



Council Meeting **Agenda**

Wednesday 5
November 2025

Commencing at 5:30 pm

Wycheproof Supper Room
367 Broadway, Wycheproof

Jenna Allan
Acting Chief Executive Officer



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1 COUNCIL WELCOME AND STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**WELCOME**

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley will welcome all in attendance.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mayor Cr Alan Getley will acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay our respects to their Elders and to the Elders from other communities who may be here today.

2 RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES**3 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with Section 130 (2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* Councillors who have a conflict of interest in respect of a matter being considered at this meeting, must

- a) Disclose the conflict of interest in the manner required by the Council's Governance Rules 2022; and
- b) Exclude themselves from the decision-making process in relation to that matter, including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee, and any action in relation to the matter.

Disclosure must occur immediately before the matter is considered or discussed.

4 GENERAL BUSINESS**4.1 MANAGEMENT REPORTS****4.1.1 BUILDING A BETTER BULOKE 2040: COMMUNITY VISION**

Author's Title: Director Community Development

Directorate: Community Development

File No: CM/13/09

Relevance to Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Strategic Objective:	Vibrant and connected communities Strengthen community activity and connections
	Council leadership and engagement Consulting with and informing our community

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision for consideration and adoption by Council.

SUMMARY

In accordance with Section 88 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan has been revised to form the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision: '*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*'. It is noted that the final graphic designed version of the document will be uploaded to Council's website on Monday 3 November 2025 ahead of the Council meeting scheduled for Wednesday 5 November 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopts the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision.
2. Notes that no changes have been made to the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision in response to the four (4) submissions received during the public exhibition period.
3. Provides a written response to all four (4) community members and stakeholders who submitted feedback on the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision.

DISCUSSION

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, all Victorian Councils must maintain a Community Vision with an outlook of at least 10 years. The Community Vision describes the long-term community's aspirations for the future of the municipality.

Buloke Shire Council's first ten-year Community Vision was developed in 2018 as part of the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan.

In March and April 2025, community members were invited to participate in surveys, discussions and workshops to develop the Council Plan 2025-2029. This engagement process included a Community Summit with members of the ten township Community Planning Forums representing Berriwillock, Birchip, Charlton, Culgoa, Donald, Nandaly, Nullawil, Sea Lake, Watchem and Wycheeproof.

The objective of the Summit was to introduce the Council Plan and Community Vision process and how the community and their township plans would inform the process. As a result of the feedback received, the Community Vision has been revised to form the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision as follows:

'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'.

Although the Vision was developed at the time of the Council Plan 2025-2029, its adoption has been delayed to align with the other long-term timeframes of the Asset Plan, Financial Plan and the Buloke Health and Wellbeing Plan. This has also allowed further review and alignment to the ten Community Plans developed by the local Community Forums.

A review of the Buloke Community Vision 2030 priority areas has also been undertaken to ensure their alignment with the Council Plan 2025-2029. These areas remain unchanged.

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 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 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.

With the recent adoption of the Council Plan 2025-2029, and the development of 10 new township Community Plans, a review of the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan has been undertaken.

The review identified that the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan and strategies duplicated those found in other Council and the township Community Plans. To reduce this duplication and provide greater clarity on Council and community priorities, the Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan has been replaced with the simplified *Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision* document.

RELEVANT LAW

The development of a Community Vision is a legislative requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The *Local Government Act 2020* states that a:

- *A Council must maintain a Community Vision that is developed with its municipal community in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.*
- *The scope of the Community Vision is a period of at least the next 10 financial years.*
- *A Community Vision must describe the municipal community's aspirations for the future of the municipality.*
- *A Council must develop or review the Community Vision in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Community Vision by 31 October in the year following a general election.*
- *The Community Vision adopted under subsection (4) has effect from 1 July in the year following a general election.*

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council decisions around other key strategic documents will interact with the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision once adopted.

OPTIONS

Council has the option to not adopt the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision.

Council also has the option to make changes to the Vision in response to the four (4) submissions received during the Public Exhibition Period.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision reflects the extensive engagement undertaken by the community, over the last two years, through the development of the ten township Community Plans.

This information has influenced the revision of the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision and has been further reviewed through specific consultation on the Council Plan and Community Vision which was undertaken with the ten Community Planning Forums at a Community Summit event in March 2025.

The Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision was considered at the Ordinary Council Meeting on Wednesday 15 October 2025. In considering the draft Vision, Council resolved to endorse the Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision to go on public exhibition for feedback from Thursday 16 October 2025 to Thursday 30 October 2025.

This public exhibition period was promoted on the Council website, social media, local papers and radio. In addition, hardcopies were made available for review at the Wycheproof Customer Service Centre and on request by contacting Council.

At the conclusion of the public exhibition period, Council received four (4) submissions however no changes have been made to the Vision.

Follow up discussions with all community members and stakeholders who submitted feedback on the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision will be held to further explore their submissions and intentions.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The review of the Building a Better Buloke 2030 Community Plan and Vision identified an opportunity to improve how the community's aspirations can be represented and incorporated into other key Council and community plans.

COLLABORATION

The development of the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision incorporates collaboration efforts undertaken with local Community Planning Forums and other key stakeholders through strategic planning over the past two years.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The implementation of the Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision will be supported through Annual Budgets adopted each year as well as the Financial Plan. Additionally, external funding may also be required and sought to achieve the outcomes of the Vision.

REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICIES

The Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision acknowledges the actions and objectives of other key Council plans and strategies, including the Council Plan 2025-2029.

TRANSPARENCY OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

This report follows the public exhibition of the Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision from Thursday 16 October 2025 to Thursday 30 October 2025 that enabled the public to make submissions and provide feedback.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officer involved in the development of this report has a conflict of interest.

Attachments:

1. Attachment 4.1.1.1 - Summary of Public Submissions received Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040 Communit

2. Attachment 4.1.1.2 - FINAL - Building a Better Buloke 2024 Community Vision - Nov 2025

Public Submissions: Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision

Submitter #1	Submission	Comment	Recommendation
Community Member	<p>Key Misalignments: Vision vs Financial Capacity</p> <p>1. Infrastructure Renewal and Beautification</p> <p>Vision Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Safe, well-maintained roads, footpaths, and public spaces ➢ Revitalised town entrances and shared facilities ➢ Community solar schemes and climate resilience <p>Financial Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Capital grants drop dramatically after 2026: from \$35.3M in 2025/26 to just \$1.6M annually from 2029 onward (Financial Plan). ➢ Renewal gap flagged in the Asset Plan; Council prioritises renewal but relies on operational surpluses and external funding. ➢ Beautification and solar initiatives are listed as “Partner” roles — meaning they depend on community or external investment. <p>Implication: Without sustained capital funding, large-scale infrastructure upgrades and beautification projects will be difficult to maintain or expand.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>May be considered in the review and implementation of other key strategic documents (i.e. Asset Plan 2025-35, Financial Plan 2025-35)</p>	No change.
	<p>2. Health and Wellbeing Services</p> <p>Vision Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Place-based GP services, early years programs, mental health support ➢ Telehealth expansion, transport rebates, and inclusion initiatives <p>Financial Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Council’s role is primarily “Advocate” or “Partner” — not direct funder. ➢ No dedicated funding stream in the Financial Plan for health service expansion or transport rebates. ➢ Operating grants grow modestly (3% annually), but are not earmarked for health initiatives. <p>Implication: Delivery of health-related aspirations is contingent on external agencies and successful advocacy — not guaranteed by Council’s budget.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>May be considered in the review and implementation of other key strategic documents (i.e. Buloke Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035)</p>	No change.
	<p>3. Economic Development and Tourism</p> <p>Vision Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Diverse industries, social enterprise, childcare, housing, tourism ➢ Telecommunications parity with urban areas <p>Financial Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Council commits to promoting Buloke and supporting investment, but major initiatives (e.g. housing innovation, childcare models) are “Partner” or “Advocate” roles. 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>May be considered in the review and implementation of other key strategic documents (i.e. Economic Development & Tourism Strategy)</p>	No Change.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Telecommunications and childcare require State/Federal action — no financial provision in Council's plan. ➤ Workforce planning and housing needs analysis are not backed by specific budget allocations. <p>Implication: Economic diversification and population stability goals are vulnerable to funding shortfalls and policy inertia at higher levels.</p>																							
	<p>4. Council and Community Leadership</p> <p>Vision Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong partnerships, reduced red tape, empowered volunteers ➤ Excellence in customer service and community participation <p>Financial Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employee costs rise steadily (3% annually), but no new staffing or volunteer support programs are detailed. ➤ Amortisation of leased assets ends after 2029 — suggesting no fleet expansion. ➤ Community engagement is valued but not financially expanded beyond current levels. <p>Implication: Leadership and service excellence goals may be constrained by staffing limits and lack of investment in new engagement platforms.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>May be considered in the review and implementation of other key strategic documents (i.e. Workforce Plan, Customer Experience Strategy)</p>	No change.																					
	<p>High-Risk Areas to Flag</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Vision Priority</th> <th>Financial Risk</th> <th>Notes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Capital Works (roads, parks, buildings)</td> <td>● High</td> <td>Dependent on declining capital grants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Climate Initiatives (solar, waste, resilience)</td> <td>● Medium</td> <td>No dedicated funding; relies on partnerships</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health Advocacy (GPs, transport rebates)</td> <td>● High</td> <td>No Council funding; advocacy only</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Childcare and Housing Innovation</td> <td>● High</td> <td>Requires external investment; no budgeted support</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tourism Infrastructure</td> <td>● Medium</td> <td>Promotion funded, but infrastructure depends on grants</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Telecommunications</td> <td>● High</td> <td>Outside Council control; advocacy only</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Vision Priority	Financial Risk	Notes	Capital Works (roads, parks, buildings)	● High	Dependent on declining capital grants	Climate Initiatives (solar, waste, resilience)	● Medium	No dedicated funding; relies on partnerships	Health Advocacy (GPs, transport rebates)	● High	No Council funding; advocacy only	Childcare and Housing Innovation	● High	Requires external investment; no budgeted support	Tourism Infrastructure	● Medium	Promotion funded, but infrastructure depends on grants	Telecommunications	● High	Outside Council control; advocacy only	<p>Noted.</p>	No Change.
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	<p>Strategic Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prioritise grant-seeking for infrastructure and climate projects early in the decade while capital funding is still high. ➤ Develop partnership frameworks for health, childcare, and housing to attract co-investment. ➤ Refine community expectations around Council's delivery vs advocacy roles — especially in wellbeing and economic areas. ➤ Monitor transmission and renewable developments for potential cost impacts or funding opportunities. 	<p>Noted.</p>	No Change.																					

Submitter #2	Submission	Comment	Recommendation
Community Member	<p>Just a few thoughts having read through the document.</p> <p>My number one suggestion is that you consult with every official community organisation and ask to be invited to a meeting or a special session so that members can tell you what their concerns are, ask questions, and TOGETHER come up with ideas/ plans. POINTLESS telling us what you have decided, BEFORE talking to each group and expecting cooperation.</p> <p>I am Secretary of 2 groups who have had our local councillors who are very committed and do the best they can, but Shire hierarchy are unknown.</p> <p>All community groups make provision for guest speakers, have open sessions and organise syllabus items usually at the end or beginning of their year. CWA, Probus, Historical Society, Forum are four who would be happy to work this way.</p> <p>Let us know of available services, tours, events etc, but come to see what we want help with.</p> <p>There is an extremely low level of trust in many because of the disastrous building bashing consultant debacle from a few years back.</p> <p>The only effective way to consult with the whole town is to call a proper public meeting in the hall where everyone is welcome, all can hear and have the opportunity to speak or write or put questions or comments in a box.</p> <p>All the ridiculous " deliberative engagement" , one on one tactics don't work, won't work and are a waste of time .</p> <p>Also, time to switch off the remarks at the beginning of each phone call to the Shire about treating people with courtesy etc. Doesn't happen in other Shires I have had to contact recently.</p> <p>Replies to emails and calls would be appreciated, not just the one that says that the matter has been passed on to the relevant person or authority, because that doesn't give any satisfaction that anything will be fixed or looked at or who to contact.</p> <p>I give a Forum report after our meetings when I can to CWA, Probus, Historical Society, Railway Restoration Committee to keep members in the loop. Many do not have social media , iPhone etc and if they have computers, iPhones, they only use the phones for phone calls and the computers for filling in necessary forms. So frustrating, but that is the way it is and with the many scams around, they probably use them even less.</p> <p>The turnover of personnel doesn't help because if and when people have had some help, the next time they look for that helpful person, they have gone looking for greener fields.</p> <p>Good luck ahead and thanks for the opportunity online.</p>	<p>The Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision is a review of the <i>Building Buloke 2030 Community Plan</i> that was developed in 2018 through an extensive community engagement process.</p> <p>The review also incorporated the whole of town consultations that were recently undertaken by Community Forums in the development of their Community Plans and the consultation that was undertaken in the development of the Council Plan 2025-2029.</p> <p>Other comments are considered to not be specific to the Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision but may be considered in the review and implementation of other key strategic documents (i.e. Customer Experience Strategy)</p>	No Change.

Submitter #3	Submission	Comment	Recommendation
Charlton Forum	<p>Thankyou for the opportunity to write outlining a few priorities we believe should be considered when looking at the years ahead, and also having the foresight to look at priorities in the coming years. We are sure that with State and Federal budget limitations things will not get easier on the financial front.</p> <p>No matter what individuals views are on renewable energy, the Federal Government's commitment to the sector will not be diminished. This will present both challenges and opportunities for the Shire. Rare earth mineral mining is again another issue the Shire will have to face to try and find a balance between local farmers and residents wishes, and the increasing demand to extract the same. It is hoped that a social dividend is returned to the Shire in the form of monetary considerations.</p> <p>We hope the 2040 vision looks at working on supporting and improving community infrastructure to make Buloke Shire an attractive option to both work and live. Housing initiatives for older residents, temporary workers and families are essential to helping the Shire grow. Perhaps look at other Shires where partnerships have been formed and land has been donated for development of affordable housing.</p> <p>Continued and increased financial support for both local Forums and Neighbourhood Houses. The later in particular have taken on an increased role in the community as many local services close and more things are required to be done online; not always easy when you are elderly or not computer literate. Also the large amount of support they give to their communities in leisure and lifestyle programs is amazing for the limited funding they receive.</p> <p>In closing, may I suggest the Shire continues to work on the issues highlighted in each towns community plans. After much consultation these were the priorities identified by the residents. This ranges from flood preparedness to footpath accessibility for scooters and new infrastructure such as a heated pool and community hub.</p> <p>Thankyou again, and best wishes moving forward into the years ahead.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Considered to be addressed in the Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision and/or other key strategic documents (i.e. Council Plan 2025-2029, Buloke Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035) but may also be considered in the review and development of other key strategic documents (i.e. Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation Strategy and Plan, Economic Development & Tourism Strategy)</p>	No Change.

Submitter #4	Submission	Comment	Recommendation
Charlton Neighbourhood House	<p>Charlton Neighbourhood House (CNH) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Building a Better Buloke 2040 Community Vision.</p> <p>We commend Council for developing a forward-looking document that reflects community priorities around liveability, wellbeing, leadership and economic growth. The Vision aligns strongly with the work and purpose of Neighbourhood Houses across the Buloke Shire, who serve as connectors, enablers and delivery partners in building healthy, inclusive and resilient rural communities.</p> <p>1. Recognition of Charlton as a major service town Charlton is one of Buloke's five major towns and plays a central role in the southern part of the Shire. It provides education, health, recreation, retail and community service access for residents across a wide catchment.</p> <p>We encourage the Vision to ensure that each of Buloke's five key towns- Charlton, Wycheeproof, Donald, Birchip and Sea Lake, are supported with equitable investment in infrastructure, housing, and community facilities to maintain their role as viable, liveable service centres for surrounding districts.</p> <p>2. All-access and liveable community Charlton has made strong progress toward becoming an all-access, liveable community, with initiatives supporting accessibility, mobility and inclusion for people of all ages and abilities.</p> <p>We ask that the Vision include specific language that reinforces universal design, accessible public spaces, and age-friendly community planning across all major towns.</p> <p>Embedding accessibility in future planning ensures that Buloke's built environment reflects the inclusive values of its people and provides practical benefits for residents, visitors, and future generations.</p> <p>3. Addressing housing and independent living needs Housing availability remains a significant constraint on population growth, workforce attraction and ageing in place across Buloke. Charlton, like other major towns, faces housing shortages across all categories- rental, workforce, family, and independent living, and we are starting to see an increase in 'dongers' that data concludes is bad options for long term housing, impacting negatively on workers health, morale and retention.</p> <p>We encourage Council to explore all models to address this, including partnerships with government, philanthropic bodies, and private developers, and to prioritise planning for an independent living facility in Charlton.</p> <p>This would enable older residents to remain connected to their community and would help alleviate housing pressure while supporting the town's broader liveability goals.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Considered to be addressed in the Draft Building a Better Buloke 2040: Community Vision and/or other key strategic documents (i.e. Council Plan 2025-2029, Buloke Health & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2035) but may also be considered in the review and development of other key strategic documents (i.e. Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation Strategy and Plan, Economic Development & Tourism Strategy)</p>	No Change.

	<p>4. Deliverables from the Charlton Community Plan</p> <p>Charlton's Community Plan identifies several priority projects that directly align with the aspirations outlined in Building a Better Buloke 2040, particularly those relating to liveability, accessibility, community wellbeing and sustainable infrastructure.</p> <p>These deliverables demonstrate how local action can contribute to the broader Shire-wide vision.</p> <p>Council's continued partnership and advocacy for these projects will be essential to ensure equitable investment across all five major Buloke towns.</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>PROJECT</th><th>DESCRIPTION</th><th>RESPONSIBLE PARTIES</th><th>TIMEFRAME</th><th>FUNDING/NOTES</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>1 Heated Swimming Pool Upgrade</td><td>The Charlton pool is approx. 70 years old and has been impacted by flooding. Upgrade to a heated, flood-resilient, universally-accessible facility (new heating/filtration, ramp/hoist access, energy-efficient plant room) to support all-ages use, tourism, and longevity.</td><td>Buloke Shire Charlton Forum</td><td>Design & Funding 2026-27; Construction 2027-29</td><td>Advocate for grants + Council budget allocation</td></tr><tr><td>2 Charlton Community Hub Co-location</td><td>Develop a multi-purpose facility housing Council customer service, library, neighbourhood house, tourism and senior citizens facilities. Shared</td><td>CNH, BSC and community users</td><td>Planning 2025-26; Build 2026-29</td><td>Explore govt and philanthropic funding. Allocate funding from budget for</td></tr></tbody></table>	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	TIMEFRAME	FUNDING/NOTES	1 Heated Swimming Pool Upgrade	The Charlton pool is approx. 70 years old and has been impacted by flooding. Upgrade to a heated, flood-resilient, universally-accessible facility (new heating/filtration, ramp/hoist access, energy-efficient plant room) to support all-ages use, tourism, and longevity.	Buloke Shire Charlton Forum	Design & Funding 2026-27; Construction 2027-29	Advocate for grants + Council budget allocation	2 Charlton Community Hub Co-location	Develop a multi-purpose facility housing Council customer service, library, neighbourhood house, tourism and senior citizens facilities. Shared	CNH, BSC and community users	Planning 2025-26; Build 2026-29	Explore govt and philanthropic funding. Allocate funding from budget for		
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		infrastructure to boost service access and efficiency.			planning study 2026/27		
3	Independent Living Facility (Housing)	Create independent living units in Charlton, enabling older residents to stay local and free up housing stock.	BSC + Housing Providers + Charlton Forum	Feasibility 2025-26; Build 2028-30	Integrate into housing strategy		
4	Volunteer & Forum Support Program	Provide structured support (administration, training, governance) for volunteer-run Forums and their partners to deliver township plans. This includes introductions to relevant partners, coordinate stakeholder meetings and assist with submissions seeking government approvals.	BSC + CNH + Charlton Forum	Program by 2025-26; ongoing	Allocate staff time or grant funding		
5	Affordable & Workforce Housing Strategy	Develop a Shire-wide strategy to address rental, workforce and assisted-living housing needs across major towns.	BSC + Regional Housing Bodies + Forums	Strategy 2025; Implementation 2026-30	Link to Independent Living Facility project		
<p>5. Development of a Charlton Community Hub Charlton</p> <p>Neighbourhood House supports the creation of a multi-purpose community hub in Charlton that co-locates Council customer service, the library, tourism services, the Neighbourhood House, Senior Citizens, and other community uses.</p> <p>Such a shared facility would increase collaboration, reduce duplication, and provide cost-effective access to essential community functions.</p> <p>This approach aligns with the Building a Better Buloke 2040 principles of efficiency, accessibility and community wellbeing, and represents a practical investment in long-term sustainability for rural service delivery.</p>							

<p>6. Recognition and support for Neighbourhood Houses</p> <p>While Buloke Shire Council is not the direct funder of Neighbourhood Houses, we believe it is essential that the Vision explicitly acknowledge their vital role in achieving community wellbeing outcomes.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Houses are often the first point of contact for residents seeking support, training, or connection, particularly in small rural communities where other services are limited.</p> <p>Council's past collaboration with Buloke's Neighbourhood Houses through initiatives such as the Community Recovery Project demonstrated how effectively local houses can deliver direct community benefits through place-based engagement, volunteer coordination, and responsive programming.</p> <p>We ask that Council include language in the Vision that recognises Neighbourhood Houses as key community partners and explores ways to strengthen their capacity through partnership funding, shared infrastructure, and coordinated planning.</p> <p>7. Support for local Forums and volunteer-run governance</p> <p>Town Forums are valuable mechanisms for community engagement and are recognised as direct links between residents and Council. However, they are entirely volunteer run organisations, and sustaining them long-term is a challenge.</p> <p>We recommend that the Vision acknowledge the volunteer capacity limitations and commit to providing structured support, whether administrative, financial, or even through partnership with local Neighbourhood Houses and other providers who can assist with positive outcomes, to help deliver and maintain township plans.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Houses are well positioned to support Forums administratively and operationally, ensuring that community voices remain strong and that local planning continues to evolve, however the capacity would only be there through financial renumeration.</p> <p>8. Alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</p> <p>Charlton Neighbourhood House encourages Buloke Shire Council to adopt the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a standard language within its long-term planning framework.</p> <p>Many organisations, including LGA's, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria and local community organisations, already use the SDGs to shape programs and advocacy. Aligning Buloke's Vision to this global framework would strengthen partnerships, improve consistency in reporting and advocacy, and position Buloke as a leader in sustainable, inclusive rural development.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Charlton Neighbourhood House fully supports the intent of the Building a Better Buloke 2040 Community Vision and commends Council's commitment to inclusive, community-led planning. We welcome continued collaboration with Council in implementing the Vision, and we offer the Charlton Neighbourhood House network's ongoing partnership in delivering practical locally responsive solutions that build a stronger, fairer and more connected Buloke.</p>	
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BUILDING A BETTER BULOKE 2040

COMMUNITY VISION



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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. ”**



KEY THEMES

**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.

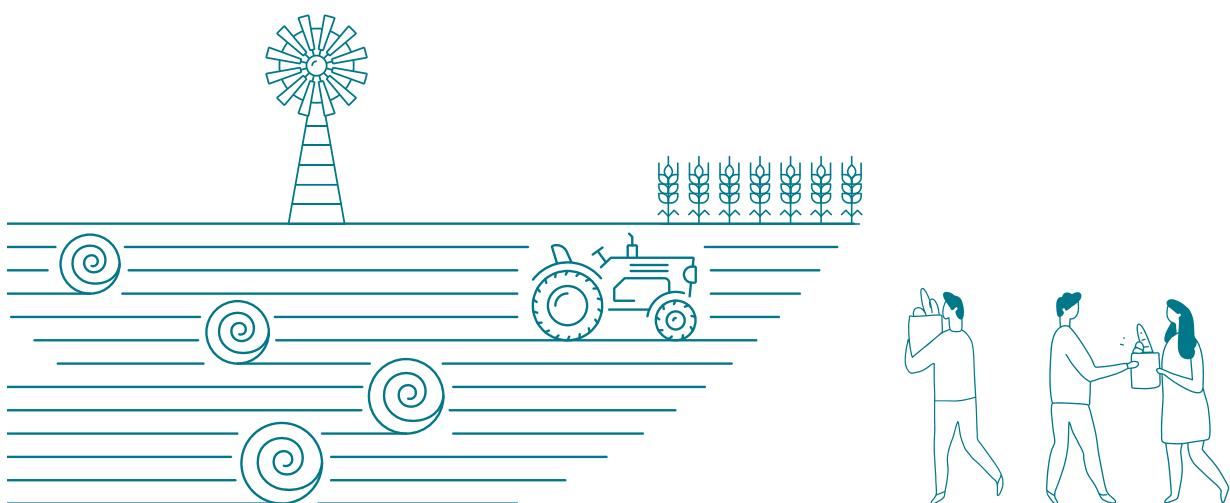
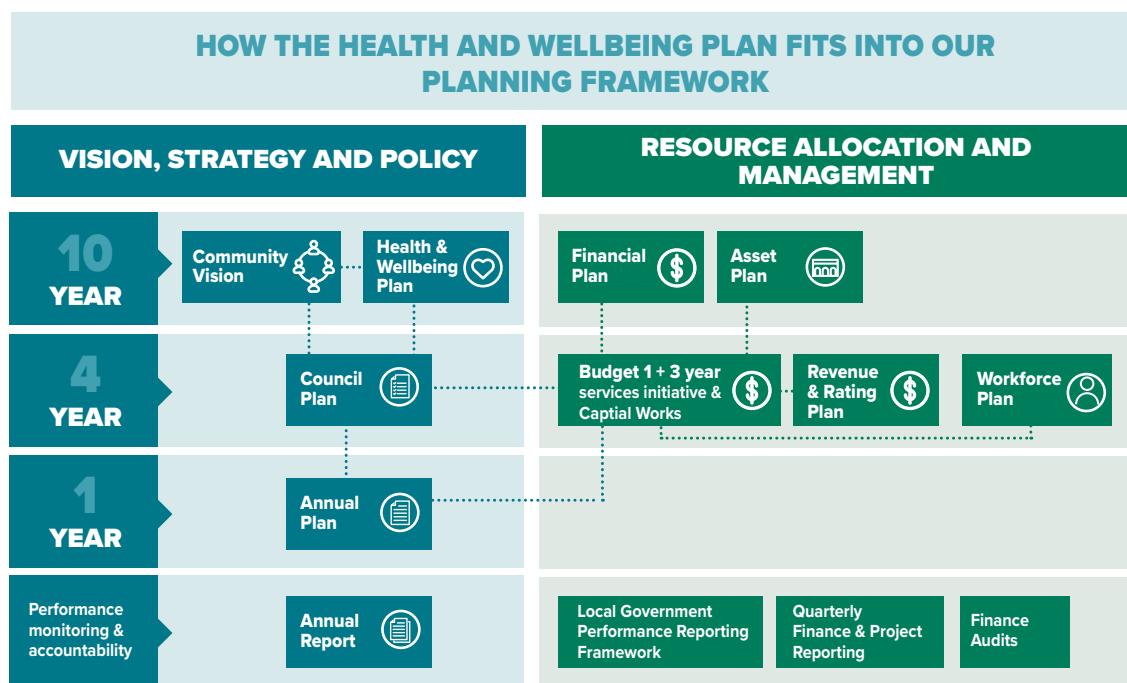
These themes were initially formed in 2020 through the review of Community Plans in early 2018 and remain aligned with the ten Community Plans reviewed in 2024.

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.



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:

1. GOOD GOVERNANCE	Providing good governance, as well as making local laws and policies for the benefit and wellbeing of our communities.
2. SERVICE PROVIDER	Providing services including waste collection, services to support families, libraries and many other community services and programs.
3. INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDER	Provides and maintains the local road/footpath/cycle network, community buildings, open spaces and recreational facilities
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IN 2020, COMMUNITY MEMBERS WERE PROVIDED WITH A WIDE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING BULOKE 2030, INCLUDING:

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

**IN TOTAL
852 PEOPLE
SHARED THEIR IDEAS
FOR THE FUTURE OF
THE BULOKE SHIRE
THROUGH A VARIETY
OF ENGAGEMENT
ACTIVITIES**

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.

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
9. Educate, promote and support the community in implementing waste minimisation and management strategies.	Partner
10. 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:

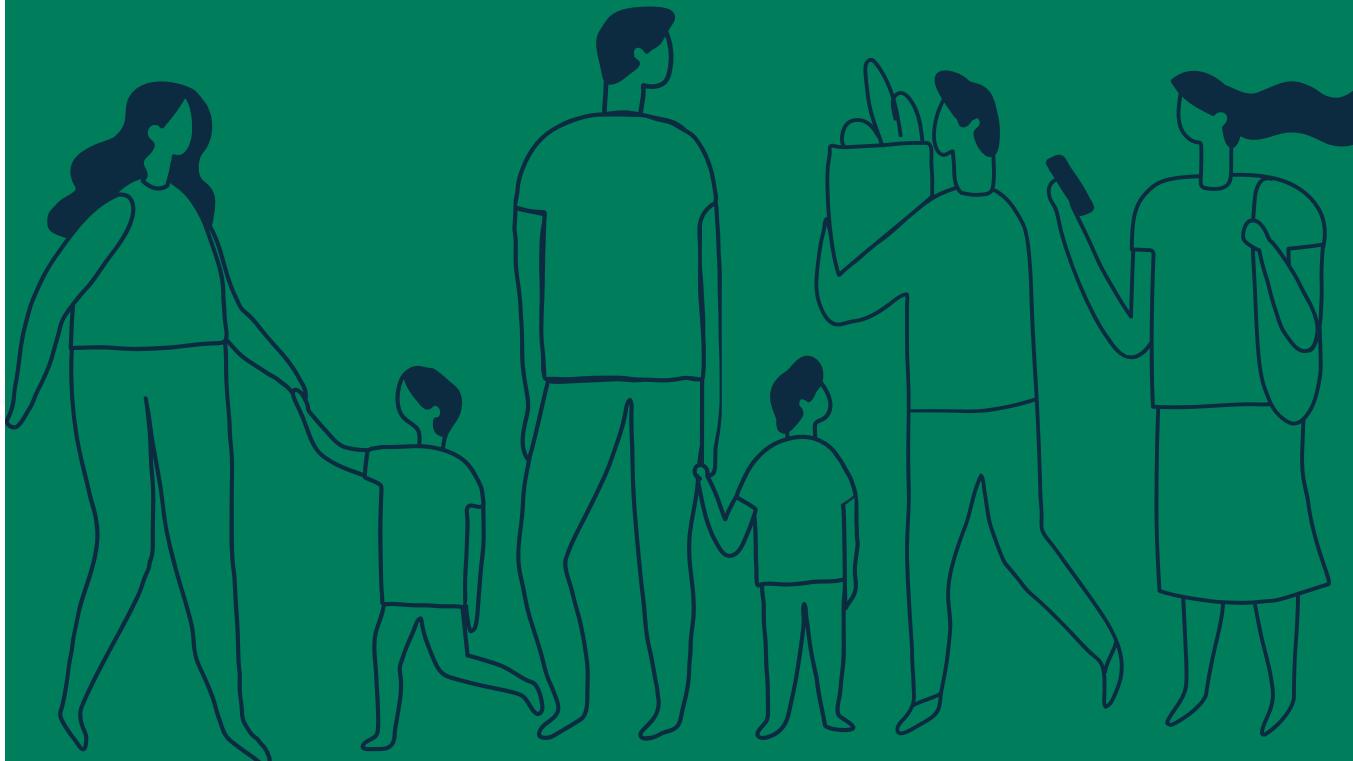
- Active partnerships and good communication with Council.
- Dynamic well supported and recognised volunteers.
- Quality customer service and response times.
- Active local laws guidance and support.
- Less red-tape.

PRIORITIES	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. ”



BULOKE SHIRE COUNCIL

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5 MEETING CLOSE