

CHARLTON & DISTRICT

LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The Friendly River Town





BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The Charlton community led by the Charlton Forum updated their community plan 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 Charlton Community Plan has informed this renewed plan which has also captured recent consultation to shape the Buloke 2030 'whole of shire' integrated plan focusing on livability and economic development in the current rural environment.

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

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

The Charlton & 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 Charlton and District.

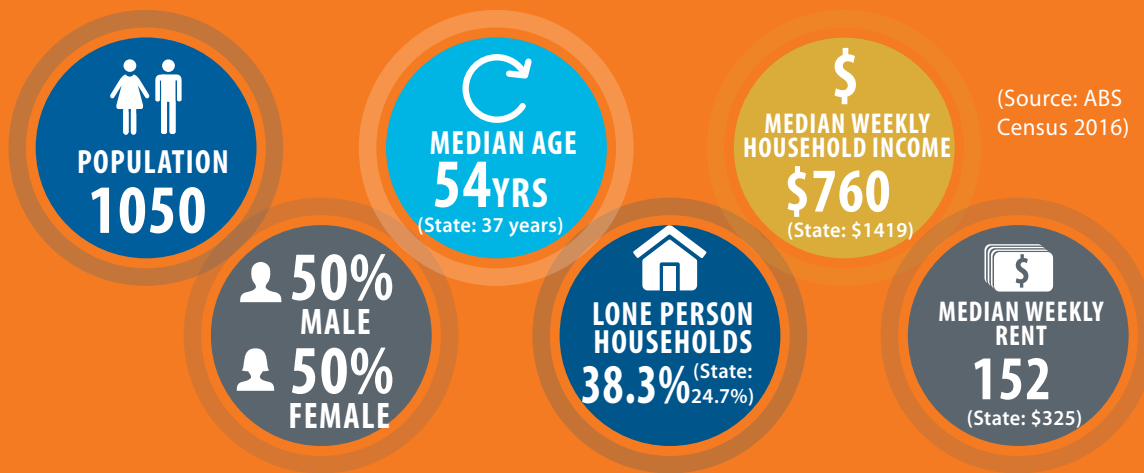
A Community Plan describes the community's long term vision and aspirations and is a way of directly involving residents in future planning.

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

- The Men's Shed
- The Pre-school upgrade
- Re-flooring of the Golden Grains Museum
- The Swimming Pool upgrade
- The Travellers Rest Managers Cabin/information Centre
- Development of a Charlton Website
- River walking trail
- Supper room kitchen and hall air conditioning upgrade
- Charlton Courthouse project
- Charlton 2020 project

OUR COMMUNITY

Charlton is located in North Central Victoria on the Calder Highway midway between Melbourne and Mildura, within the Buloke Shire. It is situated in the valley of the Avoca River in the last of the foothills of the Victorian highlands.



OUR STRENGTHS

- ▣ Friendly and caring community
- ▣ Everyone knows everyone
- ▣ Small and pretty country town
- ▣ Welcoming to new people
- ▣ Strong community spirit
- ▣ Inclusive

"We are good at looking after people and getting them involved".

Charlton is a strong small community".

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

OUR ASSETS

- ▣ The Rex
- ▣ Golden Grains Museum
- ▣ Shire Hall
- ▣ Hospital
- ▣ Community Bank
- ▣ Senior Citizen Clubrooms
- ▣ Harness Racing Track
- ▣ Police/CFA/Ambulance
- ▣ The Charlton P12 College
- ▣ North Central Trade Training Centre
- ▣ Charlton Traffic Safety Education Centre
- ▣ St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- ▣ Kindergarten and early child learning centre
- ▣ The Travellers Rest
- ▣ The Gordon Park Caravan Park
- ▣ Sealed Airstrip with emergency lighting
- ▣ Rotary and Gordon Parks
- ▣ Council Offices
- ▣ Great sporting facilities for football, cricket, netball, golf, tennis, basketball, bowling, badminton, croquet and hockey.

"The Travellers Rest is a huge asset for our community".

"We are lucky to have small classroom sizes in Charlton".

OUR CURRENT CHALLENGES

- ▣ Flooding
- ▣ Lack of Childcare
- ▣ Lack of employment
- ▣ Ageing population
- ▣ Declining population
- ▣ Lack of industrial land
- ▣ Shop Local
- ▣ Attracting professional people
- ▣ Poor Internet speed
- ▣ Mobile service black spots
- ▣ Uncertainty of visiting services
- ▣ NDIS uncertainty
- ▣ The Rex toilets and backstage need upgrading
- ▣ No hydro pool available locally
- ▣ Lack of shops open on weekends
- ▣ Lack of non-sport activities for Young people
- ▣ Footpaths
- ▣ Flood levee funding
- ▣ Lack of transport for medical services
- ▣ People moving away to larger centres due to medical issues
- ▣ Shire rates are high
- ▣ Lack of units
- ▣ Lack of retirement accommodation
- ▣ Lack of tourism identity
- ▣ No neighbourhood house
- ▣ Promotion of tourism
- ▣ Road upkeep/repairs
- ▣ Storm water/drainage
- ▣ Lack of x-ray services
- ▣ On-call doctor support
- ▣ Storage at Shire hall
- ▣ Attracting volunteers
- ▣ Volunteer fatigue
- ▣ Getting local support for events

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

"Buloke has an identity crisis in terms of tourism-we aren't an Echuca or Grampians-who are we?"

"We are very disadvantaged not having a Neighbourhood House here in Charlton".

OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

Looking Towards 2030

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

- ▣ Ageing community
- ▣ Declining population
- ▣ Declining services
- ▣ Farms are getting larger
- ▣ Increased reliance on technology

"Technology is so important for the future, until 12 months ago all we could do was hotspot our phone".

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

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 Charlton Community Plan 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. Seek funding for a storage shed for the Town Hall.
2. Seek funding to upgrade toilets and backstage facilities at the Rex.
3. Seek funding to extend bike/walking paths along the river.
4. Replace Father Goi's bridge.
5. Explore options for raising the height of the weir to stop leakage and increase enjoyment of the river.
6. Explore further development of the Travellers rest, ensuring it is maintained to a high standard so that it continues to attract visitors.
7. Develop a footpath plan for Charlton that will address areas of need including kerbing and increase gopher friendliness.
8. Improve town lighting to ensure adequate lighting at night.
9. Development of a drainage plan for Charlton to address drainage issues.
10. Advocate/work in partnership with Council and Vic Roads to ensure a safe road network.
11. Explore the development of a closed lane/boardwalk at the back of the shops to capitalise on the river.
12. Seek funding for a new fire station in Charlton.
13. Seek funding to upgrade Shire Hall chairs and tables.
14. Explore the feasibility of a museum complex at the Rex to house memorabilia.
15. Implement the Charlton Park redevelopment (realignment of Ovals).
16. Investigate the location of older burials at the Charlton cemetery, extend the lawn burial area and seek funding for an accessible unisex toilet facility.
17. Seek funding for the expansion and repair of the Charlton Golden Grains museum.
18. Seek funding to upgrade the road to Mt. Dooboobetic Lookout and provide seating and interpretive signage.
19. Seek funding for the addition of a student toilet block and extra class room for the Driver Education Facility.
20. Seek funding for landscaping development of the Charlton Swimming Pool and a BBQ for community use.
21. Explore funding opportunities for solar heating for the Charlton Swimming Pool.

BEAUTIFICATION OF STREETScape AND TOWN ENTRANCES.

1. Enhance the Charlton Streetscape for both residents and visitors.
2. Work with stakeholders to shape and prune trees in the main street so that they are uniform and safe.
3. Explore ways to enhance the look of empty shop fronts in the main street e.g. displays, lighting etc.
4. Replace rubbish & recycle bins in the retail area with more aesthetically pleasing bins (as per streetscape plan).
5. Replace Desert Ash trees along the main road (Beautify Charlton project).

PROTECT, MANAGE AND IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY.

1. Maintain trees and control weeds on council, crown and private land with a focus on safety and access for farmers and transport.
2. Maintain water in Wooroonook Lake, control weeds and maintain water quality.
3. Continue the redevelopment of the Charlton Community Forest with additional plantings.

OUR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: AND KEY ACTIONS

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

1. Seek continuing funding and support the Community Car Service.
2. Work together with Council to prepare for the local roll out of the NDIS.

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

1. Work in partnership with Council as it provides library services in Charlton.
2. Advocate for funding for a Resource Centre in Charlton that could house tourist information, agency and library services.
3. Work together with young people and the wider community to offer a range of non-sport activities on a regular basis.
4. Create a yearly early years program of activities that rotate around the Buloke Shire.
5. Create a campaign to boost the number of Charlton residents attending local events.
6. Create a newcomer pack for new residents.

A HEALTHY, SAFE AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY.

1. Create a yearly sport exhibition 'come and try' weekend to get more people involved in sport.
2. Explore lengthening the pool season and opening hours.
3. Advocate for an annual Hard Rubbish service.
4. Offer subsidised accommodation for health care professionals.
5. Advocate for improved promotion and use of tele-health options in the Buloke Shire.
6. Explore the feasibility of a Hydrotherapy pool in Charlton that could cater for the needs of all residents of the Buloke Shire.
7. Maintain comprehensive and quality GP services in Charlton.
8. Review local availability of allied health and wellbeing services to ascertain current availability, gaps and future needs.

OUR ECONOMY

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: AND KEY ACTIONS

INCREASED TOURIST ACTIVITY IN CHARLTON & DISTRICT.

1. Create a branding/tourism identity for Charlton.
2. Provide local representation for the Buloke Tourism Board.
3. Explore events that could draw visitors to Charlton and district e.g. triathlon, archery, fishing, rodeo, etc.
4. Develop an art trail in Charlton e.g. chainsaw statues, bollards, aboriginal artwork etc.
5. Create a Vintage Trail Map for Buloke Shire and promote Charlton's vintage shops.
6. Advocate for increased economic development/tourism resourcing across the Buloke Shire.

PROMOTE THE LIVEABILITY OF CHARLTON & DISTRICT.

1. Broadly promote the benefits of living in Charlton-promote Charlton as the gateway to the Wimmera/Mallee.
2. Advocate for rural models of subsidised childcare that would address lack of childcare availability.
3. Conduct a review of housing stock and create a plan to address needs/gaps.

DYNAMIC INDUSTRY, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT.

1. Explore/educate community on intensive agriculture and farm diversification opportunities.
2. Work with business to create a shared weekend schedule so some businesses can be open on weekends for both local and passing trade.
3. Develop a program (with Chamber of Commerce) for the promotion of local businesses and seek specialised marketing advice.
4. Create a shop-local campaign and a customer service charter to boost local trade in Charlton.
5. Reinvigorate the Hobson's Bay Friendship alliance.
6. Explore and develop incentives to attract industry and new business to Charlton.
7. Investigate solar farming and other new industry opportunities.
8. Explore recycling industry opportunities.
9. Increase the availability of industrial land to encourage new industry and business.

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 Charlton & District Forum meetings.
2. Recognise and support existing volunteers and create a campaign to encourage the involvement of new volunteers, especially younger residents.
3. Enhance the youth group structure to increase membership (including adult membership) and to foster youth leadership, voice and civic engagement.
4. Explore programs/initiatives that could strengthen the leadership skills of Buloke Shire residents (including young leaders).

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

1. Actively connect with the Council representative for Charlton to ensure leadership and support from Council with identified community projects.
2. Advocate to government for adequate funding for the flood mitigation levee.
3. Advocate for decentralisation of government services.

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

1. Improve Buloke Shire customer service quality and response times e.g. works requests.
2. Advocate for a Council service officer to offer local face to face support one day per week in Charlton.



GETTING INVOLVED

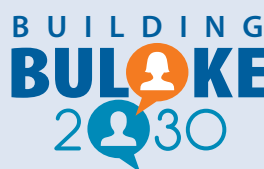
If you would like to get involved in implementing the Charlton & District Local Community Plan contact:

- 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

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.



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

PUTTING THIS PLAN INTO ACTION

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