

BIRCHIP & DISTRICT

LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN





OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The Birchip community led by the Birchip Forum updated their community plan priorities and progress in 2017. Funding in 2018 from the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Fund supported the re-engagement of community to explore longer term issues and aspirations looking towards 2030.

The 2017 Birchip community priorities have informed this renewed plan which has also captured recent consultation to shape the Buloke 2030 'whole of shire' integrated plan focusing on liveability and economic development in the current rural environment.

Residents in and around Birchip were invited to share their thoughts through:

- an online survey
- community postcards
- a drop in session
- school visits
- a focus group
- a street pop-up
- a community workshop; and
- draft plan feedback processes.

The Birchip & District Local Community Plan is a community owned plan that captures community aspirations across a broad range of areas (not just local government). The plan gives voice to local aims and aspirations and provides an opportunity for involvement by people who are interested in shaping the future of Birchip and District.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

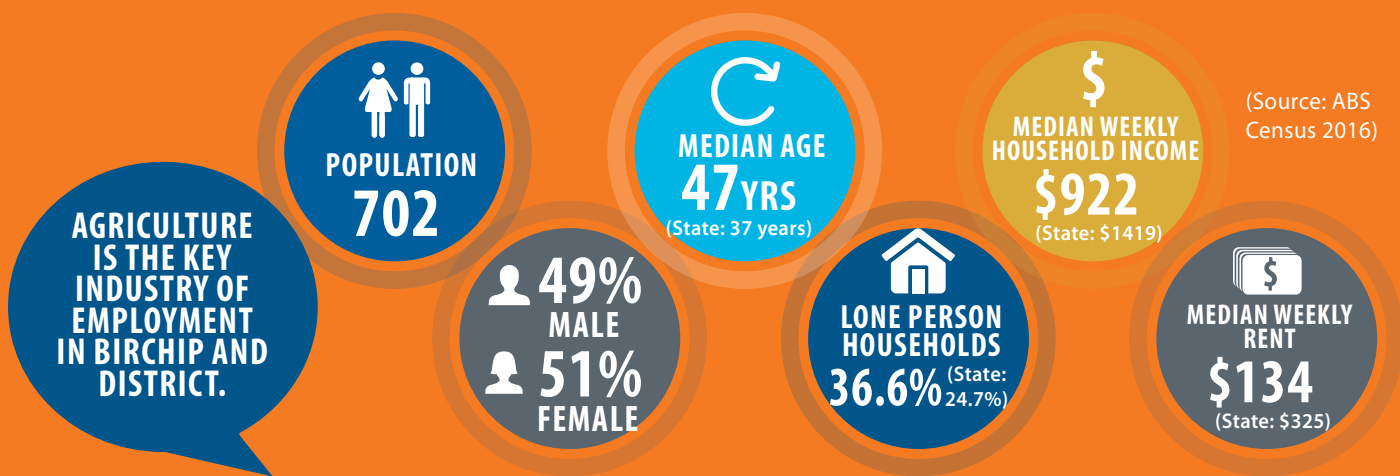
A Community Plan describes the community's long term vision and aspirations and is a way of directly involving residents in future planning.

The Birchip and District community has already made a number of achievements as a result of their previous community plans, such as:

- Streetscape and signage in main street
- Birchip Men's Shed
- Tchum Lake walking track upgrade
- Birchip Cares – community transport
- Lions Landcare walking track
- Tennis club facility upgrades

OUR COMMUNITY

Birchip, the home of the Mallee Bull is located on the Sunraysia highway about 300km north west of Melbourne. Closer settlement began in the area known then as Wirrimbirchip community around 1882.



OUR STRENGTHS

- ▣ Friendly and caring community
- ▣ Safe community
- ▣ Affordable living
- ▣ Good school and teachers
- ▣ Good care for the elderly
- ▣ Diverse community
- ▣ Young people are returning
- ▣ Stable population
- ▣ People are giving of their time and money

OUR ASSETS

- ▣ Tchum Lake
- ▣ Hospital
- ▣ Leisure Centre
- ▣ School
- ▣ Community car
- ▣ Birchip Cropping Group
- ▣ CERT - community emergency response team
- ▣ Horse races
- ▣ Bakery
- ▣ Pubs
- ▣ Birchip Neighbourhood House
- ▣ Bowling Club
- ▣ Police/Fire Station
- ▣ Swimming pool
- ▣ Good sporting facilities

"Birchip is a wonderful vibrant town".

"It is a simple life here- raising a family is simple".

"People encourage their kids to leave-to travel or study and then they come back empowered".

"We have a huge demand for the community car".

"The Hospital is very important for our community".

"The Leisure centre is widely used for weddings, funerals, sport etc".

OUR CURRENT CHALLENGES

- ▣ No locum when GP is on leave
- ▣ Lack of Childcare
- ▣ Road repairs/safety
- ▣ Council customer service
- ▣ Run down/un-kept properties
- ▣ Volunteer decline
- ▣ Lack of tradespeople
- ▣ No aged care hostel in town
- ▣ Lack of employment opportunities
- ▣ Supporting vulnerable community members
- ▣ Family violence
- ▣ Lack of rental properties
- ▣ Lack of police presence
- ▣ Footpaths and kerbing
- ▣ Lack of hard rubbish collection
- ▣ High tip fees
- ▣ Lack of garbage collection for outlying farms
- ▣ No heli-pad at Hospital
- ▣ Decrease in bed numbers at Hospital
- ▣ Declining numbers for sports teams
- ▣ Access to health and wellbeing services
- ▣ Poor internet/mobile phone coverage

"Footpaths and Kerbing need improvement-this is important with ageing population and increase of gopher use".

"We need more volunteers for the community car".

"Many grandparents are providing childcare".

OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

Looking Towards 2030

Community members highlighted a range of challenges/trends that they felt were important to plan for.

- ▣ Ageing Community
- ▣ Climate change
- ▣ Declining population
- ▣ Declining services
- ▣ Farms are getting larger
- ▣ Increased reliance on technology

"Half of our school students can't access the internet for their studies".

"Farms are getting bigger and there are less people running farms".

"Families with complex needs struggle to access services".

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for the future have been captured under four key themes which are supported by longer term strategic directions and key actions to achieve these.

Importantly, these key directions were formed through reviewing the 2017 Birchip Forum priorities and progress and combining new ideas from recent community discussions.

OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND KEY ACTIONS: SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND WELL-MAINTAINED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE.

1. Explore community 'tip shop' models and potential funding opportunities that actively minimise waste (e.g. Nhill model).
2. Install central waste bins in town for out of town residents to use.
3. Advocate for annual hard rubbish collection service.
4. Explore community initiatives to encourage residents to tidy up their properties and the town.
5. Advocate/work in partnership to ensure a safe road network.
6. Develop a footpath plan for Birchip that will address areas of need including kerbing.
7. Explore the feasibility of a shared Church model where all churches share and maintain one building.
8. Review built community assets and explore opportunities for shared facilities and resources.
9. Identify an appropriate site for the relocation of the community garden.
10. Maintain, enhance and plan for the future use of key community assets (e.g. BELC, Tchum Lake, Leisure Centre, Park).

BEAUTIFICATION OF STREETScape AND TOWN ENTRANCES.

1. Beautify the streetscape and town entrances.
2. Create a shade plan and actively seek funding for the installation of built and natural shade.

PROTECT, MANAGE AND IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY.

1. Maintain trees and control weeds on council, crown and private land.
2. Apply for a town Fruit Fly Trap and educate community on the management of fruit fly.

OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND KEY ACTIONS:

ENHANCED COMMUNITY AND SERVICE SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS WHO ARE VULNERABLE AND OR ISOLATED.

1. Work together with Council to prepare for the local roll out of the NDIS.
2. Explore models and potential funding that would support health and well-being referral linkages for community members (especially those requiring crisis support).

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY WELLBEING, LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS.

1. Work in partnership with Council as it provides library services in Birchip.
2. Support young people to plan and deliver a broader range of recreation activities for children and young people that are not 'sport specific' (e.g. movie nights, BYO blow up to the pool, music events, drama).
3. Advocate for a once weekly same day return public transport service to larger centres.
4. Strengthen early years-service delivery and linkages for children aged 0-4 years.

A HEALTHY, SAFE AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY.

1. Advocate for the increased use of tele-health options.
2. Develop a sustainable plan for GP holiday coverage for the hospital to ensure medical services are accessible at the facility year round.
3. Advocate for the development of succession plans for GP services.
4. Create a working group to better understand and improve emergency health service transportation and processes for Birchip and district.
5. Advocate for clear processes/responsibilities and improved continuity of care following care/discharge from 'out of shire' hospitals.
6. Review decrease in acute beds at Birchip Hospital to better understand if proposed numbers will meet future community need.
7. Explore a shared facility model for emergency services (CERT/SES/CFA).
8. Advocate for increased local police presence and the development of clear community processes for police coverage when local police services are unavailable.
9. Advocate for improved access to place based allied health services e.g. speech pathology services.



OUR ECONOMY

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND KEY ACTIONS:

INCREASED TOURIST ACTIVITY IN BIRCHIP & DISTRICT.

1. Seek opportunities to promote Birchip as a visitor destination.

PROMOTE THE LIVEABILITY OF BIRCHIP & DISTRICT.

1. Actively promote the positive attributes of living in Birchip.
2. Explore opportunities for migration settlement in Birchip.
3. Review land availability on the outskirts of town and identify options for lifestyle block development.
4. Conduct a review of housing stock and create a plan to address needs/gaps.

DYNAMIC INDUSTRY, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT.

1. Offer incentives to attract business and industry to Birchip.
2. Offer workshops to encourage entrepreneurs and social enterprise.
3. Lobby government to consider Buloke Shire as a site for major services or commercial expansion.
4. Conduct a structure plan review to better understand industrial estate possibilities.
5. Explore opportunities for shared retail or professional service spaces.
6. Conduct an agri-business review to ascertain future opportunities for the farming sector.
7. Develop a rural workforce strategy for Buloke Shire.

ACCESS TO RELIABLE AND EFFECTIVE TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORKS.

1. Advocate for improved internet services
2. Advocate for improved mobile phone coverage.

OUR COUNCIL & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND KEY ACTIONS:

ENHANCED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP, INVOLVEMENT AND SPIRIT.

1. Continue to plan and conduct regular Birchip & District Forum meetings.
2. Educate young people on civic involvement and the role of Local Government.
3. Encourage and support youth involvement and leadership through both Council and the Birchip Community Forum.
4. Explore a Forum led community governance model to coordinate community priorities and improve communication and grant co-ordination between community groups.
5. Explore opportunities to strengthen strategic planning, partnering, communication and meeting skills amongst volunteers and community leaders.
6. Encourage the involvement of new volunteers and support and recognise existing volunteers.

COUNCIL ADVOCACY, LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT ON COMMUNITY MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE.

1. Timely enforcement of local laws in relation to feral animals and unsafe or dilapidated houses.
2. Advocate for decentralisation of government services.
3. Advocate for rural models of subsidised childcare that would address lack of childcare availability.
4. Partner with key providers and health networks to advocate for adequate and quality place based health services.

QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE AND IMPROVED RESPONSE TIMES FROM BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL.

1. Actively connect with the Council representative for Birchip to ensure leadership and support from Council with identified community projects.
2. Improved communication/information sharing between towns to better support shire wide collaboration.
3. Improve Buloke Shire customer service (email, phone and in person) quality and response times.

HOW DOES THIS PLAN FIT?

The ten Local Community Plans have informed the development of a 'whole of Buloke Shire' integrated Community Plan. The Buloke Shire Integrated Community Plan will inform Council's planning processes over the next three Council Planning phases up to 2030.




This Plan will also strongly inform the direction of a range of key stakeholder organisations that are connected to Buloke Shire communities.

GETTING INVOLVED

If you would like to get involved in implementing the Birchip & District Local Community Plan contact:

- P. 1300 520 520
E. buloke@buloke.vic.gov.au
A. PO Box 1, Wycheproof VIC 3527
367 Broadway, Wycheproof VIC 3527

 Buloke Shire Council

PUTTING THIS PLAN INTO ACTION

Implementation of the Birchip and District Local Community Plan will be driven by the Birchip Forum.

A key Council representative will attend meetings to enable leadership and support from Council wherever appropriate. An action plan template has been developed to assist with local project planning and review.



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

