



## **Stuart Mill Community Plan.**

**June 2010**

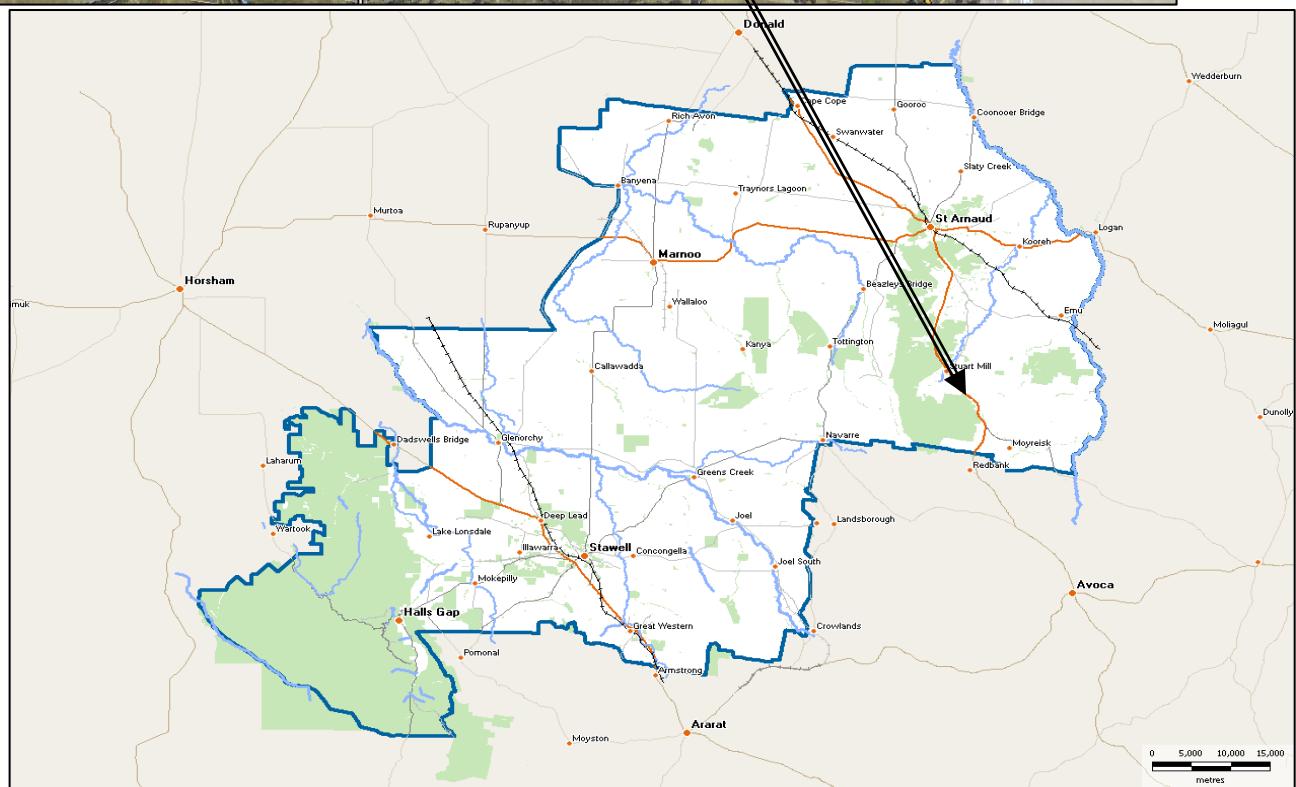


## Contents

<b>Where we are .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction: Community Plans .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About our Community: Stuart Mill .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Process towards developing a Community Plan for Stuart Mill .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Creating a Vision for Stuart Mill .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Vision .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Community Plan Priorities .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Identified Priorities .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Review .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Where to from here: .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Community Plan Leaders .....</b>	<b>17</b>



## Where we are



## **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: Stuart Mill**

A peaceful place where travellers along the Sunraysia Highway can stop for a for a BBQ, toilet break and admire the surrounding views, Stuart Mill retains a charming link with the gold rush days, with many mining relics found in surrounding bushland, which also offer B&B's and Caravan spaces.

Located in the fertile Strathfillan Valley, Stuart Mill is a little oasis in the surrounding drier areas, and the Strathfillan Creek running through the village adds to the quaint scenery.

The gateway to the St Arnaud Range (Kara Kara) National Park, Stuart Mill is also close to another popular tourist destination: Teddington Reservoirs and campground.



### **Historical Snapshot**

Originally named Albert Town, the towns name was changed to Stuart Mill (after John Stuart Mill, the English Philosopher) when it was realised there was already an Alberton in Gippsland.

Some impressive names in Australian history are connected with the village, including Labour leader and union man Donald MacDonnell who was born and buried in Stuart Mill, and GJ Coles of the Coles Stores fame, whose family owned a shop in the town. It was also a local man, William Young, who fired the first shot down at Point Nepean in World War 1.

In the 1840s squatters took up land in the Teddington area along the Strathfillan Creek and when alluvial gold was discovered in 1861 there was a gold rush to where Stuart Mill is now. In earlier times, there were market gardens, orchards and vineyards along the valley. Today these vineyards continue, alongside new olive plantations.

There was another bigger rush in 1868, when larger reef mining was established. It was a vibrant and bustling community estimate dot be around eight thousand gold diggers until the 1870's when the gold rush finished and Stuart Mill reverted to mainly agricultural activity.

### **Stuart Mill today**

Today there are relics and ruins of the early days and is still a pretty and charming village in the fertile Strathfillan Valley and gateway to the National Park via Teddington Reservoir which provides a BBQ and playground area.

Stuart Mill possesses an active farming community ranging from broad acre cereal and cattle, honey, sheep, prime lamb, squab, organic fruit, olives, grapes. The local National Park draws visitors for various activities such as: metal detecting, horse riding, bush walking, camping, bird watching, water sports, and push bike riders.

Whilst the Primary School closed in 1964 the school bus now takes the children into St. Arnaud for their education requirements. On the site of the old school is the Bishop James School Camp which provides a fully integrated camp and conference facility in the beautiful surroundings at Stuart Mill.

Stuart Mill is unique in that it manages its own Water Supply at Teddington Reservoir with a local Water Supply committee overseeing the water management,.

With a Population of around 120 people, Stuart Mill is still an active community that includes active CWA, CFA, Landcare, Progress Association, Cemetery Trust, Church Community, Angling Club, Stuart Mill Hall and annual Anzac Day service groups.

The community activity has led to numerous awards including the Community Pride award 2007 and finalist in 2009. An excerpt from the final report *"Stuart Mill Township Beautification Project - This small town is punching above its weight with the amount of work and improvements they are delivering. The community has worked hard to achieve their goals. Their efforts have included installing a new playground fence, retaining walls to retain moisture under established trees, street beautification"*



Many projects have been successfully completed by the local community whether it is the fire shed, hall improvements, construct a pergola

and install hand crafted wooden sculptures at the park or repair the historical gazebo at the cemetery. The Stuart Mill community are a close knit community generated by positive and energetic volunteers focussed on keeping the town sustainable into the future.

Major events include the annual Jazz Festival and the Stuart Mill picnic which is held every second year and has been running for over 100 years.



## Process towards developing a Community Plan for Stuart Mill

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:

- 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 on the TBA 2010.

### **Community Summit:**



Approximately 16 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 Stuart Mill Community Plan.

Facilitated by Bryan Small, 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 Stuart Mill**

### **Your Town, Your Vision**

At the Community summit, each person was 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 and were then asked to consolidate these into a single group vision for Stuart Mill.

Some key words from these statements were:

Welcoming families, vibrant, progressive, liveable, proud heritage, Community pride, future, growing population, exciting, busy, pretty, and charming, hub, young, industry, and peaceful, natural, best smallest town in Shire.

From there we created the following “Vision”

### **The Vision**

**“To develop Stuart Mill as a welcoming, vibrant and progressive community of families with a proud heritage & exciting future.**

**We are committed to attracting new residents, new industry and developing our natural assets”**

# Community Plan Priorities

## Process: Your Town, Your Future

At the community facilitated summit on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 opinions were sought in regards to the opportunities and future development of Stuart Mill that the community sees as beneficial. 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. Each idea was placed under one of the following three categories:

*Our Community: Social, welfare, sport and recreation,*

*Our Economy: Business, Tourism, cost of living*

*The Environment: Built and Natural developments*



The task was then for the community to prioritise these ideas as a beginning of an action plan. To do this, each person was 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.

All the ideas gathered during the past community engagement activities and the Stuart Mill summit had now been prioritised. Of all the ideas gathered, **several rated significantly higher than most**, which were better access to National Park, weeds & vermin removed from public and private land, new public toilets, beautify hall and creek side, tourism- B&B's, Jazz festival, walking trails, caravan sites, and motorbike tracks.

## Identified Priorities

The following table has been developed as the key priorities for the Stuart Mill Community Plan from the complete list (detailed later in this plan) of ideas tabled on the night in the format provided.

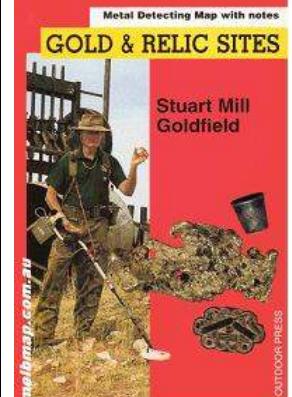
Priority Item	Gold	Green	Red
Public toilets- old toilets smell, not adequate for handicapped	3	1	
<b>Better access to National Park</b> (Rostron Rd, Sealing Low Rd & Murray sealed and widened)	3	2	
Town signage (named after John Stuart Mill father of liberty)	2		
Weeds & vermin in public and private land	1	4	
Allied health services- physio, podiatry & dietician	1	1	
Grow population and grow youth	1	1	
Safer highway intersection	1		
Less building restrictions	1		
Farmers market	1		
Farming as basis to all above	1		
Tourism- B&B's, Nat Parks, Jazz Festival, Walking trails, more caravan camping sites, motorbike tracks made		4	1
Beautify creek & around hall side, bench seating along creek		4	
Sunshade over playground		3	2
Continue yearly: Picnic, Jazz, Garden Day, Christmas Party & new events		2	
Safety barrier on new road- Oxford Street		2	
Pavers at Reserve		2	
Road side vegetation improved		2	
Clean creek near B & B (weeds) and car parking		2	
Bishop James centre is under used- more visitation 48 beds		2	
Clean up Monument block (just acquired back from Sutherlands)		2	
Teddington full again- for visitors		2	
Family totems (poles)		1	
Speed zones- trucks don't use exhaust break & fix hump on bridge		1	
More power to the Reserve		1	
Other local sporting teams EG, tennis & cricket		1	
Upgrade Strathfillan Creek area behind hall		1	
Public toilets		1	
Car access to lookout		1	
Boutique industries- Honey, Goldpanning, Olives, Winery, Eco Tourism, Eucalyptus		1	
Horse bike trails in national park		1	
Public toilets- drainage			

From the above priorities we have established the following list to include “why is this important to our community”, “how can this be achieved” and “who will be involved” to form the collated and structured form of the plan as we work through the priorities and their significance to the community.

Priority	Why is this important to our community	How can this be achieved	Who will be involved
<b>Roads, Signage and Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer highway intersection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town signage (John Stuart Mill father of liberty)</li> <li>• Speed Zones to be implemented on Highway from 80k to 60k</li> <li>• Truck exhaust brake signs</li> <li>• Fix hump on bridge</li> <li>• Safety barrier on Oxford St</li> <li>• Murray Road sealed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a safe environment for our children and families.</li> <li>• Provide clear direction for visitors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community to support changes and discuss options with key stakeholders -</li> <li>• Council and VicRoads.</li> <li>• TAC Safety trailer bought to Stuart Mill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> <li>• Progress Association</li> <li>• Vic Roads</li> <li>• Sunraysia Highway improvement committee</li> </ul>
<b>Better access to National Park</b> Rostron Rd sealed and better access to the lookout road- graded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to utilise the local assets what we already have.</li> <li>• Existing access is not servicing the area adequately.</li> <li>• To support visitors and locals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have relevant discussions with Parks Victoria to discuss options and ideas around what would work best.</li> <li>• Work with relevant authorities to assist prioritising changes that will achieve positive outcomes for all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Parks Victoria</li> <li>• Stuart Mill Community</li> </ul>

Priority	Why is this important to our community	How can this be achieved	Who will be involved
<b>Public toilets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old toilets smell</li> <li>• Not adequate for people with a disability</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing the general public, visitors and passing through traffic with suitable facilities.</li> <li>• To enhance the existing appeal of the township.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a review of the facilities and establish actual needs and produce a plan of action to implement the required improvements.</li> <li>• Residents hope that Council and/or DSE, DPCD will accept some responsibility for the upkeep of the toilets.</li> <li>• Work with Council to seek funding opportunities to improve facilities as required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Council</li> <li>• DSE</li> <li>• DPCD</li> </ul>
<b>Obtaining Allied Health Services for Stuart Mill</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physiotherapy</li> <li>• Dietician</li> <li>• Podiatry</li> </ul>	A range of allied health and community health services is not offered on a regular basis in Stuart Mill. Obtaining these services provides accessible contact with vital health services for existing residents of all age groups. Health services reduce the impact of rural isolation for the Stuart Mill and district community and reduce barriers to attract new residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding and support for the services from the Regional Hospitals.</li> <li>• Continued promotion of the services within the community to ensure utilisation occurs.</li> <li>• Supporting the expansion of services offered by the East Wimmera Health Service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Wimmera Health</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Grampians Community Health</li> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership</li> </ul>

Priority	Why is this important to our community	How can this be achieved	Who will be involved
<b>Encourage sustainable population growth with an emphasis on younger families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With many communities experiencing stagnation and an aging population we need an influx of new residents with new energy plus new ideas together with a willingness to contribute to the community. This process will provide an opportunity for Stuart Mill to continue to be a place to be or visit in the future.</li> <li>Encourage people to invest in Stuart Mill and district that will offer employment and growth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stuart Mill to explore involvement towards becoming a transition town, and the opportunities this may bring for becoming self sufficient in food, water, and capitalising on renewable energy and energy efficient housing.</li> <li>Review the planning scheme and MSS for Stuart Mill to encourage land and building development.</li> <li>Continued promotion of the Township, services and local assets.</li> <li>Continue to welcome all visitors and ensure their experience of Stuart Mill is memorable.</li> <li>Consideration of a Stuart Mill Face book/web site.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council</li> <li>Community Groups</li> <li>Progress Association</li> </ul>
<b>Weeds and vermin in public and private land removed and plant appropriate trees/shrubs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean up roadside vegetation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the natural environmental appeal to the local community and visitors.</li> <li>To prevent the further infestation and growth of unwanted weeds and vermin on all properties</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the areas of concern and consult all stakeholders to strategically plan for the eradication of problem weeds and vermin.</li> <li>Encourage state government to support sustainable culling and harvesting, explore options for fencing and other road safety measures including driver education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council</li> <li>Stuart Mill Community</li> <li>DSE</li> <li>Parks Victoria</li> <li>Land care Groups</li> </ul>

Priority	Why is this important to our community	How can this be achieved	Who will be involved
<b>Beautify Creek and around the Hall side</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bench seating near creek</li> <li>• Clean up monument block</li> </ul>	This is important to the community because keeping the town neat and tidy gives the community members pride and brings in more visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community to organise more clean up days, and Council to get more workers in to keeping Stuart Mill up to scratch.</li> <li>• Seek support for a land care project for the whole of Strathfillan, funded by DSE, DPDC, Council and Land care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> <li>• Progress Association</li> <li>• Land care</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism/ Events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Park promotion and access</li> <li>• Jazz festival, garden day, Farmers market, Christmas Celebrations and new events</li> <li>• Walking trails</li> <li>• Motorbike tracks created</li> <li>• Car access to lookout</li> <li>• Tennis/Cricket games</li> <li>• Bishop James Centre is under utilised</li> <li>• Teddington full again</li> <li>• Horse &amp; Bike trails in National Park</li> <li>• Boutique industries – Honey, gold panning, olives, winery, eco-tourism, eucalyptus, squab</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Stuart Mill community currently hold several key events to not only the town but the region.</li> <li>• The community requires assistance with the organising and promoting of these events to ensure they remain a part of the annual calendar and to seek new activities that will add to the year's events.</li> <li>• Bringing people into Stuart Mill and supporting the community and the economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a realistic Events Plan/Calendar that identifies the key activities to be focussed on and planned for within community capabilities and resources.</li> <li>• Ensure events and activities are well supported by the community with an open invitation for anyone to attend.</li> <li>• Lobbying of key stakeholders ensuring the continuation and expansion of events on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Establish relationship with Council events coordinator to ensure events progress.</li> <li>• Continue to lobby Parks Victoria to continue to upgrade facilities in the National Park as per the Park Management plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> <li>• Progress Association</li> <li>• Funding opportunities</li> <li>• Parks Victoria</li> </ul> 

Priority	Why is this important to our community	How can this be achieved	Who will be involved
<b>Public Park Reserve</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More caravan camping sites</li> <li>• More power to reserve</li> <li>• Pavers at reserve</li> <li>• Bench seats around oval</li> <li>• Sunshade over playground</li> <li>• Tree planting around the oval</li> </ul>	<p>The reserve is an integral part of the township and the many events that take place. It is paramount that this precinct continues to be developed for the benefit of these events for long term sustainability and growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work on the list of priorities for consideration and implement a timeline report for achieving the desired projects.</li> <li>• Work with Powercor to upgrade the power to the reserve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> <li>• Progress Association</li> <li>• Powercor</li> </ul>



The following is the total list of items brought up for discussion and consideration as a priority for the community on the night of the summit. Whilst the registered priorities from this list are recorded above as immediate community priorities the remaining items are also seen as an integral part of the plan for future reference and consideration

<b>Community priority</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Red</b>
Family totems (poles)		1	
Speed zones- trucks don't use exhaust break & fix hump on bridge		1	
Water taps- tank on haul			
Sunshade over playground		3	2
Bonfire			1
Green waste			
Creek clean up			
Petanque			
Safer highway intersection	1		
Continue yearly: Picnic, Jazz, Garden Day, Christmas Party & new events		2	
Safety barrier on new road- Oxford Street		2	
Pavers at Reserve		2	
Public toilets- old toilets smell, not adequate for handy capped	3		
More residential land			
More power to the Reserve		1	
Swing for disabled at playground			
Wide walking track			
Memorial garden at hall			
Other local sporting teams EG, tennis & cricket		1	
More trees			
Beautify creek & around hall side		3	
<b>Environment priority</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Red</b>
Town signage (named after John Stuart Mill father of liberty)	2		
Teddington Res ownership by Stuart Mill			
Road side vegetation improved		2	
Less building restrictions	1		
Cleaning of roadside- storm damage, Low Rd Stuart Mill			
Better access to National Park (Rostron Rd, Sealing Low Rd & Murray sealed and widened)	3	2	
Upgrade Strathfillan Creek area behind hall		1	
Planting of shrubs, trees etc			
Public toilets		1	
Recycling service			
Car access to lookout		1	
Allied health services- physio, podiatry & dietician	1	1	

Investigate & plan for new bore			
Bench seating along creek & also oval		1	
Weeds & vermin in public and private land	1	4	
Clean creek near B & B (weeds) and car parking		2	
<b>Economy priority</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Red</b>
Bishop James centre is under used- more visitation 48 beds		2	
Clean up Monument block (just acquired back from Sutherlands		2	
Public toilets- drainage		1	
Boutique industries- Honey, Gold panning, Olives, Winery, Eco Tourism, Eucalyptus		1	
Tourism- B&B's, Nat Parks, Jazz Festival, Walking trails, more caravan camping sites, motorbike tracks made		4	1
Bench seats around oval		1	
Walking trails- heritage walk			1
Teddington full again- for visitors		2	
Farmers market	1		
Horse bike trails in national park		1	
Farming as basis to all above	1		
Encourage tree change			
Grown population and grow youth	1	1	
Oggy walk (Oxonian)			5
Roads to market (rural roads upgrade)			

## Review

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

## Where to from here:

Community leaders, key stakeholders and community organisations will be invited to contribute to achieving the objectives of this plan. This includes the Northern Grampians Shire Council who we encourage to become familiar with the Stuart Mill Community Plan and support the effort the community will put in to achieve the identified priorities.

## Community Plan Leaders

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

The entire Stuart Mill Community

