Wodonga 2050
Community Vision



CITY OF WODONGA VIC

Acknowledgement

Traditional owners

Wodonga Council acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of the Country. We also acknowledge them as Traditional Owners and Custodians across various lands. We pay our deepest respect to their Ancestors, Elders, children and young people. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and recognise their continuous connections to lands, waters and communities across the country.

Community

Wodonga Council acknowledges and appreciates the valuable input from the many community members who helped shape the Community Vision. Through various engagement activities - whether by attending pop-ups, sessions, and meetings, completing surveys or discussing the Vision with community groups, family, or friends - we are grateful for your contributions. Your involvement has been essential in crafting a vision for Wodonga.



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Introducing the Community Vision

A Community Vision (the Vision) is a crucial document that outlines the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality and guides council decision-making. In creating a vision, the community is invited to envision an inclusive, prosperous and vibrant future, as well as to identify the aspirations and priorities needed to achieve that future.

Why do we need a Community Vision?

A Community Vision is essential for helping the council understand the community's key priorities and ensuring that these priorities reflect the entire Local Government Area.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, the council is required to develop a Community Vision along with long-term planning documents to support it. The Vision must be created in collaboration with the community and in line with the council's Community Engagement Policy.

The Vision will guide the council's work, playing a crucial role in shaping the Council Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, as well as other strategic documents moving forward.

It will also inspire community partners and support advocacy efforts with federal and state governments for necessary changes.

What the Vision includes

The Wodonga 2050 Community Vision includes the following.

- A vision statement outlining the desired future state of Wodonga in 2050;
- Six vision themes, each accompanied by a corresponding value statement; and,
- A series of aspirations.

For details on the development process of the Wodonga 2050 Community Vision, please refer to page 15.



Community panel

There were diverse reasons for participating, from wanting to help shape the future of our city, through to having an interest in the engagement process and learning more about what the council does.

It was like politics at the pub, without the pub and nice sandwiches instead.

Words to describe the experience: Eye opening, inspirational, positive, rushed at times (needing more time to digest).

We learned that we can actually have an impact as residents of Wodonga.

Our experience

We worked well as a team, with people considering alternate points of view and opinions when integrating our work.

To create a better Wodonga. Our hopes for the future are everything we have pulled together for our vision of Wodonga. We want better outcomes for our city.

Yes, unequivocally, we would recommend this to others.

We would also like to monitor the progress of this strategy and see that the council is fulfilling its agreement in implementing the strategy.

Opportunity to meet other people and make connections.



City snapshot

Location

Wodonga sits at the centre of the Melbourne–Sydney–Canberra triangle and at the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. It is located on the majestic Murray River which forms the border between New South Wales and Victoria.

The region is surrounded by rich agricultural valleys with nearby snow fields, world class wineries, historic towns and villages. It truly is a great place to live or visit.

Situated on the Hume Freeway and the Melbourne to Sydney rail line, Wodonga is well-recognised as a strategic hub along the eastern seaboard. Wodonga is the largest and fastest-growing centre in North East Victoria. Its proximity between Australia's two largest cities, Melbourne and Sydney, provides key strategic advantages. More than 75 per cent of Australia's population can be reached by next-day transport haul.



Climate

The broader Wodonga region has a largely Mediterranean climate which is characterised by warm to hot, dry summers and mild to cool, wet winters.

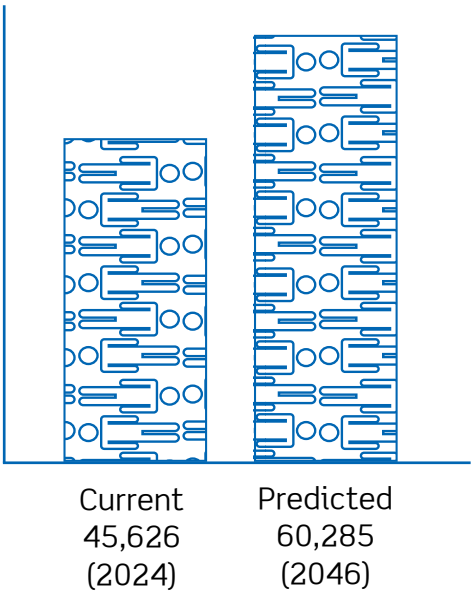


Population

Wodonga's residential base is more than 45,000 people and the city services a regional population of more than 200,000 people. Combined with Albury, Wodonga is Australia's 20th largest city and has a population of more than 100,000 (2019 ABS data).

Wodonga's population of 45,626 (2024) is predicted to grow to 62,400 by the year 2050, which represents a population increase of 36.76 per cent.

Wodonga population growth



Community Vision Statement

In 2050, Wodonga is a unique and thriving community that is inclusive, accessible, well connected and safe for all. We are a progressive regional hub that values diversity, a sense of belonging and strong links to our people and nature.

We are committed to continuous improvement of our wellbeing, sustainability, and connection to the environment around us.



1. Moving forward

Future focused, accessible interconnected transport and infrastructure that is smart, sustainable, affordable and driven by future community needs.

What would this look like?

1.1 The prioritisation of sustainable alternative transportation methods.

1.2 Adaptive and transparent infrastructure plan that incorporates the whole community.

1.3 Future focused transport and infrastructure hub linking all important areas that allow the community to transit and interconnect with other smart affordable services with ease.

1.4 Diverse infrastructure that supports and aids in accessibility for all residents and visitors regardless of ability.

1.5 A smart sustainable community that is powered by cost-effective and accessible infrastructure and transport.



2. Wellbeing for all

The strength of the community is bolstered by diversity and mutual connections. We support active spaces and environment, which fosters wellbeing and resilience through all stages of life.

What would this look like?

2.1 A community that is safe, protected and supported.

2.2 Our people have healthy behaviours and lifestyles.

2.3 We have accessible services, active spaces and facilities.

2.4 Assessing and addressing the health impacts of climate change (such as natural disasters) fostering resilience through all stages of life.

2.5 Promoting wellbeing from birth to senior years.



3. Thriving environment

Proactive custodianship and enhancement of our unique biodiversity, waterways and other environmental assets.

What would this look like?

3.1 Thriving urban landscape where green spaces and nature corridors are integral to our community's wellbeing. We are dedicated to maintaining and expanding these vital areas, ensuring they are accessible by all residents.

3.2 Protection of our diverse natural habitats, unique flora and fauna, and promoting sustainable practices, to safeguard our rich biodiversity.

3.3 Net zero by 2050, to create a resilient, eco-friendly city that thrives on renewable energy, innovative solutions, and collective action, ensuring a healthier Wodonga for generations to come.

3.4 Commitment to safeguarding the health of our waterways and ensuring effective wastewater management.

3.5 Dedication to fostering a culture of sustainability that minimises waste, maximises resource recovery, and drives forward-thinking practices for a cleaner, greener city.



4. Places and spaces for all

Connected neighbourhoods that are safe, clean and green, facilitating sustainable and affordable liveability.

What would this look like?

4.1 Increased use of other sustainable modes of transportation, resulting in lesser need for motor vehicles.

4.2 An increased sense of safety in the community.

4.3 Preventative measures to ensure the mental and physical health of the community is upheld, as well as accessible resources for those seeking help.

4.4 Functional spaces that promote connection amongst community.

4.5 A growing business community that enhances our city.

4.6 Appropriate diverse housing options to cater to the needs of residents.

4.7 Wodonga is a well-established city that attracts opportunity through its welcoming and accessible community.

4.8 A council that works with residents and businesses.



5. Connected communities

An inclusive community which champions social connection from all walks of life, where no one is left behind.

What would this look like?

5.1 Council proactively engages with the community.

5.2 Effective dissemination of information regarding community services, events and activities.

5.3 Well-advertised, promoted and evaluated services, events and activities.

5.4 There is open dialogue between community members and council to collaborate.

5.5 We have regular access to low and no cost opportunities to celebrate our diversity through arts, music, sport and culture.

5.6 We utilise and expand on our network of neighbourhood houses and other infrastructure to create third spaces as places of connection, discussion, wellbeing and fun.

5.7 Inclusive and well-publicised events integrating different groups bringing the community together.

5.8 Individuals are able to access transportation methods to connect with their wider community.

5.9 We have access to large, multifunctional spaces we can utilise for hosting grassroots events.



6. Dynamic advocacy

Building a stronger community through active partnerships and vigorous advocacy of the region's priorities.

What would this look like?

6.1 Relevant grants sourced for selected community priorities including health, transport, education, infrastructure and housing.

6.2 Partnerships with governments, private enterprise and community groups that further the community priorities.

6.3 Proactive advocacy for the needs and future growth of the community.



Next steps

The Wodonga 2050 Community Vision will help to guide the council with direction for planning and decision-making for our community.

The Vision will shape the development of the upcoming Council Plan, which will be in effect from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2029.

The Vision and Council Plan will then guide the development of the new ten-year Financial Plan and Asset Plan.

The council is committed to working collaboratively with the community, partners, government agencies and other stakeholders to realise this vision.

We will share our progress toward achieving the Vision through the Annual Report.



How the Vision was developed

Stage 1 – Wodonga 2050 Engagement Design

The council undertook a co-design process to work with the community to design the way in which we would undertake engagement to build community ownership and leadership early in the process.

The Wodonga 2050 project commenced in July 2023.

There were two formal sessions, facilitated by an independent consultant specialising in high influence and deliberative engagement.

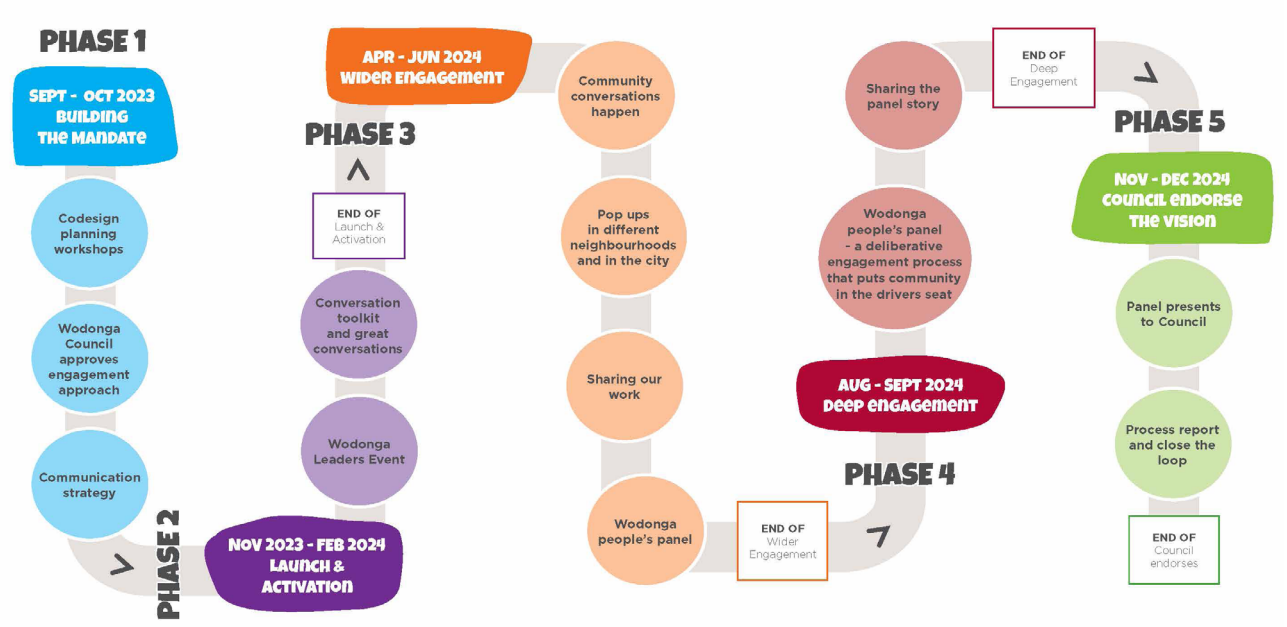
A range of community and stakeholder members representing a mix of backgrounds and interests were invited to participate, including Gateway Health, North East Water, Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Wodonga Federation of Government Schools, the Wodonga Access Group and council staff.

Staff also engaged with councillors and other stakeholders to provide input into the process.

Through the co-design process, a Strategic Engagement Plan (Appendix 1) was developed for the process which outlined the remit, scope, level of influence, audiences and an engagement roadmap.

The engagement roadmap set out five stages for the project, with a high-level overview of the activities that were to be part of each stage over a period of 12 to 18 months. Each stage providing multiple opportunities for community members to help shape the future vision.

Engagement roadmap



Stage 2 – Wodonga 2050 Launch

Stage 2 was the public launch and activation of the project. To kick it off, the council hosted a leaders' lunch, councillor dinner and a half-day community forum in November.

A total of 100 people participated in three events discussing signals, scanning, and the future of Wodonga, all facilitated by futurist Simon Waller.

Some of the themes of the discussion were housing, health, education, artificial intelligence, environment, aged care, families, growth and connectivity.

Some of the key highlights

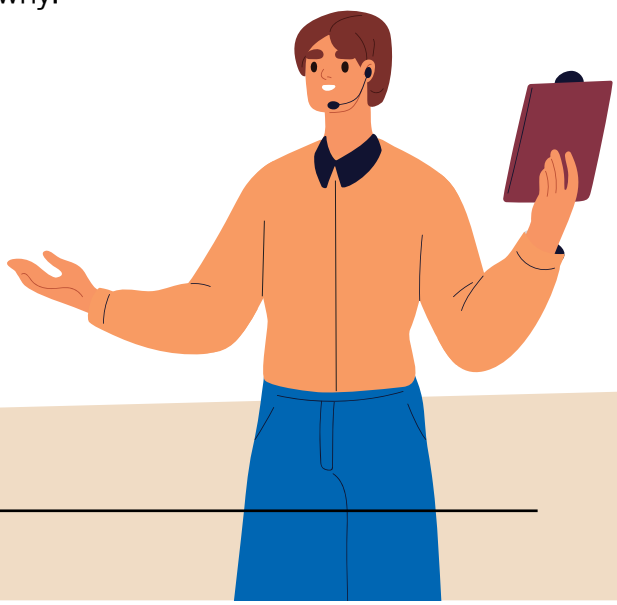
- Having 13-year-old poetry slam champion, Eve Francis, give an opening address which included a poem reminding us to consider a youth's perspective
- Everyone in the room creating a mini-vision
- A Graphic Recording, the visual representation of the day's discussions by Sarah Firth (Appendix 2)

Simon shared a quote from Bill Gates about how people overestimate the change that will occur in the short-term but underestimate the change of the long-term. This was an ideal premise to launch the Wodonga 2050 consultation.

Following the launch events, community members were invited to answer the question "How do we make Wodonga an even better place to live for all?" at a series of online and in-person meetings. A total of 116 people participated online, with a further 25 people opting for in-person meetings.

At the conclusion of this stage, community feedback was themed, based on topic areas and then each piece of feedback was tallied to show the most prominent areas of community interest.

The Stage 2 feedback report (Appendix 3) includes all of the comments received from community members during this process and provides greater context as to what themes were important to people, and why.



Stage 3 – Talking 2050 Community Conversations

This stage saw a broad community consultation process that took place across three months.

The council hosted a series of pop-up sessions and encouraged community members to host their own conversations using the Community Conversation Toolkit.

Councillors and council staff also attended meetings with businesses, groups and community organisations to talk about Wodonga in 2050.

Building on what was heard during the launch phase, the community was encouraged to continue conversations about the identified themes, as the council sought to understand what was most important to people and why they valued those things.

The council also invited the community to contribute additional ideas as to how we make Wodonga an even better place to live for all.

During this time more than 649 people participated in person and 188 people had their say online.

The Stage 3 feedback report (Appendix 4) compiles all the comments received from community members during this stage and offers insight into the key themes that mattered to people and why.



Stage 4 – Wodonga 2050 Developed

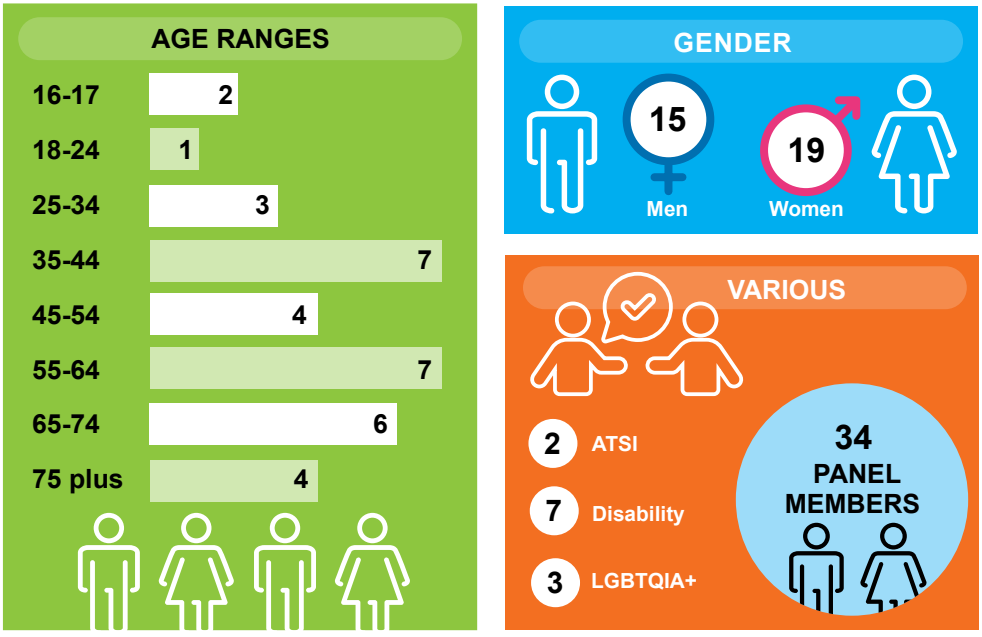
Over four sessions, the Wodonga 2050 Deliberative Panel developed the new *Wodonga 2050 Community Vision* for our city.

The Deliberative Panel consisted of 34 local residents, who were independently recruited through a random selection process.

This panel was representative of the Wodonga community profile, comprised of people from various backgrounds, ages, genders and abilities to ensure a well-rounded representation of our community was collaborating to shape the vision.

During these sessions panel members engaged with subject matter experts, were guided by experienced facilitators, and participated in robust discussions and intensive workshops to deliver a vision that does not leave anyone behind.

Wodonga 2050 Vision Deliberative Panel - Stratification goals excerpt



For the complete list of what was considered in selecting the panel members, view Stratification Goals.

Stage 5 – Wodonga 2050 Adopted

The *Wodonga 2050 Community Vision* will be presented to councillors at the regular council meeting on Monday, November 25, 2024.

With the Community Vision finalised, the council will use this document to guide the development of the Council Plan and other key strategies.

The Community Vision will be reviewed at regular intervals to re-test the community's vision, values and aspirations for their city as we move toward Wodonga 2050.

Appendix

1. Strategic Engagement Plan
   wod.city/wodonga2050-sep

2. Graphic Recording
   wod.city/wodonga2050-graphicrecording

3. Stage 2 Feedback Report
   wod.city/wodonga2050-stage2

4. Stage 3 Feedback Report
   wod.city/wodonga2050-stage3

5. Stage 4 Feedback Report
   wod.city/wodonga2050-stage4

6. Deliberative Panel Stratification Goals
   wod.city/wodonga2050-stratificationgoals



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