

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL PLAN 2017–2021

Summary of community feedback

MARCH 2017

*your say,
your shire*

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL



What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan guides our goals and priorities over the next four years, along with the strategies to achieve them. It's important that the community has the opportunity to have a say on our direction.

The process so far

In late 2016 we invited everyone to get involved and provide ideas and feedback on ways to continue to make the shire a great place to live. This information was collected through the Your Say, Your Shire survey, listening posts, community conversations and discussions with Councillors and staff. We received more than 350 submissions.

We have grouped the feedback and our ideas across three key areas:

- » Our place
- » Our people
- » Our economy

Have your say

As part of the second stage of consultation we want to make sure that we have got it right and have heard you correctly. We invite you to read the comments, feedback and ideas on what we plan to do.

What do you think?

Is this the right direction for the next four years?

Are we missing anything?

Have your say in a number of ways:

- » **Online** at haveyoursay.mountalexander.com.au/council-plan2021
- » **Email** us at info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
- » **Post** to Council Plan feedback, PO Box 185, Castlemaine VIC 3450.

Submit your feedback by **9.00am, Monday 3 April 2017**.

Next steps

Your input will inform the specific actions in the draft Council Plan 2017-2021, which will be available for public comment from Wednesday 19 April to Friday 17 May alongside the Council Budget 2017/2018.

Thank you for helping to shape the future of our shire.

Stay up to date with the progress of the Council Plan at haveyoursay.mountalexander.com.au/council-plan2021.



Our place

Buildings | Sport and recreation facilities | Roads | Footpaths | Drainage | Trails | Playgrounds | Gardens | Natural environment | Waste | Recycling | Heritage

What we know

- » We own more than 250 buildings across the shire, including many heritage structures
- » A lot of our infrastructure is ageing
- » Many community halls, recreational facilities and reserves are managed in partnership with the community
- » There is significant investment in maintaining privately owned buildings
- » The health of a community improves when everyone can access quality facilities and infrastructure
- » Our community is passionate about the environment
- » Our long term goal is to be carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of climate change
- » The area is well respected for its heritage and natural parks
- » Managing waste accounts for 14% of our expenditure



What we heard

- » Maintaining and improving our infrastructure and facilities is important
- » Continue to prioritise upgrading footpaths and cycling connections
- » Address problems with drainage
- » Free green waste disposal was valued
- » Waste services are expensive
- » Protect the environment and reduce weeds
- » Continue to be a leader in responding to climate change
- » Support development while respecting and maintaining heritage and the natural environment
- » Our parks and gardens are well liked and well used
- » Improve streetscapes, town entrances and plant more trees
- » Public transport is vital, particularly good regional train networks
- » Promote the importance of heritage to residents and visitors
- » Continue to implement community plans
- » Continue to partner and work with community groups
- » Diversity of housing is important, particularly affordable housing

What we plan to do

- » Continue to renew assets and infrastructure
- » Pursue external funding
- » Advocate for public transport and housing that meets the needs of the community and growing population
- » Improve our streetscapes and town entrances
- » Protect our built and natural environment and indigenous heritage
- » Make it easier for everyone to move around
- » Partner with community groups
- » Investigate and advocate for better building design
- » Continue to identify options to reduce our environmental footprint
- » Investigate alternative waste management strategies
- » Promote waste reduction
- » Reduce the prevalence of exotic weeds

“Encouraging better waste practices (i.e. more composting, less organics to landfill), managing weeds across the shire, protecting our native vegetation.”

“Go all out to improve the natural environment – clean the waterways for fish and natural indigenous plants.”

“We need bike lanes, better footpaths and accessibility for people in electric wheelchairs and scooters.”

“We require decent footpaths, rainwater gutters and adequate street lighting.”

Our people

Population | Health | Wellbeing | Support | Resilience | Partnerships | Social services |

What we know

- » We have an ageing population
- » The environment is changing in regards to aged care and the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- » We aren't always a service provider, but work with several government and health agencies and partner with many community groups to achieve better outcomes
- » Our population has above average rates of volunteerism and participation in community groups
- » Health and wellbeing is important to the community
- » We have higher rates of smoking, child abuse and mental health illness compared with state averages
- » Five percent of our population need direct disability assistance
- » Health is improved by access to good facilities
- » Our communities have experienced significant natural disasters

What we heard

- » People love the friendly, strong and inclusive nature of the community
- » Community services including health and wellbeing programs for young people and the elderly are highly valued
- » People want better information and support to access health services including improved transport
- » There is recognition that the community is ageing and some of our people feel isolated
- » Young people are leaving the shire
- » Reconciliation with indigenous communities continues to be important
- » Mental health, obesity, drugs and age related illnesses are a concern
- » The community wants to be involved in making decisions

What we plan to do

- » Ensure our services support the needs of our changing community
- » Support communities to meet their wellbeing and health needs
- » Create age friendly communities
- » Encourage partnerships to build a more engaged and involved community
- » Invest in and support our young people
- » Recognise our indigenous community and culture
- » Seek funding for infrastructure that supports healthy lifestyles and work with agencies and local groups to promote healthy living
- » Advocate that our community has access to high quality health services and facilities



Council does a good job of...
"Building our community, fostering the relationships between the different community groups."

"Develop in visible ways, the acknowledgement and engagement with local Aboriginal Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owner heritage."

In ten years I want the shire to...
"Provide services for young people (and others such as disabled, elderly and sole parents) in our community, generating a sense of belonging and respect. Put the heart back into politics."

"There is a great variety of interesting ways you can be involved in activities – volunteering, art groups, Buda, history and historical groups."

Our economy

Business | Economy | Jobs | Education | Creativity | Innovation | Tourism | Culture | Events

What we know

- » Creativity and innovation encompasses a wide range of interests
- » The community is renowned as a cultural and artistic hub
- » Creative pursuits and community events bring prosperity and tourism
- » The Castlemaine State Festival and many events bring economic and social benefits to our community
- » We can better support and promote our innovative community
- » There are more than 1,500 local businesses including 500 micro businesses in the shire
- » Our three key industries are manufacturing, retail/trade and health care/social assistance
- » More than 120,000 visitors drop into our two Visitor Information Centres each year
- » Every year more than 411,000 visitors spend a day in our shire
- » We support more than one event each week through our Community Grants program
- » We receive more than 300 planning applications per year

“It is my belief that a vibrant and thriving tourism industry could underpin the economic viability of this area. Providing business opportunities and employment for the younger generation. You can see some of this already when you look at the development starting to happen at The Mill in Castlemaine for example.”

What we heard

- » Employment opportunities are critical for the economy
- » Education provides critical pathways for jobs
- » Access to public transport is important and opens job opportunities
- » Support for local businesses strengthens the community and creates a business-friendly environment
- » Tourism is important to the local economy
- » We need a business-friendly environment and a variety of local retail choices
- » It is important to mix economic development and growth while retaining the shire’s heritage, unique character and low-density rural areas
- » Think broadly about arts and culture to encompass creative innovation and other industries
- » Maintaining and improving arts facilities is important
- » Promote the variety of experiential tourism opportunities such as heritage and history, indigenous, nature, arts, culture and specialty interests
- » We have many talented and creative people in the community

“Recognise that supporting arts, culture and heritage is encouraging economic development and encouraging diversity and tourism.”

“Make it easier, not harder for the community to hold events and do things.”

“More emphasis on encouraging business development and innovation to stimulate greater employment opportunities, particularly for younger people.”

What we plan to do

- » Encourage a creative and innovative economy
- » Support and promote heritage, arts, community events and cultural experiences to drive tourism and bring economic benefit
- » Engage with the community and stakeholders and involve them in decision making
- » Improve Council service delivery through innovation
- » Recognise and celebrate our creative and innovative community and business sectors
- » Promote the shire and the diverse aspects it offers to visitors, business and new residents
- » Advocate for enhanced educational opportunities
- » Support appropriate development

