GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

COMMUNITY PLANNING PROGRAM

ACTION PLAN 2021-2024

Golden Plains Community Planning

Creating connected communities

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Golden Plains Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar people. We acknowledge them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians.

Council pays its respects to Wadawurrung Elders past, present and emerging. Council also respects Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging.

Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Golden Plains Shire.

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Introduction and background

The Community Planning Program [CPP] was implemented in 2000, as a grass-roots approach to shaping the future of our communities. 'Community Planning' is used to describe a process where communities develop and implement their local community plans to improve their own communities.

Council recognises that local people are the experts when it comes to local communities and that is why community planning works so well.

The program is one of Council's core community development undertakings, informed by the principles of empowerment, human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-determination, and collective action.

What is community planning?

Community planning enables local residents to create a shared vision for their local community. It supports communities to establish what people want to change or introduce into their community.

Local residents, known as Community Coordinators, volunteer their time to coordinate the development and implementation of their local community plan with their community.

Council provides mentoring, support, advice, encouragement, information, training, and seed funding, along with an external professional facilitator to assist communities in the development of local community plans.

To develop a community plan:

- Community Coordinators seek residents' ideas for their local community plan via surveys, interviews, pop-up engagements and public meetings.
- Residents vote on the ideas to identify their top priorities for their community plan for a three-year period.
- Community Coordinators work with their community, local residents, groups and others who are passionate about a particular project/s to take charge of their communities' priorities'.

The program is delivered based on a strengths-based approach:

- Community planning is community owned and driven, uniting communities, encouraging community participation and collaboration in the development and implementation of their local community plan'.
- Community Planning Program recognises and celebrates the diversity and uniqueness of our communities.
- Encourages local ownership, sense of place, identity, and shared responsibility

2020 Program review

A Community Planning Program review was undertaken during 2019 – 2020, the review was an extensive process informed by community and best practice. The review was presented to Council and several high-level recommendations under 4 pillars were endorsed, the recommendations were noted in the Council Report.

Council recognises effective program evaluation contributes to improved program performance and provides an opportunity to assess public value. The CPP review has been used to inform the community planning action plan 2021 – 2024.

Review recommendation:

The review recognised the value, strengths, and improvement opportunities of the CPP. To build upon the existing strengths of the CPP a number of recommendations were endorsed to be delivered under four pillars:

Pillar1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4
Alignment	Flexibility	Council support	Capacity Building

The review data collection methods were:

Benchmarking

Interviews were conducted with community development staff from Moorabool, Ballarat, Geelong, Buloke and Corangamite Councils to enable benchmarking against Golden Plains Shire [CPP]

Desktop Review

- Review of the Community Planning Program
- Review of data against council plans, policies and procedures

Surveys

- 87 Surveys were received Community Coordinators

Interviews

- 45 individual interviews were undertaking with Community Coordinators
- 17 staff interviews were conducted

Focus Groups

- 7 focus groups were conducted with a total of 43 participants from Smythesdale, Barundah Park, Bannockburn, Dereel, Berringa, Staffordshire Reed, Maude, Steiglitz and She Oaks.

Action Plan

This action plan provides a list of actions for each pillar to be implemented over the next 4 years.

Pillar 1: - Alignment

The CPP Review recommended the following:

- Incorporating the Community Planning Program into Council's Integrated Planning Framework utilising the opportunity to provide local level actions that are aligned with high level strategies.
- Alignment of the Community Planning Program with 'The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement' to assist Council to develop effective volunteer involvement strategies and practices.

Pillar 1: Alignment

Action	Tasks	What success looks like	Timeframe	Who
Alignment to Councils integrated planning framework	Improve CCP resources to have a line of sight with Community Vision 2040, Council Plan, Strategies Policies and Council services and activities.	• Communities understand the alignment of CCP to Community Vision 2040 and can see that they are achieving outcomes alongside Council. • Data reporting alignment and sharing.	April 2021 – September 2021	Community Partnership Officer.
Alignment to the National Standards for Involving Volunteers	Development of a Volunteer Strategy aligned to the National Standards for Involving Volunteers.	• Volunteers feel valued, recognised, and supported. • Demonstration of the significant social benefit volunteering brings to our communities.	Duration 18 months based on phased approach: • Research / Benchmarking • Engagement • Strategy development • Draft strategy for community consultation • Volunteer Strategy complete. Commence January 2022 Completion July 2023.	Community Partnership Officer, Active Ageing, and Inclusion team and CPPAPRG.
Amalgamate the data from all community plans yearly into a collective annual report	Facilitate the collection and sharing of Community Plans, achievements, stories, and advocacy priorities to create positive touch points between Council and community.	• Strengthen relationships and partnership opportunities between Council and community. • Data is utilised to inform other strategic processes/elements of Council's integrated planning framework.	Yearly	Community Partnership Officer.

Pillar 2 - Flexibility

The CPP Review recommended the following:

- Council recognising not all communities are the same and a flexible approach to CPP should be applied in both the development and implementation of community planning. This will ensure meaningful participation and local ownership is achieved.

Pillar 2 Flexibility

Action	Tasks	What success looks like	Timeframe	Who
Flexible strength-based lens is applied to the Community Planning Program	Inclusion of Asset Based Community Development practice [ABCD] to the community planning program. • ABCD is a methodology is introduced when communities are developing their community plans, e.g., *communities are able to visualize, translate and mobilising local assets, connections, and partnership opportunities. And more broadly translation of local skills and knowledge of community members or volunteers to achieve plan priorities.*	• Increased collaboration and connection to community ABCD assets. • Relevant information from the asset mapping process is utilised to inform an online virtual community directory.	June 2021 - August 2021 resources development. Implementation of the ABCD methodology and resources becomes permanent part of the planning process from September 2021 onwards.	Community Partnership Officer and Community Planning Facilitator.
Flexibility volunteer model is developed to improve local participation	Development of volunteer model to include flexible participation. E.g. short-time or long-term volunteering participation or partnership opportunities with other community groups to achieve co-design outcomes. Community planning template includes volunteer contribution hours against project priorities to ensure priorities are achievable.	• Volunteering opportunities are communicated broadly leading to increased participation. • Residents are able contribute their skills and knowledge on a short- or long-term basis and participation data informs other strategic processes/elements of Council's integrated planning framework.	Volunteer model is development: October 2021 Community Planning template is updated to include volunteer participation: July 2021	Community Partnership Officer, Community Coordinators and CPPAPRG.
	Development of a volunteering prospectus/flyer based on 'The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement'.	• Volunteer recruitment and participation data is collected and informs other strategic processes/elements of Council's integrated planning framework.	Volunteer flyer is developed November 2021 – December 2021	

Flexible approach to the development and implementation of community plans	Community planning engagement toolkit/resources are updated to support community coordinators with a flexible approach when engaging with their communities. Community planning updated resources are provided to community coordinators	• Increased understanding of flexible approach is measured and evident.	Update CPP toolkit/resources Commenced January 2022 – Completion December 2022 Distribution of updated resources January – February 2022	Community Partnership Officer

Pillar 3 - Council Support

The CPP Review recommended the following:

- Council demonstrates its commitment to CPP and provides the resourcing and support that is needed to ensure the program continues to be a flagship and celebrated program.

Pillar 3 Council Support

Action	Tasks	What success looks like	Timeframe	Who
Maintain program	Maintain CPP systems and resources ensuring currency of the program. Actively work with communities to ensure participation and membership information is current and validated. Seed funding acquittal processes is transferred to smarty grants program to enable a streamlined approach to reporting/acquittal of CPP seed funding.	• CPP continues to be a flagship program for Council. • Volunteer data participation is current and reportable against elements/documents/processes. • Seed funding data reporting is measurable against project outputs.	Ongoing Transfer of Seed funding to Smarty Grants Program July 2021 – August 2021 Seed funding assessment	Community Partnerships Officer. Admin Officer
	Assess impact of seed funding for potential increase of funding investment.		January 2023 – February 2023	

Community Planning Communication Reporting	Collate completed community plans into an annual report to distribute internally and to Community Coordinators.	• Internal data sharing informs our integrated planning processes. • Community coordinators can identify opportunities for collaboration, knowledge and partnership opportunities with other communities through the shared data. • Linking community coordinators to funding opportunities that are matched to their plan priorities.	Yearly Ongoing	Community Partnership Officer. Community Partnerships Officer and Corporate Strategic Planner.
External Facilitator contract is reviewed	Facilitator contract is extended for a 3-year period to ensure consistency of plans and continuity of relationships. *[Option for an Internal/external facilitator to be confirmed.]*	• Continuity/quality of the work provided by the facilitator, is evident in the level of confidence in CPP and the continuity of relationships.	New facilitator contract commences April 2021 and finishes April 2023	Community Partnerships Officer and Manager Community and Council Planning
Program governance	Update CPP governance resources to ensure currency and performance of program. Strengthen alignment of governance resources, policies and procedures to the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. CPP Action Plan Reference Group informs [CPPAPRG] CPP governance. Councils volunteer policies and procedures are updated to ensure currency and alignment to the National Standards for volunteer involvement and Council Volunteer Strategy.	• Program quality and governance is maintained. • National Standards for Volunteer Involvement are included in the governance of the program.	Governance is ongoing Alignment to standards January 2022-September 2022 CPPAPRG collaboration action plan duration 2021 – 2024 Volunteer Policies update commences September 2021 – December 2021.	Community Partnerships Officer

Pillar 4 - Capacity Building

Recommendation:

- Building community capacity and influence by supporting and enabling individuals, groups and communities to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required.

Pillar 4 Capacity Building

Action	Tasks	What success looks like	Timeframe	Who
Media campaign promoting the Community Planning Program and local volunteer participation	Media campaign and CPP promotional resources are developed to promote the program and volunteer opportunities.	• Website traffic increases. • Increased knowledge of the program. • Increased profile, brand, and reputation. • Greater awareness of local volunteering opportunities.	2021 - 2022	Community Partnership Officer, Community Coordinators, CPPACRG and Communications Engagement and Advocacy team.
Training program is developed and delivered	Develop and delivery of an annual training program.	• Training partnership are identified, and collaborative opportunities are built into the training program. • Relevant training is developed and delivered. • Attendance at training and evaluation of the training offerings.	Yearly	Community Partnerships Officer and Active Ageing and Inclusion Team and CPPACRG.
Development of an online community directory	Establish governance for an online community directory. Establish online community directory with sustainable data collection processes / procedures.	• Online community directory is available and is used to broaden relationships, collaboration and project linking.	April 2021 – April 2022	Community Partnership Officer, Community Coordinators and Administration Support Officer
Establishment of Community Planning Program	Develop and implementation of a 4-monthly virtual reference group to enable networking, resource sharing	• Increase cross community collaboration and networking.	August 2021 established virtual reference	Community Partnership Officer, Community

Virtual Reference Group	and connectivity to program governance.	• Maintain communication and connection with communities and coordinators. • Increased access to relevant and timely information provides opportunities to inform other strategic processes/elements of Council's integrated planning framework. • Reference group leads and contributes to Councils working relationship with communities and volunteers.	group. Implementation 4 monthly from September 2021 .	Coordinators and elected members of CPPAPRG.
Annual National Volunteer Week participation event	National Volunteer week event is developed aligned to the National Volunteer week themes.	• Recognition of the significant individual and social benefits volunteering • Volunteer contribution, value and impact is understood, appreciated, and acknowledged by Council.	Annually	Community Partnerships Officer and Community Coordinators.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the action plan will be led by the Community and Council Planning team in collaboration with other Council business units as required.

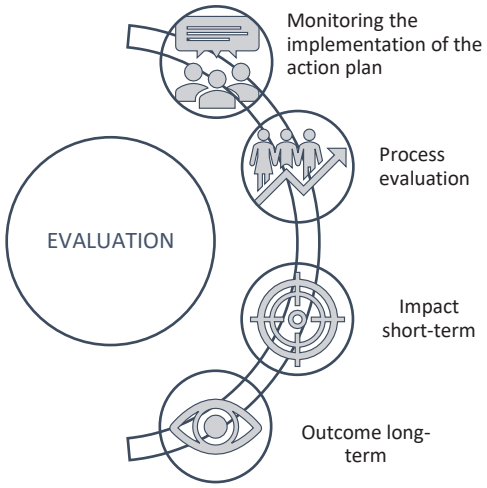
Implementation of the action plan will be staged over four years with the majority of actions commencing in either the first or second year.

Council will lead the establishment and implementation of a Community Planning Program Action Plan Reference Group [CPPAPRG].

- Membership for the CPPAPRG could be made up of internal Council staff, Community Coordinators, Industry experts e.g. Volunteering Geelong and interested community members.
- A term of reference would be setup to guide the CPPAPRG governance.
- Through collaborative efforts the reference group will support the implementation of the action plan.

The monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan will be based on four key elements:

1. Regular monitoring and recording of the implementation of the Action Plan.
2. Process evaluation of the Action Plan's implementation with a focus on whether implementation is reaching the intended stakeholders, the quality of implementation, and if all actions are being implemented.
3. Impact evaluation with a focus on the immediate change in the Community Planning Program; what is working or not working, unintended consequences, and the appropriateness of the Action Plan.
4. Outcome evaluation for each pillar with a focus on the long-term change.



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