



Strategy paper.

**BAW BAW
SHIRE COUNCIL.**

**YOUTH STRATEGY
2024-2028.**

**FUTURE
IN FOCUS.**

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

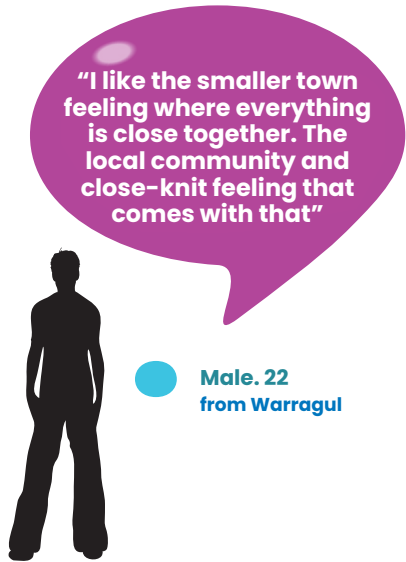
Baw Baw Shire Council is committed to providing and actively promoting a safe environment for children. Council has zero tolerance towards child abuse, and is committed to protecting the physical, emotional, cultural, and social wellbeing of all children. Council has policies and systems to protect children, 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.

Table of Contents.

- Acknowledgements 3
- Table of Contents 4
- Mayor’s Message 5
- Legislative and Strategic Policy Framework..... 6
- The Youth Strategy 7
- Young People in Baw Baw..... 8
- Summary of the Youth survey results 9
- Priority Area: Voice and Leadership..... 10**
- Priority Area: Support and Services 11**
- Priority Area: Safe 12**
- Priority Area: Learning and Growing..... 13**
- Priority Area: Health and Wellbeing..... 14**



● Male. 22
from Warragul

Message from the Mayor.

On behalf of Baw Baw Shire, I am proud to present Council's new Youth Strategy.

Young people aged 12-25 years old make up approximately 15% of our community, my children included! However, research shows that younger people can experience greater health inequities than other sections of our population and I have seen this firsthand.

Addressing these inequities is a priority identified in our existing Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) 2021-2025.

As a Council, we are committed to paving the way for a brighter, healthier and more inclusive future for our young people, and this strategy is testament to that commitment.

Set to be implemented over the next five years (2024-2028), the strategy outlines the key initiatives we will undertake to promote the health and wellbeing of our young residents.

It takes a holistic approach, identifying five priority areas that align with the MPHWP.

We have heard a consistent message from our youth: they wish to be heard, understood, and empowered. They envision a community where they can lead, make informed decisions, access necessary resources and, above all, feel secure.

With the rollout of this Youth Strategy, we are laying down the foundation to make that vision a reality. We are setting the stage for our younger community members to grow as connected, resilient individuals. More than ever, we are committed to fostering an environment where our youth can thrive, lead, and inspire.

I am excited about this journey we are embarking upon and am confident that together, we can create a legacy of positive change that will benefit generations to come.

Sincerely,

Cr Annemarie McCabe
Mayor of Baw Baw Shire



Legislative and Strategic Policy Framework.

Victorian Legislation and Statutory Plans

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Victorian Public Health & Wellbeing Act 2023-2027

Climate Change Act 2017

Gender Equality Act 2020

Local Government Act 2020

Baw Baw Shire Statutory Plans

Baw Baw Shire Community Vision



Council Plan 2021 - 2025



Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025



Municipal Strategic Statement



Baw Baw Shire Non Statutory Plans and Policies

Council's Non Statutory Plans

Arts, Culture and Events Strategy 2017-2021

Child Safety Policy

Community Financial Assistance Program

Community Hubs Action Plan 2019-2024

Environment Sustainability Strategy 2018-2023

Municipal Early Years Plan 2019-2023

Recreation Strategy 2017-2027

Health Promotion Plans

Gippsland Regional Public Health Unit

West Gippsland Healthcare Group



The Youth Strategy.

This strategy outlines Council's commitment and key initiatives to promote and support the health and wellbeing of young people (aged 12-25 years) in Baw Baw Shire. It will be implemented over a five-year period between 2024 and 2028. The Youth Strategy consists of five priority areas aligned with the Baw Baw Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 objectives.

Each priority area in the strategy includes an overall goal and describes the strategies to achieve this. The strategies are grouped by Council's role – to Provide, Partner or Promote. 'Provide' refers to activities that Council will take the lead on to plan, develop and deliver to meet the needs of young people. 'Partner' refers to activities where Council will work with and support stakeholders to deliver services to ensure a coordinated approach. 'Promote' refers to activities that Council will advocate for to the applicable body.

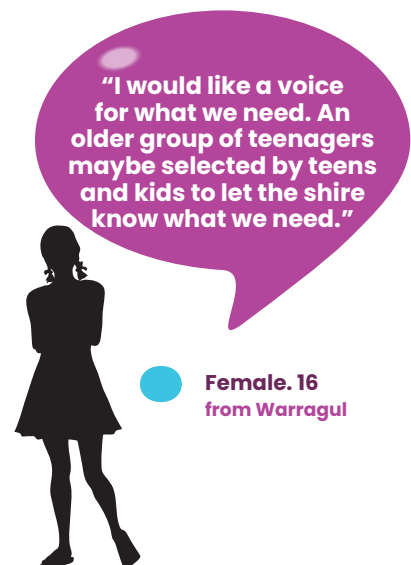
Review

During the strategy a minor review will be completed halfway and a full review upon completion. Both reviews will focus on achievement towards the goals and report on progress towards achieving strategic actions.

Thanks.

The survey, used to gather information that shaped this strategy, was co-designed with Baw Baw Shire's 2023 Youth Voices group. Baw Baw Shire would like to acknowledge the work the group has put into designing and promoting the survey and say thank you for your efforts.

We would also like to thank all the younger people who contributed to the strategy by sharing their thoughts and ideas in the survey.

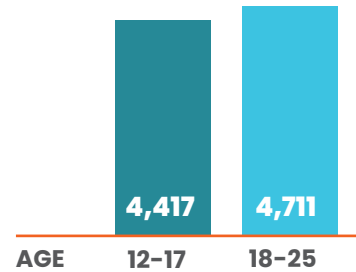


Young People in Baw Baw.

Youth Age

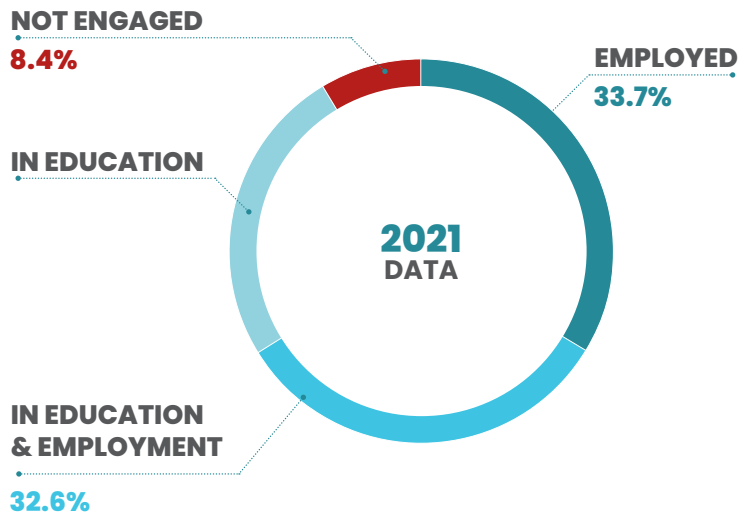


People aged **12–25** years represent **15.84%** of our community. (compared with **14.47%** in Gippsland)
177 identify as Indigenous.

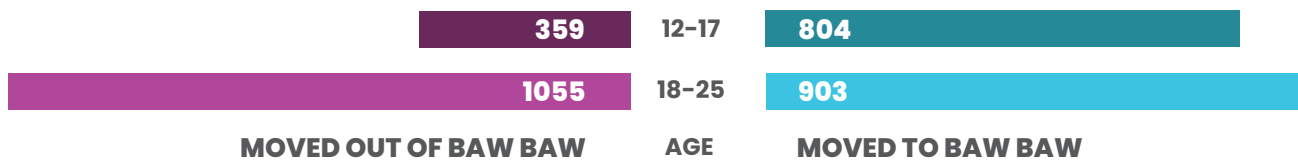


Youth Engagement

The number of young people aged 15–24 years not engaged in study or work has increased from 5.8% to 8.14% since 2016 with males slightly less engaged than females.



Between 2016–2021



Around **4%** of young people need some form of assistance at home due to disability or health.



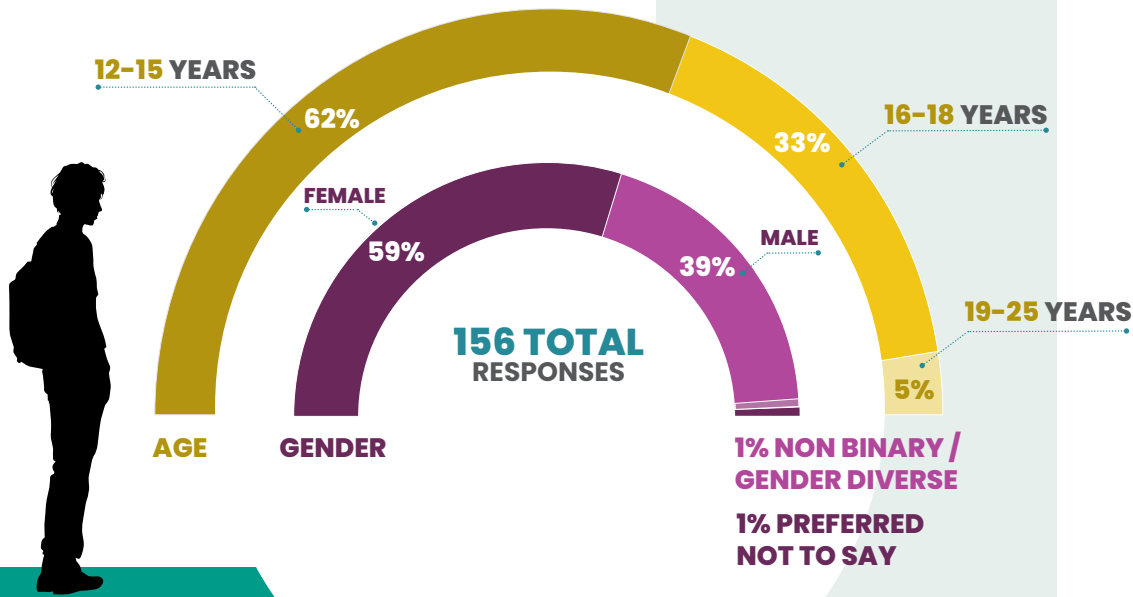
Young people report the **highest** levels of loneliness.



Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016 & 2021, Victorian Women's Health Atlas 2019, State of the Nation Report 2023

What you told us:

Summary of the Youth survey results



What do younger people want to achieve in the next 12 months?

- Achieve at school
- Find employment
- Be successful
- Engage with sport

8% IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A DISABILITY

6% IDENTIFIED AS ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

and achieve in the next 5 years?

- A job in a career they like
- Achieve personal goals, for example, move out of home, excel at sport, travel, buy a car
- Further study

Some places that are most important to younger people are:

- Shopping & Dining areas
- Natural spaces and bushland

- Parks & outdoor spaces
- Public transport

Around half of younger people know what services are available in our area and the other half are unsure.

Towns Represented



Warragul, Drouin, Longwarry, Bunyip, Trafalgar, Yarragon, Poowong, Neerim South, Neerim, Ripplebrook, Tynong, Moe, Darnum, Lillico, Newborough, Pakenham, Cloverlea.

What changes do young people want to see?

- Improve open space
- Better opportunities to connect
- Improve mental health
- Have a voice
- Improve community safety



Priority Area: Voice and Leadership

Goal: For younger people to become leaders in their community and be involved in decision making processes.

STRATEGIES

PROVIDE	PARTNER	PROMOTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage practices within Council that support the inclusion and engagement of younger people in strategy development. Continue to develop the Youth Voices group with structures to support planning, recruitment and involvement from teams across Council. Ensure young voices are included in the West Gippsland Arts Centre Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase opportunities for younger people to have a voice, both within government and their community. Partner with schools and education providers to promote leadership opportunities available for younger people to encourage participation and referral. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the needs and voices of younger people in advocacy priorities. Promote and advocate for a wide range of volunteering opportunities that engage younger people to assist them to be actively involved in our community.



“Better involvement of the younger community on changes that will affect our entire lives, living in Baw Baw”



**Male. 16
from Drouin**

Priority Area: Support and Services

Support younger people to understand and access services in our area and be considered in future needs.

STRATEGIES

PROVIDE	PARTNER	PROMOTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to include the needs of younger people in the planning for future assets.• Proactively engage a diverse range of younger people and their families in the development and implementation of Council's open spaces. Incorporate the needs, priorities and aspirations of younger people in open space master plans, upgrade programs and strategic documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play an active role in contributing to sector networking, professional development, advocacy and leadership through relevant networks.• Proactively engage a diverse range of younger people and their families in the development and implementation of Council's open spaces.• Incorporate the needs, priorities and aspirations of younger people in open space master plans, upgrade programs and strategic documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate where gaps are identified in service provision and community support.

Priority Area: Safe

Goal: Increase community safety and create inclusiveness to improve mental health.

STRATEGIES

PROVIDE	PARTNER	PROMOTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to include younger people in community awareness days/days of significance that Council supports. • Conduct walkability assessments to identify opportunities to enhance walking and bike riding routes within our open spaces. • Aim to increase safety and connection to important places for younger people such as education centres, employment and recreation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to strengthen the Live4Life partnership program, build community awareness and engagement. • Work with partners to improve community safety on the areas that younger people have identified as a concern. • Aim to support genuine inclusive practices throughout the strategy term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for spaces that are inclusive and welcoming for younger people. • Encourage clubs and community groups to support inclusivity and practices that reduce violence and bullying.

"...just a safer environment and a bigger sense of community."



Female. 15 from Drouin

Priority Area: Learning and Growing

Younger people are supported to learn, grow and achieve in their preferred field.

STRATEGIES

PROVIDE	PARTNER	PROMOTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate a Council led Graduate and Traineeship program.• Continue to develop relationships with Universities, TAFE and higher education providers to offer opportunities for younger people to participate in work experience at Council.• Support opportunities for young people to participate in arts and culture events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to support partner led events that aim to increase employment opportunities for younger people.• Support programs and organisations that focus on employment, education and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate for the needs of younger people with relevant government representatives.• Promote mental health awareness in celebrating days of significance.

Priority Area: Health and Wellbeing

Goal: To enhance physical and mental wellbeing by creating resilient, connected and socially inclusive communities

STRATEGIES

PROVIDE	PARTNER	PROMOTE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to include younger people in school holiday programming design. Include a focus on activities that support good mental health, social connection, physical activity, inclusion, arts and culture. Implement initiatives to support youth sport, active recreation and physical activity. Develop a place-based open space strategy that includes a detailed needs analysis of youth friendly activities in our parks and open spaces. Provide key information about recreation programs for youth and accessible play spaces on Council services for young people and their families in a range of languages other than English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create healthier food environments at Council led venues. Work with networks to explore approaches to increasing children, young people and their families access to healthy food. Support community awareness for local and state campaigns that seek to improve mental wellbeing. Support the provision of community gardens where possible within the council owned open spaces to improve social connections, communal activities and to promote a sustainable lifestyle and food education where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and encourage active transport, including the needs of younger people in future strategies.

