



# 2025-2026 ACTION PLAN



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## Acknowledgement

Colac Otway Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples of the Maar Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the Colac Otway region, the land and waterways upon which the activities of the Colac Otway Shire Council are conducted on.

We pay our respects to their ancestors and elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their unique cultural heritage, beliefs and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

# Annual Action Plan

## Council Plan 2025-2029

Council formally adopted the Council Plan 2025-2029 at a Council meeting held on October 14 2025. The Council Plan is a document developed in partnership with the community to guide Council's strategic direction over the next four years.

The key issues faced by our community identified through the deliberative engagement process as part of the development of the Council Plan, informs the choice of major projects and activities that Council identifies as its highest priorities.

### Community Engagement

Development of the Council Plan 2025-2029 included a comprehensive community engagement process. The engagement process included:

- 13 Focus groups
- 6 pop up sessions across various locations
- 6 drop in sessions
- 4 on line sessions
- Community survey
- Community panel sessions
- Councillor workshops
- Exhibition of the draft Council Plan 2025-2029.

The Community Vision 2050 and Council Plan 2025-2029 is available for download from Council's website, or hard copies are available for viewing at Council offices in Colac and Apollo Bay.

### Council Plan 2025-2029 Strategic Themes

There are three themes in the Council Plan:

#### Theme One: Place

Our Shire boasts a regional city by the lake, coastal towns and riverside villages in which residents and visitors alike enjoy the variety of experiences and services on offer. It is easy and fulfilling to live here, allowing people to lead their best lives.

#### Theme Two: People

Our Council and community work together to support the growth of our Shire. We make the most of the opportunities that growth presents, with the aim of improving the wellbeing of all who call our Shire home, without losing the local community spirit that makes our region great.

#### Theme Three: Prosperity

Our Shire is a place of continual improvement and investment, which builds on its strengths and creates new opportunities as it evolves. Visitors stay and play longer, residents enjoy diverse work, while new businesses are drawn here for the variety of opportunities and experiences on offer.

# Annual Action Plan

## Annual Plan 2025-26

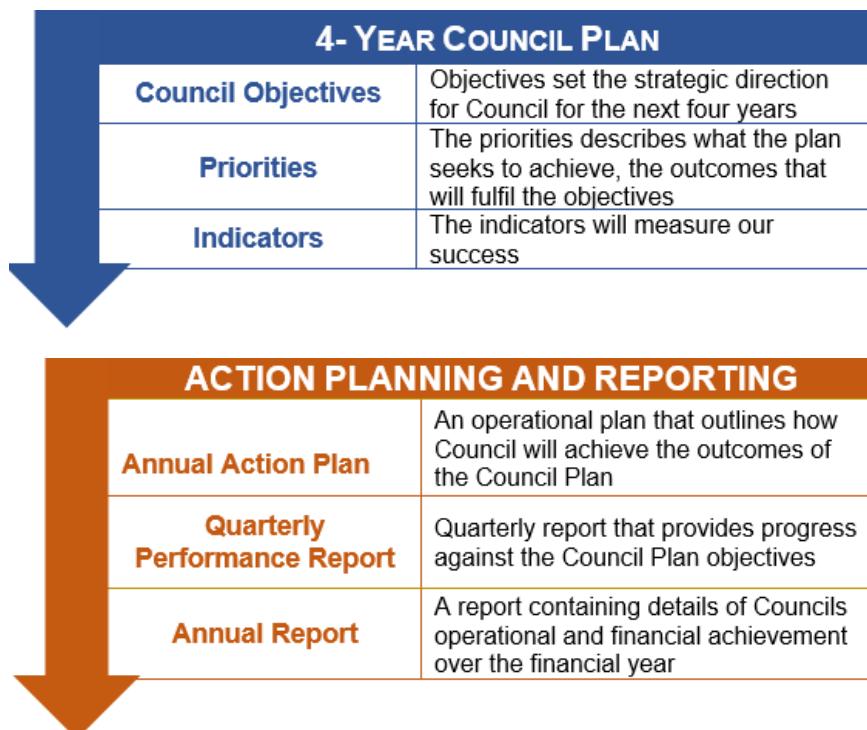
The Annual Plan 2025-26 is an operational plan that outlines how Council will work towards achieving the outcomes of the Council Plan 2025-2029 in the first financial year.

As part of the Council Plan 2025-2029, Council commits to generating an annual action plan to demonstrate how we will deliver on our commitments, evaluating our own performance, and publishing results within the annual report each October.

In addition, the development and implementation of the annual plan is informed by ongoing partnerships with agencies, community and other levels of government.

Each quarter, Council will produce a quarterly report showing progress against each of the actions in the annual plan, in addition Council produces an Annual Report, which outlines the work undertaken for the financial period.

## Integrated Planning Framework



## Theme 1 – PLACE

	Four-year Strategies	Year 1 Actions in 2025-26
<b>1.1 Our Shire is a great place to live, work and belong</b>		
1.1	Enliven and beautify our townships and natural environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress Apollo Bay Structure Plan Review.</li> <li>• Complete the Elliminnyt Wetlands project.</li> <li>• Deliver Council's Street Tree planting program to identified candidate streets.</li> <li>• Implement the Greenlinks Revegetation program at Barongarook Creek in Colac.</li> <li>• Complete the Birregurra Structure Plan review.</li> </ul>
1.2	Enhance our community and social spaces and collaborate with communities to deliver healthy and climate resilient environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake the Bluewater Leisure Centre Electrification project.</li> <li>• Prepare designs for the Lake Colac Foreshore Regional Playspace.</li> <li>• Construct a dog park at Colac's Central Reserve.</li> <li>• Deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation programs in partnership with Geelong Sustainability.</li> </ul>
1.3	Make it safe and easy to get around the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Road Safety Strategy.</li> <li>• Construct new footpath connections in accordance with the footpath strategy for Colac and Apollo Bay.</li> <li>• Renew CCTV equipment within the central Colac precinct.</li> <li>• Implement approved road safety upgrades under the State Government's Safer Local Roads and Streets program.</li> <li>• Develop a policy framework for consideration of proposals to seal unsealed roads.</li> </ul>
1.4	Ensure our region offers a diversity of economic opportunities supported by an array of housing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the Colac Otway Adaptable Precincts Project relating to Colac and Apollo Bay, funded by the Federal Government's Regional Precincts and Partnerships program.</li> </ul>

## Theme 2 – PEOPLE

	Four-year Strategies	Year 1 Actions
<b>Objective 2: Our community is vibrant, healthy and supported</b>		
2.1	Work with partners to ensure important services like employment, health, and education are readily available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Year 1 actions from the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.</li> </ul>
2.2	Build greater community connection through social, cultural, and recreational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare designs for the potential redevelopment of Colac's Lake Oval Clubrooms.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Geelong Regional Library Corporation to develop the new 2025-29 Library Plan, representing the needs of the community in Colac Otway Shire.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver youth engagement services and programs, such as Youth Fest.</li> </ul>
2.3	Identify and advocate for increased support for vulnerable and socially disadvantaged members of our communities, wherever possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the transition of aged care services to the Commonwealth Government's new Support at Home program.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for increased availability of social support services, particularly to cover gaps in the provision of mental health, counselling, homelessness outreach and emergency accommodation, including wrap-around supports.</li> </ul>
2.4	Promote and enable healthy behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Colac Otway Food Systems Community Partnership project in partnership with Colac Secondary College, Colac Area Health, Farm my School and other key stakeholders</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to partner with Colac Area Health in 16 Days of Activism initiative</li> </ul>

## Theme 2 – PEOPLE

	Four-year Strategies	Year 1 Actions
2.5	Ensure opportunities for greater community connections for multicultural and First Nations groups within our Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with community organisations, traditional owner groups and the Colac Multicultural Association to promote programs for multicultural and First Nations peoples in the Shire.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 3: Our Council governs progressively and sustainably for all</b>		
3.1	Elevate the efficiency and effectiveness of our Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Customer Experience improvement program.</li> <li>Progress service reviews for priority areas, determined through discussion with Councillors.</li> <li>Explore opportunities to dispose of surplus Council land and/or assets.</li> <li>Undertake the Planning Scheme Review.</li> </ul>
3.2	Make well-informed, transparent decisions for the betterment of the community through best-practice governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement response provided to the recommendations from the Monitors report.</li> <li>Review Council's Resource Recovery and Waste Strategy.</li> <li>Adopt a revised Domestic Animal Management Plan.</li> </ul>
3.3	Build and maintain effective working relationships with all levels of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Advocacy Strategy and determine Council's priority projects.</li> </ul>
3.4	Communicate and engage positively and clearly with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake minimum of two Community Conversations at townships across the Shire.</li> </ul>

## Theme 2 – PEOPLE

	Four-year Strategies	Year 1 Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review Council's Community Engagement Policy.</li></ul>
3.5	Develop and refine policies that support the health and wellbeing of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early and effective engagement with the community on emergency preparedness.</li><li>• Implement Council's Gender Equity Action Plan and conduct Gender Impact Assessments to inform Council's policies, programs and services</li><li>• Support the Global Age Friendly Cities declaration.</li></ul>

## Theme 3 – PROSPERITY

	Four-year Strategies	Year 1 Actions
<b>Objective 4: Our economy is growing and diverse, supporting innovation, new businesses and investments</b>		
4.1	Attract business and government investment to stimulate industry and business growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a new Economic Development Strategy.</li> </ul>
4.2	Protect and leverage our traditional agricultural and manufacturing industries to create new economic opportunities, preparing and responding to changes in the natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Saleyards Review</li> <li>• Upgrade facilities at the Colac Saleyards, including purchase of a multi-deck loading race.</li> </ul>
4.3	Build economic opportunities from local arts, culture, sports, science and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Public Art Policy and implement the Public Art program.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 5: Our tourism industry is thriving, with expanded and interlinked experiences</b>		
5.1	Facilitate the growth and diversification of the visitor economy to increase visitation, length of stay and employment outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the upgrade of the Lake Colac Holiday Park.</li> </ul>
5.2	Enhance the promotion of Colac Otway Shire as a destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In partnership with Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism, undertake a project focussing on Colac and leveraging its important role in the regional visitor economy.</li> </ul>
5.3	Increase tourism offerings and investment in the Colac Otway Shire through events, products, and attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with local businesses to develop a visitor economy business partnering program.</li> </ul>

## Theme 3 – PROSPERITY

	Four-year Strategies	Year 1 Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to investigate and support options for short term accommodation in Colac.</li></ul>
5.4	Improve tourism infrastructure that leverages our natural tourism and recreation assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore opportunities for activating key public spaces through events and programs.</li><li>• Undertake renewal works at the Red Rock scenic lookout.</li></ul>