



City of Busselton

Community Health and Wellbeing Plan

2026-2031

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.



Artwork entitled “Keyap Boodja Water Country”
by artist Melissa Riley.

Sugarloaf Rock. Photo by: Graham Hay Photography

Table of contents

Message from the Mayor	4
Introduction	6
The role of the city in public health	8
City of busseton health and wellbeing snapshot	10
How the plan was developed	14
Local priorities	15
Community focuses	15
Industry voices	16
Youth perspectives	19
Health and wellbeing in the city of busseton	20
Our delivery approaches	24
2026 – 2027 action plan	37
Implementation, monitoring and review	42

Message from the Mayor

It is my pleasure to introduce our inaugural Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2026–2031 for the City of Busselton.

This Plan marks an important milestone for our community. For the first time, local evidence, community insight and lived experience have been brought into a shared framework that guides how health and wellbeing are to be protected and supported across the district.

This Plan sets a clear, locally focused direction for action over the next five years, whilst recognising that health is shaped by everyday factors such as where we live, how we get around, the services we can access, and our sense of connection and belonging.

Importantly, this Plan has been shaped by the people who live, work and care in our community.

We sincerely thank everyone who contributed their time, experiences, and ideas. This Plan is stronger because of their honesty, care and commitment.

As one of Western Australia's fastest growing regional locations, the City of Busselton faces both opportunities and challenges. Our community is diverse in age, ability, culture, identity and life experience. While lifestyle and a strong connection to the natural environment are greatly valued, it is also recognised that pressures such as housing affordability, access to services, transport, mental wellbeing and community safety are also important factors to consider.

This Plan focuses on prevention, inclusion and early action to help address these challenges as our community continues to grow.

On behalf of the Council, I thank everyone who helped shape this inaugural Plan. Together, the City of Busselton and its partners are building a strong and practical foundation for a healthier, more connected community — now and into the future.



Phill Cronin
City of Busselton Mayor





Introduction

This Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2026-2031 sets out how we will work together to support a healthy, safe and connected community. It focuses on the factors that shape health and wellbeing for everyone who lives in, works in or visits our area.

This Plan also meets the City's responsibilities under the *Public Health Act 2016 (WA)*, which requires all local governments to prepare a public health plan by 4 June 2026.

It aligns with the City's long term direction in the Council Plan 2024–2034 and brings together key priorities previously covered in the Community Development Plan 2022–2027. These include the things our community cares about most, such as safety, recreation, arts and culture, inclusion, youth, seniors and overall wellbeing.

Purpose of the Plan

This Plan is designed to be practical and action focused, helping the City and its partners make informed decisions that support health and wellbeing across the community.

The Plan aims to:

- Understand the main health needs in our community
- Use local information and what affects people's health
- 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.

Understanding public health helps explain why local governments play such an important role in shaping healthy communities.



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

Who we are as a community: our demographics, environment, connections and values, shapes health and wellbeing across the City of Busselton.

Busselton is experiencing sustained population growth, with an estimated 46,184 residents in 2025 and growth of around 2.3 percent per year, higher than the broader South West region. This growth is changing the community's demographic profile and influencing housing, service demand and health needs across different life stages.

The community benefits from strong local networks, high participation and access to natural environments that support wellbeing. At the same time, population growth is increasing demand on housing, infrastructure and community services. Understanding these trends is important to ensure services remain accessible, vulnerable groups are supported, and community wellbeing is maintained as the City evolves.

Key characteristics of the community include:

- A median age of 45, older than the Western Australian average
- An ageing population, with people aged 65 years and over expected to make up around one quarter of residents by 2026, highlighting the need for age friendly infrastructure, accessible services, transport options and prevention of social isolation
- Around 5 percent of residents living with a profound or severe core activity limitation, reinforcing the importance of inclusive design and accessible public spaces
- A growing and diverse cultural community, with 2 percent of residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and 19.3 percent of residents born overseas

Where we live has a strong influence on health and wellbeing. Many residents benefit from the stability of home ownership and long established neighbourhoods. At the same time, very low rental availability (below 1 percent) and housing prices that have increased by around 50 percent since 2016 are making it harder for renters and new entrants to find secure, affordable housing. This contrast between stability for some and uncertainty for others affects wellbeing and influences how connected and cohesive the community feels.

How people get around also shapes wellbeing. Busselton is largely car dependent, with around 70 percent of residents driving to work. Limited public transport options and longer distances between homes, work and services mean walking or cycling are not always practical. For people without access to a car, this can create barriers to independence, connection and access to services.

Recognising these local characteristics helps ensure public health planning reflects real community experiences. By aligning services, infrastructure and environments with local needs, the City can support equitable health and wellbeing outcomes as Busselton continues to grow and change.

Place

Rental Pressure



vacancy rate below

1%

compared to a balanced market of 2.5-3.5

House Prices

increased by



50%

between 2016-2025

70%

Commuting

Distances greater than **10km** for many

2%



Driving

2-3%



Public Transport

1-1.5%



Walking



Cycling

Diversity

Age



1 in 4 residents aged

65+

in 2026

Approximately **10%** higher than state average

Disability



5.4%

residents have profound or severe core activity limitations

Identity



2%

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people



6%

born in non-English speaking countries



4.5%

aged 16+ LGBTQI+

Lifestyle



46,184

estimated population of Busselton 2025



2.3%

Annual population growth out pacing WA regional growth of **1.5%**



45

Medium population age. **7 years older** than the WA median of **38**

Diversity, equity and inclusion in our community

Busselton is home to a diverse population, comprising people with different identities, abilities, cultures and life experiences. This diversity is a strength and contributes to a vibrant, connected community. However, not everyone experiences the same access to opportunities or health outcomes.

Some groups, including children and young people, older adults, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, LGBTIQ+ people, and those experiencing social or economic disadvantage, may face additional barriers that affect wellbeing. Recognising and responding to these different experiences is essential to ensure programs, services and policies are designed with the community and respond to need rather than assuming a one size fits all approach.

Understanding local health and wellbeing

Lifestyle behaviours and local health risks play an important role in shaping wellbeing in the City of Busselton. To move this Plan from strategy into action, it is important to understand where public health efforts can make the greatest difference, and which local factors may be limiting progress. Busselton's unique community profile, when compared with WA as a whole, highlights several areas needing additional focus.

Health behaviours and lifestyle factors

Many residents demonstrate positive health behaviours, particularly high levels of physical activity, supported by Busselton's outdoor lifestyle and natural environment. However, long periods of sitting and screen time remain common, even among active individuals.

Dietary patterns show mixed results. Fruit intake is slightly higher and sugary drink consumption lower than Western Australian averages, yet most residents do not meet recommended vegetable intake, and fast food consumption is increasing. Smoking remains slightly more common locally, with 13 percent of adults reporting current smoking, contributing to preventable chronic disease.

Alcohol use is another area of concern, particularly among men. Around 40 percent of males report drinking at levels linked to long term harm. These patterns contribute to chronic disease, injuries, transport incidents and impacts on mental health.

Children and young people

Among children aged 5–15 years, rates of overweight and obesity remain steady but concerning, with approximately 17 percent overweight and 10 percent of this cohort being obese. These trends reinforce the importance of early, supportive approaches to healthy eating, physical activity and family friendly environments.

Injury, safety and mental health

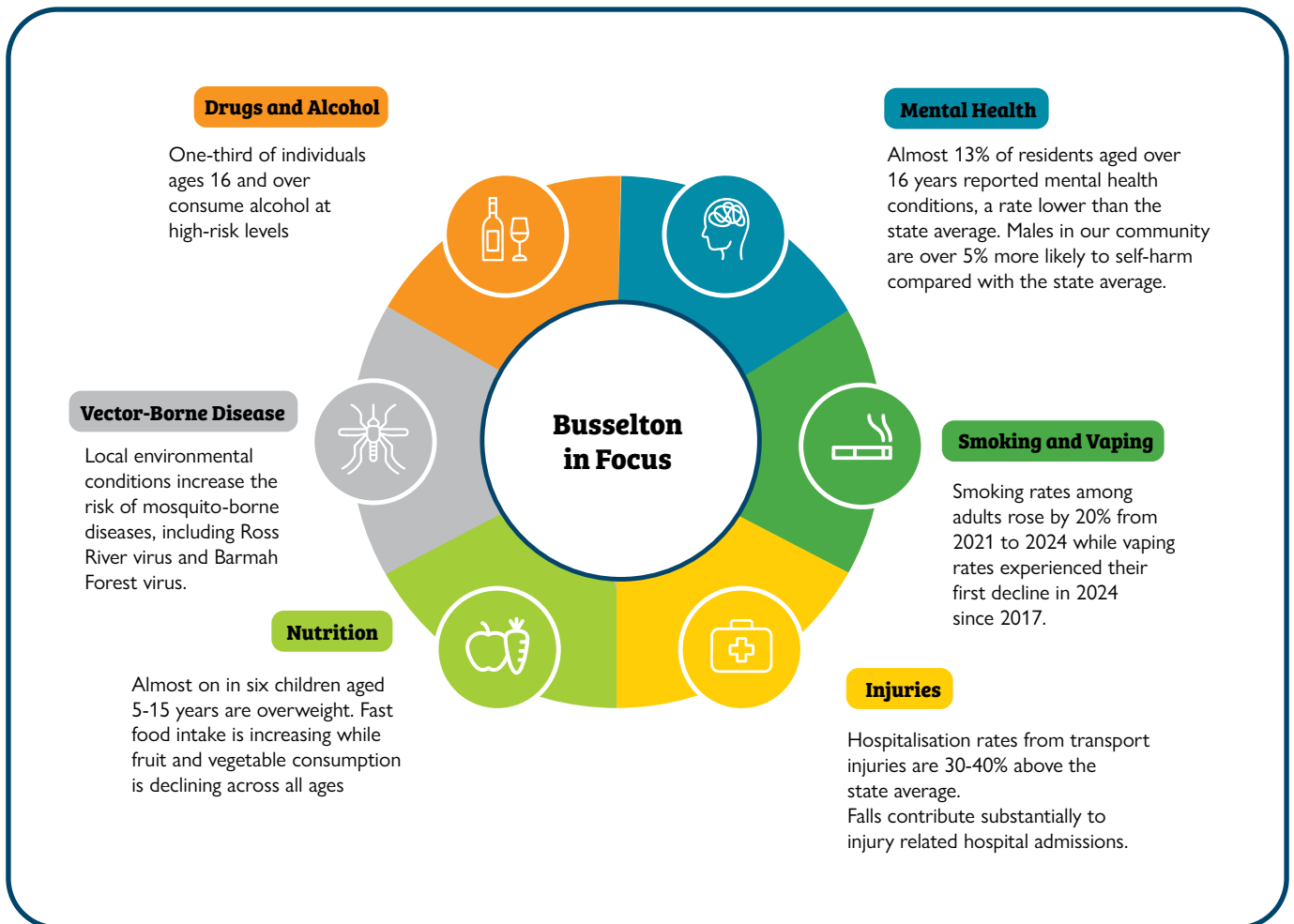
Injury patterns highlight further areas for action. Transport related injuries occur more often in and around the City of Busselton than the WA average, with higher transport related deaths in some years. This is likely influenced by longer travel distances, car dependence and tourism.

Falls are a growing issue, particularly for older adults. While local hospitalisation rates remain below the state average, falls are increasing as the population ages. Mental health also remains a priority, with intentional self harm hospitalisations similar to or above WA levels, particularly

among men.

Public and environmental health

There are encouraging signs in several areas. Rates of sexually transmitted infections, blood borne diseases and vaccine preventable illnesses are lower than WA averages. Mosquito borne diseases are more common locally due to environmental conditions, highlighting the importance of ongoing mosquito management, environmental health programs, community awareness and individual actions.



How the plan was developed

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

Table 1: Investigations Undertake 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 achieved.
Existing services	Preparing the plan is an opportunity to reflect on the existing services provided within the City 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 10.
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 all 2026-27 Actions 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 shaped through broad consultation with community members, industry partners, City officers and local stakeholders. Engagement activities included workshops with public health experts, internal staff, local industry groups and Elected Members, as well as the establishment of the Industry Panel. Insights were also drawn from feedback provided through the 2024 Catalyse MARKYT community scorecard and a community survey designed to identify key concerns and priorities.

Community voices

Input from the wider community played an important role in informing this plan. A community survey was conducted over four weeks from November to December 2025, inviting residents to share their views on the issues they believed should be prioritised by the City of Busselton. Survey participants were predominantly female and over the age of 45, with around 30 per cent identifying as carers, living with disability, and/or from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Community Health and Wellbeing survey 2025 - key findings



Top health concerns

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



Top safety concerns

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



Barriers to participation

- Affordable housing
- Transport options
- Youth facilities
- 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 focuses

Industry stakeholders highlighted the importance of strengthening coordination across sectors, advocating more effectively for regional equity, and prioritising preventative, place based and inclusive approaches to meet community needs. They emphasised that the plan must address interconnected issues such as housing, accessible transport, service access, mental health and effective communication, to ensure all people, across all communities, can participate in and benefit from a healthy, connected and thriving Busselton.

Feedback from the Industry Workshops also provided clear and consistent insights into existing strengths, service gaps and priority focus areas influencing health and wellbeing across 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 a range of structural and service system gaps that constrain community health and wellbeing. Key challenges included:

- Insufficient and insecure funding for regional services, affecting program continuity and sustainability
- A shortage of crisis and safe accommodation options for people experiencing homelessness
- Limited access to specialist and mental health services, resulting in delayed or unmet care needs
- Ongoing housing shortages, including a lack of affordable, appropriate and supported accommodation
- Constraints in public transport services, reducing access to essential services, education and employment
- Gaps in service integration, coordination and cross sector collaboration
- Limited City-led advocacy on health related and social determinants of health issues
- Barriers to healthy food access, mental health literacy and service navigation, particularly for populations experiencing disadvantage or marginalisation

These issues were consistently reinforced through workshop discussions, group exercises and prioritisation activities, highlighting their significance to community wellbeing across the district.



STAFF ONLY

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 age-appropriate 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.



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.



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 Council's efforts for most of the next decade.

City of Busselton's 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 (State Plan) sets the statewide priorities for promoting, protecting and enabling health as well as reducing health risks through prevention strategies across Western Australia. In addition to these four priority areas, the State Plan identifies two overarching objectives that are integral to all public health action:

1. Aboriginal health and wellbeing
2. Equity and inclusion

These objectives provide the policy context within which the City of Busselton's Community Health and Wellbeing Plan has been developed.

Aboriginal health and wellbeing

Aboriginal health and wellbeing extend beyond physical health and encompass social and emotional wellbeing, cultural identity, connection to Country, and the strength of family and community. Recognising and embedding this understanding supports more equitable, inclusive and culturally safe public health approaches that ultimately benefit the whole community.

Within the City of Busselton, approximately 2 percent of residents identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, compared with the identified 4.4 percent from the State plan. While this represents a smaller group of the local population, it does not lessen the City's responsibility to ensure Aboriginal people are respected, visible and meaningfully included in community health and wellbeing planning. Local government plays a critical role in shaping physical environments, policies and engagement practices that support cultural safety, participation and wellbeing.

The City's role is not to deliver Aboriginal health services, but to create conditions that enable wellbeing at a local level. This includes building and maintaining respectful relationships with Aboriginal communities and Cultural Custodians, strengthening cultural awareness and capability through leadership led implementation across all levels of the organisation, and ensuring City facilities, programs, events and engagement processes are culturally safe and inclusive. These foundational actions support trust, encourage participation and contribute to more equitable access to community life.

The City of Busselton's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) provides the primary vehicle for progressing this commitment. As a Reflect RAP progressing toward an Innovate RAP, it focuses on listening, learning, and building relationships with Aboriginal communities. Through this framework, the City aims to increase cultural awareness, support Aboriginal led cultural interpretation and storytelling, and build the organisations capability to engage respectfully and effectively. This lays the groundwork for future actions and partnerships aligned with broader Aboriginal health and wellbeing priorities, identified through the State Public Health Plan and in support of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

By embedding these commitments within the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan, the City of Busselton affirms the importance of Aboriginal perspectives in shaping healthy, inclusive and connected communities, while ensuring that actions are authentic and guided by Aboriginal voices.

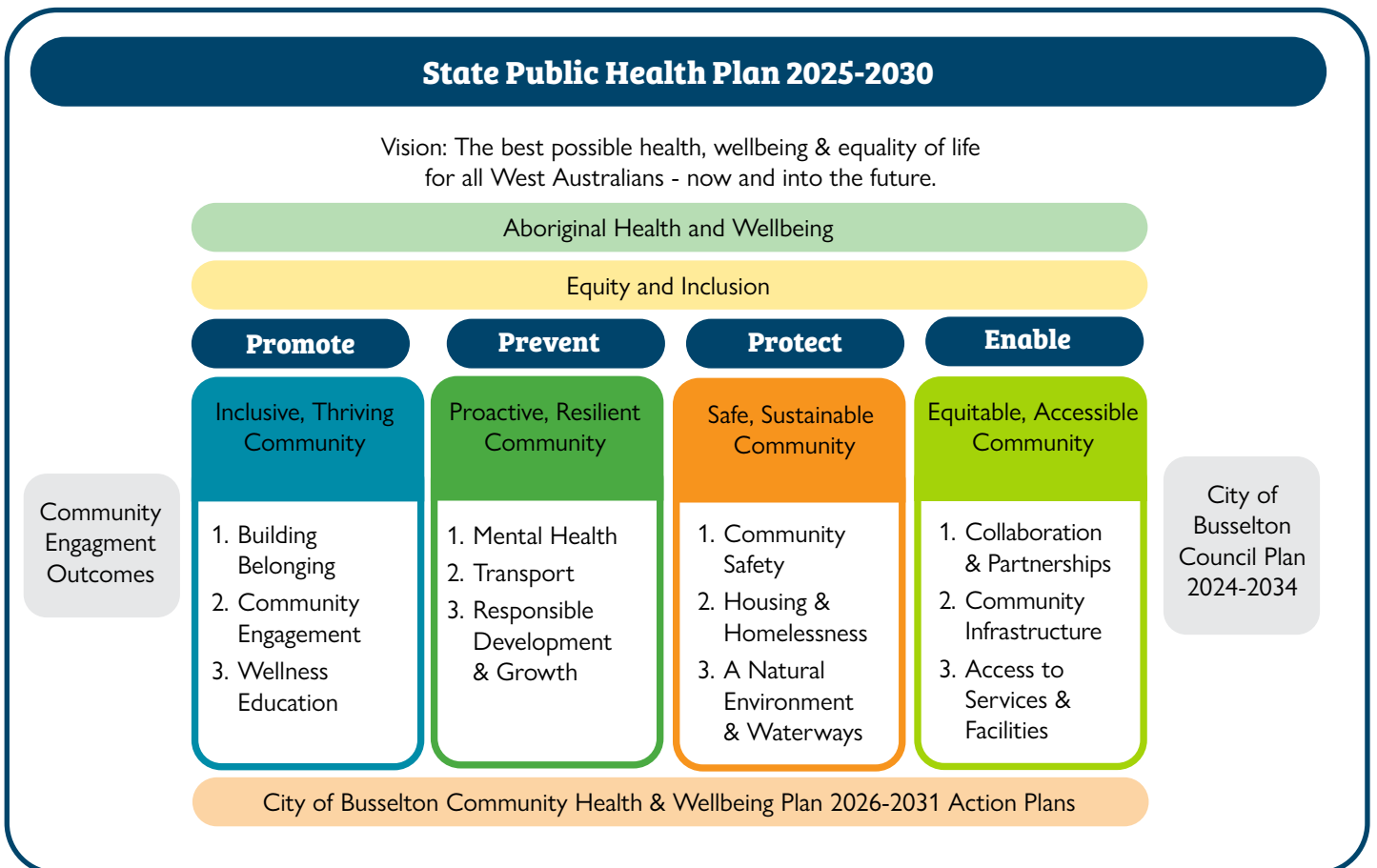
Equity and inclusion

The State Plan highlights the importance of improving equity in health and wellbeing by addressing the social and environmental determinants that influence access to services. In line with this, the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan recognises that not all members of the community experience the same opportunities to be healthy, and that outcomes are shaped by social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors. This context has informed the development of the Plan, which applies an equity focused and life course lens and emphasises inclusive and culturally safe approaches at a local level.

Strategic alignment

In line with these State priorities, Council has identified four strategic focus areas, supported by twelve strategies and informed by the Council Plan and community engagement outcomes. This ensures the 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



Our health and wellbeing outcome

“An inclusive and connected community where our environment, life style 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.

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

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.

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:

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

The following strategies will support achievement of this objective:

Strategic area	Strategy	Year 5 Strategic Indicators
 Lifestyle	S1. Building Belonging Helping people connect and feel part of the community	<p>Increase in community sense of belonging, measured through the biennial Community Satisfaction or Community Wellbeing Survey.</p> <p>Increase in participation rates at City supported events, programs and initiatives that foster inclusion and a sense of identity.</p> <p>Proportion of community members reporting feeling safe and included in public spaces.</p> <p>Increase in initiatives delivered that support identity recognition, cultural inclusion and diversity, including RAP actions, multiculturalism and LGBTIQ+ inclusion.</p> <p>Growth in partnerships that contribute to belonging.</p>

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

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.

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

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

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.

More information: [Disabled Surfers Association – WA South West Branch](#)



Objective Two


Prevent: Proactive, Resilient Community

This objective focuses on helping people stay healthy, improving access to services and creating safe, thoughtfully designed environments. 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:

- Support positive mental health and help people access the right care when needed.
- Improve transport options so people can travel safely and easily for work, school, appointments and social activities.
- Guide responsible development so neighbourhoods remain safe, connected and healthy as the community grows.
- Reduce risks linked to stress, isolation and limited access to services.
- Make it easier for people to be active, connected and engaged in daily life.
- 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	Year 5 Strategic Indicators
 Lifestyle	S4. Mental Health Supporting age-appropriate programs and environments that promote positive mental wellbeing with particular focus on impacts from alcohol and other drugs.	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, increasing mental health literacy. Increase in participation in mental health and wellbeing programs targeting smoking, nutrition and Alcohol and other drugs. 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 particularly those working in AOD and suicide prevention.

Strategic area	Strategy	Year 5 Strategic Indicators
 <p>Place</p>	<p>S5. Transport Improving sustainable, safe, reliable, accessible and inclusive transport options</p>	<p>Increase in active transport participation, measured through counts, surveys or observational data.</p> <p>Improvement in perceived and actual road safety, access to transport related community education and information.</p> <p>Improved neighbourhood walkability and connectivity, assessed through urban design audits, access to paths, proximity to services.</p> <p>Reduction in preventable transport related injuries, trend in local crash and near miss data (using available Main Roads or WALGA RoadWise data).</p> <p>Completion and implementation of District Traffic Strategy, with measurable wellbeing impacts.</p>
 <p>Place</p>	<p>S6. Responsible Development and Growth Planning for safe, healthy and well-connected neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Increase in housing diversity, density targets, housing type and accessibility.</p> <p>Improved urban design supporting healthy lifestyles, walkability, shade, green cover, safe crossings, mixed-use development, connected neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Reduction in environmental health risks in new and existing developments, noise, air quality, heat islands, incompatible land use issues.</p> <p>Community satisfaction with liveability in developing areas, distance from developments to central hubs and community infrastructure and facilities.</p> <p>Connection with transport, availability of diverse transport options.</p>

Case Study: building community resilience Paperbark’s “Hello To Me”

The Hello To Me program has been running in the Busselton and South West community since 2018, delivering a small-group prevention and early intervention wellbeing program that supports adults to manage stress, build confidence, and feel more connected.

The program runs over eight week blocks to provide early mental health support for adults who may be feeling overwhelmed, stuck, or lacking confidence. It focuses on building practical skills to manage stress, cope with change, and improve relationships, supporting the City’s Prevent: Proactive, Resilient Community objective.

Participants meet weekly in small, closed groups of up to ten people. This format helps build trust and creates a safe, supportive space where people can reflect, share experiences, and learn from each other. Sessions are interactive and practical, using simple, evidence based tools (including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) to help participants understand how their thinking patterns affect their wellbeing.

Participants learn how to recognise unhelpful thoughts, challenge negative self talk, and communicate their needs more clearly and confidently. They are encouraged to practice these skills between sessions and reflect on what works for them. Over time, many participants feel more self aware, confident, and better able to manage everyday challenges. These skills support stronger relationships and help people stay engaged in work, family, and community life.

The program offers an accessible, preventative option for people who may not be connected to clinical services. Reducing isolation and strengthening social connections, it helps individuals feel more supported and capable. These individual gains contribute to a more connected, resilient community overall.

This case study shows how locally delivered, early intervention programs can improve wellbeing and strengthen community resilience in a practical, people centered way.

More information: thepaperbarkwellnessproject.au/hellotome



Objective Three

Protect: Safer, Sustainable Community


Creating a safer 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.

This objective aims to:

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

The following strategies will support achievement of this objective:

Strategic area	Strategy	Year 5 Strategic Indicators
 Lifestyle	S7. Community Safety Helping people connect and feel part of the community	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. Increased community awareness of local services supporting community members in crisis, measured through local engagement with services.

Strategic area	Strategy	Year 5 Strategic Indicators
 <p>Environment</p>	<p>S8. Natural Environment and waterways Protecting the environment to ensure clean, healthy places for people and wildlife</p>	<p>Improved community satisfaction with the condition and safety of natural areas, measured via the City’s community scorecard survey.</p> <p>Improvement in water quality trends, including a reduction in environmental risk events.</p> <p>Increase in functional street tree canopy across LGA, measured by the proportion of streets and footpaths providing functional tree shade.</p> <p>Improved coverage of smoke free zones across the LGA, measured through the area of permanent smoke free zones, and the number of City-sponsored harm-free events.</p>
 <p>Place</p>	<p>S9. Housing and homelessness Supporting safe housing options and helping reduce the impacts of homelessness</p>	<p>Improved coordination across housing and homelessness services, measured through interagency collaboration, shared priorities, and joint initiatives.</p> <p>Reduction in rough sleeping or visible homelessness trends, measured through local by name list data, service counts, or agency reporting.</p> <p>Increased community awareness of homelessness support services, measured through local engagement, campaign reach, or survey responses.</p> <p>Rental vacancy rate</p> <p>Increase in activated affordable social housing stock, measured through the percentage activated within the municipal area, using provider or agency reporting.</p>

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.

This objective aims to:

- Improve access to services, facilities and information across the community.
- Reduce barriers that impact priority populations and limit their access to services, spaces, and opportunities.
- Strengthen collaboration and partnerships to deliver better support and opportunities.
- Ensure existing and future community spaces and infrastructure are safe, welcoming and designed for all community members at all stages of life.
- Promote fairness, inclusion and equal opportunity across the district.

The following strategies will support achievement of this objective.

Strategic area	Strategy	Year 5 Strategic Indicators
 <p>Opportunity</p>	<p>S10. Collaboration and Partnerships Working with agencies, organisations and the community to improve support and opportunities</p>	<p>Expanded partnership engagement, measured through an increase in the number and diversity of active partnerships, including traineeships.</p> <p>Increase in jointly delivered programs or initiatives.</p> <p>Improved coordination across key service networks, measured through increased knowledge of service groups.</p> <p>Development and implementation of shared advocacy positions.</p> <p>Increased leverage of external resources, measured through partner led projects supported through City collaboration.</p>

Strategic area	Strategy	Year 5 Strategic Indicators
 <p>Place</p>	<p>S11. Community Infrastructure</p> <p>Designing and maintaining places and spaces that are safe, accessible and welcoming for all</p>	<p>Increased community satisfaction with public infrastructure and open spaces, measured through community scorecard surveys.</p> <p>Progressively improved integration of inclusive and universal design principles in new and upgraded infrastructure, increase of co-design with priority population representation.</p> <p>Improved infrastructure condition and functionality, measured through asset condition ratings, priority population inclusion, compliance checks, or risk reduction.</p> <p>Increased activation and safe use of community facilities and public spaces, footfall counts, bookings, or observational usage.</p>
 <p>Lifestyle</p>	<p>S12. Access to Services and Facilities</p> <p>Improving availability, inclusiveness and awareness of local services and community resources</p>	<p>Improved accessibility and inclusiveness of City services, measured through Community Satisfaction Surveys, increase in the reach of messaging about City services across multiple communication channels.</p> <p>Increase in diversity of community use of City services and facilities, footfall counts, bookings, or observational usage.</p> <p>Improved awareness of available services and facilities, measured through surveys, engagement analytics, or campaign reach.</p> <p>Reduction in barriers to access/ increased service reach to priority populations, increased consultation with priority populations to identify barriers to use.</p> <p>Improved alignment between services and community needs, measured by review cycles, satisfaction ratings, needs assessments, and feedback loops.</p>

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.

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 Action Plan

*2024-2034 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)	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	Elders Advisory Group, SWAMS	Revised Plan adopted.
S2 Community Engagement	Establish a Community Health and Wellbeing Plan Reference Group. (Working together)	Lead Public Health	Industry Partners and Community representatives.	Reference Group established by 30 June 2027, including endorsed terms of reference and confirmed membership.
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.
	Peri/Menopause support group (Community-led)	Advocate	The People Place	Success measured by attendance.
	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.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
S4 Mental Health	Assist in distributing consistent, evidence based mental health support service information and education 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 and education.
	Over 50s social club. (Community-led)	Advocate	The People Place	Attendance.
	Community Volunteer Program supporting older people in their own homes. (Community-led)	Advocate	CapeCare	Annual surveys of clients and volunteers.
	Alcohol, Other Drug and Mental Health Prevention Plan. (Community-led)	Advocate	Safer Steps Busselton	Development of the plan.
	Outreach services for when required rather than just business hours. (Community-led)	Advocate	ICAMHS	Move to seven days per week.
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	Accessible bus for community use (Community-led)	Advocate	Lamp	Purchase of bus
	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.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
S7 Community Safety	Conduct research on resident's perceptions on community safety in the City. (Working together)	Facilitate	Edith Cowan University	Completion of consultant led research into residents' perceptions of community safety, including data collection and final reporting.
	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 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.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
S9 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.
S10 Collaboration & Partnership	Enhance awareness and accessibility of City venues to support increased community group use. (Fair access)	Lead Venues		Increase in venue booking enquiries from community groups compared to baseline.
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.

Strategy	2026/27 Actions	City Role	Delivery Partner	Measure
	Time to Think Helping older people transition from hospital. (Community-led)	Advocate	Capecare Busselton Hospital WACH DOHWA	Fewer hospital beds occupied by older people who are ready for discharge but cannot safely return home.
	General Practitioner Service Education. (Community-led)	Advocate	Capecare WA Primary Health Alliance	Increase in the number of GP visits delivered within care facilities. Improved GP knowledge of local care services and referral pathways measured via survey.



Implementation, monitoring and review

Review and evaluation of the Plan will be undertaken and reported on an annual basis with a significant review every five years.

Strategy	Timings	City Role
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.





City of Busselton
Geographe Bay

Join Our Community



T (08) 9781 0444
E city@busselton.wa.gov.au

2 Southern Drive Busselton
Western Australia

Locked Bag 1 Busselton WA 6280
www.busselton.wa.gov.au