



Spotlight on Darlington

Community priorities for township development
2014 - 2024

Prepared for the community of Darlington 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.



CORANGAMITE
SHIRE



May 2014

OVERVIEW

This plan is a product of community consideration of three questions: What aspects of Darlington are most valued and need to be maintained and protected, What things need to be improved or changed? , and What needs to be created in Darlington to make it a more prosperous and liveable place? *Spotlight on Darlington* outlines a set of initiatives which local residents see as important to Darlington’s future, to be implemented over the next 10 years.

The planning process involved a written community survey (which drew 10 completed responses), a Public Meeting held on 16 April 2014 to vote on township priorities (attended by 17 people), and a further Public Meeting on 21 May 2014 to allocate seed funding to initial projects. In all, a minimum of 24 different people or 30 per cent of the Darlington area’s estimated residential population of 80 (ABS Census 2011) participated in at least one of these three engagement activities.

Spotlight on Darlington gathered 31 ideas for Darlington, a third of which related to improving town services and facilities. These translated to 16 priority projects which were supported across the community consultation. The main priority is to clean up the township and improve its run-down appearance. Six proposals could potentially become community projects.

This plan is best seen as a start to a community development process which will increase involvement and participation as it gathers momentum. There are a number of promising developments in view which hold potential to transform the township. This plan contains some outline information which will added to as an outcome of ongoing community consultations and deliberation. This will include a recounting of some of Darlington’s early history. Opportunities are available to involve more people as listed projects are planned, scoped and implemented.

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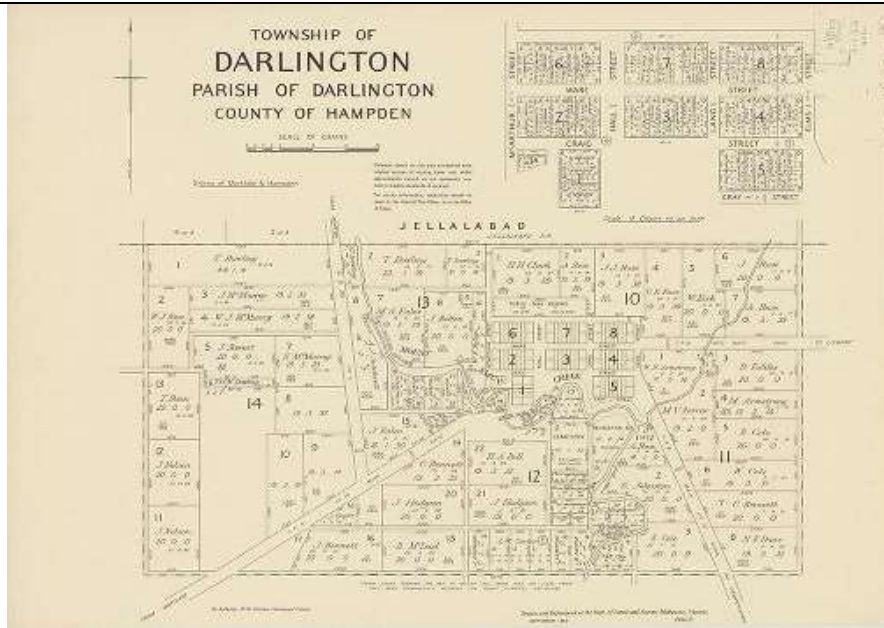
This is the twelfth plan to be developed as part of the *Building Stronger Corangamite Communities* project, which aims to produce a plan for each of Corangamite Shire’s 12 towns.

CROSSING MOUNT EMU CREEK

Darlington is the smallest of the Shire’s ‘towns’ to participate in the Corangamite Shire community planning process, and represents an additional engagement consultation to the requirements of the Shire’s contract with the State.

Established on the historical boundary of the Mount Emu Creek, the township of Darlington is spread across both the Corangamite and Moyne Shires. This may be one reason why to date there has been relatively limited planning attention focused on the township community, in addition to its small size.

The settlement history of Darlington is a fascinating study, highly significant to the Western District and the nation. Contributions of the local community have been sought to compile a concise account of the township and surrounding properties, and this will be added to this document when complete.



DEMOGRAPHICS

There are no publicly-available figures from the ABS Census on the population of the Gazetted Locality of Darlington, as it contains fewer than 200 people. The broader Woorndoo State Suburb (which takes in the larger Moyne-side component of Darlington) recorded 307 persons at the 2011 Census. Assuming a uniform population density across the land area, Darlington would therefore have an estimated residential population of around 80 persons. This estimate accords with local observations offered through the consultation process.



Source: ABS Census 2013

Age	Woorndoo	%	Victoria	%	Australia	%
<i>People</i>						
0-4 years	22	7.1	344,733	6.4	1,421,050	6.6
5-9 years	24	7.8	326,121	6.1	1,351,921	6.3
10-14 years	21	6.8	327,939	6.1	1,371,054	6.4
15-19 years	15	4.9	345,339	6.5	1,405,798	6.5
20-24 years	8	2.6	375,108	7.0	1,460,673	6.8
25-29 years	15	4.9	388,669	7.3	1,513,236	7.0
30-34 years	15	4.9	372,214	7.0	1,453,775	6.8
35-39 years	17	5.5	383,415	7.2	1,520,138	7.1
40-44 years	24	7.8	391,197	7.3	1,542,879	7.2
45-49 years	27	8.7	372,367	7.0	1,504,142	7.0
50-54 years	29	9.4	354,110	6.6	1,447,404	6.7
55-59 years	27	8.7	317,438	5.9	1,297,244	6.0
60-64 years	23	7.4	293,812	5.5	1,206,116	5.6
65-69 years	12	3.9	224,911	4.2	919,319	4.3
70-74 years	11	3.6	177,316	3.3	708,090	3.3
75-79 years	9	2.9	140,338	2.6	545,263	2.5
80-84 years	4	1.3	114,020	2.1	436,936	2.0
85 years and over	6	1.9	104,995	2.0	402,681	1.9
Median age	45	--	37	--	37	--

The median age of people in Woorndoo (State Suburbs) was 45 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 21.4% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 13.3% of the population.

Age-structure for the Woorndoo State Suburb compared to Victoria and Australia as a whole, derived from the ABS Census 2011.

The Darlington community has a comparatively high proportion of people under the age of 15 years, and far fewer people in the 15 to 40 year age grouping.

The percentage of the local population in the 40 to 65 age group is also well above the Victorian and national averages.

Generalising from the wider Woorndoo State Suburb area, there are proportionately fewer elderly people residing in the Darlington area.



made by communities also serve as a decision tool for Corangamite Council to better meet local needs and aspirations.

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.

There is no one planning model – the project is experimental and communities shape their own process – however each plan observes some fundamental principles. They are inclusive of as many voices in the community as possible and seek to reflect local demographics, and are transparent in the way priorities are identified and decided upon.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Building Stronger Corangamite Communities 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.

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. As well as steering the development of local public assets, events and services, plans

SURVEY RESPONSE

The Town Survey attracted a total of 16 responses. These contributions represent a response rate of 20 per cent of the estimated residential population of 80.

Initial survey responses 10
 Additional surveys 6
 Public meeting attendees 17
 Public meeting attendees who did not complete survey 8
 Participation (estimated minimum) 18
 Estimated Population (ABS Census 2011) 80
 Participation Rate 22.5%
 Adult Participation rate 27.0%



Darlington town survey

Gender	Age grouping									Total	Postcode	
	1 – 14	15 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75+	None		Postcode	Count
Male	1		1	1	2	2			2	9	3271	14
Female			1	1	1	2		1	1	7	3224	2
Unknown											None	-
Total	1		2	2	3	4		1	3	16	Total	16
Per cent	6.3%		12.5%	12.5%	18.7%	25.0%		6.3%	18.7%	100%		
Darlington+	17	6	7	10	14	15	6	5		80		
Adult %+		9.5%	11.1%	15.9%	22.2%	23.8%	9.5%	7.9%		100%		
Census*	67	23	30	41	56	50	23	19		307		
Per cent*	21.7%	7.5%	9.8%	13.3%	18.1%	16.1%	7.5%	6.1%		100.0%		

+Estimated population of Darlington taken as 25 per cent of Woornadoo State Suburb area total. (No data available for Darlington Gazetted Locality.)

* Estimated residential population of Woornadoo State Suburb at ABS Census 2011(307). (114 households at an average size of 2.7 persons.)

Survey response rate is 20.0 per cent, or 23.8 per cent of estimated adult population.

IDENTIFYING ASSETS

The first question on the survey asked the question ‘What things do you most value about Darlington, which need to be maintained or protected?’

The things local people value most about Darlington include the town’s social institutions (the Mechanics Institute Hall, the CFA, the Mount Elephant Bridge Hotel and Speedway), the town’s location on the Mount Emu Creek, and its cultural heritage (its history, cemetery and monuments).

What things do you value most about Darlington?			
MECHANICS HALL	Mechanics Institute Hall	7	
CFA	CFA	6	
HOTEL	The Hotel	5	
SPEEDWAY/ REC RESERVE	Speedway and Recreation Reserve	4	
MOUNT EMU CREEK	Mount Emu Creek	3	
CENTRAL LOCATION	Geographic location – central hub to major towns and locations	2	
HISTORY	History – Australian Sheep Show, Aboriginal tribes, Pub etc	2	
CEMETERY	Cemetery	2	
MONUMENTS	Monuments – Peace Bell, War memorabilia	2	
PLEASANT PLACE	Pleasant place to live	2	
OLD BRIDGE	Abutments to the old bluestone bridge	1	
MOBILE LIBRARY	Mobile Library	1	

*Survey mentions (N=16)





PUBLIC MEETINGS

A public forum was held at the Darlington Mechanics Institute hall on Wednesday 16 April 2014, with 17 people attending. This figure represents 21.3 per cent of Darlington’s estimated residential population. A further meeting was held in the evening of 21 May 2014, attended by 14 people. The six new attendees brought the total involvement to 24 different people in all, representing 38 per cent of the adult population.

The initial Forum evening commenced with an outline of the community planning project and reference to work completed in eight Corangamite towns. The outcomes of the Town Survey were presented, based on the 10 completed returns (to which 6 late returns were subsequently added.) It was explained that all the survey ideas had been summarized 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-size sheets, 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 69 listed ideas that had been identified through the survey

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 should it be?

Following the voting period, attendees returned to their chairs and an informal verbal summary of voting patterns was described, highlighting the transparent priorities to emerge.

It was reported 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.

A ‘vision’ for Darlington will be drawn up, based upon those ‘most valued’ aspects of township identified in the survey responses. This will wait on the further consideration of township improvements, where events in train will create a practical context for a renewed appreciation and optimism in the future for the Darlington community.

ISSUES AND THEMES

Five major themes emerged from the survey based on 31 ideas for the town. Voting at the public meeting confirmed the strong interest in improving the towns services and facilities and a desire to upgrade facilities at the recreation reserve as well as the passive recreation areas around the town and along the Creek. The other major concern is to improve the amenity and appearance of the town, and this emerged as the highest priority action following the voting on ideas identified in the survey.

Sixteen priority actions have been identified. As mentioned, the major priority is to clean up the town, and to improve its poor and unkempt appearance. This task has still to be properly scoped as a project, but may involve a one-off hard rubbish collection drive and the institution of town garbage collection service. (The possibility of instituting a kerb side garbage collection service is to be considered in 2015.)



Themes	Ideas	Survey mentions	Votes	'Gold'	
1	Town amenity and appearance	4	17	13	3
2	Town history and promotion	3	7	7	-
3	Recreation	6	22	23	9
4	Town services and facilities	11	29	23	4
5	Roads, access, safety and parking	5	8	12	1
6	Community initiatives	2	3	5	-
		31	86	83	17

Total survey responses – 16, Total Public Meeting attendees – 17, Minimum estimated participation – 18.

Other projects include establishing a picnic area near Mount Emu Creek, Upgrading the Speedway/ Cemetery road entrance and the Speedway toilets, upgrading the town's water supply and installing a town information board. The remaining top 10 priorities are community strengthening initiatives, including the re-opening of the town's

historic hotel. Councillors have also been briefed on other matters of local concern, including township traffic speed limits and reinstatement and maintenance of street trees which did not survive the summer. A subsequent public meeting was held on 21 May 2014, where five project groups were formed to scope and cost five initial projects.

A further meeting has been scheduled for 25 June 2014 to hear reports on these initiatives and to consider the allocation of seed-funding across them. A joint meeting with Moyne Shire representative is to be held shortly in regard to upgrading recreation reserve facilities.



<p>VISION</p>	<p>The community of Darlington values the legacy of its early days when the town’s reputation and its prosperity rode upon the sheeps’ back. This is reflected in the acknowledged appreciation of the town’s location on the Mount Emu Creek and its history, including its old bluestone structures, monuments and the cemetery. More than anything else, the community values its social institutions – the Mechanics Institute Hall, the CFA, the Elephant Bridge Hotel and the Mid-Western Speedway.</p>	<p>At this early stage a vision has not been distilled from these values, and requires further consideration by the local community.</p> <p>Darlington has not received a lot of planning attention, which might be partly explained by the small size of the settlement, very limited development in recent times, and the fact that the town straddles both the Moyne and Corangamite Shires. Already, the opportunity to shine a spotlight on Darlington has raised consideration of providing a kerbside garbage collection service and the replanting and ongoing care of some new street tree plantings.</p>	<p>These are small things, but there are bigger projects in store, of a visionary nature. There are a number of potential projects which hold promise to reverse the forces of entropy and to dramatically change the way Darlington is viewed by both visitors and locals. When change starts to occur there will be renewed interest and optimism in the town’s future. That might be a better time to talk of visions.</p>
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SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

No	PRIORITY	DESCRIPTION	S	V	G	AGENCY
1	CLEAN UP TOWN	Improve the poor and unkempt appearance of the township, Hold community meeting to 'clean up the crap', Place a large skip in the town once a year to help landowners clear out their unsightly junk, Central recycle/rubbish collection, Clean up rubbish within the town	11	9	3	BSCC PROJECT
2	PICNIC AREA	Establish a picnic area near the Creek, Construct picnic/ playground or park benches and tables, Clean up and level area around Bridge for picnics, camping, swimming and fishing, fire places, old bottles, Construct public BBQ, BBQs somewhere, Clean up area around historic Emu Creek bridge	9	8	1	BSCC PROJECT
3	TOILETS AT REC RESERVE	Toilets at Recreation Reserve, Speedway toilets, Upgrade speedway toilets – cemetery/ speedway/ camping	3	7	5	REC RESERVE COMMITTEE/ BSCC
4	INFORMATION	Install information board near Hotel – map to mark historic sites and show walking routes, Information Centre set-up at Hotel, . . .and around town (eg school, blacksmith, shop), Sign historic sites	3	7	-	BSCC PROJECT
5	SPEEDWAY AND CEMETERY ENTRY	Alter the entry to the Speedway and Cemetery, Safe access leaving speedway and cemetery entrance	2	7	-	VICROADS AND REC RES. COMMITTEE
6	WATER SUPPLY	Improve the water supply, Water supply – pressure and quality, Pressure water at daylight saving time for gardens and nature strips	6	6	1	WANNON WATER
7	REOPEN HOTEL	Reopen the Hotel	6	5	-	PRIVATE INTERESTS
8	HALL FUNDING	Allocate some funding to the Hall	2	5	2	BSCC PROJECT
9	CFA PRESENCE	Maintain a CFA presence, Allocate some funding to CFA	3	5	-	CFA
10	COMMUNITY GET-TOGETHERS	Community get-togethers - BBQ, Pizza at Christmas, etc	2	5		BSCC PROJECT
11	CREEK TRACK	Construct walking track along the Creek, Walking track to swing bridge	4	3	1	BSCC PROJECT GH CMA
12	CAMPING FACILITIES	Provide camping at Speedway – rainwater and showers, Showers for camping	3	4	1	REC RESERVE COMMITTEE
13	REDUCE SPEED	Reduce speed limit through the town to 60 km	2	3	1	VICROADS
14	GARBAGE COLLECTION	Garbage collection, More Council bins in township, Highway truck parking bay with bins	3	1	1	COUNCIL AND/OR CONTRACTOR
15	POLICE AMENITY/ REGULATIONS	Police the amenity of the town – sheds, dumping ground, caravans, etc, Stricter enforcement of building permits, Properties compliant with rubbish and grass removal	3	-	-	COUNCIL
16	TREES AND WATERING	Nature strip trees and regular watering	1	3		COUNCIL/ COMMUNITY

['S' means survey mentions, 'V' means votes. 'G' means gold (top individual priority)]

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

A primary goal of the *Building Stronger Corangamite Communities* 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.

The implementation of the projects outlined in this plan will seek to support and strengthen the local community, not the least through activation of local interest and involvement in projects deemed to be of high priority by the local community.

Having arrived at a ranked list of project priorities it is evident that a deal of detailed work is required to specify and scope these shared objectives. For this reason it may be necessary to countenance a more fluid and continuous planning approach in place of the stepped Plan/Implement/ Review process. This will provide opportunities to include additional voices in the conversation about how these priorities can be realised, and in which order.



REVIEW

It is proposed to formally review *Spotlight on Darlington* 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.

APPENDICES

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

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.



what does Darlington need?

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.



KEEP THESE DATES FREE

DARLINGTON SURVEY OPENS
Monday 3 March 2014

DARLINGTON COMMUNITY MEETING
Wednesday 16 April 2014, 7.30 pm, Darlington Mechanics Institute Hall

CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL BRIEFING
Tuesday 22 April 2014, 3.00 pm, Killara Centre, Camperdown

CORANGAMITE SHIRE COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday 27 May 2014, 7.00 pm, Killara Centre, Camperdown