



# Imagining Camperdown

Community priorities for  
township development  
2013 to 2023

Prepared for the community of Camperdown  
with the assistance of Corangamite Shire's  
***Building Stronger Corangamite Communities***  
project – a partnership between the Department  
of Planning and Community Development and  
the Corangamite Shire to support communities to  
plan and implement improvements to their  
towns.



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**THE MAKING OF CAMPERDOWN**

The making of the township of Camperdown began with the arrival of squatters and pastoralists in 1839, a period well-documented in Margaret Kiddle’s social history of the Western District of Victoria from 1834 to 1890, *Men of Yesterday*. From a town of 415 people in 1861, Camperdown had a recorded population of 1,627 by 1891. The railway had arrived in 1883, and the town continued to thrive on the export of its rich agricultural production through the depression years of the 1890’s, reaching a population of 3,473 in 1911. It was during this period that many of Camperdown’s grand buildings and fine homes were constructed and the town’s reputation for prosperity established. The Great War took its toll in many ways, and the town’s population declined over the next 20 years, bottoming at 3029 in 1933. Camperdown was on a growth path after the World War II, with its population peaking at 3596 in 1976.



Changing agricultural technologies and less intensive farming practices brought in a trend of reduced labour inputs (Kennelly, 2005) and youth out-migration (Geldens, 2007), eroding township population. Grim years followed in the 1990’s with the closure of the abattoirs,

the Bonlac factory and the town’s two clothing manufacturing enterprises, and this was compounded by deep cuts to government services and employment by the Kennett government. Loss of employment opportunities and an ageing population contributed to the

town’s declining socioeconomic profile, as did the relocation of people in crisis to cheaper rental housing in Camperdown. Twenty-five per cent of Camperdown’s population is now classified as disadvantaged (ABS, 2011).

**CAMPERDOWN CHRONOLOGY**

1836 Major Mitchell departs Sydney to explore western area of the Port Phillip Bay District  
 1837 Explorers Gellibrand and Hesse lost in the Otway Forest  
 1838 Henty's establish 'squat' in the Portland Bay District  
 1839 Manifold brothers relocate from Point Henry to Purrumbete  
 1840 Early settlement established at old Timboon site  
 1850 State of Victoria formed  
 1851 Victorian 'Gold rush' begins  
 1851 Original Timboon settlement relocated to higher ground  
 1852 New town site surveyed  
 1854 Camperdown named by Governor Charles La Trobe  
 1857 Hampden Roads District established  
 1860 Land sale in Camperdown advertised in Launceston  
 1863 Post and Telegraph office constructed  
 1869 Botanic Gardens and Arboretum reserved  
 1869 Masonic Lodge erected  
 1876 Finlay Avenue planted



Manifold Street Camperdown circa 1890  
 Source: [www.camperdownhistory.org.au](http://www.camperdownhistory.org.au)

1883 Railway arrives  
 1885 Shire Hall erected  
 1886 Courthouse erected  
 Camperdown State School No 114 built  
 1890 Mechanics Institute built  
 1891 Co-operative Butter Factory established  
 1895 East and west ridings of Shire of Hampden ceded to form Heytesbury Shire  
 1897 Clocktower erected  
 1902 Leura Hotel constructed

1909 Electric lighting turned on in Camperdown  
 1909 Post Office Arts and Crafts extension built  
 1912 Camperdown Hospital built  
 1917 'Heroes Day' celebrated  
 1927 Theatre Royal built  
 1952 Borough of Camperdown excised from Hampden Shire  
 1953 Camperdown Swimming Pool opens

1991 Camperdown Abattoirs close  
 1993 Bonlac Factory closed  
 1993 Closure of Country Road Clothing factory  
 1994 Camperdown becomes centre of new Corangamite Shire  
 2004 Safeway Supermarket opens  
 2007 Natural gas arrives  
 2007 Camperdown Hospital opens new operating Theatre  
 2009 New Sports Stadium opens  
 2012 Camperdown Cheese Company commences operations at old Factory site  
 2012 Opening of new Shire offices

There are many, many events which could be added to this chronology, including any number of external factors which shaped Camperdown's development. This one is intended as a key to reading the town as it is today. Those who would wish to argue the case for including other events are most welcome to add to or subtract from this spare list.

There are many stories contributing to the imagining of Camperdown, but three must be mentioned to appreciate the town's history, in turn tragic, triumphant and troubling.



The past is indeed a foreign land that does not bear judgment by the present, yet distant deeds have left their mark. The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia (1900) specifically disallowed the counting of aborigines among the population (so as to limit the influence of Western Australia and Queensland in the new parliament), meaning that aboriginal people were reduced to the status of 'wildlife'. (Aborigines existed under the Flora and Fauna Act, and although from 1945 they could vote in federal elections, their constitutional position did not change until the 1967 referendum.)

'As the squatters moved from illegal occupation to possession through the nineteenth century 'land wars', their properties metamorphosed from slab huts into substantial and sometimes grand homesteads.' (Edquist, 2008, p75)

If one is fortunate to enter the great 'living hall' of Purrumbete, one will be taken by Guyon Purchas' remaking of the homestead in the Arts and Crafts style (completed in 1901). From the Prenzel carvings of the Minstrel Gallery the eye is drawn to the six large historic Art Nouveau panels painted by Walter Withers (completed in 1902), which were commissioned by William Manifold as a mural to record the highlights of his family's proud pioneering heritage. One panel, 'Shooting the blacks', depicts stick meeting gun in the Stony Rises. It still shocks.

Dispossession, disease, starvation and murder took a disastrous toll on the uncounted aboriginal population. Within 43 years all were dead except for a small number forcibly concentrated at the Framlingham Mission (Critchett, 1994).

James Dawson's monument to Camperdown's 'last aborigine' Wombeetch Puyuum ('Camperdown George') and his Djargurd Wurrung people, all dead and gone by 1883.

**Source:** [www.monumentaustralia.org.au](http://www.monumentaustralia.org.au)


### A letter from 'Vera' at Camperdown, July 1895

For the present I have quitted the showers and mists of Melbourne for the fogs and frosts of Camperdown, the prettiest of inland Victorian towns. The dwellings in this picturesque sleepy hollow are, as a rule, substantial and old fashioned, the gardens flowery, and the surrounding country green and fertile; but it is the number and beauty of the lakes in the vicinity that make Camperdown scenery so unlike that of the ordinary country town. Go where you will in this neighbourhood your eyes are delighted by the sight of lakes, one more picturesque than another, and all retaining the musical native names conferred by the dead and gone aboriginal inhabitants of these parts. Purrumbete, Elingamite, Corangamite, Gnotuk, Wiridgil and many another crystal plain can be seen from the top of Mount Leura, an extinct crater, whence comes the useful scoria which keeps Camperdown clean and dry underfoot. Governor Hopetoun was so enchanted with the beauty of this district that he deserted Government Cottage at Mount Macedon to the dismay of property holders thereabouts, and spent his last Australian summer in these regions. Besides the beauty of his Camperdown surroundings, the departed chieftain was no doubt influenced by the fact that here his neighbours wealthy station owners and monarchs of all they survey hereabouts left him cheerfully to his own devices, though able and willing to indulge him in field sports to his heart's content when he felt so inclined. At Macedon, on the contrary, the population does or did consist chiefly of city society folk, ostentatious and conventional in their expensive summer quarters, and anxious to turn their annual outlay to account by sedulous cultivation of the Government House party.

Most of the Camperdown station homesteads are beautifully situated on lake shores, and surrounded by gardens remarkable for fertility and luxuriance of growth. Mignonette and primroses spring up like weeds. Camellias and hollies grow into stately trees, chrysanthemums linger late into the winter, and roses bloom until daphnes are ready to take their places. In summer raspberries are a drug in the market, as indeed are many other local products. Walnuts are ridiculously cheap, fresh milk costs sixpence per gallon, while skim milk can be had for the asking at the local batter factory. Young fowls ready for killing are sold for sixpence each, potatoes are 15s. per ton and other things equally reasonable. Besides the butter factory Camperdown boasts a rabbit canning establishment, not an imposing building, though everyone within its walls seems desperately busy. The skinning is done at night, 3000 bunnies being regarded as each man's fair share of work. By four o'clock in the morning everything is ready for the preservers who start by scalding the rabbits whole preparatory to cutting them up into neat joints, packing them in tins, and turning them into a huge vat for final cooking. When Lord Hopetoun left this district Camperdown was polo-mad, but so far as the townsfolk were concerned the mania was too expensive to be long-lived. Relays of tip-top ponies are only for those who have inherited the earth, and local citizens for the most part now leave polo to the squatter princes of the neighbourhood and content themselves with hockey or shinty, a game played with a ball and sticks and not unlike polo with the ponies left out.

'Melbourne Gossip' – a letter from 'Vera',  
*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Queensland,  
Saturday 6 July 1895, page 6

**Source: Australian newspapers online, at [www.trove.nla.gov.au](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au)**

<p><b>A TOWN IN TIME</b></p> <p>Camperdown was one of six small Victorian towns chosen for close study in a Department of Sustainability and Environment (1988) project through La Trobe University, along with Ouyen, Murtoa, Stanhope, Beechworth and Swifts Creek. Each town was selected on the basis of typifying different kinds of towns, and Camperdown was chosen for its public and private services base. The study was updated in 2005, and together these two pieces of work provide a detailed insight into town development issues and the social and community impacts of significant events on the town's prosperity, including change in local governance.</p> <p>The <i>Towns in time</i> study includes a summary of demographic data, but its findings were also grounded in interviews with residents, business operators, community groups and local and State government representatives. Many of the issues raised and ideas advanced resonate strongly with the Camperdown community planning findings.</p>	<p>Two issues arose directly out of the local government amalgamations in the early 1990's, and they still hold relevance to Community / Shire relationships. These are the loss of local leadership and representation felt by Camperdown residents as the much larger Corangamite Shire necessarily had to concern itself with broader strategic issues and spreading of limited resources. The study found that 'community identity' continued to be associated with the towns of the Shire – not the expansive Shire. The study also reported on local government's problem with State and federal government cost-shifting, with local governments loath to take federal and State money to create new facilities and services because they are then stuck with the cost of maintaining them. The outcome is described as follows: 'This causes resentment in communities who want to develop facilities and services but find local government unwilling or unable to support their projects.'</p>	 <p>Ideas for town development captured in the study were connection to natural gas to make viable the redevelopment of the old Bonlac factory, and the realisation of Camperdown's tourism potential based on its natural assets, historical features and boutique shopping.</p> <p>Despite Camperdown's severe economic setbacks, the main narrative to emerge from the <i>Towns in time</i> study is essentially positive. Population change is recognised as only a (small) part of the story, with 'a town's self-image [being] an important factor contributing to resilience, viability and sustainability'. Eighteen key findings are outlined which are worthy of re-reading, as well as a summary highlighting how local government holds the key to the future of small towns.</p>	<p><i>Towns in time</i> reported that Camperdown faces some thorny social issues which require innovative thinking. The loss of young people to pursue education and work opportunities undercuts many endeavors, and the losses associated with the increasing incidence of professionals who work but do not reside locally undermines the development of community capacity. The town also needs to find ways of supporting that part of its population determined to be disadvantaged. Low-income individuals and particularly families characterised by lower educational attainment, high levels of unemployment, unskilled occupations and dwellings without motor vehicles are in need of opportunities for engagement, participation and inclusion. It is important to note that that this is not only about income. Citing Cummins et al (2005), <i>Towns in time</i> makes the point that 'The highest level of personal well-being is achieved by people who live in rural towns.'</p>
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### CULTURAL THREADS

Through a distance of over a century one can follow the cultural threads that make up the physical and social fabric of Camperdown, with its enduring preoccupations in farming, manufacturing, sport, horses, gardening, commerce and politics. The story of Camperdown as a ‘town in time’ also invites comparisons with Ronald Blythe’s tough and tender portrait of the English village ‘Akenfield’. To make a place and find shelter from the headwinds of economic transition remains a struggle for some, delivering mixed fortunes to those that make their home in Camperdown. That some are found to be at a disadvantage in the SEIFA calculus presents the township with a serious community development challenge. What can be done to include, encourage, give hope and empower those at the margins to find a way to improve their circumstances?

In 1851 Surveyor Robert Duncan Scott noted the remarkable natural beauty of Camperdown, as did the anonymous ‘Vera’ in her 1895 description of the developing township. Camperdown’s flowering through the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century – the ‘enchanted aspect’ of the village remarked upon by English novelist Anthony Trollope on his 1937 visit – owes much to the wealth, ambition and cultivated taste of the squatter barons and early pastoralists. The town’s physical fabric and character was shaped (at least in part) by the work they created for accomplished architects and artists, and by the endowments which transmuted private wealth into public realm. There are many ways to cause hurt – blindly, indifferently, maliciously, and ignorantly. Unfortunately, like the ‘eternal note of sadness’ heard by Mathew Arnold on ‘Dover Beach’, vandalism in Camperdown is as old as the town itself. This plays as an angry chord with these who love their town passionately.

Reckless mention of the value of John Greenshields statue of Robbie Burns brought down a blunt instrument upon it in the night. Young trees forming the new *Tilia* avenue in McNicol Street were snapped in the night on the day they were formatively pruned. Heritage buildings have been lost to flames and public facilities trashed – again in the dark. Those whose heart skips a beat when they look up to the French Gothic detail of the Michael McCabe’s copper-turreted Late Victorian Medieval Revival clocktower saw the holes in the glass from rocks thrown from the street. Those who catch their breath when the light falls on the exquisite stained glass of St Paul’s Anglican Church, or who swoon upon entering a favourite Warburton Perry Knights Federation drawing room, or who quietly marvel at Paul Montford’s 1929 ‘Spirit of Empire’ memorial, know that it is best not to make mention or draw attention to these treasures.



**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Recent changes in ABS statistical methodology and reporting make for difficulty in answering simple questions about change in the population of towns and localities, and this is especially true of Camperdown with the 2011 Census. Whereas the Camperdown Urban Area count in 2006 was 3,165, in 2011 it is 2,938 – the ‘reduction’ all down to new boundaries. The ABS reports the Camperdown State Suburb count in 2011 as 3,462, compared with 3541 in 2006, but this is problematic as it includes a large rural area as well as the township proper. This ‘State Suburb’ area measure is used in Community Profile reporting for local government by Informed Decisions P/L, yet it reports Camperdown’s population as 3,306 in 2011 compared to 3,415. The company advises that the population of Camperdown is roughly the same across the last two Censuses, (contrary to its prediction of growth), the ‘reduction’ being due to a more accurate method of calculating the ABS Estimated Residential Population.

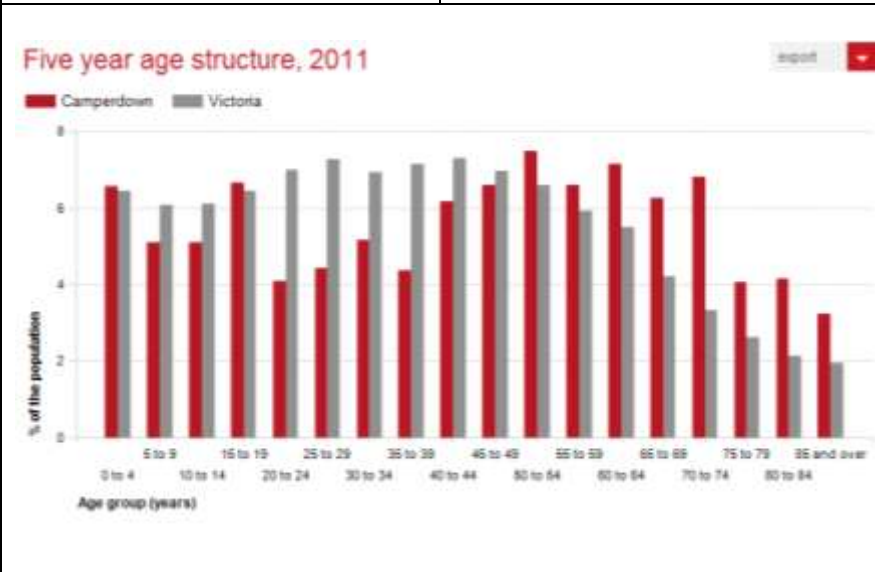


The structure of Camperdown’s aged population does not follow the distinct pattern of the State as a whole. For example, the percentage of the population in the 70-74 age group is double the Victorian average. This suggests that variable factors of inward and outward migration might be at play.

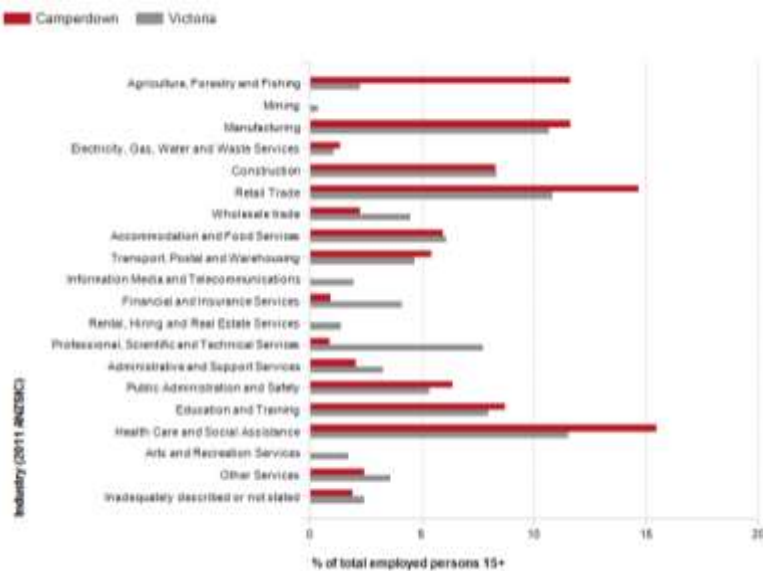
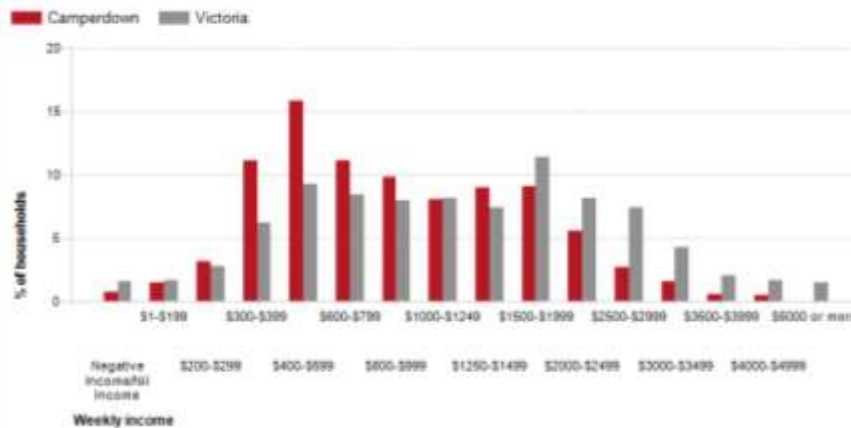
A key feature of Camperdown’s demographic story is its age profile, with a higher proportion of older people making up the population due an exodus of people in their twenties following the pied pipers of employment

and education opportunity. While the birth rate is slightly above the State average, there is some recent evidence that Camperdown has begun losing families with young children.

Other key features of Camperdown’s population are directly linked to its age profile. For example, the higher proportion of older people means that the number of persons receiving the aged pension is substantially higher, and this flows into the household income measures. Camperdown has comparatively low levels of household income compared to the Victorian average – some 13% lower. Similarly, less than 30% of Camperdown’s population completed Year 12 compared to the Victorian Average of 50%. As mentioned previously 25% of the population is classified as ‘disadvantaged’ in terms of the SEIFA index. The aged population profile contributes to all these differences.




### Weekly household income, 2011



Census data on industry and employment show Camperdown as markedly different to the Victorian average. Health care and social services represents the biggest industry sector, followed by retailing, then agriculture and manufacturing. Whereas health care and retail are significantly over-represented in comparison to the State average, the most dramatic variation is the high level of employment in agricultural industries. The biggest gap for Camperdown compared to the rest of the State is the absence of professionals, which has been remarked upon elsewhere. Along with the under-represented and related financial and insurance sector, it provides part of the explanation for the lower-income and lower educational attainment trends in the town. Vocational training qualifications have increased substantially over the last inter-census period, reducing the proportion of people reporting no post-school educational qualifications.



The Great South Coast Medicare Local group produced the first stage of its *After Hours Care Needs Assessment* report in 2012, highlighting the levels of disadvantage across Corangamite Shire and key towns. They reported on a number of Health Indicators alongside measures of disadvantage associated with them, but more seriously identified a number of local factors affecting health. The population of Camperdown and Corangamite Shire as a whole has some urgent matters to address in regard to the relatively poor health outcomes of local residents.

<p><b>THE PLANNING PROCESS</b></p> <p>The <i>Building Stronger Corangamite Communities</i> project sets out to develop community plans for the Shire’s 12 townships. These are plans developed by each local community, for the community, and owned by the local community.</p> <p>The project manages and facilitates an inclusive process that helps communities identify local priorities, set short, medium and long term goals and work with the Corangamite Shire Council and other levels of government to achieve them. It provides structure, support, advice and administrative assistance to communities so that they can come to a consensus about what they value most about where they live and to work towards their preferred future.</p> <p>As well as steering the development of local public assets, events and services, plans made by communities also serve as a decision tool for Corangamite Council to better meet local needs and aspirations.</p>	<p>The creation of community plans is designed to build capacity within local communities. The process design relies on making best use of deep local knowledge, talents and skills to scope and implement local projects, and as necessary, to identify opportunities to access funding and other resources to implement priority projects. This includes the establishment of relationships within and beyond communities and working with the Council on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>There is no one planning model – the project is experimental and communities will shape their own process – however each plan will observe some fundamental principles. They will be inclusive of as many voices in the community as possible and seek to reflect local demographics, and transparent in the way priorities are identified and decided upon.</p>		<p>Whereas the Town Survey achieved a broad sample of opinion across age and gender, it was apparent at both the Soapbox and Public Meeting events that younger people were under-represented. Speculation made by members of a number of active community groups includes the observation that for whatever reason, some people are not very interested in being involved with meetings and committees. It has been demonstrated that some community-minded people prefer to be involved in working-bees and direct action around specific projects rather than discussions and planning of their form and implementation. For this reason, and due to the comparatively lower level of participation experienced in larger communities it was decided to explore a more continuous planning cycle in place of the stepped Plan/ Implement/ Review process. This gave rise to the concept of a rolling cycle of ‘community conversations’ on key priorities, to provide opportunity for focused engagement and future involvement.</p>
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## THE SOAPBOX

Forty-six people attended the Camperdown Soapbox event at the Theatre Royal on Tuesday 18 September 2012, almost half of whom stepped up to present their ideas on 'What Camperdown needs'. Those who had previously registered their interest spoke first.

The format of the evening involved a brief outline of the community planning process in train, followed by an invitation for individuals to come forward and speak for between three and 5 minutes on any of the questions outlined in the town survey. At the conclusion of the meeting there was a general question and answer session, with both questions and answers offered by members present.

Ideas ranged from the broad and strategic (tourism infrastructure, retirement accommodation, co-location of town facilities, the future of Advance Camperdown, town promotion) to the specific and operational (installation of plaques, conduct of town events, road crossings and barriers, town beautification, streetscape upgrade, use of vacant land/buildings).

Although it carried the risk of providing a platform for critics of Council, the Soapbox format attracted a range of positive ideas on key topics. Whereas a few people took the opportunity to voice negative sentiments and general criticisms about the town, its citizens and the Council, these were generally not appreciated, and audience members took the opportunity to contest some of the wilder statements. As planned, the evening was characterized by respectful listening.

As noted previously, alongside the 'project outcomes' of community planning there are 'process outcomes'. This is where the very activity of planning produces community strengthening outcomes.

Whereas Advance Camperdown has struggled on the edge of existence in recent years with low membership and limited support for the few individuals keeping it going from one crisis AGM to another, the Soapbox meeting resulted in pleas by current and former community leaders to get behind the push to reinvigorate Advance Camperdown. The importance of having a broadly-representative incorporated town organisation to hold funds and to support and facilitate community endeavors has been accepted. At the time of writing Advance Camperdown had 62 members.



The Soapbox was a first for the *Building Stronger Corangamite Communities* project, and was designed to generate discussion and interest to build the number of completed surveys returned. Council received praise from several speakers for initiating the conversation about the future of Camperdown, with some suggesting that such conversations should be ongoing. Most participants stayed on after the Soapbox to continue the discussion. A report on the Soapbox meeting was published in the *Camperdown Chronicle* as part of the partnership with WD News.

## SURVEY RESPONSE

The survey attracted 164 responses. Depending on which ABS measure one selects this could variously represent: 5.6% of the Camperdown Urban Area (ABS 2011 – 2,938), 5.2% of the Camperdown Urban area (ABS 2006 – 3,165), or 4.7% of Camperdown State Suburb (ABS 2011 – 3,462).

In short, the survey captured the views of around 5% of residents of Camperdown, with just under 90% giving their postcode as 3260. All but 4 respondents provided ‘age-grouping’ information, which, when compared to the age distribution provided at the ABS 2006 Census, shows a good correspondence. Not surprisingly, representation of the 1-14 years age-grouping is quite low, which elevated the percentages for all other categories. Those in the 35-44 age-grouping are under-represented, and participation of males across the 25- 44 age-grouping was poor.

Gender	Age grouping								Total	Postcode	
	1 – 14	15 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75+		Postcode	Count
Male	3	15	4	3	10	13	6	5	60	3058	2
Female		27	11	7	12	21	10	6	96	3224	1
Unknown		1	1		2				8	3250	1
										3260	136
Total	3	43	16	10	24	34	16	11	164	3264	1
										3265	3
Per cent	1.9%	27.4%	10.1%	6.4%	15.3%	21.7%	10.2%	7.0%	100%	3266	2
										3269	1
Census*	16.8%	10.8%	9.6%	10.8%	14.1%	13.8%	13.1%	7.3%	100%	3271	2
										3272	1
										3273	1
										3325	3
										None	10

NOTE: Eight survey respondents did not supply any ‘age grouping’ information, and four neither gender nor age information.

\* ABS Census 2006 for Camperdown and district (Source: Community Profile ID at [www.corangamite.vic.gov.au](http://www.corangamite.vic.gov.au))

The strongest participation was by those in the 15-24 and 55-64 age-groupings. Women were more strongly represented than men in every age-group category, if only by a small margin in some. The upshot of this response profile is that the survey method captured a representative sample of the population of Camperdown across age and gender. Despite efforts to reach some of the recognised ‘difficult to reach’ groups, the survey response in no doubt skewed to the literate,

socially-connected and perhaps more comfortably placed members of the community. The sample certainly included people with a passionate interest in their town and their community.

The conduct of the survey was advertised in and editorially supported by WD NEWS through the local newspaper – the *Camperdown Chronicle*. The survey form was included as a coloured insert in the newspaper, as well as being distributed

directly to community groups and placed in shops, hotels and cafes. Presentations were made to secure the involvement of a number of community groups and schools over the course of the ten-week survey period, and promotional material distributed through the email networks of individuals and community, business organisations.

**PUBLIC MEETING**

A public forum was held in the Theatre Royal on 31 October 2012, with 66 people attending.

The evening commenced with an outline of the community planning project, with reference to work completed in five Corangamite towns. The outcomes of the Town Survey were presented, based on the 155 completed returns. (A further nine completed surveys were submitted on the evening.)

It was explained that all the survey ideas had been summarised and grouped under a number of broad headings. Similar ideas were grouped to give a summary of the most frequently mentioned proposals for change or action. This representation of all the survey advice was posted around the room on large-print A0 sheet, with room for attendees to add any further ideas which had not been mentioned to date. Members of the public then voted on priorities from the 231 listed ideas that had been identified and added a few more.



The process of voting involved each attendee being given five coloured stickers and one gold sticker. Instruction was given that the coloured stickers should be applied to the five ideas people would like to see implemented, with the single gold sticker to then be applied to each individual's top priority. This was expressed as – if there was only one action to be implemented out of the community planning process, what would it be?

Following the voting period, attendees returned to their chairs and an informal verbal summary of voting patterns was described. The summary pointed out the transparent observation that the overwhelming priority to emerge is the provision of some form of staffed 7-day-a-week Visitor Information Centre in Camperdown, with other tourism related priorities including better directional signage and updated tourist information. The issue of caravan park facilities was highlighted across several priority areas. Ideas included removing the caravan park and restoring the Botanic Gardens and providing camping and upgraded caravan park facilities in several possible locations.

Business attraction and employment featured strongly in the voting, along with improvements to, and maintenance of, the town's heritage streetscape. Upgrading Apex Park, a new gallery/performance space, safer highway crossings and traffic management treatments, a heated pool and retirement living accommodation were also prioritised.

It was explained that the next steps would involve the formation of Action Groups and scoping of projects. And that a summary of priorities would be circulated in advance of the completed plan. This would include a 'vision' for Camperdown drawn from the most valued town aspects identified, based around the much loved avenues, trees and parks, heritage features and streetscape, lakes and craters, businesses, shops and sporting facilities.

The discussion of voting outcomes continued over supper.

## IDENTIFYING ASSETS

The first question in the survey was:

*‘What things do you value most about Camperdown, which need to be protected and maintained?’*

The purpose of this question was to generate an appreciative enquiry, rather than dwell upon shortcomings and omissions, and it succeeded in highlighting the unprompted shared values of Camperdown’s citizenry. Responses were grouped under headings that emerged as the surveys were collated, to attempt to rank the most valued assets. This is necessarily a loose construction given the different language used by respondents which could be counted in different ways. A number of general descriptions are capable of multiple readings.

What is clear is that Camperdown’s avenues and tree-lined streets are the town’s most valued asset. This came in ahead of the town’s heritage buildings and its village feel/charm/ambience, a feature which was



ranked on a par with Camperdown’s parks and gardens. Scores for all aspects could be higher if aspects of ‘town layout’ were added to the counts. This cluster of features was clearly

ahead of another cluster, which mentions Lakes, Volcanic landforms and Sport. The Clocktower received 42 specific mentions, and this could also be added to the ‘Heritage buildings/

Village feel’ count. Camperdown’s shops, cafes, services and community organisations are also highly valued. These mentions (see Appendix) provide a basis for a ‘vision’ for the town’s future.



**ISSUES AND THEMES**

As with the summary of survey mentions relating to those aspects valued most by those with an interest in Camperdown, mentions in regard to aspects of the town which need to be improved, changed or created cannot be catalogued with precision. What can be fairly said is that there are key issues of concern, even though suggested solutions to them may differ.

The greatest number of survey mentions and the greatest variety of ideas attached to the issue of **Town amenity and appearance.**

The degraded condition of Camperdown’s heritage streetscape gathered most survey mentions and was elevated in priority through the voting process. Restoration of the Botanic Gardens/ Arboretum came in as number four in terms of overall priority for action, but attracted the highest vote count amongst the identified priorities. This issue was linked to taking action on the removal of the current caravan park from the

Botanical Gardens and providing upgraded facilities for caravanning and camping in another location, which was counted under the **Tourism development** heading. That category was dominated by the one, clear and overwhelming priority – the provision of a seven-day-a-week manned tourist information Centre. This both topped the survey mention count and attracted 23 ‘gold sticker’ priorities at the public meeting. A variety of suggestions around improved tourist information were aggregated to make it the number five priority overall.

The issue of **Highway crossing and pedestrian safety** received more than 40 survey mentions when one gathers together the mention of a variety of solutions connected to this issue. It has been noted that the issue of safety is differently perceived across age and gender, and that the survey mention total may be over-counted here (given that concerned individuals could legitimately mention multiple issues within the theme). Whether this is the case or not, the high

survey mention count was not supported by the vote count.

Construction of an indoor heated pool topped the **Recreation and sport** theme, just ahead of the new Camperdown Playspace project. Some participants related that they would not ‘waste their vote’ on this project, given that it is seen to be already underway.

Ways of improving employment opportunities headed the **Business, industry and economic development** category, followed by a need to provide more dining options. Suggestions around the creation of an Arts Hub/ Gallery/ Performance space head the list under the theme of **Arts and cultural development.**

It is noted that there is a great degree of overlap between different themes, where one issue can be seen to be linked to several others. Each priority project identified therefore needs to be seen as part of a package of measures rather than as a discreet end itself.





irresistible appeal of releasing equity for a much, much better life on the change left over, but it could have been because Camperdownians eventually acknowledged what they already knew, and had begun to tell the story of their town. Maybe that was it – that the town started to grow again by tapping into the market segment that mattered – cashed-up baby-boomers – but in truth it was more about ideals than money. It was the things they valued (and could afford to pay for) that got the ball rolling. First it was the Rail Trail weekenders, then the café buzz, the market and the craft and the arts and cultural activities that reminded people, like the chime of the Clocktower counting the hours, that ‘a life’ is more important than mere existence. Whatever it was, there was no doubting that the town’s new prosperity is due in no small part to the miracle of how it managed to hold on to its heritage assets and actually renew its parks and gardens before they were lost . . . just like those splendid old trees in the indelible avenues of our imagining.

**VISION**

No one could really put their finger on it, but ever-so-gradually Camperdown became one of those cherished country towns that holds a place in the imagination.

People say it was because the townsfolk finally got their act together and started working in the same direction, but that sounds a bit soft. Maybe it was because the city was becoming so dense and congested, or maybe it was that just a few people came to realise they could exchange a time-poor, harried, urban life of noise and endless traffic for a more genteel pace in a green world. Some still say it was the financial equation – the

**PRIORITY OBJECTIVES**

Most of those who ‘votes’ also filled out the survey, so one needs to be careful not to allow ‘votes’ to override ‘survey mentions’. Public meeting attendees had the benefit of reviewing the unprompted survey ideas and shifting their initial opinions. (This circumstance is demonstrated in priorities 12 and 14 in the adjacent list.) Comparing and combining the count of survey mentions and votes produces a list of ranked priorities across the several themes, however there are linkages between these ideas which mean that priorities overlap in different ways.

Objectives related to improving tourism services and information are a clear top priority, including projects related to a Tourist Information Centre (1), new or better tourist information (5), and revised directional signage for visitors (10). The call for improved dining options (13) can be read as partly related to increasing the attractiveness of the town to visitors.

Objectives around the design and appearance of Manifold Street incorporate highway crossing safety (2), streetscape improvements and the maintenance and presentation of heritage buildings and features (3)

The objective of restoring Camperdown’s Botanical Gardens and Arboretum is linked to the removal of the caravan park from its entrance (4) and includes other issues around the maintenance and development of parks and urban greenspace. It is linked to proposals to provide upgraded caravanning and camping facilities (8) to provide an improved visitor experience.

Encouraging business and industry development (6) is driven by the objective of providing improved employment opportunities.

<b>Camperdown priority projects</b>		<b>S</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>G</b>
1	<b>Tourist information Centre</b>	49	19	23
2	<b>Highway crossing/safety</b>	39	1	
3	<b>Improve heritage streetscape</b>	35	11	
4	<b>Restore Botanical Gardens/ Remove caravan park/ Upgrade Queens park</b>	29	23	2
5	<b>Tourist information</b>	26	17	2
6	<b>Business and industry development/ Employment</b>	26	10	4
7	<b>Gallery/ Performance space/ Arts Hub</b>	22	18	3
8	<b>Caravan park upgrade/ Camping/ caravanning sites/ Parking for caravans</b>	21	12	1
9	<b>Construct heated indoor swimming pool</b>	22	8	1
10	<b>Directional signage</b>	22	6	1
11	<b>Camperdown Playspace</b>	20	8	2
12	<b>Healthy lakes</b>	4	18	1
13	<b>Dining options</b>	18		
14	<b>Retirement living accommodation</b>	10	16	

S means survey mentions, V means votes at public meeting, G means ‘gold star’ (top priority of voting participants)

Work on addressing community objectives around an art space (7) and the Camperdown Playspace (11) has already begun.

## SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

Since the public meeting there have been a number of discussions on the way in which the 'what' (community priorities) can be translated into the 'how' (actions). Noting remarks about other community planning exercises which have not resulted in substantial action or change, it is recommended that a small number of practical projects be pursued to demonstrate tangible results and to create confidence that the investment of time and effort in community planning is worthwhile. For those that participated in the Camperdown planning initiative, delivery on tourism services and information priorities represents this credibility test.

Some community priorities could begin to be addressed by rolling them in with others, and others through joint Shire-wide projects in conjunction with other towns. The notional funding allocation indicated in the table responds to the key priorities identified by the Camperdown community.

	Project	BSCC funding	Other funding	Agency	Priorities
1	Tourism Services	40,000	120,000	Community/ Council partnership	1 and 10
2	Botanic Gardens and Arboretum restoration	30,000	50,000	Council/ Community partnership	4 and 8
3	Business façade grant scheme	25,000	175,000	Community/ Council partnership	3 and 6
4	Tourist information/ Place branding collateral	10,000	10,000	Community/ Council partnership	5
5	Northern towns tourism strategy	-	30,000	Community/ Council partnership	1 and 5
6	Camperdown Playspace		200,000	Community/ Council partnership	11
7	Arts hub/ gallery/ performance space	-	-	Community/ Council Partnership	7
8	Camperdown streetscape and crossing safety	-	-	Council project	2
9	Unallocated	15,000	-		
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$540,000</b>		


### Notional allocations to Community plan priorities.

Note: Other funding refers to existing LGIF funding and to potential applications to grant funding bodies, including *Putting Locals First Fund*

Further work is needed to scope out the exact form of the initial projects to be pursued over the ten year planning horizon, allowing the possibility of adjusting these allocations where a given project encounters obstacles or delays. It is proposed to allocate \$50,000 of the available \$120,000 in Council BSCC funding to three tourism-related initiatives – the proposed Tourism Information Centre, the preparation of new tourist information and the development of an overarching tourism strategy which will provide a context and rationale for local action and for future grant applications.

1 Tourist Information Centre/ Arts Hub and Community Space	2 Botanic Gardens and Arboretum Restoration	3 Business Façade Grant Scheme	4 Tourist information/ Place branding collateral
<p>Advance Camperdown, Corangamite Arts and the Rotary Club of Camperdown are preparing a joint proposal to present to Council for repurposing the vacant Old Courthouse building, providing community control of this Council-owned asset through a two-year lease and volunteer-based trial. Subject to the trial proceeding in this or another form, seed funding of \$40,000 is allocated for potential leveraging with the State Government and the Putting Locals First program.</p> <p>Tourism Services is a core area of Council operations, and the proposal will need to be developed in close partnership with relevant Council officers to ensure that the efforts of community members and Council are constructive and synergistic.</p> <p>It is envisaged that this substantial undertaking will involve a Project Management funding component in the foreshadowed grant application.</p>	<p>Early discussions have recognised that work needs to be done in regard to succession planting in the Camperdown Botanic Gardens and Arboretum before the last of the senescent trees are lost or required to be removed. This project will be further developed through community consultation, but is proposed to involve a series of actions to develop a conservation management plan, an expert panel to develop policy and an action plan both to conserve and further develop the Gardens and Arboretum. It is proposed that this group would be constituted by Council and would provide ongoing advice to Council on the reserve, including the securing of funding to undertake restoration and improvement works.</p> <p>An allocation of \$30,000 is proposed to assist in the initial work of developing a conservation management plan and establish a sound framework for future development and maintenance.</p>	<p>The concern expressed through the Camperdown community planning process over the condition of heritage buildings in the main street and that of contributory buildings operated by various businesses found even stronger expression in the Terang. The same concern was expressed at Derrinallum. Despite local concern, it was felt by many that little could be done as these are privately owned and often rented premises.</p> <p>Preliminary discussions have been held about the possible development of a business grants scheme contributed to by two or more towns, which would offer significant contributions to 'demonstration projects' which improve the presentation of building facades which significantly impact on the streetscape.</p> <p>An initial allocation of \$25,000 of Camperdown BSCC funding is proposed, which could be augmented by other funds.</p>	<p>The development of new or revised tourist information materials has been a high priority for a number of Corangamite towns. It is proposed to assemble funds across a number of plans to engage expertise to develop information content which might find expression in both digital and printed forms. Words, pictures and place-branding concepts could be applied to a range of local Community Plan initiatives.</p> <p>Matching funding will be sought using the Council BSCC seed funding of \$10,000 allocated to the Camperdown Plan, combined with funds available to other Corangamite communities. These amounts will need to be cooperatively negotiated.</p>
<b>Imagining Camperdown</b>		Community priorities for township development – 2013 to 2023	
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5 Northern towns tourism strategy	6 Camperdown Playspace	7 Arts Hub/ Gallery/ Performance space	8 Camperdown Streetscape and crossing safety
<p>Discussion around tourist information services and tourist information has highlighted the need for a strategic plan to be developed to guide local actions. Ideally this would have been in place before other tourism related priorities are designed and implemented, but a number of tourism business operators and local tourism experts are of the view that a plan needs to be developed to provide direction on this community priority. Such a plan would be critical to provide a context and rationale for future grant applications for tourism development initiatives.</p> <p>Preliminary discussions have indicated that strategic work to be carried out by an expert consultant might be able to secure funding through a planning grant.</p>	<p>Although work on the Camperdown Playspace was initiated prior to commencement of the Camperdown community planning process, the project received sufficient support to be counted as a priority project in the Camperdown Plan. The project may warrant a higher ranking than shown, given that some people advised that they did not vote for it because the project is seen to be underway.</p> <p>The Camperdown Playspace has already received Local Government Infrastructure Fund support of \$200,000 and the Camperdown community is active in carrying out a broad range of fund-raising initiatives. Additional funding opportunities are in the pipeline to contribute to Stage 2 of the concept plan.</p>	<p>Council officers are currently charged with investigations options and possible models for an 'Arts Hub' in Camperdown, and the foreshadowed Theatre royal upgrade could potentially address the priority for a quality mid-sized performance space, for which a number of innovative suggestions has been floated. Along with the suggestions about a 'Gallery' space, these could be dealt with separately or in combination. The current considerations around future use of the Old Courthouse also touch on these priorities.</p> <p>Projects in different countries show that an 'Arts Hub' can take many forms, ranging across inspiration of art, networking and workshops and skill development, studio space and arts production, to 'arts distribution' and art performance and display.</p> <p>This priority needs to be discussed further in the context of practical opportunities and constraints.</p>	<p>A number of 'solutions' were proposed through the town survey to the issue of pedestrian crossing safety on Manifold Street, to address current conditions and future concerns about the forecast growth in heavy vehicle traffic. These matters could be taken up with Vicroads by a group of community members and Council, as it has been in other towns. Initial discussions with Vicroads have identified some possible road treatments, and these could be systematically followed up.</p> <p>The scheduled upgrade of Camperdown's streetscape is a matter for consideration in Council's future budget deliberations, but this project might also countenance some pedestrian crossing safety improvements.</p> <p>Issues relating to the physical presentation of buildings might be dealt with in Project 3 (above).</p>
<b>Imagining Camperdown</b>	Community priorities for township development – 2013 to 2023		January 2013 21

<p><b>IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS</b></p> <p>A primary goal of the <i>Building Stronger Corangamite Communities</i> initiative is to strengthen communities through the establishment of linkages within communities, between community organisations, and between local communities and government agencies, including local government. This is on the premise that development of local capacity may be achieved through the sharing and utilisation of talents and skills within the community as well as through linkages to expertise not readily accessible to local organisations. This includes access to assistance from local and State government agencies to seek out advice and financial and other resources to support local initiatives.</p> <p>The implementation of the projects outlined in this plan will seek to support and strengthen local organisations, not the least through activation of local interest and involvement in projects deemed to be of high priority by the local community.</p>	<p>Having arrived at a ranked list of project priorities it is evident that a deal of detail work is required to specify and scope these shared ideas. This is complicated by the fact that the agreed shape of Camperdown’s top priority project is conditional upon Council considerations, the outcomes of which may also impinge upon the shape of other projects. For this reason it has been decided to explore a more continuous planning cycle in place of the stepped Plan/ Implement/ Review process. It is proposed that this plan will be periodically adjusted as important parameters are confirmed.</p> <p>A concept of a rolling cycle of ‘community conversations’ on key priorities is planned, with a view to providing opportunity for focused engagement and future involvement around projects.</p>		<p><b>REVIEW</b></p> <p>It is proposed to formally review <i>Imagining Camperdown</i> after a period of two years, perhaps towards the middle of 2015, to assess project achievements against objectives and to formulate revised objectives as required.</p>
<p><b>Imagining Camperdown</b></p>	<p>Community priorities for township development – 2013 to 2023</p>	<p>January 2013</p>	<p>22</p>

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APPENDICES

- Survey instrument
- Ranking of issues and projects
- Summary of survey responses
- Detailed survey and voting results

*What does Camperdown need?*

*What does Camperdown need?*

If you think about it, the best things about local communities didn't just happen – they were made to happen – by energetic and committed people with a belief in each other and a shared idea of what they could achieve.

This is your chance to get involved and to get active in building a better future for your town and your community.

**KEEP THIS DATE FREE**

**Camperdown Community Forum**

Tuesday 30 October 2012  
7.30pm  
Theatre Royal, Camperdown  
Light supper provided  
Everyone welcome

**Building Stronger Corangamite Communities**

The Corangamite Shire has partnered with the Department of Planning and Community Development in a four-year project to support communities to plan and implement improvements to their towns.

The project provides access to funding and support to enable each of the Shire's 12 towns to prepare a Town Plan to protect those assets most valued by local communities and to make changes and improvements to secure their future prosperity.

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