

Draft Warrnambool Community Services Futures Plan

Warrnambool City Council

December | 2025





Independent
insight.



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SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd
ACN 007 437 729
www.sgsep.com.au

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Executive summary

Scope

This Community Services Futures Plan 2040 (CSFP) provides ensures Council's future decision-making and investment in community infrastructure and services is clear, equitable and based on evidence of need and insights from the community.

The CSFP considers the current state, future community needs, and Council's role in supporting the following community services and infrastructure:

Libraries	Community Centres	Arts and culture	Multipurpose Spaces
Youth centres	Education	Community health	Seniors and aged care

Considerations

The CSFP is informed by a contemporary approach to community infrastructure planning and changing trends this includes:

- Ensuring access to well-located services and community infrastructure for all residents, including in those moving into the city's growth areas.
- Community infrastructure and services that are accessible and welcoming for all community members regardless of their social status, age, background, and abilities.
- Ensuring existing and future infrastructure is multipurpose, flexible and inclusive for a range of services and community groups.
- Ensuring current and future infrastructure and services are financially sustainable, including improving the fitness for purpose and utilisation of existing infrastructure as well as identifying opportunities to consolidate, decommission, or dispose of assets that can no longer meet community needs.
- Identifying opportunities for partnerships with other levels of government, not-for-profit and the private sector to support in the delivery of community infrastructure and services.

Summary of service recommendations

The CFFP identifies specific service recommendations, as summarised in the following table. These recommendations have informed the CSFP Action Plan which identifies 18 specific actions, with each action identifying Council's role as provider, planner, funder or advocate, along with the proposed timeframe for implementation and the cost implications.

The analysis and insights provided in the CSFP provide the basis for informing Council's strategic planning and business cases for community infrastructure projects, service plans and reviews, planning studies, masterplans and Development Contributions Plans.

Service	Recommendations
Library	<p>No additional library services are required.</p> <p>Continue to review and monitor utilisation data.</p> <p>Consider opportunities to increase accessibility via extended operating hours and or via click and collect/kiosk outposts at other community hub sites.</p>
Neighbourhood house / community centres	<p>Deliver the community centre in the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area and consider the relocation of the Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre (not-for-profit) into this centre to be the service provider.</p> <p>Redevelop the Archie Graham Community Centre. In doing so, work with the service providers to expand services to cater for older people and the broader community.</p>
Multipurpose Community Space	<p>Deliver the integrated Brierly Community Hub with a large flexible meeting space. In addition, consider opportunities to integrate services from the Scouts, Girl Guides, and Band Hall into this facility.</p> <p>Review other existing meeting spaces to improve utilising and fitness for purpose. Where this cannot be achieved, consider opportunities for consolidation and integration with alternative sites.</p> <p>Review lease and licencing agreements with sporting clubs to increase opportunities to share meeting rooms in pavilions.</p>
Community arts space	<p>Provide 1 new community arts space. This space should be integrated into a facility with additional services. Based on spatial accessibility it is recommended to be considered within the East of Aberline Community Centre.</p> <p>An interim solution to be found for the History House, with the long term recommendation for the services to be relocated to the redeveloped Archie Graham Community Centre.</p> <p>Renew and improve accessibility of Mozart Hall to improve fitness for purpose and asset condition.</p>
Youth centre	<p>Continue to provide youth programs from multipurpose community centres and youth friendly spaces across the city.</p> <p>Work in partnership with young people and existing services dedicated to young people to explore if a centrally located youth centre is required.</p>
Education	<p>Work with the Victorian Government to deliver the additional primary schools in the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area the North of the Merri Structure Plan.</p>
Health services	<p>Continue to work with the health sector to understand capacity, utilisation and community trends</p>
Residential aged care	<p>Work with the state government, private, and not-for-profit residential aged care providers to increase supply of aged care beds.</p>

1. Introduction

1.1 Project background and purpose

The Community Services Futures Plan 2040 (CSFP) provides Council, other local service providers and community organisations with the evidence and strategic outlook for the future provision of community services and infrastructure over the next 15 years - up to 2040 and beyond.

The CSFP builds on the progress that Council has made through the 2013 Community Services and Infrastructure Plan. It reflects the current and changing community needs and the contemporary approach to community infrastructure planning.

The purpose of the Community Services Futures Plan (CSFP) is to ensure Council's future decision-making and investment in community infrastructure and services is clear, equitable and based on evidence of need and insights from the community.

The CSFP:

- Provides a framework to guide decision making on future community infrastructure projects, funding requirements, advocacy efforts and partnership opportunities.
- Identifies future demand and location for services and infrastructure which are likely to be required with consideration of current supply and utilisation, including opportunities for optimization of use of existing facilities.

The CSFP will inform Council's strategic planning and inform business cases for community infrastructure projects, service plans and reviews, planning studies, masterplans and Development Contributions Plans.

1.2 Scope of this Plan

The CFSP assesses the needs and opportunities for community facilities and services in the City of Warrnambool. It sits alongside the **Warrnambool Futures, Early Years Infrastructure Plan**, and **Open Space Strategy** projects.

Community infrastructure can be broadly defined as the:

Spaces and activities through which people socialise, learn, recreate, create, and celebrate culture.
It is the sum of 'hard' infrastructure (buildings) and 'soft' infrastructure (services and programs).

This assessment focusses on Council-owned facilities but also considers the role of other providers in the infrastructure network, including state government and the private and not-for-profit sectors.

The CFSP scope includes:

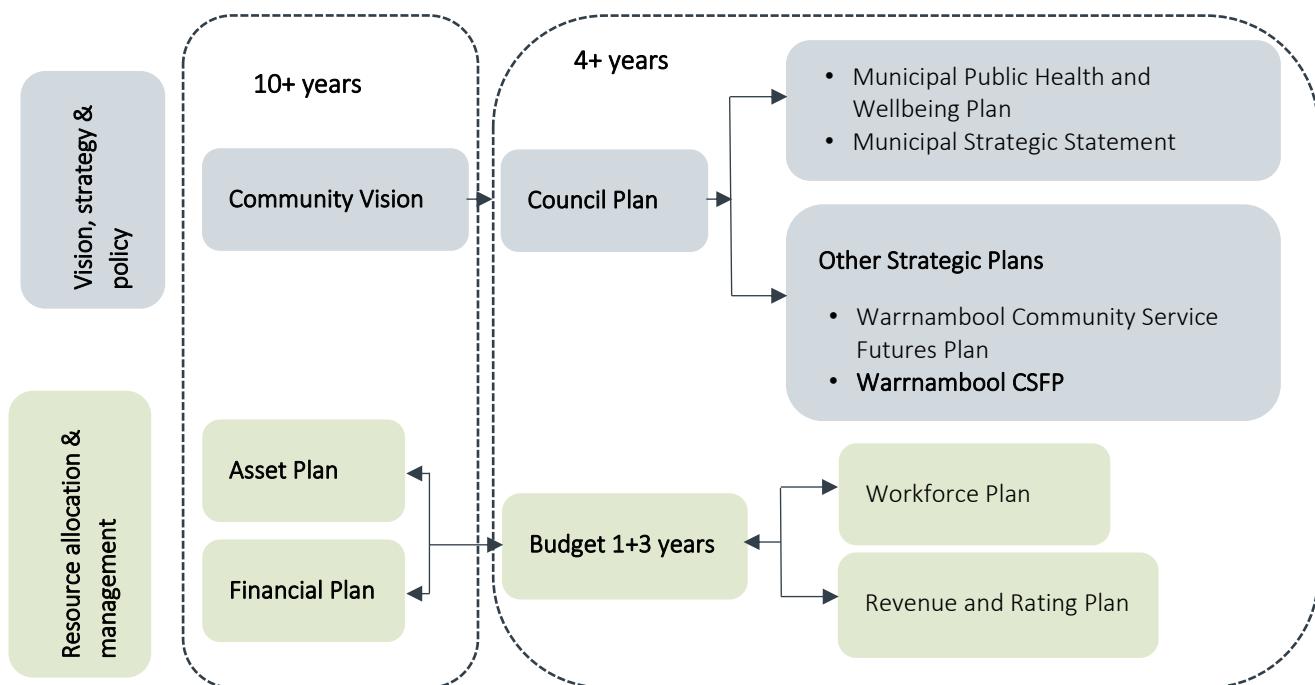
Libraries	Community Centres	Arts and culture	Multipurpose Spaces
Youth centres	Education	Community health	Seniors and aged care

2. Policy context

The following section provides an overview of the current policy that informs the future directions of community services and infrastructure in the city.

2.1 Integrated planning framework

The CSFP sits within Councils integrated planning framework. All of Council's work is guided by the Community Vision (Warrnambool 2040) and Council Plan. The CSFP, along with other strategic plans, will directly work to deliver on the Council themes of City Futures, City Infrastructure, City Sustainability, City Wellbeing, and City Leadership.



2.2 Municipal strategy and service planning

As a significant regional centre, the City of Warrnambool is committed to numerous strategic and framework plans that guide the delivery of priority projects and services across Council. A detailed summary of relevant policies can be found in Appendix A. Key implications for community services and infrastructure in the municipality identified are:

- **Community service offerings at a local level enable broader economic outcomes:** Warrnambool is a major activity hub for the region. Community spaces such as multipurpose rooms can act as a safe, affordable and accessible place for people to meet, ideas to form and projects to establish whether it be a creative, business or tourism related venture.

- **Positive health outcomes are enabled by community services:** Community services play a role in the prevention of poor physical and emotional wellbeing. Open spaces provide a place for physical activity to occur, as well as function as settings for incidental socialisation which can reduce feelings of loneliness. Multipurpose rooms and other community spaces are often where special interest or support groups gather such as playgroups and neighbourhood houses which can also contribute to a feeling of belonging.
- **Need for Warrnambool's provision level of community services should be commensurate to its status as a regional hub:** Warrnambool is a hub for education, employment and lifestyle and therefore draws people from across the South West region. A people centred approach to community service provision will help meet the needs of the growing population and support the city to remain an attractive destination to live, work and play. Inadequate or inappropriate offerings may draw people away from the area whether due to preference or necessity. This regional role and provision needs to be balanced with financial sustainability for Council. A key direction through the Council Plan being that the City will prioritise maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure.

The findings of the CSFP will be integrated into the *Warrnambool Futures* strategy. This strategy is intended to support long-term land use planning across the municipality in response to projected population growth over the next 20-30 years. Upon its completion, the City will be able to make informed and strategic choices around future land use that adequately consider changes to demographics and housing needs associated with this growth. Alongside this, Council is currently developing a more detailed outlook for the provision of early years services in the municipality via the *Warrnambool Early Years Infrastructure Plan*.

2.3 State-level directions

In 2025, the state government released **A Plan for Victoria** which outlines the overarching planning direction for metropolitan Melbourne and the regions – including the City of Warrnambool. The Plan supersedes both Plan Melbourne 2050 and the 12 Regional Growth Plans.

The Plan notes that Warrnambool is a regional city which ‘will continue to be a location for homes, employment, economic activity and investment in the region, delivering public transport, facilities and services to residents of the city and surrounding areas.’ Furthermore, the Plan includes a housing target for Warrnambool for an additional 7,200 dwellings by 2051.

The Plan has five pillars:

- Self-determination and caring for Country
- Housing for all Victorians
- Accessible jobs and services
- Sustainable environments
- Great places, suburbs and towns.

One of the key pillars in the Plan, the ‘accessible jobs and services’ theme commits the government to ensuring ‘communities have the public transport, facilities and services they need to lead healthy, productive lives, including schools and kindergartens, TAFEs, emergency services, health care, active

transport and open space.’ Beyond this, the Plan does not make any specific commitments or action relevant to community infrastructure provision in established areas.

Infrastructure Victoria is a crucial advisory body for infrastructure and planning matters in the state. In this capacity, it is responsible for the development of **Victoria’s Infrastructure Strategy 2025-55**.¹ The Strategy provides a high-level roadmap for action over the next 30 years, identifying the top infrastructure priorities for Victoria. The Strategy is focused on six core areas including: economics participation and prosperity; health; self-determination of Aboriginal Victorians; and climate. Under these themes, the specific recommendations relevant to social infrastructure and growth areas such as Warrnambool include:

- Targeting government investment in regional centres
- Build libraries and aquatic centres in Melbourne’s growing communities, and particularly in areas where people born overseas may reside
- Promoting active lifestyles through provision of recreational and outdoor areas
- Invest in and maintain community health facilities
- Co-location or repurposing of community services for vulnerable populations
- Help government schools share their grounds.

Furthermore, the Strategy acknowledges the need to improve public transport connections into and around regional Victoria.

¹This does not constitute official government policy, as Infrastructure Victoria is an independent advisory body.

3. The Warrnambool community

This section outlines the city's current community profile and how this is forecast to change into the future.

3.1 Community profile

Current and forecast population

The population of the City of Warrnambool in 2021 was 35,406 people.² A significant proportion of this population is aged 45yrs and over (Table 1).

Over the next 20 years it is forecast that an addition 4,142 residents will call the City of Warrnambool home.³ During this time the city will see an increase in the ageing population and a slight decrease in the number of children and young people (those aged under 19yrs) and those aged between 20-29 years.

Table 1: Age structure forecast of City of Warrnambool, 2021-2046

Aged group	2021	2031	2036	2046	2021-46 Growth	CAGR Growth 2021-46
Children (0-4)	1,881	1,864	1,873	1,801	-80	-0.2%
Youth (5-19)	6,533	6,014	5,877	5,971	-562	-0.4%
Young Adult (20-29)	4,215	4,398	4,552	4,062	-153	-0.1%
Adult (30-44)	6,479	6,466	6,228	6,517	38	0.0%
Mature Adult (45-64)	8,998	8,926	9,184	9,494	496	0.2%
Retiree (65 and over)	7,327	9,775	10,870	11,703	4,376	1.9%
Total	35,433	37,443	38,584	39,548	4,115	0.4%

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025) using data from VIF23. Note: The 2036-2046 forecast is undertaken using the VIF23 data as the starting point. The age structure for 2021 utilises the ABS Census 2021 data and is not based on the forecast.

In 2021 there were approximately 14,000 households in the City of Warrnambool. In relation to household composition, most of the households in the City of Warrnambool were lone person

² ABS, 2021, Census

³ 2025, State of Warrnambool Report

households (4,229) followed by couple families with no children (3,891). Both of these household types also saw the greatest level of increase between 2011 and 2021 (26% and 22% respectively) behind 'other non-classifiable household' (Table 2).

Table 2: Family household composition in Warrnambool, 2011-2021

Family household composition	2011	2016	2021	2011-21 Change (#)	2011-21 Change (%)
Couple family with no children	3,177	3,409	3,891	714	22%
Couple family with children	3,416	3,417	3,635	219	6%
One parent family	1,432	810	910	-522	-36%
Other family	137	121	160	23	17%
Group household	493	502	452	-41	-8%
Lone person household	3,369	3,759	4,229	860	26%
Visitors only household	222	158	226	4	2%
Other non-classifiable household	350	757	518	168	48%
Total	12,596	12,933	14,021	1,425	11%

Source: ABS Census 2011, 2016 and 2021

Overall, the demographics of residents in the City of Warrnambool are largely consistent with those reported in Regional Victoria. The key areas of difference based on 2021 data are the lower number of people born overseas in the City of Warrnambool (15% vs 19%) and the slightly higher weekly median household income in the City of Warrnambool (\$1,420 vs \$1,386). The household types in the City of Warrnambool are very similar to broader trends in Regional Victoria, with the City of Warrnambool having a slightly lower proportion of multiple family households (Table 3).

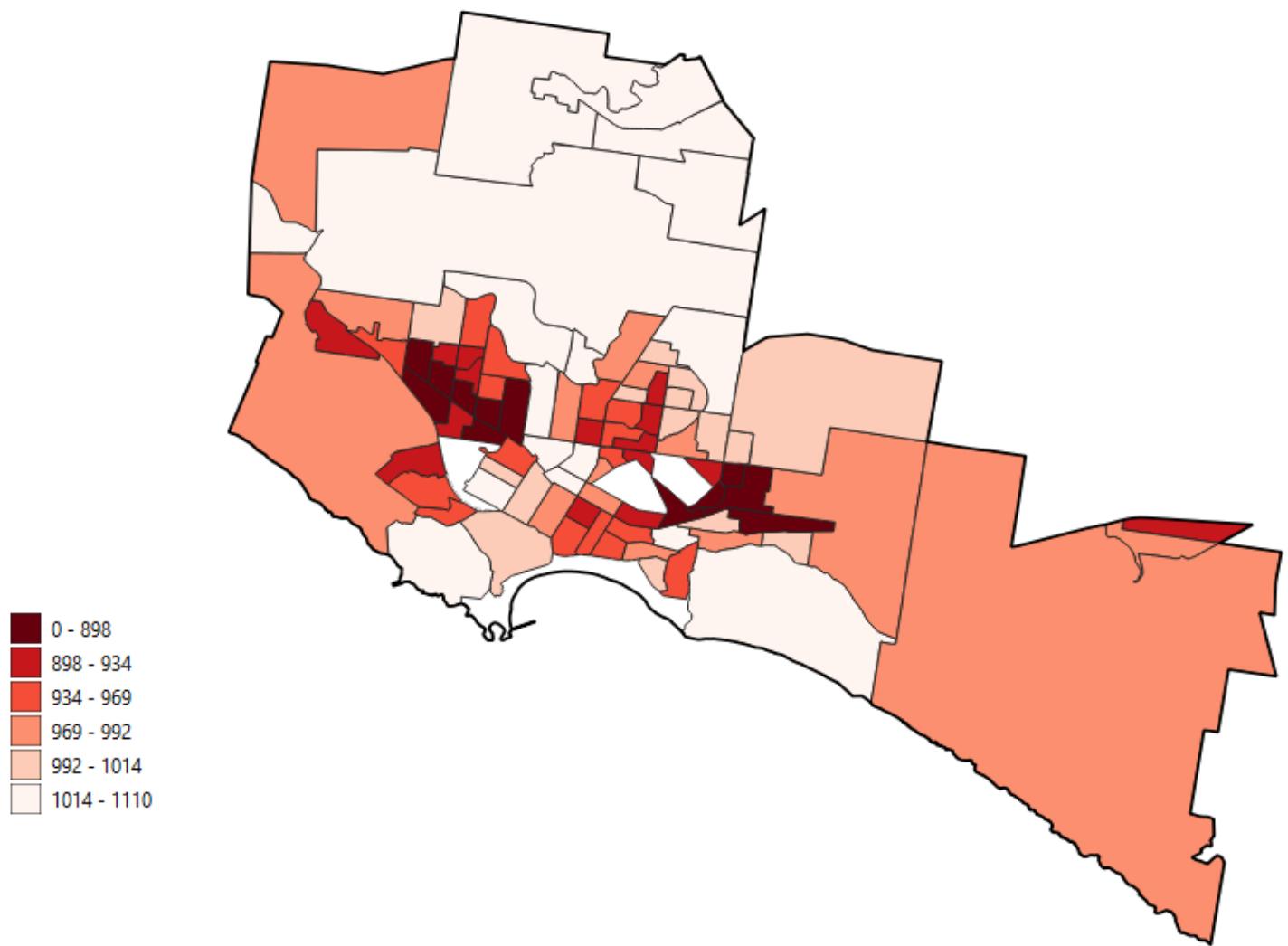
Table 3: Community characteristics, Warrnambool and Regional Victoria, 2021

Characteristics	City of Warrnambool	Regional Victoria
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1.95%	2.04%
Born overseas	15.05%	18.98%
Language other than English spoken at home	10.85%	13.59%
Weekly median household income	\$1,420	\$1,386
Household Types		
One Family Household	62.9%	62.8%
Multiple Family Household	1.5%	2.1%
Non-Family Household (group and lone person)	30.4%	28.8%
Not Applicable/Non-Classifiable	5.2%	6.2%

Source: ABS (2021)

In relation to socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, in 2021 the City of Warrnambool had a slightly below average score (995). Across the city there are areas of both high and very low disadvantage as seen in the IRSAD (Index of Relative Social Advantage and Disadvantage) in Figure 1. The most disadvantaged areas were clustered to the east and west of Warrnambool Central.

Figure 1: Disadvantage and Advantage in Warrnambool (SEIFA-IRSAD), 2021



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025), based on ABS (2021). Note that a lower IRSAD score indicates residents are experiencing more disadvantage / less advantage.

4. Community infrastructure trends

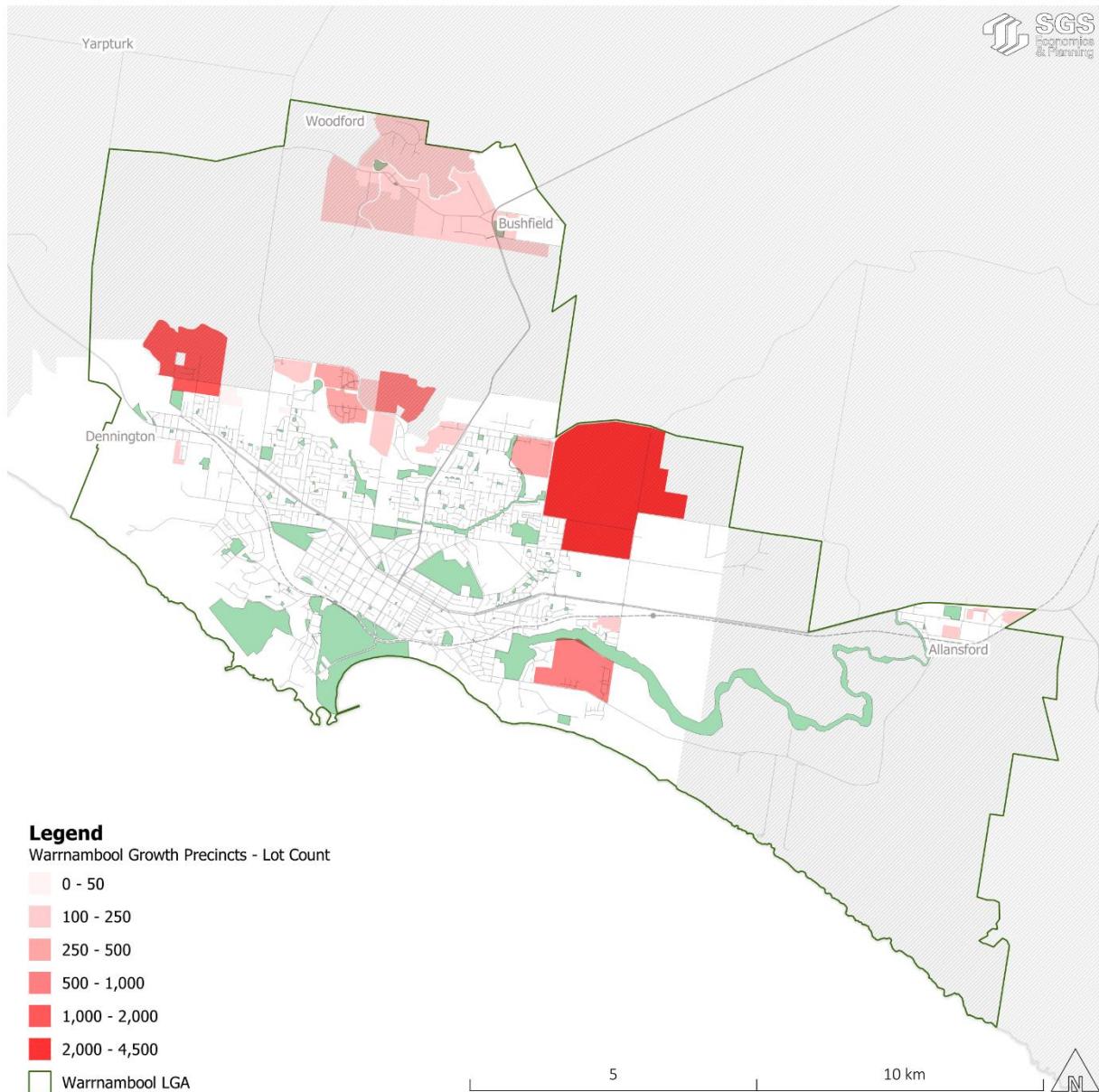
This section outlines some of the trends and challenges that have been facing local government, the City of Warrnambool, and the delivery of community infrastructure more broadly.

4.1 Population growth and spatial considerations

As noted earlier the population of the City of Warrnambool will increase by an additional 4,142 residents by 2046. The spatial distribution of this forecast population growth will largely be contained to the key growth areas of Dennington, north of the Merri, the East of Aberline precinct (east of Aberline Road), and Hopkins Heights. Woodford, Bushfield and Allansford is also forecast to experience growth, however not at as significant a rate as the other areas (Figure 2).

Within these growth precincts there is currently limited community infrastructure. In order to support this growth, access to well-located services and community infrastructure will be critical, while also ensuring that services are financially viable. This can be supported by ensuring existing and future infrastructure is multipurpose, flexible and inclusive for a range of services and community groups.

Figure 2: Growth in the City of Warrnambool



4.2 Changing community needs

Community infrastructure has a lifespan of 50 to 100 years. Over this time infrastructure needs to adapt and respond to changing community demographics and needs.

Expectations of community infrastructure is also changing. With many users requiring technology enabled spaces to support work, education, and the delivery of programs; longer opening hours; a broader range of services; and a range of services situated within the one location.

Community infrastructure today and of the future is expected to better respond to these different needs. This can be achieved through the integration of universal design principles⁴ and the delivery of flexible and adaptable spaces.

As noted earlier in this Plan, the diversity of needs across the city also varies. In relation to community infrastructure, areas with higher disadvantage may require additional services and community infrastructure. The most disadvantaged areas in the City of Warrnambool are clustered to the east and west of Warrnambool Central.

Furthermore, the city will continue to experience an increase in older residents. All community infrastructure and services should be accessible and welcoming for all community members regardless of their social status, age, background, and abilities. This will be important when considering the design of facilities as well as service models, payment structures, and operating hours.

4.3 Integration and co-location

Traditionally community infrastructure was built to support exclusive use by one individual service. Stand-alone infrastructure often results in limited use or exclusive use, increased maintenance costs due to increased numbers of assets, inability to change with community needs, and limited opportunities for sharing ideas, resources, social interactions or referrals between service providers. This delivery approach has also resulted in lots of small service specific infrastructure. Examples of this include standalone maternal & child health facilities, seniors facilities, community halls, and scout halls.

Due to the specifics of this infrastructure (e.g. one large room) or the perceived ownership over the facility by one service area, the facilities are hard to adapt and or be used by other services and community groups. This can result in highly underutilised facilities, user groups siloed in separate venues, and asset owners (Council) having a large portfolio of disparate buildings and spaces to maintain and staff.

This standalone service specific infrastructure is no longer viable. Council cannot afford infrastructure to be sitting dormant with increased financial pressures. Furthermore, there are service providers and community groups seeking access to community infrastructure while existing infrastructure is underutilised.

Given this, integration of community services and infrastructure is considered best practice. Where possible, integration should be achieved at all types and levels of community facilities. This includes several services/programs/groups working out of the same facility and sharing infrastructure spaces. This is commonly referred to as a community hub.

This also aligns with community feedback obtained during Council's asset survey. As noted in the Asset Strategy 'there was overwhelming support from the community for Council to prioritise multi-purpose

⁴ Universal design is the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to most people, regardless of age, disability, background or any other factors. It includes seven principles: equitable use, flexible in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, size and space for approach and use (Victorian Government, 2025, Universal Design, <https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design>)

facilities over single purpose or specialised buildings, with just over 80% of respondents preferencing multi-purpose buildings'.⁵

4.4 Increasing asset pool and financial sustainability

Community infrastructure is largely funded through rates and government grants however local governments are becoming increasingly financially constrained. This is due to a range of factors including the rate cap, decreasing and tied external grants, limited alternative income streams, increasing costs of infrastructure delivery, and an increase in the overall number of community assets.

Council's Asset Plan notes that within the building category (which includes more than just community infrastructure) the current condition of infrastructure is in a fair condition. Based on Councils financial capacity, existing building infrastructure and renewal demands there is a shortfall of \$2.17M per annum over the next 10 years.

The Asset Plan notes that the underfunding of building renewal may lead to:

- Inability to be meeting compliance with current building codes across the entire asset class
- Increasing demand on reactive maintenance
- Result in a reduction in service level outcomes
- Increase pressure on future years' budgets

The Plan notes key strategies to improve financial sustainability. This includes the identification of opportunities to consolidate, decommission, or dispose of assets; prioritising renewal and upgrades to infrastructure that best match community needs; and seeking external grant funding.

4.5 Partnerships

While local government has a key role in the planning, delivery and operation of community infrastructure, they cannot do it alone. With challenging financial settings facing local government, partnerships are widely seen as an increasingly beneficial and viable pathway for infrastructure and service delivery. Formal partnerships can fill gaps in skillsets and experience that councils are not positioned to provide and can fill a gap where informal relationships through community volunteering are in decline.⁶

Partnership models vary. Examples include MOUs where multiple providers agree to share a single space between their respective users, lease and license agreements where one provider allows another exclusive use of a facility or space, or integration/co-management of a facility where multiple providers collaborate for a seamless user experience.

⁵ City of Warrnambool, Asset Strategy 2025-2035

⁶ Zhu, R. (2022). 'The Decline of Formal Volunteering in Australia (2001–2020): Insights from the HILDA Survey.' https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VRP_The-Decline-of-Formal-Volunteering-in-Australia-2001–2020-Insights-from-the-HILDA-Survey.pdf

Partners can include other levels of government, not-for-profit, and the for-profit sector such as the development sector. To maximise the success of partnership arrangements there needs to be strong alignment around the vision and operational goals and requirements of all parties, resulting in a collaborative process from the design of new facilities or refurbishment of existing facilities.⁷ If individual parties in multi-party projects hold on to ‘their way’ of doing business, this is less likely to result in successful partnerships.

This approach is not without risks. This includes maintenance and renewal of non-Council owned facilities being neglected and causing reputational damage to Council, or maintenance responsibility being passed to Council to manage, where buildings were built to a lower standard. A further risk is that state owned land or facilities could be sold or redeveloped if the state desires, putting long-term service delivery at active facilities at risk.

⁷ Tordoff, D, and Atkin J. (2023). ‘Developing a School and Community Learning Hub: A Case Study from Regional Australia.’ *Schools as Community Hubs - Building ‘More than a School’ for Community Benefit*, pp. 233-249. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9972-7>

5. Community infrastructure planning principles

This section set out the principles to guide community infrastructure planning.

The delivery of community services and infrastructure will change and evolve over time. The following community infrastructure planning principles have been developed by Council to support in delivering infrastructure that responds to both current and future need.

These principles have been used to support the development of community infrastructure recommendations.

Table 4: Guiding principles for the delivery of community services and infrastructure

Principle	What this looks like in practice
Flexible and responsive	Wherever possible, infrastructure will be designed for maximum flexibility and adaptability. This will enable use by the broadest possible range of groups, services and activities and ensure facilities can be repurposed over time to suit changing community needs and priorities and new opportunities.
High-quality and innovative	Infrastructure will support contemporary best-practice service models. Design will incorporate environmental sustainability and the use of technology
Welcoming and inclusive	Infrastructure will be designed to be safe, accessible and welcoming to all members of the community, regardless of age, background or ability, fostering a sense of belonging and supporting equitable participation across diverse groups.
Strategic and co-located	Where appropriate, infrastructure will support the co-location of multiple services, programs and organisations to maximise convenience and encourage partnerships and collaboration.
Financially sustainable	Infrastructure planning and delivery will consider whole-of-life costs and aim for long-term financial sustainability. This includes exploring diverse funding and operational models, promoting shared use, and ensuring operational efficiency to reduce ongoing burdens.
Accessible	Infrastructure will be located in areas that are accessible. This includes locations that support a significant portion of the service catchment through active and public transport connections and road connections.

6. Service assessment inputs

This section set out the service assessment approach used in the following chapter.

6.1 Understanding the needs assessment

The community infrastructure assessment includes several inputs. This includes asset condition, utilisation, fitness for purpose and accessibility of each facility. Each of these inputs help inform the understanding of current and future infrastructure needs.

Asset condition

Asset condition scores provide an understanding of the physical state of existing infrastructure. These scores are currently used to inform renewal and maintenance budgets to ensure that assets are managed to achieve an optimal asset life.

This assessment includes asset condition data collected by Council in 2025. The buildings components were individually assessed and an average asset score of 1-5 was provided for each building. 1 being very good/excellent and 5 being very poor, with urgent renewal or replacement required (Table 5). This asset data is only provided for Council owned buildings.

Table 5: Asset condition scoring

Criteria	Scoring	
	1	No work required, or only routine maintenance is needed.
	2	Good: Minor maintenance may be required.
Average score of the condition of individual components: structure, roof/gutters, fit out and footings.	3	Fair/moderate: Significant maintenance may be needed.
	4	Poor: Renewal or replacement is required.
	5	Very Poor: Urgent renewal or replacement is needed

Source: City of Warrnambool

Utilisation

Utilisation assesses how well facilities are being used. The utilisation of each facility considers its capacity against current level of use. The assessments indicate where existing infrastructure has capacity for more use and may be able to accommodate the increasing demands of population growth without the need to build new infrastructure.

For most facilities, this is informed by opening/operational hours, activity levels within facilities, room bookings, and unmet demand. The level of utilisation of a facility can be impacted by the condition of the building and or the Fitness for Purpose (FFP).

The utilisation assessment, undertaken by Council officers, groups the utilisation into three categories, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Utilisation scoring

Score	Utilisation
1	High utilisation - used for most of the time it is available, with little to no capacity to be used more
3	Moderate utilisation - used around half to two-thirds the time it is available; but could be used more
5	Low utilisation - gets little use and has capacity to be used more (this may also be as a result of poor FFP)
N/A	Lack of available information / private facility

Fitness for purpose

Fitness-for-purpose (FFP) relates to the functionality and suitability of facilities for their intended use. It reflects how well they are able to meet the needs of intended service or building users to enable greatest asset utilisation.

An assessment was conducted to rate the FFP of each facility. Each facility is scored from 1 to 5 across each of the attributes shown in Table 7. Each attribute is weighted evenly, and the scores are then averaged to provide an overall FFP score for each facility. The FFP scoring is shown in Table 8.

Table 7: Fitness-for-purpose criteria

Criteria	Description
Size and Configuration	<p>Is the overall size of the facility, and the size of individual rooms functional? Consider all space types including storage.</p> <p>Is the layout of spaces functional? Consider configuration, interconnectedness, ease of use and circulation</p>
Design and Fit out – Interior	<p>Is the interior appearance and finish functional? Consider cleanliness, age, overall design, appliances, paint, fixtures and fittings.</p> <p>Are surfaces fit for purpose? Consider floors, walls, windows, doors</p> <p>Are utilities, systems, equipment and furniture functional? Consider electrical, lighting, heating, cooling, IT, lifts etc.</p>
Design and Fit out – Exterior	<p>Is the exterior appearance fit for purpose? Consider gardens, paths, sheds, outside lighting</p> <p>Is there clear signage indicating what the facility's use is?</p>
Location and convenience	<p>Is the facility convenient to the community it is intended to serve?</p> <p>Is it co-located with other community services?</p> <p>Is it accessible by car and by public transport?</p> <p>Is there sufficient and suitable parking?</p>

Source: City of Warrnambool

Table 8: Fitness-for-purpose scoring

Score	Fitness for Purpose
1	Excellent - fully meets criteria; there are no issues that impact on service delivery
2	Very good - generally meets the criteria, but perhaps with minor issues/shortcomings
3	Satisfactory - meets some criteria, but could be better
4	Poor - does not meet most criteria, and there are impacts on service delivery/users
5	Very poor/does not at all meet the criteria

Source: City of Warrnambool

7. Service supply and demand

The following section provides an overview of each of the community services provided in the city and the future demand.

7.1 Library

Library	Definition
Library	<p>Contemporary libraries provide access to a range of resources and services, including magazines, music, film, audio books, console games, STEM kits, newspapers, printing facilities, computers, Wi-Fi and electronic resources such as databases – in addition to books. Libraries are also often home to a variety of community programs such as story time, skill development and support sessions, including literacy programs. There may also be specialised resources and spaces integrated into library facilities such as makerspaces, youth and audiovisual booths.</p> <p>Libraries can be provided at a local, district, and regional level depending on service needs, population and accessibility.</p>

The role of public libraries has evolved significantly beyond simply being a place where people go to access books and other printed reading material. In addition to extended service offering, 24hr access or access to libraries after dark is becoming more common as communities are seeking spaces after 5pm. The Victorian Government also supports a Libraries After Dark program. The aim of the program is to provide communities a free, safe and friendly alternative to spending the evening at a venue with Electronic Gaming Machines (pokies), which are often the only alternative venues.

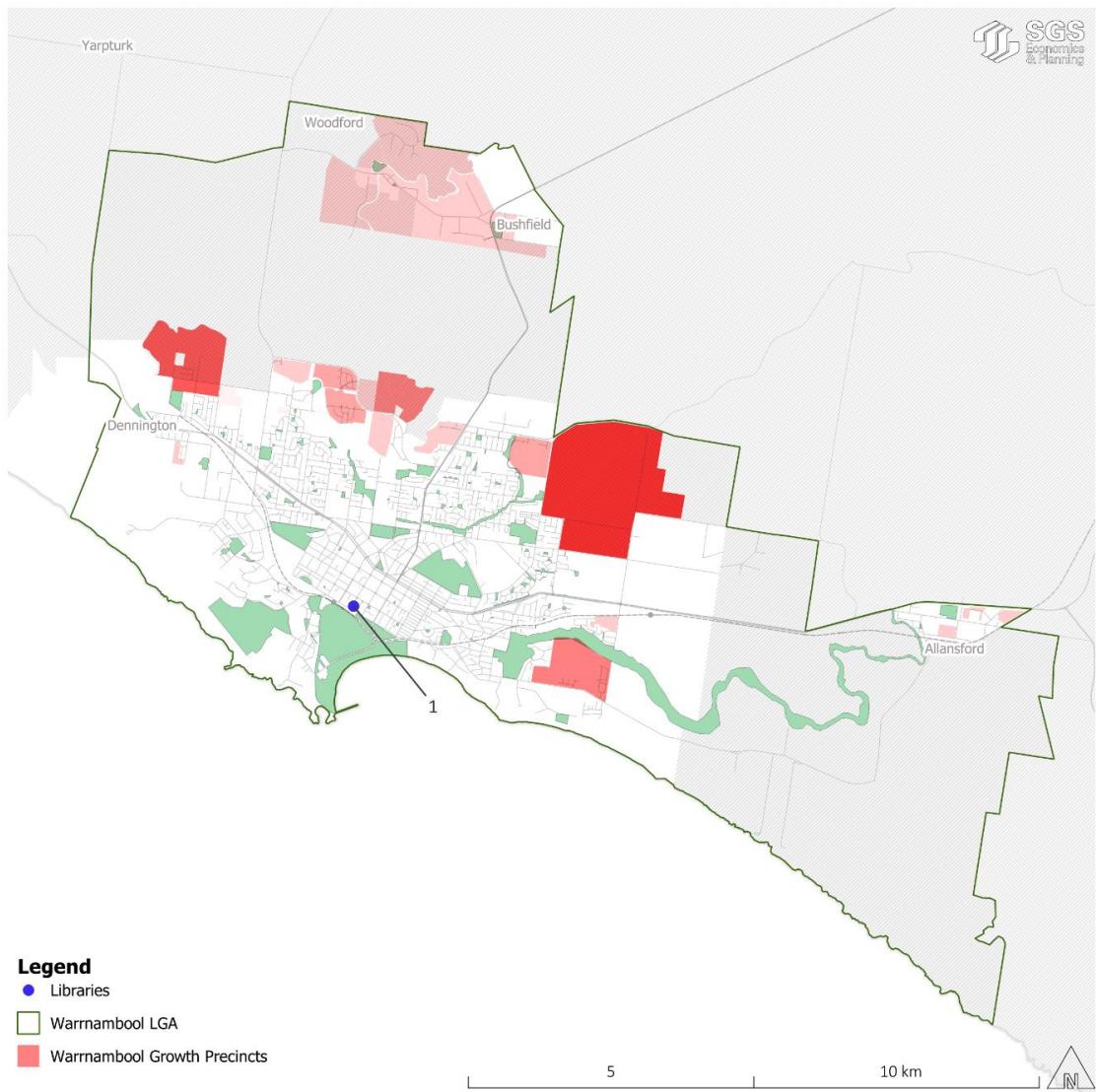
Key considerations in establishing extended library programs, including the after dark program include:

- Review infrastructure to ensure the building provides a safe space for people to be without staff
- Develop online processes, systems, and security
- Allocated adequate resources to manage the program
- Develop a code of conduct and induction program for all after dark users
- Undertaking a pilot approach with the community to test and refine delivery
- Review, evaluation, and adapt.

Existing infrastructure

The City of Warrnambool is home to the Warrnambool Library and Learning Centre which is co-located next to the South West TAFE at 8 Kepler Street (Figure 3). Measuring approximately 2,500sqm across three floors, the library was completed in 2022 and replaced the former library facility located at the Civic Centre building. In addition to its book collection, the library has a youth area, makers room, audiovisual recording space, ‘preservation station’ (enabling media conversion), and meeting rooms.

Figure 3: Warrnambool Community Infrastructure Provision - Libraries



Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2025

The library is jointly managed by Warrnambool City Council and South West TAFE. A service agreement outlines the responsibilities of each party with the building and external features managed by the TAFE, while Council operates the library service itself.

Approximately 75% of borrowers reside within the Warrnambool LGA.⁸ Beyond this the Warrnambool Library is serving residents that live in suburbs surrounding the LGA, including the suburbs of Koroit and Port Fairy, even those these suburbs are serviced through the Corangamite Moyne library network.

⁸ Warrnambool City Council, October 2025, Borrowers by Postcode

In relation to users, from 2022 to 2025, the total number of library members increased from 5,428 to 17,221 – an increase of around 3 times. Total visitation also increased during this period by 168% which is consistent with the library's strong reputation and high level of resources.

This notes that the Warrnambool Library's utilisation is growing. In addition, the library is providing services to a much larger catchment, supporting those that live, work and visit the LGA.

No asset condition was available for this facility. Given the relatively recent year of delivery, it is reasonable to assume the facility will have a high level of building condition and fitness for purpose.

Table 9: Libraries - Asset Scores

Ref.	Name	Average FFP Score	Condition Score	Utilisation Score
1	Warrnambool Library and Learning Centre			<i>Building managed by South West TAFE</i>

Supply and demand

The City of Warrnambool is well serviced by the library. There is adequate supply relative to demand now and into the future, based on the 2046 population projections and the service provision ratio of 1 facility per 40,000 residents (Table 10).

While the library is centrally located, the City offers an outreach service to West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House that includes pickup services and story time sessions. In addition, there is a free home delivery library service.

As noted in the user data, the library is providing services to users that live outside of the Warrnambool LGA. This demand has not been accounted for in this supply and demand analysis. Even with these users, it is anticipated that the existing library will continue to satisfy demand going forward as most of these users also have access to local libraries in their own LGA.

Table 10: Libraries - Supply and Demand Analysis

Facility/service	Benchmark	Current supply	2026 gap/surplus	2036 gap/surplus	2046 gap/surplus
Library	1 per 40,000 residents	1	0.1	0.0	0.0

Service recommendations

- No additional library services are required.
- Continue to review and monitor utilisation data.
- Consider opportunities to increase accessibility via extended operating hours and or via click and collect/kiosk outposts at other community hub sites.

7.2 Community Spaces

Community spaces include activated centres as well as flexible meeting spaces. They are important types of community infrastructure as they provide a ‘third space’ for community, social and service-related activity away from work and home. To increase utilisation of spaces, all new multipurpose spaces should be provided with other services, e.g. no standalone halls.

Community spaces	Definition
Neighbourhood houses/community centres	Programmed and staffed centres that deliver a wide range of programs that promote lifelong learning, inclusive participation and civic engagement. They can either be run and managed by Council or a not-for-profit.
Multipurpose spaces	Flexible bookable spaces for general community and service use. These spaces can host various meetings, programs (e.g. seniors groups, playgroups) activities (e.g. art, play, education) and events (e.g. civic events, birthdays, celebrations). Meeting spaces come in various sizes, from small to large.

Existing infrastructure

This Plan considers the supply and demand of all neighbourhood houses and multipurpose spaces (ranging in size from small, medium to large) across the municipality. The Plan also considers, but does not benchmark, ‘specialised community spaces.’ This refers to venues in the city associated with specific clubs or activities that are generally only used by members of that particular user group due to the supply of specific equipment, fit out or specialised function of the space.

31 community spaces have been identified in the municipality with the majority located in the central Warrnambool area and several at the outskirts of the LGA in Allansford, Bushfield, Dennington (Figure 4).

Neighbourhood houses/community centres

There are 2 neighbourhood houses (Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre and West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House). The Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre is run by a not-for-profit. They are operating out of a non-Council facility; however, this facility is starting to age and is unable to respond to changing community and service needs.

In relation to other facilities, the Archie Graham Community Centre is currently not operating as a community centre, as per the definition, rather is providing specific services for older people. The Gunditjmara Cooperative also runs a variety of programs and events that serve a similar function to some neighbourhood house functions however similar to the Archie Graham Community Centre, the role of this facility is to focus on a specific community group.

In relation to planned infrastructure, there is a proposed new community centre for the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan, with final planning currently underway.

Multipurpose community space

There are 21 facilities that are providing a range of multipurpose spaces of varying sizes (with a total of 30 meeting spaces). While some of these are standalone facilities, many are integrated with other types of services.

In relation to new multipurpose spaces, Council is proposing to deliver a new community hub at Brierly Reserve by 2027. This facility will include maternal and child health rooms, space for playgroups, a large multipurpose room, and change rooms to support the surrounding recreation reserves.

Specialised meeting spaces

In addition to the multipurpose community spaces, there are 8 specialised meeting spaces. These are located in facilities that are for specific activities therefore are not always available for general community use and hire.

Figure 4: Warrnambool Community Infrastructure Provision - Community Spaces

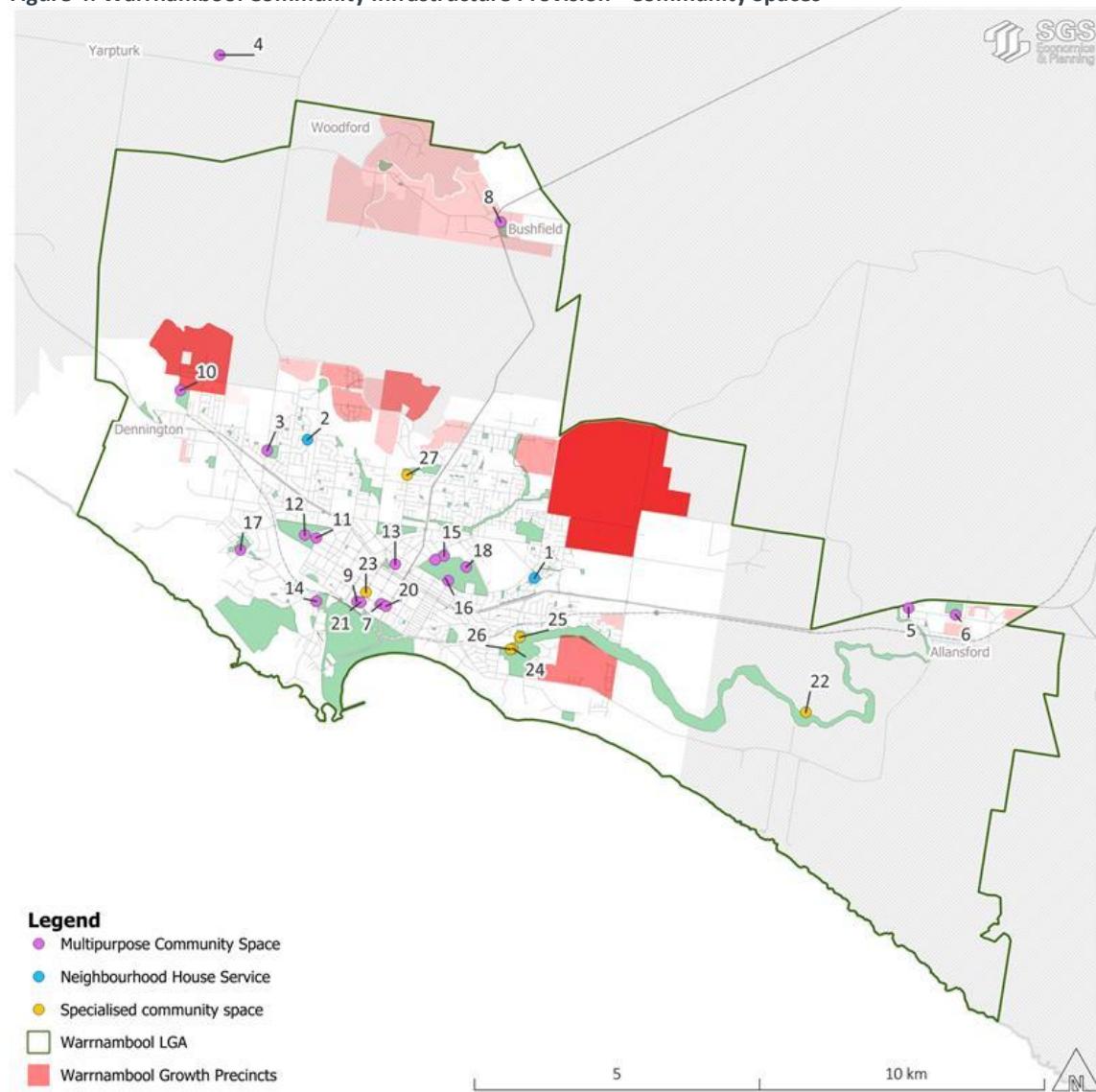


Table 11 summarises the asset scores of each of the community spaces. Of the asset data that is available, generally most assets have an average asset condition (3) with a mixed level of utilisation and fitness for purpose.

There are several facilities considered to be in poor condition: Dennington Oval: P.G. Kelson Pavilion, City Band Hall, Tooram Scout Hall, Girl Guide Hall, Warrnambool Angling Club: Angling Clubrooms, and Allansford Angling Club (Jubilee Park). Note that some facilities identified as being in poor condition still record high levels of utilisation.

Table 11: Community Spaces Asset Scores

#	Name	Facility/service type	Average FFP Score	Condition Score	Utilisation Score
Neighbourhood House/community centre					
1	Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre	Neighbourhood House Service		<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>	
2	West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House	Neighbourhood House Service		<i>New building constructed in 2025</i>	
Multipurpose community space					
3	A.H. Davidson Oval: Kevin & Irene Walsh Social Club	Multipurpose Community Space - L	3	3	3
4	Airport: Aero Club Clubroom	Multipurpose Community Space – S-M	1	3	1
5	Allansford Mechanics Institute Hall	Multipurpose Community Space – M	2	3	3
6	Allansford Recreation Reserve Social Club Rooms	Multipurpose Community Space – 2 x M-L	2	3	3
7	Archie Graham Community Centre	Multipurpose Community Space – 2 x S, 3 x S-M, 1 x M-L	3	4	1
8	Bushfield Recreation Reserve: Community Hall	Multipurpose Community Space – M-L	2	3	3
9	City Band Hall	Multipurpose Community Space – M-L	3	4	3
10	Dennington Oval: P.G. Kelson Pavilion	Multipurpose Community Space – S-M	2	4	3
11	Friendly Societies' Recreation Reserve: A.L. Lane Community Centre	Multipurpose Community Space – S-M	3	3	3
12	Friendly Societies' Recreation Reserve: South Warrnambool Club Rooms	Multipurpose Community Space – M-L	2	2	3
13	Girl Guide Hall	Multipurpose Community Space – M-L	4	4	3

#	Name	Facility/service type	Average FFP Score	Condition Score	Utilisation Score
14	Harris Street Reserve: H.I. Stephenson Pavilion Building	Multipurpose Community Space – S-M	4	4	3
15	Hockey Pavilion	Multipurpose Community Space – S-M	4	3	3
16	J.D.E. Walter Oval: Hetherington Pavilion	Multipurpose Community Space – M-L	2	3	3
17	Merrivale Recreation Reserve: W.A. Fary Pavilion	Multipurpose Community Space – S-M	2	3	3
18	R.W. Mack Oval: Horner Pavilion	Multipurpose Community Space – M-L	No data available	3	No data available
19	Reid Oval: Reid Oval Pavilion	Multipurpose Community Space – 1 x S, 1 x M-L	1	1	3
20	Tooram Scout Hall	Multipurpose Community Space - M	2	4	5
21	Warrnambool Library and Learning Centre	Multipurpose Community Space – 4 x S	<i>Building managed by South West TAFE</i>		
1	Warrnambool Neighbourhood and Community Centre	Multipurpose Community Space – 1 x S, 1 x M	<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>		
2	West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House	Multipurpose Community Space – 1 x S, 1 x M	<i>New building constructed in 2025</i>		

Multipurpose community space - specialised community space

22	Allansford Angling Club (Jubilee Park)	Specialised community space	2	4	5
23	C.W.A. Club Rooms	Specialised community space	3	3	3
24	City of Warrnambool Rowing Club Rooms	Specialised community space	<i>Council owned – no data available</i>		
25	Hopkins River Ski Club: Club Rooms	Specialised community space	2	3	3
26	Warrnambool Angling Club: Angling Clubrooms	Specialised community space	3	4	3
27	Warrnambool Lapidary Club	Specialised community space	3	3	3

Supply and demand

Assessment of current supply and future demand for community spaces, as shown in Table 12, shows that by 2046 there will be demand for 1 additional neighbourhood house/community centre.

As noted earlier, Council is planning to provide a new community centre within the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area. This facility should also include flexible multipurpose meeting spaces to cater for ageing meeting space infrastructure as noted in the following section. In addition, this facility should be activated with a neighbourhood house program that is either run by Council or a not-for-profit.

The Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre (not-for-profit) is an ageing facility. It is likely that this facility will require significant upgrades in time, and or a new facility. To support the activation of the East of Aberline Community Centre Council could consider the consolidation of services at Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre.

If the Warrnambool Neighbourhood Community Centre is deemed to be an appropriate for the East of Aberline Community Centre, this will mean that 1 additional neighbourhood house/community centre will still be required. To support with access this should be centrally located. The Archie Graham Community Centre requires redevelopment to accommodate and ensure fit for purpose functionality for broader community use. In doing so there is an opportunity to work with the service providers to broaden out the user groups to include the general community, in addition to the older cohort currently using the centre. This will then fulfil the neighbourhood house/community centre requirements.

In relation to multipurpose spaces, there is forecast to be an oversupply of medium to large and small to medium meeting spaces. In contrast, the analysis indicates a gap in the supply of small rooms (1), medium rooms (1) and large rooms (1).

The proposed Brierly Community Hub will include a large multipurpose room, which will alleviate the demand for large meeting spaces.

When considering the supply of medium meeting spaces, meeting rooms can be nested. That is, someone requiring a medium sized meeting room will generally be able to be accommodated in a medium-large sized space. Furthermore, where appropriate, any new meeting rooms should include operable walls to be able to divide the meeting space into two smaller rooms and increase flexibility of use.

The supply and demand assessment does not include the specialised spaces. Furthermore, some pavilions that are included are not operating flexible bookable spaces for all community members. While the specialised meeting spaces and some pavilions are primarily used for an alternative purpose, depending on lease arrangement they could provide additional supply in the network. Overtime the lease and licencing of these facilities should be reviewed to increase access to meeting spaces for the broader community use.

Overall, based on poor asset condition and generally average utilisation, opportunities to consolidate and integrate some meeting spaces into new facilities should be considered. Priority should be based on those meeting spaces that are of poor asset condition and standalone facilities.

Table 12: Community Centre/ Neighbourhood House Supply and Demand Analysis

Facility/service	Benchmark	Current supply	2026 gap/surplus	2036 gap/surplus	2046 gap/surplus
Neighbourhood house/community centre	1 per 15,000 residents	2	-0.4	-0.6	-0.6
Multipurpose community space - Small (1-20 capacity)	1 per 4,000 residents	9	-0.1	-0.6	-0.9
Multipurpose community space - Small to Medium (21-50 capacity)	1 per 8,000 residents	9	4.5	4.2	4.1
Multipurpose community space - Medium (51-100 capacity)	1 per 8,000 residents	4	-0.5	-0.8	-0.9
Multipurpose community space - Medium to Large (101-200 capacity)	1 per 8,000 residents	10	5.5	5.2	5.1
Multipurpose community space - Large (200> capacity)	1 per 20,000 residents	1	-0.8	-0.9	-1.0

Service recommendations

- Deliver the community centre in the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area and consider consolidation opportunities with existing neighbourhood community centres.
- Redevelop the Archie Graham Community Centre. In doing so, work with the service providers to expand services to cater for the general community, in addition to the older cohort currently using the centre.
- Deliver the integrated Brierly Community Hub with a large flexible meeting space. In addition, consider opportunities to integrate services being delivered from standalone, ageing and not fit for purpose multipurpose meeting spaces.
- Review other existing meeting spaces to improve utilisation and fitness for purpose. Where this cannot be achieved, consider opportunities for consolidation and integration with alternative sites.
- Review lease and licencing agreements with sporting clubs to increase opportunities to share meeting rooms in pavilions.

7.3 Arts and culture

Arts and culture facilities encompass buildings and services for both professional and community-based activities. While some of these activities may occur in multipurpose community rooms, the facilities identified in this category are dedicated arts and performance spaces with the requisite technical specifications such as wash spaces, appropriate flooring, storage, and other infrastructure such as sound, stages, and lighting capabilities.

Four arts and culture facility categories have been benchmarked in this Plan. This includes community art spaces, local rehearsal/performance venues, art gallery/exhibition space, and arts and cultural centres.

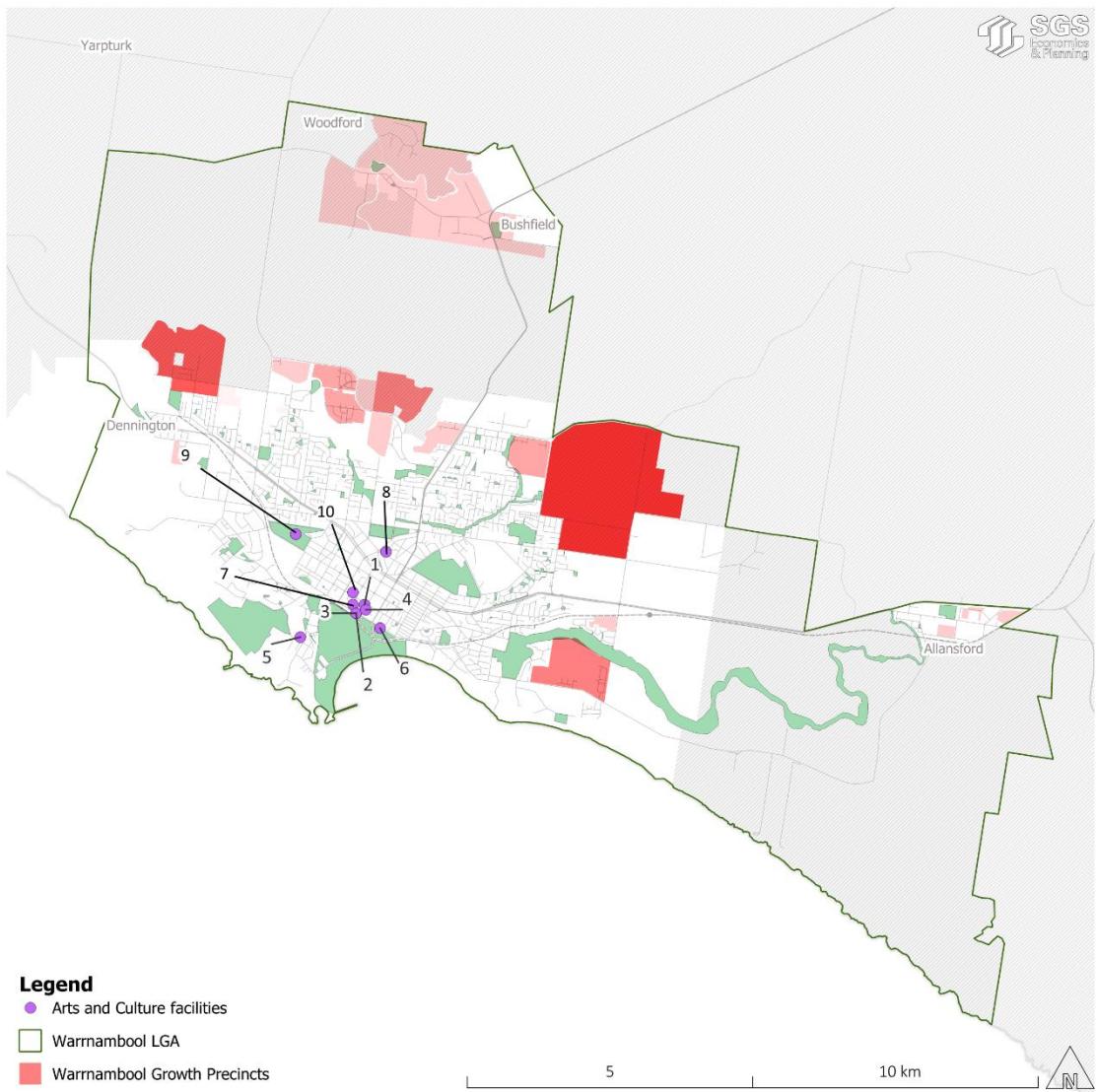
Arts and Culture	Definition
Community arts space	Arts-capable spaces (with sink, washable floors, equipment storage), usually within community centres (i.e. using multipurpose rooms) or within a larger arts and cultural facility.
Local rehearsal/ performance venue	Dedicated spaces used for rehearsal and small-scale performances, with infrastructure such as a stage, appropriate flooring, sound systems and storage.
Art gallery/exhibition space	Dedicated spaces used for displaying visual art works, and potentially for smaller-scale exhibition events, typically with open floorplans for ease of viewing/circulation.
Arts and cultural centre	Larger visual and performing arts and culture facility. These generally have dedicated, specialised infrastructure such as stage, seating, sound systems, and large storage

Existing infrastructure

There are 10 arts and cultural facilities located in the municipality, clustered around the main activity centre of Warrnambool (Figure 5). All venues are self-contained with the exclusion of the makerspace located at the Warrnambool Library. Of the arts and cultural infrastructure, Council owns the Lighthouse Theatre, Mozart Hall, History House and Warrnambool Art Gallery.

There are two ‘other’ facilities, for which there are no benchmarks: Flagstaff Hill – a tourism and education attraction, and History House – a small museum and research library on local history.

Figure 5: Warrnambool Community Infrastructure Provision – arts and culture



Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2025

The Lighthouse Theatre and Warrnambool Art Gallery are regional level facilities, servicing not just the City of Warrnambool however also the surrounding regions. Both the Lighthouse Theatre and Warrnambool Art Gallery are considered to be fit for purpose, in good to very good condition and with high utilisation.

Mozart Hall receives the least favourable scores across fit for purpose and condition assessment domains reflecting the age of the facility, limited space and storage, and restricted accessibility of spaces. However, the high utilisation rate – or at least intended utilisation of the venue within the current constraints suggest that there is opportunity to maximise utilisation through improving the state of the existing facility.

The History House is currently in an ageing facility that is not fit for purpose. Relocation of this service is required to support ongoing service delivery.

Table 13: Arts and Culture Facilities Asset Scores

#	Name	Facility/ service type	Average FFP Score	Condition Score	Utilisation Score
1	Lighthouse Theatre	Arts and cultural centre	1	2	1
2	History House	Other	3	4	1
3	Mozart Hall	Local rehearsal/ performance venue	3	4	1
4	Warrnambool Art Gallery	Art gallery/ exhibition space	1	3	1
5	Merri View Gallery (Old Scout Hall)	Community arts space	<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>		
6	Flagstaff Hill	Other	1	3	1
7	Warrnambool Library (makerspace)	Community arts space	<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>		
8	TOAD Hall	Local rehearsal/ performance venue	<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>		
9	Goodwin Hall	Other	1	3	1
10	F Project	Community arts space	<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>		

Supply and demand

Overall, the city is well serviced in terms of arts and culture facilities. As noted in Table 14, there is a slight surplus of local rehearsal/ performance venues, art gallery/ exhibition spaces, and arts and cultural centres. Given the reach of some of this infrastructure, beyond the City of Warrnambool, it still has a strong level of utilisation.

There is an undersupply of community art spaces (1). Community art spaces can support a range of different activities, with most able to be accommodated within flexible meeting spaces. Council should liaise with the community to understand what type of space is required (e.g. maker space, rehearsal spaces). Once this is understood this infrastructure could be included in the East of Aberline Community Centre, or another similar community space.

It is noted that the service and materials in the History House need to move due to the existing ageing facility. This requires a large space, ideally which includes temperature-controlled settings to adequately preserve materials. History services work well within community centres or libraries. There are no ideal existing facilities however potentially a long-term solution could be the integration of the History House with the Archie Graham Community Centre following its redevelopment (see community spaces). In addition, an interim temporary solution will need to be found.

Table 14: Arts and Culture Supply and Demand Analysis

Facility/service	Benchmark	Current supply	2026 gap/surplus	2036 gap/surplus	2046 gap/surplus
Community arts space	1 per 10,000 residents	3	-0.6	-0.9	-1.0
Local rehearsal/ performance venue	1 per 30,000 residents	2	0.8	0.7	0.7
Art gallery/ exhibition space	1 per 45,000 residents	1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Arts and Cultural Centre	1 per 150,000 residents	1	0.8	0.7	0.7

Service recommendations

- Provide 1 new community arts space. This space should be integrated into a facility with additional services. Based on spatial accessibility it is recommended to be considered within the East of Aberline Community Centre.
- An interim solution to be found for the History House, with the long term recommendation for the services to be relocated to the redeveloped Archie Graham Community Centre.
- Renew and improve accessibility of Mozart Hall to improve fitness for purpose and asset condition.

7.4 Young people

Young people	Definition
Youth centre	A youth centre is a dedicated space for young people that is actively programmed with services and events. It can include a range of service providers (council and non-council) that specifically respond to the needs of young people.

Youth Centres are the key infrastructure that is provided for young people as a dedicated and actively programmed space. In addition to youth centres, youth spaces should be provided. Youth spaces are friendly places for young people which do not necessarily offer active programming. For example, the Young Adult collection at Warrnambool Library is situated alongside gaming equipment and sofas to create a relaxed atmosphere and a conversation friendly space for young people.

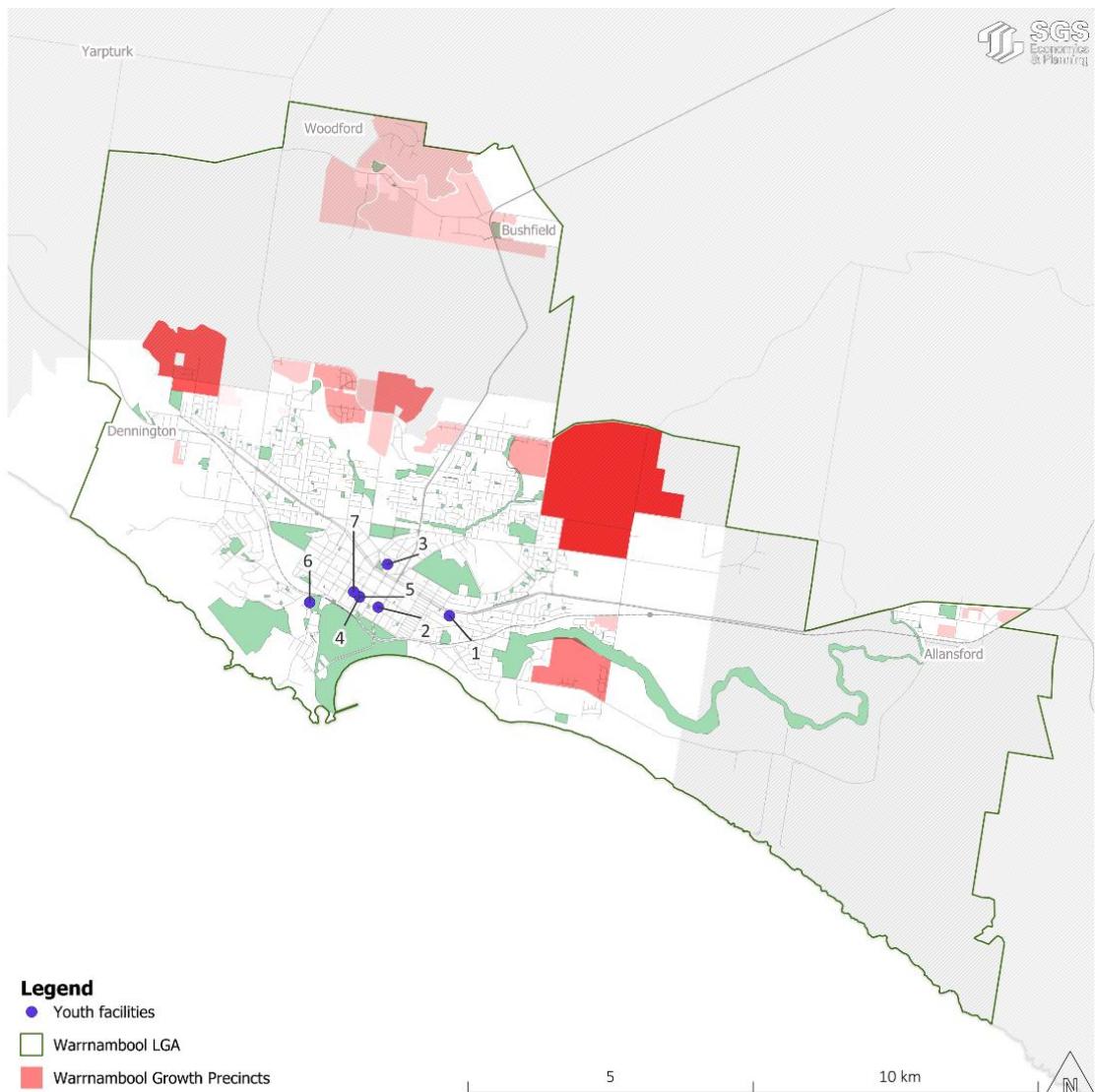
Existing infrastructure

Currently there are no facilities in the city that meet the definition of a youth centre. There are a range of services however that are dedicated to young people. This includes the Brophy Centre (including headspace) which is largely an intervention/crisis-based centre for young people who require services and other formal forms of support. The Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative also runs programs for young people, however, serves a specific group rather than universal cohort of young people. One Day Studio is a social enterprise that seeks to support young people exploring a career in the digital arts. They offer classes and mentoring as well as drop-in times. In addition, Council runs some of its youth programs from the multiuse/arts facility the F-Project. The Scout and Girl Guides halls also provide an alternative activity for some young people.

Council has partnered with Moyne Shire Council to deliver a Youth Strategy. In doing so, Council will identify programs and initiatives to engage young people aged 12-25. Given Council does not have an existing youth centre, most of these youth programs will need to be provided within a youth friendly space.

As shown in Figure 6, most of the youth services are located centrally around the Warrnambool CBD.

Figure 6: Warrnambool Community Infrastructure Provision – Young People



Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2025

Table 15: Youth facilities asset scores

#	Name	Facility/ service type	Average FFP Score	Condition Score	Utilisation Score
1	One Day Studios (at Fletcher Jones precinct location)	Other		<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>	
2	Tooram Scout Hall	Other	2	4	5
3	Girl Guide Hall	Other	4	4	3
4/5	Brophy Family and Youth Services: Community Youth Complex (inc. Headspace)	Other		<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>	
6	Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative	Other		<i>Council owned – no data available</i>	
7	F-Project	Other		<i>Not owned and/or managed by Council</i>	

Supply and demand

As noted earlier, while there are several youth related services there is no formal youth centre in the city. The assessment suggest that demand will be close to the equivalent of 1 facility by 2046.

In order to deliver the youth centre Council will need to partner with external service providers, many of which are already operating in the city. Through recent engagement with young people Council has noted that there was not a desire to have a dedicated youth centre. Instead, feedback noted that young people are interested in seeking more youth friendly spaces across the city, both within existing community facilities as well as across the public realm (open space, city centre).

Table 16: Youth Centre Supply and Demand Analysis

Facility/service	Benchmark	Current supply	2026 gap/surplus	2036 gap/surplus	2046 gap/surplus
Youth centre	1 per 45,000 residents	0	-0.8	-0.9	-0.9

Service recommendations

- Continue to provide youth programs from multipurpose community centres and youth friendly spaces across the city.
- Work in partnership with young people and existing services dedicated to young people to explore if a centrally located youth centre is required.

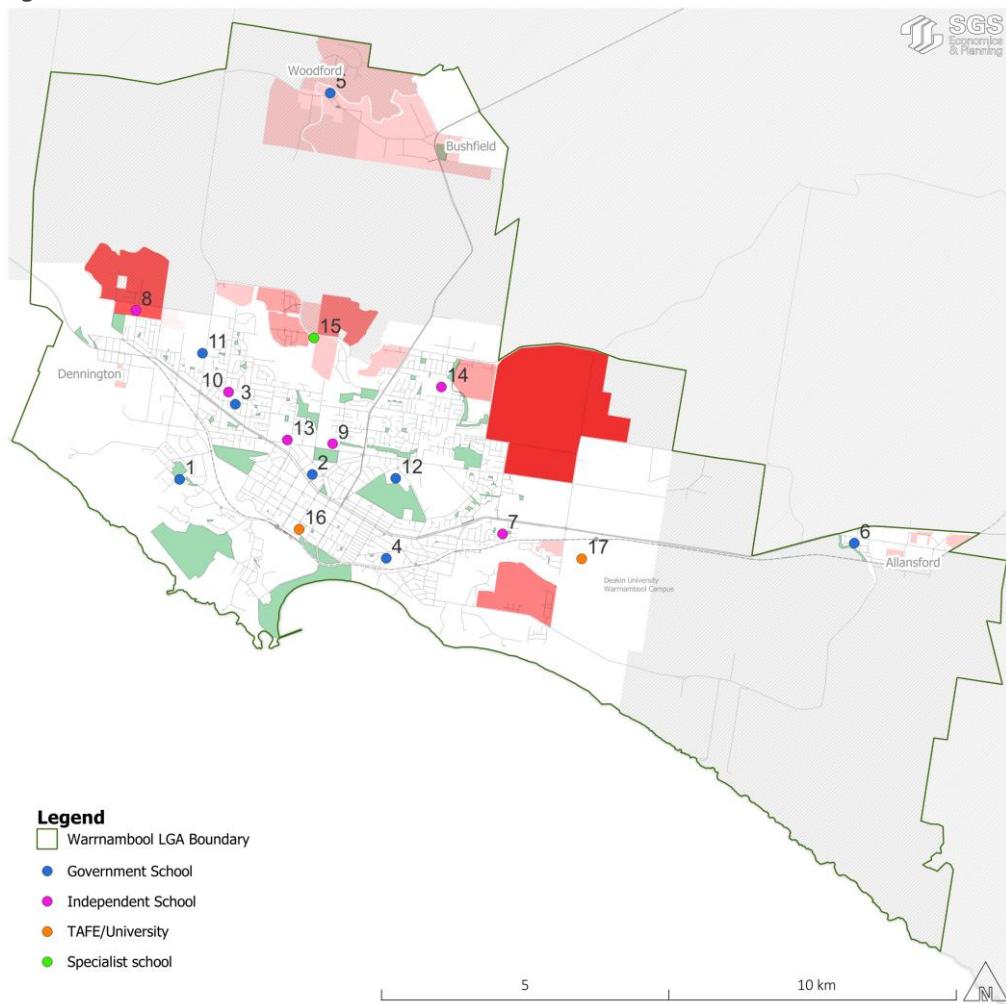
8. Supply and demand for non-Council services

This section provides an overview of other services that are not provided, managed or operated by local government. Councils role in the provision of these services can vary including working with other entities and levels of government to facilitate, advocate, and partner to support delivery.

8.1 Education

Education refers to the schools and tertiary institutions. As shown in Figure 7 the city has a range of school and post school education facilities which comprise of a mix of government and private primary schools (7) and secondary schools (3), a private kindergarten to year 12 school, a specialist school, a TAFE and a university.

Figure 7: Education Facilities



Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2025

Table 17: Existing education facilities

#	Name	Type
Primary school		
1	Merrivale Primary School	Government Primary School
2	Warrnambool Primary School	Government Primary School
3	Warrnambool West Primary School	Government Primary School
4	Warrnambool East Primary School	Government Primary School
5	Woodford Primary School	Government Primary School
6	Allansford and District Primary School	Government Primary School
7	Our Lady Help of Christians	Private Primary School
8	St John's Primary School	Private Primary School
9	St Josephs Primary School	Private Primary School
10	Saint Pius X Primary School	Private Primary School
Secondary school		
11	Brauer College	Government Secondary School
12	Warrnambool College	Government Secondary School
13	Emmanuel College Secondary	Private Secondary School
Kindergarten-secondary school		
14	King's College K-12	Private K-12
Specialist schools		
15	Merri River School	Specialist school
Tertiary education		
16	South West TAFE	TAFE
17	Deakin University Warrnambool Campus	University

Supply and demand

The Victorian Government undertake school planning for public education. In doing so, they have specific planning metrics that consider school catchments, capacity, utilisation, and forecast growth of school aged children. For this assessment broad education benchmarks have been used which are helpful in providing a baseline assessment, however, will not provide a detailed assessment of need.

The City of Warrnambool has a significant number of education facilities. In part this is due to the wider catchment that the city has. Based on high level benchmarks of government school provision, by 2046 there will be a marginal gap (-0.4) in primary school supply.

The Victorian Government has proposed the provision of 1 government primary school to meet the needs of the growing population in East of Aberline. The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education has also confirmed the acquisition of a site for a catholic primary school, in East of Aberline, with the potential to extend to a K-12 offering.

A further school has been noted by the Victorian Government with the need for the provision of 1 government primary school in the North of the Merri Structure Plan.

As noted earlier, the State Government planning for schools includes detailed data and catchment information that is outside of this project scope. Given the State have identified the need for 2 additional primary schools, these should be delivered as planned.

Table 18: Primary and Secondary School Supply and Demand Analysis

Facility/service	Benchmarks	Current supply	2026 gap/surplus	2036 gap/surplus	2046 gap/surplus
Government Primary School	1 per 9,000 residents	4	0.0	-0.3	-0.4
Government Secondary School	1 per 27,500 residents	2	0.7	0.6	0.6

Service recommendations

- Work with the Victorian Government to deliver the additional primary schools in the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area and North of the Merri Structure Plan.

8.2 Community health services

Community health services include hospitals and clinics that provide the community with a range of primary healthcare services. These services include general medical, specialist health services, home and community care, community nursing, drug and alcohol services, disability services, allied health services, and mental health services.⁹

The current provision of health services is shown below in Figure 8. All services are located in the central Warrnambool area.

The city includes 2 hospitals (1 public and 1 private hospitals) and several medical clinics. In addition, there are three community health services:

- Warrnambool Urgent Care
- South West Medical Centre
- Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Community Health Service

Similar to education services, health services in the City of Warrnambool are servicing those living in the city and the broader regions. There are no publicly available benchmarks for health services. Given this, Council should continue to work with the health services to understand demand, capacity, and potential additional services required.

Council works in partnership with local and regional service providers to progress Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing outcomes.¹⁰ These organisations include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Brophy Youth and Family Services▪ Salvation Army▪ Catholic Care▪ Mind Australia▪ Wellways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd▪ Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation▪ Meli▪ South West All Abilities Advocacy group
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⁹ Department of Health (2024), Community health services, <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/community-health/community-health-services>

¹⁰ City of Warrnambool (2025) Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-2029

Figure 8. Community health services and medical practices

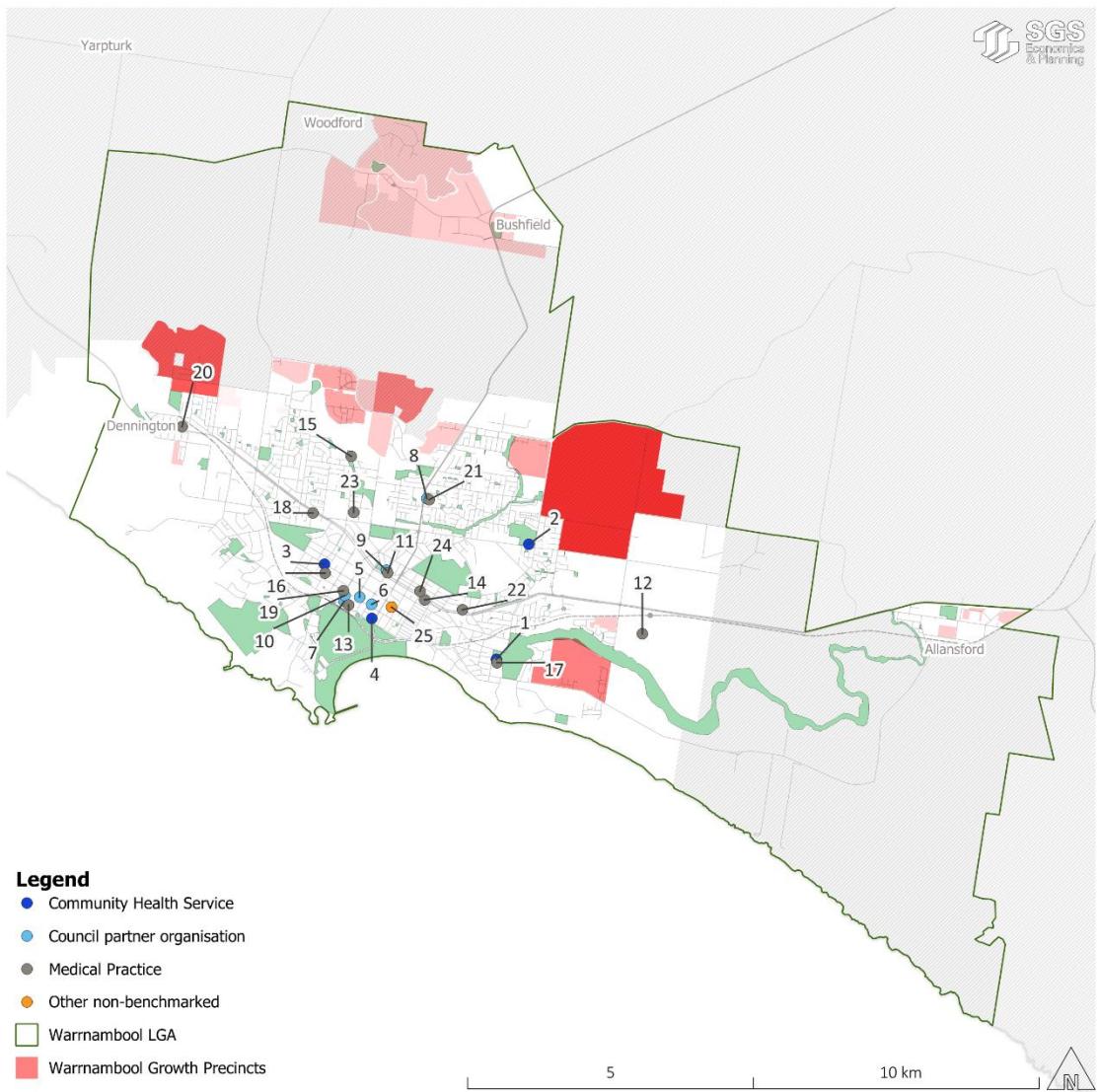


Table 19: Existing community health services and medical practices

#	Name	Facility/service type
1	Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative	Community Health Service
2	South West Healthcare Prevention and Recovery Care facility	Community Health Service
3	South West Medical Centre (Community Health Service)	Community Health Service
4	Warrnambool Urgent Care Clinic	Community Health Service
5	Brophy Youth and Family Services	Council partner organisation
6	Catholic Care	Council partner organisation
7	Meli	Council partner organisation
8	Salvation Army	Council partner organisation
9	South West All Abilities Advocacy group	Council partner organisation
10	Wellways	Council partner organisation
11	Cambourne Clinic	Medical Practice
12	Deakin University Medical Centre	Medical Practice
13	Handbury / WRAD Medical Centre	Medical Practice
14	Hopkins Medical Centre	Medical Practice
15	King Street Medical Clinic	Medical Practice
16	Lumus Imaging Warrnambool	Medical Practice
17	Lyndoch Medical Hub	Medical Practice
18	Manse Medical Warrnambool	Medical Practice
19	Middle Island Medical Clinic	Medical Practice
20	Ochre Medical Centre Dennington	Medical Practice
21	Ochre Medical Centre Jamieson	Medical Practice
22	Seaview Health	Medical Practice
23	Warrnambool Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery	Medical Practice
24	Warrnambool Dental	Medical Practice

#	Name	Facility/service type
25	Themar Heights	Other non-benchmarked
	Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation	Council partner organisation
	Mind Australia	Council partner organisation

Service recommendations

- Continue to work with the health sector to understand capacity, utilisation and community trends.

8.3 Residential aged care

Residential aged care, or aged care facilities, provides ongoing care and support for older people, including assistance with daily tasks and healthcare needs. The level of care varies from independent living to high-care beds, with many facilities offering a combination of care levels so that older people can transition into a more supportive environment on the same site as their abilities decline. The services themselves (in the unit of 'beds') are funded by the Commonwealth Government, while facilities are provided and run by state government or the private/not-for-profit sector.

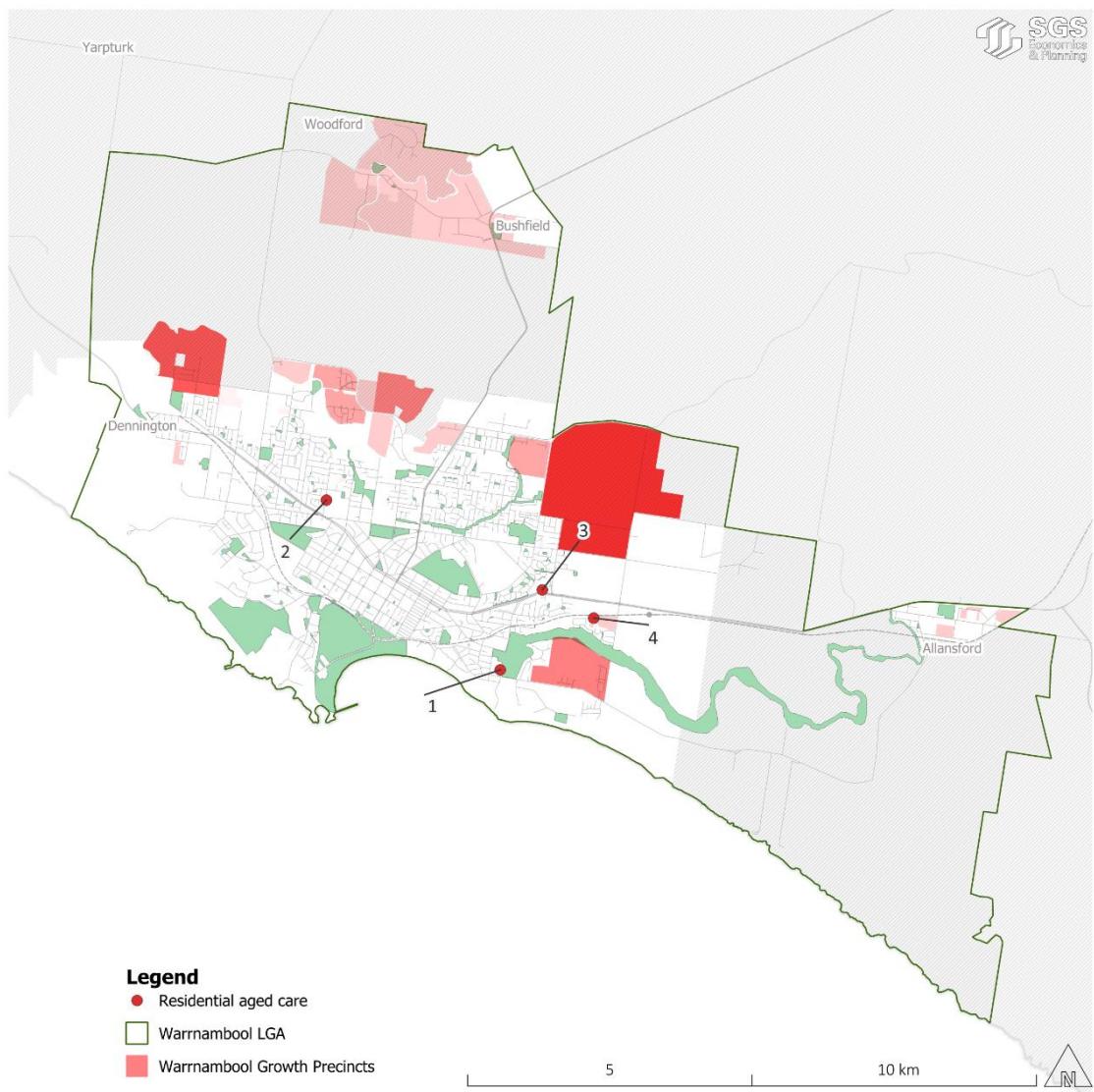
The city currently has 4 residential aged care facilities, providing a total of 364 aged care beds. As shown in Figure 9, they are all in the central Warrnambool area.

The benchmark for residential aged care is a commonwealth service standard. When applied to the City of Warrnambool it suggests that the city is already experiencing a significant shortfall in residential aged care beds, and this gap is forecast to increase to 364 beds by 2046 (Table 20). It should also be noted that, similar to education and health care, these services are likely to support those residents living outside of the City of Warrnambool, therefore the actual demand is likely to be higher.

Table 20: Residential Aged Care Supply and Demand Analysis

Facility/service	Benchmarks	Current supply	2026 gap/surplus	2036 gap/surplus	2046 gap/surplus
Residential Aged Care (beds)	78 beds per 1,000 residents aged 70+	364	-123.8	-296.3	-363.1

Figure 9: Residential aged care facilities



Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2025

Table 21: Existing aged care facilities

#	Name	No. of beds
1	Lyndoch Living Limited	115
2	Mercy Place Warrnambool	120
3	Warrnambool Place Care Community	45
4	Warrnambool Riverside Care Community	84

Service recommendations

- Work with the State Government, private, and not-for-profit residential aged care providers to increase supply of aged care beds.

9. Implementation

9.1 Summary of service needs

As per the above analysis, the following provides an overview of the individual service needs.

Service	Recommendations
Library	<p>No additional library services are required.</p> <p>Continue to review and monitor utilisation data.</p> <p>Consider opportunities to increase accessibility via extended operating hours and or via click and collect/kiosk outposts at other community hub sites.</p>
Neighbourhood house / community centres	<p>Deliver the community centre in the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area and consider consolidation opportunities with existing neighbourhood community centres.</p> <p>Redevelop the Archie Graham Community Centre. In doing so, work with the service providers to expand services to cater for the general community, in addition to the older cohort currently using the centre.</p>
Multipurpose Community Space	<p>Deliver the integrated Brierly Community Hub with a large flexible meeting space. In addition, consider opportunities to integrate services being delivered from standalone, ageing and not fit for purpose multipurpose meeting spaces.</p> <p>Review other existing meeting spaces to improve utilisation and fitness for purpose. Where this cannot be achieved, consider opportunities for consolidation and integration with alternative sites.</p> <p>Review lease and licencing agreements with sporting clubs to increase opportunities to share meeting rooms in pavilions.</p>
Community arts space	<p>Provide 1 new community arts space. This space should be integrated into a facility with additional services. Based on spatial accessibility it is recommended to be considered within the East of Aberline Community Centre.</p> <p>An interim solution to be found for the History House, with the long term recommendation for the services to be relocated to the redeveloped Archie Graham Community Centre.</p> <p>Renew and improve accessibility of Mozart Hall to improve fitness for purpose and asset condition.</p>
Youth centre	<p>Continue to provide youth programs from multipurpose community centres and youth friendly spaces across the city.</p> <p>Work in partnership with young people and existing services dedicated to young people to explore if a centrally located youth centre is required.</p>
Education	Work with the Victorian Government to deliver the additional primary schools in the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area the North of the Merri Structure Plan.
Health services	Continue to work with the health sector to understand capacity, utilisation and community trends
Residential aged care	Work with the state government, private, and not-for-profit residential aged care providers to increase supply of aged care beds.

9.2 Councils role

Community infrastructure is critical for supporting community health and wellbeing, building community connections, and social inclusion.

Local government, state government, the Not-For-Profit/community sector, and the private sector all play a role in delivering community infrastructure and services. Each sector can take on a range of roles in relation to community infrastructure. Table 22 provides an overview of Councils role in community infrastructure.

Table 22: Local governments role in community infrastructure

Council role	Description
Provider (P)	Active involvement as an investor, developer, landlord and/or service provider.
Planner (PL)	Work closely with the private sector, community groups, agencies, and service providers to coordinate planning, funding/delivery and operation of infrastructure
Funder (F)	Provide funds or assistance/support to organisations to access grants, establish governance structures and systems, and achieve other outcomes.
Advocate (A)	Undertake assessments and other analysis, advocate on behalf of the community to other tiers of government and the private sector, in place of or alongside having a more active role.

9.3 Action Plan

Based on the above service responses and the role of local government, the following actions have been developed.

Actions	Council				Timeframe	Cost
	P	PL	F	A		
1.1 Explore an interim solution for the History House to store and use materials, with the long term recommendation for the services to be relocated to the redeveloped Archie Graham Community Centre (see action below)	x	x	x	x	12mths	\$
1.2 Redevelopment of the Archie Graham Community Centre to ensure it is fit for purpose, has the ability to cater for broader service programming, and includes the integration of the History House.	x	x	x	x	5-15yrs	\$\$\$
1.3 Explore the financial options to undertake renewal works and improve accessibility of Mozart Hall .	x	x	x		12mths	\$
1.4 Following improvement options for Mozart Hall , if financially viable, undertake renewal and accessibility improvements.			x		1-5years	\$\$
1.5 In partnership with the TAFE, undertake a review of Warrnambool Library utilisation and demand for after hour access	x	x	x		12mths	\$
1.6 Following review of utilization, if required, consider opportunities to increase access to library services including options such as extended unstaffed library hours at Warrnambool Library and outpost services at community centres.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	\$
1.7 Develop the operational model for the East of Aberline Community Centre . This should consider both council and non-council operational models.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	\$
1.8 Deliver the East of Aberline Community Centre . In doing so, ensure it includes: 1x large flexible meeting space with operable walls 1x medium meeting space that can support community arts Library kiosk	x	x	x		5-10yrs	\$\$\$

Actions	Council				Timeframe	Cost
	P	PL	F	A		
1.9 Deliver the integrated Brierly Community Hub with a large flexible meeting space and opportunities for service integration.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	\$\$\$
1.10 When undertaking redevelopments of exiting community centres and developing new community centres (e.g. Brierly CC, East of Aberline CC, Archie Graham CC) consider the opportunity to integrate services that are currently being delivered from ageing facilities that are no longer fit for purpose.	x				ongoing	-
1.11 Undertake a review of all existing meeting spaces to improve utilisation and fitness for purpose.		x			1-5yrs	\$
1.12 Explore opportunities to develop a user-friendly booking system for meeting rooms to increase awareness and utilisation of existing spaces.		x	x		12mths	\$
1.13 Review lease and licencing agreements with sporting clubs to improve access to flexible meetings spaces in pavilions for all community members use. This should prioritise areas where pavilions are the key asset e.g. Bushfield Recreation Reserve Pavilion and Dennington Recreation Reserve Pavilion	x	x			1-5yrs	\$
1.14 Continue to provide inclusive spaces for young people in community facilities.		x			Ongoing	\$
1.15 In partnership with young people and service providers, monitor the need for a dedicated youth centre.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	\$
1.16 Work with the Victorian Government to deliver the additional primary schools in East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area and advocate for the Primary School identified in the North of the Merri Structure Plan.			x		5-10yrs	-
1.17 Continue to work with the health sector to understand capacity, utilisation and community trends.			x		Ongoing	-
1.18 Work with the state government, private, and not-for-profit residential aged care providers to increase supply of aged care beds.			x		Ongoing	-

Appendix A: Policy Review

Document	Description	Relevant CI
State Government directions		
Plan for Victoria <i>Department of Transport and Planning</i>	<p>Plan for Victoria is a long term planning strategy for Victoria. It is the first state wide strategic plan and replaces the Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan (2014) as the key state planning document.</p> <p>Plan for Victoria identifies Warrnambool as a “Regional Service Centre,” defined as “a pivotal town in Victoria’s regional development, fostering economic activity and providing a key network of service hubs.”</p> <p>East of Aberline is identified as one of five key regional greenfield projects in the state (Map 2 – Where Victoria Will Change).</p> <p>The plan sets a housing target of 7,200 homes to be delivered in Warrnambool by 2051.</p> <p>The Plan identifies the importance of access to community facilities and services for communities to lead healthy and productive lives.</p>	All
Victoria’s Draft Infrastructure Strategy <i>Infrastructure Victoria</i>	<p>A long-term, evidence-based view of infrastructure planning to inform and support decision making.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies over 45 recommendations and future opportunities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage government investment in kindergarten infrastructure – Help government schools share their sports fields and facilities with the community after hours. – Simplify Victoria’s infrastructure contribution schemes to all housing development statewide – Fund better health and wellbeing infrastructure for First Peoples <p>Better prepare infrastructure for climate change</p>	All
Ministerial permit: PA2503825 supporting documentation – A Vision for Key Worker	Live application for construction of multi-dwelling affordable & key worker housing development	All

Document	Description	Relevant CI
Housing Report <i>Regional Development Australia, Barwon South West</i>	<p>that includes 50 dwellings (a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom single-storey dwellings) and the creation of a road and reserves in Dennington.</p> <p>Affordable housing enables families and individuals to remain in their local community and participate in community life without needing to travel extensive distances to engage with key community infrastructure.</p>	
East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan (draft) <i>Victorian Planning Authority</i>	<p>The Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) guides land use and development where a planning permit is required in East of Aberline, 410 hectares of predominantly undeveloped land located on the eastern fringe of Warrnambool. It identifies the preferred location for planned and potential community facilities, with a 'Level 2 community centre' to be delivered by Council as the lead agency.</p> <p>Relevant PSP Objectives relating to the provision of community infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Equitable and efficient delivery of community and education infrastructure, maximising accessibility for precinct residents and surrounds – Convenient access to everyday community education and social services, through well located and connected infrastructure – Community facilities that are functional, attractive, safe and inviting for all users. 	All Community centre
City of Warrnambool directions		

Document	Description	Relevant CI
<p>Council Plan 2021-2025 (2021, revised 2024) and Warrnambool 2040 (2021)</p> <p><i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>Warrnambool 2040 provides a comprehensive and community driven roadmap for the vision of Warrnambool into the future. Comprised of four visions and 19 goals, the Plan touches on people, economy, place and environment.</p> <p>Goals that are highly relevant to community services are:</p> <p>Vision 1:3 Warrnambool's people are healthy includes connection to services and support healthy lifestyles</p> <p>Vision 2.4: Warrnambool has accessible, high quality public spaces and facilities</p>	<p>Sport and recreation</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Multipurpose community</p>
<p>Warrnambool Economic Development and Investment Strategy 2023-2028</p> <p><i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>The Strategy notes that a core strength of Warrnambool is its role as a regional city both as a population and employment centre. This concentration of services can enable economies of scale efficiency in delivery of services but is also noted as a challenge facing the municipality as supply has not yet caught up to demand. There is also an ageing population which may require additional specific services.</p> <p>Meeting Economic Development Theme 3: Workforce Attraction and Skills Development emphasises the need to invest in infrastructure that satisfies community needs. This includes creating liveable communities with high quality services and amenity to support workforce attraction and retention.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Active Warrnambool</p> <p><i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>The Active Warrnambool Strategy underpins Council's approach to the provision of sport, active recreation and physical activity in the municipality to 2030.</p> <p>Theme 2 and Theme 3 are of particular relevance to the provision of community services.</p> <p>Theme 2: Facilities and Services, relates to where people do activities and highlights the benefits of open and recreational space in walking distance of residential areas. These spaces can also promote access to neighbourhood community infrastructure. Infrastructure must also meet the improved standards of facility provision.</p>	<p>Recreation</p>

Document	Description	Relevant CI
	<p>Theme 3: Council Management and Programming, speaks to the need for council to invest in evidence-based development and enhancement of recreation, facilities and spaces. This highlights the dual planning required for provision of physical space as well as how it is used or managed.</p>	
<p>Aquatic Strategy <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>The Aquatic Strategy considers the needs of the municipality around aquatic and leisure facilities as the population grows and existing infrastructure ages.</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the importance of aquatic facilities in the provision of leisure, health and (water) safety outcomes.</p>	<p><i>Note that aquatic facilities will not be considered in this Community Services Future work</i></p>
<p>Creative Strategy 2025-2029 <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>The Creative Strategy provides a framework for the creative flourishing of Warrnambool into the future. This includes the provision of multipurpose spaces to perform and develop the arts.</p>	<p>Arts and culture</p>
<p>State of Warrnambool <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>The State of Warrnambool, Warrnambool Futures is a comprehensive report outlining the land use strategy for the City which will enable delivery of a new City-wide strategic land use plan.</p> <p>This document also provides a consolidated summary of key trends and patterns around demographics and growth which can inform future service provision needs.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Healthy Warrnambool: Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>The Plan articulates the primary priorities and initiatives to support health and wellbeing in Warrnambool.</p> <p>The Plan is predicated on the Health and Wellbeing Spectrum which identifies the role of primary prevention in strengthening social determinants of health. This includes creating an enabling environment through changes to social or physical surroundings which can be addressed through public programs, services or places.</p>	<p>Multipurpose community</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Recreation</p>
<p>Playspace Strategic Framework 2025-2034 <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>Playspaces e.g., playgrounds play an important role in facilitating social interaction and physical activity for children and their families. They can also function as a neutral 'third' space that meet complex needs of families at risk.</p>	<p><i>Playspaces are not explicitly considered in this report but are often co-located within pavilion and recreational areas.</i></p>

Document	Description	Relevant CI
<p>Youth Strategy (under development) <i>Warrnambool City Council and Moyne Shire</i></p>	<p>Moyne Shire and Warrnambool City Council have partnered together to deliver a Youth Strategy to meet the needs of young people (12-25) through the development of programs and initiatives. This Strategy is currently under-development and has been co-designed with local youth.</p>	<p>Youth</p>
<p>Open Space Strategy (2014, and upcoming) <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>The updated Open Space Strategy is currently under development and set for release in 2026. The previous iteration was made public in 2014. This strategy provides a guide to direct open space planning and management across the municipality. This includes natural areas, sport and recreation spaces, and broader features in the built environment that connect spaces and community.</p>	<p>Pavilions and Recreation</p>
<p>Community Infrastructure Service Plan (2013) <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>A community infrastructure plan was last undertaken in 2013. This document provided a framework with which to guide Council, service providers and community organisations with the information needed to support Warrnambool with the necessary supports as it continues to grow. The Council owned facilities considered in the CISP are kindergartens, child care centres, community centres and halls, meeting rooms and club rooms/sporting pavilions.</p>	<p><i>For reference.</i> <i>Note that early years services are considered in the Warrnambool 10 year EY Plan.</i></p>
<p>Asset Strategy (2020) <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>Developed in 2020, this strategy applies to all physical assets, systems, and processes that support the delivery of services by Council. It provides the framework for planning, provision, management and eventual disposal or adaptation of council assets. It is supported by Council's Asset Management policy. The strategy sets out the following asset management vision: 'Council will provide assets that are responsive and adaptable to demand and service needs in a manner that minimises risk and optimises value to our community.'</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>North of the Merri River Structure Plan (2011) <i>Warrnambool City Council</i></p>	<p>Developed in 2011 this structure plan outlines the planning and development framework for the 250ha of land referred to as the North of the Merri River Growth Area. The Plan notes that a</p>	

Document	Description	Relevant CI
	State Primary School will be required to support the population growth in the North of the Merri River Structure Plan area.	

Appendix B: Decision making framework

The following decision making framework can be used to support in prioritising community infrastructure actions that require a capital works response and more broadly, to identify project readiness. Each project can be considered against each of the decision making criteria with a score from 5-1.

Criteria	Key question(s) to be asked of the project	Scoring
Responsive to needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Based on the assessment undertaken for the Plan, is there a need for this project? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Does the project help to address identified demographic needs or challenges (e.g. socioeconomic disadvantage)?</i> - <i>Does the project address facility performance issues (i.e. poor condition, fitness-for purpose, and/or low utilisation)?</i> - <i>Does the project improve spatial distribution of facilities and accessibility to facilities/services?</i> 	5: yes 3: part 1: no
Strategic alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the project align with Council directions and priorities as set out by other plans, policies, and strategies? 	5: yes 1: no
Community equity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the project support equity of access (CALD, First Nations, women and girls, people with a disability, vulnerable groups) ▪ Is the project in alignment with community feedback? 	5: yes 3: part 1: no
Financial viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the project include partnership opportunities (infrastructure delivery and operational model) ▪ Have the ongoing operational and management costs of the project been assessed as viable for Council? 	5: yes (both) 3: part (one) 1: no (none)
Project readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the project ready to go (e.g. land secured, designs finalised, permits secured) ▪ Have project funds been secured (e.g. grants, rates, development contributions, partnership) 	5: yes 3: part 1: no
Sustainability and longevity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the project include flexibility and adaptability of spaces to respond to a wider range of users and changing needs over time? ▪ Does the project improve (existing facility) or maximise (new facility) environmental sustainability? 	5: yes 3: part 1: no

CANBERRA / NGAMBRI /
NGUNNAWAL / NGARIGO

Level 2, 28-36 Ainslie Place
Canberra ACT 2601
+61 2 6257 4525
sgsact@sgsep.com.au

HOBART / NIPALUNA

PO Box 123
Franklin TAS 7113
+61 421 372 940
sgstas@sgsep.com.au

MELBOURNE / NAARM

Level 14, 222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
+61 3 8616 0331
sgsvic@sgsep.com.au

SYDNEY / WARRANG

Suite 201/50 Holt Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
+61 2 8307 0121
sgsnsw@sgsep.com.au

