

Draft Council Plan

2021 - 2025



Acknowledgements and Statements

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their ongoing connection to the land and waters that make up Baw Baw Shire. We pay our respects to their Elders; past, present and emerging.

We thank the Traditional Custodians for caring for Country and continuing the customs that maintain the longest practised culture in the world.

Baw Baw Shire Council's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Baw Baw Shire Council is committed to providing and actively promoting a safe environment for children. Council has zero tolerance towards child abuse, and is committed to protecting the physical, emotional, cultural and social wellbeing of all children. Council has policies and systems to protect children, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously. Council acknowledges that children's safety is a whole of community responsibility and is everyone's business.

Preventing Violence Against Women

Council promotes the prevention of violence against women, through leading gender equity and building respectful and safe relationships and breaking down gender stereotypes.

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Mayor's Welcome

Baw Baw Shire is one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities. Our population is growing by 3% a year, and it is estimated that there will be more than 84,000 people in Baw Baw by 2041.

With that level of growth, and the challenges it poses, it is crucial that we engage with our residents and businesses to stay in step with the changing priorities, concerns, and aspirations of our evolving community.

In my welcome to last year's Council Plan review, I noted that the key theme for the the upcoming program was collaboration with the community. As I sit down to write the welcome message for a brand-new Council Plan, it gives me great satisfaction to report that this theme has been faithfully carried through.

Over the past year, Council has embarked on one of the most significant and thorough deliberative engagement processes in Baw Baw Shire's history to create a new long-term Community Vision.

This community-led process began with a Shire-wide survey, to which more than 300 responses were received. It progressed to detailed focus group consultations involving 35 participating community members over seven sessions throughout March 2021. Finally, a 42-member independent panel of community members was convened for a series of facilitated deliberative sessions to consider all of the feedback and commentary received.

The result of that process was a Community Vision that identifies the authentic priorities and aspirations of our residents.

This Council Plan is a direct response to the Community Vision.

It adopts the three community-identified pillars from the Vision - a sustainable shire, a healthy community, a thriving community - as the overarching objectives to which all Council activities will be assessed and aligned.

From financial management, to infrastructure delivery and maintenance, to community advocacy priorities, this Council Plan identifies the key challenges and opportunities we'll meet over the years to come and lays out our strategies for rising to them in a way that best serves our community's vision for the future.

I commend all members of our team and the wider community that have contributed to the development of this Plan.

I have great optimism for the years ahead and look forward with confidence to delivering this Council Plan on behalf of – and for the betterment of – our community.

Cr Danny Goss Mayor of Baw Baw Shire

Baw Baw Shire Council



Cr Keith Cook (West Ward)



Cr Joe Gauci (Central Ward)



Cr Danny Goss (Central Ward)



Cr Tricia Jones (West Ward)



Cr Peter Kostos (East Ward)



Cr Michael Leaney (East Ward)



Cr Annemarie McCabe (West Ward)



Cr Jazmin Tauru (Central Ward)



Cr Darren Wallace (East Ward)

The Council are responsible for making decisions about local issues and making strategic decisions that affect the long-term sustainability of the Shire. The Council, as stewards of community resources, have a responsibility to manage the Council's assets, provide a wide range of services and facilities, and ensure finances are allocated in the best interests of the whole community.

The Council are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the municipality as set out in the Council Plan and the Annual Budget.

Council's Mission and Values

Mission

Council's mission is to be leaders in delivering quality, innovative and community focused services today that make a difference for tomorrow.

Council's values

In implementing this Plan, Council is:

Optimistic about our organisation's ability to deliver quality services and projects to benefit the community.

Pragmatic by resolving issues and making the best possible use of our time, effort and resources.

Respectful of our organisation and of the diverse views and perspectives of our community.

Supportive by valuing our team members, empowering them to be successful in their roles and investing in their growth and development.

Authentic by undertaking our work in an open, honest and transparent manner.



Our Community and Region

Baw Baw Shire is one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities. Located 100 kilometres to the east of the Melbourne CBD, the Shire offers a mix of rural and urban living with affordable housing, scenic views and relaxed lifestyle making it an attractive option for new residents and leading to unprecedented growth.

Baw Baw Shire covers approximately 4,027 square kilometres of high-quality farmland, national parks and residential areas. The northern half of the Shire is heavily forested and lies in the Great Dividing Range, while the south is bound by the Strzelecki Ranges. The Shire's largest towns are located along the rail and road corridor which provide direct and easy access into the suburbs of Melbourne.

The shire population is estimated to be approximately 54,800 (forecast.id.com.au), most of whom live in the towns along the rail and road corridor of Warragul, Drouin, Longwarry, Yarragon and Trafalgar. There is a high commuter workforce and our community relies heavily on regional rail and road networks to travel to and from work, and for day to day community activities and access to services outside of the municipality. Major industries in the Shire are manufacturing, construction and agriculture, with the largest employers being healthcare, agriculture and education.





THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED **55,000** PEOPLE CURRENTLY CALLING BAW BAW HOME. WE ARE GROWING BY **3%** EACH YEAR. BY 2041 IT IS ESTIMATED THERE WILL BE MORE THAN **84,000** PEOPLE LIVING IN BAW BAW. THE MAJORITY OF THOSE MOVING TO THE SHIRE ARE COMING FROM ELSEWHERE IN VICTORIA.



IN 2016, **23%** OF BAW BAW'S RESIDENTS ARE YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 17 AND BELOW, AND APPROXIMATELY **18%** ARE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 25 AND 34 YEARS OLD. **27%** ARE AGED 60 AND OLDER.



BAW BAW HAS OVER **5,600** LOCAL BUSINESSES, GENERATING A GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT OF **\$2.34 BILLION**.



MAJOR INDUSTRIES INCLUDE MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND AGRICULTURE, REPRESENTING **45%** OF THE SHIRE'S OVERALL ECONOMIC OUTPUT.



THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN BAW BAW IS **4.1%.** THE LARGEST EMPLOYERS BEING HEALTHCARE, AGRICULTURE AND EDUCATION.

BAW BAW HAS A DIVERSE COMMUNITY. **11%** OF BAW BAW RESIDENTS ARE BORN OVERSEAS, AND **1%** ARE FROM THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY.

The Critical Challenges of the Next Decade

Baw Baw Shire is at a critical point in its development, as it continues to be one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities. This is the key theme for the Shire, the Council and this Plan: how can we support community quality of life as our community grows.

Over this next decade and beyond, there are a number of themes which are anticipated to influence Council planning and strategy:

- Council's ability to raise funds for services and infrastructure to meet the needs of the community and keep up with our growth.
- Availability of the full range of services and infrastructure required to support the community. This includes not only Council services but also services and utilities like communications, schools and health.
- The health and wellbeing of the community, particularly mental health as the community responds and recovers from COVID-19.
- Similarly, the changing community demographic as a result of the pandemic, which is driving an influx of new residents to Baw Baw and other rural areas.
- Community preparedness for significant disruption and transition, with changing technology, social and workplace norms, changes in industries and climate.
- Availability and access to education and skills development for all residents to enable them to stay in the local community.
- Economic development of the shire to support the community, including business and local employment.
- Community expectations and requirements with regards to child safety, violence against women, and gender equity.

This requires Council to act as **provider**, **advocate**, **facilitator**, **partner and/or community leader** as appropriate. This plan seeks to identify where Council plays a role and the influence it hopes to make.

Our growth, and the above influences, play out differently across the shire, creating both tensions and opportunities. As a community, we must consider: how to balance the significant growth being experienced with our existing character, farm land and environmental attributes? What does equity look like between our urban and rural communities? This Plan identifies some of the ways in which Council seeks to navigate these issues over the next four years.



Our Community Vision for the Future

Developing a vision for our future helps us to prioritise our actions of today and of tomorrow.

Baw Baw's first Community Vision, BawBaw 2050 was developed in 2011. A new Community Vision was developed in 2021, informed by over 360 members of our community and developed through a deliberation process with a panel of over 40 community representatives. Together, they established community aspirations for the future of Baw Baw Shire for the next 20 years and beyond.

Council's objectives for the next four years align with the themes of the Community Vision and identify the role that Council can play in working towards the Community Vision for the future.

The Community Vision informs and guides the planning and priorities of Baw Baw Shire Council. This Council Plan 2021 – 2025 is the plan for how council will respond to the Community Vision over the next four years.

Our Strategy 2021 - 2025

The Council Plan represents a four-year road map for the Council and describes the key services and priorities that Council will focus on.

In developing the Council Plan, Council has considered the aspirations of the community as set out in the new Community Vision, the key goals the Council wants to achieve over the four years 2021 – 2025, the critical challenges we face and how we need to respond in order to succeed.

Community vision:

Sustainable.

Sustainable towns and villages that continue to benefit from our beautiful rural and natural environment

Community Goals:

- Sustainable built environments that protect nature and meet the needs of a growing community.
- 2. Protected, sustainable and productive natural environments

Healthy.

Healthy and well people, living in safe, connected communities and healthy environments.

- 3. Healthy and well people and communities.
- Connected and inclusive communities, creating a strong sense of safety and belonging.
- 5. Healthy environments, resilient communities:

Thriving.

Thriving, diverse and resilient communities.

- A strong economy, creating and sustaining local jobs.
- 7. Education, tourism and cultural offerings that help our region to flourish.
- 8. Future ready infrastructure and transport options that help our community better access services, work and education throughout Baw Baw Shire.

Council Plan 2021 - 2025:

Readying the Shire for the future, and support community quality of life as we continue to grow.

Strategic objectives:								
A Sustainable Shire.		A Healthy Community.			ΑΤ	A Thriving Community.		
Focus areas for the next four years:								
Planning for growth.	Protecting natural environment and agricultural land.			Environments for health.			Community arts and events.	
Community infrastructure, services.	Community health, safety, and wellbeing.			Climate change, disruption, and transition.			Connectivity and local transport networks.	
Advocacy.		rsity, inclusion, reconciliation.		A strong econor				

The strategic objectives

The strategic objectives to guide the Council over the next four years are based on the Community Vision.

1. A Sustainable Shire

This objective describes how Council will respond to the Community Vision: Sustainable towns and villages that continue to benefit from our beautiful rural and natural environment.

Council's role in shire sustainability:

- Strategic and statutory planning for our future growth and development.
- Emergency preparedness, relief, and recovery.
- Management of Council open spaces and natural resources.
- Waste management and resource recovery.
- Local transport and roads planning, management, and maintenance.
- Delivery of community services and infrastructure, and advocacy to meet broader community needs.

2. A Healthy Community

This objective describes how Council will respond to the Community Vision: Healthy people, living in connected communities and healthy environments.

Council's role in community health and wellbeing:

- Supporting young children and families, youth, and aged residents.
- Delivery of regulatory, community and public health and safety services.
- Continued investment in sports facilities, parks, and footpaths infrastructure.
- Sport and recreation services.
- Parks and reserves management.
- Community planning and development.
- Advocacy on behalf of community health and wellbeing related needs.
- Community arts and leisure.

3. A Thriving Community

This objective describes how Council will respond to the Community Vision: Thriving, diverse and resilient communities.

Council's role in thriving community:

- Support for local and small business, tourism, and event attraction.
- Delivery of community arts services, including the West Gippsland Arts Centre
- Library services (via the West Gippsland Library Corporation).
- Advocacy for local transport infrastructure and services, economic development, education (including Early Years) services





The key focus areas

The strategies below have been developed as a coherent set of strategies in response to the strategic direction of the Council and the strategic objectives for the four years 2021 – 2025.

The strategies as a whole recognise the integrated and related nature of the challenges we face and what we are trying to achieve.

Seeing them together also helps us understand the interrelated nature of the strategies in achieving our goals, with the opportunity to operate as much as possible at the intersection of our objectives to be **A Sustainable Shire. A Healthy Community. A Thriving Community**.

Over the next four years, we will specifically focus on:

- 1. Planning for a sustainable, healthy and thriving Baw Baw Shire. This strategy relates to, and implements, all of the goals of the Community Vision.
- 2. Providing community infrastructure, services and facilities which support sustainable communities and are responsive to changing needs.

This strategy relates to the Community Vision goal: 1. Sustainable built environments that protect nature and meet the needs of a growing community.

3. Advocating for strategic priorities and those services and facilities needed by the community.

This strategy is a key way in which Council will deliver on the Community Vision, and recognises that a number of different authorities will be responsible for meeting our community needs.

4. Sustainably protecting and managing the natural environment, and agricultural land. This strategy relates to the Community Vision goal 2. Protected, sustainable and productive natural environments.



- 5. Supporting community health, safety, and wellbeing, including mental health. This strategy relates to the Community Vision goal 3. Healthy and well people and communities.
- 6. Supporting community connectivity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation. This strategy relates to the Community Vision goal 4. Connected and inclusive communities, creating a strong sense of safety and belonging.
- 7. Creating environments that support a diversity of sports and recreation opportunities and walkable communities across the shire.

This strategy relates to the Community Vision goal 5. Healthy environments, resilient communities.

8. Responding to and readying for climate change, emergency events, disruption, and transition.

This relates to the Community Vision goal 5. Healthy environments, resilient communities.

9. Enabling a strong local economy, through support for business and innovation, and local access to skills development and jobs.

This strategy relates to the Community Vision goals:

- 6. A strong economy, creating and sustaining local jobs.
- 7. Education, tourism and cultural offerings that help our region to flourish.

10. Supporting community arts and events to create vibrancy and attract people to live work and play in Baw Baw.

This strategy relates to the Community Vision goal 7. Education, tourism and cultural offerings that help our region to flourish.

11. Improving local transport networks and advocating for improvements for roads and public transport for residents across the shire.

This strategy relates to the Community Vision goal 8. Future ready infrastructure and transport options that help our community better access services, work and education throughout Baw Baw Shire.



How We Will Deliver the Council Plan

As an organisation we will implement the 10 key focus areas of the Council Plan by ensuring alignment between our services with the overall strategic direction and objectives of healthy, thriving, and sustainable.

As an organisation we will deliver the Council Plan by:

- Responsibly managing Council finances and resources to enable delivery of a range of community focused services.
- Planning, delivering, and maintaining community infrastructure via the annual Capital Works program.
- Advocating on behalf of community needs for strategic priorities, services, and facilities.

Our principles for delivering the plan are to:

- Be community and customer service focussed and engage with the community on local decision making.
- Plan for the long term but be responsive and flexible in response to changing needs and circumstances.
- Consider the needs of residents in communities right across the shire in planning and delivery of services and infrastructure.
- Seek to increase our sustainability with a focus on our local community and the circular economy.

Initiatives to deliver the Council Plan 2021/22

The following initiatives are included in the Annual Budget 2021/22 which was adopted by Council in June 2021.

Council will develop and fund the Council Plan for the following three years through future business planning, Annual Budget, Long Term Financial Plan and Long Term Infrastructure Plan process.

Lead strategy alignment	Operational initiative			
Sustainable.	 Review the Environmental Sustainability Policy to guide the development of an updated Environmental Sustainability Strategy Prepare for the introduction of food organics and green organics (FOGO) collection into Council's kerbside waste services. Additional resourcing within the Open Space and Tree Maintenance teams. Implement and review the Settlement Strategy, Precinct Structure Plans, and development contributions plans. 			

Lead strategy alignment	Operational initiative
Healthy.	 Implement the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan annual action plan. Transition and exit from aged and disability direct care services as per service review and Council decision. This action is in response to the Aged Care sector reforms. Complete construction of the Trafalgar Recreation Reserve Multi Use Pavilion Commence the upgrade and construction of two additional basketball courts at the Warragul Leisure Centre (subject to grant funding). Commence the construction of a Multi-Use Pavilion at Bellbird Park, Drouin (subject to a successful grant application). Finalise the Sporting Reserve Masterplans for future sporting reserves as outlined in the Warragul and Drouin Precinct Structure Plans. Plan and advocate for funding to enable the services and functions of a Drouin Community Hub to be integrated with the Bellbird Park Multi Use Pavilion and the existing Drouin Senior Citizens Centre Hall Continue implementation of the small town and rural communities Placemaking Program. Implement and deliver Council's Accelerated Footpath Program.
Thriving.	 Work with key stakeholders and partners to support the Victorian Government's commitment to implement three-year-old kindergarten for all children. Implement Council's Economic Development Strategy that is based on four pillars: business engagement, business attraction, advocacy, and tourism. Adopt and implement phase one of the Recreational Vehicle Strategy. Road Transport Advocacy Priorities Economic Analysis 2020/21. Finalise the proposal for the Rokeby to Noojee trail project and seek external funding support Develop designs for the Logan Park Cycling Centre of Excellence project. Progress stage one of the Baw Baw Civic Precinct Masterplan to preliminary design and planning phase Continue implementation of the long-term Drouin Township Plan.

Lead strategy alignment	Operational initiative
Council supporting a sustainable, healthy, and thriving shire	 Additional initiatives to enable Council to support a Healthy, Thriving and Sustainable community and Shire: 22. Continue to advocate for Baw Baw Shire and its community through ongoing engagement with Government on priority issues and projects. 23. Continue Council's service planning program to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Council services. 24. Developing a Long Term Service Plan for council services. 25. Implement Council's Community Engagement Policy by working with the community to review the long-term Community Vision for Baw Baw Shire. 26. Respond to the Community Vision through implementation of the 2021-25 Council Plan and Long Term Financial Plan 2021-31.

Council Advocacy

A number of the new initiatives identified above are reliant on advocacy, and support from other stakeholders.

Baw Baw Shire is one of the fastest growing municipalities in the State. A key responsibility for the Council, and one of the key strategies in this Council Plan is for Council to continue to advocate and seek partnerships with other levels of government, the private sector and the not-for-profit sector, on behalf of broader community needs. This includes services such as health, education, communications, public transport, and major roads and those specific initiatives nominated in the table above.



Baw Baw's Planning and Reporting Framework

Baw Baw Shire's Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework is established under the *Local Government Act 2020*, which is designed to ensure that community aspirations are translated into operational objectives

The Council Plan is a key part of Council's Framework, which establishes an integrated approach to our corporate planning, and translates the outcomes being sought by the community as captured in the Community Vision into operational actions via the Council Plan.

The Plan is resourced through the resource plans including Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Plan, Long Term Infrastructure Plan, Workforce Plan, and the Annual Budget.

A new inclusion to the Framework will be the development of a Service Plan, which will

Community Vision and aspirations (10 year +) Baw Baw Shire Other strategies Council Plan and plans' (4 years) 10 year 4 year resource plans resource plans Long Term Service Plans Infrastructure Plan Asset Plan Workforce Plan • Rates and Revenue Long Term Financial Plan Plan Budget

provide the long term strategic planning for council services over the next 10 years +.

Strategies and plans

There are a number of plans and strategies which help Council achieve and deliver on the commitments made in the Council Plan. This includes the legislated strategies and plans in the framework above and informing plans which have been developed by Council on an aspect of its service or infrastructure delivery.

Legislated strategies and plans

Annual Budget Asset Plan Disability Plan Long Term Financial Plan Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan Municipal Strategic Statement Procurement Policy Rating and Revenue Strategy Road Management Plan Workforce Plan

Key Informing strategies and plans

Advocacy Strategy Arts Strategy Asset Policy and Strategy Community Engagement Policy Economic Development Strategy Environmental Sustainability Policy Long Term Infrastructure Plan Municipal Early Years Plan Settlement Management Plan Sustainability Strategy Waste Management Plan

Risk Management

Risk management is an integral part of business planning and an essential element of sound corporate governance. Ultimately, effective risk management will help to ensure that the Council minimises the impact of the risks it faces and improving Council's ability to deliver on the Community Vision and this Council Plan.

As at June 2021, Council had 113 risks within its risk profile, made up of 21 strategic and 92 operational risks registered. The strategic risks are owned and reported on to the Executive Leadership Team and Risk and Audit Committee. Operational risks are owned, treated, and reported by appropriate Managers.

Gender Impact Assessment

The Council Plan 2021 – 2025 has been prepared and will be implemented giving consideration to gender equality and the effects of this Plan and its implementation on people of different genders in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Monitoring and Reporting our Performance

Council regularly reviews and reports its performance in quarterly reports, Annual Report and annual audited Performance Statements. Council's performance against the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework is published annually on the State Government website <u>www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au</u>.

Performance indicator framework

Key performance indicators have been developed so Council can track performance against the strategic objectives. In addition, Council also monitors its performance against the legislated Local Government Performance Reporting Framework and conducts an annual Community Satisfaction Survey.

	These indicators measure progress towards achieving the three strategic objectives.
Municipal strategic	These indicators track results at a municipality level and reflect the work by Council, community, and other stakeholders.
indicators	Implementing plans are identified for each of the strategic objectives, as they will be critical in helping to identify relevant indicators and action to achieve the Council Plan. Where gaps are identified, an action for implementing the Council Plan will be to review and identify appropriate indicators.
Council indicators	These indicators track Council specific inputs, outputs and outcomes required to meet the municipal strategic indicators and the overall strategic objectives.

Draft Council Plan indicators

A Sustainable	A Healthy	A Thriving Community.		
Shire.	Community.			

Municipal strategic indicators

- Community mental health and wellbeing*.
- Community activity levels for health*.
- Residential development and PSP land supply*.
- Change in number of businesses.
- Gross Regional Product.
- Visitor spend (Destination Action Plan areas).
- Number of jobs/ employment*.
- Number of visitors.
- Major event spend*.
- Volume of waste and diversion of waste from landfill.

Community satisfaction

- Appearance public areas*.
- Arts centres and libraries*.
- Business and community development and tourism*.
- Emergency and Disaster management*.
- Environmental sustainability*.
- Recreation facilities*.
- Sealed local roads.
- Waste management*.

Statutory Community Satisfaction indicators:

- Advocacy.
- Community consultation.
- Council decisions.
- Customer service.
- Overall performance.
- Overall direction.
- Value for money.

Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

Service Performance indicators:

- Animal management.
- Aquatic facilities.
- Food safety.
- Governance.
- Maternal and Child Health.
- Libraries.
- Roads.
- Statutory Planning.
- Waste Collection.

Financial indicators

- Efficiency.
- Liquidity.
- Obligations.
- Operating position.
- Stability.
- Sustainable capacity.

Selected service indicators

- Kindergarten places*.
- Number of building permits issued.
- Council CO² emissions.
- Council potable water consumption.
- Number of trees planted*.
- Area of sealed local roads resealed.
- Area of sealed local roads reconstructed.
- Area of unsealed local roads resheeted.

- Aquatics participation.
- Change in area of public open space*.
- Change in number of recreation reserves*.
- Length of paths and trails*.
- Length of paths and trails constructed.
- Number of users on designated pathways and trails
- Council program volunteers.
- Arts Centre attendance.
- Number of events*.
- Business concierge inquiries received*.
- Council success with advocacy and grant applications.
- Community engagement opportunities and submissions received.
- Customer requests resolved.
- Customer interactions first point of contact.
- Social media reach.
- Adopted capital works program completion (%).
- Asset renewal expenses/ depreciation.

Indicators marked with an asterisk (*) are new proposed measures for this Council Plan.

