Murrindindi Shire Council

mach2 consulting

Summary Report

Murrindindi 2030...

people

place

towns & communities

opportunity

Community Visioning Workshop - 2030

Report to Council on the outcomes of the Community Visioning Workshop held at Yea on Sunday 12 August 2012

September 2012

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Mach 2 Consulting was engaged by the Murrindindi Shire Council to facilitate a community visioning workshop for the Shire. The vision workshop was held at the Sacred Heart Primary School in Yea on Sunday 12 August 2012.

The scope of this project includes the following:

- Preliminary meeting between the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer, Manager of Customer and Communications to develop agenda and plan for workshop;
- Preparation of workshop agenda and session plan notes;
- Facilitation of Community Workshop (12 August 2012); and
- Preparation and presentation of summary Report to Council.

2.0   COMMUNITY VISION – COUNCIL PLANNING CONTEXT

Council had determined, as part of previous Council planning processes, to undertake a community Vision process in its current term, with a view to developing a Murrindindi 2030 Community Plan. The February 2009 bushfires, which significantly impacted the Shire, have meant that Council's focus and effort was directed to more immediate recovery and rebuilding objectives.

With the 2012 Council elections approaching (and the preceding caretaker period), Council decided to undertake a limited community visioning exercise with a view to creating a framework document to hand over to the new Council. This process includes:

- The community visioning workshop and report (through this project); and
- A mailout survey to all residents seeking ideas and input on the community vision (to be undertaken internally by Council).

At the workshop conducted for this project, it was stated that this workshop was considered to be the start of a conversation about the community vision. Other elements/processes as part of this community vision process to engage further with the community and seek input from residents are yet to be determined by Council. However, there were views expressed at the workshop that suggested an expectation (on the community's behalf) that there would be further steps in the dialogue undertaken by Council to inform the community vision process.

In this context, the recent workshop and this report are considered to one of several inputs to the development of a community vision and a community plan.

3.0   WORKSHOP AGENDA/STRUCTURE

After initial consultations with the Mayor and CEO, it was agreed that the workshop should be conducted under a broad subject headings/topics structure/framework (rather than 'blank sheet of paper' approach).

For this purpose, the agenda was structured around 6 'aspects' of vision. These were:

1. **Physical and transport**– buildings, infrastructure, roads, footpaths, drainage etc.
2. **Lifestyle and leisure**– leisure, services, parks, passive/active recreation etc.
3. **Cultural and social** – social inclusion, health and wellbeing, support for the needy, the arts, cultural enrichment.

4. **Environment** – land use, planning, conservation, water and natural resources, sustainability etc.

5. **Townships/communities** – defining core essence of each township and community in the Shire.

6. **Local economy and jobs** –employment opportunities, business needs, skills development, education needs etc.

The objective of conducting such a conversation under broad subject headings is to create more focus on specific aspects and issues. After some initial discussion about the merits (or otherwise) of this approach, the workshop proceeded based on this agreed structure.

4.0 ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

The community workshop commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded just after 5.00 pm. It was attended by approximately 40 residents from the various townships and communities across the Shire.

Attending the workshop were residents with strong cross section of age groups and geographic spread across the Shire. The communities represented at the workshop included Eildon, Alexandra, Buxton, Molesworth, Murrindindi, Yea, Glenburn, Marysville, Flowerdale, Strath Creek and Kinglake.

The level of input was strong and balanced across all groups and areas. Table seating was rotated (twice) during the session in order to change dynamics, add diversity of views and create opportunity for broader idea interchange between participants.

Councillors and officers attending the workshop were briefed to take an active role in discussions though not to take a lead role. It was important for the success of such a community visioning exercise that both elected members and staff take an interested, active and facilitative role in the engagement process without leading it.

Key to this role was listening to the views, ideas and visions expressed, asking questions rather than making statements and generally participating in the dialogue.

5.0 COMMUNITY VISION WORKSHOP – OUTCOMES AND CORE THEMES

Details notes from the Community Workshop are appended to this Report. The following provides a summary of the core emergent themes (as interpreted by the consultant).

Key themes analysed under workshop 'aspects of visions' are provided below:

Physical and Transport Aspects:

- Communities that are interconnected by a network of quality roads and infrastructure.
- Communities connected with Melbourne by quality, reliable public transport services and facilities
- Community centres and public places that bring people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities together to live, work and play.
- Communities serviced by high quality telecommunications and broadband
- Energy sourced locally from state-of-the art renewable sources
- Townships each with their own unique character, style and appeal.

Leisure and Lifestyle Aspects:

- Services and facilities to embrace and complement the slow, appreciative pace of rural township life.

- Desire to build on the quality lifestyle and leisure services and facilities that are already on offer
- Balance between tourism and visitor needs and services facilities for locals

Cultural and Social Aspects:

- A strong sense of pride and belonging across the Shire and within individual communities
- Vibrant, inter-connected and inclusive communities
- Communities that are welcoming, caring, tolerant and inclusive
- Communities that care for and support the needy, the elderly and disabled.
- Strong connection with the land, the environment and the rural landscape
- Empowered residents that are active, involved and participating in civic and community affairs
- Communities that that cater for lifelong needs from children's services through to aged care and health services.
- A Murrindindi-wide community culture and way of thinking

Environmental Aspects:

- A rural environment that has retained and protected its pristine waterways, landscapes and natural resources
- Planning policies and frameworks that embrace and protect the rural landscape and protect the Shire from inappropriate urban expansion pressures
- Communities that are sustainable in the use of energy and natural resources
- Recognition that we are custodians of the natural environment
- Community participation in the development of land use planning policies

Economic Aspects:

- Viable and sustainable agricultural enterprises
- Value-add enterprise development
- A vibrant tourism-based economy that leverages off the country town charm and environment and reinforces the relaxed pace of our rural lifestyle
- A place where young people can stay to pursue education, training or employment options

6.0 ARTICULATION OF A COMMUNITY VISION

Articulation of a community vision can be a challenge and a range of media can be employed. Different styles of vision expression/articulation are also widely used with various degrees of acceptance by local communities. Different methods include:

- Graphic/illustrative methods- images, artworks, illustrations, mind-maps etc.;
- Verbal/descriptive methods – stories, literal descriptions (future placed), document based approaches;
- Cultural/values-based – descriptions of non-physical/values-based elements of a future community feel or condition.

A range of other media and means have been used to elicit and express community visions including music, films, artwork as well as more traditional document-based approaches. Other vision projects have also employed different methods with different target demographics (school children, young people, older residents, etc.)

A successful community vision should ultimately find expression through a range of media. However, the form, manner and style of its expression is ultimately a matter of preference which the Council must consider and determine.

A potential structure within which a Vision may be articulated is as follows:

1. The **people**: (attitudes and values focused)
2. The **place**: (focused on the natural environment, the land, the whole Shire and its rural context)
3. The **townships and communities**: (the townships, communities and relationships between them)
4. The **opportunities**: (focus on local employment, lifelong learning, education, employment, industry and business)

Murrindindi in 2030...

... the place

In the year 2030, Murrindindi is a place that cherishes its rural environment and sub-Alpine context. It extends from the peri-urban communities of the Kinglake Ranges through to the rural townships of Yea and Alexandra and the communities around Marysville.

Nestled in the foothills of the Victorian Alps, Murrindindi treasures and protects its environment, its rolling hills and landscapes. This includes its charming townships, beautiful rural areas, pristine rivers and waterways and the Alpine National Park.

In 2030, the population of Murrindindi has grown within the constrained limits of rigorously imposed planning and development controls. As a result, inappropriate urban developments in the rural areas have been resisted and the rural landscapes and aspects protected.

Murrindindi is a place a rural landscapes and beauty.

... the people

The people of Murrindindi are inclusive and embrace visitors to the Shire. There are many new arrivals who have come from urban centres with a yearning for the more relaxed, appreciative pace of country life. The existing communities have embraced new arrivals from overseas, cities and elsewhere with open arms.

New residents in the townships and rural areas bring new skills, enterprise and different attitudes that contribute to rich and diverse rural culture. The people have a shared appetite for a quality country lifestyle. Resident come from a range of cultural backgrounds and choose to become actively involved in community and civic affairs.

Murrindindi people are welcoming and caring people.

... the communities

The communities of Murrindindi have retained the essential rural character, charm and nature that has defined them for generations. The communities are strong and resilient.

The various communities of Murrindindi are inter-connected by a network of quality roads. Reliable and frequent rail and other public transport services connect the major towns to the urban centre of Melbourne. Public transport services also connect the various communities within the Shire.

Murrindindi communities are vibrant, involved and inter-connected.

... the opportunity

In 2030, Murrindindi is a place that still has a rural and agricultural economic base. The farms in our rural areas are prosperous and sustainable. Through good agribusiness and land stewardship, the rural community has protected the natural resources and environments that are so critical to sustained economic success of our agricultural sector.

In the townships, secondary agricultural and service sectors are healthy and growing. In addition, he relaxed pace and rural charm of our townships has attracted a range of visitors to the Shire, supporting a strong and vibrant tourism, food and hospitality sector. The residents, as well as visitors, also benefit from this through the diverse leisure offering available in the Shire.

Murrindindi is a place of prosperity and opportunity.

In addition, a graphic (visual) or thematic framework to illustrate the vision may be as follows:

In the year 2030, Murrindindi Shire is....

The people ...

The place ...

The towns & communities ...

The opportunity ...

The final format for the expression of community vision needs to be considered in the context of other inputs to the process of developing a community plan. Whatever format is chosen, the expressed vision should **describe the aspired-to future condition of Murrindindi that is aspired to**. It should be:

- Concise;
- Meaningful and reflective of the input from the community
- Future-focused and aspirational
- Descriptive of the aspired-to 2030 condition
- Embrace broader components of vision including values, attitudes and cultural aspects of the aspired-to future condition, as well as the physical elements.

APPENDIX A:

Workshop Notes (Collated)

ASPECT 1:

Physical and transport– buildings, infrastructure, roads, footpaths, drainage etc.

- Community centre
  - community garden, kitchen etc.
  - space for all ages – families, youth space, arts space
  - promote/encourage volunteering
  - support for mental health
  - learning /courses/leisure activities
  - peer support
- Better access to building /facilities/transport for the disabled
- Better footpaths
- Integrated children's service facility
  - maternal and child health
  - playgroups
  - kindergarten
  - long day care
  - special needs (integrated)
  - primary school
- Improved health services across Shire by 2030
- Facilities to attract families and youth
- Building already exist in Kinglake and Marysville
- Planning culture
- Improved public transport services/facilities
  - connectivity – accessibility -
  - to/from Melbourne/between towns
  - medial, schools and general
- Clean – green lifestyle
- Friendly/welcoming Shire to all
  - Bikes /horse /motorbike /seniors etc.
- Place for youth/young adults
- Build sense of pride and belonging
- Community gardens and food security
- Town squares/ meeting places in each town
- Railway extended from Lilydale to Yea/Alex (along Melba Hwy)
  - link to Seymour (long-term)
- Cross-link road from Melba to Maroondah Hwy
  - increased access- east –west divide
  - bring communities together
- Alternative route – Kinglake- Marysville
- Roads – safe connectivity throughout whole Shire
- Access to high quality, reliable communications, utilities and energy (power, gas etc.)

- Retain small town character
- More schools/retain existing in small towns
- Access to NBN as soon as possible
- Infrastructure needs will naturally follow the vision
- Widen road through Spur
- Low cost community housing
- Drainage
- Sewerage system for Kinglake

ASPECT 2:

Lifestyle and leisure– leisure, services, parks, passive/active recreation etc.

- Facilities to support quality of life in country towns- embrace slow pace, 'cittaslow' concept
- Excellent Parks
  - better playgrounds
  - better /wider use of existing facilities for excellence in sport participation
- More sheltered parks
- Camping facilities along rail trails to encourage greater use
- Access to an indoor heated pool for every community
- Provision of active and passive recreation facilities for all ages and abilities
- Retention of rural aspects in the face of development
- Maintain a balance between the desire to attract significant tourism whilst protecting rural nature/aspects
- Joined up trails – rail and other
- Library – strengthen services – core and extra curricula
- We have quality facilities - retain and improve
- Encourage leadership to form groups
- Leverage off tourism in Shire
  - support for volunteers
- Develop major tourist attraction/activity

ASPECT 3:

Cultural and social – social inclusion, health and wellbeing, support for the needy, the arts, cultural enrichment

- Socially and physically connected, empowered communities
  - better communications between towns/communities
- Develop a Murrindindi-wide culture across Shire
- Peer support/networking
- Tolerant, welcoming, caring, inclusive community
- Centres for cultural growth/development
- Participation in decision-making
  - community partners with Council, others
  - ownership of decisions
- Ban section 86 committees (??)- too onerous on members
- Increased public arts and cultural initiatives/events/opportunities

- Social inclusion
  - starts locally
  - provide quality social support structures
- Quality/cost effective child care facilities
- Events that include whole community
- Provide support for the needy
- Revitalise the community spirit
- Maintain strong sense of belonging
- Strong sense of place, pride in place
- Inventive, resourceful community
- Encourage, support and appreciate volunteerism
- Support for the ageing
  - in home
  - retirement villages

ASPECT 4:

Environment – land use, planning, conservation, water and natural resources, sustainability etc.

- Protect/maintain the natural/rural environment of the Shire
- Strive for best practice- sustainable Shire
- Clear policy direction on growth in Shire
  - managed land development
  - subdivision guidelines
  - own, sell and protect the policy
- Promote sustainable energy use across Shire
  - Shire-level leadership on energy
- Use our natural resources wisely/sustainably
- Expand agriculture and rural industry
- Increased use of /emphasis on recycling
- Promote sustainable agricultural practices
- Environment our biggest asset- preserve/regenerate
- Community education - the role of environment
- Improved facilities to allow people to enjoy and appreciate the environment
- Infrastructure to protect/prevent damage
- Community education to protect and promote respect of environment/sustainability
- Water:
  - protect our pristine waterways and rivers
- Planning:
  - Controls on development
  - value landscapes – integral to who we are
  - retain productive farming land
  - democratic processes
- Promote tourist involvement in protection of t he environment
- Better effluent controls
- Manage water usage (planning controls)

ASPECT 5 (Core essence of town/community) and 6 (local economy and jobs):

Alexandra/Eildon:

Core essence:

- Vibrant
  - proactive, innovative, involved, pride
- Caring
  - welcoming, safe, inclusive, encouraging
- Environmentally responsible
  - water use, waste
  - attractive, proud of town and natural environment
  - volunteerism
  - noise animals, burning off graffiti

Local economy/jobs:

- Positive economy, shop locally
- Accessible education
- Lifelong learning – playgroup to tertiary options
- Local education, employment and training opportunities
- Quality pre-school education/child care services

Yea:

Core essence:

- Natural beauty
  - landscape town area, still a country town, pride of place
- Cohesive, connected, belonging, welcoming community
- Honest, inclusive, better media, communications
- Focus on wetlands centre

Local economy/jobs:

- Encourage cottage industry/home based enterprise/networking
- Utilise better communications – use NBN
- Retain young members of the community- retain resources
- Improved education resource – better on-line resources
- Achieve critical mass – hospitality sector
- Improves local services/facilities
  - strategic advantage
  - leverage off green economy
  - slow tourism

Kinglake Ranges:

Core essence:

- Natural parks and State Forest
- Commuting demographic- work/students
- Remains a rural community of the urban fringe

Local economy/jobs:

- Expanded industrial retail zone/land

- Offer best of both worlds – rural living/urban employment opportunities
- Improved public transport
- Post primary education services/facility

Marysville and Triangle:

Core essence:
- Small mountain town
- Tourism focus, Lake Mountain, Natural environment, snow-based options
- Rebuilt tourism infrastructure

Local economy/jobs:
- Rebuild tourism capacity/beds as base
- Develop value-add small businesses
- Nature based industry
- Build year round economy (decrease reliance on snow
- Agriculture
- Access gate to rest of Shire
- Decentralised Council services (Tourism services)

Other Rural Communities:

Core essence:
- Better connectivity
- Interdependence of all communities within Shire
- Effective communications
- Empowered communities
- Ability for a community to function independently- community-driven norms/values

Local economy/jobs:
- Enhance Murrindindi Training Institute
- Opportunity for young people to train/work within the Shire rather than leave the Shire
- Support local food network
- Develop a Shire Economic Plan
- Aged care facility
- Co-operatives/community trading enterprises