

Sunshine Coast
Community Strategy
Annual Report 2024–25



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Annual Report 2024–25.

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Traditional acknowledgement

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Sunshine Coast Country, home of
the Kabi Kabi peoples and the Jinibara peoples, the Traditional Custodians,
whose lands and waters we all now share.

We recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual, social
and economic significance. The Traditional Custodians' unique values, and
ancient and enduring cultures, deepen and enrich the life of our community.

We commit to working in partnership with the Traditional Custodians and the
broader First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) communities to
support self-determination through economic and community development.

Truth telling is a significant part of our journey. We are committed to
better understanding the collective histories of the Sunshine Coast and the
experiences of First Nations peoples. Legacy issues resulting from colonisation
are still experienced by Traditional Custodians and First Nations peoples.

We recognise our shared history and will continue to work in partnership to
provide a foundation for building a shared future with the Kabi Kabi peoples
and the Jinibara peoples.

We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging, and
acknowledge the important role First Nations peoples continue to play within
the Sunshine Coast community.

Together, we are all stronger.



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A message from our Mayor and Community Portfolio Councillors

We are proud of the work our community does to achieve our shared vision of a strong, connected community, where together we thrive.

It is with great pride that we present the 2024–25 Annual Report for the Community Strategy. This report offers a moment to pause and reflect on the collective achievements. It showcases how Council, our community, and partners have worked side-by-side through collaboration, advocacy, and cooperation to deliver meaningful outcomes across five key areas.

This marks the fifth annual report for the Community Strategy 2019–2041, originally endorsed in 2019, and the first report under the new Community Strategy Action Plan 2024–2029. We have actively listened to our community – understanding what matters most, what is needed, and the opportunities and challenges we face together.

Following three stages of community engagement, the refreshed Strategy and new Action Plan were adopted in October 2024. These documents were designed to be clearer and easier to read, with achievable actions, transparent targets, and a vibrant design that reflects the energy of our community.

Over the past year, we have worked to support and enhance our community's health and wellbeing, activate local places and spaces, and foster inclusive, connected, and resilient communities, while continuing to celebrate heritage, culture, and arts.

Key highlights included:

- adopting and implementing the **refreshed Community Strategy and Action Plan**
- the **Lived Experience Inclusion Project – Street Up**
- advancing to a **Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan**
- the second instalment of the **Shine a Light on Racism** campaign
- hosting the **Sunshine Coast Youth Forum**, in collaboration with the Young Leaders Academy
- introducing the **MadeSC** creative development program
- the **Kawana Aquatic Centre** upgrades
- opening **Namba Meeting Place** and a new **pump track** in Buderim.

We also awarded more than \$5.6 million across 1152 grants, supporting community groups to continue delivering the incredible programs, events, and activities that help our communities thrive.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our partners and the community for working with us to deliver the Community Strategy. As we look ahead, we acknowledge that we cannot do this alone. In partnership with internal and external stakeholders and community organisations, we remain committed to building a strong community, where together we thrive.

Mayor Rosanna Natoli
Councillor David Law
Councillor Taylor Bunnag



Making progress together

Working towards our vision
Australia's most sustainable region.

Sunshine Coast
Community Strategy
2019–2041

Sunshine Coast
Environment and Liveability
Strategy 2017–2041

Sunshine Coast
Regional Economic Development
Strategy 2013–2033

Sunshine Coast Council
Corporate Plan
2024–28

**Community Strategy
Annual Report 2024–25**

One vision – three strategies



Our vision is supported by three long-term strategies that have been developed in consultation with our community. These regional strategies collectively provide the strategic framework and desired outcomes for Council to work collaboratively across our community, with business, and other tiers of government to advance our vision as Australia's most sustainable region.

To achieve the vision for the region, it is critical to progress our community, environment and economic objectives, understanding that all three are integrated and critical to the success and overall sustainability and liveability of our region.

Vision

Together we thrive

Goal

Our Strong Community

The Community Strategy outlines Council's commitment to working with our community to reach our vision where together we thrive.

It provides the long-term direction for how Council and our community will work together to ensure that people and places remain connected, inclusive and cohesive as we grow.

The Sunshine Coast Community Strategy provides the strategic pathways towards a future where together we thrive. We thrive through connection with people, places and spaces and where we stay true to our values as a welcoming, caring and vibrant community, with opportunities for all to participate.

The strategy provides a clear framework for a strong community, built on the following five outcomes:



01 Healthy, active communities



02 Vibrant communities



03 Inclusive communities



04 Connected, resilient communities



05 Creative, innovative communities

Our global commitment



In our Sunshine Coast Biosphere, we work together with our community for a sustainable future where we celebrate people and nature.

This is an international recognition as part of a World Network of Biosphere Reserves, demonstrating our commitment to contribute to a sustainable planet and create a positive legacy for future generations. This also aligns with Council's vision as Australia's most sustainable region. Connected. Liveable. Thriving.

We all have a role to play in the Sunshine Coast Biosphere now and for all those who will live, work, learn and play here in the future.

Our biosphere spans the Sunshine Coast local government area and three nautical miles off the coast.

Caring for this special place brings new opportunities and a range of possible benefits to our natural environment, community, lifestyle and economy.

The [Sunshine Coast Biosphere](#) is centred around our four key objectives, all of which are intrinsically linked:

- **People** - A Sunshine Coast community that actively fosters and promotes sustainable practices, use and stewardship
- **Conservation** - Conserving, maintaining, and enhancing our natural environment from the hinterland to the coast, and connecting people and nature
- **Development** - Demonstrating leadership in delivering a diverse and resilient economy
- **Logistical support** - Inspiring and celebrating creativity, innovation, research, and a learning community.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Implementing the Sunshine Coast Biosphere involves local actions delivering on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As we advance our vision as Australia's most sustainable region, the environmental, social, cultural and economic activities across the region must be carefully balanced to ensure we create a sustainable future.

Council is demonstrating regional leadership by committing to embed the SDGs in our strategies, plans and associated progress reporting. The Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019–2041 supports the SDGs by outlining Council-led and community-led actions across all domains of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.

This Strategy contributes to the following goals:

SDG 1 – No Poverty

The strategy seeks to contribute to poverty reduction through collective community and government action in topic areas such as community places and spaces, housing and homelessness support, transport and inclusion.

SDG 2 and 3 – Zero Hunger; Good Health and Wellbeing

The strategy prioritises both physical and mental health with specific outcomes and actions relating to food security, health and wellbeing. Other important topic areas that influence health and wellbeing include community connection, safety, transport, inclusion and volunteering.

SDG 4, 5 and 10 – Quality Education; Gender Equality; Reduced Inequalities

Inclusion and equity are core principles in the strategy and flow through all of the topic areas covered. Outcomes and actions related specifically to inclusion are outlined in the inclusion topic.

SDG 8 and 9 – Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry Innovation and Infrastructure

The strategy recognises that inclusive opportunities for training and employment provide personal, community,

business and economic benefits. It also acknowledges that the creative arts, heritage and First Nations culture can support both livelihoods and cultural vitality.

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

The strategy includes outcomes and actions related to transport, community places and spaces, and housing and homelessness that contribute to an inclusive, safe and resilient region for all.

SDG 9 and 13 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Climate Action

The strategy seeks to improve the resilience of our communities, increasing our adaptive capacity to prepare and respond to increasing climate risks. The strategy also prioritises community connections, which improve our resilience to a multitude of shocks and stressors.

SDG 16 and 17 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; Partnerships for the Goal

The Strategy includes outcomes and actions related to community safety as well as community engagement to help promote inclusive participation in decision-making. It also fosters collaboration between Council, community organisations and other levels of government to drive shared outcomes and meaningful impact.



This Annual Report

This report highlights and celebrates the meaningful progress made over the past year in advancing the priorities of the Community Strategy, achieved through strong collaboration with our community and community partners.

This is the fifth annual report since the Community Strategy came into effect in November 2019 and the first report since the Community Strategy 2019–2041 was refreshed and Community Strategy Action Plan 2024–2029 was adopted.

Council continues to measure and report on the progress towards our community outcomes drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative data to capture the broad range of outcomes that result from our work and collective community efforts.



Measuring impact

We will use the following measures to track progress towards our shared goal of a strong community. We all have responsibility for contributing to the outcomes we want to see in our community and we will need to work together to achieve these targets. Further context and commentary on the measures and targets is detailed at Appendix A.

Target	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Residents in agreement that the Sunshine Coast is a strong community	NA	63%	75%
 01 Healthy, active communities			
1.1 Residents who rated their health as good, very good or excellent as a ranking within Regional Queensland (Health of Queenslanders, Queensland Government)	#2	#2	#1-3
 02 Vibrant communities			
2.1 Residents in agreement that Council's community infrastructure meets community need	NA	55%	60%
2.2 Personal travel by active transport and passenger transport (Queensland Household Travel Survey, Queensland Government)	15%	12%	30%
2.3 Residents in agreement that they can find the type of accommodation they need	37%	34%	40%
 03 Inclusive communities			
3.1 Residents in agreement that it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures	85%	75%	90%
3.2 Residents who volunteered for an organisation in the preceding twelve months (ABS Census)	21%	16%	20%
3.3 Residents in agreement that there are opportunities to have a say on community issues that are important to them	70%	45%	70%
 04 Connected, resilient communities			
4.1 Residents in agreement that they live in an active community where people get involved in local issues and activities	77%	54%	75%
4.1 Residents in agreement that they can get help from friends, family, neighbours or community organisations when they need it	93%	79%	90%
4.2 Residents in agreement that they feel safe all the time on the Sunshine Coast	77%	60%	75%
 05 Creative, innovative communities			
5.1 Cultural vitality	TBD	TBD	TBD

Source: Sunshine Coast Council Community Connections Survey unless noted otherwise.

Grants

Community Grants Program 2024-25

Council's Community Grants Program continues to enable and support community groups, individuals and over 29,000 volunteers to deliver sustainable community-led initiatives in response to community needs and opportunities. Grants support the delivery of programs across all Community Strategy outcome areas.

Total Grants related to Community Strategy Outcomes

1152 grants awarded, over \$5,623,062 allocated

			
Partnership Grants	Community Grants	Arts and Heritage	Environment Levy
\$2,162,390 million for 198 groups	\$2,058,266 million for 782 projects	\$421,906 for 59 projects	\$980,500 for 113 grants awarded
\$1,172,904 for 144 partner community groups	\$1,353,515 for 252 major grants	\$49,798 for 10 heritage groups (Heritage Levy funded)	\$325,000 for 86 landholder grants
\$919,486 for 49 sports fields groups	\$129,184 for 88 minor grants	\$182,108 for 38 regional arts development projects	\$20,000 for 5 Environment projects
\$70,000 for 5 recreation trail groups	\$76,366 for 27 emergency grants	\$190,000 to support 11 creative industry investment programs	\$635,500 for 22 partnerships with environment groups
	\$162,143 for 53 festive and commemorative events grants		
	\$56,943 for 176 individual development grants		
	\$280,115 for Councillor Discretionary Funding over 186 grants		

There is a continued high level of support to build the capacity of community organisations to apply for grants, and to respond to all grant enquiries and requests for assistance. A series of grant writing workshops were hosted during July and August 2024 and February 2025, both online and in-person, to build the capacity and knowledge of community groups to successfully apply for and manage grant funding. These workshops continue to be of high value to our community, with 94 per cent of participants rating the sessions as excellent or very good.

In February 2025, Council hosted its inaugural Grants Information and Networking Session at Venue 114, attracting 68 community members. The event featured presentations from external funding bodies including Queensland Gives, Queensland Sport and Recreation, and the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, providing valuable insights into available funding opportunities.

Major grants strengthening connections

2024 Multicultural Moon Festival

The 2024 Multicultural Moon Festival, supported by Council's Major Community Grant funding, was held on the closest night to the mid-autumn full moon in September, celebrating Chinese culture and community connections. The free family friendly community event held in Mooloolaba, is one of the most significant celebrations in Chinese culture and in many other east and southeast Asian countries. The event included a series of family-friendly activities, live entertainment, a multicultural market and food stalls, moonlight dancing on the beach and fireworks.

The Multicultural Moon Festival was first established in 2021 by the Arts and Culture Federation of Sunshine Coast. In 2024, the Chinese Association secured major grant funding for the event for the second time. The two organisations have co-hosted the festival, with support from other community groups. The 2024 Multicultural Moon Festival drew a record crowd of over 10,000 attendees, more than triple the attendance of the previous year.

The grant funding played a vital role in delivering a vibrant and memorable event, helping cover costs for event management, staging, sound and equipment, DJ entertainment, and a spectacular fireworks display.



“ I'd like to express our sincere gratitude for the support provided by this funding. It has played a pivotal role in the success and growth of our project, enabling us to expand the scale and impact of the event over the past two years. Thanks to the funding, we've been able to hire a professional team to handle the planning and execution, which has allowed us to elevate the quality of the event and create a more engaging experience for participants. ”

Community grant recipient 2024–25

Outcome one





My story



**Healthy, active
communities**

Danielle's story – rugby connects

My name is Danielle Lenord, and I've lived on the Sunshine Coast for around 17 years. I'm the proud mother of two adult children with disabilities.

While my children choose to keep the part of their diagnoses private, I can share that our family has experienced its fair share of challenges, heartbreak, and triumphs. A few years ago, we reached a crisis point. I began searching for ways to support my children's physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. I needed something to help them connect, build resilience, and for them to feel like part of something meaningful. That journey led us to sport – and a timely conversation with Chris Flannery, CEO of the Sunshine Coast Falcons, sparked the idea that became Connect Rugby League.

Connect Rugby League was founded in 2022, after seeing a clear gap in inclusive sport opportunities. Connect Rugby League is an all-abilities rugby league for men, women and teens 16 years and above. What began as a small initiative has grown beyond anything I imagined.

We now proudly partner with three community clubs – Kawana Dolphins, Noosa Pirates, and Caboolture Snakes Rugby League – and we're a community partner of the NRL Dolphins. These partnerships have had a profound impact, helping players develop confidence, social skills, self-worth, and a true sense of belonging on and off the field while also connecting families and club personnel.

“ Inclusion in sport isn't just about participation – it's about belonging. ”

This program has been life-changing – for the players, families, and for me. Watching players of all abilities step onto the field with pride and excitement is truly heartwarming. Personally, I've gained purpose, perspective, and a deepened commitment to making sport accessible for everyone. I've found community, connection, and the determination to keep pushing forward.

Inclusion in sport isn't just about participation – it's about belonging.

It improves physical health, yes, but it also nurtures mental wellbeing, resilience, and connection. It gives families hope and creates environments where everyone feels seen, valued, and celebrated. There have been moments of doubt and frustration, especially seeing how isolated some families still feel. But more often, I've felt proud, hopeful, and incredibly grateful. Hearing a player say, “We never thought this was possible,” reminds me every time why this matters.

Inclusion changes lives.

Everyone deserves to wear a jersey, join a team, and be cheered on – no matter their ability. This is more than sport; it's a movement. All it takes is support, understanding, and a little kindness to shift the game – for everyone.



Outcome one: Healthy, active communities

Healthy Sunshine Coast – building a stronger, healthier community

The Healthy Sunshine Coast program continues to grow and evolve, offering low-cost or free holistic health and wellbeing activities for all ages and abilities in the community. The program offers over **85** regular activities delivered by over **35** providers.

The Healthy Sunshine Coast program has grown to nearly **8,000** members, with expanded offerings including Qi Gong and Meditation, Parents and Bubs Fitness, Extra Strength and Stability for Older People, alongside inclusive classes such as Fun and Fitness for All Abilities. Two new Chair Yoga class were also introduced – one in partnership with Council's Access and Inclusion working group, and the other in partnership with a local developer, Stockland Birtinya.

To better understand community needs, a participant survey was conducted at the end of 2024, receiving over **500** responses. The feedback showed that the Healthy Sunshine Coast program continues to have a positive impact, with the annual survey of participants highlighting that **87** per cent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their overall health and wellbeing had improved, and **93** per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the lower cost of the program enabled them to participate in activities that they would not be able to afford otherwise. One participant noted, **"These classes have helped me feel more connected and confident in managing my health."** The top five benefits identified by participants included overall health; connection; enjoyment and fun; improved fitness; and mental wellbeing. The most common barriers to participation included location, activity time and need for more information. The insights gathered will inform future program development and ensure activities remain relevant and impactful.

Healthy Sunshine Coast has also played a key role in promoting and sharing the latest evidence-based research in health and wellbeing to the community, with strong interest and participation in events highlighting information on how to age and live well. The IRT Healthy Ageing Seminar, held on 17 July 2024 in Buderim, brought together experts from UniSC, the Thompson Institute, and aged care specialists to explore topics such as 'Healthy



Ageing: Enjoy it, Not Endure it,' 'Mind Your Head – Avoid Cognitive Decline,' and 'Not Just About Gym – Get Creative'. Council also joined UniSC's launch of the 'Healthy Ageing Research Cluster' in November 2024, reinforcing its dedication to innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to ageing well. In February 2025, nearly **200** participants attended the 'Old Habits Die Hard: Lifestyle for a Healthy Future' workshop, held in partnership with UniSC's Thompson Institute. The workshop explored how brain imaging and behavioural research can support healthy lifestyle changes for brain ageing.

Council's commitment to evidence-based health education was further demonstrated through its partnership with UniSC, Country to Coast PHN, Sunshine Coast Hospital Institute, Comlink Australia, and Healthy Ageing Partnerships (HAP). Together, they delivered the 'Fuelling Resilience: Frailty Prevention & Management' seminar on 26 June, attracting over **100** attendees and offering practical strategies for maintaining wellbeing in later life.

The program's reach has extended to diverse communities through events like the Multicultural Wellness Day at Nambour Community Centre, where Po Mei's Laughter Yoga session brought joy and connection to attendees. In May and June, Healthy Sunshine Coast partnered with the Sunshine Coast Bushwalking Club to offer free guided bushwalks across the region. The initiative was met with strong interest, with waiting lists forming for several walks.

Beyond physical health, Council continues to advocate for improved access to mental health services, with a strong focus on youth wellbeing. Through the Youth Connect network, Council has worked closely with youth sector organisations to promote practical strategies for supporting young people's mental health. The initiative has strengthened communication between service providers, enabling more effective referral pathways and building a more connected and responsive support system for young people across the region.



“ Healthy Sunshine Coast classes have helped me feel more connected and confident in managing my health. ”

Growing our food, our knowledge and our connections

Community gardens are a great way to meet people, share gardening skills and grow our own food. There are currently **18** community gardens across the Sunshine Coast and Council is committed to continuing to provide advice for community groups to start a community garden. There are currently three new pop-up gardens being established at Meadowlands Park, Yaroomba; Buderim Lions Lookout Park; and Eaton Park, Sippy Downs where a food pantry was also installed. In April 2025, a networking event was run by Council and Friends of Yaroomba, inviting the community to come together to deliver and manage the new pop-up garden at Meadowlands Park. Members of the Golden Beach Community Garden recently replanted the empty garden bed located behind Caloundra Library using perennial herbs.

Council hosted a lively Community Gardens Networking Event at the UniSC Moving Feast Community Garden, bringing together passionate gardeners and representatives from community gardens across the region. The gathering was a celebration of connection, with attendees sharing stories, swapping tips, and even trading fresh, homegrown produce. It was a chance to strengthen relationships and inspire new ideas for growing vibrant, sustainable gardens. Council staff also shared valuable information about available grant programs, empowering community groups to expand and sustain local food initiatives.

These initiatives not only help to promote physical and mental wellbeing, but they foster lifelong learning and knowledge sharing, strengthen community connection and cohesion, and help to ease cost-of-living pressures through access to fresh, affordable produce. They play a vital role in building a healthier and more sustainable Sunshine Coast.

Sport for everyone

Council has reaffirmed its commitment to making sport more inclusive by partnering with Get Skilled Access, founded by Paralympian and former Australian of the Year Dylan Alcott. Through this collaboration, Council appointed a Sport4All Inclusion Officer who has worked closely with local sporting clubs and schools to promote inclusive practices and build strong networks.

Commencing in January 2025, the partnership has established strong connections with all-abilities providers, peak sporting bodies, and educational institutions, and has supported several clubs in adopting inclusive training modules. These efforts reflect Council's broader vision of an active, healthy Sunshine Coast where everyone, regardless of ability, can participate fully in sport and recreation.

On 29 August 2024, families across the Sunshine Coast were invited to attend a free Paralympics LIVE event at UniSC's Sports Arena. The action-packed event was a great way to celebrate the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games and to show support for our local Paralympians and para-athletes.



Outcome two





My story



**Vibrant
communities**

**Nola and Nada's story –
finding happiness at home**

“ Having someone in the house has made a huge difference to my life. ”

Nola (Renter)

I contacted Better Together Housing which is designed for women over 55 years who are increasingly experiencing homelessness. The program is created for women by women and connects women who own or rent, with women looking for a place to live.

I've been an independent businesswoman all my life and I was finding the rent just exorbitant. The thought of having someone live with me was a big step and a big lifestyle change; particularly finding someone who is compatible because I have my own little routines, my own little way of doing things.

But it hasn't been as hard as I thought. It's been really easy actually. Nada added a new dimension to my life. I love my garden, and the lovely thing is that Nada is a gardener too.

I hadn't realised, living alone, that I was in fact lonely. Having someone in the house has made a huge difference to my life. I'm feeling much more happy and relaxed about life in general.

I would recommend to women who've been living alone, living in these big houses on their own, that they could have companionship. It is a big life improvement for yourself.

We did not expect to be this successful really. And we're just having fun. Don't be afraid because it can work.

Nada (Looking for accommodation)

I emigrated to Australia in the early 80s. I have two children born in Australia and one who was born in Croatia. A difficult life led me to be separated and left alone as a single parent, struggling through life.

I found myself searching for affordable accommodation. I wanted to be able to share with somebody with the same interests and in the same age group. Where I was living, I was not happy, and it was really disturbing and not good for my health.

I went to Google and searched. I came across the organisation, Better Together Housing. I got in contact with Nola and said, 'Can we meet, please?' We met for coffee and the rest is history.

She is a similar age, and she was offering me what I was looking for. My own privacy, my own bedroom and everything else needed. Sharing life with somebody enriches your life and health too. Make the first step.

Nola and Nada share their story further in the **Better Together Housing video**.



Outcome two: Vibrant communities

Sunshine Coast Libraries – creating welcoming spaces and fostering inclusion for all

Sunshine Coast Libraries continuously transform to meet the needs of our changing community. No longer just places to borrow books, libraries are vibrant hubs for connection, inclusion, lifelong learning, and access to Council services.

This past year, Sunshine Coast Libraries welcomed over **900,000** visits, with membership growing to **144,000** – a **14** per cent increase from the previous year. Libraries also hosted **2178** programs attended by more than 80,000 community members, supporting people from early childhood through to older age.

Libraries have strengthened their commitment to inclusion through partnerships with Sunshine Sign and Sing, First 5 Forever, and Council's Parks and Gardens team. Through the partnership, ten communication boards were developed for a younger audience and individuals with communication difficulties, and installed in local parks, creating more inclusive public spaces.

Each communication board features Key Word Sign (KWS) – a system that adds signs to spoken words, borrowing from Auslan, to support understanding and expression. QR codes link to demonstration videos, helping families learn and use signs confidently. Library staff also incorporate KWS into Rhymetime sessions, making early literacy programs more accessible and engaging. One attendee shared that she felt “encouraged by the initiative and hopeful to see more like it in the community”.

This year, libraries introduced Cerge, a digital concierge tool that enhances accessibility for people with disability across all library branches. The Cerge app provides a series of accessible tools so people can “know before they go” and understand venue accessibility ahead of time, as well as notify of specific service preferences – ensuring everyone feels welcome and supported.

The Languages Other Than English (LOTE) collection was expanded and made more visible through dual-language



signage, resulting in a **37** per cent increase in loans, and the Weekly Conversation Circles and literacy classes continue to provide safe, welcoming spaces for people to connect, practice English, and build confidence.

Sunshine Coast Libraries continue to champion connection and inclusion – empowering individuals of all ages and backgrounds to learn, grow, and thrive.

Building an inclusive legacy for Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

As part of the preparations for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, two major venues will be delivered on the Sunshine Coast: the upgraded Sunshine Coast Stadium and a new Mountain Bike Centre at Parklands. In partnership with all tiers of government and key stakeholders, the venue upgrades are being redesigned and delivered with inclusion, accessibility, and long-term community benefit at their core.

The Sunshine Coast Stadium currently has limited accessibility and does not fully support inclusive event experiences. Planned venue upgrade improvements include increased seating capacity, enhanced facilities for athletes and officials, multi-purpose community spaces, and universal amenities for people of all abilities. The planned upgrades will transform the Stadium into a world-class, accessible venue that meets growing demand and attracts national and international events, bringing economic and social opportunities to the region.

The new Mountain Bike Centre, co-located with the Parklands trail network, offers a key legacy opportunity creating a network of adventure experiences across the region. The site will provide recreational and commercial opportunities beyond Brisbane 2032 and provides for an accessible, inclusive facility which will diversify sport and recreation opportunities for people with disability. The venue also provides an opportunity for the celebration and sharing of Kabi Kabi culture, language and stories.



New and upgraded community places and spaces

Namba Meeting Place opened its doors to the community in February 2025. A new community space for hire in the heart of Nambour, was part of the upgrades to Council's Eddie De Vere building. Namba Meeting Place is now a versatile and accessible space for small community events, meetings and workshops. The name 'Namba' acknowledges the area's rich First Nations history, referring to the red-flowering tea-tree. The upgrade is part of Council's broader vision to revitalise the Nambour administration precinct into a vibrant, community-centred hub.

The **Kawana Aquatic Centre** has undergone a **\$14 million** upgrade, supported by **\$938,000** from the Federal Government, enhancing its role as a key sporting and wellness hub on the Sunshine Coast. The upgrades include a new **20-metre**, five lane enclosed pool, modern changerooms, expanded amenities, offices, cafes, picnic area and additional car parking. The improvements also include a Changing Places facility for people with high support needs and their carers, reinforcing the centre's commitment to accessibility and inclusion. As part of the broader Kawana Sports Precinct, the centre continues to support community wellbeing, elite training, and recreational activities, while strengthening the region's reputation as a premier destination for sport and leisure.

A **new pump track** at Forestwood Drive Park, Buderim was finished in mid-June after weather delays. The design has a focus on beginner and intermediate riders and offers a space and experience that encourages families and friends to come together, stay active and enjoy the outdoors.

The location and concept design were shaped by our community, who were invited to have their say on the park's design and outcomes. The design of the pump track and surrounds, including buffer planting and barriers, more seating and shade trees is reflective of community feedback received, and the delivery of the facility is responsive to the desire for more diverse and informal sport opportunities for teenagers and young adults in the area.

Leading the way in active and accessible transport

The Sunshine Coast's **RideScore Active Schools program** was spotlighted in the international Journal of Transport and Health in October 2024, setting a new global benchmark for active school travel. Over just four months in terms 1 and 2 2022, the pilot program achieved a **55** per cent increase in bike and scooter trips to school – a result that outpaces similar programs across Australia and internationally. The success of the program has been attributed to easing parents' concerns about independent travel through automated arrival and departure messages via a dedicated app, while also motivating students with gamified incentives, competitions, and leaderboards.

This success is supported by the region's growing network of off-road cycleways, on-road bike lanes, shared pathways and accessible bus routes, making it easier and safer for students to choose active travel. Overall, the program continues to make a positive impact, with **1516** students participating in the program this past year and **189,858km** travelled between January to June 2025.

Council has refreshed and enhanced its promotional strategy towards the **Council Link community transport service**, to better connect residents with essential services. The updated marketing and communications plan now includes a wider mix of platforms: digital media, print, and social channels, expanded outreach to key locations and regional publications, and a new six-monthly review process to keep the strategy responsive and effective. Improved promotion and communications enable people to stay informed of additional services such as the expansion to Banya and Nirimba. These enhancements reflect Council's commitment to ensuring our community are aware of the services available to them, while elevating inclusive, accessible transport options for all residents.

New doors open for affordable housing

Council is building 22 homes on the Coast across 11 sites in Marcoola. The project, supported by the Queensland Government's \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund, delivers three-bedroom and two-bedroom homes and one-bedroom secondary dwellings, that were prefabricated. These homes will be affordable and rented at 75 per cent of market rent for eligible low-income households and are suitable for singles, couples and small family households. The first eight dwellings are completed and tenanted, providing access to secure housing for key workers. The rental arrangements are being managed by Coast2Bay Housing Group.

Council continues to advocate for increased investment in social and affordable housing from the Federal and State governments.



Transforming the way we understand and respond to homelessness

Council continues to adopt a considered, supportive and compassionate approach to homelessness.

The Street Up initiative was launched during Homelessness Week in August 2024. Street Up emerged from the 2023–2024 Lived Experience Inclusion Project. This initiative aims to amplify and elevate the voices of people with lived or living experience of homelessness, and through this to raise awareness and contribute to shaping policies and responses that address homelessness. An evaluation of the Street Up program by UniSC identified three key outcomes: increased empowerment, strengthened community networks and effective and policy influence. Personal stories have helped shift public perceptions, with the 2024 Lived Experience team supporting Council to develop an educational video and training session to raise awareness and foster community participation in responding to homelessness.

Council continues to support community-led initiatives, such as Better Together Housing, transitional housing programs, and has assisted the Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre to provide training to volunteers to support the Sunshine Coast Sleeper Bus.

Council has strengthened its place-based approach to supporting people experiencing homelessness in public space through the newly recruited Public Space Liaison Officer (PSLO). The PSLO brings a trauma informed and relational approach in supporting people to meet basic needs and connect with services.

Council partnered with community centres and organisations to supply tents, resources and support for people experiencing homelessness during Cyclone Alfred. Amenity passes for free showers continue to be made available for nine Council Aquatic Centres through community centres, libraries and outreach services.

In May 2025, Council supported the community-led initiative to improve the safety and amenity of public space in Nambour, with a coordinated clean-up of the park. The project was led by a community partner, alongside people with living and lived experience of homelessness to create a safer, cleaner and more welcoming space. A monthly clean-up of the park is now ongoing, led by community partners working with volunteers, to maintain public spaces for all members of our community.

A number of Council's senior executive staff again participated in the annual Vinnies CEO Sleepout in June to raise awareness and funds to respond to homelessness on the Sunshine Coast.

Outcome three





My story



Inclusive communities

Walters' story – inclusion is a necessity

My name is Walters. I first came to the Sunshine Coast from Europe in 2010. I moved here permanently in 2013, when our first child was born. The Sunshine Coast has been home – a place I love, and a place where I've come to understand just how important inclusion and cultural safety really are.

I became involved in the Shine a Light on Racism (SALOR) campaign through my role in the Sunshine Coast Multicultural Advisory Group (MAG). MAG envisioned a campaign to confront the growing issue of racism in our region. When I came on board, I brought urgency to the table. Not because of data – but because I had lived it.

At one point in my journey, I experienced racism at work. I raised my concerns quietly through internal channels, only to become the target of retaliation. I lost my job. My young son, just starting kindergarten, was being isolated and subjected to racial abuse by classmates. I was angry. I wanted change.

Instead of reacting in frustration, I decided to lead with awareness. I visited my son's class and brought in a bunch of leaves, all different shapes, sizes, and colours. We spoke about how, despite their differences, they were all leaves. The kids were fascinated. Something shifted. My son went from being excluded to being embraced. Kids wanted

to be his friend. That simple act of awareness created transformation.

That's the spirit I brought into the SALOR campaign. SALOR is about calling out racism. It's about creating awareness, building empathy, and giving people the language and courage to speak up. I'm incredibly grateful we are finally talking about racism openly.

Talking about racism matters. Naming it matters. It gives strength to the dozens of people in our communities who suffer in silence. Not everyone has the courage or the platform to speak up, but campaigns like SALOR make space for all of us.

Racism doesn't just harm individuals, it weakens our whole community. Imagine a Sunshine Coast that feels unwelcoming to newcomers. How can we thrive if our doctors, teachers, essential workers, many from diverse backgrounds, feel excluded? Racism undermines our health system, economy, and our social fabric.

If there's one thing, I hope you take away from my story, it's this: inclusion is not a favour, it's a necessity. It strengthens us all. When we listen, when we make space for others, when we speak up, our whole community becomes better, safer, and more resilient.

“ Talking about racism matters.
Naming it matters. ”



Outcome three: Inclusive communities



Advancing reconciliation through meaningful connections

This year, Council reinforced its longstanding commitment to reconciliation, advancing toward a Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). At a 'Stretch' level, the plan aims to further embed reconciliation into business-as-usual through long-term strategies, high impact commitments and measurable targets and goals. The drafting of the RAP was informed by extensive feedback from Council officers, stakeholders and First Nations community partners. Endorsement will position Council as a leader in reconciliation, being recognised among the top organisations nationally. Throughout development of the new RAP, Council continued to deliver actions to embed reconciliation across our organisation and community.

The **First Nations Community Advisory Group** was formed in June 2024 to support greater engagement with the First Nations community. Made up of **10** local First Nations community members, the group worked alongside Council to help guide development of the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan and share perspective, cultural advice and knowledge to Council on key initiatives impacting First Nations communities.

During **National Reconciliation Week** (27 May – 3 June) organisations, schools, community groups, and workplaces across the Sunshine Coast came together to explore how everyone could contribute to reconciliation in Australia. The regional calendar featured a wide range of events, including art exhibitions, film screenings, First Nations markets, and the annual Aunty Betty Memorial Reconciliation Walk, held

on 28 May 2025, to honour the legacy of Elder Aunty Betty McMahon.

The **Biosphere Community Awards** in June 2025 saw a record number of **12** nominations from First Nations community groups, organisations and individuals with Kabi Kabi Elder Uncle Lyndon Davis winning the Creative Arts Award. The awards were an inclusive and vibrant showcase of community leadership in the region.

Council's partnership with **GATHAA First Nations Markets** supported the delivery of **11** markets with a collective **50** First Nations stall holders, creatives and knowledge holders participating between May 2024 and May 2025. The markets aim to support local First Nations enterprise, cultural exchange, and connection to create a community that embraces First Nations culture.

First Nations participation in the **Community Grants Program** increased, with nine applications received for the March 2025 major grants round, increasing from an annual average of five. Council continues to work to remove barriers for First Nations groups and organisations and provide support where needed to organisations accessing funding programs.

Council hosted the fourth annual **First Nations Supplier Day** on 24 October 2024 at Altitude Nine, in celebration of Indigenous Business Month. The event celebrated the local First Nations economy, bringing together **35** First Nations businesses, industry representatives, and local buyers to connect and create opportunities.

Disability inclusion

Council continues to deliver key actions from the All Abilities Action Plan, working towards a more inclusive Sunshine Coast for people with disability. Some notable activities included:

- Participation in Spinal Life's **Realistic Race** on 18 October 2024, improving understanding and awareness of the challenges and barriers faced by people with disability.
- **FUNctional Market Day** provided inclusive fun for everyone on 30 November 2024 at Millwell Road Community Centre with arts, crafts, workshops and live entertainment.
- On 7 October 2024, the **Fair Day Out** annual event at the Eumundi Markets showcased the artistic talent of people with disability to the wider Sunshine Coast community.
- A new partnership with **Dementia Australia** is driving progress towards becoming a dementia-friendly region.
- Council joined the **Hidden Disabilities Sunflower** initiative in December 2024 to make public spaces more inclusive for people with non-visible disabilities. To date, **80** per cent of Council's frontline staff have completed the required training, and several Council facilities are listed on the Sunflower Ready website to enhance public visibility and awareness.
- Improved digital accessibility tools: **Cérge** and **Mobility Maps** continued to extend their reach, with Cérge technology now active at approximately **30** Council venues, working to improve companion technologies (sensory and audio guides and virtual tours) to help make Council websites and facilities more accessible.
- **Auslan beginner training** was delivered for **50** participants from Council and the tourism sector, supporting preparations for hosting of the 2026 Deaf Games.
- Council's **Have Your Say Sunshine Coast** platform now has a new accessibility widget, making it easier for all of our community to access, navigate the site and have their say on matters that are important to them. Users with visual, hearing or mobility impairments now have the ability to customise the site to their needs.

This past year, the Sunshine Coast has also celebrated inclusivity and accessibility with two free **All Access Days** – one event on the beach and the other in the park.

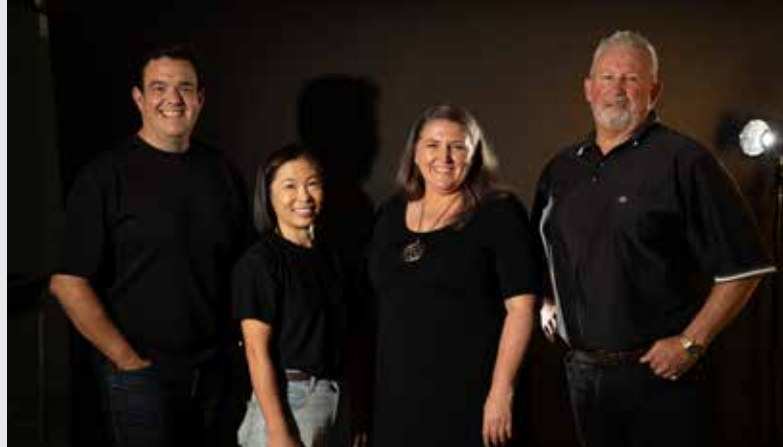
All Access Day at the Beach took place on 9 November 2024 at Dicky Beach. With the support of Dicky Beach Surf Lifesaving Club, the event celebrated diversity and inclusivity while promoting awareness of accessibility to the beach for everyone. 'Dicky Beach has Talent' was the highlight of the day with around **15** participants taking part and showcasing their talents. Beach wheelchairs were in high demand, while others enjoyed a round of seated bocce, face painting, and a performance from the Sorrell Disability Dance Group.

Following the success of the All Access beach event, Council hosted the All Access Day in the Park at Kings Beach on 4 May 2025. Over **300** people enjoyed performances from Stage Ability and NAYLIS, a silent disco, silent Karaoke, as well as a sausage sizzle provided by Currimundi Special school and market stalls from a range of community providers.





Outcome three: Inclusive communities



Working Towards Welcome

Council continues to advance its commitment to inclusion as a member of Welcoming Cities, supporting social, cultural, civic, and economic participation across the region. These efforts align with broader strategies to strengthen workforce participation and build employer readiness for a culturally diverse community.

In partnership with Nambour Community Centre, Council delivered a Disaster Preparedness Program to build community resilience. The program featured Council's disaster recovery team and Emergency Services, enhancing understanding of disaster response and recovery.

Harmony Week 2025 celebrated multicultural communities under the theme 'Everyone Belongs on the Sunshine Coast'. Events included a Conversation Circle at Caloundra Library, creative workshops, and the Sunshine Coast Business Table Tennis Championships, fostering connection and inclusion.

The Sunshine Coast Multicultural Advisory Group (MAG) continued to advise Council on multicultural policy and planning, including participation in a workshop with Brisbane 2032 to commence development of a Vision Statement for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, ensuring diverse input into major event planning. We also welcomed blessings from Muslim, Zen Buddhist, Bahá'í, and Hindu faiths at Ordinary Meetings, reflecting the region's spiritual diversity.

Council partnered to deliver the Multicultural Job and Business Expo, attracting over **250** job seekers and showcasing inclusive workplaces. An Employer Peer Network was established to support diversity in local businesses. Council also launched a mentor and internship program for migrant job seekers and opened expressions of interest for the Migrant Business Ready Scholarship to support migrant-led small businesses.

Shine a Light on Racism

Council launched phase two of the Shine a Light on Racism (SALOR) campaign in February 2025, building on the success of its initial phase in 2023. The campaign encourages individuals to take personal responsibility for understanding and addressing racism, promoting active anti-racism through education and action.

Phase two expanded the focus to businesses, organisations, and community groups, calling for improved diversity and inclusion practices, workforce training, and the celebration of cultural diversity.

Ten community Patrons, representing sport, business, and lived experience, support the campaign by sharing their messages in the campaign video and encouraging others to pledge their commitment online.

The campaign promotes three key actions: **Pledge** support for inclusion and to be actively anti-racist, **Learn** through resources and training, and **Celebrate** culture through respectful participation in events.

The campaign reinforces that being anti-racist is not a passive label but an ongoing commitment. It requires individuals and organisations to show up, take action, continue learning, and challenge discriminatory behaviour – even when it is uncomfortable. By focusing on learning and action rather than blame, Shine a Light on Racism empowers the community to engage constructively and meaningfully in anti-racism efforts, fostering a more inclusive and respectful Sunshine Coast.

The **SALOR video** was developed to highlight how the Sunshine Coast can pledge to fight racism, create safe spaces, stand up for diversity, and celebrate unique community.



Young Leaders Academy – building community leaders of the future

The Sunshine Coast Young Leaders Academy was delivered for the first time in 2024 and comprised of eight young people aged from 16 to 25 years. The Young Leaders Academy equips participants with key leadership skills and a strong foundation in participatory and community leadership practices, empowering them to lead sustainable, positive change in their communities.

The first Young Leaders group graduated in November 2024, and shared how they appreciated learning about leadership, active listening, being present, understanding community and working collaboratively. Throughout the year, young leaders shared their lived experience insights and views through participation in reference groups, interviews and panels, and supported the delivery of events including Youth Week and National Reconciliation Week.

The 2025 Young Leaders Academy commenced in January 2025, with nine new young Sunshine Coast locals joining the year-long program. Their initial focus has been in co-designing and co-facilitating the engagement program to shape a new Sunshine Coast Youth Plan.

Working with our Young Leaders Academy to shape a new Youth Plan

Council has been collaborating with the Young Leaders Academy and engaging young people (aged 12 to 24 years) across the Sunshine Coast to develop a new Youth Plan. The plan will help guide actions to improve the lives of young people in our region over the next five years.

On 28 May 2025, a Youth Forum, co-hosted by Council and the Young Leaders Academy, was held at Venue 114. Young people from across the region were able to participate, with a primary focus on attendance from high school students. In total, **85** young people attended, including representatives from **14** schools. The Youth Forum used a variety of participatory engagement methods to ensure young people felt safe and able to participate. A lived-experience panel with members of the Young Leaders Academy started the day, followed by discussions about young people's vision for the future, including what needs to change and what action needs to be taken to achieve the vision.

Phase 1 of the Youth Plan community engagement program commenced on 2 June 2025, and for six weeks Council and members of the Young Leaders Academy heard from young people about what they like about living on the Sunshine Coast and what needs to change. With an array of opportunities to get involved, there were **582** young people who completed the online survey, **450** young people who participated in pop-ups, and **85** young people attended the Youth Forum.

Approximately **1100** young people aged 12-24 years contributed to the project, providing a strong foundation for the Youth Plan to be built upon the voices of young people and their priorities.



Outcome three: Inclusive communities

Gifting time to support our communities and our region

Volunteering is an essential contributor to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our region. On the Sunshine Coast, volunteers generously offer up their time to support the community in many ways. To shine a spotlight on some of the region's volunteering initiatives and giving community members, there are:



175 Recreational Trail Partnerships volunteers



206 Environmental Visitor Centre volunteers



215 Parks volunteers contributing over 1100 hours



256 TurtleCare volunteers



219 NatureWatch volunteers



902 Beach Clean Up volunteers



1385 BushCare volunteers



nearly 30,000 volunteers who support the delivery of events, activities and programs



an average of 175 Library volunteers per month contributing almost 14,000 hours

TurtleCare Sunshine Coast is a shining example of community in action, celebrating its 20-year anniversary in 2025. What began as a small group of passionate locals monitoring turtle nests has grown into a thriving community of dedicated volunteers who have protected thousands of hatchlings, relocated nests to safer areas, and responded to environmental disasters. Since 2007, the program has partnered with the Queensland Government's Turtle Conservation Project, contributing valuable data and supporting long-term research. TurtleCare has influenced national conservation policies and the annual Clean Up for the Hatchlings, which focuses on removing litter on beaches before hatchlings emerge, is now in its eleventh year. With six founding volunteers still active and thousands engaged through education and events, TurtleCare proves that grassroots action can drive lasting environmental impact.

During National Volunteer Week in May 2025, Council celebrated the theme 'Connecting Communities' by showcasing the inspiring work of local volunteers through short **video interviews** at community halls. These stories highlighted how volunteering strengthens social bonds and supports vibrant, connected neighbourhoods. To build on this momentum, Council formed an internal working group to boost volunteer engagement through targeted communications, both within the organisation and across the wider community.

Hearing from the diverse voices in our community

Our community continued to have their say on matters important to them. Council runs regular community engagement activities on a wide range of projects including in-person activities such as community pop-ups and using the **Have Your Say Sunshine Coast** online platform. The platform now has over **15,000** subscribers with a growth of **10** per cent in the past six months. This past year has seen nearly **9000** submissions being made on the Have Your say engagement platform across **29** projects.

Further to this, Council is actively seeking more input from our community, especially the voices we haven't always been able to hear. To do this, Council is establishing its first **Sunshine Coast Citizens' Panel** – a group of community members who come together to learn, deliberate and advise on the big challenges for our region. The panel will serve as an additional mode of community input and advice into Council decision making, complementing and building upon existing engagement activities.

Outcome four





My story



Connected, resilient communities

Adam's story – don't stand by, stand up

My name is Adam. I have lived on the Sunshine Coast for the past 7 years. Our family relocated from Port Macquarie in NSW after holidaying in the region for many years. I particularly love the beaches and going surfing the across the Sunshine Coast region.

Every year domestic violence services across Australia hold a candle lighting vigil to remember those who have lost their lives due to domestic and family violence in the past 12 months. Since 2006, Centacare has been facilitating the annual Sunshine Coast Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month Candlelight Vigil on the first Wednesday in May. Council has been a key partner and supporter of this event for many years.

As the Area Manager for Centacare on the Sunshine Coast, I am involved in overseeing the event and ensuring everything goes to plan. I could not do this without the partnership and support of Council and its dedicated teams. It has been one of the highlights of my role to see the vigil grow in attendance and significance each year and to strengthen our relationships with community and local stakeholders.

“As a community we do not have to tolerate violence and abuse”

This year's theme, 'Don't Stand By, Stand Up,' called on the community to actively take a stand against domestic and family violence, emphasising the need for collective action and support at a local level. Over 300 community members attended, and the level of community participation and engagement has been extremely powerful. Many attendees have a lived experience of domestic and family violence, and some have come to honour loved ones who have lost their lives to violence. Receiving feedback that we have managed to hold an event that is impactful and educational whilst also remaining focused and respectful is really important and rewarding.

Not all disrespect towards women results in violence. But all violence against women starts with disrespectful behaviour. As a community we do not have to tolerate violence and abuse, there are many people who are willing to take a stand against it. Providing opportunities for the community to safely and respectfully gather and show support helps victims to know they are not alone. It is also a powerful way to message the small things that we each can do to positively influence the people around us, and address language and behaviours of concern.



Outcome four: Connected, resilient communities

Grassroots resilience building in action

From Kenilworth to Maleny, residents are stepping up to lead resilience efforts. The We Recover Better Together project was jointly delivered by Community Praxis and Council through the Community Recovery Resilience Officer Program. Funded by both State and Federal governments, the project aimed to help local communities prepare for better recovery after the 2022 floods. Initially scheduled from June 2023 to June 2024 for the Glass House Mountains, Beerwah, Landsborough, Mooloolah Valley and Eudlo areas, the project was extended until March 2025 due to its success, allowing it to also be delivered in Maleny and Kenilworth.

On 11 December 2024, an overview of the project outcomes was presented to Council's Local Disaster Management team. Community partner Community Praxis and Eudlo residents, alongside Council's Community Development team, shared that by taking a participatory community development approach to recovery, there were significant benefits for the community. This included:

- community members could better express what they need for recovery
- strengthened widespread connections with diverse community members and local relationships between neighbours, groups and businesses to better support one another through disaster
- increased capacity and capability through workshops such as the Building Better Communities course, Community Connectors course, household and business preparedness, Person Centred Emergency Planning, First Aid and CPR, psychological preparedness, trauma-informed care, and riparian land management
- raised awareness of what supports could be made available for disaster recovery
- opportunities for community members to share and reflect on experiences and learnings from past disasters
- strengthened working relationships between community and other key disaster management stakeholders.



Building better communities

Council's partnership with Community Praxis also led to the development of a new training collective, seeking to expand access to the Building Better Communities program. This initiative equips local facilitators to deliver community leadership training, enabling community members to identify strengths, build relationships, and address shared challenges in their local communities. The program promotes sustainable, community-led solutions and strengthens local capacity for change.

Looking out for each other: Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred

On 9 March 2025, Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred brought destructive winds and heavy rainfall to the Sunshine Coast, causing widespread flooding in the towns of Nambour, Eudlo and other locations in the region. The severe weather led to road closures and extensive damage to homes and businesses, with Nambour's commercial precinct hit hardest – facing inundation, supply chain disruptions, infrastructure damage, and temporary closures.

Council swiftly activated three Places of Refuge at Nambour Showgrounds, Caloundra Indoor Stadium, and Landsborough Sporting Complex, with local human and social support teams assisting displaced residents.

To coordinate the region's recovery, Council activated its Local Recovery Group, which worked closely with the State Government Recovery Team to provide targeted support, including Disaster Recovery Funding for vulnerable residents and business owners. Council ensured timely communication of recovery updates, while Volunteering Sunshine Coast partnered with the Local Recovery Group to assist in the flood clean-up effort, helping restore affected communities and businesses.



Standing up: Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month highlights

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Prevention Month, was marked in May with a powerful series of events and initiatives delivered across the Sunshine Coast, aimed at raising awareness and inspiring action. Across the month, Council contributed to the distribution of over **4000** purple awareness ribbons throughout the community, symbolising solidarity with and support for people affected by DFV. On 7 May 2025, over 300 people gathered in Maroochydore for the 12th annual march and candlelight vigil, united under the theme 'Don't stand by, stand up' – a call for collective responsibility in seeking to end DFV.

Council supported a range of initiatives to strengthen community engagement and raise awareness of domestic and family violence. A corporate volunteering opportunity was facilitated with local charity DV Safe Phone, which collects, repurposes and distributes free mobile phones to victims of DFV through registered agencies. A series of Community Conversations were held across several libraries in the region in partnership with IFYS and Centacare. The conversations offered residents a safe and welcoming space to connect with Council staff and DFV services to access information regarding local supports.

Involvement in the Sunshine Coast Lightning DFV awareness game, helped bring wider attention to prevention of DFV by leveraging the visibility and influence of the team and its players. Council also supported Red Bench unveilings during the month, with these permanent reminders of the impact of DFV helping to spark important conversations and increase visibility of local services.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month culminated with the Stand Together event on 26 May 2025 at Altitude Nine, where community and industry experts shared insights into Queensland's new coercive control laws and explored preventative measures that contribute to safer communities.

Engaging men in the conversation

Council continued to partner with community men's groups to explore the role of men in preventing violence. In November 2024, Council co-hosted the powerful She's Not your Rehab event with IFYS and other community partners. Personal experiences and stories of overcoming intergenerational trauma were shared in a raw and authentic session. The event focused on building understanding, encouraging positive male engagement, and supporting perpetrators and survivors of DFV to heal through group counselling. The event brought together our community with a shared resolve to end gender-based violence.

Seeds of Hope

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual global campaign, led by UN Women. Each year, the campaign runs from 25 November to 10 December and calls for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. As part of this important initiative, Council staff and community members gathered on 4 December 2024 for the Seeds of Hope tree planting event.

The event saw the planting of **500** native trees, shrubs, and groundcovers at Point Cartwright Reserve, enhancing habitat for local wildlife and leaving a meaningful legacy for the Sunshine Coast community. The act of planting served as a powerful reminder of the importance of looking after both our natural surroundings and the wellbeing of people in our communities.

Outcome five





My story



**Creative, innovative
communities**

Jennifer's story – Scene through the Screen

I am a mum, wife, aunty, daughter, granddaughter, sister, cousin, niece and friend. My name is Jennifer Kent and I am an arts practitioner in the Ministry of Reconciliation. I have a sovereign family ancestral connection to the Sunshine Coast region through my Grandmother and I am very fortunate to be blessed with gifts of creativity and a talented family heritage.

I was invited by Elder Jason Murphy who I met through a Butterfly Workshop at Mary Cairncross, to be a part of Scene through the Screen. And of course I accepted, as I wasn't going to forgo such an opportunity to work with renowned artists like Jason and Enid Morris.

'Scene Through the Screen' is a visual art exhibition commission for Horizon 2025 through Council's MadeSC program and curated by Jason Murphy. It is a declaration of the significance of connection to Country that Jinibara creatives embody – an offering of deeply embedded practice, showcasing that culture is alive and evolving and that, in this aliveness, we find culture, truth and thriving arts and cultural practices.

Being a part of this program, there's been many different impacts. Not only do I now know how to screen print, but I have managed to make profits to grow my small business and even teach others how to screen print as well.

“I think that much can be gained through the space of cultural creativity.”

I have also helped raise awareness around environmental impacts with the endangered Richmond Birdwing Butterfly and brought education around some cultural subjects.

I also made valuable social connections and some incredible events happened during the process that can only be described as divine, and which had a profound impact on my personal life.

I really love helping people to gain knowledge and better themselves. My hope was that people walk away from the exhibition feeling inspired to have that little bit more knowledge about what they can do for our country and our environment – whether that's planting a vine and helping endangered species like a butterfly, because you never know what a difference one vine can make for one butterfly.

I think that much can be gained through the space of cultural creativity, especially when it comes to raising cultural safety and awareness standards in preserving the environment and the people who live here for future sustainability. By being creative in how we care for people, animals, forests, rivers, beaches and the city, we can ensure the environment thrives well into the future for the sake of the planets (djarra) health and the environment our children's children will inherit.



Outcome five: Creative, innovative communities

Keeping the fire burning

Throughout July, the Sunshine Coast came alive with a rich program of events celebrating NAIDOC Week 2024. The 2024 theme, 'Keep the Fire Burning – Blak, Loud and Proud' honoured the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture, with fire symbolic of connection to Country, each other and the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples.

The celebrations began with a Bushland Holiday Program on 4 July 2024, where children aged 10 and over joined Kabi Kabi Traditional Custodian Brianna Hanson for a Wayapa Wuurrk experience at the Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Garden. This earth connection practice, rooted in ancient Indigenous wisdom, encouraged participants to reflect on wellbeing through caring for the Earth.

On 8 July, Caloundra Health Service hosted a NAIDOC celebration, followed by a Yarnup session with Aunty Jude Hammond at Caloundra Regional Gallery. Attendees gained insights into the Contemporary Songlines exhibition and its vision for empowering First Nations youth.

The week continued with Council's official NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony on 10 July, at Nambour Library Forecourt, featuring traditional performances by Gubbi Gubbi Dance and stories from some inspiring young leaders talking to theme Blak, Loud and Proud.

Interactive and educational experiences ran throughout the week, including the Dyungungoo digital immersive journey at Bankfoot House, a self-guided bark canoe tour at Landsborough Museum, and Jinibara digital stories screened at City Hall. These installations offered engaging ways for the public to connect with First Nations history and storytelling.

Council partnered with the GATHAA Markets, a First Nations community led market showcasing First Nations artisans and entrepreneurs on the Sunshine Coast, to hold a market at Forest Glen Village on 28 July 2024. The market included performances, bushfood tastings, workshops, and artisan stalls.

Our libraries and galleries hosted cultural workshops during August 2024, including Coolamon-making sessions led by Aunty Jude Hammond and Aunty Leighanne. Libraries also distributed limited edition library cards featuring artwork by Kabi Kabi artists.



On 19 October 2024, Council supported Wan'Diny NAIDOC to deliver the annual NAIDOC Family Fun Day October at Black Swan Park, Cotton Tree. It was a day of cultural celebration for all ages.

Online resources also remain available, including video interviews with local First Nations people and a digital map of First Nations place names, ensuring the spirit of NAIDOC continues to inspire and educate.

Community spirit shines in collaborative creative project

The Buddina Ocean Chair, a stunning mosaic mural spanning approximately 18 square metres, is the culmination of a year-long creative collaboration involving more than 400 collaborators and 20,000 handmade tiles. The Ocean Chair was unveiled to the community on 13 June 2025 and its design creates an opportunity for locals and tourists to gain a deeper understanding of our First Nations cultural history and learn about our local ecology.

The ocean chair, adjacent to Beach Access 229 in Buddina, includes sound files which can be listened to via Council's website. There are 16 poems written by Year 6 students covering four different themes: First Nations culture and history, Turtle Care, marine and dune conservation, and beach safety. The audio also includes a guided meditation by Kabi Kabi leader and Loreman Mack Muckan. Language tiles are also featured within the mosaic design with 16 different Kabi Kabi words visitors can learn.

The mosaic tiles were hand made by supported artists, professional sculptors and 330 students from Buddina State schools. The tiles featuring animals and plants endemic to the region are not only beautiful but also educate and inspire connection to the local environment.



Celebrating our sea, land and mountains

The Sunshine Coast is known for our strong connection to our environment, from the coast to the hinterland. This enduring relationship was celebrated through the exhibition 'From the sea, the land and the mountains', works by Kabi Kabi and Jinibara artists, which showcased First Nations art across the traditional lands of the Kabi Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) and Jinibara peoples. Artists Kane Brunjes and Zartisha Davis shared powerful stories of culture, identity, and Country, honouring Elders and ancestors through their work.

The exhibition featured a striking series of screen prints titled Scene Through the Screen by Jinibara artists, inspired by local plant species, wildlife, cultural symbols, and the connection between land, health, and story. Curated by Jason Murphy, the prints were displayed on tea towels – an everyday item chosen to reflect how art and activism could be woven into daily life. Jason aimed to prompt viewers to reflect on their relationship with Country and their role in caring for the land. The exhibition also included works by artists such as Uncle Noel Blair, Jennifer Kent, Enid Morris, and Jason Murphy, each contributing unique perspectives and creative expressions. The launch event on 12 June 2025 featured live music by First Nations musician Lea Sanson, with the exhibition running from June 13 to 3 August.

Culture at Caloundra's Gateway

The long-vacant Information Centre at Caloundra has been reborn as The Hope Dreaming Centre, opening its doors to the public on 17 June 2025.

Led by Kabi Kabi cultural leaders, Kerry Neill and Dr Aunty Hope O'Chin, the centre is a hub for local tourism, cultural exchange and community connection. Visitors can find local information, purchase First Nations products and art, browse the dedicated gallery space and grab a bite to eat and a coffee.

As the centre continues to grow, it will also launch First Nations-led local tours, offering immersive experiences that connect visitors with the land, stories, and traditions of our region.

Supporting our local artists

MadeSC is a six-month creative and professional development program designed to support independent artists, creative businesses and arts organisations across the Sunshine Coast, strengthening practice and foster industry connections. The new Council program was established in July 2024 and delivered in collaboration with the local creative sector. Bespoke residencies were facilitated in partnership with independent spaces and businesses to provide space for artists to work and develop their practice.

Since its launch, MadeSC has supported more than **250** artists through residences, project funding and professional development. This includes nine major works for Horizon 2025, now being developed into sustainable touring models. In 2024-25, MadeSC delivered **12** residences with public showings, a one-day Lab for **18** participants and Horizon projects that reached over **12,000** people.

Council continued its support of the Refinery Creative Incubator, supported through the Levy Program. Commencing in June 2024 through to September 2025, nine artists and creative businesses were selected to participate in the intensive 10-week program designed to turn creative ideas into sustainable businesses. The program is delivered by peak body, Sunshine Creative Alliance.



Outcome five: Creative, innovative communities

Celebrating our unique heritage

Council has worked to strengthen our regional museums and heritage organisations through expert support, strategic partnerships, and targeted programs. Over **270** participants benefited from workshops and consultations focused on volunteer engagement, marketing, and museum operations. In collaboration with Museums and Galleries Queensland and the Queensland Museum, Council delivered government-funded training in collection management, mental health, and disaster preparedness. More than **\$175,000** in grants supported **25** heritage projects, while refreshed marketing, including the Heritage Discovery Guide and seasonal campaigns, boosted public engagement, with **750** guides distributed monthly across the region.

The Historian in Residence program delivered new research by professional historians with fascinating topics revealing insights into the region's history, including Dr Martina Muller 'Iconic Pubs that shaped the Sunshine Coast' and Dr Kate Kirby 'Bounce, sprint and spirit: three stories of Sunshine Coast sport history.'

The digitisation of the collection of local photographer Bill Robinson, held by the Heritage Library, was completed and is now online. This significant collection of over **20,000** photographs documents the Sunshine Coast's cultural and social history, and important aspects of the natural and built environment, from the 1950s through to Bill's retirement in 1984.

To celebrate the Australian Heritage Festival during April and May 2025, Council held two major community events.

- The First Nations Family Fun Day was celebrated at Bankfoot House on 12 April 2025, with the event showcasing First Nations culture and offering a range of cultural learning programs and activities. The event was delivered in partnership with GATHAA First Nations Markets, supporting **18** local businesses and attracting **557** attendees.
- The Landsborough Street Festival held on 17 May 2025, brought the community together to celebrate the relaunch of the Museum with a vibrant mix of live music, classic cars, and family-friendly fun. The festival was a celebration of the region's rich heritage, engaging all ages and cultures in a lively, inclusive atmosphere.

Inside the Landsborough Museum, the festivities continued with the launch of 'Bounce – Grassroots to Glory', a new exhibition exploring the Sunshine Coast's sporting history. Part of the ongoing Grassroots to Glory series leading up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, this year's exhibition celebrated the region's passion for ball sports – from backyard games to international glory. Curated with contributions from the local sporting community, the exhibition showcased personal stories and memorabilia that captured pivotal moments, community spirit, and innovation in sport.

All of these programs were supported by the Arts and Heritage Levy, inviting everyone to reflect on the region's unique past while enjoying community celebrations.

It's a wrap: Horizon 2025

Horizon took a break in 2024 to ensure a better spread of cultural offerings. The 10-day multi-arts showcase is normally celebrated in August, which coincided with a busy calendar of arts and cultural offerings. This year Horizon 2025 was moved to the quieter period of 2 May to 11 May 2025 to enable greatest coordination and participation. The opening weekend happened over Labour Day weekend, allowing more people to come and enjoy the festival.

The festival was attended by **20,186** people who attended **211** events and activities across **10** locations, with **89** per cent rating their experience as good to excellent. These events featured **557** artists/arts workers, of which **428** were Sunshine Coast-based and **155** were First Nations.

Horizon attracted over **30** per cent of attendees from outside the region who visited specifically to attend the festival (a **10** per cent increase on 2023 figures). Horizon contributed **\$1,439,316** in economic impact into the regional economy. This is an increase on the **\$1,082,882** from 2023.

Between 2024-2025,

the Caloundra Regional Gallery delivered:



187
programs



Exhibitions to
24,925 attendees



Programs for
9728 participants



Digital events and
programs for
9033 attendees

Council supported Creative Arts through:



838
events, programs
and exhibitions



82 digital programs



Engaging 200,438
participants in programs



867
contracting local artists
and



267
First Nations artists



supporting
923
artists to participate in



264 training
development
opportunities

Council delivered Cultural Heritage Services through:



191
events and programs to



12,865
attendees and



15,537
digital attendees



the Cultural Heritage
website with
109,538 visits



24 volunteers
contributing
3575 hours



5072 visitors to
Bankfoot House,
including



31 school groups
experiencing curriculum-
aligned education programs



6022 visitors to
Landsborough Museum

Appendix

Council and community will use the following measures to track progress towards our shared goal of a strong community. We all have responsibility for contributing to the outcomes we want to see in our community and we will need to work together to achieve these targets.

Headline measure

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Residents in agreement that the Sunshine Coast is a strong community	68.4%	62.9%	75%
Measure source: Sunshine Coast Community Connections Survey (funded by Council). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected in 2023 and therefore this result has become the baseline for future years. The 2041 target reflects that there are opportunities for ongoing improvement in correlated factors, such as views about acceptance of diversity, trust in local government, and an active community getting involved in, and feeling part of the local community. Latest commentary: The latest result is well below target. The result in 2025 is 5.6% (pp) lower than in 2023 and is 12.1% (pp) below target. It reflects declines in correlated factors including acceptance of diversity (see below).			

01 Healthy, active communities

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 1.1 Resident who rated their health as good, very good or excellent as a ranking within Regional Queensland	#2	#2	#1-3
Measure source: Queensland Preventative Health Survey (undertaken by the Queensland Government). This measure is for the Sunshine Coast hospital and health service (HHS) area - not LGA, compared to Regional Queensland (which excludes the Metro North and Metro South HHS). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected for the Community Strategy for the 2019/20 financial year. The 2041 target reflects an ambition to maintain the relative strength in health for Sunshine Coast residents compared to other regional areas of Queensland. Latest commentary: The latest result has Sunshine Coast HHS maintaining the second highest self-rated health score of the 13 HHS districts in Regional Queensland.			

02 Vibrant communities

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 2.1 Residents in agreement that Council's community infrastructure meets community need	55.9%	54.6%	60%
Measure source: Sunshine Coast Community Connections Survey (funded by Council). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected in 2021, however was rewritten in 2023 (to reflect broader community need rather than individual need) resulting in a substantial change to the result. Therefore, the 2023 result is used as the baseline for this measure. The 2041 target reflects an opportunity for modest improvement considering the challenge of expected strong population growth. Latest commentary: The result in 2025 is similar to the 2023 result. The latest result is 5.4% (pp) below target which demonstrates the need for ongoing investment in community facilities given strong population growth.			

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 2.2 Personal travel by active transport and passenger transport	15%	12%	30%
Measure source: Queensland Household Travel Survey (Queensland Government). Baseline/target justification: The baseline for this measure and the 2041 target was adopted by Council in the Integrated Transport Strategy in December 2018. The target is aspirational. Achievement of the target will be influenced by infrastructure investment and urban development that take time to be delivered. The Queensland Government and Australian Government have significant influence on this measure through investment. Latest commentary: The latest result is well below target. This target represents an ambitious goal to be achieved in 2041. Achievement of this target will require significant infrastructure investment and behaviour change, which take time to be realised. A new Sunshine Coast Active Transport Plan (in the works to finalisation) is anticipated to provide further direction and initiatives to drive this measure forward.			

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 2.3 Residents in agreement that they can find the type of accommodation they need	36.6%	33.8%	40%
Measure source: Sunshine Coast Community Connections Survey (funded by Council). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected in 2021 and therefore this is the baseline for this measure. The 2041 target reflects a realistic ambition for a modest improvement in the availability and affordability of accommodation on the Sunshine Coast given the challenge of strong population growth and tourism growth. Latest commentary: The latest result is well below target. The result in 2025 is similar to the 2021 and 2023 results (a decrease but not statistically significant). The most recent results reflect the housing crisis being experienced on the Sunshine Coast, with low residential vacancy rates and growing dwelling prices and rents. In addition, there was limited universal housing and social housing. Significant national and local attention across government and community may help to address the current housing crisis, including delivery of actions and initiatives as guided by Council's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.			

03 Inclusive communities

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 3.1 Residents in agreement that it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures	85%	74.5%	90%
Measure source: Sunshine Coast Community Connections Survey (funded by Council). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected in 2016 as part of the first ever Community Connections Survey. The 2041 target reflects an opportunity for modest improvement in community perceptions related to diversity and inclusion, which was considered achievable given trends at the time, and a desirable target for maintaining community cohesion. Latest commentary: The latest result is well below target. The result in 2025 is 9.3% (pp) lower than in 2023 and is 15.5% (pp) below target. This decrease may be related to rhetoric around the Voice Referendum, Australian Government elections and global events and conflicts. Rising cost of living may also have contributed to concerns about migration and multiculturalism in the region.			

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 3.2 Residents who volunteered for an organisation in the preceding twelve months	20.7%	15.7%	20%
Measure source: Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics). Baseline/target justification: The baseline for this measure was recorded in 2016 which was the latest data available at the time the Community Strategy was adopted. The 2041 target reflects a continuation of volunteering participation while adjusting for demographic change. The target is ambitious given changes in volunteering towards informal/episodic volunteering. Latest commentary: The 2021 result was 5.0% (pp) lower than in 2016, and 4.3% (pp) below target. The 2021 result is likely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which reduced rates of volunteering due to restrictions and health concerns.			

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 3.3 Residents in agreement that there are opportunities to have a say on community issues that are important to them	70%	45.5%	70%
Measure source: Sunshine Coast Community Connections Survey (funded by Council). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected in 2016 as part of the first ever Community Connections Survey. The 2041 target reflects an ambition (in 2019) to maintain the baseline result. Returning to this baseline may be difficult given broader national trends and noting results since 2021 have been consistently lower. Latest commentary: The latest result is well below target. The result in 2025 is 5.4% (pp) lower than in 2023 and is 24.5% (pp) below target. Notably, 33.2% of residents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, an emerging trend that is demonstrating apathy amongst the community, and 21.4% disagreed. Council is aware of growing community sentiment and perceptions that community views are not being heard and acted on by Council. This sentiment is generally consistent with sentiment in other regions and levels of government and combines with factors of trust. Media fragmentation and social media are also contributing to echo chambers and misinformation and disinformation that are critical of Council, which are increasingly making it difficult to reach and communicate accurately with residents.			

04 Connected, resilient communities

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 4.1 Residents in agreement that they live in an active community where people get involved in local issues and activities	77%	53.8%	75%
Measure source: Sunshine Coast Community Connections Survey (funded by Council). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected in 2016 as part of the first ever Community Connections Survey. The 2041 target reflects an ambition (in 2019) to maintain the baseline result. Returning to this baseline may be difficult given broader community trends and the consistency of results since 2021, but remains a stretch target to advance a connected and involved community. Latest commentary: The latest result is well below target. The 2025 result is similar to the 2021 and 2023 results (a decrease but not statistically significant). The 2025 result is 21.2% (pp) below the 2041 target. Current financial pressures being experienced by residents may be impacting this measure as well as other social trends (as outlined in the Community Strategy).			

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 4.1 Residents in agreement that they can get help from friends, family, neighbours or community organisations when they need it	93%	79.0%	90%
Measure source: Sunshine Coast Community Connections Survey (funded by Council). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected in 2016 as part of the first ever Community Connections Survey. The 2041 target reflects an ambition (in 2019) to maintain the baseline result. Returning to this baseline may be difficult given broader community trends. Latest commentary: The latest result is well below target. The result in 2025 is 8.2% (pp) lower than in 2023 and is 11.0% (pp) below target. Current financial pressures being experienced by residents may be impacting this measure as well as other social trends (as outlined in the Community Strategy).			

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 4.2 Residents in agreement that they feel safe all the time on the Sunshine Coast	77%	59.6%	75%
Measure source: Sunshine Coast Community Connections Survey (funded by Council). Baseline/target justification: This measure was first collected in 2016 as part of the first ever Community Connections Survey. The 2041 target reflects an ambition (in 2019) to maintain the baseline result. Latest commentary: The result in 2025 is similar to the 2023 result (a decrease but not statistically significant) but lower than in 2021 by 12.2% (pp). The result is 15.4% (pp) below target. Council is aware of a growing community perception around perceived issues of crime and safety. This may continue to grow as the region becomes more densely populated. Crime statistics can be used to better understand differences between perceptions and actual levels of crime.			

05 Creative, innovative communities

Measure	Baseline	Latest	2041 Target
Topic 5.1 Cultural vitality	TBD	TBD	TBD
TBD			



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