

PURPOSE

The Community Planning Strategy will provide direction to Hepburn Shire Council to work with communities in our Shire to develop community plans.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY PLANNING

Community planning is a forum for public participation where community members identify who they are, what is important to them in their region and what they would like to see happen in their region in the future.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

Council has recognised community planning as an effective mechanism for Hepburn Shire Council and communities to ascertain and act on community aspirations. The benefits of community planning can be seen across three inter-related areas:

Connecting Communities

- Community members meet each other and/or further develop their connections
- Similar concerns/projects of interest are identified
- Common values are identified and documented

Developing resilience

- Generosity and helpfulness is developed amongst community members
- Community successes are recognised and celebrated
- Community members coordinate to help each other

Connecting with Council

- Communities present their plan to Councillors and plans are acknowledged at council meetings
- Community plan outcomes are considered



as part of Council Plan reviews and budget processes

HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY PLANNING

Hepburn Shire Council Plan (2013-2017)

Strategic Objective – Active and Engaged Communities

Key Strategic Activities:

“Work with and support Communities and residents to implement community driven projects through community planning, provision of advice, information and community grants, acknowledging the significant contribution made by community volunteers.”

and

“In partnership with communities, Community Services will identify community priorities and work to deliver services, programs and projects that promote community health and well-being.”

At minimum, Hepburn Shire Council will work with one community per year to produce a new community plan and one community will review and update an existing community plan.

The strategy and policy for community planning indicates a desire to create community plans with as many communities as possible. To date nine communities in Hepburn Shire have completed community plans.

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PLAN

Council will work with communities to develop processes for creating community plans, and engaging with their communities that are effective in each community.

The following flow chart shows a general progression for developing a community plan:



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Hepburn Shire community planning will adopt the internationally recognised 'best-practice' principles of community engagement established by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2).

Council's Community Engagement Framework (2010-2013) expresses a commitment to open, participatory and transparent governance. The framework incorporates the five levels of engagement recognised in the IAP2 model for community engagement:



Inform: when we will provide information in an unbiased, neutral manner

Consult: when we will listen to issues, concerns and ideas

Involve: when we will listen and advise how ideas have been incorporated (or not) into decisions

Collaborate: when we actively work with the community in developing solutions

Empower: when we actively develop mechanisms that will enable individuals or groups to make decisions and accept those decisions.

Community planning provides opportunities for Council to inform, consult, involve and collaborate with communities.

Additionally the principles we will apply when we engage with the community are:

- We will model our values of accountability, respect, excellence, trust and, where appropriate, fun
- We will clearly define the purpose and scope of the engagement
- We will be inclusive and where possible remove barriers to inclusion, such as location, time constraints, language, age or mobility issues
- We will provide, accurate and relevant information in a timely manner

See Appendix 2: *Methods of community engagement identified in the Hepburn Shire Community Engagement Framework (2010-2013).*

WHICH COMMUNITIES PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY PLANNING?

The guidelines for establishing which communities will develop a new community plan are:

- The defined area will support a population of at least 300 residents
- Small communities are encouraged to link with neighbouring communities with common values
- The community must have willing and active participants who will work to assist the community planning process

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

The role of community members is to lead and participate in discussions within their communities to ensure a community plan fully represents their community. Within the community planning process community members will:

- Participate in developing a community engagement strategy
- Work within Council's Community Engagement Framework guidelines and work respectfully with other community members to ensure an inclusive and positive process
- Provide information and assistance to ensure a timely completion of the community planning process

THE ROLE OF HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

The role of Council is to partner with the community on community planning, with the outcome being a plan that is decided upon, and owned by, the community. Within the community planning process Council will:

- Facilitate and resource community engage strategies in line with Council's Community Engagement Framework, within a defined budget
- Provide administration support to community planning
- Assist communities in gaining approval for, developing and implementing the priority projects identified in community plans
- Support communities through provision of advice from relevant Council officers



- Support communities to connect to organisations external to Hepburn Shire Council where needed

WHAT INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN A COMMUNITY PLAN?

The content of Hepburn Shire community plans will be as diverse as the residents who make up our communities. Each community is able to direct aspects of the plan content, however all community plans must be structured as simple, plain language documents that can be accessible to all. The following aspects will be included in a designed template provided by Council:

- A community snapshot – including information about the towns demographic, social-economic profile and relevant issues.
- A community map – indicating where community services, facilities and infrastructure exist, crown land, Council land and leased public spaces, potential areas of change or improvement
- A short description of the community planning process and engagement strategy undertaken to develop the plan
- Summarised priority projects, including; a description of the project and its order in the priority list; indication if project can be delivered by Council and/or the community; any Council and/or community resource commitments that have been made to the project; the next steps needed to implement the priority. See examples in Fig 3.4.
- A list of existing community groups and/or services and contact details
- A list of action or project groups established through the community planning process if applicable and contact details

Fig. 3.4



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE COMMUNITY PLAN IS COMPLETE?

Presentation of the community plan to the community

After the completion of a community plan Council will distribute the plan to all addresses on Council's database within the defined community. In conjunction with community planning participants, the plan will also be distributed by other local networks which may include: links from community websites and newsletters, school newsletters, availability in community venue such as community centre, hall, noticeboard, newsagent or post office.

Presentation to Council

Each community will have the opportunity to present their finalised plan to Hepburn Shire Councillors at a Council briefing session. Those involved in the plan can nominate to be part of the group present, with the aim of diverse representation of the community. Community Plans will be formally acknowledged by Councillors at the next available ordinary meeting of Council following the community presentation.

Community Groups Network

Council's community planning program will provide networking for community planning groups and support the development of new groups arising from the community planning process through:

- Assistance with establishing a community planning group including the payment of incorporation fees and establishment of model rules for incorporation
- Maintaining a email list of community planning groups and encouraging networking between all groups responsible for community plans
- Alerting community planning groups to relevant opportunities and events
- Celebrating new and reviewed community plans amongst a network of community groups and volunteers
- Assisting applications to the Community Planning Fund

COMMUNITY PLANNING FUND

Purpose of the Community Planning Fund

The purpose of the Community Planning Fund is to provide financial assistance to a priority project identified in Hepburn Shire community plans. The funding assists communities to deliver a priority project from their plan. The total funds available per annum are subject to Council processes.

Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria apply to applications to the Community Planning Fund:

- Projects must be identified within a Hepburn Shire community plan. The plan must be complete and have been presented to the community and Council
- The application must be made by an incorporated not-for-profit group within the Shire or able to be sponsored by such a group
- The applicant must have financial systems to account for money
- The applicant must have all permits, permissions and approvals for the project
- The proposed project cannot be the funding responsibility of the State or Federal government
- The applicant must not have any outstanding community grant acquittals or unpaid invoices due to Council
- The project must not have commenced or already been completed

Application process

- The Community Planning Fund will accept applications in conjunction with Council's Community Grants program
- Applications to the Community Planning Fund should be discussed with a Council Officer prior to submission
- Applicants to the Community Planning Fund must meet all of the eligibility criteria and submit a complete application as requested by Council
- Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their Expression of Interest to the Community Planning Fund decisions in conjunction with Community Grant decisions

- Applicants then have the opportunity to develop their proposals and present to Council

(NB: Strategy updated August 2016 to reflect changed Community Planning Fund amounts. Strategy first adopted by Council on 15 July 2014.)

Appendix 1: Planning for new Community Plans and reviewing Community Plans

Current Community Plans

The following communities have completed community plans, have plans in progress:

- Mollongghip
- Dean
- Clunes
- Smeaton
- Bullarto/Musk
- Franklinford/Clydesdale/Yandoit
- Glenlyon
- Creswick
- Trentham
- Lyonville
- Newlyn/Rocklyn
- Daylesford

These plans will be reviewed as need and interest arises in the community. Hepburn Shire Council aims to review community plans within a five year cycle.

Potential future community plans

These communities have indicated that a community plan would be of interest to them. Hepburn Shire Council will work to develop the below community plans by 2020:

- Hepburn/Hepburn Springs
- Coomoora/Wheatsheaf
- Drummond
- Sailors Falls/Leonards Hill

Please note the above suggested community planning projects are indicative only. The initiation of a community plan or review depends on community need, capacity and

desire. See page 6 'Which communities participate in community planning?' for further details.

Appendix 2: Hepburn Shire Council's policy for engaging with communities. Adopted October 2016.

POLICY

Hepburn Shire Council will:

1. Provide opportunities for community members to be informed and participate in decision making processes.
2. Promote the opportunities for community participation in a timely way.
3. Develop our skills and capacity to undertake effective engagement with our diverse community.

Our community engagement processes are informed by the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2's) model for community engagement, which includes five levels of engagement:

Inform: when we will provide information in an unbiased, neutral manner

Consult: when we will listen to issues, concerns and ideas

Involve: when we will listen and advise how ideas have been incorporated (or not) into decisions.

Collaborate: when we actively work with the community in developing solutions.

Empower: when we actively develop mechanisms that will enable individuals or groups to make decisions, and accepting those decisions.

Principles

The following principles will be used in developing community engagement strategies and activities.

Inclusive and Accessible - We will proactively engage with the community on issues that affect them. We will consider barriers to participation and remove them, if possible.

Diverse and Innovative - We will provide multiple ways for people to participate and seek innovate and creative methods to engage with the community. We will adapt our engagement strategies and activities, in line with the type and scope of the project and/or activity.

Effective and Issues Focussed - We will be clear about the purpose and scope of the engagement. We will plan engagement activities to maximise opportunities for participation and avoid duplication of processes.

Good Communication - We will provide relevant and timely information and a variety of ways for people to contribute. We will provide a range of ways to provide feedback and accept it in any form. We will acknowledge the input of community members.

Timeliness - We will provide adequate timeframes for participation and feedback. We will provide information about outcomes and/or decisions to participants and the community within specified timeframes.

Evaluation - We will review and evaluate the effectiveness of our engagement strategies and processes.