



Southwest PCP

YOUR PRIMARY CARE PARTNERSHIP



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CREATING AND SUSTAINING RURAL AND  
REGIONAL LIVEABILITY IN THE VICTORIAN  
GREAT SOUTH COAST REGION



# // Introduction

The issues facing those living in rural Victoria are significantly different to their urban counterparts. A 2018 Parliamentary Inquiry into sustainability and operational challenges of Victoria's rural and regional councils identified the common factors that affect service provision across Rural Victoria. These include<sup>1</sup>:

- **Socio-economic disadvantage.** Disadvantaged individuals and communities have more complex needs, but have a lower level of income, resulting in a decreased capacity to pay for the required services and programs.
- **Age structure.** An ageing population generally has more complex needs, increases the demand for social and health-related services.
- **Population spread.** Population spread can also lead to market failures for private sector providers, leaving a gap in service delivery. As such, some councils are required to deliver services that are delivered by the private sector in other municipalities. Physical isolation for rural councils can also lead to increased need for, and reliance on, support and care services.
- **Environmental issues** such as bushfires, drought, and economic downturns hit harder in the rural areas.
- **Remoteness.** Remote communities require duplicate services and community infrastructure across the municipality, which increase strain on public resources. There is also an increased reliance on public transport to ensure more remote communities have access to services.
- **Staff retention.** Some councils report that their locations make it difficult for them to fill advertised positions and hire professional staff. Staff shortages create gaps in the delivery of services.
- **Capacity to pay.** Lower community income, fewer employment opportunities and higher levels of disadvantage result in populations that have a higher reliance on services, but do not have the capacity or means to pay for them.

It is timely to look at what constitutes liveability in rural Victoria and how can it be sustained, improved, or developed to retain and attract residents into these communities to ensure their survival.

1. Services for Rural Liveability Final Research Report v1.1; Paul Shipp, Jonathan Rochwerger, Tayler Neale; Urban Enterprise Pty Ltd, 2019

## // Questions for Discussion

1. *What focus areas are most critical to improving our residents' rural and regional liveability?*
2. *What are the top five focus areas you think would improve rural and regional liveability in your community if addressed over the next 10-20 years?*
3. *For each focus area you identify, what elements, principles, domains and influences would be involved? (Refer to Figure 2 on last page).*
4. *What do you think you and your organisation could contribute towards improving Rural & Regional Liveability, if supported by others?*

## // Proposal

Building on the significant work that has already commenced, to create a *10-20-year strategy* that will sustainably address issues of liveability within the Great South Coast by:

- **Improving Access** – including access to meaningful employment, education, and civic participation for all. Ensuring access to affordable quality housing (public and private), transportation, sports and other leisure/recreational opportunities, health and support services, dining/shopping options, and effective communication such as internet and social media.
- **Increasing Flexibility** – ensuring that innovation and resilience are encouraged in responding to community and environmental challenges as they arise. Celebrating diversity (age, culture, gender, physical, etc.), partnering and collaborating across sectors to create strong community-centric solutions to challenges as they arise.
- **Ensuring Connectivity and Connections** – and thereby increasing social participation and cohesion. Provide safe places for people to belong and opportunities for people to connect, contribute, and receive, both digitally and physically.
- **Driving Flexible, Innovative, and Sustainable Development** – to improve standards of living and replace unsustainable industry

with vibrant new businesses and technologies, supported by and resulting in an expanded selection of local courses/careers/jobs.

- **Addressing Inequity** – by defining tele-communication, transport, infrastructure, health and wellbeing and other service gaps.

## Consultation Process

Drawing on current research<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup> this strategy will be further informed through consultation with residents and organisations across the Great South Coast region to define focus areas to transform Rural and Regional Liveability into the future.

## What are Focus Areas?

Focus areas are initiatives and strategies which improve long term Rural & Regional Liveability. They add value across the whole GSC region and align with a range of elements, principles, domains, and influences outlined in the framework. Focus areas are inclusive of existing Great South Coast initiatives, policies, plans, and strategies using existing resources (*Refer to Figure 1 below*).

Just as the many sectors within the community contribute toward what makes a location livable, so will it take collaboration between these sectors and organisations to achieve the vision of making the GSC and surrounds a place where people aspire to live, work, study, and recreate.

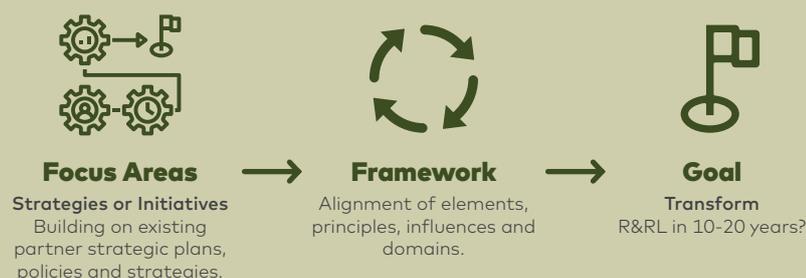
## // Process and Timelines

1. Creating the evidence base to inform decisions (SWPCP data hub & GSC R&RL Discussion Paper) *June – Dec 2020*
2. Define focus areas to transform Rural & Regional Liveability through consultation with experts, leaders and the community, supported by local data analysis *Dec 2020 – Mar 2021*
3. Develop a long-term GSC R&RL Strategy and Action Plan reflecting nominated focus areas *Mar 2021 – June 2021*
4. Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework with indicators to sign post success *June 2021*

## // Products

- Overview about Rural & Regional Liveability – Wimmera South West
- Discussion Paper on Rural & Regional Liveability in the Great South Coast
- Discussion paper on areas of focus for Rural & Regional Liveability within the Great South Coast
- GSC 10-20-year Liveability Strategy and Action Plan
- GSC Rural & Regional Liveability Evaluation Framework with Indicators

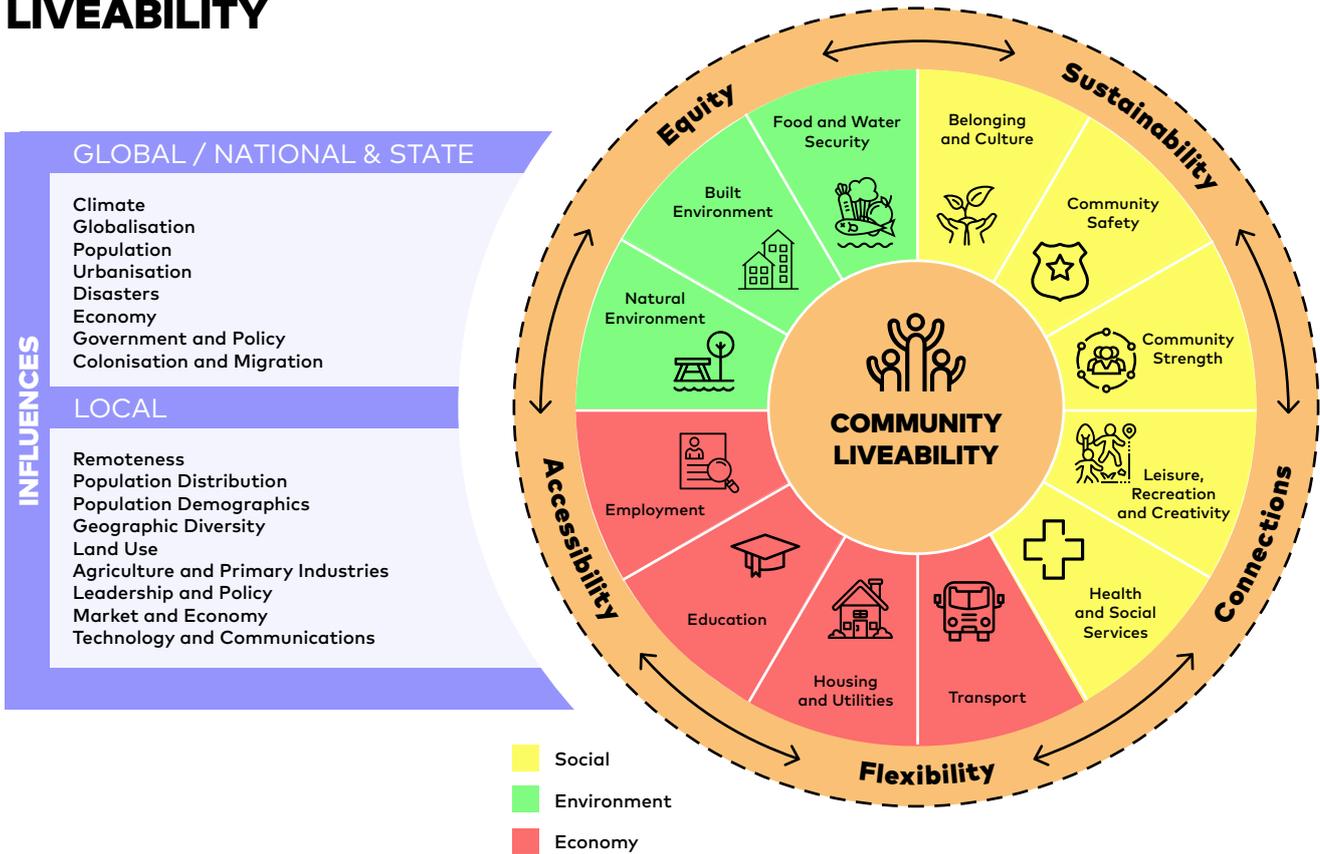
Figure 1: How Focus Areas will Transform Rural & Regional Liveability



2. Life in Australia IPSOS - 2017
3. WHO - Healthy Ageing Publications and Data
4. Model for working with local government to create liveable communities - Hunter New England Population Health 2012
5. Liveability Assessment Tool - Hunter New England Population Health 2012

Figure 2: Rural and Regional Liveability Framework

# RURAL AND REGIONAL LIVEABILITY



## // Expected Outcomes:

- **Policy, Programs & Planning** – this document, framed under the Rural and Regional Liveability Framework with indicators for monitoring achievements, will provide the basis for much of the planning requirements already imposed on local government and other government-funded agencies. Using common language, metrics, and frameworks ensures that evaluation can be made applicable for multiple and cross-sectoral needs. Collaborative and focused approaches enhance outcomes.
- **Marketing of the region** – the improvement in liveability can be used to attract new industry, residents, amenities, and tourists.
- **Improve liveability, health, and wellbeing**, and demonstrate trends over time (consistent monitoring). What is prioritised and measured is usually improved.
- **Attract Funding** – Funding applications can easily draw on the common indicators to demonstrate achievement and wider impact, making applying easier and more successful.