

BUILDING BULOKE 2030

COMMUNITY PLAN

BERRIWILLOCK, BIRCHIP, CHARLTON, CULGOA, DONALD, NANDALY,
NULLAWIL, SEA LAKE, WATCHEM, WYCHEPROOF & DISTRICTS



BULOKE SHIRE IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE.

Maybe it's the easy living in open spaces, surrounded by safe, caring communities and a friendly face around every corner. Perhaps it's the affordable living, the fresh air by the lake, at the parks or alongside fellow club members of a community group. It could be the infectious community spirit, the proud sense of belonging or the genuine concern for each other. Whatever the magic ingredient is, there is no denying it's the people of Buloke that make our communities so vibrant.

CONTENTS

ABOUT BUILDING BULOKE 2030	1
HOW DOES THE PLAN FIT?	2
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	3
BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING	3
WHAT WE VALUE	4
OUR VISION FOR 2030	5
ROLE OF COUNCIL	6
OUR PRIORITIES	7
THEME 1: OUR BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	7
THEME 2: OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING	8
THEME 3: OUR ECONOMY	9
THEME 4: OUR COUNCIL & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP	10
OUR COMMUNITY	11
UNDERSTANDING DISADVANTAGE IN BULOKE LGA	15
OUR CURRENT CHALLENGES	16
OUR STRENGTHS	17
FUTURE TRENDS	19
MONITORING AND REVIEWING BUILDING BULOKE 2030	21
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	21
GETTING INVOLVED	21



ABOUT BUILDING BULOKE 2030

Building Buloke 2030 is a long term strategic community plan. It describes the community's aspirations for the shire and captures ideas for achieving this vision. The project was funded by the Federal Government's Building Better Regions Fund which focuses on creating jobs, driving economic growth and building strong regional communities for the future.

The Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan (the Plan) outlines strategic directions for strengthening liveability under four key themes:

1. **Our Built & Natural Environment**
2. **Our Community Wellbeing**
3. **Our Economy**
4. **Our Council & Community Leadership**

These strategic directions were formed through the review of previous local level Community Plans in combination with new ideas from community discussions held throughout early 2018.

This integrated Community Plan brings together the common themes of the 10 individual community plans.

The Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan will assist in shaping the future of the Buloke Shire and enable a collective response to our challenges, aspirations and opportunities to deliver outcomes that benefit the whole community.

While Council has had a leading role in initiating and preparing the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, such as non-government organisations, community groups and Federal and State government agencies are also responsible for the delivery of actions within the Plan. Council recognises the vital role of partners to achieve positive social impact through key actions captured in this plan.



WHERE DOES THE PLAN FIT?

The Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan will inform Council's planning processes over the next three Council Planning phases up to 2030.

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



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

852 PEOPLE SHARED THEIR IDEAS



Community members were provided with a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plans, including:

- an online survey
- community postcards
- drop-in sessions
- focus groups
- community door knocks
- school visits
- street pop-ups
- community workshops and
- draft plan feedback processes.

In total 852 people shared their ideas for the future of the Buloke Shire through a variety of engagement activities:

- 3 people sent an email or submission
- 49 people filled in a post card
- 58 people attended drop-in sessions
- 94 young people attended a focus group at their school
- 106 people filled in a hard copy or online survey
- 112 people attended focus groups
- 120 people shared their thoughts at a door knock
- 129 people shared their thoughts at a street pop-up; and
- 181 people attended a community workshop.

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.

Buloke Shire communities have a long history of developing and implementing local community plans and as a result have successfully achieved a number of key projects over the past ten years such as:

- Infrastructure renewal
- Community transport
- Men's Shed focused projects
- Community leadership; and
- Walking tracks
- Streetscaping
- Tourism infrastructure and events
- Strengthened community connections.

The Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan has captured shire wide needs, aspirations and approaches so communities can continue to work together to achieve the Buloke they would like to see in 2030.





WHAT WE VALUE

Community members shared a wide range of things they valued about living in the Buloke Shire:

- Friendly and caring people who look after one another
- New community members are welcomed and included
- Country living: ease of getting around, open space and freedom
- Safe communities
- Affordable living
- Great schools and teachers
- Good community leadership
- Strong community spirit
- Good care for the elderly
- Local Hospitals
- A wide range of local businesses
- Inviting recreational lakes/waterways
- Excellent sporting and recreation facilities
- Free pool entry
- Young people are returning to live in Buloke; and
- Strong sense of community pride.

"The community cares and is passionate."

"People have a deep sense of pride for our town."

"You are an identity here, not a number."

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

"We have great schools and active community groups."

"Community spirit is thriving and most of us work together for the betterment of the whole community."

"Our sporting communities are strong."

OUR VISION FOR 2030

In 2030 we will be.....

A healthy, socially connected, inclusive and accessible community with a prosperous economy offering services, amenities and activities that match our desired liveability.

OUR BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Buloke has quality, safe and accessible infrastructure valued by the community alongside attractive streetscapes and a protected and celebrated natural environment reflecting Buloke pride.

OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Buloke is a welcoming, well-connected and inclusive community built around social connections for all age groups and backgrounds and access to, as well as ongoing advocacy for, vital services.

OUR ECONOMY

Buloke is an innovative and strong economy with agriculture, small business and industry capitalising on new ideas to provide a range of employment and tourism opportunities backed by the services, connectivity and housing to achieve population stability.

OUR COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Buloke is strongly and dynamically led by a Council demonstrating effective communication to community, active partnerships, authentic advocacy and quality customer service delivering valued community services in a responsible way.



ROLE OF COUNCIL

Buloke Shire Council will play a number of roles in working towards the achievement of the priorities within the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan:

Leader	Planning and providing direction.
Provider	Delivering services and projects.
Partner	Forming partnerships with other stakeholders in the interest of the community.
Facilitator	Bringing groups and interested parties together.
Supporter	To support and advocate for the community.
Regulator	Regulating some activities through legislation.



OUR PRIORITIES

01 OUR BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Buloke has quality, safe and accessible infrastructure valued by the community alongside attractive streetscapes and a protected and celebrated natural environment reflecting Buloke pride.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS:

- Safe, well designed and maintained roads.
- Accessible buildings and spaces.
- Thoughtful footpath and kerb planning.
- Attractive streetscapes and town entrances.
- Increased town pride - buildings and houses that look neat and well cared for.
- Quality infrastructure and assets that are well maintained and used.
- Natural areas are preserved and enjoyed.
- Resources are managed in a sustainable way.
- Yearly hard rubbish removal.
- Community solar schemes that could assist residents to lower their power costs.
- An environmentally aware community.
- A focus on both working against, and managing for, climate change.

STRATEGIES

COUNCIL'S ROLE

1.	Maintain, develop and plan for viable infrastructure and assets that respond to community needs and priorities.	○ Leader ○ Provider
2.	Develop and enhance parks and public spaces so they are welcoming, safe and accessible.	○ Leader ○ Provider
3.	Review built community assets and explore opportunities for shared facilities and resources.	○ Leader ○ Facilitator
4.	Work with key stakeholders to provide a safe road network.	○ Provider ○ Partner ○ Supporter
5.	Work together with communities to beautify and revitalise town centres and entrances.	○ Leader ○ Provider
6.	Explore community initiatives to encourage residents to tidy up their properties and the community (e.g. Tidy Towns/Keep Australia Beautiful, Bindii BBQ).	○ Partner ○ Facilitator
7.	Develop and enhance walking and cycling paths.	○ Leader ○ Provider
8.	Improve accessibility to buildings and public facilities for all community members.	○ Regulator ○ Supporter
9.	Actively manage fruit fly risks and outbreaks and educate community on the management of fruit fly.	○ Partner
10.	Educate, promote and support the community in implementing waste minimisation and management strategies.	○ Leader ○ Provider ○ Regulator
11.	Actively use, promote and support the use of renewable energy sources.	○ Leader ○ Partner ○ Supporter ○ Facilitator
12.	Protect, enhance and manage natural resources, flora and fauna and waterways.	○ Provider ○ Partner

"We need our towns to look good to get people to live here."

"Footpaths and kerbing need improvement, this is important with the ageing population and increase of gopher use."

"Our lake is a terrific asset."

"Our Leisure Centre is widely used for weddings, funerals, sport etc."

"We should share facilities and resources and collaborate on cross-town projects more."

02 OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Buloke is a welcoming, well-connected and inclusive community built around social connections for all age groups and backgrounds and access to, as well as ongoing advocacy for, vital services.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS:

- A well connected and inclusive community that is welcoming of diversity.
- Access to place based health and wellbeing services.
- Continuity of health care.
- Comprehensive and quality place-based GP services.
- Early years focussed activities and events.
- Support for vulnerable residents to access health and wellbeing services.
- Infrastructure and programs to support physical activity.
- A wide range of activities for children and young people.

STRATEGIES

COUNCIL'S ROLE

1.	Work with key stakeholders and the community to lobby for effective place-based health and wellbeing services in the Buloke Shire.	○ Facilitator ○ Supporter
2.	Work with key stakeholders to increase community understanding of the availability of health and wellbeing services across the Buloke Shire.	○ Supporter
3.	Advocate for the increased use and promotion of tele-health options across the Buloke Shire.	○ Supporter
4.	Advocate for a review of the Victorian Patient Transport Rebate.	○ Supporter
5.	Create opportunities that encourage community wellbeing, social connections and inclusion and active and healthy lifestyles.	○ Provider ○ Partner
6.	Work with key stakeholders to address social disadvantage.	○ Provider ○ Supporter
7.	Create resources and processes to welcome new residents to the Buloke Shire.	○ Leader
8.	Continue to support community driven primary prevention responses to key issues of concern, including family violence, community inclusion and mental health.	○ Supporter ○ Partner
9.	Offer a range of non-sport activities, events and leisure opportunities for residents of all ages including children and young people.	○ Provider ○ Partner
10.	Provide a range of learning and skill development opportunities for all stages of life.	○ Supporter
11.	Continue to lobby the government for improved and viable public transport services across the Buloke Shire.	○ Supporter
12.	Work towards population attraction and retention.	○ Leader ○ Partner ○ Facilitator ○ Supporter



OUR PRIORITIES

03 OUR ECONOMY

Buloke is an innovative and strong economy with agriculture, small business and industry capitalising on new ideas to provide a range of employment and tourism opportunities backed by the services, connectivity and housing to achieve population stability.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS:

- New industry and business including entrepreneurs and social enterprise
- Access to affordable (subsidised) childcare
- A range of employment opportunities
- A range of suitable housing options
- Population stability
- Exciting tourism attractions and events
- Telecommunications that are comparable to city counterparts
- Shop-local support from residents

STRATEGIES

COUNCIL'S ROLE

1.	Support the attraction of diverse industries and businesses to the Buloke Shire and provide support for projects that create new jobs.	○ Leader ○ Supporter ○ Partner
2.	Support existing business and industry and actively encourage social enterprise and entrepreneurs.	○ Leader ○ Supporter ○ Partner
3.	Explore solar, recycling and agricultural industry opportunities.	○ Leader ○ Facilitator ○ Supporter
4.	Provide strengthened leadership and resources to drive investment, economic development and tourism.	○ Leader ○ Facilitator ○ Supporter
5.	Explore opportunities for art, culture and history-based tourism.	○ Leader ○ Supporter ○ Partner
6.	Broadly promote Buloke Shire as a great place to live, work, visit and invest.	○ Leader ○ Partner
7.	Advocate for the increased provision of childcare services and rural models of subsidised childcare.	○ Facilitator ○ Supporter
8.	Determine current and future housing needs and explore innovative approaches that could better support a mixture of housing options e.g. units, retirement and rental housing.	○ Leader ○ Supporter ○ Partner
9.	Undertake workforce planning to ensure future access to a flexible and skilled workforce for a range of business and industry.	○ Partner ○ Facilitator
10.	Improve access to telecommunication services.	○ Supporter
11.	Continue to strengthen, promote and support the agricultural industry and innovation to ensure a strong local future for the sector.	○ Facilitator ○ Supporter

"I cannot believe that my child has to go on a waiting list for long day care that only occurs two days a week, how am I supposed to return to work and support my family?"

"Childcare is a huge issue, without childcare we won't be able to attract professionals to town."

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

"Business opportunities could fall out of having good internet."

"We can't attract people or maintain population without an increase in employment."

"Lots of young people are starting to come back to farms."

"There are not enough things here to get travellers to stop."

04 OUR COUNCIL & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Buloke is strongly and dynamically led by a Council demonstrating effective communication to community, active partnerships, authentic advocacy and quality customer service delivering valued community services in a responsible way.

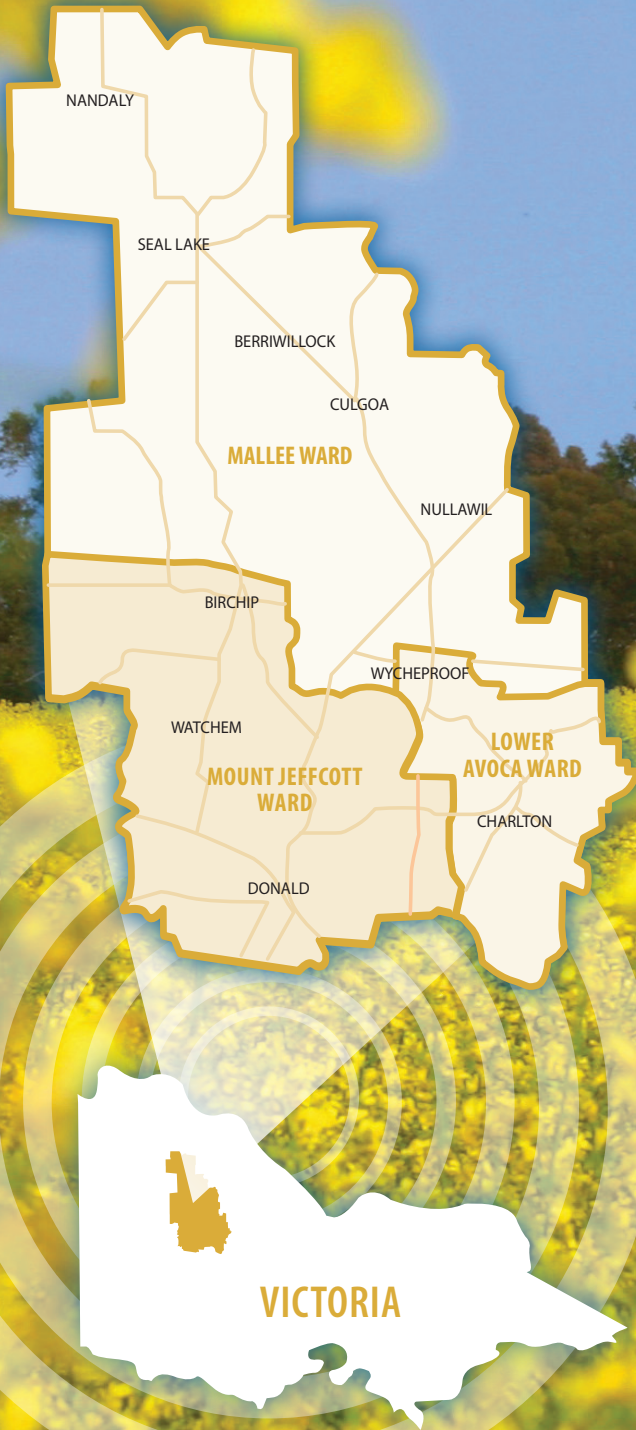
COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS:

- Active partnerships and good communication with Council.
- Dynamic well supported and recognised volunteers.
- Quality customer service and response times.
- Active local laws guidance and support.
- Less red-tape.

STRATEGIES	COUNCIL'S ROLE
1. Encourage and make clear opportunities for community participation in Council decision making.	○ Leader ○ Facilitator
2. Employ a range of effective communication methods to actively and openly share information with community members.	○ Leader
3. Partner with community and town forums to advance agreed community planning priorities and address emerging issues.	○ Leader ○ Partner ○ Facilitator ○ Supporter
4. Work collaboratively to develop and build community leadership skills.	○ Supporter ○ Partner
5. Strive for excellence in customer service delivery.	○ Leader
6. Support, encourage and recognise community volunteers.	○ Provider ○ Supporter
7. Provide leadership to communities to strengthen relationships and collaboration between community groups and across towns.	○ Leader ○ Facilitator
8. Work together with the Victorian Government to better support community innovation, investment and jobs through the reduction of unnecessary red tape.	○ Supporter ○ Partner ○ Regulator
9. Continue to advocate through the Rural Living Campaign for funding structures, rules, regulations and service models that better fit small rural environments.	○ Supporter
10. Inform residents of their obligations under the Community Local Laws in relation to derelict buildings and feral pests.	○ Regulator ○ Supporter



OUR COMMUNITY



The Buloke Shire is located in the north west of Victoria between 210 and 360 kilometres from Melbourne.

The Buloke Shire is bounded by both the Mildura and Swan Hill Rural Councils in the north, Gannawarra and Loddon Shires in the east, Northern Grampians Shire in the south and Yarriambiack Shire in the west.

The Buloke Shire is a predominantly rural area. The main townships are Birchip, Charlton, Donald, Sea Lake and Wycheproof. The Shire also comprises the smaller townships of Berriwillock, Culgoa, Nandaly, Nullawil and Watchem. The Buloke Shire encompasses a total land area of 8,000 square kilometres and is approximately 140 kilometres long and 60 kilometres wide.

The two main highways servicing the Buloke Shire are the Calder Highway and the Sunraysia Highway. Both highways run north and south through the Shire. Land is used largely for agriculture, particularly grain (wheat, oats and barley) production and sheep grazing.

The Buloke Shire is named after the 'buloke' or 'bullock' tree, 'allocasuarina luehmanni' which is common in the area and the feature of the Buloke Shire logo.

POPULATION

BULOKE 2016 **6,201**

VICTORIA 2016 **5,926,624**

BULOKE 2011 **6,384**

BULOKE 2016 **51 YEARS**

VICTORIA 2016 **37 YEARS**

BULOKE 2011 **48 YEARS**

TOTAL POPULATION

- BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE TOTAL POPULATION IN THE BULOKE LGA

DECLINED BY
183
PERSONS

FROM
6,384
TO
6,201

MEDIAN AGE OF PERSONS

- BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE MEDIAN AGE OF PERSONS IN THE BULOKE LGA

INCREASED FROM
48 TO 51
YEARS

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016 Community Profiles and QuickStats

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Total Population	6,465	5,858*	5,518	5,215	4,925
Pop. in private dwellings	6,378	5,770	5,432	5,128	4,836
Households	2,858	2,657	2,560	2,464	2,350
Average household size	2.23	2.17	2.12	2.08	2.06

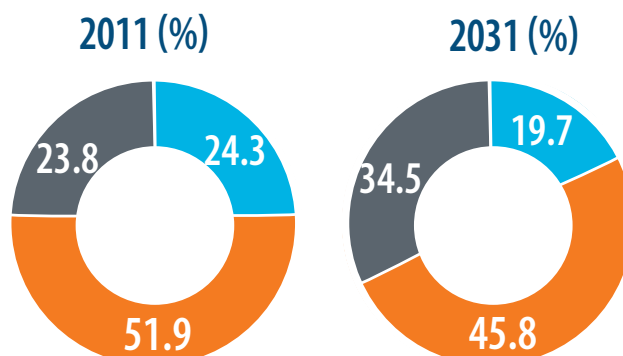
* significantly the actual 2016 Census recorded population for Buloke Shire was 6,201, greater than the 2016 projected population of 5,858 indicating less population decline than predicted.

CHANGE IN POPULATION

	2011-2031	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26	2026-31
Net change	-1,540	-607	-340	-303	-290
Average annual change	-1.4%	-2.0%	-1.2%	-1.1%	-1.1%

AGE PROJECTIONS

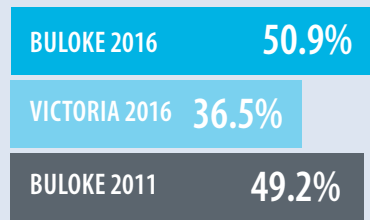
- 0-19
- 20-64
- 65+



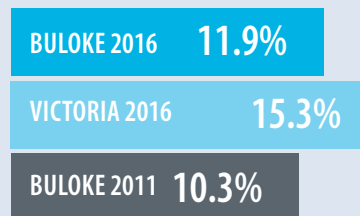
By 2031 it is projected that the number of residents in Buloke aged 65+ will grow by 10% and the number of residents aged 0-19 years old and 20-64 years old will each decrease by 5%.

Source: Victoria in Future, 2016, Buloke Shire Profile.

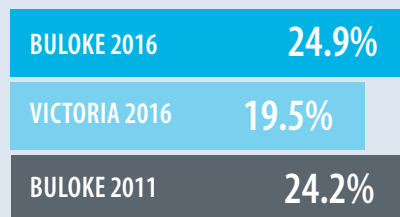
FAMILY



COUPLE FAMILY WITHOUT CHILDREN
 - BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE PROPORTION OF COUPLE FAMILIES WITHOUT CHILDREN IN THE BULOKE LGA



ONE PARENT FAMILY
 - BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE PROPORTION OF ONE PARENT FAMILIES IN THE BULOKE LGA

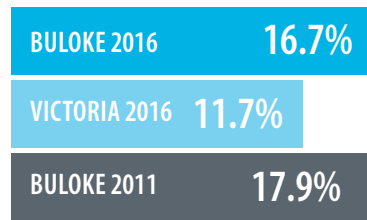


EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF COUPLE FAMILIES (BOTH NOT WORKING)
 - BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE PROPORTION OF COUPLE FAMILIES WITH BOTH PARENTS NOT WORKING

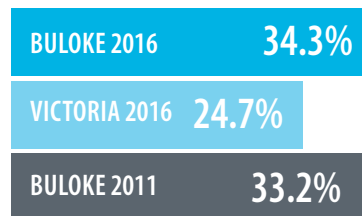
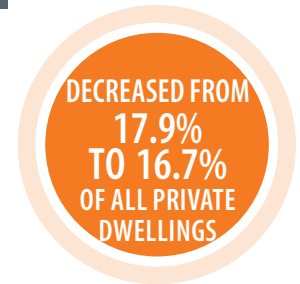


Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016 Community Profiles and QuickStats

DWELLINGS



UNOCCUPIED PRIVATE DWELLINGS
 - BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE PROPORTION OF UNOCCUPIED PRIVATE DWELLINGS



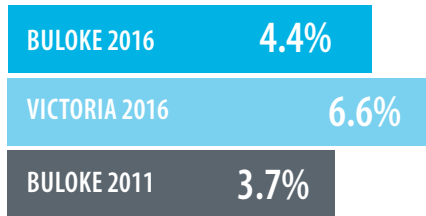
SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS (OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS)
 - BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE PROPORTION OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS THAT WERE SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016 Community Profiles and QuickStats

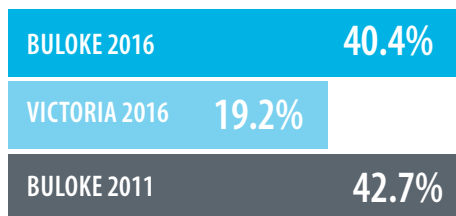


WORK AND INCOME



UNEMPLOYED

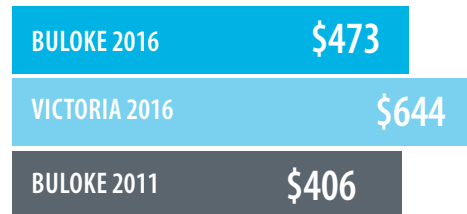
- DRAWING ON THE 2016 CENSUS OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO REPORTED BEING IN THE LABOUR FORCE AND AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER 4.4% REPORTED BEING UNEMPLOYED COMPARED TO ONLY 3.7% IN 2011.



DID VOLUNTARY WORK THROUGH AN ORGANISATION OR GROUP (LAST 12 MONTHS)

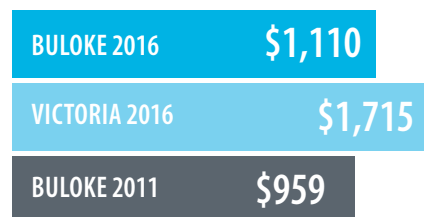
- ACCORDING TO THE 2016 CENSUS 40.4% OF THE POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER DID VOLUNTARY WORK THROUGH AN ORGANISATION OR GROUP (COMPARED TO 42.7% IN 2011).

UNEMPLOYMENT HAS INCREASED FROM 3.7%₍₂₀₁₁₎ TO 4.4%₍₂₀₁₆₎



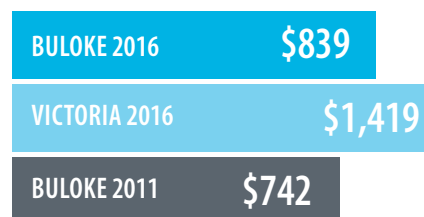
MEDIAN TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME (\$/WEEKLY)

- BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE MEDIAN TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME IN THE BULOKE LGA



MEDIAN TOTAL FAMILY INCOME (\$/WEEKLY) -

- BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE MEDIAN TOTAL FAMILY INCOME IN THE BULOKE LGA INCREASED FROM \$959 TO \$1,110.



MEDIAN TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME (\$/WEEKLY) -

- BETWEEN THE 2011 AND 2016 CENSUS REPORTING PERIODS THE MEDIAN TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE BULOKE LGA INCREASED FROM \$742 TO \$839.



UNDERSTANDING DISADVANTAGE IN THE BULOKE LGA

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) provides summary measures derived from the Census to assess different aspects of socio-economic conditions by geographic area. There are four indexes to allow ranking of regions and areas for social and economic well-being in each region.

- 1** Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD): The IRSD summarises variables that indicate relative disadvantage. A low score on this index indicates a high proportion of relatively disadvantaged people in an area.
- 2** Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD): The IRSAD summarises variables that indicate either relative advantage or disadvantage.
- 3** Index of Economic Resources (IER): The IER summarises variables relating to the financial aspects of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage.
- 4** Index of Education and Occupation (IEO): The IEO summarises variables relating to the educational and occupational aspects of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage.



Each of these indexes summarises different aspects of the socio-economic conditions of people living in an area and each is based upon a different set of social and economic information from the Census.

For Buloke there is little change in 'scores' across the four indexes between the 2011 and 2016 Census periods.

Based on 2011 Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) figures the Buloke LGA was the 22nd most disadvantaged LGA of 79 LGAs in Victoria moving to be the 24th most disadvantaged LGA based on the SEIFA measure of Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage in 2016.

Applying the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) the Buloke LGA ranked as the 22nd most disadvantaged LGA in Victoria in 2011. This rank increased slightly to 23rd for the 2016 IRSAD data.

There is an increasing difference between the minimum and maximum scores for the Statistical Areas highlighting that the 'gap' between the disadvantaged and the remainder of the community increased between the 2011 and 2016 Census reporting periods for all Indexes with the exception of the Index of Education and Occupation (IEO). This reflects a nationwide trend.

OUR CURRENT CHALLENGES

The community planning process asked community members to identify the current challenges that they face. The most predominant issues/challenges highlighted by community members across the Buloke Shire were:

- Ageing community
- Declining population
- Poor telecommunications (internet & mobile phone)
- Ageing community infrastructure/management of infrastructure
- Vacant, unused or underused buildings
- Keeping small towns alive and vibrant
- Road maintenance/safety
- Tired streetscapes/town entrances
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of new industry/business
- High number of lone households
- Lack of housing options
- Youth retention
- Attracting tourism
- Lack of access to childcare services
- Accessing health and wellbeing services
- Continuity of health and wellbeing services
- Attracting and retaining GP's
- Maintaining and increasing place-based health and wellbeing services
- Travel required to access specialist medical services
- Dealing with government red-tape
- High cost of rates
- Fruit fly
- Volunteer fatigue
- Access to public transportation
- Providing support for vulnerable residents; and
- Ensuring residents across all socio-economic backgrounds are socially connected.



"We need more civic pride-things don't look so pretty around here."

"The roads are shocking; the big trucks are ruining them."

"There aren't enough things here to get travellers to stop."

"We have too many built assets, it beggars belief why every committee effectively has its own building."

OUR STRENGTHS

There are many great things about living and working within the Buloke Shire.

We are amongst the safest communities in Victoria. We are almost amongst the most socially engaged communities within Victoria with many of our residents participating in sport, attending community events and feeling valued by society.

WE ARE A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE

74.1% OF RESIDENTS AGED 18 OR OVER FELT VERY SAFE WALKING ALONE AFTER DARK (COMPARED TO 53% OF VICTORIANS) GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY, ABS (2014)

Source: Social Health Atlas of Victorian Local Government Areas, Public Health Information Development Unit (2017)

A RATE OF **0.7** DRUG USAGE AND POSSESSION OFFENCES PER 1,000 POPULATION (COMPARED TO THE VICTORIAN RATE OF 5.1 PER 1,000)

A RATE OF **37.3** TOTAL OFFENCES PER 1,000 POPULATION (COMPARED TO THE VICTORIAN RATE OF 82.6 PER 1,000)

Source: Corporate Statistics, Victoria Police (Sept 2014–Oct 2015); Estimated Resident Population (ERP), Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014)

WE ARE AN AFFORDABLE PLACE TO LIVE

19% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE BULOKE SHIRE WITH RENTAL STRESS (COMPARED TO 27.2% OF VICTORIAN HOUSEHOLDS)

Source: ABS Census (2016) Social Health Atlas of Victorian Local Government Areas, 2012, Public Health Information Development Unit (2017).

92.9% OF RENTAL HOUSING IN THE BULOKE SHIRE IS AFFORDABLE (COMPARED TO 19.1% OF VICTORIAN HOUSEHOLDS)

Source: Affordable lettings by LGA, Housing and Community Building, Department of Health and Human Services (September quarter 2015).

A RATE OF **1.3** HOMELESS PEOPLE (ESTIMATED) PER 1,000 POPULATION (COMPARED TO THE VICTORIAN RATE OF 4.0 PER 1,000)

Source: Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011).



92% OF RENTAL HOUSING IS AFFORDABLE



74.1% OF RESIDENTS AGED 18 OR OVER FELT VERY SAFE WALKING ALONE AFTER DARK



A RATE OF **0.7** DRUG USAGE AND POSSESSION OFFENCES PER 1,000 POPULATION

WE ARE A SOCIALLY ENGAGED COMMUNITY

40.4% OF BULOKE SHIRE RESIDENTS ARE VOLUNTEERS (COMPARED TO 19.2% OF VICTORIANS)

Source: 2016 Census.

71.7% OF BULOKE RESIDENTS WERE DEFINITELY ABLE TO GET HELP FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS (COMPARED TO 54.5% OF VICTORIANS)

61.8% OF BULOKE RESIDENTS FEEL VALUED BY SOCIETY (COMPARED TO 52.9% OF VICTORIANS)

82.6% OF BULOKE RESIDENTS ATTENDED A LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENT (COMPARED TO 55.7% OF VICTORIANS)

50.2% OF BULOKE RESIDENTS ARE MEMBERS OF A SPORTS GROUP (COMPARED TO 26.5% OF VICTORIANS)
- BSC RANKED 1ST OF THE 79 VICTORIAN LGAS

29.8% OF BULOKE RESIDENTS ARE MEMBERS OF A RELIGIOUS GROUP (COMPARED TO 17.9% OF VICTORIANS)
- BSC RANKED 2ND OF THE 79 VICTORIAN LGAS

Source: Victorian Population Health Survey, Department of Health and Human Services (2011).



WE CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

12% OF RESIDENTS (740 PEOPLE) IN THE BULOKE SHIRE PROVIDE UNPAID CARE FOR A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY (2016 CENSUS).

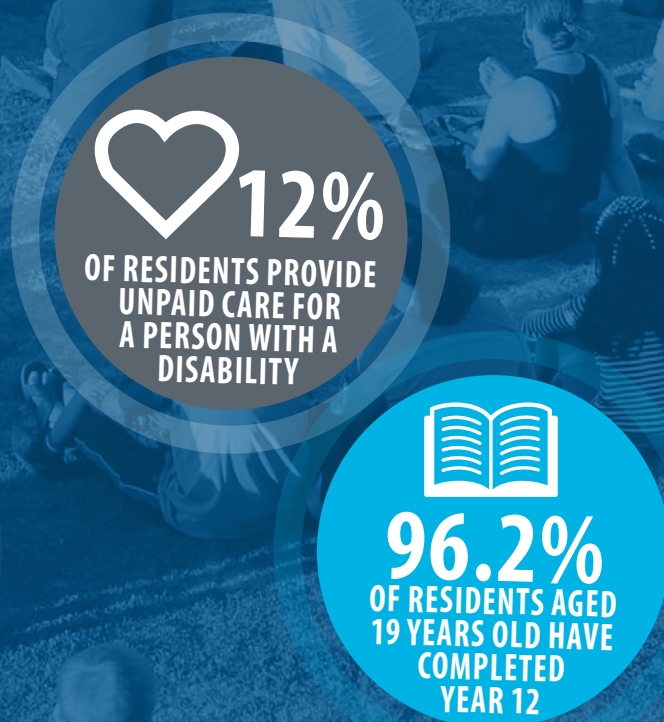
OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED IN EDUCATION

94.9% YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE BULOKE SHIRE ATTAINING NATIONAL MINIMUM LITERACY STANDARDS (COMPARED TO 92.0% OF VICTORIANS)

97.9% YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE BULOKE SHIRE ATTAINING NATIONAL MINIMUM NUMERACY STANDARDS (COMPARED TO 95.6% OF VICTORIANS)

96.2% OF BULOKE RESIDENTS AGED 19 YEARS OLD HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 (COMPARED TO 88.2% OF VICTORIANS)

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, extracted from the Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS) portal, Department of Education and Training (2014).



FUTURE TRENDS

Looking towards 2030 communities across the Buloke Shire identified a number of future challenges and trends that they felt were important to plan for:

COMMUNITY

The 2016 Census highlighted that the median age in Buloke Shire has increased to 51 years, up from 48 years in the previous Census (2011). By comparison, the Victorian median age is 37 years. Consultation revealed a number of concerns for Buloke Shire's ageing communities such as: isolation, suitable step-down housing, transport to specialist appointments, access to place-based health services, suitable aged care services and facilities and gopher friendly communities.



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

DECLINING POPULATION

Between the 2011 and 2016 Census reporting periods the total population of the Buloke Local Government Area (LGA) has declined by 183 persons. Victoria in Future population projections suggest a trend of a 1% decline per Census period leading up to 2030. During Buloke 2030 consultations community members highlighted their concerns about continued population decline and its associated challenges, including: school closures, viability of small business, decline in place-based health and wellbeing services, access to employment opportunities, access to volunteers and having the numbers required to field sports teams.



"We are peddling as hard as we can."

"Our main street is empty; the history is going."



"Corporation farms means families are leaving, farms are bigger and buying lots of things in bulk outside of the town."

SERVICES

Buloke communities highlighted the change in services they have experienced over the past several decades included amongst these were bank, school, store and pub closures. Consultation revealed the heightened concern about future access to services locally, particularly with the projected population decline for the Shire. Residents particularly revealed their unease about future access to place-based health and wellbeing services in the Buloke Shire. Without adequate place-based health and wellbeing services residents felt it would be extremely difficult to attract new residents to the area and there is a risk that existing residents may move to larger centres where these services are readily available.

The loss of community stores, pubs and other small business is a major concern for a number of small towns across the Shire. These services support social connections and the economy and are essential for the liveability of smaller towns.



"Schools, government and banks have disappeared or gotten smaller."

"We know we are small and likely the first to go, but we are nothing without our hospital, especially with our ageing population."

LARGER FARMS

Consultation revealed that the traditional family farm is growing in size with residents noting a number of potential challenges including larger machinery moving on local roads, less farming families 'on the land' and corporate agriculture 'buying-in' goods and services from outside the area. For the latter two in particular the ramifications of further declining population is particularly significant, this was compounded when the loss was of 'long-time locals' – with such instances noted as especially difficult.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Buloke Shire encompasses a total land area of 8,000 square kilometres, much of which is used for agriculture. Agriculture is the main economic driver in Buloke and the community fears that climate change presents risks for both farms and broader communities such as: extreme weather and heat, storms, bushfires, decrease in farming viability and subsequent economy and community physical and mental health. With the physical health of older community members a particular concern during heatwaves.

Consultation revealed community interest for both enhanced support for farmers and in focussing on actions that could reduce Buloke Shire's impact on climate change such as farming innovation, recycling, water use, solar etc.



"We are the centre for agriculture in the Mallee."

INCREASED RELIANCE ON TECHNOLOGY

Technology is essential in the Buloke Shire and consultation revealed that it is required not only for day to day living but also for business, agriculture, social and education purposes. The speed of technological change presents challenges for rural communities. Consultation revealed a number of concerns about current telecommunication systems: mobile phone black spots, lack of access to NBN, slow internet speeds, internet dropping out, boosters required to access internet signals, students not being able to access internet for their studies and cost of internet access. Reliable, efficient and affordable mobile phone and internet services are paramount for the future liveability of Buloke Shire.



"Internet access is a challenge out of town, consistency of service is poor and as more people get connected it is getting worse."

"The internet is frustratingly slow-this is a big negative."

DISADVANTAGE

2016 Census figures highlight an increase in the number of unemployed people residing in the Buloke Shire compared to 2011. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) IRSAD data ranks the Buloke Shire as the 23rd most disadvantaged local government area in the Victoria. In addition, SEIFA emphasises the growing gap in the Buloke Shire between the disadvantaged and the advantaged.

Average weekly rental figures from 2016 census data highlights the rental affordability of the area which could draw people with limited resources. Consultation revealed community concern around inclusion of residents from varying socio-economic backgrounds, the high number of lone person households across the Shire and the challenges of access to services for those experiencing vulnerability and or disadvantage.



"If you don't have a car it can be isolating, this is compounded if you have medical needs."

"A lot of people here are on welfare, if we can do our best we can help them to stay here."



MONITORING AND REVIEWING BUILDING BULOKE 2030

As we move towards 2030, we will need to review how we're working towards our vision and goals and continue to check that the priorities remain relevant to community. We will do this by reviewing the actions of the Plan annually and providing regular progress reports to the community via forum groups, newsletters, print and social media.



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



GETTING INVOLVED

If you would like to hear more about the progress of the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan or to get involved in implementing a Local Community Plan in your community 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

"Our place on the map is the only thing that makes us unique. We should keep our rivalry for the sporting grounds and work together to promote business opportunities and create shared events and tourism."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Buloke Shire Council would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their thoughts and ideas during the development of the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan.