

# Shaping The Ranges

2025-2035

DRAFT FOR  
CONSULTATION

# Acknowledgement of Country

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the **Dja Dja Wurrung**, **Taungurung** and **Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung** Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

**Artwork** by Taungurung artist Maddie Moser. *Artwork used with permission.*



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# A message from the Mayor and CEO

We are proud to present *Shaping the Ranges 2025-2035*: a key strategic Council document incorporating our Community Vision, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and Disability Action Plan. We thank the many community members who have given their time and insights which helped to inform this document.

Its development was underpinned by a thoughtful engagement process, to better understand the aspirations and needs of our community.

During initial consultation phases, you told us of the importance of our rural character and the protection of our natural environment and biodiversity.

You told us about the pressures that come with climate change; the need to invest in built infrastructure like roads and recreational facilities; and how critical the success of business, agriculture and industry are to our local economy and our identity.

We also heard about the challenges associated with change and growth, and the balancing act that comes with population growth and housing constraints. We are working hard to ensure that growth in the Macedon Ranges is sustainable and appropriate, and we continue to advocate for more investment in social and affordable housing to meet community need.

By combining comprehensive community engagement, in-depth discussions, and evidence-led decision-making, we developed a multi-year strategic plan that reflects our community's needs and aspirations, ensuring a resilient and prosperous future for all residents.

By incorporating our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan, we are also focused on embedding health, wellbeing, disability access, and inclusion across all that we do.

To ensure that we follow through and deliver on this document, we will stage specific work through annual action plans alongside each budget, to ensure accountability and financial sustainability.

On behalf of Council, we look forward to implementing this document and continuing to support the Macedon Ranges as an amazing place to live, work and play.



**Cr Dom Bonanno**  
Mayor



**Bernie O'Sullivan**  
Chief Executive Officer

# About this **Plan**

The 'Shaping the Ranges' Plan (the Plan) brings together four strategic documents that Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Council) is required to deliver.

## **The Community Vision**

A document that describes the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality.

## **The Council Plan**

A document that identifies community needs and local issues, describing strategic directions that guide Council's response.

## **The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan**

A document that establishes the aims and priorities for Council in improving and protecting the public health and wellbeing of people in the municipality.

## **The Disability Action Plan**

A document that identifies actions to remove barriers for people with disability, increase their employment, and change community attitudes.

## **In bringing these documents together into one Plan for the community, Council demonstrates its commitment to:**

- ensuring that the Community Vision for our shire guides everything we do
- embedding health, wellbeing, disability access, and inclusion across all that we do.

In the Plan, we provide information about our shire, who lives here and how they live, as well as information about our organisation, and what we learned from our engagement and research in putting this Plan together.

We then present the strategic directions and objectives, which will guide what we do over the next 10 years, providing examples of key projects.

The Plan provides direction to Council staff, community stakeholders and other levels of government on how best to respond to and prioritise the needs of the Macedon Ranges community.

The Plan is Council's primary strategic planning document, which means it provides overall direction for the organisation and what we do, and also guides the development of other operational plans, strategies, and budgets that may provide more detail on how we will do the things we say in this plan.

## Community Vision Statement

“A regional community protecting the environment, supporting local businesses and caring for our people”



### Our Places

We have connected and active places and spaces for everyone

- Our roads, transport and accessibility enhance our connection.
- Our community infrastructure is accessible, fit for purpose, and meets the needs of current and future generations.



### Our Environment

Our rural and natural surroundings are cared for and protected

- Our natural environment, wildlife, biodiversity and water quality are cared for and protected.
- Our actions against climate change are prioritised and enables the community to act.
- Our council and our community act in environmentally sustainable ways.



### Our Economy

Our local businesses and tourism sectors are thriving and provide opportunities for everyone

- Our local economy and businesses are thriving and promote our unique identity.
- Our community promotes economic equality so that everyone can afford to live well and participate in community life.



### Our People

Our community is safe, healthy and well

- Our people feel safe, respected and valued, living in a community where violence and discrimination are prevented, and not tolerated.
- Our people of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to experience positive physical and mental wellbeing.
- Our community and environment are well prepared for emergency events and can respond to and recover from them.



### Our Performance

We are accountable, trusted and collaborative

- Our community experiences customer interactions that are positive, meaningful and accessible and help to shape our organisation's priorities.
- Our organisation has a safe, healthy and fair culture that drives continuous improvement.
- Our organisation is efficient, collaborative and makes accountable, transparent decisions that serve the best interests of the whole community.

# About the Macedon Ranges

## Our shire

Our shire covers an area of about 1,750 square kilometres and is situated in central Victoria, just under an hour's drive from Melbourne, comprising of a mix of urban and rural areas where our 56,000-or-so residents reside.

The Macedon Ranges is part of a broader Visitor Economy region Partnership that includes neighbouring council areas of Hepburn, Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander and Loddon Campaspe shires. We are known for our outdoor attractions and natural beauty such as Hanging Rock and Mount Macedon, as well as the unique rural character of our heritage villages and local artisan culture.

## Celebrating our distinctive areas and landscapes

The Macedon Ranges has long been recognised as having several distinctive attributes and dominant features in our landscape.

The Victorian Government designated the Macedon Ranges as the first area to be afforded the maximum protection possible under the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes provisions of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy provides a framework to ensure the outstanding landscapes, layers

<sup>1</sup> Source: Macedon Ranges shire – Thematic Environmental History, October 2023

of settlement history, impressive landforms, and diverse natural environment of the Macedon Ranges are protected and preserved and continue to be of special significance to the people of Victoria. It celebrates the enduring links between Country and First Nations Victorians.

## Traditional Owners and First Nations Peoples

The land now known as the Macedon Ranges has a rich Aboriginal heritage spanning at least 30,000-40,000 years<sup>1</sup>. The area is home to three Traditional Owner Groups: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage



Aboriginal Corporation (Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung), Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC) and Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA). The First Nations Peoples who live in the shire today are diverse, coming from these three Traditional Owner Groups, as well as many nations from across Australia.

There are many places of Aboriginal cultural significance across the shire, including:

- Hanging Rock: a sacred and highly significant place and an important intertribal ceremonial meeting place. Oral traditions indicate it was the location of large intergroup gatherings for trade and ceremonies. Stone in stone tools found there comes from considerable distances, indicating the place was part of a much larger social and economic network. There is an important natural spring that was a source of water and is an important cultural and spiritual site.
- Wil-im-ee Moor-ring (Mount William): essential for the production of 'greenstone' axes by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples.

Today, Traditional Owner Groups have their unique rights to their Country recognised under a range of Victorian legislation, including the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. This Act also recognises the distinct cultural rights of all First Nations People and communities.

Wurundjeri, TLaWC and DJAARA are Recognised Aboriginal Parties, and TLaWC and DJAARA also have signed Recognition and Settlement Agreements with the State of Victoria, which acknowledge a range of Traditional Owner rights, including rights to practice culture, participate in decisions about natural resource management and proposed land use activities on Crown land within their boundaries.

We engage in cultural protocols in our day-to-day work as an organisation, such as an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of meetings or events. These cultural protocols promote respect and recognition of the unique history of our area and its First Nations Peoples.

We work with our three Registered Aboriginal Parties, and our relationships with them are crucial to our ability to deliver on our role in protecting and conserving places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance and promoting community awareness of First Nations histories and cultures.

We will continue to work with and partner with the Traditional Owners of the land now covered by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council and support their self-determination, aspirations and goals as outlined in their respective Country and Strategic Plans.



## Our Agricultural Background and Early European Settlements



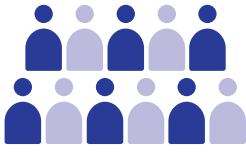
The municipality is one of the earliest European settlements in inland Victoria, with record of first settlers from around the year 1836, initially largely occupied for grazing and farming purposes, then later by farmers supplying produce such as grains, potatoes and peas to the goldfields. In the nineteenth century, the region also became known for wine growing. Although agricultural produce has changed over time it remains an important part of the local economy today.

The Shire of Kyneton was established in 1865, along with the Shire of Romsey (1862), Gisborne (1871), Newham (1861) and Woodend (1871). In 1995, these shires were merged to form the Shire of Macedon Ranges.

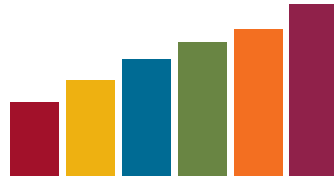


# Our people and how they live

## Population size



**56,073**  
residents live in the shire



Population expected to grow to **75,300** by 2046

The greatest growth (+187%) will occur for those **aged 85+**



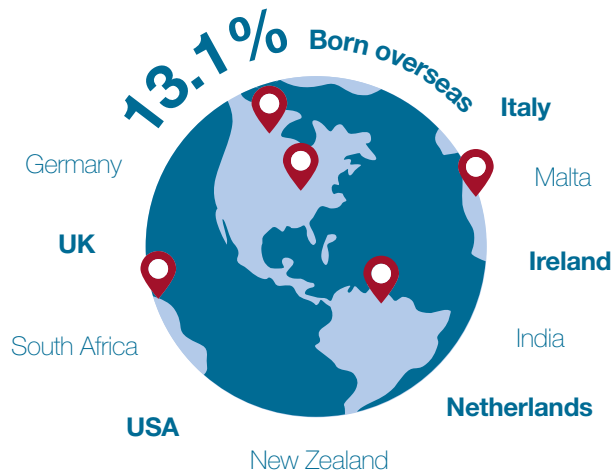
The largest number of new residents will be **parents and homebuilders**

## Demographics



**43**

Median age of residents in the shire



**5.1%** of residents **need assistance** in their day-to-day lives due to age or disability



**9.5%** of people in the shire identify as **LGBTQIA+**

**49.3%** of residents reported **no religion**. The largest religious group was Western (Roman) Catholic (22.3%)



## Employment and industry



Employment rate for residents, and 12.5% for those who reported a need for assistance

**5.4%**

of those aged 15-25 in the shire **were not working or studying**



## Top 5

### Employment sectors

- 1 Health Care & Social Assistance
- 2 Construction
- 3 Education & Training
- 4 Retail
- 5 Accommodation & Food Services



With the highest growth expected in **Construction** and **Residential Care & Social Assistance**



**19.2%**

of residents 15 and over **volunteered**



Construction and Construction Services make the biggest contribution to **economic output in the region**

## Households



**\$926K**

**Median house price**  
Compared to \$895,000  
in Metro Melbourne



**\$607**

**Median weekly rent**  
compared to \$580 in  
Metro Melbourne



More households are classified as **high income** when compared with regional Victoria



**Mortgage and rental stress** was experienced in 11.2% and 32.2% of households respectively

## Health and wellbeing

Only 1 in every 2 adults, and 3 in 4 children meet daily **fruit consumption guidelines**



**18.5%** of adults experience **loneliness**, particularly younger adults (aged 18-24)

**Less than 1/2** of residents participate in the recommended 150 minutes of **exercise** each week



**70%** of men and **45%** of women were likely to drink an amount in a single sitting that can increase their risk of injury



The most commonly reported health condition in the Macedon Ranges was **Mental Health Condition**



**11.3%** increase in **family violence incidents** recorded, compared to the previous year

Nearly **1/4** of residents reported worrying about **food insecurity**, with concerns being most common among women and younger individuals

**\$9.5 million** Worth of **gambling losses** in 2023-24 (nearly triple that of neighbouring shires)



**9.7** per 100,000 **traffic accidents** in the shire compared to 4 per 100,000 in Victoria



## Sustainability



**On road emissions** remain higher than Victorian averages (30.2% compared to 19%), while rail emissions remain substantially lower



**Residential emissions** from electricity remain higher than Victorian averages (20.8% compared to 15%)

**8,730**

**rooftop solar systems** which equates to 37.9 % of rooftops, about 9.6% higher than the state average

### Statistics are current as of April 2025, References:

[forecast.id.com.au/macedon-ranges](https://forecast.id.com.au/macedon-ranges) | Macedon Ranges shire – Thematic Environmental History, October 2023 | [health.vic.gov.au/population-health-systems/victorian-population-health-survey](https://health.vic.gov.au/population-health-systems/victorian-population-health-survey) | [reiv.com.au/market-insights/victorian-insights](https://reiv.com.au/market-insights/victorian-insights) | Crime Statistics Agency | [phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases/data-archive/data-archive-social-health-atlases-of-australia](https://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases/data-archive/data-archive-social-health-atlases-of-australia) | 2021 Census Quick Stats | Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation 2023 | Macedon Ranges municipal emissions snapshot 2022/23 | Australian Photovoltaic Installations Map | [app.remplan.com.au/macedonranges/economy/industries/employment](https://app.remplan.com.au/macedonranges/economy/industries/employment).

# Our unique **challenges**

## Responding to and balancing population growth



Our shire has experienced significant growth over the past decade, particularly in and around Gisborne. This growth is expected to continue, with our shire projected to be home to 75,303 people by 2046, a growth of 34%<sup>1</sup>. We acknowledge the pressures that population growth has on our environment, biodiversity and the rural character of the shire.

The Statement of Planning Policy and other strategic documents have guided and managed this growth over the past 10 years, directing development to six townships within our shire: Gisborne, Kyneton, Romsey, Riddells Creek, Woodend, and Lancefield. The recently released Plan for Victoria identifies a housing target of 13,200 new dwellings in our shire by 2051. Our shire has a shortage of diverse and affordable housing, with most dwellings being larger in size, resulting in higher housing prices. A significant proportion of the community comprises of single, and two person households and a growing proportion of persons aged over 70 years. There is a predominance of detached houses, typically on large lots, 1000 square metres and above. An increase in diversity of housing, including affordable housing provision is desirable in well serviced locations.

<sup>1</sup> [forecast.id.com.au/macedon-ranges](http://forecast.id.com.au/macedon-ranges)

We support human-scale development that enhances community connection, including well-designed housing, street widths appropriate for public transport, and village-type strip shopping that encourages community interaction. We will design safe, welcoming community spaces, and natural, open space to enhance wellbeing and protect biodiversity.

With this projected growth also comes increased community expectations for new and expanded infrastructure, such as roads, footpaths, community spaces, parks, and recreation. Developer contributions only cover part of the cost for new facilities.

Once new facilities are built, associated infrastructure such as roads are handed over to Council to manage and maintain, and new budget allowances need to be made. A key challenge for growth also includes supporting the development of local economic amenities. Council allocates land for these amenities; however, developers and retailers are still needed to fund, construct and open the facilities, which is often after demand from the local community has been established.

## Our landscape

Our shire comprises of many thriving and independent townships, villages and hamlets, giving it a unique rural charm that attracts



visitors and residents alike. The impact of Council serving several small towns, as opposed to one or two population centres, is a greater spread of resources to support the sustainable and equitable provision of infrastructure and services. Future planning should consider the needs of our Municipal Community, future residents and visitors, such as our ageing population, and how we can facilitate the additional and unique services each area will require (for example, ageing in place within the independent townships and villages).

Physical connectivity between townships and villages supports our residents in moving across and within our shire via both private and public transport, enabling equitable access to the services and activities they need. This also presents an additional challenge with a dispersed population.

Our region's natural environment and character, including granitic hills, mountains, valleys, established forests and bushland, form part of a cultural landscape and are an asset to the Macedon Ranges community; however, they can also obstruct or interfere with telecommunications signals, and make the installation of critical telecommunications infrastructure more challenging. This makes it more difficult to provide all areas across the municipality with reliable coverage, compared with other shires in Victoria, resulting in issues with digital connectivity. Limited digital connectivity impacts economic and social opportunities and development, hindering residents' ability to work, access essential services and participate in everyday transactions that require digital connectivity.

Council will continue to address communication and digital connectivity challenges across our shire, partnering with telecommunications providers and other levels of government and stakeholders to identify short and long-term solutions to address blackspot areas across our shire.

## Affordability in the shire



In recent years, the cost of living has continued to rise, placing greater financial pressure on both residents and Council.

The cost of essential services such as housing, groceries and insurance has grown rapidly. Housing costs are particularly high in the Macedon Ranges, where both rental and purchase prices for housing exceed regional averages. Residents have also reported increasing grocery costs as a major concern, particularly in areas with limited access to affordable retail options.

Cost-of-living pressures are shown to have a broad range of impacts on our community<sup>1</sup> including secondary impacts on mental and physical health. This includes adverse effects on behaviours that contribute to long-term health and wellbeing such as eating nutritious food and not engaging with harmful activities such as vaping.

As more residents face financial hardship, there is increasing pressure on Council to further subsidise community programs and services, provide access to information on financial assistance, and advocate for fairer state and federal cost structures, including taxes and service charges. Acknowledging the cost-of-living pressures faced by much of the community, and the effects on health and wellbeing, the Council undertakes to contain

<sup>1</sup> Victorian Health Promotion Foundation Report: High Inflation and Implications for Health

its own costs and rationalise expenditure to limit the financial burden it places on the community. In undertaking discretionary projects the Council will ensure it will conduct thorough cost-benefit analyses, and statistically relevant community consultations, before such projects are commenced. In line with Council's Transparency Policy it will provide the community with the detailed cost-benefit analysis and results of community consultations, before initiating any discretionary projects.

## Financial constraints



Council is experiencing an increasing gap between the Rate Cap (the maximum percentage that we can increase in total rates revenue each year as set by the State Government of Victoria), and the Consumer Price Index, which is resulting in growing costs of materials, construction, labour and staffing. This means we have a bigger increase in the cost of delivering our services compared with the amount of money we can generate through rates and charges.

Our ageing infrastructure assets are needing a greater portion of funds in the budget to keep them in working order for our community to enjoy, impacting our ability to spend money on the delivery of other services. We acknowledge that population growth puts disproportionate load on infrastructure

We are also experiencing more cost-shifting from other levels of government. For example, Council's Maternal and Child Health service costs were once shared 50% by us and 50% by the Victorian Government, however, due to increasing costs, Council now covers 63% of the costs of the service. Council will actively push back against State and Federal Government cost-shifting

In addition to these financial constraints, we are experiencing increased demand for our services as our population grows and increased community expectations relating to the quality and number of services we deliver, resulting in tensions between what communities expect and what we can prioritise and afford within available funding.

## Climate change and adverse weather

Australia's climate has warmed by about 1.4 degrees Celsius since national records began in 1910 and this warming is evidenced to be the result of the human population's reliance on coal, oil and gas, resulting in the greenhouse effect<sup>1</sup>.

In 2021, Council joined over 30 councils in Victoria and almost 100 councils across Australia in passing a motion at our Council Meeting on 24 March 2021 to declare a climate emergency. This declaration recognises



<sup>1</sup> Source: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Sixth Assessment Report

the urgent need to address the causes and impacts of climate change across all aspects of our operations, and in our work with community.

Our region has high household and vehicular greenhouse gas emissions compared with state averages<sup>1</sup>, and reducing these emissions, alongside reducing emissions from Council's operations, continues to be a priority for us.

The impacts of climate change are felt through changing weather patterns and increased frequency of adverse weather events in our region. In the past 10 years, we have experienced 23 events in our shire classed as 'extreme', including 8 bushfires, 10 storms, and 5 floods.

These events have an impact on our infrastructure, and community, which comes at a financial cost to Council, often requiring urgent allocation of budget for immediate response as well as further investment to make current assets more resilient to future adverse weather.

Council plays a critical role in supporting emergency management arrangements and facilitating action on climate change in our shire, due to our in-depth local knowledge and our responsibilities by law.

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1 Source: Snapshot Climate, Macedon Ranges 2022-23 Municipal Emissions Snapshot



# About our **organisation**

## Our Councillors

Councillors are elected officials who represent their communities and residents and help to make and shape the policies of Council through decision-making.

The Macedon Ranges is divided into three areas, known as wards, and each ward has three elected members, referred to as Councillors.

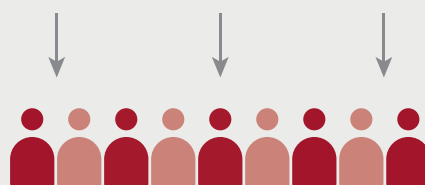
Each ward and the major towns they include are described below however, actual ward boundaries and property addresses occasionally cross over between towns (i.e. there are some addresses in Riddells Creek that are located in the South Ward).

Each year, the Councillors elect a Mayor and have the option to also elect a Deputy Mayor from their group. These positions play an important role in leading and representing the broader Councillor group, as well as ceremonial and civic functions, such as presenting citizenship ceremonies.

### Three Wards



### Three Councillors per ward



### Nine Councillors for the Macedon Ranges



# Our Councillors

## East Ward



**Cr Cassy Borthwick**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** cborthwick@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0498 806 488

## South Ward



**Cr Dominic Bonanno**

**Mayor**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** dbonanno@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0419 829 867

## West Ward



**Cr Jennifer Anderson**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** janderson@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0408 273 670



**Cr Andrew Scanlon**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** ascanlon@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0400 180 944



**Cr Alison Joseph**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** ajoseph@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0498 531 269



**Cr Kate Kendall**

**Deputy Mayor**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** kkendall@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0400 297 293



**Cr Daniel Young**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** danielyoung@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0499 943 101



**Cr Christine Walker**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** cwalker@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0438 589 251



**Cr Janet Pearce**

**Elected:** October 2024

**e:** jpearce@mrsc.vic.gov.au

**p:** 0437 282 096

## How our organisation is structured

To support Council and its many services, our organisation has an Executive Leadership Team which is responsible for managing our staff and our operational activities. Our Chief Executive Officer leads this executive team.

These many services that make up Macedon Ranges Shire Council are organised across four directorates: Planning and Environment, Corporate Services, Community, and Assets and Operations.

## The services our organisation delivers

Macedon Ranges Shire Council provides a wide range of services to support the community. These services are both direct and indirect and comprise service provision, advocacy, partnership, planning, facilitating and community capability building.

These services aim to enhance the quality of life for all residents and ensure a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community. Some of the direct services provided include the following:

For children, youth and families	For health and wellbeing	For your home	For your town	For your community	Enabling Services
 Kindergarten	 Food Safety	 Planning Permits	 Parks and Open Space	 Grants	 Communications and Engagement
 Maternal and Child Health	 Immunisation	 Building Permits	 Parking	 Community Meeting Spaces	 Finance, Rating and Revenue
 New parent programs	 Recreation and Leisure Spaces	 Pet Registrations	 Roads and Footpaths	 Arts and Culture Programs	 Governance and Reporting
 School crossing supervisors	 Pools	 Waste Management	 Business Support	 Libraries	 Information Technology
 Youth engagement	 Youth Mental Health Programs	 Septic Inspections	 Emergency Management	 Social Connection Programs	 Record Management

# Our organisational values

As an organisation, we are committed to five core values:



We commit to act in accordance with our organisational values. We will constantly measure our performance against these values and take action where our performance falls short. We will ensure that we Respect everyone in our community, act Honesty, are always Accountable, Work Together and in the best interests of our Municipal Community. We will constantly improve our performance through measurement of results and ongoing Innovation.

Our values underpinned the engagement process we undertook to develop the updated Plan. Respect for our community and Working Together were demonstrated through the development of the renewed Community Vision and the five broad strategic themes working directly with the community and community organisations. Accountability, Honesty and Innovation were key to forming Objectives and Priorities. Our Council team managing the overall process has been committed to honestly receiving and interpreting feedback from the community and community groups, and combining this direction from Council to manage and coordinate the process of renewing the Plan, while also taking Accountability for delivering the Plan documents.

# Our Integrated Strategic Planning Framework

The development of a Community Vision and Council Plan is a responsibility by law for all Victorian councils. The intention of this document is to promote good governance and public trust by clearly expressing our vision, mission, and objectives, encouraging long-term decision-making in the best interest of the community.

This document sets out a roadmap for future actions, enabling us to respond proactively to new challenges and opportunities, ultimately contributing to the overall wellbeing and development of the Macedon Ranges community.

We are required by law to redevelop key documents such as the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, in the year after our new Councillors are elected.

Additionally, the Disability Action Plan, also required by law, is due in October 2025.

This 'Shaping the Ranges' Plan guides everything we do. It is the most important document we have and it directs all planning and strategies undertaken across Council.

Underpinning the Community Vision and Council Plan is the Asset Plan and the Financial Plan, which align with the aspirations set out in this plan and identify how these priorities can be achieved within Council's financial capacity. The Asset Plan sets out how Council will acquire, build, look after, and use assets over the next 10 years and beyond. The Financial Plan ensures Council delivers on its strategic goals in a financially sustainable way.

## Integrated Strategic Planning Framework

<b>Our long-term vision</b> (guiding all that we do)	<b>Community Vision</b> (every 10 years)
<b>Our strategic direction</b> (providing specific priorities and objectives)	
<b>Our long-term resource allocation</b>	<b>Financial Plan and Asset Plan</b> (every 10 years)
	<b>Workforce Plan and Revenue and Rating Plan</b> (every 4 years)
<b>Our yearly Commitments</b> (what we will deliver each financial year)	<b>Council Plan Action Plan and Budget</b> (annually, ahead of each financial year)
	<b>Quarterly Reporting</b> (quarterly, within each financial year)
<b>Our reporting</b> (for accountability and transparency)	<b>Annual Report</b> (annually, after each financial year)

Ongoing review and continuous improvement

# How this Plan was developed

The development of our new Council Plan was a structured and inclusive process designed to ensure we capture and reflect the aspirations and needs of our community.

By combining comprehensive community engagement, in-depth discussions, and evidence-led decision-making, we developed a plan that reflects our community's needs and aspirations, ensuring a resilient and prosperous future for all residents.

We engaged with the community through targeted and broader communications methods. Targeted engagement focused on specific groups or issues to gather detailed insights, while broader engagement reached out to the wider community to gather feedback on the existing Council Plan through platforms like Council's Your Say online engagement hub.

Deliberative engagement was also conducted with a Community Assembly, consisting of members independently selected to endeavour to reflect our diverse population. The Assembly tested ideas and helped shape the Plan through in-depth conversations and deliberations, through four independently facilitated in-person sessions.

These engagements informed a refresh of the Community Vision, which is the foundation for the strategic directions guiding the Council Plan.

Public consultation is now open on the draft document to receive community feedback on the Council Plan.

**Community engagement**

The strategic directions that are the pillars of this Plan, are a direct result of what we heard from the community and their aspirations for the future of the shire.

**Evidence-led decision making**

We consulted specialists, gathered evidence and data, and formulated objectives and strategies to achieve the strategic directions.

**Guidance and oversight**

A dedicated project team of Council officers managed the overall process, ensuring everything was coordinated and aligned with our goals.

**Working Together** **Respect**

**Accountability** **Honesty**

**Innovation**

# Our Community Vision

The Community Assembly group refreshed the Community Vision statement for Macedon Ranges Shire Council on behalf of the broader community.

The Community Assembly took place over three weeks. Participants engaged in workshops where they deliberated on various issues, considering expert insights and diverse viewpoints.

The Assembly considered these issues and the earlier 2021-2031 Community Vision statement:

“With our unique regional identity, Macedon Ranges Shire embodies a caring, resilient approach to community through our robust local economy, protection of the natural environment and a collaborative commitment to inclusivity for all.”

The Assembly then drafted a renewed Community Vision statement. This Vision, as well as additional research and consultation findings, led to the development of the five strategic directions (themes). These themes reflect a vision for a community where all people feel they belong and are able to help shape the future of the shire. They will guide our decision-making, work, and funding allocation over the next 10 years. Our vision and supporting themes are shown in the diagram.





# Wellbeing, access and inclusion

This Plan includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Disability Action Plan.

In bringing these documents together into one plan for the community, Council demonstrates its commitment to embedding health, wellbeing, disability access, and inclusion across all that we do. We acknowledge the role that the local government plays in the local built environment that itself has an impact on the wellbeing of our communities. We strive to foster a connected community that has access to environments, supports, and resources that allow them to live their best and most healthy lives.



## Municipal public health and wellbeing planning

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a document that establishes the aims and priorities for progressing to improve and protect the public health and wellbeing of people in our shire. By law, these goals must also include what we are legally required to do about climate change and its effects on health, as well as steps to prevent family violence.

Many factors influence a person's health. The conditions in which people live, the access they have to resources, the treatment they receive, and the activities they engage in all have an impact on the health of communities and individuals.

To identify which of these factors were most important to address for health and wellbeing, we presented community feedback and research to local community organisations and services. These organisations collectively identified priority areas for us to act on collaboratively.

The following priorities were identified as most important to act on to support our communities' long-term wellbeing:

- Loneliness and social inclusion\*
- Housing
- Food security\*
- Diversity and inclusion
- Access to and provision of services

This group also identified the following areas of additional importance:

- Climate and emergencies\*
- Transport, including active transport\*
- Alcohol and gambling\*
- Gender-based violence (family violence)\*

Priorities with an asterisk\* are also included in the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2024-2027.

## Disability action planning



The Disability Action Plan is a document that identifies ways to remove barriers for people with disabilities, increase their employment opportunities, and change community attitudes.

### **Our community told us that these were the most important priorities for doing this:**

- Support people with disabilities to access education and employment.
- Improve the accessibility of our physical spaces and places so that people with disabilities are not excluded.
- Advocate for accessible local public transport options and ensure our own transport infrastructure (i.e. walking paths) is accessible too.
- Facilitate equitable participation of people with disabilities in Council programs and services, and in other activities taking place across our shire.
- Work to reduce experiences of discrimination for people with disabilities, and improve their visibility in our shire and in our organisation.
- Provide tailored programs and activities for people with disabilities to foster their wellbeing, autonomy and social connection.

## Partnerships and collaboration

We look forward to supporting and partnering with the following local organisations and community groups in the delivery of these priorities:

- Centre for Non-Violence
- Intereach
- Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit
- Macedon Ranges Health
- Our local Landcare networks
- Our local neighbourhood houses
- Our local schools
- Specialist Hoops
- Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health
- Victorian Department of Health
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- Windarring
- Youth Live4Life

We also welcome other groups and organisations who would like to partner with us to progress community wellbeing and address the needs of people with disabilities in our shire.

# How to read **the Plan**

The following part of the Plan is broken into five main Strategic Themes.

## Strategic Themes

A **Strategic Theme** is an achievable long-term goal that guides our decision-making. Each Strategic Theme provides a clear picture of the desired future state of our shire. Under each Strategic Theme, Council has developed a set of objectives.

## Strategic Objectives

**Objectives** are measurable outcomes of what Council wants to accomplish, that will achieve the overall Strategic Theme. To achieve objectives, Council has outlined the priorities that it will take.

## Priorities

A **Priority** is how we plan to achieve the objectives using actions. It gives an indication of what you will see us doing for community.

## Indicators

**Indicators** are the statistics and data we will collect to measure our success in achieving the objectives. Indicators may be quantitative (measured with numbers) or qualitative (measured by descriptions in words).



The following symbols have been used throughout the plan to show linkages and alignment where appropriate:



Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan



Our Economy



Disability Action Plan



Our People



Our Places



Our Performance



Our Environment

















Council will develop an annual **Action Plan** which will specify what actions we will take each year for the priorities outlined in this Plan.

Progress on these actions will be tracked, and their status reported on every six months and published on Council's website.

Our Places	
Connected and active places and spaces for everyone.	
Objectives	Priorities to Achieve Objective
Our roads, transport and accessibility enhance our connection.	Deliver roads that anticipate population growth and maintain an efficient road network.
	Improve frequency and coverage of public transport services across our shire.
	Plan and deliver programs and infrastructure that support walking, cycling and other active transport. 
	Invest in transport infrastructure to facilitate connection within and between townships.
	Support people with different needs and abilities to access, understand and navigate transport options. 
Our community infrastructure is accessible, fit for purpose, and meets the needs of current and future generations.	Support provision of accessible health and wellbeing services. 
	Design and deliver inclusive and accessible spaces that support safety, cultural inclusion, community participation and ownership. 
	Deliver land use planning to attract investment for business and enable a thriving economic environment.
	Enhance economic activity centres with public art, activation, maintenance and improvements that attract and engage visitors and locals.
	Facilitate affordable housing in new developments and existing townships that meet the varied needs of different household types and life stages. 
	Invest in, and deliver, sustainable, equitable and accessible community infrastructure.  
	Maintain our assets to be safe, accessible and sustainable, in ways that meet community needs. 
	Plan new and future built environments that protect the rural character of our shire by incorporating and prioritising heritage management, visual amenity, and the natural environment.
Work with Traditional Owner Groups in accordance with the Cultural Heritage Act and the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan to ensure appropriate use, stewardship and development of land.	

Our Environment	
Rural and natural surroundings that are cared for and protected.	
Objectives	Priorities to Achieve Objective
Our natural environment, wildlife, biodiversity and water quality are cared for and protected.	Act to restore and increase native/indigenous vegetation, land conversation and ecosystem.
	Develop and embed policies and frameworks to improve environmental conservation and management. Reduce environmental risks including bushfire, storm and flood in all land use planning.
	Facilitate sustainable water management and quality. 
	Reduce negative impacts on the natural environment, including weed control/pests/domestic animals/waste.
	Encourage and facilitate sustainable agricultural practices, including regenerative farming.
Our actions against climate change are prioritised and enables the community to act.	Deliver initiatives that lower emissions related to housing, infrastructure and transport.
	Enable the community to take action and understand environmental and financial benefits of reducing our impact on the planet.
	Consider investments into lower-carbon alternatives.
Our council and our community act in environmentally sustainable ways.	Build the capacity of community members and groups to adopt environmentally sustainable practices.
	Deliver and support initiatives that enable the reuse, repair and recycling of materials locally and implement strategies to improve waste compliance.
	Learn from and integrate evidence based environmental management practices inclusive of local Traditional Owner Groups and community groups.
	Invest in environmentally sustainable solutions such as renewable energy, recycled water, or climate resilience of infrastructure.

Our Economy	
Our local businesses and tourism sectors thrive and provide opportunities for everyone.	
Objectives	Priorities to Achieve Objective
Our local economy and businesses are thriving and promote our unique identity.	Engage with local businesses, entrepreneurs and industry to support innovation, attract investment, and deliver economic growth.
	Support businesses to be environmentally and economically sustainable.
	Support the growth and maintenance of industries that contribute to health, wellbeing and sustainability such as mental health, allied health, and local food systems. 
	Partner with local heritage and community groups, including historical, arts, cultural, and local Traditional Owner Groups to develop cultural and eco-tourism and share cultures, histories and places of significance.
	Promote local landmarks and attractions as part of the visitor economy, providing clear, accessible information on how to find and engage with them.
	Promote and attract artistic, cultural and historical activity, events and values, that showcase the region's quality and stimulate economic activity.
	Support the community, businesses, entrepreneurs to activate their towns.
	Work collaboratively with businesses and entrepreneurs to identify community-led initiatives that address local needs.
	Work collaboratively with local businesses and entrepreneurs to advocate for and deliver education, employment and training that supports them to adapt and grow.
Our community promotes economic equality so that everyone can afford to live well and participate in community life.	Support our local agricultural sector and community partners to deliver affordable local food and reduce food insecurity. 
	Deliver programs, targeted support and initiatives that cater to the diverse needs of the community and assist people facing financial hardship, education or employment barriers, including people with disabilities. 
	Support projects that increase local social and affordable housing. 

Our People		
Our community is safe, healthy and well.		
Objectives	Priorities to Achieve Objective	
Our people feel safe, respected and valued, living in a community where violence and discrimination are prevented, and not tolerated.	Deliver inclusive, accessible and culturally safe services and spaces that support participation, reduce discrimination and reflect our diverse community.	
	Enable people of all ages and backgrounds, especially those with lived experience, to lead, participate and shape local decisions.	
	Lead and support primary prevention initiatives and partnerships with agencies that promote respect, equality and safety and reduce harm in the community, including family violence.	
	Deliver inclusive programs, partnerships and spaces that promote positive community attitudes and social connection, to build trust, challenge discrimination, and support belonging and safety for all.	 
Our people of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to experience positive physical and mental wellbeing.	Improve access to inclusive sport, recreation, facilities and Council services to support the health, wellbeing and participation of people of all abilities, and encourage active healthy lifestyles in partnership with community groups and health services.	 
	Partner with community groups, health services and government to deliver and promote local wellbeing initiatives.	
	Support and advocate for accessible, inclusive local programs and services that promote mental health and resilience and are tailored to the needs of different ages, abilities, identities and experiences.	 
	Support inclusive, community-led initiatives that reduce isolation and build connection, with attention to diversity and accessibility.	
Our community and environment are well prepared for emergency events and can respond to and recover from them.	Build community knowledge, skills and leadership to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.	
	Deliver targeted actions to reduce the health, social and environmental impacts of emergencies.	
	Partner with all relevant organisations and businesses, including local Traditional Owner Groups, to strengthen emergency planning response and recovery.	
	Plan for and provide inclusive support to vulnerable groups before, during and after emergencies.	 



## Our Performance

**We are accountable, trusted and collaborative.**

Objectives	Priorities to Achieve Objective
Our community experiences customer interactions that are positive, meaningful and accessible and help to shape our organisation's priorities.	Partner with aligned external organisations, businesses and groups to deliver community outcomes.
	Collaborate effectively across Council to deliver connected, efficient, sustainable and innovative services and ways of working.
	Provide staff with practical tools, training and resources to respectfully and effectively engage externally with diverse community and partners. 
	Provide transparent information to the community that improves trust and understanding, and is easy to find, access, use and interpret.  
	Deliver streamlined service approaches and methods that make interacting and working with Council simple, inclusive, and accessible for community, businesses, and partners. 
Our organisation has a safe, healthy and fair culture that drives continuous improvement.	Embed cultural competence, safety, access and inclusion across Council operations and services through enhanced staff capability and organisation-wide practices.  
	Strengthen organisational knowledge through active sharing and continuous learning and improvement.
	Provide tools, targeted development, and training to support staff performance, safety and wellbeing.
	Seek out and use community feedback to prioritise and shape continuous improvements and inform better processes and services.
Our organisation is efficient, collaborative and makes accountable, transparent decisions that serve the best interests of the whole community.	Deliver consistent, reliable, services and operations across all areas of Council that respond to community needs.
	Modernise digital capability and enhance digital capacity to create smarter, more efficient, inclusive and accessible services and customer-focused ways of working.
	Strengthen capability to build trusted relationships and engage proactively with community groups, including local Traditional Owner Groups, in meaningful and respectful ways that reflect the diversity of people and perspectives across the Macedon Ranges, to inform key decisions. 
	Collect, analyse and use evidence and data in decision-making, service design and delivery, evaluation and reporting.
	Manage organisational risks through clear, coordinated risk management that supports consistent, transparent and accountable decision-making.

# How we will **report against the Plan**

Council will develop an annual Action Plan detailing the specific actions we will take to implement the priorities in this Plan.

Council will report on our progress in the Report of Operations which is published every six months on Council's website.

This report will include:

- progress on actions included in the Action Plan
- reporting on the indicators included in this Plan and insight into their meaning in relation to achieving our objectives.

# Glossary of Terms

Specific terms used in this Plan are defined below for reference.

Term	Definition
<b>Acknowledgement of Country</b>	<p>An Acknowledgment of Country recognises and pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the land on which they are gathering.</p> <p>An Acknowledgement of Country is made where appropriate at the opening of meetings, formal events, public forums and functions.</p> <p>It can be given by any non-Aboriginal person or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person not from the Traditional Owner Group on whose land the gathering is on.</p>
<b>Active transport</b>	<p>Active transport is defined as physical activity undertaken as a means of transport and not purely as a form of recreation. Active transport generally refers to walking and cycling for travel to and/or from a destination, but may also include other activities such as the incidental activity associated with the use of public transport.</p>
<b>Built infrastructure</b>	<p>The built infrastructure relates to any buildings and infrastructure created by people, such as homes, utilities infrastructure or sporting facilities. It contrasts with the natural environment, which encompasses all living and non-living things that exist naturally, without significant human interference.</p>
<b>Consumer Price Index</b>	<p>The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is regarded as Australia's key measure of inflation. It is an important economic indicator that measures the change in the price of a 'basket' of goods and services, which account for expenditure by households in capital cities.</p>
<b>Country Plans/ Strategic Plans</b>	<p>Whole of Country Plans or Strategic Plans are overarching, long-term visions, developed by Traditional Owner Groups, that set out clear goals and priorities, principles of engagement and measures of success in caring for Country.</p>
<b>Deliberative engagement</b>	<p>Deliberative engagement in this Council context means bringing together a diverse sample group representative of the broader community (varying ages, genders, experience etc.), who committed their time to contribute their views and ideas to help shape a number of Council's key guiding documents, through a number of tailored sessions facilitated by an independent consultant.</p> <p>Deliberative engagement is elaborated on in Council's Community Engagement Policy, but it is an example of a more collaborative ('Collaborate') approach to consultation on the internationally recognised IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, whereby Council commits to working more closely with the representative group on outcomes and incorporating advice and recommendations into the decisions made.</p> <p>This contrasts against many of Council's other community consultations, which are often closer to a 'Consult' approach whereby Council still actively seeks contributions and ideas from the community, but the negotiables may be less or the commitment to change aspects is reduced on proposals that are generally more fully formed through expert advice and analysis.</p>

Term	Definition
<b>Developer contributions</b>	<p>Development contributions are payments or in-kind works, facilities or services provided by developers towards the supply of infrastructure required to meet the future needs of the community.</p>
<b>Distinctive Areas and Landscapes provisions of the <i>Planning Environment Act 1987</i></b>	<p>In 2018, the Victorian Government passed legislation to recognise and safeguard the state’s distinctive areas and landscapes and to achieve better coordinated decision-making by government agencies, local councils and other key parties.</p> <p><i>The Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Act 2018</i>, enables the government to declare a distinctive area and landscape subject to meeting strict criteria.</p> <p>On 16 August 2018, the Macedon Ranges became the first area to be declared under the <i>Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Act 2018</i>.</p>
<b>Ecotourism</b>	<p>Ecotourism Australia defines ecotourism as: “Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation”.</p> <p>It aims to preserve the integrity of the destination and its focus is on conserving the local environment and historical heritage while supporting the culture and encouraging people to look after the natural resources that attract them to the region.</p>
<b>First Nations Peoples</b>	<p>The term First Nations Peoples refers to people who have identified themselves or have been identified by a representative (for example, their parent or guardian), as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.</p>
<b>Greenhouse effect</b>  <b>Greenhouse gas emissions</b>	<p>The greenhouse effect is a natural process that warms the Earth’s surface. When the Sun’s energy reaches the Earth’s atmosphere, some of it is reflected back to space and some is absorbed and re-radiated by greenhouse gases.</p> <p>Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone and some artificial chemicals such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).</p> <p>While emissions can result from natural causes, they are primarily the result of human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels for energy and transportation.</p> <p>The absorbed energy warms the atmosphere and the surface of the Earth. This process maintains the Earth’s temperature at around 33°C warmer than it would otherwise be, allowing life on Earth to exist.</p>

Term	Definition
<b>Indicators</b>	Indicators are used in this document to represent the “strategic indicators for monitoring the achievements of the objectives” described in the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
<b>Macedon Ranges community</b>	<p>The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> defines the municipal community (who we would refer to as the Macedon Ranges community) as inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people who live in the municipal district of the Council; and</li> <li>• people and bodies who are ratepayers of the Council; and</li> <li>• Traditional Owners of land in the municipal district of the Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	Objectives are used in this document to represent the “strategic objectives for achieving the strategic direction” described in the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
<b>Plan for Victoria</b>	Plan for Victoria is a Victorian Government-led plan which sets the state-wide vision for how Victoria will grow over time. The plan will guide the actions of all Victorian Government departments and councils including housing targets, accessible jobs and services, and sustainable environments.
<b>Priorities</b>	Priorities are used in this document to represent the “strategies for achieving the objectives for a period of at least the next 4 financial years” described in the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
<b>Rate Cap</b>	<p>Before 31 December each year, the Minister for Local Government sets the local council rate cap for the next financial year. The rate cap limits the maximum amount a council can increase general rates and municipal charges. The minister can set a cap that applies to all councils, a group of councils or a single council.</p> <p>The Essential Services Commission administers council rate caps by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing the minister with advice on setting the rate cap for council rates</li> <li>• assessing, then accepting or rejecting higher cap applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Report of Operations</b>	<p>This Council report is generated to enable senior management, Councillors and the community greater transparency and a more comprehensive view of the organisation and its key activities.</p> <p>Key topic areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Performance</li> <li>• Council Plan Action progress</li> <li>• Capital Works progress</li> <li>• Governance and Councillor reporting</li> <li>• People and Wellbeing</li> <li>• Insurance and Risk</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
<b>Stakeholder</b>	As referenced in this document Stakeholder means groups, organisations or businesses with a shared interest in specific activities of Council.
<b>Statement of Planning Policy</b>	<p>A Statement of Planning Policy will include a long-term vision of at least 50 years, policy objectives and strategies to achieve the vision, and a strategic framework plan for guiding the future use and development of land in the declared areas.</p> <p>The Statement of Planning Policy for the Macedon Ranges provides a framework to ensure the outstanding and valuable landscapes, layers of settlement history, impressive landforms, diverse natural environment, catchments and biodiversity of our shire are protected, conserved and enhanced and continue to be of special significance to the people of Victoria.</p>
<b>Themes</b>	Themes are used in this document to represent the “strategic directions of the Council” described in the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
<b>Traditional Owner Groups</b>	Traditional Owner Group means a group recognised as such under the <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i> .

### **Kyneton Administration Centre**

129 Mollison Street, Kyneton  
Hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm.

### **Gisborne Administration Centre**

40 Robertson Street, Gisborne  
Hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm

### **Romsey Hub**

96–100 Main St, Romsey  
Hours: Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm

### **Woodend Community Centre**

Corner Forest and High streets, Woodend  
Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 12pm to 5pm

## Contact Us

(03) 5422 0333 | [mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au](mailto:mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au) | [mrsc.vic.gov.au](http://mrsc.vic.gov.au)

Find us on:    

If you need help to speak or hear, you can contact us through the **National Relay Service**:

- **TTY** users call 133 677 then ask for (03) 5422 0333
- **Speak and Listen** (speech-to-speech relay) users call 1300 555 727 then ask for (03) 5422 0333
- **Internet relay users** connect to the National Relay Service and then ask for (03) 5422 0333

If you need help with English, please call **TIS National** on 131 450 and ask them to call Macedon Ranges Shire Council on 5422 0333.



**Macedon  
Ranges**  
Shire Council