2026 - 2031

City of Busselton Draft
Community Health
and Wellbeing Plan

City of Busselton
Geographe Bay

The City of Busselton acknowledges the Traditional Custodians, the Wadandi People, on whose land we are living and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Contents

Message from the Mayor

To be included in final plan.

Introduction

The City of Busselton's Community Health and Wellbeing Plan explains how we will help keep our community healthy, safe and connected. It supports everyone who lives in, works in or visits our area.

The Plan also meets the requirements of the *Public Health Act 2016 (WA)*, which says all local governments must prepare a public health plan by 4 June 2026.

This Plan links to the City's long-term goals in the Council Plan 2024–2034, and the Community Development Plan 2022–2027, which focus on the things our community cares about, like safety, recreation, arts and culture, seniors, youth and community wellbeing.

Purpose of the Plan

The Plan aims to:

- Understand the main health needs in our community
- Look at local information and what affects people's health
- Listen to what the community tells us
- Set clear goals to prevent illness and support healthy living
- Work with the WA Department of Health, the Chief Health Officer and local partners

To do this, we use local data, community and youth workshops, and advice from service providers and health experts.

It focuses on improving the social, environmental and behavioural conditions that shape health, such as where people live, how they travel, their access to services and their sense of safety and connection.

The Plan also includes a strategic approach for identifying, evaluating and managing public health risks in the district, supporting the Council Plan 2024–2034 goal of creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive community.

What Is Public Health?

Public health is about creating conditions that help people live healthy and fulfilling lives. It focuses on preventing illness, promoting wellbeing and improving factors that shape health across an entire population.

"The art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society."

World Health Organization

"The big picture of how society is organised to maximise health and wellbeing."

WA Department of Health

"Programs that focus on preventing, not just treating, disease and illness across the entire population."

Public Health Association Australia

Public health recognises that health is shaped by more than individual choices. Health outcomes are shaped by the environments in which people live, learn, work and play, including housing, education, safety, transport, community connection and the natural and built environment. By addressing these broader determinates, public health helps create communities where everyone can thrive.

The role of the City in Public health

The City of Busselton already plays a major role in protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of our community. While public health is influenced by many factors, local government helps shape the places, services and environments that support people to live healthy, safe and connected lives.

Much of this work happens every day through our planning, operations, community programs and regulatory responsibilities. We contribute to public health in the following ways:

Creating Healthy Environments

We protect community health by ensuring safe, clean environments. This includes the Public Health team monitoring food businesses and public facilities, protecting water quality, and responding to issues like noise, pollution, pests and unsafe buildings. We also reduce sanitation risks through managing waste and recycling.

Designing Places That Support Wellbeing

Through planning and development, we create neighbourhoods that support active lifestyles, social connection and access to nature. We provide and maintain parks, paths, recreation facilities and inclusive community spaces.

Supporting Community Wellbeing and Inclusion

The City delivers programs and services that strengthen social and emotional wellbeing across all ages. This includes community development initiatives, youth and seniors' programs, libraries, cultural activities, major events and recreation services. We partner with local organisations and volunteers to foster inclusion, celebrate diversity and build strong, connected communities.

Managing Public Health Risks

Under the Public Health Act 2016 (WA), we identify and respond to local health issues, complaints and emerging risks. We work with state agencies during outbreaks, contamination events and other alerts to protect community health.

Promoting Community Safety

Safe communities support better health. Our Rangers support community safety through animal management, parking, local laws and addressing antisocial behaviour. Safe public spaces are further supported through design, lighting and community education.

Supporting Emergency Preparedness and Recovery

The City plays a key role in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies such as bushfires, storms, heatwaves and coastal incidents. We support evacuation centres, welfare needs, environmental health assessments and long-term recovery. Strengthening community resilience helps minimise the health impacts of emergencies.

Within the Action Plan, the City's primary role in achieving each objective and outcome will be clearly identified, ensuring our responsibilities and contributions are transparent and easy to understand.

These outcomes are achieved through a variety of roles or responsibilities:

Lead	Advocate	Facilitate	Provide	Regulate
We lead community engagement and strategic planning.	We are a voice for the community on local issues.	We enable service delivery partnerships, funding and other support.	We provide infrastructure, services, programs and information.	We comply with and enforce legislation and regulations.

Working in Partnership

Many health and wellbeing outcomes can only be achieved through strong collaboration, and partnerships are essential to the successful implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this Plan. The City of Busselton has well established relationships with state health agencies, local service providers, community organisations, schools, businesses and neighbouring local governments. These collaborations enable us to address shared challenges, align resources and deliver coordinated, locally appropriate solutions.

Each partner contributes differently depending on their jurisdiction, expertise and statutory responsibilities. Some focus on clinical or specialist services, others on community programs, prevention, infrastructure, social support or regulatory functions. Recognising these varied roles helps ensure our work is complementary rather than duplicative.

Where possible, existing and future partnership opportunities have been identified against each strategy in the Action Plan. This approach ensures that initiatives are grounded in collective effort, maximise regional capacity, and leverage the strengths of all organisations involved. By working together, through shared planning, co-design, information exchange and joint delivery, we create more effective, sustainable outcomes for our community.

City of Busselton Health and Wellbeing Snapshot

Our community

Who we are as a community, our demographics, social connections, environment, and shared values, directly shapes our health outcomes and overall wellbeing.

The City of Busselton is one of the fastest-growing local government areas in Western Australia, with an estimated population of 45,003 in 2024 and a growth rate of 2.3% per year, outpacing the broader South West region. This rapid growth is accompanied by a strong sense of cultural cohesion, active community participation, and significant natural assets that support healthy, outdoor lifestyles.

With a median age of 45, Busselton's population is older than the state median, and by 2026, residents aged 65 and over are expected to make up a quarter of the population, around 10% above the Western Australian average. These characteristics shape local health needs and the types of services and environments required to support an ageing community.

Busselton is diverse in ability, culture, and life experience. Approximately one in nineteen resident's lives with a profound or severe core activity limitation, emphasising the importance of inclusive design and accessible services. The district's cultural landscape continues to grow, supported by strong community groups and local events, with 2% of residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. These cultural strengths build social connection and resilience, forming an important foundation for community wellbeing.

The places in which people live, work, and travel also significantly influence health. Busselton is experiencing very low rental vacancy rates (under 1%) and house prices that have risen by about 50% since 2016, creating affordability pressures that can affect stability, health, and access to suitable housing. Transport patterns further shape daily life: around 70% of residents drive to work, while public transport use remains low and active travel rates (walking 2–3%, cycling 1–5%) have stayed stable over time. Longer commuting distances, often over 10 km, limit opportunities for regular walking and cycling for transport. These factors underscore the importance of planning for connected neighbourhoods, safe active-travel infrastructure, and equitable access to services.

Recognising these local characteristics ensures that planning for public health in the City of Busselton is grounded in the real experiences and needs of the community. By aligning services, infrastructure, and environments with the unique demographic and social profile of the region, the City can continue to support equitable health and wellbeing outcomes for all residents.

Community Snapshot

Lifestyle

45,003

The estimated population of Busselton in 2024.

2.3%

Estimated population growth per annum, expanding faster than the South West regional average of 1.5%.

45

Medium age of population. Which is seven years older than the median age of WA (38 years).

Diversity

Age

Seniors 65+ estimated to make up a quarter of our population by 2026, approximately 10% higher than state average.

Disability

An estimated 1 in 19 residents live with profound or severe core activity limitations.

Culture

Busselton has a growing cultural landscape reflected in its events and community groups. With 2% of our population representing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Isander People.

Place

Housing

Busselton is experiencing rental vacacy rates of under 1%, compared to 2.5-3.5% in a balanced market. With house prices increasing by approximately 50% between 2016 and 2025.

Transport

Car use dominates commuting, with ~70% driving to work, while public transport (~2%) and active travel (walking 2–3%, cycling 1–1.5%) remain low. Longer commute distances (>10 km for many) limit opportunities for walking and cycling.

2.2 Busselton in Focus

Lifestyle choices and health risks strongly influence wellbeing in the City of Busselton. To move our plan from strategy into action, we need a clear understanding of how public health can make a difference and which local factors may be holding back progress. Busselton's unique community characteristics shape health outcomes and, when compared with state-level data, highlight several areas needing additional focus.
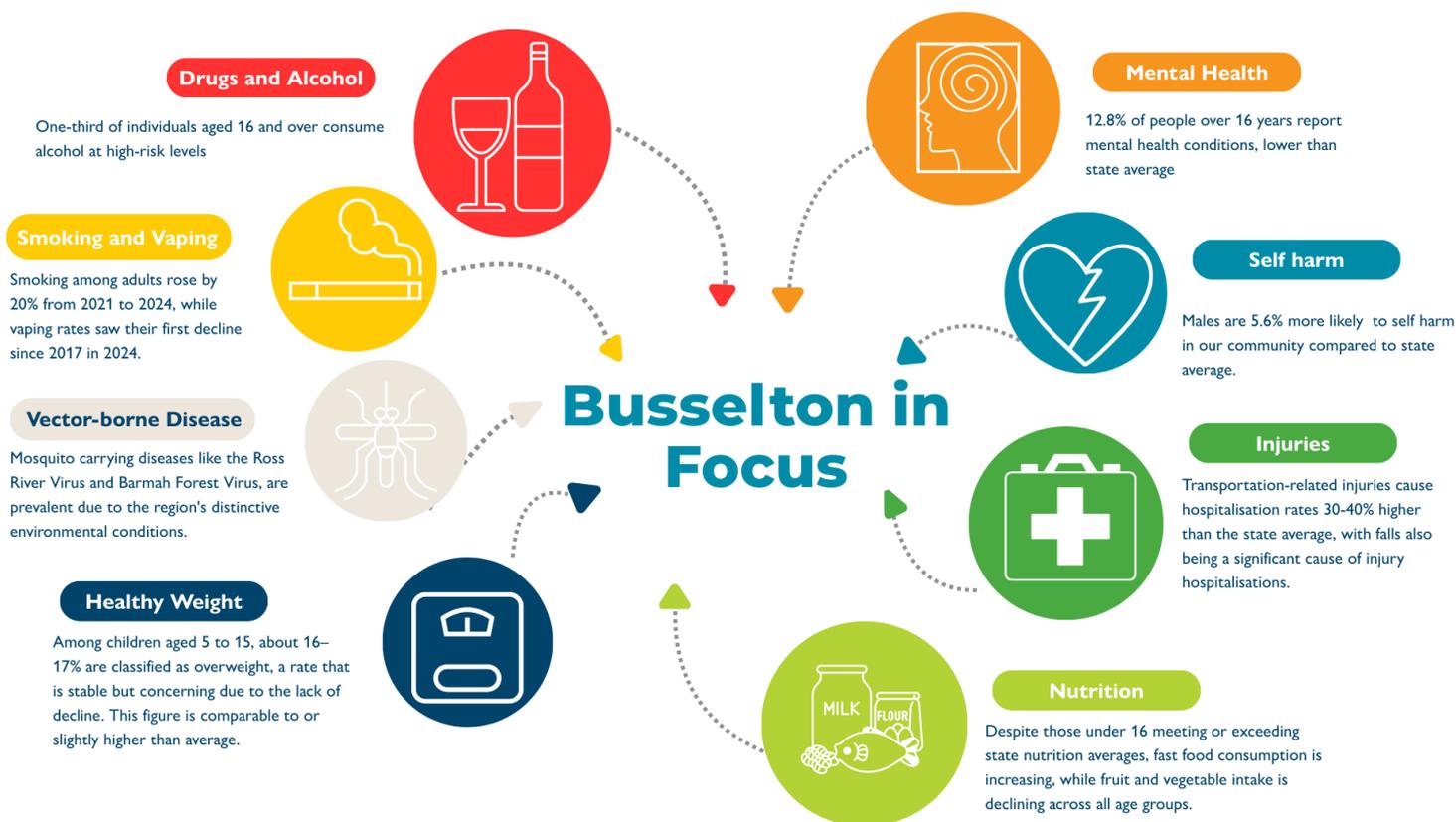
Many residents show positive health behaviours, particularly high levels of physical activity supported by the outdoor environment. However, long periods of sitting and screen time remain common, even among active individuals. Eating and drinking patterns also present mixed results: fruit intake is slightly higher and sugary drink consumption lower than WA averages, yet most people still fall short on vegetable intake, and fast-food consumption is increasing. Smoking remains slightly more common locally, with 12–14% of adults reporting current smoking—rates that consistently match or exceed state levels and contribute to preventable chronic disease.

Alcohol use, especially among men, is another concern. Around 38–42% of males drink at levels linked to long-term harm, higher than WA in several years, contributing to injuries, transport incidents, chronic disease and mental health impacts.

Among children aged 5–15, overweight and obesity rates remain steady but concerning, with around 16–17% overweight and 10–11% obese, reinforcing the need for early support around healthy lifestyles.

Injury patterns reveal further areas for action. Transport-related injuries occur more often in Busselton than the WA average, with higher transport-related deaths in some years, likely influenced by longer travel distances, car dependence and tourism. Falls remain a major issue, particularly for older adults; although local hospitalisation rates are lower than the state rate, falls are increasing as the population ages. Mental health remains a priority, with intentional self-harm hospitalisations similar to or above WA levels, especially among men.

There are also positive signs: rates of sexually transmitted infections, blood-borne diseases and vaccine-preventable illnesses are lower than WA averages. However, mosquito-borne disease rates are higher due to local environmental conditions, highlighting the importance of ongoing mosquito management and environmental health programs.

Drugs and Alcohol

One-third of individuals aged 16 and over consume alcohol at high-risk levels

Smoking and Vaping

Smoking among adults rose by 20% from 2021 to 2024, while vaping rates saw their first decline since 2017 in 2024.

Vector-borne Disease

Mosquito carrying diseases like the Ross River Virus and Barmah Forest Virus, are prevalent due to the region's distinctive environmental conditions.

Healthy Weight

Among children aged 5 to 15, about 16–17% are classified as overweight, a rate that is stable but concerning due to the lack of decline. This figure is comparable to or slightly higher than average.

Busselton in Focus

Mental Health

12.8% of people over 16 years report mental health conditions, lower than state average

Self harm

Males are 5.6% more likely to self harm in our community compared to state average.

Injuries

Transportation-related injuries cause hospitalisation rates 30-40% higher than the state average, with falls also being a significant cause of injury hospitalisations.

Nutrition

Despite those under 16 meeting or exceeding state nutrition averages, fast food consumption is increasing, while fruit and vegetable intake is declining across all age groups.

How the plan was developed

The process the City of Busselton undertook in preparing the plan is summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1: INVESTIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN IN PREPARING THE PLAN	
Legislation, regulations, codes of practice	The legislative framework sets the foundation for the City of Busselton's services. Developing this plan has allowed the City to review current services to improve the outcomes achieves.
Existing services	Preparing the plan is an opportunity to reflect on the existing services provided by the Council and consider possible improvements.
City of Busselton Profile	Understanding the local demographic ensures the plan reflects the unique attributes of our community. This is referenced on page 9.
Epidemiology analysis	The City of Busselton examined local health data to identify patterns of disease, risk factors and priority groups, providing evidence-based guidance.
Community and Stakeholder Feedback	Community and stakeholder views were a core element in preparing the plan. Extensive feedback obtained has been incorporated into the plan where possible and appropriate. The community engagement process and feedback received is explained in the Local Priorities of this plan.
Strategic context	The City of Busselton reviewed relevant local plans and strategies and their implications for this plan. This includes: • Council Plan 2024 – 2034 • Long term Financial 2025–2035
Research and best practice	The City of Busselton reviewed the latest research and best practice related to public health
Funding	This plan has been prepared assuming that all initiatives will be funded within existing budgets.
Staff feedback	City of Busselton staff were able to provide valuable input on trends, issues and possible priorities and initiatives.
Partnerships	In preparing the plan, the City of Busselton considered ways to partner with others to improve outcomes and achieve a better use of resources. Existing and future possible partners include the State Government, neighbouring councils, and industry service providers

Local Priorities

This plan was developed in consultation with community members, industry partners, City officers and local stakeholders through:

- Workshops with local public health experts
- Internal staff workshops
- Workshops with local industry panel groups
- Development of the Industry Panel
- Review feedback from 2024 Catalyse MARKYT scorecard
- Survey the community to identify concerns and priorities
- Workshop with Elected Members

Community focuses

This plan has been influenced by a variety of sources, including the wider community. Broad community consultation in the form of a survey was run over four weeks from November to December 2025. Survey respondents were asked a series of questions to help identify matters they thought were top priorities for the City of Busselton to focus on in this plan. Over 75 percent of respondents were female and over the age of 45 years while 30 percent identified as a carer or living with a disability and/or culturally diverse.

Community Health and Wellbeing Survey 2025
Key Findings

Top health concerns
- Poor mental health
- Physical inactivity
- Harmful alcohol use
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking & vaping
- Injuries & accidents
- Harmful alcohol use
- Unsafe community
- Rising cost of living

Top safety concerns
- Antisocial behaviour
- Lack of surveillance
- Mental health services
- Drugs and alcohol
- Poor lighting
- Traffic & vehicles
- Disengaged youth

Barriers to participation
- Affordable housing
- Transport options
- Youth Facilities
- Transport options
- Mental health services
- Disability access
- Policing
- Food relief

Service gaps identified
- Cost
- Transport issues
- Feeling unsafe/unwelcome
- Childcare challenges
- Lack of awareness
- Limited hours
- Time pressures

Industry voices

Industry stakeholders were clear: to meet community needs, the City must strengthen coordination, advocate more powerfully for regional equity, and prioritise preventative, place based and inclusive approaches.

They emphasised that the plan must respond to the intertwined challenges of housing, transport, service access, mental health and communication, ensuring that all people, in all places, can participate in and benefit from a healthy, connected and thriving Busselton.

At the same time, feedback from the Industry Workshops provided a clear and consistent picture of the strengths, gaps and priority focus areas shaping community health and wellbeing in the district.

What's Working Well

Industry representatives recognised the strength of Busselton's community networks and the number of existing programs already contributing positively to health and wellbeing.

These include local alcohol and other drug prevention initiatives, youth and outreach services, community food support, smokefree environments, strong recreation and arts groups, and school based wellbeing programs. Existing initiatives were identified as important foundations to build upon rather than duplicate.

Where the Gaps Are

Despite strong community assets, participants identified significant structural and service gaps that limit community wellbeing. The most prominent issues included:

- Insufficient funding for regional services, impacting program sustainability.

- Lack of crisis accommodation and safe options for people experiencing homelessness.

- Limited specialist and mental health services, leading to delayed or inaccessible care.

- Housing shortages, including affordable, appropriate and supported accommodation.

- Public transport limitations affecting access to essential services, education and employment.

- Integration, coordination and collaboration across the service system.

- Limited City led advocacy on health related issues.

- Challenges in healthy food access, mental health literacy, and service navigation, particularly for groups experiencing disadvantage or marginalisation.
  These gaps were repeatedly confirmed through group exercises and prioritisation activities.

What Industry Says We Need to Focus On

Across both workshops, industry members consistently reinforced seven core areas as the essential focuses to improve local health and wellbeing outcomes:

1. **Safer Communities:** Industry emphasised the importance of safety through proactive education, supportive partnerships, urban design, and community preparedness.
2. **Health Literacy and Community Engagement:** Participants called for the City to play a stronger role as a trusted communicator, ensuring information is inclusive, culturally appropriate and reaches all parts of the community.
3. **Connected and Active Mobility:** Improved access to safe, reliable and accessible transport options was viewed as essential to reducing inequities and supporting active, healthy lifestyles.
4. **Mental Wellbeing and Social Connection:** Early intervention, stigma reduction, improved mental health literacy and stronger community connection were consistently prioritised.
5. **Healthy and Sustainable Development:** Participants recommended embedding health into planning through walkable neighbourhoods, shade and open space, smokefree areas, and environments that support healthy choices.
6. **Inclusive and Secure Housing:** Safe, appropriate and affordable housing, including crisis options.
7. **Equitable Access to Health Supporting Infrastructure: Industry** highlighted the need for health hubs, accessible facilities, distributed services (not CBD centric), and improved access to amenities that support prevention and community connection.

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Youth perspectives

Youth representatives emphasised the need for accessible, inclusive and youth centred programs, with cost, transport, service navigation, mental health and basic needs identified as major barriers to participation.

While strong school-based initiatives provide a solid foundation for youth wellbeing, gaps remain in access to activities beyond school, coordination between schools and community services, and equitable access to food and essential supports.

Stakeholders highlighted priorities including reducing participation barriers, improving transport links, strengthening early mental health support, better sharing of community resources, addressing nutrition and basic needs, and ensuring youth voices help shape ongoing action.

Accessible programs	**Improved Transport**	**School-Community Coordination**	**Mental Health Support**	**Nutrition & Basic Needs**	**Youth Voice**
Reduce cost and transport barriers to activities.	Youth-friendly transport linking schools and services.	Better sharing of spaces and resources between schools.	Enhance early intervention and in-school support services.	Ensure consistent access to food and essentials.	Embed youth input to guide implementation.

Health and Wellbeing in the City of Busselton

Our Strategic Direction

The City of Busselton Council plan 2024 – 2034 sets the strategic overarching aspirations that guide Councils efforts for the next 5 years.

City of Busselton Vision

"Where environment, lifestyle and opportunity thrive"

Our Strategic Outcomes

In response to the outcome aspirations shared by our community, there are five strategic focus areas that will guide the work of Council over the coming four years. These are

1. **Lifestyle:** Our community is safe, welcoming and inclusive, with access to services and facilities to support good health and wellbeing.
2. **Environment:** Our environment is valued, conserved and able to be enjoyed by current and future generations.
3. **Place:** Responsible planning is helping the region to experience sustainable growth with retention and enhancement of our unique character, identity and lifestyle.
4. **Opportunity:** We have a vibrant and growing economy with diverse opportunities for everyone to learn, work and flourish.
5. **Leadership:** We actively engage with community to deliver visionary, collaborative and accountable leadership.

Planning for Community Health and Wellbeing

The State Public Health Plan 2025–2030 sets the statewide priorities for promoting, preventing, protecting and enabling health.

In line with these State priorities, Council has identified four strategic focus areas supported by twelve strategies, informed by the Council plan, and Community Engagement outcomes, ensuring our Local Public Health Plan responds to local needs while remaining aligned with Western Australia's public health direction.

Objective 1: Promote: Inclusive, thriving community

Objective 2: Prevent: Proactive, Resilient Community

Objective 3: Protect: Safe, Sustainable Community

Objective 4: Enable: Equitable, Accessible Community

State Public Health Plan 2025 - 2030

Vision: The best possible health, wellbeing & quality of life for all West Australians - Now and into the future.

Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing

Equity and Inclusion

Community engagement outcomes

Promote — Inclusive, Thriving Community
1. Building Belonging
2. Community Engagement
3. Wellness Education

Prevent — Proactive, Resilient Community
1. Mental Health
2. Transport
3. Responsible development & growth

Protect — Safe, Sustainable Community
1. Community Safety
2. Housing & Homelessness
  a. Natural environment & waterways

Enable — Equitable, Accessible Community
1. Collaboration & Partnerships
2. Community Infrastructure
3. Access to services & facilities

City of Busselton Council Plan 2024 - 2034

City of Busselton Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025 - 2030 Action Plans

Our Health and Wellbeing Outcome

"An inclusive and connected community where our environment, lifestyle and opportunities support the best possible health and wellbeing for everyone."

The following principles will guide achievement of this outcome:

Prevention first: We focus on early, evidence-based action that reduces the risk of illness, injury and chronic disease before it occurs, reflecting the State Plan's priority to reduce preventable harm.

Equity, Inclusion and Access for Diverse Communities: We recognise that different groups in our community, including CALD communities, people with disability, older adults, young people, LGBTQIA+ people, people experiencing vulnerability, and Aboriginal people, may face different barriers to achieving good health. We design our actions to improve access, inclusion and outcomes for all, with targeted support where it is needed most.

Partnerships for Impact: We work collaboratively across sectors, health, community services, education, business and the broader community, to create coordinated, sustainable solutions aligned with the State Plan's emphasis on strengthening public health systems.

Place Based and Evidence Led Action: We use local data, community insight and ongoing evaluation to shape targeted actions within our five-year planning cycle, ensuring responses reflect Busselton's unique local needs and emerging public health risks.

Our delivery approaches

The City of Busselton uses a range of approaches to support the health and wellbeing of people who live, work and visit our district. These approaches help us design actions that make sense for our local communities and respond to the different needs across our communities.

Working together on big issues:

We team up with schools, health services, police and community groups to tackle complex challenges.

Place-based:

We shape actions to suit the needs and strengths of each area.

Community-led:

We work with community members, volunteers, clubs, groups and Elders to guide our work.

Health in every decision:
We consider health and wellbeing in all City planning and services.

Settings-based:

We support safe, healthy environments in places like schools, sport clubs, workplaces and community centres.

Prevention through design:
We design public places and buildings to reduce harm and encourage safe, healthy behaviour.

Fair access for everyone:
We help the whole community and give extra support where it's needed.

Life-course:

We design programs that support people at every stage of life.

Objective One

Promote: Inclusive, Thriving Community

Creating an inclusive, thriving community is an important goal of this Plan. This means making sure everyone in the City of Busselton feels welcome, supported and able to take part in community life. When people feel connected and included, their health and wellbeing improve. But when people feel lonely, excluded or unsure where to get help, it can lead to poorer mental and physical health.

This objective focuses on helping people feel connected, improving understanding of health and wellbeing, and making sure community voices are heard. By building stronger neighbourhoods, sharing helpful information, and involving people in local decisions, the City aims to reduce isolation, improve access to support and create a healthier community for everyone.

This objective aims to:

- o Help people feel a sense of belonging in their community
- o Share clear and accessible information about health and wellbeing
- o Encourage people to get involved, speak up and participate in community activities
- o Reduce loneliness and improve mental wellbeing
- o Make sure everyone can take part, no matter their age, background, ability or circumstances
- o Build a community that is connected, resilient and supportive

The following strategies will support achievement of this objective:

Strategic area	Strategy	5 Year Strategic Indicators
Lifestyle	**S1. Building Belonging** Helping people connect and feel part of the community	**Increase in community sense of belonging**, measured through the biennial Community Satisfaction or Community Wellbeing Survey. **Increase in participation rates** at City-supported events, programs and initiatives that promote inclusion and cultural connection. **Proportion of community members reporting feeling safe and included** in public spaces. **Number of initiatives delivered that strengthen cultural recognition and inclusion**, including RAP actions. **Growth in partnerships** that contribute to belonging.

Strategic area	Strategy	5 Year Strategic Indicators
Leadership	*S2. Community Engagement* Listening to community voices and encouraging participation	**Increase in community participation in health-related engagement activities,** including public health consultations, wellness workshops, and health education events. **Increase in diversity of respondents** in public health and wellbeing engagement activities. **Improvement in community satisfaction with the City's communication on health and wellbeing information,** measured through community scorecard survey. **Volume and effectiveness of co-designed processes that inform City public health, wellbeing, and community safety initiatives.** **Number and reach of public health community engagement campaigns** delivered annually.
Opportunity	*S3. Wellness Education* Sharing simple, clear information to support healthy living	**Number and reach of public health education campaigns** delivered annually. **Level of community awareness of key public health risks**, measured through periodic surveys or campaign evaluation. **Number of partnerships formed** to deliver health promotion and wellness education (schools, health services, community groups). **Reduction in preventable incidents or issues** linked to awareness campaigns. **Increase in participation in wellness programs.**

Snapshot Case study: South West Disabled Surfers Association

An inclusive surfing program in the Dunsborough region provides people of all abilities with the opportunity to experience surfing in a safe, supported and welcoming environment. Using adaptive equipment, beach accessible wheelchairs and the help of skilled volunteers, the program removes barriers that often prevent people with disability from taking part in community activities. -accessible wheelchairs and the help of skilled volunteers, the program removes barriers that often prevent people with disability from taking part in community activities.

Improving Mental Health and Social Connection

The program has become a powerful contributor to positive mental health in the region. Regular participation helps individuals:

- o Reduce stress and anxiety
- o Improve confidence and self-esteem
- o Build new friendships and feel a stronger sense of belonging
- o Feel supported during recovery or adjustment to disability
- o Families and carers also benefit from the program's warm, community focused environment, where they can connect with others who share similar experiences. focused environment, where they can connect with others who share similar experiences.

Building a Stronger, More Resilient Community

The program holds four community events each year, creating a relaxed and social atmosphere where participants, families, carers and volunteers can connect. These sessions support mental wellbeing by helping people reduce stress, build confidence, feel included and enjoy meaningful time outdoors.

This initiative strongly aligns with the Prevention priority of the Plan by promoting inclusion, improving social connection and supporting positive mental health. By turning personal lived experience into a community-wide solution, this inclusive surfing program shows how local innovation can improve wellbeing and create a more connected, resilient community, helping prevent isolation and ensuring people of all abilities feel part of a thriving, supportive community.

Building a proactive and resilient community is an important goal of this Plan. A resilient community is one that can stay strong during challenges, adapt to change and support each other when things get tough. When people feel prepared, supported and able to access what they need, their overall health and wellbeing improve. But when communities face barriers such as poor mental health, limited transport options, or fast growth that isn't well planned, it can increase stress and reduce quality of life.

Objective Two

Prevent: Proactive, Resilient Community

This objective focuses on helping people stay healthy, improving access to services and creating safe, well designed places. By supporting mental health, improving transport options and guiding responsible community growth, the City aims to reduce health risks, improve safety and support long-term wellbeing for everyone.

This objective aims to:

o   Support positive mental health and help people access the right care when needed
o   Improve transport options so people can travel safely and easily for work, school, appointments and social activities
o   Guide responsible development so neighbourhoods remain safe, connected and healthy as the community grows
o   Reduce risks linked to stress, isolation and limited access to services
o   Make it easier for people to be active, connected and engaged in daily life
o   Strengthen community resilience by planning for the needs of both current and future residents

The following strategies will support achievement of this objective.

Strategic Area	Strategy	Strategic Indicators
Lifestyle	*S4. Mental Health* Supporting programs and environments that promote positive mental wellbeing	**Increase in reported community mental wellbeing** Measured through community scorecard surveys (e.g., feeling supported, connected, safe). **Increased community awareness of mental health support services** **Increase in participation in mental health and wellbeing programs** **Improved access to mental health information for priority populations** Evidence of tailored communications and resource reach. **Strengthened cross sector collaboration** Number and quality of partnerships with mental health providers, schools, NGOs and peak bodies.

Strategic Area	Strategy	Strategic Indicators
Place	**S5. Transport** Improving access to safe, reliable and inclusive transport options	**Increase in active transport participation;** measured through counts, surveys or observational data. **Improvement in perceived and actual road safety.** **Improved neighbourhood walkability and connectivity** Assessed through urban design audits, access to paths, proximity to services. **Reduction in preventable transport related injuries** Trend in local crash and near miss data (using available Main Roads or WALGA RoadWise data). **Completion and implementation of District Traffic Strategy**, with measurable wellbeing impacts.
Place	**S9. Responsible Development and Growth** Planning for safe, healthy and well-connected neighbourhoods.	**Increase in housing diversity** **Improved urban design supporting healthy lifestyles** Walkability, shade, green cover, safe crossings, mixed-use development, connected neighbourhoods. **Reduction in environmental health risks in new and existing developments;** Noise, air quality, heat islands, incompatible land use issues. **Community satisfaction with liveability in developing areas**

Case Study: Building Community Resilience Paperbark's "Hello To Me"

Overview

The Paperbark Wellness Project's *Hello To Me* program shows how early-intervention mental health support can strengthen personal and community resilience—central to the City's *Prevent: Proactive, Resilient Community* objective. Over eight weeks, adults develop emotional skills that help them manage stress, adapt to change and build healthier relationships in a supportive group setting.

How the Program Supports Resilience

Many residents experience feeling overwhelmed, directionless or lacking confidence. *Hello To Me* by the Paperbark Wellness Project helps participants understand the unhelpful thought patterns and long-held beliefs that contribute to stress and isolation. Using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) tools, the program teaches people to challenge negative thinking, express their needs and build self-confidence.

Small, closed groups of up to ten people meet weekly for two-hour sessions, creating a safe environment for sharing, insight and mutual support. As participants apply new strategies in daily life, they become better equipped to handle challenges, make healthier decisions and stay engaged in work, family and community life.

Alignment with the Prevent Objective

The program strengthens mental wellbeing by offering an accessible option for people not yet connected to clinical services. Its focus on connection and shared learning reduces isolation and builds supportive networks. Improved confidence and communication help participants contribute more actively in their communities. By teaching critical awareness, accountability and emotional regulation, *Hello To Me* builds the foundations of long-term community resilience aligned with the City's goals.

Paperbark's *Hello To Me* demonstrates how local, evidence-informed programs can enhance wellbeing, reduce isolation and build a more resilient, connected community. It supports the City's aim to foster a healthy, adaptable and empowered population now and into the future.

Objective Three

Protect: Safe, Sustainable Community

Creating a safe and sustainable community is an important goal of this Plan. A safe community is one where people feel secure, supported and confident to move around their neighbourhoods. A sustainable community protects its natural environment, plans for the future and makes sure everyone has access to basic needs, including safe and stable housing. When these foundations are strong, the whole community is healthier and more resilient.

This objective focuses on reducing harm, improving access to safe living environments and protecting the places that make our region unique. Issues such as crime, unsafe housing, homelessness, pollution and damage to natural areas can increase health risks and reduce quality of life. By strengthening community safety, addressing housing challenges and caring for our environment and waterways, the City aims to support long-term wellbeing for all residents. term wellbeing for all residents.

This objective aims to:
- o Improve community safety and reduce behaviours that cause harm
- o Support safe, stable and appropriate housing options
- o Reduce the health impacts linked to homelessness
- o Protect natural areas, beaches and waterways for current and future generations
- o Create clean, healthy and safe public spaces
- o Reduce risks related to pollution, environmental damage and unsafe living conditions
- o Strengthen community confidence and long-term sustainability term sustainability

The following strategies will support achievement of this objective.

Strategic Area	Strategy	Strategic Indicators
Lifestyle	**S7. Community Safety** Creating safe neighbourhoods through prevention, partnerships and local action	**Increase in reported community safety perception** via survey. **Reduction in preventable incidents and injuries.** **Improved lighting, CCTV and safety infrastructure coverage** Number of priority safety upgrades completed in public spaces.
Place	**S8. Housing and homelessness** Supporting safe housing options and helping reduce the	**Improved coordination across housing and homelessness services** Measured through interagency collaboration, shared priorities, and joint initiatives. **Reduction in rough sleeping or visible homelessness trends**

Strategic Area	Strategy	Strategic Indicators
	impacts of homelessness	Measured through local by-name list data, service counts, or agency reporting **Increased community awareness of homelessness support services** Measured through local engagement, campaign reach, or survey responses.
Environment	***S9****. Natural Environment and waterways* Protecting the environment to ensure clean, healthy places for people and wildlife	**Improved community satisfaction with the condition and safety of natural areas** Measured via the City's community scorecard survey. **Improvement in water quality trends,** including reduction in environmental risk events.

Case study of success - Cultural precinct smoke free zone

The City of Busselton recently introduced a Smoke-Free Zone across the Cultural Precinct, creating a fresher and more welcoming space around the Old Courthouse. This simple change has helped the area feel cleaner, safer and more enjoyable for everyone who spends time there — from families grabbing ice cream to visitors exploring the galleries and grounds.

Since the new zone began, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff have received no complaints at all, and people have been happy to follow the new rules. In fact, there's been a clear drop in smoking across the precinct. The space now feels more relaxed and inviting, with people lingering a little longer to chat, wander or enjoy the gardens.

The Smoke-Free Zone is already helping the community by:

- Reducing second-hand smoke, keeping the air cleaner

- Making the area more comfortable for families, children and older adults

- Encouraging healthier habits in a shared public space

- Supporting a cleaner, tidier environment in this much-loved part of Busselton

This positive change shows how a small step can make a big difference. By keeping the Cultural Precinct smoke-free, the City is helping create safer, healthier and more vibrant public places where everyone feels welcome.

Objective Four

Enable: Equitable, Accessible Community

Creating an equitable and accessible community is a key goal of this Plan. An equitable community is one where everyone has a fair chance to live well, no matter their background, ability or circumstances. An accessible community makes it easy for people to move around, use facilities and get the services they need to stay healthy and connected. When people cannot access information, services, transport or community spaces, it can lead to poorer health, increased stress and reduced opportunities to participate in community life.

This objective focuses on removing barriers and improving access so that all residents can benefit from local services, programs and community spaces. By working together with partners, building well designed infrastructure and ensuring services are available and inclusive, the City aims to improve health, independence and quality of life for everyone. Designed infrastructure and ensuring services are available and inclusive, the City aims to improve health, independence and quality of life for everyone.

This objective aims to:
- o Improve access to services, facilities and information across the community
- o Reduce barriers for people with disability, older adults, young people and other groups who may face extra challenges
- o Strengthen collaboration and partnerships to deliver better support and opportunities
- o Ensure community spaces and infrastructure are safe, welcoming and designed for all abilities
- o Make it easier for people to participate in community life, regardless of their circumstances
- o Promote fairness, inclusion and equal opportunity across the district

The following strategies will support achievement of this objective.

Strategic Area	Strategy	Strategic Indicators
Opportunity	**S10. Collaboration and Partnerships** Working with agencies, organisations and the community to improve support and opportunities	**Increase in the number and diversity of active partnerships** **Improved effectiveness of partnerships** Measured through joint initiatives delivered, or co-designed outcomes. **Increase in jointly delivered programs or initiatives** **Improved coordination across key service networks** **Development and implementation of shared advocacy positions** **Increased leverage of external resources** measured through partner-led projects supported through City collaboration.
Place	**S11. Community Infrastructure** Designing and maintaining places and spaces that are safe, accessible and welcoming for all	**Increased community satisfaction with public infrastructure and open spaces** Measured through community scorecard surveys. **Progressively improved integration of inclusive and universal design principles in new and upgraded infrastructure** **Improved infrastructure condition and functionality** Measured through asset condition ratings, compliance checks, or risk reduction. **Increased activation and safe use of community facilities and public spaces** Footfall counts, bookings, or observational usage.
Lifestyle	**S12. Access to Services and Facilities** Improving availability, inclusiveness and awareness of local services and community resources	**Improved accessibility and inclusiveness of City services** **Increase in diversity of community use of City services and facilities** **Improved awareness of available services and facilities** Measured through surveys, engagement analytics, or campaign reach.

Strategic Area	Strategy	Strategic Indicators
		Reduction in barriers to access/ increased service reach to priority populations
		Improved alignment between services and community needs Measured by review cycles, satisfaction ratings, needs assessments, and feedback loops.

Case study of success – Opening up the Busselton foreshore for Everyone

The Busselton Foreshore is a special place for the community. With calm water, wide paths and beach matting that helps wheelchair users reach the ocean, it's already one of the most accessible beaches in the region. Many people with disability visit the area because it gives them a chance to enjoy the beach in a way that feels safe and welcoming.

But one important thing was missing: a facility that could support people who can't use standard accessible toilets. For these community members, staying at the beach for long periods or taking part in events was still difficult. Some people had to limit their visits or avoid the foreshore altogether.

To remove this barrier, the City of Busselton built a new Changing Places facility right on the foreshore. This was a natural choice because so many people with disability were already using the beach matting, pathways and other accessible features in the area. Putting the facility here means people can enjoy the whole experience, from the water to the foreshore, without worrying about whether suitable toilets or changing spaces are available.

The new facility includes a ceiling hoist, an adult sized height adjustable change table, an accessible shower, privacy screening, space for two carers to assist, and a separate area to store wheelchairs or mobility equipment. It is open 24/7 through the MLAK key system, giving people the freedom to stay as long as they like and enjoy the foreshore like anyone else. Sized- height adjustable change table, an accessible shower, privacy screening, space for two carers to assist-, and a separate area to store wheelchairs or mobility equipment. It is open 24/7 through the MLAK key system, giving people the freedom to stay as long as they like and enjoy the foreshore like anyone else.

The project was supported by $184,000 in State and Federal funding, helping bring more inclusive infrastructure to Western Australia. Since opening, families and carers have shared that the facility gives them more confidence to visit the foreshore, stay longer and enjoy their time without stress. People with disability say it helps them feel welcome and included, rather than limited by what facilities are available. This project shows how thoughtful design can make a real difference in people's lives. By placing the Changing Places facility in a location that already had accessible beach features, the City has strengthened its commitment to building a community where everyone has a fair chance to live well, no matter their ability or circumstances.

Together, the beach matting and the new facility make the Busselton Foreshore a more inclusive place, one where all community members can now participate comfortably, safely and with dignity.

2026 – 2027 Community Health and Wellbeing Action Plan

*Council Plan Action

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
S1 **Building belonging**	Develop and implement an Accessibility and Inclusion Checklist for all City-sponsored events. *(Fair access for Everyone)*	Lead Events and Culture	Event organisers	% of City-sponsored event organisers providing both a completed Accessibility and Inclusion Checklist and accompanying Post-Event Report.
	Review the City of Busselton Reconciliation Action Plan*. *(Community led)*	Lead Events and Culture	Karri Karrak Undalup	Revised Plan Adopted
S2 **Community Engagement**	Establish a Community Health and Wellbeing Plan Reference Group *(Working together on big issues)*	Lead Public Health	Industry Partners and Community representatives.	Reference Group established by 30 June 2027, including endorsed terms of reference and confirmed membership.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
S3 **Wellness education**	Provide timely, accessible public information on identified public health risks through the City's communication channels, including website updates, social media posts, and community alerts. (*Fair access*)	Facilitate Lead Public Health and Public Relations	State Agencies and specialist industry partners.	Timely dissemination of public health risk information, measured by number, frequency, and reach of communications across City channels.
	Implementation of Busselton Alcohol and Drug Plan (*Settings-based*)	Partner	St John of God Bunbury	Number of Alcohol and Drug harm-reduction initiatives, partnerships, or educational activities delivered annually in accordance with the Plan.
S4 **Mental health**	Assist in distributing consistent, evidence-based mental health support service information across City communication platforms in collaboration with key stakeholders. (*Work together*)	Advocate and facilitate	Multiple Stakeholders	Number of collaborations with key mental health service providers to ensure accuracy and alignment of shared information.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
S5 **Transport**	Prepare a District Traffic Strategy that incorporates health, safety and active transport considerations*. (*Health in every decision*)	Lead Engineering and Facilities	Department of Transport Main Roads	Strategy endorsed by Council
S6 **Responsible development + growth**	Implement Local Planning Scheme 22 to support sustainable, safe and healthy development across the District*. (*Health in every decision*)	Lead & Regulate Planning and Development Services	Department of Planning Lands and Heritage	Staff training and internal guidance materials prepared to support consistent implementation of LPS22. Communication delivered to developers, consultants and the community regarding new Scheme provisions.
S7 **Community Safety**	Conduct research on resident's perceptions on community safety in the City. (*Working together*)	Facilitate	TBD (RFQ out at moment)	Completion of consultant-led research into residents' perceptions of community safety, including data collection and final reporting.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
	Adoption of the City of Busselton 2026 – 2030 Community Safety Action Plan*. (*Health in every decision*)	Lead Community Safety	WAPOL WALGA	Community Safety Action Plan presented for Council consideration and adopted.
	Implement the City of Busselton Child Safe Awareness Policy aligned to the WA Child Safe Standards*. (*Settings based*)	Lead Community and recreation	Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety	Completion and adoption of the City of Busselton Child Safe Awareness Policy aligned with WA Child Safe Standards.
	Implement lighting update program. (*Prevention through design*)	Lead Asset Planning and Parks and Environment		Reduction in lighting-related service requests or safety concerns in upgraded areas.
S8 Housing & Homelessness	Develop an advocacy position on local housing and homelessness needs in collaboration with service providers and peak bodies. (*Life-course*)	Facilitate	Department of Communities, Police, Industry partners.	Summary of local needs, gaps, and issues compiled using partner and data insights.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
S9 **Natural environment & waterways**	Support the continued implementation of the Lower Vasse River and Toby Inlet Management Plans in partnership with responsible agencies to reduce nuisance algal blooms and improve water quality.* (*Placed-based*)	Partner	Multiple stakeholders	Monitoring program delivered as scheduled (sampling frequency met) and annual summary reported.
	Develop and Implement the City's Sustainability and Environment Strategy to identify opportunities to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency. (*Settings-based*)	Lead Environmental Management		Completion of a full review of the existing Energy Strategy, including an assessment of current energy use, emissions and performance against prior targets.
	Develop a 10-year Coastal Management Plan to strengthen community resilience and guide long-term coastal management.* (*Place-based*)	Lead Engineering and Facilities		Council endorsement of the plan
S10 **Collaboration & Partnership**	Enhance awareness and accessibility of City venues to support increased community group use. (*Fair access to everyone*)	Lead Venues		Increase in venue booking enquiries from community groups compared to baseline.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
S11 **Community Infrastructure**	ACROD parking initiatives (*Prevention through design*)	Lead Design and Survey		Proportion of ACROD-compliant parking bays across the City
	Implement targeted drainage inspections and priority upgrades to minimise mosquito breeding risk. (*Settings-based*)	Lead Asset Planning		Development of a prioritised upgrade plan based on inspection results and mosquito risk assessment.
S12 **Access to Services and Facilities**	Deliver staff training to build awareness and capability to design and deliver inclusive, accessible services and programs. (*Health in every decision*)	Lead Community Development		Number of service areas incorporating inclusive design considerations into program planning following staff training.
	Develop and implement the Disability inclusive emergency planning roadmap*. (*Working together*)	Lead/ Partner Community Development Emergency Services		Roadmap endorsed by LEMC and DAIP

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

Review and evaluation of the plan will be undertaken annually, with an annual review and reporting of action status and four yearly significant review.

ACTION	WHEN	EVALUATION
Establish annual timeline and program for review and evaluation of the plan	2025/26	Annual timeline and review program will ensure the plan remains current and appropriate reporting requirements are met.
Ensure all programs and procedures are reviewed annually where this is required in the plan.	Annual	The annual reviews are completed and are effective.
Complete an evaluation of the plan. Submit to the Council for approval along with proposed amendments to the plan. Update the plan as appropriate.	Annual	Evaluation completed and amendments recommended as appropriate
Annually report on implementation of the plan.	Annual	Annual Evaluation published within the Council's annual report.
Community perceptions (community scorecard survey)	Biannual	Increase from 2024 score
Significant review	2031	Review and evaluate the outcomes, to provide a foundation for and guide the development of the next plan.