



Local Public Health Plan 2026 – 2031

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Document control

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1	28 April 2026 – Council Item No. DEV 02-04/26	Draft for public comment.

Background

The Public Health Act 2016 (**Act**) defines public health as the health of individuals in the context of:

- a. The wider health and wellbeing of the community; and
- b. The combination of safeguards, policies and programmes designed to protect, maintain, promote and improve the health of individuals and their communities and to prevent and reduce the incidence of illness and disability.

Part 5 of the Act requires a local public health plan (**Plan**) to be prepared by each local government.



Introduction

The work of the Shire of Irwin (**Shire**) is varied, but it touches almost all areas of the community's day to day life.

There are a number of initiatives and a variety of local programs and services that the Shire is already implementing that all have a big impact on the community's health and wellbeing including:

- ❖ **infrastructure and property services** including local roads, footpaths, drainage and waste collection;
- ❖ **recreation facilities** such as parks, sports fields and the Irwin Recreation Centre;
- ❖ **health services** such as water and food inspections, animal control and provision of public toilets;
- ❖ **community and cultural facilities** such as aged care and accommodation, the Dongara Public Library, Dongara Cemetery and the Irwin District Museum; and
- ❖ **planning and building services** including permits, approvals, enforcement and leasing of land for health related activities.

It must be acknowledged that many factors affecting health and wellbeing fall outside the scope of local government and that the delivery of many health services are facilitated by external agencies.

The intention of this Plan is to ensure that the Shire's resources are used in the most appropriate and efficient way to address the public health and wellbeing needs of the community, rather than increase the number of services provided.

Strategic Context and Vision

The brilliant future of the Shire is articulated in the Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031, which has the following vision:

“Provide a safe place to live, an exciting place to visit and a progressive place to work.”

The action plan has been developed with clear linkages to the objectives of the Strategic Community Plan which are:

Social	A friendly, safe and inclusive community enjoying a high quality lifestyle
Economic	A prosperous and diverse economy
Environment	Custodianship of our natural and built environment
Leadership	Leading the community with engaged and progressive governance

The Plan reflects the priorities identified in the community engagement of the Strategic Community Plan and has a focus on achieving long-term public health outcomes through the planning process which enables the Shire to:

- ❖ **assess** the public health needs of the community;
- ❖ **articulate** the public health priorities for the community;
- ❖ **allocate** resources to achieve those priorities; and
- ❖ **report** progress.

Our Community's Health and Wellbeing

When thinking about the public health and wellbeing of our community, it is important to consider the following lifestyle factors of the Shire's population.



Population

- ❖ 30.4% aged 65 years and over
- ❖ The State average is 16.1%



Nutrition

- ❖ 50.6% eat the recommended serves of fruit daily
- ❖ 90.7% eat less than the recommended serves of vegetables daily



Fast food

- ❖ Only 13.6% eat fast food weekly



Physical activity

- ❖ 47.2% do the recommended amount of physical activity per week



Sedentary behavior

- ❖ 45.8% spend more than the recommended amount of time on screen-based leisure activities



Weight

- ❖ Higher obesity prevalence (38.4%)
- ❖ Lower prevalence of overweight (32.3%)
- ❖ Compared to the State



Smoking

- ❖ Higher prevalence (14.4%) of tobacco smoking compared to the State



Alcohol

- ❖ 27.5% drank at high risk levels for long-term harm (more than 2 standard drinks per day)



Mental health

- ❖ Lower prevalence (12.3%) of any mental health condition compared to the State



Injury

- ❖ Accidental falls were the leading cause of injury-related hospitalisations
- ❖ Transport accidents were the leading cause of injury-related deaths

Our Action Plan

In the following action plan, the role of the Shire is classified as follows depending on the degree of involvement:

- Deliver** Provide services that improve public health.
- Partner** Develop and maintain partnerships with others.
- Advocate** Promote awareness of public health matters to influence the decisions of others.



Social A friendly, safe and inclusive community enjoying a high quality lifestyle

No.	Action	Shire Role
1	Increase community participation by building the capacity of local clubs/groups and creating opportunities for social connection through a range of activities including arts, recreation and sport.	Partner
2	Support volunteering opportunities and encourage community/volunteer groups to deliver health and well-being activities.	Partner
3	Advocate for early childhood facilities, services and programs.	Advocate
4	Support and facilitate access to facilities and fitness/physical activities for seniors and people of all abilities to promote interdependence, social connection and well-being.	Deliver
5	Support and promote opportunities for youth development, participation and activities.	Partner
6	Partner with specialist organisations to support the delivery of mental health and well-being programs.	Partner
7	Support the delivery of aged and independent living accommodation options to enable aging in place.	Deliver
8	Support sustainable access to medical and primary health services including the Dongara Medical Centre.	Partner



Economic A prosperous and diverse economy

No.	Action	Shire Role
9	Partner with health promotion stakeholders and initiatives (such as LiveLighter, R U OK and Alcohol. Think Again) to promote healthy lifestyle messages.	Partner
10	Deliver events and programs that encourage community connection and reduce social isolation.	Deliver
11	Provide and manage the Irwin Recreation Centre as a key community health and well-being asset.	Deliver
12	Provide library services that support literacy, learning and social connection.	Deliver



Environment

Custodianship of our natural and built environment

No.	Action	Shire Role
13	Manage and maintain the Shire’s recreation areas, sporting grounds and facilities.	Deliver
14	Maintain and further develop local roads, footpath networks and trails, ensuring accessibility and safety.	Deliver
15	Support progression of the Port Denison Foreshore Masterplan to activate the foreshore area promoting visitation and active lifestyles.	Deliver
16	Provide and maintain dog exercise areas and support responsible pet ownership.	Deliver



Leadership Leading the community with engaged and progressive governance

No.	Action	Shire Role
17	Maintain public health inspections and enforcement services to minimise harm from known risks to human health and safety.	Deliver
18	Support a healthy, safe and positive workplace for Shire staff including healthy food options, wellbeing initiatives and flu vaccinations.	Deliver
19	Ensure effective representation from the Shire to advocate and pursue funding opportunities for improved health outcomes for the community.	Advocate
20	Support community-led initiatives through the provision of community leases and implementation of the Community Assistance Scheme (CASE) .	Deliver
21	Coordinate emergency management services including the Shire’s volunteer bushfire brigades and Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA).	Partner
22	Progress actions in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) .	Deliver

