



Yarriambiack  
SHIRE COUNCIL

*A rural  
solution to a  
rural  
problem*



# Beulah Supermarket

## About Beulah

Situated in Yarriambiack Shire, Beulah is in the heartland of the Wimmera Southern Mallee in North West Victoria. With a population of 329 passionate residents, Beulah is a town supported by agriculture and other industries such as education, construction, retail and tourism.

Yarriambiack Shire is a diverse, vibrant region experiencing social and economic change. This is creating a growing demand for a skilled and educated workforce. Home to the original Silo Art Trail, Yarriambiack Shire continually strives for excellence and aims to serve its community through strategic, sustainable and innovative projects.

In 2019, Beulah was renamed Kiewarra for the filming of the motion picture adaptation of Jane Harper's novel, *The Dry*. The drought-ridden town was the perfect backdrop for the Australian crime-drama and injected much needed excitement into the community.



# The supermarket, the glue of a small community

Rural Victorians face unique challenges due to their geographic location and often have poorer health outcomes than people living in metropolitan areas. Every small rural community will tell you that the supermarket is one of the most vital businesses in town.

Agriculture and tourism are the lifeblood of rural communities, and local businesses, such as a supermarket relies heavily on good agricultural seasons and high volume of domestic travellers.

Beyond providing healthy food and products to residents, the benefits of a supermarket includes sustaining local employment, attracting visitor dollars as well as providing a social connection between community members. It is the beating heart of Beulah.



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*"The local supermarket is more than the place to buy your groceries, it provides a physical and social connection to place and people for the community of Beulah."*

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The impact of a small rural town losing its supermarket has devastating economic, social and health outcomes for the community.

Economic leakage is felt through the inability for residents and visitors to complete their basic grocery shops in town, leading to increased purchasing behaviour in regional centres. It also impacts the liveability of small towns for attracting new residents, business and industry.

The community has taken it into their own hands to provide Beulah the essential service of a general store. This is a makeshift short-term solution but inadequate to provide for the needs of the town.

The Beulah community strives to provide innovative, community-led action for their town's sustainability. This can be seen in their mural art and community projects.



## Our History



The Beulah Store was the hub of the Southern Mallee town, where it housed a supermarket, news agency, dry cleaning depot and gift shop until recent years.

In 2019, a disastrous fire burnt down the iconic building, taking with it 122 years of history and memories for the Beulah community. The community had a supermarket and it was taken away through disaster.

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*The Beulah Store has been the lifeblood of the community since 1893. The fire of 2019 not only destroyed a piece of Beulah's history, but has impacted the town's ability to generate economic value from retail and tourism.*

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The Beulah Business Information Centre (BIC) set up a Co-operative committee to run a general store out of the original cafe building in town.

The community co-operative has been passionate advocates for ensuring the town has the essential services to meet the needs of the community and visitors travelling through on the Silo Art Trail and north to Mildura. The co-operative has since changed its business structure to a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee

Shortly after, the cafe building sold and the General Store was required to move again. The Store found its new temporary home in the 'Roundabout' building, owned by Rural Northwest Health. The building was previously utilised as a meeting room and is not sufficient to host a supermarket. The Post Office is currently operating out of the same building.

Beulah's BIC received a donation from 'The Dry' film production company for the use of its grounds and building. This money is going towards maintaining the temporary store.

## Our Stories – The Thompson's

Shaun, Megan and their three kids operate Thompson Hardware and Diesel, a business that is an essential service for the town and surrounding area. Megan, a born and bred local has returned back to Beulah with husband in tow to take over the business from fellow locals. The Thompson family relies heavily on the Beulah Store for their everyday living and appreciates the effort made by the Co-operative to keep the doors open and continue to provide a service for the community.



Serving fuel to visitors and locals alike, Shaun has the daily conversation about the economic and community opportunities a new purpose-built facility would create for the town, and the current challenges faced by the current space.

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*"The current building does not meet the needs of locals. We need to future-proof our town with a dedicated building that provides the essential services we deserve" – Shaun*

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## Our Stories – Chris, the loyal worker making it work

Chris works part time at the Beulah Convenience Store where the space is jam-packed of all the essential grocery items that his community needs.

The store supports other local businesses where possible with regular deliveries of meat and bread from Rainbow and Hopetoun. While the store aims to serve the entire community, a strong focus is placed on elderly community member who can't drive.



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*"We can't buy in bulk as we don't have any storage, there's only 1 cupboard out the back" – Chris*

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## Our Stories – Cathy, a farming family to feed

Cathy, along with her husband and three kids live on farm and use Beulah as their main centre for school and agricultural and grocery supplies.

A weekly grocery shop for Cathy is significant. The limited supplies at the Beulah Store requires her to shop multiple times per week as buying in bulk is not an option.



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*"Our town is missing out on economic opportunities as the result of the store's size. It does a great job with the resources they have, but we need better for our community to thrive" – Cathy*

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When travelling out of town for appointments or services otherwise not available in Beulah, Cathy, like many of the Beulah residents, would complete a grocery shop when visiting Warracknabeal, Hopetoun or Horsham.

As a passionate volunteer for the Southern Mallee Giants Football Netball Club, Cathy believes that a larger store that encompasses the essential services will be better utilised by community members and community organisations.

*"We want to support local, but sometimes it's just not possible to get what we need, when we need it" – Cathy*



## The Proposal – Local People solving local problems

Yarriambiack Shire Council has transferred ownership of a block of land (Corner of Phillips and Gladstone Streets) to the Beulah Cooperative Limited, earmarked for the new building.

The core purpose of the facility is to provide groceries and a bottleshop for locals and those passing through the area.

Secondary facilities could include a post office and/or a flexible space that could be separately leased to provide services such as hairdressing.



The building required to house the supermarket needs to be able to be suitable for stocking by a supply group such as Foodlands or IGA. This will impact the desire to sub-let space for other non-related purposes.

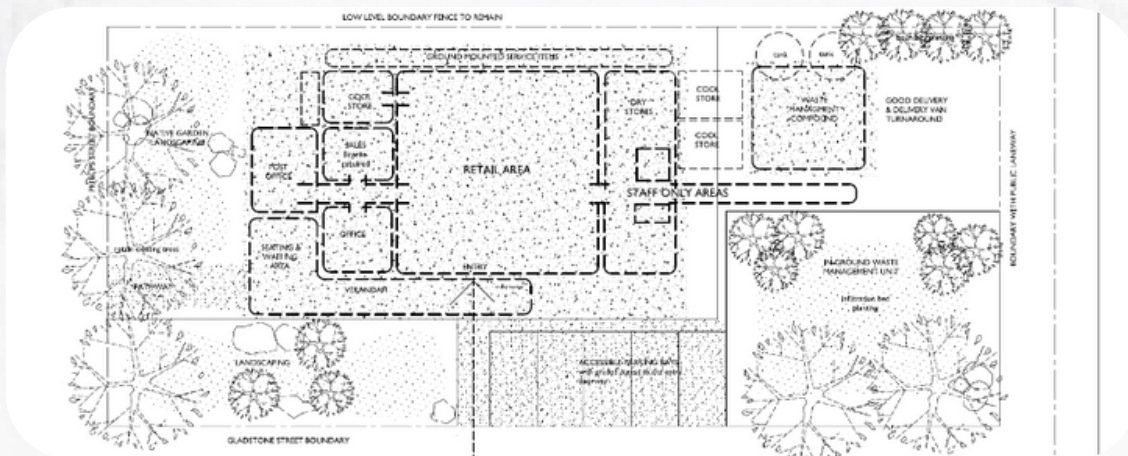
The construction of the facility is seen as a catalyst for future development in the town. Reducing expenditure leakage from residents while also maximising expenditure capture from visitors will be important factors in running a viable supermarket in Beulah.

*"Construction of the supermarket precinct is critical for retaining existing population and providing essential services to complement the area's lifestyle and recreational attributes to support new growth"*  
- Beulah Supermarket Feasibility Study September 2022



# The Project – Employment and Economic Opportunities

The employment opportunities will extend beyond the construction of the facility, with the expectation that a larger supermarket will require at least 1 additional EFT employee.



*"The corner location enables the building to have a significant presence and safe accessibility from both street frontages." – Beulah Supermarket Concept Plan July 2022*

## Beulah Supermarket Precinct: Capital Development Cost Estimates

Preliminaries	\$59,077
Sub-structure	\$57,056
Columns, floor and roof	\$132,596
External walls, doors and windows	\$164,512
Internal walls, screens, doors	\$26,987
Finishes and fittings	\$68,909
Cool room, freezer and shop fittings	\$117,649
Plumbing, mechanical, fire and electrical services	\$340,732
Contingency	\$28,220
<b>Sub Total: Construction</b>	<b>\$1,242,238</b>
IT and Systems	\$35,000
Solar Panels	\$30,000
Landscaping	\$80,000
Joinery and Shelving	\$135,000
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>\$1,522,238</b>