

ARART RURAL CITY COUNCIL

Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan

2025 - 2029



Ararat Rural City



ARARAT RURAL CITY MUNICIPAL PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN 2025-2029

The Ararat Rural City Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 (MPHWP) is one of Council's key strategic planning documents. It focuses on the goals and strategies that Council can implement as part of its operations and the available evidence to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for our community.

HOW ARE WE?

There is a myriad of data available on health status and determinants. For this Plan, we have chosen to focus on two measures from the Victorian Population Health Survey as the indicators of our overall health and wellbeing. These are our:

- Self-reported health status, and
- Life-satisfaction.

These indicators are representative of our we feel about our diets, physical activity, mental health, and a wide range of other social, economic and environmental factors that influence our health and wellbeing. Our results in these two indicators are mostly worse than Victoria.

The tables below shows the proportion (%) of people and their self-reported health status and life-satisfaction from the Victorian Population Health Survey 2023¹

Self-Reported Health Status	Ararat Rural City	Victoria
Fair/Poor	28.4%*	20.9%
Good	34%	38.3%
Excellent/Very Good	37.1%	39.8%

*Significantly higher than Victoria

Life-Satisfaction	Ararat Rural City	Victoria
Low or medium (0-6)	24.7%	21.9%
High (7-8)	47.9%	50.7%
Very High (9-10)	26.6%	26%

¹ [Victorian Agency for Health Information](#)

OTHER FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Natural Disasters and Extreme Weather Events

Ararat Rural City has experienced 13 declared natural disasters in the last 15 years, consisting of storms, floods and bushfires². The frequency and severity of natural disasters and extreme weather events such as heat waves is increasing. These events can impact on our safety, physical health and emotional wellbeing, cause financial hardship, and severely disrupt communities³.

Through our lived experiences and with consideration for the National Principles for Disaster Recovery⁴, we have found that strong social connectedness and having community spaces to engage with others has helped with disaster resilience and recovery.

Family Violence

Family violence is defined as violent, abusive, threatening or coercive behaviour. Each incident can have lifelong consequences for victims and children who hear, witness or are otherwise exposed to family violence. Using violence in any situation is a choice made by those who use it. Why do people who use violence choose this option instead of others? What could be done to encourage better choices?

Ararat Rural City has consistently had higher rates of family violence incidents than the rest of Victoria. The table below shows the rate of family incidents per 100,000 population for the last five years.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Ararat LGA	2,858	2,245	2,320	3,115	2,625
Victoria	1,420	1,369	1,366	1,375	1,497
Ararat rank out of 79 LGAs	5	12	11	6	12

² Australian Government's list of [Australian disasters](#)

³ [Chapter 2 - Impact of climate change and more frequent and severe natural disasters](#) – Parliament of Australia

⁴ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience [Knowledge Hub](#)



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Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, the Eastern Maar, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk, and Wadawurrung peoples. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We recognise and respect their knowledge of how our health and wellbeing is connected to the state of the land, our cultures, and our families.

1. **SOCIAL CONNECTIONS & INCLUSION**
We will encourage the development of community networks and cohesion that can provide the foundations for strong, vibrant and resilient communities.
 - 1.1 Build and resource strong local networks of volunteers across our rural City.
 - 1.2 Collaborate with community sporting clubs, health organisations and educational institutions to engage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities in physical activity and preventative health programs.
 - 1.3 Foster a culture of emergency preparedness through planning, building capability and capacity, and strengthening community resilience to disasters.

2. **NATURAL & BUILT ENVIRONMENTS**
We will create environments and places that encourage our communities to lead healthy and socially engaged lifestyles.
 - 2.1 Deliver nature based recreational opportunities, including cool and inviting parks, gardens, playgrounds and streetscapes, while promoting unique identities for our towns and villages across the municipality.
 - 2.2 Reduce injury, death and disability from road trauma by promoting community awareness and increasing the safety of local roads and infrastructure for pedestrians cyclists and drivers.
 - 2.3 Upgrade and develop safe, accessible and welcoming recreational and community facilities to ensure that community health and wellbeing needs are met into the future.

3. PARTNERSHIPS

We will develop effective, long-term partnerships focused on delivering positive health and wellbeing outcomes to the communities of Ararat Rural City, including improved access and outreach programs for rural areas.

- 3.1 Continue to develop our partnership with East Grampians Health Service and the Department of Health focused on delivery of population health, wellbeing, and research outcomes at a community level.
- 3.2 Continue to collaborate with Federation University Australia and project partners to deliver 'The Healthy Regions InterVention' (THRIVE) project.
- 3.3 Commit to strong local partnerships with Grampians Community Health, key providers and social enterprises in delivery of health and wellbeing initiatives.

4. BREAKING THE CYCLE

We will work towards preventing all forms of violence by addressing the deep underlying causes, including gendered drivers, structural discrimination and disadvantage.

- 5.1 Develop partnerships to change attitudes and behaviours that can lead to violence, and deliver practical and creative ways to promote respectful, safe and equitable relationships.
- 5.2 Ararat Rural City Council organisationally will develop a culture of supporting positive attitudes towards gender equality.
- 5.3 Collaborate with local service providers, community organisations and social enterprises to improve local service provision to victims of family violence.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The following measures of success are gathered independently of Council and enable us to compare data from before and after this Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

- The rate of family incidents per 100,000 population is reduced
- The self-reported health status results from the Victorian Population Health Survey is improved
- The life-satisfaction results from the Victorian Population Health Survey is improved
- Our communities successfully recover from disasters, based on data from the National Disaster Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation Database, where available.



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