



Great Western Community Plan
2009- 2013

*“A vibrant village, well connected
with its community, spirited in
providing a safe, clean, self
sustaining and caring environment”*

Contents

Introduction: Community Plans	3
About our Community: Great Western	3
Process towards developing a Community Plan for Great Western	4
Creating a Vision for Great Western.....	6
The Vision	6
Community Plan Priorities	7
Identified Priorities.....	8
Review.....	15
Community Plan Leaders	15



Bottling Sparkling Wine at Irvine's Great Western Cellars, 1895
{image online at www.nicks.com.au/Index.aspx?link_id=76.1224}

Introduction: Community Plans

Communities throughout the Northern Grampians Shire have been supported to develop a plan that is unique for their own community. Community planning is a dynamic and participatory process where the community arrive at and document a group vision, priorities and actions to achieve a positive change that will enhance the well-being of their community. Community Plans reflect the aspirations, their strengths, what is special or unique about the community, in particular the lifestyle, social image, economy, environment, pride, work and recreation.

About our Community: Great Western

Great Western is a charming township located on the Western Highway between Ararat and Stawell in the Northern Grampians Shire, approximately 220km from Melbourne. First settled in the 1840's by sheep graziers, Great Western rapidly developed through the discovery of gold and then the planting of grape vines and today remains the focal point of one of Australia's internationally renowned wine growing regions and one of the State's most attractive wine villages.

Historical context

Great Western is a fascinating blend of old and new. The area was first settled by sheep graziers and rapidly developed with the discovery of gold on Concongella Creek in 1858. The streets were named after prominent British Railway Engineers.

Key buildings throughout the town were constructed between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Significant street planting occurred in the 1930's and the sports reserve was established in 1915, followed by the creation of the Memorial Park in 1956. Grapevines were first planted in 1863 by Jean Pierre Trouette and Emile Blampied.

Great Western Today

Great Western has a population of approximately 250. Local community groups such as the Progress Association, the various sporting clubs and the primary school are the core of the community spirit.

History continues in the age-old vines and rustic cellar doors of Seppelt and Best's wineries and more recently newer modern wineries. Modern day Great Western has developed into a wine industry centre with supporting tourism industry including cottage, bed and breakfast and motel accommodation.

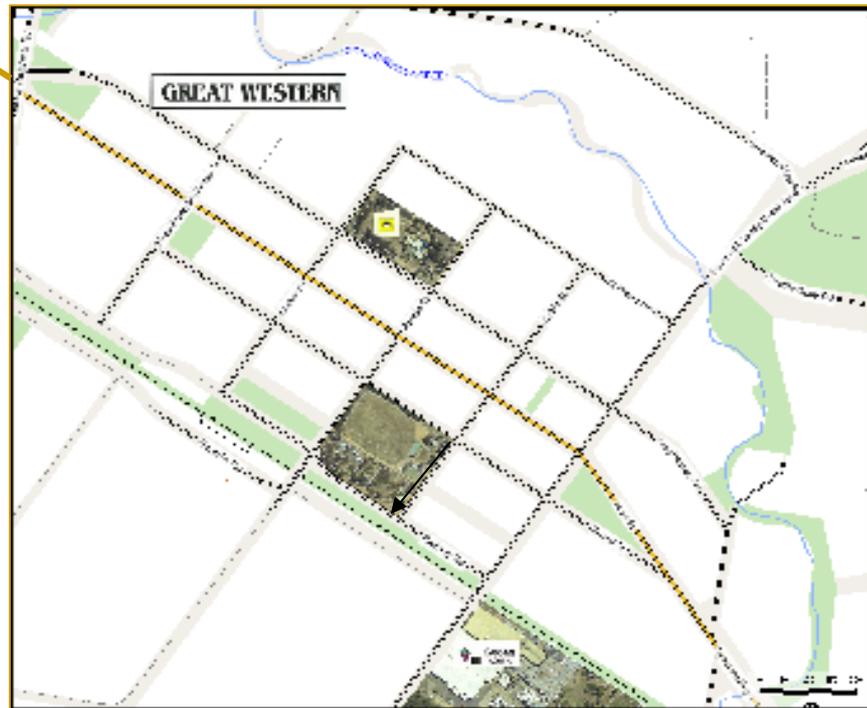
Wineries continue to make Great Western famous for its premium wines, winning international accolades and attracting around 60,000 visitors per year. Tours of the Seppelt Winery's underground "drives" are one of the region's most popular activities, while the slab hut of Best's Vineyard is one of the area's historic highlights.

Great Western plays host to many events throughout the year including the Great Western Horse Racing Carnival, the Great Western Rodeo, and A Day on the Green.

1. adapted from Great Western Urban design framework 2003



To Stawell



Process towards developing a Community Plan for Great Western

The Northern Grampians Shire initiated the development of a community plan, and has provided the means for a community plan to be developed without influence on the outcomes. The steps in the process were:

- Street canvassing of residents, businesses and visitors to Great Western
- A community summit
- Community champions of the plan identified
- Draft Plan distributed to the community for comment
- Follow up community meeting
- Sign off by community
- Formally presented to the Northern Grampians Shire Council at their February council Meeting.

Street Canvassing

Northern Grampians Shire Council officers spent an afternoon in Great Western canvassing residents, business owners, the school and visitors to the town on their perceptions of Great Western and what opportunities if any they believe could make it a better place. In all around 45 people offered a contribution towards the community plan. Every issue raised was tabled for consideration at the Great Western Community Summit.



Community Summit:

Approximately 29 people attended a community meeting initiated by the Northern Grampians Shire Council as part of the Your Town, Your Future community planning forum to develop the Great Western Community Plan.



Facilitated by Paul Margetts from Victoria Police, the goal of the night was to create a draft plan to ensure a community strategy for the future of this vibrant town and friendly community.



Creating a Vision for Great Western

Your Town, Your Vision

At the Community summit participants were broken into three smaller groups with each person asked to write a brief statement, sentence or paragraph on their individual vision for their community over the next 10 years.

Individuals read these statements aloud to their small group and were then asked to consolidate these into a single group vision for Great Western.

The three visions had many similarities and a number of key words.

The participants at the second community plan meeting have developed a vision statement utilising the themes from the draft group vision statements and key words to develop the community vision for Great Western that will become recognised as the Great Western Community Vision for the future.

The Vision

“Great Western is a vibrant village, well connected with its community, spirited in providing a safe, clean, self sustaining and caring environment.”



Community Plan Priorities

Process: Your Town, Your Future

Over the course of several days and the community facilitated summit on the 27th of August 2009, opinions were sought in regards to the development of Great Western over the next ten years. Key priorities from other community engagement activities were also included for community prioritisation.



Every idea was captured with discussion flowing in regards to the direction and significance of each idea, this continued with each person provided a gold dot for their number one preference, three green dots for their next three preferences and one red dot for what they believe is the least important development for the future years.

Each idea was placed under one of the following three categories:

Our Community: Area including social, welfare, sport and recreation,

Our Economy: Business, Tourism, cost of living

The Environment: Built and Natural developments

All the ideas gathered during the street campaigning, past community engagement exercises and the Great Western summit had now been prioritised. Of all the ideas gathered, several rated significantly higher than most, these included the upgrade of

current town sewerage infrastructure, the improvement of footpaths, guttering for more adequate access for the community, review of street lighting, a more focussed support for recreation facilities in the town, assistance with running and retention of existing events, a review of transport between Ararat & Stawell and the proposal of the imminent Bypass was seen as an opportunity for the township.

The second Great Western Community Plan meeting provided the opportunity to reflect on the priorities and how they fit with the intended vision statement. At this meeting the priorities were confirmed, some achievable actions were identified and stakeholders identified.

Sustainability and a sense of its own identity to support Great Western's vibrant, safe and healthy environment rated highly within the Great Western community.

Its worth noting that the ideas have been put forward with minimal strategic support for further development of significant projects, the feasibility of those projects will need to be conducted.



Identified Priorities

The following table has been developed as the key priorities for the Community Plan from the complete list of suggestions.

New toilets, drainage/sewerage, Extend original sewerage plan, Make sewerage plan voluntary, Upgrade sewerage and drainage	8	6	1
Get bypass as soon as possible- increase police to help slow trucks down, Bypass better right out of town (West),	5		
Paving on Cubit street for disability access from the road, Wheel chair access from parking bays	2	3	
Another bus service between Ararat & Stawell plus fast train, Better more frequent in the city public transport		5	
Keep Great Western races, pleasure rides, football & netball club, rodeo		5	
Water for local clubs- football/netball, archers, school, rec reserve	2	1	
Netball facilities- court surface, fencing, seating and lights	1	2	
Make our school sustainable	1	2	
Bring back rail freight for Great Western		3	
Assistance to help run youth & community events		3	
Remove lights from middle of highway and relocate to the sides of the road- remove pedestrian refugees Street lights at other end of town	1	3	1
Reduce road side fuel for fires- especially on dead end roads	1	1	
Slow down Trucks		2	
No shed houses ban zincolune houses in township	2	1	2



Regional Issues Impacting On Great Western

Priority Issue 1

The Effects of the Bypass on Great Western

Western Highway duplication between Ballarat and Stawell will encompass a proposed bypass of Great Western.

Why is this important to our community?

The Community Planning session provided an insight into the positive nature of the Great Western Community. The community have embraced the proposal of a bypass as a positive step in the future of Great Western as a town.

The Bypass will happen; Great Western must make the best of the bypass. This can be achieved by making the town appealing for visitors, and sustaining businesses with limited resources such as the shops, restaurants, wineries. The community has identified advantages of traffic issues which will allow for the community to develop as a village that can grow as a result of the proposed bypass.

How can this be achieved?

Whilst there is already a proposal by Vic Roads for the Bypass, the Great Western community is keen to continue to be consulted sooner rather than later.

Liaison with VicRoads to must continue through the project development to maximise the efforts to ensure the town can prosper from a bypass, including things such as making sure the turn-off from the highway into Great Western encourages visitation and signage promotes the towns assets and activities.

The community will form a Bypass committee in conjunction with the Progress Association to continue discussions with Vic Roads to streamline their consultation process for the enhancement of the Great Western community.

Who will be involved?

- Great Western Community
- Vic Roads
- Council
- Progress Association
- Land owners

Priority Issue 2

Sewerage Plan

Review the current proposal for implementation of a sewerage plan for Great Western. Ensure the proposal is current and seek consultation with authorities on the existing requirements of the community in relation to alterations, voluntary options and extensions to proposals.

Why is this important to our community?

This is a considerable priority for the development of the towns future prosperity. The sewerage scheme needs to be implemented correctly to make the most benefit

The community consider they are currently not well informed of what is proposed for replacement of existing septic systems.

The community wishes to be further consulted to be a part of the development of options available and implementation process.

How can this be achieved?

Further community consultation with GWM Water to establish links with the broader Great Western Community, maximise the benefit of sewerage and empower the community to influence the outcomes.

Who will be involved?

- Community Champions
- GWM Water
- Council
- Rate payers
- Progress Association



Local Issues and Priorities

Priority Issue 3

Road Safety

Stop vehicle speeding in Brunel Street and Stephenson Street

Why is this important to our community?

Brunel and Stephenson Streets are residential streets with speed restrictions including a school zone. It is not uncommon for vehicles, including heavy vehicles to use these streets as a bypass to the main highway in order to overtake slower traffic on the main road through the town. This is dangerous for the community and other vehicles.

How can this be achieved?

Council, Vic Roads and Victoria Police to explore traffic calming options and implement as soon as possible. While the proposed Bypass will reduce traffic through the town, the issue is of peoples safety and therefore not be allowed to wait to be addressed

Who will be involved?

- VicRoads
- Council
- Victoria Police
- Progress Association



Priority Issue 4

Footpaths Gutters and Lighting

There is a demand for the town to have the guttering, footpaths and roadside surfaces to be replaced with new curbing, channelling and paving.

There is a need for adequate disabled access to footpaths.

The street lighting should be reviewed in the centre of town and installation of lighting at the Stawell end of town.

Why is this important to our community?

The community requires a safe and welcoming environment for residents and visitors. The roads, curb and guttering in Main Street do not allow for easy access for people with disabilities to the shops and traders.

Uniform lighting from Seppelt to Best would create a common theme, other infrastructure should then match this theme to create the image of Great Western.

How can this be achieved?

Liaise with Council, the Community Access Advisory Group and VicRoads re disabled parking and wheelchair accessibility.

Consult the community to access their specific needs and implement a staged process of works to be completed.

Review run off of gutters into storm water/sewerage system, make sure they are clean and functional

Who will be involved?

- VicRoads
- Council
- GWM Water
- Progress Association
- CAAG/ Rural Access workers



Priority Issue 5

Need to support Events in Great Western

Includes existing and new events,

- A day on the Green
- Rodeo
- Great Western Races
- Pleasure Rides

Why is this important to our community?

The Great Western community currently hold several key events that not only cater for the town but also the region.

The community facilitate these events however requires assistance in organising and promoting these events to ensure they remain a part of the annual calendar.

How can this be achieved?

Lobbying of key stakeholders to ensure support for the continuation and expansion of events on an ongoing basis.

Establish a relationship with Council events coordinator to provide advice and support event actions to happen.

Who will be involved?

- Council Events Coordinator
- Community Members
- Wimmera Racing
- A Day on the Green organisers
- Great Western Riding Club
- Great Western Race club
- Great Western Football Club
- Great Western Racing and Recreation Reserve
- Progress Association
- Other event organisers

Priority Issue 6

Public Transport

More frequent timetabling of bus service between Ararat & Stawell, at times that link with other public transport.

Why is this important to our community?

Provides a community link to larger town's services

How can this be achieved?

Inclusion of Great Western in the transport connections project.

Negotiations with VLine to ensure services still come through Great Western when the Bypass is completed

Who will be involved?

- Transport Connections Project Officer
- VLine
- Progress Association
- Council
- VicRoads
- Dept of Transport



2008 Great Western Rodeo



Priority Issue 7

Recreation Facilities

Continued improvement of existing facilities is required to ensure they are servicing the community as required by current regulations and public expectations.

Specific items such as Netball Courts, fencing, seating and lighting are seen as priorities.

Why is this important to our community?

Communities such as Great Western are reliant on their recreation facilities not only as a meeting place but for their health and wellbeing. Many communities have been severely impacted with the loss of such facilities and the associated organisations and clubs. Water is an ongoing issue for drought ravaged communities and is a priority for the sustainability of our Recreation Reserves.

The Great Western community is rich in history directly associated with the recreation activities they provide for their people and visitors. The community will continue to seek the support of all key stakeholders in the sustainability of this important aspect of their rural community life.

How can this be achieved?

Create a staged plan or strategic plan for each facility with a specific focus on sustainability and growth.

Plan for more and improved netball courts
Tidy up and resurface tennis courts
Improve public toilets in rec reserves (football, Tennis)

Investigate the feasibility of a public swimming pool in Great Western

Who will be involved?

- Council
- DSE
- Community Groups/Clubs
- Progress Association
- Dept of Planning and Community Development
- GWM Water

Priority Issue 8

Improve Public Toilets

Including public amenities, and toilets at rec reserves (Football, Tennis)

Why is this important to our community?

The current toilets are adequate for the tennis club, but not when visitors/travellers are also utilising them.

Quality Public Toilets provides visitors with a positive first image of the town, Pride in their presentation encourages people to want to stop.

How can this be achieved?

Investigate options ideally to be achieved in time for the completion of the Bypass

Who will be involved?

- Council
- DSE
- Community Groups/Clubs
- Progress Association
- GWM Water



Great Western Comments and priorities

The complete table of ideas captured, and the priorities afforded to them by the community are as follows. It should be noted that all ideas have some merit, having come from a community member therefore are included for future consideration, however some have not been assessed by the community representatives as being key priorities in this planning cycle.

Our Community	GOLD	GREEN	RED
Get bypass as soon as possible- increase police to help slow trucks down	3		
New toilets, drainage/sewerage	2		
Wheel chair access from parking bays		3	
Another bus service between Ararat & Stawell plus fast train		3	
Assistance to help run youth & community events		3	
Street lights at other end of town		2	
Slow down Trucks		2	
Listen to what the community have to say		1	
Regular events such as Day on the Green and Rodeo that draw people to the Community		1	
Better maintenance of grassed area and trees			
Residents to appreciate township and more involvement with community groups			
Directional signage of paths to key locations			
Update signage on approaches to town and in town			
Intersection of highway and Brunel Street			
Cars speeding in Brunel Street			
Close the intersection and use the area for better bus and caravan parking			
Free water for oval- drought proof			
Make the bypass an asset			
Signage on bypass to inform travellers of Great Western			
Communication between local groups			
Fencing restriction to fit the heritage of Great Western			
Get rid of purple highway signs (events)			
Affordable events for the Community members			
More accommodation			
Interchangeable event advertising banners			
Activities directed at our Youth			
Retain low crime rate- left and burglary			
Valuing what's in our community			
Strengthen linkages, build on existing networks			
Footpaths			
Meeting places to gather for young people in the community			4



The Environment	GOLD	GREEN	RED
Extend original sewerage plan	3	1	1
Bypass better right out of town (West)	2		
Make sewerage plan voluntary	2		
Paving on Cubit street for disability access from the road	2		
Netball facilities- court surface, fencing, seating and lights	1	2	
Drainage	1	2	
No shed houses	1	1	1
Remove lights from middle of highway and relocate to the sides of the road- remove pedestrian refugees	1	1	1
Reduce road side fuel for fires- especially on dead end roads	1	1	
Ban zincolune houses in township	1		1
Upgrade sewerage and drainage		3	
Fire Plans- tinder dry old houses, fuels, tip, scrub land		2	
Footpaths		2	
Thin trees along highway		1	1
Improve oval and surrounds at rec reserve		1	
Continue new fence at Memorial Park		1	
Stop car speeding in Brunell Street and Stevenson Street		1	
More gutters		1	
Extend grannet footpaths		1	
Highway bypass where will it be?		1	
Improve footpaths		1	
Retain: Seppelts, Café Galleries, Shop, Garage, Post Office			
Improve catering facilities at racing and rec reserve			
Support your local community			
Bypass to go back to seppelts			
Extra street trees			
Road side cleaning			
More bins at tennis court area			
Install bin enclosures			
Footpaths			
Tennis courts to be resurfaced and fenced			
Replicate township lights at both entrances			
Rich history about Great Western publicize it			
Lighting at tennis courts			
Develop small urban forest- flooding			
Road maintenance			



The Environment	GOLD	GREEN	RED
Maintenance program for parks and gardens			
Retain building block size			
Be proactive with alternative power- compost in toilets, waste water			
Replace ash trees that are missing			
Round about at street intersections			
Enlarge oval			
Safer access to St. George Road from the Highway			
Eliminate mistletoe from existing trees			
Develop proper sewerage plan			
Pedestrian crossing on highway			
Make pedestrian refugee safer by relocating keep left sign			
To much signage			
Finish sealing streets within town			
Develop a flood plan for Concongella creek			
Promote small area properties with diversified products- eg 20 acres instead of minimum 80 acres			
Entertainment for children and young people			
Retain and develop Quaint/Historic building			
Clearing of weed in creeks to allow water flow			
Walking path along Concongella Creek			
Develop and promote existing produce locally			1
Street plants			3

Our Economy	GOLD	GREEN	RED
Water for local clubs- football/netball, archer, school, rec reserve	2	1	
Make our school sustainable	1	2	
Keep Great Western races, pleasure rides, football & netball club, rodeo		5	
Bring back rail freight for Great Western		3	
Better more frequent in the city public transport		2	
Bring back Seppelts		1	
Keep the races & promote well		1	
Better toilets @ tennis court		1	
Subdivision for new house construction Stevenson Street		1	
Invite new businesses		1	
Visitors Centre- display local history		1	
Exit off bypass both ways- Melbourne Adelaide			
Keep our school			



Our Economy	GOLD	GREEN	RED
Museum celebrating multicultural nature of Great Western & district			
Tourist information boards in rest areas			
Rodeo accommodation			
Improve catering @ racing rec reserve			
Public toilets in middle of town			
Town access- parking			
Retain Culture of town and people			
Improve tourism signage			
Highway bypass- use it to our advantage, promote the village concept			
Avoid cargo culture			
Reduce sign pollution			
More migrants			4



Review.

The plan can be reviewed at any time at the request of the Great Western community. An informal review of the plan will occur each year, and a formal review each four years.

Community Plan Leaders

The Community Plan for Great Western has been enthusiastically developed by local community members and community organisations including the Great Western Progress Association, Recreation Reserve Committees and the sporting clubs.

The process of moulding the ideas from the broad community summit into a Community Plan has been led by:

Allan Cosford
Linda Lockwood-Mawson
Kylie McMillan
Leigh Cadzow
Garry Burbridge
Mark Kindred
Peter Bullock
Liz Monaghan

