

REVIEW OF NOORAT COMMUNITY PLAN – 25 July 2017

Summary

This report provides advice to Council on the review of Noorat's Community Plan – *Community Priorities for Township Development 2013 - 2023*.

Introduction

Noorat's 10 year community plan was prepared over the three-month period from April to June 2013, and received by Council on 23 July 2013. It involved a town survey and a public meeting to deliberate on and rank identified priorities. Some 34 people, or 25 per cent of the adult town population of 167 (ABS, 2011) participated. The plan listed some 27 township priorities. These priorities cover a range of social and infrastructure issues. Six (6) were potential community projects, six (6) could be completed through the agency of Council, and five (5) were State Government responsibilities. The balance relied upon the action of private commercial interests, community organisations, or partnerships between various agencies. The top six (6) priorities received strong support through both the survey and voting, with the remaining twenty-one (21) priorities presenting a long-tail of spread votes. At the time it was noted that it remained open to individuals and group to pursue any of these 27 objectives through any of a number of channels available to them.

The review of Noorat's Town Plan occurred almost exactly four years on from the original formulation in 2013. It was presented as an opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved, to check whether current priorities are still relevant, and to put forward ideas for new township priorities. Participation was open to any person with an interest in Noorat and its future.

Great progress has been made on each of the top six township priorities over the past four years, with all either completed or in train. A number of the lower-order priorities have also been realised. Almost all of the completed projects are the product of community or Council efforts, and many the product of Community/ Council partnerships.

Heading the list is the work on the Mount Noorat Walking Track, which has progressed in a way few could have imagined due to the generosity of the Neil Black Estate. The foundations are set for Mount Noorat to play an even more significant role in the life of the local community and visitors to Noorat as more people have the opportunity to learn about and appreciate its cultural, conservation and geological significance.

Noorat does not have much by way of footpaths along Mackinnons Bridge Road, so the completion of the gravel walking path from the School to the Recreation Reserve represents a significant improvement to the amenity of Noorat. This project was not without its problems, however the community enjoyed strong support from Corangamite Shire Works staff to resolve them as far as possible in the circumstances. The Shire has also completed repairs on damaged footpaths. Whereas there is still seen to be a need to provide more and better footpaths in Noorat, the original priority 3 has been reduced to priority 18 given the work completed to date.

Other highlights include the re-establishment of the central native plant garden, this time with a water supply arranged by Corangamite Shire, the Noorat Newsletter and the Town Market. Installation of new town entry signage is nearing completion and work continues on the 'Volcanic Lakes and Plains' town promotion.

Issues

The review process commenced with a re-appraisal of the list of 'What do you value most about Noorat?' This was recognised as a critical step in the 'appreciative enquiry' process, whereby social, physical and environmental assets are recognised, so that future development proposals do not undermine the preservation and maintenance of valued community attributes.

The community then reviewed the list of completed projects which could be removed from the priority list. The third step was to obtain consensus on which other priorities might be removed from the Town Plan as 'no longer relevant'. The fourth step was to (uncritically) add any and all ideas for new project priorities. The resultant list of priorities determined by this process was presented for assessment by 'voting', that is, that application of coloured stickers by each person present of their 'top five' priorities. The meeting then reviewed the revised list of Noorat Community plan priorities.

PRIORITY PROJECTS AND ACTION AGENCY

P2	P1	PROJECT		S1	V1	G1	V2	AGENCY
1	1	IMPROVE MOUNT NOORAT WALKING TRACK	Improve the walking track up the Mount, Work with Committee of Management to develop Mount Noorat walking track, including viewing platform, interpretive signage, picnic tables or covered area at the lookout on Mount Noorat, Bubble taps, picnic tables and maybe BBQ at top of Mount Noorat, Put more picnic tables in, Fix the hut, Improve walking safety on Mount Noorat, clearer paths	18	8	7	14	PRIVATE/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
2	12	PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS	Expand playground in town centre, More playground equipment in main street, More for teenagers,	2	5	-	13	COMMUNITY/ SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
3		PUBLIC ART	Develop more public art projects (eg old Co-Op store, water tanks				12	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH PARTNERS
4	22	OPEN LAKE KEILAMBETE	Open up Lake Keilambete to the public as a tourist attraction, Promote as tourist attraction	3	1	2	11	COMMUNITY/ SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
5		TOILETS SECURITY	Implement security measures at the town centre toilets (eg lighting, video surveillance, signage, etc.)				9	VICTORIA POLICE/ COMMUNITY/ CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
6	6	STREET LIGHTING	More lighting around the town, Lighting of intersections	4	9	-	8	CORANGAMITE SHIRE/ VICROADS
7	8	AVENUE PLANTINGS	Succession planting of trees in the avenue, including filling present gaps, Update trees in the avenue, Keep avenues cut more often, Extend tree plantings on approaches to town, Extend indigenous plantations	5	5	-	7	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
8		TOURIST BROCHURE	Develop a pamphlet on 'things to see and do' in Noorat				7	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH SHIRE AND GORRT

P2 means priority in 2017, P1 means priority in 2013, S1 means survey mentions 2013 (N = 29), V1 means votes 2103 (N = 24),

G means 'gold' top voter priority in 2013, and V2 means votes in 2017 (N = 29)

1 Mount Noorat Walking Track

This remains Noorat's highest priority. Mount Noorat heads the list of the most valued assets of the township and there is a palpable excitement within the Noorat community over the prospective transfer of the Mount into public ownership through the generous bequest of the Niel Black Estate. Work on the upgrading of the Walking Track was completed as an early project in the Noorat Plan, however there is strong interest in further developing the Walking Track, potentially with picnic facilities, fixing the hut and other trail developments. It was noted that a management plan for the site would be an early priority for the Committee of Management (whatever form that takes) to balance the various interests in accordance with the confirmed objectives for this highly significant and cherished place. It can also be noted that this priority may have greater community support than indicated through the voting process, as some members consider that the achievement of this priority is 'already in hand' and therefore applied their limited 'votes' to other priorities.

2 Playground improvements

There is a strong feeling within Noorat that the playground (in the median strip next to the public toilets) should be developed and extended to generate more and longer stop-overs in the town. The meeting was made aware of Council's 'one town – one playground' policy and asked whether or not this should become the town's main playground (rather than the one at the recreation reserve), but unanimously said 'no' to that idea. It was therefore noted that community representatives would need to make representations to their Councillors for a change in Council's policy if this priority is to have any life. A further point of consideration is the interest in developing a different type of playground at the site – a 'nature play' type facility which does not have commercial equipment structures but natural materials upon which to play and with which to interact.

3 Public Art

There is an appetite for more public art in Noorat, based on the highly successful project completed in 2016, added to by a recent private gift of a second piece – an 'eagle' sculpture to complement 'the nest'.

4 Open Lake Keilambete

This elevated priority links in with the work with the GORRT authority to develop a new 'Volcanic Lakes and Plains' tourism region, based on a brand strategy capitalising on direct experience of the region's volcanic legacy. This priority was also included in the Terang Community Plan. There is a public access easement on the north side of the lake, which has an interesting social history prior to the construction of the Terang Swimming Pool.

5 Toilets Security

The local community has raised this matter with Victoria Police. Members are keen to see some security measures put in place to address recent reported behaviours.

6 Street lighting

Whereas the requested additional lighting at the intersection of Mackinnons Bridge and Glenormiston roads has been installed, some community members still hold concerns about safety at other major intersections.

7 Avenue plantings

Succession planting, additional avenue plantings and increasing the number of plantings of indigenous trees on the approaches to Noorat have all been proposed.

8 Tourist brochure

This priority fits with current work regarding online promotion of the 'Volcanic Lakes and Plains' region, in partnership with GORRT and Corangamite Shire. Noorat has been actively represented on the Reference Group for that project over the past year.

9 Town promotion strategy

It is widely recognised that 'product development' needs to occur across the northern parts of the Shire to support tourism development, but that an incremental process of tourism development can occur building on a range of local initiatives. This priority will receive consideration and support through the partnership with GORRT, but again rely on local initiatives to give effect to the broader strategy.

10 *Tree maintenance on Blacks Drive*

Further to the work undertaken by the Shire a few years back, the community holds the view that further maintenance work needs to be carried out on these trees.

11 *Rare Trades Festival*

Building on the new Noorat Town Market, an annual Festival is proposed for Noorat. As with the Market initiative, this proposal will rely upon local support to establish.

12 *Glenormiston*

The meeting heard from two attendees about plans for a range of educational activities at Glenormiston which are expected to be announced shortly. There is still strong support for something to be done about the underutilisation of this asset, although the priority ranking has slipped somewhat in the current review.

13 *Hard rubbish collection*

The idea for a once-a-year hard rubbish collection was elevation in the priority ratings.

14 *'Public Hall'*

As Noorat does not have a 'public hall', and as the Noorat Scouts have gone into recess, the community wonders whether support might be made available for the operation and maintenance of the Noorat Scout Hall as the town's Public Hall.

P2	P1	PROJECT		S1	V1	G1	V2	AGENCY
9		TOWN PROMOTION STRATEGY	Develop a town promotion/ communications strategy				7	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH SHIRE AND GORRT
10		TREES ON BLACKS DRIVE	Undertake maintenance work on trees in 'Lovers Lane',				7	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
11		RARE TRADES FESTIVAL	Develop a rare/ lost trades festival event				7	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH SHIRE
12	7	GLENORMISTON COLLEGE	Offer more at Glenormiston College, Promote Glenormiston College	2	6	2	6	SWTAFE/ STATE GOVERNMENT
13	20	HARD RUBBISH COLLECTION	Some form of hard waste collection (maybe once a year), Twice a year hard rubbish day	3	3	-	6	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
14		PUBLIC HALL SUPPORT	Seek support for funding and maintenance of Public Hall/ Scout Hall				6	COMMUNITY/ SHIRE PARTNERSHIP
15	11	DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE	A big glassed-in signage providing direction and telling information about walking track to crater, Allan Marshall precinct, Recreation Complex and new Fire Station, Directional signage to Recreation Reserve and children's playground	2	5	-	4	COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH VICROADS
16		TRAFFIC ISLAND MAINTENANCE	Clear weeds/ vegetation growing on traffic islands at the entry to Glenormiston College				4	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
17	13	PROMOTE HISTORY	Promote history of Noorat and district	1	5	2	3	COMMUNITY PROJECT

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The remaining project ideas on Noorat's priority list attracted a limited number of votes this time round. They are included here as they weren't struck out initially and they complete the picture in terms of the current voting pattern. As mentioned previously, it remains open for interested people to take inspiration from these ideas and pursue them where opportunities are created or present themselves.

P2	P1	PROJECT		S1	V1	G1	V2	AGENCY
18	3	MORE FOOTPATHS	More footpaths, Create footpaths for mobility, A walking trail from town centre to Scanlon's Rural Store, past Lake Lolly and Primary School	6	11	1	2	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
19	17	RE-PURPOSE BUTTER FACTORY	Develop butter factory, Put the old butter factory to some use, Turn old factory into a dairy museum from horse and cart deliveries to the present	4	-	-	2	PRIVATE BUSINESS INTEREST OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
20	25	SEALING OF ROADS	Upgrade unfinished roads to beautify the town, Sealing road section from 23 Terang road to Terang-Mortlake Road	2	3	2	2	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
	27	CHURCH FENCE	Install new fence around the Presbyterian Church, fence needs fixing	3	-	-	2	COMMUNITY GROUP/ CHURCH COUNCIL?
	14	UPGRADE TOILETS AT RESERVE	Upgrade toilets at Recreation Reserve	1	5	-	1	COMMUNITY GROUP/ RESERVE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT?
	9	SPEED LIMITS	Enforcement of speed limits, Road safety for schools, relocate speed restriction signs further out of town,	5	4	-	1	VICROADS/ STATE GOVERNMENT
	16	SEAL BLACKS LANE	Seal Blacks Lane to prevent bumpiness, Seal Blacks Drive,	2	4	-	1	CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL
	18	TOWN SLOGAN	Noorat needs a new 'town slogan'	1	4	1	1	COMMUNITY PROJECT
	10	MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION/ NBN	Improve mobile phone reception in town	3	5	1	-	COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AND PROVIDERS
	23	ATTRACT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE	Encourage more young people to come and live in Noorat so that schools will grow, Attract more children to the State School	3	1	-	-	?

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Policy and Legislative Context

The Council Plan 2017-2021 outlines Corangamite Shire's community planning initiative (Pages 10 and 11) and describes how, over the past six years, it has systematically surveyed local residents and assisted them to develop Community Plans. Recognising the many benefits of community planning and supporting its delivery, the new Council Plan includes a 'commitment to support Council's Community Planning Program' under its Theme 4 Objective to 'Engage with and listen to our communities' (Page 23), and under the Theme 1 Objective to 'Advocate strongly in relation to . . . community priorities' (Page 13).

Importantly, the Noorat Community Plan review process contributes to Council's Vision: 'We strive for a thriving and connected community' (Page 4) and gives expression to Council's Values of Respect, Innovation and Collaboration (Page 8).

Internal / External Consultation

Consultation and engagement activities to review Noorat's 10-year community plan began with the seeking of advice through meetings of the Noorat and District Residents Association, where decisions were made on process and timelines. An A5 printed flyer 'What next for Noorat?' was sent to Noorat households through the local Post Office and the seeking of advice through meetings of the Noorat and District Residents Association, where decisions were made on process and timelines.

An A5 printed flyer 'What next for Noorat?' was sent to Noorat households through the local Post Office and distributed at The Shed, in addition to social media posts and word-of-mouth advice by local community members. A Facebook post by Corangamite Shire attracted 270 post clicks and 52 likes and shares.

Post Details Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts ✕

Corangamite Shire Council
Published by Brooke Comins (9) · June 19 at 2:22pm · 🌐

A lot of things have changed for Noorat since the town's community plan was prepared back in 2013.

Four years on, the time has come to review it. Everyone with an interest in Noorat is invited to come along and contribute their thoughts, and to vote on the revised list of township priorities.

What next for

NOORAT?

When: Tuesday 20 June 2017
Time: From 7:30 pm to 9 pm
Where: Noorat Scout Hall

👍 Get More Likes, Comments and Shares
Boost this post for \$4 to reach up to 1,300 people.

3,397 people reached Boost Post

👤 Siobhan Staunton, Eileen Cotterill and 16 others · 2 Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

3,397 People Reached

52 Likes, Comments & Shares

41 Likes	18 On Post	23 On Shares
4 Comments	0 On Post	4 On Shares
7 Shares	2 On Post	5 On Shares

270 Post Clicks

28 Photo Views	0 Link Clicks	242 Other Clicks 📄
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

0 Hide Post	1 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

A total of 24 people attended the Public Meeting on 20 June 2017, a similar level of participation as in June 2013, but with a number of new people involved (representing a wider demographic). In deliberating over the business of the evening, some community members were able to learn more about the community planning process and the about the efforts made by fellow community participants over the past four years.

It might also be noted that two Town Walks and other site inspections involving community-members, Councillors and Officers also provided a sound footing for the partnership formation which not only enabled collaborative planning, design, delivery and completion, but provided a means to deal effectively with some unforeseen problems and conflict resolution.

Financial and Resource Implications

This report is for information only and does not entail any recommendations relating to increased or reduced financial and other resources. The provision of more than \$50,000 in direct seed-funding by Council, \$30,000 through the Public Art program, and funds provided for footpath and lighting upgrades as well as the Retail Area Facades Improvements program has provided the impetus and the means for the local community to identify and pursue projects to strengthen the Noorat community, to build public participation in decision-making affecting Noorat's future and to improve the liveability of the township through development projects. Noorat Community Plan priorities will be considered as part of the formulation of

future Council budgets or as part of Council's advocacy programs on behalf of Corangamite Shire communities.

Conclusion

The community of Noorat has made outstanding progress over the first four years of its 10 year community plan, with works completed or proceeding on nine of the original 27 listed priorities. Importantly this includes all of the top six priorities, so that the community has achieved those things that were judged four years ago to be the most important for the town.

Along the way three other projects arose and have been completed. These are the Noorat Public Art project, a town war memorial, a new succulent garden in the Mackinnons Bridge road median strip, plus another (donated) public sculpture. These works are indicative of a strengthened capacity of the community to come together, to form partnerships and to take active steps to achieve their goals.

The completion of these projects provides unequivocal evidence of the value to communities of committing time and effort to Council's community planning initiative. This value not only relates to project outcomes for communities and for Council, but to the building of the trust which is essential to productive partnerships to enhance the liveability and prosperity of Noorat.

Source: Extract of Ordinary Council Minutes 25 July 2017