



Smythesdale Community Plan 2021-2024

What is community planning

Community Planning is a process that brings people together to consider issues and take action to improve their community. Community members develop a plan that outlines projects they will undertake to make their town a better place to live.

Golden Plains Shire Council supports Community Planning Program by providing an external professional facilitator to assist communities through the process, as well as providing seed funding to support the implement plan.

Currently 23 communities across the Shire are working to make their townships even better places to live through community planning. To learn more about community planning visit:

<https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-community/community-services/community-planning>

Community Coordinators

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

- Are you interested in working with us to achieve our community plan outcomes?
- Would you like to volunteer for any of the projects in our plan or become a volunteer community coordinator?

We would love to hear from you, please contact one of our volunteer community coordinators:

- Bill MacNeill
0409 145 267 or billandruth59@optusnet.com.au
- Lin Hocking-Turnbull
0448 527 123 or lingra48@bigpond.com
- Graham Turnbull
0409 405 391 or lingra48@bigpond.com
- Dennis Ross
0418 503938 or denisslross@gmail.com

Plan was completed: March 2021

Plan start date: May 2021

Plan finish date: May 2024



Disclaimer: If major changes to the Community Plan projects need to be made within the life of the plan, Coordinators will conduct public process before making these changes.

How was our plan developed

The process for developing this plan was based in recognition that Smythesdale has changed significantly over recent years, with many new residents coming into our community.

We saw this as an opportune moment to think again about how we share information within our community, and to also provide an opportunity for newer community members to contribute to the discussion of what would make Smythesdale an even better place to live.

Covid-19 related restrictions also required new ways of communicating in the process of developing our plan. In response, we decided to initiate a number of different approaches to try and reach as broad a cross-section of our community as possible.

We firstly arranged for a survey to be mailed to all households, which was supported by Golden Plains Shire. We also set up the Smythesdale Community Planning Facebook page, which now has more than 140 members. Within the survey, we also distributed contact details of the community members behind this process, to allow for people to just call and discuss their issues of interest.

From these different strands of information, we have prepared this plan as an effort to best reflect overall community perspectives, and to also help strengthen our community.

Smythesdale – Working Together

The Smythesdale community has a long history of working together. The Monthly Market, the Arts and Music Fiesta, and the vibrant Woody Yaloak Historical society are some of the higher profile activities where we come or have come together in the past.

More recently we have established a Smythesdale Community Facebook page where residents share ideas about what matters to them.

Given the growth in our community (*and also the likelihood of further rapid growth*), we believe that it is more important than ever for the Smythesdale community to come together and hear each other's opinions on what matters most.

Community Connections

Project Outline:

Our aim is to further strengthen opportunities for our community to come together, increase local participation and a sense of community pride. This is also important given the increase in newer residents in our area.

Community Working Bees: identified and promoted in **advance**, allowing people to focus on specific jobs, with a morning tea or lunch included.

- Provide support to enhance the monthly market providing children's arts activities, music, public information activities, and providing residents with a free market stall every 6 months.
- Support to the Smythesdale Arts and Music Fiesta.
- A community event around the Easter break.
- It is also proposed that we research the idea/feasibility of a major community event, with similar profile to the Bush riders' Cup that occurred until recently.

Sustainability: We will monitor different funding opportunities to strengthen these activities wherever possible, and only draw on this fund in circumstances where no other funding option exists.

Benefit to community: Additional activities will increase opportunities for Smythesdale community members to come together, meet and enjoy activities in each other's company. These activities will help draw our community together and help build community spirit that supports community collaboration, resilience, and connection.

SEED funding allocated to this project: \$5,500

Arts and Town Beautification Local

Project Outline:

Smythesdale is a beautiful, old community of great physical and cultural interest. We propose to further enhance these strengths through support to different town beautification efforts and art initiatives.

Activities proposed include:

- Provide specific support for the commissioning of a sculpture to be installed at the Smythesdale Gardens on the tree stump in the car park. This initiative will be co-funded by the Smythesdale Progress Association.
- Refurbishment of signs at town entrances.

SEED funding allocated to this project: \$1,500



Environment

Project Outline:

Smythesdale's physical environment is one of its great strengths, but also requires constant management and upkeep, especially given the ever-present threat of fire.

Given the breadth of both need and opportunity to better manage the local environment, it is important that we raise awareness and mobilise the community around key environmental issues.

Given that environmental management projects tend to be bigger picture, we see our role advocating with the responsible authorities to ensure they undertake projects as required.

Community working bees that have a focus on the environment, and where our 'community contribution' could be used to leverage financial support from the responsible authority (DELWP, CFA, Shire, etc.) to further enhance fire and flood mitigation or environmental concerns.

Benefit to community

Protecting wildlife and their habitat and local flora is important to us, as is fire protection and ensuring public spaces are well managed. Environmental management and improvements increase pride in the Smythesdale community, as well as being supportive of fire management and flood mitigation.

SEED funding allocated to this project: \$500

Infrastructure & Services Advocacy

Project Outline:

The community has various local infrastructure and service needs. While some require investment, others require changes around access and opening hours. While roads projects are beyond the financial reach of our plan, we will work together to identify community priorities and share these with the Shire and VicRoads.

Examples of community perspectives on infrastructure priorities include:

- Toilet access at the heavily used 'skate park' by making simple alterations to toilets at the recreation centre.
- Improved waste disposal options: by providing tip passes for the Shire tip at Rokewood and/or the transfer station in Ballarat (the closer facility).
- Opening up of the Woody Yaloak River land below the oval and skate park and connecting this to the reserve on the other side by the bridge.
- Improved traffic management and pedestrian safety, including an over-arching traffic management plan for Smythesdale.
- We will lobby and coordinate with the Shire in relation to streetscape improvements, including ensuring that there is community input to decision making on these improvements.

SEED funding allocated to this project: Nil

Big Picture Advocacy

Project Outline:

The community has identified some bigger picture issues that it would like to address by advocating to the responsible authorities for both consultation and action.

Specific areas of interest

- Improved traffic management and pedestrian safety, including an over-arching traffic management plan for Smythesdale that considers options for flashing warning signs on highway on both sides of town; review of speed limits; and installation of a pedestrian crossing
- Push for support to create a "bushfire buffer zone" along Woody Yaloak River. This will also require better understanding Shire plans for the creation of a storm water wetlands in the same area
- Assert the need for thorough consultations to occur before any planned town beautification works are proposed by the Shire.
- Storm water drain improvements and maintenance.
- Road improvements and maintenance.

SEED funding allocated to this project: Nil