

Graytown Community Planning Reference Group

(known as the Graytown Community Action Group)

Community Plan 2017- 2021



Introduction

The Graytown Community Plan was developed through engagement and consultation with the local Graytown community. Discussions were held during July to September 2017.

The Plan was compiled using information from the Graytown Action Plan 2010, the Graytown Community Action Group Plan 2014 - 2018, the Strathbogie Shire Council Community Planning Program Guidelines, the Strathbogie Shire Graytown Community Planning Reference Group Charter and resources from the Strathbogie Shire Council website.

Graytown Community Values

The Graytown community is made up of some long term residents and some residents that come to live in the community only on weekends or in the holidays. Everyone in the Graytown community is welcome at any time to participate in any community events.

The values for the Graytown community are:

- **To ensure there is a connected community** - that people are aware of what is happening in their community and contribute to community affairs as they evolve.
- **To ensure a supportive community** - that the community can socialise together but also support each other, in order to build community spirit.
- **To demonstrate a community that shares opportunities** - that the physical attractiveness, activities and history combine to build a community that is proud of its location and willing to share it between the community and with others.

Graytown History

Graytown is located 137 km north of Melbourne, halfway along the connecting road between Heathcote and Nagambie. Graytown is a gold mining ghost town.

Graytown has a number of geological distinguishing features including Mount Moormbool (816m), located North West of the Graytown township, which is considered the geographical centre of Victoria.

The earliest inhabitants of the Graytown area were members of the Taungurung Clans. They were the first custodians of the land on which the township of Graytown now stands. The Taungurung lived harmoniously with the environment, the Taungurung people hunted, gathered and travelled according to seasonal change. As a result of colonisation, Taungurung people suffered because of introduction of diseases, massacres and the dispossession and relocation to government run reserves.

Formally known as ‘Spring Creek’, Graytown was surveyed in 1848 by Robert Hoddle, Officer-in-Charge of the Port Phillip Survey Department. He went on to become the first Surveyor General of Victoria in 1851. He was a central figure in the areas of surveying, cartography and geography in Victoria.

Gold was discovered in Graytown 1868 and the population suddenly leapt to 30,000, during this period Graytown was likened to the Ballarat Gold Rush. Although lack of water proved a problem with some of the creeks being exhausted and material allegedly ‘washed in beer’ which was in plentiful supply.

The alluvial gold rapidly disappeared and by late 1870 the population had declined to 150. The death-knell came in 1870 when a freak storm and flood swamped the mining endeavours and destroyed numerous buildings. Many of the remaining structures were moved elsewhere. Some old shafts, mullock heaps, poppet legs and brick chimneys serve as reminders of the town's previous existence.

During the Second World War a prisoner-of-war camp, was established at Graytown: this camp was predominantly a wood cutting camp in the bush for Italian, German and Finnish Prisoners of War. It included the crew of the German auxiliary cruiser *Kormoran* that battled the *HMAS Sydney* on the afternoon of 19 November 1941, of the *HMAS Sydney's* complement of 645, none survived.

Council's Support for Community Planning

(taken from the Strathbogie Council website and Community Planning Program Guidelines)

Council aims to assist and strengthen our communities to help them become more environmentally and socially sustainable, foster a sense of community spirit and pride and increase residents involvement in community life. Council believes that local communities are best at identifying and resolving local issues and that building “community capacity” is essential to developing vibrant healthy communities.

The approach to community planning in Strathbogie Shire is that planning is not done by Council for its communities but by communities themselves. Community planning is an important way of Council getting to know the communities and what is important to residents. Community planning is about enabling communities to identify, find solutions and implement projects that address social, environmental, health and well-being, infrastructure, cultural and economic goals, issues and opportunities.

Community planning will be undertaken by Community Planning Reference Groups. These groups represent the community through a democratic process of open community planning sessions.

Community Planning Reference Group

A Community Planning Reference Group is a committee that agrees to participate in the Community Planning Program. From the 2017 Graytown AGM, the following Graytown residents make up the Committee:

- President - Graham Sims
- Deputy President - Robert Bell
- Secretary/Treasurer - Julie Sims
- Assistant Treasurer -Rondaa Stevenson
- Grants/Projects - Vivienne Moore
- Community Building Manager - Ari Apostolopoulos

Responsibility, Role, Meetings and Reporting

(taken from the Strathbogie Council Community Planning Reference Group Charter)

The key responsibility of the Committee is to provide feedback and advice to Council on the following objectives:

- Represent the community through a democratic process of open community planning sessions and the development of a Community Plan.
- Implement actions which are identified in the Community Plan which strengthen and develop communities.
- Advocate on behalf of the community to other Government agencies for appropriate funding for initiatives identified by communities.
- Balancing the present and future interest of all Shire residents and visitors.

The role of the Community Planning Reference Group is to:

- Identify appropriate strategies to respond to community needs.
- Identify services, facilities and activities needed in each community.
- Act as a reference group for projects for which Council seeks public input.
- Provide advice to Council on Community planning initiatives that could be included in the Council Plan or budget process.

Details of Meetings:

- All meetings of the Committee shall be conducted in accordance with accepted meeting procedures.
- The Committee shall meet at least quarterly or more often if determined by the Committee.
- The Committee shall hold an annual meeting every twelve months on a date to be determined by the Committee.

Reporting:

- The minutes of meetings are to be submitted to Council on request.
- The Committee shall submit an Acquittal Report not later than 31st July in each year.

The Key Principles of Graytown Community Plan

- **Consultation** – the community must ensure that its plans and ideas for each initiative is genuinely what local people want, and it fits into the foreseeable future needs of the Graytown community. It includes involving residents in developing each initiative that increases community participation and continuously improves community opportunity and services.
- **Commitment** – the Graytown community in pursuing these ideas must ensure that the outcomes are supported by direct community involvement and support, through either recognised and agreed paid resources or volunteer time.
- **Sustainability** – the community is seeking to improve its quality of life. All the outcomes of any actions must be able to be maintained into the future.
- **Partnerships** - at the centre of community planning is the opportunity to build partnerships between the community and stakeholders external to Graytown.

Progress since 2010

Since the Graytown Action Plan in 2010, a lot has been achieved by the Graytown Community.

A Community Hub has been established using a repurposed demountable school classroom. The hub now has permanent tables and chairs set up, heating and cooling and a kitchen area. There is also a library of donated books and DVDs available for use by the residents.

Outside the hub there are rainwater tanks, a storage shed, a permanent generator set up for power, a shed for the generator, a toilet, a bbq area, a pizza oven, handmade wooden outdoor tables and benches in a seating area with umbrellas, a parking area and a community noticeboard.

This has only been possible with grant funds from the Council, some funding from local organisations, lots of donated items and many many hours of volunteer work from the local residents.

The Graytown community has regular meetings and social events with plans to continue this in the future.

The Priorities of the Graytown Community Plan

Priority One – Communication and Community Engagement

The community has a high priority to continue to develop methods of communication with all residents to ensure everyone can be involved community affairs or receive local information.

Actions:

- Continue to communicate regularly with residents and listen to ideas from all residents
- Deliver flyers with information about community events or local information
- Start a Facebook page (or website) for the community information
- Hold regular Community events, such as:
 - Hold a morning tea once a month
 - Host a Biggest Morning Tea (usually in May) to raise funds for Cancer Council
 - Celebrate special dates: Australia Day and ANZAC Day
 - Hold a Melbourne Cup Day event
 - Hold a Christmas party for all the residents
- Arrange guest speakers at Hub eg CFA presentation for fire season preparation

Priority Two – History and Heritage

The Graytown area has enormous history and heritage with links to the goldfields, national parks and the Prisoner of War Camps.

Actions:

- Research the history and heritage of Graytown and prepare a booklet
- Investigate maps of the area that could be reprinted and framed for display at the Hub

Priority Three – Maintain the Hub

Now a Community Hub building has been established, it is important to maintain it for the future use of all residents.

Actions:

- Maintenance of the Hub – clean out gutters, maintain toilet facilities, kitchen drainage
- Maintain generator – petrol, battery, regular servicing
- Hold a working bee to clean up leaves and fallen trees around the outside of the hub to reduce fire risk

Priority Four – Administration and Training

Continue the work by the Graytown Community Planning Reference Group (also known as the Graytown Community Action Group).

Actions:

- Hold committee meetings at least quarterly, minute the meetings and have copies available at the Hub for all to access.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting
- Administration costs -paper, printing, posters, internet for Facebook, website and communications
- Refresher training for First Aid and Food handling for committee members as required

Conclusion

A lot of great work has been done by the Graytown Community in the past and the plan is to continue that work into the future. This will involve all residents working together as a community.

Graytown Community Plan prepared by:

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Cleared by :
 Graytown Community Action Group Committee – 16 September 2017