Supporting York's Residents to Age Well in Place

SHIRE OF York



AGE FRIENDLY STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN 2026-2031

Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of York acknowledges the Ballardong people of the Noongar Nation who are the Traditional Owners of this country and recognise their continuing connection to land, water, sky and culture. We pay our respects to all these people and their Elders past, present and emerging.





CONTENTS

Foreword 4
Executive Summary 5
Introduction 7
Vision 8
Strategic Alignment 9
Community Snapshot 10
Why an Aged Friendly Strategy for York? 11
Population Forecast 13
How We Built This Plan 15
What We Heard 17
Strategy Themes 19
Action Plan 2026-2031 23
Governance, Implementation & Success 29
Final Word 30



FOREWORD

As the Shire of York plans for the future, it is increasingly important that we take deliberate steps to support our ageing population. Our older residents bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and joy to the community. The Shire is committed to enabling people of all ages and cultural backgrounds to live well with dignity, independence, and a strong sense of connection to place and community.

This Age Friendly Strategy outlines our shared vision for creating an inclusive and liveable community where people of all ages are valued and supported to live fulfilling lives. The Strategy accompanies a five-year Action Plan developed with input from community consultation, service providers, and local stakeholders.

By embedding age-friendly practices into our planning, partnerships and service delivery, we can ensure that York remains a place where people not only choose to age in place but are supported to do so.

For the purpose of this strategy, the term ‘senior’ refers to those aged 65 and over, or any Aboriginal person aged 55 years and over, as outlined in the *An Age-Friendly WA: State Seniors Strategy 2023-2033*.



Executive Summary

The Shire of York's Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2031 reflects a shared commitment to supporting residents to age well in place, with dignity, independence and connection. As York's population continues to age, it is essential that our community remains inclusive, accessible and responsive to the needs, strengths and contributions of older people and Elders.

This Strategy provides a clear framework to guide planning, partnerships, services and infrastructure that support healthy ageing and meaningful participation in community life. It recognises both the challenges and opportunities associated with ageing in a regional setting, including access to housing, healthcare, transport, information and social connection, alongside the strong community ties, local knowledge and cultural connections that make York a unique place to live.

Informed by community feedback and aligned with the WA State Seniors Strategy and the World Health Organisation's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Framework, the Strategy is structured around four key themes. These focus on supporting healthy, active and independent living, strengthening social connection and inclusion, creating safe and accessible environments, and improving access to information, support and advocacy.

Through its roles as provider, facilitator, advocate and partner, the Shire will embed age-friendly principles across Council decision-making and service delivery. This Strategy represents an ongoing commitment to working alongside older residents, service providers and community organisations to ensure York remains a place where people feel respected, supported and able to live well at every stage of life.



Cr Chris Gibbs
Shire President



Alina Behan
Temporary CEO



INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a natural and valuable stage of life. As individuals live longer and healthier lives, communities are presented with both opportunities and challenges to ensure residents can age well. In regional areas like York, older adults often face specific barriers related to social isolation, housing, healthcare access and transport.

However, regional towns also offer unique strengths such as strong community ties, local knowledge, recognised cultural bonds to country and intergenerational connection.

This Strategy is underpinned by both the WA State Seniors Strategy 2023-2033 and the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Framework, which promotes healthy ageing through eight key domains, shown to the right.



1) Transport
2) Housing
3) Social Participation
4) Respect & Inclusion
5) Civic Participation
6) Communication & Information
7) Community Support & Health Services
8) Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Image 1: World Health Organisation Age Friendly Cities and Communities Eight (8) Domains

VISION






To enable a vibrant and inclusive Shire where older people and Elders are respected, supported, and able to age well in place






STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This strategy aligns with key strategic documents that guide the Shire of York's commitment to inclusion, wellbeing, accessibility, and age-friendliness.

It has been shaped to support the priorities of the Council Plan 2025-2035, the Access and Inclusion Plan, and the Wellbeing Plan, ensuring consistency across all areas of planning, service delivery, and community development.

It also responds directly to the WA State Seniors Strategy 2023-2033 and its accompanying Action Plan, reflecting the broader State Government vision for connected, respected, and empowered older people. Additionally, the strategy incorporates the principles of the World Health Organisation Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Framework, providing an internationally recognised foundation for making York a place where people of all ages can thrive.



Image 2: Contribution and alignment of existing plans and strategies

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



3649
Population



52%
% in the labour force



213,159
Hectares in Shire

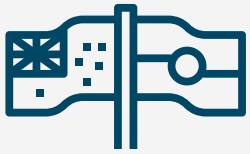


21.9%
Volunteering rate

65+
33%
Aged over 65



3.9%
Speaks language other than English



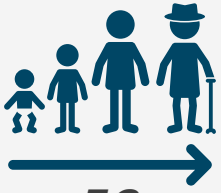
4.1%
Indigenous



35%
Has 1 or more long term conditions



5.7%
Needs help with care activities



56
Median Age



$1,127
Median Household Weekly Income

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2025) York 2021 Census All Person QuickStats

WHY AN AGE FRIENDLY

York's demographic profile is shifting. Like many rural and regional areas across Australia, the proportion of residents aged 65 years and over continues to grow. Older people are choosing to remain in the region and others are choosing to move here for retirement, attracted by the peaceful environment, proximity to Perth, historic charm and sense of community.

As a small regional town, some challenges exist. These include an increased risk of social isolation, limited age-appropriate housing, gaps in healthcare services, and transport barriers.

An age-friendly York is one where people are supported to age well with choice, purpose, and connection. A place where ongoing cultural connection to country is enabled and supported. It is a town where people can access support and services, participate in meaningful activities, live in safe and accessible environments, and feel respected and included.



STRATEGY FOR YORK



The first York *Age Friendly Community Plan* was released in 2017. At the time, according to the 2016 census data, the percentage of York's population aged over 65 was 26.5%. By the 2021 census it had climbed to 32.5% and it is estimated to approach 42% by 2036.

York has one of the Western Australia's highest percentage of residents aged over 65, nearly doubling the State's 17%. The Shire is committed to ensure our community facilities, services, and inclusion opportunities extend through all demographics that choose to call York home.

The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan provide a framework to work towards common goals and become a reference point when advocating for outcomes with external stakeholders. These stakeholders can include all levels of government, healthcare providers, community groups, local sporting clubs or local businesses.

POPULATION FORECAST

The York population forecast pyramid (bottom right) highlights a clear trend towards an ageing community. By 2036, the largest population increases are projected in the 70+ age groups reflecting longer life expectancy.

The younger age groups (0-14) are projected to remain relatively small and with a slight reduction, with the average working-age population showing little growth. *NOTE: 2026 will bring the next Australia wide Census and provide updated and current data*.

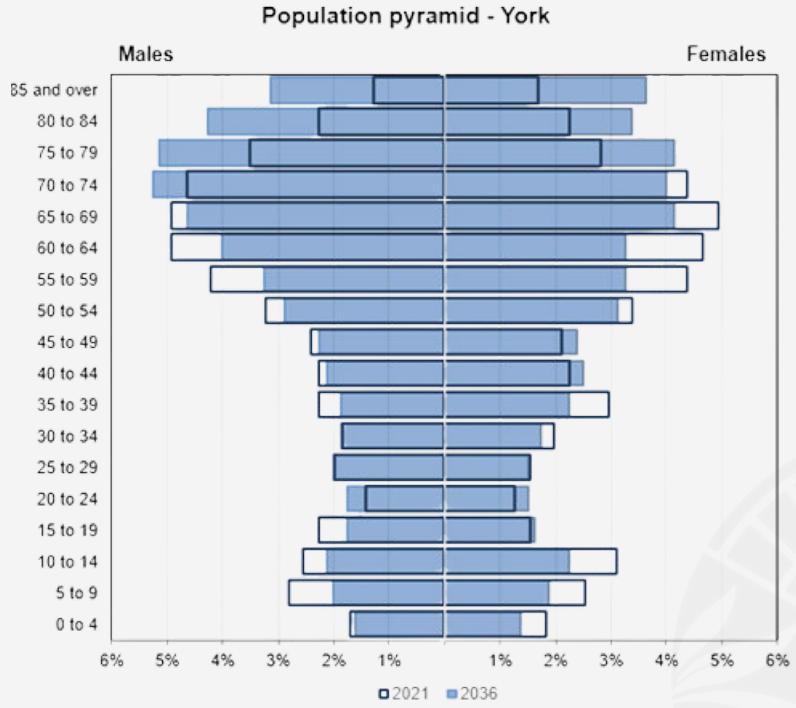
This shift raises important planning considerations such as increased demand for accessible housing, retirement living options, and age-appropriate infrastructure which will be necessary to support older residents.

Health services, including general practitioners, allied health, and home care will need to expand, alongside investment in transport options that reduce reliance on private vehicles. Public spaces, community facilities, and footpaths should align with age-friendly design principles to promote safety, inclusion, and mobility for seniors.

Retaining and engaging younger residents will be critical to maintaining a sustainable workforce and ongoing community vitality. Investment in education, childcare, recreation, digital connectivity, and employment pathways will help make York attractive to families and young adults.

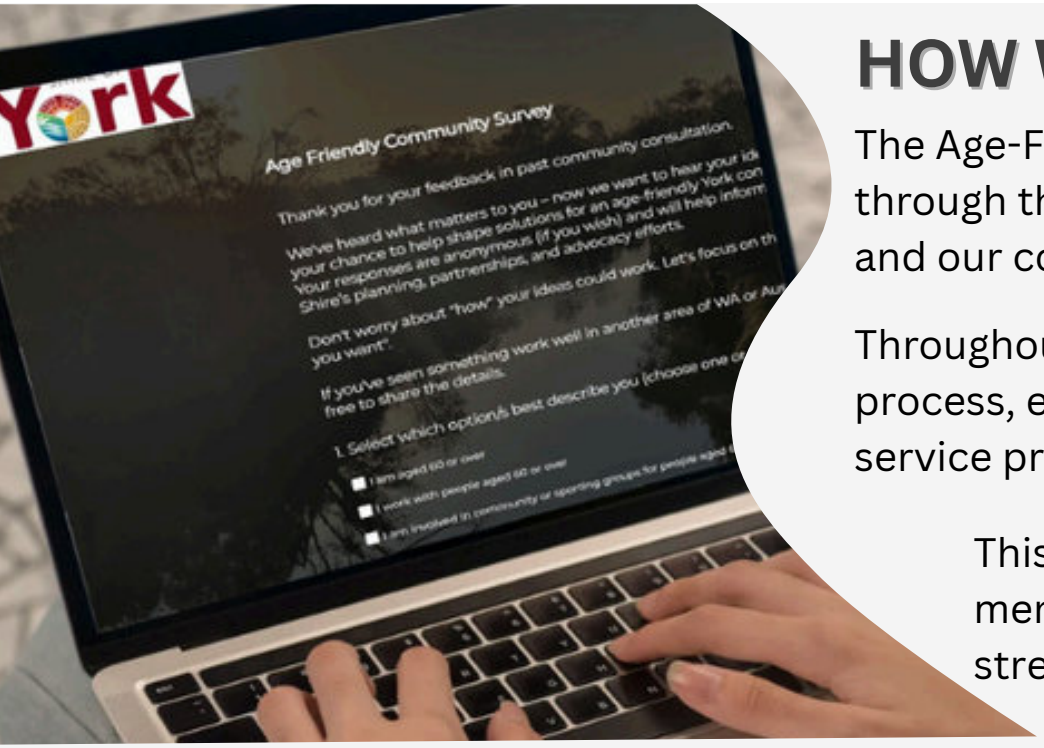
Supporting older residents who wish to remain in the workforce with flexible employment opportunities may also help ease potential labour shortages.

Programs that address isolation, encourage volunteering, and promote connection will become increasingly important. Local emergency planning will need to account for the specific vulnerabilities of an older population, ensuring that communication, mobility, and health needs are built into all emergency preparedness and response systems.



Graph 1: Current and forecast population displayed by age bracket and sex. Source: WA Tomorrow 12 – April 2025 release





HOW WE BUILT THIS PLAN

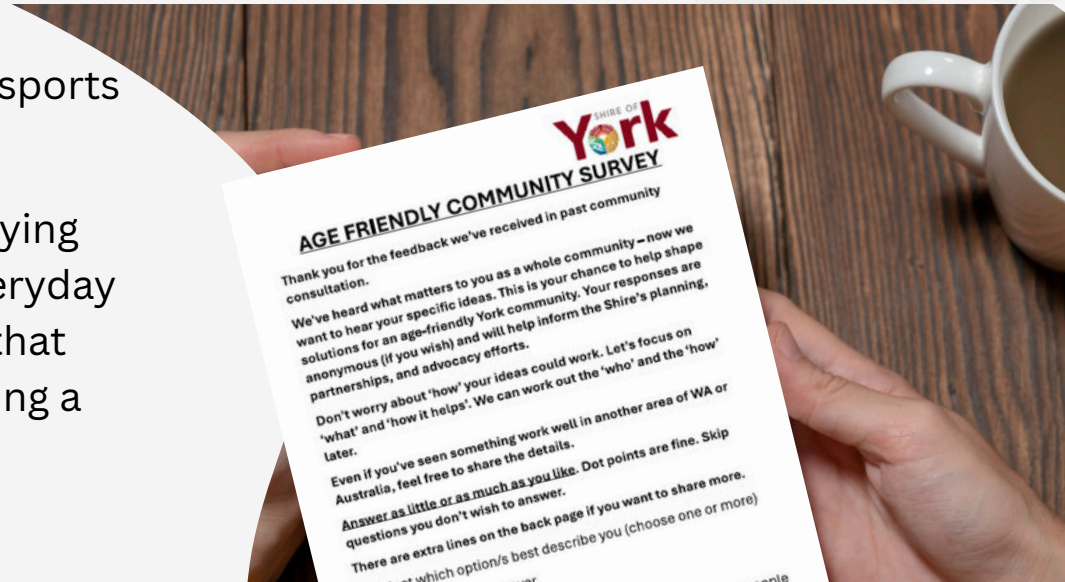
The Age-Friendly Strategy and Action Plan has been developed through the voices, experiences, and aspirations of our local people and our community as a whole.

Throughout mid-2025, the Shire undertook an extensive consultation process, engaging directly with residents, community groups and service providers.

This included health services, sports clubs, women's groups, men's groups, one-on-one conversations, suggestion boxes, street conversations and front counter drop-ins.

To strengthen our understanding, we visited local groups, sports clubs, community gatherings and service providers.

Attending these in-person sessions enabled us to hear varying points of view and provided invaluable insight into the everyday experiences of residents. It confirmed the important role that local networks, volunteers, and organisations play in shaping a connected and inclusive York.



HOW WE BUILT THIS PLAN

We accompanied these in-person sessions with community-wide surveys that invited individuals to share their ideas, challenges, and hopes for how the Shire could better support its older residents both directly and indirectly.

This information was combined with other recommendations obtained through previous community consultation processes for the Council Plan, Access and Inclusion Plan and Wellbeing Plan.

Importantly, every piece of feedback has helped shape the priorities and actions in this strategy.

Whether it was a story shared in a survey, a concern raised at a meeting, or a practical idea put forward during a group visit, the strategy reflects what we heard and what matters most to our community.



WHAT WE HEARD



> The community consultation process revealed insights from residents, service providers and families in the Shire of York to “preserve what we have and build to what we need”.
>
> Participants gave constructive and practical suggestions as well as reflections on what makes York a great place to live but expanded on what would make it even better.

Over 1000 ***individual ideas, feedback, wants and needs shared***

250

The number of residents voices heard through group meetings, from organisational representatives and through surveys





WHAT WE HEARD

Older residents emphasised the importance of remaining independent, active, and socially connected as they age. Many highlighted the value of local infrastructure, transport, access to local health and support services, and opportunities to continue contributing through volunteering and intergenerational activities. There was a clear desire to see the Shire lead in creating inclusive environments ranging from the physical layout of our town to the way information is shared and continuing its engagement with local Aboriginal groups, promoting shared learning practices.

Some respondents identified the need to better promote the existing community groups and opportunities in town in a way that reaches the intended participants.

By studying the wide range of feedback ideas and assessing how the Shire can deliver as much value as possible, four strategy themes have been developed.





STRATEGY THEMES

Based on community feedback and targeted research, the Strategy outcomes have been expressed through four main themes that reflect the values of the York community and demonstrate alignment with the WA State Seniors Strategy and the WHO Age Friendly Framework.

Theme 1 – Healthy, Active & Independent Living

Theme 1 focuses on enabling older residents to stay physically and mentally well including access to exercise options, recreation facilities, health care, and maintaining independence at home for longer.

It is supported through actions such as the provision of sports facilities, health support services, and age-friendly housing.

STRATEGY THEMES

Theme 2 – Connected, Inclusive & Engaged Community

Theme 2 aims to reduce isolation and loneliness by creating opportunities for social connection, volunteering, intergenerational activities, sharing cultural knowledge and neighbourhood support.

York has a strong community spirit with a high number of volunteer run groups such as the Mens Shed, CWA, York Mobility Group (pictured) and many more.

Theme 2 will be delivered through actions like intergenerational events, engagement programs, volunteering support, and promoting cultural and social participation from all York residents.





STRATEGY THEMES

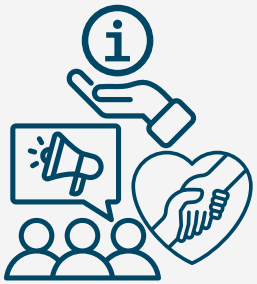
Theme 3 – Safe, Accessible & Well-Designed Environments

Theme 3 ensures that physical spaces, transport, and infrastructure are safe, welcoming, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

Actions for Theme 3 include footpath improvements, increased seating, accessible public spaces, transport advocacy, wayfinding and adaptive local emergency planning.

STRATEGY THEMES

Theme 4 – Information, Support & Advocacy



Theme 4 ensures older residents know where to find help, how to access information in clear and friendly formats, and are confident that the Shire advocates on local, regional, state and national matters on their behalf.

Theme 4 actions include better promotion of Shire and community services, advocacy for transport and health services, age-friendly communication channels, and digital literacy programs.

AGE FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN 2026-2031

The Age Friendly Action Plan has been developed in alignment with the Shire of York Age Friendly Strategy, other Shire informing plans, the identified themes and clarified by ongoing community consultation with organisations, community groups, health care providers and individuals who are aged 65 and over, or support and care for those who are.

Each table will describe the actions identified to deliver the outcomes of each theme.

Each action will also display the Shire's role in completing the action. These roles can be Provide, Facilitate, Advocate, Fund and/or Regulate as described below.

Provide
The Shire delivers the service, program or infrastructure directly. This involves taking responsibility for planning, resourcing, and delivering the initiative in-house or through direct contracts.

Facilitate
The Shire brings people together, supports coordination, and enables others (such as local groups, businesses or service providers) to deliver outcomes.

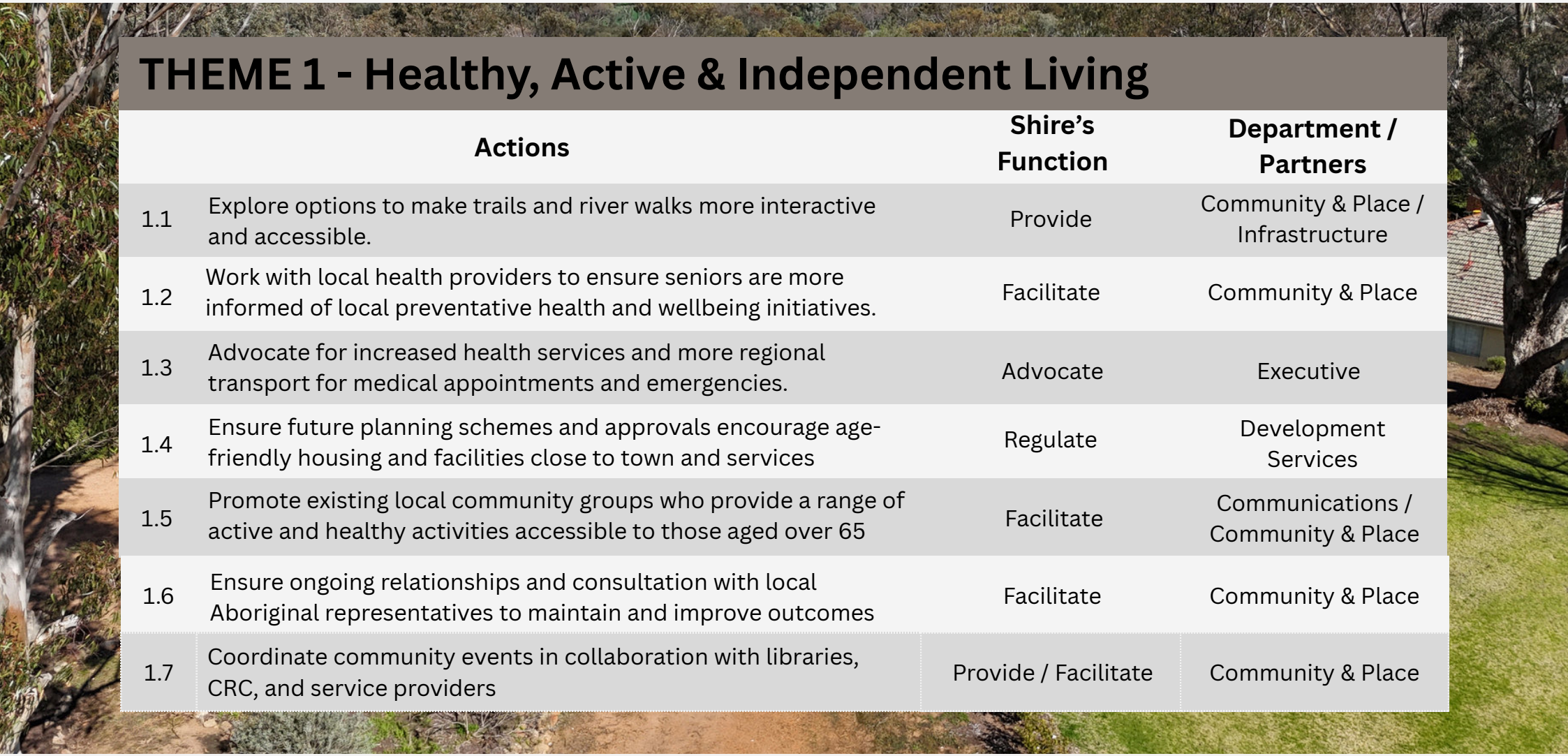
Advocate
The Shire uses its position and relationships to influence other levels of government, organisations, or decision-makers to act on local needs.

Fund
The Shire allocates monetary or in-kind support to external stakeholders to assist in the delivery or provision of services.

Regulate
The Shire uses its statutory powers to make or enforce rules, policies or local laws such as land use planning, licensing, compliance, or frameworks.


TOWN HALL

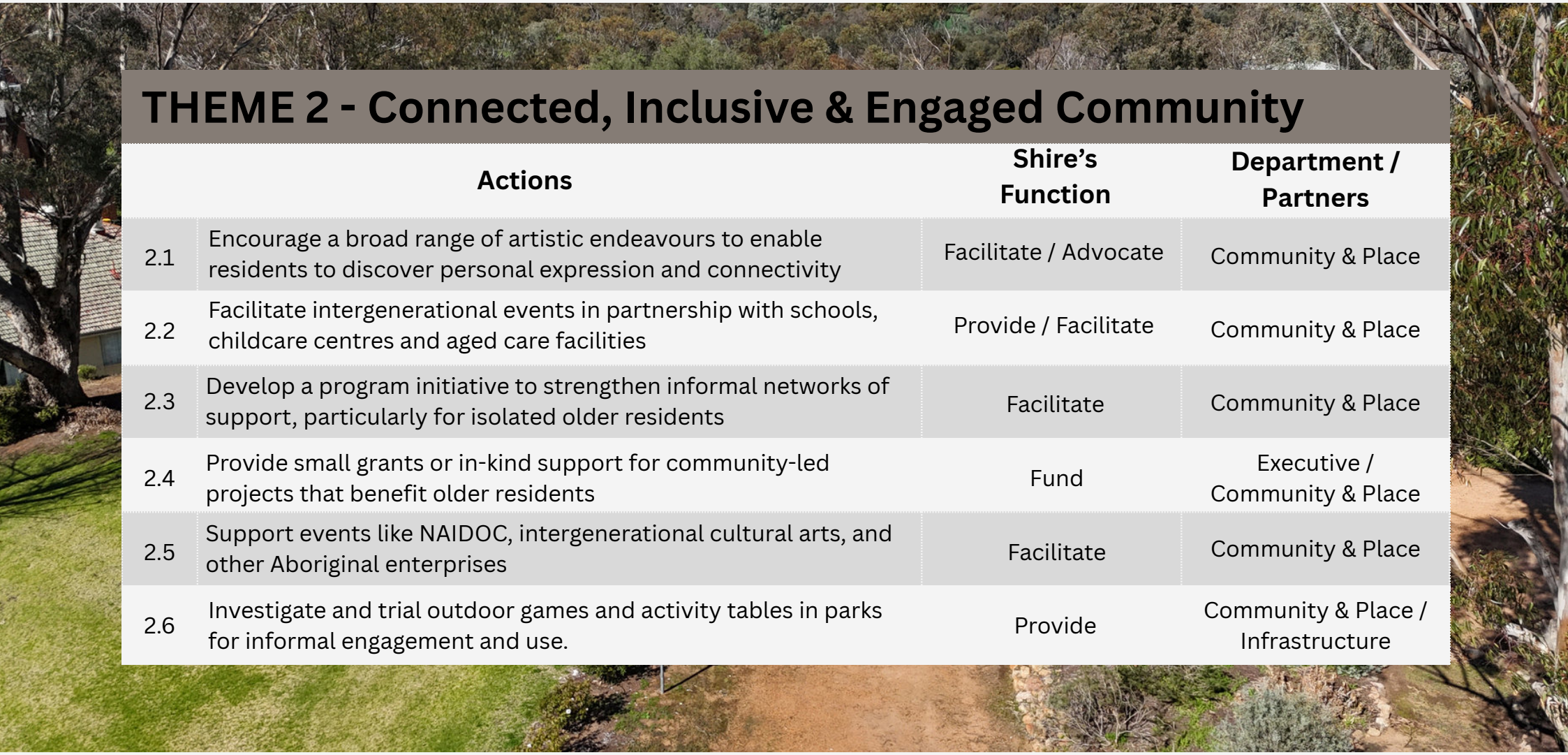
THEME 1 - ACTIONS



THEME 1 - Healthy, Active & Independent Living

	Actions	Shire's Function	Department / Partners
1.1	Explore options to make trails and river walks more interactive and accessible.	Provide	Community & Place / Infrastructure
1.2	Work with local health providers to ensure seniors are more informed of local preventative health and wellbeing initiatives.	Facilitate	Community & Place
1.3	Advocate for increased health services and more regional transport for medical appointments and emergencies.	Advocate	Executive
1.4	Ensure future planning schemes and approvals encourage age-friendly housing and facilities close to town and services	Regulate	Development Services
1.5	Promote existing local community groups who provide a range of active and healthy activities accessible to those aged over 65	Facilitate	Communications / Community & Place
1.6	Ensure ongoing relationships and consultation with local Aboriginal representatives to maintain and improve outcomes	Facilitate	Community & Place
1.7	Coordinate community events in collaboration with libraries, CRC, and service providers	Provide / Facilitate	Community & Place

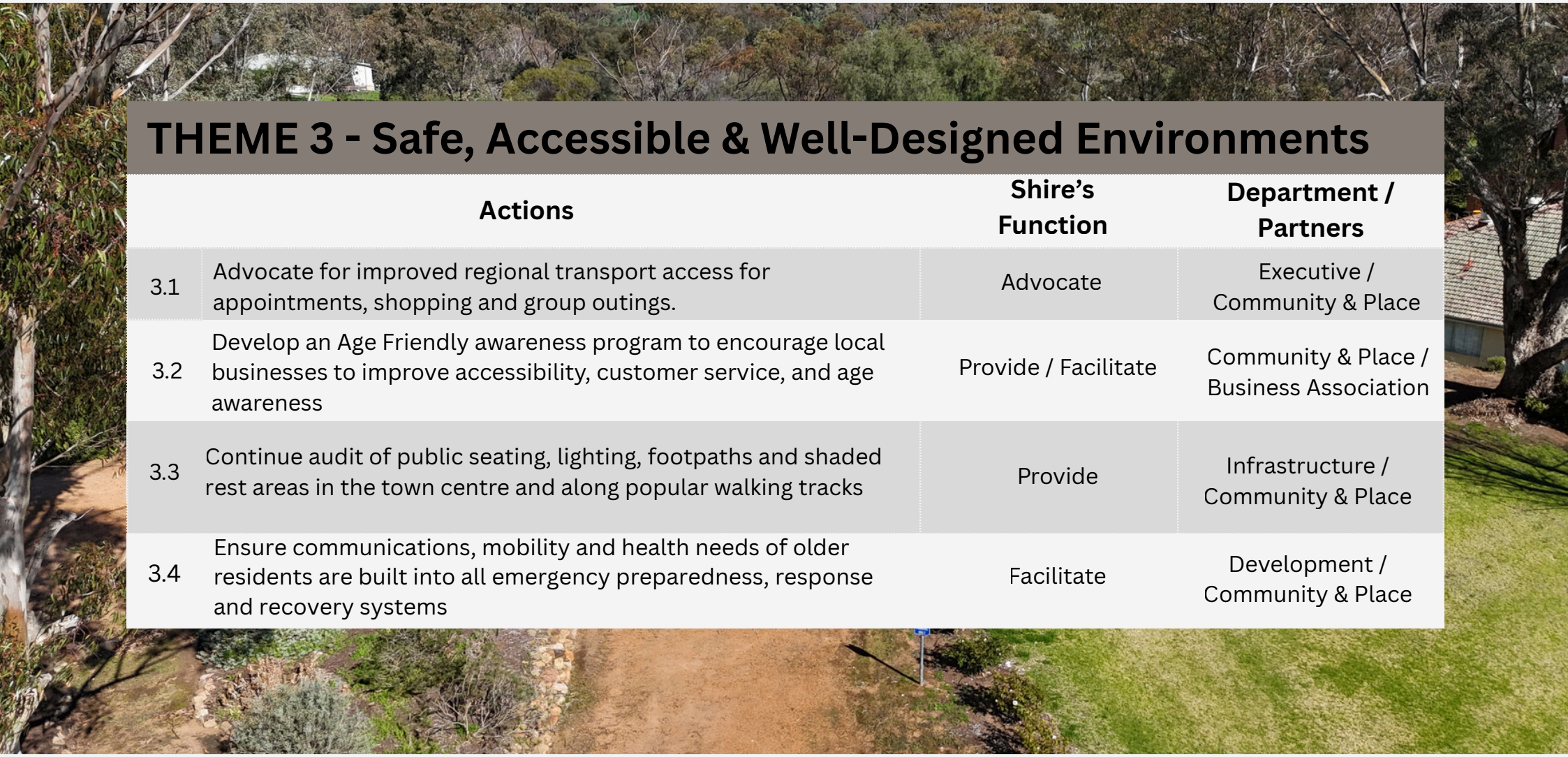
THEME 2 - ACTIONS



THEME 2 - Connected, Inclusive & Engaged Community

	Actions	Shire's Function	Department / Partners
2.1	Encourage a broad range of artistic endeavours to enable residents to discover personal expression and connectivity	Facilitate / Advocate	Community & Place
2.2	Facilitate intergenerational events in partnership with schools, childcare centres and aged care facilities	Provide / Facilitate	Community & Place
2.3	Develop a program initiative to strengthen informal networks of support, particularly for isolated older residents	Facilitate	Community & Place
2.4	Provide small grants or in-kind support for community-led projects that benefit older residents	Fund	Executive / Community & Place
2.5	Support events like NAIDOC, intergenerational cultural arts, and other Aboriginal enterprises	Facilitate	Community & Place
2.6	Investigate and trial outdoor games and activity tables in parks for informal engagement and use.	Provide	Community & Place / Infrastructure

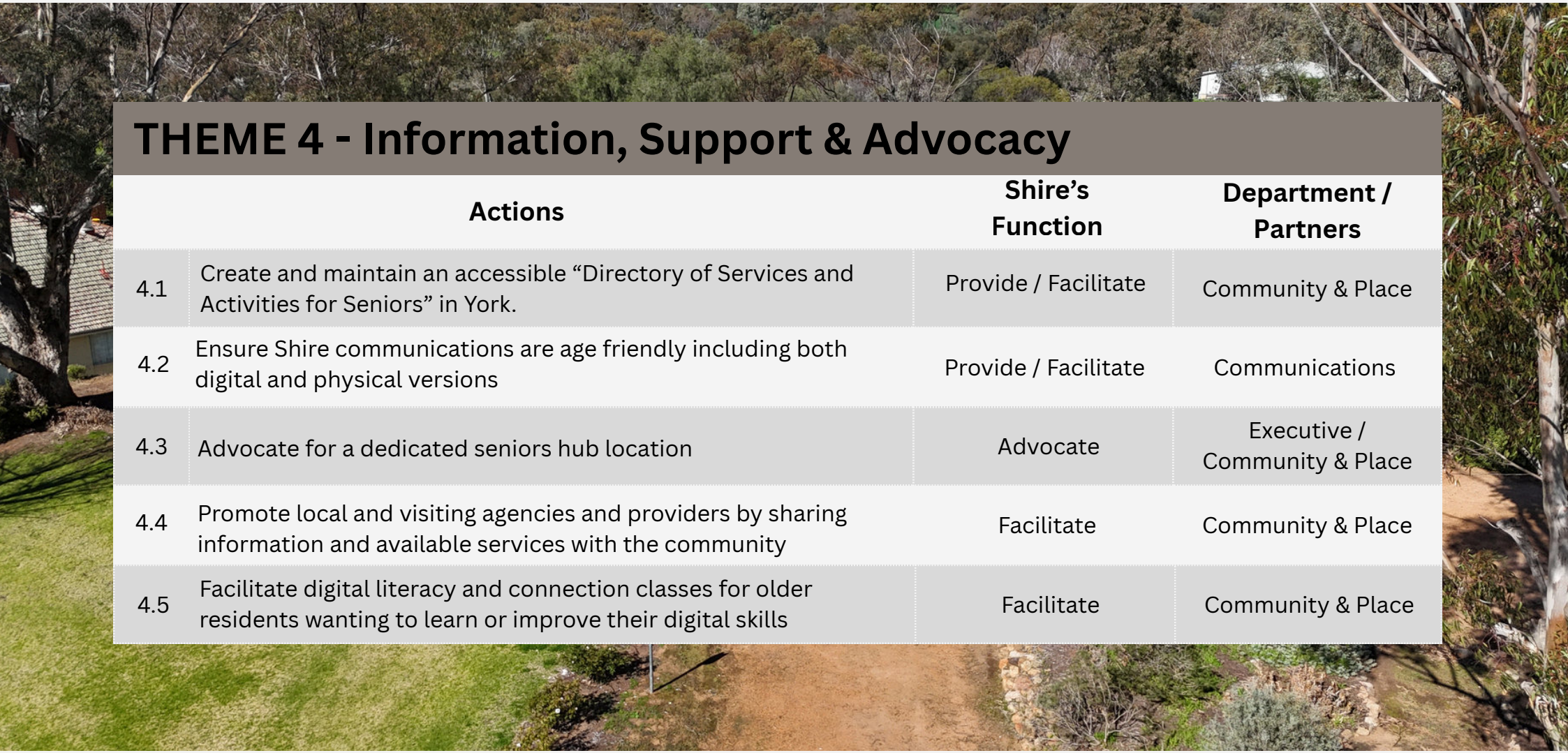
THEME 3 - ACTIONS



THEME 3 - Safe, Accessible & Well-Designed Environments

	Actions	Shire's Function	Department / Partners
3.1	Advocate for improved regional transport access for appointments, shopping and group outings.	Advocate	Executive / Community & Place
3.2	Develop an Age Friendly awareness program to encourage local businesses to improve accessibility, customer service, and age awareness	Provide / Facilitate	Community & Place / Business Association
3.3	Continue audit of public seating, lighting, footpaths and shaded rest areas in the town centre and along popular walking tracks	Provide	Infrastructure / Community & Place
3.4	Ensure communications, mobility and health needs of older residents are built into all emergency preparedness, response and recovery systems	Facilitate	Development / Community & Place

THEME 4 - ACTIONS



THEME 4 - Information, Support & Advocacy

	Actions	Shire's Function	Department / Partners
4.1	Create and maintain an accessible "Directory of Services and Activities for Seniors" in York.	Provide / Facilitate	Community & Place
4.2	Ensure Shire communications are age friendly including both digital and physical versions	Provide / Facilitate	Communications
4.3	Advocate for a dedicated seniors hub location	Advocate	Executive / Community & Place
4.4	Promote local and visiting agencies and providers by sharing information and available services with the community	Facilitate	Community & Place
4.5	Facilitate digital literacy and connection classes for older residents wanting to learn or improve their digital skills	Facilitate	Community & Place

GOVERNANCE, IMPLEMENTATION & MEASURING SUCCESS

The Shire of York Age Friendly Strategy will be led by the Community and Place Team, with input from other Shire departments, community groups, residents, service providers, and key partners. This collaborative approach ensures the strategy remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of older people while embedding age-friendly principles into Council planning and service delivery.

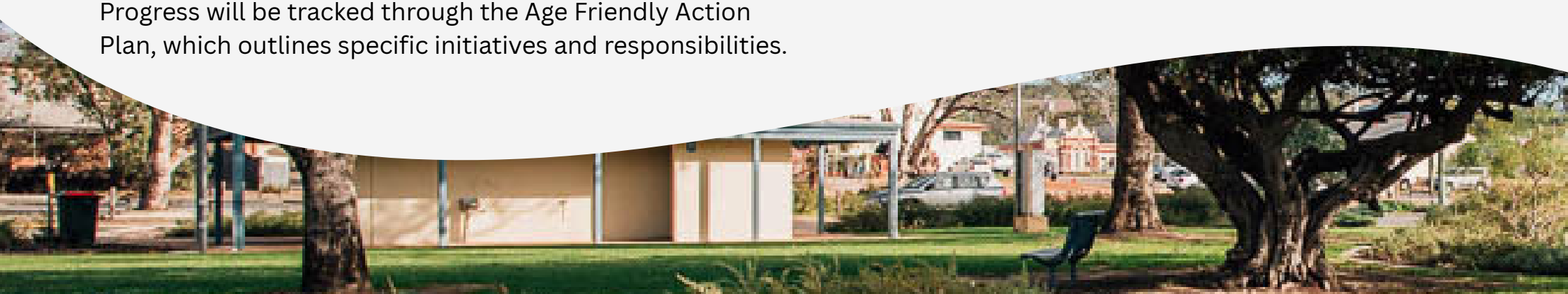
Implementation will be integrated across the Shire's key strategic frameworks, including the Council Plan, Access and Inclusion Plan, Wellbeing Plan, and Local Planning Strategy to ensure coordinated outcomes. Partnerships with local organisations and community services will be encouraged to strengthen delivery, share resources, and build local capacity to support healthy, connected ageing.

Progress will be tracked through the Age Friendly Action Plan, which outlines specific initiatives and responsibilities.

The Action Plan will remain a living document, reviewed and updated as community priorities evolve.

Success will be measured through the completion of key actions, improved accessibility, and increased opportunities for participation and connection among older residents. Progress will be reported when milestones are reached, with annual updates to Council and a mid-term review in 2028 to assess achievements and refine priorities.

Regular communication with the community and stakeholders will ensure transparency and maintain momentum toward making York a welcoming, inclusive, culturally aware and age-friendly place for all.



FINAL WORD

As York continues to grow and evolve, this strategy stands as both a commitment and an invitation. A commitment by the Shire to prioritise the wellbeing of older residents, and an invitation for our whole community to play a role in building a place where everyone can age well.

The coming years will bring both challenges and opportunities, but York's greatest strength lies in its people. In the way neighbours look out for one another, volunteers give their time, and local groups create belonging and connection.

The Shire recognises that becoming truly age friendly is not achieved through a single document, but through continued listening, learning, and partnership. Each project, service and decision will reflect our shared belief that every resident deserves to feel valued, included, and supported to live well at every stage of life.

With this strategy we look ahead with optimism, confident that by working together, York will remain a welcoming, safe and connected community for all generations, now and into the future



Shire of York

Age Friendly Strategy & Action Plan 2026-2031