

Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision

Version 1 – October 2025 (Working Document – Undesigned Version)

Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision

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 its the people of Buloke that make our communities so vibrant.

About the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision

The Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision reflects the Buloke Shire community's aspirations:

"In 2040 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".

The Vision outlines community priorities for strengthening liveability under four key themes:

THEME 1: 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.

THEME 2: 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.

THEME 3: 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.

THEME 4: 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.

These themes were initially formed in 2020 through the review of Community Plans in early 2018 and remain aligned with the ten Community Plans reviewed in 2024.

Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision 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 a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision, 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 Vision. Council recognises the vital role of partners to achieve positive social impact through key actions captured in this plan.

Where does the Vision fit?

The Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision will inform Council's strategic planning processes and guide the direction of a range of key stakeholder organisations and groups that are connected to the Buloke Shire communities.

{Insert Graphic}

Role of Council

Buloke Shire Council will play a number of roles in working towards the achievement of the priorities within the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision:

Good Governance	Providing good governance, as well as making local laws and policies for the benefit and wellbeing of our communities.
Service Provider	Providing services including waste collection, services to support families, libraries and many other community services and programs.
Infrastructure Provider	Provides and maintains the local road/footpath/cycle network, community buildings, open spaces and recreational facilities
Planner	Works to understand the current and future needs of the municipality and to set the overall direction for Buloke through long-term planning which guides Council activities and allocation of resources.
Advocate	Council uses a range of methods to advocate on behalf of the community, depending on the issue. Advocacy can include submissions, regional partnership groups and forums, discussions with Ministers and lobbying.
Leader, Capacity Builder, Partner and Broker	Works in collaboration with a range of stakeholders to improve outcomes for our residents and municipality.

More specifically, the key roles relating to delivering on the priorities in the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision are:

To **deliver** programs and services to our communities.

Working with others in **partnership** where we have a shared responsibility or influence.

As an **advocate** to key decision makers on behalf of our communities.

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, walking tracks, community transport, streetscaping, Men's Shed focused projects, tourism infrastructure and events, community leadership and strengthened community connections.

Community Engagement

In 2020, community members were provided with a wide range of opportunities to contribute to Building Buloke 2030, including:

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

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

Throughout 2024-25 the communities of Berriwillock, Birchip, Charlton, Culgoa, Donald, Nandaly, Nullawil, Sea Lake, Watchem and Wycheproof have revisited their Community Plans and reaffirmed the themes and priorities of the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision to ensure alignment with their aspirations.

A Community Summit held in early 2025 with representatives from the Community Forums provided a further opportunity to review the Community Plans against one another and engage in valuable shire-wide discussions about their similarities, differences and the many opportunities which each present.

Themes and Priorities

THEME 1 - 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

PRIORITIES	COUNCIL'S ROLE
1. Maintain, develop and plan for viable infrastructure and assets that respond to community needs and priorities.	Deliver
2. Develop and enhance parks and public spaces so they are welcoming, safe and accessible.	Deliver
3. Review built community assets and explore opportunities for shared facilities and resources.	Partner
4. Work with key stakeholders to provide a safe road network.	Partner
5. Work together with communities to beautify and revitalise town centres and entrances.	Deliver
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
7. Develop and enhance walking and cycling paths.	Deliver
8. Improve accessibility to buildings and public facilities for all community members.	Partner
10. Educate, promote and support the community in implementing waste minimisation and management strategies.	Partner
11. Protect, enhance and manage natural resources, flora and fauna and waterways.	Advocate

THEME 2 - 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.

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

THEME 3 - 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

PRIORITIES	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.	Partner
2. Support existing business and industry and actively encourage social enterprise and entrepreneurs.	Partner
3. Explore solar, recycling and agricultural industry opportunities.	Partner
4. Provide strengthened leadership and resources to drive investment, economic development and tourism.	Deliver
5. Explore opportunities for art, culture and history-based tourism.	Partner
6. Broadly promote Buloke Shire as a great place to live, work, visit and invest.	Deliver
7. Advocate for the increased provision of childcare services and rural models of subsidised childcare.	Advocate
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.	Partner
9. Undertake workforce planning to ensure future access to a flexible and skilled workforce for a range of business and industry.	Partner
10. Improve access to telecommunication services.	Advocate
11. Continue to strengthen, promote and support the agricultural industry and innovation to ensure a strong local future for the sector.	Advocate

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

Monitoring and Reviewing the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision

As we move towards 2040, we will need to review how we're working towards our vision and goals and continue to check that the priorities align with those of our community.

"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."

Getting Involved

If you would like to hear more about the progress of the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision or to get involved in implementing your local Community Plan contact:

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