

We All Belong

**A Strategy for an inclusive Mornington Peninsula
2024-2029**

MORNINGTON PENINSULA Shire



<pp>2

Acknowledgements

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (Council) acknowledges and pays respect to the elders, families and ancestors of the Bunurong people, who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong peoples' living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.



We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, multicultural communities and LGBTIQA+ people.

We respectfully acknowledge people with disability, people who are neurodivergent and carers as we strive for a more accessible and inclusive society.

This Strategy has been developed based on meaningful engagement with community, stakeholders and Council staff and in alignment with relevant evidence bases and policy directions.

Children	Young People	Older People	People from multicultural communities	People with Disability	People who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual (LGBTIQA+) and gender diverse
					

<pp>3

Language statement

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council acknowledges that inclusive language is integral for promoting inclusion across the community. We understand that language is always changing and recognise that words have different meanings for different people. Preferences about how language is used reflects the different ways people consider their identity, experiences, and attitudes within the community.

Council is committed to continually listening and understanding our communities' preferences and the best way to use language to promote inclusion.

We have chosen to use person-first language which emphasises a person's right to an identity beyond their disability, race, gender, and/or sexuality.

Council uses the acronym LGBTIQ+ which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual. The plus sign acknowledges that there are other diverse gender and sexual identities which may not covered by the letters LGBTIQ.

<pp>4

Message from the Mayor

As the Mayor and CEO of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, we are proud to present ***We All Belong***: A Strategy for an inclusive Mornington Peninsula 2024-2029.

We All Belong is the Council's Strategy to guide our work across key life stages (children, young people, older people) and population groups (people with disability, LGBTIQ+ community as well as multicultural communities) of all genders over the next five years. The Strategy has been developed to support our Peninsula 2040 Community Vision, Council and Wellbeing Plan and in alignment with State and Federal policy and legislation such as the Disability Act 2006.

We All Belong was informed by a comprehensive and meaningful engagement process that included over 2,100 community members. We listened to our local community and learnt about what impacts people's sense of belonging, as well as the solutions and partnership opportunities to improve inclusion, diversity, and wellbeing for the Mornington Peninsula. We learnt that our community's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is stronger than ever, and we thank everyone who provided feedback.

The Strategy sets out five goals based on what we heard from our local community: *Connected, Empowered, Accessible, Leading and Thriving*. These goals will help us to achieve our vision of the Mornington Peninsula being a place where people of all ages, abilities, cultures, genders, and sexualities are welcomed, celebrated, and provided opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential.

A key focus of this Strategy and its delivery is the use of an intersectionality approach which recognises that our community across all ages can have many interconnected parts to their identity which can overlap and impact their overall wellbeing.

Implementation of this Strategy will take place over the next five years, working with our community, committees, and partners to achieve our vision that ***We All Belong***. We look forward to seeing positive change that will enhance the wellbeing of all community members across the Mornington Peninsula.



Simon Brooks

MAYOR

<pp>5

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Language statement.....	4
Message from the Mayor.....	4
Strategy on a Page.....	7
Introduction	8
Council's Role	10
Strategic Context.....	11
Our Mornington Peninsula community	14
What is intersectionality?.....	17
What our community told us.....	18
Population groups	19
Our Vision	32
Goal 1: Connected	33
Goal 2: Empowered.....	35
Goal 3: Accessible.....	38
Goal 4: Leading.....	39
Goal 5: Thriving.....	41
Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.....	43
Service Centres.....	45

<pp>6

Strategy on a Page

Our Vision

Our community is a place where people of all ages, abilities, cultures, genders, and sexualities are welcomed, celebrated, and provided opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential.

'We' – All of the Mornington Peninsula community.

'All' – Regardless of age, status, race, gender, sexuality, beliefs, and disability.

'Belong' – Feel secure, supported, accepted, included, heard and valued.

Our Goals

Connected	Empowered	Accessible	Leading	Thriving
Our community fosters strong social connections, embraces diversity and promotes equality.	Our community have opportunities to participate in community life and have their voices meaningfully heard.	Our community has access to well- designed built, social, economic, health, digital and natural environments.	Our community benefits from strong advocacy, strategic partnerships and effective leadership.	Our community thrives through delivery of programs and services across the lifespan.

Our Population Groups

- Children, Young People
- Older People
- People from Multicultural Communities
- People with Disability
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQA+) and gender diverse people.

Our Delivery

An Annual Action Plan will be developed, implemented and evaluated to provide detail on how the goals will be achieved. Some actions will be stand-alone for specific population groups, while others will reflect intersectionality through benefit to more than one population group.

We will engage with our local community and partners throughout implementation of the Strategy to ensure we are making progress meaningfully and respectfully.

<pp>7

Introduction

We All Belong Strategy 2024-2029 outlines the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council's approach to working in partnership across key life stages (children, young people, older adults) and population groups (people with disability, LGBTIQA+ and multicultural communities) over the next five years.

Council celebrates, values and welcomes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, religions, ages, bodies and abilities and acknowledges their lived and living experience which has contributed to the development of **We All Belong**.

The Strategy recognises that people have many, interconnected parts to their identity, such as ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, religion, and ability, known as

intersectionality. The many parts of a person's identity can sometimes result in overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation which have a significant impact on overall wellbeing.

We All Belong replaces multiple existing and planned strategies delivered by Council and brings all actions for key life stages and population groups under one document, embracing a whole of council and whole of community approach.

By combining multiple strategies, we can approach our planning and service delivery more comprehensively and collaboratively. This enables teams across our organisation to better align service delivery and resources to achieve improved outcomes for our communities.

We All Belong 2024-2029 replaces the:

- Positive Ageing Strategy 2020-2025
- Disability Inclusion Plan 2018-2022

Council will continue to have a standalone Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026 (RAP) and Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2030. It is important to note that this Strategy should not be read in isolation. The RAP and Gender Equality Strategy and their actions align with **We All Belong** to ensure a holistic approach is taken to advance an inclusive and equitable Mornington Peninsula.

The Shire's RAP is a two-year commitment that focuses on:

- Developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Engaging staff and external stakeholders in Reconciliation efforts.
- Creating and piloting strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

<pp>8

Council's Role

Local government is the closest tier of government to community and is legislated to uphold human rights, safeguard against discrimination and protect the health and wellbeing of its community. It is well placed to plan and advocate for local and diverse community needs and concerns.

Council will fulfil various roles in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the **We All Belong** Strategy including:

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Planner: by participating in service coordination, networking, policy development, consultation, research and partnerships across child, youth, family, LGBTIQA+, ageing and disability sector

Resource provider to community through the provision and maintenance of buildings and infrastructure, delivery of community grants and education and training.

Service provider through the delivery of community services (child and family health, early years and youth services) required for the municipality and the wider region.

Partner and broker by working with key stakeholders, community groups and individuals to provide evidence-informed programs, services, policies and facilities.

Advocate and supporter of important issues on behalf of the community and Council advisory committees.

Capacity builder through coordination, engagement and encouragement of inclusive practices within internal services and in key settings such as schools, sports clubs, health services and local businesses.

Strategic Context

We All Belong Strategy 2024-2029 is aligned with Council's broader strategic framework including:

- Peninsula 2040: Our Shared Community Vision; and
- Council and Wellbeing Plan

The Peninsula 2040: Our Shared Community Vision was developed by Mornington Peninsula community members and launched in 2021. It sets out seven key principles and community goals aimed at enhancing the liveability and sustainability of the Mornington Peninsula. **We All Belong** aligns directly with the Peninsula 2040 principle that Council will "*support an inclusive, connected and safe society*".

The Council and Wellbeing Plan is developed in alignment with legislative requirements under the Local Government Act 2020 and Public Health Act 2008. **We All Belong** is a key deliverable for both the 2021-2025 and 2025-2029 Council and Wellbeing Plan.

Disability Act 2006

Under section 38 of the *Disability Act 2006*, public sector bodies (including Councils) are required to prepare a Disability Action Plan (DAP) and report on implementation through their Annual Report. Under the Act, a DAP is prepared for the purpose of:

- (a) reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- (b) reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
- (c) promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability
- (d) achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability

We All Belong incorporates Council's Disability Action Plan. Each purpose stated in the Act is addressed through priorities within the Strategy, which then guide the development and implementation of actions within the annual action plan, taking a whole of council and community approach.

<pp>10

We All Belong aligns with Commonwealth, State and Local efforts to support people of all ages, abilities, cultures, genders, and sexualities to reach their full potential by ensuring an inclusive, connected and safe community for all.

We All Belong aligns with the following legislation, frameworks, plans and policies:

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Commonwealth legislation

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

State of Victoria legislation

- Disability Act 2006*
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Multicultural Victoria Act 2011
- Racial and Religious Intolerance Act 2001
- Victorian Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005
- Local Government Act 2020

- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008

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External Guiding Frameworks, Plans and Practices

- UN Convention Rights of the Child
- Early Years Strategy 2024 – 2034
- Victorian Child Safety Standards
- 2017-27 Supporting Children and Families in the Early Years
- Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children
- Early Childhood Reform Plan
- Best Start, Best Life Reform
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Our promise, your future: Victoria's Youth Strategy 2022-27
- The Code of Ethical Practice for the Victorian Youth Sector
- World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities Framework
- Victoria's Ageing Well Action Plan 2022-26
- Australia's Disability Plan 2021-2031
- Inclusive Victoria: State disability plan 2022-26
- Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement Victoria 2022
- Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2022-32
- Victoria's Rainbow Ready Roadmap
- Victoria's Multicultural and Multifaith Action Plan 2022-27
- Victoria's Multicultural Health Action Plan 2023-27
- Whole of Victorian Government Universal Design Policy 2022
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

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Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

Peninsula 2024: Our Shared Community Vision

Council and Wellbeing Plan

Well All Belong Strategy 2024-2029.

Aligned Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Gender Equality Strategy
- Triple A Housing Plan
- Our Library Strategy
- Arts and Culture Plan
- Community Engagement Policy and Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Pedestrian Access Strategy
- Playspace Strategy
- Sustainable Transport Strategy
- Universal Design Policy
- Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (internal)
- Child Safety Action Plan
- Climate Emergency Plan
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan

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<pp>11

Our Mornington Peninsula community

The Bunurong people are the traditional custodians of the land on which the Mornington Peninsula is located. The Mornington Peninsula is located on the fringe

of Melbourne's outer southern suburbs and covers 192km of coastline fronting Port Phillip and Western Port Bays and Bass Strait with a total area of 720 square kilometres.

There are more than 40 towns and villages along the Port Phillip side of the Peninsula from Mount Eliza to Portsea, and on the Western Port side from Baxter, Hastings, Crib Point and Balnarring. As well as larger population centres such as Mornington, Rosebud and Sorrento, there are smaller populations spread out across the Peninsula including Flinders, Merricks, Red Hill, Somers, Shoreham, St Andrews Beach and Tuerong.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council is an 'interface Council'. This means the local community does not yet have access to all of the services available in Melbourne's metropolitan areas thereby requiring travel outside of the municipality.

The below highlights key demographic data about our local community:

Population at last census 2021, 168,973. 87,276 women and 81,697 men.	Population forecast for 2024 is 173,022 and is forecast to grow to 181,138 by 2036.	Between 2020 and 2021 +1846 people moved to the Mornington Peninsula.
Children and young people (0-19 years) make up 22% of the population. 17,936 girls/women and 19,196 boys/men.	Older people (over 60 years) make up 34.3 % of the population. 24,627 women and 26,761 men. 4% of the population are women over 75 living alone and 2% are men	Life expectancy for women is around 84.5 years and for men 80.4 years.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members have a lower life expectancy by about 10 years.	An estimated 23% of the population have a disability, which is significantly higher than the national estimate of 18%. 14% of women and 9% of men have unpaid caring responsibilities for someone with a disability	*In 2017, it was estimated that 6,877 (5.4%) of the adult population identify as LGBTIQ+. LGBTIQ+ people experience higher rates of family violence in Australia.
33% of women and 20% of men of the population have experienced transport limitations.	1,438 women and 538 men experienced family violence on the Mornington Peninsula in 2022. Women who identify as having a disability, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, multicultural community and/or new migrants community experience higher rates of family violence in Australia. Family violence is the leading cause of housing stress and homelessness in women.	61% of community members said they had felt unwelcomed or experienced discrimination. Of these community members, 63% identified as female/women, 20% men/male and 7% non-binary.

21.5% of residents had a Bachelor or Higher degree qualification in 2021, lower than Greater Melbourne. This represents an increase of 8,277 people since 2016.	Unemployment rate of persons 15+ as of June 2023 was 2.3, compared to 3.9 for Greater Melbourne. 47% of women and 33% of men earn below the minimum weekly wage.	75,765 residents were employed in 2021, of which 36% of women and 66% of men worked full-time and 51% of women and 24% of men worked part-time. 28% of women and 12% of men do more than 15 hours of unpaid domestic work each week.
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*] Actual proportions are likely higher due to the reliance of self-reporting and limited options to capture this data

What is intersectionality?

'Intersectionality' refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation (Victorian Government, 2021). 'Intersectionality' is a theoretical approach that understands the interconnected nature of a person's identity such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, disability and/or age – which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group.

We All Belong utilises an intersectional approach to enable inclusion of all community members. Using this approach helps us to acknowledge community members as their whole selves, and as a result, work in partnership to address the complex health and social challenges that they may face.

What our community told us

A total of 2,193 individual community members provided feedback that informed the development of this Strategy across a range of engagement methods during November 2023 to March 2024.

The purpose of the engagement was to:

- Understand and gather local community feedback on what impacts people's sense of belonging; and
- Identify potential solutions and partnership opportunities to improve inclusion, diversity, and wellbeing of the Mornington Peninsula.

A key objective of the community engagement was to target key life stages (children, young people, older adults) and priority population groups (people with disability, LGBTIQ+ and multicultural communities). This was achieved through ensuring a broad range of engagement methods were used, tailored to each of the key life stages and priority population groups. For example,

- An online survey was hosted on the online engagement platform Shape.
- Hard copy surveys were distributed through Council libraries, community centres, senior groups, youth centres, corporate centres, Community Support Centres, kindergartens, secondary schools and Council advisory committees.
- Face to face conversations were held with targeted groups.
- Pop up activities were hosted at Libraries and Council hosted events.
- Social media and Council communication channels were used to promote engagement opportunities.

Key findings included:

- 60.4% of respondent rated a sense of belonging to community as very important.
- 61% of respondents reported having felt unwelcomed or experienced discrimination in their community due to, gender identity, disability, age, cultural background and financial circumstances. Of these respondents, 63% identified as female/women, 20% male/men and 7% non-binary.

- Community events, social activities, and opportunities to connect with nature all scored very high for Mornington Peninsula residents in helping them feel a sense of belonging to their community.
- Difficulty finding information on what is happening locally, services, programs and activities that don't meet their needs as well as unaffordable programs were top barriers for Mornington Peninsula residents to feeling connected.

Further findings have been captured under each population group in the next section of this Strategy.

<pp>14

Population groups

To achieve an intersectional approach, it is important to understand the health and wellbeing of our community across key life stages and identities, with a focus on those at higher risk of experiencing social disadvantage and poorer wellbeing outcomes. This ensures these populations are considered in Council's planning and decision-making to enable improved equity and wellbeing.

The populations are identified below and are not listed in priority order:

-  Children (0-9 years)
-  Young People (10-25 years)
-  Older people (55 years and older)
-  People from multicultural communities
-  People with disability

-  People who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, Asexual (LGBTIQA+) and gender diverse communities.

Key demographics of these populations are described on the following pages. The data highlights the differences between these population groups, while acknowledging intersectionality for example, a young person, who identifies as a woman, could also be a person living with disability and identifies as LGBTQIA+.

<pp>15



Children

Population

In 2021, there were 17,201 children aged 0-9 years on the Mornington Peninsula making up 10.3% of the population. This number is forecast to rise to 18,418 by 2026. This is an increase of 6.6%. For children aged 0-11 (the range available from the ABS), 16,008 children are in families with two parents, 3,146 are in single parent families and 646 are in blended families. Women are more likely to be primary carers and lone-parents of children.

Place

The neighbourhoods with the highest number of children 0-9 years are Mornington (2,397), Mount Eliza (2,257), Mount Martha (2,225) and Rosebud and surrounds (2,225).

4,283 children aged 0-11 are living in suburbs with a Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas index (SEIFA) of 38% or below compared with the rest of Australia. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage.

Intersectionality

- 1,925 children aged 0-14 years have disability.
- 442 children aged 0-11 years identity as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 489 children come from bi-lingual homes.

What children told us

Children who we engaged told us they like going to community places where they can connect with their friends such as the library, parks and playgrounds and community events. They like having opportunities to attend activities they love to do such as gymnastics, dancing, sport and swimming. Children felt connected through their neighbours, friends and families and enjoyed it when there were opportunities created to come together and share experiences. Children expressed their concerns on climate change, bullying and harassment of others. They felt it was important to provide a basic level of shelter and food for everyone in our community.

How we work with children

With the child's voice at the centre, we provide quality services to children and their families/caregivers so that children develop, learn, are connected, safe and confident.

We partner with parents/careers to build their capacity leading to quality relationships that benefit children providing access to health and well-being assessments and connecting them with other parents/ caregivers.





Young People

Population

In 2021, there were 27,567 young people aged 10-24 years of age on the Mornington Peninsula making up 16.3% of the population. This number is forecast to rise to 28,492 by 2026. This is an increase of just over 3%.

Place

The neighbourhoods with the highest number of young people aged 10-24 years are Mornington (3,942), Mount Martha (3,862), Mount Eliza (3,798) and Rosebud and surrounds (3,261). In 2021, 20.1% of young people (5,534) live in lower socioeconomic parts of the municipality.

Intersectionality

- It is estimated 5,317 young people aged between 12-25 years have disability.
- 1,046 young people are unpaid carers for adults or children with disability.
- 455 young people aged 12-24 years identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 490 young people aged 12-24 years come from bilingual homes.



What young people told us

Young people we engaged with told us that they felt proud to be part of their local community (64%) and enjoyed connecting with friends both face to face and digitally. They enjoyed gathering and socialising in open spaces at parks, beaches and shopping complexes. Many (55%) felt they would like more of a say on issues that matter to them such as climate change, bullying and respect. Transport, cost of activities, safety and lack of opportunities particularly in the creative arts space were listed as barriers to participation.

How we work with young people

Council's Youth Services and actions within **We All Belong** adhere to the youth work principles, including; empowerment, participation, social justice, safety, respect human dignity and worth, connectedness to family and community, positive health and wellbeing outcomes and the positive transitions and healthy development of our young people.

This approach aligns with the Code of Ethical Practice for the Victorian Youth Sector. Its four core principles are 'non-discrimination', 'the best interests of the child', 'the right to life, survival and development', and 'respect for the views of the child'

<pp>17



Older People

Population

In 2021, there were 68,876 people aged over 55 years on the Mornington Peninsula Shire, making up 40.4% of the population, a much larger share than in Greater Melbourne (26%) or Victoria as a whole (28%). This number is forecast to rise to 72,291 (41.5%) by 2026. Most of Mornington Peninsula's 55+ year olds are aged 60-74 years, with around 21% of the total population in this age cohort.

Place

The neighbourhoods with the highest number of older people aged over 55 years are Mornington (53%) and Flinders (53%); followed by Point Nepean (48.5%), Rosebud-Macrae (46.7%) and Dromana (45.4%).

Intersectionality

- 11,329 women and 7,423 men live in lone-person households on the Mornington Peninsula.
- 60.4% of lone-person households are women.
- 11% of 55+ year-olds have a need for assistance due to disability.
- 51% have at least one long-term health condition.

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Positive Ageing is a term that aligns with a worldwide trend to shift the narrative around the increasing ageing population, increasing longevity, and attitudes to ageing and older people. Positive Ageing encourages us to consider the later stages of our lives as ones of continued health, happiness, meaning, social connection, relationships, and resilience

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What older people told us

Older people we engaged with told us that they loved connecting with outdoor spaces and the natural environment and was a key contributing factor to living on the Mornington Peninsula. They enjoyed access to organised community based and social activities such as U3A, leisure facilities (e.g YAWA) and availability of Council services such as libraries, community houses, senior citizen clubs and Mount Martha Gold Club. Many felt safe and welcomed (63%) in their local communities, however some had felt unwelcomed or experienced discrimination due to disability, age and or financial circumstances. Areas for improvement to ensure older people can participate, feel they belong and contribute to community life included technology

support, improved transport options and ensuring information about what is happening locally is available and accessible.

<pp>18

How we work with older people



Council is a committed member of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The **We All Belong** Strategy is well placed to influence the domains contributing to an age- friendly community, enabling positive ageing for all.

The WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework identifies eight areas of influence (domains) that contribute to age-friendly cities and communities.

Creating age-friendly environments requires collaboration across multiple sectors engaging diverse stakeholders. One of the fundamental principles of creating an age-friendly community is wide and varied input from older residents – evident through Council's Peninsula Advisory Committee for Elders (PACE), annual Community Conversations on ageing well and the involvement of other key stakeholders, internal teams, community partners and organisations.



People from multicultural communities

Population

In 2021, 17.7% of people on the Mornington Peninsula were born overseas and 5.4% of people used a language other than English at home.

In 2021, the top five languages other than English spoken at home on the Mornington Peninsula were Italian (0.9%), Greek (0.8%), German (0.3%), Mandarin (0.3%) and Spanish (0.3%). The language groups with the largest number of people with low or no English proficiency are Greek (192 persons), Italian (117 persons) and Mandarin (113 persons)

The ten largest ancestries on the Mornington Peninsula are English (45.2%), Australian (37.4%), Irish (12.5%), Scottish (12.2%), Italian (4.7%), German (4%), Dutch (2.5%), Greek (1.6%), Australian Aboriginal (1%) and Chinese (0.9%).

Place

Mount Eliza has the highest proportion of people born overseas (22.3%) and Dromana – Safety Beach (8.6%) has the highest proportion of people who speak a language other than English.

<pp>19

Intersectionality

- 26.6% of Mornington Peninsula residents aged 55 years or more were born overseas. Most were born in Europe and represent the post World War II era wave of migration to Australia.
- There are more women than men overseas arrivals on the Mornington Peninsula Shire (15,699 women and 14,132 men).
- Compared to women in Greater Melbourne, Mornington Peninsula Shire has a much lower proportion of women who arrived in Australia recently.



What people from multicultural communities told us

People from multicultural communities that we engaged with told us that they enjoyed being part of the community when they had opportunities to share their culture and heritage with extended family, friends and wider community. Many were part of organised social groups which made them feel connected. Feedback was focused on increasing local opportunities for more celebrations of culture and the opportunity to showcase cultural dancing, food and language across the community.

How we work with people from multicultural communities

Council is committed to supporting people from multicultural communities and celebrating multiculturalism together with community.

Council co-convenes the Peninsula Ethnic Seniors Council (PESC) alongside Frankston City Council. PESC is a forum for information dissemination and sharing of issues relevant to multicultural communities. Membership includes representatives from groups and clubs of Italian, Greek, Croatian, Dutch, Polish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, Muslim, Filipino, Sri Lankan and South American origin.

Council is dedicated to reducing experiences of racism and race-based discrimination across community through educational awareness and advocacy work internally and externally; including delivering events and activities that engage community in learning about diverse cultures and embracing differences.



People with disability

Population

It is estimated that people with disability make up 23% (39,239) of the Mornington Peninsula population. This is higher than the national estimate of 17% of Australians living with a disability influenced by the Mornington Peninsulas ageing population. In 2021, 10,533 (6.2%) of the Mornington Peninsula population reported needing daily assistance with communication, mobility and/or self-care because of a disability, long-term health condition or old age.

Place

The neighbourhoods with the highest number of reported persons in need of assistance are Capel Sound (14%), Hastings (8.9%), and Rosebud (8.4%).

Intersectionality

- 9.6% (or 165) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people residing on the Mornington Peninsula, reported needing daily assistance due to disability.
- 55.1% of women with disability need daily assistance compared to 44.9% of men.
- 14% of women and 9% of men have unpaid caring responsibilities for someone with disability.
- 11.4% of the labour force needing assistance were unemployed, when compared to the total labour force at 3.3.%.

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This Strategy adopts the social model of disability. The United Nations convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities definition of disability, which describes people with disability as people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory

differences that, when interacting with inaccessible communities and environments, prevent full and equal community participation.

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What people with disability and carers told us

People with disability and carers that we engaged with told us that physical access, including but not limited to appropriate housing, built environment, footpaths, toilets, community facilities, open spaces and beaches were key concerns impacting their ability to participate in community. We also heard that communication including knowing where to find information and receiving information in an accessible format was a priority. The need for increased advocacy and community awareness regarding employment of people with disability and pathways from volunteering to paid employment was also highlighted as a key priority.

How we work with people with disability

Council's approach to working with people with disability is deeply rooted in inclusivity, partnership and capacity building, guided by a commitment to universal design principles and a person-centred approach. This is evident through strong collaboration with people with disabilities, their carers and service providers, our Disability Advisory committee, continued advocacy work internally and externally and working towards accessible physical and digital environments.



People who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual (LGBTIQA+) and gender diverse

Population

In 2017, it was estimated that 6,877 (5.4%) of the Mornington Peninsula adult population are openly LGBTIQA+, noting the actual proportions are likely higher due to the reliance of self-reporting and limited options to capture this data.

Place

Accurate place-based information is limited for LGBTIQA+ populations due to inadequate data collection on gender and sexuality in large population-based surveys. However, smaller research studies have identified LGBTIQA+ community members living across all townships on the Mornington Peninsula.*

*] Reference: lisahunter (2024). Unpublished Summary of Selected Data from ARCSHS *Writing Themselves In and Private Lives* for Mornington Peninsula and Frankston Local Government Area Postcodes, Monash University)

Intersectionality

- More than 50% of young LGBTIQA+ people and 23% of adult LGBTIQA+ people are from multicultural communities.
- 40% of LGBTQIA+ young people and 39% of LGBTQIA+ adults have a disability, and there is a high correlation between LGBTQIA+ and neurodivergence.
- Approximately 62% of young LGBTIQA+ people have been diagnosed with a mental illness during their lifetime.

What people from the LGBTIQA+ and gender diverse people told us

LGBTIQA+ and gender diverse communities that we engaged with told us that Council should continue to proactively support LGBTIQA+ events and recognition days, which promote respect and acceptance across the Mornington Peninsula. It was also suggested that there are more opportunities for allies to support community events and create awareness amongst community. A critical action that needs to be taken was that of improved mental health support and access to LGBTIQA+ and gender diverse healthcare services locally on the Mornington Peninsula.

How we work with LGBTIQA+ and gender diverse people

Council is committed to recognising and celebrating LGBTIQA+ and gender diverse communities. Council co-convenes the Frankston & Mornington Peninsula LGBTIQA+ Collaborative alongside Frankston City Council. The Collaborative brings together community members, service providers and other stakeholders from across the region to collaborate respectfully and meaningfully with the aim of enhancing and protecting the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ communities whilst reducing LGBTIQA+ discrimination, abuse and oppression through advocacy, educational awareness and addressing systemic change.

<pp>22

Council is guided by *Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQA+ Strategy 2022-32* and are investigating the Victorian Government Rainbow Ready Roadmap for application across the municipality.



<pp>23

Our Vision

Belonging is essential for our health and wellbeing. We experience improved health and wellbeing outcomes when we feel included in public spaces, services, activities and among our social networks as well as being free from all forms of discrimination.

Vision

We All Belong Strategy aims to ensure our community is a place where people of all ages, abilities, cultures, genders, and sexualities are welcomed, celebrated, and provided with opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential.

We All Belong

All of the Mornington Peninsula community Regardless of age, status, race, gender, beliefs, and disability Feel secure, supported, and accepted, included, and valued

Goals

The Strategy outlines five goals:

- Connected

- Empowered
- Accessible
- Leading
- Thriving

Each of these goals has a set of objectives and actions that outline how we will work in partnership to achieve them. The annual action plan will include measures that outline how we will track our progress. Each objective will have a set of actions that will be developed annually to operationalise the Strategy.



<pp>24

Goal 1: Connected

Our community fosters strong social connections, embraces diversity, and promotes equality.

A connected community allows people from all ages, abilities and backgrounds access to services and resources that enhance their wellbeing and enable them to

live full lives. At one level it represents the degree to which individuals feel connected within their community, however more broadly it is the strength and resilience within communities that sustains positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

Social connectedness, delivery of high-quality services, awareness raising, attitude and cultural changes, opportunities for volunteering and initiatives focused on reducing social isolation have been identified as key contributing factors to ensuring a connected community.

Outcome measures:

- Increase in the number of community members participating in inclusive arts, cultural, and sporting programs
- Increase in reported levels of social connection

Objectives	Actions
1.1 Facilitate safe and welcoming opportunities for boys/men, girls/women and gender diverse people to connect through the arts, sport, and other recreation and leisure activities.	Facilitate a range of Council led inclusive arts and cultural programs for all ages and abilities. Work in partnership with other levels of government, businesses, organisations and the community to increase the availability of and participation in inclusive sporting, arts and recreation activities. Facilitate a range of programs and events that support social connection. Provide opportunities for community led events and initiatives supporting creative development and employability. Improve access to Council and community events through consideration and provision of access equipment options.

Objectives	Actions
1.2 Actively promote and celebrate community diversity and cultural pursuits across all stages of life.	Recognise and celebrate days of cultural significance through supporting local events and promotion. Provide support to local networks and community groups. Amplify diverse voices through Council services and within the community to promote inclusivity.
1.3 Work with local businesses and community organisations to increase volunteering and employment opportunities for all.	Promote local volunteer opportunities increasing connection to community and providing opportunities for learning and development. Build capacity of local employers and community organisations to employ people of all ages, abilities, gender, cultures and sexuality. Evaluate current practices and work in partnership to connect people all ages and abilities to employment.
1.4 Better understand the impact of social isolation and loneliness across the lifespan in our community.	Ensure gender disaggregated community engagement data is collected, analysed and shared to inform future work. Regularly monitor and analyse relevant local, statewide, national and international evidence, frameworks and policy reforms. Ensure current programs and events are evaluated to better support opportunities to combat social isolation and increase connectedness.

Goal 2: Empowered

Our community have opportunities to participate in community life and have their voices meaningfully heard.

Empowering and building resilient communities that promote inclusion and participation are fundamental in supporting all community members to be healthy and happy. Feeling connected to and valued by others, having the opportunity and capacity to contribute to the community and working in partnership are all essential to building resilience and improving wellbeing for those who are most marginalised.

Effective information sharing, delivery of prevention and early intervention approaches across services, building community capacity and ensuring equitable access and co-design opportunities to participate in council processes are key drivers in creating an empowered Mornington Peninsula community.

<pp>26

Outcome measures:

- Increase in the number of volunteers across priority population groups and key life stages.
- Decrease in the number of people who report feeling unwelcomed or discriminated against.

Objectives	Actions
2.1 Enhance the capability of local stakeholders to create welcoming and safe environments.	Deliver community awareness, education, prevention programs and events focused on anti-discrimination. Educate and support existing networks and groups on providing welcoming, safe and inclusive environments. Deliver training to local businesses and community to increase awareness of safe, welcoming and inclusive practices, codesigned with people with lived experience.

Objectives	Actions
2.2 Ensure community engagement efforts are accessible, targeted and meaningful and to ensure all voices are heard.	Identify and address barriers preventing community members engaging with Council Capture and analyse the demographics of those interacting with Council to identify any gaps and guide future initiatives. Ensure community engagement occurs across the life stages and represents the diversity within the community.
2.3 Build community capability to identify local needs and lead change in their neighbourhoods.	Administer ongoing Council community grants and subsidies program to support community resilience. Facilitate opportunities across and within population groups to lead change and provide advice and guidance to Council. Build capability of local organisations to support and respond to community need. Build the capacity of our population groups to be future leaders and community change agents.

<pp>27

Objectives	Actions
2.4 Improve the efficiency of information sharing both within Council and with the community.	Review existing methods and determine the most effective communication channels for sharing information across the community. Ensure Council engagement and communication channels are inclusive of all ages and diversities.

Goal 3: Accessible

Our community has access to well-designed built, social, economic, health, digital and natural environments.

The environments in which community members live, work, learn and play have direct impact on their sense of belonging, connection, and overall physical, social, mental and emotional wellbeing. Ensuring all our environments are safe, respectful, free from discrimination and accessible are key drivers to creating a community for all to participate in.

Outcome measures:

- Increase in the number of new infrastructure builds, retrofits, and maintenance projects that adhere to universal design principles and meet accessibility standards.
- Increased transport options across the Peninsula that are accessible and low cost
- Increased use of community facilities by community members in key life stages and priority populations.

Objectives	Actions
3.1 Deliver a Universal Design approach to ensure all new infrastructure builds, retrofits and maintenance of Council owned community facilities are accessible to everyone.	Implement Council's Universal Design Policy. Improve accessibility of community facilities. Ensure relevant Council staff are trained on Universal Design and Access standards.
3.2 Work with service providers, businesses, and community organisations to ensure they use inclusive and accessible practices.	Administer ongoing grants programs to support accessibility and inclusion.

Objectives	Actions
3.3 Deliver events and programs that prioritise accessibility, providing equal opportunities for participation.	Undertake Equity Impact Assessments on Council led services, programs and policies to promote gender equality and ensure accessibility. Lead and support the delivery of accessible and affordable community transport options.

<pp>28

Objectives	Actions
3.4 Ensure all Council information is easily accessible and uses inclusive language.	Review and implement the Victorian Government's Inclusive Language Guide Provide a statement of inclusion that is publicly visible.



Goal 4: Leading

Our community benefits from strong advocacy, strategic partnerships and effective leadership.

Council leads and advocates for accessible and inclusive practices and works in partnership with local services and all levels of government to support the wellbeing of priority populations and the broader local community. Empowering internal Council teams, taking a whole of council approach and whole of community approach to equity, diversity and inclusion is key to leading and driving change.

Outcome measures

- Increased rates of diversity within Shire staff and volunteers..
- Improved local, statewide and national policies that benefit community members in key life stages and priority populations.

<pp>29

Objectives	Actions
4.1 Promote diversity, equity, and inclusive practices throughout Council, encompassing staff, volunteers, and our work in the community.	Promote a culture of inclusion and accessibility, including providing training and awareness-building materials to all staff and volunteers. Use inclusive language in all Council written materials. Promote inclusion and diversity throughout recruitment processes. Identify and mitigate risks to the safety of community members and groups experiencing vulnerability.
4.2 Partner with and advocate to all levels of Government on policy issues that relate to population groups.	Advocate for the rights of population groups to amplify their voices. Advocate for increased social, affordable and accessible housing.
4.3 Identify and advocate to address service gaps based on community need.	Provide accessible and relevant information to individuals, carers and services.



<pp>30

Goal 5: Thriving

Our community thrives through delivery of programs and services across the lifespan.

Council is uniquely placed to deliver services starting from birth and across to ages to end of life. These initiatives address identified needs, enhance quality of life, and promote well-being for community members of all ages and abilities. From early childhood education and youth programs to positive ageing, Council plays a vital role in fostering a resilient and thriving community. By championing inclusivity, accessibility, and collaboration, we ensure that everyone has equitable access to opportunities, resources, and care, contributing to a vibrant and cohesive community.

Outcome measures

- Increased number of children, young people and families accessing services.
- Improved health and wellbeing outcomes for community members in key life stages and by people in priority populations.

Objectives	Actions
5.1 Invest in and facilitate high-quality programs that support optimal health and wellbeing outcomes.	Attract and deliver services that focus on positive health and wellbeing outcomes. Work with settings to support transitioning people through the education system to employment and further opportunities.
5.2 Ensure access to lifelong learning which will increase benefits to health, educational and social outcomes.	Support children and families to access high quality early childhood education and enter school as confident and involved learners. Create and promote intergenerational educational and learning opportunities. Facilitate a range of initiatives that support people to remain engaged in lifelong learning.
5.3 Increase and support protective factors and reduce risk factors for the community.	Offer a range of intergenerational programs to promote social connectedness and mental wellbeing. Support programs and initiatives that enable ageing in place.

Objectives	Actions
5.4 Provide a comprehensive and focused approach for the promotion, prevention, early identification and early intervention of the physical, emotional and social factors affecting key populations.	Attract and deliver funded services that focus on prevention and early intervention. Work with external providers to improve processes, systems and transitions to support community accessing local services. Ensure programs and educational processes are inclusive, equitable and diverse.

Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

Annual Action Plan

Implementation of **We All Belong** will occur through an annual Action Plan.

The Action Plan will include activities that will be undertaken by Council and external partners to achieve the goals and objectives set out in **We All Belong**.

Some actions will be stand alone for specific population groups or key life stages, where other actions will be intersectional, being delivered to benefit more than one population group.

Most actions will be delivered through Council's operational budgets, with implementation to be informed by available resources, current priorities, and emerging issues and opportunities. Where additional resources are required, these will subject to Council's annual budget processes and/or external funding opportunities.

Key partners and stakeholders

Partners and external stakeholders will also have an active role to support the delivery of the Action Plan and achieving the overall goals and objectives set out in **We All Belong**. They include:

Stakeholder Groups	
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Community Advisory Committees	Peninsula Advisory Committee for Elders (PACE), Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), LGBTQIA+ Collaborative, and the Health and Wellbeing Committee.
External Agencies and Service Providers	Local external agencies and service providers for early years, children, family, youth, older people with disability, LGBTQIA+ and multicultural communities. Aged Care Service Providers, Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Sports and Recreational clubs
Internal Council stakeholders	We All Belong internal working group and Universal Design Reference Group
State and Federal Government Departments	A range of state and federal government departments will play a key role in supporting the delivery of this Strategy through guidance, funding and

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of **We All Belong** Strategy will be undertaken as follows:

- Progress against the Action Plan will be monitored, with annual reports made to Council and the community each year, alongside case studies that demonstrate the benefits of an intersectionality approach.

- Data from relevant indicators of change will be used to monitor trends, identify emerging issues and measure progress against the strategies intended outcomes.

The internal steering committee and Universal Design Reference group will continue to meet regularly to oversee implementation, identify opportunities for collaboration, and share knowledge and experiences. Council advisory committees will also support and oversee the Strategy.

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires Local Governments to conduct Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) on all new and revised policies, programs and services impacted by the community to promote gender equality. As such, GIAs will be conducted on eligible programs and services from **We All Belong**.

<pp>33

Service Centres

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MORNINGTON

2 Queen Street, 3931

HASTINGS

21 Marine Parade, 3915

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MORNINGTON PENINSULA Shire