



MURTOA

2016

# COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

## COMMUNITY VISION

A township and district that is economically and environmentally sustainable, vibrant and appealing for existing and potential new residents.

# Contents

OUR COMMUNITY.....	3
OUR COMMUNITY PLAN.....	5
WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO US.....	5
THE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION'S COMMUNITY ROLES.....	6
OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS.....	6
NEW AND EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES.....	7
PRIORITY PROJECTS ACTION PLAN.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
MORE INFORMATION.....	16

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# Murtoa

## OUR COMMUNITY

The town of Murtoa is situated 30 kms East of Horsham in the Wimmera district and relies on the regional centre for employment and higher order services. The town, with a population of approximately 800 residents provides many jobs for local residents but also acts as a commuter town to Horsham. Like most towns in the Wimmera it is largely dependent on the prominent agricultural grain industry. Murtoa located on the Adelaide / Melbourne rail line and the Wimmera Highway, has the State's largest inland grain receival centre operated by GrainCorp.

The major employers in the town are Murtoa College (many staff commute into town), GrainCorp, K& J Baker Cartage Pty Ltd, Solomit Strawboard, Schier Cabinet Makers, and Dunmunkle Health Services (Community Health Centre).

Murtoa is well serviced for a small community with fixed wireless NBN, Tesltra and Optus mobile towers, a post office/ news agency, CBA Bank (with ATM), Community Health Centre, a retail sector including IGA Supermarket, Thrifty Link Hardware and Rural Supplies, Pharmacy, Butcher, Hotel a Milk Bar and takeaway shop as well as a range of other retail services. Trades businesses include mechanical repairs, electrician, plumbers and builders.

The town has excellent educational facilities – Murtoa College (P-12 state school) a Catholic Primary school and a Kindergarten

The town also boasts a range of sporting facilities including a 25 metre swimming pool, four new tennis courts, bowling green, 18-hole golf course (sand scrapes) football and netball and race course.

Four significant land marks are – Lake Marma/Rabl Park, the National Heritage listed Murtoa No1 Grain Shed (Stick Shed - formerly used for grain storage) and the Water Tower Museum. The avenue of Kurrajong trees in Comyn Street, also Heritage Listed is considered to be the first planting of native trees as a street avenue in Victoria.

Lake Marma/Rabl Park, centrally located within the town, is an important habitat for wildlife and a beautiful recreational asset for the community. Its future is now assured as it has been granted an annual allocation of recreation water from the Wimmera Mallee pipeline system. The Caravan Park, operated by the Yarriambiack Shire, is situated on the shores of Lake Marma.

The Stick Shed (circa 1941), which was placed on the National Heritage List in October 2014 has recently been restored. This has been the result of the community taking action to have it preserved as a unique example of Australian architecture and its significance to the important grains industry history and development. The community would like to exploit the great potential which the stick shed has to draw visitors to Murtoa.

Other buildings of significance in the town include the old Freezing Works (now Schier Cabinetmakers) which was built during in 1911 to process and freeze lamb for export this facility closed in 1924. The site is the home of the Dunmunkle Sumpoilers, a club for people who collect old engines, tractors and machinery. The W.C. Thomas Flour Mill was opened in 1925 and operated until its closure in 1979, is now the home of Solomit Strawboard a manufacturer of strawboard ceiling panels and brush panel fencing. The former Marma Gully Hotel is an impressive two story brick building in Marma Street which closed its doors in 2012

The Water Tower Museum (circa1886), originally a water supply for steam engines and the town, is a relic of the town's strong association with the railways. It is currently the Murtoa Historical Society's Museum and houses a unique collection of taxidermy prepared by a former pioneer Mr. James Hill and many local artifacts. A group of railway enthusiasts have joined with the Historical Society and are planning the establishment of an historical Railway precinct centered on the former railway station building, Water Tower Museum and the Railway Hotel.

Murtoa is host to a highly successful annual festival each October, Murtoa's Big Weekend. It attracts large crowds and includes many events held over three days including the Agricultural & Pastoral Society Show, an art exhibition, street market, Dunmunkle Sumpoilers Rally and the TAB race meeting featuring the Murtoa Cup.

## OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

Community projects are essential to maintain and develop rural townships and enhance lifestyle for residents.

This plan has been prepared by the community and Murtoa Progress Association Inc. with the assistance of the Yarriambiack Shire Council.

The Community Action Plan was drafted to detail how the vision and ideas articulated by the community could be achieved.

We will use our Action Plan to:

- § Enable all community members to have a voice;
- § Organise project plans;
- § Display community planning;
- § Promote individual projects for prospective funding;
- § Connect with stakeholders; and
- § Inform Local Government of proposed projects.

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO US

- § Providing opportunities for community participation
- § Supporting a sense of belonging and connectedness to our friendly and safe community.
- § Supporting opportunities for employment, businesses and tourism.
- § Working together on community projects and having a place to meet our family and friends.
- § Ensuring people have access to appropriate services.
- § Identifying and responding to the aspirations of our community.
- § Providing a variety of sporting, recreation and leisure activities for all our residents.
- § Enhancing our environmental sustainability so we can make a difference and create a sustainable future for generations to come.
- § Maintaining our community assets and infrastructure

## THE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION'S COMMUNITY ROLES

In addition to our community priority projects, we also have a number of other ongoing roles that are important to us.

The Murtoa Progress Association has been serving the Murtoa Community since 1888. The committee performs a number of roles to help the community generally. These include;

- Acting as the Community Consultative Committee for the Yarriambiack Shire Council
- Co-hosting the annual local Australia Day awards ceremony
- Publishes fortnightly the local newspaper the "Murtoa and District advertiser".
- Promotes and supports local businesses
- Initiates and participates in town beautification projects
- Promotes tourism, arts and cultural events
- Mentors and supports Community Leaders
- Manages the Murtoa Website and Facebook page
- Coordinates annual Community Plan review

## OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The following projects have been gathered from community ideas presented to the Progress Association through community consultations

Updates were incorporated into the plan, following a community planning session held on 17th November 2015. As part of this session, it was acknowledged that a number of the actions identified in the previous plan have been successfully achieved.

The Action Plan is divided into sections, acknowledging ongoing priority actions, projects with significant planning completed (shovel ready) and actions requiring more work by community groups and Murtoa Progress Association.

## NEW AND EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

A number of opportunities have been identified for consideration by Murtoa Progress Association and community groups. Contemplation of these opportunities may lead to community discussions, to identify new actions or planning activities.

### REGIONAL MINING INVESTMENT

There are several well advanced mineral sand mining developments in the immediate area. When investment is sourced for these developments, there will be a significant employment opportunity (estimated at 200+ ongoing jobs per mining investment). Murtoa is well placed to provide accommodation for the permanent employees. The capacity of health and education services in the community could accommodate increased population eg kindergarten, schools, community health).

### EXISTING AND NEW BUSINESSES

A discussion with existing Murtoa businesses to understand what needs to occur for them to consider additional services, employment or investment would be informative. One job = one additional family, trainees and apprentices keep young people in the community, what are their concerns about town amenity, how do they interact with the Yarriambiack Shire? This would demonstrate the support of the community for the future of their business. Murtoa Progress Association could then advocate for these businesses to help them achieve what they are planning. Community discussions on how to attract new business and industry (i.e. bakery) to town.

### TOURISM

The potential for tourism in Murtoa is not to be understated. The Murtoa Stick Shed was placed on the National Heritage Register in October 2014 and recently declared as Reserved Crown Land by the Victorian State Government. A Committee of Management will be appointed during 2016, which will be able to develop the facility into a viable and interesting tourist precinct.

The towns remaining attractions such as the Water Tower Museum, Lake Marma and Rabl Park, Kurrajong Avenue will benefit from this development.

### YOUNG PEOPLE

Murtoa has experienced an influx of young families – many of them have returned to their community to work and raise their family. It is important to engage these young people in the community, through community groups and broader community activities – they are a great resource of new ideas and linkage to other like-minded people.

Murtoa is well provided with sporting facilities. Engagement with local young people to build an appreciation of their other interests and aspirations would benefit the community. Support of the Yarriambiack Shire Council Youth Worker provides a new opportunity to focus on this aspect of the community.

## STREETSCAPE AND PRECINCT PLANNING

- The concept of developing a precinct plan is strongly supported by members of the community. As well as providing an overview of the streetscape planning (including footpaths, street plantings, public art, etc.), it could also provide the plan to incorporate a range of other issues. It would potentially focus on managing heritage issues, help prioritise recreation facility works, signage policies, town entrances, town amenity concerns, identify common issues across different community groups, etc. Murtoa Progress Association will review the Urban Development Plan written a numbers of years ago and investigate the benefits of this idea.

## GRANTS

- During the review of the 2015 plan it was identified that one of the obstacles to the development of projects was the difficulty encountered by groups to identify funding opportunities from grants. It was suggested that if a local person could be engaged to research and identify grant opportunities which have guidelines to fit projects under consideration then more projects could be successful in gaining funding. A Grant Support Person would encourage cohesion between community groups. Progress will attempt to develop a process where funding opportunities are circulated to all community organisations.

## HOUSING

A key issue (for the whole Wimmera region) is the scarcity of appropriate housing. Investment attraction for rental accommodation, review of existing housing and promotion of the amenity of Murtoa should be considered. Short term and temporary options (e.g. caravan park, Marma Gully Hotel) may also be opportunities.

A research program taking into account the following considerations could be a worthwhile project to be undertaken to identify the opportunities which exist within the community for various types of accommodation for residents. Factors to be included in such a project would include;

- Affordability of existing housing stock – overpriced?
- Quality of rental stock in correlation to potential tenant
- Private investment/community investment opportunities
- Opportunities created by regional developments e.g. Mining/Wind Farms
- Types of accommodation required for elderly residents
- Attraction for new residents e.g. great community/schools/sports/recreation/business
- Stock take of vacant blocks
- Identification of stakeholders



## ACCOMMODATION

The town has only one hotel and therefore the availability of temporary accommodation is limited. The caravan park has 20 powered sites for vans and camping and regularly has occupancy from both tourists and extended term clients. Overflow camping can be accommodated on the grassed area on the northern fringes of the caravan park. Demand for accommodation in the town is irregular, there is a shortage of accommodation at times such as The Big Weekend in October and occasions such as weddings and parties.

There is a school of thought which considers the costs associated with staying at the Caravan Park may be a deterrent to people staying in the town and that free camping may attract more customers who will spend their money with local businesses e.g. hotel, take away, fuel, supermarket etc.

A project to identify options for temporary accommodation needs to be undertaken and include the following factors;

- Caravan Park – Cabins/Free Camping
- Marma Gully Hotel
- Scout Hall
- Railway Precinct
- Traveller Information
- Stakeholders

## PRIORITY PROJECTS ACTION PLAN

The community projects are organized into three sections:

1. On-Going Projects
2. Identified Projects on Stream
3. Projects for Consideration

## ONGOING PROJECTS

Ongoing Projects	Key actions	Lead Organisation	Stakeholders	Status/Action
Stick Shed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Committee of Management</li> <li>• Finalise official access to the site</li> <li>• Establish opportunities for use</li> <li>• Promotion and marketing</li> </ul>	Stick Shed Steering Committee	Heritage Victoria Murtoa Progress DLWP	Shed declared Reserved Crown Land Appoint COM
Rabl Park & Wayside Stop Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking tracks</li> <li>• Signage upgrade</li> <li>• Landscaping</li> <li>• Review initial Rabl Park Plan</li> <li>• Tourist information self-serve kiosk</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	YSC	Application for funding of Walking Track submitted Signage upgrade complete Landscaping project underway
Recreation Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erect fencing for playground</li> </ul>	Recreation reserve COM	Sporting groups, Caravan Park users, general community	Source additional funding required

<p>Railway Station Precinct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an historical precinct based upon Murtoa's long association with the railways based around the Railway Station, Water Tower Museum and Railway Hotel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ VICTRACK lease request</li> <li>○ Restore platform to conform with standards for future passenger use</li> <li>○ Painting and maintenance costs to be identified</li> <li>○ Engage with other potential user groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Historical Society</p>	<p>VICTRACK Local Railway Enthusiasts</p>	<p><b>\$350,000 funding allocated-</b> Project to commence middle of 2016</p>
<p>Lake Marma Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek YSC advice on priority upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Repair of rotunda</li> <li>○ Pier refurbishment</li> <li>○ Fountain repairs</li> <li>○ Shade</li> <li>○ Sound Shell</li> <li>○ Sealing of entrances to swimming pool</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Scout Hall development for accommodation/visitor facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Lake Marma COM</p>	<p>YSC DELWP</p>	<p>YSC advice required Funding required</p>
<p>Neighborhood House</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelopment of facilities</li> <li>• Funding opportunities to be investigated</li> <li>• Engagement of user groups</li> </ul>	<p>Murtoa Neighbourhood House/SLAAM</p>	<p>User Groups</p>	<p><b>Refurbishment plans completed</b> Investigate funding opportunities</p>
<p>Social Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain Website and Facebook page to promote key activities to both locals and external stakeholders</li> <li>• Review website regularly</li> <li>• Cultivate local management of the Website</li> </ul>	<p>Murtoa Progress</p>	<p>All Community based organisations</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b> Appoint more local contributors</p>

Big Weekend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued support, marketing and funding to develop the event</li> </ul>	Big Weekend Committee	SLAAM A & P Society Murtoa/Marma Race Club Historical Society Sumpoilers Stick Shed Steering Committee	Identify and submit proposals to new major sponsors
Arts/Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene group to develop proposal for Small Towns Transformation Project.</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	Community Organisations and Individuals	Convene Steering Group Attend Information Session Develop Project Proposal

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## IDENTIFIED PROJECTS ON STREAM

Identified Projects on Stream	Key actions	Lead Organisation	Stakeholders	Status
Community Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued support, management upgrades and further development</li> <li>Conduct community survey to establish future requirements.</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	YSC Dunmunkle Lodge	Ongoing project
Mechanics Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance and upgrades to facility                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carpet and Paint Supper Rooms</li> <li>Re-stumping</li> <li>External painting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Mechanics Hall Committee		Carpet and painting completed Obtain quotes for priority works
Medical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate whether visiting medical services can be increased/improved</li> </ul>	Dunmunkle Health Services	Murtoa Progress	Feedback from DHS required.
Traveler facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bus Stop toilet upgrade, disabled access, lighting, parking</li> <li>Information booth to be established</li> <li>Install Service Information Signs at town entrances</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	YSC	Proposals and plans to be developed
Transport services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate increasing/improving current public bus service to Murtoa</li> <li>Promote the return of a passenger rail service to the Wimmera and Murtoa</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	V/Line YSC	
V/Line Ticketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby V/Line for the reestablishment of a ticketing agency in Murtoa.</li> </ul>	Progress Association	Stuff- Ya –Guts Takeaway	Negotiations ongoing

Caravan Park Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of cabins</li> <li>Establish sites suitable for Five Wheelers</li> <li>Promotion and marketing to attract additional visitors to town</li> <li>Maintain and improve grassed areas</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	YSC	Ongoing project Quotes and funding needed for works
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of Murtoa Streetscape Plan - obtain quotation</li> <li>Review of street tree policy</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	YSC VicRoads	Quote from consultant required Funding required
Town Entrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of signage and landscaping</li> <li>Refurbish timber town signs</li> <li>Town signs considered for town entrances and in centre of town that highlight businesses and key locations (i.e. schools, Sumpoilers, museum, etc.)</li> <li>Historical signs providing the story for visitors and community members</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	Men's Shed YSC	
Lions Club Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shade sails</li> </ul>	Marma Lake COM	Lions Club Tennis Club	Quotes sourced and funding application to be submitted

## PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Projects for consideration	Key actions	Lead Organisation	Stakeholders	Status
Post Office Ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of a ramp at the Post Office to provide adequate access for all patrons</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	Murtoa Progress YSC Post Master	Plans completed Funding required Regulations impede further action at present
Community Social Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social gatherings for the whole community (i.e. New Year's Day community event)</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	CFA, Racing Club, Angling Club	
Concordia College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building restoration and refurbishment</li> </ul>	Historical Society		
Barrabool Nature Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate Reserve's potential for region. Form working group to scope initial ideas and develop plan. Include track from Lake Marma to Barrabool</li> <li>Establish free camping areas in reserve</li> </ul>	Murtoa Progress	Parks Vic	Conceptual stage – Steering Committee to be formed
Sporting Facilities – Recreation Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toilets for Netball Courts</li> <li>MMFNC propose development of a Business Plan to prioritise works and engage user groups</li> <li>Design and develop proposal for new Grandstand</li> </ul>	Recreation Reserve COM	MMFNC User Groups	Issues identified include upgrades (cool room, netball facilities, gatehouse, sustainability plan)
Sporting Facilities – Swimming Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade change rooms and construct first aid room at Swimming Pool</li> <li>Public access to Pool facilities to be incorporated into upgrade to provide improved public toilet facilities</li> </ul>	Swimming Pool COM	YSC	Planning and funding required Funding submission lodged
Sporting Facilities - Tennis Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pavilion Extension</li> <li>Practice wall</li> </ul>	Tennis Club	Tennis Club	Plans drawn/costings completed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rainwater tank</li> </ul>			Seeking funding
Sporting Facilities – Bowling Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade of seating and shade</li> <li>• Dishwasher</li> </ul>	Bowling Club	YSC	Quotes required
Sporting Facilities – Basketball Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct outdoor practice basketball ring</li> </ul>	Basketball Club		Identify appropriate site Identify partners
Angling Clubrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sink/toilets to be provided</li> <li>• Community notice board</li> </ul>	Angling Club		
Golf Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New mower required</li> </ul>	Murtoa Golf Club		

## MORE INFORMATION

If you would like more information about the community action plan or would like to be involved in community activities here are some useful contacts.

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