develop and implement the Animal Management Plan December 2025-2029.	•	•	•	•
Develop and Implement Council's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.	•	•	•	•
Build the capacity of the Disability Advisory Committee to advise on the delivery of the Disability Action Plan Framework.	•	•		
Utilise the Rainbow Ready Roadmap Local Government Guide to inform LGBTQIA+ initiatives.	•	•	•	•
Develop and implement the Municipal Early Years Plan.	•	•	•	•
Undertake a review Community Engagement Policy.	•			
Foster reciprocal relationships and proactive partnerships with community and key stakeholders.	•	•	•	•

Supporting Strategies and Plans

- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2025-2029
- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2020-2030
- Customer Experience Strategy 2022 - 2026
- Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021-2025
- Disability Action Plan Strategic Framework
- Rainbow Ready Roadmap
- Community Engagement Policy and Framework
- Golden Plains Shire Economic Development, Tourism & Investment Attraction Strategy 2022-2032
- Asset Plan 2022-2032
- Financial Plan
- Golden Plains Community Vision 2040
- Community Plans

LIVEABILITY PILLAR





Liveability

Context

The community told us they value a diversity of quality rural and urban living options that balance growth and retain a strong country feel. They want places and programs that support passive recreation and socialisation, with safe, connected pedestrian and transport options.

Liveability equates to a high quality of life that attracts people to live, play, and do business in Golden Plains. The community's vision blends rural and urban living while maintaining a country feel, focusing on health and wellbeing.

Council enhance liveability through our strategic planning and service delivery, creating places, spaces, and programs that support both active and passive recreation and foster social connections.

We strive to build a vibrant, inclusive, and well-connected community.

Strategic Intent

Our strategic intent for the liveability pillar focuses on enhancing the quality of life for all residents within our community. This will be supported through key areas including.

Promoting Sustainable Development: Using Council strategic and land use planning to ensure growth is sustainable and environmentally responsible.

Fostering a Vibrant Local Economy: Promoting local shopping, goods, and services.

Supporting Community Services: Ensuring access to quality care, education, and training for all residents.

Enhancing Infrastructure: Managing infrastructure to support community needs and growth.

Engaging the Community: Encouraging community participation and fostering activities that create a sense of belonging and pride.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

- Development, management, maintenance and activation of parks, open spaces, sports facilities, community hubs, tracks and trails and other community infrastructure.
- Strategic asset management, planning and management of assets such as roads, bridges, drains, buildings, parks and gardens infrastructure.
- Roads and drainage engineering expertise required to rebuild or renew road and drainage assets such as local road network, footpaths, bridges and culverts, line marking, guard rails, and lighting in parks and reserves.
- Road-related capital projects, including the associated civil engineering design and preparation of contract documentation, and supervision of contractors.
- Administration and enforcement of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme.
- Provide information and advice on Planning Permits (requirements and processes).
- Consideration and assessment of amendments to the Golden Plains Planning Scheme.
- Development of structure plans and urban design frameworks for various towns within the Shire.
- Development of strategic plans and policies such as the rural land use strategy or heritage study.

Strategic Objective

Key Priority

Success Measures

1. We will focus on activities and services that enable inclusion.



Facilitate opportunities that enable the delivery of services, activities and infrastructure that meet the needs of our community, while remaining financially sustainable.

- Annual Maternal Child Health Enrolment and participation numbers.
- Annual Community Immunisation numbers.

2. We will work with developers and the relevant authorities to meet the housing needs of our growing community, focusing on quality rural and urban living for our new and existing communities.



Future growth and infill development provides considered liveability and urban design outcomes for community.

- Number of council planning decisions upheld at VCAT.
- Determine 80% of planning applications within 60 days and 80% of Vic Smart applications within 10 business days.

3. We will plan, provide and maintain open spaces and facilities to keep community healthy and active and to support social connection.



Provide suitable and accessible spaces for active, passive and wellbeing pursuits.

- Provision levels of passive, active and conservation spaces.
- Completion of major projects/ programs within the Capital and Operational Works Programs.
- Annual review of the MPHWP 2025-2029 action plan (Number, reach and range of HW programs, activities and services being delivered).

4. We will advocate for improved transport options for community between townships and regional centres and promote active transport infrastructure.



Identify and advocate for priority opportunities for all transport options across the Shire that increase connectivity.

- Number of opportunities identified and progressed to increase transport related connectivity.

Major Initiatives

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Plan and deliver services and events in consultation with relevant population groups such as children, youth and older adults.	•	•	•	•
Implement universal design principles in all new Council owned facilities and in future facility upgrades.	•	•	•	•
Implement the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan in partnership with the State Government to meet Early Years Service Reform requirements.	•	•	•	
Develop and implement the Growing Places Strategy.	•	•	•	•
Develop and implement the Open Space Strategy.	•	•	•	•
Implement planning decisions to support delivery of the designated housing targets for Golden Plains Shire in line with Victorian State Government legislation.	•	•	•	•
Design and advocate for appropriate infrastructure and open space to meet future growth demands.	•	•	•	•
Develop and implement an Open Space Maintenance Strategy.	•	•	•	•
Prepare a policy that ensures fair and equitable allocation of funding of community infrastructure relating to Development Contribution Plans.			•	•
Advocate for appropriate transport infrastructure and resourcing to meet future growth demands.	•	•	•	•
Implement the Footpath Strategy.	•	•	•	•
Advocate for and seek funding opportunities to deliver the Tracks and Trails Strategy including the Kitjarra-dja-bul Bullarto Langi-ut masterplan.	•	•	•	•

Supporting Strategies and Plans

- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Municipal Early Years Plan 2025-2029
- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2020-2030
- Play Space Strategy 2019-2029
- Tracks and Trails Strategy
- Infrastructure Plan Master Plans
- Community Services Infrastructure Plan
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2025-2029
- Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022 – 2026
- Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021 - 2025
- Disability Action Plan Strategic Framework
- Community Engagement Policy
- Golden Plains Community Vision 2040
- Financial Plan
- Asset Plan 2022-2032
- Planning scheme
- Environment Strategy
- Footpath Strategy 2024-2034
- Community Plans

SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR





Sustainability

Context

Golden Plains Shire's natural environment boasts wide open plains, striking river valleys and rolling hills with significant remnant native vegetation. Threats like weeds, drought, flooding, biodiversity decline, and climate change challenge our environment. Together, the community and Golden Plains Shire Council are playing an active role in responding to these challenges.

Community told us that they believe council need to promote responsible attitudes towards natural resources, land use, waste management, and climate change. They want to live in a community where residents, visitors and businesses are encouraged to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours and support initiatives that focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions. By fostering environmental stewardship, we can ensure Golden Plains thrives while preserving our biodiversity, natural environment and cultural heritage.

Being part of Golden Plains means being part of a resilient and thriving community where the environment is not just protected but celebrated. We take pride in creating a place where people can enjoy the tranquillity of nature, knowing that efforts are made to preserve it for the future. This is a community where you would want to live, surrounded by the commitment to a sustainable, and resilient future.

Our goal is to maintain our ecosystems, nature, and cultural heritage, ensuring that our landscapes, open spaces, and bushland remain protected for future generations.

Strategic Intent

Our strategic intents for sustainability, as outlined in our Environment Strategy 2019-2027, emphasise environmental stewardship and responsible behaviours towards natural resources through several key initiatives:

Biodiversity Conservation: Protecting and enhancing native vegetation and wildlife habitats to maintain biodiversity.

Sustainable Agriculture: Promoting practices that ensure long-term productivity and environmental health.

Statutory Obligations: Aligning with the *Environmental Protection Act 2017* to reduce risks of harm to human health and the environment.

Water Management: Implementing measures to conserve water and improve water quality.

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change impacts.

Community Education: Sharing information and resources to encourage community participation in environmental initiatives and fostering a culture of sustainability.





SUPPORTING PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

- Educate and empower the community about ways to live more sustainably.
- Environmental Management Plans and systems to reduce risks to human health and our environment.
- Native vegetation programs, initiatives that focus on preserving native vegetation and wildlife, promoting biodiversity, and protecting natural habitats.
- Weed and Pest Animal management and eradication on Council managed land and roadsides.
- Projects that promote environmentally sustainable design, energy efficiency, and green energy solutions.
- Collection, processing, disposal of residential commercial and public waste.
- Assisting in supporting natural biodiversity through planned burning activities.
- Educate, capacity build and empower the community about ways to live more sustainably.

Strategic Objective

Key Priority

Success Measures

- | Strategic Objective | Key Priority | Success Measures |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1. We will take action on climate change through reducing waste and emissions, resilience planning and adaptation strategies.</p>  | <p>Enhance climate resilience through improved risk management, education, knowledge sharing and climate adaptation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of Climate Emergency Plan current year actions completed • Annual review of the MPHWP 2025-2029 action plan (Number, reach and range of HW programs, activities and services being delivered). |
| <p>2. We will manage and enhance our natural ecosystems, landscapes and open spaces with cultural sensitivity.</p>  | <p>Undertake effective planning, partnering and management of our natural landscapes, significant biodiversity and conservation assets, whilst respecting cultural heritage.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental monitoring indicators established by 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of roadside weeds reduction. - Progress % of conservation reserve management plans. - Number of roadside burning activities completed. - Investigation of illegal dumping, # of illegal dumping reports responded to. |
| <p>3. We will foster environmental responsibility, reduce ecological impact, and promote long-term conservation efforts.</p>  | <p>Embed sustainability practices across Council and community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of sustainability practices embedded into council operations. |
| <p>4. We will promote alternative forms of energy efficiency and advance a circular economy.</p>  | <p>Source and provide community education and information on alternative forms of energy efficiency, green solutions and circular economy opportunities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal waste landfill diversion rate min 60% by 2028. • % Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill. |

Major Initiatives

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Implement the Climate Emergency Plan.	●	●	●	●
Implement the Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy, including introduction of FOGO in line State Government requirements.	●	●	●	●
Review and implement the Tree Management Plan.	●	●	●	
Implement the Bannockburn Integrated Water Management Plan.	●	●	●	●
Liaise with traditional custodians of the land to ensure cultural sensitivity in land management.	●	●	●	●
Develop and implement the Environment Strategy.	●	●	●	●
Promote and advocate for accessible and affordable renewable energy options, including exploring community battery/energy concepts.	●	●	●	●
Develop and implement the Fleet Transition Policy.	●	●		
Promote community circular economy accelerator programs engaging businesses, young people and the broader community.	●	●	●	●

Supporting Strategies and Plans

- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2025-2029
- Climate Emergency Plan 2022 – 2032
- Integrated Water Management Plan
- Golden Plains Community Vision 2040
- Infrastructure Design Manual - Bannockburn
- Environment Strategy
- Waste Resource and Recovery Strategy 2020 2030
- Open Space Strategy
- Rabbit management Strategy 2021 – 2031
- Community Engagement Policy (February 2021)
- Financial Plan
- Asset Plan 2022-2032
- Golden Plains Shire Economic Development, Tourism & Investment Attraction Strategy 2022 – 2032
- Community Plans
- Golden Plains Community Vision 2040

PROSPERITY PILLAR





Prosperity

Context

Golden Plains demonstrates prosperity through vibrant communities, a robust agricultural sector, and a commitment to sustainable development, making it a desirable place to live, work, and play.

The community told us that prosperity means supporting sustainable development, advancing access to quality education and training, offering diverse local shopping, goods, and services, and creating varied employment opportunities.

Our thriving regional economy is supported by partnerships, innovation, and strong advocacy with government and business groups. We focus on supporting a vibrant local economy where businesses thrive, and residents enjoy access to essential goods, services, recreation, entertainment, and shopping options. Enhancing learning, education, and training opportunities is a priority, ensuring everyone has access to quality education.

Advocacy and partnerships are at the heart of our efforts. Council are committed to maintaining and strengthening relationships with government, regional development boards, a business groups to promote innovation, support local enterprises, and ensure our community continues to grow and develop.

Strategic Intent

Our strategic intent to achieve a thriving, sustainable, and inclusive community where everyone enjoys a high quality of life will be guided by the Economic Development, Tourism, and Investment Attraction Strategy 2022-2032. This includes:

Supporting the Local Economy: Promoting local shopping, goods, and services, and implementing initiatives that foster a vibrant local economy.

Fostering Economic Growth: Building partnerships, fostering innovation, and supporting local producers, agriculture, and businesses.

Advocacy and Relationships: Maintaining and strengthening advocacy and relationships with government, regional development boards, and business groups to ensure ongoing prosperity and growth.

Infrastructure for Education: Planning and advocating for infrastructure to support the implementation of the Best Start, Best Life reform, and partnering with the state government to develop and implement the Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan.

Quality Early Years Services: Delivering quality sessional kindergarten services through Council's Early Years Management.

Business Growth and Retention: Supporting business growth in main service centres, retaining businesses in small townships, and supporting local communities to run vibrant events and festivals to attract visitors.

Tourism Development: Implementing a short-stay accommodation strategy to boost tourism.









SUPPORTING PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

- Planned Infrastructure services and management, maintain roads, footpaths, public lighting, drainage.
- Support major events (Beyond the Valley, Meredith Music Festival, Golden Plains Music Festival), issue permits community/business engagement emergency management.
- Support and facilitate opportunities for Economic Development and Tourism, Business growth in main service centres, business retention in small townships.
- Support local communities to run vibrant events and festivals to attract visitors, short stay accommodation strategy to boost tourism.
- Infrastructure projects that increase and enhance visitor experience natural and historical assets.
- Connectivity, working with telecommunications companies to identify sites and develop needs-based submissions for new mobile towers.
- Developing and maintain relationships with windfarms, in context of community benefits.
- Early Years managed Kindergartens, Long Day Care, Family Day Care.

Strategic Objective

Key Priority

Success Measures

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1. We will engage with key funding and business stakeholders through consultations, collaborative initiatives, and strategic partnerships to strengthen our advocacy and relationships.</p> <p> </p> | <p>Transparency in engagement and advocacy activities to increase economic opportunities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings with state and federal members. |
| <p>2. We will support and advocate for education and training opportunities in our region, focusing on pathways in growing and emerging industries.</p> <p>   </p> | <p>Collaborate and partner with existing education and training related service providers to expand opportunities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Local employment opportunities. • ABS Stats, including unemployment rates. • Number of partnerships developed, number of opportunities identified and progressed. |
| <p>3. We will support local producers, agriculture and businesses to grow their resilience and adapt to the risks posed by a changing climate.</p> <p> </p> | <p>Participate in partnerships that assist businesses in resilience, climate, and financial adaptation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of annual actions completed in the Golden Plains Shire Economic Development, Tourism & Investment Attraction Strategy 2022 – 2032. |

Major Initiatives

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Develop a community facing advocacy plan, highlighting community priorities.	•			
Establish a Tourism Reference Group that encompasses both the South and North regions of Golden Plains Shire with diverse representation.	•	•		
Participate and leverage opportunities linked to the Central Goldfields World Heritage application.	•	•	•	•
Support local employment pathways through traineeships, apprenticeships and work placements.	•	•	•	•
Continue to implement the Golden Plains Shire Economic Development, Tourism & Investment Attraction Strategy 2022 - 2032.	•	•	•	•

Supporting Strategies and Plans

- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Climate Emergency Plan 2022-2032
- Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan (KISP)
- Economic Development, Tourism, and Investment Attraction Strategy 2022 – 2032
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2025-2029
- Disability Action Plan Strategic Framework
- Community Engagement Policy
- Golden Plains Community Vision 2040
- Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)
- Financial Plan
- Asset Plan 2022-2032
- Community Plans
- Capital Works Program
- Workforce Plan and Capability Framework
- Community Plans

LEADERSHIP PILLAR





Leadership

Context

Golden Plains Shire Councillors have identified leadership as a key priority for the Council plan.

Councillor leadership in Golden Plains Shire is pivotal in shaping a thriving, inclusive, and resilient community. Councillors are responsible for setting strategic directions, making policy decisions, and representing the interests of residents. We work collaboratively with the community, our staff, and other stakeholders to ensure effective governance and service delivery. Councillors set the direction and support the CEO to operationalise these.

As councillors we lead by example, promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical behaviour. We engage with residents to understand their needs and aspirations, fostering a sense of trust and community involvement.

Through our leadership, we advocate for our community visions, sustainable development, economic growth, and the well-being of all residents, ensuring that Golden Plains Shire remains a great place to live, work, and play.

Strategic Intent

To achieve our strategic intent, we will:

Inform and Involve the Community: Share information openly and encourage participation in decision-making through community engagement, consultation, and plain language communication. Use various channels to gather feedback and keep everyone updated.

Build Trust and Confidence: Ensure transparent and accountable governance and financial management by regularly publishing reports, clarifying decision-making processes, and being open about public fund usage.

Responsive and Efficient Service Delivery: Invest in technology and infrastructure to improve services and ensure our workforce is well-trained and motivated to meet residents' needs.

Plan, Advocate, and Innovate for the Future: Work on long-term projects, advocate for community needs at higher government levels, and continuously seek new ways to improve.


SUPPORTING PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

- Assist customers with enquiries and information through; Phone calls, email, post, website enquires, councillor contact, customer hubs, Snap Send Solve, and processing payments.
- Accounts payable/ receivable, supplier onboarding, external audit, statutory financial reporting, treasury and taxation compliance, management and coordination of the annual budget and reporting.
- Issuing of annual and supplementary rates notices, collection of rates and property levies.
- Provide advice and build organisational capacity in best practice contracting and procurement for the procurement of goods, services and works by Council.
- Acquire, sell, manage and coordinate Council's vehicle and plant fleet in accordance with Council policy.
- Human resources, payroll, safety and wellbeing, recruitment, learning and development, organisational performance and reporting, employee relations.
- Records management, (physical and digital) inclusive of the relationship with the Public Records Office of Victoria and the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner.
- Strategic advice, guidance, support and coordination in the maintenance of an effective and robust governance systems and risk management.
- Manage corporate ICT environment including security services, user device installation and management, communications infrastructure, software database management and reporting.
- Developing strategies for communicating and engaging with the community regarding Council projects, programs and activities.

Strategic Objective

Key Priority

Success Measures

1.	<p>We will deliver viable services that meet the needs of all townships and communities across our Shire.</p> 	<p>Provide organisational systems and resources to enable agreed service delivery outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with accounting requirements, and lowest cost to Council to deliver infrastructure in DCP. • Customer satisfaction survey results.
2.	<p>We will review operational costs and efficiency, identifying savings to reallocate towards critical priorities like road infrastructure, while ensuring responsive service delivery.</p> 	<p>Ensure accountability and transparency in financial decision making and management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance to agreed budget. • Itemised service delivery costs.
3.	<p>We will communicate clearly using plain language about what we can do, where we are limited, and the decisions we have made.</p> 	<p>Implement good governance and decision-making processes with regular communication to community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of Council resolutions made at a meeting of Council, or at a meeting of a delegated committee consisting only of Councillors, closed to the public under section 66(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>. • The percentage of attendance at Council meetings by Councillors. • The community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community. • Number of council consultations. • Average number of responses per consultation.

Major Initiatives

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Develop the new Customer Experience Strategy.	•			
Develop and implement a Development Contributions Accounting processes to support future growth.	•	•	•	
Review and implement the Workforce Capability Framework.	•	•	•	•
Undertake a review of services and service levels to maintain financial sustainability.	•			
Implement the Core System Transformation Project.	•	•		
Redevelop and implement the Digital Transformation Strategy.	•	•		
Develop and implement the Workforce Plan.	•	•	•	•
Implement the Safety and Wellbeing Strategy.	•	•	•	•
Deliver the Asset Management Strategy Road Map.	•	•	•	•
Refine and implement Council's Risk Management Framework and ensure all key risks have been measured and adequately controlled.	•	•		
Develop and implement a Communications plan to ensure community is well informed on Council decisions and priorities.	•			
Regular reporting on legislative compliance is undertaken.	•	•	•	•

Supporting Strategies and Plans

- Local Government Act 2020
- Local Government (Governance & Integrity) Regulations.
- Customer Experience Strategy 2022-2026
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2025-2029
- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Financial Plan
- Endorsed Annual Budget
- Asset Plan 2022-2032
- Asset Management Strategy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021 - 2025
- Procurement Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Accounting Standard and Audit Standard requirements



GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

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CUSTOMER HUB HOURS

Bannockburn (Civic Centre) 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Smythesdale (The Well) 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

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