

Progress Snapshot

Cardinia Shire's Liveability Plan
Action Agenda 2022-23



Cardinia Shire Council October 2023

A photograph of a man in a dark hoodie playing a didgeridoo. He is in the foreground, slightly to the right, looking down at the instrument. In the background, a diverse crowd of people, including children and adults, are watching. Some are sitting on the grass, others are standing. A man in a grey jacket is crouching down, holding a camera. The setting appears to be an outdoor park or sports field with trees in the distance. A blue decorative bar is in the top right corner.

Acknowledgments

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

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

This report has been prepared by Cardinia Shire Council on behalf of the Liveability Partnership Steering Group and associated Action Teams.

We would also like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the hundreds of workers and volunteers involved in bringing the actions within the Liveability Plan Action Agenda to life. Many community and government workers are also residents and regularly go above and beyond to support their communities.

A special thank you to the Liveability Partnership Steering Group member organisations for providing progress data to inform the report.

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Introduction



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

Reporting on each outcome area, we highlight our collective achievements from July 2022 – June 2023 and focus for the next 12 months.

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

www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/healthandwellbeing

Our shared long-term health and wellbeing outcomes are:

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

Cardinia Shire's Liveability Partnership

Cardinia Shire's Liveability Partnership involves more than 70 organisations collectively leading implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Liveability Plan.

Cardinia Shire Council provides 'backbone support' to the Partnership as a key function under the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

The Liveability Partnership Steering Group includes:

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

The Liveability Partnership Survey 2023 found that:

- 75% members feel a sense of common purpose
- 80% members find the partnership meetings valuable
- 83% members trust council as the backbone organisation

As a result of participating in the partnership:

45% respondents had expanded existing projects to align to the shared outcomes

40% had taken on board learnings from the partnership to improve what they do

33% had started new projects to align with the shared outcomes

30% had used data provided by the partnership to improve what they do

53% had formed new relationships or networks to help work towards the shared outcomes



Spotlight on

The Liveability Partnership forum was held on Monday 24th July at the Cardinia Cultural Centre. More than 80 partners attended, with the purpose of coming together to connect, share the story of liveability in Cardinia Shire, celebrate our success and define our collective work for a vibrant future.

Results from the forum found that there is a significant appetite to strengthen collective work and to build on the strong culture of partnering across the service system. Participants were clear on the mindset and thinking that is needed to advance the collective work; highlighting the need for listening, having an open mind and trusting relationships.

There was a call from partnership members to:

- Leave logos and egos at the door
- Support vulnerability in others
- Create an environment where it's safe to fail and learn
- Be transparent about risk tolerance, roles and boundaries of organisations in different aspects of the work
- Share the leadership for this work across and between partners.



Focus for 2023-24

Partnership members reflected that some key areas of focus for the next year should be hearing from diverse voices most impacted by issues of liveability, allowing for more flexibility and innovation in the action planning cycle, and a focus on how data is used to drive change.

Next iteration of the Victorian Health and Wellbeing plan is due to be released in September 2023. Planning to review the Liveability Plan will commence in the second half of 2024, aligned to Council's statutory requirements.

Liveability Indicators

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



Active Travel

- Use of shared bike paths has doubled from 2019 (7%) to 2023 (14%)
- 9% increase in the use of footpaths from 2019 (35%) to 2023 (44%)
- In 2023 the main barriers to active travel were identified as weather (34%), too much to carry (33%), prefer to use car (30%), takes too long (28%), not within walking distance (20%)
- In 2023, 47% residents said they walk, ride or scoot for short local trips instead of driving, and 10% said they plan to do this in the next 2 years.
- 39% households are located within 400m of a bus stop, however only 19% of households have access to a regular 30min weekday service (7am-7pm)



Education

- Higher percentage of primary school enrolments in Cardinia Shire (10%), compared to Greater Melbourne (8.1%)
- 52.4% of people aged over 15 years had completed Year 12 schooling (or equivalent) as of 2021, compared to 64.3% of Greater Melbourne.
- 23.9% of people in Cardinia Shire had a vocational qualification in 2021, higher than Greater Melbourne. This represents an increase of 3,549 people since 2016.
- Lower percentage of university enrolments in Cardinia Shire (3.4%) compared to Greater Melbourne (5.8%).
- 19.1% of people have a bachelor or higher degree compared to 32.8% of Greater Melbourne.



Employment

- In 2021, 58,706 people living in Cardinia Shire were employed, of which 61% worked full-time and 32% worked part-time.
- In the 2023 March quarter, 4.0% residents were unemployed, slightly higher than the Victorian average (3.7%).
- In 2021/22 the jobs to resident's ratio was 0.57, meaning that there were less jobs than resident workers.
- In 2021, 32.1% of Cardinia Shire's resident workers were employed locally.



Food

- 38% households are located within 1km of a supermarket.
- 11.5% households have no food outlet within 3.2km
- In 2023, 37% residents pay more than 30% of their household income on food.
- In 2023, 57% said they buy / eat locally produced fruit or vegetables, and 14% said they plan to do this in the next 2 years.
- In 2023, 45% said they grow their own fruit or vegetables, and 20% said they plan to do this in the next 2 years.



Community infrastructure and services

- Visiting local libraries fell during COVID (from 43% in 2019 down to 33% in 2021), yet has recovered slightly in 2023 (37%).
- The average distance to a GP clinic with bulkbilling was 1.5km in 2021.
- 11.2% residents are employed in the healthcare and social assistance industry.
- When compared to the Southern Metro Region, Cardinia Shire has less access to culture and leisure infrastructure (3rd percentile, Casey 29th, Dandenong 47th)



Housing

- The proportion of residents spending more than 50% of their household income on housing costs (20%) has doubled since 2019 (10%).
- In 2023, 19% said they had difficulty finding a suitable property to purchase within their budget, up from 16% in 2021 and 10% in 2019.
- In 2023, 28% reported experiencing rental or mortgage stress in the year prior, up from 13% in 2019 and 2021
- 13% indicated that they had used housing or homelessness support services in the 12 months prior.
- Homelessness is becoming more visible, with 44% of respondents in 2023 saying they had seen someone who is homeless in their local area, up from 36% in 2021 and 22% in 2019.



Environment and open space

- The average distance to public open space across the shire is 258m, with 81% residents living within 400m of public open space.
- 51% residents visit native bushland
- 56% residents said they plant native trees in the garden, and 16% said they plan to do this in the next 2 years.

Outcome 1

Improve mental health and wellbeing



35%

of residents feel that mental health services are not available locally

25%

of residents identified a mental health impact from climate change and extreme weather

18%

of adults have sought professional help for mental health problems

20%

of adults reported high or very high psychological distress in 2020, a 5% increase since 2017

8%

of adults are unable to work, study or manage daily activities due to psychological distress.

18%

of year 5-6 students, and 21% of year 7-9 students have been bullied

46%

of young people report anxiety and 42% report being unhappy

14%

The proportion of residents experiencing negative impacts relating to body image has increased from 7% in 2019 to 14% in 2023.

Our objectives

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

Action Team

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Team includes representatives from:

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

Key achievements

- Cardinia Shire Council and Uniting Victoria met with local Labor MPs to advocate for more local mental health services as part of the ‘Cardinia calls for’ campaign.
- The Victorian Government announced funding to plan for a new Mental Health Local Service in Officer.
- Engagement with local seniors was undertaken and their feedback submitted through the consultation process for the new plan “Wellbeing in Victoria: A plan to promote good mental health”.
- Commenced mapping of mental health services that are provided within Cardinia Shire.
- Fourteen sporting clubs in Cardinia Shire are participating in Monash Health Community’s Healthy Sporting Clubs Program. Five clubs have been recognised in the Mental Wellness benchmark area and another 2 are currently working towards it.
- Two early years services in Cardinia Shire are currently working towards being recognised as services which promote mental health and wellbeing.
- Wellways offered a 6-week Carer Support Program to Cardinia Shire residents.
- WHISE delivered a Sex, Gender and Mental Wellbeing Forum, attended by 63 people and later launched their Gender and Mental Wellbeing priority area, outlining how they will work to ensure health and wellbeing strategies consider the needs of different genders across the lifespan.
- Council ran an event in collaboration with Outlook Community Centre, Pakenham Central Probus, Bunurong Men’s Shed, Cardinia Men’s Shed and the Cardinia Community Connectors team at Meadowvale Retirement Village during Mental Health Month to promote opportunities to stay mentally healthy in older age.

Spotlight on

Save Your Bacon Events

Hope Assistance Local Tradies (HALT) is a national prevention charity, raising awareness about suicide prevention at the grassroots level. Between July 2022 to June 2023, HALT delivered 7 ‘Save your Bacon’ events at local workplaces, reaching 440 people. These events aim to equip individuals employed in trade occupations with the skills and confidence to engage in conversations about mental health, while also creating a supportive workplace culture among colleagues during challenging periods.

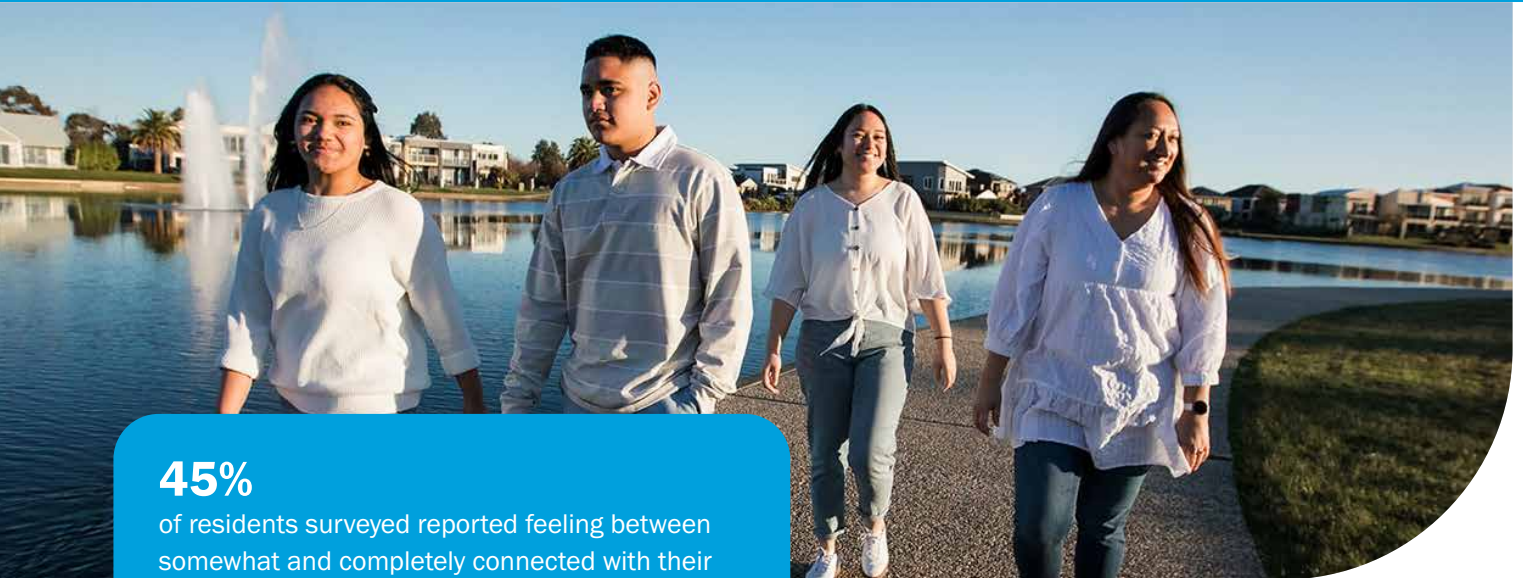
Through the Cardinia Shire Mental Health & Wellbeing Action team, HALT has established a collaborative relationship with Women’s Health in the South East (WHISE). WHISE serves as a regional women’s health promotion, advocacy, and support service for the Southern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. Moving forward in 2023-24, HALT and WHISE aspire to collaborate on understanding the local mental health and social consequences associated with male stereotype behaviour, particularly in trade occupations. This unique combination of expertise hopes to further strengthen and create a targeted approach for tradies in the prevention of family violence, while concurrently promoting their overall mental wellbeing.

Focus for 2023-24

Completing the mental health services mapping and continuing to advocate for increased mental health services and resourcing within Cardinia Shire. Also anticipating the release of Wellbeing in Victoria: A Plan to Promote Good Mental Health and identifying how the Action Team’s work can align and support local implementation.

Outcome 2

Improve social cohesion



45%

of residents surveyed reported feeling between somewhat and completely connected with their local community.

Feeling connected to the local community was lower in 2023 than in 2021 (23%) and 2019 (19%)

73%

of residents surveyed reported no experiences of racism within the past 12 months.

8%

In 2023, 8% residents reporting feeling discriminated for their age (as high as 16% amongst 60–69-year-olds)

7%

In 2023, 7% residents reporting feeling discriminated for their weight / body shape (11% 35–49-year-olds, compared to 0% 75+ year olds)

6%

In 2023, 6% residents reporting feeling discriminated due to cultural background (as high as 23% amongst those who speak a Language other than English)

4%

In 2023, 4% residents reported feeling discriminated due to their gender (as high as 14% amongst under 35-year-olds)

Our objectives

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

Action Team members

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

- Age Friendly Alliance
- Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Multicultural Advisory Group
- Interfaith Network

Key achievements

- More than 300 residents attended Cardinia Shire's inaugural Refugee Festival to enjoy cultural performances, refugees speaking about their lived experience and information stalls from 17 service providers. Fifteen organisations collaborated to deliver this special event.

- The 'Expression' exhibition created an opportunity for artists with disability to showcase their creative talent and express themselves. Many community submissions were displayed and visited by more than 3,500 people.
- In partnership with local schools, Council hosted two Reconciliation Day events. Programs included a flag raising ceremony, welcome to country and smoking ceremony at the Civic Centre in Officer on Bunurong Land, and a welcome to country, smoking ceremony, cultural performances, and speeches from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Emerald on Wurundjeri Land.
- Seventeen community members graduated from the 2022 Cardinia Community Leadership Program and a further 21 begin the Program in 2023. Graduates joined the Program Alumni which now has over 100 graduates.
- Council welcomed 15 new community representatives to the Multicultural Advisory Group which meets every two months to connect, share information, provide input into Council's policy and decision-making processes, as well as provide a voice for our Shire's multicultural communities.
- The Cardinia Seniors Network provides a platform for older residents to have a voice, present their views and share their experiences to improve the health and wellbeing of older residents. Participants have become better informed of local opportunities for seniors and evaluation has shown that this network has brought about a greater understanding, appreciation, and trust in Council. The gatherings are hosted by community groups at various locations around the shire and 46 different community groups/organisations have attended.
- The Victorian Seniors Festival held in September 2022 had the theme "Takin' it Easy", with a priority to get people out and having fun again. 300 residents attended two much enjoyed events, including the "Old time dance" supported by Pakenham Rotary at Pakenham Hall. The Cardinia Cultural Centre kept the enthusiasm going with a toe tapping live show and Devonshire tea.

Spotlight on

Intergenerational connections

To combat isolation experienced by older residents living alone during COVID-19 lockdowns, the Hills Hub pen pal project, a partnership between Council and the Emerald Village Association (EVA) was implemented where older people and local primary school children communicated via mail to learn about each other, form relationships and eventually meet when lockdown restrictions ended.

The 'Come Sit by Me' project built on the pen pal project and in November 2022, 26 older volunteers and 65 primary school aged children came together to share interests, skills and hobbies. Participants were involved in a range of games and activities with the aim of increasing social cohesion. The project received a \$5,000 seeding grant through Cardinia Shire Council's Wellbeing Support Grant program, covering initial set up costs. As the biggest contribution to the program was time volunteered, the funding stretched further than originally intended. As a result, several off-shoots of the program have also been delivered:

Tell me a story: program focused on connecting an older person from a different cultural background with a primary school aged child to share their story. The child then goes away and develops a visual representation of the older person's story. The older people were invited to the school a fortnight later to see the results of the student's reflections, with a morning tea to celebrate.

Gather and Grow: An intergenerational garden project. The feedback from volunteers, participants and teachers has been extremely positive, particularly for the older volunteers. They were grateful for the opportunity to share their skills and hobbies and valued the intergenerational interactions which are often limited for them. Given the program required minimal resources and the set-up costs were supported through a grant, it is something that EVA are planning to continue.

Focus for 2023-24

Continuing to strengthen local connections through a range of programs and events.

Outcome 3

Improve safety



59%

Safety and accessibility ratings of footpaths as 'good or very good' has increased to 59% and 42% respectively in 2023, up from 51% and 35% in 2021

19%

The proportion who said they had experienced crime or safety issues was higher in 2019 (24%), than in 2021 (18%) or 2023 (19%).

8.5%

A total of 6,832 recorded offences were committed in Cardinia in the year ending March 2023, an increase of 8.5% on the previous year.

Our objectives

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

Action Team members

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

- Anglicare
- Australian Drug Foundation
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Crime Stoppers
- Dept. Education
- Dept. of Justice
- Eastern Region Mental Health Association (ERMHA)
- Kooweerup Regional Health Service
- Parks Victoria
- Victoria Police
- Windana
- Youth Support Advocacy Service (YSAS)

Key achievements

- Community engagement for the development of Cardinia Shire's new Community Safety Policy commenced and the policy is now in draft.
- Road Safe South East distributed a \$32,267 Vic Roads Community Road Safety Grant to local organisations to support bike maintenance and education, safe driver programs including for new arrivals and first aid for motorcyclists.
- Council's Youth Services team received a \$35,000 FREEZA grant which supports drug, alcohol and smoke free events and activities for young people by young people. A further \$45,000 Engage grant was received to deliver activities for young people which increase connection with peers, community, school, and trusted adults. These initiatives, events and programs assist in reducing risk factors and improving protective factors to reduce antisocial behaviour.
- Taskforce Community Association received \$105,000 in long term recovery funding for a youth and family outreach support program to support young people impacted by natural disasters. The program provided outreach support to 15 young people and their families with over 300 client visits. Three events for at risk youth and their families to connect in with support services were also delivered.
- More than 200 young people were engaged in the Stand Out basketball competition run by Centre for Multicultural Youth.
- Victoria Police hosted a Community Safety meeting for Lang Lang residents to discuss local safety issues and answer questions.
- Council's Emergency Management team ran several workshops and pop-up events to encourage emergency preparedness across the Shire.
- 1,500 'Grab and Go' bags were distributed throughout Cardinia Shire, supporting residents to prepare for emergencies.
- The Safer Communities partnership continues to have a strong visible presence in Cardinia Shire. The Partnership along with various teams within Council supported 4 'Coffee with a Cop' events in 2022-23 as well as attending community events including Reconciliation Day Flag raising and Refugee Festival events.
- Kooweerup Regional Health Service delivered the L2P program supporting young people to achieve their driver's licence.

Spotlight on

Cuppa with Community

On Thursday the 9th of March, members of the Safer Communities Partnership Committee including Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, SES and Cardinia Shire Council held a "Get to Know Your Park/Cuppa with Community" event in support of Parks Week 2023 at Ron Andrews Reserve in Pakenham.

The event supported key strategies within the Safety Action Agenda to 'increase perceptions of safety', providing an opportunity to activate underutilised public spaces and to identify and understand neighbourhood level perceptions of safety. More than 60 people attended and residents were encouraged to visit their local park, meet their neighbours, and engage with local police, council, key community safety partners and service providers, on a range of community safety topics or concerns.

Focus for 2023-24

Road, pedestrian, and cyclist safety continues to be a high priority, as is building community preparedness for heat events and other natural disasters in the lead up to the warmer months. Continuing to work collaboratively, utilising the CPTED principles to identify solutions to localised safety issues in Cardinia Shire.

Increasing perceptions of safety through tailored awareness campaigns, activation of public spaces, and a visible presence in the community.

Outcome 4

Improve healthy eating and active living



96%

of adults and children don't eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables.

15%

of adults drink sugary drinks daily, and 12% consume takeaway 1-3 times weekly.

53%

of residents complete sufficient physical activity and 14% participate in organised sport.

40%

of households with children experience marginal-very high food stress.

55%

The shire has a low walkability score of -1.3 (in the 15th percentile across Victoria)

55% of residents travel to work by car, while 1% walk, 0.1% cycle and 2.7% use public transport.

The shire experiences a higher rate of avoidable deaths from diabetes, circulatory system disease and cancer, compared to the rest of Victoria.

Our objectives

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

Action Team members

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

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

Key achievements

- Council joined the VicHealth Local Government Partnership, committing to delivery of the 'Building Better Food Systems' module. Through this partnership Council was successful in receiving \$55,000 to deliver key initiatives over the next three years.
- Supported by Council, The Community Grocer successfully received a \$10,000 grant to continue delivering affordable fresh produce in Pakenham. The Community Grocer have since established a partnership with Beaconsfield College to develop a student-led social enterprise model for the Beacon of Hope Garden, with produce sold to the community grocer.
- Following a submission in December 2022, Council was invited to speak at the Parliamentary Inquiry into Food Security in Australia.
- Monash Health Community in partnership with CMSport and Council, delivered two inclusion forums to local sporting clubs.
- Monash Health Community is working with two alternative leisure settings in Cardinia Shire to become recognised 'health promoting' settings. One is working towards the healthy eating benchmark and the other is working towards the inclusion benchmark area.
- Monash Health are working with 10 early years services in Cardinia Shire, of which 2 are working towards physical activity, and 4 are working towards the healthy eating benchmark.
- Six Cardinia Shire leisure facilities renewed their Healthy Choices accreditation, and one facility is working towards re-accreditation.
- Council adopted the Active Cardinia Strategy and the Open Space Strategy which will provide strategic direction for the planning of open spaces and recreation facilities, along with key actions focused on increasing participation in physical activity.

Spotlight on

Drinking Fountain Project

Through the Healthy Eating and Active Living Action Team, Cardinia Shire Council have partnered with South East Water (SEW) to increase the number of accessible drinking water fountains across the Shire. SEW donated six accessible drinking water fountains, which will be installed over the next 1-2 years. Council has also received funding from the DFFH Home and Community Care Vulnerable Persons Register (HACC-VPR) to purchase an additional 3 fountains, with locations selected to ensure our community has access to water in times of extreme heat/weather events and emergencies, when undertaking outdoor activities in parks or recreation reserves and to provide safe access to drinking water for people experiencing homelessness. Campeyn Group, through their social contribution fund under their maintenance contract with Council, are providing the installation free of charge.

The contemporary fountains can be used with or without a drink bottle and are equipped with:

- a wheelchair accessible fountain arm
- a dog bowl
- a sensor to measure how many plastic bottles have been saved from landfill due to re-filling
- The project also supports objectives under the Municipal Heat Health Plan, Access and Inclusion Plan, and Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy.

Focus for 2023-24

Following adoption of the Active Cardinia Strategy, Council is adding the 'Building Active Communities' module to the partnership agreement with VicHealth. A key focus will be ensuring that Council's recreation facilities promote gender equality, as a requirement under the Victorian Fair Access Policy Roadmap. The module will also assist Council to deliver inclusion and participation programs in partnership with the HEAL Action Team, such as expanding the Women and Girls Sport and Participation network. Council will also continue to facilitate partnership initiatives under the 'Building Better Food Systems' module.

Outcome 5

Reduce family violence



3.5%

In the previous year ending March 2023, there were 1,562 reported incidents of family violence reported to police, 3.5% fewer than the previous year.

75% and 29%

75% of victims of these incidents were females and 29% of victims were aged 35-44 years.

9%

of these victims were children <18 years.

The proportion who perceive the topic of family violence to be a serious problem in the community has remained relatively stable over time (43% 2019, 41% 2021, 44% 2023)

The proportion who perceive family violence to be extremely common has remained relatively stable over time (13% 2019, 14% 2021, 15% 2023)

Our objectives

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

Action Team members

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

- Aligned Leisure
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Dept. Education
- My Community Library (Myli)
- Orange Door (Family Safety Victoria)
- Outlook Australia Inc.
- Relationships Australia (VIC)
- Sikh Australia Support for Family Violence
- Star News Group
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
- Victoria Police
- WAYSS
- Windermere
- Womens Health in the South-East (WHISE)

Key achievements

- Council's Maternal and Child Health team have six trained Baby Makes 3 facilitators and received \$3,000 to deliver the Partners and Parents Program. 39 couples have completed the program to date.
- Mother's Legal Help Service is operating every Tuesday at Pakenham Hills. Referrals are made through MCHS and FV Services. Referrals relate to family law and family violence matters.
- Council delivered a World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event.
- WHISE called upon the Victorian Government to continue progress on gender equality, women's health and wellbeing in the 2023 state budget.
- The 2022 Walk Against Violence attracted over 250 people and, as an annual event, continues to raise awareness of the men's violence against women and the impact on children.
- The Star News Group's Road to Respect Campaign was a monthly 8-page feature focusing on building respectful, safe and equitable relationships and support services.
- Together We Can Round Table supported Casey Cardinia Library Corporation (now MyLi) to apply for a 16 Days of Activism Consortium Grant (Safe and Equal) to purchase Storytime books on Gender Equality and print bookmarks with 16 Days of Activism messages.
- Good Health Down South Network and Cardinia Youth Services worked in partnership with Consent Matters Community of Practice to co-design and build the capacity of youth and community service professionals to deliver affirmative consent information to young people.
- In partnership with Living Learning Pakenham, Council hosted an International Women's Day event. The event was well attended and featured a diverse program of speakers on women's leadership, a presentation by Wurundjeri and Dja Dja Wurrung woman on a traditional coming of age ceremony, performance by local artists as well as a panel discussion.
- Council Youth Services ran a Young Men's Program with around 48 young people from 4 secondary schools. A sister program called the Young Women's Program attracted a further 36 participants.
- Debbie Wood Visual Artist received \$5,000 for Gender Equality Forums to capture the conversations of people over 65, young people and parents with children under 4 years of age who will be discussing what gender equality means to them. The digital artwork will be on display at the White Ribbon Art show.

Spotlight on

Family Violence Prevention First Aid Training

The pilot Preventing Family Violence First Aid training program was delivered over six sessions and completed by 14 participants.

Council's partnership with WHISE was a key success factor and included facilitation of the program and support from WHISE's research and evaluation team. The use of evidence based, publicly available resources enabled the design of the program to be seamless, accurate and effective.

There was high interest from members to be involved in a Train the Trainer program.

WHISE conducted an extensive pre and post evaluation and a Social Impact Valuation Statement, identifying the net benefit of the program at \$132,319.

When asked to describe a key learning from the training program most people discussed the realisation that "I can do something to act against family violence." People felt confident to be an active bystander, saying that they can now "recognise violence and [have] the courage to intercept." There was a sense of empowerment in these comments as the participants acknowledged "I can make a difference." One person discussed learning about "why bystanders decide to act or not act."

Focus for 2023-24

Exploring ongoing delivery of the Preventing Family Violence First Aid Training as well as continuing to build capacity of the Partners and Parents Program to maintain engagement of men following completion of the program. Council will also look to apply for the Free From Violence grant offered by Local Government Victoria to continue embedding gender equality and family violence prevention practices into Council's programs and services. The Together We Can Round Table will provide advice and support to Council when conducting Gender Impact Assessments and will deliver a Community Leadership Summit.

Outcome 6

Improved financial wellbeing and resilience



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

In 2023 **16%** residents couldn't afford to pay bills in the 12 months prior, up from 12% in 2021.

During COVID there was an increase in the proportion who said they have someone outside their household they could rely on in an emergency (82%, up from 76% in 2019), however this proportion has fallen back down in 2023 (78%).

In 2023, **26%** reported experiencing negative impacts from expensive medical services, up from 21% in 2021 (to a similar level to that recorded in 2019, 28%).

In 2023, **23%** reported experiencing financial difficulties in the year prior, up from 18% in 2021.

Our objectives

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

Action Team members

The Financial Wellbeing and Resilience Action Team includes representatives from:

- Berry Street
- Brotherhood St. Lawrence
- Cardinia Shire Council
- Casey North CISS
- Connect Health
- EACH
- ECHO Youth & Family Services
- Good Shepherd
- Living Learning Pakenham
- My Community Library (Myli)
- PIR – Financial Counselling
- Salvation Army
- South East Community Links (SECL)

Key achievements

- Establishing the Financial Wellbeing and Resilience Action Team, and Financial Wellbeing Response Taskforce as a sub-group, bringing together a combined 30 partners in total working to respond and prevent financial crisis.
- Advocacy to Australian Department of Social Services highlighting service and funding gaps for emergency relief funding.
- Good Shepherd to delivered 'Supporting Clients with Everyday Money Management' Training, reaching 30 different community organisations and Council staff.
- An ongoing 'Money Matters' series was included in Council's Connect Magazine and distributed to households across the Shire.
- Translation of Salvation Army's 'You're The Boss' resources into Pashtu and Dari languages for the first time in Australia.
- Additional capacity through the Emergency Relief Assessor at Salvation Army and Casey North CISS by offering additional day of Financial Counselling for Cardinia Shire, Peninsula Community Legal Centre Tenancy Program operating from Salvation Army responding to high rates of people presenting with rental eviction notices.
- Two 'Planning for retirement' workshops were delivered by Council following local data showing a higher than average number of pre-retirees in the growth corridor. Both sessions were delivered by retirement coach Estelle Kelly from Services Australia.
- Council's Energy Efficiency Handbook updated with readable language, and low-cost options for reducing energy bills.
- Bless Collective transitioned their location to Pakenham Hall with a three-year lease.
- Festive Financials and Christmas Cheer programs, supporting community through the financial challenges of end of year.
- Council launched a new online service directory 'Cardinia Support', providing a single platform for residents and service providers to find local services.

Spotlight on

Everyday Money Management

The Financial Wellbeing and Resilience Action Team identified that local community workers and council staff were challenged by an increase in clients and residents discussing financial hardship and issues with managing their money to meet rising living expenses.

Council partnered with Good Shepherd to bring their national training, 'Supporting Clients with Everyday Money Management' to Cardinia Shire for the first time. The training provided participants insight into financial disadvantage, what drives financial vulnerability and who makes up the 'newly vulnerable' cohorts of residents. The session covered money stories and what influences our spending habits, tips and tools for a financial health check-up, all things budgeting, bills and expense management, and a dive into the impacts of modern credit and debt products.

There was a high level of interest, with over 30 participants, representing key local community organisations that work directly with people in financial crisis. These sessions have ensured Council staff and community workers have the skills, tools and knowledge to respond appropriately when residents discuss financial hardship, and better awareness of local referral options. Council's partnership with Good Shepherd will ensure the financial literacy and financial capability services and programs they provide are accessible for the Cardinia Shire community.

Council's partnership with Berry Street from 2024 to will include Cardinia Shire on the statewide training schedule for Money Minded Coach Training and will ensure similar sector training continues to be available annually. This training will build sector capacity to respond to the increase in people experiencing financial hardship in Cardinia Shire.

Focus for 2023-24

Preparing for the Department of Social Services funding round in 2025 to ensure Cardinia Shire is not overlooked in the national formula and has a strong service model to deliver holistic emergency relief and financial wellbeing support to residents in Cardinia Shire.

Outcome 7

Reduced harm from tobacco, alcohol, drugs and gambling



80% of residents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that gambling is a public health issue

89% of residents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the community should have less exposure to gambling advertising.

Alcohol addiction and binge drinking had a negative impact on 4% of respondents or their family within the last 12 months, while 2% were negatively impacted by drug use.

15% of adults in Cardinia Shire smoke

Our objectives

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

Action Team members

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

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

Key achievements

- A background Report has been prepared to commence review of Council's Responsible Gaming Policy.
- The South East Melbourne Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Governance Group, led by South East Community Links, have prepared a new AOD Catchment Management Plan. The first year of the plan focuses on reducing barriers for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to accessing AOD services.
- The Municipal Association of Victoria made a submission on behalf of local councils to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee follow-up of the Victorian Auditor General's reports into the regulation of gambling and liquor.
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Spotlight on

Understanding vaping

Monash Health partnered with Cardinia, Casey and Greater Dandenong councils, and QUIT Victoria to deliver the Understanding Vaping webinar to over 269 people live, specifically targeting teachers and school staff, with a further 297 people watching the recording. The webinar featured key-note speaker Sharon Torpey from Drug Education Australia, followed by an expert panel of representatives from Quit Victoria, City of Casey's Environmental Health Team, and a Monash Health physician. Participants learned about the risks of vaping for health and wellbeing and the environment, the laws regarding buying, selling and using vaping products, and strategies to support young people to refrain from, or quit, vaping. The workshop was delivered in June, shortly following the announcement of Federal Government reforms to vaping in May 2023 which proposed to remove all single-use disposable e-cigarettes from retail sale and put in place measures to prevent marketing of e-cigarettes to young people.

All of the participants who completed the post webinar survey expressed that they were satisfied with the webinar and content, with the recording now available to continue to educate teachers and guardians of young people on the harms and risks of vaping, and how to discourage the uptake among young people. Monash Health plans to undertake a needs assessment with schools to inform the next steps for this health priority areas for education settings.

Focus for 2023-24

Completing review of the Responsible Gaming Policy in consultation with key stakeholders and the community. Through the VicHealth Local Government Partnership we plan to investigate community risks and harms associated with alcohol.



Prepared by:

Cardinia Shire Council

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