



# Public Health Plan

2026 – 2031



# Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Ashburton acknowledges all Native Title holders throughout the Shire. We respect and honour the Traditional Owners, Custodians, Native Land Titles, and Elders past and present. We acknowledge the stories, traditions, and living cultures of Aboriginal peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together.

We are proud to comprise many Nations in the Shire of Ashburton, including the Muntulgura Guruma People in the Tom Price region, the Yinhawangka People in the Paraburdoo region, the Kurrama People in the Pannawonica region, and the Thalanyji People in the Onslow region.

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## Message from the Shire President



On behalf of Council, I am proud to present the Shire of Ashburton’s first Public Health Plan. This inaugural Plan marks an important milestone in our commitment to supporting the health, wellbeing and quality of life of our diverse and growing communities.

Public health is about much more than healthcare alone; it is about the places we live, the connections we share, the services we access, and the opportunities available to us to live active, safe and fulfilling lives. Through this Plan, the Shire acknowledges the vital role local government plays in shaping the social, environmental and built conditions that influence health and wellbeing across our region.

This Plan has been shaped by our identified local priorities, meaningful community and stakeholder engagement, careful alignment with the State Public Health Plan 2025-2030 and local strategic priorities. It reflects what we have heard from our communities and provides a clear, practical framework for action over the coming years.

Importantly, it builds upon the significant work the Shire already delivers through core services, partnerships and programs that support community wellbeing every day. Recognising our role in Public Health and delivering core services for our communities continues to be at the forefront of our decision making.

Council is committed to working alongside our community, service providers and key partners to deliver the actions outlined in this Plan. Together, we will continue to strengthen the foundations for a healthier, more connected and resilient Ashburton region, now and into the future.

**Audra Smith**  
Shire President

## Executive Summary

This inaugural Local Public Health Plan (the Plan) marks an important milestone for the Shire of Ashburton, formally recognising the vital role local government plays in shaping the conditions that enable people to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.

This Plan brings that work together under a clear five year strategic framework to guide future decision-making, strengthen prevention efforts, and support a collaborative and proactive approach to improving community health and wellbeing for all who live, work and visit the Shire, across all our towns.

To develop the Shire’s first Public Health Plan, community engagement with

stakeholders and community members took place between July to September 2025 engaging over 200 individuals through various methods including surveys, meetings, social media and information sharing.

The priorities and actions that are featured in this Plan have been developed with current available resources in mind, ensuring the actions are achievable whilst in alignment to the State Public Health Plan 2025-2030 where relevant.

The Shire would like to thank and acknowledge the community members and stakeholders who provided input throughout the development of the Public Health Plan.



# Our role in *Public Health*



The Shire's Public Health Plan acts as a strategic informing document, providing clear focus on priorities and actions developed in response to its current health status and from community feedback gathered throughout the community engagement phase.

A Public Health Plan is designed to:  
***"Promote, protect and improve public health and is used to guide essential public health services and intervention"***  
(WA Department of Health).

The Public Health Plan will guide the Shire as a local Government to collaborate and coordinate with key stakeholders effectively to deliver on health and wellbeing actions focused on improving the community's health.

The Shire of Ashburton recognises its important role in protecting, promoting and supporting public health within the community, and this Plan reflects

Council's commitment to embedding health and wellbeing considerations into its everyday business.

The Shire acknowledges Aboriginal health and wellbeing, equity and inclusion as important overarching considerations within public health planning. These considerations have informed the development of this Plan to ensure that the Shire's policies, programs, services and environments are inclusive, culturally respectful and accessible to all members of the community.

Importantly, this inaugural Public Health Plan has been deliberately developed to focus on the Shire's core services and

areas where it has direct responsibility and capacity, ensuring proposed actions are practical, achievable and aligned with existing roles and resources.

By building on what the Shire already delivers, while strengthening partnerships and advocacy where needed, this Plan provides a realistic framework for improving health and wellbeing across the Shire of Ashburton.

doing so the Shire will be well positioned to prioritise the health and wellbeing of its community, whilst continuing to balance resources.

The Shire's Health and Wellbeing profile snapshot provided by the Department of Health provides further information to help guide our decision making relating to the priorities and actions developed for the Public Health Plan.

## **Why we developed the Public Health Plan**

The Shire is required by legislation to develop a Public Health Plan under Part 5 of the *Public Health Act 2016*, and by



# Our Health Profile

To support a healthy and liveable community, the Shire has reviewed the local health profile provided by Department of Health that highlights key health challenges compared to the State, as shown in the infographic below.



**34.0%**

OF MALES ARE **OVERWEIGHT**

**36.7%**

OF MALES WERE **OBESE**



**47.6%**

OF MALES DRANK AT **HIGH-RISK LEVELS** FOR **LONG-TERM HARM**

**15.7%**

FOR **SHORT-TERM HARM**



**LOW DRUG-ATTRIBUTED HOSPITALISATIONS** COMPARED TO STATE



**11.8%**

OF MALES AND

**8.7%**

OF FEMALES ARE **CURRENT SMOKERS** (COMPARED WITH **11.9%** OF MALES AND **9.7%** FOR STATE AVERAGE)



**54.7%**

DO **NOT** EAT THE RECOMMENDED **2 SERVES OF FRUIT DAILY** (COMPARED WITH **50.1%** FOR STATE AVERAGE)



**54.8%**

DID **LESS** THAN THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PER WEEK** (COMPARED WITH **51.93%** FOR STATE AVERAGE)



**ACCIDENTAL FALLS** WERE THE LEADING CAUSE OF **INJURY-RELATED HOSPITALISATION**, LOWER THAN THE STATE AVERAGE.



**MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION:** RESIDENTS HAD A SIMILAR PREVALENCE OF **ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, STRESS & MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION** COMPARED TO WA.





# Community Engagement Findings

A broad community engagement process was undertaken to inform the development of the Shire's first Public Health Plan.

From July 2025 to September 2025, the Shire of Ashburton community were asked for input on key barriers and opportunities that help support them to live a healthier lifestyle. The below table outlines these activities and responses.

| Engagement Activities  | Responses                |
|--|--------------------------|
| Online Community Survey  | 174 responses            |
| Online Staff Survey  | 28 responses             |
| Online Elected Members Survey  | 5 responses              |
| What's On Tom Price Meeting Presentation   | 11 stakeholders attended |
| 1 x online workshop 11 September 11.30am   | 13 attendees             |
| Promotion of survey and project in <i>Inside Ashburton</i> newsletter – July & August editions | 2 editions               |
| Social media posts engagement  | 591                      |
| Emails promoting survey and inviting stakeholders  | 179 stakeholders         |
| Community facilities, community noticeboards & general store                                   | Across all towns         |
| One on One meetings  | 2                        |

Key points from the community survey include:

**Top 3** identified factors when asked:

- 1** Access to healthy food options **93%** high importance
- 2** Safer communities **89%** high importance
- 3** Environmental health protection (e.g. mosquito control, good air quality) **90%** high importance

'How important are the following factors to you for living a **healthy and happy life in your community?**'

**Top 3** identified barriers to living a healthy lifestyle

- 1** Limited access to health services **74%**
- 2** Cost of healthy options, e.g. food, gym **66%**
- 3** Difficulty getting to services **40%**

**Top 3** important actions

- 1** Improving access to fresh, healthy food
- 2** Increasing access to affordable exercise programs
- 3** Improving public spaces for physical activity



**Top 3** of Shire's efforts in Public Health action

- 1** Delivering engaging community events
- 2** Access to parks and playgrounds
- 3** Delivering community programs



While this is the Shire's first dedicated Public Health Plan, health and wellbeing has long been embedded across its programs, services, partnerships and planning processes.

This includes:

- Environmental health and regulatory services,
- Community and youth development, recreation and active living,
- Land use planning and the built environment,
- Waste management, infrastructure and service provision,
- Community safety, and
- Emergency management.

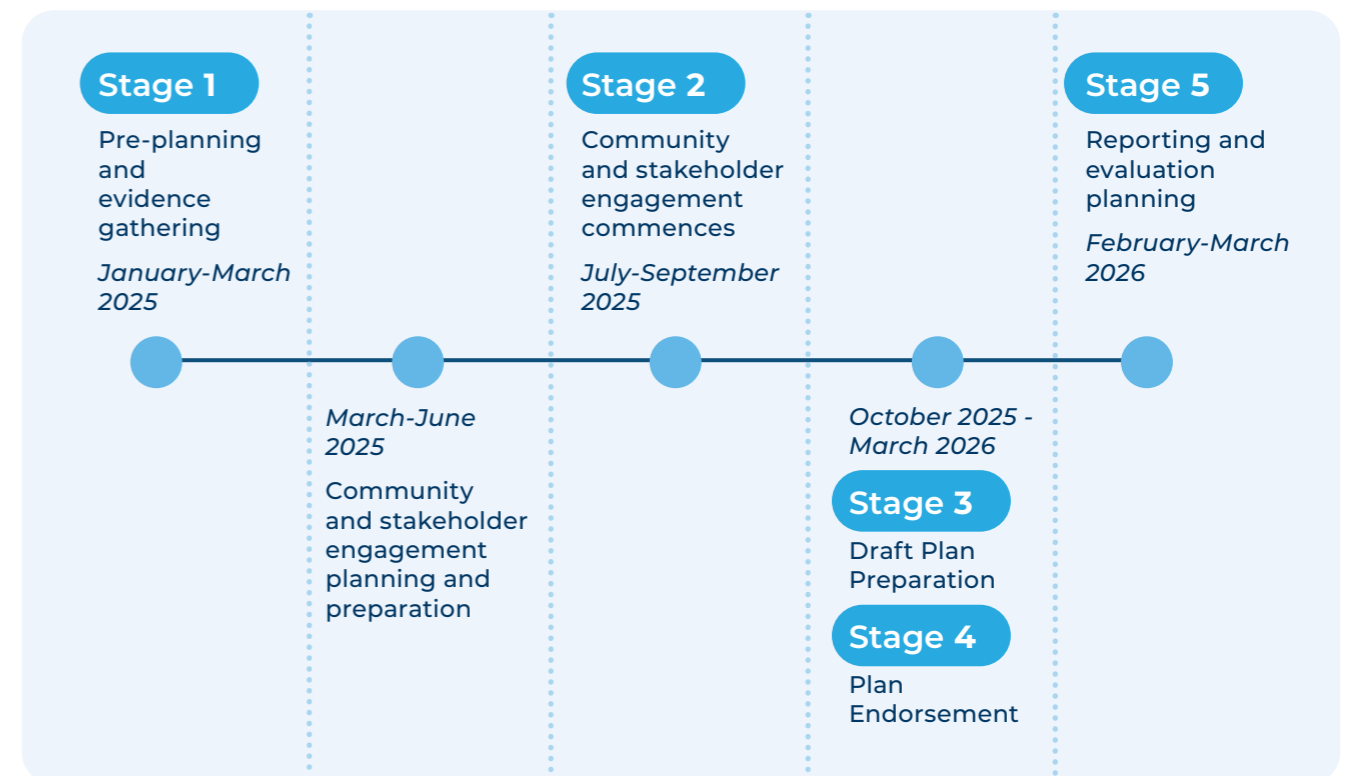
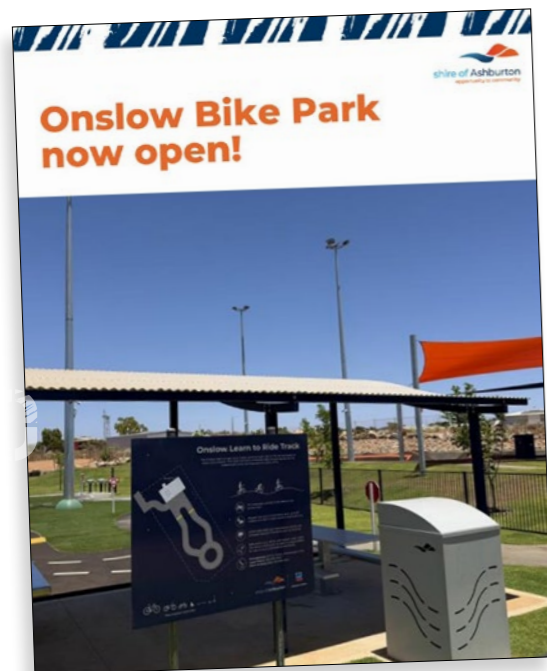
These everyday functions collectively shape the social, physical and environmental conditions that influence health outcomes across the Shire and demonstrate that public health is already embedded in the way the Shire plans, delivers services and supports its communities.

The Shire of Ashburton Public Health Plan was developed through a structured **five-stage process** to ensure it was evidence-based, informed by the community and aligned with strategic priorities. This began with pre-planning and evidence gathering, including a review of key health profile data, State Public Health Plan priorities and existing strategic documents to identify community needs and opportunities.

Community engagement then informed the direction of the Plan through consultation with residents, service providers and partners.

A draft plan was prepared to translate this input into clear priorities and actions, which was followed by formal endorsement through Council governance processes.

The Shire acknowledges the important role of the Chief Health Officer, WA Health and local health service providers in supporting public health outcomes. The Shire will continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders including local business, community service providers, schools, government departments, community groups and partners to strengthen coordinated, local responses to public health priorities.





# Deliverables



The Shire has identified **four roles** in delivering this Public Health Plan:

- **Facilitate:** To bring together partners, stakeholders and the community by enabling coordination, collaboration and shared progress toward collective outcomes.
- **Support:** To strengthen community and partner initiatives by providing guidance and practical assistance that leads to effective local action.
- **Advocate:** To actively represent and promote the needs, priorities and aspirations of the Ashburton community to influence policy, investment and service delivery.
- **Deliver:** To plan, implement and manage core services, programs and projects that achieve tangible, measurable benefits for the Shire and its communities.

The actions on the following pages set out the practical steps the Shire will take to deliver on the priorities identified, aligning with the State Public Health Plan priorities, noting that not every community idea can be included and actions focus on what is realistic, achievable and within the Shire's role and resourcing.



## Promote

To support and encourage strong, connected communities and healthier environments

| Strategy  | Action/s  | Role    | State PHP Alignment | Responsible Team/s     |
|---|---|---------|---------------------|------------------------|
| <b>1. We will support and encourage strong, connected, safer communities and healthier environments</b> | <b>1.1.</b> Deliver community events that promote health and wellbeing, community safety, support community connection and prioritise inclusion of all members of our communities.            | Deliver | Promote             | Communities            |
|   | <b>1.2.</b> Work in collaboration with community organisations, clubs and groups and service providers to promote cohesive positive mental health and wellbeing messages.                     | Promote |                     | Communities and Health |
|   | <b>1.3.</b> Strengthen the Shire's Youth programs by embedding evidence-based health and wellbeing principles across planning and delivery, including proactive responses to emerging issues. | Deliver |                     | Communities            |
|   | <b>1.4.</b> Promote health and wellbeing messages using existing and emerging communication channels to ensure information is accessible and appropriate for all community members.           | Deliver |                     | Media                  |



Working with clubs and sporting groups to offer healthier options at events. Focus on education and awareness around road safety. Continuing with the implementation of the footpath linking program.

## Prevent

To reduce the burden of chronic disease, communicable disease and injury

| Strategy  | Action/s  | Role    | State PHP Alignment | Responsible Team/s          |
|---|---|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>2. Reduce the impact of injury, chronic disease and communicable disease on our communities.</b> | <b>2.1.</b> To deliver and maintain quality sport and recreation facilities that support physical activity opportunities across all towns.  | Deliver | Prevent             | Facilities & Infrastructure |
|   | <b>2.2.</b> To support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and health service providers to be able to deliver healthy lifestyle programs and services that support Aboriginal people. | Support |                     | Communities                 |
|   | <b>2.3.</b> To promote existing trails, walking routes, parks and other public spaces to encourage community participation in physical activities that are low cost/freely accessible for all.  | Deliver |                     | Media & Communities         |
|   | <b>2.4.</b> To implement and maintain tobacco and vaping-free signage across all Shire owned buildings, facilities and events.  | Deliver |                     | Facilities & Health         |
|   | <b>2.5.</b> To support local sporting clubs to promote participation in regular physical activity programs and the accessibility pathways available..   | Support |                     | Communities                 |



A higher focus on implementing tobacco free zones. Increasing lighting around town to support walkability and safety. Implementation of preventative health programs through partnerships with service providers.

## Protect

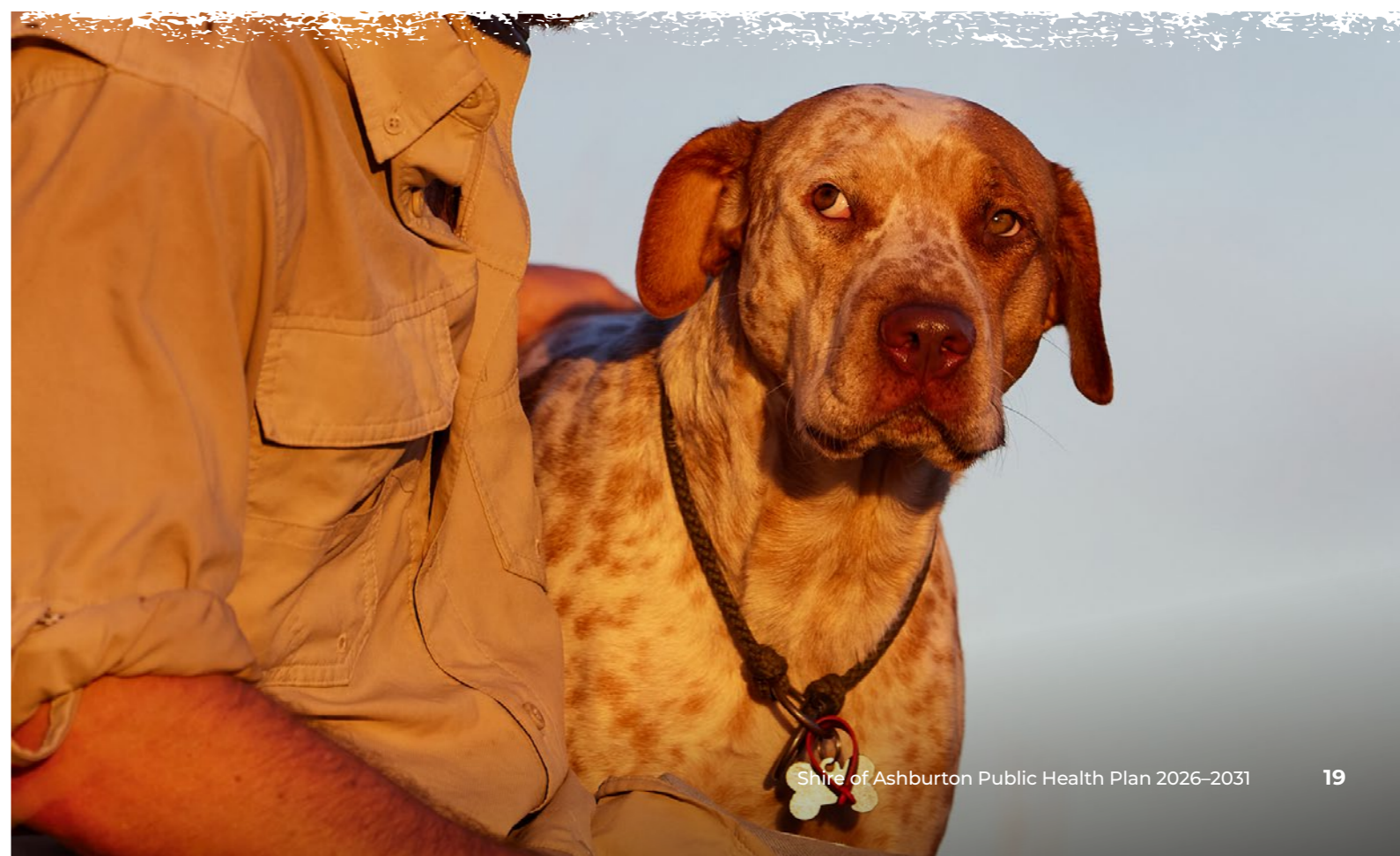
To protect against public and environmental health risks, effectively manage emergencies, reduce impacts of disaster and lessen the health impacts of climate change.

| Strategy  | Action/s  | Role    | State PHP Alignment | Responsible Team/s   |
|---|---|---------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 3. Protect against public and environmental health risks, managing emergencies, lessen impact of disasters and impacts of climate change. | 3.1. To deliver the Shire's statutory responsibilities by ensuring food safety and hygiene standards are upheld through regular inspections of registered food premises.                                    | Deliver | Protect             | Health               |
|   | 3.2. To deliver vector control programs and deliver community awareness campaigns that reduce the public health risks associated with mosquitoes, pests and other vectors.                                  | Deliver |                     | Emergency Management |
|   | 3.3. To deliver Shire emergency management and community preparedness initiatives that strengthen local resilience to natural disasters and climate related changes in partnership with essential agencies. | Deliver |                     | Emergency Management |

## Enable

To leverage partnerships to support health and wellbeing.

| Strategy   | Action/s   | Role       | State PHP Alignment | Responsible Team/s        |
|--|--|------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 4. Leverage partnerships to support health and wellbeing | 4.1. To advocate to local service providers, State and Federal Government for increase accessibility and service delivery of health services for our community       | Advocate   | Enable              | Executive Leadership Team |
|  | 4.2. To facilitate regional collaboration and information sharing with key stakeholders to strengthen and improve service health delivery outcomes across the Shire. | Facilitate |                     | Health                    |



# Reporting

As with all of the Shire's strategic informing documents, monitoring, reporting and evaluation will form a core part of implementing this Public Health Plan. Annual reporting will track achievements, challenges and emerging priorities, using the measures identified within the Action Plan to demonstrate progress over time.

These updates will be provided to Council and made available to the community, supporting continuous improvement and adaptability. In addition, The Plan will be reported on annually to the Department of Health via their reporting requirements and every 5 years the Plan will be reviewed and updated.





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opportunity to community

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