

Active Stonnington Action Plan

DRAFT V4 October 2025



We acknowledge the City of Stonnington is situated on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.

We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge their living connection to Country, relationship with the land and all living things extending back tens of thousands of years.

What is Active Stonnington?

Active Stonnington is our approach to helping people get and stay active. It's about designing, delivering and promoting the spaces and programs that make being active part of everyday life, and working with clubs, schools, health providers and community groups to make participation easier, fairer and more enjoyable for everyone.



Message from the Mayor

The *Active Stonnington Action Plan 2026–2029* sets a clear direction for how we will strengthen participation in sport and active recreation across our community over the next four years.

This Plan builds on the strong foundation established through the *Active Stonnington Strategic Framework 2021–2025*, which delivered significant improvements to our recreation facilities, increased participation, and introduced key policies such as the Fair Access Policy.

Developed through extensive community engagement involving more than 750 residents, club members and stakeholders, the Plan reflects the priorities of our community and the importance of creating more accessible, inclusive and flexible opportunities to be active.

The *Active Stonnington Action Plan* aligns with Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2029 and the broader Council Plan. The People, Process, Place framework is the foundation of this Action Plan and ensures we're thinking of every part of the system that supports participation. From improved facilities, connections and accessibility to social and casual opportunities, safety and inclusion, marketing and awareness, and capacity building.

Through this Plan, Council reaffirms its commitment to supporting a healthy, connected and active community. We will continue to work in partnership with local clubs, community groups, schools and state sporting associations to ensure that everyone in Stonnington can participate in sport and recreation in a way that suits their lifestyle.

Cr Melina Sehr
Mayor, City of Stonnington

Contents

Key terms 6

What this plan is about 7

Why it matters 7

What the numbers tell us 8

Context 9

How this plan fits with others 9

What we have achieved so far 10

Community engagement 11

How we engaged 11

What we heard 11

Our framework: People, Process, Place 12

Actions 13

Reading this section 13

Focus Area 1. People 14

Focus Area 2. Process 16

Focus Area 3. Place 18

Monitoring and evaluation 20

Key measures of success 20

How we'll report on progress 20

Key terms

Organised sport: Structured participation arranged by a club, association, school, or other body. Examples include playing in a junior cricket competition, or training with a tennis coach.

Informal sport: Self-organised, casual participation in a sport without a club or program. Examples include a game of backyard cricket, shooting hoops with friends, or a casual round of golf.

Non-sport physical activity: Activities without a national sporting body, such as gym/fitness, yoga, or bushwalking. These may be organised (e.g. a group fitness class) or informal (e.g. walking alone).

Active recreation: A catch-all term used to describe leisure activities that require physical exertion, like walking, cycling, or playing kick-to-kick with the kids. Captures both informal sport and non-sport physical activity.

Passive recreation: Leisure activities in parks and open spaces which do not require significant physical exertion. Examples include picnicking, reading, socialising, enjoying nature, or watching sport as a spectator. Often co-exists alongside active recreation and organised sport.

Sports facilities: The places, venues or sites where sport takes place. Examples include ovals, tennis centres, stadiums, aquatic centres, golf courses and bowling clubs. Facilities are made up of different types of infrastructure.

Sports infrastructure: The physical assets that enable participation in sport. This includes playing surfaces, pavilions, courts, swimming pools and specialist structures, as well as supporting infrastructure.



What this plan is about

Being active looks different for everyone. For some it's team sport or regular visits to the gym, for others it's walking the dog, riding to work or a game in the park with friends. However people choose to move, being active helps us feel better, connect with others and build a stronger sense of community.

The Active Stonnington Action Plan sets out how we'll make it easier for people to find and take part in those opportunities. It outlines where we will focus our effort, investment and partnerships over the next four years, to help more people be active in ways that suit them.

This plan focuses on what we can directly influence, like our programs, infrastructure and public spaces, and where we can work with others or advocate to create better outcomes. It doesn't try to address the broader social and economic factors that shape health and wellbeing, like education, transport or cost of living, but it recognises how these factors affect people's lives and responds with that in mind.

Why it matters

Our community is diverse and growing, with more people living closer together in apartments and townhouses. The ways people want to participate are changing too – we're seeing more people looking for flexible, social and unstructured activities, alongside strong ongoing demand for organised sport.

This growth and change create new challenges – pressure on services and infrastructure, greater reliance on shared public spaces, and demand for a wider range of activities. At the same time, some residents still face barriers to participation, whether that's cost, confidence, access or competing priorities.

This plan will help us respond to these challenges and gives us a framework to track progress and adjust our approach as needs and expectations evolve over time.

What the numbers tell us

Our community is active and values active recreation and sport:

- More than 20 per cent of all residents participate in organised sports (approx. 26,100 players)
- 1600 people volunteer in an official capacity at a local sporting club
- There are over 50 organised sports clubs in Stonnington
- Our recreational facilities have a 76 per cent satisfaction rate (higher than Metro and State average results)

Source: Self-reported and Council data

Council owns a range of facilities that support sport and active recreation

- 20 outdoor sportsgrounds with 14 sports pavilions
- 8 tennis facilities with a total of 41 courts
- 1 bowls club
- 2 rowing boathouses
- 1 golf course (18-hole)
- 2 leisure centres including 3 pools and 1 health club
- 2 indoor stadiums including 4 regulation and 2 non-regulation courts
- 2 skate parks
- 1 BMX pump track



How this plan fits with others

The Active Stonnington Action Plan is part of a wider collection of Council strategies, policies and plans that together support ***Stonnington Tomorrow,*** our Community Vision 2040 and Council Plan 2025-29.

This plan delivers directly on our **Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-29**, particularly *Objective 3.1: 'Everyone has the opportunity to be active'*. It will work together with the upcoming **Sports Infrastructure Plan**, which focuses on planning and investment in our sports facilities.

Supporting policies, especially the **Fair Access Policy**, guide our decision-making with a focus on inclusive and equitable participation.

Figure 1 shows how this plan fits within Council's broader strategic framework.

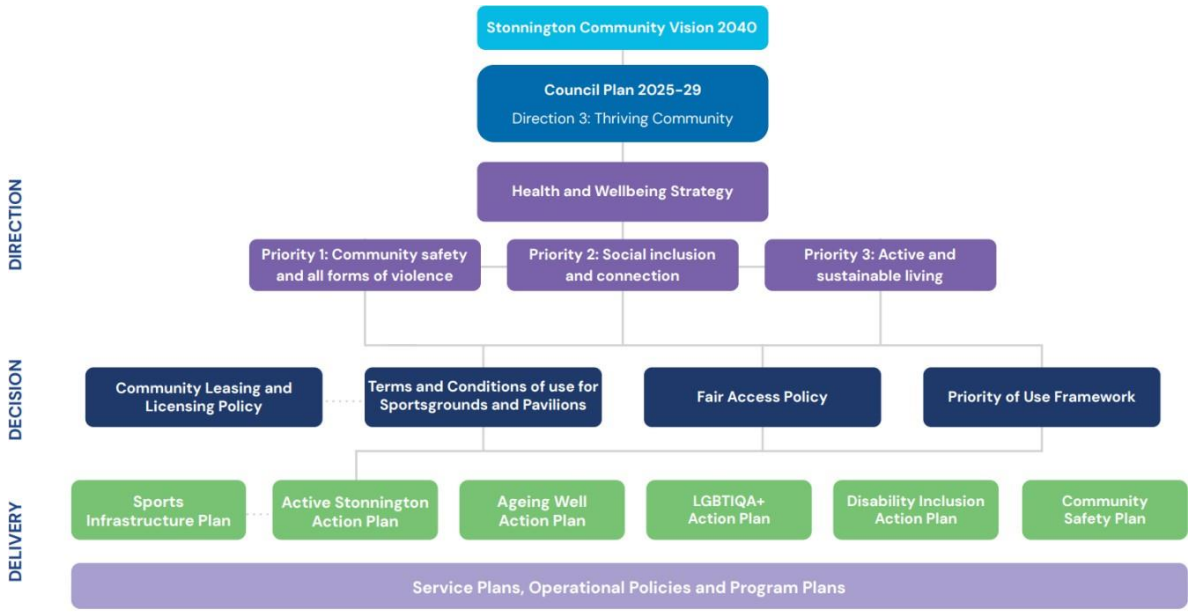


Figure 1: Strategic Framework

Supporting strategies

Beyond the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, this plan aligns with several other strategies and plans that support active living across our city, including:

- **Transport Strategy** – supports walking, cycling and other active travel.
- **Open Space Strategy** – shapes how our parks and public spaces are designed to support walking, cycling, sport, recreation and social connection.
- **Domestic Animal Management Plan** – recognises dog walking as an important way people stay active and connected, and promotes safe, responsible use of shared spaces.
- **Environment Strategy –** supports protected green spaces, balanced recreational and sustainability outcomes, alternative water for irrigation, resilient high-performance facilities, and community connection to and care for the local environment.



What we have achieved so far

Over the past four years, our Active Stonnington Strategic Framework 2021-25 helped strengthen local opportunities for sport and active recreation. Through this work:

- Website engagement grew by **219%**, and **1600** residents now subscribe to our Active Stonnington newsletter to stay informed about local opportunities.
- The value of recreation infrastructure rose from $7,000 per capita in 2022 to **$9,309** in 2024, with upgrades like the Princes Gardens Sports Courts, which hosted nearly **15,000** bookings since reopening.
- Aquatic Centre visits increased by around **20%** in 2024-25, to the equivalent of **4.83** visits for every person living in Stonnington.
- Daily use at Prahran Skatepark rose by **31%** since redevelopment in 2024.
- More than **700** people participated in Come & Try programs between 2023 and 2025, and more than **800** people attended community-led wellness sessions each month.
- There are now over **16,000** registered club members and **1600** active volunteers, keeping local clubs strong.
- More than **90** young people experiencing financial hardship accessed team sport through Australian Sports Commission grants.
- The **Fair Access Policy 2024-27** was endorsed to improve gender equity and inclusion.
- The proportion of residents who are overweight or obese dropped from 41% to **39.6%**, reflecting the benefits of more people being active more often.

These results show that we are on the right track, and our investment and effort is building a stronger, healthier and more connected community.

How we engaged

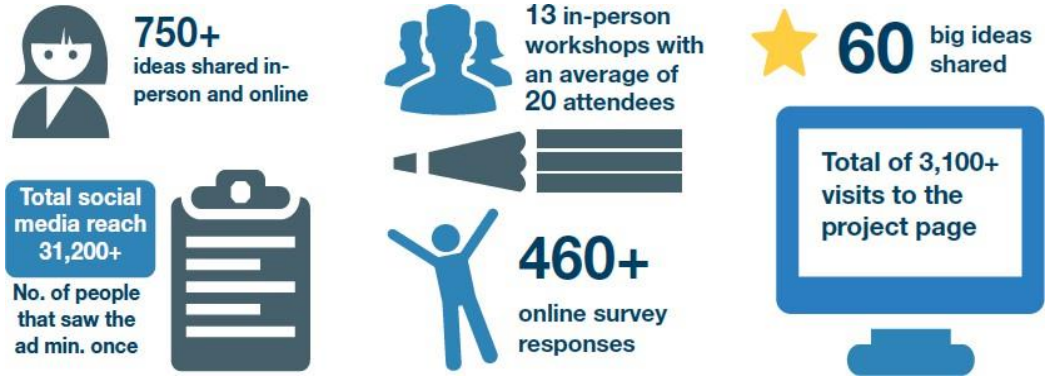


Figure 2: How We Engaged

What we heard

Our community survey provided valuable feedback from a wide range of people who live, work and play in Stonnington. We also held targeted workshops with sports club representatives, women and girls, youth advisory groups and older adults to hear their perspectives and understand how we can better support them.

Key insights from this process are outlined below.

- **People value choice and flexibility.** Many residents prefer informal or social ways to be active, like walking, fitness classes or casual sport, rather than formal competition.
- **Feeling safe and welcome is essential.** Inclusive design, good lighting, and a positive culture all make it easier for people to join in and stay involved.
- **Barriers still exist for some groups.** Cost, confidence, physical accessibility and cultural factors continue to make participation harder for some people, especially women and girls, older adults and people with disability.
- **Some facilities work well, others need attention.** People told us that while some spaces are modern, well-located and easy to use, others feel outdated, restrictive and in need of improvement.
- **Information isn't always easy to find.** Many people don't know what's available locally or how to get involved. They want clear, up-to-date information in one easy place.
- **Clubs and community groups face capacity challenges.** With volunteer numbers declining and administrative demands increasing, many are finding it hard to sustain programs without extra support.

Our framework: People, Process, Place

To support an active city, everything needs to work together. Facilities only thrive when they're managed well, open at the right times and offer something people want to use. Programs only succeed when people know about them, feel welcome and can afford to take part. And even the best plans need capable people, strong partnerships and sustainable funding to turn them into action.

That's where the People, Process, Place framework comes in. It's the foundation of this Action Plan and ensures we're thinking of every part of the system that supports participation.

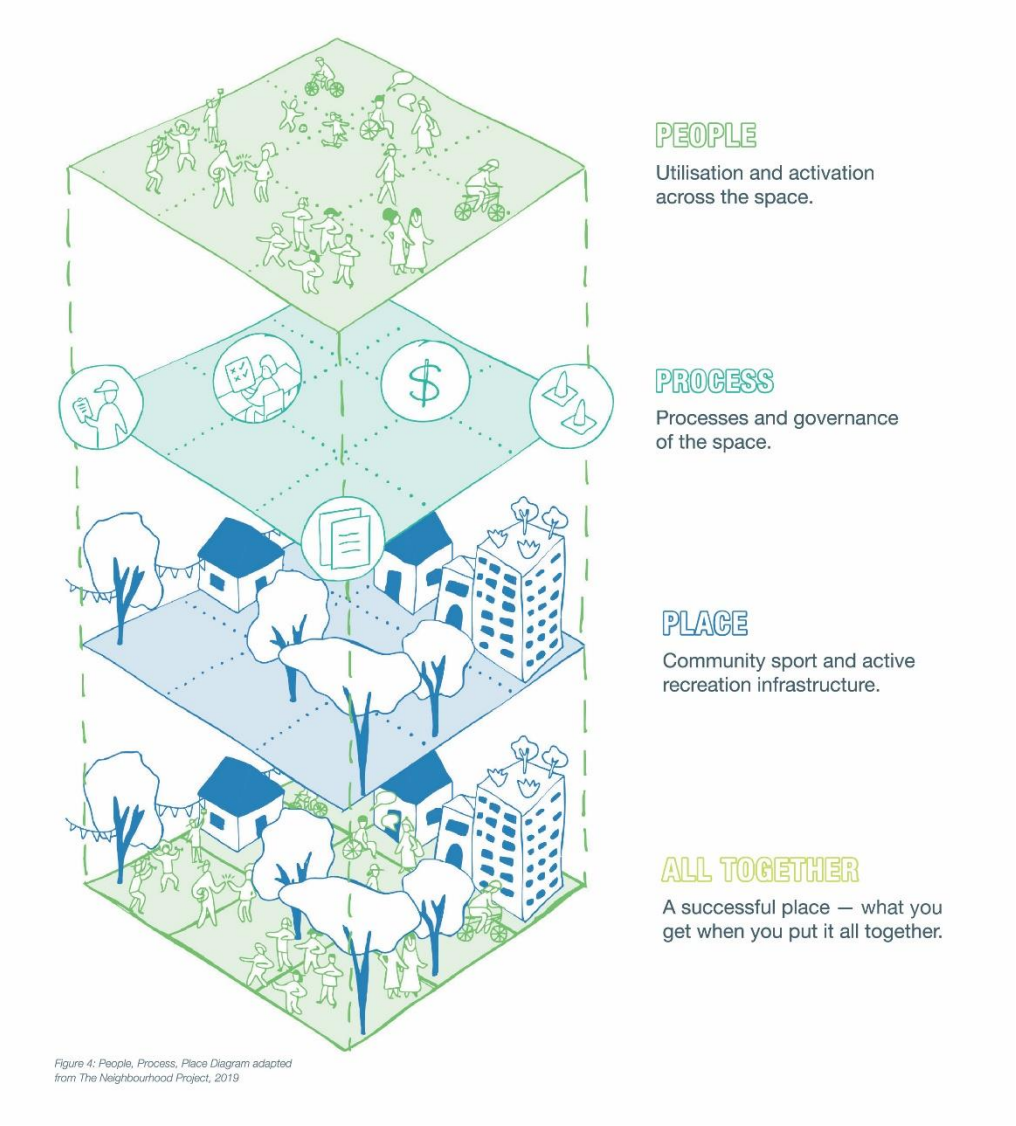


Figure 4: People, Process, Place Diagram adapted from The Neighbourhood Project, 2019

Actions

This part of the plan sets out what we'll deliver over the next four years to help more people be active – by focusing on people, processes and places.

Reading this section

Ongoing activities

The things we already deliver as part of our everyday work to support sport and active recreation.

Actions for the next four years

The new or expanded initiatives that we will deliver over the life of this plan, responding to what our community engagement and internal review told us.

Timeframe

When we plan to deliver each action. Some will be completed in a specific year, while others will be introduced progressively or maintained throughout the life of the plan.

Budget Implication

Each action includes an indicative cost and funding source. These estimates are high-level and intended to guide planning rather than allocate funding which happens through our annual budget process.

What success looks like

The outcomes we want to see as the plan is delivered. They are the basis of how we'll track progress and measure the impact of our work.



Focus area 01 / People

Overview

Active Stonnington depends on people. It's the participants, volunteers, organisers and supporters who bring our parks, paths and facilities to life. This focus area is about helping more people start, stay and succeed in being active, and supporting the volunteers and organisations who help make it happen.

Ongoing activities

- Deliver a series of community sport, recreation and wellness programs.
- Maintain partnerships with clubs, schools and community groups to support participation.
- Support local clubs and associations through advice, grants and partnerships.
- Promote local sport and active recreation opportunities and stories through Active Stonnington online channels.
- Apply Fair Access principles to all sport and recreation activities.
- Provide resources and promotion opportunities through our Volunteer Stonnington webpage, and recognition through our annual Volunteer Awards program.

Actions for the next four years

Action		Timeframe	Budget implication
1.1	Introduce new low-cost, casual and beginner-friendly programs in partnership with clubs, schools and community groups. Examples include: • Older adults' social sport opportunities like walking basketball, football & netball. • Seasonal Wellness Sessions at Stonnington Leisure Venues Jan–May summer sessions • Take the plunge – annual swim event for club and recreational swimmers • Non-competitive sporting sessions for women, girls and young people	Years 1-4	$20,000 per annum Operating budget (existing) External funding opportunity
1.2	Deliver a series of targeted campaigns that inspire more people to be more active or get involved in local sport. Examples include: • Promoting volunteer, coaching, officiating and club support roles. • Opportunities for women and girls to participate and lead. • Stories from local role models and community leaders that celebrate active living.	Years 1-4	$5000 per annum Operating budget (existing)
1.3	Provide Biannual training governance, first-aid, grant-writing and inclusion training for club volunteers and committee members, in partnership with State Sporting Associations and community organisations.	Years 1-4	$15,000 per annum Operating budget (existing) External funding opportunity
1.4	Partner with local businesses and precinct associations to deliver inclusive events and activations that promote active living and local connection.	Years 1 & 3	$10,000 per event Operating budget (existing)

What success looks like

Outcome	How we'll measure it
More people participating in Active Stonnington programs and events.	Program registrations and attendance counts.
More diverse participation across gender, age and ability.	Demographic breakdowns from registration and attendee survey data.
More volunteers engaged and retained by local clubs and groups.	Club-reported volunteer and vacancy numbers.
Clubs feel supported and equipped to manage and grow participation and provide welcoming, inclusive environments.	Feedback from club engagement sessions and post-training surveys.
Greater awareness of local opportunities to be active.	Active Stonnington website visits, newsletter subscriptions and social engagement



Focus area 02 / Process

Overview

Good processes help us plan, coordinate and evaluate our work so effort is aligned, decisions are transparent, and resources are used where they make the biggest difference. This focus area is about improving the systems, decisions and partnerships that make it possible to deliver programs, maintain facilities and support participation effectively.

Ongoing activities

- Manage bookings, allocations and user agreements for sport and recreation facilities.
- Coordinate maintenance and renewal programs to keep facilities safe and fit for purpose.
- Monitor participation trends and facility usage to inform planning, funding and partnerships.
- Develop and maintain policies and procedures that guide fair, consistent and transparent decision-making.
- Maintain internal coordination across Council teams to ensure integrated planning and service delivery.

Actions for the next four years

Action		Timeframe	Budget implication
2.1	Establish fair, transparent and consistent processes for sportsground use by updating the Terms and Conditions, introducing an Allocation Policy, and implementing a clear fee structure.	Years 1-2	$40,000 Operating budget (existing) $20,000 External funding (Confirmed)
2.2	Review and update sport and recreation leases and licences to ensure they reflect contemporary standards and fair access principles.	Years 1-4	$80,000
2.3	Establish a consistent process and reporting tools to collect, analyse and share participation and facility data, to support effective planning and track progress over time.	Years 1-4	$10,000 Operating budget (existing)
2.4	Review and update the Active Stonnington communication approach to improve how programs and opportunities are promoted across digital and community channels.	Years 1-4	Staff costs only
2.5	Ensure all Active Stonnington campaigns and visual materials reflect diverse body types, cultures, ages, genders and abilities.	Years 1-4	Staff costs only
2.6	Evaluate Fair Access Policy 24-27 achievements and outcomes	Year 2	Staff costs only

What success looks like

Outcome	How we'll measure it
Clear and consistent policies guide fair access and use of facilities.	Policies updated and applied.
Better data informing decisions and resource planning.	New data management processes in place and used to inform annual planning and reporting.
Stronger coordination across Council teams delivering sport and recreation outcomes.	Quarterly coordination forums held and evaluated annually for effectiveness.



Focus area 03 / Place

Overview

The spaces where people move, play and connect shape how active our community can be. From ovals and gyms to parks and paths, these places bring people together and make it easier to be active close to home. This focus area is about planning, designing and managing our sport and recreation spaces so they're safe, welcoming and built for the future.

Ongoing activities

- Provide and maintain open spaces with free infrastructure such as courts and outdoor fitness equipment, alongside formal facilities for organised sport.
- Maintain Council's sport and recreation facilities to ensure they are safe, functional and compliant.
- Deliver upgrades and renewals identified through asset condition assessments and long-term planning.
- Apply universal design standards, Fair Access principles and environmental sustainability and climate resilience to all new and upgraded facilities.
- Integrate flexible, multi-use design in sports facility and open space projects to support diverse and emerging forms of recreation.
- Ensure open spaces and recreation areas are designed and maintained to support active and passive recreation.
- Advocate for external funding to deliver open space, sport and recreation infrastructure improvements.

Actions for the next four years

Action		Timeframe	Budget implication
3.1	Deliver infrastructure upgrades guided by the Sports Infrastructure Plan, Open Space Strategy, Asset Plan and Financial Plan.	Years 1-4	To be scoped Capital funding (new and existing) External funding opportunity.
3.2	Embed crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles and standards in all sport and recreation projects and upgrades.	Years 1-4	Staff time only
3.3	Review and upgrade public lighting in parks, paths and recreation spaces where community feedback or site assessments show it is most needed.	Years 1-4	To be scoped Capital funding (new and existing) External funding opportunity.
3.4	Audit the quality, diversity and distribution of free active recreation facilities such as outdoor courts, fitness equipment and running tracks and establish improvement priorities to inform future capital works.	Year 2	Staff time only
3.5	Pursue joint-use arrangements with schools to enable broader community access to existing sports facilities outside school hours.	Years 1-4	Staff time only

What success looks like

Outcome	How we'll measure it
More places to play sport, delivered through partnerships or multi-use design.	Number of playing areas available for community use, or under shared user agreement with council.
Safer, more inclusive sports facilities that support diverse participation.	Percentage of sports facilities meeting standards for disability and gender access.
Higher satisfaction with public spaces, including Council-managed facilities**,** parks, plazas and open spaces.	Community Satisfaction Survey results.
Improved lighting and visibility in key parks and recreation spaces.	Number of sites upgraded and community perceptions of safety.

Monitoring and evaluation

We'll monitor the delivery and impact of this plan to make sure our effort, investment and partnerships are making a difference. Tracking results helps us understand what's working, where we can improve, and how community needs are changing over time. Each year, we'll assess delivery of planned actions, note any changes or emerging priorities, and report against key measures of success.

Key measures of success

Headline indicators

These are the outcomes that show whether the actions in this plan are having a municipal-wide impact. They're included in our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-29 and Council Plan 2025-29.

Indicator	Target (2030)	Source	Frequency
Health and Wellbeing Index – residents' self-reported rating	↑	views.id	Every two years
Self-reported health status	↑	Victorian Population Health Survey (VHPS)	Every three years
Percentage of adults engaging in sufficient levels of moderate exercise	↑	VPHS	Every three years
Proportion of priority population participating in organised/community sport	↑	Council & state sporting association data	Annual
Community satisfaction with Council-managed recreation facilities	↑	Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS)	Annual
Community satisfaction with parks, public plazas and open/green spaces meeting their needs	↑	views.id	Every two years

Supporting indicators

The other measures listed under each focus will help us monitor specific improvements over time and give us a broader view of where we're making progress.

How we'll report on progress

We'll publish key results through Council's existing reporting channels, including the CEO Quarterly Update and Annual Report. This will include integration within Health and Wellbeing Strategy reporting, as well as some feature stories specifically on Active Stonnington achievements.

